Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)
Office of Planning, Policy, and Program Support
Policy Unit Communications

The CFSA Policy Unit communicates regularly with staff, private agencies and other stakeholders to support best practice standards, provide comprehensive and uniform guidelines for staff decision-making authority and accountability, and to further protect the children and families served by the Agency. The communication process is comprehensive, multi-tiered, and designed to guide the conduct of all employees.

New Employee Orientation and the CFSA Policy Manual
Every new CFSA employee is introduced to policy during orientation sessions. A list of current policies, along with a brief explanation for how to access the online CFSA Policy Manual, is included during the session. New employees are also informed of the policy development process, including their core involvement as program staff. They are also encouraged to ask any questions by contacting the Policy Unit through the CFSA policy email address: cfsa.policies@dc.gov. Several hard copies of the CFSA Policy Manual are also available in the offices of some external stakeholders, and of the deputy director and/or administrator for each individual administration.

Policy Unit Listening Tours
Policy Unit Listening Tours help to increase staff and stakeholder (e.g. private agencies) familiarity with policy development and the implementation process while simultaneously encouraging staff and stakeholder utilization of policy initiatives. The ultimate purpose, however, of a Policy Listening Tour is to assess needs for future policy development. Over a dozen CFSA administrations and several stakeholders are visited annually by the program manager and the supervisory policy advisor during a tour. After a brief presentation, staff members or stakeholders, including foster parent advocacy groups, are invited to ask questions, express concerns, and offer suggestions. Staff feedback is recorded by the Policy Unit staff assistant. Next steps are followed up within 30 days, and all interested parties are kept informed.

Updates to Policies and Administrative Issuances
Whenever a new or revised policy is finalized, staff and applicable stakeholders receive a one page summary of the policy document(s) via email with a link to the new policy. Additionally, policy updates are distributed during Program Operations' All-Staff Meetings, as well as Management Team meetings. Staff may also be informed via email of all changes in practice procedures through monthly status reports. Finally, all program administrators and external stakeholders receive new policies via email to be printed out and placed in the hard copy of the manual for each physical location, and for distribution to staff and/or other interested parties.

Policy Development
CFSA encourages staff to initiate policies or policy revisions through the chain of command for presentation by the appropriate deputy director to the Executive Policy Team (EPT). Although the Policy Unit facilitates the development process, policy content evolves as a direct result of decisions and input by invested staff and external stakeholders, guided by an executive sponsor. Lastly, the policy returns to the EPT for final acceptance.

Trainings and Policy Implementation
Implementation of new policies requires a concerted effort to reach a broad base of social workers and stakeholders. Cross-training is the vehicle with which the Agency achieves this goal. Foster and adoptive parents, along with social workers and GALs, are invited to participate in trainings that include both development and implementation of policies.

POLLY CEE – A Monthly Column in the CFSA Reporter
An effective communication tool for keeping policies in the forefront of practice, the bi-weekly publication of the CFSA Reporter highlights individual policies once a month. The highlights include brief tips for applying the policy in daily practice and reminders for accessing the online Policy Manual.