

# Legal Services for Older Adults Decision Guides

## Skills Training Series: Legal Issue Spotting, Intake & Referrals

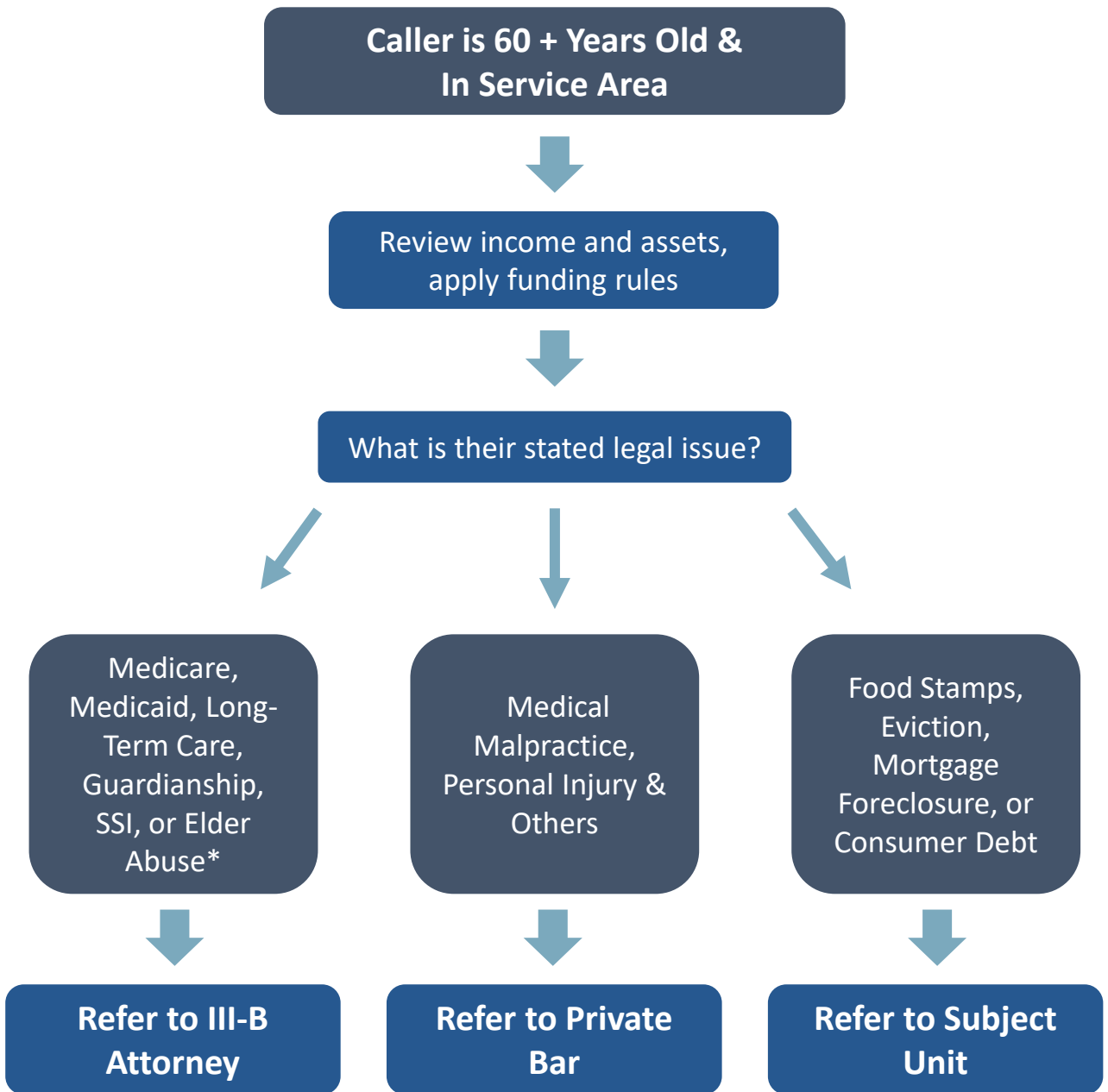
*The Decision Guides are clear visual aids intended to assist intake staff, attorneys, and community partners in determining follow-up questions and making intake decisions and referrals. They can be used in print or electronic format, depending on the preferences of the user.*

*The Decision Guides are samples, and should be modified to include program-specific and local information before use by an individual program.*

*For assistance with creating or customizing your own Decision Guides, contact NCLER at [ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:ConsultNCLER@acl.hhs.gov).*

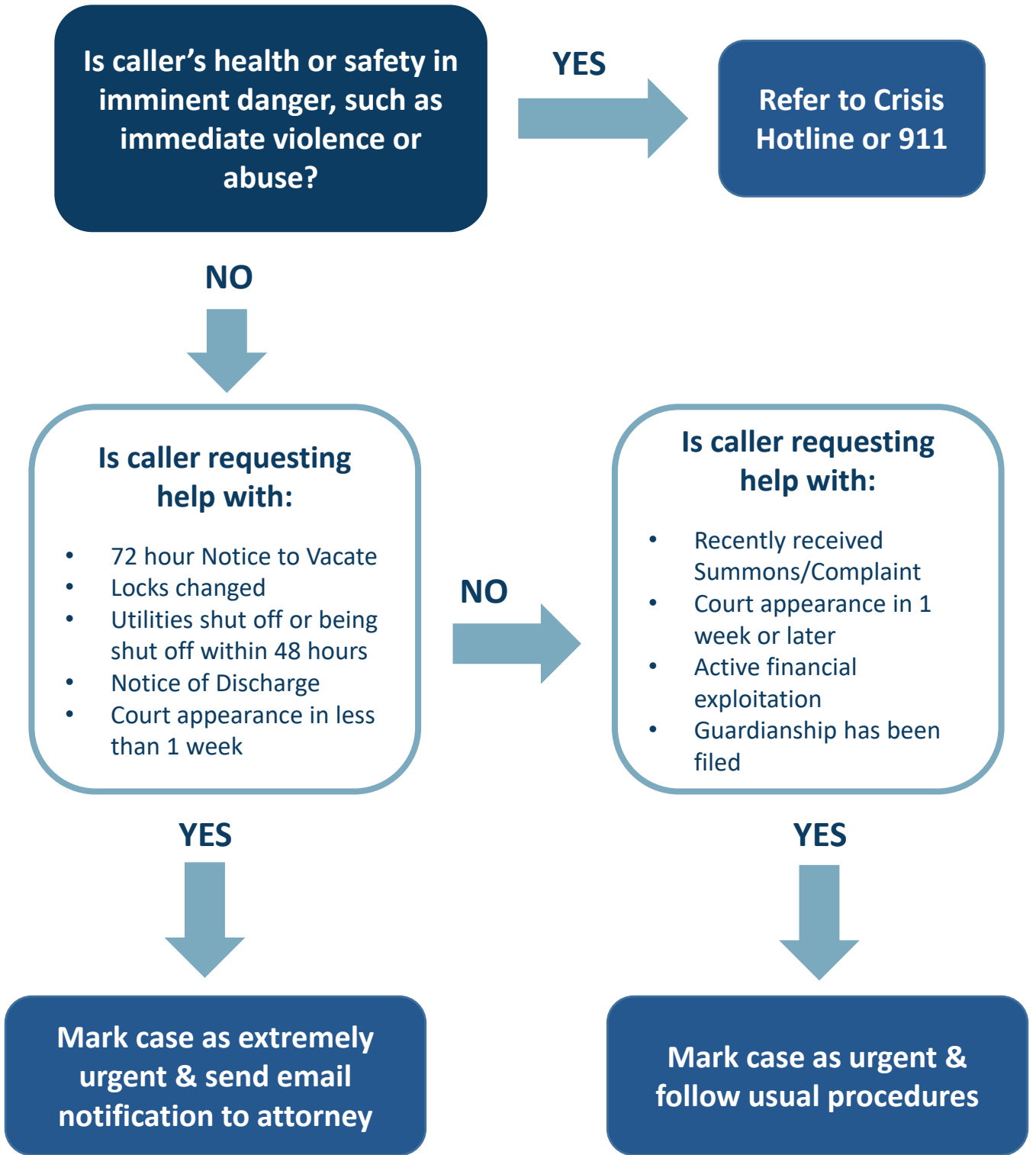
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## Decision Guide 1: Basic Intake Model



\* If issue is elder abuse, get a safe phone number for caller. If caller is in immediate danger, refer to Crisis Hotline/911.

## Decision Guide 2: Screening for Urgency



## Decision Guide 3: Follow-Up Questions

Before you close your file, consider some additional questions to determine...

Does your client have a safe living environment?

Does your client have their health care needs met?

Does your client have adequate nutrition?

Is your client at risk of abuse or exploitation?

Tell me about your apartment. What is it like?

Do you pay a lot each month for your doctor visits and prescriptions?

Do you feel like you have enough food to eat on most days?

Has anyone recently asked you to change your POA or will?

Are you comfortable having friends over to visit you?

Are there any medical bills that you are currently paying?

Have you ever applied for food stamps?

Have you noticed anything unusual or different about your bank accounts?

Do you have any trouble getting in or out of your home?

Have you ever gone without medical care because it was not covered or you couldn't afford it?

Are you able to get what you need at the grocery store each month?

Is there anyone in your life right now who makes you nervous or anxious?

## Decision Guide 4: Screening for Consumer & Income Issues

Client has mentioned having too many bills, running out of money each month, receiving collection calls, or struggling to pay for basic necessities.

Review client's budget. Ask them to provide bills & collection notices.

Does client recognize all debts as belonging to them or remember opening all accounts?

YES

NO

Proceed with Income Review. Does client have adequate income to cover their expenses?

Proceed with Fraud/Exploitation Review. Try to obtain **credit report** for client and review for unrecognized accounts.

YES

NO

Proceed with review for possible financial exploitation. If no exploitation detected, refer for budgeting assistance.

**Benefits Check Up** for eligibility for income assistance, food stamps and other benefits to help increase available income.

Review debt options with client, including settlement, cease communication letters and bankruptcy. Verify there are no pending lawsuits.

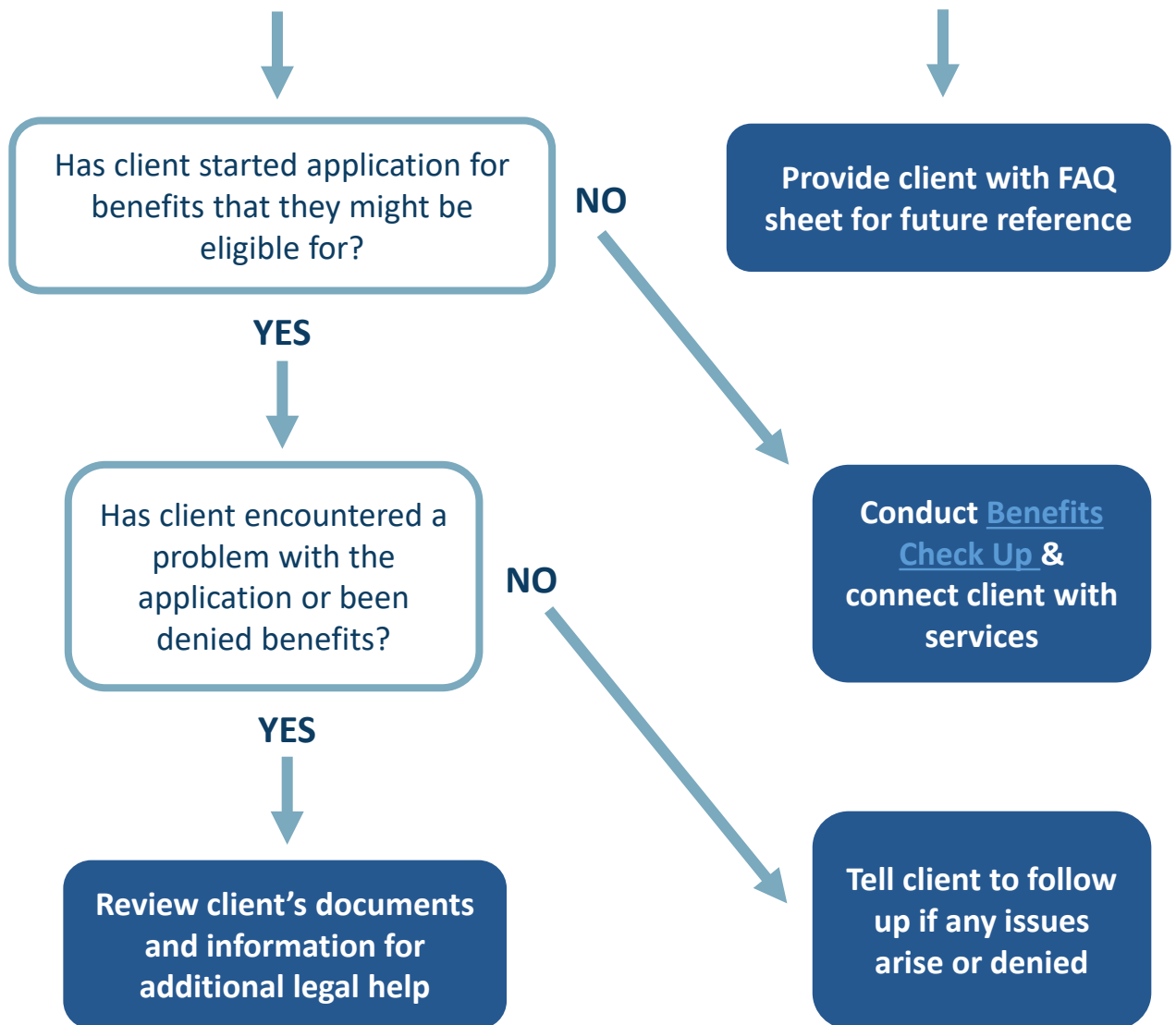
If unrecognized accounts are found in credit report, **take steps** to help client resolve identity theft.

## Decision Guide 5: Screening for Income Issues

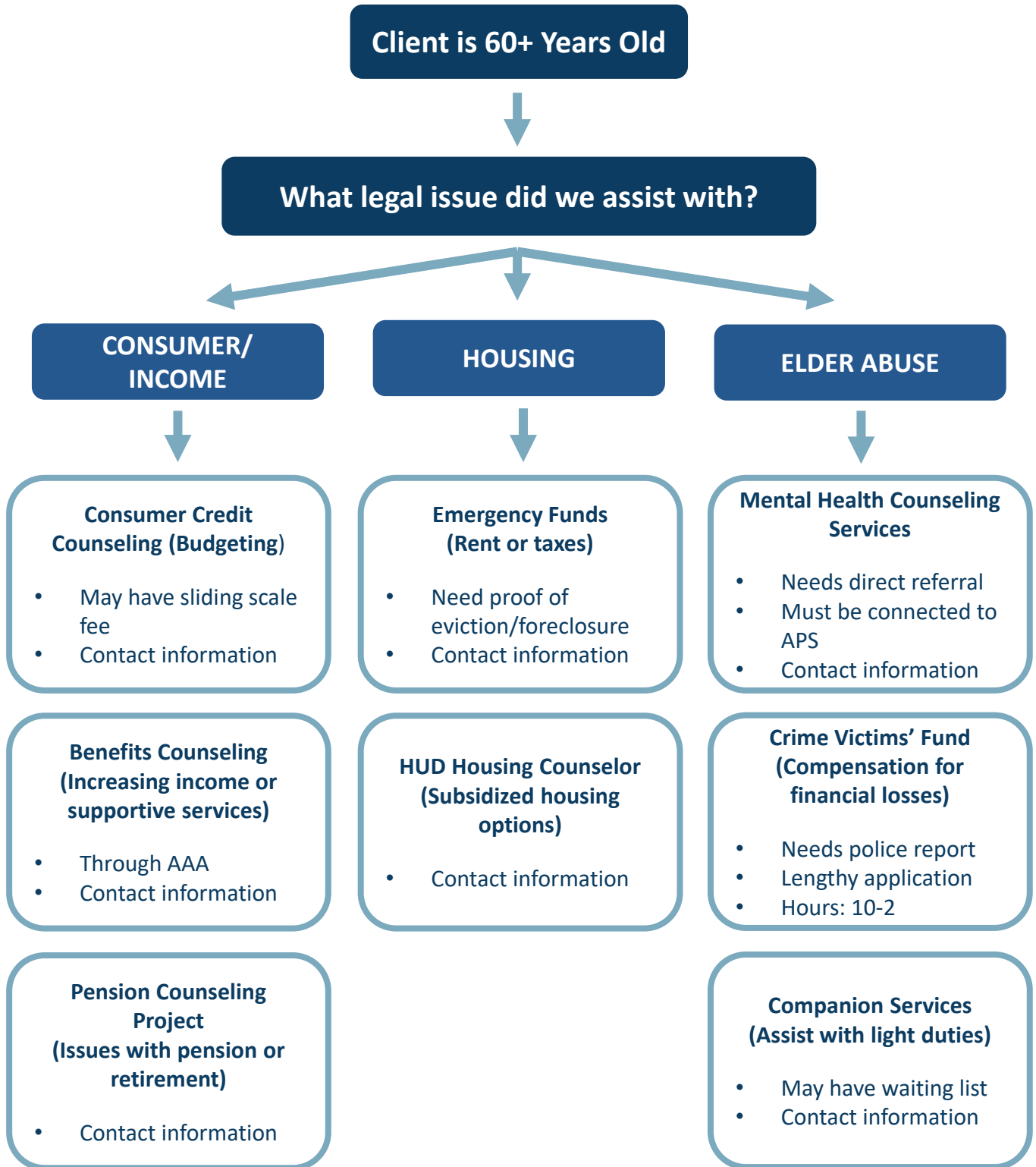
1. Is client disabled and not receiving SSI or SSID?
2. Is client a veteran and not receiving VA benefits?
3. Is client a surviving spouse of a veteran and not receiving VA benefits?
4. Is client's income level under \$750 per month?
5. Is client unable to afford basic necessities?
6. Did client have previous employment that might entitle them to a pension, but are not currently receiving pension income?

**Yes to any of the above**

**No to all of the above**



## Decision Guide 6: Older Adults Referral Guide



*This Decision Guide is a sample guide only, and it is intended to be customized by individual programs to include their specific office procedures, local resources, and information before use.*