

ADOPTION SERVICES – CHILDREN/YOUNG ADULTS

PUBLIC ADOPTIONS (DFPS SPONSORED)

Refuge House does not charge for any of its services involving adoption. Therefore, a fee schedule is not needed. It should be noted that Refuge House does not charge birth parents for public adoptions. If and when a fee schedule is needed, Refuge House will design policies and obtain all approvals from its monitoring entities prior to implementing a fee policy of any kind.

Refuge House will not release an adoptive home screening to adoptive families and/or any other Child-Placing Agency.

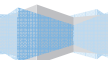
References

§749.161(c), §749.241(a)

ADOPTIVE PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES- ADOPTION PLACEMENT CONTRACT

Prior to placing an adoptive child/young adult into the home, Refuge House will obtain a written agreement with the adoptive parents. Per Refuge House's Adoption Placement Contract, and in accordance with RCCL Minimum Standards and Contracts, Refuge House foster/adopt and straight adopt parents:

- 1) Agree with Refuge House to complete the adoption at a specified time and within a specific timeframe.
- 2) Agree to supervision by Refuge House during the time prior to completion of the adoption.
- 3) Notify Refuge House before traveling with the child/young adult outside of Texas prior to the completion of the adoption.
- 4) Can return the child/young adult to Refuge House at the discretion of either the adoptive parents or Refuge House before the adoption is completed.
- 5) Meet the needs of the child(ren)/young adults placed in their home and seek out community resources to meet the child(ren)/young adults' needs.
- 6) Make the final decision regarding the day-to-day activities of the foster/adopt child(ren)/young adults in their care. Such decisions will include food, shelter, allowances, shopping, recreation, school needs, transportation, appropriate discipline, and routine doctor appointments.
- 7) Foster/adopt parents will be responsible for acquiring the number of training hours needed for the type of child(ren)/young adults in their care and actively participate in the training program provided by Refuge House.
- 8) Foster/adopt parents agree to the fee and schedule of payment and submit the necessary forms for financial reimbursement to Refuge House bookkeeper at the agreed upon time.



- 9) Make the final decision regarding children with whom they are willing to accept for an adoptive placement and ask that a child/young adult be removed from their home should circumstances no longer allow them to provide care.
- 10) Immediately inform Refuge House of any changes or updates in the child(ren)/young adults' psychological, educational, or medical/dental situation.
- 11) Immediately notify agency employees of plans to move their residence, prior to the completion of the adoption.
- 12) Participate in and attend the child/young adult's Adoption Plan of Service development and reviews. Be responsible for carrying out their portion of the child/young adult's plan of service.
- 13) Adhere to Refuge House policies and procedures, RCCL Minimum Standards, and Refuge House Adoption Placement Contract.
- 14) Agree to supervision of their adoptive home by Refuge House.
- 15) Provide Refuge House with current, accurate, and complete data and information concerning the children in their home in the form of verbal communication and required logs, reports, medication records, incident reports, or other required documentation on a monthly basis.
- 16) After the child(ren)/young adults has lived in the home at least 6 months, and if the Refuge House Adoption Worker agrees, the family is responsible for hiring an attorney who can finalize the adoption in court.

Refuge House Adoption Placement Contract will be signed by adoptive parents and RH Adoption Worker prior to the adoptive placement. A copy of the signed agreement will be provided to the adoptive parents, and an additional copy will be recorded in the child/young adult and adoptive home's file.

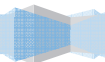
Refuge House is responsible for referring all adoptive families to Lutheran Social Services for enrollment in post-adoption services (once an adoption has been consummated/finalized). Any time after the adoption is finalized/consummated until the child/young adult is 18 years old, the adoptive family will be responsible for contacting Refuge House if they require any further referrals for post-adoption services.

Both Refuge House and adoptive parents are expected to participate in two-way communication concerning all aspects of the needs of children/young adults in adoptive care prior to consummation.

CONSENT

Refuge House will obtain written approval from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) before formal presentation of information about a child/young adult is made to the prospective adoptive family. The managing conservator of a child/young adult (typically DFPS designee) and/or person legally authorized to consent for the placement of a child/young adult must sign an agreement upon placement of a child/young adult into an adoptive home.

Refuge House will provide required information for requests under the Interstate Compact for Placement of Children, when appropriate.



For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, Refuge House does not work with birth parents. All work with birth parents of children/young adults placed for adoption is done by the agency holding managing conservatorship of the child/young adult. If there is to be any exchange of information about the child(ren)/young adults between the adoptive parent and the birth parent, that exchange will be coordinated between a Refuge House employee and the birth parent's DFPS worker.

References

§749.3301, §749.3373, Adoption Contract Term VIII.13, Adoption Contract Term VIII.15

ADOPTION RECORDS

Refuge House will make available to the Department at reasonable times and for reasonable periods client records and other programmatic and/or financial records, etc. for reviewing and copying by the Department, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or their authorized representatives.

Before closing a record after an adoption has been consummated or disrupted, Refuge House will provide the Department with a copy of all case record information not previously forwarded to ensure that the Department has a complete case record. Refuge House understands that the Department will, upon the request of an adult adoptee, release the case record according to the confidentiality laws within the Texas Family Code.

Refuge House will retain active and inactive adoption and adoption-related case records permanently. In the case that Refuge House ceases operations, all active and inactive adoption case records will be transferred to the Department of State Health Services, Bureau of Vital Statistics. The adoption case records will be transferred within the time frame specified by the Bureau of Vital Statistics.

References

§749.585(a), §749.587, Adoption Contract Term VI.A, Adoption Contract Term VIII.26, Adoption Contract Term VIII.27

ADOPTION PLAN OF SERVICE

Refuge House will develop an Adoption Plan of Service within 30 days of a child/young adult or *sibling group's placement and update it as necessary and at least every six (6) months until consummation. If the adoption is not consummated/finalized within 12 months of the initial placement, Refuge House and the Department will review the placement and develop/review the child(ren)/young adults' Adoption Plan of Service. The child(ren)/young adults and their DFPS managing conservator (child/young adult's caseworker) are invited and encouraged to participate in the development and execution of their Adoption Plan of Service. As previously stated, adoptive parents are expected to participate and attend the child/young adult's Adoption Plan of Service development and reviews.

For children/young adults with a foster care service plan prior to preparation for adoption, the Adoption Plan of Service may be a continuation of the foster care service plan. However, the foster care service plan must be non-expired (current) and the permanency plan listed in the foster care service plan must be adoption. Additionally, needs related to adoption must be reassessed and documented in the Adoption Plan of Service at the time the child/young adult is accepted by family for adoptive placement. Needs related to adoption include: the needs of the child/young adult and adoptive family, and any other issue that affects the adoption.

For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, the parental rights of children/young adult in foster care are generally involuntarily terminated or relinquished. Therefore, Refuge House does not have contact with the birth family and therefore they will not be represented in the Adoption Plan of Service. However, in the case that parental rights are not involuntarily terminated or relinquished, the needs of the child/young adult's birth parents will be addressed in the Adoption Plan of Service.

In the event that an adoptive parent receives placement of a child/young adult with a significantly different cultural or ethnic background, Refuge House will ensure that the adoptive parent(s) is able to meet the specific needs of the child(ren)/young adults in care through additional training, education and/or mentoring by Refuge House employees or another experienced caregiver. Documentation of such training, education, counseling, and referrals/support services will be included in the child/young adult's Adoption Plan of Service.

The Adoption Plan of Service will include planned action(s) to meet the needs and issues outlined in the plan, as well as an estimated time frame to meet the permanency plan (consummation). Adoptive parents, the child(ren)/young adults, DFPS managing conservator and in the rare occurrence, **birth parents (if parental rights have not been relinquished or involuntarily terminated), will be informed of the services provided by Refuge House, as outlined in the Adoption Plan of Service. Confirmation of this will be documented by signatures of individuals participating in the Adoption Plan of Service. Signatures collected on the Adoption Plan of Service signature page include those of the adoptive parents, child(ren)/young adults' DFPS managing conservator, child/young adult, and, in some cases, the **birth parents' DFPS worker.

*If the sibling group will be placed for adoption into the same adoptive home.

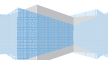
**Any communication with birth parents will be facilitated through the birth parents' DFPS worker.

References

§749.3321, §749.3323, §749.3325, §749.3327, Adoption Contract Term VIII.19, Adoption Contract Term VIII.21, Adoption Contract Term VIII.22

PREPARATION FOR ADOPTION

Children/young adults whose permanency plan is adoption need preparation for adoption. During the adoption preparation period, Refuge House will work with the child/young adult to address their understanding of adoption, including the child/young adult's thoughts about their birth parent's



inability to care for him/her, as well as their feelings about being adopted by their foster/adopt or adoptive family. The Refuge House Adoption Worker will evaluate the child(ren)/young adults' ability to develop within a family setting and relate to foster parents as adoptive parents. If there are other siblings in the home, Refuge House evaluates how the child/young adult relates to them. If the child/young adult has siblings in care that will be placed in the same adoptive home as well, Refuge House will explore the child/young adult's feelings about being placed with his/her siblings. When appropriate, Refuge House will also develop a plan of contact with the child/young adult's biological siblings and other family members, and/or other significant persons in the child/young adult's life.

Children/young adults age 12 and over must give written consent prior to the adoption and this consent must be documented and recorded in the child/young adult's record. The Refuge House adoption worker may use the child/young adult's life book to assist the child/young adult and the family in preparation for the upcoming adoption. If the child/young adult does not have a life book, Refuge House will assist the foster family and child/young adult in the preparation of a life book.

Documentation of the child/young adult's adoption preparation based on Refuge House's evaluations and discussions with the child/young adult regarding adoption, will be documented in Refuge House Preparation & Approval for Adoptive Placement form. This form will be filed in the child/young adult's adoption record.

CONTACT AND COUNSELING SERVICES

Contact with children/young adults being considered for adoptive placement will be established as follows:

- (i) Contact with the child/young adult must occur at least quarterly, must be meaningful, and must function to further prepare the child/young adult for adoption and obtain updated information concerning the adoption.
- (ii) For children 18 months of age and older, Refuge House employees make a minimum of 3 face-to-face contacts to prepare the child/young adult for adoption.
- (iii) For infants 0 to 18 months of age, at least one face-to-face contact is required.
- (iv) Contacts are documented in the child/young adult's adoption record.

Refuge House will ensure counseling services are arranged and maintained for children 2 years of age and older (unless otherwise indicated by the licensed professional providing counseling services). The counseling will occur based on the child/young adult's developmental level, service level, and psychiatric/psychological recommendations. Children/young adults participating in therapy may obtain some of their adoption preparation through counseling. The counseling to address preparation for adoption should include the child/young adult's: needs and level of understanding, knowledge and understanding of his/her history, understanding of difference between biological, foster, and adoptive parents, hopes and fears about adoption, separation and loss issues related to the child/young adult's birth family, and ability to form new attachments.

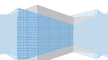
Documentation of pre-placement contacts with the child/young adult and adoptive family, as well as adoption preparation based on the child/young adult's progress in therapy, will be documented

in Refuge House Preparation & Approval for Adoptive Placement form. This form will be filed in the child/young adult's adoption record.

ASSESSMENTS AND REFERRALS

1. Refuge House will obtain professional assessments of the physical, mental, and emotional status of a child/young adult being considered for adoption as well as a developmental assessment.
2. The assessments must be completed according to the following schedule:
 - a. Within 30 days of placement (including the day of placement) for children 0 to 18 months;
 - b. Within 3 months of placement (including the day of placement) for children 18 months to 5 years of age; and
 - c. Within 6 months of placement (including the day of placement) for children ages 5 years and older.
3. In addition, Refuge House will provide any recommended testing for the child/young adult being considered for adoption.
4. The assessments and results will be documented in the child(ren)/young adults' adoption record.
5. The extent of the professional assessment will depend upon the age, history, and special needs of the child/young adult being considered.
 - a. From 0-18 months with normal development:
 - i. Medical examination by a licensed physician within 30 days prior to placement if there is no history of abuse, neglect, failure to thrive.
 - b. From 0-18 months with physical or mental handicapping conditions, developmental delays or history of abuse, neglect, failure to thrive:
 - i. Medical examination by a licensed physician within 30 days prior to placement.
 - ii. Evaluation by a professional credentialed in the area appropriate to the child/young adult's needs within 30 days prior to placement or scheduled by the date of placement.
 - iii. Full information must be made available to the adoptive family from the licensed physician about the potential impact on the child/young adult of existing conditions.
 - c. For older children/young adults (over 18 months of age):
 - i. Medical examination.
 - ii. Assessment by a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or other appropriately licensed or credentialed professional within the time frames in the standard.
 - iii. Any further testing or assessments recommended by these professionals must be scheduled by the date of placement, with full information to the adoptive family from the referring professional about the potential impact on the child/young adult of existing conditions.

If the above listed professional assessments have been completed since the child/young adult was placed in the home (i.e. a foster to adopt child/young adult currently in the care of Refuge House), it is not necessary to repeat them.



Documentation proving the date of and type of assessment(s) completed on the child/young adult will be documented in Refuge House Preparation & Approval for Adoptive Placement form. This form will be filed in the child(ren)/young adults' adoption record.

The definition of 'scheduling' includes the recommendations of professionals for further testing and evaluation that cannot be accomplished given the child/young adult's chronological or developmental age at time of placement. For example, recommending that a child/young adult's IQ be evaluated on a standard instrument in two year's time meets the intent of the standard.

In the event that the adoptive child/young adult being placed into a Refuge House adoptive family is already placed in foster care with Refuge House, the child/young adult who have or may have a disability will be referred to the Social Security Administration to determine eligibility for Social Security Income (SSI). SSI, as well as other necessary service referrals, will be documented in the child/young adult's Adoption Plan of Service.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE CHILD/YOUNG ADULT

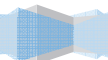
Prospective adoptive parents have the right to important information about the child(ren)/young adults. Refuge House will obtain and document all available information regarding the child(ren)/young adults being considered for adoption and provide it to the prospective adoptive parents. Refuge House will ensure that the impact of the adoptive placement of a special needs child/young adult on the adoptive family will be thoroughly discussed with the adoptive family. Documentation of any and all information regarding the child(ren)/young adults being considered for adoption will be filed in the child(ren)/young adults' adoption record(s). This includes:

1. Abuse or neglect history, health history, social history, educational history, genetic and family history, including any other information required by the Minimum Standards and Texas Family Code (40);
2. History of any previous placements, including dates and reasons for placements;
3. The child/young adult's understanding of the adoptive placement; and
4. The child/young adult's legal status.

For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, Refuge House does not have contact with birth parents. Therefore, most information regarding the child(ren)/young adults will be obtained from the Department (the agency holding managing conservatorship of the child(ren)/young adults) and/or person(s) legally authorized as conservator of the child(ren)/young adults. Refuge House will work closely with DFPS to obtain and compile the above information on the child/young adult. Requests made by Refuge House to obtain the above listed information from DFPS will be made in the form of e-mail and/or other written communication. E-mail and written Agency requests will be documented in the child/young adult's adoption record.

References

§749.3341, §749.3343, §749.3347, §749.3349, §749.3351, §749.3353, §749.3391, Adoption Contract Term VIII.12, Adoption Contract Term VIII.14



ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Children/young adults older than one month will have at least one visit with the adoptive family (including the entire adoptive home household members) prior to placement. Refuge House and DFPS will arrange and provide an initial face-to-face pre-placement visit and a minimum of one overnight pre-placement visit between child(ren)/young adults and prospective adoptive family. An overnight visit is required unless waived in writing by DFPS. In order to assist the child(ren)/young adults in the transition, as many pre-placement visits as are necessary will be arranged as agreed upon by Refuge House and DFPS, and documented in the Preparation & Approval for Adoptive Placement form (under signature approval by Refuge House CPMS).

Prior to placing an adoptive child/young adult into the home, Refuge House will obtain a written agreement with the adoptive parents. A signed copy of this agreement, referred to as the Adoption Placement Contract, will be given to the adoptive parents and a copy of the signed agreement will be placed in the child/young adult's and adoptive home's records. The contract specifies the following:

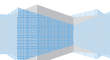
- 1) Agree with Refuge House to complete the adoption at a specified time and within a specific timeframe.
- 2) Agree to supervision by Refuge House during the time prior to completion of the adoption.
- 3) Notify Refuge House before traveling with the child/young adult outside of Texas prior to the completion of the adoption.
- 4) Can return the child/young adult to Refuge House at the discretion of either the adoptive parents or Refuge House before the adoption is completed.

Refuge House Adoption Worker will visit the child(ren)/young adults and the adoptive family according to child/young adult and family needs. Upon placement of a child/young adult with and adoptive family, Refuge House employees will make the first home visit within 2 weeks. Subsequent visits will be face-to-face with the child/young adult and the adoptive family at least once a month during the first six months of placement or more frequently according to need. If the adoption is not consummated within the first 6 months of placement, monthly contact must continue unless DFPS has approved a different visitation schedule in writing. Documentation of contact/visitation with the child(ren)/young adults and adoptive family will be recorded in Refuge House's Adoption Supervision Narrative form (under signature approval by Refuge House CPMS).

Refuge House shall obtain in advance DFPS written consent that an adoption is in the best interest of the child/young adult and should be consummated. This consent requires that Refuge House has supervised the child/young adult in the adoptive placement for at least 6 months and has provided the required written reports about the placement. All other legal requirements must be met. DFPS may provide written waiver of the above requirements if the child/young adult is in foster/adopt placement.

References

§749.3371, §749.3373, §749.3425, Adoption Contract Term VIII.16, Adoption Contract Term VIII.20, Adoption Contract Term VIII.25



REQUIRED INFORMATION

Before placing a child/young adult in the adoptive home, Refuge House will provide adoptive parents with accurate, current, and objective information to allow adoptive parents to make informed decisions regarding the placement of a child/young adult into their home. Refuge House will discuss information about the child(ren)/young adults and their birth parents with the adoptive parents. Prior to or at the time of placement, Refuge House will also provide written information to the adoptive parents that include all available information on the child and his family (excluding confidential/identifying information, if appropriate). This information is contained in the documentation provided from DFPS and includes the child/young adult's complete case record and an opportunity to review the child/young adult's de-identified Health, Social, Education, and Genetic History (HSEGH) reports (as according to Texas Family Code §162.006).

By the time of placement, Refuge House will provide the adoptive parents with:

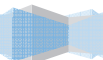
- A. Written authorization to care for the child/young adult;
- B. Written information if the child/young adult is not completely free for adoption at the time of the placement;
- C. Written consent for the medical care of the child/young adult at the time of the child/young adult's placement in the home;
- D. Information regarding the DFPS adoption assistance program (if the adoptive family is eligible for such assistance).

Copies of all authorizations and consent forms will be documented in the child/young adult and adoptive home record(s).

Prospective adoptive parents have the right to important information about the child(ren)/young adults. Refuge House will obtain and document all available information regarding the child(ren)/young adults being considered for adoption and provide it to the prospective adoptive parents. Refuge House will ensure that the impact of the adoptive placement of a special needs child/young adult on the adoptive family will be thoroughly discussed with the adoptive family. Documentation of any and all information regarding the child(ren)/young adults being considered for adoption will be filed in the child(ren)/young adults' adoption record(s). This includes:

- 1. Abuse or neglect history, health history, social history, educational history, genetic and family history, including any other information required by the Minimum Standards and Texas Family Code (40);
- 2. History of any previous placements, including dates and reasons for placements;
- 3. The child/young adult's understanding of adoptive placement; and
- 4. The child/young adult's legal status.

For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, Refuge House does not have contact with birth parents. Therefore, most information regarding the child(ren)/young adults will be obtained from DFPS (the agency holding managing conservatorship of the child(ren)/young adults) and/or person(s) legally authorized as conservator of the child(ren)/young adults. Refuge House will work closely with DFPS to obtain and compile the above information. Requests made by Refuge House to obtain the above listed information from DFPS will be made in the form of e-mail and/or other written



communication. E-mail and written Agency requests will be documented in the child/young adult's adoption record.

References

§749.3391, §749.3393, §749.3395, Adoption Contract Term VIII.12, Adoption Contract Term VIII.14

POST-PLACEMENT SUPERVISION AND PRE-ADOPTION CONSUMMATION ACTIVITIES

POST-PLACEMENT SUPERVISION PERIOD

Upon placement of a child/young adult into a Refuge House adoptive home, Refuge House will assign an Adoption Worker to the adoptive home (including child/young adult, adoptive parents, and household members). Refuge House will continue to monitor and assess the child(ren)/young adults' needs, and make every effort to maintain or update the progress of the child(ren)/young adults' Adoption Plan of Service.

During the post-placement supervision period, Refuge House will:

1. Maintain responsibility for the child(ren)/young adults until the court has entered the adoption decree.
2. Offer counseling services to the adoptive family (including child(ren)/young adults and adoptive parents). These services will be provided through referrals outside Refuge House or by Refuge House employees.
3. Ensure that the children/young adult's needs are met in the adoptive placement.
4. Produce an Adoption Plan of Service within 30 days of the child(ren)/young adults' placement and update/review it as necessary and every 6 months until the adoption is consummated/finalized.
5. Produce written reports to Refuge House that maintains the managing conservatorship of the child(ren)/young adults until the adoption is consummated. Refuge House will report any serious incidents regarding the child(ren) in the adoptive placement to DFPS by the next workday.
6. Make every effort to ensure that the child(ren)/young adult's adoption is consummated within the time frame stated on the Adoption Placement Contract. If the adoption is not consummated within the specified time on the Adoption Placement Contract, Refuge House will renegotiate another timeframe for when the adoption(s) will be consummated/finalized.
7. Document any changes in the adoptive family in health, financial condition, or composition, which may affect the child(ren)/young adults. In order to comply with their Adoptive Placement Contract, adoptive parents are required to report these changes to Refuge House in a timely manner.

To ensure that the needs of the children/young adults placed for adoption are being met, post-placement supervision will include:

- 1) A home visit with the adoptive child/young adult and family within two weeks of placement to be conducted by Refuge House; and

- 2) Monthly face-to-face contact with the adoptive family and child(ren)/young adults during the first six months of placement (or more frequently according to the needs of the child/young adult and adoptive family):
 - a) For children under the age of two (2) with no special needs, Refuge House will have a minimum of five (5) supervisory contacts with the adoptive parents within the first six (6) months of placement. Two (2) contacts will be face-to-face with the entire family. At least one (1) of these contacts will be in the adoptive home. Post-placement contacts will be documented. Three (3) of the required five (5) contacts may be done with one adoptive parent and may be done by telephone.
 - b) For children/young adults with special needs and children ages two (2) years or older, Refuge House will have monthly face to face contacts with the adoptive family during the first six (6) months.
 - i) Two of these contacts must be in the adoptive home, with the entire family.
 - ii) Four of the required 6 monthly contacts must be fact-to-face, but may be with one adoptive parent and may be in a location other than the home. Post-placement contacts will be documented.

Documentation of contact/visitation with the child(ren)/young adults and adoptive family will be recorded in Refuge House's Adoption Supervision Narrative form (under signature approval by Agency CPMS).

PRE-ADOPTION CONSUMMATION ACTIVITIES

If the adoption is not consummated within the first 6 months of placement, monthly contact with the child(ren)/young adults and adoptive family must continue unless DFPS has approved a different visitation schedule in writing. In this event, however, Refuge House must have at least quarterly face-to-face contacts in the adoptive home until the adoption decree is entered. Quarterly contacts after the first 6 months of placement must be face-to-face, in the adoptive home, and include both adoptive parents and all other household members. Additionally, Refuge House will assess why the adoption will not be completed within the first 6 months of placement. The assessment will be documented by an update/review to the child(ren)/young adults' Adoption Plan of Service and will include:

- 1) Input by any Refuge House employees involved in the child(ren)/young adults' adoptive placement and associated activities concerning the child(ren)/young adults, professionals who provided counseling for the entire adoptive family, and any other professional involved with the entire adoptive family (including, but not limited to: ECI providers, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, DFPS personnel, Attorney Ad-Litem, CASA, etc.); and
- 2) Plan for finalization/consummation of the adoption, as well as supervision of the placement, based on Refuge House's assessment.

The Department retains managing conservatorship of the child(ren)/young adults until an adoption is consummated. If the adoption is not consummated/finalized within a year after the initial placement, Refuge House and DFPS must review the placement and develop/review the Adoption Plan of Service together.

The adoption may be disrupted by the decision of Refuge House, the adoptive parents, or the Department. If the placement is unsatisfactory and/or not in the best interest of the child/young adult, Refuge House will remove the child(ren)/young adults from the adoptive home. The decision to remove the child(ren)/young adults must be reviewed and approved by Refuge House CPMS prior to the removal and in consultation with the DFPS caseworker for the child/young adult. Refuge House will inform the Department of significant or pertinent problems that arise in the adoptive placement within 5 working days after Refuge House becomes aware of the problem. Refuge House will work with DFPS to plan for another placement for the child(ren)/young adults if an adoptive placement is disrupted. Planning will include a review of available resources before another placement is selected.

As part of the Adoptive Placement Contract, adoptive parents agree to:

- 1) To provide sufficient advance written notification to Refuge House of a request to remove the child(ren)/young adults from their home, except in cases where the child/young adult is a danger to self or to others or exhibits volatile or self-injurious behaviors that are inappropriate for the program of service and requires a placement in another setting;
- 2) To work with the Refuge House to help prevent a disruption through counseling, behavior management, and/or other strategies developed as a team;
- 3) To cooperate with Refuge House, should a disruption occur, in a way that serves the best interest of the child(ren)/young adults under the judgment of Refuge House. This includes sending the child(ren)/young adults with all of his/her belongings at the time of the move, including his/her life book/picture book, and any items/gifts given to the child(ren)/young adults during placement.
- 4) To return the child/young adult to Refuge House if in the opinion of Refuge House the best interests of the child(ren)/young adults require it.

If a child/young adult comes back into Refuge House care, circumstances necessitating this and the child(ren)/young adults' needs will be documented in the child(ren)/young adults' record and include applicable updates to the child(ren)/young adults' Adoption Plan of Service.

References

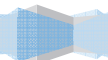
§749.3421, §749.3423, §749.3425, §749.3427, §749.3429, §749.3431, §749.3461, §749.3721, §749.3725, §749.3727, §749.3729, §749.3741, Adoption Contract Term VIII.20, Adoption Contract Term VIII.21, Adoption Contract Term VIII.22, Adoption Contract Term VIII.28, Adoption Contract Term VIII.29

SUBSEQUENT ADOPTIONS

Before a subsequent placement is made into an adoptive home, the adoptive home screening must be updated within 30 days of the adoptive placement.

The adoptive home screening update for a subsequent placement will include:

- 1) At least one individual interview with each applicant (applies to individuals ages 3 and older residing in the adoptive home either full time or part time);
- 2) At least one visit to the home when all members of the household are present;



- 3) Observation of the adjustment of the children in the family and how the children feel about the addition of another child/young adult and/or children;
- 4) Updates on all areas addressed in the original adoptive home screening.

Refuge House will ensure that all other requirements for an adoptive placement are completed in the case of subsequent placements. In the case that a subsequent adoption occurs within one year of a previous adoption with Refuge House (upon agency confirmation that the prior adoption had all of the required home visits and interviews conducted), individual interviews with the adoptive parents and a home visit with all household members will suffice in meeting the subsequent adoption interviewing and home visit requirements.

References

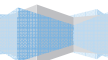
§749.3761

POST-ADOPTION SERVICES

After the adoption is consummated/finalized, Refuge House will offer counseling services to the adoptive child(ren)/young adults and the adoptive family. These services may be provided through referrals outside of Refuge House. For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, Refuge House does not work with birth parents. All work with birth parents of children placed for adoption is done by the agency holding managing conservatorship of the child/young adult. All counseling referrals for birth parents of children/young adults placed for adoption is done through communication with the DFPS worker of the birth parent(s), and is detailed further in the following section, title "Adoption Services- Birth Parents". Refuge House will document that counseling (post-adoption services) were offered to the adoptive child(ren)/young adults and adoptive family.

Refuge House will make diligent efforts to inform adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee, in writing, about any supplemental medical, psychological, or psychiatric information that subsequently comes to Refuge House's attention. Such birth parent information includes developing genetic conditions, terminal illnesses, or death. This information will be communicated to the adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee, provided that Refuge House is kept informed of their whereabouts. When Refuge House receives information about the specified topics from a birth parent, at a minimum, Refuge House will:

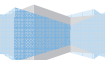
- Write a letter the adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee at their last known mailing address;
- If the letter is returned to Refuge House as undeliverable, Refuge House will check the public telephone directory or search the Internet for the city where the adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee were last known living;
- If Refuge House continues to struggle in locating the family, Refuge House will check the record for contact information on the adoptive parents' and/or adult adoptee's family members or others that may have knowledge of their whereabouts. If contact information is discovered, Refuge House will attempt to contact these persons in order to obtain forwarding contact information of the adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee.



- Attempts to locate any of the above specified parties in this policy will be documented. Refuge House will document when any information on the adoptee's birth parents (as outlined in this policy) is given to adult adoptees and adoptive parents. Successful communication to adoptive parents and/or adult adoptees of birth parent information will be documented by Refuge House. The documentation must state the information provided to the adoptive parents and/or adult adoptee, the date and method of providing the information, and the names of the individuals receiving the information.
- Upon request by an adult adoptee, Refuge House will provide the adult adoptee with a de-identified copy of the adoption report. The report will include the county and court of jurisdiction for the adoption. If an adoptee is less than 18 years of age, the request for the information must come from or must include the written consent of the child/young adult's adoptive parents or managing conservator.

References

§749.3423, §749.3461, §749.3463, §749.3465, §749.3571(a)(c), §749.3741, TAC §162.006



ADOPTION SERVICES - BIRTH PARENTS

For DFPS-sponsored adoptions, Refuge House does not work with birth parents. All work with birth parents of children/young adults placed for adoption is done by the agency holding managing conservatorship of the child/young adult. All adoption services, as discussed below, for birth parents of children/young adults placed for adoption is done through communication with the DFPS worker of the birth parent(s).

Refuge House will make diligent efforts to inform the birth parents of the adoptive child(ren)/young adults, in writing, about any supplemental medical, psychological, or psychiatric information that subsequently comes to Refuge House's attention. Such child/young adult information includes developing genetic conditions, terminal illnesses, or death. Refuge House will contact the former managing conservator of the child/young adult, DFPS, in an attempt to locate the birth parents. This information will be communicated to the birth parents, provided that Refuge House is kept informed of their whereabouts.

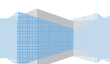
Attempts to locate the birth parents of the adoptive child(ren)/young adults will be documented. Refuge House will document when any information on the adoptee's birth parents (as outlined in this policy) is given to adult adoptees and adoptive parents.

Successful communication of adoptive child/young adult information to the birth parents will be documented by Refuge House. The documentation must state the information provided to the birth parents, the date and method of providing the information, and the names of the individuals receiving the information.

Upon establishing a formal relationship with birth parents, Refuge House will provide the following information to them in writing:

- 1) Alternatives and options to adoption that Agency policies do not oppose;
- 2) The services provided, including counseling and post-adoption services;
- 3) Adoption registries;
- 4) Legal rights and responsibilities of both birth parents, in regard to:
 - i) Relinquishment of parental rights;
 - ii) Waivers of Interest;
 - iii) Affidavit of status;
 - iv) Termination of parental rights;
 - v) Designating the father of a child/young adult as "unknown" based on legal requirements;
 - vi) Paternity registry requirements; and
- 5) Any assistance available through Refuge House to meet housing, medical, and prenatal care and other needs.

- Refuge House will provide and discuss this information (in written form only) to birth parents in a language that they understand. Refuge House will document



the Who provides supervision and transportation of the child/young adult to, during, and from each activity

the information was shared with the birth parents and Refuge House employee(s) that shared the information.

The Refuge House Adoption Worker(s) must have at least two face-to-face contacts with birth parents prior to the relinquishment of parental rights over a period of two or more days. At least one interview must be held after the birth of the child/young adult. If face-to-face contact with the birth father is not feasible, Refuge House must document justification for contacts that are not face-to-face; and except in cases of relinquishment or involuntary termination of parental rights, quarterly contact with birth parents prior to placement of the child/young adult. If these contacts cannot be made, Refuge House will document that reasonable efforts to locate the absent parent have been exercised, and why the contacts could not be made.

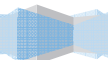
Contacts made by Refuge House to the birth parents must assist birth parents in understanding their feelings regarding relinquishing the child/young adult for adoption and the long range implications of relinquishing the child/young adult for adoption. The birth parent must freely make a choice regarding relinquishing the child/young adult to Refuge House for adoption and Refuge House must ensure that birth parents are not pressured to make a decision to place their child/young adult for adoption. Refuge House must obtain information from birth parents about their expectations for adoptive placement (if placement is chosen) and the degree and type of involvement, if any, they desire with adoptive family. Contact by Refuge House with the birth parents will assist the birth parents to obtain the required the Health, Social, Educational, and Genetic History Report (HSEGH). A birth parent who signs an affidavit of involuntary relinquishment of parental rights regarding a biological child/young adult must prepare a medical history report form. If the managing conservatorship of the adoptive child(ren)/young adults is Child Protective Services, DFPS will maintain the HSEGH Report and make it available to persons with whom the child(ren)/young adults is placed. DFPS will provide the updated HSEGH Report to Refuge House. The following topics must be discussed with the birth parents:

- Preparation for childbirth, when applicable;
- Relinquishment or waiver of parental rights;
- Termination of parental rights;
- Counseling in regard to separation, loss, and grief issues; and
- Agency employees providing the service must document all contacts with birth parents.

Refuge House will comply with all state and federal law regarding termination of parental rights, including Chapter 161 of the Texas Family Code.

References

§749.3501, §749.3503, §749.3521, §749.3523, §749.3571, §749.3573, Texas Family Code §161.1031



ADOPTION SERVICES - ADOPTIVE PARENTS

ADOPTIVE APPLICANT PREPARATION

Prior to establishing a formal relationship with prospective adoptive parents, Refuge House will provide written information regarding:

1. Services Refuge House provides;
2. Fee policies and payment procedures;
3. Required foster/adoptive parent, adopt only parent, and caregiver pre-requisites, pre-service requirements, procedures and any other Agency requirements;
4. Legal requirements for adoption, including an adoptive parent's right to have independent legal counsel for legal consummation. Refuge House requires that the legal counsel selected by the adoptive parents be experienced in adoptions; and
5. Adoption registries.

References

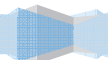
§749.3601

PRE-ADOPTIVE HOME SCREENING

CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTING ADOPTIVE PARENT APPLICATIONS:

Refuge House will consider prospective applicants to the foster and adoption programs without discrimination due to race, sex, national origin and handicap. Applicants will be considered based upon the need of Refuge House and the foster and adoptive parent's ability to meet the needs of the type of child(ren)/young adults served by Refuge House. Couples or individuals interested in adopting a child/young adult through Refuge House will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Prospective adoptive parents should be interested in a child/young adult who has been referred to Refuge House for adoptive placement from a state's Child Protective Services.
- 2) Married or single applicants may apply. Married applicants must have been married at least one year prior to the adoptive home screening.
- 3) Refuge House will not approve foster and adoptive parent applicants who are the same gender (un-related) and live in the same household.
- 4) Prospective adoptive parents must be at least 21 years of age.
- 5) Prospective adoptive parents should live in Region 3. Applicants living outside of Region 3 will be considered on a case-by-case basis according to the needs and resources of Refuge House.
- 6) Refuge House will accept applicants who are infertile, as well as couples who are able to have biological children.



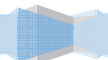
- 7) Prospective adoptive parents must be responsible, mature, stable, healthy adults capable of meeting the needs of children/young adults in care. A completed and signed physician's statement stating the adoptive parent applicant is in good health is required for each adoptive parent applicant. A therapist's statement may also be requested by Refuge House during the screening process.
- 8) Prospective adoptive parents must have a high school diploma/GED and/or exhibit intellectual capability to understand and utilize training and to meet the needs of children/young adults. This capability will be assessed by a designated Refuge House employee and will be further demonstrated by the adoptive parent applicant(s) through completion of pre-service training and Agency observation during the screening process.
- 9) Prospective adoptive parents and each person 14 years or older, who will regularly or frequently be present at the adoptive home (including biological children) or have ongoing contact with the adoptive family must agree to a DPS and DFPS criminal history/central registry background check, which includes searches of different databases:
 - a) Criminal history checks conducted by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for crimes committed in the state of Texas;
 - b) Central registry checks conducted by DFPS. The central registry is a database of people who have been found by Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, or Licensing to have abused or neglected a child/young adult; and
 - c) Criminal history checks conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for crimes committed anywhere in the United State (on persons who live outside of Texas or about whom there is reason to believe other criminal history exists). *These checks are completed to determine whether: (1) A person has any criminal or abuse and neglect history; and (2) His/her presence is a risk to the health or safety of children in care. All prospective adoptive parents and each person 14 years or older, who will regularly or frequently be present at the adoptive home or have contact with the adoptive family (including biological children), must receive a cleared FBI criminal history check prior to the home being approved for adoption. Any positive matches between these individuals and the databases will be evaluated according to the RCCL Minimum Standards.*
- 10) Prospective adoptive parents must be willing to attend and participate in pre-service training prior to placement of a child/young adult in the home.
- 11) Individuals applying to be adoptive parents must have a social security number. A determination as to the appropriateness of the prospect that is not a U.S. citizen will be made through Refuge House's screening process. However, additional verification, as indicated below, is required and will be obtained at the time of the home study interview:
 - a) A copy of the adoptive parent applicant's proof of citizenship status (permanent resident, temporary visa, green card, etc.).
 - b) Length of time residence maintained in the U.S.
 - c) Reasons for relocating to the U.S.
 - d) Plans to return to native country (visits or other reasons, including explanation of circumstances that would require a return home if they do not have current plans to return, etc.).

- e) Location of adoptive parent applicant's extended family; type of communication adoptive parent applicants have with their extended family; feelings of extended family regarding residency decisions and desire to foster or adopt.
- f) Evaluation of adoptive parent applicant's stability (residence history, employment history, etc.).
- g) Recommendations from people who have known the adoptive parent applicant(s) for an extended period of time (at least one year) and can confirm stability.
- h) Information regarding cultural customs/practices and beliefs that differ from those practiced in the U.S. will be gathered to determine ability to care for the children served by this Agency, especially as they relate to medical care, education, discipline, expectations, religious beliefs, etc.
- i) Information on the celebration of holidays recognized in the adoptive parent applicant's home will be gathered. U.S. and/or Christian holidays will be addressed, particularly regarding the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in December and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ at Easter. As a Christian agency, Refuge House places emphasis on acknowledging and celebrating the above mentioned holidays.

SCREENING AND SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS:

Refuge House will screen and select prospective adoptive parent (single licensed) applicants and foster to adopt parent (dual licensed) applicants as follows:

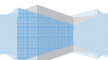
- 1) Refuge House will conduct the initial screening through a telephone interview with prospective adoptive parent(s). During the telephone screening, Refuge House will determine if the prospective adoptive parent(s) meets the initial criteria (listed under "Criteria.." sub-section, #1-6).
- 2) If the prospective adoptive parent(s) meets the initial criteria, Refuge House sends them a packet of information. Included in this packet is a survey, Consent to Background Investigation form, Release of Information form, and a Physician's Statement form. The packet also contains information pertaining specifically to Refuge House, as well as a list of documentation to begin collecting (see below).
- 3) Once the prospective adoptive parent(s) completes the survey and returns it to Refuge House, Agency employees will go to the home to conduct an initial orientation at which time agency policies and procedures are discussed, and the prospective adoptive parent(s) is provided the opportunity to ask questions. During this time, qualification criteria (listed under "Criteria.." sub-section, #6-13) will be evaluated.
- 4) Following the home visit and Agency orientation, if the prospective adoptive parent(s) and Refuge House both agree to continue having a working relationship and the prospective adoptive parent(s) meets criteria (listed under "Criteria.." sub-section, #1-11), then the prospective adoptive parent(s) will be invited to attend Refuge House's pre-service training.
- 5) Each prospective adoptive parent(s) is given an application for completion during the time of the pre-service training.
- 6) Prospective adoptive parent(s) may turn in the requested documentation at any point during this process, but prior to the home screening.



- 7) Once the survey and application is received, and pre-service training has been successfully completed, the applicant will be assigned to a qualified Refuge House employee who will complete the prospective adoptive home's Pre-Adoptive Home Screening.
- 8) Throughout this process, the applicant will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with Refuge House's mission and to participate openly in the home screening process. This will be shown by the adoptive parent applicant(s) providing information requested in the survey, application, subsequent interviews, and other information required by Chapter §749 of Minimum Standards, the Department's policies (CPSH 7000), and Refuge House policies.
- 9) Refuge House will request and evaluate the background information from any child-placing agency that previously verified the applicants as a foster home or approved them as an adoptive home. Such background information from previous agencies includes, but is not limited to: the home screening and related documentation, documentation of supervisory visits and evaluations, any record of deficiencies and their resolutions, information related to the parent's experience and performance as foster and/or adoptive parents, most current fire and health inspections, and any background information regarding the foster/adoptive home as described in §749.2447(22) of this title. This information will be used in the evaluation of the prospective adoptive family's ability to work with specific kinds of behaviors and backgrounds.

DOCUMENTATION NEEDED DURING THE EVALUATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS:

- 1) Completed and signed survey.
- 2) Completed and signed application from each parent.
- 3) Copy of current driver's license, indicating that applicant is age 21 or over.
- 4) Completed Consent to Background Investigation form from each applicant, other adults in the home and children/young adult household members ages 14 and older, to conduct a background investigation, including a DPS criminal history check, DFPS central registry check, and FBI criminal history check (if the individual is 18 years of age or over).
- 5) A general Release of Information form signed by each applicant (if previously applied, approved, or verified as a foster or adoptive home).
- 6) At least two letters of reference (three preferred). References may include family members, friends, supervisor(s), and co-workers of the adoptive parent applicant(s).
- 7) Documentation of prospective adoptive parent training verifying the required hours and type of training as it relates to the needs of the type of children they will be caring for. Pre-service training requirements are determined by whether or not the adoptive parents wish to foster to adopt (which enables them to accept children for placement whose parental rights have not been terminated), the type of child/young adult being cared for, and the prospective adoptive parent's responsibilities. Documentation of supervised child care experience: 5 hours for basic care, 8 hours for therapeutic moderate care, 40 hours for therapeutic specialized care.
- 8) Vehicle liability insurance (must be current and up to date).
- 9) Marriage verification.
- 10) Verification of each divorce (if applicable).
- 11) Death certificates of spouse (if applicable).



- 12) Pet vaccinations (must be current and up to date).
- 13) Copy of floor plan, labeling dimensions and purposes of each room, also identifying fire escape plan.
- 14) Fire inspection, indicating no deficiencies.
- 15) Health inspection, indicating no deficiencies.
- 16) Proof of medical and life insurance and proof of financial stability.
- 17) Signed Statement of Faith form.

SUITABILITY OF ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS:

The suitability and appropriateness for a family, couple, or individual to be approved as adoptive parents will be determined by the content of interviews, documents provided and obtained during the application process and professional observation. Criteria for making decisions about the number, ages and needs of children/young adults who may be placed with foster/adoptive parents will be determined from the following:

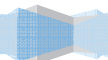
- 1) Ages in which the prospective adoptive parent(s) have had experience with or received prior training.
- 2) Evaluations from Refuge House employee(s) conducting the orientation and the pre-service training.
- 3) Recommendations made by Refuge House employee(s) conducting the home screening based upon the evaluation material utilized during the interview process.
- 4) Individual assessments of the adoptive parent applicant(s) to determine the most appropriate placement with regard to age, special needs, gender, number of children/young adults, etc.
- 5) Prospective adoptive parent(s) may wish to be dual licensed as foster to adopt homes, rather than straight adopt homes. These families foster with the intent of potentially adopting a foster child/young adult. Foster/adoptive parents operate on the basis of the Adoption Placement Contract with Refuge House. Foster/adoptive parents are responsible for providing substantial, direct service with special emphasis on creating a home-like atmosphere with warmth and sufficient structure. Foster/adopt parent roles include many functions which would ordinarily be done by natural parents; contributing to staff conferences; participation in supervisory conferences and in-service training; planning and supervision of recreational experiences for children/young adults; and parent conferences as they relate to the educational program of children/young adults in residence.

Refuge House will accommodate placement in a prospective foster/adopt or adoptive parent's home prior to the pre-adoptive home screening completion only in these cases:

1. The prospective parent is a member of the child/young adult's family related by the second degree of consanguinity or affinity; or
2. Foster family with whom the child/young adult has been living immediately prior to the request for a pre-adoptive home screening.

Refuge House will complete a written pre-adoptive home screening update.

References



§749.3621, §749.3623, §749.3625, §749.3627, §749.3629, §749.3631, §749.3633, §745.4067, §745.4073, Adoption Contract Term VIII.7

BASIC CARE AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Before placing a child/young adult into the adoptive home, Refuge House requires documentation of DPS and DFPS criminal history checks on all individuals 14 years and older (in addition, FBI checks for individuals 18 and older), a floor plan of the home showing the dimensions and purposes of all the rooms, and sketches or photos of the grounds to be used by the child/young adult. If the home is already providing foster care, the foster care home screening information will be used, and updated as necessary to provide the most current and accurate information of the foster/adoptive home and household members.

Refuge House will provide reading materials to the adoptive family regarding health and safety issues, depending upon the age and needs of the specific child/young adult or children/young adults to be placed. Refuge House will then follow up with the adoptive parents to ensure that they have read, understood and implemented the material. This information is contained in the "Handbook and Resource Guide for Foster and Adoptive Parents." This information is contained in the Refuge House Caregiver Handbook for foster care and adoption parents, substitute caregivers, and babysitters.

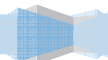
Refuge House will discuss basic care and safety issues with the adoptive parents and ensure that the home provides an environment safe for the child/young adult or children/young adults to be placed. This will include firearm safety, water safety, storage of medication, and basic home health and fire safety.

This preparation will be accomplished during pre-service training, and during Refuge House employee visits to the home during the home screening process. Refuge House will make an assessment of the home, which includes basic health and safety factors. Refuge House will utilize basic home health and fire safety checklists when inspections are not available.

Refuge House will determine during the application and home screening process whether the potential adoptive family has firearms in the home, and if so, what precautions have been taken to protect children/young adults. This will be physically verified by Refuge House staff during the home screening visit and addressed in the home screening document.

This preparation will be accomplished during pre-service training, and during Refuge House employee visits to the home during the home screening process. Refuge House will make an assessment of the home, which includes basic health and safety factors. Refuge House will utilize basic home health and fire safety checklists when inspections are not available.

Refuge House will determine during the application and home screening process whether or not there is a pool or other body of water on or adjacent to the property and if so, what safety measures and precautions are in place. This will be addressed in the home screening document.



Refuge House will also verify storage of poisonous/flammable substances; ensuring children are protected from such substances. Storage of prescription, over the counter, and psychotropic medication will also be verified during the home screening to ensure they are out of reach of children.

A prospective adoptive home may not be approved for adoption placements until all of the above described safety precautions are followed.

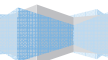
References

§749.1803-1817, §749.1841, §749.2909, §749.2911, §749.2913, §749.2915, §749.3039, §749.3101, §749.3103, §749.3111, §749.3133, §749.3661, §749.3663

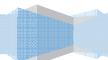
AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES - PRE AND POST-CONSUMMATION

Refuge House employees will:

- 1) Educate and assess prospective adoptive parents about:
 - a) Separation and attachment issues;
 - b) Dynamics and impact of abuse and neglect on children/young adults and their development;
 - c) Behaviors exhibited by children/young adults who have experienced the trauma of abuse, neglect, and removal from their birth families;
 - d) Age appropriate non-physical discipline for children/young adults with a history of abuse and neglect;
 - e) Availability and use of community resources to strengthen the support network of the adoptive family as well as encourage advocacy for their adopted children/young adults;
 - f) Sexuality and its manifestations in children/young adults who have been abused and neglected; and
 - g) Health, disabilities, and attitudes toward children/young adults with emotional or physical disabilities including addressing their expectations of and for a child/young adult with disabilities.
- 2) Complete and submit the NON-DFPS Adoptive Home Registration, Form 2238, upon the completion of the adoptive home screening in order to ensure that an adoptive family may be considered for the adoption of the Department's children/young adults. If the adoption is a foster to adopt parent adoption, Refuge House Home Report, Form 2953, must be verified for accuracy.
- 3) Submit documentation to the DFPS worker placing the child/young adult for adoption verifying DPS and DFPS criminal history checks conducted on all persons 14 years or older residing in the prospective adoptive home.
- 4) Provide adoptive parents with accurate, current, and objective information to allow adoptive parents to make informed decisions regarding the placement of a child/young adult into their home. Refuge House will:



- a) Fully review the child/young adult's case record, ensure that all information is shared with the adoptive family, and ensure that the impact of an adoptive placement of a special needs child/young adult on the adoptive family has been thoroughly discussed with the family.
 - b) Provide the adoptive family with the opportunity to review the child/young adult's de-identified Health, Social, Education, and Genetic History (HSEGH) reports and case record in compliance with RCCL Minimum Standards for Child-Placing Agencies and CPSH §6000 and shall document that the opportunity was provided and whether or not the family reviewed the HSEGH.
- 5) Obtain written approval from the Department before a formal presentation of information about the child(ren)/young adults is made to the prospective adoptive family.
 - 6) Provide required information for requests under the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children when appropriate.
 - 7) Arrange and provide an initial face-to-face pre-placement visit and a minimum of one overnight pre-placement visit between the child(ren)/young adults and the prospective adoptive family, unless waived in writing by the Department. Refuge House may arrange as many pre-placement visits necessary based on the needs of the child(ren)/young adults and the joint agreement with the Department.
 - 8) Develop and provide pre-service and ongoing adoptive parent training for Refuge House adoptive parents.
 - 9) For dual licensed parents with a foster to adopt child/young adult, Refuge House will provide foster care payments according to the child/young adult's level of care as specified in their contract until the Adoption Placement Contract has been signed.
 - 10) Provide foster/adoptive children/young adults' medical and dental care referrals, counseling, and support for therapeutic needs. Other support services such as Christmas gifts, school supplies, and training resources are also available.
 - 11) Make the final decisions regarding children in the areas of treatment issues, placement, and/or removal.
 - 12) Keep foster/adoptive parents abreast of all impending changes in placement decisions, new psychological, biological family issues, and visits regarding a child/young adult in their care.
 - 13) Develop an Adoption Plan of Service the day the Adoption Placement Contract is signed and update it as necessary and at least every 6 months until consummation.
 - 14) Send the DFPS caseworker for the child(ren)/young adults a written report on the adoptive placement at least every two months.
 - 15) Provide counseling and support services for the adoptive family and child(ren)/young adults before, during and after the adoptive placement.
 - 16) Visit the child(ren)/young adults and the adoptive family according to child(ren)/young adults and family needs. upon placement of a child/young adult with an adoptive family, Refuge House will make the first home visit to the child/young adult and adoptive family within two weeks. Subsequent visits must be face-to-face with the adoptive family and child(ren)/young adults at least once a month during the first six months of placement or more frequently according to the needs of the child(ren)/young adults and family.
 - 17) If the adoption is not consummated within the first 6 months of the adoptive placement, monthly contact must continue unless the Department has approved a different visitation schedule in writing.



- 18) May visit the adoptive home unannounced at any reasonable time, if such a need presents itself.
- 19) Be available for support and consultation on a 24-hour basis.
- 20) Inform adoptive parents of Refuge House Programmatic Policies and Procedures and Chapter §749 of Minimum Standards.
- 21) Inform adoptive parents about the Texas DFPS adoption assistance program, including the post-adoption program, and help them apply for assistance when appropriate.
- 22) Help the adoptive family and their attorney complete the adoption consummation/finalization process. Refuge House will prepare the court report unless the court orders another party to prepare the report.
- 23) Obtain written consent from the Department that an adoption is in the best interest of the child(ren)/young adults and should be consummated.
- 24) Unless the Department is a party to the adoption case, Refuge House will complete and notarize a PRS Post-Placement Adoptive Report Registration form, and file this form with the appropriate court(s).

POST-PLACEMENT ADOPTIVE REPORT:

Refuge House will complete and notarize a Post-Placement Adoptive Report. A Post-Placement Adoptive Report is a written evaluation of the assessments and interviews, after the placement of the child(ren)/young adults, regarding the:

- 1) Child(ren)/young adults;
- 2) Prospective adoptive parent(s);
- 3) Family of the prospective adoptive parent(s);
- 4) Environment of the prospective adoptive parent(s) and their family; and
- 5) Adjustment of all individuals to the placement.

Interviews for the Post-Placement Adoptive Report will be conducted after the child/young adult has resided with the adoptive parent(s) for at least six months, unless otherwise directed by the court. However, the information for the Post-Placement Adoptive Report may be gathered after the placement of the child(ren)/young adults.

Interviews for the Post-Placement Adoptive Report, as well as interviews for foster/adopt and straight adopt home screenings, may be conducted in one visit and will include the following interviews:

- 1) Individual interviews with each prospective adoptive parent;
- 2) Each child/young adult three years or older living in the home;
- 3) Any other person living full time with the family;
- 4) A joint interview with the prospective adoptive parents;
- 5) A family group interview with family members living in the home; and
- 6) An interview of any minor child 12 years or older or adult child of the prospective adoptive parents not living in the home (by phone, in person or by letter).

Refuge House will conduct these interviews at the home of the foster/adopt or adoptive parents, when all household and family members of the home are present. All conducted interviews and

attempts to interview persons listed above will be documented in the Post Placement Adoptive Report or home screenings (when applicable) and will include dates and methods taken to contact the persons, date of interview, who was present, their relationship to the foster/adopt or adoptive parents, and a summary and observation of the interviews.

The interviews for the Post-Placement Adoptive Report will focus on the adjustment of the family and the child(ren)/young adults following the placement of the child(ren)/young adults, and any items relating to the home screening information that had not been adequately and/or previously addressed.

Information in the Post-Placement Adoptive Report will include the following:

- 1) A summary of all assessments and available information about the child(ren)/young adults who is the subject of a petition for adoption, including:
 - a) Health history, social history, educational history, genetic and family history, and other information required by the Texas Family Code §162.005 and §162.007;
 - b) History of physical sexual, or emotional abuse experienced by the child/young adult;
 - c) History of any previously placements, including the date and reason for the placement;
 - d) The child/young adult's understanding of the adoptive placement or conservatorship;
 - e) The child/young adult's legal status
- 2) A summary of all assessments, interviews, and available information about the prospective adoptive parents including:
 - a) The pre-adoptive home screening (see §745.4061 of TAC) including the results of the criminal history and central registry background checks;
 - b) Individual strengths and weaknesses of the adoptive parents;
 - c) Observations made relative to the family's interactions with each other;
 - d) Additional interviews of persons specified in §745.4033 of TAC; and
 - e) A visit to the home.
- 3) An evaluation of the child(ren)/young adults' present or prospective physical, intellectual, social and psychological functioning and needs, and whether the environment will meet those needs.
- 4) A summary of the adjustment of the family and the adoptive child(ren)/young adults in the adoptive home during the six-month post-placement period, if appropriate.
- 5) Sources of information and verification to the extent possible, of all statements of fact pertinent to the report.
- 6) The basis for conclusions or recommendations.
- 7) The names and qualifications of all persons involved in the preparation and evaluation of the Post-Placement Adoptive Report.
- 8) Telephone numbers for entities where it is appropriate for the subject of the report to file complaints about how the Post-Placement Adoptive Placement Report was conducted (see §745.4043 of TAC).

All persons involved in the preparation and evaluation of the report must sign the Post-Placement Adoptive Report.

Any Refuge House employees conducting the Post-Placement Adoptive Report will not have a conflict of interest with any party in a disputed suit. No previous knowledge of any party that was not exclusively obtained through a home screening or adoptive report will be allowed. Refuge House employees will disqualify themselves if a conflict or bias exists. Any issues or concerns relating to such a conflict or bias to the court before an appointment will be accepted. However, unless the court finds the employee(s) biased, the subsequent reports may be conducted unless the employee(s) has been previously screened. Any adoptive placement that appears to have been made by someone other than the adoptive child(ren)/young adults' adoptive parents or Refuge House will be reported to RCCL.

Any complaints about how the Post-Placement Adoptive Report was conducted will be made directly to Refuge House. Refuge House will give the telephone numbers to the entities where it is appropriate to file complaints.

References

§745.4025, §745.4033, §745.4035, §745.4037, §745.4121, §745.4123, §745.4125, §745.4127, Adoption Contract Term VIII.9-21, Adoption Contract Term VIII.24-25, Adoption Contract Term VIII.28-29

