

	Department of Human Services CHILDREN, ADULTS & FAMILIES	NUMBER: III-F.1.2
	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT INDEX	SECTION: F. Information Management
	ISSUED BY: Program Operations FINAL: 1-02-96	SUBSECTION: 1. Administrative Information
SUBJECT: 2. Development and Distribution of Policy – Policy		

REFERENCES:

CF 78, "Questions for New/Revised Rules and Policies"

PURPOSE

Policies define a structure that brings consistency, conformity and quality to agency actions. They communicate expectations and desired results. This policy provides guidelines for developing and distributing agency policy.

DEFINITIONS

(See Glossary)

(1) **“Author”** is the person responsible for writing a new policy.

(2) **“Information Letter”** is a short version of an issue that is in the policy-making process, but that needs to be implemented immediately for legal, financial, practice or other reasons. Information letters are printed on pink policy paper and are effective until the policy replaces it (within six months).

(3) **“Interpreter”** is the person responsible for explaining the intent of the policy and its application. The interpreter is often the author.

(4) **“Play Script”** is the pattern for writing procedures where the actions by each person are recorded in a manner that reflects the actual flow of the procedure. Use this pattern for internal SOSCF policy. (See the procedure section of this policy for an example of the play script pattern.)

(5) **“Policy”** is an interpretation of a plan or philosophy which affirms law, administrative rule or general agency operating principle or standard. Policy describes internal SOSCF process. Policy states agency position.

(6) **“Procedures”** are guidelines, pamphlets, practice manuals on the day-to-day implementation of policy, rule or law.

(7) “Requestor” is a person who has a need for new or revised policy, and makes the request known to the *policy/rules* coordinator. The requestor may, or may not, be the author.

POLICY

(1) Whenever possible, staff will write policy that reflects SOSCF's values and mission by:

(a) Developing policy in such a way that those people who are responsible for carrying out the policy have been included in policy development;

(b) Developing policy with broad participation and input from people both inside and outside of SOSCF;

(c) Stating broad principles and keeping procedures flexible when possible; and

(d) Writing policy to meet client, provider, staff and community needs.

(2) Policy will be written following the guidelines in this policy.

(3) The policy/rule coordinator will review all policy to ensure content and format consistency and lack of conflict with other policies/rules.

(4) Authors will review all of their policies at least once every three years.

(5) SOSCF policies will be filed in agency policy manuals.

(6) Policies shall:

(a) Be current;

(b) Be accessible;

(c) Provide clear guidance on important issues;

(d) Meet all legal requirements; and

(e) Provide a framework and basis for staff to carry out the agency's mission and values.

POLICY FORMAT

Policy will have the following elements:

- (1) Title. The policy's subject;
- (2) Interpretation Line. Job title of the person who can answer questions and interpret policy meaning;
- (3) Approval Signature. Assistant administrator of agency section issuing the policy;
- (4) References. Administrative rules, statutes, federal laws or requirements, and forms the policy/rule is based on or referred to in the body of the policy;
- (5) Purpose Statement. Short statement describing why the policy exists;
- (6) Definitions. Definitions of the key words the reader needs to understand when reading the policy;
- (7) Policy. Plan, philosophical statements, and/or position of the agency that affirms general agency operating standards;
- (8) Procedure. Step-by-step direction(s) on how to implement or carry out the policy.
 - (a) Include short procedures in policy (six pages or less);
 - (b) If the procedure exceeds six pages, place them in a procedure manual and adopt by references in policy;
 - (c) Indicate if the branch has some flexibility in carrying out the policy;
 - (d) Use play script format;
 - (e) Indicate where and by whom exceptions to procedure can be made. Also indicate if no exceptions are allowed.

PROCEDURE

<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Action</u>
Requestor	1	Determine need for policy - new or revised.

	2	Review proposed new/revised policy with supervisor and assistant administrator, and obtain their approval to develop the policy concept.
Policy/Rules Coordinator	3	Review request with requestor and author to determine appropriateness of request, additional revisions, connection to other policies/rules, and whether the material should be in policy or administrative rule.
Author	4	Develop draft policy and related forms and procedures as needed, with the assistance of representatives from SOSCF staff who may be affected by the policy. Complete CF 78, "Questions for New/Revised Rules and Policies." Provide a copy of all of these documents to the policy/rules coordinator.
Policy/Rules Coordinator	5	Circulate draft policy, related forms and procedures, and CF 78 for as broad a review as possible. Review usually takes four weeks.

Operations Committee, Branch Managers, Program Managers, Supervisors and Other Interested Parties	6	Review proposed policy and send comments to policy/rules coordinator in Central Office. Field responders: send response to the regional manager or designee, with a copy to the policy/rules coordinator. If there are conflicting responses, the regional manager or designee will resolve them within their region and send region response to the policy/rules coordinator.
Policy/Rules Coordinator	7	Review comments, obtain additional clarification, if needed, and give comments to author to review.
Author	8	Review comments and revise draft policy as appropriate. Prepare a written response to the substantive issues presented by written and oral views within 30 days after the adoption of the policy. Substantive changes in the policy may require repeating steps 5 through 8.
Policy/Rules Coordinator	9	Prepare final policy.
Assistant Administrator	10	Approve and sign policy.
Policy/Rules Coordinator	11	Publish and distribute approved policy and any related forms and procedures to policy stations, author and other persons as requested. Send author's written response, and a copy of the final policy, to persons who provided comments during the review.
	12	Distribute the bi-monthly "Summary of Policy and Rule Activity" report to branch managers, executive staff and authors to keep them updated on status of policy changes.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to the policy-making process include the following:

(1) Minor change being made to *policy* (i.e., spelling, punctuation correction). The policy/rules coordinator will update the policy and distribute to policy stations.

(2) *Policy* revision is minor and cannot be negotiated because it is based on laws or another agency's policies that SOSCF must follow. The policy/rules coordinator will review the changes with a small review group consisting of the assistant administrator of the Administrative Services Section, and the program managers of the Program Operations, Management Operations, Field Operations and other managers when appropriate. Upon approval of the change, the policy/rules coordinator will send a transmittal letter and the updated policy to the policy stations and other staff as appropriate.

(3) Proposed *policy* needs to be implemented quickly.

A policy Information Letter will be used. A policy Information Letter is:

(a) A short version of the policy (Information Letter) to be implemented. It shall be reviewed and approved by the author's supervisor and assistant administrator of the author's section, as well as other appropriate management staff, (i.e., regional administrators, deputy administrator);

(b) The Information Letter shall be signed by an assistant administrator, printed on pink policy paper, and distributed to policy stations and other staff as requested;

(c) Information Letters are intended to be effective only for a short period of time (less than six months), while the regular policy-making process is being followed.