



In order for a local department of social services (LDSS) to receive federal IV-E reimbursement for certain allowable pre-placement administrative activities, timely and accurate documentation is required in CONNECTIONS of a child’s “candidacy for foster care.” This tip sheet defines candidacy and describes the steps necessary for caseworkers and eligibility workers to document required information.

What is Candidacy?

A candidate for foster care is a child who is at serious or imminent risk of removal from his or her home and placement into foster care, as evidenced by the LDSS either (1) pursuing the child’s removal from the home or (2) making reasonable efforts to prevent such removal.

A child cannot be considered a candidate for foster care when the LDSS has no formal involvement with the child or simply because he or she has been described as being “at risk” due to circumstances such as a dysfunctional home environment or social/interpersonal problems.



An individualized determination that a child is a candidate for foster care must be completed and documented and, if determined to be a candidate, must be re-determined every six months thereafter.

The LDSS caseworker must complete the Federal Foster Care Candidacy Determination Form (OCFS-4777) for each individual child who is receiving protective or preventive services. This form, along with the documentation that supports the finding must be maintained in the child’s case record.

Documenting Candidacy Determinations

To satisfy federal candidacy requirements based on the child’s case record, documentation must include the following:

1. A statement that the child is in “serious or imminent risk of placement into foster care”
2. A description of the circumstances in the home that place the child at imminent or serious risk of removal from the home
3. A description of services offered or provided to the child to prevent removal
4. An indication that foster care will be the result if the services described in the plan are not offered or provided
5. The signature of the child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) on the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) **or**

documentation in the case record of the efforts made by the LDSS or the voluntary agency workers to engage the parent/guardian in the development of the FASP. Where applicable, this would include documentation of the parent or guardian’s refusal or inability to participate.

To satisfy candidacy requirements based on evidence of a court proceeding, the child’s case record must include both:

- a signed and dated petition filed in the Family Court under Article 3, 7, 10 or 10-C of the Family Court Act or section 358-a of the Social Services Law; **and**

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NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

FEDERAL FOSTER CARE CANDIDACY DETERMINATION FORM

Initial Determination Six-Month Redetermination (See Sections IV and V)

SECTION I. CASE INFORMATION

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Child's Name: | Name of Person Completing Form: |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Note: Discussions of the need for services are not sufficient. Documentation that referrals have been made is also required, particularly when pertaining to mandated preventive services.

- a description of the services offered or provided to the child to prevent removal.

Documenting Candidacy Redeterminations

After a child with a Preventive or Protective Program Choice has been initially determined to be a candidate for foster care, justification for continued candidacy must be re-determined and documented at least every six months. Redeterminations may be done sooner than six months to align subsequent redeterminations with the FASP cycle.

- If candidacy is based on documentation in the child’s case plan, the re-determination must include the same findings and documentation as in the original determination.
- Where candidacy is based on court proceedings, the re-determination must include documentation that the child remains in imminent or serious risk of placement into foster care but for the provision of preventive services, along with the services offered or provided to address such risk.

For children initially determined to not be a candidate for foster care, a new determination should be done whenever it is warranted by a change in case circumstances.

Documenting Candidacy in Activities

In addition to case record documentation requirements, three new Activities codes have been developed to document the results of candidacy determinations:

- S400 - Initial Candidacy Determination
- S410 - Six-Month Candidacy Redetermination
- S420 - Candidacy Ended

See the chart below and on the following page for examples and guidance on entering the correct Activities codes.

| Activity Code | Determination | Event Date | Modifier A - Status | Modifier B - Based On | Comments |
|---|--------------------------|---|---------------------|---|---|
| S400 Initial Candidacy Determination | Child is a candidate | Enter date the child specific determination was completed | Candidate | CA - Case Record or CO - Court Petition/ Order | An S400 code is used (1) when a child’s first determination is made and (2) when second determination is made on a child who was initially determined not to be a candidate. Thus, a child may correctly have <u>two</u> consecutive S400 codes entered without an S420 (Candidacy ended) code. |
| | Child is not a candidate | Enter date the child specific determination was completed | Not a candidate | NA - N/A | |

| Activity Code | Determination | Event Date | Modifier A - Status | Modifier B - Based On | Comments |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------|---|---|
| S410 6-Month Candidacy Re- Determination | Child continues to be a candidate | Enter date the child specific redetermination was completed | Candidate | CA - Case Record or CO - Court Petition/ Order | An S410 code is used only when recording a redetermination for a child that was initially determined to be a candidate. If the child's initial determination was "Not a Candidate" and the subsequent determination is that they are now a candidate for foster care, a second S400 should be entered, not an S410. |
| | Child is no longer a candidate | Enter date the child specific redetermination was completed | Not a candidate | NA - N/A | |
| S420 Candidacy Ended | Child is no longer a candidate | Enter date the child specific determination was completed. | None | None | An S420 should be entered as soon as the determination is made that a child is no longer a candidate for foster care, such as when a child enters placement. |

Date of Activity

Type of Activity

Event

Date of Activity: * Type of Activity: * Event: *

Modifiers
Status : (Field A)
NC - Not a Candidate

Based On : (Field B)

Modifier A

Modifier B

Date of Activity: * Type of Activity: * Event: *

Modifiers
Status : (Field A) *

Based On : (Field B)
CO - Court Petition/Order
NA - N/A

 **Reminder: It is essential that candidacy information be entered in a timely and accurate way so that districts are able to receive the maximum allowable federal and state reimbursement for which they are eligible.**

Correcting Entry Errors in Activities

Because data accuracy is tied to federal claiming of IV-E administrative expenses, it is essential that Activities entries be correct.

If a child is determined not to be a candidate for foster care, but an S400 with a Mod A of "Candidate" is entered in Activities, it must be corrected by invalidating the incorrect entry and re-entering it as an S400 with a Mod. A of "Not a Candidate." Entering an S420 to indicate that "Candidacy Ended" is not a suitable correction as this would result in a claim of the child having been a candidate, even briefly, when they were not.

Additional Information on Candidacy

Additional information on candidacy requirements are available on the 2018 Policy Directives page of the OCFS website:

- 18-OCFS-LCM-04
https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/policies/external/ocfs_2018/LCM/18-OCFS-LCM-04.pdf
- Form OCFS-4777
https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/policies/external/ocfs_2018/LCM/18-OCFS-LCM-04-OCFS-4777.docx
- Frequently asked questions:
https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/policies/external/ocfs_2018/LCM/18-OCFS-LCM-04-QAs.pdf
- Candidacy Mailbox: ocfs.sm.TitleIV-E.CandidacyforFosterCare

Resources

- CONNECTIONS Job Aids and Tip Sheets:
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/jobaided/jobaided.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Regional Implementation Staff:
<http://ocfs.state.nyenet/connect/contact.asp>
- CONNECTIONS Application Help Mailbox:
ocfs.sm.conn_app@ocfs.state.ny.gov
(NOTE: address contains an underline)
- CONNECTIONS Communications Mailbox:
connections@ocfs.ny.gov

ITS Enterprise Service Desk
1-800-697-1323