



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

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: April 12, 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: *Patricia Babcock for*
JoShonda Guerrier, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Go-Live for FSFN Enhancements – Levels of Licensure

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to announce the approval of the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN) enhancements scheduled to be implemented on April 12, 2019. The FSFN system will be unavailable Friday, April 12, 2019 from 10:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. to implement these 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 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 allows 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, was updated to reflect these new levels of licensure.

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

PEOPLE READINESS: **Completed!** – All regions report that staff and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies (CBCs) are ready.

SYSTEM READINESS: **Completed!** – FSFN User Acceptance Testing has been completed, and the build implementation plan has been approved.

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Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

SUPPORT READINESS: Completed! – The following supporting documentation has been updated to align with the FSFN Enhancements:

The following policies have been updated to align with the Levels of Licensure Enhancements and have been or will be published in the coming days:

- CFOP 170-11, Chapter 16 Levels of Licensure *(in process)*
- CFOP 170-11, Chapter 12 Foster Home Licensing *(in process)*
- CFOP 170-1, Chapter 5 Completing a Unified Home Study *(updated: November 2, 2018)*

The following FSFN Implementation policy guidance has been issued for Levels of Licensure documentation:

- [FSFN Implementation: Levels of Licensure](#) (4/9/19)
- [FSFN Payment Reference Guide](#) (Updated 4/10/19)

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

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

To see the full list of FSFN Build Notes, please visit:

http://fsfn.dcf.state.fl.us/docs/FSFN%20Build%20Notes_4-12-2019.pdf

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 CBC Points of Contact.

TRAINING INFORMATION: Four Regional Train the Trainer sessions have been completed: two in Orlando, one in Tampa, and one in Jacksonville. All training materials are available on the project website. The FSFN training region (Sandbox) has been updated with the new Levels of Licensure functionality and regional and CBC trainings are in progress.

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 now be five Levels of Licensure that are 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
- Relatives, non-relatives, and fictive kin can now be licensed in FSFN as a Level I foster home.

- What was once considered a “traditional foster home” is now a Level II non-child specific foster home (*please note this correction from the Get Ready Memo*).
- 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; as relatives, nonrelatives, and fictive kin become licensed they will move into the “foster home” category.

ACTION REQUESTED: Please continue to execute all readiness plans to ensure our workforce is ready for the upcoming FSFN changes on April 12, 2019.

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

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