



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

325 North Salisbury Street • Raleigh, North Carolina 27603
Courier # 56-20-25
MSC# 2408 Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2408

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Director
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal,
(919) 733-3055

October 2, 2003

MEMORANDUM:

County Directors of Social Services
Adoption Plus
(Appalachian Family Innovations/BIABH)
Another Choice for Black Children, Inc.
Bethany Christian Services, Inc.
Catholic Social Services of the Diocese of Charlotte
Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Inc.
Christian Adoption Services
Family Services, Inc.
Lutheran Family Services
Methodist Home for Children
Nazareth Children's Home
Yahweh Center, Inc.
Other Private Agencies that are interested in participating
in the Fund

SUBJECT:

SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND

The Division is very pleased to announce the availability of \$3,100,000 to public and private adoption agencies to continue the expansion and enhancement adoption opportunities for hard to place children in North Carolina. Since its establishment in 1997 by the General Assembly, the Special Children Adoption Fund 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 adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for harder to place children, and to foster private/public partnerships. Twenty-five per cent of the Fund is targeted for participating private child placing agencies until March 31, 2004. If the private agencies' share of the Fund is not used by the deadline, the balance will be available to all agencies. Public-private agency partnership is strongly encouraged in order to maximize placement resources for children in the foster care system.

Each year we discuss ways to improve the administration of the Fund with the Special Children Adoption Fund Committee. The Committee is composed of representatives from the

Dear County Director
October 2, 2003
Page 2

Division of Social Services, the Association of County Directors of Social Services, and participating private adoption agencies. This year the Committee decided to provide opportunities for more agencies to participate by revising the calculation of the baseline to recognize fluctuation in annual numbers of finalized adoptions. For SFY 03-04, each agency's baseline will be calculated based on the average, annual number of children who have exited the foster care system by a Decree of Adoption during two of the last three years. The highest number in the three years is not included in the average for the baseline. For those private agencies (Another Choice for Black Children, Appalachian Family Innovations-Adoption Plus, Children's Home Society of NC, Inc., and Methodist Home for Children) under contract with the State to provide special needs adoption services, their baselines are set after they have exhausted the funding for services enumerated in those contracts. The baseline for other private agencies will be the same as for public agencies.

Information for the baseline comes from the Adoption Information and Management System (AIMS). Data in AIMS include the dates of the Decrees of Adoption, placing agency whether public or private, and names of children. Please review the baseline information and contact us if you believe the information is incorrect (Attachment I). The numbers will be changed if you can prove that a mistake has been made.

The Committee also decided to change the payment levels in an effort to focus on the need to find permanent homes for teenagers and sibling groups of three or more who are placed together in an adoptive family. The payment levels are:

- \$ 9,000 per child for children from 0-12 years;
- \$15,000 per child for children from 13-18 years; and
- \$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, 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.

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:

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, 2003. This will enable us to identify the point at which payment will begin. **Do not submit this information until the baseline has been exceeded.**

Dear County Director

October 2, 2003

Page 3

2. Complete the revised DSS-1571 Part IV (attached) 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 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. Mail or fax the completed information as soon as possible. You may send as many completed DSS-1571, Part IV as needed. **Do not include children for whom payment has already been made on the DSS-1571.** Each request should be for a new child or group of children. All requests received by the end of business on June 30, 2004 will be accepted, if money is available.

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 requests for payments as soon as possible after the Decree of Adoption has been issued and **the adoption assistance information has been entered into the Child Placement and Payment System (DSS-5095). If the child’s case is not activated in the system via DSS-5095 payment for the child will be denied.** We will also deny reimbursement requests that do not have a signature of authorized official on the DSS 5171, Part IV. Payment requests may be faxed to expedite processing; however, we must have the original documents for our records. Funds will be electronically transferred to counties and checks will be mailed to private agencies.

All agencies that received payments from the Special Children Adoption Fund for SFY 02-03 must provide information on how the money was used or will be used to enhance their adoption program before funds can be received for the current fiscal year. These agencies must provide the following information with the first request they submit this year:

- The total amount of money that was received; and
- A verification and description of how the money was used or will be used in its entirety before the end of SFY 03-04.

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 the use of 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 supplement the salaries of current workers.**

Adoption recruitment for teenagers presents many challenges. We encourage agencies to become more familiar with the LINKS program because we believe more families will consider adopting these children if they were aware of the services and resources provided by this program. Children whose adoptions were finalized after their 13th birthday are eligible for

Dear County Director
October 2, 2003
Page 4

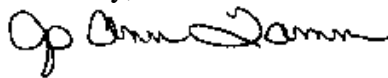
services and resources that are intended to help them overcome barriers to their successful transition to self-sufficiency. In addition, children whose adoptions from foster care were finalized after their 16th birthday can qualify for up to \$5000 per year to assist with post-secondary educational and vocational training expenses. (Please refer to Family Services Manual, Chapter IV: Placement Section 120l, for more information on the LINKS program. If you have questions, contact Joan McAllister, LINKS Coordinator, at 919-733-2580.)

If you have questions regarding the Special Children Adoption Fund, please contact Amelia Lance at (919) 733-2580, fax (919) 733-3052 or Amelia.Lance@ncmail.net. Requests for payments, including all of the required documentation described in this letter, should be sent to Amelia at the following address:

North Carolina Division of Social Services
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section
2409 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2409

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,



JoAnn Lamm, Program Administrator
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

Attachments (2)

CC: Pheon Beal
Sherry Bradsher
Sarah Barham
LaKeitha Miller
FSCWS Team Leaders
Children's Services Program Representatives
Local Business Liaisons

JAL/ETH/al

FSCWS-22-03

Attachment 1

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 03-04**

	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	BASELINE (Highest Number Dropped)
ALAMANCE	35	17	21	13
ALEXANDER	3	1	1	1
ALLEGHANY	2	1	0	0
ANSON	5	8	5	3
ASHE	0	0	3	0
AVERY	0	2	4	1
BEAUFORT	12	6	5	4
BERTIE	0	4	3	1
BLADEN	1	1	0	0
BRUNSWICK	14	18	24	11
BUNCOMBE	27	35	37	21
BURKE	7	17	18	8
CABARRUS	24	7	11	6
CALDWELL	19	19	36	13
CAMDEN	0	0	0	0
CARTERET	5	7	12	4
CASWELL	3	2	1	1
CATAWBA	40	65	16	19
CHATHAM	12	5	6	4
CHEROKEE	2	3	0	1
CHOWAN	1	1	1	1
CLAY	0	1	0	0
CLEVELAND	15	10	14	8
COLUMBUS	7	7	6	4
CRAVEN	12	14	9	7
CUMBERLAND	33	87	53	29
CURRITUCK	1	4	5	0
DARE	7	6	2	3
DAVIDSON	30	45	23	18
DAVIE	10	8	9	6
DUPLIN	5	0	4	1
DURHAM	30	34	19	16
EDGECOMBE	19	24	14	11
FORSYTH	66	49	53	34
FRANKLIN	13	10	4	5
GASTON	11	12	22	8
GATES	0	0	0	0
GRAHAM	0	0	2	0
GRANVILLE	4	4	1	2
GREENE	0	0	0	0
GUILFORD	167	126	110	79
HALIFAX	18	5	10	5
HARNETT	12	9	27	7

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 03-
04**

	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	BASELINE <i>(Highest Number Dropped)</i>
HAYWOOD	7	16	9	5
HENDERSON	14	6	13	6
HERTFORD	0	1	7	0
HOKE	4	6	4	3
HYDE	0	0	1	0
IREDELL	7	18	19	8
JACKSON	2	1	4	1
JOHNSTON	36	14	18	11
JONES	2	1	2	1
LEE	2	10	4	2
LENOIR	6	7	5	4
LINCOLN	9	6	11	6
MACON	2	2	2	1
MADISON	6	2	2	1
MARTIN	4	0	4	1
MCDOWELL	11	5	9	5
MECKLENBURG	112	122	173	78
MITCHELL	0	0	2	0
MONTGOMERY	0	5	0	2
MOORE	25	10	8	6
NASH	19	12	4	5
NEW HANOVER	41	24	33	19
NORTHAMPTON	2	0	0	0
ONSLow	21	8	12	7
ORANGE	22	9	17	9
PAMLICO	1	0	0	0
PASQUOTANK	4	6	0	1
PENDER	2	4	9	2
PERQUIMANS	1	0	1	1
PERSON	4	5	0	1
PITT	24	18	19	12
POLK	4	3	7	2
RANDOLPH	16	21	14	10
RICHMOND	12	10	4	5
ROBESON	30	32	20	17
ROCKINGHAM	3	8	11	4
ROWAN	26	33	16	15
RUTHERFORD	13	16	11	8
SAMPSON	6	9	10	5
SCOTLAND	4	9	6	3
STANLY	6	3	4	2
STOKES	3	5	7	5
SURRY	13	7	7	5

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 03-04**

	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	BASELINE <i>(Highest Number Dropped)</i>
SWAIN	4	0	1	0
TRANSYLVANIA	9	9	11	6
TYRRELL	0	0	0	0
UNION	17	13	18	10
VANCE	15	7	5	4
WAKE	116	89	46	45
WARREN	4	7	0	1
WASHINGTON	1	1	0	0
WATAUGA	3	4	3	2
WAYNE	22	24	11	11
WILKES	15	13	17	9
WILSON	13	23	18	10
YADKIN	9	10	9	6
YANCEY	3	6	11	3
BETHANY CHRISTIAN	5	0	2	1
CATHOLIC SERVICES	4	0	2	1
CHRISTIAN ADOPTION	6	0	8	2
FAMILY SERVICES	3	3	0	1
LUTHERAN	0	0	2	0
NAZARETH	0	0	1	0
YAHWEH	0	1	0	0

ATTACHMENT 2

**SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION
FUND**

COUNTY/PRIVATE AGENCIES

	CHILD'S NAME/RACE/AGE (DO NOT USE CODE FOR RACE)	5095 SIS ID#	SHARED WITH ANOTHER COUNTY OR AGENCY (GIVE NAME)	DATE OF DECREE	AMOUNT REQUESTED	INDICATE SPECIAL NEEDS OF CHILD (DO NOT USE CODE FOR SPECIAL NEED)
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

CERTIFICATION: I certify that the above services were provided with our approved contract and have been documented as required by grantor policy.

Signature of Authorized Official Date
DSS-1571 PART IV-REVISED (Rev. 10-02)

Prepared by Telephone Number