

**CLINTON COUNTY JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES  
FOSTER CARE PROGRAM  
POLICY ON AGENCY ASSESSMENT OF AN INITIAL APPLICATION  
FOR A FOSTER HOME CERTIFICATE**

- A. An agency shall not discriminate in recommending foster caregivers on the basis of age, color, race, sex, religion, national origin, marital status or disability in violation of Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 and of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C., 1201 et seq. An agency may selectively recruit on the basis of the need for foster homes for specific types of children as specified in the agency's recruitment plan as required by Rule 5101:2-5-13 of the Administrative Code.
- B. Clinton County JFS shall not consider the race, color or national origin of a foster caregiver applicant to determine whether that person shall be certified as a foster caregiver. No PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall consider the race, color or national origin of a child, for whom a prospective foster caregiver or a certified foster caregiver has indicated an interest in providing foster care, in determining whether the applicant should be certified or the child placed with the foster caregiver. Only in those cases where it is determined pursuant to rule 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Administrative Code that a child's race, color or national origin should be considered, shall the agency consider those factors in the placement of the child with a foster caregiver.
- C. Clinton County JFS shall document in the record of each applicant that the applicant has been evaluated by an assessor to determine the applicant's compliance with Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code and the suitability of the applicant to be certified as a foster caregiver considering all occupants of the caregiver's household and the availability of appropriate accommodations for any foster child that may be placed in the home. The evaluation shall be a completed JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement" or JFS 01349 "Foster Home Homestudy," (rev.1/2003,) as applicable. In completing the form, a written narrative shall be compiled and signed by the assessor, indicating the assessor's approval or denial of the application. Effective January 1, 2007 the JFS 01673 shall be used to initiate all foster home homestudies. Homestudies initiated prior to December 31, 2006 using the JFS 01349 may be completed using the JFS 01349.
- D. In addition to the criteria on either the JFS 01673 or the JFS 01349, an agency may establish a written policy, applicable to all applicants, which requires applicants to submit additional materials or documents and to participate in additional assessment activities.
- E. The assessment required by paragraph (C) of this rule and as documented through the completion of the JFS 01673 or the JFS 01349, shall be commenced within thirty days of the date of the agency receives the JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 9/2006.) The assessment shall be completed within one hundred eighty days of the date the agency received the application. An agency that fails to commence an assessment within thirty days or complete the assessment within one hundred eighty days shall document the reasons why it was unable to meet one or both of these requirements in the

foster caregiver's record. Commencement of a homestudy means, at a minimum, scheduling an appointment to interview the applicant or assuring that the applicant has been informed of the necessary materials required for the assessor to complete the homestudy. The assessment shall include at least one visit by an assessor to the applicant's home to ensure that the physical facilities of the home are in compliance with the requirements set forth in Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code and to determine any placement limitations which the physical environment or space available of the home may necessitate.

- F. In order to complete the JFS 01673 or the JFS 01349 an assessor shall interview all members of the household over the age of four years old. The interview may be conducted in conjunction with the visit to the prospective foster home as required by paragraph (E) of this rule, or may be conducted during a separate visit to the home or held elsewhere. The interview with all members of the household over the age of four years may be a joint interview or separate individual interviews.
- G. Prior to recommending initial certification of a foster home an agency shall ensure that the applicant has completed all of the preplacement training required for the type of foster home for which the applicant is seeking certification; the agency has received a signed and fully completed JFS 01691; a criminal records check has been conducted and successfully completed for the applicant(s) and all other adult members of the home; personal references have been received, are satisfactory and have been verified; a JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 1/2002) has been received indicating that the applicant and all household members are free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition that would endanger children or impair the ability of the household to care for a foster child; if determined necessary by the agency, an additional report of an examination by a physician, psychologist or other certified or licensed professional; a fire safety inspection of the applicant's home has been conducted by a state certified fire safety inspector certifying that the applicant's home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of foster children; and an assessor has completed a JFS 01673 or JFS 01349, including a written narrative, indicating the assessor's approval of the application and the suitability of the applicant to be certified as a foster caregiver.
- H. Clinton County JFS shall not place a child or cause a child to be placed in a foster home until:
  - 1. The initial assessment of the foster home and JFS 01673 or the JFS 01349 has been completed by an assessor and the assessor has recommended that the applicant(s) be certified as foster caregiver(s);

2. The foster caregiver has completed the preplacement training required by rule 5101:2-5-33 of the Administrative Code for the type of foster home certification the caregiver is seeking;
  3. An original JFS 01317 "Recommendation for Certification/Recertification of a Foster Home" (rev. 1/2003) recommending certification has been submitted to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS); and
  4. The effective date of a foster home certificate that has been issued by ODJFS.
- I. The determination of the specific number, age, and sex of children to be placed in a foster home is the joint responsibility of the foster caregiver and the recommending agency based on the assessor's evaluation of the foster caregiver's capabilities and physical facilities as required by Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Administrative Code.
- J. All placements in the foster home shall conform with the provisions of paragraph (I) of this rule and with the provisions of rule 5101:2-5-32 of the Administrative Code.
- K. To avoid a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, an assessor shall not conduct or approve a foster care homestudy or homestudy update for any of the following:
1. Him or herself;
  2. Any person who is a family member of the assessor;
  3. Any agency employee for whom the assessor has any supervisory responsibility;  
or
  4. Any agency employee who has any supervisory responsibility for the assessor.
- L. An agency administrator and a family member of the agency administrator shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the administrator is employed.
- M. A member of the agency's governing body and a person known to the agency as a family member of the agency's governing body shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the governing body member is associated.
- N. Foster care inquiries from persons mentioned in paragraphs (L) and (M) of this rule who wish to become certified foster caregivers shall be referred to another recommending agency where there will be no conflict of interest.

- O. An existing foster home certificate of any person referred to in paragraphs (L) and (M) of this rule shall be transferred to another recommending agency by January 1, 2008 except that such persons who have one or more foster children currently placed in their foster home and who elect not to transfer to another agency may maintain the certificate and continue to provide care for the foster children placed in the home but shall not accept any additional placements of foster children.
- P. When an agency becomes aware that a certified foster caregiver of the agency is a family member of the administrator or a family member of a member of the agency's governing body, it shall take the necessary steps to initiate a transfer of the foster caregiver's foster home certificate. The transfer shall be accomplished within thirty days of the discovery or by January 1, 2008, whichever is later.
- Q. As used in this rule, "family member" means a spouse or significant other, or a parent, child, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin whether through birth or adoption. "Significant other" means a person in a domestic relationship between two or more people living together and sharing a common domestic life but who are not joined in any type of legal partnership, marriage or civil union recognized under Ohio law.

Submitted by:

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Approved by:

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John Hosler  
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