| New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Manual: | CP&P | Child Protection and Permanency | Effective Date: |
| Volume: | IV | Out of Home Placement | |
| Chapter: | B | Resource Care | 5-28-2013 |
| Subchapter: | 2 | Resource Home Selection | |
| Issuance: | 150 | **Application** | |

**Purpose 5-28-2013**

Foster and Adoptive Family Services (FAFS) is a statewide advocacy organization for resource families. Through its contracted partnership with CP&P, its staff responds to telephone or website inquiries from prospective resource parent applicants, including applicants interested in adopting a child through CP&P. FAFS staff provide the inquirer with basic information about resource care and adoption services, and answer any questions they may have. The conversation is guided by the inquirer. Staff promote a customer friendly approach.

FAFS responds to inquiries from prospective resource parents by:

- Sending the prospective applicant general information about becoming a resource parent;
- Forwarding inquiries from prospective applicants, on a daily basis, to the appropriate CP&P Resource Family Support Unit (RFSU) for assignment to a Resource Family Recruiter (RFR).

A CP&P representative may also accept an inquiry by telephone or at a recruitment event. In such cases the CP&P representative completes CP&P Form 14-158, Inquiry Form, and faxes it to FAFS at 1-609-520-1515, within 24 hours of taking the inquiry.

Note: The CP&P Office of Adoption Operations also responds to inquiries which come through the National Adoption Exchange or through various other recruitment websites and initiatives.

**The Role of the Resource Family Recruiter (RFR) 3-9-2009**

Timely response to each inquiry is important, to reinforce interest and encourage participation. The RFR contacts the prospective applicant via telephone within five business days of receipt of an inquiry to invite him or her to a Group Engagement. If the

initial attempt to contact a prospective applicant by telephone is unsuccessful, the RFR makes a second telephone contact at a different time of the day. If there is no response within five business days, the RFR sends CP&P Form 5-2a, Inquiry Response Letter, to the prospective applicant.

Families who may not be ready are informed that a follow-up call will be made within the next two weeks. They are given contact information if they have further questions or decide to apply.

**Documentation of an Inquiry 3-9-2009**

The RFR creates a folder for the prospective applicant to include copies of letters.

The RFR also documents the inquiry in New Jersey SPIRIT (NJS) as follows:

- Creates a resource home record and enters the date of the inquiry in NJS. The RFR confirms the primary applicant's "official" name is correct to avoid a duplicate resource being created in the Licensing Information System (LIS).

- Documents the results of the contact in a Resource Note.

- Documents the date the CP&P Form 5-2a is sent to the prospective applicant, if applicable, in the resource note.

- Disposes/rescinds an inquiry when the prospective applicant does not respond to the CP&P Form 5-2a within 30 days, or when the inquirer informs the RFR that he or she does not wish to apply to become a resource family parent.

- Enters the date the Division disposes of/rescinds the inquiry in NJS and documents in the file.

**Group Engagement 3-9-2009**

Prospective resource parents are invited to a Group Engagement in their community, given at a minimum of two times per month in each county/area. A presentation is conducted by a representative from the RFSU, to inform the prospective resource parents of the following:

- An organizational chart of the Department of Children and Families;

- The Division's mission and responsibilities to children and families;

- Information about the Resource Family home study process and the Office of Licensing (OOL) licensing standards;

- The relationship between the Office of Licensing, the Resource Family Support Unit, and each office's duties and responsibilities.

Note: If a prospective applicant is unable to attend a Group Engagement, or requires special assistance, a Home Engagement may be considered.

Prospective resource parents who show an interest in moving forward are given an application and assigned to a Resource Family Support Worker (RFSW), who contacts the family within three business days to make an appointment for the first home visit. The first home visit is one of a minimum of three home visits required during the home study process.

**Initial Home Visit and the Role of the Resource Family Support Worker 5-28-2013**

During the initial home visit, the RFSW provides general information about CP&P, including:

- The need for resource parents for the types of children in our care;
- CP&P adoption services and Kinship Legal Guardianship;
- Policies and procedures regarding board rate reimbursement to providers, medical coverage, transportation reimbursement, etc.;
- Methods of child discipline policy (i.e., viable alternatives to corporal punishment);
- Detailed information about licensing standards.

The RFSW conducts a preliminary inspection of the home to determine the presence of any safety issues or structural concerns that might preclude the applicant from meeting licensing standards.

In the absence of concerns, the RFSW secures a completed and signed CP&P Form 5-2, Resource Family Parent Home Study/Licensing Application.

The RFSW provides the following forms, which are to be returned within one week of the initial home visit:

- CP&P Form 26-15, Authorization for Release of Information - Two originals must be completed for each applicant and each adult member of the applicant's household;

- CP&P Form 5-25, Police Check, for each applicant and each adult household member;

- SAFE Questionnaire I, a component of the SAFE Home Study, for each applicant only;

- DCF Form 5-1, Request for Child Abuse/Neglect Record Information (out of state) - One form completed for each applicant or adult household member who lived in another state within the last five years;

- CP&P Form 5-2g, Financial Statement, one per household;

- Live scan application, with instructions to the resource parent applicant for completing the form and scheduling an appointment to have fingerprints taken (for a criminal history inquiry).

The RFSW provides stamped, addressed return envelopes.

**Documentation of Home Visit 3-9-2009**

After the RFSW conducts the initial home visit and secures an application, the RFSW enters the date the application is received in NJS, in a Resource Note.

If the prospective applicant decides not to continue with the application process, enter the date the Division disposes of the inquiry. Maintain the disposed inquiry file in the Resource Family Support Unit for three years.

**Application Process 3-9-2009**

The RFSW conducts the following:

- NJS person search;

- Child Abuse Record Information (CARI) inquiry in NJS. In accordance with the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, a CARI check must also be conducted in any state where the applicant (or any other adult residing in the home) lived in the previous five years, in order for the home to be licensed.

- PROMIS/GAVEL (criminal history inquiry);

- Human Services Police for history of domestic violence or other incidents.

The RFSW submits the completed and signed application, with the results of the above checks, to the Resource Family Support Unit Supervisor for approval, within five calendar days of the date in which it was received.

See Reimbursement for Medical Examinations of Resource Parent Applicants, below, for the policy on reimbursement for medical examinations of resource parent applicants and family members. See http://aspe.hhs.gov/ for the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines used to determine eligibility for reimbursement.

**Initiating the Home Study Process 3-9-2009**

Upon receipt of the application, the Supervisor reviews, approves and signs the application. Once the application is approved, day one of the 150-day home study and licensing process begins. The Supervisor then proceeds with the following:

- Assigns the application to a Resource Family Support Worker, making this primary assignment in NJS;
- Schedules an initial conference with the RFSW to assess progress;
- Sends a copy of the application to the Office of Licensing (OOL) and attaches the NJS screen shots that include the applicant's name and resource number;
- Has an initial conference with the RFSW and schedules the next conference to take place within the next 30 days;
- Enters the date the application is approved in NJS;

**Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf, or Hard of Hearing Applicants 3-9-2009**

The Resource Family Recruiter (RFR) provides the following necessary assistance in the event that a blind or visually impaired person applies to be a resource parent:

- Any required document may be enlarged for the visually impaired applicant to complete.
- Forms may be read to a blind applicant and completed with assistance.
- Documents which require the signature of the applicant should be witnessed by a person chosen by the applicant.
- Materials can be recorded and given to the applicant.

The DHS Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) operates an interpreter referral service which can identify a certified interpreter for CP&P, who can assist with the study of a Deaf or hard of hearing applicant. The interpreter can help CP&P during the inquiry, training sessions, and the home visit(s). See CP&P-II-C-3-100, Policy for Intervening With Clients who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Note: Contact the DCF Office of Legal Affairs for questions regarding accommodating people with disabilities. Such accommodations are required by law.

**REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF RESOURCE PARENT APPLICANTS 1-5-2009**

Medical Examination Required for Licensure - Although it is expected that applicants for substitute parenting undergo a physical examination at their own expense, it is recognized that the cost of the physical examination may deter some otherwise eligible resource parent applicants from completing the application process.

"The resource parent applicant may request reimbursement of the cost of a physical examination necessary to provide the information required in N.J.A.C. 10:122C. The Division representative shall approve reimbursement at a rate determined by the Division, if the resource parent applicant's family has a verified income below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, as published in the Federal Register, and the examination is not available free of charge." (N.J.A.C. 10:122B-5.2(a)) See Federal Poverty Income Guidelines at http://aspe.hhs.gov/.

Reimbursement Rate - The maximum rate allowable to reimburse a resource family applicant for a medical examination has been increased to $150.00.

Who is Eligible? Those applicants eligible for this reimbursement are resource families applying to provide foster, relative and family friend care services, when it is anticipated that board will be paid, and applicants wishing to adopt children with special needs as defined in the Definitions section of CP&P-IV-C-8-100.

**PROCEDURES RELATED TO OBTAINING REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF RESOURCE PARENT APPLICANTS 6-25-2007**

| RESPONSIBILITY | ACTION REQUIRED |
|---|---|
| Resource Family Support Worker | 1. Submit to Office Manager a Special Approval Request (SAR), CP&P Form 16-76, justifying need for reimbursement. |
| Office Manager | 2. Evaluate the Special Approval Request, CP&P 16-76, and request additional information if necessary. Approve or deny the request. |
| Resource Family Support Worker | 3. Advise resource parent applicants of approval or denial. |
| Resource Family Applicant | 4. Obtain medical examination(s) from |

| | |
|---|---|
| | a provider willing to accept reimbursement via a State of N.J. Payment Voucher, PV 6/93; or pay for the medical examination(s), obtain receipt for payment and attach to the PV 6/93 for reimbursement. |
| Resource Family Support Worker | 5. Check the PV 6/93 for completeness.<br><br>• If submitted by a physician, the PV 6/93 must contain the doctor's IRS number and signature and have the physician's billing invoice attached.<br><br>• If submitted by a resource parent applicant, the PV 6/93 must contain the applicant's Social Security Number and signature, with the physician's bill attached.<br><br>The physician's bill should be marked "paid" by the physician's office or a copy of the canceled check should be attached. |
| | 6. Submit to the Office of Accounting a completed PV 6/93 along with a signed Special Approval Request, CP&P Form 16-76, and receipt (if reimbursement is to be made to the resource parent applicant). |