



CDSS

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DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

July 19, 2017

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 17-50

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL COUNTY ICPC LIAISONS
ALL CDSS ADOPTION DISTRICT OFFICES
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES

SUBJECT: INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN
(ICPC) EQUIVALENCY LETTER FOR THE RESOURCE FAMILY
APPROVAL PROGRAM (RFA) OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT

REFERENCE: [WRITTEN DIRECTIVES V4](#); [ACL 16-10](#); [SOCIAL SECURITY ACT SECTION 471\(a\)\(10\)](#); [WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 16519.5](#); [HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTION 1522-1522.1](#); [TITLE 22, CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, DIVISION 2, SUBCHAPTER 5, ARTICLE 11](#); [CDSS MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES \(MPP\), SECTION 31-510](#)

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

This ACL is provided to assist counties in explaining the RFA to ICPC member states.

Various California counties have experienced difficulties explaining to other states the legality of the RFA process used in California and its equivalency to a licensing status. These difficulties can result in delayed foster care and adoptive placements made pursuant to the ICPC and result in funding issues with these placements.

In an effort to avoid these challenges, the California Department of Social Services has developed the attached equivalency letter. Counties are encouraged to provide this equivalency letter to other ICPC states as an explanation of California's approval process in connection with foster care and adoptive placements. The use of this letter will enable the other ICPC member states to more readily understand California's RFA approval process and avoid unnecessary placement and/or payment delays for children in receipt of federal foster care funds. Counties should provide the attached letter and the RFA forms with the ICPC100A when transmitting final approval to the requesting

ACL NO. 17-50
Page Two

state. Please note that some states may require an annual update to continue payments.

Questions related to this ACL should be directed to the Out-of-State Placement Policy Unit at (916) 651-8100 or email ICPC@dss.ca.gov. For questions regarding California's RFA process, counties should contact the Resource Family Approval Unit at RFA@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

Attachment



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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA INTERSTATE COMPACT ON THE
PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN
EQUIVALENCY LETTER FOR
RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL FOR FOSTER CARE
AND ADOPTIONS AS A RECEIVING STATE**

The State of California has developed a Resource Family Approval Process (RFA) to approve caregivers in connection with foster care and adoptive placements. The approval process is codified in California statute in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 16519.5. The RFA process is further detailed in Version 4 of the RFA Written Directives published on February 6, 2017. Please check the CDSS website for the most current version:

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program> .

Under the California RFA process, resource families are not issued a license, but instead receive an approval. The RFA is a new family-friendly, child-centered caregiver approval process that combines elements of and replaces the current foster care licensing, including relative, adoption and guardianship approval processes.

California's RFA process is recognized by the federal government, and resource families are eligible for Title IV-E federal financial participation.

The RFA process ensures the home meets the core health and safety standards previously required of licensed foster family homes in California. Beginning on January 1, 2017, all new foster caregivers in California are required to meet the RFA standards in order to become an approved resource family. Further, all existing foster caregivers will be required to convert to resource family approval. California's RFA process has been incorporated into California's Title IV-E State Plan, which was submitted to and approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families. In compliance with the Social Security Act section 471(a)(3) [42 U.S.C. 671], the Title IV-E State Plan foster care payments shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, which includes all county welfare and probation departments, and is mandatory upon the political subdivisions administering it. As such, homes approved as resource families are eligible for Title IV-E federal financial participation.

Related to the assessment of the placement resource, the RFA process includes:

1) Written Directives Section 6-01: Comprehensive Assessment:

- a) The comprehensive assessment shall include:
 - (1) Home environment assessment pursuant to Section 6-02
 - (2) Background check assessment pursuant to Section 6-03

- (3) Permanency assessment pursuant to Section 6-04
 - (1) Psychosocial assessment pursuant to Section 6-05
 - (2) Pre-approval training pursuant to Section 6-06
- (c) As deemed appropriate and necessary by a county, an applicant may be required to complete additional activities to help determine an applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.

2) Written Directives Section 4-06: Incoming ICPC Requests

- (a) Upon receipt of a complete incoming ICPC request, a county shall complete the comprehensive assessment of an applicant for RFA within 60 days
 - (1) Pre-approval training, as specified in Section 6-06, may be completed after the 60 day timeframe.
 - (2) A report shall be submitted to the sending agency within 60 days in pursuant to Family Code section 7901.01.
 - a. The report shall address the extent to which placement in the home would meet the needs of the family.
 - b. If the applicant has not completed pre approval training, the report shall state the anticipated date of completion.

3) Written Directives Section 6-02: Home Environment Assessment:

- (a) A home environment assessment shall include all of the following:
 - (1) The results of a background check assessment pursuant to Section 06 -03A.
 - (2) A health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the applicant's home to determine compliance with Article 11.
 - (3) A fire clearance pursuant to subsections (b) and (c).
 - (4) A capacity determination pursuant to subsections (d), (e), and (f).

4) Written Directives Section 6-03A: Background Check Assessment:

- (a) A county shall conduct a background check assessment for each applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home of an applicant or Resource Family.
- (b) A background check assessment shall include all of the following:
 - (1) A review of an individual's state and federal criminal record information pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5.

- (2) Consideration of all substantiated allegations of child abuse and severe neglect contained in the Child Abuse Central index pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1522.1.
 - (3) A Megan's Law registered sex offender check.
 - (4) A Department of Motor Vehicles check on the applicant and any adults residing or regularly present in the home who may frequently transport a child or non-minor dependent.
 - (5) A check for prior-licensing-related disciplinary actions
 - (6) A check for prior licensing history contained in the Licensing Information System maintained by the department.
- (c) An individual shall be required to obtain a criminal record clearance or criminal record exemption pursuant to Section 06-03B prior to approval, residency, or regular presence in a Resource Family.

5) Written Directives Section 6-04: Permanency Assessment

- (a) A permanency assessment shall include all of the following:
- (1) Verification that an applicant completed pre-approval training as specified in Section 6-06.
 - (2) A psychosocial assessment of the applicant as specified in Section 6-05.
 - (3) Verification of the completion of any other activities related to an applicant's ability to achieve permanency with a child or nonminor dependent.

6) Written Directives Section 6-05: Psychosocial Assessment

- (a) A county shall conduct interviews as follows:
- (1) A minimum of three face-to-face interviews of each applicant.
 - (2) A minimum of one separate face-to-face interview of all other persons, including children and non-minor dependents, residing in the home of an applicant.
 - (3) Additional interviews as deemed necessary by the county.

7) Written Directives Section 6-06: Pre-Approval Training

- (a) A county shall ensure each applicant completes a minimum of 12 hours of pre-approval training prior to RFA.
- (c) Pre-approval training shall address the topics specified in Section 6-06(c)(1)-(16).
- (e) A county shall provide an applicant with pre-approval training or shall require an applicant attend pre-approval training provided by qualified sources.

8) Written Directives Section 6-07: Written Report-

- (a) A county shall complete a written report of the comprehensive assessment of an applicant.
- (c) A county shall approve or deny an applicant in the Written Report and provide the reasons for its determination.

The Resource Family Approval Certificate Form RFA-05(A) or a similar certificate documents that Resource Family Approval was granted by a county, and this certificate indicates that the caregiver's home meets the standards for the State of California. To confirm whether a family has been approved according to appropriate standards, a copy of the Form RFA-05(A), or similar certificate verifying approval, should be sent by the county approving the home with the 100A. Additionally, a copy of the form should be maintained in the minor or nonminor dependent(s) eligibility file of the sending state to verify approval of the home in the event of a federal audit.

Any questions related to the approval of a specific placement resource through the RFA process, please contact the ICPC Liaison in the receiving county. For general questions related to the RFA process, email the RFA Program Unit at RFA@dss.ca.gov.