

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 16: Financial Services/Assistance	Effective Date: September 1, 2020
	Section 2: Assistance for Unlicensed Relative Placements	Version: 6

STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is committed to meeting the financial needs of children in unlicensed relative placements by providing the following assistance:

1. [Personal Allowance](#): An annual personal allowance for the child of up to \$300 is available to reimburse the relative placement. These funds are available after the 8th consecutive day of placement and reset at the beginning of each calendar year.

Note: If a child changes placement within the year, the new unlicensed relative may be reimbursed for any remaining personal allowance for the child.
2. [Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment](#): Initial clothing and personal items funds of up to \$200 per child are available upon initial placement of the child.
3. [Special Occasion Allowance](#): Special occasion funds are available for all children in the amount of \$50 for each child’s birthday and \$50 for holiday gifts for each child. In order for the unlicensed relative to receive reimbursement for the Special Occasion Allowance, the child must be in the relative’s care on the day of his or her birthday and December 25th.
4. [Bedding Allowance](#): Bedding allowance funds are available up to \$400 per child if there is a need for a bed and/or bedding, and DCS approval has been obtained. This is a one (1) time payment per child, per life of the case, and the bed and bedding must go with the child should he or she return home or be moved to a different placement.
5. [Child Care Allowance](#): Child care funds are available up to \$18 per day or \$90 per week, per child (only if needed for work or school), for child care costs in a child care center or home that is licensed, registered, or the appropriate background checks have been conducted. This funding is available for six (6) months. If the relative becomes licensed or begins receiving [Child Care Development Fund \(CCDF\)](#) prior to six (6) months the funding will end.
6. [Educational Needs Funding](#): Educational needs funding is available to cover the cost of securing a High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma, tutoring, and summer school.
7. [Respite Care](#): Respite care funds, if needed and approved by the FCM, are available for up to five (5) days each calendar year. The respite care must be provided by a licensed resource parent.
8. [Travel Reimbursement](#): Travel reimbursement is available for properly claimed travel expenses incurred for each child placed in unlicensed relative care.

Code References

N/A

PROCEDURE

The FCM will:

1. Ensure all appropriate clothing and/or personal items go with the child at the time of removal or placement change whenever possible;
2. Complete a thorough inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items on the [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF54315\)](#) within three (3) days of placement and updated with changes throughout the life of the case. The inventory of the child's clothing and/or personal items should be:
 - a. Taken anytime a child is removed from his or her home, and
 - b. Reviewed with and signed by the unlicensed relative acknowledging what items belong to the child and were brought with and/or bought for the child.
3. Make efforts to deliver the child's clothing and/or personal items within 48 hours if they are not taken at the time of removal;
4. Direct the unlicensed relative to the [Indiana Foster Care Portal](#) to access resources at initial placement. See [Practice Guidance](#) for additional information;
5. Engage the CFT to identify community supports and services which may be able to assist the relative in meeting the child's financial needs;
6. Meet with the FCM Supervisor to discuss the child's needs for clothing and/or personal items;
7. Complete a referral or voucher in KidTraks for the [Initial Clothing and Personal Items Allotment](#) to assist the unlicensed relative in acquiring clothing and/or personal items for the child within 60 days of initial placement if the child does not have adequate clothing and/or personal items at the time of initial removal. If the unlicensed relative receives a voucher from DCS, the unlicensed relative has 30 days to utilize the voucher;
8. Complete a referral in KidTraks for the use of the [Bedding Allowance](#) if a need is identified. The FCM should verify the [Bedding Allowance](#) has not previously been expended for the child during the life of the case;
9. Complete a referral in KidTraks for the use of [Personal Allowance](#) when requested by the unlicensed relative;

Note: Prior to completing referrals for the use of Personal or Bedding Allowances, verify the requested amount does not exceed the allotted amounts. Questions regarding a child's usage of annual allowances should be directed to the local RFM.

10. Ensure the unlicensed relative has applied for a [CCDF](#) Voucher;
11. Complete a referral for child care assistance in reimbursement efforts for the unlicensed relative if a child care need is identified;
12. Complete a referral for respite care and/or educational needs if a need is identified;
13. Ensure that the unlicensed relative is informed of the [Relative Parent Travel Invoice Instructions](#); and
14. File an appropriate appeal, if the relative has unusual circumstances or a situation that requires additional financial support.

Request for Additional Funding:

To make a request for additional funding, the following steps will be completed:

1. The FCM will complete the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#) 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 \(SF54870\)](#). The decision of the FCM Supervisor will be submitted to the LOD or DM for final approval or denial;
3. The LOD/DM will approve or deny the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#). If the LOD/DM approves the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#), a copy of the request will be submitted to the RFM;
4. The LOD/DM will notify the RM and the FCM Supervisor of the final determination via written correspondence.

Note: The LOD/DM may approve an extra \$300 for clothing and other personal items and \$300 extra for miscellaneous expenses. **An RM appeal must be submitted (utilizing the [Request for Additional Funding \[SF54870\]](#)) to the RM for approval when additional funds or funds outside the scope of LOD approval are needed.**

RM Appeals:

The following steps will be completed for an RM appeal:

1. The FCM will complete the RM appeal on the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#), detailing the unusual circumstances and situations prior to the expenditure of any funds, and submit to the FCM 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 decision to the LOD/DM for approval or denial;
4. The LOD/DM will approve or deny the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#);
5. The LOD/DM will send the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#) to the RM for final approval or denial;
6. The RM will submit a copy of the [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#) to the RFM, if approved; and
7. The RM will notify the LOD/DM of the final determination via written correspondence.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Relative Placement Options

Adult relatives (18 years of age and older) to be considered for placement include, but are not limited to:

1. Adult siblings including step and half-siblings;
2. Maternal or paternal grandparents;
3. Adult aunts or uncles;
4. Adult cousins;

Note: The individuals must be first or second cousins.

5. Parents and extended family of half-siblings (e.g., adult siblings, grandparents, adult aunts or uncles, and adult cousins);
6. Former step-parents and extended family of former step-parents (e.g., adult siblings, grandparents, adult aunts or uncles, and adult cousins);

7. Other adult relatives suggested by either parent of a child including, but not limited to extended cousins, great or great-great aunts or uncles; or
8. Any other individual with whom a child has an established and significant relationship.

Kinship and Other Relative Placement

A child may be placed with an individual who is not related by blood, marriage, or adoption if this is an individual with whom the child has an established and significant relationship. The relationship with the child will be documented as **other relative** and **must**:

1. Have the characteristics of a family relationship. The relationship should have the same characteristics or be similar to the relationship that the child has with an individual related to them by blood, marriage, or adoption;
2. Have existed prior to the agency's current involvement with the child or family; and
3. Be verified through interviews or attested to by the written or oral designation of the child or of another person, including other relatives related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Former [long-term resource parents](#) may be considered as relative placements in cases where the child is the victim of repeat maltreatment or returning to out-of-home care. FCMs should staff with the FCM Supervisor and LOD to determine which type of placement is appropriate (i.e., Foster Care or Relative Placement). Consideration should be given to the child's report of the relationship and the potential for permanency.

Credible evidence showing that the individual performs or has performed a substantial role in the upbringing or material support of the child should be documented in the case management system. The placement recommendation should be staffed with the FCM Supervisor and LOD, as needed. DCS placement recommendation must be approved by the court.

Note: Placement with a relative related by blood, marriage, or adoption **must** be ruled out before considering any other out-of-home placement, with the first consideration being given to an appropriate noncustodial parent.

Child Care Allowance

Child care allowance is paid for six (6) months, until CCDF is received, or the relative becomes licensed, whichever occurs first. DCS will only permit an Unlicensed Registered Child Care Ministry to be paid using child care allowance if the ministry accepts CCDF. If there are concerns regarding the safety and/or well-being of a ward attending this type of facility, it may be appropriate to facilitate a CFT Meeting to discuss the relative placement's child care needs and any issues or concerns such as location of the child care and cost. A decision may be made to review Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) inspection reports for the facility (which may found on the FSSA website, <https://secure.in.gov/apps/fssa/carefinder/index.html>). An FCM may complete site visits necessary to make an informed decision as to the appropriateness of the facility. The team should also be prepared to provide information about facilities that may be deemed appropriate and may meet the needs of the family. For further guidance, see policy [13.5 Conducting Background Checks for Unlicensed Placements](#).

Personal Allowance

The purpose of the Personal Allowance is to normalize a child's stay in foster care. As such, Personal Allowance may be used for a broad array of purchases. These funds may be used for items such as, but not limited to, computer hardware and/or software, field trips, driver's education (unless eligible for Emancipation Goods & Services Funds), class pictures, application fees, extracurricular activities, musical instruments, sporting equipment, electronic

devices (e.g., e-readers, laptops, iPod, and Xbox), a prom dress or other special occasion clothing, equipment and fees associated with extracurricular activities (including activities for young children), and preschool.

The following items are not permitted or reimbursable: piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms or other weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards (e.g., gas, credit card, store gift card), cash, checks, or money orders.

Note: DCS will reimburse the unlicensed relative for all of the above covered items upon receipt of a properly claimed invoice with a receipt attached for each of the items.

Initial Clothing and Personal Item Allotment

It is allowable for unlicensed relatives to purchase clothing for the child up to \$200 and be reimbursed if they have received FCM approval, even if the approval is received after the purchase of clothing. At times it is necessary for the clothing to be purchased prior to DCS approval. These funds are to be utilized for clothing and personal items such as, but not limited to, clothing, socks, shoes/boots, coats, toiletries, personal hygiene items, undergarments, hair products, diapers, wipes, infant formula, and bottles. Unlicensed relatives must present the receipts for all purchases.

In unique circumstances, an RM appeal may be utilized to purchase ongoing clothing beyond the first 60 days of placement (e.g., sudden weight gain or loss, maternity clothing, or attempts to obtain clothing from previous placement without success).

Educational Needs

Contact the Educational Liaison (EL) for assistance with school related fees as many may be waived. For fees that cannot be waived or cannot be funded through other means, a Global Services referral via KidTraks should be completed. These expenses should not come out of the child's personal allowance.

Note: When other funding is available for securing an HSE Diploma it should be utilized prior to completing a Global Services referral.

Special Occasion Allowance

The FCM should collaborate with the Relative Care Support Specialist (RCSS) to make all unlicensed relative placements aware of invoicing instructions in order to utilize the Special Occasion Allowance.

These items include, but are not limited to toys, video games or other electronics, salon services, clothing, jewelry, sporting equipment, birthday party, and tickets to an event on his or her birthday. Items not allowable are: piercings, tattoos, tobacco products, alcoholic products or beverages, firearms/weapons, fireworks, lottery tickets, gift cards (e.g., gas, gift card, store gift card), cash, checks, or money orders.

Note: A referral is not needed to receive reimbursement for the [Special Occasion Allowance](#). DCS will reimburse the unlicensed relative for all of the above covered items upon receipt of a properly claimed invoice with a receipt attached for each of the items.

Travel Reimbursement

Travel will be reimbursed monthly beginning at mile one (1) for travel such as:

1. Travel between the unlicensed relative home and the school if the child continues to attend the school he or she attended prior to removal.

Note: Mileage will be eligible for reimbursement only when transportation services are not provided by the school corporation. Consult with the EL for information on what school corporations are required to provide transportation for the child.

2. Travel to and from Headstart, summer school, pre-school, summer camps, and school related extracurricular activities.

Note: Mileage will be eligible for reimbursement to and from these programs only when it is not provided by the school corporation.

3. Travel to and from parent and/or sibling visits (including visits to other relatives that are authorized by DCS and are a part the child's [Case Plan \[SF2956\]](#)) and visits to facilitate the transition to another placement;
4. Travel to and from the following types of health related appointments:
 - a. Doctor (primary care physician and any specialists),
 - b. Dentist (including orthodontist),
 - c. Health clinic,
 - d. Hospital/Emergency Room (including visits during child inpatient episodes),
 - e. Occupational and Physical Therapy, and
 - f. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist.
5. Travel to and from employment or for purposes of a job search for youth 14 years of age or older;
6. Travel to and from the following types of case activities:
 - a. Administrative case reviews,
 - b. Judicial reviews (court appearances),
 - c. Case Conferences,
 - d. CFT Meetings,
 - e. Foster parent training sessions, and/or
 - f. Behavioral Health Counselor and Therapist.
7. Other travel that is extraordinary and has been approved in writing as consistent with the child's [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#) by the DCS Local Office Director (LOD)/Division Manager (DM) prior to the travel taking place.

The relative being considered as a placement resource may receive an amount of properly claimed travel expenses incurred for a child who will be placed in the relative home when the relative travels at least one (1) mile for pre-placement visits between the relative and child, regardless of whether they are overnight visits.

DCS will not pay for the child to take trips with the unlicensed relative placement that are not related to the child's [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#). Questions regarding a child's usage of annual allowances should be directed to the DCS Regional Manager (RM) and to the local DCS Regional Finance Manager (RFM).

Tax Reimbursement

Tax on any purchases made for a ward including clothing, personal items, and special occasion allowances is reimbursable. For example, the resource parent purchases clothing in the amount

of \$180 and paid \$12.60 in tax for a total of \$192.60. The resource parent may claim reimbursement for \$192.60. However, if the resource parent purchased clothing in the amount of \$200 and paid \$14 in tax for a total of \$214, the resource parent may only claim \$200 outlined in policy. Reimbursement may be claimed for the items plus tax up to the stated limit for each allowance.

Supporting Relative Caregivers

It is important for FCMs to support all relative caregivers. FCMs will be mindful that relative caregivers may not have planned to take emergency placement of their relative's child. This is especially true in emergency after hours placements. The FCM should be patient and exercise empathy for the relative caregivers and serve as a support to them by answering any questions and addressing any concerns they may have, in conjunction with the RCSS and/or Regional Foster Care Specialist (RFCS). It is the goal of DCS to have a child transition as smoothly as possible from his or her home into the relative caregiver's home. The transition will be easier to achieve if the relative feels supported and may focus primarily on the child.

FCMs, in conjunction with the RCSS/RFCS, are responsible for communicating all of the support and clinical services that DCS may offer the relative caregiver. Information regarding the foster care portal should be provided to the relative caregiver to enable him or her to access community and financial resources. If the unlicensed relative does not have access to internet, give the unlicensed relative the [Financial Assistance Options for Relative Caregivers Brochure](#), [Relative Resource Guide](#), Prevent Child Abuse Helpline (1-800-244-53743), and 2-1-1.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Case Plan \(SF2956\)](#)- available in the case management system
2. [Inventory of Personal Items \(SF54315\)](#)
3. [Financial Assistance Options for Relative Caregivers Brochure](#)
4. [Relative Resource Guide](#)
5. [Relative Home Environment Checklist \(SF55106\)](#)
6. [Application for Assistance, Food Stamps, Cash Assistance, Health Coverage](#)
7. [Request for Additional Funding \(SF54870\)](#)
8. [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds \(SF28808\)](#)
9. [Direct Deposit Authorization \(SF51519\)](#)
10. [Relative Parent Travel Invoice \(SF54891\)](#)
11. [Relative Parent Travel Instructions](#)
12. [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF47551\)](#)
13. [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#)
14. [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Instructions](#)
15. [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A](#)
16. [Indiana Foster Care Portal](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Mileage Reimbursement

Unlicensed relatives need to fill out the [Relative Parent Travel Invoice \(SF54891\)](#) in order to claim mileage reimbursement. Mileage reimbursement is a flat rate per mile, which is based on the current State employee approved mileage per diem. Unlicensed relative caregivers may check for the most current rate at: <http://www.in.gov/idoa/2459.htm>. Mapquest at www.mapquest.com should be used to obtain the shortest mileage distance for trips.

Requirements for Reimbursement

All resource parent(s) need to fill out an [Automated Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement \(SF47551\)](#) and [W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification](#) in order to receive reimbursement from the state. All resource parents should utilize the standard invoice, [Claim for Support of Children Payable from Family & Children Funds \(SF28808\)](#) (or submit via KidTraks e-Invoicing), and attach all receipts in order to receive reimbursement for the Personal Allowance, Special Occasion Allowance, Initial Clothing Allotment, and other applicable reimbursements. Additional information on completing the W-9 may be found on the [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Instructions](#) and [W-9 and Direct Deposit Form Q & A](#).

Long-Term Resource Parent

A long-term resource parent is a resource parent who has provided care and supervision for a child for at least:

1. The most recent 12 months;
2. Fifteen (15) of the most recent 22 months; or
3. Six (6) months if the child is less than 12 months of age.