

# Nebraska

## Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

### State Contact information

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Assistance Specialist</b></p> <p>NAME: Ruth Grosse</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us">ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402.471.7785</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Ruth Grosse</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us">ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402.471.7785</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adoption Program Manager Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Mary Dyer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us">mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402.471.9331</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Mary Dyer or Rita Krusemark</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us">mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402.471.9331 or 402.471.9254</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Post Adoption Services Contact</b></p> <p>NAME: Mary Dyer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us">mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402. 471.9331</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Medical Assistance Specialist</b></p> <p>NAME: Mary Dyer or Ruth Grosse</p> <p>ADDRESS: Nebraska Dept. of Health and Human Services Office of Protection and Safety P.O. Box 95044 Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-50441</p> <p>E-MAIL: <a href="mailto:mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us">mary.dyer@hss.state.ne.us</a> and <a href="mailto:ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us">ruth.grosse@hss.state.ne.us</a></p> <p>TELEPHONE: 402.471.9331 or 402.471.7785</p>

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

**A good place to start.** Public adoption in Nebraska is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Protection and Safety (OPS). HHS Department of Services, Protection and Safety, and adoption links: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/) (click on Department of Services, lower left of page), [www.hhs.state.ne.us/jus/jusindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/jus/jusindex.htm), and [www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/adpindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/adpindex.htm). Or phone 402.471.9331.

### **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:

- Age (If age is the only criteria, children seven years of age or younger are generally not eligible)
- Member of a minority race (Race by itself is insufficient for eligibility)
- Member of a sibling group of three or more children to be placed together
- Behavioral, emotional, physical or mental disability

Note: Children must be legally free for adoption to be eligible for adoption assistance.

### **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, legally free for adoption, and a ward of the state of Nebraska in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services at the time the adoption petition is filed.

### **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.**

\$1500.00 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.**

Nebraska does not offer deferred adoption assistance.

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

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Nebraska after adoption finalization.

### **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?

- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoptive parents can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement at any time. Changes may be made at the request of the adoptive family whenever there are changes in family circumstance or when a change in law or regulation indicates the need for a modification in the agreement. Requests must be made in writing to the adoption assistance worker and parents must send information substantiating the change in family circumstance to the DHSS. To locate a local Nebraska HHS office, see the office locator link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/map/mapindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/map/mapindex.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 Nebraska are administered by the DHSS Office of Protection and Safety through contracted agencies and parent organizations. Services include the following examples:

1. Information and referral
2. Educational programs and materials
3. Support groups
4. Family-centered support services
5. Talk Adopt (Internet chat room)
6. Adoption searches

Many services are contracted through the University of Nebraska, Center for Children, Family, and Law (CCFL). CCFL link: <http://ccfl.unl.edu/about/snebraska.html>. Nebraska has a contract with the NE Foster and Adoptive Parent Association. The Association has an annual adoption conference and three foster parent conferences each year with adoption information presented. Contact the Association, phone: 877.257.0176 or 402.476.2273. Additional information is available from the local DHSS agency, adoption assistance worker, or post adoption services contact. Many private organizations offer a variety of respite options. See Nebraska's Respite Programs, link: [www.respitelocator.org/n1states.htm](http://www.respitelocator.org/n1states.htm). To locate a local HHS office, link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/map/mapindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/map/mapindex.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 Nebraska are administered by the DHHS System and includes the following examples: outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment services, including evaluation (by a supervising practitioner/psychiatrist/psychologist individual), group/ family psychotherapy; individual/group/family substance abuse counseling, family assessment, mental/home health and personal care services, intensive family preservation services, medication checks, crisis intervention services.

Mental health and substance abuse day treatment services are also provided. These services are part of a continuum of care designed to prevent hospitalization or to facilitate the return of the client to functioning within the community with less frequent contact with the mental health or substance abuse professionals. Services include: treatment foster care services, treatment group home services, residential treatment services for children/adolescents, inpatient mental health services, and inpatient mental health services for

clients age twenty or younger in institutions for mental disease (IMDs). Medicaid is administered by Megellan, Nebraska's managed care contractor. Length of care is determined by Megellan and based on a child's need. Nebraska's Medicaid services link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/med/medserv.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/med/medserv.htm). All adoption assistance services end in Nebraska once a child reaches nineteen years of age.

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 under your state medial plan to children receiving adoption assistance?**

Nebraska offers what is known as *Payment for Pre-Existing Medical Conditions*. Funding is available to adoptive parents for medical or mental health services not available through any other program or benefit. Examples of such services include mental health care, basic life skills training, inpatient hospitalization, and medications. Eligible adoptive parents must exhaust all other resources before this funding is available, including their own private insurance. Payment for services is made directly to providers. The need for services must be listed in the adoption assistance agreement and conditions cannot be added after adoption finalization. However, conditions can be changed if the child's original diagnosis was incorrect. Inpatient psychiatric and residential treatment care is covered in some cases. These services require prior authorization before treatment and coverage is for up to eighteen months of care. Length of care is determined by Megellan and based on a child's need.

Nebraska also offers what is known as a *Special Service Subsidy*. Funds are allocated on a one-time basis for a specific service or item for a specified period of time. Services or items must relate to the child's special needs as indicated in the original adoption assistance agreement and are only available if no other program or resource exists to meet the child's need. These services must be connected to the special need indicated on the original subsidy agreement. Examples of such services and items include: adoptive parent training, specially designed furniture, house modifications designed to accommodate a child's particular special need, and transportation expenses necessary for a child to receive medical services for a condition in existence prior to adoption finalization. Modifications to the home must be recommended by The Assistive Technology Partnership, an agency contracting by HHS. The specific modification and the estimated cost must be included in the original adoption assistance agreement and approved by the Central Office adoption specialist prior to the adoption finalization.

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 families have the right to request a fair hearing any time a DHHS action or inaction affects adoption assistance eligibility, the amount of payment, and/or the Department fails to act with reasonable promptness. Requests must be made to the HHS Director in writing within ninety days of the contested action or inaction. The Director will forward this request to the Legal Division. A hearing officer will conduct the fair hearing and listen to both sides, but will not make a decision at the hearing. Parents will receive a written decision in the mail from the hearing authority within ninety days of the hearing request. Send fair hearing requests to the following address:

Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
P.O. Box 95044  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

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

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

Nebraska's general adoption information link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/adpindex.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/adpindex.htm) and Frequently Asked Questions link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/faq.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/adp/faq.htm).

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

Nebraska's adoption assistance regulation link:

[www.sos.state.ne.us/local/regsearch/Rules/Health\\_and\\_Human\\_Services\\_System/Title-479/Chapter-8.pdf](http://www.sos.state.ne.us/local/regsearch/Rules/Health_and_Human_Services_System/Title-479/Chapter-8.pdf)  
(479 NAC Chapter 8)

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

Nebraska's state-specific medical assistance link: [www.hhs.state.ne.us/med/medprog.htm](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/med/medprog.htm)