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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script

**Vermont Department of Social Welfare  
Orientation for ANFC Applicants**

Notes to the Presenter:

1. Remember that this is an important function, so arrange not to be disturbed during the presentation.
2. Have a stack of information packets ready (one per applicant) in a place where they will be easy for you to hand them out.
3. For each person at the session, have one piece of paper (or a pad) and a pencil ready. Put these at each place where you want a person to sit.
4. Prepare the presentation visuals in sequence, either set up on an easel or resting on the floor or a table.
5. Provide materials, if needed, to keep children busy.
6. Underlined passages in parentheses in the following script are action directions for the presenter, reminders to pause or emphasize something. They're not part of the script. You might want to highlight them in your copy of the script.
7. The >>>> symbol means you've finished with that segment. It's time to go on to the next page of script and show the next poster.
8. Test districts should have plans in place for participants to complete the BIF and POS materials at the beginning or end of the session.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**THE GREETING**

Good afternoon/morning. My name is\_\_\_\_\_. I am a caseworker for the Department of Social Welfare.

Thanks for coming to this Department of Social Welfare orientation session. Sessions like this are being held in DSW offices statewide so that people everywhere receive the same information when they apply for assistance. Today we'll be showing you the services available to you and your family. This session will last about 30 minutes, perhaps slightly longer.

I'll be stopping now and then for questions throughout this session. If you have questions about your personal situation, it would be better to wait and talk with your caseworker. If you have a general question that doesn't require confidentiality, please feel free to ask.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this building, the restrooms are located.....Other offices also located in this building are.....

Does everyone have a pen or pencil? Make notes about your questions, take notes... whatever you need to do to help yourself in this process.

When this session is over, I'll give you a packet of information for you to keep. It's full of brochures, lists and booklets that will help you understand what I'm going to talk about today.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

(If children are present, speak to them directly.)

I'd like to welcome the children who have come today. Could you be sure to pay special attention to what I say? It's very important that you are quiet while you're here. Thank you.

(Attention back to parents)

I'm sure you know how important it is for all of us to give our full attention to this process. If you need to, it's OK to leave in order to take care of your children. If you can't return promptly, please see the receptionist to reschedule your appointment.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■ ■     POSTER 1     ■■

In this session you'll learn about

- programs that can benefit you
- how welfare reform might affect you
- ways to become self-sufficient
- how to apply for benefits
- and ways to a better future than you might think

I also want to acknowledge how hard it must be for you to be here today. I hope that your experience with the Department of Social Welfare will be helpful, supportive and positive. We are here to help and encourage you with financial assistance, education and skill-building.

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P-2201    Application Procedures (Continued)

J.    Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■    POSTER 2    ■■

Here's what we'll look at today:

- A.    The Basic Department of Social Welfare Programs
- B.    Welfare Reform
- C.    The Reach Up Program
- D.    The Application Process
- E.    ANFC-Related Services
- F.    Services After You Find Work

Questions?    (Wait at least 7 seconds!!!!)

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 3     ■■

A.     Programs

Let's look first at the programs available to you through the Department of Social Welfare. These are not ALL the state programs available, just the ones that are available through DSW. By the way, DSW is short for Department of Social Welfare. We use a lot of abbreviations here, and you will learn more of them as you go along.

The main programs are:

1.     Aid to Needy Families with Children and Reach Up
2.     Medicaid/Dr. Dynasaur and the Vermont Health Access Plan
3.     Food Stamps
4.     Fuel Program
5.     Emergency Assistance

They have different income and resource limits, which will be explained when you meet with your worker after this session. Let's look at these programs one at a time.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 4     ■■

**1.   ANFC**

ANFC stands for "Aid to Needy Families with Children," and the program is designed to give temporary help to families who have little or no money or resources.

If a family is found eligible, ANFC provides a monthly benefit so that families have money to meet their basic needs. This monthly benefit is called an ANFC grant.

The amount of assistance is based on the size of your family, housing costs and income.

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Another major program associated with ANFC is the Reach Up program, which will help you get the training you might need to move off ANFC. I'll be talking more about that later.

Do you have any questions?     (Wait at least 7 seconds!!)

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 5     ■■

**2.     MEDICAID**

Medicaid is a health insurance program funded by the state and federal governments. If you qualify for ANFC, you automatically qualify for Medicaid coverage. In the near future, this coverage will be provided through managed health care plans. You will receive more information on this at the time of enrollment.

Medicaid covers most of the cost of medically necessary doctor's services, hospital services, prescriptions, medical equipment, home health care, dental and eye care and chiropractic care. Sometimes transportation to and from medical appointments can be reimbursed or provided.

If you have had unpaid medical bills in the last three months, you may be able to get help to pay them. Check with your caseworker.

Now let's talk about Dr. Dynasaur.

Dr. Dynasaur is a health insurance program that covers pregnant women and children under the age of 18. It covers the same things Medicaid does, but has higher income eligibility limits.

If you are found eligible for either Medicaid or Dr. Dynasaur, you will receive a green plastic ID card for each eligible household member. You will be asked to show this card when you receive health services. This is important: Not all health care providers accept Medicaid and Dr. Dynasaur. So, before getting treatment, ask if yours does.

The Vermont Health Access Plan (VHAP) is a health insurance program for adults with no children who have no insurance for doctors and hospitals. VHAP-Pharmacy is a prescription insurance program for the elderly and disabled.

Do you have any questions?     (Wait at least 7 seconds!!)

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P-2201 Application Procedures (Continued)

J. Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■ POSTER 6 ■■

**3. FOOD STAMPS**

Food stamps provide a way to supplement your family's food budget. Food stamps are coupons that you use like money to purchase food items or edible plants and seeds to grow food. They come in booklets and must stay in the booklets until they are actually used.

The value of the food stamps you receive depends on your income and the number of members of your household.

If you are eligible for ANFC, you will probably qualify for food stamps as well.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 7     ■■

**4.    FUEL PROGRAM**

The Fuel Program provides a line of credit to your fuel dealer during the winter months to help you heat your home. The payments are NOT supposed to meet the total cost of heating your home, just to help.

If you are interested in applying for seasonal Fuel Program benefits, you must apply between July 15 and August 31. You must reapply every year.

Benefits vary according to your income and how much fuel you use.

Crisis fuel assistance may help you when you're out of fuel or are about to be, and you have no way to buy more. To apply, contact your local community action agency.

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P-2201            Application Procedures (Continued)

J.    Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■    POSTER 8    ■■

**5.    EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

Next is Emergency Assistance, sometimes called General Assistance. It provides financial help to families in emergency situations when other funding is not available. Each time you apply you must come to this office and fill out a short application form. Help with basic needs such as food, shelter, fuel, and utilities can sometimes be provided. Generally, you have to have used all of your own money first before you can get help with any emergency program. Applicants for General Assistance are usually referred to other programs for ongoing help.

That covers the major program areas.

Questions?        (Wait at least 7 seconds!!!!)

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J.    Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■    POSTER 9    ■■

Now let's move on to

**B.    Welfare Reform**

On July 1, 1994, Vermont began its own welfare reform. The ANFC program changed, so it now has different goals and different rules. I'm sure you've heard that the federal government has also changed its welfare laws. Some of these changes may affect Vermont's ANFC program.

The overall goals for the ANFC program are pretty simple:

1.    Strengthen families and parental responsibility
2.    Reward work and promote self-support
3.    Change ANFC from a financial assistance program to a transitional assistance program
4.    Improve the way we at DSW serve families

The federal government calls what we're doing a "demonstration project," and we've hired an independent research company to tell us how well the project works. It will last seven years, until 2001. The idea is to see how Vermont's welfare reform rules work.

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(Poster 10 has been deleted.)

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J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 11     ■■

In order to do this, all ANFC families will be randomly assigned to one of three groups. It is important for you to know that each group will be receiving ANFC benefits under different rules.

- If you are assigned to Group 1, you will receive services and benefits under the ANFC rules we followed before welfare reform. These rules include work incentives for the newly employed. Twenty percent of families receiving ANFC will be in Group 1.
- If you are assigned to Group 2, you will receive ANFC services and benefits under the welfare reform rules, including ongoing work incentives. Twenty percent of families receiving ANFC will be in Group 2.
- If you are assigned to Group 3, you will receive ANFC benefits under the welfare reform rules, including work incentives, as in Group 2, plus time limits and work requirements. Sixty percent of families receiving ANFC will be in Group 3.

Assignment to these groups is purely by chance. Nothing in your history, your intake interview, your financial or employment situation will affect your group assignment. A computer program makes the choice, and your group assignment cannot be changed, either by your caseworker or anyone else. Your caseworker will tell you what your group assignment is and what it means during your interview today.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 12     ■■

**C.     Reach Up**

Most families want a better life than welfare can provide, but many parents receiving ANFC need to improve their occupational skills and education in order to find a good job. The Reach Up Program handles this by helping ANFC parents get job training, job search skills, work experience, education, and support services.

Participation in Reach Up means you'll have a case manager who will work with you to set goals, develop skills and find work. You will receive individual guidance and may get support services such as child care, transportation, and practical job skills training.

You should volunteer for Reach Up right away. Early enrollment will give you a valuable head start. You'll have more resources available to you and more time to complete the family development plan you and your case manager work out.

If you think you might be interested in Reach Up assistance to attend college, and you are assigned to Group 3, it's very important for you to volunteer for Reach Up within 12 months of being granted ANFC. Otherwise, Reach Up may restrict you to no more than a two-year college.

Those who sign up will be invited to attend a Reach Up orientation, where they will learn more about the program. Attending the orientation is a necessary step if you want to participate in Reach Up.

Be sure to ask about Reach Up when you have your eligibility interview.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 13     ■■

**D.   The ANFC Application Process**

I want to discuss the ANFC application process itself for a moment and make you aware that you have certain rights and responsibilities when you apply for and accept assistance from the Department of Social Welfare.

Most of you have already completed an application and a statement-of-need form. You are responsible for making sure that the information on this form is complete and correct. Your caseworker will be going over the forms with you and might ask for proof of the information you have given.

For example, you may be asked to show wage stubs, unemployment income, rent receipts, utility bills or other records of money you've received or paid out. It is important to save your receipts.

**This is important!** If you knowingly give false or misleading information or hold back needed information, you could lose benefits and be prosecuted for fraud, and you might have to go to court. Be sure you always give completely correct information.

**This is also important:** Once you have applied for assistance, you need to report any changes in your circumstances that could affect your eligibility or the amount of assistance you might receive. Such changes must be reported within 10 days and could be things like who lives with you, an increase in your income, or things you own, such as money in your bank account or buying a car.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 14     ■■

Once the application is complete, your caseworker will process your application and determine your eligibility for ANFC, Medicaid and food stamps within 30 days from the date the application is received.

Your ANFC benefits will be paid from the day your caseworker approves your application. This means you will need to gather all the proof or information your caseworker asks for and submit it as quickly as possible. If you have trouble getting any information, your caseworker might be able to help.

You will be notified in writing when a decision on your application has been made. We will also notify you in writing about any changes in your benefit amount or if your benefit is going to stop. Case decisions are based on federal and state rules and regulations that your caseworker must follow.

If you disagree with the case decision, you may request a hearing.

All information you give us is kept confidential.

The federal government requires that ongoing cases must be periodically reviewed for accuracy by DSW's quality control staff. If this happens in your case, the quality control staff will notify you and tell you if you are required to provide any additional information for the review of your case.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 14■■

You have certain rights when you apply at the Department of Social Welfare.

- Everyone who applies receives the same consideration and treatment regardless of age, sex, color, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, national origin, political beliefs, or whether you have received help before.
  
- If you feel at any point that you have not been treated fairly, you may file a complaint. Contact your caseworker, a supervisor, or the district director if there is a problem.

All of us appreciate courtesy, including your caseworker. You can expect to be treated with respect whenever you have contact with anyone in this department.

Do you have any questions?     (Wait at least 7 seconds!!!)

OK. Now we'll move on to ANFC-related services.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 16     ■■

**E.   ANFC-Related Services**

There are other services I'd like to tell you about: child care for employed ANFC parents, child support, earned income tax credit, WIC, Link Up and Lifeline.

**First, CHILD CARE.**

The state of Vermont has contracts with child care resource and referral agencies throughout the state to help you find child care. The packet you will receive contains a list of agency addresses and phone numbers. The agencies can provide you with a list of day care facilities in your area. This referral service is free to any ANFC parent who is employed or will be employed within 30 days.

You can get help with child care, but you must first show that you are employed, waiting to begin employment, self-employed, or participating in Reach Up.

Either Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) or DSW can help pay for child care, depending on the care you select.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 17     ■■

**CHILD SUPPORT**

When you apply for ANFC, you will be required (by federal and state laws) to assign support rights to the state. This means that you will be asked as a condition of ANFC eligibility to allow the state to pursue and collect child support for any child who has a parent absent from the home.

Sometimes the collection of child support might be harmful to you or your child. If you think you have good reason for not wanting child support to be actively pursued, you should say so and ask your worker how to get a waiver.

We pursue child support because ALL parents have the responsibility to support their children. Child support also helps parents become self-supporting.

The Office of Child Support can help you obtain child support, get a child support order, modify an existing order, establish paternity, and go to court to enforce a court order.

If your monthly child support is more than the amount of your ANFC grant, your grant will close. You will be sent a letter that asks if you would like the Office of Child Support to continue to act as a support collection service for you.

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P-2201    Application Procedures (Continued)

J.    Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■    POSTER 18    ■■

**EITC**

Now I'd like to take a moment to tell you about a program you may not have heard about. It's called the earned income tax credit and it provides money for families with earned income under a certain amount. It's called a tax credit because you can collect the money even if you don't owe federal or state income tax. The exact amounts and rules for applying are in your federal and state tax packages. You do not have to be receiving ANFC to qualify. If you are receiving ANFC, this tax credit is not figured into your ANFC benefit.

There are two ways you can receive the federal earned income tax credit. You may apply for it on your federal tax return, or you may request that your employer include the credit in your payroll check.

To receive the state earned income tax credit, you must apply for it on your state tax return.

You will find information in your packet that tells you more about the earned income tax credit, and there's also a toll-free number for more information.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 19     ■■

**WIC** stands for Women, Infants and Children. This program provides healthful food items for pregnant women and children under the age of five and is run by the Vermont Health Department. You can ask your caseworker about it.

Two programs are available to help you pay your telephone costs: Link Up and Lifeline.

**Link Up** helps pay the cost of hooking up your telephone service. Ask your caseworker about Link Up if you need it.

**Lifeline** provides a monthly credit toward your basic monthly telephone charge. Ask your caseworker about Lifeline if you have a phone.

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P-2201     Application Procedures (Continued)

J.     Orientation Script (Continued)

**DSW ORIENTATION PRESENTATION**

■■     POSTER 20     ■■

Now that we've come to the end of this session, I'd like to explain that you may qualify for some extended benefits. If you are no longer eligible for ANFC when you go to work, you might be eligible for extended childcare assistance and extended Medicaid coverage for your family. You might also be eligible for food stamps and seasonal fuel benefits. When you find a job, call your worker and ask what extended benefits might apply to you.

Here is a packet that contains a list of other community resources you may want to check out.