

LCCS POLICY 756

Transfer of Family Foster Home Certificate

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Reason for Obsoleting/Combining:	
See new Policy #:	

Scope:	This policy applies to all family foster homes as well as all Agency Personnel.
Responsibility:	Placement Department Manager
Purpose:	To work collaboratively to provide responsible child welfare services statewide and to address the individual and specific needs of foster families.
Legal Cite:	O.R.C. §§5103.03, 5153.16, 5153.161; O.A.C. 5101:2-5-13, O.A.C. 5101:2-5-31

POLICY STATEMENT

LCCS will transfer and accept in transfer currently certified Family Foster Homes.

DEFINITIONS:

- Sending Agency: Agency that currently holds the license
- Receiving Agency: Agency accepting the transfer of the license.

PROCEDURE - including required timeframes and documentation

LCCS will consider a transfer request from a currently certified foster home to a private child placing agency (PCPA) or private non-custodial agency (PNA) certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to recommend foster homes of the same type or to a public children services agency (PCSA).

A foster caregiver certified to operate a specialized foster home may transfer to an agency that does not operate a specialized foster home program if the caregiver agrees that upon execution of the transfer, the foster home designation will be identified as a family foster home.

LCCS will accept a transfer of a foster home from another agency only if the foster caregiver has been certified with the sending agency for a minimum of one (1) year.

An exception will be made in the case of a foster caregiver who has relocated to another county not served by the foster caregiver's recommending agency or if the foster caregiver's recommending agency ceases to recommend foster homes for certification to ODJFS.

Upon receipt of a written request from a foster caregiver (who has been certified with the sending agency for a minimum of one (1) year or meets the exception requirements) expressing a desire to transfer from the caregiver's current recommending agency, the receiving agency will consider the request and make a decision whether it wishes to proceed further with an assessment to determine whether to accept the transfer.

A foster caregiver will not initiate more than one (1) transfer request during a certification period and only to one (1) agency at a time.

Before accepting the transfer of the foster home, the receiving agency will contact the sending agency of the foster caregiver in writing to notify the sending agency that such a request has been received and to request a complete copy of the caregiver's foster home records (excluding personal references and criminal records checks).

Upon receipt of the transfer request from the receiving agency, the sending agency will inform the receiving agency of any decision to not place any more children in the foster caregiver's home, including the reasons why the decision was made.

If the receiving agency still wishes to proceed with exploring the transfer request, it will notify the sending agency in writing.

Prior to sending the records to the receiving agency, the sending agency will ensure that a signed release of information authorization from the foster caregiver authorizing the sending agency to provide a copy of the agency's foster care records to the receiving agency has been obtained.

The release of information may be obtained by either agency or the foster caregiver.

While the transfer request is pending, the sending agency will:

- Continue to work with the foster caregiver as it does with all other foster caregivers associated with the agency;
- Continue to provide the caregiver with notification of training events needed according to the foster caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan;
- Allow the foster caregiver to attend any such events; and
- Continue to meet with the caregiver regarding the care of any child placed in the home.

No child will be removed from a foster caregiver's home solely because the caregiver has requested a transfer from one agency to another.

Within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the signed release of information, the sending agency will send a complete copy of the foster home records (excluding references and any criminal records checks) to the receiving agency.

The record information to be transferred includes: the most recent homestudy, homestudy updates, training records, fire inspection reports, safety audits and medical reports, all complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any applicable corrective action plans. The sending agency will notify the receiving agency of the nature of any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented.

LCCS charges a reasonable fee for copying records that are sent to another agency, not to exceed twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per page. No additional fees will be charged to any party. Records will not be sent to another agency until the fee is paid.

The records will be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested or hand delivered by agency staff. If the records are hand delivered, the sending agency will be provided with a receipt showing the date the records were delivered to the receiving agency and the receiving agency will document the date of receipt of the records.

The receiving agency will accept the copy of the foster caregiver's records only from the sending agency. The receiving agency will not accept a copy of the records from a foster caregiver. A caregiver may provide other information to the receiving agency that the caregiver considers to be pertinent.

Upon receipt of the foster caregiver's records, the receiving agency will assign an assessor to review the information received and conduct an assessment of the transfer request.

The assessor will:

- Review the foster caregiver's foster home records and any other information received from the sending agency and the foster caregiver(s) in order to make an informed decision whether the agency wishes to proceed with the transfer request.
- Complete the review and make a recommendation to the receiving agency regarding the transfer within sixty (60) days after the records have been received. If the transfer review cannot be completed within sixty (60) days, the assessor will document in the foster home records the reasons why the review cannot be completed within sixty (60) days.
- Contact staff from the sending agency and the foster caregiver(s) to ascertain the reasons why the request is being made and to determine if there are foster children in the home and, if so, to identify the agency with custody of the child(ren).
- Make, at least, one (1) visit to the foster home and conduct a face-to-face meeting with each foster caregiver and with all other household members.
- Not recommend acceptance of the transfer unless the assessor is satisfied that any outstanding complaints or rule noncompliance investigations are not material to the request to transfer the home and the safety of any children who are or may be placed in the home.

All transfer review activities will be documented in the receiving agency's foster home records.

The receiving agency shall not approve the transfer request until the following information has been received and approved by the agency.

- Three (3) new personal references for the foster caregiver(s) from three (3) persons who are unrelated to the caregiver and who do not live with the caregiver;
- A new criminal records check has been obtained, reviewed and approved by the assessor for all persons subject to a criminal records check residing in the foster home;
- A new safety audit of the foster home has been conducted to verify that the home meets all current safety requirements for foster homes; and
- Documentation of the assessor's decision to recommend approval of the transfer request, and the reasons for the decision are recorded in the receiving agency's foster home records. The foster caregiver and the sending agency will be sent a written notice of the receiving agency's decision within five (5) working days of the decision.

The receiving agency who approves the transfer request will maintain all information sent by the original recommending agency, as well as, any information gathered in the transfer review process and the assessor's written recommendation as part of the receiving agency's foster caregiver records.

The receiving agency who does not approve the transfer request will maintain the copy of the records received from the sending agency and the assessor's written recommendation to reject the transfer request for at least two (2) years.

The approval or rejection of a transfer request rests solely with the receiving agency subject to the approval of ODJFS and creates no right of appeal pursuant to Chapter 119. of the Revised Code for any party to the transfer request.

Prior to accepting a transfer, the receiving agency will ensure that the custodial agency of any child currently placed in the home agrees to the transfer. If the custodial agency does not agree to the transfer while a child in its custody is placed in the home, the transfer will not take place until the child is no longer placed in the home. A child will not be removed from a caregiver's home solely because the caregiver seeks to transfer his/her foster home certificate to another agency.

An agency is not required to accept the transfer of a foster home from another agency.

The receiving agency will provide an orientation to the foster caregiver of the agency's policies and procedures for foster caregivers prior to or not later than thirty (30) calendar days after a transfer request has been processed by ODJFS.

The receiving agency who decides to accept the transfer will make a recommendation to ODJFS to transfer the foster home to the agency by submitting a JFS 01334 "Notification of Transfer of a Foster Home" (rev. 9/2006).

The sending agency and the receiving agency may seek and agreement to determine which agency will conduct the recertification review if a transfer of a foster home is pending within the ninety (90) days immediately prior to the expiration of the certificate.

The foster home's recommending agency will be responsible for conducting the recertification review and recommendation, if there is no agreement between the sending and receiving agencies.

Upon receipt of a signed release of information form, an agency will release a copy of a foster care homestudy to an adoption agency when the foster caregiver is being considered as an adoptive parent.

CASE PRACTICE GUIDES

RELATED POLICIES and FORMS

ODJFS 01334 (Notification of Transfer of a Family Foster Home)

LCCS Policy #800 Assessment Training and Homestudy Process for the Adoptive Family