

Relative Search and Notification

Why conduct a Relative Search?

The requirement for conducting a Relative Search is supported by [Public Law 110-351](#), Fostering Connections to Success.

This law requires that child welfare agencies throughout the United States notify all adult relatives when a child is removed from parental custody.



A photograph of a man and a child in winter clothing. The man is in the foreground, wearing a red cap and a dark jacket, looking towards the right. The child is behind him, wearing a patterned winter hat and a dark jacket, also looking towards the right. The background is a snowy, outdoor setting with trees and a building in the distance. The image has a blue tint and a semi-transparent dark overlay.

**It is very important to
keep children connected
to their families,
traditions and culture.**

The connection to family and community is very important to a child because:



Children can live with people they may already know and trust.



Children maintain their personal and cultural identity.



Families identify their own resources and strengths.



Relatives are integral members of the child & family's support team.



Relatives can fill in family history gaps (health, behavioral, ed.) when a parent may be unavailable to do so.

Who's considered a relative in Washington State?

[RCW 74.15.020](#) identifies the people who DCYF consider to be relatives.

Persons related to a child include, but are not limited to...



Parents, siblings (including adoptive and step-family members), aunts, uncles etc.



Grandparents, great aunts and uncles.



Great grandparents and Great-great grandparents.

Caseworkers & Caregivers



Relative search and engagement is an ongoing process that continues throughout the life of a case; identifying and notifying relatives can take time.

DCYF staff must be transparent with Caregivers about this process and the ongoing efforts to engage and place with relatives when it is in a child's best interest.

Relative Search is required for all children in Washington State placed in out-of-home care.

Q. When does the Relative Search process start?

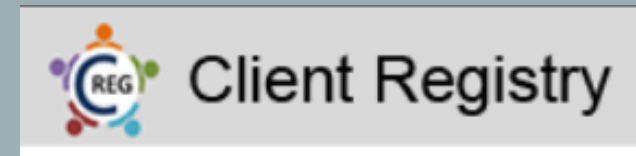
A. Within 30 Days after a child is placed out of home.

Prior to starting a Relative Search, the RSU will contact the Caseworker to determine the following:

- Has the child been returned home?
- Has an Indian child's tribe taken jurisdiction?
- Is there a No Contact Order between the child and an adult relative?
- Has paternity been established?
 - ✓ If not, only a search for **maternal** relatives will be conducted.
 - ✓ Caseworkers must inform the RSU within **5** calendar days of learning that paternity was established to ensure a search of **paternal** relatives is conducted.



Data Bases used in completing Relative Search



Relative Inquiry DCYF 09-134 form



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
900 East College Way, Suite 200 • Mount Vernon WA • 98273-5687

Name and Mailing Address

Date: [REDACTED]

Case Number: [REDACTED]

Regarding: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I am a relative search specialist for Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in Washington State. We are required by law to identify and contact relatives when a child has been removed from the custody of their parents or legal guardian.

The names of the parents

DCYF recognizes and values extended family. We must ask able family members options you have under placement and well-being history, identifying other

Attached to this letter is in other ways during a D or other relatives who me having options to participate responding to this notice completed form or you ca

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] Relative Search S
State of Washington Dep
Phone Number for Relat

[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@dcyf.wa.gov

Relative Search Unit (360) 429-3007

Information Regarding Relative Placement/Support

- Q1: I don't know if or how I am related to a child who is in need of foster care so what should I do?
A1: If you don't know how you might be related to a child, please contact the relative search specialist. They will be able to help you understand how you're related.
- Q2: I am interested in being a placement resource for the child. What will I need to do?
A2: To ensure a safe and suitable home for a child placement, the following is required:
- Each person age 18 and older living in the home must pass a national background check.
 - A caseworker will complete an initial home visit to ensure the health, safety and well-being of a child.
 - A Home Study will be completed to assess each caregiver's abilities to meet the needs of the child.
- Q3: A household member has criminal history. Does that mean I would not be approved?
A3: Criminal history is reviewed carefully to determine child safety. Some crimes are permanently disqualifying, but others can be considered. This can occur through looking at factors such as: how much time has passed, the age you were at the time of offense, your life as it is today, and other objective factors.
- Q4: If I reside out of state, could I still be chosen for placement?
A4: There is a process in place that allows relatives who reside in another state to be considered for placement. This is called the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children, and can be explained in more detail by the child's assigned social worker.

Dear [REDACTED]

I am a relative search specialist for Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in Washington State. We are required by law to identify and contact relatives when a child has been removed from the custody of their parents or legal guardian.


The names of the parents for the above named children are: [REDACTED]

Relative Inquiry

DCYF 09-134

form

(continued)


 DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES (DCYF)

Relative Inquiry

Please return in envelope provided within 10 days
 If you need additional space to provide relative information, please use the back of this page.

OFFICE: _____

CASE NAME _____		CASE NUMBER _____																
CHILD(REN)'S NAME(S) _____																		
PARENT'S NAME(S) _____																		
RESPONDING RELATIVE _____																		
1. I wish to be a placement option or provide support in the following ways: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Help with visits</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Supervising visitations</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Providing transportation for:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Placement now</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Placement in the future</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Child(ren)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Respite care</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Staying in contact with child(ren)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Parents</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to help at this time.</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><input type="checkbox"/> Other (provide family / medical information: _____)</td> </tr> </table>				<input type="checkbox"/> Help with visits	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervising visitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Providing transportation for:	<input type="checkbox"/> Placement now	<input type="checkbox"/> Placement in the future	<input type="checkbox"/> Child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/> Respite care	<input type="checkbox"/> Staying in contact with child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to help at this time.			<input type="checkbox"/> Other (provide family / medical information: _____)		
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<input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to help at this time.																		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (provide family / medical information: _____)																		
How are you related to the child (check a box below)? <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Maternal (Mother's side)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Paternal (Father's side)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Aunt / Uncle</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain in comments box)</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Cousin</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Step Relative</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Not related</td> </tr> </table>				<input type="checkbox"/> Maternal (Mother's side)	<input type="checkbox"/> Paternal (Father's side)	<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent	<input type="checkbox"/> Aunt / Uncle	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain in comments box)	<input type="checkbox"/> Cousin		<input type="checkbox"/> Step Relative		<input type="checkbox"/> Not related					
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	<input type="checkbox"/> Step Relative																	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Not related																	
Comments: _____																		
NAME AND TELEPHONE WITH AREA CODE OF PERSON SUBMITTING FORM _____			EMAIL ADDRESS _____															
2. Other family members who may be willing to help.																		
NAME _____		RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD(REN) _____	EMAIL ADDRESS _____															
ADDRESS _____	CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP CODE _____															
TELEPHONE WITH (AREA CODE) _____																		

I wish to be a placement option or provide support in the following ways:

<input type="checkbox"/> Help with visits	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervising visitations	<input type="checkbox"/> Providing transportation for:
<input type="checkbox"/> Placement now	<input type="checkbox"/> Placement in the future	<input type="checkbox"/> Child(ren)
<input type="checkbox"/> Respite care	<input type="checkbox"/> Staying in contact with child(ren)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not wish to help at this time.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (provide family / medical information: _____)		

If yes, please explain and list possible tribal affiliations: _____

What is shared by the Relative Search Unit?

Upon receipt of a telephone call or email from a relative, the following information may be provided:

- A brief explanation of Public Law 110-351 requiring notification to all adult relatives when a child is placed in out-of-home care within **30** days of placement.
- A general statement, “The child was found to be in need of protection and was placed in State care, however we cannot speak to the specifics of the case.”
- An overview of the dependency process.
- The assigned Caseworker’s contact information.




Does Relative Search work?

Relative Search stats	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Relative Search referrals	5061	4477	3682	4052	3974
Relative Searches completed	3527	4198	3658	3217	3555
Letters sent to potential relatives	145,318	137,374	121,791	141,157	163,220
Relatives interested in placement	5934	4511	4113	3677	4475
Relatives interested in providing family support	4278	4229	3375	3140	4059
Relatives unable or willing to help at this time	7735	6191	4226	4621	5945



Foster Parenting & Kinship Care

 [Become a Foster Parent](#)

[Kinship Caregivers](#)

- [Overview](#)
- [Caring for My Relative's Child](#)
- [Kinship Licensing Process and Home Studies](#)
- [Kinship Caregiver Resources](#)
- [Kinship Care Oversight Committee \(KCOC\)](#)
- [Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children \(ICPC\)](#)
- [Relative Search and Notification](#)

For All Families & Caregivers

- [Support & Resources](#)
- [Laws & Rules](#)

[Current Foster Parents](#)

[Caregiver News](#)



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Questions?

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