INTERIM INSTRUCTION NOTICE #12-003

Date of Notice- September 18, 2012

SUBJECT: **Children's Fund Voucher Guidelines Update**

DISTRIBUTION: **All Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Employees**

OBSOLETE: **Upon revision of current guidelines**

Effective Date **September 18, 2012**

From Department of Behavioral Health, Office of Compliance

Introduction The Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) staff may facilitate assistance to minor and transitional age (youth ages 18-25) clients, or children of adult clients, by requesting vouchers if they have an immediate need in accordance with applicable County and Department policies and procedures as funds are available. Effective immediately, the new guidelines will be used along with the existing guidelines CHD0315 designated by Children's Fund prior to issuance of vouchers.

Update to Issuing Immediate Need Vouchers

Children's Fund has added additional criterion to be used when issuing emergency vouchers that include the following:

Requirements	Description
Families must be case managed with home visitations	Case management is defined by Children's Fund as a component of assessing need, planning, seeking and monitoring services on behalf of a client (i.e. assess needs and monitor outcomes).
Families must be able to demonstrate sustainability	The family must be able to maintain stability after receiving the requested items (i.e. stable housing). Total outgoing bills cannot exceed the monthly income by more than $150 on an ongoing basis.
Request for assistance are limited to once per specific year July 1 to June 30	A child/family is eligible to receive immediate need vouchers: • once per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) • one (1) time only request per item or need per child per year
Family must demonstrate hardship	Disposable income cannot exceed the following: • $200 per family of 1-4 • $300 per family of 5+

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Update to Issuing Immediate Need Vouchers (Continued)

Requirements	Description
Families must meet income eligibility requirements	Families whose income is below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Federal Poverty Income Guidelines will be eligible. Family income that is above the Federal Poverty guidelines will not be accepted. Court dependent children and children who are wards of the court are not required to submit financial information except in the case of rental/utility assistance.
Assistance for County Employees and Request for unborn Children	Request for assistance for a county employee must be processed by Children's Fund when they receive documented approval by a Deputy Director. Request for unborn children must also be processed by Children's Fund.

Special Instructions

DBH staff may be eligible to receive immediate need vouchers if the employee or their minor children are current clients of DBH and meet the qualifications outlined in this notice. Requests can be submitted through the employee's immediate supervisor who will follow the chain of command in obtaining Deputy Director approval. It will be the responsibility of the staff member's immediate supervisor to confirm eligibility based on the requirements contained within these guidelines.

Additional Voucher Funding Guidelines

Below are other notable requirements when requesting immediate need vouchers from Children's Fund:

- Deputy Directors approval and home visits are required prior to issuing clients immediate need vouchers for appliances and/or furniture
- Families receiving CalFresh (food stamps) are excluded from food assistance
- Beds and Mattresses must be new
- Set-up and Delivery fees for furniture and/or appliances are covered
- Car seat allowance has been increased to $75
- Baby formula has been increased to $50

Additional items may be available for clients by submitting a Referral Request Form to Children's Fund.

Case Management

DBH staff must verify that the client is being case managed by DBH for the family to be eligible for immediate need vouchers through DBH. If the client is part of a multi-agency or integrated program, the client should be referred to the appropriate County department or agency providing case management services to obtain immediate need assistance. Case management is defined as a component of assessing needs, seeking and monitoring services on behalf of the client, i.e. conducting regular home visits to assess needs and monitor outcomes with all the documentation contained within the case file.

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Immediate Need Voucher

The Fund Custodian will verify that no immediate need vouchers were previously issued to the family. The DBH Clinician/Case Manager will assess their financial status. If no previous immediate need voucher(s) has been issued and the client meets the income requirement, the Fund Custodian will complete the following documents in their entirety for review and approval by the Clinic Supervisor.

- Authorization of Issuance of Immediate Need (DBH712)
- Authorization to Release Protected Health Information for Immediate Need voucher (English) (Spanish)

Documentation and Justification

The DBH Clinician/Case Manager will document the issuance of the immediate need voucher in the client's case notes with all pertinent information. Documentation should include:

- Reason the family is unable to provide resources for the child(ren)
- How the family will sustain if services such as furniture and/or appliances are provided to them
- If anyone in the household is working, going to school, or participating in job training

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Immediate Need Voucher Eligibility, Approval and Issuance Processing

The following table describes the steps the DBH Clinician/Case manager completes in obtaining immediate need vouchers:
Note: The HS 278 was updated on 2/2012. Continue to use the current inventory of vouchers until they run out and then use the new Voucher dated. 2/2012.

Step	Who	Action
1	Fund Custodian	Using the voucher tracking log (CHD021), verify that no member of the family unit has received a voucher(s) in the current fiscal year (July 1 – June 30); or the same item or category ever.

2	Clinician/ Case Manager	With client:
		• Identifies immediate need
		• Determines client eligibility by gathering necessary documentation to prove all of the following factors exist:
		  ○ meets income Federal Poverty Income Guidelines
		  ○ disposable income does not exceed \$200 per family of 1-4 or \$300 per family of 5 or more
		  ○ is able to demonstrate sustainability after receiving requested items, i.e. stable housing
		  ○ total outgoing bills do not exceed monthly income by \$150 on an ongoing basis.

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Immediate Need Voucher Eligibility, Approval and Issuance Processing (continued)

Step	Who	Action

2 (continued)	Clinician/ Case Manager	• Explains Children's Fund immediate need voucher process as follows:
		  ○ A voucher can be given only once a year, one category in a lifetime.
		  ○ Timelines for receipt of voucher
		  ○ Vendor interaction; and
		  Other information as applicable

3	Fund Custodian	• Complete and obtain approval on the Authorization of Issuance of Immediate Need (DBH712) form • Complete and obtain client or parent/guardian signature on the Authorization to Release Protected Health Information for Immediate Need Voucher (English) (Spanish) form
4	Fund Custodian	Complete the immediate need voucher triplicate NCR form (Vendor Service Voucher – HS278) per the HS 278 template instructions.
5	Clinician/ Issuer	• Obtain client signature on the immediate need voucher (HS 278) acknowledging receipt (top section) • Verify all forms are complete and signed
6	Fund Custodian/ Issuer	Make two (2) copies of the completed: • Immediate need voucher (HS 278) • Authorization for Issuance of Immediate Need (DBH 712) form
7	Clinician/ Issuer	• Provide client with White and Canary pages of the immediate need voucher (HS 278) • Retain the Pink page of immediate need voucher (HS 278)

8	Fund Custodian	• Send original Pink page of immediate need voucher (HS 278) and original Authorization for Issuance of Immediate Need (DBH 712) form **Daily** to the following department:
		HS Auditing – Mail Code 0914
		ATTENTION: VOUCHER DESK
		825 E. Hospitality Ln, First Floor
		San Bernardino, CA 92415-0914
		• Maintain copies of the immediate need voucher (HS 278) and the Authorization for Issuance of Immediate Need (DBH 712) in the:
		  ○ Client case file
		  ○ Site location

9	Fund Custodian	Maintain the Children's Fund Voucher Log (HS 715) and shared DBH Voucher tracking log.

Voucher Storage and Record Keeping

It is the expectation and requirement that all immediate need vouchers be stored in a locked drawer, compartment, or safe if available; and treated as a paid negotiable. At no time should immediate need vouchers be pre-signed prior to the identification of a client need.

All immediate need voucher requests will be logged and tracked on the Children's Fund Voucher spreadsheet which is stored on a DBH shared drive accessible by staff issuing immediate need vouchers. **Each member** of the household family should be noted on the voucher log; regardless if they actually received a voucher. This is to ensure all transactions are accounted for and to avoid duplication of request. The child and clients name should be entered with each corresponding voucher. Voucher requests must be logged on the **same day** the vouchers are issued.

The following steps are to be completed at month end:

Step	Who	Action
1	Fund Custodian	Review the Children's Fund Voucher Log (HS 715)
2	Fund Custodian and Void Supervisor	Complete reconciliation of the Voucher Log as follows: • Count the number of vouchers (HS 378) on hand and record the inventory on the bottom of the HS 715 voucher log • Research and resolve any differences between the immediate need vouchers and the HS 715 voucher log • Document all shortages immediately • Refer all shortages immediately to HS Auditing
3	Fund Custodian/ Void Supervisor	• Submit the voucher log to Program Manager for review and signature
4	Fund Custodian	• Submit original HS 715 voucher log for the immediate need vouchers to HS Auditing by the third (3rd) business day of the following month to Mail Code:0914, Attention Jacqueline Vega • Maintain a copy of the HS 715 voucher log

Important Note: The Void Supervisor will perform random checks of the Voucher tracking log (CHD021) to ensure it is completed in its entirety.

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Voiding Vouchers

Since vouchers are unable to be altered once written, any mistakes will be cause to void a voucher and start anew. It will be the responsibility of the Fund Custodian to obtain Void Supervisor's approval **prior** to voiding a voucher. The vouchers must be voided by the Void Supervisor of the applicable unit. Once approval is obtained, the Void Supervisor will

Stage	Description
1	Write "VOID" on **all three** pages of the voucher.
2	Obtain supervisor's initials on the voided voucher.
3	Record the voided voucher on the HS 715 voucher log by: • IF NOT LOGGED – enter the date; write "VOID" in the Case Name/Case Number lines; enter "1" issued and the voided vouchers serial number; deduct from balance. • IF LOGGED – line through entry; write "VOID": adjacent to the Case Name/Case Number lines.
4	Required Signatures: Issuance clerk signs in the 'Requested by' line; supervisor signs in 'Issued/Received by line.
5	Conduct a weekly audit of all vouchers that have been voided.
6	Maintain voided voucher with other stock until the end of the month reconciliation

Lost or Stolen Vouchers

If any vouchers are lost or stolen, inform the immediate supervisor and call HS Auditing Payments Unit at (909) 383-9746 without delay. HS Auditing will provide further instruction.

Staff Changes

Please forward updated Authorization of District Issuance/Receipt Office Assistants (HS 710) form (original) to HS Auditing and a copy to DBH Compliance via email.

Questions

Questions regarding this Interim Instruction Notice should be directed to the Office of Compliance at (909) 382-3197.

References

Standard Procedures Manual CHD0315