

Throughout my career I have worked in both private and government social service agencies. Both come with their share of hoops to jump through in order to access services. The government agencies do however seem to change the size and placement of these hoops more often. There were actually times when I was embarrassed at some of the requests that I had to make of clients in order for them to keep their services. Eventually the red tape and constant changing of the rules caused me to resign my position.

It was very frustrating to me that the people that set up the policy and procedures that needed to be followed were those that were the most removed from face to face contact with the clients. Many of our programs would be cut because the congress or senate decided that the money needed to be moved to a different part of the budget. There would be times where there would be pots of over a million dollars available, but there was not way to access twenty-five bucks for a kid to go to camp. The policy and procedures are necessary in order to run a program, but the paper work and guidelines do not have to be so confusing and at times so degrading for people to access.

One program that I worked with for several years changed so many times that no one could keep up with it. When it started it was a great simple program. It was a waiver service through medical assistance to allow people with a disability to remain in their home rather than being placed in a facility. When I started with this program the policy and procedures were quite simple. The person or their representative filled out a three page questionnaire about the person's abilities to maintain in their home and what care needs they had. Soon a face to face interview with a social worker and a public health nurse was added to the policy and procedures for accessing the funds. By the time I left that program there was a twenty six page document that needed to be completed every six months by the face to face nurse and social worker team. The money was still there for services but the process was so complicated that many people stopped asking for the services. It seems like whenever you put politicians in charge of governing something they very little about you get problems. Policy and procedures should be set by the people working with them, so that the process of accessing the funds makes sense to the people working with the programs.