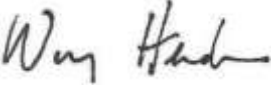


To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator
DCF Area Administrators
Child Placing Agency Directors
Child Welfare Agency Directors
County Departments of Community Programs Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
Group Home Providers
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors
Private Child Placing Agencies
Residential Care Center Providers
Shelter Care Providers
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Wendy Henderson 
Administrator

Re: Exceptional Payments and One-Time Uniform Foster Care Rates for Covid-19 Costs

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide the process that funds related to exceptional payments and one-time foster care rates for COVID-19 related costs will be provided to licensed foster homes for each child placed in the month of April 2020.

BACKGROUND

Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency on March 12, 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19 in the state of Wisconsin. DCF recognizes the acute need for emergency funding related to caring for children during the public health emergency. DSP recognizes the need to provide additional financial support to cover unforeseen costs to licensed foster parents for the increased costs being incurred during this time. These one-time funds up to \$300.00 per child will be provided for the care of each child placed in a licensed foster home during the month of April by DMCPs in Milwaukee, the balance of state counties, and the Department.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

The Department will provide funding for these one-time payments to help support all foster families in meeting the needs and costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The expectation is that foster parents will use the additional funds to cover allowable increased costs of food, childcare, supervision, additional time, and cleaning supplies due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All licensed foster parents with children for whom a placement is documented in eWiSACWIS during the month of April 2020 will receive a one-time or exceptional foster care payment up to \$300.00 to reimburse some of the COVID-19 costs that the family has incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Licensed foster parents will receive one reimbursement per child placed in their home. All licensed foster parents certified as a Level of Care 1 or higher are eligible for the reimbursement. The reimbursement will be prorated for the days of the month that the family had placement of the child in the month of April 2020.

The Department will provide an amendment to the state/county contract for the increased costs for each uniform foster care rate generated for the month of April 2020 up to \$300.00 per child based on the documented days of placement in each foster home in the month of April 2020. The one-time

reimbursement for these costs will be disbursed as part of the April 2020 foster care payments, which are received in the month of May 2020.

The mechanisms that will be used to provide these funds are the following:

- Level of Care 1: The reimbursements will be issued as one-time payments, which will be documented and approved by the Department.
- Level of Care 2 – 5: The reimbursement will be provided through a one-time exceptional rate increase that will be documented in the basic maintenance rate functionality. Please take note that this increase does not reflect an increase in the monthly basic maintenance rate, which is set by statute. Rather, it is a one-time exceptional payment that is being processed through the basic maintenance rate functionality. This exceptional rate increase is for COVID-19 related costs as described. These payments will be automatically generated by eWiSACWIS for the month of April 2020 in addition to the age-based basic maintenance rate. The basic maintenance rate functionality will then be decreased in May 2020 back to the established basic maintenance rate based on the child's age without the additional exceptional rate increase.

It is important to note that uniform foster care rates for the month of April 2020 shall not be manually adjusted as a result of the increased payments entered by DSP for one-time and exceptional rate payments, even if the foster care rate exceeds \$2000.00. Foster care rates in excess of \$2000.00 are allowable for the month of April 2020, if the rate above the max is the result of the one-time reimbursement the foster parent has received from the Department.

Additionally, adjustments made to the foster care rates for the month of April 2020 will have no impact on the due dates for subsequent uniform foster care rates. This process is very similar to the process used when the basic maintenance rates have previously increased in January as approved by the Legislature.

Lastly, as a reminder, agencies may continue to reimburse foster parents for increased child-specific costs related to COVID-19, such as childcare, supervision, additional time, cleaning supplies, an increase in food needs, etc. not covered through this one-time or exceptional foster care rate increase. Questions about other types of reimbursement related to COVID-19 should be directed to the agency Foster Care Rate Setter. More information on this process may be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/press/2020/dcf-order-13-covid-19v5.pdf>

DCF will process and approve each foster care rate directly in eWiSACWIS for each child placed by a county in Wisconsin, DMCPs, or by the Department. Additional costs incurred to support the continuity of placements that are private pay, out-of-state, WRAP-Milwaukee non-DMCPs, or by the Division of Juvenile Corrections should be resolved with those placing agencies for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

County agencies will process the one-time only and exceptional rates through the increased basic maintenance rate functionality approved by the Department that are cued for payment through the normal financial batch processing. All adjustments necessary will be processed by Friday, May 1, 2020 to be made with the rest of the April 2020 uniform foster care rate reimbursement made for the placement of each child. Additional guidance for county agencies regarding the state/county contract amendments will be provided through scheduled conference calls with county financial managers and Uniform Foster Care Rate Setters on May 1, 2020.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT: Section Chief
Bureau of Permanence and Out-of-Home Care
Out-of-Home Care Section
(608) 422-6930

MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>