

EFFECTIVE

October 1, 2024.

Subject(s)

FOM 922, Foster Family Recruitment, Support and Development

Definitions

Inquiry

The process by which a person requests information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent and provides information allowing the CPA to contact them.

Regional Resource Teams

Contracted agencies tasked with supporting the local county office with recruitment, retention, training, and foster care navigation services.

**FOSTER FAMILY
LICENSING BY
AGENCY
ASSOCIATES**

Employees of the MDHHS or a contracted adoption agency, CPA or Child Caring Institution (CCI) may apply to become a licensed unrelated caregiver. The employee shall be treated on an equal basis with all other applicants. However, neither the employee nor their supervisor may be involved in the licensing process, decision, or recommendation. Further, if the employee becomes licensed, children the caregiver may provide care for must not be on the employee's caseload. **Effective January 1, 2025 the licensing process must be completed by an agency outside the applicant's county of employment. Under no circumstances may an employee complete any component of the licensing process or become licensed in the counties in which they are employed.** An agency employee or board member must not use their position to gain access to children or gain information about children and must clearly separate their role as an employee or board member from their role as a prospective licensed unrelated caregiver.

**Program
Statement**

Licensing rule changed from 400.12302 to 400.12402.

Licensing R 400.12402 requires that prior to the beginning of each fiscal year the child placing agency (CPA) is to prepare a written program statement that now includes but is not limited to the following information:

- The racial, ethnic, cultural identity, heritage, spirituality, and background of the children served.
- Types of services provided to foster children and their families.

This statement, in combination with other documentation, may be used to support a recommendation for denial of application based on “being willing and demonstrating the ability to meet the requirements for children who are served by the agency” (R 400.9201(d)).

The following is no longer required to be in the program statement:

- Age, race, ethnic background, and specific characteristics of children to be served.
- Types and numbers of foster homes needed.
- Types of services provided to children, parents relatives, and foster families.
- Other categories as appropriate.

R 400.12306(2) has been replaced with Rule 400.9201(b).

Goals

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) objective to increase the number of licensed relative caregivers has been removed. A new process has been developed where relatives can now become "approved", which includes fingerprinting. This level of oversight ensures the safety of children. As such, there is no longer a need for relatives to become licensed unless they are becoming licensed to take children who are unrelated.

Recruitment Efforts

Prospective foster parents who make an inquiry as a result of recruitment efforts must be contacted within three business days for follow-up and invited to attend an orientation.

Comprehensive Recruitment Plan

Strategies targeted for ensuring available foster families in each county match the racial, ethnic, and cultural make up of children in foster care in that community.

Strategies to ensure there are sufficient number of designated placements that are prepared to meet the unique needs and create a supportive environment for children with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression (SOGIE).

Recruitment Activities

Recruitment activities may include:

- Responding to individual inquirers within three business days to ensure that families are receiving prompt and courteous attention in person, by phone, or by email.

Foster Parent Recruitment Activities/ Expenditures

Allowable foster parent recruitment activities or expenditures may include:

- Promotional materials and apparel.

Retention Activities

Allowable foster parent retention activities or expenditures may include:

- Support-based goods or services to assist foster families, such as gift cards for home cleaning services, sending a meal to a family during a time of need, etc.

Orientation

A CPA must not provide an application to a prospective applicant prior to orientation.

Inquiring families should not have to wait more than 30-calendar days from the date of their inquiry to be able to attend an orientation.

Not more than three hours of the orientation may be included as part of the initial required training. The following topics were added that must be covered:

- Trauma responsive care.
- Collaboration in transportation planning.
- Foster parent bill of rights law.

Pre-Licensure Training

To refer a prospective family for GROW training, the licensing case manager should complete the [MDHHS-5853, GROW Training Referral](#), and email it to the appropriate [Regional Resource Team](#) mailbox.

If a family cannot attend the GROW training sessions the licensing agency can request an exception to be able to train the family individually or receive permission for alternate arrangements.

Training Topics

Each person to be named on the foster home license must complete at least 12 hours of training before the agency can make a recommendation for licensure. Training topics that must be completed prior to licensure are:

- Characteristics and needs of children who may be placed into the home.
- [Safe sleep](#) practices for infants.
- Calming and soothing supports for children, including sensory modulation and de-escalation techniques.
- Importance of the foster child's parents and relatives.
- Concurrent planning.
- Emergency procedures, first aid, and fire safety.
- Preparation of the child in foster care for permanence and independence.

- The role of the court and lawyer guardian ad litem in permanency planning.
- Reasonable and prudent parent standards.
- Firearm storage and safety.
- The unique needs of foster children based on individual identities related to culture, race and ethnicity, religion, and spirituality, and SOGIE.
- Human trafficking.
- Trauma-informed parenting, including the effects of discipline in the household.

**Assessment of
Training Needs**

Licensing rule changed from 400.12316(4) to 400.12312.

**Unallowable
Expenses**

Flowers or gifts for families, with the exception of an annual appreciation gift has changed from \$35 to not exceeding \$45 per foster parent.

**Licensing Time
Frames**

All activities related to licensing time frames must be documented as a social work contact in the Child Welfare Licensing Module (CWLM) within five business days of the activity.

Agencies must ensure their customer service delivery is adequate to achieve timely licensure by following the required time frames below:

- The inquirer must be contacted within three business days of initial inquiry to invite them to orientation.
 - Orientation must be available and offered to provide prospective foster parents the opportunity to attend within 30-calendar days of their inquiry follow-up contact.

- All prospective applicants must be provided a CWL-3889, Foster Home Application, and a CWL-4622, Foster Home Applicant Questionnaire, after attending orientation.
- Within two weeks following orientation the agency must follow up with prospective foster parents who did not submit a signed application after orientation.
- Once an application is received the following must be completed within five business days:
 - Enroll the applicant(s) in CWLM.
 - Upload signed paper applications in CWLM, if applicable.
- Once an application is received the following must be completed within 10 business days:
 - Schedule fingerprinting.
 - Complete first in-person home visit. If the first in-person home visit does not occur within 10 business days attempts to schedule the visit and identified barriers must be documented in a social work contact.
 - The next available pre-service GROW training must be offered.
 - Submit out-of-state child abuse and neglect inquiries, if applicable.
 - Request an environmental health inspection, if applicable.
- Within 30-calendar days of the signed application, references must be contacted.
- Within 60-calendar days of the signed application date at least two in-person home visits must occur.
- Phone, video, or in-person contact must be made with each prospective foster family at least once every 30-calendar days to assess progress and reduce barriers to licensure.
- To meet the time frame of licensure within 180-calendar days, it is recommended the CWL-3130, Initial Foster Home Evaluation, be routed to the Division of Child Welfare Licensing

(DCWL) for approval within 166 days after the date the application was signed.

Application Questionnaire

The CWL-4622, Foster Home Application Questionnaire, is the only approved applicant questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to assist the licensing agency in collecting information about the applicants and households to aid in the development of the initial foster home licensing assessment. The CWL-4622, Foster Home Application Questionnaire, is designed as a guide for home visit interviews after application and must not take the place of in-person interviews. Each area within the questionnaire must be explored further during in-person interviews.

Completion of the CWL-4622, Foster Home Application Questionnaire, by the family **is not required for licensure**. Any delay by applicants in completing this form must not delay or impede the licensing process. The assigned licensing case manager is responsible for collecting necessary information to complete the initial evaluation and can gather information for assessment during interviews.

Agencies must not use any additional questionnaires intended to collect preliminary information needed to conduct an evaluation of suitability for foster home licensure.

The licensing case manager must meet with their supervisor at least once monthly to discuss foster home licensing tasks. Monthly consultation may be conducted in person or by video conference and must be documented in a social work contact.

Reason: Clarification by the Caregiver Recruitment, Support, and Development Program Office and Children's Services Administration (CSA) priorities and licensing rules revisions.

**MANUAL
MAINTENANCE
INSTRUCTIONS**

Changed Items ...

[FOM 922](#)