



## INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

### Chapter 2: Administration of Child Welfare

#### Section 28: Regional Services Council (RSC)

**Effective Date:** 5/13/2024

**Version:** 5

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### POLICY OVERVIEW

The purpose of a Regional Services Council (RSC) is to assess the local child welfare service needs and identify how best to meet those needs.

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### PROCEDURE

Each county in Indiana will participate in a Regional Services Council (RSC) for the service region (see Definitions) in which the county is located. The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will determine the county or counties that comprise each service region. A county may not be divided when establishing a service region.

The RSC is required to meet quarterly to accomplish the following:

1. Evaluate local child welfare service needs and make a determination of appropriate delivery mechanisms to meet those needs. The RSC will take public testimony regarding local service needs and system changes. The needs are to be tailored to children and families:
  - a. Alleged to be or adjudicated a Child in Need of Services (CHINS), Informal Adjustment (IA), or Juvenile Delinquency/Juvenile Status (JD/JS), or
  - b. Identified by DCS as substantially at risk of becoming a CHINS, IA, or JD/JS and have been referred to DCS for services (by or with the consent of the parent, guardian, or custodian), in accordance with a child's individual case plan.
2. Develop, approve, and recommend a Biennial Regional Services Strategic Plan (Plan) designed to meet the needs identified in #1 above and, per IC 31-26-6-5.5 will include the following:
  - a. Organization,
  - b. Staffing,
  - c. Mode of operations,
  - d. Financing of the child protection services,
  - e. The provisions made for the purchase of services, and
  - f. Interagency relations.
3. Recommend allocation and distribution of funds allocated to the service region for the expenses of child welfare programs and child services administered by DCS within the region. Public and private funds available for consideration by the RSC in the Plan include funds available through;

- a. Title IV-B of the Social Security Act,
- b. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act,
- c. Title XX of the Social Security Act,
- d. The Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA),
- e. Special Education programs under IC 20-35-6-2,
- f. All programs designed to prevent child abuse, neglect, or delinquency or to enhance child welfare and family preservation administered by or funded through DCS, Division of Family Resources (DFR), prosecuting attorneys, and juvenile courts, including programs funded through IC 31-26-3.5 and IC 31-40, and
- g. A child advocacy fund.

4. Develop, review, or revise a strategy for implementation of an approved Plan that identifies:

- a. The manner in which prevention and early intervention services will be provided or improved,
- b. How local collaboration will improve children's services, and
- c. How different funds can be used to serve children and families more effectively.

5. Review applications to establish, continue, or modify child welfare programs for the region and make recommendations to the DCS Agency Director;

6. Review the implementation of the Plan and prepare revisions, additions, or updates of the Plan that the RSC considers necessary or appropriate to improve the quality and efficiency of early intervention child welfare services provided in accordance with the Plan;

7. Reorganize, as needed, and select a vice chairperson for the ensuing year;

8. Collaborate with Central Office for obtaining services (e.g., Request for Proposals [RFPs]); and

9. Ensure the meeting agenda, minutes, and notices are posted on the DCS website.

The chairperson or vice chairperson of an RSC may convene any additional meetings of the RSC that are, in the chairperson's or vice chairperson's opinion, necessary or appropriate.

A majority of the voting members appointed to the RSC constitutes a quorum for the transaction of official business that includes taking final action (as defined in IC 5-14-1.5-2[g]). The RSC may hold a meeting in the absence of a quorum to discuss any items of public business related to its responsibilities and functions, without taking final action.

**Note:** A proxy (see Definitions) may represent an RSC member during an RSC meeting.

All meetings of an RSC are subject to the Open Door Law as specified by IC 5-14-1.5. The RSC will:

1. Publicize to residents of each county in the service region the existence and availability of the Plan, including information concerning access to the Plan on the DCS website; and
2. Post meeting agendas and a memorandum of each meeting to the DCS website and make the general public aware this information is available. In accordance with IC 5-14-1.5-4, the memorandum will state the name of each member who:
  - a. Was physically present at the place where the meeting was conducted,
  - b. Participated in the meeting using a means of communication where all other members participating in the meeting and all members of the public physically

present at the same place where the meeting is conducted to communicate simultaneously with each other during the meeting, or

- c. Was absent.

The DCS RM will:

1. Serve as the chairperson to conduct the RSC meeting (the RSC will select a member to serve as the vice chairperson);
2. Document the meeting minutes and distribute them to the members of the RSC;
3. Post the date, time, and location of quarterly meetings at least 30 days before the meeting. Once meeting schedules are established, annual posting of the regularly scheduled meetings will be placed on the DCS website. Updates regarding scheduling changes will be made as necessary;
4. Deliver a notice by mail, e-mail, or fax to all news media and other persons that request written notice;
5. Post the agenda no less than 48 hours prior to the start of the meeting at the entrance of the meeting location; and
6. Transmit copies of:
  - a. The Plan;
  - b. Each annual report;
  - c. Each revised Plan; and
  - d. Any other report or document described by administrative rules to the following:
    - i. The DCS Agency Director. The Plan must be submitted to the DCS Agency Director by no later than February 2 of each even-numbered year,
    - ii. DCS Central Office for posting on the DCS website,
    - iii. Each local DCS office in the service region,
    - iv. Each juvenile court in the service region,
    - v. Each community Child Protection Team (CPT) in the service region; and
    - vi. Appropriate public or voluntary agencies, including organizations for the prevention of child abuse or neglect.

The DCS Agency Director or designee will, within 60 days of receiving the Plan, do **one (1)** of the following:

- 1) Approve the Plan as submitted by the RSC; or
- 2) Return the Plan to the RSC with directions concerning:
  - a) Subjects for further study and reconsideration, and
  - b) Resubmission of a revised Plan
- 3) Approve the Plan with amendments, modifications, or revisions.

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## RELEVANT INFORMATION

### Definitions

#### Proxy

A proxy is an individual selected by a member of the judiciary, prosecuting attorney, or a DCS employee who is to represent the RSC member during a meeting.

#### Service Region

A service region is an area of Indiana consisting of one (1) or more counties.

### Forms and Tools

- [Regional Service Councils](#)

### Related Policies

N/A

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## LEGAL REFERENCES

- [IC 5-14-1.5: Chapter 1.5. Public Meetings \(Open Door Law\)](#)
- [IC 5-14-1.5-2\(g\): "Final action"](#)
- [IC 20-35-6-2: Contracts for services; payment of costs; rules](#)
- [IC 31-26-3.5: Chapter 3.5. Child Welfare Programs](#)
- [IC 31-26-6: Chapter 6. Regional Service Strategic Plans](#)
- [IC 31-26-6-5.5: Description of plan implementation](#)
- [IC 31-40: ARTICLE 40. JUVENILE LAW: FUNDING](#)

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## PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 2.28

*Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.*

N/A

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