

2016 ONTARIO PERMANENCY FUNDING POLICY

GUIDELINES

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Ontario Permanency Funding Policy Guidelines

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Introduction

The Child Welfare Transformation (2005) document provided a strategic plan for the provision of child welfare services that would maintain the focus on child safety while enhancing permanency options for children receiving services from Indigenous and non-Indigenous children's aid societies (societies) in Ontario. A key component of the 2005 Child Welfare Transformation was the Pillars of Permanence which were designed as a service continuum of family-based permanency options to help societies to determine individual plans of care that are best suited for each child. The continuum included:

- Admission Prevention
- Kinship Service
- Kinship Care
- Customary Care
- Legal Custody
- Foster Care
- Adoption
- Youth Leaving Care

The objective is for societies to continually work with the child's family and extended family or community towards establishing a stable, safe and permanent home for the child. It is anticipated that members of a child's family, extended family or community may require financial assistance and service supports in order to support this goal.

The Ontario Permanency Funding Policy Guidelines (OPFPG), in place since January 26, 2007, provide a framework for the provision of financial assistance for the purposes of facilitating admission prevention, kinship service, place of safety¹, customary care, legal custody² and adoption options. The guidelines reflect the principles that financial assistance should be based on the unique needs of the child, and the family's or caregiver's ability to meet those needs.

Since the policy guidelines were issued in 2007, additional financial assistance and service supports have been developed for children and their families, requiring corresponding revisions to the policy guidelines. These additional financial and service supports include:

- Renewed supports for 16 and 17 year olds (introduced and appended to the OPFPG in September 2011);
- Targeted Subsidies for eligible families who adopt or obtain legal custody of eligible Crown wards (introduced as Policy Directive CW 002-12 in June 2012 and revised June 15, 2016);

¹ Place of safety – in relation to section 37(5) of the *Child and Family Services Act*.

² Legal custody - in relation to section 65.2 of the *Child and Family Services Act*.

- One-time financial assistance to support customary caregivers with expenses that will enable them to meet legislative/and or ministry standards and accommodate First Nation children in their homes (in addition to the per diem/funding supports previously available). The ministry has also clarified requirements for the provision of a subsidy to eligible customary care providers; and
- Residential stability for youth leaving care who need additional time to complete high school (i.e. Stay Home for School, introduced June 15, 2016).

Financial assistance that will be provided to support placement options for children in the care of a society (i.e. kinship care, foster care) and to support Crown wards leaving care, is not included in this policy. Financial assistance for kinship care, foster care and youth leaving care are outlined in separate documents. Societies will continue to follow financial policy directions currently in place for these types of care. For clarification: a kinship care family approved as a kinship foster home will be eligible for foster care per diem rates.

Format and Language of the Policy

Each permanency option addressed in this policy includes the following seven components:

- *Eligibility*: outlines the circumstances in which a family/caregiver may be eligible for financial assistance from a society.
- *Community Support*: outlines types of community supports which may be available to the family/caregiver providing care and must be considered prior to the provision of financial assistance by a society.
- *Financial Assistance*: outlines the type of financial assistance which a society may provide to the family/caregiver providing care.
- *Decision-Making Criteria*: summarizes considerations for decision-making around the provision of financial assistance.
- *Rationale*: articulates the intent of providing financial assistance.
- *Accountability*: outlines the ministry's expectations of societies with respect to the provision of financial assistance, including ensuring appropriate documentation is maintained and that eligibility and decision-making criteria are met.
- *Record Keeping*: stipulates the ministry's requirements for record keeping with respect to financial assistance.

ADMISSION PREVENTION	
Eligibility	<p>A child residing with their family in the community is determined by the society to be in need of protection and is at risk of being admitted to care. The child is not in care. Financial assistance could reduce the risk to the immediate health and safety of the child and could prevent admission to care.</p> <p>Family is receiving protection services either on a voluntary basis or through a Supervision Order.</p>
Community Support	<p>Availability of assistance from extended family members, community services, private or government programs must be considered.</p> <p>Societies and OW/ODSP offices are encouraged to develop protocols to facilitate the coordination of financial support payments between programs.</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Episodic/emergency support may be provided to cover items not immediately available from social assistance or other government/community programs such as urgent unforeseen overnight accommodation, payment to address urgent child safety related home repairs (window/door safety locks, broken windows repair), child car safety seat, transportation to child support services (e.g. counseling), and other short term needs to address immediate health and safety concerns for the child.</p> <p>Case work and service supports are provided as required.</p>
Decision Making Criteria	<p>In determining the assistance to be provided, societies should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is the minimum support required to prevent the child's admission to care? • what is the family's financial ability to contribute to the cost of the required intervention? • are there members of the extended family or community who could provide some or all of the assistance to address the urgent need? • are there other private, or government programs that could provide the emergency assistance to address the urgent need? • has financial assistance been provided in the past to prevent an admission to care? • that they are required to provide financial assistance within their current funding envelope.
Rationale	<p>Research indicates that early intervention to reduce urgent risk situations can better position parents to address the issues causing their child to be in need of protection and ultimately enable children to remain out of care on that occasion as well as possibly in future.</p>
Accountability	<p>Eligibility criteria have been met. Decision making criteria have been applied. Societies should make direct payments to service providers whenever possible. Receipts from families receiving direct financial assistance are required. If receipts are not provided, explanatory notes must be made to file. As well, where societies are providing financial assistance, they must be prepared to provide documentation to the family for purposes of social assistance upon request. Each society will be required to track and manage financial assistance provided in relation to admission prevention.</p>
Record keeping	<p>Family files will require documentation through a case note and recording regarding provision of the assistance and how this relates to preventing the admission of the child to care. Provision of financial assistance on a frequent basis should trigger the assessment of parent's ability to meet the ongoing needs of the child.</p>

KINSHIP SERVICE	
Eligibility	<p>A child is determined by the society to be in need of protection and is placed with a kin or community caregiver. The child's safety will be protected and an admission to care will be prevented if the child resides with kin or a community member.</p> <p>The caregiver requires financial assistance to meet the extraordinary costs of integrating the child into their family. The child is not in the care of the society and will remain with kin or community member until safety issues have been addressed either to allow the child's return to their parent(s) or protection concerns have been addressed and a permanency plan is established.</p> <p>The child has been placed with kin or a community member either on a supervision order (no longer than 12 months), on the consent of the child's family, or during the application process for legal custody (CFSA 57.1).</p>
Community Support	<p>Availability of assistance from extended family members, community services, private or government programs must be considered. Child/family may be eligible for other community supports such as subsidized day care, recreation programs, day camps, etc.</p> <p>Kin/community member may be eligible for Temporary Care Assistance through Ontario Works that may include prescription drugs, dental and vision care, back-to-school allowance and winter clothing allowance.</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Episodic/emergency financial assistance may be provided to stabilize the kinship placement and prevent an admission to care. The assistance would cover items that would not be immediately available from social assistance or other government programs such as start-up costs (e.g. furniture/mattress), payments for accommodations to the home to meet the needs of the child (e.g. window/door safety locks), transportation to child support service (e.g. counseling), caretaker relief, and other short term needs to address health and safety concerns for the child.</p> <p>Case work and service supports are provided as required.</p>
Decision Making Criteria	<p>In determining the assistance to be provided, societies should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what minimum supports are required to prevent the child's admission to care? • what is the kin caregiver's financial ability to contribute to the cost of meeting the child's needs of the required intervention? • are there members of the extended family or community who could provide the assistance? • are there other private or government programs that could provide the assistance to address the need? • has financial assistance been provided in the past to prevent an admission to care? • that they are required to provide financial assistance within their current funding envelope.
Rationale	<p>The provision of financial support has been identified as a key factor in achieving the goal of preventing a child's admission to care by facilitating and stabilizing a kin placement.</p>
Accountability	<p>Eligibility criteria have been met. Decision making criteria have been applied. Determination that the provision of financial assistance has prevented an admission to the society's care. New kinship service standards have been applied. Societies should make direct payments to service providers whenever possible. Receipts from kin caregivers receiving direct financial assistance are required. If receipts are not provided, explanatory notes must be made to file. As well, where societies are providing financial assistance, they must be prepared to provide documentation to the family for purposes of social assistance upon request. Each society will be required to track and manage funds in relation to kinship service.</p>
Record keeping	<p>Family files will require documentation through a case note and recording regarding provision of the financial assistance and how this relates to preventing the admission of the child to care.</p>

	KINSHIP CARE Place of Safety under <i>Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)</i> subsection 37(5)
Eligibility	A child is determined by the society to be in need of protection and has been admitted to the society's care. The child has been placed with kin caregiver in accordance with the "Place of Safety Prior to Placement" regulation. The society is satisfied that the person is willing and able to provide a place of safety until safety issues have been addressed to allow the child's return to the child's parent(s) or protection concerns have been addressed and a permanency plan has been established. Financial support is required by the kin caregiver to meet the child's identified needs.
Community Support	Available assistance from extended family, community services, private or government programs must be considered. In addition to the protection court order (e.g. interim care and custody, society wardship) the court may make a support order requiring parents to contribute to the costs of the child while in the care of the society.
Financial Assistance	Societies will provide financial assistance to support the needs of the child in kin caregiver homes until the child returns to their parent(s) or a permanency plan has been established. Payments are not to exceed the regular foster care rate (approximately \$900 per month). Financial support will be provided to stabilize the kinship placement and to meet a child's basic needs (food, clothing, medical and dental, school supplies, recreation) and other items such as start-up costs (e.g. furniture/mattress), payments for accommodations to the home to meet the needs of the child (e.g. window/door safety locks), transportation to child support service (e.g. counseling), babysitting, day care, caretaker relief and other short term needs to address health and safety concerns for the child.
Decision Making Criteria	In determining the assistance to be provided, societies should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of the child's needs • supports required by the family to meet the child's needs and health and safety concerns • other assistance available from extended family members, community services, private or government programs
Rationale	The child is in society's care and the society is required to provide care for children assigned or committed to its care. The family providing a place of safety is exempt from foster care licensing standards for 60 days, and therefore the rate of support may be less than the regular foster rate during this period. If the family is approved as a foster home, the foster care per diem rates apply.
Accountability	Child is in the care of a society and placed with a kin caregiver who has been assessed as willing and able to offer a place of safety. Financial assistance provided will not exceed foster care rates. Eligibility criteria have been met. Decision making criteria have been applied. Receipts for direct financial assistance for costs to family in accommodating the child and child's safety needs are required. If receipts are not provided, explanatory notes must be made to file. Each society will be required to track and manage funds for kinship care.
Record keeping	As child is in society care, a child's file has/will be created. Visits to the home are required in accordance with Ontario Regulation 206/00. All costs provided to the kin caregiver and to the child must be documented in the kinship file.

SUBSIDY FOR CUSTOMARY CARE	
Eligibility	<p>Customary care is defined for the purpose of Part X in the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> as “the care and supervision of an Indian or native child by a person who is not the child’s parent according to the custom of the child’s band or native community. R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11, s.208. An Indian child is an “Indian” as defined in the <i>Indian Act</i>. A native child is a “native person” as defined in the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i>.</p> <p>In accordance with section 212 of the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i>, where a band or native community declares that an Indian or native child is being cared for under customary care, a society may grant a subsidy to the person caring for the child. R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11, s. 212.</p> <p>A society will grant a subsidy for customary care if the following eligibility criteria and conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A society determines that an Indian or native child is in need of protection and removal of the child from the parents/caregiver is required; • There is a Band Council Declaration by the band of either parent that declares that the child will be cared for under customary care according to the custom of the First Nation; • The home must meet foster care licensing regulations and standards; • The child is supervised by a society pursuant to the Band Council Declaration; and • There must be a Customary Care Agreement in place.
Community Support	Availability of assistance from extended family members should be considered when assessing the financial assistance required.
Financial Assistance	<p><u>Ongoing Subsidy for Customary Care</u> A society will grant a subsidy for customary care in accordance with eligibility criteria in the revised 2016 <i>Ontario Permanency Funding Policy Guidelines</i>. A caregiver providing customary care will be paid at regular, specialized or treatment foster care rates in accordance with the child’s needs. The caregiver will be entitled to the same reimbursements, training and support systems as foster parents. Ongoing financial assistance will not exceed foster care rates.</p> <p><u>One-Time Financial Assistance</u> A society will provide one-time funding of up to \$5,000 per child subject to a Customary Care Agreement to assist customary caregivers³ with initial costs associated with accommodating a child in the home (e.g. furniture/mattress) and home modifications in order to meet foster care licensing regulations and standards (e.g. window/door safety locks). One-time financial assistance may be provided to customary caregivers in addition to the ongoing subsidy for customary care. Societies are responsible for providing one-time financial assistance within the 60-day exemption period before a customary care home must meet prescribed foster care licensing regulations and standards.</p>
Decision Making Criteria	<p>The society has made a determination that the child is in need of protection and cannot remain with the parent/caregiver due to protection concerns. There is a Band Council Declaration by the band of either parent. The child is supervised by a society pursuant to the Band Council Declaration. A Customary Care Agreement is in place.</p> <p><u>Ongoing Subsidy for Customary Care</u> The customary caregiver requires assistance in providing for a child’s basic needs and addressing the health and safety concerns for the child.</p> <p><u>One-Time Financial Assistance</u> A customary caregiver is entitled to one-time financial assistance of up to \$5,000 per child if the provision of this assistance will enable them to meet foster care licensing regulations and standards and accommodate the child/children in their home.</p>
Rationale	Customary care is a culturally appropriate placement option for Indian or native children. Use of customary care by Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies allows for an Indian or native child to

³ One-time financial assistance does not apply to non-family based institutional settings, such as group homes.

	SUBSIDY FOR CUSTOMARY CARE
	<p>remain connected to his or her heritage, language, community and culture. A number of Indigenous societies have developed good working models of customary care for protection cases within the current legislative regulations and standards of the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i>.</p> <p>These models recognize that children must be kept safe, secure and raised in an environment that is conducive to learning and supporting their growth to become healthy, productive adults.</p>
Accountability	<p>There is a Band Council Declaration that declares that a child will be cared for according to the custom of the First Nation.</p> <p><u>Ongoing Subsidy for Customary Care</u> There is a Customary Care Agreement. Children are supervised by the society and foster care standards apply. Eligibility criteria have been met. Decision making criteria have been applied.</p> <p><u>One-Time Financial Assistance</u> Approval of one-time financial assistance is required by a local society director or designate. In considering a request for one-time financial assistance, a local director or designate will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all eligibility criteria have been met; • decision making criteria have been applied; • documentation that supports the level of funding requested is provided (e.g. estimate from a contractor, estimate for equipment or furniture); and • a recommendation by a worker and supervisor for the provision of financial assistance has been made. <p>Societies should make direct payments to suppliers (e.g. contractors for home modifications), and pay for initial costs associated with accommodating a child in a home (e.g. furniture, mattress).</p>
Record keeping	<p>A customary care child and home file are created. Children in care and foster care standards and recording requirements apply. Receipts for all expenditures associated with one-time financial assistance are required. If receipts are not provided, explanatory notes must be included in the file.</p>

	LEGAL CUSTODY
Eligibility	Family has obtained legal custody of a child under the <i>CFSA</i> section 65.2.
Community Support	Availability of assistance from extended family members, community services, private or government programs must be considered. Societies and OW/ODSP offices are encouraged to develop protocols to facilitate the coordination of financial support payments between programs (e.g., families requiring assistance for children with special needs from societies would only receive Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) if societies are unable to provide funding to cover these special expenses).
Financial Assistance	Episodic and/or ongoing financial assistance may be provided to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist families where the placement of the child is based on continuity of care, to be with a sibling or relative, or cultural/religious compatibility and/or where family could not offer a permanency plan in absence of financial support, assist with the specific costs or with cost sharing that provides for a child's special services. This would include but not be limited to medical and related costs not covered by OHIP, orthodontic and corrective dental treatment, home renovations to accommodate a child's disability, wheelchairs, crutches, braces or prostheses, therapy including occupational, speech and hearing, remedial education, day care, and transportation that are not covered by private or government programs. Societies may allocate subsidy payments up to regular, specialized or treatment foster care rates in accordance with the child's needs and family's ability to meet those needs. Case work and service supports are provided as required.
Decision Making Criteria	In determining the financial assistance to be provided, societies should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identification of need based on either child's special needs, need for continuity of care, sibling or relative placement, cultural or religious needs, family's financial ability to meet the needs of the child, availability of community resources, family's eligibility for supports through a private or government program, that they are required to provide financial assistance within their current funding envelope.
Rationale	To address the special challenges for families who make a permanent commitment to care for a child by legal custody (<i>CFSA</i> 65.2), the provision of subsidies and support has been identified as a key factor in achieving the goal of permanency through legal custody in other jurisdictions and in research.
Accountability	Approval is required by a local director or designate. In considering this request a local director or designate will require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eligibility criteria have been met, decision making criteria have been applied, permanency agreement including a synopsis of child's needs and reason for subsidy has been developed, statement of family's financial situation, estimate of assistance required, statement regarding availability of other supports or programs, recommendation by worker and supervisor. The local director or designate will conduct an annual review. In conducting the annual review the local director or designate will consider the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation that child resides in the home, updated financial statement, review of eligibility and decision making criteria, recommendation to extend, amend or terminate. Each society will be required to track and manage funds for legal custody (<i>CFSA</i> 65.2). Where societies are providing financial assistance, they must be prepared to provide documentation to the family for purposes of social assistance upon request.
Record keeping	A separate file is required. Copies of permanency agreements will be placed in the custodial parent post-placement file. File will contain separate documentation for each child in the family for whom family is receiving assistance. This will include: documentation supporting the application, permanency funding agreement, annual review documentation, requests, invoices, and ongoing documentation in relation to services provided.

	ADOPTION
Eligibility	<p>Child is a Crown ward or the child's parents consent to the child's adoption through a society and at the time assistance is provided the child is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in care and on adoption probation until adoption is finalized or, • out of care as the adoption has been finalized.
Community Support	<p>Availability of assistance from extended family members, community services, private or government programs must be considered.</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Episodic and/or ongoing financial assistance may be provided to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist with the specific costs or with cost sharing that provides for a child's special services. This would include but not be limited to medical and related costs, orthodontic and corrective dental treatment, home renovations to accommodate a child's disability, wheelchairs, crutches, braces or prostheses, therapy including occupational, speech and hearing, remedial education, day care and transportation that are not covered by private or government programs, • assist families where the placement of the child is based on continuity of care, to be with a sibling or relative, or cultural/religious compatibility and/or where family could not offer a permanency plan in absence of financial support. <p>Societies may allocate subsidy payments up to regular, specialized or treatment foster care rates in accordance with the child's needs and the family's ability to meet those needs. Case work and service supports are provided as required.</p>
Decision Making Criteria	<p>In determining the assistance to be provided, societies should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of need based on either child's special needs, need for continuity of care, sibling or relative placement, cultural or religious needs, • family's financial ability to meet the needs of the child, • availability of community and other resources, • family's eligibility for supports through a private or government program, • that they are required to provide financial assistance within their current funding envelope.
Rationale	<p>To address the special challenges for families who make a permanent commitment to care for a child by legal adoption through a children's aid society. The provision of subsidies and support has been identified in research and jurisdictional review as a key factor in achieving the goal of permanency through adoption.</p>
Accountability	<p>Approval is required from the local director or designate. In considering this request the local director or designate will require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligibility criteria have been met, • decision making criteria have been applied, • permanency agreement including a synopsis of child's needs and reason for subsidy has been developed, • statement of family's financial situation, • estimate of assistance required, • statement regarding availability of other supports or programs, • recommendation by worker and supervisor. <p>The local director or designate will conduct an annual review. In conducting the annual review the local director or designate will consider the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirmation that the child resides in the home, • updated financial statement, • review of eligibility and decision making criteria, • recommendation to extend, amend or terminate. <p>Each society will be required to track and manage funds for adoption subsidies. Where societies are providing financial assistance, they must be prepared to provide documentation to the family for purposes of social assistance upon request.</p>
Record keeping	<p>A separate subsidy file is required. Copies of permanency funding agreements to be placed in child's file and adoptive family file. The subsidy file will contain separate documentation for each child in the family for whom family is receiving assistance. This will include; documentation supporting the application, permanency agreement, annual review documentation, requests, invoices, ongoing documentation in relation to services provided.</p>

TARGETED SUBSIDIES FOR ADOPTION AND LEGAL CUSTODY	
Eligibility	<p>Societies shall provide Targeted Subsidies to families when the following 3 conditions are met:</p> <p><i>(a) Type of Permanency Placement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family has obtained legal custody of the child or children on or after June 15, 2012; OR • The child / children are Crown wards who have been placed with the adoptive family on or after June 15, 2012. <p><i>(b) Eligible Crown Wards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the adoption placement or legal custody order occurred between June 15, 2012 and June 14, 2016, the child was 10 years or older on the date of the adoption placement or legal custody order; OR • If the adoption placement or legal custody order occurred on or after June 15, 2016, the child is 8 years old or older on the date of the adoption placement or the legal custody order; AND/OR • The child or children being adopted or subject of the legal custody order on or after June 15, 2012 are members of a sibling group, where sibling group is defined as 2 or more siblings. The definition of sibling group includes siblings placed at the same time, as well as successive sibling placements.⁴ <p><i>(c) Family Income</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family has a combined annual net family income of not more than \$93,700, as calculated from line 236 of the Canada Revenue Agency personal income tax return, at the point of application for, and renewal of, a Targeted Subsidy. <p>All eligible families will receive Targeted Subsidies until the youth's 21st birthday. Societies will conduct annual reviews to determine if the family continues to meet the eligibility requirements.</p> <p>For youth subject to a legal custody order, caregivers and youth will have to voluntarily agree to the youth remaining in the home for the caregiver to be eligible to continue receiving Targeted Subsidies.</p>
Community Support	<p>Availability of assistance from extended family members does not need to be considered when assessing eligibility for Targeted Subsidies.</p>
Financial Assistance	<p>Societies shall provide Targeted Subsidies to families meeting the above eligibility criteria from the date of the adoption placement or from the date of the legal custody order until the youth's 21st birthday,⁵ provided that upon annual reviews, the eligibility criteria set out in this guideline continue to be met.</p> <p>Societies shall provide ongoing (monthly) subsidies to eligible families for each eligible child at a rate of 60% of the average CAS foster care per diem rate of \$20,700⁶ (as determined by the ministry). As of June 15, 2016, this amount is \$1,035 per month / \$12,420 annually per child.</p> <p>Families who adopt or obtain legal custody of children and who are in receipt of Targeted Subsidies may also be eligible to receive episodic and/or ongoing financial assistance in accordance with the requirements of the Adoption and Legal Custody policies in the revised 2016 Ontario Permanency Funding Policy Guidelines to help with the needs of their child(ren), at the discretion of individual society's, on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Note: If the adoption placement or legal custody of eligible Crown wards occurred on or after June 15, 2016, and the family meets the financial eligibility requirement, the family will begin receiving Targeted Subsidies.</p> <p>A family that adopted or obtained legal custody of an eligible child or children and was determined ineligible to receive a Targeted Subsidy from the date of the adoption placement or from the date of the legal custody order (as their annual family net income was above the income threshold) and who meet the income eligibility criteria at a later date, based on their most recent personal income tax notice of</p>

⁴ The sibling(s) eligible for a Targeted Subsidy must have been placed for adoption or subject of a legal custody order on or after June 15, 2012.

⁵ Financial assistance will continue to be provided to eligible families who obtained legal custody of Crown wards between age 18 and 21 years. This includes families who adopt or obtain legal custody of Crown wards who are part of a sibling group.

⁶ The monthly Targeted Subsidies amount is based on \$20,700, the average annual CAS foster care per diem rate in 2013-14 (up from \$19,000 in 2009).

	TARGETED SUBSIDIES FOR ADOPTION AND LEGAL CUSTODY
	<p>assessment, will receive Targeted Subsidies from the date of the signed Targeted Subsidy Agreement (i.e. not from the date of the adoption placement or the date of the legal custody order).</p> <p>A family that previously received Targeted Subsidies for a child or children they adopted or for whom they obtained a legal custody order on or after June 15, 2012 and who are now eligible to receive the updated Targeted Subsidy amount, will be required to sign a new Targeted Subsidy Agreement with their local society. The family must meet the income eligibility requirement to be eligible to receive the updated Targeted Subsidy amount. If the most recent personal income tax notice of assessment meets the financial eligibility requirement in the revised Targeted Subsidies Policy, the family will receive Targeted Subsidies, on a go-forward basis, from the date of the signed Targeted Subsidy Agreement (i.e. not from the date of the adoption placement or the date of the legal custody order).</p> <p>Youth between the ages of 18 and 21 years who were subject to a legal custody order will not be eligible to receive financial supports through the Continued Care and Supports for Youth (CCSY) program if their caregivers are receiving Targeted Subsidies. However, a youth whose caregivers are receiving Targeted Subsidies is still eligible to receive non-financial supports through the CCSY program. Please refer to the revised CCSY Policy Directive (CW004-16) for eligibility requirements.</p> <p>If an adopted youth or youth who was formerly subject to a legal custody order leaves home to live independently, the family will not continue to receive the Targeted Subsidies. If an adopted youth or youth who was formerly subject to a legal custody order leaves home for school but has not transitioned to independent living, the family will continue to receive the Targeted Subsidies.</p>
Decision Making Criteria	<p>In determining eligibility, societies should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if families are adopting or obtaining legal custody of Crown wards (i.e. siblings of two or more, or the child is 8 years old or older on the date of the adoption placement or the legal custody order); and • that families' annual net incomes are not more than the income threshold.
Rationale	<p>To provide financial assistance to families who adopt or obtain legal custody of targeted populations, specifically families who adopt or become legal custodians to Crown ward siblings and Crown wards aged 8 years and older.</p> <p>The provision of subsidies and support has been identified in research and jurisdictional review as a key factor in achieving the goal of permanency for Crown wards.</p>
Accountability	<p>Approval of a Targeted Subsidy is required from the local director or designate.</p> <p>In considering a request for a Targeted Subsidy, the local director or designate will require that the eligibility criteria have been met.</p> <p>The local director or designate will conduct an annual review of Targeted Subsidy agreements. In deciding to extend or terminate a Targeted Subsidy agreement, the local director will require confirmation that the child/children or youth who were subject to a legal custody order remain in the care of the family and that the family continues to meet the Family Income criteria.</p> <p>Each society will track, manage and report on Targeted Subsidies in a manner to be determined by the ministry.</p> <p><u>Communication</u> Societies are required to ensure that their staff and prospective adoptive families/legal custodians are knowledgeable about Targeted Subsidies and their related operating policies and procedures.</p> <p>Societies are required to ensure relevant staff are trained on Targeted Subsidies to enable full implementation of Targeted Subsidies guidelines and required documentation.</p>
Record keeping	<p>A Targeted Subsidy file in the family's name is required and will contain the following for each child or youth for whom the family is receiving a Targeted Subsidy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documentation supporting the application (e.g. proof of income); • the Targeted Subsidy agreement; and • annual review documentation.

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<p>Eligibility</p>	<p>A caregiver is eligible for financial assistance under the Stay Home for School Policy if the following three conditions are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The caregiver is an individual or organization (including Outside Paid Resources) that was receiving funding from a society to provide: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. kinship care, customary care, foster care or group care to a youth immediately prior to the youth's 18th birthday; or b. a residential placement to a youth receiving Renewed Youth Supports immediately prior to the youth's 18th birthday; and 2. The youth's 18th birthday is on or after June 15, 2016 and the youth is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. eligible for and participating in the Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) program; b. enrolled and participating in high school to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalency (see exception below); and c. registered in a minimum of two (2) credit courses per semester, unless one of the exceptions below applies; and 3. The eligible caregivers and youth voluntarily agree to this type of arrangement and enter into a Stay Home for School Agreement (see Appendix for the agreement template). <p><u>Exceptions to the Educational Requirements for Youth</u></p> <p>A youth may carry a course load fewer than 2 credits in a semester if the youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has fewer than 2 credits remaining to obtain a high school diploma or has completed the requisite number of credit courses (compulsory and optional), and still needs to complete the required hours for community involvement activities and/or the provincial literacy requirement to obtain an OSSD; or • has special education needs and as part of the youth's Individual Education Plan is on a modified or alternative program requiring fewer than two credits; or • is not attending school during the summer months (optional for youth) but is enrolled in the fall semester of the following school year and is still eligible for a Stay Home for School Agreement in the fall semester. <p>If the youth is not enrolled in high school or an equivalent program for a short period of time or is taking less than 2 credit courses in a semester due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness), the society has the discretion to extend eligibility to the caregiver for that period of time provided that it is in the best interests of the youth and that the youth has the intention to continue his/her high school studies. Approval for these exceptions is required by the local director or designate.</p> <p>If the youth is pursuing an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate (i.e. the GED® test) instead of the OSSD, the society has the discretion to extend eligibility to the caregiver for a reasonable period of time providing that it is in the best interests of the youth. Approval for this exception is required by the local director or designate.</p>
<p>Community Support</p>	<p>Societies are encouraged to work together with local schools, school boards and/or school authorities, through new or existing local protocols, to maximize coordination of educational supports collectively that will assist youth to graduate from high school. Societies should also collaborate with community partners, including Youth-in-Transition Workers, to help youth to expand their support network and community connections.</p>
<p>Financial Assistance</p>	<p>Societies will provide an eligible caregiver with a per diem and supports for the youth (e.g. clothing, allowance) that is equivalent to what the caregiver received from the society prior to the youth's 18th birthday.</p> <p>Financial assistance will be provided to an eligible caregiver from the time that the youth turns 18 years of age until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth has completed high school or reached his/her 21st birthday, <i>whichever occurs first</i>; or • The youth or the youth's caregivers have opted to end the Stay Home for School Agreement, after providing reasonable notice.

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	<p>Societies shall continue to provide financial assistance to an eligible caregiver where a short-term exception to the educational requirements, as set out in the Eligibility section, has been approved by the local director or designate for the youth. In such cases, the reason and the time period shall be documented in the youth's file.</p> <p>Societies have the discretion to suspend financial assistance or to end a Stay Home for School Agreement in situations where the youth is not residing in the home.</p> <p>An eligible caregiver receiving financial assistance under a Stay Home for School Agreement cannot receive financial assistance from another program intended to cover the same supports for the youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: A youth in a Stay Home for School Agreement is not eligible to receive financial support from the CCSY program for the time that the Stay Home for School Agreement is in effect. <p>If the youth or the caregiver decides to end the Stay Home for School Agreement, it is expected that reasonable notice (e.g. one month) will be provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note: A youth who opts to end a Stay Home for School Agreement may renew the agreement at a later date providing that the youth and the caregiver still meet the eligibility requirements and voluntarily agree to renew the arrangement.
Decision Making Criteria	<p>Eligibility criteria have been met.</p> <p>Societies should also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a Stay Home for School Agreement is in the best interests of the youth as his/her living arrangement will no longer be assessed as part of the licensing requirements; • The educational needs of youth and supports required; • The availability of community and other resources that would benefit the youth; • The impact of this type of living arrangement on children and youth in care also residing in the home (where applicable).
Rationale	<p>The Stay Home for School Policy is intended to extend funding to eligible caregivers so that they can continue providing youth with a stable home from ages 18 to 21 to enable them to complete their high school education and build supportive, lasting relationships with caring adults in their lives.</p>
Accountability	<p>Approval is required from the local director or designate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In considering a request for financial assistance to be provided to an eligible caregiver, the local director or designate will require that the Decision Making Criteria have been met. • The local director or designate will conduct an annual review of Stay Home for School Agreements to ensure that caregivers and youth in these agreements continue to meet the eligibility criteria and that the funds are being used by caregivers for its intended purpose. <p>Societies shall track and report on Stay Home for School Agreements through their child welfare customized budget package submissions to the ministry as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of youth in Stay Home for School Agreements at the end of each month <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: The total number of youth in Stay Home for School Agreements <u>are also</u> to be reported under the total number of youth participating in CCSY for the duration of the agreement; and • Total number of paid days of care under Stay Home for School Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: The total number of paid days of care under Stay Home for School Agreements <u>will not</u> be reported under CCSY for the duration of the agreement. <p>Societies shall ensure that their policies and procedures are in compliance with the requirements of the Stay Home for School Policy.</p> <p>Societies shall monitor each Stay Home for School Agreement through discussions with the youth at least once every three months, when reviewing the youth's CCSY Youth Plan, to ensure that the living arrangement continues to be in the best interests of the youth. These discussions shall also include the youth's progress towards completing high school and addressing any challenges that the youth has identified.</p> <p>Societies shall ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • society staff are knowledgeable about the Stay Home for School Policy and receive appropriate

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	<p>training; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caregivers and youth are informed about the availability of Stay Home for School Agreements in advance of the youth's 18th birthday. <p>Societies are to comply with the processes and procedures in the <i>Serious and Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Guidelines (2013)</i> if there is a serious occurrence in the home involving a youth receiving services from the society through the CCSY program.</p> <p>Societies are to ensure that their internal complaints and review procedures address complaints brought forward by a youth or caregiver in a Stay Home for School Agreement, including situations where the society has decided to suspend financial assistance or end a Stay Home for School Agreement.</p> <p>Note: Youth in a Stay Home for School Agreement are considered adults living in the home and, therefore, will not be counted towards the maximum capacity permitted in a licensed foster or group home. However, it is expected that the youth will continue to receive the same accommodation that was provided to the youth prior to his/her 18th birthday (i.e. same room), unless the youth is sharing a room with another youth in care. In such cases, the society will need to determine whether there are any restrictions on such an arrangement prior to approving the Stay Home for School Agreement.</p>
Record Keeping	<p>Separate documentation on Stay Home for School Agreements shall be included in the caregiver's file and the youth's file.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The caregiver's file shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirmation that the eligible caregiver voluntarily agrees to the Stay Home for School Agreement and that the youth meets the eligibility criteria (e.g. signed copy of the Stay Home for School Agreement). • The youth's file shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Signed copy of the Stay Home for School Agreement; ○ Documentation of the youth's enrollment in high school or an equivalent program (e.g. timetable); and ○ Documentation explaining any exceptions applied to the educational requirements for the youth (e.g. case notes in the youth's CCSY Youth Plan).

APPENDIX

The Stay Home for School Agreement Template describes the responsibilities for both eligible youth and caregivers who voluntarily enter into a Stay Home for School Agreement. These are minimum requirements. Societies may adapt the template, and are encouraged to include other requirements, such as information regarding the youth and caregiver's expectations (e.g. supports and resources for the youth, allowance and budgeting, curfews).

STAY HOME FOR SCHOOL AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

This is an agreement made on the _____ day of _____ 20_____

BETWEEN

Name of Youth (hereafter "youth")

AND

Name of Caregiver (hereafter "caregiver")

AND

Name of Children's Aid Society or Indigenous Society (hereafter "society")

The society will provide the caregiver with financial assistance as set out in the Stay Home for School Policy.

Under the Stay Home for School Policy, the youth agrees to the following terms:

1. Will be eligible for and participate in the Continued Care and Support for Youth (CCSY) program;
2. Will be enrolled and participating in high school to achieve an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalency (see exception below); and
3. Will be registered in a minimum of two (2) credit courses per semester, unless one of the exceptions below apply:

Exceptions to the Educational Requirements for Youth

A youth may carry a course load fewer than 2 credits in a semester if the youth:

- has fewer than 2 credits remaining to obtain a high school diploma or has completed the requisite number of credit courses (compulsory and optional), and still needs to complete the required hours for community involvement activities and/or the provincial literacy requirement to obtain an OSSD; or
- has special education needs and as part of the youth's Individual Education Plan is on a modified and or alternative program requiring fewer than two credits; or
- is not attending school during the summer months (optional for youth) but is enrolled in the fall semester of the following school year and is still eligible for a Stay Home for School Agreement in the fall semester.

If the youth is not enrolled in high school or an equivalent program for a short period of time or is taking less than 2 credit courses in a semester due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. serious illness), the society has the discretion to extend eligibility to the caregiver for that period of time provided that it is in the best interests of the youth and that the youth has the intention to continue his/her high school studies. Approval for these exceptions is required by the local director or designate.

If the youth is pursuing an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate (i.e. the GED® test) instead of the OSSD, the society has the discretion to extend eligibility to the caregiver for a reasonable period of time providing that it is in the best interests of the youth. Approval for this exception is required by the local director or designate.

AND

The caregiver agrees to the following terms:

1. Will support the youth to participate in high school;
2. Will provide support to the youth that is consistent with the support being provided immediately prior to the youth's 18th birthday, including:
 - Providing a comfortable and safe living environment;
 - Providing clothing and other resources needed by the youth, using the per diem provided by the society, as per the society's financial policies;
 - Providing nutritious meals;
 - Supporting the youth's development of life skills (e.g. budgeting, cooking);
 - Maintaining regular communication with the society worker and providing any updates when necessary (e.g. the youth is no longer residing with the caregiver, or the youth's eligibility for the arrangement has changed); and
 - Permitting visits by the society to the residence.
3. If the youth is in agreement, will participate in part or all of the discussions that take place with the society worker regarding the CCSY Agreement (on an annual basis) and/or CCSY Youth Plans (on a quarterly basis); and
4. Will provide reasonable notice (e.g. one month) to the society and youth if terminating the Stay Home for School Agreement.

AND

As set out in the Stay Home for School Policy, funding for this arrangement will be provided directly to the caregiver. Any provision for an allowance to the youth should be set-out in this agreement, as follows:

The caregiver agrees to provide an allowance in the amount of \$_____, on a _____ basis to the youth.

AND

This agreement shall be in effect for a 12 month period unless before the expiry of 12 months, the youth will turn 21 years old or becomes otherwise ineligible (e.g. graduates from high school). The agreement must be renewed on an annual basis, or earlier if necessary.

The undersigned hereby agree to the terms outlined in this agreement:

(Signature of youth) (Date)

(Signature of society worker) (Date)

(Signature of caregiver) (Date)

(Signature of local director or designate) (Date)

ADDENDUM TO ONTARIO PERMANENCY FUNDING POLICY GUIDELINES

Effective Date: September 1, 2011

RENEWED YOUTH SUPPORTS (RYS)	
Eligibility	<p>Any youth whose court-ordered society care or customary care was terminated at age 16 or 17 and voluntarily enters into an agreement with the society to receive supports up to age 18.</p> <p>“Court-ordered society care” specifically refers to orders made under the <i>Child and Family Services Act</i> (CFSA) for Crown wardship, society wardship or temporary care and custody.</p>
Community Support	Societies are encouraged to work with community partners to assist youth in the RYS program to expand their support network and to make connections to the community, as appropriate.
Financial Assistance	Based on the youth’s individual plan, societies will provide financial assistance to support the needs of youth living independently or in a residential placement, as well as non-financial supports that are comparable to those provided by societies to children and youth in care.
Decision Making Criteria	<p>In determining the assistance to be provided, societies should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the youth’s needs. • supports required by the youth. • availability of community and other resources. • that financial assistance (where applicable) must be provided within the society’s current funding envelope.
Rationale	Under Part III of the CFSA, youth whose court-ordered society care or customary care was terminated at age 16 or 17 are no longer eligible to receive services from a society. The intent of this program is to enable this group of youth to re-engage with their society to receive services and supports to assist them to achieve improved educational outcomes and transition smoothly to emerging adulthood.
Accountability	<p>Eligibility criteria have been met.</p> <p>Decision making criteria have been applied.</p> <p>RYS agreement has been signed by the youth, society worker and local director (or designate).</p> <p>Individual plan has been developed with the youth. Plan is based on the youth’s needs and goals and describes the supports to be provided to meet those needs and goals.</p> <p>Society workers will meet with youth at minimum every three months to assess the youth’s progress in meeting his/her goals and address any challenges experienced by the youth.</p> <p>Societies are required to track and report on funds in relation to this program.</p>
Record Keeping	<p>A file will be created for each youth and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signed RYS agreement. • individual plan for the youth and any updates to the plan. • case notes recording discussions with the youth, including the youth’s progress in meeting his or her goals.

Issuance Date: August 12, 2011