



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 16: Financial Services/Assistance

Section 03: Assistance for a Family of Origin's Basic Needs

Effective Date: March 1, 2023

Version: 4

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POLICY OVERVIEW

This policy applies to a child's family of origin. See policy 16.01 Funding for Children in Out-of-Home Care and policy 16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative and Kinship Placements.

The child's family is responsible for ensuring the child's basic needs are met. In the event a parent, guardian, or custodian needs support to meet their child's basic needs, financial assistance is available for children under the care and supervision of the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS).

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PROCEDURE

Children and families who are eligible for financial assistance include those involved in:

1. Out-of-home Child in Need of Services (CHINS);
2. In-home CHINS;
3. Informal Adjustment (IA); or
4. An assessment and receiving DCS funded services.

DCS will provide the following assistance for eligible children and families in the event a parent, guardian, or custodian needs support to meet the child's basic needs:

1. One (1) month of rent and/or one (1) security deposit of up to \$750.

Note: Rent and security deposit assistance each have a cap of \$750 per family, per lifetime of the case. The LOD/DM may approve \$500 extra for rent and utilities and \$300 extra for miscellaneous expenses.

2. A one-time collective payment for gas, electric, water, and sewage utilities of up to \$1000 per family;

Note: An additional \$750 may be made available one (1) time for utility assistance.

3. Pest Control services of up to \$1200 per lifetime of the case;
4. Children's bed and bedding of up to \$400 per lifetime of the case, per child;
5. Parent, guardian, or custodian travel (e.g., gas card, bus tickets) up to \$70 per month;
6. Home appliance repairs and purchases (e.g., stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC)); and
7. Concrete Goods and Services, including but not limited to:
 - a. Furniture (excluding children's bed and bedding outlined above);

- b. Food and groceries;
- c. Vehicle repairs, driver's license reinstatement fees, and other expenses related to parental travel not listed above;
- d. Recreational activities (e.g., fees, supplies, uniforms);
- e. Education (e.g., tuition, uniforms, book fees);
- f. Child Care;
- g. Telephone and cell phone; and
- h. Clothing and personal items.

Note: There are no restrictions on buying clothing for children in their own homes when emergencies arise.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Engage the Child and Family Team (CFT) to identify family and/or community resources in the event a parent, guardian, or custodian needs support to meet their child's basic needs (see Practice Guidance for a list of community resources);
2. Develop a plan as to how expenses will be paid in future months;
3. Document the following information in the case management system:
 - a. Any situation involving the child and family that requires additional financial support,
 - b. The reason why the financial assistance is needed, and
 - c. All efforts to locate community resources for alternative funding.
4. Obtain a copy of the signed lease if the family is seeking financial assistance for rent and/or security deposit; and

Note: The Rental Agreement may be used when a signed lease is unavailable.

5. Obtain a copy of the signed Security Deposit Agreement if the family is seeking financial assistance for a security deposit.

Financial Policy Exception

The FCM will complete the following steps for a Financial Policy Exception when an item requested is **greater than the policy limit but under \$1500**:

1. Complete Global Services referral for the requested dollar amount and state the justification of need for:
 - a. Funding greater than the policy limit, and/or
 - b. Funding for expenses not referenced in policy.
2. Submit the referral to one (1) of the workflow approvers (i.e., FCM Supervisor, Local Office Director [LOD], or Division Manager [DM]).

The workflow approver will:

1. Review the Financial Policy Exception justification;

Note: In the event a family needs assistance to pay their mortgage, DCS should provide assistance for other household expenses to be paid so funds are available for the family to make the mortgage payment. The Regional Manager (RM) will review all Financial Policy Exceptions regarding mortgage assistance.

2. Approve or deny, as appropriate; and

Note: The referral will proceed to the KidTraks invoicing unit for payment, upon Financial Policy Exception approval.

3. Notify the FCM via written correspondence if the Financial Policy Exception is denied.

Request for Additional Funding (RAF) form

A RAF form is completed when an item requested is **greater than the policy limit and above \$1500.**

The FCM will:

1. Complete the RAF form; and
2. Submit the RAF form to the FCM Supervisor for approval or denial.

The FCM Supervisor will:

1. Review and respond to any RAF requests by either approving or denying the request; and
2. Submit the RAF form decision to the LOD/DM

The LOD/DM will:

1. Review and approve or deny the RAF; and
2. Send the RAF to the Regional Manager (RM) for final approval or denial.

The RM will:

1. Review the RAF request and make a determination whether to approve the request;
2. Submit a copy of the RAF form to the Regional Finance Manager (RFM) if approved; and
3. Notify the LOD/DM of the final determination via written correspondence.

The RFM will process the RAF form, upon receipt from the RM.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Security Deposit Agreement

The Security Deposit Agreement is an agreement between the landlord and DCS in which the landlord agrees that any refundable portion of the security deposit will be refunded to DCS when the tenant leaves.

Forms and Tools

- [4.G Tool: Community Resources and Prevention Services](#)
- [Request for Additional Funding \(SF 54870\)](#)
- [Rental Agreement](#)
- [Security Deposit Agreement](#)

Related Policies

- [16.01 Clothing Personal Items and Permitted Per Diem Expenses](#)
- [16.02 Assistance for Unlicensed Relative Placements](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

N/A

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 16.03

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Bed and Bedding

Bed and bedding purchases include, but are not limited to:

1. Mattress and/or box spring;
2. Bed rails and/or bedframe;
3. Pillows; and
4. Bedding (e.g., blankets, sheets, comforter).

Prior to Requesting Funding

Prior to requesting financial assistance to assist a family in meeting a child's basic needs, alternative funding from extended family members and community resources should be explored through contact with the following:

1. Trustee's Office;
2. Utility company (e.g., gas, electric, and water) directly to see about enrolling in a payment plan;
3. Local winter assistance and/or summer cooling programs if available in the area;
4. Energy Assistance Program (EAP);
5. Salvation Army and other charitable organizations;
6. Local churches and other faith-based organizations;
7. School system;
8. Medicaid Transportation; and
9. Community groups.

Rent and Security Deposit

The following documents are needed for DCS to provide additional funding for a family's rent and/ or security deposit:

1. Rent and security deposit assistance: A copy of the lease (or the Rental Agreement) and the Security Deposit Agreement;
2. Rent only assistance: A copy of the lease (or the Rental Agreement); or
3. Security deposit only assistance: A copy of the lease (or the Rental Agreement) and the Security Deposit Agreement.

Travel Expenses

Financial assistance for travel expenses should benefit the child and the family (e.g., visitation, mental health and medical appointments, education, and substance abuse treatment).

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