Cases with Multiple Case Numbers

Management Directive, 25-01

Overview

This Management Directive provides an overview and instructions on how to maintain case file records separate based on their case number episode.

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Version Summary

This new management directive was created on 4/15/2025. DCFS does not have a policy/directive instructing offices how to close and store cases with multiple case episodes and case numbers.

POLICY

DCFS Case Numbering Background

When the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) was established as a separate department from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) in 1984, the case numbering system continued based on the Welfare Case Management Information System (WCMIS) which generated a seven-digit numerical case number (also known as the State ID).

- CWS/CMS: Family's Name # 1234567
- Storage database: Family's Name # 1234567

In 2016, the Los Angeles County Eligibility, Automated Determination, Evaluation and Reporting System (LEADER) / LEADER Replacement System (LRS) was implemented, replacing the WCMIS-based system. LEADERS/LRS generates a seven-digit alpha-numerical case number (State ID). Therefore, families with subsequent cases from 2016 forward are assigned a new alpha-numerical case number.

If a family had a case or cases prior to 2016 and then a new case after 2016, case information in CWS/CMS will show the case history by multiple numbers, as per the example below:

- CWS/CMS: Family's Name # 1234567 (for cases prior to 2016)
  Family's Name # L234567 (for cases after 2016)

When DCFS referrals/cases are sent to storage, the referrals/cases are labeled based on the case name and State ID. Per DCFS Policy Guide (PG) C300-051, Search, Attach, Assign and Merge Specialist (SAAMS) Clerk Responsibilities and PG C300-011, Referral Assignment Time Frames, when an office receives a referral, the SAAMS unit or assignment clerk searches the case history in CWS/CMS and requests any/all prior cases from storage.

When a case file is sent to an office, the storage archives database shows as follows:

- Storage archives: Family's Name # 1234567 OUT (Name of office who last requested the file).

Issues with Case Labeling and Storage

There is no uniform model case format on how the office is to maintain the separate case files or how to return them to storage. Currently, when offices send records with multiple case episodes and numbers to storage, some offices merge the older physical case file into the latest Master Case Jacket, while other offices do not merge the case file records. When the latest case (or case episode) is closed and sent to storage, storage is not aware that the earlier physical case file records are also returned; and archive the case by the new case number found in the Master Case Jacket. This results in inaccuracies in their database as to the true status of the file.

- Storage archives: Family's Name # 1234567 OUT (Name of last requesting office)
  Family's Name # L234567 IN

Impact

Inconsistencies in packaging the physical closed case file records create inconsistencies between CWS/CMS and the storage status.

When an office requests for the physical closed case file records, storage will note one part of the records is available and the other part of the records are OUT to the last requesting office. This creates the false sense that part of the case file records is missing.

PROCEDURE

Roles and Responsibilities

This Directive is applicable to all DCFS staff that prepare the physical case file records for closure, request closed case records, and send closed case records to storage (Clerical staff [including unit clerk, suspense clerk, SAAMS], CSWs, SCSWs, ARAs, Managers, and Administrators).

CSW Responsibilities

1. When the case is ready for closure, please refer to PG 1200-500.90, Model Case Format.
   - This policy guide will provide instructions on filing hard copy case records.
2. When there are multiple case episodes/case numbers, maintain each hard copy case episode separate in their respective Master Case Jacket.

SCSW Responsibilities

1. When reviewing a physical closed case, ensure compliance with model case formatting, as per PG 1200-500.90, Model Case Format.
2. When there are multiple case episodes/case numbers, ensure that each hard copy case episode is maintained separate in their respective Master Case Jacket.

Suspense Clerk Responsibilities

1. When receiving the physical closed case, please refer to PG C300-061, Suspense Clerk General Responsibilities.
   - This PG will provide procedure instructions on closed case responsibilities.
2. Ensure that each case episode is separated into their respective Master Case Jacket.

Requestor of Historical/Closed Case Records Responsibilities

1. When the requestor is ready to send back the historical/closed case, ensure each case episode is returned to their respective Master Case Jacket. Do not merge all cases together.

APPROVALS

None

HELPFUL LINKS

Attachments

[DCFS Closed Case and Document Storage Service](#)

References

[C300-011](#), Referral Assignment Time Frames
[C300-051](#), Search, Attach, Assign and Merge Specialist (SAAMS) Clerk Responsibilities
[C300-061](#), Suspense Clerk General Responsibilities
[1200-500.90](#), Model Case Format (MCF)

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