



## DCS Guidelines for Residential and LCPA Needs Assessment

### I. Procedure for New Residential and LCPA Applicants

1. All new Residential and LCPA applicants and all existing Residential and LCPA providers proposing new programs must develop a needs assessment (see below for more information)
2. The Residential/LCPA applicant or provider must submit the needs assessment to the DCS Residential Licensing Unit, who will submit the needs assessment to the Regional Services Council (via the Regional Manager) in the Region where the proposed facility or program is located.<sup>1</sup>
3. The Regional Services Council will give a recommendation based on the information submitted in the needs assessment (see attached Recommendation form).
  - a. If the need is not proven or justified, the RSC will not recommend the applicant or program, and DCS will not provide the agency with a contract or license.
  - b. If the need is proven, the applicant or program will be referred to Residential Licensing to submit an application for licensure
4. Residential Licensing makes the final decision regarding licensure.
5. The agency submits the necessary documents for a contract.
6. Fiscal makes the final decision on the rate under the contract.

### II. Needs Assessment

#### **465 IAC 2-9-18 "Needs assessment" defined**

Authority: IC 12-13-5-3

Affected: IC 12-17.4

Sec. 18. As used in this rule, "needs assessment" means a written study which documents that the specific services offered by a child caring institution will be used by referral sources within the geographic area to be served.

A needs assessment is a process for determining and addressing *needs*, or "gaps" between current conditions and desired conditions. It involves identifying material problems/deficits/weaknesses and advantages/opportunities/strengths, and evaluating possible solutions that take those qualities into consideration.

An applicant for a DCS residential or LCPA license (or an existing agency requesting a new program) must complete a Needs Assessment. This Needs Assessment involves assessing the needs of children requiring placement services in order to develop a program that addresses unmet needs. It is a research-based, written study which

---

<sup>1</sup> A new needs assessment is not required if a new company is merely taking over an existing program and there are no programmatic changes and there is no lapse in operations of the program (i.e. the program is not closed and reopened). A new license may be required upon a transfer of ownership, but the needs assessment will not be required.



## DCS Guidelines for Residential and LCPA Needs Assessment

documents that the specific services offered by an agency are needed within the geographic area to be served. When preparing a needs assessment, applicants must have knowledge and awareness of the type of programming which is eligible for licensure.

### **Four Steps to Conducting a Needs Assessment**

#### ***1. Perform a "gap" analysis***

Identify the current situation and the necessary or desired situation. The "gap" between the current and the necessary will identify the needs, purposes, and objectives.

#### ***2. Identify priorities***

Examine the identified needs within the context of placing agency goals, realities, and constraints. Determine if the identified needs are real, if they are worth addressing, and specify their importance and urgency in view of placing agency needs and requirements.

#### ***3. Identify causes of performance problems and/ or opportunities***

Describe why existing programs do not meet the needs of children and/ or placing agencies. This may be related to a specialized service which is not offered by other agencies, capacity issues preventing existing agencies from serving the total population of children in need, ineffective service delivery and a plan for improvement, or any other relevant issues. Identification of performance opportunities may include a plan for duplicating an existing, successful program or service and improving or expanding it to meet the needs of more children, different ages or types of children, or another geographic area.

#### ***4. Identify a solution***

This is where the new program is introduced as a solution or part of a plan for a solution. Include current goals and future plans or opportunity for growth, improvement, and expansion.

### **Methods**

There are several basic Needs Assessment techniques. Use a combination of some of these, as appropriate:

- Direct or participant observation
- Questionnaires
- Consultation with persons in key positions, and/or with specific knowledge



## DCS Guidelines for Residential and LCPA Needs Assessment

- Review of relevant literature
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Focus groups
- Tests/ evaluation
- Records & report studies
- Work samples
- Secondary data analysis

### III. Residential Application Steps

Once the RSC approves the Needs Assessment, the Application for Licensure can be sent to Residential Licensing. The steps in the process are below.

#### 1. Clerical Review and Processing

- a. New applications must be received by postal mail.
- b. All sections must be clearly labeled.
- c. The packet must include the original application with attachments and one copy of the application with attachments.
- d. The nonrefundable application fee must be included at the time of submission.
- e. Incomplete applications will be returned to sender.

#### 2. Consultant Review

- a. Each new application will be assigned a residential licensing consultant to review the content.
- b. The consultant will contact the applicant with any questions or requests for information.
- c. The applicant has 30 days to respond to any requests for information or the application will be returned.
- d. The agency may refer any questions about the application or the process to the assigned consultant.

#### 3. Supervisory Review

- a. The application is forwarded for supervisory review.
- b. This review may result in additional questions or requests for information.
- c. The applicant has 30 days to respond to requests for information or the application will be returned.
- d. The decision to approve the written application is made at the supervisory level.

#### 4. Field Review



## DCS Guidelines for Residential and LCPA Needs Assessment

- a. Representatives from state agencies reviewing the building and grounds for physical health, safety, and sanitation will visit the agency and provide the findings to the residential licensing unit.
- b. The child caring institution must meet compliance with these state agencies before licensure is approved.
- c. The DCS Residential Licensing Unit will facilitate inspections by the appropriate state agencies after the written application is approved.

### 5. Fiscal Review

- a. The DCS Fiscal Department will review the requested per diem rate requested by the applicant.
- b. The applicant may be required to provide additional financial data to DCS as a part of this review.
- c. The final approved per diem rate is set as a result of this review.

### 6. Next Steps

- a. Initial Review- The residential licensing consultant assigned to the agency will conduct an initial licensing inspection.
- b. Supervisory Review- The initial review will be evaluated at the supervisory level. If not approved, the agency may complete additional steps up to and including repeating the entire process from the beginning. If approved, the agency moves on to complete the next steps.
- c. Residential Contract
  1. When the written application is approved, DCS will provide the applicant with information the master residential contract with the State of Indiana.
  2. The contract must be executed before the agency may receive payment for any Indiana DCS or probation placement.
  3. The agency is responsible for adhering to all requirements of the contract throughout the contract period.
  4. Title IV-E - The agency will be contacted by a DCS representative to discuss Title IV-E compliance when the license is approved. DCS cannot contract with a Residential or LCPA provider who is not Title IV-E eligible.
- d. Residential License- The agency will receive the residential license by postal mail. The agency may begin to accept or place children when the license is



## DCS Guidelines for Residential and LCPA Needs Assessment

received and the contract is executed. The license must be displayed in a conspicuous location in the agency at all times.



## Regional Services Council Recommendation Related to Need for Residential or LCPA Programming

The Regional Services Council in Region \_\_\_ has received the Needs Assessment submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ [insert name of provider] for a proposed [choose the applicable category]:

- Child Caring Institution
- Group Home
- Private Secure Facility
- Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA).

After careful review, the Regional Services Council has voted as follows:

There is a need for the type of program outlined in the above-mentioned Needs Assessment in this Region: Yes  No

This recommendation does not assure that a license will be issued by the Department of Child Services (DCS) or that a contract will be executed. This recommendation applies only to the general category of program described in the Needs Assessment and is not an endorsement of or opposition to the specific Applicant/Provider who submitted the Needs Assessment.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Regional Manager: \_\_\_\_\_