

## **PLACEMENT UNIT INVESTIGATIONS: SHORT-TERM RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS (STRTP) AND RESOURCE FAMILY APPROVAL (RFA)**

- AUTHORITY:** Title IV-E, Title 22, Division 31, Written Directives Version 8.0 effective 11/01/2022  
WIC 16519.5-16521, STRTP Interim Licensing Standards (ILS) Version 5 released 12/11/2023, Resource Family Approval Written Directives
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 2-6-205, dated 03/22/22
- FORMS:**
- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Complaint Intake Report                                | (RFA 802)   |
| Complaint Investigation Report                         | (RFA 9099)  |
| Complaint Investigation Report -Corrective Action Plan | (RFA 9099C) |
| Resource Family Visit – Corrective Action Plan         | (RFA 809C)  |
| Resource Family Visit Record                           | (RFA 809)   |
- PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for investigating a resource family or Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) to determine if either may not have met or is not meeting requirements set by the state or any applicable law, regardless of whether the information presented is in the form of an allegation.

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **A. Resource Family Approval (RFA)**

1. RFA is a family friendly and child-centered caregiver approval process that combines elements of the current foster parent licensing, relative approval, and approvals for adoption and guardianship processes and replaces those processes. The RFA process improved the way caregivers (related and non-related) of children in foster care are approved and prepared to parent vulnerable children, whether temporarily or permanently.

#### **B. Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP)**

1. Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTP) are licensed by the California Department of Social Services and provide a Mental Health Program Approval by the Department of Health Care Services. STRTPs are residential facilities that provide an integrated program of specialized and intensive care and supervision, services and supports, specialty mental health services, mental health treatment, and short-term, 24- hour care and supervision to children.

### **II. PROCEDURE**

#### **A. Investigation Procedure**

1. Investigations procedures for Resource Family Approval are determined by the state and provided in the Written Directives. The Written Directives are

currently on version 8. As the Written Directives change often, please refer to the most recent version of the directives at [www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/resource-family-approval-program](http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/resource-family-approval-program). The goal for an RFA investigation is to determine whether or not the resource family may not have met or may not be meeting the requirement of one or more of the Written Directives or any applicable law.

2. Investigations procedures for Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs are determined by probation. Guidelines for facility standards can be found in the Licensing Standards, Division 31 and Title 22. The Reference Material for complaints and information on investigations of an STRTP and complaint definitions can be found at the following website: [CCLD Complaints](#) or contact CDSS via Phone: 844-LET-US-NO (844-538-8766 or Email: [letusno@dss.ca.gov](mailto:letusno@dss.ca.gov).
3. Upon receipt of a complaint allegation concerning an RFA or STRTP, the assigned investigations officer/monitor shall conduct a preliminary review of the complaint allegation as follows:
  - a. **A report will be made to Community Care Licensing (CCL).**
  - b. Review all information maintained on file concerning the Resource Family or STRTP.
  - c. For any incident with an STRTP that is jointly used by **Social Service Agency** (SSA), they should be invited to complete the investigation on a collaborative basis.
    - (1) For STRTPs where youth from other counties were involved or affected, the placement monitor may contact their monitor and suggest completing the investigation as one unit.
  - d. Collect all incident reports from the program and/or assigned DPO related to the incident. Probation's program monitor may require additional or supplemental reports. If any law enforcement was involved, the monitor shall request all reports listed under the assigned DR#.
  - e. Interview any complainant and applicable staff, family members, program directors, and youth. If a law enforcement investigation is opened as a result of the investigated incident, probation's investigation may be placed on hold until law enforcement has concluded their investigation.
  - f. Probation shall document in the Resource Family or STRTP file all information received and reviewed pursuant to the Written Directives and Division 31.
  - g. If the complaint allegation is not related to the requirements of the Written Directives or Division 31, then probation shall review the information as required in both documents.
    - (1) A complaint allegation described in this paragraph that

involves child abuse or neglect shall be immediately reported to the county child abuse and neglect hotline. The assigned investigations officer may coordinate with the investigating Emergency Response worker to complete a complaint investigation if determined necessary to prevent duplication of efforts and eliminate multiple interviews of the same witness.

- (2) Depending on the nature of the investigation, local law enforcement authorities may also be notified. The STRTP administration should be involved in providing information to local law enforcement and probation may need to hold their investigation until law enforcement has concluded their investigation. If this situation arises, close monitoring should occur with the Placement Unit's supervising probation officer (SPO).
4. Probation shall choose one of the following three responses to a complaint allegation based upon its preliminary review of the complaint allegation. Nothing precludes probation from determining that a change in response is necessary. The decision regarding the response shall be approved by the division director (DD) or assistant division director (ADD) and documented in the Resource Family or STRTP file.
  - a. Evaluate out the complaint allegation - if probation determines, based on a review of the information received from the complainant, that at least one of the following criteria is met:
    - (1) The Incident could not have occurred.
    - (2) The report is part of a pattern and practice of harassment against the Resource Family or STRTP.
    - (3) The complaint allegation does not involve a violation of the Written Directives or Division 31, a violation of a foster youth's personal right, and does not pose a risk or threat to the health and safety, protection, or well-being of a **youth** or nonminor dependent.
    - (4) The situation has been addressed, corrected, or otherwise resolved.
    - (5) The Resource Family or STRTP is currently on inactive status and the complaint allegation is concerning the requirement specified in Article 11 or Article 11.1 of the Written Directives, Licensing Standards, or Division 31(if applicable).
  - b. Initiate a remediation plan if probation determines that even if the allegation is true, it can be mitigated through engagement with the Resource Family or STRTP and there is no risk or threat to the health, safety, protection or well-being of a **youth** or nonminor dependent, or the risk or threat is so minimal that it does not

outweigh the benefit of a remediation plan response.

(1) Remediation may be appropriate when the information reviewed in the complaint allegation and the interview of the complainant indicates, but is not limited to the following:

- (a) The Resource Family or STRTP would benefit from continued education regarding RFA, Licensing standards, or Division 31 and qualifications including, but not limited to, home health and safety standards, personal rights, Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standards, reporting requirements, cooperating with the Agency, and QPI Partnership, as applicable.
- (b) The Resource Family or STRTP properly reported the incident or issue to the assigned investigations officer and the placement agency for a **youth** or a nonminor dependent, in accordance with Section 11-06 of the Written Directives or Division 31.
- (c) There is an identified need for support, including but not limited to a request from the **youth's** social worker, deputy probation officer, RFA program staff, STRTP staff, or from the Resource Family.
- (d) There is an identified concern raised by the Resource Family, STRTP, child's social worker, deputy probation officer, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), relatives, tribe, or others, which does not rise to the level of concern requiring a complaint investigation.

(2) As a result of remediation, the assigned investigations officer may initiate a Corrective Action Plan.

c. Initiate a complaint investigation as outlined in Section 9-06A(f) of the Written Directives if probation determines that the information reviewed in the complaint allegation is of such concern that there is a risk or threat to the health, safety, or well-being of a **youth** or nonminor dependent, or a violation of the **youth's** or nonminor dependent's personal rights.

- 5. Probation shall conduct an unannounced visit to a Resource Family's home or STRTP facility immediately or within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of a complaint allegation to be investigated as appropriate, unless the tenth day after the receipt of the complaint is not a business day, in which case probation shall conduct the visit on the following business day.
- 6. Probation shall notify the department of a serious complaint allegation by the close of the next business day following receipt of the complaint as specified in Section 4-03(e) of the Written Directives when investigating a resource family. Please forward RFA Form 802 to the RFA inbox at:

[RFA@dss.ca.gov](mailto:RFA@dss.ca.gov).

7. Log all complaints into the RFA complaint log or STRTP complaint log as appropriate.
8. At the conclusion of the investigation, a detailed summary of the entire process shall be written by the placement monitor within 30 days. This will include a recommendation of any actions to be taken. After the SPO reviews and approves the report, it will be forwarded to the **DD** or ADD for review and approval of the recommended action.

**REFERENCES:**

Other

RFA Written Directives Version 8.0 effective 11/01/2022  
AB 403 Continuum of Care Reform  
Quality Parenting Initiative  
Evaluator Manual for Complaints  
[www.cdss.ca.gov](http://www.cdss.ca.gov)

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**APPROVED BY:**