

Continuous Certification and OCAF Transition

Ohio Certification for Agencies and Families (OCAF): Continuous Certification

What is continuous certification?

The Department of Children and Youth (DCY) will be transitioning to a continuous certification process for agencies, foster homes, and adoption homes on January 1, 2025. This will include all DCY certified agency function types as well as DCY-certified resource providers and approved adoptive providers. The continuous certification process will streamline the agency application process by reducing paperwork and allowing more flexibility in time frames, allowing agencies and resource caregivers to serve families and children more efficiently in Ohio. With the reduction in administrative tasks, DCY staff and agency staff can commit more time to initially certifying DCY agencies and resource caregivers. For more information on the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) changes, please see the [DCY Guidance Letter 24-031](#) 'Conversion for Continuous Certification'.

How will this impact agencies?

All agencies, regardless of where they fall in continuous certification, will utilize Ohio Certification for Agencies and Families (OCAF) to document certification activities.

For agencies working to be certified by DCY:

- Certification activities will continue to be completed in Ohio's Certification And Licensing Management (OCALM) system until January 1, 2025.
- The agency's application and certification materials will be converted from OCALM to OCAF prior to January 1, 2025, where they will finish the remainder of their certification activities.
- The agency will no longer utilize OCALM system.
- The agency's information will be converted from OCALM into OCAF as of OCAF's Agency Certification deployment.

For DCY certified agencies who have not completed at least one recertification:

- The agency will automatically convert to an initial four-year certification. The updated certificate will be available to be printed.
- The agency will no longer utilize OCALM system.
- The agency's information will be converted from OCALM into OCAF as of OCAF's Agency Certification deployment.

For DCY certified agencies who have completed at least one recertification, as of January 1, 2025:

- The agency will be transitioned to continuous certification and will no longer have an end date on their certificate through OCAF. The updated certificate will be available to be printed.
- The agency will no longer utilize OCALM system.
- The agency's information will be converted from OCALM into OCAF as of OCAF's Agency Certification deployment.

For DCY certified agencies whose recertification expires before January 1, 2025:

- The agency's certificate has or will be extended out by 6 months.
- The agency will have or has already had an additional visit in lieu of recertification.
- As these agencies have come up for recertification, their assigned licensing specialist has been communicating with them (as they approach the 120 days before their certification expires).
- The agency will still need to submit their financial audits, as normal for review in OCALM until OCAF is live. The information entered in OCALM will be converted over to OCAF.
- The agency will no longer utilize OCALM system.
- The agency's information will be converted from OCALM into OCAF as of OCAF's Agency Certification deployment.

For agencies who wish to submit an inquiry:

- The agency will be able to submit an inquiry through OCAF on January 1, 2025.

How will this impact foster and adoptive homes?

All foster and adoptive homes, regardless of where they fall in continuous certification, will continue to utilize Ohio Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) to document certification activities until OCAF's Home Certification functionality is deployed. The functionality is not planned to be deployed for the next year or more.

If a DCY certified foster or approved adoptive home has not completed at least one recertification:

- The home will automatically convert to an initial four-year certification or approval on January 1, 2025. The updated certificate will be available to be printed from Ohio SACWIS.
- The agency will continue to complete the certification of foster homes and approval of adoptive homes in Ohio SACWIS, and all homes will have a four-year certification period. **This process is only temporary for conversion purposes.**

If a DCY certified foster home has completed at least one recertification:

- The home will automatically be transitioned to a continuous certification. To ensure reminders and notifications are accurate, there will be a four-year expiration listed in Ohio SACWIS. The updated certificate will be available to be printed.
- The agency will continue to complete the certification of foster homes and approval of adoptive homes in Ohio SACWIS, and all homes will have a four-year certification period. **This process is only temporary for conversion purposes.**

To facilitate the transition to continuous certification in Ohio SACWIS, the system will update all certified or approved foster and adoptive homes by updating the home's expiration date and extending it by 2 years effective January 1, 2025. For example, if a foster home certification expiration is set for February 1, 2025, Ohio SACWIS will be updated on January 1, 2025, to extend the expiration date to February 1, 2027.

The extension for all homes will align certification/approval timeframes with the continuous certification rule changes. Agencies will not be required to complete anything outside of their normal processes for certification/approval of their homes.

As more functionality is released to OCAF, conversion efforts will occur to ensure all necessary and relevant data is brought from OCALM or Ohio SACWIS into OCAF.

How to prepare?

Internal and external trainings have been scheduled to help facilitate the transition to continuous certification rules and OCAF. Two external trainings will be held, allowing users to select which date/time works best for their schedule. The first is scheduled for December 2, 2024, and the second, January 7, 2025. Links to register for the training and potentially more dates will be communicated through the DCY [Continuous Certification and OCAF SharePoint Site](#).

- [Link to register for Dec. 2, 2024, 1-3 p.m.](#)
- [Link to register for January 7, 2025, 9-11 a.m.](#)

If you have additional questions pertaining to this DCY Update:

- Visit the [Continuous Certification and OCAF SharePoint Site](#)
- Visit the DCY Systems' [Customer Care Center](#)