

Task Force Executive Summaries

GENERAL LICENSING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for LD IMPLEMENTATION

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license more caregivers who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in care, with an interest in caring for children and youth of varying age and gender, sibling groups and children with special, developmental, behavioral or medical needs. To create a consistent, efficient and eco-friendly process. Meet timeframes, eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies and maximize IV-E dollars.

OBJECTIVES:

To license welcome and affirming homes for all children who are served by DCYF. To decrease time to license a family, after submitting the initial home study application and BAF(s), to increase the percent of families that complete the licensing process, and to increase the percent of licensed families that take one placement in the first year (post licensure).

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Implement a tiered home study approach (see Home Study Summary for LD Implementation);
- (2) Kinship providers and General providers:
 - One licensing standard, with certain exemptions for relatives (defined in RCW 13.36.020) seeking licensure.
 - If a licensed kinship placement wants to expand to take non-kin placements, they would have to complete the additional requirement for general licenses (see training), but would not have to redo any requirements or paperwork already completed.
 - If a licensed kinship provider doesn't have any waivers in place (safety or non-safety), they would be in compliance with WAC to accept non-kin placements.
- (3) Streamline requirements to reduce workload for families and staff, without added risk to child safety.



ADOPTION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for LD IMPLEMENTATION

OVERALL GOALS:

Elevate the importance of completing requirements of adoption when best suited for the child(ren) and families involved. Through a consistent, efficient and eco-friendly process, timely assessments that support adoption will be achieved.

BACKGROUND: Recruitment of adoptive homes is different than foster home recruitment. Adoption is defined as a social, legal and lifelong permanent commitment for children and youth, while foster care is temporary care until the child or youth is reunified with family or another permanent plan is achieved. An analysis of data from calendar years 2017, 2018 and 2019 shows that 24% of children exited care through adoption.

OBJECTIVES:

Prospective adoptive families must have an approved pre-placement home study report prior to being considered as an adoptive family- RCW 26.33.190.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Eliminate duplicative data entry. Tier 4 is the set of legal requirements for adoption, in addition to the well-being assessment (Tier 2), for any family wishing to adopt. It is possible for a family to include adoption in a foster care license home study (Tier 3), or to become approved for adoption-only.
- (2) For adoption-only, Tier 2 and Tier 4 requirements would apply.
- (3) Adoption update – for applicants who have children currently placed in their home and have experienced significant changes in the home as specified in Policy 5110:
 - There is a significant change within the family such as Marriage, divorce or a separation.
 - Someone new moves into the home who is identified as a caregiver and/or who may pose a risk to children.
 - There is a medical condition, mental health condition or significant change affecting the caregiver’s ability to care for children.
 - There are concerns about the caregiver’s ability to meet the needs and/or support an additional child.
 - The family previously adopted a child and is adopting another child that is outside the recommendations on the previous home study.
 - The local court requires and update.
 - Adoption Area Administrator (AA) may request an adoption home study update by contacting LD AA. LD AA will review request and determine if an update is needed.

Original Date: June 9, 2021

Licensing Division | Approved for distribution by Ruben Reeves, Licensing Policy & Data Administrator

KINSHIP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for LD IMPLEMENTATION

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license more kinship caregivers; create a consistent, efficient and eco-friendly process and eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies.

BACKGROUND: Current data shows that approximately 46% of children placed in out of home care are placed with kinship caregivers. These caregivers are either relatives or suitable other caregivers who have known the child and/or has pre-existing relationship with the child. Empirical research suggests that there is a direct correlation between safety and kinship foster homes and in the long term, kinship placements improve child safety and provide permanency.

OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective is to increase licensed kinship placements and provide support and resources for our kin caregivers.

BACKGROUND: Kinship caregivers are unaware of the type of support that is available to a licensed foster home. Often kinship caregivers are confused surrounding the licensing requirements and the process to licensure. Kinship caregivers often opt out of becoming foster licensed because there are too many requirements for them to meet to care for their kin child.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goal of licensing more kinship care placements, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Provide early engagement and support to kinship caregivers.
 - In limited regions, The Caregiver Engagement Unit (CEU) was established in October 2020 to provide support and guidance to caregivers at the earliest onset of placement. It is the hope and goal to expand CEU to other regions within the next couple of years.
- (2) Reducing the requirements of becoming foster licensed to kinship placements.
 - Reducing forms that are not required to determine placement approval.
 - Reducing training hours and having trainings that are relevant to kinship placements.
 - Reduce time of verifying documents but still hold kinship caregivers accountable to meet WAC's.
- (3) Adding additional non-safety exemptions for licensed relative placements.
 - Allow additional exemptions to be waived for relative placements.

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HOME STUDY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for LD IMPLEMENTATION

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license more caregivers; create a consistent, efficient and eco-friendly process and eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies.

BACKGROUND: In 2020, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families asked the Government Performance Lab to look across kinship placement, licensing and support processes to identify ways to increase: support available to kinship placements, proportion of out-of-home placements with kin and proportion of kin who are licensed. This review found that “the one-size-fits-all approach to home study slows licensing, and has other repercussion throughout the system” [sic]. They encouraged a redesign of the home study process utilizing a tiered approach to better serve client needs and better utilize staff capacity.

OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective is to increase home study completion timelines and provide appropriate support and resources to all foster caregivers with a lens on racial and social equity.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goal of timely home studies, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (4) Implement a tiered home study approach: The tiered approach divides all requirements of the unified home study into specific tiers that may be completed simultaneously or separately. Tiers are designed to put the work where it is most needed at the time it makes the highest impact. The tiered approach places the agency’s emphasis on relational and cultural permanency while also promoting legal permanency.
 - *Level 1 – Safety Assessment/Emergent Placement:* This work solely fall on the Child Welfare worker and the recommendation is to fully implement or update CW policy 45274 ensuring basic levels of safety for the child. This level is required for all emergent placements when a home study has not been completed and applies to Kin providers only.
 - *Level 2 – Well Being Assessment:* Required for all current and prospective caregivers and focus’ on well-being, relational and cultural permanency.
 - *Level 3 – Licensure:* Adds licensure requirements
 - *Level 4 – Adoption:* Adds adoption requirements
- (5) Differentiate requirements between Kinship providers and General providers.
 - All categories are addressed but level of depth may differ based on need. This will be identified by the presence of a predicative indicator (addressed in section 3).

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- Provide a logical pathway for kin providers who already provide a foundational level of child safety.
- (6) Implement Predicative Indicators.
- *Identification:* Most of the indicators have been systematically and intentionally imbedded in the home study sections as questions for the LD worker to answer based on the applicant's responses on the application, during interviews and through their own assessment.
 - *Expansion:* Indicators will be used as a tool to identify potential areas that need additional information before finalizing a home study.
 - *Mitigation:* Mitigation strategies have been built into the new home study as a list of options to check, with "other" as an option to capture those strategies that aren't listed. There is also an additional narrative component to document resilience.
- (7) Create recommendations for Portal Functionality and business needs: In addition to licensor usability, consideration also included forethought into data gathering, analysis, and reporting.

RECRUITMENT, INQUIRIES, and RETENTION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERALL GOALS:

The way in which DCYF recruits and retains caregivers are key programmatic elements to the work done within the Licensing Division. Understanding the experience an individual has from their initial point of interest, to engaging in the home study assessment, to approval recommendations, to accepting placement, to then final closure. The work of recruitment and retention intersects with every aspect within LD. Obtaining one system to link processes together will allow the work of recruitment and retention to be data-driven, intentional, and measurable.

OBJECTIVES:

Create a system that captures progress of an individual before, during, and after licensure. Pre-licensure tracking includes prospective foster parent progress from point of inquiry through the licensing pipeline. Post-licensure tracking includes retention milestones, support interventions provided, reasons for withdrawals and closure. The system will maintain technology to report on multiple factors including, but not limited to, individual demographics, motivation, recruitment source, dates between identified stages, license issuance, initial placement, interventions, and support provided.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Implement electronic system that allows for individual to apply to be a caregiver from initial point of inquiry through the licensing process.
- (2) Allow DCYF staff/contracted provider access to case management features and data reports to track and analyze status of individual record at intervals pre and post licensure.
- (3) Clearly articulate paths to licensure and include CPA profiles in the system so prospective foster parents understand available options within their geographical location.
- (4) Adopt proposed process for assigning inquiries and managing transfers (to include CEU and CPA's)
- (5) Ensure pre-service training is easily accessible and Orientation is updated and embedded into system.
- (6) Implement exit strategies to capture reasons at application withdrawal, inquiry withdrawal, and license closure.
- (7) Continuous Quality Improvement elements implemented where opportunity to provide feedback, request support, evaluate the process at every stage.

GENERAL LICENSING EXECUTIVE SUMMARY for CPA Certification Implementation

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license more caregivers who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in care, with an interest in caring for children and youth of varying age and gender, sibling groups and children with special, developmental, behavioral or medical needs. To create a consistent, efficient and eco-friendly process. Meet timeframes, eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies and maximize IV-E dollars.

OBJECTIVES:

To license welcome and affirming homes for all children who are served by DCYF. To allow a Child Placing Agency (CPA) to use LD online portal functionality and new LD Tiered home study. The CPA applicant may input their applicant and needed documentation for the CPA to certify the applicant meets all Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR). Then provide this as an online transaction to LD Regional Licensing for approval of the applicants foster care license. To decrease the delays from application to the final license approval for CPA certified homes. To enhance the ability of the Child Placing Agency to monitor certain ongoing compliance with their certified foster care licensed homes.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Implement a tiered home study approach (see Home Study Summary for LD Implementation);
- (2) Streamline requirements to reduce workload for families, agencies and staff without added risk to child safety.
- (3) Allow CPA to work with applicants via portal while conducting home study up to the certification.
- (4) Allow increased speed of shared information between CPA licensors and their LD Regional Licensor.
- (5) Increase the timeliness from application to approved license.
- (6) Allow CPA certain ability to monitor licensing compliance with their certified foster home via on line portal.

MAINTENANCE AND INVESTIGATIONS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license and monitor Foster Homes and increase foster home resources. To do this we are to create an online option for foster parents to become licensed, renew, amend and modify their license, track trainings, and enhance the ability to collaborate between licensing and foster parents. Meet timeframes, eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies and maximize IV-E dollars.

OBJECTIVES:

To license safe and effective foster homes for all children who are served by DCYF. To streamline the licensing process and increase communication between Licensing, foster parents and other partners. Allow for increased information sharing between licensing division and foster parents providing care to foster children.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Implement electronic system that allows providers to apply on line.
- (2) Use e-signatures for all regional licensing forms and application through portal. Automatically send alerts to licenser and agency provider through a shared calendar function.
- (3) Allow providers to track progress through status bar as well as providers to monitor and update their staff rosters via portal functionality.
- (4) Streamline requirements to reduce workload for families and staff, without added risk to child safety.
- (5) Robust reporting of licensed capacity, number in care, and types of contracts linked to the license.
- (6) Enable portal, FamLink, Outlook email to interface to allow secure, reliable, easy use for foster parents, LD workers, Child Welfare, training partners, to access forms, share information and input or upload information into the provider's portal file.
- (7) The technology and procedures in # 6 would also effectively improve the overcapacity requests and communication.

GROUP CARE AND CHILD PLACING AGENCY SUMMARY for LD IMPLEMENTATION

OVERALL GOALS:

The overall goal of the Licensing Division is to license and monitor facilities increasing our residential care capacities. To do this we are to create an online option for residential facilities to become licensed, track roster, and enhance the ability to collaborate between licensing and providers. Meet timeframes, eliminate unnecessary steps and redundancies and maximize IV-E dollars.

OBJECTIVES:

To license safe and effective facilities for all children who are served by DCYF. To streamline the licensing process and increase communication between licensing and partnering agencies. Allow for increased information sharing between licensing division and residential facilities providing care to foster children.

STRATEGIES:

To achieve the overall goals, the following is recommended to be implemented in the Licensing Division.

- (1) Implement electronic system that allows providers to apply on line.
- (2) Use e-signatures for all regional licensing forms and application through portal. Automatically send alerts to licensor and agency provider through a shared calendar function.
- (3) Allow providers to track progress through status bar as well as providers to monitor and update their staff rosters via portal functionality.
- (4) Streamline requirements to reduce workload for families and staff, without added risk to child safety.
- (5) Robust reporting of licensed capacity, number in care, and types of contracts linked to the license.