

Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS

Background

Federal and state law requires certain information to be maintained regarding foster care licensing in Wisconsin. This policy combines federal and state requirements and enhancements made to the eWiSACWIS provider section to integrate legal and reporting requirements.

Purpose

This policy establishes the requirements for data entry of foster homes serving children from the public child welfare system into eWiSACWIS. Additionally, this policy directs agencies how to document information about the licensing activities in eWiSACWIS. Agencies must assure all actions of either agency or contract provider staff comply with this policy.

Applicability

This policy applies to state and county agencies responsible for Title IV-E and any other agency that acts as an agent or is under contract with a Title IV-E agency to issue licenses or approvals of foster or adoptive parents who will receive placement of children in the public child welfare system.

Therefore, the Special Needs Adoption Program, the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services, county human services or social services agencies and private child placing agencies licensing prospective foster or prospective adoptive parents who will receive placement of a public welfare child or who will receive Adoption Assistance payments.

All child placing agencies that do not have direct access to eWiSACWIS are required to report to the Department the requirements of this policy on the form Foster Home Information for WiSACWIS (DCF-F-CFS 2386) and submit to the Department within the timeframes specified for each area.

Private Child Placing Agencies can access DCF-F-CFS 2386 at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/2386.docx>

There are several stages in the foster care licensing process: inquiry, application, a licensing decision, and licensing modifications that will be explored in depth with the documentation requirements.

Licensing Activity

When a licensing agency receives an inquiry about foster care, the Licensing page must be completed in eWiSACWIS when the provider:

- Submits a Completed Application as defined in Ch. DCF 56.04 Admin. Code or
- Is a relative caregiver who is required to go through the Levels of Care Foster Care Licensing Process according to Ch. DCF 58.13(3), 58.16(3) and 58.04(1) Admin. Code

Licensing agencies can use discretion regarding all other foster care licensing inquiries.

When licensing agencies begin the licensing process with applicants by providing them a copy of the agencies paper application, this date must be entered into eWiSACWIS in the “Date the Application Provided to Family” field for all relative applicants or applicants who have placement of a child pending a license. This must be completed within 5 days or by the end of the calendar month, whichever occurs first. Agencies have discretion on when to enter this information on all other types of applications.

The licensing process includes someone who is actively working with a licensing agency to pursue foster care licensure.

The input of this information into eWiSACWIS improves the Title IV-E claiming for activities related to foster care licensing.

Note: A Completed Application includes the paper application and all other materials a prospective foster or adoptive family has to provide to the licensing agency, including meeting with agency staff for interviews, allowing a physical inspection of the home, and providing required information to complete background checks in order to obtain the necessary information to complete the assessment process.

SAFE Home Study Report

The home study report shall be completed prior to the agency rendering a decision on the application as described in Ch. DCF 56.04(5) Admin. Code.

Licensing agencies shall document the initial home study report in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.

Additionally, licensing agencies shall document the home study report update/recertification in eWiSACWIS prior to the issuance of a foster home license or adoption approval.

Licensing Decisions

Licensing Agencies must document all licensing decisions for the cases required to be entered into eWiSACWIS as stated under the Applicability section. There are three actions a licensing agency can take on an application or reapplication for foster care licensure. They can issue/renew, deny, or not-renew a foster care license.

An applicant for foster care licensure or relicensure can withdraw their application or surrender their foster care license at any time.

Each licensing decision will be explored. A licensing decision shall be documented in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the licensing decision.

Approved Applications – Issued Foster Care License

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the issuance of the foster care or treatment foster care license:

- Date of the issuance of the license (Decision Date field) and information necessary to create a foster care license.
- Exceptions and Waivers granted.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has automated the documentation of exceptions and waivers so that all exceptions and waivers approved in eWiSACWIS will pre-fill onto the foster care license for the licensing agency. Exceptions and waivers that are approved by the licensing agency and by the Department are required to be documented in eWiSACWIS within 10 days of the licensing agency or Department's decision.

In addition to the state law, the Fostering Connections Act of 2008 requires states to report annually on exceptions and waivers granted to relative caregivers and barriers that exist to licensing relative caregivers.

- Training Completed of Each Licensee.

Effective June 1, 2015, all required foster parent training commensurate with their Level of Care certification must be documented in the Professional Development System Online at <http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/index.htm>.

- Background Checks Completed.

All background check documentation for foster homes are required to be uploaded into eWiSACWIS. Documentation from the following background checks is required to be added into the eWiSACWIS Person Background Check page:

A. Department of Justice (DOJ)

- B. Integrated Background Information System (IBIS) – (This is the *Response to Caregiver Background Check* letter)
- C. Adam Walsh / Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint Check Results Letter
- *If fingerprints are rejected on the Adam Walsh/FBI background check, the rejections must also be uploaded into eWiSACWIS.
- D. Wisconsin Sexual Offender Address Check, all pages of the results list must be scanned into eWiSACWIS
- E. Local Law Enforcement Checks
- F. Armed Forces Checks
- The completion of a Rehabilitative Review and supporting documentation of the Rehabilitative Review, if applicable.
 - The Disaster Plan for the foster home.
 - Provider Characteristics, which includes values for both Family Accepts and Other Family Characteristics.

Refer to the Licensing Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to approve a license, as well as how to document exceptions and waivers in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/license/licensing-home-providers.pdf>.

Refer to the Maintaining Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document training hours in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/maintain-provider/maintaining-home-provider.pdf>.

Refer to the Provider Imaging Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to add images to the provider in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/imaging/imaging-provider.pdf>.

If a county or private agency does not currently have scanning capability, the licensing agency should contact their regional DCF Area Administration staff to discuss available options to ensure that the documentation is added into eWiSACWIS. Statewide Eligibility Unit (SEU) staff can assist agencies in getting the background check information scanned and uploaded.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) has verified that the Adam Walsh / FBI fingerprint checks can be scanned and uploaded into eWiSACWIS to verify that all federal and state required caregiver checks are completed as required by Title IV-E claiming requirements. Per DOJ, current FBI regulations prohibit any federal background check documentation from being emailed between agencies. If counties or private agencies need to send caregiver background check documents to the regional Title IV-E eligibility units to be scanned and uploaded into eWiSACWIS, they will have to either mail, hand deliver, or fax the Adam Walsh / FBI background check results. DOJ also

indicated that background check documents should be dated, i.e. handwriting the date the Adam Walsh / FBI background check prior to adding the document into eWiSACWIS.

Per DOJ, this documentation would meet the federal FBI requirement associated with the dissemination of the Adam Walsh / FBI background check results. This dissemination requirement only applies to federal caregiver background check documentation. If the county or private agency does not keep a hard copy of the Adam Walsh / FBI background check in their licensing provider file, then the date the document was uploaded into eWiSACWIS would be captured and saved by the system. This date, as documented on the background check added into eWiSACWIS, would serve as verification of the document's dissemination date to DCF.

The automated process for uploading caregiver background checks directly into eWiSACWIS is outlined in a Quick Reference Guide that can be found on the eWiSACWIS Knowledge Web. You can find the quick reference guide by using the following web link: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/imaging/imaging-background-checks.pdf>.

Denial of a Foster Care Application

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the denial of the foster care license:

- The date of the decision to deny the foster care application for licensure or relicensure.
- The Denial Reasons, including the specific code citations for the denial and any supporting documentation for the decision.
- The denial letter that is sent to the applicant(s).
- Documentation of a Negative Action Notice being submitted to DCF if the denial or non-renewal is based on Ch. DHS 12 Admin. Code.

Refer to the Denied Foster Home License Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document denials in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/license/denied-license.pdf>.

Refer to the Provider Licensing Appeals Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document appeals by the foster parent(s) in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/license/provider-licensing-appeals.pdf>.

Withdrawn Application for a Foster Care License or Renewal

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the decision of a relative applicant or an applicant who has submitted a Completed Application if they choose to withdraw his or her foster care application for licensure or renewal:

- The date of the decision to withdraw the application or renewal request by the applicant.
- The reason for the withdrawal.

If the applicant is a relative caregiver who is receiving Court Ordered Kinship Care payments and he or she is withdrawing his or her application in accordance with the permissible exceptions in Ch. DCF 58 to continue to be eligible for Court Ordered Kinship Care payments, then the reason is either that he or she is refusing or unlicensable.

Refer to the Maintaining Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to document withdrawals in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/maintain-provider/maintaining-home-provider.pdf>.

Modification of Foster Care Licenses

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Administrative Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of notification of the occurrence of the following modifications of a foster care license:

- A change of address of the licensee.
- A licensee's wants to have a license condition changed.
- A change in the marital status of the licensee.
- A household member leaves the home.
- When someone enters the household.
- Provider Characteristic updates, which includes values for both Family Accepts and Other Family Characteristics.

Refer to the Modifying a Provider's Foster Home License for guidance on how to document license modifications in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/license/modifying-a-license.pdf>.

Revocation of a Foster Care License

In accordance with Ch. DCF 56 Admin. Code and this policy, licensing agencies must document the following in eWiSACWIS within 7 days of the decision to revoke a foster care license:

- The date of the revocation.
- The code citations and supporting rationale for the revocation.
- Documentation of a Negative Action Notice being submitted to DCF if the revocation or non-renewal is based on Ch. DHS 12 Admin. Code.

Refer to the Licensing Home Providers Quick Reference Guide for guidance on how to revoke a license in eWiSACWIS. The Guide can be found at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/license/licensing-home-providers.pdf>.