

The Path Forward

What's On The Horizon

Courtney Smith, MSW
Adoption & Permanency Manager
Office of Child Welfare
Department of Children and Families

Jennifer W. Perez
Statewide Revenue Maximization Specialist
Office of Child Welfare
Department of Children and Families



Why This? Why Now?

Expiration of the Title IV-E Waiver

What is the Title IV-E Waiver?

- Allowed states to waive certain provisions of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. These provisions govern Federal programs relating to foster care and other child welfare services.
- Allows federal Title IV-E foster care funds to be used for a wide variety of child welfare purposes rather than being restricted to eligible children in licensed foster care homes or institutions, as is normally the case under federal law.

Why This? Why Now?

Expiration of the Title IV-E Waiver

- With the sunseting of the Title IV-E Demonstration Waiver, the Department has begun to explore ways to draw down additional funding to support the state's child welfare system while ensuring to maintain a quality level of enhanced services being offered to Florida citizens.
 - Anticipate losing approximately \$90 million in revenue that funds CBC positions and services to families.
- Waiver Expiration Date: September 2018
- Request Granted for Waiver Extension Expiration Date: *September 2019*

The Path Forward

- Title IV-E Extended Foster Care (EFC)
- Extension of Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (EMAS)
- Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)
- Title IV-E Candidacy
- Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Enhancements

Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)

Overview

- Similar to the current Relative & Non-Relative Caregiver Program
- Available when a relative/fictive kin agrees to accept permanent guardianship of a child in foster care
- Payments until the child turns 18 years old as long as the guardian has custody of the child
- Annual redetermination required

Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)

Overview continued

- Benefits
 - Increased monthly payments amount to \$333 per month.
 - The option to extend payments to age 21 if Guardianship Assistance Agreement was executed with the child was 16 or 17 years old
 - Licensure process begins immediately upon placement of child – do not have to wait for adjudication so benefits may begin sooner
 - A family is still eligible for benefits if the child and caregiver live or move out of state

Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)

New Eligibility Requirements

- *Child Specific License*

- License issued for a specific child, as opposed to a traditional foster care license that is not for a specific child
- Non- Safety licensing requirements may be waived
- Training requirements are reduced

- *Six months placement*

- Prior to permanent guardianship, the guardian must care for child a minimum of 6 months as a licensed placement

Title IV-E Candidacy

Federal language

2) in the case of any other child who is **potentially eligible** for benefits under a State plan approved under this part and at **imminent risk** of removal from the home, only if—

(A) reasonable efforts... are being made to prevent the need for, or if necessary to pursue, removal of the child from the home; and

(B) the State agency has made, not less often than every 6 months, a determination (or redetermination) as to whether the child **remains at imminent risk** of removal from the home.

Title IV-E Candidacy – Florida's model

Overview

- Florida's current practice model should support candidacy claiming for virtually 100% of in-home cases, including post-placement supervision since by definition, they are UNSAFE and at risk of removal from the home.
- SAFE but very high risk or high risk may also meet the definition of candidacy.
- Eligibility determination is not required – we can use proxy of foster care eligibility rate for candidacy claims

Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility clean-up

Eligibility Project Overview

- Intended to provide individualized, dedicated resources to CBCs and Regions to identify areas to streamline processes, increase penetrations rates, and develop strategies for post-waiver environment
- Contract negotiations underway – anticipate kick-off by January 2019
- 3 CBCs will undergo process mapping of workflows-Heartland, Families First Network, Family Support Services of North Florida
- Each CBC will have an assigned consultant-larger CBCs may have more than one

Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility clean-up

Eligibility Project Overview Continued

- Consultants
 - Conduct an assessment of current CBC eligibility determination processes and provide written report
 - Provide on-site assistance regarding technical assistance, policies, procedures
 - Conduct IV-E audits on approximately 14,600 children statewide
 - Conduct review of group home background check compliance
 - Provide a report that indicates projected penetration rate for each CBC

Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility clean-up

Eligibility Project Overview Continued

- FSFN Eligibility Implementation Assistance
 - 1) Identify all children active in OOH care whose removal began prior to 2016. Review and, *upon Go-Live*, reconstruct all IV-E Eligibility Determinations completed with functionality prior to 2016.
 - 2) Identify all children active in OOH care who have been or will reach their 13th month in care as of June 2019. If a current Redetermination does not exist in FSFN documenting REFPP, one must be completed in FSFN *prior to Go-Live*.

Consultants may assist with any portion of this requirement at the CBC's discretion.

Questions & Answers

