

Big Bend Community Based Care Policy & Procedure

Series:	1100: Human Resources	
Policy Name:	Foster/Adopt Conflicts of Interest & Special Reviews	
Policy Number:	1129-A	
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Regulation:	65C-13.025, F.A.C.	

Policy

Big Bend Community Based Care, Inc. (BBCBC), recognizes the importance of recruiting and retaining quality foster and adoptive parents for children in care. As they already work in the social services field, employees of BBCBC and BBCBC's subcontracted provider agencies may possess knowledge and skills that would make them strong candidates for foster and/or adoptive parenting. However, there may be an inherent conflict of interest in being a BBCBC, *DCF, CLS, GAL, Judiciary*, subcontracted provider agency employee, another service provider or a foster or adoptive parent for children in BBCBC custody.

It is the policy of BBCBC that employment in the field should not, in and of itself, preclude an individual from becoming a foster or adoptive parent, given that the person meets all other standards required for licensure pursuant to 65C-13, F.A.C., and that conflict of interest can be avoided given careful consideration of approval of and placements into the home. The Procedure outlined in this Policy should be followed in order to mitigate any conflict of interest that may arise when an employee of BBCBC, *DCF, CLS, GAL, Judiciary*, subcontracted provider agency employee, another service provider or a foster or adoptive parent. *NOTE: The procedure described below can be applied at any time there is a need for an outside, unbiased, professional review, e.g., an adoption denial or multiple families expressing interest in the same child, a request for a change to a Maintenance Adoption Subsidy rate, etc.*

For the purposes of this Procedure, "employees" is defined as employees of BBCBC and their immediate family members; employees of BBCBC subcontracted case management, foster home management, adoptions, group care, shelter and independent living providers; and immediate family members of BBCBC, DCF, CLS, GAL and subcontracted providers in the aforementioned categories.

Procedure

A. [Conditional Statement.] Employees may be approved to be an adoptive parent as long as the following conditions are met:

1. No conflict of interest exists that could result in preferential treatment concerning the placement and movement of children placed in the potential licensed foster/adoptive home; and
2. No conflict of interest exists that could result in the employee's ability to influence the outcome of the dependency case for personal gain; and
3. The adoption home study and approval is completed by a licensed child placing agency (CPA) outside of the Circuit in which the potential adoptive parent resides. If the potential adoptive parent is an employee of BBCBC, the licensing study must be completed by a licensed CPA outside of Circuits 2 and 14. This would also pertain to service provision following placement.

B. Managing Conflict of Interest Related to Placement.

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1. The potential for conflict of interest exists both prior to licensure or adoption approval of the employee home and during subsequent placement of children in the home. If the application for licensure is approved by the Department of Children and Families or an adoption home study is approved, good judgment should be used when considering placement of a child into an employee home to ensure that preferential treatment of the child or home does not occur and that professional boundaries are maintained.
2. In addition, the employee's position within the service delivery system should be evaluated to determine the potential for that employee to influence the case or access information related to the case. If the foster parent works for a subcontracted case management organization (CMO), the child placed in the home should be case managed by a different CMO.
3. At any time there are questions as to managing conflict of interest, the employee's circumstances may be presented to the Employee Conflict Evaluation Committee as discussed below.
4. Prior to the submission of the adoption application to the Department of Children and Families, the packet must be reviewed and approved by BBCBC's CEO or designee or as required by applicable rules or Statute.

C. Requests by Employees to Foster or Adopt Youth from Caseload.

1. Professional ethics prohibit an employee of BBCBC or BBCBC's subcontracted provider agencies from providing services to a child when the staff member may be interested in adopting or fostering same said child. When a staff member recognizes a developing interest in care giving a child on his or her caseload, the staff member should promptly report this to the supervisor of the service unit. Supervisory staff is expected to be alert to the potential for dual relationships and take necessary steps to avert a potential conflict of interest and boundary violations including transfer of the child to another staff member's caseload when deemed necessary.
2. In circumstances when an employee seeks to foster or adopt a child from their caseload, special consideration needs to be given to evaluating professional boundaries, the best interest of the child, potential consequences to the employee, and conflict of interest. All such requests will be reviewed by the Employee Conflict Evaluation Committee.
3. The Employee Conflict Evaluation Committee will be comprised of individuals relevant to the situation. Participants must include either the BBCBC Operations Manager, the BBCBC Permanency Specialist, or the BBCBC Intake/Placement Director and any of the following: Foster Home Management staff, Placement staff, Adoption staff, Guardian Ad Litem, Attorney Ad Litem, the child's caregiver, the child's therapist, mentor. The committee will carefully examine the request and will document the outcome of the staffing. If approved, the documented outcome shall include details on managing the conflict.
4. Recommended steps:
 - a. The Adoption Provider will notify the Operations Manager in writing when an employee conflict case is in need of review. The notification will include a brief summary of the reason the case is considered a conflict.
 - b. The Operations Manager will schedule a meeting within two (2) weeks with the Adoption Provider, the Dependency Case Management Organization, the licensure unit (when applicable) the Intake Placement Utilization Director, and the Permanency Specialist, etc.
 - c. The Committee will determine if the case presents a conflict and assign tasks as needed to move forward.

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- d. The Operations Manager will provide a written summary to each committee member and schedule any additional meetings as needed.
- e. The Adoption Provider will provide the Operations Manager updates every two weeks as to the status of the tasks assigned until the adoption process is completed.