

January 7, 2026

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



From: John Elliott
Administrator

Re: **Basic Maintenance Foster Care Rates and Kinship Care Rates for CY2026 and CY2027**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to inform child welfare agencies of the basic maintenance rates for foster care and the payment for kinship care as provided in the 2025-27 biennial state budget (2025 WI Act 15).

BACKGROUND

The basic maintenance rate for foster care and the payment for kinship care are the required amounts to be paid per state statute.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

As provided in the biennial budget (2025 WI Act 15), the basic maintenance rate for foster care and kinship care for CY 2026 increased by 2.5 percent. There is no increase to the rate for CY 2027. The rates are effective January 1, 2026, and are as follows:

	Rate Effective January 1, 2026
Kinship Care (child of any age)	\$384
Foster Parent Certified at Level 1 (child of any age)	\$384
Foster Parent Certified Above Level 1 (based on age of child)	See below
Child Age 0-4	\$452
Child Age 5-11	\$495

Child Age 12-14	\$562
Child Age 15-18	\$586

These are also the basic maintenance rates to be reimbursed in Adoption Assistance and Subsidized Guardianship payments in CY 2026 and CY 2027.

Funds

Counties can use funding provided in the annual Children and Family Allocations to fund foster care rate payments. Counties and Tribes should use funding in the annual Kinship Care Allocation to fund kinship care payments.

The revised brochure entitled "Understanding the Uniform Foster Care Rate" is attached below and includes information on the rates and initial clothing allowance.

Additionally, the Department recommends that county agencies provide electronic funds transfer (EFT) to providers including those licensed by private Child Placing Agencies, and kinship care providers as a method for receipt of payment.

ACTION SUMMARY

Agency staff should be made aware of the updated publication to share with foster parents and kinship care providers for payments occurring after January 1, 2026.

REGIONAL OFFICE CONTACT: DCF Area Administrator

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Out-of-Home Care Section
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
Division of Safety and Permanence
DCFDSPPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov

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

Attachments [Understanding the Uniform Foster Care Rate](#) (DCF-P-PFS0142)