

STATEWIDE INTERCOUNTY PROTOCOL
FOR
RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL

***** *The **highlighted** areas in this protocol are subject to change pending CARES go-live*

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Statewide Intercounty Protocol is to provide guidance to request an Emergency Safety Assessment Request and a Resource Family Approval Assessment Request in a relative, nonrelative extended family member (NREFM) or extended family member in the case of Indian child, who resides in another county, per the current Written Directives.

This agreement shall apply to county child welfare agencies when managing their own approvals and in those instances when the child welfare department has agreed to approve/monitor resource families referred by probation departments.

II. DEFINITIONS

- a. "Applicant" means an individual or individuals who have submitted an application to a County for Resource Family Approval.
- b. "Approving county" means the county that completes the RFA process for a family's home to be approved.
- c. "Child" means any person under the age of 18, non-minor dependent or ward of the Juvenile Court in a California County who is considered for placement.
- d. "Contiguous County" means county that shares a border with another county.
- e. "Emergency placement" means a placement of a child/youth or NMD with a relative or nonrelative extended family member (NREFM) prior to them being approved as Resource Family.
- f. "Emergency assessment" means completion of the safety assessment to include in-home inspection, criminal record check, child abuse and neglect check and assessment of ability of the relative or nonrelative extended family member (NREFM) to provide care and supervision to the child or nonminor dependent prior to the placement pursuant to WIC 361.4.
- g. "Host County" means the county that completes the requested RFA assessment.
- h. "Intent to Place" is an email to include the name, address and phone number of the placement home, the name(s), date of birth of the child/ren, relationship to the caregivers, and their emotional/behavioral/medical/educational issues if known.
- i. "Nonrelative extended family member (NREFM) means an adult who has an established familial relationship with a relative of a foster child or a familial or mentoring relationship with a child as described in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 362.7.

- j. "Placing County" means the county of jurisdiction for a dependent child or a ward of a California Superior court, or otherwise in the care of a child welfare agency or probation department.
- k. "Resource Family" means an individual or family that a County determines to have successfully met the application and assessment criteria necessary for providing care for a child or nonminor dependent who is under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, or otherwise in the care of a child welfare agency or probation department.
- l. "Resource Family Approval" (RFA) means an applicant or Resource Family successfully meets the home environment assessment and permanency assessment standards adopted pursuant to WIC section 16519.5.

III. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- a. CDSS will maintain a list that will provide an Out of County Point of Contact (OOC POC) for the purposes of implementing this Protocol.
 - i. All contact between counties shall always occur through the OOC POCs.
- b. Contiguous counties shall do their own RFA approvals and emergency assessments, unless those contiguous counties have an alternative agreement in place.
- c. Approved Resource Families will be transferred to their County of Residence. The family must be informed of this process prior to the RFA approval process.
- d. Individual counties may establish their own reciprocity agreements with other, non-contiguous counties that supersede the statewide Intercounty Approval Agreement.
- e. Written Directives specifies that a county requires a caregiver to submit an RFA application within five (5) business days after an emergency placement.
 - i. Counties who complete an emergency placement with an Applicant who resides Out of County, prior to RFA Approval shall start the EC Funding on the date of placement, while awaiting the ii-iv process to commence below.
 - ii. Counties who complete an emergency placement prior to RFA approval shall have their OOC POC submit the OOC request using the current [RFA Out of County Assessment Request Form](#) to the Host County OOC POC within ten (10) business days from date of placement.
 - iii. The Host County RFA Team will collect the [RFA01A](#).
 - iv. If the Placing County does not meet this timeframe, they shall complete the RFA process in its entirety, unless the Host County agrees to complete the RFA process. Upon approval of the Resource Family, the Placing/Approving County shall transfer the Resource Family Home to the Host County following the case transfer protocol. See section IX.
- f. If a Host County refuses to accept an OOC request from a Placing County, (outside of the time frame criteria) the Host County OOC POC shall

immediately notify the Placing County's OOC POC. The Placing County's OOC POC shall contact the Host county's RFA manager to discuss the situation. If unresolved, the Placing County shall be responsible for processing the RFA application.

- g. This protocol shall also apply to "conflict of interest" families and sensitive cases from placing counties. A conflict-of-interest family is one who resides within the geography of the Placing County but their direct and substantial relationship to the Placing County could impact or could be seen as impacting fair and unbiased decisions. A sensitive case is one who resides within the geography of the Host County but has direct and substantial relationship to the placing county that could have unauthorized access to confidential information. The term "Host County" shall apply to the county that agrees to complete the assessment.
- h. Incoming out-of-county requests shall be given the same prioritization as the Host County's RFA Assessments.

IV. EMERGENCY SAFETY ASSESSMENT REQUEST OF A CHILD WITH A RELATIVE OR NREFM IN ANOTHER COUNTY

For purposes of this section, an emergency safety assessment request with a relative or NREFM refers to a home that is not currently approved. If the family is in the application process, please refer to Section V for information regarding Compelling Reason placements.

- a. The Placing County may request a Host County where the relative/NREFM resides (and the child or children are to be placed) to process an Emergency Safety Assessment Request.
 - i. The default presumption is that the child's county of jurisdiction will process an emergency assessment for a child's placement with a relative or NREFM in another county.
 - ii. The Host County may decline the processing of the emergency safety assessment request.
 - iii. If permissions are required within the child's county of jurisdiction, the child's county of jurisdiction shall obtain permission from the dependency court to place out of county prior to making a request to process an emergency safety assessment request that may lead to an emergency placement.
- b. If the Host County agrees to process the emergency safety assessment request, the counties will take the following actions, in the order that is listed below:
 - i. The Placing County OOC POC shall request the Host County OOC POC to initiate the emergency safety assessment with the identified relative or NREFM.
 - 1. The request shall be made using the RFA Out of County Assessment Request Form and identifying the Emergency Safety Assessment Request, then completed in its entirety including the completion of the emergency background

checks.

- ii. The request shall be made to the Host County OOC POC by email. The Host County shall accept or decline the request via email.
 - iii. The Host County, upon acceptance, shall respond to the request within two (2) business days and provide a date that initial contact will be attempted with the family. Since this is an emergency safety assessment request, the initial attempted contact shall not exceed two (2) business days from the request.
 - iv. The Host County will then begin the process for emergency safety assessment with a relative or NREFM as outlined in the Written Directives, and according to the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 309 or 361.45. If the emergency safety assessment for the family is approved, the Host County shall notify the Placing County via email by the end of next business day.
 - v. Once the emergency safety assessment is approved, the Placing County can decide to place the child(ren) in the relative/NREFM home.
 - 1. Emergency Safety Assessment Requests for a Placing County's emergency placement assessment shall be valid for no more than 30 calendar days. If 30 calendar days have lapsed without a placement, a new request needs to be submitted. (Upon a second request, the placing county must check the "Reopen Request" box on the RFA Out of County Assessment Request Form and provide the previous request date.)
 - 2. Once placement occurs, the Placing County shall submit an updated RFA OOC Assessment Request Form identifying the Request as the RFA Assessment Request (Initial) to initiate the RFA process with the date of placement and within ten (10) business days from the placement date. Please see above, Section III(e)(i).
 - 3. The Host County shall commence the RFA Assessment process as documented below in Section IV(d). The Host County shall collect the RFA01A and all required RFA documents. The RFA comprehensive assessment shall be completed within 120 days of the emergency placement of a child or NMD, per the Written Directives, unless good cause exists for the delay.
 - 4. The relative/NREFM shall meet the approval standards of the Written Directives and any County specific training requirements the Host County may have.
 - vi. If the relative/NREFM is not approved for the emergency safety assessment, the Host County OOC POC shall notify the Placing County OOC POC within two (2) business days by email and include the reason why the emergency safety assessment request was not approved.
- c. If the Placing County must place a child on an emergency basis when

the Host County OOC POC has already received an application, the Placing County OOC POC must immediately notify the Host County OOC POC via email of the intent to place. It is highly recommended that the Placing County OOC POC communicate with the Host County OOC POC prior to the emergency placement when at all possible.

- i. If placement has already been made, the Placing County OOC POC will send the intent to place request after placement to the Host County OOC POC. No need for the RFA OOC Request.
 - ii. If there is a Pending Administrative Action (denial of application) or any concerns about the application, the Host County OOC POC will inform the Placing County OOC POC of the pending concerns. The Host County OOC POC will lift this issue up to their Management as needed.
- d. Once the emergency placement is completed, the Placing County shall follow the procedures outlined below.
 - i. If the Placing County makes an emergency placement and would like the Host County to complete the RFA comprehensive assessment, the Placing County shall take the following actions, in the order that is listed.
 1. Enter the family information in **CWS/CMS in Resource Management, under the Resource Family Home Type**, with the Application Status as “Application Approved” and RFA License Status as “RFA Probationary” and both to reflect the placement date.
 - a) The RFA ID number MUST start with an X to identify that it has been created by the county of jurisdiction, then followed by the two-digit county code for the county of jurisdiction to avoid duplicating numbers.
 2. The Placing County OOC POC emails the completed RFA Out of County Assessment Request form to the Host County OOC POC no later than ten (10) business days from the emergency placement date. The Placing County shall ensure all fields are fully filled out, noting any concerns including criminal or Child Welfare history, home environment, and any special needs of the children in the home, that may need additional training (example-medical training).
 3. Include Alternative arrangements agreed on from the Placing County with the Applicant, ICWA/Tribal pending or further inquiries required in the Comments/Additional Information Section of the RFA OOC Assessment Request form, when applicable.
 - ii. The Host County OOC POC shall accept the request and respond acknowledging the receipt within two (2) business days, and include the name of the assigned RFA worker and supervisor.
 - iii. The Placing County will reassign the County Licensing Case

- (CLC) to the identified Host County RFA Worker.
- iv. Once the CLC is reassigned, the Host County must change the RFA ID number to align with their county numbering convention by using Process Placement Home Move (PPHM).
- v. The Host County shall complete the RFA comprehensive assessment within 120 days of the emergency placement of a child or NREFM with a relative or NREFM, unless good cause exists for a delay.

V. COMPELLING REASON PLACEMENT OF A CHILD WITH A RELATIVE OR NREFM IN ANOTHER COUNTY

For purposes of this section, a compelling reason placement with a relative or NREFM refers to a home that is not currently approved but for whom an application has been received.

- a. Compelling reason applies when a Placing County wants to place with an applicant who has submitted the RFA application to the Host County. When this occurs, the following steps shall be followed:

- i. The Placing County OOC POC shall email the Host County's OOC POC requesting an agreement to place under compelling reason.
- ii. The Host County OOC POC shall acknowledge receipt of the request within 24 business hours.
- iii. Within 48 business hours from acknowledging receipt of the request, the Host County OOC POC shall verify if the Host County has completed the following:
 - 1. A home environment assessment is completed and documented on the RFA 03.
 - 2. A background check is completed for the applicant(s) and all adults residing in or regularly present in the home, which includes the completion and approval/denial of any criminal record exemptions.
 - 3. In addition, should the Host County OOC POC have additional information related to concerns of safety or risk, this information shall be shared with the Placing County OOC POC within the confines of confidentiality, and may affect the agreement for the compelling reason decision.
- iv. Within 48 business hours from acknowledging receipt of the request, the Host County OOC POC shall reply to the Placing County OOC POC and either agree or disagree with the request for compelling reason placement or shall provide a status and estimate of the timeframe for a decision. The agreement for compelling reason placement shall be valid for no more than 30 calendar days.
- v. If the Placing County wishes to place on a compelling reason

basis after the 30-day calendar period, a new request must be made following the steps outlined in this section. The request must note that this is a “reopen request.”

- vi. The Placing County OOC POC shall notify the Host County OOC POC within 24 business hours of placing the child in the home.
 - vii. The Host County shall follow the Written Directives and complete the RFA Comprehensive Assessment within 120 days of the compelling reason placement, unless good cause exists for the delay.
- b. Upon agreement with the compelling reason placement, the Host County shall amend the application status to Application Approved and License Status to RFA Probationary both with the date of placement in **CWS/CMS Resource Management CLC**.

VI. RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL REQUEST IN ANOTHER COUNTY

- a. A California county may choose to pursue consideration for Resource Family approval of a relative or NREFM, residing in another county, who has been identified for prospective placement of a child under its jurisdiction.
 - i. Prior to a Placing County commencing the RFA process in a Host County, the Placing County shall search for any prior or pending approvals/denials, pending Investigation or Administrative Actions, for the applicants.
 - ii. If there is a pending application, the Placing County OOC POC must request an Intent to Place to the Host County OOC POC.
- b. When a Placing County wishes to request assessment of a relative or NREFM in another county for Resource Family Approval by the Host County, the Placing County and Host County will take the following actions, in the order that is listed:
 - i. The Placing County OOC POC shall make the request to the Host County OOC POC, using the RFA Out of County Assessment Request form located in the CWDA website and shall complete the form in its entirety.
 - 1. The OOC Assessment Request will be emailed to the Host OOC POC as listed on the CDSS website unless an alternative email In-Box has been provided by the Host County. Keep in mind some counties are unable to provide CA Driver License or social security number on the OOC Request due to confidentiality, and the request shall be accepted. Please note the reason on the OOC Assessment Request.
 - 2. If there is a Pending application in the Host County, the Placing County OOC POC will contact the Host County OOC POC within 48 business hours.
 - a) The Placing County OOC POC will submit the Intent to Place request to the Host County OOC POC if placement is needed.
 - b) If there is a Pending Administrative Action (denial of

- application) on the application, the Host County OOC POC will inform the Placing County OOC POC.
- c) The Host County OOC POC will respond to the Placing County OOC POC within two (2) business days acknowledging the receipt of the OOC Assessment Request.
 - ii. The Host County OOC POC will inform the Placing County OOC POC with the contact information of the assigned RFA social worker and their supervisor.
 - iii. The Host County will begin the RFA process, according to their RFA procedures, with the prospective family and provide updates to the Placing County OOC POC on the approval process every 30 calendar days to include any pending actions (denial, cease, etc.) or barriers to approval.
 - iv. Upon request from the Placing County OOC POC, the Host County OOC POC shall send the signature date of the RFA 01A.
 - v. Upon any change of the application status, the Host County OOC POC shall notify the Placing County OOC POC via email:
 - 1. Cease/withdrawal documentation
 - 2. Approval documentation: Written Report (RFA05) and Approval Certificate (RFA05A).
 - a) The Placing County OOC POC shall be responsible for contacting the Host County OOC POC to discuss any Simplified exemptions, Standard exemptions, or Standard with Conditions exemptions and the Host County OOC POC shall provide the relevant details regarding the exemption to allow the Placing County OOC POC to make an appropriate placement decision.
 - 3. Denial documentation (Written Report, Notice of Action (NOA))
 - vi. If the Host County is considering a possible denial, the Host County OOC POC shall notify the Placing County OOC POC in writing no later than at the time legal consult is requested prior to the denial and provide the reason for the denial.
 - c. The Host County shall be responsible for completing the denial process, including legal consult, sending of the notice of action(s), and due process to the family if an appeal is filed.
 - d. In the case of Probation requesting approval out-of-county, the Placing Probation agency shall process the Resource Family Approval request, unless the host Probation agency and Placing Probation County have an alternative reciprocal agreement.

VII. SUPERVISION OF RESOURCE FAMILY HOMES

- a. Whichever county does the approval is then responsible for all subsequent activities related to the supervision and investigation of the Resource Family. These activities include:
 - i. Criminal clearance and subsequent exemption processes

- ii. Updates
- iii. Investigation of complaints
- iv. Administrative Actions and completion of the appeal process
- v. Maintain receipt of criminal clearances along with all documentation detailing criminal background.
- vi. Updated home and grounds inspection when the family moves.
 - 1. If the Host county is the approving county, the Host county shall notify the Placing County OOC POC of any child abuse referrals, complaints, or sub-arrest notifications and any actions taken against the resource family, no later than five (5) business days, using the Out of County Complaint Notification or the Out of County Child Abuse Referral Notification in the CWDA website at <https://www.cwda.org/resource-family-approval-tools>.
- vii. If the Host County and the Placing County have a separate protocol regarding child abuse referrals, that protocol shall be followed.
- viii. If the County of Residence for the Approved Resource Family is not the approving county but receives information regarding a child abuse referral or a complaint, the County of Residence for the Approved Resource Family OOC POC is to notify the Placing County OOC POC, no later than five (5) business days, using the Out of County Complaint Notification using the Out of County Child Abuse Referral Notification in the CWDA website at <https://www.cwda.org/resource-family-approval-tools> or the separate child abuse referral protocol if applicable.
 - 1. Any concerns regarding a resource family on the part of the Placing or Host County shall be communicated to the other county in writing, through the OOC POCs.

VIII. PLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Once a relative or NREFM is approved as a Resource Family, that home shall be available to be considered for placement of a relative or non-relative foster child(ren) under the jurisdiction of any county, unless the Approval is child specific.
 - i. Approval of a Resource Family does not guarantee initial or continued placement of a foster child/NMD.
- b. Any County intending to place with a Resource Family approved by another county will have the Placing OOC POC contact the Approving County OOC POC via email **prior** to placement to discuss their intention and to obtain agreement.
- c. A family approved by the Host County may accept additional placements as a resource family for that Host County, unless the family has child-specific approval.

IX. TRANSFER OF APPROVED RESOURCE FAMILIES TO ANOTHER COUNTY

- a. An approved resource family who resides outside the Approving County shall be transferred to the county of residence by way of the Host OOC POC to the County of Residence OOC POC, with the following exceptions:
 - i. Situations may include but are not limited to:
 - 1. Child-specific approval.
 - 2. Approval due to conflict of interest.
 - ii. For conflict-of-interest cases, an agreement shall be reached between the two counties regarding the appropriateness of the transfer.
 - iii. Any approval of the transfer update must be completed by the Host County. The County of Residence OOC POC may return the transfer request to the Original Host County OOC POC/ Sending County OOC POC if all requirements in the Written Directives are not met.
- b. The two counties shall follow the protocol outlined below:
 - i. The Sending County shall determine the current placed child(ren)/youth's ICWA status.
 - ii. If there is a tribe involved, transfer of the Resource Home with ICWA children/youth, please inform the designated tribal contact(s) of the transfer.
 - iii. The Sending County shall email the RFA Transfer Packet to the Host County OOC POC. The Transfer Packet shall include:
 - 1. Fully completed RFA Transfer Assessment Request Form
 - 2. The Sending County must complete the BCIA 9002 for every adult residing and/or regularly present in the home following the instructions in the Background Assessment Guide Section 122.
 - 3. The Host County completes Section 2 of the BCIA 9002 Form (Substitute Agency Requesting Subsequent Notification Transfer Information).
 - 4. A copy of a complete Resource Family Home (RFA) file that includes all the required documents in the Written Directives.
 - 5. The CORI is not to be included in the file. For more information about Exemption transfer please refer to the Background Assessment Guide (BAG) Section 122.
 - 6. Delays in sending the copy of the complete RFA file may impact the transfer process.
 - 7. If the Host County OOC POC prefers receiving the packet via regular mail, then the Host County OOC POC must provide the contact information to the Sending County OOC POC within two (2) business days.
 - iv.
 - v. The Host County OOC POC shall respond via email to the Sending County OOC POC within two (2) business days acknowledging receipt of the RFA Transfer Packet.
 - vi. The Host County OOC POC shall:
 - 1. Review the RFA file received from the Sending County

OOO POC and ensure all required documents are included.

- a) If the RFA file is not complete, then the Host County OOC POC will contact the Sending County OOC POC to send the missing required information within 30 calendar days.
 - b) The Sending County OOC POC may request an extension as mutually agreed by the two counties.
 - c) If the required documents are not received, the Host County OOC POC shall send notification to the Sending County OOC POC informing them that the request for transfer is closed.
2. The Host County shall assign an RFA worker to the family within the recommended five (5) business days of the receipt of the complete RFA Transfer Packet, but no longer than ten (10) business days, and will notify the Sending County OOC POC of the name and contact information for that RFA worker and their supervisor.
3. Complete the health and safety assessment of the home pursuant to the Written Directives.
4. The Host County shall conduct a background check for any new adults residing or regularly present in the home.
5. Once the full assessment has been completed and the Host County is ready to approve the Transfer, the Host County shall facilitate completion of Step 3 of the BCIA 9002 (or equivalent as required by the DOJ) and submit it to the Department of Justice.
6. Complete an updated Written Report Update and Approval Certificate.
 - a) The Written Report Update and Approval Certificate shall be considered in draft until the transfer is finalized with the notification from DOJ of the approval of the sub-arrest transfer. See below.
- vii. Upon receipt of the DOJ approval of the sub-arrest transfer, the Host County shall:
 1. Finalize the draft written report update and approval certificate.
 2. Notify the Sending County OOC POC of the DOJ approval and the new RFA number for the family.
 3. Notify any jurisdictional county with children placed in the home, through their OOC POC, of the finalized transfer of the home to the Host County. A copy of the new Written Report Update and Approval Certificate shall be included with this notification.
 - a) This may include the Sending County OOC POC, but may also include other counties OOC POC who have dependent children in that home.
 4. Assume full responsibility for the RFA Approved Resource Family as of the date of receipt for the DOJ approval of the

sub-arrest transfer.

- viii. The Sending County OOC POC, upon receipt of the DOJ approval of the sub-arrest transfer and the new RFA number from the Host County, shall:
1. Complete the Process Placement Home Move (PPHM) in CWS/CMS as of the date of receipt of the DOJ approval of the sub-arrest transfer.
 2. Submit No Longer Interested Notifications (BCIA 8302 or electronically) on every adult in the Resource Home.
 3. Relinquish responsibility for the RFA family as of the date of receipt of the DOJ approval of the sub-arrest transfer.