

# Washington Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

## State Contact information

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<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Program Manager or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Pam Kramer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration PO Box 45713 Olympia, Washington 98504</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:apm@dshs.wa.gov">apm@dshs.wa.gov</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 360.902.7968</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Janette Benham</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration PO Box 45710 Olympia, Washington 98504</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:beja300@dshs.wa.gov">beja300@dshs.wa.gov</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 360.902.7987</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Post Adoption Services Contact</p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>ADDRESS:</p> <p>E-MAIL:</p> <p>E-ADDRESS</p> <p>TELEPHONE:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medical Assistance Specialist</p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>ADDRESS:</p> <p>E-MAIL:</p> <p>E-ADDRESS</p> <p>TELEPHONE::</p>

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

**A good place to start.** Public adoption in Washington is administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Children's Administration (CA).

DSHS, CA, and adoption link(s): [www1.dshs.wa.gov/index.html](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/index.html), [www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/abStructure.asp](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/abStructure.asp), and [www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adopt/Step1.asp](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adopt/Step1.asp). Or phone 888.794.1794.

### **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:

- Six years of age or older at the time of application for adoption assistance
- Minority ethnic background
- Member of a sibling group of three or more
- Member of a sibling group in which one or more siblings meet the definition of special needs
- Diagnosed with a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive or emotional disability
- At risk for a diagnosis of a physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, or emotional disability due to prenatal exposure to toxins, a history of serious abuse or neglect, or genetic history

### **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.

### **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.**

\$1,500.00

### **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 offers deferred adoption assistance. Adoptive parents can enter into an adoption assistance agreement with a zero amount (no payment) in the same way they enter into an Adoption Assistance agreement.

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

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Washington after 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 can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement at any time. Requests must be in writing by a parent who is a signed party to the adoption assistance agreement. Requests for review of the amount of any payment or level of continuing payments can be made whenever there are changes in a family's economic circumstances or the condition or needs of the child. Adoption assistance payments may be modified or discontinued and later resumed. There are no automatic increases- families must request payment increases and monthly maintenance may increase as a child reaches different foster care age payment categories. Substantiation of the need for change is required. Adoptive parents will need to complete a questionnaire regarding changes in circumstances of the family or the child related to the agreement and a copy of the parents' most recent tax return may be requested. Adoption assistance agreements undergo mandatory review every five years and failure to renew may result in termination from the program. Contact the Adoption Support Program Manager or your adoption assistance worker to request an adoption assistance agreement modification. Children's Administration office locator, link: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/caoffices/internetapps/offices/general/OfficePick.asp>

## **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?

Washington's post adoption services are not administered by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Children's Administration (CA) outside the adoption assistance program. DSHS post adoption services are offered within the adoption assistance program or through family groups and include the following examples:

1. Therapeutic interventions
2. Medical and counseling services
3. Family Reconciliation Services (FRS)
4. Training (1 per yr., in issues related to the needs of the child)
5. Respite (through *supplemental case payments*, see Question #9)

There are no specific post adoption services available in Washington through DSHS CA, except in the Vancouver area. This program is operated by the Children's Center. Contact the local DSHS CA office to request post adoption information and assistance for your area. DSHS CA office locator link: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/caoffices/internetapps/ca/caoffices.asp>.

The Seattle area has a parent support group, Adoptive Friends and Families of Greater Seattle (AFFGS). AFFGS link: [www.affgs.org](http://www.affgs.org) and phone 206.903.9664. Several private organizations provide respite options throughout the state. See Washington Respite Programs, link: [www.respitelocator.org/w1states.htm](http://www.respitelocator.org/w1states.htm).

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

## **Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance**

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

Public mental health for children in Washington is administered by the DSHS Mental Health Division (MHD), under their Medical Assistance Programs and includes the following examples: medical/corrective/rehabilitative services such as psychiatric services, counseling, and medical care. The adoption support program can supplement residential or group home treatment with counseling to facilitate transition back home. Requests for psychiatric care require special procedures and are submitted to the Department for approval prior to receipt of services with payments made directly to the service provider.

Access mental health treatment through the publicly funded system for children and adolescents by calling the Regional Support Network (RSN) that serves the county of residence and request the name and phone number of the mental health agency that serves the area. Call the mental health agency for an appointment. They may do a screening over the phone and schedule an intake appointment. Outpatient mental health services are provided by community mental health agencies. Services could be provided at the mental health agency, in-home, or elsewhere in the community. Locate the local office, Community Service Office county link: [www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/findservice.asp](http://www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/findservice.asp) or phone 800.562.5682 for more information. Washington's mental health links:

Mental Health Division (MHD): [www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/)

Medicaid Mental Health Benefits: [www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/childrens\\_medical.asp](http://www2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/childrens_medical.asp)

MH Services for Children and Youth: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/mhservicesforkids.shtml](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/mhservicesforkids.shtml)

Frequently Asked Questions: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/parentfaqs.shtml](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/parentfaqs.shtml)

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or state medical assistance specialist for 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?**

Washington offers *Supplemental Cash Payments* in certain circumstances to offset financial hardship adoptive families may experience in meeting a child's special needs. To be eligible, a child must have been adopted on or after July 1, 1996 and the total amount of adoption assistance and supplemental cash payments together cannot exceed the maximum foster care rate the child would receive were they in foster care. Funds may only be used for services unavailable through any other DSHS or community resource and include the following examples: additional in-home supervision, respite, and childcare. The need for these services must be identified in the adoption assistance agreement.

Washington also offers what is known as the *Reconsideration Program*. Program funding is allocated for payment of medical and counseling services for families who seek adoption assistance after adoption finalization and is limited to \$20,000 per child. Children eligible under the program must have an identifiable physical, mental, or emotional disability that existed prior to their adoption and not have received adoption assistance initially. The family must live in Washington, the child cannot be in residential treatment, and funds are not given in direct cash payment to the family but are paid to service providers.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for 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 have the right to request a fair hearing to contest decisions made by the Department of Social and Health Services that affects their child's adoption assistance benefits. Adoptive parents are asked to contact the Office of Administrative Hearings or their adoption assistance worker to request a fair hearing, or phone 800.562.5682 for further information. Either the parent or their representative may request a hearing. The request must be made within in 90 days of the date of the decision. Decisions regarding the timeliness of a hearing request are the responsibility of the ALJ. All hearing requests should be forwarded for scheduling regardless of the date of the request. The request does not need to be in any particular form and can be made verbally or in writing. The request can be made to any responsible department employee. The request should include the decision being appealed and why the client is dissatisfied with the decision. However, any request indicating dissatisfaction with a department decision should be treated as a hearing request. Send requests to the following address:

Office of Administrative Hearings  
P.O. Box 2465  
Olympia, WA 98504-2465

The above information and further explanation of the fair hearing process can be found at the following link: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/EAZManual/Sections/FairHearings.htm](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/esa/EAZManual/Sections/FairHearings.htm).

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

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

Washington's general adoption links: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adoption/index.html](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/adoption/index.html) and Frequently Asked Questions: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/Adoption/faq.html#post](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/Adoption/faq.html#post)

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

Washington's adoption assistance link: [www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/Adoption/adoptsupport.html](http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/Adoption/adoptsupport.html)

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

Washington's state-specific medical assistance links: [wws2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/Medical.asp](http://wws2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/Medical.asp) and [wws2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/childrens\\_medical.asp](http://wws2.wa.gov/dshs/onlinecso/childrens_medical.asp)