

**LOCAL AGREEMENT
OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNTIES GAL PROGRAM
AND DCYF - TRI-CITIES**

BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNTIES GAL PROGRAM/DCYF AGREEMENT

The Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Guardian ad Litem Program agree to adhere to the following procedures relating to cases in which a GAL has been assigned in the Benton and Franklin Counties.

Clarification:

It is important to distinguish between the GAL who is a paid staff member and the GAL who is a trained volunteer.

- As set forth in RCW 13.34.105, all information available to DCYF shall be provided to the GAL as requested. No information shall be withheld or altered in any manner, except for information or records specified in RCW 13.50.100 (4).
- DCYF Social Worker and GAL shall be equally responsible for initiating and/or maintaining ongoing and frequent contact to obtain current information regarding case status/change.
- GAL volunteer shall contact DCYF Social Worker to request a date and a time to review client's file. Social Worker shall arrange an appointment within 5 working days of the request. If no response is received from Social Worker within the timeline, GAL program personnel may contact immediate DCYF Supervisor.
- Social Worker shall provide the address, phone number, and name of caregiver regarding placement. If a placement change occurs, Social Worker should notify GAL as soon as the change of placement arises except in an exigent circumstance situation. Under this circumstance, information of placement change will be provided to the GAL within 24 hours.
- GAL will be invited to all CHET meetings, Permanency Staffings, post filing Family Decision Making, Team Decision Making Meetings, and other staffings in which case planning and progress for a specific child are discussed, except for administrative meetings/staffings that are internal to the Department. (If unable to attend, GAL will contact the DCYF office to notify the social worker.) Many of these meetings are offered via Zoom.
- DCYF Social Worker will be invited to any staffing, arranged by the GAL in which case planning and progress of a specific child(ren) are discussed, except for internal GAL meetings.
- Social Worker and GAL shall maintain frequent contact (telephonically, email, text, or in person with each other regarding case status or changes). A 24-hour response is

expected from both parties. If no response is received within the timeline, the immediate supervisor may be contacted.

- DCYF and GAL Program personnel may meet quarterly to address program changes, concerns, training, and to interchange information to improve practice.
- DCYF Social workers must notify the GAL by email, text, or in person when a referral is received by the Department of child abuse or neglect on a dependent child and again when the investigation is complete and a finding is made. (Policy effective June 12, 2008).

Dated this 22nd day of July, 2022.

Signatures:

David Wheeler

David Wheeler
Juvenile Court Administrator

Stephen Cotter

Stephen Cotter
**Office Chief – Contracts Procurement
and Purchasing**

Sheila Davidson

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GAL Program Coordinator

