Institutional Review Board

Policy

All requests for research involving human subjects (clients or DCF staff) which the Department of Children and Families conducts or in which DCF assists in providing participants or data, shall require consideration for approval by the DCF Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Note: All studies involving human subjects, or records pertaining to them, shall be assumed to require IRB review until determined otherwise. If there is any question whether IRB review is required, the question shall be submitted in writing to the Co-Chairs of the IRB.

Governing Principles and Procedures

The IRB shall operate under a set of Principles and Procedures which are in accordance with the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, 45 CFR 46.

If there is any possibility of DCF client or staff involvement, regardless of where the research is being conducted, IRB approval is required.

Membership

The IRB shall be composed of a multidisciplinary panel of interested volunteers and shall include at least one non-DCF member.

Application for Review by IRB

An application for consideration of a research project, which in any way may involve DCF clients, case records or employees, shall be submitted on form DCF-2168, "Application for Consideration," to the Institutional Review Board, to:

DCF Institutional Review Board
505 Hudson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

DCF IRB@ct.gov.

Responsibilities of the IRB Co-Chairs

Upon receipt of a DCF-2168, the IRB Co-Chairs shall conduct a preliminary review of the application. As a result of this review, the Co-Chairs may:

- return the application to the requester for additional information;
- forward the application to the IRB for a full review; or
- expedite the review process.

Expedited Review

At the discretion of DCF, an expedited review may be completed by the IRB Co-Chairs or one or more IRB members acting as an expedited review team as designated by the Co-Chairs.

The expedited review may result in:

- approval of the application by the team;
- approval of the application with conditions to be met by the researcher; or
- forwarding the application for review by the entire IRB.

Note: Applications approved through the expedited process must still be submitted to the Commissioner for final approval.

If the expedited review team rejects an application, its decision shall be reviewed by the entire IRB at its next meeting.

IRB Review

The IRB shall review applications at its next scheduled meeting, but no later than 60 days after receipt of all materials.

All materials necessary shall be submitted at least two weeks prior to the review meeting. The applicant shall be available to attend the meeting or participate in a conference call to directly address questions and concerns.

The criteria for review by the IRB are detailed in Attachment A of this policy.

Student and Intern Projects

Any student or intern research project that will require DCF data or access to DCF clients or staff shall be approved through the IRB process. Approval of the research project at the Superintendent or Regional Administrator level is not sufficient.

Any Superintendent, Regional Administrator or other DCF staff member who supervises a student or intern shall inform the student or intern of the requirement for IRB approval at the start of the student placement or internship.

DNA and Genetics

Research proposals which include DNA or genetics as the focus of study shall meet all expectations and guidelines related to research review as set forth in Attachment A, "Institutional Review Board DNA and Genetics".

Commissioner's Approval Required

The IRB shall submit all applications recommended for approval to the Commissioner or designee for final review and approval.

Notification to Researcher

All applicants shall be notified in writing by the IRB Co-Chairs of the IRB's decision. If the application is denied, the IRB's concerns with the application shall be cited and re-submission shall be allowed.

Duration of Approval and Change of Research Design

Approvals of research projects shall generally be for a one-year period and the principal investigators (PI) shall be responsible for submitting a request for a continuation of the approval, if needed, at least one month prior to the expiration of the current approval.

In the event of a research protocol revision or a change in the research design or methodology, the PI shall be responsible for bringing the details to the attention of the IRB via the submission of an amended document.