Public Adoption Guide

This resource provides a high-level summary of the work completed by public adoption agencies post-Termination of Parental Rights (TPR). Each box highlights a component of the case prior to an adoption finalization.

TPR

The county, excluding Milwaukee county, refers the case to the adoption agency prior to the filing of the TPR.

Child's name, parents' names, and birth dates must be correct or TPR order must be amended before adoption finalization.

Case Transfer

TPR order transfers case and guardianship of the child to DCF. DCF contracted adoption agencies provide case management and adoption services, not the county agency.

Milwaukee county does not transfer the case. The case remains with the same contracted agency.

Case Management

Adoption worker provides services and support post-TPR until adoption finalization.

The adoption worker must work with the child to ensure they are prepared for adoption.

Pre-adoptive Training

First time adoptive parents must complete 25 hours of pre-adoption preparation training.

Topics include: trauma, child abuse & neglect, adoption & impact on parenting, loss & grief, cultural sensitivity, etc.

Adoptive Resource

If the child is not living with the adoptive resource at TPR, a resource must be found by the adoption agency.

Adoptive resources may not feel prepared for adoption, and need support to move to adoption.

Home Study

Contracted adoption agencies, not county agencies, complete an adoption home study.

It examines a family's ability and willingness to permanently care for the child throughout their life.

Adoption agencies work with counties to update foster care home studies for adoption.

Adoption Finalization Preparation

Adoption Assistance eligibility reviewed and agreement finalized with DCF.

Ensure child(ren) and family have information and services in place post-adoption - not all services are available outside of foster care.

Adoption Hearing

Adoption worker prepares and files court paperwork.

Court will schedule adoption hearing within 90 days of petition filing.

Children's Court Improvement Program in consultation with the Department of Children and Families

February 2021

Reasons that could delay public adoption finalization:

A CHANGE IN PLACEMENT POST-TPR:

A relative comes forward to request placement of the child.

The pre-adoptive parents no longer wish to adopt the child.

The identified pre-adoptive parents are not approved for adoption and a new identified permanent resource must be found.

LEGAL ISSUES:

The Termination of Parental Rights case is appealed by one or both parents.

The TPR case is remanded back to the Circuit Court for further proceedings.

The TPR Dispositional Order must be amended to correct the child's name, the parents' names, or birth dates prior to adoption finalization.

FAMILY IS NOT READY FOR ADOPTION:

The pre-adoptive parents have not completed adoption requirements, such as paperwork or pre-adoptive training.

The child or family needs additional services or resource prior to adoption finalization.

The child leaves the home for treatment at a residential facility.

The pre-adoptive parents disagree with the adoption assistance rate.

Adoption Resources

DCF Adoption Resources: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/adoption

Public Adoption Agency Map: https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/map/adoption/snap

Public Adoption Resources from the Coalition for Children, Youth, and Families: https://wiadopt.org/

Children's Court Improvement Program E-Learning Module on Adoption:
https://www.wicciptraining.com/Modules/All

Post-TPR Permanency Hearing Checklist: https://www.wicciptraining.com/Resources