



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott  
Governor

David E. Wilkins  
Secretary

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**DATE:** March 8, 2013

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors

**THROUGH:** Pete D'Arcy, Assistant Secretary for Operations  
Elisa Cramer, Director of Family and Community Services

**FROM:** Andrea M. Tulloch, Esq., Director, Office of Child Welfare

**SUBJECT:** New Unified Home Study Process/Template Rollout

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the new Unified Home Study (UHS), user's guide, and the timeline for implementation.

Starting May 1, all Child Protective Investigators (CPIs) will use the new UHS and process. The new UHS will be available for use by CBCs on May 1. All child welfare staff must use the new UHS with FSFN Release 2, which is slated for July 1, 2013.

**BACKGROUND:** The intent of the unified home study is to assess a potential caregiver or foster or adoptive family's strengths and needs. The new UHS is progressive, in that it can expand and change based on the caregiver and the child's situation. For example, the home study for an emergency placement with a relative can be built upon for an ongoing placement with the relative, and later for licensing if the relative chooses to be licensed as a foster parent. The unified home study can then become an adoptive home study if the caregiver applies to adopt. The unified home study is also for conducting ICPC studies.

The new paper UHS is intended to be an intermediate step between the existing unified home study and the future FSFN home study module. Using the new paper tool in advance of the FSFN change will acclimate child protective investigators and case managers to assessing and evaluating families for placement and/or licensing.

Each Region, Sheriff's office and CBC must ensure that staff members who conduct home studies receive training on the new UHS. The Office of Child Welfare will provide weekly webinar trainings beginning the week of March 25<sup>th</sup>, and continuing through the month of April. Regional Managing Directors will determine whether staff members responsible for conducting home studies participate in one of the webinar sessions, or if a trainer or other local representative is going to participate. If you choose the latter, the Department's expectation is that the local representatives will serve as your agency experts or trainers for your staff. The webinar schedule and details are forthcoming.

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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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**ACTION REQUESTED:** Regions and Sheriffs must develop training and implementation plans for CPI use of the new UHS starting May 1. Please submit plans to Kristi Gilmore in the Office of Child Welfare by March 29th.

Please disseminate this memorandum and attachments to all child welfare staff, CBCs, Sheriff's offices conducting child protective investigations, and agency staff who are involved in placement and licensing efforts.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you have any questions, or for additional information, please contact Kristi Gilmore at [Kristi\\_Gilmore@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:Kristi_Gilmore@dcf.state.fl.us) or 850-717-4659.

cc: CBC Contract Managers

Attachments