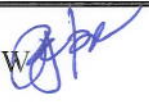
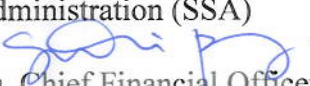


<b>Policy Subject:</b>	Differential Board Rates for Public Foster Care
<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 1, 2018
<b>Approved By:</b>	<p>Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW                       Executive Director                      Social Services Administration (SSA)</p> <p>Stafford Chipungu, Chief Financial Officer                       Budget Management and Finance</p>
<b>Policy Number:</b>	SSA-CW#19-12
<b>Last Revision Date (s):</b>	January 10, 2019
<b>Originating Office:</b>	Placement and Permanency
<b>Supersedes:</b>	SSA CW# 18-7
<b>Program Affected:</b>	Placement and Permanency



### **Legal Information and Purpose**

The board rate is set by DHS and applies to all resource providers. As a result of Supplemental Budget No. 1 to House Bill 150/Senate Bill 170 in the form of an amendment to the budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2018, resource providers were allotted a 2% increase in Foster Care Maintenance Payments intended to augment the board rate and per diem for the purpose of meeting the needs of children and youth in out-of-home placement. In the FY19 DHS Budget Analysis, the Department of Budget and Management approved a 1% increase to public foster care board rates. A one-time adjustment payment will be processed on December 27, 2018 (via MD CHESSIE adjustment process) for public providers who had children in placement July 2018-Nov 2018. The 1% increased rate for public providers will then be part of the monthly board payment beginning in January 2019 and beyond, including the differential board rate.

Because the District of Columbia pays higher board rates for foster children than Maryland does, it is essential that Maryland remains competitive with their resource home recruitment and retention efforts in the counties surrounding Washington, District of Columbia. Maryland had been losing families to the District of Columbia. In certain local 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 homes to accommodate Maryland's foster children needing placements. In order to address this barrier a differential board rate has been established.

### **Policy**

This Policy Directive provides guidelines for the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) 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. 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.

### **Procedural Guidance**

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 jurisdiction 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 jurisdiction.
2. The majority of the "out-of-state children" are from a state or DC that pays higher board rates than Maryland's standard board rates.

Prince George's and Charles Counties have been determined to be qualifying jurisdictions.

The regular differential board rate to be paid to resource families in Prince George's and Charles Counties is \$901/month for children 0-11 years old and \$916/month for children 12 years and older.



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

**DIFFERENTIAL BOARD RATES FY19**

	<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)			
• Infant through age 11	\$29.61	\$60	\$901
• Age 12 and older	\$30.10	\$75	\$916

**Please note:** The monthly clothing allowance is built into the monthly board rate, as is indicated in the **Foster Family Care FY 2019 Monthly Board Rate** chart in Policy SSA-CW19-13. The **Foster Family Care FY 2019 Monthly Board Rate** chart reflects the minimum amount that resource parents shall spend monthly, when providing clothing for foster children/youth.

**THE LDSS SHALL TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

1. The 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 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 LDSS will be responsible for paying the differential board rates that apply.

**THE SSA SHALL TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

1. Conduct annual statewide assessments to determine a LDSS’s eligibility to receive a differential board rate;
2. Provide assistance to LDSS with tracking and monitoring the recruitment and retention of resource parents ;
3. Provide support, assistance and advocacy; and
4. Identify the exact amount to be paid to each eligible jurisdiction based on a review of the current board rate and individual jurisdictional need and communicate the findings.

**Alignment with the Practice Model and Desired Outcomes**

Maryland’s goal is to ensure all children are placed in a safe and nurturing environment. This policy provides guidelines for the differential foster care board rate to support the placement of a child while in care. This policy aligns with the Integrated Practice Model by supporting our

**THE SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION SHALL TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

1. Conduct annual statewide assessments to determine a local jurisdiction's eligibility to receive a differential board rate;
2. Provide assistance to local jurisdictions with tracking and monitoring the recruitment and retention of resource parents ;
3. Provide support, assistance and advocacy; and
4. Identify the exact amount to be paid to each eligible jurisdiction based on a review of the current board rate and individual jurisdictional need and communicate the findings.

**Alignment with the Practice Model and Desired Outcomes**

Maryland's goal is to ensure all children are placed in a safe and nurturing environment. This policy provides guidelines for the differential foster care board rate to support the placement of a child while in care. This policy aligns with the Integrated Practice Model by supporting our partnership with resource parents to ensure our commitment that the children's needs are met.

**Documentation**

The foster care rate is documented in MD Chessie/CJAMS. The new rates containing the 1% increase have been updated in MD CHESSIE and are now in effect. Providers who had children placed from July 2018 through November 2018 are receiving a one-time adjustment payment to cover the 1% increase in effect during that period.

**Related Policies and Information**

- SSA-CW#19-13 Guidelines of Foster Care Board Rate and Expenditure