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Desk Guide

For Implementation of the ACS/DHS

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Dated March 21, 2017

Generally

The CPS must explore all available housing options with families who have active child welfare cases including child protection, preventive, or foster care services (**ACS-involved families**) before referring such families to DHS' Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) family intake center for shelter placement. The CPS must also follow up and maintain contact with shelter staff and families throughout their stay in shelter.

DHS operates and maintains several types of shelters, including shelters for families with children under the age of 21. The types of shelters for families with children include tier II shelters, family hotels, cluster units, and commercial hotels. Plans are underway to phase out the use of clusters and commercial hotels.

Tier II Shelters: Certified by the State of New York, they are freestanding buildings with units that have bathrooms, cooking facilities, on-site social services, and on-site security. This shelter model is the most service-rich and may include on-site child care, recreational programming, and visiting space.

Family Hotels: Typically hotels that have been converted to shelters with units that have bathrooms, may have modest cooking facilities, and provide some social services on site. Family hotels generally do not have after-school programming or child care.

Cluster Units: Apartment-style units located within buildings exclusively occupied by families in shelter or buildings that also house rent-paying tenants. Social services and security staff are not located on site.

Commercial Hotel Rooms: Rented as shelter due to capacity constraints and have on-site social services and security.

Families may be placed conditionally in shelter after applying for temporary housing assistance at PATH, pending a DHS case-by-case determination about whether the family is eligible to receive temporary housing assistance. This determination is based on an investigation into whether the family has any viable and available non-shelter housing options. A referral to PATH from ACS, a provider agency, or a court order does not guarantee that DHS will find an ACS-involved family eligible for shelter placement. However, if found eligible, DHS will provide priority placement to the ACS-involved family for tier II shelters, if available.

During an ACS-involved family's stay in DHS shelter, the CPS and DHS and shelter staff must continue to coordinate and share information so that the family's day-to-day needs are being met, any outstanding issues are addressed, and the family's service needs are identified for the purposes of efficient and non-duplicative service planning.

Note: This does not apply to discharging youth with the permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement with a permanency resource (APPLA+). Youth with a goal of APPLA+ may not be discharged from foster care to a shelter for adults, shelter for families, single-room occupancy hotel, or any other congregate living arrangement which houses more than 10 unrelated persons.

CPS Responsibilities Prior to PATH Referral

The CPS must refer the ACS-involved family to PATH when there is an **imminent concern** for housing and all other reasonable efforts have been made to obtain other non-shelter housing, and/or time does not allow for all reasonable efforts, but efforts will be made in the interim and communicated to DHS staff at PATH. When there is no imminent need for housing, the CPS must refer the family to [Homebase](#), or if housing repairs are needed, to 311.

The CPS must have ongoing discussions with the ACS-involved family about housing throughout the life of a case and these discussions must be documented in CNNX.

In assisting families with obtaining viable housing, the CPS must take the following steps:

- **Identify the family's housing needs** as early as possible so that connections to services and supports can be made.
- Pursue and discuss all **appropriate housing options**;
- **Review the family's budgetary needs**, to the extent possible, in order to determine what housing options are sustainable;
- **Support the family in pursuing any appropriate housing resources and supports, including:**
 - ACS housing subsidies;
 - New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Note: Such NYCHA applications are not eligible for housing priority;
 - Supportive housing;
 - Housing Court;
 - [DHS Homebase Program](#);
 - [Family Justice Center](#); and/or
 - Private, non-subsidized housing options.
- Include an appropriate, viable, and realistic **housing plan** in CNNX, and when appropriate, within the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP); and
- As the family's housing needs and options may change over time or unexpectedly, **revisit housing goals** throughout the life of the case until the housing goals are satisfactorily met; and
- When there is no imminent need for housing, the CPS must refer the family to Home Base, or if housing repairs are needed, to 311.

The CPS must promptly document efforts in a CNNX progress note when he or she has explored all housing resources and the ACS-involved family has completed or is in the process of receiving services required as part of the child welfare service plan.

If the ACS-involved family has no viable housing options, including family resources, the CPS may refer, and when appropriate, accompany the family to PATH for emergency shelter placement. To the extent the CPS is aware, the CPS must notify the on-site PATH CPS, via email to DCP.PATH@acs.nyc.gov, that an ACS-involved family will be going to PATH to apply.

PATH Referral Process

If the CPS has planning responsibility for the ACS-involved family (i.e., there is no foster care agency assigned), he or she must take the following steps prior to referring the family to the PATH family intake center for placement in a shelter:

Make reasonable efforts to verify that the family does not have any viable or available non-shelter housing options other than DHS shelter, which includes calling the DV hotline for shelter assistance and/or the [Family Justice Center](#);

Notify the FCLS attorney, if any, whenever a court-involved family has no viable or available non-shelter housing options and will be referred to PATH;

Prepare the parent(s)/guardian(s) to bring to PATH any documents that will help PATH Family Intake staff understand why the family is homeless, such as an eviction notice, if applicable;

To the extent possible, provide the PATH CPS with the following in an email addressed to DCP.PATH@acs.nyc.gov:

- Subject line to read: DCP PATH placement referral;
- Household composition of the persons going to PATH;
- Reasons for the PATH referral, including whether the referral is court-ordered, and reasonable efforts, if time allows, to avert DHS shelter placement;
- Family Court legal status of the children, if applicable (e.g., temporary release/parole, release, temporary custody);
- Any medical needs, disabilities, and/or other special needs pertaining to the child(ren) or adult household members;
- Family history of domestic violence where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court;
- Underlying safety issues not mentioned in this section (e.g., a young parent with multiple children under the age of three);
- Borough of services and/or supports;
- School/day care the children attend;

- Name and contact information for the CPS and supervisor assigned to the case;
- Any emails, letters of advocacy, etc.; and
- A summary of all Family Court orders pertaining to the PATH applicant and household members or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court.

Court Orders

A court order that specifies a referral to PATH is not required for DHS to provide shelter to ACS-involved families. ACS staff must not request any orders against DHS and must advocate in Court that such orders, if issued, must still permit DHS to make its own determination as to shelter eligibility.

However, if the Family Court issues an order directing the family to PATH, the CPS must immediately notify DCP, via email to DCP.PATH@acs.nyc.gov, to begin processing the PATH referral, as well as email a summary or, preferably, a copy of the order with permission of the Family Court to the DHS Director of Eligibility Determinations. The CPS must email a copy of the order with the permission of the Family Court. Absent the Court's permission, the CPS must email a summary of the order's contents.

Procedures and Protocols at PATH Family Intake

Preliminary Protocols for PATH Family Intake:

DHS will share with ACS the names of all family members applying for shelter at PATH through the DHS system of record.

ACS has a CPS working on-site at PATH (PATH CPS) to assist ACS-involved families with the PATH Family Intake process. The PATH CPS (Unit 1)¹ also provides on-site assistance for ACS-involved families deemed ineligible by DHS for shelter, supports ACS with locating ACS-involved families in the DHS shelter system, and supports CPS who escort families to PATH. PATH CPS Unit 2 liaises with DHS regarding safety issues concerning the placement of ACS-involved families.

Information Sharing by ACS at PATH Family Intake

The PATH CPS (Unit 1) must conduct a New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) clearance to determine whether the family applying for shelter has an active child welfare case currently being investigated by and/or receiving child welfare services from ACS, an open indicated case, or a closed indicated case.

ACS must not disclose whether a shelter applicant has any unfounded or Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases.

The CPS must ask the family member to sign a health-related consent for the release to DHS of any of his or her information or records related to medical, mental health, substance use, and HIV/AIDS treatment.

¹ The CPS Unit 2 will be assigned to any family identified by PATH CPS Unit 1 to have an "active" child welfare case for continued support until they are either found eligible for DHS shelter or they are found ineligible and alternative housing options are arranged.

The PATH CPS must also provide PATH Family Intake staff with all available housing documentation, which will be scanned into the DHS system of record by the PATH Family Intake staff.

Role of the CPS

If the CPS or designee is able to accompany the ACS-involved family to PATH to assist with the intake process by providing and verifying required information, the CPS must remain with such family for intake and to facilitate the connection with the family and the on-site PATH CPS team.

Note: PATH does not require children to accompany their parent or guardian to PATH under any of the following circumstances:

- Reunification is already scheduled to occur;
- The family is reapplying for shelter after less than a 30-day break from shelter; or
- On the day following an overnight placement.

The CPS must notify the PATH CPS that he or she is on-site via email or in person at PATH, 5th floor.

When escorting an ACS-involved family to PATH, the CPS must verify that the family has and brings all required documents, to the extent possible. Note: If the family does not have all of the necessary documents, the family may receive a conditional placement but may be ineligible for shelter placement until the family or CPS obtains and submits the required documents, including but not limited to:

- Birth certificates for all children;
- Valid photo identification for all adults;
- Proof of paternity (through a paternity order, the child's birth certificate, or the putative father registry);
- Social security cards, if available;
- Family history of domestic violence, where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court; and
- Proof of medical clearances, if applicable, including a health-related signed consent allowing the release of this information. If there are any issues with obtaining the release, the CPS must notify the PATH CPS so that DHS PATH intake can be notified.

Procedures and Protocols During the Family's Stay in Shelter

During the intake process, PATH Family Intake staff may provide the ACS-involved family with a conditional shelter placement pending DHS' determination of the family's ongoing shelter eligibility (called a "**Conditional Placement**"). If, after the shelter eligibility investigation, DHS deems the family eligible for shelter, the family will be assigned an official shelter placement (a "**Transitional Placement**"), which may or may not be the same shelter as the Conditional Placement.

If DHS emails a request for any outstanding information needed from an ACS-involved family during the family's Conditional Placement in order for DHS to make an informed decision about shelter eligibility or

placement, the CPS must provide such information to DHS, or make every effort to provide such information, within two (2) business days of DHS' email request. Note: The CPS Unit 2 will be assigned to any family identified by PATH CPS Unit 1 to have an "active" child welfare case for continued support until they are either found eligible for DHS shelter or they are found ineligible and alternative housing options are arranged.

Case Conference

The CPS must coordinate either an in-person conference or a conference call within three (3) business days of the family's Conditional or Transitional Placement into DHS shelter in order to discuss the reasons for placement, the family's safety and/or service needs, and other pertinent information about the family that will support ACS and DHS in service planning.

The CPS must invite, and make every effort to secure the participation of, at minimum, the shelter staff working with the family (i.e., case manager and Client Care Coordinator as applicable) and DHS staff. Depending on the nature of the conference, the family may be invited as well.

At the case conference, the following information must be discussed, if applicable:

- The location and type of Conditional or Transitional Placement;
- The child welfare safety and service plan for the family including any patterns in the family's housing history that could be important for service planning;
- If permissible, a procedure for overnight visits between the family and a youth family member currently in foster care;
- Whether the location of the Conditional or Transitional Placement will interfere with the family's receipt of support services, and possible ways to minimize any disruption of services;
- The family's strengths and needs to assist shelter staff in developing a suitable Independent Living Plan (ILP),² permanent housing arrangements, and provision of additional support to the family through the DHS Clinical Services Unit or a DHS shelter provider Client Care Coordinator as applicable; and
- The contents and goals of the ILP for which the CPS must seek to secure a signed consent as applicable.

CPS' Communication about Visiting

To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods,³ the CPS must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit. Upon arrival at the shelter, the CPS must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the CPS or shelter staff have. If such contact cannot be made at that time, CPS must proceed to the visit with the family and contact the shelter within the first seven (7) days of any new investigation, and at least monthly on any ongoing child welfare case.

² A plan developed between the shelter provider case manager and the family that sets certain tasks within specific time frames to achieve short-term goals toward exiting shelter and moving to permanent housing.

³ Visits must be made within the first seven (7) days of any new investigation, and at least monthly on any ongoing child welfare case.

When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the CPS must leave a business card/contact information with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

CPS' Communication of Status Changes

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the CPS must email the designated DHS liaison and shelter case manager (who will advise the shelter director) of status changes regarding any ACS-involved family. Examples of status changes which would trigger notification to DHS and shelter staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the Family Court issues a remand order for any children in the family composition, the provider agency fails a trial discharge and returns a child to foster care, or any other change to the family composition, within one (1) business day;
- Any change in status of a child welfare case warranting an increase or decrease in the level of intervention and/or supervision (e.g., change from a general preventive services program to an intensive preventive services program);
- Any plans for a child to be placed away from the family; and/or
- Any new Family Court orders known to ACS regarding any member of the family, by providing a summary of the Family Court order or, preferably, a copy with permission of the Family Court.

DHS and Shelter Staff Communication of Status Changes

DHS and shelter staff will notify ACS of any changes in an ACS-involved family's composition or of any shelter transfers of an ACS-involved family through the DHS system of record.

DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned CPS and designated ACS liaison of any of the following:

- Any planned transfer of any ACS-involved family to a different shelter (within 24 hours when possible), via email or during a shelter exit case conference as applicable;
- New births in the family, via the daily data feed between ACS and DHS (daily data feed);
- New household members added to the family composition in the shelter, via the daily data feed; or
- Calls to the SCR, via email.

Within 24 hours (via the data feed) or immediately if there are imminent safety concerns, DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned CPS about an ACS-involved family's exit from the DHS shelter system if such exit is anticipated and/or known to DHS and shelter staff. If there are any safety concerns related to unplanned exits, the shelter director will call the CPS and ACS liaison.

Additional Joint Responsibilities

The CPS, DHS, and shelter staff must work together when the ACS-involved family is conditionally placed to provide the family with necessary child care and personal hygiene supplies and equipment. Note: DHS is responsible for providing cribs for families in its shelter system.

As part of ACS's ongoing safety assessment of an ACS-involved family, the CPS may convene a Family Team Conference (FTC) which must include the family (including children, as appropriate), the CPS that referred the family to PATH, shelter staff working with the family, and when available, DHS staff. FTCs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elevated Risk Conferences;
- Initial Child Safety Conferences;
- Follow Up Child Safety Conferences;
- Trial Discharge Conferences;
- Final Discharge Conferences;
- Follow-up Family Team Conferences including 12 month Permanency Conference and 30-45 day Permanency Planning Conferences; and
- Service Termination Conferences.

Data Match

Data Match information is transmitted through automated systems for both ACS and DHS pursuant to the MOU between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York City Department of Homeless Services, dated 3/21/17.

DHS Responsibilities

If the ACS-involved family is deemed ineligible, or eligible and assigned Transitional Placement, DHS will notify the ACS-involved family's CPS of the shelter determination and placement through ACS Data Match.

DHS will provide ACS with specific up-to-date information (the "DHS Data File") related to all children and adults having jointly-specified case types the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) for active cases, or for Family with Children or Adult Family case members that have exited for an agreed upon time period from or otherwise had a change in status at a facility managed or overseen by DHS.

DHS Data File information will be available daily and will be transmitted securely and electronically on a schedule.

ACS Responsibilities

ACS must review and analyze the DHS Data File to determine whether any DHS client: (i) is or has recently been receiving preventive services from ACS, (ii) is or was recently connected to any foster care placement, and/or (iii) is or was recently connected to any report to the SCR.

For each file submitted to ACS by DHS, ACS must transmit a file of the matched client records back to DHS, using secure file transmissions (the “ACS Data File”). ACS must redact any and all information relating to unfounded cases, Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) cases, and FAR cases, and exercise precautions to prevent unintended disclosure of such information to DHS staff.

ACS and DHS must not use the Data Files for any purpose other than to assist ACS and DHS staff at the PATH intake center for families with children in determining shelter eligibility; enhance and improve service planning for families; and assist ACS in exchanging and receiving relevant information with DHS about status changes and activities impacting service and safety planning.

Data Confidentiality

ACS and DHS must use appropriate safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the shared data, and must implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data.

Access to or use of confidential and/or personally identifiable information must be restricted to employees at ACS and DHS authorized to use such data.⁴

⁴ See Policy #2010/07, *Security of Confidential, Case Specific and/or Personally Identifiable Information*; see Memorandum: *Confidentiality*.

Generally

Preventive agency case planners must explore all available housing options with families who have active child welfare cases including child protection, preventive, or foster care services (**ACS-involved families**) before referring such families to DHS' Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) family intake center for shelter placement. The case planner must also follow up and maintain contact with shelter staff and families throughout their stay in shelter.

DHS operates and maintains several types of shelters, including shelters for families with children under the age of 21. The types of shelters for families with children include tier II shelters, family hotels, cluster units, and commercial hotels. Plans are underway to phase out the use of clusters and commercial hotels.

Tier II Shelters: Certified by the State of New York, they are freestanding buildings with units that have bathrooms, cooking facilities, on-site social services, and on-site security. This shelter model is the most service-rich and may include on-site child care, recreational programming, and visiting space.

Family Hotels: Typically hotels that have been converted to shelters with units that have bathrooms, may have modest cooking facilities, and provide some social services on site. Family hotels generally do not have after-school programming or child care.

Cluster Units: Apartment-style units located within buildings exclusively occupied by families in shelter or buildings that also house rent-paying tenants. Social services and security staff are not located on site.

Commercial Hotel Rooms: Rented as shelter due to capacity constraints and have on-site social services and security.

Families may be placed conditionally in shelter after applying for temporary housing assistance at PATH, pending a DHS case-by-case determination about whether the family is eligible to receive temporary housing assistance. This determination is based on an investigation into whether the family has any viable and available non-shelter housing options. A referral to PATH from ACS, a provider agency, or a court order does not guarantee that DHS will find an ACS-involved family eligible for shelter placement. However, if found eligible, DHS will provide priority placement to the ACS-involved family for tier II shelters, if available.

During an ACS-involved family's stay in DHS shelter, the preventive case planner and DHS and shelter staff must continue to coordinate and share information so that the family's day-to-day needs are being met, any outstanding issues are addressed, and the family's service needs are identified for the purposes of efficient and non-duplicative service planning.

Note: This does not apply to discharging youth with the permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement with a permanency resource (APPLA+). Youth with a goal of APPLA+ may not be discharged from foster care to a shelter for adults, shelter for families, single-room occupancy hotel, or any other congregate living arrangement which houses more than 10 unrelated persons.

Preventive Case Planner Responsibilities Prior to PATH Referral

The preventive case planner must refer the ACS-involved family to PATH when there is an **imminent concern** for housing and all other reasonable efforts have been made to obtain other non-shelter housing, and/or time does not allow for all reasonable efforts, but efforts will be made in the interim and communicated to DHS staff at PATH.

The preventive case planner must have ongoing discussions with the ACS-involved family about housing throughout the life of a case. These discussions must be documented in CNNX or in the case record that is maintained on-site if the case is an Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) case.

In assisting families with obtaining viable housing, the preventive case planner must take the following steps:

- **Identify the family's housing needs** as early as possible so that connections to services and supports can be made. If the family has appropriate housing, confirm that the housing meets ACS's Housing Support and Services (HSS) Home Evaluation Checklist criteria and that there are no outstanding arrears that place the family in danger of eviction;
- Pursue and discuss all **appropriate housing options**;
- **Review the family's budgetary needs**, to the extent possible, in order to determine what housing options are sustainable;
- **Support the family** in pursuing any appropriate housing resources and supports, including:
 - ACS housing subsidies;
 - New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Note: Such NYCHA applications are not eligible for housing priority;
 - Supportive housing;
 - Housing Court;
 - [DHS Homebase Program](#);
 - [Family Justice Center](#); and/or
 - Private, non-subsidized housing options.
- Include an appropriate, viable, and realistic **housing plan** within the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) and document the housing plan in CNNX or in the case record for ADVPO cases; and
- As the family's housing needs and options may change over time or unexpectedly, **revisit housing goals** throughout the life of the case until the housing goals are satisfactorily met.

The preventive case planner must promptly document efforts in a CNNX progress note or the ADVPO case record when he or she has explored all housing resources and the ACS-involved family has completed or is in the process of receiving services required as part of the child welfare service plan.

If the ACS-involved family has no viable housing options, including family resources, the preventive case planner may refer, and when appropriate, accompany the family to PATH for emergency shelter placement. To the extent the preventive case planner is aware, the preventive case planner must notify the on-site PATH CPS electronically that an ACS-involved family will be going to PATH to apply.

PATH Referral Process

If the preventive case planner has planning responsibility for the ACS-involved family, he or she must take the following steps prior to referring the family to the PATH family intake center for placement in a shelter:

Make reasonable efforts to verify that the family does not have any viable or available non-shelter housing options other than DHS shelter;

Notify the assigned CPS who will then notify the FCLS attorney, if any, whenever a court-involved family has no viable or available non-shelter housing options and will be referred to PATH;

Prepare the parent(s)/guardian(s) to bring to PATH any documents that will help PATH Family Intake staff understand why the family is homeless, such as an eviction notice, if applicable;

Notify the ACS Office of Preventive Technical Assistance that the family is seeking to enter PATH by emailing PPRS-DHS@acs.nyc.gov with the following information, to the extent the preventive case planner is aware: _

- Subject line to read: PPRS PATH placement referral;
- Household composition of the persons going to PATH;
- Reasons for the PATH referral and reasonable efforts, if time allows, to avert DHS shelter placement;
- Whether DCP is actively involved with the family and contact information as applicable;
- Any medical needs, disabilities, and/or other special needs pertaining to the child(ren) or adult household members;
- Family history of domestic violence, where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies of such orders as permitted by the Family Court;
- Underlying safety issues not mentioned in this section (e.g., young parent with multiple children under the age of three);
- Name and contact information for the case planner and supervisor assigned to the case; and
- Any emails, letters of advocacy, appropriate signed releases of information, etc.

Court Orders

A court order that specifies a referral to PATH is not required for DHS to provide shelter to ACS-involved families. ACS and provider agency staff must not request any orders against DHS and must advocate in Court that such orders, if issued, must still permit DHS to make its own determination as to shelter eligibility.

However, if the Family Court issues an order directing the family to PATH, ACS must immediately notify DPS to begin processing the PATH referral, as well as email a summary or, preferably, a copy of the order with permission of the Family Court to the DHS Director of Eligibility Determinations. ACS must email a copy of the order with the permission of the Family Court. Absent the Court's permission, ACS must email a summary of the order's contents.

Procedures and Protocols at PATH Family Intake

Preliminary Protocols for PATH Family Intake:

DHS will share with ACS the names of all family members applying for shelter at PATH through the DHS system of record.

ACS has a CPS working on-site at PATH (PATH CPS) to assist ACS-involved families with the PATH Family Intake process. The PATH CPS (Unit 1)¹ also provides on-site assistance for ACS-involved families deemed ineligible by DHS for shelter, supports ACS with locating ACS-involved families in the DHS shelter system, liaises with DHS regarding safety issues concerning the placement of ACS-involved families, and supports preventive case planners who escort families to PATH.

Information Sharing by ACS at PATH Family Intake

The PATH CPS (Unit 1) must conduct a New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) clearance to determine whether the family applying for shelter has an active child welfare case currently being investigated by and/or is receiving child welfare services from ACS, has an open indicated case, or has a closed indicated case.

ACS must not disclose whether a shelter applicant has any unfounded or Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases.

The preventive case planner must ask the family member to sign a health-related consent for the release to DHS of any of his or her information or records related to medical, mental health, substance use, and HIV/AIDS.

The PATH CPS must also provide PATH Family Intake staff with all available housing documentation, which will be scanned into the DHS system of record by the PATH Family Intake staff.

Role of the Preventive Case Planner

If the preventive case planner or designee is able to accompany the ACS-involved family to PATH to assist with the intake process by providing and verifying required information, the preventive case planner must remain with such family until the family has been placed in a shelter.

¹ The CPS Unit 2 will be assigned to any family identified by PATH CPS Unit 1 to have an "active" child welfare case for continued support until they are either found eligible for DHS shelter or they are found ineligible and alternative housing options are arranged.

Note: PATH does not require children to accompany their parent or guardian to PATH under any of the following circumstances:

- Reunification is already scheduled to occur;
- The family is reapplying for shelter after less than a 30-day break from shelter; or
- On the day following an overnight placement.

The preventive case planner must notify the PATH CPS that he or she is on-site via email or in person at PATH, 5th floor.

Prior to escorting an ACS-involved family to PATH, the preventive case planner must verify that the family has and brings all required documents, to the extent possible. Note: If the family does not have all of the necessary documents, the family may receive a conditional placement but may be ineligible for shelter placement until the family or case planner obtains and submits the required documents, including but not limited to:

- Birth certificates for all children;
- Valid photo identification for all adults;
- Proof of paternity (through a paternity order, the child's birth certificate, or the putative father registry);
- Social security cards, if available;
- Family history of domestic violence, where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court; and
- Proof of medical clearances, if applicable, including a health-related signed consent allowing the release of this information. If there are any issues with obtaining the release, the preventive case planner must notify the PATH CPS so that DHS PATH intake can be notified.

Procedures and Protocols During the Family's Stay in Shelter

During the intake process, PATH Family Intake staff may provide the ACS-involved family with a conditional shelter placement pending DHS' determination of the family's ongoing shelter eligibility (called a "**Conditional Placement**"). If, after the shelter eligibility investigation, DHS deems the family eligible for shelter, the family will be assigned an official shelter placement (a "**Transitional Placement**"), which may or may not be the same shelter as the Conditional Placement.

If DHS emails a request for any outstanding information needed from an ACS-involved family during the family's Conditional Placement in order for DHS to make an informed decision about shelter eligibility or placement, the preventive case planner must provide such information to DHS, or make every effort to provide such information, within two (2) business days of DHS' email request.

Case Conference

The preventive case planner must coordinate either an in-person conference or a conference call within three (3) business days of the family's Conditional or Transitional Placement into DHS shelter in order to discuss the reasons for placement, the family's safety and/or service needs, and other pertinent information about the family that will support ACS and DHS in service planning.

The preventive case planner must invite, and make every effort to secure the participation of, at minimum, the shelter staff working with the family (i.e., case manager and Client Care Coordinator as applicable) and DHS staff. Depending on the nature of the conference, the family may be invited as well.

At the case conference, the following information must be discussed, if applicable:

- The location and type of Conditional or Transitional Placement;
- The child welfare safety and service plan for the family including any patterns in the family's housing history that could be important for service planning;
- If permissible, a procedure for overnight visits between the family and a youth family member currently in foster care;
- Whether the location of the Conditional or Transitional Placement will interfere with the family's receipt of support services, and possible ways to minimize any disruption of services;
- The family's strengths and needs to assist shelter staff in developing a suitable Independent Living Plan (ILP),² permanent housing arrangements, and provision of additional support to the family through the DHS Clinical Services Unit or a DHS shelter provider Client Care Coordinator as applicable; and
- The contents and goals of the ILP for which the preventive case planner must seek to secure a signed consent as applicable.

Preventive Case Planner's Communication about Visiting

To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the preventive case planner must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit, prior to visiting a family. Upon arrival at the shelter, the preventive case planner must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the case planner or shelter staff have. If unable to contact the shelter's designated staff, the case planner must upon arrival attempt contact again with the shelter director or designee and then conduct the visit with the family as planned. Collateral contacts with the shelter director or designee must be ongoing.

When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the preventive case planner must leave a business card with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

² A plan developed between the shelter provider case manager and the family that sets certain tasks within specific time frames to achieve short-term goals toward exiting shelter and moving to permanent housing.

ACS and/or the Preventive Case Planner's Communication of Status Changes

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the preventive case planner (or ACS staff in the case of court orders or status changes) must email the designated DHS liaison and shelter case manager (who will advise the shelter director) of status changes regarding any ACS-involved family. Examples of status changes which would trigger notification to DHS and shelter staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the Family Court issues a remand order for any children in the family composition, the provider agency fails a trial discharge and returns a child to foster care, or any other change to the family composition, within one (1) business day;
- Any change in status of a child welfare case warranting an increase or decrease in the level of intervention and/or supervision (e.g., change from a general preventive services program to an intensive preventive services program);
- Any plans for a child to be placed away from the family; and/or
- Any new Family Court orders known to ACS regarding any member of the family, by providing a summary of the Family Court order or, preferably, a copy with permission of the Family Court.

DHS and Shelter Staff Communication of Status Changes

DHS and shelter staff will notify ACS of any changes in an ACS-involved family's composition or of any shelter transfers of an ACS-involved family through the DHS system of record.

DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned preventive case planner and designated ACS liaison of any of the following:

- Any planned transfer of any ACS-involved family to a different shelter (within 24 hours when possible), via email or during a shelter exit case conference as applicable;
- New births in the family, via the daily data feed between ACS and DHS (daily data feed);
- New household members added to the family composition in the shelter, via the daily data feed; or
- Calls to the SCR, via email.

Within 24 hours (via the data feed) or immediately if there are imminent safety concerns, DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned preventive case planner about an ACS-involved family's exit from the DHS shelter system if such exit is anticipated and/or known to DHS and shelter staff. If there are any safety concerns related to unplanned exits, the shelter director will call the preventive case planner and ACS liaison.

Additional Joint Responsibilities

The preventive case planner must work together with DHS and shelter staff when the ACS-involved family is conditionally placed to provide the family with necessary child care and personal hygiene supplies and equipment. Note: DHS is responsible for providing cribs for families in its shelter system.

As part of ACS's ongoing safety assessment of an ACS-involved family, the preventive case planner may convene a Family Team Conference (FTC) which must include the family (including children, as appropriate), the preventive case planner that referred the family to PATH, shelter staff working with the family, and when available, DHS staff. FTCs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elevated Risk Conferences;
- Initial Child Safety Conferences;
- Follow Up Child Safety Conferences;
- Trial Discharge Conferences;
- Final Discharge Conferences;
- Follow-up Family Team Conferences including 12 month Permanency Conference and 30-45 day Permanency Planning Conferences; and
- Service Termination Conferences.

Data Match

Data Match information is transmitted through automated systems for both ACS and DHS pursuant to the MOU between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York City Department of Homeless Services, dated 3/21/17.

DHS Responsibilities

If the ACS-involved family is deemed ineligible, or eligible and assigned Transitional Placement, DHS will notify the ACS-involved family's preventive case planner of the shelter determination and placement through ACS Data Match.

DHS will provide ACS with specific up-to-date information (the "DHS Data File") related to all children and adults having jointly-specified case types the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) for active cases, or for Family with Children or Adult Family case members that have exited for an agreed upon time period from or otherwise had a change in status at a facility managed or overseen by DHS.

DHS Data File information will be available daily and will be transmitted securely and electronically on a schedule.

ACS Responsibilities

ACS must review and analyze the DHS Data File to determine whether any DHS client: (i) is or has recently been receiving preventive services from ACS, (ii) is or was recently connected to any foster care placement, and/or (iii) is or was recently connected to any report to the SCR.

For each file submitted to ACS by DHS, ACS must transmit a file of the matched client records back to DHS, using secure file transmissions (the "ACS Data File"). ACS must redact any and all information relating to unfounded cases, ADVPO cases, and FAR cases, and exercise precautions to prevent unintended disclosure of such information to DHS staff.

ACS and DHS must not use the Data Files for any purpose other than to assist ACS and DHS staff at the PATH intake center for families with children in determining shelter eligibility; enhance and improve service planning for families; and assist ACS in exchanging and receiving relevant information with DHS about status changes and activities impacting service and safety planning.

Data Confidentiality

ACS and DHS must use appropriate safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the shared data, and must implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data.

Access to or use of confidential and/or personally identifiable information must be restricted to employees at ACS and DHS authorized to use such data.³

³ See Policy #2010/07, *Security of Confidential, Case Specific and/or Personally Identifiable Information*; see Memorandum: *Confidentiality*.

Generally

The foster care case planner (case planner) must explore all available housing options with families who have active child welfare cases including child protection, preventive, or foster care services (**ACS-involved families**) before referring such families to DHS' Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) family intake center for shelter placement. The case planner must also follow up and maintain contact with shelter staff and families throughout their stay in shelter.

DHS operates and maintains several types of shelters, including shelters for families with children under the age of 21. The types of shelters for families with children include tier II shelters, family hotels, cluster units, and commercial hotels. Plans are underway to phase out the use of clusters and commercial hotels.

Tier II Shelters: Certified by the State of New York, they are freestanding buildings with units that have bathrooms, cooking facilities, on-site social services, and on-site security. This shelter model is the most service-rich and may include on-site child care, recreational programming, and visiting space.

Family Hotels: Typically hotels that have been converted to shelters with units that have bathrooms, may have modest cooking facilities, and provide some social services on site. Family hotels generally do not have after-school programming or child care.

Cluster Units: Apartment-style units located within buildings exclusively occupied by families in shelter or buildings that also house rent-paying tenants. Social services and security staff are not located on site.

Commercial Hotel Rooms: Rented as shelter due to capacity constraints and have on-site social services and security.

Families may be placed conditionally in shelter after applying for temporary housing assistance at PATH, pending a DHS case-by-case determination about whether the family is eligible to receive temporary housing assistance. This determination is based on an investigation into whether the family has any viable and available non-shelter housing options. A referral to PATH from ACS, a provider agency, or a court order does not guarantee that DHS will find an ACS-involved family eligible for shelter placement. However, if found eligible, DHS will provide priority placement to the ACS-involved family for tier II shelters, if available.

During an ACS-involved family's stay in DHS shelter, the case planner and DHS and shelter staff must continue to coordinate and share information so that the family's day-to-day needs are being met, any outstanding issues are addressed, and the family's service needs are identified for the purposes of efficient and non-duplicative service planning.

Note: This does not apply to discharging youth with the permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement with a permanency resource (APPLA+). Youth with a goal of APPLA+ may not be discharged from foster care to a shelter for adults, shelter for families, single-room occupancy hotel, or any other congregate living arrangement which houses more than 10 unrelated persons.

Foster Care Case Planner Responsibilities Prior to PATH Referral

The case planner must refer the ACS-involved family to PATH when there is an **imminent concern** for housing and all other reasonable efforts have been made to obtain other non-shelter housing, and/or time does not allow for all reasonable efforts, but efforts will be made in the interim and communicated to DHS staff at PATH.

The case planner must have ongoing discussions with the ACS-involved family about housing throughout the life of a case and these discussions must be documented in CNNX.

In assisting families with obtaining viable housing, the case planner must take the following steps:

- **Identify the family's housing needs** as early as possible so that connections to services and supports can be made. If the family has appropriate housing, confirm that the housing meets ACS's Housing Support and Services (HSS) Home Evaluation Checklist criteria and that there are no outstanding arrears that place the family in danger of eviction;
- Pursue and discuss all **appropriate housing options**;
- **Review the family's budgetary needs**, to the extent possible, in order to determine what housing options are sustainable;
- **Support the family in pursuing any appropriate housing resources and supports, including:**
 - ACS housing subsidies;
 - New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Note: Such NYCHA applications are not eligible for housing priority;
 - Supportive housing;
 - Housing Court;
 - [DHS Homebase Program](#);
 - [Family Justice Center](#); and/or
 - Private, non-subsidized housing options.
- Include an appropriate, viable, and realistic **housing plan** within the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) and document the housing plan in CNNX; and
- As the family's housing needs and options may change over time or unexpectedly, **revisit housing goals** throughout the life of the case until the housing goals are satisfactorily met.

The case planner must promptly document efforts in a CNNX progress note when he or she has explored all housing resources and the ACS-involved family has completed or is in the process of receiving services required as part of the child welfare service plan.

If the ACS-involved family has no viable housing options, including family resources, the case planner may refer and accompany the family to PATH for emergency shelter placement. To the extent the case planner is aware, he or she must notify the on-site PATH CPS electronically that an ACS-involved family will be going to PATH to apply.

PATH Referral Process

If the case planner has planning responsibility for the ACS-involved family, he or she must take the following steps prior to referring the family to the PATH family intake center for placement in a shelter:

Make reasonable efforts to verify that the family does not have any viable or available non-shelter housing options other than DHS shelter;

Notify the FCLS attorney, if any, whenever a court-involved family has no viable or available non-shelter housing options and will be referred to PATH;

Prepare the parent(s)/guardian(s) to bring to PATH any documents that will help PATH Family Intake staff understand why the family is homeless, such as an eviction notice, if applicable; and

Provide two (2) letters on the provider agency's letterhead to be given to PATH Family Intake staff on the day that the family goes to PATH:

- The first letter must explain to DHS the family's housing circumstances, if possible.
 - The case planner must list the most recent address of the family, as well as the prior addresses of any residence the family has lived in over the past two (2) years.
 - The letter must include how long the family stayed at each residence and why the residence is no longer viable for the family's return.¹
 - The letter must also include a statement that all other possible housing options for the family (e.g., living with relatives or friends or making additional space at its current residence) have already been explored, relevant contact information for such possible housing options, and the reasons why they are not practicable. PATH Family Intake staff will investigate all possible options unless there is a clear risk to the ACS-involved family's health and safety.
- The second letter must explain that ACS is reunifying a foster child with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) at PATH (i.e., the child's legal status) and, if applicable, that ACS is requesting shelter placement in a particular borough. DHS may or may not be able to accommodate such requests, depending on capacity; the case planner must verify with the CPS PATH Unit 1 to verify if the request can be accommodated.

¹ The case planner may obtain this information from the family and from a review of ACS and/or agency records. The case planner must state in the letter if ACS or the agency is unable to provide the required prior residence information and the reason(s) why the information is unknown.

To the extent possible, provide the Housing Support and Services (HSS) with the following in an email addressed to acs.sm.housing.fostercare@acs.nyc.gov within a minimum of 72 hours prior to the reunification at PATH when possible:

Provide the following case contact information;

- Name and phone number of the agency staff who will escort the family to PATH;
- Name and phone number of the case planner;
- Name and phone number of the case planner's supervisor;
- ACS case name and case number;
- Names and gender of those children being reunified and their respective dates of birth;
- Names and dates of birth of the parent/guardian(s) involved in the reunification;
- Names, gender and dates of birth of other anticipated household members authorized to reside with the family, including parents, guardians and/or siblings involved in the reunification;
- The expected date of the shelter entry for reunification;
- Any special needs pertaining to any of the children being reunified;
- Names and addresses of the schools that the children are presently attending;
- Borough of preference for shelter placement and the reason for that particular preference; **requested borough assignment is not guaranteed;**
- Are there current or prior domestic violence issues within the case? If yes, the family should bring all corresponding proof of domestic violence for the case, including police reports, orders of protection and medical reports;
- Does a court order exist ordering PATH reunification, and if so on what date was it issued? **A copy of the order should be emailed, with the PATH referral, as an attachment with the court's permission;**
- What diligent efforts did the agency make to avoid the family being referred to PATH? Are these efforts documented in CNNX in the progress notes?
- Did the case planner consult the agency housing specialist about this case? Did the case planner bring the client to the ACS HSS unit for an assessment?
- Did the family complete a NYCHA application with the HSS unit and/or explore the ACS Housing Subsidy program?
- Did the case planner explore NY/NY III Supportive Housing for families?
- Are there any outside family resources or friends who can assist the family with housing?

Court Orders

A court order that specifies a referral to PATH is not required for DHS to provide shelter to ACS-involved families. ACS staff must not request any orders against DHS and must advocate in Court that such orders, if issued, must still permit DHS to make its own determination as to shelter eligibility.

However, if the Family Court issues an order directing the family to PATH, the case planner must immediately notify FPS to begin processing the PATH referral, as well as email a summary or, preferably, a copy of the order with permission of the Family Court to the DHS Director of Eligibility Determinations. The case planner must

email a copy of the order with the permission of the Family Court. Absent the Court's permission, the case planner must email a summary of the order's contents.

Procedures and Protocols at PATH Family Intake

Preliminary Protocols for PATH Family Intake:

DHS will share with ACS the names of all family members applying for shelter at PATH through the DHS system of record.

ACS has a CPS working on-site at PATH (PATH CPS) to assist ACS-involved families with the PATH Family Intake process. The PATH CPS (Unit 1)² also provides on-site assistance for ACS-involved families deemed ineligible by DHS for shelter, supports ACS with locating ACS-involved families in the DHS shelter system, liaises with DHS regarding safety issues concerning the placement of ACS-involved families, and supports the case planners who escort families to PATH.

Information Sharing by ACS at PATH Family Intake

The PATH CPS (Unit 1) must conduct a New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) clearance to determine whether the family applying for shelter has an active child welfare case currently being investigated by and/or receiving child welfare services from ACS, an open indicated case, or a closed indicated case.

ACS must not disclose whether a shelter applicant has any unfounded or Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases.

The case planner must ask the family member to sign a health-related consent for the release to DHS of any of his or her information or records related to medical, mental health, substance use, and HIV/AIDS.

The PATH CPS must also provide PATH Family Intake staff with all available housing documentation, which must be scanned into the DHS system of record by the PATH Family Intake staff.

Role of the Foster Care Case Planner

The case planner or designee must accompany the ACS-involved family to PATH to assist with the intake process by providing and verifying required information; the case planner must remain with such family until the family has been placed in a shelter.

Note: PATH does not require children to accompany their parent or guardian to PATH under any of the following circumstances:³

- Reunification⁴ is already scheduled to occur;

² The CPS Unit 2 will be assigned to any family identified by PATH CPS Unit 1 to have an "active" child welfare case for continued support until they are either found eligible for DHS shelter or they are found ineligible and alternative housing options are arranged.

³ See DHS PATH Bypass Procedure for Children of ACS Involved Families Reunifying at PATH and Children of Families Reapplying Following a Break in Service of Less than 30 days.

⁴ For the purposes of this Desk Guide, "reunifications" are trial discharges and final discharges that occur within the shelter system.

- The family is reapplying for shelter after less than a 30-day break from shelter; or
- On the day following an overnight placement.

The case planner must notify the PATH CPS that he or she is on-site via email or in person at PATH, 5th floor.

When escorting an ACS-involved family to PATH, the case planner must verify that the family has and brings all required documents, to the extent possible. Note: If the family does not have all of the necessary documents, the family may receive a conditional placement but may be ineligible for shelter placement until the family or case planner obtains and submits the required documents, including but not limited to:

- Birth certificates for all children;
- Valid photo identification for all adults;
- Proof of paternity (through a paternity order, the child's birth certificate, or the putative father registry);
- Social security cards, if available;
- Family history of domestic violence, where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court; and
- Proof of medical clearances, if applicable, including a health-related signed consent allowing the release of this information. If there are any issues with obtaining the release, the case planner must notify the PATH CPS so that DHS PATH intake can be notified.

Procedures and Protocols During the Family's Stay in Shelter

During the intake process, PATH Family Intake staff may provide the ACS-involved family with a conditional shelter placement pending DHS' determination of the family's ongoing shelter eligibility (called a "**Conditional Placement**"). If, after the shelter eligibility investigation, DHS deems the family eligible for shelter, the family will be assigned an official shelter placement (a "**Transitional Placement**"), which may or may not be the same shelter as the Conditional Placement.

If DHS emails a request for any outstanding information needed from an ACS-involved family during the family's Conditional Placement in order for DHS to make an informed decision about shelter eligibility or placement, the case planner must provide such information to DHS, or make every effort to provide such information, within two (2) business days of DHS' email request.

Case Conference

The case planner must coordinate either an in-person conference or a conference call within three (3) business days of the family's Conditional or Transitional Placement into DHS shelter in order to discuss the reasons for placement, the family's safety and/or service needs, and other pertinent information about the family that will support ACS and DHS in service planning.

The case planner must invite, and make every effort to secure the participation of, at minimum, the shelter staff working with the family (i.e., case manager and Client Care Coordinator as applicable) and DHS staff. Depending on the nature of the conference, the family may be invited as well.

At the case conference, the following information must be discussed, if applicable:

- The location and type of Conditional or Transitional Placement;
- The child welfare safety and service plan for the family including any patterns in the family's housing history that could be important for service planning;
- If permissible, a procedure for overnight visits between the family and a youth family member currently in foster care;
- Whether the location of the Conditional or Transitional Placement will interfere with the family's receipt of support services, and possible ways to minimize any disruption of services;
- The family's strengths and needs to assist shelter staff in developing a suitable Independent Living Plan (ILP),⁵ permanent housing arrangements, and provision of additional support to the family through the DHS Clinical Services Unit or a DHS shelter provider Client Care Coordinator as applicable; and
- The contents and goals of the ILP for which the case planner must seek to secure a signed consent as applicable.

The Foster Care Case Planner's Communication about Visiting

To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the case planner must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit, prior to visiting a family. Upon arrival at the shelter, the case planner must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the case planner or shelter staff have. If unable to contact the shelter's designated staff, the case planner must upon arrival attempt contact again with the shelter director or designee and then conduct the visit with the family as planned. Collateral contacts with the shelter director or designee must be ongoing.

When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the case planner must leave a business card with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

The Foster Care Case Planner's Communication of Status Changes

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the case planner must email the designated DHS liaison and shelter case manager (who will advise the shelter director) of status changes regarding any ACS-involved family. Examples of status changes which would trigger notification to DHS and shelter staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the Family Court issues a remand order for any children in the family composition, the provider agency fails a trial discharge and returns a child to foster care, or any other change to the family composition, within one (1) business day;
- Any change in status of a child welfare case warranting an increase or decrease in the level of intervention and/or supervision (e.g., change from a general preventive services program to an intensive preventive

⁵ A plan developed between the shelter provider case manager and the family that sets certain tasks within specific time frames to achieve short-term goals toward exiting shelter and moving to permanent housing.

- services program);
- Any plans for a child to be placed away from the family; and/or
- Any new Family Court orders known to ACS regarding any member of the family, by providing a summary of the Family Court order or, preferably, a copy with permission of the Family Court.

DHS and Shelter Staff Communication of Status Changes

DHS and shelter staff will notify ACS of any changes in an ACS-involved family's composition or of any shelter transfers of an ACS-involved family through the DHS system of record.

DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned case planner and designated ACS liaison of any of the following:

- Any planned transfer of any ACS-involved family to a different shelter (within 24 hours when possible), via email or during a shelter exit case conference as applicable;
- New births in the family, via the daily data feed between ACS and DHS (daily data feed);
- New household members added to the family composition in the shelter, via the daily data feed; or
- Calls to the SCR, via email.

Within 24 hours (via the data feed) or immediately if there are imminent safety concerns, DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned case planner about an ACS-involved family's exit from the DHS shelter system if such exit is anticipated and/or known to DHS and shelter staff. If there are any safety concerns related to unplanned exits, the shelter director will call the case planner and ACS liaison.

Additional Joint Responsibilities

The case planner must work together with DHS and shelter staff when the ACS-involved family is conditionally placed to provide the family with necessary child care and personal hygiene supplies and equipment. Note: DHS is responsible for providing cribs for families in its shelter system.

As part of ACS's ongoing safety assessment of an ACS-involved family, the case planner may convene a Family Team Conference (FTC) which must include the family (including children, as appropriate), the case planner that referred the family to PATH, shelter staff working with the family, and when available, DHS staff. FTCs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elevated Risk Conferences;
- Initial Child Safety Conferences;
- Follow Up Child Safety Conferences;
- Trial Discharge Conferences;
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- Follow-up Family Team Conferences including 12 month Permanency Conference and 30-45 day Permanency Planning Conferences; and
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Data Match

Data Match information is transmitted through automated systems for both ACS and DHS pursuant to the MOU between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York City Department of Homeless Services, dated 3/21/17.

DHS Responsibilities

If the ACS-involved family is deemed ineligible, or eligible and assigned Transitional Placement, DHS will notify the ACS-involved family's case planner of the shelter determination and placement through ACS Data Match.

DHS will provide ACS with specific up-to-date information (the "DHS Data File") related to all children and adults having jointly-specified case types the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) for active cases, or for Family with Children or Adult Family case members that have exited for an agreed upon time period from or otherwise had a change in status at a facility managed or overseen by DHS.

DHS Data File information will be available daily and will be transmitted securely and electronically on a schedule.

ACS Responsibilities

ACS must review and analyze the DHS Data File to determine whether any DHS client: (i) is or has recently been receiving preventive services from ACS, (ii) is or was recently connected to any foster care placement, and/or (iii) is or was recently connected to any report to the SCR.

For each file submitted to ACS by DHS, ACS must transmit a file of the matched client records back to DHS, using secure file transmissions (the "ACS Data File"). ACS must redact any and all information relating to unfounded cases, Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) cases, and FAR cases, and exercise precautions to prevent unintended disclosure of such information to DHS staff.

ACS and DHS must not use the Data Files for any purpose other than to assist ACS and DHS staff at the PATH intake center for families with children in determining shelter eligibility; enhance and improve service planning for families; and assist ACS in exchanging and receiving relevant information with DHS about status changes and activities impacting service and safety planning.

Data Confidentiality

ACS and DHS must use appropriate safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the shared data, and must implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data.

Access to or use of confidential and/or personally identifiable information must be restricted to employees at ACS and DHS authorized to use such data.⁶

⁶ See #2010/07, *Security of Confidential, Case Specific and/or Personally Identifiable Information*; see *Memorandum: Confidentiality*.

Generally

The **Child Welfare Worker** (collectively, the foster care case planner, the preventive case planner, and the Child Protective Specialist [CPS]) must explore all available housing options with families who have active child welfare cases including child protection, preventive, or foster care services (**ACS-involved families**) before referring such families to DHS' Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing (PATH) family intake center for shelter placement. The Child Welfare Worker must also follow up and maintain contact with shelter staff and families throughout their stay in shelter.

DHS operates and maintains several types of shelters, including shelters for families with children under the age of 21. The types of shelters for families with children include tier II shelters, family hotels, cluster units, and commercial hotels. Plans are underway to phase out the use of clusters and commercial hotels.

Tier II Shelters: Certified by the State of New York, they are freestanding buildings with units that have bathrooms, cooking facilities, on-site social services, and on-site security. This shelter model is the most service-rich and may include on-site child care, recreational programming, and visiting space.

Family Hotels: Typically hotels that have been converted to shelters with units that have bathrooms, may have modest cooking facilities, and provide some social services on site. Family hotels generally do not have after-school programming or child care.

Cluster Units: Apartment-style units located within buildings exclusively occupied by families in shelter or buildings that also house rent-paying tenants. Social services and security staff are not located on site.

Commercial Hotel Rooms: Rented as shelter due to capacity constraints and have on-site social services and security.

Families may be placed conditionally in shelter after applying for temporary housing assistance at PATH, pending a DHS case-by-case determination about whether the family is eligible to receive temporary housing assistance. This determination is based on an investigation into whether the family has any viable and available non-shelter housing options. A referral to PATH from ACS, a provider agency, or a court order does not guarantee that DHS will find an ACS-involved family eligible for shelter placement. However, if found eligible, DHS will provide priority placement to the ACS-involved family for tier II shelters, if available.

During an ACS-involved family's stay in DHS shelter, the Child Welfare Worker and DHS/shelter staff must continue to coordinate and share information so that the family's day-to-day needs are being met, any outstanding issues are addressed, and the family's service needs are identified for the purposes of efficient and non-duplicative service planning.

Note: This does not apply to discharging youth with the permanency goal of another planned permanent living arrangement with a permanency resource (APPLA+). Youth with a goal of APPLA+ may not be discharged from foster care to a shelter for adults, shelter for families, single-room occupancy hotel, or any other congregate living arrangement which houses more than 10 unrelated persons.

Child Welfare Worker Responsibilities Prior to PATH Referral

The Child Welfare Worker must refer the ACS-involved family to PATH when there is an **imminent concern** for housing and all other reasonable efforts have been made to obtain other non-shelter housing, and/or time does not allow for all reasonable efforts, but efforts will be made in the interim and communicated to DHS staff at PATH. When there is no imminent need for housing, the Child Welfare Worker must refer the family to [Homebase](#), or if housing repairs are needed, to 311.

The Child Welfare Worker must have ongoing discussions with the ACS-involved family about housing throughout the life of a case and these discussions must be documented in CNNX.

In assisting families with obtaining viable housing, the Child Welfare Worker must take the following steps:

- **Identify the family's housing needs** as early as possible so that connections to services and supports can be made. If the family has appropriate housing, confirm that the housing meets ACS's Housing Support and Services (HSS) Home Evaluation Checklist criteria and that there are no outstanding arrears that place the family in danger of eviction;
- Pursue and discuss all **appropriate housing options**;
- **Review the family's budgetary needs**, to the extent possible, in order to determine what housing options are sustainable;
- **Support the family** in pursuing any appropriate housing resources and supports, including:
 - ACS housing subsidies;
 - New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). Note: Such NYCHA applications are not eligible for housing priority;
 - Supportive housing;
 - Housing Court;
 - [DHS Homebase Program](#);
 - [Family Justice Center](#); and/or
 - Private, non-subsidized housing options.
- Include an appropriate, viable, and realistic **housing plan** within the Family Assessment and Service Plan (FASP) and document the housing plan in CNNX or in the case record for ADVPO cases;
- As the family's housing needs and options may change over time or unexpectedly, **revisit housing goals** throughout the life of the case until the housing goals are satisfactorily met; and
- When there is no imminent need for housing, the Child Welfare Worker must refer the family to Home Base, or if housing repairs are needed, to 311.

The Child Welfare Worker must promptly document efforts in a CNNX progress note when he or she has explored all housing resources and the ACS-involved family has completed or is in the process of receiving services required as part of the child welfare service plan.

If the ACS-involved family has no viable housing options, including family resources, the Child Welfare Worker may refer, and when appropriate, accompany the family to PATH for emergency shelter placement. To the extent the Child Welfare Worker is aware, he or she must notify the on-site PATH CPS electronically that an ACS-involved family will be going to PATH to apply.

PATH Referral Process

The Child Welfare Worker with planning responsibility for the ACS-involved family must take the following steps prior to referring the family to the PATH family intake center for placement in a shelter:

Make reasonable efforts to verify that the family does not have any viable or available non-shelter housing options other than DHS shelter;

Notify the FCLS attorney, if any, whenever a court-involved family has no viable or available non-shelter housing options and will be referred to PATH;

Prepare the parent(s)/guardian(s) to bring to PATH any documents that will help PATH Family Intake staff understand why the family is homeless, such as an eviction notice, if applicable;

- CPS: To the extent possible, provide the PATH CPS with pertinent information in an email addressed to DGP.PATH@acs.nyc.gov;
- Preventive Case Planner: Notify the ACS Office of Preventive Technical Assistance that the family is seeking to enter PATH by emailing PPRS-DHS@acs.nyc.gov with pertinent information, to the extent possible.
- Foster Care Case Planner: Notify HSS of the PATH referral by emailing pertinent information to acs.sm.housing.fostercare@acs.nyc.gov at least 72 hours before the reunification is expected to occur; in cases where the Family Court has ordered an immediate reunification and referral to PATH, the assigned foster care case planner must notify HSS immediately on the same day the order was issued.

Court Orders

A court order that specifies a referral to PATH is not required for DHS to provide shelter to ACS-involved families. ACS and provider agency staff must not request any orders against DHS and must advocate in court that such orders, if issued, must still permit DHS to make its own determination as to shelter eligibility.

However, if the Family Court issues an order directing the family to PATH, the Child Welfare Worker must immediately notify DCP, via email to DGP.PATH@acs.nyc.gov, to begin processing the PATH referral, as well as

email a summary or, preferably, a copy of the order with permission of the Family Court to the DHS Director of Eligibility Determinations. If the children are in foster care, then the Child Welfare Worker must immediately notify FPS, via email to acs.sm.housing.fostercare@acs.nyc.gov, to begin the PATH referral process. The Child Welfare Worker must email a copy of the order with the permission of the Family Court. Absent the Court's permission, the Child Welfare Worker must email a summary of the order's contents.

Procedures and Protocols at PATH Family Intake

Preliminary Protocols for PATH Family Intake:

DHS will share with ACS the names of all family members applying for shelter at PATH through the DHS system of record.

ACS has a CPS working on-site at PATH (PATH CPS) to assist ACS-involved families with the PATH Family Intake process. The PATH CPS (Unit 1)¹ also provides on-site assistance for ACS-involved families deemed ineligible by DHS for shelter, supports ACS with locating ACS-involved families in the DHS shelter system, liaises with DHS regarding safety issues concerning the placement of ACS-involved families, and supports the Child Welfare Workers who escort families to PATH.

Information Sharing by ACS at PATH Family Intake

The PATH CPS (Unit 1) must conduct a New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) clearance to determine whether the family applying for shelter has an active child welfare case currently being investigated by and/or is receiving child welfare services from ACS, has an open indicated case, or has a closed indicated case.

ACS must not disclose whether a shelter applicant has any unfounded or Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases.

The Child Welfare Worker must ask the family member to sign a health-related consent for the release to DHS of any of his or her information or records related to medical, mental health, substance use, and HIV/AIDS.

The PATH CPS must also provide PATH Family Intake staff with all available housing documentation, which will be scanned into the DHS system of record by the PATH Family Intake staff.

Role of the Child Welfare Worker

If the Child Welfare Worker or designee is able to accompany the ACS-involved family to PATH to assist with the intake process by providing and verifying required information, the Child Welfare Worker must remain with such family until the family has been placed in a shelter. The foster care case planner must accompany the family to PATH.

¹ The CPS Unit 2 will be assigned to any family identified by PATH CPS Unit 1 to have an "active" child welfare case for continued support until they are either found eligible for DHS shelter or they are found ineligible and alternative housing options are arranged.

Note: PATH does not require children to accompany their parent or guardian to PATH under any of the following circumstances:

- Reunification is already scheduled to occur;
- The family is reapplying for shelter after less than a 30-day break from shelter; or
- On the day following an overnight placement.

The Child Welfare Worker must notify the PATH CPS that he or she is on-site via email or in person at PATH, 5th floor.

Prior to escorting an ACS-involved family to PATH, the Child Welfare Worker must verify that the family has and brings all required documents to the extent possible. Note: If the family does not have all of the necessary documents, the family may receive a conditional placement but may be ineligible for shelter placement until the family or Child Welfare Worker obtains and submits the required documents, including but not limited to:

- Birth certificates for all children;
- Valid photo identification for all adults;
- Proof of paternity (through a paternity order, the child's birth certificate, or the putative father registry);
- Social security cards, if available;
- Family history of domestic violence, where there is a current safety concern for family members to be placed together, and a summary of orders of protection or, preferably, copies as permitted by the Family Court; and
- Proof of medical clearances, if applicable, including a health-related signed consent allowing the release of this information. If there are any issues with obtaining the release, the Child Welfare Worker must notify the PATH CPS so that DHS PATH intake can be notified.

Procedures and Protocols During the Family's Stay in Shelter

During the intake process, PATH Family Intake staff may provide the ACS-involved family with a conditional shelter placement pending DHS' determination of the family's ongoing shelter eligibility (called a "**Conditional Placement**"). If, after the shelter eligibility investigation, DHS deems the family eligible for shelter, the family will be assigned an official shelter placement (a "**Transitional Placement**"), which may or may not be the same shelter as the Conditional Placement, and is considered "permanent" placement within the PATH continuum.

If DHS emails a request for any outstanding information needed from an ACS-involved family during the family's Conditional Placement in order for DHS to make an informed decision about shelter eligibility or placement, the Child Welfare Worker must provide to DHS, or make every effort to provide such information, within two (2) business days of DHS' email request.

Case Conference

The Child Welfare Worker must coordinate either an in-person conference or a conference call within three (3) business days of the family's Conditional or Transitional Placement into DHS shelter in order to discuss the

reasons for placement, the family's safety and/or service needs, and other pertinent information about the family that will support ACS and DHS in service planning.

The Child Welfare Worker must invite, and make every effort to secure the participation of, at minimum, the shelter staff working with the family (i.e., case manager and Client Care Coordinator as applicable) and DHS staff. Depending on the nature of the conference, the family may be invited as well.

At the case conference, the following information must be discussed, if applicable:

- The location and type of Conditional or Transitional Placement;
- The child welfare safety and service plan for the family including any patterns in the family's housing history that could be important for service planning;
- If permissible, a procedure for overnight visits between the family and a youth family member currently in foster care;
- Whether the location of the Conditional or Transitional Placement will interfere with the family's receipt of support services, and possible ways to minimize any disruption of services;
- The family's strengths and needs to assist shelter staff in developing a suitable Independent Living Plan (ILP),² permanent housing arrangements, and provision of additional support to the family through the DHS Clinical Services Unit or a DHS shelter provider Client Care Coordinator as applicable; and
- The contents and goals of the ILP for which the Child Welfare Worker must seek to secure a signed consent as applicable.

The Child Welfare Worker's Communication about Visiting

CPS: To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods,³ the CPS must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit, prior to visiting a family. Upon arrival at the shelter, the CPS must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the CPS or shelter staff have. If such contact cannot be made at that time, CPS must contact the shelter within the first seven (7) days of any new investigation, and at least monthly on any ongoing child welfare case. When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the CPS must leave a business card with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

Preventive Case Planner: To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the preventive case planner must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit, prior to visiting a family. Upon arrival at the shelter, the preventive case planner must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the case planner or shelter staff have. If unable to contact the shelter's designated staff, the case planner must upon arrival attempt contact again with the shelter director or designee and then conduct the visit with the family

² A plan developed between the shelter provider case manager and the family that sets certain tasks within specific time frames to achieve short-term goals toward exiting shelter and moving to permanent housing.

³ Visits must be made within the first seven (7) days of any new investigation, and at least monthly on any ongoing child welfare case.

as planned. Collateral contacts with the shelter director or designee must be ongoing. When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the preventive case planner must leave a business card with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

Foster Care Case Planner: To the extent possible during the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the case planner must notify the shelter director on the same day as a visit, prior to visiting a family. Upon arrival at the shelter, the case planner must ask for the shelter director or designee to briefly discuss the reason for the visit, as well as the family's progress, challenges, and any concerns the case planner or shelter staff have. If unable to contact the shelter's designated staff, the case planner must upon arrival attempt contact again with the shelter director or designee and then conduct the visit with the family as planned. Collateral contacts with the shelter director or designee must be ongoing. When providing advanced notice is impracticable (e.g., an emergency visit during the evening), the case planner must leave a business card with security staff, as applicable, and contact the shelter director the following business day.

The Child Welfare Worker's Communication of Status Changes

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the Child Welfare Worker must email the designated DHS liaison and shelter case manager (who will advise the shelter director) of status changes regarding any ACS-involved family. Examples of status changes which would trigger notification to DHS/shelter staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the Family Court issues a remand order for any children in the family composition, the provider agency fails a trial discharge and returns a child to foster care, or any other change to the family composition, within one (1) business day;
- Any change in status of a child welfare case warranting an increase or decrease in the level of intervention and/or supervision (e.g., change from a general preventive services program to an intensive preventive services program);
- Any plans for a child to be placed away from the family; and/or
- Any new Family Court orders known to ACS regarding any member of the family, by providing a summary of the Family Court order or, preferably, a copy with permission of the Family Court.

DHS and Shelter Staff Communication of Status Changes

DHS and shelter staff will notify ACS of any changes in an ACS-involved family's composition or of any shelter transfers of an ACS-involved family through the DHS system of record.

DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned Child Welfare Worker and designated ACS liaison of any of the following:

- Any planned transfer of any ACS-involved family to a different shelter (within 24 hours when possible), via email or during a shelter exit case conference as applicable;

- New births in the family, via the daily data feed between ACS and DHS (daily data feed);
- New household members added to the family composition in the shelter, via the daily data feed; or
- Calls to the SCR, via email.

Within 24 hours (via the data feed) or immediately if there are imminent safety concerns, DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned Child Welfare Worker about an ACS-involved family's exit from the DHS shelter system if such exit is anticipated and/or known to DHS and shelter staff. If there are any safety concerns related to unplanned exits, the shelter director will call the Child Welfare Worker and ACS liaison.

Additional Joint Responsibilities

The Child Welfare Worker must work together with DHS and shelter staff when the ACS-involved family is conditionally placed to provide the family with necessary child care and personal hygiene supplies and equipment. Note: DHS is responsible for providing cribs for families in its shelter system.

As part of ACS's ongoing safety assessment of an ACS-involved family, the Child Welfare Worker may convene a Family Team Conference (FTC) which must include the family (including children, as appropriate), the Child Welfare Worker that referred the family to PATH, shelter staff working with the family, and when available, DHS staff. FTCs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elevated Risk Conferences;
- Initial Child Safety Conferences;
- Follow Up Child Safety Conferences;
- Trial Discharge Conferences;
- Final Discharge Conferences;
- Follow-up Family Team Conferences including 12 month Permanency Conference and 30-45 day Permanency Planning Conferences; and
- Service Termination Conferences.

Data Match

Data Match information is transmitted through automated systems for both ACS and DHS pursuant to the MOU between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York City Department of Homeless Services, dated 3/21/17.

DHS Responsibilities

If the ACS-involved family is deemed ineligible, or eligible and assigned Transitional Placement, DHS will notify the ACS-involved family's Child Welfare Worker of the shelter determination and placement through ACS Data Match.

DHS will provide ACS with specific up-to-date information (the "DHS Data File") related to all children and adults having jointly-specified case types the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) for active cases, or for Family with Children or Adult Family case members that have exited for an agreed upon

time period from or otherwise had a change in status at a facility managed or overseen by DHS.

DHS Data File information will be available daily and will be transmitted securely and electronically on a schedule.

ACS Responsibilities

ACS must review and analyze the DHS Data File to determine whether any DHS client: (i) is or has recently been receiving preventive services from ACS, (ii) is or was recently connected to any foster care placement, and/or (iii) is or was recently connected to any report to the SCR.

For each file submitted to ACS by DHS, ACS must transmit a file of the matched client records back to DHS, using secure file transmissions (the "ACS Data File"). ACS must redact any and all information relating to unfounded cases, Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) cases, and FAR cases, and exercise precautions to prevent unintended disclosure of such information to DHS staff.

ACS and DHS must not use the Data Files for any purpose other than to assist ACS and DHS staff at the PATH intake center for families with children in determining shelter eligibility; enhance and improve service planning for families; and assist ACS in exchanging and receiving relevant information with DHS about status changes and activities impacting service and safety planning.

Data Confidentiality

ACS and DHS must use appropriate safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the shared data, and must implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data.

Access to or use of confidential and/or personally identifiable information must be restricted to employees at ACS and DHS authorized to use such data.⁴

⁴ See Policy #2010/07, *Security of Confidential, Case Specific and/or Personally Identifiable Information*; see Memorandum: *Confidentiality*.

Generally

This Desk Guide describes the coordination and information sharing required between ACS, DHS, and providers for both agencies, when ACS-involved families are applying for, or residing within, the shelter system.

An additional signed release of information form is no longer required for ACS, DHS, and their provider agencies to communicate and share information. The exception to this is when discussing or sharing information regarding medical, mental health, substance use, and HIV/AIDS.

ACS must not disclose whether a family has any unfounded or Family Assessment Response (FAR) cases.

If an ACS-involved family has no viable housing options, the Child Welfare Worker (collectively, foster care case planner, preventive case planner, and Child Protective Specialist [CPS]) may refer and, when appropriate, accompany the family to PATH for emergency shelter placement. Note: The foster care case planner must go to PATH with the family and remain with them until they have been placed in a shelter.

DHS will share with ACS the names of all family members applying for shelter at PATH through the DHS system of record.

Note: PATH does not require children to accompany their parent or guardian to PATH under any of the following circumstances:

- Reunification is already scheduled to occur;
- The family is reapplying for shelter after less than a 30-day break from shelter; or
- On the day following an overnight placement.

If DHS emails a request for any outstanding information needed from an ACS-involved family during the family's Conditional Placement in order for DHS to make an informed decision about shelter eligibility or placement, the Child Welfare Worker must provide or make every effort to provide such information to DHS within two (2) business days of DHS' email request.

Case Conference

The Child Welfare Worker must coordinate either an in-person conference or a conference call within three (3) business days of the family's Conditional or Transitional Placement into DHS shelter. The purpose of the conference is to discuss the reasons for placement, the family's safety and/or service needs, and other pertinent information about the family that will support ACS and DHS in service planning. The Child Welfare Worker must invite at minimum, the shelter staff working with the family (i.e., case manager and Client Care Coordinator as applicable) and DHS staff. Depending on the nature of the family's case, the family may be invited as well.

At the case conference, the following information must be discussed, if applicable:

- The location and type of Conditional or Transitional Placement;
- The family's strengths and needs to assist shelter staff in developing a suitable Independent Living Plan (ILP), permanent housing arrangements, and provision of additional support to the family through the DHS Clinical Services Unit or a DHS shelter provider Client Care Coordinator as applicable;
- The child welfare safety and service plan for the family including any patterns in the family's housing history that could be important for service planning;
- If permissible, a procedure for overnight visits between the family and a youth family member currently in foster care;
- Whether the location of the Conditional or Transitional Placement will interfere with the family's receipt of support services, and possible ways to minimize any disruption of services; and
- The contents and goals of the ILP for which the Child Welfare Worker shall seek to secure an appropriate signed consent as applicable.

Child Welfare Worker's Communication with Shelter Staff During or Following Visits

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the Child Welfare Worker must check in with the case manager or supervisor when arriving on site during business hours and leave contact information with the front desk outside of business hours.

For unstaffed cluster buildings, the Child Welfare Worker must call the case manager or supervisor after visiting a family.

Child Welfare Worker's Communication of Status Changes

During the Conditional and Transitional Placement periods, the Child Welfare Worker must email the designated DHS liaison and shelter case manager (who will advise the shelter director) of status changes regarding any ACS-involved family. Examples of status changes which would trigger notification to DHS and shelter staff include, but are not limited to, the following:

- If the Family Court issues a remand order for any children in the family composition, the provider agency fails a trial discharge and returns a child to foster care, or any other change to the family composition, within one (1) business day;
- Any change in status of a child welfare case warranting an increase or decrease in the level of intervention and/ or supervision (e.g., change from a general preventive services program to an intensive preventive services program);
- Any plans for a child to be placed away from the family; and/or
- Any new Family Court orders known to ACS regarding any member of the family, by providing a summary of the Family Court order or, preferably, a copy with permission of the Family Court.

DHS and Shelter Staff Communication of Status Changes

DHS and shelter staff will notify ACS of any changes in an ACS-involved family's composition or of any shelter transfers of an ACS-involved family through the DHS system of record.

DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned Child Welfare Worker and designated ACS liaison of any of the following:

- Any planned transfer of any ACS-involved family to a different shelter (within 24 hours when possible), as applicable;
- New births in the family, via the daily data feed between ACS and DHS (daily data feed);
- New household members added to the family composition in the shelter, via the daily data feed; or
- Calls to the SCR, via email.

Within 24 hours (via the data feed) or immediately if there are imminent safety concerns, DHS and shelter staff will notify the assigned Child Welfare Worker about an ACS-involved family's exit from the DHS shelter system if such exit is anticipated and/or known to DHS and shelter staff. If there are any safety concerns related to unplanned exits, the shelter director must contact the Child Welfare Worker and ACS liaison.

As part of ACS's ongoing safety assessment of an ACS-involved family, the Child Welfare Worker may convene a Family Team Conference (FTC), which must include the family (including children, as appropriate), the Child Welfare Worker that referred the family to PATH, shelter staff working with the family, and when available, DHS staff. FTCs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Elevated Risk Conferences;
- Initial Child Safety Conferences;
- Follow Up Child Safety Conferences;
- Trial Discharge Conferences;
- Final Discharge Conferences;
- Follow-up Family Team Conferences including 12 month Permanency Conference and 30-45 day Permanency Planning Conferences; and
- Service Termination Conferences.

During an ACS-involved family's stay in DHS shelter, the Child Welfare Worker and DHS and shelter staff must continue to coordinate and share information to address the family's service needs and enhance efficiency in service planning.

Data Match

Data Match information is transmitted through automated systems for both ACS and DHS pursuant to the MOU between the New York City Administration for Children's Services and the New York City Department of Homeless Services, dated 3/21/17.

DHS Responsibilities

If an ACS-involved family is deemed ineligible, or eligible and assigned Transitional Placement, DHS will notify the ACS-involved family's Child Welfare Worker of the shelter determination and placement through the ACS Data Match.

DHS will provide ACS with specific up-to-date information (the "DHS Data File") related to all children and adults having jointly-specified case types the Client Assistance and Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) for active cases, or for Family with Children or Adult Family case members that have exited for an agreed upon time period from or otherwise had a change in status at a facility managed or overseen by DHS.

The DHS Data File information will be available daily and will be transmitted securely and electronically on a schedule.

ACS Responsibilities

ACS must review and analyze the DHS Data File to determine whether any DHS client: (i) is or has recently been receiving preventive services from ACS, (ii) is or was recently connected to any foster care placement, and/or (iii) is or was recently connected to any report to the SCR.

For each file submitted to ACS by DHS, ACS must transmit a file of the matched client records back to DHS, using secure file transmissions (the "ACS Data File"). ACS must redact any and all information relating to unfounded cases, Advocates Preventive Only (ADVPO) cases, and FAR cases, and exercise precautions to prevent unintended disclosure of such information to DHS staff.

ACS and DHS must not use the Data Files for any purpose other than to assist ACS and DHS staff at the PATH intake center for families with children in determining shelter eligibility; enhance and improve service planning for families; and assist ACS in exchanging and receiving relevant information with DHS about status changes and activities impacting service and safety planning.

Data Confidentiality

ACS and DHS must use appropriate safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the shared data, and must implement administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that reasonably protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the data.

Access to or use of confidential and/or personally identifiable information must be restricted to employees at ACS and DHS authorized to use such data.