

## Application/Homestudy Falsification

### SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<b>ORC:</b> 3107.031; 5103.02; 5103.0319 <b>OAC:</b> 5101:2-33-13; 5101:2-5-28; 5101:2-48-12 <b>USC:</b> N/A <b>CFR:</b> N/A	<b>ORIGINAL:</b> 12/08 <b>REVISIONS:</b> 06/16, 11/24/16 <b>RELATED FORM(S):</b> N/A <b>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES):</b> Termination, Revocation or Denial of Foster Home Certificate
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security<br><input type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |
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All Staff       Bargaining Unit       Non-Bargaining       Management

#### **POLICY:**

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) expects prospective foster and adoptive applicants to be open and honest in all communications with the Agency. Falsification of a foster and/or adoption application or homestudy is strictly prohibited. SCCS takes action against applicants who deliberately falsify or misrepresent information.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

Applicants for foster care and adoption must provide SCCS complete and accurate information during the application and homestudy process. SCCS takes the following steps if provided false information:

The assigned SCCS assessor provides the Director of Placement Services and Permanency Planning a written report within three (3) days of the assessor's determination of possible falsification by a person on the application or during the homestudy process. The written statement must include, but is not limited to:

- The original document completed by the applicant.
- Written documentation of the false statement provided by the applicant or adoptive parent.
- Documentation verifying the information reported by the applicant is knowingly false.

Within ten (10) days of a determination of falsification, the assessor sends a notification letter to the applicant through certified mail indicating that the information submitted to SCCS is suspected to be knowingly false. The notice must include all of the following information:

- The date the notification letter is mailed by the assessor.
- A statement indicating the homestudy process is discontinued because SCCS has probable cause to believe the information provided by the applicant on the Application for the Placement of a Child (JFS 01691), or during the homestudy process, is knowingly false.
  - If the homestudy process has already been completed, and it is determined the false statement or document was knowingly provided, the assessor shall include the following in the statement:
    - SCCS will not represent the family at a matching conference.
    - SCCS will not release a homestudy for sharing or transferring.
    - A homestudy will not be filed with the Court for finalization.
- A copy of the documentation or statement that is alleged knowingly false.

- Documentation that verifies the information submitted on the JFS 01691 or during the homestudy process that is knowingly false.
- A statement that if SCCS determines the applicant made knowingly false statements, the SCCS legal department makes a referral to the county prosecutor's office in the county of the applicant(s) residence.
- The applicant's right to have a review by the SCCS Client Rights Officer and how to request a review.
- A statement that if the applicant(s) fails to respond within ten (10) days the application is withdrawn and the applicant are considered to have voluntarily discontinued the homestudy process.

If the applicant responds within ten (10) days of receiving notice of the falsification allegation SCCS is responsible for reviewing the information received within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the applicant(s) response.

SCCS conducts an internal investigation that includes but is not limited to:

- A face to face visit with the applicant and all relevant witnesses, if available.
- Issuance of a final investigatory report to the applicant(s) and a recommendation of whether or not the agency found probable cause to indicate the applicant(s) made knowingly false statements on the application or during the homestudy process.
- SCCS notifies the applicant(s) no later than ten (10) calendar days after the agency review.
- SCCS notifies the applicant if additional time is needed to complete the investigation or to issue the final report due to unanticipated circumstances. The extension must not be more than fourteen (14) additional days. Any extensions must be documented in the adoptive family record.

The Director of Placement Services and Permanency Planning determines within twenty-four (24) hours of completion of the investigation if there is cause related to the child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parent(s) home until the result of the investigation is completed.

The final investigative reports must include the following:

- An explanation of the allegation.
- Any background information deemed relevant by SCCS.
- The results of the investigation, including whether probable cause was found to indicate the applicant or adoptive parent made knowingly false statements.
- Any action steps to be taken by the applicant, adoptive parent, or the agency as a result of the investigation.

SCCS mails the final investigative report within thirty (30) days of receiving the applicant's response to the allegation, at which time the applicant is notified of any action to be taken.

If the final investigative report concludes that the information or documentation was knowingly falsified, SCCS shall:

- Forward a copy of the investigative report to the county prosecutor's office where the adoptive applicant or adoptive parent lives.
- If the adoptive applicant was still in the homestudy process, SCCS shall close the adoption homestudy as if the applicant has voluntarily withdrawn from the homestudy process.
- If the adoptive homestudy was approved prior to the investigation of falsification, the following must be done:
  - The adoption homestudy shall not be presented at any matching conference.
  - The adoption homestudy shall not be released to another agency for sharing or transferring.
  - The adoption homestudy shall not be filed with the court for finalization.
  - The adoption homestudy approval shall expire at the end of the current approval span.

If SCCS determines that there was not falsification SCCS resumes the homestudy process if the applicant(s) choose to proceed and must complete the homestudy within one hundred eighty (180) days.

The above procedures also apply when a child is placed in an approved or licensed home and the caregiver(s) or other household members knowingly made a false statement in the assessor's re-certification of the homestudy.

See also procedure titled Termination, Revocation or Denial of Foster Home Certificate.