

# POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## House of New Hope

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**POLICY: JFS-2-48-05**

**TITLE: Adoption Services Policy**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/03**

**AUTHORIZED BY: Board of Trustees**

**REVISION DATE:**

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**5101:2-48-05(B)(1)**

- A. Geographic area within which House of New Hope conducts adoption homestudy assessments:
  - 11. All of Ohio's eighty-eight counties.
- B. Application Process (5101:2-48-09):
  - 11. To avoid conflict of interest, or the appearance of any conflict of interest:
    - i. The agency administrator and a relative of the agency administrator shall not have an adoption homestudy completed by the agency with which the administrator is employed.
    - ii. A member of the agency's governing body and a person known to the agency as a relative of the agency's governing body shall not have an adoption homestudy completed by the agency with which the member is associated.
    - iii. Adoption inquiries from anyone mentioned in this paragraph wishing to have an adoption homestudy completed shall be referred to another agency with no such appearance of a conflict of interest.
    - iv. An existing approved adoption homestudy of any person referred to in paragraph 1 of this policy shall be transferred to another adoption agency within sixty days of the effective date of OAC Rule 5101:2-48-12.
    - v. If the agency becomes aware of an approved adoptive parent of the agency is a relative of the administrator or a relative of the agency's governing body, it shall initiate a transfer of the adoptive homestudy. The transfer shall be completed within sixty days of the discovery.
  - 12. House of New Hope shall:

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- i. Inform all individuals applying for approval for adoptive placement that they can also be studied for foster home certification.
- ii. Upon inquiry for any inquirer who resides in the State of Ohio, shall provide within seven business days
  1. Copy of the JFS 01675 Ohio Adoption Guide or link on the website to access it
  2. Instructions on how to obtain an application
  3. Copy of the agency's adoption policy or summary available on the website .
  4. This information will be retained in SACWIS pursuant to OAC rule.
13. Conduct a joint homestudy pursuant to the requirements contained in rule 5101:2-5-20 of the Administrative Code which can result in the simultaneous approval of the applicant for:
  - i. Adoptive placement.
  - ii. Foster care placement.

14. In the event during the homestudy process the applicant desires to add the other license (i.e. adoptive applicant wanting to add foster license), the homestudy documentation and training completed up to that point may be utilized as long as the documentation or training has not expired upon completion of the homestudy. Applicants shall not be required to duplicate documentation as a result of a new application date.
15. House of New Hope shall utilize the JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2006) as the standard form when accepting applications for adoptive placement. The Agency shall send the JFS 01691 to any individual requesting an application for adoption within seven business days of receipt of a request for an application.
  - i. The agency shall not accept an incomplete JFS 01691
  - ii. The agency shall not begin the homestudy assessment process prior to the receipt of a fully completed JFS 01691 signed by the applicant(s)
  - iii. If a foster care applicant decides during the homestudy process to also become approved for adoption, the homestudy documentation and training completed up to that point may be utilized as long as the documentation or training has not expired upon completion of the homestudy. Applicants shall not be required to duplicate documentation as a result of a new application date.

16. Paperwork shall not be received until after the final date of training. Training can be completed prior to the completion of the JFS 01691.
17. An application submitted with a knowingly false statement shall not be used to initiate the homestudy. If the Agency determines that an application has been falsified, the Agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
18. The agency shall not begin the homestudy assessment process prior to the receipt of a fully completed JFS 01691 which is signed by the adoptive parent(s).
19. The agency shall not accept an application for approval for adoptive placement which does not contain complete and accurate information.

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20. Upon receipt of the completed JFS 01691, the Agency shall commence the homestudy process and request the applicant provide additional information including at a minimum:
  - i. Documentation of current marital status, which shall include a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other verification of marital status, if applicable.
  - ii. A JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" (rev. 10/2000) providing recent information to show the household has an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and to make timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills and other debts.
  - iii. The report of any criminal records check conducted in accordance with section 2151.86 of the Revised Code. Except as provided in paragraph (D) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, the agency shall not recommend a person to be approved as an adoptive parent if the person or any adult member of the applicant's household has been convicted of any crime listed in paragraph (C) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
21. The Agency shall search or have searched the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or the central registry of abuse and neglect pursuant to rules 5101:2-34-38.1 and 5101:2-33-22 of the Administrative Code if SACWIS is not fully implemented, for each adoptive applicant and each adult household member of the applicant's home prior to approval of the adoptive home in accordance with paragraph (I) of this rule. This search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive parent. The search shall also be conducted within ten days of the addition of any new adult member of the applicant's household once the applicant's homestudy has been approved.
22. If the applicant is a foster parent for the adoptive child, the Agency shall search SACWIS or the central registry of abuse and neglect pursuant to rules 5101:2-34-38.1 and 5101:2-33-22 of the Administrative Code if SACWIS is not fully implemented, when:
  - i. The applicant has not had a previous central registry check completed as a foster parent in Ohio.
23. Any adult household member who has not had a previous central registry check completed as a requirement of living with a foster parent in Ohio.
24. Any adult household member who had a central registry check previously but left the foster family's home to reside elsewhere for any period of time over two weeks.
25. The agency conducting the adoption homestudy is different than the agency that has certified or currently services the foster caregiver.
26. The Agency shall request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state in which a prospective adoptive applicant or other adult household member in the applicant's home has resided in the five years immediately prior to the date of the criminal records check as required by division (A) of section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.
27. A summary report of the results of the search shall be placed in each adoptive home record.

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28. The summary report shall include, for each applicant and each adult household member, a chronological list of abuse and neglect determinations or allegations in which the person was involved where a PCSA has done one of the following:
  - i. Determined that abuse or neglect occurred.
  - ii. Initiated an investigation, and the investigation is ongoing.
  - iii. Initiated an investigation, and the investigation was unable to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred. This provision is limited to report dispositions the PCSA determined to be unable to locate.
29. The summary report shall not contain any of the following:
  - i. Any information concerning a report of abuse or neglect where the PCSA determined that abuse or neglect did not occur or was unsubstantiated.
  - ii. The name of the person who or entity that made, or participated in the making of, the report of abuse or neglect. This includes any additional collateral contact who made, or participated in, the report of abuse or neglect.
  - iii. The name of or other identifying information regarding a child.
  - iv. Any information the release of which is prohibited by state or federal law.
30. If the search indicates there are no allegations or reports of involvement in child abuse and/or neglect investigations or there are only unsubstantiated reports for any applicant or adult household member, the summary report shall indicate that there are no substantiated or indicated reports involving any applicant or adult household member in an allegation or report of involvement in a child abuse and/or neglect investigation reported to the uniform statewide child welfare information system or the central registry.
31. If the Agency determines that an adoptive homestudy cannot be initiated, the agency shall send written notification to the applicant stating the reason for not initiating the homestudy and a description of procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision. The notification shall be sent to the applicant no later than fifteen days after the application was submitted.
32. An applicant shall have the opportunity to revise the JFS 01691 at any time regarding the characteristics or number of children desired. If the agency, based upon receipt of a revised JFS 01691, determines that the applicant is now seeking a special needs child, requirements and time frames for the application and homestudy process shall begin with the date that the revised JFS 01691 is received by the agency. If the applicant revises the JFS 01691 and does not seek to adopt a special needs child, the time frames for the application and homestudy process shall be consistent with the agency's adoption policy prepared pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.
33. Upon request, the Agency shall assist the applicant in completing the application and provide assistance to the applicant in securing all required documents and information.
34. The Agency shall not continue with the homestudy process if all required documentation is not submitted within one year of the receipt of the initial or revised JFS 01691 unless the agency makes a determination that the homestudy should not be terminated. The applicant shall be notified, in writing, at least thirty days prior to the termination of the application. Written notification shall contain an explanation of the

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reason for termination and a description of the procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision.

35. Training requirements for adoptive families will include, but not be limited to:
- i. The adoption process
    1. Agency policy and procedures
    2. Role of the agency
    3. Pre-service training
    4. Homestudy
    5. Matching
    6. Placement
    7. Post-placement services
    8. Adoption subsidies
    9. Legalization
    10. Openness of adoption
  - ii. Child development
    1. Normal child development
    2. Predictable stages of development in the adopted child
    3. The impact of earlier separations
    4. The impact of abuse and neglect
    5. Identity and control issues in adolescence
  - iii. Attachment and Separation
    1. Techniques for supporting a grieving child
    2. Developing empathy for the child's past
    3. Promoting attachment and dealing with the unattached child
  - iv. Dealing with behavioral challenges
    1. Why behaviors occur
    2. Typical behaviors to be expected
    3. Creative parenting/discipline
  - v. Cultural issues (minimum of three-hours – cannot be waived)
    1. Defining culture
    2. Understanding how one's own culture impacts parenting in general
    3. Understanding how one's own culture impacts the adopted child
    4. Impact of cultural issues on adoption issues arising post-placement
    5. How adoptive parents can use their knowledge of the child's culture to stimulate attachment, stimulate developmental growth, and to assist the child in identity formation
    6. Impact of cross cultural placements on triad members and extended family
    7. Diversity issues
    8. Issues of racism and discrimination
    9. Overview of the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1966(b)(1/2/06) and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d (1/2/06), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.

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- vi. Caring for a child that has been sexually abused
  - 1. Dynamics of sexual abuse
  - 2. Impact of sexual abuse on children
  - 3. Therapeutic parenting methods
- vii. Adoption related issues
  - 1. Permanency Issues for children
  - 2. Permanency issues for families
  - 3. Talking about adoption with the adopted child
  - 4. The child's birth family and on-going contact with significant others
  - 5. Adoption and extended family
  - 6. Adoption issues in school in in the community
  - 7. Using community resources
  - 8. Advocating for the adoptive family and child
  - 9. Permanency issues for children
  - 10. Permanency issues for families
- 11. Effects of caregiving on children's families.
- 12. Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases.
- 13. Community health and social services available to children and their families.
- 14. The substance of section 2152.72 of the Revised Code which deals with the information required to be shared with a prospective adoptive parent before a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed with a prospective adoptive parent. A course addressing section 2152.72 of the Revised Code shall not be less than one hour long
- 11.
- 34. House of New Hope may waive components of the requirements for education and training if the assessor determines that the family has received training previously or the family has the skills to care for the needs of the child that will be placed in the home. When a waiver has been granted by the agency, House of New Hope shall document the waiver in the case record pursuant to rule 5101: 2-48-22.
- 35. The agency shall not deny the acceptance of the JFS 01691 based on race, color, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation, gender, sexual identity, or age of the applicant.
- 36. Eligibility Requirements for an adoptive applicant(s)
  - viii. All adoptive applicants must be 21 years of age or older at the time the JFS 01691 has been signed.
  - ix. If married, all applicants must be married for two or more years.
  - x. Is a legal resident of the United States.
- 37. Timeframe for commencing and completing an adoption homestudy
  - xi. For the purpose of this policy, "commencement of a homestudy" means, at minimum, scheduling an appointment to interview the applicant or assuring the applicant is informed of the necessary materials required for the assessor to complete the homestudy. In order to complete the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" an assessor shall conduct a face to face interview with all members of the household over the age of four years. The interview with all members of the household over the age of four years may be a joint interview or separate individual interviews.

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- xii. Homestudies shall be conducted by an adoption assessor who meets meeting the requirements contained in rules 5101:2-1-01 and 5101:2-48-06 of the Administrative Code and is employed or under contract with House of New Hope.
  - xiii. The JFS 01673 shall commence within thirty days of the date the agency receives a fully completed JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2006) signed by the adoptive applicant. In the event that the Agency fails to commence a homestudy within thirty days of receiving the application, it shall document in the applicant's record the reason(s) the agency was unable to meet this requirement.
- C. Foster to Adopt Process under 6 months (5101:2-48-11)
- 11. Except as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-11.1 of the Administrative Code, when a foster caregiver who is not an approved adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent, the Agency is responsible for completing the following:
    - i. Assist the foster caregiver in completing the JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement"(rev. 6/2009).
    - ii. Review and attach the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:
      - 1. The most recent JFS 01653, "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009), if deemed necessary by the agency.
      - 2. JFS 01349, "Foster Home Homestudy" (rev. 01/2003) or the JFS 01673, "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 8/2005), the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 08/2005) and the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2006), as applicable.
      - 3. All JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update" (rev. 12/2006) forms, if applicable.
      - 4. Foster home record.
      - 5. The bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, if deemed necessary by the agency.
      - 6. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.
  - 12. Have an assessor:
    - i. Review information contained on the JFS 01691.
    - ii. Conduct a home visit.
    - iii. Complete the JFS 01530, if applicable, as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code when a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children who will reside in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child.
    - iv. Observe the interaction between the child, foster caregiver and other members of the household, if applicable.

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- v. Discuss how the foster caregiver is working with the child on problems identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long term issues the child may have.
  - vi. Discuss the availability of adoption assistance and post-finalization adoption services with the foster caregiver.
13. Based upon information obtained through review of documentation outlined in paragraph (A) of this rule, the assessor shall complete the sections of the JFS 01673 not previously completed on the JFS 01349, and attach the JFS 01349 and most recent JFS 01385, if applicable, to the JFS 01673.
  14. The Agency shall search the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or the central registry of abuse and neglect if SACWIS is not fully implemented, in accordance with the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code for each applicant, adult household member and any new adult household member.
  15. If House of New Hope is arranging an adoption and initiates an adoptive homestudy with an applicant from another county, it shall notify the PCSA in the county the applicant resides in accordance with the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code. This requirement does not apply to:
    - i. Step-parent adoptions.
    - ii. Adoptions where the PCSA in the county the adoptive applicant resides contracted with a PCPA or PNA to complete the adoptive applicant's homestudy.
  16. The Agency shall follow procedures contained in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code for approval or denial of an applicant for adoptive placement.
  17. When the Agency determines any statement in a homestudy is falsified, the Agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 and 5101:2-5-28 of the Administrative Code.
  18. House of New Hope shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if the application or homestudy is determined to contain a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) included in the written report of the homestudy.
  19. If a homestudy is not completed within one year of the application date it shall be terminated unless the agency makes the determination the homestudy should not be terminated. The decision not to terminate shall be made at the agency's discretion. The Agency shall notify the adoptive applicant in writing no less than thirty days prior to the termination. Written notification includes an explanation of the reason for termination and the procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision.
  20. Homestudies initiated prior to the effective date of this rule shall be in compliance with Administrative Code rules in effect prior to the effective date of this rule. These homestudies shall be updated in accordance with the update process outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12.1 of the Administrative Code.
  21. Paragraph (10) of this policy does not apply to a homestudy determined to have knowingly false statements. The adoption assessor shall follow procedures according to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
- D. Foster-to-Adopt Process 6 Months and Over (5101:2-48-11.1)



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11. If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child who is and has been residing with the foster caregiver for at least six consecutive months, the Agency shall provide the foster caregiver with a JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child" (rev. 6/2009). The JFS 01692 is a child specific application and expires once the foster child is adopted as evidenced by a final decree of adoption or interlocutory decree.
12. A completed JFS 01692, with supporting documentation, and if applicable, the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (12/2006), serves as a shortened homestudy, replacing the JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 6/2009) and the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 08/2005) required by rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code.
13. The assessor shall complete the JFS 01530, as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code, if:
  - i. A family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care.
  - ii. The family will have a total of five or more children residing in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child.
14. The Agency shall inform the foster caregiver consideration is given to the application if the placement is in the best interests of the child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.
15. If the Agency determines any statement in a homestudy is falsified, the Agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
16. The Agency shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if it is determined that the application or homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) included in the written report of the homestudy.
17. Upon receipt of a completed JFS 01692, the Agency shall review the application with the foster caregiver. The Agency shall not require the foster caregiver to undergo a bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) or federal bureau of investigation (FBI) check as a condition of acceptance or approval of the application for adoption of a foster child; however, the agency shall inform the foster caregiver a criminal records check, pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, is required before a court issues a final decree of adoption or an interlocutory order of adoption.
18. If the Agency receives a completed JFS 01692, it shall provide the foster caregiver with both of the following:
  - i. Information about the requirement for adoption training as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
  - ii. Information about the application process and eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance, state adoption maintenance, post-adoption special services subsidy, and non-recurring adoption expenses.
19. Prior to the approval of the adoption homestudy, the Agency shall document in the case file the foster caregiver has fulfilled the required adoption training as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.

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20. The Agency shall review the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:
    - i. The most recent JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009), if deemed necessary by the agency.
    - ii. JFS 01349 "Foster Home Homestudy" (rev. 01/2003) or the JFS 01673, and the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 08/2005), and the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2006), as applicable.
    - iii. All JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update," (rev. 12/2006), if applicable.
    - iv. Foster home record.
    - v. The BCII and FBI reports as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, if deemed necessary by the agency.
    - vi. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home.
  21. The Agency shall search the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or the central registry of abuse and neglect if SACWIS is not fully implemented, for each applicant and adult member of the applicant's household in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code..
  22. The Agency shall process the completed JFS 01692 and the assessor shall arrive at one of the following recommendations:
    - i. Approve the applicant(s) as a prospective adoptive parent for the child residing in the applicant's home for at least six consecutive months.
    - ii. Deny the application.
  23. The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the adoption homestudy within ten days after the homestudy has been approved or denied.
  24. If the decision of the agency is to approve the applicant(s) as a prospective adoptive parent for the specific child residing in the home for six consecutive months, the written notification shall include, but not be limited to the date of approval of the JFS 01692.
  25. If the decision of the assessor is to deny the applicant(s) of adoption for the specific child(ren) residing in the home for six consecutive months, the written notification shall contain the following:
    - i. A detailed explanation of the reason for the denial setting forth all of the reasons.
    - ii. A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.
  26. The JFS 01692 shall only be used in consideration of the adoptive placement for the child(ren) for whom the homestudy was conducted. A separate JFS 01692 or JFS 01673 and JFS 01673-A, as applicable, shall be used for any other child(ren) the family is considering adopting.
  27. Upon approval of the foster caregiver for the adoptive placement, the agency shall follow the adoptive placement procedures as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code including, but not limited to, conducting a matching conference.
- E. Homestudy Process (5101:2-48-12)

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11. For the purpose of this policy, "commencement of a homestudy" means, at minimum, scheduling an appointment to interview the applicant or assuring the applicant is informed of the necessary materials required for the assessor to complete the homestudy. In order to complete the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" an assessor shall conduct a face to face interview with all members of the household over the age of four years. The interview with all members of the household over the age of four years may be a joint interview or separate individual interviews.
12. Homestudies shall be conducted by an adoption assessor meeting the requirements contained in rules 5101:2-1-01 and 5101:2-48-06 of the Administrative Code and is employed or under contract with House of New Hope, a PCPA.
13. The assessment required by paragraph (2) of this policy shall commence within thirty days of the date the agency receives a fully completed JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2006) signed by the adoptive applicant. An agency failing to commence a homestudy within thirty days of receiving the application shall document in the applicant's record the reason(s) the agency is unable to meet this requirement.
14. The assessment for applicants seeking to adopt a child with special needs shall be completed within one hundred eighty days of the date that the agency received the application. An agency failing to complete a homestudy within one hundred eighty days shall document in the applicant's record the reason(s) the agency is unable to meet this requirement.
15. For an applicant(s) not seeking a child with special needs, the timeframes for completion of a written homestudy report, approval or denial of the adoptive homestudy, and written notification to the applicant(s) of the approval or denial shall be consistent with the agency's adoption and foster care policy prepared pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.
16. The Agency shall search the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) , or the central registry of abuse and neglect if SACWIS is not fully implemented, for each applicant and adult members of the applicant's household in accordance with the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
17. The Agency shall request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state a prospective applicant or other adult residing with the prospective adoptive parent has resided in the five years immediately prior to the application.
18. If House of New Hope initiates an adoptive homestudy with an applicant from another county, it shall notify the PCSA in the county the applicant resides. This requirement does not apply to an adoption by a step-parent whose spouse is a biological or adoptive parent of the minor to be adopted.
19. If House of New Hope is arranging an adoption and initiates an adoptive homestudy with an applicant, it shall notify the PCSA in the county in which the applicant resides. This requirement does not apply to:
  - i. An adoption by a step-parent whose spouse is a biological or adoptive parent of the minor to be adopted.

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- ii. An adoption where the PCSA in the county the adoptive applicant resides is contracted with House of New Hope to complete the adoptive applicant's homestudy.
20. The written notification to the PCSA, required in paragraphs (8) and (9) of this policy, shall be sent within ten days of the initiation of the homestudy.
21. The written notification required in paragraphs (8) and (9) of this policy shall include the following information:
  - i. The applicant's name.
  - ii. The applicant's address.
  - iii. The applicant's telephone number.
  - iv. The names and dates of birth of all household members at the time of the application.
  - v. A request for any relevant information, if known, including, at a minimum:
    1. Past or present functioning of the prospective adoptive parent.
    2. Rule violations involving any foster or pre-adoptive child.
    3. Any third party investigations.
    4. Information relating to any previous adoption applications and/or placements.
    5. Information on the events leading to a removal of any child from the prospective adoptive family home.
    6. Confirmation of household members as determined by a review of agency records.
22. If the PCSA in the county the adoptive applicant resides receives the notification letter, the Agency shall provide, in writing, any relevant information listed in paragraph (11) of this policy to the requesting agency within fifteen days.
23. The PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides shall maintain written documentation on each family they receive a notification letter. If the family is known to the agency and a record exists, the information shall be merged with the existing file.
24. A multiple children/large family assessment shall be completed for any person seeking to adopt a child when a family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including foster children and children in kinship care; or if the family will have a total of five or more children residing in the home upon the adoptive placement of a child. The large family assessment shall be completed on the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (12/2006) form and attached to the JFS 01673, if applicable.
25. House of New Hope shall respect the right of the applicant(s) to select an agency for the purpose of completing the homestudy assessment. Once the homestudy is initiated, the Agency shall maintain involvement with the applicant(s) through completion of the homestudy assessment, unless the applicant requests a transfer or fails to follow through with timely submission of homestudy documents.
26. House of New Hope shall not consider race, color, or national origin of a family for whom that agency is conducting a homestudy in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved. House of New Hope shall not consider the race, color or national origin of the child in whom a family indicates an interest in adopting in determining whether to approve or disapprove the family's homestudy.

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27. House of New Hope shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving a homestudy on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (1/2/2006) and of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201 (1/2/2006).
28. If the Agency determines any statement in a homestudy is false, the Agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
29. House of New Hope shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if it is determined that the application or homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s), included in the written report of the homestudy.
30. All homestudies conducted by the Agency shall be documented on the JFS 01673, or the JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child" (rev. 6/2009), as applicable. Step-parent and international homestudies are exempt from this requirement. The JFS 01698 "Step-parent Homestudy Report" (rev. 10/2006) may be used when the court requests the Agency to conduct a homestudy involving a step-parent adoption.
31. Prior to the end of the assessment process, applicants shall complete and sign the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) indicating the acceptable characteristics of the child the applicant is requesting to adopt. Upon completion of the assessment process, the JFS 01673-A shall be attached to the JFS 01673. International and step-parent adoptions are exempt from this requirement.
32. Upon completion of the homestudy, the PCSA, PCPA and PNA shall document the results of the homestudy on the JFS 01609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary" (2/2005).
33. The agency shall require the following for the homestudy:
  - i. JFS 01673-A signed by the adoptive/foster parent(s), assessor and assessor's supervisor.
  - ii. The JFS 01530, if applicable.
  - iii. The JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" signed (rev. 6/2009) completed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner or certified nurse-midwife not more than six months prior to an initial recommendation by the agency for approval.
    1. The form shall document that the applicant and all members of the household are free from any physical, emotional or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household members to care for the child being adopted.
    2. The agency may require the medical statements(s) be provided before the person may participate in any pre-service training required by rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code
  - iv. The names of three people unrelated to the applicant, do not reside with the applicant and can be contacted by the agency as references and which the applicant(s) and adult household members have signed a consent form regarding.

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1. The agency may require the person to provide the names of the references and any signed release of information statements before the person participates in any pre-service training required by rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
2. The applicant and all adult applicants shall provide the name of any other agency or organization the applicant has had a homestudy approved as well as a written and signed release of information statement so any such reference may be contacted.
3. Prior to approving the homestudy, the agency shall contact all references given by the applicant, including any other agency or organization the applicant has been previously approved as an adoptive parent.
4. Prior to approving the homestudy, the agency shall obtain references from any agency the applicant(s) and adult household members has previously applied to for foster care or adoption, or any organization they have worked with in providing care and supervision of children.
5. Prior to approving the homestudy, the agency shall contact all adult children of the applicant(s) for a reference. If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference, this shall be assessed during the homestudy process and documented on the homestudy.
6. All contacts with references shall be documented in the narrative section of the JFS 01673.
7. The JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report for Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS" (rev. 10/2000) fire safety approval or other form used for a local or state fire inspection. The report shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's recommendation for approval.
8. The JFS 01348 "Safety Audit of a Foster Home," (rev. 1/2003), also used for adoptive homes and documentation the residence satisfactorily meets all safety standards, dated no more than 6 months of the finalization date.
9. The JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" (rev. 10/2000).
10. The bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
11. There shall be continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking shall be tested and approved by the health department prior to approval of the adoption homestudy. .
34. In the event the applicant(s) are required to submit additional materials or documents, or participation in additional assessment activities, the agency shall not approve an adoption homestudy prior to the completion of those requirements, in addition to all requirements of Chapter 5101-2-48 of the Administrative Code that are applicable to the approval of the adoption homestudy.
35. The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided within ten days after the homestudy is approved or disapproved.

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36. The assessor shall make one or more of the following recommendations at the completion of the homestudy:
    - i. Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parent(s) only.
    - ii. Recommend the applicant(s) for certification as a foster caregiver(s) only.
    - iii. Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parents and recommend the applicant(s) for certification as a foster caregiver(s) simultaneously.
    - iv. Deny the adoption application.
    - v. Recommend that the applicant(s) certification as a foster caregiver(s) not be approved.
    - vi. Deny the adoption application and recommend the applicant's certification as a foster caregiver(s) not be approved.
  37. If the decision of the assessor is to approve the applicant(s) as an adoptive parent(s), the written notification required in paragraph (24) of this rule shall include, at minimum, the following information:
    - i. Date of approval of the adoptive homestudy with the date the approved homestudy or update expires.
    - ii. A description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the applicant is being approved.
  38. If the decision of the assessor is to deny the applicant for adoption, the written notification required in paragraph (24) of this rule shall contain both of the following:
    - i. A detailed explanation of the reason for the denial setting forth all of the reasons for the denial.
    - ii. A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.
  39. The Agency shall follow procedures contained in rules 5101:2-5-22 and 5101:2-5-26 of the Administrative Code for approval or denial of an applicant(s) for certification as a foster home.
  40. No later than ten days after the homestudy is completed, the agency shall document the results of the homestudy on the JFS 01609 Family Permanency Planning Data Summary.
  41. The homestudy shall be updated every two years from the date of approval of the initial homestudy in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-12.1 of the Administrative Code.
  42. The homestudy shall be amended, if applicable, in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-12.2 of the Administrative Code.
  43. If a child has been placed in an approved adoptive home, the PCSA, PCPA or PNA shall assure that the home continues to be in an approved status until the adoption is finalized by updating and amending the homestudy in accordance with rules 5101:2-48-12.1 and 5101:2-48-12.2 of the Administrative Code.
- F. Homestudy Update Process (5101:2-48-12.1)
11. All homestudies approved on or after December 11, 2006, shall be updated every two years from the date of approval of the initial homestudy.

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12. Homestudies approved prior to December 11, 2006, shall be updated every two years. The date of approval of the most current update becomes the new date to determine the next two-year update.
13. If an approved adoptive home is certified for foster care by the same agency that approved the home for adoption, the adoptive home shall be updated at the same time the home is initially certified for foster care.
14. If a certified foster home is approved for adoption by the same agency that certified the home for foster care, the next adoption update shall be completed when the current foster care certificate is recertified.
15. When updating the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 8/2005), the assessor shall complete the JFS 01385 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement Update" (rev. 12/2006). International-only adoptions are exempt from using the JFS 01385.
16. Updates to adoption homestudies shall be completed by an assessor employed or under contract with a public children services agency (PCSA), private child placing agency, (PCPA) or private noncustodial agency (PNA) meeting the definition of an assessor contained in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code.
17. House of New Hope shall not consider race, color, or national origin of a family for whom that agency is conducting an update to a homestudy in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved. The Agency shall not consider the race, color or national origin of the child a family indicates an interest in adopting in determining whether to approve or disapprove the update to the adoptive family's homestudy.
18. The Agency shall not discriminate in approving or disapproving an update to a homestudy on the basis of disability in violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (1/2/2006) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. 1201 (1/2/2006).
19. The recommending agency shall notify the adoptive parent(s) of the date of expiration of the homestudy not fewer than ninety days or more than one hundred fifty days prior to the expiration date. The notification shall:
  - i. Identify any information or documentation the adoptive parent(s) is required to submit for the homestudy update.
  - ii. Be completed on the JFS 01331 "Notice of Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certification or Adoption Homestudy Update/Amendment." (rev. 12/2006).
20. If the adoptive applicant fails to submit the completed JFS 01331 to the agency at least thirty days prior to the expiration date of the adoption approval, an agency shall follow the requirements per OAC 5101:2-48-12.1, if the agency has sufficient time, to complete the assessment for the update of the adoption approval prior to the completion of the expiration date of the current approval span.
  - i. If the agency is unable to complete the update of the adoption approval prior to the expiration, the adoption approval will expire on the date of the expiration.
  - ii. If the adoption approval expires, the agency shall, within ten days after the expiration date of the current approval span:



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1. Provide written notification to the family of the following:
  - a. That the adoption homestudy approval has expired.
  - b. That the family must reapply for initial adoption approval pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code if they would like to obtain adoption homestudy approval.
2. Agency shall enter into SACWIS expiration date and reason for expiration.
21. Following agency notification to the prospective adoptive parent as required by paragraph (9) of this policy, if the prospective adoptive parent fails to either reapply or voluntarily terminate prior to the expiration date of the homestudy, the prospective adoptive family record shall close and the applicant(s) shall reapply through the initial homestudy application process pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
22. Prior to the recommendation for and expiration of a current homestudy, if an adoptive applicant has re-applied to update a current homestudy, an assessor shall complete a JFS 01385. The agency shall attach the following documents to the JFS 01385:
23. The most recent JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009) completed for the applicant and all household members by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner or certified nurse-midwife. The agency may require a new JFS 01653 if the agency deems it necessary.
  24. A minimum of one written reference from a professional knowledgeable of the prospective adoptive parent(s) family dynamics, or if a reference is not available from a professional, one personal reference from someone aware of the prospective adoptive parent(s) family's functioning. The personal reference shall not be completed by a relative. If the family is also certified for foster care by the recommending agency, the reference is not required.
25. A report of a physical, psychiatric or psychological examination or treatment of the caregiver or prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) if required by the agency to ensure the safety, health or care of an adoptive child. The examination shall be conducted by a licensed physician, psychologist, or other certified or licensed professional.
26. A fire inspection by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office using the JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report for Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS" (rev. 10/2000), fire safety approval or other form used for a local or state fire inspection, if the agency deems it necessary to ensure the home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of an adoptive child.
27. The JFS 01348 "Safety Audit of a Family Foster Home," (rev. 01/2003) dated within 6 months prior to the approval of the adoption homestudy update, also used for adoptive homes; if there is a reason for concern relative to the home's continued safety. The JFS 01348 must document the residence satisfactorily meets all safety standards.
28. The JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement." (rev. 10/2000), if any substantial changes to the prospective adoptive parent(s) financial situation occurred.

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29. There shall be continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking shall be tested and approved by the health department prior to approval of the adoption homestudy. ..
30. The most recent JFS 01530 Large Family Assessment, if applicable. If the family circumstances have changed substantially since the previous JFS 01530 or if a JFS 01530 was not previously completed and is now required, the agency shall complete a new JFS 01530 at the time of the update.
31. The most recent criminal records check for the adoptive parents and adult household members. Once a homestudy is approved, a new criminal records check shall be conducted, pursuant to section 2151.86 of the Revised Code, for the adoptive parent(s) and each adult household member every four years prior to approving the adoption update. If an existing resident of the home, including youth placed in the home, turn eighteen years of age during the current approval span, the agency shall have criminal records checks completed at the time of the next update and every four years thereafter at the time of the update.
32. If the Agency has access to the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), the agency shall conduct a search of abuse and neglect report history in the system. The recommending agency shall also request a search of the central registry of abuse and neglect from the Ohio department of job and family services for each adoptive applicant and each adult who resides with the adoptive applicant. This search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive parent.
33. Preparation of summary report of involvement of an applicant and other adult household members in reports of child abuse and neglect contained in SACWIS.
  - i. A summary report shall be placed in each adoptive home record. Prior to the placement of each child in the applicant's home, the summary report shall be considered as a tool to help determine the appropriateness of the placement.
  - ii. One summary report shall be prepared for each applicant's home. The summary report shall include, for each applicant and each adult member of the household, a chronological list of abuse and neglect determinations or allegations in which the person was involved where a PCSA has done one of the following:
    1. Determined that abuse or neglect occurred.
    2. Initiated an investigation, and the investigation is ongoing.
    3. Initiated an investigation, and the agency was unable to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred. This provision is limited to report dispositions the PCSA determined to be unable to locate.
  - iii. The summary report shall not contain any of the following:
    1. Any information concerning a report of abuse or neglect where the PCSA determined that abuse or neglect did not occur or was unsubstantiated.
    2. The name of the person who or entity that made, or participated in the making of, the report of abuse or neglect. This includes any additional collateral contact who made, or participated in, the report of abuse or neglect.
    3. Any information the release of which is prohibited by state or federal law.

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4. The name of or other identifying information regarding a child.
    - iv. If the search indicates there are no allegations or reports of involvement in child abuse or neglect investigations for any applicant or adult household member, the summary report shall indicate that there is no record involving any applicant or adult household member in an allegation or report of involvement in a child abuse or neglect investigation reported to SACWIS or the central registry.
  34. Once a homestudy is approved, new criminal records check pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code shall be conducted for the adoptive parent(s) and each adult member of the household every four years at the time of the update.
  35. The agency shall conduct a criminal records check on each adult residing in the household within sixty days of the effective date of this rule if the last criminal records check was completed more than four years ago.
  36. After the criminal records check is completed, the agency shall conduct continued criminal records checks pursuant to paragraph (N) of this rule.
  37. An assessor's update of the homestudy shall include a minimum of one face to face home visit with each member of the household currently residing in the home. The interview with other household member(s) may be joint visits.
  38. The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the update to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten days of completion of the homestudy update.
  39. If the decision of the assessor is to recommend the approval of an adoptive parent(s) homestudy update, the written notification shall include, but not be limited to, the date of the approval of the update to the adoptive homestudy and the date the approved update will expire.
  40. If the decision of the assessor is to deny the updated adoptive homestudy, the written notification shall contain both of the following:
    - i. A detailed explanation setting forth the reasons for denial.
    - ii. Procedures the applicant(s) shall follow for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.
- G. Homestudy Amendment Process (5101:2-48-12.2)
  11. An amendment is a narrative of the assessor's evaluation of the approved adoptive parent(s) and family and shall be completed and attached to the homestudy within thirty days of the agency becoming aware a change occurred.
    - i. If the change is to add an adoptive parent to the homestudy, the amendment shall not be completed until the preservice training has been completed or waived pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
    - ii. In completing the amendment, the agency shall, if necessary, redetermine the specific number, age, and gender of children the family is approved to adopt. The amendment shall address sleeping arrangements, beds, bedrooms, and shall evaluate whether the adoptive family remains in compliance with all applicable requirements.
    - iii. The amendment shall be completed in the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS).

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12. The assessor shall provide written notification to the adoptive parent of approval or denial of the amendment to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten days of completion of the homestudy amendment. If an amendment is denied, the adoption homestudy is no longer approved.
- i. Amendment approval notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
    1. A summary of the change requirement the amendment
    2. The date of the notification provided pursuant to paragraph (B) of this rule
    3. The date the change occurred that required the amendment
    4. Date of approval of the adoption amendment.
  - ii. Adoption homestudy denial shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
    1. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the denial
    2. A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.
13. If the approved adoptive parent notifies the agency of any changes or circumstances listed in paragraphs (C) and (D) of this rule occurred, the agency shall amend the homestudy.
14. An approved adoptive parent shall notify the recommending agency within one hour of any of the following circumstances involving the adoptive child whose adoption is not finalized:
- i. A serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the adoptive child.
  - ii. The death of the adoptive child.
  - iii. Unauthorized absence of the adoptive child from the home.
  - iv. Removal of the adoptive child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency, or attempts at such removal.
  - v. Any involvement of the adoptive child with law enforcement authorities.
15. An adoptive parent shall notify the recommending agency within twenty-four hours or the next working day if any of the following occur prior to finalization of the adoption of the child:
- i. A change in the marital status of an approved adoptive parent(s).
  - ii. Any serious illness or death of an approved adoptive parent(s) or household member.
  - iii. The finalization of an adoptive child placed by a different agency.
  - iv. A change in the number of household members through birth or kinship who have not reached the age of majority.
  - v. A change in the number of adults residing with the approved adoptive parent (not including an existing household member reaching the age of majority).
  - vi. A criminal charge or conviction of any approved adoptive parent or other adult household member(s).
  - vii. A significant change in financial status/income.

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- viii. The physical relocation of the approved adoptive parent(s) resulting in a change of address different than the address listed on the most recent homestudy or homestudy update.
  16. New child household members residing with the adoptive parent shall have a JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009) completed within sixty days of becoming a household member.
  17. If the child is an infant born to the adoptive parent and the agency documents in the case record the adoptive parent has had prenatal care from a physician during the pregnancy and is receiving periodic medical examinations from a physician, the JFS 01653 shall be completed within ninety days of the date the infant becomes a household member.
  18. Household members turning eighteen years of age shall have a bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) background check and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) check, as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, initiated within ten working days of the date they turned eighteen years of age.
  19. New adult household members residing with the approved adoptive parent shall have a JFS 01653 completed within sixty days of becoming a household member.
  20. New adult household members residing with the approved adoptive parent shall have a BCII background check and FBI check, as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, and a search of the central registry initiated within ten working days of the date they became a household member.
  21. Upon notification of a change of address, the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall conduct a safety audit of the new residence using the JFS 01348 "Safety Audit of a Foster Home," which is also used for adoptive homes (rev. 1/2003).
  22. The safety audit shall be conducted within ten working days after the notification of the change of address.
  23. The Agency shall require the approved adoptive parent to obtain a fire safety inspection certifying the new residence is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of an adoptive child.
  24. The fire safety inspection shall be conducted within ninety days of the change of address by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office.
- H. Notification Procedures (5101:2-48-05(B)(3))
11. It is required that an adoptive applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) shall notify the Agency in writing if a person residing in the home who is twelve years old, but under eighteen years old, has been convicted or pleaded guilty to any offense listed in appendix A of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult, would constitute one of those offenses.
  12. The requirements that the Agency shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides within ten days after the initiation of a homestudy pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code.
  13. The requirements that the Agency shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent(s) resides, of an impending adoptive placement no later than ten

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days prior to the placement of the child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.

- I. Procedure for Sharing and Transferring Adoptive Homestudies (5101:2-48-19)
  11. House of New Hope shall only consider approved homestudies forwarded by a PCSA, PCPA, private non-custodial agency (PNA) or comparable agency of another state. The Agency shall not require any additional documentation for the homestudy beyond the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code.
  12. The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:
    - i. "Sharing an adoptive homestudy" means forwarding an approved adoptive homestudy to a PCSA or PCPA for consideration of potential adoptive matches.
    - ii. "Transferring an adoptive homestudy" means releasing the approved homestudy and all related materials to another PCSA, PCPA or PNA. Upon acceptance of the receiving agency and the execution of the JFS 01334, "Recommendation for Transfer of a Foster or Adoptive Home" (rev. 6/2009) the sending agency is relieved of all responsibilities related to the approved adoptive family.
  13. House of New Hope shall not solicit homestudies or transfers from other PCSAs, PCPAs or PNA for the purpose of locating a family of a specific race, color or national origin.
  14. If the approved adoptive family signed an authorization for release of information, the Agency shall make the homestudy available to any other agency requesting a copy of the homestudy for sharing or transferring.
  15. The Agency shall release the homestudy and related materials, including the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (Rev.12/2006) within fifteen days after the request is made as long as the requirements outlined in paragraph (12) are met.
  16. The Agency shall not release or accept a homestudy for sharing or transferring purposes if it is determined an application or homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) and is included in the written report of the homestudy. If the Agency determines a homestudy is falsified, the Agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
  17. The agency shall forward a copy of the homestudy and all related materials within fifteen working days of the receipt of the signed release of information and any applicable fee pursuant to allowable amounts in this policy. If the request is to transfer the homestudy, then the most recent report of the alleged perpetrator search of child abuse and neglect information from the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) shall also be forwarded to the receiving agency with the homestudy and related materials.
  18. The assessment for accepting the transfer shall be completed within sixty days of the date the complete record was received. If the transfer cannot be completed in this timeframe, the assessor shall document the reason(s) in the record. If the transfer request is pending within ninety days immediately prior to the expiration date of the two year approval span, the current agency and the receiving agency, may determine through mutual agreement, which agency will conduct the update of the adoption

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

- i. Three new personal references from three persons unrelated to the prospective adoptive parent and do not live with the prospective adoptive parent.
  - ii. A new criminal records check is obtained, reviewed and approved by the assessor for all persons subject to a criminal records check residing in the home.
  - iii. A new safety audit of the adoptive home is conducted to verify the home meets all current safety requirements.
  - iv. One visit to the home and ca face-to-face meeting is conducted with each adoptive parent and all other household members.
  - v. Contact staff from the current recommending agency and the adoptive parent(s) to determine the reasons why the request to transfer is being made at this time.
  - vi. Receive new references from all adult children of the adoptive parent(s). If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference, this shall be assessed during the transfer process and documented in the provider record.
  - vii. Documentation of the assessor's decision to recommend approval of the transfer request. The prospective adoptive parent and the sending agency are sent a written notice of the receiving agency's decision within five working days of the decision. The approval or rejection shall be documented and is the sole decision of the receiving agency. Written notice of the decision to approve or deny the transfer shall be given to the adoptive parent and the recommending agency within five working days of the date the decision was made.
  - viii. If the decision is to deny the transfer request, all information contained in the copy of the record from the current recommending agency as well as any information gathered during the transfer assessment, including the written notice to deny the request, shall be maintained by the agency for at least two years.
  - ix. If the decision is to approve the transfer request, the JFS 01334 shall be completed and signed by both the sending and receiving agencies, and all information gathered during the assessment process shall be incorporated into the receiving agency's adoptive provider record. The transfer shall be completed in SACWIS.
19. If a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA released a homestudy and the agency in receipt of the homestudy determines the homestudy contains a knowingly false statement, the agency in receipt of the homestudy shall not consider the homestudy in the matching process and shall notify the sending agency in writing of the false statement within three days of determination of the false statement.
20. If an incomplete homestudy is received from an agency, the receiving agency shall notify the sending agency in writing within ten days from the date of receipt of the incomplete homestudy.
- i. The written notification shall indicate the information needed in order for the homestudy to be considered complete as required by Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code.
  - ii. The sending agency shall respond within fifteen days from the date of receipt of the written notification from the receiving agency.

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21. Upon acceptance of the transfer of an adoption homestudy, the JFS 01334 shall be completed and signed by both the sending and receiving agencies.
  22. Homestudies from other agencies shall be regularly considered for potential adoption matches pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.
  23. The Agency may charge reasonable fees for the release of the homestudy and related materials. A PCSA shall not charge any other PCSA a fee for the release of the homestudy and related materials.
- J. A procedure for the receipt and maintenance of approved adoptive homestudies from other agencies or states, including the length of time that homestudies received shall be maintained in the agency's files (5101:2-48-05(B)(5))
11. House of New Hope shall only consider approved homestudies forwarded by a PCSA, PCPA or PNA.
  12. The Agency shall not accept a homestudy when it is determined the application or homestudy contains a false statement.
  13. If an incomplete homestudy is received, the Agency shall notify the other agency within 10 days of information needed
  14. The length of time that homestudies received shall be maintained in the agency's files are as follows:
    - i. Homestudies that become part of an adoptive record will be kept indefinitely.
    - ii. Homestudies that do not become part of an adoptive record will be kept for no less than five years.
- K. Procedure to review grievances or complaints received from the prospective adoptive applicant(s), adoptive applicant(s), or approved adoptive parent(s) (5101:2-48-24).
11. The prospective adoptive applicant(s), adoptive applicant(s), or approved adoptive parent(s) will submit a grievance or complaint in writing to the Executive Director.
  12. The Agency review of the grievance or complaint shall occur within thirty days of the receipt of a request for an agency review and shall include a face-to-face meeting with the adoptive applicant, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families requesting an agency review, the adoptive family caseworker and the Executive Director of the Agency or his designee.
  13. A written decision, including the reason for the decision, shall be rendered by the Executive Director of the Agency or his designee. The decision shall be based upon the evidence presented at the review. A copy of the decision shall be provided to all parties to the agency review within fifteen days of the review.
  14. All documentation related to notification regarding rights to an agency review and written decisions of the agency review required by this rule shall be maintained in the child and family case record.
  15. For complaints involving alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to the foster care and adoption process that involve race, color or national origin, the procedures contained in rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code supersede the requirements of this rule.



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- i. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of the Agency or the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS).
- ii. Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of House of New Hope or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by the Agency or by ODJFS because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.
- iii. The individual filing a complaint shall use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form". The complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with:
  1. Any PCSA, PCPA or PNA; or,
  2. The ODJFS.
- iv. When any complaint alleging discrimination involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process is received by:
  1. House of New Hope, the agency shall forward the complaint to ODJFS within three working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
  2. ODJFS, the department shall notify the Agency that is the subject of the complaint within three working days of the receipt of the complaint.
- v. ODJFS shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. The Agency that is the subject of the complaint shall not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.
- vi. The Agency shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS not later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- vii. ODJFS shall conduct an investigation that shall include, but is not limited to:
  1. Face-to-face interviews with the complainant, the respondent and all relevant witnesses.
  2. Issuance of a final investigation report to the complainant and the Agency. The report shall include the allegations, background information, analysis, determination and recommendations and shall be issued within ninety days of the receipt of the initial complaint.
  3. If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, ODJFS will notify the complainant and the Agency that is the subject of the complaint of the need for additional time.

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- viii. Upon completion of the final investigation report, ODJFS shall determine if any action against the Agency is warranted. For noncompliance by a PCSA, ODJFS may take any action permitted under section 5101.24 of the Revised Code. For noncompliance by a PCPA or PNA, ODJFS may take action concerning the agency's certificate pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code.
  - ix. No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA or PNA or who has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of the Agency or ODJFS.
  - x. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an individual from filing a complaint with the United States department of health and human services (HHS), office for civil rights (OCR) alleging discrimination that involves RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.
  - xi. The requirements of rules 5101:2-33-04 and 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code do not apply to complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO.
  - xii. House of New Hope shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO within thirty days of the effective date to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive homestudies or who are participating in the adoptive homestudy process on the effective date of this rule.
16. House of New Hope shall follow procedures as outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code when an agency determines there may knowingly be falsification on an adoptive application or homestudy.
- i. The Agency, upon an internal investigation, shall refer all cases to the county prosecutor in which there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code.
  - ii. The assessor shall report in writing a person who knowingly makes a false statement on an application or homestudy document during the homestudy process to the agency administrator or designee within three days of the assessor's determination of possible falsification. The written statement shall include, but is not limited to:
    - 1. The original application completed by the applicant.
    - 2. Documentation verifying the information reported on the application or in the homestudy by the applicant is knowingly false.
  - iii. The Agency shall, within fourteen days of the determination of falsification, send a notification letter to the applicant indicating that the information submitted to the agency had been determined to be knowingly false. The notice shall include procedures for an agency review and shall include all of the following information:
    - 1. Date notification letter is prepared by the assessor.
    - 2. Mailing address of the applicant(s).

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3. A statement indicating the homestudy process will discontinue because the agency has probable cause to believe the information provided by the applicant on the JFS 01691, "Application for the Placement of a Child" (rev. 12/2006) or during the homestudy process is knowingly false.
  4. A copy of the information that is alleged knowingly false.
  5. Documentation verifying the information submitted on the JFS 01691 or during the homestudy process that is knowingly false.
  6. A statement indicating that all cases in which it is determined by the agency the applicant made knowingly false statements will be referred to the county prosecutor office in the county the applicant(s) reside.
  7. The applicant(s) right to an agency review to respond to the alleged falsification.
  8. A statement indicating that if the applicant(s) fails to respond within the fourteen day period the applicant(s) application is withdrawn, and the action of refusing to respond to allegations of knowingly making false statement(s) has resulted in the applicant(s) selecting themselves out of continuing the homestudy process.
  9. The notification letter shall be mailed to the applicant by certified mail.
- iv. If the applicant responds within fourteen days of the date of receipt of the written notice alleging falsification, the agency is responsible for reviewing information received from the adoptive applicant within twenty-one days of receipt of the applicant(s) response. The Agency shall conduct an internal investigation that shall include but not limited to:
1. Face-to-face visit with the adoptive applicant, and all relevant witnesses, if available.
  2. Issuance of a final investigatory report to the adoptive applicant(s) that is the subject of the investigation. The report shall include the allegations, relevant background information deemed appropriate by the agency, the results of the investigation and recommendation of whether or not the agency found probable cause to indicate the applicant(s) made knowingly false statements on the application for child placement or during the homestudy process. The agency shall notify the applicant(s) no later than ten days after the agency review.
  3. If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, the Agency shall notify the adoptive applicant that is the subject of the investigation of the need for additional time. The extension shall not be longer than fourteen days after the agency notifies the applicant(s) of the need for additional time to complete the investigatory report.
- v. The Agency shall provide written notification, within thirty days, to the adoptive applicant of any action to be taken.
- vi. Upon completion of the final investigation report and the agency determines there has been no falsification made by the applicant(s), the Agency shall resume the homestudy process if the applicant(s) chooses to proceed. The homestudy shall be completed within one hundred eighty days from re-commencement.

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- vii. The Agency shall include in the adoptive family case record all documentation which supports the Agency's action in determining the results and recommendation of the internal investigation.
  - viii. When an adoptive child is placed in an approved adoptive parent(s) home and the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly made a false statement that results in the assessor's reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, the prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. The assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to the procedures pursuant to paragraphs (ii), (iii)(1) to (iii)(7), (v), (vi) and (vii) of this policy.
  - ix. The Executive Director or designee must determine in twenty-four hours of completing the agency's internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parent(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.
- L. Procedure to match a child with an adoptive parent(s) (5101:2-48-05(B)(8))
- 11. If only one relative or if only the child's current foster caregiver has expressed an interest in adopting the child, and if the agency deems that placement with the relative or foster caregiver is in the child's best interest, the agency shall give preference to this family in the placement selection. The agency is not required to consider other families in the matching conference.
  - 12. If the child is a member of a federally recognized tribe or Alaskan Native Village, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 (1/2/06) (ICWA) shall take precedence for an adoption.
  - 13. Whenever possible and in the best interest of the child(ren), sibling groups should not be separated.
  - 14. The child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.
  - 15. A twelve month length of time between placements, subject to variation based on the individual needs of the child.
  - 16. Any relative or foster caregiver who has expressed interest in the child, shall be considered at the matching conference. The following is the preferential order for the placement of a child if more than one family is being considered for placement:
    - i. An adult relative.
    - ii. The foster caregiver with whom the child resides, if the child has substantial emotional ties to the foster caregiver and if the removal of the child from placement with the foster caregiver would be detrimental to the child's well-being.
    - iii. A foster caregiver with whom the child has previously resided at any time.
    - iv. An approved adoptive parent(s) who is accepting of the child's characteristics and who has expressed an interest in adopting the child.
  - 17. If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specified child, the agency shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at a minimum:

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- i. The agency distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies.
  - ii. The agency review of the case files for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.
  - iii. The agency exploration with the child of the ability of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to adopt the child.
18. House of New Hope adheres to non-discriminatory policy on determining the approved adoptive parents listed in paragraph (L)(6)(iv) of this policy who will be presented as a potential adoptive parent for the child in the matching conference. If there are more than five families who are potential matches for the child, the agency may narrow the number of families to a minimum of five based on :
- i. The level of experience the family has in working with child(ren) with the specific behavior, medical or mental health challenges that a specific child presents.
  - ii. The preference to keep siblings together if in the child's best interest.
  - iii. If a family was previously considered for a child in a matching conference and was not interested in the child, the agency does not have to consider the family for the same child in subsequent matching conferences.
  - iv. The availability of open adoptions between the birth parent(s) and the adoptive parent(s) and the referral process if the agency does not provide open adoptions.
  - v. State and federal assistance, including eligibility and application requirements (5101:2048-05(B)(13))
  - vi. Federal adoption subsidy
    1. Eligibility: based upon the child meeting Title IV-E criteria.
    2. Amount of subsidy based upon the needs of the child.
    3. Application requirements:
      - a. JFS 01453
      - b. JFS 01451
      - c. Journal entry surrender
      - d. Eligibility form submitted in the child's biological name
      - e. Petition
      - f. Complaint affidavit
  - vii. State adoption maintenance subsidies
    1. Eligibility: based upon the adoptive parent(s) income and the needs of the child.
    2. Amount of subsidy based upon the needs of the child.
    3. Application requirements:
      - a. JFS 01613
      - b. JFS 01654
      - c. Copy of the families IRS 1040 and two pay stubs
      - d. Financial verification form
  - viii. Non-recurring adoption expenses subsidy
    1. Eligibility: based upon birth parent(s) income.
    2. Amount of subsidy: maximum of \$2000 reimbursement to adoptive families for expenses incurred through the adoption process.

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3. Application requirements:
  - a. JFS 01491
  - b. IRS W-9
  - c. Household account expenses
  - d. JFS 01438
- ix. Post adoption special services subsidy
  1. Eligibility: post-finalization
  2. Amount of subsidy: variable and dependent on special services
  3. Application requirements:
    - a. Applied to PCSA within the county of residence
- M. Schedule of fees for Adoption Services (5101:2-48-05(B)(13))
  11. Homestudy only is \$1500
  12. Post placement visits are \$300/per visit.  
HONH placement with pre-selected HONH birth mother \$15,000  
\*Fees do NOT include medical cost to birth mother and baby.
  13. Target out of state is total \$4,300
  14. In State Target is \$5,500
    - i. \$2,500 pre-placement
    - ii. \$3000 post-placement
    - iii. \$300 post-placement visit fee
- N. Assessor Only fee is \$125/hr
- O. Adoption Related Fees (Not Applicable in all Cases)
  11. Legal termination of Birth Father Rights \$800.00  
(Does not include court cost and guardian ad litem charges)
  12. Home Study Update/Review \$750.00
  13. Temporary Foster Care \$38-45/per day
  14. Acceptance of temporary surrender \$50/hr
  15. Adoption assessor present at match meeting \$50/hr
  16. Holiday or Weekend Placement or Meeting \$50/hr
  17. Facilitation of Interstate Compact (Out of state only) \$300
  18. Native American Indian Clearance \$200
  19. Legal Representation - minor birth parent: Estimated: \$150/hr
  20. Legal representation for birth parents \$150/hr
  21. Mandatory Supervisory Post Placement Visit \$250
    - i. w/in 7 days and monthly until finalization
  22. Agency appearance at Finalization Hearing \$300
  23. Fed Ex, Copies, Other Necessary Office Fees Est. \$50
  24. Living Expense Deposit for Birth Mother (when applicable) \$3000
    - i. To be paid on account in advance with refundable balance
  25. Multiple Births – No additional Agency fees other than medical costs
  26. Medical fee deposit to birth mother \$4000
    - i. Unused portion refunded after Finalization. Additional medical fees may be incurred

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- P. House of New Hope has no religious affiliation requirements.
- Q. Provision of Pre-Finalization Services (5101:2-48-17)
11. Visits and contacts shall be conducted by the Agency assessor who is responsible for the child's case, or another assessor employed or contracted by the Agency who has been delegated to act on behalf of the assigned assessor in his or her absence. Visits must be completed by the custodial agency representative assigned to the case at a rate higher than fifty percent, unless visits for out-of state placements are approved through ICPC through the contracting with another approved agency for completion of the visit.
  12. The frequency of visits with the child and the adoptive parent(s) shall be as follows:
    - i. At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first seven days of the placement, not including the date of placement.
    - ii. At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first thirty days of placement, not including the visit during the first seven days of placement.
    - iii. After the first thirty days, at a minimum of one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made monthly.
  13. The frequency of visits with any other household member shall be as follows:
    - i. At a minimum, one face-to-face visit in the home with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home shall be made every sixty days.
    - ii. At a minimum, two face-to-face visits in the home prior to finalization with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home although he or she may temporarily reside elsewhere. No less than sixty days between visits.
  14. During each visit, the assessor shall gather information on how the placement is progressing from the child, as appropriate to his or her ability to communicate, the adoptive parent(s) and other household members, in applicable visits. All contacts and visits shall be documented in the child's case record and address the following:
    - i. The child's safety and well-being within the adoptive home. In assessing the child's safety and well-being, the assessor shall consider the following through observation and individualized interviews with each person obtained during the visit:
      1. The child's current behavior and emotional and social functioning in the adoptive home and any other settings.
      2. The child's adjustment to the placement.
      3. The child's feelings around loss, separation and the reasons for being adopted.
    - ii. Any new information regarding the child, the adoptive parent(s) or the other household members, including, but not limited to:
      1. Changes in the marital status.
      2. Significant changes in the health status of a household member.
      3. Placement of additional children.
      4. Birth of a child.
      5. Death of a child or household member.
      6. A criminal charge, conviction or arrest of the child, adoptive parent(s) or any household member.

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7. Addition or removal of temporary or permanent household members.
  8. Family's relocation.
  9. Child's daily activities.
  10. A change in the adoptive parent(s) employment or any financial hardships.
  11. Any supportive services needs for the child or adoptive parent(s) to assure the child's safety and well-being.
- iii. For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into an approved adoptive home outside of Ohio:
1. Request the out-of-state children services agency (CSA) to conduct visits with the adoptive family in the home as identified in this rule and to submit written supervisory reports on a monthly basis.
  2. At a minimum, one face to face visit shall be conducted by the assessor within the Agency who is responsible for the child's case, or another assessor employed or contracted by the Agency who has been delegated to act on behalf of the assigned assessor in his or her absence once every six month period prior to the finalization of the adoption.
  3. The assessor shall observe and document the interaction between the adoptive child, the adoptive parent and all other household members pursuant to this rule.
- iv. If the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly makes a false statement that results in the assessor reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, the assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to procedures pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.
- v. The assessor shall complete the JFS 01699 "ODJFS Pre-finalization Adoption Assessment Report" (rev. 12/2006) prior to the issuance of a final decree of adoption or finalization of an interlocutory order of adoption. The report shall include the following information:
1. Dates of contact with the adoptive parent(s), the child and all other household members according to this rule.
  2. Information regarding the child, adoptive parent(s) and all other household members' adjustment to the adoptive placement.
  3. Present and anticipated needs of the child, the adoptive parent(s) and all other household members for adoptive services, adoption subsidies assistance and Medicaid.
  4. Physical, mental and developmental condition of the child.
  5. Biological family background of the child, including identifying information about the biological or other legal parent(s), if known.
  6. Reasons for the child's placement with the adoptive parent(s) and the circumstances under which the child was placed in the home of the adoptive parent(s).
  7. Adoptive parent(s) and all household members' attitudes toward the proposed adoption.



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8. If the child is an Indian child as defined in 25 U.S.C.A. 1903 (4), how the placement complies with the "Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978", 25 U.S.C.A. 1901 (11/8/78).
  9. Pre-finalization services which have been requested, provided or agreed upon.
  10. Pre-finalization services planned, but not provided, and the reason the services were not provided.
  11. The child's psychological background, if known, including prior history of abuse and behavioral problems of the child.
  - vi. The assessor shall file the JFS 01699 with the court where the adoption petition is pending no later than twenty days prior to the date scheduled for the final hearing on the adoption unless the court determines there is good cause for filing the report at a later date.
  - vii. The assessor shall provide a copy of the JFS 01699 to the prospective adoptive parent(s) no later than twenty days prior to the date scheduled for the final hearing on the adoption. All identifying information about the biological or other legal parent(s) shall be deleted prior to providing a copy of this report to the prospective adoptive parent(s).
  - viii. The agency having custody of the child shall maintain in the child's case record a copy of the JFS 01699 provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s), including the date the information was provided, and the prospective adoptive parent's written acknowledgment of receipt. The agency shall provide a copy of the acknowledgment of receipt to the prospective adoptive parent(s).
  - ix. The adoptive family case record shall contain a copy of the JFS 01699 provided to the adoptive family and written acknowledgment of the family's receipt of the information.
  - x. Unless a court determines that it is in the best interest of the child and orders that an assessor conduct a pre-finalization assessment, the JFS 01699 is not required if the prospective adoptive parent(s) is the child's stepparent.
  - xi. A redacted copy of the JFS 01699 will be kept in the child's case record
- R. Provision of post-finalization services (5101:2-48-18)
11. Post-finalization adoption services shall be made available upon the request of the birth parent, the adoptive parent, or the adoptee and may be provided directly or by referral.
  12. If House of New Hope does not provide direct Post-finalization adoption services, the agency shall:
    - i. Refer each person who requests Post-finalization adoption services to an agency that provides such services;
    - ii. Upon written request of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian, provide consultation on adoption-related issues to non-agency professionals who are working with the family.
    - iii. Provide information regarding the procedures for releasing identifying information pursuant to rules 5101:2-48-19 and 5101:2-48-20 of the administrative code.
  13. If an adoptive parent, adoptee or birth parent contacts an agency for post-finalization adoption services and the agency determines that another agency made the adoptive

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placement, the agency may contact that agency for assistance in providing post-finalization services.

14. If an adoptive parent, adoptee or birth parent is unable to access post-finalization adoption services, the PCSA located in the county of residence of the adoptive family, adoptee or birth parent, respectively, is the agency ultimately responsible for the provision of, or referral to, appropriate post-finalization services.
- S. If a prospective applicant(s) believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for the reason of geographic location of the family, they are entitled to a state hearing, as described in section 5101.35 of the Revised Code. The Agency shall provide the family with notices and copies of all materials related to requesting a state hearing.  
(5101):2-48-05(B)(17)
- T. MEPA Complaint Process pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03
  11. When a prospective applicant(s) believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for the reasons of geographic location of the family, House of New Hope will ensure that the party(s) are aware of their right to a State Hearing and the Agency shall provide the family with notices and copies of all materials related to requesting a state hearing.
  12. House of New Hope shall provide a written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO) to all individuals inquiring about or applying to be a foster caregiver or adoptive parent. Such notice shall be provided within seven days of the individual's first contact with the agency.
  13. Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS).
  14. Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or by ODJFS because he or she has made a complaint, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.
  15. The individual filing a complaint shall use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form". The complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with:
    - i. Any PCSA, PCPA or PNA; or,
    - ii. The ODJFS.
  16. When any complaint alleging discrimination involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process is received by:

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- i. The agency shall forward the complaint to ODJFS within three working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
  - ii. ODJFS, the department shall notify the Agency that is the subject of the complaint within three working days of the receipt of the complaint.
17. ODJFS shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. The PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint shall not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.
18. The PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS not later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.
19. ODJFS shall conduct an investigation that shall include, but is not limited to:
  - i. Face-to-face interviews with the complainant, the respondent and all relevant witnesses.
  - ii. Issuance of a final investigation report to the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint. The report shall include the allegations, background information, analysis, determination and recommendations and shall be issued within ninety days of the receipt of the initial complaint.
20. If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, ODJFS will notify the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA that is the subject of the complaint of the need for additional time.
21. Upon completion of the final investigation report, ODJFS shall determine if any action against House of New Hope is warranted. For noncompliance by a PCSA, ODJFS may take any action permitted under section 5101.24 of the Revised Code. For noncompliance by the Agency, ODJFS may take action concerning the agency's certificate pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code.
22. No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA or PNA or who has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of the PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.
23. Nothing in this rule or in an agency's policy shall prohibit an individual from filing a complaint with the United States department of health and human services (HHS), office for civil rights (OCR) alleging discrimination that involves RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.
24. House of New Hope shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO within thirty days of the effective date to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive home studies or who are participating in the adoptive home study process on the effective date of this rule.

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25. If the complaint is filed with House of New Hope 's MEPA Monitor or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS for investigation. ODJFS must complete the investigation within 90 days of receipt of the complaint, unless unusual circumstances prevent it from completing the investigation within that timeframe. ODJFS will provide a copy of the investigation report to the complainant and to the agency that is the subject of the complaint.

### U. Standards of Conduct

11. House of New Hope has established the following Standards of Conduct with regard to the performance of employees and contractors/providers related to compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (MEPA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq (Title VI), as they apply to the foster care and adoption process. These Standards of Conduct prohibit policies, procedures or actions which serve to:

- i. Deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved; or
- ii. Delay or deny any placement of a child in foster care or for adoption on the basis of the race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver(s), of the adoptive parent(s) or of the child involved.

12. Permissible Actions: MEPA and Title VI permit the following actions as they apply to the foster care or adoption process:

- i. Asking about and honoring any initial or subsequent choices made by prospective foster or adoptive parents regarding what race, color, or national origin of child the prospective foster or adoptive parents will accept.
- ii. Honoring the decision of a child twelve years of age or older to not consent to an adoption when that decision has been approved by a court pursuant to section 3107.06 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- iii. Providing information and resources about fostering or adopting a child of another race, color or national origin to prospective foster or adoptive parents who request such information and making known to all families that such information and resources are available.
- iv. Considering the request of a birth parent(s) to place the child with a relative or non-relative identified by name.
- v. Considering the race, color or national origin of the child as a possible factor in the placement decision when compelling reasons serve to justify that race, color or national

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origin need to be a factor in the placement decision pursuant to 5101:2-48-13 and 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code. These rules permit consideration of race, color or national origin if an Individualized Child Assessment (JFS 01688) completed pursuant to these rules indicates the child has needs related to race, color or national origin that should be taken into account when placing the child. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to race, color, or national origin, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.

- vi. Promoting cultural awareness, including awareness of cultural and physical needs that may arise in the care of children of different races, ethnicities, and national origins as part of the training which is required of all applicants who seek to become foster or adoptive parents.
  - vii. Documenting verbal comments, verbatim, or describing in detail any other indication made by a prospective foster or adoptive family member living in the household or any other person living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the race, color or national origin of a child for whom the prospective foster or adoptive family has expressed an interest in fostering or adopting. The documentation shall indicate whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for all foster and adoptive applicants. Documentation shall be included in the family's homestudy, update, or an addendum to the homestudy or update prior to consideration of placement or a matching conference. A matching conference is the process of determining the most appropriate adoptive family for the child based on the child's special needs. The matching committee may consider the information in determining if the placement is in the child's best interests.
13. Prohibited Actions: MEPA and Title VI prohibit the following actions as they apply to the foster care or adoption process:
- i. Using the race, color or national origin of a prospective foster or adoptive parent to differentiate between placements.
  - ii. Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with prospective foster or adoptive parent(s) of a specific race, color or national origin, unless the birth parent(s) identifies a relative or non-relative by name and that person is found to meet all relevant state child protection standards, provided that the agency determines that the placement is in the best interests of the child.
  - iii. Requiring a prospective adoptive family to prepare or accept a transracial adoption plan.
  - iv. Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
  - v. Delaying or denying placement of a child based upon the geographical location of the neighborhood of the prospective foster or adoptive family whenever geography is being used as a proxy for:
    - 1. the racial or ethnic composition of the neighborhood;
    - 2. the demographics of the neighborhood; or

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3. the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular race, color, or national origin in the neighborhood or any similar purpose.
  - vi. Requiring extra scrutiny, additional training, or greater cultural awareness of individuals who are prospective foster or adoptive parents of children of a different race, color or national origin than required of other prospective foster or adoptive parents.
  - vii. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color or national origin.
  - viii. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective foster or adoptive parents of a particular race, color or national origin to care for or nurture the sense of identity of a child of another race, color, or national origin.
  - ix. "Steering" prospective foster or adoptive parents away from parenting a child of another race, color, or national origin. "Steering" is any activity that attempts to discourage prospective foster or adoptive parents from parenting a child of a particular race, color or national origin.
  - x. Requiring an ongoing, foster care or adoption worker or contractor to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's foster caregiver or adoptive parent.
14. Prohibition on Retaliation: House of New Hope employees and contractors/providers may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate against or otherwise retaliate against any individual who makes a complaint, testifies, assists or participates in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process.
15. Additional Information: Employees or contractors/providers who desire more information about MEPA and Title VI as related to the adoption and foster care process may contact: Brenda Pack, House of New Hope, MEPA Monitor at (740) 345-5437
16. MEPA Complaint Procedure:
- i. Any person who believes that House of New Hope any other public or private Ohio adoption or foster care agency, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has policies or procedures that violate MEPA and Title VI may file a complaint. In addition, anyone who believes that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way because he or she made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process may also file a complaint. Individuals who may file a complaint include but are not limited to the following:
    1. a foster or adoptive parent or other member of a foster or adoptive family
    2. a prospective foster or adoptive parent or other family member
    3. an employee or former employee of House of New Hope or of any other Ohio adoption or foster care agency

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- ii. Individuals who wish to file a complaint must complete the "Discrimination Complaint Form" (JFS 02333). This complaint may be filed with any of the following:
    - 1. House of New Hope, Attn: Brenda Pack, MEPA Monitor, 8135 Mt. Vernon Rd., St. Louisville, OH 43071
    - 2. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Civil Rights, 30 E. Broad St., 37<sup>th</sup> Floor, Columbus, OH 43266-0423
    - 3. Any other public or private Ohio foster care and adoption agency.
  - iii. If the complaint is filed with House of New Hope 's MEPA Monitor or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS for investigation. ODJFS must complete the investigation within 90 days of receipt of the complaint, unless unusual circumstances prevent it from completing the investigation within that timeframe. ODJFS will provide a copy of the investigation report to the complainant and to the agency that is the subject of the complaint.
17. Enforcement Requirements:
- i. These standards of conduct include enforcement requirements to be used whenever an agency employee or contractor/provider engages in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color, or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS upon completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code.
  - ii. For House of New Hope employees, these enforcement requirements shall include employee discipline in accordance with agency practice.
  - iii. For contractors/providers performing foster care or adoption services on behalf of House of New Hope, these enforcement requirements shall include discipline in accordance with the contractor/provider's personnel policy and may include contract termination. Enforcement requirements for contractor/provider subcontractors shall include corrective action in accordance with the contractor/provider's contract with the subcontractor and may include contract termination.
  - iv. These enforcement requirements are applied in accordance with applicable employment law and union contracts.
18. Corrective Action Plan:
- i. House of New Hope shall provide for the submission of a corrective action plan whenever an investigation conducted by ODJFS, pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, results in a finding that an agency employee or contractor/provider engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices. If the finding involves a discriminatory act, policy or practice by a contractor/provider or subcontractor, House of New Hope shall develop the corrective action plan in collaboration with the contractor/provider or in collaboration with the contractor/provider and subcontractor.

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- ii. The corrective action plan shall:
  - 1. Address how House of New Hope will prevent future violations by that employee or contractor/provider or subcontractor, and
  - 2. Be submitted to ODJFS within thirty days of notification of the findings of the investigation.
- iii. House of New Hope shall provide a copy of these Standards of Conduct to each employee or contractor/provider who is:
  - 1. Engaged in the placement of children into foster care or for adoption, or
  - 2. Engaged in the recruitment, assessment, approval, or selection of foster or adoptive families.
- iv. Employees or contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct. If these Standards of Conduct are revised, employees and contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the revised Standards of Conduct within 30 days of the completion of any revisions. New employees or contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct within thirty days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract. House of New Hope and contractors/providers shall ensure that these Standards of Conduct are provided to their employees and subcontractors.