

**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

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RE: Community Papering

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To promote engagement in safety and case planning with families where children are still residing at home, the Agency has developed a process, community papering, for requesting court intervention. This should be used when other strategies have not been successful in engaging parents in the process, when there is a lack of progress on the treatment plan, or when parents are not able or willing to follow through when the safety assessment outcome is “safe with a plan”. The community papering process is appropriate when CFSA (or one of its contracted agencies) has made a clinical determination that the court’s involvement and oversight will support the family and team meeting the outcomes of the case plan.

Community papering is appropriate in cases of educational neglect and medical neglect where emergency care is not needed, or where the parent has a substance abuse or mental health issue that is impacting parenting. In all situations, a key factor in the decision to use community papering must be the determination that **imminent danger to the child(ren) does not exist**. If imminent danger exists then it must be immediately addressed.

1. Factors to consider:
  - 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 decision to community paper is made by the social worker and supervisor after considering 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 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. When the recommendation has been made to community paper the case, the social worker, supervisor, and program manager meet to review and document the following information:
  - a. Issues of non-compliance and impact on the child's safety
  - b. Reasons to community paper versus remove the child
  - c. Documentation (see attached *Tips for Community Papering*) for discussion with 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.
  - 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.
    - 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 affirms the clinical decision to move forward with community papering the case, the social worker will draft the complaint form for AAG review within 2 business days of 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.

8. Within one business day of the AAG approval of the complaint, the social worker documents in FACES.NET 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 five 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.
  - 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.
9. 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, AP, and section chief, filing a copy for the AAG’s own files
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. All information regarding the status of community papering requests are documented and stored in FACES.Net.