

# Big Bend Community Based Care Policy & Procedure

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**Series:** 400: Child Welfare Services  
**Policy Name:** Adoption Applicant Review Committee  
**Policy Number:** 419  
**Origination Date:** 03/09/2009 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 12/13/2018  
**Regulation:** 65C-16, F.A.C.  
District Court of Appeals No. 1 D04-055 (January 31, 2005)

## Referenced Documents:

400-419 x 1, Adoption Applicant Review Committee Request Form  
400-419 x 2, Adoption Applicant Review Committee Checklist  
400-419 x 3, Adoption Applicant Review Committee Recommendation Template

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## Policy

It is the policy of Big Bend Community Based Care, Inc. (BBCBC), to establish, maintain, and manage the adoption review committee and permanency staffing in accordance with 65C-16, F.A.C.

## Procedure

### A. Adoption Applicant Review Committee (AARC).

1. The AARC committee shall consist of but not limited to a representative, preferable with child welfare adoption/experience/expertise, from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Special Needs Adoption contracted Agency, an Adoption Competency Expert and a Mental Health Expert (the last two (2) roles may be filled by one (1) individual). A representative from BBCBC with knowledge/experience in the area of special needs adoption will serve as the committee chair. Each committee member will be required to attend Adoption Competency training and will receive training on the purpose and their role as AARC Committee member.
2. The AARC will provide consultation and assistance to the adoptions provider on any adoptive home study in which the Adoption Specialist and Adoption Supervisor are recommending a denial or adoption case situations that present challenging issues. All requests for an ARC review will be submitted in writing to the committee chair (see *AARC Request Form*) and provide documentation that is applicable to the AARC process (see *AARC Checklist*).
3. While the committee is available to review any challenging case, cases with the following issues must be referred to the committee in accordance with 65C-16 F.A.C., and as required by BBCBC, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Health;
  - b. Abuse History;
  - c. Criminal History;
  - d. Current or former foster parent with previous care or supervision concerns;
  - e. Older children with younger prospective parents and younger children with older prospective parents;

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- f. When multiple approved adoptive families have applied to adopt a child with whom they have a relationship.
- 4. The AARC chairperson will convene the committee within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request and provide the AARC committee members with the information to be reviewed at least one (1) week prior to the AARC convening.
  - a. The chairperson will prepare a written report summarizing the consensus of the committee and recommendations (see AARC format templates). The report will be submitted to and reviewed by all AARC committee members.
  - b. If the recommendation is for approval, the applicants will be notified in writing within ten (10) days of the final report.
  - c. If the recommendation is for denial, the case documents and AARC report will be forwarded to the Regional Family and Community Services Program Office within ten (10) days of the final report.
  - d. The Department of Children and Families Regional Managing Director shall provide the applicant with written notification of the decision to deny the application within ten (10) days of receipt of the AARC report. The written notification must include the reason for denial, and must advise the applicant of their judicial option for review of the denial as described in the Administrative Procedures Act, Chapter 120, and Florida Statute.
  - e. The AARC report is then maintained as a hard copy with the adoption home study at the adoption agency and a copy is provided to BBCBC.

## **B. Dispute Resolution.**

- 1. Efforts will be made to settle disputes at the adoption specialist/supervisor level.
- 2. If dispute resolution is unsuccessful, the AARC will be convened as outlined in 65C-16.005(9), F.A.C.
  - a. If decision results support the previous decision, the applicant must be provided written notification of the decision by the Department of Children and Families Regional Managing Director.
  - b. The applicant will also be informed of their judicial option for review of the denial as described in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 120.68, F.S., and of their right to a hearing pursuant to Section 120.57, F.S.
  - c. A copy of the written notification of the results of the hearing must be provided to the Department of Children and Families, the adoption agency and BBCBC staff.