



In New York State, the majority of children who are adopted from foster care receive an adoption subsidy. Adoption subsidy payments are made by the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS), or, in New York City, by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Payments are based on a written subsidy agreement between the local district and the adoptive parent(s) with final review and approval by OCFS. The Adoption Subsidy Database, introduced in 2010, automates the process for completing, reviewing, and submitting adoption subsidies. It is also used to process needed changes and updates over the life of the subsidy agreement.

This tip sheet is for adoption workers, supervisors and others seeking to understand the interface between the adoption subsidy database and CONNECTIONS so that common issues can be resolved.

Creating an Adoption Subsidy Home - Starting off Right

When a subsidy eligible child is going to be adopted from foster care, an adoption subsidy home FAD stage must be created in CONNECTIONS to facilitate the payment of the adoption subsidy.



This FAD stage **must be created BEFORE the subsidy application is launched in the Adoption Subsidy Database** to be certain that the correct CONNECTIONS Resource ID is linked to the subsidy agreement.

Only LDSS/ACS workers can open an Adoption Subsidy Home.

The process for creating an adoption subsidy home will differ, depending on whether the adoptive home is certified/licensed by a local district or by a voluntary agency.

- **District Foster Homes**

If the existing foster home is certified/licensed by the district, the district needs to create a **new** Adoption/Guardianship FAD stage for the family in CONNECTIONS. ***This will require a new Vendor Identification Number (VID) for the adoption subsidy home.***

If the family already has an open Adoption Subsidy home stage **with your district** for a previous child they have adopted, you may use that same Adoption Subsidy stage to launch the new subsidy application.

Previously closed Adoption Subsidy home stages should not be reopened and reused.

- **Voluntary Agency Foster Homes**

Since only local districts can pay adoption subsidies, there are two choices for a foster home certified/licensed by a voluntary agency. It can:

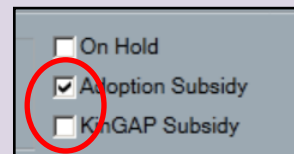
- ▶ remain open with the VA so the family can continue to foster *or*
- ▶ be closed after the adoption is finalized if the family no longer wishes to continue fostering.

VA homes should not be transferred to the district for subsidy purposes as the family may wish to foster again in the future and the home could be reopened with the VA at that time.

“Multipurpose Homes”

CONNECTIONS previously allowed local districts to create “multipurpose” FAD homes that served **BOTH** as a foster home **AND** an Adoption Subsidy and/or KinGAP Subsidy stage using a single Resource ID (RID) and Vendor ID (VID).

Multipurpose homes can be identified on the Licensing Information window of a FAD stage. They have a type of Certified Foster Home, Foster/Adoptive Home or Approved Relative Foster Home and a checkmark in the Adoption Subsidy and/or KinGAP Subsidy checkbox.



<input type="checkbox"/>	On Hold
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adoption Subsidy
<input type="checkbox"/>	KinGAP Subsidy

Because commodity code and payment issues in BICS can result when the foster care portion of a multipurpose home closes and is reopened, **the ability to create and reopen multipurpose homes was eliminated with the implementation of Build 2022-2 in September 2022.**

A number of multi-purpose homes continue to exist and DO NOT PRESENT A PROBLEM AS LONG AS THE FOSTER HOME PORTION REMAINS AUTHORIZED.

If the foster home portion system closes, the subsidy portion remains open and subsidy payments continue. The foster home portion, however, CANNOT be reopened again as part of the multipurpose home.

If the family wishes to continue fostering, a **NEW** foster home stage with a unique RID and VID must be opened. Like any new foster home opening, this will require fingerprints, Staff Exclusion List (SEL) and Criminal History Record Check (CHRC) clearances, medical clearances completed within the past 12 months, and a new, updated home study.

Clearance information will prefill when existing PIDs are used for the new stage, but **system edits will not allow the new home to open unless medical clearance dates are less than 12 months old.**

An updated homestudy must be done within the new stage. To keep FAD history together, workers are encourage to upload a copy of the original homestudy to this new stage.

Note: While foster home/subsidy multipurpose homes can be problematic, a single FAD subsidy stage **can** be used for more than one subsidy payment (Adoption subsidy plus KinGAP subsidy or multiple Adoption subsidies).

Since only a district can pay an adoption or KinGAP subsidy, multipurpose homes **cannot be transferred** from a district to a voluntary agency. If the foster family in a multipurpose home wishes to “transfer” to a voluntary agency, the voluntary agency must open a **NEW** foster home, with a **NEW** VID. The district would then close the foster care portion of the multipurpose home, leaving the subsidy portion of the home intact with the original VID.

See page 9 of this tip sheet for additional information on the steps needed to change a multipurpose home from a district to a voluntary agency when a child is currently placed in that home.



WORKERS ARE URGED TO KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON ANY EXISTING MULTI-PURPOSE HOMES SO THAT THEY CONTINUE TO BE REAUTHORIZED ON TIME!

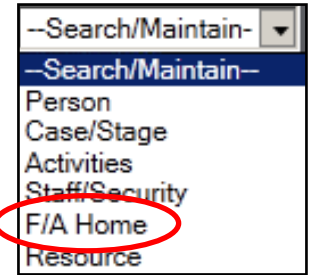
If the foster portion of a multi-purpose home system closes while children are placed in the home and medical clearances are more than 12 months old, contact your Regional Office Permanency Specialist for assistance.

Creating a New Adoption Subsidy Home

Step-by-Step: Creating a New Adoption Subsidy Home:

- From either the Search/Maintain or Intakes menu, select **F/A Home**.

The F/A Home Search window displays.



- Search by home name, using the format, *Last name,First name (no space between.)*

- Carefully review the results.**

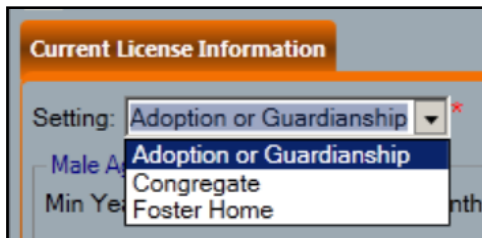
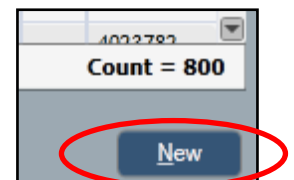
- ▶ If the family has an **existing** subsidy home established for a previous adoption or KinGAP subsidy payment **open with your county**, you can add an additional subsidy payment to this home, rather than opening a new home for the new subsidy.

Do not reopen and reuse a previously closed subsidy home.

- ▶ If the family has a **closed foster/adoptive** home with your district **do not** reopen this home to use as a subsidy home. It is better to create a new home for subsidy purposes so that if the family decides to foster again in the future, the closed home can be reopened at that time for that purpose, preserving their fostering history in one place.

- For a new subsidy home, click the **New** button at the lower right of the F/A Home Search List on the Home-Search window.

The Home Demographics tab displays.



- Select the Setting of "**Adoption or Guardianship**" and complete all other required information (indicated by red asterisks.)

- Click the **Use As Business** checkbox in the Primary Address section.

- Enter the new **Vendor ID** number.

- Click the **Validate** button.

- Click the **Accept** button.

- Click the **Save & Assign** link in the navigation pane.

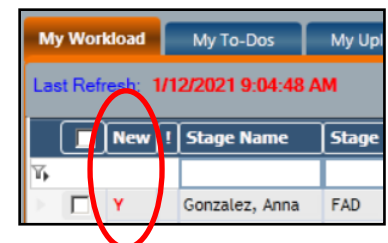
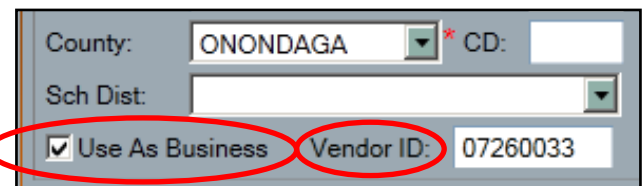
- Select the name of the worker who will be assigned as Primary worker for the stage.

- Click the **Save & Close** button.

- Navigate to the assigned worker's workload and select the new FAD stage (indicated by a red "Y" in the New column).

- Click the **Person List** link in the navigation pane.

The Person List window opens.



15. Use the **Add Person** link in the navigation pane to add the adoptive parents with a **Rel/Int** of “Parent”.

Unlike regular FAD homes, all household members do NOT need to be added.

*Be sure to use the **Relate** button rather than creating a new Person Identification Number (PID), as the person you are adding will already exist in the CONNECTIONS database.*

16. Click the **Licensing Information** link in the navigation pane.

The Home License window opens.

17. Select the **Facility Type** of “Adoption Subsidy Home”.

18. Change the **Status** to “Applicant”.

19. Select the **Program Type** of “Regular”.

20. Click the **Save** button.

21. Complete required fields for age ranges and capacity.

This should reflect the age(s) and number of children to be adopted.

22. Change the **Status** field to “Pending-Acceptance”.

23. Click the **Save & Submit** link in the navigation pane to submit the home for supervisory approval.

24. Click the **Save & Close** button.

CONNECTIONS and The Adoption Subsidy Database

Once an Adoption Subsidy home stage has been created and is in Acceptive-Active status in CONNECTIONS, the next step is to launch an adoption subsidy application in the Adoption Subsidy Database.

Resource (foster home) information is pulled into the Adoption Subsidy Database application from CONNECTIONS and **must be verified for accuracy.**

FOSTER HOME INFORMATION CANNOT BE ADDED TO OR CHANGED IN THE ADOPTION SUBSIDY DATABASE. Any necessary changes must be made in CONNECTIONS.

An overnight batch is required for the corrected information to transfer over from CONNECTIONS to the Adoption Subsidy application.

An adoption subsidy application becomes an adoption subsidy agreement once the application is approved by New York State Adoption Services (NYSAS). **Post finalization changes to an adoption subsidy agreement are done by amending the original agreement.**

Complete instructions for launching and completing an Adoption Subsidy application are available in the Adoption Subsidy Database Step-by-Step Manual.



It is essential that the correct Resource ID (RID) and the correct Vendor ID (VID) are used when creating the Adoption Subsidy application.

Be sure the VID displaying in the Adoption Subsidy database is the VID for the district Adoption Subsidy Home, not the voluntary agency foster home.

Once approved as part of an original agreement, the RID cannot be changed in the Adoption Subsidy Database and can impact future updates to the agreement.

Once the adoption is finalized in court, the LDSS/ACS Case Manager documents this in the CONNECTIONS Child Case Record (CCR) stage. The child's discharge from foster care (M990) must be recorded in Activities and the CONNECTIONS Finalize Adoption window completed before the CCR stage is closed and sealed.



Completing the Finalize Adoption window in CONNECTIONS is the ONLY way to close and seal the CCR stage. If this window is not completed, the stage will not be sealed even if the stage is closed in CONNECTIONS.

The associated Welfare Management System (WMS) case must also be closed. A **new** WMS case for the child is then opened to maintain information regarding the finalized adoption subsidy. Payments are issued directly from the district's Benefits Issuance and Control System (BICS). The adoptive home in CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record for the home receiving subsidy payments.

Unlike a regular foster home, an Adoption Subsidy FAD stage does not need to be reauthorized annually in order for the family to continue receiving adoption subsidy payments. It is important, however, that information in the Adoption Subsidy FAD stage be kept up-to-date at all times.

- ▶ If a district chooses to keep Adoption Subsidy FAD stages open and an update is needed, the stage can be accessed from the assigned worker's workload like any other open stage.
- ▶ If the district chooses to close Adoption Subsidy FAD stages and a change in address, family composition or other maintenance activity is needed, the closed stage must be reopened in CONNECTIONS. Information can then be updated, batch overnight to the Adoption Subsidy Database and the home can be closed again.

Adoptive homes continue to receive subsidy payments until BICS is explicitly notified to cease payments. This occurs when the WMS case file for the adopted child is closed. If the Adoptive home is still in Accepted-Active status in CONNECTIONS, it will need to be closed once adoption subsidy payments for all children attached to that home terminate. When subsidy payments end, nothing is required to be changed/updated in the Adoption Subsidy Database.

Resolving Issues between CONNECTIONS & the Adoption Subsidy Database

On occasion, issues arise between CONNECTIONS and the Adoption Subsidy Database. Some of the more common issues and the steps needed to resolve them are discussed below.

Issue: The New Application Button is Not Enabled

The New Application button in the Adoption Subsidy Database enables only for homes that are open, approved, and active in CONNECTIONS.

	New Application
Vendor ID	00329801
Home Status	Accepted - Active

	New Application
Vendor ID	00395465
Home Status	Closed

There are **three common reasons** the “New Application” button is not enabled:

- The resource home is not open or authorized (i.e., not in “Accepted-Active” status).
- There is already an in-process application started for the child under this or another resource. The adoption subsidy database does not allow multiple incomplete applications to progress.
- The home you have selected from your search results in the Adoption Subsidy Database is closed in CONNECTIONS and is not the correct home.



*Reminder: The Subsidy home FAD stage in CONNECTIONS must be created and in Active-Approved status **BEFORE** attempting to launch the subsidy application in the Adoption Subsidy Database so that the correct VID is linked with the subsidy application.*

You need to search carefully in the Adoption Subsidy Database when seeking the correct home to which the subsidy application will be attached. There are different ways to search and the same names may appear in more than one search list.

- The **LDSS Subsidy Results** list displays homes that have a subsidy application attached to them. These homes may be in **any** status in CONNECTIONS (closed, Accepted-Active, Pending Acceptance).
- The **LDSS CONNECTIONS Results** list also displays homes in any status in CONNECTIONS (closed, Accepted-Active, Pending Acceptance) but which **DO NOT** have subsidies attached to them.

21 LDSS Subsidy Results			
Resource ID	1002539	Resource Name	Apple Tango
CRID / VID	20326684 / 00329801	Home Type	Foster Home

6 LDSS Connections Results			
CRID / VID	21088884 / 00386250	Home Type	Foster Home
Names	Apple Tango Thomas Tango	Address	10 GUM DROP LANE SYRACUSE, NY 13204
CRID / VID	20188347 / 00327389	Home Type	Foster Home
Names	Apple Salsa Apple Mango	Address	144 GUMMY BEAR RD CICERO, NY 13209-1

Whichever search results you use, verify that the RID and VID of an Adoption Subsidy Home in CONNECTIONS is in Accepted-Active status and matches the CRID and VID listed in the Adoption Subsidy Database **BEFORE clicking the New Application link.**

Amending an Adoption Subsidy Agreement

The original approved adoption subsidy agreement, signed before finalization of the adoption, is the official agreement and it remains in effect for the lifetime of the subsidy.

Amendments may be needed due to a change in the child’s condition, changes in a parent’s personal circumstances (e.g., name changes due to marriage or divorce, adoption of the child by a stepparent, transfer of guardianship or legal custody after the death of the adoptive parents), Fair Hearing decisions, or to correct an error made on the initial application.

Reminder: For complete instructions on making any amendment to a subsidy, please refer to the Adoption Subsidy Database Step-by-Step Manual.



Post finalization changes to an adoption subsidy agreement are done by amending the original completed agreement, not through a new application.

Issue: The New Amendment Button is not Enabled

There are several reasons why an application launches but will not advance or why the **New Amendment** button in the Adoption Subsidy Database is not enabled. These include:

- one or more incomplete applications exist (the most common reason);
*An incomplete application may be used, or may need to be deleted, depending on case specifics. **Only NYSAS staff may delete an application in the Adoption Subsidy Database.***
- the agreement you are attempting to amend is not the original agreement;
- the home is closed in CONNECTIONS.

Applications

STATUS	STATUS DATE	BOARD RATE	PER DIEM	APPLICATION		
Approved by NYSAS	8/30/2020	Exceptional			New Amendment	New Fair Hearing
Approved by NYSAS	8/30/2020	Exceptional			New Amendment	New Fair Hearing



If the home linked to the original adoption subsidy agreement in the Adoption Subsidy Database is no longer open in CONNECTIONS, that home must be re-opened in CONNECTIONS in order to amend the subsidy agreement.

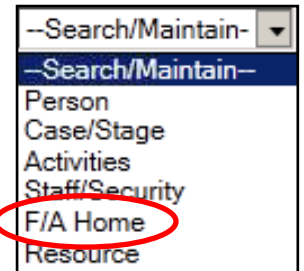
Step-by-Step: Reopening a Closed Adoption Subsidy Home in CONNECTIONS:

1. In the Adoption Subsidy Database, verify the Resource ID (CRID) of the home linked to the original Adoption Subsidy Agreement. **This is the home that will need to be reopened in CONNECTIONS.**

If this CRID belongs to a voluntary agency home, rather than a district home, see the instructions on page 8.

2. In CONNECTIONS, select **F/A Home** from the Search/Maintain menu.

The F/A Home Search window displays.



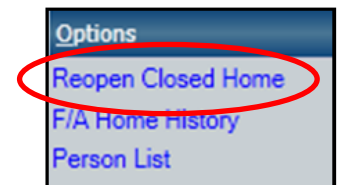
3. Enter the Resource family name.
4. Click the **Search** button.

Setting	Status
Foster Home	Inquiry
Adopt/Guard	Closed
Adopt/Guard	Accepted - Active

5. Select the FAD stage that has the same CONNECTIONS Resource ID and verify the home's status.

6. If the home is a closed home *from your district*, click the **Reopen Closed Home** link on the left navigation pane.
7. In the **Change To** field, change the status to "Inquiry".
8. Click the **Save & Assign** link in the navigation pane.

The Assign window opens.



9. In the Available Staff grid, select the worker who will have primary responsibility for the reopened subsidy home FAD stage.

10. Click the **Primary** button.

11. Click the **Save & Close** button.

The stage now displays at the top of that worker's workload with a red "Y" in the New column.

12. On the assigned worker's workload, select the reopened FAD stage.

13. Click the **Person List** link in the navigation pane.

The Person List window opens.

14. Verify the household composition and update as needed. Only the adoptive parents need to be listed.

15. Click the **Licensing Information** link in the navigation pane.

The Home License window opens.

16. Select the Facility Type of **Adoption Subsidy Home**.

17. Change the Status to "**Applicant**".

18. Select the Program Type of "**Regular**".

19. Click the **Save** button.

20. Change the Status field to **Pending-Acceptance**.

21. Update the required fields for age ranges and capacity (the number of children to be adopted) as needed.

22. Click the **Save & Submit** link in the navigation pane to submit the home for supervisory approval.

23. Click the **Save & Close** button.

Because it is a subsidy home it will not require any of the F/A person detail information, or elements such as fingerprint, SEL, medical exam, SCR or CHRC dates.

If the CRID Belongs to a Voluntary Agency Home:



If a **Voluntary Agency RID**, rather than the district's Adoption Subsidy home RID was incorrectly used in the original agreement, **the Voluntary Agency home must be reopened for the subsidy agreement to be amended.**

Once entered in the original adoption subsidy agreement, the Resource ID cannot be changed.

*If a **Voluntary Agency** foster home RID was used for the subsidy agreement, and that foster home is either closed or pending closure, a **District** worker can reopen the Voluntary Agency home and change it into a district Adoption Subsidy type home.*

- Fingerprints and other clearances are not needed.
- A reopening Home Study is required to change the home to Active status.
- The worker should enter a sentence in the home study stating that the home is being reopened

as an Adoption Subsidy home because the home's RID is already associated with an active agreement in the Adoption Subsidy Database.

- The voluntary agency Vendor ID will prefill, but ***should be changed to a new district VID*** for this resource as an adoption subsidy home.
- Follow the step-by step instructions beginning on page 7 to reopen the home as an Adoption Subsidy home.

Note: Should the family again wish to foster, the voluntary agency would need to open a new foster home stage, with a new VID, for the family.

Issue: The Amendment Cannot be Located by Searching for the Adoptive Parents' Name

Occasionally, an Adoption Subsidy agreement that needs to be amended cannot be easily located in the Adoption Subsidy Database when searching by family name. This may be because the original Adoption Subsidy home was created without adding any household members.

Since home information pulls from CONNECTIONS into the Adoption Subsidy Database, the name of the adoptive parent(s) may need to be added to a home without household members in CONNECTIONS **before** any additional updates can be done in the Adoption Subsidy Database.

Issue: A Multipurpose Home Family Wants to Transfer to a Voluntary Agency to Foster

Since only a district can pay an adoption or KinGAP subsidy, **multipurpose homes cannot be “transferred” from a district to a voluntary agency.** If a district certified/licensed foster family that also receives subsidy payments under the same VID wishes to “transfer” to a voluntary agency, the agency must open a **new** foster home, with a **new** VID. The district would then close the foster care portion of the multipurpose home, leaving only the subsidy portion(s) of the home open. The now subsidy-only home can remain open or can be closed, in line with the local district's business practice.

For questions about home certification requirements, please contact your OCFS Regional Office Permanency Specialist.

If the home has one or more foster children placed there, additional steps are necessary:

1. The voluntary agency must first open a new foster home with a new VID.
2. Add the foster parents with their existing PIDs when populating the Person List.

While NYS regulations prohibit foster parents from being certified/licensed by more than one authorized agency at the same time (18 CRR-NY 443.3 (o) 1), CONNECTIONS will not prevent you from using the existing PIDs when adding household members to the new voluntary agency home.

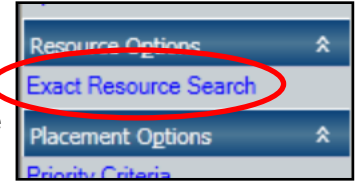
3. Complete a new homestudy and all required background checks (SCR, SEL, CHRC, fingerprints, medical) as you would for any new foster home.

Note: Although existing clearance and medical dates prefill when existing PIDs are used, **NEW** clearances and medical exams should be completed by the agency.

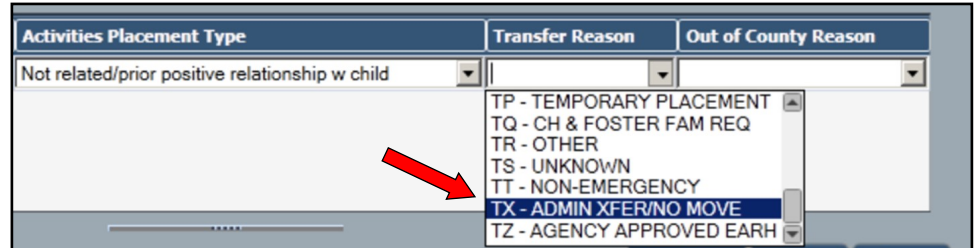
4. Once the foster home is in Active-Accepted status, the voluntary agency must contact the district so an “Administrative Transfer” can be entered through the Placement module to record the child's “change” in residence.

This coding is necessary to support the fact that while the VID, RID and licensing entity have changed, the child(ren) did not actually move to a new location.

5. The district worker would do an exact search in the Placement module, using the new agency Resource ID (RID) number to locate the new resource.

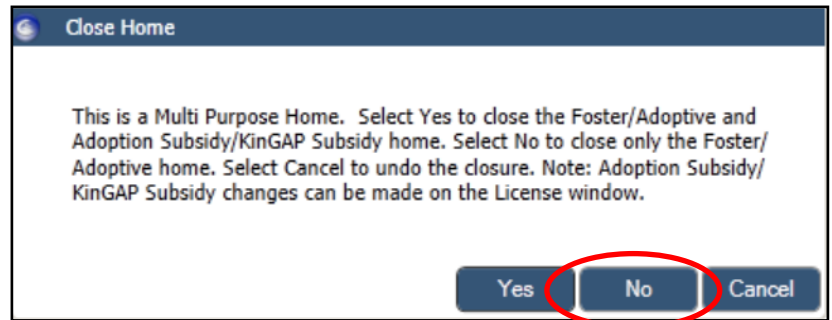


6. On the Place Child window, select “TX - ADMIN XFER NO MOVE” as the Transfer Reason.



7. The district can then click “No” to close the foster care portion of their multipurpose home, leaving the subsidy portion(s) open and subsidy payments continuing.

The subsidy portion may remain open and be reassigned if needed or can be closed, according to the local district’s business practice.



Resources

- CONNECTIONS Job Aids and Tip Sheets: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/jobaides/jobaides.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/connect/contacts/CONNECTIONS-Implementation-Staff.pdf>
- CONNECTIONS Application Help Mailbox: ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.us
(NOTE: this address contains an underline)
A Helpdesk ticket is now required before sending requests to the Triage Unit. This can be acquired by emailing FixIt@its.ny.gov.
- Adoption Subsidy Database Step-by-Step Manual Available by clicking Help on any screen in the Adoption Subsidy Database application.

ITS Enterprise Service Desk
1-844-891-1786