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| Policy Subject: | Utilization of Family Reunification Funding This policy sets forth usage and reporting requirements for Family Reunification (formerly time-limited reunification) through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. |
| Effective Date: | July 1, 2018 |
| Approved By: | Rebecca Jones Gaston, MSW <i>RJG</i> Executive Director Social Services Administration |
| | Stafford Chipungu <i>SC</i> Chief Financial Officer Office of Budget and Finance |
| Policy Number: | SSA/CW #19-9 |
| Revision Date (s): | None |
| Originating Office: | Office of Placement and Permanency |
| Supersedes: | SSA/CWS #18-3 |
| Program Affected: | Out-of-Home Placement Services |



Purpose:

The purpose of this policy directive is to provide guidance to the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) on the utilization of Family Reunification (formerly known as Time-Limited Reunification) services funded through the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. DHS's Budget and Finance office annually provides each LDSS an allocation.

The federal money MUST be used for any Family Reunification services BEFORE using State General Funded Flex Funds, i.e. Super Flex Funds.

Policy:

Family Reunification services are SERVICES PROVIDED to a child that is removed from his or her home and placed in an out-of-home placement such as a foster family home or a child care institution. These services may be provided to the parents or primary caregiver of such a child in order to facilitate the reunification of the child safely and appropriately.

The passage of the Families First legislation has made some changes in the way family reunification funds can be utilized. First, the name was changed to Family Reunification services. Second, this legislation has eliminated the language that the child had to be in out-of-home placement 15 months or less to be eligible for the service. Finally, a child returning home will now have access to 15 months of family reunification services beginning on the date the child returns home.

Procedures and Timeframes:**GOALS:**

- Reduce the length of stay in foster care;
- Establish permanency for children through reunification with their families; and
- Improve the permanency plan of children in out-of-home placement.

The funds may be following services: be spent on the following services:

- Individual, group and family counseling;
- Inpatient, residential, or outpatient substance abuse treatment services;
- Mental health services;
- Assistance to address domestic violence;
- Services designed to provide temporary child care and therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries;
- Transportation to or from any of the services;
- Peer-to-peer mentoring;
- Support groups for parents and primary caregivers; and
- Services and/or activities to facilitate access to and visitation of children with parents and siblings

REQUIREMENTS

Promoting Safe and Stable Families funds cannot be combined with other grants or merged into other flex

fund accounts. A separate accounting must be maintained. The LDSS is required to report to the United States Department of Health and Human Services the amount of funds spent of EACH service of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program.

A plan or proposal is not required if the funds are spent on any of the nine services shown above. The following services can be provided under Family Reunification general:

- Aftercare services to reunify families;
- Parenting classes;
- Assisting in negotiating systems including the court and legal system;
- Case management;
- Intensive home-based casework;
- Home-based therapy;
- Family mediation;
- Mentoring to parents; and
- Enhancing personal skills of family members, i.e., teaching anger/depression/anxiety management, self-criticism reduction, and how to handle frustration; enhancing interpersonal skills of family members, i.e., teaching conversational skills, assertiveness skills, listening skills, problem solving and negotiation, giving and accepting feedback, accepting “no” from others, accepting criticism, and displaying sensitivity to others.

As stated above, Family Reunification services also include

- peer-to-peer mentoring,
- support groups for parents and primary caregivers, and
- services and activities to facilitate access to and visitation of children with parents and siblings.

If one half (1/2) of the LDSS allocation is not spent by January 3, 2019, the remaining amount will be subject to reallocation to another LDSS that is spending their Family Reunification funds. The number of families and children served, by service, must be submitted quarterly on the attached Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program Family Reunification Services Quarterly Program Report form (Attachment A). The expenditures reported on the quarterly reports must be reconciled to the Monthly 302 Report to ensure that reported data is consistent. **A LDSS that fails to submit their quarterly reports will risk a reduction and reallocation of their TLR funds to another LDSS.** The report is to be submitted to Helene Hornum, Program Analyst, and Social Services Administration as follows:

The report submission dates and periods covered are as follow:

Submission Dates

Periods Covered

October 19, 2018
January 18, 2019
April 19, 2019
July 19, 2019

July 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018
October 1, 2018- December 31, 2018
January 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019
April 1, 2019– June 30, 2019

The allocation for SFY 2019 and all expenditures for services rendered between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019 must be liquidated (services provided and paid for) by June 30, 2019. The DAFER report and quarterly expenditure reporting will be used to monitor expenditures.

All contracts and purchase orders must follow COMAR Title 21 procurement regulations.

Charge Codes for Family Reunification Services Funding:

In order to track and report the use of these funds, please use the following charge codes:

- All child and family-specific expenses, should be requested through the Chessie Service Log choosing Category Code **4130** for “PSSF Family Reunification”.
- Any charges that are not child and family-specific, should use charge code PCA GC950, Project/Subproject number 0302.87, within the Child Welfare Services (N00G0003) program and the appropriate agency object for the purchase being made.

**PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES PROGRAM
FAMILY REUNIFICATION
QUARTERLY PROGRAM REPORT**

Local Department: _____
 Person Completing Form: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Report Period: July 1, 2018 – September 30, 2018 _____ October 1, 2018 – December 31, 2018 _____
 January 1, 2019 – March 31, 2019 _____ April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019 _____

| Account Name | Account Number/ Project /Subproject/ Object | Expenditures Current Quarter | Expenditures Y-T-D | Obligated Funds to Date | Families Served Current Quarter | Children Served Current Quarter | Families Served Y-T-D | Children Served Y-T-D |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| TIME-LIMITED REUNIFICATION | GC950 0302.87 (non child and family- specific) | | | | | | | |
| | 4130 (child and family- specific) | | | | | | | |

Allocation _____
 Year-to-Date Expenditures _____
 Remaining Balance _____

Mail or Fax the Report to:
 Helene Hornum
 Social Services Administration
 311 W. Saratoga Street, 5th Floor
 Baltimore, MD 21201
 Fax #: 410-333-6556