



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

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

October 3, 2006

MEMORANDUM:

County Directors of Social Services
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
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 \$3,100,000 in Special Children Adoption Fund in SFY 06-07. **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 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, 2007. 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.

On April 7, 2006, 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 convened to recommend guidelines for administration of the SFY 06-07 Special Children Adoption Fund. Many options were discussed and a recommendation was made pending the Divisions final approval. Following Division review, maintaining the established SFY 05-06 process was determined to be the most equitable based on current reviews and management of the fund. For SFY 06-07, each agency's baseline will be governed 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. For those private agencies, (ASU-Appalachian Family Innovations, Another Choice for Black Children, Children's Home Society of North Carolina, and Methodist Home for Children), under contract with the State to provide special needs adoption services, they are eligible to participate in the fund once they have exhausted the funding for services enumerated in those 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 06-07** 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 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, 2006. 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 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 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.** **We will eliminate reimbursement requests that do not have the signature of an authorized official on the DSS 1571, Part IV.**
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, 2007 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 payment requests as soon as possible after the Decree of Adoption has been issued. Although payment requests may be faxed to expedite processing; the Division 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 05-06 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 06-07 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.**

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.) If you have questions, contact Joan McAllister, LINKS Coordinator, at (919) 733-2580 or Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net.

Last year **37** agencies participated in the Special Children Adoption Fund yielding the adoption of **346** children. Of the children that were adopted, there were **6** sibling groups of four or more; **12** sibling groups of three; and 38 sibling groups of 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.

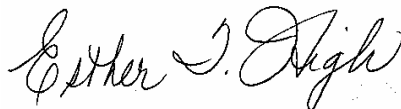
The Division encourages more agencies to participate during SFY 06-07. The purpose of the fund is to recognize and reward strong performance in adoption services. It is our expectation that all participating agencies adhere to best practice standards in providing these services. Failure to adhere to 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 Tamika Williams at (919) 733-2580, fax (919) 733-3052 or Tamika.Williams@ncmail.net. Requests for payments, including all of the required documentation described in this letter should be sent to Ms. Williams at the following address:

North Carolina Division of Social Services
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section
325 N. Salisbury Street Suite 715
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 adoption s has steadily increased. We believe that the Special Children Adoption Fund is one of the positive factors in that accomplishment.

Sincerely,



Esther T. High, Acting Chief
Family Support and Child Welfare Services Section

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

ETH/CJ/twl

FSCWS-56-06

**BASELINE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPECIAL CHILDREN ADOPTION
 FUND
 SFY 06-07**

		sfy02/03	sfy03/04	sfy04/05	sfy05/06	BASELINE
ALAMANCE		21	19	14	16	16
ALEXANDER		1	1	3	12	2
ALLEGHANY		0	2	1	2	1
ANSON		5	6	2	5	4
ASHE		3	2	6	3	3
AVERY		4	6	5	4	4
BEAUFORT		5	8	14	4	6
BERTIE		3	1	0	0	0
BLADEN		0	12	2	8	3
BRUNSWICK		24	17	21	27	21
BUNCOMBE		37	50	38	49	41
BURKE		18	18	19	34	18
CABARRUS		11	12	47	30	18
CALDWELL		36	23	29	38	29
CAMDEN		0	0	0	2	0
CARTERET		12	11	7	12	10
CASWELL		1	1	1	5	1
CATAWBA		16	49	47	70	37
CHATHAM		6	7	16	18	10
CHEROKEE		0	2	0	5	1
CHOWAN		1	0	0	0	0
CLAY		0	0	0	0	0
CLEVELAND		14	32	26	11	17
COLUMBUS		6	2	6	3	4
CRAVEN		9	13	8	11	9
CUMBERLAND		53	62	45	44	47
CURRITUCK		5	3	8	0	3
DARE		2	5	6	17	4
DAVIDSON		23	28	17	27	22
DAVIE		9	2	6	12	6
DUPLIN		4	5	5	7	5
DURHAM		15	14	16	16	15
EDGECOMBE		14	14	12	10	12
FORSYTH		53	54	48	47	49
FRANKLIN		4	3	5	9	4
GASTON		22	6	25	18	15
GATES		0	0	0	0	0
GRAHAM		2	4	2	2	2
GRANVILLE		1	2	7	0	1

GREENE		0	2	1	0	0
GUILFORD		110	110	102	121	107
HALIFAX		10	9	9	20	9
HARNETT		27	16	28	34	24
HAYWOOD		9	13	5	50	9
HENDERSON		13	11	9	12	11
HERTFORD		7	2	3	0	2
HOKE		4	2	2	4	3
HYDE		1	0	0	0	0
IREDELL		19	10	18	13	14
JACKSON		4	5	1	2	2
JOHNSTON		18	19	40	26	21
JONES		2	2	0	0	1
LEE		4	17	7	8	6
LENOIR		5	4	18	3	4
LINCOLN		11	11	17	10	11
MACON		2	1	5	5	3
MADISON		2	8	2	3	2
MARTIN		4	1	0	2	1
MCDOWELL		9	8	5	15	7
MECKLENBURG		173	126	104	125	118
MITCHELL		2	3	9	0	2
MONTGOMERY		0	1	2	1	1
MOORE		8	6	1	10	5
NASH		4	12	11	6	7
NEW HANOVER		33	35	39	58	36
NORTHAMPTON		0	1	0	3	0
ONslow		12	27	25	36	21
ORANGE		17	18	12	21	16
PAMLICO		0	1	1	1	1
PASQUOTANK		0	10	6	4	3
PENDER		9	3	10	17	7
PERQUIMANS		1	2	1	0	1
PERSON		0	2	3	0	1
PITT		19	18	3	5	9
POLK		7	6	4	10	6
RANDOLPH		14	13	15	21	14
RICHMOND		4	4	5	6	4
ROBESON		20	19	33	36	24
ROCKINGHAM		11	10	10	9	10
ROWAN		16	26	22	16	18
RUTHERFORD		11	14	8	8	9
SAMPSON		10	2	5	0	2
SCOTLAND		6	1	3	7	3
STANLY		4	2	8	10	5
STOKES		7	4	4	4	4
SURRY		7	8	15	11	9
SWAIN		1	0	0	1	0

TRANSYLVANIA	11	11	5	9	8
TYRRELL	0	0	0	0	0
UNION	18	19	16	12	15
VANCE	5	17	15	12	11
WAKE	46	91	90	84	73
WARREN	0	5	7	0	2
WASHINGTON	0	1	2	5	1
WATAUGA	3	8	4	9	5
WAYNE	11	34	34	48	26
WILKES	17	7	10	18	11
WILSON	18	9	7	8	8
YADKIN	9	10	10	3	7
YANCEY	11	8	2	5	5

PRIVATE AGENCIES	sfy02/03	sfy03/04	sfy05/06	sfy05/06	BASELINE
AGAPE					0
BETHANY CHRISTIAN		0	3	2	1
BOYS & GIRLS HOME			6	13	2
CATHOLIC SERVICES		2		4	0
CHILDREN'S HOME			0	2	0
CHRISTIAN ADOPTION	12	6	13	14	10
COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN	0	0		8	0
CROSSNORE SCHOOL					0
FAMILY SERVICES			0	2	0
LUTHERAN	2	1	10	17	4
NAZARETH			1	2	0
NEW LIFE	0	0	0	0	0
OMNI COMMUNITY	0	0	6	4	1
YAHWEH		1	0	0	0
YOUTH HOMES					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