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MEMORANDUM

TO: AAA Executive Directors **NOTICE#:** 061504-1-PC-SWCBS

FROM: Susan Tucker
Deputy Secretary

DATE: June 15, 2004

SUBJECT: Notice of Policy Clarification: 2004 Monitoring Plan
(**NOI#:** 031904-1-I-SWCBS)

The purpose of this Policy Clarification is to provide additional information regarding the original Notice of Instruction concerning the 2004 Monitoring Plan. Specifically, additional information is being provided concerning the revised monitoring timetable, additional features and key elements of the monitoring process and the elimination of scores from the monitoring report.

The Department has determined need to increase the number of days monitoring team members have to review and analyze monitoring data and submit comments to the monitoring team leader. Additional time is allowed for the monitoring team to discuss the monitoring visit with senior management staff and for the team leader to prepare the draft report for internal review. More time is also allowed for team members to adequately debrief with senior managers and supervisors, and to prepare monitoring information for submission to the monitoring team leader for the draft report. Debriefing time will allow for review, analysis, and discussion of the monitoring findings and evaluation of the monitoring process. Conclusions will be reached on the AAA's overall compliance, performance and technical assistance needs relative to contract and other requirements. Achievement will be considered in terms of how the compliance or performance area reviewed is actually impacting the AAA's overall operations. Area agencies, except PSAs 1, 6, and 7, will note in the attached timetable five additional days for each step. PSAs 1, 6 and 7 experienced a longer delay, since the need for changes had to be validated based on these visits.

The additional monitoring features and key elements are as follows:

- Pre-monitoring meetings at the Department will play a more crucial role in the monitoring process. The monitoring team members will conduct a thorough review and analysis of all relevant information regarding the AAA and PSA. All divisions within the Department have committed staff to participate in all pre-monitoring meetings to ensure all relevant information is available to the monitoring team.

- The monitoring process will be clearly defined for AAAs by the Department and not changed in midstream without due notice. The monitoring team leader will explain the review, analysis and report process during the entrance and exit conferences.
- The AAA's adherence to implementing the approved area plan will be incorporated into the visit and monitoring report. Area plan critiques initially completed on program and contract modules by contract managers and reviewed and commented on by other divisions within the Department will serve as the basis for this analysis and determination.
- Department staff interaction with Area Agencies throughout the monitoring period regarding identified technical assistance needs, AAA response to Departmental and other request for information and assistance, submission of reports and other required data, etc., will be incorporated into the monitoring report.
- The team leader will provide a general summary of the findings at the exit interview. If there are technical issues or questions requiring specific expertise, the team leader may ask the appropriate team members to address these items. This exchange will be facilitated by the provision of daily updates provided by team members on the progress of the monitoring.
- Monitoring team members will receive ongoing training and orientation on all aspects of the Department's monitoring philosophy and process.

The draft and final reports to be provided to the AAA will no longer be scored. The Department has determined that the current monitoring score often does not truly reflect an accurate assessment of an Area Agency's overall performance, compliance and effectiveness. The goal is to have the monitoring review and report to be as meaningful and as useful as possible while accurately reflecting the AAA's situation in its entirety at the time of the review and during the review period.

We look forward to working with you in completing another successful year of monitoring and technical assistance. If you have questions regarding this notice of clarification, please contact your contract manager.

Attachment