

## District of Columbia Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

### State Contact information

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Program Manager Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Sharon T. Knight</p> <p>ADDRESS: Washington, District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency 400 6<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W., Room 3042 Washington, DC 20024</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:SKnight@cfssa-dc.org">SKnight@cfssa-dc.org</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 202.727.5424</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Sandra L. Jackson</p> <p>ADDRESS: Washington, District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency 400 6<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20024</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:SJackson@cfssa-dc.org">SJackson@cfssa-dc.org</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 202.442.6188</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Post Adoption Services Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Felicia Holley</p> <p>ADDRESS: Washington, District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency 1004 6<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20001</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:FHolley@cfssa-dc.com">FHolley@cfssa-dc.com</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 202.289.1057</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medical Assistance Specialist</b></p> <p>NAME: Joy Jolly Atkins</p> <p>ADDRESS: Washington, District of Columbia Child and Family Services Agency 400 6<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W. Washington, DC 20024</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:JAtkins@cfssa-dc.com">JAtkins@cfssa-dc.com</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 202.727.7107</p>

## **Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?**

**A good place to start.** Public adoption in Washington, District of Columbia is administered by the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA).

Washington, DC's CFSA and adoption link(s): <http://cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/site/default.asp?cfsaNav=&cfsaNav=>, and <http://cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=520649&cfsaNav=|31319> or phone 202.671-LOVE (5683).

### **1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? (*"What is your state definition of special needs?"*)**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Two years of age or older
- Race
- Ethnic background
- Membership in a sibling group of two or more children who should be placed together
- Physical or mental condition
- A child for whom an adoptive placement has not been made within six months after he is legally available for adoptive placement

Note: Children must be legally free for adoption to be eligible for adoption assistance.

### **2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above. Additionally, the adoptive family must undergo an income analysis often referred to as a means test. The income analysis is conducted to determine if the adoptive family's resources exceed state eligibility requirements. Children may additionally need to be in the custody of the CFSA of the District of Columbia, depending on the circumstances of their adoption.

### **3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$2,000.00 per child

### **4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Washington, DC offers deferred adoption assistance. Deferred agreements are available to children who are at high risk of developing a special need but do not otherwise qualify as special needs. "High risk" means that a child does not currently evidence a special need but, due to factors in their biological, social, or familial background, are at risk of developing a special need in the future.

## 5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Washington, DC at adoption finalization.

## 6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoptive parents who are a party to the adoption assistance agreement can request a change in the agreement any time there is a change in the condition of the child related to the condition of special needs identified at the time of adoption, or identified as being “at risk” of developing. Parents must make a written request specifying the reason for change and send the request to the adoption assistance worker. Parents can request a review of the amount of any single payment or in the level of on-going payments and must provide medical or psychiatric documentation substantiating the need for modification of the agreement. CFSA reviews adoption assistance agreements annually for continued need. Adoptive families are sent forms each year in order to verify the child’s residence through school registration. Requests for modification of the adoption assistance agreement are reviewed within thirty days of receipt by DC’s CFSA.

Send requests to:

Child and Family Services Agency  
Adoption Subsidies Unit  
400 6<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

## **Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services**

### 7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post adoption services in Washington, DC are offered through The Adoption Resource Center and the CFSA adoption assistance program. The Center can assist families in the District of Columbia in finding supportive community resources in such areas as mental health, parenting, emergency services, public health, academic support, and adoption assistance. Post adoption services include the following examples:

- |                                  |                                   |            |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Information and referral      | 4. Crisis hotline                 | 7. Respite |
| 2. Short-term family counseling  | 5. Parent trainings and workshops |            |
| 3. Support and counseling groups | 6. Resource library               |            |

The crisis hotline operates seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day at 202.289.1057, extension #15. The Adoption Resource Center link: [www.adoptionresourcecenterdc.org/](http://www.adoptionresourcecenterdc.org/) or phone: 202.289.1057.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance**

## 8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Public mental health services for children in Washington, DC are administered by the Department of Health Services, Medical Assistance Administration and includes the following examples: mental health, physician, clinic, inpatient/outpatient hospital care, residential treatment, and pharmacy/prescription drugs. Washington, DC's Medicaid benefits link: [http://dchealth.dc.gov/services/healthy\\_families/benefits.shtm](http://dchealth.dc.gov/services/healthy_families/benefits.shtm).

Services under the Adoption Resource Center include short-term counseling focused on adjustment difficulties, grief and loss, abandonment, identity development, and family identify formation. The Center provides a licensed Social Worker, known as a Family Coordinator, who provides support. Link to the Center's support services: [www.adoptionresourcecenterdc.org/services2.cfm](http://www.adoptionresourcecenterdc.org/services2.cfm) or contact the Intake Coordinator at 202.289.1057, extension #14.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker, medical assistance specialist, or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## 9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered by your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Washington, DC offers what is known as *Special Service Payments*. Funding can be approved to meet verified, exceptional expenses when no other resources are available or adequate. These determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and are determined by the specific needs of the child and documentation that the service is available through no other means and the financial circumstances of the adoptive parents.)

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings**

### 10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

An adoptive parent or permanent guardian can challenge CFSA's denial, reduction, or termination of their adoption assistance benefits through the Office of Fair Hearings and Appeals. A Notice of Action along with a Fair Hearing request form is sent to parents instructing them on how to formally request a hearing. Parents must submit a the fair hearing request form or a written request for fair hearing via letter form and CFSA will hold a conference with the parents to resolve the issue.

Hearing requests must be received within thirty days from receipt of the Notice of Action. The parent/caregiver may request a hearing with an examiner or choose to have the case mediated by an impartial third party. A trained mediator will work to bring the parties together to help resolve disputes quickly and to the satisfaction of both CFSA and caregivers. The Office of Fair Hearings and Appeals must submit a notification of the hearing within forty-five days of receipt of the family's request for fair hearing.

Contact the adoption assistance office at 202.727.2377 to initiate the process or request a hearing via written notice or Fair Hearing request form submitted to:

Herman Ray Barber

Child and Family Services Agency  
400 6<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024

## **Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information**

**11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?**

Washington, DC's general adoption link(s):

[www.cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=520649&cfsaNav=31319](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=520649&cfsaNav=31319) and  
[www.cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=519886](http://www.cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=519886)

**12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?**

Washington, DC's adoption assistance information link:

<http://cfsa.dc.gov/cfsa/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=519879#4>. See the heading, "Special Needs Children" and "Financial Assistance" at the bottom of the page.

**13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?**

Washington, DC's medical assistance link: [http://dchealth.dc.gov/about/index\\_maa.shtm](http://dchealth.dc.gov/about/index_maa.shtm)