

14.4 CPS: Locating the Child and Family	
Application: All Department of Children's Services (DCS) Child Protective Services (CPS) and Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Case Managers	
Authority: TCA 37-1-401et seq; 37-1-601et seq; 37-5-105 (3); 37-5-106; 37-5-107	Standards: COA: PA-CFS 5; PA-CFS 6
Commissioner:	Date:
Original Effective Date: 12/01/23 Current Effective Date: 12/01/23	Supersedes: 14.5 08/24/22 Last Review Date: 12/01/23
Glossary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Good Faith Effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multiple, persistent, relevant attempts to locate the ACV within the identified priority response timeframe. ◆ Residence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The location in which the ACV lives. This may include the family home, residential facilities, family or kinship home (if the ACV lived there prior to the current DCS involvement), foster home, or long term treatment facilities (such as NICU or psychiatric hospital). 	

Policy Statement:

Child Protective Services and Special Investigations Unit Case Managers shall make efforts to locate the alleged child victim (ACV) and their family to determine if abuse and/or neglect have occurred and/or to determine if services are recommended or required.

Purpose:

To locate the ACV and family to gather information necessary to assess for safety and/or risk to the ACV.

Procedures:

A. Locating the ACV and Family

1. CPS must make efforts to see the ACV and family as applicable. Such efforts may include:
 - a) Visiting the following locations, if known:
 - ◆ The ACV's reported whereabouts;
 - ◆ The ACV's residence;

- ◆ The ACV's school;
- ◆ The ACV's childcare center or babysitter's home.
- b) Contacting the following:
 - ◆ Neighbor as a potential witness to the ACV's wellbeing and whereabouts;
 - ◆ Law Enforcement to check records for information which can locate the ACV or family;
 - ◆ School Employee as a potential witness to the ACV's wellbeing and whereabouts;
 - ◆ Utility Companies to obtain information on the ACV and family's address;
 - ◆ Referent to verify or obtain additional identifying information;
 - ◆ Landlord or person in control of a residential rental property;
 - ◆ Known service providers;
 - ◆ Social media searches;
 - ◆ First Two;
 - ◆ Clear Searches.
- c) Researching **TFACTS** for previous DCS history and consulting with any prior case workers.

Note: When a DCS child/family is unable to be located through the efforts listed above and there is reason to believe that the child/family has relocated to another country, refer to [Safety Notice: International Assistance Locating Children and Families](#) for additional options.

2. When making contacts in efforts to locate the family, any information regarding the family or extended family are components of a diligent search. Refer to Policy [31.9, Conducting Diligent Searches](#).
3. If the ACV and family are located however:
 - a) The adult caregiver refuses to allow the CPS Case Manager to see or speak with the ACV:
 - ◆ The CPS Case Manager explains their purpose and authority to see the ACV (refer TCA 37-1-406).
 - ◆ If access continues to be denied, per policy [14.14, Removal: Safety and Permanency Considerations](#), the CPS Case Manager may pursue a court order, after consulting with the supervisor and regional legal counsel.
 - b) The language of the ACV and family is different from the CPS Case Manager:
 - ◆ The CPS Case Manager immediately contacts a translator, a translation services or translation app to assist in conducting an interview with the ACV and family members, privately. The CPS Case Manager must document the availability of the translation services or services used.
 - c) The ACV is unable to verbally communicate due to age, disability or other condition.

- ♦ The Case Manager observes the ACV for indications of distress, injury, or illness. The Case Manager may also utilize the non-offending caregiver, childcare provider or school employee to assist in communicating with the ACV. The Case Manager must document the means by which they communicated with the ACV and what was observed.

B. Courtesy Interviews

When an out of state child protection services agency or another Tennessee DCS county office makes a courtesy request for assistance in contacting or locating a child or family, refer to [Work Aid 5: CPS Courtesy Requests](#) for additional information.

C. Unable to Locate the Child and Family

1. If all attempts to locate the ACV and family fail, the CPS Case Manager confers with a Team Leader to determine the next course of action to ensure the safety of the ACV. The Case Manager must document all Good Faith Efforts (GFE) to see the ACV and family within **TFACTS**.
2. The CPS Case Manager completes GFE tasks within the priority response timeframe.
3. The CPS Case Manager visits the ACV's residence if provided by the referent, school, law enforcement or utility company at least one (1) time. In addition, the CPS Case Manager conducts:
 - a) One (1) additional home visit at a different time of the day, if the address is confirmed or believed to be where the ACV is located/living; or
 - b) One (1) additional site visit which may include the school, childcare center, or babysitter's home; or
 - c) One (1) additional contact with a witness which may include a neighbor, law enforcement, school employee, childcare provider or babysitter for additional information.
4. If an ACV is not seen within the priority response, the CPS Case Manager shall:
 - a) Staff all efforts with the Team Leader at response time and daily for next steps;
 - b) Staff all efforts with the Team Coordinator by or on day 7 if the child is not located;
 - c) Staff all efforts with the Director by day 14 if the ACV has not been located to ensure all efforts are exhausted or identify next steps.
 - d) Prepare the case for closure by day 30 if ACV is unable to be located, despite all efforts.

Note: When the ACV is determined to be out of state, a courtesy request and follow up contact with that jurisdiction's child welfare agency and/or law enforcement is considered a GFE.

D. Safety Considerations

Sometimes case members may be reported as detained for deportation outside the United States. See attached **[Safety Notice: Verifying/Locating Case Members Reportedly Detained to Deportation](#)** and **[Brochure for Online Deportee Locator System](#)** for information on confirming and locating individuals federally identified for deportation.

Forms:

[Diligent Search Letter](#)

Collateral Documents:

[14.14, Removal: Safety and Permanency Considerations](#)

[31.9, Conducting Diligent Searches](#)

[Brochure for Online Deportee Locator System](#)

[Safety Notice: Verifying/Locating Case Members Reportedly Detained for Deportation](#)

[Safety Notice: International Assistance Locating Children and Families](#)

[Work Aid 5: CPS Courtesy Requests](#)