

CF OPERATING PROCEDURE
NO. 15-7

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
TALLAHASSEE, December 19, 2012

Documentation Management

DECISION MEMORANDUM PROCESS

1. Purpose. This operating procedure defines the process by which an issue paper becomes a decision memorandum, formalizes the format for such papers, and establishes guidelines for the development, presentation, and review of a decision memorandum.
2. Scope. This operating procedure applies to all Department of Children and Families' offices, including circuits and regions.
3. Explanation of Terms.
 - a. Headquarters Leadership Team. The group consisting of the Secretary, Chief of Staff, Assistant Secretaries, General Counsel, Headquarters Directors, and other managers as named by the Secretary.
 - b. Major Departmental Policy. Policy based on legislative, gubernatorial, or secretarial directives that significantly affects one or more units of the Department or groups outside the Department with which the Department conducts business.
 - c. Issue Paper. A document that clearly and concisely describes the issue to be decided, gives its background, outlines costs and impact on affected programs, presents the range of possible actions with ramifications of each option clearly described, and states recommended action. An issue paper is useful at any level of decision making and may or may not require action by the Secretary.
 - d. Decision Memorandum. An issue paper that constitutes major Department policy, requires review and comment by a number of Department managers, and requires a decision by the Secretary. Only a headquarters leadership team member can forward a decision memorandum to the Secretary.
4. Procedure.
 - a. A decision memorandum for the Secretary's signature may be initiated by the members of the Headquarters Leadership Team, a Circuit Administrator, or Regional Managing Director. The memorandum must be reviewed or coordinated with all affected offices. The review or coordination must be noted in the DCFTracker issue.
 - b. All program offices must route decision memorandums for the Secretary's signature through the Assistant Secretary responsible for that program office. Offices under the Chief of Staff and offices that report directly to the Secretary must route decision memorandums through the Chief of Staff. All Circuit Administrators and Regional Managing Directors must route decision memorandums through the Assistant Secretary for Operations.
 - c. All decision memorandums that involve Department funding must be reviewed by the Assistant Secretary for Administration prior to review by the Assistant Secretary or the Chief of Staff, as appropriate.

This operating procedure supersedes CFOP 10-9 dated February 7, 2005.

OPR: OSEC

DISTRIBUTION: B

d. Following the required review and coordination through the appropriate Assistant Secretary or the Chief of Staff as appropriate, decision memorandums are submitted to the Office of the Secretary (OS).

e. OS will review the decision memorandum to ensure that all required coordination has been completed. The memorandum will be returned to the originator if the required coordination and review are not complete.

f. After the Secretary has signed the decision memorandum, OS will return the original decision memorandum to the originator, as the office of record, for distribution.

g. A copy will be filed in OS.

5. Presentation.

a. Documents prepared pursuant to this operating procedure should be as brief and concise as possible while presenting the necessary information for the Secretary to make an informed decision. The originating office will ensure the information provided is factual, unbiased, comprehensive, and concise. Supporting material may be attached as needed to clarify the issue.

b. Appendices A and B of this operating procedure contain guidelines and a format to be used when preparing a decision memorandum.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY:

(Signed original copy on file)

KRISTEN VALLESE
Executive Communications Director

SUMMARY OF REVISED, DELETED OR ADDED MATERIAL

This revision updates terminology and the review process for decision memorandums.

(Letterhead)

ISSUE PAPER/DECISION MEMORANDUM FORMAT
(Prepare on letterhead stationary)

DATE:

TO:

THROUGH:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

(Refer to Appendix B of this operating procedure for description of the information which is to be included in each of the following sections.)

ISSUE/PROBLEM DESCRIPTION:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

OPTIONS

OPTION #1:

OPTION #2:

OPTION #3:

RECOMMENDATION:

Concur with Option # _____

Do Not Concur _____

Implement by: _____

Comments: _____

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

Date: _____

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING AN ISSUE PAPER/DECISION MEMORANDUM

I. ISSUE/PROBLEM DESCRIPTION.

Briefly describe the issue that requires resolution and clearly state its significance. Include in this description the magnitude and implications of the issue, as well as why the issue cannot be resolved below the Secretary's level.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Provide the relevant facts, underlying assumptions, and contributing factors necessary for a clear understanding of the issue. Briefly explain all reference material that directly relates to the issue; for example, statutes, legislation, executive orders, related previous decision documents, reports, or audit findings. Explain the underlying assumptions and premises on which alternative analyses are made. Highlight critical time frames.

III. ALTERNATIVES.

a. Describe each reasonable alternative or option. Present a similar level of supporting data and justification for each alternative, including a statement of expected costs and benefits, advantages and disadvantages, and potential internal and external effect.

b. List all probable costs, including personnel, equipment, and material, associated with implementation. Note any budget transfers which would be necessary and the impact such a transfer would have. Describe specific benefits, such as revenue increases, position reduction, or enhanced public image.

c. Address the potential internal and external effects of each alternative, including economic, operational, organizational, administrative or programmatic areas. Describe any legislation that would be necessary. To the extent possible, include quantitative information and apply standard evaluation criteria so that methodology and source of data are clear.

IV. RECOMMENDATION.

If the office submitting the decision memorandum has a preference for one option, the submitting office should make the recommendation and explain the basis for the recommendation.