



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families


Rick Scott  
Governor



Mike Carroll  
Secretary

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**DATE:** March 1, 2018

**TO:** Regional Managing Directors  
Sheriff's Offices Conducting Child Protective Investigations  
Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agency CEOs

**THROUGH:** David L. Fairbanks, Deputy Secretary 

**FROM:** JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare   
Rebecca Kapusta, Assistant Secretary for Operations 

**SUBJECT:** Unified Home Study Completion

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**PURPOSE:** This memorandum is to advise all impacted stakeholders of the requirement to complete all pending home studies that currently exist in the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN), prior to release of the enhanced Unified Home Study (UHS) functionality that will go live in June 2018.

**BACKGROUND:** During preparations for the sun setting of the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver, there has been a continuous effort to address areas of improvement in the documentation of children in out of home care settings. During development of new FSFN UHS functionality which is set for a June 2018 deployment, it was determined that more than 100,000 home studies currently exist with a 'pending' outcome status. The home study types of emergency placements, relative, non-relative, licensing and adoption home studies were initiated by child welfare professionals statewide. Several of these home studies have resulted in the decision to approve or not approve the placement of a child(ren) referenced in the home study. These home studies must be completed and either approved or not approved prior to deployment of the new UHS functionality as this will also support Florida's efforts to maintain Title IV-E compliance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please review and disseminate this memorandum to all CPI, CBC and sub-contracted provider staff who conduct home studies for purposes of child placement. Pending home studies must be completed and receive a supervisory validation to either Approve or Not Approve each study, congruent with the placement decision that was made for each child who was the subject of the respective home study. *The validation period for this clean-up will begin on March 1, 2018 and conclude on May 30, 2018.*

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1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

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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

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Current UHS functionality validates that a local background check was completed on each prospective provider within 365 days of the current system date; this edit will be released during the validation period and FSFN will instead validate that the local background check is within 365 days of the *Completed* date of the UHS (within the Home Evaluation group box). The current Delink Provider functionality which does not allow two linked (merged) providers to be separated (delinked) will also be corrected. Child welfare professionals will need to review the case file to validate that there was a local background check completed on each household member or frequent visitor referenced in the home study prior to either approving or not approving the home study.

On a UHS where background checks cannot be validated, the UHS should be left pending and the justification should be added to the Incomplete Unified Home study Excel Workbook.

In June, the Office of Child Welfare will request each CBC and each DCF Circuit to provide a copy of their Incomplete Unified home study Excel Workbook containing the list of UHS that were not able to be approved and the justification.

The attached Unified Home Study (UHS) FSFN Clean-Up Job Aid provides the information necessary to complete the approval process. In addition, those needing assistance in completing the approvals process can access the Unified Home Study User Guide and How Do I Guide on Florida's Center for Child Welfare by clicking the following link:

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FSFNAll.shtml#UserGuides>

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you have questions or need further information, please contact Courtney Smith, Permanency & Well Being Manger, at (850) 717- 4660 or via email at [Courtney.Smith@myflfamilies.com](mailto:Courtney.Smith@myflfamilies.com).

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

Attachments: Unified Home Study (UHS) FSFN Clean-Up Job Aid  
Incomplete Unified Home Study Excel Workbook (as of 02/06/2018)

# Unified Home-Study (UHS) FSFN Clean-Up Job Aid

## Purpose:

- To prevent an “illegal” placement or the loss of IV-E funding (with the current “pending home studies of the state”, the state would lose approximately \$90 million in funding).
- Current HS in the process of being completed will continue as normal.
- The UHS FSFN enhancements are scheduled to roll out June 15, 2018.

## Steps:

- You will not be able to just go into the approval links and mark “approved” or “not approved”. Each home study must go through a “validation” process.
- **For home studies dated 2013 and later**, make the recommendation in the “Outcome” Drop Down menu and submit for approval under the Actions approval link.

**General Information**

Provider ID: 100093972 Counselor Name: ZGPRMH, BRIANNA L [Search](#) Purpose of Home Study: Relative Placement **Outcome:** APPROVED - MEETS REQUIREMENTS Completed Date:

**Demographics** | **Prior Intakes and Investigations/Referrals** | **Background Check Information** | **Financial Security Resources and Child Care Arrangement** | **Narrative Family Assessment** | **Attachments to the Unified Home Study** | **Actions:**

Viewed SSN Verification:  Yes  No Address: 2919 Szidllw HG City: Tallahassee County, State & Zip Code: Leon, FL 32301-7068 Home Phone: (850)524-0585 Cell Phone: Work Phone: Fax: Email Address: Work Schedule: Primary Language: English Race: Black/African American Ethnicity: African American/Black FL Residence Length: 1 Years - 1 Months Other States of Residence and approximate dates lived there: State: [v] Dates: 00/00/0000 To 00/00/0000 State: [v] Dates: 00/00/0000 To 00/00/0000

Viewed SSN Verification:  Yes  No Address: 2919 Szidllw HG City: Tallahassee County, State & Zip Code: Leon, FL 32301-7068 Home Phone: (850)524-0585 Cell Phone: Work Phone: Fax: Email Address: Work Schedule: Primary Language: English Race: Black/African American Ethnicity: African American/Black FL Residence Length: 1 Years - 1 Months Other States of Residence and approximate dates lived there: State: [v] Dates: 00/00/0000 To 00/00/0000 State: [v] Dates: 00/00/0000 To 00/00/0000

**Home Evaluation**

Date Initiated: 08/24/2016 Date Completed: 10/20/2016

**Actions:**

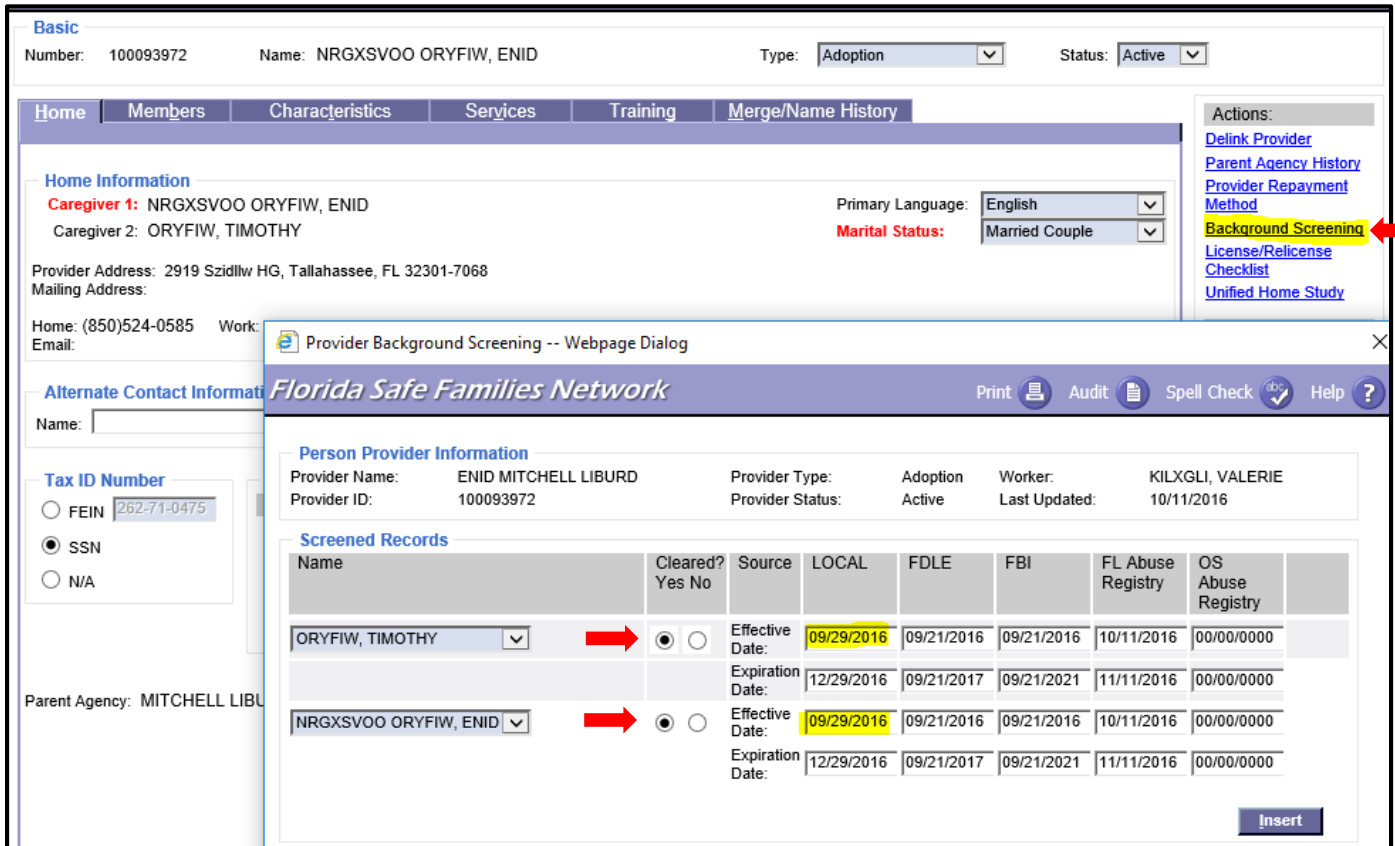
- Approval
- Upload Image

**Text:**

[Unified Home Study](#)

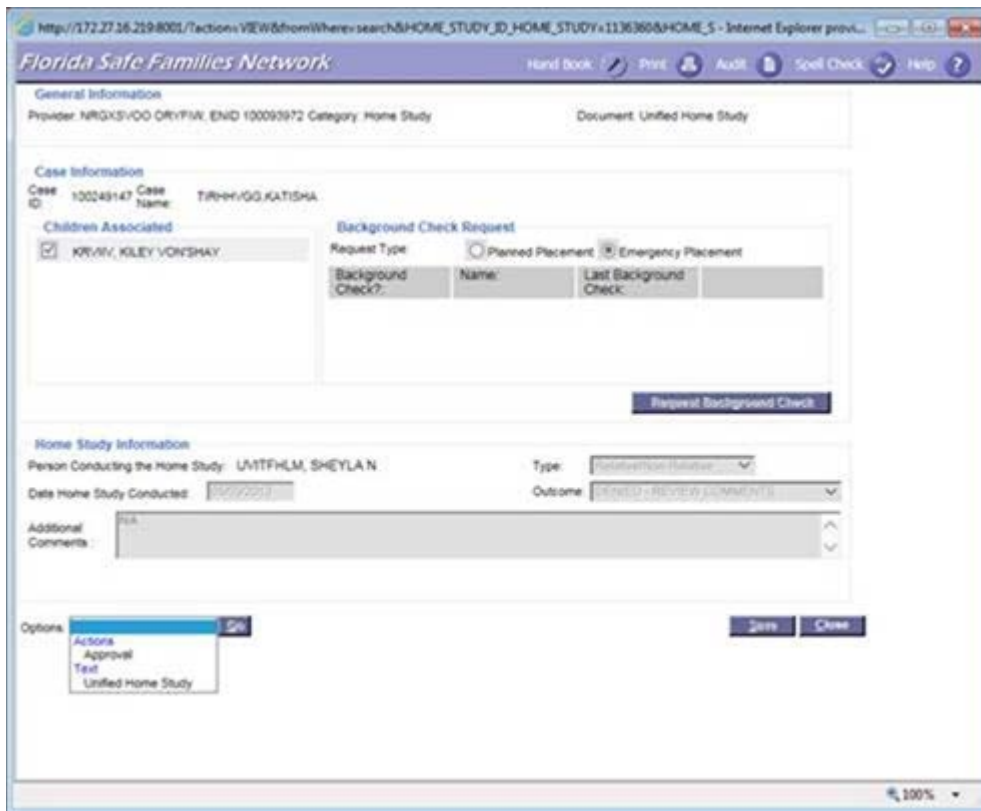
- If the Case Manager/Supervisor/Adoption Specialist/Licensing Specialist is no longer working at the agency, the current Case Manager/Supervisor/Adoption Specialist/Licensing Specialist is responsible to complete the task by:
  - looking through the documents to enter the local background check dates found in the file or home study.
  - reviewing the recommendation and submitting for approval to the supervisor.

- The local background checks have to be within 365 days prior to the completion date of the home study. The completion date is the date the supervisor signed the home study if there is a paper copy identified. The local background check paper copy needs to be scanned to the home study file as an image. Reminder as per CFOP 50-1, any documentation containing FCIC/NCIC information should not be scanned into FSFN.



- If there is no completion date entered, the completion date is the date the supervisor signed the home study template with signatures in the attached image or paper copy. The paper copy needs to be scanned and attached and uploaded to the home study prior to marking “approved” or “not approved”.
- A supervisor may not submit for approval and then route to themselves to approve (must be a two-tiered process). After the approval, the Case Manager/Supervisor/Adoption Specialist/Licensing Specialist must make a note in the provider notes explaining why he/she is approving the recommendations of the UHS.
- The following case note should be entered when approving an outstanding UHS:  
**NOTE: The portion in red illustrates an example and must be replaced with the actual purpose or type of study**  
 “As a result of the new UHS functionality which is set for a June 2018 deployment in to FSFN, it was determine that a home study associated with this case had a pending outcome status. A review of the paper record indicates that all background checks were completed timely for <<enter purpose/type of study (e.g., emergency placement, relative placement, etc.)>> home study and the FSFN record is being updated to reflect the appropriate outcome for the home study approved by the supervisor on (date).”

- **For home studies dated prior to 2013**, if the Case Manager/Supervisor/Adoption Specialist is no longer working at the agency, the current Case Manager/Supervisor/Adoption Specialist is responsible to complete the task by:
  - looking through the documents to enter the local background check dates found in the file or home study.
  - reviewing the recommendation and submitting for approval to the supervisor by selecting approval from options drop down.



- If there are duplicated home studies made in error, you may select the "not approved" radio button in the approval link and make a note in the provider record that it was a duplicate made in error.
- If you cannot find the completed home study template with signatures-do not approve the home study and add the reason to the Incomplete UHS Excel document.
- For open cases that have a pending home study, but background screens are not located- do not approve the home study and add the reason to the Incomplete UHS Excel document.