



Tom C. Rawlings
Director



Vision, Mission and Core Values

Vision

- ***Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.***

Mission

- Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

Core Values

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

Becoming an RBWO Provider

This presentation covers the process of becoming a private foster care provider in Georgia and answers frequently asked questions, including:

- **What are the steps to earning an RBWO contract?**
- **Which provider types need additional licenses or specialized training, and how can they start those processes?**

By the end of this presentation, you'll have all the information you need to follow the diagram on the next slide and apply for an RBWO contract.

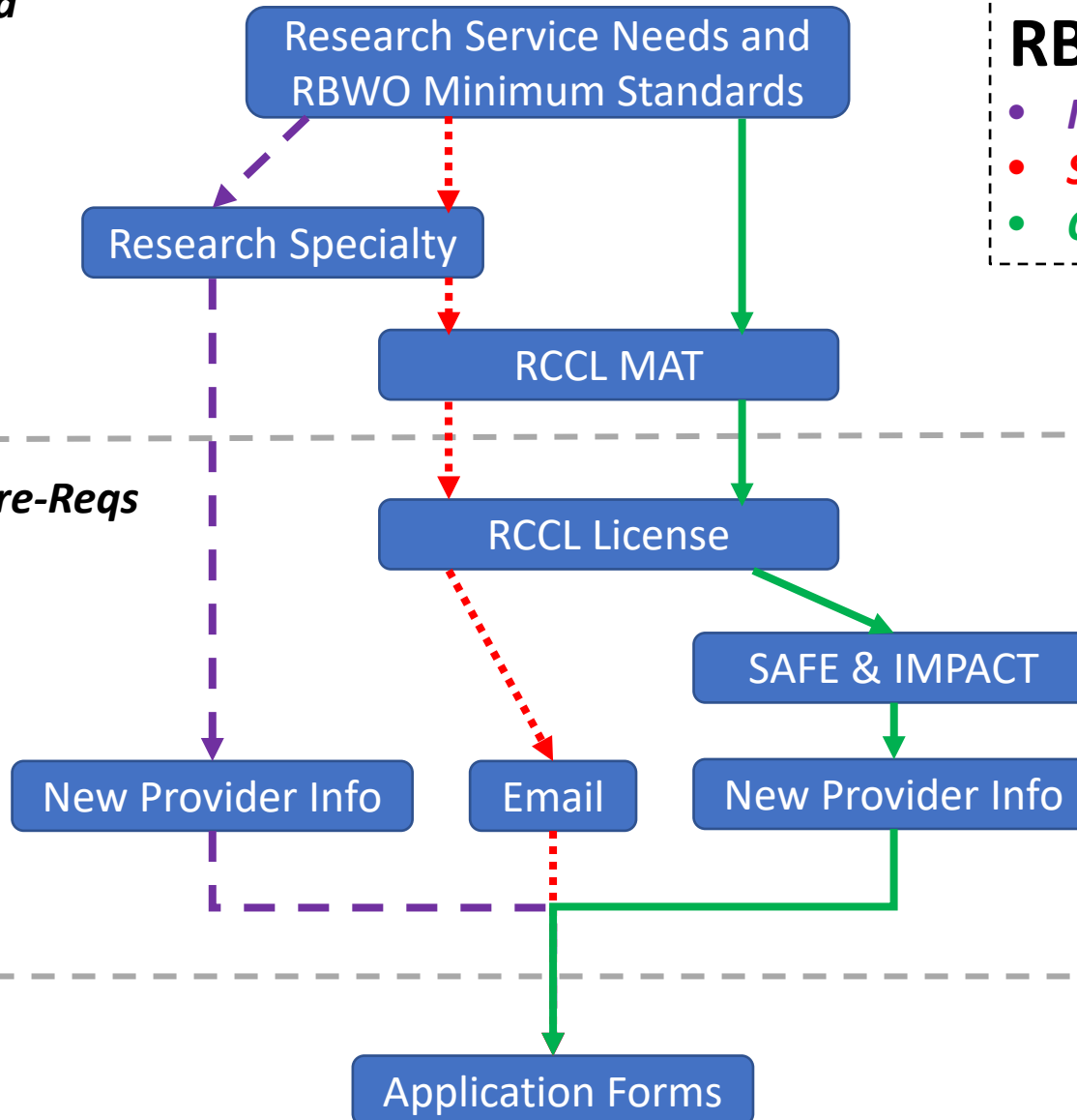
1. Get Involved

RBWO Contracting Process

- *ILPs (dashed arrows)*
- *Specialty CCLs (dotted arrows)*
- *CPAs (solid arrows)*

2. Complete Pre-Reqs

3. Apply



RBWO Foster Care in Georgia



When children enter foster care in Georgia, they may be placed in a foster home approved by a DFCS county office, or they may be placed with a private provider of foster care. **Private providers contract with the state through the Room, Board & Watchful Oversight program (RBWO).**


Private-provider contracts are issued and managed by the Office of Provider Management (OPM). Throughout the contract year, OPM provides technical assistance and support to providers and monitors their performance via site visits and self-reporting.



Residential Child Care Licensing

The Office of Provider Management is not the only state agency with oversight. Providers working with children and youth under 18 also require a license from the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit.

RCCL does not automatically grant licenses as part of the RBWO application process and OPM is not part of the licensing decision. To begin this separate process, visit <https://dhs.georgia.gov/residential-child-care-licensing>



Demographics of Children in Foster Care



As of November 2020, approximately **11,635** children and youth were in care in Georgia. One third were placed with private providers.

- About **1750** children and youth met the standards for Maximum Watchful Oversight based on their needs and behaviors.
- About **300** met the standards for specialty care based on medical or other needs.
- About **378** were placed with providers focusing on transitional or independent living for older youth and young adults.
- About **23** were placed in homes for pregnant and parenting teens.

Working with DFCS

Private providers receive placement referrals from DFCS frontline staff, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and/or the Care Coordination Treatment Unit.

During the placement, providers support case plans and permanency goals established by DFCS staff.

Whether children are placed at a DFCS foster home or with a private provider, all work for DFCS has the same goal: to strengthen families, protect children from further abuse and neglect and to assure that every child has a permanent family.



Who are RBWO providers?



OPM manages four types of providers:

1. Child Placing Agencies (CPAs) maintain a central office that recruits, trains, supports, approves, and monitors families to serve foster children in their homes.
2. Child Caring Institutions (CCIs) house children and youth onsite in homelike environments managed by CCI staff. CCI serve youth 12+ with specific, high-level needs that can't be met in a CPA foster home.
3. Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) house youth onsite, like CCIs, but focus on older youth who are working toward living independently.
4. Independent Living Programs (ILPs) serve older youth and young adults living independently in an apartment, condo, or other independent dwelling.

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)

In order to comply with 2018's Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), Georgia DFCS is making changes to its provision of foster care services. That includes:

- Limiting referrals to CCIs and Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) unless the youth has specialized needs that can't be met in a CPA foster home. OPM is not currently accepting applications for new CCIs or TLPs unless they serve those specialized populations.
- Heavily recruiting for CPAs to ensure local & appropriate placement resources throughout the state.

Learn more at www.blueprintfamilyfirst.org



**FOSTER YOUTH
SUPPORT
#FAMILYFIRSTACT**

Child Placing Agencies

Child Placing Agencies maintain a central office that recruits and approves families to serve as foster homes. A potential CPA must:

- ☐ Be willing and able to recruit foster homes to work with Georgia's foster care population, including older children and teens, sibling groups, African American, Hispanic, LGBTQ, and special needs.
- ☐ Maintain office space within monitoring distance of foster homes.
- ☐ Employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director, Case Support Supervisor, and Case Support Worker. (See definitions in the RBWO Minimum Standards.) These staff must complete IMPACT Certification as well as SAFE Training prior to approval.
- ☐ Have an applicable CPA license from the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit (RCCL).

IMPACT and SAFE Training



CPAs are responsible for recruiting, assessing, approving, and maintaining foster homes that meet DFCS policy standards. Mandatory trainings teach provider staff how to complete initial approvals and annual re-evaluations and how to train foster parents for their roles.

Structured Analysis Family Evaluation (SAFE)

SAFE assists home study practitioners in performing a thorough, structured and uniform evaluation of families who have applied to foster or adopt.

To register: Email becca@consortforkids.org to be added to the mailing list.

IMPACT Leader Certification

IMPACT Train-the-Trainer courses prepare staff to lead information and training sessions for potential foster parents, who must complete IMPACT before being approved.

To register: See upcoming trainings on www.gascore.com under "Training".

Specialty Child Caring Institutions

OPM is accepting applications from CCIs that serve youth 12+ with specialized needs – Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children or Pregnant and Parenting Teens – that can't be met in a CPA foster home. CCIs must have a license from Residential Child Care Licensing.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

Georgia is committed to ensuring that child sex trafficking victims receive quality care and services. CCIs must employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director & Human Service Professional (see definitions in the RBWO Minimum Standards) and staff should have knowledge and/or experience working with this population. These programs must have a Georgia Cares CSEC certification: reach out to Dr. Gabrielle Starr, Human Trafficking Program Coordinator, gabrielle.starr@dhs.ga.gov for more information.



Specialty Child Caring Institutions



Pregnant & Parenting Teens Program

- These programs provide for the health, safety, and well-being of a resident and the resident's child(ren), providing preparation and support who may or may not be in the resident's legal custody. These programs ensure that youth are provided with parenting preparation & life skills. Programs should consult with their intended region to assess the need.
- CCIs must employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director & Human Service Professional (see definitions in the RBWO Minimum Standards) and staff should have knowledge and/or experience working with this population.

Independent Living Programs

- Independent Living Programs serve older youth and young adults. A potential ILP must:
 - Identify an approved setting such as apartments, duplexes, townhomes or condos (no residential homes or manufactured homes), preferably with 1-2 bedrooms. OPM conducts a site inspection as part of the application process. ILPs will initially be approved for one location only, such as apartments in a single complex/on one plot of land.
 - Maintain office space within monitoring distance of site location.
 - Employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director and Life Coach. (See definitions in the RBWO Minimum Standards.)
- Providers working exclusively with young adults 18 and older do not require a license from the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit.



Additional Expectations for ILPs

- Independent Living Programs provide youth in foster care with opportunities to prepare for adulthood. ILP providers must have **established relationships** with local schools, employers, and community resources to ensure that youth entering the program are able to pursue an education, find a job, obtain suitable housing, and protect their health and well-being when they leave the foster care system.
- For more information, reach out to a regional Independent Living Specialist via www.garyse-ilp.org



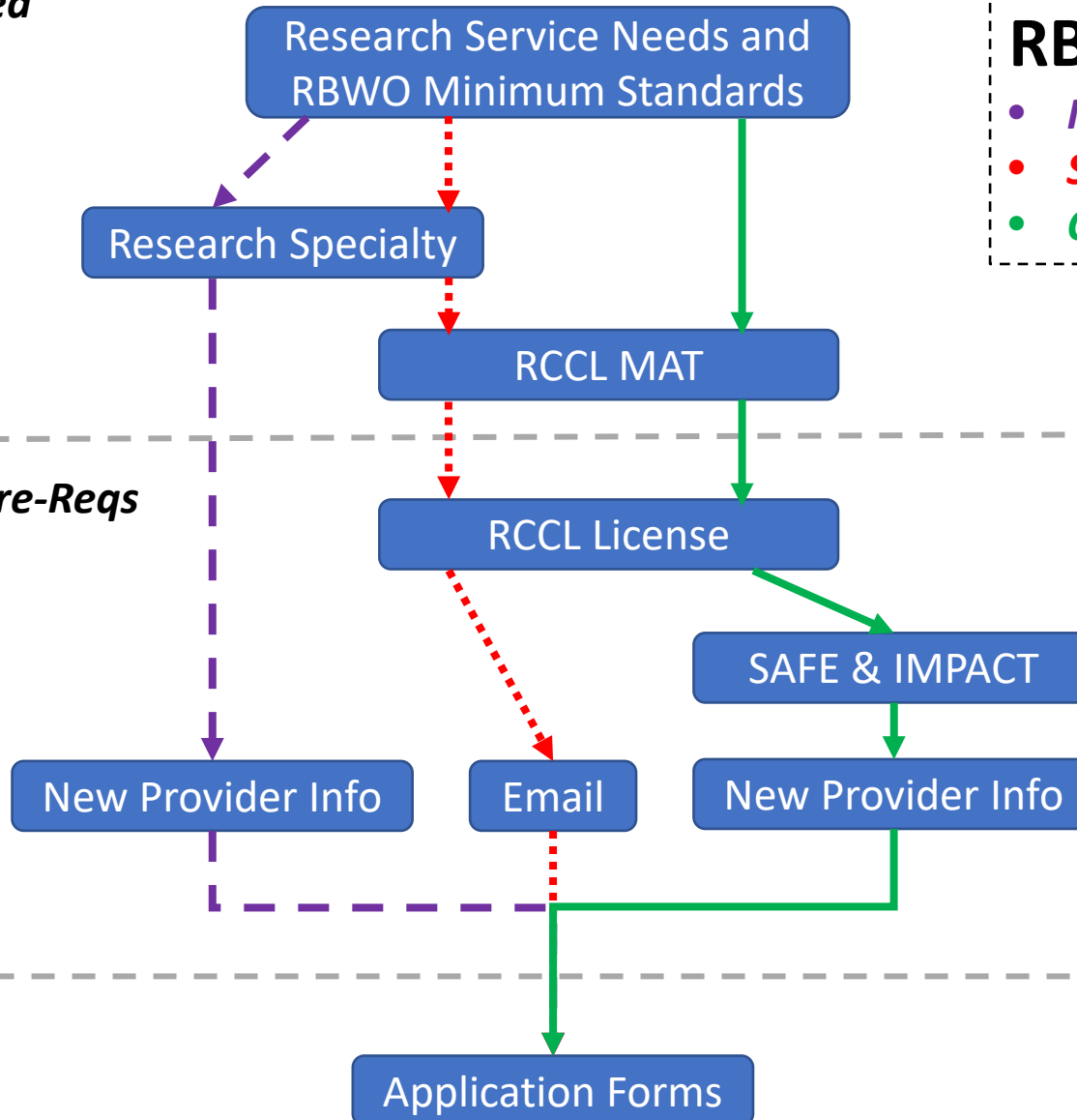
1. Get Informed

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Three Steps to an RBWO Contract

Get Informed

- a. Review the Service Needs and RBWO Minimum Standards
- b. Research requirements for specialty programs (CCIs and ILPs)
- c. Attend RCCL MAT training (CCIs and CPAs)

Complete Pre-Reqs

- a. Earn RCCL license (CCIs and CPAs)
- b. Complete SAFE & IMPACT trainings (CPAs)
- c. Locate site and establish community connections (ILPs)

Apply

- a. Fill out the New Provider Information Sheet
- b. Assemble the required materials for your RBWO application
- c. Submit the completed application to OPM

Effective Dates

There are two contract lifecycles within a fiscal year: **July 1st** & **October 1st**



Provider Deadline to Submit Application and supporting documents	OPM Review and Approval Deadline	Contract Effective Date
November 30 th	January 31 st	July 1 st
February 28 th	April 30 th	October 1 st



1. Get Informed: Review the Service Needs

On www.gascore.com, click “Future Providers”, then “Current State Needs”. Based on the RBWO Provider Service Needs List and the DHS map, are your proposed provider type and location a match for DFCS’s current needs?

- **Only CCIs with staff who have knowledge and/or experience relevant to the listed specialty types will be considered.**
- **CPAs and ILPs must operate an office close to their homes.**
- Have you spoken with local DFCS offices / the regional ILS about their needs? Are you ready to work with DFCS case managers to get referrals and placements?

1. Get Informed: Read the RBWO Minimum Standards

On www.gascore.com, click “Key Documents & Forms” and download the RBWO Minimum Standards document.

- Does your agency have the start up capital to sustain for the at least 6 months?
- Are you prepared to meet the requirements for staffing levels, experience, and training?
- Does your agency’s policy align with and cover all of the standards?
- Are you ready to uphold the state’s standards for behavior management, Reasonable and Prudent Parenting, and family support?
- Can you meet expectations for documentation and reporting?



RBWO Minimum Standards

Your program must have policy to cover all relevant sections of the RBWO Minimum Standards, including:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Program Designations | <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity Support Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of Care | <input type="checkbox"/> CCI Section | <input type="checkbox"/> Staffing Standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Permanency | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster Home Section (CPA) | <input type="checkbox"/> RPPS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Administrative Matters | <input type="checkbox"/> ILP/TLP | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment |

For CCIs and CPAs, that is in addition to policy requirements from RCCL. Your document should address both sets of standards, either separately or in combination.

RBWO Minimum Standards Chart

- Part of the application process is submitting the RBWO Minimum Standards Chart that aligns RBWO standards and your written policy.
- Your policy should describe the specific methods your program will use to meet or exceed the standards. It's not acceptable to restate the standard.

E1 fx Feedback					
	A	B	C	D	
1	RBWO Standard #	Standard Title	Perspective Provider Policy name or number	Approved (OPM use only)	
2	1.0	Safety of Children in Care			
3	1.1	Providers (which includes all staff, caregivers, volunteers etc.) will adhere to the requirements of the Taylor vs Ledbetter Consent Decree which prohibits the improper punishment of children in care. Improper punishment includes any physical or emotional act to deliberately inflict pain to the body or which creates undue fear, anxiety or feelings of humiliation or degradation from abuse and neglect.			
4		Staff Mandated Reporting law and procedures to report concerns about abuse and neglect.			
5		a. Providers must immediately notify the DFCS county office where the placement is located as well as the custodial county of any child involved when there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, neglect, or corporal punishment of any child/children being served.			
6		b. The provider must cooperate fully with DFCS and those investigating and prosecuting the alleged maltreatment of children, including providing access to the records, staff, facilities, and foster parents as dictated by the circumstances of the particular case.			

1. Get Informed: Specialty Programs

- Remember that potential CCIs must have specialized knowledge and experience relevant to either CSEC or Pregnant and Parenting Teens.
- ILPs must have established relationships to help young adults make progress on their goals for housing, employment, and education.



1. Get Informed: RCCL MAT

Before a CCI or CPA can apply for an RCCL license, you must attend the RCCL Mandatory Application Training (MAT). Classes are held the second Wednesday of every month. Please email rcs@dhs.ga.gov for registration details.

More information is available on the website for the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit (<https://dhs.georgia.gov/residential-child-care-licensing>)

1. Get Informed: Self-reflection

The process of applying for an RCCL license and RBWO contract can take as much as a year, and it may be some time after the contract start date before your program receives the first placement referral. Before beginning this process, be sure you have considered the risks and rewards of serving this population.

- Finances: Can you sustain a program for 3-6 months with no or minimal placements? Can you afford staff, facilities, and insurance? Does your budget cover your model and capacity?
- Do you have appropriate knowledge and experience? Do you have community connections to support your program's model?

2. Complete Pre-Reqs

- CCIs and CPAs must have an RCCL license in order to apply for an RBWO contract. The process is covered in depth in the required MAT training.
- CPAs must have at least two staff trained in IMPACT Pre Service Training and SAFE. Without these trainings, staff cannot complete the sample home studies required as part of the application.
- ILPs must identify an approved setting such as apartments, duplexes, townhomes or condos (**no residential homes or manufactured homes**); OPM will conduct a site visit as part of the application process. ILPs should also be able to demonstrate community relationships and support for education, employment, and other support.

3. Apply: Fill out the New Provider Information Sheet

On www.gascore.com, click “Future Providers”, then “Start the Process”.



Select the applicable sheet and use the included link to access an online form.

CPA New Provider Information Sheet

ILP New Provider Information Sheet

CCIs – Open to specialty providers only.

Email: opm.leadership@dhs.ga.gov

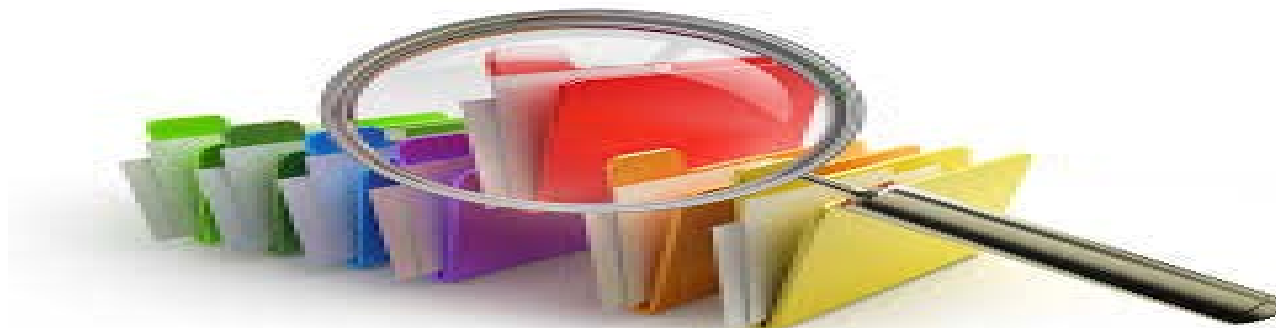


Within two weeks after you submit the form, you will receive an email response from OPM containing either the details of the application process or a response explaining why your program does not meet the state’s current needs.

3. Apply: Assemble the required materials

The email you receive will contain a checklist of required application materials and attached copies of the forms you must complete and return by mail. Requirements vary by provider type.

Remember that all forms must be submitted by November 30 for a July 1st start date or by February 28th for an October 1st start date.



Required documents include:

- ☐ RBWO Application
- ☐ RCC License (CCIs / CPAs)
- ☐ Agency's Policies & Procedures
- ☐ Agency's Training Plan
- ☐ Behavioral Management Plan
- ☐ Organizational Chart
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ W-9
- ☐ Evidence of Criminal Records Check (all staff)
- ☐ Vendor Form (along with voided check)
- ☐ Vendor Request Form
- ☐ Pictures of physical plant or foster homes
- ☐ Two foster home evaluations (CPAs only)
- ☐ Sample ISP
- ☐ Secure agency e-mail domain



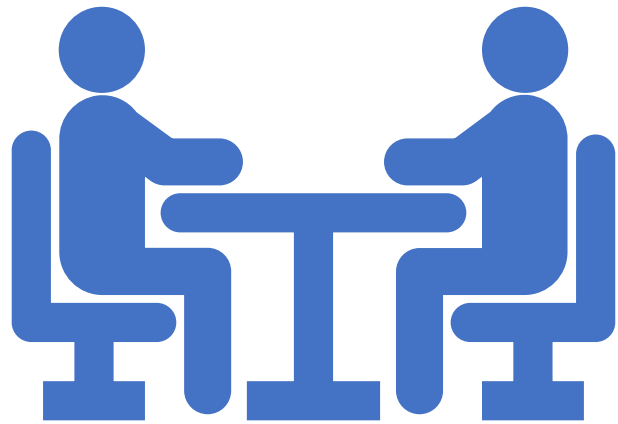
Insurance Requirements



Your policy must be in effect three months prior to your effective contracting date (April 1 for July 1 start date or July 1 for October 1).

- ☐ Verification of agency's owner
- ☐ Insurance (\$1 million per occurrence/\$3 million aggregate policy limits)*Exception
 - ☐ Malpractice/Professional Liability
 - ☐ Commercial General Liability
 - ☐ Commercial Umbrella Policy
 - ☐ Workers Compensation Insurance (if plans are to employ 3 or more employees)
 - ☐ Business Auto Policy (*\$1 million per occurrence/\$1 million aggregate policy limits)

After You Apply



OPM will take up to 45 days to review the packet. At the status conference you will have the opportunity to ask questions and will receive feedback on the policies and procedures you developed as well as a deadline for submitting corrections based on the next plausible contract cycle.

- Denied providers can submit based on the terms of their denial letter.

Provider Orientation & Setup

- Approved providers must attend new provider orientation prior to execution of their contract. New provider orientation features presentations from multiple agencies and departments that work with RBWO providers. Sessions include billing, monitoring/compliance, risk management, performance-based placements, and mandatory reporting in two data systems:
 - Georgia SHINES Provider Portal: creating accounts and reporting child data
 - GA+SCORE: creating accounts and reporting child, home, and provider data
 - User manuals for both Georgia SHINES and GA+SCORE are posted on www.gascore.com under “Key Documents & Forms”.



Mandatory Provider Training

- All staff in the following roles – Case Support Worker, Case Support Supervisor, HSP, Life Coach – must complete 160 hours of RBWO Foundations training within 4 months of hire / the start of the RBWO contract, whichever is later.
- Life Coaches at ILPs must complete LC training, which is offered twice a year.
- Provider staff responsible for child visits must complete the online *Every Child, Every Month* training before documenting the first ECEM in Georgia SHINES.
- One representative must attend the next Cost Report training hosted by DFCS Fiscal Services.

Ongoing Monitoring & Contract Oversight

Georgia's child welfare agencies work to coordinate their monitoring efforts to ensure minimal disruption to children, families, and provider staff. Active providers may receive visits from all or some of these agencies:

- OPM monitors conduct safety reviews (site visits), annual comprehensive reviews, safety check desk reviews, and PBP verification visits. Providers who fail to meet expectations may be suspended or required to complete improvement plans.
- OPM risk managers follow up on significant events and CPS allegations.
- DFCS case managers visit children and foster homes; CPS investigators follow up on CPS allegations.
- The Residential Child Care Licensing Unit conducts site visits & comprehensive reviews and may issue fines for adverse actions.
- Providers who are contracted to accept youth from the Department of Juvenile Justice will also receive site visits & comprehensive reviews from DJJ.



Contacts

Office of Provider Management / RBWO Contracts

OPM Provider Relations

opm.leadership@dhs.ga.gov, (404) 657-3400

Residential Child Care Licensing Unit

- <https://dhs.georgia.gov/residential-child-care-licensing>
- **MAT pre-training:** rsc@dhs.ga.gov

Department of Juvenile Justice

- <https://djj.georgia.gov/>
- **Contract questions:**
rbwo.contracts@djj.state.ga.us

CCI Specialty

- **Georgia Cares (CSEC):** www.gacares.org

Independent Living

www.garyse-ilp.org

CPA Training

- **SAFE:** www.consortforkids.org
- **IMPACT:** www.fostergeorgia.com or www.gascore.com