

5101:2-48-05

Agency adoption and recruitment plan.

(A) A public children services agency (PCSA), private child placing agency (PCPA) or private noncustodial agency (PNA) that places children for adoption or participates in the placement of children for adoption shall have a current written adoption policy.

(B) The policy shall include:

(1) The geographic area within which the agency conducts adoption homestudy assessments.

(2) A description of the adoption application process, the adoption homestudy, and the adoption homestudy update and amendment procedures, including:

(a) Eligibility requirements for an adoptive applicant(s).

(b) Timeframe for commencing and completing an adoption homestudy.

(c) Process for simultaneously certifying an applicant for foster care placement and approving an applicant for adoption.

(d) Preservice training requirements for an adoptive applicant(s).

(e) Criminal records check requirements and fees associated with obtaining a criminal records check pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.

(f) The requirement that an assessor shall complete the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (12/2006) if an approved adoptive parent(s) will have at least five children residing in the prospective adoptive home. The five children includes the child who is to be placed in the home for adoption.

(3) Notification procedures which, at a minimum, include:

(a) The requirements that an adoptive applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) shall notify the agency in writing if a person residing in the home who is twelve years old, but under eighteen years old, has been convicted or pleaded guilty to any offense listed in appendix A of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult, would constitute one of those offenses.

(b) The requirements that the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides within ten days after the initiation of a homestudy pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code.

- (c) The requirements that the PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent(s) resides, of an impending adoptive placement no later than ten days prior to the placement of the child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.
- (4) A procedure to provide access to approved adoption homestudies and other related documents to another PCSA, PCPA, or PNA that requests a copy of the adoption homestudy for purposes of matching a child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-19 of the Administrative Code.
- (5) A procedure for the receipt and maintenance of approved adoptive homestudies from other agencies or states, including the length of time that homestudies received shall be maintained in the agency's files.
- (6) A procedure pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code, to review grievances or complaints, received from the prospective adoptive applicant(s), adoptive applicant(s), or approved adoptive parent(s).
- (a) The requirements for hearing grievances and for resolving differences with the prospective adoptive applicant(s), adoptive applicant(s), or approved adoptive parent(s), relative to the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code and other agency policies.
- (b) The requirements of review by the highest administrative employee of the agency or designee for any unresolved grievance within thirty calendar days of the filing of the grievance.
- (7) The requirements contained in rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code supercedes the requirements of this rule when the grievance or complaint involve alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to the foster care and adoption process that involves race, color or national origin (RCNO).
- (8) A procedure to match a child with an adoptive parent(s):
- (a) If only one relative or if only the child's current foster caregiver has expressed an interest in adopting the child, and if the agency deems that placement with the relative or foster caregiver is in the child's best interest, the agency shall give preference to this family in the placement selection. The agency is not required to consider other families in the matching conference.
- (b) If the child is a member of a federally recognized tribe or Alaskan Native Village, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 (1/2/06) (ICWA) shall take precedence for an adoption.

- (c) Whenever possible and in the best interest of the child(ren), sibling groups should not be separated.
- (d) The child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.
- (e) The length of time between adoptive placements for the adoptive parents shall be specified in the policy.
- (f) Any relative or foster caregiver who has expressed interest in the child, shall be considered at the matching conference. The following is the preferential order for the placement of a child if more than one family is being considered for placement:

 - (i) An adult relative.
 - (ii) The foster caregiver with whom the child resides, if the child has substantial emotional ties to the foster caregiver and if the removal of the child from placement with the foster caregiver would be detrimental to the child's well-being.
 - (iii) A foster caregiver with whom the child has previously resided at any time.
 - (iv) An approved adoptive parent(s) who is accepting of the child's characteristics and who has expressed an interest in adopting the child.
- (g) If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specified child, the agency shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

 - (i) The agency distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies.
 - (ii) The agency review of the case file for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.
 - (iii) The agency exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.
- (9) A non-discriminatory policy on determining the approved adoptive parents listed in paragraph (B)((8)(f)(iv) of this rule who will be presented as a

potential adoptive parent for the child in the matching conference. If there are more than five families who are potential matches for the child, the agency may narrow the number of families to a minimum of five based on :

(a) The level of experience the family has in working with child(ren) with the specific behavior, medical or mental health challenges that a specific child presents.

(b) The preference to keep siblings together if in the child's best interest.

(10) If a family was previously considered for a child in a matching conference and was not interested in the child, the agency does not have to consider the family for the same child in subsequent matching conferences.

(11) The availability of open adoptions between the birth parent(s) and the adoptive parent(s) and the referral process if the agency does not provide open adoptions.

(12) A procedure for the agency to report an adoptive applicant(s) or adoptive parent(s) who it feels has made a false statement in the application or homestudy process. The procedure shall include, at a minimum, the notification to the applicant and the applicant's rights to an agency review according to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(13) A description of all state and federal adoption assistance, including eligibility and the application requirements.

(14) Schedule of fees for service, if applicable. If fees apply, and multiple births are involved, a statement to that effect shall be included.

(15) Religious affiliation requirements, if applicable.

(16) Provision of prefinalization and postfinalization services.

(17) Availability of a state hearing, as described in section 5101.35 of the Revised Code, if a prospective applicant(s) believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for the reason of geographic location of the family.

(18) The complaint process pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code.

(C) Standards of conduct regarding the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b)(9) (MEPA) (1/2/06) and the Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, (1/2/06) as they apply to the adoption process (Title VI) do not supercede the provisions of the ICWA.

- (D) The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA may prepare a summary of its agency adoption policy to respond to inquiries concerning adoption pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-08 of the Administrative Code. If the agency prepares a summary, it shall include:
- (1) A written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO).
 - (2) The JFS 01611 "Non-discrimination for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements" (rev. 1/2009). No additional language regarding non-discrimination in the adoptive placement process based upon RCNO shall be included in the agency's policy or other recruitment materials.
- (E) The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall update its written policy to reflect new requirements contained in Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code. The agency shall submit its adoption policy to the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS) within thirty days of the effective date of this rule.
- (F) If the PCSA, PCPA or PNA amends its adoption policy at any time other than the required due date, the PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall submit the amended adoption policy to ODJFS within thirty days following the policy change.
- (G) Recruitment of prospective adoptive parents shall be an ongoing activity of the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA. The agency shall not deny any person the opportunity to become an adoptive parent on the basis of RCNO of the person or the child involved.
- (H) The PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall develop and implement a comprehensive recruitment plan that identifies the agency's diligent recruitment efforts of parents and which reflects the diversity of waiting children for whom adoptive homes are needed.
- (I) The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall submit a recruitment plan to ODJFS for each upcoming state fiscal year by May first of each year. The director of the PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall sign the plan.
- (J) If the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA amends its recruitment plan at any time other than the required due date, the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall submit the amended recruitment plan to ODJFS within ten days following the amendment.
- (K) The PCSA, PCPA and PNA, at a minimum, shall include in its recruitment plan the following:
- (1) A fee structure that is non-discriminatory to approved adoptive parents and that allows parents of various income levels the opportunity to adopt. Fees may be charged according to a standardized and uniformly applied sliding scale, based on a family's ability to pay. The ability to pay a fee shall not influence the choice of the most appropriate parent(s) for a child.

(2) Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community.

(a) The PCPA or PNA shall define its own community.

(b) The PCSA shall define the community as the county in which the PCSA is located.

(3) Specific methods of disseminating both general and targeted recruitment.

(4) Strategies for assuring that all prospective adoptive applicants will receive information regarding adoption procedures within seven days of inquiry.

(5) Strategies for assuring that all applicants have access to the homestudy process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access to all members of the community.

(6) Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities.

(7) Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers between the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA and the prospective adoptive applicant(s).

(L) The PCSA and PCPA shall include in its recruitment plan the following:

(1) A description of the characteristics of children in the permanent custody or permanent surrender of the agency, including:

(a) Age.

(b) Gender.

(c) Race and ethnicity.

(d) Developmental needs.

(e) Emotional and mental health needs.

(f) Physical needs.

(2) A comparison of the racial and ethnic diversity of the children in permanent custody with the racial and ethnic diversity of the approved adoptive family resources in the agency.

(3) Any racial or ethnic category of family that is under-represented and the strategies the agency will initiate to increase the category.

(4) Criteria to determine when the agency will conduct child specific recruitment

strategies for a child.

(5) Identification of the type of specific recruitment techniques the PCSA or PCPA will have available and will utilize when child specific recruitment is warranted. Child specific recruitment activities, shall include at a minimum, written information on the child to other adoption agencies.

(M) The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall maintain case records in a consistent and organized manner. If the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA maintains any required information set forth in this rule in a location other than the case record, it shall be stated in the agency policy or noted in the case record where the information can be found.

(N) If ODJFS determines an agency's adoption policy, policy revisions or annual recruitment plan are noncompliant with this rule, the agency shall accept technical assistance from ODJFS until such time that the policy or recruitment plan is in compliance.

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Certification

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