



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

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

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director  
(919) 733-3055

November 21, 2008

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION:**

AGAPE of NC  
ASU (Appalachian Family Innovations/BIABH)  
Another Choice for Black Children, Inc.  
Bethany Christian Services, Inc.  
Boys and Girls Homes of NC, Inc.  
Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Charlotte  
Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Inc.  
The Children's Home  
Christian Adoption Services  
The Crossnore School  
Community Services for Children  
Family Services, Inc.  
Lutheran Family Services in the Carolina  
Methodist Home for Children  
Nazareth Children's Home  
Seven Homes Residential Youth Development Alternative, Inc.  
Omni Community Services, Inc.  
Yahweh Center  
Youth Homes  
Other Private Agencies that are interested in  
Participating in the Fund

**SUBJECT: SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND**

The North Carolina Division of Social Services is pleased to announce the availability of \$3,000,000 in Special Children Adoption Fund (SCAF) in SFY 08-09. No local match is required as a condition for receipt of these funds. The Fund, which continues to be a vital resource in the placement of special needs children, has made it possible for hundreds of children who were living in, or likely to be placed in, foster homes or institutions to be adopted into safe and secure adoptive homes.

The purpose of the Fund is to enhance and expand adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for hard to place children, and to promote public/private partnerships. Twenty-five per cent of the Fund is targeted specially for participating private child placing agencies until March 31, 2009. If the private agencies' share of the Fund is not used by the deadline, the balance will be available to both private and public agencies. Partnerships between public and private agencies are strongly encouraged to maximize available placement resources to children in the foster care system.

A committee comprised of representatives from the Division of Social Services, the Association of County Directors of Social Services, departments of social services and participating private adoption agencies were invited to convene on March 5, 2008 to recommend guidelines for administration of the SFY 08-09 Special Children Adoption Fund. Many options were discussed and recommendations were made pending the Division's final approval. The Division concurred with the Committee's recommendation to maintain the established SFY 07-08 guidelines which were determined to be the most equitable based on current reviews and management of the fund. **CURRENT REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE REIMBURSEMENTS FOR FINALIZATION OF ADOPTION FOR ALL YOUTH THIRTEEN (13) YEARS AND OLDER, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER AN AGENCY'S BASELINE HAS BEEN MET.** Hopefully with the availability of additional funding from SCAF for the development of placement resources for teenagers many barriers in achieving permanency through adoption will be removed.

For SFY 08-09, each agency's baseline will be determined by the average number of children who exited the foster care system by a Decree of Adoption during three of the last four years. The highest number in the four year period is not included in the average for the baseline. Private child placing agencies, (ASU-Appalachian Family Innovations, Another Choice for Black Children, Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas and Methodist Home for Children), under contract with the State to provide special needs adoption services, are eligible to participate in the fund once they have exhausted the funding for services enumerated in their contracts. The baseline for other private agencies is calculated using the same procedure as for public agencies.

Information for the baseline comes from the Adoption Information Management System (AIMS). Data in AIMS include the dates of the Decree of Adoption, placing agency-whether public or private, and names of children. Please review the baseline information (Attachment I) carefully and contact us if you believe that the information is incorrect. We will change the number if you can prove that the information is inaccurate. The payment levels for disbursement of the Special Children Adoption Fund for SFY 08-09 are:

- Payment level of \$ 9,000 per child for children from 0-12 years;
- Payment level of \$15,000 per child for children from 13-18 years;
- Payment level of \$15,000 per child for children from 13-18 years who are included in the agency's baseline; and
- Payment level of \$15,000 per child for sibling groups of three or more who are placed together at the same time in an adoptive family

The total amount is paid to an agency when the agency recruits, prepares, and supervises the placement. The amount is shared when agencies work together to place a child. For example, each agency receives 50% of the payment if one agency recruits and trains the adoptive family and another agency supervises the placement and completes the necessary paperwork to finalize the adoption. We encourage partnerships and trust that agencies will work together when funds are requested. If agencies share in the placements, it is mandatory that this information is reflected on the DSS-1571,

Part IV when reimbursement is requested. We cannot provide the full amount of payment to two agencies for the placement of the same child. The Division of Social Services expects and recommends that local departments of social services and private adoption agencies ensure that needed child information and prospective adoptive family history is openly shared and communicated between both entities. The Division further encourages both agencies to appropriately assess the amount of supervision needed to monitor the placement, whether or not the custodial agency needs to jointly monitor the placement, that monthly detailed progress reports are submitted, and mutually agree upon the desired timeframe to finalize the adoption based on the needs of the individual child/ren.

The Fund is performance-based in that payments can only be made after a Decree of Adoption has been issued. Payments can only be made on behalf of children who have been determined eligible for adoption assistance cash payments. **Children who meet the “potential handicap” criteria for adoption assistance cash payment *do not* qualify for payment under the Fund.**

To receive a payment from the Special Children Adoption Fund, participating public and private agencies must provide the Division with the following information:

1. Submit the name and ***new*** SIS identification number for adoption assistance of each eligible special needs child for whom a decree of adoption has been entered since July 1, 2008. This will enable us to identify the point at which the baseline is exceeded. **Do not submit this information until you have exceeded your baseline and become eligible for payment, unless you are requesting payment for teenagers included in your baseline. Payments are only made after the case is activated in the Child Placement and Payment System DSS-5095.** Agencies should verify the adoption assistance information has been entered. **If the child’s case is not activated via the DSS-5095 payment for the child will be denied.**
2. Complete the revised DSS-1571 Part IV (Attachment II) to indicate children included in your baseline and to request a payment on behalf of those children for whom the Decree of Adoption enables you to exceed your baseline. Provide all the information that is requested, including race, age, gender, SIS identification number, agency partner sharing in placement, race of adoptive parent, amount of reimbursement, receipt of funds under another contract, and special needs of the child. Please do not use numeric codes to indicate special needs. It is important to write out the special needs, i.e., sibling, teenager, etc.
3. All sections on DSS-1571, Part IV must be completed, including the signature of an authorized agency official. **INCOMPLETE DSS-1571, PART IV WILL NOT BE PROCESSED.**
4. Mail the completed DSS 1571, Part IV as soon as possible. We are unable to accept faxed DSS 1571, Part IV. Do not include children for whom payment has already been made on the DSS-1571, Part IV.

Please remember that the Special Children Adoption Fund operates on a “first come, first serve” basis until funds are depleted. Therefore, it is most important that participating agencies submit payment requests as soon as possible after the Decree of Adoption has been issued. Funds will be electronically transferred to counties and checks will be mailed to private agencies monthly.

All agencies that received payments from the Special Children Adoption Fund for SFY 07-08 ***must*** provide information on how the money was used to enhance or expand their adoption program before funds can be received for the current fiscal year. Agencies must provide the following information with the first request:

- **The total amount of money that was received; and**
- **An itemized statement documenting how the money was used or will be used in it's entirely before the end of SFY 08-09 to enhance adoption services for the agency.**

Allowable uses for the Fund include the direct provision or purchase by contract of services included in the definitions of Adoption Services (010), Adoption Recruitment (011), Adoption Assistance Case Management (012), Child-Specific Recruitment, Assessment and Training of Adoptive Parents (013), and Post Adoption Case Management (016). We encourage you to use these funds for legal or court related services to expedite the adoption process, for post-adoption services and for child-specific recruitment efforts. 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 purchase automobiles for the county or to supplant the salaries of current workers.**

Since the legislative intent for the Fund is to have an impact on the state's adoption program, payments from the Fund cannot be made *until* this information is received. The Division will contact the agency if there are questions about the information submitted. We encourage you to keep clear and accurate records of the use of the funds for auditing purposes, if requested. If you do not exceed your baseline, it is not necessary to submit this information.

With the increasing number of teenagers and sibling groups in care who need permanent homes, the Division recognizes that recruitment presents many challenges and remains committed to supporting permanency among these populations. The LINKS Program is a resource the Division strongly encourages agencies to become more familiar and share with families. Many families may not be aware that children whose adoptions were finalized after their thirteenth birthday are eligible for services and resources that are intended to help them transition to self-sufficiency. In addition, children who are adopted from foster care after their sixteenth birthday can qualify for up to \$5,000 per year to assist with post-secondary educational and vocational training expenses. (Please refer to *Family Services Manual, Chapter IV: Placement Section 1201*, for more information on the LINKS Program.)

Also, the Division is pleased to announce that last session the General Assembly also approved funding to help children adopted from DSS custody after the age of twelve to pay for postsecondary education. Known as NCR reach the fund will help eligible students pay for tuition, fees, books and supplies and a room and board allowance at one of North Carolina's public universities or community colleges. Funds will be available for all students who were or become eligible on or after July 1, 2007. For more information on the LINKS Program or NCR reach please contact Joan McAllister, LINKS Coordinator, at (919) 334-1092 or [Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net](mailto:Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net).

Last year 43 agencies participated in the Special Children Adoption Fund program. Of the 339 children that were adopted, there were 60 sibling groups, including 2 sibling groups of four or more; 16 sibling groups of three; and 42 sibling groups of two. Thirty two (32) of the children were over 13 years of age. We continue to emphasize the need for adoptive placements of siblings groups and the older children in foster care. We appreciate your efforts in making it possible for these children to secure permanency.

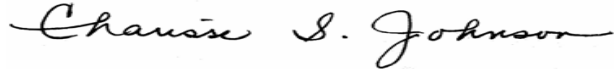
The Division encourages more agencies to participate during SFY 08-09. The purpose of the fund is to recognize and reward strong performance in adoption services. It is our expectation that all participating agencies adhere to best practice standards in providing these services. Failure to adhere to best practice standards will result in an agency's ineligibility to continue participation in the Fund.

If you have questions regarding the Special Children Adoption Fund, please contact Amelia Lance at (919) 334-1096 or [Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net](mailto:Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net). Requests for payments, including all of the required documentation described in this letter should be sent to Ms. Lance at the following address:

North Carolina Division of Social Services  
Child Welfare Services Section  
Children's Services Policy Team  
325 N. Salisbury Street Suite 715  
2408 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2408

We sincerely appreciate all of your efforts in providing safe, permanent homes for children. The Fund offers us an opportunity to provide additional financial resources to county departments of social services and our private adoption agency partners to improve adoption services for children. Since the creation of the Fund the number of adoptions has steadily increased. We believe that the Special Children Adoption Fund is one of the positive factors in that accomplishment.

Sincerely,



Charisse Johnson, Chief  
Child Welfare Services

CC: Sherry Bradsher  
Sarah Barham  
LaKeitha Miller  
FSCWS Team Leaders  
Children's Services Program Representatives

**CWS-64-08**

ATTACHMENT I

**BASELINE FOR PARTICPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND SFY 0708**

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>SFY 0405</b>	<b>SFY 0506</b>	<b>SFY 0607</b>	<b>SFY 0708</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>
ALAMANCE	14	16	8	12	11
ALEXANDER	3	12	10	7	7
ALLEGHANY	1	2	5	1	1
ANSON	2	5	4	2	3
ASHE	6	3	3	0	2
AVERY	5	4	3	6	4
BEAUFORT	14	4	6	15	8
BERTIE	0	0	0	5	0
BLADEN	2	8	8	1	4
BRUNSWICK	21	27	12	22	18
BUNCOMBE	38	49	65	37	41
BURKE	19	34	25	30	24
CABARRUS	47	30	50	35	37
CALDWELL	29	38	37	40	35
CAMDEN	0	2	0	0	0
CARTERET	7	12	10	10	9
CASWELL	1	5	1	1	1
CATAWBA	47	70	50	62	53
CHATHAM	16	18	8	11	12
CHEROKEE	0	5	16	16	7
CHOWAN	0	0	1	1	0
CLAY	0	0	2	0	0
CLEVELAND	26	11	24	25	20
COLUMBUS	6	3	0	13	3
CRAVEN	8	11	3	18	7
CUMBERLAND	45	44	43	44	44
CURRITUCK	8	0	1	1	1
DARE	6	17	11	7	8
DAVISON	17	27	10	17	15
DAVIE	6	12	4	5	5
DUPLIN	5	7	2	7	5
DURHAM	16	16	31	30	21
EDGECOMBE	12	10	14	17	12
FORSYTH	48	47	36	58	44
FRANKLIN	5	9	11	13	8
GASTON	25	18	12	23	19
GATES	0	0	0	1	0
GRAHAM	2	2	4	1	2
GRANVILLE	7	0	3	3	2
GREENE	1	0	3	9	1
GUILFORD	102	121	92	81	94
HALIFAX	9	29	4	6	6
HARNETT	28	34	26	16	23
HAYWOOD	5	50	27	26	19

AGENCY	SFY 0405	SFY 0506	SFY 0607	SFY 0708	BASELINE
HENDERSON	9	12	14	22	12
HERTFORD	3	0	2	3	2
HOKE	2	4	1	5	2
HYDE	0	0	0	2	0
IREDELL	18	13	16	14	14
JACKSON	1	2	0	1	1
JOHNSTON	40	26	20	29	22
JONES	0	0	1	0	0
LEE	7	8	9	2	6
LENOIR	18	3	5	6	5
LINCOLN	17	10	12	9	10
MACON	5	5	1	7	3
MADISON	2	3	0	4	2
MARTIN	0	2	1	4	1
MCDOWELL	5	15	13	11	10
MECKLENBURG	104	125	110	119	111
MITCHELL	9	0	6	7	4
MONTGOMERY	2	1	7	1	2
MOORE	1	10	6	2	3
NASH	11	6	12	6	8
NEW HANOVER	39	58	64	56	51
NORTHAMPTON	0	3	1	1	1
ONslow	25	30	21	16	21
ORANGE	12	21	15	13	13
PAMPLICO	1	1	1	2	1
PASQUOTANK	6	4	3	4	3
PENDER	10	17	17	2	10
PERQUIMINS	2	1	0	0	0
PERSON	3	0	4	2	2
PITT	3	5	14	12	7
POLK	4	10	4	10	6
RANDOLPH	15	21	22	25	19
RICHMOND	5	6	1	2	3
ROBESON	33	36	18	31	27
ROCKINGHAM	10	9	9	17	9
ROWAN	22	16	21	22	20
RUTHERFORD	8	8	8	11	8
SAMPSON	5	0	5	11	3
SCOTLAND	3	7	4	11	5
STANLY	8	10	1	13	6
STOKES	4	4	11	7	3
SURRY	15	11	6	11	9
SWAIN	0	1	1	0	0
TRANSYLVANIA	5	9	11	2	5
TYRRELL	0	0	0	0	0
UNION	19	16	4	14	11
VANCE	15	12	4	9	8
WAKE	90	84	30	78	64

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>SFY 0405</b>	<b>SFY 0506</b>	<b>SFY 0607</b>	<b>SFY 0708</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>
<b>WARREN</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WASHINGTON</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>WATAUGA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>WAYNE</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>WILKES</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>WILSON</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>YADKIN</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>YANCEY</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PRIVATE AGENCIES</b>					
<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>SFY 0405</b>	<b>SFY 0506</b>	<b>SFY 0607</b>	<b>SFY 0708</b>	<b>BASELINE</b>
<b>AGAPE</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>BETHANY</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>BOYS &amp; GIRLS HOME</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>CATHOLIC SOC SVCS</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHILDREN'S HOME</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHRISTIAN ADOPTION</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>GRANDFATHER HOME</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CROSSNORE SCHOOL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>FAMILY SERVICES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NAZARETH</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OMNI VISIONS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>SEVEN HOMES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>YAHWEH</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>YOUTH HOMES</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**ATTACHMENT II**

**SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND**

COUNTY/AGENCY	PREPARER	PREPARER'S TELEPHONE #	PREPARER'S E-MAIL ADDRESS				
Child's Name/Age/Race (Do not use code for race)	DSS 5095 SIS Identification Number	If partnership, give name of Agency/DSS)	Included in Statewide Contract?		Date of Decree Of Adoption	Amount Requested	Child's Special Needs
			YES	NO			
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							
14.							
15.							

**CERTIFICATION:** I certify that the above adoption services were provided in compliance with Special Children Adoption Fund guidelines and have been documented as required.

Name & Signature of Authorized Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_