

**Series:** Operating Procedures COA: CM 2, FIN 7.04,

**Procedure Name:** Child Protective Investigators Flex Funds  
**Policy Number:** OP BC 1027  
**Revision #/Date:** (1)12/10/2012, (2) 04/02/2021, (3) 03/26/2026  
**Effective Date:** 07/01/2012

**Applicable to:** All Family Partnerships of Central Florida (FPOCF) Staff

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**SUBJECT:** Avoiding Unnecessary Entry into the Prevention Program and Child Welfare System Using Flexible Funding by Child Protective Investigators

**PURPOSE:**

1. **Purpose:** This operating procedure describes the agency's operating procedure regarding the spending flexibility within those cases referred by Department of Children and Families Child Protective Investigators. Funds, appropriated for use by families who are at risk, are intended to provide assistance to prevent unnecessary entry into the child welfare system and/or child abuse prevention program.
2. **Scope:** This operating procedure applies to FPOCF staff and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Protective Investigators (CPI).
3. **Reference:** It is the intent of FPOCF that the funds appropriated for the alternate care of children as described in this section be used to meet the needs of children and families in their own homes. Financial assistance shall be used as a means of preventing the family from entering the child welfare system and/or child abuse prevention program.
4. **Eligibility Criteria:**
  - a. Use of these funds is restricted to families who have an open investigation with the Department of Children and Families because of a call to the Florida Abuse hotline alleging abuse, neglect or abandonment.
  - b. The CPI must make a determination that the family is not appropriate for entering the child welfare system (including Court Ordered Protective Supervision or Out of Home Care.)
  - c. The CPI must identify the financial need of the family and initiate a referral to the Child and Family Services Specialist . Direct calls for assistance from the family will not be accepted as the CPI must verify that the family will not be serviced by other means. Need is defined as a pressing lack of something essential. This resource is meant to address the necessities of life; rather than what is merely "desirable."
  - d. These funds may also be used flexibly for triaging when families (with an open abuse report) are experiencing an acute crisis while they are being connected with the appropriate resources in emergency situations on a one time basis only.

- e. FPOCF has an obligation to be a good manager of the agency's resources, including the purchase of goods or services from other providers. Common sense must prevail in making decisions about the potential effectiveness or efficiency of acquisitions forecasted to prevent the family from entering the child welfare system and/or child abuse prevention program and to keep the child safely at home.
  - f. The CPI must provide demographic information such as FSFN case identification number, family and children's name, social security numbers, dates of birth and address. The CPI must also present information on the family's current situation, identify what resources have been explored thus far and list any other relevant information and specific support requested (i.e. rent payment, electric bill etc.)
  - g. The original bill must be secured by the CPI and submitted in person to the Child and Family Services Specialist for the request to be processed. Failure to submit the original bill will result in the withdrawal of the request for flexible support services.
  - h. The CPI must indicate at the time of the request whether the check will be picked up or mailed. The contact person, phone number and address of attending party must be included with request.
  - i. Each family may only be considered one time per fiscal year regardless of incidences or frequency of abuse reports.
  - j. Family eligibility is determined on a case by case basis and failure to demonstrate sustainability may result in denial of funds.
  - k. This assistance is subject to the availability of funds.
5. Service eligibility: The purpose of this funding is to meet the unique and individualized needs of the families being served. There must be a clear connection between the service and/or product delivered to meet the needs of the child and the prevention of the family from entering the child welfare system and/or child abuse prevention. The intervention proposed must be goal oriented and time limited. If the service provision is going to require a long-term investment, then, eventually, more traditional sources of intervention must be explored, and this flexible funding source would not be appropriate. FPOCF staff are not restricted to a certain prescribed list of goods and services and have flexibility to move into a more comprehensive domain of helping with food, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities. The purchase of such commodities and provisions must be justified by virtue of the family being deemed ineligible from other resources and/or on a waiting list for other resources that are accessible at time of request. FPOCF has not been prescribed a restrictive list of goods and services, the funds must not be used to acquire goods and services that are illegal or in violation of other operating procedures of FPOCF.
6. Funding Limitations: At the individual level, the most critical external limit is placed on meeting the needs of the family and of the children in the home. The cost of the purchase will prevent the family from requiring additional services and supports.
7. Decision Making: FPOCF has discretion in its decision-making ability regarding how and under what circumstances these flexible funds can be spent, exercising fair and rational decisions about spending. The spirit of this operating procedure is written so that these decisions are best left to the staff closest to the service delivery level.

8. Notification: FPOCF Child and Family Services Specialist will notify the CPI when all requested documentation has been received, and the Request for Flexible Support Services for Child Protective Investigators form has been submitted to financing for processing.
9. Dispute Resolution: From time to time, CPIs and FPOCF Child and Family Services Specialist may not agree on a particular issue related to the use of these funds. All such disputes are to be resolved the same day they arise or as soon as possible. If agreement cannot be reached between the assigned CPI, CPI Supervisor, FPOCF Child and Family Services Specialist and Family Support Services Senior Manager, then the disagreement will be referred to Family Partnerships of Central Florida Director of Prevention and Diversion, and DCF Program Operations Administrator. A joint consultation shall be held if necessary. If there is still supervisor disagreement, then the issue will be referred to FPOCF Chief Executive Officer or appointed designee and the DCF Regional Administrator or appointed designee. The persons designated to resolve these disputes shall meet and/or initiate discussion as soon as necessary practicable to resolve the dispute within three business days.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT  
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER:



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Family Partnerships of Central Florida

APPROVAL DATE: March 26, 2026