

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
(CCDCFS)
Policy Statement**

Policy Chapter: Management
Policy Number: 10.07.02
Policy Name: Agency Policy and Procedure Development

Original Effective Date: 12/15/1994
Review Date(s): 05/01/2013, 08/10/2010, 08/06/2008
Current Revision Date: 10/01/14
Approved By: Patricia L. Rideout

PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for the development, review, and revision of agency policies and procedures and the maintenance of an agency policy and procedures manual for the day-to-day operations of the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS).

SCOPE: This policy applies to all Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) staff.

POLICY

- A. CCDCFS maintains a Policy and Procedures Manual with policies governing the general administration and day to day operations of the agency and basic agency services and practice.
- B. All CCDCFS policies and procedures comply with all current legal and regulatory requirements, and applicable child welfare standards and practices.
- C. CCDCFS has established procedures for the development and approval of new policies, the revision or deletion of outdated policies, and the timely review of all policies governing the agency.
- D. All approved policies are posted and accessible to employees and the public. A signed hard copy is maintained by the agency. The entire manual is accessible on the agency's internal and public web-sites.
- E. Any CCDCFS employee may identify the need for a new policy development or revision of an existing policy.

- F. When new policies are added and/or existing policies have been updated, revised or deleted, CCDCFS announces this information to all employees. It is the responsibility of all staff to read, understand, and adhere to all CCDCFS policies.
- G. CCDCFS maintains a Policy Review Group (PRG). PRG's purpose is to assist the agency in maintaining the agency's policy and procedures manual by ensuring proposed new policies and/or revisions comply with child welfare standards and meet legal and regulatory requirements. Membership includes representatives from each Deputy Director's area: Senior Supervisors, Supervisors, Social Services Workers, and Case Review Facilitators. Members serve on the committee for at least one year. The chairperson/co-chair rotates on a yearly basis.
- H. PRG reviews all new policies. PRG will be kept apprised of all current policies as they are due for review and may review any policy with or without the request of the policy owner. If requested, the PRG will review revised policies and if needed, suggest changes as agreed upon by the Group; and disseminate written feedback via PRG's policy review form. The new/revised policies will be reviewed for content and format. If requested, the PRG will review any policy revisions made on behalf of prior recommendations. PRG shall invite the policy owner to a PRG meeting for continued dialogue, as needed.
- I. The Performance Management Unit (PMU) designee ensures triennial reviews of existing policies are conducted.

PROCEDURES

I. Writing New Policies and Revision of Existing Policies

- A. A new policy or a policy revision may be necessary when:
 - 1. Agency practice and/or Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) require the development of a new policy.
 - 2. A current policy no longer reflects the current CCDCFS practice and / or ORC and OAC.
 - 3. A request for a new policy or revision of an existing policy is made by a CCDCFS staff member and the Deputy Director determines a new policy or revision is necessary.
 - a. Any CCDCFS staff member may submit a request for a new policy or revision to an existing policy.
 - b. All requests for a new policy or revision of an existing policy are submitted through the staff member's chain of command.
 - c. If the Deputy Director determines the new policy or revision request has an impact agency wide, the request is passed on to the Division Administrator.

- d. If the new policy or revision will not have an impact agency wide, the Deputy Director determines if a new policy or revision is necessary.
- B. If a new policy or revision is necessary, the Division Administrator or Deputy Director:
 1. Assigns a policy owner and/or appoints staff to draft the new policy or revise an existing policy.
 2. Notifies PRG chairperson of the new policy or revision being drafted and those appointed to create the documents.
 3. Provides PRG chairperson with an e-mail confirming the approval.
- C. The identified policy owner and/or appointed staff draft the new policy and/or revision using the CCDCFS Policy Statement template (accessible via CCDCFS agency intranet Forms section).
- D. When completed, an electronic copy of the drafted policy/revision in the correct format is submitted by the policy owner to the appropriate Deputy Director. The Deputy Director decides if the policy is reviewed by PRG or Senior Managers.
 1. If the policy is reviewed by PRG, the PRG reviews the new/revise d policy by completing the PRG policy review form (accessible via CCDCFS agency intranet Forms section) and forwards the completed form with the policy draft to the Deputy Director. PRG does not make changes to the content of a submitted policy.
 2. If the policy is reviewed by Senior Managers, the policy owner presents the new/revise d policy at a designated Senior Managers meeting and feedback is provided to the Deputy Director.
- E. The Deputy Director reviews and makes approval recommendations regarding the submitted policy. The Deputy Director decides if the policy is reviewed by the Administrative Team.
 1. If the policy is reviewed by the Administrative Team, the policy owner and PRG liaison(s), if necessary, presents the new/revise d policy to the Administrative Team. The Administrative Team makes approval recommendations.
 2. If at any time during the review process changes are requested, the new/revise d policy is returned to the policy owner to make the necessary edits and then resubmitted back to the Deputy Director.
- F. After the new/revise d policy is approved by the Deputy Director or Administrative Team (if necessary), the Deputy Director:
 1. Discusses the policy with the Division Administrator.
 2. If the Division Administrator determines additional revisions are required, the Deputy Director returns the new/revise d policy to the policy owner to make necessary edits.

3. The policy owner then resubmits policy back to the Deputy Director for further dialogue with the Division Administrator.
- G. After the new/revised policy is pre-approved by the Division Administrator (if necessary), the policy is sent by the Deputy Director to PMU for formatting. Upon completion, PMU sends the formatted policy back to the Deputy Director for Administrative Services. The Deputy Director for Administrative Services will then submit the policy to the Division Administrator for signature.
 - H. Upon final approval, PMU maintains and secures the policy's original signed copy. PMU staff submits an electronic copy of the policy to Information Services (IS) to be posted on the agency website. The policy's current revision date (noted in the policy header) reflects the first day of the preceding month.
 - I. IS posts the policy on the CCDCFS internal intranet, as well as the CCDCFS agency internet page. IS notifies PMU staff when the policy has been posted.
 - J. Within 24 hours, or (1) business day, after the new/revised policy is posted, the PRG's designee contacts the Administrative Services Deputy Director's office and requests an all staff broadcast e-mail message be sent informing staff of the new / revised policy and of staffs obligation to review and be familiar with the policy. The e-mail message states:

“It is the responsibility of all staff to read, understand, and adhere to all CCDCFS policies. By opening this e-mail, you have acknowledged receipt of the above policy(s) and accept responsibility for knowledge of its content. Should you have any questions about this, or any, CCDCFS policy, please contact and discuss with your immediate supervisor.” A hyperlink is inserted in the e-mail for each policy so staff can be taken directly to the policy upon reading the e-mail.
 - K. All agency managers ensure review of relevant policies with their staff.
 1. The PRG designee provides each Department area with a list of new and revised policies approved and posted during the previous month. This list is provided by the fifth business day of the month.
 2. All agency managers determine which policies are relevant to their staff and provide a Policy Review Sheet for those policies. Upon receipt of the all staff broadcast, managers ensure policies are reviewed with staff, immediately, but no longer than 60 days after the effective date of the policy. Managers obtain acknowledgement of review of policies by obtaining staff signatures on a Policy Review Sheet following the review.

II. Deletion/Obsolescence of Existing Policies

- A. Deletion/ Obsolescence of a policy may be necessary when:
 - 1. A policy no longer reflects CCDCFs practice and/or ORC and OAC rules and regulations.
 - 2. Pertinent information is housed within another approved policy.
 - 3. A policy is requested for deletion by either the policy owner or PRG. It is a policy owner's responsibility to notify PRG when a policy is no longer relevant to practice.
- B. After PRG reviews the policy and makes recommendations to the policy owner, PRG chairperson submits recommended list for deletion to all deputies for review/approval. Upon completion, Administrative Services Deputy Director forwards list to Division Administrator for final approval.
- C. If policy is approved for deletion/obsolescence, all staff is made aware via:
 - 1. A broadcast message (e-mail) which includes a rationale statement on why the policy is being deleted.
 - 2. DCFs' monthly newsletter, News You Can Use.

III. Triennial Review of Policies

- A. All policies have a triennial review.
- B. The PRG Chairperson notifies the appropriate Deputy Director of policies due for review. The PMU designee sends a reminder notice to the policy owner, 90 days prior to the triennial review deadline date. PMU tracks all policies as they are due for review and keeps PRG apprised of all requests for new policies. The Deputy Director is notified by the PRG Chairperson of any policies overdue for review.
- C. The Deputy Director or Division Administrator determines who reviews and/or revises said policies. If a revision is necessary, follow the procedures outlined in the preceding section, Revision of Existing Policies.
- D. If no revision is necessary, upon approval of the Deputy Director, the review date is noted on the policy and posted on the CCDCFs' intranet, as well as, the Cuyahoga County internet page. The designee of the Policy Review Group maintains a hard copy of this approved review.
- E. The review and revision of all policies is monitored and tracked to ensure it is completed every three years.

Guidance for Policy Development

- a review of relevant government policy and legislation (local, state, federal), strategic direction of the Division, accreditation requirements, and best practice standards;
- a review of existing policies;
- a review of if and how the policy affects racial equity and racial disparity of all groups;
- a review and consideration of impact and challenges with implementing the policy at all levels; and
- consultation with *key stakeholders* (Subject Matter Expert/SME) which may include formal meetings, phone conversation or email.
- a review to ensure policy is in compliance with civil rights requirements and does not promote or encourage discrimination in the delivery of service by DCFS on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, gender expression or religion.

Guidance for Policy Review

- whether the policy and/or any related procedures or other associated forms or attachments need to be revised or rescinded;
- whether the policy and/or procedures is still consistent with government policy and legislation (local, state, federal), strategic directions of the Division, accreditation standards, and best practice;
- consideration of impact and challenges with implementing changes to the policy at all levels; and
- consultation with *key stakeholders* (SME) which may include formal meetings, phone conversation or email.
- a review to ensure policy is in compliance with civil rights requirements and does not promote or encourage discrimination in the delivery of service by DCFS on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, gender expression or religion.

RELATED FORMS:

[CCDCFS Policy and Procedure Template](#)

[CCDCFS Policy Review Group Review Form](#)

[CCDCFS Policy Review Sheet](#)