DCYF is committed to the timely development of policy that reflects a consensus of DCYF ideas and decisions consistent with the NH DCYF Practice Model, federal and state law, court decree, case law, other regulations and influences. The process of gaining approval for the product of policy development before it is officially adopted is important to assure that the document maintains the integrity of the program(s) it is meant to support.

**Purpose**

This policy describes the process for how policies obtain the Director’s approval to become official.

**Definitions**

“DCYF” means the Division for Children, Youth and Families.

**Policy**

I. **Policy Finalization Communications:**

   A. The Policy and Planning Unit informs DCYF staff by email of final policy drafts that are posted for staff feedback, identifying:

      1. Any final draft policies available for review during a 2 week period, a summary of the policies, and a link to view the policies;

      2. Any final draft policies available for review during the following week, a summary of the policies, and a link to view the policies;

      3. Any final draft policies whose review period will end the following day, a summary of the policies, and a link to view the policies.

   B. Staff feedback will be due by the end of the final draft policy review period identified in the email.

      1. Staff are encouraged to provide any feedback that is positive, neutral, or negative with any suggestions for improvement.

      2. Feedback can be submitted as:

         (a) A return email with any information summarized;
(b) A copy of the policy with written comments emailed, faxed, or sent through interoffice mail to the Policy and Planning Unit; or

(c) A phone call to the Policy and Planning Unit to discuss concerns or questions.

3. A lack of feedback will not delay the process of circulating the final draft policy for approval and failure to provide feedback will be interpreted as agreement with the final policy draft.

C. Written comments will be compiled by the Policy and Planning Unit representative to be summarized and discussed with the Policy Lead, SME, and Policy Workgroup if appropriate.

D. The Policy Workgroup will review the final draft policy based on the comments and suggestions received.

II. The Policy and Planning Unit representative will ensure that the final draft policy:

A. Has been shared and agreed upon with other agencies whose collaboration is detailed in the policy, to confirm agreement and maintain positive communication between units and staff.

B. Has been formatted and had all references verified for accuracy;

C. Has a valid policy manual reference number; and

D. Has an assigned Policy Directive number and coversheet to identify key information for the approval and release of the policy.

III. Final draft policies shall be circulated by the Policy and Planning Unit representative.

A. Circulation must begin with Field Administrators whose program is affected by the policy, if applicable.

1. The final policy draft will be shared with the Field Administrators by email.

2. The Field Administrators will be asked to respond via email within a specified timeframe.

3. Field Administrator policy approval emails will be printed for the policy circulation folder.

B. Policy approval emails by the Field Administrators, and any outside agencies if applicable, will be placed in a circulation folder with the final draft policy and Policy Directive coversheet and provided to staff in the following order:

1. The Policy and Planning Unit Manager;

2. The Subject Matter Expert;

3. All Administrators, Bureau Chiefs, and/or the SYSC Director whose program is affected by the final draft policy; and

4. The DCYF Director.
C. Any individual who has concerns and does not approve the final policy draft during circulation, must provide comments as to why he/she does not approve and what changes can be made to gain his/her approval.

1. Any disapproval must return to the Policy and Planning Unit representative to be reviewed and resolved before the final draft policy may be circulated to any further staff.

2. Once the requested changes are completed and the individual has approved of the final draft policy, the circulation process shall resume.

3. No final draft policy shall be provided to the DCYF Director for signature prior to obtaining all necessary approvals.

IV. A policy will not be considered official and/or approved until signed by the DCYF Director.