



**State of Florida
Department of Children and Families**

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: March 29, 2019

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

THROUGH: Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary *PB*

FROM: JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *JS*

SUBJECT: Get Ready for FSFN Enhancements – Levels of Licensure

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to update all child welfare stakeholders on the status of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) enhancements scheduled to be implemented on April 12, 2019 so final preparations can be made locally to "Get Ready" for the changes.

BACKGROUND: Florida's child welfare system has been under the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver since 2006, allowing the state to forego certain provisions of the Title IV-E Social Security Act, yet still claim Title IV-E dollars. The Department of Children and Families (department) uses much of this revenue to fund our unique Community-Based Care child welfare system. This waiver is set to expire on September 30, 2019 and the department anticipates it will lose approximately 90 million dollars. Therefore, with the sunset of the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver, the department has implemented the Path Forward initiative which includes various programs that will draw down additional funding to help support the state's child welfare system. One of these programs is the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP).

GAP is a Title IV-E funded program that would allow the state to draw down funds from the federal government. In accordance with the implementation of this program, the foster care system needs to be restructured to implement levels of licensure. In 2018 s. 409.175, Florida Statutes, were updated to reflect these new levels of licensure.

High Level Overview of Levels of Licensure Changes:

Various stakeholder groups will be affected by the levels of licensure changes differently, but the following changes apply to all stakeholders:

- There will be five Levels of Licensure classifications for family foster homes licensed by the department.
 - Level I** - Child specific foster home
 - Level II** - Non-child specific foster home
 - Level III** - Safe foster home for victims of human trafficking
 - Level IV** - Therapeutic foster home
 - Level V** - Medical foster home

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

- Relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin can be licensed in FSFN as a Level I foster home.
- What was once considered as a “traditional foster home” will be a Level II child specific foster home.
- There will be a new relationship value of ‘Fictive Kin’ available for documentation in FSFN as applicable.
- All licensed placements, including licensed relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin will acquire the federal definition of a “foster home”.
- There will be a visible difference in performance dashboards and statewide reporting numbers; as relatives, nonrelatives, and fictive kin become licensed they will move into the “foster home” category.

In preparation for the enhancements to “go live” on April 12, 2019, there is a continuous effort to assess and achieve people readiness, system readiness, and the implementation of a support plan. The following is a status on the readiness assessment:

PEOPLE READINESS: On Target! – Statewide train-the-trainer sessions have been completed and all regions report that staff training plans are underway to finalize readiness activities prior to go-live.

SYSTEM READINESS: Completed! – The FSFN enhancements have been designed, developed, and User Acceptance Testing has been completed.

SUPPORT READINESS: On Target! – Policy updates are being finalized for publication.

A project website has been setup on the Center for Child Welfare’s website to house all project related policy, training, FAQ, and FSFN documentation.

<http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/licensure.shtml>

Post-Deployment Support Readiness: On Target! –The Levels of Licensure post-deployment support will include daily calls for the two weeks following deployment to evaluate and respond to any issues. The support team will include members from the Office of Child Welfare Policy and Practice team, Office of Information Technology Services team, IBM team, Regional Points of Contact, and Community-Based Care Lead Agency (CBC) Points of Contact.

TRAINING INFORMATION: Four regional trainings have been completed, two in Orlando, one in Tampa, and one in Jacksonville. All training materials are available on the projects website.

ACTION REQUESTED: It is time to **Get Ready** for the Levels of Licensure enhancements to go-live on April 12, 2019. Please continue to execute all readiness plans to ensure our workforce is ready for the upcoming FSFN changes.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have questions about the Levels of Licensure Enhancements, please contact Teanna Houston, Statewide Foster Home Licensing Specialist at Teanna.Houston@myflfamilies.com. If you have FSFN questions, please contact Jeanette.Betancourt@myflfamilies.com. If you have any questions regarding local readiness efforts, please contact your regional champion below.

Regional Champions:

Northwest Region – Regina Pleas – Regina.Pleas@myflfamilies.com
Northeast Region – Rebecca Robinson – Rebecca.Robinson@myflfamilies.com
Central Region – Candace Cox – Candace.Cox@myflfamilies.com
Suncoast Region – Rebecca Dorsey – Rebecca.Dorsey@myflfamilies.com
Southeast Region – LeKeinya Mellion – LaKeinya.Mellion@myflfamilies.com
Southern Region – Allyson Peckins – Allyson.Peckins@myflfamilies.com

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

Attachment: Levels of Licensure Enhancements Highlights

Levels of Licensure Enhancements Highlights

General changes that apply to all stakeholders:

- There will now be Levels of Licensures that are classifications of family foster homes licensed by the Department of Children and Families.
 - Level I-** Child specific foster home
 - Level II-** Non-child specific foster home
 - Level III-** Safe foster home for victims of human trafficking
 - Level IV-** Therapeutic foster home
 - Level V-** Medical foster home
- Relatives, Non-Relatives, and Fictive Kin can now be licensed in FSFN as a Level I foster home.
- What was once considered as a “traditional foster home” is now a Level II non-child specific foster home.
- There is a new relationship value of ‘Fictive Kin’ available for documentation in FSFN as applicable.
- All licensed placements, including licensed relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin will acquire the federal definition of a “foster home”.
- There will be a visible difference in performance dashboards and statewide reporting numbers, because as relatives, nonrelatives, and fictive kin become licensed they will move into the “foster home” category.

When will changes go into effect? The new FSFN functionality will go into effect on April 12, 2019.

The following describes the impact to each of the individual stakeholders, not including the changes listed above:

1. *Child Protective Investigators*

- There are additional benefits now available to relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin. The ‘Caregiver Brochure’ will be provided to all caregivers at the time of placement and will explain these additional benefits. This brochure will be provided to the regions prior to Go-Live.

2. *Case Managers:*

- Will not need to complete the UHS within the first 45 days from case transfer *if* a licensing home study has been completed on the caregiver.

3. *CBC Licensing Specialists:*

- Awareness of the ability to waive non-safety requirements in FSFN to be licensed

as a Level I Foster Home.

- Awareness of the new updates that have been made to the training tab in FSFN.

4. *Regional Licensing Specialists:*

- There is a new security user group titled 'DCF Regional Licensing Specialist'.
- Awareness of new updates that have been made to the Provider Licensing Page to align with the new levels of licensure.
- Awareness of the new non-safety waivable licensing requirements in order to approve a Level I license in FSFN.
- Awareness of the ability to create a Non-DCF License in FSFN.

5. *Data Entry/Placement Entering Staff:*

- Once a relative or non-relative becomes licensed, the child's Out-of-Home Placement Page will be updated to reflect a service category of "Foster Home" and a Placement Setting of "Foster Family Home-Relative" or "Foster Family Home Non-Relative".

6. *Financial Staff:*

- A new standardized Service Type shall be created utilizing the guidance provided in the upcoming Financial Implementation Memo.
- Existing Service Types shall be updated to reflect the correct license that is required for each Service Type, per guidance provided in the upcoming Financial Implementation Memo.