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1. The Social Assistance Act empowers the Minister to provide Social Assistance and services. The Social Assistance Act makes provision for a “Director of Social Assistance” to have specific authority and accompanying responsibilities with respect to the administration of the Act.

- (a) The Act empowers the Minister to delegate any of his/her power and authority to employees of the Department that he/she may deem advisable.
- (b) The Act empowers the Director of Social Assistance, subject to the approval of the Minister, to establish appropriate procedures and controls for effective delivery of the Program.
- (c) All employees of the Department, the Social Assistance Appeal Board and all applicants are bound by administrative policies and procedures as if the policies and procedures were specified in the Regulations.
- (d) All employees with delegated power and authority shall act within the limits of that specified power or authority.
- (e) No employee with delegated power and authority may delegate such authority to any other person without the consent of the Minister.

2. Signing authority, in the Social Assistance Program, will only be delegated to an employee after that person has demonstrated competency in the delivery of Social Assistance during a period of close supervision and training.

3. The employee’s supervisor will have the responsibility for guiding the worker through this training period and will be responsible for monitoring progress. When the employee’s supervisor is satisfied that the worker understands and is able to apply competently the Act, Regulations and policies, a recommendation for signing authority may be made to the appropriate authority.

4. Employees are expected to develop a general competency that will ensure their Social Assistance decisions are made in an appropriate larger context. Training objectives are:

- (a) To review/study program philosophy and principles, especially looking at views and attitudes toward the poor, income maintenance and prevention;

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- (b) To understand and apply the knowledge and methods of casework. It is only after the employee is able to learn how to use his/her “people” skills in interacting with clients that effective service/case plans with the client will result;
- (c) To understand the concepts of intake and case management;
- (d) To understand the roles of the Department and the importance of good referral linkages to other Government agencies;
- (e) To understand the resources/services available through local agencies.

5. Specific competency in Social Assistance problem-solving and decision-making should develop from attention to the following training objectives:

- (a) To understand the legislative mandate of the Program and the respective employee’s position in relationship to this mandate; lines of authority specific to Social Assistance delivery;
- (b) To develop a working knowledge of the Social Assistance Act, Regulations and policies, i.e. their intent, contents, interpretation and application;
- (c) To maintain an efficient and consistent system of recording information, both on the Integrated Services Management System (ISM) and the client paper file;
- (d) To understand the cheque / service processing procedure so that staff can appreciate the importance of meeting cut-off dates, etc.

6. The employee is responsible for his/her own decisions when he/she has been granted signing authority, based on his/her demonstrated competency. Monitoring overall performance is the responsibility of the employee’s immediate supervisor. Procedures followed on specific cases may come under the scrutiny of processing staff or case auditors, and errors will usually be reported to the employee or his/her supervisor, directly.

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7. Misuse of signing authority, or a pattern of errors or faulty judgment, will result in corrective action that may include:

- (a) Temporary withdrawal of signing authority by the supervisor, thus requiring the supervisor's approval of all case actions until practice competency is restored;
- (b) Recommendation that signing authority be permanently withdrawn.