

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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POLICY GUIDE 2001.05

ADOPTIVE RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENTS BETWEEN AGENCIES

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TO: Rules and Procedures Book Holders and Child Welfare Staff

FROM: 
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I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to provide a process for finding adoptive resources. It also outlines a procedure that assures that Department and private agency permanency (follow-up) staff and adoption specialists will work together to facilitate an adoptive placement when one agency serves the child and another agency provides the prospective adoptive family.

II. PRIMARY USERS

The primary users of this Policy Guide are Department and private agency caseworkers, supervisors, adoption specialists and Agency Performance Teams.

III. KEY WORDS

Adoption, recruitment, interagency adoptive placements, collaborative adoptions.

IV. FINDING AN ADOPTIVE RESOURCE

A) When a child needs an adoptive home, some recommended courses of actions are:

- 1) Convene a staffing of appropriate parties including the caseworker, supervisor, adoption specialist, licensing/resource staff and others with significant information on the child to develop a child specific recruitment plan.
- 2) Explore the interest of adults who know the child in becoming adoptive parents. Relatives, godparents and family friends



- 3) For older children, ask them for their suggestions of people to whom they feel close or connected as potential adoptive resources. It is also important to carefully review the child's file to find connections the child has had in his or her past. They may provide a resource for permanency.
 - 4) Brainstorm about possible sources of adoptive families that meet the child's unique characteristics. For example, if the child has a developmental disability, explore parent groups of developmentally disabled children or special education teachers' associations. If the child has artistic skills, contact the local art association, art teachers, etc. Think about matching opportunities that relate directly to the child's special interests, talents, or characteristics.
- B) Be sure the child is listed with the Adoption Information Center of Illinois (AICI). AICI is located at 188 W. Randolph, Suite 600, Chicago, Ill. 60601, (312) 346-1516 or (800) 572-2390. If the child has been listed, check with AICI to ensure that the listing is up to date. If an update is needed, request a Change Notice for Child Listing form from AICI, record the changes on the form and fax the form to AICI.
- C) Check with AICI for a list of families that meet the child's needs. They can provide a copy of the "Family Album" book of families waiting to adopt a child. AICI will list the child in the national photo listing web site. All licensed families listed in the Family Album receive a copy of the monthly ALS matching book of listed children and call AICI for the names of workers of children in whom they are interested. Workers are mailed a confirmation of the call and should contact the family or the family's agency and explore the possible match. AICI produces weekly suggested computer matches of listed children and families and mails all parties a match notice. Workers should contact the family or the family's agency and explore the possible match.
- D) Ask your adoption specialist and/or licensing or resource staff to assist in identifying licensed adoptive homes either in your Region or any other Region or agency.
- E) Contact the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (NAIC) at <http://www.calib.com/naic> for searchable databases of adoptive

resources. NAIC can also be reached at 330 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20447 (703) 352-3488 or (888) 251-0075.

- F) Attend networking meetings to present the child's profile such as the Adoption Information Service meetings held in Chicago.

V. MAKING THE MATCH

Select several adoptive home possibilities from the resources detailed in the previous section. Call the licensing worker of the prospective adoptive parents to discuss their current status and whether they are still interested in adoption. The caseworker or adoption specialist for the child should share non-identifying information about the child with the licensing worker and prospective adoptive family in the interest of determining whether they are seriously interested in being considered as a match. For those families that appear to be a potential match, request a copy of the home study and the **CFS 2017, Child/Caregiver Matching Tool**, with the portion for the prospective family completed by the licensing agency.

The agency requesting the home study is to acknowledge receipt of the study within one business day. They should complete the child portion of the **CFS 2017, Child/Caregiver Matching Tool**, and make a decision whether to use the family or not within fifteen working days of receipt of the home study. If two or more families appear eligible, the agency with the child's case should meet with the respective licensing workers to discuss the family profiles in greater depth before a decision to proceed is made. The reasons for selecting a family (and rejecting other families, if there is more than one eligible candidate) should be recorded in the worker's case notes. The child's worker must also send a Change Notice to AICI once the adoptive family has been identified.

VI. COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR INTERAGENCY ADOPTIVE PLACEMENTS

When a home is selected for a child that is not supervised by the agency with case responsibility for the child, representatives from the two agencies involved will collaboratively develop a plan that ensures appropriate continuity for the child, as well as support for the new adoptive parents. This plan should detail how disclosure of information will be handled, as well as a plan for pre-placement visits, placement, post placement support for the adoptive family and child, preparation of the subsidy, and managing the work necessary for finalization. In addition, the plan should address logistics related to medical and other specialized treatment if the child requires ongoing care by medical or other specialists who may not be available near the home of the adoptive parents.

The adoption placement plan for the child and the adoptive home shall be agreed to in writing and approved by appropriate supervisory staff of the two agencies. Originals will be filed in the child's record and a copy given to the prospective adoptive parents and the Agency Performance Team supervisor

in downstate regions or Agency Performance Team liaison in Cook County. The child's agency must send AICI a Change Notice to inform AICI that the child is "placed" as soon as the child begins living with the adoptive family.

As a general rule in order to maintain continuity for the child, the child's case should remain with the agency that has been providing the case management and foster care services. If circumstances preclude this agency's effective management of the case – for example, if the adoptive placement is geographically distant and the licensing agency is in closer proximity to provide oversight and support – the child's case may be transferred. The basis for any such transfers should be detailed in the adoptive placement plan developed for the child. Supervisors of each agency must approve all plans for case transfers. Prior approval of all case transfers must be secured from the Agency Performance Liaison in Cook County, the Agency Performance Team supervisor in downstate regions, or the DCFS Regional Administrator, depending on the parties involved in the transfer.

VII. PERFORMANCE CREDITS FOR COLLABORATIVE ADOPTIONS

For agencies with performance-based contracts and all DCFS Regions, both the agency/Region managing the child's case and the agency/Region providing the adoptive home will each receive a full performance credit for a collaborative adoption.

It is the responsibility of the agency/Region providing case management to provide documentation to the other agency/Region regarding the details of the shared adoption and the progress of the match. The agency/Region providing case management will create an official letter, on agency letterhead, which outlines the details of the shared adoption plan. The details of the plan referenced in Section VI can serve as the contents of the "official letter" or the information can be included as an attachment to that letter. This letter and the shared adoption plan are submitted to DCFS performance contracting staff at the time of the quarterly reconciliation process. The agency/Region providing case management is also responsible for documenting the adoption with the AFCARS information (CFS 484), court orders, and final living arrangement on the **CFS 906-1**.

Neither agency/Region will receive an adoption credit until the adoption is finalized. The child's case will continue to be considered part of the case management agency's BAT/BARC until the adoption is final. If case management is retained by the agency/Region serving the child, the agency/Region providing the licensed home is not eligible for an additional intake.

In those exceptional instances where the child's case is transferred to the adoptive parents' agency/Region, the following rules apply:

- o The adoptive parents' agency/Region (this will be the licensing agency for the adoptive home) will be expected to carry the case, and it will be counted as additional intake.
- o It is the responsibility of the child's sending agency/Region to document the transfer of the case for the purpose of adoption according to the procedures set forth in Administrative Procedure #9, Case Transfer.
- o Prior approval of all case transfers must be secured from the Agency Performance Liaison in Cook County, the Agency Performance Team supervisor in downstate regions or the appropriate DCFS Regional Administrator.
- o The transferring agency/Region will receive a neutral outcome until the adoption is finalized.

VIII. AGENCIES WITH ADOPTION CONTRACTS

Downstate performance contract providers still retain their adoption contracts. Other non-performance based agencies, such as those providing specialized foster care or agencies too small for a performance contract are reimbursed solely through their adoption contracts for adoption related work. The shared adoption credit is applied to these agencies in the following manner:

- A) For performance-based agencies with adoption contracts, the agency receives a performance credit by completing the collaborative plan and submitting the letter and other documentation described in Sections VI and VII. In addition, the agencies with adoption contracts will share equally the reimbursement rate for a newly recruited adoptive resource. The agency that provides the adoptive home can claim half the current adoption contract rate at the point of the adoptive placement. The agency that retains case management responsibility can claim half of the rate at the point the adoption is finalized. For a second and any subsequent child placed in the same adoptive home, the payment rate is again half for the agency that provides the home and half to the agency providing case management services at finalization. Documentation of the collaborative plan must be submitted with each billing. The agencies are not eligible for any performance credits until the adoption is finalized.
- B) Non-performance based agencies with standard adoption contracts will receive the payments described above depending on whether they provide the adoptive resource and/or case management through finalization of the adoption. Both agencies need to present a joint plan, but do not need to provide reconciliation since they do not receive performance credits.

IX. PLACEMENT DISRUPTION PRIOR TO FINALIZATION

If the adoptive placement disrupts prior to finalization, the agency/Region serving the child continues to provide placement and casework services as well as adoption planning. Neither the agency/Region providing the adoptive resource or the agency doing case management receives a performance credit for the failed placement. In cases where an adoptive placement disrupts, the child should immediately be re-listed with AICI.

X. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If the agencies/Region serving the child and the adoptive family are unable to reach agreement on a collaborative plan, the case will be referred to the Agency Performance Team Supervisor of the region serving the child. The Agency Performance Team will convene a staffing to review the facts of the case and the issues in dispute. If an agreement cannot be reached on a plan as a result of the staffing, the Agency Performance Team Supervisor will recommend a solution that will be binding on both agencies/Regions.

XI. QUESTIONS

Direct questions regarding this Policy Guide to the Division of Foster Care and Permanency Services 217-524-2422.

XII. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide directly behind Rule Section 309.100 Preparation of Children for Adoption.