

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		
Policy Number: EA-5	Effective Date: May 1, 2023	Version: 5.0
POLICY TITLE: CONSTITUENT CORRESPONDENCE		
<p>OVERVIEW: The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) shall respond to all correspondence it receives with a professional and timely response that addresses the specific needs outlined in the original communication. All requests will be handled in accordance with IC 5-14-3 and IC 31-33-18. Any constituent correspondence addressing issues that are technical in nature, including but not limited to, DCS policy, Indiana Code (IC), Federal law and/or legislation, must be forwarded to the Constituent Services Liaisons for processing.</p>		

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Constituent:** Any individual who is not a DCS employee and who communicates an inquiry or concern to the DCS Director, Central Office Constituent Services Liaison, Child Support Bureau (CSB) Constituent Services Liaison, other government agency, or the Governor's Office.

Note: This does not include public records requests. Public records requests should be sent to DCSPublic.RecordsRequest@dcs.in.gov.

- B. **Correspondence:** Any non-routine business communication addressed to or received by DCS. Correspondence may come from the Governor's Office, a Legislator, another State or non-governmental agency, or a constituent. Correspondence may be in the form of a letter, fax, telephone call, or an email.
- C. **Constituent Services Liaison:** The liaisons are DCS employees who oversee the process of responding to constituent correspondence. Constituent Services Liaisons are located at the DCS Central Office and the CSB.
- D. **Subject Matter Expert:** A staff person identified as being knowledgeable of a specific DCS program and/or procedure.
- E. **Division:** An organizational unit within DCS (e.g., Strategic Solutions and Agency Transformation [SSAT] is a division within DCS).
- F. **Program:** A specialty unit within a division (e.g., Focused Needs and International and Cultural Affairs is a program within the SSAT division).

II. REFERENCES

- A. [EA-2 Communication with Legislators Policy](#)
- B. [EA-3 Media Contact Policy](#)
- C. [IC 5-14-3: Access to Public Records](#)
- D. [IC 31-33-18: Disclosure of Reports; Confidentiality Requirements](#)

III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

- A. All DCS constituent correspondence will be tracked by the Constituent Services Liaisons. All correspondence from the media shall be addressed in accordance with the [EA-3 Media Contact Policy](#).
- B. Correspondence received by a program, DCS Local Office, or CSB that is general in nature may be answered by the Program Manager, DCS Local Office Director (LOD),

or appropriate CSB staff. Examples include, but are not limited to, local service overviews and programmatic questions from local service providers. Correspondence of this nature is considered routine business communication and does not need to be reported to the Constituent Services Liaisons.

Note: The only exception to this reporting requirement is communication with Legislators and media, which should be handled in accordance with the [EA-2 Communication with Legislators Policy](#) and [EA-3 Media Contact Policy](#).

- C. All constituent correspondence addressing issues that are technical in nature, including but not limited to, DCS policy, Indiana Code, Federal law and/or legislation, must be forwarded within three (3) business days to the Constituent Services Liaisons for processing.
- D. All requests will be handled in accordance with [IC 5-14-3](#) and [IC 31-33-18](#).
- E. All responses to correspondence shall be in the same format as the original communication, when practical (e.g., an inquiry sent by email will receive an emailed response). All individuals copied on the original communication should be included on the response.
- F. All written responses must be developed in a manner consistent with the guidelines provided by the Office of the Governor.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Upon receipt of correspondence regarding Field Operations (Field Ops), the DCS Central Office Constituent Services Liaison will determine the county and region of origin of the issue discussed in the correspondence. The DCS Central Office Constituent Services Liaison will forward the correspondence to the appropriate DCS LOD. The Regional Manager (RM), Assistant Deputy Director of Field Operations, and Deputy Director of Field Operations will be copied on all correspondence.

Note: The DCS Central Office Constituent Services Liaison will direct the constituent to contact the DCS Local Office if the constituent has not previously attempted to make contact. If the constituent has contacted the DCS Local Office and continues to have concerns, the Constituent Services Liaison will assist the constituent in contacting the RM and continue up the chain of command as needed.

- B. The DCS LOD will review the correspondence and discuss with the RM how to address any outlying issues and provide an update to the DCS Central Office Constituent Services Liaison for their response within five (5) business days.
- C. Upon receipt of correspondence regarding Title IV-D child support operations, the CSB Constituent Services Liaison will determine the county and office of origin of the issue, examine the case management system records and, if necessary, contact the respective county Clerk or Prosecutor office for further information needed to facilitate a response.

Note: The CSB Constituent Services Liaison will direct the constituent to contact the appropriate office if the constituent has not previously attempted to make contact. If

the constituent has contacted the appropriate office and continues to have concerns, the CSB Constituent Services Liaison will assist the constituent in working with the office to address and resolve those concerns.

- D. The Constituent Services Liaisons will work with the DCS Local Office or respective county Clerk or Prosecutor office to craft an appropriate response to case-specific inquiries.
- E. All inquiries directed to the Governor or DCS Director will be managed by the Constituent Services Liaisons.
- F. The Constituent Services Liaisons will work with the appropriate subject matter expert to appropriately respond to constituent inquiries that are not related to a specific case.
- G. The Constituent Services Liaisons will maintain a record of all constituent correspondence.

DATE: March 24, 2023

Eric Miller, Chief Executive Officer
Department of Child Services