

# DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

## FOSTER CARE, ADOPTION, & CONCURRENT PLANNING

### DEFINITIONS:

- **FOSTER CARE** - Providing short term, substitute care to children who will likely return to their birth families.
- **CONCURRENT PLANNING** - Providing foster care to children while joining with the agency to help reunify these children with their birth families. If reunification is not possible, your family is willing to adopt the children so they do not have to move to another placement. Your role will include active contact with the child's birth family.
- **ADOPTION** - Olmsted County Community Services works with children who had parental rights terminated as a result of abuse or neglect or sometimes other situations. These children are committed to state guardianship, and our goal is to find them a permanent home where there is a legal bond with the parents. You may be referred to a private agency (see attached list) to complete your home study.

### MINIMAL CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF A HOME STUDY:

- All applicants must attend an Informational Session.
- Prior to licensure all applicants must complete the following training:
  1. **Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome**
  2. **Abusive Head Trauma**
  3. **Child Restraint Systems**
  4. **Mental Health**
  5. **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders**
  6. **Normalcy, Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard**
  7. **Comfort Calls**
  8. **Mandated Reporting**
  9. **An additional 4 hours of training in the following areas:**
    - *Attachment*
    - *Trauma*
- All applicants must complete **Minnesota Foster Care/Adoption Education Class**. The training must be completed within the first year of licensure. This is a two-day training (8:00 AM to 5:30 PM). Applicants must attend both days. The training will be offered quarterly in Olmsted County.
- All applicants must complete 4 hours of training (in addition to the informational session) before the home study is initiated.
- Must reside in Olmsted County.
- Must be at least 21 years of age at the time of application. There is no upper age limit.
- A request for licensure cannot be denied based on marital status.
- Applicants can work outside the home.

## **MINIMAL CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF A HOME STUDY (CONT.):**

- The applicant and all household members must provide a signed statement which indicates that they are receiving all necessary medical care, do not pose a risk to the child's health, and are physically able to care for foster children. They must also indicate any limitations that the applicant and/or household members may have that would impact their parenting abilities.

**NOTE: This information is requested on the "Individual Fact Sheet" which is part of the application packet. Please do not answer these questions with "none" or "not applicable". Please answer these questions with a statement such as:**

**"My husband, my children and I have no diagnosed health concerns or conditions."  
"I have high blood pressure which is controlled by medication and diet."**

- The applicant and adult household members must sign a statement, indicating that they have been free of chemical use problems for the past two years.  
**NOTE: This information is requested on the "Individual Fact Sheet" which is part of the application packet. Please do not answer these questions with "none" or "not applicable". Please answer these questions with a statement such as:  
"I do not and have never used or abused chemicals."  
"I have been free of any chemical use issues for 15 years."**
- The licensing agency may consult with a specialist in such areas as health, mental health, or chemical dependency to evaluate the abilities of the applicant to provide a safe environment for foster/Concurrent Planning children. An independent evaluation may be recommended in some cases and would be at the family's expense.
- All household members who are 13 years of age or older must pass a criminal background check. They must also pass a social service check (no history of abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults). Foster children or adults who have been placed in your home are exempt from a background check.
- Must provide the licensing agency with the names and addresses of three references (non-relatives), and the agency will send the reference letters/questionnaires.
- There should be no major changes within the household in the past year.
- Provide the licensing agency with any previous foster care or adoption studies that were completed by other agencies for which the applicant applied for foster care licensure or adoption.
- A license holder/adoptive parent may be licensed through only one Minnesota-licensed child placing agency or county social services agency at a time.
- The licensing agency must make a determination as to whether a prospective license holder and foster parent can provide appropriate structure and is suitable to be licensed if a prospective license holder or foster parent has had either of the following:
  - 1) A child for whom the applicant is legally responsible was removed from the applicant's home and placed in foster care, a correctional facility, or a residential treatment center for severe emotional disturbance under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 260C, within one year prior to the date of application; or
  - 2) The applicant has a child in voluntary foster care under Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.212, subdivision 8, 260C.193, 260C.201, or 260C.205.

- Physical Home
  - 3) Must comply with fire, health, building, and zoning codes.
  - 4) The licensing agency will inspect the home for compliance with licensing standards.
  - 5) Each foster child must be provided with a separate, suitably sized bed. Two siblings of the same gender may share a double bed.
  - 6) Children of the same gender may share a bedroom.
  - 7) Sleeping space must be in an area of the home that is not used for a second purpose (i.e., a family room).
  - 8) The foster child must have an identified space for clothing and personal belongings. This space may be shared with other children.
  - 9) The dining area must be able to accommodate all persons residing in the home at one time.

## **FEES:**

Olmsted County Community Services does not charge a home study fee for county residents:

1. Who are requesting a child foster care license,
2. Who desire to adopt children from the Child Welfare System that are legally free and waiting for adoption, or
3. Who desire to participate in Concurrent Planning.

The client/applicant will be responsible for the payment of other services such as the following:

- Psychological and/or chemical dependency evaluations if recommended
- State Fire Marshall inspection
 

The foster home may need to be inspected by the State Fire Marshall (\$50 fee) if:

  - a) The foster home contains a freestanding solid fuel heating appliance;
  - b) The foster home is a manufactured home as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 327B.01, subdivision 13, and was manufactured before June 15, 1976;
  - c) The licensing agency identifies a potential hazard in a single-family detached home, or a mixed or multiple occupancy building;
  - d) The home is licensed for four or more foster children; or
  - e) The foster home has a foster child sleeping in a room that is 50% or more below ground level.
- Families may request information on attorney referral services. The fees assessed by an attorney are the responsibility of the adoptive family. If the child qualifies for a subsidy, the adoptive family can be reimbursed for those attorney fees.

There are no agency fees following placement.

The family is responsible for all fees associated with finalizing an adoption. In cases of subsidized adoption, these fees will be reimbursed up to \$2000.

## **PLACEMENTS:**

- All placements must be mutually agreed upon by the family and the agency.
- If any member of the household has admitted to, been convicted of, or substantial evidence exists of certain criminal activities and/or the abuse or neglect of children/vulnerable adults:
  1. The foster care license may be denied, suspended, or revoked;
  2. The foster child may be removed from the home; and
  3. The adoption may be suspended or terminated.
- No guarantees can be made to an adoptive couple regarding the length of time they may wait for a placement. Placements have been made by this agency anywhere from a few days after the home study has been completed up to 5 years later. There is no guarantee that an adoptive placement will ever be made.
- Licensure under parts 2960.3000 to 2960.3340 is not an entitlement, a right, or a guarantee that children will be placed in the foster home. The agency responsible for the child retains the right to choose which licensed foster home is best suited for an individual child in need of foster care placement. The focus is on finding a home for the child, not a child for the home.
- Foster care placement is governed by the statement of intended use developed by the licensing agency and the license holder. The license holder may decline to accept a foster child without a stated reason.

## **THE AGENCY SERVICES WILL INCLUDE:**

1. Completing all the requirements for a home study,
2. Adequately preparing the family for all placements,
3. Answering questions that the family may have regarding billing, etc,
4. Assisting the family in accessing agency and community resources that will meet the needs of the child and family, and
5. Providing post-placement and finalization services in the case of adoption.

THE HOME STUDY BECOMES THE PROPERTY OF OLMSTED COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES. UNDER MINNESOTA LAW, THIS FAMILY PROFILE WILL BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE MUTUALLY AGREED UPON BY OLMSTED COUNTY AND THE FAMILY.