Good Neighbor Team
CASE NOTES GUIDE

Case Note Structure and Basics

The typical structure of a case note template should include the following:

Date	Name/Initials of Individual Making the Entry	Mode of Contact	Name/Initials of Interpreter	Clearly Legible Log Entry (Must Be Typed)

DATE

This is the date that the service occurred. It may be a phone call transporting a client to an appointment, or a caseworker completing a home visit. IMPORTANT: The date must be the day that the actual service occurred, not the date that you write the case note.

COMMON MISTAKES FOR DATE

Combining several days' worth of services and case work into a single case note entry. Various events should only be together in one case note if they occurred on the same day. Below is an example of what not to do. Each of the events described below should be in separate entries.

Date	Name/Initials of Individual Making the Entry	Mode of Contact	Name/Initials of Interpreter	Clearly Legible Log Entry (Must Be Typed)
4/14/2022	C. M.	OV (Office Visit)	Q.T.	On 4/11/22, the client went to the Social Security Administration, on 4/12/22 they applied for food stamps, on 4/13/22 their Service Plan was updated and on 4/14/22 I emailed the ESL clinic

NAME/ACRONYMS

When someone new (case member, WR staff, or volunteer) is introduced for the first time, list their full name and title. After that, you can reference just their first name. If an outside individual, use only their initials and title.

Examples:
Val Osta, R&P Caseworker
Angela Luchko, Volunteer Coordinator

When entering a long program/organization/title/etc., that you would like to use an acronym for throughout your case notes, please list out the full title and note the acronym the first time it is used in case notes. Again, you can use the full name if you're unsure if it was referenced earlier.

Examples:
Gift-in-kind (GIK)
DSHS (Department of Social and Health Services)
Match Grant (MG)

COMMON MISTAKES FOR NAME/ACRONYMS

Forgetting to list the full title or note the acronym the first time it is used in the case note.

MODE OF CONTACT

The method, or mode, used to conduct an R&P service. The mode of service provision may include taking a client to an office (office visit), conducting a service in their home (home visit), or calling/emailing a service provider to set up an appointment or check on a status. These modes are established internally by your office, not WR Home Office. The Mode of Contact can be listed as an abbreviation in case notes as noted in the example above. Here are the most common modes of contact:

OV: Office Visit
TC: Telephone Call
EM: E-mail
AR: Airport Reception
EV: Employment Visit
HV: Home Visit

Check with your GNT Coordinator to determine what Mode of Contact tracking is used at your office. It is recommended that you have at least 5-7 different Mode of Contact to describe your appointments.

COMMON MISTAKES FOR MODE OF CONTACT

Not having an available list of modes and abbreviations describing the various modes of contact. Maintaining this list is imperative and must be available to all staff and internal and external monitors.

INTERPRETATION

The documented use of interpreters is required for case notes. The first, and preferred method, is to type the interpreter's name or initials underneath the "interpreter" heading in the case notes template (see example above). The second method is to type the interpreter's name in the actual case note log entry. While this is compliant, it is not recommended as it is often forgotten when typing the case notes.

Every R&P core service is required to provide interpretation (as applicable). Interpretation must be documented for all client communication pertaining to R&P core services. This includes airport reception where an interpreter or telephonic interpreter, must be present/available for every airport arrival to ensure clients' initial questions are answered and communication is possible. An example of a case note that does not require an interpreter includes sending an email to the local health department to schedule the client's health assessment. In this situation, there was no direct communication with the client, thus no interpreter was needed. If a client speaks fluent English, the caseworker can state at the top of Case Notes that the client does not require interpretation. It does not have to be repeatedly stated within each case note.

COMMON MISTAKES FOR INTERPRETATION

If your office only uses interpreters' initials, the office must maintain an updated list of interpreters' full names and corresponding initials and provide the list to staff and monitors (similar to Mode of contact descriptions). Another common finding is that interpreters are not often listed or noted during airport receptions. Make it a habit to include an interpreter's name or initials in every case note or write a short explanation as why an interpreter was not necessary (i.e., the client speaks fluent English, or an email was sent to the local ESL program to register the client).

CLEARLY LEGIBLE CASE LOG

This is a concise narrative of what took place. Writing effective case notes is an essential part of case management. Each case note should be written as if it might be read by an attorney, judge, or federal monitor. Using the following keys when writing case notes will ensure your documentation is proficient:

- Objective- Relaying information without bias or prejudice
- Accurate- Relaying information that is precise and truthful
- Clear- Relaying information that is understandable and easy to comprehend; not ambiguous or vague
- Descriptive- Relaying information that leaves the reader fully knowledgeable of what occurred
- Relevant- Providing information that is pertinent, important, and significant that relates directly to the client's situation. Avoid unnecessary information.
- Concise- Relaying information in a brief summary, including important facts and details but not word-for-word, redundant or confusing

COMMON MISTAKES FOR CLEARLY LEGIBLE CASE LOG

Not documenting the required core services. Emotions can easily transfer into written word; while documenting, remain unbiased without judgement. Simply write what took place. Stay on topic and be objective. If there is a situation that you do not know how to document, notify your GNT Coordinator.

FREQUENCY AND TIMING

Case notes are to be documented throughout the 30-90 day R&P Period. As a general rule, case notes should be the most frequent and detailed during the first 30 days, though there are exceptions such as minors (M2-M7) and special circumstances. Set aside a specific time in your weekly schedule to accommodate case noting.

COMMON MISTAKES FOR FREQUENCY AND TIMING

Long, undocumented periods of time (a week or more) early on in the R&P Period. Remember, most of the R&P core services must be completed within the first 30 days, including home visits. This means there should be several case notes each week that reflect core service provision as well as frequent client/staff interaction and communication. Utilizing the Required Case Notes Chart will ensure that you remember to document every core service.

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT LANGUAGE

When writing case notes, utilize the common Cooperative Agreement language and avoid internal jargon or non-compliant language. Consider the following examples:

Use	Don't Use
Pocket Money	Welcome Money
R&P Per Capita Funds	Welcome Money/Grant Money

WELFARE ASSESSMENTS

A welfare assessment is to be documented within a home visit case note or as a stand-alone case note.

PUPROSE

The purpose of the Welfare Assessment it to provide written documentation of a client's physical and mental well-being, or distress, and assess any immediate needs. As a Good Neighbor Team, you need to know how a client or family is doing, what condition they are in and what concerns or needs they have. Obtaining this information through a welfare assessment will help you prioritize your next step.

APPROACH

A Welfare Assessment is data collection. To collect data, you must be curious and ask questions. Observe behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal communication. What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear?

- Must address every family member individually
- Be objective. Avoid subjective statements such as "the family seems happy" or "the family looks tired"
- Document items or needs that require follow-up including, urgent medical concerns, material needs provision, accessing benefits, a cell phone, etc.
- Can be documented within a home visit case note or as a stand-alone case note
- If volunteers conduct home visits, they must be trained in assessing welfare.
- There must be a minimum of two welfare assessments in client's case notes (next-day and 30-day home visit)

NEXT CALENDAR DAY HOME VISIT

Questions to consider while assessing welfare of the Whole Case

- Do they have enough food? If not, do they know how to access it?
- Have all of their belongings arrived?
- Are there immediate health concerns?
- What is the condition of the housing? Are there any problems?
- Assess the neighborhood. Are there any concerns related to transportation, safety, the community, or ability to access services?
- How does the family interact with you? with each other? What is their body language?
- Does anyone need anything? (e.g., another pillow, additional seating, medication)

Questions to consider while assessing welfare of the Each Individual

- What are each person's actions? comments? and/or questions?
- Is the person dressed appropriately for the season?
- Comment on their health. Does this person have any medical needs?
- Have they experienced any challenges since arrival?
- Do they have a specific goal in mind after arriving (e.g., going to school, driving)?

NEXT CALENDAR DAY EXAMPLE

Sample welfare assessments for a family of three: mom, dad, and two-year old child:
The family is residing in permanent housing. When I arrive at the family's apartment, they have just finished eating. PA's wife steps away from cleaning up to join us on the couch. They tell me that they have enough food for the next few days. All of their belongings have arrived, including the wife's medication. PA is engaged, asks many questions. He expresses that he is interested in working immediately. I remind him that he will be meeting with an Employment Specialist next week.

PA's wife smiles a lot but is quiet. When I ask how the trip was, she tells me "Too long" and that she is still very tired. The medication she takes also makes her sleepy. Their 2-year-old daughter appears to be high energy and is very engaged with a toy truck, frequently showing her mother and laughing. Does not seem nervous at the caseworker's presence.

All family members are dressed appropriately for the weather. None have any urgent medical needs at this time. They do not have any other immediate needs at this time.

30 DAY HOME VISIT

Questions to consider while assessing welfare of the Whole Case

- Is the family still accessing food? If not, what is the problem and what plan can be developed?
- Are they accessing all benefits? Are there hold-ups that need to be addressed?
- Does that family understand how to use all benefits?
- Comment on housing. Are there any problems? Strange odors?
- How has the transition been into the local neighborhood? (Transportation, safety, community, accessing services, etc.)
- Describe family dynamics and behavior towards you and with each other
- Did the family express needs or concerns? (e.g., more pocket money, a computer, assistance to apply for a state I.D., more medication)

Questions to consider while assessing welfare of the Each Individual

- Comment briefly on each person's actions, comments, and/or questions
- Is the person dressed appropriately for the season?
- Does this person have any medical needs? Does he/she look ill? If so, how?
- Comment briefly on the past month and their adjustment. How are they felling about it? Where are they struggling?
- Adults- Have they made any progress on their Service Plan goals?
- Children- Assess their adjustment to school. Favorite subject? Have they made friends? Do they practice English? Do they understand their homework? Are they in any programs outside of school? How are these going?

30 DAY EXAMPLE

Sample welfare assessments for a family of three: mom, dad, and two-year old child:
The family is living in the same home. Their previous plumbing issue in the bathroom has since

been resolved and they expressed confidence in communicating with their landlord through an interpreter. The family has enough food for the next few days and shop at Giant grocery store, a 10-minute bus ride from their home, using food stamps to purchase everything.

The PA is set to begin work next week at the meat packing facility. A friend helped him find the job and has been providing guidance to the family on getting around to different places.

The PA's wife says she feels happy to be here and has made some friends in the apartment complex. One woman who lives downstairs comes over once a week to work on a sewing project with her. She talks to her sister a lot via WhatsApp and her sister's family is not doing well. The PA's wife would like to apply for reunification for her. We discussed counseling as well, but she declined. She continues to take her medication daily and has had no trouble accessing it

The daughter was enrolled in WIC last week but has not yet received her card. She has a cold and is seeing a doctor tomorrow. All family members were dressed appropriately for the weather and reported having all necessary clothing items for the upcoming winter months.

COMMON CASE NOTE TRENDS

Case notes are confidential (per the Cooperative Agreement) and must only reference clients who are on the case.

DO NOT

- Document the names of other clients that are not listed on the case, even if they are related by blood or marriage
- Document the case number of other clients
- Document information pertaining to another case
- Document irrelevant details, religious references, or personal frustrations.
- Use stock phrases and paragraphs in case notes
- Copy and paste emails into case notes. Emails may contain sensitive information and other individuals' personal information, both of which are a breach of confidentiality.

REMEMBER

- Case notes are objective, factual, and serve as a record of information relevant to R&P Core services.
- Case notes are to be unique to the circumstances of the client/family.
- Certain circumstances are out of your control as a volunteer. When necessary, briefly explain the situation and what is being done to address the challenge(s). For example: The local social security office asks you to come back to apply in 15 days, which is outside of the compliant period. The health department does not complete a health assessment within the first 30 days. A local property management is uncooperative and will not fix a plumbing problem.
- Case notes should address the service/visit that happened on that date. And if the case note addresses a core service that is planned for the future (i.e. the client's health screening is scheduled for 9/18, two weeks from now), then a case note must be provided on 9/18 to confirm whether the appointment indeed took place.
- When referencing outside support and assistance, use appropriate terms such as U.S. Tie or volunteer. Avoid using terms like "sponsor" or "anchor" in case notes.
- World Relief is considered the sponsor and responsible for the resettlement of the case.

GNT Core Services
REQUIRED CASE NOTES CHART

Pre-Arrival

- [ ] Housing
- [ ] Furnishings

Upon Arrival

- [ ] Airport Reception
- [ ] Interpretation
- [ ] Culturally Appropriate Ready-to-Eat Meal
- [ ] Sufficient Food
- [ ] Seasonally appropriate clothing

Within 5 Days of Arrival

- [ ] Next Calendar Day Home Visit
- [ ] Welfare Assessment(s)
- [ ] Safety (house and personal)
- [ ] Emergency Procedures
- [ ] Ensure material needs
- [ ] Pocket Money throughout 1-30 days

Within 7 Working Days of Arrival

- [ ] Food Stamps - application and receipt
- [ ] Cash Assistance - app and receipt
- [ ] Medicaid - app and receipt
- [ ] Social Security - app and receipt (only receipt if applied at port of entry)

Within 30 Days of Arrival

- [ ] 2nd Home Visit
- [ ] Welfare Assessment(s)
- [ ] ESL-assistance to enroll
- [ ] Employment Services-assistance to enroll
- [ ] School Enrollment
- [ ] Initial Health Assessment (must be scheduled in advance of 30th Day, but must occur before 90th Day)
- [ ] Selective Service (if applicable)

Throughout GNT R&P Period

- [ ] Role of World Relief
- [ ] Refugee Status
- [ ] English
- [ ] Public Assistance
- [ ] US Laws
- [ ] Community resources and services
- [ ] Employment
- [ ] Health
- [ ] Budgeting and Personal Finance
- [ ] Housing
- [ ] Hygiene
- [ ] Safety
- [ ] Cultural Adjustment
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Travel Loan
- [ ] WIC Enrollment if applicable
- [ ] Interpretation for all Core Services
- [ ] Updated MNS and SVHC if case moves
- [ ] Cultural Orientation Assessment(s) include date, score, type (oral/written) and follow-up for incorrect responses

Local WR Office

- [ ] Assurance
- [ ] Biodata
- [ ] Intake Interview
- [ ] Complete AR-11
- [ ] Post Office Change of Address
- [ ] Service Plan
- [ ] Update Change of Address (if applicable)

GOOD NEIGHBOR TEAM
REQUIRED CASE FILE DOCUMENTS

GNT and Local Office Responsibility

Case Notes
- See GNT Required Case Notes Chart

GNT Responsibility

Material Needs Support Form (MNS):
- To be completed within 5 working days of arrival and for subsequent moves within the R&P period

Site Visit Housing Checklist (SVHC):
- To be completed between 5 working days prior to an arrival and 5 working days after an arrival
- Complete a second checklist for subsequent moves within the R&P period

Pocket Money Disbursement Tracking:
- Form or spreadsheet that acknowledges all pocket money and cash/check amounts provided equally to each adult on a case

Cultural Orientation Assessment (COA)
- One per each adult
- Written Version
- Oral Version

Welfare Benefits Documentation
- Food Stamps (application and receipt)
- Cash Assistance (application and receipt)
- Medicaid (application and receipt)

Local Office Responsibility

Biodata

Assurance Form

Travel Document/Letter with client photo(s)
- Typically found in the client's IOM bag
- SIVs do not have a travel document

I-94/Visa
- I-94s can be obtained from I94 - Official Website (dhs.gov)
- SIVs do not have I-94s, please include a copy of their visa

Signed Co-sponsor Agreement

Service Plans
- Employable Adults
- Non-Employable Adults
- Minors

R&P Period Reports
- Complete in IRIS and print after report is approved by HO