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CONNECTIONS

Adoption Subsidy Job Aid



**CONNECTIONS Training Project
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**CONNECTIONS – Adoption Subsidy Job Aid
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction **2**

CONNECTIONS – Legacy Interface **3**

 Interfaced Automated Systems 3

 What is the Synchronization/Interface process? 3

Adoptive Homes..... **4**

 Recording Adoptive Homes in CONNECTIONS 4

 Progressing the Adoptive Inquiry to Applicant Status 8

 Submitting an Adoptive Home for Approval 9

Maintaining Adoptive Homes..... **10**

 Closing an Adoptive Home in CONNECTIONS 13

Resource Definitions **14**

Cross-Reference Guide **15**



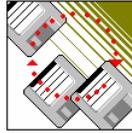
Introduction

This Job Aid provides information about recording adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS in order to initiate the Adoption Subsidy payment process in the Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS).

Specifically, this Job Aid contains information about:

- conducting a thorough F/A Home Search in CONNECTIONS;
- creating an adoptive home in CONNECTIONS;
- recording demographic information and the Vendor ID number for the home;
- assigning the home to a worker;
- relating people to the new adoptive home;
- recording F/A home license information (including Facility Type); and
- submitting an adoptive home for supervisory approval.

CONNECTIONS – Legacy Interface

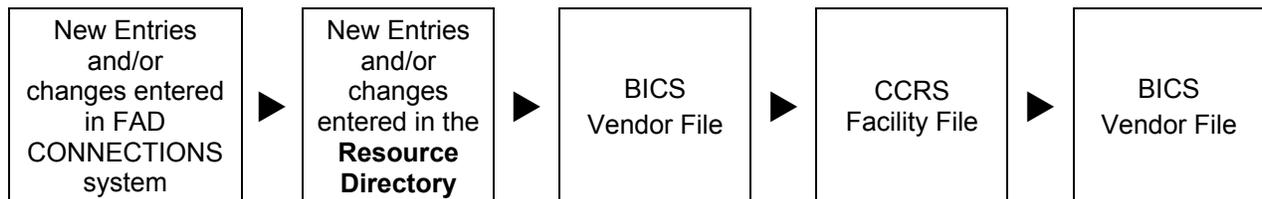


Interfaced Automated Systems

- CONNECTIONS records all State Central Register (SCR) reports, Child Protective Services (CPS) intakes and investigations, foster and adoptive home development activities, contracts and resources.
- **CCRS** (Child Care Review Service) tracks all child movements, legal events and service plans in the child welfare system.
- **BICS** (Benefits Issuance Control System) is the system for the payment and claiming for Non-Services cases in upstate New York. It also generates all services payments in upstate New York with the exception of Erie County, and generates foster care and adoption payments in New York City (but not for voluntary agencies in NYC).
- **WMS** (Welfare Management System) records case and child demographics, eligibility data, purchase of service, and it authorizes services for children and families.

What is the Synchronization/Interface process?

- In August 1997, the CONNECTIONS Resource Directory and FAD dialogue were created from CCRS and BICS data. Facilities and providers that were known to BICS remain in BICS for inquiry, authorization and payment. The facilities that were in CCRS remain in CCRS for inquiry and placement.
- CCRS is still used for inquiry and placement, while BICS is still used for payment and claiming.
- Each night, a batch is run that updates WMS, CCRS and BICS with data recorded.
- All new facilities and vendors are now recorded in CONNECTIONS.
- For example: the interface between CONNECTIONS, CCRS and BICS updates name (and other) information for facilities in CCRS and the name (and other) information for all CONNECTIONS Resources in BICS. Historical data from CONNECTIONS updates the status of FAD homes in CCRS.

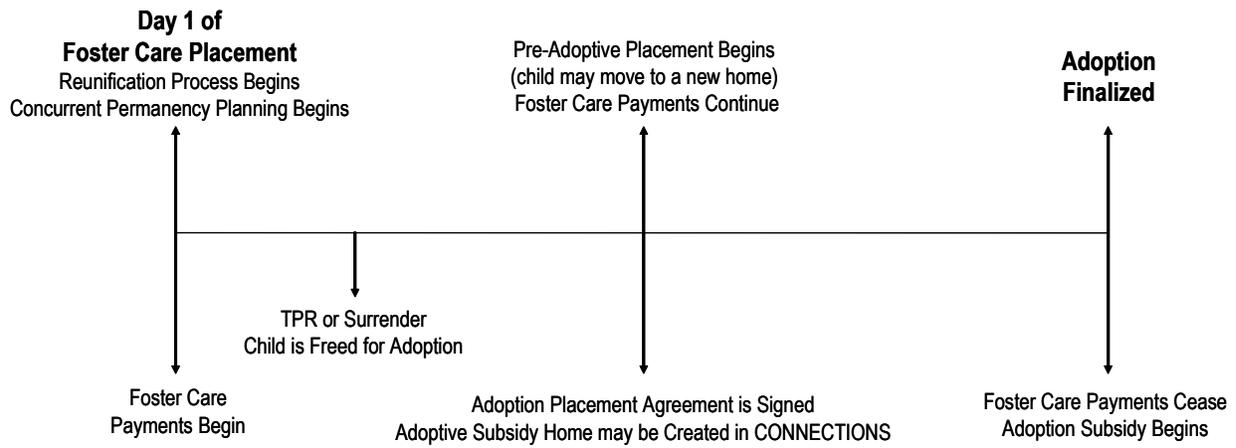


Adoptive Homes

Children meeting certain eligibility requirements may be able to receive federal and/or state adoption assistance. (For information on eligibility for Adoption Subsidy see 18 NYCRR §426.) This financial assistance is referred to as an Adoption Subsidy. Adoption Subsidies are distributed once an adoption is completely and legally finalized.

The diagram below highlights the major milestones completed when a child transitions from foster care placement to a final adoptive placement. It also clearly indicates when foster care payment changes to adoption subsidy.

Major Milestones in the Process of Adopting a Child in Foster Care



Approval of Adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS is a separate process from the certification or approval of foster homes. Authorized agencies operating an adoption program have an adoption or home finding unit that accepts public inquiries. Once an inquiry is made, the authorizing agency must respond to the inquiry and develop the home as a potential adoptive placement in accordance with New York State adoption regulations.

In CONNECTIONS, a Setting of “Adoption” is used to identify homes receiving Adoption Subsidy payments. Pre-adoptive placements (with a Setting of “Foster Care”) receive Foster Care Payments until adoption finalization.

Recording Adoptive Homes in CONNECTIONS

Creating adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS follows a very similar system process as that used to create foster homes. The key procedural differences in recording adoptive homes in CONNECTIONS apply to the timing of home creation and the Setting and Facility Type selected.

Foster care payments and adoption subsidy payments are different types of payments. In order for BICS to make adoption subsidy payments, the Adoptive home must have a Vendor ID (VID) number that is different from the VID used to make foster care payments.



The prospective adoptive parent inquiry will be recorded in CONNECTIONS twice to reflect the different types of payment each home/stage receives:

Initially, a home is created with a setting of **Foster Care**.

Closer to the time of an adoption finalization, a home is created with a setting of **Adoptive Home**.

In order to accommodate a second VID, a second FAD home must be created in CONNECTIONS with a **Setting** of “Adoptive” and a **Facility Type** of “Adoptive Home” on the *F/A Home License* window. This second home contains the Adoption Study and will be populated by using the **Relate** function to relate residents in the Foster home to the Adoptive home.



Step-by-Step: Creating an Adoptive Home in CONNECTIONS

- 1 On the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, click on the **Options** menu and select **F/A Home**.
The F/A Home sub-menu displays.
- 2 Click on the **F/A Home Search...** command from the sub-menu.
The F/A Home Search window displays.
- 3 In the **Home Name** field, enter the name of the adoptive parent(s) in the following format: *Last Name,First Name(s)*.
For example, “Smith,Joan” or “Smith,Joan & John”;
*do **not** add a space after the comma.*
- 4 Click on the **Search...** button.
*The F/A Home List displays with the results of the search. Verify that the **adoptive** home does not already exist in CONNECTIONS; if a **foster** home was created for the pre-adoptive placement, that foster home will display on the F/A Home List.*
- 5 Click on the **New...** button.
*The Home Demographics window displays. The **Home Name** field is pre-filled with the name you entered on the F/A Home Search window.*

- 6 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Setting** field and select **Adoptive** from the resulting list.
- 7 Record the home demographics, including **Ethnicity**, **Race**, **Religion**, **Language** and **Marital** status.
If the adoptive home is being created at the time of adoption finalization, complete demographic information is needed for AFCARS reporting.

- 8 In the Primary Address section, record the primary address of the adoptive home.
- 9 Click on the **Validate** button.
The CODE-1 address validation message window displays.
- 10 Click on the **Yes** button to accept the CODE-1 validated address.
*Click on the **No** button if the CODE-1 validated address is **less** complete than the address you recorded. For example, if you recorded the address with an apartment number, which the CODE-1 address validation does not return, do not use the CODE-1 validated address in this situation.*
- 11 Click on the **Use as Business** check box to select it, indicating that the primary address will be used for mailing adoption subsidy payments to the adoptive parents.
*The **Vendor ID** field and **Validate** check box enable.*
- 12 In the **Vendor ID** field, enter the unique Vendor Identification number for this home's Adoption Subsidy payments.
- 13 Click on the **Validate** button.
The CODE-1 address validation message window displays.
- 14 Click on the **Yes** button to accept the CODE-1 validated address.
- 15 Click on the **Save & Assign** button.
The Assign window displays.
- 16 To save this home to your own *Assigned Workload*, click on the **Save** button.
*To assign this home to another worker, select that worker from the Available Staff list at the top of the window, then click on the **Primary** button. If the worker's name is not displayed in the Available Staff list, you need to conduct a Staff Search from the Assign window.*

Once the adoptive home has been created in CONNECTIONS, you need to record person and licensing information for the home.



Step-by-Step: Recording Person Information for an Adoptive Home

- 1 On the CONNECTIONS Toolbar, click on the **WORK** button.
The Assigned Workload displays.
- 2 Click on the adoptive home you created to select it.
*The **Tasks...** button enables.*
- 3 Click on the **Tasks...** button.
The Task List displays.
- 4 Select the **Maintain Person** task, then click on the **List...** button.
The Person List displays.
- 5 Click on the **New...** button.
The Person Search window displays.

- 6** In the **First** and **Last** name fields, enter the name of the person to be added to the adoptive home, then click on the **Search** button.
The search results display in the Person Search List at the bottom of the Person Search window.
- 7** Click on the appropriate person's name to select it from the Person Search List, then click on the **Relate...** button.
The following message displays:
"Sex mismatch between individuals. Do you wish to continue?"
*This message displays under these circumstances because you did not make a selection from the **Sex** field on the Person Search window.*
- 8** Click on the **Yes** button to close the message window.
The Person Detail window displays. Verify that the demographic information is accurate.
- 9** Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Rel/Int** field and select from the resulting list.
*If the person you are relating is the adopted child, select **Child**; if you are relating the (formerly foster, now adoptive) parents, select **Parent** from the resulting list. Be sure to relate all individuals living in the home, including biological children.*
- 10** Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Marital** field and select from the resulting list.
- 11** Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Religion** field and select from the resulting list.
- 12** Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Ethnicity** field and select from the resulting list.
*If you select **Hispanic or Latino**, you also need to select the appropriate origin(s) from the **Hispanic or Latino Origin** list box by double-clicking on an origin. Multiple origins may be selected. If you select **Non-Hispanic or Latino**, the list box disables.*
- 13** In the **Race** field, double-click to select the appropriate race(s) from the list box.
Multiple races may be selected.
- 14** Click on the **Save** button.
The Person List displays.
- 15** Repeat **Steps 5-12** for each remaining individual who needs to be added to the home.
- 16** When you have finished recording person information for the home, click on the **Close** button.
The Task List displays.

Progressing the Adoptive Inquiry to Applicant Status

Progressing the inquiry to Applicant status requires the completion of an adoption application. Applications for an adoption program are accepted on a *Priority Basis*, which is described below [18 NYCRR §421.13(a)]:

Priority of Acceptance for Adoption Applications	
First Priority	<p>On or about April 1st of each year, OCFS will determine the age, race, handicap and other significant characteristics of the largest proportion of waiting children. First priority will be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applicants seeking children with these characteristics; • foster parents seeking to adopt a child who has resided in their home for 12 continuous months; and • Native Americans seeking to adopt Native American children.
Second Priority	<p>Second priority is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applicants who are seeking to adopt photo-listed children who do not have the characteristics of the largest proportion of waiting children as determined by OCFS; and • applicants who are seeking children currently available in the care of the authorizing agency for whom there is not a waiting list of approved families.
Third Priority	<p>Third priority is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other applicants (i.e., those who have expressed an interest in adopting children such as healthy young children who are not photo-listed, if such children are not available for adoption in the care of the authorizing agency where application was made).



Step-by-Step: Recording Program Type and Status for an Adoptive Home

- 1 From the *Task List*, select the **Maintain Licensing Information** task, then click on the **New** button.
The F/A Home License window displays.
- 2 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Facility Type** field and select **Adoptive Home** from the resulting list.
- 3 In the **Program Type** field, scroll down and double-click **Regular**.
A check mark displays next to the selected Program Type.
- 4 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Applicant** from the resulting list.
- 5 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.

Submitting an Adoptive Home for Approval

The Adoptive home in CONNECTIONS does not become active and receive adoption subsidy payments until the adoption is finalized and the adoptive home has received supervisory approval in CONNECTIONS. Once the adoption is finalized, a caseworker closes the foster care case in the Welfare Management System (WMS) and the Child Care Review Service (CCRS). A new case (for the child) is then opened in WMS to maintain information regarding the finalized adoption subsidy. The Adoptive home in CONNECTIONS becomes the system of record for the home receiving subsidy payments.



Only local district workers create FAD Adoptive homes.

Best practice is to create the Adoptive home after an Adoption Placement Agreement has been signed.



Step-by-Step: Recording Licensing Information and Submitting the Adoptive Home for Supervisory Approval

- 1 From the *Task List*, select the **Maintain Licensing Information** task, then click on the **New** button.
The F/A Home License window displays.
- 2 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Status** field and select **Pending Acceptance** from the resulting list.
The Age Range and Capacity fields highlight in yellow, indicating that they are required fields.
- 3 Click on the drop-down arrows for the **Age Range** fields and select the appropriate sex and age range for the adoptive child(ren).
- 4 In the **Capacity** field, enter the number of adoptive children for which the home will receive adoption subsidy payments.

- 5 Click on the **File** menu and select **Save and Submit**.
The To-Do Detail window displays.
- 6 Click on the **Save** button to send the approval request to your supervisor.
The Task List displays.
- 7 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Task List*.
The Assigned Workload displays.

Once the supervisor or Unit Approver approves the adoptive home, its **Status** automatically progresses to “Accepted-Active.” Adoptive homes with finalized adoptive placements do *not* need to remain in Accepted-Active status in order for adoption subsidy payments to continue. However, the adoptive home must be kept updated at all times. Changes of address, family composition and other maintenance activities can be recorded by reopening a closed Adoptive home to Inquiry or Applicant status, correcting the information and then closing the home again.

For adoptive parents with an interest in adopting more children, it is recommended that you maintain a home in CONNECTIONS with the setting type of **Foster Home**, a **Facility Type** of “Foster/Adoptive Home” and a status of “Accepted-Active.” This foster/adoptive home must be recertified/reapproved annually to remain in Accepted-Active status. The Home Study needs to be updated to reflect any changes.



In a pre-adoptive placement, the home receives *foster care payments* because the child is still in the legal custody of the county.

Once an adoption has been finalized, the home receives adoption subsidy payments.

Maintaining Adoptive Homes

Once an adoptive home has progressed to “Accepted-Active” status, it does *not* need to be reauthorized in order to continue receiving adoption subsidy payments. However, if home information changes (e.g., if the family moves to a new address), it is important to keep the adoptive home information up to date. If the home is still open, you can access the home from the *Assigned Workload* to update this information. If the home’s authorization date has expired, you need to use the Local Data Maintenance function (accessed via a Case Search) to make these changes. *These maintenance processes do not affect the processing of adoption subsidy payments from BICS.*



Step-by-Step: Updating Primary Address Information for an Adoptive Home (via the *Assigned Workload*)

- 1 From the *Assigned Workload*, select the adoptive home that needs to be updated.
*The **Tasks...** button displays.*
- 2 Click on the **Tasks...** button.
The Task List displays.

- 3 Click on the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task, then click on the **Detail...** button.
The Home Demographics window displays.
- 4 In the Address section at the bottom of the *Home Demographics* window, record the updated address information.
*Make sure the **Use as Business** check box is selected; payments are sent to the Business address.*
- 5 Click on the **Validate** button.
The CODE-1 address validation window displays.
- 6 Click on the **Yes** button to accept the CODE-1 validated address.
*Click on the **No** button if the CODE-1 validated address is either incorrect or **less complete** than the address you recorded. For example, if you recorded the address with an apartment number, which the CODE-1 address validation does not return, do not use the CODE-1 validated address in this situation.*
- 7 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.
- 8 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Task List*.
The Assigned Workload displays.
- 9 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Assigned Workload*.



**Step-by-Step:
Updating Primary Phone Information for an Adoptive Home
(via the Assigned Workload)**

- 1 From the *Assigned Workload*, select the adoptive home that needs to be updated.
*The **Tasks...** button displays.*
- 2 Click on the **Tasks...** button.
The Task List displays.
- 3 Click on the **Maintain Non-Licensing Information** task, then click on the **Detail...** button.
The Home Demographics window displays.
- 4 In the Phone section in the lower right corner of the *Home Demographics* window, record the updated phone information.
- 5 Click on the **Save** button.
The Task List displays.
- 6 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Task List*.
The Assigned Workload displays.
- 7 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Assigned Workload*.



**Step-by-Step:
Updating Address and/or Phone Information for an Adoptive Home
(via Local Data Maintenance)**

- 1** Click on the **CASE** button on the CONNECTIONS Toolbar,
The Case Search Criteria window displays.
- 2** In the **Case Name** field, enter the name of the adoptive home in the following format:
Jones, Mary
*If you know the Case ID number for the adoptive home, you can enter that in the **Case ID** field instead.*
- 3** Click on the **Search** button.
The Case List displays with the search results.
- 4** Locate the adoptive home on the list, then click on it to select it.
You may need to scroll down through the list to locate the adoptive home.
- 5** Click on the **Summary** button.
The Case Summary window displays.
- 6** Click on the case to select it from the *Case Summary* window.
- 7** Click on the **Options** menu and select the **Maintain Closed Person Demographics...** command.
*The Local Data Maintenance Window displays, with the **Person Demographics** tab active.*
- 8** In the Primary Address Information section, record the updated address information.
- 9** Click on the **Validate** button.
The CODE-1 Address Validation window displays, comparing the address you entered with the CODE-1 validated address. All addresses recorded in CONNECTIONS must be run through CODE-1 Address Validation, which checks the accuracy of the address and formats it according to U.S. Postal Service protocols.
- 10** Click on the **Accept** button to accept the CODE-1 validated address.
*Click on the **Reject** button to reject the CODE-1 validated address; this should be done only if the address you recorded was more complete/accurate than the CODE-1 validated address.*
*If you recorded a NYC address and the CD (Community District code) was not retrieved, the following message displays:
"Community District could not be populated."*
- 11** Click on the name of the individual(s) to whom this updated address should apply. To select multiple individuals, hold down the **Ctrl** key while clicking on each person's name.
- 12** Click on the **Save** button.
The following message displays: "Changes have been saved."



Your BFP must include the MAINT CLSD PERS (Maintain Closed Person Demographics) Business Function in order to perform this function.

- 13 Click on the **OK** button.
The window refreshes and displays with the modifications.
- 14 In the Primary Phone Information section, enter the updated phone **Number**, **Extension** (if applicable) and **Type**.
- 15 Repeat **Steps 11-13**.
- 16 To close the *Local Data Maintenance* window, click on the close button () in the upper right corner of the window.

Closing an Adoptive Home in CONNECTIONS

An adoptive home continues to receive adoption subsidy payments until BICS is explicitly notified to cease payments; this occurs when the caseworker closes the WMS case file for the adopted child. If the Adoptive Home is still in Accepted-Active status in CONNECTIONS, you need to close the home in CONNECTIONS to reflect the termination of adoption subsidy payments.



Step-by-Step: Closing an Adoptive Home in CONNECTIONS

- 1 From the *Assigned Workload*, select the adoptive home that needs to be closed.
*The **Tasks...** button displays.*
- 2 Click on the **Tasks...** button.
The Task List displays.
- 3 Click on the **Close Home** task, then click on the **New** button.
The Close Home window displays.
- 4 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Closure Reason** field and select the appropriate closure reason from the resulting list.
- 5 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Closure Type** field and select **Voluntary**.
- 6 Click on the drop-down arrow for the **Recommend Reopening** field and select **Recommend**.
- 7 In the **Date Notification Sent** field, record the date the home closure notification was sent to the adoptive parents.
- 8 Click on the **Closure Report** button to generate the Closure Report.
The report displays as a Microsoft Word document.
- 9 Record information in the unprotected sections of the document.
- 10 Click on the **File** menu and select **Close**.
The Close Home window displays.



Commonly Used Closure Reasons for Adoptive Homes

- ▶ Adoption Finalized
- ▶ Adoption Disruption

- 11 Click on the **Save and Submit** button.
The following message displays:
"Have you completed the Closing Summary Report?"
- 12 Click on the **Yes** button.
The To-Do Detail window displays.
- 13 Enter information in the **Description** field, as needed.
- 14 Click on the **Save** button to send the To-Do to your supervisor for approval.
The Task List displays.
- 15 Click on the **Close** button to close the *Task List*.
The Assigned Workload displays. Once your supervisor approves the home closure in CONNECTIONS, the adoptive home will no longer display on the Assigned Workload.

Resource Definitions

Facility Any foster care home, adoptive home, or congregate care facility such as an institution, runaway shelter, or intermediate care facility. Foster and adoptive homes can be certified or approved by local districts and voluntary agencies. Congregate care facilities are licensed by state agencies such as NYS/OCFS, NYC/OMRDD and NYS/OMH.

Provider Any resource (aside from a foster/adoptive home) that is paid for services. Local districts are responsible for recording and maintaining providers in the CONNECTIONS Resource Directory. Examples of such organizations and individuals that provide services for the local district are:

- Day Care
- Housing vendors (preventive)
- Adoption vendors



Providers in CONNECTIONS can only be maintained in CONNECTIONS. Only the district displayed as the maintainer for that provider can maintain it.

Agency A legally incorporated entity that has the authority to provide child welfare and other related services. A local district (LDSS) or a voluntary agency are examples of an agency.

Cross-Reference Guide

Below is a cross-reference guide for recording Adoptive casework activities in CONNECTIONS. This table identifies the casework activity and matches it to the activity required in CONNECTIONS. The last column provides a reference to the module in the *FAD Step-by-Step Guide* where you can find the directions for completing the activity.

Casework Activity	CONNECTIONS Activity	Refer to...
Determine if the prospective adoptive parent has a history of providing foster care services, or has had an adoptive home in the past.	F/A Home Search	Module 6
Record inquiry information about the home.	<i>Home Demographics</i> window	Module 6
Obtain and record general information (e.g., address, phone number, maiden name) about prospective adoptive parent.	Maintain Person task	Module 7
Provide fingerprint cards and document information regarding the CHRC.	Maintain Person task (<i>Person Detail FA</i> window)	Module 7
Document training/orientations that the prospective foster parent attends.	Maintain Person task (<i>F/A Home Member Training List/Detail</i> window)	Module 7
Document the Adoption Study Narrative.	Maintain Licensing Information task	Module 8
Document certification or approval information, track the progression of the home toward Accepted-Active status, and submit certification or approval information for supervisory review and approval.	Maintain Licensing Information task	Module 8
Produce a Certificate or Approval Letter prior to the pre-adoptive placement. (The home will exist in CONNECTIONS as a foster home.)	Maintain Licensing Information task	Module 8
Re-open an Adoption subsidy home to update information.	Re-open Closed Home command Maintain Person task (update person information)	Module 16 Module 7
Maintain changes to home and person information.	Maintain Non-Licensing Information task Maintain Person task	Module 6 Module 7