



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING



ISMAEL AHMED
DIRECTOR

February 3, 2010

The Honorable Bill Hardiman, Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS
Michigan State Senate
Lansing, Michigan 48933

The Honorable Dudley Spade, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS
Michigan House of Representatives
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Dear Senator Hardiman and Representative Spade:

Section 556 of 2009 Public Act No. 129 (Enrolled Senate Bill No. 248) requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to report on adoption subsidy notification, post adoption training, adoption subsidy hearings and subsidy payment policy.

The department complies with both federal and state requirements to notify prospective adoptive parents about the Michigan Adoption Subsidy Assistance Programs with the DHS Publication-538. The DHS Pub-538 brochure, Michigan Adoption Subsidy Programs - Information for Prospective Adoptive Parents, is available through the Office Services Unit of DHS or online under the Adoption category of the DHS public web site: www.michigan.gov/dhs-publications. State law requires that this publication be provided to prospective adoptive parents of children who are under the care and supervision of DHS prior to their adoptive placement and signatory acknowledgement of this information is required on DHS form 3153A. If Michigan does not have responsibility for placement and care, or is otherwise unaware of the adoption of a potential special needs child, it is incumbent upon the adoptive family to request adoption subsidy on behalf of the child. This policy is consistent with the intent and purpose of the statute to promote the adoption of special needs children who are in the public foster care system.

In fiscal year 2009, the Adoption Subsidy office received three (3) requests from adoptive parents for funds or reimbursement of costs to attend conferences that include training or discussion of significant adoption issues. The Adoption Subsidy office does not have funds to provide post adoption training; however, families are referred to their local DHS office for further information. Training costs for adoptive families may be covered under the adoption and foster care recruitment and retention allocation distributed to local DHS offices. Approval for these funds is based upon the number of requests received and current budget constraints. The department does not track reimbursement of post adoption services since there is no program, or funds allocated,

for this purpose. The department may advocate for an appropriation increase if a substantial need arises in the future.

The purpose of support and medical subsidies is to assist with the costs of caring for a child with special needs. An adoptive child may be eligible to receive a support subsidy or a medical subsidy or both. The subsidies are intended to help with the costs of raising the child, but not to cover every expense. Adoption Subsidy policy requires issuance of a negative action if it is determined that a parent is not using the Adoption Subsidy payments to financially support their child. Parents have due process to submit evidence to negate the negative action and the right to an administrative hearing if payments are stopped. If a child is placed in a residential setting that is funded through the medical subsidy program, parents agree to have their support subsidy payments stopped. If a child is placed as a temporary ward in foster care, the court may order that the adoption subsidy payments stop. In fiscal year 2009 the department received eight (8) fair hearing requests from adoptive parents challenging the maximum amount of the adoption subsidy agreement. In fiscal year 2009, no requests were received alleging that a means test or similar test was used; no requests were received alleging that an adoption subsidy amount was reduced without the consent of the adoptive parent; and no payments were suspended when the child was still in the custody of the adoptive parent, but no longer in the physical care of that adoptive parent.

If you have questions, or need additional information please contact Terry A. Salacina, Field Operations deputy director, at 517-373-3570.

Sincerely,



Ismael Ahmed

Attachments

C: Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittee on DHS
Senate and House Fiscal Agencies
Senate and House Policy Offices
State Budget Office