August 18, 2023

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, AND FISCAL STAFF

SUBJECT: REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR UNLICENSED KINSHIP PROVIDERS, SENATE BILL 20

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Information Only ☐ Time Sensitive ☐ Immediate

The General Assembly, during the 2023 legislative session with Senate Bill 20, established a reimbursement fund to assist in supporting unlicensed kinship care providers who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption and are providing foster care as defined under G.S. 131D-10.2(9).

The definition of relative according to North Carolina General Statute § 7B-101 (18a) is “An individual directly related to the juvenile by blood, marriage, or adoption, including, but not limited to, a grandparent, sibling, aunt, or uncle.” Relative by marriage can occur even if the marriage has been dissolved by death or divorce. The preceding definition of relative includes relation within the fifth degree of kinship to the child. This includes, but is not limited to, a parent, grandparent, sibling, great grandparent, uncle or aunt, nephew or niece, great-great grandparent, great-uncle or aunt, first cousin, great-great-great grandparent, great-great uncle or aunt, or a first cousin once removed. Also included is any relationship above preceded by step or half.”

With the new legislation in Senate Bill 20, it was determined that more specific kinship information was needed to implement the parameters of the law. To gather this specified level of kinship information, the North Carolina Division of Social Services (NCDSS) has partnered with Public Knowledge (PK) to survey counties regarding their kinship efforts.

To complete this survey, counties may need to consult with different personnel for important information. However, your support is essential in the completion of the survey as it will contribute to the development of policy regarding these payments. Please follow the link to complete the survey: https://forms.office.com/r/mz8nz6UsqB. Survey responses are due by August 28, 2023.

Another important component of the Senate Bill 20 legislation are the reimbursement rates set for unlicensed kinship providers. The law is not intended to make the participation in this program optional; therefore, all counties are expected to participate in the unlicensed reimbursement payment program in partnership with the State in the following manner:
1. Use of the current Foster Care and Adoption Assistance board rates.
2. Take one quarter (1/4) of the board rate for county participation rate.
3. The State would participate at the rate of one quarter (1/4) of the board rate.

The chart below illustrates the newly increased Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Rates as of July 1, 2023. It is important to have the current board rates, as Senate Bill 20 provides that unlicensed kinship providers are reimbursed at half the board rate.

**Effective July 1, 2023**, the Standard Board Rate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Age Group</th>
<th>Standard Board Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>$702 / month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>$742 / month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 and up</td>
<td>$810 / month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Effective November 16, 2023**, the approximate half board reimbursement rates for unlicensed kinship foster care by State and county participation are displayed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Age Group</th>
<th>Standard Board Rate</th>
<th>State Participation</th>
<th>County Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>$351 / month</td>
<td>175.50</td>
<td>175.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>$371 / month</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 and up</td>
<td>$405 / month</td>
<td>202.50</td>
<td>202.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The full development of the unlicensed kinship policy and program implementation is underway with more detailed information forthcoming. This communication is to share the statutory mandates and their effective dates of implementation.

For any questions, please contact the Adoption Manager Mary Mackins at Mary.Mackins@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

Adrian Daye, MSW
Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Lisa Tucker Cauley, Senior Director of Child, Family and Adult Services
Katie Swanson, Deputy Director for County Operations
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety and Prevention Services
Kimaree Sanders, Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing
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