

<b>POLICY TITLE: Diligent Search</b>		<b>PAGE 1 OF 3</b>
 	<b>CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY</b> <b>Approved by: <u>Brenda Donald</u></b> Agency Director  <b>Date: <u>July 17, 2014</u></b>	<b>REVISION HISTORY:</b> March 25, 2009 December 1, 2009
<b>LATEST REVISION:</b> July 10, 2014	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> March 25, 2009	

<b>I. AUTHORITY</b>	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission, applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations, and <i>the LaShawn A. v. Gray</i> Implementation and Exit Plan (December 17, 2010).
<b>II. APPLICABILITY</b>	This policy applies to all CFSA employees and contracted personnel.
<b>III. RATIONALE</b>	CFSA recognizes that when a child* is removed from the family, the early involvement of parents, relatives, and significant non-relatives in planning for permanency reduces the time that children stay in foster care while expediting positive permanency outcomes. It further facilitates the placement of children with their siblings. CFSA assumes the responsibility early in the case-planning process for the timely location of those parents, relatives, and significant non-relatives whose whereabouts or identity are unknown. Locating family members early in the case affords them the opportunity to actively participate in the case-planning process. *Note: the term "child" is inclusive of infants, teens, and older youth.
<b>IV. POLICY</b>	It is the policy of CFSA to conduct a diligent search to attempt to identify and locate missing parents to provide them with notice that their child is in the custody of CFSA, and to determine whether a missing parent is able to appropriately care for his or her children. In general, children most commonly reside with their mothers. Therefore, exhaustive efforts are also made to locate birth fathers, relatives, and any significant non-relatives whose whereabouts may be unknown (including maternal and paternal grandparents, godparents, and adult siblings) to determine whether they can serve as a safe placement option for children in CFSA's custody. The assigned social worker and the Diligent Search Unit (DSU) investigator use reasonable and concerted efforts and exhaust all leads when attempting to locate any of the above-cited persons. Additional details concerning diligent searches are outlined in the diligent search business process.
<b>V. CONTENTS</b>	<b>A.</b> When to Conduct a Diligent Search <b>B.</b> Social Worker's Responsibilities When Conducting a Diligent Search <b>C.</b> Requirements for Diligent Search Requests Processed through DSU <b>D.</b> Court-Ordered Diligent Search Requests <b>E.</b> Confidentiality
<b>VI. ATTACHMENTS</b>	Diligent Search Referral Form

<p><b>VII. SECTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>Section A: When to Conduct a Diligent Search</b></p> <p>A diligent search is conducted under the following circumstances in order to locate missing parents, relatives, and significant non-relatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When the Kinship Unit social worker is unable to locate the family during a temporary emergency kinship placement investigation</li> <li>2. When the Child Protective Services (CPS) social worker is unable to locate the family during a CPS investigation</li> <li>3. When a child is removed from his or her home and is placed in the care of CFSA</li> <li>4. At any time during the life of the case when the assigned social worker determines that it is in the child's best interest</li> <li>5. When ordered by the Family Court Division of the DC Superior Court of the District of Columbia (Family Court)</li> <li>6. When the Agency seeks to provide notice to absentee parents in a custody or Family Court proceeding (such as in an adoption or guardianship proceeding, or when motions are filed to terminate parental rights (TPR) and notification must be served on the birth parent), unless the following situations apply: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The parent is deceased (as certified by a formal death certificate).</li> <li>b. The parent has signed a consent form for adoption of the child.</li> <li>c. The parent has relinquished the child for adoption.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section B: Social Worker's Responsibilities When Conducting a Diligent Search</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The assigned social worker must first conduct a preliminary diligent search to attempt to locate the person <u>before</u> making a referral to DSU.</li> <li>2. The social worker documents all efforts to locate the person and enters the results of the search in FACES.NET, including when, where, and how attempts were made to identify and locate the persons.</li> <li>3. If the social worker is unable to locate the person after completing a preliminary diligent search, he or she consults with his or her supervisor to determine whether further action is required or whether the case should be referred to DSU.</li> <li>4. If it is determined that the case should be referred to DSU, the social worker completes a <i>Diligent Search Referral Form</i> (referral form)(see <i>Attachment A</i>), and submits it to his or her supervisor for review and signature.</li> </ol> <p><i>Note: the social worker shall submit one referral form per case.</i></p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Upon receipt of the DSU investigator's diligent search results, the social worker shall document the results in the contacts section in FACES.NET.</li> <li>6. The social worker is responsible for following up on any leads provided by the DSU investigator.</li> <li>7. The social worker continues to periodically conduct an ongoing search until persons being sought are found, until the child reaches permanency, or until all reasonable efforts have been exhausted.</li> <li>8. If the social worker exhausts all reasonable efforts to locate the person, he or she consults with his or her supervisor to determine whether further action is required or whether the search is complete.</li> <li>9. If the supervisor determines that further action is required, the social worker continues the search, and if necessary, contacts the DSU supervisor to request that another search be conducted.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section C: Court-Ordered Diligent Search Requests</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When the Family Court orders a diligent search request, DSU has primary responsibility for conducting the diligent search. <i>Note: Family Court-ordered requests may involve "show cause" orders regarding pending adoption proceedings, TPR proceedings, a summons and notice of motion of guardianship proceeding, permanency hearing orders, or a judicial summons requiring a party to appear in court.</i></li> <li>2. The assigned social worker must provide the DSU supervisor with the court order within 2 business days from the date the order was issued in order to begin immediate processing.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Section D: Confidentiality</b></p> <p>Individuals conducting a diligent search must maintain the confidentiality of the parties involved in the case.</p>

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## DILIGENT SEARCH REFERRAL FORM

**THE REFERRING PARTY MUST PROVIDE AS MUCH IDENTIFYING INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE PROVIDE A DETAILED CASE SYNOPSIS ON THE LAST PAGE OF THIS FORM. PRIOR TO SUBMITTING THIS FORM, PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE CONDUCTED AN INITIAL SEARCH AS REQUIRED, AND PLACE A CHECK MARK NEXT TO THE SEARCHES PERFORMED.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> VISIT LAST KNOWN ADDRESSES FOR PARENTS   | <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK FACES              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CALL OR VISIT CHILD'S SCHOOL             | <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK ACEDS              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TALK WITH CLIENT'S RELATIVES             | <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK LOCAL HOSPITALS    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TALK WITH NEIGHBORS                      | <input type="checkbox"/> CHECK MEN/WOMEN SHELTERS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONTACT LANDLORD                         | <input type="checkbox"/> CONTACT PAST EMPLOYER    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC INFORMATION SEARCHES VIA INTERNET |   |

Please return this form to the Diligent Search Unit, 200 I Street, SE, Rm. 2650, Washington, DC 20003, telephone (202) 727-4688, fax (202) 727-7818, or email: [cfsa.dsu@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.dsu@dc.gov).

Person Requesting Search: \_\_\_\_\_

Name _____	Department _____	Title _____
Phone _____		Email Address _____
Social Worker Signature _____		Date _____

Supervisor

Name _____	Department _____	Phone _____
Supervisor Signature _____		Date _____

<b>SEARCH FOR (Please Check)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Birth Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Birth/Putative Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Relative
	<input type="checkbox"/> Maternal Relatives	<input type="checkbox"/> Paternal Relatives	
<b>Reason for Search</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> FTM/Removal	<input type="checkbox"/> FTM/At Risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Find
	<input type="checkbox"/> FTM/LYFE	<input type="checkbox"/> CPS	<input type="checkbox"/> In-Home
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		

### CASE INFORMATION

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

FACES ID \_\_\_\_\_ Referral ID \_\_\_\_\_ Case ID \_\_\_\_\_

**MOTHER'S INFORMATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle  
Known Aliases \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Known Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip  
Assigned Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Phone Number

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Race (please check one)  White  Black  Asian  Pacific  Native  Other  
Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
Distinguishing Features: (e.g., scars, thick glasses, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical Afflictions, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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**FATHER'S INFORMATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle  
Known Aliases \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Last Known Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip  
Assigned Attorney \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Phone Number

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

Race (please check one)  White  Black  Asian  Pacific  Native  Other  
Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_  
Distinguishing Features: (e.g., scars, thick glasses, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical Afflictions, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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**(THIS REFERS TO THE PERSON REQUESTING THIS SEARCH)**

Mode of last contact with parent  Phone number (Please specify telephone number) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address (Please specify address) \_\_\_\_\_

Last Contact with Parent \_\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

Have you asked the attorney to share identifying information on his/her client?  Yes  No

Does the parent have a criminal record  Yes  No If Yes, Date and Location \_\_\_\_\_

Was the person in the U.S. Armed Forces?  Yes  No

If Yes, Which Branch  Army  Navy  Air Force  Marines  Coast Guard Date Active \_\_\_\_\_

Does parent have previous work history  Yes  No

Year Last Employed \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Employer \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_

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### COLLATERAL INFORMATION

Relatives/Neighbors/Significant Others Who May Have Knowledge of the Parent. If a relative, specify the degree and type of kinship, e.g., maternal cousin, paternal uncle. Give name, telephone number and address.

Date of last contact \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Kinship \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last contact \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Kinship \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

## **CASE SYNOPSIS**

(Please provide a detailed narrative regarding the case history and circumstances that require this diligent search referral)