

Narrative Training



SSTU
February 2009

Narrative Recommendations

The following is not intended to be a template, but a recommendation of elements to be addressed in eligibility narratives. It is not necessary to repeat information that can be found on the application or on the screens. Items included in the recommendations below should be addressed as needed. For example, if the person is not a fleeing felon, no mention is necessary. The goal is to simplify narratives, improve their quality, determine if and when items are needed, and reduce time spent to free up staff to do other work while maintaining accuracy rates and quality narratives.

NARRATIVE HEADING: The type of narrative (FS recertification, TANF redetermination, etc.), clearly labeled to be easy to find in TRACS.

SITUATION: The circumstances that brought the client(s) in; include items such as date of request, filing date, interview date, program(s) applying for, alternate formats, expedited criteria.

HH COMP (EXPLAIN FILING GROUP): Who is in the household, who is in the filing group and why (i.e., who must apply together, who can apply separately, who can't apply together.) Should also include authorized rep/alternate payee, anyone pregnant and due date.

NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY: Nonfinancial eligibility for the program(s) applying for; include items such as ID, SSN, residency, citizenship, alien status, student status, OFSET status, JOBS status, job quit/reduction, disqualifications, fleeing felon, disability, child care situation, tribal members, medical coverage.

DEPRIVATION: Deprivation for MAA, MAF and TANF (continued absence, name[s] of child[ren] and their absent parent[s], amount of visitation at child's home, at absent parent's home, PWE, under or un-employment, incapacity, death).

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY: Income – earned, unearned, excluded, calculation, pay stubs/verification used, self employment, results of screen checks, if no income how they are meeting basic needs; NC1/NC2 calculations; resources; pursuing assets; good cause.

DEDUCTIONS: Shelter, utilities, medical deductions, child care costs, court ordered support.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION: Decision for each program and person, approved, pending, denial, notices sent, length of certification, reporting system, referrals.

Sample

Narratives

FS Only Sample Narrative

NARRATIVE HEADING:

FS application

SITUATION:

Filing Date: 9/26/08 OV 9/26/08, Joe was released from prison yesterday and is applying for FS only.

HH COMP AND ELIGIBILITY GROUPS:

He is staying with his sister and brother-in-law, and they P&P separately.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

He currently has no income. His sister is letting him stay in exchange for doing yard work until he finds a job.

DEDUCTIONS:

NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

I viewed his prison ID and SS card. He is OFFSET mandatory, and he signed a 7832 to attend TJC starting 9/29. He needs transportation, and I explained that TJC will provide a bus pass. Reporting requirements were explained.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION:

Expedited eligible due to \$0 income. FS approved in SRS.

FS and Medical Sample Narrative

NARRATIVE HEADING:

FS and Medical application

SITUATION:

Office visit 9/15/08, Filing date 9/10/08, DOR 9/8/8. Michael applying for FS and Medical for family. He was laid off from Bear Creek Orchards a week and a half ago. He started a full-time job at 62 Auto.

HH COMP AND ELIGIBILITY GROUPS:

FS filing group: Michael, Rachelle, unmarried and their two children, and Rachelle's child from a previous relationship. All in filing and need groups for OHP. Michael is not in the OHP benefit group because he is a new applicant. Only Rachelle and Ethan are in filing group for MAF.

DEPRIVATION:

OVI for MAA. Ethan's deprivation based on continued absence of his father who lives in Utah. There is a support order, but FA works under the table and does not pay.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

Rachelle has \$21 cash and \$3.50 in checking. Ethan has a \$100 savings bond. Rachel owns outright a 1993 Honda Accord with a FMV of \$1,650 less than \$10,000 vehicle exclusion. The total resources for MAF are \$124.50.

Michael received his final pay from Bear Creek on 9/9/08. No valid UC claim. No other income in past 3 months. Michael will be working 40 hours a week at \$13 an hour at 62 Auto, and paydays are every Friday. He received his first check of \$260 on 9/12, and he expects 2 more of \$520 each. Income:

Bud mo income for MAF \$0

Bud mo income for FS and OHP \$1,863.07 (new and terminated sources)

Convert income for FS ongoing: $40 \times \$13 \times 4.3 = \$2,236$

8/08 income \$1,828.80

7/08 income 2,286.00

6/08 income 1,819.20

Total 3 mo $\$5,934/3 = \$1,978.00$ HPI for OHP

DEDUCTIONS:

Rent is \$850. Heat is electric and paid separately. FUA. Michael listed court-ordered support on the application, but is currently not paying.

NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

ID was verified via ODLs, and SSNs were verified by Social Security records. Citizenship was verified for Rachelle and all children on BBCN. OFSET – Both are exempt, Michael due to working full time, and Rachelle has children under age 6.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION:

All reporting requirements were explained.
FS approved in SRS. 853 given.
MAF approved for Rachelle and Ethan.
OHP approved for other children.
Medical denied for Michael. 462A given.

ERDC, FS and Medical Sample Narrative

NARRATIVE HEADING:

ERDC, FS, Medical application

SITUATION:

DOR 9/15/8. Filing date 9/17/8. Phone interview 9/24/08 because Sheila works during most office hours. Sheila needs assistance for her family because she separated from her husband last week.

HH COMP AND ELIGIBILITY GROUPS:

The HH consists of Sheila and her 2 children. Sheila is not in the OHP benefit group because she is a new applicant. She has full custody of the kids and does not expect any change.

DEPRIVATION:

OVI for MAA. No MAF.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

Sheila works 32 hours a week at Mom & Pop's Market at \$10.50 an hour. Paydays are every Friday. She has received 3 checks so far this month totaling \$1,004, and she expects one more check on XX/XX of \$332. Income from this month and the past two months is representative of what she expects. Viewed pay stubs. She has no other income and hopes to get a child support order soon. Income:

FS – Convert for ongoing months to match ERDC: $32 \times \$10.50 \times 4.3 = \$1,448$

Bud no income for FS and medical \$1,336 (\$1,004 + \$332 expected)

8/08 \$1,660

7/08 1,351

6/08 1,322

Total $\$4333/3 = \$1,444.33$ HPI for OHP

DEDUCTIONS:

\$675 rent, gas heat is billed separately, FUA. Sheila's copay is \$111, and she pays an additional \$30 over her copay for a total deduction of \$141.

NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

ID was verified via WVIR for Sheila and her statement on app regarding children. Citizenship for the children was verified by BBCN. SSNs verified from Social Security Records. Immunizations are current. Sheila normally works M- F, 8am to 4pm, but sometimes it changes. CC hours are 138 (32 x 4.3) Not eligible for RCP, received in Jan, within last 12 months. Her provider is listed and is ABC child care center. DPU emailed for connection. Reporting requirements were explained.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION:

FS certified in CRS.

ERDC approved 9/1 with an APR of 6 months. The co pay is \$111. OHP-OPC opened for children, Sheila is ineligible for all medical. 462A sent.

A DCS referral was made. Sheila was sent a 943, 7478, a 7492, and a 7294.

MAA and TANF Sample Narrative

NARRATIVE HEADING:

TANF and MAA Application

SITUATION:

DOR 9/5/8. Intake appt 9/18/08. Sharon applying for TANF and medical for herself and 2 children. Ongoing FS and OHP client. She is living with her parents. She is working with the public health nurse, has a high-risk pregnancy and is due next month. She is currently receiving FS, OHP, and WIC.

HH COMP AND ELIGIBILITY GROUPS:

TANF and MAA filing group: Sharon and children. P&P separately.

DEPRIVATION:

Continued absence of father, Alex Moore, in jail per Jack Co Sheriff's website. Sharon expects him to be there for at least 60 days. He may go to prison. Paternity established for both children. Sharon states that Alex is the father of unborn.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

Sharon has no income this month. No valid UC claim. She has \$6 cash and \$29 in a joint account with Alex. She has a 1995 Chevy Malibu, FMV \$5,499, under vehicle exclusion. Total countable resources \$35.

DEDUCTIONS:

Sharon must pay \$200 a month rent when TANF approved. Pays cell phone. TUA.

NONFINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY:

Sharon exempt from the JOBS program since she is in her 9th month of pregnancy. I explained that she will be exempt until her newborn is 6 months old although may be required to participate in parenting classes/family stabilization activities and may volunteer at any time.

ELIGIBILITY DECISION:

Opened MAA 9/5. Cleared eligibility and opened TANF 9/18. Issued \$228 prorated benefits. Updated FSMIS and sent reduction notice.

Program Specific Examples

of

Poor and Good Narration

Food Stamp Narrative Examples

Area	Poor Narration	Good narration
Household Comp	Millie is applying for her family. SEU.	Millie is requesting FS for self and 2 children. Lives with two unrelated roommates: Bob Smith and Sandy Jones. Millie and children P&P separately.
	Couch Surfing	Client has changed residence since applying. Is allowed to stay briefly with friends or family. No fixed address.
Citizenship/Alien Status	Mien is ineligible for FS as she is a noncitizen. Her kids are ok.	Mien provided her alien registration card #. Checked SAVE. LPR entry date 10/05/06. Mien ineligible as she does not meet any LPR criteria.
	Ineligible alien	Undocumented, NC1
Student status	Ineligible.	Mark attends Lane CC 14 hours (full time) and lives with his disabled father. Mark works weekends (12 hours) at Starbucks. He receives some financial aid but no work study. Mark is an ineligible student.
Shelter/utilities	Millie pays \$200 rent and has FUA.	The total rent is \$450/month. Millie's share is \$200. Roommate pays remainder. Millie pays an additional \$50/month towards utilities which includes gas heat. FUA.
	Nancy reports paying \$450 rent. Utilities included. FUA.	Nancy is in HUD housing. Total rent is \$450 but she pays \$100 month. Her gas heat cost is included in rent. She pays separately for electricity and phone. LUA.
	Mary lives with her roommate, Tom. He gives her \$300/month for rent and utilities. \$400 rent allowed.	The total rent is \$400. Mary's roommate, Tom, gives her \$300 month. \$200 is for rent and \$100 towards all utilities (gas heat, electric, garbage, phone). Mary allowed \$200 rent plus FUA.

OFSET exemptions	Exempt, other barriers	Exempt due to lack of transportation; lives 25 miles from town and no car.
Income	John is working and provided two pay stubs with gross income of 2984. Will calculate excluding the 17 hours OT. $\$2984 - \$382.50 \text{ OT} = 2601.50/2 = 1300.75 \times 2.15 = \2796.61 . WAGE record shows he worked for Target in 2007.	John has been employed at Denny's for the last 6 months as an assistant manager. He earns \$15/hour, works 40 hours a week and is paid every other Friday. He provided two wage stubs. One had a pay date of 11/7, reg hours of 86 plus 7 hours OT for a total of \$1444. The second pay stub was for pay date 11/21 showing 88 reg hours and 10 hours OT for a total of \$1540. Called manager, Mike Golden, who reports that John always works 7 to 10 hours a month OT. Worker determines these two wage stubs are representative. $\$1444 + \$1540 = \$2984/2 = \$1492 \times 2.15 = \$3207.80$.
	Steven meets his needs with help from family and friends.	Steven is homeless, His mother, Mary Green, gives him \$20 when she sees him, about 2 times a month. His sister pays for his cell phone so the family can reach him. \$40 OTH ($\20×2)
	Max says he makes about \$900/month after expenses. He did not file taxes last year. Worker using his statement as reasonable. \$900 SEC coded. Told Max to send in 2007 tax returns when he files them.	Max is self employed as a barber. Meets all 5 SLF criteria. He has been in business about 4 years. He has not yet filed his 2007 federal taxes but did file in 2006. He has costs for rent on the shop, scissors, clippers, towels, etc. He brought his 1040 and Schedule C from 2006. Line 3 of schedule C shows income of \$15,422.65. When questioned, Max stated he is doing about 10% better in 2008 than 2006. Income calculated using $\$15422.65 + \$1542.26 (10\%) = 16964.91/12 = \1413.74 SEC.

ERDC Narrative Examples

Area	Poor Narration	Good narration
Household Comp	Mary and two children living with boyfriend. 4 in HH and # ERDC.	Mary and her two children living with boyfriend John. Mary is pregnant with John's child. 4 in HH and # ERDC.
HH Comp	Mary Smith and child Tracy Holden.	Mary Smith caring for unrelated child, Tracy Holden.
Citizenship/ Alien Status	Teresita and 4 children LPRs.	Teresita and 4 children are LPRs. All I-551s viewed and verified through SAVE at prior application on X/XX.
RCP	RCP=Y	RCP eligible 6/XX. Ongoing copay of \$59. 7294 sent.
	RCP=N	Not RCP eligible due to receipt on X/XX. Copay=\$119. 7294 sent.
Providers	Gave Sarah listing form for secondary provider.	Sarah's primary provider, Rita Chesler, listed. Sent provider connection to DPU. Secondary provider, Teresa Festler, not listed. Gave client 7294 and parents and providers CC Guide.
Income	EML=1223/mo	Anticipated income using last 4 months (XX/XX-XX/XX) income of 1256.45 + 1325.34 + 1123.45 + 1187.54 = 4892.78 divided by 4 = 1223.20
Child Care Hours	CC hours = 258	Tina works 35-40 hrs week and has 1 hour commute each way 5 days a week. 172 work hours and commute hours of 86 (20 hrs /wk times 4.3). Total 258 cc hrs. EXT coding added to C/D and N/R, will review at next APR XX/XX.
Special Needs Rate	Rosie asked about special needs rate for child, Tim. Denied.	Tim has Learning Disabilities but Rita states he does not require additional care above norm for age. No SNR.

MAA/TANF Narrative Examples

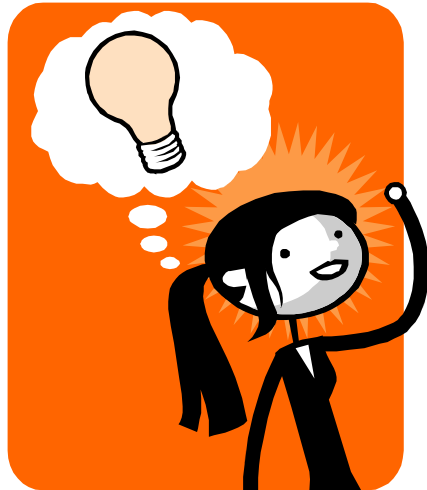
Area	Poor Narration	Good narration
Deprivation	Deprivation met.	Deprivation based on un/underemployment. Dad is the PWE, started working in late June but hasn't worked for past few years so no UC available.
Deprivation	Deprivation: Absence	Deprivation based on continued absence due to father's incarceration until 2014.
Income	EML=\$513.88.	Client working at Apple Peddler as dishwasher. Does not receive tips. Paid every Monday. Current month's income, 243.88 received on 4/6. Check to be received 4/20 anticipated for 30 hours @ \$9/hr = \$270 = 513.88. Ongoing EML anticipated at 55 hrs a month @ \$9/hr for \$495.00 Occasional child support but none received in past 3 months & none anticipated.
Citizenship/ Identity	Cit/Id: Yes	Citizenship/id for all in file, person/alias updates completed for all 5.
	Cit/ID: N/A	<i>Note: If citizenship previously verified and entered online, no need to address in narrative.</i>
Effective Dates.	Opened TANF 9/14/XX for SSI mom, Nita and child, Mary, 4.	SSI mom and child. DOR 8/15. Verification cleared and TANF opened 9/14/XX.
Notices	Absent parent, Rick, returned to home. OVI. MAA closed for Nancy and child 4/30/XX.	Nancy reported on 3/25 absent father, Rick, returned to home 3/20. Rick is not requesting benefits. Rick earns approximately \$3300/mo. Sent 456 to close TANF and medical for Nancy and child 4/30 and 462A.

Pursuit of Assets	John and two children applying. John laid off last month. EML=0	John laid off from Landmark Ford and received final pay last month. Pended by 210 for pursuit of UC.
Deprivation & Pursuit of Assets	Ken and Tina and 3 children. No income in current month. Ken laid off 2 months ago.	Ken, Tina and 3 children. No income in current month. Ken is PWE. Ken laid off 2 months ago. Checked employment screens on X/XX and confirmed client not disqualified from receiving UC.
Case Management	Client appeared to be drunk.	Client had difficulty tracking, slurred words and appeared confused.

OHP Narrative Examples

Area	Poor Narration	Good narration
CHIP Children & PHI	Child eligible for CHIP.	Brendon eligible for CHIP. No PHI now or in prior 6 months.
		Paige, eligible for CHIP. No PHI now. Last PHI ended 2 months ago in X/XX. 6 –month waiting period waived due to emergent need.
Income	HPI= \$1129.61.	Averaged last 3 months income from X/XX to X/XX. $\$1131.54 + \$1092.98 + 1164.32 = 3388.84$ divided by 3 = \$1129.61 HPI.

Narration Pilot Tips & Resources



Thanks to Christy Garland and Jennifer Dion, HSS4s from the Springfield branch, for providing this information. Stephanie Primacio, Springfield Operations Manager, can be contacted for questions regarding the Springfield Narration Pilot.

Narration Pilot Tips

- It takes time to become comfortable with the Narration Guide. It takes a week or two of using the new method to start to see a time savings.
- Staff using the Narrative Guide find that there is even greater time savings when it is used in conjunction with SpeakWrite. SpeakWrite is particularly suited to the Narrative Guide style of paragraph narration. Like with anything else, it takes time to become comfortable with using SpeakWrite. Over time, one learns to use it in ways that require less or no editing.
- Remember, the new narrative recommendations are about clearly and concisely recording the essentials of the eligibility decision to save staff time.
- Transitioning to the Narrative Guide is helped by understanding your process of working an application and determining eligibility. What process/flow do you have of checking the screen, looking at eligibility factors and making the eligibility decision? In using the Narrative Guide, find a flow of narrating your decision that works for you. You can choose the order of the elements you narrate. For example, some workers may show income calculations for all programs in one area of their narrative and other workers may chose to all FS eligibility specific factors in one area, some may follow the order of items in the application and others may have a different order, etc.
- After getting comfortable with using the Narrative Guide method, look for information that may be unnecessary to narrate or ways to narrate more concisely. For example, narrating “John and unrelated friend don’t purchase and prepare together and don’t want to apply together.” versus. “HH includes John and an unrelated friend. Filing Group of John. They are not required to be in the same filing group as they don’t purchase and prepare together. Also, they do not want to apply together.”

Implementation Tips

- Provide a laminated Narrative Guide that can be taped to the monitor for those workers needing extra structure (see following page). Some workers photocopy this guide and add their handwritten notes if needed.
- Provide additional in-house reviews to catch any accuracy issues early on. For example, at Springfield, in addition to the targeted reviews, HSS4s and the local reviewer reviewed the first intake for each worker every day for the first month of the pilot and on an ongoing basis.
- Create HSS3 meetings (15 minutes or so) daily to talk about the process, address any concerns, share ideas for making narrations more concise, etc. At Springfield, these “Food Stamp Huddles” occurred daily during the first month of the implementation of the pilot.
- Gather and share information from the reviewers regarding topics they see still being narrated that are not necessary to narrate, e.g., repeating citizenship status on a medical case for which it’s already been verified.
- For those who choose to use SpeakWrite, develop and share SpeakWrite Friendly Narration Guides, elements from the Guidelines in a checklist format for ease of use with SpeakWrite.
- Encouraging the use of SpeakWrite by making one-on-one coaching available through the HSS4s and peers. Include information sharing on learning to use SpeakWrite in the daily HSS3 check-ins/“huddles.”



NARRATIVE GUIDE

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