



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

WAYNE E. BLACK
DIRECTOR

October 23, 2017

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 to Departments of Social Services and licensed child placing agencies for SFY 2018. This fund has made it possible for hundreds of children who were living in foster care to be adopted into safe and secure homes.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the fund is to enhance and expand adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for hard to place children and to encourage partnerships between public and private agencies to achieve permanency for children in a timely manner by providing incentives for the adoption of special needs children. Participating agencies are compensated for adoption services that culminate in the finalization of an adoption of a child from foster care. These services, as defined below, are recruitment of adoptive families, pre-adoption training, post placement support and the facilitation of legal procedures resulting in the finalization of an adoption.

- **Recruitment** is the process of general recruiting, assessment and approval of families as prospective adoptive placement resources.
- **Pre-adoption training** is preparatory training for prospective adoptive families to provide knowledge and skills necessary for parenting children with special needs.
- **Post Placement Support** is defined as services provided by an adoption agency from the time that a child is placed in the home of his or her prospective adoptive parents and the time that that child's adoption is finalized in court. These services include support and referrals that are specific to ensuring the success of the adoption and go beyond the scope of the monthly mandated visits.
- **Facilitation of Legal Procedures** is the completion of the legal work necessary to finalize an adoption.

WWW.NCDHHS.GOV

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MAILING ADDRESS: 2401 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-2401

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

BASELINE: A county's baseline is determined by averaging the number of children who exited the foster care system by a decree of adoption during the last four years after discarding the year with the highest number of decrees of adoption.

Information for the baseline comes from the Child Placement and Payment System (CPPS) database. 5094's closed due to adoptions realized within the fiscal year will be counted towards the baseline. Please review the baseline information (Attachment 1) and contact the Division of Social Services immediately if you have any questions.

County Departments of Social Services may apply for reimbursement of adoption services culminating in the issuance of a decree of adoption after exceeding their predetermined baseline ***and*** spending or encumbering to be spent by the end of this fiscal year previously received funds from the Adoption Promotion Program Fund. **Any encumbered funds must be spent by June 30, 2018.**

Reimbursement requests for youth 13-18 years old and sibling groups of three or more placed together in the same home may be submitted for disbursement of funds, regardless of whether the agency has met their baseline. Previous reimbursements from the fund must have been spent or encumbered prior to the agency's first submission of request for payment. Any encumbered funds must be spent by June 30, 2018.

FUNDING AMOUNTS: The payment levels for disbursement of the Adoption Promotion Program Fund for SFY 2018 are:

- \$7,200 per child for children 0-12 years old;
- \$12,000 per child for children 13-18 years old, and
- \$12,000 per child for sibling groups of three or more who are placed together at the same time in an adoptive home.

Payments are only made on behalf of children who have been determined eligible or potentially eligible for adoption assistance benefits. Children who meet the "potentially eligible" criteria for adoption assistance also qualify for consideration in determining the agency's baseline.

SHARING FUNDING: This program is designed to encourage partnerships between licensed child placing agencies and departments of social services in achieving permanency for children from the foster care system. The completion of the Adoption Services Agreement form (DSS-5113) <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/forms/dss/dss-5113-ia.pdf> is an essential part of the collaboration process. Agencies must follow the protocol outlined below as you are working together with other agencies.

- The Adoption Services Agreement will be signed by both agencies at the time an adoptive family is identified or selected for a specific child.
- Partnering agencies **must mutually predetermine** each agency's responsibilities in the adoption process and the percentage of payment that each agency will request, **PRIOR** to work being initiated and completed.
- The Adoption Services Agreement must be thought of as a contract for services.
- The Adoption Services Agreement must indicate services provided by each agency and be submitted with requests for reimbursement when two agencies work together to finalize an adoption. Each agency **must** mutually acknowledge the agreed upon financial arrangement by signing the Adoption Services Agreement.
- 100% reimbursement is paid to an agency only when that agency completes all four service areas: recruits, trains, provides post placement support to the prospective adoptive family and facilitates the completion of the legal paperwork to finalize the adoption.

- Partial payments are only paid when agencies work collaboratively to complete an adoption.
- Agencies will only be reimbursed for services they have provided.
- Whether a county Department of Social Services has met their baseline **will not** be used as a determining factor in what percentage a partnering agency is reimbursed.
Previous instructions noted funding restrictions that indicate it is not permissible for one agency to claim full reimbursement when the other agency is not eligible for payment from the Division.
- Reimbursement to agencies are in increments of 25%.
- In the absence of a signed Adoption Services Agreement, reimbursement will be awarded at a 50/50 split. Agencies must still submit an incomplete ASA to indicate that the work was shared with another agency.

Below are examples of specific tasks associated with each service area to help guide the Adoption Services Agreement process. This is not an exhaustive list:

Recruitment of Family

- Family participated in general interest meeting, recruitment fair, etc., regarding becoming an adoptive parent
- Agency completed screening interview to determine if family was appropriate for TIPS-MAPP.

Training of Family

- Agency provided TIPS-MAPP or equivalent training.
- Agency facilitated licensure process.
- Agency prepared PPA for family.

Placement Supervision

- Agency provided ongoing supervision and supportive services to the adoptive parent and child beyond mandated monthly contact visits.
- Referrals and/or additional services were provided to ensure the success of the adoption.

Legal Paperwork

- Who facilitated the completion of the legal paperwork? (petition, child consent, affidavit of fees, information sharing, vital records, etc.)
- Consider which agency is gathering and completing the information rather than reviewing and submitting to the court.

PROCEDURE FOR REIMBURSEMENT:

County Departments of Social Services:

County DSS agencies may request payment from the Adoption Promotion Program Fund after July 1, 2017 once they have exceeded their baseline **or** when they have completed an adoption of a teen (age 13 or older) or a sibling group of three or more placed together at the same time in an adoptive home.
An agency does not have to wait to meet their baseline in order to submit a request for reimbursement for a teen or sibling group.

Please follow the steps below when requesting reimbursement from the Adoption Promotion Program Fund:

1. Submit the Adoption Promotion Program Fund Reimbursement Form (DSS-5320) <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/forms/dss/DSS-5320-ia.pdf> listing all adoptions from foster care completed to date. **Children should always be listed in order of adoption decree date beginning July 1, 2017.** Decree dates determine when each county has exceeded their baseline and is eligible for reimbursement. (See example A)
 - Please note that even if an agency has not met their baseline and they are only requesting reimbursement for a teen or sibling adoption, it is still necessary to list any and all adoptions completed thus far. (See example B)
 - If children have already been listed on one request for reimbursement, they do not need to be listed on any future requests for reimbursement. Only submit children one time. (See example C)
 - Payments are only made after a case is activated in the Child Placement and Payment System via DSS-5095 and the child's 5094 has been closed.
2. Submit the Adoption Services Agreement (DSS-5113) <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/forms/dss/dss-5113-ia.pdf> for any child where funding is to be shared with a private partner agency.
 - Each agency **must** sign the agreement.
 - Be sure that the child's name on the Adoption Services Agreement matches the child's name on the DSS-5320.
 - **In the absence of a completed/signed Adoption Services Agreement, agencies will split the reimbursement 50/50.**
3. County agencies that received payments from the Adoption Promotion Program Fund previously **must** provide an **Affidavit of Expenditures (Attachment 2)** documenting how previous monies received were used to enhance or expand their adoption services program before additional funds can be received for the current fiscal year. *Agencies must provide the Affidavit of Expenditures form with their first request for payment.*
 - Complete the Affidavit in its entirety by providing the total amount of money that was received, the fiscal year in which it was received and document specifically how the money **was used or will be used in its entirety before the end of SFY 2018** to enhance and/or expand adoption services for the agency.
 - Do not send supporting documentation of the expenses. However, the Adoption Promotion Program Coordinator may request copies of contracts and/or receipts to verify services at any time.
4. Mail the Adoption Promotion Program Fund Request for Reimbursement form (DSS-5320), Adoption Services Agreements (DSS-5113) and the Affidavit of Expenditures (Attachment 2) to the Division of Social Services.

DEADLINES FOR REQUESTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT SUBMISSIONS:

June 8, 2018 – All adoptions completed between July 1, 2017 – May 30, 2018.

July 10, 2018 – All adoptions completed between June 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018.

No requests will be accepted or processed after that time.

Requests for payments should be sent to Kim Best at the following address:

Regular Mail
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services
ATTN: Kimberly Best

820 South Boylan Avenue
2445 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2445

FED-EX or UPS
NC Division of Social Services
Attn: Kimberly Best
820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde East
Raleigh, NC 27603

Private Contract Agencies:

The procedure for submitting adoption promotion payments by private contract agencies in the 2017/2018 contract period is outlined below. Please carefully read and follow all the instructions:

1. Agencies will complete, sign and submit the **“DSS-1571 III”** each month (see attached example).
 - Agencies will type in their total payment each month in column "(2) Current Expenses" on line "23. Adoption Payments" on the tab for that month.
 - Ensure the person who prepares the report is different from the person who authorizes it. Sign in blue ink.
 - By the 10th of each month, send **ONE original** and **ONE copy** of the 1571.
 - Submit a 1571 *even if the agency has no payments* for that month. In this case, you should enter \$0 on line 23.
2. Agencies will fully complete & submit **one** "Adoption Promotion Program Fund Reimbursement Form" (DSS-5320) including all adoptions billed that month.
3. Agencies must also continue to submit **one** "Adoption Services Agreement" (DSS-5113) for every adoption. This must be fully completed and signed by the agency and the County DSS. If it is not completed/signed by both parties, reimbursement will be 50/50.
4. All of the above must be sent by **hard copy via mail or FedEx/UPS**. Confidential information regarding clients cannot be emailed.

Regular Mail:
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services
ATTN: Kimberly Best
820 South Boylan Avenue
2445 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2445

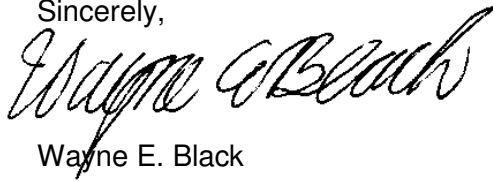
Fed Ex or UPS:
NC Division of Social Services
Attn: Kimberly Best
820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde East
Raleigh, NC 27603

Quarterly Performance Status Reports for contract agencies are due October 10th, January 10th, April 10th and July 10th. Please see the attachment for the current form. The 4th quarter report will serve as the agency's end of year report.

The intent of the fund is to recognize and reward exceptional performance in adoption services. The Division of Social Services is committed to providing funding for this program and appreciates all your efforts to provide safe, permanent homes for North Carolina's children.

If you have questions regarding the Adoption Promotion Program Fund, please contact Kim Best at (919) 527-6354 or kimberly.best@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne E. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

Wayne E. Black

CWS-41-2017

Attachments (8):

1. Adoption Promotion Fund SFY 2018 Baseline
2. Affidavit of Adoption Expenditures
3. DSS-5320 Example A
4. DSS-5320 Example B
5. DSS-5320 Example C
6. Adoption Promotion Funding Uses
7. Performance Status Report Form (Private Agencies Only)
8. DSS-1571 Invoice Example (Private Agencies Only)