

90-050.1. CONFIDENTIALITY

A. General Policy

Confidentiality rules that affect all HHSA self-sufficiency programs are located in the Eligibility Desk Guide, [Confidentiality in Self-Sufficiency Programs](#).

This Chapter provides staff with policies and procedures regarding the release of information to qualified agencies and people. Staff is advised to review this section prior to releasing confidential information to other agencies or individuals. Both the release and possession of confidential information in violation of these regulations can be prosecuted as a misdemeanor.

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B. Confidential Information

Names, addresses, and all other eligibility information concerning the circumstances of any particular client, including whether that person is or is not an applicant or recipient, will not be disclosed for any purposes not directly related to the administration of public social services programs.

C. Providing Verifications

To protect the confidentiality of an individual public assistance applicant or recipient, the individual must be afforded the opportunity to provide needed information or verifications in a manner that does not identify the individual as a public assistance applicant or recipient. Before a collateral contact is initiated, the client must be informed of his/her option to obtain the needed himself/herself without any requirement to use County forms or form letters. Except for Public Assistance Fraud Division (PAFD) staff, the client's written consent must be obtained prior to initiating collateral contacts.

D. Unauthorized Disclosure

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information by a County employee is a misdemeanor and may lead to criminal or civil liability for both County employees and the County. The County may also take disciplinary action against the employee.

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E.
Case Records Case records are the original and permanent records of HHSA and are maintained for reference and audit purposes to document eligibility. As a general policy, case records and original documents should be either at the assigned FRC or in Records Library. All information in case records shall be considered confidential and should be safeguarded.

F.
Case Removal Unless approved by an ADD of SPOS Division, no case record will be removed from HHSA. When requested, case records may be routed to other divisions or administrative staff for official use (for example, PAFD, Overpayment Specialist Unit (OSU), Appeals, Quality Assurance, Fiscal, Internal Security, etc.) without ADD approval.
