National Community Services Information Model, version 1, Entities

Data elements

Need		Assistance request reason (concept)
		Interpreter services require

Party

Person

Agency		Agency (concept)

Party group

Family		Family (concept)

Household		Household (concept)

Target group		Target group

Other party group
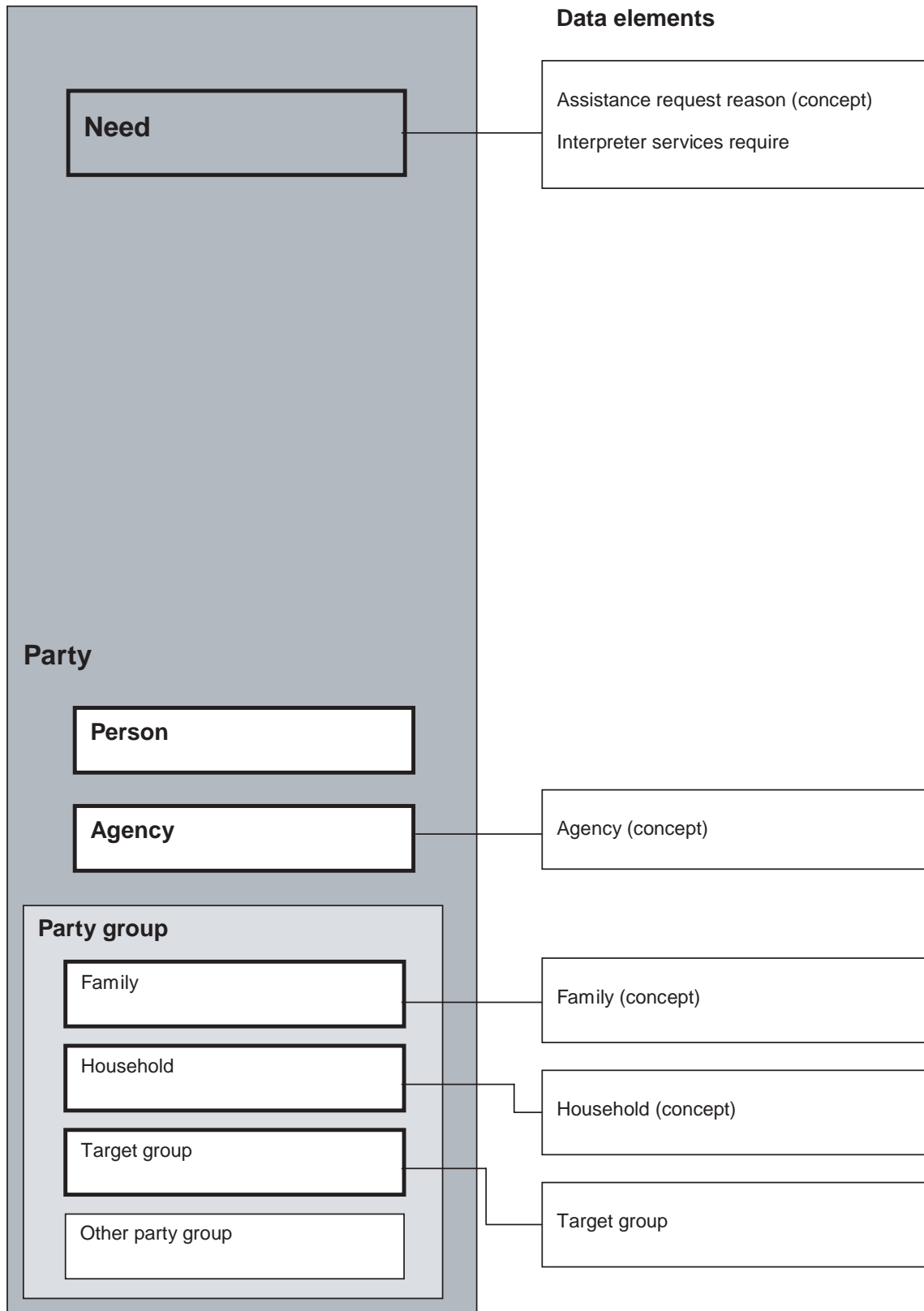
Assistance request reason

New	*Status*		*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT		1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000584
NCSI Model Location				*Data Class*	*Version*
Need				Cross-Program	1

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type: DATA CONCEPT

Definition: The reason(s) why a person has sought or requires assistance from a community services agency.

Context: To better identify the needs of clients, to identify needs that are not being met and to target assistance to clients more effectively:

A person may seek or require assistance for a number of reasons, some of which are the immediate presenting reason, while others will be underlying or longer term reasons. These will require particular and usually different responses and services.

For example, a person's immediate reason for seeking assistance may be that they have lost their accommodation and require accommodation support. However, the underlying reasons as to why they have no accommodation may be because of a psychiatric condition, alcohol or drug dependency, a gambling addiction, or because they are being abused at home. These underlying reasons may or may not have directly resulted in the homelessness, but have been contributing factors. Underlying reasons for a person requiring a service are likely to be complex and more difficult to ascertain than the immediate presenting reason.

A second example is in child protection. Many children that come to the attention of community services agencies as being in need of care and protection come from families in crisis (for example, parents have psychiatric illnesses, financial stress, domestic violence etc). Without providing a service to the family as well as the child then the child is likely to be re-notified.

Providing a service for the client's immediate need will not necessarily assist the client in the longer term, resulting in the client continually requiring short term assistance, while at the same time continuing to have an underlying problem or need that is not being addressed.

Therefore by attempting to collect information on both the immediate and the underlying reasons for a person's current situation, agencies may be able to better assist them both in the short and longer term, while at the same time more effectively utilising the services available.

Many children that come to the attention of community services agencies as being in need of care and protection come from families in crisis (for example, parents have psychiatric illnesses, financial stress, domestic violence etc).

Relational attributes

Related data:

Assistance request reason *(continued)*

Administrative attributes

Source document:

Source organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Comments: Further research is required to develop a data domain to enable the measurement of this concept.

It is possible that a number of data elements could be developed out of this concept, such as `Immediate reason for seeking assistance' and `Underlying reason for seeking assistance'. Such items would need a great deal of consultation with input from community service agencies to develop meaningful, and well structured data domains.

Interpreter services required

Revised	*Status*	*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT	1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000525
NCSI Model Location			*Data Class*	*Version*
Need			Cross-Program	2

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type:	DATA ELEMENT
Definition:	Requirement for interpreter services (yes/no) as perceived by the person seeking assistance.
Context:	This information is essential in order to assist in planning for provision of interpreter services.

Relational and representational attributes

Datatype:	Numeric	*Representational form:*	CODE
Field size:	*Min.* 1 *Max.* 1	*Representational layout:*	N

Data domain:

0	Interpreter not required
1	Interpreter required

Guide for use:

Collection methods:

Related data: Supersedes previous data element Interpreter services required v.1.

Related to the data elements:

> Main language other than English spoken at home v.2,
> First language spoken v.2,
> Country of birth v.2,
> Year of arrival in Australia v.2,
> Proficiency in spoken English v.1.

Administrative attributes

Source document:	AIHW: 1999. National Health Data Dictionary, version 9. Catalogue No. HWI 24. Canberra: AIHW.
Source organisation:	National Health Data Committee
Comments:	

Agency

New	*Status*	*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT	1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000544
NCSI Model Location			*Data Class*	*Version*
Party/agency			Cross-Program	1

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type: DATA CONCEPT

Definition: An organisation or organisational sub-unit that is responsible for the provision of assistance to clients.

Context: Defining agency is extremely important for data collection, as it is the level at which most data are collected in the community services area.

An agency may or may not directly provide the services to clients, but is responsible for their provision, whether directly, administratively or via allocation of funds.

Sometimes agencies may contract out or broker the assistance required by their clients to other service providers. Although the agency may not directly provide the assistance in these cases, the agency paying for the assistance to clients is considered responsible for that assistance and should be able to report on those clients and the assistance they receive.

Regardless of the way in which an organisation is funded, an agency is the level of the organisation responsible for service provision to clients. In some instances one organisation will have more than one or many agencies.

Relational and representational attributes

Guide for use: Different collections define agency differently according to their context and varying need for information on the different levels of organisations providing community services. Individual data collections will therefore need to further specify what an agency is for their collection purposes.

Agencies may be government or non-government organisations.

In the SAAP National Data Collection, SAAP agencies are defined as `The body or establishment which receives a specified amount of money (SAAP funds) to provide a SAAP service. The agency is the level at which data are collected'.

In the HACC Data Dictionary however, a HACC agency is defined as `A HACC funded organisation or organisational sub-unit that is responsible for the direct provision of HACC funded assistance to clients'.

In Children's Services, agency most closely corresponds to the definition of Service Provider `The entity (individual, agency, organisation, body or enterprise) that provides the service(s)'.

At this point in time the NCSDD definition of agency is of necessity quite broad. As agency is generally the level at which the responsibility for service provision lies and at which data are collected. As there are different needs for data collection in different areas, a more precise definition would be too narrow to encompass all community services data collections.

Related data:

Agency *(continued)*

Administrative attributes

Source document: AIHW: 1999. SAAP National Data Collection Data Dictionary Version 1.1. Canberra: AIHW.

Source organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Comments:

Agency *(continued)*

Family

Revised	*Status*		*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT		1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000517
NCSI Model Location				*Data Class*	*Version*
Party group/family				Socio-demographic	2

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type: DATA CONCEPT

Definition: Two or more people related by blood, marriage (including step-relations), adoption or fostering and who may or may not live together. They may form the central core of support networks for individuals.

Context: The 'household family' has been traditionally viewed as a building block of society and it is the predominant unit reported statistically and historically. However, the 'household family', since it is tied to the idea of co-residence, forms only a snapshot in time of related people who live in the same household. Related persons who leave the central household may still participate in the lives of other family members in a variety of ways, including financial, material, physical, emotional, legal and spiritual.

Data on families are essential elements for the study of the well being of family groups and in this way for the study of the well being of individuals. They are a tool for assessing the type of and level of support to which a person has access. By defining the extended family as the central support network for individual, support which would not have been defined as accessible to the individual using the 'Household family' definition becomes apparent.

Relational attributes

Related data: Supersedes previous data concept Family v.1.

Related to the data concept, Household v.2.

Related to the data elements:

> Family type v.2,
> Household type v.2,
> Marital status v.1.

Administrative attributes

Source document: McDonald, P. 1995. Families in Australia: A Socio-Demographic Perspective. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Source organisation: Australian Institute of Family Studies

Comments: This definition differs from the ABS standard. This is necessary because the ABS standard is based on household collection, which is not suitable, in many community services' areas. The community service definition needs to be broader to incorporate families that exist outside of households.

Household

Revised	*Status*	*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT	1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000521
NCSI Model Location			*Data Class*	*Version*
Party group/household			Socio-demographic	2

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type: DATA CONCEPT

Definition: A group of two or more related or unrelated people who usually reside in the same dwelling, who regard themselves as a household and who make common provision for food or other essentials for living. Or a person living in a dwelling who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living, without combining with any other person.

Context: Together with Family, Household is considered one of the basic groups of social aggregation. Information on household numbers and composition aids in identifying groups within the population such as multiple family households or the number of people living alone.

Relational attributes

Related data: Superseded previous data concept Household v.1.

Related to the data elements:

> Household type v.2,
> Family (concept) v.2,
> Family type v.2, and
> Marital status v.1.

Administrative attributes

Source document: ABS: 1995. Standards for Statistics on Families. Catalogue No. 1286.0. Canberra: AGPS.

ABS: 1995 (as amended). Directory of Concepts and Standards for Social, Labour and Demographic Statistics. Catalogue No. 1361.30.001 (Statistical Concepts Library). Canberra: AGPS.

Source organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Comments:

Target group

Revised	*Status*	*Effective Date*	*Reg. Auth.*	*ID No.*
	CURRENT	1/07/2000	NCSIMG	000537
NCSI Model Location			*Data Class*	*Version*
Party group/target group			Cross-Program	2

Identifying and definitional attributes

Data element type: DATA ELEMENT

Definition: The target group is a group of people with a particular characteristic or set of characteristics which, a particular community services program/service seeks to assist. Target groups may relate to population groups or communities, families/households, individuals, organisations or labour force groups. Characteristics may include age, cultural identity, geographic location, specific needs and other relevant characteristics.

Context: Target group is used in describing community services agencies, in service planning and in comparing community needs and service availability.

Relational and representational attributes

Datatype: Numeric   *Representational form:* CODE

Field size: *Min.* 3 *Max.* 3 *Representational layout:* NNN

Data domain: A classification of community services target groups is contained in the National Classifications of Community Services (currently Version 1.0, but to be revised and updated in 2001). To meet program or service specific needs, the categories used in individual data collections may be more detailed than those in the target group classification but they should always be mappable to categories in this classification.

Guide for use:

Collection methods:

Related data: Supersedes previous data element Target group v.1.

Administrative attributes

Source document: AIHW: 1997. National Classifications of Community Services. version 1.0. Catalogue No. HWI 7. Canberra: AIHW.

Source organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

Comments: Should be supported by data items delineating the individual characteristics that define the target population, such as Sex, Country of birth, etc.

At the present time very little community services data are classified to target groups but implementations of this classification is under active consideration by the National Community Services Data Committee.