

Wisconsin Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

Adoption Assistance Specialist	ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact
<p>NAME: Jill Duerst</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children & Family Services, Adoption & Consultation Section, Bureau of Programs & Policies 1 West Wilson Street, P. O. Box 8916 Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8916</p> <p>E-MAIL: duersjm@dhfs.state.wi.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 608.266.1142</p>	<p>NAME: Dale Langer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children & Family Services, Adoption & Consultation Section, Bureau of Programs & Policies 1 West Wilson Street, P.O. Box 8916 Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8916</p> <p>E-MAIL: langedw@dhfs.state.wi.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 608.266.3595</p>
Adoption Program Manager or Contact	ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact
<p>NAME: Dale Langer</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department. of Health and Family Services Division of Children & Family Services, Adoption & Consultation Section, Bureau of Programs and Policies 1 West Wilson Street, P.O. Box 8916 Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8916</p> <p>E-MAIL: langedw@dhfs.state.wi.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 608.266.3595</p>	<p>NAME: Connie Klick</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children & Family Services, Child Welfare & Family Violence Section, Bureau of Programs & Policies 1 West Wilson Street, P.O. Box 8916 Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8916</p> <p>E-MAIL: klickcl@dhfs.state.wi.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 608.266.1489</p>
Post Adoption Services Contact	Medical Assistance Specialist
<p>Wisconsin's post adoption resource centers link: www.wiadopt.com/WisPostAdoptionResourceCenters.htm</p>	<p>NAME: Jennifer Broberg</p> <p>ADDRESS: Department of Health and Family Services Division of Children & Family Services, Bureau of Programs & Policies 1 West Wilson Street, P. O. Box 8916 Madison, Wisconsin 53708-8916</p> <p>E-MAIL: brobejj@dhfs.state.wi.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 608.266.2550</p>

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Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Wisconsin is administered by the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS), Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DHFS and adoption links: www.dhfs.state.wi.us and <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption/index.htm>.

- 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:

- Ten years of age or older (if age is the only factor in determining eligibility)
- Member of a minority race and children of that minority race cannot be readily placed due to a lack of appropriate placement resources
- Member of a sibling group of three or more children that must be placed together at the same time
- Exhibits special need characteristics judged to be moderate or intensive
- At high risk of developing a moderate or intensive level of special needs as outlined above

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 and legally free for adoption. If the child is an American Indian, adoption procedures shall be in accordance with 25 USC 1901-1963 available at www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/25/ch21.html.

- 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.**

\$2,000.00 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 monetary monthly payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Wisconsin offers deferred adoption assistance. The agreement is made with a zero (\$0) monetary amount to families adopting a child at risk of having special needs and begins the month the adoption is finalized. If special needs can be documented after twelve months from the date of adoption, a new rate is determined and a monetary monthly payment is established.

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

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Wisconsin at placement and must begin at least thirty days prior to the finalization of the adoption.

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?

Adoption assistance agreements can be amended in Wisconsin if adoptive parents believe a substantial change in circumstances has occurred and the needs of the child have changed at any time during adoptive placement and prior to finalization of the adoption. After finalization, parents must wait 12 months from the date of adoption to request an amendment to their original adoption assistance agreement if they believe a substantial change in circumstance has occurred since the initial adoption assistance agreement was signed. The family must complete and return the request for adoption assistance amendment form available from the Wisconsin department to record the family's observations of the child's physical, behavioral, and emotional needs. Professional documentation of the child's current special needs is also required for verification of a substantial change in circumstance.

Changes to adoption assistance agreements are known as amendments. Parents interested in pursuing an amendment should contact the Adoption Assistance Program Specialist at 866.666.5532 to discuss the process and obtain the necessary information. All information regarding a *Request to amend the adoption assistance agreement for a child at high risk of developing special needs* and a *Request to amend adoption assistance agreement following adoption* is in Wisconsin's Administrative Code *Chapter HFS 50, Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs, Sections 50.044 (2) and 50.045 (2)* found on the Web at www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs050.pdf.

Prior to adoption finalization, if an applicant for adoption assistance is not satisfied with the action taken by the Department on the application, or if a prospective adoptive parent who has been approved for or is receiving adoption assistance is not satisfied with the conditions governing the award, the applicant or prospective adoptive parent may request a review of the decision by the division administrator or designee or may appeal the decision under Ch. 227, Wis. Stats. (www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0227.pdf), to the department's office of administrative hearings. A request for review of a decision should be addressed to the following address:

Administrator, Division of Children and Family Services
P.O. Box 7851
Madison, WI 53707

A request for a fair hearing should be addressed to the following address:

Division of Hearings and Appeals
P.O. 7875
Madison, WI 53707

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 Wisconsin are administered by DHRS, DCFS through five Post Adoption Resource Centers located throughout the state. Post adoption services include the following examples:

1. Resource and referral
2. Parent support groups
3. Educational opportunities
4. Mentor families
5. Lending libraries
6. Parenting training
7. Respite
8. Search services

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services funds Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARC) throughout the state. PARC link: www.wiadopt.com/WisPostAdoptionResourceCenters.htm or phone the Adoption and Consultation Section: 866.666.5532 for a list of centers. Many private organizations offer a variety of respite options. See Wisconsin Respite Programs, link: www.respitelocator.org/w3states.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 Wisconsin are administered by the Department of Health and Family Services, Wisconsin Medicaid. DHFS Medicaid services include the following examples: inpatient hospital, skilled nursing facility, and intermediate care facility services for patients in institutions for mental disease; mental health and medical day treatment; mental health and psychosocial rehabilitative services, including case management services, provided by staff of a certified community support program; physician services; and prescription drugs.

Wisconsin Medicaid services link:

http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid1/recpubs/eligibility/book_d.htm#Medicaid%20Benefits.

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 medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

The adoption assistance rate is negotiated to cover any anticipated costs not covered by Medicaid. After the adoption is finalized, the family can request minor adjustments to the rate on an annual basis, but there is no funding to cover major costs not included in the adoption assistance rate. The monthly monetary adoption assistance amount consists of a basic rate that is determined by age, and a supplemental and exceptional rate when needed. The supplemental and exceptional rates address children's physical, emotional and/or psychological difficulties. "Supplemental" rates are based on an assessment of a child's emotional, behavioral, and physical and personal care characteristics. "Exceptional" rates are paid when needed to allow the child to live in a less restrictive environment. For a complete listing of these characteristics and their corresponding levels of care, see HFS 56, Foster Home Care for Children – 56.11(3) at www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs056.pdf.

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.

There are two sets of procedures for parents seeking a fair hearing regarding adoption assistance in Wisconsin. One set is the appeal process before adoption is final and the second set is after adoption is final. If families submit a request for an amendment and it is denied, the request for a hearing regarding amendment decisions are directed to the Office of Hearings and Appeals. Refer to Wisconsin Administrative Code HFS 50, Facilitating the Adoption of a Special Needs Child, 50.065 - www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs050.pdf

Prior to adoption finalization, if an applicant for adoption assistance is not satisfied with the action taken by the Department on the application, or if a prospective adoptive parent who has been approved for or is receiving adoption assistance is not satisfied with the conditions governing the award, the applicant or prospective adoptive parent may request a review of the decision by the division administrator or designee or may appeal the decision under Ch. 227, Wis. Stats. (www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/Stat0227.pdf), to the department's office of administrative hearings. A request for review of a decision should be addressed to the Administrator, Division of Children and Family Services, P.O. Box 7851; Madison, WI 53707.

After adoption finalization, an adoptive parent may appeal to the department of administration's division of hearings and appeals regarding a contested department decision such as a denial of adoption assistance benefits or a failure of the department to inform adoptive parents of the availability of adoption assistance. A request for a hearing should be addressed to the Division of Hearings and Appeals, P.O. Box 7875; Madison, WI 53707. For a complete listing of reasons for appeal link to Wisconsin Administrative Code HFS 50, Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs – 50.065 at: www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs050.pdf.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

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

Wisconsin's general adoption link: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption/index.htm>.

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

Wisconsin's adoption assistance links: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption/SNATOPICS.HTM> and www.wiadopt.com/SpecialNeedsAdoption/Guide.htm.

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

Wisconsin's state-specific medical assistance links: www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Medicaid/ and http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid1/recpubs/eligibility/book_contents.htm.

Questions regarding medical assistance information can also be directed to Jennifer Broberg by phone at 608.266.2550 or by e-mail at brobejj@dhfs.state.wi.us.