

Chapter HFS 42

STATE ADOPTION INFORMATION CENTER

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Note: Chapter HSS 42 was renumbered to be chapter HFS 42 under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 1., Stats., and corrections made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 6. and 7., Stats., Register, December, 1999, No. 528.

HFS 42.01 Authority and purpose. These rules are promulgated under the authority of s. 48.55 (2), Stats., to specify functions of a state adoption information center which is established pursuant to s. 48.55, Stats., to increase public knowledge of adoption and to bring to the attention of adolescents and pregnant women the availability of adoption services.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92; corrections made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats.

HFS 42.02 Applicability. This chapter applies to the department and to any individual or private agency operating the state adoption information center under contract with the department.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92.

HFS 42.03 Definitions. In this chapter:

(1) "Center" means the state adoption information center established by the department pursuant to s. 48.55, Stats.

(2) "Department" means the Wisconsin department of health and family services.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92; correction in (1) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats.

HFS 42.04 Establishment and operation of the center. The department shall establish an adoption information center and shall operate the center or contract with a private individual or agency to operate the center.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92.

HFS 42.05 Center functions. The adoption information center shall carry out the following functions:

(1) Operate a toll-free telephone line to provide information and referral services, as follows:

(a) Provide coverage 24 hours a day by staff, trained volunteers, an answering service or an answering machine. When the center is operated under contract, the department shall specify in the contract an average number of hours a week that the toll-free line is to be answered by staff or trained volunteers;

(b) Respond within 2 working days to all requests for information or referral left with an answering machine or answering service. If center staff are unable to reach the caller within that period of time, they shall document attempts to reach the caller; and

(c) Recruit and train volunteers to provide telephone coverage. Ensure that each staff person or volunteer taking a toll-free call or responding to an inquiry is knowledgeable about adoption law, services and procedures and is capable of providing a helpful non-judgmental response to a variety of issues raised by a caller;

(2) Refer expectant birthparents or their representatives who contact the center to a designated contact person in the county social services or human services department in that county or to a licensed adoption agency;

(3) Make available to inquirers a list of public adoption agencies and licensed private adoption agencies in Wisconsin with brief descriptions of their services. As appropriate to an inquirer's

request, the center may distribute promotional material supplied to it by these agencies;

(4) Maintain current information on adoption services and related services, which shall include:

(a) Statistical information on the number and types of adoptions occurring in Wisconsin;

(b) Accurate information on Wisconsin adoption laws;

(c) A list of adoption agencies in Wisconsin with the types of services each offers; and

(d) For each county, the name of a contact person who will, on request, arrange for local public agency support services for an adolescent or adult experiencing a problem pregnancy or considering options to parenting;

(5) Publish a directory of post-adoption services and support organizations available to assist birthparents who release their child for adoption;

(6) Seek out and provide training to persons who provide counseling to adolescents, including school counselors, county child welfare workers and family planning clinic employees, and to other helping professionals to develop an understanding that adoption is an option for an adolescent or an adult experiencing a problem pregnancy or considering options to parenting, to make people aware of the center's toll free telephone service and to convey information about the variety of adoption-related services available in the state. The training shall include discussion of independent and agency adoption practices, the range of opportunities for contact between the birth parent and the adoptive parent and between the birth parent and the adopted person, adoption information search, and termination of parental rights (TPR) proceedings;

(7) Offer to make presentations on the services of the center and on the adoption option at Wisconsin professional association and statewide and community organization meetings;

(8) Develop publicity to inform Wisconsin adolescents about adoption and to promote the positive benefits of adoption;

(9) Offer to make presentations to youth and young adult groups and assemblies to inform youth and young adults about adoption procedures and related services;

(10) Disseminate information widely, including through the communications media, to make the public aware of the toll-free telephone number and services of the center; and

(11) Work with local counseling, social service, education, health care and other service providers to promote adoption as an option for adolescents and adults with problem pregnancies or who are considering options to parenting and increase public knowledge of adoption procedures and appreciation for adoptions.

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92.

HFS 42.06 Administration. (1) **ADVISORY BOARD.** If the center is not operated by the department, the center director shall appoint a board of volunteers to advise him or her in regard to the focus of center activities, response to department evaluations, and new or controversial program concerns.

(2) **RECORDS AND REPORTS.** (a) For each call received at the toll-free telephone number, the center shall maintain a record of

the type of call, referrals provided and follow-up actions taken by center staff.

(b) The center shall prepare quarterly summary reports of all inquiries received as well as of other activities of the center, and, if the center is not operated by the department, shall submit these to the department for planning and evaluation purposes by the dates specified in the contract.

(3) **SERVICES NEEDS.** The center on an ongoing basis shall identify adoption service gaps at the local and state levels and bring these to the attention of local adoption services agencies and social services agencies and, if the center is not operated by the department, to the attention of the department.

(4) **ACCEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES AND CONTRIBUTIONS.** The center may seek volunteer services and contributions, provided that these do not conflict with the purpose or functions of the center or promote for-profit enterprises.

(5) **OBTAINING DEPARTMENT APPROVAL AND KEEPING THE DEPARTMENT INFORMED.** If the center is not operated by the department, the center shall obtain written approval from the department for all written press releases and publications and for visual media products.

(6) **CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS.** If the center is being operated under contract with the department, the contract shall be an annual contract which shall include:

(a) Annual objectives for the center;

(b) An annual budget for the center; and

(c) A plan for on-going evaluation of the impact of the center's activities on professionals.

(7) **CONTRACT RESPONSIBILITY.** If the center is being operated under contract with the department, the center director shall:

(a) Meet with the department's contract administrator at least monthly for the first 3 months of the center's contract to report on progress and confer on any problems in carrying out the terms of the contract and shall meet with the department's contract administrator bimonthly for the next 6 months, and quarterly after that. At the meetings the center director shall present a written report of progress on the contract and other activities, review activities planned for the next quarter and assess the long range plans for the center and the effectiveness of the center's activities;

(b) Prepare an annual report on the center's activities and an assessment of the center's effectiveness in meeting the annual objectives for the center agreed upon in the contract with the department and any other information requested by the department. The report shall be completed and submitted to the department within 30 days after the end of the state fiscal year; and

(c) Provide for an ongoing evaluation of the impact of the center's activities to determine the usefulness and effectiveness of its services to professionals. The ongoing evaluation shall be based on the plan submitted by the center and approved by the department under sub. (6) (c).

History: Cr. Register, May, 1992, No. 437, eff. 6-1-92.