



**DCY Guidance Letter 24-031
DIVISION OF POLICY**

TO: Directors and Administrators, Public Children Services Agencies
Directors and Administrators, Private Child Placing Agencies
Directors and Administrators, Private Non-Custodial Agencies

FROM: Laura Graf, Deputy Director of Policy

DATE: October 15, 2024

SUBJECT: Conversion for Continuous Certification

Background

Governor DeWine signed House Bill 33 (HB 33) of the 135th General Assembly to include changes to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) sections to remove language referring to the renewal of certificates or recertification processes and outlines a continuous certification process. The goal of a continuous certification is to streamline the agency application process by reducing paperwork and allowing more flexibility in timeframes to enable agencies and foster caregivers to serve families and children more efficiently in Ohio.

Purpose

Since the passage of HB 33, the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) has been preparing for the change to continuous certification for both agencies and foster caregivers. The initial certification of a foster caregiver has been extended from a two-year to a four-year timeframe, reducing the administrative burden experienced by an agency and family. The continuous certification process has moved most activities and paperwork to a four-year span of time. Continuous certification will reduce the number of times an agency and family must complete paperwork and other documentation. Continuous certification moves away from previously required rigid timelines, offering new flexibility around the receipt of documentation. The purpose of this letter is to explain the transition to a continuous certification process for both agencies and foster caregivers. The transition will be as follows:

- OAC rules are effective 1/1/2025.



- If a DCY certified agency or foster home has completed at least one recertification, that agency or home will automatically convert to a continuous certification. The updated certificate will be available to be printed.
- If a DCY certified agency or foster home has not completed at least one recertification, that agency or home will automatically convert to an initial four-year certification. The updated certificate will be available to be printed.
- **Foster Home** certification process as of 1/1/2025:
 - A note regarding how the system will convert foster homes: OCAF will not be available for homes when the rules go into effect on 1/1/2025.
 - Workers will continue to complete the certification of foster homes in Ohio SACWIS, and all homes will have a four-year certification period. **This process is only temporary for conversion purposes.**
 - Agencies will not be required to complete anything outside their normal processes to certify their foster homes.
- **Agency** certification process as of 1/1/2025:
 - OCAF will be available on 1/1/2025 for agency certification.

There will be additional communication regarding the upcoming system changes and training opportunities in the 10/29/2024 Tuesday Times.

Contact

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your foster care licensing specialist.