

Foster Family Agencies (FFAs)

(Revised 10/07/22)

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Forms

- 04-24C Order Authorizing Examination and Treatment-Court
- 04-153 FFA Resource Parent Information
- 04-155 FFA Background Checks from Resource Family Complaints
- 04-157 IEU Placement Response Letter
- 04-158 Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the home
- 04-158sp Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the home
- 04-258 Placement Needs and Services Plan (CWS/CMS Template)
- 04-258sp Placement Needs and Services Plan (CWS/CMS Template)
- 04-302 Declaration of Information Withheld from Disclosure
- 04-303 827 Disclosure Cover Letter
- 04-310 Inter-Departmental FFA and LGH Complaint and Feedback Form

Definition

A Foster Family Agency (FFA) is a private non-profit agency that approves resource homes for the placement of children. FFAs recruit, approve, train, and provide professional support to resource parents. All FFAs are considered non-treatment foster care with some designated as having Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) homes or Therapeutic Foster Care (TFC) homes.

ISFC homes: ISFC homes serve children/youth who require intensive treatment and behavioral supports as well as children/youth with specialized health care needs in a home-based family care setting to avoid a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)/Licensed Group Home (LGH) or to step down from a STRTP/LGH.

Definition (cont.)

TFC homes: TFC homes allows for short-term, intensive, highly coordinated, trauma-informed and individualized activities to children who are under the age of 21. TFC is intended for children and youth who require intensive and frequent mental health support in a family environment and must have complex emotional and behavioral needs.

Background

The [Foster Family Agency \(FFA\) Interim Licensing Standards \(ILS\)](#) build on the current [California Code of Regulations Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 1 General Licensing Requirements](#) and [Chapter 8.8 Foster Family Agencies](#). The ILS incorporate the Continuum of Care Reform changes applicable to FFAs which provide the approval of resource homes under the Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program by FFAs.

**Comparison
Between an FFA
Home Versus a
Resource Family
Home**

This table compares a FFA home to a Resource Family Home.

Component	FFA (Agency homes)	Resource Family Home (County homes)
Source of Approval	State licenses FFA and FFA approves home	County of San Diego Resource Family Approval (RFA) Program
Home-Based Family Care (HBFC) Rates	Rates paid to FFA who in turn pays the home	Rates paid directly to the home
Specialized Care Increments	Not available	Available with proper authorization
Recruitment	By FFA	County of San Diego
Training	By FFA	County of San Diego
Respite Care Support Services	24 hours per quarter	34 hours per month
Placement Access	Regional Placement Specialist	Regional Placement Specialist through clearance by the Placement Coordinators Office (PCO)

Services Provided by an FFA and a Resource Family Home

This table identifies the services provided by a FFA and a Resource Family Home.

Services	FFA	Resource Family Home
SW Contacts (minimum)	Weekly by FFA SW, unless the CWS SW approves an exception	Monthly by CWS SW
School Enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFA staff Educational Right Holder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CWS SW Approved Resource parent Educational Rights Holder
Individual/Family Counseling	Counseling is provided by Foster Family Agency Stabilization and Treatment Services (FFAST) unless prior approval is given by the IEU COR or designee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referred by CWS SW Community agencies
Reunification Services	FFA staff/CWS SW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CWS SW Community agencies
Support to resource/certified home	FFA SW/Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CWS SW Community agencies
Training and monitoring of resource home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FFA SW Community Care Licensing (CCL) IEU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HHSA Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Care Education Program RFA

Responsibilities of CWS Staff Versus FFA

The responsibilities of CWS staff and FFA staff include but are not limited to:

CWS	Foster Family Agency
Comply with legal mandates of placement at lowest level of care	Arrange for appropriate placement to achieve plan objectives
Provide Medi-Cal card, Health and Education Passport (HEP) and authorization for medical care (04-24C)	Submit all health and education information compiled while the child is in FFA care directly to the Public Health Nurse (PHN) input into the HEP. Fax #: 619-692-8827

**Responsibilities of
CWS Staff Versus
FFA (cont.)**

CWS	Foster Family Agency
Provide all available background information	Arrange for medical and dental exam within 30 days of placement and semi-annually for dental and annually for medical
Provide case decision-making information to attorney, parents and FFA	Arrange for school enrollment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Change of Placement (COP) Requirements When Notice is Given to Move Child/Youth when there is a potential placement disruption • Hold a Child and Family Team Meetings • Develop and implement a Placement Preservation Strategy in consultation with the CFT • Provide all required parties a change of placement notice via the 10-41 within 14 days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Change of Placement (COP) Requirements When Notice is Given to Move Child/Youth when there is a potential placement disruption • Hold a Child and Family Team Meetings • Develop and implement a Placement Preservation Strategy in consultation with the CFT • Give 30 day notice to the placing worker in writing for any change of placements in order to transition the child/youth within 30 days
Monthly contact with the child	Weekly face to face counseling sessions to work on treatment plan goals unless recommended by the CFT to have bi-weekly visits
Arrange for visitation	Arrange for visitation
Provide the Placement Needs and Services Plan (04-258) within 10 days of placement	Develop and provide the initial Placement Needs and Services Plan within 30 days of placement
-	Provide in-county transportation
-	Provide 24 hour support services to assist with respite, emergency psychiatric care, crisis intervention
-	Notify CWS SW immediately of all critical incidents within one business day and provide a written report to both the CWS SW and IEU within seven calendar days NOTE: AWOLs/Runaway youth must be reported within three hours

FFA Clearance Process

When a Foster Family Agency (FFA) receives an application from a prospective caregiver, the FFA will contact CWS to check for CWS history/involvement. Health and Safety Code 1536 (c)(1) states that “the department, a county, or a foster family agency may request information from, or divulge information to, the department, a county, or a foster family agency, regarding a prospective certified parent, resource parent, or relative caregiver for the purpose of, and as necessary to, conduct a reference check to determine whether it is safe and appropriate to license, certify, or approve an applicant to be a certified parent, resource parent, or relative caregiver”.

When a FFA requests information, they need to articulate how, and the reasons why, this information would be necessary to make a determination about whether a prospective RFA home was safe and appropriate. For further information on what types of documents can be released, see the Confidentiality - General policy.

The table below describes the FFA clearance procedure.

Step	Who	Action
1	FFA	Fingerprint the applicant/prospective caregiver and all adults residing or who are regularly present in the home.
2	FFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit the completed FFA Foster Parent Information form (04-153) to Institutions Evaluation Unit Contracting Officer Representative (IEU COR). • Submit the completed Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home form (04-158) to the Institution Evaluation Unit Contracting Officer Representative (IEU COR). <p>NOTE: The Foster Family Agency can submit a copy of the Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regular Present in the Home form (04-158) on behalf of the individual that is releasing as long as the individual signs the release.</p>
3	IEU COR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify the needed consents are on file • Send a copy of the completed 04-153 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource Family Approval Liaison (RFAL) ○ IEU Designee <p>NOTE: If the 04-153 is for porting between two FFAs, a check must be completed on all new adults in the home that have not had a full review.</p>

FFA Clearance
Process (cont.)

Step	Who	Action
4	IEU Designee	<p>Within 10 business days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check for prior CWS referral/case history in the State of California ○ Notify the IEU COR of the findings via email, indicating which household members have relevant CWS referral and/or case history <p>NOTE: Additional consultation is needed between IEU Designee and IEU CWS Manager and designated staff when the history includes the applicant as a resource parent, no identified perpetrator and/or history as a minor to assess relevance and extent of what is to be released.</p>
	Resource Family Approval Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Within 10 days, check for RFA (and Licensed Foster Home) complaint history (04-155) ● Notify the IEU COR of the findings; Resource Family Approval Liaison can email their findings
5	IEU COR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review emails from RFCL and IEU Designee ● Email FFA and notify them of the findings and the process for requesting records
6	FFA	<p>Notify the IEU COR via email that they are requesting CWS referral records, indicating which applicants the request is for and/or notify the RFCL to schedule a review of records as indicated in the Review of CWS Information for Applicants section. As a reminder, only applicant history may be shared with the FFA per the Health and Safety Code 1536(c)(1). For others residing in the home, the information provided on the 04-153 is all that will be provided.</p> <p>In the correspondence, the FFA must articulate how, and the reasons why, this information would be necessary to make a determination about whether a prospective RFA home was safe and appropriate. If the history is out of county, the FFA will need to request this directly from the other county's CWS.</p> <p>NOTE: The IEU COR will maintain a list of child abuse hotlines for California counties that FFAs can use as a reference point to start the process to get that county's CWS history. Please refer to the Department of Social Services- Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect website to obtain the Emergency Response Child Abuse Reporting telephone numbers for the various counties within California.</p>

**FFA Clearance
Process (cont.)**

Step	Who	Action
7	IEU COR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Legal Support Services to request CWS records • Coordinate with the RFA Liaison to request applicant RFA records • Send the records to the FFA, once received <p>NOTE: Any/all written CWS information given must have form 04-303, the 827 Disclosure Cover Letter and 04-302, Declaration of Information Withheld from Disclosure attached reminding the receiver that the information is confidential and not to be re-disclosed, see the Confidentiality Guide policy for additional information.</p> <p>CWS information is confidential and may only be sent redacted to a contract provider that has been added to the HHS Transport Layer Security (TLS). If sensitive information is sent to other providers NOT listed on the HHS TLS list, then staff must follow the standard Email Policy, please refer to the list of Business Partners for TLS for HHS that have been added to the TLS list as an approved County business partner.</p>
8	FFA	<p>FFA to submit a copy of the completed Written Report to the IEU COR</p> <p>NOTE: If the FFA does not certify the home, any grievance process will be handled by the FFA.</p>
9	IEU COR	<p>Provide a copy of the Written Report to the IEU Designee</p>
10	IEU Designee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Written Report • Confirm that there is not any new CWS history • Make a recommendation regarding placement • Notify IEU COR about the Agency's decision to use the home for placement. • Save the Written Report in a confidential/secure location. <p>NOTE: The Agency will not make a placement determination for homes porting over to FFAs until after the FFA has approved the home.</p>

FFA Clearance Process (cont.)

Step	Who	Action
11	IEU COR	Provide the FFA with a copy of the Placement Response Letter via email or mail notifying them of the Agency’s decision to utilize the home for placement.

Review of CWS Information for Applicants

The table below outlines who the FFA needs to contact for the various file reviews for applicants. For others residing in the home or who are regularly present in the home, refer to the [Release Process for Background Information on Other Adults Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home section](#) below.

To review the...	The FFA will...
CWS referral and case history	<p>Coordinate with the IEU COR to determine what records are needed.</p> <p>The Legal support staff will provide the IEU COR with the requested redacted documentation within 45 business days. As a reminder, for others residing in the home or who are regularly present in the home, refer to the Release Process for Background Information on Other Adults Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home section.</p> <p>The LSS worker will provide information that is relevant to the determination of whether it would be safe and appropriate to license the home. This includes any information regarding alleged abuse to their biological/adopted/guardian children as well as alleged abuse as a resource parent. This may also include history as a minor for applicants as well as history if there is no identified perpetrator.</p> <p>The records may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1st Page of Emergency Response Document ○ Investigative Narrative • Court Cases including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case Notes Document ○ Case Plans ○ Court Reports • Voluntary Cases including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Case Notes

Review of CWS Information for Applicants (cont.)

To review the...	The FFA will...
CWS referral and case history (cont.)	<p>Any/all written CWS information given must have form 04-303, 827 Disclosure Cover Letter, and the 04-302, Declaration of Information Withheld from Disclosure attached reminding the receiver that the information is confidential and not to be re-disclosed, see the Confidentiality Guide policy for additional information.</p> <p>CWS will follow Discovery: File Review policy and the Confidentiality Guide Policy to see what information to redact.</p> <p>CWS information is confidential and may only be sent redacted to a contract provider that has been added to the HHS Transport Layer Security (TLS). If sensitive information is sent to other providers NOT listed on the HHS TLS list, then staff must follow the standard Email Policy, please refer to the list of Business Partners for TLS for HHS that have been added to the TLS list as an approved County business partner.</p>
Resource Family Complaint File	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Resource Family Approval Liaison at 858-650-5782 to schedule an appointment to review the file(s) • Review the Resource Family (and Licensed Foster Home) Complaints for public/ confidential files for complaints and possible revocation history <p>NOTE: This request is to view files only as outlined and allowed within the Confidentiality Guide and Written Directives. For copies of any RFA records, FFAs will request through their IEU COR who will coordinate the release of records with the RFA Liaison.</p>
Foster Family Agency File	<p>FFAs should contact the previous FFA and/or other FFAs the applicant was associated to for compliance history. The associations are identified on the Licensing Information System (LIS) check. If the FFA is unable to obtain the compliance history through the other FFA(s), the FFA can reach out to their assigned Licensing Program Analyst (LPA) at Community Care Licensing (CCL) via a phone call, letter and/or email to obtain the information.</p>

Release Process for Background Information on Other Adults Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home

If a Release of Information is received then only preliminary, non-specific Child Welfare History can be released for other adults residing or who are regularly present in the home of an applicant or prospective applicant seeking placement of youth in foster care. Non- applicants should complete the Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home form (04-158) prior to CWS releasing any information.

Release Process for Background Information on Other Adults Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home (cont.)

Below are examples of information that can be released via the 04-153- Resource Parent Information form, by the IEU designee:

- If adult has CWS history
- The number of Referrals/Cases
 - For Referrals you are allowed to provide allegation disposition, not the allegation conclusion types (not the nature of abuse).
 - Timeframe of history (within 5 years, over a decade) but do not provide specific dates.

NOTE: The Release of Information- Adult Residing or Who Are Regularly Present in the Home form (04-158) allows the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to release any known criminal history and any known child welfare history not otherwise protected by California Welfare and Institutions Code section 827. Should further history be needed, the individual can seek an 827 to obtain the history.

Resource Family Case File

IEU will request or provide documents for the resource family case file including any updates when a resource family seeks approval by a subsequent FFA or transfers their approval to a different county.

Court Order

A FFA placement is legally the same level of care as a Resource Family Home placement. See the Change of Placement (COP) - Court Requirements policy for more information.

Concerns About FFA Caregivers

If the CWS SW has concerns about an FFA caregiver, the CWS SW is to address these concerns with the FFA SW, not directly to the caregiver. The SW will complete the 04-310 and send to IEU. This improves the likelihood of resolution and ensures the FFA responsible for care and supervision of the youth is aware of all situations. If unable to resolve at this level, contact or submit a complaint via email to the IEU PSS.

FFA Placements

Per ACL 04-28E Errata, it is expected that an FFA will obtain agreement from the placing county prior to moving any child to a different home. It is also expected that an FFA will participate in any team meeting related to placement changes with the placing county, the resource family, and/or other significant professionals involved with the child.

Alignment with SET

This policy aligns with SET [Value 2](#): Collaborative Partnerships with Kinship and Resource Families by providing supportive services, consistent communication and information sharing and keeping safety, permanency, and well-being of a child/youth at the forefront.

For additional information or comments, contact Rachel Swaykos.