



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
Courier # 56-20-25

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October 12, 2011

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

DEAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF ADOPTION CHILD PLACING AGENCIES

SUBJECT: ADOPTION PROMOTION PROGRAM FUND

The Division of Social Services announces the availability of the Adoption Promotion Program Fund for SYF 2012. This funding, available to both public and private placing agencies, has made it possible for hundreds of children living in foster care homes or institutions to be adopted into safe and secure adoptive families.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this funding is to offer agencies that provide adoption services additional financial resources to improve their adoption program. The fund is paid to an agency that a.) recruits the prospective adoptive individual(s); b.) provides pre-placement screening; c.) trains the prospective adoptive individual(s); and d.) provides monitoring and support for the placement. Since departments of social services also receive federal funding to fulfill these tasks, they must complete a specific number of adoptions, referred to as their baseline, prior to receiving this funding (with the exception of the adoptions of teenagers – see details below). Private adoption agencies do not receive federal funding for these tasks, and therefore do not have to meet a baseline prior to receiving this funding.

Recruitment is defined as the agency's activities to locate and work with families that are not actively engaged in the adoption process, but are able and willing to care for children who are eligible for adoption.

Pre-placement Screening is defined as the agency conducting the process of mutual selection with the prospective adoptive individual(s) to determine if they meet criteria outlined in adoption law, rule and policy and will serve the best interests of our children.

Training is defined as the agency transferring the knowledge, skills and abilities to the prospective adoptive individual(s) in order to ensure a child placed with them will receive the care required and achieve permanency.

Monitoring and Support is defined as the agency's activities to ensure the prospective adoptive individual(s) have the long-term ability to meet the specific child's needs and promote the ongoing permanency of the placement.

BASELINE: The county's baseline is determined by reviewing the number of finalized adoptions from the Adoption Information Management System (AIMS) during the previous four years. After excluding the year with the highest number of adoptions, the remaining three years are averaged and become the county's baseline. County agencies should review the baseline information contained in Attachment 3 and contact the Division of Social Services within 15 business days if you believe the information is incorrect.

Since children age 13 and older are at high risk of aging out of foster care without finding permanence, payment for these adoptions may be made whether or not the county has met their baseline requirement. These adoptions may be counted toward the number of adoptions needed to meet the county's baseline goal.

SHARING FUNDING: The Adoption Promotion Program Fund is designed to encourage partnerships between public and private agencies to achieve permanence for children. Partnering agencies shall ensure that child/birth family and prospective adoptive family information are openly shared and communicated between both entities via the Information Sharing Partnership form ([DSS-5247](#)).

If the adopting family has only received services from the public agency, then the public agency is eligible for all of the funds. Where the private agency has primarily provided the above services, then the private agency is eligible for all of the funds. Funding is shared when public and private agencies work together to place a child. Legal clearance, preparing the child for adoption, legal paperwork and standard monthly visits to the child is the responsibility of the public agency and are not services to be considered under this sharing construct.

It is imperative that partnering agencies mutually determine their respective responsibilities in the adoption process (up front and in advance of the actual placement), the amount of payment that each agency will request and document such agreement using the Adoption Services Agreement Form (Attachment 1). Payment sharing should be in 25%, 50%, or 75% increments.

Public agencies are entitled to count the completed adoptions as part of their baseline goal regardless of how the funding is dispersed.

FUNDING AMOUNTS: The Adoption Promotion Program Fund payments can only be made after a Decree of Adoption has been issued for a child who has been deemed eligible (or potentially eligible) for adoption assistance. The payment levels for disbursement of the Adoption Promotion Program Fund for SFY 2012 are:

- \$7,200 per child for children 0-12 years old;
- \$12,000 per child for children who are part of a sibling group of three or more who are placed together at the same time in an adoptive family; and
- \$12,000 per child for children 13-17 years old.

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS: The full amount cannot be paid to two agencies for the placement of the same child. If an agency receives payment from other sources for these adoption services (recruit, pre-placement screening, train, monitor/support), that information should be reflected on the DSS-1571-Modified when reimbursement is requested. The Division cannot provide full amount of payment if agency has already received compensation.

FUNDING USES: Allowable use of these funds include the direct provision or purchase by contract of services included in the definitions of Adoption Case Management (009), Diagnostic/Treatment Services for Adoption (005), Adoption Services (010), Adoption Recruitment (011), Adoption Assistance Case Management (012), Child-Specific Recruitment/Assessment (013), Training of Adoptive Parents (014); and Post Adoption Case Management (016). Please refer to the Services Information System manual (<http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/rim-01/man/SIS.pdf>) for full details of each of these services. This would include the funding for contracts with out-of-state agencies that are willing to provide a family for your child. Funds cannot be used to supplant the salaries of county workers or for county automobiles. Funds received through the Adoption Promotion Program are to be used within 24 months beginning with the month in which the payments are made.

Each agency must submit a year-end report specifying:

- The total amount of money received for previous fiscal year;
- An itemized statement documenting how the money was (or will be) used to enhance and/or expand adoption services for the agency.

PROCEDURE FOR REIMBURSEMENT: To receive reimbursement from the Adoption Promotion Program Fund, participating agencies must do the following:

1. Verify the adoption assistance information has been entered into the Child Placement and Payment System by the county who held placement responsibility while the child was in foster care via the [DSS-5095](#). The Division is unable to process payment for any child that is not activated via the DSS-5095.
2. Complete all sections of the Adoption Promotion Program Fund Reimbursement Form. This is the document that also captures the names and information of the adopted children that are counted toward your baseline (although baseline documentation is only required after baseline has been met and a standard reimbursement request is made). Do not use numeric codes for the child's special needs, please use words (i.e., sibling, teenager, etc.). Do not include children on the form for whom payment has already been made.

3. Complete all sections of the Adoption Services Agreement with the partnering agencies (where applicable).
4. Mail the Adoption Promotion Program Reimbursement Form, documentation of expenditure and/or encumbrment of funds previously received, and the Adoption Services Agreement (where applicable) to Amelia Lance at:

North Carolina Division of Social Services
Adoption Promotion Program Fund
2408 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2408

Documents should be mailed timely (within 30 days of adoption decree). Incomplete documents will not be processed.

Agencies are encouraged to keep clear and accurate records of all adoptions and expenses for auditing purposes because of the complexities of the Adoption Promotion Program Fund (baselines, financial sharing, child eligibility, etc.). If you have any questions regarding the Adoption Promotion Program Fund, please contact Amelia Lance at 919-334-1096 or amelia.lance@dhhs.nc.gov.

The Division is committed to providing funding for this program and we do not anticipate that funds will be depleted during SFY 2012. Therefore, you can expect to be able to submit reimbursement requests for all finalized adoptions continuously throughout the SFY. The Division sincerely appreciates all of your efforts to provide safe, permanent homes for children and is very pleased to offer these funds to recognize and reward exceptional performance in adoption services.

Sincerely,



Kevin Kelley, Chief
Child Welfare Services

Attachments:

[Adoption Services Agreement Form](#)

[Adoption Promotion Reimbursement Form \(DSS-1571-modified\)](#)

[Baseline for Participation in Adoption Promotion Fund SFY 2012](#)

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher
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CWS-28-2011