

Adoption Assistance Rate Determination Information for Prospective Adoptive Parent(s)

2014

The following is basic information about the adoption assistance rate determination process for prospective adoptive parent(s).

The purpose of adoption assistance is to provide financial support to families who adopt children from foster care through the public child welfare system. These are children who would otherwise grow up in state foster care, if a suitable adoptive parent could not be identified.

Adoption assistance provides monthly financial support to the adoptive parent(s) of an eligible adopted child. It is intended to assist with the payment of expenses of caring for the child; it is not intended to meet all of the costs of raising the child. In order to receive adoption assistance, eligibility must be determined and a negotiated adoption assistance agreement must be signed prior to the final order of adoption.

During the adoption process, your adoption worker will discuss adoption assistance with you. The goal is for you and your adoption worker to determine the need your family has for adoption assistance, while taking into consideration your family circumstances and the needs of the child being adopted.

Following this discussion, if you would like to request a determination of eligibility for adoption assistance, your adoption worker will complete the adoption assistance application and packet. Your adoption worker will assist you in completing the DHS-959, Adoption Assistance Rate Determination Worksheet, which will be included in the application packet. You will request a daily adoption assistance rate on the DHS-959, based on the information you provided on the form. The requested rate cannot exceed the maximum foster care rate the child is receiving or would receive if placed in a licensed foster family home. Your adoption worker will submit the adoption assistance application and supporting documentation to the Adoption Subsidy Office for an eligibility determination.

Note: Adoption workers do not determine if a child is eligible for adoption assistance. The Adoption Subsidy Office makes this determination.

Through discussion with your adoption worker, using the DHS-959, you will determine the following before your adoption worker applies for adoption assistance on your behalf:

- The child's extraordinary medical or behavioral expenses , and

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- The child's child care/day care needs and expenses, and
- The child's educational needs and expenses, and
- The child's basic/ordinary needs (examples: shelter, food, clothing, school supplies), and
- The child's special needs, if applicable, and
- The capacity of your family to incorporate the child into your household in relation to the daily rate you are requesting, taking into account your lifestyle, standard of living and future plans, as well as your overall capacity to meet the needs of the child, and
- Available resources to assist with the expenses, and
- The amount you are able to contribute to the expenses listed on the DHS-959, and
- The daily adoption assistance rate you are requesting (not to exceed the maximum foster care payment for the child which was paid or would have been paid if the child had been in a foster family home at the time of adoption) taking into consideration available resources to assist with the expenses and the amount you are able to contribute to the expenses.

The DHS-959, Adoption Assistance Rate Determination Worksheet, is used by the Adoption Subsidy Office when determining the offered daily adoption assistance rate.

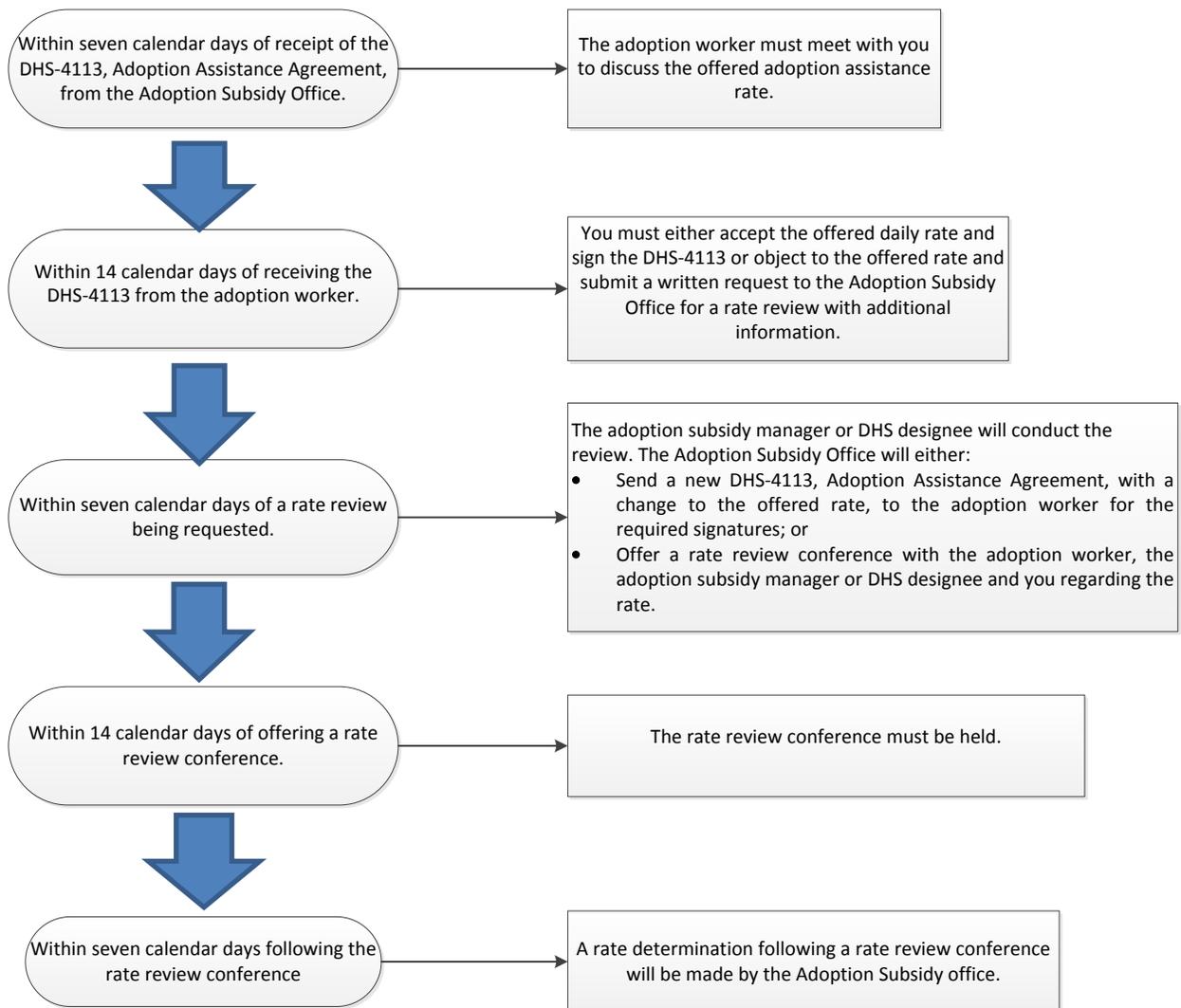
If the child is determined eligible for adoption assistance, the Adoption Subsidy Office will prepare and send to the adoption worker a proposed DHS-4113, Adoption Assistance Agreement, which includes the offered rate and the maximum adoption assistance rate. The adoption worker will review the DHS-4113 form with you.

Note: If the offered rate is zero, it does not mean that the child is ineligible for adoption assistance. This means that based on the information provided in the application packet, taking into consideration available resources to assist with the child/family expenses and the amount the family is able to contribute to the expenses, indicated that a daily adoption assistance rate is not needed at the time. Refusal to accept the offered adoption assistance rate, in and of itself, will not result in adverse action by the department. **You may decide to request/accept a zero rate at the time, if you feel your family circumstances do not warrant the need for adoption assistance. You may request a different rate (up to the maximum adoption assistance rate) if your circumstances change in the future.**

The following chart identifies the timeframe and process for establishing an agreed upon daily adoption assistance rate for an eligible child:

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Note: If you do not want a rate review and/or object to the outcome of the conference, you may request an administrative hearing in writing; see AAM 700 at <http://www.mfia.state.mi.us/olmweb/ex/AA/Public/AAM/700.pdf> for more information.

Renegotiation: If you agree to an ongoing adoption assistance rate that is less than the maximum daily rate indicated on the DHS-4113, you may request a renegotiation of the rate (up to the maximum adoption assistance daily rate set by the Adoption Subsidy Office) when extraordinary circumstances occur that will impact the child's needs or your family circumstances over an extended period of time, using the DHS-959, Adoption Assistance Rate Determination Worksheet. Supporting documentation is required.