

CWS-CARES RFA Portal and FFPSA Portal Support

A guide on where to find resources, training, and support for the RFA Portal and FFPSA Portal.

RFA Portal

RFA (Resource Family Approval) supports the approval of foster and adoptive families. Today, RFA functionality is not available in CWS/CMS, so counties use separate systems to manage this process.



CARES
Child Welfare Services

CWS-CARES will integrate RFA functionality directly into the system, reducing duplication and streamlining approvals. This includes the **RFA Application Portal**, which allows prospective resource families to apply online and guides them through the application process with less paperwork. The link to the RFA Portal will be shared by CWS-CARES Go-Live.

RFA Portal Access

RFA Workers & Supervisors:

1. Log in to CWS-CARES.
2. Select **RFA Portal** from the **CARES Applications Menu**.
3. Access your Organization's dashboard.
4. Review and process RFA applications.

Applicants & Providers

1. Access the RFA Portal through the public RFA Portal link on the CWDS or county websites*.
2. Create a personal account through self-registration.
3. Log in to begin and complete the RFA application process.

Note: RFA Workers and RFA Supervisors can send an invitation to a prospective applicant through CWS-CARES, but only for Emergency Placements. In all other cases, applicants apply through the public link. Existing Resource Family Homes with an email address on file will also receive an invitation to log in to the portal.

*Not all county websites will include a link to the RFA Portal; Inclusion is determined by each county.

FFPSA Portal

FFPSA (Family First Prevention Services Act) supports the delivery and documentation of community-based prevention services.

CWS-CARES will integrate FFPSA functionality directly into the system, including the **FFPSA Portal**, which supports the submission and tracking of information related to prevention services and helps improve coordination and compliance with federal requirements.

FFPSA Portal Access

County and Organization Staff

1. Log in to CWS-CARES.
2. Select **FFPSA Assessment Portal** from the **CARES Applications Menu**.
3. Access your organization's dashboard.
4. Complete and review workflows.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

A county/organization adds the provider and their email address to CWS-CARES, which triggers the invitation email. **Once invited, the provider will:**

1. Receive an email to establish a password and update applicable information.
2. Log in to access the FFPSA Portal.

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RFA & FFPSA Support

Support for the RFA and FFPSA Portals is a coordinated effort between Organizations and the CWS-CARES Project.

The CWS-CARES Project will provide materials to help Organizations support portal users prior to CWS-CARES Go-Live.

Organization support teams (Tier 1) provide the first level of assistance. This includes helping applicants and CBO providers who don't know how to access or navigate the portal. RFA applicants contact the Organization handling their application. CBO users contact the Organization that invited them to the portal.

Issues an Organization cannot resolve are escalated by the Organization support team (Tier 1) to the CWS-CARES Project Team (Tier 2) through the CWS-CARES Help Desk. The Help Desk will provide advanced technical and portal support starting September 30, 2026. Beginning at CWS-CARES Go-Live, support will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays.

Self-Serve Password Resets

In both the RFA and FFPSA portals, users can reset passwords independently using a self-serve option which sends a reset link to the user.

The table below outlines the types of support handled by Organizations and the CWS-CARES Project.

Start with Organization	Org Escalates to CWS-CARES Project Support
• Business process questions • User roles/permissions • Logon and access issues • Questions about using the portal • Application or referral status	• System defects • Security-related concerns • Portal outages • Complex questions • Anything Tier 1 is unable to resolve

Tier 0

RFA/FFPSA Portal Users

Organization staff, RFA applicants, and CBO users. A question or issue comes up. Email the Organization support team (Tier 1).

Tier 1

Organization Support Team

Resolves it directly - or escalates to the Project team (Tier 2) through the CWS-CARES Help Desk

Tier 2

CWS-CARES Help Desk

Reviews and analyzes the item before contacting your Organization support team with the resolution.

Resources & Training Materials

CWS-CARES will continue to develop training materials and how-to guides to help Organizations provide support for both portals. These resources will be available on the CARES Training site. The following resources are available now:

RFA

- Instructor-Led Training (ILT): [RFA Training Guide](#)
- Train-the-Trainer Resources:
 - [RFA Facilitator Guide](#)
 - [RFA Training Deck](#)
- RFA Demonstrations: [RFA Demos](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions: [RFA FAQs](#)

FFPSA

- Instructor-Led Training (ILT): [FFPSA Training Guide](#)
- Train-the-Trainer:
 - [FFPSA Facilitator Guide](#)
 - [FFPSA Training Deck](#)
- FFPSA Demonstrations: [FFPSA Demos](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions: [FFPSA FAQs](#)