

Series	300: Child and Family Assessment and Services
Policy Name	Maintenance Adoption Subsidy Eligibility and Process
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References	CFOP 170-12; Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, P.L. 110-351; 65C-16.012(2) F.A.C., 65C-16.013(8) F.A.C.

Attachments

Policy

It is the policy of Partnership for Strong Families (PSF) to commit to timely permanency for children and accountability related to eligibility and fiscal processes. PSF will assess the need and eligibility for adoption subsidy for families to alleviate financial barriers to adoption and to subsidize the cost of providing care for the adopted child, meeting criteria as “difficult-to-place,”_until the age of 18. It is the policy of PSF to maintain effective procedures for maximizing IV-E eligibility and meeting the needs of TANF eligibility including annual renewals for children found ineligible for IV-E funding but meeting criteria annually for TANF eligibility. PSF embraces a collaborative, strategic approach to risk management, which includes identifying and addressing threats and opportunities the organization faces at every level. This policy is written in accordance with PSF’s Risk Management Plan.

Procedure

A. Adoption Title IV-E Eligibility Determination

1. The Adoption Case Manager will review and fully complete FSN Adoption Tab Information related to “difficult-to-place” criteria, ensuring that the necessary screens in FSN are completed to populate the Adoption Tab and therefore eligibility screens with the child’s primary basis of “difficult-to-place.” Adoption staff will also review and correct any AFCARS errors prior to submission of a subsidy packet.
2. Once a child has had parental rights terminated and a family has been identified to adopt the child, the Adoption Case Manager will submit a subsidy packet to PSF’s Adoption Eligibility Determination Specialist. Supporting documents must include an explanation of reasonable efforts to place without subsidy, the Child Study, the CBHA if one has been completed, the child’s most recent psychological evaluation and pertinent medical evaluations, the child’s

most recent JR, the shelter petition and order, the TPR petition and order, surrenders (if applicable), the child's birth certificate, and evidence of the child's social security number. The Adoption Eligibility Determination Specialist will then determine the child's eligibility for adoption assistance per the criteria in CFOP 170-12 and in furtherance of the aims of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, P.L. 110-351.

B. Legal Adoptive Placement of the Child

1. After an approved adoption home study is completed, an initial adoption eligibility determination has been made, and the TPR appeal window passed without termination of rights being appealed or any appeals resolved, the adoption case manager will proceed to legally place the child for adoption. Legal adoptive placement will be accomplished when:
 - a) The prospective adoptive family has had the opportunity to review documents provided for full disclosure and to ask any questions pertaining to the information provided;
 - b) A full disclosure acknowledgement form has been signed and dated by the family; and
 - c) The Adoption Assistance Agreement (AAA) and the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) have been executed with the prospective adoptive family.
2. Once the AAA and MOA have been completed with the family, the Adoption Case Manager will submit a placement packet to the Adoption Eligibility Determination Specialist consisting of the AAA and MOA, the Affidavit of Disclosure for Adoption, a copy of the approved adoption home study of the identified family including background checks current at the time of adoption home study pursuant to the requirements of Section 39.0138, F.S. and 65C-16.007, F.A.C., and DCF Memo: Adoption Processes dated January 26, 2024. The Adoption Eligibility Determination Specialist will complete the adoption eligibility determination in FSFN and submit to the Eligibility Supervisor for final approval in FSFN. Once approved, the Adoption Eligibility Specialist will end the child's previous placement in FSFN and create the child's adoptive placement in FSFN, effective the date of the signing of the MOA.

C. Enhanced Maintenance Adoption Subsidy

1. The amount of a child's maintenance adoption subsidy will be negotiated between the Adoption Case Manager and the family.
2. Should the family request an enhanced rate and the child have significant needs requiring attention beyond those typical for "difficult-to-place" children in foster care as of the date of the negotiation, consideration of a request up to 100% of the foster board rate for the child's age may be made by PSF and approved by the CEO. Unless approved by the Department's Regional Managing Director or designee pursuant to subsection 65C-16.013(8), F.A.C., the amount of the payment may not exceed the statewide standard foster care maintenance payment the child would have been eligible for in foster care at the time of the request.

D. Extension of Maintenance Adoption Subsidy

1. The Extension of Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (EMAS) program, will be administered by PSF to allow young adults adopted at ages 14 to 17 whose adoptive parents entered into their initial adoption assistance agreements to continue to receive maintenance adoption subsidy payments between the ages of 18 and 21 years old and Medicaid until the age of 21, if the young adult maintains a qualifying activity and contact with Partnership for Strong Families.
2. The process for eligibility for EMAS eligibility is as follows:
 - a. For children adopted at ages 14 to 17, an initial Adoption Assistance Agreement is signed checking the appropriate box reflecting interest in participating in the program.
 - b. Approximately 60 days prior to the young adult's 18th birthday, PSF's Post Adoption Liaison will mail the family an Extended Adoption Assistance Agreement. This must be signed by the young adult and parent, and documentation provided to reflect the young adult's qualifying activity.
 - c. Every six months and at least 30 days prior to the six-month redetermination date, the adoptive family will be mailed a redetermination letter and will be required to provide updated documentation in support of the young adult's qualifying activity. Documentation of participation in a qualifying activity must be received no later than 30 days after the 6-month redetermination period.
 - d. If the young adult continues to provide documentation of a qualifying activity every 6 months to the Post Adoption Liaison, EMAS will continue until the young adult attains the age of 21.
3. Extended Maintenance Adoption Subsidy will be terminated upon any of the following circumstances and written notification of termination mailed to the adoptive family.
 - a. The young adult becomes unable to provide documentation of a qualifying activity;
 - b. The young adult turns 21 years old;
 - c. The young adult opts out of the program;
 - d. The adoptive parent(s) or young adult passes away;
 - e. The adoptive parents are no longer providing support to the young adult; or
 - f. The young adult marries or joins the military.
4. In the event that PSF finds EMAS termination to be appropriate, PSF will notify Regional DCF to initiate the family's notice of denial and of appeal rights and process.
5. Readmission to the EMAS program may be achieved by the young adult providing PSF with documentation to support that the young adult again has established a qualifying activity. A new completed Extended Adoption Assistance Agreement will be signed by the adoptive parent(s) and the young adult at the time of readmission and goes into effect once the Extended Adoption Assistance Agreement and documentation of qualifying activity is provided to the Post Adoption Liaison.