

## Maryland Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

### State Contact Information

Adoption Assistance Specialist	ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact
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Adoption Program Manager or Contact	ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact
<p>NAME: Stephanie Johnson Pettaway</p> <p>ADDRESS: Maryland Department of Human Resources Social Services Administration 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:spettawa@dh.state.md.us">spettawa@dh.state.md.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 410.767.7506</p>	<p>NAME: Jane Noonan, Deputy</p> <p>ADDRESS: Maryland Department of Human Resources Social Services Administration 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:jnoonan@dh.state.md.us">jnoonan@dh.state.md.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 410.767.7249</p>
Post Adoption Services Contact	Medical Assistance Specialist
<p>NAME: Anita Wilkins</p> <p>ADDRESS: Maryland Department of Human Resources Social Services Administration 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:awilkins@dh.state.md.us">awilkins@dh.state.md.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 410.767.7119</p>	<p>NAME: Joan Washington</p> <p>ADDRESS: Maryland Department of Human Resources Social Services Administration 311 West Saratoga Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:jwashington@dh.state.md.us">jwashington@dh.state.md.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 410.767.7096</p>

## **Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?**

**A good place to start.** Public adoption in Maryland is administered by the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Social Services Administration (SSA). DHR, SSA and adoption links: <http://63.236.98.116/index.html>, <http://63.236.98.116/ssa/index.htm> and <http://63.236.98.116/adopt/index.htm>. Or phone 800.39.ADOPT.

### **1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? (*"What is your state definition of special needs?"*)**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Six years of age or older and under eighteen years of age
- Race or ethnic background (considered in addition to other special needs)
- Member of a sibling group of two or more children placed in the same family
- Physical or mental disability or risk of developing a physical or mental disability
- Emotional disturbance
- At high risk of developing a physical or mental disease

### **2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above or the adoptive family's income may make them eligible even if the child does not meet the definition of special needs. An assessment is conducted to determine if the adoptive family's resources are limited and are within state eligibility requirements.

### **3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$2000.00 per child

### **4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Maryland offers deferred adoption assistance. Deferred adoption assistance is for "at risk" special needs designations and require documentation that a special needs condition existed at the time of adoption finalization. The request must be related to the condition that would have made the child eligible for adoption assistance but was unknown at the time of adoption.

### **5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?**

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Maryland at adoption placement.

### **6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?**

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement? Families may apply for an increase or reduction when they have a need.
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement? The family must contact the agency that placed the child and request their assistance or a review of their current agreement.
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement? They have a right to appeal the Department's decision not to grant the change.

Adoptive parents may request a change in the adoption assistance agreement if there is a change in the needs of the child or the circumstances of the family. Agreements are reviewed annually by the Department and the family, but parents can call and request a change whenever there is a need. Requests can be made in person, over the phone, or in writing. Parents are asked to contact the agency that placed the child when requesting a change. The agency will advise and assist the family in collecting the documentation necessary to support their request and determine eligibility for the requested change. If the adoption agency is private, they will forward the request and the documentation to the public agency for consideration. The package is reviewed and a decision to approve or deny the request is made by the local Department of Social Services. All changes must be agreed to by both the Department and the adoptive parent(s). Adoption assistance payment amounts automatically increase when a child reaches the age of twelve. If parents do not receive the requested change, they can request a fair hearing and appeal the decision through the local Department that denied the request. Contact local county offices, link: <http://63.236.98.116/county.htm>.

## **Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services**

### **7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?**

Post adoption services in Maryland are administered by the Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration and include the following examples:

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| 1. Information and referral             | 4. Waiver of higher education tuition and fees |
| 2. Counseling                           | 5. Provision of medical and family history     |
| 3. Search, contact and reunion services | 6. Childcare reimbursement                     |

Adoptive parents are directed to contact the adoption agency that placed the child or the local Departments for referral to agencies in the area where the family resides. DHR may make services available on request to eligible families of children adopted through the local department of social services. Adoptive families are placed on a waiting for post adoption services in accordance with available DHR staff resources. Many private organizations offer a variety of respite programs. See Maryland's Respite Programs, link: [www.respitelocator.org/m1states.htm](http://www.respitelocator.org/m1states.htm). Post adoption services are detailed in the Code of Maryland Regulations available on-line at: <https://constmail.gov.state.md.us/comar/07/07.02.12.21.htm>. Contact local county offices, link: <http://63.236.98.116/county.htm>.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance**

### **8. What mental health services are provided by your state?**

Public mental health services for children in Maryland are administered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH). DHMH mental health services include the following examples: outpatient therapy, in-patient hospitalization, residential rehabilitation, residential treatment, rehabilitation, supported living, day treatment, and 24-hour crisis intervention.

Maryland's Public Mental Health System links: [www.dhmh.state.md.us/mha/geninfo.htm](http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/mha/geninfo.htm) and [www.dhmh.state.md.us/mha/geninfo.htm#services%20covered](http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/mha/geninfo.htm#services%20covered). Or phone the Toll-Free help line: 800.888.1965.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

**9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered by your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?**

Maryland offers a program known as *One-Time Subsidy*. This program covers specific expenses or special services related to the adoption of a particular child or children, such as necessary physical alterations to the home to accommodate a handicapped child and special equipment not otherwise provided for. The need or potential need for these services must be requested on the adoption assistance agreement. The amount of the one-time subsidy is equal to the expense or the service to the family, up to a maximum of 12 x the board rate the child is eligible for at the time of the application. It cannot exceed the intermediate board rate paid at the time of the request. *The state and federal government fund the One-Time Subsidy program* as determined by the need for the money and whether it meets certain federal definitions. Please ask your adoption assistance worker for an explanation of program specifics.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

## **Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings**

**10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.**

Adoptive parents can request a fair hearing whenever there is disagreement with a Department decision that affects their child's adoption assistance benefits. Parents are directed to make requests for fair hearing to their adoption assistance worker or the Director of the local Department that made the contested decision. Requests can be made in person, over the phone, or in writing and must be made within thirty days of the notice of contested decision. Once a request is received, the Department will send the family a fair hearing request form to complete and return to the Department. The local Department will then forward the form to the Office of Administrative Hearings. An Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will hear the case, render a decision, and notify the family of the decision. Call your adoption assistance case manager or 800.332.6347 for assistance, or send completed request forms directly to the following address:

Office of Administrative Hearings  
Administrative Law Building  
11101 Gilroy Road  
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031-1301

For complete information and/or to obtain a fair hearing request form, see Maryland's Family Investment Administration's page, *How to have a hearing if you think we are wrong*, link: <http://63.236.98.116/fia/hearing.htm>.

## **Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information**

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

Maryland's general adoption information link: <http://63.236.98.116/adopt/index.htm>

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

Maryland's adoption assistance link: <http://63.236.98.116/adopt/finhelp.htm>

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

Maryland's state-specific medical assistance link: [www.dhmf.state.md.us/mma/mmahome.html](http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/mma/mmahome.html)