RYAN WHITE
POLICIES
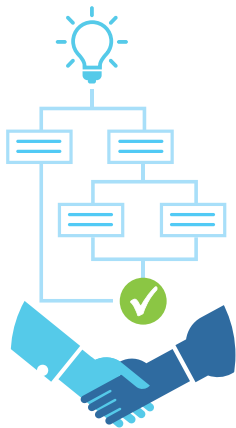# & PROCEDURES
101

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT IS A POLICY?

A policy is a deliberate system of values that guides organizational decisions and helps them achieve identified goals or outcomes.

Policies set the tone for an organization and guide them in achieving compliance with program requirements and board priorities. Organizational leadership implements policies and executes them through defined procedures and protocols. For Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs (RWHAP), federal legislation, programmatic requirements, program letters and policy clarification notices drive policies.

Policies ensure that organizational priorities, such as: excellence in medical care, the provision of services per national standards, and client access to medical care and supportive services are consistently met. Policies establish boundaries in providing services to ensure everyone has access and allows for constant improvement in the quality and efficiency of services.

WHAT IS A PROCEDURE?

A procedure is an agreed upon, official way of doing something. A procedure consists of an identified series of actions, performed in a certain order, or in a certain way, in order to provide a desired outcome.

An organization utilizes policies and procedures to reach both its short-term and long-term goals. Policies and procedures influence and direct day-to-day activities, as well as major decisions, to ensure they occur within, and support the boundaries defined by leadership. Policies and procedures translate daily steps into desired outcomes that ensure compliance with the priorities of funders and the goals determined by leadership.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A policy explains WHY you do something a certain way and a procedure explains HOW your organization carries out the policy in its daily practice.

Organizations rely on policies and procedures for replication and sustainability. Well-developed and useful policies and procedures provide a clear plan for sustainability during employee and leadership transitions. Policies and procedures ensure that every employee, at every step in the process, is performing at the same level and is working towards the same goals and outcomes. They direct an organization to function within national standards and program expectations. Policies and procedures provide order, and ensure that a client or participant will receive the exact same services or answers no matter whom he/she talks to in the organization.

DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

## Policies and procedures typically affect multiple members of a multidisciplinary team.

When developing policies and procedures, it is critical that you involve managers and employees at every level to ensure the developed tools are comprehensive and useful. Organizations often identify a policy management team, which includes staff from across the organization, or multidisciplinary care team, to ensure that the documents reflect different perspectives and duties. It is essential that your policy management team includes experts who are knowledgeable regarding local, state, and federal laws to ensure the policy and procedure are in compliance.

The policy management team should meet as often as necessary to develop and maintain program policies and procedures. The team will likely meet frequently (possibly weekly) during the development stage, and then less frequently (monthly or quarterly) during the maintenance stage. During the development stage, discuss one or two policies and procedures at a time to ensure the process is comprehensive. It is important to announce what those policies and procedures will be in advance of each meeting so employees can formulate systematic processes describing their role in the procedure. Each policy and procedure should be distributed to everyone on the policy management team for review and comment before being shared throughout the program or organization. For complicated processes that involve multiple staff members or teams, it might be helpful to develop a workflow map first to visually identify all of the personnel involved in the processes from start to finish. The workflow map can be used to specifically define the procedures necessary to complete the process in accordance with organizational policies.
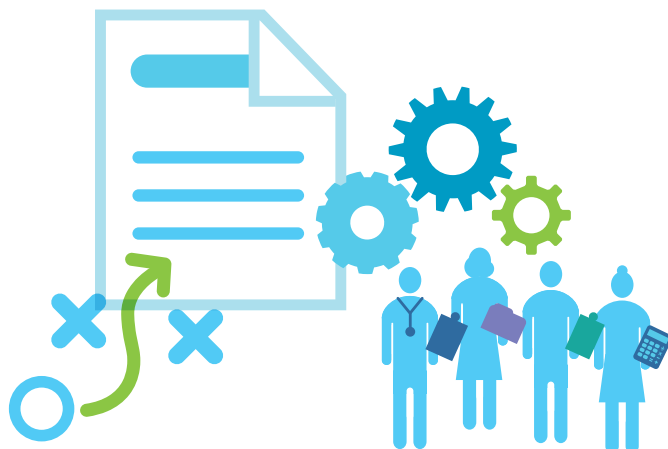
POLICY AND PROCEDURE TEMPLATES

A standard policy and procedure structure or template ensures that your organizational documents are clear and organized and can streamline the writing and development processes. A standard template can guide an organization to include each critical section and all pertinent information in each unique policy. The "Policy & Procedure Template" provides a possible structure for document development. Each section in the template is defined and described below:
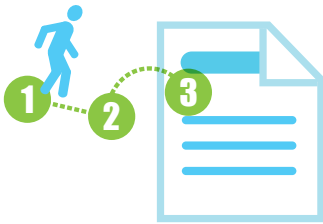
Toolkit Resource: Policy & Procedure Template

1. Title

Label each policy and procedure with a succinct and clear title. The title should identify what is being accomplished through the defined set of procedures. Early Intervention Services (EIS) examples include: "HIV Targeted Testing;" "Outreach Event Planning;" and "Referral and Linkage to Care."

2. Date

Policies and procedures should have defined dates to ensure their accuracy and usefulness. The effective date should identify when the policy and procedure was established or implemented by the organization. The revision date identifies the last time an appropriate staff member reviewed the policy and procedure and identifies the next time (usually a year out) the staff member will review the document again to ensure that is still accurate.

3. Department of Ownership & Identified Approver

Each policy and procedure should be "owned" by a certain employee or department. The owner of the policy or procedure is someone that can answer questions about the document and will be responsible for updating the document at the next revision date. The owner should have the training and skill set to provide professional guidance on the defined topic. For instance, a clinical policy and procedure is "owned" by the program's medical director or a clinical provider; whereas, an administrative policy and procedure is "owned" by the project director or program manager.

4. Introduction or Purpose Statement

An introduction or purpose statement identifies what the policy is about and why it is essential to the organization or unit. The introduction defines the significance of the document, and its importance to program operations.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE TEMPLATES

Toolkit Resource: Policy & Procedure Template

5. Policy Statement

A policy statement defines the organization's stance on the topic. The policy statement identifies the federal, state or programmatic guidelines that are essential to the defined topic. The policy statement develops buy-in for the procedures detailed in the document and explains the "why" to employees, staff, and participants.

6. Definitions

It is imperative that organizations define words or phrases, especially those that could have multiple meanings, to provide clarity to staff. For instance, the term "out of care" could mean different things to different organizations. It could identify a patient that has not had an appointment for 6 months, 12 months, 18 months, etc. It is imperative to define "out of care" if the policy and procedure is providing step by step follow-up for out of care clients to ensure staff initiate the process equivalently.

7. Procedures

Procedures are the step-by-step instructions that detail an organization's routine tasks and operations. Procedures identify:

- Who is involved
- Who does what part of each process
- The defined responsibility of each employee
- The order in which each step is taken
- The appropriate follow-up if a client doesn't provide what is needed.
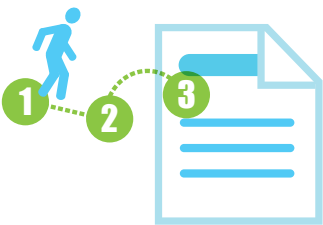
The "Developing Procedures Template" provides a guide for policy and procedure teams. This tool walks through each necessary section to identify the appropriate staff and tasks for each procedure. This template also provides space to discuss the systematic order of tasks and the tools needed to complete each part of the process.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE TEMPLATES

Toolkit Resource: Developing Procedures Template

The "Developing Procedures Template" provides a guide for policy and procedure teams. This tool walks through each necessary section to identify the appropriate staff and tasks for each procedure. This template also provides space to discuss the systematic order of tasks and the tools needed to complete each part of the process.

1. Policy Statement

The conduct section of a policy and procedures provides the guidelines for proper behavior. The conduct explains the expectations of each staff member involved in the policy and procedure and outlines any restrictions on employee behavior. For instance, a home visit may be identified as the last stage in the process of following up on a client that is identified as out of care. The conduct of the policy and procedure might declare that an employee should:

- not perform home visits alone
- be accompanied by a colleague
- notify a supervisor prior to conducting the home visit and again at the conclusion

The conduct identifies the expectations of the employee and addresses risk management concerns for the safety of both staff and clients.

2. Reporting Requirements

This section identifies how data is captured for reporting and the appropriate way to document the provision of the service. This section also details where employees should file and store information, forms, and related documents.

3. Source Documents

This section includes links and references to applicable laws, rules, and guidelines that are driving the identified policy and procedure. The source documents section provides program staff with additional resources where they can find detailed information about program requirements and associated laws.

4. Associated Forms or Documents

It is imperative that each employee has the tools necessary to complete and document each step of the procedural process. The associated forms/documents section includes a list of program forms or information included in the document that are necessary to complete and document each step of the procedural process. This section ensures that an employee has access to everything needed in one central location.

5. Approval Signatures

The approval section is dependent on your organization's process for establishing policies and procedures. Some organizations will include all of the necessary staff members in the development process so that approval signatures might not be necessary. If the process includes approval in the form of "after development review," adding approval signatures can demonstrate the support of management. The defined approval process demonstrates buy-in from organizational management and conveys the support of each policy and procedure that shows the expectation of compliance.
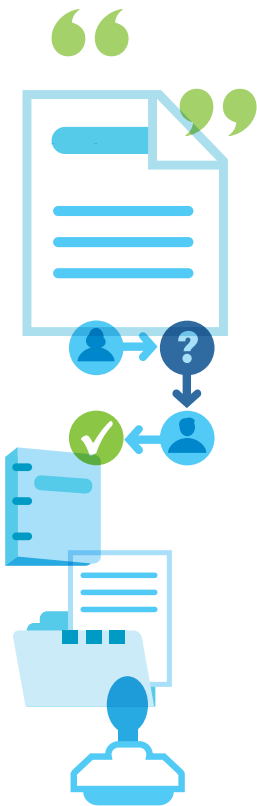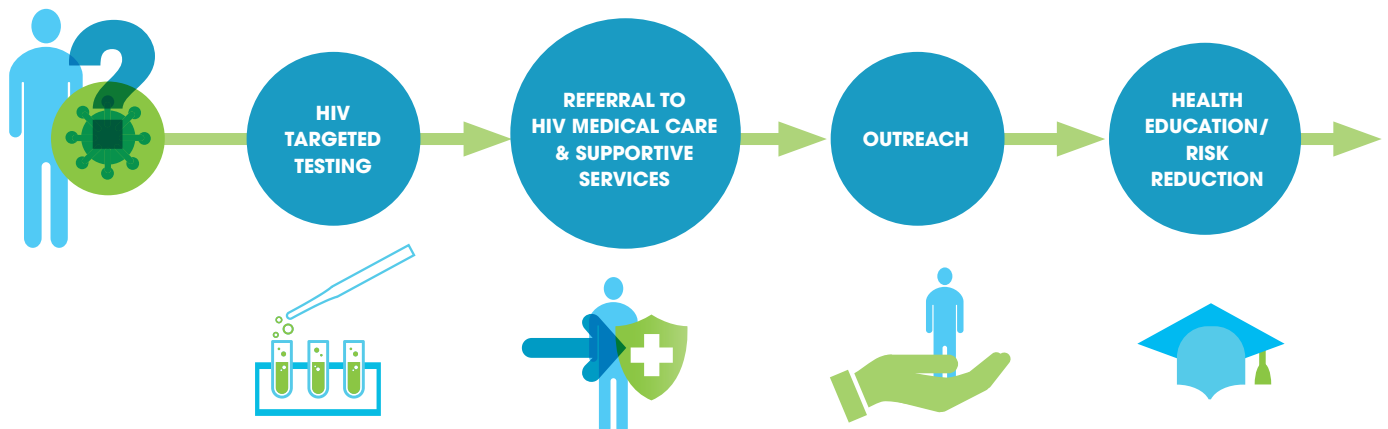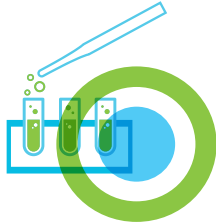
IMPORTANCE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and Procedures are essential to program management, crucial for staff development, and critical in demonstrating compliance during program audits and site visits. It is essential that they are written and easily accessible to staff. Program staff should be familiar with all policies and procedures, and, when appropriate, should be included in developing and updating the documents to ensure accuracy and improve compliance. Policies and procedures must be updated for accuracy and to ensure that they are useful and staff can rely on them for decision-making. They should be a source of relevant information, and updated to reflect new systems, new staff, and changes in guidelines. Organizations must have an official process in place to regularly update existing policies and procedures, and to communicate and distribute updated documents to the appropriate staff.

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES (EIS) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For RWHAP Part A recipients and subrecipients, EIS programs consist of four distinct services working together to identify persons who do not yet know their HIV status. EIS programs must consist of:

HIV TARGETED TESTING → REFERRAL TO HIV MEDICAL CARE & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES → OUTREACH → HEALTH EDUCATION/ RISK REDUCTION

HIV TARGETED TESTING

HIV targeted testing consists of specifically designed activities that that identify persons with undiagnosed HIV infections and link them to HIV medical Care. HIV targeted testing is crucial to identify the HIV status of persons at highest-risk for contracting and/or transmitting HIV. Targeted testing must be coordinated with other HIV testing and prevention efforts already implemented within the community and must expand - not replace - current testing efforts.

HIV targeted testing seeks to increase the number and percentage of HIV positive persons identified, not the volume of HIV testing. Targeted testing seeks out high prevalence populations, communities and jurisdictions. The CDC identifies high prevalence communities as having a 2% positivity testing rate, or two HIV positive individuals for every 100 high risk individuals. HIV targeted testing rates that fall below 2% should be evaluated, and efforts should be redirected to different populations and new locations, or should employ different methods and strategies.

The key to successful HIV targeted testing is utilizing data to focus program efforts on identifying the highest risk populations and the settings in which they access services. HIV targeted testing concentrates strategies to engage the focus population. Effective planning is a critical component of targeted HIV testing. The following tools can assist organizations in planning and implementing HIV targeted testing.

Toolkit Resources:
HIV Targeted Testing – Identifying Focus Populations

The "HIV Target Testing-Identifying Focus Populations" tool assists organizations in identifying focus populations in designated communities. This brainstorming tool encourages programs to utilize available data to assess HIV risk transmission based on:

- Persons at risk
- Behaviors of the focus populations
- Influencing factors

HIV TARGETED TESTING

Toolkit Resources:
HIV Targeted Testing – Recruiting the Target Population

Once the high-risk, targeted population has been identified, the "HIV Target Testing – Recruiting the Target Population" tool assists organizations in identifying specific ways to provide outreach and services to target populations in designated communities. This tool explores specific characteristics about the target population to ensure services are accessible to the community and address barriers during the planning stages of outreach. This tool explores patient characteristics, such as:

- Location (neighborhood, community)
- Socialization
- Sexual Practices
- Drug Use
- Access to Health and Dental Care
- Access to Health Information
- Barriers to HIV Testing
- Access to Preventative Services

HIV Targeted Testing - Targeted Testing & Outreach Evaluation Tool

Targeted outreach should occur at times and locations when there is a high probability of identifying persons with HIV (PLWH) that have either: not been tested, do not know their HIV status, or know their HIV status but are not engaged in comprehensive medical care and supportive services. It is essential for programs to evaluate the effectiveness of HIV targeted testing to ensure high prevalence populations are the focus. The CDC identifies high prevalence communities as having a 2% positivity-testing rate. Organizations should identify an appropriate time period to test out target locations and determine if they are truly high prevalence sites for EIS services (ie. 3-4 months; 6 scheduled events, etc.). The Targeted Testing and Outreach Evaluation tool assists organizations in measuring positivity rates and prevalence as well as identifying strengths and barriers of identified sites.

REFERRAL TO HIV MEDICAL CARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Once a client is identified as being HIV-positive, an EIS program should seamlessly refer the client to HIV care and treatment services at key points of entry. Referral systems should include access medications, mental health and substance abuse services, as well as medical case management. Systems to refer clients to services should include a brief assessment of client characteristics, preferences, and needs to ensure clients are referred to comprehensive services that meet their unique needs.

OUTREACH SERVICES

Outreach services are intended to identify PLWH that do not know their status or to re-engage PLWH into ongoing comprehensive medical care and supportive services. Since outreach is provided to target persons who don't know their status, it is possible that outreach services may be provided to high-risk individuals that are HIV-negative. HIV-negative persons should receive education regarding their risks, tools and strategies to prevent contracting HIV, and referrals to risk reduction services such as syringe services programs or PrEP services.

Outreach services should be designed to provide services in populations and locations that have a high probability of reaching PLWH and to include seamless referral to RWHAP services. Much like EIS services, outreach should be conducted at days, times, and locations that increase the chance of reaching PLWH, and should be delivered in coordination with other outreach efforts already being implemented within the community. The HIV targeted testing tools described in this Toolkit should be used to provide outreach within targeted populations and communities.

Outreach services can include community awareness activities such as social media, billboards, and radio announcements. However, these services must be targeted to populations and communities identified in the planning process, and must include information that links a PLWH to information about available RWHPA services.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND RISK REDUCTION

Outreach and EIS services must include services that educate PLWH about risk reduction strategies around HIV transmission. This includes educating clients about medical and supportive services available through RWHP programs designed to improve their overall health and well-being. Health education and risk reduction includes educating PLWH, their partners and their family members about risk reduction strategies such as health literacy, PrEP, and treatment adherence. In addition, educational services should include information on available health care options. When applicable, health education and risk reduction should include referrals to community organizations that can link PLWH, or those at highest risk, to enroll in qualified health plans and access available services.

EIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures for EIS services must incorporate each of the requirements to ensure the provision of service complies with RWHAP legislation and programmatic guidelines. EIS policies and procedures should address strategies for planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Procedural Components of EIS services can include:

- Identifying the Target/Focus Population
- Evaluating Targeted Testing Outcomes
- Scheduling an Outreach/HIV Testing Event
- HIV Testing Protocol and Confirmatory Testing
- Referral/Linkage to HIV Care
- Health Education and Risk Reduction

Toolkit Resources:
EIS Policy and Procedure Guides

REFERENCES

1. HIV Testing Toolkit: Data Driven Targeting and Recruitment (2015). National Alliance of State
    & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
    https://www.nastad.org/sites/default/files/resources/docs/NASTAD-HIV-Testing-Tool-Targeting.pdf

2. Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Services: Eligible Individuals & Allowable Uses of Funds (2018). Policy
    Clarification Notice #16-02. Health Resources and Services Administration, HIV/AIDS Bureau.
    https://hab.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hab/program-grants-management/
    ServiceCategoryPCN_16-02Final.pdf

3. False-Positive HIV Test Results (2018). Center for Disease Control.
    https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/testing/cdc-hiv-factsheet-false-positive-test-results.pdf

THE EFFI BARRY
TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Effi Barry Training Institute provides trainings and technical assistance to support current and prospective HAHSTA grantees and community-based organizations in the Fee-for-Service business process; basic HIV service competencies; advanced skills in health care systems, data and health informatics; high-impact prevention programs, including biomedical; and emerging evidence-based or informed approaches through a series of group-level trainings, boot camps, community forums, and individual consultation.

Rooted in the idea of holistic, integrated, patient-centered care, HealthHIV capacity building efforts help develop an organization's ability to improve patient outcomes and increase efficiencies, while remaining organizationally sustainable. The agency's unique approach involves structuring sustainable systems and services that span the HIV care continuum. HealthHIV's ability to diagnose and address multisystem challenges is enhanced by a comprehensive team of expert consultants and focuses on achieving measurable outcomes. By remaining data and outcomes driven, HealthHIV employs state-of-the-art, and state-of-the-sciences approaches to improve health care delivery.

EffiBarryInstitute.org

🐦 @HealthHIV

📘 www.Facebook.com/HealthHIV

2000 S ST NW
Washington, DC 20009
202.232.6749

info@HealthHIV.org

DC | HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HealthHIV