

<i>Social Assistance Act R.S.P.E.I., 1988, S- 4.3</i>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Social Assistance</b>	
	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Family Violence</b>	<b>2-1-1</b>
<b>Effective Date: November 1, 2000</b>		<b>Authorized by: Carol Anne Duffy</b>	
<b>Revised Date: March 6, 2015</b>		<b>Deputy Minister</b>	

## 1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 Family violence is a complex societal issue requiring a range of supportive programs and services to assist persons experiencing violence in relationships of trust and dependency. Through respectful service delivery, the Social Assistance Program will promote safety for applicants who are victims of family violence, and encourage disclosure and intervention at the earliest point.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Applicant:** a person who applies for Social Assistance or a person who receives Social Assistance.
- 2.2 **Emergency Intake Assessment:** the initial gathering of information and assessment of a new applicant's situation as one of priority or emergency. A same-day appointment is scheduled to determine a course of action appropriate to meet the immediate needs of the applicant.
- 2.3 **Emergency Assistance:** financial assistance granted to an applicant on a one-time basis for a period of time not exceeding one month.
- 2.4 **Family Violence:** threatening behavior, violence or abuse (psychological, verbal, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between family members regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, class, culture or ethnic background, or physical and mental abilities.
- 2.5 **Priority Appointment:** when an applicant in receipt of social assistance is assessed to be in an emergency situation, an appointment will be scheduled as soon as possible.

## 3.0 POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Social Assistance Program staff will be familiar with indicators of family violence and will provide information on resources and supports available, in a respectful and sensitive

manner, to applicants who are, or are suspected of, experiencing abuse.

- 3.2 Social Assistance Program staff recognize that any person may be the victim of family violence.
- 3.3 Social Assistance Program staff recognize the importance of early intervention and will provide supportive responses that are timely and appropriate.
- 3.4 Social Assistance Program staff adhere to confidentiality standards, delivered in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 3.5 Social Assistance Program staff, pursuant to the *PEI Child Protection Act*, Section 10.(1), mandatory reporting, will notify Child Protection Services if there is knowledge or reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection.
- 3.6 Social Assistance Program staff, pursuant to the *PEI Adult Protection Act*, Section 4.(2), duty to report, will report the circumstances to Adult Protection Services if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a vulnerable adult (as defined in the *Adult Protection Act*) is in need of assistance or protection.
- 3.7 Social Assistance Program staff will participate in departmental training on family violence that will include indicators and impacts of abusive relationships.

#### **4.0 PROCEDURE STATEMENT**

- 4.1 Where there is a disclosure of abuse or a Social Assistance Case Worker suspects abuse, the Social Assistance Case Worker will:
  - acknowledge concern for the applicant and safety considerations involved should the applicant make the decision to return to the abusive partner;
  - explore safety issues, financial arrangements, resources and supports available;
  - encourage disclosure and intervention;
  - make referrals, with consent, to appropriate resources;
  - comply with mandatory reporting (see sections 3.5 - 3.6).
- 4.2 In high risk or emergency situations requiring immediate action or remedy due to imminent risk of harm to self and/or others, the Social Assistance Case Worker will contact police to request assistance.
- 4.3 When the applicant needs to leave his/her residence immediately because of safety risk, the Social Assistance Case Worker will authorize payment of transportation to a safe location if necessary.
- 4.4 When a person who is applying for social assistance discloses abuse, Social Assistance Program staff will schedule an Emergency Intake Assessment to determine eligibility for emergency assistance.
- 4.5 When a person who is in receipt of social assistance discloses abuse, Social Assistance Program staff will schedule a priority appointment to determine eligibility for emergency

assistance.

- 4.6 An applicant may be eligible for assistance on more than one occasion.
- 4.7 The Social Assistance Case Worker will consider security options such as
- blocking the Social Assistance Case Worker’s telephone number;
  - not leaving a telephone message;
  - confirming whether it is a safe time to talk or to meet;
  - providing a safe space when meeting with a person at Social Assistance offices.
- 4.8 The Social Assistance Case Worker will encourage the applicant to bring a support person to Social Assistance appointments.
- 4.9 The Social Assistance Case Worker will inform the applicant of the Family Housing Program and provide contact information.
- 4.10 Where the applicant requests a geographic relocation, the Social Assistance Case Worker will caseplan with the person to support this request.
- 4.11 To ensure appropriate access to translation services, the Social Assistance Case Worker may contact a community-based agency that provides multilingual interpretive service.

## **5.0 REFERENCES**

*PEI Adult Protection Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. A-5*

*PEI Child Protection Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. C-5.1*

*PEI Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. F-15.01*

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### **History:**

March 6, 2015 - significant revisions that include the removal of information from policy to staff orientation and training; remaining essentials are the policy and procedure to be used with applicants who are or may be experiencing family violence.