

## **Frequently Asked Questions #3 – APS Transition**

**DATE: 5/11/04**

The APS Transition Team appreciates all your good questions and comments. We recognize and understand anxiety associated with uncertainty and unknowns. Please know that the Team is attempting to get the answers and finalize plans. As we approach the transfer date we will share what we know with you. This FAQ #3 attempts to clarify and provide information on the questions we have received. We have grouped some questions based on similar content. *If you have sent a question to the Transition Team and the answer is not shown here, it will be answered in a later FAQ.*

**1. How will APS staff be notified if they will have the opportunity to move to DAS?**

**Will it be in writing to our office or home or will we receive a phone call? How long will we have to respond back and to whom where?**

**Will all existing staff be notified yeah or nay whether they will be transferred?**

**How do we find out if our name is on the list to be transferred? I have read in previous questions that there is a list of the names that has been pulled to transfer, where is the list?**

**The FAQ#2 said that within the next week the APS case managers and supervisors identified for potential transfer will receive an email. Our Family Service Worker wanted to know if FSW's will be notified at this time also.**

***Reply: The initial APS Transfer Preference Packages were e-mailed on May 3, 2004, via GroupWise, to caseworkers and supervisors identified as potential lateral transferees. Those Preference Forms were due back to Debbie Nicholson on Monday, May 10, 2004. We will review the responses, contact anyone who did not respond (to ensure he/she received the e-mail) then determine whether additional APS Transfer Preference Packages can be sent based on the numbers.***

***There is not a posted "list of staff to be transferred". Case manager and supervisory staff were identified (using specific criteria described in FAQ#2) to receive a Transfer Preference Form. Soon we will know whether additional Preference Forms can be issued.***

***APS Transfer Preference Packages have not yet gone out to Family Service Workers, but should be issued in the next few weeks. The Packages for Family Service Workers will go out by regular mail, as we understand that not many have computer access in the course of a working day.***

***Staff selected to transfer with the APS Program to DAS will receive an official notification in writing prior to 7/1/04.***

***In addition, there will likely be some competitive positions and these positions will be posted on the [www.dhrjobs.com](http://www.dhrjobs.com) web site within the next couple of weeks.***

**2. Currently I am paid two times a month - direct deposit. Is the transition team far enough into the planning to answer how and when the staff that is transferred will be paid?**

**Reply: APS staff transferred with the APS program to DAS will be paid same as everyone else - twice a month. Transferring employees will need to complete some personnel paperwork, including direct deposit forms, since checks will be coming from DHR instead of from County DFCS. July paychecks may be in paper form, depending on the length of time needed to set up DHR payroll records. We will inform staff on the details related to this subject as soon as they are known.**

**3. Will there be a need for accounting personnel that have been doing checks for the adult payees?**

**Reply: Although there will likely be some clarifications to procedures, there will be no significant change in the fiscal area of Payeeships at this time. The Memorandum of Understanding between DAS and DFCS will spell out exactly how the Representative Payeeship accounting and check distribution will be handled during FY 05 (7/1/04-6/30/05). During FY 05, DAS will be exploring the various ways to transfer the money handling aspect beginning in SFY06.**

**4. Is the transition still occurring July 1, 2004?**

**Reply: Yes**

**5. Who is or will be my supervisor? Where will they be located?**

**Reply: This has not been established yet and will be determined once all transferring staff are identified and competitive positions are filled. All APS supervisors will be experienced with the APS program and will work in APS 100% of the time. For FY05, Supervisors will likely be located in the DFCS office where then are currently located.**

**6. Is there a requirement for certification for APS Case Managers as is required with the CPS Case Managers?**

***Reply:*** *Not at the present time. This is an area we will be exploring after the transfer and once the APS program gets established in DAS. We will be looking at other states' APS programs and will determine how best to address this issue.*

**7. What office will I work out of?**

**Where will APS workers be housed if transferred to DAS? I have read that they will still be at the DFCS office, but have also heard that they may go to offices with AAA's. I think this will have an impact on worker's decisions about transferring to DAS. For example, the AAA for our county is 30 miles away, but the DFCS office where I am now is only 4 miles from my home and I have a young child. Will we know about these kinds of plans before we receive a Transfer Preference Letter, if offered one?**

***Reply:*** *Agreement has been made between DAS and DFCS that staff who transfer to DAS with the APS program will be able to remain in the DFCS offices for up to a year while DAS is exploring options for future workspace. A Memorandum of Understanding between the two Divisions will outline and clarify details related to work environment and use of necessary equipment.*

**8. Will I be solely responsible for my current county or other counties as well?**

***Reply:*** *APS is going to a regional structure so there will be multi-county coverage in many situations. Caseload coverage will be negotiated and determined by the APS Section staff, Supervisors, Casework staff, and Family Service Workers once all staff transferring are identified. Actual coverage will depend on the caseload numbers and staff preference.*

**9. Will the existing APS policy manual change as a result of the transfer?**

***Reply:*** *Basically APS policy will remain the same with some enhancements and procedural changes related to the program transferring and going to a regional structure. A Revised manual will be distributed to APS staff prior to 7/1/04.*

**10. What briefing will take place, if any?**

**Reply:** *We hope to hold an orientation meeting, likely in late June, for all the staff who are transferring with the APS program to DAS. At this session we will introduce staff and share information on the new APS including structure, procedural details, roles and responsibilities, etc., as well as hear your questions, concerns and suggestions.*

**11. As a multi-program worker, if selected to receive a Transfer Preference Letter and I decide to transfer to DAS, when and how would I go about transitioning from my CPS caseload?**

**Is this up to my supervisor alone or will the CPS supervisors be given deadlines for CPS cases to be transferred from APS workers? I feel that those of us who do multi-programs will need some time to complete investigative and on-going CPS documentation and have time to introduce our families to new workers.**

**Reply:** *We understand there will need to be time to transfer cases, both APS and CPS, as part of the transfer of APS to DAS. Specific guidelines for this process will be finalized and distributed to both transferring APS staff and DFCS staff once the transferring staff are identified and confirmed. We anticipate the transferring of cases and joint visits will be happening in June. Both Divisions value the smooth transition of cases especially as it impacts our clients and families.*

**12. What about our new tablet computers and forms and things like that?**

**Will we continue to use our same APS forms or will they be revised by DAS and will the computers belong to DFCS or DAS?**

**Reply:** *Staff transferring to DAS with the APS program will retain the computer equipment they have assigned to them now.*

*The APS forms will initially remain the same as they are now. As the new APS program develops there likely will be revisions to the forms used in the program.*

**13. I also have a question about closed APS cases. Will these records also be transferred to DAS or remain the property of DFCS? Do we need to begin to purge APS closed records older than 3 years in our county to make this transition smoother?**

**Once APS physically relocates from the DFCS offices, will we be allowed to take the APS case files with us to DAS?**

**At this point, our agency files all of closed case files (aps, cps, etc) together. It would be helpful if the process was started now to separate APS case files to be able to "take with" to DAS history is very strategic especially for investigations.**

***Reply: We will have time to develop a systematic plan for case records since APS staff will be remaining in the DFCS offices for a while (up to a year). Once the APS program transfer is complete and things stabilize, we will be developing plans for the case records (both open and closed cases).***

**14. When will the APS "people" know what their jobs will be?**

**What counties will they be assigned to?**

**If you are in a small county and have a case load of 19 to 20 APS cases, would that worker still have to cover multi-counties?**

***Reply: Staff transferring with the APS program to DAS will be officially notified of a transfer or selection for a competitive position as soon as final decisions are made. We anticipate that most of these decisions will be made over the next six weeks.***

***Once the Teams are in place, they will plan together related to coverage, intra-team structure and other significant responsibilities. Since APS is going to a regional Service Delivery Model it is very likely that many staff will either have primary or back-up coverage responsibilities for more than one county.***

**15. Is retirement the same as is now, or will we have to work more or less years?**

**What type of retirements are we facing?**

***Reply: APS staff in DAS will be under the State Employee Retirement System. The transfer of APS to DAS should have no changes for staff that are currently under the State Employee Retirement System. Reference the ERS web site for additional information. [www.ersga.org](http://www.ersga.org)***

**16. Working under the "DAS" how does promotions status work?**

**What's the policy on taking leave? Who will keep up with this?**

**Do we keep all of our fringe benefits?**

For those of us requesting leave, or those that have already been approved, what process is in place to address those questions? I would assume that for the first few weeks, a period of transition may deem it necessary to have all staff on hand, but what about the latter weeks of the month? We seem to be in the dark on the probability of leave issues.

***Reply:*** APS under the DAS will handle promotions and leave under the same standards of DHR Human Resources Personnel Policy. Reference the web site for details on personnel policy:

<http://www2.state.ga.us/departments/dhr/ohrm.html>

***Specific procedures/expectations for taking, reporting and keeping track of leave will be shared with transferring staff.***

***We are not sure of the fringe benefits you have in mind. You will maintain the fringe benefits outlined in the Georgia DHR Employee Handbook. This Handbook can be located by going to the [www.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.dhr.georgia.gov) web site, then click on the link for "Employee Intranet"***

***Leave will be worked out with supervisors. We value staff taking care of themselves and will make every effort to accommodate leave plans.***

**17. Will APS case managers specialize in either ongoing services or investigations, or will they be doing both under the DAS?**

**Currently our county has three APS positions--two handle ongoing and one investigations. Is it possible that mode of service delivery could also be implemented once we transfer? This has worked well for our county.**

***Reply:*** The decision to specialize APS duties within a Team will be made by the Team once the Teams are officially formed. An APS Team is a supervisor and about 6-8 case managers designated to cover a specific area in a region. We want staff to configure the Teams in a manner that will build on strengths while providing the most effective interventions in APS cases.

**18. Will there be future training for us? APS workers.**

***Reply:*** Yes, over the next year you will begin to have a significant increase in training opportunities; both APS subject matter specific and cross training with other agencies, programs and partners. The APS Transition Team has a sub-group that is working on plans for short-term and long-term training for APS staff.

***The APS program will be drawing on resources in Georgia and at the national level to provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the challenges of APS work.***

**19. As a Social Services Generalist doing APS intake exclusively. I am also qualified to do monthly APS on-going visits. What is going to happen to my position? Is it possible for me to be of support to the APS unit in this area?**

**Will previous history with the agency be considered or only APS history? I have not worked APS that long but I have worked with DFCS for over ten years and eight of those were with Social Services.**

**I have learned that some of my co-workers received transfer preference form. My question is how will I find out about my transfer to DAS as I don't have access to an e-mail address?**

**In our county, we have a program assistant assigned to the APS unit. She is a state employee. Will she be transferring to DAS also?**

***Reply: The Transition Team is not able to give individual, accurate and specific answers to these questions. The new structure of APS will have a centralized Intake Unit in Atlanta. The APS Transition identification of staff for preference forms, analysis of the responses, advertisement of competitive positions and staff selection is a process with several stages. As these stages occur there will likely be additional opportunities. APS knowledge and experience are key components for identifying staff to transfer with the program to DAS. We will ensure that staff who were sent but did not return a Transfer Preference Form are contacted to be sure they received the e-mail.***

***Family Service Workers will be sent APS Transfer Preference Packages soon; we are aware many do not have GroupWise e-mail and an alternative method of contact will be used.***

***The Transition Team continues to move through the process of identifying the staff who will transfer. At the same time we anticipate that in the months to come there will be additional opportunities to work in Adult Protective Services for folks that really want to serve.***

**20. There is no APS supervisor for our county. We are supervised by the Ongoing CPS supervisor and I do not think there is an APS supervisor in the two adjoining counties. Will those of us who work APS in these areas have an opportunity to apply for advancement and if yes, when will these jobs most likely be posted as available?**

**Reply:** *There will be APS supervisors who elect to transfer with APS to DAS. We anticipate that there will also be some opportunities for competitive positions in APS supervision. These positions will be determined in coming weeks and all competitive positions will be posted on the website: [www.dhrjobs.com](http://www.dhrjobs.com)*

**21.** In my five years experience with DFCS I have only been called out once on an APS case and it involved a guardianship case. Currently I work in a county which shares on-call with another county. The advantage of this is that we are not on-call as often but the disadvantage is that we have to cover more than one county. Will APS Caseworkers be required to handle on-call as there is a ten-day response time in APS cases? If so, will workers have to cover multi-counties?

**Reply:** *APS on-call is an area that must be addressed to create a standard for APS workers statewide. There is not an on-call policy at present for APS but we will need to address different scenarios where APS is called upon after business hours. After hour emergencies tend to have “themes” including medical crises, placement, or lack of food or utilities. APS usually does not have the capacity to resolve the issue after hours. Infrequently, the police may alert APS to unusual circumstances (for example, an elder walking down the road wearing a bathrobe and not knowing how to get home). Other situations involving “the need to know ASAP” often relates to the death or medical emergency of a ward. A care provider must know how to reach us if it is a ward, but we can usually handle things by telephone. Supervisors and case managers will have a role in APS on-call policy and procedures. Staff will cover and/or provide back-up for assigned areas.*

**22.** I think it would be beneficial to have a chat room session which would allow us to ask questions, receive answers, and make suggestions based on answers.

**Reply:** *A chat room is a good idea. As the transition of APS to DAS is implemented this may be a good way to communicate. We can think of several potential benefits of a chat room and will explore options once more final decisions are made on details of the new APS.*

**23.** What will happen with the employment status of APS staff persons who do not go with their positions to DAS and for whom DFCS has no comparable position on which they can be placed? Will they be 'RIFFED', terminated, or allowed to retire early, if this option is possible; also, when they be notified of their fate and by whom? .

**Our county has one fulltime APS worker. If that person is offered a transfer, but declines, what happens? According to staff allocation, there would not be a position to move this person to.**

**Reply: DFCS staff, currently providing case management services for APS caseloads that do not transfer to DAS with the APS program, will have the option to continue working in DFCS.**

***As to placement on comparable positions, most DFCS staff now providing case management services in APS is classified in the Social Services Case Management series; that classification series will continue to be available in DFCS.***

***DAS will make decisions on staff accepted for transfer with the APS Program and DHR Personnel will officially notify all affected staff of transfer decisions and competitive position selections. DAS, DFCS and other DHR staff are working hard to get through the process with a target date of mid-June.***

- 24. I am concern about my educational leave contract with DFCS. I have one year left to complete my Masters in Social Work with the understanding that I would work a year for an each year I received IV- E monies. IS not the contract binding even though I am currently working APS?**

**Reply: The Title IV-E Child Welfare Grant requires that staff participating on the grant fulfill their work obligation in a child welfare position. Staff affected by the change from part CPS/APS caseloads to full APS caseloads in the Division of Aging Services will need to make arrangements to either 1. repay their grant, OR 2. transfer to an Office of Child Protection position.**

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**The APS Transition Team  
May 11, 2004**