



Division of Safety and Permanence
August 29, 2025

DSP Informational Memo Series 2025-17i

To: 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
Tribal Chairpersons

From: John Elliott
Division Administrator

Re: **2026 Maximum Daily Rates for Group Homes, Residential Care Centers, and Child Placing Agencies**

PURPOSE

This memo provides the established 2026 maximum daily rates for residential care centers (RCCs), group homes (GHs), and child placing agencies (CPAs). This memo also outlines the procedure for providers to determine individual rates, and a process for facilities intending to become qualified residential treatment programs (QRTPs).

BACKGROUND

Wisconsin Stat. s. 49.343 requires the department to establish per client daily rates for GHs and RCCs, as well as the administrative portion of foster care daily rates paid to CPAs. The department has established these rates using cost and service report data gathered from providers who submitted their reports prior to the established deadline.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

Below are the 2026 per client maximum daily rates, with 2025 maximum daily rates for comparison. The published 2026 maximum rates are effective starting January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026, for all placements, regardless of placement date.

Provider Type	2025 Maximum Daily Rate	2026 Maximum Daily Rate
Child Placing Agency	\$96.44	\$ 104.38
Group Home	\$398.96	\$ 417.10
Pregnant/Parenting Teen Group Home	\$428.96	\$ 447.10
Residential Care Center	\$666.78	\$ 740.99



QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT PROGRAMS

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) encourages all GHs and RCCs to become certified as QRTPs. Information and QRTP certification application can be found on [DCF's QRTP website](#).

DCF is committed to supporting facilities that become certified as QRTPs in building programs that provide specialized, high quality clinical care designed to meet the needs of children and youth in higher levels of care, including those currently placed out of state. These QRTPs may have increased costs that reflect investments in the following areas:

- Trauma informed treatment model
- Robust mental health and behavioral health assessments
- Clinical services for youth
- Clinical supervision of staff
- Increased direct care staff, including availability of 1:1 staffing where appropriate
- Increased training and support to enhance professional status of front-line staff and staff retention
- Family participation

DCF will continue allowing QRTPs to request increased rates to support costs associated with programming outlined above, as permitted by sections DCF 52.66(3)(b) or DCF 57.62(3)(b) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code for specialized services or specialized programming to a specific population of children. Additional information on how facilities can request these rates, after becoming certified as a QRTP, is provided in the [DCF Child Welfare Licensing Memo 2021-28-lic](#).

REQUESTING A PROPOSED DAILY RATE

On or before October 1, 2025, GHs, RCCs, and CPAs will be required to submit a 2026 proposed rate request by completing form DCF-F-2696-E (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/2696.docx>) and emailing it to DCFCLWRateReg@wi.gov. Failure to meet the deadline of October 1, 2025, will result in the provider waiving the right to mediation. If a licensee does not submit all proposed rate information required under Chapters DCF 52, 54 and 57 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, the department may impose sanctions and penalties under these administrative rules and s. 48.715, Stats, which may include license revocation.

The department will approve individual rates by November 1, 2025, for rates effective January 1, 2026. The provider agency will receive an email from the department's rate regulation email account with the approved rate no later than November 1, 2025.

As of January 1, 2026, all placements, regardless of placement date, will follow the department's approved rates set for 2026. Pursuant to Chapters DCF 52, 54, and 57 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, an agency shall charge all Wisconsin public purchasers the



same rate for the same service. If an agency negotiates a rate lower than the department's approved rate with a Wisconsin public purchaser, this rate must be charged to all purchasers, for all placements. The agency shall notify the department within 5 business days of a change in their rate.

For further clarification, please refer to the following table that outlines the timeline of the rate regulation process:

Timeline for Rate Regulation	
September 1	The department publishes maximum daily rates for each provider type to be effective January 1.
October 1	All agencies submit proposed rate using form F-2696-E on or before this date . <i>If a licensee does not submit all proposed rate information required under Chapters DCF 52, 54 and 57 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, the department may impose sanctions and penalties under these administrative rules and s. 48.715, Stats, including license revocation.</i>
Upon Receipt, and no later than November 1	<p>The department will notify agencies of their maximum approved rate as soon as possible upon receipt and no later than November 1.</p> <p>If the department determines that an agency's proposed rate is not appropriate, the department must negotiate with the agency's licensee to determine an agreed to rate.</p> <p>If a licensee has negotiated with the department and does not agree to the department's approved rate, the licensee may request that the department and the licensee engage in mediation. A licensee shall request mediation within 5 business days of receiving the notification of the approved rate from the department by sending an email to DCFCWLRateReg@wi.gov. If after mediation a rate is not agreed to, the department shall order a rate as provided in administrative rule. A licensee has 30 days to appeal the rate ordered following mediation to the Division of Hearings and Appeals.</p>
January 1	Rates are effective for all placements regardless of placement date.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:

Child Welfare Program Specialist
Bureau of Permanence and Out of Home Care
(262) 446-7856
DCFCWLRateReg@wisconsin.gov

MEMO WEB SITE:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

LINK:

DCF-F-2696-E
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/doc/2696.docx>

