

RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL (RFA) COMPREHENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
County of Santa Barbara
March 1, 2014

PROGRAM STATEMENT AND VISION

Santa Barbara County is committed to implementing a unified, family friendly and child-centered Resource Family Approval (RFA) program that streamlines approval processes, and provides for increased assessment, training and support for all RFA homes.

The RFA process will be responsive to the needs of the children and families we serve while supporting a high level of permanency and quality care. Caregivers are skilled, respected members of a team who will be provided with the services and support they need to provide quality care and excellent parenting.

PROGRAM GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

GOAL #1	Implement comprehensive RFA program by March 1, 2014
Objectives	
1.	Ensure staff is adequately trained in RFA process, policies, and procedures.
2.	Ensure tools, forms, training, and resources are adequately prepared to support implementation.
Proposed Outcome(s)	
<p>Santa Barbara County will implement a unified, family friendly and child-centered Resource Family Approval (RFA) program that streamlines approval processes, and provides for increased assessment, training and support for all RFA homes.</p>	

GOAL #2	Develop a unified process to approve Relative, Non-Relative Extended Family Member (NREFM), licensed and adoptive homes providing care for children in out-of-home placement.
Objectives	
1.	Create streamlined approval process that replaces existing multiple duplicative processes.
2.	Incorporate comprehensive evaluation process to ensure all families are adequately prepared to provide permanency for children.
3.	Support a high level of permanency and quality care for all RFA homes.
Proposed Outcome(s)	
Improve placement stability and permanency outcomes which are directly correlated with child well-being for children placed in out of home care. This correlates with the County's SIP strategy of increasing the number of relative placements in order to achieve the goal of improving performance on outcome C4.3 - Placement Stability.	
GOAL:	Provide increased assessment, training and support for all RFA homes.
Objectives	
1.	Improve retention of resource families through continued expansion of the Quality Parenting Initiative.
2.	Provide increased support and training to relative/NREFM placements.
3.	Caregivers will be better prepared to facilitate successful reunification and provide permanency for children.
Proposed Outcome(s)	
Promote increased recruitment and retention of quality caregivers. This correlates to the County's strategy of expanding QPI in order to improve retention and positively impact outcome C4.3 - Placement Stability.	
Help remove barriers to permanency for children placed in out of home care. This correlates with the County's goal of improving C4.3 - Placement Stability and C1.1 – Reunification within 12 months.	

PROGRAM ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The County of Santa Barbara has a designated organizational structure that allows for successful RFA implementation.

Currently the licensing/approval unit is responsible for conducting home approvals and FFH licensing activities. Under the RFA Program Four RFA Social Workers will report to an assigned RFA Social Services Supervisor. The Social Worker Supervisor will report to the Operations Manager, and the Operations Manager will report to the Deputy Director. In addition, Santa Barbara County DSS has designated Department Business Specialists assigned to the RFA Program who are responsible for monitoring state requirements, creating training materials, updating county policy and procedure guides, and working with staff to implement changes

Placement Social Workers are charged with placing children and monitoring their placements. They will continue to conduct all emergency relative and NREFM placement assessments; however, will provide the applications to the RFA unit for completion, which will include orientation and training, as well as the psycho-social risk and permanency assessment. The RFA unit will maintain a list of all approved resource families for CWS SSWs to utilize.

The county's Probation Department and DSS have MOUs for Title IV-E placement funding, use of CWS/CMS, and the 241.1 processes. The departments have enjoyed a close relationship for many years and work together well. Historically DSS has conducted all relative/NREFM assessments for the Probation Department and will continue to do so under the RFA Program. Probation has successfully used wraparound services to keep youth from entering placement whenever possible and as such has very few placements in out of home care. The majority of probation youth in placement are placed in group homes and the remainder is placed with relatives whenever possible. The department does not anticipate altering its placement practices; however, it is aware of the RFA program. Historically DSS has conducted all relative/NREFM assessments for the Probation Department and will continue to do so under the RFA Program.

PROGRAM STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Manager
<p>Title: Operations Manager</p> <p>Role: The Operations Manager will ensure the RFA Program operates in accordance with agency policies and procedures, as well as all CDSS RFA written directives. regulations.</p> <p>Responsibilities: The Operations Manager will guide implementation by ensuring timelines are met, workgroups report back in a timely manner, and development of training materials, supporting documents, and policies and procedures. The Operations Manager also has primary oversight of the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) and will modify the plan to incorporate the RFA Program for enhanced recruitment and retention of quality resource families. The Operations Manager will monitor continued implementation and the need for policy, procedure, and form modifications as implementation progresses. The Operations Manager will consult with the RFA Supervisor and Department Business Specialist regarding any suggested modifications and work in collaboration with both individuals for any needed changes to documents.</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: The Operations Manager has worked in CWS for over 13 years. She has formerly overseen the licensing relative approval unit as a supervisor for 5 years and as a program manager for 3 years. In addition the Operations Manager has formerly overseen the adoptions/permanency unit for 5 years as a supervisor and as a program manager for 1 year. The Project Manager position requires knowledge of CWS regulations, policies, and procedures, as well as working knowledge of the polices, procedures, and regulations that govern the foster family home licensing and adoptions programs.</p> <p>Reporting Relationships: Reports to Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services. RFA Supervisor and Department Business Specialist are direct reports.</p>

Leadership
<p>Title: RFA Social Services Supervisor</p> <p>Role: The RFA SSS is responsible for planning, assigning, and directing the work of the RFA SSWs.</p> <p>Responsibilities: She has direct oversight of the RFA unit's work, including ensuring SSWs follow RFA written directives, Policies, and Procedures. She provides RFA Program training to the RFA unit on an ongoing basis, as well as consults with other units to ensure they are educated on their roles and responsibilities. She is responsible to monitor effectiveness and productivity of the RFA Program and to bring any recommended modifications to the</p>

Leadership
<p>attention of the operations manager. She is the DSS Harris hearing representative, handling all resource family denial grievances.</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: The RFA Social Services Supervisor has over 15 years in CWS. She has previously served as a CWS social worker in the Court Services Unit and Adoptions Unit. She has also served as a CWS Supervisor in the Assessment and Investigation Unit, Ongoing Unit, and most recently the Licensing/ICPC unit.</p> <p>Reporting Relationships: Reports To Operations Manager. RFA Social Workers are Direct Reports.</p>

Staff
<p>Title: RFA Social Workers</p> <p>Role: The RFA SSWs will conduct resource family approval assessments and annual updates to determine if they meet the standards for approval.</p> <p>Responsibilities: Resource Family Social Workers are responsible for attending implementation work group meetings and providing input as to how they see RFA impacting their daily duties. Resource Family Social Workers will attend scheduled trainings, and will keep Supervisors apprised of any issues or concerns that arise. The RFA SSWs will follow all CDSS RFA written directives, as well as agency policies and procedures to assess resource families. The RFA SSWs will recommend, in collaboration with their supervisor and manager whether to approve or deny resource family homes. The RFA SSWs will conduct all complaint investigations on resource families. The RFA SSWs will reassess the resource family homes annually. They will gather comprehensive information for background exemption requests. They will communicate regularly with their supervisor on assessments. They will keep updated on new written directives, , policies, and procedures. They will also be responsible for provide RFA Orientation Information.</p> <p>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: The 4 assigned RFA SSW's all are experienced CWS social workers with over 5 years of experience respectively in multiple units. Two are experienced licensing relative approval workers, one is a former adoptions worker and the 4th is an experience assessment and investigation and family preservation worker.</p> <p>Reporting Relationships: Reports To RFA Social Services Supervisor. No Direct Reports.</p>

PLAN FOR MAINTAINING PROGRAM STAFF QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, AND PROGRAM EXPERTISE

Requirement	How will you accomplish this requirement?
<p>Ensure and Maintain Minimum Staff Qualifications</p>	<p>RFA Social Workers Require the following plus at least two year of experience as a CWS Social Worker:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possession of a bachelor’s degree including 30 semester or 45 quarter units of course work in social work, psychology, counseling, sociology, child development, geriatrics, or other behavioral or health sciences; or, 2. two years of experience equivalent to Eligibility Worker or Social Services Case Aide with Santa Barbara County, plus 30 semester or 45 quarter units of course work in social work, psychology, counseling, sociology, child development, geriatrics, or other behavioral or health sciences related to social work; or, 3. a combination of training and experience that is equivalent to the experience requirement listed in #2 above; however, candidates must also possess the 30 semester or 45 quarter units of course work in a related field of study.
<p>Develop and Maintain Staff Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RFA SSWs will receive comprehensive training prior to program implementation on the RFA regulations, statutes, and agency policies and procedures. 2. The RFA SSWs will receive daily training, guidance, and direction from their supervisor and management, if needed. 3. The RFA SSWs will receive training on any updates to the regulations, statutes, or policies and procedures on an ongoing basis.
<p>Develop and Maintain Program Expertise</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program Managers and Department Business Specialists will continue to develop training on RFA as training needs are identified, modify Policies and Procedures as needed, and create tools for use by staff as needs are identified.

NON-COUNTY STAFF/AGENCY PROGRAM INVOLVEMENT

Title: Cooperative Agencies

Role: Completion of Resource Family Permanency Assessment.

Responsibilities:

I. Conduct interviews

(1) A minimum of three interviews with each applicant

- a. If more than one applicant, an individual interview with each applicant and a joint interview with all applicants must occur
- b. At minimum, at least one additional interview with all applicants, either separately or jointly

(2) A separate face-to-face with all other persons living in the home of the applicant

(3) Additional interviews as deemed necessary by County DSS

II. Gather the following information necessary to complete a thorough psychosocial evaluation for the applicant(s) to be assessed and approved or denied by DSS:

- a. Childhood upbringing and experiences
- b. Adult experiences and personal characteristics
- c. Past and current alcohol and other substances use and abuse history
- d. Physical, emotional, sexual abuse and family domestic violence history
- e. Children living in or out of the home
- f. Parenting Approaches
- g. Social support system
- h. Motivation to become a Resource Family.

III. Notify Child Welfare Services timely as barriers to completion occur.

IV. Maintain ongoing communication with Child Welfare Services in support of the completion of the Resource Family Permanency Assessment completion.

RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL PROCESS

During the initial 30 days of the RFA process, DSS staff will work with the Resource Family(RF) applicant(s) to comply with the RFA process:

Santa Barbara County will utilize a “no wrong door” approach to RFA Applicants. Upon identification, all potential RFA applicants will be provided information and an application to start the RFA Process. Applicants will be identified through Placement Social Workers, Resource Family Recruiter, Home Connection Finder, or any other agency staff.

Once the initial RFA application is returned, the RFA SSW will work with the RF applicant(s) to:

Assess the RFA applicant’s suitability and willingness to provide care

Ensure the RFA applicant understands Child’s Personal Rights

Complete the Initial Risk Assessment

Conduct an in-person safety assessment of the home and complete the Home Environment Assessment

Perform a criminal records check

Refer the RFA applicant to enroll in RFA training

Provide a list of documents and verifications to be collected by the RFA SSW within 30 days

Upon Satisfactory Completion of the above the RFA SSW will refer the RFA applicant to a Cooperative Agency for completion of a Resource Family Permanency Assessment.

The RFA Social Worker will complete a written referral for the RFA applicant being referred to a Cooperative Agency for a Permanency Assessment. Included with the referral shall be:

- Resource Family Initial Comprehensive Plan—based on the information and documents that have been collected by DSS within the initial 30 days
- A signed release from the RFA applicant(s) for DSS to share information with the Cooperative Agency
- A signed release from the RFA applicant(s) for the Cooperative Agency to share information with DSS
- An informed consent form signed by the RFA applicant(s) acknowledging that they understand the nature and purpose of the RFA Permanency Assessment and that DSS retains final authority and responsibility for any decisions pertaining to the RFA process and the adoption for the child(ren).

CWS and the assigned Cooperative Agency will work concurrently for the next 60 days to assist the RFA applicant in successfully completing the Resource Family Comprehensive Assessment. Any time there is a need for further clarification or discussion on the status of the RFA Permanency Assessment, DSS or the Cooperative Agency may request a staffing. Resource Families referred to Cooperative Agency will continue to be “case managed” by DSS. The RFA liaison will be the assigned RFA Social Worker. The local Cooperative Agencies have agreed to use a standardized RFA Permanency Assessment for both Matched and Unmatched Resource Family applicants.

The Cooperative Agencies are:

Aspiranet

Kinship Center

Family Connections Christian Adoptions

Family Care Network Incorporated (pending adoption license)

Upon completion, the Cooperative Agency will submit the completed RFA Permanency Assessment to the RFA SSW. The RFA Social Worker Supervisor will review the complete RFA Application and Comprehensive Assessment to ensure compliance with all CDSS regulations and RFA Policies and Procedures.

DSS will retain final authority and responsibility for any decisions pertaining to the RFA process and the adoption for the child(ren). DSS will issue the RFA approval certificate and all documents filed in court.

Once the RFA application is approved, DSS will determine financial eligibility of the child, benefit amount and duration and prepare RFA paperwork as needed.

The RFA cooperative effort will include DSS working with the Resource Family applicant to complete all requirements prior to the start of a point in time RF Permanency Assessment. It is agreed by all agencies that:

- DSS understands it is solely responsible for approving, denying, and rescinding Resource Families and will not delegate this responsibility to any agency, entity, or individual, to include Adoption Agencies and Foster Family Agencies.
- DSS agrees to limit contracted services to “permanency assessments” and such services will be conducted by licensed Adoption Agencies.
- DSS agrees not to delegate its responsibility to conduct “home environment assessment” or any criminal background check to any agency, entity, or individual, to include Adoption Agencies and Foster Family Agencies.
- DSS understands it is responsible for obtaining the necessary information needed to approve, deny, or rescind the Resource Family.
- DSS understands it is solely responsible for defending all denials of Resource Family applications, even the denial is based a Resource Family based upon a “RFA Permanency Assessment” conducted by a contracted Adoption Agency.
- DSS understands it is responsible for ensuring all staff have the education and experience necessary to complete the “RFA Permanency Assessment”.

DSS agrees that a Memorandum of Understanding with a Cooperative Agency will include the following:

- Contracted services are limited to “RFA Permanency Assessments”.
- Conflict of Interest Provision

- Confidentiality Provision: The Adoption Agency must protect the confidentiality of the information submitted.
 - Non-Compete Provision: The Adoption agency will not compete with County DSS in the recruitment of foster parents.
 - Staff Requirements: The Adoption agency will ensure that its staff has the education and experience necessary to complete the permanency assessment as required by the county.
- Ongoing communication and scheduled monthly staffing meetings are key to making the cooperative effort work efficiently and successfully.
- Post–Referral Communication: RFA SSW will continue working with the family. If a concern or issue arises, the RFA SSW will notify the Cooperative Agency Social Worker. Conversely, should the Cooperative Agency Social Worker identify an area of concern during the RFA Permanency Assessment, they will communicate their concerns to the RFA SSW timely. Telephone case staffings between DSS and the Cooperative Agency will take place on no less than a weekly basis.
- Post- Resource Family Placement Communication: When a child is placed with a Resource Family, the Adoption Social Worker will notify the assigned cooperative agency.
- Upon Adoption, the Cooperative Agency and DSS will sign a Cooperative Placement agreement for the Cooperative Agency to obtain reimbursement for the cooperative efforts made in completing the RFA process and the finalized adoption of the child(ren).

PROPOSED RESOURCE FAMILY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Assessment Tools, e.g., SAFE	
Tool	Description
RFA Data Report	DSS will generate a monthly report to monitor RFA activities. This report will include such areas as the percentage of placements with relatives versus in stranger care, and the average length of time to approval and permanency outcomes (reunification, legal guardianship, or adoption).
Foster Parent Satisfaction Survey	This tool has been generated out of the QPI workgroup and is designed to solicit feedback from foster parents as to their experience with the department. Ongoing use of this tool will allow the department to monitor RFA Families’ experience with the RFA program.
	This tool will be used to discuss expectations of both the

Assessment Tools, e.g., SAFE	
QPI Partnership Plan	Resource Family and the Department and how both parties will work together to support the child.
Combined Comprehensive Permanency Assessment	Comprehensive Permanency Assessment Tool to be completed by DSS RFA SSW (Part A) and Cooperative Agency Adoption Worker (Part B).

TRAINING PLAN FOR PROGRAM STAFF AND RESOURCE FAMILIES

Program Staff Training: All RFA SSWs and CWS SSWs will be trained on the new RFA Program, regulations, statutes, and policies and procedures prior to implementation.

Pre-Service Resource Family Approval Training

RFA Families will receive initial RFA training based on PRIDE Competencies, and meet ongoing training requirements by attending DSS Sponsored and Foster and Kinship Care Education courses offered through Community Colleges.

Session One – Licensing orientation and introductions:

The prospective foster and relative caregiver will:

- Understand and be able to describe the Resource Family Approval (RFA) process and the steps for becoming a relative or non-relative caregiver.
- Understand and be able to describe the requirements for becoming approved as a foster/relative resource family, including pre-service and continuing education requirements, Live Scan, health screening, caregiver home study and home safety inspection.
- Understand and be able to describe how the agency responds to complaints and need for corrective action involving a resource family.
- Understand the agency’s policy regarding foster and relative caregiver abuse and neglect allegations.
- Understand and be able to describe the appeals process for a resource family.
- Understand the components of the pre-service training process.
- Understand the agency’s policy regarding confidentiality and mandates of caregivers to report child abuse and neglect concerns.

Session Two - Overview of the Child Welfare system

The prospective foster and relative caregivers will:

Understand the laws that define the forms of child maltreatment, including neglect, emotional maltreatment, physical and sexual abuse and the legal processes related to child placement and permanency planning.

Understand the various pathways for a child or youth and family through the child welfare system.

Know the relationship between child welfare laws, the agency mandate and how the agencies carry out its mandate through the Juvenile Court.

Understand that reunification and family preservation is a primary child welfare goal and know the circumstances that would contribute to the selection of each permanency goal.

Know the purpose of assessment and service planning for reunification and permanency.

Understand the concept of permanence for children and why children in out of home care are at risk for not being connected to lifetime relationships.

Know how adoption is a legal and social process that transfers parental rights to adoptive parents.

Knows the roles, rights and responsibilities of being a foster or relative caregiver and an adoptive parent.

Learning Objectives:

Prospective foster and relative caregivers will be able to:

Explain the agency's responsibility and mandate to protect children, and to strengthen and support families.

Describe how child protection reunification and preservation services are delivered to families.

Describe how the Child Welfare Services agency is organized.

Describe the Juvenile Court process and timelines and how the court protects the Constitutional rights of birth parents, non-custodial parents, relatives and tribes.

Explain the three roles of caregivers: foster/relative caregiver, concurrent planning and adoptions and how foster and relative care and adoption fit into the larger Child Welfare process.

Explain how the agency uses relative and foster care and adoption services to carry out its mission to protect children and strengthen families.

Describe the meaning of permanence, permanency planning and concurrent planning.

Describe the differing roles of birth parents, foster and relative caregivers and adoptive parenting in promoting permanence.

Identify the value of helping children and youth stay part of their families and culture and recognize that strengthening families is the first goal of Child Welfare Services.

Session Three - Teamwork and Planning for Care giving/ Health, education and mental health for children in care

Identify what foster and relative caregivers and prospective adoptive parents are expected to know and do as members of the child or youth's professional team whose goal is to protect children and strengthen families.

Understand their role in participating in teaming strategies such as Team Decision Meetings and Safety Organized Practice mapping and decision-making.

Know their shared responsibility for open communication with other members of the child welfare team.

Know the importance of being non-judgmental in caring for children, working with their families and collaborating with other members of the team.

Describe how the agency uses assessment and service planning to help support and strengthen families and the caregiver's role in assessment of a child's needs.

Describe the caregiver's role in monthly caseworker visits.

Identify how the indicators of:

- Substance exposed infants
- Developmental disabilities
- Emotional maltreatment
- Deprivation from neglect
- Trauma of physical and sexual abuse

Impact the placement decision for a foster/relative caregiver.

Know the key components for making a successful placement decision and key questions to ask the social worker prior to placement.

Know the importance of advocating for children to obtain needed services.

Know their own strengths and needs in fulfilling the foster/relative caregiver or adoptive role.

Identify issues affecting their ability and willingness to work effectively with birth parents.

Understand the importance of respecting children's connections to their birth families and previous foster/relative families and/or adoptive families.

Explain the importance of being fully informed to assess how substitute care giving or adoption can affect one's family.

Know the importance of promoting a child's positive sense of identity, history, culture and values to help develop self-esteem.

Recognize that specific knowledge and skills are needed to help a child of another culture to feel at home upon placement.

Be able to describe the needs that families meet for children, including physical, emotional, social, cultural and educational.

Know that regular visits and other types of contact can strengthen relationships between children and their birth families.

Know the importance of respecting and supporting children's connections to their siblings appropriate to each sibling situation.

Know how to prepare children for visits with family and understand how visits with their family may affect a child's feelings and behaviors.

Know the value of maintaining records regarding a child's history.

Know how the professional team can support the reunification process.

Identify the types of questions to ask regarding possible placement of a child, youth or sibling group.

Describe the importance of teamwork to plan and manage changes in routines, traditions, and patterns of behavior as a foster/relative family.

Identify how providing out-of-home care and adoption impact family relationships.

Understand the rights, responsibilities and liabilities of caregiver decision-making associated with the Prudent Parent Act.

Understand the typical health care issues of children in care.

Understand the typical behavioral and mental health needs of children in out of home care.

Understand the typical educational needs of children in care.

Know the importance of advocating for children to obtain needed services.

Understand the provisions of the Katie A. settlement as it relates to assessing and treating the mental health and behavioral needs of children in care.

Describe the responsibilities of the caregiver in accessing timely medical and dental well-child examinations and needed care according to provisions of the California Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) requirements.

Understand the Medi-Cal insurance coverage provided for a child in out of home care and how physicians are assigned through the CenCal

Understand the responsibility for maintaining health and dental care records for a child in care.

Describe the caregiver's responsibilities for working with the social worker to assess and obtain treatment for a child's mental health and behavioral needs.

Identify indicators of a medical emergency for a child or youth.

Describe behaviors that indicate a need for professional attention.

Know the special educational rights and services for children in out of home care and the caregiver's responsibility to ensure the child's educational needs are met.

Know how to maintain a home environment that promotes a sense of safety and wellbeing and prevents and reduces injuries.

Describe ways that a healing home can provide private space, boundaries and respectful nurturing.

List the components of universal precautions in the care of children.

Understand the personal rights of foster children, the role of the foster care ombudsman.

Understand the rights and responsibilities of caregivers.

Session Four – Impact of trauma, deprivation and loss on development

Know the conditions and experiences that may cause developmental delays and affect healthy attachment.

Know the physical, medical, emotional and behavioral indicators of neglect.

Know the physical, medical, emotional and behavioral indicators of physical and sexual abuse.

Know the emotional and behavioral indicators of emotional maltreatment.

Know the effects of separation and loss on children's feelings and behaviors.

Know how physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional maltreatment affect attachment, behaviors and child development.

Can recognize developmental delays and respond appropriately.

Knows that development occurs in stages and across five domains and that successfully achieving one developmental milestone impacts the next stage.

Understands how relative and foster caregivers and adoptive parents can continue the challenging process of building attachments with children.

Understand the losses that birth families, foster and relative caregivers and adoptive families experience because they are involved with the child welfare system.

Session Five– Discipline and self-esteem

Knows the importance of creating a supportive and accepting family environment.

Knows the importance of providing unconditional positive support.

Knows the goals of effective discipline and how these goals relate to the agency's policy on discipline.

Knows developmentally appropriate, non-physical disciplinary techniques used to meet goals of effective discipline.

Know how to use discipline strategies with children who have experienced trauma.

Describe strategies to prevent behavioral crises, strategies to de-escalate a crisis situation and to know when to call for help for a crisis situation.

Session Six – CPR and First Aid Certification/Live Scan

Ongoing Support Education and Outreach:

DSS will provide a RFA resource guide with a wide variety of resources and information for RFA families. Information about trainings offered by DSS, QPI, and Foster Care and Kinship Education Community College Programs will be provided via mass email and newsletters.

TRIBAL PARTICIPATION/ICPC

Santa Barbara County maintains communication with our local Tribe, the Chumash. Although are required to comply with ICWA, which gives the Tribe home certification authority with an exception of criminal background clearances and exemptions, to date they have not chosen to utilize this process and instead refer tribal members to the County. The county will continue to approve these homes through the RFA process.

All states submitting incoming ICPC requests will be advised that Santa Barbara County operates a RFA program and advised of the process and timelines for approval. All new ICPC requests received after March 1, 2014 for out of home caregivers will be approved through the RFA Program.

MONITORING OF RESOURCE FAMILIES

Process	Responsible Staff	Procedures
Periodic Evaluations and Onsite Visits	RFA SSW	RFA homes will be reassessed on an annual basis using the Resource Family Annual Update (RFA-04) and all internal forms will be updated to reflect the RFA requirements and language. The update shall include an annual in-home visit, verification of background clearance for all adults in the home, interview of all individuals in the home or documentation of why an interviewee was not available, and a determination as to whether RFA training is current and up-to-date. A copy of the update will be provided to the Resource Family.
Corrective Action Plans (Describe how plans will	RFA SSW and SSS	When deficiencies are noted, Resource Families will be assisted in developing and

Process	Responsible Staff	Procedures
be developed and monitored)		submitting a written Corrective Action Plan. The Corrective Action Plan will describe how the deficiency will be corrected, and the timeline as to when the correction will be made. This plan will be developed in partnership between the RFA SSW and the Resource Family. The assigned RFA SSW will be responsible for monitoring the plan and ensuring the corrections are made timely.

INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS AND INCIDENTS INVOLVING RESOURCE FAMILIES

Process	Responsible Staff	Procedures
Investigating Complaints and Serious Complaints	RFA SSW and SSS	Upon receipt of a complaint against an RFA, information will be gathered including the date the event occurred, the alleged victim, and the alleged perpetrator. This information will be forwarded to the Resource Family Social Worker Supervisor who will log the complaint in the tracking log and assign a Resource Family Social Worker to investigate. Whenever possible, the Social Worker assigned to the investigation will not be the same Resource Family Social Worker who initially approved the home. Notices of the result of the complaint investigation will be sent to the Resource Family and filed in their case folder.
Investigating Incidents	RFA SSW and SSS	Resource Family will be responsible for reporting incidents to the County of Santa Barbara CWS consistent with reporting requirements specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 9.5, Foster Family Homes, Section 89361. All Incidents will be documented and investigated if appropriate.
Notifications	RFA Manager	Santa Barbara County will provide initial notification to the Department within 72 hours, as well as updates regarding the status and disposition of serious complaints, serious incidents, or any incident involving

Process	Responsible Staff	Procedures
		Resource Families that falls within the definition of Penal Code section 11165.5.

DUE PROCESS FOR DENIAL OR RESCISSION OF APPROVALS AND OTHER ADVERSE ACTIONS

Process	Responsible Staff	Procedures
Process for Resource Family Denials	RFA SSW,SSS RFA Manager	All RFA denials will be reviewed by the SSS with consultation by the RFA Manager if necessary. The County will inform the home in writing and provide appeal rights information.
Process to Rescind Approval	RFA SSW,SSS RFA Manager	All RFA denials will be reviewed by the SSS with consultation by the RFA Manager. The County will inform the home in writing and provide appeal rights information. The County will ensure that the health and safety of any child(ren) placed in the home is considered first and foremost and that if the children are to be moved, that those placement moves are made in concordance with current county business practices.
Process for other adverse actions	RFA SSW,SSS	Procedures for How to resolve Grievances and how to request a hearing will be provided to all RFA Families during the application process.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

TASK/STEP	2013					
	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Implementation Committee Meetings			X	X	X	X
Gathering Baseline Data and reviewing Existing Structure			X	X		

Task Focused Work Groups					X	X
Development of RFA Training Materials						X

2014						
TASK/STEP	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Development of RFA Policies, Procedures, and Forms	X	X				
RFA Staff Training	X	X				
RFA Implementation			X			
Implementation Meetings Continue to review need for modifications and assess overall program structure			X	X	X	X
Additional Meetings and follow-up as needed			X	X	X	X

TERMINATION PLAN

Requirement	How will you accomplish this requirement?
Minimize disruption to families	Santa Barbara County will continue to operate a relative approval program, FFH program, and adoptions program concurrently with the RFA Pilot. Should the RFA Pilot terminate for any reason

	<p>Approved Resource families will be converted to appropriate category by the County with minimal disruption to families.</p>
<p>Maximize child safety</p>	<p>Santa Barbara County will continue to operate a relative approval program, FFH program, and adoptions program concurrently with the RFA Pilot. Should the RFA Pilot terminate for any reason Approved Resource families will be converted to appropriate category by the County to ensure families continue to be approved according to statute and regulations of respective programs to maximize child safety.</p>
<p>Ensure that Resource Families will operate in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309 or 362.7 or Health and Safety Code section 1502, et seq., as applicable.</p>	<p>Santa Barbara County will continue to operate a relative approval program, FFH program, and adoptions program concurrently with the RFA Pilot. Should the RFA Pilot terminate for any reason Approved Resource families will be converted to appropriate category by the County to ensure families continue to be approved according to statute and regulations of respective programs as applicable.</p>
<p>Ensure that eligibility for foster care payments will not be interrupted</p>	<p>Santa Barbara County will continue to operate a relative approval program, FFH program, and adoptions program concurrently with the RFA Pilot. Should the RFA Pilot terminate for any reason Approved Resource families will be converted to appropriate category by the County to ensure families continue to be approved according to statute and regulations of respective programs and there is no disruption in eligibility for foster care payments.</p>