

ADAMS COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ADOPTION ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES

Mission Statement: Adams County Human Services Department (ACHSD) provides adoption assistance to support families in meeting the special needs of children adopted in Adams County who meet the established state and federal eligibility guidelines.

Philosophical Statement: The adoption assistance program is to assist in reducing the barriers to adoption. Each adoption assistance agreement is developed for a specific child with that child's special needs in mind. Adoption assistance is provided if a child(ren) meets the State and Federal eligibility criteria and is based on the special needs of the child and the resources available to the family to meet those needs. The act of adoption shifts responsibility of the care of the child from ACHSD to the adopting parent(s). The county is no longer the custodian with sole responsibility of the child contracting with an agent for service. Instead, the adopting parent(s) willingly accepts custody of the child and all the responsibilities inherent in that role.

All families will be notified of the existence of the adoption assistance program at information meetings and in subsequent training. All families will sign the guidelines, acknowledging receipt and understanding.

Guidelines of the Adoption Assistance Program:

1. Adoption assistance is a program that provides assistance to adoptive parents in certain defined and limited ways to provide for special the needs of an eligible adopted child. Adoption assistance is intended to help or remove financial or other barriers to the adoption of Colorado children with needs by providing assistance to the parents in caring for and raising the child. (Vol. 7, 7.306.4A3)
2. Adoption assistance is determined based upon the special needs of the child identified at the time of initial assessment for assistance. These needs should include documentation by independent service providers, such as medical doctors, mental health professionals, physical or occupational therapists. Future needs identified must directly relate to the original special needs identified for the child.
3. To receive any type of adoption assistance, it must be determined that the child has a **special** need that acts as a barrier to the child's adoption. A need must include at least one of the following:
 - Physical disability; or,
 - Mental disability; or,
 - An educational disability which qualifies for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or education services; or,
 - Emotional disturbance; or,

- High risk children (such as HIV positive, drug exposure or alcohol exposure in utero); or,
 - Hereditary factors that have been documented by a physician or psychologist; or,
 - Ethnic background or membership in a minority group which may be difficult to place; or,
 - Other conditions that act as a serious barrier to the child’s adoption (such as a child over the age of seven, sibling group being adopted together, medical conditions requiring further treatment, etc.).
4. Families are to request the minimum amount necessary that enables them to meet the special needs of the child(ren). Families will be required to provide documentation of expenses related to the child(ren)’s needs.
 5. Adoption assistance range in amounts from:
 - a. Medicaid only” adoption assistance or “dormant” adoption assistance, which means no payment will be provided but allows for a payment to be made in the future if the child’s originally identified needs change,
 - b. “Time-limited” adoption assistance which allows for assisting the needs of a child for a specified time period,
 - c. “Long-term” adoption assistance provides financial assistance to support the family in meeting the needs of the child until the adoption assistance agreement terminates as described in #17 below. This amount can be up to, but not greater than, the Adams County adoption subsidy rates based on the child’s age at the time of adoption:

0-10	\$470.00 (\$15.45 daily)
11-14	\$500.00 (\$16.44 daily)
15-18	\$530.00 (\$17.42 daily)
 - d. A medically fragile amount may be applied if the child meets the criteria of medically fragile.
 6. Adoption Case Services may be available on a case by case basis when the needs of the child warrant such services. These services can only be requested when documentation has been submitted that Medicaid and other community resources have been exhausted. These expenses can only be reimbursed with the submission of appropriate receipts. Families must contact ACHSD prior to beginning these services. ACHSD will not pay for services already rendered.
 7. It is expected that all medical and psychiatric services for the child will be provided by an approved Medicaid provider.
 8. It is the expectation that the adopting family pay the filing fees for their Petition to Adopt and the cost of the child’s new birth certificate. If there are extenuating circumstances creating a hardship for the adopting parent(s), a request may be

made to ACHSD for assistance with these expenses. Non-recurring adoption expenses may be available and \$800.00 is the maximum allowable limit for these expenses, per child. **Only those fees pertinent to the preparation of adoption finalization and filing of the adoption petition, when necessary, are reimbursable.** Attorney's fees are reimbursed only when ACHSD or another county department cannot complete the adoption.

9. All adoption assistance agreements are reviewed every three years. Medicaid eligibility continues for the period of the three year agreement and is reviewed upon execution of the three year adoption assistance agreement. Adoptive parents can request a review in the adoption assistance at any time if the needs of a child cannot be met by the family and the family can provide documentation of the needs.
10. ACHSD will notify the adoptive parents of the need to review the adoption assistance agreement. Notification will be provided to the adoptive parents 60 days prior to the due date. The necessary documentation must be returned to the ACHSD no later than 30 days upon receipt.
11. Educational documentation is a federal requirement for all children between the ages of 6 and 17 that have been adopted and are receiving any assistance. **This documentation must be submitted each year.**
12. When the child reaches age 18 families are required to provide educational documentation or the adoption assistance will be terminated. If the child is a student in high school, adoption assistance will continue through high school graduation.
13. Adoption assistance may continue to the age of 21 if ACHSD determined in the initial agreement that the child has a developmental or physical disability which warrants continuation of assistance.
14. When a child is receiving monthly adoption assistance and is placed out of the home for more than 30 days and in the custody of a county department, adoption assistance payments and case services may be ended until the child returns home or a fee may be assessed by the county of residence.
15. Adoption assistance agreements will terminate when:
 - a. The family requests assistance to end; or,
 - b. The child reaches age 18 or graduates from high school, or age 21 if the county determined assistance can continue to age 21; or,
 - c. Adoptive parents are no longer legally responsible for the support of the child; or,
 - d. The child is no longer receiving any support from the adoptive family; or,

