

# Bulletin

February 13, 2014

Minnesota Department of Human Services -- P.O. Box 64941 -- St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

## OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Social Services Supervisors and Staff
- Tribal Social Services Directors and Staff

## ACTION/DUE DATE

Implement use of revised forms as instructed.

## EXPIRATION DATE

February 13, 2016

## Revised Adoption Assistance Forms, 2013

### TOPIC

Revised Adoption Assistance Forms, 2013

### PURPOSE

Provide a summary of changes to the Adoption Assistance forms.

### CONTACT

Tamera VanMoer, 651-431-4989  
[tamera.vanmoer@state.mn.us](mailto:tamera.vanmoer@state.mn.us)

### SIGNED

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ERIN SULLIVAN SUTTON  
Assistant Commissioner  
Children and Family Services Administration

### Terminology Disclaimer

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the use of "People First" language.

## **Adoption Assistance Forms**

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has revised the adoption assistance forms to comply with policy changes and the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Access the following links for additional information:

### **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act**

[http://www.fosteringconnections.org/tools/assets/files/Public\\_Law\\_110-351.pdf](http://www.fosteringconnections.org/tools/assets/files/Public_Law_110-351.pdf)

[http://www.ssa.gov/OP\\_Home/ssact/title04/0473.htm](http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/ssact/title04/0473.htm)

## **Adoption Assistance Certification**

In August 2013, the revised Adoption Assistance Certification became available via the Social Service Information System (SSIS). All applications for adoption assistance must now be submitted with the revised certification. Workers submitting an application for adoption assistance who do not have access to SSIS should contact their adoption eligibility worker for the revised form at:

Kelly Nelson at [kelly.nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.nelson@state.mn.us), or 651-431-5890

Jessica Ramstad at [jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us), or 651-431-4715

### **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions** (Section IV, page 8 of the Adoption Assistance Certification)

The phase-in of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) de-link eligibility provision began October 1, 2009, for special needs children age 16 or older, children who have been in foster care for 60 consecutive months (five years), or are a sibling to a child found eligible due to their age or length of time in foster care. The phase-in spans nine years and will be complete September 30, 2018. **Effective October 1, 2013, a child age 8 or older prior to September 30, 2014, a child who has been in foster care for 60 consecutive months, or a sibling to a child found eligible due to their age or length of time in foster care, is considered an applicable child.**

The applicable ages for the nine fiscal years is shown in the phase-in chart below.

[Social Security Act, section 473 (e)]

<b>For a case in fiscal year:</b>	<b>The applicable age is:</b>
2010	16
2011	14
2012	12
2013	10
<b>2014</b>	<b>8</b>
2015	6
2016	4
2017	2
2018 or thereafter	Any age

A child who is not age 8 or older prior to September 30, 2014, or has not been in foster care for 60 consecutive months, is considered a non-applicable child. A sibling of a non-applicable child does not meet the applicable child requirements when their sibling is ineligible due to their age or length of time in foster care.

### **Adoption Assistance Agreement**

In December 2013, the revised Adoption Assistance Agreement was made available via the Social Service Information System (SSIS). All applications for adoption assistance submitted on or after March 1, 2014, must be submitted on the revised Adoption Assistance Agreement. Workers submitting an application for adoption assistance who do not have access to SSIS should contact their adoption eligibility worker for the revised form at:

Kelly Nelson at [kelly.nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.nelson@state.mn.us), or 651-431-5890

Jessica Ramstad at [jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us), or 651-431-4715

### **Provisions of Agreement** (pages 1 and 2 of the Adoption Assistance Agreement)

The Basic Maintenance Needs Payment will be known as Basic Maintenance Payment. Monthly Supplemental Maintenance Needs Payment will be known as Monthly Supplemental Needs Payment.

### **Medical Care** (pages 2 and 3)

Medical Assistance, Minnesota's medical benefit program, will be known as Medicaid, for consistency.

**Special Non-medical Expenses** (page 4)

An adoptive parent shall submit statements for expenses incurred between July 1 and June 30 of a given fiscal year. Statements for expenses must be received by the Adoption Assistance Program within 60 days after the end of the fiscal year, which is August 29, for reimbursement to occur. August 29 was added for clarification.

**Assignment** (page 7)

With the written consent of the commissioner, Adoption Assistance payments may be made to a guardian appointed by the court for a child upon the death of the adoptive parent(s), unless a child is in the custody of an authorized child-placing agency. **Upon assignment of payments pursuant to this section, categorical eligibility for Medicaid will terminate.**

A child may be eligible for Medicaid through another category of eligibility. A child's guardian will be responsible to make application for them.

**Effective Date** (page 7)

The Adoption Assistance Agreement becomes effective on the date the final Adoption Decree is issued, or the date written in a Decision of State Agency Appeal order.

**Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment**

In December 2013, the revised Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment was made available via the Social Service Information System (SSIS). All applications for adoption assistance submitted on or after March 1, 2014, must be submitted with the revised Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment, if applicable. Workers submitting an application for adoption assistance who do not have access to SSIS should contact their adoption eligibility worker for the revised form at:

Kelly Nelson at [kelly.nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.nelson@state.mn.us), or 651-431-5890

Jessica Ramstad at [jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us), or 651-431-4715

**Mental Disability\*** (page 1 of the Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment)

Developmental Delay will now be known as Developmental Disabilities.

**Level III** (page 4)

Diagnosed with severe emotional disturbance has been removed. Animal cruelty was added to "breaks the law by acts harmful toward persons, property or animal cruelty."

\*[Mental disability is being used because it is a federal term, Social Security Act 473(c)]

**Level IV** (page 5)

Frequent fire setting behavior has been removed. Animal cruelty was added to “frequently breaks the law by acts harmful toward persons, property or animal cruelty.”

**Level I-IV (pages 2 - 5)**

Instruction for the narrative has been changed. The instruction is to:

Identify and describe the child’s disability or disabilities, the impact of the disability on current functioning, and the parenting required to meet the child’s needs. Alternately, submit a copy of the child’s current out-of-home placement plan.

There were no changes on the Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment to Level 1 and Level 2.

**Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Guide**

The Adoption Assistance Program staff collaborated with county and tribal child-placing agencies to publish a guide for the Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment tool. The guide clarifies and expands on conditions associated with each level, and clarifies requirements of the narrative. It does not replace the existing Supplemental Adoption Assistance Needs Assessment tool. The guide was released Monday, December 9, 2013 via the State Adoption List Serve. Use of the guide is not required, although department staff believes that you will find it helpful when conducting assessments. Feedback regarding the guide’s effectiveness is encouraged. Submit feedback to your adoption eligibility worker at:

Kelly Nelson at [kelly.nelson@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.nelson@state.mn.us), or 651-431-5890

Jessica Ramstad at [jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us), or 651-431-4715

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-3530 (voice) or toll free at (800) 627-3529 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency’s ADA coordinator.