



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
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

September 24, 2004

MEMORANDUM:

County Directors of Social Services
Adoption Plus (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.
Christian Adoption Services
Family Services, Inc.
Methodist Home for Children
New Life Christian adoption
Omni Community Services, Inc.
Yahweh Center
Other Private Agencies that are interested in
participating in the Fund

SUBJECT:

SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND

The North Carolina Division of Social Services announces the availability of \$3,100,000 in Special Children Adoption Fund in SFY 04-05. 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 adoption programs, to secure permanent homes for hard to place children, and to foster public/private partnerships. Twenty-five per cent of the Fund is targeted specially for participating private child placing agencies until March 31, 2005. 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. Public-private agency partnership is strongly encouraged to maximize placement resources available to children in the foster care system. No local match is required as a condition for receipt of these funds.

A committee comprising 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 established guidelines for administration of the Special Children Adoption Fund. Many options were discussed however utilizing a similar process as established before was agreed upon by all as being the most equitable. To provide more equitable access to the Fund the calculation of the baseline has been adjusted to reflect a broader period of time. For SFY 04-05, each agency's baseline will be determined based on the average number of children who have 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. For those private agencies, (Appalachian Family Innovations-Adoption Plus, Another Choice for Black Children, Children Home Society of North Carolina, 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 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 Division remains committed to permanency for teenagers and sibling groups and encourages agencies to continue their diligent efforts in finding families willing to open their hearts and homes to these groups of children. The payment levels for disbursement of the Special Children Adoption Fund for SFY 04-05 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 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 when reimbursement is requested. We cannot provide the full amount of payment to two agencies for the placement of the same child.

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, 2004. 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.** Payments are only made after case is activated in the system using the DSS-5095.
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. If you fax your request for reimbursement, we strongly recommend that you notify the State Consultant to expect it. 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, 2005 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 eliminate reimbursement requests that do not have a signature of authorized official on the DSS 5171, Part IV.** Although Payment requests may be faxed to expedite processing; 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 03-04 must provide information on how the money was used to enhance their adoption program before funds can be received from the Fund for the current fiscal year. These agencies must provide the following information with the first request:

- **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 04-05 to enhance adoption services in 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.**

Hopefully, more agencies will participate in the Special Children Adoption Fund during SFY 04-05. 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.

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 resources and services provided by this Program. 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 were 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*

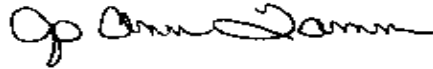
1201, for more information on the LINKS Program.) If you have questions, contact Joan McAllister, LINKS Coordinator, at (919) 733-2580 or Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net.

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 Ms. Lance 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JoAnn Lamm".

JoAnn Lamm, Section Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

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

JAL/ETH/al
FSCWS-40-04

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 04-05**

	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	sfy03/04	BASELINE
ALAMANCE	35	17	21	19	19
ALEXANDER	3	1	1	1	1
ALLEGHANY	2	1	0	2	1
ANSON	5	8	5	6	5
ASHE	0	0	3	2	1
AVERY	0	2	4	6	2
BEAUFORT	12	6	5	8	6
BERTIE	0	4	3	1	1
BLADEN	1	1	0	12	1
BRUNSWICK	14	18	24	17	16
BUNCOMBE	27	35	37	50	33
BURKE	7	17	18	18	14
CABARRUS	24	7	11	12	10
CALDWELL	19	19	36	23	20
CAMDEN	0	0	0	0	0
CARTERET	5	7	12	11	8
CASWELL	3	2	1	1	1
CATAWBA	40	65	16	49	35
CHATHAM	12	5	6	7	6
CHEROKEE	2	3	0	2	2
CHOWAN	1	1	1	0	1
CLAY	0	1	0	0	0
CLEVELAND	15	10	14	32	13
COLUMBUS	7	7	6	2	5
CRAVEN	12	14	9	13	11
CUMBERLAND	33	87	53	62	49
CURRITUCK	1	4	5	3	3
DARE	7	6	2	5	4
DAVIDSON	30	45	23	28	27
DAVIE	10	8	9	2	6
DUPLIN	5	0	4	5	3
DURHAM	30	34	19	29	26
EDGECOMBE	19	24	14	14	16
FORSYTH	66	49	53	54	52
FRANKLIN	13	10	4	3	6
GASTON	11	12	22	6	10
GATES	0	0	0	0	0
GRAHAM	0	0	2	4	0
GRANVILLE	4	4	1	2	2
GREENE	0	0	0	2	0
GUILFORD	167	126	110	110	115
HALIFAX	18	5	10	9	8
HARNETT	12	9	27	16	12
HAYWOOD	7	16	9	13	10
HENDERSON	14	6	13	11	10
HERTFORD	0	1	7	2	1
HOKE	4	6	4	2	3
HYDE	0	0	1	0	0

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 04-05**

	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	sfy03/04	BASELINE
JONES	2	1	2	2	2
LEE	2	10	4	17	5
LENOIR	6	7	5	4	3
LINCOLN	9	6	11	11	9
MACON	2	2	2	1	2
MADISON	6	2	2	8	3
MARTIN	4	0	4	1	2
MCDOWELL	11	5	9	8	7
MECKLENBURG	112	122	173	135	123
MITCHELL	0	0	2	3	1
MONTGOMERY	0	5	0	3	1
MOORE	25	10	8	6	8
NASH	19	12	4	12	7
NEW HANOVER	41	24	33	35	31
NORTHAMPTON	2	0	0	1	0
ONSLOW	21	8	12	27	14
ORANGE	22	9	17	18	15
PAMLICO	1	0	0	1	0
PASQUOTANK	4	6	0	10	3
PENDER	2	4	9	3	3
PERQUIMANS	1	0	1	2	1
PERSON	4	5	0	2	2
PITT	24	18	19	18	18
POLK	4	3	7	6	4
RANDOLPH	16	21	14	13	14
RICHMOND	12	10	4	4	6
ROBESON	30	32	20	19	23
ROCKINGHAM	3	8	11	10	7
ROWAN	26	33	16	26	22
RUTHERFORD	13	16	11	14	13
SAMPSON	6	9	10	2	6
SCOTLAND	4	9	6	1	4
STANLY	6	3	4	2	3
STOKES	3	5	7	4	4
SURRY	13	7	7	8	7
SWAIN	4	0	1	0	0
TRANSYLVANIA	9	9	11	11	10
TYRRELL	0	0	0	0	0
UNION	17	13	18	19	16
VANCE	15	7	5	22	9
WAKE	116	89	46	91	75
WARREN	4	7	0	5	3
WASHINGTON	1	1	0	1	1
WATAUGA	3	4	3	8	3
WAYNE	22	24	11	34	19
WILKES	15	13	17	7	12
WILSON	13	23	18	9	13
YADKIN	9	10	9	10	9

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND
SFY 04-05**

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	sfy00/01	sfy01/02	sfy02/03	sfy03/04	BASELINE
BETHANY CHRISTIAN	5	0		0	0
CATHOLIC SERVICES	4	0		2	1
FAMILY SERVICES	3	3		0	1
CHRISTIAN ADOPTION	6	0		6	2
NEW LIFE	0	0	0	0	0
YAHWEH		1	0	1	0
ADOPTION OPTIONS		0		0	0
GRANDFATHER HOME	0	0	0	0	0
OMNI COMMUNITY	0	0	0	0	0
NAZARETH					
CHILDREN'S HOME	0	0	0	0	0
LUTHERAN	0	0	2	1	0

SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION FUND

County/Private Agencies

NUMBER	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	I 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

Prepared by

Telephone Number