



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

July 28, 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Delivered electronically via [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

The Board of Public Works approved modifications to the Residential Care Center (RCC) and Child Placement Agency (CPA) contracts on June 11, 2025. The modifications include a nine-month extension for the RCC contracts and a three-month extension for the CPA contracts. The short-term contract extensions enable us to complete the procurement process for these contracts. The contract modifications also include revisions to the respective scopes of work that align with the letter (attached) we distributed on October 2, 2024.

The following key changes became effective July 1, 2025:

1. Intake and Admissions

- a. Referrals should be accepted 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in accordance with the Provider Profile, provided a program vacancy exists. Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) staff retain authority for making placement referrals.
- b. Placements shall also occur 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- c. At the time of placement, the LDSS shall furnish the Contractor with the child's social history information, available psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations, medical histories, family and school information, and other pertinent data deemed necessary for the child's care (Referral Information Package).

2. No Reject/No Eject

- a. The Contractor shall fill every Program vacancy with all referred children who meet the criteria specified in the Contractor's Profile.
- b. Should the Contractor reject a referred child or eject a child in care who meets the profile criteria, written documentation detailing the reason for the rejection must be submitted to the LDSS and the Social Services Administration (SSA) Executive Director within twenty-four (24) hours. No ejection or rejection shall be finalized without the explicit approval of the SSA Executive Director (or designee). Notification to the SSA Executive Director shall be sent to:

Placementand.Permanency@maryland.gov

3. Discharge Requirements

- a. The contractor will provide, in the absence of extenuating circumstances, thirty (30) calendar days' prior notice and a Discharge Plan to the LDSS Case Worker and the parent (when applicable) for all planned discharges.
- b. The Contractor shall provide the LDSS with at least seventy-two (72) hours' written notice of any unplanned discharge, unless extraordinary circumstances involving a high and immediate risk to the child's safety or danger to others preclude such notice. Unplanned discharges are to be extremely rare occurrences, reserved for only the most unusual cases.
- c. An unplanned discharge notice shall be submitted to the LDSS and SSA Placement Unit for review and approval. Notices shall be submitted to SSA via Placementand.Permanency@maryland.gov.

Furthermore, interviews or "meet and greets" with youth are *not* to be conducted prior to an admissions decision. Exceptions to this practice include Independent Living Programs (ILPs) where pre-admission interviews are required by COMAR, and in-state Residential Treatment Centers, which follow similar regulatory requirements.

The LDSS worker is responsible for youth placement and must be contacted with any questions or concerns pertaining to a specific youth. Onboarding or orientation discussions may take place *only after* a youth has been formally accepted into your program. This trauma-informed approach is intended to center our work and practice in child well-being, and reduce setbacks among youth who were previously interviewed by prospective providers and subsequently denied admission.

We appreciate your partnership in fostering practices that ensure the well-being and stability of the youth we serve with respect and dignity.

In service,



Rafael Lopez
Secretary



Carnitra White
Principal Deputy Secretary



Dr. Alger Studstill, Jr.
Executive Director, SSA

CC: Heather Zenone, Assistant Secretary of Policy and Data

Webster Ye, Chief of Staff
Tennille Thomas, SSA Principal Deputy Executive Director
Remonte Green, SSA Deputy Executive Director
Robin Harvey, Executive Director, Office of Licensing and Monitoring
LDSS Directors and Assistant Directors of Services
Cynthia Washington, Procurement Director



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

October 2, 2024

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Submitted Electronically via Email to: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

On October 1, 2024, the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) launched comprehensive rate reforms for residential care providers across the state. The new rates reflect our commitment to improving outcomes for Maryland's children experiencing foster care and ensuring that provider partners are adequately resourced to meet the complex and changing needs of our youth in care.

These new rates will come with clear expectations aligned with our Moore-Miller Administration Values (attached), rooted in being responsive, moving urgently, data-driven, heart-led, and challenging the status quo. We look to our out-of-home provider partners, like your organization, to be leaders in this effort, ensuring that the children and youth we serve receive timely, high-quality care. Specifically, we are outlining the following expectations in alignment with the rate adjustments:

1. Timely Response to Referrals: We expect residential care providers to respond within 48 hours to our placement referrals. We will be accountable to you and ensure that our placement teams are equally responsive. Children experiencing a crisis should not and will wait. Timely responses will be critical to preventing delays in care and ensuring that youth are placed in the most appropriate settings as quickly as possible.

2. Acceptance of Maryland Youth to Prevent Out-of-State Placements: In recent years, too many of our youth had to be placed out of state, far from their families, communities and support networks. This is unacceptable. With the new rates, we expect Maryland providers to prioritize accepting Maryland youth who meet program criteria and within your organization's provider profile. Together, we will dramatically

reduce, and eventually end, out-of-state placements whenever possible. This will help us keep children closer to home, where they can maintain stronger connections to their families and communities.

3. Innovative and Evidence-Based Solutions: The complex experiences of youth who require out-of-home care require innovative and tailored approaches. We expect providers to utilize the new rate structure to implement evidence-based models and innovative practices that support positive outcomes for youth.

Rate Reform is a collaborative effort between our team and our valued provider community. We will be working closely with you to ensure a smooth transition and will be offering guidance and support throughout this change. Together, we can deliver better results for youth in our care. Fostering stronger partnerships is essential to create a responsive system of care rooted in the respect and dignity of the children and families we serve.

In our effort to over-communicate, I am formally inviting you as the CEO/ED to a virtual town hall meeting on October 11, 2024 at 10:30 AM to continue this conversation. We encourage you to bring your most senior executives directly responsible for the work in Maryland that intersects with our department so that we are all on the same page.

Thank you for your service to Maryland's children, youth, and families. We appreciate you.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written over a horizontal line.

Rafael López
Secretary

CC: Carnitra White, Principal Deputy Secretary
Heather Zenone, Assistant Secretary for Policy
Webster Ye, Chief of Staff
Dr. Alger Studstill, Jr., Executive Director, Social Services Administration
Tennille Thomas, Principal Deputy Executive Director, Social Services Administration
David Beller, Principal Counsel, Officer of the Attorney General

Moore-Miller Administration Values



Be Responsive

We work for you; when you reach out to us, you can expect a response within 48-hours



Be Everywhere

Marylanders are across the state, and so will be our administration



Be Data-Driven, Heart-Led

We rely on data and experiences to inform our decisions



Follow Through

We are committed to completing all services



Move urgently

We move quickly and diligently with a purpose



Over-Communicate

We are transparent, honest, and open



Be Innovative

We collaborate across agencies to identify and implement bold solutions



Be Audacious

We encourage taking risks and implementing bold solutions



Move with Integrity

We are honest and maintain strong moral principles



Be Courageous

Lead with confidence to tackle hard problems



Challenge the Status Quo

It's okay to disagree and offer a new viewpoint



Outcomes-Focused

We will spend each day focused on leaving no one behind