



Division of Safety and Permanence

DSP Informational Memo Series 2025-11i

April 25, 2025

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  
Private Child Placing Agencies  
Residential Care Center Providers  
Shelter Care Providers  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: John Elliott  
Administrator

Re: **2017 Wisconsin Act 260: Foster Parent Grants, FY 2026 Applications**

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to notify county, tribal, and non-profit child placing agencies of a one-time grant opportunity, authorized by 2017 Wisconsin Act 260, to support licensed relatives, foster parents, and normalcy opportunities for children in out-of-home care. This funding is open to county and tribal child welfare agencies and child placing agencies that license foster homes that support children placed in out of home care. The funds must be used for licensed foster parents, licensed relative or like-kin, or for children placed in community settings such as court ordered kinship care, or unlicensed relative or like-kin caregivers for the following activities:

- Incentives for the retention of licensed relatives/like-kin and fosterparents;
- Licensed relative/like-kin and foster parent training activities; and/or
- Reimbursement to court-ordered kinship or unlicensed relative/like-kin caregivers for related expenses that allow for normalcy opportunities for children in out-of-home care.

## BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin legislature passed several foster care related bills in 2017, referred to as the Foster Forward Acts. 2017 Wisconsin Act 260, one of the Foster Forward Acts, provides grant funding to support children in out-of-home care. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall distribute not more than \$400,000 each fiscal year in grants to counties, nonprofit organizations, or tribes for the purpose of supporting foster parents and providing normalcy for children in out-of-home care.

## INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Division of Safety and Permanence is distributing these funds as a one-time contract for state fiscal year 2026 (July 1, 2025, through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026). DCF will award a maximum of \$400,000 to county, tribal, and child placing agencies who submit a complete and timely application as described below. Funding will be distributed to agencies using a methodology that allows all eligible agencies that apply for funding for allowable activities to receive a minimum amount of \$3,700 with the maximum allocation of \$15,000. Final funding allocations will be dependent upon the total number of applications received, with the department distributing no more than \$400,000.

The 2017 Wisconsin Act 260 Foster Parent Grant funds will be awarded through a non-competitive application process. The application should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Agencies will be asked to identify the category or categories in which they are applying for funding, how funds are anticipated to be utilized, and the total amount requested, not to exceed \$15,000. Application eligibility requirements are as follows:

**All counties, tribes, and CPA's are eligible to apply for foster parent retention and support.**

- Costs related to the retention of relative and/or non-relative foster parents may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:
  - Costs that support the licensing of relative and like-kin providers
  - Respite for caregivers
  - Caregiver support groups
  - Closet or pantry items for placement needs such as diapers, clothing in varying sizes, and other non-perishable items that may be utilized at the time of placement
  - Appreciation events, such as a banquet, picnics, family day for caregivers, etc.
  - Offering a "date night" for caregivers and providing them with childcare
  - Organizing and partnering with community groups to support caregivers who accept placements with little notice and/or who are newly licensed. This may include making meals and providing needed items for families (i.e., groceries, diapers, formula, clothes, etc.).

**Tribes are eligible to apply for foster parent training activities.** Reimbursement for licensed relative and foster parent training expenses under the grant shall not be used to supplant the current foster parent training structure, which allows for reimbursement through the Title IV-E Foster Parent Training Pass-Through or the administrative rate provided to private child placing agencies.

**Tribes and counties are eligible to apply for normalcy expenses for the following placement types.**

- Tribes are eligible to apply for foster homes not paid through the standard uniform foster care rate setting process and for court ordered and unlicensed placements.
- Counties are eligible to apply for funding that supports children placed with relative/like-kin caregivers who are not licensed.



Normalcy activities for children placed in licensed foster homes (Level 2-5) using the uniform foster care rate setting process can be included in the exceptional portion of the foster care rate.

### **Application Process**

DCF will review grant applications and grants will be awarded based upon available funding not to exceed a total of \$400,000 statewide in state fiscal year 2026. Agencies may apply for grant funding under all the qualifying topic areas. Agencies should only apply under the topic areas they intend to have expenses and should only apply under their eligible topic area. Agencies may receive funding that exceeds the minimum award amount based upon the number of applications for eligible activities. **This is a one-time funding opportunity and grants must be spent by June 30, 2026.**

The attached Foster Parent Grant application packet specifies the grant requirements, including information on each of the three topic areas. **Applications for state fiscal year 2026 will be accepted until May 30, 2025.**

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:      Program & Policy Analyst  
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care  
[DCFDSPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDSPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov)

MEMO WEB SITE:      <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

Attachments      [Foster Parent Grant Program Application](#)