

Stafford County Children's Services Act Program /Case Manager Financial Contribution Quick guide

Purpose:

- The Stafford County Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) have set out the policy and procedures for parental financial contribution to the cost of services provided by Children's Services Act (CSA) funding.
- It is the expectation that most parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will contribute the assessed amount, however human services staff are committed to developing a collaborative financial plan that respects and recognizes the prior emotional and financial investments made by families on behalf of their children.
- Parental contribution (i.e. co-payment) toward the cost of services demonstrates a willingness to bear responsibility for providing for the child's needs.

Exceptions to the policy include:

- Any service written into the IEP to include community based/residential and services for children in foster care.
- Any legal guardian (s) not receiving child support or any other type of financial assistance to help aide in the financial care of the child whom services are being funded.
- Any family who meets criteria for poverty status, or who receives any of the following; SNAP, Public Housing, Free and Reduced Lunch, TANF, and/or Low Income Energy Assistance will not be assessed a co-pay, but will need to provide documentation that they meet one of the aforementioned criteria.
- Families who have multiple children in services will only be assessed on one child. If one of those children is being assessed for residential treatment that child will be the assessed child.

Procedures for Parental Agreement/Residential Services Contribution:

- Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) whose child is receiving residential treatment series will be assessed a parental contribution using the Residential Treatment Income Assessment Worksheet for parent(s)/guardian (s) (**attachment B of policy**). (If a child has an IEP for educational services and Medicaid is utilized for other services no copayment will be due- assessment should be completed until the determination of Medicaid is made)
- If parents (s)/legal guardian (s) agree with the amount of the parental contribution determined by completed the worksheet they will sign the completed worksheet.
- The CSA program staff will send an invoice for and collect the assessed co-payment on behalf of the lead agency. All parental co-payments will be paid directly to the CSA program and are due on the 15th of every month.

Procedures for Non-Custodial Foster care/Foster care services:

- For parent(s)/legal guardian(s) whose child is placed in foster care or a non-custodial agreement the DSS case manager shall file the appropriate petition for child support and the appropriate application for child support with the State Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE).
- Any Social Security check for a child who is in foster care, a parental agreement or non-custodial foster care shall be given to the Stafford CPMT or its designee.

Procedures for Community Based Services contribution:

- Parent(s)/Legal guardian(s) whose child is receiving community based services will be assessed using the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Income Assessment Worksheet. (**attachment A of policy**)
- If parents are divorced and living in separate households the assessment is completed on parent(s) who has/have legal custody of the youth.
- Total gross income will be used to determine annual income and includes, but is not limited to, any wages, pension and retirement benefits, workers' compensation benefits, unemployment benefits, spousal support or alimony, interest dividends, payments from annuities, trusts, life insurance policies, income from other forms of investments, or any income received on behalf of the child.
- Income will be verified by the case manager. Sufficient documents for verification would include W-2, pay stubs, 1040's, and/or Employment and Benefit Verification Form through DSS. (**If a parent is appealing- a copy of pay stubs if employed will be required**)
- The case manager will research if the child has been screened and/or enrolled in Medicaid, and whether private insurance is available for the child's needs.
- **If the parent(s)/legal guardians agree with the amount of the parental contribution determined by completing the Household income assessment worksheet they will sign the completed worksheet.**
- If the parent(s)/legal guardians disagree with the amount of the parental contribution determined by completing the Household Income Assessment worksheet they will indicate so on the completed worksheet ~~and~~ by signing the appeal box. The case manager will guide parents through the appeals process.
- The CSA program staff will send an invoice for and collect the assessed co-payment on behalf of the lead agency. All parental co-payments will be paid directly to the CSA program and are due on the 15th of every month.

Appeals Process:

- The appeal budget worksheet (**attachment D of policy**) and a letter explaining why the assessed co-payment would cause undue hardship from the family and the amount that they would be able to pay with documentation must be presented to the case manager within 7 days of the FAPT meeting when services are authorized which shall then be submitted to the CSA program staff for review. Notification shall be provided in writing of the decision.
- If a family is appealing they must submit pay stubs rather than the W-2 for income verification.

Guidelines for completion of appeal budget worksheet:

- The budget worksheet must be **typed** and filled out in its entirety; illegible and/or incomplete worksheets will cause the appeal to automatically be denied.
- Families must use their **net** income on the budget worksheet, and should not include expenses on the budget worksheet that have already been taken out of the paycheck. For example health insurance or child support that is deducted from a paycheck should not then go on the budget worksheet.
- All amounts entered on the worksheet are monthly, if the cost is not a monthly cost the family must break it down to an average monthly cost and explain this in the letter. For example, if they pay for car insurance on an annual basis that amount would be divided by 12 to get the average monthly cost that goes on the worksheet.
- The amounts on the worksheet must add and subtract correctly. Please check the worksheet for mathematical errors as well as for discrepancies between pay stubs and what is on the worksheet. Verification of multiple issues delays determination.

Guidelines on completion of appeal letter:

- The letter of appeal should be factual information that explains specific items included in the budget worksheet. For example, if the family has medical costs the letter should explain for whom the cost is associated and if it will continue while the child is receiving services.
- Also included in the letter should be any other costs not identified in the budget worksheet.
- The letter should also include any other **specific** reasons that the co-payment would cause hardship to the family.

Collection Procedure:

- If payment is not received within 60 days of the first invoice being sent, a 60 day letter requesting that they make a payment or contact this office to make payment arrangements will be mailed to the family.
- If payment has not been received within 90 days of the first invoice being sent a letter will be mailed to the family reiterating that unless a payment and/or payment plan has been received by the next billing due date services may be interrupted.
- If payment has not been received by 120 days a ***Final Notice*** letter will be sent to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) indicating that services may be interrupted within 10 days of the date of the letter if this office has not received payment and/or made payment arrangements with, at minimum, one month paid. Families who have delinquent accounts will not be able to receive additional services until a payment plan has been initiated. A minimum of one payment must be made prior to services continuing or the arrears have been paid in full to begin a new service. Families will be made aware of this policy as part of the co-payment assessment process.
- Families who have delinquent accounts will not be able to request new services until payment has been made in full.
- For families receiving non-mandated services funding approval will not continue until arrears have been paid in full.

Payment Schedules:

- Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are provided the opportunity to arrange a payment schedule in order to address the past due status.
- If accepted, the Stafford CSA program staff will send a letter to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) confirming the payment schedule and outlining the process if the schedule is not met.
- If rejected, the Stafford CSA program staff will send a letter to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) offering a revised and acceptable payment schedule. The letter will outline further steps that will be taken if the schedule is not met.