



**STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

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January 25, 2021

To: All staff in Field Operations (FO) and Licensing Division (LD)  
From: Kwesi Booker, Assistant Secretary, Field Operations  
Luba Bezborodnikova, Assistant Secretary, Licensing Division  
Re: Practice Expectations for Home Study Withdrawals and Denials

Please see below an agreement between the Assistant Secretaries for the respective divisions, and an expectation for the staff in those divisions regarding consultation when:

- The LD home study worker intends to withdraw an application for a kinship care home study due to lack of response from the caregiver.
- The LD home study worker is considering denial of a licensed or unlicensed home study for a relative or kinship caregiver.

It is important that these providers are staffed to ensure that children in kinship placements are safe, with maximized potential for their permanency and well-being.

Intent to Withdraw

LD staff will be making diligent efforts to engage and support kinship caregivers through the application process. If the caregiver does not respond to those efforts, LD will be seeking assistance from the family's assigned caseworker. If that is not effective, a staffing will be held between LD and FO staff prior to LD notifying the court of the intention to withdraw the application. LD staff will then withdraw the application in accordance with LD practice memos, which will not be considered a denial precluding the family from reapplying in the future.

Intent to Deny

When the home study worker is considering denial of a home study, and before the home study is denied, LD and FO staff must jointly staff the case in order to determine if there are urgent issues that pose a risk to the child's placement in the home, whether those concerns can be remediated, and plans about whether the home study will move forward. This does not replace legal consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, and does not apply to private agency home studies, or ICPC home studies being completed in order to place a child from out of state.

1. In the event that the LD home study worker is intending to deny the home study application, the LD Area Administrator must notify the Field Operations Area Administrator from the office in which the child welfare case is assigned. (This may be a different office than where the provider resides.) The administrators will discuss relevant safety, permanency and well-being issues on the case within ten days of LD's notification to the FO AA.
2. If the AAs do not agree, each AA will notify their respective administrator (Pamela McKeown or the Regional Administrator), and a second consultation will occur within 3 days of the AA consultation.

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3. If there is not agreement at the RA level, the administrators will notify their respective Assistant Secretaries, who will hold an additional consultation within 10 days.

This protocol recognizes that LD has the statutory authority to assess the general abilities for caregivers to provide care and make decisions on denial or approval of home studies, and FO has the statutory authority to make placement decisions. It also recognizes there is due process for caregivers being licensed.



Luba Bezborodnikova  
Assistant Secretary  
Licensing Division



Kwesi Booker  
Assistant Secretary  
Division of Field Operations