

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Child and Family Services Agency**



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-16-7**

TO: All Staff  
FROM: Heather D. Stowe, Ph.D.  
Principal Deputy Director  
DATE: December 22, 2016  
RE: Community Papering

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CFSA has developed the community papering process to request the Family Court's intervention with families with a child who is not currently under the court's supervision. CFSA undergoes the community papering process to:

- promote family engagement in safety and case planning with parents who, despite the best efforts of the case management team, have been unwilling to engage; or,
- request a shelter care order for the child(ren) in the home for whom there are safety risks due to the parent's steadfast refusal to engage in services.

This administrative issuance outlines the key considerations, required processes and approvals, and documentation requirements for any decisions around community papering. Questions should be directed to the Office of the Principal Deputy Director or the Deputy Attorney General of the Family Services Division.

1. Factors to consider before pursuing community papering:

- a. Patterns that impact child safety
  - i. Lack of agreement with case plan, not meeting the stated outcomes
  - ii. Persistence of conditions<sup>1</sup>
- 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

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<sup>1</sup>A 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 social worker and supervisor make the decision to pursue community papering during clinical supervision after careful consideration of the factors above. The decision to community paper the case may also be discussed during one of the following meetings:
  - a. Hotline RED Team<sup>2</sup>
  - b. 4+ staffing<sup>3</sup>
  - c. Case transfer staffing from CPS to an ongoing social worker
  - d. 10/15 day RED team
  - e. In-Home Big RED
  - f. At-risk Family Team Meeting (FTM)
3. When the clinical status of the case warrants community papering, the social worker, supervisor, and program manager hold a “pre-meeting” to review and document the following information:
  - a. Issues of non-compliance and impact on the child’s safety
  - b. Reasons to community paper and next steps, including formal conditions for maintaining the child in the home or recommendations for appropriate placement.
  - c. Documentation for discussion with the assistant attorney general (AAG).
4. The social worker meets with the AAG who is assigned to community paper cases for that week to discuss the case<sup>4</sup>.
5. The AAG then consults with the section chief on the case.
  - a. 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 will follow up with the AAG within five business days of the initial meeting, and provide 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.
    - i. 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 determines that the legal basis for community papering exists and is supported by the documentation provided, within two days the social worker will draft the complaint form for AAG endorsement.
8. Within one business day of the AAG endorsement of the complaint, the supervisory social worker approves the action in FACES.net and the social worker documents (in FACES.NET) the decision

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>4</sup> The AAG meeting is not a consultation to determine whether to proceed with community papering; it is a meeting to affirm a clinical recommendation to do so and to plan accordingly. The SW, Supervisor, and Program Manager should consult the AAG only after they themselves have determined that community papering is their desired course of action.

in a contact note selecting “Legal Consult-Community Papering Approved” from the Purpose drop down pick list.

9. The social worker or supervisor must be available to attend the initial hearing, which should be scheduled after consulting the parent(s) regarding their availability<sup>5</sup>.
  - a. 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).
10. 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 the section chief’s signature
  - c. Email the scanned *Community Papering & Consultation Sheet* to the social worker, supervisor, program manager, program administrator, Agency Performance, and section chief
11. 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.
12. 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 for resolution.
13. All information regarding the status of community papering requests are documented and stored in FACES.Net.

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<sup>5</sup> Initial hearings are typically scheduled within five days of the filing of the complaint.