

NWF Health Network Policy & Procedure

Series: 400: Child Welfare Services

Policy Name: Adoption Subsidy Approval Process

Policy Number: 420

Origination Date: 03/09/2009 **Revised:** Board Meeting of 06/27/2024

Regulations: 100.152, F.S. 65C-16.012, F.A.C.
409.166(4)(a), F.S. 65C-16.014, F.A.C.
CFOP 175-71 65C-16.015, F.A.C.

Referenced Document:

400-420 x 1, NWFHN Subsidy File Checklist

Policy

It is the policy of NWF Health Network (NWFHN), to assess the need for an adoption subsidy for families in order to alleviate financial burden and expedite permanency. The purpose of the adoption subsidy is to make financial aid available to prospective adoptive parents, which could enable them to adopt a special needs child.

Procedure

A. Initial Adoption Subsidy Process.

1. Every adoptive family must be advised of the availability of adoption subsidy and the purpose for which it is intended.
2. The Adoption Provider must identify the child's and the family's need for subsidy and eligibility must be determined prior to adoptive placement.
3. The initial determination of the monthly maintenance subsidy shall be based on the needs of the child at the time of the negotiation and the projected future needs of the child based on the family and medical history of the child and birth family or, for adoptions finalized on or after July 1, 2007, as stated in Section 409.166, F.S. Negotiations for the initial maintenance subsidy shall begin at \$417 monthly.
4. If an Adoption Provider determines that a child meets the requirements for Medical Subsidy (also referred to as Medical Assistance) which can only be used as prescribed in subsection 409.166(4)(c), F.S., they are to ensure that this is documented on the Adoption Assistance Agreement prior to adoptive finalization.

B. Supplemental Basic Maintenance Subsidy.

1. An additional supplemental amount may be added to the child's basic subsidy when a child has a specific and diagnosed physical, mental, emotional or behavioral problems which require care, supervision and structure beyond that ordinarily provided in a family setting.

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2. The total of the basic amount and the supplemental amount may not exceed the standard foster care board rate for which the child is or would be eligible if the child had been placed in a family foster home.
3. No adoption subsidy may exceed the actual amount of the foster care board rate paid for the child. Any request for this policy exception must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of DCF. The request should come from the NWFHN CEO and DCF Regional Administrator.

C. Subsidy File.

1. The Adoption Provider will prepare an Initial Adoption Subsidy File and submit to the NWFHN Adoption Specialist or designee for review and approval by NWFHN Chief Executive Officer or designee.
2. The initial Adoption Subsidy File will include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Shelter Petition (must be uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet as Legal Document);
 - b. Shelter Order (must be uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet as Legal Document);
 - c. Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) Petition (must be uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet as Legal Document);
 - d. TPR Order on all parents (must be uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet as Legal Document);
 - e. Surrenders, if applicable;
 - f. Petition for Adoption (placed in file after finalization);
 - g. Adoption Finalization Order (placed in file after finalization);
 - h. FSFN/CCWIS Memorandum of Agreement (once fully signed, upload to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet labeled "Memorandum of Agreement to Adopt");
 - i. Initial Adoption Assistance Agreement (AAA)
 - i. Automated AAA is to be created in FSFN/CCWIS,
 - ii. Written AAA, Form 5079, October-2022 is to be upload to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet once fully signed and should be labeled "Signed Adoption Assistance Agreement);
 - j. Adoption Information Page (created and completed in FSFN/CCWIS, must complete all AFCARS fields in red labels);
 - k. Maintenance Adoption Subsidy Approval Form (must have supervisor signature; once approved, uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet);
 - l. FSFN/CCWIS Title IV-E & Adoption Eligibility Verification Worksheets;
 - m. Birth Certificate;
 - n. Social Security Card (print out from person page);
 - o. SSI Verification/Award Letter, if applicable;
 - p. TANF-MAS Specific Documentation; State of Residence & child income supporting documentation;

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- q. Child Study (must include description of special needs & uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet labeled "Adoption Documents Other");
 - r. Physical Exam (within 12 months of placement & uploaded to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet);
 - s. CBHA/Psychological, if applicable; (upload to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet);
 - t. Adoptive Home Study (must be approved in FSFN/CCWIS & uploaded to the provider file cabinet);
 - u. Adoption Application (must be signed & uploaded to the provider file cabinet);
 - v. Adoption Review Committee Report, if applicable;
 - w. National/Federal Background Checks;
 - x. State Background Checks;
 - y. Local Background Checks;
 - z. Florida Abuse Registry Checks;
 - aa. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Checks;
 - bb. Abuse Registry (Adam Walsh) checks, if applicable;
3. The file will be reviewed by the NWFHN Adoption Specialist or designee using the NWFHN Subsidy File Checklist to ensure all required documents are present. When all required documentation from the adoption provider is received the Adoption Specialist and Eligibility Specialists will have no less than ten (10) business days to review and obtain approval.
 4. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist or designee will complete the eligibility screens in FSFN/CCWIS.
 5. The completed Adoption Subsidy File will be forwarded to NWFHN's CEO or designee for approval and signature.

D. Adoptive Placement.

1. Within two (2) business days of adoptive placement, the Adoption Provider will send the NWFHN Communication Form, signed AAA (must have effective date), and signed MOA to the NWFHN adoption communication email address/Adoption Eligibility Specialist.
2. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist will complete the Medicaid documentation in FSFN/CCWIS and will create the adoptive placement in FSFN/CCWIS.
3. If the adoption placement disrupts or the child is not initially placed with the prospective adoptive family, the Adoption Provider must notify the NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist within two (2) business days.
4. Once the child is officially placed for the purpose of adoption, the Adoption Provider will issue consents to the adoption attorney. Consents for the adoption finalization should not be sent to the adoptive parent's attorney prior to subsidy approval and placement of the child in an official adoptive placement. The adoption provider will provide NWFHN Adoption Specialist the date consents are submitted.

E. Adoption Finalization.

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1. Within two (2) business days of adoption finalization, the Adoption Provider will email the NWFHN Communication Form (with the finalization date) and the Final Judgment of Adoption Order to the NWFHN Adoption Communication email address/Adoption Eligibility Specialist.
2. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist or designee will submit a Medicaid closure row in FSFN/CCWIS indicating the reason of adoption.
3. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist or designee will end the adoptive placement in FSFN/CCWIS with the finalization date.
4. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist or designee will create the post adoption case and submit an initial Medicaid determination in FSFN/CCWIS.
5. Within five (5) business days of the Adoption Finalization, the Adoption Provider will ensure that the following documents are placed in the adoption subsidy file:
 - a. Adoption Petition;
 - b. Final Judgement of Adoption Order;
 - c. Initial Adoption Assistance Agreement (signed by all parties).
6. The NWFHN Adoption Eligibility Specialist will upload the signed AAA and Final Judgment of Adoption Order to FSFN/CCWIS file cabinet.

F. Adoption without Subsidy.

1. If an adoptive family desires Medicaid benefits for an adoptive child being placed without subsidy, the Initial Adoption Subsidy Process must be followed, including:
 - a. Documenting the subsidy amount as Zero Dollars (\$0.00) with Medicaid requested; and
 - b. Assuring valid signatures from both the prospective adoptive parents and the Adoption Provider.
2. Families who previously adopted without a subsidy may later request an adoption subsidy by making a written request of NWFHN's Adoption Provider.
 - a. Upon receipt of an adoption subsidy request from a previous adoptive family, the Adoption Provider is responsible for:
 - i. Working with the family and NWFHN to determine the appropriate subsidy;
 - ii. Updating the MAS Approval Form and Adoption Assistance Agreement;
 - iii. Preparing a written statement indicating the Adoption Provider's findings; and
 - iv. Submitting the MAS Approval Form, agreement and findings to the NWFHN Adoption Specialist or designee.
 - b. NWFHN is then responsible for processing subsequent requests for adoption subsidies as provided in *Section C, subsections 3 through 5*, as stated in this Policy.

G. Enhanced Subsidy Approval Process.

1. NWFHN must submit a foster care board rate matrix to the DCF Regional Licensing Chief for approval each calendar year.
2. NWFHN must submit a rate matrix that outlines the enhanced amounts they would like to pay over the COLA memo amounts.

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3. If a licensed or unlicensed prospective adoptive parent requests an enhanced subsidy amount within the DCF approved matric, the Maintenance Adoption Subsidy Approval form, approved adoption home study and child study is required to be submitted to DCF for approval.
4. If a licensed or unlicensed prospective adoptive parent requests an enhanced subsidy amount above the DCF approved matric rates, the request must include the Maintenance Adoption Subsidy Approval Form, approved adoption home study, child study, and any supporting documentation of the child meeting the difficulty to place requirement to justify the increased rate.
5. For out-of-county enhanced subsidy requests, the lead agency that has jurisdiction of the case is responsible for submitting the subsidy packet to DCF in their region for approval.