

# **NON-PUBLIC ASSISTANCE CASE/AOC ORDER INITIATION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This chapter contains information on the following topics:

1. [An overview of the Case Initiation process;](#)
2. [Special Case Initiation situations;](#)
3. [Non-Public Assistance \(NPA\) Case Initiation;](#)
4. [AOC Order Initiation.](#)

## **CASE INITIATION OVERVIEW**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [Requests for NPA applications and program information;](#)
2. [Inquiry Only \(INQO\) participants;](#)
3. [Creating new case participants;](#)
4. [Storing data obtained during an interview with the client.](#)

### **REQUESTS FOR CSS APPLICATION AND PROGRAM INFORMATION**

When potential applicants request a CSS application and information about Non-Public Assistance (NPA) services, CSS caseworkers obtain data from them and enter it in ACTS. To store this data, caseworkers create an "Inquiry Only" participant record for the applicant so that ACTS can generate an Application For Child Support Services (DSS-4451), Cover Letter (DSS-4452), and Application Supplemental Data Sheet (DSS-4688). These documents explain the application process, the applicant's rights and responsibilities, and certain services' requirements.

If caseworkers suspect that the applicant might have been involved previously in the CSS program, they can search the "Inquiry Only" participant database prior to creating an "Inquiry Only" participant record. Caseworkers can also search the CSS participant database using ACTS.

For policy information about the application process, see "NPA Applications" in the [Intake/Case Assignment](#) chapter.

### **INQUIRY ONLY PARTICIPANTS**

CSS caseworkers can create "Inquiry Only" participant records for persons who have asked about and have been sent information regarding CSS services, but who are not attached to any CSS case. ACTS assigns a special account type to "Inquiry Only" participants so that they can be listed separately from regular case participants. Once an "Inquiry Only" participant is linked to a case in ACTS, that participant's name is moved from the Inquiry Only list to the regular participant list.

## CREATING NEW CASE PARTICIPANTS

Each person in a case is referred to as a "participant". Once a participant record has been created, that participant can be linked with any number of cases. When each participant record is created, ACTS assigns a Master Participant Index (MPI) number to that participant. Once all of the participants (a client, at least one child, and the noncustodial parent) have been created, they must then be "linked" together to form a case. ACTS then assigns a CSS case (IV-D) number to the case.

It is vital to the CSS program that only one participant record be created for any one person. Before allowing caseworkers to create a new participant record, ACTS searches its participant database and provides a list of possible matches. This search helps caseworkers to avoid creating multiple participant records for the same person. If caseworkers decide that an existing participant is the same person, they should use the data that already exists, rather than re-entering it.

## STORING DATA OBTAINED DURING THE CLIENT INTERVIEW

Any initial or follow-up information that caseworkers obtain during an interview with the client are entered directly into the case in ACTS while the interview is being conducted. This not only prevents the duplicate work that results from first writing and then typing interview information, but it also ensures that the case is created as soon as possible and that system-initiated actions can begin immediately.

## SPECIAL CASE INITIATION SITUATIONS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Sometimes caseworkers can encounter special situations during the NPA case initiation process that require additional steps or actions that differ slightly from "normal" case initiation procedures. This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [Children in the protective custody of DSS who exist as NPA participants in ACTS;](#)
2. [Mothers in an NPA case who are legally "minors" \(an unemancipated person under the age of 18\);](#)
3. [Public Assistance \(PA\) cases with a pending application \(immediate referrals\);](#)
4. ["Assisted Guardianship" cases.](#)

### DSS PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Children who are in the protective custody of DSS can be NPA participants in ACTS if no funds from IV-E or SFHF are being applied to the child's cost of care. In this situation, caseworkers should follow the appropriate steps for initiating an NPA case-- with these exceptions:

- Caseworkers must enter the DSS director as the client and the DSS agency address as the client's address in ACTS. The payments

collected for the case go to the Director's office and are put in a trust account for the child(ren).

- The case must also have at least one (1) child and a noncustodial parent (NCP). If the mother and father are both NCPs, caseworkers should create a separate case in ACTS with the child(ren) and each parent as the NCP.

#### **MINOR MOTHER PARTICIPANTS**

Sometimes caseworkers can encounter a situation in which the mother in a case is legally a "minor", an unemancipated person under the age of eighteen (18). Many times when this situation occurs, someone other than the minor mother is the client in the case (often a parent or grandparent of the minor mother.) Caseworkers must indicate in ACTS whether a minor mother who is not the client is actively involved in the case or not.

A minor mother who is not the client can still be actively involved in the case. For example, a minor mother can provide information about the father; participate in paternity testing; or be named in, sign, or receive legal documents.

#### **PA CASES WITH PENDING APPLICATIONS (IMMEDIATE REFERRALS)**

Some county departments of social services refer Work First or Medicaid applicants to CSS immediately after taking the application, which is known as an "immediate referral".

*NOTE: The information that follows also applies to immediate referrals that include a payee change.*

CSS caseworkers in counties that use the immediate referral process must first determine whether or not a case already exists in ACTS with the same participants who are in the immediate referral.

If a case already exists in ACTS, a new case is not created. The EIS Case number is not assigned (or re-assigned) to the client's MPI # or to the case.

When a case DOES NOT already exist in ACTS, caseworkers create the appropriate NPA case (or cases.) ACTS gives caseworkers the capability to create an NPA case using EIS participants with pending IV-A applications (or a combination of EIS pending participants and ACTS participants.) Data for these EIS participants is stored in the EIS "holding tank". When a case is created using participants in the EIS holding tank, much of the EIS participant data is brought from the holding tank and inserted in the appropriate fields in ACTS, so that caseworkers do not have to manually enter it in ACTS.

#### **ASSISTED GUARDIANSHIP CASES**

A federal child welfare project known as the "IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project" operated in the following North Carolina counties: Alamance, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cleveland, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Haywood, Johnston, Pasquotank, Rockingham, Scotland, Union, Wake, Wayne, Yadkin, and Yancey). This temporary project has ended.

Assisted or subsidized guardianship was one component of the project. Guardianship is a permanency option for some children for whom reunification with the parent(s) is ruled out and adoption is not deemed to be in the child's best interest. Only local child support offices serving these counties can receive referrals of Assisted Guardianship cases.

## **NPA (NON-PUBLIC ASSISTANCE) CASE INITIATION**

### **NPA CASE INITIATION OVERVIEW**

When caseworkers are about to create a NPA case or a new case participant, they should always search ACTS to see whether or not the case or the participant already exists. During this search, one of the following situations will occur:

1. No matching participant or case exists. If this occurs, caseworkers create a new participant record for each case participant and "link" them to form a new case in ACTS.
2. Some (or all) of the matching participants exist, but a case that contains ALL of the desired participants does not exist in ACTS. Depending on the case circumstances, caseworkers "link" the desired existing participants to form a new case or add new/existing participants to an existing case.
3. A matching case with the desired participants exists in ACTS. Caseworkers can use this case without changing its structure. Caseworkers must always review the EIS system to determine whether or not the child(ren) in the CSS case have been assigned an EIS participant number (EIS Individual ID).

For more information, see the [Public Assistance Cases](#) chapter.

## **AOC ORDER INITIATION**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This topic contains information on the following subjects:

1. [An overview of the AOC order initiation process;](#)
2. [The storage of Non-IV-D and private child support cases in the N.C. State Case Registry.](#)

### **AOC ORDER INITIATION OVERVIEW**

In order to fulfill federal requirements for state case registry, an interface with AOC (Administrative Office of the Courts) provides ACTS with information about cases that are not handled by CSS. The N.C. State Case Registry (SCR) stores case data for all of the CSS and Non-CSS cases in North Carolina; the SCR transmits this case data to the Federal Case Registry (FCR). For more information, see "State Case Registry" in the [Child Support Program Basics](#) chapter or "Federal Case Registry" in the [Locate](#) chapter.

This interface also transmits information to ACTS about the Non-CSS child support cases that are paid through the courts. ACTS can also

be used to store information for child support cases in which one party makes direct payments to another party (not through the courts.) CSS caseworkers can use ACTS to store this information by building a "Non-IV-D" case or "Private" case.

#### **NON-IV-D AND PRIVATE CASES IN THE STATE CASE REGISTRY**

Child support orders that are not handled by CSS are added to the N.C. State Case Registry (SCR) when new orders are filed and existing orders are modified. ACTS receives child support order data for Non-CSS cases by these methods:

1. The automated interface with AOC's SES (Support Enforcement System) transmits child support data to ACTS nightly, where it is stored on "holding" screens. The designated CSS caseworkers who are responsible for entering these cases build the participants and cases in ACTS. The system processes any updates for existing cases without caseworker intervention.
2. Designated CSS caseworkers manually enter data for new or updated private cases into ACTS. Caseworkers obtain this information from the AOC Cover Sheet For Child Support Cases (AOC-CV-640). Caseworkers who are responsible for entering these cases create the participants and cases in ACTS.

Non-CSS cases are stored in ACTS for informational purposes only. Although CSS does not provide services to Non-CSS cases, its involvement in building and updating these cases is necessary to prevent the creation of duplicate participants and cases.