

# Bulletin

February 6, 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
- Fiscal Supervisors
- Financial Assistance Supervisors and Staff

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Please read and implement.

Enter data into new SSIS automated RCA Payment Worksheet prior to April 1, 2014.

**EXPIRATION DATE**

The policies in this bulletin are ineffective as of February 6, 2016.

**Relative Custody Assistance Reporting Requirements**

## Relative Custody Assistance Reporting Requirements

**TOPIC**

Reporting requirements for the Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) program payments

**PURPOSE**

Provide an overview of RCA reporting requirements for the new process for state reimbursement that takes effect April 1, 2014.

**CONTACT**

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**SIGNED**

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**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.

## **Change in Reimbursement Process**

Currently, the reimbursement process for Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) payments has been based on expenditures reported on SEAGR under BRASS code 182. Effective April 1, 2014, the reimbursement process will change. This change is necessary as the Department prepares for Northstar Care for Children, which becomes effective January 1, 2015.

## **Background**

The Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) program was established in 1997 to support the permanency option of transferring the permanent legal and physical custody of children in foster care to a relative. Children eligible for this program receive financial and medical support. Information about RCA payments and details on RCA rates can be found in the DHS bulletin #13-68-09, November 21, 2013, *Relative Custody Assistance Overview and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*.

Prior to Northstar Care, DHS has reimbursed each county on a quarterly basis the amount of cash payments the county paid to the relative custodians. Reimbursements are subject to the availability of state funds.

The 2013 Minnesota Legislature enacted Northstar Care for Children, under which Northstar Kinship Assistance (previously known as Guardianship Assistance) will replace Relative Custody Assistance over time. RCA will be replaced by Northstar Kinship Assistance beginning January 1, 2015. However, children already on RCA will continue on RCA until it finally is phased out.

Other significant dates:

1. November 26, 2014 (the day before Thanksgiving), is the last permissible date for a Relative Custody Assistance agreement to be executed.
2. If a Relative Custody Assistance agreement was signed by all parties on or before November 26, 2014, but the agreement was not yet in effect because the proposed transfer of permanent legal and physical custody had not yet occurred by the date, then it must be renegotiated under the Northstar Kinship Assistance and cannot become effective before January 1, 2015, when Northstar Care for Children begins.
3. Beginning January 1, 2015, Relative Custody Assistance will become a Pre-Northstar Care legacy program. Those families that are currently receiving RCA or enter into a relative custody assistance agreement on or before November 26, 2014 will continue on RCA until the county terminates the agreement or the child turns age 18. Under some circumstances, the department may transition a child from legacy RCA to the Northstar Care for Children program.

4. Beginning November 27, 2014, a foster parent who is a relative and obtains permanent legal and physical custody of a child through a county or tribe may potentially be eligible for the Northstar Kinship Assistance with an effective date no earlier than January 1, 2015.
5. Like other Pre-Northstar Care legacy programs, RCA expenditures will be subject to the Northstar Care fiscal reconciliation process beginning January 1, 2015.

In preparation for Northstar Care for Children, the Department will require additional reporting from counties on RCA payments beginning in 2014. This will involve providing additional information on the children, relative custodians, supplemental levels, income offsets, family annual income, and payments.

### **New RCA Reporting Requirements**

Beginning with the reporting quarter April 1 through June 30, 2014, the Department will require that information on the children receiving RCA payments be entered into SSIS. That means payments made during that quarter must have the relevant data in SSIS. Children who received payments prior to April 1, 2014 and will not continue to receive an RCA payment after April 1, 2014, are not subject to this requirement.

A new RCA Report will be generated within SSIS, similar to the generation of the Title IV-E Abstract Report. Although tribal children are involved, only counties issue RCA payments. Each county that makes RCA payments will be required to generate the RCA Report and submit it to DHS on a quarterly basis due 20 days after the end of the quarter. Complete instructions for the new RCA Report will be issued in a future bulletin.

The county may receive reimbursement from the State only through this new reporting process. If counties making RCA payments do not enter this information into SSIS, there will be no state reimbursement for the RCA payment, and these payments will not be included in the Northstar Care fiscal reconciliation process.

### **Basic Criteria**

The basic criteria of the RCA Report:

- All payments must be made through SSIS
- All payments must be client-specific (the child is the client on the payment)
- All payments must be made using BRASS service code 182 – Relative Custody Assistance
- An RCA Payment Worksheet must exist in SSIS for each child

### **RCA Payment Worksheet**

As part of this process, SSIS will add new capability to calculate RCA payments. For the calculation to work, some information will be required in SSIS. However, this information will only need to be entered once for each child receiving an RCA payment on or after April 1, 2014, and SSIS will use the information to calculate RCA payments, which previously had no automation available. Subsequent worksheets may be needed due to changes in the information reported by the relative custodian(s), such as on the annual affidavit.

A new screen for the RCA Payment Worksheet is being added to SSIS in version 14.1, which goes statewide at the end of February 2014. This will allow counties to begin completing the new automated worksheets prior to the first RCA Report that is due on July 18, 2014 for the April 1 – June 30, 2014 quarter. The new worksheet will contain all of the information in the existing form plus a field for the date custody was transferred, the assessment supplemental level, and the payment worksheet status (Draft or Finalized). There will be *context sensitive help* on each entry field with the instructions embedded into the RCA Payment Worksheet to provide assistance for completion. There will also be automated help for the MFIP income calculation; a separate worksheet will pop up when the MFIP Worksheet button is pressed. SSIS will look up rates and perform all of the calculations for the entire RCA Payment Worksheet.

The information entered into the RCA Payment Worksheet to calculate the child's monthly benefit payment should be consistent with the information set forth in the Relative Custody Assistance agreement signed by the relative custodian(s).

Reimbursement for subsequent quarters will be based on the payments that are recorded in SSIS.

### **Example RCA Worksheet**

The following page shows an example of a completed RCA Payment Worksheet for a 13 year old child who was assessed at Assessment Supplemental Level II. The gray shaded boxes indicate values the county worker entered. The SSIS system determined all of the other values.

**RCA PAYMENT WORKSHEET**

Custody Transfer Date	<input type="text" value="12/15/2009"/>	Assessment Supplemental Level	<input type="text" value="Level II"/>
Worksheet Effective Date	<input type="text" value="12/1/2013"/>	Revision	<input type="text" value="0"/>
		Worksheet Status	<input type="text" value="Finalized"/>

**Rate Computation**

1. Base Assistance Rate	<input type="text" value="\$307"/>
2. Supplemental Assistance Rate	<input type="text" value="\$275"/>
3. Maximum Assistance Rate	<input type="text" value="\$582"/>

**Monthly Child Income Offsets**

4. MFIP	<input type="text" value="\$195"/>	<input type="text" value="MFIP Worksheet"/>
5. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	<input type="text" value="\$157"/>	
6. Veterans Administration Benefits (VA)	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
7a. Retiree Survivor Disability Income (RSDI)	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
7b. Railroad Retirement Benefits	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
7c. Black Lung Benefits	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
7d. Child Support	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
7e. Other Income	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>	
8. Total Offsets	<input type="text" value="\$352"/>	

**Payment Computation**

9. Net Maximum Assistance Rate	<input type="text" value="\$230"/>
10. Annual Gross Family Income	<input type="text" value="\$57,352"/>
11. Household Size	<input type="text" value="5"/>
12. Applicable Federal Poverty Guideline	<input type="text" value="\$27,570"/>
13. Gross Family Income Percentage	<input type="text" value="208%"/>
14. RCA Percentage	<input type="text" value="80%"/>
15. Monthly RCA Payment Amount	<input type="text" value="\$184"/>
16. Daily RCA Rate (for partial month payments)	<input type="text" value="\$6.05"/>

## Questions

For reporting requirements and reimbursement questions regarding the RCA Payment Worksheet, please contact:

Deb Jensen at (651) 431-3740 or [deb.jensen@state.mn.us](mailto:deb.jensen@state.mn.us)

For questions on completing the automated RCA Payment Worksheet in SSIS, please contact:

SSIS Help Desk at (651) 431-4801 or [Dhs.Ssishelp@state.mn.us](mailto:Dhs.Ssishelp@state.mn.us)

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

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling (651) 431-3777 (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.