

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



**Business Process: Adoption**

**I. POLICY**

When a child is placed in out-of-home care, CFSA's first objective is to seek reunification with the birth family or caregiver. If reunification is not possible, CFSA will pursue an alternative permanency goal, such as adoption. In an adoption, the Family Court terminates the rights of the biological parents and establishes, via court order, a new legal relationship of parent and child with an adoptive parent, also called an adoptive resource.

CFSA assesses adoptive resources for a child through clinical assessments of kin and/or the current caregiver. The results of the assessment determine the course of action that the agency believes to be in the child's best interest. Adhering to federal guidelines, CFSA works to finalize an adoption within 24 months of a child's removal. (See the [Permanency Practice policy](#) for more information on permanency goals).

**II. PROCEDURES**

**A. Adoption Practice Overview**

Adoption practice at CFSA has two objectives, which are pursued simultaneously: (1) to build and support the relationship between a child and their adoptive resource; and (2) to secure the Family Court's finalization of the adoptive arrangement. The ongoing social worker is responsible for leading all efforts on both objectives, working in close collaboration with the full clinical team, all known stakeholders (including the petitioners' attorneys),<sup>1</sup> and the assigned Assistant Attorney General (AAG) who represents the agency in Family Court proceedings. The ongoing social worker shall work to ensure that the Family Court process is moving forward timely.

1. The work to secure the Family Court's finalization of an adoption shall move through the following stages:
  - a. Finding/preparing the pre-adoptive home
  - b. Preparing for trial
  - c. Trial and Fitness Hearing
  - d. Reporting to the Family Court
  - e. Finalization

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, the term "Petitioner" will be referred to as "adoptive resource." An adoptive resource may be any individual who is at least 21 years old.

2. Following the establishment of a goal of adoption, the social worker shall work to build and support the relationship between a child and their adoptive resource through effective engagement, problem-solving and providing needed external resources. This effort shall be structured by the Child Case Plan and the Service Agreement (located in the Case Plan). The social worker shall update the Child Case Plan every 6 and the Service Agreement every 3 months throughout the life of a case (see the [Case Planning business process](#) for more information).
3. Following the establishment of a goal of adoption, the ongoing social worker shall also continue working with the birth parents, as appropriate and with their consent, to support their adjustment to the new permanency arrangement and to secure greater stability in the birth home. Parent contacts (electronically or in-person, depending on case circumstances) with the social worker shall take place at least once per month until the case closes. All contacts shall be documented in FACES.net by the ongoing social worker.

## B. Finding/Preparing the Pre-Adoptive Home

The adoption process begins with the identification of the adoptive resource and the preparation of that home. Identification of an adoptive resource shall begin shortly after the removal of a child, as part of [concurrent planning](#) with the family. Identification of the resource may also reoccur later in the life of a case, depending on how the child and birth family are progressing, the stability of the child's placement, and the availability of adoptive resources. Finding and preparing the adoptive home includes the critical steps identified below.

### 1. Determining the Adoptive Resource.

- a. **Identifying and assessing kin options.** The social worker shall be responsible for conducting early concurrent planning and discussions with the family that are used to identify possible adoptive resources among their extended network. Such efforts take place at these junctures:
  - i. During In-Home case planning, if the family had an In-Home case
  - ii. At the removal FTM; through a diligent search
  - iii. During the Parent Engagement, Education and Resource (PEER) orientation; and during on-going case planning with the family

The social worker shall also have a conversation with the child (if age- and developmentally appropriate) about potential resources, to better understand their thoughts and needs. To the extent possible, the extended kin landscape should be fully identified and assessed within 30 days of removal and documented in the collaterals screen in FACES.net.

- b. **Assessing resource parents.** As the case moves forward, the assigned social worker, with the support of other agency staff (e.g., the resource parent support worker [RPSW], recruitment staff, etc.) shall talk with resource parents to assess their interest in, and capacity for, becoming an adoptive resource. Direct conversations should begin as early as possible. Social workers shall also be continually assessing the resource parent's ability to become a permanency option for the child and continuously keep resource parents updated about the status of the case.

- c. **Late identification of kin.** When previously unknown or “ruled-out” (i.e., the clinical team determines they are not a viable placement option) kin emerge as potential adoptive resources late in the life of a case, it can extend the time in achieving permanency, and may be traumatic to a child who has been building a relationship with their current adoptive resource. Early identification of kin is intended to prevent such trauma. However, because CFSA prioritizes kin placement, if kin enter the picture late in the case, the assigned social worker shall meet with them to explore their viability while taking into consideration the existing relationship between the resource parent and the child. Following these efforts, a clinical assessment shall be made, as soon as possible, to determine the permanency arrangement that meets the best interests of the child. Although these conversations and decisions can be difficult, social workers are encouraged to seek guidance and support from their supervisor to discuss strategies for having them with the child, adoptive resource, and kin.

## 2. Specialized Recruitment

- a. **Purpose.** The Specialized Recruitment Unit is responsible for searching for adoptive resources, if none have been identified, matching children with adoptive families, and helping to expedite preparation of the pre-adoptive home. In addition, the unit monitors progress and supports the clinical team from goal change to adoption through the filing of an adoption petition. For example, members of the Unit provide attorney lists or connections to pre-adoption supports to those who are in need of this information and engage with resource parents to ensure the process moves forward.
- b. **Process.** The Specialized Recruitment Unit shall monitor children who already have an identified adoptive resource until a petition is filed. Immediately following a goal change to adoption, if there is no identified adoptive resource, the social worker shall immediately submit a referral packet to the Recruitment Unit. (The packet may be submitted before a goal change if the social worker knows a search will be needed). To identify information about the child, a court order waiving confidentiality will need to be obtained by the Assistant Attorney General (AAG) or Guardian ad litem (GAL). Once the Family Court waives confidentiality, the agency is enabled to conduct a public recruitment as well as a child-specific search with sister agencies in other jurisdictions, on adoption websites, or through other appropriate adoption recruitment mechanisms.

When potential adoptive families are identified, the assigned recruitment worker shall meet with the GAL, social worker, and supervisory social worker to select a first choice for the child. If the child is of age and it is developmentally appropriate, the child may be able to participate in the decision. Once the first choice is made, a “background conference” with the selected family is held. During this conference, detailed information sharing can be gathered through a discussion between the selected family and the assigned recruitment team member. The previous resource parent may also be invited to the background conference, when appropriate, to participate in the conversation with pre-adoptive parents.

If the match is moving forward, a transition plan with graduated visitation shall be carefully developed, taking into account the unique needs of the child. The transition period often lasts about 6 weeks but may be longer or shorter. Adoption support services are also offered to the family during this time through a referral. The Recruitment Unit staff shall also make monthly visits to the child to support the social worker, and to assist with the child and the pre-adoptive family’s transition. The monthly visits occur until the petition is filed.

- c. **Timeframe.** The Specialized Recruitment Unit shall seek to ensure the child is placed in a pre-adoptive home within 9 months of the date the adoption goal was established by the Family Court (i.e., the “goal date”).
- d. **Documentation.** The Specialized Recruitment Unit shall document in the Permanency Tracker by the end of each month the date a referral packet is received from the social worker. Other recruitment milestones (such as a background conference) shall be documented in FACES.net as contact notes. The Specialized Recruitment Unit shall prepare a “Timely Adoption Plan” within 95 days of the goal change, upload it to FACES.net and provide a copy to the social worker. This plan shall be updated every 90 days until a petition is filed.

### 3. Securing an Attorney

- a. **Purpose.** Resource parents who plan to adopt may require an attorney to file a petition and represent them in all aspects of the adoption process that take place in the Family Court.
- b. **Process.** The ongoing social worker shall work with the adoptive resource to ensure they secure an attorney. The attorney can be retained at the adoptive resource’s expense or, depending on the financial resources of the family, an attorney may be secured through the Counsel for Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) office. (See the Legal Fee Voucher Program Protocol for more information). The social worker may provide the family with a list of CCAN attorneys to facilitate their search.
  - i. *A note about CFSA’s Adoption Voucher Program:* The Adoption Voucher program provides up to \$5,000 per adoptive family to cover attorney fees associated with the adoption. It may be available to attorneys who file an adoption petition for a child on behalf of an identified adoptive resource selected by the Agency. The voucher shall be received upon the conclusion of the case. Upon receipt of the Order of Reference/Petition of Adoption, the appropriate Permanency Administration clerical staff shall review it to identify the assigned attorney information. If the child is placed in the home of the adoptive resource, as indicated in FACES.net, the assigned attorney is provided a Legal Voucher Agreement/Protocols to be submitted to CFSA’s Program Operations’ Permanency program clerical assistant upon finalization or dismissal of the adoption case.

Upon finalization/dismissal of the case, the attorney submits the supporting documentation and legal voucher for payment of services. The demand payment/legal voucher shall be entered into FACES.net by the appropriate Permanency Administration clerical staff for approval by their supervisor. The supervisor is provided the demand payment request form and supporting documentation for signature. The supervisor signs the documents and sends it to accounts payable, which processes payment directly to the attorney.

CFSA’s Program Operations’ permanency program clerical assistant will provide the voucher to the adoptive parent’s attorney. The AAG and social worker shall discuss the resource parent’s progress towards securing an attorney every 30 days.

- c. **Timeframes.** To keep the adoption process moving forward expeditiously, the social worker shall seek to ensure that a resource parent who intends to adopt a child secures an attorney within four to six weeks of the goal change (if the child is already in the home), or of the placement date if the child is new to the home.

- d. **Documentation.** The supervisory social worker shall document the date an attorney is secured in the Permanency Tracker by the end of the month in which it occurred.

#### 4. Adoption Petition and Order of Reference

- a. **Filing a Petition.** An adoption petition is the legal commitment to pursue adoption of a child. While the petition can be filed in the Family Court without an attorney (which is referred to in court as *Pro Se*), CFSA shall encourage resource parents to seek legal representation as opposed to representing themselves in Family Court. CFSA works to have the resource parent file an adoption petition within 45 days of the adoption goal (if the child is already in the home), or of the placement date if the child is new to the home.
- b. **Order of Reference.** Following the filing of a petition, the Family Court will provide CFSA with the “Order of Reference” (OR), which officially consolidates the neglect case (that led to the child’s placement into foster care), with the adoption case moving forward. The OR contains the dates of the petition filing, due dates for the interim and final adoption reports (which are often subject to change), and the date of the Initial Show Cause Hearing (see below).
- c. **Documentation.** When Program Operations clerical staff receive the OR from the Family Court, they shall send a copy to all staff and managers involved in the case and enter the date the OR is issued into the Permanency Tracker. A member of the Permanency Administration clerical team shall enter the date the petition was filed in FACES.net at the placement screen.

#### 5. Home Study and Clearance Updates

- a. **Purpose:** All adoptive homes must have a complete home study and up-to-date clearances for all residents in the home over the age of 18 for the adoption to finalize. Required clearances include: child protection clearances for every state lived in during the last 10 years; police clearance for every state lived, worked, or attended school in during the last 5 years; FBI clearance; and a medical clearance.
- b. **Process.** The social worker shall submit an adoption update request to the Re-licensing Unit. The Re-licensing Unit shall ensure all clearances are updated. When the clearances have been completely updated, the Re-licensing staff assistant shall notify the social worker that the information can be included in reports to the Family Court.
- c. **Timeframes.** As soon as the Order of Reference is received at CFSA, the Relicensing Unit shall receive notification from the Permanency Administration Clerical Team. The assigned Relicensing worker then begins the process of ensuring all clearances will be up-to-date when the Final Adoption Report is filed with the Family Court.
- d. **Documentation.** The relicensing worker shall document all clearance updates in FACES.net.

#### 6. Subsidy Agreement

- a. **Purpose.** Children who have been in foster care may be eligible for a monthly financial subsidy, until age 21, to help their adoptive families meet their needs. CFSA’s Subsidy Unit is responsible for negotiating a subsidy agreement individually with each family and their attorney.

b. **Process.**

- i. Immediately following receipt of the OR, the social worker shall begin working with the resource family to complete the required paperwork for the subsidy referral. (See the [Adoption Subsidy policy](#) for more information.)

*Note: This packet includes a subsidy referral, subsidy application completed by the prospective adoptive parent(s), a copy of the petition, copies of the child's birth certificate and social security card, the child's asset statement, child's medical documentation (if applicable), the child's initial hearing order, and copy of the court document addressing parent rights.*

- ii. The subsidy referral, application, petition, and birth certificate are required to begin the subsidy process. The additional information referenced in the note above may be submitted as it becomes available.
  - iii. Once the referral has been made, the assigned subsidy worker shall begin negotiations and inform the clinical team when an agreement has been finalized.
- c. **Timeframes.** Within 21 business days of receiving the OR, the social worker shall submit the adoption subsidy referral packet. The Subsidy Unit shall seek to finalize an agreement with the family within 30 days of the receipt of the referral.
- d. **Documentation.** The Subsidy Unit staff shall enter into the Permanency Tracker: the date the subsidy referral was received; the date the final proposed subsidy was sent to the family and attorney; and the date the agreement on the proposed subsidy was finalized (i.e., signed by all parties).

7. Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC)

- a. **Purpose.** Approval of an ICPC is required if a child's adoptive resource resides outside the District of Columbia (See the [ICPC policy](#) for more information).
- b. **Process.** Prior to the submission of an ICPC referral to the ICPC Unit, the child must have been declared legally free (i.e., the child is legally able to be adopted, either through a termination of parental rights or waiver of parental consent by the Family Court, consent to adoption, voluntary relinquishment, or death of a parent).
  - i. The referral packet includes: a copy of the court order waiving or terminating parental rights or, if it is a relinquishment, a copy of the consent or death certificate; the child-specific adoption home study; three post-placement reports; and a final post-placement report recommending adoption finalization from the assigned child placing agency in the state where the adoptive family resides. (See the [ICPC policy and business process](#) for more information.)
  - ii. If a child-specific home study has not been completed by the receiving state, the ICPC Unit will work with the receiving state to ensure the home study is completed.
  - iii. The ICPC Unit shall: (1) review the ICPC referral for completeness, (2) submit it to the ICPC office in the receiving state, (3) monitor it for approval, and (4) inform the assigned CFSA social worker once approved.

- c. **Timeframes.** The social worker shall make an ICPC referral within 7 days of the child being legally free for adoption. If the home study has been approved by a licensed child placing agency in the receiving state, CFSA's ICPC Unit shall have 3 days to process and send the referral to the receiving state's ICPC office. The receiving state's office generally has 3 days to render its final decision. Delays to these timeframes may be caused by incomplete adoption home studies/updates or monitoring reports. Adoption home studies and reports are to be completed by the assigned child placing agency in the state where the adoptive family resides.
- d. **Documentation.** CFSA's ICPC Unit shall maintain all relevant ICPC information in the National Electronic Interstate Compact Enterprise (NEICE) database. They also shall enter the dates an ICPC referral was received, submitted, and approved in the Permanency Tracker.

### C. Preparing for the Adoption Trial

Although an adoption trial generally lasts anywhere from a few hours to a week, the preparatory work by the social worker, AAG, adoptive resource's attorney, and other CFSA program area staff is extensive.

#### 1. Service to Birth Parents of The Order to Show Cause

- a. **Purpose.** The birth parents of a child for whom CFSA is pursuing adoption must be given the opportunity to either consent to the adoption or "show cause" (i.e., provide reasons) why the Family Court should not grant permission for an adoption to be pursued. Parents are officially informed of an adoption petition by being "served" delivery of a court document. The document to the birth parent provides that an adoption petition has been filed for one or more of their children and the date of the Show Cause Hearing.
- b. **Process.** Following the filing of an adoption petition, the Family Court issues an "Order of Reference" for CFSA and an "Order to Show Cause" for parents. CFSA's Diligent Search Unit (DSU) shall retrieve copies of these orders from the courthouse. The DSU is then responsible for locating parents and serving them the Order to Show Cause. The ongoing social worker shall prepare parents for this event during concurrent planning discussions. The ongoing social worker shall also be responsible for assisting the DSU in finding and connecting with the parents so they can be served. See the [Diligent Search policy](#) for more information.
- c. **Timeframes.** When the above-mentioned orders are retrieved, DSU staff are immediately assigned to complete (or attempt) their service by the date listed in the order.
- d. **Documentation.** DSU staff shall file an "Affidavit of Service" or an "Affidavit of Efforts" with the court, to document their work. DSU staff shall also enter the dates of their efforts and service into the Permanency Tracker.

#### 2. Show Cause and/or Fitness Hearing

- a. **Purpose.** The Show Cause Hearing provides birth parents an opportunity to persuade the Court that an adoption should not be granted. If the parents do not wish to contest the adoption, the Show Cause hearing provides the Family Court with the factual basis for waiving the parents' consent. The purpose of the Fitness Hearing is for the Family Court to assess the suitability of the adoptive resource to adopt.
- b. **Process.** The social worker shall collaborate with the birth parents and their attorneys to seek and secure their intention to consent to the adoption. If the birth parents consent and

an adoption trial will **not** occur, the judge is still required to hear the evidence supporting the adoptive parents' fitness as caregivers. The social worker shall confirm for the court the adoptive parents' health, finances, relationship with the child, and why the adoption is in the child's best interest. The adoptive parents themselves are provided an opportunity to testify. If the birth parents **do not** consent to an adoption, the hearing will be used to schedule the adoption trial.

- c. **Documentation.** The supervisory social worker shall document the date of the Show Cause Hearing in the Permanency Tracker.

3. Severing Parental Rights (Relinquishment, Consent, Involuntary Waiver of Consent, Termination of Parental Rights)

- a. **Purpose.** Prior to an adoption, which establishes a new legal relationship of parent and child, the Family Court must sever the legal rights of the child's birth parents. This can be accomplished through a voluntary relinquishment, consent, waiver of consent by the court, or a termination of parental rights. Each is summarized briefly below.

- b. **Voluntary Relinquishment:**

- i. For a voluntary relinquishment to occur, the birth parents must voluntarily put in writing (on the required Relinquishment Form) that they are unable and unwilling to provide for the rearing of their child.
- ii. Relinquishments shall be obtained by the social worker with involvement of the birth parent's attorney.
- iii. The birth parent can revoke a relinquishment, in writing, within fourteen days.

- c. **Consent:**

- i. The birth parent(s) voluntarily consents to their child being adopted by a specific person (petitioner).
- ii. Written consent is obtained by the birth parents' attorney.

- d. **Waiver of Consent by the Court (involuntary):**

- i. Following the Show Cause Hearing, a judge may waive the parent's consent if they conclude that the parent's consent is being withheld and is against the best interest of the child or that the parents have abandoned the child for a period of 6 months and voluntarily failed to contribute to the child's support for at least 6 months.
- ii. A waiver of consent is only in relationship to the specific adoption petition before the Family Court at the time of the Show Cause Hearing and cannot be appealed prior to adoption finalization.

- e. **Termination of Parental Rights (TPR):**

- i. OAG files a motion and presents evidence that the parent is unfit to care for their child. The motion can be filed 6 months after removal, if appropriate. Under federal law, a TPR is filed when a child has been in foster care for 15 of 22 months. Based on the evidence provided, the court may terminate the parent-child relationship if it finds that doing so is in the child's best interest.
- ii. Generally, a TPR motion is heard along with an adoption petition. In this instance, the court sets the date for a trial that will cover both the adoption and the TPR. The



court first makes its findings on whether the parent is fit. Then the Family Court considers whether adoption is in the best interests of the child as well as the fitness of the adoptive resource. Parents are given an opportunity to consent to the adoption, and if they do not consent and/or are determined by the court to be unfit, their right to consent to the adoption is waived by the court.

- iii. If a parent's rights have been terminated involuntary, the Family Court can find that CFSA does not have to make reasonable efforts to reunify any subsequent siblings who enter care and can recommend a goal of adoption at the disposition hearing. This is referred to as an aggravated circumstance that allows the agency to bypass reunification efforts.
- f. **Documentation.** The social worker shall enter the date a TPR is filed in the contact notes in FACES.net.

#### 4. Child's Consent (age 14 or Older)

- a. **Purpose.** Children who are age 14 or older and developmentally able, are required to give their written consent to adoption by a specific individual. Children under 14 years of age are not required to provide consent to be adopted.
- b. **Process.** The social worker should discuss this matter with the child to ensure they are informed about the process. The assigned GAL shall meet with the age-appropriate child, secure the consent, and file it with the court. If the child does not consent, the adoption cannot be granted.
- c. **Timing.** The court determines when consent is to be secured on a case-by-case basis and informs all parties during a hearing or other meeting.
- d. **Documentation.** The court or GAL provides CFSA with a copy of the consent, which shall be included in the case file by the social worker. The supervisory social worker enters the date of the consent in the Permanency Tracker.

#### 5. Competing Adoption Petitions

- a. **Definition.** A competing adoption petition is when more than one person files a petition in court to adopt the same child.
- b. **Process.** When the clinical team becomes aware of a potential competing adoptive resource, or an Order of Reference is received for a competing petition, the following steps are taken:
  - i. Notify the AAG and GAL of the competing petition.
  - ii. The clinical team, led by the social worker, shall assess the viability of any potential adoptive resource: their financial and mental stability; their ability and willingness to meet the child's individual needs; and the physical capacity of their home.
    - a) If a determination needs to be made about supporting a specific adoptive resource, the social worker's program manager shall convene a panel (consisting of the social worker, licensing staff, the supervisory social worker, and program administrator) to discuss the different options and to make a recommendation on an adoptive placement that is in the best interest of the child. Additional individuals in the chain-of-command may participate in the

decision-making if needed. The panel shall consult with the AAG and GAL as needed.

- b) If an adoptive resource is a viable option, they can get licensed through CFSA (for a DC home) or referred to a contracted agency (if a Maryland home).
  - c) If the clinical team determines an adoptive resource is not a viable, and will not be considered, the social worker shall verbally inform the family. *Note: Although CFSA may not consider an adoptive resource viable, they may still move forward with filing the competing petition with the Family Court.*
- iii. If the adoptive resource who is not supported by CFSA files a competing petition, the social worker shall write a Status Report to the court updating them about the competing petitions to include the agency's recommended petitioner. If the petition is not dismissed by the Family Court, and the competing adoptive resource remains committed to adopting, then the case shall proceed to trial as a contested adoption.
- c. **Documentation.** The social worker shall document all of the above in the case file, in court reports, and the contacts screen in FACES.net. The Program Operations clerical staff shall enter any competing adoption petitions in the Permanency Tracker.

#### D. Trial

In the adoption trial, if the birth parents have not consented to the adoption, the court determines parental fitness (*See Procedure C above for more information*). The judge also determines whether the adoptive resource is qualified, and the adoption is in the best interests of the child. Since both birth parents are entitled to contest an adoption, and there may be competing adoptive resources, the trial could last multiple days.

##### 1. Social Worker and AAG Roles

- a. The AAG shall represent the agency's position in the trial, questioning witnesses, and providing support to the adoptive resource(s) whom the agency supports, and their attorney.
- b. The social worker will be called as a witness and shall work with the AAG and the adoptive resource's attorney to prepare for the trial. (See [Tip Sheet - Testifying in Court.](#))

##### 2. Adoption Short Order/Findings of Fact

- a. **Purpose.** The Family Court will issue an Adoption Short Order (a one-page summary), the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law (a detailed description of the trial and decision in the case), along with official documentation of the proceedings to all parties. The Adoption Short Order, which verifies that the child is legally freed for adoption, is used to launch the ICPC process, complete the subsidy process, and schedule the Family Court's finalization of the adoption.
- b. **Process.** The social worker shall include the Adoption Short Order, Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, along with any additional court documentation in the case file.
- c. **Documentation.** The supervisory social worker shall enter the date the short order was issued in the Permanency Tracker.

### 3. Appeals

- a. **Process.** Birth parents cannot appeal an adoption order until the adoption is finalized. The possibility of an appeal does not prevent the agency from closing the case and achieving permanency.
- b. **Timing.** Birth parents shall have 30 days from finalization to make an appeal to the Family Court.

### E. **Ongoing Reporting to the Court**

Court reports, written by the assigned social worker, enable CFSA to keep the judge and others informed about the status of the case. The development of court reports by the social worker is an ongoing process. Social workers shall continuously gather information from various sources and document them in the case file throughout the life of the case. The submission of reports to the Family Court begins once a child is removed. Updates are due to the court prior to every scheduled Permanency Hearing, which are held at least every 6 months. The adoption process requires a specific series of additional court reports as detailed below. The social worker shall ensure that all court reports are included in the case file.

#### 1. Adoption Interim Report.

- a. **Purpose.** The Adoption Interim Report provides the court with a review of the birth parents' positions on the possible adoption of their child(ren); lists any potential impediments to adoption (e.g., past criminal or child abuse records for the adoptive resource); and certifies that the agency has applied for the required FBI clearances and made a referral to the CFSA subsidy unit. All of the required elements of this report are listed in the OR provided by the Family Court.
- b. **Timing and approval:** The due date for the Adoption Interim Report is listed in the OR, generally 21 days from the date the petition is filed. The supervisory social worker followed by the program manager shall approve the Adoption Interim Report before it is submitted to the court. To meet the deadline, social workers shall begin preparation of this report as soon as they receive the OR.
- c. **Submission logistics and documentation.** The Adoption Interim Report is a word document that is filed in court for the judge. The social worker shall also email the report to the GAL and adoptive resource's attorney simultaneously. A copy shall be kept in the case file.

#### 2. Adoption Status Reports.

- a. **Purpose.** If CFSA is in the process of preparing its final adoption report, "Status Reports" are filed to provide the court with, among other information, the status of clearances, and a detailed list of all outstanding items that must be completed before the final report can be submitted (required contents are listed in the OR).
- b. **Timing and approval:** Status reports are usually required to be filed with the court every 30-45 days (from the final report due date listed in the OR), however, this requirement may vary depending on the judge. The approval process is the same as for the Interim Report.
- c. **Submission logistics and documentation.** The Adoption Status Report is filed electronically by the AAG to the court. It is emailed by the social worker to the GAL and adoptive resource's attorney. A copy is kept in the case file by the social worker.

### 3. Adoption Final Report

- a. **Purpose.** The Adoption Final Report conveys the full history of the case leading up to the adoption, including detailed information about the birth and adoptive parent(s), their home, the child, and their relationship. The Adoption Final Report also includes a justification for the adoption plan (link to template and tip sheet for writing the final report).
- b. **Timing and approval:** Following the trial, the court establishes a new due date for the final report if there is conflict with the date in the OR, as well as a date for finalization of the adoption. The final report is approved through the full chain of command (supervisory social worker, program manager, program administrator, deputy director, and director) 10 days prior to the due date to ensure compliance with the deadline.
- c. **Submission logistics and documentation.** The final report is submitted to the judge by the AAG.

### F. Finalization

Following the conclusion of the adoption trial, CFSA shall complete the following activities to finalize the adoption.

1. Documentation of the Final Decree. The final decree provided by the court indicates the date the adoption is finalized. Program Operations clerical staff shall enter the date the final decree was received into the Permanency Tracker and send a copy to all staff, including managers involved in the case.
2. Splitting the Case. Upon receipt of the final decree, the Subsidy Unit shall transition the adopted child's neglect case to an adoption subsidy case in FACES.net. This enables the adoptive parents to receive the negotiated adoption subsidy. This step, known as "splitting the case," shall not be taken until the final adoption decree is received by the Subsidy Unit. (See [the Adoption Subsidy policy](#) for more information.)
3. Post Permanency Services. CFSA's Post Permanency Team shall provide crisis intervention services, referrals to various programs, resource information, adoption search information, and support to families who have finalized adoptions and guardianships in the District of Columbia. These services are provided to prevent disruptions of and/or dissolutions to finalized adoptions, and to educate, support, empower, and stabilize adoptive families. The ongoing social worker shall provide the family with information on accessing post permanency services. This information shall also be included in the subsidy agreement and in the congratulatory letter sent out after the finalization of the adoption.

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Child and Family Services Agency



## LEGAL FEE VOUCHER PROGRAM PROTOCOL

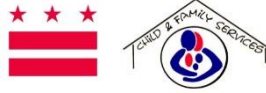
The Child and Family Services Agency has a voucher program to cover adoption legal fees for fiscal year 2021. To receive a voucher and payment under this program, an adoption petition must have been filed between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021, in the Superior Court for the District of Columbia for the adoption of a child who is adjudicated to have been abused or neglected.

No voucher shall be issued for petitions filed after September 30, 2021, for Fiscal Year 2021. Payment shall be made upon finalization of the adoption or dismissal of the petition.

- Upon receipt of the petition from the court, the Legal Voucher Coordinator shall issue a legal fee agreement to the attorney who is listed as the legal representative for the petitioner.
- Legal fee agreements shall be submitted directly to the petitioner(s)' attorney.
- Payment shall commence with the filing date of the petition.
- All bills shall be paid in full upon finalization of the adoption or a dismissal of the petition. Payment of no more than \$1,500 shall be paid for a dismissal or withdrawal of a petition.
- Legal Fee Voucher Program is only applicable for adoption petitions filed between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021.
- In regard to competing petitions, payment shall commence upon placement of the child and finalization of the adoption.
- All parties involved should sign the Legal Fee Agreement.
- Legal Fee Agreement **must** accompany **all** invoices for payment, copy of final decree or dismissal signed by judge. No bill shall be paid without the original agreement.
- The Agreement and invoice should be returned to the Legal Voucher Coordinator.
- The Legal Voucher Coordinator shall process paperwork for payment and forward to Fiscal Operations for processing.
- The Legal Voucher Coordinator is responsible for all communications with Fiscal Operations.
- All matters pertaining to the Legal Fee Voucher Program should be directed to the Legal Voucher Coordinator, CFSA, 202-727-4549.

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Child and Family Services Agency



**VOUCHER FORM AGREEMENT**

This agreement entitles \_\_\_\_\_ to obtain payment of their legal fees  
Adoptive Parent(s)  
related to finalizing the adoption(s) of their prospective child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_  
Child(ren's) names

Legal fees under this program are only available for reimbursement of expenses related to finalizing the adoptions of District foster children. For purposes of this program, foster children are defined as children in the care, custody and control of the Child and Family Services Agency of the District of Columbia (hereafter referred to as CFSA). The following conditions apply to program usage:

1. The maximum reimbursement amount that can be paid for any family's adoption (whether for an individual child or sibling group) is up to \$5,000.
2. All legal charges must be justified based on the type and complexity of the case. All attorneys' bills must be specific as to length of service for any individual charge (broken down in tenth of an hour, including description of client activity).
3. Attorneys may not bill at a rate higher than \$125.00 per hour. Attorney's bills submitted for higher hourly rates shall be returned for re-computation by the attorney.
4. CFSA shall pay the attorney directly. No payments shall be made to any attorney in any individual case unless the adoption petition has been filed, the goal has been changed to adoption and the adoptive parents shall have completed all eligibility requirements for adoption and the agency approves the permanency plan.
5. Payments will be made for legal services for adoptions which are filed and/or finalized from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.
6. Payment of no more than \$1,500 will be paid for a dismissal or withdrawal of a petition.
7. Attorneys shall bill the agency upon finalization of the adoption and the original agreement must be enclosed with the bill.
8. Attorneys shall direct their bills to:

Child and Family Services Agency  
200 I Street, S.E. Rm. 2656B  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
Attention: Carolyn Brockman  
(202) 727-4549

The Legal Fees Agreement for the adoption(s) of the forenamed child(ren) is approved for actual billings up to \$5,000 while funds remain available in the program.  
We understand and accept the foregoing provisions regarding the Legal Fees Program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attorney for Adoptive Parent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoptive Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoption Services Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Child and Family Services Agency



Fiscal Operations Administration-Accounting Office

**Demand Payment Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Requested by: \_\_\_\_\_

Requestor's Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

For new providers the following information must be provided for entry into FACES:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID No: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider Phone No: \_\_\_\_\_

For the following clients: (attach addition sheet if necessary)

Name:	Client ID:	Date of Service	Amount
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Brief Justification: (Attach memorandum and/or all receipts of applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Approval: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor/\*Program Manager or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\*Requests in excess of \$300 must be approved by a program manager or designee.

This form must be received in the accounting office before payment is approved.  
Check will be generated within 5 – 7 days after approval



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



**RELINQUISHMENT OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the \_\_\_\_\_  
Name First Middle Last (Maiden) Biological Mother/Biological Father/Adoptive Parent  
of the minor child \_\_\_\_\_, born on \_\_\_\_\_,  
Child's Name First Middle Last Month -- Day--Year  
at \_\_\_\_\_ located in \_\_\_\_\_,  
Name of Hospital City State

I have talked with \_\_\_\_\_, from the \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name of Professional Social Worker Name of Licensed Child Placing Agency

who has explained my rights to me, and the nature and consequences of executing or signing this form, which I fully understand.

Therefore, after being fully informed and giving due consideration to the alternatives available, and having been given the opportunity to contact any attorney presently assigned to me, I now, voluntarily and without coercion or duress, relinquish my child and surrender those parental rights to the Mayor of the District of Columbia, or the designated agent, as provided by Section 4-1406 of the District of Columbia Code (2006).

I also consent and give authority to the Mayor of the District of Columbia or the designated agent in whose care, custody or control my child is now placed, to make a permanent adoptive placement for my child and to consent to the adoption of the same.



2. That \_\_\_\_\_ is personally well known to me as the person executing

the foregoing Relinquishment of Parental Rights form regarding the above-named child; and

3. They have acknowledged the same to be their act and deed, done voluntarily and without coercion or duress, in my presence and in the presence of \_\_\_\_\_ and in the presence of \_\_\_\_\_  
Witness, First Middle Last

each other, on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.  
Month -- Day--Year Time

4. They have had the contents of this form and their rights explained by me, and the nature and consequences of executing and signing this form.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Licensed Child Placing Agency Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address of Agency

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip Code

Subscribed and sworn to before me, \_\_\_\_\_, a Notary Public in and for  
Name of Notary Public

\_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_.  
Jurisdiction Month-Day-Year

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary Public My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Expiration