

To: DCF/DMCPS 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
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Fredi-Ellen Bove 
Administrator

Re: Foster Home Recruitment Activities

PURPOSE

Currently, Wisconsin is experiencing an increase in the number of children in out-of-home care due to a number of factors, including the rise in opioid abuse which disproportionately impacts younger children. As a result, child welfare agencies are struggling to identify and recruit enough foster homes to meet the increasing need. In addition, Foster Care Coordinators are experiencing an increase in their workload related to relative placements and licensure due to the increase in children in out-of-home care living with relatives. In many counties, Foster Care Coordinators have other responsibilities, such as serving as ongoing caseworkers and Kinship Care workers. As a result, child welfare agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and license a sufficient number of new foster homes on their own.

BACKGROUND

There are approximately 4,500 foster homes and 1,800 Kinship Care homes serving approximately 6,300 foster care and Kinship Care placements statewide. There are 127 agencies, 72 counties, 44 private child placing agencies, and 11 tribes, which license foster homes throughout Wisconsin.

The current Wisconsin administrative rule for foster parent licensing, Ch. DCF 56, requires licensing agencies to recruit and license foster parents: who are interested in and capable of working with the types of children who are commonly placed by that agency; assess and screen families who are interested in becoming foster parents; and develop foster homes to meet the needs of a specifically identified child in need of placement.

In August of 2017 DSP launched the Foster Care Recruitment initiative to allow agencies to apply for funding to increase the capacity within child welfare agencies to recruit and to acknowledge foster parents who successfully recruit new licensed foster homes. The efforts of the participating agencies and foster families has been successful in bringing more individuals forward who are interested in becoming licensed by county agencies. This and the continued increase in the use of relative caregivers seeking licensure is leading to an increased workload creating backlogs of foster care licensing in county agencies.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

To assist foster home licensing agencies in recruiting and licensing qualified foster parents the Department is amending the current foster home recruitment activities set forth in DSP Informational Memo Series 2017 – 29i: Foster Home Recruitment Activities. Counties may now also apply for funding to contract with private child placing agencies to assist with licensing foster parents to help address the backlog they are experiencing.

The funds available may be used to contract for the foster care licensing process for:

- Relative conversions from Court Ordered Kinship Care to foster care licensing.
- New Level of Care 1 and 2 foster homes recruited as part of the foster care recruitment activities described in DSP Informational Memo Series 2017 – 29i: Foster Home Recruitment Activities

This does not include:

- Foster home renewal applications for foster homes already licensed by the county agency, unless a specific limited plan is agreed to by DSP.
- Replacing current existing contracts with private agencies to license foster homes on the county's behalf.

All licenses issued using these funds shall be issued by the public licensing agency and must be documented in compliance with DSP Numbered Memo Series 2015 – 02: Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS,

An application to apply for the available funding is attached to this memo.

County agencies will submit requests for the reimbursement and the Department will provide the funds to the county agency. The request for these funds shall be submitted to the Department on the attached Foster Parent Licensing Subcontract Application. Requests for reimbursement will be processed quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Agencies will be reimbursed through their SPARC contract with the Department.

The Department will monitor the applications submitted and the foster home licenses issued, denied, or withdrawn as a part of this process.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out-of-Home Care Specialist
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
(608) 422-6937

MEMO WEB SITE: DSP Informational Memo Series 2017 – 29i
DSP Numbered Memo Series 2015 – 02
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Links: DCF-F-5210-E: Foster Parent Recruitment Request for One-Time Expense
Reimbursement
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/forms>

State of Wisconsin Pocket Travel Guide
<https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/PocketTravelGuide.pdf>

Attachments Foster Parent Licensing Subcontract Application

Foster Home Licensing Subcontract Application

The purpose of this application is to provide public foster home licensing agencies a means to apply for foster homes licensing subcontract funds to assist foster home licensing agencies with the increasing number of individuals seeking licensure.

Currently, Wisconsin is experiencing an increase in the number of children in out-of-home care due to a number of factors, including the rise in opioid abuse which disproportionately impacts younger children. As a result, child welfare agencies are struggling to identify and recruit enough foster homes to meet the increasing need. In addition, Foster Care Coordinators are experiencing an increase in their workload related to relative placements and licensure due to the increase in children in out-of-home care living with relatives. As a result, child welfare agencies are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and license a sufficient number of new foster homes on their own.

In response to this growing need, the Department of Children and Families is allocating funds to support county foster home licensing agencies that choose to subcontract for assistance in addressing their backlog requests for foster care licensing.

Foster Home Licensing Subcontracting

The funds available may be used to contract for the foster care licensing process for:

- Relative conversions from Court-Ordered Kinship Care to foster care licensing.
- New Level of Care 2 foster homes recruited as part of the foster home recruitment activities described in [DSP Informational Memo Series 2017 – 29j](#): Foster Home Recruitment Activities.

This does not include:

- Foster home renewal applications for homes already licensed by the public foster home licensing agency, unless a specific limited plan is agreed to by DSP.
- Replacing current existing contracts with private agencies to license foster homes on the public foster home licensing agency's behalf.

All licenses issued using these funds shall be issued by the public licensing agency and must be documented in compliance with [DSP Numbered Memo Series 2015 – 02](#): Documentation Requirements for Foster Care Providers in eWiSACWIS.

SPARC Contracts

The SPARC contracts for the foster home licensing subcontracts will be issued as part of the foster home recruitment contracts. Once the foster parent licensing subcontract applications have been approved by the Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care, agencies will be issued a new contract or an addendum to their current foster home recruitment contract. Separate SPARC lines will be established under the Foster Home Recruitment SPARC Contract Code Number 3394. The SPARC lines will be 3394A and 3394B reporting to SPARC line 3394. SPARC line 3394A shall be used to report expenses incurred for foster home recruitment activities and 3394B shall be used to report foster home licensing subcontract expenses.

Fiscal information will be needed annually and the amount identified in the agency fiscal information will set the reimbursement limit for that contract year.

All reimbursements will be based on expenses reported to DCF through the SPARC system. No contract advances will be made to agencies for this program.

SPARC Reporting

The SPARC reporting update includes information for both reimbursement and reporting expenses for DCF administrative use. The agency shall report 100% of their costs on the SPARC Expenditure Report Lines 3394A and 3394B.

Agencies should retain their own documentation of costs of approved qualifying expenses for their local audit purposes.

Agency Worksheet

The following worksheet shall be completed by the public licensing agency requesting the foster home licensing subcontracting reimbursement. An application shall not be considered complete until all of the below information is submitted to the Department.

Foster Home Licensing Subcontracting Estimate	
	Total Expense
COKC Licensing Conversions	_____
New Level of Care 2 Foster Homes	_____
TOTAL ESTIMATE:	_____

In addition to the above estimated costs, agencies shall submit the following information to the Department:

1. Total number of Court-Ordered Kinship Care conversions to foster home licensing issued under the agency's foster home licensing subcontract.
2. Total number of new level of care 2 foster home licenses as part of the agency's involvement in the foster home recruitment initiative that are issued under the agency's foster home licensing subcontract.

Agencies shall submit this information to Department quarterly within the following timeframes:

- January 1st through March 31st by April 15th
- April 1st through June 30th by July 15th
- July 1st through September 30th by October 15th
- October 1st through December 31st by January 15th

Agencies shall submit this application and supporting documents electronically to the Department at the following email address: lindsay.wood@wisconsin.gov .

The application shall be received by July 31, 2018.