

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-15-2

TO: All Staff

FROM: Michelle L. Farr
Deputy Director for Entry Services

Debra Porchia-Usher
Deputy Director for Community Partnerships

DATE: January 30, 2015

RE: Community Papering

In an effort to prevent removals and keep children safely in their own homes, the Agency has developed a process for requesting court intervention for investigations and in-home services cases where there are issues of non-compliance with the case plan. The community papering process (i.e., filing a petition for court intervention) is appropriate when CFSA (or one of its contracted agencies) has an open case with the family *where the children remain in the home*. Examples of cases that are appropriate for community papering include educational neglect and medical neglect where emergency care is not needed, or cases where the parent has a substance abuse or mental health issue that is impacting parenting but **imminent danger does not exist**. If there has already been a removal, or removal is imminent, community papering is not appropriate and the process for removal (72-hour papering) is followed. If you have question regarding the community papering process, please consult with your supervisor or program manager.

1. When determining whether a case is appropriate for community papering, the following factors are considered:
 - a. Patterns that impact child safety
 - i. Non-compliance with case plan
 - ii. Persistence of conditions¹
 - b. Prior history with CFSA
 - i. Past removal
 - ii. Open case
 - iii. Court involvement
 - iv. Substantiation history
 - c. Chronicity
 - i. Length of time between closure of the last case and opening of a new case
 - ii. History of prior case open longer than 6 months
 - iii. Current in-home case open longer than 6 months

¹A persistent pattern of family functioning in which the caregiver has not sustained and/or met the basic needs of the children which results in harm to the child as specified as no significant improvement on presenting allegations or concerns during the course of an investigation or open case.

2. The decision to community paper is made by the social worker and supervisor after considering the factors in paragraph 1 above. The decision to community paper the case may also be discussed during one of the following meetings:
 - a. Hotline RED Team²
 - b. 4+ staffing³
 - c. Case transfer staffing from CPS to the In-Home and Permanency administration
 - d. 10/15 day RED team
 - e. In-Home Big RED
 - f. At-risk Family Team Meeting (FTM)
3. Once the recommendation has been made to community paper the case, based on the above-cited discussions, the social worker, supervisor, and program manager meet to document the following information:
 - a. Issues of non-compliance and impact on the child
 - b. Reasons to community paper versus remove the child
 - c. Documentation (see attached *Tips for Community Papering*) for discussion with OAG.
4. The social worker meets with the assistant attorney general (AAG) who is assigned to community paper cases for that week to discuss the case.
5. The AAG then consults with the section chief on the case
 - Within one business day of the meeting, the AAG emails the *Community Papering & Consultation Sheet* to the social worker, supervisor, program manager, agency performance management analyst (AP) and section chief.
6. If the AAG determines that a legal basis exists, but supporting documentation is needed prior to going forward, the AAG will delineate the type of information needed and communicate this information to the social worker, supervisor, program manager, AP, and section chief.
 - a. The supervisor takes the lead to follow up with the AAG within 5 business days of the initial meeting, and provides an update on the requested information.
 - b. The social worker, program manager, AP, and section chief are copied on all email updates.
 - c. The social worker documents the decision in a contact note and selects “Legal Consult-Community Papering Pending Additional Information” from the Purpose drop down pick list.
 - When the AAG makes the final decision, the social worker enters a new contact note with either “Legal Consult-Community Papering Approved” or “Legal Consult-Community Papering Denied”.
7. If the AAG decides to move forward with community papering the case, the social worker will complete the complaint form in FACES.NET within one business day of the decision and document the decision in a contact note selecting “Legal Consult-Community Papering Approved” from the Purpose drop down pick list.
 - a. Initial hearings generally occur within 5 days of the filing of the complaint.
 - b. Within this time frame, the social worker and AAG should discuss availability for the social worker and the parent(s) to attend the hearing.

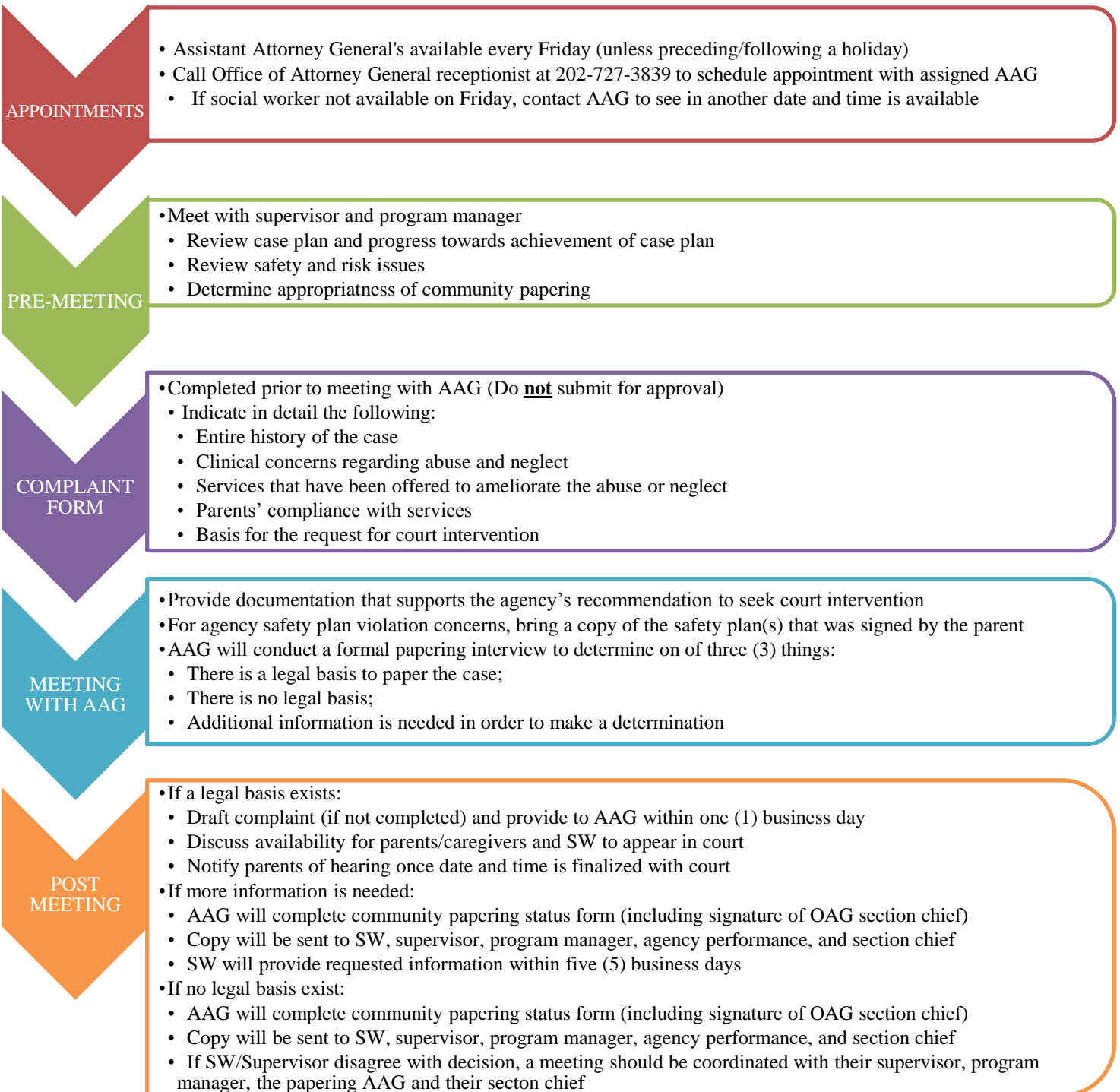
² A consultation and information sharing framework, the RED (review, educate, direct) team process is a structured framework to determine the acceptance and response pathways for referrals. The team consists of a diverse selection of internal and external multi-disciplinary representatives who discuss safety, complicated factors, service provisions, and next steps. The Big RED team process is specific to supervisory or managerial level staff.

³ Four or more allegations have been reported on the same family with the last report occurring within the past 12-months.

- c. Once the AAG is notified of a date and time for the initial hearing, the AAG notifies the social worker who notifies the parent(s).
 - d. The social worker or supervisor must be available to attend the initial hearing.
8. If the AAG determines that a legal basis to community paper the case does not exist, the AAG will complete the following tasks:
 - a. Indicate the reasons for not community papering on the *Community Papering & Consultation Sheet*
 - b. Obtain his or her section chief's signature
 - c. Email the scanned *Community Papering & Consultation Sheet* to the social worker, supervisor, program manager, AP, and section chief, filing a copy for the AAG's own files
9. The social worker documents the decision not to community paper in a contact note and selects "Legal Consult-Community Papering Denied" from the Purpose drop down pick list.
10. If a social worker or supervisor has any concerns related to a decision not to community paper, the supervisor makes a request up their chain of command (including notification of the deputy director) for resolution.
11. All information regarding the status of community papering requests are documented and stored in FACES.Net.

TIPS FOR COMMUNITY PAPERING

Community papering is a legal avenue that social workers can use to obtain court intervention and assistance with families that have been uncooperative and non-compliant with CFSA's efforts to remedy conditions of abuse and/or neglect in the home. At the time that a case is presented for community papering, a removal has not occurred and has not been recommended by the clinical team.¹



¹ Safety plans that restrict parental rights have the legal implications of a removal. For example, placing a child with a third party and restricting parental contact with the child to supervised visitation is technically a constructive removal. It is important that social workers consult an OAG section chief before including any restrictive contact conditions in a safety plan.