

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 5:</b> General Case Management	<b>Effective Date:</b> April 1, 2012
	<b>Section 17:</b> Assistance for a Family's Basic Needs	<b>Version:</b> 1

**POLICY [NEW]**

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:<sup>1</sup>

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

**Note:** For families in need of mortgage assistance, an additional \$750 can 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).

**Note:** Questions regarding a family's use of payments should be directed to the local Regional Finance Manager (RFM).

DCS will not pay any of the following:

1. Mortgage payment assistance (See Practice Guidance);
2. Repairs and purchases of home appliances, (including stoves, refrigerators, dishwashers), heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC), repairs and purchases;
3. Furniture (not including children's beds as outlined above);
4. Food and groceries;
5. Car repairs, driver's license reinstatement fees, and other expenses related to parental travel not listed above;
6. Clothing;
7. Recreation (including, but not limited to fees, supplies, uniforms, etc.);
8. Education (including, but not limited to tuition, uniforms, book fees, etc.);
9. Day Care; and
10. Telephone & cell phone.

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

## Code References

N/A

### **PROCEDURE**

For Families with an applicable child, The Family Case Manager (FCM) should:

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 Indiana Child Welfare Information System contacts (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.

Appeals for Additional Funding:

1. The FCM will complete the [Appeal for Additional Funding SF 54870](#) detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any funds and submit to the Supervisor for approval or denial.
2. The Supervisor will review and approve or deny the appeal for additional funding. The Supervisor will immediately notify the FCM if the request is denied. If the Supervisor approves the appeal for additional funding, it will be submitted to the DCS Local Office Director for approval or denial.
3. The DCS Local Office Director will approve or deny the appeal of additional funding. If the DCS Local Office Director approves the appeal for additional funding, the written request will be sent to the Regional Manager (RM) and if approved the RM will submit a copy to the RFM.
4. The RM will notify the Local Office Director 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. Salvation Army;

2. School system;
3. Medicaid Transportation; and
4. 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, 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 in an out-of-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or Juvenile Delinquent (JD) placement, (b) is in an in-home CHINS, (c) is the subject of an Informal Adjustment (IA) (d) is the subject of an assessment and receiving services.

<b>FORMS AND TOOLS</b>
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1. [Appeal for Additional Funding SF 54870](#)

<b>RELATED INFORMATION</b>
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N/A