



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Charlie Crist**  
Governor

**George H. Sheldon**  
Secretary

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**DATE:** September 3, 2010

**TO:** Regional Directors

**THROUGH:** Pete Digre, Assistant Secretary for Operations  
David L. Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs

**FROM:** Alan Abramowitz, State Director, Office of Family Safety

**SUBJECT:** Review Process for Initial and Re-licensure Foster Home Packets  
**ACTION REQUIRED:** CBC Process for Review of Initial and Re-licensure Foster Home Packets  
**DUE DATE:** September 17, 2010

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to follow-up with recommendations made by the Office of Inspector General as a result of an internal audit conducted on foster home licensing regulations, processes and practices.

**BACKGROUND:** In November 2008, the Office of the Inspector General issued report #A-05-0809-023, that offered several recommendations to improve the initial and relicensing processes. One such recommendation was specific to the Department supporting efforts to ensure that Community-Based Care Lead Agencies review all foster home initial/re-licensure packets.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is necessary for all Community-Based Care Lead Agencies to have a written process in place for the review of foster home initial/re-licensure packets prior to submission to the Department. The process is to be consistent with law, rule and CBC contract requirements. This will help ensure that foster home initial/re-licensure packets are of sufficient quality, timely, and that recommendations for licensure support policies and practices of the lead agency. The review process should also reduce the number of packets returned to subcontractors or lead agencies with a request for additional information. Hence, the time it takes to issue the license should decrease.

Lead agencies participating in the Attestation Model for licensure need not develop a separate review process. The structure of the Attestation Model is built around a thorough review by the lead agency of all foster home licensing packets prior to submission to the Department.

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

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Regional licensing specialists are to document the reason for each incomplete packet and copy the contract manager with the information. If incomplete licensing packets are a continuous problem, then the contract manager may chose to include this as a review item in the annual contract monitoring of the lead agency.

Please disseminate this guidance to Department licensing staff, contract managers, and Community-Based care Lead Agencies.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** For additional information, please contact Stacey Cleveland at 850-921-8833 or via email [Stacey\\_Cleveland@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Stacey_Cleveland@dcf.state.fl.us).

## PROJECT ACTION PLAN

**PROJECT NAME:** Audit Report #C-05-0809-23

**TEAM LEADERS:** Sallie Bond

**DESCRIPTION:** Response to IG Report FH Practices Inconsistent Finding 1: CBC Oversight and Processing of Licensing and Re-licensing Application Packets are Inconsistent. "...we recommend that Family Safety issue a state-wide directive to inform DCF licensing staff, CBC lead agencies and subcontractors of the expected routing of both licensing and re-licensing"

**KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS**

**Recommendations:**

- CBC agencies receive substantial funding from the Department to deliver a wide-range of foster care related services including licensing tasks. We recommend that Chapter 65C-13, FAC be revised to ensure consistency with the Department's CBC Contract Services Template. CBCs that do not perform reviews of both licensing and re-licensing packets may not merit their historical level of funding.
- Until revisions have been finalized, we recommend that Family Safety issue a statewide directive to inform DCF licensing staff, CBC lead agencies and subcontractors of the expected routing of both licensing and re-licensing packets.

<u>ACTION STEP</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
1. Issue memo directing CBC's of the contracted requirement to review all licensing packets.	Stacey Cleveland	2/12/2010	2/18/2010	Draft memo being reviewed for dissemination on 9/3/2010. See attached.
2. Prepare memo clarifying expectation for review of all licensing packets.	Stacey Cleveland	2/19/2010	2/18/2010	Draft memo being review for dissemination on 9/3/2010. See attached.
3. Identify and amend rule and contract as appropriate.	Stacey Cleveland	3/31/2010	4/10/2010	contract amended Rule revision in progress

**PROJECT NAME:** Audit Report #C-05-0809-23

**TEAM LEADERS:** Sallie Bond

Response to IG Report FH Practices Inconsistent

**DESCRIPTION:** \_ Finding 2: Quality of Supporting Documentation for Foster Home Licensure Needs Improvement

**KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS**

**Recommendations:**

- Development of state-wide uniform licensing and re-licensing checklists for use by all Department regions, CBC lead agencies and their sub-contractors.
- Frequent training and/or communication on the proper implementation of foster home licensing regulations including Headquarters' Family Safety Program staff, regional licensing offices, CBC lead agencies and their sub-contractors.
- More stringent reviews of licensing and re-licensing packets prior to delivery to the Department.

<u>ACTION STEP</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
1. Gather licensing and re-licensing checklists and identify the best practice models to share with staff.	Stacey Cleveland	2/28/2010	Sample licensing packets gathered 12/11/2008	Complete. The checklist for the Attestation Model is consistent and contains core requirements. The checklist used by regions that do not participate in the Attestation Model are not consistent in format, but all contain core items required by statute and rule.
2. Develop and share tip sheet with core items required by statute and rule.	Stacey Cleveland	2/28/2010	The results of the sample packets determined the tip sheet was not necessary.	In progress. The checklist for the Attestation Model is consistent and contains core requirements. The checklist used by regions that do not participate in the Attestation Model are not consistent in format, but all contain core items required by statute and rule. Tip sheet to be issued in the next issue of the Family Safety electronic training bulletin

DESCRIPTION: Finding 3: Supporting Documentation for Re-licensure Is Not Always Delivered Timely.

**KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS**

**Recommendations:**

- Evaluation of possible duplicative supporting documentation for meeting re-licensure requirements.
- Continued discussions between Family Safety, CBCs and government agencies to improve information delivery time.

<u>ACTION STEP</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
1. Identify possible duplicative supporting documentation	Stacey Cleveland	July 2009	5/09	Complete. Possible duplication addressed through the work of the committee developing the Attestation Model. See the July 1, 2009 correspondence.
2. Execute Interagency Agreement with Department of Health to assist with timely information.	Stacey Cleveland		8/7/09	Complete. The interagency agreement between the Department and DOH was executed on 8/7/09

PROJECT NAME: Audit Report #C-05-0809-23

TEAM LEADERS: Sallie Bond

DESCRIPTION: Finding 4: Departmental Regional Offices Need to Improve Foster Home Licensing Data.

**KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS**

**Recommendation:**

- Headquarters and Regional Family Safety Program staff work together to develop a uniform document for recording important foster home licensing dates and activities.

<u>ACTION STEP</u>	<u>LEAD</u>	<u>TARGET DATE</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
1. Utilize data available in FSFN	Stacey Cleveland		FSFN R2B	Completed. The licensing component of FSFN is currently being utilized by staff.