


**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES**

Subject: Community Services Counselor Files	Policy Number: 48
Number of Pages: 2	Section: XIV
Attachments: A. Counselor File Order	Related Standards & References:
Effective Date: October 1, 2019	Approved:  James Maccarone, Director

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Youth Services that a Community Services Section Youth Services Counselor File be established. The use and content of all Youth Services Counselor Files shall include the youth's right to privacy, secure placement and preservation, and ensure confidentiality mandated by law.

II. DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy and procedures the following definitions apply:

- A. **Counselor File** – The official record maintained by the Community Services Section for each youth referred to a Youth Services Counselor that documents program service delivery and holds related case documents.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Each Counselor File should be labeled with the youth's name, date of birth, and MYCIDS number.
- B. The clerical staff member assigned to assist the Youth Services Counselor will be responsible for creating and maintaining the file. In the event of a clerical vacancy, other staff may be designated to perform these duties, to include the assigned Youth Services Counselor.
- C. The Counselor File shall adhere to a specific format and order, as outlined on Attachment A, Counselor File Order.
- D. Each Counselor File shall be maintained in a Division of Youth Services (DYS) approved standardized folder, a letter size file consisting of four (4) sections with a fastener for

SUBJECT	POLICY	PAGE
Community Services Counselor Files	48	2 of 2

each section, with each section separated and denoted by section number according to Attachment A. In the event of a section being at capacity, a second file may be created. In that case, the first file shall be labeled Volume 1 on the top outside of the file, and the second file shall be labeled Volume 2, and so on.

E. Counselor File Entries:

1. All entries (i.e. case notes) in the Counselor File shall be dated and identify the individual making the entry. Case notes shall be made within one (1) business day of the contact, or upon return to the DYS office holding the file.
2. All received documents or records shall be placed in the Counselor File within two (2) business days and shall be filed in descending chronologic order, as specified in Attachment A.

F. Security

1. All Counselor Files shall be maintained and secured to ensure a youth's right to privacy.
2. Both active and inactive files shall be stored in locked metal cabinets, or in a locked holding area, such as a closet or storage room.
3. Counselor files shall be retained and may only be destroyed by the appropriate means as specified by the Youth Court Act, Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Section 43- 21-265.

G. Confidentiality

1. All Counselor Files shall remain confidential.
2. All Counselor Files shall be safeguarded from unauthorized and improper disclosure.
3. Access to Counselor files shall be limited to persons that have both a "right to know" and a "need to know," and can demonstrate that access to such information is necessary for juvenile justice purposes.
4. All information stored or managed by computerization, to include MYCIDS or an electronic case management system, shall be treated as confidential as well.
5. A copy of all Release of Information consent forms, originating inside or outside of the DYS shall be maintained in the Counselor File.