

# stronger families

FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA





# 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.




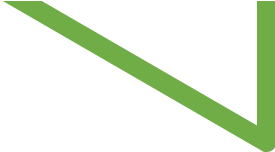

# Becoming a DFCS RBWO Provider

This presentation covers the process of becoming a contracted private foster care provider for the Division of Family and Children Services and answers frequently asked questions, including:

- What are the steps to earning a DFCS 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 apply for an RBWO contract.





## Residential Child Care Licensing

Providers working with youth under 18 require a license from the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit (RCCL).

**RCCL is a separate entity from OPM and does not automatically grant licenses as part of the DFCS RBWO application process.** To begin this separate process, visit <https://dhs.georgia.gov/organization/about/division-offices/office-general-counsel/office-inspector-general/residential>



# DFCS 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 DFCS County).**

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 agency self-reporting.



# 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 that serve foster children in their homes.
2. **Specialty Child Caring Institutions (CCIs)** house 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 <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/about-us/blueprint-family-first>



**FOSTER YOUTH  
SUPPORT  
#FAMILYFIRSTACT**



# Demographics of Children in Foster Care



- As of May 2026, approximately **10,330** children and youth were in care in Georgia. **4,760** were placed with private providers. Approximately **3,720** youth were placed in CPA's and **1,040** youth were placed in CCI's.
- About **1,850** children and youth met the standards for Maximum Watchful Oversight based on their needs and behaviors.
- About **390** met the standards for specialty care based on medical or other needs.
- About **215** were placed with providers focusing on transitional or independent living for older youth and young adults.
- About **15** were placed in homes for pregnant and parenting teens.



# Working with DFCS

Private providers receive placement referrals from DFCS frontline staff and/or the Care Coordination Treatment Unit.

During the placement, providers must ensure the safety and well-being needs of all youth placed in their program are met. Providers must also 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.



# Effective Dates

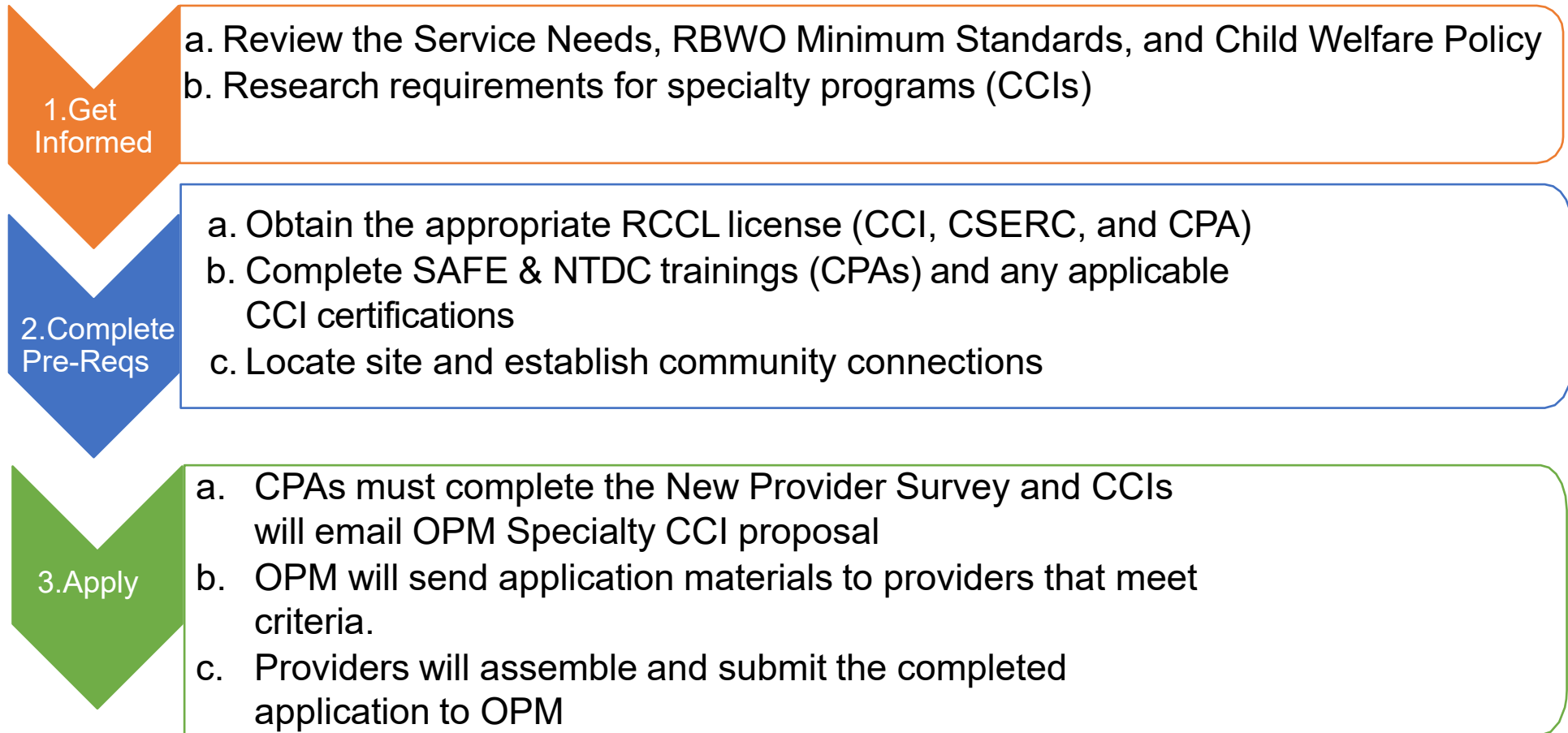
There are two contract lifecycles within a fiscal year: **July 1<sup>st</sup>** & **October 1<sup>st</sup>**



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



# Three Steps to an RBWO Contract



# 1. Get Informed: Review the Service Needs



On [www.gascore.com](http://www.gascore.com), click “Future Providers”, then “Current State Needs”. Based on the RBWO Provider Service Needs List, 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 must operate an office within a reasonable proximity to their approved foster caregiver’s homes.**
- Have you spoken with local DFCS offices 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 & DFCS Child Welfare Policy

On [www.gascore.com](http://www.gascore.com), click “Key Documents & Forms” and download the RBWO Minimum Standards document. Also click “Policy” and select [pamms.dhs.ga.gov](http://pamms.dhs.ga.gov) website and download the Department of Family and Children Services - Child Welfare Manual.

- Are you prepared to meet the requirements for staffing levels, experience, and training?
- Does your agency’s policy align with and cover all 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:

- Safety
- Quality of Care
- Permanency
- General Administrative Matters
- Program Designations
- CCI Section
- Foster Home Section (CPA)
- ILP/TLP
- Maternity Support Programs
- Staffing Standards
- RPPS
- Sexual harassment

RBWO Minimum Standards are in addition to policy requirements from RCCL. Therefore, your agency policy and procedures should address both sets of standards, either separately or in combination.



## 2. Preliminary Requirements

- Child Placing Agency Programs
- Child Caring Institution Programs
  - Specialty CCI Programs
    - CSEC Programs
    - Pregnant and Parenting Teens Programs



## Child Placing Agencies (CPA)

**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, and youth with complex needs.
- Maintain office space within monitoring distance of foster homes.
- Ensure the safety and well-being needs of all youth placed in their program are met by approved foster families. As well as support case plans and permanency goals established by DFCS.
- Employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director, Case Support Supervisor, and Case Support Worker. These two staff members must complete NTDC Train-the-Trainer Certification as well as SAFE Training prior to contract approval.
- Have an applicable CPA license from the Residential Child Care Licensing Unit (RCCL).



# NTDC Train-the-Trainer 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](mailto:becca@consortforkids.org)

## NTDC Leader Certification

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

**To register:** See upcoming trainings on [www.gascore.com](http://www.gascore.com) under "Training".



# Child Placing Agency (CPA) Staff Credentials

## Director

Director must have a master's degree from an accredited college or university in the area of behavioral or social sciences, social work, or childhood education, business or public administration or related field and two (2) years of paid work experience in the field of social services or human service delivery and at least one of which has been in an administrative or supervisory capacity; or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the same areas of study and four (4) years of paid work experience in a human services delivery capacity or a related field and at least two of which have been in an administrative or supervisory capacity.

## Case Support Supervisor

Case Support Supervisor must have a master's degree from an accredited college or university in the area of behavioral or social sciences, social work, psychology, childhood education, special education, guidance counseling, or related field with one (1) year experience in the field of childcare or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the same areas of study with two (2) years of paid work experience in a human services delivery capacity or a related field.

## Case Support Worker

Case Support Worker must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the area of behavioral or social sciences, social work, psychology, childhood education, special education, guidance counseling, or related field.

Please refer to the RBWO Minimum Standards - CPA Staffing Standard Section for complete description of all CPA Staffing requirements, responsibilities, and child ratios.



# Child Caring Institutions (CCI)

OPM is accepting applications from CCIs that serve youth 12 and older with the following specialized needs – Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Pregnant and Parenting Teens, youth with complex care needs. All CCIs must have a license from Residential Child Care Licensing. CCIs must employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director & Human Service Professional and staff should have knowledge and/or experience working with this population.

## **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)**

Georgia is committed to ensuring that child sex trafficking victims receive quality care and services. CSEC providers must be affiliated with **Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CAC)** at <https://www.cacga.org/csec-response-team/>, obtain **Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Organization Certification** from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Counsel (CJCC) at <https://cjcc.georgia.gov> and obtain **Commercial Sexual Exploitation Recovery Center (CSERC) License** from Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL).



# 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 and learn more at Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential [gcapp.org](http://gcapp.org).



- CCIs must employ distinct individuals in the roles of Director & Human Service Professional and staff should have knowledge and/or experience working with this population.



# Child Caring Institution (CCI) Staff Credentials

## Director

Director must have a master's degree from an accredited college or university in the area of behavioral or social sciences, social work, or childhood education, business or public administration or related field and two (2) years of paid work experience in the field of social services or human service delivery and at least one of which has been in an administrative or supervisory capacity; or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the same areas of study and four (4) years of paid work experience in a human services delivery capacity or a related field and at least two of which have been in an administrative or supervisory capacity.

## Human Services Professional (HSP)

The HSP must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the area of behavioral or social sciences, social work, or psychology, childhood education and (2) years of paid work experience in the field of social services or human service delivery.

## Child Care Worker

The Child Care Worker must be at least 21 years of age and possess at least a high school diploma or GED. New Child Care Workers must log at least 40 hours of work with the provider before working unsupervised with children.

Please refer to the RBWO Minimum Standards – CCI Staffing Standard Section for complete description of all CCI Staffing requirements, responsibilities, and child ratios.



# 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 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 the specialized knowledge and experience relevant to your program?
- Do you have community connections to support your program's model?



### 3. Apply: Fill out the New Provider Information Survey

On [www.gascore.com](http://www.gascore.com), click “Future Providers”, then “Start the Process”.

Select the applicable program and use the included link to access an online survey.

CPA New Provider Survey

CCIs – Open to specialty providers only.  
Email: [andria.bolton@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:andria.bolton@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 criteria.



### 3. Apply: Assemble the required materials

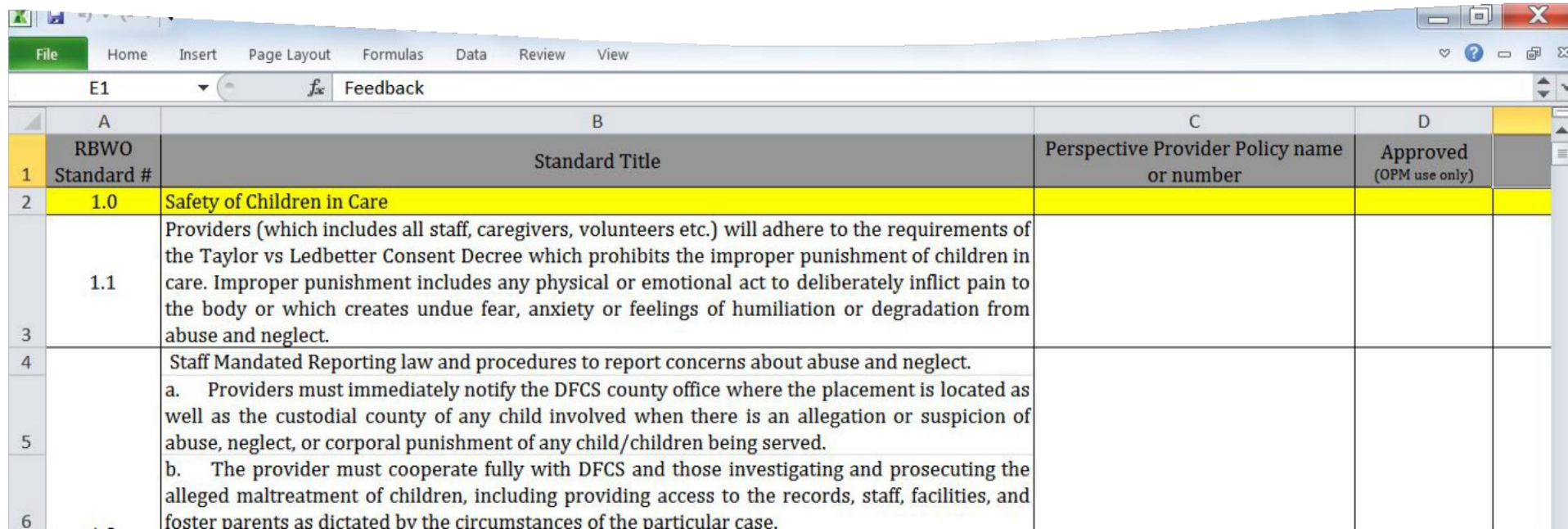
The email you receive will contain a checklist of required application materials and attached copies of the forms you must complete and return via email. Requirements vary by provider type.

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



# 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.



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.		



# Working with DFCS Foster Youth 18 and Older



All DFCS RBWO Providers must ensure that its admission policy includes that youth up to 21 years of age may be served. Contractor must ensure that youth are discharged upon the youth's 21st birthday.

\*Note: The Residential Child Care Licensing (RCCL) jurisdiction only extends to youth up to 19 years of age. Therefore, the Residential Child Care license will continue to indicate that it covers youth up to 19 years of age.



## Required documents include:

- RBWO Application
- RCC License (CCIs / CPAs)
- Agency's Policies & Procedures
- Agency's Training Plan
- Behavioral Management Plan
- Organizational Chart
- Budget
- \*Financial Audit Review
- 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
- Three foster home evaluations (CPAs only)
- Sample ISP
- Secure agency e-mail domain

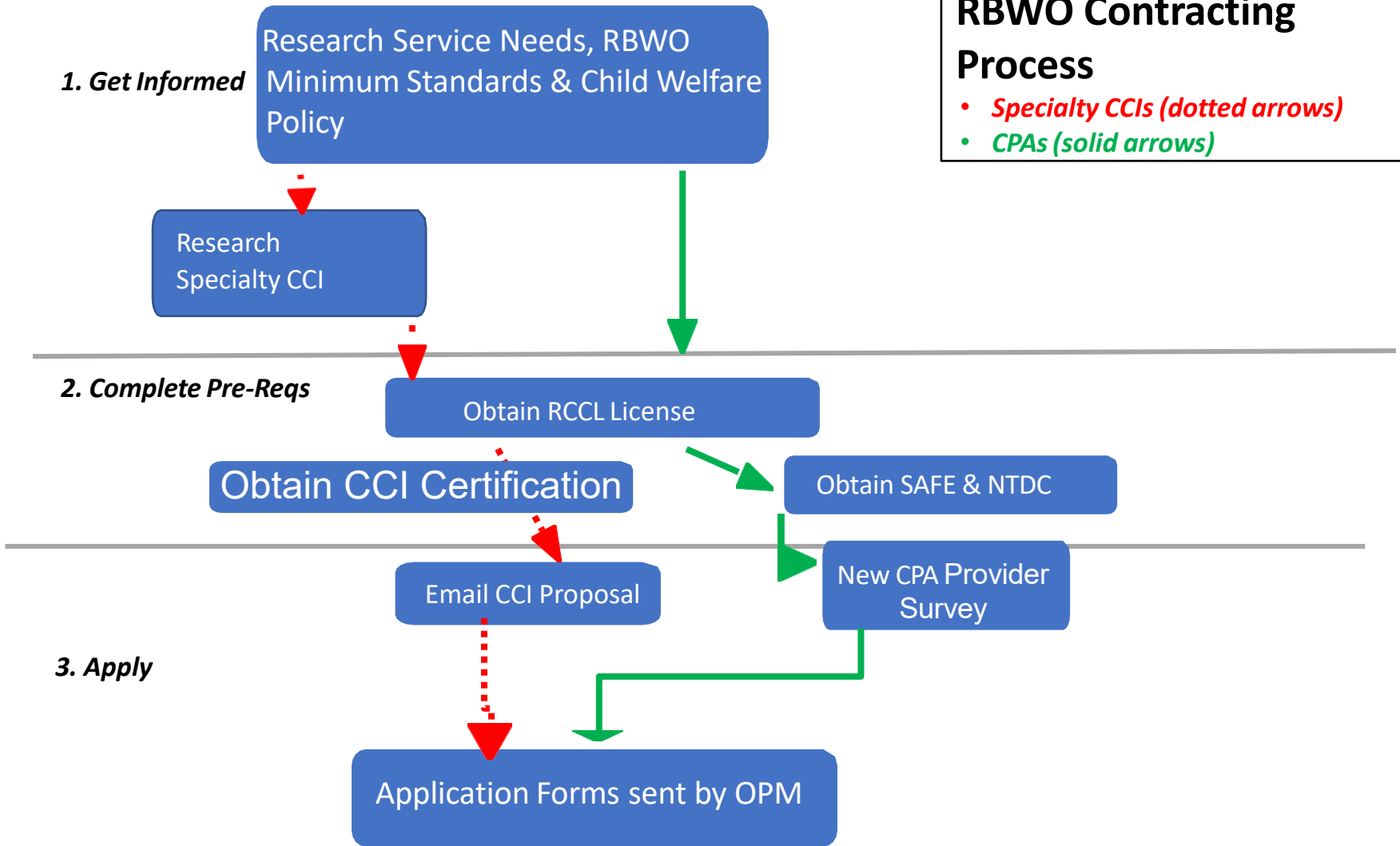
\*New contract or no contract within the past 2 years





**RBWO Contracting Process**

- Specialty CCIs (dotted arrows)
- CPAs (solid arrows)



# 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.

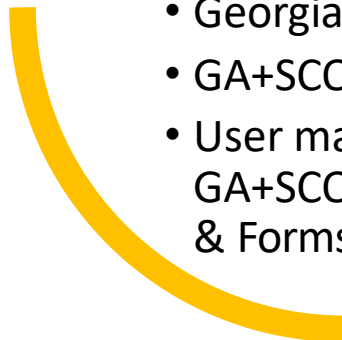
- Denied providers can submit based on the terms of their denial letter.



# 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, CPS & IONS Screening process, 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 Provider Portal and GA+SCORE are posted on [www.gascore.com](http://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 conduct site visits & comprehensive reviews.



# Contacts

## Office of Provider Management / RBWO Contracts

**Andria Bolton**  
**OPM Provider Relations Manager**  
404-895-7135, [andria.bolton@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:andria.bolton@dhs.ga.gov)

## Department of Juvenile Justice

- <https://djj.georgia.gov/rbwo>

## Independent Living

[www.garyse-ilp.org](http://www.garyse-ilp.org)

## Residential Child Care Licensing Unit

- <https://dhs.georgia.gov/organization/about/division-offices/office-general-counsel/office-inspector-general/residential>

## CCI Specialty

- **Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CSEC):** <https://www.cacga.org/csec-response-team/>
- **Criminal Justice Coordinating Counsel (CJCC) :** <https://cjcc.georgia.gov>

## CPA Training

- **SAFE:** [www.consortforkids.org](http://www.consortforkids.org)
- **NTDC Train-the-Trainer:** <https://www.gascore.com/training.cfm>

