

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL			
	Chapter:	(19) Case Management	Effective Date:	July 2019
	Policy Title:	Diligent Search		
Policy Number:	19.20	Previous Policy #:	N/A	

CODES/REFERENCES

O.C.G.A. § 15-11-2 Definitions
O.C.G.A. § 15-11-130 Emergency Care and Supervision of Child Without Order
O.C.G.A. § 15-11-211 Relative Search by DFCS
O.C.G.A. § 15-11-216 Periodic Review Hearing
O.C.G.A. § 15-11-241 Petition for Permanent Guardian
O.C.G.A. § 19-11-9 Location of Absent Parents; Putative Father Registry
O.C.G.A. § 49-5-41 Persons and Agencies Permitted to Access Records
Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Sections 471(a)(19), 471(a)(29), and 475(7)
45 CFR Section 1356.21(b)(5)
Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

REQUIREMENTS

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Complete a diligent search to identify and locate persons who may be considered as a placement or visiting resource for the child and/or a support for the family while the child is in foster care. Those persons include:
 - a. Absent/non-custodial parents
 - b. Maternal and paternal relatives
 - c. Fictive kin
 - d. The parents of the child's siblings
 - e. Family friends
 - f. Other individuals who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the child
2. Conduct a diligent search by at a minimum:
 - a. Interviewing the parent/legal custodian in the Child Protection Service (CPS) assessment phase of a case utilizing a genogram to document the information;
 - b. Interviewing the child;
 - c. Interviewing identified relatives;
 - d. Interviewing any other person who is likely to have information about the identity or location of the person being sought;
 - e. Conducting comprehensive searches of data bases available to DFCS including, but not limited to, searches of employment, residence, utilities, vehicle registration, child support enforcement, law enforcement, corrections records, and any other records likely to result in identifying and locating the person being sought;
 - f. *Seeking the services of the Federal Parent Locator Service through the Department of Child Support Services to search for absent parents at any point in order to facilitate a permanency plan.*
 - g. Making an inquiry during the court hearings that the parent/caregiver provide the

- names and contact information of absent parents, all relatives, and other persons who can be considered as a possible placement for the child; and
- h. Conducting any other reasonable means that are likely to identify relatives or other persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the child.
3. *Within 30 calendar days after the removal of a child from the custody of the parent(s)/caregiver(s) of the child, exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to the following relatives subject to exceptions due to family violence:*
 - a. *All adult grandparents;*
 - b. *All parents of a sibling of the child, where such parent has legal custody of such sibling; and*
 - c. *Other adult relatives of the child, including any other adult relatives suggested by the parents/caregivers; and*
 - d. *Noncustodial parents.*
 4. Engage each absent parent, relatives, fictive kin and other committed individuals identified through the diligent search process by phone or in person to discuss their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child.
 5. *Provide notice via the Diligent Search Notification Form by certified mail with return receipt requested or verified email, within three business days of identifying the relative or parent of a sibling of the child where the parent has legal custody of the sibling, that:*
 - a. *Specifies that the child has been or is being removed from the custody of the parent(s)/caregiver(s) of the child;*
 - b. *Explains the options the relative has under Federal, State, and local law or Tribal law to participate in the care and placement of the child, including any options that may be lost by failing to respond to the notice;*
 - c. *Describes the requirements to become an approved foster family home; and*
 - d. *Identifies the additional services and supports that are available for the child in such a home.*

NOTE: *Georgia has opted out of the operation of a kinship guardianship assistance program.*

 - e. Explains that the court may excuse DFCS from considering a relative as a placement resource, if after receiving the required notice, the relative fails within six months of the notice date, to demonstrate their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child.
 6. Submit to the court a diligent search report outlining efforts to locate absent parents, relatives, fictive kin, friends, or other committed individuals for the placement of the child:
 - a. Within 30 calendar days of the child's removal from his/her home; and
 - b. At subsequent judicial or citizen review panel (see policy [17.2 Legal: Case Review/Permanency Plan Hearings](#)).
 7. Continue diligent search efforts throughout the life of the case until a relative or other committed individual has been identified for the placement of the child or until such child is placed for adoption unless the court excuses DFCS from continuing a diligent search.
 8. Document all diligent search efforts and the results in Georgia SHINES within 72 hours of occurrence.

PROCEDURES

The Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) will:

1. Gather information about absent parents, relatives, fictive kin and the family's support

network during the CPS phase of the case utilizing a genogram in accordance with policy [19.19 Case Management: Genogram](#).

2. Prior to a planned removal of the child from his/her home obtain information about absent parents, relatives, and fictive kin during the pre-removal staffing or pre-removal Family Team Meeting (FTM) that will assist with diligent search.
3. Conduct a comprehensive diligent search to identify absent parents, relatives, fictive kin, friends and the parents of the child's siblings that could be a resource for the child and family:
 - a. Engage the parent/legal custodian:
 - i. Explain what is a diligent search, the importance of the diligent search, and how the child and family can benefit from the support of relatives;
 - i. Obtain addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses of any identified persons;
 - ii. Inquire about any tribal affiliation (see policy [1.6 Administration: Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\) and Transfer of Responsibility for Placement and Care to a Tribal Agency](#));
 - iii. Obtain the child's current school information or the last school attended, if the child is not presently enrolled in school; and
 - iv. Gather any other information that would be helpful in locating resources and supports for the child.
 - b. Engage the child to identify his/her family members (including any siblings), other significant adults or relationships that are important to him/her, when age appropriate.
 - c. Review the case record in Georgia SHINES to identify relatives, fictive kin, and other family supports in accordance with policy [19.10 Case Management: Analyzing DFCS History](#). This review includes but is not limited to the following:
 - i. Person List Pages
 - ii. Genograms
 - iii. Contacts
 - iv. Assessments (Family Functioning Assessment, Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment, Wraparound, psychological evaluations, etc.)
 - v. FTM documentation and interview notes
 - vi. Out-of-state child welfare history, if applicable.
 - d. Participate in the case transfer staffing and discuss diligent search efforts including any person identified, contacted and the results (see policy [19.4 Case Management: Case Transfer](#)).
 - e. Discuss the diligent search efforts during the FTM and obtain information from participants regarding additional individuals that may be included in the diligent search.
 - f. Request the Special Assistant Attorney General (SAAG) make an inquiry during the adjudicatory hearing that the parent/caregiver provide under oath the identity of:
 - i. The absent parent(s) and provide his/her contact information;
 - ii. Any relatives who can be considered as a possible placement for the child and his/her contact information;
 - iii. The parents of any siblings of the child.
 - g. Obtain and review the child's birth certificate for the mother's maiden name and any married name, identity of the father, and the state/county of the child's birth. This information can be used to enhance the diligent search efforts (see policy [11.2](#)

[Adoptions: Putative Father Registry & Birth Certificates](#));

- h. Contact the daycare or the school of school-aged children:
 - i. Interview the teacher to ask about relatives/fictive kin they are aware of or the child mentioned.
 - ii. Request the names and contact information for the emergency contacts and/or individuals allowed to pick up the child from school.
 - i. Search available databases which include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. CLEAR® - a family locator tool used to locate individuals. The CLEAR® search may include current/previous addresses, social security numbers, telephone numbers, email addresses, criminal history, relatives, associates, etc.
 - ii. Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) - to determine if there is a current case on the child and an address for the absent parent and the person seeking the financial support. The child support office also can provide information from other states to locate a parent using the Federal Parent Locator Service.
 - iii. Gateway - to identify parent(s), grandparents, adult relatives or fictive kin and last known addresses;
 - iv. Putative Father Registry – to identify any possible biological fathers of the child (see policy [11.2 Adoptions: Putative Father Registry & Birth Certificates](#));
 - j. Search social media networks (Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram®, etc.) to locate the parent's and/or child's social media page to gather information about absent parents, relatives, fictive kin, and other committed individuals.

NOTE: SSCMs shall not use their personal social media account to conduct searches of social media. Never post messages on the parent's or child's social media network page.
 - k. Search internet online directories for telephone numbers or addresses of identified individuals.
 - l. Use internet search engines (Google®, Bing®, etc.) to search for contact information of identified individuals.
4. Make additional efforts to locate an absent parent utilizing resources provided in Practice Guidance and in policy [19.21 Case Management: Unable to Locate](#).
 5. Contact absent parents, relatives, fictive kin and other committed individuals within three business days of receiving the individual's contact information.
 - a. Make an initial contact in person or by telephone when a number and/or address is available:
 - i. Be prepared to answer as many questions as possible. There may likely be a lot of emotions and questions that could be answered immediately when the contact is in person or by phone. DFCS is permitted to tell an adult relative that a child is in foster care and the role he/she can serve in the child's life.

NOTE: Information shared with the identified person must comply with confidentiality laws in accordance with policy [2.6 Information Management: Confidentiality/Safeguarding Information](#).
 - ii. Assess the individual's willingness and ability to provide care or support for the child and family while the child is in foster care.
 - iii. Gather or verify his/her demographic information (full name, address, telephone number(s) and email address).
 - iv. Inform relatives and parents of the child's sibling where the parent has legal custody of the sibling that:

1. He/she may support the child and family by becoming a placement resource, permanency resource and providing other support.
2. He/she will receive a Diligent Search Notification form via certified mail and/or email explaining ways he/she can support the child and family, the opportunity to express his/her interest and willingness to provide care for the child while in foster care or provide a permanent home for the child if reunification is not possible. In addition, the supports that may be available to him/her as a placement or permanency resource.

NOTE: If the Diligent Search Notification is sent via email, receipt is verified if the relative responds to the email or by verbal verification of receipt by the relative.

3. It is important he/she demonstrate an interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child within the requested timeframes, as the Court may excuse DFCS from considering them as a placement resource if they do not demonstrate their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child within six months of receiving the required notification.
 - i. Request information about absent parents, other relatives, and/or fictive kin that could be a support for the child.
 - ii. Update the genogram in accordance with policy [19.19 Case Management: Genogram](#).
 - iii. Explain the next steps.

EXCEPTION: Contact is not required with any absent parent(s), relative, fictive kin and/or other committed individuals when it may cause a significant safety issue for the child or parents. Each situation must be assessed with the Social Services Supervisor (SSS) to determine if contact is required. The decision will be staffed with the SAAG and clearly documented in Georgia SHINES. When assessing whether an absent parent will be contacted the Social Services Administrator (SSA) must be included.

- b. Document the contact on the Contact Detail page in Georgia SHINES and select diligent search as the purpose of the contact. Include in the contact detail whether the individual expressed an interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child, and any other supports they expressed a willingness to provide.
 - c. Send identified relatives and the parent(s) of the child's sibling where the parent has legal custody of the sibling the Diligent Search Notification form within three business days of contact with the relative or within three business days of receiving the relatives contact information.
 - d. Upload a copy of the sent Diligent Search Notification form to Georgia SHINES External Documentation.
6. Consult with the SSS regarding diligent search efforts and solicit input on locating absent parent(s), relatives, and fictive kin.
 7. Submit a diligent search report to the court within 30 calendar days of the child's removal from his/her home outlining efforts to locate relatives or other committed individuals for the placement of the child.
 8. Continue diligent search efforts throughout the duration of the child remaining in foster care to obtain additional information about absent parents, relatives, fictive kin and other committed individuals:
 - a. Re-engage the parent/legal custodian and the child during monthly purposeful contacts to discuss any additional family members, other significant adults or

- relationships that are important to him/her, when age appropriate.
- b. Periodically re-engage previously contacted relatives and other committed individuals as circumstances change.
 - c. During subsequent FTMs engage attendees to gather information about absent parents, relatives and fictive kin.
 - d. During court hearings and Judicial Citizen Review Panels engage the family's attendees to obtain additional information about absent parents, relatives, or fictive kin who may be considered as a possible placement and/or support for the child.
 - e. Ask the foster parent if the child has shared information about his/her parents, family members, or other individuals who are significant to the child.
 - f. Repeat searches of available databases. Databases are updated frequently and new information may now be available (telephone number, address, etc.).
 - g. Contact absent parent(s), relatives and fictive kin within three business days of receiving the individual's contact information following the process provided above for initiating contact and notifying committed persons in support of the child.
9. Submit to the court at subsequent case plan review hearings the Diligent Search Report outlining continued diligent search efforts.
 10. Continue to update the family's genogram as new persons are identified in accordance with policy [19.19 Case Management: Genogram](#).
 11. Update Georgia SHINES Person Detail page, Contact Detail page and Diligent Search Information page as new persons are identified and/or contacted.
 12. Refer to policy [10.4 Foster Care: Selecting a Placement Resource](#) when identified relatives and fictive kin have expressed an interest to become a placement resource for the child.
 13. Initiate visitation and/or other contact (if appropriate) with the relative or fictive kin to establish, enhance or preserve connections with the child (see policy [10.19 Foster Care: Visitation](#)).

The Social Services Supervisor (SSS) will:

1. Participate in the case transfer staffing with the SSCM and obtain information about absent parents, relatives, fictive kin or other family supports that have been identified through completion of the genogram by the CPS SSCM.
2. Conduct a supervisor staffing to discuss diligent search efforts and to provide guidance where required, prior to submission of the initial diligent search report to the court (see policy [19.6 Case Management: Supervisor Staffing](#)).
3. Review the Diligent Search Report prior to each court submission to ensure accuracy and thoroughness.
4. Ensure that the SSCM has informed relatives of the timeframes and follows up to facilitate a timely response regarding their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child, including providing periodic reminders of the remaining time.
5. Monitor ongoing diligent search efforts through monthly supervisory staffings and case record reviews to ensure efforts continue until an appropriate relative or fictive kin is located who meets the needs of the child and his/her siblings or until permanency is achieved.
6. Ensure identified relatives or fictive kin are timely referred for a foster home evaluation and/or relative care assessment when he/she has agreed to be a placement resource

for the child; and efforts (such as visitation or other contact as appropriate), are initiated to develop/preserve the child's connections.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

What is a Diligent Search?

Diligent search is efforts to identify and locate parents, relatives or other persons who have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the child and may be considered as a placement resource and/or support while the child is in foster care. Whenever possible, children should be placed with relatives as it minimizes trauma for the child, maintains familial and cultural connections, and increases contact with parents and siblings. Additional benefits include decreasing the number of placement disruptions, reducing the amount of time the child spends in foster care and expediting permanency.

Information gathering about absent parents, relatives, and the family support network begins during the CPS phase of the case and continues if the child is placed in foster care and continues throughout the life of the case. Timely identification of relatives and fictive kin increases the likelihood of making sound placement decisions. Diligent search efforts should immediately begin when a child enters foster care. It requires pursuing every lead and responding rapidly to every indication of familial interest. Diligent search efforts are not complete when the report is submitted and approved by the Court. When a relative is identified through the diligent search process, it is important to immediately engage him/her to provide timely notification and emphasize the need for him/her to respond timely to DFCS regarding their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child. If the relative does not demonstrate their interest and willingness to provide a permanent home for the child within six months of the Diligent Search Notification, the court has the option to excuse DFCS from considering the relative as placement resource. When this occurs, it is essential that DFCS staff review all applicable court orders to determine whether the court used their discretion to excuse the consideration of a relative. See policy [10.4 Foster Care: Placement Resources](#) Practice Guidance: Placement Selection for additional assistance regarding situations in which relatives come forward within the six months timeframe and period for completing an assessment will fall after the child has been placed with a foster parent for 12 months.

Who is a Relative of the Child?

Relative of the child is a person related to the child by blood, marriage or adoption, including the spouse of any of those persons even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution.

Relatives include:

1. Maternal and paternal grandparents
2. Great grandparents
3. Uncles and aunts
4. Nieces and nephews
5. Siblings, including siblings that are related through a putative father
6. First cousins and first cousins once-removed (a parent's cousin)

Who is a Fictive Kin?

Fictive kin means a person who is not related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption but who prior to his or her placement in foster care is known to the family, has a substantial and positive relationship with the child, and is willing and able to provide a suitable home for the

child. There is no comprehensive list of such persons but may include the following.

1. Godparents
2. Neighbors
3. Close family friends
4. Spiritual advisors or congregation members
5. Person defined as a relative of a refugee child
6. Domestic partner or former domestic partner of the child's parent if the child had a relationship with the former domestic partner prior to coming into care
7. Adoptive parent of a child's sibling
8. Legal or biological parent of a child's half sibling
9. Person defined as a relative by the child's tribe if the child is an American Indian/ Alaska Native child under the ICWA or is in the legal custody of the tribe
10. Others identified by the child or family

Who are Other Persons?

Other persons are individuals identified by the child or the family that have an emotional significant relationship with the child includes but are not limited to:

1. Previous neighbors
2. Teachers
3. Scoutmasters
4. Previous foster parents
5. Parents of friends of the child, with whom such child has resided or had significant contact

Who is a Sibling of a Child?

A child's sibling is an individual with whom a child shares one or both parents in common by blood, adoption or marriage, even if the marriage was terminated by death or dissolution. Such an individual shall still be considered a sibling of the child following termination of parental rights (TPR) up until a finalized adoption occurs. Such an individual shall also still be considered a sibling of the child following the death of their common parent(s).

Initiating a Diligent Search

The SSCM assigned to the child's foster care case has the primary responsibility for conducting the diligent search. Once the child is removed, the search intensifies. The CPS and Permanency SSCMs share in the responsibility of obtaining relevant information and documenting the search efforts in Georgia SHINES. Interviewing the parent and the child are key activities to beginning a diligent search. Diligent search is also required for a child who enters foster care as a result of Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA).

Diligent Search and Significant Safety Issues

Contact is not required with any absent parent, relative, fictive kin and other committed individuals when it may cause a significant safety issue for the child or parents. Each situation must be assessed with the SSS to determine if contact is required. The decision will be staffed with the SSAG and clearly documented in Georgia SHINES. When assessing whether an absent parent should be contacted, the SSA must be included. Some instances in which safety may be of a concern are:

1. Domestic violence/Intimate partner violence
2. Protective orders

3. Criminal history related to abuse of a child

Parents/Legal Custodian Engagement

A child entering foster care is a traumatic event which impacts the lives of all involved. There may be times when the SSCM will need to engage the parent/legal custodian about diligent search during their first encounter. The parent/legal custodian may be emotionally overwhelmed and may not trust DFCS and is defensive in his/her response to DFCS' urgency in obtaining relative information. The parent/legal custodian may prefer not to involve their family for fear that relatives may not approve of their circumstances. This is an opportunity for the SSCM to build rapport by having an honest conversation with the parent/legal custodian explaining what is diligent search, the purpose of a diligent search, and the urgency of conducting it timely. Also, explain that specific information about the circumstances that precipitated the child entering care cannot be disclosed to family and other individuals, however, family can be informed that the child is in foster care. Terms should be explained in a manner that the parent/legal custodian can understand and answer any questions he/she may have. Ask the parent/ legal custodian his/her placement preferences, if reunification is no longer an option. The SSCM should be empathetic and nonjudgmental about the parent's/legal custodian's feelings. Inform the parent/legal custodian they will be asked to testify under oath about absent parent(s), relatives, fictive kin and other committed individuals. Re-engage the parent(s)/legal custodian at each contact for additional information about relatives, friends, fictive kin and other committed individuals that could support the child and family while their child is in foster care. Ongoing communication with the parent/legal custodian regarding who was located and contacted and the next steps is also necessary to build a partnership and overcome any barriers.

Child Engagement

Children want their voices to be heard and input in the changes occurring around them. A child should be involved in the diligent search process and the decision-making when age and developmentally appropriate. The diligent search process should be explained to the child in a manner that he/she can understand and answer any of his/her questions. Engage the child in identifying relatives and other important people in his/her life and provide the benefits of finding family to support the child while in foster care. Keep the child informed on who was located and contacted and the next steps.

Contacting Identified Persons

All identified persons should be contacted whether in the state of Georgia or out of the state. When contacting identified persons, it is important to provide the reason for the communication. Take into consideration the person maybe be unaware of the family's child welfare involvement or the child is out of the home and may become emotional. The SSCM should discuss the different options that the person can play in the child's life while in foster care to demonstrate his/her interest and willingness to provide a permanent home if reunification is not possible, for example:

1. Providing care for the child while in foster by becoming a kinship caregiver or foster parent;
2. Visiting with the child (i.e. summer vacation, weekends, holidays); and
3. Providing additional support (i.e. transportation, maintaining regular contact with the child, participating in case planning activities).

Communication is important in managing expectations about the potential outcomes. The SSCM should be clear about his/her intentions, the six-month timeframe of being considered a permanent resource for the child, and not make promises he/she cannot keep. Always ask about additional relatives, friends, fictive kin, or other supportive persons in the parent or child lives. Be sure to provide the SSCM's contact information if he/she has additional questions or information. Following the initial contact, provide the Diligent Search Notification form to relatives or parents of a sibling of the child where the parent has legal custody of the sibling outlining the services available to the individual if he/she decides to become a resource. The SSCM should encourage the persons timely response.

The SSCM should follow up on every potential lead and document the results. When individuals have been identified as a possible resource for the child or the family, it is important to maintain contact to provide updates even if there is no progress to report. A person may be ruled out due to CPS history or criminal history, he/she should be promptly notified of the determination and informed of any role he/she can play in the child's life while in foster care. Some persons may not be emotionally ready to become involved in the case and may need some additional time to consider his/her options. It is important to periodically revisit persons who at one point may have declined as feelings change over time.

Absent Parents

Parents help children understand who they are, their family, culture and heritage. When a parent is absent or missing from a child's life, the child is in essence missing a piece of him/her self. It is important for a child to maintain contact with both parents. When a child is removed from the custody of either one parent or a legal custodian, diligent search efforts must include a search for the absent parent(s). This includes inquiring about the absent parent(s) with the parent/legal custodian from whom the child was removed, the child, relatives, and other persons contacted while conducting a diligent search. Sometimes a parent/legal custodian will not reveal the identity of the absent parent(s) or only identify the absent parent by first name or proclaim no knowledge about the absent parent's location. The parent/guardian may have a number of reasons he/she will not provide this information which may include fear that absent parent(s) may seek or be granted legal custody, they had a problematic relationship that he/she wishes to leave in the past, or the absent parent has not played a role in the child's life. The SSCM should acknowledge and normalize the parent's/legal custodian's feelings about the situation. However, it should not impact DFCS' due diligence to locate an absent parent, unless there is family violence and it imposes a significant safety issue for the child or parent. Keep in mind an absent parent may not be aware of DFCS involvement or the circumstances that precipitated the involvement. Also, an absent parent may not be aware that he/she even has a child. Even vague information that you receive may help you locate the absent parent.

Other sources of information used to identify and locate absent parents are the following:

1. Child's birth certificate can provide the following:
 - a. Mother's maiden name
 - b. Mother's marital status at the time of birth
 - c. The identity of the father.
2. Putative Father Registry is a list of names of men who have acknowledged paternity of a child by completing the Paternity Acknowledgement form or have indicated the possibility of paternity without acknowledging paternity of the child (see policy [11.2 Adoptions: Putative Father Registry & Birth Certificates](#)).

3. Military branches of services can be contacted if the individual is believed to be in the military or recently discharged from the military.
4. Federal Parent Locator service documents new hire information and can locate persons in the county where they are presently working.
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire>
5. Federal Bureau of Prisons Inmate Locator website can be used if information indicates that an absent parent is currently incarcerated in a federal prison.
www.bop.gov/inmateloc
6. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) public website can be used if the individual is reported as detained for deportation outside the United States. Information required to process an inquiry includes:
 - a. The detainee's first and last name; and
 - b. The country of birth; or
 - c. The detainee's A-Number (the nine-digit identifying number that is assigned to a person during immigration benefits or enforcement proceedings) and/or
 - d. A date of birth for the detainee, if available.www.ice.gov/locator

CLEAR®

CLEAR® is a DFCS family locator tool used to find absent parents, relatives, fictive kin and other committed persons with a significant relationship to the child. CLEAR® offers fast, efficient search technology that allows one to locate people and authenticate their identities. The CLEAR® search includes information from all three credit reporting agencies, Equifax®, Experian®, and Transunion® so the record is updated with a current address every time there is an application for credit. The CLEAR® search may provide the following:

1. Current or previous addresses and a time-frame for each address
2. Social Security Numbers
3. Telephone Numbers
4. Identity of Spouse
5. Criminal History
6. Marriages and/or divorces
7. Licenses held
8. E-mail addresses
9. Social Media accounts/pictures
10. Public wish lists (such as Amazon)
11. Vehicle Registrations
12. Description of Vehicles owned
13. Relatives
14. Associates (for all prior addresses)
15. Neighbors

NOTE: CLEAR® reports contain personal identifiable information and should be kept confidential. CLEAR® reports cannot be uploaded in Georgia SHINES External Documentation as they may contain other persons' information, who are not associated with the case.

Online Directories

Online directories can provide addresses and telephone numbers of searched persons. A reverse look-up usually allows the SSCM to obtain the name of the person from a telephone

number, but some sites, also offer a reverse lookup by address. Some sources are:

1. www.whitepages.com
2. www.superpages.com
3. www.wayp.com (source for international White and Yellow Page search sites)
4. www.infobel.com (worldwide online telephone directory)

Internet Search Engines

1. Google® www.google.com
2. Bing® www.bing.com
3. Yahoo® www.yahoo.com

Social Media Networks

1. Facebook® www.facebook.com
2. Instagram® www.instagram.com
3. Twitter® www.twitter.com
4. Snapchat® www.snapchat.com

Documenting Diligent Search Results and Efforts in SHINES

Documenting diligent search provides a road of DFCS efforts to locate supports for the child while in foster care and leaves a clear picture for the next SSCM partnering with the family. All persons identified during the diligent search process must be added to the Person Detail page. A person can be added at any stage in Georgia SHINES. Each contact made related to a diligent search must be added on the Contact Detail page and “diligent search” selected as the purpose of the contact. It is also important to document the discussion and outcome of the discussion with each relative regarding the diligent search notification and their interest and willingness to become a placement resource and to provide a permanent home for the child. The contacted person and the date of the contact prepopulates onto the Diligent Search Report. Failure to select diligent search as the purpose of the contact, will result in the information not prepopulating onto the Diligent Search Report.

The Diligent Search Information page is used to track the responses from each contact with absent parents, relatives, fictive kin, and other committed persons. Complete it for each contact entered on the Contact Detail page where “diligent search” was selected as the purpose of the contact. Decisions not to contact an absent parent, relative, fictive kin or other person should also be recorded on the Diligent Search Information page. Information entered on the Diligent Search Information page is prepopulated to the Diligent Search Report. The Diligent Search Information page should be continuously updated as persons are identified and contacted, and as previously contacted persons are re-engaged.

The Diligent Search Report is comprised of all contacts entered on the Contact Detail page where “diligent search” was selected as the purpose of the contact and all information entered on the Diligent Search Information page. Prior to submitting Diligent Search Report to court review for accurateness and thoroughness.

FORMS AND TOOLS

[Diligent Search Notification Form](#)