



Bulletin

NUMBER

#14-32-11

DATE

July 7, 2014

OF INTEREST TO

County & Tribal Social
Services Directors

Social Services Supervisors
and Staff

Fiscal Supervisors

Child Placing Agencies

ACTION/DUE DATE

Please read information to
prepare for implementation
of Northstar Care for
Children and use
appropriate payment rates

EXPIRATION DATE

July 7, 2016

Northstar Care for Children Maintenance and Supplemental Difficulty of Care Payment Rates

TOPIC

Maintenance and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates by age category effective January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

PURPOSE

Provide county and tribal human service agencies and private child placing agencies with the payment rates for Northstar Care for Children.

CONTACT

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Financial Operations Division
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SIGNED

ALEXANDRA KOTZE
Chief Financial Officer

TERMINOLOGY NOTICE

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.

Background

The Minnesota Legislature enacted Northstar Care for Children during the 2013 session, creating a unified rate structure for foster care, adoption assistance and kinship assistance. The unified rate structure is based on a new unified assessment tool named Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY). The MAPCY will assess a child's supplemental difficulty of care that will correspond to the payment rate for that level. Northstar Care for Children begins on January 1, 2015. [Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256N]

Pre-Northstar Legacy Programs

The programs that provide benefits for children in family foster care placement, relative custody assistance or adoption assistance on or before December 31, 2014 will continue to provide the same benefits and processes as defined in federal and Minnesota law and will be referred to as the Pre-Northstar or legacy programs. These legacy programs will be phased out as children leave the program or are phased into Northstar Care for Children. A forthcoming bulletin providing policy guidance for North Star Care for Children will give more details about the phase out of the legacy programs.

Legal References

Minnesota Statutes, section 256.82, subdivisions 3 & 4
Minnesota Statutes, sections 256N.001 to 256N.21
Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.22, subdivisions 1 & 12
Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.23, subdivisions 1 & 13
Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.24
Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.26, subdivisions 1 to 6
Minnesota Statutes, section 259A.12
Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.451
Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.4411
Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.4413
Minnesota Rules, parts 9560.0651 to 9560.0656

Unified Assessment Tool

Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.24 provides criteria for assessing each child to determine the basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates the child may receive under section 256N.26. Minnesota's assessment tool is named Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth or MAPCY. The MAPCY will take into consideration the child's strengths and needs and the extra parenting provided by the caregiver to meet the child's needs. This will include the caregiver's need for child care when the child is under age 13.

The MAPCY assessment process will result in assigning each child one of 17 levels from A to Q with associated payment rates for levels B through Q. Level A is assigned for children who are determined to be an at-risk child for Northstar Adoption Assistance. Level B represents the basic maintenance benefit with no supplemental difficulty of care payment.

Northstar Foster Care

Children entering out-of-home family foster care placement on or after January 1, 2015 will be eligible to receive Northstar Care for Children benefits if the child meets the eligibility requirements in Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.21. The maintenance and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates for foster care are shown in the tables below in the daily rate columns.

Extended Foster Care

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 [Public Law 110-351] allowed states the option to extend foster care benefits to eligible youth ages 18 up to 21, including those placed in unlicensed supervised independent living settings. In Minnesota, all youth 18 years old or older and under age 21 who are placed in foster care under Minnesota Statutes, Chapters 260C or 260D remain eligible for foster care maintenance payments. The foster care maintenance payment includes the basic foster care maintenance and the assessed supplemental difficulty of care payment rates. The youth must remain eligible for extended foster care, consistent with Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.451 to receive foster care benefits.

Emergency Foster Care

Children who enter foster care due to immediate custody by a police officer or court order may receive the emergency foster care payment rate for up to 30 days. The emergency foster care payment rate will be the basic daily rate plus Level D for the supplemental difficulty of care daily rate. This payment rate will apply if one of the following conditions is met:

1. The child's initial placement must be in foster care in Minnesota;
2. The child's previous placement was more than two years ago; or
3. The child's previous placement was for fewer than 30 days and an assessment was not completed using MAPCY.

When a child is receiving the emergency foster care rate and the MAPCY assessment is not completed within 30 days, the foster care payment rate drops to Level B on day 31 and remains at that level until the MAPCY assessment is completed. Upon completion of the initial MAPCY (including approval), if the rate is higher than Level D, the higher rate must be retroactive to the date of the initial placement. If the rate is lower than Level D, the new rate must take effect on the date that the MAPCY was approved. An agency may choose to

complete the MAPCY assessment for any child in foster care and not utilize the emergency foster care rate.

Northstar Kinship Assistance (NKA)

Children under the supervision of county or tribal social services that leave foster care and have permanent legal and physical custody transferred a relative on or after January 1, 2015 will be eligible to receive Northstar Care for Children kinship assistance benefits if the child meets the eligibility requirements in Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.22. The basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates for NKA for children entering kinship care at age six or older are shown in the tables below in the monthly rate columns. If the payment will be for a partial month, then the payment rates are shown in the tables below in the daily rate columns.

Alternate Rates

Alternate rates for pre-school entry will apply when a child enters Northstar Kinship Assistance while under age six. The pre-school entry child will receive 50 percent of the amount that a child age six and older is entitled to receive, if in foster care. The basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates for NKA for children entering kinship care under age six are shown in the tables below in the alternate rate columns. [Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.26, subdivision 5]

Northstar Adoption Assistance (NAA)

Children under the guardianship of the commissioner that leave foster care and are adopted on or after January 1, 2015 will be eligible to receive Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance benefits if the child meets the eligibility requirements in Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.23. The basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates for NAA for children entering adoption at age six or older are shown in the tables below in the monthly rate columns. If the payment will be for a partial month, then the payment rates are shown in the tables below in the daily rate columns.

Alternate Rates

Alternate rates for pre-school entry will apply when a child enters Northstar Adoption Assistance while under age six. The pre-school entry child will receive 50 percent of the amount that a child age six and older is entitled to receive, if in foster care. The basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment rates for NAA for children entering adoption under age six are shown in the tables below in the alternate rate columns. [Minnesota Statutes, section 256N.26, subdivision 5]

Basic Maintenance Rates

The basic maintenance payment rates to be paid to child foster care parents, adoptive parents, relative custodians or to youth 18 years old or older and under age 21 in extended foster care who are eligible for Northstar Care for Children benefits, including those placed in unlicensed supervised independent living settings, **effective January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016** are as follows:

Child's Age	Monthly Basic Rate	Alternate Monthly Basic Rate	Daily Basic Rate	Alternate Daily Basic Rate
0 - 5	\$ 565	\$283	\$ 18.58	\$ 9.29
6 - 12	\$ 670	\$335	\$ 22.03	\$ 11.02
13 - 20	\$790	\$395	\$ 25.97	\$ 12.99

Supplemental Level Rates

The supplemental level payment rates determined by the MAPCY assessment for children who are eligible for Northstar Care for Children benefits, including those placed in unlicensed supervised independent living settings, **effective January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016** are as follows:

MAPCY LEVEL	Monthly Supplemental Rate	Alternate Monthly Supplemental Rate	Daily Supplemental Rate	Alternate Daily Supplemental Rate
Level B	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Level C	\$ 100	\$ 50	\$ 3.29	\$ 1.65
Level D	\$ 200	\$100	\$ 6.58	\$ 3.29
Level E	\$ 300	\$150	\$ 9.86	\$ 4.93
Level F	\$ 400	\$200	\$ 13.15	\$ 6.58
Level G	\$ 500	\$250	\$ 16.44	\$ 8.22
Level H	\$ 600	\$300	\$ 19.73	\$ 9.87
Level I	\$ 700	\$350	\$ 23.01	\$ 11.51
Level J	\$ 800	\$400	\$ 26.30	\$ 13.15
Level K	\$ 900	\$450	\$ 29.59	\$ 14.80
Level L	\$1,000	\$500	\$ 32.88	\$ 16.44
Level M	\$1,100	\$550	\$ 36.16	\$ 18.08
Level N	\$1,200	\$600	\$ 39.45	\$ 19.73
Level O	\$1,300	\$650	\$ 42.74	\$ 21.37
Level P	\$1,400	\$700	\$ 46.03	\$ 23.02
Level Q	\$1,500	\$750	\$ 49.32	\$ 24.66

Foster Care Initial Clothing Allowance Rates

An initial clothing allowance is available based on the child's individual needs during the first 60 days of the child's initial placement into foster care. The county or tribal social service agency shall approve the initial clothing allowance consistent with the child's needs. The initial clothing allowance must not exceed the monthly basic payment rate for the child's age group. The initial clothing allowance rates **effective January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016** are as follows:

Ages 0 through 5	\$ 565
Ages 6 through 12	\$ 670
Ages 13 through 20	\$ 790

Questions

Please direct questions on the Northstar Care for Children rates to:

Deb Jensen, Financial Operations Division
(651) 431-3740; or e-mail at deb.jensen@state.mn.us

Please direct questions on the MAPCY assessment to:

Deborah Beske Brown, Child Safety and Permanency Division
(651) 431-4731 or deborah.beske.brown@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.