
**ORANGE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
CFS OPERATIONS MANUAL**

Effective Date: August 22, 1990
Revised: January 7, 2010
Revised: February 14, 2014

Policy No.: E-0102

Referral and Case Filing

Purpose	To provide guidelines for filing child welfare documents associated with a referral or case.
Approved	This policy was approved by Gary Taylor, Director of CFS, on February 14, 2014. <i>Signature on file.</i>
Most Recent Revision	<p>This Policy and Procedure (P&P) was previously titled “Case Filing.” This revision of the P&P includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional direction for referral filing• Definitions of Permanent Record and Personal Documentation• Attachments that provide guidelines on filing and folder creation
Background	<p>Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section (§) 10851(a) provides that counties establish and maintain a case record for each public social services case. Maintenance of records related to the provision of child welfare services is governed by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Division 31 Regulations.</p> <p>Children and Family Services (CFS) maintains documentation relevant to a referral or case in a family’s “Permanent Record”. The Permanent Record is an Orange County specific term which includes paper and electronic files documenting CFS involvement with a family.</p> <p>This policy provides direction on maintaining an accurate and complete Permanent Record. The policy does not address filing documents related to:</p>

- Program logs, reception logs, statistics, tracking reports, audits/reviews
- Oversight of SSA contracted providers (e.g., FACT, RDM, etc.)
- Personnel files

Definitions

For the purposes of this P&P, the following definitions apply:

Permanent Record: A record (electronic and/or paper) of CFS involvement with a family as defined in CDSS MPP Division 31, Chapter 31, § 31-002(c)(5).

Personal Documentation: Information generated/received by staff during the course of working with a family (e.g., field notes, emails, telephone logs/notes, case staffing notes).

Legal Hold: A designation for a referral or case based on potential or filed legal action, which triggers the duty to preserve records associated with the referral or case, regardless of format (e.g., paper, electronic, Personal Documentation, etc.).

POLICY

Filing Timelines

Per best practice, while a family is receiving child welfare services, the assigned social worker will attempt to keep the family’s Permanent Record current.

Per CFS policy:

- A. Documentation (including Personal Documentation) will be considered for inclusion in the family’s Permanent Record, at a minimum of every 60 calendar days.
- B. Documentation will be reviewed for inclusion in the Permanent Record prior to closing or transferring a referral or case.

Documentation to include in the Permanent Record

CDSS Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) Division 31-105 details records to be maintained regarding Child Abuse Registry (CAR) activities.

CDSS MPP Division 31-075 details records to be maintained regarding:

- Emergency Response (ER) services
- Voluntary child welfare services
- Children for whom a petition has been filed in Juvenile Court

Documentation (including Personal Documentation) not specified by the regulations noted above will be considered for inclusion in the family's Permanent Record. This includes, but is not limited to, documentation which:

- Serves as supporting evidence in an Investigation Narrative or court report
- Influences decision-making or supports actions taken by staff in the referral or case
- Verifies the provision of services to clients, including contacts and attempted contacts
- Details or demonstrates correspondence and/or visitation

Note: Consult a supervisor if there is a question about what to include in the family's Permanent Record.

Documentation determined not relevant for inclusion in the Permanent Record will be destroyed.

During the course of providing services, if an issue becomes personnel related, information will be filed in a separate personnel file.

Filing

When a decision has been made to include documentation in the family's Permanent Record:

- A. Per best practice, the following may be utilized to assist with filing hard copy documents:
 - [Attachment 1—Suggested Guidelines for the creation of Child Abuse Registry \(CAR\) and Emergency Response \(ER\) Files](#)
 - [Attachment 2—Suggested Guidelines for Creation of Service Files](#)
 - [Attachment 3—Suggested Guidelines for Frequently Used Accos](#)
 - [Attachment 4—Suggested Guidelines for Creation and Filing of Legal Files](#)
 - [Attachment 5—Guidelines for Filing Documentation in a Closed Referral or Case](#)

The assigned social worker will be responsible for filing hard copy documents. Assistance may be provided by the assigned Information Processing Technician (IPT).

- B. Per best practice, electronically store information in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) using one of the following:
- Create a CWS/CMS contact
 - Refer to CFS P&P [Case Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(E-0105\)](#) or CFS P&P [Referral Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(A-0415\)](#)
 - Import the document into CWS/CMS
 - Refer to [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Import a Document Into CWS/CMS](#)

Paper documents (including Personal Documentation) which have been electronically stored in CWS/CMS may be destroyed per All County Letter (ACL) 07-40, if the information accurately reflects the content of the original documentation that will remain in CWS/CMS, and no other laws require the documentation to be maintained in its original form.

- C. When documentation pertains to multiple siblings, a copy will be filed in each relevant child's Permanent Record.

Note: If a service provider report pertains to two out of five siblings, for example, documentation will be filed in the relevant two children's cases. The original may be filed in either of those two cases.

- D. If documentation identifies multiple families, redact information about unrelated clients/families (e.g., running telephone log with case-record information regarding more than one family, etc.).

Duplicate Copies

Per best practice, if there is a business need to maintain duplicate records contained in the Permanent Record, staff may indicate on the duplicate/copy:

“Duplicate to the Permanent Record”

Maintain single copies of hard copy documents and/or reports and destroy duplicate versions.

Closed Referrals/ Cases

After a referral or case is closed, if staff identify documentation relevant to include in the Permanent Record, the documentation will be forwarded to the designated storage area.

Upon receipt of documentation, INDEX staff will:

- A, File documents in the Permanent Record, if the Service and Legal files are available (within two years of case closure).
 - B. If Service and Legal files are no longer available, determine destruction schedule and either:
 - Pony documents to Orange County Public Works (OCPW) on Grand or the same location the Permanent Record was sent
- Or–
- Destroy documents

Refer to [Attachment 5—Guidelines for Filing Documentation in a Closed Referral or Case](#).

Legal Holds

If a referral or case is designated as a Legal Hold, associated documentation (including Personal Documentation) will not be destroyed until the Legal Hold is removed.

REFERENCES

Attachments and CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards

Hyperlinks are provided below to access attachments to this P&P and any CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards that are referenced.

- [CWS/CMS Data Entry Standards—Importing Documents Into CWS/CMS](#)
- [Attachment 1—Suggested Guidelines for the Creation of Child Abuse Registry \(CAR\) and Emergency Response \(ER\) Files](#)
- [Attachment 2—Suggested Guidelines for Creation of Service Files](#)
- [Attachment3—Suggested Guidelines for Frequently Used Accos](#)
- [Attachment 4—Suggested Guidelines for Creation and Filing of Legal Files](#)

- [Attachment 5—Guidelines for Filing Documentation in a Closed Referral or Case](#)

Hyperlinks

Users accessing this document by computer may create a direct connection to the following references by clicking on them.

- CFS P&P [Case Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(E-0105\)](#)
- CFS P&P [Referral Compliance Contacts and Documentation \(A-0415\)](#)

Other Sources

Other printed references include the following:

None.

FORMS

Online Forms

Forms listed below may be printed out and completed, or completed online, and may be accessed by clicking on the link provided.

Form Name	Form Number
CFS Filing Chart	F063-25-413
Suggested Guidelines for Adoptions Cases	F063-25-739

Hard Copy Forms

Forms that may be completed in hard copy (including multi-copy NCR forms) are listed below. **For reference purposes only**, links are provided to view these hard copy forms, where available.

Form Name	Form Number
Adoption Assistance Program Acco	F063-25-1133
Adoption Freeing/Finalization Information Acco	F063-25-1131
Adoptive Applicant Information Acco	F063-25-1134
Adoptive Placement Information Acco	F063-25-1132
Case Plan Acco	F063-25-1123
Child Services Acco	F063-25-1151
Clearances Acco	F063-25-1130
Court/Search Acco	F063-25-1120
Emergency Assistance Acco	F063-28-247
Education Acco	F063-25-1127
ILP Services/TILP Acco	F063-25-1125
EFC Acco	F063-25-1145

Funding/Financial Acco	F063-25-1118
ICPC Acco	F063-25-1113
ICWA Acco	F063-25-1129
Intake/Investigation Acco	F063-25-105
Medical Acco	F063-25-1115
Mental Health/Developmental Acco	F063-25-1150
Parent Services Acco	F063-25-1153
Placement Acco	F063-25-106
Post Adoption Inquiries Acco	F063-25-1128
Red Flag Safety Alert Acco	F063-25-1121
Relative/NREFM Acco	F063-25-1119
Relinquishment Acco	F063-18-251
SDM Acco	F063-25-1122
Services/Miscellaneous Acco	F063-25-1114
SIR Acco	F063-25-1140
Substance Abuse Acco	F063-25-1152
TDM Acco	F063-25-1135

CWS/CMS Forms

Forms that may **only** be obtained in CWS/CMS are listed below. ***For reference purposes only***, links are provided to view these CWS/CMS forms, where available.

	Form Name	Form Number
	None.	

Brochures

Brochures to distribute in conjunction with this policy may include:

	Brochure Name	Brochure Number
	None.	

LEGAL MANDATES

[Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) section \(§\) 10851\(a\)](#) provides counties establish and maintain a case record for each public social services case.

[California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\) Manual of Policies and Procedures \(MPP\), Division 31-075](#), details documentation to be contained in a case record.

[CDSS MPP Division 31, Chapter 31, § 31-002\(c\)\(5\)](#) defines a child welfare services case record.

[CDSS MPP Division 10, Chapter 10, § 10-112](#) provides county welfare departments are responsible for maintaining a case record for each client in compliance with Division 30.

[CDSS MPP Division 19, Chapter 19, § 19-008](#) indicates the purpose of public assistance and social service records is to evidence eligibility and delivery of public social services and provides that records contain facts relevant to a case.

[All County Letter \(ACL\) 11-23](#) and [Title 22 CCR, Division 6, Chapter 9, § 89182](#) details the content of Adoption Records.

[Title 22 California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Division 2, Chapter 3, § 35351](#) provides documents related to APP eligibility be kept separate from the adoption case record.

[Welfare and Institutions Code § 16501.5](#) mandates implementation of a single statewide database (i.e., CWS/CMS) to document child welfare services.

[ACL 07-40](#) details the circumstances under which paper documents that have been electronically stored, may be destroyed.

[CDSS Management and Office Procedures, Division 23, Chapter 23, Section 23-353.7](#) provides copies of records need not be retained unless originals are not available.