

**NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND
PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES SECTION
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE BLIND PROGRAM**

Section:	Chapter 2
Title:	Application Process
Revision History:	Revised 08/02

Any individual has the right to apply for Special Assistance for the Blind. The applicant or persons of the applicant's choice may participate in the application process. An application (DSB-7204) can be completed at the county department of social services or away from the DSS and then submitted to staff of the DSS or the Division of Services for the Blind. Refer to page 211 for a copy of the application form and instructions for its completion. The application should then be submitted to the SAB Eligibility Specialist in the State Office of the Division of Services for the Blind, 2601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2601.

I. ACCEPTANCE OF THE APPLICATION

- A. The applicant shall be allowed to apply without delay when he/she requests SAB. "Without delay" is defined as the same day the applicant appears at the DSS, the date he/she requests an application be taken either in writing or by phone, or by referral from another agency, institution, or individual. In such cases, application forms will be mailed to the prospective applicant so that the application process may continue.
- B. The Agency shall allow the applicant or his/her representative to apply when there is an anticipated need as long as the need will occur within the time standard for completing the application.
- C. If more than one person in a household wishes to apply for SAB, a separate Application will be completed by each person.
- D. The applicant must apply in his/her county of residence unless there are extenuating circumstances (see page 4).
- E. The date of the application is the date the applicant, his/her authorized representative, or someone acting responsibly for him/her when he/she is incompetent or incapacitated signs the application under penalty of perjury. An authorized representative is any individual who alleges that he/she is acting in an applicant's behalf. A responsible person includes, but is not limited to, a relative, friend, hospital staff member or staff of a specialized community residential center.

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- F. Adult Care Home (ACH) placements are based on need as indicated by medical information provided in the physician's order reflected on the FL-2, Level of Care Designation Form or the MR-2 Level of Care Designation Form for Mentally Retarded. The appropriate form must be presented by the a/r during the application process and again at twelve month intervals.

II. DISPOSITION OF APPLICATION

Applications and re-applications continue in effect until disposed of for one of the following reasons:

- A. The applicant is determined eligible for Special Assistance for the Blind and payment is authorized.
- B. The applicant is determined to be ineligible for Special Assistance for the Blind and assistance is denied.
- C. The applicant voluntarily withdraws application.
- D. The applicant or third party has not provided all necessary information by the end of the 12th month following the date of application.
- E. The applicant dies before the application process is completed.
- F. The DSS or the SWB is unable to locate the applicant.

III. TIME LIMITS IN PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

- A. Applications for SAB must be processed within 60 days from the date of application on DSB-7204 to the date on which the applicant is mailed notice of approval or denial of assistance unless the applicant or a third party causes the delay. The SAB Eligibility Specialist will dispose of the application within five workdays after the last piece of information is received.
- B. The applicant is to be informed of the Agency's time standard so that he/she may know the time period within which he/she should expect action on his/her application.
- C. The applicant is to be informed of his/her right to a fair hearing on the basis of the promptness requirement if action is not taken within the 60 day time limit to notify him/her of his/her eligibility or ineligibility.
- D. Occasionally, there are circumstances beyond the agency's control that may cause a delay in completing the application.

Examples of such circumstances are:

1. The applicant fails to have an eye examination report.
 2. The applicant desires to delay completing the application. Any delay beyond the 60 day period must be documented in the record. The SAB Eligibility Specialist will document all attempts to verify necessary information. He/she will notify applicant at the beginning of the 12th month that the application will be denied unless the information is provided by the end of the 12th month.
- E. When disposing of a pending application, the SAB Eligibility Specialist will determine eligibility on a monthly basis for all months from the date of the application.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE OF PAYMENT

- A. In general, the effective date of payment is the day when the eye report is approved by the State Consulting Ophthalmologist and all other eligibility requirements are met.
- B. If an applicant is in an ACH or a specialized community residential center for an entire month and eligibility requirements are met after the first day of the month, the applicant is not eligible for a full month's payment until the following month.
- C. Do not authorize a SAB payment for months prior to the month of application.
- D. Authorize SAB payments the month of SSI approval (even if no payment was received) if the applicant was in an Adult Care Home (ACH) or a specialized residential community center and had applied for SAB that month.
- E. Do not authorize a SAB payment prior to the date the eye report is approved by the State Consulting Ophthalmologist. Calculate a partial payment based on the date the eye report is approved by the State Consulting Ophthalmologist.
- F. Do not authorize a SAB payment prior to the date the state residency requirements are met. Calculate the partial month payment based on the day the residency requirement was met.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE AGENCY

- A. The Agency shall provide assistance and opportunities for consumers to express their rights.
- B. The Agency shall keep recipients informed of changes in law or agency policy which may affect his/her payments.
- C. The Agency shall explain fraud.
- D. The Agency shall employ methods that do not infringe upon the consumers' rights.

VI. APPLICANT/RECIPIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The applicant/recipient must apply for RSDI/SSI if he/she does not have a current application or is not currently receiving benefits from the Social Security Administration.
- B. The a/r must provide the information necessary to determine eligibility for SAB. This includes proof of visual impairment as well as information concerning other eligibility requirements. If the a/r encounters problems in gathering the required information, the SWB or the SAB ES will assist in these efforts.
- C. The a/r is responsible for providing current information concerning his/her needs and resources and other pertinent information concerning his/her continued eligibility whenever a redetermination of his/her eligibility is due.
- D. The a/r must report to the DSS or DSB's ES within five days any change of situation that may affect eligibility. If this is not done, he/she may be suspected of fraud. Repayment of assistance received in error may be necessary and the a/r may also be tried by the courts for fraud.
 - 1. A change in situation, such as an increase in his/her needs or income and/or other resources must be reported. This includes notifying the County DSS and/or the SAB ES as soon as he/she begins receiving a check from Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Veteran's Administration, Railroad Retirement, Teachers and State Employees Retirement, or any other source.
 - 2. A change in his/her employment status or the employment status of members of his/her family must be reported.
 - 3. A change of his/her home or mailing address must be reported.
 - 4. Rent, sale, or transfer of property must be reported.

- E. The a/r must provide information about any person or organization against whom he/she has a right to recovery.
- F. The recipient must immediately report to the county DSS and/or the DSB the receipt of a check which he/she knows to be erroneous, such as two checks for the same month, or a check in the wrong amount. If the incorrect payment is not reported the recipient may be required to repay any overpayments.

VII. RIGHTS OF THE APPLICANT/RECIPIENT

The a/r has certain rights afforded to him/her by N.C. General Statutes and by policies of the Division of Services for the Blind.

- A. The a/r has the right to receive assistance if found eligible.
- B. The a/r has the right to be protected against discrimination on the grounds of race, creed, or national origin by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Appeals based on discrimination should be made to the Agency Director.
- C. The a/r has the right to receive his/her monthly check in advance until the payment is terminated by the appropriate action.
- D. The a/r has the right to have any information given to the Agency and all information contained in the files, papers, or other documents kept confidential. Such information shall not be released to anyone except upon written consent of the a/r or except as provided by law.
- E. The a/r has the right to appeal, if:
 - 1. Assistance is denied, changed, or terminated.
 - 2. He/she believes the payment is incorrect based on the Agency's interpretation of state regulations.
 - 3. A request for a change in the amount of assistance was delayed beyond
- F. The a/r has the right to reapply at any time, if found ineligible.
- G. The a/r has the right to withdraw from the SAB program at any time.