

Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Information Memo Series 2026-33i

September 28, 2026

To: DCF/DMCW Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: John Elliott
Administrator



Re: Adoption Assistance (AA) Amendments Process Transition

PURPOSE

This memo is to serve as notification that effective October 1, 2026, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is transferring responsibilities of processing adoption assistance (AA) amendment requests to the Statewide Wisconsin Family Connections Center (WiFCC). The Statewide WiFCC will assist families with the completion of required paperwork for all AA amendment requests and will submit completed requests to DCF for final review in accordance with administrative rule and policy. Final approval of all AA amendment requests and decisions will remain the responsibility of the Department.

BACKGROUND

Adoption Assistance (AA) is a supportive resource to adoptive parents for children who have been adopted and are determined eligible for AA pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code s DCF 50.09. AA provides Foster Care Medicaid and the chance to apply for a one-time reimbursement of up to \$2,000 in adoption-related expenses. For some children, AA also includes a monthly subsidy. AA is established by an agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the adoptive parent(s) prior to the finalization of adoption.

An AA amendment is a one-year increase to the monthly AA subsidy established through a time-limited agreement between DCF and the adoptive parent(s). Adoptive parent(s) may request new amendments annually when there is an established AA Agreement with the Department.

To be eligible to apply for an AA amendment, the adoptive parent(s) must:

1. Have an active AA Agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF);
2. Believe that the child's emotional, behavioral, or physical needs have increased since the time of adoption; and
3. Meet **at least one** of the following requirements:
 1. It has been at least 12 months since the child was adopted.
 2. It has been at least 12 months since a previous denial for an AA amendment.
 3. It is within 120 days before the expiration of an active AA amendment.

Prior to October 1, 2026, adoptive parents submitted AA amendment requests, including supporting documentation, directly to the Department. Following feedback from adoptive families who completed the AA amendment request process, it was determined that more direct support in the completion and submission of the amendment paperwork to the Department was needed. The Department also recognized that in addition to the financial assistance provided by an increased AA subsidy, adoptive parent(s) would benefit from additional resource connections specific to the increased emotional, behavioral, or physical needs identified in the AA amendment request. Therefore, it was determined that adding AA amendment processing to the Statewide WiFCC contract would align with the other post-permanency support they already provided.

The primary goal of the Statewide WiFCC is to expand availability of services that:

- Increase permanency for identified populations of youth indicated through data as experiencing lower rates of achieving permanency in formal systems.
- Increase family and cultural connections for children and their caregivers.
- Increase identification and utilization of relative and like-kin caregivers.
- Increase recruitment of resource parents that prioritize reunification and co-parenting.
- Increase skill building opportunities for parents and caregivers focused on trauma-informed and strengths-based caregiving.
- Increase the support provided to families' post-permanency to decrease re-entry into the child welfare system.
- Increase engagement with lived experience voices in program development and revision.
- Increase the accessibility of services to rural and underserved geographical areas of the state.
- **Increase support to adoptive families who are receiving adoption assistance, in the completion of initial and subsequent AA amendment requests; including "option to continue" AA amendment requests.**

INFORMATION SUMMARY

Effective October 1, 2026, the Statewide WiFCC will facilitate AA amendment requests on behalf of the Department in addition to connecting families to relevant resources, based on areas of increased need identified from the AA amendment request documents.

The services provided by the Statewide WiFCC for AA amendment requests will include:

- Responding to AA amendment inquiries made via email, phone, webform, fax, and mail.
- Facilitating AA amendment requests on behalf of the department and in accordance with administrative rule and policy, which includes initial amendment requests, subsequent requests, and option to continue requests. This includes providing families with the forms needed to complete an amendment request and providing support to the families in the completion of the forms.
- Connecting families to relevant resources available, based on areas of need identified from the AA amendment request documents including the confirmation of needs documents.
- Answering questions from adoptive parents pertaining to the completion and submission of an AA amendment request, status updates, and questions about the AA amendment process.

Final approval of all AA amendment requests and AA amendment decisions will remain the responsibility of the Department.

More information on adoption assistance amendments, including how to apply for an amendment can be found at the [DCF Adoption Assistance Amendments](#) website or the [WiFCC Adoptive Parent](#) website.

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MEMO WEB SITE: [Wisconsin Child Welfare Policies and Standards](#)

ATTACHMENTS: [Adoption Assistance Amendments](#)