Department of Family and Children’s Services

**Family and Permenency Bureau**

*373 Julian Street Building #2*

*San Jose, Ca 95110*

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***We Believe***

*Resource Families are fully committed to nurturing and supporting a child.*

*Resource Families are respected and valued team members.*

*Resource Families support family connections.*

*Resource Families are our neighbors who are specially trained and skilled in meeting the diverse needs of children in their care.*

We are always recruiting for more foster families. Refer friends to 299-KIDS or visit our webpage at:

<http://www.sccgov.org/fpr>

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**Date**: August 9, 2014

**Dear Prospective Caregiver,**

We are pleased to announce that Santa Clara County has begun to implement the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process. We are joining Kings, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties, who have already launched, to be among the first counties in California to implement and shape the RFA process. Statewide implementation of the remaining counties will begin in 2017.

Please see important deadlines at the end of this letter.

***What is the RFA?***

The Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program was authorized through Senate Bill 1013 (Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012). The statute requires the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), in consultation with county child welfare agencies, foster parent associations, and other interested community parties, to implement a unified, family friendly, and child-centered resource family approval process.

This new process replaces the existing multiple processes, eliminates duplication, and increases approval standards by incorporating a comprehensive permanency assessment of all families that want to provide care to a child, including relative care, foster, adopt, or provide legal guardianship to a child.

***What is a Resource Family?***

The term Resource Family, replaces the terms such as foster parent, adoptive family, guardianship family, and relative/NREFM. A Resource Family is considered to be approved individuals or couples, regardless of whether they are related to a child in foster care, who provide supervision of a juvenile, court dependent or ward.

***RFA Process Changes and Enhances our Services***

 **R**educes Processes and Paperwork

 The RFA process is a streamlined process that includes one application, one background check and a combined home environment and permanency assessment (formally known as the adoption home study) designed to expedite permanency.

 Resource families will no longer have to go through redundant processes. The separate orientations for people interested in fostering or adopting a child have merged into one orientation.

 **F**ocuses on Stable, Caring Lifelong Relationships

 Eligibility of families, relatives and non-relatives to become caregivers will be determined upfront in order to connect children to safe, caring relationships that can last a lifetime.

 **A**chieves Results for Children and Families.

 The RFA process provides pre-approval and post approval training for caregivers and relatives resulting in families who are equipped to address the needs of children and prepared to make lifelong commitments. The new process is anticipated to be expedited in less than 90 days and accelerate the process to permanency.

***What you need to know!***

Due to transitioning to a new process, the Department will no longer accept applications from individuals who completed Pre-Service Training after September 2014. If you completed Pre-Service Training and are still considering becoming a Resource Family for the Department you are highly encouraged to expedite the application packet and submit it to the Recruiters, either Ruth Huezo (408)-501-6858 or Sonya Stamper at (408-501-6854). If you do not remember the name of your recruiter please call 408-299-KIDS (5437).

All applications submitted after September 2014 will be required to complete the new application process including Pre-Approval Training.

You are welcome to attend an informational meeting or orientation to learn about the new requirements for the Resource Approval Program. You can sign up by calling 408-299-KIDS (5437).

**Contact:** Family and Permanency Bureau 408-299-KIDS (5437)