NWF Health Network
Policy & Procedure

Series: 100: Intake

Policy Name: Diligent Search

Policy Number: 105

Origination Date: 3/21/2005 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 09/10/2026

Regulation: 65C-30.003, F.A.C.
CFOP 170-1 Chapter 14

Referenced Document:

100-105 x 1, Diligent Search Request Form

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN) and all Case Management Organizations (CMOs) to ensure diligent efforts are made to locate parents, relatives and fictive kin when a child must be placed in out-of-homecare. A diligent search to provide notice to the parents of dependency and termination of parental rights proceedings before the court can enter final orders impacting the parent's rights to their child pursuant CFOP 170-1 Chapter 14.

CMOs will work collaboratively with the NWFHN Fatherhood Initiative Program to ensure identification of father's known to the program.

For detailed instructions, please see CFOP, found here:

CFOP 170-1 Chapter 14

Procedure

A. A Diligent search should be requested from a NWFHN Diligent Search Specialist on a parent whose location is unknown and has a child involved in a dependency court case. A request should only be made for the purpose of initial notification to a parent of a dependency petition or a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition.

   1. If the father's whereabouts are unknown the CMO will contact the NWFHN Fatherhood Initiative Program to determine if the father is known to the Program prior to the request for Diligent Search.

B. The Child Protective Investigator (CPI) or Dependency Case Manager (DCM) will initiate a diligent search request when they fill out and submit the Diligent Search Request Form using the information obtained from all known relatives of the child, as well as, the relatives of the parent whose location is unknown.

1. The information should be filled out as accurately and completely as possible.

2. If the information is unknown, this should be indicated.

3. If a request is not filled out correctly, it will be returned to the case manager for completion.

4. The request should be submitted no more than 30 days from placement out-of-home and no less than six (6) weeks prior to the date it is due in Court for termination of parental rights to ensure adequate time to complete the necessary search activities.

5. The CPI or DCM should submit the completed Diligent Search Request Form to the applicable NWFHN email.

C. The CPI or DCM should submit any additional information known at the time of making the request. If new information is obtained after submitting a request, it is the responsibility of the CPI or DCM to notify the Diligent Search Specialist of the new information.

D. If a parent is located, the Children's Legal Services (CLS) attorney/paralegal will be notified for an attempt of service to be completed.

1. If the parent is served; the CPI or DCM will be notified, and documentation will be placed in the case file and filed with the Court.

2. If the parent is not served; continuing diligent search efforts will be made.

E. If a parent is unable to be located, an Affidavit of Diligent Search will be provided to the CLS attorney by the Diligent Search Specialist.

1. A diligent search will take a minimum of four (4) to six (6) weeks from the date of request.

2. Extraordinary circumstances such as out-of-state and out-of-county searches; or cases where multiple service attempts are necessary may increase the time frame for completion.

F. If a father is located, the CMO will refer the father to the NWFHN Fatherhood Initiative Program within five 5 business days.