

# Northstar Adoption Workflow

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## Northstar Adoption: Overview

In Minnesota Adoption is the preferred permanency option for a child who cannot return home. Adoption is the *legal permanency disposition*. Northstar Adoption Assistance (NAA) is a financial benefit available for children who would otherwise remain in foster care; it is intended to reduce financial barriers to adoption of children who would otherwise remain in foster care.

Typically this benefit is available for children under guardianship of the commissioner (or tribal equivalent), although in some unique circumstances some privately adopted children are eligible. The child must be legally free for adoption through either Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) or the Court's acceptance of a Consent of Parent to Adoption pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.515, subd. 3 (Consent to Adopt), and Guardianship is then transferred to the Commissioner of Human Services. Alternatively, children under Tribal court jurisdiction and for whom a suspension of parental rights has occurred may be eligible.

The agency adoption process relies on entering child, previous parent, sibling, and pre-adoptive parent client information into SSIS and then verifying that the information is complete and accurate for the State Adoptions Unit at DHS. AFCARS information is gathered throughout the permanency process, from the first entries into the Permanency folder through the finalization of an adoption.

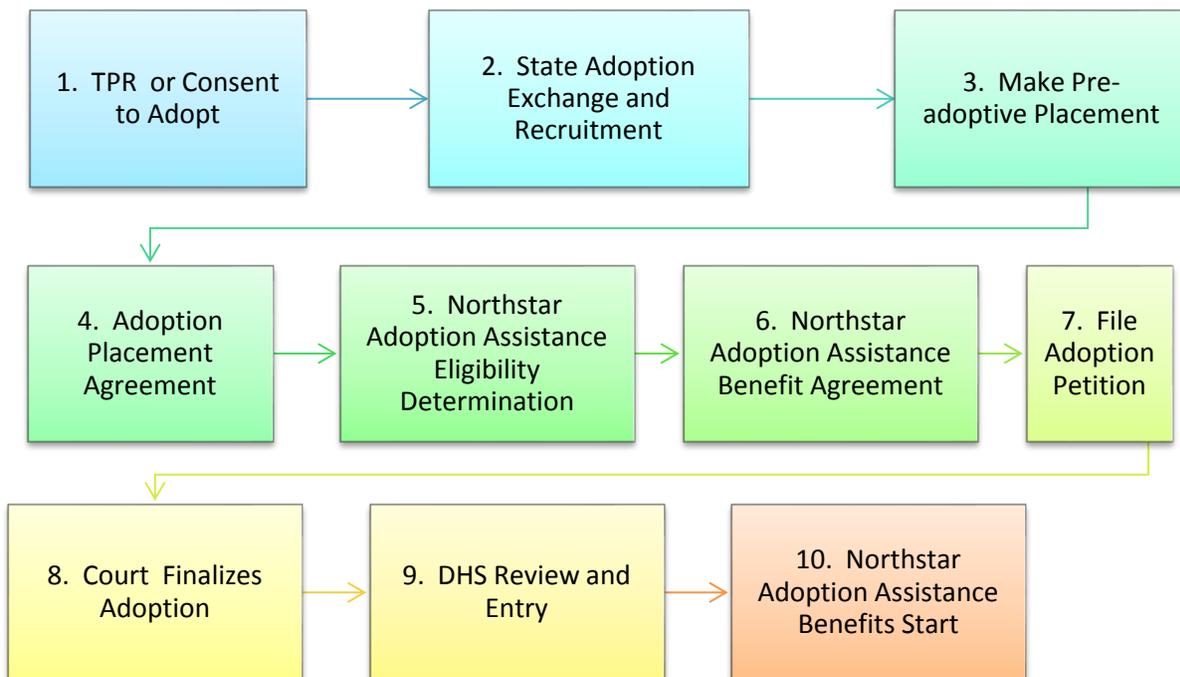
For children and families in which adoption for a child is the identified permanency outcome, SSIS provides additional tools to complete this process. These changes are due to Northstar Care for Children and include Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, Income Offsets, and Northstar Assistance Adoption Benefit Agreement.

Typically, a child will reside with the prospective adoptive parents while moving forward with finalizing an adoption. In some circumstances, the child may not be in a pre-adoptive placement setting with the prospective adoptive parent (s) at the time the Northstar Adoption Placement Agreement is signed; i.e., the child is in a treatment facility. SSIS does not currently allow for adoptive placement verification if a child is not placed in the home, so completion of the adoption placement verification requires a data fix.

Child Ward folder and Adoption Verifications must be completed prior to completing Northstar Adoption Eligibility Determination. The Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination must be approved by DHS and the Adoption Benefit Agreement signed before the Adoption is finalized in court.

Additional information about Northstar Adoption Assistance can be found in the [Northstar Care for Children Practice Guide](#). An [Adoption Process Checklist](#) is available in eDocs and SSIS External documents. This checklist has been designed to provide county social workers with a clear guide of the required steps to legally finalize the adoption of a child under guardianship of the commissioner. It also provides a place to document in the case file completion of each step of the adoption process.

## Northstar Adoption Workflow



*Hint:* This workflow represents the typical workflow for non-American Indian children under the jurisdiction of a county; for children under tribal jurisdiction the workflow could differ, including but in no way limited to such important practices as Suspension of Parental Rights.

### SSIS Resources:

- [SSIS Documentation](#)
  - Placement module
  - [Kinship Workflow](#)
  - Permanency Folder

### Adoption Resources:

- [Paths to Permanency](#) (DHS-7024A)
- [Adoption and Guardianship webpage](#) on County Link
  - [Policy on Foster and Adoption Placement Decisions for Children Under Guardianship of the Commissioner](#)
  - [Adoption Process Checklist for Children Under Guardianship of the Commissioner](#) (DHS 6542)
- [Northstar Care for Children webpage](#) on County Link
- [Northstar Care for Children Practice Guide](#)
- [The Benefit Information Portal](#) (BIP)

### System Requirements for Adoption

In preparation for completing the Northstar Adoption work, ensure the following items are entered or open for the child:

- Legal Names (for the child, previous parents, siblings, and pre-adoptive parents)
- Date of Birth (for the child, previous parents, siblings, and pre-adoptive parents')

- Race
- Birth Location information (state and tribal wards)
- Citizenship Information (child and pre-adoptive parents)
- Relationships (add the birth father detail, if known); the *SSIS system at DHS requires two birth parents, even if one is unknown.*
- All child clients, known legal parents (either biological or adoptive), prospective relative custodians and all siblings must be cleared to SWNDX to begin the Adoption verifications.
- Completed Continuous Placement
- Entry of a Removal and Adoptions History folder within the Permanency folder
- Update Placement setting to Pre-adoptive Placement (when appropriate), with Foster Parent relationships defined
- The Business Organization record with the Pre-adoptive parents identified as the individual providers

In preparation for creating the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, ensure the following is entered:

- Completed Court Action with Best Interests recorded (only required for initially Court Ordered Placements)
- A MAPCY Assessment (required for all adoptions after 01/01/2015)

## Security Functions

The Security Administration functions include **Create adoption**, **View adoption**, and **Access adoption reports**:

- **Create adoption**: allows workers to create and edit the new Child Ward folder and complete all verifications
- **View adoption**: allows worker only to view access to adoption related nodes
- **Access adoption reports**: allows workers to access the adoption related reports in Tools> General Reports

## Requirements to Open an Adoption/Guardianship Workgroup

### 1. Birth Location and US Citizenship Information

Entry of Birth Location and US Citizenship is required for all child clients who are DHS State or Tribal wards and their pre-adoptive parents. Entry is also required for all children who are in continuous placement.

#### Person Information > Birth/Death Information

Birth/Death Information			
Date of birth:	9/1/2012	Age:	2 years
Date of death:			
Est. date of birth:		Est. Age:	
Birth location:	County: Out of State	State: Alaska	Country:

To enter Birth Location information:

1. Expand Participants folder.
2. Highlight Client node.
3. On the client demographic screen, select a county from the **County** drop-down field; the **State** field auto fills with **Minnesota**.
4. If **Out of state** selected, select the state from the **State** drop-down field.
5. If **Out of U.S.** selected, enter the country name in the **Country** entry field.
6. Click **Save**.

### Person Information > US Citizenship

US Citizenship	
US citizenship status: U.S. Citizen/naturalized citizen	Verification method: Birth Certificate
US citizenship date: 9/1/2012	Date verified: 1/9/2013

To Enter Citizenship information:

1. Expand the Participants folder.
2. Highlight the Client node.
3. On the Client Demographic screen, select the **US citizenship status** from the drop-down.
4. Select the **Verification method** from the drop-down field.
5. *If Birth Certificate is selected for Verification method, the US citizenship date defaults to DOB.*
6. Select the **US citizenship date** using the date-picker.
7. Select the **Date verified** using the date-picker.
8. Click **Save**.

## 2. Inactivating Parental Relationships

All relationships must be entered between each child client, their previous parents (either biological or adoptive parents), and all of the siblings of the child ward. This is required information to proceed with entering the child as a New Child Ward. SSIS requires that both biological parents' relationships and/or at least one adoptive parent relationship are indicated as resolved through consent, death, suspension or termination, to save the Previous Parent Verification entry for notifying the State of DHS Guardianship or Tribal Guardianship of the child. These fields that satisfy some AFCARS requirements and are reported to the State Adoption Unit staff.

The Birth father detail field is optional. Workers may not want to select anything if this is unknown. The Birth father detail field allows the entry of Inactive legal relationships between the child and multiple potential birth fathers. Select the Inactive Reason Detail of Voluntary if this was a true voluntary parental termination. If the parent is stipulating to the TPR, then the correct choice is Involuntary (found by court or admitted by parent).

If the worker requires the selection of Unknown male or Unknown female for parent resolution Inactive reason, then the relationships should be entered from child's Relationship folder, not the Case Relationship folder

Foster parent and pre-adoptive parent relationships continue to be entered on the Placement screens. *Previous parents should not be added as clients in an Adoption/Guardianship workgroup.*

### Relationship folder > Relationship status fields

Name	Relationship (Person 1 - Person 2)	Name (Person 2)	Status	Inactive Reason	Inactive Date	Inactive Reason Detail
Velma X Vaughn	Birth daughter - Birth father	Vinnie X Vincent	Inactive	Termination of parental rights	9/5/2014	Involuntary (found by court or admitted by parent)
Velma X Vaughn	Birth daughter - Birth mother	Veronica V Vaughn	Inactive	Termination of parental rights	9/5/2012	Involuntary (found by court or admitted by parent)
Velma X Vaughn	Half-sister - Half-sister	Vena V Vaughn	Active			
Velma X Vaughn	Half-sister - Half-sister	Vanessa V Vaughn	Active			
Velma X Vaughn	Former partner's child - Parent's former partner	Val V Vaughn	Active			
Velma X Vaughn	Foster daughter - Foster mother	Anikka A Andersson	Active			
Velma X Vaughn	Foster daughter - Foster father	Lars L Andersson	Active			

Relationship

Person 1: Velma X Vaughn's - SSIS Person #: 199270462

Relationship: Birth father

Person 2: Vinnie X Vincent - SSIS Person #: 199420501

**Velma X Vaughn's Birth father is Vinnie X Vincent**

Relationship status

Status: Inactive

Inactive reason: Termination of parental rights

Inactive date: 9/5/2014

Inactive reason detail: Involuntary (found by court or admitted by parent)

Birth father detail: Adjudicated

### To Inactivate Parental Relationships:

1. From the child's Clients Relationship folder, select the child's relationship with the first previous parent.
2. From the **Status** drop-down field, select **Inactive**.
3. From the **Inactive reason** drop-down field, select **Consent to adopt, Death, Suspension of parental rights, or Termination of parental rights**.
4. Select the date the relationship is inactive based on the Inactive reason indicated above.
5. From the **Inactive reason detail** drop-down, select **Involuntary (found by court or admitted by parent)** or **Voluntary (initial request by parent)**.
6. If the relationship is that of birth mother, the **Birth mother married at time of child's birth** drop-down field is enabled and required. Select **Yes, No, or Unable to determine**.
7. If the relationship is that of birth father, the **Birth father detail** drop-down field is enabled. Select **Adjudicated, Alleged, Custodial (married to mother), or Presumed**.
8. Click **Save**.

## Adoption/Guardianship Workgroup

The workgroup used for recording services provided to the child should change from Child Protection an Adoption Guardianship workgroup (A/G) once the parental relationships are made inactive due to: TPR, Consent to adopt, Death, or Suspension of Parental rights).

Although an A/G workgroup can be created under the existing previous parental case, **DHS best practice is to open an A/G workgroup within a new case as soon as parental rights have been terminated and Guardianship has been transferred to the tribe or to the DHS Commissioner.** Services provided to the new Child Ward are separate from historical Child Protection/Child Welfare records with the previous parents. However, the child ward's prior workgroups are associated with his/her history under the A/G workgroup.

Any records that relate to the Child Ward and his/her adoptive family after finalization should not be combined in hard files. The State Adoption Unit maintains the link between the pre-adoptive identity and the post-adoptive identity for purposes of post-adoption record searches requested by adopted children and others eligible to seek access to those records per MN Statute.

### *To Open an Adoption/Guardianship Workgroup:*

1. Navigate to Case folder above the CP/CW workgroup.
2. Access Action button.
3. Select **New Case**.
4. Initiating Case defaults to Previous Parents' case.
5. Enter Case open date using the Date picker. This date should reflect the date A/G services began (the date that Guardianship was transferred to the Commissioner of Human Services).
6. Select a workgroup from the Initiating Workgroup drop-down menu.
7. Select **Case Management** in the Type field.
8. Select **Adoption/Guardianship** in the program field.
9. Enter Workgroup open date using the Date picker.
10. Select unit in Assigned to unit field.
11. Select Access restriction in the Access restriction field.
12. Select the appropriate County of service.
13. Select the appropriate County of financial responsibility.
14. Select either **Self assign** and enter the Start date, or select **No change to assignment** to have it display on the Workgroup Assignment Log.
15. Select the Child Ward's name (and the foster parents' names and/or the pre-adoptive parents' names, if applicable) in the **Choose members to add** to the workgroup field.
16. Choose the child's name in the **Choose case name** field.
17. Choose the child's name in the **Choose workgroup name**.
18. Click **OK**.

## Child Ward Folder

The Child ward folder cannot be created until all parental relationships have been set to Inactive. (ex: Termination of Parental Rights). There are verifications needed under the Child Ward folder for the worker to submit information. You must create the Child Ward folder first and

then complete the required Verifications. The Child Ward folder has two tabs: Child Ward Information and Child Ward Event Summary.

Once verifications are saved with a verification date, the information is sent to SSIS at DHS. You can also create additional verifications, which will be a way to keep DHS workers notified of things such as, adding additional siblings.

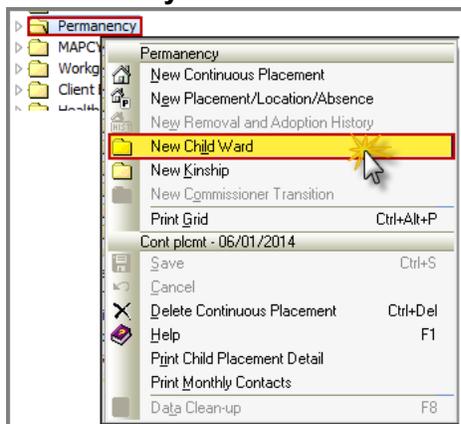
Requirements for opening a Child Ward folder:

- The SWNDX connection and connection to State Adoption Unit must be active in order to begin a New Child Ward.
- The child must have at least one Race entered
- All previous parent relationships must be Inactive to begin a New Child Ward.
- Permanency folder:
  - The child is one (and only one) open Continuous Placement must be entered to begin the New Child Ward entry and verification process.
  - On the Continuous Placement, on the Authority tab, the Authority entered must be court ordered.
  - If the child is in a pre-adoptive placement, and the foster parents have signed an Adoption Placement Agreement, on the Placement, the Setting must be Pre-adoptive home – relative or Pre-adoptive home – non-relative. The Placement Reason field must be Adoption.
  - On the Permanency Plan tab, the Primary Permanency Plan should be either Adoption – non-relative or Live with relatives – adoption.
- All child clients, previous parents (either biological or adoptive), foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, and all siblings must be cleared to SWNDX to begin a New Child Ward.

*Hints:*

- Agency workers enter the date of Guardianship as the date they received guardianship of the child from the court.
- On the Continuous Placement, on the Authority tab, the Authority entered must be court ordered.

### Permanency folder > New Child Ward



**Child Ward Folder> Child Ward information tab**

Child Ward Information		Child Ward Event Summary	
Guardianship type:	DHS guardianship	Effective date:	09/05/2014
Status at DHS:	Successful submission to DHS	Guardianship active:	Yes
Workgroup:	Vaughn Veronica V CP Case Management 07/26/2012		
Primary Contact:	Songbird, Louise		
AD Ward ID:	108524160	Person Ward ID:	209755988
DHS Number:			

*To Open a New Child Ward:*

1. Select the child's Permanency folder.
2. Access **Action** menu.
3. Select **New Child Ward**.
4. On the Child Ward Information tab, select Guardianship type of **DHS guardianship** or **Tribal guardianship**.
5. Select the **Effective date** of guardianship.
6. **Status at DHS** field defaults to **County initial set up**.
7. The **Guardianship active** field defaults to **Yes**.
8. Select the workgroup to be associated with the Child Ward from the **Workgroup** drop-down field.
9. Select the social worker's name to be the primary contact with the State Adoption Unit from the **Primary Contact** drop-down field.
10. The **AD Ward ID#** field auto fills with an SSIS system generated number.
11. The **Person Ward ID #** field auto fills with an SSIS system generated number.
12. Click **Save**.

The **Status at DHS** field displays initially with **County initial set up**. Once workers verify the Previous Parents, the status changes to **Successful submission to DHS**. Once the Child Ward has been set up on the state side, the status changes to **Active at DHS**. The Child Ward Event Summary tab maintains a record of actions in the child ward folder.

**Child Ward Folder> Child Ward Event Summary tab**

Child Ward Information		Child Ward Event Summary	
Event	Date	Worker	
▶ Previous parent verification	12/1/2014	Evans, Michael	
Sibling verification	10/22/2014	Evans, Michael	

## Verifications

Two types of verifications are required in Adoptions: **Sibling** and **Previous Parent**.

## 1. Sibling Verifications

All sibling relationships must be entered into SSIS prior to verifying sibling relationships to the State Adoption unit. If a sibling relationship known to the county or tribal worker does not display on the Sibling Verification screen, *do not* enter a Verified date, click Save, and return to the Child Ward's Client folder to enter the sibling relationship. If there are no siblings a Sibling Verification event is still required in order to verify there are no known siblings

### Sibling Verifications screen

The screenshot displays the 'Sibling Verifications' screen in SSIS. On the left, a navigation tree shows the 'Child Ward' folder expanded, with 'Sibling Verifications' highlighted. A red arrow points from this folder to the main content area. The main area shows a 'Sibling verification' form. At the top, there is a table with columns 'Type' and 'Name', containing one entry: 'Sibling Verification' with name 'Sibling verification - 10/22/2014'. Below this, the text reads: 'All known sibling relationships for this child have been entered into SSIS and are listed in the grid below. If the grid is blank, the grid is empty.' The form includes fields for 'Verified date' (10/22/2014) and 'Verified by' (Spagetti, Eddie). At the bottom, a table titled 'Child's sibling relationships in SSIS' lists the following data:

	Name	SWNDX #	Relationship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vaughn, Vanessa V	36803441	Half-sister
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vaughn, Vena V	37239405	Half-sister

#### To Verify Sibling Relationships:

1. Expand the **Child Ward** folder.
2. Highlight the **Sibling Verifications** folder
3. Access **Action** menu and select **New Sibling Verification**.
4. All Child sibling relationships entered in SSIS default as checked. Workers can uncheck sibling relationships that do not apply.
5. Double check that the sibling information entered is accurate.
6. Enter **Verified date**.
7. Enter **Verified by**.
8. Click **Save**.

If a circumstance arises where another sibling of the Child Ward comes to the attention of the county or tribal worker, e.g., a child living out of state with relatives, a newborn infant to the previous parent that is likely to become a child ward, or a known sibling that is likely to have DHS or Tribal guardianship established and needs sibling placement preference, the worker enters the relationship between siblings and creates a new Sibling Verification with the new sibling. A sibling verification event cannot be deleted.

## 2. Previous Parent Verification

SSIS requires entry of two birth parent relationships, or a minimum of one adoptive parent relationship, that are Inactive prior to allowing a social worker to create the previous parent verification. Workers should not enter Verified date and Verified by until all previous parent relationships have been entered and their status Inactivated.

## Previous Parent Verification screen

Type	Name
Previous Parent Verification	Previous parent verification - 12/1/2014

Previous parent verification

All pre-guardianship parents for this child are entered into the SSIS relationship screen and all parent/child relationships have been ended.

Verified date: 12/01/2014      Verified by: Woessner, Wendy A

Check the child's most recent previous parents

	Name	SWNDX #	Relationship	Inactive date	Inactive reason	Birth father detail
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vaughn, Veronica V	37239402	Birth mother	09/05/2012	Termination of parental rights	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Vincent, Vinnie X	37239408	Birth father	09/05/2014	Termination of parental rights	Adjudicated

To verify that all previous relationships have been inactivated:

1. Expand the **Child Ward** folder.
2. Highlight the **Previous Parent Verifications** folder
3. Access **Action** menu and select **New Parent Verification**.
4. Review list of Previous Parents for accuracy.
5. Use the mouse to click and check the check box indicating that each previous parent is indicated in the list and are to be verified as previous parents.
6. Click **Save**.
7. From the **Verified date** field, use the date-picker to select the date the county or tribal worker is verifying that they have ended all of the child's previous parents' relationships.
8. In the **Verified by** field, select the social worker's name from the drop-down field.
9. Click **Save**.

A dialog box displays upon saving when the Verified date and Verified by fields are entered, warning workers that verifying submits data to the state and finalizes the screen so that it is no longer editable and cannot be deleted. **Once Parent Verifications are complete, DHS staff is notified of the child and can start their portion of work in the Adoption process. Before this, the child is not known to DHS Adoptions staff.**

## Making a Pre-Adoptive Placement

When making an adoptive placement decision, the agency must:

- make an individualized determination of a child's needs based on 10 best interest factors.
  - assess (from review of the home study and background study) whether the prospective adoptive parent(s) has the capacity to meet the child's identified needs.
  - Provide the prospective adoptive parent a copy of the child's social and medical history plus redacted copies of all relevant attachments.

- [Instructions for Completing a Social and Medical History for a Child in Foster Care: DHS-6754-ENG](#)
- [Social and Medical History for a Child in Foster Care: DHS-6754A-ENG](#)
- [Information to Accompany a Social and Medical History for a Child in Foster Care and Acknowledgement of Receipt \(Optional\): DHS-6754B-ENG](#)

## Change Placement Setting and Foster Parent Relationship

Once the pre-adoptive family and the local agency sign an Adoption Placement agreement (APA) the placement setting should be changed from foster care to pre-adoptive.

- If the pre-adoptive family is the current foster family, change the placement setting from foster care to pre-adoptive.
- If the child is moving from their current foster home to the pre-adoptive home, end the foster home setting with the reason “pre-adoptive placement” and start a new placement with the setting “pre-adoptive home- relative “ or “pre-adoptive home- non-relative “
- Ensure the correct relationship of the child to the Foster parent is selected on the foster Parents tab of the Placement/Location/Absence folder.

### Foster Parents > Relationship

Placement - Legacy - 09/01/2013 **Foster Parents** Changes to this placement/location

**Jay Valentine**

Foster Parent

Name: Jay Valentine

Relationship: Aunt/uncle

---

**Judy Valentine**

Foster Parent

Name: Judy Valentine

Relationship: **Aunt/uncle**  
 Kin (tribal or ethnic)/previous foster parent  
 Grandparent  
 Other non-relative  
 Other relative  
 Stepparent

*To Change Placement Setting to Pre-adoptive home:*

1. Access the Placements/Locations/Absences or Placement **Action** menu and select **Change Placement Setting (Child with Same family)**.
2. Select **Pre-adoptive home** from the **Change Setting To** field.
3. Select the effective date.

### Changes to this placement/location tab > Setting field

Placement - Legacy - 11/01/2012		Foster Parents		Changes to this placement/location	
Setting	Reason	Workgroup	Bus Org / Provider	Location Description	
Foster family home - non-relative	Safety/stability	Vaughn Veronica V CP Case Management 07/26/2012	Annika & Lars Andersson Child Foster Care		

Placement / Location / Absence Information

Setting:

Reason:

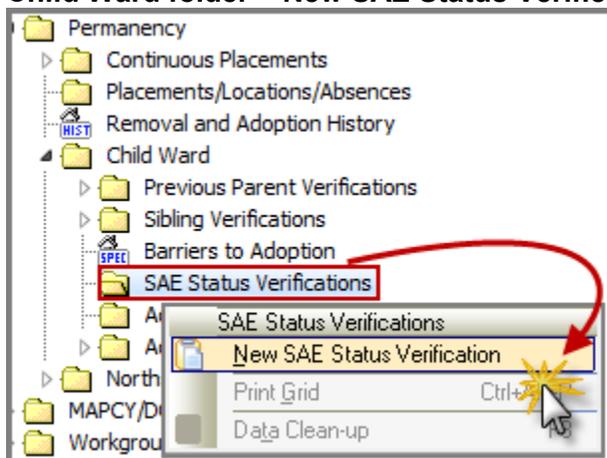
Start Date:   Entry Date:

Classification: **Placement - Legacy** Effective date:

## State Adoption Exchange Status Verification

The agency worker enters and verifies data in SSIS that is transmitted electronically to DHS as a State Adoption Exchange. This information must be submitted to DHS within 45 days of the child becoming legally free for adoption. Data entry options to meet this SAE requirement are:

- **Register** a child on the Exchange if adoption recruitment efforts are required because there is no identified adoptive resource for them. See specific instructions for registration in **Procedure V**. The only time you need to complete the SAE Registration document is when the child is Registered on the SAE.
- **Defer** a child from registration on the Exchange if: 1) A child's foster parent or other person is considering adoption; 2) Diagnostic testing is required to clarify a child's needs; or 3) A child is currently in a hospital setting and their care needs will not permit placement in a family setting. Deferrals for 1) or 2) are valid for 90 days only, with no subsequent deferral granted.
- **Exempt** a child from Exchange registration if a child: 1) Is in an adoptive placement, as indicated by the signing of an Adoption Placement Agreement (APA).
  - a. Secure matching site: [State Adoption Exchange at MN Adopt](#)
  - b. [MN Adopt public adoption photo web list](#)
  - c. Adoption email list serve

**Child Ward folder > New SAE Status Verification**

To Open an SAE Status Verification:

1. Expand the Child Ward Folder
2. From the SAE Status Verifications folder, Access the Action Menu and select **New SAE Status Verification**.

**State Adoption Exchange Status Verification - Exempt**

Type	Name
SAE Status Verification	SAE Status Verification

SAE status verification Document

SAE status verification

The SAE registration status information is correct. If the child is being registered, the SAE Registration Document is complete and accurate.

Verified date: 1/30/2015 Verified by: Bologna, Toni

Registration information

Registration status: Exempt

Reason: Child placed with parents under signed APA

***When completing an Adoptive Placement Verification, the system creates the SAE Status Verification, making the 'Registration Status: Exempt' and the 'Reason: Child placed with parents under signed APA'. If this is completed, workers will not have to create a new SAE exempt record.***

To enter Exempt for the SAE Registration Status Verification:

1. From the the SAE Status Verifications screen, select **Exempt** in the **Registration status** drop-down field.
2. Select **Child placed with parents under signed APA** as exemption reason in the **Reason** drop-down field.
3. Click **Save**.

4. Enter **Verified date**.
5. Enter **Verified by** name.
6. Click **Save**.
7. A warning displays and asks if you would like to continue. Select Yes if you want to save the SAE Verification or information or Select No if you do not want to.

The Verified date and Verified by name fields are disabled until the Registration status of Exempt is saved by the worker. No information displays on the Report or Document tabs with the Registration Status of Exempt.

**State Adoption Exchange Status Verification - Deferred**

*To enter Deferred for the SAE Registration Status Verification:*

1. From the the SAE Status Verifications screen, select **Deferred** in the **Registration** status drop-down field.
2. Select the reason the SAE registration is deferred in the **Reason** field.
3. Enter **Verified date**.
4. Enter **Verified by** name.
5. Click **Save**.
6. A warning displays and asks if you would like to continue. Select Yes if you want to save the SAE Verification or information or Select No if you do not want to.

Additional information about selecting Deferred:

- A Deferred status is only valid for 90 days. Deferred can only be selected on the first SAE Verification, otherwise a dialog box displays as below enforcing the need to select Exempt or Registered as the appropriate selection.
- The Verified date and Verified by name fields are disabled until the Registration status of Deferred is saved by the worker. No information displays for the County worker on the Report or Document tabs with the Registration Status of Deferred

**SAE Status Verification of Registered:**

1. Enter and save Registered on Registration status.

2. Document completely the Child Ward information on the Document tab so that it is ready for publication statewide and nationally by Minnesota Adoption Resource Network (MARN).
3. Complete SAE registration status verification.
4. The social worker mails an updated photo of the Child Ward directly to MARN.

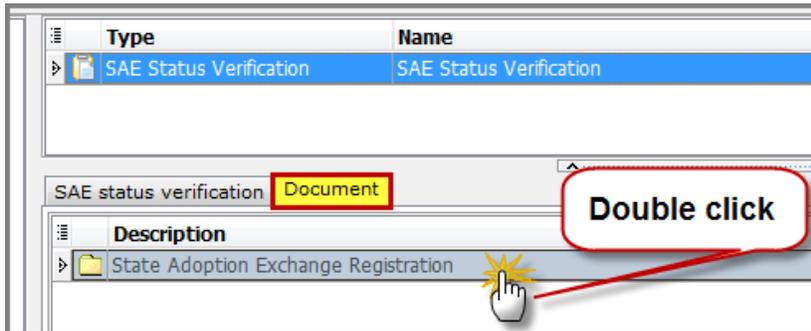
**State Adoption Exchange Status Verification – Registered**

The screenshot shows a software interface for SAE status verification. At the top, there are two tabs: "SAE status verification" (highlighted in yellow) and "Document". Below the tabs, the text reads: "The SAE registration status information is correct. If the child is being registered, the SAE Registration Document is complete and accurate." There are two dropdown menus: "Verified date:" with the value "1/22/2015" and "Verified by:" with the value "Worker, Second". Below this is a section for "Registration information" with a "Registration status:" dropdown set to "Registered" and a "Reason:" dropdown.

*To enter Reistered for the SAE Registration Status Verification:*

1. From the the SAE Status Verifications screen, in the **Registration** status drop-down field select Reistered.
2. Enter **Verified date**.
3. Enter **Verified by** name.
4. Select the **Document** tab.
5. Double click on the State Adoption Exchange Registration in the Setup tab displays. Review the Setup tab for accuracy.

**SAE Verification> Document tab**



**SAE Status Verification > Document tab > Setup tab**

SAE status verification **Document**

**Description**

State Adoption Exchange Registration

**Setup** Document Properties Document Properties

No required fields needed to complete.

Document template: State Adoption Exchange Registration

Description: State Adoption Exchange Registration

Gender: Female

Primary language: English

Qualifies under ICWA: No

Hispanic heritage: Yes

Race

Caucasian

Race: Caucasian

Tribe or ethnicity:

Tribal enrollment status:

Siblings:

Barriers to adoption

Documented physical, mental, emotional or behavioral disability

Barrier to adoption: Documented physical, mental, emotional or behavioral disability

Primary barrier: No

6. View and confirm information entered into the Setup tab.
7. Select the **Document** tab.

## State Adoption Exchange Registration: Documenting Child Ward Information for Minnesota Adoption Resource Network (MARN)

**State Adoption Exchange Registration**

**Agency Information**

Responsible Agency: Aitkin  
 Worker: Deligent, Sarah  
 Phone: (651)431-4791  
 Email: sarah@agency.mn.us  
 Registration Date:

**Child Information**

Name: Velma X Vaughn  
 DOB: 09/01/2012  
 Gender: Female  
 Primary Language: English  
 ICWA Applies: No  
 Hispanic Heritage: Yes

**Race Information**

Race	Tribe or ethnicity	Tribal enrollment status
Caucasian		

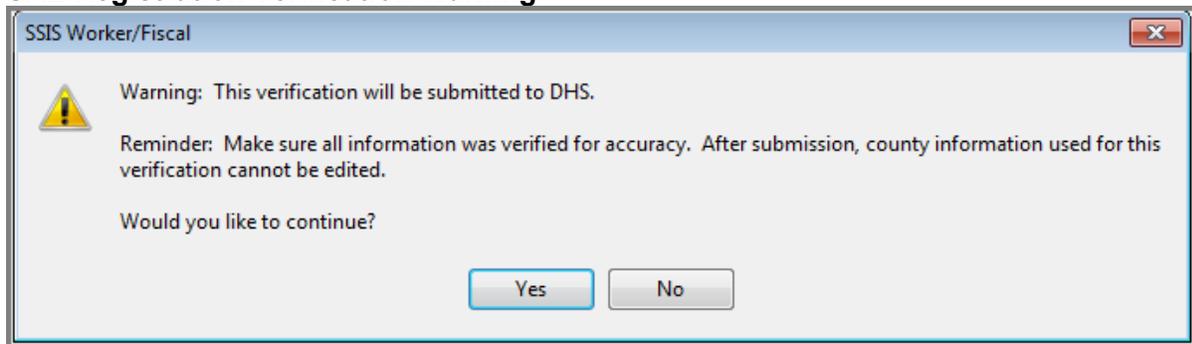
**Child Description (for publication)**  
 Describe the child's personality (for example: talkative, quiet, outgoing, shy, funny, helpful, introverted, anxious, laid-back, cautious).  
 <<< Click button to edit...

Describe child's favorites (for example: foods, subjects in school, TV shows or movies, music or singers, snorts, toys, season).

8. Enter all pertinent information in the Child description (for publication) section; Diagnosis information, and Worker Recommendations sections.
9. Click **Save**.
10. Select **SAE status verification** tab.
11. Enter **Verified date**.
12. Enter **Verified by**.
13. Click **Save**.
14. A warning displays, informing worker that after submission the SAE verification cannot be edited. Select **Yes** if you do want to submit the SAE Verification or **No** if you do not want to submit the SAE Verification
15. Immediately mail photo directly to the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network

*Hint:* Workers can utilize the Heart Gallery to get professional photos taken.

## SAE Registration Verification Warning



The information entered on the Document tab, and the photo of the child ward is published on the Minnesota Adoption Resource Network (MARN) website and the Federal USAdoptKids website to assist in recruiting permanent families for children under DHS Guardianship or Tribal Guardianship.

*To print an SAE Registration Document:*

1. Select the SAE Status Verification folder.
2. Select the **Document** tab.
3. Click the **Editor** button.
4. The SAE Document displays.
5. Select **Print**.
6. Click **OK**.

## Adoption Placement Agreement

The Adoption Placement Agreement (APA) is signed by the Responsible agency and prospective adoptive parent(s). Then, the Agency submits to DHS:

1. The Adoption Placement Agreement
2. The Adoption Placement Decision Summary
  - a. **Adoption Placement Decision Summary (DHS-0312A) requires information and documentation related to:**
  - b. Individualized determination of child's needs based on 10 best interest factors
  - c. Assessment of the pre-adoptive parent's ability to meet the child's identified needs
  - d. Summary or relative search efforts under 260C.221
  - e. Sibling status
  - f. Adoption background study (criminal and social services background checks)
  - g. Child's social and medical history
3. All required documentation as per the Adoption Placement Decision Summary:
  - The Agency may complete [Adoption Placement Decision Summary \(DHS-0312\)](#) or submit the child's current Out-of-Home Placement Plan.
  - Adam Walsh-compliant background study for each required household member 13 years of age or older, excluding the children who are to be placed for adoption.

- [Social and Medical History for a Child in Foster Care \(DHS-6754A\)](#) and [Optional Information to Accompany a Social and Medical History for a Child in Foster Care and Acknowledgement of Receipt DHS-6754B](#) **OR**
- [Birth Parent Social and Medical History \(DHS-3205\)](#) **AND**
- [Background and Health History – All Children in Out-of-home Care \(DHS-3235\)](#)
- Court order relieving the agency of relative search efforts, if applicable
- Court order approving sibling separation, if applicable.

When received, DHS will determine if all the requirements are met, including that the date on the APA is the same or after the “legally free” date

- DHS may request additional clarification from the Agency
- If denied, DHS will send notice to the Agency
- If the requirements are met, DHS will sign the APA on behalf of the commissioner, making it a **fully executed agreement**

### Chronology> Adoption Placement Agreement Document

Type	Description	Date	Setup Complete
Document	Adoption Placement Agreement	1/23/2015 12:30:50 PM	Yes
Document	Adoption Placement Decision Summary	1/23/2015 12:50:57 PM	Yes

Setup RTF Document Properties

DHS-0312

Adoption Placement Agreement  
for a Child Under Guardianship of the Comm...

Minnesota Department of Human Services

This agreement is between the pre-adoptive parent(s) and a county social service agency authorized by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services to children for adoption:  
On 01/23/2015 the Test County Family Services places with Anikka A Andersson a Andersson the child known to them as Velma X Vaughn, in consideration of the agreement made herein.

#### To Complete an Adoption Placement Agreement:

1. From the Workgroup Chronology folder, access the Action menu and select **New Document**.
2. Complete a document Template Search.
3. Highlight the **Adoption Placement Agreement** from the template list; click on Select.
4. Complete the **Setup** tab.
5. **Save**.
6. Select the **RTF Document** tab.
7. Select the blue “E” button. The Document displays.
8. Select the correct date that the APA is being executed. Ensure the child’s legal name is accurately entered. Print the Document to obtain needed signatures and submit to DHS

#### To Complete an Adoption Placement Decision Summary:

1. From the Workgroup Chronology folder, access the Action menu and select **New Document**.

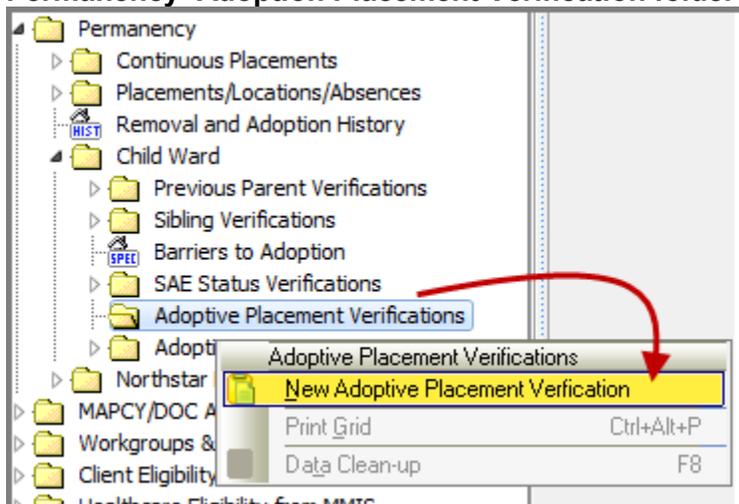
2. Complete a document Template Search.
3. Highlight the **Adoption Placement Decision Summary** from the template list; click on Select.
4. Complete the **Setup** tab.
5. **Save**.
6. Select the **RTF Document** tab.
7. Select the blue “E” button. The Document displays.
8. Ensure the child’s legal name is accurately entered. Complete the document and print for Submission to DHS, along with all required attachments.

## Adoptive Placement Verification

The Agency enters and verifies the date of the APA in SSIS. This is transmitted via SSIS Adoption Placement verification to DHS as an adoptive placement event. *The Effective date of the APA and SSIS verification cannot be before the effective date of the guardianship transfer court order to the Commissioner.*

When completing an **Adoptive Placement Verification**, the system creates the SAE Status Verification, making the 'Registration Status: Exempt' and the 'Reason: Child placed with parents under signed APA'. This will help DHS and MARN remove the child from the State Adoption Exchange timely.

### Permanency>Adoption Placement Verification folder



## Adoption Placement Verification folder

Type	Name
Adoptive Placement Verification	Adoptive placement

Adoptive placement

Adoptive Placement Verification

Placement: Placement - Legacy - 11/01/2012

Adoptive parents have been entered on SSIS as foster parents for the pre-adoptive placement. The signed Adoptive Placement Agreement (APA) has been sent or will be sent to DHS. Each adoptive parent listed on the APA is checked on the grid below.

Verified date:  Verified by:

Adoptive parents

	Name	SWNDX #	Relationship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Andersson, Anikka A		Other non-relative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Andersson, Lars L		Other non-relative

### To Complete an Adoption Placement Verification:

1. Expand the Child Ward folder; Highlight the **Adoptive Placement Verification** folder.
2. Access **Action** menu.
3. Select New **Adoptive Placement Verification**.
4. Verify the **Placement** field displays the appropriate placement.
5. Verify that the name of each pre-adoptive parent listed matches the names of the pre-adoptive parents that signed the Adoptive Placement Agreement.
6. Enter the **Verified date**.
7. Enter the **Verified by**.
8. **Save**.
9. A Warning displays, asking "Would you like to continue?" Select **Yes** or **No**.

### Adoption Placement Verification Warning

SSIS Worker/Fiscal

Warning: This verification will be submitted to DHS.

Reminder: Make sure all information was verified for accuracy. After submission, county information used for this verification cannot be edited.

Would you like to continue?

Yes No

## Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination

Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is used to determine a child's eligibility for Northstar Adoption Assistance, including Title IV-E. The agency with financial responsibility shall complete an Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, which includes Income Offsets, and an amount based on the MAPCY.

In order for the adoptive parents to receive Adoption Assistance benefits on behalf of the child, an eligible child must:

- Be determined eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance using the Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination **AND**
- Have a fully executed Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement **prior** to finalization.

The Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, completed primarily in SSIS, which includes initial Income Offsets, Required Documents, and Discussion Log, is created from the Child Ward node. The Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is used to generate one of the two Northstar Adoption Assistance Agreements.

Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination and Benefit agreements are automated. Two new documents are available under the Person > Documents node related to Adoption:

- Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement
- Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement

The Northstar Adoption Eligibility Determination includes a series of screens with questions that must be answered to determine both eligibility for the program and the funding source (Title IV-E or Non-Title IV-E funds). The series of questions varies depending on how each preceding question is answered. The worker then submits electronically to the State for approval.

The Financially responsible agency typically determines eligibility for Northstar Adoption Assistance, but DHS reviews and *affirms* or *denies* the agency's determination. A MAPCY needs to be approved prior to completing this (the rate auto fills in form). However, not all children who are adopted will qualify for a monthly Adoption Assistance benefit; a MAPCY is not required for children who are eligible as "at-risk only".

Before completing a Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination the following requirements must be met:

1. The child must be in a pre-adoptive placement for the purpose of adoption.
2. A Child Ward node must be created.
3. There must be a fully executed Adoption Placement Agreement (signed by pre-adoptive parents, agency, and DHS)
4. A Previous Parent Verifications must be completed
5. An Adoption Placement Verification must be completed
6. The child's status at DHS, on the Child Ward node, must be "Active at DHS"

When the Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is completed, DHS reviews this and approves, denies, requests additional information/documentation or requests corrections. After approval of the Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, the financially responsible agency or tribal worker will be notified that they may proceed with completing the Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement. The Northstar Adoption

Assistance Benefit Agreement is a person document and remains beneath the client's Person node no matter which workgroup(s) the client is associated with.

## Eligibility for Adoption Assistance

For a child to be eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance, a child must meet the "special needs" determination:

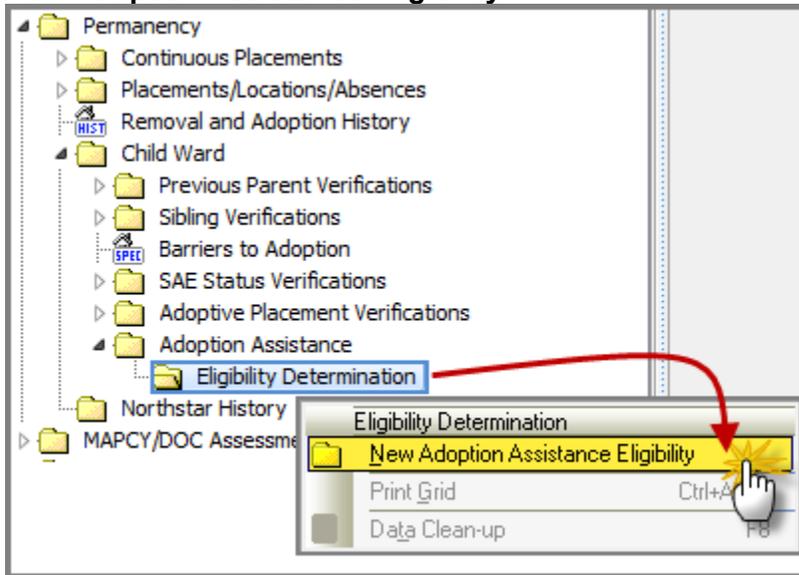
- Cannot or should not return home
- Reasonable efforts were made to place the child for adoption without providing adoption assistance
- Barrier to Adoption:
  - Has a specific factor or condition that makes it reasonable to believe the child cannot be adopted without providing adoption assistance:
    1. Determination by the SSA that the child meets all medical or disability requirements of title XVI of the Social Security Act with respect to eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.
    2. Documented physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability, but without SSI eligibility.
    3. Member of a sibling group being adopted at the same time by the same parent.
    4. Adoptive placement in the home of a parent who previously adopted a sibling for whom they receive adoption assistance.
    5. Documentation that the child is an at-risk child.
      - *These "at-risk only" children will receive no monthly benefit payment. These children may be eligible for Adoption Assistance in the future if a disability manifests.*

Additionally, for children who will be eligible for Northstar adoption Assistance, the rate is determined by the age of the child when the financially responsible agency sends the eligibility determination to DHS for approval. Children age 0-5 when the Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is submitted will receive the "Pre-school entry rate" sometimes also referred to as the "Alternate rate". Children age 6 or older when their Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is submitted DHS will receive the "School age rate" or "Standard rate", if they are eligible and not "at-risk" only. For more information about this, please refer to [DHS Bulletin 14-32-11](#).

## Completing the Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination document tabs

The Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination is created from the Child Ward node. There are four tabs in this document: Setup, Document, Properties, Income Offsets, Discussion Log and Required Documents.

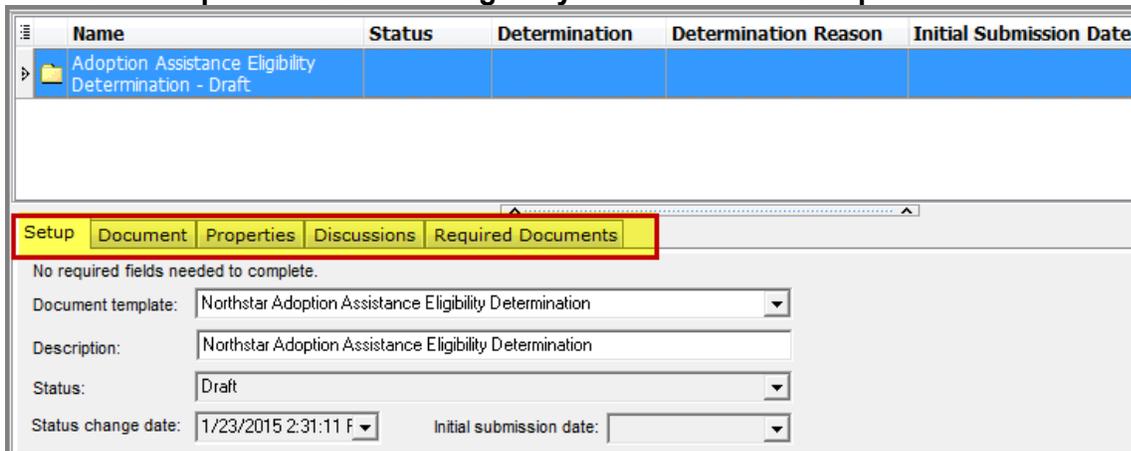
### New Adoption Assistance Eligibility



To complete an Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination Setup tab:

1. Expand the Child Ward folder and highlight the Adoption Assistance folder
2. Access the Action menu and select **New Adoption Assistance Eligibility**
3. On the Setup tab, in the Document template filed, select **Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination**. This autofills into the Description field; you can remove this and enter new information into the Description field if desired.
4. The Status field displays as **Draft** and the Status Change date displays the date/time the Adoption Assistance Eligibility document was opened.
5. Select the **Document** tab.

### Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination>Setup tab



### Document Tab

Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination Document will guide the user through a series of questions based on how the previous question was answered. As the questions are answered a list of required supporting documents is compiled. The user will need to review the

Required Documents Tab to view the list. Based on how the questions are answered, the Eligibility Determination Document will calculate the child’s eligibility for Adoption Assistance.

To Complete an Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination Document tab:

1. Review the fields on the Title Page and ensure the data that merged in from the Tree View folders is accurate.
2. Complete each section: **Age and Citizenship**, **Background Studies**, **Placement Information** (Barriers to Adoption), and **Eligibility Factors**. This document should be completed from top to bottom, as fields display based on how previous fields were answered.
3. The Complete checkbox auto checks to ensure this screen prints on the document.
4. Click on each Navigation bar (or advance the screens by clicking the double-arrows at the bottom right of the screen) and answer the questions as listed.
5. Click **Save**.

**Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination> Document tab> Title Page**

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination 15.1

Child Name: Velma X Vaughn	Birth Date: 09/01/2012
Worker Name: Janet R Bowman	Legal Status: DHS guardianship
Worker Email:	Worker Phone: (651)431-4642

**Previous Parent Verification**

Parent	Inactive Reason	Date
Birth father	Termination of parental rights	9/5/2014
Birth mother	Termination of parental rights	9/5/2012

**Placement Information**

Continuous Placement Episode: - present  
Placement Setting: 11/01/2012 - present

**Responsible Agencies**

Financially Responsible Agency: Test County Family Services

**Adoptive Parent Information**

Adoptive Parent 1: Anikka AAndersson  
Adoptive Parent 2: Lars L Andersson  
9595 Yellow Jacket St  
Sunnyville, MN 54555

Mailing Address:

Does the adoptive parent(s) for this child wish to apply for Northstar Adoption Assistance benefits?

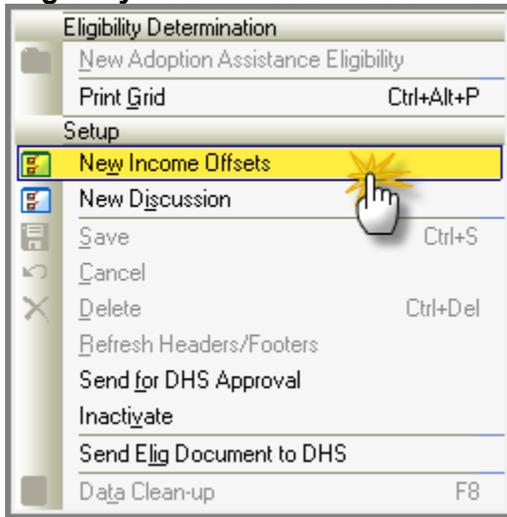
Alternate Print Format     Complete

Navigation: << >>

**Income Offsets**

Income offsets are required when sending NAA Eligibility Determination for Approval for an eligible child who is not “At-risk” only eligible. However, this tab does not automatically display with the other tabs, because it is used for both Northstar kinship Assistance (NKA) and Northstar Adoption Assistance (NAA).

**Eligibility Determination Action Menu > New Income Offsets**



*To Complete Income Offsets:*

1. From the Eligibility Determination folder, access the Action menu.
2. Select **New Income Offsets**. Income Offsets tab displays.
3. Complete entry in the fields to indicate if the child receives any income from: **RSDI**, **Veterans Benefits**, **Railroad Retirement Benefits**, **Black Lung benefits**, or from **SSI**.
4. **Save**. The **Total Income Offsets** displays.

**Income Offset tab**

Name	Status	Determination	Determination Reason	Initial Submission Date
Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination - Draft	Draft	Eligible for Title IV-E		

Setup | Document | Properties | **Income Offsets** | Discussions | Required Documents

Initial Income Offsets

Child Name:

Reporting Date:

Does the child receive any of the following  Yes  No

[RSDI: \(Social Security\)](#)

[Veterans Benefits \(VA\):](#)

[Railroad Retirement Benefits:](#)

[Black Lung Benefits:](#)

Total Income Offsets:  Benefit amount will be adjusted to reflect Total Income Offsets

Additional Monthly Income Offsets

[Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\):](#)

## Properties Tab

This tab displays basic information about the Adoption Document, including **Last Edited Date**, and **Last Changed By** fields.

### Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination > Properties tab

Setup	Document	Properties	Discussions	Required Documents
Kinship Document Properties				
Description:	Velma - Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination			
SSIS Document #:	213548677			
Created Date:	1/26/2015 9:53:36 AM	Created By:	Burns, Mister	
Initial Submission Date:		Pre-school Indicator:		
Status:	Draft			
Determination:	Eligible for Title IV-E			
Determination Reason:				
Infant Benefit Level:		Child Benefit Level:		Teen Benefit Level:
Last Edited Date:	1/26/2015 10:15:32 AM	Last Changed Date:	1/26/2015 10:15:32 AM	Last Changed By:
				Burns, Mister
Template Properties				
Name:	Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination			
Document Template #:	282470			
Document Identification:	07/29/2014			
Format:	Forms			
Description:	Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination 15.1			

## Discussion tab

Use the Discussion tab to communicate (i.e. instead of sending an email) between the Agency and DHS. This allows you to retain communications specific to a person.

Action Menu options for the discussion tab are:

- New Discussion-To begin a new communication with DHS.
- Print Grid-To print your screen
- Show Discussion Details-To view detail communications between the Agency and the State.
- Save- to save the communication.
- Cancel- To exit without saving.
- Copy Preview to Clipboard-To copy your entry to the clipboard.
- Add Comment- To add a comment to an existing discussion.

**To start a New Discussion:**

1. From the Discussion tab, access the Action menu
2. Select New Discussion
3. The fields Discussion #, County code, and Agency Name autofill. Select a **Response Code** and in the **Description** field, and type the new discussion.

**To Add A Comment to a Discussion:**

1. From the Discussions tab, highlight in the grid the discussion to which you want to add a comment.
2. Access the action menu and select **Add Comment**. Add Comment box displays.
3. Write Comment and Select **OK**.

**Discussions Tab> Add Comment**

The screenshot displays the 'Discussions Tab' interface. At the top, there is a grid with columns 'Status' and 'Description'. The second row is highlighted in blue and contains 'Draft' and 'Have you received all 10 documents that I emailed to you on 01/25/2015'. Below the grid is a form with fields for 'Discussion #', 'County Code', 'Agency Name', and 'Response Code'. The 'Description' field contains the text 'Have you received all 10 documents that I emailed to you on 01/25/2015 ?'. Below the form is another grid with columns 'User First Name', 'User Last Name', 'Agency Name', and 'Posted Date/Time'. The first row shows 'Alma Swada Aitkin' and '1/26/2015 2:18:57 PM'. Below this is a comment: 'E-mailed document QQQ on 01/26/2015'. The second row shows 'Alma Swada Aitkin' and '1/26/2015 2:18:13 PM' with the comment 'E-mailed a birth certificate this morning 01/26/\*2015'. At the bottom left, there is an 'Action' dropdown menu. A blue arrow points from the 'Action' menu to the 'Add Comment' option in a context menu that is open over the highlighted discussion row. The context menu includes options like 'New Discussion', 'Print Grid', 'Show Discussion Details', 'Save', 'Cancel', 'Delete', 'Copy Preview to Clipboard', 'Add Comment', and 'Data Clean-up'. The 'Add Comment' option is highlighted in yellow and has a mouse cursor over it.

**Required Documents tab**

There are several required documents to submit to the State. Use the Required Documents tab to select the specific document your Agency is submitting to DHS. DHS will verify receipt and accuracy of document(s). The documents required will differ based on the information entered in the Document and Income Offsets tabs. First click on the page for the Requirement Met By drop-down menus to display. Use the drop-down menus to identify the appropriate documents to satisfy this requirement.

## Required Documents tab

Requirement Needed	Requirement Met By	Comment	State Received	State Verified	Submission Method
Documentation of sibling's adoption assistance	Signed Placement Agreement or tribal equivalent	E-mailed to DHS Staff Ramona Quimby on 01/25/2015	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emailed
Placement Agreement or tribal equivalent	Signed Placement Agreement or tribal equivalent		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### To Complete the Required Documents Tab:

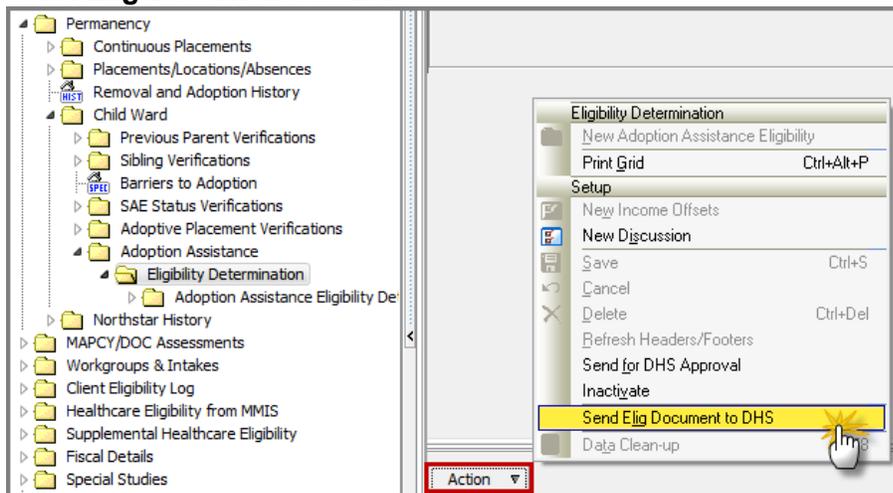
1. Click on the **Required Documents** tab.
2. For each field repeat the following steps:
  1. Select the required document from the **Requirement Met By** field drop-down menu.
  2. Select the submission method from the **Submission method** drop-down menu.
  3. Enter comment in the **Comment** field if/as applicable.
  4. Click **Save**.

DHS staff will review and indicate if they have received the documentation and if it has been verified by checking the applicable boxes for each Required Document.

### To Send Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination Documentation to DHS

1. From the Eligibility Determination folder, Access the Action menu
2. Select **Send Elig documentation to DHS**. A dialogue box displays, stating **Document Sent**.

## Send Elig Documents to DHS



## Declining Northstar Adoption Assistance

If a prospective adoptive parent chooses not to apply for NAA, have the parent sign a *Prospective Adoptive Parent Statement to Decline Northstar Adoption Assistance*, found in the Child's Documents folder. Submit a copy to DHS. The NAA Eligibility Determination must still be completed; this form will document the adoptive parents' choice to "opt-out" of Northstar Adoption Assistance.

### Setup tab >Declining Northstar Adoption Assistance

Does the adoptive parent(s) for this child wish to apply for Northstar Adoption Assistance benefits?	No ▾
--	------

### Sending Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination to DHS for Approval

After the agency completes the adoption eligibility determination screens, has sent all *supporting documentation* to DHS, the final step in NAA eligibility determination is for the agency to send the eligibility information to DHS for Approval in SSIS

*To Send for DHS Approval:*

1. From the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination screen, while on the Setup tab access the **Action** menu.
2. Select **Send for DHS Approval**.

### DHS Review of Northstar Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination

The State must confirm all determinations and requests, even when the child is not eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance or the adoptive parents have declined. After agency submits eligibility determination *plus all supporting documentation* to DHS, DHS will review and respond:

- Affirming agency's decision (approval or denial)
- Denying agency's decision (approval or denial).
- Requesting additional information/documentation and/or corrections.
  - When DHS sends back to the Agency for a correction, the Agency will need to complete the request and re-send for DHS approval.

*If DHS affirms approval, it will notify the agency of the correct Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement to use based on:*

- Title-IV-E/ Non IV-E
- Preschool/ School Age
- At risk

### Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement

After DHS approval of the Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination, the financially responsible agency worker will be notified to proceed with completing the Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement. Once notified, select the correct Northstar Adoption Assistance (NAA) Benefit Agreement in SSIS:

- Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement
- Northstar At-Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement

After the NAA Benefit Agreement is fully executed, the adoption petition may be filed. ***Court may order adoption finalization at any time, but it will impact the child's eligibility for Northstar Adoption Assistance.*** The Adoption petition is required to be filed within nine months of the adoptive placement. The Petitioning adopting parent must be at least 21 years old, with some exceptions for relatives. There is no Minnesota state residency requirement. A responsible agency may file an adoption petition on behalf of a willing prospective adoptive parent. This petition should be filed in county court conducting post-guardianship review hearings.

The following items should be filed with petition:

- Judgment, Order and Decree
- Adopting parent(s) home study and background study
- Fully executed Adoption Placement Agreement
- Child's social and medical history
- Names of persons who must be given notice

Filed after petition, but before finalization:

- Certified copy of child's birth certificate
- Certified TPR/guardianship transfer orders
- Communication or contact agreement
- Certification that the Minnesota Father's Adoption Registry (MFAR) has been searched
- Original of each consent required
- Post-placement assessment and report to court
- Minnesota Department of Health forms include the Certificate of Adoption and Birth Certificate Application

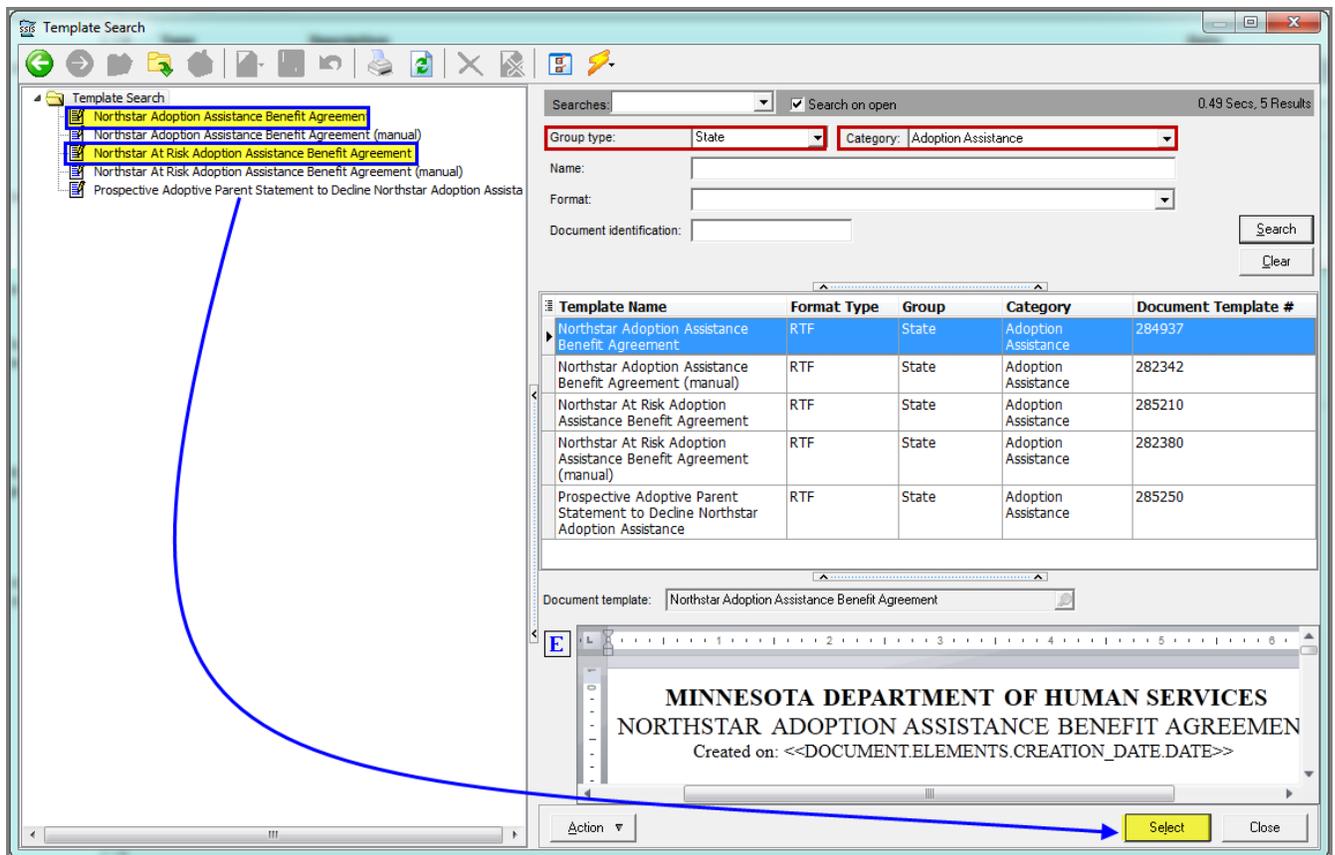
*Hint:* Refer to the Adoption Process Checklist or your Supervisor for additional information or direction.

The Northstar Adoption Benefit Agreements are Person documents, located beneath the client's node in the Tree View. Person documents remain with the client no matter which future workgroup(s) the client becomes associated with. There are three tabs in this document: Set up, RTF Document , and Properties.

*To Create a Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement:*

1. From the child's Document folder, access the Action menu and select **New Document**.
2. Complete a Document Template Search.
3. Select State in the Group Type field and Select Adoption Assistance in the Category field.
4. Highlight the correct **Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement**; choose **Select**.

**Template Search > Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreements**



### To Complete the Setup tab and RTF Document Tabs

1. On the Setup tab, complete all applicable fields.
2. Click the **RTF Document** tab and click the Blue E, editor button. Ensure the document is complete and accurate.
3. **Save**.
4. Click **Print** to print a copy and obtain signatures of Case Worker, Supervisor, adoptive parent (s).
5. Send to DHS staff for review and signature. The NAA Benefit Agreement must be:
  - a. Signed by adopting parents, workers, and supervisor.
  - b. Submitted to DHS in the mail (original signatures needed by DHS).

**Northstar At-Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement > Set Up Tab**

**Setup** | RTF Document | Properties

No required fields needed to complete.

Document template: Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement

Description: Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement

Status: Draft Finalized date:

---

Document

Document: Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement (manual)

Elements

Creation Date: 1/29/2015

Agency

Agency: Test County Family Services

Agency name: Test County Family Services

Is agency county or region: Yes

Participant

Participant: Velma X Vaughn

Name: Velma X Vaughn

Date of birth: September 01, 2012

18th birthday: September 01, 2030

What entry rate is being used? Pre-School Entry Rate (ages 0-5)

What is the funding source? Title IV-E

Display the language block? no

Are the Legally and Financially Responsible Agency the same? yes

Enter Adoptive Parent 1 name: Anikka A Andersson

Enter Adoptive Parent 2 name: Lars L Andersson

**Properties Tab**

This tab displays basic information about the Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement, including **Last Edited Date**, and **Last Changed By** fields.

## Northstar Adoption Assistance benefit Agreements > Properties tab

Setup	RTF Document	Properties
Document Properties		
Description:	Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement	
SSIS Document #:	214095510	
Created Date:	1/29/2015 4:13:24 PM	Created By: Star, Falling
Last Edited Date:	1/29/2015 4:22:12 PM	
Last Changed Date:	1/29/2015 4:22:12 PM	Last Changed By: Star, Falling
Template Properties		
Name:	Northstar At Risk Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement (manual)	
Document Template #:	282380	
Category:	Adoption Assistance	
Group:	State	Documents and Service Plans associated with templates with a "Template Status" of Inactive cannot be copied using the Copy Document and Copy Service Plan menu options.
Template Status:	Active	
Document Identification:	10/30/2014	
Format:	Forms	
Description:		

When received, DHS reviews the Northstar Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement.

- **DHS must sign the Agreement to make it fully executed.**
- DHS will send an introduction/information packet to adopting parent(s) and worker.

## Adoption Finalization

Once an adoption has been finalized in court, there are several steps that need to be completed in SSIS.

- Enter Adoption finalization in Court Action
- End the Placement in the PLA folder
- End the Continuous placement in the Continuous Placement folder
- Enter a Finalization Verification

### Court Actions folder > Adoption Finalization

**Placement/ Location/Absence folder > End Placement**

### Continuous Placement folder > End Continuous Placement

Cont plcmt - 11/01/2014 Authority Removal Conditions Permanency Plans Reviews

Removal Information

Cont Placement #: 213548992

Start Date: 11/01/2014 Entry Date: 1/26/2015 1:51:49 PM

Target Population: Child welfare/protection

Supervising Agency: County social services Effective Date: 11/1/2014

Tribe:

Reason Discharged: Adoption finalized

Discharge Date: 01/28/2015 Discharge Entry Date: 1/28/2015 11:26:34 AM

Hours Out Of Home:  Less than 24 hours  24 or more hours

Is the child receiving SSI (Title XVI) or other Social Security, such as RSD?  Yes  No

Is the sole reason for this placement the child's disability?  Yes  No

Caretaker family structure prior to placement

Family Structure: Single female

Caretaker 1: Veronica V Vaughn

Caretaker 2:

AFCARS finalized adoptive placement information

Child was placed for adoption from: Within state

Child was placed by: Public agency

### Adoptive Placement Verifications > Finalize

Adoptive parents have been entered placement. The signed Adoptive Plac DHS. Each adoptive parent listed on

Verified date: 01/23/2015

Adoptive parents:

	Name
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Andersson, Ar
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Andersson, Le

Adoptive Placement Verifications

- New Adoptive Placement Verification
- Adoptive placement - 01/23/2015
- Disrupt
- Cancel Disruption
- Finalize**
- Cancel Finalization
- Save Ctrl+S
- Cancel
- Delete Ctrl+Del
- Data Clean-up F8

## Adoptive Placement Finalized Verification Screen

Adoptive placement

Adoptive Placement Verification

Placement: Placement - 0701/2014

Adoptive parents have been entered on SSIS as foster parents for the pre-adoptive placement. The signed Adoptive Placement Agreement (APA) has been sent or will be sent to DHS. The Adoptive parents checked in the grid below are listed on the APA.

Verified date: 01/02/2015 Verified by: Spagetti, Eddie

Adoptive Placement Finalized Verification

Verified date: 02/02/2015 Verified by: Spagetti, Eddie

Adoptive parents

	Name	SWNDX #	Relationship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bach, Roger	7851246932	Other non-relative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bach, Denise	7851246931	Other non-relative

Action

### To finalize an adoptive placement:

1. Select child's Placement node under the **Permanency** folder.
2. In the End reason drop-down field select Discharged from agency responsibility.
3. Enter End date.
4. Click **Save**.
5. Select child's **Continuous placement** node.
6. Enter Discharge reason of Adoption finalized.
7. Enter Discharge date.
8. In the AFCARS finalized adoptive placement information section, select **within state**, **Another state**, or **Another country** in the **Child was placed for adoption from** drop-down field.
9. In the Child was placed by drop-down field, select Public agency, Private agency, Tribal agency, Independent person, or Birth/legal parent.
10. Click **Save**.
11. Select Adoptive Placement Verifications folder under Child Ward folder.
12. Access **Action** menu.
13. Select **Finalize**.
14. Confirm the adoptive parents checked in grid are accurate.
15. Enter Verified date.
16. Enter Verified by.
17. Click **Save**.

### Cancel Adoption Finalization

Finalization only works when a worker has verified the adoptive placement finalization by entering information in the Verified date and Verified by fields.

### To cancel finalization of an unverified finalized adoptive placement:

1. Select Adoptive Placement Verification folder.
2. Access **Action** menu.
3. Select Cancel Finalization.

## Adoption Disruptions

If a pre-adoptive placement disrupts before the adoption is finalized, the agency county is required to enter the disruption into SSIS.

### *To disrupt a pre-adoptive placement:*

1. From the Permanency folder, expand the Placement/Location/Absences Folder.
2. In the **End reason** drop-down field choose Pre-adoptive placement disruption.
3. Enter **End date**.
4. In the **Disruption reason** drop-down field, select one:
  - a. Agency decision
  - b. Parent request
  - c. Child request
  - d. Tribe decision (ICWA child only)
  - e. Court initiated
  - f. Death of caregiver
5. In the **Disruption detail** drop-down field, select the appropriate option.
6. Click **Save**.

### End Placement – Pre-adoptive Placement Disruption

End reason:	Pre-adoptive placement disruption	
End date:	01/28/2015 3:30PM	End Entry Date: 01/28/2015 4:30PM
Disruption reason:	Agency decision	
Disruption detail:	Unable to meet Child's Needs	

7. Select the Adoptive Placement Verifications folder.
8. Access **Action** menu.
9. Select **Disrupt**.
10. Enter Verified date.
11. Enter Verified by.
12. Click **Save**.
13. Select Placements/Locations/Absences folder.
14. Access **Action** menu.
15. Select New Placement/Location/Absence.
16. Enter child's new placement information.
17. Click **Save**.

### Adoptive Placement Disruption Verification

Adoptive placement

Adoptive Placement Verification

Placement: Placement 01/22/2015

Adoptive parents have been entered on SSIS as foster parents for the pre-adoptive placement. The signed Adoptive Placement Agreement (APA) has been sent or will be sent to DHS. The Adoptive parents checked in the grid below are listed on the APA.

Verified date: 06/19/2008 Verified by: Jam, Cherry

Adoptive Placement Disruption Verification

Verified date: 01/28/2015 Verified by: Jam, Cherry

Adoptive parents

	Name	SWNDX #	Relationship
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bach, Roger		35114437 Other non-relative
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bach, Denise		35114440 Other non-relative

Action

### Adoptive Placement Cancel Disruption Action Menu

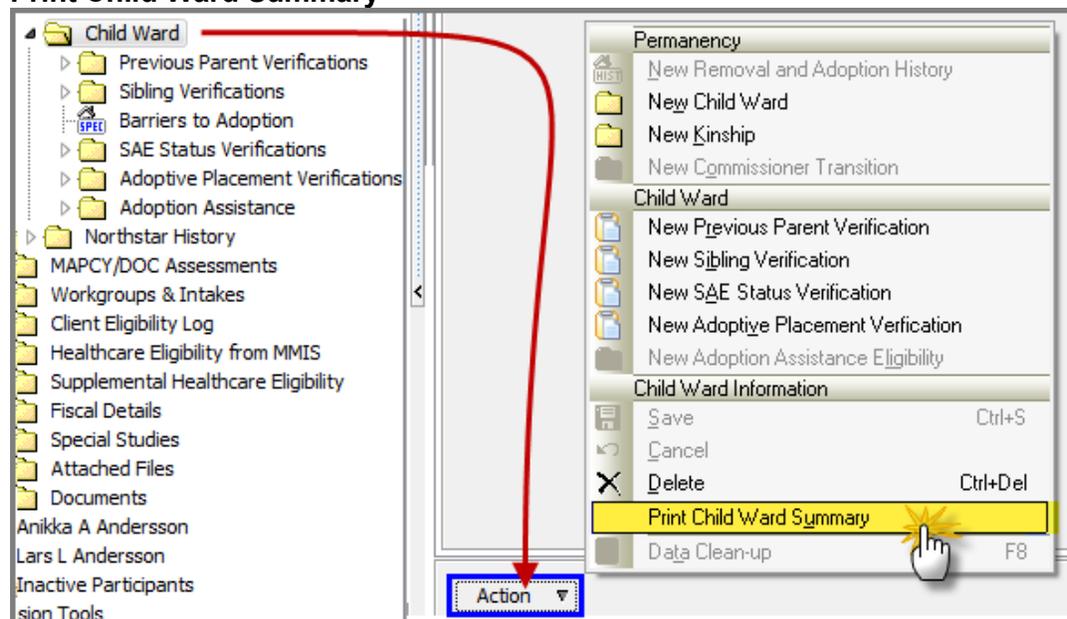
Adoptive Placement Verifications

- New Adoptive Placement Verification
- Print Grid Ctrl+Alt+P
- Select Configuration
- Save Configuration
- Disrupt
- Cancel Disruption**
- Finalize
- Cancel Finalization
- Save Ctrl+S
- Cancel
- Delete Ctrl+Del
- Data Clean-up F8

To cancel an unverified disruption of an adoptive placement:

1. Select the disrupted Adoptive Placement Verification node.
2. Access **Action** menu.
3. Select **Cancel disruption**. (This is only available before the verified date field is selected and saved).

## Print Child Ward Summary



### Print a Child Ward Summary:

1. Select the **Child Ward** folder.
2. Access the **Action** menu and select **Print the Child Ward Event Summary**.
3. The **Setup** tab displays; select Report Sections you would like to display (all sections check-boxes are default as checked).
4. Select the **Search** button. The Child Ward Summary displays on the preview tab.
5. Review and select **Print**.

### To close an Adoption/Guardianship workgroup:

1. Complete AFCARS Data Clean-up requirements
  - a. Access **Action** menu and select Data Clean-up.
  - b. Complete all data clean-up
2. Select the tree tab.
3. Select the Adoption/Guardianship Case Management Workgroup folder.
4. In the Close reason drop-down field select the appropriate close reason.
5. Enter **Close date/time**.
6. Click **Save**.

### Close Adoption/Guardianship Workgroup

Identification			
Name:	Vaughn Velma X A/G Case Management 10/1/2014		
Description:	Vaughn Velma X	SSIS Workgroup #:	213547706
Type:	Case Management	Agency Workgroup #:	
Program:	Adoption/Guardianship	SSIS Case #:	213547701
		Agency Case Extension:	
Status			
Start Date / Time:	10/1/2014	12:00 AM	Status: Open
Close Reason:	Services completed, no further service necessary		
Close Date / Time:	01/30/2015	10:30 AM	Destruction Date:
Security / Workers			

## Adoption Reports Available

- Child Wards Without SAE Verification
- Child Wards With Deferred SAE Registration
- Child Wards and Adoption Events

The security function "Access adoption reports" is required.

#### To Access Adoption Reports:

1. Click **Tools** on the Main application menu.
2. Select General Reports.
3. Expand **Adoption** folder.
4. Select Child Wards Without SAE Verification, Child Wards With Deferred SAE Registration or Child Wards and Adoption Events report node.
5. Complete **Setup** tab.
6. Click **Search**.
7. View report details on **Preview** tab.