



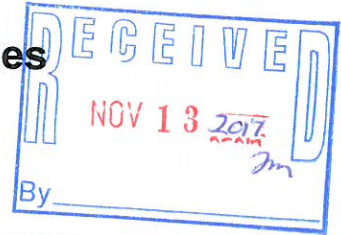
## Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services

700 Main Street, Donaghey Plaza South, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S560

Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Telephone (501) 682-8008 TDD (501) 682-1442 FAX (501) 682-6968



November 13, 2017

Varnaria Vickers-Smith, Legislative Analyst  
Senate Interim Children and Youth Committee and the  
House Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs Committee  
Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research  
One Capital Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room R-516  
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Initial Filing - Regular Promulgation

Dear Ms. Vickers-Smith:

Please place the Division of Children & Family Services on the Children & Youth Committee agenda for review of the Rules as listed on the Questionnaire. The public comment period is from November 13, 2017 to December 13, 2017, with a proposed effective date of March 1, 2018.

Enclosed are copies of the Questionnaire, Summary of Changes, Financial Impact Statement and Rule.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Christin Harper, Assistant Director, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 1437, (Slot S570), Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437; phone 682-8541; email [christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov) or fax 682-6968.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mischa Martin".

Mischa Martin

Director, Division of Children and Family Services

# BUREAU OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
Division of Children and Family Services  
AMENDING ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

TITLE:

**New Procedure**

- **Policy I-D: Division Volunteers and related procedures**

**Revised Rule**

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements**

PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE:

March 1, 2018

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

A.C.A. 9-28-103

NECESSITY AND FUNCTION:

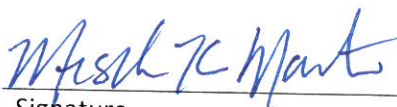
**New Procedure**

- **Policy I-D: Division Volunteers and related procedures**
  - To update the DCFS volunteer policy in order to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding processing and approving volunteers.
  - To add relative and fictive kin volunteers per Act 1111 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session.
  - To address non-custodial parental visitation and contact policy per Act 701 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session.

**Revised Rule**

- **POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements:**
  - To update the Division's procedure per Act 1111 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session. Specifically to add the requirement for Division staff to accept and process requests from relatives and fictive kin to become Division volunteers on a case specific basis and if in the best interest of the child.
  - To provide clarity surrounding visitation and contact between foster children and non-custodial parents presumed fit per Act 701 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session.

PAGES FILED:



Signature

Name: Mischa Martin

Title: Director

Section: Division of Children and Family Services

Department of Human Services

PROMULGATION DATES: November 13, 2017-December 13, 2017

CONTACT PERSON: Christin Harper  
DHS-DCFS Policy Unit  
Phone: (501) 682-8541  
Fax: (501) 683-4854  
Email: [christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov)

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FILING PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS  
WITH THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND JOINT INTERIM COMMITTEE**

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY Department of Human Services  
 DIVISION Division of Children and Family Services  
 DIVISION DIRECTOR Mischa Martin  
 CONTACT PERSON Christin Harper, Assistant Director  
 ADDRESS P. O. Box 1437, Slot S570, Little Rock, AR 72203-1437  
 PHONE NO. (501)682-8541 FAX NO. (501) 683-4854 E-MAIL christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov  
 NAME OF PRESENTER AT COMMITTEE MEETING Christin Harper  
 PRESENTER E-MAIL christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- A. Please make copies of this form for future use.
- B. Please answer each question completely using layman terms. You may use additional sheets, if necessary.
- C. If you have a method of indexing your rules, please give the proposed citation after "Short Title of this Rule" below.
- D. Submit two (2) copies of this questionnaire and financial impact statement attached to the front of two (2) copies of the proposed rule and required documents. Mail or deliver to:

**Donna K. Davis  
 Administrative Rules Review Section  
 Arkansas Legislative Council  
 Bureau of Legislative Research  
 One Capitol Mall, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Little Rock, AR 72201**

\*\*\*\*\*

1. What is the short title of this rule? Volunteer and Relative Support and Involvement

To update the DCFS volunteer policy in order to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding processing and approving volunteers and to add relative and fictive kin volunteers per Act 1111 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session; To address non-custodial parental visitation and contact policy per Act 701 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, Regular Session.

2. What is the subject of the proposed rule? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Is this rule required to comply with a federal statute, rule, or regulation? Yes  No   
 If yes, please provide the federal rule, regulation, and/or statute citation. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Was this rule filed under the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act? Yes  No   
 If yes, what is the effective date of the emergency rule? \_\_\_\_\_

When does the emergency rule expire?

Will this emergency rule be promulgated under the permanent provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act?

Yes

No

5. Is this a new rule? Yes  No

If yes, please provide a brief summary explaining the regulation. Relatives and fictive kin will be allowed to serve as volunteers to provide services for their families on a case specific basis. Staff will recognize the legal presumption that non-custodial parents are fit for contact and visitation if no evidence is presented to the contrary.

Does this repeal an existing rule? Yes  No

If yes, a copy of the repealed rule is to be included with your completed questionnaire. If it is being replaced with a new rule, please provide a summary of the rule giving an explanation of what the rule does.

Is this an amendment to an existing rule?

Yes  No

If yes, please attach a mark-up showing the changes in the existing rule and a summary of the substantive changes. **Note: The summary should explain what the amendment does, and the mark-up copy should be clearly labeled "mark-up."**

6. Cite the state law that grants the authority for this proposed rule? If codified, please give the Arkansas Code citation. A.C.A. § 9-28-103

7. What is the purpose of this proposed rule? Why is it necessary?

POLICY I-D: Division Volunteers and related procedures

- To clarify staff roles and responsibilities regarding processing and approving volunteers.
- To update the Division's policy and procedure per Act 1111 of the 91st General Assembly, Regular Session, specifically to add the procedure for relative and fictive kin applicants to become volunteer transporters for their families on a case specific basis

POLICY VI-C: Maintaining Family Ties in Out-of-Home Placements

- To update the Division's policy and procedure per Act 701 of the 91st General Assembly, Regular Session, specifically to ensure that staff are aware of the legal presumption that non-custodial parents are fit for purposes of contact and visitation with foster children in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

CFS-323-A: Notice to Adult Relatives by Blood, Adoption or Marriage that a Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody.

- To establish a time frame of 10 business days for relatives to contact the Department.

CFS-323-B: Notice to Fictive Kin that a Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody.

- To establish a time frame of 10 business days for relatives to contact the Department.

CFS-342: State Police Criminal and FBI Record Check Release.

- To add a selection to process checks for volunteers and clarifies that court ordered checks are State checks and not FBI checks.

8. Please provide the address where this rule is publicly accessible in electronic form via the Internet as required by Arkansas Code § 25-19-108(b).

AR Secretary of State Website

<https://ardhs.sharepointsite.net/CW/Notice%20of%20Rule%20Making/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

9. Will a public hearing be held on this proposed rule? Yes  No

If yes, please complete the following:

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

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

10. When does the public comment period expire for permanent promulgation? (Must provide a date.)

December 13, 2017

11. What is the proposed effective date of this proposed rule? (Must provide a date.)

March 1, 2018

12. Do you expect this rule to be controversial? Yes  No

If yes, please  
explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Please give the names of persons, groups, or organizations that you expect to comment on these rules? Please provide their position (for or against) if known.

We do not know of any specific groups of persons who would comment.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY**

**DEPARTMENT** Department of Human Services  
**DIVISION** Division of Children and Family Services  
**PERSON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT** Christin Harper  
**TELEPHONE NO.** (501)682-8541 **FAX NO.** (501) 683-4854 **EMAIL:** christin.harper@dhs.arkansas.gov

To comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the following Financial Impact Statement and file two copies with the questionnaire and proposed rules.

**SHORT TITLE OF THIS RULE** Volunteer and Relative Support and Involvement

1. Does this proposed, amended, or repealed rule have a financial impact? Yes  No
2. Is the rule based on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, or other evidence and information available concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule? Yes  No
3. In consideration of the alternatives to this rule, was this rule determined by the agency to be the least costly rule considered? Yes  No

If an agency is proposing a more costly rule, please state the following:

- (a) How the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (b) The reason for adoption of the more costly rule;  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Whether the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, please explain; and;  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Whether the reason is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority; and if so, please explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. If the purpose of this rule is to implement a federal rule or regulation, please state the following:

(a) What is the cost to implement the federal rule or regulation?

**Current Fiscal Year**

General Revenue 0  
Federal Funds 0  
Cash Funds 0

**Next Fiscal Year**

General Revenue 0  
Federal Funds 0  
Cash Funds 0

Special Revenue 0

Other (Identify) 0

Special Revenue 0

Other (Identify) 0



Total 0.00

Total 0.00

(b) What is the additional cost of the state rule?

**Current Fiscal Year**

**Next Fiscal Year**

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_

General Revenue \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Cash Funds \_\_\_\_\_

Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_

Special Revenue \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

Total 0.00

Total 0.00

5. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to any private individual, entity and business subject to the proposed, amended, or repealed rule? Identify the entity(ies) subject to the proposed rule and explain how they are affected.

**Current Fiscal Year**

**Next Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00

\$ 0.00

6. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to state, county, and municipal government to implement this rule? Is this the cost of the program or grant? Please explain how the government is affected.

**Current Fiscal Year**

**Next Fiscal Year**

\$ 0.00

\$ 0.00

7. With respect to the agency's answers to Questions #5 and #6 above, is there a new or increased cost or obligation of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year to a private individual, private entity, private business, state government, county government, municipal government, or to two (2) or more of those entities combined?

Yes  No

If YES, the agency is required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(4) to file written findings at the time of filing the financial impact statement. The written findings shall be filed simultaneously with the financial impact statement and shall include, without limitation, the following:

(1) a statement of the rule's basis and purpose;

(2) the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute;

(3) a description of the factual evidence that:

(a) justifies the agency's need for the proposed rule; and

- (b) describes how the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs;
- (4) a list of less costly alternatives to the proposed rule and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
  - (5) a list of alternatives to the proposed rule that were suggested as a result of public comment and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
  - (6) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule and, if existing rules have created or contributed to the problem, an explanation of why amendment or repeal of the rule creating or contributing to the problem is not a sufficient response; and
  - (7) an agency plan for review of the rule no less than every ten (10) years to determine whether, based upon the evidence, there remains a need for the rule including, without limitation, whether:
    - (a) the rule is achieving the statutory objectives;
    - (b) the benefits of the rule continue to justify its costs; and
    - (c) the rule can be amended or repealed to reduce costs while continuing to achieve the statutory objectives.

# DCFS SUMMARY OF CHANGES FOR NOVEMBER 2017 PROMULGATION

## **SUMMARY OF DCFS REGULAR PROMULGATION**

The purpose of this regular promulgation is to revise Division policy regarding:

- Division Volunteers. This revised rule will create new procedure to ensure State compliance with ACT 1111 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Regular Session.
- The presumption of fitness of non-custodial parents. This revised rule will ensure State compliance with ACT 701 of the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Regular Session.

## **POLICY VI-C: MAINTAINING FAMILY TIES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS**

03/2018

Removal from the home and subsequent out-of-home placement are traumatic events for children. One way this trauma may be minimized is by maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements. Moreover, the Division believes that strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children. This belief is supported by research demonstrating that children who maintain positive family ties while in out-of-home placement achieve better short- and long-term outcomes. If court orders differ from the requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures regarding visits and contact with family members, the Division will comply with court orders accordingly.

### **CONTACT WITH PARENTS**

In order to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship, visits and other forms of contact with parents and their children in out-of-home placements are essential. Visits between parents, including noncustodial and putative parents as applicable, and their children will occur at least weekly based upon the child's best interest. More frequent visits are encouraged, as appropriate. A positive drug or alcohol screen in and of itself will not result in the postponement and/or withholding of visits between a parent and child in DHS custody unless:

- A. The parent is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the scheduled visit and has observable behavior indicating impairment of parenting capacity; or,
- B. A court order specifies that a parent's positive screen will result in the withholding of parent-child visits.

There is a legal presumption that visits may be unsupervised unless evidence has been provided to and the court has made a ruling that unsupervised visitation is not in the best interest of the children involved. The burden is upon Division staff to provide evidence regarding why visits must be supervised or may be unsupervised. Visits which have been ordered to be supervised may be graduated to unsupervised depending on the dynamics of the case. Any Division staff member as well as approved student interns and volunteers may supervise visits. However, the appropriate supervisor will individualize each assignment to supervise visits. When making the assignment the supervisor will consider the family's history, current level of functioning, and any other applicable factors as well as the skill set of the individual selected to supervise the visit.

The preferred location for visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort.

While children are in out-of-home placements, the Division, in conjunction with foster parents and placement providers, will update parents regarding their children's lives including providing information regarding, without limitation, status of physical, behavioral, and emotional health, progress in school, involvement in extracurricular activities, and achievements. Parents will be invited to participate in their children's school, faith-based, and extracurricular activities as appropriate.

The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents, as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact.

Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers may communicate directly with biological parents when appropriate and in the child's best interest to give updates on the child's progress, inform them of the child's school and extracurricular activities, and share photos. Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.

In addition, since foster parents can model positive parenting skills that may help the biological parents to achieve reunification, foster parents may consider hosting parent-child visits, if appropriate and acceptable to all individuals involved.

When assessing the appropriateness of foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers communicating directly with biological parents, holding parent-child visits in the foster parent home, or transporting the child to parent-child visits, the Division will ensure the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers thoroughly understand all court orders related to parent-child contact and consider:

- A. Various family dynamics;
- B. Progress of the case at that point in time; and,
- C. Experience and other skills sets of the foster family or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers.

DCFS staff members will discuss with foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers and biological parents the level of comfort that both sets of parents have with foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers providing transportation to parent-child visits or, as applicable to foster parents hosting/supervising parent-child visits. Staff will not expect foster parents to host/supervise parent-child visits and/or transport to parent-child visits:

- A. During the first placement they have as foster parents;
- B. During the first month of any open foster care case regardless of the number of times they have served as foster parents.

Exceptions to the above guidelines may be made if the foster parents express an interest in assisting with parent-child visits under these conditions. Even when foster parents state they are willing to assist with parent-child visits during the first placement they have as foster parents or during the first month of any open foster care case, the FSW will make a decision regarding the foster parents' involvement with parent-child visits after carefully assessing each individual case and the dynamics involved. Even after the first month of an open foster care case, if foster parents desire to assist with parent-child visits, the FSW will continue to assess on a case by case basis the appropriateness of foster parent involvement for each foster care placement.

The Division will assist the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers and biological parents in establishing appropriate expectations and boundaries regarding communication and interaction (e.g., frequency and specific times the biological parent may call and/or visit the foster home). Any direct interaction between the biological parents and foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers in no way relieves the Division of its duty to ensure the biological parents remain current on all aspects of their case and their children.

#### CONTACT WITH SIBLINGS

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood, but over the course of a lifetime with sibling relationships likely to be the longest relationships most people experience. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent.

For children in out-of-home placements, sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity, stability, and comfort while in foster care. As such, when it is in the best interest of each of the children and barring extenuating circumstances, siblings are entitled to be placed together in out-of-home placements.

Siblings may be placed separately only if:

- A. Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded;
  - 1) An assessment must be conducted by a mental health professional within five days of placing siblings in different placements due to the abuse allegations between the siblings that are under investigation and/or have been founded.

- a) The siblings may continue in the separated placements if the assessment by the mental health professional supports continuing the separated placements because placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children as related to the abuse allegations and/or investigation findings;
- B. An assessment by a mental health professional determines that placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children; or,
- C. The Division presents evidence to the court that there are no available placements that can take the entire sibling group.

If children must be separated, the Division will attempt to place them in close proximity in order to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. The Division will ensure the reasons for the separation of siblings into different foster homes or other approved placements are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings. The case plan must include when siblings will be reassessed to determine if they can be reunited at a later point in time. If the reassessment determines reunification is appropriate, the plan for placing siblings together will be documented in the case plan as well.

In an effort to maintain sibling connections for those siblings who are placed separately, the siblings' case will be reviewed by the court at least once every 90 days to determine whether there have been reasonable efforts to reunite the siblings and to allow regular and meaningful contact with the siblings. If the court approves a paper review, the 90 day court reviews of separated siblings may be satisfied by such a review and a hearing is not required.

In addition, siblings who must be placed separately will have consistent and meaningful contact at least weekly when possible. While face-to-face visits in home-like settings or other family-friendly locations are preferred and encouraged, other forms of communication such as phone calls, emails, and Skype or FaceTime (or similar program) conversations are permissible, as age and developmentally appropriate, to meet the weekly contact requirement. However, siblings who are placed separately will have at least bi-weekly face-to-face visits unless a FSW Supervisor grants a visit waiver. The plan for sibling visits and other contact will be outlined in the case plan. Visits or other forms of contact with siblings will not be withheld by DCFS or any placement provider as a behavioral consequence unless there are documented safety concerns for one or more of the siblings.

Siblings also have the right to remain actively involved in each other's lives. Aside from regularly scheduled visits, the Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will work together to allow siblings to share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other meaningful milestones when possible. The Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will also collaborate to ensure siblings attend each other's extracurricular events such as athletic events, musical performances, and faith-based events when reasonable and practical.

The Division will ensure siblings are included in one another's case plan staffing decisions and permanency planning decisions as age and developmentally appropriate. Siblings will also be notified when another sibling has a change in placement or exits foster care as age and developmentally appropriate. When a sibling leaves foster care, that sibling will be allowed, as appropriate, to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in an out-of-home placement. The Division will also strive to help children in foster care maintain relationships with their siblings who are not in out-of-home placements or who have been adopted or placed in permanent custody or guardianship.

#### CONTACT WITH RELATIVES AND OTHER FICTIVE KIN

In an effort to ensure foster care supports the permanency and well-being of the children in DHS custody, children may have an opportunity to visit or have other forms of contact with non-custodial parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, other relatives, and fictive kin provided the visits are in the best interest of the children. It is the responsibility of the Division to explore the willingness and appropriateness of identified relatives and fictive kin interested in being involved in the lives of children in out-of-home placements.

**CONTACT AFTER TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

If it is in the child's best interest, visits with relatives may continue after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). Visits after TPR will continue until an adoptive placement is made or the out-of-home placement case is closed. The Division will encourage adoptive parents to consider allowing contact between biological relatives and fictive kin with their adopted children, as appropriate. Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

## **PROCEDURE VI-C1: Parent-Child Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements**

03/2018

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine what, if any, evidence must be provided to the court to establish that supervised visitation is necessary.
- B. Regardless of the type of visitation (i.e., supervised or unsupervised) needed for a particular family, establish the frequency and length of parent-child visits, to include non-custodial and putative parents as appropriate, in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- C. Obtain approval from FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.
  - 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.
- D. Arrange for visits with parents as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation, supervision of visits, and/or other logistics, as needed.
  - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), foster parents, interns, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with transportation to visits and asking Program Assistants (PAs), foster parents, interns, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with the supervision of visits, as appropriate.
  - 2) The FSW will ensure any PAs, foster parents, interns, and/or non-relative volunteers supervising parent-child visits:
    - a) Know the history and other applicable dynamics of the case; and,
    - b) Understand what they are to observe and/or assist with while providing said supervision.
- E. Prepare children for visits with their parents.
- F. Ask Program Assistants, interns, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers, as applicable, for information he/she obtained while assisting with parent-child visits and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- G. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of parent-child visits.
- H. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding parent-child visits.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with parents.
- B. Assist with parent-child visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of parent-child visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of parent-child visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

## **PROCEDURE VI-C2: Sibling Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements**

03/2018

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Include in the case plan the reasons for the separation, if applicable, as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement, if appropriate.



- 1) Arrange for an assessment by a mental health professional within five days to determine if placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the siblings as needed.
- B. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of sibling visits in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- C. Obtain approval from the FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.
  - 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.
- D. Arrange for visits with siblings as outlined in the case plan as well as participation in sibling celebrations and attendance of sibling extracurricular events, to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
  - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with transportation to visits and asking PAs, interns, foster parents, and non-relative volunteers to assist with supervision of visits, as appropriate.
  - 2) Encourage foster parents to assist with siblings participating in one another's various celebrations and extracurricular activities.
- E. Prepare children for visits with their siblings.
- F. Ensure supervision of visits if needed.
- G. Document sibling visits and participation in sibling celebrations and extracurricular activities in CHRIS contact screens.
- H. Ask Program Assistant for information he/she obtained while assisting with sibling visits and other contact and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- I. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of sibling visits and other contacts.
- I. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding sibling visits and other contacts.
- J. Document efforts to reunify siblings placed separately in CHRIS contacts screen.
- K. Document sibling visits that occur after TPR in CHRIS contacts screen.
- L. Prepare the packet for the 90 Day Court Review to include:
  - 1) 90 Day Case Review Cover Sheet
  - 2) The case plan participants and visitation plan sections of the case plan
  - 3) The Family Visit Log for the preceding 90 days listing only the sibling visits and/or parent visits that include all siblings as well (i.e., exclude visits involving only parents and one child)
  - 4) Printed CHRIS contact screens for the past 90 days regarding sibling visits, other sibling contact, and efforts to reunify siblings
- M. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the FSW Supervisor for review.
- N. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the local OCC attorney.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with siblings.
- B. Assist with sibling visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, involved with siblings visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.
- D. Review the 90 Day Court Review Packet and request any necessary changes.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of sibling visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of sibling visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

## **PROCEDURE VI-C3: Other Relative and Fictive Kin-Child Contact in Out-of-Home Placement**

03/2018

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Assess and determine the frequency and length of contact with other relatives and fictive kin to recommend to the court.
- B. Arrange for contact with other relatives or fictive kin as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
  - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or other volunteers to assist with transportation to visits to and asking PAs, interns, foster parents, and/or other volunteers to assist with supervision of visits, as appropriate.
- C. Prepare children for visits with other relatives and fictive kin.
- D. Ensure supervision of visits as needed.
- E. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- F. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding contact with other relatives and fictive kin.

The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- B. Assist with logistics of contact with other relatives and fictive kin if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits with other relatives and fictive kin to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with logistics of contact with relatives and fictive kin as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from interaction with children, other relatives, and fictive kin with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

## POLICY VI-C: MAINTAINING FAMILY TIES IN OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS

01031/201876

Removal from the home and subsequent out-of-home placement are traumatic events for children. One way this trauma may be minimized is by maintaining family ties in out-of-home placements. Moreover, the Division believes that strengths of families and supporting these strengths contribute to life-long permanent relationships for children. This belief is supported by research demonstrating that children who maintain positive family ties while in out-of-home placement achieve better short- and long-term outcomes. If court orders differ from the requirements outlined in this policy and related procedures regarding visits and contact with family members, the Division will comply with court orders accordingly.

### CONTACT WITH PARENTS

In order to maintain and strengthen the parent-child relationship, visits and other forms of contact with parents and their children in out-of-home placements are essential. Visits between parents, including noncustodial and putative parents as applicable, and their children will occur at least weekly based upon the child's best interest. More frequent visits are encouraged, as appropriate. A positive drug or alcohol screen in and of itself will not result in the postponement and/or withholding of visits between a parent and child in DHS custody unless:

- A. The parent is under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the scheduled visit and has observable behavior indicating impairment of parenting capacity; or,
- B. A court order specifies that a parent's positive screen will result in the withholding of parent-child visits.

~~Visits~~ Visitation will be ~~There is a legal presumption that visits may be unsupervised unless evidence has been provided to and the court has made a ruling that unsupervised visitation is not in the best interest of the children involved. The burden is upon Division staff to provide evidence regarding why visits must be supervised or may be unsupervised.~~ Visits which have been ordered to be supervised may be supervised or graduated to unsupervised depending on the dynamics of the case. Any Division staff member as well as approved student interns and volunteers may supervise visits. ~~Relatives and fictive kin volunteers who have been approved by the Area Director may also supervise visits as appropriate.~~ However, the appropriate supervisor will individualize each assignment to supervise visits. When making the assignment the supervisor will consider the family's history, current level of functioning, and any other applicable factors as well as the skill set of the individual selected to supervise the visit.

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The preferred location for visits is the parent's home or, if that is not possible, in the most home-like setting possible. Office visits are a last resort.

While children are in out-of-home placements, the Division, in conjunction with foster parents and placement providers, will update parents regarding their children's lives including providing information regarding, without limitation, status of physical, behavioral, and emotional health, progress in school, involvement in extracurricular activities, and achievements. Parents will be invited to participate in their children's school, faith-based, and extracurricular activities as appropriate.

The specific plan for visits between a child in out-of-home placement and his or her parents, as appropriate, will be included in the case plan. As the family prepares for reunification, the frequency and/or length of visits will increase while the level of supervision will decrease accordingly. The case plan will be updated as needed to reflect changes regarding visits and other contact.

Foster parents ~~and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers~~ may communicate directly with biological parents when appropriate and in the child's best interest to give updates on the child's progress, inform them of the child's school and extracurricular activities, and share photos. ~~Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share~~

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with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.

In addition, since foster parents can model positive parenting skills that may help the biological parents to achieve reunification, foster parents may consider hosting parent-child visits, if appropriate and acceptable to all individuals involved. ~~Foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers are also encouraged to consider supporting the parent-child relationship in other ways such as helping the child write letters to his or her parents, creating Life Books with the children to then share with the biological parents, and presenting a positive view of the child's parents to the child to the extent possible.~~

When assessing the appropriateness of foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers communicating directly with biological parents, holding parent-child visits in the foster parent home, and/or transporting the child to parent-child visits, the Division will ensure the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers thoroughly understand all court orders related to parent-child contact and consider:

- A. Various family dynamics;
- B. Progress of the case at that point in time; and,
- C. Experience and other skills sets of the foster family or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers.

DCFS staff members will discuss with foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers and biological parents the level of comfort that both sets of parents have with foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers hosting/supervising parent-child visits and/or providing transportation to parent-child visits or, as applicable to foster parents hosting/supervising parent-child visits. Staff will not expect foster parents to host/supervise parent-child visits and/or transport to parent-child visits:

- A. During the first placement they have as foster parents;
- B. During the first month of any open foster care case regardless of the number of times they have served as foster parents.

Exceptions to the above guidelines may be made if the foster parents express an interest in assisting with parent-child visits under these conditions. Even when foster parents state they are willing to assist with parent-child visits during the first placement they have as foster parents or during the first month of any open foster care case, the FSW will make a decision regarding the foster parents' involvement with parent-child visits after carefully assessing each individual case and the dynamics involved.

Even after the first month of an open foster care case, if foster parents desire to assist with parent-child visits, the FSW will continue to assess on a case by case basis the appropriateness of foster parent involvement for each foster care placement.

The Division will assist the foster parents and approved relative and fictive kin volunteers and biological parents in establishing appropriate expectations and boundaries regarding communication and interaction (e.g., frequency and specific times the biological parent may call and/or visit the foster home). Any direct interaction between the biological parents and foster parents or approved relative and fictive kin volunteers in no way relieves the Division of its duty to ensure the biological parents remain current on all aspects of their case and their children.

#### CONTACT WITH SIBLINGS

Sibling relationships are emotionally powerful and critically important not only in childhood, but over the course of a lifetime with sibling relationships likely to be the longest relationships most people experience. Siblings include those individuals who would be considered a sibling under state/tribal law if it were not for the disruption in parental rights, such as a termination of parental rights or death of a parent.

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For children in out-of-home placements, sibling relationships can provide a significant source of continuity, stability, and comfort while in foster care. As such, when it is in the best interest of each of the children and barring extenuating circumstances, siblings are entitled to be placed together in out-of-home placements.

Siblings may be placed separately only if:

- A. Allegations of abuse between siblings are under investigation and/or have been founded;
  - 1) An assessment must be conducted by a mental health professional within five days of placing siblings in different placements due to the abuse allegations between the siblings that are under investigation and/or have been founded.
    - a) The siblings may continue in the separated placements if the assessment by the mental health professional supports continuing the separated placements because placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children as related to the abuse allegations and/or investigation findings;
- B. An assessment by a mental health professional determines that placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the children; or,
- C. The Division presents evidence to the court that there are no available placements that can take the entire sibling group.

If children must be separated, the Division will attempt to place them in close proximity in order to facilitate regular and meaningful contact. The Division will ensure the reasons for the separation of siblings into different foster homes or other approved placements are regularly reassessed and targeted recruitment efforts continue to reunite the siblings. The case plan must include when siblings will be reassessed to determine if they can be reunited at a later point in time. If the reassessment determines reunification is appropriate, the plan for placing siblings together will be documented in the case plan as well.

In an effort to maintain sibling connections for those siblings who are placed separately, the siblings' case will be reviewed by the court at least once every 90 days to determine whether there have been reasonable efforts to reunite the siblings and to allow regular and meaningful contact with the siblings. If the court approves a paper review, the 90 day court reviews of separated siblings may be satisfied by such a review and a hearing is not required.

In addition, siblings who must be placed separately will have consistent and meaningful contact at least weekly when possible. While face-to-face visits in home-like settings or other family-friendly locations are preferred and encouraged, other forms of communication such as phone calls, emails, and Skype or FaceTime (or similar program) conversations are permissible, as age and developmentally appropriate, to meet the weekly contact requirement. However, siblings who are placed separately will have at least bi-weekly face-to-face visits unless a ~~the~~ FSW Supervisor grants a visit waiver. The plan for sibling visits and other contact will be outlined in the case plan. Visits or other forms of contact with siblings will not be withheld by DCFS or any placement provider as a behavioral consequence unless there are documented safety concerns for one or more of the siblings.

Siblings also have the right to remain actively involved in each other's lives. Aside from regularly scheduled visits, the Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will work together to allow siblings to share celebrations including birthdays, holidays, graduations, and other meaningful milestones when possible. The Division, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and other placement providers will also collaborate to ensure siblings attend each other's extracurricular events such as athletic events, musical performances, and faith-based events when reasonable and practical.

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The Division will ensure siblings are included in one another's case plan staffing decisions and permanency planning decisions as age and developmentally appropriate. Siblings will also be notified when another sibling has a change in placement or exits foster care as age and developmentally appropriate. When a sibling leaves foster care, that sibling will be allowed, as appropriate, to maintain contact with a sibling who remains in an out-of-home placement. The Division will also strive to help children in foster care maintain relationships with

their siblings who are not in out-of-home placements or who have been adopted or placed in permanent custody or guardianship.

#### CONTACT WITH RELATIVES AND OTHER FICTIVE KIN

In an effort to ensure foster care supports the permanency and well-being of the children in DHS custody, children may have an opportunity to visit or have other forms of contact with non-custodial parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, other relatives, and fictive kin provided the visits are in the best interest of the children. It is the responsibility of the Division to explore the willingness and appropriateness of identified relatives and fictive kin interested in being involved in the lives of children in out-of-home placements.

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#### CONTACT AFTER TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

If it is in the child's best interest, visits with relatives may continue after Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). Visits after TPR will continue until an adoptive placement is made or the out-of-home placement case is closed. The Division will encourage adoptive parents to consider allowing contact between biological relatives and fictive kin with their adopted children, as appropriate. Continuation of visits with relatives does not include the parents for whom the agency has obtained TPR.

## PROCEDURE VI-C1: Parent-Child Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements

01031/201876

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine what, if any, evidence must be provided to the court to establish that supervised visitation is necessary.
- A.B. Regardless of the type of visitation (i.e., supervised or unsupervised) needed for a particular family, if supervised visitation is necessary, establish the frequency and length of parent-child visits, to include non-custodial and putative parents as appropriate, in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- B.C. Obtain approval from FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.
- 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.
- C.D. Arrange for visits with parents as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation, supervision of visits, and/or other logistics, as needed.
- 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), foster parents, interns, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with transportations to visits and asking Program Assistants (PAs), foster parents, interns, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with the supervision of visits, as appropriate.
  - 2) The FSW will make sure any PAs, foster parents, interns, and/or non-relative volunteers supervising parent-child visits:
    - a) Know the history and other applicable dynamics of the case; and,
    - b) Understand what they are to observe and/or assist with while providing said supervision.
- D.E. Prepare children for visits with their parents.
- E.F. Ask Program Assistants, interns, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers, as applicable, for information he/she obtained while assisting with parent-child visits and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- F.G. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of parent-child visits.
- G.H. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding parent-child visits.

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The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with parents.
- B. Assist with parent-child visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of parent-child visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of parent-child visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

## PROCEDURE VI-C2: Sibling Contact for Children in Out-of-Home Placements

031101/201687

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Include in the case plan the reasons for the separation, if applicable, as well as the steps that will be taken to reunify the siblings in a single placement, if appropriate.

- 1) Arrange for an assessment by a mental health professional within five days to determine if placing the siblings together would be detrimental to the health, safety, or well-being of one or more of the siblings as needed.
- B. Within five working days of placement, assess and determine the frequency and length of sibling visits in order to develop a visit plan to recommend to the court.
- C. Obtain approval from the FSW Supervisor for any deviations from required frequency of visits.
  - 1) If approved, request appropriate visit waiver in CHRIS.
- D. Arrange for visits with siblings as outlined in the case plan as well as participation in sibling celebrations and attendance of sibling extracurricular events, to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
  - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or non-relative volunteers to assist with transportations to visits and asking PAs, interns, foster parents, and non-relative volunteers to assist with supervision of visits, as appropriate.
  - 2) Encourage foster parents to assist with siblings participating in one another's various celebrations and extracurricular activities.
- E. Prepare children for visits with their siblings.
- F. Ensure supervision of visits if needed.
- G. Document sibling visits and participation in sibling celebrations and extracurricular activities in CHRIS contact screens.
- H. Ask Program Assistant for information he/she obtained while assisting with sibling visits and other contact and/or review PA CHRIS contact entries, as applicable.
- I. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of sibling visits and other contacts.
- J. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding sibling visits and other contacts.
- K. Document efforts to reunify siblings placed separately in CHRIS contacts screen.
- L. Document sibling visits that occur after TPR in CHRIS contacts screen.
- L. Prepare the packet for the 90 Day Court Review to include:
  - 1) 90 Day Case Review Cover Sheet
  - 2) The case plan participants and visitation plan sections of the case plan
  - 3) The Family Visit Log for the preceding 90 days listing only the sibling visits and/or parent visits that include all siblings as well (i.e., exclude visits involving only parents and one child)
  - 4) Printed CHRIS contact screens for the past 90 days regarding sibling visits, other sibling contact, and efforts to reunify siblings
- M. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the FSW Supervisor for review.
- N. Submit the 90 Day Case Review Packet to the local OCC attorney.

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The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for visits and other contact with siblings.
- B. Assist with sibling visit logistics if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff, interns, and/or volunteers, as applicable, involved with siblings visits to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.
- D. Review the 90 Day Court Review Packet and request any necessary changes.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with transports to and/or supervision of sibling visits as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from transports to and supervision of sibling visits with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.



## **PROCEDURE VI-C3: Other Relative and Fictive Kin-Child Contact in Out-of-Home Placement**

031101/201876

The Family Service Worker will:

- A. Assess and determine the frequency and length of contact with other relatives and fictive kin to recommend to the court.
- B. Arrange for contact with other relatives or fictive kin as outlined in the case plan to include assisting with transportation and/or other logistics, as needed.
  - 1) This coordination may include asking Program Assistants (PAs), interns, foster parents, approved relative and fictive kin volunteers, and/or other volunteers to assist with transportation to visits to and asking PAs, interns, foster parents, and/or other volunteers to assist with supervision of visits, as appropriate.
- C. Prepare children for visits with other relatives and fictive kin.
- D. Ensure supervision of visits as needed.
- E. Update the CANS and/or case plan as necessary based on the interaction and/or outcomes of contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- F. Conference with FSW Supervisor as necessary regarding contact with other relatives and fictive kin.

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The Family Service Worker Supervisor will:

- A. Review and approve the plan for contact with other relatives and fictive kin.
- B. Assist with logistics of contact with other relatives and fictive kin if needed.
- C. Conference regularly with the FSW and other staff who may supervise visits with other relatives and fictive kin to assess the quality of the visits and to determine if any changes to the plan for visits and/or other contact are needed.

The Program Assistant will:

- A. Assist with logistics of contact with relatives and fictive kin as assigned.
- B. Share information gathered from interaction with children, other relatives, and fictive kin with FSW and document information in CHRIS contact screens.

## **POLICY I-D: DIVISION VOLUNTEERS**

03/2018

Because families' success depends on community involvement, DCFS volunteers are an integral part of the child welfare system working to improve outcomes for children and families. Division volunteers may serve in a variety of capacities based on their interests, skill-level, and training. Regardless of the role volunteers may play, all volunteers are responsible for ensuring the proper care, treatment, safety, and supervision of the children they serve. Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age with the exception of stipend and non-stipend interns who must be at least 18 years of age.

A County Office Volunteer Designee will be established in each DCFS county office to assist and support local volunteers. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator in Central Office will help process volunteer applications and provide technical assistance to local County Office Volunteer Designees. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will also serve as the direct point of contact for community organizations that recruit volunteers to then support DCFS activities.

Community organizations (e.g., The CALL, Project Zero, etc.) that recruit their own volunteers to then provide assistance to DCFS staff and clients also play a vital role in supporting children and families and are valued DCFS partners. Each Community Organization Liaison will be responsible for submitting all required background checks and other application materials for their agency volunteers to the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator. After the background check results have been received and approved by DCFS, the Community Organization Liaison will also be responsible for updating these background checks every two years for those individuals who continue to serve as volunteers for that agency.

All prospective volunteers who have direct and unsupervised contact with children must be cleared through the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and through a State Police Criminal Record Check. The Division will request any other state where the prospective volunteer has resided in the preceding five years to check its child abuse and neglect registry, if available, and in the person's state of employment, if different, for reports of child maltreatment, if available. Any prospective volunteer who has not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years must also clear an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check. A Vehicle Safety Check (i.e., driving record) and a copy of proof of auto insurance are also required for all prospective volunteers who will have direct and unsupervised contact with children and other clients. Once a volunteer is approved, all background checks will be run every two years thereafter as long as an individual remains a volunteer with DCFS.

Volunteers who will not have direct contact with children and clients are not required to complete background checks.

All volunteers will maintain confidentiality of children and families served by DCFS and will sign a confidentiality agreement to this effect. Confidentiality applies to verbal, written and/or electronic transmittal of information. Volunteers will not have unsupervised access to CHRIS.

Volunteers will be supervised by an appropriate staff person. A volunteer who works unsupervised and substitutes as staff must meet the qualifications required for a paid employee in that position.

Volunteers not serving in a foster or adoptive capacity are required to earn at least five hours of continuing education hours each year following the completion of their first year of volunteer service.

Volunteers approved by DHS to transport children in foster care or DHS clients or to supervise visits at the request of DHS shall not be liable to the children in foster care, DHS clients, or the parents or guardians of children in foster care for injuries to the children or clients caused by the acts or omissions of a volunteer unless the acts or omissions constitute malicious, willful, wanton, or grossly negligent conduct.

An approved volunteer who performs home studies without compensation shall have immunity from liability as provided for state officers and employees. While a home study volunteer may be recruited through any organization operating under a memorandum of understanding with DHS for the completion of home studies, only DHS will approve the home study volunteer.

If at any point during the volunteer application and assessment process the Division determines that an applicant does not meet the standards or any other criteria for a DCFS volunteer, then the Division will deny approval of the volunteer. If at any time during the course of an approved volunteer's service with DCFS it is determined that the volunteer poses a risk to children, then the Division will terminate the volunteer's services immediately.

In the interest of providing stability for children and families, DCFS recruits relatives and fictive kin as volunteers for their specific family members. Relative and fictive kin applicants must be cleared through the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and through a State Police Criminal Record Check as well as meet driving requirements established by the Division. The Division will request any other state where the prospective volunteer has resided in the preceding five years to check its child abuse and neglect registry, if available, and in the person's state of employment, if different, for reports of child maltreatment, if available.

If approved, these relative and fictive kin volunteers are available to provide transportation for their family members and will not be allowed to participate as a volunteer for DCFS in any other manner. Because the relative and fictive kin volunteers will serve in a case specific role, DCFS will make exceptions to the volunteer application process, such as completing only the necessary background check forms rather than the entire volunteer packet, to expedite the availability of the relative and fictive kin volunteers to provide services for their family members.

## **PROCEDURE I-D1: Volunteer Application Process and Approval**

03/2018

The DCFS County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison will:

- A. Provide volunteer applicant with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion.
  - 1) The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:
    - a) CFS-050-A: DCFS Volunteer Opportunities
    - b) CFS-050-C: DCFS Volunteer Application
    - c) CFS 050-D: DCFS Volunteer Confidentiality Statement
    - d) CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement
    - e) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
    - f) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
    - g) FBI fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five years
    - h) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS Drivers
    - i) VSP-001: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
    - j) VSP-002: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
    - k) Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual
  - 2) The forms in the Indirect Service Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:
    - a) CFS-050-C: Volunteer Application
    - b) CFS-050-D: Confidentiality Statement
    - c) CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement

- B. Ask applicant to submit a W-9 if the volunteer plans to transport clients and wishes to be reimbursed for mileage.
- C. Answer volunteer applicant questions, as applicable
- D. Collect the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed including the volunteer applicant's W-9, if applicable.
- E. Review Volunteer Packet forms submitted by volunteer applicant.
- F. Call the references listed on the application to gather more information.
- G. Complete Section A of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, as appropriate, to ensure that all documents required of volunteer applicant have been completed.
- H. Forward the completed Volunteer Packet, including CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, to DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator, Slot S-565 for processing and approval.
- I. Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from DCFS Volunteer Coordinator) to volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years and who choose to use the harvester to conduct the FBI Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check.
- J. If approval of volunteer is received from the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist:
  - a) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
  - b) Assign volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities.
  - c) Provide DCFS orientation to volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two weeks of approval notification to volunteer.
  - d) Establish mutually agreed upon schedule for volunteer.
  - e) Complete Section C of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist and file in volunteer record.
  - f) Handle complaints as needed.
  - g) Notify DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator if volunteer quits or is asked to leave.
- K. If approval of volunteer is not received from DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator:
  - a) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
  - b) Place copy of completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist in volunteer applicant record.

The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will:

- A. Review forms in the Volunteer Packet using CFS-050-B DCFS Volunteer as a guide to ensure all required volunteer applicant forms have been completed and submitted.
- B. Mail a thank you post card to the volunteer applicant.
- C. Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units.
  - 1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-316 must be notarized. The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check shall be repeated every two years.
    - a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit.
    - b) Document results in CHRIS.
  - 2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-342 must be notarized. The State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two years.
    - a) Route each completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Records Unit.
    - b) Document eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS.
  - 3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant.
    - a) Copy the front and back of the driver's license.

- b) Document results in CHRIS.
- 4) For all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years, submit the appropriate paper work for an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check to the DCFS Criminal Records Unit to process this check and collaborate with the Criminal Background Check Unit accordingly. There are two options for processing the FBI check:
  - a) Electronic Fingerprint Scanning
    - i. Volunteer applicants do NOT need to fill out an FBI fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.
    - ii. The Criminal Records Unit will use the CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the State Police.
    - iii. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator.
    - iv. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will forward the transaction number to the DCFS County Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison to then forward to the volunteer applicant.
    - v. Applicants must go to an approved Electronic Harvester to have fingerprints scanned.
  - b) Ink Fingerprint
    - i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check and the FBI fingerprint card with good, unsmudged prints. Take care not to staple through the fingerprints on the FBI fingerprint card.
    - ii. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to re-submit. Volunteer applicants may not use an Electronic Harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints and the attempt was unsuccessful.
    - iii. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead.
- D. Enter all other required volunteer data into the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable.
- E. Maintain other records and correspondence with county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons regarding volunteers.
- F. Notify County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of volunteer via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes.
- G. Maintain a copy of the CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes.
- H. Assist county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons with orientations for new volunteers as needed/upon request.
- I. Assist county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons with trouble-shooting volunteer-related issues.
- J. Document in volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable, when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave, as applicable.

## **PROCEDURE I-D2: Volunteer Background Check Renewals**

03/2018

The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will:

- A. Mail the following to the volunteer's home address (as identified in CHRIS) at least 30 business days prior to the volunteer's two-year anniversary of his/her last processing of background checks:
  - 1) A cover letter:
    - a) Thanking volunteer for his/her volunteer service
    - b) Reminding the volunteer that he or she is required to earn five hours of continuing education credit annually following the completion of the first year of volunteer service
    - c) Explaining that his/her background checks will expire soon and must be renewed
    - d) Requesting volunteer to complete all enclosed background check forms and return them to the DCFS Central Office Policy Unit within two weeks of receipt
    - e) Informing volunteer that if all enclosed background check forms are not completed and returned to the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator within the required timeframe, he or she will no longer be eligible to serve as a DCFS Volunteer
    - f) Requesting volunteer to provide copies of his or her training completion certificates earned over the last year
  - 2) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
  - 3) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
- B. After mailing the information listed above, notify volunteer's County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as applicable, that volunteer's background checks must be renewed as soon as possible and that required forms have been mailed to the volunteer.
- C. If volunteer does not return all completed background check forms and copies of training certificates within requested timeframes outlined in aforementioned cover letter:
  - 1) Contact volunteer by phone prior to his/her two-year anniversary of the last processing of background checks to request that he/she complete and return required background check forms within one week.
  - 2) Document conversation (or attempt to contact) with volunteer in the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable.
  - 3) If volunteer still does not return completed background checks and copies of training certificates within required timeframe:
    - a) Document in the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable, that volunteer is no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer.
    - b) Send a letter to the former volunteer informing him/her that he/she is no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer.
    - c) Notify the volunteer's County Office Volunteer Designee via e-mail that the volunteer may no longer serve as a volunteer in the county office.
    - d) Submit returned background check forms to applicable background check units for processing (see Procedure (I-D1 above).
    - e) Notify County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of volunteer based on the background check re-evaluation.

The County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison will:

- A. Work with the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator and volunteer as needed to ensure that volunteer's background checks are renewed when required.

- B. If volunteer does not renew required background checks in required timeframe, ensure he/she no longer provides services to/at the local county office or through the community organization that helps to support DCFS.

## **PROCEDURE I-D3: Relative and Fictive Kin Volunteer Application and Process for Approval**

03/2018

The FSW will:

- A. Ensure that relatives and fictive kin who have already been approved as a provisional placement resource for a child under Policy VI-B are not referred for processing as a relative or fictive kin volunteer (individuals already approved as provisional placement resources may also transport the relative/fictive kin child).
- B. If the relative or fictive kin transporter appears viable, interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about routine contact with that person and make individualized decisions on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child.
- C. Speak with the applicant and with the biological family to determine the current status of their relationship.
- D. Provide volunteer applicant with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion. The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the relative/fictive kin volunteer applicant will receive are:
- 1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
  - 2) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
  - 3) FBI fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five years
  - 4) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS Drivers
    - a) VSP-001: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
    - b) VSP-002: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
  - 5) W-9 Form
- B. Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual/Answer volunteer applicant questions, as applicable
- C. Collect and review the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed.
- D. Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units.
- 1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-316 must be notarized. The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check shall be repeated every two years.
    - a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit.
    - b) Document results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.
  - 2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-342 must be notarized. The State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two years.
    - a) Route each completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Records Unit.
    - b) Document eligible or in-eligible results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.

- 3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant.
    - a) Copy front and back of driver's license.
    - b) Document results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.
  - 4) Work with the DCFS Criminal Records Unit to process an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check for all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years. There are two options for processing the FBI check:
    - a) Electronic Fingerprint Scanning
      - i. Volunteer applicants do NOT need to fill out an FBI fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.
      - ii. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will route the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to the DCFS Criminal Records Unit.
      - iii. The Criminal Records Unit will use the CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the State Police.
      - iv. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS County Supervisor or designee requesting the checks.
      - v. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will forward the transaction number to the relative/fictive kin volunteer applicant.
      - vi. Applicants must go to an approved Electronic Harvester to have fingerprints scanned.
      - vii. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will document eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS.
    - b) Ink Fingerprint
      - i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Records Check and the FBI fingerprint card with good, un-smudged prints. Take care not to staple through fingerprints on the FBI fingerprint card.
      - ii. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to re-submit. Volunteer applicants may not use an Electronic Harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints and the attempt was unsuccessful.
      - iii. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead.
      - iv. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will work with the Criminal Records Unit to process the check.
  - 5) Enter all other required volunteer data in CHRIS relative and fictive kin tab of "collateral" screens.
- E. Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from DCFS Central Office) to volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years and who choose to use the harvester to conduct the FBI Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check.
- F. If approval of volunteer is received via conference with Supervisor (based on background check results and consultation about FSW's assessment of the volunteer's appropriateness for contact with the family):
  - 1) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
  - 2) Assign volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities.



- 3) Provide W-9 to area Financial Coordinator and work with Financial Coordinator to obtain the volunteer applicant's assigned ASSIS vendor number.
  - 4) Provide DCFS orientation to volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two weeks of approval notification to volunteer.
    - a) DCFS Travel Forms
    - b) ASSIS vendor number for completion of travel reimbursement requests
    - c) Case specific information pertaining to the location, frequency, duration and supervision requirements for parent-child or sibling visitation as appropriate.
  - 5) Establish mutually agreed upon schedule for volunteer.
  - 6) Handle complaints as needed.
  - 7) Notify DCFS Central Office Foster Care Unit and Area Director if volunteer quits, concerns or issues arise or the volunteer is asked to leave.
- G. If approval of volunteer is not received from Supervisor:
- 1) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
- H. Document in CHRIS when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave, as applicable.

## **POLICY I-D: DIVISION VOLUNTEERS**

01308/201874

Because families' success depends on community involvement, DCFS volunteers are an integral part of the child welfare system working to improve outcomes for children and families. Division volunteers may serve in a variety of capacities based on their interests, skill-level, and training. Regardless of the role volunteers may play, all volunteers are responsible for ensuring the proper care, treatment, safety, and supervision of the children they serve. Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age with the exception of stipend and non-stipend interns who must be at least 18 years of age.

A County Office Volunteer Designee will be established in each DCFS county office to assist and support local volunteers. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator in Central Office will help process volunteer applications and provide technical assistance to local County Office Volunteer Designees. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will also serve as the direct point of contact for community organizations that recruit volunteers to then support DCFS activities.

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Community organizations (e.g., The CALL, Project Zero, etc.) that recruit their own volunteers to then provide assistance to DCFS staff and clients also play a vital role in supporting children and families and are valued DCFS partners. Each Community Organization Liaison will be responsible for submitting all required background checks and/or other application materials for their agency volunteers to the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator. After the background check results have been received and approved by DCFS, the Community Organization Liaison will also be responsible for updating these background checks every two years for those individuals who continue to serve as volunteers for that agency.

All prospective volunteers who have direct and unsupervised contact with children must be cleared through the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and through a State Police Criminal Record Check. The Division will request any other state where the prospective volunteer has resided in the preceding five years to check its child abuse and neglect registry, if available, and in the person's state of employment, if different, for reports of child maltreatment, if available. Any prospective volunteer who has not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years must also clear an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check. A Vehicle Safety Check (i.e., driving record) and a copy of proof of auto insurance are also required for all prospective volunteers who will have direct and unsupervised contact with children and other clients. Once a volunteer is approved, all background checks will be run every two years thereafter as long as an individual remains a volunteer with DCFS.

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Volunteers who will not have direct contact with children and clients are not required to complete background checks.

All volunteers will maintain confidentiality of children and families served by DCFS and will sign a confidentiality agreement to this effect. Confidentiality applies to verbal, written and/or electronic transmittal of information. Volunteers will not have unsupervised access to CHRIS.

Volunteers will be supervised by an appropriate staff person. A volunteer who works unsupervised and substitutes as staff must meet the qualifications required for a paid employee in that position.

Volunteers not serving in a foster or adoptive capacity are required to earn at least five hours of continuing education hours each year following the completion of their first year of volunteer service.

Volunteers approved by DHS to transport children in foster care or DHS clients or to supervise visits at the request of DHS shall not be liable to the children in foster care, DHS clients, or the parents or guardians of children in foster care for injuries to the children or clients caused by the acts or omissions of a volunteer unless the acts or omissions constitute malicious, willful, wanton, or grossly negligent conduct.

An approved volunteer who performs home studies without compensation shall have immunity from liability as provided for state officers and employees. While a home study volunteer may be recruited through any organization operating under a memorandum of understanding with DHS for the completion of home studies, only DHS will approve the home study volunteer.

If at any point during the volunteer application and assessment process the Division determines that an applicant does not meet the standards or any other criteria for a DCFS volunteer, then the Division will deny approval of the volunteer. If at any time during the course of an approved volunteer's service with DCFS it is determined that the volunteer poses a risk to children, then the Division will terminate the volunteer's services immediately.

In the interest of providing stability for children and families, DCFS recruits relatives and fictive kin as volunteers for their specific family members. Relative and fictive kin applicants must be cleared through the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry and through a State Police Criminal Record Check as well as meet driving requirements established by the Division. The Division will request any other state where the prospective volunteer has resided in the preceding five years to check its child abuse and neglect registry, if available, and in the person's state of employment, if different, for reports of child maltreatment, if available.

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If approved, these relative and fictive kin volunteers are available to provide transportation for their family members and provide other volunteer services on a family-specific basis and will not be allowed to participate as a volunteer for DCFS in any other manner. Because the relative and fictive kin volunteers will serve in a case specific role, DCFS will make exceptions to the volunteer application process, such as completing only the necessary background check forms rather than the entire volunteer packet, to expedite the availability of the relative and fictive kin volunteers to provide services for their family members.

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## **PROCEDURE I-D1: Volunteer Application Process and Approval**

01308/201874

The DCFS County Supervisor, Office Volunteer Designee or designee-Community Organization Liaison will:

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A. Provide volunteer applicant with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion.

A-1) The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:

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- a) CFS-050-A: DCFS Volunteer Opportunities
- b) CFS-050-C: DCFS Volunteer Application
- c) CFS-050-D: DCFS Volunteer Confidentiality Statement
- d) CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement
- ~~e) APS-0001: Authorization for Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check~~
- f) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
- g) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
- h) FBI fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five years
- i) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS Drivers
- j) VSP-001: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
- k) ~~VSP-002: Authorization~~ 002: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
- l) Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual

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2) The forms in the Indirect Service Volunteer Packet that the volunteer applicant will receive are:

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- a) CFS-050-C: Volunteer Application
- b) CFS-050-D: Confidentiality Statement

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H.C. CFS-050-E: Volunteer Agreement

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B. Ask applicant to submit a W-9 if the volunteer plans to transport clients and wishes to be reimbursed for mileage.

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~~B.C.~~ Answer volunteer applicant questions, as applicable

~~C.D.~~ Collect the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed including the volunteer applicant's W-9, if applicable.

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~~D.E.~~ Review Volunteer Packet forms submitted by volunteer applicant.

~~E.F.~~ Call the references listed on the application to gather more information.

~~F.G.~~ Complete Section A of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, as appropriate, to ensure that all documents required of volunteer applicant have been completed.

~~G.H.~~ Forward the completed Volunteer Packet, including CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist, to DCFS ~~Central Office Policy Unit~~ Statewide Volunteer Coordinator, Slot S-5654 for processing and approval.

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~~H.I.~~ Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from DCFS ~~Central Office Policy Unit~~ Volunteer Coordinator) to volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years and who choose to use the harvester to conduct the FBI Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check.

~~I.J.~~ If approval of volunteer is received from ~~Central Office~~ the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist:

- a) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
- b) Assign volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities.
- c) Provide DCFS orientation to volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two weeks of approval notification to volunteer.
- d) Establish mutually agreed upon schedule for volunteer.
- e) Complete Section C of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist and file in volunteer record.
- f) Handle complaints as needed.
- g) Notify DCFS ~~Central Office Policy Unit~~ Statewide Volunteer Coordinator if volunteer quits or is asked to leave.

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~~J.K.~~ If approval of volunteer is not received from ~~Central Office~~ DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator:

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- a) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
- b) Place copy of completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist in volunteer applicant record.

~~The~~ DCFS ~~Policy Unit~~ Statewide Volunteer Coordinator will:

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A. Review forms in the Volunteer Packet using CFS-050-B DCFS Volunteer as a guide to ensure all required volunteer applicant forms have been completed and submitted.

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~~B.~~ Mail a thank you post card to the volunteer applicant.

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~~B.C.~~ Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units.

1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-316 must be notarized. The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check shall be repeated every two years.

- a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit.
- b) Document results in CHRIS.

~~c) Scan results in E-docus.~~

~~2) Submit the completed APS-0001: Authorization for Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check to Adult Protective Services. The APS-0001 must be notarized. The volunteer applicant must have no history of true abuse and/or neglect.~~

- ~~a) Route each completed APS-0001 to Adult Protective Services.~~
- ~~b) Document results in CHRIS.~~
- ~~c) Scan results in E-doctus.~~

~~3)2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-342 must be notarized. The State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two years.~~

- ~~a) Route each completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Records Unit.~~
- ~~b) Document eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS.~~
- ~~c) Scan results in E-doctus.~~

~~4)3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant.~~

- ~~a) Copy the front and back of the driver's license.~~
- ~~b) Document results in CHRIS.~~

~~5) Work with the DCFS Criminal Records Unit to process an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal~~

~~4) Background Check For all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years, submit the appropriate paper work for an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check to the DCFS Criminal Records Unit to process this check and collaborate with the Criminal Background Check Unit accordingly.~~ There are two options for processing the FBI check:

a) Electronic Fingerprint Scanning

- i. Volunteer applicants do NOT need to fill out an FBI fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.
- ~~ii. The DCFS Central Office Policy Unit will route the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to the DCFS Criminal Records Unit.~~
- ~~iii.ii. The Criminal Records Unit will use the CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the State Police.~~
- ~~iv.iii. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS Central Office Policy Unit, Statewide Volunteer Coordinator.~~
- ~~v.ii. The DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator, Central Office Policy Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS County Supervisor or designee, Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison to then forward to the volunteer applicant.~~
- ~~vi.v. Applicants must go to an approved Electronic Harvester to have fingerprints scanned.~~
- ~~vii. Applicants must pay the electronic harvester fee. If applicants are approved as a volunteer, they may request reimbursement. A receipt for the harvester fees and a DHS-1914 must be submitted to the local financial coordinator for reimbursement processing.~~
- ~~viii. The DCFS Central Office Policy Unit will document eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS and scan results in E-doctus.~~

b) Ink Fingerprint

- i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check and the FBI fingerprint card with good, unsmudged prints. Take care not to staple through the fingerprints on the FBI fingerprint card.
- ii. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to re-submit. Volunteer applicants may not use an Electronic Harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints and the attempt was unsuccessful.

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- iii. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead.
- iv. ~~The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will forward the documents to the Central Office Policy Unit along with the other items in the Volunteer Packet.~~
- v. ~~The Central Office Policy Unit will work with the Criminal Records Unit to process the check.~~
- vi. ~~The DCFS Central Office Policy Unit will document the eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS and scan into E-doctus.~~

~~C.D.~~ Enter all other required volunteer data in CHRIS to the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable.

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~~D.E.~~ Complete Section B of CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist. Maintain other records and correspondence with county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons regarding volunteers.

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~~E.~~ Notify County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of volunteer via completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes, as applicable.

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~~F.~~ Scan completed CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist in E-doctus.

~~G.~~ Maintain records and correspondence with county office staff regarding volunteers a copy of the CFS-050-B: DCFS Volunteer Checklist for record keeping purposes.

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~~H.~~ Assist county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons with orientations for new volunteers as needed/upon request.

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~~G.I.~~ Assist county office staff and Community Organization Liaisons with trouble-shooting volunteer-related issues.

~~H.J.~~ Document in volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable, when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave, as applicable.

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## PROCEDURE I-D2: Volunteer Background Check Renewals

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The DCFS ~~Statewide Volunteer Coordinator Central Office Policy Unit~~ will:

- A. Mail the following to the volunteer's home address (as identified in CHRIS) at least 30 business days prior to the volunteer's ~~two-year~~two-year anniversary of his/her last processing of background checks:
- 1) A cover letter:
    - a) Thanking volunteer for his/her volunteer service
    - b) Reminding the volunteer that he or she is required to earn five hours of continuing education credit annually following the completion of the first year of volunteer service
    - c) Explaining that his/her background checks will expire soon and must be renewed
    - d) Requesting volunteer to complete all enclosed background check forms and return them to the DCFS Central Office Policy Unit within two weeks of receipt
    - e) Informing volunteer that if all enclosed background check forms are not completed and returned to the DCFS ~~Statewide Volunteer Coordinator Central Office Policy Unit~~ within the required timeframe, he or she will no longer be eligible to serve as a DCFS Volunteer
    - f) Requesting volunteer to provide copies of his or her training completion certificates earned over the last year

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~~2) APS-0001: Authorization for Adult Maltreatment Central Registry Check to Adult Protective Services~~

~~3) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check~~

~~4) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check~~

- B. After mailing the information listed above, notify volunteer's ~~County supervisor Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as applicable~~, that volunteer's background checks must be renewed as soon as possible and ~~volunteer should receive appropriate forms soon that required forms have been mailed to the volunteer.~~

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~~C. Process, document, and scan all completed, returned background check forms (see Procedure I-D1 above for more detailed background check processing instructions) and copies of training certificates.~~

~~D.C.~~ If volunteer does not return all completed background check forms and copies of training certificates within requested timeframes outlined in aforementioned cover letter:

- 1) Contact volunteer by phone prior to his/her ~~two-year~~two-year anniversary of the last processing of background checks to request that he/she complete and return required background check forms within one week.
- 2) Document conversation (or attempt to contact) with volunteer in ~~CHRIS~~the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable.
- ~~3) Process, document, and scan all completed, returned background check forms (see Procedure I-D1 above for more detailed background check processing instructions) and copies of training certificates.~~
- 4) If volunteer still does not return completed background checks and copies of training certificates within required timeframe:
  - a) Document in the volunteer management spreadsheet or CHRIS, as applicable, that volunteer is no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer.
  - b) Send a letter to the former volunteer informing him/her that he/she is no longer eligible to serve as a volunteer.
  - c) Notify the volunteer's ~~county supervisor~~County Office Volunteer Designee via e-mail that the volunteer may no longer serve as a volunteer in the county office.

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d) Submit returned background check forms to applicable background check units for processing (see Procedure (I-D1 above).

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e) Notify County Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison, as appropriate, with approval or denial status of volunteer based on the background check re-evaluation.

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The County Supervisor-Office Volunteer Designee or Community Organization Liaison will:

- A. Work with the DCFS Statewide Volunteer Coordinator Central Office Policy Unit and volunteer as needed to ensure that volunteer's background checks are renewed when required.
- B. If volunteer does not renew required background checks in required timeframe, ensure he/she no longer provides services to/at the local county office or through the community organization that helps to support DCFS.

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### **PROCEDURE I-D3: Relative and Fictive Kin Volunteer Application and Process for Approval**

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The FSW will:

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- A. Ensure that relatives and fictive kin who have already been identified as a provisional placement resource for a child under Policy VI-B are not referred for processing as a relative or fictive kin volunteer (individuals already approved as provisional placement resources may also transport the relative/fictive kin child).
- B. If the relative or fictive kin transporter appears viable, interview the child, if age appropriate, to assess how the child may feel about routine contact with the relative that person and make individualized decisions on a case-by-case basis in the best interest of the child.
- C. Speak with the applicant and with the biological family to determine the current status of their relationship is contentious or amenable.
- D. Provide volunteer applicant with a Volunteer Packet and instructions on completion. The forms in the Volunteer Packet that the relative/fictive kin volunteer applicant will receive are:
  - 1) CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check
  - 2) CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check
  - 3) FBI fingerprint card (if not using harvester) for any volunteer applicant who has not lived continuously in Arkansas for the past five years
  - 4) CFS-593: Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Additional Requirements for DCFS Drivers
    - a) VSP-001: Authorization to Operate State Vehicles and Private Vehicles on State Business
    - b) VSP-002: Authorization to Obtain Traffic Violation Record
  - 5) W-9 Form
- B. Arkansas State Vehicle Safety Program Manual/Answer volunteer applicant questions, as applicable
- C. Collect and review the Volunteer Packet forms listed above from the applicant once all forms have been completed.
- D. Route all background check request forms to the appropriate units.



- 1) Submit the completed CFS-316: Request for Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check to the Central Registry Unit for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-316 must be notarized. The Child Maltreatment Central Registry Check shall be repeated every two years.
  - a) Route each completed CFS-316 to the Central Registry Unit.
  - b) Document results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.
- 2) Submit the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check for each volunteer applicant. The CFS-342 must be notarized. The State Police Criminal Record Check shall be repeated every two years.
  - a) Route each completed CFS-342 to the Criminal Records Unit.
  - b) Document eligible or in-eligible results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.
- 3) Submit the signed CFS-593, VSP-1, and VSP-2 to the Vehicle Safety Program Coordinator along with a clear copy of the driver's license for each volunteer applicant.
  - a) Copy front and back of driver's license.
  - b) Document results in CHRIS relative volunteer tab of "collateral" screen.
- 4) Work with the DCFS Criminal Records Unit to process an FBI fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check for all volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years. There are two options for processing the FBI check:
  - a) Electronic Fingerprint Scanning
    - i. Volunteer applicants do NOT need to fill out an FBI fingerprint card, as a request for electronic scanning will be done via CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check.
    - ii. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will route the completed CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to the DCFS Criminal Records Unit.
    - iii. The Criminal Records Unit will use the CFS-342: State Police Criminal Record Check to get a transaction number from the State Police.
    - iv. The Criminal Records Unit will forward the transaction number to the DCFS County Supervisor or designee requesting the checks.
    - v. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will forward the transaction number to the relative/fictive kin volunteer applicant.
    - vi. Applicants must go to an approved Electronic Harvester to have fingerprints scanned.
    - vii. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will document eligible or ineligible results in CHRIS.
  - b) Ink Fingerprint
    - i. Volunteer applicants will complete CFS-342: State Police Criminal Records Check and the FBI fingerprint card with good, un-smudged prints. Take care not to staple through fingerprints on the FBI fingerprint card.
    - ii. If the prints are not readable, the volunteer will have to re-submit. Volunteer applicants may not use an Electronic Harvester if they have already submitted ink fingerprints and the attempt was unsuccessful.
    - iii. If a legible set of fingerprints cannot be obtained after a minimum of two attempts, a name-based FBI check will be conducted instead.
    - iv. The DCFS County Supervisor or designee will work with the Criminal Records Unit to process the check.

- 5) Enter all other required volunteer data in CHRIS relative and fictive kin tab of "collateral" screens.
- E. Provide the transaction number (upon receipt from DCFS Central Office) to volunteer applicants who have not lived in Arkansas continuously for the past five years and who choose to use the harvester to conduct the FBI Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check.
- F. If approval of volunteer is received via conference with Supervisor (based on background check results and consultation about FSW's assessment of the volunteer's appropriateness for contact with the family):
- 1) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
  - 2) Assign volunteer an appropriate point of contact in the county office prior to commencement of any volunteer activities.
  - 3) Provide W-9 to area Financial Coordinator and work with Financial Coordinator to obtain the volunteer applicant's assigned ASSIS vendor number.
  - 4) Provide DCFS orientation to volunteer prior to commencement of any volunteer activities, but preferably within two weeks of approval notification to volunteer.
    - a) DCFS Travel Forms
    - b) ASSIS vendor number for completion of travel reimbursement requests
    - c) Case specific information pertaining to the location, frequency, duration and supervision requirements for parent-child or sibling visitation as appropriate.
  - 5) Establish mutually agreed upon schedule for volunteer.
  - 6) Handle complaints as needed.
  - 7) Notify DCFS Central Office Foster Care Unit and Area Director if volunteer quits, concerns or issues arise or the volunteer is asked to leave.
- G. If approval of volunteer is not received from Supervisor:
- 1) Inform volunteer as soon as possible.
- H. Document in CHRIS when volunteer resigns or is asked to leave, as applicable.

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# Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services

## Notice to Fictive Kin that a Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody

To: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You have been identified as an individual having a strong, positive, emotional tie and play a positive role in \_\_\_\_\_'s life. Pursuant to A.C.A. §9-28-107, this is your notice that this child is now in the custody of the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS has removed or is removing the above-named child from the home of \_\_\_\_\_. We believe that relatives and other individuals with whom a child shares a positive, meaningful relationship play an important role in a child's life, especially a child who must be temporarily cared for by someone other than a parent. Children do better when they can temporarily live with or stay connected in other ways to people who know and care about them.

We are contacting you as someone who could offer services needed by \_\_\_\_\_ and/or his or her family such as offering a temporary home for or otherwise supporting the child by staying in contact while he or she is in custody. In the next few days, I or someone from my agency will call you to review your options for helping to care for \_\_\_\_\_.

If you would like to temporarily bring the child into your home, you may ask to become a Provisional Foster Parent. DCFS may approve your home as a Provisional Foster Home after conducting (1) a health and safety check, which includes background checks, and (2) a visual inspection of your home. Requesting to be considered as a possible Provisional Foster Home, does not guarantee that you will be asked or approved to ultimately serve as a Provisional Foster Home for \_\_\_\_\_.

If your home is opened as a Provisional Foster Home, you may receive benefits if you qualify after the child is placed in your home, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly known as food stamps). DCFS may also provide daycare assistance if appropriate. The child will receive medical insurance.

Within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, you must meet all other foster home requirements including attending foster parent training. If you are approved as a Regular Foster Home, DCFS will provide all services and supports available to every child in foster care, such as monthly board payments for the child.

If you are not approved as a Regular Foster Home within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, then one of the following must take place: (1) You must receive custody of the child, or (2) Your Provisional Foster Home must be closed and the child must be removed.

If you are not able to provide a temporary home for \_\_\_\_\_, there are other ways for you to stay involved in his or her life and maintain important connections.

We will call you in the next few days to explore your options, but feel free to contact me sooner. My phone number and email address are listed above. We need to communicate with you at your earliest convenience by phone, mail, email, or in person, to determine if you are interested in (1) Participating in the care and placement of the child, (2) Becoming a foster parent, and/or (3) Visiting the child. Ensuring you have contact with me as soon as possible will help ensure that you do not lose the opportunity to connect with \_\_\_\_\_ now or in the future.

Signature



Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services

Notice to Fictive Kin that a
Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody

To:
Address:
From: Phone:
Email: Date:
Dear

You have been identified as an individual having a strong, positive, emotional tie to and play a positive role in's life. Pursuant to A.C.A. §9-28-107, this is your notice that this child is now in the custody of the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS has removed or is removing the above-named child from the home of. We believe that relatives and other individuals with whom a child shares a positive, meaningful relationship play an important role in a child's life, especially a child who must be temporarily cared for by someone other than a parent. Children do better when they can temporarily live with or stay connected in other ways to people who know and care about them.

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We are contacting you as someone who could offer services needed by and/or his or her family such as offering a temporary home for or otherwise supporting the child by staying in contact while he or she is in custody. In the next few days, I or someone from my agency will call you to review your options for helping to care for.

If you would like to temporarily bring the child into your home, you may ask to become a Provisional Foster Parent. DCFS may approve your home as a Provisional Foster Home after conducting (1) a health and safety check, which includes background checks, and (2) a visual inspection of your home. Requesting to be considered as a possible Provisional Foster Home, does not guarantee that you will be asked or approved to ultimately serve as a Provisional Foster Home for.

If your home is opened as a Provisional Foster Home, you may receive benefits if you qualify after the child is placed in your home, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly known as food stamps). DCFS may also provide daycare assistance if appropriate. The child will receive medical insurance.

Within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, you must meet all other foster home requirements including attending foster parent training. If you are approved as a Regular Foster Home, DCFS will provide all services and supports available to every child in foster care, such as monthly board payments for the child.

If you are not approved as a Regular Foster Home within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, then one of the following must take place: (1) You must receive permanent custody of the child, or (2) Your Provisional Foster Home must be closed and the child must be removed.

If you are not able to provide a temporary home for, there are other ways for you to stay involved in his or her life and maintain important connections.

We will call you in the next few days to explore your options, but feel free to contact me sooner. My phone number and email address are listed above. We need to communicate with you at your earliest convenience by phone, mail, email, or in person, to determine if you are interested in (1) Participating in the care and placement of the child, (2) Becoming a foster parent, and/or (3) Visiting the child. Contacting Ensuring you have contact with me as soon as possible will help ensure that you do not lose the opportunity to connect with now or in the future.

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| Signature

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Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services

Notice to Adult Relatives by Blood, Adoption or Marriage that a
Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody

To: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

You have been identified as a relative of \_\_\_\_\_ who is now in the custody of the
Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS has removed or is removing the
above-named child from the home of \_\_\_\_\_. We believe that relatives play an important
role in the lives of children, especially children who must be temporarily cared for by someone other than their parents. Children do
better when they can temporarily live with or stay connected in other ways to people who know and care about them.

We are contacting you to see if you are interested in being considered as a temporary home for or otherwise staying in contact with
\_\_\_\_\_ while s/he is in custody. In the next few days, I or someone from my agency will
call you to review your options for helping to care for \_\_\_\_\_.

Pursuant to Arkansas Code Ann. §9-28-107, this is your notice that you have the option to (1) Participate in the care of the child, (2)
Participate in the placement with the child, and/or (3) Visit the child.

If you are interested in having the child temporarily live in your home with you, one option may be to become a Provisional Foster
Home. DCFS may approve your home as a Provisional Foster Home after conducting (1) a health and safety check, which includes
background checks, and (2) a visual inspection of your home.

If your home is opened as a Provisional Foster Home, you may receive benefits if you qualify after the child is placed in your home,
such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly known as food stamps). DCFS may also provide daycare
assistance if appropriate. The child will receive medical insurance.

Within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, you must meet all other foster home requirements including attending
foster parent training. If you are approved as a Regular Relative Foster Home, DCFS will provide all services and supports available
to every child in foster care, such as monthly board payments for the child. In addition, if you become a fully approved Regular
Relative Foster Home, you may eventually qualify to serve as a guardian for the child and receive a guardianship subsidy.

If you are not approved as a Regular Relative Foster Home within six months of becoming a Provisional Foster Home, then one of the
following must take place: (1) You must receive custody of the child, or (2) Your Provisional Foster Home must be closed and the
child must be removed.

If you are not able to provide a temporary home for \_\_\_\_\_, there are other ways for you
to stay involved in his/her life and maintain important family connections. You might arrange regular weekend or holiday visits at
your home or offer to transport him/her to and from school, medical appointments, or other activities.

We will call you in the next few days to explore your options, but feel free to contact me sooner. My phone and email are listed
above. We need to communicate with you at your earliest convenience either by phone, mail, email, or in person, to determine if you
are interested in (1) Participating in the care and placement of the child (to potentially include becoming a provisional foster parent),
or (2) Visiting the child. Contacting me as soon as possible will help ensure that you do not lose the opportunity to connect with
\_\_\_\_\_ now or in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Contact Person





Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Children and Family Services

Notice to Adult Relatives by Blood, Adoption or Marriage that a
Child Has Been Taken into DCFS Custody

To: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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connect with

\_\_\_\_\_ now or in the future.

| Signature of Contact Person

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