

Tennessee

Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact Information

<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Assistance Specialist</p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Children’s Services 436 Sixth Avenue North 8th Floor, Cordell Hull Building Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1290</p> <p>E-MAIL:</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 615.532.5637</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME :</p> <p>ADDRESS: Tennessee is not a member of ICAMA</p> <p>E-MAIL:</p> <p>TELEPHONE:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Program Manager or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Mattie Satterfield</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Children’s Services 436 Sixth Avenue North 8th Floor, Cordell Hull Building Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1290</p> <p>E-MAIL: Mattie.Satterfield@state.tn.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 615.532.5637</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Cheri Stewart</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Children’s Services 436 Sixth Avenue North 8th Floor, Cordell Hull Building Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1290</p> <p>E-MAIL: Cheri.Stewart@state.tn.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 615.532.5618</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Post Adoption Services Contact</p> <p>NAME: Anita Cowan, Adoption Records</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Children’s Services 436 Sixth Avenue North, 8th Floor, Cordell Hull Building, Nashville, Tennessee 37243-1290</p> <p>E-MAIL: Anita.Cowan@state.tn.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 615.532.5637</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medical Assistance Specialist</p> <p>NAME: Sherry May</p> <p>ADDRESS: Southeast CSA 1501 Riverside Drive, Suite 105 Chattanooga, Tennessee 37406</p> <p>E-MAIL: Sherry.May@state.tn.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 423.493.5927</p>

Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Tennessee is administered by the Department of Children's Services (DCS). DCS and adoption links: www.state.tn.us/youth/index.htm, www.state.tn.us/youth/adoption/becoming.htm and www.state.tn.us/youth/adoption/adopproc.htm. Or phone 615.532.5637.

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:

- Nine years of age or older and Caucasian
- Five years of age or older and of minority heritage
- Member of a sibling group of three or more children placed together for the purpose of adoption at the same time
- Severe physical or psychological handicap as diagnosed by a licensed physician, psychologist, or licensed clinical social worker
- HIV-positive
- Neglect that rises to the level of severe child abuse, physical abuse and/or sexual abuse

Note: Children must be in the custody of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or a Tennessee licensed child-placing agency, public or non-profit, immediately preceding adoptive placement or in full guardianship 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 and in the custody of the state of Tennessee Department of Children's Services or a Tennessee-licensed child-placing agency, public or non-profit, immediately preceding adoptive placement or in full guardianship.

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.

\$1500.00 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.

Tennessee offers deferred adoption assistance. Children who do not meet the definition of special needs but are at high risk of developing severe medical or psychological/psychiatric problems in the future are eligible for deferred adoption assistance. The following risks may be considered: (a) any child whose genetic background or birth family (birth mother/birth father) medical history indicates significant potential for developing physical/psychological problems, (b) a drug/alcohol exposed infant, (c) a child who has a history of multiple foster/adoptive disrupted placements of 3 or more. Non-recurring expenses and other benefits/services

are not included in Deferred Adoption Assistance. At the point the child exhibits problems related to those identified high risks, the parents may request a revision/activation of the Adoption Assistance Agreement to receive benefits and services to meet the changed needs of the child.

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

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Tennessee at adoption placement. Neither the state-funded nor the Title IV-E assistance programs may make a payment prior to the effective date on the adoption assistance agreement. The adoption assistance agreement may not be signed until the adoptive placement agreement has been signed.

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 can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement any time there is a change in the circumstances of the family or the needs of the child. Parents can contact the Adoption Assistance Designee by phone in the local Department of Children's Service office to request a revision to the adoption assistance agreement. Supporting professional documentation must be provided by the parent to the Adoption Assistance Designee. The adoption assistance contract is revised to reflect any approved change. If the request is denied, the parent can appeal the decision by requesting and completing the "Appeal for Fair Hearing" form. See the Central Office Phone Directory link: www.state.tn.us/youth/dcsinfo/directory/central.htm and Regional Office Phone Directory link: www.state.tn.us/youth/dcsinfo/directory/index.htm.

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 Tennessee are administered by the Department of Children's Services (DCS) through DCS, private agencies, and parent groups. Post adoption services include the following examples:

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| 1. Information and referral
(through the adoption assistance worker) | 4. Therapeutic intervention/targeted case management |
| 2. Awareness events | 5. Respite |
| 3. Support groups | 6. Search services (information) |

The Department of Children's Services currently provides targeted case management services through the Family Support Services program to any family with a child at risk of entering state custody. A new post adoption program is being developed and will soon be available to adoptive families. Contact the Adoption Services Team Coordinator in the local Department of Children's Services office regarding information and contact persons. The Program Specialist in Adoption Services is also available to provide information at 615.532.5637.

Various parent and private organizations provide support to adoptive families. The Carroll County Foster Parents Association looks to recruit new parents and enlighten and inform the public about the foster care and adoption system. Address: 40 Foust Lane; Hollow Rock, Tennessee 38242, phone: 731.986.5316. Another parent group, Johnson County Foster Adoptive Care Association, is a rural organization that sponsors foster/adoptive parent recruiting events and is located in Mountain City, Tennessee, address: 399 Mill Creek

Road, phone: 423.727.4925. Many private organizations provide a variety of respite options. See Tennessee's Respite Program link: www.respitelocator.org/s2states.htm.

For mediation and/or search services, Tennessee law mandates the provision of non-identifying and medical information to adoptees and access to sealed adoption records for persons over twenty-one years of age. There are other criteria which have to be met for access to records to occur. Phone inquires regarding access to sealed adoption records can be made to the Adoption Unit at 615.532.5637. For other inquires, see the DCS Regional Office Phone Directory, link: www.state.tn.us/youth/dcsinfo/directory/index.htm.

Though not a post adoption service, children who are eligible for Adoption Assistance are also eligible for TennCare, which can be used to provide for some therapeutic/preservation services. TennCare provides for medically necessary services such as outpatient treatment, residential treatment and hospitalizations. Adoptive parents with access to family insurance coverage must first utilize their private insurance with TennCare as the secondary coverage. TennCare is the primary provider for children whose adoptive families do not have access to family coverage.

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 in Tennessee are administered by Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (DMHDD) and include the following examples: outpatient/counseling treatment, residential treatment, prescription drugs, inpatient hospitalization, mental health centers, crisis phone lines/assessment teams and state psychiatric hospitals.

Tennessee's Medicaid program is known as TennCare. Children with serious mental illness are eligible for what is known as "mental health case management" services through TennCare. Information regarding available services and locations is available on the DMHDD web site. The TennCare web site can be accessed through the DMHDD site.

MHDD Services for Children and Youth links

www.state.tn.us/mental/mhs/soc2.html (System of Care)

www.state.tn.us/mental/mhs/soc5.html (Serious Emotional Disturbance)

www.state.tn.us/mental/mhs/soc4.html (Wraparound Process)

MHDD general link: <http://www.state.tn.us/mental/>, Crisis Information Line link: www.state.tn.us/mental/crisis.html and TennCare Children's Page link: www.state.tn.us/tenncare/child.html

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist 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 under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Tennessee does not provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under their state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance. No additional financial assistance or services are available outside of the adoption assistance agreement. Adoption assistance agreements initiated on or after October 1, 1997 require that medically necessary services be funded by either private insurance (family

coverage) or TennCare. If it becomes necessary for an adoptive family to travel 150 miles or more one way from home to receive medical treatment, DCS will reimburse travel costs (not including food) to the adoptive family for one parent and the child.

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.

Adoptive parents can request a fair hearing whenever there is disagreement with a Department of Children’s Services (DCS) decision that affects their child’s adoption assistance benefits. When DCS revises, terminates, or denies adoption assistance, the adoptive parents may appeal the decision. “Appeal for Fair Hearing” forms are available through the Adoption Assistance Designee in the local DCS office. The completed form is returned to the Adoption Assistance Designee who forwards the form to the Appeals Hearing Officer. The hearing is then scheduled by the Hearing Officer. If the parents disagree with hearing decision, they can request a reconsideration of the decision. The adoptive parents may, as a final recourse, file an appeal in Chancery Court. Regional Office Phone Directory link: www.state.tn.us/youth/dcsinfo/directory/index.htm.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

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

Tennessee’s general adoption link: www.state.tn.us/youth/adoption/index.htm

Adoption Services Procedure Manual:

www.state.tn.us/youth/adoption/Adoption_Services_Procedure_Manual.pdf

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

Tennessee has no specific link to adoption assistance information. See the general adoption link: www.state.tn.us/youth/adoption/index.htm

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

Tennessee’s state-specific medical assistance links: www.state.tn.us/tenncare/ and www.state.tn.us/humanserv/medi.htm