




State of Florida
Department of Children and Families


Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: July 25, 2019

TO: Regional Managing Directors
Sheriff's Offices Conducting Child Protective Investigations
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
Florida Abuse Hotline Chiefs of Operations and Program Development

THROUGH: Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary 

FROM: Patricia Medlock, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare 

SUBJECT: Go-Live for FSFN Enhancements – Guardianship Assistance Program

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the approval of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) enhancements scheduled to be implemented on July 26, 2019. The FSFN system will be unavailable Friday, July 26, 2019 from 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. to implement the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP).

BACKGROUND: Florida's child welfare system has been under the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver since 2006, allowing the state to forego certain provisions of the Title IV-E Social Security Act, yet still claim Title IV-E dollars. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses much of this revenue to fund our unique Community Based Care child welfare system. This waiver is set to expire on September 30, 2019 and the Department anticipates it will lose approximately 90 million dollars. Therefore, with the sun setting of the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver, the Department has implemented the Path Forward initiative which includes various programs that will draw down additional funding to support the state's child welfare system. Authorized by the Social Security Act, states have the option to receive federal Title IV-E reimbursement for payments and associated costs to relatives or fictive kin who assume legal guardianship of certain children for whom they have cared for while foster parents. Effective July 1, 2019, Florida has elected to participate in the federal Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP).

The Guardianship Assistance Program is a Title IV-E funded program that will allow the state to draw down funds from the federal government. It is also a benefits program that is available to relatives and fictive kin who commit to caring for a child long term through permanent guardianship.

There is also an Extension of the Guardianship Assistance Program (E-GAP) that will be offered to families who signed their initial Guardianship Assistance Agreement (GAA) when the child they are caring for turned 16 or 17 years old. This extension of the program will allow these eligible children to continue receiving benefits until they turn 21 years old as long as they are enrolled in at least one of the qualifying activities (same qualifying activities as Extension of

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

Maintenance Adoption Subsidy and Extended Foster Care [CFOP 170-15 Ch. 6](#) and [CFOP 170-15 Ch.7](#)).

In addition, there will be a new 'GAP universe' deployed with this enhancement effort that will make data related to the Guardianship Assistance Program readily available to the community-based care lead agencies for reporting and analysis.

PEOPLE READINESS: Completed! – All Regions report that staff and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies (CBCs) are ready.

SYSTEM READINESS: Completed! – FSFN User Acceptance Testing was completed, and the build implementation plan has been approved.

SUPPORT READINESS: Completed! – The following supporting documentation has been updated to align with the FSFN Enhancements:

The following policies have been published to align with the FSFN implementation of the Guardianship Assistance Program:

- [CFOP 170-10 Ch.13 Guardianship Assistance Program \(Effective July 01, 2019\)](#)
- [CFOP 170-10 Ch.14 Guardianship Assistance Program Eligibility](#)
- [CFOP 170-15 Ch.8 Federal and State Funding Eligibility - Guardianship Assistance Program](#)
- [CFOP 170-15 Ch.9 Federal and State Funding Eligibility - Extension of Guardianship Assistance Program](#)

The following FSFN financial Implementation policy guidance has been issued:
[Financial Implementation- Guardianship Assistance Program](#)

A project website has been setup on the Center for Child Welfare's website to house all project related policy, training, and FSFN documentation:
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/GAP.shtml>

For a High-Level Overview of the Guardianship Assistance Program including eligibility requirements and benefits, please see '[Highlights](#)' document.

For a more in-depth overview of the Guardianship Assistance Program, please watch the video below which includes a power point presentation:

[Training Video: 'Florida's New Guardianship Assistance Program' \(03/29/2019\)](#)

To see the full list of FSFN Build Notes, please visit:

http://fsfn.dcf.state.fl.us/docs/FSFN%20Build%20Notes_7-26-2019.pdf

Post-Deployment Support Readiness: On Target! – The Guardianship Assistance Program post-deployment support will include daily calls for the two weeks following deployment to evaluate and respond to any issues. The support team will include members from the Office of Child Welfare Policy and Practice team, Office of Information Technology Services team, IBM team, Regional Points of Contact, and Community-Based Care lead agency (CBC) Points of Contact.

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TRAIN THE TRAINER INFORMATION: Four train the trainer sessions have been completed, two in Kissimmee, one in Tampa, and one in Saint Augustine. All training materials are available on the project's website <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/GAP.shtml>

ACTION REQUESTED: Please continue to execute all readiness plans to ensure our workforce is ready for the upcoming FSFN changes on July 26, 2019.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have questions about the Guardianship Assistance Program, please contact Teanna Houston, Statewide Foster Home Licensing Specialist at Teanna.Houston@myflfamilies.com. If you have FSFN questions about this enhancement effort, please contact Jeanette.Betancourt@myflfamilies.com. If you have any questions regarding local readiness efforts, please contact your regional champion below.

Regional Champions:

Northwest Region – Regina Pleas – Regina.Pleas@myflfamilies.com

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cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Center for Child Welfare
FSFN Consultant Network