



## Help us plan a future

### YOUR GUIDE TO THE Volunteer Case Review Program

**t**he Massachusetts Department of Children and Families is the state agency charged with the responsibility of protection children from abuse and/or neglect. When parents cannot ensure the safety of children in their home, DCF provides out-of-home care based on the child's individual needs. For thousands of children placed in foster homes, the review process is an integral part of making decisions that will effect their future well-being.

#### **Who are Volunteer Case Reviewers?**

Volunteer Case Reviewers are community members (not employed by the DCF) who participate on panels to review the cases of children who have been placed in foster homes or substitute care.

#### **What is Case Review?**

The family, DCF social workers, foster parents and others working with the family meet to review the service plan and discuss progress towards the established goal for each child. In accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 197, established in 1984, each child's case is reviewed every six months to ensure that necessary services are being provided.

#### **Who else is on the Case Review panel?**

The Case Review panel consists of three members: the case reviewer from the DCF Foster Care Review Unit, a member of the administrative staff from the local DCF area office and a Volunteer Case Reviewer from the local community.



# Volunteer Case Review Program



## What decisions will the panel make?

The three-member case review panel determines whether:

- Continued placement of the child is necessary and appropriate.
- The tasks in the service plan have been completed.
- Progress has been made towards the determined goal.
- The projected date for the permanent goal to be achieved is appropriate and safe.

## When and where do reviews occur?

Each review lasts about an hour and a half and is conducted at a local DCF area office. Reviews occur Monday through Friday between 9:30 am and 4:30 pm.

## What are the requirements to become a Volunteer Case Reviewer?

- Age 18 or older.
- Commitment to the welfare of children and families.
- Fairness and objectivity.
- Good communication skills.
- Awareness of culturally sensitive issues.
- Ability to encourage active, honest discussion among review participants.
- Participation in a day and a half of pre-service training.
- Available to review at least one case per month.

## What are the benefits of becoming a Volunteer Case Reviewer?

- Help ensure that children in your community will have permanent homes.
- Opportunity to share in a decision-making process that effects children.
- Gain knowledge about the services your community provides to families.
- A small stipend for participating in each review.
- On-going support and training by the Foster Care Review Unit (CEUs available at some training sessions).

## How to apply

For more information about becoming a Volunteer Case Review, please call:

- The Foster Care Review Unit at **617-748-2000** or **1-800-423-2022**.
- In the Springfield area call 1-800-286-0323.
- Or visit our website at **[www.mass.gov/dcf](http://www.mass.gov/dcf)**



Massachusetts Department of Children & Families  
Angelo McClain, Commissioner

1.800.KIDS.508  
[www.state.ma.us/dcf](http://www.state.ma.us/dcf)

## Yes, I'm interested!

Please send me more information about becoming a Volunteer Case Reviewer.

Name

Street

City/State/Zip

Home Phone

Best time to call

Email