


**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET  
BALTIMORE, MD 21201**

**DATE:** November 1, 2016

**POLICY DIRECTIVE:** SSA-CW# 17-15

This Policy Directive replaces and supersedes Policy Directive SSA # 12-4

**TO:** Directors, Local Departments of Social Services  
Assistant Directors and Foster Care Supervisors, Social Services Finance Offices

**FROM:** Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW   
Executive Director  
Social Services Administration

**RE:** Differential Board Rates for Public Foster Care

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED:** Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services)  
And Resource Units

**ORIGINATION OFFICE:** Resource Development Placement and Support Services

**ACTION REQUIRED OF:** All Local Departments, Child Welfare Service Staff

**REQUIRED ACTION:** Implement Policy and Procedures

**ACTION DUE DATE:** November 1, 2016

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## **PURPOSE**

This Policy Directive provides guidelines for the payment of a differential board rate to public resource families in Maryland. Each year, Maryland launches vigorous resource parent recruitment efforts, with the goal of recruiting a sufficient number of resource families to address foster children needing placements. The District of Columbia (DC) has a large number of approved resource homes located in various counties in Maryland. The District of Columbia pays their public families a higher board rate than Maryland does; therefore a differential board rate supports the recruitment and retention of Maryland's public resource families.

## **BACKGROUND**

The District of Columbia pays higher board rates for foster children than Maryland. Recently, Maryland had been losing families to the District of Columbia. In certain jurisdictions, the District of Columbia foster care placements exceed the number of children in the local jurisdiction's custody. This creates a major barrier to the recruitment of sufficient numbers of public resource families to accommodate Maryland foster children needing placements.

## **DEFINITION**

Differential board rates are defined as specific foster care board rates which exceed the standard Maryland Board Rates, for the purpose of maintaining adequate numbers of public resource families and to provide foster care services for foster children in specific Maryland jurisdictions.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The following criteria necessitate providing public resource families in a specific local jurisdiction with a differential board rate:

1. The number of children placed in a given county or Baltimore City from another state or the District of Columbia represents at least one-third (33%) of the total number of children in the custody of the given county or Baltimore City.
2. The majority of the "out-of-state children" are from Washington, DC or a state that pays higher board rates than Maryland's standard board rates.

## **QUALIFYING JURISDICTIONS**

1. Prince George's and Charles Counties have been determined to be qualifying jurisdictions.
2. The regular differential board rate to be paid to resource families in Prince George's and Charles Counties, is \$875/month for children 0-11 years old and \$900/month for children 12 years and older.

3. The qualifying local departments do not receive the differential board rate if they have an approved TFC program.

**DIFFERENTIAL BOARD RATES**

	<b>Regular Monthly Board Rate</b>	<b>Differential Per Diem</b>	<b>Monthly Clothing</b>	<b>Differential Monthly Board Rate</b>
<u>Regular Care Differential Rate</u> (Payment category 2173, 7173)				
o Infant through age 11	\$835	\$28.76	\$60	\$875
o Age 12 and older	\$850	\$29.56	\$75	\$900

**ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES:**

1. The local department of social services (LDSS) shall keep accurate and up-to-date data regarding trends that would necessitate a differential board rate for a given jurisdiction and report the need for a differential board rate to the Social Services Administration (SSA), if it is determined that the criteria applies.
2. The LDSS shall conduct yearly reassessments of the need for modification to the jurisdiction’s Differential Board Rates.
3. The LDSS shall make payments to public resource parents at the amount identified by SSA.
4. If children from other jurisdictions are placed with a public foster family in a county where differential board rates are in effect, the placing county will be responsible for paying the differential board rates that apply.

**ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION:**

- Conduct statewide assessments to determine a local jurisdiction’s eligibility to receive a differential board rate;
- Provide assistance to local jurisdictions with tracking and monitoring;
- Provide support, assistance and advocacy; and
- Identify the exact amount to be paid based on a review of the board rate in the identified state and communicate the findings.