

Resource Family Approval Written Directives



VERSION 8

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Prepared by:

California Department of Social Services



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**RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL
WRITTEN DIRECTIVES**

ARTICLE I. INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1-01: Purpose

- (a) The Resource Family Approval Program was implemented to establish a unified, family-friendly, and child-centered Resource Family Approval process to replace previous multiple processes for licensing foster family homes and approving relatives and nonrelative extended family members as foster care providers, and approving families for legal guardianship or adoption.
- (b) A Resource Family is considered eligible to provide foster care for related and unrelated children and nonminor dependents in out-of-home placement, is considered approved for adoption or legal guardianship, and does not have to undergo any additional approval or licensure processes.

SECTION 1-02: Authority

- (a) **Federal Authority.** Title IV-E, Section 471(a)(10) of the Social Security Act requires that the state of California establish a state authority responsible for establishing and maintaining standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended standards of national organizations concerned with standards for these institutions or homes, including standards related to admission policies, safety, sanitation, and protection of civil rights.
- (b) **State Authority.** Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 requires the California Department of Social Services, in consultation with county child welfare agencies, foster parent associations, and other interested community parties, to implement a unified, family friendly, and child-centered Resource Family Approval process to replace the existing multiple processes for licensing foster family homes, certifying foster homes by licensed foster family agencies, approving relatives and nonrelative extended family members as foster care providers, and approving guardians and adoptive families. *(Added by Stats. 2007, c.464 (A.B.340), §3. Amended by Stats. 2011, c.32 A.B.106), §69, eff. June 29, 2011; Stats. 2012, c.35 (S.B.1013), §136, eff. June 27, 2012; Stats. 2013, c.21, §42, eff. June 27, 2013; Stats. 2014, c.772 (S.B.1460), §21, eff. September 29, 2014; Stats. 2015, c.773 (A.B.403), §111, eff. October 11, 2015; Stats. 2016, c.612 (A.B.1997), §119 and 131, eff. September 25, 2016; Stats. 2017, c.732 (A.B.404), §103 and 126, eff. October 12, 2017; Stats. 2018, c.935 (S.B.1083), §7.5, eff. September 29, 2018; Stats. 2018, c. 910 (A. B. 1930), § 45 and 54 eff. September 29, 2018; Stats. 2019, c.434 (A.B. 686), eff. October 2, 2019; Stats. 2019, c. 810 (A. B. 865), §1.3 and 2.3 eff. October 12, 2019; Stats. 2019, c. 777 (A. B. 819), § 19 and 25 eff. October 12, 2019; Stats. 2020, c. 104 (A. B. 2944), § 21 eff. September 18, 2020; Stats. 2021, c.548 (S.B. 584), eff. October 5, 2021; Stats. 2021, c.687 (S.B. 354), eff. October 8, 2021; Stats. 2022 c.765 (A.B. 1914), eff. September 29, 2022.*

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- (c) These Written Directives contain standards for county Resource Family Approval programs only and have the same force and effect as regulations.

Handbook Begins Here

Emergency placement procedures performed by a county welfare agency or probation department can be found in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.4, 361.45 and 727.05. For more information related to these statutes please email childprotection@dss.ca.gov.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 1-03: Interstate Compact on Placement of Children

- (a) The Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC) is set forth in Family Code section 7900 et seq. and hereby adopted and entered into with all other jurisdictions joining therein. It further designates the California Department of Social Services as the “appropriate public authority” responsible for administration of ICPC.
- (b) The ICPC is a contract among member states and U.S. territories authorizing them to work together to ensure that children who are placed across state lines for foster care or adoption receive adequate protection and support services. The ICPC establishes procedures for the placement of children and fixes the responsibility for agencies and individuals involved in placing children.
- (c) Nothing herein shall supersede any timelines, requirements, or provisions set forth by Family Code section 7900 et seq, Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) section 31-510, or regulations adopted by the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (AAICPC).

SECTION 1-04: Tribally Approved and Tribally Specified Homes

- (a) Tribally Approved Homes (TAHs) are homes that have gone through a tribal approval process as defined by the Tribe or Tribal Agency approving the home. TAHs are exempt from the Resource Family Approval process but must meet minimum federal standards for approval.
- (b) Tribally Specified Homes (TSHs) are designated by the Indian child’s Tribe as a preferred placement option for an Indian child. A Tribally Specified Home must be either tribally approved or approved pursuant to the Resource Family Approval standards.
- (1) In the case of an Indian child, a County shall comply with placement preferences as required by Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.31 and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.).
- (c) In the case of an Indian child for whom the child’s Tribe is not exercising its right to approve or specify a home, the County shall apply the prevailing social and cultural

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standards of the Indian community to Resource Family Approval for that child, as required by Welfare and Institutions Code subdivision (f) of section 361.31 and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.).

- (1) The County shall contact and collaborate with the Tribe to apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community throughout the approval process, as specified in these written directives.
 - (A) The prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community can only be determined by the Tribe and applied in collaboration with the Tribe. Collaboration shall include, but is not limited to, invitation of a representative of the Indian child's Tribe to participate in all aspects of the RFA process involving the application of prevailing social and cultural standards, as specified in these written directives.
 - (i) The County shall collaborate with the Tribe to arrange mutually agreed-upon dates and times to schedule any in-person assessments or meetings with the family.
 - (B) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (i) If the tribal representative is unable to participate in any assessment or in-person meeting, the County shall document the invitation and the reason the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (C) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes, verbally or in writing, of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.

Handbook Begins Here

The current list of designated ICWA agents for the Indian Child Welfare Act is found in the [Federal Register](#). This list is not inclusive of tribal representatives that the Tribe has designated as a point of contact. It is recommended that the County contact the designated ICWA agent to request information about the appropriate point of contact for collaboration in applying the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 1-05: Historical Program Notes

- (a) **Written Directives:** Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(f)(1)(A), the Department has issued Written Directives to administer the Resource Family Approval Program operated by Counties.
 - (1) Version and Effective Date
 - **Version 1: Effective November 1, 2013** (Revision Date: 11/22/2013)
 - Authorized and approved by Greg Rose, Deputy Director, for the Children and Family Services Division and Dave Dodds, Deputy Director, for the Community Care Licensing Division.

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- (2) Version 2 through 7 authorized and approved by Greg Rose, Deputy Director for the Children and Family Services Division, and Pam Dickfoss, Deputy Director for the Community Care Licensing Division.
- **Version 2: Effective October 15, 2015** (Revision Date: 09/01/2015)
 - **Version 2.1: Effective June 18, 2016** (Revision Date: 05/18/2016)
 - **Version 3: Effective September 30, 2016** (Revision Date: 08/30/2016)
 - **Version 4: Effective February 6, 2017** (Revision Date: 01/06/2017)
 - **Version 4.1: Effective June 9, 2017** (Revision Date: 05/09/2017)
 - **Version 5: Effective February 6, 2018** (Revision Date: 02/06/2018)
 - **Version 6: Effective April 11, 2019** (Revision Date: 04/10/2019)
 - **Version 6.1: Effective January 7, 2020** (Revision Date: 01/07/20)
 - **Version 7: Effective January 13, 2021**(Revision Date: 01/13/2021)
 - **Version 8: Effective November 1, 2022** (Revision Date: 11/01/2022)

ARTICLE 2: GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 2-01: Written Directives

- (a) The Written Directives:
- (1) Have the same force and effect as regulations.
 - (2) Ensure Counties use the same standards for Resource Family Approval.
- (b) A County may not implement policies or procedures that conflict with or attempt to supersede the Written Directives.
- (c) The Department may amend the Written Directives to address policy, program, or other issues identified by a County or the Department.
- (1) An amendment to the Written Directives shall be effective on the date of publication of the change by the Department.

ARTICLE 3: DEFINITIONS AND FORMS

SECTION 3-01: Definitions

- (a) The following definitions shall apply whenever the terms are used in the Written Directives:

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- (1) “Accusation” means a written statement of charges filed by a County or the Department that specifies the applicable law or Written Directives that a Respondent is alleged to have violated that may constitute grounds for revocation, rescission, suspension, limitations, or conditions, as described in Government Code section 11503.
- (2) “Adoption Assistance Program” or “AAP” means a program of financial or medical assistance to facilitate the adoption, or tribal customary adoption, in the case of an Indian child, of children or nonminor dependents who otherwise would remain in long-term foster care, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 16115 through 16125.
- (3) “Adoptive parent” means a person who has obtained an order of adoption of a minor child or, in the case of an adult adoption, an adult.
- (4) “Adult” means a person who is 18 years of age or older.
- (5) “Age or developmentally appropriate” means activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 362.05(c)(2).
- (6) “Allegation” means information which asserts or indicates that a Resource Family may not have met or may not be meeting the requirements of one or more of the Written Directives or any applicable laws.
- (7) “Alternative caregiver” means a person who is at least 18 years of age and provides alternative care for a foster child in either their home or the home of the caregiver as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16501.02(a)(2).
- (8) “Applicant” means an individual or individuals who have submitted an application to a County for Resource Family Approval.
- (9) “Application” means the form used to apply for Resource Family Approval.
- (10) “Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Program” or “ARC Program” means a program, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 11461.3, which provides the approved relative caregiver of a dependent child or nonminor dependent who is not eligible for AFDC-FC, a monthly payment equal to the Home-Based Foster Care (HBFC) Level of Care (LOC) basic rate at the child’s or nonminor dependent’s assessed level of care.
- (11) “Associated individual” means a person who is required to obtain or has obtained a criminal record clearance or exemption pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 because they reside or are regularly present in the home of an applicant or Resource Family.
- (12) “Authorized representative” means:
 - (A) A person or entity authorized by law to act on behalf of a child or nonminor dependent. The person or entity may include, but not be limited to, a parent or attorney of a child or nonminor dependent, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), legal guardian, conservator, or public placement agency.
 - (B) For due process pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6, an attorney or other person or entity authorized by a party to act on behalf of the party on appeal.
- (13) “Birth parent” means a biological parent or, in the case of a person previously

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- adopted, an adoptive parent.
- (14) “Capacity” means the number of children and nonminor dependents for whom a Resource Family is approved to provide care and supervision.
- (15) “Case management visit” means a visit between a RFA program staff member, Resource Family, or other individual residing in the home to provide support or consultation to the family or to discuss concerns, deficiencies, or other issues.
- (16) “Certified respite care provider” means an individual who has been certified pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16501.01 to provide respite care services to a child or nonminor dependent in the home of the Resource Family or the certified respite care provider.
- (17) “Child” means a person who is under 18 years of age, placed with or who is being considered for placement with an applicant or Resource Family by a placement agency or a parent or guardian, and in the case of an Indian child, the Indian child’s Tribe, with or without a court order.
- (A) “Child” also means a person who is 18 to 22 years of age that meets the requirements of a “child with special health care needs” as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17710(a), and is placed with or being considered for placement in a certified family home or with a Resource Family by a placement agency with or without a court order.
- (18) “Child Abuse Central Index” or “CACI” means the statewide, multi-jurisdictional, centralized index of child abuse investigation reports maintained by the California Department of Justice. These reports pertain to alleged incidents of physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental or emotional abuse or severe neglect. Each child protection agency (police, sheriff, county welfare, and probation departments) is required by law to forward to the California Department of Justice a report of every child abuse incident it investigates, unless an incident is determined to be inconclusive or unfounded.
- (19) “Child with special health care needs” means the following, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17710(a):
- (A) A child, or a person who is 22 years of age or younger who is completing a publicly funded education program, who meets both of the following requirements:
- (i) Has a condition that can rapidly deteriorate resulting in permanent injury or death or a medical condition that requires specialized in-home healthcare.
- (ii) Has been adjudged a dependent of the court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 300, is in the custody of a county welfare department, or has a developmental disability and is receiving services and case management from a regional center.
- (20) “Child-Specific Approval” means approval as a Resource Family to care only for a specific child or nonminor dependent based on any of the following circumstances:
- (A) The family is a relative or nonrelative extended family member who has an established familial or tribal relationship of such significance that it outweighs any concerns about the Resource Family identified through the family evaluation.
- (B) The relative applicant or other adult living in the home was granted a criminal record exemption outlined in 6-03B(b)(1).

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(C) The Tribe did not exercise its right to approve a family for a specific child, and the County, in collaboration with the Tribe, applied the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community when approving the family for that child.

- (21) “Compelling reason” means a decision to place a child with an applicant prior to approval as a Resource Family based upon the best interest of the child, to include maintaining a child’s family-like connections.
- (22) “Complainant” means a person who makes an allegation or provides information to a County concerning a Resource Family, which is considered to be a complaint. If an administrative action is pending, “Complainant” may also mean a County or the Department as that term is typically used in an administrative action.
- (23) “Complaint” means one or more allegations made concerning a Resource Family.
- (24) “Comprehensive Assessment” means an evaluation of an applicant using the home environment and permanency assessments and any other factors set forth in the Written Directives for the purpose of determining the applicant’s suitability as a Resource Family.
- (25) “Conviction” means a plea or verdict of guilty or a conviction following a plea of nolo contendere, notwithstanding a subsequent order pursuant to Penal Code sections 1203.4 and 1203.4a permitting the person to withdraw their pleas of guilty and to enter a plea of not guilty, or setting aside the verdict of guilty, or dismissing the accusation, information, or indictment.
- (26) “Core Practice Model” or “CPM” means a framework to support child welfare practice and allow child welfare professionals to be more effective in their roles.
- (27) “Corrective Action Plan” or “CAP” means a plan developed by a County which describes how a Resource Family is not conforming to the requirements of an applicable statute, regulation, or the Written Directives and the steps the Resource Family and the County will take to ensure that the Resource Family corrects identified deficiencies within a specified time.
- (28) “County” means a county child welfare agency or probation department that approves Resource Families.
- (29) “Criminal Record Exemption” or “Exemption” means an exemption from the presumptive disqualification of a person with one or more criminal convictions to be approved as, reside in, or be regularly present in a Resource Family home.
- (30) “Current foster family agency” means a licensed foster family agency by which a Resource Family is currently approved.
- (31) “Default” means failure by a Respondent to file a notice of defense in a matter set before the Office of Administrative Hearings as described in Government Code section 11520, or failure to appear at the hearing described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6.
- (32) “Deficiency” means any failure to conform to any applicable statute, regulation, or Written Directive.
- (33) “Department” means the California Department of Social Services.
- (34) “Digital signature” means an electronic identifier created by computer, intended by the party using it to have the same force and effect as the use of a manual signature, as defined in Government Code section 16.5(d).
- (35) “Director” means the director of the California Department of Social Services or their designee.

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- (36) “Documented Alternative Plan” or “DAP” means a written plan approved by a County describing an applicant’s or Resource Family’s use of an acceptable alternative to a specific non-safety home environment requirement.
- (37) “Emergency placement” means a placement of a child or nonminor dependent with a relative or nonrelative extended family member prior to Resource Family Approval as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309,361.45, or 727.05.
- (38) “Evaluate out” means a determination was made that a complaint referral does not meet the criteria for an in-person response or investigation.
- (39) “Excluded individual” means a person who is prohibited from residence, presence, or contact with children or nonminor dependents in the home of a Resource Family as a result of an order by the Department or an administrative action.
- (40) “Extended family member” means, in the case of an Indian child, an individual defined by law or custom of the Indian child’s Tribe or, in the absence of such law or custom, shall be a person who has reached the age of eighteen and who is the Indian child’s grandparent, aunt, uncle, brother or sister, brother in-law or sister in-law, niece or nephew, first or second cousin, or stepparent pursuant to 25 USC 1903(2).
- (41) “Family evaluation” means a component of the Permanency Assessment which includes interviews of an applicant or Resource Family, to evaluate their family system dynamics and strengths, and areas where more support or resources may be needed for more effective and quality parenting skills.
- (42) “Family health care” means health care provided to a child or nonminor dependent by a Resource Family in accordance with the written instructions of the health professional for the child or nonminor dependent.
- (43) “Foster care” means 24-hour out-of-home care provided to children or nonminor dependents whose families are unable or unwilling to care for them and who are in need of temporary or long-term substitute parenting.
- (44) “Gender expression” refers to the ways a person communicates their gender identity through clothing, haircut, behavior, and interaction with others.
- (45) “Gender identity” means a person’s internal identification or self-image as male, female, or other.
- (46) “General neglect” means as defined in Penal Code section 11165.2(b).
- (47) “Health care practitioner” means any of the following persons who are licensed or certified pursuant to Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code and who provide specialized in-home health care prescribed by a physician for a child with special health care needs: Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, Public Health Nurse, Registered Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse, Psychiatric Technician, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, and Respiratory Therapist.
- (48) “Health professional” means any of the following persons who are licensed or certified pursuant to Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code: Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Practitioner, or Public Health Nurse.
- (49) “Home Environment Assessment” means a component of the Resource Family Approval process which requires an applicant or Resource Family to meet standards that include, but are not limited to, a background check, health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the home, and capacity determination.

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- (50) "ICPC" means the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.
- (51) "Inactive status" means a period of time during which a Resource Family is not eligible to provide foster care for a child or nonminor dependent and is not subject to the requirements specified in Article 11, or Article 11.1 if applicable, or an approval update.
- (52) "Inconclusive" means that an investigation concluded that an allegation in a complaint is not substantiated or unfounded.
- (53) "Indian child" means an unmarried person who is under 18 years of age, or an unmarried person who is 18 years of age or over, but under 21 years of age, who is a member of an Indian Tribe or eligible for membership in an Indian Tribe and is the biological child of a member of an Indian Tribe.
 - (A) An "Indian child" who is 18 years of age or over, or their attorney, may elect that the person not be considered an Indian child for purposes of the child custody proceeding.
- (54) "Indian child's Tribe" means (a) the Indian Tribe in which an Indian child is a member or eligible for membership or (b), in the case of an Indian child who is a member of or eligible for membership in more than one Tribe, the Indian Tribe with which the Indian child has the more significant contacts according to 25 U.S.C. 1903 (5).
- (55) "Indian community" means the community in which the parent or extended family members of an Indian child reside, or with which the parent or extended family members maintain social and cultural ties, or the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian child's Tribe.
- (56) "Individual Exemption" means an exemption granted to a person who has requested an exemption on his/her own behalf, when a Resource Family or applicant elected not to pursue an exemption on behalf of the affected person and voluntarily terminated the person's residency and/or presence in the home.
- (57) "Individualized health care plan" means a written plan developed by an individualized health care plan team and approved by the team physician, or other health care practitioner designated by the physician to serve on the team, for the provision of specialized in-home health care to a child with special health care needs as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17731.
- (58) "Individualized health care plan team" means those persons who develop an individualized health care plan for a child with special health care needs, including the primary care physician for a child or other health care practitioner chosen by the physician to serve on the team, the county social worker or regional center caseworker for the child, and any health care practitioner chosen to monitor the specialized in-home health care provided to a child pursuant to the individualized health care plan, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17710.
- (59) "Infant" means a person who is under two years of age, placed with or who is being considered for placement with an applicant or Resource Family by a placement agency or a parent or guardian, and in the case of an Indian child, the Indian child's Tribe, with or without a court order.
- (60) "Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments" or "Kin-GAP" means a program of financial assistance or medical assistance (Medi-Cal) to facilitate the achievement of permanency for foster children or nonminor dependents through legal guardianship by a relative caregiver as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code

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- sections 11362 and 11391.
- (61) “Legal Division” means the Legal Division of the California Department of Social Services.
 - (62) “Mandated Reporter” means an individual, as specified in Penal Code section 11165.7, who is mandated by the state of California to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect to the county child welfare agency and/or local law enforcement agency.
 - (63) “Nonminor dependent” or “NMD” means a foster child who is at least 18 years of age and not more than 21 years of age or a nonminor former dependent or ward, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 11400.
 - (64) “Nonrelative extended family member” or “NREFM” means an adult who has an established familial relationship with a relative of a child or nonminor dependent, or a familial or mentoring relationship with a child or nonminor dependent as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 362.7.
 - (65) “Notice of Defense” means a written statement signed by or on behalf of a Respondent in response to an Accusation or Statement of Issues that constitutes a request for hearing, as described in Government Code section 11506.
 - (66) “Occasional short-term babysitter” means a person who cares for a child in or out of a Resource Family’s home on an occasional basis for no more than 24 hours at a time.
 - (67) “Office of Administrative Hearings” means as defined in Government Code section 11370.2.
 - (68) “Permanency Assessment” means a component of the Resource Family Approval process, which requires an applicant or Resource Family to meet standards that include, but are not limited to, training, family evaluation, and any other activities that relate to a Resource Family’s ability to achieve permanency with a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (69) “Placement agency” means a county probation department, county welfare department, county social service department, county mental health department, county public guardian, general acute care hospital discharge planner or coordinator, conservator pursuant to Part 3 (commencing with Section 1800) of Division 4 of the Probate Code, conservator pursuant to Chapter 3 (commencing with section 5350) of Part 1 of Division 5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, and regional center for persons with developmental disabilities, that is engaged in finding homes or other places for children and nonminor dependents for temporary or permanent care, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1536.1(a).
 - (70) “Portability” means the process by which either:
 - (A) A Resource Family currently approved by a licensed foster family agency may transfer their approval to a County pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.58 and section 5.01-01.
 - (B) A Resource Family currently approved by a County may be approved by a subsequent licensed foster family agency pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1517.5(b) and Articles 2.1 and 5.1 of the Foster Family Agency Interim Licensing Standards.
 - (71) “Position Statement” means a written statement or hearing brief by a party that includes a summary of the facts and issues in a case and the party’s position related to the allegations set forth in a Notice of Action or amended Notice of

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- Action, that is filed prior to a hearing at the State Hearings Division, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 10952.5.
- (72) “Precedential decision” means a decision adopted by the Department that contains a significant legal or policy determination of general application that is likely to recur and that has been designated as a precedent decision in whole or in part, as described in Government Code section 11425.60.
- (73) “Prevailing social and cultural standards” means the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian child’s Tribe(s), which can only be determined by the Tribe and may be applied in collaboration with the Tribe.
- (A) Collaboration with a Tribe includes, but is not limited to, invitation of a representative of the Indian child’s Tribe to participate in all aspects of Resource Family Approval involving the application of prevailing social and cultural standards, as specified in these written directives.
- (74) “Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Partnership Plan” means the document that describes the roles of a Resource Family and a County in mutually supporting a child or nonminor dependent in care and meets the case plan objectives.
- (75) “Reasonable and prudent parent standard” means the careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain a child’s health, safety, and best interests, while at the same time encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 362.05.
- (76) “Relative” means an adult who is related to a child or nonminor dependent by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship, including stepparents, stepsiblings, and all relatives whose status is preceded by the words “great,” “great-great,” or “grand” or the spouse of any of these persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 11400.
- (77) “Rescind” means an administrative action by a County to revoke a criminal record exemption or approval of a Resource Family.
- (78) “Reside” means physical presence in the home of a relative, nonrelative extended family member, applicant, or Resource Family for 30 days or longer or the point at which presence in the home is not for a temporary or transitory purpose, whichever occurs first.
- (79) “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 county child welfare agency or probation department.
- (80) “Resource Family Approval” or “approval” means that an applicant or Resource Family successfully meets the Home Environment Assessment and Permanency Assessment standards adopted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5.
- (81) “Resource Family Approval Program” or “program” means the single process for approving families for foster care, legal guardianship, and adoption.
- (82) “Resource Parent” means an individual who is approved as a Resource Family.
- (83) “Respite care” means temporary care for periods not to exceed 72 hours, and, in order to preserve the placement, may be extended up to 14 days in any one month, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16501(b), in the home

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- of a licensed foster family, certified family, approved relative or nonrelative extended family member, Resource Family, or a certified respite care provider.
- (84) “Respondent” means an applicant, Resource Parent, or individual who has been served with a Notice of Action and is the subject of an administrative action. For matters that shall be heard by the State Hearing Division, a “Respondent” also means a “Claimant,” as defined in CDSS Manual of Policy and Procedures section 22-001.
- (85) “RFA program staff” means child welfare agency or probation department staff whose roles and responsibilities include performing components of the Resource Family Approval program as specified in the Written Directives.
- (86) “Risk assessment” means the consideration of factors regarding an applicant that include, but are not limited to, physical and mental health, alcohol and other substance use and abuse, and family and domestic violence history.
- (87) “Self-administer” means the act of a child or nonminor dependent giving themselves medication or injections.
- (88) “Serious complaint” means a complaint containing an allegation which may involve any of the following:
- (A) Conduct by any person as described in Penal Code section 11165.5.
 - (B) Death or serious bodily injury, or risk of death or serious bodily injury, to any person.
 - (C) A violation of Sections 11-08 or 11.1-06 or Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9.
- (89) “Serious deficiency” means any failure to conform to Resource Family Approval requirements that presents an immediate or substantial threat to the physical health, mental health, or safety of any child or nonminor dependent in a home.
- (90) “Serious incident” means an incident reported by a Resource Family which may involve any of the following:
- (A) Conduct by any person as described in Penal Code section 11165.5.
 - (B) Death or serious bodily injury, or risk of death or serious bodily injury, to any person.
 - (C) A violation of Sections 11-08 or 11.1-06 or Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9.
- (91) “Severe neglect” means as defined in Penal Code section 11165.2(a).
- (92) “Sexual orientation” describes a person’s emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to others that may be shaped at an early age.
- (93) “Sibling” means two or more children or nonminor dependents related by blood, adoption, or affinity through a common legal or biological parent as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 362.1 and 16002.
- (94) “Sibling group” means two or more children or nonminor dependents who are related to each other as full, half, or stepsiblings as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.5.
- (95) “Simplified exemption process” means a process by which an exemption may be granted on a County’s own motion, as authorized in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(D).
- (96) “Smoking” means as defined in subdivision (c) of section 22950.5 of the Business and Professions Code.
- (97) “Specialized in-home health care” means those services identified by a child’s

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- primary physician as appropriately administered by a Specialized Resource Family.
- (98) “Specialized Resource Family” means a Resource Family who has been trained by a health care practitioner to provide specialized in-home health care to children with special health care needs.
- (99) “Specialized Resource Parent” means an individual who is approved as a Specialized Resource Family.
- (100) “Statement of Issues” means a written statement filed by a County or Department regarding grounds for denial of a license, approval or privilege and specifying the statutes and rules with which a Respondent must show compliance, as described in Government Code section 11504.
- (101) “Subsequent foster family agency” means a licensed foster family agency to which a Resource Family has submitted a portability application for Resource Family Approval pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1517.5.
- (102) “Substantiated” means that an investigation concluded that based on a preponderance of the evidence, meaning that it is more likely than not, an allegation in a complaint occurred.
- (103) “Summary criminal history record” means any document received directly from the Department of Justice in response to Live Scan fingerprint submissions pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5, including the state and federal record of arrests and prosecutions (RAP sheet), CACI reports, and any subsequent notifications.
- (104) “Surrender” means a voluntary relinquishment of Resource Family Approval by a Resource Family or Resource Parent.
- (105) “Tobacco product” means a product or device as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 22950.5 of the Business and Professions Code.
- (106) “Transgender” means a person whose gender identity does not correspond with their anatomical sex. A transgender girl or woman is a girl or woman whose birth sex was male but who understands herself to be female. A transgender boy or man is a boy or man whose birth sex was female but who understands himself to be male.
- (107) “Trauma Informed” means program interventions, practices, services, and supports that recognize and respond to the varying impact of traumatic stress on children, nonminor dependents, and their families, certified parents, Resource Families, and those who have contact with the child welfare system.
- (108) “Tribally Approved Home or “TAH” means a home that has been licensed or approved by an Indian Tribe for foster care or adoptive placement of an Indian child using standards established by the Tribe pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act (25 U.S.C. 1915). A Tribally Approved Home is not required to be licensed by the Department or a County and is equivalent to a Department or County licensed home. Background check requirements for foster or adoptive placement as required by Health and Safety Code sections 1522 and 1522.1 apply to a Tribally Approved Home.
- (109) “Tribally Specified Home” means a designation by the Indian child’s Tribe of its preferred placement option for the Indian child. Tribally Specified Homes are second in order of placement preference for an Indian Child pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.31.
- (110) “Unfounded” means that an investigation concluded that an allegation in the

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- complaint is false, could not have happened, or is without any reasonable basis.
- (111) “Withdrawal” means a voluntary decision by an applicant to stop the application and assessment process.
 - (112) “Written Report” means a summary, analysis, and determination of an applicant’s suitability to foster, adopt, and provide legal guardianship of a child or nonminor dependent based on all the information gathered through the application and Comprehensive Assessment processes.
 - (113) “Written Directives” means the written processes, standards, and requirements issued by the Department to implement the Resource Family Approval Program.

SECTION 3-02: Forms

- (a) A County shall use the following Resource Family Approval forms:
 - (1) RFA 01A: Resource Family Application
 - (2) RFA 01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement
 - (3) RFA 02: Resource Family Background Checklist and Out-of-State Child Abuse Registry Checklist
 - (4) LIC 198B: Out-Of-State Child Abuse/Neglect Report Request (or other state’s equivalent)
 - (5) RFA 03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist
 - (6) RFA 07: Resource Family Health Questionnaire
 - (7) RFA 09: Notice of Action Regarding Resource Family Approval
 - (8) RFA 09B: Notice of Action to Individual Regarding Resource Family Approval Criminal Record Exemption Decision
 - (9) RFA 09E: Order to Individual of Exclusion from Resource Family Homes and Department Licensed Facilities
 - (10) RFA 09I: Order to Individual of Immediate Exclusion from Resource Family Homes and Department Licensed Facilities
 - (11) RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application
 - (12) RFA 11: Resource Family Approval Statement Acknowledging Requirement to Report Child Abuse
 - (13) RFA 802: Complaint Intake Report
 - (14) RFA 809: Resource Family Visit Record
 - (15) RFA 809C: Resource Family Visit – Corrective Action Plan
 - (16) RFA 9099: Complaint Investigation Report
 - (17) RFA 9099C: Complaint Investigation Report –Continued
- (b) A County may use the following Resource Family Approval forms or an equivalent form containing the same information:
 - (1) RFA 04: Resource Family Risk Assessment
 - (2) RFA 05: Resource Family Approval Written Report
 - (3) RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate
 - (4) RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report
 - (5) RFA 12: Resource Family Approval Documented Alternative Plan
 - (6) RFA 811: Confidential Names
 - (7) RFA 812: Detail Supportive Information

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- (c) A County may use electronic document transmission and digital signatures when collecting forms and documents in which a signature is required for the purpose of Resource Family Approval.
 - (1) If a County intends to use digital signatures, the County shall ensure that the technological safeguards and requirements provided in Government Code section 16.5, and Civil Code section 1633.1 through 1633.17 are observed.
 - (2) All electronic forms or forms containing a digital signature shall be maintained in the applicant's or Resource Family's file.
 - (3) If an applicant or Resource Family requests not to use electronic document transmission, paper copies shall be made available.

ARTICLE 4: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTIES

SECTION 4-01: Implementation Plan

- (a) County shall maintain an implementation plan for operation of the Resource Family Approval Program.
 - (1) A County shall modify its implementation plan, if necessary, as determined by the Department during a biennial review.
- (b) An implementation plan shall include the following:
 - (1) Program statement and vision.
 - (2) Program goals, objectives, and intended outcomes.
 - (3) The County's organizational structure, including child welfare agency and probation department staff roles and responsibilities.
 - (4) Description of how the County will maintain separation between the operation of the RFA program and its placement, adoption, and social work responsibilities.
 - (5) Description of a plan for maintaining RFA program staff qualifications, skills, and program expertise.
 - (6) If applicable, identification of the role of any contracted licensed adoption agencies or foster family agencies that will be involved with the implementation or operation of the program, including a description of activities to be performed, as well as their staff qualifications, skills, and expertise.
 - (7) Description of the County plan for tribal outreach and participation.
 - (8) Resource Family Approval process, including plans for out-of-county approvals.
 - (9) Proposed Resource Family Approval assessment tools.
 - (10) Training plan for child welfare agency and probation department staff and Resource Families.
 - (11) Procedures for the monitoring of Resource Families.
 - (12) Procedures for due process regarding denied or rescinded approvals or other adverse actions, and whether the County intends to use the Legal Division for consultations and hearings.
 - (13) If applicable, a request to delegate specific program responsibilities to the Department.
 - (14) Any other information requested by the Department related to implementation.
- (c) A County shall consult with its probation department prior to any modifications to its

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implementation plan.

- (d) A County shall maintain a copy of its implementation plan and any amendments to the plan.

SECTION 4-02: RFA Program Requirements

- (a) A County shall ensure that RFA program staff have the education and experience, and the core competencies necessary to competently participate in the assessment and evaluation of an applicant or Resource Family.
 - (1) A County shall require social work personnel to meet the minimum qualification requirements for social worker or probation officer positions according to the County's requirements.
- (b) A County shall ensure RFA program staff are trained to perform assigned tasks.
- (c) A County shall ensure RFA program staff participating in the assessment and evaluation of an applicant or Resource Family meet core competency requirements, including having necessary knowledge and skills.
 - (1) For purposes of this subsection, "knowledge" includes an understanding of the following:
 - (A) The child protective and probation systems.
 - (B) The Resource Family Approval assessment and approval process.
 - (C) The contents of the Written Directives.
 - (D) The personal rights of children in foster care and how to ensure those rights are afforded to children.
 - (E) Child and family confidentiality principles.
 - (F) Techniques for interviewing children, nonminor dependents, and adults.
 - (G) Developmental stages of childhood and effects of trauma on development, as well as the impact of poverty on the lives of families and children.
 - (H) The priorities of safety, permanency, and well-being for children in foster care.
 - (I) The impact of trauma, grief, and loss on a child involved in the child welfare system and its impact on placement and permanency goals.
 - (J) Understanding the historical trauma, cumulative trauma, and ongoing trauma in the case of an Indian child.
 - (K) The impact of mental health and substance abuse on children and families.
 - (L) Permanency timelines and the role caregivers play in supporting timely permanency.
 - (M) That teaming or collaboration assists in developing solutions that are individualized to the family and their culture, community, and in the case of an Indian child, the child's Tribe. In the case of an Indian child, an understanding of the responsibility and importance of collaborating with the Indian child's Tribe to ensure the application of the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community.
 - (N) The practice of cultural humility and how this approach improves family engagement shows respect for families and ensures assessments

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- incorporate a family's unique culture, and in the case of an Indian child, how understanding and applying the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community inform the Comprehensive Assessment of the family.
- (O) Ongoing training and services prepare caregivers to meet the needs of children and nonminor dependents and assists families with forming lifelong relationships.
- (P) Resource Family Approval prepares families to better meet the needs of vulnerable children in the foster care system and assists with a seamless transition to permanency.
- (Q) The impact of implicit and personal biases when working with children and families.
- (2) For purposes of this subsection, "skills" include the ability to do the following:
 - (A) Explain the Resource Family Approval requirements to applicants and Resource Families.
 - (B) Correctly apply the Written Directives and applicable laws.
 - (C) Conduct a Home Environment Assessment, family evaluation, and prepare a Written Report.
 - (D) Incorporate an assessment of an applicant's mental health and substance abuse into the risk assessment.
 - (E) Interview children, nonminor dependents, and adults using a variety of interviewing techniques.
 - (F) Conduct visits for assessment purposes in a way that engages Resource Families to build rapport and establish trust.
 - (G) Assess a variety of information including, but not limited to, historical, social, and economic factors pertaining to individuals.
 - (H) Summarize, evaluate, and make a final determination of an applicant in the Written Report.
 - (I) Investigate complaints, and prepare, conduct, and report findings of complaint investigations.
 - (J) Utilize teaming or collaborative strategies to engage Resource Families.
 - (K) Ability to assess and identify children who have been abused, neglected, or maltreated.
 - (L) Recognize how personal beliefs, values, norms, and world views can affect the dynamics of case planning and outcomes.
 - (M) Present self in a manner that is respectful, culturally humble, professional, and adapts well to meet both community and cultural needs of children, families and tribes.
 - (N) Collaborate with families to achieve mutual goals, build upon family strengths, and ensure quality comprehensive Written Reports are developed.
- (d) A County shall provide RFA program staff with a copy of the Written Directives.
- (e) A County shall designate a Resource Family Approval Program Project Manager to be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Program and to serve as the point of contact to the Department.
- (f) If a County assigns the components of the Comprehensive Assessment, as set forth in

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Section 6-01(a), to different RFA program staff, the County shall ensure RFA program staff member or supervisor reviews all components of the Comprehensive Assessment prior to approving a Written Report.

- (g) If a RFA program staff member discovers that they have a conflict of interest related to the performance of their duties, then the staff member shall immediately report the conflict to a supervisor, who may transfer responsibility for the duty to another staff member.
- (h) County operated programs that **approve** Intensive Services Foster Care (ISFC) Resource Families, shall follow the ISFC program requirements pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 18360 – 18360.35.

SECTION 4-03: County Reporting Requirements

- (a) A County shall collect and submit the data elements and information as determined by the Department. The Department shall give Counties no less than 30 calendar days' notice of the date on which the information should be submitted to the Department.
- (b) A County shall report to the Department on a monthly basis the number of applicants with a child or nonminor dependent placed in a home prior to Resource Family Approval, pursuant to Sections 4-08 and 4-09, whose application process has exceeded 90 calendar days from the date of placement and provide a summary of the reasons for the delay.
- (c) On a quarterly basis, a County shall provide the Department with a log of applications that were denied and Resource Families that were approved, had approval rescinded, or surrendered approval.

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The reporting requirement specified in Section 4-03(b) complies with the Emergency Caregiver Funding provisions and the monthly reporting template will be provided to Counties by the Department. The reporting requirement specified in Section 4-03(c) is provided on a separate template sent to Counties by the Department. Effective July 1, 2019, this report will be on the RFA 181 form.

Handbook Ends Here

- (d) A County shall submit information and records to the Department regarding administrative actions initiated by the County, including updating the Administrative Action Records System (AARS) and Notice of Action (NOA) database maintained by the Department, as follows:
 - (1) Upload a Notice of Action for the denial or rescission of Resource Family Approval or the denial or rescission of a criminal record exemption and enter required information in the Notice of Action (NOA) database.
 - (2) For exclusion actions initiated prior to January 1, 2017, upload a Notice of Action

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- for the exclusion of an individual from the home of a Resource Family and an exclusion order.
- (3) Update the Notice of Action (NOA) database regarding whether an appeal was received and the subsequent disposition of the action.
 - (4) Upload legal pleadings, including an Accusation, Statement of Issues, or Position Statement.
 - (5) Upload final decisions or resolutions following an appeal, including a default decision and order; dismissal; stipulation, waiver and order; any agreement pursuant to a withdrawal; proposed decision; decision and order; order pursuant to a writ of mandamus; or any other final order.
 - (6) Provide information related to criminal records exemptions required by Health and Safety Code section 1521.7(a)(1) (A)-(D) beginning no later than January 1, 2023.

Handbook Begins Here

The Department's Legal Enforcement Branch may upload records regarding administrative actions on behalf of a County in cases where there is a Memo of Understanding (MOU) for legal services between CDSS and the County.

Handbook Ends Here

- (e) A County shall notify the Department of a serious complaint by sending an email to RFA@dss.ca.gov and to the county's assigned liaison by the close of the next business day following receipt of the serious complaint.
 - (A) The following information shall be included in the notification described in this subsection:
 - (A) Date, time, and location of the complaint.
 - (B) Resource Family identification number.
 - (C) Birthdates and genders of children and/or nonminor dependents placed with the Resource Family.
 - (D) Type of allegation involved in the complaint.
 - (E) Detailed information about the complaint.
 - (F) Other agencies notified, if any, including an Indian child's Tribe.
- (f) A County shall notify the Department of a serious incident by sending an email to RFA@dss.ca.gov and the county's assigned liaison by the close of the next business day following receipt of the incident report.
 - (1) The following information shall be included in the notification:
 - (A) Date, time, and location of the incident.
 - (B) Resource Family identification number.
 - (C) Birthdates and genders of children and/or nonminor dependents who were involved in the incident.
 - (D) Type of incident.
 - (E) Detailed information about the incident.
 - (F) Other agencies notified, if any, including an Indian child's Tribe.

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SECTION 4-04: Confidentiality

- (a) A County shall comply with Welfare and Institutions Code section 10850, section 9201 of the Family Code, and all other applicable laws to ensure that all applications and records concerning individuals made or kept by any officer or agency in connection with the administration of the Resource Family Approval Program are kept confidential. A County shall maintain the confidentiality of all information and records in accordance with applicable laws and Written Directives.
- (b) A County shall comply with its confidentiality policies, procedures, and guidelines. The location of the county's confidentiality policies, procedures, and guidelines shall be made known to all employees, agents, and independent contractors.
- (c) A County shall require its employees, agents, and independent contractors to comply with the confidentiality policies, procedures, guidelines, and the provisions of this Section. All documents identified in Section 10-05(b), and any other information the County deems necessary, shall be maintained in a confidential section of the Resource Family file.
- (d)
 - (1) Information in a Written Report:
 - (A) Shall be released to the individual to whom the information pertains pursuant to Civil Code section 1798.24(a).
 - (i) Upon written request, the County shall provide the requestor copies of material they submitted to the County or documents they signed during the assessment process.
 - (B) May be included in any social study prepared for the court to assist the juvenile court in determining whether placement with a relative is appropriate pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.3.
 - (i) Information that is otherwise confidential and not specifically required by Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.3 shall not be included in a social study.
 - (C) Shall be released as required by law.
 - (2) A Written Report may be shared with a placement agency for the purpose of determining whether to place a child or nonminor dependent with a Resource Family.
 - (3) A Written Report may be shared with the Department and the individuals and entities listed in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.555.
 - (A) In the case of an Indian child, the Written Report may be shared with the Tribe and/or tribal agency.
- (e) A County, the Department, or a foster family agency may share confidential information and documents containing confidential information with another County, the Department or foster family agency for purposes of the Resource Family Approval Program or for authorized purposes related to the placement of children with Resource Families.

Handbook Begins Here

This Section allows counties to share the written report, which includes the county's evaluation of an individual's background check results. However, any criminal offender record information documents

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(CORI) received directly from the California Department of Justice (DOJ), including subsequent arrest notifications, are confidential and access is strictly regulated by statute. For RFA approval purposes, counties are only authorized to share the DOJCORI with the subject of the document pursuant to Penal Code sections 11105(t) and 11105.2.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 4-05: Implementation of Resource Family Approval Program by a County

- (a) Upon implementation of the Resource Family Approval Program in a County, the County may not accept new applications for the licensure of foster family homes, the approval of relative and nonrelative extended family members, or the approval of adoptive families or guardians.
- (b) A County shall operate the Resource Family Approval Program separately from its placement, adoption, and social work responsibilities below the second line supervisor level.
 - (1) If a county child welfare or probation department is unable to maintain separation between the program and its placement, adoption, child/nonminor dependent caseworker or probation officer responsibilities, and it has less than three full-time equivalent RFA program staff, the County shall submit to the Department a written request for an exception to compliance with subsection (b). The written request for an exception must contain the following:
 - (A) An explanation as to how the County will make best efforts to maintain separation between the program and its placement, adoption, child/nonminor dependent case worker and probation officer responsibilities.
 - (B) A statement that the County will ensure RFA program staff does not conduct a complaint investigation against a Resource Family if the RFA program staff participated in any assessment of the Resource Family or granted the approval of the Resource Family, unless adequate staff is unavailable.
 - (C) A statement that the County will ensure RFA program staff does not conduct a complaint investigation against a Resource Family if the RFA program staff has a direct relationship with or interest in the Resource Family or Complainant.
 - (2) The Department shall provide a County with a written response indicating approval or denial of the request.
 - (3) An exception granted by the Department shall remain in effect for three years from the date of the approval letter, at which time the approval will expire.
 - (A) If a County remains unable to comply with subsection (b) once an approval has expired, a new written request for an exception, as specified in paragraph (1), shall be submitted to the Department.

SECTION 4-06: Incoming ICPC Requests

- (a) Upon receipt of a complete incoming ICPC request, a County shall complete a Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant for Resource Family Approval within 60 calendar days, except as provided in paragraph (1).

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- (1) Pre-approval training, as specified in Section 6-06, may be completed after the 60-day time frame.
- (2) A report shall be submitted to the sending state within 60 calendar days pursuant to Family Code section 7901.1.
 - (A) The report shall address the extent to which placement in the home would meet the needs of the child.
 - (B) If the applicant has not completed pre-approval training, the report shall state the anticipated date of completion.
- (3) A signed Interstate Compact Placement Request form (ICPC 100A) recommending that a placement of the child be made shall not be returned to the sending state until a County has completed the Comprehensive Assessment of the applicant pursuant to Section 6-01 and has approved the Resource Family as evidenced through the issuance of a Written Report as specified in Section 6-07.

SECTION 4-07: Out of County Resource Family Approval Assessments

- (a) When a county placement agency places a child or nonminor dependent with a relative, nonrelative extended family member (NREFM), or extended family member in the case of and Indian child, who resides in another county on an emergency basis, the County may choose any of the following options regarding the Resource Family Approval assessments:
 - (1) The County may assess the relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, for Resource Family Approval.
 - (2) The County may request the County of residence to assess the relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, for Resource Family Approval. The County of residence shall proceed with the Comprehensive Assessment in accordance with Article 6 and the protocols adopted by the County Welfare Directors Association or Chief Probation Officers of California.
 - (3) The County may join with the County of residence to establish an agreement that clearly outlines the assessment responsibilities for each County and which County will be responsible for the approval and monitoring of the Resource Family.

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For RFA program staff in the child welfare agency, the County Welfare Director's Association (CWDA) has established a Statewide Inter-County Protocol to provide consistency and agreement with how to assess families who live out of county. This protocol may be found on the CWDA website at <http://www.cwda.org/childrens-services-0> and on the CDSS RFA website at <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Resource-Family-Approval-Program>.

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- (b) A County that approves a Resource Family, or a County that agrees to be responsible for the approval and monitoring of a Resource Family pursuant to paragraph (3) of subsection (a), shall comply with the requirements applicable to a County as specified in the Written Directives.

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SECTION 4-08: Placement Prior to Approval

- (a) Following the emergency placement of a child or nonminor dependent with a relative or nonrelative extended family member (NREFM), or an extended family member in the case of an Indian child, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.45 or 727.05, a county welfare agency or probation department shall do the following:
 - (1) In the case of an ICWA eligible child, consult with the Tribe and determine if the relative, NREFM, or extended family member, will initiate the TAH process, as described in Section 1-04(a), or, within five business days, initiate the Resource Family Approval process as described in paragraph (2) & (3).
 - (2) Ensure the relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, completes form RFA-01(A): Resource Family Application and RFA-01(B): Resource Family Criminal Records Statement.
 - (A) All adults residing or regularly present in the home shall also complete the RFA-01(B).
 - (3) Initiate a Home Environment Assessment, including a background check, as specified in Sections 6-02 and 6-03A.
 - (A) Ensure the relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, and any other required individuals as described in Section 6-03A shall initiate the criminal background fingerprint clearance within five business days of the emergency placement or within 10 calendar days of when the County or probation department conducted a criminal records check through the California Legal Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS).
 - (B) A County shall document the date on which the health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the home is conducted by using form RFA 03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist.
 - (4) Discuss funding available to a relative or NREFM prior to approval as a Resource Family.
- (b) A County shall complete a Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant, as specified in Section 6-01, and prepare a Written Report, as specified in Section 6-07, within 90 calendar days of the date a child or nonminor dependent was placed with the relative or NREFM.
 - (1) If a County is unable to complete the Comprehensive Assessment within 90 days, the County shall document the reasons for the delay, if the delay was due to a good-cause reason, and generate a timeframe for completion.
 - (A) A good cause reason for delay is created when the circumstances for the delay are outside the direct control of the County.
- (c) A relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, is not eligible to receive an Aid to Families with Dependent Children- Foster Care payment on behalf of a child or nonminor dependent until the applicant receives Resource Family Approval and the child or nonminor dependent meets all other eligibility criteria.
 - (1) A relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, shall receive emergency caregiver funding effective the date of placement pursuant to

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Welfare and Institutions Code section 11461.36.

- (d) The emergency placement of a child or nonminor dependent with a relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 309, 361.45, or 727.05 does not ensure approval as a Resource Family.

SECTION 4-09: Placement Prior to Approval – Compelling Reason

- (a) A county welfare agency or probation department may place a child or nonminor dependent with an applicant of a county RFA program or Foster Family Agency prior to Resource Family Approval based on a compelling reason, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(e).
 - (1) A compelling reason may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - (A) The unique needs of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (B) The best interest of a child or nonminor dependent to maintain their family or family-like connections with an applicant.
 - (C) In the case of an Indian child, complying with placement preferences set forth in Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.31 and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq).
- (b) Prior to placing a child or nonminor dependent with an applicant for a compelling reason, a County shall:
 - (1) Verify that a health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the home has been completed and documented on form RFA-03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist, and that a capacity determination has been completed, as specified in Section 10-04.
 - (2) Verify that a background check of the applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home has been completed as specified in Section 6-03A, and if necessary, any criminal record exemptions have been approved pursuant to Section 6-03B.
- (c) A County shall conduct a Permanency Assessment of an applicant, as specified in Section 6-04, and prepare a Written Report, as specified in Section 6-07, within 90 calendar days of the date a child or nonminor dependent was placed pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(e) unless good cause exists.
 - (1) If good cause exists, a County shall document the reasons for the delay and generate a timeframe for completion.
- (d) An applicant is not eligible to receive an Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care payment on behalf of a child or nonminor dependent until the applicant receives Resource Family Approval and the child or nonminor dependent meets all other eligibility criteria.
 - (1) An applicant with a child placed in their home based on a compelling reason shall receive emergency caregiver funding effective the date of placement pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 11461.36.

- (e) The placement of a child or nonminor dependent with an applicant pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(e) does not ensure approval as a Resource Family.

ARTICLE 5: RESOURCE FAMILY APPLICATION PROCESS

SECTION 5-01: Nondiscrimination of Applicants

- (a) Any adult shall be permitted to apply for Resource Family Approval regardless of age, sex, race, religion, color, political affiliation, national origin, disability, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, actual or perceived sexual orientation, medical condition, genetic information, citizenship, primary language, immigration status, or ancestry.

SECTION 5-02: Applicant Qualifications

- (a) An applicant shall be at least 18 years of age.
- (b) An applicant shall be in good physical and mental health.
 - (1) Verification of good physical health of each applicant shall include form RFA 07: Health Questionnaire, or a health screening by a health professional that was issued not more than one year prior to the date of application.
 - (2) Good mental health may include, but not be limited to, information that shows the applicant has not engaged in conduct that poses a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child, nonminor dependent, or other individual.

SECTION 5-03A: Application Requirements – Applicant

- (a) An applicant shall comply with the requirements specified in this Section and the following requirements:
 - (1) Submit a completed application on form RFA 01A: Resource Family Application.
 - (2) Consent to release all requested evaluative reports and records, including physical and mental health reports and records.
 - (A) Confidential information and documents containing confidential information may be shared by a County or the Department pursuant to Section 4-04 (e).
 - (3) Allow a home health and safety assessment pursuant to Section 6-02, to determine whether there are conditions in the home that affect the health, safety, and well-being of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (4) Provide the names and contact information of two individuals who can attest to the applicant's character and ability to provide a safe environment for a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (A) If an applicant is unable to provide two references, the applicant shall document the reasons.
 - (5) Consent for a County to conduct a background check pursuant to Section 6-03A, including submitting a completed form RFA 01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement, and if applicable, form LIC 198B: Out-of-State Child Abuse/Neglect Report Request or an equivalent form from a responding State if that State will not complete the LIC 198B.

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- (6) Consent for a County to obtain a California Department of Motor Vehicles report, and equivalent report from any other state that issued the individual's driver's license, of each applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home who may frequently transport children or nonminor dependents.
 - (A) A County may choose to provide alternate documentation in lieu of an out-of-state driving record pursuant to Section 6-03A(b)(4)(A).
 - (7) Participate in a family evaluation, pursuant to Section 6-05, which includes a comprehensive inquiry into the applicant's personal history, family history, and family dynamics.
 - (8) Complete pre-approval training as specified in Section 6-06 and as required by a County.
 - (A) Applicants shall complete cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid training, or demonstrate equivalent certification, no later than 90 days following approval as a Resource Family as specified in Section 8-01(a).
 - (9) Submit the following supporting documentation:
 - (A) Proof of identity for each applicant.
 - (B) Form RFA 07: Health Questionnaire, or a health screening by a health professional that was issued not more than one year prior to the date of application, for each applicant.
 - (i) As deemed appropriate and necessary by a County, an applicant may be required to complete a health screening by a health professional to verify the applicant is in good physical health.
 - (C) If employed, verification of current employment.
 - (D) Verification of the applicant's current income and disclosure of expenses.
 - (E) Documents verifying that an applicant owns or rents the home in which the applicant resides or has written permission to reside at the residence by the owner of the home.
 - (F) History of the applicant's prior or present status as an approved relative or nonrelative extended family member, a certified family home, or an employee, volunteer, or licensee of a community care facility.
 - (10) Complete any other activities, as determined by a County, related to an applicant's ability to achieve permanency with a child or nonminor dependent or to help determine the applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
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- (b) An applicant shall not willfully or knowingly make or disseminate any false or misleading statements in connection with an application. This includes, but is not limited to, information regarding an applicant, family members, and adults residing or regularly present in the home.
 - (c) If an applicant moves to a new home location, the applicant shall notify the RFA program staff 30 calendar days prior to moving or as soon as the information is available.
 - (d) An applicant or individual for which a criminal record clearance or exemption has been requested shall notify the RFA program staff in writing within five business days of any change in mailing address or telephone number.
 - (e) An applicant shall have the right to withdraw an application, prior to approval or denial,

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verbally or in writing.

- (1) If an applicant verbally withdraws their application, the County shall follow up by providing written confirmation to the applicant.
 - (A) Written confirmation shall be provided to the applicant within five business days from the time of receiving a verbal withdrawal.
- (2) If an applicant withdraws and the county has already established subsequent arrest notification service for the applicant(s), and other adults who reside or are regularly present in the home, the county shall immediately submit a No Longer Interested (NLI) notification form (BCIA 8302) to the Department of Justice, or an electronic notification through the Applicant Agency Justice Connection (AAJC), for each individual, pursuant to Penal Code section 11105.2(d).
- (3) A County shall maintain documentation of the withdrawal in the applicant's file that includes the following information:
 - (A) Date of withdrawal.
 - (B) Date of submission of the NLI notice to the AAJC, or a copy of the No Longer Interested Notification form sent to the California Department of Justice, terminating subsequent arrest notifications pursuant to Penal Code section 11105.2(d).
 - (C) As applicable, a copy of the written withdrawal from the applicant, or a copy of the written confirmation of a verbal withdrawal provided by the County to the applicant.
- (4) An applicant who withdraws an application may submit a new application, or resubmit their previous application, within 12 months of the date of withdrawal.
 - (A) If an applicant resubmits their previous application, the County shall verify that the information remains current or has been updated and require the applicant to sign the application again as confirmation.
 - (B) The date of the applicant's resubmission of the application begins the timeline for processing the application if the applicant received a placement prior to approval.
 - (C) A County may use information submitted by the applicant prior to withdrawal.
 - (D) As deemed necessary, the County may require an applicant to resubmit documents or complete application requirements that were submitted or completed prior to withdrawal.
- (5) Paragraph (3) shall not apply if the County or Department, as applicable, have taken an administrative action related to the initial application.
- (6) A County or the Department may institute or continue any administrative action against an applicant, notwithstanding a withdrawal pursuant to this paragraph, as authorized by subdivision (m) of section 16519.6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

SECTION 5-03B: Application Requirements – County

- (a) A County shall accept an application for Resource Family Approval, upon submission, from an individual who requested an application pursuant to Section 5-01.
- (b) Prior to conducting any component of a Comprehensive Assessment pursuant to Section 6-01, a County shall require an applicant to complete, sign, and submit form RFA 01A:

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Resource Family Application.

- (1) A County may allow an individual to begin pre-approval training, as specified in Section 6-06, prior to the submission of an application.
- (c) If a child or nonminor dependent is placed in the home of a relative, nonrelative extended family member (NREFM), or extended family member in the case of and Indian child, prior to approval on an emergency basis pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.45, or 727.05, a County shall, within 10 calendar days following the criminal records check conducted through the CLETS, or five business days after a child or nonminor dependent is placed with a relative, NREFM, or extended family member, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.45, or 727.05, whichever is sooner, require the relative, NREFM, or extended family member, applicant to complete, sign, and submit form RFA 01A: Resource Family Application and form RFA 01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement.
- (d) The review of an application shall be governed by the law and Written Directives in effect at the time of the decision to approve or deny an application or a criminal record exemption, or if a denial is appealed or an action for the record is filed, as specified in Section 12-01(d). Nothing in this subsection shall supersede any provision of federal or state law or any regulation adopted pursuant to federal or state law.
- (e) A County shall require an applicant to provide the supporting documentation specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9) prior to approval as a Resource Family.

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A County may assist an applicant with obtaining the supporting documentation specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9).

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- (f) As deemed necessary by a County, the County may require an applicant to complete a health screening by a health professional to verify the applicant is in good physical health.
- (g) A County may not charge an applicant an application processing fee.
- (h) A County shall discuss and address questions regarding the following with an applicant:
 - (1) Benefits associated with foster care, Adoption Assistance Program (AAP), Kin-GAP, Approved Relative Caregiver (ARC) funding, emergency caregiver funding if the applicant received a placement prior to approval and any other assistance that may apply.
 - (2) Personal Rights of foster children as specified in Section 11-08 and, if applicable, Section 11.1-06, including how to access additional information and resources that address these personal rights.
 - (3) The applicant's right to a due process hearing.
 - (4) Access to health, mental health, and dental care through Medi-Cal, in home supportive services, and developmental or other services based on the needs of a child or nonminor dependent in the care of a Resource Family.

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- (5) The reasonable and prudent parent standard as specified in Section 11-12.
- (6) If the applicant is married, in a domestic partnership, or resides with a significant other who is not applying for Resource Family Approval, the impact on the other individual's ability to file a petition for adoption.
- (i) A County and applicant shall discuss and sign the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Partnership Plan, if applicable.
- (j) A County shall advise an applicant or Resource Family that if the applicant moves to a new home location, the applicant or Resource Family is required to notify the RFA program staff 30 calendar days prior to moving or as soon as the information is available and that the applicant or Resource Family will be subject to an approval update as required by Section 9-02.
- (k)
 - (1) When an applicant fails to complete the application process specified in Section 5-03A, a County shall provide the applicant with written notice that includes the following:
 - (A) A description of all outstanding items necessary to complete the application process.
 - (B) A time period in which to complete the outstanding items.
 - (C) An advisement that pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(c)(7)(C), the County may cease review of the application if, after 30 calendar days from the date of notice, the applicant does not make a good faith effort to complete the outstanding application items, or if applicable, that the County may deny the application.
 - (2) The County shall document proof of service of the written notice in the applicant's file.
 - (A) The County may document proof of service by certified mail by retaining a copy of the notice with the certified mail receipt service or as specified in Section 12-08(e).
 - (3) If after providing the written notice specified in subsection (k)(1), the applicant fails to make a good faith effort to complete the application process within 30 days of the date of the notice, the County may cease any further review of the application, or if applicable, deny the application pursuant to Section 10-01A.
 - (4) A County shall not cease processing an application pursuant to this subsection if a child or nonminor dependent is placed with the applicant(s) on an emergency basis pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 309, 361.45, 727.05, or for placement based on a compelling reason pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(e)(1).
 - (5) If a County ceases review of an application and has already established subsequent arrest notification service for the applicant(s), and any associated individual, the County shall immediately submit a No Longer Interested (NLI) Notification form (BCIA 8302) to the Department of Justice, or an electronic notification through the Applicant Agency Justice Connection (AAJC), for each individual, pursuant to Penal Code section 11105.2(d).
- (l) After ceasing review of an application, a County shall allow an applicant up to 365

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calendar days from the cease review date documented by the County to resume the Resource Family Approval process.

- (1) The County may use the information submitted previously by the applicant but shall verify that the information remains current or has been updated and require the applicant to sign the application again as confirmation.
 - (2) As deemed necessary by a County, the County may require an applicant to resubmit documents or complete application requirements that were submitted or completed prior to ceasing the review.
 - (3) If an applicant requests to resume the Resource Family Approval process after 365 calendar days of ceasing a review of an application, the applicant must submit a new application.
- (m) (1) A County shall cease any further review of an application as follows:
- (A) An individual has had an application denial by the Department or a County within the preceding year.
 - (B) An individual has had a rescission, revocation, exemption denial, or exemption rescission by the Department or County within the preceding two years.
 - (C) An individual was excluded for life by the Department from Resource Family homes or facilities licensed by the Department, unless the excluded individual has been reinstated pursuant to Government Code section 11522 and Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(g).
- (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a County may continue to review an application if it has determined that the applicant is not an excluded individual and the reasons for the previous denial, rescission, or revocation were due to circumstances or conditions which the applicant shows have either been corrected or are no longer inexistence.
- (3) The cessation of review shall not constitute a denial of the application for purposes of this section or any other law.

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As of January 1, 2022, an applicant may reapply if a recent denial, rescission, revocation, exemption denial, or exemption rescission was because of a conviction that was non-exemptible prior to January 1, 2022. An individual who has been excluded by the department due to a conviction that was non-exemptible prior to January 1, 2022, may petition for reinstatement after one year has elapsed from the effective date of the exclusion order.

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ARTICLE 5.1: RESOURCE FAMILY APPLICATION PROCESS – PORTABILITY

SECTION 5.1-01: Portability Requirements – FFA to County

- (a) A Resource Family approved by a licensed foster family agency may transfer their approval to a County pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.58.

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- (1) A Resource Family may submit form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval-Portability Application while on inactive status pursuant to Section 10-02.
- (b) A Resource Family shall complete all the following:
- (1) Complete and sign Section I of form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application and provide a copy of this completed form to the County.
 - (2) Authorize the County to request that clearances and exemptions issued to the Resource Family and all adults residing or regularly present in the home be transferred from the Department to the County pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1522(h)(3).
 - (3) Cooperate with the County during the approval update process specified in Section 9-04.
- (c) County Requirements: Upon receipt of a Resource Family's completed form RFA10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application, the County shall complete all of the following:
- (1) Complete Section II of form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application.
 - (2) Provide a copy of the completed RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application to the current foster family agency. The provision of this form shall constitute the County's request for a copy of the Resource Family case record, including but not limited to the written report and any updates.
 - (3) If a child is currently placed in the home, notify the placement agency of the Resource Family's intent to transfer their Resource Family Approval to the County.
 - (A) In the case of an Indian child, notify the Tribe of the Resource Family's intent to transfer their Resource Family Approval.
 - (4) Submit a request to the Department for criminal record clearances and exemptions issued to the Resource Family and all adults residing or regularly present in the home to be transferred from the Department to the County pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1522(h)(3).
 - (5) Complete an approval update for the Resource Family in accordance with Section 9-04.

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The Resource Family Approval Background Assessment Guide (BAG) is available as a resource for the procedures associated with transferring criminal record clearances, exemptions, and subsequent arrest notifications.

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- (d) If the County approves a Resource Family's portability application, the County shall complete the following:
- (1) Submit a request to the California Department of Justice to transfer subsequent arrest notifications for the Resource Family and all adults residing or regularly present in the home to the County, as specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522(h)(4).
 - (2) Complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate, or an equivalent

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certificate that complies with the requirements of Section 6-08.

- (A) A copy of the RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate shall be provided to the foster family agency.
 - (B) A copy of the RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate shall be provided to the placement agency if a child or nonminor dependent is currently placed with the Resource Family.
- (e) If the County denies a Resource Family's portability application, the County shall provide due process for denial of the application in accordance with Article 12.
 - (1) A County shall provide the foster family agency with a copy of the notice of denial after complying with due process procedures outlined in Article 12.
- (f)
 - (1) If a Resource Family fails to complete the portability application process, the County may cease review of the portability application in accordance with Section 5-03B(k).
 - (2) Prior to ceasing review of the portability application, the County shall provide the Resource Family with written notice that includes the following:
 - (A) A description of all outstanding items necessary to complete the portability application process.
 - (B) A time period in which to complete the outstanding items.
 - (C) A statement that pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(c)(7)(C), the County may cease review of the portability application if, after 30 calendar days from the date of notice, the Resource Family does not make a good faith effort to complete the outstanding items.
 - (3) The County shall document proof of service of the written notice in the Resource Family's file.
 - (A) The County may document proof of service by certified mail by retaining a copy of the notice with the certified mail receipt or as specified in Section 12-08(e).
 - (4) If after providing the written notice specified in subsection (e)(2), the Resource Family fails to make a good faith effort to cooperate within 30 days of the date of the notice, the County may cease any further review of the portability application.
 - (A) The County shall notify the foster family agency if the County ceased review of the portability application.
 - (5) To ensure subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service is not prematurely terminated, the County shall not transfer rap back service pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (c), until the Resource Family's portability application has been approved.
- (g) A Resource Family maintains its approval status with its current foster family agency unless any of the following occur:
 - (1) Approval is rescinded by the foster family agency or Department;
 - (2) The Resource Family chooses to surrender its approval;
 - (3) The approval is forfeited by operation of law; or
 - (4) The Resource Family is approved by a County in accordance with Section 5.1-01.

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The requirements for a foster family agency when a Resource Family is seeking approval from a County are specified in Section 88336 of the Foster Family Agency Interim Licensing Standards.

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SECTION 5.1-02: Portability Requirements – County to FFA

- (a) A Resource Family approved by a County may be subsequently approved by a licensed foster family agency pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 1517.5(b).
- (1) A Resource Family may submit form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application while on inactive status pursuant to Section 10-02.
- (b) The County shall complete all the following:
 - (1) Within 20 business days of the County's receipt of the form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application from the subsequent foster family agency:
 - (A) Complete and sign Section III of form RFA 10 – Resource Family Approval – Portability Application. Return the completed form to the subsequent foster family agency.
 - (B) Provide the subsequent foster family agency with a copy of the Resource Family's file, excluding the following:
 - (i) Summary criminal history records, including CACI matches, received directly from the California Department of Justice in response to Live Scan fingerprint submissions.
 - (ii) Confidential attorney-client privileged communications, including but not limited to, communications with or documents prepared by or for, a county's attorney for the purposes of legal consultation or representation.
 - (C) If a County, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 827(a)(e), provides the subsequent foster family agency with content from a juvenile case file that was contained in the Resource Family's file, the County shall inform the subsequent foster family agency that it must protect the confidentiality of the information in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 827 and Penal Code section 11164 et seq.
 - (2) If there is a child or nonminor dependent currently placed in the home, notify the child's or nonminor dependent's social worker of the Resource Family's intent to be approved by a subsequent foster family agency.
 - (A) In the case of an Indian child, notify the Tribe of the Resource Family's intent to transfer their Resource Family Approval.
 - (3) Maintain all responsibilities of case management for the Resource Family until the subsequent foster family agency has issued the LIC 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or equivalent approval certificate.
 - (4) Send the No Longer Interested (NLI) form (BCIA 8302) to the California Department of Justice or submit an electronic notification through the Agency Application Justice Connection (AAJC) for all adults residing or regularly present in the home after a County receives a copy of the LIC 05A: Resource Family

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Approval Certificate, or equivalent, from the subsequent foster family agency verifying the Resource Family's subsequent approval.

(5) Securely retain the Resource Family file as specified in Section 10-05 following the date of forfeiture of the approval.

(c) The RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate of a Resource Family approved by a County shall be forfeited by operation of law upon approval as a Resource Family by a subsequent foster family agency in accordance with Section 88336.1(a) of the Foster Family Agency Interim Licensing Standards.

Handbook Begins Here

The requirements for a Resource Family and subsequent foster family agency are specified in Articles 2.1 and 5.1 of the Foster Family Agency Interim Licensing Standards.

Handbook Ends Here

- (d) A Resource Family shall maintain its approval status with the County unless any of the following occur:
- (1) Approval is rescinded by the County.
 - (2) The Resource Family chooses to surrender its approval.
 - (3) The approval is forfeited by operation of law.
 - (4) The Resource Family is approved by a subsequent foster family agency in accordance with this Section.

ARTICLE 6: RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

SECTION 6-01: Comprehensive Assessment

- (a) A County shall conduct a Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant that includes the following:
- (1) A Home Environment Assessment pursuant to Section 6-02.
 - (2) A Permanency Assessment pursuant to Section 6-04.
- (b) A County may use tools, including questionnaires and forms, to complete a Comprehensive Assessment.
- (c) As deemed appropriate and necessary by a County, the County may require an applicant to complete additional activities to help determine the applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
- (d) Notwithstanding subsection (a), a County may discontinue any component of the Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant at any time it determines there is sufficient evidence to deny the application or upon the verbal or written withdrawal of an application by the applicant.

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- (e) When a child or nonminor dependent has been placed pursuant to Sections 4-08 or 4-09, a County shall complete the Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant and prepare a Written Report, as specified in Section 6-07, within 90 calendar days of the date of the placement, unless good cause exists.
 - (1) If good cause exists to exceed the 90-calendar day requirement specified in subsection (e), then a County shall document the reasons for the delay and generate a timeframe for completion.
 - (2) The County shall submit to the Department on a monthly basis the number of applications with a placement prior to approval pending 90 days or more and the reason for the delay pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 11461.36 and Section 4-03(b).

SECTION 6-02: Home Environment Assessment

- (a) A County shall conduct a Home Environment Assessment that includes all of the following:
 - (1) A background check pursuant to Section 6-03A.
 - (2) A health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the applicant's home using form RFA-03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist, to determine compliance with Article 11 and, if applicable, Section 11.1-07.
 - (A) The health and safety assessment of the home and grounds shall include the following:
 - (i) The type of residence, such as a single-family home, apartment, or duplex.
 - (ii) The number of bedrooms and bathrooms.
 - (iii) Any other relevant information, such as the presence of weapons, animals, pools, or other bodies of water.
- (b) In the case of an Indian child, a County shall apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the child's Indian community when conducting the Home Environment Assessment.
 - (1) The prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community can only be determined by the child's Tribe and applied in collaboration with the Tribe. Collaboration shall include, but is not limited to, invitation of a representative of the Indian child's Tribe to participate in all aspects of the home environment assessment process.
 - (A) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments or meetings with the family.
 - (2) The County shall document on the RFA 03 any Indian community standards that were applied to the Home Health and Safety Assessment.
 - (A) Any Indian community standard described on the RFA 03 shall be specific to the approval for the specific Indian child and shall not be applied to any other approval.
 - (B) County shall provide the tribal representative with a copy of the RFA 03 for review and make efforts to obtain a signature from the social service director or designee of the tribe acknowledging receipt.

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- (i) If after seven days no signature from the tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the Written Report can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (ii) The RFA program staff may document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
 - (3) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative that was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (4) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes, verbally or in writing, of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.
- (c) If a child or nonminor dependent is placed in the home of a relative, nonrelative extended family member (NREFM), or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, prior to approval on an emergency basis pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.45, or 727.05, a County shall, within 10 calendar days following the criminal records check conducted through the CLETS, or five business days after a child or nonminor dependent is placed with a relative, NREFM, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code sections 309, 361.45, or 727.05, whichever is sooner, initiate a Home Environment Assessment, including a background check, as specified in this section and Section 6-03A.

SECTION 6-03A: Background Check

- (a) A County shall conduct a background check for an applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home of an applicant or Resource Family and not exempt pursuant to subsection (g).

Handbook Begins Here

The Resource Family Approval [Background Assessment Guide \(BAG\)](#) is available as a resource for the RFA background check procedures.

Handbook Ends Here

- (b) A background check shall include all of the following:
 - (1) A review of an individual's state and federal criminal record information, pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(d), to determine whether a criminal record clearance or exemption may be granted.
 - (A) A County shall obtain from an applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home a completed form RFA-01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement.
 - (2) Consideration of all substantiated allegations of child abuse and severe neglect listed on the Child Abuse Central Index (CACI), pursuant to Health and Safety

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Code section 1522.1, to determine whether the individual poses a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child, nonminor dependent, or other individual.

- (A) Consideration of the allegations described in paragraph (2) shall include a review of the investigation report and file prepared by the child protective agency.
 - (B) A County may not deny an application or take any other administrative action based upon a CACI report unless the County obtains an investigation report, documentation, interviews, child welfare system records, or other evidence that supports the substantiated allegation of child abuse or severe neglect.
 - (C) If the applicant or any adult residing in the home has lived in another state within five years before the applicant has applied for Resource Family Approval, then an out-of-state child abuse and neglect registry check shall be conducted using form LIC 198B: Out-of-State Child Abuse/Neglect Report Request, or an equivalent form from a responding State if that State requires its own, state-specific form.
- (3) A Megan's Law registered sex offender check.
 - (4) A California Department of Motor Vehicles check on an applicant and any adults residing or regularly present in the home who may frequently transport a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (A) If an individual described in paragraph (4) does not have a California driver's license but provides a driver's license issued from a state other than California, a County shall, in addition to a California Department of Motor vehicles search, attempt to obtain an equivalent check from the other state. However, if a County is unable to obtain that record, they shall document the attempt to obtain the information in the Resource Family file in lieu of the driving record.

Handbook Begins Here

The State of Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles created a [website](#) that includes an interactive map with links for consumers to access motor vehicle information from any of the 50 states and Washington, DC.

Handbook Ends Here

- (5) A check for prior licensing-related administrative actions contained in the Administrative Action Records System (AARS) database maintained by the Department.
- (6) A check for prior licensing history and criminal record exemption denial or rescission actions contained in the Licensing Information System (LIS) maintained by the Department.
- (7) A check for prior Resource Family-related administrative actions contained in the Administrative Action Records System (AARS) and Notice of Action (NOA) databases maintained by the Department.

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- (c) Prior to approval, a County may conduct a reference check pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.55(c).
- (d) Prior to initial presence in a Resource Family's home, any individual described in subsection (a) shall obtain one of the following:
 - (1) A criminal record clearance, or criminal record exemption pursuant to Section 6-03B.
 - (2) An approved transfer of a criminal record clearance pursuant to subsection (i).
 - (3) An approved transfer of a criminal record exemption pursuant to Section 6-03B(r).
 - (A) Violation of this subsection may result in a denial of the application, rescission of the Resource Family's approval or other administrative action.
- (e) If an individual's summary criminal history record indicates an arrest for an offense specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522(e), a County shall not grant the individual a clearance or exemption until an investigation has been completed.
 - (1) If an individual's summary criminal history record indicates an arrest for an offense not specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522(e), a County shall consider the information pursuant to Family Code section 8712 and may conduct an investigation as described in subparagraph (A) to ensure compliance with Resource Family Approval standards.
 - (2) An investigation of the facts regarding arrests, CACI entries, or convictions may lead to a denial of Resource Family Approval, an exclusion action, or both.
 - (3) If a County finds that an individual described in subdivision (a) has been convicted of a crime other than an infraction, the application shall be denied or approval shall be rescinded, as applicable, unless the County grants a criminal record exemption pursuant to Section 6-03B.
 - (4) If a County finds that an individual is awaiting trial, or has an active warrant for an arrest, then the County may cease processing the criminal record information and close the case provided that closure of the case does not pose an imminent risk to a child or nonminor dependent in placement. If the County chooses to close the case, the individual may resubmit fingerprints when criminal proceedings have concluded. For purposes of this subsection, cease processing and case closure shall not constitute a denial of a clearance or a criminal record exemption.
 - (5) A County shall verify that a subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service, as specified in Penal Code section 11105.2, is in place for each applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home of an applicant or Resource Family.
 - (6) Any action which a County is permitted to take following the establishment of a conviction may be taken when the time for appeal has elapsed, or the judgment of conviction has been affirmed on appeal, or when an order granting probation is made suspending the imposition of sentence, notwithstanding a subsequent order pursuant to Penal Code sections 1203.4 and 1203.4a permitting the person to withdraw their plea of guilty and to enter a plea of not guilty, or setting aside the verdict of guilty, or dismissing the accusation, information, or indictment. For purposes of this section, the record of a conviction, or a copy thereof certified by the clerk of the court or by a judge of the court in which the conviction occurred, shall be conclusive evidence of the conviction.

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- (f) A County or the Department is authorized to obtain any arrest or conviction records or reports from any court or law enforcement agency as necessary to the performance of its duties as provided in Health and Safety Code section 1522(e) and Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(s).
- (g) The following individuals are exempt from the background check requirements of this section:
 - (1) A medical professional who holds a valid license or certification from the governing California medical care regulatory entity and who is not employed, retained, or contracted by the Resource Family, if all of the following apply:
 - (A) The criminal record of the individual has been cleared as a condition of licensure or certification by the individual's California medical care regulatory entity.
 - (B) The individual is providing time-limited specialized clinical care or services.
 - (C) The individual is providing care or services within the applicable scope of practice.
 - (D) The individual is not a licensed, certified, or approved caregiver or an employee of the Resource Family.
 - (2) A third-party repair person, or similar retained contractor, if all the following apply:
 - (A) The individual is hired for a defined, time-limited job.
 - (B) The individual is not left alone with a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (C) When a child or nonminor dependent is present in the room in which the repairperson or contractor is working, a Resource Parent who has a criminal record clearance or exemption is also present.
 - (3) Employees of a licensed home health agency and other members of licensed hospice interdisciplinary teams who have a contract for a child or nonminor dependent in the home and are in the home at the request of the child's or nonminor dependent's authorized representative.
 - (A) The exemption shall not apply to an individual who is a licensed, certified, or approved caregiver or an employee of the Resource Family.
 - (4) Clergy and other spiritual caregivers who are performing services in common areas of the home, or who are advising a child or nonminor dependent at the request of, or with the permission of, the child or nonminor dependent or their authorized representative.
 - (A) This exemption shall not apply to an individual who is a licensed, certified, or approved caregiver or an employee of the Resource Family.
 - (5) Members of fraternal, service and similar organizations who conduct group activities for a child or nonminor dependent if all the following apply:
 - (A) Members are not left alone with a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (B) Members do not take a child or nonminor dependent from the home.
 - (C) The same group does not conduct such activities more often than once a month.
 - (6) Adult friends and family of the Resource Family who come into the home to visit, for a length of time no longer than 30 calendar days provided they are not left alone with a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (7) A parent or guardian of a child or nonminor dependent who comes into the Resource Family home for the purpose of complying with a court-ordered visitation

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- schedule, provided that they are not left alone with a child or nonminor dependent who is not subject to the court ordered visitation schedule.
- (8) Parents of friends of a child or nonminor dependent when a child or nonminor dependent is visiting the friend's home and the friend, Resource Family, or both are also present.
 - (9) Occasional short-term babysitters.
 - (10) Individuals who come into the home for the purpose of facilitating an extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, or social activity as described in Section 11-14, provided they are not left alone with a child or nonminor dependent.
- (h) Nothing in this section shall prevent a County from requiring a background check for an individual specified in subsection (g), provided that the individual has contact that may pose a risk to the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent placed with an applicant or Resource Family.
- (i) (1) A County may accept the transfer of a criminal record clearance that has been issued by the same County, another County, or the Department for a Resource Family, an approved relative or nonrelative extended family member, or a licensed foster family home. The request to transfer shall be in writing to the County evaluating the applicant or Resource Family and shall include a copy of a proof of identification accepted by the California Department of Justice for Live Scan purposes. The County shall verify whether the individual has a clearance that can be transferred.
- (2) With respect to notifications issued by the California Department of Justice pursuant to Penal Code section 11105.2 concerning an individual whose criminal record clearance was originally processed by another County or the Department, the following shall apply:
- (A) The California Department of Justice shall process a request from the County to receive the notifications only if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) The request shall be submitted to the California Department of Justice by the agency to be substituted to receive the notification.
 - (ii) The request shall be for the same California Department of Justice applicant type as the type for which the original criminal record clearance was obtained.
 - (iii) The request shall contain all prescribed data elements and format protocols pursuant to a written agreement between the California Department and the Department of Justice.
- (j) A nonminor dependent shall not be subject to a background check for purposes of Resource Family Approval.
- (k) (1) After a County and the Department have determined that an administrative action for the record will not be filed, pursuant to Section 12-04, a County shall request that the California Department of Justice terminate the subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service for an individual at the following times:
- (A) When an applicant withdraws their application prior to the approval or denial

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- of the application.
- (B) When a County ceases processing an application pursuant to Section 5-03B.
 - (C) When a Resource Family surrenders approval.
 - (D) When an individual no longer resides or is regularly present in a Resource Family's home.
- (2) A County shall request that the California Department of Justice terminate the subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service for an individual if the County denies an application, rescinds approval, or denies or rescinds a criminal record exemption, or the Department excludes an individual, and, pursuant to Section 12-04, it was determined that the time for appeal or late appeal for good cause has lapsed, or that there was an appeal of the denial, rescission, or exclusion, and there has been a final determination in the administrative action and the time for reconsideration or rehearing has lapsed.

SECTION 6-03B: Criminal Record Exemption

- (a) A County may grant criminal record exemptions if the County has been granted permission by the Department pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 361.4 prior to January 1, 2017.
- (b) A County may not grant a criminal record exemption for an individual whose criminal record indicates a conviction for any offense specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(A)(i)-(ii) unless 10 years have passed since the conviction and provided there is no felony conviction for a crime specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(A)(iii).
 - (1) For relative RFA applicants seeking placement of a specific child or children with whom the applicant is related, a County may grant a criminal record exemption to the applicant, or an adult residing in the applicant's home, pursuant to subsection (g), notwithstanding a conviction for a crime specified in HSC section 1522(g)(2)(A)(i)-(iii), provided there has been no felony conviction within the last five years for a child abuse or neglect, spousal abuse, rape, sexual assault, homicide, or any other crime against a child, including child pornography.
 - (A) Any criminal record exemption granted pursuant to this paragraph shall only be valid for purposes of a child-specific Resource Family Approval and may not be transferred to any other setting.
 - (2) A County shall, in writing, separately notify the individual and the applicant or Resource Family when the individual has been convicted of a crime for which an exemption may not be granted.
 - (A) Only the notice to the individual shall indicate the specific criminal conviction(s) for which an exemption may not be granted, including the crime, date, and location of the conviction, and shall include a copy of the complete summary criminal history record received from the California Department of Justice.
 - (B) For purposes of this subsection, "spousal abuse," as referenced in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(A)(iii)(I), means the abuse of an individual to whom the perpetrator is legally married or registered as a

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domestic partner.

- (c) A County shall grant an exemption using the simplified exemption process based solely on criminal record information collected pursuant to Section 6-03A, and without an exemption request as described in subsections (e) through (i), if the County determines that the individual has a criminal conviction and meets all the following criteria:
 - (1) The individual does not have a misdemeanor conviction within the last three years.
 - (2) The individual does not have a felony conviction within the last five years.
 - (3) The individual has not been convicted of a crime described in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(A) or (g)(2)(B).
 - (4) The individual's criminal history does not indicate a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent.
- (d) At a County's discretion, an individual who is otherwise eligible for the simplified exemption process, pursuant to subsection (c), may be required to request an exemption as described in subsections (e) through (i), if the County determines such action is necessary to protect the health and safety of children and nonminor dependents.
- (e) If any criminal record information collected pursuant to Section 6-03A indicates an individual has been convicted of a crime described at Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(B), a County shall, in writing, separately notify the individual and if applicable, separately notify the applicant or Resource Family of the following:
 - (1) The individual must be granted an exemption in order to reside or be regularly present in a Resource Family home.
 - (2) The authority and criteria for the granting of a criminal record exemption.
 - (A) Only the notice to the individual shall indicate the specific criminal conviction(s) for which an exemption is needed, including the crime, date, and location of the conviction, and shall include a copy of the complete summary criminal history record received from the California Department of Justice.
 - (3) The individual, applicant or Resource Family acting on the individual's behalf, has the right to request a criminal record exemption and the right to appeal if the exemption is denied.
 - (4) The individual shall be excluded for a period of two years in accordance with subsection (p) if a criminal record exemption is denied, unless otherwise ordered by the Department.
- (f) If an individual, or the applicant or Resource Family acting on the individual's behalf, chooses to request an exemption, then the person making the request shall submit the following documents to a County within forty-five (45) calendar days of the date on the exemption needed notice provided by the County:
 - (1) A letter indicating that an exemption is being requested, signed by the individual or by the applicant or Resource Family on behalf of the individual.
 - (2) A detailed description of the individual's role as it applies to the Resource Family or applicant.
 - (3) A signed copy of the form RFA-01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement.
 - (4) A signed statement describing any and all convictions within or outside the state, including approximate dates, what happened, and how and where it happened.

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The statement shall describe the actions the individual has taken since the conviction to demonstrate he or she has been rehabilitated and is presently of good character.

- (A) The individual need not disclose any marijuana-related offenses covered by the marijuana reform legislation codified at Health and Safety Code sections 11361.5 and 11361.7, or any conviction related to human trafficking for which relief has been granted pursuant to Penal Code section 1203.49.
- (5) Documentation relevant to the conviction(s), including, but not limited to, minute orders, court dockets, transcripts, or other court records, law enforcement records, county probation department letters or records, parole records, or California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation records.
 - (A) If the law enforcement agency or court will not release a record to an individual, the individual shall notify the County, and the County shall request the record.
 - (B) If the County determines that it is too burdensome for the individual to obtain the record, the County shall request the record.
- (6) Verification of trainings, classes, courses, treatment, or counseling, or other documentation relevant to rehabilitation.
- (7) Three signed, original, and current character references, including the reference's contact telephone number and mailing address.
 - (A) An individual listed as a reference on form RFA 01A: Resource Family Application may be the same individual providing a character reference for a criminal record exemption request.
 - (B) If an individual submits fewer than three character references, a County may approve an exemption provided sufficient evidence of rehabilitation exists, as provided in subsection (h).
- (g) A County may grant a criminal record exemption for a crime listed in Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(B) if all of the following occurs:
 - (1) The individual requests an exemption or the applicant or Resource Family requests an exemption on the individual's behalf, pursuant to subsection (f).
 - (2) The individual, applicant, or Resource Family presents substantial and convincing evidence satisfactory to the County that the individual has been rehabilitated and presently is of such good character as to justify the granting of an exemption.
 - (3) The individual has not been convicted of a crime for which the County prohibited from granting an exemption under Health and Safety Code section 1522(g)(2)(A).
- (h) The County shall consider all reasonably available information to support a determination that an individual has been rehabilitated and is presently of good character, including but not limited to:
 - (1) The nature of the crime or conduct did not involve acts of violence or physical harm to another person.
 - (2) A substantial period of time has elapsed since the crime was committed or since the conduct occurred.
 - (3) Any longstanding pattern of criminal conduct.
 - (4) The circumstances surrounding the commission of the crime or conduct indicate that repetition is not likely.
 - (5) The individual has engaged in positive activities since the conviction or conduct

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- that would indicate changed behavior, including, but not limited to, employment, education, or participation in counseling or treatment.
- (6) Granting by the Governor of a full and unconditional pardon.
 - (7) Character references indicate present good character.
 - (A) A character reference that demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the individual's criminal background and an awareness of the individual's changed behavior and rehabilitation shall be given more weight than those that do not demonstrate such knowledge, understanding, and awareness.
 - (8) A certificate of rehabilitation from a superior or tribal court.
 - (9) Evidence of honesty and truthfulness as revealed in the application documents, interviews, and conversations between the individual and the County or Department.
 - (10) In the case of an Indian child, a County shall apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community when determining an individual has been rehabilitated and is presently of good character:
 - (A) The prevailing social and cultural standards of an Indian community can only be determined by the tribe and applied in collaboration with the Tribe, which shall include, but is not limited to, invitation to a representative of the Indian child's Tribe to participate in the evaluation of the factors outlined in Section 6-03B(h) and submit any relevant information regarding rehabilitation and good character. This invitation shall not contain any confidential information, including criminal record information.
 - (i) County shall collaborate with the tribal representative agreed upon dates and times to schedule any in-person assessments or meetings with the family.
 - (B) If the Tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the representative was unable to participate.
 - (i) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (C) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative that was contacted.
- (i) The following factors may be considered to support a determination, but are not conclusive evidence, that an individual requiring a criminal record exemption has not been rehabilitated or is not presently of good character:
- (1) False or misleading statements on forms, letters, other documents, or in conversations between the individual or others and the County, in order to obtain or maintain approval or to obtain or maintain a criminal record exemption. This includes the individual's knowing failure to fully disclose their criminal history or child abuse or neglect history when required to do so in application documents or interviews.
 - (2) The individual is currently on probation.
 - (3) The individual's statements or testimony denies or minimizes guilt or attempts to impeach a conviction.

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- (4) The individual has not sought counseling, treatment, or aftercare for an alcohol or substance abuse problem.
 - (5) The individual has not paid full restitution or interest to a victim or only paid it when faced with jail or another consequence.
 - (6) The individual's statements or testimony fails to accept full responsibility for criminal conduct that resulted in a conviction, or the individual fails to express remorse for the conduct that is the subject of an allegation at issue.
 - (7) The individual has a recent conviction within the last five years for fraud or theft from a government program within the Department's jurisdiction.
- (j) A County may grant a criminal record exemption that places conditions on an individual's exemption approval, or presence in a Resource Family's home.
- (k) A County may deny a criminal record exemption if any of the following occurs:
- (1) The individual, or applicant or Resource Family acting on the individual's behalf, fails to provide the documents specified in subsection (f) within 45 calendar days of the date on the exemption needed notice provided by the County.
 - (2) The individual, or applicant or Resource Family acting on the individual's behalf, fails to cooperate in the exemption process.
 - (3) The County determines the individual is not of good character or has not been rehabilitated.
- (l) A County may rescind an individual's criminal record exemption if any of the following occurs:
- (1) The exemption was granted in error.
 - (2) The exemption does not comply with current exemption laws or regulations.
 - (3) The conviction for which an exemption was granted subsequently becomes non-exemptible bylaw.
 - (4) Evidence obtained after the exemption was granted shows that the individual engaged in conduct that is inconsistent with the good character requirement of a criminal record exemption, as evidenced by factors including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - (A) Violation of any applicable law or regulation.
 - (B) Any conduct by the individual indicating the individual may pose a risk to the health and safety of any child or nonminor dependent who is or may be placed with a Resource Family.
 - (C) Nondisclosure of a conviction or evidence of lack of rehabilitation that the individual failed to disclose to the County, even if it occurred before the exemption was granted.
 - (D) The individual is convicted of a subsequent crime.
- (m) If a County denies a criminal record exemption or rescinds an exemption, the County shall provide the individual with a notice of the denial or rescission that conforms to the requirements of Section 12-05 and includes the following:
- (1) The authority to deny a criminal record exemption or to rescind an exemption.
 - (2) The specific criminal conviction for which the exemption was denied.
 - (A) Only the notice to the individual shall indicate the specific criminal

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conviction(s) for which an exemption was denied, including the crime, date, and location of the conviction.

- (3) The individual's right to appeal the County's decision pursuant to Article 12.
- (n) If an individual, applicant, or Resource Family appeals a County's decision to deny a criminal record exemption or to rescind an exemption, the County shall provide due process as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq. and Article 12.
- (o) A County shall take the following actions if a criminal record exemption is denied or rescinded:
 - (1) For an applicant, denial of the application.
 - (2) For a Resource Family, rescission of Resource Family Approval.
 - (3) For an adult who resides or is regularly present in the home, if the individual will continue to reside or be regularly present in the home, then denial of the application or rescission of the Resource Family Approval.
 - (4) If applicable, conduct a visit to the home as set forth in Section 12-07(e) to verify that an adult who had a criminal record exemption denied or rescinded is no longer residing or present in the home.
- (p)
 - (1) If an exemption has been denied or an exemption is rescinded, the individual shall be excluded for a period of two years unless the individual has been convicted of a crime for which no exemption may be granted pursuant to subsection (b).
 - (A) The Department shall have authority to not impose the exclusion in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(g)(5) and Health and Safety Code section 1558.1(e).
 - (B) Exclusion or removal of an individual pursuant to this paragraph shall not be considered an order of exclusion for purposes of Health and Safety Code section 1558, Section 16519.6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or any other applicable law.
 - (2) If an exemption has been denied or an exemption has been rescinded based on a conviction of a crime for which no exemption may be granted, the individual shall be excluded for the remainder of the individual's life.
 - (A) Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an application may be processed pursuant to Section 5-03B(m)(2) if the applicant is not an individual excluded for life by the Department.
 - (B) An individual who has been excluded by the Department due to a conviction that was non-exemptible prior to January 1, 2022, may petition for reinstatement after one year has elapsed from the effective date of the exclusion order.
- (q) A County shall maintain written documentation containing the reasons for granting, denying, or rescinding a criminal record exemption.
- (r)
 - (1) A County may accept the transfer of a criminal record exemption that has been issued by the same County, another County, or the Department for a resource family, an approved relative or nonrelative extended family member or licensed

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- foster family home. The request to transfer shall be in writing to the County evaluating the applicant or Resource Family and shall include a copy of a proof of identification accepted by the California Department of Justice for Live Scan purposes. The County shall verify whether the individual has an exemption that can be transferred, and subsequent to an approved transfer, continue to enforce and incorporate, as part of an approved exemption notification, any condition(s) placed on the individual pursuant to the previously granted exemption.
- (2) With respect to notifications issued by the California Department of Justice pursuant to Penal Code section 11105.2 concerning an individual whose criminal record exemption was originally processed by another County, or the Department, the following shall apply:
- (A) The California Department of Justice shall process a request from the County to receive the notifications only if all the following conditions are met:
- (i) The request shall be submitted to the California Department of Justice by the agency to be substituted to receive the notification.
- (ii) The request shall be for the same California Department of Justice applicant type as the type for which the original exemption was obtained.
- (iii) The request shall contain all prescribed data elements and format protocols pursuant to a written agreement between the Department and the California Department of Justice.
- (s) (1) The county shall notify a Resource Family to act immediately to remove from the home or bar from entering the home any person described in Section 6-03A(a), while the county considers granting or denying an exemption, as follows:
- (A) Any person who has been convicted of or is awaiting trial for a sex offense against a minor.
- (B) Any person who has been convicted of a felony.
- (C) Any person who has been convicted of an offense specified in Sections 243.4, 273a, 273d, 273g, or 368 of the Penal Code or any other crime specified in Health and Safety Code Section 1522(c)(3).
- (2) Upon notification, the Resource Family shall comply with the notice. If the individual who is the subject of the notice is the Resource Family, the Resource Parent's spouse or a dependent adult, the county shall not order the Resource Family to remove the individual from the home but shall act to temporarily suspend the approval, if applicable, in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(g)(5)(iv), or take other appropriate action.

SECTION 6-04: Permanency Assessment

- (a) A County shall conduct a Permanency Assessment that includes all of the following:
- (1) Verification that each applicant completed pre-approval training as specified in Section 6-06.
- (2) A family evaluation of each applicant as specified in Section 6-05.
- (3) Verification of the completion of any other activities related to an applicant's ability to achieve permanency with a child or nonminor dependent.

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- (b) In the case of an Indian child, a County shall apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community, as outlined in Section 1-04(c), when conducting the Permanency Assessment.
 - (1) The prevailing social and cultural standards of an Indian community can only be determined by the Tribe and applied in collaboration with the Tribe. Collaboration shall include, but is not limited to, invitation of a representative of the Indian child's Tribe to participate in all aspects of the Permanency Assessment process.
 - (A) County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family.
 - (2) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe, including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (3) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes, verbally or in writing, of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.

SECTION 6-05: Family Evaluation

- (a) A County shall conduct interviews as follows:
 - (1) A minimum of two face-to-face interviews with an applicant.
 - (A) If there is more than one applicant, then one individual interview of each applicant and one joint interview of all applicants shall occur.
 - (B) If an applicant refuses to participate in an interview, a County shall deny the application.
 - (C) One of the required interviews shall occur at the applicant's residence and shall include observation of the family environment, and if applicable, any parent-child interaction.

Handbook Begins Here

Flexibility with the applicant's schedule should be considered when scheduling the interviews. Interviews may occur prior to or after a child and family team meeting, monthly caseworker visit, during the home health and safety assessment, or other convenient times or locations for the family.

Handbook Ends Here

- (2) (A) A minimum of one separate face-to-face interview of all other adults, children, nonminor dependents, and adoptive, biological, and guardianship children, residing in the home of an applicant to ascertain:
 - (i) Parenting skills of the applicant.
 - (ii) Strengths and weaknesses of the applicant.
- (B) Interviews with other adults residing in the home shall include a discussion of the individual's background check results.

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- (C) If the RFA program staff is unable to meet with the other adults' face to face, then the interview may be conducted via web-based audio-video communications.
 - (D) If an adult residing in the home is unable to participate in an interview due to a compelling circumstance, a County shall determine if the interview is necessary to assess the applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
- (3) Additional interviews of an applicant or other individuals, as deemed necessary by the County.
- (b) At a minimum, the following information shall be gathered during the family evaluation of an applicant:
 - (1) Motivation to become a Resource Family, including the relationship to a specific child or nonminor dependent considered for placement with the applicant.
 - (2) Childhood upbringing and experiences.
 - (3) Adult experiences and personal characteristics.
 - (4) A risk assessment, which shall include:
 - (A) Past and current alcohol and other substance use and abuse history.
 - (B) Physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, and family domestic violence history.
 - (C) Past and current physical and mental health.
 - (5) Current relationships.
 - (A) Co-parenting roles.
 - (B) If the applicant's spouse, domestic partner or significant other did not apply for Resource Family Approval, then the reasons for the individual application shall be discussed.
 - (6) Parenting experiences, practices, and discipline methods.
 - (A) Discussion of how the applicant will promote a normal, healthy, balanced, and supported childhood experience and treat a child or nonminor dependent as part of the family, to the extent possible.
 - (B) Ability to parent a child or nonminor dependent from different backgrounds or experiences, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or a child who is gender non-conforming.
 - (C) In the case of an Indian child, willingness to collaborate with the child's Tribe to maintain the child's connection to the Tribe.
 - (D) In the case of an Indian child, willingness to provide opportunities to the Indian child to attend cultural events that are in line with the prevailing social and cultural standards of the child's Tribe(s).
 - (7) Discussion of the background check results.
 - (8) Discussion of any services needed by the applicant to meet their Resource Family responsibilities.
 - (9) Employment.
 - (10) Financial situation.
 - (A) Ability to ensure the stability and financial security of the family.
 - (i) In the case of a relative, nonrelative extended family member, or extended family member in the case of an Indian child, the requirement to demonstrate financial stability may be waived on a

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case-by-case basis.

(ii) There are no minimum income requirements for Resource Family Approval.

- (B) Understanding of legal and financial responsibilities when caring for a child or nonminor dependent.
- (11) Knowledge or ability to demonstrate an understanding of the following:
 - (A) The safety, permanence, protection and well-being of children and nonminor dependents who have been victims of child abuse and neglect.
 - (B) The needs and development of children and nonminor dependents.
 - (C) Effective parenting skills or knowledge about parenting.
 - (D) A Resource Family's role and capacity to work cooperatively with the County, birth parents, extended family, Tribe, and other service providers in implementing the child's or nonminor dependent's case plan.
 - (E) The rights of children and nonminor dependents in care and a Resource Family's responsibility to safeguard those rights.
- (12) An ability and willingness to do the following:
 - (A) Meet the needs of children and nonminor dependents.
 - (B) Make use of support resources offered by a County or by a support structure in place, or both.
 - (C) Prepare a child for adulthood or prepare a nonminor dependent for the transition to independent living.
 - (D) Participate in the Quality Parenting Initiative Partnership Plan, if applicable.
 - (E) Honor the natural connections of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (F) In the case of an Indian child, the ability to help maintain the child's connection with the Tribe, such as by visitation and participation in cultural events and ceremonies.
 - (G) Support permanency plans for a child or nonminor dependent, including reunification, and help prepare a child or nonminor dependent for permanence or provide permanency.

(c) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall invite the tribal representative to participate during the interviews outlined in Section 6-05(a) and 6-05(b), respectively.

- (1) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family, or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
- (2) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe, including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative that was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known.
- (3) The county shall inform the tribal representative, verbally or in writing, of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.

(d) When evaluating information that shows an applicant has a history of conduct that may

pose a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child, nonminor dependent, or other individual, a County shall consider the factors specified in Section 6-03B(i) and (j), if applicable, and any other relevant information.

- (e) A County may review information contained in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) or Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) databases regarding an applicant to develop topics to discuss with an applicant during a family evaluation.

SECTION 6-06: Pre-Approval Training

- (a) A County shall ensure that each applicant completes a minimum of 12 hours of pre-approval training prior to Resource Family Approval.
 - (1) An individual may begin pre-approval training no more than 60 days prior to submitting an application.
 - (A) An application must be submitted prior to the completion of pre-approval training.
- (b) Pre-approval training shall address the following topics:
 - (1) A Resource Family orientation, which includes the requirements set forth in Articles 6, 11, and 11.1.
 - (2) An overview of the child protective and probation systems.
 - (3) The effects of trauma, including grief and loss, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence on child development and behavior, and methods to behaviorally support children impacted by that trauma or child abuse and neglect.
 - (4) Positive discipline and the importance of self-esteem.
 - (5) Common health issues of children and nonminor dependents in foster care.
 - (6) Accessing services and supports available to foster children and nonminor dependents to address education needs, physical, mental, and behavioral health, and substance use disorders, including culturally relevant services.
 - (7) Personal rights of children and nonminor dependents in foster care including the Resource Family's responsibility to safeguard those rights, including the right to have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to not be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.
 - (8) Cultural needs of children, including instruction on cultural competency and sensitivity, and related best practices for providing adequate care for children or youth across diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, as well as children or youth identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
 - (9) Basic instruction on existing laws and procedures regarding the safety of foster youth at school; and ensuring a harassment and violence free school environment pursuant to Article 3.6 (commencing with Section 32228) of Chapter 2 of Part 19 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code.
 - (10) Permanence, well-being, and education needs of children, including the importance of the Resource Family's role in education, educational protections

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specific to foster youth under state and federal law, and the rights and obligations of Resource Families to access and maintain educational and health information, including the requirements of Education Code sections 49069.3, 49076, and 56055 and Welfare and Institutions Code section 16010.

- (11) Child and adolescent development, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.
- (12) The role of a Resource Family, including working cooperatively with the child welfare agency or probation department, a child's family, and other service providers and agencies to develop and implement the child's or nonminor dependent's case plan.
- (13) The role of a Resource Family on the child and family team as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16501(a)(4).
- (14) Knowledge and skills relating to the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Health and Safety Code section 1522.44.
- (15) An overview of the specialized training described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(h).
- (16) Options for permanency.
- (17) Birth parent relationships and safety issues regarding contact.
- (18) The rights of children and nonminor dependents to sexual and reproductive health care and information and to confidentiality of sensitive health information.
- (19) The duties and responsibilities of the Resource Family in ensuring children and nonminor dependents can obtain sexual and reproductive health services and information.
- (20) Guidance about how to engage and talk with children and nonminor dependents about healthy sexual development and reproductive and sexual health in a manner that is medically accurate, age or developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and strength-based.
- (21) Information about current contraception methods and how to select and provide appropriate referrals, resources and materials for information and service delivery.
- (22) Information on providing care and supervision to children who have been commercially sexually exploited or who have been victims of child labor trafficking. Information may include, but not be limited to, information pamphlets addressing the identification of victims of commercial sexual exploitation and child labor trafficking and the provision of existing resources, including crisis hotline numbers, survivor and caregiver supports, and contact information for law enforcement entities.
- (23) Information on the Family Urgent Response System (FURS), including FURS services and eligibility for services.
- (24) The role of a Resource Family as a mandated reporter, including training on child abuse and neglect identification, and abuse and neglect reporting, as defined in Penal Code section 11166.
 - (A) As part of the training described in paragraph (24), a County shall provide a copy of Penal code sections 11165.7, 11166, and 11167 to the applicant.
 - (B) Once training has been completed, an applicant shall submit a signed statement on a form provided by the County, verifying that the applicant has knowledge of child abuse and neglect reporting responsibilities pursuant to provisions of Penal Code section 11166, and confidentiality rights under

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subdivision (d) of section 11167, and agrees to comply with those provisions.

Handbook Begins Here

California mandated reporter information and resources, including a free on-line training, can be found at the mandated reporter website at www.mandatedreporter.ca.com.

Handbook Ends Here

- (c) A County may require an applicant to receive relevant specialized training, as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(h), to meet the needs of a specific child or nonminor dependent.
 - (1) In the case of an Indian child, the County, in collaboration with the Tribe as outlined in Section 1-04(c), may determine if any additional training is necessary for the Resource Family applicants to meet the needs of the Indian child.
 - (d) A County shall provide an applicant with pre-approval training or shall require that an applicant complete pre-approval training provided by qualified sources that may include colleges, hospitals, foster parent associations, adult schools, certified foster parent instructors, and online sources.
 - (1) When a County does not provide the pre-approval training, the County shall provide an applicant with information as to where the training is available.
 - (2) Upon request of an applicant, a County shall make efforts to assist the applicant with accessing training.
-

Handbook Begins Here

A County may assist an applicant with completing training requirements, such as offering one-on-one training in the home (as determined necessary by the RFA worker) or providing childcare or transportation stipends.

Handbook Ends Here

- (e) Nothing in this section shall preclude a County from requiring an applicant to complete pre-approval training hours in excess of the requirements in this section or as required by state law for any specialized training.
 - (f) Upon the applicant's completion of pre-approval training, as well as any required additional training, a County shall provide documentation of the completed training to the applicant(s).
 - (1) A certificate or other form of documentation of completed training shall include the following:
 - (A) The name or topic of the training.
 - (B) The name of the individual(s) who completed the training.
 - (C) The date training was completed.
-

- (D) The number of training hours completed.

SECTION 6-07: Written Report

- (a) A County shall complete form RFA-05: Resource Family Approval Written Report or an equivalent report of the Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant.
- (b) A Written Report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
- (1) Identifying information of an applicant, any adopted, biological, or guardianship children residing in the home, and any adults residing or regularly present in the home.
 - (2) A description of the physical features of the home, as specified in Section 6-02(a)(2)(A).
 - (A) Any identified concerns regarding an animal that may adversely impact the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent shall be evaluated and resolved with the applicant prior to approval.
 - (3) An evaluation and determination of whether an applicant's home is safe and in compliance with the requirements specified in Section 6-02, Article 11, and if applicable, Section 11.1-07, including any Documented Alternative Plans pursuant to Section 10-03.
 - (4) An evaluation of the results of a background check of an applicant and all adults residing or regularly present in the home, including any criminal record exemptions granted, as specified in Sections 6-03A and 6-03B.
 - (5) A summary of all interviews of applicant(s), children, nonminor dependents, adoptive, biological, guardianship children, adults residing in the home, and other individuals.
 - (A) If an adult residing in the home is unable to participate in an interview due to a compelling circumstance, document the reasons and the County's determination regarding whether the interview is necessary to assess the applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
 - (6) An evaluation of the information obtained during a family evaluation of an applicant, including a risk assessment, as specified in Section 6-05.
 - (A) If an applicant applied as an individual but is currently married, in a domestic partnership, or residing with a significant other in the home, then the evaluation shall include the impact, if any, this has on the applicant's ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
 - (7) Verification that an applicant completed pre-approval training as specified in Section 6-06.
 - (A) The Written Report shall state the number of training hours completed, any specialized training received, and an evaluation of any feedback provided by a trainer.
 - (8) A statement verifying whether an applicant has provided the supporting documentation specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9).
 - (9) A determination of an applicant's commitment and capability to meet the needs of a child or nonminor dependent including, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (A) Strengths and weaknesses of the applicant.
 - (B) Whether the applicant would only prefer to adopt, become a legal guardian,

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- or provide foster care.
- (C) Understanding of the needs, safety, permanence, and well-being of children or nonminor dependents, including those who have been victims of abuse or neglect.
- (D) Ability and willingness to participate in the Quality Parenting Initiative Partnership Plan, if applicable.
- (10) If the County has determined the applicant may be approved only for a specific child or nonminor dependent; an evaluation of the reasons as specified in subsection (e).
 - (A) The name of the specified child or nonminor dependent shall be listed on form RFA-01A: Resource Family Application.
- (11) A capacity determination, as specified in Section 10-04, and the reasons supporting the determination.
- (12) A summary of an applicant's understanding of the legal and financial responsibilities for providing care to a child or nonminor dependent.
- (13) A statement that an applicant has been provided with the information specified in Section 5-03B(h).
- (14) Any concerns regarding the applicant.
 - (A) Describe any historical or current events contributing to the concern and frequency and duration of the concern.
 - (B) Attempts by the County or applicant(s) to resolve or mitigate the concern.
 - (C) The County's determination of whether the concern has been resolved and the impact the concern has on the applicant's ability to meet the qualifications of a Resource Family.
- (15) A statement that the applicant has signed the Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) Partnership Plan, if applicable, as specified in Section 5-03B(i).
- (16) The characteristics of a child or nonminor dependent an applicant may best serve.
- (17) Any resources, services, or training that would assist an applicant in meeting the needs of a child or nonminor dependent.
- (18) A statement that the application is approved or denied and the reasons for the determination.
- (19) In the case of an Indian child:
 - (A) A summary of the applicable prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community as determined by the Tribe, and of the application of these standards throughout the Comprehensive Assessment.
 - (B) Dates and methods of contact with the tribal representative, including but not limited to dates the tribal representative participated in any assessment or evaluation of the family, and if the tribal representative was unable to participate, the reason, if known.
 - (C) A summary of any concerns or disagreements between the County and Indian child's Tribe, as well as the steps taken to resolve the disagreements.
- (c) A County may evaluate character references provided by an applicant, pursuant to Section 5-03A(a)(4), in the Written Report.
- (d) A County may approve an application that places conditions on the approval, provided

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each applicant meets all of the standards for approval. Any conditions shall be specified in writing on the Resource Family Approval certificate pursuant to Section 6-08(a)(2)(G).

(1) There is no right to a state hearing as described in Article 12 when an approval as described in this subsection or subsection (e) has been granted.

(e) A County may approve an applicant to care for a specific child or nonminor dependent if all the Resource Family Approval standards have been met, and any of the following circumstances apply:

(1) When the family is a relative or nonrelative extended family member who's relationship is of such sufficient significance that it outweighs any concerns about the applicant identified through the family evaluation required by Section 6-05.

(A) The identified concerns or issues about the applicant shall not be of such significance that it may impact the health, safety, or well-being of the specified child or nonminor dependent

(B) In the case of an Indian child, a County shall apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian Community, as determined through discussion and collaboration with the Tribe as outlined in Section 1-04(c), to the approval for the specific Indian child.

(2) The relative applicant or other adult living in the home was granted a criminal record exemption outlined in 6-03B(b)(1).

(A) Any criminal record exemptions granted under Section 6-03B(b)(1) shall only be valid for purposes of the child-specific approval and shall not be transferred to any other setting.

(3) The tribe did not exercise its right to approve a family for a specific child, and the County, in collaboration with the Tribe, applied the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community when approving the family for that child.

(4) Approval for a specific child or nonminor dependent does not guarantee initial or continued placement of the specified child or nonminor dependent with a Resource Family.

(5) Prior to approving an applicant for a specific child or nonminor dependent, a County shall advise the applicant that the Resource Family may not accept the placement of any other child or nonminor dependent unless an approval update is completed pursuant to Section 9-02(b)(3).

(A) A County shall initiate an approval update pursuant to Section 9-02(b)(3) within five business days of an emergency placement.

(f) Except as required pursuant to subsection (b)(18), if a County has discontinued the Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant pursuant to Section 6-01(d), then the County is not required to complete any section of the Written Report that was not completed prior to the determination of denial.

(g) A Written Report shall contain the following:

(1) A signature from the RFA program staff who completed the report.

(2) A signature from the assigned RFA program staff supervisor or program manager.

(3) Each applicant's signature acknowledging receipt of the Written Report.

(A) If a signature is unable to be obtained, or an applicant is unwilling to sign the Written Report, the RFA program staff shall document the reason or refusal, including the date the document was provided to the applicant(s), in the

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- signature space.
- (B) If a Written Report is provided via certified mail, a copy of the certified mail received receipt may be used in Lieu of a signed Written Report and shall be filed in the Resource Family file.
- (C) If a Written Report is provided via email, a copy of the sent email may be used in Lieu of a signed Written Report and shall be filed in the Resource Family file.
- (4) In the case of an Indian child, when the Written Report is shared with the Tribe for purposes of applying the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community, a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (A) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the Written Report can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (i) The RFA program staff **shall** document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
- (h) A County shall distribute a copy of a Written Report as follows:
 - (1) To an applicant or Resource Family.
 - (2) To the County's Resource Family file, as described in Section 10-05(a).

SECTION 6-08: Resource Family Approval Certificate

- (a) If a County approves an application, as documented in the Written Report, or updates an approval pursuant to Section 9-02 through 9-04, or changes the capacity pursuant to Section 10-04, then a County shall complete form RFA-05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate.
 - (1) The certificate of approval for a Resource Family remains in effect and does not expire regardless of when the update to the approval is completed.
 - (2) The certificate shall contain the following:
 - (A) The name of the County.
 - (B) The full name(s) of the Resource Family and address of the home.
 - (C) The date of approval.
 - (D) The date and type of most recent update.
 - (E) The capacity for which the Resource Family is approved.
 - (F) If applicable, that the approval is for a specific child or nonminor dependent pursuant to Section 6-07(e).
 - (G) If applicable, that there are conditions placed on the approval pursuant to Section 6-07(d).
 - (3) The certificate may not contain the name of a child or nonminor dependent when the approval is for a specific child or nonminor dependent pursuant to Section 6-07(e).
 - (4) A copy of the completed Resource Family Approval Certificate shall be kept in the Resource Family file and in the Resource Family home.

ARTICLE 7: RESERVED

ARTICLE 8: RESOURCE FAMILY ANNUAL AND OTHER TRAINING

SECTION 8-01: Annual and Other Training

- (a) A County shall ensure that each Resource Parent submits copies of the certificates verifying completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training, or demonstrate equivalent certification, no later than 90 days following Resource Family Approval.
- (1) A Resource Parent who has a certificate of completion for Basic Life Support (BLS) for healthcare professionals, or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), or a higher standard of training that certifies cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and for whom the certification is currently active, shall be exempt from completing Resource Family Approval CPR requirements listed under subsection (a) upon demonstrating proof of certification of completion and until the date the certification expires.
- (2) A Resource Parent who has active and unrestricted licensure as a healthcare professional, issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs or the Emergency Medical Services Authority, shall be exempt from completing the Resource Family Approval first aid training requirements as described in subsection (a) upon demonstrating proof of active and unrestricted licensure and until the date the licensure expires.
- (3) Prior to expiration of the cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid certificates, Resource Families shall obtain training to remain certified in CPR and first aid, or demonstrate equivalent certification, and submit copies of certificates verifying completion of the training.
- (4) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training shall be obtained from an agency offering such training including, but not limited to, the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, a training program approved by the State Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA), or a course offered by an accredited college or university.
- (b) Within 12 months of approval, a County shall ensure that each Resource Family that cares for children who are 10 years of age or older, attend a training on understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to children who have been commercially sexually exploited or who have been victims of child labor trafficking.
- (1) The training shall be survivor informed, culturally relevant and appropriate, and address issues related to stigma. This training shall address all of the following topics:
- (A) Recognizing indicators of commercial sexual exploitation and child labor trafficking.
- (B) Harm reduction.
- (C) Trauma informed care.
- (D) Available county and state resources.
- (E) Perspectives of individuals or families who have experiences with commercial sexual exploitation and child labor trafficking.

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- (2) The information provided in Section 6-06(b)(22) shall also be provided during the training described in this paragraph.
- (3) After completing the training required by this paragraph, and notwithstanding subsections (f) and (g) in this Section, a Resource Family shall not be required to attend training relating to children who have been commercially sexually exploited or who have been victims of child labor trafficking, except as required pursuant to subsection (b).
- (c) Nothing in subsection (b) prevents an entity from providing the training specified in paragraph (1) in person, virtually, by recorded means, or by any other available means.
- (d) A County shall ensure that each Resource Parent completes a minimum of eight hours of annual training, due every 12 months on the approval anniversary date. Annual training shall be provided by qualified sources that may include those listed in Section 6-06(d), and which shall include one or more of the courses specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(g)(13).
 - (1) If there is a child or nonminor dependent placed in the home, a portion of the annual training shall support the case plans, goals, and needs of the child.
- (e) Annual training may include, but not be limited to, the following topics:
 - (1) Trauma informed care and attachment.
 - (2) Core Practice Model.
 - (3) Crisis intervention.
 - (4) Behavior management.
 - (5) Supporting children and nonminor dependents in school.
 - (6) Effects of drug and alcohol abuse on children and nonminor dependents.
 - (7) Effects of domestic violence on children and nonminor dependents.
 - (8) Assisting with self-administration of psychotropic medications.
 - (9) Emancipation and independent living.
- (f) In addition to the training specified in subsection (b), a County may require a Resource Parent to receive relevant specialized training, as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(h), to meet the needs of a particular child or nonminor dependent in care.
 - (1) Specialized training may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - (A) Understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to commercially sexually exploited children and children who have been victims of child labor trafficking.
 - (B) Understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children.
 - (C) Understanding the requirements and best practices regarding psychotropic medications, including, but not limited to, court authorization, benefits, uses, side effects, interactions, assistance with self-administration, misuse, documentation, storage, and metabolic monitoring of children prescribed psychotropic medications.
 - (D) Understanding the federal and state Indian Child Welfare Act (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.; WIC 224 et seq. and other sections), its historical

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significance, the rights of children covered by the act, and the best interests of Indian children, including the role of the caregiver in supporting culturally appropriate, child-centered practices that respect Native American history, culture, retention of tribal membership, and connection to the tribal community and traditions.

- (E) Understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to nonminor dependents.
 - (F) Understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to children with special health care needs.
 - (G) Understanding the different permanency options and the services and benefits associated with the options.
- (g) Nothing in this section shall preclude a County from requiring Resource Family to complete training hours in excess of the requirements in this section or as required by state law for specialized training.
- (h) Upon each Resource Parent's completion of annual trainings as well as any required additional trainings, administered by a County, the County shall provide documentation of completion to the Resource Family or individual.
- (1) A certificate or other form of documentation of completed training shall include the following:
 - (A) The name or topic of the training.
 - (B) The name of the individual(s) who completed the training.
 - (C) The date the training was completed.
 - (D) The number of training hours completed.

ARTICLE 9: MONITORING RESOURCE FAMILIES

SECTION 9-01: Monitoring Resource Families

- (a) A County shall monitor Resource Families through the following:
- (1) Visiting the homes of Resource Families periodically and as necessary to ensure Resource Families conform to applicable laws, the Written Directives, and any exclusion orders, and to verify that only individuals with a criminal record clearance or exemption reside or are regularly present in the home.
 - (2) Conducting approval updates as required by Sections 9-02 through 9-04.
 - (3) Investigating complaints regarding Resource Families and serious incidents reported by Resource Families as required by Sections 9-06A and 9-06B.
 - (4) Developing corrective action plans and requiring Resource Families to comply with corrective action plans to correct identified deficiencies as required by Section 9-07.
 - (5) Investigating possible address matches of registered sex offenders as required by Section 9-08.
 - (6) Collaborating with the Department regarding RFA exclusion investigations and administrative actions, and for Resource Families who are certified or registered by the Department or associated to a licensed facility, investigations of complaints and serious incidents and administrative actions concerning the Resource Family.

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- (7) Providing support and guidance to the Resource Family as needed.
 - (8) A County shall review and, as applicable, initiate an administrative action based on subsequent notifications from DOJ, including subsequent arrest, CACI, and conviction notifications and including notifications received when a Resource Family is on inactive status, consistent with the standards proscribed in applicable statute, regulation, or the Written Directives.
- (b) RFA program staff shall document each visit to the home of a Resource Family on form RFA 809: Resource Family Visit Record. A copy of the form shall be provided to the Resource Family upon completion.
 - (1) Completion of the RFA 809 form is not required when visiting the home of a Resource Family for the following reasons:
 - (A) The purpose of the visit to the home is solely to complete the Home Health and Safety Assessment checklist form RFA 03.
 - (B) The purpose of the visit to the home is solely to investigate a complaint allegation and complete form RFA 9099: Complaint Investigation Report, and if applicable, form RFA 9099C: Complaint Investigation Report – Continued.
 - (c) A County shall ensure that the RFA program staff who identifies a condition that may adversely impact the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent, takes appropriate actions and reports their observations to the social worker or probation officer for the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (d) The review of a Resource Family's compliance with the requirements to maintain approval shall be governed by the law and Written Directives in effect at the time of the condition, deficiency, incident, or allegation at issue. Nothing in this subsection shall supersede any provision of federal or state law or any regulations adopted pursuant to federal or state law.
 - (e) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the tribal representative to apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community when conducting any monitoring activity for the Resource Family.
 - (1) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family, or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, to arrange a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (2) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe, including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (3) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes, verbally or in writing, of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.

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SECTION 9-02: Update of Resource Family Approval

- (a) At least once every 24 months a County shall update the approval of a Resource Family.
- (b) A County shall complete an update for a Resource Family, as specified in subsection (e), when any of the following occur:
 - (1) A significant change has occurred in the Resource Family's circumstances, as determined by a County.
 - (A) An update due to a significant change shall begin within 30 calendar days of a County's knowledge of the change.
 - (2) Relocation to a new home.
 - (A) A County shall begin an update to the Resource Family's approval within 30 calendar days of being notified that the Resource Family has moved.
 - (3) A Resource Family who is approved for a specific child or nonminor dependent requests to care for an additional child or nonminor dependent.
 - (A) A County shall begin an update specified in paragraph (3) within five business days of the placement of another child or nonminor dependent.
 - (4) A Resource Family requests to end inactive status pursuant to Section 10-02(e) or (f).
 - (A) A County shall complete an update to end inactive status within 30 calendar days of the placement, unless good cause exists, pursuant to Section 10-02(d).
 - (i) If good cause exists, a County shall document the reasons for the delay beyond the 30 calendar days and generate a timeframe for completion of the update.
 - (B) If the request to end inactive status is pursuant to Section 10-02(i), a County shall initiate a home health and safety assessment pursuant to Section 6-02(a)(2) within 5 calendar days of the placement and complete an update within 30 calendar days of the placement, unless good cause exists.
 - (i) If good cause exists, a County shall document the reasons for the delay beyond the 30 calendar days and generate a timeframe for completion of the update.
 - (5) It has been 24 months since the Resource Family was approved and no updates as specified in paragraphs (1-4), or Sections 9-03 and 9-04 have been completed since their date of approval; or it has been 24 months since any type of update (regardless of their approval date) as described in paragraphs (1-4), or Section 9-03 and 9-04 has been completed.
 - (A) A "24-month" "biennial" per WIC 16519.5(g)(6) update shall be completed no sooner than 60 calendar days prior to the 24-month due date and no later than 30 calendar days after the 24-month due date.

Handbook Begins Here

Example 1: If a Resource Family was approved on January 1, 2020, and no updates were completed during the first 24 months of approval, a 24-month update would be due on January 1, 2022.

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Example 2: If a Resource Family was approved on January 1, 2020, and an update is completed on January 1, 2021, due to a significant change, the next update would be due on January 1, 2023, unless specified events deem an update necessary pursuant to paragraphs (1-4) or Sections 9-03 and 9-04 prior to January 1, 2023.

Handbook Ends Here

- (c) A County shall complete an update for a Resource Family, as specified in Section 9-03 or 9-04, as applicable.
- (d) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the child's Tribe when completing an approval update to ensure Resource Family Approval continues to meet the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community.
 - (1) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family, or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (2) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate the County shall document the invitation and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known.
 - (3) The County shall document a summary of any concerns or disagreements between the County and Indian child's Tribe, as well as the steps taken to resolve the disagreements.
 - (4) The County shall inform the tribal representative of the outcomes, verbally or in writing, of any interview or meeting that the tribal representative was unable to participate.
- (e) During an update of a Resource Family's approval, a County shall:
 - (1) Ask the Resource Family to verify that all personal information in the Written Report, and any updates to the Written Report are current and, if applicable, update.
 - (2) Conduct a health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the home using form RFA 03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist to ensure compliance with Section 6-02(a)(2).
 - (3) Confirm that a subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service is in place for all adults residing or regularly present in the home.
 - (A) If there are new adults residing or regularly present in the home, complete a background check, as specified in Section 06-03A, shall be completed for each new adult.
 - (4) Address any significant changes to the family evaluation, which may include, but not be limited to the following:
 - (A) A change in the number of people residing in the home, including the following:

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- (i) Any additional individuals residing or regularly present in the Resource Family's home, including if the Resource Family becomes a guardian or conservator for any child or nonminor dependent or other person in the home.
 - (ii) Any adult who plans to reside or be regularly present in the home or move out of the home.
 - (B) A change in marital or domestic partnership status or a change in a relationship with a significant other.
 - (C) A change in the physical or mental health of a Resource Parent, a child or nonminor dependent, or any other residents in the home.
 - (D) If the Resource Family has become licensed to operate a family day care home as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1596.78.
 - (E) A change in employment or financial situation.
 - (F) A change in any information evaluated in the risk assessment as specified in Section 6-05(b)(4).
 - (5) Interview all individuals residing in the home.
 - (A) If an individual is unavailable or refuses to be interviewed, document the reasons, and determine if the interview is necessary to assess the Resource Family's continued ability to be approved as a Resource Family.
 - (6) Review the Resource Family's current capacity and if necessary, revise the capacity in accordance with Section 10-04.
 - (7) Review Current DAP(s) and evaluate the need for continued approval.
 - (8) Review the Resource Family's current annual and other training to identify any training that is overdue.
 - (A) If training is overdue, a County may develop a corrective action plan.
 - (9) Review, with the Resource Family, all complaint allegations that were evaluated out since the last approval update, as specified in 9-06A(d)(1).
 - (A) Any RFA program staff or Resource Family concerns regarding the information provided in this paragraph shall be addressed and mitigated with the family during the update process.
 - (10) Assess whether a Resource Family shall complete additional activities to maintain their approval.
 - (11) For a move to a new home location, a County shall ensure a Resource Family submits documents verifying that the Resource Family owns or rents the home in which the Resource Family resides, or written permission to reside at the residence by the owner of the home.
- (f) If deficiencies are identified, a County shall document the identified deficiencies and develop a corrective action plan with the Resource Family as specified in Section 9-07, or take other actions as necessary.
- (1) If the Resource Parent operates a licensed family daycare, and it is determined that any deficiency may pose a risk to the health and safety of children, or nonminor dependents, a County shall notify the Department.
 - (2) If the identified deficiencies are unable to be corrected, a County may choose to rescind the Resource Family's approval.
 - (3) In accordance with Section 10-01A(e), a County shall attempt to resolve areas of concern, if possible, prior to rescinding an approval, or take other action as

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appropriate.

- (4) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall invite the Indian child's Tribe to collaborate and participate in the development of a corrective action plan.
 - (A) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (B) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe, including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (i) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation and the reason the representative was unable to participate, if known. The County may then proceed with the development of the corrective action plan.
 - (C) The County shall inform the tribal representative, verbally or in writing, of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.
 - (D) The County shall provide a copy of the corrective action plan to the tribal representative and make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (i) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the corrective action plan can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (ii) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
- (g) A County shall complete form RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report, or an equivalent form.
 - (1) A Resource Family Approval Update Report shall contain the following:
 - (A) A signature from the RFA program staff who completed the report.
 - (B) A signature from the assigned RFA program supervisor or program manager.
 - (C) Each Resource Parent's signature acknowledging receipt of the Report.
 - (i) If a signature is unable to be obtained, or an applicant is unwilling to sign the RFA Update Report, the RFA program staff may document the reason for refusal, including the date the document was provided to the applicant(s), in the signature space.
 - (ii) If an RFA Update Report is provided via certified mail, a copy of the certified mail received receipt may be used in lieu of a signed Report and shall be filed in the Resource Family file.
 - (iii) If an RFA Update Report is provided via email, a copy of the sent email may be used in lieu of a signed Report and shall be filed in the Resource Family file.
 - (2) A County shall distribute a copy of the Resource Family Approval Update Report as follows:
 - (A) To the Resource Family.

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- (B) To the County's Resource Family file, as described in Section 10-05(a).
- (3) In the case of an Indian child, a County may share the RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report or an equivalent report with the Tribe for purposes of applying the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community.
- (A) The County shall make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
- (i) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the Update Report can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
- (ii) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
- (h) A County shall complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08.
- (i) When a Resource Family fails to cooperate in a 24-month [biennial per WIC 16519.5(g)(6)] update process specified in paragraph (5) of subsection (b), a County shall provide the Resource Family, and the placement worker or probation officer of each child or nonminor dependent placed in the home, with written notice that includes the following:
- (1) A description of all outstanding items necessary to complete the update.
- (2) A time period the Resource Family has to complete the outstanding items.
- (3) That pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.501(d), the approval shall be forfeited by operation of law if the Resource Family fails to cooperate with the update within 30 days of the date of the written notice from the County.
- (4) The County shall document proof of service of the written notice in the Resource Family file.
- (j) For purposes of Section 9-02 and 9-03:
- (1) A Resource Family maintains their approval unless approval is rescinded by a County, the Resource Family chooses to surrender the approval, or the approval is forfeited by operation of law.
- (2) An approval update does not change a Resource Family's date of approval.
- (3) Approval does not expire even if the update is pending or overdue.

SECTION 9-03: Approval Update Due to Addition or Removal of a Resource Parent

- (a) An individual who resides in the home of a Resource Family may submit an application in order to be added to the approval certificate as a Resource Parent. The application and assessment process shall include the following:
- (1) The individual shall:
- (A) Comply with the applicant qualifications specified in Section 5-02.
- (B) Comply with the application requirements specified in paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) through (9) of Section 5-03A(a).
- (C) Except for Section 5-03A(a)(9)(E), provide the supporting documentation specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9).
- (2) The County shall complete an update to the Resource Family's approval to include the items specified in Section 9-02(d), if applicable, and Section 9-02(e)-(g).

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- (3) If the County approves the application, then the County shall complete form RFA-05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08.
- (b) If a County denies the application described in subsection (a), then due process shall be provided to the applicant in accordance with Article 12.
- (c) If one or more parents in a Resource Family request to be removed from an approval and be approved separately, the following shall apply:
 - (1) If The request shall be submitted in writing to the County.
 - (2) The County shall complete an approval update for each Resource Parent to include the items specified in Section 9-02(d), if applicable, and Section 9-02(e)-(f), and collect documents specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9).
 - (3) The County shall complete form RFA-06: Resource Family Approval Update Report or an equivalent form pursuant to 9-02(g) for each Resource Parent and shall provide a copy of the form to the corresponding Resource Parent upon completion.
 - (4) The County shall complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08 for each Resource Parent.
- (d) If a Resource Parent no longer wishes to be approved, the Resource Parent may surrender their approval.
 - (1) The surrender shall be submitted verbally or in writing to the County.
 - (A) The County shall document the surrender of approval by a Resource Parent in the Resource Family's file.
 - (B) If the surrender was submitted verbally, the County shall provide a written confirmation to the Resource Family.
 - (2) The County shall complete an approval update for the remaining Resource Parent to include the items specified in Section 9-02(d), if applicable, and 9-02(e)-(g).
 - (3) The County shall complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08, for the remaining Resource Parent.

SECTION 9-04: Approval Update Due to Portability

- (a) Upon receipt of a completed form RFA10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application from a Resource Family, the County shall complete an approval update pursuant to this Section.
- (b) If the Resource Family currently has placement of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the tribal representative to ensure the continued application of the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community while completing the update outlined in this section.
 - (1) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to schedule mutually agreeable dates and times for any in-person assessments of the home or family or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.

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- (2) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (A) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known.
- (3) The County shall inform the tribal representative, verbally or in writing, of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known.

(c) During the approval update, the County shall:

- (1) Evaluate all information provided by the current foster family agency, including the information provided on Section III of form RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application and all records in the Resource Family's file.
- (2) Ask the Resource Family to verify that all personal information contained in the Written Report and any updates to the Written Report is current.
- (3) Conduct a health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas of the home using form RFA 03: Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment Checklist to ensure compliance with Article 11, and if applicable, Article 11.1-07.
- (4) Verify with the current foster family agency that a subsequent arrest notification (rap back) service is in place for all adults residing or regularly present in the home.
 - (A) If a new adult plans to reside or be regularly present in the home, the County shall complete a background check for any such adult.
- (5) Address any significant changes to the family evaluation, which may include but not be limited to, the following:
 - (A) A change in the number of people residing in the home, including the following:
 - (i) Any additional individuals in the Resource Family's home, including if the Resource Family becomes a guardian or conservator for any child, nonminor dependent, or other person.
 - (ii) Any adult who plans to reside or be regularly present in the home or move out of the home.
 - (B) A change in marital or domestic partnership status or a change in a relationship with a significant other.
 - (C) A change in the physical or mental health of the Resource Parent, a child or nonminor dependent, or any other residents in the home.
 - (D) A move to a new home location.
 - (E) If the Resource Family has become licensed to operate a family daycare home as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1596.78.
 - (F) A change in employment or financial situation.
 - (G) A change in any information evaluated in the risk assessment as specified in Section 6-05(b)(4).
- (6) Interview all individuals residing in the home.
 - (A) If an individual is unavailable or refuses to be interviewed, document the reasons and determine if the interview is necessary to approve the

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Resource Family's portability application.

- (7) Review the Resource Family's current capacity and increase or decrease the capacity if necessary, in accordance with Section 10-04.
 - (8) Review the Resource Family's annual training to identify any training that is overdue.
 - (A) If training is overdue, the approval update may not be finalized until the Resource Family completes annual and other required training as specified in Section 08-01.
 - (9) Review all current approved DAP(s) and evaluate the continued need for approval of the DAP(s).
 - (10) Determine whether a Resource Family shall complete additional activities necessary to evaluate the Resource Family's portability application.
 - (11) Determine whether the portability application is approved or denied and the reasons for the determination.
- (d) If any concerns are identified during the approval update, the County shall make a good faith effort to resolve its concerns prior to approving or denying the portability application.
- (1) The County may approve a portability application that places conditions on the approval, provided the Resource Family meets all of the standards for approval. Any conditions shall be specified in writing on the Resource Family Approval certificate pursuant to Section 6-08(a)(2)(G).
 - (2) If the County determines that it cannot resolve its concerns, the County may deny the portability application.
 - (3) The County shall comply with the cross-reporting requirements of Section 9-06C if the identified concerns constitute a risk or threat to health or safety of a child or nonminor dependent.
- (e) If there were conditions placed on a criminal record exemption or a Resource Family's approval prior to transfer of the approval, the conditions shall be transferred if:
- (1) The condition was imposed by the Department's Caregiver Background Check Bureau.
 - (2) The condition was imposed as a result of an administrative action.
 - (3) The condition was imposed due to a concern for the health, safety or welfare of a child or nonminor dependent and the concern has not been fully addressed.
- (f) The County shall complete form RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report, or an equivalent form.
- (g) The County shall distribute a copy of the approval update as follows:
- (1) To the Resource Family.
 - (2) To the Resource Family file maintained by the County.
 - (3) If a County denies the portability application, to the current foster family agency.
 - (4) To the current placement agency if there is a child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family.
- (h) In the case of an Indian child, a County may share the RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report or equivalent report with the Tribe for purposes of applying the

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prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community.

- (1) The County shall make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (A) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the Update Report can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (B) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
- (i) A Resource Family maintains its approval status with its current foster family agency unless any of the following occur:
 - (1) Approval is rescinded by the current foster family agency or Department;
 - (2) The Resource Family chooses to surrender its approval;
 - (3) The approval is forfeited by operation of law; or
 - (4) The Resource Family is approved by a County in accordance with Section 5.1-01.

SECTION 9-05: Reserved

SECTION 9-06: Reserved

SECTION 9-06A: Response to a Complaint Allegation

- (a) A County shall review any information presented by any person concerning a Resource Family to determine whether the Resource Family may not have met or may not be meeting the requirement of one or more of the Written Directives or any applicable law, regardless of whether or not the information is presented in the form of an allegation.
- (b) A County shall notify the Department of a serious complaint allegation by the close of the next business day following receipt of the complaint as specified in Section 4-03(e).
- (c) Upon receipt of a complaint allegation concerning a Resource Family, a RFA program staffmember shall conduct a preliminary review of the complaint allegation as follows:
 - (1) Review all information maintained on file concerning the Resource Family.
 - (2) Interview any complainant.
 - (3) The County shall document in the Resource Family's file all information received and reviewed pursuant to Section 9-06A.
 - (4) If the complaint allegation is concerning an incident that occurred during the Resource Family's current inactive status and is related to the requirements of Article 11 or Article 11.1, a County shall follow Section 9-06A(d)(1)(E) and evaluate out the complaint allegation.
 - (A) If the complaint allegation is not related to the requirements of Article 11 or Article 11.1 (if applicable), then the County shall review the information as required in Section 9-06A.
 - (i) A complaint allegation described in this subparagraph that involves child abuse or neglect shall be immediately reported to the county child abuse and neglect hotline. The RFA program staff may coordinate with the investigating Emergency Response worker to

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complete a complaint investigation if determined necessary pursuant to 9-06A(f) et seq., to prevent duplication of efforts and eliminate multiple interviews of the same witness.

- (d) A County shall choose one of the following three responses to a complaint allegation based upon its preliminary review of the complaint allegation. Nothing precludes the County from determining that a change in response is necessary. The decision regarding the response shall be approved by a supervisor, manager or designee and documented in the Resource Family's file.
 - (1) Evaluate out the complaint allegation if a County determines, based on a review of the information received from the complainant, that at least one of the following criteria is met:
 - (A) The incident could not have occurred.
 - (B) The report is part of a pattern and practice of harassment against the Resource Family.
 - (C) The complaint allegation does not involve a violation of the Written Directives, a violation of personal rights, and does not pose a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (D) The situation has been addressed, corrected, or otherwise resolved.
 - (E) The Resource Family is currently on inactive status and the complaint allegation is concerning the requirement specified in Article 11 or Article 11.1 (if applicable) or meets the criteria pursuant to this Section.
 - (2) Initiate Case Management if a County determines that even if the allegation is true, it can be mitigated through engagement with the Resource Family and there is no risk or threat to the health, safety, protection or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent, or the risk or threat is so minimal that it does not outweigh the benefit of a case management response.
 - (A) Case management may be appropriate when the information reviewed in the complaint allegation and the interview of the complainant indicates, but is not limited to, the following:

Handbook Begins Here

Core Practice Model (CPM) Service Planning and Delivery Behavior: Best practice for a County is to work with the family and their team, and in the case of an Indian child, the child's Tribe, to build a plan that will focus on changing behaviors that led to the circumstances that brought the family to the attention of the child welfare agency, and assist the child, youth, young adult, and family with safety, trauma, healing, and permanency. Describe how family strengths, safety threats, and priority needs will be addressed in the plan. Share information about agency programs, providers, resources, and supports.

Handbook Ends Here

- (i) The Resource Family would benefit from continued education regarding RFA standards and qualifications including, but not limited to, home health and safety standards, personal rights, Reasonable

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- and Prudent Parent Standards, reporting requirements, cooperating with the Agency, and QPI Partnership, as applicable.
- (ii) The Resource Family properly reported the incident or issue to a RFA program staff and the placement agency for a child or a nonminor dependent, in accordance with Section 11-06.
- (iii) There is an identified need for support, including but not limited to a request from child's social worker, RFA program staff, or from the Resource Family.
- (iv) There is an identified concern raised by the Resource Family, child's social worker, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), relatives, Tribe, or others, which does not rise to the level of concern requiring a complaint investigation.
- (B) As a result of Case Management, County RFA program staff may initiate a Corrective Action Plan.
- (3) Initiate a complaint investigation as outlined in Section 9-06A(f) et seq. if a County determines that the information reviewed in the complaint allegation is of such a concern that there is a risk or threat to the health, safety or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent, or a violation of the child's or nonminor dependent's personal rights.
 - (A) If the complaint allegation is received from the County child abuse and neglect hotline, then the RFA program staff may coordinate with the investigating Emergency Response worker to complete a complaint investigation, to prevent duplication of efforts and eliminate multiple interviews of the same witnesses.
 - (B) If the Resource Family currently has placement of an Indian child, the County shall contact the Tribe to collaborate and participate in all aspects of the investigation, or if the tribal representative is unable to attend in person, through telephonic or video conference.
 - (i) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to find mutually agreeable dates and times to schedule any in-person assessment of the home or family, or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (ii) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (iii) If the tribal representative or social worker is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, the reason the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known, and proceed with the complaint investigation.
- (e) Prior to conducting an investigation of a complaint, allegation, or incident, if the Resource Family operates a licensed family day care home, or it is known that the Resource Family is registered on the Trust Line or Home Care Aide registries, or associated to a facility licensed by the Department, a County shall notify the Department and collaborate with the Department on the investigation.

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- (f) (1) A County shall conduct an unannounced visit to a Resource Family's home within ten calendar days of receipt of a complaint allegation to be investigated, unless the tenth day after the receipt of the complaint is not a business day, in which case the County shall conduct the visit on the following business day.

Handbook Begins Here

CPM Foundational Behavior: Best practice for a County is to be open, honest, clear and respectful in your communications. Use language and body language that demonstrates an accepting and affirming approach to understand the family.

Handbook Ends Here

- (2) A visit to a Resource Family's home may be delayed under the following circumstances:
- (A) Law enforcement requests that the visit be delayed as it would adversely affect a law enforcement investigation.
 - (B) The visit would endanger the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family.
 - (C) The visit would increase the possibility of evidence being compromised.
- (3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), if a County has, on two separate occasions at different hours of the day, unsuccessfully conducted an unannounced visit to a Resource Family's home, and it appears that further attempts to make an unannounced visit will not be successful, then the County may schedule the visit with the Resource Family under the following circumstances:
- (A) Doing so would not have a significant adverse effect upon the investigation or jeopardize the health and safety of any child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family.
 - (B) The County has documented each attempt to make an unannounced visit to the home.
 - (C) A supervisor approves the scheduling of the visit.
- (4) Prior to visiting the home, the County may not disclose to the Resource Family that a complaint allegation has been received concerning the Resource Family.
- (5) When visiting a Resource Family's home, a County shall ensure that the Resource Family is aware of the complaint investigation process, their rights and responsibilities during the investigation process, including the right to dispute the investigation finding as outlined in Section 9-06A(q).

Handbook Begins Here

CPM Foundational Behavior: Best practice for a County is to be open, honest, clear and respectful in your communication. Be open and honest about the safety threats and circumstances that brought the family to the attention of the agency, what information can be shared among team members and what information will be included.

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- (g) When investigating a complaint allegation, a County shall take reasonable steps to ascertain the validity of the complaint. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Handbook Begins Here

CPM Foundational Behavior: Best practice for a County is to be accountable. Model accountability and trust by doing what you say you're going to do; being responsive, which includes returning calls, texts, and emails within 24 business hours; being on time, including submitting reports on time and being on time for appointments; and following ICWA and other federal and state laws. Be aware of and take responsibility for your own biases, missteps, and mistakes.

Handbook Ends Here

- (1) Assessing the health and safety of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas.
- (2) Conducting interviews of a child or nonminor dependent, or any person who may have knowledge of the circumstances described in the complaint.

Handbook Begins Here

CPM Engagement Behaviors. Best practice for a County is to listen to the child, youth, young adult, and family, and demonstrate that you care about their thoughts and experience. Listen attentively and use language and concepts that the family has used. Use a trauma-informed approach to acknowledge and validate venting, expressions of anger, and feelings of grief and loss. Reflect what you heard so the child, youth, young adult, and family can see that you understood.

Handbook Ends Here

- (3) Obtaining and/or reviewing any relevant records.
 - (4) Observing any child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family in the home.
 - (5) Coordinating a medical examination of a child or nonminor dependent with the social worker or probation officer of the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (A) A nonminor dependent may not be examined by a medical professional without the nonminor dependent's consent.
 - (6) Making additional unannounced visits to the home as needed.
 - (7) Documenting all interviews and steps taken during the investigation.
- (h) When investigating a complaint allegation, a County shall review any adverse action taken by the Department against the license, certificate, employment, approval, or registration of a Resource Family or an associated individual, to determine if the Resource Family did not conform to the Written Directives or any applicable law.
- (1) All allegations identified in an adverse action taken by the Department shall be documented as a complaint and investigated.
 - (2) A County may rely on an investigation conducted by the Department in lieu of

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investigating the allegations specified in the adverse action, when appropriate.

- (i) Before interviewing a minor who is not a foster child, a County shall make a reasonable effort to obtain the permission of the minor's parent, guardian, or authorized representative, unless doing so would adversely affect the investigation.
 - (1) If the County interviews a minor who is not a foster child without first obtaining the permission of the minor's parent, guardian, or authorized representative, the County shall document the circumstances which necessitated that action.
 - (2) The County shall document all actions taken during the course of an investigation, including, but not limited to, all information obtained pursuant to subsection (f).
-

Handbook Begins Here

CPM Engagement Behaviors: Best practice for a County is to listen to the child, youth, young adult, and family, and demonstrate that you care about their experiences. Listen attentively and use language and concepts that the family has used. Use a trauma-informed approach to acknowledge and validate venting, expressions of anger, and feelings of grief and loss. Reflect what you heard so the child, youth, young adult, and family can see that you understood.

Teaming Behaviors: Work with the family to build a supportive team. Ask initially and throughout the family's involvement if they would like a support person or peer advocate on their team. Facilitate development of a mutually supportive relationship among the parents, caregivers, an Indian child's Tribe if applicable, and others.

Handbook Ends Here

Handbook Begins Here

A County has authority to interview a foster child without the permission of the Resource Family but should follow the child interview protocols for their County. Before interviewing a child or nonminor dependent, a County may consider developing a plan regarding how, when, and where the child or nonminor dependent will be interviewed. Such a plan should be designed to help support the child or nonminor dependent in providing necessary and complete information.

Handbook Ends Here

- (j) During the course of a complaint investigation, if a County discovers or receives information indicating that a Resource Family may not be conforming to applicable laws or the Written Directives, which are unrelated to the complaint allegation under investigation, the County shall review the information as specified in Section 9-06A(a) and take appropriate action in response.
 - (1) The RFA program staff may address any complaint allegation unrelated to the current allegation while investigating, however, any new complaint allegation information must be documented separately.

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CPM Assessment Behaviors: Best practice for a County is from the beginning and throughout all work with the child, youth, young adult, family, the child's Tribe if applicable, and their team engage in initial and on-going safety and risk assessment and permanency planning. Explain the process to the child, youth, young adult and family so they know what to expect, and check in early and often to be sure they understand.

Handbook Ends Here

- (k) Upon completion of a complaint investigation, a County shall:
 - (1) Complete form RFA 9099: Complaint Investigation Report, containing a finding for each allegation as either substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded.
 - (A) A supervisor shall review and approve the written complaint investigation report prior to notifying the Resource Family or complainant.
 - (2) Give a copy of the form RFA 9099: Complaint Investigation Report to the Resource Family.
 - (3) If applicable, document that no corrective action plan was necessary because the deficiency has been addressed, corrected or resolved.
 - (4) If applicable, develop a corrective action plan to address a deficiency by completing form RFA 9099C: Complaint Investigation Report – Continued, for the Resource Family to correct any identified deficiencies.
 - (A) If a County determines that it is not possible to correct an identified deficiency, then the County shall document the deficiency on the RFA 9099 and may proceed with the necessary administrative action pursuant to Article 12.
 - (5) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall provide a completed copy of the RFA 9099 and RFA 9099C (if applicable) to the child's Tribe, and make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (A) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the corrective action plan can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (B) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
 - (6) Document in the Resource Family file all information received and investigated during the complaint investigation.
 - (7) Notify the complainant, if known, of the findings of the complaint investigation.
- (l) A County shall maintain a complaint log, which shall be available for review by the Department, and which shall contain the following information for each complaint:
 - (1) The Resource Family involved.
 - (2) The complaint allegation(s).
 - (3) Date the complaint was received.
 - (4) Name of the RFA program staff member assigned to the complaint investigation.
 - (5) Whether the RFA program staff member assigned to the complaint investigation approved the Resource Family.
 - (6) Date the ten-day visit to the Resource Family's home is due.

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- (7) If the ten-day visit to the Resource Family's home was scheduled, the date and time of each attempted unannounced visit, and the supervisor's approval to schedule the visit.
 - (8) Date the ten-day visit was made.
 - (9) Findings for each complaint allegation.
 - (10) If the complaint cannot be resolved within 60 calendar days after the ten-day visit, a notation that further investigation is required.
- (m) An unfounded complaint allegation and any information related to it shall be confidential and not released to the public.
- (n) A County shall consider the identity of every complainant as confidential and may not disclose to a Resource Family or make public the identity of any complainant, unless explicitly authorized to do so by the complainant, or as required by law.
- (o) County RFA program staff conducting a complaint investigation concerning a Resource Family may not be any of the following:
- (1) The social worker or probation officer of any child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family.
 - (2) A person who has any direct relationship with, or interest in, the Resource Family or any complainant, or who has any conflict of interest with any aspect of the investigation.
 - (3) A RFA program staff member who approved the Resource Family, unless no other qualified staff member is available.
 - (A) If a staff member who approved the Resource Family conducts the complaint investigation, the County shall document the circumstances that constitute the necessity and ensure that all documentation and evidence gathered during the investigation and the investigation report are reviewed by a supervisor prior to the form RFA 9099: Complaint Investigation Report being delivered to the Resource Family.
- (p) If, during the course of a complaint investigation, a RFA program staff member conducting a complaint investigation discovers that he or she has a conflict of interest, then the staff member shall immediately report the conflict to a supervisor, who may transfer responsibility for the investigation to another staff member.
- (q) If a Resource Family disagrees with any finding related to a complaint allegation, the Resource Family has a right to request a County review of the finding(s).
- (1) A Resource Family shall submit a written request for a review of the finding(s) to the County first level supervisor/manager listed on the RFA 9099 within ten calendar days from the date the Resource Family received the RFA 9099.
 - (2) If the County first level supervisor/manager determines that a finding was not issued in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, or Written Directives, or that other circumstances existed, the first level supervisor/manager may amend or dismiss the finding.

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- (3) A County may require additional County reviews at or above the first level supervisor/manager position. If additional reviews are conducted as described, the County shall notify the Resource Family of the review process.
- (4) A County shall provide written notification of the result of a review to the Resource Family.

Handbook Begins Here

Counties that contract back with the Department for complaint investigations will follow the requirements and procedures outlined in their contract.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 9-06B: Incident Reports and Investigations

- (a)
 - (1) A County shall investigate all serious incidents reported by a Resource Family and all incidents indicating that a Resource Family may not have met or may not be meeting applicable laws or the Written Directives.
 - (2) A County may investigate any incident reported by a Resource Family that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (1).
 - (3) If the incident concerns an Indian child, the County shall contact the Tribe to collaborate on and participate in all activities related to the investigation as outlined in Section 9-06B and the following:
 - (A) The County shall collaborate with the tribal representative to find mutually agreeable dates and times to schedule any in-person assessments of the home or family or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (B) The County shall document all contacts and attempted contacts with the Tribe including the dates, method of contact, and the name of the representative who was contacted.
 - (i) If the tribal representative or social worker is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation, and the reason the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known, and proceed with the investigation.
 - (C) The County shall inform the tribal representative, verbally or in writing, of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.
- (b) After a preliminary review of an incident report received from a Resource Family, a County shall notify a Resource Family if additional information is needed.
- (c) A County shall notify the Department of a serious incident by the close of the next business day following receipt of the serious incident report as specified in Section 4-03(f).

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- (d) When investigating an incident, a County shall take reasonable steps to ascertain whether the incident was the result of a Resource Family not meeting applicable laws or the Written Directives. These steps may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - (1) If the Resource Family operates a licensed family day care home, or it is known that the Resource Family is registered on the Trust Line or Home Care Aide registries, or associated to a facility licensed by the Department, the County shall notify the Department and collaborate with the Department on the investigation.
 - (2) Assessing the health and safety of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, and storage areas.
 - (3) Conducting interviews of a child, nonminor dependent, or any person who may have knowledge of the incident.
 - (4) Obtaining and/or reviewing any relevant records.
 - (5) Observing any child or nonminor dependent placed with the Resource Family in the home.
 - (6) Coordinating a medical examination of a child or nonminor dependent with the social worker or probation officer for the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (A) A nonminor dependent may not be examined by a medical professional without the nonminor dependent's consent.
 - (7) Making additional visits to the home as needed.
 - (8) Documenting all interviews and steps taken during the investigation.
- (e) During the course of an incident investigation, if a County discovers or receives information indicating that a Resource Family may not be meeting applicable laws or the Written Directives, which are unrelated to an incident under investigation, the County shall review the information as specified in Section 9-06A(a).
- (f) Upon completion of an incident investigation, a County shall:
 - (1) Complete a form RFA 809: Resource Family Visit Record.
 - (A) A supervisor shall review and approve the form RFA 809 prior to notifying the Resource Family.
 - (2) If applicable, document that no corrective action plan was necessary because the incident has been addressed, corrected or resolved.
 - (3) If applicable, develop a corrective action plan by completing form RFA 809C: Resource Family Visit – Corrective Action Plan for the Resource Family to correct any identified deficiencies.
 - (A) If a County determines that it is not possible to correct an identified deficiency, then the County shall document the deficiency and may proceed with the necessary administrative action procedures pursuant to Article 12.
 - (4) Give a copy of the form RFA 809 and 809C to the Resource Family.
 - (5) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall provide a completed copy of the RFA 809 and RFA 809C (if applicable) to the child's Tribe and make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (A) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the corrective action plan can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (B) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature

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in the signature space.

- (6) Document in the Resource Family's file all information received and investigated during the incident investigation.

SECTION 9-06C: Cross-Reporting Investigation Results

- (a) If, after an investigation of a complaint or incident, a County determines that a Resource Family has not met or is not meeting applicable laws or the Written Directives, the County shall immediately notify the following of its findings:
 - (1) The placement agency responsible for placing a child or nonminor dependent with the Resource Family.
 - (2) The Tribe, in the case of an Indian child.
 - (3) The Community Care Licensing Division of the Department, if the Resource Family is licensed as a family day care home.
 - (4) The Community Care Licensing Division of the Department if it is known that the Resource Family is registered on the Trust Line or Home Care Aid registries or associated to a facility licensed by the Department.
 - (5) The Department as provided in Section 12-07(a)(2), if a County will be recommending an exclusion action.

SECTION 9-07: Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

- (a) Notwithstanding Section 9-06A(k)(4), if a County determines that a Resource Family is not conforming to an applicable statute, regulation, or the Written Directives, and that the identified deficiency may be corrected, then the County shall issue a written CAP using form RFA 809C: Resource Family Visit Corrective Action Plan.
 - (1) If the Resource Family operates a licensed family day care home, and it is determined that any deficiency may pose a risk to the health and safety of children or nonminor dependents, a County shall notify the Department.
- (b) A Resource Family or person designated by the Resource Family shall meet with a County to discuss any deficiency.
 - (1) The County shall request and consider the Resource Family's feedback to develop a plan to correct each deficiency.
 - (2) In the case where an Indian child is placed in the home, the County shall invite the Indian child's Tribe to collaborate and participate in the development of any CAP.
 - (A) Collaboration with an Indian child's Tribe includes but is not limited to, asking the tribal representative for mutually agreeable dates and times to schedule a joint visit to conduct all interviews, or if the tribal representative is unable to be present face-to-face, arranging a telephonic or video conference with the tribal representative.
 - (B) If the tribal representative is unable to participate, the County shall document the invitation and the reason the tribal representative was unable to participate, if known, and proceed with the development of the CAP.
 - (C) The County shall inform the tribal representative, verbally or in writing, of the outcomes of any interview or meeting the tribal representative was unable to participate.

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- (D) The County shall provide a copy of the CAP to the tribal representative and make efforts to obtain a signature from the social services director or designee of the tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (i) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the corrective action plan can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (ii) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.
- (c) A written CAP shall include the following information:
 - (1) The statute, regulation, or Written Directive that applies.
 - (2) A description of the nature of the deficiency that states the manner in which the Resource Family failed to conform to a specified statute, regulation, or Written Directive.
 - (3) A plan to correct each deficiency.
 - (4) A date by which each deficiency shall be corrected.
 - (A) In determining the date for correcting a deficiency, a County shall consider the following factors:
 - (i) The potential hazard presented by the deficiency.
 - (ii) The number of children and nonminor dependents affected.
 - (iii) The availability of equipment necessary to correct the deficiency.
 - (iv) The estimated time necessary for the delivery and installation of necessary equipment.
 - (B) The date for correcting a deficiency shall not be more than 30 calendar days following service of a CAP, unless a County determines that the deficiency cannot be completely corrected in 30 calendar days.
 - (i) If the date for correcting a deficiency is more than 30 calendar days following service of a corrective action plan, the CAP shall specify which actions must be taken within 30 calendar days.
 - (ii) A County may require correction of a deficiency within 24 hours or less if there is an immediate threat to the health or safety of children or nonminor dependents.
 - (5) The address and telephone number of the County responsible for reviewing corrective action plans for the area in which the home is located and the name and telephone number of the County first level supervisor/manager.
 - (6) A date for a follow-up visit to determine compliance with the CAP.
- (d) A County shall provide a CAP to a Resource Family as follows:
 - (1) The corrective action plan shall be given to the Resource Family upon completion of the visit.
 - (2) If the Resource Family is not at home, the CAP shall be given to the person designated by the Resource Family upon completion of the visit and mailed to the Resource Family.
 - (3) If the Resource Family or the person designated by the Resource Family refuses to accept or acknowledge receipt of the CAP, the County shall mail the CAP to the Resource Family.

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- (e) If a Resource Family disagrees with a CAP, the Resource Family has the right to request a County review.
 - (1) A Resource Family shall submit a written request for a review of the CAP to the County first level supervisor/manager listed on the CAP within ten calendar days from the date the Resource Family received the CAP.
 - (2) If the County first level supervisor/manager determines that a CAP was not issued in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, or Written Directives, or that other circumstances existed, the first level supervisor/manager may amend or dismiss the CAP.
 - (3) The County first level supervisor/manager may extend the date specified for correction of a deficiency if warranted by the facts or circumstances presented to support a request for an extension.
 - (4) The decision by the County first level supervisor/manager shall be the final determination and there is no right to a hearing as described in Article 12 on the review of a CAP.
- (f) If a County determines that it is not possible for a Resource Family to correct an identified deficiency, for reasons including but not limited to the seriousness of the deficiency, then no CAP is required. The County shall document the deficiency and may proceed with the necessary administrative action procedures pursuant to Article 12.

SECTION 9-08: Registered Sex Offender Address Investigations

- (a) A County shall investigate and report back to the Department possible address matches of registered sex offenders within 45 days using the information provided.
 - (1) Notwithstanding subsection (a), if a Resource Family is on inactive status pursuant to Section 10-02, a County shall investigate possible address matches of registered sex offenders in the home during the update conducted in accordance with Section 9-02.
 - (2) Counties are responsible for completing registered sex offender address investigations regardless if they have entered into a contract with the Department to conduct complaint investigations on a County's behalf.
- (b) A County shall take the following actions when investigating a possible registered sex offender address match for a Resource Family's home:
 - (1) A designation of "At Capacity" shall be applied and a Special Project Code "S-RSO RPRT RCVD-UNDER REVIEW" shall be entered in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) database pending completion of the investigation.
 - (2) Determine if the registered sex offender resides or is regularly present in the home.
 - (A) If the registered sex offender resides or is regularly present in the home and a child or nonminor dependent is placed in the home, the County shall treat this situation as a report to the Emergency Response hotline and immediately create a "General Neglect" referral for the child using the name of the Substitute Care Provider as the alleged perpetrator. The designated response time shall be listed as "immediate."
 - (B) A County may not permit a registered sex offender to reside or be regularly

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- present in a Resource Family's home without a criminal record clearance or exemption if a child or nonminor dependent is placed with the Resource Family.
- (C) A County shall immediately notify the social worker or probation officer for the child or nonminor dependent of the investigation.
 - (D) The County shall conduct a background check of the individual pursuant to Section 6-03A.
- (c) If the County denies the registered sex offender's criminal record clearance or exemption request, and the registered sex offender will continue to reside or be regularly present in the home, the County shall rescind the approval of the Resource Family in accordance with Section 10-01A (b) and Article 12.
- (1) If a child was placed with the family, the RFA program staff shall inform the child's social worker the results of the investigation including the determination to rescind the approval of the Resource Family.
- (d) Upon completion of the investigation, the County may remove the "At Capacity" designation in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) database when all individuals residing or regularly present in the home are cleared and the home is appropriate for placement.
- (1) The County shall enter a Special Project Code to appropriately describe the results of the investigation.
- (e) The County shall submit the results of the investigation within 45 calendar days on an encrypted electronic spreadsheet to CDSSRSOResponse@dss.ca.gov.

Handbook Begins Here

Special Project Codes are described in ACL13-64.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 9-09: Oversight of the Resource Family Approval Program

- (a) The Department shall provide ongoing oversight of a County's Resource Family Approval Program.
- (b) The Department shall provide a County with periodic training, as appropriate, to ensure proper administration by the County.
- (c) The Department may, without prior notice, inspect, review, and monitor implementation of the program in a County, including all activities, procedures, records, and forms related to the program.
- (d) The Department shall review a random sample of Resource Families in a County for compliance with applicable laws and the Written Directives, which may include home visits.

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- (1) The Department's review shall include, but not be limited to, the following Resource Family information:
 - (A) Application.
 - (B) Background checks, including any criminal record exemptions.
 - (C) Approval updates.
 - (D) Reports of serious complaints and serious incidents involving Resource Families.
 - (E) Administrative actions.
 - (F) County reviews of decisions related to capacity determinations and Resource Family corrective action plans and documented alternative plans.
 - (G) In the case of an Indian child, the application of the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community as outlined in Section 1-04(c).
- (e) The Department's review shall occur on biennial basis or more often if the Department becomes aware that a County is experiencing a disproportionate number of complaints against individual Resource Families.
- (f) The Department may conduct an independent investigation of serious complaints or serious incidents and change the findings depending on the results of the Department investigation.
- (g) The Department shall investigate unresolved complaints against a County.
- (h) The Department shall require a County to comply with a corrective action plan if it is not operating the program in accordance with applicable laws and the Written Directives.
 - (1) A County shall comply with a corrective action plan to correct program deficiencies within the time approved by the Department.
- (i) The Department shall assess County performance in related areas of the California Child and Family Services Review System and remedy identified problems.
- (j) A County shall interact with the Department as necessary to implement the program, including the following:
 - (1) Providing the Department with timely, and when requested, immediate access to any written information, files, and data pertaining to the program as determined by the Department.
 - (2) Responding in a timely manner, or immediately as requested by the Department, to requests, inquiries, and meetings.
 - (3) Notifying the Department in writing when a County is not complying or believes that a County is unable to comply with applicable laws or the Written Directives, and describe the circumstances resulting in then on-compliance.

ARTICLE 10: ADMINISTRATIVE

SECTION 10-01A: Denying or Rescinding Resource Family Approvals, Exclusions, and Surrenders

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- (a) A Resource Family maintains their approval status unless approval is rescinded by a County, the Resource Family chooses to surrender the approval, the approval is forfeited pursuant to Section 10-01B, or the Department institutes or continues an administrative action against a Resource Family or any individual residing or regularly present in the home of a Resource Family during a period of inactive status and such administrative action results in a rescission.
- (b) A County may deny an application for approval, or may rescind the approval of a Resource Family, and the Department may exclude an individual from presence in any Resource Family home, for any of the following reasons:
 - (1) Violation of Welfare and Institutions section 16519.5, the Written Directives, or any applicable law.
 - (2) Aiding, abetting, or permitting the violation of any applicable law or the Written Directives.
 - (3) Conduct that poses a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child, nonminor dependent, another individual, or the people of the State of California.
 - (4) The conviction of an applicant, Resource Parent, or associated individual, at any time before or during their approval, of a crime as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1522.
 - (5) Engaging in acts of financial malfeasance, including but not limited to, improper use or embezzlement of the money or property of a child or nonminor dependent or fraudulent appropriation for personal gain of money or property, or willful or negligent failure to provide services.
 - (6) Failure to meet application requirements.
 - (7) Failure to meet Resource Family qualifications.
 - (8) Inability to provide adequate references.
 - (9) Failure or refusal to participate in interviews as specified in Section 6-05(a).
 - (10) Failure to complete pre-approval or annual training, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training, specialized training, or other training required by the County.
 - (11) Failure to receive a criminal record clearance or exemption.
 - (12) Failure to meet the Home Environment Assessment standards.
 - (13) Family evaluation results or other information indicates an inability to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard as dictated by law, or to provide or failure to ensure the care and supervision of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (14) Failure to cooperate or comply as specified in Section 11-17.
 - (15) False or misleading statements made to a County to obtain or maintain Resource Family Approval.
 - (16) Conduct that would indicate the individual is not of reputable or responsible character.
- (c)
 - (1) If a County denies an application, rescinds the approval of a Resource Family, or denies or rescinds a criminal record exemption, the County shall provide the applicable individual with due process as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq. and Article 12.
 - (2) If the Department excludes an individual from any Resource Family home, the

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Department shall provide the individual with due process as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq. and Article 12.

- (d) A County shall not deny an application based on any of the following:
 - (1) An applicant's reliance on the funding described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5(l) to meet additional household expenses incurred due to the placement of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (2) An applicant's preference to provide a specific level of permanency, including adoption, guardianship, or, in the case of a relative, placement with a fit and willing relative.
 - (3) An applicant's age, sex, race, religion, color, political affiliation, national origin, disability, marital status, gender identity, gender expression, actual or perceived sexual orientation, medical condition, genetic information, citizenship, primary language, immigration status, or ancestry.
 - (4) A substantiated, inconclusive, or unfounded allegation of general neglect, or an inconclusive or unfounded allegation of child abuse or severe neglect, contained in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) or Child Welfare Services – California Automated Response and Engagement System (CWS-CARES) databases.
 - (A) For purposes of this paragraph, "substantiated," "inconclusive," and "unfounded" are defined in as outlined in Penal Code section 11165.12.
 - (B) Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit a County from reevaluating or reinvestigating an allegation of child abuse or neglect.
 - (C) Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit a County from denying an application for approval based on an allegation contained in CWS/CMS or CWS-CARES when a County:
 - (i) Obtains independent evidence substantiating the child abuse or neglect allegation contained in CWS/CMS or CWS-CARES; or
 - (ii) Verifies that the individual who is the subject of the allegation contained in CWS/CMS or CWS-CARES was provided due process and that the substantiated allegation is based upon a decision and order as a result of a hearing pursuant to Manual of Policies and Procedures section 31-021 or Welfare and Institutions Code section 300 et seq.
 - (D) If a County determines an allegation of severe neglect is substantiated, the County shall provide the individual with an opportunity to dispute the substantiated allegation, pursuant to Manual of Policies and Procedures section 31-021.
 - (i) If the individual does not dispute the substantiated allegation, the County may deny the application.
 - (ii) If the individual disputes the substantiated allegation, and the substantiated disposition is upheld, the County may deny the application.
- (e) A County shall attempt to resolve areas of concern, if possible, prior to denying an application, rescinding approval, or denying or rescinding a criminal record exemption.
 - (1) Part of the duties to resolve areas of concern include identifying if additional

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supports or services are needed to support the applicant or Resource Family in meeting the requirements of approval.

- (2) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the Indian child's Tribe before any decision to deny, rescind, or exclude a Resource Family or individual to resolve areas of concern and ensure the application of the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community are not factors in the denial, rescission, or exclusion.

Handbook Begins Here

When concerns have been raised and a child or nonminor dependent is placed with an applicant or a Resource Family, the County should notify the child's or nonminor dependent's social worker or probation officer so that a Child and Family Team meeting can be convened.

Handbook Ends Here

- (f) If a Resource Family no longer wishes to be approved, the Resource Family shall have the right to surrender their approval.
- (1) A surrender of approval may be verbal or in writing.
 - (2) Documentation of a surrender of approval by a Resource Family shall be maintained in the Resource Family file.

SECTION 10-01B: Forfeiture of Resource Family Approval

- (a) A Resource Family Approval shall be forfeited by operation of law when any of the following occurs:
- (1) A Resource Family surrenders their approval to the County.
 - (2) The sole Resource Parent dies.
 - (3) A Resource Family abandons the approved home. The Resource Family abandons the home when one of the following occurs:
 - (A) The Resource Family informs RFA program staff that the Resource Family no longer accepts responsibility for the home.
 - (B) A County is unable to determine the Resource Family's whereabouts after the County has attempted to contact the Resource Family in all of the following ways:
 - (i) Visited the home and requested information of the Resource Family's whereabouts from an adult at the home, if an adult can be contacted.
 - (ii) Made at least one phone call per day to the Resource Family's last telephone number of record for three consecutive business days, and the Resource Family failed to respond.
 - (iii) Sent a certified letter to the Resource Family's last mailing address of record requesting that the Resource Family contact the County and has received an undeliverable or unclaimed response notice.
 - (4) A Resource Family fails to cooperate with an approval update within 30 calendar days of the date of written notice, as specified in Section 9-02(i).
 - (5) A Resource Family is approved by another foster family agency or a County as specified in Health and Safety Code section 1506.6(c).

SECTION 10-02: Inactive Status

- (a) A County shall place a Resource Family on inactive status upon verbal or written notification by the Resource Family that includes the following information:
 - (1) The date inactive status will begin.
 - (2) The reason(s) for the request to be placed on inactive status, which may include, but is not limited to:
 - (A) Birth of a child.
 - (B) Adoption of a child.
 - (C) Medical condition or surgery.
 - (D) Job loss.
 - (E) Relocation.
 - (F) Death of a family member.
 - (3) An anticipated date inactive status will end.
- (b) Notification from the Resource Family, whether verbal or written, shall be documented in the Resource Family file.
- (c) A County may not place a Resource Family on inactive status if a child or nonminor dependent is placed in the home.
- (d) A period of inactive status may not exceed two years.
- (e) A County shall advise a Resource Family that inactive status may not exceed two years and to end inactive status, the Resource Family is required to provide 30 calendar days verbal or written notification, and that the Resource Family shall be subject to an approval update pursuant to Section 9-02.
 - (1) Within 30 calendar days of the notification provided by a Resource Family, a County shall update the Resource Family's approval pursuant to Section 9-02, unless good cause exists.
 - (A) If good cause exists, a County shall document the reasons for the delay beyond the 30 calendar days and generate a timeframe for completion of the update.
 - (2) Notwithstanding subsection (f), A Resource Family may not provide care to a child or nonminor dependent until an update is completed as specified in paragraph (1).
- (f) If a child or nonminor dependent is placed with a relative, nonrelative extended family member, or a Resource Family who is considered critical to the best interest of the child, while on inactive status, a County shall initiate a home health and safety assessment pursuant to Section 6-02(a)(2) within 5 calendar days of the placement and complete an approval update pursuant to Section 9-02(e) within 30 calendar days of the placement, unless good cause exists.
 - (1) If good cause exists, a County shall document the reasons for the delay beyond the 30 calendar days and generate a timeframe for completion of the update.
- (g) Within 60 calendar days prior to exceeding the two-year maximum, if the Resource Family has not provided the County with verbal or written notification of their intent to return from inactive status, the County shall provide the Resource Family with a written notice that

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includes the following:

- (1) A reminder that inactive status may not exceed two years, and the date the two-year inactive status will end.
 - (2) That the Resource Family is required to provide 30 calendar day verbal or written notification of their intent to return from inactive status.
 - (3) That to return from inactive status, the Resource Family shall be subject to an approval update pursuant to Section 9-02(e).
- (h) If there are conditions placed on a Resource Family's approval, the conditions shall be suspended during a period of inactive status.

SECTION 10-03: Documented Alternative Plan

- (a) A County may approve a Documented Alternative Plan (DAP) for a non-safety home environment standard set forth in Section 11-01(c)(1), and (c)(2).
 - (1) A DAP issued regarding Section 11-01(c)(1) may be approved for a specific child or nonminor dependent in care.
 - (2) A DAP issued regarding Section 11-01(c)(2) may be approved for a specific child or nonminor dependent to share a bedroom with a Resource Parent or an adult in the home due to special circumstances of the child or nonminor dependent which may include but not be limited to medical conditions or disabilities requiring close supervision.
- (b) A County shall ensure that a DAP meets the following requirements:
 - (1) Provides an alternative plan that meets the same standards in terms of safety, sanitation, and personal rights of each child and nonminor dependent in the home.
 - (2) Is not detrimental to the health and safety of any child or nonminor dependent in the home.
 - (3) Is in the best interests of children and nonminor dependents in the home.
 - (4) Is discussed and agreed upon between an applicant or a Resource Family and RFA program staff in a written document signed by both.
 - (A) The written document shall include supporting documentation for the request.
 - (5) Is submitted by the RFA program staff for approval by the County.
 - (A) Approval or denial of the requested DAP shall be determined within 14 calendar days following submission of the request.
 - (B) Approval or denial of a requested DAP in an emergency or compelling reason placement shall be determined within seven calendar days following submission of the request.
- (c) A County shall provide a copy of a written approval or denial of a requested DAP to an applicant or Resource Family.
- (d) A County shall retain the written approval or denial of a DAP in the Resource Family file for an applicant or Resource Family.

SECTION 10-04: Capacity Determination

- (a) A County shall ensure that the capacity be no more than the total number of children and nonminor dependents that an applicant or Resource Family can properly care for as determined by the County.
 - (1) The capacity may not exceed six, including adopted, biological, and guardianship children and children of a minor or nonminor dependent parent residing in the home.
 - (2) A County may approve a capacity greater than six for any of the following reasons:
 - (A) To allow sibling groups to remain together.
 - (B) To allow a minor or nonminor dependent parent to remain with their child.
 - (C) To allow a child or nonminor dependent who has an established relationship with a Resource Family to remain with that Resource Family.
 - (3) The County may approve a capacity greater than six, pursuant to paragraph (2) if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (A) The Resource Family is not a Specialized Resource Family or an Intensive Services Foster Care Resource Family as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 18360.
 - (B) The home is sufficient in size to accommodate the needs of all children and nonminor dependents in the home.
- (b) When determining the capacity of an applicant or Resource Family, a County shall consider the following factors:
 - (1) An applicant's or Resource Family's ability to comply with applicable laws and the Written Directives.
 - (2) The number of children or nonminor dependents, in addition to any adopted, biological, and guardianship children, and children of a minor or nonminor dependent parent residing in the home, for whom the applicant or Resource Family is capable of providing care and supervision and that the home can accommodate.
 - (3) Any other household members who live in the home and their individual needs.
 - (4) Circumstances in the family environment that may affect the ability of an applicant or Resource Family to provide care and supervision to a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (5) Physical features of a home, including all of the following:
 - (A) The number of bedrooms and bathrooms.
 - (B) The sleeping arrangements of family members and other individuals residing in the home.
 - (C) Number of children or nonminor dependents who may share a bedroom as specified in Section 11-01(c).
- (c) A County may increase or decrease the capacity of a Resource Family when there is a change in any of the factors specified in subsection (b).
 - (1) If a County increases or decreases the capacity of a Resource Family, then the County shall complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval Certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08.
- (d) If a County approves a capacity that is less than that requested by an applicant or

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Resource Family, the County shall provide written notification to the applicant or Resource Family of the right to a formal County review of the decision as described in subparagraph (e). The capacity notice shall include the following:

- (1) The reasons for the limitation.
- (2) The name and telephone number of the County first level supervisor/manager.
- (3) That the applicant or Resource Family has a right to request a formal County review of the decision by the first level supervisor/manager.

- (e) If an applicant or Resource Family disagrees with a County's capacity determination, the applicant or Resource Family shall have a right to request a formal County review by submitting a written request for a review of the decision to the County first level supervisor/manager listed on the written notification provided by the County within ten calendar days from the date the applicant or Resource Family received the notification. There is no right to a hearing as described in Article 12 on an approval with a capacity limitation.

- (1) If the County first level supervisor/manager determines that a capacity determination was not issued in accordance with applicable statutes, regulations, or Written Directives, or that other circumstances existed, the first level supervisor/manager may amend the capacity determination.
- (2) The County shall provide the applicant or Resource Family with a written determination by the County first level supervisor/manager.
- (3) The County shall complete form RFA 05A: Resource Family Approval certificate or an equivalent certificate as specified in Section 6-08.

SECTION 10-05: Resource Family File

- (a) A County shall securely maintain an electronic or hard copy central Resource Family file for each applicant and Resource Family. Records shall be securely maintained for at least five years following the date of an application withdrawal or denial, rescission of approval, criminal record exemption denial or rescission, exclusion, or forfeiture or surrender of approval except as follows:

- (1) If an appeal, notice of defense or action for the record is filed, the time period to maintain the file shall begin on the date that a final decision and order is issued.
- (2) If a County chooses to purge or destroy hard copy records after the file retention period in this section, an electronic version shall first be stored of records necessary to support an administrative action.
- (3) Records necessary to support an administrative action that contain an original certification or signature, including but not limited to court or law enforcement agency records, or handwritten statements of an individual shall not be purged, destroyed, or stored solely in an electronic format; an original hard copy shall be maintained consistent with the county's retention policy in consultation with their county counsel office.

- (b) The following records shall be stored in a confidential section of a Resource Family file:

- (1) RFA 01A: Resource Family Application
- (2) RFA 01B: Resource Family Criminal Record Statement
- (3) RFA 02: Resource Family Background Checklist and Out-Of-State Child Abuse

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- Registry Checklist
- (4) LIC 198B: Out-Of-State Child Abuse/Neglect Report Request (or other state's equivalent)
- (5) RFA 04: Resource Family Risk Assessment or equivalent form
- (6) RFA 05: Resource Family Approval Written Report or equivalent form
- (7) RFA 06: Resource Family Approval Update Report or equivalent form
- (8) RFA 07: Resource Family Health Questionnaire
- (9) RFA 09: Notice of Action Regarding Resource Family Approval
- (10) RFA 09B: Notice of Action Regarding RFA Criminal Background Exemption Decision
- (11) RFA 09E: Order to Individual of Exclusion from Resource Family Homes and Department Licensed Facilities
- (12) RFA 09I: Order to Individual of Immediate Exclusion from Resource Family Homes and Department Licensed Facilities
- (13) RFA 10: Resource Family Approval – Portability Application
- (14) RFA 12: Resource Family Approval Documented Alternative Plan (DAP)
- (15) RFA 802: Complaint Intake Report
- (16) RFA 809C: Resource Family Visit – Corrective Action Plan (Confidential depending on type of information).
- (17) RFA 811: Confidential Names
- (18) RFA 9099: (if unfounded): Complaint Investigation Report
- (19) Records related to a background check as specified in Sections 6-03A and 6-03B.
- (20) Supporting documentation as specified in Section 5-03A(a)(9).
- (21) All documentation or notes related to a family evaluation, including supporting documentation used in the evaluation.
- (22) Verification of completion of additional activities required by Section 6-04(a)(3).
- (23) Correspondence between an applicant or Resource Family and a County.

ARTICLE 11: REQUIREMENTS FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

SECTION 11-01: Home and Grounds

- (a) The home and grounds of a Resource Family shall meet the requirements specified in this Section and the following requirements:
 - (1) The home shall be clean, safe, sanitary, and in good repair.
 - (2) Except for a home with a working sprinkler system, a home shall have an approved, commercially manufactured, and functioning smoke detector installed in the hallway of each sleeping area.
 - (A) A smoke detector shall be audible in each bedroom.
 - (B) A smoke detector shall meet the standards set forth in Section 13113.7 of the Health and Safety Code.
 - (3) A home shall have one or more commercially manufactured, and functioning carbon monoxide detectors.
 - (A) A carbon monoxide detector shall meet the standards set forth in Chapter 8 (commencing with Section 13260) of Part 2 of Division 12 of the Health and Safety Code.
 - (4) All outdoor and indoor passageways, stairways, inclines, ramps, and open porches

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- in and on the grounds of the home shall be free of obstruction.
 - (5) At least one toilet, sink, and tub or shower shall be maintained in a safe, clean, and operating condition.
 - (A) Faucets to be used by a child or nonminor dependent for personal care and grooming shall deliver water that is safe and sanitary and hot water at a safe temperature.
 - (B) If age or developmentally appropriate, individual privacy shall be provided to a child or nonminor dependent in all toilet, bath, and shower areas.
 - (6) Fireplaces, freestanding stoves, and space heaters shall be maintained and used in a manner that ensures safe operation.
 - (7) A safe and comfortable temperature shall be maintained in the home.
 - (8) There shall be lighting as necessary in all rooms and other areas of the home and grounds to ensure comfort and safety.
 - (9) All water used in the home shall be safe and sanitary.
- (b) A bedroom for a child or nonminor dependent shall meet the following requirements:
- (1) Each bedroom used by a child or nonminor dependent shall have at least one operable window or door that ensures a safe, direct, emergency exit to the outside.
 - (A) A window with security bars shall have a safety release device that meets all state and local requirements.
 - (B) If the home of a Resource Family is in a high-rise building, the Resource Family is subject to the rules and regulations set forth by the State Fire Marshal.
 - (2) A room that is commonly used for other purposes may not be used as a bedroom for an infant, child or nonminor dependent. Such rooms shall include, but not be limited to, halls, stairways, public passageways, unfinished attics or basements, garages, storage areas, sheds, or similar detached buildings.
 - (A) A room commonly used for other purposes that is converted to a bedroom may be used as a bedroom for a child or nonminor dependent if it does not pose a violation of personal rights or a hazard to health and safety. If a County suspects that there is a hazard to health and safety, a Resource Family may be required to have the converted bedroom inspected by a local building inspector.
 - (3) A child or nonminor dependent shall be provided with an individual bed, which is equipped with a clean and comfortable mattress, and clean linens, blankets, and pillows, as needed, all in good repair.
 - (A) Linens shall be changed at least once per week or more often when necessary to ensure that clean linen is in use at all times.
 - (4) Beds shall be arranged to allow easy passage between beds and easy entrance into the room.
 - (5) The following shall apply to a bunk bed for a child:
 - (A) Bunk beds shall have railings on both sides of the upper tier to prevent falling.
 - (B) A child under six years of age or who is unable to climb into or out of the upper tier unassisted may not be permitted to use the upper tier.
 - (C) Bunk beds of more than two tiers shall not be used.
 - (6) Each infant, or child requiring a crib, shall be provided with an individual, safe, and

sturdy bassinet or crib as appropriate to the age and size of the infant or child. The following shall apply to cribs:

- (A) Tiered or stacked cribs, or cribs with drop sides, may not be used.
 - (B) Crib slats may not pose the danger of an infant or child being trapped.
 - (C) A crib mattress shall be clean, comfortable, and fit properly in the crib.
 - (D) Linens shall include a fitted sheet that fits tightly on a crib mattress and overlaps the underside of the mattress so it cannot be dislodged.
 - (E) Linens shall be changed at least once per week or more often when necessary to ensure that clean linen is in use at all times.
 - (F) A bassinet or crib shall be free from all loose articles and objects.
 - (G) Objects may not hang above or be attached to any side of a bassinet or crib.
 - (H) An infant or child who can climb out of a crib shall be provided with an age-appropriate bed.
- (7) Each bedroom shall have portable or permanent storage space to accommodate a child's or nonminor dependent's clothing and personal belongings.
- (c) A bedroom sharing arrangement involving a child or nonminor dependent shall meet the following requirements:
- (1) No more than four children or nonminor dependents, or one child and one nonminor dependent, may share a bedroom.
 - (A) A child or nonminor dependent may share a bedroom with an adopted, biological, or guardianship child of a Resource Family provided that the total number of individuals in the bedroom does not exceed four.
 - (2) A child or nonminor dependent may not share a bedroom with a Resource Parent except as specified in Section 10-03(a)(2).
 - (3) Children of different genders may share a bedroom under any of the following circumstances:
 - (A) Each child is under eight years of age.
 - (B) The children are siblings.
 - (C) A minor parent may share a bedroom with their child.
 - (D) A Resource Family may permit a child to share a bedroom consistent with the child's gender identity regardless of the gender or sex listed on their court or child welfare documents.
 - (4) A child and nonminor dependent may share a bedroom under any of the following circumstances:
 - (A) The child and nonminor dependent are siblings.
 - (B) The child and nonminor dependent have been sharing a bedroom prior to the nonminor dependent turning 18.
 - (C) A nonminor dependent parent may share a bedroom with their child.
 - (D) The child is 16 years of age or older.
 - (E) A Resource Family may permit a child and nonminor dependent to share a bedroom consistent with the child's or nonminor dependent's gender identity regardless of the gender or sex listed on their court or child welfare documents.
 - (5) For purposes of this paragraph, a "child" shall include an adopted, biological, or guardianship child of a Resource Family. A Resource Family shall consider the following factors to determine whether a bedroom sharing arrangement ensures

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compatibility with a child or nonminor dependent:

- (A) The age of the children and/or nonminor dependent, including the degree of age difference between them.
 - (B) The sleeping patterns of the children and/or nonminor dependents and if they may be disruptive to one another.
 - (C) The developmental levels and needs of the children and/or nonminor dependents.
 - (D) The privacy needs of the children and/or nonminor dependents and the plans to meet those needs.
 - (E) The history of the children and/or nonminor dependents, including previous sleeping arrangements and any information that may contraindicate sharing a room, if known.
 - (F) Any history or suspicion of sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.
 - (G) The supervision plan within the home.
 - (H) The needs of a minor or nonminor dependent parent and their child.
- (6) When permitting any bedroom sharing arrangement involving a child or nonminor dependent, a Resource Family shall:
- (A) Consult with the child or nonminor dependent about sharing a bedroom if it is age or developmentally appropriate.
 - (B) Consult with the child or nonminor dependent, in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, regarding the child's or nonminor dependent's sexual orientation and gender identity and what information the child or nonminor dependent wishes to disclose and to whom.
 - (i) The Resource Family shall not disclose information about the child's or nonminor dependent's sexual orientation and/or gender identity against the child's or nonminor dependent's wishes, unless compelled to do so by law or court order.
 - (C) Discuss the factors considered in making the determination, as specified in paragraph (5), with the child's or nonminor dependent's social worker or probation officer, including the following elements:
 - (i) The bedroom sharing arrangement ensures the health and safety of each child and/or nonminor dependent.
 - (ii) The children and/or nonminor dependents are compatible, including the adopted, biological, and guardianship children of the Resource Family who will be sharing the room.
- (d) Notwithstanding paragraph (2) of subsection (c), no more than two infants may share a bedroom with a Resource Family.
- (e) A County may approve a documented alternative plan (DAP), pursuant to Section 10-03, that authorizes alternative ways a Resource Family may comply with subsection (c)(1), and (c)(2).
- (f) A Resource Family who intends to accept a child or nonminor dependent with a developmental, mental, or physical disability shall make necessary modifications to the home and grounds to provide protection and assistance and to maximize the potential of a child or nonminor dependent for self-sufficiency.

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- (g) A Resource Family may not smoke or permit any person to smoke inside the home, and when a child or nonminor dependent is present on the outdoor grounds of the home.
- (h) A Resource Family shall maintain first aid supplies appropriate to the needs of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (1) A Resource Family shall ensure that a nonminor dependent has access to first aid supplies.

SECTION 11-02: Outdoor Activity Space

- (a) If a Resource Family provides a yard or outdoor activity space, the Resource Family shall comply with the following requirements:
 - (1) A yard or outdoor activity space shall be free from hazards that may endanger the health and safety of a child or a nonminor dependent.
- (b) A Resource Family shall ensure that swimming pools, fixed-in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, or similar bodies of water are inaccessible, as specified in subsection (d), if they accept placement of any of the following individuals:
 - (1) A child under ten years of age.
 - (2) A child who is developmentally, mentally, or physically disabled.
 - (3) A nonminor dependent who is developmentally, mentally, or physically disabled.
 - (4) A minor or nonminor dependent parent's child who is under ten years of age or developmentally, mentally, or physically disabled.
- (c) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as set forth in Section 11-12, when deciding whether a child should have access to fish ponds, fountains, creeks, and similar bodies of water.
- (d) A Resource Family shall ensure the inaccessibility of swimming pools, fixed in-place wading pools, hot tubs, spas, or similar bodies of water by using at least one of the safety features described in paragraphs (1) or (2).
 - (1) The pool shall be isolated from access to the home by an enclosure, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 115921, and as specified in Health and Safety Code section 115923 and does not obscure the pool from view.
 - (A) If removable mesh pool fencing is used as the enclosure as provided in Health and Safety Code section 115922(a)(2), an applicant or a Resource Family shall ensure that it is installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications.
 - (2) The pool shall be equipped with an approved safety pool cover.
 - (A) A pool safety cover that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials specifications (F 1346-91) is considered an approved safety pool cover.
 - (3) If a County determines that it is not physically possible for a Resource Family to comply with paragraphs (1) or (2), the home shall be equipped with exit alarms on doors and windows that provide direct access to the pool. The alarms shall meet the following requirements:
 - (A) Produces an audible warning when the door or window is opened.

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- (B) Sounds continuously for a minimum of 30 seconds within seven seconds after the door is opened.
 - (C) Meets the requirements of UL 2017 General – Purpose Signaling Devices and Systems, Section 77.
 - (D) Have a minimum sound pressure rating of 85 dBA at 10 feet and the sound of the alarm should be distinctive from other household sounds, such as smoke alarms, telephones, and doorbells.
 - (E) Automatically resets under all conditions.
 - (F) Equipped with manual means, such as touch pads or switches, to temporarily deactivate the alarm for a single opening of the door from either direction. Such deactivation shall last for no more than 15 seconds. The deactivation touch pads or switches shall be located at least 54 inches above the threshold of the door.
- (4) A Resource Family may use other means of protection, if the degree of protection afforded is equal to or greater than any of the devices described in paragraphs (1) through (3). The other means of protection shall be approved in writing by the County.
 - (5) If the home has an above-ground pool, the pool shall be made inaccessible when not in use by removing or making the ladder inaccessible, and if the pool is less than 60 inches in height, by the use of an enclosure. Any enclosure, whether or not it includes the above-ground pool structure itself, shall meet the requirements of subsection (d)(1).
 - (6) All pools that cannot be emptied after each use shall have an operative pump and filtering system.
 - (7) All pools shall be kept clean and maintained to ensure they are free from objects that may pose a risk to the safety of a child.
- (e) A Resource Family shall ensure that an adult who is able to swim provides continual supervision when a child or individual specified in subsection (b) is using or near a pool or other body of water required to be made inaccessible, as specified in subsection (d).

SECTION 11-03: Storage Area Requirements

- (a) Except as specified in subsections (d) and (e), a Resource Family shall store medicines, disinfectants, and cleaning solutions where they are inaccessible to a child or nonminor dependent.
- (b) A Resource Family shall store poisons and other dangerous items in a locked storage area.
- (c) Except as specified in paragraph (1), a Resource Family shall store firearms and other dangerous weapons in a locked container, as defined in Penal Code section 16850, which may include, but not be limited to, a lock box or gun safe.
 - (1) In lieu of locked storage of firearms, a Resource Family may use locking devices, as defined in Penal Code section 16860, which may include but not be limited to, trigger locks, cable locks, or other firearm safety devices, as defined in Penal Code section 16540.

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- (2) Ammunition shall be stored in a locked container separate from firearms.
- (d) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, in determining if it is age or developmentally appropriate for a child to have access to and use the following items:
 - (1) Household kitchen knives and appliances for use in meal preparation.
 - (2) Medications necessary for self-administration by the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Disinfectants and cleaning solutions for use in performing household chores.
- (e) A Resource Family shall permit a nonminor dependent to have access to the following items:
 - (1) Household kitchen knives and appliances for use in meal preparation.
 - (2) Medications necessary for self-administration by the nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Disinfectants and cleaning solutions for use in performing household chores.
- (f) In allowing a child or a nonminor dependent to access and use the items specified in subsection (d) or (e), a Resource Family shall ensure that the safety of a child, a nonminor dependent, and others in the home is maintained.
- (g) A Resource Family shall store and dispose of waste in a manner that will not permit the transmission of communicable disease or odors, create a nuisance, or provide a breeding place or food source for insects or rodents.

SECTION 11-04: Reserved

SECTION 11-05: Emergency Procedures

- (a) A Resource Family shall provide two telephone numbers and, if available, two email addresses as 24-hour contact information to the County, including contact information for alternative caregivers and place emergency telephone numbers in a prominent location in the home.
- (b) A Resource Family shall ensure that an occasional short-term babysitter and an alternative caregiver knows where the emergency contact information is located.
- (c) At the time of placement of a child or nonminor dependent with a Resource Family, and every six months after placement, the Resource Family shall discuss and practice emergency procedures for the home with the child or nonminor dependent as age or developmentally appropriate.
- (d) A Resource Family shall review the emergency procedures with an occasional short-term babysitter or an alternative caregiver.
- (e) A Resource Family shall maintain a hard copy emergency binder in the home. If desired, other methods for keeping information may be used in addition to the hard copy binder, such as information electronically stored in a portable device that can be transported in an emergency. The binder shall contain the following:

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- (1) Child's or nonminor dependent's information including, the child's or nonminor dependent's name, date of birth, and any medical conditions.
 - (2) As applicable, a child's or nonminor dependent's current health care and mental health care provider names and contact information, including 24-hour contact numbers.
 - (3) Contact information for the child's or nonminor dependent's authorized representative and placement agency, as applicable.
 - (4) 24-hour contact information for the county child welfare agency or probation department.
- (f) In the event of a state or local emergency or natural disaster, the Resource Family shall follow guidance or instructions of any responsible state or local official or agency, as necessary to protect the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent in care.

SECTION 11-06: Reporting Requirements

- (a) A Resource Family shall make a report to the RFA program staff and the placement agency for a child or a nonminor dependent when any of the following events occur:
- (1) Death, serious bodily injury, or risk of death or serious bodily injury, to a child, nonminor dependent.
 - (2) Any suspected child abuse or neglect, as defined in Penal Code section 11165.6, or any suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of a child or a nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Any injury to or illness of a child or a nonminor dependent that requires emergency medical or mental health treatment or hospitalization.
 - (4) Any incident that threatens the physical or emotional health or safety of the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (5) Any unusual absence of a child or, for a nonminor dependent, any prolonged absence that is unplanned or failure of the nonminor dependent to return to the home that lasts more than 72 hours.
 - (A) Report temporary absences if a personal history or the case plan indicate that a child or nonminor dependent may be in jeopardy when absent beyond the approved time.
 - (6) Removal of a child or a nonminor dependent from the home under emergency circumstances, which may include:
 - (A) Removal by a law enforcement officer when a child or nonminor dependent is arrested.
 - (B) Removal for emergency medical or mental health care.
 - (7) Relocation by the authorized representative for a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (8) Communicable disease outbreak in the home.
 - (A) For purposes of this Section, "communicable disease outbreak" means an epidemic or outbreak of illness or disease as determined by a local, state or federal health authority.
 - (9) Poisonings, which shall also be reported immediately to the local fire authority.
 - (A) If a Resource Family is located in an area that does not have organized fire services, the Resource Family shall make a report to the State Fire Marshal within 24 hours after the poisoning occurs.

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- (10) Fires or explosions that occur in or on the premises of the home.
 - (11) If a Resource Family becomes licensed to operate a family day care home, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1596.78.
 - (12) All changes in the composition of a Resource family household, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - (A) Any additional individuals residing or regularly present in the Resource Family's home, including when a Resource Family becomes a legal guardian or conservator for any child, nonminor dependent, or other person.
 - (B) Any adult moving in or out of the home.
 - (C) Except for a nonminor dependent, anyone who resides or is regularly present in the home who reaches their 18th birthday.
 - (13) A change in marital status.
 - (14) A significant change in the physical or mental health of a child, nonminor dependent or any other residents in the home, including the Resource Family.
 - (15) A Resource Parent, or an adult who resides in or is regularly present in the home and has a criminal record clearance or exemption, is arrested or has a subsequent arrest.
- (b) A Resource Family shall make the report specified in subsection (a) to the RFA program staff by telephone, e-mail, or fax within 24 hours or by the next business day following the event and to the placement agency for a child or nonminor dependent by the next business day following the event.
- (1) The report specified in subsection (a) shall include the following information, if available:
 - (A) The name, age, sex, and date of placement of the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (B) Name and contact information of any adults involved.
 - (C) Date and nature of the incident.
 - (D) Whether a Suspected Child Abuse Report was required and filed.
 - (E) Attending physician's name, findings, and treatment, if any.
 - (F) Current status of the incident.
 - (2) If the report specified in subsection (a) was made by telephone or did not include all of the information specified in paragraph (1) of subsection (b), then a Resource Family shall submit a written report containing the information to a County and the placement agency for a child or nonminor dependent within seven calendar days following the event.
- (c) A Resource Family shall notify the RFA program staff and the placement agency for a child or nonminor dependent of any changes to the Resource Family's mailing address. The notification shall occur by telephone, e-mail, or fax within ten business days following the change.
- (d) A Resource Family shall notify the RFA program staff and the placement agency for a child or a nonminor dependent by telephone, e-mail, or fax within 30 calendar days prior to moving home locations or as soon as the information is available.

SECTION 11-07: Records Requirements

- (a) A Resource Family shall maintain separate, complete, and current records in the home for a child. A child's file shall include the following:
 - (1) The name of the child, birth date, and date of placement with the Resource Family.
 - (2) A summary of the child's health and education information and records, including mental health information or records, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16010.
 - (3) The Resource Family shall be responsible for maintaining information and records provided by physicians and educators including, but not limited to, the child's immunization records and any official grade or progress reports.
 - (4) Written authorization for the Resource Family to obtain medical and dental care in an emergency if authorization by the placement agency cannot be obtained.
 - (5) The case plan for the child.
 - (6) An itemized inventory list of the child's cash resources, personal property, and valuables.
 - (7) A copy of the personal rights accorded to a child.
 - (8) Written instructions by the physician of a child regarding the provision of family health care as described in Sections 11-15 and 11-16.
 - (9) Documentation of the date, time, and dose of any prescription medications and injections given to a child and the results of any glucose testing or monitoring for a child as described in Sections 11-15 and 11-16.
 - (10) Documentation of a child's refusal to take any psychotropic medication.

- (b) A Resource Family shall maintain separate, complete, and current records in the home for a nonminor dependent. A nonminor dependent's file shall include the following:
 - (1) The name of the nonminor dependent, birth date, and date of placement with the Resource Family.
 - (2) A summary of the nonminor dependent's health and education information and records, including mental health information or records, as described in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16010.
 - (3) The pre-placement appraisal as described in Section 11-18.
 - (4) The transitional independent living plan.
 - (5) If the cash resources, personal property, and valuables of the nonminor dependent are entrusted to the Resource Family, then an itemized inventory list of these items.
 - (6) A copy of the personal rights accorded to a nonminor dependent.
 - (7) Written instructions by the physician of a nonminor dependent regarding the provision of family health care as described in Sections 11-15 and 11-16.
 - (8) Documentation of the date, time, and dose of any prescription medications and injections given to a nonminor dependent and the results of any glucose testing or monitoring for a child or nonminor dependent as described in Sections 11-15 and 11-16.
 - (9) Documentation of a nonminor dependent's refusal to take any psychotropic medication.

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- (c) A nonminor dependent shall have access to their records in a manner that ensures the confidentiality of other records maintained in the home.
- (d) A Resource Family is not responsible for obtaining and maintaining the nonminor dependent's health and educational information but may assist then on minor dependent with any recordkeeping that the nonminor dependent requests of the Resource Family. This health and education information may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) School records.
 - (2) Immunization records.
 - (3) Medical records.
- (e) Upon the request of a nonminor dependent, a Resource Family shall assist the nonminor dependent in obtaining and keeping their own records. These records may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) A certified birth certificate.
 - (2) A Social Security card.
 - (3) A California or other state identification card or driver's license.
 - (4) A proof of citizenship or residency status; or for an alien, evidence of an approved petition for special immigrant juvenile status pursuant to Title 8, C.F.R. Section 204.11.
 - (5) Death certificates of parents, if applicable.
 - (6) A proof of county dependency status for education aid applications.
 - (7) Written information concerning the nonminor dependent's dependency or delinquency case including information about the nonminor dependent's family history; the nonminor dependent's placement history; the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of siblings and other relatives; and the procedures for inspecting the documents described under Welfare and Institutions Code section 827.
- (f) All records for a child, as specified in subsection (a), or for a nonminor dependent, as specified in subsection (b), shall be available to a County or the Department to inspect, audit, and copy upon demand during business hours. Records may be removed if necessary, for copying. Removal of records shall be subject to the following requirements:
 - (1) A County or the Department representative may not remove any current emergency or health-related records for a child or nonminor dependent unless the same information is otherwise readily available in another document or format.
 - (2) Prior to removing any records, a County or the Department representative shall prepare a list of the records to be removed, sign, and date the list upon removal of the records and leave a copy of the list with the Resource Family.
 - (3) A County or the Department representative shall return the records to the home undamaged and in good order within three business days following the date the records were removed.
- (g) If a child or nonminor dependent is removed from a home, a Resource Family shall distribute the child's or nonminor dependent's records as follows:
 - (1) The child's or nonminor dependent's placement agency shall receive originals and any copies of all records.

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- (2) The child's or nonminor dependent's authorized representative, if applicable, shall receive copies of all records.
- (3) The nonminor dependent shall receive copies of all records.
- (h) A Resource Family shall maintain all information and records regarding a child or nonminor dependent in a confidential manner and not disclose any confidential information except as otherwise authorized bylaw.
- (i) A Resource Family shall maintain copies of current certificates verifying completion of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training or certificates as specified in Section 8-01(a)(1-2).

SECTION 11-08: Personal Rights

- (a) A Resource Family shall ensure that each child and nonminor dependent is accorded the personal rights specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9, including, but not limited to:
 - (1) To live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home where they are treated with respect. If the child is an Indian child, to live in a home that upholds the prevailing social and cultural standards of the child's Indian community, including, but not limited to, family, social, and political ties.
 - (2) To be placed in the least restrictive setting possible, regardless of age, physical health, mental health, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression, juvenile court record, or status as a pregnant or parenting youth, unless a court orders otherwise.
 - (3) To be placed with a relative or nonrelative extended family member if an appropriate and willing individual is available.
 - (4) To not be locked in any portion of their foster care placement, unless placed in a community treatment facility.
 - (5) To have a placement that utilizes trauma-informed and evidence-based de-escalation and intervention techniques, to have law enforcement intervention requested only when there is an imminent threat to the life or safety of a child or another person or as a last resort after other diversion and de-escalation techniques have been utilized, and to not have law enforcement intervention used as a threat or in retaliation against the child.
 - (6) To not be detained in a juvenile detention facility based on their status as a dependent of the juvenile court or the child welfare services department's inability to provide a foster care placement. If they are detained, to have all the rights afforded under the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and all applicable state and federal laws.
 - (7) To have storage space for private use.
 - (8) To be provided the names and contact information for social workers, probation officers, attorneys, service providers, foster youth advocates and supporters, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and education rights holder if other than the parent or parents, and when applicable, representatives designated by the child's Indian Tribe to participate in the juvenile court proceeding, and to communicate with these individuals privately.

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- (9) To visit and contact siblings, family members, and relatives privately, unless prohibited by court order, and to ask the court for visitation with the child's siblings.
- (10) To have social contacts with people outside of the foster care system, including, but not limited to, teachers, coaches, religious or spiritual community members, mentors, and friends. If the child is an Indian child, to have the right to have contact with tribal members and members of their Indian community consistent with the prevailing social and cultural conditions and way of life of the Indian child's Tribe.
- (11) To attend religious services, activities, and ceremonies of the child's choice, including, but not limited to, engaging in traditional Native American religious practices.
- (12) To participate in extracurricular, cultural, racial, ethnic, personal enrichment, and social activities, including, but not limited to, access to computer technology and the internet, consistent with the child's age, maturity, developmental level, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.
- (13) To have fair and equal access to all available services, placement, care, treatment, and benefits, and to not be subjected to discrimination or harassment on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.
- (14) To have caregivers, child welfare and probation personnel, and legal counsel who have received instruction on cultural competency and sensitivity relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and best practices for providing adequate care to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender children in out-of-home care.
- (15) To be placed in out-of-home care according to their gender identity, regardless of the gender or sex listed in their court, child welfare, medical, or vital records, to be referred to by the child's preferred name and gender pronoun, and to maintain privacy regarding sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, unless the child permits the information to be disclosed, or disclosure is required to protect their health and safety, or disclosure is compelled by law or a court order.
- (16) To have child welfare and probation personnel and legal counsel who have received instruction on the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. Sec. 1901 et seq.) and on cultural competency and sensitivity relating to, and best practices for, providing adequate care to Indian children in out-of-home care.
- (17) To have recognition of the child's political affiliation with an Indian Tribe or Alaskan village, including a determination of the child's membership or citizenship in an Indian Tribe or Alaskan village; to receive assistance in becoming a member of an Indian Tribe or Alaskan village in which the child is eligible for membership or citizenship; to receive all benefits and privileges that flow from membership or citizenship in an Indian Tribe or Alaskan village; and to be free from discrimination based on the child's political affiliation with an Indian Tribe or Alaskan village.
- (18) (A) To access and receive medical, dental, vision, mental health, and substance use disorder services, and reproductive and sexual healthcare, with reasonable promptness that meets the needs of the child, to have diagnoses and services explained in an understandable manner, and to participate in decisions regarding health care treatment and services. This right includes covered gender affirming health care and gender affirming

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- mental health care, and is subject to existing laws governing consent to health care for minors and nonminors and does not limit, add, or otherwise affect applicable laws governing consent to health care.
- (B) To view and receive a copy of their medical records to the extent they have the right to consent to the treatment provided in the medical record and at no cost to the child until they are 26 years of age.
- (19) Except in an emergency, to be free of the administration of medication or chemical substances, and to be free of all psychotropic medications unless prescribed by a physician, and in the case of children, authorized by a judge, without consequences or retaliation. The child has the right to consult with and be represented by counsel in opposing a request for the administration of psychotropic medication and to provide input to the court about the request to authorize medication. The child also has the right to report to the court the positive and adverse effects of the medication and to request that the court reconsider, revoke, or modify the authorization at any time.
- (20) (A) To have access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive health care, the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections.
- (B) At any age, to consent to or decline services regarding contraception, pregnancy care, and prenatal care, including, but not limited to, abortion services and health care services for sexual assault without the knowledge or consent of any adult.
- (C) At 12 years of age or older, to consent to or decline health care services to prevent, test for, or treat sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, and mental health services, without the consent or knowledge of any adult.
- (21) At 12 years of age or older, to choose, whenever feasible and in accordance with applicable law, their own health care provider for medical, dental, vision, mental health, substance use disorder services, and sexual and reproductive health care, if payment for the service is authorized under applicable federal Medicaid law or other approved insurance, and to communicate with that health care provider regarding any treatment concerns or needs and to request a second opinion before being required to undergo invasive medical, dental, or psychiatric treatment.
- (22) To confidentiality of medical and mental health records, including, but not limited to, HIV status, substance use disorder history and treatment, and sexual and reproductive health care, consistent with existing law.
- (23) To attend school, to remain in the child's school of origin, to immediate enrollment upon a change of school, to partial credits for any coursework completed, and to priority enrollment in preschool, afterschool programs, a California State University, and each community college district, and to receive all other necessary educational supports and benefits, as described in the Education Code.
- (24) To have access to existing information regarding the educational options available, including, but not limited to, the coursework necessary for career, technical, and post secondary educational programs, and information regarding financial aid for post secondary education, and specialized programs for current and former foster children available at the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges.

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- (25) To attend Independent Living Program classes and activities, if the child meets the age requirements, and to not be prevented by caregivers from attending as a consequence or punishment.
- (26) To maintain a bank account and manage personal income, consistent with the child's age and developmental level, unless prohibited by the case plan.
- (27) To work and develop job skills at an age-appropriate level, consistent with state law.
- (28) For children 14 to 17 years of age, inclusive, to receive a consumer credit report provided to the child by the social worker or probation officer on an annual basis from each of the three major credit reporting agencies, and to receive assistance with interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies.
- (29) To be represented by an attorney in juvenile court; to have an attorney appointed to advise the court of the child's wishes, to advocate for the child's protection, safety, and well-being, and to investigate and report to the court on legal interests beyond the scope of the juvenile proceeding; to speak to the attorney confidentially; and to request a hearing if the child feels their appointed counsel is not acting in their best interest or adequately representing their legal interests.
- (30) To receive a notice of court hearings, to attend court hearings, to speak to the judge, to view and receive a copy of the court file, subject to existing federal and state confidentiality laws, and to object to or request the presence of interested persons during court hearings. If the child is an Indian child, to have a representative designated by the child's Indian Tribe be in attendance during hearings.
- (31) To the confidentiality of all juvenile court records consistent with existing law.
- (32) To view and receive a copy of their child welfare records, juvenile court records, and educational records at no cost to the child until the child is 26 years of age, subject to existing federal and state confidentiality laws.
- (33) To be involved in the development of their own case plan, including placement decisions, and plan for permanency. This involvement includes, but is not limited to, the development of case plan elements related to placement and gender affirming health care, with consideration of the child's gender identity. If the child is an Indian child, the case plan shall include protecting the essential tribal relations and best interests of the Indian child by assisting the child in establishing, developing, and maintaining political, cultural, and social relationships with the child's Indian Tribe and Indian community.
- (34) To review the child's own case plan and plan for permanent placement if the child is 10 years of age or older, and to receive information about their out-of-home placement and case plan, including being told of changes to the plan.
- (35) To request and participate in a child and family team meeting, as follows:
 - (A) Within 60 days of entering foster care, and every 6 months thereafter.
 - (B) If placed in a short-term residential therapeutic program, or receiving intensive home-based services or intensive case coordination, or receiving therapeutic foster care services, to have a child and family team meeting at least every 90 days.
 - (C) To request additional child and family team meetings to address concerns, including, but not limited to, placement disruption, change in service needs, addressing barriers to sibling or family visits, and addressing difficulties in

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- coordinating services.
 - (D) To have both informal and formal support people participate, consistent with state law.
 - (36) To be informed of these rights in an age and developmentally appropriate manner by the social worker or probation officer and to be provided a copy of the rights in this section at the time of placement, any placement change, and at least once every six months or at the time of a regularly scheduled contact with the social worker or probation officer.
 - (37) To be provided with contact information for the Community Care Licensing Division of the State Department of Social Services, the tribal authority approving a tribally approved home, and the State Foster Care Ombudsperson, at the time of each placement, and to contact any or all of these offices immediately upon request regarding violations of rights, to speak to representatives of these offices confidentially, and to be free from threats or punishment for making complaints.
- (b) In addition to subsection (a), a Resource Family shall ensure that each child is accorded the following personal rights:
- (1) To be informed of and exercise their personal rights without harassment or retaliation.
 - (2) To be free from corporal or unusual punishment; infliction of pain; humiliation; intimidation; ridicule; coercion; threat; exploitation; physical, sexual, emotional, mental, or other abuse; or other actions of a punitive nature including interference with the daily living functions of eating, sleeping, or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication, or aids to physical functioning.
 - (3) To make and receive confidential telephone calls and send and receive unopened mail and electronic communication, unless prohibited by court order.
 - (A) Unless prohibited by court order, a child may acquire, possess, and use their own cellular telephone.
 - (i) Reasonable restrictions on the use of a cellular telephone may be imposed by a Resource Family using the reasonable and prudent parent standards.
 - (4) To have access to letter writing material and postage.
 - (5) To be accorded dignity in their personal relationships with other persons in the home.
 - (6) To be free from unreasonable searches of person and personal property.
 - (7) Not to be restrained or placed in any restraining device.
 - (8) To obtain, possess and use contraception including, but not limited to, birth control medication, emergency contraception, long-acting reversible contraceptives, condoms, and barrier methods.
 - (9) To be free to accept or decline a Resource Family's request to babysit the Resource Family's children, including adopted, biological, foster, and guardianship children.
 - (10) To be provided with and allowed to acquire, possess, and use adequate personal items, which includes their own:
 - (A) Clothes, provided the clothes are age-appropriate, do not violate school standards when worn during school activities, and are in accordance with the gender identity and expression of the child.

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- (B) Toiletries and personal hygiene products appropriate for the child's skin and hair, including razors used for shaving, as age or developmentally appropriate, and as appropriate to the child's cultural, religious, ethnic or racial background, and gender identity and expression.
 - (C) Belongings, including items that were a gift to the child.
 - (11) Provided the rights of others are not infringed upon, to have visitors that include:
 - (A) Relatives, unless prohibited by court order.
 - (B) The authorized representative for the child.
 - (C) Other visitors, unless prohibited by court order or by the authorized representative for the child.
 - (12) To be informed, and to have their authorized representative informed, by the Resource Family of the provisions of law regarding complaints, the address and telephone number of the County, and about the confidentiality of complaints without retaliation.
 - (13) To be accorded the independence appropriate to the age, maturity, and capability of the child consistent with the child's case plan or the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP), if applicable.
 - (14) To have private or personal information, including, but not limited to, any medical condition or treatment, psychiatric diagnosis or treatment, history of abuse, educational records, sexual orientation, gender identity, and information relating to the biological family of the child, maintained in confidence.
 - (A) A Resource Family shall disclose information about the child to a County, the Juvenile Court, the Office of Foster Care Ombudsperson, and the child's biological family, social worker, placement worker, probation officer, Tribe, physician, psychiatrist, CASA, attorney, and authorized representative, unless the disclosure is prohibited by court order.
 - (B) As needed to ensure appropriate care, supervision, or education of the child, a Resource Family shall disclose information to respite care providers, occasional short-term babysitters, alternative caregivers, school officials, and other persons, unless the disclosure is prohibited by court order.
 - (15) To receive medical, dental, vision, and mental health services.
 - (A) Medical services may include, but are not limited to, services related to the prevention or treatment of pregnancy, sexual assault, or rape; and at 12 years of age or older, the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of sexually-transmitted diseases.
 - (i) A child may consent personally to the services described in subsection (A), without the knowledge or consent of a parent, guardian, social worker, probation officer, judge, or authorized representative.
 - (ii) A child may obtain these services confidentially, unless prohibited by law.
 - (iii) A child may choose a gender affirming health care and mental health care provider with reasonable promptness.
- (c) In addition to subsection (a), a Resource Family shall ensure that each nonminor dependent is accorded the following personal rights:

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- (1) The rights specified in paragraphs (1) through (9) of subsection (b).
- (2) To be provided with and allowed to acquire, possess, maintain, and use adequate personal items which include the nonminor dependent's own:
 - (A) Clothing that is in accordance with the gender identity and expression of the nonminor dependent.
 - (B) Toiletries and personal hygiene products as specified in subsection (b)(10)(B).
 - (C) Belongings, including gifts to the nonminor dependent, furniture, equipment, and supplies, for their personal living space in accordance with their interests, needs, tastes, gender identity and expression.
- (3) To have adequate privacy for visitors that include:
 - (A) Relatives, unless prohibited by court order.
 - (B) The placement agency.
 - (C) Other visitors, unless prohibited by court order.
- (4) To be informed by the Resource Family of the provisions of law regarding complaints, the address and telephone number of the County, and about the confidentiality of complaints without retaliation.
- (5) To have the independence appropriate to the status of a legal adult, consistent with the case plan or the TILP for the nonminor dependent.
- (6) To have private or personal information, including any medical condition or treatment, psychiatric diagnosis or treatment, history of abuse, educational records, and information relating to the biological family of the nonminor dependent, maintained in confidence.
 - (A) There shall be no release of confidential information without the prior written consent of a nonminor dependent, and this information shall only be released to the extent permitted by law.
 - (i) A Resource Family shall, with the consent of a nonminor dependent, only disclose relevant and necessary information about the nonminor dependent.
 - (ii) A Resource Family shall disclose information about a nonminor dependent to a County, the Juvenile Court, the Office of Foster Care Ombudsperson, and then nonminor dependent's biological family, social worker, placement worker, probation officer, Tribe, physician, psychiatrist, CASA, attorney, and authorized representative, unless the disclosure is prohibited by court order.
 - (iii) As needed to ensure appropriate care, supervision, or education of a nonminor dependent, a Resource Family shall disclose information to school officials and other persons, unless disclosure is prohibited by court order.
- (7) To access information regarding available educational, training, and employment options of the nonminor dependent's choosing.
- (8) To select, obtain, prepare, and store food of the nonminor dependent's choosing.
- (9) To select, obtain, or decline medical, dental, vision, and mental health care and related services at the nonminor dependent's discretion.
- (10) To leave or depart the home at any time at the nonminor dependent's discretion.
- (11) To acquire, possess, maintain, and use a personal vehicle for transportation.
- (12) To acquire, possess, and use a personal cellular telephone.

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- (d) In ensuring the rights of a child or a nonminor dependent, a Resource Family is not required to take any action that would impair the health and safety of a child, nonminor dependent, or others in the home consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9(c).
 - (1) A Resource Family is not prohibited from taking the following actions for the protection of a child, nonminor dependent, or others in the home:
 - (A) Establishing house rules, that may include rules regarding visitation that shall apply to all visitors; curfew; dating; completing coursework; laundry and cleaning bedrooms and other areas; and use of entertainment equipment and cellular telephones.
 - (B) Locking exterior doors and windows as long as a child or nonminor dependent can enter or exit the home.
- (e) At the following times, a Resource Family shall ensure a child or nonminor dependent is verbally notified in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, of their rights as specified in this section and in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9, and provided with a written copy of these rights and information regarding agencies a child or nonminor dependent may contact concerning violation of these rights:
 - (1) Upon placement in the home.
 - (2) Upon the request of a child or a nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Each time a new right has been added to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9 or this section.

SECTION 11-09: Telephones

- (a) A Resource Family shall have cellular telephone, Internet telephone, or landline telephone service in the home at all times.
- (b) Telephone service shall be accessible to a child or nonminor dependent in the home at all times.
- (c) A Resource Family is not required to purchase a cellular telephone for a child or nonminor dependent or pay for a child's or nonminor dependent's personal cellular telephone service fees.

SECTION 11-10: Transportation

- (a) A Resource Family shall ensure that a child or a nonminor dependent is provided with transportation for the following situations:
 - (1) Health-related services.
 - (2) School.
 - (3) Extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities, provided the transportation to these activities is reasonable.
- (b) When determining if the transportation to an activity for a child or nonminor dependent is

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reasonable, a Resource Family may consider the location, frequency, cost for transportation, and time necessary to provide transportation.

- (c) A Resource Family may not allow a child or nonminor dependent to be transported by an individual the Resource Family knows or reasonably should know does not have a valid driver's license.
- (d) A Resource Family shall ensure that all individuals who transport a child or nonminor dependent use motor vehicles that are in safe operating condition.
- (e)
 - (1) A Resource Family shall ensure that a child is properly restrained in an appropriate child passenger restraint system based on the child's age, weight, and size while being transported in a motor vehicle in accordance with applicable laws.
 - (2) A Resource Family shall ensure that a nonminor dependent is properly restrained by a safety belt while being transported in a motor vehicle in accordance with applicable laws.
- (f) A Resource Family shall not smoke or permit any individual to smoke in a motor vehicle that is regularly used for providing transportation to a child or nonminor dependent. This prohibition applies when the motor vehicle is moving or at rest.
- (g) Transportation shall be provided in accordance with any other arrangements specified in the case plan or transitional independent living plan for a child or nonminor dependent included in the written placement agreement between a Resource Family and the placement agency.
- (h) A Resource Family shall ensure that a nonminor dependent is provided with transportation under the following additional conditions:
 - (1) Except for the transportation described in subsection (a), transportation shall be provided by arrangement between a Resource Family and the minor dependent.
 - (2) Notwithstanding subsection (c) or (d), a nonminor dependent shall be permitted to arrange for their own transportation.
 - (3) A nonminor dependent may, but is not be required to, provide transportation to others.

SECTION 11-11: Food and Nutrition

- (a) A Resource Family shall provide or ensure the provision of nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages that can reasonably meet the child or nonminor dependent's special dietary needs or practices, as documented in the case plan for a child or a nonminor dependent, or as reported by the child or nonminor dependent, or the child's or nonminor dependent's family.
 - (1) The quantity and quality of food available to household members shall be equally available to a child or nonminor dependent.
- (b) A Resource Family shall invite a child or nonminor dependent to participate in all household meals.

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- (c) A Resource Family shall ensure that a child, or nonminor dependent is provided with the following:
 - (1) Age-appropriate food, snacks, and beverages.
 - (2) At least three meals per day.
- (d) A Resource Family shall ensure that an infant, who is unable to hold a bottle, is held during bottle-feeding. A bottle given to an infant able to hold their own bottle shall be unbreakable. A bottle may not be propped up for an infant.
- (e) A Resource Family may encourage a child, as age or developmentally appropriate, to learn meal preparation, but may not require a child to prepare meals.
- (f) A Resource Family shall ensure that a nonminor dependent is provided with access to food, snacks, and beverages under the following additional conditions:
 - (1) As agreed upon with a Resource Family, a nonminor dependent shall be permitted to plan meals, grocery shop, and store and prepare food.
 - (2) A nonminor dependent shall have access to all meal preparation areas, appliances, and utensils for meal preparation.
 - (3) A nonminor dependent may prepare meals.
 - (4) A Resource Family may not require a nonminor dependent to prepare meals.

SECTION 11-12: Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

- (a) A Resource Family shall be responsible for applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 362.05, when:
 - (1) Determining day-to-day activities that are age appropriate to meet the needs of the child.
 - (2) Determining whether to allow a child to participate in age and developmentally appropriate extracurricular or social activities.
 - (3) Selecting an occasional short-term babysitter or alternative caregiver.
 - (A) Except for circumstances that involve a child, or the determination and selection of an occasional short-term babysitter as specified in Section 11-13, the reasonable and prudent parent standard does not apply to a nonminor dependent.
 - (4) And as specified in this Section.
- (b) Applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard may not result in denying the rights of a child as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16001.9; Section 11-08, or if applicable, Section 11.1-06; contradict court orders or the case plan for the child; or result in denial of trauma informed care.
- (c) In applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard, a Resource Family shall consider the following:
 - (1) The age, maturity, and developmental level of a child.
 - (2) The nature and inherent risks of harm of the activity.
 - (3) The best interests of a child based on information known by the Resource Family.
 - (4) The behavioral history of a child and the child's ability to safely participate in the

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- activity.
- (5) The importance of encouraging a child's emotional and developmental growth.
 - (A) Emotional and developmental growth may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (i) The child's level of understanding about healthy relationships.
 - (ii) The child's level of understanding about sexuality and body development.
 - (iii) Feelings about spirituality.
 - (iv) Other stages of maturity experienced during adolescence.
- (6) The importance of providing a child with a sense of normalcy in the most family-like living experience possible.
- (d) A Resource Family shall consider information provided or known about a child when determining the best interests of a child. This information includes the history, behavioral tendencies, mental and physical health, medications, abilities and limitations, sexual orientation, gender identity, developmental level of, and court orders for the child.
 - (1) A Resource Family may contact the child's social worker, physician, counselor, or educator to obtain the information described in subsection (c).

SECTION 11-13: Responsibility for Providing Care and Supervision

- (a) A Resource Family shall provide care and supervision that meets the needs of a child or nonminor dependent and ensures health, safety and well-being.
 - (1) If a Resource Family provides care for a minor or nonminor dependent parent and their child, the Resource Family shall work with the minor or nonminor dependent parent and a representative from the county child welfare agency or probation department to develop a shared responsibility plan as described in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 11465(d)(3) and 16501.25(b).
- (b) A Resource Family shall provide care and supervision in accordance with the case plan of a child or nonminor dependent, the placement agreement, and transitional independent living plan, if applicable.
- (c) A Resource Family may arrange for other care and supervision of a child that includes the following:
 - (1) An occasional short-term babysitter.
 - (A) If a Resource Family anticipates being absent from the home for less than 24 hours, on an occasional basis, the Resource Family is permitted to arrange for an occasional short-term babysitter to provide care and supervision to a child in the Resource Family's or short-term babysitter's home.
 - (i) If an occasional short-term babysitter will provide care and supervision in their home, a Resource Family shall use the reasonable and prudent parent standard to determine that the occasional short-term babysitter's home is safe and appropriate for the child and the child's personal rights will be respected.
 - (B) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard,

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as specified in Section 11-12, in determining and selecting an appropriate babysitter for occasional short-term use, including determining whether it is appropriate for a child or nonminor dependent to act as an occasional short-term babysitter.

- (i) A child or nonminor dependent **shall** not be required to babysit.
- (C) An occasional short-term babysitter may be under 18 years of age, but shall have the maturity, experience, and ability necessary to provide adequate care and supervision to a child.
- (D) When a child is in the care of an occasional short-term babysitter, a Resource Family shall ensure that the babysitter knows how to contact the Resource Family in case of an emergency.
- (2) An alternative caregiver.
 - (A) If a Resource Family anticipates being absent from the home for longer than 24 hours, on an occasional basis, the Resource Family is permitted to arrange for an alternative caregiver to provide care and supervision to a child unless prohibited by the child's social worker or probation officer or court order.
 - (B) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, in determining and selecting an appropriate alternative caregiver.
 - (C) An alternative caregiver shall meet the following requirements:
 - (i) Be 18 or older.
 - (ii) Have the willingness and ability to and shall comply with applicable laws and Article 11.
 - (iii) Have the willingness and ability to provide care and supervision to a child, taking into consideration the age, maturity, behavioral tendencies, mental and physical health, medications, abilities and limitations, developmental level of, and court orders for a child.
 - (D) The care and supervision during a Resource Family's absence shall occur in the Resource Family's home or an alternative caregiver's home.
 - (i) If an alternative caregiver will provide care and supervision in their home, a Resource Family shall use the reasonable and prudent parent standard to determine that the alternative caregiver's home is safe and appropriate for the child and the child's personal rights will be respected.
 - (E) Prior to a Resource Family's absence from the home, the Resource Family shall provide verbal or written notification to the social worker or probation officer for a child as follows:
 - (i) The dates the Resource Family plans to be absent from the home.
 - (ii) The name, telephone number, and address, if applicable, of the alternative caregiver.
 - (iii) An emergency telephone number where the Resource Family can be contacted during their absence.
 - (F) A Resource Family shall obtain prior approval from the social worker or probation officer for a child for any absence that exceeds 72 hours.
 - (G) Before entrusting a child to an alternative caregiver, a Resource Family shall provide the alternative caregiver with the following:

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- (i) Information about the emotional, behavioral, medical, or physical conditions of a child, if any.
 - (ii) Any medication for which an alternative caregiver must assist a child with self-administration or as permitted by Health and Safety Code section 1507.25(b)(1), consistent with instructions from the child's physician.
 - (iii) The name and telephone number of the social worker or probation officer for a child and the Resource Family's 24-hour emergency contact information.
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Handbook Begins Here

Effective January 1, 2019, a criminal record clearance or exemption is no longer a requirement to be an alternative caregiver. However, if an alternative caregiver is an adult who is residing or regularly present in the home of a Resource Family, then the alternative caregiver would be required to complete a background check pursuant to Section 6-03A.

Handbook Ends Here

- (3) Respite care.
 - (A) A Resource Family may use respite care approved by a county child welfare agency or probation department.
 - (B) A respite caregiver shall be an approved relative or nonrelative extended family member (NREFM), a licensed foster family home, a certified family home, Resource Family, or certified respite care provider.
 - (C) Respite care shall not be provided for the purpose of routine, ongoing childcare.
 - (d) Leaving a Child Alone.
 - (1) If a Resource Family anticipates being absent from the home on an occasional basis, the Resource Family may leave a child over age 10 in the home without adult supervision but may not leave a child unsupervised overnight.
 - (2) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard as specified in Section 11-12, to determine the appropriateness of leaving a child over age 10 in the home without adult supervision.
 - (3) Before leaving a child alone, a Resource Family shall ensure that the child knows the following:
 - (A) Where emergency numbers are posted.
 - (B) Emergency procedures.
 - (C) Where and how to contact the Resource Family.
 - (e) Licensed and license-exempt child care.
 - (1) A Resource Family may arrange for a child to be cared for by a licensed child day care facility, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1596.750, or a licensed family day care home, as defined in Health and Safety Code section 1596.78.
 - (2) A Resource Family may arrange for a child to be cared for by any of the following programs exempt from licensure pursuant to Health and Safety Code section
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1596.792:

- (A) An individual providing care for only the children of the Resource Family in addition to the individual's own children, per Health and Safety Code 1596.792(d).
 - (B) Any cooperative arrangement between parents for the care of their children when no payment is involved as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(e).
 - (C) Any arrangement for the receiving and care of children by a relative as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(f) if contact with that relative is approved by the child's social worker or probation officer.
 - (D) A public recreation program as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(g).
 - (E) Extended day care programs operated by public or private schools as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(h).
 - (F) Any child day care program that offers temporary childcare services to parents as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(k).
 - (G) Any program that provides activities for children of an instructional nature in a classroom-like setting as described in Health and Safety Code section 1596.792(l).
- (f) A Resource Family shall permit a child to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities as specified in Section 11-14.
- (1) A Resource Family shall permit a child to participate in a manner that affirms their gender identity expression.
- (g) A Resource Family who chooses to leave a child in a parked vehicle shall do the following:
- (1) Comply with the requirements of Vehicle Code section 15620.
 - (2) Apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, to determine whether it is appropriate to leave a child in a parked vehicle.
- (h) A Resource Family is responsible for ensuring care and supervision of the children of a minor parent placed in the home.
- (1) A Resource Family shall provide direct care and supervision of the children of a minor parent during the hours that the minor parent is unavailable or unable to provide care and supervision.
- (i) Unless restricted by a child's case plan or court order, a Resource Family shall permit and facilitate connections between a child and their relatives and NREFMs and other caring and committed adults.
- (1) In permitting and facilitating the connections described in subsection (i), a Resource Family is not required to take any action that would impair the health and safety of a child.
- (j) A Resource Family shall provide care and supervision to a nonminor dependent as follows:
- (1) A Resource Family shall provide care and supervision in accordance with a

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- nonminor dependent's case plan and transitional independent living plan.
- (2) A Resource Family shall assist a nonminor dependent with developing the skills necessary for self-sufficiency, including the following:
- (A) Financial literacy.
 - (B) Nutrition and healthy food choices, grocery shopping, and meal preparation.
 - (C) Identifying a suitable home and home maintenance.
 - (D) Childcare.
 - (E) Automotive maintenance.
 - (F) Educational and career development.
 - (G) Obtaining medical, dental, vision, and mental healthcare.
 - (H) Access to community resources.
 - (I) Developing and reaching goals.
 - (J) Self-care, including laundry.
 - (K) Drug and alcohol abuse awareness and prevention.
 - (L) Safe sex and reproductive health information.
- (3) A Resource Family may arrange for other care and supervision of a nonminor dependent as follows:
- (A) If a Resource Family anticipates being absent from the home, the Resource Family is permitted to leave a nonminor dependent in the home alone and may leave a nonminor dependent in the home overnight without adult supervision.
 - (i) In making a decision to leave a nonminor dependent home alone, a Resource Family shall maintain the health and safety of the nonminor dependent.
 - (ii) A Resource Family shall consider the maturity, experience, and ability of a nonminor dependent when leaving the nonminor dependent in the home alone.
 - (iii) Before leaving a nonminor dependent in the home alone, a Resource Family shall ensure that the nonminor dependent knows the following:
 - a. The location of emergency telephone numbers.
 - b. Emergency procedures.
 - c. Where and how to contact the Resource Family.
 - (B) A Resource Family may leave a nonminor dependent in the home alone for more than 72 hours if the following occur:
 - (i) The Resource Family shall provide verbal or written notification to the placement agency for the nonminor dependent that includes the following:
 - a. The dates the Resource Family plans to be absent from the home.
 - b. An emergency telephone number where the Resource Family can be reached in their absence.
 - c. A Resource Family is responsible for ensuring that a nonminor dependent parent provides care and supervision for the nonminor dependent's children.
 - (ii) A Resource Family shall obtain prior approval from the placement agency for the nonminor dependent before leaving the nonminor

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dependent alone in the home for more than 72 hours.

- (C) A Resource Family shall provide direct care and supervision of the children of a nonminor dependent parent during the hours that the nonminor dependent parent is unavailable or unable to provide care and supervision.
- (k) Unless restricted by a case plan, transitional independent living plan, or court order, a Resource Family shall encourage a nonminor dependent to seek, select, and maintain permanent connections with their relatives and NREFMs and other caring and committed adults.
 - (1) In encouraging the nonminor dependent's connections described in subsection (k), a Resource Family is not required to take any action that would impair the health and safety of a nonminor dependent.

SECTION 11-14: Extracurricular, Enrichment, Cultural and Social Activities

- (a) A Resource Family shall permit and promote a child's participation in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code sections 362.05 and 727.
 - (1) A Resource Family shall permit a child to participate in a manner that affirms their gender identity expression.
- (b) A Resource Family shall apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as specified in Section 11-12, in determining whether to permit a child to participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.
- (c) A child or nonminor dependent shall be titled to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, that may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) Sports
 - (2) School or after-school activities, including band, dances, and field trips.
 - (3) Leisure time, including bike riding, socializing with friends, shopping, and movies.
 - (4) Community events, including concerts, dances, plays, and celebrations of special events.
 - (5) Dating.
 - (6) Overnight activities lasting one or more nights including sleepovers with friends.
 - (7) Babysitting.
 - (8) Having visitors in the home.
 - (9) Use of computer equipment or similar electronic devices, if available.
 - (10) Use of a cellular telephone, if available.
- (d) For a child age 16 or older or a nonminor dependent, a Resource Family shall provide access to information regarding available vocational and postsecondary educational options. The information may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) Admission criteria for universities, community colleges, trade or vocational schools.
 - (2) Informational brochures and Internet research on post secondary or vocational schools or programs, independent living skills programs, employment-related programs, and other local resources to assist youth.

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- (3) Campus tours.
- (4) Community or school-sponsored events promoting post-secondary or vocational schools or programs, internships, volunteerism, or employment.
- (5) Financial aid information, including information about federal, state and school-specific aid, state and school-specific scholarships, grants and loans, as well as aid available specifically to a current or former foster child and contact information for the Student Aid Commission.
- (6) Career options, requirements, and salary information for trade, vocational, or professional careers.

SECTION 11-15: Health Related Services

- (a) Family health care shall be provided by a Resource Family to a child, and as requested by a nonminor dependent, in accordance with the written instructions from the health professional for the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (1) The Resource Family shall ask the health professional to provide adequate and practical written instructions.
- (b) When a child or nonminor dependent has a health condition that requires medication, including injections, a Resource Family shall comply with the following:
 - (1) Assist a child with self-administration of the medication as directed on the label or in writing by the physician of the child.
 - (A) If the physician of a child gives permission, as specified in Section 11-16(f), then the child may self-administer medications, including injections.
 - (2) Assist a nonminor dependent with self-administration of the medication, if requested by the nonminor dependent, as directed on the label or in writing by the physician of the nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Ensure that instructions are followed as outlined by the appropriate health professional.
 - (4) Store medication in the original container with the original, unaltered label.
 - (5) Document the date, time, and dose of any prescription medication given to a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (6) If a child or nonminor dependent cannot determine their own need for medication, a Resource Family shall determine the need of the child or nonminor dependent in accordance with written medical instructions.
- (c) For children 12 years of age or older, a Resource Family shall allow access and assist a child or nonminor dependent in accessing age-appropriate, medically accurate information about reproductive health care, the prevention of unplanned pregnancy, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
 - (1) A Resource Family shall direct a child or nonminor dependent to reliable sources of information.
 - (2) A Resource Family shall not require a child or nonminor dependent to practice abstinence.
- (d) A Resource Family shall maintain documentation of all prescription medications given to a child or nonminor dependent in the file for a child or nonminor dependent as specified in

Section 11-07.

SECTION 11-16: Emergency Medical Assistance, Injections, and Self-Administration of Medications

- (a) A Resource Family or designated substitute caregiver may provide emergency medical assistance to a child or nonminor dependent and give injections to a child or nonminor dependent for severe diabetic hypoglycemia and anaphylactic shock.
- (b) A Resource Family or designated substitute caregiver may give prescribed injections, including insulin, to a child or nonminor dependent as prescribed by the physician of the child or nonminor dependent.
- (c) Prior to administering any medical assistance or injections authorized by this section, a Resource Family and any designated substitute caregiver shall obtain training from a health professional practicing within their scope of practice.
- (d) A Resource Family shall ensure that the date, time, and dose of all injections given to a child or nonminor dependent, including injections self-administered by a child, are documented by the person giving the injection or assisting with the self-administration of the injection.
- (e) A Resource Family shall ensure the date, time, and results of glucose testing and monitoring for a child or nonminor dependent are documented by the person assisting with the testing.
- (f) Unless prohibited by court order, a child or nonminor dependent may self-administer medication or injections if the physician of a child gives permission. A Resource Family shall ensure that a child or nonminor dependent knows how to do all of the following:
 - (1) Self-administer their medication and injections.
 - (2) Document when they self-administer their medication and injections.
 - (3) Properly store the medication so that it is not accessible to other children or nonminor dependents.
- (g) Psychotropic medication shall only be used in accordance with the written directions of the physician prescribing the medication and in accordance with authorization requirements specified in Sections 369.5(a)(1) and 739.5(a)(1) of the Welfare and Institutions Code and Section 88270(a)(4).
 - (1) Psychotropic medications may be administered without court authorization in an emergency, Emergency procedures are specified in CA Rules of Court, rule 5.640.
- (h) A Resource Family shall maintain documentation of all injections given pursuant to subsection (d) and the results of all glucose testing and monitoring pursuant to subsection (e) in the file for a child or nonminor dependent as specified in Section 11-07.

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SECTION 11-17: Cooperation and Compliance

- (a) A Resource Family shall not willfully or knowingly make or disseminate any false or misleading statements in regard to Resource Family Approval or operation of the home. This includes, but is not limited to, information regarding a Resource Family, family members, adults residing or regularly present in the home, persons who currently provide or may provide care or supervision to a child or nonminor dependent, or any of the services provided to a child or nonminor dependent.
- (b) A Resource Family shall comply and maintain compliance with all applicable laws and the Written Directives.
- (c) A Resource Family shall cooperate with a County, and any service providers in completing the requirements, qualifications, or training specified in the Written Directives or as directed by the County.

SECTION 11-18: Nonminor Dependent Pre-Placement Appraisal

- (a) Prior to the placement of a nonminor dependent with a Resource Family, the Resource Family shall, jointly with the placement agency, prepare a pre-placement appraisal for the nonminor dependent.
- (b) A pre-placement appraisal shall include the following information:
 - (1) Confirmation that the nonminor dependent does not pose a threat to children or nonminor dependents in the home.
 - (2) The ability of the Resource Family to meet the needs of the nonminor dependent.
- (c) A Resource Family shall maintain a copy of the pre-placement appraisal in the records for the nonminor dependent, as specified in Section 11-7.

SECTION 11-19: Annual and Other Training

- (a) Each Resource Parent shall submit copies of certificates verifying completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid training, or demonstrate equivalent certification to a County no later than 90 days following Resource Family Approval as specified in Section 8-01(a).
- (b) A County shall ensure that each Resource Family that cares for children who are 10 years of age or older attend, within 12 months of approval as a Resource Family, a training on understanding how to use best practices for providing care and supervision to children who have been commercially sexually exploited or who have been victims of child labor trafficking pursuant to Section 8-01(b).
- (c) Each Resource Parent shall complete a minimum of eight hours of annual training pursuant to Section 8-01(d).
- (d) Each Resource Parent shall complete relevant specialized training to meet the needs of a

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particular child or nonminor dependent in care, and any additional training deemed necessary by a County pursuant to Section 8-01(f).

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Hands-on or online training for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid is permissible. However, it is recommended that any online training that has a skills competency component, e.g. First Aid and CPR, include a hands-on practice component. The hands-on practice component would increase the confidence level of the participant and consequently augment a Resource Parent's ability to perform their job duties. The hands-on practice component should be provided and overseen by an on-site instructor and is age-appropriate.

Handbook Ends Here

SECTION 11-20: THE PREVAILING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STANDARDS OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

- (a) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the Tribe, as outlined in Section 1-04(c), in order to apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community when conducting the health and safety assessment of the home and grounds, outdoor activity space, storage areas, and all Sections of Article 11.
- (b) The prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community can only be determined by the Tribe and applied in collaboration with the Tribe.
- (c) The County shall document on the RFA 03 any Indian community standards that were applied to the Home Health and Safety Assessment.
 - (1) Any Indian community standard described on the RFA 03 shall be specific to the approval for the specific Indian child and shall not be applied to any other approval.
 - (2) The County shall provide a copy of the RFA 03 to the Tribe and request a signature from the social services director or designee of the Tribe acknowledging receipt.
 - (A) If after seven days no signature from the Tribe's social service director or designee can be obtained, receipt of the RFA 03 can be verified electronically or by certified mail.
 - (i) The RFA program staff shall document the attempts to obtain the signature in the signature space.

ARTICLE 11.1: REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIALIZED RESOURCE FAMILIES

SECTION 11.1-01: Limitations on Capacity for Specialized Resource Families

- (a) A Specialized Resource Family shall not care for more than two children or nonminor dependents with or without special health care needs except as provided in subsection (b).

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- (b) A Specialized Resource Family may accept additional children or nonminor dependents with or without special health care needs provided that the approved capacity is not exceeded and all of the following conditions are met:
 - (1) The placement agency determines the following:
 - (A) The County or regional center service area in which the Specialized Resource Family's home is located has no other specialized foster care home as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17710, foster family home, Resource Family home, small family home, or certified family home available to care for the child or nonminor dependent.
 - (B) The Specialized Resource Family can meet the psychological and social needs of all children and nonminor dependents in care.
 - (C) The individualized health care plan team for each child with special health care needs placed with the Specialized Resource Family has considered the number of adoptive, biological, foster, and guardianship children in the home and determines that placement of additional children or nonminor dependents will not jeopardize their health and safety.
- (c) The capacity of a Specialized Resource Family home, including adopted, biological, and guardianship children, and children of a minor or nonminor dependent parent residing in the home, shall not exceed six children.

SECTION 11.1-02: Prohibition of Licensure for Specialized Resource Families

- (a) A Specialized Resource Family may not be licensed to operate a family childcare home or residential facility for the same premises as the home of the Specialized Resource Family.
 - (1) A Resource Family who plans to care for a child with special health care needs and holds any license specified in subsection (a) shall surrender the license prior to becoming a specialized Resource Family and accepting a child with special health care needs.

SECTION 11.1-03: Continuing Requirements for Specialized Resource Families

- (a) Except as otherwise specified, a Specialized Resource Family shall comply with the provisions of this article and Article 11.
 - (1) A Specialized Resource Family shall ensure that any person who provides specialized in-home health care to a child with special health care needs complies with the applicable provisions of this article and Article 11.
- (b) Before accepting a child with special health care needs or when a child's needs change, a Specialized Resource Family, and any person who provides care to the child, shall complete training provided by a health care practitioner as required by the child's individualized health care plan and as specified in Welfare and Institutions Code section 17731(c)(3) and (c)(5), except as follows:
 - (1) The Specialized Resource Family is a health care practitioner, and
 - (2) The individualized health care plan team determines that completion of specialized in-home health care training is unnecessary based on the medical qualifications and expertise of the Specialized Resource Family.

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- (c) Within 30 calendar days of accepting a child with special health care needs, a Specialized Resource Family shall obtain a written medical assessment of the child.
 - (1) A medical assessment shall meet the following requirements:
 - (A) A medical assessment may not be more than one year old.
 - (B) A medical assessment of a child with special health care needs shall include the results of an examination for communicable tuberculosis (TB) and other contagious or infectious diseases.

SECTION 11.1-04: Additional Records Requirements for Specialized Resource Families

- (a) A Specialized Resource Family shall maintain documentation verifying completion of the training or exemption from the training, as specified in Section 11.1-03 (b) for each Specialized Resource Parent and any person who provides care to a child with special health care needs.
 - (1) Exemption documentation shall include the following:
 - (A) A copy of a valid license or certificate indicating that the Specialized Resource Family is a health care practitioner.
 - (B) A written statement that the individualized health care plan team for a child with special health care needs has determined that specialized in-home healthcare training is unnecessary.
- (b) A Specialized Resource Family shall maintain records of RFA 07: Health Questionnaires and screenings for tuberculosis for any adult who resides in the home.
- (c) A Specialized Resource Family shall maintain a copy of the individualized health care plan, and any updates to the plan, for a child with special health care needs.
- (d) A Specialized Resource Family shall maintain all records in the home and shall make them available to a County to inspect, audit, and copy upon demand during normal business hours. A County may remove records from the home if necessary, for copying. Removal of records by a County shall be subject to the following requirements:
 - (1) The County shall not remove any current emergency or health-related information for a Specialized Resource Family or a child with special health care needs unless the information is readily available in another document or format.
 - (2) Prior to removing any records from a home, the County shall prepare a list of the records to be removed, sign, and date the list upon removal of the records, and leave a copy of the list with the Specialized Resource Family.
 - (3) The County shall return the children's records to the Specialized Resource Family undamaged and in good order within three business days following the date the records were removed.

SECTION 11.1-05: Individualized Health Care Plan

- (a) A Specialized Resource Family shall not accept a child with special health care needs unless the Resource Family has obtained an individualized health care plan for the child.
- (b) An individualized health care plan shall include the following information:

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- (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the healthcare practitioner responsible for monitoring ongoing health care for a child with special health care needs.
 - (2) The appropriate number of hours of on-site and off-site supervision and monitoring that needs to be provided by the health care practitioner responsible for monitoring ongoing health care for a child with special health care needs.
 - (3) Documentation by the individualized health care plan team for a child with special health care needs that identifies the specialized in-home health care to be administered by a health care practitioner or responsible adult trained by a healthcare practitioner.
 - (4) Arrangements for in-home health support services if required.
 - (5) Specific responsibilities of a Specialized Resource Family for providing specialized in-home health care, including any required training or additional training.
 - (6) Identification of any available and funded medical services that are to be provided to a child with special health care needs in the home of a Specialized Resource Family which may include, but is not limited to, assistance from health care practitioners.
 - (7) Identification of any psychological, emotional, behavioral, or medical problems that are identified in the Case Plan of the child with special health care needs or the medical assessment specified in Section 11.1-03(c).
- (c) The individualized health care plan for a child with special health care needs may be combined with the case plan of the child or the individual program plan from the regional center for a child provided that all of the information required by each plan is included.

SECTION 11.1-06: Personal Rights for Children with Special Health Care Needs

- (a) A Specialized Resource Family shall afford a child with special health care needs all of the personal rights specified in Section 11-08 and the following additional personal rights:
- (1) A child with special health care needs has the right to be free of the administration of medication or chemical substances except as specifically provided in the individualized health care plan for a child.
 - (2) A child with special health care needs has the right to be free from any restraining or postural support device except as required to treat the specific medical symptoms of a child and addressed or outlined in the individualized health care plan for the child.
 - (A) Physical restraining devices may be used for the protection of a child with special health care needs during treatment and diagnostic procedures. The restraining device, which shall not have a locking device, shall be applied for no longer than the time required to complete the treatment and shall be applied in conformance with the individualized health care plan for a child. The individualized health care plan for a child shall include all of the following:
 - (i) The specific medical symptom(s) that require use of the restraining device.
 - (ii) An evaluation of less restrictive therapeutic interventions and the reason(s) for ruling out these other practices.

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- (iii) A written order by the physician of a child. The order must specify the duration and circumstances under which the restraining device is to be used.
- (B) Postural supports may be used if prescribed in the individualized health care plan for a child with special health care needs. The method of application shall be specified in the individualized health care plan and approved in writing by the physician for the child.

SECTION 11.1-07: Additional Home and Grounds Requirements for Specialized Resource Families

- (a) Areas in the home of a Specialized Resource Family that include, but are not limited to, bedrooms, bathrooms, toilets, dining areas, passageways, and recreational spaces used by a child with special health care needs shall be large enough to accommodate any medical equipment that the child needs.
 - (1) A bedroom that is occupied by a child with special health care needs shall be large enough to permit the following:
 - (A) Storage of the child's personal items.
 - (B) Storage of any required medical equipment or assistive devices, including wheelchairs, adjacent to the child's bed.
 - (C) Unobstructed bedside access for the provision of specialized in-home health care.
- (b)
 - (1) Section 11-01(c)(1) shall not apply to Specialized Resource Families.
 - (2) A bedroom occupied by a child with special health care needs may not be shared with another child or nonminor dependent who resides in the home of a Specialized Resource Family if the child's need for medical services or medical condition would be incompatible with another child's or nonminor dependent's use and enjoyment of the bedroom.
- (c) When required by the individualized health care plan for a child with special healthcare needs, a Specialized Resource Family or other adult caring for the child shall sleep in a bedroom adjacent or in close proximity to the child's room or use a monitoring device to alert the Resource Family.

ARTICLE 12: DUE PROCESS

SECTION 12-01: Applicability and Jurisdiction

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in this article, all citations are to California law.
- (b) The Department is the agency of the State of California responsible for the administration of the Resource Family Approval Program.
- (c) A Resource Parent, applicant, or individual who has received notice of a denial or rescission of approval, notice of a criminal record exemption denial or rescission, or notice of an exclusion, is accorded the right to a state hearing and other due process rights as

set forth in this article and in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq.

- (d) Due process conducted pursuant to this article shall be governed by the procedures in this article that are in effect at the time of service of the notice of action, exclusion order, Accusation, or Statement of Issues. Administrative review procedures conducted pursuant to this section shall be governed by the procedures in this article that are in effect at the time of the administrative review.
 - (1) The review of an application shall be as specified in Section 5-03B(d). For an appeal, notice of defense or action for the record related to an application denial or criminal record exemption denial or criminal record exemption rescission, the review shall be governed by the law and Written Directives in effect at the time of a final decision and order.
 - (2) The review of a Resource Family's compliance with the requirements to maintain approval shall be as specified in Section 9-01(d).
 - (3) Nothing in this subsection shall supersede any provision of federal or state law or any regulation adopted pursuant to federal or state law.
- (e) The Written Directives shall be known and may be cited as the California Department of Social Services Resource Family Approval Written Directives (Cal. Dept. of Social Services, RFA Writ. Dir.).
- (f) References to the Administrative Procedures Act in this Article shall mean the act governing administrative review procedures for government agencies commencing with Section 11370 of the Government Code.

SECTION 12-02: Legal Consultation and Representation

- (a) A County may enter into an agreement with the Department for the Legal Division to provide legal consultation and legal representation related to Resource Family Approval. The Legal Division may represent a County on matters heard by the State Hearings Division or the Office of Administrative Hearings.

SECTION 12-03: Resolution Prior to Formal Administrative Action

- (a) A County shall use best efforts to address any concerns with an applicant or a Resource Family prior to or in lieu of issuing a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues in order to assist an applicant or Resource Family in obtaining or maintaining approval. A County may require a Resource Parent, applicant, or associated individual to participate in any of the following:
 - (1) Conformance conferences or meetings.
 - (2) Correction of any condition in the home that may adversely impact the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Submission of any required documentation.
 - (4) The completion of classes, trainings, or counseling.
 - (5) Any other action deemed necessary by the County.

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- (b) In the case of an Indian child, the County shall contact and collaborate with the Tribe to apply the prevailing social and cultural standards of the Indian community to address any concerns as outlined in Section 12-03(a).
- (c) An attempt to resolve a concern prior to the issuance of a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues shall not preclude a County or the Department from subsequently issuing a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues.

SECTION 12-04: Legal Consultation Requirement

- (a) A County shall consult with the Legal Division, or a County attorney if the Legal Division is not representing the County, as follows:
 - (1) Prior to the service of a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues for the denial of an application, rescission of approval, or denial or rescission of a criminal record exemption.
 - (2) When seeking a temporary suspension order as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 16519.5(g)(5)(A)(iv). In addition to the required legal consultation, a County shall obtain County Counsel approval prior to serving a temporary suspension order.
- (b) A County shall consult with the Legal Division, as follows:
 - (1) When the county is recommending an exclusion action.
 - (2) When an individual against whom the County is seeking administrative action holds a Department license, certificate, or registration, is certified or approved by a licensed Foster Family Agency or is associated to a licensed facility.
- (c) Prior to seeking a legal consultation, a County shall review the Licensing Information System (LIS) database history for any individual that is the subject of a County's proposed administrative action. If it is determined that the individual holds a Department license, certificate, or registration, is certified or approved by a licensed foster family agency, or is employed or present in a licensed facility, the County shall notify the Community Care Licensing Division of the Department so that a Department representative may attend the consult and evaluate whether a licensing action is necessary.

SECTION 12-05: Notices of Action and Exclusion Orders: Actions for the Record

- (a)
 - (1) If a County is taking an action for denial of an application or rescission of Resource Family Approval, or denial or rescission of a criminal record exemption, a Notice of Action shall be served on the applicant, Resource Parent, or individual who is the subject of the action.
 - (2) If the Department is taking an exclusion action against an individual, an order of exclusion shall be served on the individual.
- (b) A Notice of Action or exclusion order shall contain all of the following:
 - (1) A written notice informing the individual of the action the County or Department intends to take.
 - (2) The reasons for the action.

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- (3) Any applicable statutory or regulatory authority.
 - (4) Notice of the right to submit a written appeal to contest the action, timelines to submit an appeal, and the address to which the appeal must be submitted.
 - (5) The date on a Notice of Action or exclusion order shall be the same as the date of service.
- (c) If the Department seeks to exclude an individual from a Resource Family home, and the County is also taking an action identified in subsection (a)(1), an exclusion order shall be served with the Notice of Action. Nothing in this article shall be construed to prohibit the Department from issuing an exclusion order at an earlier or a later date if unable to issue the exclusion order at the time of service of a related Notice of Action.
- (d)
 - (1) A County shall serve a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues for the record, and if applicable, the Department shall serve an exclusion order for the record, if a Resource Family chooses to surrender approval prior to the service of a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues, and failure to proceed with an administrative action poses a risk to a child or nonminor dependent or is likely to result in a loss of evidence.
 - (2) A County may serve a Notice of Action, Accusation, or Statement of Issues for the record, and if applicable, the Department shall serve an exclusion order for the record when an applicant chooses to withdraw an application or there is a forfeiture of approval by operation of law, and failure to proceed with an administrative action poses a risk to a child or nonminor dependent or is likely to result in a loss of evidence.
 - (3) A Notice of Action, Accusation, Statement of Issues or exclusion order for the record shall include a confirmation of the surrender of approval, withdrawal of the application, or forfeiture by operation of law.
 - (4) Service shall be provided as described in Section 12-08.
- (e) Notwithstanding CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-049.5, for matters identified in subsection (a) that are pending before the State Hearings Division, a County may file an amended or supplemental Notice of Action. All parties shall be notified thereof.
 - (1) Any new action identified in subsection (a) or amended grounds for action included in an amended or supplemental Notice of Action shall be consolidated with the pending denial or rescission, and no additional appeal shall be required. Any new action or grounds for action shall be deemed controverted, and any objections may be made orally and shall be noted in the record.
 - (2) A Respondent shall be given a reasonable opportunity to prepare a defense to any new charges or actions included in the amended or supplemental Notice of Action. If a Respondent states that he or she is not adequately prepared to address an issue raised in an amended or supplemental Notice of Action, and the Administrative Law Judge determines that the Respondent was not provided with timely notice, the Respondent shall be entitled to a postponement. An Administrative Law Judge may hold the record open or set additional days of hearing upon request of a party in order to provide additional time for a party to respond as a result of the filing of an amended or supplemental Notice of Action.

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- (f) The effective date of an action or exclusion order shall be:
 - (1) The effective date of a final decision or order following an appeal, notice of defense or action for the record.
 - (2) The date specified in the notice of action or exclusion order, if no appeal, notice of defense or action for the record was filed.
- (g) A County or the Department, as applicable, shall document a Notice of Action or exclusion order in the applicable section of the Administrative Action Records System (AARS) database maintained by the Department, as applicable. The action shall be documented immediately after it is served.
- (h) A County or the Department, as applicable, may withdraw a Notice of Action notwithstanding the requirements of the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-001 et seq., if the matter has resolved informally prior to a hearing and failing to proceed with the administrative action to obtain a formal resolution on the record poses no risk or threat to the health, safety, protection or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent, and is not likely to result in a loss of evidence.
 - (1) For State Hearings Division matters, a withdrawal may be filed at any time prior to the issuance of a hearing decision and order. If a County withdraws a Notice of Action, the appeal will be dismissed.
 - (2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of a County or the Department, as applicable, to file a later Notice of Action on the same or new allegations to the extent authorized by law; however, a Respondent shall have the right to appeal and a hearing as set forth in this Article.
- (i) The legal consult as defined in Section 12-04 shall be arranged in a manner that helps ensure that the Notice of Action is served close in time to service of the Written Report.

SECTION 12-06A: Appeal to a Notice of Action or Exclusion Order

- (a) If a Respondent chooses to appeal a Notice of Action for denial of an application, or denial of a criminal record exemption, he or she shall submit a written appeal to the County address listed in the Notice of Action within 90 calendar days from the date the notice was served on the Respondent. If a Respondent chooses to appeal a Notice of Action for rescission of Resource Family Approval or rescission of a criminal record exemption, he or she shall submit a written appeal to the County address listed in the Notice of Action within 25 calendar days from the date the notice was served on the Respondent. If the notice was served on the Respondent by mail, the time to respond shall be extended five days.
- (b) If a Respondent chooses to appeal an order of exclusion, he or she shall submit a written appeal to the Department at the address listed in the exclusion order within 25 calendar days from the date the notice was served on the Respondent. If the order was served on the Respondent by mail, the time to respond shall be extended five days.
- (c) For matters where different appeal timelines apply due to multiple actions filed against a

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Respondent or more than one program action, the following shall apply:

- (1) For matters to be heard at the State Hearings Division, a County or the Department, as applicable, may accept an appeal on one action as a hearing request on all of the actions against the same Respondent(s), notwithstanding section 22-004 of the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures.
- (2) For matters to be heard at the Office of Administrative Hearings, a County or the Department, as applicable, may accept an appeal on one action as an appeal on all of the actions against the same Respondent(s).
 - (A) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to limit the authority of a County or the Department to file an action for the record and resolve the matter with a final decision and order in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 or the Administrative Procedures Act, as applicable, notwithstanding the receipt of an appeal.
- (3) When an action for rescission of approval, criminal record exemption rescission, or exclusion also includes an action for application denial, the applicable appeal timeline for the rescission of approval, criminal record exemption rescission, or exclusion specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) shall apply to the action for application denial.
- (d) To be effective, the appeal shall be in writing as required by Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(d) and shall be delivered or postmarked on or before the due date specified in subsections (a) and (b).
- (e) A Respondent may submit an appeal using an appeal form provided with the Notice of Action or exclusion order, or they may prepare their own written appeal.
 - (1) A Respondent must submit a written appeal to the County or the Department pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(d), and the written appeal shall be delivered or postmarked on or before the due date specified in subsections (a) and (b).
 - (2) No oral appeal shall be accepted.
- (f) A County and the Department shall notify each other in writing if either receives an appeal to a Notice of Action or exclusion order that is related to another action that was filed at or near the same time as the action by the County or Department.
- (g) For State Hearings Division matters, a Respondent may withdraw their appeal at any time prior to a hearing.
 - (1) Withdrawal of an appeal by a Respondent shall have the same effect as failing to file an appeal to the Notice of Action, and the Notice of Action or Amended Notice of Action, as applicable, shall be deemed a final action as to that Respondent unless:
 - (A) The Notice of Action or Amended Notice of Action, as applicable, is withdrawn by the County;
 - (B) A stipulation, waiver and order are issued for a conditional withdrawal; or
 - (C) A County pursues an action for the record as authorized by Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(m), and a decision and order are issued.
 - (2) CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-054.211(b) shall not apply to

withdrawal of an appeal on an action described in this Article.

SECTION 12-06B: Jurisdictional Review: Late Appeals

- (a) For any matter where jurisdiction to proceed under Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 is disputed or unclear, the presiding administrative law judge of the State Hearings Division may review the request for hearing and may request supplemental information from the parties to determine whether to set a hearing on the issue of jurisdiction. No jurisdictional review shall be required if all parties agree there is jurisdiction to proceed, or the presiding administrative law judge or administrative law judge assigned to hear the case determines the review is unnecessary. A party may request that a hearing on the issue of jurisdiction be bifurcated from a hearing on the merits, or the presiding administrative law judge or administrative law judge assigned to hear the case on their own motion may set a bifurcated jurisdictional hearing. The following shall apply to a jurisdictional proceeding conducted pursuant to this Section:
 - (1) A jurisdictional hearing may be held in person, by telephone, by electronic means, or if all parties agree, by the submission of written argument, as determined by and at the discretion of the State Hearings Division.
 - (2) If a bifurcated jurisdictional hearing is held, the parties need not submit evidence on the substantive issues and the administrative law judge shall take evidence on the jurisdictional issue only.
 - (3) The determination shall be in writing and provided to each party and their attorney of record.
 - (4) The determination shall not be made without affording the parties the opportunity to present either oral or written argument.
 - (5) If jurisdiction is not found following a jurisdictional proceeding, the State Hearings Division shall dismiss the appeal.
- (b) If a Respondent has filed a late appeal no more than 30 calendar days after the due date for the appeal, then a County or the Department, as applicable, shall immediately refer the late appeal to the State Hearings Division requesting a bifurcated jurisdictional review as described in subsection (c), except that no request for a bifurcated jurisdictional review shall be required if the County or Department, as applicable, agrees that the appeal meets the timeliness and good cause requirements for a late appeal and proceeds in accordance with Section 12-09.
- (c) If the County or Department, as applicable, has referred the late appeal requesting a jurisdictional review, or the presiding administrative law judge has set a late appeal for a jurisdictional review on their own motion, the State Hearings Division shall make a jurisdictional determination solely on whether the late appeal meets the timeliness and good cause requirements of Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(e). Respondent shall have the burden of proving that good cause exists.
- (d) If the State Hearings Division determines that a late appeal meets the requirements of Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(e), then the appeal shall be remanded to the County or Department, as applicable, to proceed in accordance with Section 12-09. The County or Department shall comply with any statutory, regulatory, or Written

Directives timelines and shall use the date that the written determination was issued and served on all parties as the date of appeal.

SECTION 12-07: Exclusion Actions

- (a) The Department may exclude an individual from residing or being present in any Resource Family home or from having contact with a child or nonminor dependent when the individual has violated, aided, or permitted the violation by any other person of, any provision of Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq., the Written Directives, or any applicable law. The Department may issue an immediate exclusion order when a County recommends it and the Department determines it is necessary to protect a child or nonminor dependent from physical or mental abuse, abandonment, or any other substantial threat to health or safety, consistent with the established standard. Prior to the service of a County's Notice of Action and at or prior to the date of the legal consultation specified in Section 12-04, the following shall occur:
 - (1) If a County receives a complaint, incident report or other information indicating that an applicant, Resource Family, or individual who resides or is regularly present in the Resource Family home has engaged in conduct that may warrant an exclusion action, a County shall notify the Department as provided in Section 4-03.
 - (2) A County shall notify the Department when the County recommends the exclusion of an individual. The recommendation shall be provided in writing to the Department prior to the service of a County's Notice of Action and at or prior to the date of the legal consultation specified in Section 12-04.
 - (3) A County and the Department shall share information and evidence related to the exclusion of an individual and shall coordinate on the service of a Notice of Action and order of exclusion.
 - (4) Unless it is not feasible, a County and the Department shall consolidate the County's and Department's administrative actions in accordance with the established standard.
- (b) An order of immediate exclusion shall remain in effect until a hearing is completed and the Director or their designee has made a final determination on the merits in accordance with Health and Safety Code section 1558, Government Code section 11517, and Welfare and Institutions Code sections 10959 and 16519.6.
- (c) If an exclusion order is served, the Department shall notify the County and the applicant or Resource Family of the exclusion decision in writing at the time of service of the exclusion order on an individual. If the individual who is the subject of the exclusion order is the applicant or Resource Family, a notice separate from the exclusion order is not required.
- (d) If an individual is no longer residing or regularly present in a Resource Family's home and an exclusion order appears to be unnecessary, or an exclusion order was served but not appealed, or was appealed but later withdrawn by the excluded individual, then the County and Department shall consult with the Legal Division to determine whether the filing of an Accusation (exclusion action) for the record is necessary.

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- (e) A County shall conduct an unannounced visit to a Resource Family's home within 30 calendar days after an order of immediate exclusion is served to verify that the excluded individual is no longer present in the home.
 - (1) Any method of verification that does not include an unannounced visit shall be approved by a county supervisor.
 - (2) The County shall maintain documentation of the verification in the Resource Family's file.
- (f) If an individual has had an application for approval denied, the individual shall be excluded for a period of one year. If an individual has had a Resource Family Approval rescinded, the individual shall be excluded for a period of two years.
 - (1) The Department shall have authority to not impose the exclusion in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(g)(5) and Health and Safety Code section 1558.1(e). An individual shall not be excluded as provided in this section if the County does not have current evidence that the individual poses a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent, and the application denial or rescission of approval is based solely upon the following:
 - (A) Failure to cooperate with the application process or approval update as described in Section 5-03B(k).
 - (B) Failure to meet the good physical health requirements set forth in Section 5-02.
 - (C) Failure to pass the home health and safety assessment set forth in Section 6-02(a)(2).
 - (D) An exemption denial or exemption rescission of an individual other than the applicant or Resource Family who was the subject of the application denial or rescission of approval.
 - (E) A combination of the above.
 - (F) As otherwise ordered by the Department.
 - (2) An order to not impose an exclusion as provided in subsection (f) shall only apply to the extent it does not conflict with a different exclusion order issued by the Department.
 - (3) If a matter involves both a denial and rescission, the longer term of exclusion shall apply.
 - (4) The period of exclusion shall run from the effective date of the denial or rescission as specified in Section 12-05(f).
 - (5) Exclusion or removal of an individual pursuant to this subsection shall not be considered an order of exclusion for purposes of Health and Section Code section 1558, Section 16519.6 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or any other applicable law.

SECTION 12-08: Service of Process

- (a) A County or the Department, as applicable, shall serve a Notice of Action by personal service or first-class mail in accordance with the established standard. The County shall keep a record of service of the Notice of Action.

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- (b) An exclusion order shall be served by personal service or registered mail as provided in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(g) and in accordance with the established standard. A copy of the order shall be served on the Resource Family by personal service or registered mail.
- (c) Except as provided in subsections (a) and (b), all other writings related to a proceeding conducted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 shall be served by first class mail, unless otherwise specified in another applicable law.
- (d) Service by mail of a Notice of Action, exclusion order, or other writing on a Respondent in a proceeding conducted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 is effective if served to the last mailing address on file with a County or the Department, as applicable. If the last day for the performance of any action falls on a holiday, then such period shall be extended to the next day, which is not a holiday.
- (e) Proof of service shall be by declaration under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California and shall state the title of the document served or filed, the name and address of the person making the service, the date and method of delivery, and that the person is over 18 years of age and not a party to the matter. If service is made by personal service, then the proof of service shall also name the person to whom the papers were handed.

SECTION 12-09: Procedures After Receipt of Appeal

- (a)
 - (1) Upon receipt of an appeal, a County or the Department, as applicable, shall date-stamp the appeal and appeal envelope, if applicable, and document the appeal status in the Notice of Action (NOA) database maintained by the Department with the date the appeal is received.
 - (2) An appeal that is timely or that meets the requirements for a late appeal as described in Section 12-06B shall be processed as required in this Section, even if a County or the Department has reason to believe that an informal resolution is expected in the matter.
- (b) For matters to be heard by the Office of Administrative Hearings, a County and the Department shall process the appeal as follows:
 - (1) A County shall serve an acknowledgement of appeal upon an individual who is the subject of a Notice of Action. The Department shall serve an acknowledgement of appeal upon an individual who is the subject of an exclusion action or is the subject of an exclusion action and Notice of Action that were served simultaneously.
 - (2) A County shall forward the appeal and originals of all relevant documents to the Department's county liaison, if the Legal Division is representing the County.
- (c) For matters to be heard by the State Hearings Division, a County and the Department shall process the appeal as follows:
 - (1) A County shall forward the appeal and case file documents to the Legal Division if the Legal Division is representing the County. The Department shall forward the appeal and case file documents related to an exclusion action to the Legal

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- Division.
- (2) After the documentation has been forwarded to the Legal Division as provided in paragraph (1), a County or the Department, as applicable, shall forward the appeal to the State Hearings Division no later than ten business days following the receipt of the appeal.
 - (3) The State Hearings Division shall serve an acknowledgement of appeal by first class mail upon the individual who is the subject of a Notice of Action.
- (d) An acknowledgement of appeal shall contain the following:
- (1) Confirmation that a Respondent's appeal has been received by a County or the Department, as applicable, including the date of receipt.
 - (2) Notice to a Respondent of the duty to notify the County or Department, as applicable, in writing of any change in the Respondent's mailing address until the administrative action process has been completed or terminated.
- (e) A County or the Department, as applicable, shall maintain copies of an appeal and all relevant documents forwarded as specified in this Section.

SECTION 12-10: Hearing Forum Rules

- (a) An administrative law judge at the State Hearings Division shall hear administrative actions based upon the following:
- (1) A denial or rescission of a criminal record exemption or failure to comply with background check requirements.
 - (2) Criminal conduct or conduct that poses a risk or threat to the health, safety, protection, or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent or other individual, except for conduct that involves abuse or neglect of a child or other minor or nonminor dependent or abuse or neglect of a dependent adult.
 - (3) A failure to meet or comply with home environment related standards.
 - (4) A failure to act as a reasonable and prudent parent or a failure to provide adequate care and supervision as specified in Sections 11-12 and 11-13, where the matter does not involve abuse or neglect of a child or other minor or nonminor dependent.
 - (5) A failure to meet Resource Family qualifications other than the requirement for good mental health, or a failure to meet Permanency Assessment criteria as determined in a family evaluation specified in Sections 6-04 and 6-05 other than criteria related to mental health.
 - (6) A failure to comply with reporting requirements.
 - (7) A failure to maintain or provide records for a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (8) A failure to meet applicant requirements or failure to complete required training.
 - (9) A failure to cooperate or comply as specified in Section 11-17 or upon false or misleading statements provided to a County or the Department.
- (b) An administrative law judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings shall hear administrative actions based upon the following:
- (1) Dual or multiple-program matters when the applicant, Resource Parent, or individual has applied for or holds a license, administrator certificate, or registration issued by the Department, a Resource Family approval or certificate of approval

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- issued by a foster family agency, or is employed by or regularly present in a facility licensed by the Department.
- (2) When a temporary suspension order, as defined in WIC 16519.5(g)(5)(A)(iv), was issued as a result of an immediate and substantial risk to the health and safety of a child or nonminor dependent.
 - (3) Conduct that poses a risk or threat to the health, safety, protection or well-being of a child or nonminor dependent or other individual, including abuse or neglect of a child or other minor or a nonminor dependent, or abuse or neglect of a dependent adult.
 - (4) A violation of the personal rights of a child or nonminor dependent, or a failure to ensure a child or nonminor dependent is accorded personal rights.
 - (5) A failure to act as a reasonable and prudent parent or failure to provide care and supervision as specified in Sections 11-12 and 11-13 and the matter involves abuse or neglect of a child or other minor or nonminor dependent, or abuse or neglect of a dependent adult.
 - (6) An exclusion action.
 - (7) A failure to meet the Resource Family qualification of good mental health as specified in Section 5-02 or as determined in a Written Report as specified in Section 6-07.
 - (8) Financial malfeasance involving a child or nonminor dependent or dependent adult, including but not limited to, fraudulent appropriation for personal gain of money or property or willful or negligent failure to provide services.
 - (9) A pattern of serious deficiencies or a failure to comply with more than one requirement across several different areas.
 - (10) Any administrative action that does not meet the criteria specified in subsection (a) or subsections (b)(1) through (b)(9).
- (c) Except for exclusion actions, hearing forum determination shall be made at the sole discretion of a County in consultation with the Legal Division, or a County attorney if the Legal Division is not representing the County. For exclusion actions, hearing forum determination shall be made at the sole discretion of the Department in consultation with the Legal Division.
- (d) Hearing forum determination shall not be subject to rehearing or review in an administrative hearing. If a matter is set in the incorrect forum, a presiding administrative law judge of the State Hearings Division or Office of Administrative Hearings, on its own motion or at the request of a County or the Department, if applicable, may issue an order to remand the matter to the County or Department, as applicable, to proceed with the administrative action in the correct forum.

SECTION 12-11A: Disclosure of Documents and Issuance of Subpoenas

- (a) A party shall make available to the other party or parties for examination all relevant documents, whether inculpatory or exculpatory, in the party's possession in accordance with applicable law. Prior to disclosure, documents that are subject to confidentiality or privilege laws shall be redacted or withheld, as required by law.

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- (1) Notwithstanding CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures sections 22-045 and 22- 051 for matters set before the State Hearings Division, the notice of a prehearing or settlement conference shall include a notice to Respondent of the right to review during regular working hours all documents in the County's case record and if the matter includes an exclusion, the Department's case record, that are relevant to the Notice of Action or exclusion order. Upon the request of a Respondent, a County or the Department, as applicable, shall provide to a Respondent redacted copies of all relevant documents that are not required to be withheld, which may be provided by mail or secure electronic format, and shall be provided free of charge.
 - (A) A party that has provided discovery or disclosed documents to another party shall notify that party of the reasons why a document has been redacted or withheld.
 - (2) For matters set before the Office of Administrative Hearings, the provisions governing discovery in the Administrative Procedures Act shall apply.
- (b) If a party has requested but not been provided an opportunity to examine relevant documents in the other party's possession in advance of a State Hearings Division hearing, the party may be entitled to a postponement in accordance with Section 12-18. If a party has requested but not been provided copies of relevant and discoverable documents in the other party's possession in advance of a hearing at the Office of Administrative Hearings, the party may be entitled to a continuance in accordance with Section 12-18.
- (c) Prior to the commencement of a hearing, and after the commencement of a hearing if necessary, a subpoena requiring the presence of a witness or a subpoena duces tecum for the production by a witness of books, papers, correspondence, memoranda or other records, may be issued in accordance with applicable law, the Administrative Procedures Act, and CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-051, as applicable.
- (1) Notwithstanding CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-051, a subpoena or subpoena duces tecum may be issued by an attorney of record for a party.

SECTION 12-11B: Filing the Administrative Hearing Documents

- (a) For matters to be heard at the State Hearings Division, a County shall prepare and file a Notice of Action to initiate the administrative adjudication process. After a matter is set for hearing the County shall prepare and file a position statement as defined in Section 3-01(a) with the State Hearings Division and serve it on a Respondent no later than two business days prior to a hearing in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code sections 10952.5 and 16519.6. A Respondent may file a Position Statement but is not required to do so unless so ordered by an administrative law judge.
- (b) A Position Statement shall include the following:
 - (1) A summary of the facts and issues in the case and the justification for the County's or Department's action.
 - (2) Citations to the applicable statutory, regulatory, or Written Directives authority for

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- each applicable basis for action provided in the Notice of Action.
- (3) A list of witnesses and documentary evidence which the County intends to use during the hearing to support the allegations in the Notice of Action and the County's position, with copies of the documents attached.
 - (c) For matters to be heard at the Office of Administrative Hearings, a County or the Department, as applicable, shall prepare and file an Accusation or Statement of Issues and serve it in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act to initiate the administrative adjudication process.
 - (d) A County and the Department may coordinate the filing of actions, file consolidated pleadings or file a motion to consolidate multiple actions if a matter involves both a County and Department action.

SECTION 12-12: Law Governing Hearing Procedures

- (a) For State Hearings Division matters, hearings and all related procedures are governed by Welfare and Institutions Code sections 10950 et seq. and 16519.6 et seq., the Written Directives, the CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-000 et seq., and All County Letters or similar written standards applicable to Resource Family Approval. The provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.5 et seq. prevail over a conflicting or inconsistent provision in Welfare and Institutions Code section 10950 et seq. This article governs the hearing process and the rights and responsibilities of parties. The CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-000 et seq. govern procedures, rights, and responsibilities that are not addressed in the Written Directives.
- (b) For Office of Administrative Hearings matters, hearings and all related procedures are governed by Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 et seq., the Written Directives, the Administrative Procedures Act (Gov. Code, section 11370 et seq.), Title 1, California Code of Regulations, section 1000 et seq., and All County Letters or similar written standards applicable to Resource Family Approval.

SECTION 12-13: Setting the Hearing, Settlement, and Prehearing Conferences

- (a) For matters to be set before the State Hearings Division, the State Hearings Division shall set a hearing dates upon receipt of an appeal, and at its discretion may also set a prehearing or settlement conference.
 - (1) A party may request that a settlement conference be set in lieu of a prehearing conference. If the request is approved by the State Hearings Division, the administrative law judge at the settlement conference shall not preside as administrative law judge at the hearing unless otherwise stipulated by the parties, and discussions and disclosures made at any settlement conference shall remain confidential and shall not be made available or considered at any subsequent hearing of the matter.
 - (2) The State Hearings Division shall serve all parties with a notice overhearing, prehearing or settlement conference, and if a party is represented by an attorney, the notice shall also be served on the attorney of record. The notice shall include

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the date, time, and modality of the hearing conference, and any other information required by this Article.

- (b) For matters to be set before the Office of Administrative Hearings, if a Respondent submits a Notice of Defense, a County or the County's legal representative shall request a hearing date from the Office of Administrative Hearings in accordance with Title 1, California Code of Regulations, section 1018. The County shall serve a Respondent or their attorney of record with a notice of hearing.
- (c) A party may request that a prehearing conference, settlement conference, or hearing be conducted by electronic means in accordance with the established standard.
- (d) The hearing location may be set within the County that issued the Notice of Action or where a Respondent or witnesses reside, or for matters set before the Office of Administrative Hearings, at the location set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act.
- (e) Related County or Department actions that were filed or received separately but that involve the same parties and issues shall be consolidated unless it is not feasible, to ensure consistent outcomes and the efficiency of process.

SECTION 12-14: Reserved

SECTION 12-15: Reserved

SECTION 12-16: Conduct of Hearing: Confidentiality and Procedures

- (a) All proceedings conducted in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6 shall be conducted in a manner that protects the confidential information and identity of a child, nonminor dependent, applicant, or Resource Family as required by Health and Safety Code sections 1536 and 1551.3, Family Code section 9201, Penal Code section 11167.5, and Welfare and Institutions Code sections 827, 10850, and 16519.55.
- (b) A County or the Department, as applicable, shall request a protective order and request the record be sealed after the conclusion of legal proceedings in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 827(a)(1)(J) and any other applicable law.
- (c) An administrative law judge, In their discretion, with due consideration for the effect on witnesses, the hearing process, and existing law and protective orders, may:
 - (1) Issue an order to remove an individual from the hearing.
 - (2) Issue a protective order.
 - (3) Order the record to be sealed.
 - (4) Close the hearing to the public.
 - (5) Upon an offer of proof of privilege or confidentiality, review information *in camera* prior to ruling on whether all or part of the information is privileged or confidential and subject to exclusion or redaction. The opposing party shall be given an opportunity to agree or disagree as to the need for an *in camera* hearing. If held, the *in camera* hearing must be recorded on a separate record from the prehearing

- conference or hearing.
- (6) Take other action to protect the health or safety of the parties or witnesses, promote due process or the orderly conduct of the proceeding.

SECTION 12-17: Rulings on Evidence

- (a) Rulings on the admissibility of evidence made during an administrative hearing shall be made on the record and, when appropriate, shall be included in a decision or proposed decision.

SECTION 12-18: Good Cause Requirement for Continuance or Postponement

- (a) A hearing shall be held within the timelines set forth in Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6, unless a continuance or postponement of the hearing is granted for good cause. When the matter has been set for hearing, only an administrative law judge may grant a continuance of the hearing. The administrative law judge may grant a continuance or postponement of the hearing only upon a finding of good cause shown by the existence of one or more of the following:
- (1) The death or incapacitating illness of a party, a representative or attorney of a party, a witness to an essential fact, or of the parent, child, or member of the household of such person, when it is not feasible to substitute another representative, attorney, or witness because of the proximity of the hearing date.
 - (2) Lack of proper notice of hearing.
 - (3) A material change in the status of the case where a change in the parties, Position Statement, or pleadings requires postponement, or an executed settlement or stipulated findings of fact obviate the need for hearing. A partial amendment of the pleadings or Position Statement shall not be good cause for a continuance to the extent that the portion of the pleadings or Position Statement that have not been amended is ready to be heard.
 - (4) The substitution of the representative or attorney of a party upon a showing that the substitution is required and that a late substitution was not caused by the neglect of the party.
 - (5) The unavailability of a party, representative or attorney of a party, or witness to an essential fact due to a conflicting and required court appearance when the appearance cannot be postponed.
 - (6) The unavailability of a party, representative or attorney of a party, or material witness due to an unavoidable emergency.
 - (7) Failure by a party to comply with a timely submission of a Position Statement or discovery request if the continuance request is made by the other party.
 - (8) A request by a Respondent when it is argued that the Respondent did not receive an adequate and/or language-compliant notice, and the administrative law judge determines that the required notice was not received.
- (b) Nothing in this Section shall be construed to limit the authority of an administrative law judge at the State Hearings Division to postpone the hearing in accordance with CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures sections 22-053.13 through 22-053.21. Any postponement granted pursuant to this Section shall be deemed a postponement for good

cause for aid pending purposes.

SECTION 12-19: Applicability of Precedential Decisions

- (a) An administrative law judge shall apply the principles of the Department's precedential decision(s), if the facts or issues are similar to those before the administrative law judge in a proceeding conducted pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6.
- (b) In accordance with Government Code section 11425.60, the Department's designation of a precedential decision is not subject to judicial review.

SECTION 12-20: Burden of Proof and Inferences at Hearing

- (a) In all proceedings conducted in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6, the burden of proof on a County or the Department related to the matters set forth in a Notice of Action, Statement of Issues, Accusation, or exclusion order, as applicable, shall be by a preponderance of the evidence.
- (b) Where criminal misconduct is proven, whether or not it resulted in a conviction, negative character inferences shall be presumed in accordance with the established standard.
 - (1) The individual, applicant, or Resource Family has the burden of establishing at hearing that an individual is rehabilitated and of present good character, in accordance with Section 6-03B(g)(2).

SECTION 12-21A: Decision

- (a) A decision or proposed decision shall be in writing and shall include a statement of the factual and legal basis for the decision and any other basis as required in any applicable law. A decision or proposed decision shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - (1) A concise and explicit statement of the underlying facts of record that support the decision.
 - (2) Any determinations on the weight of evidence or determinations of credibility that affect the findings and conclusions.
 - (3) Any determinations on the admissibility of evidence that affect the findings and conclusions.
 - (4) If the factual basis for the decision includes a determination based substantially on the credibility of a witness, the statement shall identify any specific evidence of the observed demeanor, manner, or attitude of the witness or content of the witness testimony that supports the determination.
- (b) A decision or proposed decision may place conditions on an approval, criminal record exemption, or presence in a Resource Family's home in order to ensure the health and safety and well-being of children or nonminor dependents in care, so long as the applicant, Resource Family, or individual meets the requirements and standards for approval, a criminal record exemption, or presence in a Resource Family's home.
- (c) If a County discontinued the Comprehensive Assessment of an applicant pursuant to

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Section 6-01(d), an administrative law judge shall not order the approval to be granted but may remand the relevant part of the action to the County to complete the Comprehensive Assessment.

- (d) A proposed decision by an administrative law judge at the State Hearings Division shall be delivered to the Department for a final decision by the Director as provided in Welfare and Institutions Code section 10959, and the provisions of that section and CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-061 et seq. shall govern procedures related to decisions.
 - (1) Service of a final decision and order shall be to each party, or if a party is represented by an attorney, to the attorney of record for the party.
- (e) A proposed decision by an administrative law judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings shall be delivered to the Department for a final decision by the Director as provided in Government Code section 11517, and the provisions of that section shall govern procedures related to decisions.
- (f) The Director may adopt a stipulation and waiver of the parties as the final decision and order of the Director.
 - (1) A stipulation and waiver of the parties shall specify at minimum any findings, how the action is resolved, any conditions including dates for compliance, any waivers of the parties, notice of consequences for failure to comply, and effective dates of any terms.
 - (2) If a matter is set for hearing at the State Hearings Division, upon receipt of a signed stipulation, waiver and order resolving the matter, the State Hearings Division shall dismiss the appeal with prejudice.
 - (3) CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-054.211(b) shall not apply.

SECTION 12-21B: Default and Failures to Appear at Hearing; Set Asides

- (a) If a Respondent fails to appear at the hearing after proper service of a notice of hearing, a County may seek a default decision and order.
- (b) For matters set before the Office of Administrative Hearings, Government Code section 11520 shall govern defaults and the ability of a Respondent to request that a default decision and order be set aside for good cause.
- (c) For matters set before the State Hearings Division, CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-054.22 shall apply, except as provided in this Article and as follows.
 - (1) A written default decision may be issued as the final decision and order of the Director.
 - (2) Consistent with Welfare and Institutions Code section 16519.6(m), a County may proceed with the hearing and present evidence notwithstanding a default of the Respondent in order to obtain a written default decision and order.
 - (A) A County may seek dismissal of the appeal in lieu of a default decision and order.
 - (B) If a County seeks dismissal of the appeal in lieu of a default decision and

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order, there shall be no requirement to take evidence at a hearing or issue a written decision and order other than the order of dismissal.

- (3) If an administrative law judge at the State Hearings Division dismisses the appeal as a result of a Respondent's failure to appear at the hearing, unless a request to set aside the dismissal is granted, the dismissal shall be with prejudice and the Notice of Action or Amended Notice of Action, as applicable, shall be deemed the final decision.
- (4) Notwithstanding the time for a request to set aside in CDSS Manual of Policies and Procedures section 22-054.222, a Respondent may request the dismissal of appeal be set aside within thirty (30) calendar days of the date of the notice of dismissal, showing good cause why the dismissal should be set aside.

SECTION 12-22: Reinstatement or Reduction in Penalty

- (a) An individual who has been excluded for life from residing or being present in any Resource Family home or from having contact with a child or nonminor dependent in the home may petition for reinstatement to the Department after one year has elapsed from the date of the notification of the exclusion order pursuant to Government Code section 11522 and Health and Safety Code section 1558. The burden of proof on the individual filing a petition shall be a preponderance of the evidence.
- (b) If an individual filing a petition seeks reinstatement in order to apply for Resource Family Approval, the Department may seek information and a recommendation from a County. The County and Department shall share evidence and information related to the petition or application.

Handbook Begins Here

The Resource Family Approval [Background Assessment Guide \(BAG\)](#) contains additional information regarding reinstatements.

Handbook Ends Here

ARTICLE 13: ADOPTION REQUIREMENTS FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

Section 13-01: Adoption Approval Requirements

- (a) Following the approval of a Resource Family, when adoption is the identified case plan for a child or NMD currently placed in the home, the family shall be referred to an adoption program for the completion of the remaining adoption procedures and services.
 - (1) A prospective adoptive Resource Family shall maintain their approval status during the adoption process, including adoptive placement and through adoption finalization.
 - (2) A Resource Family maintains their approval status, after adoption finalization, unless approval is rescinded by a County or the Resource Family chooses to surrender their approval.

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- (b) A Written Report for a Resource Family that meets the requirements of Section 6-07(b), and any updates to the Written Report, shall be considered sufficient for meeting the requirements of a written assessment of an adoptive applicant pursuant to Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Subdivision 4, Chapter 3, Subchapter 5, Article 11, section 35180.
 - (1) If documentation for an adoption is in the Resource Family file, it may be shared with an adoption social worker for the purposes of finalizing an adoption.
- (c) If not previously collected and verified during the Resource Family Approval process, the following documentation is required to be collected by the adoption program worker prior to adoption finalization:
 - (1) Verification of all marriages and divorces through obtaining copies of marriage certificates and divorce decrees pursuant to Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Division 2, Subdivision 4, Chapter 3, Subchapter 5, Article 11, section 35181(b)(6)(A)(1).
 - (2) The names of two individuals to be contacted by the agency for the purpose of obtaining references.
- (d) A Written Report for a Resource Family that meets the requirements of Section 6-07(b), and any updates to the Written Report, may not be used as a substitute for the assessment of an applicant proceeding with any adoption other than an agency adoption as defined in Family Code section 8506.
- (e) An adoption social worker shall complete all other adoption related requirements per Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Divisions 2, Adoption Regulations.
 - (1) The adoption social worker must meet the minimum qualifications as set forth in Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Division 6, Chapter 9, Article 2, section 89155.

Handbook Begins Here

[All County Letter 18-142](#) provides clarification on the Resource Family Written Report and overview of the adoption process for existing foster caregivers and Resource Families.

Handbook Ends Here
