LIONS of DISTRICT 35-O HEARING PROGRAM
CLIENT APPLICATION AND LION INTERVIEWER'S GUIDE

CONTEXT

The Lions Club 35-O Hearing Board's goal is to provide hearing aids for those in financial need, particularly clients who otherwise would be unable to obtain hearing aids without outside assistance.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this guide is to provide suggestions and intention for those Lions who volunteer to screen clients applying for hearing aids from the Lions Hearing Board. Clients in need are required to file a completed Application, which captures the client's living/marital/financial status. It is the goal of the "Lion Interviewer" to communicate with the applicant and verify that the client fully completes the application and meets the initial eligibility criteria for receiving Lions Hearing Board assistance in providing hearing aids. The goal is NOT to validate the applicant data by seeking evidence, but to better understand the applicant's situation.

CLIENT ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility, simply stated, means that the client is unable to afford hearing aids without outside support. Lions Club International suggests this means that the client has income less than 200% of the current Federal Poverty Level. Practically speaking, the Hearing Board 35-O, equates that to the client's income and expenses are less than $400 per month discretionary funds available to spend from their budget. The budget is verified with the client via a discussion of income vs. expenses; if monthly income minus expenses is less than $400, the client is eligible to be submitted to the Hearing Board for review. Applicants with more than $400 per month discretionary funds will need additional personal documentation to support their case.

THE PROCESS

<u>CLIENT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:</u>

1) Have your client contact the nearest Hearing Center or Miracle Ear store for a free hearing test. *Applicants <u>must</u> receive a hearing test before the Hearing Board will review the Application.*

2) If qualified at a Miracle Ear store, they may verify bank information, household income, and perform a credit check. If deemed qualified for the Miracle Ear Foundation, the store may refer the client to the local Lions Club hearing representative or Lions Hearing Board to complete the Hearing Program Application. The client should NOT sign up for any monthly payment plan. If eligible and approved by the Hearing Board, all related fees will be covered, sans $25.

3) Have the applicant complete the Hearing Program Application, providing any additional explanation on the back of the application.

4) If the applicant has Medicaid, VA, or any other insurance that will pay for Hearing Aids, explore how much support they will receive through that agency and indicate this on the back of the application.

INTERVIEWING LION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The process begins with the receipt of a client Application and have Lions Club Hearing Chair or another Lion volunteer conduct an interview with the applicant.
    a. The Lion Interviewer receives a completed copy of the Application.
    b. If $25 check received with the Application, the Lion makes note.
2. The Lion Interviewer carefully reviews the Application taking note of the number of individuals in the household and examines the income and expenses and considers questions to ask the applicant.
3. The Lion Interviewer calls the applicant.
    a. Calls should be made no earlier than 8:30 am and no later than 8:00 pm.
4. The Lion Interviewer should identify him/herself
    a. Ex: “Hi, this is <Lion Interviewer ’s First Name>, from the Lions Hearing Program. I’m looking to speak to <Applicant> to discuss their application for help with hearing aids.”
    b. If the Applicant voice message greeting answers, the Lion Interviewer should provide a phone number for the Applicant to reach him/her and suggest they will try again in a day or so.
5. The Lion Interviewer should verify that the basic information from the application is correct:
    a. Correct address information? Read the address aloud and verify.
    b. Correct age? Read aloud the age.
    c. Correct household situation? Read the information aloud about household members, spouse, family, etc. Ask if there have been any changes that need to be updated.
    d. Correct monthly income data? Read aloud the income items and inquire about vague areas (e.g., Other Income). Ask if there have been any changes that need to be updated.
    e. Correct monthly expense data? Read aloud the expense items and inquire about vague areas (e.g., Other Expenses). Ask if there have been any changes that need to be updated.
    f. Overlooked income and especially expenses are key to assessing the applicant’s financial needs. If there is more than one person in the household, all monthly income and expenses must be included.
    g. Tally up the Total Income, Total Household and Other Expenses and Difference (discretionary funds). There should not be a difference of more than $400. If so, document any extraordinary circumstances. *Most of our applicants are living at poverty level and can barely get by.*
6. Applicant signature on page 1 and 2?
7. Has the applicant received a hearing test? *Applicants <u>must</u> receive a hearing test before the Hearing Board will review the Application.*
    a. Yes - write down the Hearing Center, location, and email, if available.
    b. No – Application placed on HOLD. Have the applicant schedule an appointment at a local Hearing Center or Miracle Ear, then call you with the results.
8. Write down any other specifics that you may learn about the applicant’s, situation.

9. Ask the applicant if they or any other family/friend can pay $25 toward the application process of the hearing aids?
    a. Yes, check made out to "Lions of District 35-O Hearing Program."
    b. No:
        i. Can the sponsoring Lions Club submit the $25 payment, or
        ii. Indicate when submitting the Application that the Club does not have the funds to support this case and requests the Lions Hearing Board cover the $25 fee.
10. Closing the interview: Thank the client for their time and let them know that you will report back to the Hearing Board and the Application will be submitted for consideration; also inform them of the likely timeline. The Hearing Board usually votes by email following the 15th of each month. Following a majority vote, the applicant, sponsoring Lions Club/Interviewing Lion and Hearing Center are notified.
11. Review your findings from the interview and determine if you believe the client is eligible. Total Income is less than 200% of the current Federal Poverty Guideline Chart based on Household/Family size and Difference between monthly Income and Expenses is less than $400, pending exceptional circumstances.
12. Sign and date the application and forward it to the Hearing Board Secretary with your findings.
13. Lions Hearing Program Secretary, Lion Dennis Dulniak, 1772 Carillon Park Drive, Oviedo, FL, 32765, 407-592-6670, centralfloridalionshearing@gmail.com

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