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Chapter:	Residential Licensing	
Subject:	Licensing Child Placing Agencies	Page 1 of 4
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PURPOSE

To outline the procedures for the licensing of child placing agencies, renewal of licenses and handling of complaints.

POLICY

A. APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE

Consultation to Potential Applicants

Upon request, the Residential Licensing Unit (RLU) will consult with potential applicants on issues related to licensing including:

- the necessity for licensure;
- activities that require a license;
- interpretation of regulations;
- the application and licensing process.

Once the RLU receives an application, a lead licensor will be designated.

Other Requirements

If applicant agency is not incorporated in Vermont, the RLU will verify with the Secretary of State that the agency is authorized to do business in Vermont. The agency must provide copies of any licenses in effect in other states.

Licensing Evaluation

The licensing process will include:

- educating the applicant on the licensing process;
- assessing the agency's compliance with each regulation,
- discussing any deficiency noted and the steps the agency might take to correct

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deficiencies;

- notifying the agency about procedures on obtaining criminal records and child abuse registry checks on agency staff and for foster and adoptive parents;
- for foster care agencies, reviewing foster home regulations.

Within ten days of noncompliance with regulation, the RLU will give the agency sixty days to comply. The RLU may extend this period if the agency is progressing toward compliance. The lead licensor may provide additional consultation, as necessary.

Licensing Decision

When the licensing team determines that the agency is in substantial compliance with regulations, the lead licensor will prepare a report, with assistance from other team members. The report will:

- briefly describe the agency's practices in each area covered in regulation;
- outline areas of particular strengths and weaknesses;
- clearly describe any remaining areas of noncompliance and time frames for correction;
- for foster care agencies, specify the degree of authority given to the agency to approve foster homes;
- state a recommendation for licensure.

The RLU will send a draft report to the applicant for review with comments due within fifteen days.

If the licensing team, in consultation with the licensing supervisor, determines that the agency is not making progress toward compliance, or cannot comply, the licensing report will recommend a denial of licensure. The Residential Licensing Director will notify the agency in writing, listing specific areas of noncompliance, and information on the process for appeal.

B. LICENSING RENEWAL

Notification of Renewal Deadline

Three months before the expiration of the agency's license, the licensing administrative assistant will:

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- send a renewal application, requesting its return in one month;
- solicit feedback on the agency from each district director, resource coordinator, the Adoption Coordinator and Community Resource Team, as appropriate.

Re-licensing Visit

Before the licensing visit, the licensing team will review the record, the complaints received during the past year and the agency's handling of criminal and registry records. At the re-licensing visit, the licensing team will:

- review changes in personnel, policy and practice;
- interview administrative and program staff;
- review minutes of board meetings;
- assess progress in areas of weakness or correcting noncompliance;
- review sample records in each area in which the agency provides services: children in care, foster parents, adoptive parents, birthparents. Agency personnel may assist in the selection of records to review, but the licensing team will make the final choice. The record review may be omitted if the agency has been inactive during the past year;
- for foster care agencies, make a site visit to one or more foster homes, for review of compliance with foster care regulations governing the physical facility and interview with the foster parents about the services the agency provides.

The licensing team will hold a closing conference with the agency administrator to discuss findings and recommendations. This conference may be waived by mutual consent if no significant issues have emerged.

Issuing a License

The lead licensor, with assistance from the licensing team, will prepare a report for review and signature by the Residential Licensing Director. The RLU will send a draft of the report to the licensee for review and comment. Once the report is finalized, a new license will be issued promptly.

C. ONGOING REVIEW OF LICENSES

Record and Registry Checks

If any criminal or child abuse registry check requested by the agency has a finding that indicates the welfare of children may be affected, the administrative assistant will notify an

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authorized person at the agency immediately. Results are sent by mail, with a request that the agency inform Residential Licensing of how they handled the matter.

Complaints

The Residential Licensing supervisor will review complaints about licensed child placing agencies and will determine the appropriate action. If necessary, the supervisor will assign a licensor to investigate. Following the conclusion of the investigation, the licensor will prepare an investigation report. The Residential Licensing supervisor will notify the agency in writing of the outcome of the investigation and any actions to be taken.