Unified Home Study

General Information

Trainer Guide

Office of Child Welfare

4/1/2018

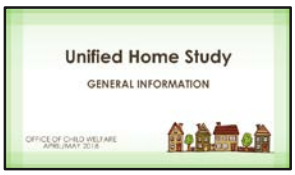
Unified Home Study: General Information

Time:

1.5 hours

Unit Overview:

Slide: 1.1



The purpose of this unit is to introduce participants to the new Unified Home Study (UHS). This unit includes the purpose of a Unified Home Study, its components, and the various types of home studies that exist.

Learning Objectives:

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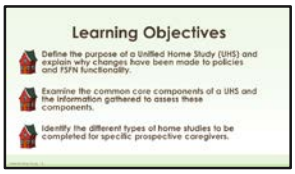

PG: 3

1. Define the purpose of a Unified Home Study and explain why changes have been made to policies and FSFN functionality.
2. Examine the common core components of a UHS and the information gathered to assess these components.
3. Identify new FSFN functionality and how it relates to the various UHS types.

Materials:

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Flip chart paper / markers
- Handouts needing printed: UHS Job Aid

Trainer Note: *In order to teach FSFN functionality, there are sections in this Trainer Guide designated as "FSFN Tutorials" to indicate when to play the associated tutorial before discussing the material.*

After the material is discussed, there are sections in the Trainer Guide designated as "FSFN Screens" showing independent screenshots to reinforce what was shown in the tutorial and discussed in the material.

It is ideal to show the tutorial(s) first and complete each topic with the screenshot(s) in order to strengthen the concepts that participants see and hear. However, it is the trainer's choice to use the material in a way that best suits the class.

Unified Home Study Definition

What comes to mind when you think of a Unified Home Study?

Endorse:

- Assessing a family before placing a child in a home
- Examining the physical home environment
- Meeting the needs of children when they are removed from their home

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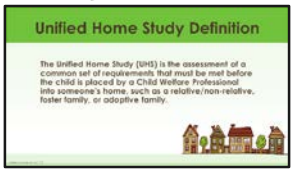

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The Unified Home Study (UHS) is the assessment of a common set of requirements that must be met before the child is placed by a Child Welfare Professional into someone's home, such as a relative/non-relative, foster family, or adoptive family.

- Many updates and improvements have been made to the UHS over the years. In the past, the UHS assessment has been conducted utilizing various forms and practices that were not always uniform throughout the state.

- Starting in 2008, functionality for the UHS was built into FSFN. This new functionality did not always meet users' needs which led to frustration and workarounds.

Why Change?

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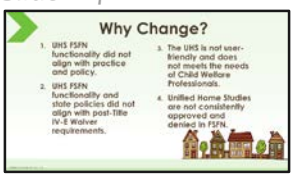

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There are many reasons why the UHS FSFN functionality and related policies needed to be updated. Here are some key reasons:

1. UHS FSFN functionality did not align with practice and policy.
   - As currently designed, all of the language used in the FSFN UHS does not address the specific Florida Statute, Florida Administrative Code, and CFOP requirements for the different types of home studies.
   - The narrative assessment questions in the UHS were not reflective of the entire family condition.

2. UHS FSFN functionality and state policies did not align with post-Title IV-E Waiver requirements.
   - Currently, Florida works under a federal Title IV-E waiver. This waiver expires in 2019 at which point the state will be monitored for all Title IV-E requirements. To do this, state policies have been updated and additional information has been added to the UHS in FSFN to bring the state into compliance with federal regulations.
   - The state will be subject to federal IV-E audits. Some of the major review components in these audits include home studies, background checks, and licensing requirements so the UHS must be in compliance with all federal regulations.
   - Currently, some agencies are using templates or their own forms and uploading to FSFN which does not meet policy and practice requirements.

3. The UHS is not user-friendly and does not meet the needs of CPIs, Case Managers, Licensing Specialists, and Adoptions Specialists.
   - The current UHS has text limitations and requires all questions to be answered whether they pertain to the type of home study being done or not.
   - Current UHS functionality in FSFN forces Child Welfare Professionals to begin each UHS from scratch even if the provider is already in FSFN and has previous home studies completed for them. UHS is lacking the "unified" piece. When CPIs complete their study, Case Management cannot build off of it, and when Case Management completes theirs, Adoptions cannot build off it, etc.

4. Unified Home Studies are not consistently approved and denied in FSFN.
   - Current FSFN functionality and the processes and practices around using this functionality has led to unapproved home studies. Some of these home studies have not been approved or denied due to being duplicates and others have simply not gone all the way through the approval process in FSFN. This has led to the appearance that children are in placements without approved home studies.

The updates to policies, practices, and FSFN functionality will ensure all out-of-home placements have approved UHS assessments in FSFN.

What Has Changed?

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Policies

The Department has made a number of changes to existing policies pertaining to home studies to ensure that the Unified Home Study (UHS) aligns with our Practice Model.

- The following policies, rules, and administrative codes have been changed to support the updated Unified Home Study:
  - 65C-16, F.A.C.: Adoptions
  - 65C-13, F.A.C.: Licensing
  - 65C-28, F.A.C.: Out-of-Home Care
  - CFOP 170-1, Chapter 5: Unified Home Study
  - CFOP 170-1, Chapter 6: Requesting and Analyzing Background Records

- This training provides an overview of the changes and updates that have been made to the above policies and operating procedures. To be fully be informed and knowledgeable, it is vital for all Child Welfare Professionals, including supervisors and frontline staff, to review and become familiar with these policies before the UHS functionality goes live.

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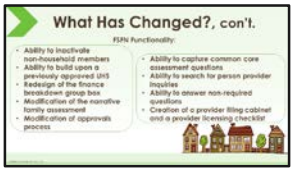

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FSFN Functionality

For the past year, the Department and IBM have been working diligently to make a number of changes to the UHS FSFN functionality to ensure the policies and FSFN are aligned, and most of all, to make the UHS a more user-friendly assessment that meets the needs of Child Welfare Professionals.

- Some of the exciting changes include:

- The ability to inactivate non-household members and document if the non-household member is a frequent visitor.
- The ability to build upon (copy) a previously approved UHS so that it is not necessary to start from the beginning when the provider is already in the system.
- A redesign of the finance breakdown group box in its entirety. This will allow for the documentation of multiple employers per household member.
- Modification of the narrative family assessment including:
  - Updates to the labels
  - Increased character limits for all narrative fields
  - Dynamically enabled narratives that are required or not required based on the home study type selected
- Modification of approvals to reflect current practice decisions.
- The ability to capture common core assessment questions that are relevant to all types of home studies. Questions are also more descriptive in nature and reflect how caregivers have the capacity to meet the needs of the child.
- The ability to search for person provider inquiries.
- The ability to answer non-required questions to ensure all possible information is captured, if available.
- Creation of a provider filing cabinet and a provider licensing checklist

When Do the Changes Occur?

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FSFN enhancements are scheduled to go live June 15, 2018! Various training materials and resources will be offered in order to prepare all Child Welfare Professionals for the upcoming changes. These resources can be found at the Florida Center for Child Welfare website.

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- The following materials can be found here: http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/HomeStudy.shtml
  - UHS Train-the-Trainer Guides, PowerPoints, and Participant Guides.

– UHS Job Aid: Provides an overview of the core components and includes sample questions that can be utilized by participants when making the UHS assessment.

– FSFN Tutorials: Provide step-by-step demonstrations on how to create a Person Provider and the UHS. Includes how to select the various types of home studies, upload key documents, and complete the UHS.

– UHS FSFN Functionality Informational Flyers.

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- The following materials can be found here: http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/DeptOperatingProcedures.shtml

  – CFOPS.

- The following materials can be found here: http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/FloridaAdminCode.shtml

  – Florida Administrative Codes.

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- The following materials can be found here: http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/FSFNAll.shtml

  – Unified Home Study User Guide: Provides information about how to complete work in FSFN. This guide includes screen shots of the work in FSFN.

  – Unified Home Study How Do I Guide: Provides the steps to take when completing work in FSFN. This is a quick desk reference companion to the User Guide where additional details can be found.

  – Unified Home Study Position Paper: Defines how a child welfare business process is supported with the FSFN functionality.

Placement Assessment

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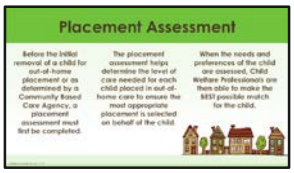

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A Placement Assessment must be completed when a child is initially removed. Additional Placement Assessments should be completed as determined by the Community Based Care (CBC) Lead Agency. The placement assessment process was a result of House Bill 1121 which amended Chapter 39.523 of the Florida Statutes.

- People may recall from the recent webinar entitled "Assessment Process for Placement of Children in Out-of-Home-Care", the placement assessment helps determine the level of care needed for each child placed in out-of-home care to ensure the most appropriate placement is selected on behalf of the child. The placement assessment applies to ALL placements, even an emergency placement!
  - All Child Welfare Professionals need to be very familiar with this assessment. Here is the webinar link to share and/or use as needed: http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/video/center/asplacoohc/start.html
- Through the use of the placement assessment, Child Welfare Professionals determine the best level of care needed for the child's placement. In determining the best placement setting, assess if the child has any:
  - Medical, developmental, and/or mental health needs
  - DJJ involvement
  - Court order placement requirements
  - Siblings
  - Educational needs
  - Placement preference and activities, hobbies, etc., that the child is involved with
- When the needs and preferences of the child are assessed, Child Welfare Professionals are then able to make the BEST possible match for the child.
- This assessment is designed to determine the level of care, not to determine if the child should be placed with a specific

individual. For example, it helps determine if the child can be in a relative/non-relative setting, but it does not determine if a specific relative/non-relative is appropriate. It is the UHS that assesses if an identified potential caregiver has the ability to safely care and meet the identified needs of the child.

Purpose of Unified Home Studies

Slide: 1.12

Slide: 1.13

PG: 8-9

Purpose of Unified Home Studies FSFN Tutorial: *To show the material discussed below, use the FSFN Tutorial to conduct a demonstration showing how to select the purpose of the home study. Show participants the different UHS types and how this changes the information shown.*

There are multiple types of home studies which differ based on the type of caregiver who is assessed such as a relative, non-relative, adoptive, or licensed caregiver. When documenting the caregiver assessment for the specific type of placement that is being conducted, Child Welfare Professionals select the appropriate dropdown option to denote what type of home study is being completed. The dropdown selection will impact which questions are required.

The group box for each question will be blue, white, or grey. If the box is blue, it is enabled and requires a response. If the box is white, the question is enabled and Child Welfare Professionals can add information, but it is not required. If the box is grey, Child Welfare Professionals should not gather information in this area and will be unable to enter information in this box.

The multiple types of home studies that may be completed when placing a child include:

- **Emergency Placement:**
  - Completed by Child Protective Investigators.
  - Assesses prospective relative/non-relative caregivers.
  - Occurs when a child must be placed immediately due to exigent circumstances.
  - Initial assessment occurs prior to the child's placement.

- **Relative/Non-relative Placement:**
  - Completed by Case Managers that will be placing the child with a relative/non-relative caregiver.
  - Assesses prospective relative/non-relative placements.
  - Assessment occurs prior to the child's placement.

- **Initial Licensing or Re-licensing for Foster Home:**
  - Completed by Licensing Specialists/staff who are employed by a CBC, subcontracted agency, or other licensed child-placing agency.
  - Assesses prospective caregivers who want to become foster parents (licensed caregivers) for children placed in out-of-home care and caregivers who are already licensed and are undergoing their re-licensure process.
  - For the initial license UHS, the assessment and supervisor approval in FSFN occurs prior to the child's placement.
  - Determines the number of children the caregiver(s) are able to care for and supervise.

- **Adoption:**
  - Completed by Adoption Specialists/staff employed by a CBC, subcontracted agency, or other licensed child-placing agency.
  - Completed when an individual wishes to adopt a child within the Child Welfare System to evaluate his/her capacity for adoptive parenthood.
  - Completed and supervisor approved in FSFN prior to the adoption of a child.

- **Adoption Addendum**
  - Completed by Adoption Specialists/staff employed by a CBC, subcontracted agency, or other licensed child-placing agency.
  - Completed when an Adoption Unified Home Study needs to be updated.

- **Addendum-Not Adoption**
  - Completed by Licensing Specialists and Case Managers.
  - Completed annually when a licensed caregiver is afforded a three-year foster care license.
  - Completed when there are updates due to changes in family circumstances.

- It is important to note that when placing a child, only the above types of home studies are to be used. The UHS is not to be used to assess for reunification, placement with a parent, or family-made arrangements.

- Also, while home studies are not required for young adults in extended foster care, Child Welfare Professionals providing transition services to foster youth and former foster youth should be familiar with the completed home studies for these youth. These assessments provide valuable insight into the appropriateness of the young adult's placement post 18 and if the placement meets the requirements of an approved living arrangement.

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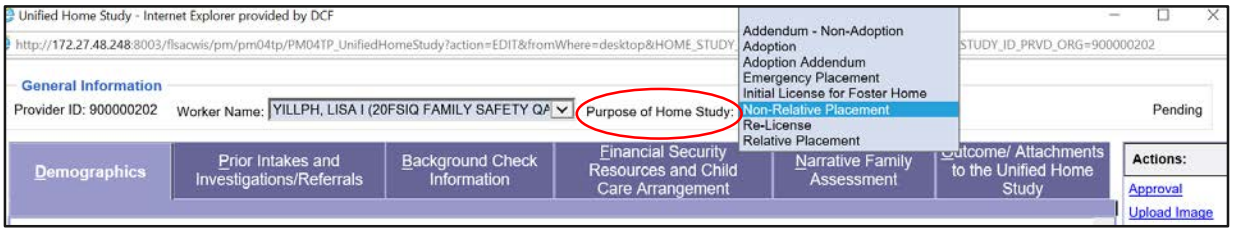
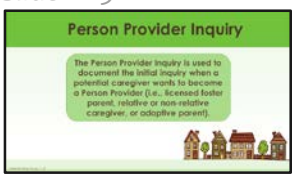
PG: 10

FSFN Screens: *Show participants how to select the purpose of the home study. Refer participants to screenshots in the Participant Guide.*



Person Provider Inquiry

Slide: 1.15



PG: 10

The Person Provider Inquiry is used to document the initial inquiry when a potential caregiver wants to become a Person Provider (i.e., licensed foster parent, relative or non-relative caregiver, or adoptive parent).

- There are two routes that can be followed when creating the Person Provider Inquiry:

  1. When CPIs are in situations where they do not have access to a computer, for example if they are conducting the removal in the late hours of the night and are not near the office or do not have internet access in the field, the Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU) at the Florida Abuse Hotline can assist by phone. To conduct the background checks and complete the Person Provider Inquiry, the CIU needs the information for the potential caregiver(s) and household members. The CIU will then conduct a provider search, create a provider inquiry, create the UHS, complete background checks, and assign the Person Provider Inquiry to the CPI.
     – **Note:** The Person Provider Inquiry displays in the My Intakes section on the FSFN Desktop.

  2. The second way is for Child Welfare Professionals to create the Person Provider Inquiry themselves using the FSFN Create menu.

What Has Changed with the Person Provider Inquiry?

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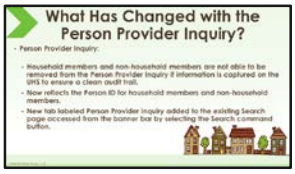


PG: 11

Several updates have been made regarding the Person Provider Inquiry. Some changes include:

- Household members and non-household members are not able to be removed from the Person Provider Inquiry if information is captured on the UHS to ensure a clean audit trail.

- It now reflects the Person ID for household members and non-household members.

Slide: 1.17

PG: 11

- A new tab labeled "Person Provider Inquiry" has been added to the existing Search page accessed from the banner by selecting the Search command button.
- The links for household members have been updated so the user can more readily access Person Management and make modifications as needed.
- Household members cannot be removed or inactivated on a pending UHS.
- Non-household members can be inactivated.
- The Caregiver 1's Person Management page has been updated.

Creating the Person Provider Inquiry and Launching the UHS

Slide: 1.18

Slide 1.19

PG: 12

Creating the Provider Inquiry and Launching the UHS FSFN Tutorial: *Using the FSFN Tutorial, demonstrate:*

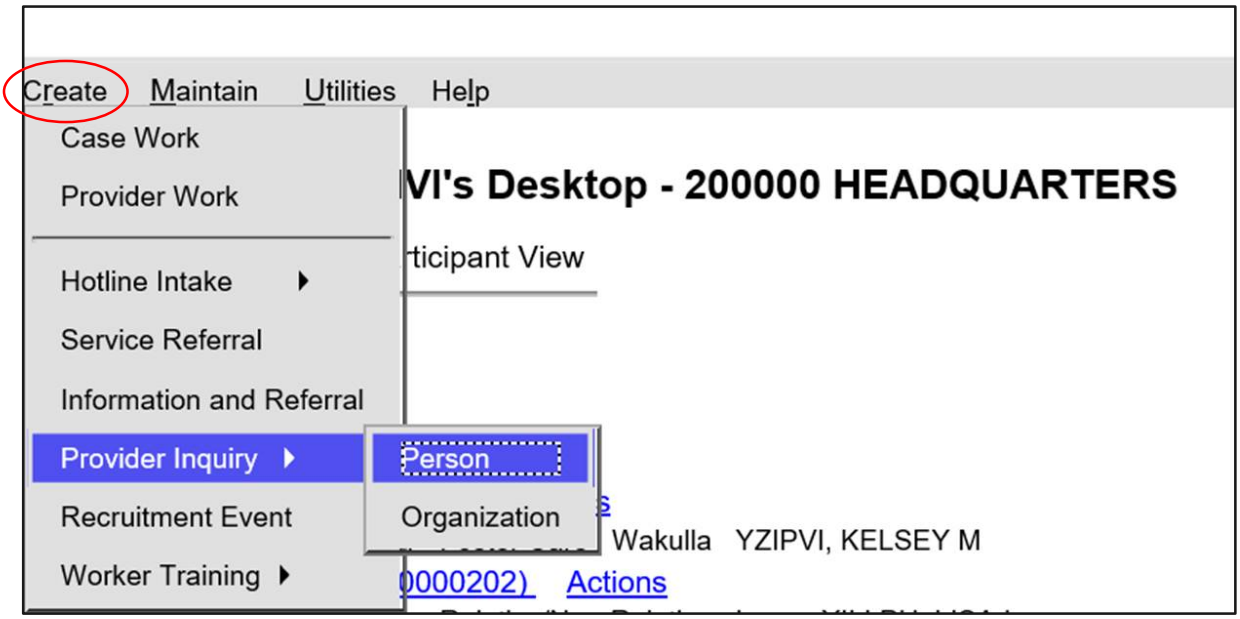
- *how to create the Person Provider Inquiry*
- *how to search and add participants to the Person Provider Inquiry*
- *documenting the caregiver role on the Person Provider Inquiry page*
- *where to complete the acceptance decision*
- *what the Person Provider Home tab looks like once created*
- *how to launch the UHS from a Person Provider page*
- *the UHS Main page once created*
- *how to link the UHS with a particular case in FSFN*

Slides: 1.20-1.28

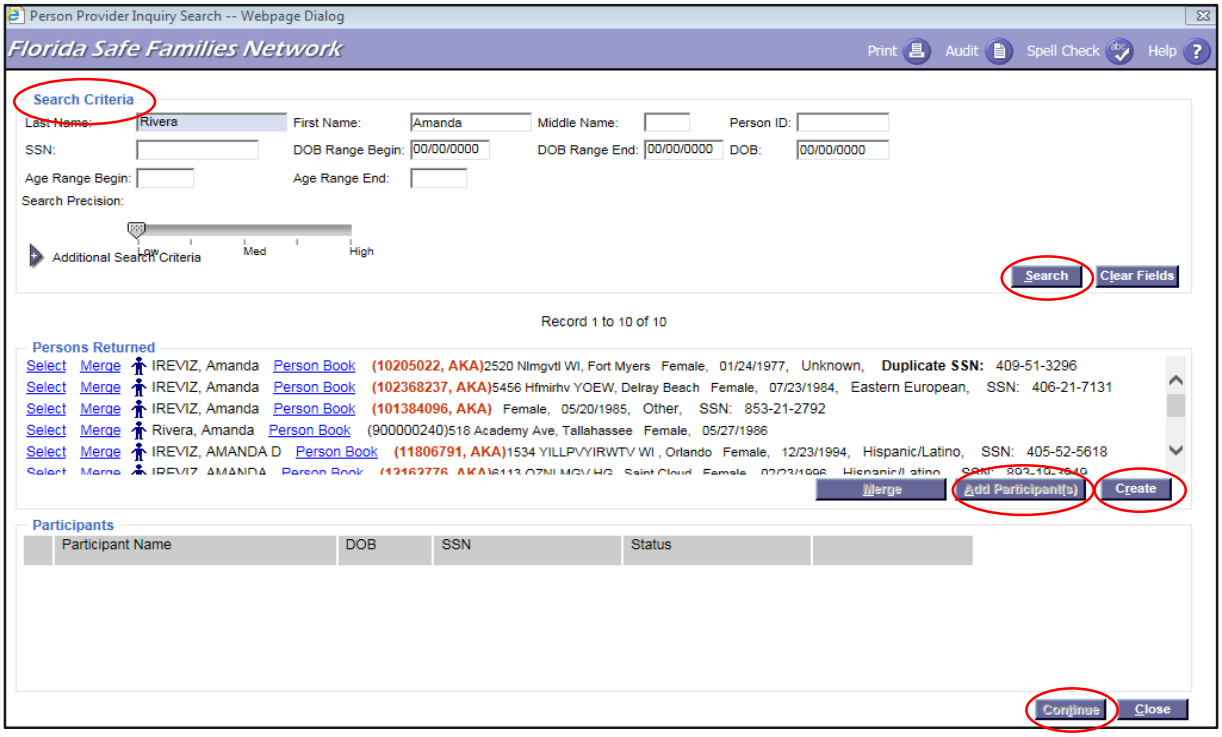
PG: 12-16

FSFN Screens: *Show participants how to select the purpose of the home study. Refer participants to screenshots in the Participant Guide.*

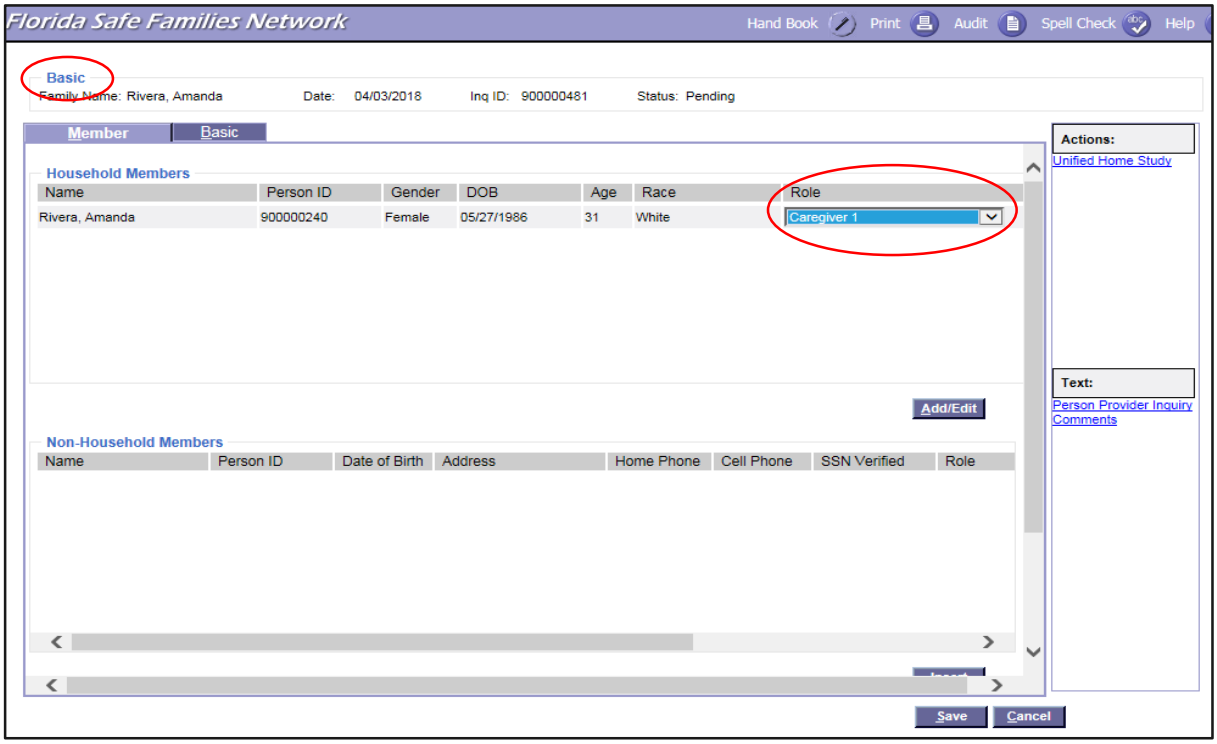
How to create a Person Provider Inquiry:



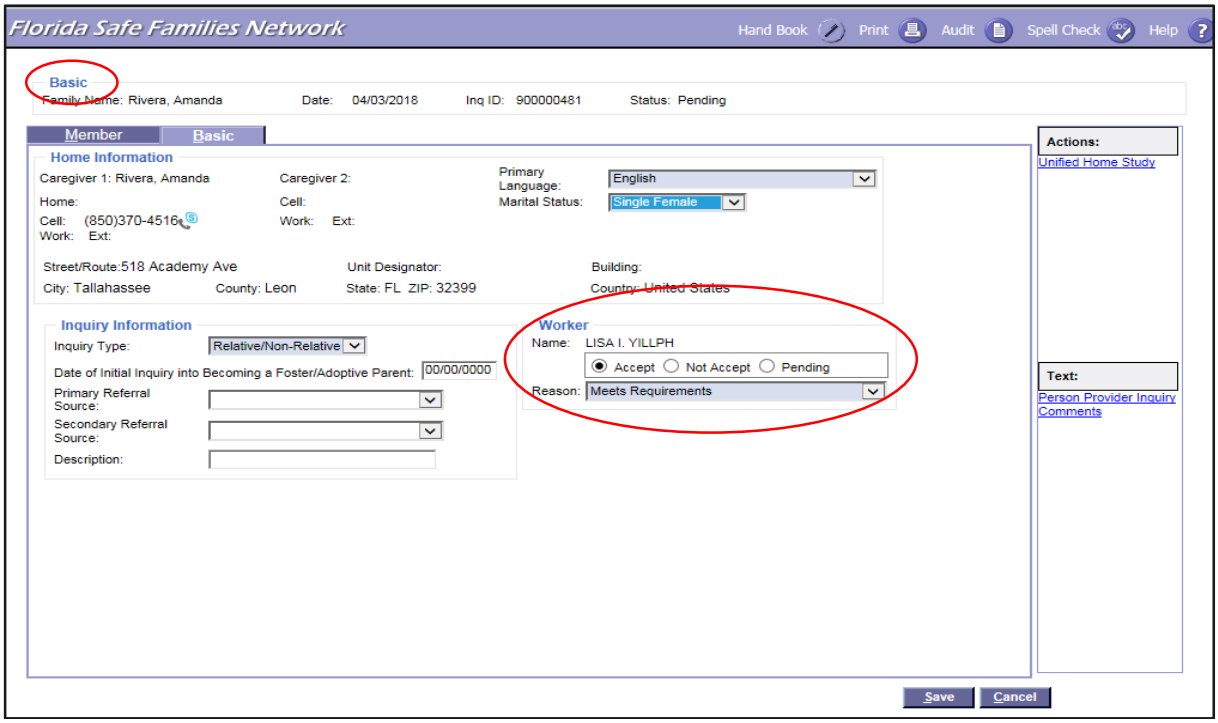
How to search and add participants to the Person Provider Inquiry:



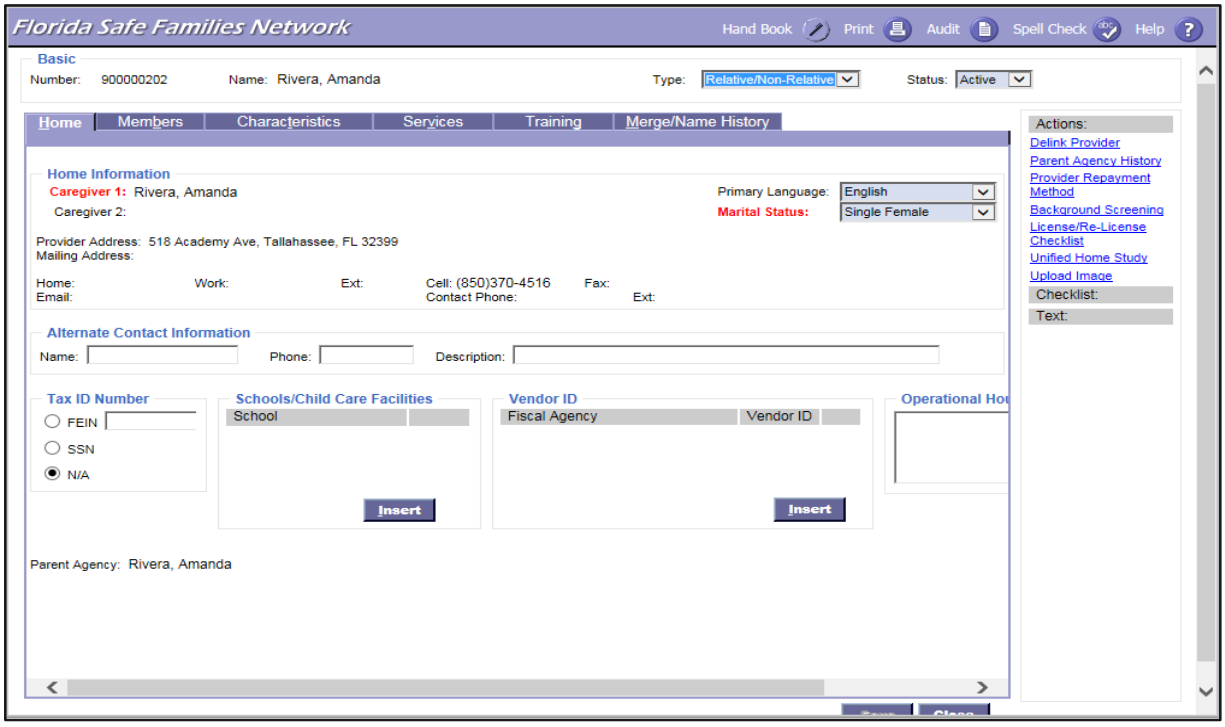
Documenting the caregiver role on the Person Provider Inquiry page:



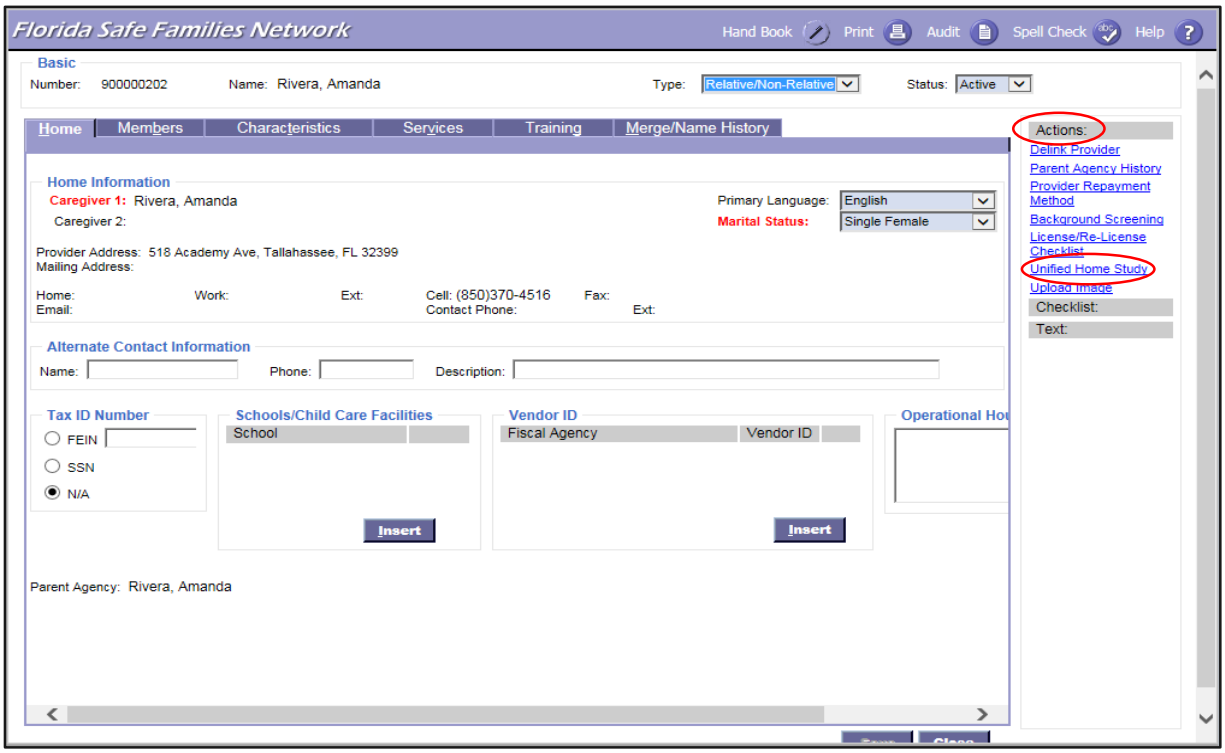
Where to complete the acceptance decision:



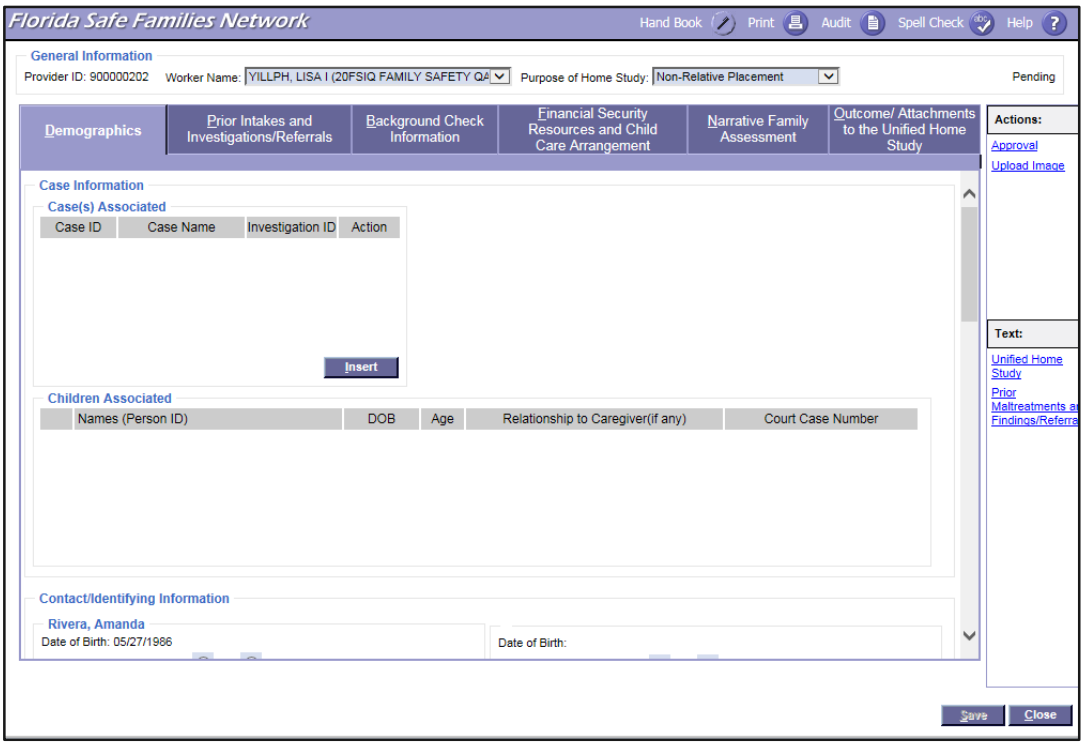
What the Person Provider Home tab looks like once created:



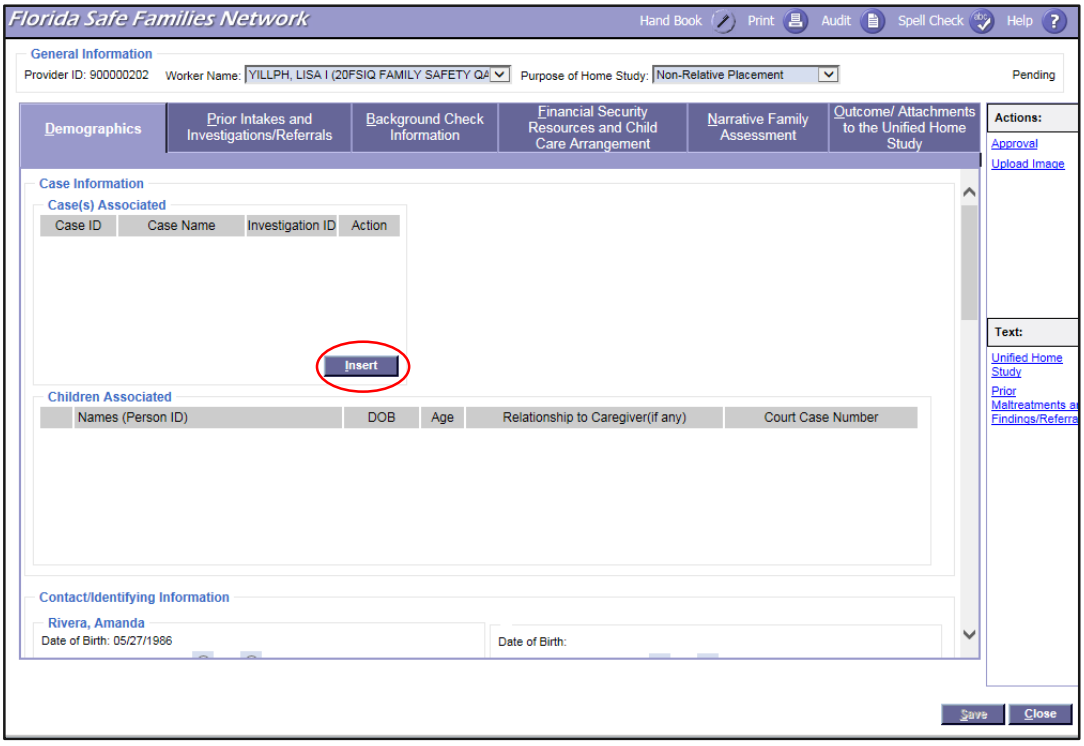
Launching the UHS from a Person Provider page:

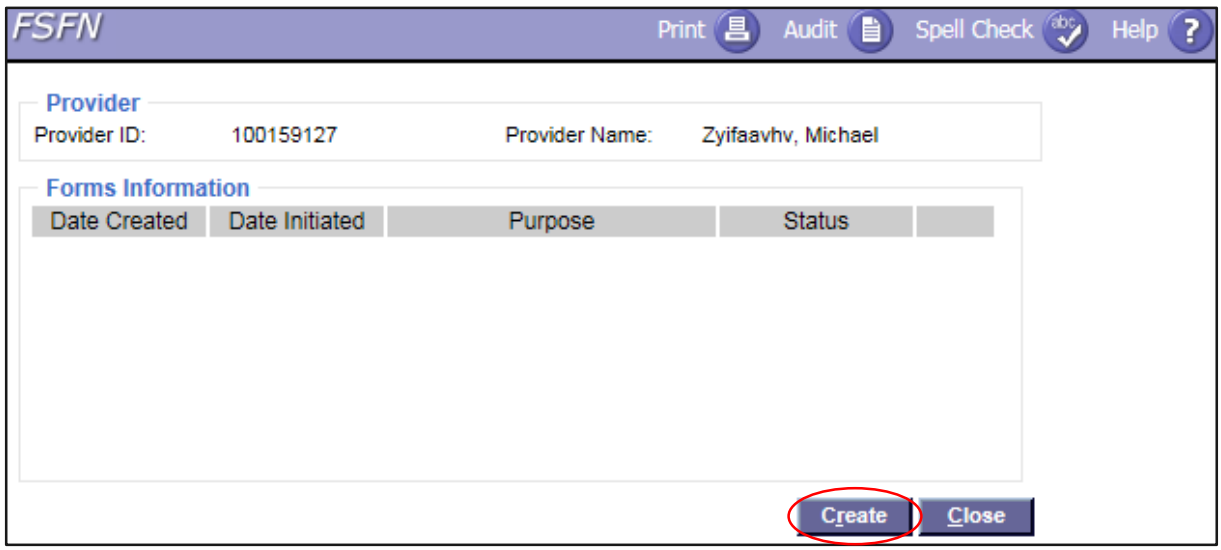


UHS Main page once created:



How to link the UHS with a particular FSFN case:





Provider File Cabinet

Slide: 1/29

Provider File Cabinet FSFN Tutorial: *To show the material discussed below, use the FSFN tutorial to demonstrate how to:*

- *access the Provider File Cabinet*
- *upload the Image pop-up box for the Provider File Cabinet*
- *upload images from the UHS*
- *choose the image type from the UHS*
- *view attached images from the UHS*
- *view attached images from the desktop*
- *search in the Provider File Cabinet*

Slide: 1.30

PG: 17

The new Provider File Cabinet allows Child Welfare Professionals to upload documents that relate specifically to the provider. It is similar to the Case File Cabinet. A new drop-down has been created on the Create Provider Work page labeled Provider File Cabinet, with the following Image categories:

- Certificates and Training
- Provider Household Documents
- Required Signed Documents

- Once uploaded, the documents can be reviewed by selecting the Provider File Cabinet icon under the Provider expando (button to provide list of options).

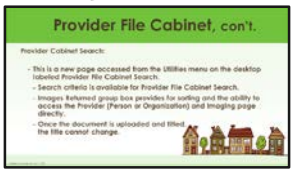
- Documents can also be uploaded directly to the UHS using the hyperlink "Upload Image". Once uploaded, the attached images can be viewed either on the UHS or by selecting the Provider File Cabinet icon under the Provider expando.

Slide: 1.31

PG: 16

- The Provider File Cabinet Image can be created directly from the Person Provider, Organization Provider, UHS, or Create Provider Work.
- Child Welfare Professionals have the ability to select a specific category.
- There is a new page accessed from the Utilities menu on the desktop labeled Provider File Cabinet Search.
  - Search criteria is available for the Provider File Cabinet Search.
  - The Images Returned group box provides for sorting and the ability to access the Provider (Person or Organization) and Images page directly.
  - Once the document is uploaded and titled, the title cannot be changed. The File Name for all uploaded images needs to follow a standard naming convention.

Slide: 1.32



PG: 17

Slides: 1.33-1.40

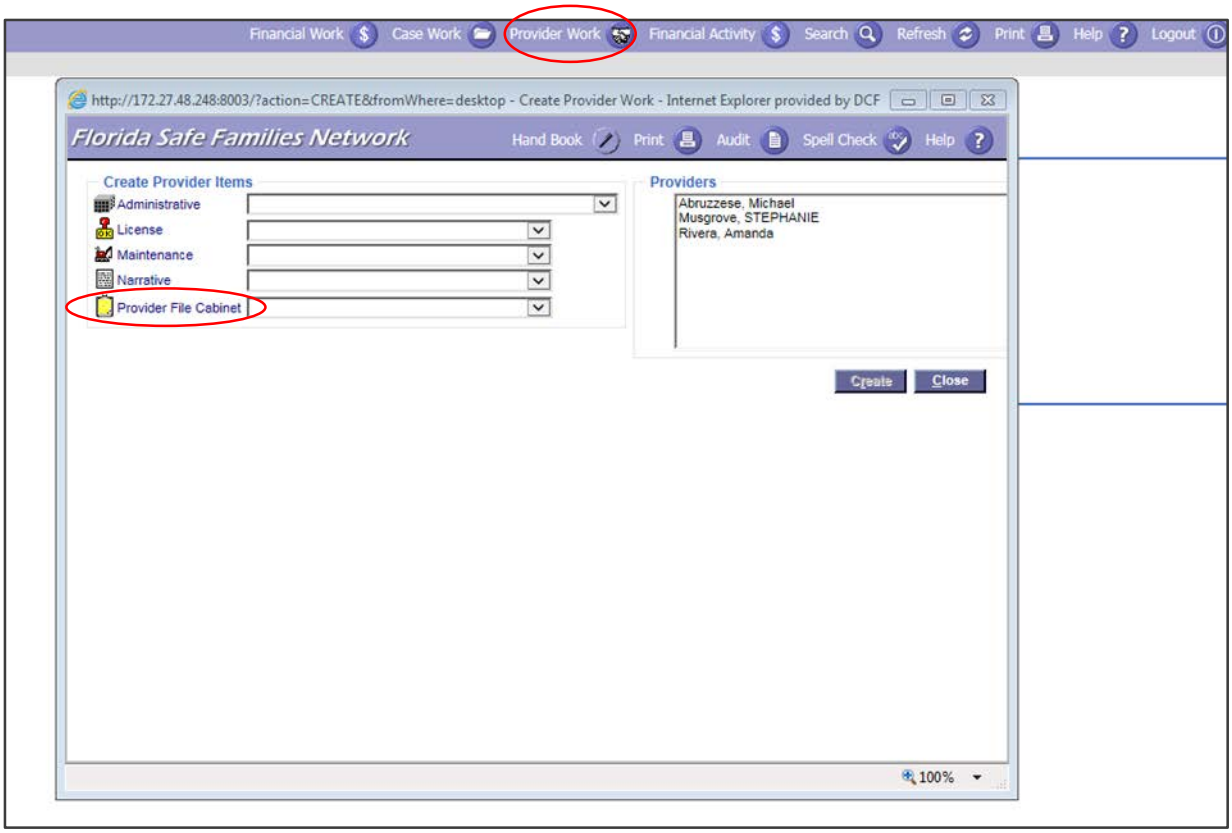
PG: 18-22

FSFN Screens: *Use the screenshots to show how to:*

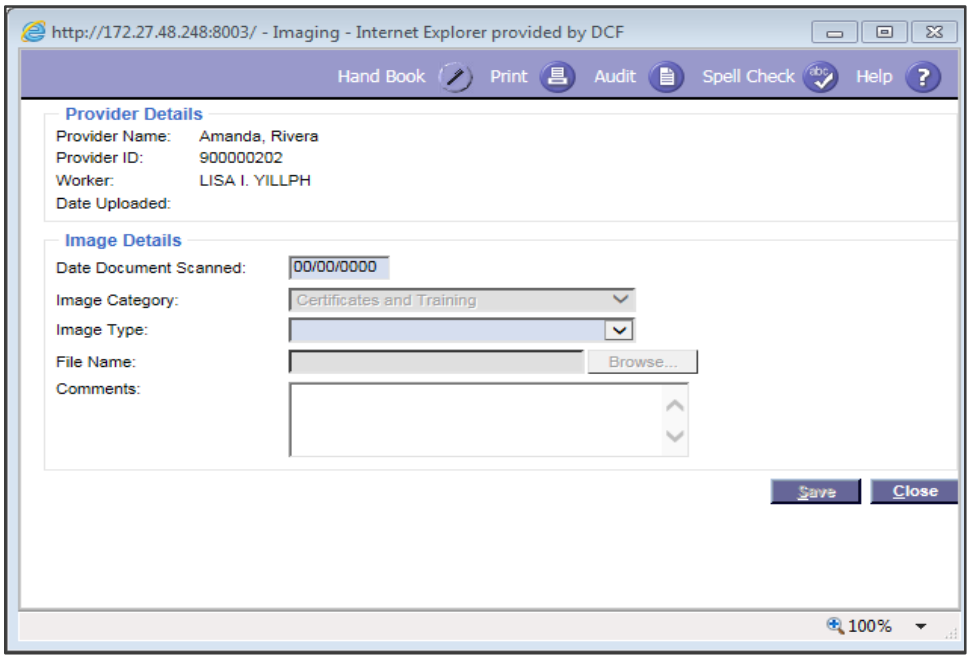
- *access the Provider File Cabinet*
- *upload the Image pop-up box for the Provider File Cabinet*
- *upload images from the UHS*
- *choose the image type from the UHS*
- *view attached images from the UHS*
- *view attached images from the desktop*
- *search in the Provider File Cabinet*

Refer participants to screenshots in the Participant Guide.

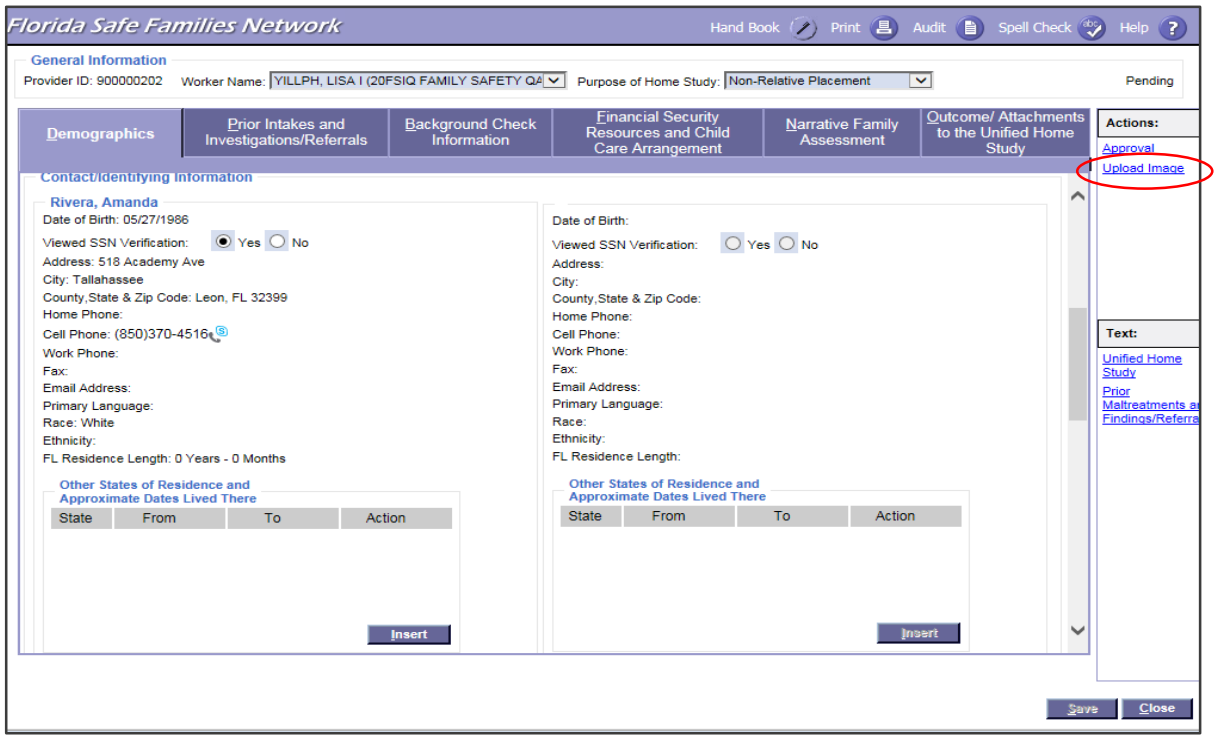
How to access the Provider File Cabinet:



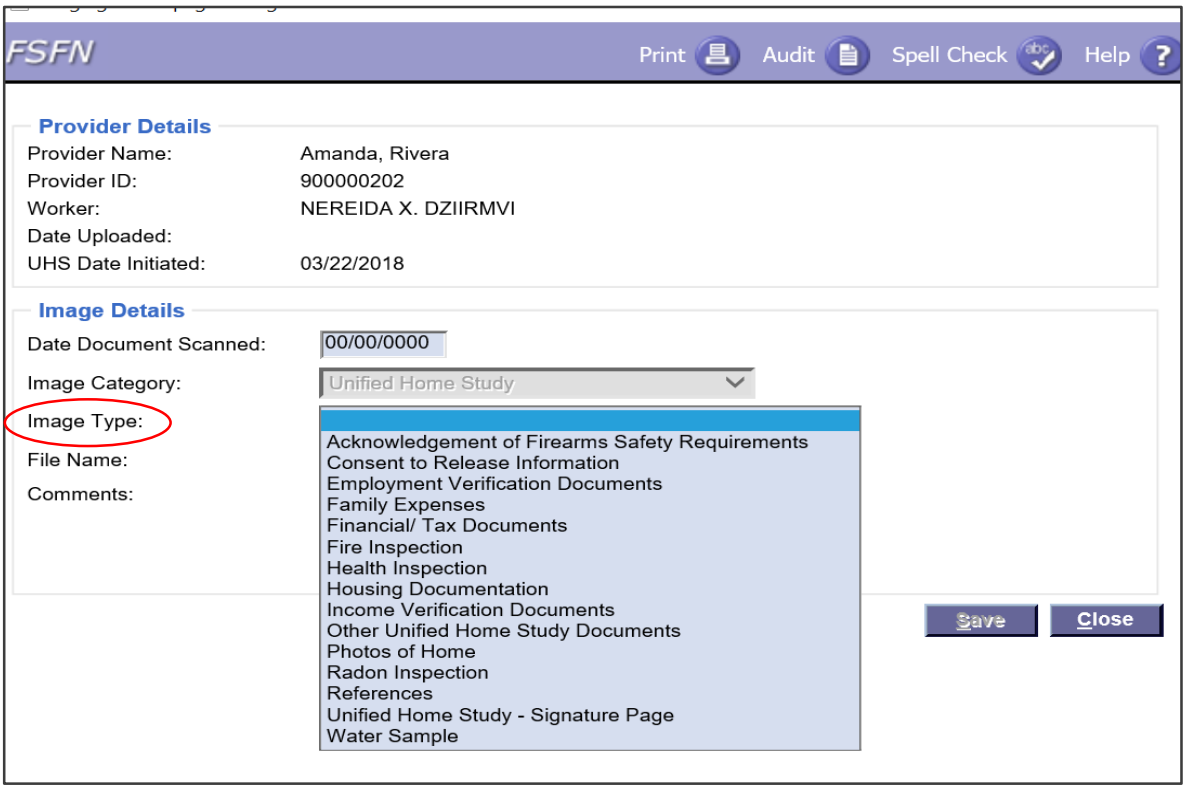
How to upload the Image pop-up box for the Provider File Cabinet:



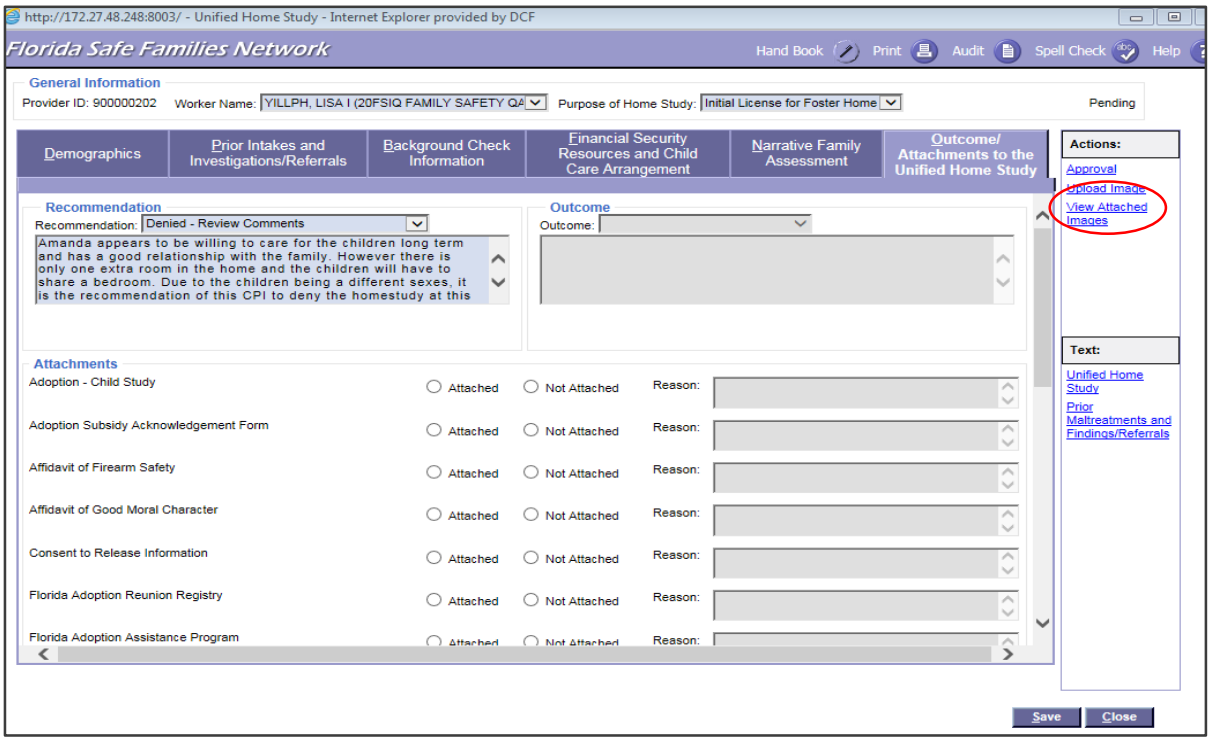
How to upload images from the UHS:



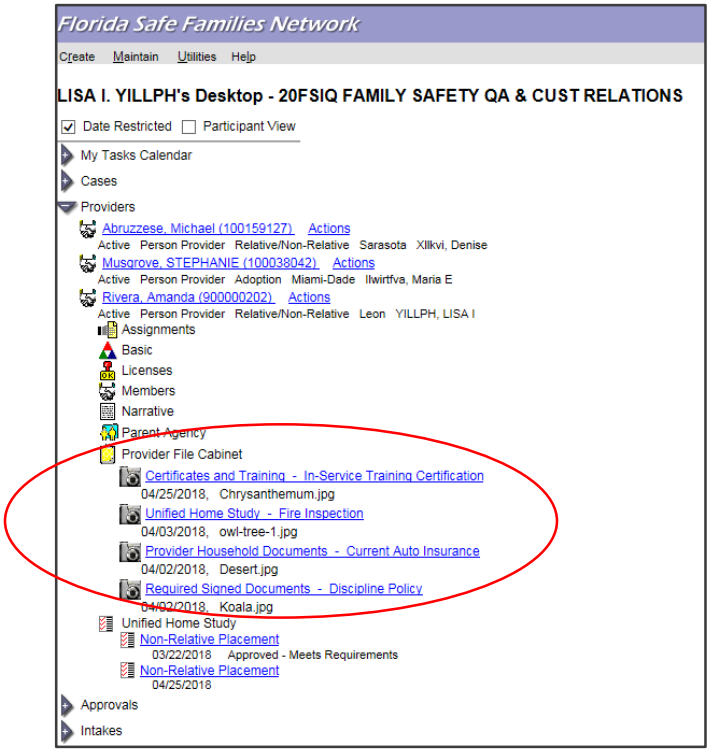
How to choose the image type from the UHS:



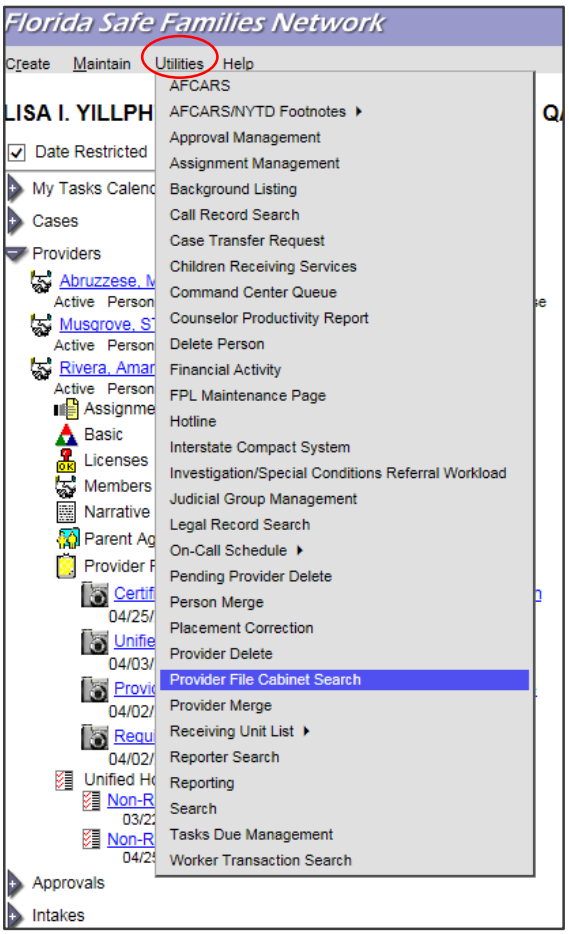
How to view attached images from the UHS:

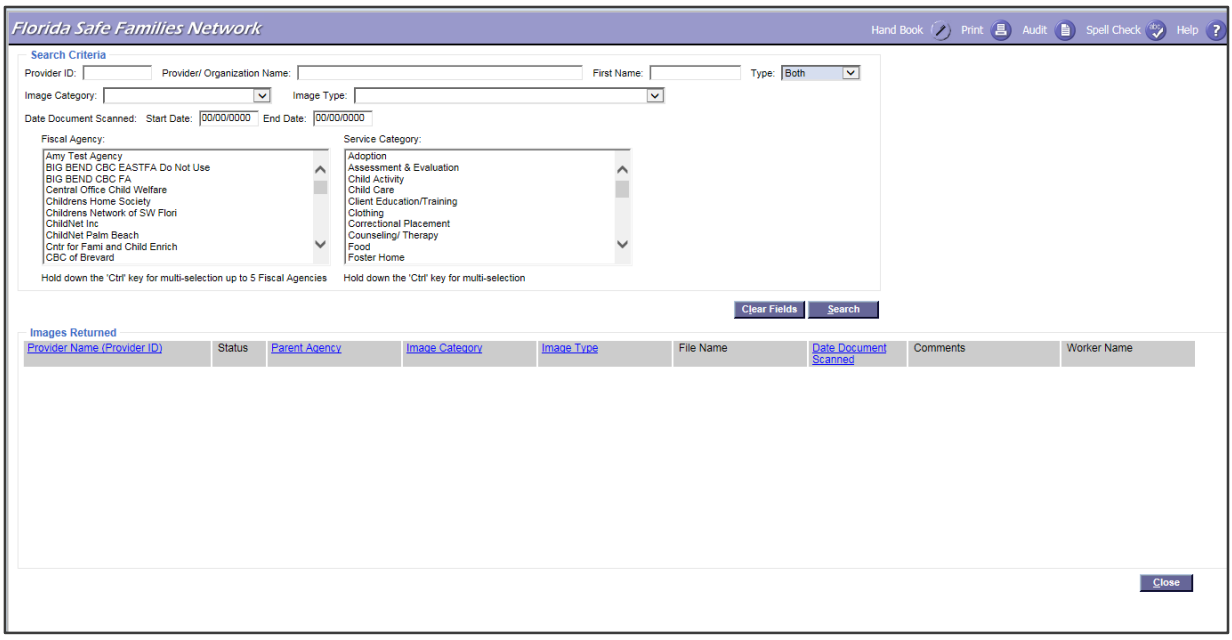


How to view attached images from the desktop:



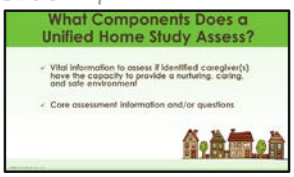
How to search in the Provider File Cabinet:





What Components Does a UHS Assess?

Slide: 1.41



PG: 22

The UHS is a process whereby Child Welfare Professionals gather vital information in order to assess if identified caregiver(s) have the capacity to provide a nurturing, caring, and safe environment for each child placed in their care.

- Each component of the UHS consists of core assessment information and/or questions. The information gathered as part of the core assessment is required for all home studies, regardless of type. Additional information will be required and gathered based on the type of home study that is completed.

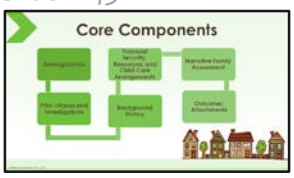
- During the upcoming units, Child Welfare Professionals will gain further information about each component, including how and where the information is entered in the UHS in FSFN.

Core Components

Slide: 1.42

Core Components FSFN Tutorial: *To show the material discussed below, use the FSFN tutorial to conduct a demonstration of each of the UHS core components.*

Slide: 1.43



PG: 23

All Unified Home Studies are comprised of the following components:

- **Demographics**: Requires demographic information for all household members. For the UHS, household members are defined as any person 12 years of age and older who resides in a household, including the caregiver(s). This includes household, even if they are not related and adult non-household members who provide care of the child outside of the caregiver's ability to provide sight and sound supervision.

  Demographic information includes dates of birth, social security numbers, phone numbers, and if the person lived in another state. This information allows Child

Welfare Professionals to begin the process of requesting the background checks needed for placement. This is the first step in assessing potential caregivers.

This tab also provides information on Home Evaluation dates, Provider Notes, Other Household Members, Children Currently Place OR Exited within One Year from Home Evaluation Date Initiated, and Non-Household Members, also known as frequent visitors.

- **Prior Intakes and Investigations/Referrals:** Includes all prior intakes and investigations/referrals pertaining to the people included in the UHS. This is displayed as part of the UHS so that Child Welfare Professionals can gain an understanding of the family's functioning and assess if there is a prior abuse or neglect history that may affect the child's safety and well-being. This component refreshes with the latest information known about the participant's prior involvement with the Department when it is selected.

  In order to capture ALL of the information that may be available for each potential caregiver and household member, it is extremely important for Child Welfare Professionals to conduct a "Person Search and Merge" to ensure each participant only has one person ID in FSFN. If a person has multiple person IDs, then all of the history in FSFN for that person will not display in the UHS. Only the FSFN history for the person ID selected as part of the home study will display.

  A detailed report of prior history can be viewed by selecting the Prior Maltreatments and Findings/Referrals hyperlink on the right side of the UHS under "Text".

- **Background Check Information:** Includes an assessment of how the caregiver's or household member's criminal history, if any, will affect child safety. This component of the FSFN UHS is pre-filled with participants documented as Caregiver 1, Caregiver 2 (if applicable), and any additional participants who are documented as Other Household Member or Non-Household Member who are

12 years or older.

This component includes functionality that enables Child Welfare Professionals to request background checks, document fingerprint results, view completed background checks, and document additional background checks or clearance issues.

- **Financial Security Resources and Child Care Arrangements:** Requires details about the current financial situation of the caregiver(s). Information gathered, assessed, and documented includes:
  - Employment information for all household members
  - Additional monthly support or income
  - Monthly expenses
  - How will the caregiver(s) afford to have another person in the home?
  - What resources do the caregiver(s) need or already have available to them?
  - Will the caregiver(s) need assistance with the costs of childcare?

- **Narrative Family Assessment:** An assessment of specific characteristics, feelings, knowledge, and abilities of all caregiver(s) to determine their capacities to provide care to child(ren). This assessment includes the needs of a specific child or children, with the exception of licensing and re-licensing home studies. This UHS component consists of multiple elements where information is gathered, assessed, and documented.

- **Outcome:** Recommendation by Child Welfare Professionals as to whether or not the potential caregiver(s) are the BEST possible placement for the child. The recommendation is reviewed by the supervisor who makes a final Outcome determination.

- **Attachments:** Area where supporting documents can be attached to the UHS. Possible attachments to the UHS include:
  - Adoption - Child Study
  - Adoption - Subsidy Acknowledgement form
  - Affidavit of firearm safety

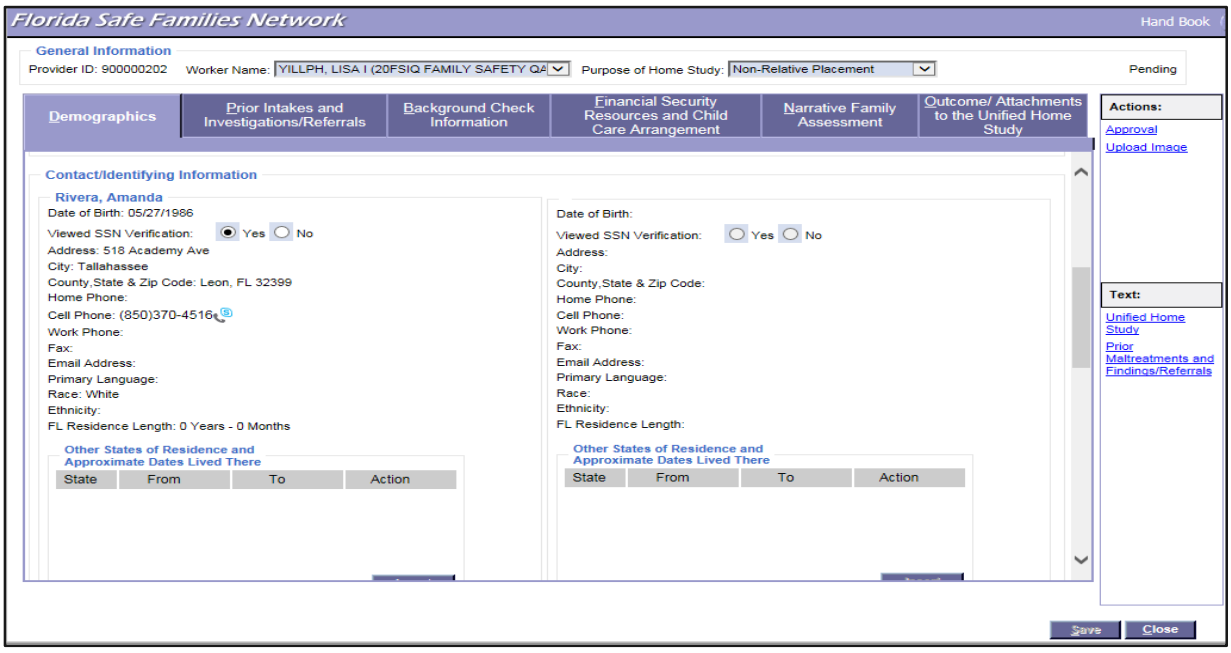
- Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- Consent to Release Information
- Florida Adoption Assistance Program
- Information Packet Sent - Adoptive Home
- Information Packet Sent - Foster Home
- Consents to release information
- Florida Adoption Reunion Registry
- Referrals
- Personal References
- Receipts of Rights and Responsibilities
- Receipt of Grievance Brochure
- TANF information
- Relative Caregiver Program Information
- Water Addendum

Slide: 1.44-52

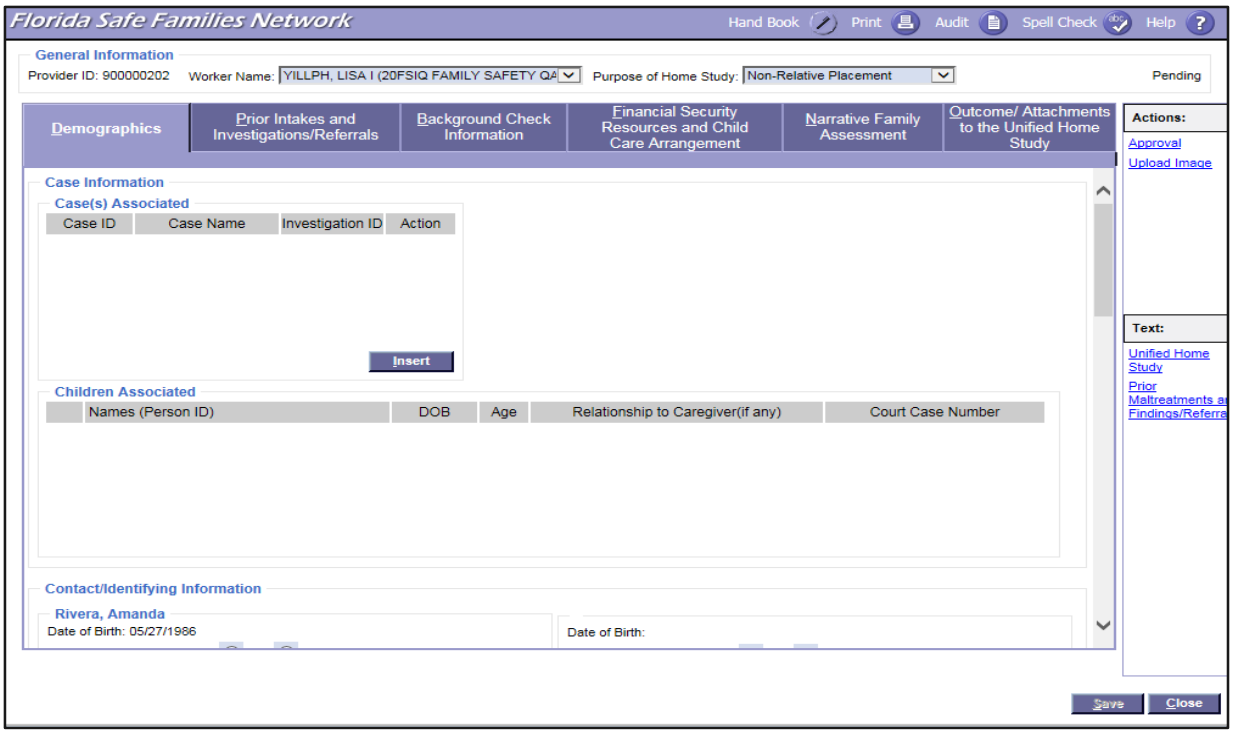
PG: 24-28

FSFN Screens: *Show participants each of the UHS core components. Refer participants to screenshots in the Participant Guide.*

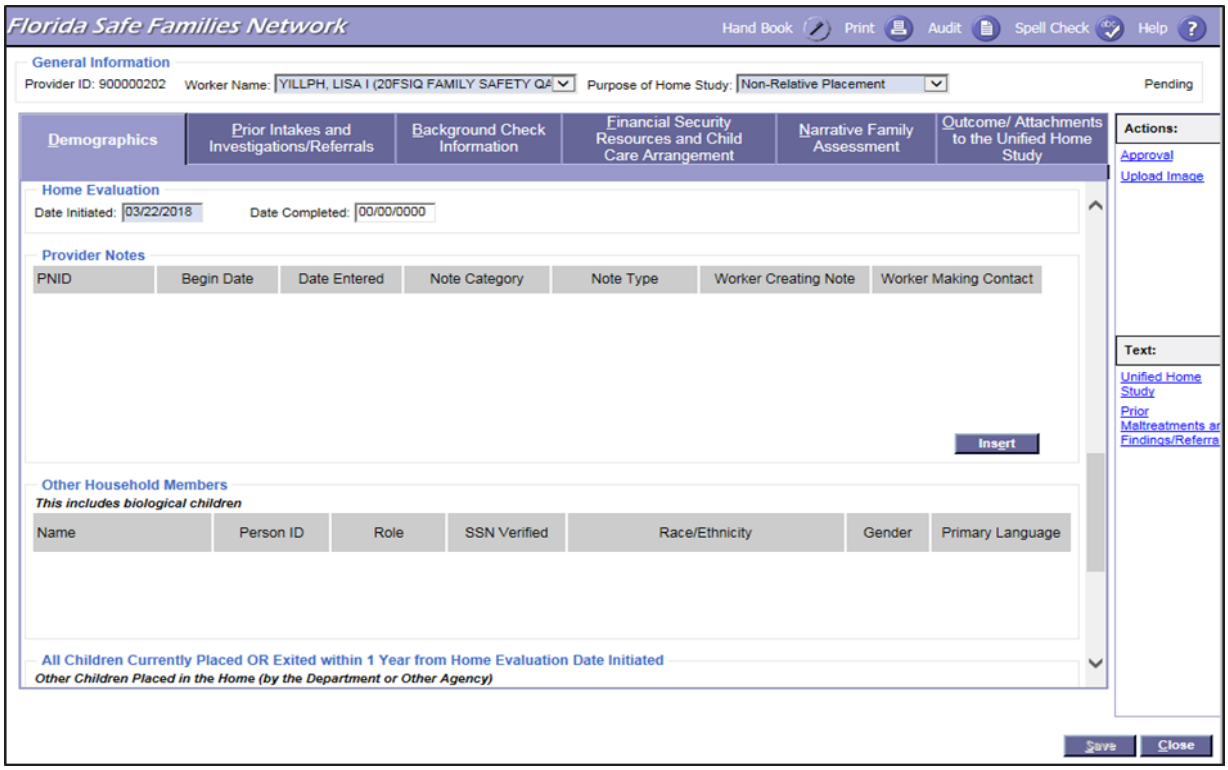
Core Component – Demographics:



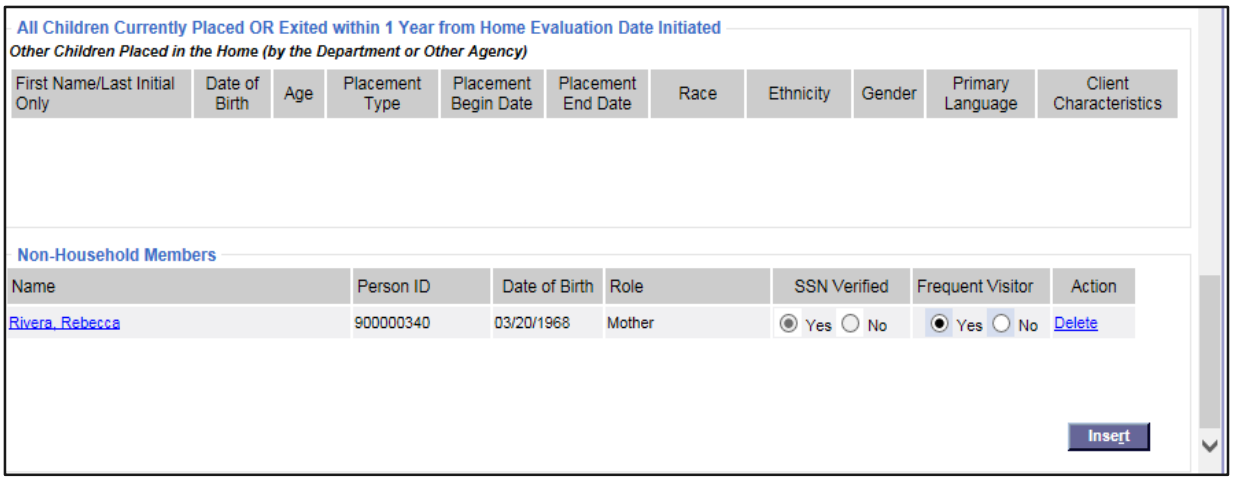
Core Component – Demographics:



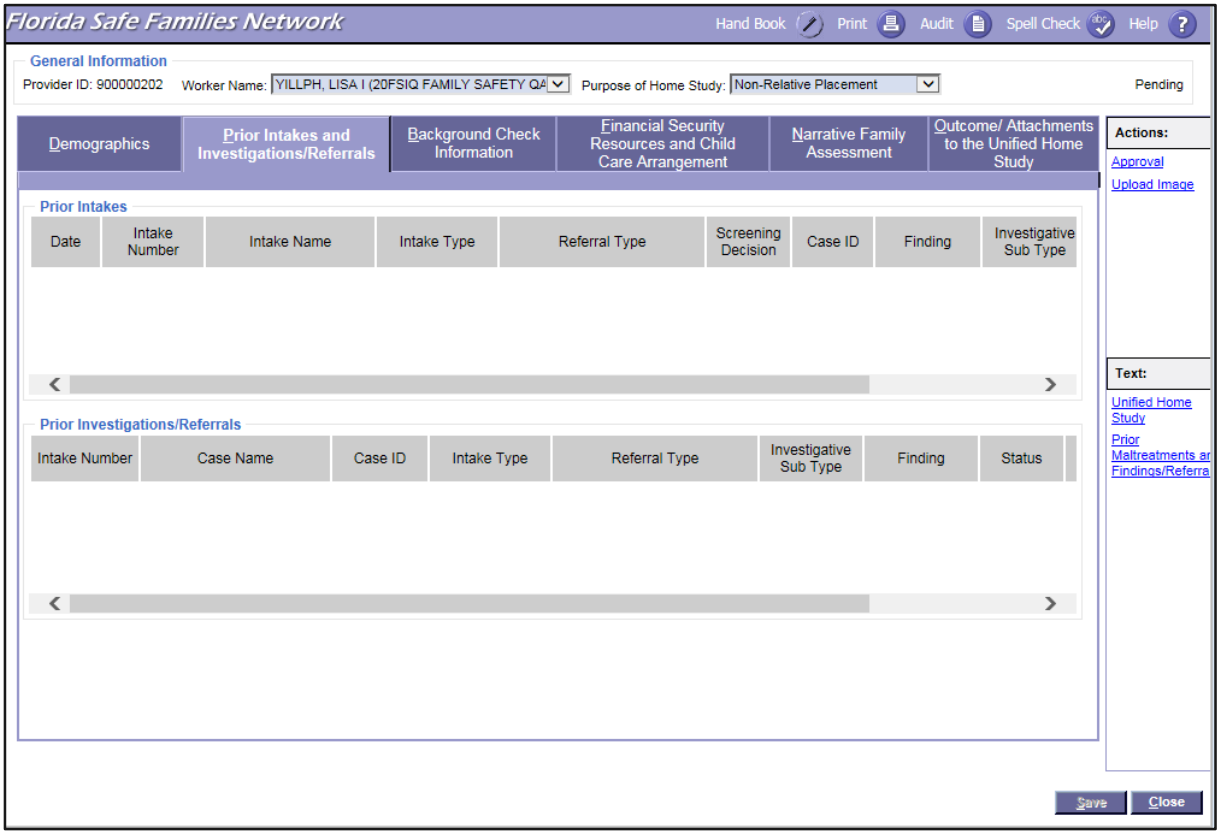
Core Component – Demographics:



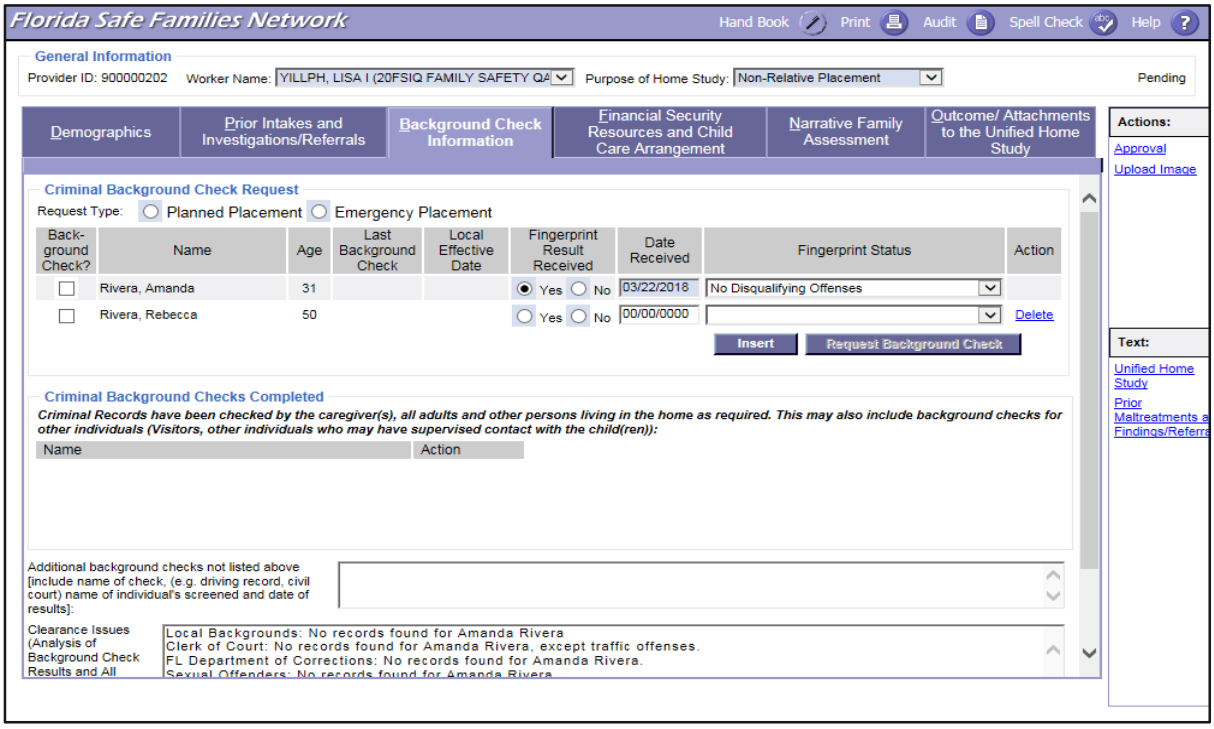
Core Component – Demographics:



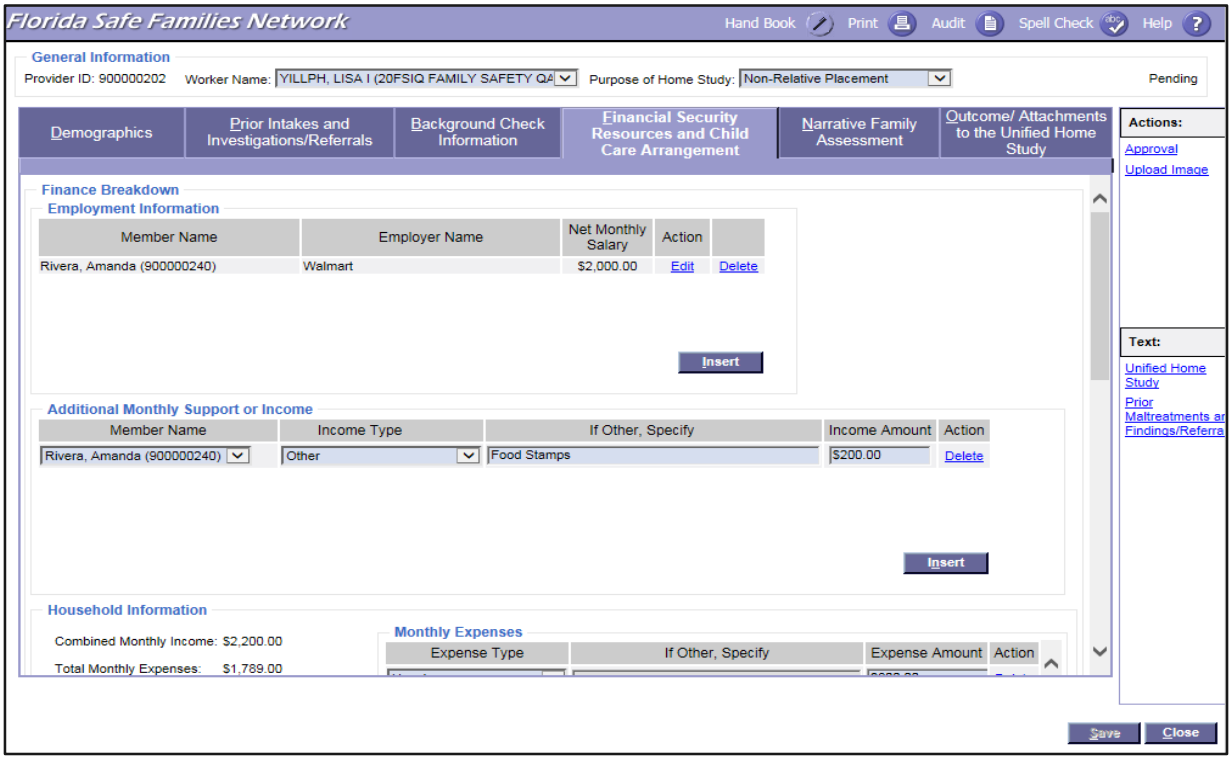
Core Component – Prior Intakes and Investigations/Referrals:



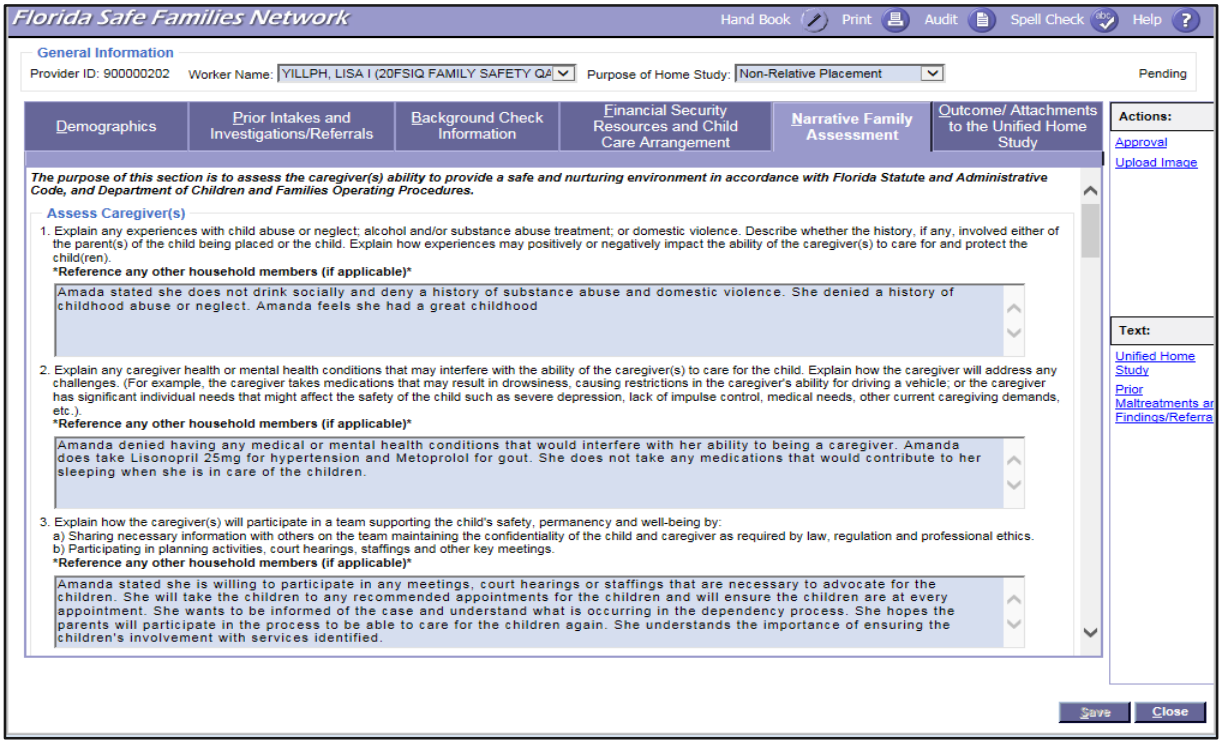
Core Component – Background Check Information:



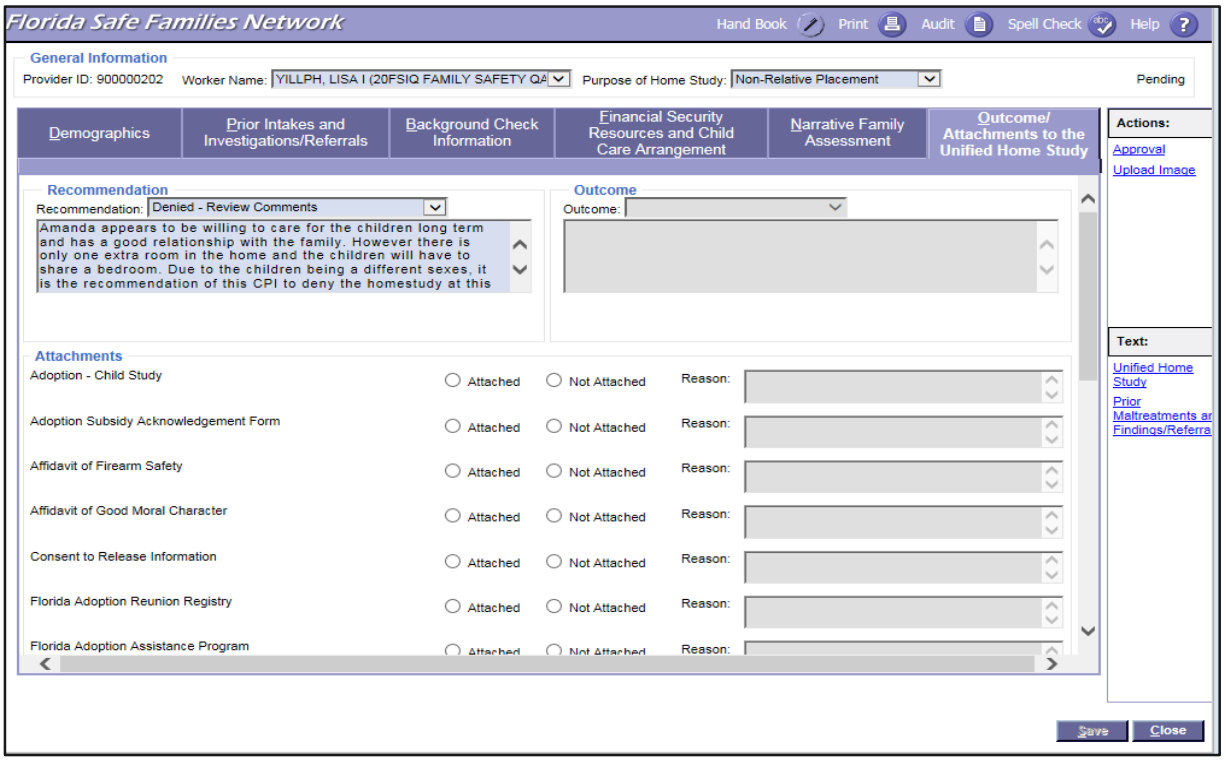
Core Component – Financial Security Resources and Child Care Arrangement:



Core Component – Narrative Family Assessment:



Core Component – Outcome/Attachments:



Unit Summary:	This unit focused on the different types of home studies and some of the key information that must be gathered. It also explained the use of a placement assessment, the Person Provider Inquiry, and the Provider File Cabinet. The next unit explores the specific UHS that needs to be conducted to ensure that the caregiver can safely care for the child.