

The Child Welfare Services Resource Family Approval (RFA) Steering committee formed a variety of subcommittees in order to develop the policies and procedures necessary to implement RFA in San Diego County by 1/1/2017. The purpose of this article is to provide you with additional information on the subcommittees, including current areas of focus, challenges, and progress being made.

RFA Communication Subcommittee

Overview

This group is tasked with developing a communication plan that will disseminate information to staff, caregivers, and stakeholders. The subcommittee completed a Target Audience Analysis to determine how to best communicate with all.

Current Area of Focus

- Develop a one-page Frequently Asked Questions sheet that gives brief and basic information about RFA.
- Provide a letter to current caregivers with a brief overview of RFA
- Subcommittee members are tasked with slowly introducing RFA to their regions and sharing more information as it available.
- The RFA articles will ensure that staff, caregivers, and stakeholders become familiar with the RFA implementation, concepts, and process.

Articles Published

- The first article published provided a brief overview of RFA, positive outcomes expected, and a list of RFA Steering Committee members.
(https://cwc.sdcounty.ca.gov/sites/CWS/CCWS_News/Shared%20Documents/Resource%20Family%20Approval.pdf).
- The second article published provided a letter from CWS Director Debra Zanders-Willis explaining how RFA supports each initiative Child Welfare Services is implementing and how, together, they work towards our vision that *Every Child Grows Up Safe and Nurtured*.
(https://cwc.sdcounty.ca.gov/sites/CWS/CCWS_News/Shared%20Documents/Final%20DZW%20RFA%20letter.pdf#search=RFA)
- The third article gave a brief overview of the subcommittees and the subcommittee members assigned.
(https://cwc.sdcounty.ca.gov/sites/CWS/CCWS_News/Shared%20Documents/CWS%20Newsletter%20RFA%20Article%203.pdf)

RFA ESCU Subcommittee

Overview

The subcommittee is reviewing past curriculum for ESC foster parents and developing a new application process, criteria, training, and expectations for the new specialized ESC program.

Due to the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), Polinsky Children Center (PCC) will be transitioned into a 10-day assessment center.

The goals of the new ESC program are:

- Homes will be available immediately for children to be placed directly into family like settings.
- Children will be assessed for services while waiting for relatives' assessments and/or approvals to be completed.
- ESC foster parents will team with the Social Worker to ensure that the child is placed with an appropriate resource family who can best meet the child's needs.
- ESC foster parents will receive specialized training and additional support through trainings, support groups, and ESC social workers assigned to their family.

Current Area of Focus

- Establish new protocol for the Emergency Shelter Care (ESC) program
- Establish criteria for ESC specialty homes
- Develop an application process for current foster parents who want to become ESC specialty homes
- Develop specialized training for ESC homes

RFA Permanency Assessment Subcommittee

Overview

This subcommittee is tasked with developing a Permanency Assessment tool that will be used with every Resource Family. The Permanency Assessment tool will replace the existing home study process. The subcommittee has made substantial progress in developing the permanency assessment.

The subcommittee has:

- Reviewed Permanency assessments developed by Kings County, San Luis Obispo, and San Diego's current processes.
- Reviewed the State's written directives.
- Developed an assessment outline as a foundation:
 - The outline lists key areas of assessment.
 - The subcommittee is reviewing the outline and filling in specific questions that lead to deeper exploration of these areas.

Current Area of Focus

The subcommittee plans to submit a draft of this assessment to the Steering Committee in May with the goal to tentatively pilot in June.

RFA Emergency Approval (EA) Subcommittee

Overview

This subcommittee is establishing the policies and procedures, roles and responsibilities of the Emergency RFA Workers and Unit, and developing the process of how emergency placement will be administered throughout the county. The subcommittee has developed a flow chart of the current process and presented to the Steering Committee.

Current Area of Focus

- Review the Emergency Approval directives
- Review Agency and State Forms
- Develop roles and responsibilities of the EA RFA Workers and Unit

RFA Background and Exemption Subcommittee

Overview

This subcommittee will structure how background checks and exemptions are consistently completed for all resource families; a process will be developed to expedite background checks for emergency approvals, and the roles and responsibilities of the Background/Exemption Unit.

Current Area of Focus

- Review what is currently in place for Licensing and Relative/NREFM
 - A flow chart of both processes has been developed
- Review Licensing and Relative/NREFM Forms and RFA State Forms
- Chart what is working well and what are the worries
- The group will be highlighting the possible changes that could be implemented in order to meet the RFA requirements and build consistency in practice

RFA Investigation and Complaint Subcommittee

Overview

The subcommittee will set up policy and procedures on how to handle investigations and complaints on all RFA homes and the roles and responsibilities of the Complaint Unit.

Current Area of Focus

- Review what is currently in place for Licensing and Relative/NREFMs
- Review the state written directives

Training

Overview

This subcommittee will modify the current curriculum for resource families, align the orientation, and explore training for staff. The subcommittee reviewed curriculum of a few of the early implementing counties and compared the curriculum to what San Diego already has in place. The subcommittee will decide on any changes that need to be made to what is currently in existence.

Current Area of Focus

- Review all sessions of San Diego's current pre-service training, titled Trauma Informed Pre-Service (TIPS).
- Develop pre-service training for all caregivers.
- Develop an orientation for RFA.

Additional Resource Family Approval Information

The Communication subcommittee will continue to provide monthly updates as all the subcommittees move forward in the decision making process to ensure a smooth transition and implementation of the Resource Family Approval. For additional information, you may contact the subcommittee members for your assigned regions.

https://cwc.sdcounty.ca.gov/sites/CWS/CCWS_News/Shared%20Documents/CWS%20Newsletter%20RFA%20Article%203.pdf.