

Becoming a Resource Family



Orange County Probation

Welcome

We appreciate your interest in providing care for a youth on probation. Most youth have a loving and supportive family to keep them on the right path. When a youth lacks this kind of guidance, they could end up involved in the juvenile justice system.

The State of California has adopted Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), which strives for all youth to live as members of a committed and nurturing family.



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In the past, youth on probation, who were removed from their parents, were primarily housed in group homes. Research supports that the best place for a youth to succeed is with a family, in a home setting.

Our goal is to place youth in resource homes, where they will get the caring support that a family can provide, to help them get back on the right path.

The State of California developed Resource Family Approval (RFA) to ensure all caregivers meet the same standards. Although the program was developed by the State, it is carried out by counties. The following information will help you understand the Orange County Probation Department RFA process.

If you are interested in becoming a resource parent to a youth on probation, or if you just want more information, please contact the Probation Department Placement Unit RFA Coordinator, at **(714) 935-7621**.

We look forward to working with you.



Juvenile Delinquency Court

If a youth is arrested and lacks parents willing or able to provide proper care, they can enter the foster care system through the juvenile delinquency court. In some cases, a youth may have been a dependent of the court when they were arrested, so may become a “crossover” youth, with both a social worker and probation officer assigned to their case.

For “crossover” youth, the court will designate one agency as the lead, to make decisions regarding their foster care placement. If the delinquency court orders a youth to be placed with a resource family, a probation officer will conduct the RFA process. Once a youth is placed with you, it is important to have good communication with the youth’s assigned probation officer and attend delinquency court proceedings if possible.

What are Resource Families?

Resource families care for the youth just as a reasonable parent would. It is full-time care of a youth, until their parents can resume their responsibility, or the youth moves on to independent living. Relatives of a youth can serve as resource families and are required to meet the same eligibility requirements as any other resource family applicant, except for some possible background check allowances.

Who is the youth in need of a Resource Family?

Youth may need foster care due to physical abuse, neglect, abandonment, or incapacity of their parent(s). These youth are generally teenagers of diverse races and cultures. Some may need extra attention due to physical issues, developmental delays, or emotional and/or behavioral issues. Because of the trauma they may have experienced, caregivers may need to factor in the past trauma while making parenting decisions.

What do resource parents do?

Our resource parents provide the basic daily care and supervision a loving, nurturing, and stable parent would provide. They act in the place of the parents, providing transportation, supporting the child at school, ensuring all medical, dental, social, recreational, cultural, religious, and physical needs are met.

Resource parents are expected to make and accompany youth to medical and/or therapy appointments. Resource parents develop non-physical discipline techniques that are fair and age appropriate. They act as an advocate and are part of the Child and Family Team, who will participate in Child and Family Team meetings. Resource parents support youth with family visitation and reunification efforts. Resource parents take part in trainings that increase their knowledge and skill level in parenting a special population. Resource parents respect the culture, race, and background of the youth and their family.

More than anyone else, they have the unique ability to help a youth overcome challenges and make positive behavioral change, which supports the motto of the Orange County Probation Department, “A Safer Orange County Through Positive Change.”

We are very thankful for our resource families and will attempt to support you throughout the application and caregiving process.



What are the RFA requirements?

A resource family applicant must be 18 years of age and be in good physical, emotional, and mental health. You can be single or in a stable relationship. There are no educational or religious requirements, and home ownership is not necessary. The approval process is expected to take around 90 days.

What support is available for Resource Families?

Once you have a youth placed in your home, you will receive a monthly check to provide for the care of that youth. The RFA Coordinator can tell you the current monthly rate. The rate you receive, once fully approved, will be based on the needs of the youth and care you provide. If you are caring for a youth who is parenting a child, there will be additional financial support. Youth will receive a Medi-Cal card to cover expenses for medical, dental, and therapeutic services.

Resource families have 24-hour access to a professional who can assist them in case of a crisis, through a program called the Family Urgent Response System (FURS). The assigned Probation Officer will supervise the youth with at least monthly contacts and provide case management services, to assist you in meeting the needs of the youth. Wraparound services providing therapy, parent and youth coaching, and other supportive services may be provided if needed.



Steps to becoming a resource family:

1. Application Submission:

A probation officer will meet with you in your home to do a preliminary tour, evaluating it before the official Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment. This will allow us to work together to make any small changes necessary to pass the Resource Family Home Health and Safety Assessment, such as adding a smoke or carbon monoxide detector, portable fire escape or first-aid supplies, which our RFA program can provide. You will be given an application to complete, and turn in at your next appointment, which when signed and dated, makes you an applicant with due process rights.

The next appointment is the official Home Health and Safety Assessment, during which, you will be asked to provide a copy of your California driver's license, car registration and proof of insurance. We will discuss your duties as a mandated reporter of child abuse and you will sign an acknowledgement form. You will also complete the RFA Criminal Records Statement and your fingerprints will be taken for a Live Scan background check.

All household members over 18 and any adults who are regularly present in your home, must also complete the form and be fingerprinted. Our program has a mobile Live Scan system, so we will fingerprint in the comfort of your home, at no cost. After the appointment, the probation officer will enter your application into the statewide record keeping system and you will be enrolled in pre-approval training.

2. Pre-Approval Training:

The purpose of pre-approval training is to ensure caregivers understand the juvenile justice and child welfare system and are prepared to parent a youth who has experienced trauma. Pre-approval training consists of 12 hours.

Two of those hours will be satisfied by the Probation RFA Orientation, which will take place in your home. The remaining hours can be done online or in a classroom setting. The probation officer will enroll you in the proper classes at Foster Parent College, an online learning website, so you can complete them at your convenience.

If you prefer in person learning, classes are available through Saddleback College at various locations throughout Orange County. All applicants must complete pre-approval training. You are also required to be trained in adult/child/infant CPR and First Aid. This training can be completed online or in person through a variety of providers. That brings the total amount of training hours to 16. Once you are approved, you will need to complete 8 hours of post-approval training each year.

3. Probation Orientation:

An appointment will be made in your home, for the probation officer to explain the expectations, requirements, and responsibilities of being a resource parent. You will be asked to sign a variety of forms required for approval and provide proof of home ownership or your lease agreement. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have. This appointment usually takes two hours.



4. The Home Study:

You will have at least two subsequent visits from a probation officer, during which all household members will be interviewed. This is to complete the Family Evaluation portion of the approval process. The goal of this assessment is to get well acquainted with you and evaluate your ability to provide a safe and caring home for a youth in foster care. The thorough study will require you to discuss your life history, any criminal history, motivation for providing care, family dynamics, and parenting skills. You will also be asked to complete two questionnaires, which will assist in the evaluation process. An Income and Expenditures Disclosure and proof of income will also be collected.

5. Completion of a written report:

Information gathered from the application, home study, interviews and references will be included in a comprehensive written report. Once that report has been approved by a supervising probation officer, a certificate of approval will be issued, and you will be eligible to receive a youth into your home (If one has not already been placed as an emergency placement).

6. Placement Expectations:

Time varies on how soon a youth will be placed in your home, but we have a great need for caring resource parents. Characteristics of the youth are considered when matching you with a placement, in an attempt to make a good fit for all involved.

When a youth needing placement matches your specifications, you may be invited to a Child and Family Team meeting where placement decisions are made.

You will have the opportunity to meet the youth under consideration for placement, and if time permits, to have visit(s) prior to placement.

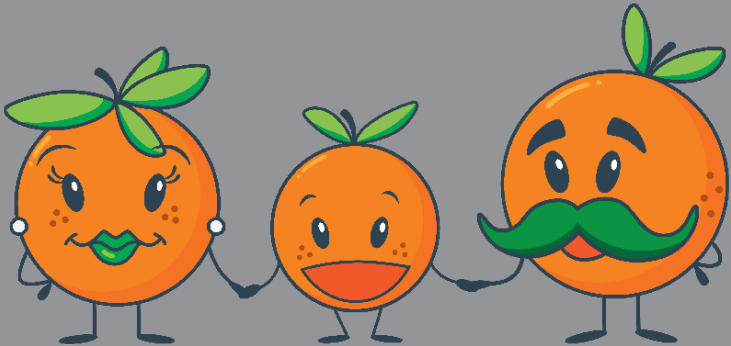
Our goal is a successful match, so we will make every attempt to schedule visits to promote familiarity, for the youth's smooth transition into your home.

We encourage you to call or email if you have more questions or are interested in becoming a resource parent for a youth.

Please contact the Probation Department RFA Consultant at:

Email: RFA@prob.ocgov.com

Telephone: (714) 935-7621





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