

1263 CASE CLOSURE WHEN THE CONCURRENT GOAL IS ACHIEVED

Chapter: **Child Protective Field Services**

Section: **CPS Family Services**



New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families Policy Manual

Policy Directive: **19-36**

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Approved:

Joseph E. Ribsam, Jr., DCYF Director

Related Statute(s): [RSA 169-C](#)

Related Admin Rule(s):

Related Federal Regulation(s):

Related Form(s): **FORM 1260, and FORM 1520**

Bridges' Screen(s) and Attachment(s):

The Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) has an obligation to end its involvement with children and youth who have achieved permanency by means other than reunification in a timely manner. Those adopting a child/youth or assuming guardianship or a primary caring adult role of a child/youth must be engaged in the decision-making process and invited to provide input as to ending DCYF's involvement. Children and youth must also be engaged in this process as age and developmentally appropriate. Youth with a permanency plan of APPLA must be engaged around their future post-DCYF and encouraged to actively participate in transition planning.

Purpose

To outline CPSW procedures for determining the appropriateness of closing a case with a permanency goal of adoption, guardianship, or APPLA and the necessary steps to do so.

Definitions

"APPLA" or **"Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement"** means a permanency goal in which the Division maintains supervision of, and placement and care responsibility for a youth age 16 or older through the deliberate out-of-home placement of the youth with an identified permanent connection until the youth reaches adulthood based on compelling information that it is not in the youth's best interest to seek a more permanent goal.

"CASA" or a **"Court Appointed Special Advocate"** means a volunteer who serves as an advocate for an abused and/or neglected child/youth in the New Hampshire court system.

"Concurrent Goal" means the alternative plan for the child/youth in placement that will achieve another permanency goal if reunification with a parent is not possible.

"CPSW" or **"Child Protective Service Worker"** means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Child Protective Service Worker.

"DCYF" or the **"Division"** means the Department of Health and Human Services' Division for Children, Youth and Families.

"Guardian Ad Litem" or **"GAL"** means a court-appointed representative designated to represent the best interests of children legally considered to be incapable of managing their own affairs.

"JPPO" or **"Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer"** means an employee of DCYF who is authorized by the Division to perform functions of the job classification Juvenile Probation and Parole Officer.

“PCA” or “Primary Caring Adult” means an adult other than the youth’s parent, chosen by a youth that: makes a lifelong commitment to be the youth’s primary source of guidance and encouragement; plays an important role in the youth having a safe and stable place to live, which may or may not include the youth living with the primary caring adult; understands the youth’s current and future needs; and has been confirmed as fit to serve by the Court.

Required Practice

- I. The CPSW and their Supervisor must identify, plan, and work toward the concurrent goal from the onset of a child/youth’s removal from their home pursuant to policy 1625 Permanency Options for Children and Youth.
- II. When the concurrent goal becomes the primary goal, the CPSW and their Supervisor shall regularly discuss the time frames around the child/youth achieving permanency and closing the case. This exploration must include consultation with the following prior to the decision to finalize the permanency plan and close the case being made:
 - A. The adoptive parent(s), guardian(s), or identified primary caring adult(s);
 - B. The child/youth involved, as age and developmentally appropriate;
 - C. Any community agencies involved;
 - D. The assigned JPPO on any co-occurring cases with Juvenile Justice Services; and
 - E. The CASA/GAL.
- III. When the concurrent goal of APPLA is enacted, the CPSW and their Supervisor shall complete all necessary actions outlined in the [APPLA Protocols](#) until such time as the youth:
 - A. Reaches the maximum age to remain involved with the Division;
 - B. Chooses to end their involvement with the Division; or
 - C. Achieves permanency through adoption or guardianship.
- IV. Once the decision to close the case through adoption or guardianship has been made, the CPSW and/or Permanency Worker shall:
 - A. Meet with the adoptive parent(s)/guardian(s) and child/youth (as age and developmentally appropriate) to discuss the process involved relative to permanency and ending DCYF’s involvement;
 - B. Establish clear timeframes with the adoptive parent(s)/guardian(s) and service providers for when case activities will be completed. Any paid services working with the family/youth should be ended a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to closure to allow the opportunity to identify any areas in which the child/youth may need additional support; and
 - C. Work with the adoptive parent(s)/guardian(s) and community to identify resources and supports that are available to the child/youth after DCYF has closed the case. This includes any services outlined in policies 1802 Adoption Assistance Program and 1825 Post-Adoption Services.
- V. For cases in which Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) is the goal, prior to the youth reaching the age of 18 the CPSW and/or Adolescent Worker shall:

- A. Meet with the youth to discuss the process involved relative to the youth preparing for their transition to independent living, including discussion around setting a date for the 90-Day Youth Transition Meeting and who the youth wishes to participate in that meeting. This conversation shall also include discussion around the youth extending care as outlined in policy 1985 Extended Care Services and the identification of a primary caring adult if one has not already been made;
 - B. Assist the youth in planning for independent living by holding the 90-Day Youth Transition Meeting as outlined in policy 1972 and any follow-up meetings as warranted; and
 - C. Ensure that the youth is aware of programming available to them as outlined in policy 1980 DCYF Teen Independent Living Aftercare Program.
- VI. Once permanency has been achieved through adoption, guardianship, or a youth whose plan is APPLA exiting care, the following steps shall be completed by the CPSW to close the case:
- A. Work with the Staff Attorney to motion the Court for closure once permanency has been achieved (if necessary);
 - B. Continue to see the child/youth until the final order has been received;
 - C. Prepare and submit the electronic (Bridges) and paper files for closure as outlined in policies 1261 Family Services Documentation and Case Records and 1827 Adoption Case Records if applicable. See Practice Guidance below;
 - D. Notify all professionals involved with the case, such as attorneys, CASA/GALs and community resources, prior to the date of case closure regarding the status of the case and any follow-up services in place;
 - E. Advise the Fiscal Specialist of the case's closing and provide a copy of the Court's order; and
 - F. Complete and submit the Case Closure Summary (Form 1260) for approval.
- VII. The Supervisor shall:
- A. Review the paper and electronic (Bridges) files;
 - B. Approve the Bridges closing and Case Closure Summary (Form 1260); and
 - C. Forward the paper file(s) to Archives.
- VIII. The Court must approve case closure as well as terminate existing court orders prior to the CPSW closing the electronic and paper files.

Practice Guidance

What if DCYF plans to close a case, but the adoptive parent(s)/guardian(s) wish to remain involved?

- The CPSW should explore with them why they feel the case should remain open and what resources are available to them post permanency. If there are safety factors or significant issues with resources that could impact permanency later on, consult with their Permanency Team.

What if DCYF plans to close a case, but CASA, or others involved do not want it to close?

- The CPSW should explore with them why they believe this way and should seek to build consensus around the appropriateness of closure by reiterating supports in place.

What if a youth's plan is APPLA, but they wish to become adopted or have someone assume guardianship over them?

- The Division always strives for the most permanent living situation for children/youth when it is appropriate. If a youth identified as APPLA is presented with an opportunity for adoption or guardianship, explore this with their Permanency Team.

How do I prepare the electronic (Bridges) record and paper Family Services case file for closure?

- Ensure that all contacts are entered into Bridges;
- Update all demographic screens;
- Ensure that all paperwork is filed in the case file;
 - Add a copy of the Court's order to close the case and any other orders in the Court section of the case file;
- Enter the reason for closing the case and date in the Bridges Case Summary Screen; and
- Complete the Case Closure Summary (Form 1260) and file it in the front of the case file.