Confidential Information Requests Received Through Masterfile

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 100.0025

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Frequently individuals will call the DCYF Masterfile seeking case information or requesting that a child or family be cleared for current or previous involvement with the Department. Most DCYF employees have unlimited access to most information stored in Masterfile either by phone, through the use of RICHIST, or by submitting a DCYF #035, Request for DCYF Clearance. While most non-Departmental employees have no access over the telephone to information contained in Masterfile and only limited access to information by written request, certain professionals may be given limited verbal information provided their identity is properly verified prior to release and it has been clearly established that they have a need and a right to know such information. Masterfile employees may then only verify that DCYF is currently involved and provide the name and phone number of the assigned worker and supervisor or they may verify that DCYF is not currently active. No information about previous DCYF activity or other case related information may be provided by Masterfile employees over the telephone.

Any of these professionals who request additional information about a currently active case shall be referred to the assigned worker or supervisor by Masterfile employees. If they request information about a closed case, Masterfile employees shall, without confirming or denying DCYF activity, instruct them to send a written request with a signed confidential release to Information Systems, Division of Management and Budgeting. Current activity can be confirmed through RICHIST. All others who call through Masterfile seeking information (such as clients, attorneys, relatives) shall be told that such information is confidential and cannot be released over the telephone. If the caller insists on pursuing such information, Masterfile employees may, without confirming or denying DCYF activity or guaranteeing results, instruct the caller to send a written request to Information Systems, Division of Management and Budgeting and/or leave their name, address, telephone number, and information sought. If the case is active, this information would then be forwarded to the assigned worker or supervisor for resolution.

Related Procedure

Requesting Confidential Information Received Through Masterfile

Requesting Confidential Information Received Through Masterfile

Procedure From Policy 100.0025: Confidential Information Requests Received Through Masterfile

A. Most non-Departmental employees have no access over the telephone to information contained in Masterfile:
   1. Callers are informed that such information is confidential and cannot be released over the telephone.
   2. If the caller insists on pursuing such information, Masterfile employees may, without confirming or denying DCYF activity or guaranteeing results, instruct the caller to send a written request to Information Systems, Division of Management and Budgeting and/or leave their name, address, telephone number, and information sought (include relationship to client where indicated):
      a. If the case is active, this information is then forwarded to the assigned worker or supervisor.
      b. If the case is closed, Information Systems has the responsibility to decide on the proper response to this request.

B. The following professionals have limited access over the telephone to specific information contained in Masterfile:
   1. Other state employees (social work, supervisory, and administrative staff of DHS, MHRH, etc.).
   2. School Department/Headstart (Student Relations/Social Services, Administration, Principals).
   3. Physicians/Hospitals/Clinics (Social Services, Administration , Clinical Staff).
   4. Visiting Nurse Association.
   5. Mental Health Professionals (Counselors, Psychologists/Psychiatrists, Administration).
   6. Comprehensive Emergency Services (Service Staff, Administration).
   7. Police (City and State).
   8. Family Court (including CASA).
   9. Office of the Child Advocate.
   10. DCYF Vendors (foster parents, group home staff, etc. limited to children presently in their care).

C. Prior to releasing any information to these professionals, Masterfile employees must first verify the identity of the caller and clearly establish that the caller has the need and the right to know such data as defined in Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) 42-72-8 (Confidentiality). In addition:
   1. The caller must currently be involved with the child or his/her immediate family (parent(s)/sibling(s)).
   2. The caller must appear on the above list of approved individuals or prior administrative approval must be obtained for the release of information.
   3. The identity of the caller must be verified in the following manner:

a. ~~Elicit the name, address, and phone number of the caller as well as that of the school, agency, or organization he/she represents, if different.~~

b. ~~Call directory assistance or otherwise verify all numbers given.~~

c. ~~If the individual is calling from other than his/her place of employment, contact the employer for verification.~~

D. ~~Once verification has been successfully completed (see Number 3 above), the caller shall be contacted and shall be provided information within the following prescribed limits:~~

1. ~~Information released to these professionals is limited to confirmation that DCYF is currently involved and the name and phone number of the assigned worker and supervisor or confirmation that DCYF is not currently active:~~

   a. ~~Prior DCYF involvement may not be confirmed or denied by Masterfile employees over the telephone.~~

   b. ~~No other case related information may be released by Masterfile employees at any time to these professionals:~~

      (1) ~~Those professionals who request additional information about a currently active case shall be referred by Masterfile to the assigned worker or supervisor.~~

      (2) ~~Those professionals who request information about a closed case shall be instructed, without confirming or denying DCYF activity, to send a written request with a signed confidential release to Information Systems, Division of Management and Budgeting.~~

2. ~~Current activity can be confirmed through RICHIST.~~