TITLE: VERIFYING HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

PURPOSE: To define the persons counted in the household for purposes of calculating the amount of financial assistance from the Harris Health System and the verifications that may be used to substantiate the household.

GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES STATEMENT:

Clients applying for financial assistance are required to declare and provide verification to identify all family members living in the household. Household composition is the basis for determining what income is included when calculating a client’s level of financial assistance.

ELABORATIONS:

I. DEFINITIONS:

A. **Adult**: A person at least age eighteen (18) or a younger person who is or has been married or had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

B. **An Unaccompanied Alien Child** (UAC): One who has no lawful immigration status in the United States; has not attained eighteen (18) years of age, and with respect to whom:

1. There is no parent or legal guardian in the United States; or
2. No parent of legal guardian in the United States is available to provide care and physical custody.

C. **Managing Conservator**: A person designated by a court to have daily legal responsibility for a minor.

D. **Minor Child**: A person under age eighteen (18) who is not or has not been married and has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes.

II. IDENTIFYING HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS:

A. A household is defined as:

1. A person living alone; or
2. Two (2) or more persons living together who are legally responsible for support of the other person.

B. Legal responsibility for support exists between:

1. Persons who are married (including common-law married);
2. A legal parent and a minor child;
3. A managing conservator and a minor child; or
4. A guardian and the ward of the guardian.

C. The following are considered one-person households:

1. An adult living with others who are not legally responsible for supporting the client;
2. An adult living alone;
3. A minor child living alone or with others who are not responsible for the child's support; or
4. An inmate in a county jail.

Note:
Harris county and Houston city jail prisoners may be able to prove Harris County residency and are eligible for financial assistance if the normal eligibility requirements are met.

*Ensure patient is a Harris county jail prisoner or a Houston City jail prisoner. City jail prisoners are transported by Houston City police and Harris County prisoners are transported by Harris County sheriffs.

D. The following persons living together are considered to be household groups:

1. Two (2) persons legally married to each other or common-law;
2. One (1) or both parents and their minor children (including unborn children);
3. A managing conservator and a minor child and the conservator's spouse and other minor children, if any;
4. Minor children who are siblings, when not living with parents or a managing conservator; or
5. An adult between ages eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26) who is a full time student and relies on the family for support will be counted as part of the family’s household so long as the student retains full time status (see III/D3 for verification proof).

E. Separate households:

1. Adults living together who do not have legal responsibility for support and who are not married or common-law married are not considered a household. Each individual is considered a separate household;
2. A full-time student who is self-supporting; or
3. A married couple living in another household is considered to be a separate household.

III. VERIFYING RELATIONSHIPS:

A. The relationship between all members of the household must be documented the first time the family applies for and is granted financial assistance.

B. No verification is required when the client declares in a written application for financial assistance that another person living in the household is not a family member or a dependent person.

C. If the client declares married (formal, common law/informal marriage) on a written application, one of the following documents will be accepted:

1. A marriage license or certificate;
2. Church records;
3. Statement from clergy;
4. Family Bible records;
5. Current Income Tax Return (IRS 1040 Form)
6. DSHS Form VS-180.1, “Declaration and Registration of Informal Marriage” filed with county clerk (for common law/informal marriage); and
7. THHSC Form H1057, “Declaration of Informal Marriage” (for common law/informal marriage).
D. The following documents are acceptable to verify household composition and relationship:

1. Birth certificate showing the names of parent and child;
2. Baptismal record showing names of parent and child;
3. Proof of full time school enrollment for students aged eighteen (18) to twenty-six (26) who are claimed as dependents;
4. Social Security Award letter with dependents’ names;
5. School documents (report cards, transcripts, etc.) showing names of parent and child;
6. Insurance documents showing names of parent and child;
7. U.S. Immigration applications with dependents’ names listed;
8. Divorce decree or child support decree (with judge’s signature and/or page number and volume stamped by courthouse personnel);
9. For infants under ninety (90) days old, the baby’s Popras form, birth fact record, or hospital armband;
10. Any reasonable document which shows the parent/child (or guardian/child) relationship approved by management; or
11. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) - Division of Children’s Services- Verification of Release Form (ORR UAC/R-1) is used as an ID for the unaccompanied alien child (UAC), who is in the US without legal status.

E. A client’s statement of household composition will be accepted one time only, if the client provides a reasonable explanation of why verification documents are not available or readily acceptable (e.g., births outside U.S., divorce outside Texas). Managers must approve the financial assistance classification. The client will be provided with a list of acceptable verifications and will be required to verify household composition upon renewing the financial assistance classification.

IV. VERIFYING CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION:

Upon renewal, the client must provide verification of any change in household composition (e.g., providing school enrollment documents for an adult child, a birth certificate for newborn, or death certificate for previous household members).
REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Harris County Indigent Health Care Program Manual Handbook. Section 2
U.S Department of Health & Human Services-Administration for Children & Families-
Office of Refugee Resettlement.

THHSC Form H1057, https://www.dads.state.tx.us/forms/H1057/

Declaration and Registration of Informal Marriage filed with County Clerk Form VS-180.1
https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs/field/vsforms/localforms.shtm

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Harris Health System Eligibility Services Department

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

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