




# Northstar Kinship & Adoption Assistance Permanency

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Permanency Quality Assurance Team – Child Safety & Permanency Administration

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- Overview of Northstar Care for Children – Permanency
  - General Eligibility, Process, & Timelines
  - DCYF Update
  - Legislative Changes
  - Resources
  - Contacts
  - Questions – Ask anytime

# Brief Overview of Northstar Care for Children

- Effective Jan. 1, 2015
  - Northstar Foster Care
  - Northstar Adoption Assistance
  - Northstar Kinship Assistance
- New Title IV-E financial program for custody transfers
  - Replaced relative custody assistance
  - Follows federal IVE regulations regarding TPLPCs, which requires relative custodians to be licensed foster parents for at least 6 consecutive months while a child has been placed in their care
  - MN interprets 6 months to be at least one day in a calendar month with licensed, relative custodian

# Northstar Funding Streams

- Northstar benefits can be:
  - Title IV-E (federal, state, local shares)
  - Non Title IV-E (state and local shares only)
- Agencies must determine Title IV-E eligibility before considering non Title IV-E
  - Title IV-E determined at time of removal
  - AFDC requirements
- Non Title IV-E Medicaid implications – Kinship & Adoption

# Agencies Involved

## Financially responsible agency

- Completes forms in SSIS
  - Approves MAPCY, enters eligibility determinations, creates BA

## Legally responsible agency

- Provides information and documentation, as needed
- Makes placement decisions, files petitions, court jurisdiction

## Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, & Families

- Reviews and confirms forms

## Licensing Agency / Child Placing Agency

- Public Private Permanency Collaborative (PPPC)

# General Eligibility, Process, & Timelines

- Child is US citizen/immigration status
- Child is under 18 years of age
  - NAA 18-20, depends on jurisdiction
- Cleared AW – BGS for all required individuals
- Child lived with licensed prospective relative custodian for 6 consecutive months (NKA only)
  - Federal requirement – IVE funding
- Benefit agreement in place prior to finalization
- Option to decline benefits



# TPLPC

- Must be to a relative
  - Living in and outside of Minnesota must be considered
- Agency has consulted with the child, if age 14+, about permanency
- Agency determined:
  - Reunification & adoption are not appropriate;
  - Strong attachment to the relative; and
  - The relative is committed to caring permanently for the child.

# Adoption

- Special needs determination
  - Child cannot/should not return home, attempted to place w/o NAA, & a barrier to adoption w/o NAA:
    - ↓ SSI benefits
    - ↓ Documented disability
    - ↓ Member of sibling group
    - ↓ Adopted by parent who previously adopted sibling
    - ↓ At risk of developing a disability
- Child, age 14+, must consent to adoption
- Must be legally free

# TPLPC

- Primary rights & responsibilities
  - Legal relationship is maintained w/ birth parents
    - Inheritance, visitation, access to certain information, etc.
- Ends when child turns 18
- Child's name remains the same
- Child support may continue

# Adoption

- Equal to birth parents rights
- Permanent, lifelong relationship
- Inheritance
- Determine child's name
- No child support from birth parents
- Tax credit, maybe

# General Process

## Kinship

- Kinship / Tribal Placement Agreement
  - Filed w/ TPLPC petition
- Eligibility Determination
- Benefit Agreement
- Finalization

## Adoption

- Adoption Placement Agreement
  - Filed w/ Adoption petition
  - DCYF approval if under guardianship
- Eligibility Determination
- Benefit Agreement
- Finalization

# Required Documents – Kinship

- Kinship Placement Agreement
  - Can be signed on or after date of approved foster care home study & approved relative custodian BGS
  - Contains required determinations for NKA eligibility
- Current MAPCY
  - Approved within 1 year of ED submission
- Removal Method
  - Court order or VPA
- CFC license
  - ICPC approval, if applicable
- All required AW – BGS
- Child’s birth certificate
  - Citizenship
- AFDC worksheet
  - Completed at the time of foster care placement
  - Used for Title IV-E & non Title IV-E eligibility

# Required Documents – APA

- Adoption Placement Agreement
  - Can be signed on or after date of approved adoption home study & approved BGS and child is legally free
  - Can be signed based on intent, not location
  - Fully executed once signed by prospective adoptive parent(s), legally responsible agency, and DCYF
- Adoption Placement Decision Summary
  - If using OHPP for sections A and B, need to include OHPP
- AW – BGS for all required household members
- CFC license (if using a foster care AW – BGS)
  - If married couple, both have to be on the APA & CFC license
  - [Exemption](#)
- Child's social and medical history document
- Sibling separation court order (if applicable)

## C. Relative search and placement consideration

County social services agencies have a duty to search for, notify, and engage relatives of children in out-of-home placement. A child's relatives must be considered for adoptive placement prior to considering unrelated individuals. Additionally, individuals related to a child by blood, marriage, or adoption, including legal parents, guardians, or custodians of a child's sibling, must be considered for adoptive placement **before** considering individuals who are important friends or who have significant relationships with a child or their family. Adult siblings of children in foster care have an additional right to be considered for adoptive placement, and must receive notice of this right per the Foster Care Sibling Bill of Rights. [Minn. Stat., sections 260C.008; 260C.212, subd. 2(a); 260C.221; 260C.605, subd. 1(b); and 260C.613, subd. 1(b)]

3. Provide a summary of relative search and placement consideration efforts below. Include: search method/s, individuals contacted, responses received, and how the agency considered each relative who indicated interest in being a placement and/or permanency resource. If a relative search was **not** completed, and/or relatives were **not** considered in the specified order, provide an explanation and attach supporting documentation.

# Required Documents – Adoption ED

- Removal order or VPA
- Disability documentation (if applicable)
- MAPCY Rating Report
- Title IV-E Foster Care AFDC Relatedness Worksheet (non-applicable)
- Adoption assistance in prior adoption (if applicable)
- SSIS will prompt documents needed

# Title IV-E Requirements

## Kinship

- Court Order or VPA
  - If court order for removal, need contrary to welfare statement.
- Child lived with licensed prospective relative custodian for 6 consecutive months & eligible for Title IV-E foster care payments.

A sibling of a Title IV-E eligible child do not need to meet the Title IV-E eligibility criteria, as long as the child is placed with the same relative custodian and the agency agrees it is in the child's best interests.

## Adoption

- Court Order or VPA
- If court order for removal, need contrary to welfare statement.
- Child's removal home meets AFDC eligibility criteria.
  - Depends on age of the child



# Non Title IV-E Requirements

## Kinship

- If court order for removal, no contrary to the welfare statement.
- Not eligible for Title IV-E foster care payments.
- If an exemption is granted.

Exemptions are very rare & can be to:

- Licensing requirement; or
- Living in the home for a min. of 6 consecutive months while licensed.

## Adoption

- Child's removal home did not meet AFDC eligibility criteria.
  - Depends on age of the child

- Statement to Decline – NAA & NKA
- Four main benefits:
  - Basic payment
    - Age of child
    - Child's food, clothing, shelter, and daily supervision
  - Supplemental payment
    - MAPCY
    - Extra care and attention needed to meet child's needs
    - At-Risk Adoption Assistance – No monthly payment
  - Medical Assistance (Medicaid)
  - Reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses associated with finalizing
    - NAA – Vehicle & Home Modification benefit

- **Preschool Rate**
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  of the rate that the child would receive in foster care
    - If finalized at preschool rate, preschool rate remains even with reassessment / rate adjustment post-finalization
    - Determined when benefit agreement is signed by pre-adoptive parent(s) or by relative caregiver(s)
- **School Age Rate**
  - Full rate that the child would receive in foster care

# Title I-VE Benefits

## Adoption Assistance

- Automatic eligibility for Medicaid

## Kinship Assistance

- Automatic eligibility for Medicaid

# Non Title IV-E Benefits

## Adoption Assistance

- Automatic eligibility for Medicaid
- Out-of-state = state dependent

## Kinship Assistance

- Automatic eligibility for Medicaid in MN
- Out-of-state = state dependent

## Kinship

- Kinship / Tribal Placement Agreement
- Eligibility Determination
  - 3-4 weeks after submission
- Benefit Agreement
  - 24-48 hours after submission

## Adoption

- Adoption Placement Agreement
  - 6-8 weeks after submission
- Eligibility Determination
  - 3-4 weeks after submission
- Benefit Agreement
  - 24-48 hours after submission

- DCYF (Records & Eligibility) process items by order received
  - Complete submissions – All required documents must be sent in order to start review
- Expedited requests
  - Special circumstances may be processed by “urgency” if communicated
    - Examples – Youth close to turning 18 & significant medical implication (not long to live)
- For siblings under different court jurisdictions being adopted by the same family, all submissions are reviewed and approved at same time
- Can go back and forth between agency & DCYF with correction requests

# DCYF Update

# DCYF Update

- Child Safety and Permanency moved from DCYF to DCYF on July 31, 2024.
  - New staff phone numbers effective 8/28/2024 & general email changes (i.e. SSIS help desk)
  - CSP is now its own Administration under DCYF vs a division in DCYF
- Minnesota Statutes Chapter 256N changed to 142A. Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 260C remained the same.
- The Social Services Information System (SSIS) has been updated so that template documents reflect these changes. State Court Administration is in the process of updating its order templates to reflect these changes as well.
- Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance benefit agreements created on or after July 1, 2024, need to reflect DCYF and updated 256N statutes.



# 256N Renumbered

Old	Renumbered
256N.001	142A.60
256N.01	142A.601
256N.02	142A.602
256N.20	142A.603
256N.21	142A.604
256N.22	142A.605
256N.23	142A.606
256N.24	142A.607
256N.25	142A.608
256N.26	142A.609
256N.261	142A.61
256N.27	142A.611
256N.28	142A.612

- Guardianship orders signed on or after July 1, 2024, need to have guardianship transferred to the Commissioner of DCYF.
- Guardianship orders signed prior to July 1, 2024, do not need to be updated because the children involved in those matters are considered automatically transferred to and under the guardianship of the Commissioner of DCYF as of July 1, 2024.
- Adoption petitions, decrees, and placement agreements signed on or after July 1, 2024, need to reflect DCYF.
- Adoption petitions and placement agreements signed prior to July 1, 2024, do not need to be updated because children involved in those matters are also considered automatically transferred to and under the guardianship of the Commissioner of DCYF as of July 1, 2024.
- When finalizing an adoption, it is important that the adoption decree reference the new DCYF.

# Legislative Updates – Permanency

- Established the MN African American Family Preservation & Child Welfare Disproportionality Act
  - Hennepin and Ramsey –January 1, 2025
  - Statewide –January 1, 2027
- Reestablishment of Parental Rights Modifications
- Sections 14-15 – Effective January 1, 2025, for Hennepin/Ramsey (or if county ops in) and January 1, 2027, statewide
- Modifies chapter 260C to allows children ages 10 or older, responsible social service agencies, and guardians ad litem to file petitions to reestablish parental rights and reduces the length of time a child must have been in foster care following a termination of parental rights order for a reestablishment petition to be filed (from 48 months to 24 months).

# Applicable Age

- Between October 1, 2023, and September 30, 2024, the applicable age is 2.
- Starting July 1, 2024, the final step of the applicable age phase-in takes effect, making all children eligible for IV-E adoption assistance regardless of age.
- Eligibility determinations made on or after July 1, 2024, will automatically assign a child of any age as an “applicable child” in SSIS
  - If a benefit agreement is signed on or after July 1, 2024, the child be an applicable child. In this situation, the department will inactivate the original ED so that a new one may be submitted & the child properly assigned “applicable child.” This process will need to occur before the BA is fully executed.
  - If the benefit agreement was signed before July 1, 2024, the child will be a non-applicable child.

# 256 Changes

This chapter has been affected by law enacted during the 2024 Regular Session. [Less info...](#)

256N.22 subd. 10 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 15](#)

256N.24 subd. 10 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 16](#)

256N.26 subd. 12 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 12, Section 2](#)

256N.26 subd. 13 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 12, Section 3](#)

256N.26 subd. 15 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 17](#)

256N.26 subd. 16 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 18](#)

256N.26 subd. 18 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 19](#)

256N.26 subd. 21 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 20](#)

256N.26 subd. 22 has been amended by [Chapter 115, Article 18, Section 21](#)

*Note: see session law sections for effective dates.*

# Tips & Tricks

# Questions from the Bench

## “Waiting for DCYF”

- Date of submission
- What was submitted
- Licensing process / status
- Preschool & School age rate delay
- ICPC initiated / status

- Is it in data/document correction and if so, what is DCYF asking for
- Have you submitted APA and/or ED back to DCYF for approval
  - Data/Document correction request
- Have you followed up with assigned R&E worker
  - Status check 3 weeks after submission



# Common Issues

- Paperwork errors

- Missing pages, placement agreements signed before requirements met, incorrect names

- SSIS errors

- Incorrect data entry
  - Continuous placement dates, names, ICWA, etc
- MAPCY sent vs MAPCY selected in ED
- Submitting eligibility determination prior to 6 month requirement
- Data fixes

- Background studies

- Adoption AW – BGS older than 1 year

- ICWA inquiry & notice

- QEW, if required

- Relative search

- Child's social and medical history incomplete & not current

# Common Issues

- Court Orders

- Missing required language
- Not deferring court orders (if applicable – NKA)
- Addressing both parents in TPR
  - Alleged/presumed fathers; status addressed but don't need to TPR; no parental rights to TPR
  - Any/Unknown – Not required
- Documentation of extenuating circumstances if removal date & initial order with the CWS finding don't coincide
  - IV-E eligibility / requirement

- Licensing

- Misspelled names on CFC license and AW – BGS
- Address not matching CFC license
- Timeliness with licensing process
- Missing prospective relative custodians on KPA
- All pre-adoptive / relative custodians on KPA / APA must be on the CFC license, if CFC AW – BGS are being submitted

# Resources

- Sign up to receive Permanency Support Updates
  - Permanency, Family First, and Safety & Prevention
  - <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDCYF/subscriber/new>
- Sign up to receive CJI Newsletters
  - <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNCOURTS/subscribers/new>

- [Final Step in Phase-in of Requirements for Title IV-E Northstar Adoption Assistance \(#24-68-06\)](#)
- [Summary of 2024 Child Welfare Legislation \(#24-68-13\)](#)
- [Practice Guide on Relative Search, Notice, Engagement, and Placement Consideration for Foster Care Children \(#23-68-12\)](#)
- [Revisions to Policies & Procedures for Northstar Adoption & Kinship Assistance \(#22-68-01\)](#)
- [Overview of 2022 MN Law Changes Affecting Permanency \(#22-68-11\)](#)

- [Northstar Kinship Assistance ED Navigation Guide](#)
- [Northstar Adoption Assistance ED Navigation Guide](#)
- [Adoption Assistance Workflow](#)
- [Kinship Assistance Workflow](#)
- [General SSIS Release Notes & Resources](#)

# General Resources

- [Northstar Kinship Assistance to Northstar Adoption Assistance](#)
- [Paths to Permanency – Adoption of children in foster care](#)
- [Paths to Permanency – Transfer of Permanent Legal & Physical Custody of children in foster care](#)
- [Northstar Care for Children – Practice Guide](#)
- [What is the MAPCY assessment?](#)
- [MAPCY – Practice Guide](#)
- [Legally & Financially Responsible Agency Roles – NCC](#)
- [Guide to State District Court Proceedings for Relatives & Foster Parents](#)

# Public Private Permanency Collaborative Agencies

Currently, the Department contracts with six private child-placing agencies to provide adoption services in collaboration with the county:

- [Ampersand Families](#)
- [Children's Home Society of Minnesota](#)
- [Evolve Family Services](#)
- [Nexus Kindred Family Healing](#)
- [Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota](#)
- [North Homes Children and Family Services](#)



# Family Resources

- Post-Permanency Reassessments & At-Risk Conversions
- Post-Adoption Search Services
  - Foster Adopt Minnesota (MN Adopt) – [Search@fosteradoptmn.org](mailto:Search@fosteradoptmn.org)
- [Permanency Resource Hub](#)
- [Foster Adopt Minnesota](#)
  - Training, support groups, podcast & webinar libraries, resources, etc
- County services may include, but not limited to:
  - Children’s Mental Health services;
  - Developmental Disabilities services;
  - Other waived services; and/or
  - Post-placement services / resources (PPPC & PSS).

The Benefit Information Portal has helpful information and forms for families post-finalization.

- BiP | The Benefits Information Portal (mn.gov)
  - [Home Modification Reimbursement](#)
  - [Vehicle Modification Reimbursement](#)
  - [Direct Deposit Information](#)
  - [Income Verification Request Form](#)
  - [Bank Change Request](#)
- Don't need an account to access forms

# Acronyms

- Northstar Care for Children (NCC)
- Northstar Kinship Assistance (NKA)
- Northstar Adoption Assistance (NAA)
- Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA)
- Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)
- Suspension of Parental Rights (SPR)
- Transfer of Permanent Legal & Physical Custody (TPLPC)
- Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY)
- Benefit Agreement (BA)
- Adam Walsh Background Study (AW – BGS)
- Extended Foster Care – Supervised Independent Living (EFC-SIL)
- Extraordinary levels (EL)

# Acronyms

- Eligibility Determination (ED)
- Adoption Placement Agreement (APA)
- Kinship Placement Agreement (KPA)
- Public Private Permanency Collaborative (PPPC)
- Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF)
- Interstate Compact on Placement of Children (ICPC)

- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medical Assistance (MA)
- Child Foster Care (CFC)
- Relative Custody Assistance (RCA)
- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)

# MN Rules & Statutes

- [MN Statute 256N](#) – Northstar Care for Children (142A)
- [MN Statute 260](#) – Juvenile Court; Child Placement; Compacts
- [MN Statute 260C](#) – Juvenile Safety & Placement
- [MN Statute 259](#) – Change of Name, Adoption
- [MN Statute 245A](#) – Human Services Licensing
- [MN Statute 245C](#) – Human Services Background Studies
- [MN Rule 2960](#) – Child Foster Care Licensing

# Questions

# Contact Information

## Permanency Quality Assurance Team (PQAT):

- Elisha Wolfman & Vanessa Ryan

Email – [northstar.benefits@state.mn.us](mailto:northstar.benefits@state.mn.us)

## Permanency Policy Specialist:

- Catrina Ankarlo

## Supervisors:

- Kathleen Hiniker (PQAT & Adoption/Kinship Assistance Eligibility)
- Mical Peterson (Adoption/Kinship Assistance – Payments & Reimbursements)

# Records & Eligibility

Adoption/Kinship Assistance Eligibility Consultants		
Barnhart, Ryan	(651) 539-7959 <a href="mailto:ryan.barnhart@state.mn.us">ryan.barnhart@state.mn.us</a>	Children under guardianship; adoption/kinship assistance process, placement and case consultation; Caseload divided by county
Habedank, Suzanne	(651) 539-7991 <a href="mailto:suzanne.habedank@state.mn.us">suzanne.habedank@state.mn.us</a>	
Lanz, Nicole	(651) 539-7926 <a href="mailto:Nicole.lanz@state.mn.us">Nicole.lanz@state.mn.us</a>	
Pigsley, Bret	(651) 539-8320 <a href="mailto:bret.pigsley@state.mn.us">bret.pigsley@state.mn.us</a>	
Ramstad, Jessica	(651) 539-7820 <a href="mailto:jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us">jessica.ramstad@state.mn.us</a>	
Womack, Karen	(651) 539-7837 <a href="mailto:Karen.womack@state.mn.us">Karen.womack@state.mn.us</a>	
Adoption/Kinship Quality Assurance Consultants		
Vacant		Ensure compliance with statewide permanency standards. Monitor agencies in the areas of permanency timelines, placement with relatives, achieving child's permanency goals.
Ryan, Vanessa	(651) 539-8004 <a href="mailto:vanessa.ryan@state.mn.us">vanessa.ryan@state.mn.us</a>	
Wolfman, Elisha	(651) 539-8369 <a href="mailto:elisha.wolfman@state.mn.us">elisha.wolfman@state.mn.us</a>	



# Thank You!

**Permanency Unit – CSP**

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