

On January 2017 all California Counties will be required by statute to implement a new unified, family friendly, and child-centered approval process for all caregivers, called Resource Family Approval also known as RFA. The RFA process will replace existing multiple processes, eliminate duplication, and increase approval standards by incorporating a comprehensive permanency assessment of all families that want to provide care to a child, including relative care, foster care, adoption, or legal guardianship of a child. RFA aligns with Safety Enhanced Together (SET) by increasing our collaborative partnership with kinship and resource families (Value 2) and help to identify living situations that can support children and develop lifelong relationships (Value 3).

### RFA

- Unifies approval standards for all caregivers regardless of the child's case plan
- Includes a comprehensive psychosocial assessment, home environment check, and training for all families, including relatives
- Prepares families to better meet the needs of vulnerable children in the foster care system
- Allows seamless transition to permanency

### What is a Resource Family?

The term Resource Family, replaces the terms foster parent, adoptive family, guardianship families, and relative/non-related extended family member (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**

#### **Reduces 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.

#### **Focuses 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.

#### **Achieves 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 accelerates the process to permanency.

The County of San Diego Child Welfare Services has developed a Resource Family Approval Steering Committee with multiple subcommittees to ensure a smooth implementation. Each region has a steering committee member. The Communication subcommittee will be providing monthly updates via LMS, email blasts, and County CWS intranet articles. Please feel free to reach out to your steering committee member (listed below) for additional questions. Staff can also send questions to CWS RFA Policy Analyst Wendy Curiel at [Wendy.Curiel@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Wendy.Curiel@sdcounty.ca.gov)

### **RFA Steering Committee Members**

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