

FILED

JUL 03 2019

Clerk of the Court
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY _____ DEPUTY

O. DUARTE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

**ORDER AUTHORIZING SENECA FAMILY OF AGENCIES ACCESS TO
CONFIDENTIAL JUVENILE CASE INFORMATION FOR PURPOSES OF FAMILY
FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT**

The Santa Clara County Social Services Agency/Department of Family and Children's Services ("DFCS") has contracted with Seneca Family of Agencies ("Seneca") to provide Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) services. Under the Welfare and Institutions Code, the SSA/DFCS is required to exercise due diligence to identify all adult relatives of the child, within 30 days after removal of that child from their parent or parents.

Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) is a broad concept which encompasses not only the statutory requirements pertaining to identifying, locating, and notifying relatives of a child in foster care, but also related to efforts to foster life-long familial connections for children and youth in care. The FFE process is an important tool for achieving permanent and stable connections for youth in the child welfare system, and, as conducted by Seneca, includes tasks such as: internet searches using national databases, mining the child welfare case file, and direct interviews of youth/family using specific information-gathering tools. Once this information is collected by Seneca it is submitted to the DFCS social worker for review and direction prior to any outreach or engagement of the located family members.

In order to accomplish its legal mandates and provide these critical services to the youth under its care and supervision, the DFCS requests court authorization to provide Seneca access to confidential juvenile case file information maintained by the DFCS.

FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN, THE COURT FINDS AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Santa Clara County Social Services Agency, Department of Family and Children's Services, has a compelling need to provide access to confidential child welfare records – both hard copy and electronic records – to Seneca Family of Agencies for purposes of identifying family members and fictive kin who may be able to provide permanency to youth in out-of-home care.

2. That Seneca staff reviewing records or accessing confidential juvenile case information pursuant to this Order shall utilize the information in the records only to the extent necessary for the purpose of family finding and engagement, including locating family and involving family in meetings to assure the youth's needs for support and stability are met.
3. That Seneca staff shall be bound by the confidentiality provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code sections 827 and 10850. Under no circumstances shall the names or other identifying information of any party to the dependency proceeding or a recipient of services from DFCS be disclosed or disseminated by Seneca.
4. That Seneca staff shall destroy all hard and soft copies of notes and other documentation created during the FFE process, once the services to the client/family are complete.
5. This Order shall expire on June 30, 2020. Should the contract be renewed, the DFCS shall seek to extend or renew this Order.

Dated: 7/3/19

Shawna Schwarz
THE HONORABLE SHAWNA SCHWARZ
Supervising Judge of the Superior Court
Juvenile Dependency Division