

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Number: EA-5

Effective Date: July 1, 2005

Version: 1.0

POLICY TITLE: CORRESPONDENCE

OVERVIEW: All correspondence shall receive a professional and timely response that addresses the specific needs outlined in the original communication. Any correspondence addressing issues that are technical in nature, including but not limited to, DCS policy, Indiana Code, Federal law and/or legislation, must be forwarded to the Constituent Services work unit for processing.

I. DEFINITIONS

- a. Correspondence: Any communication addressed to or received by DCS. Correspondence may come from the Governor's Office, a Legislator, another State or non-governmental agency, or a constituent. Correspondence may be in the form of a letter, an email, a fax, a telephone call, etc.
- b. Constituent Services work unit: The central office work unit responsible for overseeing the process of responding to correspondence.
- c. Subject Matter Expert: A staff person identified as being knowledgeable of a specific DCS program and/or procedure.

II. REFERENCES

- a. [DCS Communication with Legislators Policy](#)
- b. [DCS Media Contact Policy](#)
- c. [IC 5-14-3](#)
- d. [IC 5-15-5-1](#)

III. POLICY

- a. All correspondence that is addressed to the Governor must be forwarded to the Constituent Services work unit regardless of the subject or how the correspondence is received.
- b. All correspondence received from the media shall be addressed in accordance with the [DCS Media Contact Policy](#).
- c. Correspondence received at the program or local level that is general in nature may be answered by the program or local director. Examples include but are not limited to, local service overviews and programmatic questions from local service providers. These types of correspondence are considered routine business communications and do not need to be reported to the Constituent Services work unit. The only exception to this reporting requirement is communication with Legislators, which should be handled in accordance with the [DCS Communication with Legislators Policy](#).
- d. All correspondence addressing issues that are technical in nature, including but not limited to, DCS policy, Indiana Code, Federal law and/or legislation, must be forwarded within three business days to the Constituent Services work unit for processing.

- e. All responses shall be courteous and professional in nature, and addressed to the individual initiating the communication, unless otherwise requested, in accordance with confidentiality rules. All responses shall be completed in a timely manner. Specific due dates will be assigned by the Constituent Services work unit. Failure to meet deadlines may result in disciplinary action.
- f. All correspondence shall be responded to in the same format as the original communication, unless otherwise instructed. Example: An emailed inquiry will receive an emailed response. All individuals carbon copied on the original communication should be included on the response along with the Communications Director.
- g. All written responses must be developed in a manner consistent with the guidelines provided by the Office of the Governor.
- h. The Communications Director must approve all responses written for the Governor's signature prior to submission to the Office of the Governor.

IV. PROCEDURE

- a. The Constituent Services work unit will develop a process for processing correspondence, assigning subject matter experts and tracking response details.
- b. The Constituent Services work unit will distribute a written copy of the above mentioned process to all staff involved in responding to correspondence.
- c. The Constituent Services work unit will produce a bi-weekly report summarizing all correspondence-related activities.
- d. The Constituent Services work unit will maintain a copy of any written responses and the original correspondence in accordance with Indiana record retention laws, [IC 5-14-3](#) and [IC 5-15-3-1](#).

DATE: 06/08/05
James W. Payne, Director
Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.