



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

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



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

Date: January 12, 2017

TO: FOSTER FAMILY AGENCIES

FROM: Teresa Owensby, CCRB

SUBJECT: Email Update: Foster Family Agencies - Implementation of Resource Family Approval Program

The department is excited that statewide implementation of the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program has begun for both county placing agencies and licensed foster family agencies. The RFA program streamlines processes, unifies approval standards for all caregivers, prepares families to better meet the needs of vulnerable children in the foster care system, and enables a seamless transition to permanency.

We acknowledge that both county placing agencies and licensed foster families agencies still have many questions regarding RFA implementation. The department is committed to provide ongoing technical assistance and support as needed.

We have received many updated program statements from FFAs that include RFA implementation plans as required. The department will be conducting an expedited review of RFA components for each FFA program statement. In the meantime, this posting provides clarification regarding an FFA's ability to implement RFA, approve a resource family applicant, and convert an existing certified family home to an approved resource family.

Effective January 1, 2017, a foster family agency (FFA):

- Shall not accept applications to certify foster homes.
 - Note: A FFA shall continue the certification process to approve or deny all certified family home applications received on or before December 31, 2016 in accordance with the laws applicable to certified family homes and Articles 1-8 of Chapter 8.8, Foster Family Agencies, contained in Division 6, Licensing of Community Care Facilities, Title 22, Social Services, of the California Code of Regulations.)

- May begin to implement the resource family approval program upon the submission to the department of a written program statement that includes a resource family program implementation plan and describes how the FFA will comply with the resource family approval standards and requirements, as specified in Subchapter 1, Resource Family Approval, commencing with Section 88300 of the FFA interim licensing standards.
 - Note: Implementation may include recruiting new families and conducting background checks, trainings, health and safety assessments and psychosocial assessments. But an FFA shall not approve an applicant or convert an existing certified family home until it receives approval from the department to do so.
 - Note: FFAs are required to obtain authorization from the Department of Justice to receive criminal record information. See below for additional information.
- Shall finalize approval of resource families in lieu of certifying foster families upon approval by the department of the FFA's resource family program implementation plan contained in the FFA's program statement.
- May begin converting its existing certified family homes to approved resource families upon approval by the department of the FFA's RFA conversion plan contained in the FFA's program statement.
 - Note: FFAs are initially encouraged to focus on the recruitment of new families and to create a detailed conversion plan for their existing certified family homes. The department will be releasing further instructions for FFAs on how to convert existing certified family homes, including those certified family homes with approved adoption home studies.
- Shall comply with the resource family approval standards and requirements contained in the interim licensing standards and applicable laws.
- Shall utilize the "draft" version of the RFA forms specified in Section 88302(a) of the interim licensing standards until the final forms are posted. Upon finalization and posting of the forms, FFA will be required to use the final forms for new applicants from that date forward.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Authorization -- Originating Agency Identifier (ORI)

An FFA implementing RFA must be authorized by the DOJ to obtain criminal history information necessary to complete an RFA assessment. To become authorized, an FFA must establish mailing and billing information and obtain an Originating Agency Identifier (ORI) code by completing the application package which can be found on the [Attorney General's website](#). Additional information can be found at: <http://oag.ca.gov/fingerprints/agencies>. Note: Each FFA was sent a letter dated July 29, 2016 entitled Resource Families Approvals (AB 403) regarding obtaining criminal history information from the Department of Justice. This letter can be obtained on the [CCR website](#) or by contacting your local [CCLD Regional Office](#).

LIS and LAARS Checks

As part of the RFA Program, the background check assessments include obtaining checks for prior licensing-related disciplinary actions and history through LIS and LAARS which are maintained by the Department. For information on how to obtain LIS and LAARS, please refer to: [PIN 16-03-CRP - Resource Family Approval \(RFA\) Foster Family Agencies \(FFAs\) Background Check Assessment](#).

For additional information:

- Email the CCR Inbox: ccr@dss.ca.gov
- Email the RFA Inbox: RFA@dss.ca.gov
- Contact your local CCLD Regional Office: http://cclld.ca.gov/res/pdf/childres_rolist16.pdf
- Visit the RFA Website: <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG3416.htm>
- Visit the CCR Website: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/PG4869.htm>