

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT[441]

Regulatory Analysis

Notice of Intended Action to be published: 441—Chapter 117
“Foster Parent Training”

Iowa Code section(s) or chapter(s) authorizing rulemaking: 237.5A

State or federal law(s) implemented by the rulemaking: Iowa Code chapter 237

Public Hearing

A public hearing at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

November 3, 2026
10 a.m.

Microsoft Teams
Meeting ID: 248 759 469 701 592
Passcode: P7mr37nG

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this Regulatory Analysis, which must be received by the Department of Health and Human Services no later than 4:30 p.m. on the date of the public hearing. Comments should be directed to:

Victoria L. Daniels
Department of Health and Human Services
Lucas State Office Building
321 East 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Phone: 515.829.6021
Email: compliancerules@hhs.iowa.gov

Purpose and Summary

This chapter was reviewed as part of the Red Tape Review process laid out by Executive Order 10. As a result of this review, restrictive terms were removed, areas that were duplicative were combined or eliminated, and editorial updates were made to processes and procedures to ensure they reflect current policies and procedures. This proposed chapter sets forth requirements for foster parent orientation, preservice training, and in-service training. These proposed rules also set standards for becoming certified as an approved foster parent training provider.

This proposed rulemaking also implements 2026 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2096, by referring preservice training requirements back to Iowa Code section 237.5A.

Analysis of Impact

1. Persons affected by the proposed rulemaking:

• Classes of persons that will bear the costs of the proposed rulemaking:

This proposed rulemaking does not have a cost to the public.

• Classes of persons that will benefit from the proposed rulemaking:

Potential foster children and foster families will benefit from having clear, concise, and accurate rules regarding the required training necessary to become a foster parent.

2. Impact of the proposed rulemaking, economic or otherwise, including the nature and amount of all the different kinds of costs that would be incurred:

- **Quantitative description of impact:**

In State fiscal year 2026, 429 potential foster families started preservice trainings to become licensed foster care homes and a total of 623 new foster families were approved to be licensed.

- **Qualitative description of impact:**

Potential foster children and foster families will benefit from having clear, concise, and accurate rules regarding the required training necessary to become a foster parent.

3. Costs to the State:

- **Implementation and enforcement costs borne by the agency or any other agency:**

There are no implementation or enforcement costs aside from personnel expenses.

- **Anticipated effect on State revenues:**

This proposed rulemaking is not expected to have an effect on State revenues.

4. Comparison of the costs and benefits of the proposed rulemaking to the costs and benefits of inaction:

Rulemaking is required by Iowa Code section 237.5A.

5. Determination whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rulemaking:

Not applicable.

6. Alternative methods considered by the agency:

- **Description of any alternative methods that were seriously considered by the agency:**

Not applicable.

- **Reasons why alternative methods were rejected in favor of the proposed rulemaking:**

Not applicable.

Small Business Impact

If the rulemaking will have a substantial impact on small business, include a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rulemaking on small business:

- Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rulemaking for small business.

- Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rulemaking for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Consolidate or simplify the rulemaking's compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

- Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rulemaking for small business.

- Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rulemaking.

If legal and feasible, how does the rulemaking use a method discussed above to reduce the substantial impact on small business?

This proposed rulemaking is not expected to have an impact on small business.

Text of Proposed Rulemaking

ITEM 1. Rescind 441—Chapter 117 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 117
FOSTER PARENT TRAINING

441—117.1(237) Required preservice training. Foster parent preservice training shall be offered by the department or by a public or private agency with expertise in the provision of child foster care or related subject areas through a training program that has been offered or approved by the department.

117.1(1) Preservice training requirement. Each individual foster parent applicant shall complete the entire preservice training as approved by the department.

- a. Applicants shall complete preservice training before receiving a license for the first time.
- b. Applicants shall retake the preservice training as prescribed by the department if the applicants do not complete the curriculum within 24 months after initially commencing it.
- c. The department may waive the preservice training requirement in whole or in part when the department finds that:
 - (1) The applicant has completed relevant training or has a combination of relevant training and experience that is an acceptable equivalent to all or a portion of the required preservice training; or
 - (2) There is good cause for the waiver based upon the circumstances of the child and the applicant.

117.1(2) Preservice training program approval requirements.

- a. *Content.* The department will consider Iowa Code section 237.5A(1) “a” when developing preservice training for proposed individual licensees. At a minimum, the program will address the topics outlined in Iowa Code section 237.5A(2).
- b. *Missed content.* The department’s contracted agency or any approved agency shall devise a procedure for applicants to make up any portions of the preservice training that are missed.
- c. *Instructors.* The program shall be team-taught by at least two instructors. All instructors shall be approved by the department.
- d. *Group method.* The program shall be provided in groups that consist of three or more persons. The training shall be offered to a foster family individually only when the foster family is unable to attend group trainings as approved by the department.
- e. *Training certificate.* A certificate of completion shall be provided to each foster parent who completes the training.
- f. *Training evaluation.* A means for participants in the training to evaluate the instructors and the content shall be provided.
- g. *Training records.* A record of the applicants who begin and complete the training and of the training program evaluations shall be submitted to the recruitment and retention contractor.

117.1(3) Additional preservice training. Each foster parent applicant before licensure shall complete trainings on the reasonable and prudent parent standard as well as mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification.

441—117.2(237) Required orientation. All foster parent applicants shall attend orientation.

117.2(1) Method of provision. The approved agency may provide orientation:

- a. In a virtual or individual meeting with one set of foster parent applicants; or
- b. In a group setting.

117.2(2) Provider. Orientation shall be conducted by the contracting agency completing the family’s licensing study.

117.2(3) Content. Orientation shall be designed to provide the foster parent applicant with information on the policies and procedures of the foster care and adoption programs.

441—117.3(237) Application materials for in-service training. Applications for approval of an in-service training program shall be submitted to the department and must be approved before the delivery of the training.

117.3(1) Applications submitted after a training is completed will not be approved.

117.3(2) Applications shall be submitted with the following materials:

- a. A detailed training program description relative to a foster parent, including objectives, program agenda, content, participant materials, and time frames.
- b. The names of program instructors and their qualifications to provide the training.

441—117.4(237) Application process for in-service training.

117.4(1) Group training. Applications to provide group foster parent training shall be submitted to the department.

117.4(2) Individual training. Applications for approval for individual training, college credit, written materials, or prerecorded trainings shall be submitted to the department office for the service area in which the foster family resides.

441—117.5(237) Application decisions. The department will notify the applicant of the department's decision regarding the application for approval of in-service training within 30 days of receipt of the training materials. This notification will include the reason for not giving approval if approval is denied.

117.5(1) Approval. Foster parent training programs that meet the criteria in rule 441—117.1(237) or 441—117.7(237) and that are submitted will be approved by the department.

117.5(2) Denial. Preservice training programs and in-service training programs that do not meet the department criteria will be denied approval. The applicant may submit a revised program for approval at a later date.

117.5(3) Revocation. Approval will be revoked when any of the following exists and corrective action is not taken to correct the deficiencies within 45 days:

a. The training provider fails to provide the training to the department as described in the approved application materials.

b. Over 25 percent of the participant evaluations of the training program rate the training program as not helpful.

If approval is revoked, the training provider may submit a revised program at a later date.

441—117.6(237) Application conference available. If an applicant or provider of training objects in writing within seven days after the notification of the department's decision to deny approval, the department's area social work administrator will review the decision to determine if the original decision will stand. The decision of the department's area social work administrator is final and is not subject to appeal.

441—117.7(237) Required in-service training. The foster parent training plan shall be used to address in-service training needs. The training plan shall be developed with the department or contracted agency and the foster parent annually.

117.7(1) Providers of in-service training. Foster parent in-service training may be provided by the department or by a department-approved agency, institution, or association with expertise in the training content. Agencies, institutions, or associations wishing to have a foster parent in-service training program or workshop approved shall submit application materials pursuant to rules 441—117.3(237) and 441—117.4(237).

117.7(2) In-service training program approval requirements.

a. Content. The program shall relate to the foster parent's role in providing foster care and the skills needed by a foster parent. Training shall be specific to developing each foster parent's skills for addressing the needs of foster children.

b. Method. The training shall be provided through one or more of the following methods:

- (1) Face-to-face or interactive virtual training to a group.
- (2) Face-to-face or interactive virtual training to an individual foster family.
- (3) Written materials.
- (4) Pre-recorded trainings.

c. Approved training. Approved training includes workshops offered at the National Foster Parent Association's annual conference.

117.7(3) Foster parent training requirements. Each individual foster parent shall complete department-approved in-service training as recommended by the department annually when the foster parent has an approved one-year license or an approved two-year license.

a. Content. The choice of in-service training shall be based upon an assessment of the foster parent's training needs made by the foster parent and the approved agency in collaboration with the department.

b. Foster parent-specific training. Each foster parent must complete the specific training required in rule 441—117.8(237).

c. Documentation. The contracted or approved agency shall document training information and provide that information to the department when requested.

441—117.8(237) Specific in-service training required. Each foster parent shall complete an approved mandatory child abuse reporter training as required every three years after the foster parent's initial preservice mandatory child abuse reporter training relating to the identification of child abuse and the requirements and procedures for the reporting of child abuse.

117.8(1) Training provider. The foster parent shall be responsible for completing the required mandatory reporter training on child abuse identification and reporting in accordance with Iowa Code section 232.69.

117.8(2) Documentation. The foster parent shall secure documentation of the training content, amount, and provider and shall forward the documentation to the recruitment and retention contractor, who will provide the documentation to the department for inclusion in the foster parent's licensing file.

441—117.9(237) Foster parent training expenses. No expense stipend is provided for orientation or preservice training.

117.9(1) Training stipend. Each family that is issued an initial or renewal foster family home license shall receive a \$100 stipend to be used for the family's annual in-service training. The department's contracting agency shall issue one stipend per license on or after the date that the license is issued. When a family with a two-year foster family home license has completed the first training cycle of required in-service training, the contractor shall issue the next training stipend no earlier than the start of the second year of licensure contingent upon the foster family's completion of the in-service training hours in the first cycle. Foster families who elect not to receive the \$100 stipend shall notify the department and the contractor.

117.9(2) Trainer fees. Instructors who serve as trainers for approved preservice training programs shall each be paid a contract fee per class hour appropriate to community standards based upon the education and experience of each trainer. These rates shall be negotiated between the approved agency and the trainer.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 237.5A.