

INITIAL LICENSING

For relative and suitable other caregivers at Shelter Care

Effective July 1, 2023, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is required to **start an assessment for an initial license to qualified relative and suitable person caregivers within 10 calendar days IF the court orders the assessment at the shelter care hearing** and the caregiver indicates a desire to become foster licensed. This change allows the caregivers, including DCYF employees that are caregivers, to become eligible for foster care maintenance payments starting on the date DCYF approves the initial license.



“If the court places with a relative or other suitable person, and that person has indicated a desire to become a licensed foster parent, the court shall order the department to commence an assessment of the home of such relative or other suitable person within 10 days and thereafter issue an initial license . . . if qualified.”

RCW 13.34.065(5)(i).

COURT ORDER REQUIRED

The process for initial licensing is NOT automatically triggered by placement with a relative or suitable other caregiver. The court is required to ask the placement if they would like to be considered for an initial license and, if they say yes, **order DCYF to start the assessment within 10 days.**

This order allows the caregivers to become eligible for foster care maintenance payments starting on the date DCYF approves the initial license.

Initial licensure is an important resource to support caregivers and children.



Requirements for Initial Licensing

1 Placement Agreement: The caregivers agree to the initial license and sign DCYF Placement Agreement

2 Background Checks: NCIC background checks are started for all household members 16 years and older

Reminder: the court can order DCYF to assess for an initial license regardless of whether a background check has been done.



DID YOU KNOW?

The average time for an NCIC background check to come back in 30-40 minutes.

3 DCYF Walkthrough of the Home: Very basic home inspection where DCYF can help support the family in making the home safe for the child to be placed there.

Denial: Caseworkers must notify the court within seven (7) days upon receiving notification from the Licensing Division when initial licenses are denied.



Supporting kinship caregivers provides children with stability and familiarity while keeping them connected to their family and community