

Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)
Division of Licensing Programs
Child Welfare Unit

Children's Residential Facilities
Technical Assistance Instructions for Writing the Program Description

Your program description is an important document that needs to be thought through carefully. The program description describes what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. The program description must be clearly written. The VDSS licensing staff uses the information contained in your written description to determine if your program should be licensed under the authority of VDSS. Please make sure you follow the specific instructions below.

- Use the four subject headings listed below.
- Write complete sentences when answering questions under the headings.
- Provide detailed and specific information (e.g., “qualified staff” is not adequate - explain how the staff is qualified, “residents will be assessed” is not enough information - tell us how residents will be assessed and what criteria will be used to assess the residents, etc.)
- Include information relevant to the heading and to the type of program you plan to provide and the children to be served (e.g., services provided must be suitable for population served, staff qualifications must match population served and services offered, etc.)
- Include specific and detailed information in the position (job) descriptions. Your written job descriptions must be specific to your program. Descriptions shall not be limited to simply repeating the language and requirements of the standards.
- Submit only your program description at this time. If your program meets the criteria to be licensed under VDSS, the licensing staff will make a request for you to submit additional materials.
- Submit your program description without any binder or notebook.
- Provide a contact name, address, telephone number and e-mail address for correspondence and questions.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

1. MAIN FOCUS OF PROGRAM - What issue or problem is this program addressing? How will a resident benefit by being placed in this proposed program?

2. DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION TO BE SERVED (i.e., girls ages 15-18 is not a thorough description) – Describe the type of youth, including age and gender and, the types of problems and behaviors you will accept and not accept into your proposed program. Also include the number of children (capacity) your proposed program will serve at one time. Identify from where you will receive your referrals (i.e., psychiatric

hospitals, foster homes, etc.) Include discharge criteria. Discharge criteria must address all requirements of standard 680.A, Standards for Licensed Children's Residential Facilities, 22VAC40-151 and include more than "when the resident completes the program".

Please be aware that the mixing of populations is not allowed and if you plan to serve a larger age range, you will need to describe supervision practices and programming for the age ranges (i.e., if you plan to provide services to children ages 12-17, you will need to address the differences in needs and how your program and services will address the needs of all children accepted into your program.

3. SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED - What will be offered to the children? How will the type of children you described in #2 be served? What will be accomplished by placing a child in this program? For example, stating the program will offer Independent Living Services is not an adequate description. What curriculum will be used? What skills will be taught? How will it be determined on what skills the resident needs to work? How will the skills be taught? How will the resident be continually assessed? Include evidence that there is a structured program of care. What are the position titles of the persons to provide the service? Explain all point or level systems if applicable. Also include a daily schedule showing when services will be offered. Indicate if the service is to be provided at the facility or if residents will be taken to someone in the community for the service.

How will educational services be provided? Please be advised that school divisions are not required to serve children from other school districts unless the child is in foster care and is in the custody of the local department of social services. If a foster care child has been expelled for a weapons or drug charge, the school division does not have to serve that child.

If the local school division refuses to serve a child, what is your alternative educational plan? Have you talked to the local school division about serving the children in your program if the educational plan is for the residents to attend the local public school? Do you know of appropriate alternative education resources in your area (i.e. alternative schools, private schools, etc.) Please be aware that your acceptance and admittance of a child into your program does not guarantee that the child can attend the neighborhood school. Your program may have to make and implement transportation plans for the child to and from the designated school.

For children eligible for special education, please reference regulation 8VAC20-81, Virginia Department of Education Special Education Regulations. Standard 30 defines responsibilities of local school divisions and state-operated programs. The school division serving the child is responsible for ensuring that services identified in the individualized education plan (IEP) are provided to the child. Schools are responsible for providing only those services identified in the IEP. For example if a child's IEP requires that he receive speech services only, then the speech services are all the school division is obligated to provide. You should obtain clarity regarding school services by contacting the Virginia Department of Education.

4. JOB DESCRIPTIONS OF STAFF TO BE HIRED – Job descriptions for all direct care staff (chief administrative officer, program director, child care supervisors, child care workers, social workers, etc.) must be included. Use the same position titles as used in

the program description and on the organizational chart. What kind of qualifications will staff have (LCSW or other certifications, college degrees, work experience)? Make sure that all positions meet the requirements of standards 280 through 340 of 22VAC40-151, Standards For Licensed Children's Residential Facilities. Indicate which positions will provide case management. Please also include the name of the person who will be serving as the chief administrative officer and the person's resume.

Send to:

Lafond.blount@dss.virginia.gov

Or

VDSS, Division of Licensing Programs
Child Welfare Unit
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130
Richmond, Virginia 23229-5008
Attn: Lafond Blount

Revised 01/08/10

Program Description Checklist

Before sending your program description to the Child Welfare Unit, ensure it is complete.

Main Focus states specifically what type of program is being offered (i.e. treatment, training, education, independent living, etc.)	
Description of Population includes:	
Gender served	
Proposed capacity	
Ages served	
Behaviors that will be accepted	
Behaviors that will not be accepted	
DSM IV categories accepted, if applicable	
Admission and Discharge criteria	
A description that is specific, focused, and does not mix populations	
Services to be offered	
Do services match population to be served?	
Have you described the services including materials and curriculums, assessment tools, and methods to be used?	
Daily schedule showing times services will be offered (24 hours – 7 days per week)	
Description on how education will be provided	
Description of the structured program of care, including model of care	
Job Descriptions	
Includes job title	
Includes specific duties and responsibilities	
Includes job title of immediate supervisor	
Includes minimum education, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities required	
CAO's job description	
Program Director's job description	
Case Manager	
Anyone supervising child care workers	
Child Care Worker	
Job Descriptions are individualized to the program's population and services	
Name of the CAO and his resume	
Resume of program director, if identified	
Other	
A contact name, address, and telephone number	
No binders, notebooks, etc.	
No policies and procedures, no forms	