

5101:2-49-21**Reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses for a child with special needs.**

(A) Each public children services agency (PCSA), private child placing agency (PCPA), and private non-custodial agency (PNA) shall notify all persons who inquire about adoption services through their agency of the availability of funds for the reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses and the application process.

(B) Nonrecurring adoption expenses means reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court cost, attorney fees, and in accordance with paragraph (C) of this rule, other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs, as defined in rule 5101:2-49-03 of the Administrative Code for whom a final decree of adoption has been issued. These expenses cannot be incurred in violation of state or federal law and cannot be reimbursed from other sources or funds.

(C) Other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs refers to the cost of adoption incurred by or on behalf of the adoptive parent(s) and for which the adoptive parent(s) carries the ultimate liability for payment. These expenses include costs related to:

(1) The adoption homestudy,

(2) Health and psychological examinations,

(3) Supervision of the placement prior to the final decree of adoption,

(4) Attorney fees and court costs,

(5) Reasonable cost of transportation, lodging, and food for the child and/or adoptive parent(s) when necessary to complete the placement or adoption process.

(D) The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall inform an adoptive parent(s) who inquires about adoption services through their agency that the JFS 01421 "Application for Reimbursement of Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses" (rev. 09/2006) must be submitted to the appropriate PCSA and approved prior to the final decree of adoption. The JFS 01421 cannot be considered for approval retroactively.

(E) The JFS 01438, "Agreement for Payment of Reimbursement for Nonrecurring Expenses Incurred in the Adoption of a Special Needs Child" (rev. 09/2006) must be signed by the adoptive parent(s) and the agency prior to the final decree of adoption. A final decree of adoption by a foreign country constitutes the final decree of adoption. The agreement shall indicate the amount and details of the nonrecurring expenses. The JFS 01438 cannot be entered into retroactive to the final decree of adoption.

(F) The PCSA shall not consider the race, color, or national origin of an adoptive family or of the child for whom a family has indicated an interest in adopting, when

entering into a JFS 01438.

(G) When siblings are placed for adoption, either separately or together, each child shall be treated as an individual. A separate JFS 01421 and JFS 01438 shall be executed for each child and Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS) shall make payment or reimbursement for such expenses available up to two thousand dollars for each child.

(H) No income eligibility requirement (means test) shall be applied to the adoptive parent(s) in determining whether payment or reimbursement for nonrecurring adoption expenses shall be made.

(I) In order for a PCSA to enter into an agreement for the reimbursement of non-recurring adoption expenses the child must be determined a child with special needs prior to the final decree of adoption.

(J) The adoptive parent(s) shall submit to the PCSA a request for payment or reimbursement and proof of the expenditures for nonrecurring expenses incurred in the adoption of a special needs child within two years of the final decree of adoption.

(K) Payment or reimbursement for nonrecurring adoption expenses of a special needs child shall be available up to two thousand dollars per child per adoption. A child is considered special needs if all three of the following criteria are met prior to the final decree of adoption.

(1) The PCSA has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to the home of his parents. This determination shall be made based on the PCSA's obtaining one of the following:

(a) An order from a court of competent jurisdiction terminating parental rights;

(b) A petition for termination of parental rights;

(c) A signed relinquishment by the birth parent.

(2) The PCSA has determined that the child meets the special needs criteria, as defined in rule 5101:2-49-03 of the Administrative Code. The child need not meet other categorical eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance.

(3) In accordance with rule 5101:2-49-10 of the Administrative Code, the PCSA has determined that in each case a reasonable but unsuccessful effort was made to place the child with an appropriate adoptive parent(s) without providing reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption assistance or the PCSA has determined that this requirement shall be waived as described in rule

5101:2-49-10 of the Administrative Code.

(L) When an JFS 01453 "Adoption Assistance Agreement" (rev. 09/2006) is in effect, application for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses shall be made to the PCSA with which the adoptive parent(s) entered into the AA agreement. The JFS 01438 shall be incorporated as an addendum to the AA agreement.

(M) If a JFS 01453 has not been executed, all of the following shall apply:

(1) Prior to the final decree of adoption, the adoptive parent(s) shall submit a JFS 01421 for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses to the PCSA in the county in which they reside.

(2) At the time of application and prior to the final decree of adoption, the adoptive parent(s) shall provide the PCSA with:

(a) A copy of the JFS 01616 "Social and Medical History" (rev. 09/1996) completed on the child for whom the request is being made; and

(b) A copy of the adoptive parent's completed JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 08/2005) or a completed JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child" (rev. 01/2002) and a JFS 01673A "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 08/2005).

(3) A PCSA shall deny the JFS 01421 based on the applicant's failure to provide a completed JFS 01616 and JFS 01692.

(N) When the child is placed for adoption from Ohio into another state, the following apply:

(1) If a PCSA has entered into a JFS 01453 or has custody of the child, that PCSA is responsible for the determination of eligibility for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses and payment of allowable nonrecurring adoption expenses if the child is eligible.

(2) If a JFS 01453 is not in effect or a PCSA does not have custody of the child, the children services agency (CSA) in the state in which the adoptive parent(s) live is responsible for the determination of eligibility. The PCSA shall inform the adoptive parent(s) what documentation is required.

(3) If a PCPA has custody of the child, that agency is responsible for providing all required information and documentation to the PCSA responsible for the determination of eligibility.

(4) If a PCSA or PCPA does not have custody of the child, the adoptive parent(s) is

responsible for providing all required information and documentation to the PCSA responsible for the determination of eligibility. The PCSA shall inform the adoptive parent(s) of the required documentation.

(O) When the child is placed for adoption from another state into Ohio, the following apply:

- (1) If the PCSA has entered into a Title IV-E AA agreement or has custody of the child, that agency is responsible for the determination of eligibility for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses and payment of allowable nonrecurring adoption expenses if the child is eligible.
- (2) If the state public agency has not entered into a Title IV-E AA agreement or does not have custody of the child, the Ohio PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent(s) resides is responsible for the determination of eligibility for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses and payment of allowable nonrecurring adoption expenses if the child is eligible.
- (3) If a private child placing agency has custody of the child, that agency is responsible for providing all required information and documentation to the Ohio PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent(s) resides for the determination of eligibility.
- (4) If a public or private child placing agency does not have custody of the child, the adoptive parent(s) is responsible for providing all required information and documentation to the Ohio PCSA in their county of residence for the determination of eligibility. The PCSA shall inform the adoptive parents(s) of the required documentation.

(P) If the child for whom the request is made for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses will be adopted internationally:

- (1) Prior to final decree of adoption issued by the foreign country, the family shall submit the JFS 01421 and all required documentation to the PCSA in the county where the adoptive parent(s) resides.
- (2) In lieu of the JFS 01616, JFS 01673 and the JFS 01692, the adoptive parent(s) shall provide the PCSA a copy of the homestudy narrative report, and a copy of a social and medical history report completed in the child's country of origin by the placing entity at the time of application and prior to the final decree of adoption issued by the foreign country. A PCSA shall deny the application if the applicant does not supply a homestudy narrative report and social and medical history report completed by the placing entity in the child's country of origin prior to the final decree of adoption issued by the foreign country.

(Q) A stepparent adopting a special needs child shall not be eligible to receive payment

or reimbursement for nonrecurring adoption expenses if a biological parent is also present in the home. If a biological parent is not present due to death, divorce, or abandonment of the child, the stepparent shall receive payment or reimbursement for the nonrecurring adoption expenses if all other provisions of this rule are met.

(R) For each JFS 01438 executed, the PCSA shall maintain documentation in the child's case record to verify compliance with this rule.

(S) The state hearing policies and procedures contained in Chapter 5101:6-1 to 5101:6-9 of the Administrative Code apply to individuals applying for benefits under this rule.

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