# Division of Developmental Services
# Virginia Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS® and Appeals Process

## What is the Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS®)?

The Supports Intensity Scale® is a standardized and norm-referenced assessment which was developed in 2004 by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). This assessment has been tested nationwide to ensure validity and reliability. More information can be found on the AAIDD web site: www.aaidd.org.

The SIS® is an assessment of an individual's support needs at the time of the interview. The SIS® gathers information through a face-to-face interview with the individual and other people who live or work with the individual, see him/her on a daily basis, and knows him/her well. The people who answer interview questions are called "Respondents." A "Primary Respondent" is defined as an individual who has known the individual well for at least the last 3 months and has observed the individual closely in one or more environments for substantial periods of time. A trained Interviewer collects information from respondents and/or the individual on the many areas in community living. The interview questions focus on the supports an individual would need if he/she were to do these activities like any other person his/her age living in the community without a disability. A copy of the family version report, which includes explanation and background on the SIS®, is sent to the family within 15 business days of the SIS® interview by the Support Coordinator/Case Manager (SC/CM). The long form report is available upon request. A copy of the long form report is sent to all providers within 15 business days of the SIS® interview by the Support Coordinator/Case Manager. The long report is the official record of the SIS® Interview.

## Virginia Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS®

1. The SIS® is administered by an AAIDD endorsed SIS® Interviewer. Only an AAIDD SIS® with the Virginia Supplemental Questions will be utilized.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, it is preferred that the individual participate as a respondent in his/her interview. The individual is free to choose his or her level of participation in the interview. Regardless of individual's participation level, the SIS® Interviewer must meet the individual. Guardians must be invited to participate in the SIS® interview.
3. The SIS® Interviewer will explain the reason for the SIS®, the assessment process, and the role of respondents, prior to starting the interview.
4. The SIS® interview must be conducted face-to-face with at least two primary respondents who are defined as individuals who have known the individual well for at least the last 3 months and have observed the individual closely in one or more environments for substantial periods of time.
5. At least two of the primary respondents must be present throughout the full SIS® interview.
6. Each question on the assessment was asked and opportunity for discussion was given during the assessment. Each item in the assessment must be described before it is rated.
7. The individuals support needs are described and discussed for each question. The Interviewer will guide the discussion. An overall consensus is sought, but not required, for each question. Based upon the information shared by respondents, the SIS® Interviewer will make an item rating determination. The final rating of each question will be shared with the respondents.
8. Individuals' medical or behavioral support needs are identified in Sections 3A and 3B of the SIS®. The Virginia SIS® Supplemental Questions will be completed as indicated by specific Medical and Behavioral Support Needs identified.
9. The individual and/or the guardian as well as all respondents will sign the *Virginia Standard Operating Procedures Checklist for the SIS® Interview* at the conclusion of the SIS® interview.

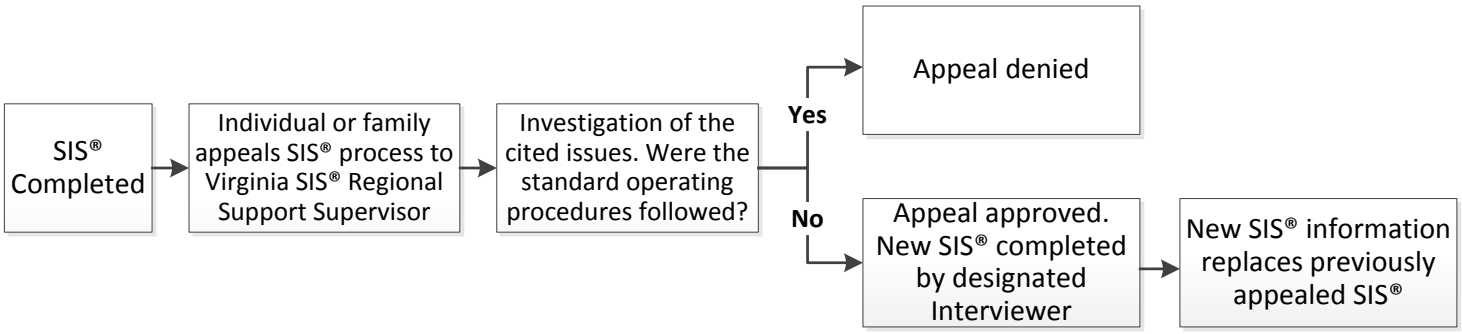
## What if there are concerns about how the SIS® was conducted?

The SIS® may be appealed by the individual, his/her guardian/authorized representative, or his/her family members if there is evidence that the Virginia Standard Operating Procedures were not followed. A SIS® score is not appealable.

## Process for Individuals and Guardians to Appeal Administration of Standard Operating Procedures:

1. Individuals, his/her guardian/authorized representative, or family members have 30 business days from the date they received the SIS® results to request an appeal.
2. To appeal the SIS®, the individual, his/her guardian/authorized representative or his/her family must submit a completed and signed copy of the Virginia SIS® Appeal form along with a letter that details the specific ways in which the Virginia Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS were not followed.
3. The Appeal form, letter and any supporting documentation must be mailed to the DDS SIS® Regional Support Supervisor for Virginia in the Division of Developmental Services, PO Box 1797, Richmond, Virginia 23218-1797.
4. The DDS SIS® Regional Support Supervisor for Virginia, in consultation with Ascend, the Support Coordinator and the Virginia State SIS® Coordinator will investigate the issues raised. A final decision will be rendered within 60 business days of the date the Appeal is received by DBHDS.
5. If it is found that the Virginia Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS® were not followed, a new SIS® will be requested and scheduled with an AAIDD recognized Interviewer within 90 business days of the decision rendered by DDS that procedures were not followed.
6. If there is no evidence that Standard Operating Procedures were not followed, the appeal will be denied.

### Appeal Process Flow Chart



## DBHDS/Division of Developmental Services

## Virginia SIS® Appeal

Please send a completed and signed copy of this form with a letter detailing the specific ways in which the Virginia Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS® were not followed to DDS SIS® Regional Support Supervisor for Virginia at the address listed below. The appeal process is available at www.dbhds.virginia.gov under Individuals and Families/Developmental Services/Supports Intensity Scale

**Name of individual who receives services:** _____

**CSB/Training Center/Support Coordination Agency:** _____

**Please check the item(s) that were not followed during the SIS® interview in which you participated.**

| ☑ Check those items that were NOT followed during the SIS® | Standard Operating Procedures for Conducting a SIS® |
|---|---|
| | **The SIS® Interviewer met the individual.** |
| | **The SIS® Interviewer explained the reason for the SIS®,** the assessment process, and the role of respondents, prior to starting the interview. |
| | **The SIS® interview must be conducted face-to-face with at least two primary respondents who are defined as individuals who have known the individual well for at least the last 3 months and have observed the individual closely in one or more environments for substantial periods of time.** (Phone calls might be necessary to get additional information for a SIS®, but the SIS® should never be completed in its entirety via telephone.) |
| | **Each question on the SIS® was asked and opportunity for discussion was given during the assessment.** |
| | **Each item in the assessment was described before it was rated.** |
| | **Based upon the information shared by respondents, the SIS® Interviewer made an item rating determination.** |
| | **The final rating of each question was shared with the respondents.** |
| | **Medical and Behavioral support needs were discussed with the respondents.** |

_____ _____ _____

**Print Name** **Signature** **Date**

_____

**Relationship to Individual Receiving Service**

_____

**Contact Information: Phone number, mailing address**

**Mail this form, letter and any supporting documentation to:**

*Appeals Section for the SIS®*
*Division of Developmental Services*
*PO Box 1797*
*Richmond, VA 23218*

## DBHDS/Division of Developmental Services

## SIS® Interview Guidelines

In order to ensure the SIS is completed in an accurate and effective way, the guidance below will be followed.

- Respondents will bring to the interview an open mind and empty hands.
  - No copies of SIS® booklets
  - No copies of old SISs®
  - No copies of SIS® expanded clarifications
  - No other assessments like the LOF, ICAP, etc., as they are not needed

- After providing demographic information, laptops and tablets are to be turned off and put away for the duration of the interview. Under no circumstances are laptops or tablets to be open or in operation during any other part of the interview.

- Texting is not permitted during any part of the interview. All cell phones and smart phones are to be turned off or to vibrate and will not be answered unless the respondent has informed the interviewer, prior to the interview, that they expect to receive an emergency call.

- No audio or video recording is permitted at the SIS® interview unless authorized with prior approval by DBHDS for training purposes and with the individual's informed consent.

- During the interview, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to ask questions and the responsibility of respondents to answer questions in order to ensure that accurate and complete information is reflected in the results.

- The interviewer will ask additional questions to ensure they have a clear picture of the supports needed for the individual. If a difference of opinion emerges, the interviewer, based on their knowledge of the SIS®, will make a determination of the appropriate rating based on the reports from respondents.

- At least 2 primary respondents must remain for the entire interview.

- The Respondent Signature form for the Virginia Interview Standard Operating Procedures Checklist will be signed by everyone at the interview immediately following the session. If a respondent must leave before the interview has ended, they will sign the form before leaving.