



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVPUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

January 16, 2026

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

SUBJECT: Adult Services Practice Standards

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Information Only ☐ Time Sensitive ☐ Immediate

The North Carolina Division of Social Services, in collaboration with Public Knowledge, has developed the **NC Practice Standards for Adult Services**. These standards outline best-practice behaviors for adult services leaders, supervisors, and staff when working with their agencies, teams, and the adults and families they serve. They define how work should be carried out and establish expectations for high-quality, person-directed practice statewide.

By establishing these standards, North Carolina ensures that adults receive consistent, respectful, and effective services regardless of county or program area. The Practice Standards apply to Adult Protective Services, Special Assistance In-Home Services, Guardianship Services, and other Adult Services programs.

The framework consists of essential functions, which serve as the foundation for core activities and practice standards. Each essential function is supported by:

- **Core activities**, which translate the function into actionable tasks.
- **Practice standards**, which describe the behaviors and professional conduct staff should demonstrate in practice.

Together, these components create a cohesive model that guides effective social work practice and clarifies what practitioners should be doing and demonstrating in their daily work.

Training Requirement:

All North Carolina Adult Services staff should complete training on the Practice Standards. Training is available through the [NCDHHS Adult Services Learning Management System](#) (LMS) and includes:

- An introductory eLearning module, *NCDHHS Practice Standards for Adult Services: Introduction*, that explains the Practice Standards and demonstrates how they apply to Adult Services work. This eLearning will debut at the January 22, 2026 Statewide Consultation Meeting and is currently live on the LMS.

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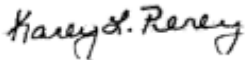
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- Individual eLearning modules for each essential function, detailing the related core activities and practice standards, will be available on the NCDHHS Adult Services Learning Management System (LMS) on January 26, 2026:
 - *Communicating Practice Standards for Adult Services Workers*
 - *Engaging Practice Standards for Adult Services Workers*
 - *Assessing Practice Standards for Adult Services Workers*
 - *Planning Practice Standards for Adult Services Workers*
 - *Implementing Practice Standards for Adult Services Workers*

These trainings provide staff with a deeper understanding of the standards and practical strategies for integrating them into everyday practice, ensuring consistent, high-quality, person-directed service delivery statewide.

If you have any questions about the Practice Standards, please reach out to the Adult Services listserv at DHHS.AdultServices@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karey Perez".

Karey Perez
Deputy Director, Adult Services
Division of Social Services

01_2026