

# Recruitment and Selection Committee Tips for Prospective Adoptive Parents and Selection Committee Panel Members



## What Is the Selection Committee?

The child's or youth's best interest ([www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/best\\_interest.pdf](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/best_interest.pdf)) is the primary consideration in selecting an adoptive or guardianship placement. Placement decisions should be considered throughout concurrent planning and based on the individual child's or youth's identified needs, including those for life-long safety, well-being and permanency, and the prospective families' understanding of and potential capacity for meeting those needs.

Using a committee or team process to make placement decisions minimizes the impact of individual biases and increases the diversity of perspectives. When only one placement is being considered, the team approach can help identify the unique needs of the child or youth and family and proposing supports to help make the placement successful.

## How does DCYF recruit for a child or youth in need of a permanent home?

- The caseworker will ensure all relatives, suitable others, current caregivers, and caregivers of siblings (if siblings are separated) are considered first.
- The caseworker will consult with the local adoption staff regarding any possible adoptive families who may be a fit for the child or youth.
- The caseworker may consult with their regional placement unit, state licensing, and/or Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) as additional avenues to identify potential families.
- If a child or youth is not yet legally-free, the caseworker may request permission from the court and/or biological parent to begin recruitment services that will include registration with WA Access through Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) ([www.nwae.org/login](http://www.nwae.org/login)), Northwest Adoption Exchange ([www.nwae.org](http://www.nwae.org)), Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), and adoption consortium. No special permission is required to access these services if the child or youth is legally-free.
- The caseworker may have discussions with the child or youth regarding what qualities and characteristic they wish for in a prospective family.
- The caseworker will talk with local resources such as their Regional Adoption Program Manager or designee regarding other types of recruitment activities or events such as photoshoots or Family Fest or Kids Fest.
- The Regional Adoption Program Manager or designee will verify a family has an approved adoption home study before being considered for placement of a legally-free child or youth. Prospective adoptive families must be licensed as foster parents with a home study approving the family for adoption.





**A family has let the caseworker know their family is interested in a child or youth.  
What happens next?**

- The caseworker will identify the needs of the child or youth and have an idea of what type of family and/or skills would be necessary to parent the child or youth through adulthood.
- The caseworker will ensure any family interested has enough information about the child or youth through a conversation with the family and/or sharing redacted documents to make a good decision as to fit. Having honest discussions upfront with a family can minimize problems in the future.
- It is imperative discussions with the prospective family are strength's based while also providing context as to why the child may be exhibiting some behaviors (e.g. a child who hoards food may do so due to not getting enough to eat in their home of origin).
- The remaining families will be referred to the Selection Committee. The caseworker will communicate updates to the families throughout the matching process.



## What happens during a Selection Committee, and how should I prepare?

- The caseworker will contact their local Regional Adoption Program Manager (RAPM) or designee to schedule a Selection Committee.
- Before the first selection committee meeting, the caseworker will be prepared to talk about their child or youth, share important documents regarding the child or youth with the Selection Committee, and identify the qualities and characteristics they recommend and the child or youth may be seeking in a potential family. One committee member will also review the family's provider file in FamLink for any infractions or investigations and current licensing placement capacity.
- It is **critical** that all participants in a Selection Committee thoroughly review the home studies before the initial meeting. Ensure that at least one member has reviewed the family's provider file in FamLink to identify any pending or current infractions or investigations and current licensing placement capacity.
- Typically, the initial Selection Committee meeting is internal only with DCYF staff. This portion is to determine the needs of the child or youth through evaluating various areas of need using Family Selection Criteria DCYF 09-030A form available online at <http://intranet.dcyf.wa.gov:8090/drupal-8.4.0/sites/default/files/forms/09-030A.pdf>. This is then evaluated by what each of the potential adoptive families can provide for the child or youth using Home Study Review and Placement Considerations CWP\_0064 publication available online at [www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP\\_0064.pdf](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pubs/CWP_0064.pdf) as a guide.
- Once this portion of the process is complete, the top-scoring families will be invited to another meeting that may include external partners (e.g., CASA, GAL, Tribe, child's or youth's attorney, etc.). The caseworker will obtain consent from each of the families being considered if external partners will be involved. Once permission is given, each external partner will be provided with the family's home study to review before the second Selection Committee meeting.



- During the second Selection Committee meeting, committee members will be involved in asking predetermined questions before any interviews with families. All families will be asked the same set of questions by using Interview Questions and Scoring DCYF 09-030C form available online at <http://intranet.dcyf.wa.gov:8090/drupal-8.4.0/sites/default/files/forms/09-030C.pdf>.
- Each participant in the committee will score the families individually by using Interview Questions and Scoring DCYF 09-030C form available online at <http://intranet.dcyf.wa.gov:8090/drupal-8.4.0/sites/default/files/forms/09-030C.pdf>. These scores will be combined for each individual family and will then be used to determine final best fit and possible alternative placements by using the Selection Committee Interviews-Prospective Families DCYF 09-030D form available online at [http://intranet.dcyf.wa.gov:8090/drupal-8.4.0/forms?field\\_form\\_number\\_value=09-030d&title=](http://intranet.dcyf.wa.gov:8090/drupal-8.4.0/forms?field_form_number_value=09-030d&title=).
- The caseworker will ensure all families are being informed about what is occurring throughout the process and provided a timeframe in which they will receive the final decision.

## The Selection Committee has chosen a top family. What happens next?

- The caseworker will schedule a Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) meeting ([www.dcyf.wa.gov/1700-case-staffings/1720-family-team-decision-making-meetings](http://www.dcyf.wa.gov/1700-case-staffings/1720-family-team-decision-making-meetings)) involving the chosen family, current placement, and all other case parties to begin discussions on a transition plan. Each transition plan is based on the needs of the individual child or youth and must always consider the child's or youth's best interest. The caseworker will ensure appropriate approvals are in place with licensing and/or placement unit before placement.
- If placement is not successful with the top family, the caseworker and supervisor may consider alternative families who interviewed. They may also initiate the search process again and hold another selection committee.



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