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**ACCEPTANCE DATE**

The date the court order is signed by the judge/referee.

**ADOPTEE**

A child who is to be adopted or who has been adopted.

**ADOPTION CODE**

Chapter X of The Michigan Compiled laws, 1939 PA 288, MCL 710.21 to 710.70.

**ADOPTIVE  
PLACEMENT**

Placement of a child with an approved family as ordered by a court through issuance of a PCA 320 - Order Placing Child After Consent or similar court order.

**AGENCY  
PLACEMENT**

A placement in which a child placing agency (CPA), Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHHS), or a court selects the adoptive parent for the child and transfers physical custody of the child to the prospective adoptive parent as defined in MCL 710.22(d).

**APPROVED FAMILY**

A prospective adoptive family with an approved adoptive family assessment who has been found suitable for adoption by a licensed private CPA, MDHHS, or comparable agency in another state or country.

**BEST INTEREST OF  
THE CHILD**

The sum total of the following factors to be considered, evaluated, and determined by the court when granting consent to an adoption, including (MCL 710.22(g)):

- a. The love, affection, and other emotional ties existing between the adopting individual or individuals and the adoptee.

- b. The capacity and disposition of the adopting individual or individuals to educate and create an environment that fosters the religion, racial identity, and culture of the adoptee.
- c. The capacity and disposition of the adopting individual or individuals to provide the adoptee with food, clothing, education, permanence, medical care, or other remedial care recognized and permitted under the laws of this state in place of medical care, and other material needs.
- d. The length of time the adoptee has lived in a stable, satisfactory environment, and the desirability of maintaining continuity.
- e. The permanence as a family unit of the proposed adoptive home.
- f. The moral fitness of the adopting individual or individuals.
- g. The mental and physical health of the adopting individual or individuals.
- h. The home, school, and community record of the adoptee.
- i. The reasonable preference of the adoptee if the adoptee is 14 years of age or more and if the court considers the adoptee to be of sufficient age to express a preference.
- j. The ability and willingness of the adopting individual or individuals to adopt the adoptee's siblings.
- k. Any other factor considered by the court to be relevant to a particular adoption proceeding.

## CERTIFICATION

A determination by the MDHHS Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office (AGAO) that an adoptee is eligible for adoption assistance, nonrecurring adoption expenses, or medical subsidy.

## CHILD PLACING AGENCY

As defined in MCL 722.111(1)(e); a governmental organization or an agency organized under the Nonprofit Corporation Act, 1982 PA 162, MCL 450.2101 to 450.3192, for the purpose of receiving children for placement in private family homes for foster care or for adoption. The function of a CPA may include investigating applicants for adoption and investigating and certifying foster family

homes and foster family group homes as provided in the act. The function of a CPA may also include supervising children who are at least 16 but less than 21 years of age and who are living in unlicensed residences as provided in section 5(4).

**COMMITMENT DATE**

The date the judge signs the court order committing a child to MDHHS.

**COMPETING PARTIES**

More than one family interested in adopting a specific child.

**CONSENT**

The granting of permission for an approved applicant to adopt a specific child by the person with legal authority, i.e., the parent, the court for permanent court wards, or the MCI superintendent for state wards.

**CONSIDERATION**

The process by which the child's adoption specialist will explore a specific child's relationship with relatives and other families, who have a history with the child and/or a relationship that was significant to the child for the purpose of adoption. This family may have a strong positive emotional tie or role in the child's life or the child's parent's life if the child is an infant, as determined by the department.

**COURT**

Family Division of the Circuit Court in Michigan.

**DEPARTMENT**

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

**DETERMINATION OF CARE**

A Determination of Care (DOC) is a supplemental payment that must be justified based on the child's needs and not solely the actions of the caregivers; see [FOM 903-03, Payment for Foster Family/Relative Care](#).

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**DIRECT CONSENT**

Direct consent is the consent granted to a particular family by the parent(s) to accompany a family's petition for adoption. MDHHS does not process direct consent adoptions.

**DIRECT PLACEMENT**

A private adoptive placement arrangement in which a parent or guardian selects an adoptive parent for a child, other than a stepparent or an individual related as determined by MCL 712A.13a.

**DISRUPTION**

The termination of a child's adoptive placement prior to adoption finalization.

**DISSOLVED ADOPTION**

Termination of parental rights of adoptive parents either through involuntary termination of parental rights under the juvenile code or voluntary release.

**FAMILY SUPPORT SUBSIDY**

Financial support to families with severely impaired children living at home. A family support subsidy is paid by MDHHS and is intended to meet the special needs of the family that exceed basic living costs and to prevent institutionalization of the child.

**FINALIZATION (CONFIRMATION)**

The final legal step in the adoption process through which a court confirms the adoptive parent or parents are a child's legal parent(s).

**FOSTER CARE**

24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom MDHHS has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements supervised by a licensed private CPA under contract with MDHHS, placements in foster family homes, relative homes, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child caring institutions

(CCI), and pre-adoptive placements. A child is in foster care regardless of whether the foster care facility is licensed and payments are being made for the care of the child, whether adoption assistance payments are being made prior to the finalization of an adoption, or whether there is federal matching of any payments.

## **FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT**

Court-approved removal of a child from the parental home and placement in foster care, a shelter home, a hospital, or with a private treatment agency. Foster care placement for an Indian child is as defined in MCL 712B.3(b)(i).

## **GUARDIAN**

A person legally appointed by the court to oversee a minor child.

## **HOUSEHOLD MEMBER**

Any person, other than a foster child, who resides in a foster or adoptive home on an ongoing or recurrent basis; see Licensing Rules for Child Placing Agencies R 400.12101(q).

## **IDENTIFYING INFORMATION**

Case information that may lead to positive identification of an adopted person. This information may include the names of the parents or other relatives, the name of the child before placement in adoption, the name of each parent at the time parental rights were terminated, the most recent name and address of each parent, and the names of the siblings at the time parental rights were terminated (MCL 710.27(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)).

## **INTERNET CRIMINAL HISTORY ACCESS TOOL**

Michigan Criminal History Record Database that is updated daily with Michigan felony and misdemeanor conviction information.

Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) information is available online at: <https://apps.michigan.gov>.

**IMMEDIATE  
CONFIRMATION**

A motion granted by a court to waive the six-month adoption supervision period that is usually required between the placement of a child in an adoptive home and the finalization of an adoption.

**JUDICIAL  
DETERMINATION**

A court determination.

**LEGAL RISK  
ADOPTION**

The placement of a child in an adoptive home during the period that is allowed for a parent to request a rehearing or an appeal. The Adoption Code does not permit issuance of an Order of Adoption until all appeals of an order terminating parental rights have been decided.

**LAW  
ENFORCEMENT  
INFORMATION  
NETWORK**

A database used by law enforcement to gather/maintain pertinent criminal charge and conviction information. MDHHS child welfare programs have access to information on Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) through a department agreement with the Michigan State Police. Local office MDHHS staff cannot do LEIN checks for other government entities, or non-profit agencies contracting with MDHHS.

**MEDICAL  
STATEMENT**

A document signed by a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner for members of the household indicating if there are any physical, emotional, or mental factors that would jeopardize the physical or mental welfare of any child placed in a family for adoption. A medical statement does not require a physical examination.

**MEDICAL SUBSIDY**

Payment for medical, surgical, hospital, and related expenses which are necessary because of a specific physical, mental, or

emotional condition of the child that existed, or the cause of which existed, before the adoption petition was filed.

**MEPA/IEAP**

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994 (P.L. 103-382) and subsequent amendments by the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-188), referred to as the Interethnic Adoption Provisions, prohibits delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care based on race, color, or national origin of the adoptive or foster parent, or the child involved.

**NON-IDENTIFYING  
INFORMATION**

Descriptive details about an adopted person and the adopted person's relatives, that would not lead to positive identification of an adopted person.

**NONRECURRING  
EXPENSES**

As defined in MCL 400.115f(p), reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and other expenses that are directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs. Nonrecurring adoption expenses do not include costs or expenses incurred in violation of state or federal law or that have been reimbursed from other sources or funds.

**OFFENDERS  
TRACKING  
INFORMATION  
SYSTEM**

The Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS) contains information about prisoners, parolees, and probationers who are currently under supervision, or who have been discharged but are still within three years of their discharge date. The website that can be used to obtain information about a wide variety of offenders who are under the supervision of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) is <https://mdocweb.state.mi.us/OTIS2/otis2.aspx>.

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**OFFICE OF  
CHILDREN'S  
OMBUDSMAN**

The Children's Ombudsman Act, MCL 722.921, et. seq., created the Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO). While this office is located within the Department of Management and Budget, it is an autonomous agency. The purpose of the OCO is to monitor and ensure compliance with relevant statutes, rules and policies pertaining to children's protective services (CPS), foster care, juvenile justice, and adoption.

Section 4(2) of the act charges the OCO with the establishment of procedures for receiving and processing complaints, conducting investigations, holding hearings, and reporting investigative findings. The Act also requires MDHHS to provide relevant information as required and cooperate with the Ombudsman in the carrying out of their responsibilities; see [SRM 132, Response to the Office of Children's Ombudsman](#).

**OTHER EXPENSES**

As defined in MCL 400.115f(q), adoption costs incurred by or on behalf of the adoptive parent and for which the adoptive parent carries the ultimate liability for payment, including the family assessment, health and psychological examinations, supervision of the placement before adoption, and transportation and reasonable costs of lodging and food for the child or adoptive parent if necessary to complete the adoption or placement process.

**RELATIVES**

An individual who is at least 18 years of age and related to the child within the fifth degree by blood, marriage, or adoption, including the spouse of an individual related to the child within the fifth degree, even after the marriage has ended by death or divorce, the parent who shares custody of a half-sibling, and the parent of a man whom the court has found probable cause to believe is the putative father if there is no man with legally established rights to the child.

A relative may also be an individual who is at least 18 years of age and not related to a child within the fifth degree by blood, marriage, or adoption but who has a strong positive emotional tie or role in the child's life or the child's parent's life if the child is an infant, as determined by the department or, if the child is an Indian child, as



determined solely by the Indian child's tribe. As described under MCL 712A.13a.

**RSDI: RETIREMENT,  
SURVIVORS, AND  
DISABILITY  
INSURANCE**

A monthly payment made by the Social Security Administration for retirement, survivors, or disability insurance.

**ADOPTION  
ASSISTANCE**

Payment toward the daily support of an eligible child who has been placed for adoption.

**SSI:  
SUPPLEMENTAL  
SECURITY INCOME**

A cash benefit designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little or no income. The cash benefit can be used to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. SSI benefits include a basic federal benefit and an additional amount paid with state funds.

**MICHIGAN  
VETERANS AFFAIRS  
AGENCY**

Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) runs programs benefiting veterans and members of their families.