

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 16: Financial Services/Assistance	Effective Date: October 1, 2014
	Section 3: Assistance for a Family's Basic Needs	Version: 2

POLICY [REVISED]

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) believes that families should be financially responsible for ensuring their children's basic needs are met. In situations where the parents need assistance providing for the basic needs of their children, DCS has determined that the following assistance is available for applicable children:¹

1. One (1) month of rent and one (1) security deposit of up to \$750. These each have a lifetime cap of \$750 per family;
2. Collective one-time payment for gas, electric, water and sewage utilities assistance of up to \$1000 per family;

Note: For families in need of mortgage assistance, an additional \$750 may be made available for utility assistance in certain circumstances (see Practice Guidance).

3. Up to \$200 per lifetime for Pest Control services per family;
4. Up to \$400 per lifetime, per child for children's bed and bedding; and
5. Up to \$50 per month per family to cover the cost of parent, guardian and custodian travel (gas card, bus tickets, etc. See Practice Guidance).

Questions regarding a family's use of payments should be directed to the Regional Manager (RM) and the local Regional Finance Manager (RFM). Additional funding for clothing and personal items may be requested to assist families in meeting their basic needs.

[NEW] Note: The DCS Local Office Director (LOD) may approve \$500 extra for rent and utilities, and \$300 extra for miscellaneous expenses. In addition, there are no restrictions on buying clothing for children in their own homes when emergencies arise, with the approval of the LOD. All other requests for funding must be approved by the RM.

DCS will not pay for the following items, except through an RM appeal:

1. Mortgage payment assistance (See Practice Guidance);
2. Repairs and purchases of home appliances, (including stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers), heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC);
3. Furniture (not including children's beds as outlined above);
4. Food and groceries;

¹ Applicable children/families include families who have a child who: (a) is an out-of-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS), (b) is an in-home CHINS, (c) is the subject of an Informal Adjustment (IA), or (d) is the subject of an assessment and receiving services.

5. Car repairs, driver's license reinstatement fees, and other expenses related to parental travel not listed above;
6. Recreation (including, but not limited to fees, supplies, uniforms, etc.);
7. Education (including, but not limited to tuition, uniforms, book fees, etc.);
8. Day Care; and
9. Telephone & cell phone.

[NEW] Note: An appeal for additional funding may be submitted for non-funded items, if there is an unusual circumstance or a situation that requires additional financial support.

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Engage the Child and Family Team (CFT) to identify community supports and services which may be able to assist the family in meeting their financial needs;
2. Document whether the family has an unusual circumstance or a situation that requires additional financial support, the exact reason the service is needed, and efforts made to locate alternative funding prior to completing a referral in the Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK) (see Practice Guidance for additional information on alternative funding); and
3. Complete a referral to request approved funding for the family if community resources are not able to meet the identified needs.

[REVISED] LOD Request for Additional Funding:

1. The FCM will complete the [Request for Additional Funding SF 54870](#) detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any additional funds and submit to the FCM Supervisor for approval or denial.
2. The FCM Supervisor will review and approve or deny the request for additional funding.
3. The FCM Supervisor will immediately notify the FCM if the request is denied. If the Supervisor approves the request for additional funding, it will be submitted to the DCS Local Office Director (LOD)/Division Manager for final approval or denial.
4. The LOD/Division Manager will approve or deny the request of additional funding up to a set limit (see Director's Note: [Usage of Funds](#)). If the LOD/Division Manager approves the request for additional funding, a copy of the appeal will be submitted to the RFM.
5. The LOD/Division Manager will notify the RM and the FCM Supervisor of the final determination via written correspondence.

Note: The DCS LOD may approve \$300 extra for clothing and other personal items, \$500 extra for rent and utilities, and \$300 extra for miscellaneous expenses. In addition, there are no restrictions on buying clothing for children in their own homes when emergencies arise, with the approval of the LOD. **An RM appeal, utilizing the [SF 54870 Request for Additional Funding](#) form, must be submitted for approval by the RM when additional funds or funds outside the scope of LOD approval are needed.**

[REVISED] RM Appeals:

1. The FCM will complete the RM appeal on the [SF 54870 Request for Additional Funding](#) form detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any funds and submit to the Supervisor for approval or denial;
2. The FCM Supervisor will review and approve or deny the appeal for funding;
3. The FCM Supervisor will submit the appeal to the LOD/Division Manager for approval or denial;
4. The LOD/Division Manager will approve or deny the request for additional funding (RM appeal);
5. The LOD/Division Manager will send the request for additional funding (RM appeal) to the RM for final approval or denial;
6. The RM will submit a copy to the RFM, if approved; and
7. The RM will notify the LOD/Division Manager of the final determination via written correspondence.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Prior to requesting any funding from the DCS local office to assist a family in meeting their basic needs, the FCM should ensure financial support of extended family members is explored for potential funding assistance as well as the following:

Utilities:

1. Contact Trustee's Office;
2. Contact utility company directly (gas, electric, water, etc.) to see about enrolling in a payment plan;
3. Contact local winter assistance, summer cooling programs if available in the area;
4. Contact Energy Assistance Program (EAP);
5. Contact Salvation Army; and
6. Contact Local churches.

Transportation:

1. Contact Salvation Army;
2. Contact School system;
3. Contact Medicaid Transportation; and
4. Contact Churches, community groups that may provide transportation to and from certain types of appointments.

Permitted travel expenses are those related to the benefit of the parent (i.e. parental visitation, counseling/therapy sessions, doctor's visits, education, and substance abuse appointments/meetings).

In the event a family needs assistance to pay their mortgage, DCS should provide assistance for other household expenses to be paid so that funds are available for the family to make the mortgage payment. The FCM and family will develop a plan as to how household expenses will be paid in future months. This assistance is available one time for each family and is available through an approved appeal by the RM.

DCS local offices should have a mechanism in place to validate the family's participation in the service or event for which the assistance was deemed necessary prior to subsequent disbursements to the family.

Applicable children/families include families who have a child who: (a) is an out-of-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS), (b) is an in-home CHINS, (c) is the subject of an Informal Adjustment (IA), or (d) is the subject of an assessment and receiving services.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Request for Additional Funding SF 54870](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

N/A

Archive 10/31/2016 Assistance Amount Revisions