Chapter 8:
CASE NOTES & DOCUMENTATION

- Case Notes
- Documentation

CASE NOTES

Case Notes and file maintenance are vital to quality service and reporting. They reflect the results of continuous Career Planning in detail so that the participant's status is easily determined. The case notes for active service must document ongoing two-way communication between the career planner and participant that describes how the services or activity moves the participant toward their goals. Career planners must enter case notes into the Illinois workNet (IwN) case management system within ten (10) calendar days of the service delivery. Grantees should maintain regular contact with participants every thirty (30) days.

Career Planners must identify the partner programs from which the participant receives services on the concurrent programs screen in the IwN system. Case notes should also indicate cross-program coordination of services and contacts with staff in other programs. The quality of the case notes is imperative to assist in monitoring efforts.

The participant case note history must reflect the following information as appropriate:

Introduction: Provide a complete description of the individual's status at enrollment, including an explanation of their overall need for services. The introduction case note should elaborate on the individual's eligibility and assessment results and give a clear picture of their barriers, strengths, skills, training preferences, and possible support service needs.

Determination of Training Need: The career planner must document the suitability of the training/retraining program to the participant's needs. The selected training must be directly linked to employment opportunities in the Local Area, the Planning Region, or in an area where a participant is willing to commute or relocate and document how successfully entering or re-entring the workforce is achieved.

Training Begin Date (if applicable): A case note must be entered when the participant enters training and includes the date the training began, training program, training provider/school, approximate cost, and estimated training end date.

Training End Date (if applicable): A case note must be entered to reflect that the participant's training has ended and include the following – the date training ended, the name of the program, whether the participant completed the training, and credential/license status.

Service Closure/Exit: A complete description of the participant's status at exit must be case noted. The case note should include the placement status, for example, employment or continuing education, and related details.

Follow-up: A complete description of the follow-up services and information provided to the participants upon completion of the program.

In instances when a participant is no longer actively participating in services, case notes should be updated, documenting the outreach to the client and any necessary follow-up steps.

Example of Case Note Entries

Example #1
Monday, September 28, 2021 - Met with Stan today and discussed concerns regarding the delay in completing his training program within the planned timeframe. We also discussed the need for regular contact while he participates in training. Stan reports he had some personal issues that prevented him from attending his required classes. We discussed options for either continuing with training or closing his file until a future date when his problems have been resolved and he can better dedicate time to attending required classes. Stan agreed to call and update me on or before this Friday, October 2, to let me know if he plans to return to training.

Friday, October 2, 2021 - There has been no further contact from Stan. I sent Stan a letter today to let him know his file will be closed and to contact me should he desire services in the future. Due to multiple delays in training and no message received from Stan by the deadline of October 2 of his plans to return to school, I will move forward with exiting the file. No further services are planned at this time.

Example #2
1/14/22 - Mary called and said she would need to reschedule our 10:30 am meeting on 1/21/22 because she has a doctor's appointment at the same time. A new appointment was scheduled for 1/28/22 at 9:00 am.

Example #3
January 15, 2021 - I called and talked to Cindy today about her progress in the Spring 2021 semester. She remains on track for completing training and continues making satisfactory progress in her classes. Cindy reports she is current on her homework assignments and is maintaining A's and B's in her classes. She has no concerns but states she will need a scientific calculator. I prepared a supportive service voucher for the calculator, and Cindy will come in tomorrow to sign the voucher and take it to the bookstore.

Utilize Documentation Tools
Tools formulated to help you efficiently take notes are a great place to start. Some documentation tools are already built with DAP note structures to make it easier for you to record all your information.

Keep it Simple.
Remember not to overcomplicate the process. Record only the information relevant to the session, which will help you build a better plan.

Documentation

Participant File Folder Tips Tools
Maintenance of files will be one of the factors considered during the monitoring process. Each participant must have their own file. Effective case management should include the standardization of the contents and organization of the participant files to ensure uniformity and consistency throughout all file records and ensure effective service delivery. It helps Grantees to locate information quickly and provides a seamless service delivery system.

Tip

Below are tips for Grantees to consider for the content and maintenance of participant files.

Participant file documentation is:

- Complete and comprehensive
- Entered in Illinois workNet (IwN)
    - Documents can be scanned and attached to the participant's file page (optional)
    - Case managers may have copies or originals in a physical file folder
- Whether handwritten or computer generated, each participant file page indicates their name
    - Each entry made by the case manager is dated
- Files are kept secure
- Files encompass participants demographic information including:
    - Residence, address, and telephone number
    - Emergency contact person(s)
    - Copies of documents supporting eligibility
    - Correspondence with participants regarding the program
    - Copies of certificates or diplomas
    - Verification of placements (job, training, or education)
    - Documentation of short-and long-term goal completion
    - Attendance records as applicable
    - Other information pertinent to the participants
- Files contain proof of services delivered and documentation of outcomes. Some items can be scanned and thus maintained in an electronic format.
- Copies of assessments and reassessments, including a copy of initial assessment of enrollee needs, which addresses the participant's strengths and assets; social or academic status; long-term training choices; family support; environmental and special needs.
- Pre-and post-test results for the measurable objectives are kept in the file.
- Copy of the most up-to-date signed career plan.
    - If the plan is electronic, a printout of the completed or most up-to-date career plan, with participant's signature may be in the participant file.
- Documentation that the case manager has evaluated the participant's current status and the effectiveness of services being delivered. This can be accomplished by reviewing participants goals to determine if they are appropriate, if they have been met, or how services might be adjusted to better serve them. Suggestions include housing, clothing, food, transportation, childcare, academic, medical, mental health, vocational, and post placement follow-up services being provided to the enrollee.
- Correspondence, including letters, e-mails, phone logs, etc. with local service provider contacts and post-program follow-up.
- Case notes, including pertinent documentation of the type of contact made with the participant or all other persons who may be involved with the career development.
- Other documentation as may be required by the program operator or funder.
- Each program should create written descriptions of the standards for the files for all case managers as well as a created checklist of what documentation will be in each file.
- Case managers can develop the habit of 1) entering a case note immediately after the end of a telephone conversation or a meeting with a participant and 2) reviewing all case files on a regular

basis (for example, once a month or whatever guidelines the grantees have for participant files management).