

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
<b>Chapter:</b>	Transferring Cases	
<b>Subject:</b>	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 1 of 7
<b>Approved:</b>	Karen Shea, Deputy Commissioner	Effective: 12/18/2017
<b>Supersedes:</b>	Family Services Policy 211	Dated: 10/15/2014

## Purpose

To articulate the expectations and responsibilities when transferring a family’s case from one Family Services Division district office to another.

## Table of Contents

Purpose.....	1
Table of Contents.....	1
Definitions.....	1
Policy .....	1
Transferring Child Safety Interventions (CSIs) .....	1
Transferring Ongoing Family Cases.....	2
Case Transfers Involving Threats to Staff or Other Safety Concerns .....	4
Managing Special Case Circumstances .....	4
Task List .....	6

## Definitions

**Conflict:** For the purposes of this policy, a conflict may exist when a child safety intervention (CSI) or family’s ongoing case involves:

- A family member of a current district office employee; OR
- An immediate family member of a current contracted provider or community partner that currently works closely with the district office on a regular basis; OR
- An in-district State of Vermont employee.

## Policy

Policy and operations manager(s) will facilitate case transfers between districts.

### Transferring Child Safety Interventions (CSIs)

Regardless of the reason a child safety intervention (CSI) needs to transfer to another district, the CSI **must be commenced within 72 hours** or a waiver must be processed, if appropriate. See Family Services [Policy 52](#) for additional information.

Situation or Circumstances	Required Actions
(1) If a CSI was wrongly assigned to a district office (incorrect address, error, etc.) ...	The district director or supervisor notifies Centralized Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) of the error in assignment

<b>Chapter:</b>	Transferring Cases	
<b>Subject:</b>	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 2 of 7

<b>Situation or Circumstances</b>	<b>Required Actions</b>
	before the end of the business day. CIES makes the correction.
(2) If a CSI is a conflict for the assigned district office ...	The district director or supervisor will immediately contact their assigned policy and operations manager to evaluate the conflict. If a conflict is determined to exist, the policy and operations manager(s) will determine case assignment and notify the receiving district director. The decision is final.
(3) If a family moves to a new district office while the CSI is open ...	The CSI will not be transferred to the new district office until it is determined the case will open for ongoing services. The district office where the family resides will support the district office that holds the CSI. This support may include, but is not limited to: interviewing parents and children, conducting home visits, visiting or approving potential caretakers, and other tasks upon request.

### Transferring Ongoing Family Cases

Generally, unless extenuating circumstances exist, cases should be transferred when a family moves from one district to another district on what the family intends to be a permanent basis.

<b>Situation or Circumstances</b>	<b>Required Actions</b>
(1) If the family is residing in permanent housing (i.e., has documented financial responsibility for paying rent or mortgage or has been approved in a shelter sponsored program) ...	The case should be transferred to the receiving district as soon as the move occurs.
(2) If the family is residing in temporary housing (i.e., moves in with someone in another district or is staying at a hotel) ...	The case should be transferred after family resides in new district for 60 days absent a compelling reason for the current district to retain the case.
(3) If a court hearing or administrative review is scheduled within 30 days ...	The court hearing or administrative review should be scheduled and held in the sending district, with the receiving social worker attending.

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
<b>Chapter:</b>	Transferring Cases	
<b>Subject:</b>	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 3 of 7

In general, court-involved cases should only be transferred:

- (1) After merits has occurred; AND
- (2) The disposition hearing is scheduled more than 30 days out from the date of request.

There may special circumstances which make it advisable to transfer a case before all court matters or administrative reviews have been completed, or to delay transfer until all court proceedings have been completed. For example, there are sometimes substantial court delays that may necessitate pre-merits transfer of cases. Such circumstances should be discussed with the expectation that the decision will serve the child's best interests.

When a family moves to a new district:

- (1) The district director notifies the policy and operations manager upon notice that a client has changed their legal residence on a permanent basis; and
- (2) The policy and operations manager(s) will determine district assignment and notify the receiving district director of the decision. Upon notification by the policy and operations manager, the case is the responsibility of the receiving district.

If an ongoing case may be a conflict for the district office,

- (1) The district director notifies the policy and operations manager as soon as a conflict is identified; and
- (2) If a conflict is determined to exist, the policy and operations manager(s) will determine district assignment and notify the receiving district director of the decision. Upon notification by the policy and operations manager, the case is the responsibility of the receiving district.

The sending district director will contact the receiving district director to discuss details of transfer within two business days of notification from the policy and operations manager that the case has been reassigned. This discussion may include requests to receive electronic copies of case plans or other pertinent documents. District staff may choose to utilize the family safety planning (FSP) format as a structured way to discuss case transfer issues; however, the scheduling of this meeting will not delay the case transfer.

The case transfer process should include a plan for a joint home visit between the sending and receiving social worker and a clear plan to ensure face-to-face contact for the transfer month. Monthly contact is the responsibility of the receiving district if the policy and operations manager sends the transfer notification before the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. If the notification is sent on or after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month, monthly contact

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
Chapter:	Transferring Cases	
Subject:	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 4 of 7

is the responsibility of the sending district. Joint home visiting is encouraged but should not delay the case transfer.

**Case Transfers Involving Threats to Staff or Other Safety Concerns**

Threats to staff or other staff safety concerns may necessitate a case transfer between district offices in instances where transferring the case to another social worker within the office does not resolve the danger or threat. District directors will notify their policy and operations manager and the staff safety manager to discuss these situations and determine the best course of action.

For additional information on safety-related case transfers within a district office, see [Family Services Policy 250: Staff Safety](#).

**Managing Special Case Circumstances**

**Pre-Merits Transfers**

If a case will be transferred pre-merits, the sending district and the receiving district will both participate in the merits hearing.

**Post-Merits and Pre-Disposition Transfers**

The disposition case plan will be written by the receiving district (where the family resides) if the case is transferred at least 30 days before the disposition hearing. Otherwise, the sending district will write the disposition case plan.

**Transferring Cases from RLSI to a District Office**

At the end of a CSI assigned to the Residential Licensing and Special Investigations (RLSI) Unit, there are times when the case may need to be opened for ongoing services in a district office. RLSI will notify the operations team in these cases and operations managers will determine case assignment.

**Supporting Youth Over the Age of 18**

When a youth has signed a *Voluntary Services Agreement for Completion of Secondary Education* and resides outside of the district in which their parents reside, the sending and receiving district directors will consult to determine which district should manage the youth’s needs.

**Supporting Youth Who Have Youthful Offender Status**

When a youth is determined by the court to meet criteria and is offered youthful offender status, the case shall be overseen by the district office in which the youth lives –

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
Chapter:	Transferring Cases	
Subject:	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 5 of 7

regardless of where the youth’s parents live. Exceptions to this could be considered in situations where there is a social worker continuing to work with the youth’s parents/family and the resources to support the youth outside of the district are available to the existing social worker.

### **Supporting Children and Families Who Reside in Multiple Districts**

There are times where children are in the shared custody (physical or legal) of two parents who reside in two different districts. The district directors of the two districts involved in the case will discuss which district makes the most sense for the family. Criteria for determining in which district a case should be assigned may include the following:

- The district where the parent with majority legal or physical custody resides, if any;
- The district where the child attends daycare or school;
- The district where the protective parent/non-perpetrating caretaker resides; or
- The district where the perpetrating caretaker resides if there are other children in the home who reside in that district full-time.

There are times when a family moves to another district and the district decides not to transfer the case based on the needs of the family. The home district director should notify the district director the family lives in that the family is residing in their district and discuss service delivery. The local district will assist with service delivery and coordination as agreed upon by the two district directors.

There are also instances where the court may give custody to a person that resides in another district while the parent continues to reside in their home district. The home district director should notify the district director where the custodian resides when these circumstances arise.

In cases where a TPR petition has been filed, the case should not transfer prior to the proceedings and issuance of an order. The home district director should notify the district director the family lives in to let them know the family is residing in their district and discuss service delivery. The local district will assist with the service delivery and coordination as agreed upon by the two district directors. After the TPR decision and during the appeal process, the case may transfer to the district office where the family resides.

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
Chapter:	Transferring Cases	
Subject:	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 6 of 7

## Task List

### **Sending Social Worker:**

- Completes Inter District Case Transfer Summary (FS-261), with supporting case documents.
  - *Family Support Cases:* information should be included as available (i.e. most recent case determination, case plan, FSP, SDM assessments and assessments of the child/family).
  - *Court-Involved Cases:* information should be included as available (i.e., most recent affidavit, case determination, case plan/disposition report, SDM assessments, assessments of child/family).
- Reviews file to ensure required material is present and current.
- Routes file and the Inter District Case Transfer Summary (FS-261) to their supervisor.

### **Sending Supervisor:**

- Reviews the file and ensures all required material is present and current.
- Signs off on the Inter District Case Transfer Summary (FS-261), and sends it with file to their district director.

### **Sending District Director:**

- Reviews and signs the Inter District Case Transfer Summary (FS-261).
- Notifies the policy and operations manager by email and attaches the Inter District Case Transfer Summary (FS-261).
- Contacts the receiving district director to discuss details of transfer within 2 business days of notification from the policy and operations manager that the case has been reassigned.
- Immediately following the discussion, plans for the paper file to be sent to the receiving district. The paper file should include the IV-E file if applicable.

### **Policy and Operations Manager:**

- Review, approve, and assign cases that are identified as appropriate for transfer.
- Sends notification email to the sending and receiving district directors when a case has been re-assigned.
- Arbitrates disputes.

### **Receiving District Director:**

- Works with sending district director to determine details of transfer within 2 business days of receiving the notification of transfer email from policy and operations manager.
- Accepts responsibility for case immediately upon notification of transfer email from the policy and operations manager.

 <b>VERMONT</b> DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Family Services Policy Manual		<h1>211</h1>
<b>Chapter:</b>	Transferring Cases	
<b>Subject:</b>	Transfers Between District Offices	Page 7 of 7

- Ensures that the supervisor or point of contact is assigned within 72 hours of notification of assignment and ensures the Supervisory Tracking Form is updated to reflect the change.
- Ensures contact occurs between the involved social workers to assure a smooth transition.

**Receiving Social Worker:**

- Reviews all materials from the sending district.
- Contacts the previous social worker to discuss transition issues, including the possibility of a joint home visit.
- Attends FSP (if one is scheduled) and other events (court, case plan reviews, home visits) as negotiated between districts.