**2017 Wisconsin Act 260 Foster Parent Grant**

**Application Information**

**437003-G24-0002221**

**Background and Purpose**

2017 Wisconsin Act 260 provides $400,000 in funding in state fiscal year 2024 to the Department of Children and Families for grants support licensed relatives, foster parents, and normalcy activities for children in out-of-home care.

The foster parent grant funding is being awarded via a competitive grant process for the purpose of supporting counties, tribes, and non-profit organizations to implement activities that they would not otherwise be able to accomplish without financial assistance. The Department will review grant applications and grants will be awarded to those agencies that thoroughly provide the information requested in the grant application. Agencies may apply for a grant up to $60,000 in funding to support the development of new activities. All counties, tribes, and non-profit organizations (hereafter referred to as “agencies”) are eligible to apply.

Reimbursement provided to agencies through the grant program shall be reimbursed up to $60,000, as funds allow, and up to $400,000 total statewide in state fiscal year 2024. Agencies that receive the grant shall allocate the funding they receive within state fiscal year 2024 and the funds shall be spent by June 30, 2024.

**Topic Areas for Activities**

Qualifying expenses under the grant may include:

1. Incentives for the retention of licensed relatives and foster parents
2. Licensed relative and foster parent training activities
3. Reimbursement to licensed relatives and foster parents for foster care related expenses that allow for normalcy opportunities for children in out-of-home care

Agencies may apply for grant funding to reimburse for qualifying expenses under more than one of the three topic areas.

1. **Incentives for the retention of relative and non-relative foster parents**

The current Wisconsin administrative rule for foster parent licensing, Ch. DCF 56, requires licensing agencies to provide general support to foster parents; encourage peer support among foster parents; and inform foster parents of available supports.

In addition, the most effective resource for recruitment of new foster homes is individuals who themselves have had a positive experience fostering. When licensed foster parents speak positively about foster care in their communities to interested families, friends, neighbors, and community members, others are encouraged to become licensed foster parents as well. One of the main mechanisms to ensure licensed foster parents have a positive experience fostering is to provide sufficient support to those foster families. Retention activities may take many forms. Some require increased efforts and costs.

Activities related to the retention of relatives and foster parents may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

* Costs that support the licensing of relative and like-kin providers, such as purchasing smoke/carbon monoxide detectors, additional beds, child safety gates, minor home modifications, paying for pet vaccinations, etc.
* Respite for caregivers
* Caregiver support groups
* Closet or pantry 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, etc.
* Hosting a family day for caregivers at a waterpark, local ballgame, movie theatre, 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.).

1. **Licensed relative and foster parent training activities**

The current Wisconsin administrative rule for foster parent licensing, Ch. DCF 56, requires foster parents to complete Pre-Placement, Initial Licensing, and Ongoing Training in accordance with their Level of Care certification. In addition, licensing agencies shall provide, arrange, and approve the required pre-placement, initial, and ongoing training for foster parents. Reimbursement for foster parent training expenses under the grant shall not be used to supplant the current foster parent training structure, which allows for training through the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS), reimbursement through the Title IV-E Foster Parent Training Pass-Through or the administrative rate provided to private child placing agencies for foster parent training. Reimbursement for foster parent training expenses shall exceed the reimbursement received through the current foster parent training structure.

1. **Reimbursement for normalcy opportunities for children in out-of-home care**

Licensed relatives and foster parents are required to promote normalcy and the healthy development of a child placed in their home with a family-like environment that supports the child's participation in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities to have experiences that are similar to those of the child's peers. Children in out-of-home care have the right to have a normal childhood or adolescence, and the individuals involved in their lives are responsible for creating as much normalcy as possible. The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard requires all foster parents to apply the Standard when making decisions about children placed in out-of-home care to allow them to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities.

Allowable costs for reimbursement to licensed relatives and foster parents for expenses related to normalcy for children in out-of-home care are outlined in the [Uniform Foster Care Rate Setting Policy, DCF-P-5611](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5611.pdf). Funds shall be used to reimburse the share of the exceptional payment made by the agency with placement and care responsibility, or extraordinary payment costs requested by a private child placing agency. All reimbursements made for normalcy activities shall be reimbursed through the Uniform Foster Care Rate.

**Partnership with Other Agencies**

Agencies may apply in partnership with other agencies, including other county or tribal agencies, or non-profit organizations, by submitting one application with one or more partners listed. One agency must be identified as the lead agency and fiscal agent.

**Grant Funding Topic Areas**

Agencies may apply for grant funding to reimburse qualifying expenses under more than one of the three topic areas, if appropriate. Agencies do not need to request reimbursement for each topic area if the agency does not intend to participate in activities under that category.

**Contracts**

Once qualifying expenses under the foster parent grant have been approved by the Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care in the Division of Safety and Permanence (DSP), agencies or organizations will be issued a new contract for the grant reimbursement.

The new contract will be issued by DSP for fiscal year 2024 effective July 1st 2023. Fiscal reporting information is required annually. The amount identified in the agency fiscal information will set the reimbursement limit for that contract year.

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

Reimbursement provided to agencies through the grant program shall be up to $60,000, as funds allow, and no more than $400,000 total statewide. Agencies that receive the grant shall allocate the funding they receive in state fiscal year 2024 and the funds shall be spent by June 30, 2024.

**Exit Summary**

By September 1, 2024, agencies that receive the grant shall submit an exit summary to the Department that includes all of the following:

1. How the agency used the grant funding to meet its intended purpose, including the total amount requested for each grant funding topic and the total amount spent
2. The total associated cost to the agency for activities provided under the grant
3. The effectiveness of the activities as measured by the agency, which includes agency data specific to:
   1. If the agency requested grant funding to improve foster home retention:
      1. Specific retention activities provided by the agency
      2. The number of licensed foster homes closed and the reason for closure, for fiscal years 2019 through 2023
      3. The number of closures and reason for closure in state fiscal year 2024
   2. If the agency requested grant funding to provide foster parent training:
      1. The number of foster parents trained with the grant funding
      2. A pre/post-training evaluation summary that describes foster parent knowledge acquisition for additional training sessions provided through grant funding
   3. If the agency requested grant funding to provide normalcy activities:
      1. The number of children served through the grant funding

**Timeline for Award and Use of Funds**

Successful applicants will be notified in June 2023, with an anticipated contract start date of July 1, 2023. The funds shall be used by June 30, 2024.

**2017 Wisconsin Act 260 Foster Parent Grant**

**Application**

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**Instructions:**

* An agency may apply for one grant only, up to $60,000
* Complete the set of questions corresponding to the topic area of your proposed plan
* Complete the set of questions within this application form; do not create a new form
* Limit your response to **three single-spaced pages** per topic area

Applications that do not adhere to these instructions will not be considered. Applications that are either incomplete or do not adequately respond to all subsections will be deemed ineligible for review. Agencies that have received funding in the past will be considered. However, the Department will prioritize agencies that fully executed their previous year’s award. The Department will also give additional consideration to agencies that prioritize efforts that support licensing or licensed relatives. All applications must be completed and submitted to the Out-of-Home Care Program and Policy Analyst via [DCFDSPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDSPGeneralFosterCare@wisconsin.gov) **no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 16, 2023**. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

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| Lead Agency |
| If Applying in Partnership, Please List the Partnering Agency(ies) and Which Agency Will Be the Fiscal Agent: |
| Lead Agency Mailing Address (Street, City, Zip Code) |
| Point Of Contact for This Proposal (Name, Title, Email, Phone) |
| Indicate which topic area your plan addresses (choose all that apply):  Incentives for the retention of licensed relatives and foster parents Requested amount $  Licensed relative and foster parent training expenses Requested amount $  Normalcy opportunities for children in out-of-home care Requested amount $  Total Requested Amount (up to $60,000): $ |
| Complete the set of questions that correspond to the area under which your plan fits. Complete the set of questions within this application form; do not create a new form. Limit your response to **three single-spaced pages** per topic area. Use a minimum of 11 pt. font. Applications that do not adhere to these instructions, will not be considered. |

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| **Incentives for Licensed Relatives and Foster Parents Retention Questions**  Limit response to three single-spaced pages | | **Amount Requested**  **$** |
| 1. | Describe the proposed plan and activities. This shall include, at a minimum:  a. The overall goal of the plan and activities, and the general outcomes sought;  b. The target population the plan will serve;  c. The key activities of the plan;  d. How the activities will achieve the goals and outcomes; and  e. An overview of how the agency will use the level of funding sought, up to $60,000. | |
| 2. | Describe how the proposed plan will improve licensed relative and foster parent retention. This shall include, how the activities will meet the intended goal to improve retention. | |
| 3. | The associated cost to the agency to implement the activities described under number one above. The associated costs shall be specific to the activity the agency is engaging in. Please be as specific as possible when assigning costs to an activity, and if the activity includes multiple cost categories, such as venue, food, childcare, etc., please provide a breakdown that includes subtotals for those cost categories. For activities such as respite, please be specific with the number of families you intend to serve, the respite hours that will be provided, and the hourly rate that will be reimbursed. | |
| 4. | Include data on past closures, closure reasons, the projected closures for 2024, and how the agency will track and assess the effectiveness of the activities. At a minimum, include the following:  a. The number of licensed foster homes closed and the reason for closure, for state fiscal years 2018 through 2023.  b. The agency’s goal for the projected number of closures and reason for closure in state fiscal year 2024.  c. The reports the agency will use to track closure data.  d. How the agency will track and measure an increase in foster parent satisfaction with the licensing agency. Evaluation tools, such as a satisfaction survey to complete with foster parents after retention activities, are strongly recommended. | |

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| **Licensed Relative and Foster Parent Training Expenses Questions**  Limit response to three single-spaced pages | | **Amount Requested**  **$** |
| 1. | Describe the proposed plan. This shall include, at a minimum:  a. The overall goal of the plan and activities, and the general outcomes sought;  b. The target population the plan will serve;  c. The key activities of the plan;  d. How the activities will achieve the goals and outcomes; and  e. An overview of how the agency will use the level of funding sought, up to $60,000. | |
| 2. | Describe how the proposed plan will allow the agency to provide foster parent training that exceeds the reimbursement received through the current foster parent training structure. | |
| 3. | The associated cost to the agency to implement the activities described under number one above. The associated costs shall be specific to the activity the agency is engaging in. | |
| 4. | Describe how the grant funding will allow the agency to meet at least one of the intended goals of foster parent training as described in Ch. DCF 56.14 Admin. Code. Please check the intended goal that the grant funding will impact and describe how the applicable goals will be met:  a. Improve the quality of care provided to children who live in foster or adoptive homes  b. Prepare foster and adoptive families to care for and provide stability for foster children in their homes;  c. Promote communication, respect, and understanding among all involved parties, with a focus on working for the best interests of the foster child;  d. Provide opportunities to foster parents to mutually explore their values, strengths, limitations, and needs as they relate to compatibility with foster and adoptive children;  e. Develop an understanding of the child welfare system and the importance of permanency for children; and  f. Encourage foster and adoptive parent networking and the use of resources. | |
| 5. | Describe how the agency will track and assess the effectiveness of the activities. At a minimum, this shall include agency data specific to:  a. The current cost to the agency to provide foster parent training.  b. The projection for the increase in cost to the agency in state fiscal year 2024 to provide foster parent training that exceeds the reimbursement received through the current foster parent training structure.  c. The target number of additional foster parents that to be trained through the grant funding.  d. How the agency will track and measure knowledge acquisition of foster parents. Evaluation tools, such as pre/post-evaluation surveys for foster parents to complete, are strongly recommended. | |

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| **Normalcy Opportunities for Children in Out-of-Home Care Questions**  Limit response to three single-spaced pages | | **Amount Requested**  **$** |
| 1. | Describe the proposed plan. This shall include, at a minimum:  a. The overall goal of the plan and activities, and the general outcomes sought;  b. The target population the plan will serve;  c. The key activities of the plan;  d. How the activities will achieve the goals and outcomes; and  e. An overview of how the agency will use the level of funding sought, up to $60,000. | |
| 2. | Describe how the proposed plan will allow licensed relatives and foster parents to provide normalcy opportunities for children placed in their homes. | |
| 3. | The associated cost to the agency to implement the activities described under number one above. The associated costs shall be specific to the activity the child is engaging in. | |
| 4. | Describe how the grant funding will allow licensed relatives and foster parents to provide normalcy opportunities for children placed in their homes as described in Ch. DCF 56.09 Admin. Code. Specifically, describe how it will:  a. Create and promote normalcy for children placed in out-of-home care;  b. Improve the well-being of children placed in out-of-home care and allow them to develop and normalize relationships; and  c. Encourage personal growth of children placed in out-of-home care. | |
| 5. | Describe how the agency will track and assess the effectiveness of the activities. At a minimum, this shall include agency data specific to:  a. The total cost of normalcy activities that the agency currently reimburses through the Uniform Foster Care Rate, or total extraordinary payment costs requested by a private child placing agency, to reimburse for normalcy opportunities.  b. The projected costs for state fiscal year 2024 to reimburse for normalcy opportunities.  c. The target number of additional children served through the grant funding. | |

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| **ATTESTATION** | |
| Eligibility for a Foster Parent Grant requires consent to the criteria below. Please check each box to acknowledge agency acceptance of these terms. | |
| Agreement to commit the time of the necessary staff to accomplish the plan and its intended outcomes, as described above.  Agreement to participate in all required grantee administrative activities (e.g., kick-off phone conference, quarterly check-in, etc.).  Agreement to submit agency exit summary by September 1, 2024.  Agreement to participate in plan evaluation activities.  The agency has reviewed and approved the content of this application. | |
| Full Name Authorized Agency Authority | Date (mm/dd/yyyy) |
| Signature Authorized Agency Authority | |