

Client Services: What You Need To Know



◆ Confidentiality

All services provided by the AIDS Council of Northeastern New York are confidential. In order for us to share information about you with other providers, family members, your doctor, etc. you must sign a release of information form specific to HIV information. You have control over who receives information about you and you can revoke a release of information at any time.

Staff other than your case manager may have access to your file on a “need to know” basis. “Need to know” means that the staff person would only need to know information about you if they are assisting in providing you services or are conducting quality assurance reviews. The only other people that have access to your information are funding sources that monitor the AIDS Council to insure that appropriate services are being delivered.

◆ Transportation

The AIDS Council coordinates transportation services for people living with HIV/AIDS in a 17 county region. The main source of funding for this program is from the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act. Due to strict Ryan White guidelines, only rides to certain types of services (medical appointments, substance abuse treatment with an OASAS licensed provider, mental health appointments with a licensed provider) are provided. Therefore, you may not be able to get a ride to some of the places you need to go. In addition, your case manager will work with you and your doctor to determine which type of transportation assistance you need. Depending on your needs, you may be offered bus tokens, gas cards, or cab rides. We are not able to reimburse client’s for transportation expenses. Everyone’s situation is different and the type of transportation is based on individual need. Transportation assistance is limited to six times per month. In addition, your case manager will work with you to determine if you are eligible for other types of transportation assistance including Medicaid transportation.

If you receive case management from another organization (i.e. Whitney Young, Albany Medical Center, Catholic Charities) your case manager can call the AIDS Council to coordinate transportation for you. You do not have to be a case managed client of the AIDS Council to receive transportation assistance from the AIDS Council.

◆ Housing Assistance

HOPWA (Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS) is a federally funded housing assistance program for people living with HIV/AIDS. This program provides a monthly rental subsidy to help people pay their rent (Long Term HOPWA) as well as one to five months of assistance with rent or utility bills (Short Term HOPWA).

To be eligible for HOPWA, a person must meet the following criteria: live in or move into housing with a fair market rent, live in or move in to housing that passes inspection, apply for other forms of housing assistance (including Section 8), and you must prove you have an income and show your expenses.

The AIDS Council receives a fixed amount of money for the HOPWA program. Not everyone who is eligible for HOPWA will receive it due to program capacity. The AIDS Council often has a waiting list for these services.

◆ **Food Assistance**

The AIDS Council can provide limited assistance in emergencies when you are having difficulty meeting your nutritional needs. In emergency situations, food vouchers are available to people up to 6 times per year (\$10 per individual or \$30 per family). Decisions are made based on your current situation, income, expenses, health status, etc.

Food pantry assistance is also available. The AIDS Council keeps a small supply of non-perishable food items in most offices. These items are not intended to be a regular supplement to your food budget and your case manager will ask you if you have exhausted other resources before utilizing the agency's food pantry. If you have difficulty meeting your food needs on a regular basis, your case manager will work with you to identify other resources in the community and provide budgeting assistance.

◆ **Emergency Assistance**

The AIDS Council uses most of its fundraised dollars to provide emergency assistance to clients. This may include rent assistance to prevent eviction, security deposit, payments for utility bills to prevent a shut-off, transportation, and assistance with moving. The AIDS Council has very limited resources to meet these needs. Therefore, your case manager will carefully review your situation (income, expenses, need, other resources available in the community, etc.) to determine the need and the agency's ability to assist with it. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

◆ **Social and Recreational Programs/Seasonal Programs**

The AIDS Council sponsors some social and recreational programming at different times during the year. Events include the annual summer cookout and, the holiday sponsor program, and the holiday dinner. Different offices also have periodic luncheon and dinner programs. Check with your case manager to see what is available in your region.

The agency's volunteer department coordinates the holiday sponsor program. This program identifies donors and "matches" them with clients and their families who have specific needs around the holidays. Case managers work with their clients to identify clients/families most in need at this time of the year. Referrals come directly from the case manager and are based on income, expenses, number of children in the household, health status, living situation, etc. This is a very popular program and the agency receives no funding for it. Due to its popularity, not everyone referred for the program can be assisted. Assistance is based solely on the number of volunteer donors identified.