



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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COMMISSIONER

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To: DBHDS Office of Licensing Stakeholders

From: Jae Benz, Director, Office of Licensing

Cc: Veronica Davis, Associate Director for State Licensure Operations
Mackenzie Glassco, Associate Director of Quality and Compliance
Chesna Gore, Regulatory & Administrative Manager

DATE: December 16, 2022

RE: Changes to the Licensing Initial Application Review Process

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to notify DBHDS Office of Licensing stakeholders of changes to the initial application review process in support of DBHDS' North Star transformational plan.

What does this mean for new DBHDS licensing applicants of priority services?

The DBHDS Office of Licensing is dedicated to reducing any undue administrative burden to potential licensure applicants. Our office has streamlined the licensing process for all "Priority" Services to ensure the services with the greatest need can be licensed within 90 days of the submission of a completed application. The [current prioritization list](#) can be found on the DBHDS Office of Licensing website under the Initial Applicants section.

The Office of Licensing will be limiting its initial application review of priority applications to the application attachments mandated by the *Code of Virginia* & Licensing Regulations. This includes basic demographic information, service description, budget, evidence of financial resources, organizational structure, position descriptions, staffing plan with supervision, applicant's records management policy and evidence of authority to conduct business in Virginia.

The review specialist will also review the following documents, as appropriate, for residential and center-based services: certificate of occupancy, current fire inspection for residential services serving over eight, building floor plan, and a health inspection for any location where the provider is responsible for serving food (note: this requirement does not apply to sponsored residential or group home services).

Previously applicants were not asked to secure a location for their services until their application was close to approval (estimated to be within 90 days of approval). Due to the streamlining of the application review process, we are now requiring applicants have a location secured prior to submitting their application, as those elements (certificate of occupancy, floor plan, etc.) will need to be approved prior to license approval. As the review specialist will not be reviewing most of the applicant's policies prior to licensure, applicants will be required to submit an attestation with their application swearing that all submitted policies and procedures comply with the Licensing Regulations.

Licensing specialists will only conduct an onsite inspection prior to the issuance of a conditional license for residential service providers. During the initial on-site inspection for residential services, the licensing specialist will review the physical site for compliance with the physical environment Licensing Regulations. For all other services, the licensing specialist will conduct their first onsite inspection during the conditional license period and prior to the issuance of an annual license.

We have upgraded our CONNECT Provider Portal database to support this new streamlined approach and will be offering training to potential new applicants in the coming months. This training will include how to apply for a license, what to expect through the process, and what to expect during an inspection. The goal of the Office of Licensing is to make the application process seamless, so providers can begin serving the needs of the individuals as soon as possible. Toward this end, we have set a goal of issuing a license for priority services within 90 days of completed application submission. However, meeting this goal will also depend on providers responding to requests for information or making corrections to policies as quickly as possible. Therefore, we have shortened the time period for providers to respond to corrections to 30 days. However, the more quickly providers can respond, the more quickly we will be able to issue a license.

What does this mean for new DBHDS licensing applicants of non-priority services?

New DBHDS licensing applicants of non-priority services will also fall under the new streamlined application review process. As with priority applications, the Office of Licensing will be limiting its initial application review of non-priority applications to the application attachments mandated by the *Code of Virginia* & Licensing Regulations. However, as the Office of Licensing is prioritizing the review of the Commonwealth's most needed services, non-priority applications will be placed on the waitlist when they are received and will be pulled from the waitlist based on priority. Once an application has been pulled from the waitlist and assigned to a policy review specialist, it will go through the same review process as priority applications. However, because of the time on the waitlist, applications for non-priority services will not be licensed within 90 days of the submission of a completed application.

What does this mean for DBHDS applicants currently under policy review?

DBHDS applicants currently under review will also fall under a streamlined application process. A general notification will be sent to all applicants currently under review with additional information regarding changes to application process and clarification as to how applicants should handle application items that are no longer required. The applicants assigned review

specialist will also send a copy of the updated application attestation with the provider's next set of revisions for the provider to sign and send back to the review specialist.

What does this mean for DBHDS applicants who have previously submitted an application but are still on the waitlist?

DBHDS applicants who have previously submitted an application, but are still on the waitlist, will also fall under a streamlined application process. The CONNECT system will automatically update to remove any items that are no longer required as part of the new application process. Once your application has been removed from the waitlist, you will receive correspondence from your assigned review specialist with additional instructions for completing the licensure process.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve the citizens of the Commonwealth and look forward to the new growth of needed services within our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jae Benz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jae Benz
Director, Office of Licensing