

TITLE	POLICY NUMBER	
Letter of Support Requests	DCS 14-03	
RESPONSIBLE AREA	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION
Office of Correspondence	09/24/18	1

## **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Department of Child Safety (Department or DCS) lends its support to projects, grants, and other initiatives designed to improve child welfare. When the Department is approached by individuals or organizations engaged in endeavors for which DCS support is sought, such requests shall be thoroughly reviewed by the DCS Office of Correspondence and/or the Research Review Committee.

The purpose of this policy is to formalize the process of accepting, considering, and disposing of requests for letters of support from external entities. The Department shall consider the potential benefit to DCS when determining whether to furnish a letter of support. All requests shall be considered solely on their merits without prejudice, partiality, or preferentialism.

Requests will be processed in a timely manner with attention to deadlines.

## **II. APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all requests for DCS letters of support.

## **III. AUTHORITY**

[A.R.S. § 8-453 \(A\) \(12\)](#) Powers and duties.

## **IV. DEFINITIONS**

DCS or Department: The Arizona Department of Child Safety.

DCS Leadership: The DCS Director and Deputy Director of Field Operations.

Letter of Support: Letters of a general nature that express the writer's support of an applicant's desire to pursue an identified work project that may relate directly or indirectly to the Department's work. Letters of support do not constitute an endorsement by DCS of the agency or entity seeking the letter.

Requestor: The principal project manager, grant writer, or other individual or institution seeking a letter of support from DCS.

Research Review Committee (or "the Committee"): A DCS body constituted and convened for the purpose of reviewing research proposals and requests for letters of support. The Committee represents a cross-section of DCS management including ad hoc subject matter experts as needed, and is advised by the Office of the Arizona Attorney General.

## V. POLICY

### A. Accepting Requests for Letters of Support

The Department shall accept and review requests for letters of support from requestors affiliated with entities such as an institution of higher learning, a court, or a child advocacy organization recognized by DCS.

Any DCS staff members who receive a request for a letter of support shall direct the requestor to the DCS Office of Correspondence, which manages the process of accepting and processing requests for letters of support.

### B. Submission of Requests

Requestors shall complete a [\*Letter of DCS Support Request Form \(DCS-1560\)\*](#) in order to provide the Department with sufficient information to consider the request. However, the Office of Correspondence may consider requests without the submission of a formal request form if the request is uncomplicated and easily accommodated.

Requests should be made as early as possible to allow sufficient time for review and processing, but the Office of Correspondence may consider exigent, time-sensitive requests if the requestor can demonstrate that the urgency is attributable to factors beyond their control.

The Office of Correspondence may confer with appropriate subject matter experts within DCS and invite them to participate in a Research Review Committee

meeting to assist the Committee in determining whether to provide a letter of support to a requestor.

C. Criteria for Approval of Letter of Support Requests

DCS reviewers of requests for letters of support shall apply the following criteria:

1. whether the project, grant, or initiative promotes the mission of the Department;
2. whether a letter of support is *required* for the project, grant, or initiative;
3. whether there are any expectations of DCS beyond a letter supporting the requestor's desire to pursue the project, grant, or initiative; requests involving or requiring commitment or collaboration of any kind require a letter of commitment pursuant to the *Letter of Commitment Requests Requests* [\(DCS 14-04\)](#) policy;
4. whether the requestor will keep DCS informed about the eventual result of the project, grant, or initiative for which the letter of support was sought.

## VI. PROCEDURES

- A. Individuals or organizations seeking letters of support will submit a [Letter of DCS Support Request Form](#) to the Office of Correspondence.

The [Letter of DCS Support Request Form](#) shall include:

1. the name of individual/agency/organization requesting the letter, including contact information such as mailing address, email address, and phone number;
2. whether the project, grant, or initiative *requires* a letter of support;
3. the purpose of project, grant, or initiative for which letter is requested, including a copy of the grant or project proposal, or a detailed summary thereof;
4. an acknowledgement that there will be no additional expectations from

DCS beyond the letter of support;

5. how the project, grant, or initiative supports the mission of DCS;
6. the amount of the grant, if applicable;
7. the timeline for project, grant, or initiative for which a letter of support is being sought;
8. a draft of the proposed language the requestor proposes for the letter of support;
9. other entities contacted for letters of support, if any.

B. Acknowledgement of Request

The Office of Correspondence will send a letter to the requestor acknowledging receipt of the request for a letter of support.

C. Processing Requests

The Office of Correspondence will review the [Letter of DCS Support Request Form](#) and select one of the following options.

1. If the Office of Correspondence determines that the request meets the requirements of this *Letter of Support Requests* policy, the request may be presented to the members of the Research Review Committee, who shall reply with their approval, denial, or abstention. The Committee will provide a recommendation to DCS Leadership regarding the approval or denial of a letter of support.
2. If DCS Leadership approves the letter of support, the Office of Correspondence will prepare a letter for DCS Leadership signature.
3. If the Office of Correspondence determines that the request does not meet the requirements of this *Letter of Support Requests* policy, the Office of Correspondence shall work with the DCS Director, Deputy Director of Field Operations, and/or other appropriate subject matter experts within DCS to determine if a letter of support will be granted.

The Office of Correspondence shall maintain templates of letters of support and letters of denial which can be tailored to the specific requirements of requests.

D. Issuance of Letters of Support

Final letters of support will be signed by the DCS Director or the Deputy Director of Field Operations. A letter notifying the requestor that the request has been approved shall be issued. Letters of support will include a statement that the letter is intended to apply solely to the project, grant, or initiative for which it has been requested, and does not constitute an endorsement by DCS of the agency or entity seeking the letter of support.

If the DCS Director or the Deputy Director of Field Operations chooses not to issue a letter of support, a letter explaining the decision will be sent to the requestor.

**VI. FORMS INDEX**

[Letter of DCS Support Request Form \(DCS-1560\)](#)