CHAPTER 142A

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

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142A.01 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Application.** The definitions in this section apply to this chapter.

Subd. 2. **Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the commissioner of children, youth, and families.

Subd. 3. **Department.** "Department" means the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 13*

142A.02 CREATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES.

Subdivision 1. **Department.** (a) The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is established.

(b) The commissioner of children, youth, and families is hereby constituted the "state agency" for the purposes of Title IV of the Social Security Act of the United States and the laws of this state. The commissioners of human services and children, youth, and families are hereby constituted the "state agency" for background studies under chapter 245C.

(c) The commissioner of children, youth, and families is hereby constituted the "state agency" for the purposes of administering the child care and development fund. The commissioners of human services and children, youth, and families are hereby constituted the "joint interagency office" for background studies under chapter 245C.

Subd. 2. **Transfer and restructuring provisions.** The restructuring of agencies under Laws 2023, chapter 70, article 12, must be conducted in accordance with sections 15.039 and 43A.045.

Subd. 3. **Successor and employee protection clause.** (a) Personnel relating to the functions assigned to the commissioner in section 142A.03 are transferred to the department effective 30 days after approval by the commissioner.

(b) Before the commissioner's appointment, personnel relating to the functions in this section may be transferred beginning July 1, 2024, with 30 days' notice from the commissioner of management and budget.

(c) The following protections shall apply to employees who are transferred to the department from state agencies:

(1) no transferred employee shall have their employment status and job classification altered as a result of the transfer;

(2) transferred employees who were represented by an exclusive representative prior to the transfer shall continue to be represented by the same exclusive representative after the transfer;

(3) any applicable collective bargaining agreements with exclusive representatives shall continue in full force and effect for transferred employees after the transfer;

(4) when an employee in a temporary unclassified position is transferred to the department, the total length of time that the employee has served in the appointment shall include all time served in the appointment at the transferring agency and the time served in the appointment at the department. An employee in a temporary unclassified position who was hired by a transferring agency through an open competitive selection process in accordance with a policy enacted by the commissioner of management and budget shall be considered to have been hired through such process after the transfer;

(5) the state shall have the obligation to meet and negotiate with the exclusive representatives of the transferred employees about any proposed changes affecting or relating to the transferred employees' terms and conditions of employment to the extent that the proposed changes are not addressed in the applicable collective bargaining agreement; and

(6) in the event that the state transfers ownership or control of any facilities, services, or operations of the department to another private or public entity by subcontracting, sale, assignment, lease, or other transfer, the state shall require as a written condition of the transfer of ownership or control the following:

(i) employees who perform work in the facilities, services, or operations must be offered employment with the entity acquiring ownership or control before the entity offers employment to any individual who was not employed by the transferring agency at the time of the transfer; and

(ii) the wage and benefit standards of the transferred employees must not be reduced by the entity acquiring ownership or control through the expiration of the collective bargaining agreement in effect at the time of the transfer or for a period of two years after the transfer, whichever is longer.

There is no liability on the part of, and no cause of action arises against, the state of Minnesota or its officers or agents for any action or inaction of any entity acquiring ownership or control of any facilities, services, or operations of the department.

(d) To the extent that departmental changes affect the operations of any school district or charter school, employers have the obligation to bargain about any changes affecting or relating to employees' terms and conditions of employment if the changes are necessary during or after the term of an existing collective bargaining agreement.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 14; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 1; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 16 s 1*

142A.03 COMMISSIONER.

Subdivision 1. **General.** The department is under the administrative control of the commissioner. The commissioner is appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The commissioner has the general powers provided in section 15.06, subdivision 6. The commissioner's salary must be determined by the Compensation Council under section 15A.082, in the same range as specified for the commissioner of management and budget.

Subd. 2. **Duties of the commissioner.** (a) The commissioner may apply for and accept on behalf of the state any grants, bequests, gifts, or contributions for the purpose of carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the commissioner. Any money received under this paragraph is appropriated and dedicated for the purpose for which the money is granted. The commissioner must biennially report to the chairs and ranking minority members of relevant legislative committees and divisions by January 15 of each even-numbered year a list of all grants and gifts received under this subdivision.

(b) Pursuant to law, the commissioner may apply for and receive money made available from federal sources for the purpose of carrying out the duties and responsibilities of the commissioner.

(c) The commissioner may make contracts with and grants to Tribal Nations, public and private agencies, for-profit and nonprofit organizations, and individuals using appropriated money.

(d) The commissioner must develop program objectives and performance measures for evaluating progress toward achieving the objectives. The commissioner must identify the objectives, performance measures, and current status of achieving the measures in a biennial report to the chairs and ranking minority members of relevant legislative committees and divisions. The report is due no later than January 15 each even-numbered year. The report must include, when possible, the following objectives:

(1) centering and including the lived experiences of children and youth, including those with disabilities and mental illness and their families, in all aspects of the department's work;

(2) increasing the effectiveness of the department's programs in addressing the needs of children and youth facing racial, economic, or geographic inequities;

(3) increasing coordination and reducing inefficiencies among the department's programs and the funding sources that support the programs;

(4) increasing the alignment and coordination of family access to child care and early learning programs and improving systems of support for early childhood and learning providers and services;

(5) improving the connection between the department's programs and the kindergarten through grade 12 and higher education systems; and

(6) minimizing and streamlining the effort required of youth and families to receive services to which the youth and families are entitled.

(e) The commissioner shall administer and supervise the forms of public assistance and other activities or services that are vested in the commissioner. Administration and supervision of activities or services includes but is not limited to assuring timely and accurate distribution of benefits, completeness of service, and quality program management. In addition to administering and supervising activities vested by law in the department, the commissioner has the authority to:

(1) require county agency participation in training and technical assistance programs to promote compliance with statutes, rules, federal laws, regulations, and policies governing the programs and activities administered by the commissioner;

(2) monitor, on an ongoing basis, the performance of county agencies in the operation and administration of activities and programs; enforce compliance with statutes, rules, federal laws, regulations, and policies governing welfare services; and promote excellence of administration and program operation;

(3) develop a quality control program or other monitoring program to review county performance and accuracy of benefit determinations;

(4) require county agencies to make an adjustment to the public assistance benefits issued to any individual consistent with federal law and regulation and state law and rule and to issue or recover benefits as appropriate;

(5) delay or deny payment of all or part of the state and federal share of benefits and administrative reimbursement according to the procedures set forth in section 142A.10;

(6) make contracts with and grants to public and private agencies and organizations, both for-profit and nonprofit, and individuals, using appropriated funds; and

(7) enter into contractual agreements with federally recognized Indian Tribes with a reservation in Minnesota to the extent necessary for the Tribe to operate a federally approved family assistance program or any other program under the supervision of the commissioner. The commissioner shall consult with the affected county or counties in the contractual agreement negotiations, if the county or counties wish to be included, in order to avoid the duplication of county and Tribal assistance program services. The commissioner may establish necessary accounts for the purposes of receiving and disbursing funds as necessary for the operation of the programs.

The commissioner shall work in conjunction with the commissioner of human services to carry out the duties of this paragraph when necessary and feasible.

(f) The commissioner shall inform county agencies, on a timely basis, of changes in statute, rule, federal law, regulation, and policy necessary to county agency administration of the programs and activities administered by the commissioner.

(g) The commissioner shall administer and supervise child welfare activities, including promoting the enforcement of laws preventing child maltreatment and protecting children with a disability and children who are in need of protection or services, licensing and supervising child care and child-placing agencies, and supervising the care of children in foster care. The commissioner shall coordinate with the commissioner of human services on activities impacting children overseen by the Department of Human Services, such as disability services, behavioral health, and substance use disorder treatment.

(h) The commissioner shall assist and cooperate with local, state, and federal departments, agencies, and institutions.

(i) The commissioner shall establish and maintain any administrative units reasonably necessary for the performance of administrative functions common to all divisions of the department.

(j) The commissioner shall act as designated guardian of children pursuant to chapter 260C. For children under the guardianship of the commissioner or a Tribe in Minnesota recognized by the Secretary of the Interior whose interests would be best served by adoptive placement, the commissioner may contract with a licensed child-placing agency or a Minnesota Tribal social services agency to provide adoption services. For children in out-of-home care whose interests would be best served by a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative under section 260C.515, subdivision 4, or equivalent in Tribal code, the commissioner may contract with a licensed child-placing agency or a Minnesota Tribal social services agency to provide permanency services. A contract with a licensed child-placing agency must be designed to supplement existing county efforts and may not replace existing county programs or Tribal social services, unless the replacement is agreed to by the county board and the appropriate exclusive bargaining representative, Tribal governing body, or the commissioner has evidence that child placements of the county continue to be substantially below that of other counties. Funds encumbered and obligated under an agreement for a specific child shall remain available until the terms of the agreement are fulfilled or the agreement is terminated.

(k) The commissioner has the authority to conduct and administer experimental projects to test methods and procedures of administering assistance and services to recipients or potential recipients of public benefits. To carry out the experimental projects, the commissioner may waive the enforcement of existing specific statutory program requirements, rules, and standards in one or more counties. The order establishing the waiver must provide alternative methods and procedures of administration and must not conflict with the basic purposes, coverage, or benefits provided by law. No project under this paragraph shall exceed four years. No order establishing an experimental project as authorized by this paragraph is effective until the following conditions have been met:

(1) the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services has agreed, for the same project, to waive state plan requirements relative to statewide uniformity; and

(2) a comprehensive plan, including estimated project costs, has been approved by the Legislative Advisory Commission and filed with the commissioner of administration.

(l) The commissioner shall, according to federal requirements and in coordination with the commissioner of human services, establish procedures to be followed by local welfare boards in creating citizen advisory committees, including procedures for selection of committee members.

(m) The commissioner shall allocate federal fiscal disallowances or sanctions that are based on quality control error rates for the aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) program formerly codified in sections 256.72 to 256.87 or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the following manner:

(1) one-half of the total amount of the disallowance shall be borne by the county boards responsible for administering the programs. For AFDC, disallowances shall be shared by each county board in the same proportion as that county's expenditures to the total of all counties' expenditures for AFDC. For SNAP, sanctions shall be shared by each county board, with 50 percent of the sanction being distributed to each county in the same proportion as that county's administrative costs for SNAP benefits are to the total of all SNAP administrative costs for all counties, and 50 percent of the sanctions being distributed to each county in the same proportion as that county's value of SNAP benefits issued are to the total of all benefits issued for all counties. Each county shall pay its share of the disallowance to the state of Minnesota. When a county fails to pay the amount due under this paragraph, the commissioner may deduct the amount from reimbursement otherwise due the county, or the attorney general, upon the request of the commissioner, may institute civil action to recover the amount due; and

(2) notwithstanding the provisions of clause (1), if the disallowance results from knowing noncompliance by one or more counties with a specific program instruction, and that knowing noncompliance is a matter of official county board record, the commissioner may require payment or recover from the county or counties, in the manner prescribed in clause (1), an amount equal to the portion of the total disallowance that resulted from the noncompliance and may distribute the balance of the disallowance according to clause (1).

(n) The commissioner shall develop and implement special projects that maximize reimbursements and result in the recovery of money to the state. For the purpose of recovering state money, the commissioner may enter into contracts with third parties. Any recoveries that result from projects or contracts entered into under this paragraph shall be deposited in the state treasury and credited to a special account until the balance in the account reaches $1,000,000. When the balance in the account exceeds $1,000,000, the excess shall be transferred and credited to the general fund. All money in the account is appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes of this paragraph.

(o) The commissioner has the authority to establish and enforce the following county reporting requirements:

(1) the commissioner shall establish fiscal and statistical reporting requirements necessary to account for the expenditure of funds allocated to counties for programs administered by the commissioner. When establishing financial and statistical reporting requirements, the commissioner shall evaluate all reports, in consultation with the counties, to determine if the reports can be simplified or the number of reports can be reduced;

(2) the county board shall submit monthly or quarterly reports to the department as required by the commissioner. Monthly reports are due no later than 15 working days after the end of the month. Quarterly reports are due no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the quarter, unless the commissioner determines that the deadline must be shortened to 20 calendar days to avoid jeopardizing compliance with federal deadlines or risking a loss of federal funding. Only reports that are complete, legible, and in the required format shall be accepted by the commissioner;

(3) if the required reports are not received by the deadlines established in clause (2), the commissioner may delay payments and withhold funds from the county board until the next reporting period. When the

report is needed to account for the use of federal funds and the late report results in a reduction in federal funding, the commissioner shall withhold from the county boards with late reports an amount equal to the reduction in federal funding until full federal funding is received;

(4) a county board that submits reports that are late, illegible, incomplete, or not in the required format for two out of three consecutive reporting periods is considered noncompliant. When a county board is found to be noncompliant, the commissioner shall notify the county board of the reason the county board is considered noncompliant and request that the county board develop a corrective action plan stating how the county board plans to correct the problem. The corrective action plan must be submitted to the commissioner within 45 days after the date the county board received notice of noncompliance;

(5) the final deadline for fiscal reports or amendments to fiscal reports is one year after the date the report was originally due. If the commissioner does not receive a report by the final deadline, the county board forfeits the funding associated with the report for that reporting period and the county board must repay any funds associated with the report received for that reporting period;

(6) the commissioner may not delay payments, withhold funds, or require repayment under clause (3) or (5) if the county demonstrates that the commissioner failed to provide appropriate forms, guidelines, and technical assistance to enable the county to comply with the requirements. If the county board disagrees with an action taken by the commissioner under clause (3) or (5), the county board may appeal the action according to sections 14.57 to 14.69; and

(7) counties subject to withholding of funds under clause (3) or forfeiture or repayment of funds under clause (5) shall not reduce or withhold benefits or services to clients to cover costs incurred due to actions taken by the commissioner under clause (3) or (5).

(p) The commissioner shall allocate federal fiscal disallowances or sanctions for audit exceptions when federal fiscal disallowances or sanctions are based on a statewide random sample in direct proportion to each county's claim for that period.

(q) The commissioner is responsible for ensuring the detection, prevention, investigation, and resolution of fraudulent activities or behavior by applicants, recipients, and other participants in the programs administered by the department. The commissioner shall cooperate with the commissioner of education to enforce the requirements for program integrity and fraud prevention for investigation for child care assistance under chapter 142E.

(r) The commissioner shall require county agencies to identify overpayments, establish claims, and utilize all available and cost-beneficial methodologies to collect and recover these overpayments in the programs administered by the department.

(s) The commissioner shall develop recommended standards for child foster care homes that address the components of specialized therapeutic services to be provided by child foster care homes with those services.

(t) The commissioner shall authorize the method of payment to or from the department as part of the programs administered by the department. This authorization includes the receipt or disbursement of funds held by the department in a fiduciary capacity as part of the programs administered by the department.

(u) In coordination with the commissioner of human services, the commissioner shall create and provide county and Tribal agencies with blank applications, affidavits, and other forms as necessary for public assistance programs.

(v) The commissioner shall cooperate with the federal government and its public welfare agencies in any reasonable manner as may be necessary to qualify for federal aid for temporary assistance for needy families and in conformity with Title I of Public Law 104-193, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and successor amendments, including making reports that contain information required by the federal Social Security Advisory Board and complying with any provisions the board may find necessary to assure the correctness and verification of the reports.

(w) On or before January 15 in each even-numbered year, the commissioner shall make a biennial report to the governor concerning the activities of the agency.

(x) The commissioner shall enter into agreements with other departments of the state as necessary to meet all requirements of the federal government.

(y) The commissioner may cooperate with other state agencies in establishing reciprocal agreements in instances where a child receiving Minnesota family investment program (MFIP) assistance or its out-of-state equivalent moves or contemplates moving into or out of the state, in order that the child may continue to receive MFIP or equivalent aid from the state moved from until the child has resided for one year in the state moved to.

(z) The commissioner shall provide appropriate technical assistance to county agencies to develop methods to have county financial workers remind and encourage recipients of aid to families with dependent children, the Minnesota family investment program, the Minnesota family investment plan, family general assistance, or SNAP benefits whose assistance unit includes at least one child under the age of five to have each young child immunized against childhood diseases. The commissioner must examine the feasibility of utilizing the capacity of a statewide computer system to assist county agency financial workers in performing this function at appropriate intervals.

(aa) The commissioner shall have the power and authority to accept on behalf of the state contributions and gifts for the use and benefit of children under the guardianship or custody of the commissioner. The commissioner may also receive and accept on behalf of such children money due and payable to them as old age and survivors insurance benefits, veterans benefits, pensions, or other such monetary benefits. Gifts, contributions, pensions, and benefits under this paragraph must be deposited in and disbursed from the social welfare fund provided for in sections 256.88 to 256.92.

(bb) The specific enumeration of powers and duties in this section must not be construed to be a limitation upon the general powers granted to the commissioner.

Subd. 2a. **Grant consultation.** The commissioner must consult with the commissioner of management and budget to create, review, and revise grant program performance measures and to evaluate grant programs administered by the commissioner in accordance with section 16A.055, subdivisions 1a and 1b.

Subd. 3. **Subpoena power.** (a) The commissioner may administer oaths and affirmations, take depositions, certify to official acts, and issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of individuals and the production of documents and other personal property necessary in connection with the administration of programs administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

(b) The fees for service of a subpoena in paragraph (a) must be paid in the same manner as prescribed by law for a service of process issued by a district court. Witnesses must receive the same fees and mileage as in civil actions.

(c) The subpoena in paragraph (a) shall be enforceable through the district court in the district where the subpoena is issued.

(d) A subpoena issued under this subdivision must state that the person to whom the subpoena is directed may not disclose the fact that the subpoena was issued or the fact that the requested records have been given to law enforcement personnel or agents of the commissioner except:

(1) insofar as the disclosure is necessary and agreed upon by the commissioner, to find and disclose the records; or

(2) pursuant to court order.

Subd. 4. **Advisory task forces.** The commissioner may appoint advisory task forces to provide consultation on any of the programs under the commissioner's administration and supervision. A task force shall expire and the compensation, terms of office and removal of members shall be as provided in section 15.059. Notwithstanding section 15.059, the commissioner may pay a per diem of $35 to consumers and family members whose participation is needed in legislatively authorized state-level task forces, and whose participation on the task force is not as a paid representative of any agency, organization, or association.

Subd. 5. **Centralized disbursement system.** The commissioner may establish a system for the centralized disbursement of benefits administered by the commissioner as well as any related documents. Benefits must be issued by the state or county subject to section 142A.10.

Subd. 6. **Contracting with financial institutions.** The state agency may contract with banks or other financial institutions to provide services associated with the processing of public assistance checks and may pay a service fee for these services, provided the fee charged does not exceed the fee charged to other customers of the institution for similar services.

Subd. 7. MS 2024 [Repealed, 2024 c 115 art 12 s 35]

Subd. 8. MS 2024 [Repealed, 2024 c 115 art 12 s 35]

Subd. 9. **American Indian child welfare projects.** (a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families may authorize projects to initiate Tribal delivery of child welfare services to American Indian children and their parents and custodians living on the reservation. The commissioner has authority to solicit and determine which Tribes may participate in a project. Grants may be issued to Minnesota Indian Tribes to support the projects. The commissioner may waive existing state rules as needed to accomplish the projects. The commissioner may authorize projects to use alternative methods of (1) screening, investigating, and assessing reports of child maltreatment, and (2) administrative reconsideration, administrative appeal, and judicial appeal of maltreatment determinations, provided the alternative methods used by the projects comply with the provisions of sections 142A.20 and 256.045 and chapter 260E that deal with the rights of individuals who are the subjects of reports or investigations, including notice and appeal rights and data practices requirements. The commissioner shall only authorize alternative methods that comply with the public policy under section 260E.01. The commissioner may seek any federal approval necessary to carry out the projects as well as seek and use any funds available to the commissioner, including use of federal funds, foundation funds, existing grant funds, and other funds. The commissioner is authorized to advance state funds as necessary to operate the projects. Federal reimbursement applicable to the projects is appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes of the projects. The projects must be required to address responsibility for safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "American Indian child" means a person under 21 years old and who is a Tribal member or eligible for membership in one of the Tribes chosen for a project under this subdivision and who is residing on the reservation of that Tribe.

(c) In order to qualify for an American Indian child welfare project, a Tribe must:

(1) be one of the existing Tribes with reservation land in Minnesota;

(2) have a Tribal court with jurisdiction over child custody proceedings;

(3) have a substantial number of children for whom determinations of maltreatment have occurred;

(4)(i) have capacity to respond to reports of abuse and neglect under chapter 260E; or (ii) have codified the Tribe's screening, investigation, and assessment of reports of child maltreatment procedures, if authorized to use an alternative method by the commissioner under paragraph (a);

(5) provide a wide range of services to families in need of child welfare services;

(6) have a Tribal-state title IV-E agreement in effect; and

(7) enter into host Tribal contracts pursuant to section 142A.07, subdivision 6.

(d) Grants awarded under this section may be used for the nonfederal costs of providing child welfare services to American Indian children on the Tribe's reservation, including costs associated with:

(1) assessment and prevention of child abuse and neglect;

(2) family preservation;

(3) facilitative, supportive, and reunification services;

(4) out-of-home placement for children removed from the home for child protective purposes; and

(5) other activities and services approved by the commissioner that further the goals of providing safety, permanency, and well-being of American Indian children.

(e) When a Tribe has initiated a project and has been approved by the commissioner to assume child welfare responsibilities for American Indian children of that Tribe under this section, the affected county social service agency is relieved of responsibility for responding to reports of abuse and neglect under chapter 260E for those children during the time within which the Tribal project is in effect and funded. The commissioner shall work with Tribes and affected counties to develop procedures for data collection, evaluation, and clarification of ongoing role and financial responsibilities of the county and Tribe for child welfare services prior to initiation of the project. Children who have not been identified by the Tribe as participating in the project shall remain the responsibility of the county. Nothing in this section shall alter responsibilities of the county for law enforcement or court services.

(f) Participating Tribes may conduct children's mental health screenings under section 245.4874, subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (12), for children who are eligible for the initiative and living on the reservation and who meet one of the following criteria:

(1) the child must be receiving child protective services;

(2) the child must be in foster care; or

(3) the child's parents must have had parental rights suspended or terminated.

Tribes may access reimbursement from available state funds for conducting the screenings. Nothing in this section shall alter responsibilities of the county for providing services under section 245.487.

(g) Participating Tribes may establish a local child mortality review panel. In establishing a local child mortality review panel, the Tribe agrees to conduct local child mortality reviews for child deaths or

near-fatalities occurring on the reservation under subdivision 7. Tribes with established child mortality review panels shall have access to nonpublic data and shall protect nonpublic data under subdivision 7, paragraphs (c) to (e). The Tribe shall provide written notice to the commissioner and affected counties when a local child mortality review panel has been established and shall provide data upon request of the commissioner for purposes of sharing nonpublic data with members of the state child mortality review panel in connection to an individual case.

(h) The commissioner shall collect information on outcomes relating to child safety, permanency, and well-being of American Indian children who are served in the projects. Participating Tribes must provide information to the state in a format and completeness deemed acceptable by the state to meet state and federal reporting requirements.

(i) In consultation with the White Earth Band, the commissioner shall develop and submit to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over health and human services a plan to transfer legal responsibility for providing child protective services to White Earth Band member children residing in Hennepin County to the White Earth Band. The plan shall include a financing proposal, definitions of key terms, statutory amendments required, and other provisions required to implement the plan.

Subd. 10. **Citizen review panels.** (a) The commissioner shall establish a minimum of three citizen review panels to examine the policies and procedures of state and local welfare agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. Local social service agencies shall cooperate and work with the citizen review panels. Where appropriate, the panels may examine specific cases to evaluate the effectiveness of child protection activities. The panels must examine the extent to which the state and local agencies are meeting the requirements of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act. The commissioner may authorize mortality review panels or child protection teams to carry out the duties of a citizen review panel if membership meets or is expanded to meet the requirements of this section.

(b) The panel membership must include volunteers who broadly represent the community in which the panel is established, including members who have expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, child protection advocates, and representatives of the councils of color and ombudsperson for families.

(c) A citizen review panel has access to the following data for specific case review under this paragraph: police investigative data; autopsy records and coroner or medical examiner investigative data; hospital, public health, or other medical records of the child; hospital and other medical records of the child's parent that relate to prenatal care; records created by social service agencies that provided services to the child or family; and personnel data related to an employee's performance in discharging child protection responsibilities. A state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision shall provide the data upon request of the commissioner. Not public data may be shared with members of the state or local citizen review panel in connection with an individual case.

(d) Notwithstanding the data's classification in the possession of any other agency, data acquired by a local or state citizen review panel in the exercise of its duties are protected nonpublic or confidential data as defined in section 13.02, but may be disclosed as necessary to carry out the purposes of the review panel. The data are not subject to subpoena or discovery. The commissioner may disclose conclusions of the review panel, but may not disclose data on individuals that were classified as confidential or private data on individuals in the possession of the state agency, statewide system, or political subdivision from which the data were received, except that the commissioner may disclose local social service agency data as provided

in section 260E.35, on individual cases involving a fatality or near fatality of a person served by the local social service agency prior to the date of death.

(e) A person attending a citizen review panel meeting may not disclose what transpired at the meeting, except to carry out the purposes of the review panel. The proceedings and records of the review panel are protected nonpublic data as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 13, and are not subject to discovery or introduction into evidence in a civil or criminal action against a professional, the state, or county agency arising out of the matters the panel is reviewing. Information, documents, and records otherwise available from other sources are not immune from discovery or use in a civil or criminal action solely because they were presented during proceedings of the review panel. A person who presented information before the review panel or who is a member of the panel is not prevented from testifying about matters within the person's knowledge. However, in a civil or criminal proceeding, a person must not be questioned about the person's presentation of information to the review panel or opinions formed by the person as a result of the review panel meetings.

Subd. 11. **Information for persons with limited English-language proficiency.** The commissioner shall implement a procedure for public assistance applicants and recipients to identify a language preference other than English in order to receive information pertaining to the public assistance programs in that preferred language.

Subd. 12. **Appropriation transfers to be reported.** When the commissioner transfers operational money between programs under section 16A.285, in addition to the requirements of that section the commissioner must provide the chairs of the legislative committees that have jurisdiction over the agency's budget with sufficient detail to identify the account to which the money was originally appropriated, and the account to which the money is being transferred.

Subd. 13. **Immigration status verifications.** (a) Notwithstanding any waiver of this requirement by the secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the commissioner shall utilize the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program to conduct immigration status verifications:

(1) as required under United States Code, title 8, section 1642; and

(2) for all applicants for food assistance benefits, whether under the federal SNAP, the MFIP or work first program, or the Minnesota food assistance program.

(b) The commissioner shall comply with the reporting requirements under United States Code, title 42, section 611a, and any federal regulation or guidance adopted under that law.

Subd. 14. **Public Assistance Reporting Information System.** (a) The commissioner shall comply with the federal requirements in Public Law 110-379 in implementing the Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) to determine eligibility for all individuals applying for public benefits under chapter 142E and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

(b) The commissioner shall determine eligibility under paragraph (a) by performing data matches, including matching with medical assistance, cash, child care, and supplemental assistance programs operated by other states.

Subd. 15. **Drug convictions.** (a) The state court administrator shall provide a report every six months by electronic means to the commissioner of children, youth, and families, including the name, address, date of birth, and, if available, driver's license or state identification card number, date of the sentence, effective date of the sentence, and county in which the conviction occurred, of each person convicted of a felony

under chapter 152, except for convictions under section 152.0263 or 152.0264, during the previous six months.

(b) The commissioner shall determine whether the individuals who are the subject of the data reported under paragraph (a) are receiving public assistance under chapter 142F or 142G, and if an individual is receiving assistance under chapter 142F or 142G, the commissioner shall instruct the county to proceed under section 142G.18 or 256D.024, whichever is applicable, for the individual.

(c) The commissioner shall not retain any data received under paragraph (a) that does not relate to an individual receiving publicly funded assistance under chapter 142F or 142G.

Subd. 16. **Data sharing with Department of Children, Youth, and Families; multiple identification cards.** (a) The commissioner of public safety shall, on a monthly basis, provide the commissioner of children, youth, and families with the first, middle, and last name, the address, date of birth, driver's license or state identification card number, and all photographs or electronically produced images of all applicants and holders whose drivers' licenses and state identification cards have been canceled under section 171.14, paragraph (a), clause (2) or (3), by the commissioner of public safety. After the initial data report has been provided by the commissioner of public safety to the commissioner of children, youth, and families under this paragraph, subsequent reports shall only include cancellations that occurred after the end date of the cancellations represented in the previous data report.

(b) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall compare the information provided under paragraph (a) with the commissioner's data regarding recipients of all public assistance programs managed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to determine whether any individual with multiple identification cards issued by the Department of Public Safety has illegally or improperly enrolled in any public assistance program managed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

(c) If the commissioner of children, youth, and families determines that an applicant or recipient has illegally or improperly enrolled in any public assistance program, the commissioner shall provide all due process protections to the individual before terminating the individual from the program according to applicable statute and notifying the county attorney.

Subd. 17. **Data sharing with Department of Children, Youth, and Families; legal presence date.** (a) The commissioner of public safety shall, on a monthly basis, provide the commissioner of children, youth, and families with the first, middle, and last name, and address, date of birth, and driver's license or state identification card number of all applicants and holders of drivers' licenses and state identification cards whose temporary legal presence date has expired and as a result the driver's license or identification card has been accordingly canceled under section 171.14 by the commissioner of public safety.

(b) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall use the information provided under paragraph (a) to determine whether the eligibility of any recipients of public assistance programs managed by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families has changed as a result of the status change in the Department of Public Safety data.

(c) If the commissioner of children, youth, and families determines that a recipient has illegally or improperly received benefits from any public assistance program, the commissioner shall provide all due process protections to the individual before terminating the individual from the program according to applicable statute and notifying the county attorney.

Subd. 18. **Homeless services.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families may contract directly with nonprofit organizations providing homeless services in two or more counties.

Subd. 19. **Nonstate funding for program costs.** Notwithstanding sections 16A.013 to 16A.016, the commissioner may accept, on behalf of the state, additional funding from sources other than state funds for the purpose of financing the cost of assistance program grants or nongrant administration. All additional funding is appropriated to the commissioner for use as designated by the grantor of funding.

Subd. 20. **Systems continuity.** In the event of disruption of technical systems or computer operations, the commissioner may use available grant appropriations to ensure continuity of payments for maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of clients served by programs administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Grant funds must be used in a manner consistent with the original intent of the appropriation.

Subd. 21. **Federal administrative reimbursement dedicated.** Federal administrative reimbursement resulting from the federal child support grant expenditures authorized under United States Code, title 42, section 1315, is appropriated to the commissioner.

Subd. 22. **Federal reimbursement for privatized adoption grants.** Federal reimbursement for privatized adoption grant and foster care recruitment grant expenditures is appropriated to the commissioner for adoption grants and foster care and adoption administrative purposes.

Subd. 23. **DCYF receipt center accounting.** The commissioner may transfer appropriations to, and account for DCYF receipt center operations in, the special revenue fund.

Subd. 24. **Nonfederal share transfers.** The nonfederal share of activities for which federal administrative reimbursement is appropriated to the commissioner may be transferred to the special revenue fund.

Subd. 25. **Interview expenses.** Job applicants for professional, administrative, or highly technical positions recruited by the commissioner may be reimbursed for necessary travel expenses to and from interviews arranged by the commissioner.

Subd. 26. **Changes to grant programs.** Prior to implementing any substantial changes to a grant funding formula disbursed through allocations administered by the commissioner, the commissioner must provide a report on the nature of the changes, the effect the changes will have, whether any funding will change, and other relevant information, to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over children, youth, and families. The report must be provided prior to the start of a regular session, and the proposed changes cannot be implemented until after the adjournment of that regular session.

Subd. 27. **Federal grants for Minnesota Indians.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families is authorized to enter into contracts with the United States Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Interior, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for the purpose of receiving federal grants for the support of Minnesota's Indian Communities.

Subd. 28. **Reimbursement of counties for certain Indian benefits costs.** (a) The commissioner, to the extent that state and federal money is available, shall reimburse any county for all benefits costs expended by the county to any Indian who is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa and resides upon the Red Lake Indian Reservation. The commissioner may advance payments to a county on an estimated basis subject to audit and adjustment at the end of each state fiscal year. Reimbursements shall be prorated if the state appropriation for this purpose is insufficient to provide full reimbursement.

(b) The commissioner may promulgate rules for the carrying out of the provisions of this subdivision and may negotiate for and accept grants from the United States government for the purposes of this section.

Subd. 29. **Rules on physical control of clients for facilities.** For any applicable facility licensed or operated by the commissioner, the commissioner shall abide by and enforce the nonrulemaking provisions of sections 245.825 and 245.8251 and any rules adopted by the commissioner of human services pursuant to those sections. The commissioner shall cooperate with the commissioner of human services in any data collection and reviews of rules related to sections 245.825 and 245.8251.

Subd. 30. **Court-awarded funds; disposition.** (a) The commissioner shall notify the house of representatives Ways and Means and senate Finance Committees of the terms of any contractual arrangement entered into by the commissioner and the attorney general, pursuant to an order of any court of law that provides for the receipt of funds by the commissioner.

(b) Any funds recovered or received by the commissioner pursuant to an order of any court of law shall be placed in the general fund.

Subd. 31. **Donated funds from private postsecondary institutions.** The commissioner may accept, on behalf of the state, funds donated from private postsecondary institutions, as the state's share in claiming federal Title IV-E reimbursement, to support the Child Welfare State/University Partnership, consistent with Code of Federal Regulations, title 45, part 235, section 235.66, Sources of State Funds, if the funds:

(1) are transferred to the state and under the state's administrative control;

(2) are donated with no restriction that the funds be used for the training of a particular individual or at a particular facility or institution; and

(3) do not revert to the donor's facility or use.

Subd. 32. **Duties of commissioner of children, youth, and families.** It shall be the duty of the commissioner of children, youth, and families to promote the enforcement of all laws for the protection of children with developmental disabilities and dependent, neglected, and delinquent children, to cooperate to this end with juvenile courts and all reputable child-helping and child-placing agencies of a public or private character, and to take the initiative in all matters involving the interests of such children where adequate provision therefor has not already been made. The commissioner may appoint a chief executive officer and such assistants as shall be necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

Subd. 33. **Services to pregnant women.** It shall be the duty of the commissioner of children, youth, and families to offer appropriate social services to any pregnant woman who is in need of social services under criteria prescribed by rule of the commissioner. The commissioner shall also offer appropriate social services to the woman and her child after the birth of the child.

Subd. 34. **Minor parents and their children.** (a) Every birth to a minor shall be reported by the hospital where the birth occurs, within three working days after the birth. The hospital shall make the report to the county social services agency in the county in which the minor mother resides and shall notify the minor that the report has been made. The county social services agency shall contact any minor mother who does not have a case manager who resides in the county and determine whether she has a plan for herself and her child. The plan must consider:

(1) the age of the minor parent;

(2) the involvement of the minor's parents or of other adults who provide active, ongoing guidance, support, and supervision;

(3) the involvement of the father of the minor's child, including steps being taken to establish paternity, if appropriate;

(4) a decision of the minor to keep and raise her child or place the child for adoption;

(5) completion of high school or a commissioner of education-selected high school equivalency program;

(6) current economic support of the minor parent and child and plans for economic self-sufficiency;

(7) parenting skills of the minor parent;

(8) living arrangement of the minor parent and child;

(9) child care and transportation needed for education, training, or employment;

(10) ongoing health care; and

(11) other services as needed to address personal or family problems or to facilitate the personal growth and development and economic self-sufficiency of the minor parent and child.

(b) If the minor parent does not have a plan for herself and child, the county social services agency shall work with her to develop a plan and shall provide case management services as needed to assure the resources and services are available to meet the plan requirements.

(c) If the minor parent refuses to plan for herself and her child or fails, without good cause, to follow through on an agreed-upon plan, the county social services agency may file a petition under section 260C.141 seeking an order for protective supervision under section 260C.201, subdivision 1, clause (a), on the grounds that the minor parent's child is dependent due to the state of immaturity of the minor parent. A contract with a minor parent under section 142G.57, subdivision 2, is an "agreed-upon plan" for purposes of this section.

Subd. 35. **Electronic benefits transfer; contracting and procurement.** Notwithstanding chapter 16C, the commissioner is exempt from the contract term limits for the issuance of public benefits through an electronic benefit transfer system and related services. These contracts may have up to an initial five-year term with extensions not to exceed a ten-year total contract duration.

Subd. 36. **Office of the Inspector General; reports.** The commissioner must submit final investigative reports to the inspector general appointed under chapter 15E, for any investigation conducted by the commissioner into fraud or misuse, as defined in section 15E.15, within the child care assistance program.

Subd. 37. **Program integrity report.** Beginning January 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, the commissioner must provide a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over children, youth, and families on program integrity functions within the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The report must include:

(1) an update from the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families with historical metrics and descriptive data, including the office's capacity to meet licensing demands and data for the past five years on the number of maltreatment reports and licensing complaints received, the results of maltreatment investigations, the number of licenses issued for each provider type, the number of licensing investigations and reviews completed, and the number of correction orders issued; and

(2) an update from the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families that includes summary data related to caseload, site visit data, the number of child care assistance program

investigations and administrative reviews within the past five years, recipient fraud investigation results involving multiple benefits from the past five years, and updates on closed major fraud investigations.

History: *(4456) 1917 c 194 s 3; 1965 c 45 s 37; 1980 c 589 s 30; 1984 c 654 art 5 s 58; 2014 c 312 art 27 s 77; 2023 c 70 art 12 s 15; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 2-27,96; art 6 s 4; art 7 s 12; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,43; 2024 c 127 art 66 s 4; 2025 c 20 s 105; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 9 s 1; art 11 s 1; 2026 c 88 art 1 s 42; 2026 c 92 art 2 s 9; 2026 c 122 s 6*

142A.04 STATE AND COUNTY SYSTEMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment of systems.** (a) The commissioner shall establish and enhance computer systems necessary for the efficient operation of the programs the commissioner supervises, including:

(1) management and administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and income maintenance program, including the electronic distribution of benefits; and

(2) management and administration of the child support enforcement program.

(b) The commissioner's development costs incurred by computer systems for statewide programs administered with that computer system and mandated by state or federal law must not be assessed against county agencies. The commissioner may charge a county for development and operating costs incurred by computer systems for functions requested by the county and not mandated by state or federal law for programs administered by the computer system incurring the cost.

(c) The commissioner shall distribute the nonfederal share of the costs of operating and maintaining the systems to the commissioner and to the counties participating in the system in a manner that reflects actual system usage, except that the nonfederal share of the costs of the MAXIS computer system and child support enforcement systems for statewide programs administered by those systems and mandated by state or federal law shall be borne entirely by the commissioner.

(d) The commissioner may enter into contractual agreements with federally recognized Indian Tribes with a reservation in Minnesota to participate in state-operated computer systems related to the management and administration of the SNAP, income maintenance, and child support enforcement programs to the extent necessary for the Tribe to operate a federally approved family assistance program or any other program under the supervision of the commissioner.

Subd. 2. **State systems account created.** A state systems account for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families is created in the state treasury. Money collected by the commissioner for the programs in subdivision 1 must be deposited in the account. Money in the state systems account and federal matching money are appropriated to the commissioner for purposes of this section.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 16*

142A.045 CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) An intergovernmental advisory committee is established to provide advice, consultation, and recommendations to the commissioner on the planning, design, administration, funding, and evaluation of services to children, youth, and families. Each of Minnesota's federally recognized Tribal Nations may, but is not required to, participate in the advisory committee required under this section. Notwithstanding section 15.059, the commissioner, each participating Tribal Nation, the Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators must codevelop and execute a process to

administer the committee that ensures each participating Tribal Nation and each county are represented. The committee must meet at least quarterly and special meetings may be called by the committee chair or a majority of the members. A Tribal Nation may elect to participate at any time.

(b) Subject to section 15.059, the commissioner may reimburse committee members or their alternates for allowable expenses while engaged in their official duties as committee members.

(c) Notwithstanding section 15.059, the intergovernmental advisory committee does not expire.

(d) In addition to the requirements under this section, the commissioner must implement a Tribal consultation process under section 10.65 to ensure recognition of the unique legal relationship between the state of Minnesota and Minnesota Tribal governments.

History: *2024 c 115 art 16 s 2*

142A.05 RULEMAKING.

(a) The commissioner may use the procedure in section 14.386, paragraph (a), to adopt rules necessary to implement the responsibilities transferred under this article or through section 16B.37. Section 14.386, paragraph (b), does not apply to these rules.

(b) The commissioner must amend Minnesota Rules to make conforming changes related to the transfer of responsibilities under Laws 2023, chapter 70, article 12, or through section 16B.37. The commissioner must obtain the approval of the commissioners of human services, education, health, and public safety for any amendments to or repeal of rules in existence on July 1, 2024, and administered under the authority of those agencies.

(c) The time limit in section 14.125 is extended to 36 months for rulemaking under paragraphs (a) and (b). The commissioner must publish a notice of intent to adopt rules or a notice of hearing within 36 months of the effective date reported under Laws 2023, chapter 70, article 12, section 30, subdivision 1, paragraph (c).

(d) The commissioner may adopt rules for the administration of activities related to the department. Rules adopted under this paragraph are subject to the rulemaking requirements of chapter 14.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 17; 2026 c 88 art 1 s 43*

142A.06 ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL GRANTS-IN-AID.

Subdivision 1. **Administration of grants-in-aid.** If, when and during such time as grants-in-aid are provided by the federal government for relief of the poor and accepted by this state, such aid shall be administered pursuant to and in accordance with rules promulgated and adopted by the commissioner of children, youth, and families; and during such time any provision of Minnesota Statutes 1945, chapter 261, as amended by Laws 1947, chapter 546, of Minnesota Statutes 1945, chapter 262, and of Minnesota Statutes 1945, chapter 263, in conflict with such rules shall be and remain, to the extent of such conflict, inoperative and suspended.

Subd. 2. **Treatment of grants-in-aid.** Grants-in-aid received from the federal government for any welfare, assistance or relief program or for administration under the jurisdiction of the commissioner shall, in the first instance, be credited to a federal grant fund and shall be transferred therefrom to the credit of the commissioner in the appropriate account upon certification of the commissioner that the amounts so requested to be transferred have been earned or are required for the purposes and programs intended. Moneys received

by the federal grant fund need not be budgeted as such, provided transfers from the fund are budgeted for allotment purposes in the appropriate appropriations.

Subd. 3. **Securing grants-in-aid.** The commissioner shall negotiate with the federal government, or any agency, bureau, or department thereof, for the purpose of securing or obtaining any grants or aids. Any grants or aids thus secured or received are appropriated to the commissioner and made available for the uses and purposes for which they were received but shall be used to reduce the direct appropriations provided by law unless federal law prohibits such action or unless the commissioner obtains approval of the governor who shall seek the advice of the Legislative Advisory Commission.

Subd. 4. **Exclusion.** This section does not apply to federal grants or aids received from the United States Department of Education.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 28*

142A.07 GRANTS AND PURCHASE OF SERVICE CONTRACTS.

Subdivision 1. **Authority.** The local agency may purchase community social services by grant or purchase of service contract from agencies or individuals approved as vendors.

Subd. 2. **Duties of local agency.** The local agency must:

(1) use a written grant or purchase of service contract when purchasing community social services. Every grant and purchase of service contract must be completed, signed, and approved by all parties to the agreement, including the county board, unless the county board has designated the local agency to sign on its behalf. No service shall be provided before the effective date of the grant or purchase of service contract;

(2) determine a client's eligibility for purchased services, or delegate the responsibility for making the preliminary determination to the approved vendor under the terms of the grant or purchase of service contract;

(3) ensure the development of an individual social service plan based on the client's needs;

(4) monitor purchased services and evaluate grants and contracts on the basis of client outcomes; and

(5) purchase only from approved vendors.

Subd. 3. **Local agency criteria.** When the local agency chooses to purchase community social services from a vendor that is not subject to state licensing laws or department rules, the local agency must establish written criteria for vendor approval to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of clients.

Subd. 4. **Case records and data reporting requirements.** Case records and data reporting requirements for grants and purchased services are the same as case record and data reporting requirements for direct services.

Subd. 5. **Files.** The local agency must keep an administrative file for each grant and contract.

Subd. 6. **Contracting within and across county lines; lead county contracts; lead Tribal contracts.** (a) Paragraphs (b) to (f) govern contracting within and across county lines and lead county contracts. Paragraphs (b) to (f) govern contracting within and across reservation boundaries and lead Tribal contracts for initiative Tribes under section 142A.03, subdivision 9. For purposes of this subdivision, "local agency" includes a Tribe or a county agency.

(b) Once a local agency and an approved vendor execute a contract that meets the requirements of this subdivision, the contract governs all other purchases of service from the vendor by all other local agencies

for the term of the contract. The local agency that negotiated and entered into the contract becomes the lead Tribe or county for the contract.

(c) When the local agency in the county or reservation where a vendor is located wants to purchase services from that vendor and the vendor has no contract with the local agency or any other Tribe or county, the local agency must negotiate and execute a contract with the vendor.

(d) When a local agency wants to purchase services from a vendor located in another county or reservation, it must notify the local agency in the county or reservation where the vendor is located. Within 30 days of being notified, the local agency in the vendor's county or reservation must:

(1) if it has a contract with the vendor, send a copy to the inquiring local agency;

(2) if there is a contract with the vendor for which another local agency is the lead Tribe or county, identify the lead Tribe or county to the inquiring agency; or

(3) if no local agency has a contract with the vendor, inform the inquiring agency whether it will negotiate a contract and become the lead Tribe or county. If the agency where the vendor is located will not negotiate a contract with the vendor because of concerns related to clients' health and safety, the agency must share those concerns with the inquiring local agency.

(e) If the local agency in the county where the vendor is located declines to negotiate a contract with the vendor or fails to respond within 30 days of receiving the notification under paragraph (d), the inquiring agency is authorized to negotiate a contract and must notify the local agency that declined or failed to respond.

(f) When the inquiring local agency under paragraph (e) becomes the lead Tribe or county for a contract and the contract expires and needs to be renegotiated, that Tribe or county must again follow the requirements under paragraph (d) and notify the local agency where the vendor is located. The local agency where the vendor is located has the option of becoming the lead Tribe or county for the new contract. If the local agency does not exercise the option, paragraph (e) applies.

Subd. 7. **Contracting for performance.** A local agency may negotiate a supplemental agreement to a contract executed between a lead agency and an approved vendor under subdivision 6 for the purposes of contracting for specific performance. The supplemental agreement may augment the lead contract requirements and rates for services authorized by that local agency only. The additional provisions must be negotiated with the vendor and designed to encourage successful, timely, and cost-effective outcomes for clients, and may establish incentive payments, penalties, performance-related reporting requirements, and similar conditions. The per diem rate allowed under this subdivision must not be less than the rate established in the lead county contract. Nothing in the supplemental agreement between a local agency and an approved vendor binds the lead agency or other local agencies to the terms and conditions of the supplemental agreement.

Subd. 8. **Contracts for child foster care services.** When local agencies negotiate lead county contracts or purchase of service contracts for child foster care services, the foster care maintenance payment made on behalf of the child shall follow the provisions of Northstar Care for Children, sections 142A.60 to 142A.612. Foster care maintenance payments as defined in section 142A.602, subdivision 15, represent costs for activities similar in nature to those expected of parents and do not cover services rendered by the licensed or tribally approved foster parent or administrative costs or fees. Payments made to foster parents must follow the requirements of section 142A.609, subdivision 14. The legally responsible agency must provide foster parents with the assessment and notice as specified in section 142A.607. The financially responsible agency is permitted to make additional payments for specific services provided by the foster parents, as

permitted in section 142A.604, subdivision 5. These additional payments are not considered foster care maintenance.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 29,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.08 PLAIN LANGUAGE IN WRITTEN MATERIALS.

(a) To the extent reasonable and consistent with the goals of providing easily understandable and readable materials and complying with federal and state laws governing the programs, all written materials relating to services and determinations of eligibility for or amounts of benefits that will be given to applicants for or recipients of assistance under a program administered or supervised by the commissioner must be understandable to a person who reads at the seventh-grade level, using the Flesch scale analysis readability score as determined under section 72C.09.

(b) All written materials relating to determinations of eligibility for or amounts of benefits that will be given to applicants for or recipients of assistance under programs administered or supervised by the commissioner must be developed to satisfy the plain language requirements of the Plain Language Contract Act under sections 325G.29 to 325G.36. Materials may be submitted to the attorney general for review and certification. Notwithstanding section 325G.35, subdivision 1, the attorney general shall review submitted materials to determine whether they comply with the requirements of section 325G.31. The remedies available pursuant to sections 8.31 and 325G.33 to 325G.36 do not apply to these materials. Failure to comply with this section does not provide a basis for suspending the implementation or operation of other laws governing programs administered by the commissioner.

(c) The requirements of this section do not apply to materials that must be submitted to a federal agency for approval, to the extent that application of the requirements prevents federal approval.

(d) Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit a lawsuit brought to require the commissioner to comply with this section or to affect individual appeal rights granted pursuant to section 256.045.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 30*

142A.09 BACKGROUND STUDIES ON LICENSEES AND OTHER PERSONNEL.

Subdivision 1. **Background studies required.** The commissioner of human services shall conduct background studies of individuals specified in section 245C.03, subdivision 5c, affiliated with:

(1) a facility or program licensed or seeking a license under chapter 142B;

(2) a license-exempt child care center certified under chapter 142C; or

(3) a legal nonlicensed child care provider authorized under chapter 142E.

Subd. 2. **Responsibilities of commissioner of human services.** (a) The commissioner of human services shall conduct the background studies required by subdivision 1 in compliance with the provisions of chapter 245C. The commissioner of human services shall provide necessary forms and instructions, shall conduct the necessary background studies of individuals, and shall provide notification of the results of the studies to the facilities, individuals, and the commissioner of children, youth, and families.

(b) If the commissioner of human services determines that an individual is disqualified pursuant to chapter 245C, the commissioner of human services shall notify the license holder; the commissioner of children, youth, and families; and the individual and shall inform the individual of the right to request a reconsideration of the disqualification.

Subd. 3. **Reconsiderations.** (a) Notwithstanding any provision of chapter 245C, the commissioner of children, youth, and families shall review and decide reconsideration requests, including requests for variances, for all background studies of individuals in subdivision 1, paragraph (a), except for facilities or programs that are also licensed by the commissioner of human services. The commissioner of children, youth, and families must review and decide reconsideration requests in accordance with the procedures and criteria contained in chapter 245C.

(b) The commissioner of human services is solely responsible for reviewing and deciding a reconsideration request for a background study of an individual affiliated with a facility or program licensed or certified by both the commissioner of children, youth, and families and the commissioner of human services.

(c) The commissioner of children, youth, and family's decision must be provided to the individual and to the commissioner of human services. The commissioner's decision to grant or deny a reconsideration of disqualification is the final administrative agency action, except under the circumstances described in sections 245C.25, 245C.27, and 245C.28, subdivision 3.

Subd. 4. **Responsibilities of facilities and programs.** Facilities and programs described in subdivision 1 shall be responsible for cooperating with the departments in implementing the provisions of this section. The responsibilities imposed on applicants, certification holders, and licensees under chapters 142B and 245C shall apply to these facilities. The provision of section 245C.09 shall apply to the refusal to cooperate with the completion of the background studies by an applicant, a licensee, a registrant, or an individual.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 31; art 2 s 74; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 41; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 16 s 2*

142A.10 COMPLIANCE SYSTEM.

(a) The commissioner shall coordinate with the commissioner of human services to administer the compliance system in section 256.017.

(b) The commissioner shall administer the compliance system for the Minnesota family investment program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the child care assistance program, and all other programs administered by the commissioner or on behalf of the commissioner under the powers and authorities named in section 142A.03, subdivision 2.

(c) The purpose of this section is to permit the commissioner to supervise the administration of public assistance programs; to enforce timely and accurate distribution of benefits, completeness of service, and efficient and effective program management and operations; to increase uniformity and consistency in the administration and delivery of public assistance programs throughout the state; and to reduce the possibility of sanctions and fiscal disallowances for noncompliance with federal regulations and state statutes. The commissioner, or the commissioner's representative, may issue administrative subpoenas as needed in administering the compliance system.

(d) The commissioner shall utilize training, technical assistance, and monitoring activities, as specified in section 142A.03, subdivision 2, to encourage county agency compliance with written policies and procedures.

(e) The commissioner shall coordinate with the commissioner of human services in funding and awarding grants from the county public assistance incentive fund under section 256.018.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 32*

142A.11 COUNTY PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCENTIVE FUND.

(a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families, in coordination with the commissioner of human services, shall grant incentive awards of money specifically appropriated for this purpose to counties that: (1) have not been assessed an administrative penalty under section 256.017 in the corresponding fiscal year; and (2) perform satisfactorily according to indicators established by the commissioner.

(b) After consultation with county agencies, the commissioner shall inform county agencies in writing of the performance indicators that govern the awarding of the incentive fund for each fiscal year by April of the preceding fiscal year.

(c) The commissioner may set performance indicators to govern the awarding of the total fund, may allocate portions of the fund to be awarded by unique indicators, or may set a sole indicator to govern the awarding of funds.

(d) The funds shall be awarded to qualifying county agencies according to their share of benefits for the programs related to the performance indicators governing the distribution of the fund or part of the fund as compared to the total benefits of all qualifying county agencies for the programs related to the performance indicators governing the distribution of the fund or part of the fund.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 33*

142A.12 LIMITS ON RECEIVING PUBLIC FUNDS.

Subdivision 1. **Prohibition.** (a) If a provider, vendor, or individual enrolled, licensed, receiving funds under a grant contract, or registered in any program administered by the commissioner, including under the commissioner's powers and authorities in section 142A.03, is excluded from that program, the commissioner shall:

(1) prohibit the excluded provider, vendor, or individual from enrolling, becoming licensed, receiving grant funds, or registering in any other program administered by the commissioner; and

(2) disenroll, revoke or suspend a license of, disqualify, or debar the excluded provider, vendor, or individual in any other program administered by the commissioner.

(b) If a provider, vendor, or individual enrolled, licensed, receiving funds under a grant contract, or registered in any program administered by the commissioner, including under the commissioner's powers and authorities in section 142A.03, is excluded from that program, the commissioner may:

(1) prohibit any associated entities or associated individuals from enrolling, becoming licensed, receiving grant funds, or registering in any other program administered by the commissioner; and

(2) disenroll, revoke or suspend a license of, disqualify, or debar any associated entities or associated individuals in any other program administered by the commissioner.

(c) If a provider, vendor, or individual enrolled, licensed, or otherwise receiving funds under any contract or registered in any program administered by a Minnesota state or federal agency is excluded from that program, the commissioner of children, youth, and families may:

(1) prohibit the excluded provider, vendor, individual, or any associated entities or associated individuals from enrolling, becoming licensed, receiving grant funds, or registering in any program administered by the commissioner; and

(2) disenroll, revoke or suspend a license of, disqualify, or debar the excluded provider, vendor, individual, or any associated entities or associated individuals in any program administered by the commissioner.

(d) The duration of a prohibition, disenrollment, revocation, suspension, disqualification, or debarment under paragraph (a) must last for the longest applicable sanction or disqualifying period in effect for the provider, vendor, or individual permitted by state or federal law. The duration of a prohibition, disenrollment, revocation, suspension, disqualification, or debarment under paragraphs (b) and (c) may last until up to the longest applicable sanction or disqualifying period in effect for the provider, vendor, individual, associated entity, or associated individual as permitted by state or federal law.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions have the meanings given.

(b) "Associated entity" means a provider or vendor owned or controlled by an excluded individual.

(c) "Associated individual" means an individual or entity that has a relationship with the business or its owners or controlling individuals, such that the individual or entity would have knowledge of the financial practices of the program in question.

(d) "Excluded" means removed under other authorities from a program administered by a Minnesota state or federal agency, including a final determination to stop payments.

(e) "Individual" means a natural person providing products or services as a provider or vendor.

(f) "Provider" means any entity, individual, owner, controlling individual, license holder, director, or managerial official of an entity receiving payment from a program administered by a Minnesota state or federal agency.

Subd. 3. **Notice.** Within five days of taking an action under subdivision 1, paragraph (a), (b), or (c), against a provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity, the commissioner must send notice of the action to the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity. The notice must state:

(1) the basis for the action;

(2) the effective date of the action;

(3) the right to appeal the action; and

(4) the requirements and procedures for reinstatement.

Subd. 4. **Appeal.** Upon receipt of a notice under subdivision 3, a provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity may request a contested case hearing, as defined in section 14.02, subdivision 3, by filing with the commissioner a written request of appeal. The scope of any contested case hearing is solely limited to action taken under this section. The commissioner must receive the appeal request no later than 30 days after the date the notice was mailed to the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity. The appeal request must specify:

(1) each disputed item and the reason for the dispute;

(2) the authority in statute or rule upon which the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity relies for each disputed item;

(3) the name and address of the person or entity with whom contacts may be made regarding the appeal; and

(4) any other information required by the commissioner.

Subd. 5. **Withholding of payments.** (a) Except as otherwise provided by state or federal law, the commissioner may withhold payments to a provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity in any program administered by the commissioner if the commissioner determines there is a credible allegation of fraud for which an investigation is pending for a program administered by a Minnesota state or federal agency.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "credible allegation of fraud" means an allegation that has been verified by the commissioner from any source, including but not limited to:

(1) fraud hotline complaints;

(2) claims data mining;

(3) patterns identified through provider audits, civil false claims cases, and law enforcement investigations;

(4) court filings and other legal documents, including but not limited to police reports, complaints, indictments, informations, affidavits, declarations, and search warrants; and

(5) information from the inspector general, including information listed on the inspector general's exclusion list under section 15E.25, subdivision 1, clause (11).

(c) The commissioner must send notice of the withholding of payments within five days of taking such action. The notice must:

(1) state that payments are being withheld according to this subdivision;

(2) set forth the general allegations related to the withholding action, except the notice need not disclose specific information concerning an ongoing investigation;

(3) state that the withholding is for a temporary period and cite the circumstances under which the withholding will be terminated; and

(4) inform the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity of the right to submit written evidence to contest the withholding action for consideration by the commissioner.

(d) If the commissioner withholds payments under this subdivision, the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity has a right to request administrative reconsideration. A request for administrative reconsideration must be made in writing, state with specificity the reasons the payment withholding decision is in error, and include documents to support the request. Within 60 days from receipt of the request, the commissioner shall judiciously review allegations, facts, evidence available to the commissioner, and information submitted by the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity to determine whether the payment withholding should remain in place.

(e) The commissioner shall stop withholding payments if the commissioner determines there is insufficient evidence of fraud by the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity or when legal proceedings relating to the alleged fraud are completed, unless the commissioner has sent notice under subdivision 3 to the provider, vendor, individual, associated individual, or associated entity.

(f) The withholding of payments is a temporary action and is not subject to appeal under section 256.0451 or chapter 14.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 34; 2026 c 92 art 2 s 10*

142A.13 ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER CARD.

Subdivision 1. **Electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card.** Cash benefits for the general assistance and Minnesota supplemental aid programs under chapter 256D and programs under chapter 142G must be issued on an EBT card with the name of the head of household printed on the card. The card must include the following statement: "It is unlawful to use this card to purchase tobacco products or alcoholic beverages." This card must be issued within 30 calendar days of an eligibility determination. During the initial 30 calendar days of eligibility, a recipient may have cash benefits issued on an EBT card without a name printed on the card. This card may be the same card on which Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are issued and does not need to meet the requirements of this section.

Subd. 2. **Prohibited purchases.** An individual with an EBT card issued for one of the programs listed under subdivision 1 is prohibited from using the EBT debit card to purchase tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, as defined in section 340A.101, subdivision 2. Any prohibited purchases made under this subdivision shall constitute unlawful use and result in disqualification of the cardholder from the program as provided in subdivision 4.

Subd. 3. **EBT use restricted to certain states.** EBT debit cardholders in programs listed under subdivision 1 are prohibited from using the cash portion of the EBT card at vendors and automatic teller machines located outside of Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wisconsin. This subdivision does not apply to the food portion.

Subd. 4. **Disqualification.** (a) Any person found to be guilty of purchasing tobacco products or alcoholic beverages with their EBT debit card by a federal or state court or by an administrative hearing determination, or waiver thereof, through a disqualification consent agreement, or as part of any approved diversion plan under section 401.065, or any court-ordered stay which carries with it any probationary or other conditions, in the: (1) Minnesota family investment program and any affiliated program to include the work participation cash benefit program under chapter 142G; (2) general assistance program under chapter 256D; or (3) Minnesota supplemental aid program under chapter 256D, shall be disqualified from all of the listed programs.

(b) The needs of the disqualified individual shall not be taken into consideration in determining the grant level for that assistance unit: (1) for one year after the first offense; (2) for two years after the second offense; and (3) permanently after the third or subsequent offense.

(c) The period of program disqualification shall begin on the date stipulated on the advance notice of disqualification without possibility for postponement for administrative stay or administrative hearing and shall continue through completion unless and until the findings upon which the sanctions were imposed are reversed by a court of competent jurisdiction. The period for which sanctions are imposed is not subject to review.

Subd. 5. **Electronic benefit transaction card; receipt of benefits.** Any person in whose name an electronic benefit transaction card has been issued shall be presumed to have received the benefit of all transactions involving that card. This presumption applies in all situations unless the card in question has been reported lost or stolen by the cardholder. This presumption may be overcome by a preponderance of evidence indicating that the card was neither used by nor with the consent of the cardholder. Overcoming this presumption does not create any new or additional payment obligation not otherwise established in law, rule, or regulation.

Subd. 6. **Obligation to recover.** If an amount of MFIP assistance is paid to a recipient in excess of the payment due, it shall be recoverable by the county agency. This recovery authority also extends to preexisting claims or newly discovered claims established under the AFDC program in effect on January 1, 1997. The

agency shall give written notice to the recipient of its intention to recover the overpayment. County agency efforts and financial contributions shall be maintained at the level in place during fiscal year 1996.

Subd. 7. **Recoupment.** When an overpayment occurs, the county agency shall recover the overpayment from a current recipient by reducing the amount of aid payable to the assistance unit of which the recipient is a member for one or more monthly assistance payments until the overpayment is repaid. All county agencies in the state shall reduce the assistance payment by three percent of the assistance unit's standard of need in nonfraud cases and ten percent where fraud has occurred. For recipients receiving benefits via electronic benefits transfer, if the overpayment is a result of an automated teller machine (ATM) dispensing funds in error to the recipient, the agency may recover the ATM error by immediately withdrawing funds from the recipient's electronic benefit transfer account, up to the amount of the error. In cases where there is both an overpayment and underpayment, the county agency shall offset one against the other in correcting the payment.

Subd. 8. **Voluntary repayments.** Overpayments may also be voluntarily repaid, in part or in full, by the individual, in addition to the aid reductions in subdivision 7, to include further voluntary reductions in the grant level agreed to in writing by the individual, until the total amount of the overpayment is repaid.

Subd. 9. **Closed case recoveries.** The county agency shall make reasonable efforts to recover overpayments to persons no longer on assistance according to standards adopted by rule by the commissioner of children, youth, and families. The county agency need not attempt to recover overpayments of less than $35 paid to an individual no longer on assistance unless the individual has been convicted of fraud under section 256.98.

Subd. 10. **Replacement card.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families may charge a cardholder, defined as a person in whose name the transaction card was issued, a $2 fee to replace an electronic benefit transaction card. The fees shall be appropriated to the commissioner and used for electronic benefit purposes.

Subd. 11. **Transaction fee.** The commissioner may charge transaction fees in accordance with this subdivision up to a maximum of $10 in transaction fees per cardholder per month. In a given month, the first four cash withdrawals made by an individual cardholder are free. For subsequent cash withdrawals, $1 may be charged. No transaction fee can be charged if the card is used to purchase goods or services on a point of sale basis. A transaction fee subsequently set by the federal government may supersede a fee established under this subdivision. The fees shall be appropriated to the commissioner and used for electronic benefit purposes.

Subd. 12. **Requirement for liquor stores, tobacco stores, gambling establishments, and tattoo parlors.** Liquor stores, tobacco stores, gambling establishments, and tattoo parlors must negotiate with their third-party processors to block EBT card cash transactions at their places of business and withdrawals of cash at automatic teller machines located in their places of business.

Subd. 13. **EBT transaction costs; supplemental nutrition assistance program.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall not subsidize retailers for electronic benefit transfer Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program transactions.

Subd. 14. **Gambling establishments.** (a) For purposes of this section, "gambling establishment" means a racetrack licensed under section 240.06 or 240.09, a casino operated under a Tribal-state compact under section 3.9221, or any other establishment that receives at least 50 percent of its gross revenue from the conduct of gambling.

(b) The commissioner shall take all actions necessary to ensure that no person may obtain benefits under chapter 142F, 142G, or 256 through the use of a financial transaction card, as defined in section 609.821, subdivision 1, paragraph (a), at a terminal located in or attached to a gambling establishment, liquor store, tobacco store, or tattoo parlor.

(c) The commissioner shall take all actions necessary to ensure that warrants issued to pay benefits under chapter 142F or 256 bear a restrictive endorsement that prevents their being cashed in a gambling establishment.

History: *1997 c 85 art 5 s 19; 1Sp2011 c 9 art 1 s 33; 2012 c 247 art 3 s 30; 2013 c 108 art 3 s 42; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 35,96; art 6 s 4; art 7 s 12; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,43*

142A.14 TAX REBATES.

Any federal or state tax rebate received by a recipient of a public assistance program shall not be counted as income or as an asset for purposes of any of the public assistance programs under this chapter or any other chapter, including, but not limited to, chapters 142E, 142F, and 142G to the extent permitted under federal law.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 36*

142A.15 MS 2024 [Repealed, 2025 c 21 s 95]

142A.20 ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL REVIEW OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES MATTERS.

Subdivision 1. **Hearings held by the Department of Human Services.** All state agency hearings under subdivision 2 must be heard by a human services judge pursuant to sections 256.045 and 256.0451.

Subd. 2. **State agency hearings.** State agency hearings are available for the following:

(1) any person:

(i) applying for, receiving, or having received public assistance or a program of social services administered by the commissioner or a county agency on behalf of the commissioner or the federal Food and Nutrition Act; and

(ii) whose application for assistance is denied, not acted upon with reasonable promptness, or whose assistance is suspended, reduced, terminated, or claimed to have been incorrectly paid;

(2) any person whose claim for foster care payment according to a placement of the child resulting from a child protection assessment under chapter 260E is denied or not acted upon with reasonable promptness, regardless of funding source;

(3) any person to whom a right of appeal according to this section is given by other provision of law; and

(4) any person with an outstanding debt resulting from receipt of public assistance or the federal Food and Nutrition Act who is contesting a setoff claim by the commissioner of children, youth, and families or a county agency. The scope of the appeal is the validity of the claimant agency's intention to request a setoff of a refund under chapter 270A against the debt.

Subd. 3. **Orders of the commissioner of children, youth, and families.** (a) A state human services judge shall conduct a hearing on an appeal of a matter listed in subdivision 2 and shall recommend an order

to the commissioner of children, youth, and families. The recommended order must be based on all relevant evidence and must not be limited to a review of the propriety of the state or county agency's action. A state human services judge may take official notice of adjudicative facts. The commissioner of children, youth, and families may accept the recommended order of a state human services judge and issue the order to the county agency and the applicant, recipient, or former recipient. If the commissioner refuses to accept the recommended order of the state human services judge, the commissioner shall notify the petitioner or the agency of the commissioner's refusal and shall state reasons for the refusal. The commissioner shall allow each party ten days' time to submit additional written argument on the matter. After the expiration of the ten-day period, the commissioner shall issue an order on the matter to the petitioner and the agency.

(b) A party aggrieved by an order of the commissioner may appeal under subdivision 5 or request reconsideration by the commissioner within 30 days after the date the commissioner issues the order. The commissioner may reconsider an order upon request of any party or on the commissioner's own motion. A request for reconsideration does not stay implementation of the commissioner's order. The person seeking reconsideration has the burden to demonstrate why the matter should be reconsidered. The request for reconsideration may include legal argument and proposed additional evidence supporting the request. If proposed additional evidence is submitted, the person must explain why the proposed additional evidence was not provided at the time of the hearing. If reconsideration is granted, the other participants must be sent a copy of all material submitted in support of the request for reconsideration and must be given ten days to respond. Upon reconsideration, the commissioner may issue an amended order or an order affirming the original order.

(c) Any order of the commissioner issued under this subdivision shall be conclusive upon the parties unless appeal is taken in the manner provided by subdivision 5. Any order of the commissioner is binding on the parties and must be implemented by the state agency or a county agency until the order is reversed by the district court or unless the commissioner or a district court orders monthly assistance or aid or services paid or provided under subdivision 8.

(d) A vendor under contract with a county agency to provide social services is not a party and may not request a hearing or seek judicial review of an order issued under this section, unless assisting a recipient as provided in section 256.045, subdivision 4.

Subd. 4. **Additional powers of commissioner; subpoenas.** (a) The commissioner may initiate a review of any action or decision of a county agency and direct that the matter be presented to a state human services judge for a hearing held under subdivision 2 or section 256.045, subdivision 3b. In all matters dealing with children, youth, and families committed by law to the discretion of the county agency, the commissioner's judgment may be substituted for that of the county agency. The commissioner may order an independent examination when appropriate.

(b) Any party to a hearing held pursuant to subdivision 2 or section 256.045, subdivision 3b, may request that the commissioner issue a subpoena to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of records at the hearing. A local agency may request that the commissioner issue a subpoena to compel the release of information from third parties prior to a request for a hearing under section 256.0451 upon a showing of relevance to such a proceeding. The issuance, service, and enforcement of subpoenas under this subdivision is governed by section 357.22 and the Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure.

Subd. 5. **Judicial review.** Any party who is aggrieved by an order of the commissioner of children, youth, and families may appeal the order to the district court of the county responsible for furnishing assistance, or, in appeals under section 256.045, subdivision 3b, the county where the maltreatment occurred, by serving a written copy of a notice of appeal upon the commissioner and any adverse party of record within

30 days after the date the commissioner issued the order, the amended order, or order affirming the original order, and by filing the original notice and proof of service with the court administrator of the district court. Service may be made personally or by mail; service by mail is complete upon mailing. The court administrator shall not require a filing fee in appeals taken pursuant to this subdivision, except for appeals taken under section 256.045, subdivision 3b. The commissioner may elect to become a party to the proceedings in the district court. Except for appeals under section 256.045, subdivision 3b, any party may demand that the commissioner furnish all parties to the proceedings with a copy of the decision, and a transcript of any testimony, evidence, or other supporting papers from the hearing held before the state human services judge, by serving a written demand upon the commissioner within 30 days after service of the notice of appeal. Any party aggrieved by the failure of an adverse party to obey an order issued by the commissioner under subdivision 3 may compel performance according to the order in the manner prescribed in sections 586.01 to 586.12.

Subd. 6. **Hearing.** Any party may obtain a hearing at a special term of the district court by serving a written notice of the time and place of the hearing at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. The court may consider the matter in or out of chambers, and shall take no new or additional evidence unless it determines that such evidence is necessary for a more equitable disposition of the appeal.

Subd. 7. **Appeal.** Any party aggrieved by the order of the district court may appeal the order as in other civil cases. Except for appeals under section 256.045, subdivision 3b, no costs or disbursements shall be taxed against any party nor shall any filing fee or bond be required of any party.

Subd. 8. **Payments pending appeal.** If the commissioner of children, youth, and families or district court orders monthly assistance or aid or services paid or provided in any proceeding under this section, it shall be paid or provided pending appeal to the commissioner of children, youth, and families, district court, court of appeals, or supreme court. The state or county agency has a claim for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or cash payments made to or on behalf of a recipient or former recipient while an appeal is pending if the recipient or former recipient is determined ineligible for SNAP benefits or cash payments as a result of the appeal.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 38; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 28-33,47*

142A.22 OVERPAYMENTS BECOME JUDGMENTS BY OPERATION OF LAW.

Subdivision 1. **Qualifying overpayment.** Any overpayment for assistance granted under chapters 142E and 142G and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), except agency error claims, become a judgment by operation of law 90 days after the notice of overpayment is personally served upon the recipient in a manner that is sufficient under rule 4.03(a) of the Rules of Civil Procedure for district courts, or by certified mail, return receipt requested. This judgment shall be entitled to full faith and credit in this and any other state.

Subd. 2. **Overpayments included.** This section is limited to overpayments for which notification is issued within the time period specified under section 541.05.

Subd. 3. **Notification requirements.** A judgment is only obtained after:

(1) a notice of overpayment has been personally served on the recipient or former recipient in a manner sufficient under rule 4.03(a) of the Rules of Civil Procedure for district courts, or mailed to the recipient or former recipient certified mail return receipt requested; and

(2) the time period under section 142A.20, subdivision 3, has elapsed without a request for a hearing, or a hearing decision has been rendered under section 142A.20 or 142A.27 that concludes the existence of an overpayment that meets the requirements of this section.

Subd. 4. **Notice of overpayment.** The notice of overpayment shall include the amount and cause of the overpayment, appeal rights, and an explanation of the consequences of the judgment that will be established if an appeal is not filed timely or if the administrative hearing decision establishes that there is an overpayment that qualifies for judgment.

Subd. 5. **Judgments entered and docketed.** A judgment shall be entered and docketed under section 548.09 only after at least three months have elapsed since:

(1) the notice of overpayment was served on the recipient pursuant to subdivision 3; and

(2) the last time a monthly recoupment was applied to the overpayment.

Subd. 6. **Docketing of overpayments.** On or after the date an unpaid overpayment becomes a judgment by operation of law under subdivision 1, the agency or public authority may file with the court administrator:

(1) a statement identifying, or a copy of, the overpayment notice that provides for an appeal process and requires payment of the overpayment;

(2) proof of service of the notice of overpayment;

(3) an affidavit of default, stating the full name, occupation, place of residence, and last known post office address of the debtor; the name and post office address of the agency or public authority; the date or dates the overpayment was incurred; the program that was overpaid; and the total amount of the judgment; and

(4) an affidavit of service of a notice of entry of judgment shall be made by first class mail at the address where the debtor was served with the notice of overpayment. Service is completed upon mailing in the manner designated.

Subd. 7. **Administrative renewal of overpayment judgments.** Overpayment judgments may be renewed by service of notice upon the debtor. Service must be by first class mail at the last known address of the debtor, with service deemed complete upon mailing in that manner designated, or in the manner provided for the service of civil process. Upon filing of the notice and proof of service, the court administrator shall administratively renew the judgment for the overpayment without any additional filing fee in the same court file as the original overpayment judgment. The judgment must be renewed in an amount equal to the unpaid principal plus the accrued unpaid interest. Overpayment judgments may be renewed multiple times until satisfied.

Subd. 8. **Does not impede other methods.** Nothing in this section shall be construed to impede or restrict alternative recovery methods for these overpayments or overpayments that do not meet the requirements of this section.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 40*

142A.25 WRONGFULLY OBTAINING ASSISTANCE; DISQUALIFICATION.

Section 256.98 applies to:

(1) all applicants for and recipients of benefits administered by the commissioner; and

(2) child care providers receiving child care assistance under chapter 142E.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 41*

142A.26 FRAUD PREVENTION PROGRAM.

(a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall work with the commissioner of human services to oversee and administer the fraud prevention program in sections 256.981 to 256.9861.

(b) All recipients of benefits administered by the commissioner of children, youth, and families are subject to the requirements of sections 256.981 to 256.9861 and 256.9866.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 42*

142A.27 ADMINISTRATIVE FRAUD DISQUALIFICATION HEARINGS.

A local agency must initiate an administrative fraud disqualification hearing for individuals accused of wrongfully obtaining assistance or intentional program violations, in lieu of a criminal action when it has not been pursued, in the Minnesota family investment program and any affiliated program to include the diversionary work program and the work participation cash benefit program, child care assistance programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Department of Children, Youth, and Families, in lieu of a local agency, may initiate an administrative fraud disqualification hearing when the state agency is directly responsible for administration or investigation of the program for which benefits were wrongfully obtained. The hearing is subject to the requirements of sections 142A.20 and 256.0451 and the requirements in Code of Federal Regulations, title 7, section 273.16.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 43; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 47*

142A.28 RECOVERY OF MONEY; APPORTIONMENT.

Subdivision 1. **Retention rates.** (a) When an assistance recovery amount is collected and posted by a county agency under the provisions governing public assistance programs, the county may keep one-half of the recovery made by the county agency using any method other than recoupment.

(b) This section does not apply to recoveries by the attorney general's office or child support collections. In the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nonfederal share of recoveries in the federal tax offset program only will be divided equally between the state agency and the involved county agency.

Subd. 2. **Retention rates for AFDC and MFIP.** (a) When an assistance recovery amount is collected and posted by a county agency under the provisions governing the aid to families with dependent children program formerly codified in 1996 in sections 256.72 to 256.87 or MFIP under chapter 142G, the commissioner shall reimburse the county agency from the proceeds of the recovery using the applicable rate specified in paragraph (b) or (c).

(b) For recoveries of overpayments made on or before September 30, 1996, from the aid to families with dependent children program including the emergency assistance program, the commissioner shall reimburse the county agency at a rate of one-quarter of the recovery made by any method other than recoupment.

(c) For recoveries of overpayments made after September 30, 1996, from the aid to families with dependent children program including the emergency assistance program and programs funded in whole or in part by the temporary assistance to needy families program under section 142G.03, subdivision 2, and

recoveries of nonfederally funded food assistance under section 142G.11, the commissioner shall reimburse the county agency at a rate of one-quarter of the recovery made by any method other than recoupment.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 44*

142A.29 WORK REPORTING SYSTEM.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

(b) "Date of hiring" means the earlier of: (1) the first day for which an employee is owed compensation by an employer; or (2) the first day that an employee reports to work or performs labor or services for an employer.

(c) "Earnings" means payment owed by an employer for labor or services rendered by an employee.

(d) "Employee" means a person who resides or works in Minnesota, performs services for compensation, in whatever form, for an employer and satisfies the criteria of an employee under chapter 24 of the Internal Revenue Code. Employee does not include:

(1) persons hired for domestic service in the private home of the employer, as defined in the Federal Tax Code; or

(2) an employee of the federal or state agency performing intelligence or counterintelligence functions, if the head of such agency has determined that reporting according to this law would endanger the safety of the employee or compromise an ongoing investigation or intelligence mission.

(e) "Employer" means a person or entity located or doing business in this state that employs one or more employees for payment, and satisfies the criteria of an employer under chapter 24 of the Internal Revenue Code. Employer includes a labor organization as defined in paragraph (g). Employer also includes the state, political or other governmental subdivisions of the state, and the federal government.

(f) "Hiring" means engaging a person to perform services for compensation and includes the reemploying or return to work of any previous employee who was laid off, furloughed, separated, granted a leave without pay, or terminated from employment when a period of 60 days elapses from the date of layoff, furlough, separation, leave, or termination to the date of the person's return to work.

(g) "Labor organization" means entities located or doing business in this state that meet the criteria of labor organization under section 2(5) of the National Labor Relations Act. This includes any entity, that may also be known as a hiring hall, used to carry out requirements described in chapter 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

(h) "Payor" means a person or entity located or doing business in Minnesota who pays money to an independent contractor according to an agreement for the performance of services.

Subd. 2. **Work reporting system established.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish a centralized work reporting system for the purpose of receiving and maintaining information from employers on newly hired or rehired employees. The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall take reasonable steps to inform the state's employers of the requirements of this section and the acceptable processes by which employers can comply with the requirements of this section.

Subd. 3. **Duty to report.** Employers doing business in this state shall report to the commissioner of children, youth, and families the hiring of any employee who resides or works in this state to whom the

employer anticipates paying earnings. Employers shall submit reports required under this subdivision within 20 calendar days of the date of hiring of the employee.

Employers are not required to report the hiring of any person who will be employed for less than two months' duration; and will have gross earnings less than $250 per month.

Subd. 4. **Means to report.** Employers may report by delivering, mailing, or telefaxing a copy of the employee's federal W-4 form or W-9 form or any other document that contains the required information, submitting electronic media in a compatible format, toll-free telecommunication, or other means authorized by the commissioner of children, youth, and families that will result in timely reporting.

Subd. 5. **Report contents.** Reports required under this section must contain all the information required by federal law.

Subd. 6. **Sanctions.** If an employer fails to report under this section, the commissioner of children, youth, and families, by certified mail, shall send the employer a written notice of noncompliance requesting that the employer comply with the reporting requirements of this section. The notice of noncompliance must explain the reporting procedure under this section and advise the employer of the penalty for noncompliance. An employer who has received a notice of noncompliance and later incurs a second violation is subject to a civil penalty of $25 for each intentionally unreported employee. An employer who has received a notice of noncompliance is subject to a civil penalty of $500 for each intentionally unreported employee, if noncompliance is the result of a conspiracy between an employer and an employee not to supply the required report or to supply a false or incomplete report. These penalties may be imposed and collected by the commissioner of children, youth, and families. An employer who has been served with a notice of noncompliance and incurs a second or subsequent violation resulting in a civil penalty, has the right to a contested case hearing under chapter 14. An employer has 20 days from the date of service of the notice, to file a request for a contested case hearing with the commissioner. The order of the administrative law judge constitutes the final decision in the case.

Subd. 7. **Access to data.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall retain the information reported to the work reporting system for a period of six months. Data in the work reporting system may be disclosed to the commissioner of children, youth, and families; the public authority responsible for child support enforcement; federal agencies; state and local agencies of other states for the purposes of enforcing state and federal laws governing child support; and agencies responsible for the administration of programs under title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the Department of Employment and Economic Development, and the Department of Labor and Industry.

Subd. 8. **Authority to contract.** The commissioner may contract for services to carry out this section.

Subd. 9. **Independent contractors.** The state and all political subdivisions of the state, when acting in the capacity of an employer, shall report the hiring of any person as an independent contractor to the centralized work reporting system in the same manner as the hiring of an employee is reported.

Other payors may report independent contractors to whom they make payments that require the filing of a 1099-MISC report. Payors reporting independent contractors shall report by use of the same means and provide the same information required under subdivisions 4 and 5. The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish procedures for payors reporting under this section.

Subd. 10. **Use of work reporting system information in determining eligibility for public assistance programs.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families is authorized to use information from the work reporting system to determine eligibility for applicants and recipients of public assistance programs

administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Data including names, dates of birth, and Social Security numbers of people applying for or receiving public assistance benefits will be compared to the work reporting system information to determine if applicants or recipients of public assistance are employed. County agencies will be notified of discrepancies in information obtained from the work reporting system.

Subd. 11. **Action on information.** Upon receipt of the discrepant information, county agencies will notify clients of the information and request verification of employment status and earnings. County agencies must attempt to resolve the discrepancy within 45 days of receipt of the information.

Subd. 12. **Client notification.** Persons applying for public assistance programs administered by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families will be notified at the time of application that data including their name, date of birth, and Social Security number will be shared with the work reporting system to determine possible employment. All current public assistance recipients will be notified of this provision prior to its implementation.

History: *1995 c 257 art 1 s 16; 1997 c 203 art 6 s 15-20; 1997 c 245 art 1 s 10; art 3 s 7; 2004 c 206 s 52; 2012 c 216 art 1 s 3,4; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 86,96; art 8 s 7,70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.30 CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGOR COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families may contract with a county that operates a community work experience program or a judicial district Department of Corrections that operates a community work experience program to include child support obligors who are physically able to work and fail to pay child support as participants in the community work experience program.

Subd. 2. **Limitations.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (f), a person ordered to participate in a work program under section 518A.72 shall do so if services are available.

(b) A person may not be required to participate for more than 32 hours per week in the program under this section.

(c) A person may not be required to participate for more than six weeks for each finding of contempt.

(d) If a person is required by a governmental entity to participate in another work or training program, the person may not be required to participate in a program under this section in a week for more than 32 hours minus the number of hours the person is required to participate in the other work or training program in that week.

(e) If a person is employed, the person may not be required to participate in a program under this section in a week for more than 80 percent of the difference between 40 hours and the number of hours actually worked in the unsubsidized job during that week, to a maximum of 32 hours.

(f) A person who works an average of 32 hours or more per week in an unsubsidized job is not required to participate in a program under this section.

Subd. 3. **Notice to court.** If a person does not complete six weeks of participation in a program under this section, the county operating the program shall inform the court administrator, by affidavit, of that noncompletion.

Subd. 4. **Injury protection for work experience participants.** (a) This subdivision applies to payment of any claims resulting from an alleged injury or death of a child support obligor participating in a community

work experience program established and operated by a county or a judicial district department of corrections under this section.

(b) Claims that are subject to this section must be investigated by the county agency responsible for supervising the work to determine whether the claimed injury occurred, whether the claimed medical expenses are reasonable, and whether the loss is covered by the claimant's insurance. If insurance coverage is established, the county agency shall submit the claim to the appropriate insurance entity for payment. The investigating county agency shall submit all valid claims, in the amount net of any insurance payments, to the commissioner of children, youth, and families.

(c) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall submit all claims for impairment compensation to the commissioner of labor and industry. The commissioner of labor and industry shall review all submitted claims and recommend to the commissioner of children, youth, and families an amount of compensation comparable to what would be provided under the impairment compensation schedule of section 176.101, subdivision 2a.

(d) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall approve a claim of $1,000 or less for payment if appropriated funds are available, if the county agency responsible for supervising the work has made the determinations required by this section, and if the work program was operated in compliance with the safety provisions of this section. The commissioner shall pay the portion of an approved claim of $1,000 or less that is not covered by the claimant's insurance within three months of the date of submission. On or before February 1 of each year, the commissioner shall submit to the appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives a list of claims of $1,000 or less paid during the preceding calendar year and shall be reimbursed by legislative appropriation for any claims that exceed the original appropriation provided to the commissioner to operate this program. Unspent money from this appropriation carries over to the second year of the biennium, and any unspent money remaining at the end of the second year must be returned to the general fund. On or before February 1 of each year, the commissioner shall submit to the appropriate committees of the senate and the house of representatives a list of claims in excess of $1,000 and a list of claims of $1,000 or less that were submitted to but not paid by the commissioner of children, youth, and families, together with any recommendations of appropriate compensation. These claims shall be heard and determined by the appropriate committees of the senate and house of representatives and, if approved, paid under the legislative claims procedure.

(e) Compensation paid under this section is limited to reimbursement for reasonable medical expenses and impairment compensation for disability in like amounts as allowed in section 176.101, subdivision 2a. Compensation for injuries resulting in death shall include reasonable medical expenses and burial expenses in addition to payment to the participant's estate in an amount not to exceed the limits set forth in section 466.04. Compensation may not be paid under this section for pain and suffering, lost wages, or other benefits provided in chapter 176. Payments made under this section must be reduced by any proceeds received by the claimant from any insurance policy covering the loss. For the purposes of this section, "insurance policy" does not include the medical assistance program authorized under chapter 256B.

(f) The procedure established by this section is exclusive of all other legal, equitable, and statutory remedies against the state, its political subdivisions, or employees of the state or its political subdivisions. The claimant may not seek damages from any state or county insurance policy or self-insurance program.

(g) A claim is not valid for purposes of this subdivision if the local agency responsible for supervising the work cannot verify to the commissioner of children, youth, and families:

(1) that appropriate safety training and information is provided to all persons being supervised by the agency under this subdivision; and

(2) that all programs involving work by those persons comply with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration and state Department of Labor and Industry safety standards.

A claim that is not valid because of failure to verify safety training or compliance with safety standards may not be paid by the commissioner of children, youth, and families or through the legislative claims process and must be heard, decided, and paid, if appropriate, by the local government unit responsible for supervising the work of the claimant.

Subd. 5. **Transportation expenses.** A county shall reimburse a person for reasonable transportation costs incurred because of participation in a program under this section, up to a maximum of $25 per month.

Subd. 6. **Payment to county.** The commissioner shall pay a county $200 for each person who participates in the program under this section in that county. The county is responsible for any additional costs of the program.

History: *1995 c 257 art 1 s 15; 2005 c 164 s 29; 1Sp2005 c 7 s 28; 2016 c 158 art 1 s 108; art 2 s 73; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.40 LEGAL REFERRAL AND ASSISTANCE GRANTS.

(a) The commissioner shall award grants to one or more nonprofit programs that provide legal services based on indigency to provide legal services to individuals with emergency medical conditions or chronic health conditions who are not currently eligible for medical assistance or other public health care programs based on their legal status, but who may meet eligibility requirements with legal assistance.

(b) The grantees, in collaboration with hospitals and safety net providers, shall provide referral assistance to connect individuals identified in paragraph (a) with alternative resources and services to assist in meeting their health care needs.

History: *2015 c 71 art 11 s 18; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96*

142A.41 CITATION.

Sections 142A.411 to 142A.415 may be cited as the "Children's Trust Fund for the Prevention of Child Abuse Act."

History: *1986 c 423 s 1; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 25; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.411 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Applicability.** The definitions in this section apply to sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3.

Subd. 2. **Act.** "Act" means the Children's Trust Fund for the Prevention of Child Abuse Act.

Subd. 3. **Child.** "Child" means a person under 18 years of age.

Subd. 4. **Child abuse.** "Child abuse" means sexual abuse, neglect, or physical abuse as defined in section 260E.03, subdivisions 15, 18, and 20.

Subd. 5. **Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the commissioner of children, youth, and families.

Subd. 6. **Local council.** "Local council" means a child abuse prevention council established under section 142A.413.

Subd. 7. **Prevention program.** "Prevention program" means a system that directly provides primary or secondary child abuse prevention services to a child, parent or prospective parent, guardian, or professional who works regularly with children, and may also include a research program related to the prevention of child abuse.

Subd. 8. **Primary prevention.** "Primary prevention" means a program or service designed to promote the general welfare of children and families.

Subd. 9. **Secondary prevention.** "Secondary prevention" means a program or service designed to prevent abuse of children who are in circumstances where there is a high risk that abuse will occur.

Subd. 10. **Tertiary prevention.** "Tertiary prevention" means a program or service provided after child abuse has occurred that is designed to prevent its recurrence.

Subd. 11. **Trust fund.** "Trust fund" means the children's trust fund for the prevention of child abuse established under section 142A.412.

History: *1986 c 423 s 2; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 8,25; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 2002 c 379 art 1 s 37; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 126; 1Sp2020 c 2 art 8 s 101; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 87,96; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.412 TRUST FUND.

Subdivision 1. **Creation of trust fund.** A children's trust fund for the prevention of child abuse is established as an account in the state treasury. The commissioner of management and budget shall credit to the trust fund all amounts received under sections 142A.415 and 144.226, subdivision 3, and shall ensure that trust fund money is invested under section 11A.25. All money earned by the trust fund must be credited to the trust fund. The trust fund earns its proportionate share of the total annual state investment income.

Subd. 2. **Availability of funds for disbursement.** Until the total amount of assets in the trust fund exceeds $20,000,000, not more than 60 percent of the gross amount contributed to the trust fund each year under section 144.226, subdivision 3, plus 100 percent of all earnings credited to the trust fund the previous fiscal year, are available for disbursement. When the commissioner of management and budget certifies that the assets in the trust fund exceed $20,000,000, only the annual earnings and the funds received under section 142A.415 that are credited to the trust fund are available for disbursement.

Subd. 3. **Exception.** Notwithstanding subdivision 2, money received under section 142A.415 may be disbursed in its entirety. This money must not be taken into account when calculating the annual contributions to the trust fund under this section.

Subd. 4. **Authority to disburse funds.** The commissioner may disburse trust fund money to any public or private nonprofit agency to fund a child abuse prevention program. State funds appropriated for child maltreatment prevention grants may be transferred to the children's trust fund special revenue account and are available to carry out this section.

Subd. 5. **Plan for disbursement of funds.** The commissioner shall develop a plan to disburse money from the trust fund. The plan must ensure that all geographic areas of the state have an equal opportunity to establish prevention programs and receive trust fund money.

Subd. 6. **Operational costs.** $120,000 each year is appropriated from the children's trust fund to the special revenue fund for administration and indirect costs of the children's trust fund program.

Subd. 7. **Responsibilities of commissioner.** (a) The commissioner shall:

(1) provide for the coordination and exchange of information on the establishment and maintenance of prevention programs;

(2) develop and publish criteria for receiving trust fund money by prevention programs;

(3) review, approve, and monitor the spending of trust fund money by prevention programs;

(4) provide statewide educational and public informational seminars to develop public awareness on preventing child abuse; to encourage professional persons and groups to recognize instances of child abuse and work to prevent them; to make information on child abuse prevention available to the public and to organizations and agencies; and to encourage the development of prevention programs, including programs that provide support for adolescent parents, fathering education programs, and other prevention activities designed to prevent teen pregnancy;

(5) establish a procedure for an annual, internal evaluation of the functions, responsibilities, and performance of the commissioner in carrying out sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3;

(6) provide technical assistance to local councils and agencies working in the area of child abuse prevention; and

(7) accept and review grant applications.

(b) The commissioner shall recommend to the governor changes in state programs, statutes, policies, budgets, and standards that will reduce the problems of child abuse, improve coordination among state agencies that provide prevention services, and improve the condition of children, parents, or guardians in need of prevention program services.

History: *1986 c 423 s 3; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 25; 1986 c 423 s 4; 1987 c 358 s 113; 1Sp1987 c 4 art 2 s 6; 1988 c 629 s 57; 1989 c 119 s 1; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 9,25; 1992 c 515 s 2; 1Sp1993 c 1 art 3 s 31; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 7 art 2 s 8,9; 1997 c 162 art 2 s 3-5; 1Sp2001 c 3 art 2 s 1-4,17; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2009 c 101 art 2 s 109; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 88,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.413 LOCAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION COUNCILS.

A child abuse prevention council may be established in any county or group of counties that was eligible to receive funds under Minnesota Statutes 1986, section 145.917, as of January 1, 1986. A council organized in such a county or group of counties shall be authorized by the commissioner to review programs seeking trust fund money on finding that the council meets the criteria in this section:

(a) The council has submitted a plan for the prevention of child abuse that includes a rank ordering of needed programs and services, assesses the need for additional programs or services, and demonstrates that standards and procedures have been established to ensure that funds will be distributed and used according to sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3.

(b) A single-county council shall consist of:

(1) a minimum of nine members with the majority consisting of members from the community-at-large who do not represent service-providing agencies. These members shall represent the demographic and geographic composition of the county and, to the extent possible, represent the following groups: parents, businesses, racial and ethnic minority communities, and the faith communities; and

(2) if necessary, enough additional members with knowledge in the area of child abuse prevention so that a majority of the council is composed of members who do not represent public agencies.

(c) A multicounty council shall be composed of the combined membership of persons in paragraph (b).

History: *1986 c 423 s 5; 1991 c 199 art 2 s 22; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 25; 1997 c 162 art 2 s 6; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 89,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.414 PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA FOR DISBURSEMENT.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner shall establish in the plan for prevention of child abuse the criteria for distribution of trust fund money. All money shall be distributed for programs and services involving primary or secondary prevention, and no money shall be distributed for programs and services involving tertiary prevention.

Subd. 2. **Matching and other requirements.** Trust fund money shall only be distributed to applicants that demonstrate an ability to match at least 40 percent of the amount of trust fund money requested and whose proposals meet the other criteria. The matching requirement may be met through in-kind donations. In awarding grants, the commissioner shall consider the extent to which the applicant has demonstrated a willingness and ability to:

(1) continue the prevention program or service if trust fund money is eliminated or reduced; and

(2) provide prevention program models and consultation to other organizations and communities.

Subd. 3. **Use of funds.** Priority must be given to applicants whose matching funds do not consist, in whole or in part, of state or federal funds. Any trust fund money received must not be used to compensate for a decrease in previously existing funding levels unless that decrease is attributable to a decision made by state, federal, or other entities not controlled by the applicant and the applicant demonstrates that it has made reasonable efforts to retain all previously existing funding.

Subd. 4. **Statewide or regional programs.** The commissioner may fund programs that intend to serve the entire state or a region larger than the area served by any local council even if the program has not been reviewed by any local council. The commissioner may, however, solicit comments or recommendations about the applicant or the program from a local council covering any area to be served by the applicant's proposed program.

Subd. 5. **Local council as recipient of funds.** The commissioner may disburse funds to a local council for community education purposes, or for administrative costs in carrying out sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3, if all criteria and standards are met.

Subd. 6. **Excluded programs.** Programs transferred to the Department of Education from the Department of Employment and Economic Development may not be included in the consolidated funding account and are ineligible for local consolidation. The commissioner may not apply for federal waivers to include these programs in funding consolidation initiatives. The programs include the following:

(1) programs for the homeless under sections 116L.365 and 256K.48;

(2) emergency energy assistance under section 216C.265;

(3) weatherization programs under section 216C.264;

(4) food shelf programs under section 142F.14 and the emergency food assistance program; and

(5) lead abatement programs under section 142A.46.

Subd. 7. **Contracts.** The commissioner shall use state or local resources and staff if practicable but may enter into contracts with public or nonprofit private agencies to fulfill the requirements of sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3.

Subd. 8. **Rules.** The commissioner may adopt rules to carry out sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3.

History: *1986 c 423 s 6; 1Sp1987 c 4 art 2 s 7; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 25; 1997 c 162 art 2 s 7,8; art 3 s 4; 1998 c 273 s 2; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2004 c 206 s 52; 2005 c 97 art 4 s 2,6; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2008 c 361 art 3 s 13; 2014 c 222 art 2 s 15; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 90-92,96; art 6 s 4; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,43; 2024 c 125 art 6 s 7; 2024 c 127 art 51 s 7*

142A.415 ACCEPTANCE OF FEDERAL FUNDS AND OTHER DONATIONS.

The commissioner may accept federal money and gifts, donations, and bequests for the purposes of sections 142A.41 to 142A.416 and 144.226, subdivision 3. Money so received and proceeds from the sale of promotional items, minus sales promotional costs, must be deposited in the trust fund and must be made available to the commissioner.

History: *1986 c 423 s 7; 1987 c 358 s 114; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 25; 1997 c 162 art 2 s 9; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 93,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.416 ANNUAL APPROPRIATION.

All earnings from trust fund assets, all sums received under section 142A.415, and 60 percent of the amount collected under section 144.226, subdivision 3, are appropriated annually from the children's trust fund for the prevention of child abuse to the commissioner of children, youth, and families to carry out sections 142A.41 to 142A.415.

History: *1986 c 423 s 9; 1991 c 292 art 8 s 10,25; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2005 c 98 art 1 s 24; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 94,96; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.417 CHILD PROTECTION GRANTS TO ADDRESS CHILD WELFARE DISPARITIES.

Subdivision 1. **Child welfare disparities grant program established.** The commissioner may award grants to eligible entities for the development, implementation, and evaluation of activities to address racial disparities and disproportionality in the child welfare system by:

(1) identifying and addressing structural factors that contribute to inequities in outcomes;

(2) identifying and implementing strategies to reduce racial disparities in treatment and outcomes;

(3) using cultural values, beliefs, and practices of families, communities, and Tribes for case planning, service design, and decision-making processes;

(4) using placement and reunification strategies to maintain and support relationships and connections between parents, siblings, children, kin, significant others, and Tribes; and

(5) supporting families in the context of their communities and Tribes to safely divert them from the child welfare system, whenever possible.

Subd. 2. **State-community partnerships; plan.** The commissioner, in partnership with the legislative task force on child protection; culturally based community organizations; the Indian Affairs Council under section 3.922; the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs under section 15.0145; the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage under section 15.0145; the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans under section 15.0145; the American Indian Child Welfare Advisory Council under section 260.835; counties; and Tribal governments, shall develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated plan to award funds under this section for the priority areas identified in subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Measurable outcomes.** The commissioner, in consultation with the state-community partners listed in subdivision 2, shall establish measurable outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the grants and other activities funded under this section in reducing disparities identified in subdivision 1. The development of measurable outcomes must be completed before any funds are distributed under this section.

Subd. 4. **Process.** (a) The commissioner, in consultation with the state-community partners listed in subdivision 2, shall develop the criteria and procedures to allocate competitive grants under this section. In developing the criteria, the commissioner shall establish an administrative cost limit for grant recipients. A county awarded a grant shall not spend more than three percent of the grant on administrative costs. When a grant is awarded, the commissioner must provide a grant recipient with information on the outcomes established according to subdivision 3.

(b) A grant recipient must coordinate its activities with other entities receiving funds under this section that are in the grant recipient's service area.

(c) Grant funds must not be used to supplant any state or federal funds received for child welfare services.

Subd. 5. **Grant program criteria.** (a) The commissioner shall award competitive grants to eligible applicants for local or regional projects and initiatives directed at reducing disparities in the child welfare system.

(b) The commissioner may award up to 20 percent of the funds available as planning grants. Planning grants must be used to address such areas as community assessment, coordination activities, and development of community-supported strategies.

(c) Eligible applicants may include, but are not limited to, faith-based organizations, social service organizations, community nonprofit organizations, counties, and Tribal governments. Applicants must submit proposals to the commissioner. A proposal must specify the strategies to be implemented to address one or more of the priority areas in subdivision 1 and must be targeted to achieve the outcomes established according to subdivision 3.

(d) The commissioner shall give priority to applicants who demonstrate that their proposed project or initiative:

(1) is supported by the community the applicant will serve;

(2) is evidence-based;

(3) is designed to complement other related community activities;

(4) utilizes strategies that positively impact priority areas;

(5) reflects culturally appropriate approaches; or

(6) will be implemented through or with community-based organizations that reflect the culture of the population to be reached.

Subd. 6. **Evaluation.** (a) Using the outcomes established according to subdivision 3, the commissioner shall conduct a biennial evaluation of the grant program funded under this section. Grant recipients shall cooperate with the commissioner in the evaluation and shall provide the commissioner with the information needed to conduct the evaluation.

(b) The commissioner shall consult with the legislative task force on child protection during the evaluation process.

(c) The commissioner shall submit a biennial evaluation report to the task force and to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees with jurisdiction over child protection funding. This paragraph expires January 1, 2032.

Subd. 7. **American Indian child welfare projects.** Of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section, the commissioner shall award $75,000 to each Tribe authorized to provide Tribal delivery of child welfare services under section 142A.03, subdivision 9. To receive funds under this subdivision, a participating Tribe is not required to apply to the commissioner for grant funds. Participating Tribes are also eligible for competitive grant funds under this section.

History: *2015 c 71 art 1 s 12; 2015 c 77 art 2 s 87; 2022 c 98 art 14 s 25; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.418 PAYMENTS BY STATE.

Subd. 1. **Foster care maintenance payments.** (a) For the purpose of foster care maintenance payments under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 670 to 676, the county or American Indian child welfare initiative Tribes under section 142A.03, subdivision 9, paying the maintenance costs must be reimbursed for the costs from the federal money available for the purpose. For the purposes of determining a child's eligibility under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, the placing agency shall use AFDC requirements in effect on July 16, 1996.

(b) For the purpose of foster care maintenance payments under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 670 to 676, the state is responsible for approving of child care institutions for the county paying the facility's maintenance costs to be reimbursed from the federal money available for the purpose. The facility must be licensed by the state or approved or licensed by a Tribe.

Subd. 2. **Setting foster care standard rates.** (a) The commissioner shall annually establish minimum rates for foster care maintenance including supplemental difficulty of care payments for all children eligible for Northstar Care for Children under sections 142A.60 to 142A.612.

(b) All children entering foster care on or after January 1, 2015, are eligible for Northstar Care for Children under sections 142A.60 to 142A.612. Any increase in rates shall in no case exceed three percent per annum.

(c) All children in foster care on December 31, 2014, must remain in the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program under sections 142A.604, subdivision 6, and 260C.4411, subdivision 1. The rates for the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program shall remain those in effect on January 1, 2013.

(d) The commissioner of children, youth, and families may promulgate rules as necessary to implement this section.

History: *(8688-16) 1937 c 438 s 14; 1943 c 619 s 1; 1951 c 229 s 6; 1977 c 423 art 3 s 3; 1979 c 303 art 2 s 1; 1980 c 607 art 2 s 2; 1982 c 553 s 1; 1983 c 312 art 5 s 5; 1Sp1985 c 9 art 2 s 31; 1987 c 235 s 1,2; 1988 c 719 art 8 s 6; 1989 c 277 art 2 s 5; 1Sp1989 c 1 art 16 s 3; 1990 c 568 art 4 s 84; 1991 c 292 art 5 s 23; 1997 c 7 art 5 s 29; 1997 c 85 art 3 s 8; 1997 c 203 art 5 s 11; art 11 s 3; 1998 c 406 art 1 s 10,37; 1998 c 407 art 9 s 10; 1999 c 159 s 44; 2000 c 260 s 97; 2010 c 301 art 3 s 3; 2013 c 108 art 17 s 2,3,24; 1Sp2020 c 2 art 5 s 36; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 77,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.42 DIAPER DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall establish a diaper distribution program to award a sole-source grant to the Diaper Bank of Minnesota to provide diapers to underresourced families statewide.

Subd. 2. **Eligibility.** To be eligible for a grant under this section, the Diaper Bank of Minnesota must demonstrate its capacity to distribute diapers statewide by having:

(1) a network of well-established partners for diaper distribution;

(2) the infrastructure needed to efficiently manage diaper procurement and distribution statewide;

(3) relationships with national organizations that support and enhance the work of addressing diaper need;

(4) the ability to engage in building community awareness of diaper need and advocate for diaper need at local, state, and federal levels;

(5) a commitment to and demonstration of working with organizations across ideological and political spectrums;

(6) the ability to address diaper need for children from birth through early childhood; and

(7) a commitment to working within an equity framework by ensuring access to organizations that provide culturally specific services or are located in communities with high concentrations of poverty.

Subd. 3. **Application.** The Diaper Bank of Minnesota must apply to the commissioner in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner. Applications must be filed at the times and for the periods determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Eligible uses of grant money.** The Diaper Bank of Minnesota must use the money awarded under this section to purchase diapers and wipes and may use up to ten percent of the money for administrative costs.

Subd. 5. **Enforcement.** (a) The Diaper Bank of Minnesota must:

(1) retain records documenting expenditure of the grant money;

(2) report to the commissioner on the use of the grant money; and

(3) comply with any additional requirements imposed by the commissioner.

(b) The commissioner may require that a report submitted under this subdivision include an independent audit.

History: *2023 c 70 art 12 s 21; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 13 s 4; art 16 s 34; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 12 s 1*

142A.43 GRANTS TO YOUTH INTERVENTION PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Grants.** (a) The commissioner must make grants to nonprofit agencies administering youth intervention programs in communities where the programs are or may be established. Grants under this section are limited to available appropriations. No grant may exceed $75,000.

(b) "Youth intervention program" means a nonresidential community-based program providing advocacy, education, counseling, mentoring, and referral services to youth and their families experiencing personal, familial, school, legal, or chemical problems with the goal of resolving the present problems and preventing the occurrence of the problems in the future. The intent of the youth intervention program is to provide an ongoing stable funding source to community-based early intervention programs for youth. Program design may be different for the grantees depending on youth service needs of the communities being served.

(c) A grant under this section is contingent upon the agency obtaining local matching money equal to the amount of the grant from the community in which the youth intervention program is established. The matching requirement is intended to leverage the investment of state and community money in supporting the efforts of the grantees to provide early intervention services to youth and their families.

Subd. 2. **Applications.** Applications for a grant must be submitted by the administering agency to the commissioner. The commissioner must provide the application form, procedures for submitting application forms, criteria for review of the application, and a description of the kinds of contributions in addition to cash that qualify as local matching money.

Subd. 3. **Youth Intervention Programs Association grant.** Up to six percent of the appropriation for grants under this section must be used for a grant to the Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association for providing collaboration, program development, professional development training, technical assistance, and tracking, analyzing, and reporting outcome data for the community-based grantees of the program. The Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association is not required to meet the matching requirement under subdivision 1, paragraph (c).

Subd. 4. **Report.** On or before March 31 of each year, the Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the committees and divisions with jurisdiction over children and youth on the implementation, use, and administration of the grant program under this section. The report shall include information sent by agencies administering youth intervention programs to the Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs Association. At a minimum, the report must identify:

(1) the grant recipients;

(2) the geographic location of the grant recipients;

(3) the total number of individuals served by all grant recipients, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender;

(4) the total number of individuals served by all grant recipients who successfully completed programming, disaggregated by age, race, ethnicity, and gender;

(5) the total amount of money awarded in grants and the total amount remaining to be awarded from each appropriation;

(6) the amount of money granted to each recipient;

(7) grant recipient workplan objectives;

(8) how the grant was used based on grant recipient quarterly narrative reports and financial reports; and

(9) summarized relevant youth intervention program outcome survey data measuring the developmental assets of participants, based on Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework.

Subd. 5. MS 2024 [Repealed by amendment, 2026 c 127 art 9 s 2]

History: *1987 c 312 art 1 s 23; 1996 c 408 art 2 s 2; 1999 c 107 s 65; 2004 c 206 s 52; 2005 c 136 art 8 s 1,29; 2013 c 86 art 3 s 5; 2015 c 65 art 3 s 7; 2023 c 52 art 5 s 22; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34; 2024 c 123 art 5 s 12; 2026 c 127 art 9 s 2*

142A.44 GREAT START SCHOLARSHIPS PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families, in collaboration with the commissioner of education and the commissioner of human services, shall develop and, to the extent funds are available and notwithstanding federal and state laws to the contrary, implement a plan for the great start scholarships program to ensure affordable access to high-quality early care and learning for children from birth to kindergarten entry.

Subd. 2. **Development.** In developing the plan and implementing the program under this section, the commissioner shall:

(1) identify ways to integrate the functions, administrative structures, and funding mechanisms of early care and learning programs administered by the state with the great start scholarships program;

(2) consider the recommendations made by the Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force under Laws 2021, First Special Session chapter 7, article 14, section 18, subdivision 2;

(3) create a process and timeline to transition the following families to the great start scholarships program by July 1, 2028:

(i) families with at least one child receiving an early learning scholarship under section 142D.25; and

(ii) families with at least one child who is not yet in kindergarten and is receiving child care assistance under section 142E.04 or 142E.08 for care received from a provider licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502 or 9503, or Tribally licensed, or a Head Start program that has a rating under section 142D.13;

(4) create mechanisms for members of local communities, including families and members of the early care and learning workforce, to have input in decisions regarding needs and preferences for early care and learning options;

(5) develop a proposed method for funding early care and learning slots in response to local need through contracts with eligible providers that may be used to deliver services that meet quality and compensation standards with the intent to build early care and learning capacity statewide for children from birth to kindergarten entry; and

(6) consider how to maximize available federal resources while maintaining access to child care assistance funding under sections 142E.04 or 142E.08 for school-age children. The commissioner, in consultation with an appropriate state agency, may seek federal technical assistance or outside consultation as necessary to provide minimally burdensome program access to all participating families.

Subd. 3. **Program requirements.** The great start scholarships program must include at a minimum:

(1) a method to provide financial assistance to families voluntarily participating in the program;

(2) family eligibility for any qualifying family that has at least one child who is not yet in kindergarten;

(3) provider eligibility for:

(i) any program licensed under Minnesota Rules, chapter 9502 or 9503, or Tribally licensed, that participates in the quality rating and improvement system under section 142D.13; and

(ii) any school-based program and Head Start program that has a rating under section 142D.13;

(4) a unified, integrated, and simple online application process that utilizes administrative data to ease qualification and benefit determination and meet federal reporting requirements;

(5) an electronic attendance tracking system that is integrated, to the extent practicable, and payments system to safeguard program integrity and streamline billing and payment processes for providers; and

(6) a schedule for family contributions and provider payments that ensures that no participating family pays more than seven percent of annual income for early care and learning services for children from birth to kindergarten entry. Family contributions and provider payments may vary by family income, program quality, geography, and need for compensatory services, and may take into consideration the results of the market rate survey under section 142E.02, subdivision 7; information from cost estimation models for providing early care and learning in the state; and cost information gathered through contracts under subdivision 2, clause (5).

Subd. 4. **Administration; reporting requirement.** (a) By July 1, 2028, to the extent funding is appropriated and notwithstanding federal and state laws to the contrary, the commissioner shall have in place the administrative structures and systems needed for the great start scholarships program to meet the operational needs of participating families and eligible providers.

(b) By July 1, 2026, the commissioner, in consultation with the commissioners of education and human services, must submit a report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over early care and learning on the status of planning for the program under this section. The report must:

(1) include information on progress made and work underway to develop the program;

(2) provide details about the administrative structures, systems, and funding needed to meet the needs of families and providers who may participate in the program; and

(3) identify any statutory or regulatory changes necessary for implementation of the program.

History: *2023 c 54 s 2; 2024 c 80 art 4 s 26; art 5 s 7; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 42*

142A.45 FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** The commissioner shall establish a grant program to support prevention and early intervention services in order to implement and build upon Minnesota's Family First Prevention Services Act Title IV-E prevention services plan.

Subd. 2. **Uses.** Grant funds must be used to:

(1) implement or expand any Family First Prevention Services Act service or program that is included in Minnesota's prevention services plan;

(2) implement or expand any proposed future Family First Prevention Services Act service or program;

(3) implement or expand any prevention or family preservation service or programming; or

(4) evaluate any of the programs or services listed in this subdivision.

Subd. 3. **Special revenue account established.** (a) Funds appropriated under this section shall be transferred to a special revenue account. The commissioner shall retain federal reimbursement generated under this section. Federal reimbursement shall be transferred to the special revenue account and is appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes of this section.

(b) The commissioner must provide an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over health and human services policy and finance that identifies the amount of funds appropriated and transferred to this account under paragraph (a) and how the funds were used.

History: *2023 c 70 art 14 s 2; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.451 FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT KINSHIP NAVIGATOR PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** The commissioner shall establish a grant program for Kinship Navigator programs as outlined by the federal Family First Prevention Services Act.

Subd. 2. **Uses.** Eligible grantees must use funds to assess kinship caregiver needs, provide connections to local and statewide resources, provide case management to assist with complex cases, and provide support to meet caregiver needs.

Subd. 3. **Special revenue account established.** (a) Funds appropriated under this section shall be transferred to a special revenue account. The commissioner shall retain federal reimbursement generated under this section. Federal reimbursement shall be transferred to the special revenue account and is appropriated to the commissioner for the purposes of this section.

(b) The commissioner must provide an annual report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over health and human services policy and finance that identifies the amount of funds appropriated and transferred to this account under paragraph (a) and how the funds were used.

History: *2023 c 70 art 14 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.452 FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ALLOCATION PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** The commissioner shall establish a program that allocates money to counties and federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota to provide prevention and early intervention services under the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Subd. 2. **Uses.** Money allocated to counties and Tribes may be used for the following purposes:

(1) to implement or expand any service or program that is included in the state's prevention plan;

(2) to implement or expand any proposed service or program;

(3) to implement or expand any existing service or program; and

(4) any other use approved by the commissioner.

A county or a Tribe must use at least ten percent of the allocation to provide services and supports directly to families.

Subd. 3. **Payments.** (a) The commissioner shall allocate state money appropriated under this section to each county board or Tribe on a calendar-year basis using a formula established by the commissioner.

(b) A county agency or an initiative Tribe must submit a plan and report the use of money as determined by the commissioner.

(c) The commissioner may distribute money under this section for a two-year period.

Subd. 4. **Prohibition on supplanting existing money.** Money received under this section must be used to address prevention and early intervention staffing, programming, and other activities as determined by the commissioner. Money must not be used to supplant current county or Tribal expenditures for these purposes.

History: *2023 c 70 art 14 s 5; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.46 EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND CHILD PROTECTION FACILITIES.

Subdivision 1. **Grant authority.** The commissioner may make grants to state agencies and political subdivisions to construct or rehabilitate facilities for early childhood programs, crisis nurseries, or parenting time centers. The following requirements apply:

(1) The facilities must be owned by the state or a political subdivision, but may be leased under section 16A.695 to organizations that operate the programs. The commissioner must prescribe the terms and conditions of the leases.

(2) A grant for an individual facility must not exceed $500,000 for each program that is housed in the facility, up to a maximum of $2,000,000 for a facility that houses three programs or more. Programs include Head Start, School Readiness, Early Childhood Family Education, licensed child care, and other early childhood intervention programs.

(3) State appropriations must be matched on a 50 percent basis with nonstate funds. The matching requirement must apply program wide and not to individual grants.

Subd. 2. **Grant priority.** (a) The commissioner must give priority to:

(1) projects in counties or municipalities with the highest percentage of children living in poverty;

(2) grants that involve collaboration among sponsors of programs under this section; and

(3) where feasible, grants for programs that utilize Youthbuild under sections 116L.361 to 116L.366 for at least 25 percent of each grant awarded or $50,000 of the labor portion of the construction, whichever is less, if:

(i) the work is appropriate for Youthbuild, as mutually agreed upon by the grantee and the local Youthbuild program, considering safety and skills needed;

(ii) it is demonstrated by Youthbuild that using Youthbuild will not increase the overall cost of the project; and

(iii) eligible programs consult with appropriate labor organizations to deliver education and training.

(b) The commissioner may give priority to:

(1) projects that collaborate with child care providers, including all-day and school-age child care programs, special needs care, sick child care, nontraditional hour care, and programs that include services to refugee and immigrant families;

(2) grants for programs that will increase their child care workers' wages as a result of the grant; and

(3) projects that will improve the quality of early childhood programs.

History: *1998 c 273 s 9; 1999 c 86 art 1 s 29; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 2; 2000 c 444 art 2 s 3; 2000 c 492 art 1 s 47; 2002 c 380 art 6 s 1; 2004 c 206 s 52; 2008 c 179 s 39; 2008 c 361 art 3 s 13; 2010 c 189 s 42,43; 2012 c 247 art 3 s 13; 2023 c 71 art 2 s 10; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.47 QUALITY PARENTING INITIATIVE GRANT PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment.** The commissioner of children, youth, and families must establish a quality parenting initiative grant program to implement quality parenting initiative principles and practices to support children and families experiencing foster care placements.

Subd. 2. **Eligible applicants.** To be eligible for a grant under this section, an applicant must be a nonprofit organization or a nongovernmental organization and must have experience providing training and technical assistance on how to implement quality parenting initiative principles and practices.

Subd. 3. **Application.** An organization seeking a grant under this section must apply to the commissioner in the time and manner specified by the commissioner.

Subd. 4. **Grant activities.** Grant money must be used to provide training and technical assistance to county and Tribal agencies, community-based agencies, and other stakeholders on:

(1) conducting initial foster care telephone calls under section 260C.219, subdivision 6;

(2) supporting practices that create birth family to foster family partnerships; and

(3) informing child welfare practices by supporting youth leadership and the participation of individuals with experience in the foster care system.

History: *2023 c 70 art 14 s 1; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 13,18*

142A.48 EDUCATE PARENTS PARTNERSHIP.

The commissioner may work in partnership with health care providers and community organizations to provide parent information to parents of newborns at the time of birth. The commissioner may coordinate the partnership and the distribution of informational material to the parents of newborns before they leave the hospital with early childhood organizations, including, but not limited to, early childhood family education, child care resource and referral, and interagency early intervention committees. The commissioner may develop a resource website that promotes, at a minimum, the department website for information and links to resources on child development, parent education, child care, and consumer safety information.

History: *2006 c 282 art 2 s 6; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 20*

142A.60 CITATION.

Sections 142A.60 to 142A.612 may be cited as the "Northstar Care for Children Act." Sections 142A.60 to 142A.612 establish Northstar Care for Children, which authorizes certain benefits to support a child in need who is served by the Minnesota child welfare system and who is the responsibility of the state, local county social service agencies, or Tribal social service agencies authorized under section 142A.03, subdivision 9, or are otherwise eligible for federal adoption assistance. A child eligible under this chapter has experienced a child welfare intervention that has resulted in the child being placed away from the child's parents' care and is receiving foster care services consistent with chapter 260B, 260C, or 260D, or is in the permanent care of relatives through a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody, or in the permanent care of adoptive parents.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 4; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.601 PUBLIC POLICY.

(a) The legislature declares that the public policy of this state is to keep children safe from harm and to ensure that when children suffer harmful or injurious experiences in their lives, appropriate services are immediately available to keep them safe.

(b) Children do best in permanent, safe, nurturing homes where they can maintain lifelong relationships with adults. Whenever safely possible, children are best served when they can be nurtured and raised by their parents. Where services cannot be provided to allow a child to remain safely at home, an out-of-home placement may be required. When this occurs, reunification should be sought if it can be accomplished safely. When it is not possible for parents to provide safety and permanency for their children, an alternative permanent home must quickly be made available to the child, drawing from kinship sources whenever possible.

(c) Minnesota understands the importance of having a comprehensive approach to temporary out-of-home care and to permanent homes for children who cannot be reunited with their families. It is critical that stable benefits be available to caregivers to ensure that the child's needs can be met whether the child's situation and best interests call for temporary foster care, transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, or adoption. Northstar Care for Children focuses on the child's needs and strengths, and the actual level of care provided by the caregiver, without consideration for the type of placement setting. In this way caregivers are not faced with the burden of making specific long-term decisions based upon competing financial incentives.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 5; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.602 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Scope.** For the purposes of sections 142A.60 to 142A.612, the terms defined in this section have the meanings given them.

Subd. 2. **Adoption assistance.** "Adoption assistance" means medical coverage as allowable under section 256B.055 and reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses associated with adoption and may include financial support provided under agreement with the financially responsible agency, the commissioner, and the parents of an adoptive child whose special needs would otherwise make it difficult to place the child for adoption to assist with the cost of caring for the child. Financial support may include a basic rate payment and a supplemental difficulty of care rate.

Subd. 3. **Assessment.** "Assessment" means the process under section 142A.607 that determines the benefits an eligible child may receive under section 142A.609.

Subd. 4. **At-risk child.** "At-risk child" means a child who does not have a documented disability but who is at risk of developing a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability based on being related within the first or second degree to persons who have an inheritable physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabling condition, or from a background which has the potential to cause the child to develop a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability that the child is at risk of developing. The disability must manifest during childhood.

Subd. 5. **Basic rate.** "Basic rate" means the maintenance payment made on behalf of a child to support the costs caregivers incur to provide for a child's needs consistent with the care parents customarily provide, including: food, clothing, shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, and a child's personal incidentals. It also supports typical travel to the child's home for visitation, and reasonable travel for the child to remain in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement.

Subd. 6. **Caregiver.** "Caregiver" means the foster parent or parents of a child in foster care who meet the requirements of emergency relative placement, licensed foster parents under chapter 142B, or foster parents licensed or approved by a Tribe; the relative custodian or custodians; or the adoptive parent or parents who have legally adopted a child.

Subd. 7. **Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the commissioner of children, youth, and families or any employee of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to whom the commissioner has delegated appropriate authority.

Subd. 8. **County board.** "County board" means the board of county commissioners in each county.

Subd. 9. **Disability.** "Disability" means a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include, but are not limited to: thinking, walking, hearing, breathing, working, seeing, speaking, communicating, learning, developing and maintaining healthy relationships, safely caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks. The nature, duration, and severity of the impairment must be considered in determining if the limitation is substantial.

Subd. 10. **Financially responsible agency.** "Financially responsible agency" means the agency that is financially responsible for a child. These agencies include both local social service agencies under section 393.07 and Tribal social service agencies authorized in section 142A.03, subdivision 9, as part of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative, and Minnesota Tribes who assume financial responsibility of children from other states. Under Northstar Care for Children, the agency that is financially responsible at the time of placement for foster care continues to be responsible under section 142A.611 for the local share of any

maintenance payments, even after finalization of the adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child.

Subd. 11. **Human Services Board.** "Human Services Board" means a board established under section 402.02; Laws 1974, chapter 293; or Laws 1976, chapter 340.

Subd. 12. **Initial assessment.** "Initial assessment" means the assessment conducted within the first 30 days of a child's initial placement into foster care under section 142A.607, subdivisions 6 and 7.

Subd. 13. **Legally responsible agency.** "Legally responsible agency" means the Minnesota agency that is assigned responsibility for placement, care, and supervision of the child through a court order, voluntary placement agreement, or voluntary relinquishment. These agencies include local social service agencies under section 393.07, Tribal social service agencies authorized in section 142A.03, subdivision 9, and Minnesota Tribes that assume court jurisdiction when legal responsibility is transferred to the Tribal social service agency through a Minnesota district court order. A Minnesota local social service agency is otherwise financially responsible.

Subd. 14. **Licensed child foster parent.** "Licensed child foster parent" means an individual or family who is licensed for child foster care under Minnesota Rules, chapter 2960, excluding foster residence settings licensed under Minnesota Rules, parts 2960.3200 to 2960.3230, or licensed or approved by a Minnesota Tribe in accordance with Tribal standards with whom the foster child resides.

Subd. 15. **Maintenance payments.** "Maintenance payments" means the basic rate plus any supplemental difficulty of care rate under Northstar Care for Children. It specifically does not include the cost of initial clothing allowance, payment for social services, or administrative payments to a child-placing agency. Payments are paid consistent with section 142A.609.

Subd. 16. **Northstar kinship assistance.** "Northstar kinship assistance" means medical coverage, as allowable under section 256B.055, and reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses associated with obtaining permanent legal and physical custody of a child, and may include financial support provided under agreement with the financially responsible agency, the commissioner, and the relative who has received a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child. Financial support may include a basic rate payment and a supplemental difficulty of care rate to assist with the cost of caring for the child.

Subd. 17. **Permanent legal and physical custody.** "Permanent legal and physical custody" means: (1) a full transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child ordered by a Minnesota juvenile court under section 260C.515, subdivision 4, to a relative who is not the child's parent as defined in section 260C.007, subdivision 25; or (2) for a child under jurisdiction of a Tribal court, a judicial determination under a similar provision in Tribal code which means that a relative will assume the duty and authority to provide care, control, and protection of a child who is residing in foster care, and to make decisions regarding the child's education, health care, and general welfare until adulthood. To establish eligibility for Northstar kinship assistance, permanent legal and physical custody does not include joint legal custody, joint physical custody, or joint legal and joint physical custody of a child shared by the child's parent and relative custodian.

Subd. 18. **Reassessment.** "Reassessment" means an update of a previous assessment through the process under section 142A.607 for a child who has been continuously eligible for Northstar Care for Children, or when a child identified as an at-risk child (Level A) under adoption assistance has manifested the disability upon which eligibility for the agreement was based according to section 142A.608, subdivision 4, paragraph (b). A reassessment may be used to update an initial assessment, a special assessment, or a previous reassessment.

Subd. 19. **Relative.** "Relative," as described in section 260C.007, subdivision 27, means a person related to the child by blood, marriage, or adoption, or an individual who is an important friend with whom the child has resided or had significant contact. For an Indian child, relative, as described in section 260C.007, subdivision 26b, means a person who is a member of the Indian child's family as defined in the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, United States Code, title 25, section 1903, paragraphs (2), (6), and (9).

Subd. 20. **Relative custodian.** "Relative custodian" means a person to whom permanent legal and physical custody of a child has been transferred under section 260C.515, subdivision 4, or for a child under jurisdiction of a Tribal court, a judicial determination under a similar provision in Tribal code, which means that a relative will assume the duty and authority to provide care, control, and protection of a child who is residing in foster care, and to make decisions regarding the child's education, health care, and general welfare until adulthood.

Subd. 21. **Special assessment.** "Special assessment" means an assessment performed under section 142A.607 that determines the benefits that an eligible child may receive under section 142A.609 at the time when a special assessment is required. A special assessment is used when a child's status within Northstar Care is shifted from a pre-Northstar Care program into Northstar Care for Children and when the commissioner determines that a special assessment is appropriate instead of assigning the transition child to a level under section 142A.612.

Subd. 22. **Supplemental difficulty of care rate.** "Supplemental difficulty of care rate" means the supplemental payment under section 142A.609, if any, as determined by the financially responsible agency or the state, based upon an assessment under section 142A.607. The rate must support activities consistent with the care a parent provides a child with special needs and not the equivalent of a purchased service. The rate must consider the capacity and intensity of the activities associated with parenting duties provided in the home to nurture the child, preserve the child's connections, and support the child's functioning in the home and community.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 6; 2014 c 275 art 1 s 73; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 13,34; 2015 c 78 art 1 s 8; 2019 c 50 art 1 s 79; 1Sp2020 c 2 art 5 s 60; 2021 c 30 art 9 s 1,2; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 2 s 74; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,41*

142A.603 NORTHSTAR CARE FOR CHILDREN; GENERALLY.

Subdivision 1. **Eligibility.** A child is eligible for Northstar Care for Children if the child is eligible for:

(1) foster care under section 142A.604;

(2) Northstar kinship assistance under section 142A.605; or

(3) adoption assistance under section 142A.606.

Subd. 2. **Assessments.** Except as otherwise specified, a child eligible for Northstar Care for Children shall receive an assessment under section 142A.607.

Subd. 3. **Agreements.** When a child is eligible for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, negotiations with caregivers and the development of a written, binding agreement must be conducted under section 142A.608.

Subd. 4. **Benefits and payments.** A child eligible for Northstar Care for Children is entitled to benefits specified in section 142A.609, based primarily on assessments under section 142A.607, and, if appropriate,

negotiations and agreements under section 142A.608. Although paid to the caregiver, these benefits must be considered benefits of the child rather than of the caregiver.

Subd. 5. **Federal, state, and local shares.** The cost of Northstar Care for Children must be shared among the federal government, state, counties of financial responsibility, and certain tribes as specified in section 142A.611.

Subd. 6. **Administration and appeals.** The commissioner and financially responsible agency, or other agency designated by the commissioner, shall administer Northstar Care for Children according to section 142A.612. The notification and fair hearing process applicable to this chapter is defined in section 142A.612.

Subd. 7. **Transition.** A child in foster care, relative custody assistance, or adoption assistance prior to January 1, 2015, who remains with the same caregivers, continues to receive benefits under programs preceding Northstar Care for Children, unless the child moves to a new foster care placement, permanency is obtained for the child, or the commissioner initiates transition of a child receiving pre-Northstar Care for Children relative custody assistance, Northstar kinship assistance, or adoption assistance under this chapter. Provisions for the transition to Northstar Care for Children for certain children in preceding programs are specified in section 142A.612, subdivisions 2 and 7. Additional provisions for children in: foster care are specified in section 142A.604, subdivision 6; relative custody assistance under section 142A.65 are specified in section 142A.605, subdivision 12; and adoption assistance under chapter 259A are specified in section 142A.606, subdivision 13.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 7; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 34; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.604 ELIGIBILITY FOR FOSTER CARE BENEFITS.

Subdivision 1. **General eligibility requirements.** (a) A child is eligible for foster care benefits under this section if the child meets the requirements of subdivision 2 on or after January 1, 2015.

(b) The financially responsible agency shall make a title IV-E eligibility determination for all foster children meeting the requirements of subdivision 2, provided the agency has such authority under the state title IV-E plan. To be eligible for title IV-E foster care, a child must also meet any additional criteria specified in section 472 of the Social Security Act.

(c) Except as provided under section 142A.609, subdivision 1 or 6, the foster care benefit to the child under this section must be determined under sections 142A.607 and 142A.609 through an individual assessment. Information from this assessment must be used to determine a potential future benefit under Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, if needed.

(d) When a child is eligible for additional services, subdivisions 3 and 4 govern the co-occurrence of program eligibility.

Subd. 2. **Placement in foster care.** To be eligible for foster care benefits under this section, the child must be in placement away from the child's legal parent, guardian, or Indian custodian as defined in section 260.755, subdivision 10, and must meet one of the criteria in clause (1) and either clause (2) or (3):

(1) the legally responsible agency must have placement authority to place the child with: (i) a voluntary placement agreement or a court order, consistent with sections 260B.198, 260C.001, and 260D.01, or consistent with section 260C.451 for a child 18 years old or older and under age 21 who maintains eligibility for foster care; or (ii) a voluntary placement agreement or court order by a Minnesota Tribe that is consistent with United States Code, title 42, section 672(a)(2); and

(2) the child is placed with a licensed child foster parent who resides with the child; or

(3) the child is placed in one of the following unlicensed child foster care settings:

(i) an emergency relative placement under Tribal licensing regulations or section 142B.06, with the legally responsible agency ensuring the relative completes the required child foster care application process;

(ii) a licensed adult foster home with an approved age variance under section 245A.16 for no more than six months where the license holder resides with the child;

(iii) for a child 18 years old or older and under age 21 who is eligible for extended foster care under section 260C.451, an unlicensed supervised independent living setting approved by the agency responsible for the child's care; or

(iv) a preadoptive placement in a home specified in section 142B.05, subdivision 2, paragraph (a), clause (5), with an approved adoption home study and signed adoption placement agreement.

Subd. 3. **Minor parent.** A child who is a minor parent in placement with the minor parent's child in the same home is eligible for foster care benefits under this section. The foster care benefit is limited to the minor parent, unless the legally responsible agency has separate legal authority for placement of the minor parent's child.

Subd. 4. **Foster children ages 18 up to 21 placed in an unlicensed supervised independent living setting.** A foster child 18 years old or older and under age 21 who maintains eligibility consistent with section 260C.451 and who is placed in an unlicensed supervised independent living setting shall receive the level of benefit under section 142A.609.

Subd. 5. **Excluded activities.** The basic and supplemental difficulty of care payment represents costs for activities similar in nature to those expected of parents, and does not cover services rendered by the licensed or tribally approved foster parent or administrative costs or fees. The financially responsible agency may pay an additional fee for specific services provided by the licensed foster parent. A foster parent must distinguish such a service from the daily care of the child as assessed through the process under section 142A.607.

Subd. 6. **Transition from pre-Northstar Care for Children program.** (a) Section 142A.418 establishes the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program for all children residing in family foster care on December 31, 2014. Unless transitioned under paragraph (b), a child in foster care with the same caregiver receives benefits under this pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program.

(b) Transition from the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program to Northstar Care for Children takes place on or after January 1, 2015, when the child:

(1) moves to a different foster home or unlicensed supervised independent living setting;

(2) has permanent legal and physical custody transferred and, if applicable, meets eligibility requirements in section 142A.605;

(3) is adopted and, if applicable, meets eligibility requirements in section 142A.606; or

(4) re-enters foster care after reunification or a trial home visit.

(c) Upon becoming eligible, a foster child must be assessed according to section 142A.607 and then transitioned into Northstar Care for Children according to section 142A.612.

Subd. 7. **Background study.** (a) A county or private agency conducting a background study for purposes of child foster care licensing or approval must conduct the study in accordance with chapter 245C and must meet the requirements in United States Code, title 42, section 671(a)(20).

(b) A Minnesota Tribe conducting a background study for purposes of child foster care licensing or approval must conduct the study in accordance with the requirements in United States Code, title 42, section 671(a)(20), when applicable.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 8; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 14,15,34; 1Sp2020 c 2 art 5 s 61,62; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 2 s 74; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,41; 2026 c 88 art 1 s 44*

142A.605 NORTHSTAR KINSHIP ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY.

Subdivision 1. **General eligibility requirements.** (a) To be eligible for Northstar kinship assistance under this section, there must be a judicial determination under section 260C.515, subdivision 4, that a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative who is not the child's parent is in the child's best interest. For a child under jurisdiction of a Tribal court, a judicial determination under a similar provision in Tribal code indicating that a relative will assume the duty and authority to provide care, control, and protection of a child who is residing in foster care, and to make decisions regarding the child's education, health care, and general welfare until adulthood, and that this is in the child's best interest is considered equivalent. A child whose parent shares legal, physical, or legal and physical custody of the child with a relative custodian is not eligible for Northstar kinship assistance. Additionally, a child must:

(1) have been removed from the child's home pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement or court order;

(2)(i) have resided with the prospective relative custodian who has been a licensed child foster parent for at least six consecutive months; or

(ii) have received from the commissioner an exemption from the requirement in item (i) that the prospective relative custodian has been a licensed child foster parent for at least six consecutive months, based on a determination that:

(A) an expedited move to permanency is in the child's best interest;

(B) expedited permanency cannot be completed without provision of Northstar kinship assistance;

(C) the prospective relative custodian is uniquely qualified to meet the child's needs, as defined in section 260C.212, subdivision 2, on a permanent basis;

(D) the child and prospective relative custodian meet the eligibility requirements of this section; and

(E) efforts were made by the legally responsible agency to place the child with the prospective relative custodian as a licensed child foster parent for six consecutive months before permanency, or an explanation why these efforts were not in the child's best interests;

(3) meet the agency determinations regarding permanency requirements in subdivision 2;

(4) meet the applicable citizenship and immigration requirements in subdivision 3;

(5) have been consulted regarding the proposed transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, if the child is at least 14 years of age or is expected to attain 14 years of age prior to the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody; and

(6) have a written, binding agreement under section 142A.608 among the caregiver or caregivers, the financially responsible agency, and the commissioner established prior to transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a), the child's prospective relative custodian or custodians must meet the applicable background study requirements in subdivision 4.

(c) To be eligible for title IV-E Northstar kinship assistance, a child must also meet any additional criteria in section 473(d) of the Social Security Act. The sibling of a child who meets the criteria for title IV-E Northstar kinship assistance in section 473(d) of the Social Security Act is eligible for title IV-E Northstar kinship assistance if the child and sibling are placed with the same prospective relative custodian or custodians, and the legally responsible agency, relatives, and commissioner agree on the appropriateness of the arrangement for the sibling. A child who meets all eligibility criteria except those specific to title IV-E Northstar kinship assistance is entitled to Northstar kinship assistance paid through funds other than title IV-E.

Subd. 2. **Agency determinations regarding permanency.** (a) To be eligible for Northstar kinship assistance, the legally responsible agency must complete the following determinations regarding permanency for the child prior to the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody:

(1) a determination that reunification and adoption are not appropriate permanency options for the child; and

(2) a determination that the child demonstrates a strong attachment to the prospective relative custodian and the prospective relative custodian has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child.

(b) The legally responsible agency shall document the determinations in paragraph (a) and eligibility requirements in this section that comply with United States Code, title 42, sections 673(d) and 675(1)(F). These determinations must be documented in a kinship placement agreement, which must be in the format prescribed by the commissioner and must be signed by the prospective relative custodian and the legally responsible agency. In the case of a Minnesota Tribe, the determinations and eligibility requirements in this section may be provided in an alternative format approved by the commissioner. Supporting information for completing each determination must be documented in the legally responsible agency's case file and available for review as requested by the financially responsible agency and the commissioner during the Northstar kinship assistance eligibility determination process.

Subd. 3. **Citizenship and immigration status.** A child must be a citizen of the United States or otherwise be eligible for federal public benefits according to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended, in order to be eligible for Northstar kinship assistance.

Subd. 4. **Background study.** (a) A background study must be completed on each prospective relative custodian and any other adult residing in the home of the prospective relative custodian. The background study must meet the requirements of United States Code, title 42, section 671(a)(20). A study completed under section 245C.33 meets this requirement. A background study on the prospective relative custodian or adult residing in the household previously completed under chapter 245C for the purposes of child foster care licensure under chapter 142B or licensure by a Minnesota Tribe, shall be used for the purposes of this section, provided that the background study meets the requirements of this subdivision and the prospective relative custodian is a licensed child foster parent at the time of the application for Northstar kinship assistance.

(b) If the background study reveals:

(1) a felony conviction at any time for:

(i) child abuse or neglect;

(ii) spousal abuse;

(iii) a crime against a child, including child pornography; or

(iv) a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery; or

(2) a felony conviction within the past five years for:

(i) physical assault;

(ii) battery; or

(iii) a drug-related offense;

the prospective relative custodian is prohibited from receiving Northstar kinship assistance on behalf of an otherwise eligible child.

Subd. 5. **Responsibility for determining Northstar kinship assistance eligibility.** The commissioner shall determine eligibility for:

(1) a child under the legal custody or responsibility of a Minnesota county social service agency who would otherwise remain in foster care;

(2) a Minnesota child under Tribal court jurisdiction who would otherwise remain in foster care; and

(3) an Indian child being placed in Minnesota who meets title IV-E eligibility defined in section 473(d) of the Social Security Act. The agency or entity assuming responsibility for the child is responsible for the nonfederal share of the Northstar kinship assistance payment.

Subd. 6. **Exclusions.** (a) A child with a Northstar kinship assistance agreement under Northstar Care for Children is not eligible for the Minnesota family investment program child-only grant under chapter 142G.

(b) The commissioner shall not enter into a Northstar kinship assistance agreement with:

(1) a child's biological parent or stepparent;

(2) an individual assuming permanent legal and physical custody of a child or the equivalent under Tribal code without involvement of the child welfare system; or

(3) an individual assuming permanent legal and physical custody of a child who was placed in Minnesota by another state or a Tribe outside of Minnesota.

Subd. 7. **Northstar kinship assistance eligibility determination.** The financially responsible agency shall prepare a Northstar kinship assistance eligibility determination for review and final approval by the commissioner. The eligibility determination must be completed according to requirements and procedures and on forms prescribed by the commissioner. Supporting documentation for the eligibility determination must be provided to the commissioner. The financially responsible agency and the commissioner must make every effort to establish a child's eligibility for title IV-E Northstar kinship assistance. A child who is determined to be eligible for Northstar kinship assistance must have a Northstar kinship assistance agreement negotiated on the child's behalf according to section 142A.608.

Subd. 8. **Termination of agreement.** (a) A Northstar kinship assistance agreement must be terminated in any of the following circumstances:

(1) the child has attained the age of 18, or up to age 21 when the child meets a condition for extension in subdivision 11;

(2) the child has not attained the age of 18 years of age, but the commissioner determines the relative custodian is no longer legally responsible for support of the child;

(3) the commissioner determines the relative custodian is no longer providing financial support to the child up to age 21;

(4) the death of the child; or

(5) the relative custodian requests in writing termination of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement.

(b) A relative custodian is considered no longer legally responsible for support of the child in any of the following circumstances:

(1) permanent legal and physical custody or guardianship of the child is transferred to another individual;

(2) the death of the relative custodian under subdivision 9;

(3) the child enlists in the military;

(4) the child gets married; or

(5) the child is determined an emancipated minor through legal action.

Subd. 9. **Death or incapacity of relative custodian or modification of custody.** The Northstar kinship assistance agreement ends upon death or incapacity of the relative custodian or modification of the order for permanent legal and physical custody in which legal or physical custody is removed from the relative custodian. In the case of a relative custodian's death or incapacity, Northstar kinship assistance eligibility may be continued according to subdivision 10.

Subd. 10. **Assigning a successor relative custodian for a child's Northstar kinship assistance.** (a) In the event of the death or incapacity of the relative custodian, eligibility for Northstar kinship assistance and title IV-E assistance, if applicable, is not affected if the relative custodian is replaced by a successor named in the Northstar kinship assistance benefit agreement. Northstar kinship assistance must be paid to a named successor who is not the child's legal parent, biological parent or stepparent, or other adult living in the home of the legal parent, biological parent, or stepparent.

(b) In order to receive Northstar kinship assistance, a named successor must:

(1) meet the background study requirements in subdivision 4;

(2) renegotiate the agreement consistent with section 142A.608, subdivision 3, including cooperating with an assessment under section 142A.607;

(3) be ordered by the court to be the child's legal relative custodian in a modification proceeding under section 260C.521, subdivision 2; and

(4) satisfy the requirements in this paragraph within one year of the relative custodian's death or incapacity unless the commissioner certifies that the named successor made reasonable attempts to satisfy the

requirements within one year and failure to satisfy the requirements was not the responsibility of the named successor.

(c) Payment of Northstar kinship assistance to the successor guardian may be temporarily approved through the policies, procedures, requirements, and deadlines under section 142A.612, subdivision 2. Ongoing payment shall begin in the month when all the requirements in paragraph (b) are satisfied.

(d) Continued payment of Northstar kinship assistance may occur in the event of the death or incapacity of the relative custodian when:

(1) no successor has been named in the benefit agreement or a named successor is not able or willing to accept custody or guardianship of the child; and

(2) the commissioner gives written consent to an individual who is a guardian or custodian appointed by a court for the child upon the death of both relative custodians in the case of assignment of custody to two individuals, or the sole relative custodian in the case of assignment of custody to one individual, unless the child is under the custody of a county, Tribal, or child-placing agency.

(e) Temporary assignment of Northstar kinship assistance may be approved for a maximum of six consecutive months from the death or incapacity of the relative custodian or custodians as provided in paragraph (a) and must adhere to the policies, procedures, requirements, and deadlines under section 142A.612, subdivision 2, that are prescribed by the commissioner. If a court has not appointed a permanent legal guardian or custodian within six months, the Northstar kinship assistance must terminate and must not be resumed.

(f) Upon assignment of assistance payments under paragraphs (d) and (e), assistance must be provided from funds other than title IV-E.

Subd. 11. **Extension of Northstar kinship assistance after age 18.** (a) Under the circumstances outlined in paragraph (e), a child may qualify for extension of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement beyond the date the child attains age 18, up to the date the child attains the age of 21.

(b) A request for extension of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement must be completed in writing and submitted, including all supporting documentation, by the relative custodian to the commissioner at least 60 calendar days prior to the date that the current agreement will terminate.

(c) A signed amendment to the current Northstar kinship assistance agreement must be fully executed between the relative custodian and the commissioner at least ten business days prior to the termination of the current agreement. The request for extension and the fully executed amendment must be made according to requirements and procedures prescribed by the commissioner, including documentation of eligibility, and on forms prescribed by the commissioner.

(d) If an agency is certifying a child for Northstar kinship assistance and the child will attain the age of 18 within 60 calendar days of submission, the request for extension must be completed in writing and submitted, including all supporting documentation, with the Northstar kinship assistance application.

(e) A child who has attained the age of 16 prior to the effective date of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement is eligible for extension of the agreement up to the date the child attains age 21 if the child:

(1) is dependent on the relative custodian for care and financial support; and

(2) meets at least one of the following conditions:

(i) is completing a secondary education program or a program leading to an equivalent credential;

(ii) is enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education;

(iii) is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment;

(iv) is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

(v) is incapable of doing any of the activities described in items (i) to (iv) due to a medical condition where incapability is supported by professional documentation according to the requirements and procedures prescribed by the commissioner.

(f) A child who has not attained the age of 16 prior to the effective date of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement is eligible for extension of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement up to the date the child attains the age of 21 if the child is:

(1) dependent on the relative custodian for care and financial support; and

(2) possesses a physical or mental disability which impairs the capacity for independent living and warrants continuation of financial assistance, as determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 12. **Beginning Northstar kinship assistance component of Northstar Care for Children.** Effective November 27, 2014, a child who meets the eligibility criteria for Northstar kinship assistance in subdivision 1 may have a Northstar kinship assistance agreement negotiated on the child's behalf according to section 142A.608. The effective date of the agreement must be January 1, 2015, or the date of the court order transferring permanent legal and physical custody, whichever is later. Except as provided under section 142A.609, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), the rate schedule for an agreement under this subdivision is determined under section 142A.609 based on the age of the child on the date that the prospective relative custodian signs the agreement.

Subd. 13. **Transition to Northstar kinship assistance under Northstar Care for Children.** The commissioner may execute Northstar kinship assistance agreements for a child with a relative custody agreement under section 142A.65 executed on the child's behalf on or before November 26, 2014, in accordance with the priorities outlined in section 142A.612, subdivision 7, paragraph (b). To facilitate transition into the Northstar kinship assistance program, the commissioner may waive any Northstar kinship assistance eligibility requirements for a child with a relative custody agreement under section 142A.65 executed on the child's behalf on or before November 26, 2014. Agreements negotiated under this subdivision must be done according to the process outlined in section 142A.612, subdivision 7. The maximum rate used in the negotiation process for an agreement under this subdivision must be as outlined in section 142A.612, subdivision 7.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 9; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 16-19,34; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 47,48; 2021 c 30 art 9 s 3; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 2 s 74; art 7 s 12; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,41; art 18 s 15*

142A.606 NORTHSTAR ADOPTION ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY.

Subdivision 1. **General eligibility requirements.** (a) To be eligible for Northstar adoption assistance under this section, a child must:

(1) be determined to be a child with special needs under subdivision 2;

(2) meet the applicable citizenship and immigration requirements in subdivision 3;

(3)(i) meet the criteria in section 473 of the Social Security Act; or

(ii) have had foster care payments paid on the child's behalf while in out-of-home placement through the county social service agency or Tribal social service agency prior to the issuance of a court order transferring the child's guardianship to the commissioner or making the child a ward of the Tribe; and

(4) have a written, binding agreement under section 142A.608 among the adoptive parent, the financially responsible agency, or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner, and the commissioner established prior to finalization of the adoption.

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a), an eligible child's adoptive parent or parents must meet the applicable background study requirements in subdivision 4.

(c) A child who meets all eligibility criteria except those specific to title IV-E adoption assistance shall receive adoption assistance paid through funds other than title IV-E.

(d) A child receiving Northstar kinship assistance payments under section 142A.605 is eligible for Northstar adoption assistance when the criteria in paragraph (a) are met and the child's legal custodian is adopting the child.

Subd. 2. **Special needs determination.** (a) A child is considered a child with special needs under this section if the requirements in paragraphs (b) to (g) are met.

(b) There must be a determination that the child must not or should not be returned to the home of the child's parents as evidenced by:

(1) a court-ordered termination of parental rights;

(2) a petition to terminate parental rights;

(3) consent of the child's parent to adoption accepted by the court under chapter 260C or, in the case of a child receiving Northstar kinship assistance payments under section 142A.605, consent of the child's parent to the child's adoption executed under chapter 259;

(4) in circumstances when Tribal law permits the child to be adopted without a termination of parental rights, a judicial determination by a Tribal court indicating the valid reason why the child cannot or should not return home;

(5) a voluntary relinquishment under section 259.25 or, if relinquishment occurred in another state, the applicable laws in that state; or

(6) the death of the legal parent or parents if the child has two legal parents.

(c) There exists a specific factor or condition of which it is reasonable to conclude that the child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing adoption assistance as evidenced by:

(1) a determination by the Social Security Administration that the child meets all medical or disability requirements of title XVI of the Social Security Act with respect to eligibility for Supplemental Security Income benefits;

(2) a documented physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability not covered under clause (1);

(3) a member of a sibling group being adopted at the same time by the same parent;

(4) an adoptive placement in the home of a parent who previously adopted a sibling for whom they receive adoption assistance; or

(5) documentation that the child is an at-risk child.

(d) A reasonable but unsuccessful effort must have been made to place the child with adoptive parents without providing adoption assistance as evidenced by:

(1) a documented search for an appropriate adoptive placement; or

(2) a determination by the commissioner that a search under clause (1) is not in the best interests of the child.

(e) The requirement for a documented search for an appropriate adoptive placement under paragraph (d), including the registration of the child with the state adoption exchange and other recruitment methods under paragraph (f), must be waived if:

(1) the child is being adopted by a relative and it is determined by the child-placing agency that adoption by the relative is in the best interests of the child;

(2) the child is being adopted by a foster parent with whom the child has developed significant emotional ties while in the foster parent's care as a foster child and it is determined by the child-placing agency that adoption by the foster parent is in the best interests of the child; or

(3) the child is being adopted by a parent that previously adopted a sibling of the child, and it is determined by the child-placing agency that adoption by this parent is in the best interests of the child.

For an Indian child covered by the Indian Child Welfare Act, a waiver must not be granted unless the child-placing agency has complied with the placement preferences required by the Indian Child Welfare Act, United States Code, title 25, section 1915(a).

(f) To meet the requirement of a documented search for an appropriate adoptive placement under paragraph (d), clause (1), the child-placing agency minimally must:

(1) conduct a relative search as required by section 260C.221 and give consideration to placement with a relative, as required by section 260C.212, subdivision 2;

(2) comply with the placement preferences required by the Indian Child Welfare Act when the Indian Child Welfare Act, United States Code, title 25, section 1915(a), applies;

(3) locate prospective adoptive families by registering the child on the state adoption exchange, as required under section 259.75; and

(4) if registration with the state adoption exchange does not result in the identification of an appropriate adoptive placement, the agency must employ additional recruitment methods prescribed by the commissioner.

(g) Once the legally responsible agency has determined that placement with an identified parent is in the child's best interests and made full written disclosure about the child's social and medical history, the agency must ask the prospective adoptive parent if the prospective adoptive parent is willing to adopt the child without receiving adoption assistance under this section. If the identified parent is either unwilling or unable to adopt the child without adoption assistance, the legally responsible agency must provide documentation as prescribed by the commissioner to fulfill the requirement to make a reasonable effort to place the child without adoption assistance. If the identified parent is willing to adopt the child without

adoption assistance, the parent must provide a written statement to this effect to the legally responsible agency and the statement must be maintained in the permanent adoption record of the legally responsible agency. For children under guardianship of the commissioner, the legally responsible agency shall submit a copy of this statement to the commissioner to be maintained in the permanent adoption record.

Subd. 3. **Citizenship and immigration status.** (a) A child must be a citizen of the United States or otherwise eligible for federal public benefits according to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended, in order to be eligible for the title IV-E adoption assistance program.

(b) A child must be a citizen of the United States or meet the qualified alien requirements as defined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as amended, in order to be eligible for adoption assistance paid through funds other than title IV-E.

Subd. 4. **Background study.** (a) A background study must be completed on each prospective adoptive parent and all other adults residing in the home. A background study must meet the requirements of United States Code, title 42, section 671(a)(20). A study completed under section 245C.33 meets this requirement. If the prospective adoptive parent is a licensed child foster parent licensed under chapter 142B or by a Minnesota Tribe, the background study previously completed for the purposes of child foster care licensure shall be used for the purpose of this section, provided that the background study meets all other requirements of this subdivision and the prospective adoptive parent is a licensed child foster parent at the time of the application for adoption assistance.

(b) If the background study reveals:

(1) a felony conviction at any time for:

(i) child abuse or neglect;

(ii) spousal abuse;

(iii) a crime against a child, including child pornography; or

(iv) a crime involving violence, including rape, sexual assault, or homicide, but not including other physical assault or battery; or

(2) a felony conviction within the past five years for:

(i) physical assault;

(ii) battery; or

(iii) a drug-related offense;

the adoptive parent is prohibited from receiving adoption assistance on behalf of an otherwise eligible child.

Subd. 5. **Responsibility for determining adoption assistance eligibility.** The commissioner must determine eligibility for:

(1) a child under the guardianship of the commissioner who would otherwise remain in foster care;

(2) a child who is not under the guardianship of the commissioner who meets title IV-E eligibility defined in section 473 of the Social Security Act and no state agency has legal responsibility for placement and care of the child;

(3) a Minnesota child under Tribal jurisdiction who would otherwise remain in foster care; and

(4) an Indian child being placed in Minnesota who meets title IV-E eligibility defined in section 473 of the Social Security Act. The agency or entity assuming responsibility for the child is responsible for the nonfederal share of the adoption assistance payment.

Subd. 6. **Exclusions.** The commissioner must not enter into an adoption assistance agreement with the following individuals:

(1) a child's biological parent or stepparent;

(2) a child's relative under section 260C.007, subdivision 26b or 27, with whom the child resided immediately prior to child welfare involvement unless:

(i) the child was in the custody of a Minnesota county or Tribal agency pursuant to an order under chapter 260C or equivalent provisions of Tribal code and the agency had placement and care responsibility for permanency planning for the child; and

(ii) the child is under guardianship of the commissioner of children, youth, and families according to the requirements of section 260C.325, subdivision 1 or 3, or is a ward of a Minnesota Tribal court after termination of parental rights, suspension of parental rights, or a finding by the Tribal court that the child cannot safely return to the care of the parent;

(3) an individual adopting a child who is the subject of a direct adoptive placement under section 259.47 or the equivalent in Tribal code;

(4) a child's legal custodian or guardian who is now adopting the child, except for a relative custodian as defined in section 142A.602, subdivision 20, who is currently receiving Northstar kinship assistance benefits on behalf of the child; or

(5) an individual who is adopting a child who is not a citizen or resident of the United States and was either adopted in another country or brought to the United States for the purposes of adoption.

Subd. 7. **Adoption assistance eligibility determination.** (a) The financially responsible agency shall prepare an adoption assistance eligibility determination for review and final approval by the commissioner. When there is no financially responsible agency, the adoption assistance eligibility determination must be completed by the agency designated by the commissioner. The eligibility determination must be completed according to requirements and procedures and on forms prescribed by the commissioner. The financially responsible agency and the commissioner shall make every effort to establish a child's eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance. Documentation from a qualified expert for the eligibility determination must be provided to the commissioner to verify that a child meets the special needs criteria in subdivision 2. A child who is determined to be eligible for adoption assistance must have an adoption assistance agreement negotiated on the child's behalf according to section 142A.608.

(b) Documentation from a qualified expert of a disability is limited to evidence deemed appropriate by the commissioner and must be submitted to the commissioner with the eligibility determination. Examples of appropriate documentation include, but are not limited to, medical records, psychological assessments, educational or early childhood evaluations, court findings, and social and medical history.

(c) Documentation that the child is at risk of developing physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities must be submitted according to policies and procedures prescribed by the commissioner.

Subd. 8. **Termination of agreement.** (a) An adoption assistance agreement must terminate in any of the following circumstances:

(1) the child has attained the age of 18, or up to age 21 when the child meets a condition for extension in subdivision 12;

(2) the child has not attained the age of 18, but the commissioner determines the adoptive parent is no longer legally responsible for support of the child;

(3) the commissioner determines the adoptive parent is no longer providing financial support to the child up to age 21;

(4) the death of the child; or

(5) the adoptive parent requests in writing the termination of the adoption assistance agreement.

(b) An adoptive parent is considered no longer legally responsible for support of the child in any of the following circumstances:

(1) parental rights to the child are legally terminated or a court accepted the parent's consent to adoption under chapter 260C;

(2) permanent legal and physical custody or guardianship of the child is transferred to another individual;

(3) death of the adoptive parent under subdivision 9;

(4) the child enlists in the military;

(5) the child gets married; or

(6) the child is determined an emancipated minor through legal action.

Subd. 9. **Death of adoptive parent or adoption dissolution.** The adoption assistance agreement ends upon death or termination of parental rights of both adoptive parents in the case of a two-parent adoption, or the sole adoptive parent in the case of a single-parent adoption. The child's adoption assistance eligibility may be continued according to subdivision 10.

Subd. 10. **Continuing a child's title IV-E adoption assistance in a subsequent adoption.** (a) The child maintains eligibility for title IV-E adoption assistance in a subsequent adoption if the following criteria are met:

(1) the child is determined to be a child with special needs as outlined in subdivision 2; and

(2) the subsequent adoptive parent resides in Minnesota.

(b) If a child had a title IV-E adoption assistance agreement in effect prior to the death of the adoptive parent or dissolution of the adoption, and the subsequent adoptive parent resides outside of Minnesota, the commissioner is not responsible for determining whether the child meets the definition of special needs, entering into the adoption assistance agreement, and making any adoption assistance payments outlined in the new agreement unless a state agency in Minnesota has responsibility for placement and care of the child at the time of the subsequent adoption. If there is no state agency in Minnesota that has responsibility for placement and care of the child at the time of the subsequent adoption, the public child welfare agency in the subsequent adoptive parent's residence is responsible for determining whether the child meets the definition of special needs and entering into the adoption assistance agreement.

Subd. 11. **Assigning a child's adoption assistance to a court-appointed guardian or custodian.** (a) State-funded adoption assistance may be continued with the written consent of the commissioner to an

individual who is a guardian appointed by a court for the child upon the death of both the adoptive parents in the case of a two-parent adoption, or the sole adoptive parent in the case of a single-parent adoption, unless the child is under the custody of a state agency.

(b) Temporary assignment of adoption assistance may be approved by the commissioner for a maximum of six consecutive months from the death of the adoptive parent or parents under subdivision 9 and must adhere to the requirements and procedures prescribed by the commissioner. If, within six months, the child has not been adopted by a person agreed upon by the commissioner, or a court has not appointed a permanent legal guardian under section 260C.325, 524.5-313, or similar law of another jurisdiction, the adoption assistance must terminate.

(c) Upon assignment of payments under this subdivision, assistance must be from funds other than title IV-E.

Subd. 12. **Extension of adoption assistance agreement.** (a) Under certain limited circumstances a child may qualify for extension of the adoption assistance agreement beyond the date the child attains age 18, up to the date the child attains the age of 21.

(b) A request for extension of the adoption assistance agreement must be completed in writing and submitted, including all supporting documentation, by the adoptive parent to the commissioner at least 60 calendar days prior to the date that the current agreement will terminate.

(c) A signed amendment to the current adoption assistance agreement must be fully executed between the adoptive parent and the commissioner at least ten business days prior to the termination of the current agreement. The request for extension and the fully executed amendment must be made according to the requirements and procedures prescribed by the commissioner, including documentation of eligibility, on forms prescribed by the commissioner.

(d) If an agency is certifying a child for adoption assistance and the child will attain the age of 18 within 60 calendar days of submission, the request for extension must be completed in writing and submitted, including all supporting documentation, with the adoption assistance application.

(e) A child who has attained the age of 16 prior to the finalization of the child's adoption is eligible for extension of the adoption assistance agreement up to the date the child attains age 21 if the child is:

(1) dependent on the adoptive parent for care and financial support; and

(2)(i) completing a secondary education program or a program leading to an equivalent credential;

(ii) enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education;

(iii) participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment;

(iv) employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

(v) incapable of doing any of the activities described in items (i) to (iv) due to a medical condition where incapability is supported by documentation from an expert according to the requirements and procedures prescribed by the commissioner.

(f) A child who has not attained the age of 16 prior to finalization of the child's adoption is eligible for extension of the adoption assistance agreement up to the date the child attains the age of 21 if the child is:

(1) dependent on the adoptive parent for care and financial support; and

(2)(i) enrolled in a secondary education program or a program leading to the equivalent; or

(ii) possesses a physical or mental disability that impairs the capacity for independent living and warrants continuation of financial assistance as determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 13. **Beginning adoption assistance under Northstar Care for Children.** Effective November 27, 2014, a child who meets the eligibility criteria for adoption assistance in subdivision 1 may have an adoption assistance agreement negotiated on the child's behalf according to section 142A.608, and the effective date of the agreement must be January 1, 2015, or the date of the court order finalizing the adoption, whichever is later. Except as provided under section 142A.609, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), the maximum rate schedule for the agreement must be determined according to section 142A.609 based on the age of the child on the date that the prospective adoptive parent or parents sign the agreement.

Subd. 14. **Transition to adoption assistance under Northstar Care for Children.** The commissioner may offer adoption assistance agreements under this chapter to a child with an adoption assistance agreement under chapter 259A executed on the child's behalf on or before November 26, 2014, according to the priorities outlined in section 142A.612, subdivision 7, paragraph (b). To facilitate transition into the Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance program, the commissioner has the authority to waive any Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance eligibility requirements for a child with an adoption assistance agreement under chapter 259A executed on the child's behalf on or before November 26, 2014. Agreements negotiated under this subdivision must be in accordance with the process in section 142A.612, subdivision 7. The maximum rate used in the negotiation process for an agreement under this subdivision must be as outlined in section 142A.612, subdivision 7.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 10; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 20,21; 2015 c 78 art 1 s 9; 2019 c 50 art 1 s 80; 2021 c 30 art 9 s 4,5; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 2 s 74; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,41*

142A.607 ASSESSMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Assessment.** (a) Each child eligible under sections 142A.604 to 142A.606, must be assessed to determine the benefits the child may receive under section 142A.609, in accordance with the assessment tool, process, and requirements specified in subdivision 2.

(b) If an agency applies the emergency foster care rate for initial placement under section 142A.609, the agency may wait up to 30 days to complete the initial assessment.

(c) Unless otherwise specified in paragraph (d), a child must be assessed at the basic level, level B, or one of ten supplemental difficulty of care levels, levels C to L.

(d) An assessment must not be completed for:

(1) a child eligible for Northstar adoption assistance under section 142A.606 who is determined to be an at-risk child. A child under this clause must be assigned level A under section 142A.609, subdivision 1; and

(2) a child transitioning into Northstar Care for Children under section 142A.612, subdivision 7, unless the commissioner determines an assessment is appropriate.

Subd. 2. **Establishment of assessment tool, process, and requirements.** Consistent with sections 142A.60 to 142A.612, the commissioner shall establish an assessment tool to determine the basic and supplemental difficulty of care, and shall establish the process to be followed and other requirements, including appropriate documentation, when conducting the initial assessment of a child entering Northstar

Care for Children or when the special assessment and reassessments may be needed for children continuing in the program. The assessment tool must take into consideration the strengths and needs of the child and the extra parenting provided by the caregiver to meet the child's needs.

Subd. 3. **Minnesota assessment of parenting for children and youth (MAPCY) revision.** The commissioner, in consultation with representatives from communities of color, including but not limited to advisory councils and ombudspersons, shall review and revise the MAPCY tool and incorporate changes that take into consideration different cultures and the diverse needs of communities of color.

Subd. 4. **Child care allowance portion of assessment.** (a) The assessment tool established under subdivision 2 must include consideration of the caregiver's need for child care under this subdivision, with greater consideration for children of younger ages.

(b) The child's assessment must include consideration of the caregiver's need for child care if the following criteria are met:

(1) the child is under age 13;

(2) all available adult caregivers are employed or attending educational or vocational training programs; and

(3) the caregiver does not receive child care assistance for the child under chapter 142E.

(c) For children younger than seven years of age, the level determined by the non-child care portions of the assessment must be adjusted based on the average number of hours child care is needed each week due to employment or attending a training or educational program as follows:

(1) fewer than ten hours or if the caregiver is participating in the child care assistance program under chapter 119B, no adjustment;

(2) ten to 19 hours or if needed during school summer vacation or equivalent only, increase one level;

(3) 20 to 29 hours, increase two levels;

(4) 30 to 39 hours, increase three levels; and

(5) 40 or more hours, increase four levels.

(d) For children at least seven years of age but younger than 13, the level determined by the non-child care portions of the assessment must be adjusted based on the average number of hours child care is needed each week due to employment or attending a training or educational program as follows:

(1) fewer than 20 hours, needed during school summer vacation or equivalent only, or if the caregiver is participating in the child care assistance program under chapter 142E, no adjustment;

(2) 20 to 39 hours, increase one level; and

(3) 40 or more hours, increase two levels.

(e) When the child attains the age of seven, the child care allowance must be reduced by reducing the level to that available under paragraph (d). For children in foster care, benefits under section 142A.609 must be automatically reduced when the child turns seven. For children who receive Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, agreements must include similar provisions to ensure that the benefit provided to these children does not exceed the benefit provided to children in foster care.

(f) When the child attains the age of 13, the child care allowance must be eliminated by reducing the level to that available prior to any consideration of the caregiver's need for child care. For children in foster care, benefits under section 142A.609 must be automatically reduced when the child attains the age of 13. For children who receive Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, agreements must include similar provisions to ensure that the benefit provided to these children does not exceed the benefit provided to children in foster care.

(g) The child care allowance under this subdivision is not available to caregivers who receive the child care assistance under chapter 142E. A caregiver receiving a child care allowance under this subdivision must notify the commissioner if the caregiver subsequently receives the child care assistance program under chapter 142E, and the level must be reduced to that available prior to any consideration of the caregiver's need for child care.

(h) In establishing the assessment tool under subdivision 2, the commissioner must design the tool so that the levels applicable to the non-child care portions of the assessment at a given age accommodate the requirements of this subdivision.

Subd. 5. **Extraordinary levels.** (a) The assessment tool established under subdivision 2 must provide a mechanism through which up to five levels can be added to the supplemental difficulty of care for a particular child under section 142A.609, subdivision 4. In establishing the assessment tool, the commissioner must design the tool so that the levels applicable to the portions of the assessment other than the extraordinary levels can accommodate the requirements of this subdivision.

(b) These extraordinary levels are available when all of the following circumstances apply:

(1) the child has extraordinary needs as determined by the assessment tool provided for under subdivision 2, and the child meets other requirements established by the commissioner, such as a minimum score on the assessment tool;

(2) the child's extraordinary needs require extraordinary care and intense supervision that is provided by the child's caregiver as part of the parental duties as described in the supplemental difficulty of care rate, section 142A.602, subdivision 22. This extraordinary care provided by the caregiver is required so that the child can be safely cared for in the home and community, and prevents residential placement;

(3) the child is physically living in a foster family setting, as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 2960.3010, subpart 23, or physically living in the home with the adoptive parent or relative custodian; and

(4) the child is receiving the services for which the child is eligible through medical assistance programs or other programs that provide necessary services for children with disabilities or other medical and behavioral conditions to live with the child's family, but the agency with caregiver's input has identified a specific support gap that cannot be met through home and community support waivers or other programs that are designed to provide support for children with special needs.

(c) The agency completing an assessment, under subdivision 2, that suggests an extraordinary level must document as part of the assessment, the following:

(1) the assessment tool that determined that the child's needs or disabilities require extraordinary care and intense supervision;

(2) a summary of the extraordinary care and intense supervision that is provided by the caregiver as part of the parental duties as described in the supplemental difficulty of care rate, section 142A.602, subdivision 22;

(3) confirmation that the child is currently physically residing in the home with the foster parent, adoptive parent, or relative custodian;

(4) the efforts of the agency, caregiver, parents, and others to request support services in the home and community that would ease the degree of parental duties provided by the caregiver for the care and supervision of the child. This would include documentation of the services provided for the child's needs or disabilities, and the services that were denied or not available from the local social service agency, community agency, the local school district, local public health department, the parent, or child's medical insurance provider;

(5) the specific support gap identified that places the child's safety and well-being at risk in the home or community and is necessary to prevent residential placement; and

(6) the extraordinary care and intense supervision provided by the foster, adoptive, or guardianship caregivers to maintain the child safely in the child's home and prevent residential placement that cannot be supported by medical assistance or other programs that provide services, necessary care for children with disabilities, or other medical or behavioral conditions in the home or community.

(d) An agency completing an assessment under subdivision 2 that suggests an extraordinary level is appropriate must forward the assessment and required documentation to the commissioner. If the commissioner approves, the extraordinary levels must be retroactive to the date the assessment was forwarded.

Subd. 6. **Timing of initial assessment.** For a child entering Northstar Care for Children under section 142A.604, the initial assessment must be completed within 30 days after the child is placed in foster care.

Subd. 7. **Completion of initial assessment.** (a) The assessment must be completed in consultation with the child's caregiver. Face-to-face contact with the caregiver is not required to complete the assessment.

(b) Initial assessments are completed for foster children, eligible under section 142A.604.

(c) The initial assessment must be completed by the financially responsible agency, in consultation with the legally responsible agency if different, within 30 days of the child's placement in foster care.

(d) If the foster parent is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the assessment process, the child shall be assigned the basic level, level B under section 142A.609, subdivision 3.

(e) Notice to the foster parent shall be provided as specified in subdivision 13.

Subd. 8. **Timing of special assessment.** (a) A special assessment is required as part of the negotiation of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement under section 142A.605 if:

(1) the child was not placed in foster care with the prospective relative custodian or custodians prior to the negotiation of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement under section 142A.608; or

(2) any requirement for reassessment under subdivision 10 is met.

(b) A special assessment is required as part of the negotiation of the adoption assistance agreement under section 142A.606 if:

(1) the child was not placed in foster care with the prospective adoptive parent or parents prior to the negotiation of the adoption assistance agreement under section 142A.608; or

(2) any requirement for reassessment under subdivision 10 is met.

(c) A special assessment is required when a child transitions from a pre-Northstar Care for Children program into Northstar Care for Children if the commissioner determines that a special assessment is appropriate instead of assigning the transition child to a level under section 142A.612.

(d) The special assessment must be completed prior to the establishment of a Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance agreement on behalf of the child.

Subd. 9. **Completing the special assessment.** (a) The special assessment must be completed in consultation with the child's caregiver. Face-to-face contact with the caregiver is not required to complete the special assessment.

(b) If a new special assessment is required prior to the effective date of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement, it must be completed by the financially responsible agency, in consultation with the legally responsible agency if different. If the prospective relative custodian is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the special assessment process, the child shall be assigned the basic level, level B under section 142A.609, subdivision 3.

(c) If a special assessment is required prior to the effective date of the adoption assistance agreement, it must be completed by the financially responsible agency, in consultation with the legally responsible agency if different. If there is no financially responsible agency, the special assessment must be completed by the agency designated by the commissioner. If the prospective adoptive parent is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the special assessment process, the child must be assigned the basic level, level B under section 142A.609, subdivision 3, unless the child is known to be an at-risk child, in which case, the child shall be assigned level A under section 142A.609, subdivision 1.

(d) Notice to the prospective relative custodians or prospective adoptive parents must be provided as specified in subdivision 14.

Subd. 10. **Timing of and requests for reassessments.** Reassessments for an eligible child must be completed within 30 days of any of the following events:

(1) for a child in continuous foster care, when six months have elapsed since the initial assessment, and annually thereafter;

(2) for a child in continuous foster care, change of placement location;

(3) for a child in foster care, at the request of the financially responsible agency or legally responsible agency;

(4) at the request of the commissioner; or

(5) at the request of the caregiver under subdivision 11.

Subd. 11. **Caregiver requests for reassessments.** (a) A caregiver may initiate a reassessment request for an eligible child in writing to the financially responsible agency or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner. The written request must include the reason for the request and the name, address, and contact information of the caregivers. The caregiver may request a reassessment if at least six months have elapsed since any previous assessment or reassessment. For an eligible foster child, a foster parent may request reassessment in less than six months with written documentation that there have been significant changes in the child's needs that necessitate an earlier reassessment.

(b) A caregiver may request a reassessment of an at-risk child for whom an adoption assistance agreement has been executed if the caregiver has satisfied the commissioner with written documentation from a qualified expert that the potential disability upon which eligibility for the agreement was based has manifested itself, consistent with section 142A.608, subdivision 4, paragraph (b).

(c) If the reassessment cannot be completed within 30 days of the caregiver's request, the agency responsible for reassessment must notify the caregiver of the reason for the delay and a reasonable estimate of when the reassessment can be completed.

(d) Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in paragraph (a) or subdivision 10, when a Northstar kinship assistance agreement or adoption assistance agreement under section 142A.608 has been signed by all parties, no reassessment may be requested or conducted until the court finalizes the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody or finalizes the adoption.

Subd. 12. **Completion of reassessment.** (a) The reassessment must be completed in consultation with the child's caregiver. Face-to-face contact with the caregiver is not required to complete the reassessment.

(b) For foster children eligible under section 142A.604, reassessments must be completed by the financially responsible agency, in consultation with the legally responsible agency if different.

(c) If reassessment is required after the effective date of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement, the reassessment must be completed by the financially responsible agency.

(d) If a reassessment is required after the effective date of the adoption assistance agreement, it must be completed by the financially responsible agency or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner.

(e) If the child's caregiver is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the reassessment, the child must be assessed at level B under section 142A.609, subdivision 3, unless the child has a Northstar adoption assistance agreement and is known to be an at-risk child, in which case the child must be assessed at level A under section 142A.609, subdivision 1.

Subd. 13. **Approval of initial assessments, special assessments, and reassessments.** (a) Any agency completing initial assessments, special assessments, or reassessments must designate one or more supervisors or other staff to examine and approve assessments completed by others in the agency under subdivision 2. The person approving an assessment must not be the case manager or staff member completing that assessment.

(b) In cases where a special assessment or reassessment for Northstar kinship assistance and adoption assistance is required under subdivision 9 or 12, the commissioner shall review and approve the assessment as part of the eligibility determination process outlined in section 142A.605, subdivision 7, for Northstar kinship assistance, or section 142A.606, subdivision 7, for adoption assistance. The assessment determines the maximum of the negotiated agreement amount under section 142A.608.

(c) The effective date of the new rate is determined as follows:

(1) for initial assessments of children in foster care, the new rate is effective based on the emergency foster care rate for initial placement pursuant to section 142A.609, subdivision 6;

(2) for special assessments, the new rate is effective on the date of the finalized adoption decree or the date of the court order that transfers permanent legal and physical custody to a relative;

(3) for postpermanency reassessments, the new rate is effective on the date that the commissioner signs the amendment to the Northstar Adoption Assistance or Northstar Kinship Assistance benefit agreement.

Subd. 14. **Notice for caregiver.** (a) The agency as defined in subdivision 7 or 12 that is responsible for completing the initial assessment or reassessment must provide the child's caregiver with written notice of the initial assessment or reassessment.

(b) Initial assessment notices must be sent within 15 days of completion of the initial assessment and must minimally include the following:

(1) a summary of the child's completed individual assessment used to determine the initial rating;

(2) statement of rating and benefit level;

(3) statement of the circumstances under which the agency must reassess the child;

(4) procedure to seek reassessment;

(5) notice that the caregiver has the right to a fair hearing review of the assessment and how to request a fair hearing, consistent with sections 142A.20 and 256.045, subdivision 3; and

(6) the name, telephone number, and email, if available, of a contact person at the agency completing the assessment.

(c) Reassessment notices must be sent within 15 days after the completion of the reassessment and must minimally include the following:

(1) a summary of the child's individual assessment used to determine the new rating;

(2) any change in rating and its effective date;

(3) procedure to seek reassessment;

(4) notice that if a change in rating results in a reduction of benefits, the caregiver has the right to a fair hearing review of the assessment and how to request a fair hearing consistent with sections 142A.20 and 256.045, subdivision 3;

(5) notice that a caregiver who requests a fair hearing of the reassessed rating within ten days may continue at the current rate pending the hearing, but the agency may recover any overpayment; and

(6) name, telephone number, and email, if available, of a contact person at the agency completing the reassessment.

(d) Notice is not required for special assessments since the notice is part of the Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance negotiated agreement completed according to section 142A.608.

Subd. 15. **Assessment tool determines rate of benefits.** The assessment tool established by the commissioner in subdivision 2 determines the monthly benefit level for children in foster care. The monthly payment for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance may be negotiated up to the monthly benefit level under foster care for those children eligible for a payment under section 142A.609, subdivision 1.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 11; 2014 c 275 art 1 s 74-79; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 22,23,34; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 49; 2018 c 188 s 2; 1Sp2020 c 2 art 5 s 63; 2021 c 30 art 9 s 6-10; 2023 c 70 art 14 s 4; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 4 s 26; art 5 s 7; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34,42; art 18 s 16; 2025 c 21 s 14*

142A.608 AGREEMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Agreement; Northstar kinship assistance; adoption assistance.** (a) In order to receive Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance benefits on behalf of an eligible child, a written, binding agreement between the caregiver or caregivers, the financially responsible agency, or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner, and the commissioner must be established prior to finalization of the adoption or a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody. The agreement must be negotiated with the caregiver or caregivers under subdivision 3 and renegotiated under subdivision 4, if applicable.

(b) The agreement must be on a form approved by the commissioner and must specify the following:

(1) duration of the agreement;

(2) the nature and amount of any payment, services, and assistance to be provided under such agreement;

(3) the child's eligibility for Medicaid services;

(4) the terms of the payment, including any child care portion as specified in section 142A.607, subdivision 4;

(5) eligibility for reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses associated with adopting or obtaining permanent legal and physical custody of the child, to the extent that the total cost does not exceed $2,000 per child pursuant to subdivision 2;

(6) that the agreement must remain in effect regardless of the state of which the adoptive parents or relative custodians are residents at any given time;

(7) provisions for modification of the terms of the agreement, including renegotiation of the agreement;

(8) the effective date of the agreement; and

(9) the successor relative custodian or custodians for Northstar kinship assistance, when applicable. The successor relative custodian or custodians may be added or changed by mutual agreement under subdivision 4.

(c) The caregivers, the commissioner, and the financially responsible agency, or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner, must sign the agreement. A copy of the signed agreement must be given to each party. Once signed by all parties, the commissioner shall maintain the official record of the agreement.

(d) The effective date of the Northstar kinship assistance agreement must be the date of the court order that transfers permanent legal and physical custody to the relative. The effective date of the adoption assistance agreement is the date of the finalized adoption decree.

(e) Termination or disruption of the preadoptive placement or the foster care placement prior to assignment of custody makes the agreement with that caregiver void.

Subd. 2. **Reimbursement of nonrecurring expenses.** (a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families must reimburse a relative custodian with a fully executed Northstar kinship assistance benefit agreement for costs that the relative custodian incurs while seeking permanent legal and physical custody of a child who is the subject of a Northstar kinship assistance benefit agreement. The commissioner must reimburse a relative custodian for expenses that are reasonable and necessary that the relative incurs during

the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a child to the relative custodian, subject to a maximum of $2,000. To be eligible for reimbursement, the expenses must directly relate to the legal transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of the child to the relative custodian, must not have been incurred by the relative custodian in violation of state or federal law, and must not have been reimbursed from other sources or funds. The relative custodian must submit reimbursement requests to the commissioner within 21 months of the date of the child's finalized transfer of permanent legal and physical custody, and the relative custodian must follow all requirements and procedures that the commissioner prescribes.

(b) The commissioner of children, youth, and families must reimburse an adoptive parent for costs that the adoptive parent incurs in an adoption of a child with special needs according to section 142A.606, subdivision 2. The commissioner must reimburse an adoptive parent for expenses that are reasonable and necessary for the adoption of the child to occur, subject to a maximum of $2,000. To be eligible for reimbursement, the expenses must directly relate to the legal adoption of the child, must not have been incurred by the adoptive parent in violation of state or federal law, and must not have been reimbursed from other sources or funds.

(1) Children who have special needs but who are not citizens or residents of the United States and were either adopted in another country or brought to this country for the purposes of adoption are categorically ineligible for the reimbursement program in this section, except when the child meets the eligibility criteria in this section after the dissolution of the child's international adoption.

(2) An adoptive parent, in consultation with the responsible child-placing agency, may request reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses by submitting a complete application to the commissioner that follows the commissioner's requirements and procedures on forms that the commissioner prescribes.

(3) The commissioner must determine a child's eligibility for adoption expense reimbursement under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, United States Code, title 42, sections 670 to 679c. If the commissioner determines that a child is eligible, the commissioner of children, youth, and families must fully execute the agreement for nonrecurring adoption expense reimbursement by signing the agreement. For a child to be eligible, the commissioner must have fully executed the agreement for nonrecurring adoption expense reimbursement prior to finalizing a child's adoption.

(4) An adoptive parent who has a fully executed Northstar adoption assistance agreement is not required to submit a separate application for reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses for the child who is the subject of the Northstar adoption assistance agreement.

(5) If the commissioner has determined the child to be eligible, the adoptive parent must submit reimbursement requests to the commissioner within 21 months of the date of the child's adoption decree, and the adoptive parent must follow requirements and procedures that the commissioner prescribes.

Subd. 3. **Negotiation of agreement.** (a) When a child is determined to be eligible for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, the financially responsible agency, or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner, must negotiate with the caregiver to develop an agreement under subdivision 1. If and when the caregiver and agency reach concurrence as to the terms of the agreement, both parties shall sign the agreement. The agency must submit the agreement, along with the eligibility determination outlined in sections 142A.605, subdivision 7, and 142A.606, subdivision 7, to the commissioner for final review, approval, and signature according to subdivision 1.

(b) A monthly payment is provided as part of the adoption assistance or Northstar kinship assistance agreement to support the care of children unless the child is eligible for adoption assistance and determined to be an at-risk child, in which case no payment will be made unless and until the caregiver obtains written

documentation from a qualified expert that the potential disability upon which eligibility for the agreement was based has manifested itself.

(1) The amount of the payment made on behalf of a child eligible for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance is determined through agreement between the prospective relative custodian or the adoptive parent and the financially responsible agency, or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner, using the assessment tool established by the commissioner in section 142A.607, subdivision 2, and the associated benefit and payments outlined in section 142A.609. Except as provided under section 142A.607, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), the assessment tool establishes the monthly benefit level for a child under foster care. The monthly payment under a Northstar kinship assistance agreement or adoption assistance agreement may be negotiated up to the monthly benefit level under foster care. In no case may the amount of the payment under a Northstar kinship assistance agreement or adoption assistance agreement exceed the foster care maintenance payment which would have been paid during the month if the child with respect to whom the Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance payment is made had been in a foster family home in the state.

(2) The rate schedule for the agreement is determined based on the age of the child on the date that the prospective adoptive parent or parents or relative custodian or custodians sign the agreement.

(3) The income of the relative custodian or custodians or adoptive parent or parents must not be taken into consideration when determining eligibility for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance or the amount of the payments under section 142A.609.

(4) With the concurrence of the relative custodian or adoptive parent, the amount of the payment may be adjusted periodically using the assessment tool established by the commissioner in section 142A.607, subdivision 2, and the agreement renegotiated under subdivision 4 when there is a change in the child's needs or the family's circumstances.

(5) An adoptive parent of an at-risk child with an adoption assistance agreement may request a reassessment of the child under section 142A.607, subdivision 11, and renegotiation of the adoption assistance agreement under subdivision 4 to include a monthly payment, if the caregiver has written documentation from a qualified expert that the potential disability upon which eligibility for the agreement was based has manifested itself. Documentation of the disability must be limited to evidence deemed appropriate by the commissioner.

(c) For Northstar kinship assistance agreements:

(1) the initial amount of the monthly Northstar kinship assistance payment must be equivalent to the foster care rate in effect at the time that the agreement is signed, or a lesser negotiated amount if agreed to by the prospective relative custodian and specified in that agreement, unless the Northstar kinship assistance agreement is entered into when a child is under the age of six; and

(2) the amount of the monthly payment for a Northstar kinship assistance agreement for a child who is under the age of six must be as specified in section 142A.609, subdivision 5.

(d) For adoption assistance agreements:

(1) for a child in foster care with the prospective adoptive parent immediately prior to adoptive placement, the initial amount of the monthly adoption assistance payment must be equivalent to the foster care rate in effect at the time that the agreement is signed, or a lesser negotiated amount if agreed to by the prospective adoptive parents and specified in that agreement, unless the child is identified as at-risk or the adoption assistance agreement is entered into when a child is under the age of six;

(2) for an at-risk child who must be assigned level A as outlined in section 142A.609, no payment will be made unless and until the potential disability manifests itself, as documented by an appropriate professional, and the commissioner authorizes commencement of payment by modifying the agreement accordingly;

(3) the amount of the monthly payment for an adoption assistance agreement for a child under the age of six, other than an at-risk child, must be as specified in section 142A.609, subdivision 5;

(4) for a child who is in the Northstar kinship assistance program immediately prior to adoptive placement, the initial amount of the adoption assistance payment must be equivalent to the Northstar kinship assistance payment in effect at the time that the adoption assistance agreement is signed or a lesser amount if agreed to by the prospective adoptive parent and specified in that agreement, unless the child is identified as an at-risk child; and

(5) for a child who is not in foster care placement or the Northstar kinship assistance program immediately prior to adoptive placement or negotiation of the adoption assistance agreement, the initial amount of the adoption assistance agreement must be determined using the assessment tool and process in this section and the corresponding payment amount outlined in section 142A.609.

Subd. 4. **Renegotiation of agreement.** (a) A relative custodian or adoptive parent of a child with a Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance agreement may request renegotiation of the agreement when there is a change in the needs of the child or in the family's circumstances. When a relative custodian or adoptive parent requests renegotiation of the agreement, a reassessment of the child must be completed consistent with section 142A.607, subdivisions 11 and 12. If the reassessment indicates that the child's level has changed, the financially responsible agency or, if there is no financially responsible agency, the agency designated by the commissioner or the commissioner's designee, and the caregiver must renegotiate the agreement to include a payment with the level determined through the reassessment process. The agreement must not be renegotiated unless the commissioner, the financially responsible agency, and the caregiver mutually agree to the changes. The effective date of any renegotiated agreement must be determined by the commissioner.

(b) An adoptive parent of an at-risk child with an adoption assistance agreement may request renegotiation of the agreement to include a monthly payment under section 142A.609 if the caregiver has written documentation from a qualified expert that the potential disability upon which eligibility for the agreement was based has manifested itself. Documentation of the disability must be limited to evidence deemed appropriate by the commissioner. Prior to renegotiating the agreement, a reassessment of the child must be conducted as outlined in section 142A.607, subdivision 11. The reassessment must be used to renegotiate the agreement to include an appropriate monthly payment. The agreement must not be renegotiated unless the commissioner, the financially responsible agency, and the caregiver mutually agree to the changes. The effective date of any renegotiated agreement must be determined by the commissioner.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 12; 2014 c 275 art 1 s 80,81; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 24,25,34; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 50; 2021 c 30 art 9 s 11,12; 1Sp2021 c 7 art 9 s 1,2; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 8 s 70; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.609 BENEFITS AND PAYMENTS.

Subdivision 1. **Benefits.** (a) There are three benefits under Northstar Care for Children: medical assistance, basic payment, and supplemental difficulty of care payment.

(b) A child is eligible for medical assistance under subdivision 2.

(c) A child is eligible for the basic payment under subdivision 3, except for a child assigned level A under section 142A.607, subdivision 1, because the child is determined to be an at-risk child receiving adoption assistance.

(d) A child, including a foster child age 18 to 21, is eligible for an additional supplemental difficulty of care payment under subdivision 4, as determined by the assessment under section 142A.607.

(e) An eligible child entering Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance under the age of six receives a basic payment and supplemental difficulty of care payment as specified in subdivision 5.

(f) A child transitioning in from a pre-Northstar Care for Children program under section 142A.612, subdivision 7, shall receive basic and difficulty of care supplemental payments according to those provisions.

Subd. 2. **Medical assistance.** Eligibility for medical assistance under this chapter must be determined according to section 256B.055.

Subd. 3. **Basic monthly rate.** From July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018, the basic monthly rate must be according to the following schedule:

Ages 0-5	$650 per month
Ages 6-12	$770 per month
Ages 13 and older	$910 per month

Subd. 4. **Difficulty of care supplemental monthly rate.** From January 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, the supplemental difficulty of care monthly rate is determined by the following schedule:

Level A	none
Level B	none (basic under subdivision 3 only)
Level C	$100 per month
Level D	$200 per month
Level E	$300 per month
Level F	$400 per month
Level G	$500 per month
Level H	$600 per month
Level I	$700 per month
Level J	$800 per month
Level K	$900 per month
Level L	$1,000 per month
Level M	$1,100 per month
Level N	$1,200 per month

Level O	$1,300 per month
Level P	$1,400 per month
Level Q	$1,500 per month

A child assigned level A is not eligible for either the basic or supplemental difficulty of care payment, while a child assigned level B is not eligible for the supplemental difficulty of care payment but is eligible for the basic monthly rate under subdivision 3.

Subd. 5. **Alternate rates for preschool entry and certain transitioned children.** A child who entered the Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance components of Northstar Care for Children while under the age of six shall receive 50 percent of the amount the child would otherwise be entitled to under subdivisions 3 and 4. The commissioner may also use the 50 percent rate for a child who was transitioned into those components through declaration of the commissioner under section 142A.612.

Subd. 6. **Emergency foster care rate for initial placement.** (a) A child who enters foster care due to immediate custody by a police officer or court order, consistent with section 260C.175, subdivisions 1 and 2, or equivalent provision under Tribal code, shall receive the emergency foster care rate for up to 30 days. The emergency foster care rate cannot be extended beyond 30 days of the child's placement.

(b) For this payment rate to be applied, at least one of three conditions must apply:

(1) the child's initial placement must be in foster care in Minnesota;

(2) the child's previous placement was more than two years ago; or

(3) the child's previous placement was for fewer than 30 days and an assessment under section 142A.607 was not completed by an agency under section 142A.607.

(c) The emergency foster care rate consists of the appropriate basic monthly rate under subdivision 3 plus a difficulty of care supplemental monthly rate of level D under subdivision 4.

(d) The emergency foster care rate ends under any of three conditions:

(1) when an assessment under section 142A.607 is completed;

(2) when the placement ends; or

(3) after 30 days have elapsed.

(e) The financially responsible agency, in consultation with the legally responsible agency, if different, may replace the emergency foster care rate at any time by completing an initial assessment on which a revised difficulty of care supplemental monthly rate would be based. Consistent with section 142A.607, subdivision 11, the caregiver may request a reassessment in writing for an initial assessment to replace the emergency foster care rate. This written request would initiate an initial assessment under section 142A.607, subdivision 6. If the revised difficulty of care supplemental level based on the initial assessment is higher than level D, then the revised higher rate shall apply retroactively to the beginning of the placement. If the revised level is lower, the lower rate shall apply on the date the initial assessment was completed.

(f) If a child remains in foster care placement for more than 30 days, the emergency foster care rate ends after the 30th day of placement and an assessment under this section must be completed.

Subd. 7. **Daily rates.** (a) The commissioner shall establish prorated daily rates to the nearest cent for the monthly rates under subdivisions 3 to 6. Daily rates must be routinely used when a partial month is involved for foster care, Northstar kinship assistance, or adoption assistance.

(b) A full month payment is permitted if a foster child is temporarily absent from the foster home if the brief absence does not exceed 14 days and the child's placement continues with the same caregiver.

Subd. 8. **Revision.** By April 1, 2016, for fiscal year 2017, and by each succeeding April 1 for the subsequent fiscal year, the commissioner shall review and revise the rates under subdivisions 3 to 6 based on the United States Department of Agriculture, Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child, published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Resources Service, Publication 1411. The revision shall be the average percentage by which costs increase for the age ranges represented in the United States Department of Agriculture, Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child, except that in no instance must the increase be more than three percent per annum. The monthly rates must be revised to the nearest dollar and the daily rates to the nearest cent.

Subd. 9. **Home and vehicle modifications.** (a) Except for a child assigned level A under section 142A.607, subdivision 1, paragraph (d), clause (1), a child who is eligible for an adoption assistance agreement may have reimbursement of home and vehicle modifications necessary to accommodate the child's special needs upon which eligibility for adoption assistance was based and included as part of the negotiation of the agreement under section 142A.608, subdivision 3. Reimbursement of home and vehicle modifications must not be available for a child who is assessed at level A under subdivision 1, unless and until the potential disability manifests itself and the agreement is renegotiated to include reimbursement.

(b) Application for and reimbursement of modifications must be completed according to a process specified by the commissioner. The type and cost of each modification must be preapproved by the commissioner. The type of home and vehicle modifications must be limited to those specified by the commissioner.

(c) Reimbursement for home modifications as outlined in this subdivision is limited to once every five years per child. Reimbursement for vehicle modifications as outlined in this subdivision is limited to once every five years per family.

Subd. 10. **Child income or income attributable to the child.** (a) A monthly Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance payment must be considered as income and resources attributable to the child. Northstar kinship assistance and adoption assistance are exempt from garnishment, except as permissible under the laws of the state where the child resides.

(b) When a child is placed into foster care, any income and resources attributable to the child are treated as provided in sections 252.27 and 260C.331, or 260B.331, as applicable to the child being placed.

(c) Supplemental Security Income (SSI), retirement survivor's disability insurance (RSDI), veteran's benefits, railroad retirement benefits, and black lung benefits are considered income and resources attributable to the child.

Subd. 11. **Treatment of Supplemental Security Income.** (a) If a child placed in foster care receives benefits through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at the time of foster care placement or subsequent to placement in foster care, the financially responsible agency may apply to be the payee for the child for the duration of the child's placement in foster care. If a child continues to be eligible for SSI after finalization of the adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody and is determined to be eligible for a payment under Northstar Care for Children, a permanent caregiver may choose to receive payment from

both programs simultaneously. The permanent caregiver is responsible to report the amount of the payment to the Social Security Administration and the SSI payment will be reduced as required by the Social Security Administration.

(b) If a financially responsible agency applies to be the payee for a child who receives benefits through SSI, or receives the benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child, the financially responsible agency must provide written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested to:

(1) the child, if the child is 13 years of age or older;

(2) the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or if there is no legal parent or custodian the child's relative selected by the agency;

(3) the guardian ad litem;

(4) the legally responsible agency; and

(5) the counsel appointed for the child pursuant to section 260C.163, subdivision 3.

(c) If a financially responsible agency receives benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child 13 years of age or older, the legally responsible agency and the guardian ad litem must disclose this information to the child in person in a manner that best helps the child understand the information. This paragraph does not apply in circumstances where the child is living outside of Minnesota.

(d) If a financially responsible agency receives the benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child, it cannot use those funds for any other purpose than the care of that child. The financially responsible agency must not commingle any benefits received under this subdivision and must not put the benefits received on behalf of a child under this subdivision into a general fund.

(e) If a financially responsible agency receives any benefits under this subdivision, it must keep a record of:

(1) the total dollar amount it received on behalf of all children it receives benefits for;

(2) the total number of children it applied to be a payee for; and

(3) the total number of children it received benefits for.

(f) By July 1, 2025, and each July 1 thereafter, each financially responsible agency must submit a report to the commissioner of children, youth, and families that includes the information required under paragraph (e). By September 1 of each year, the commissioner must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over child protection that compiles the information provided to the commissioner by each financially responsible agency under paragraph (e); subdivision 12, paragraph (e); and section 260C.331, subdivision 7, paragraph (d). This paragraph expires January 31, 2034.

Subd. 12. **Treatment of Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; veteran's benefits; railroad retirement benefits; and black lung benefits.** (a) If a child placed in foster care receives Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; veteran's benefits; railroad retirement benefits; or black lung benefits at the time of foster care placement or subsequent to placement in foster care, the financially responsible agency may apply to be the payee for the child for the duration of the child's placement in foster care. If it is anticipated that a child will be eligible to receive Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; veteran's benefits; railroad retirement benefits; or black lung benefits after finalization of the adoption or assignment

of permanent legal and physical custody, the permanent caregiver shall apply to be the payee of those benefits on the child's behalf.

(b) If the financially responsible agency applies to be the payee for a child who receives Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance; veteran's benefits; railroad retirement benefits; or black lung benefits, or receives the benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child, the financially responsible agency must provide written notice by certified mail, return receipt requested to:

(1) the child, if the child is 13 years of age or older;

(2) the child's parent, guardian, or custodian or if there is no legal parent or custodian the child's relative selected by the agency;

(3) the guardian ad litem;

(4) the legally responsible agency; and

(5) the counsel appointed for the child pursuant to section 260C.163, subdivision 3.

(c) If a financially responsible agency receives benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child 13 years of age or older, the legally responsible agency and the guardian ad litem must disclose this information to the child in person in a manner that best helps the child understand the information. This paragraph does not apply in circumstances where the child is living outside of Minnesota.

(d) If a financially responsible agency receives the benefits under this subdivision on behalf of a child, it cannot use those funds for any other purpose than the care of that child. The financially responsible agency must not commingle any benefits received under this subdivision and must not put the benefits received on behalf of a child under this subdivision into a general fund.

(e) If a financially responsible agency receives any benefits under this subdivision, it must keep a record of:

(1) the total dollar amount it received on behalf of all children it receives benefits for;

(2) the total number of children it applied to be a payee for; and

(3) the total number of children it received benefits for.

(f) By July 1, 2025, and each July 1 thereafter, each financially responsible agency must submit a report to the commissioner of children, youth, and families that includes the information required under paragraph (e).

Subd. 13. **Treatment of child support and Minnesota family investment program.** (a) If a child placed in foster care receives child support, the child support payment may be redirected to the financially responsible agency for the duration of the child's placement in foster care. In cases where the child qualifies for Northstar Care for Children by meeting the adoption assistance eligibility criteria or the Northstar kinship assistance eligibility criteria, any court-ordered child support must not be considered income attributable to the child and must have no impact on the monthly payment.

(b) Consistent with section 142G.17, a child eligible for Northstar Care for Children whose caregiver receives a payment on the child's behalf is excluded from a Minnesota family investment program assistance unit.

Subd. 14. **Payments.** (a) Payments to caregivers or youth under Northstar Care for Children must be made monthly. Consistent with section 142A.607, subdivision 13, the financially responsible agency must send the caregiver or youth the required written notice within 15 days of a completed assessment or reassessment.

(b) Unless paragraph (c), (d), or (e) applies, the financially responsible agency shall pay foster parents directly for eligible children in foster care.

(c) When the legally responsible agency is different than the financially responsible agency, the legally responsible agency may make the payments to the caregiver or youth, provided payments are made on a timely basis. The financially responsible agency must pay the legally responsible agency on a timely basis. Caregivers must have access to the financially and legally responsible agencies' records of the transaction, consistent with the retention schedule for the payments.

(d) For eligible children in foster care, the financially responsible agency may pay the foster parent's payment for a licensed child-placing agency instead of paying the foster parents directly. The licensed child-placing agency must timely pay the foster parents and maintain records of the transaction. Caregivers must have access to the financially responsible agency's records of the transaction and the child-placing agency's records of the transaction, consistent with the retention schedule for the payments.

(e) If a foster youth aged 18 to 21 years old is placed in an unlicensed supervised independent living setting, payments must be made directly to the youth or to a vendor if the legally responsible agency determines it to be in the youth's best interests. If the legally responsible agency has reason to believe that the youth is being financially exploited or at risk of being financially exploited in the approved unlicensed supervised independent living setting, the legally responsible agency shall advise the financially responsible agency to make the payments to a vendor.

Subd. 15. **Effect of benefit on other aid.** Payments received under this section must not be considered as income for child care assistance under chapter 142E or any other financial benefit. Consistent with section 142G.17, a child or youth receiving a maintenance payment under Northstar Care for Children is excluded from any Minnesota family investment program assistance unit.

Subd. 16. **Home and community-based services waiver for persons with disabilities.** A child in foster care may qualify for home and community-based waivered services, consistent with section 256B.092 for developmental disabilities, or section 256B.49 for community alternative care, community access for disability inclusion, or traumatic brain injury waivers. A waiver service must not be substituted for the foster care program. When the child is simultaneously eligible for waivered services and for benefits under Northstar Care for Children, the financially responsible agency must assess and provide basic and supplemental difficulty of care rates as determined by the assessment according to section 142A.607. If it is determined that additional services are needed to meet the child's needs in the home that are not or cannot be met by the foster care program, the need would be referred to the local waivered service program.

Subd. 17. **Overpayments.** The commissioner has the authority to collect any amount of foster care payment, adoption assistance, or Northstar kinship assistance paid to a caregiver or youth in excess of the payment due. Payments covered by this subdivision include basic maintenance needs payments, supplemental difficulty of care payments, and reimbursement of home and vehicle modifications under subdivision 9. Prior to any collection, the commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall notify the caregiver or youth in writing, including:

(1) the amount of the overpayment and an explanation of the cause of overpayment;

(2) clarification of the corrected amount;

(3) a statement of the legal authority for the decision;

(4) information about how the caregiver can correct the overpayment;

(5) if repayment is required, when the payment is due and a person to contact to review a repayment plan;

(6) a statement that the caregiver or youth has a right to a fair hearing review by the department; and

(7) the procedure for seeking a fair hearing review by the department.

Subd. 18. **Payee.** For adoption assistance and Northstar kinship assistance cases, the payment must only be made to the adoptive parent or relative custodian specified on the agreement. If there is more than one adoptive parent or relative custodian, both parties will be listed as the payee unless otherwise specified in writing according to policies outlined by the commissioner. In the event of divorce or separation of the caregivers, a change of payee must be made in writing according to policies outlined by the commissioner. If both caregivers are in agreement as to the change, it may be made according to a process outlined by the commissioner. If there is not agreement as to the change, a court order indicating the party who is to receive the payment is needed before a change can be processed. If the change of payee is disputed, the commissioner may withhold the payment until agreement is reached. A noncustodial caregiver may request notice in writing of review, modification, or termination of the adoption assistance or Northstar kinship assistance agreement. In the event of the death of a payee, a change of payee consistent with sections 142A.605 and 142A.606 may be made in writing according to policies outlined by the commissioner.

Subd. 19. **Notification of change.** (a) A caregiver who has an adoption assistance agreement or Northstar kinship assistance agreement in place shall keep the agency administering the program informed of changes in status or circumstances which would make the child ineligible for the payments or eligible for payments in a different amount.

(b) For the duration of the agreement, the caregiver agrees to notify the agency administering the program in writing within 30 days of any of the following:

(1) a change in the child's or caregiver's legal name;

(2) a change in the family's address;

(3) a change in the child's legal custody status;

(4) the child's completion of high school, if this occurs after the child attains age 18;

(5) the end of the caregiver's legal responsibility to support the child based on termination of parental rights of the caregiver, transfer of guardianship to another person, or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to another person;

(6) the end of the caregiver's financial support of the child;

(7) the death of the child;

(8) the death of the caregiver;

(9) the child enlists in the military;

(10) the child gets married;

(11) the child becomes an emancipated minor through legal action;

(12) the caregiver separates or divorces; and

(13) the child is residing outside the caregiver's home for a period of more than 30 consecutive days.

Subd. 20. **Correct and true information.** The caregiver or youth must be investigated for fraud if the caregiver or youth reports information the caregiver or youth knows is untrue, the caregiver or youth fails to notify the commissioner of changes that may affect eligibility, or the agency administering the program receives relevant information that the caregiver or youth did not report.

Subd. 21. **Termination notice for caregiver or youth.** The agency that issues the maintenance payment shall provide the child's caregiver or the youth with written notice of termination of payment. Termination notices must be sent at least 15 days before the final payment or, in the case of an unplanned termination, the notice is sent within three days of the end of the payment. The written notice must minimally include the following:

(1) the date payment will end;

(2) the reason payments will end and the event that is the basis to terminate payment;

(3) a statement that the caregiver or youth has a right to a fair hearing review by the department consistent with sections 142A.20 and 256.045, subdivision 3;

(4) the procedure to request a fair hearing; and

(5) the name, telephone number, and email address of a contact person at the agency.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 13; 2014 c 275 art 1 s 82,83; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 26,34; 2015 c 78 art 6 s 31; 2016 c 189 art 15 s 4; 2019 c 50 art 1 s 81-83; 1Sp2021 c 7 art 9 s 3,4; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; art 4 s 26; art 5 s 7; art 7 s 12; 2024 c 115 art 12 s 2,3; art 16 s 34,42; art 18 s 17-21; 2025 c 20 s 106; 2025 c 21 s 15*

142A.61 SUPPORT FOR ADOPTIVE, FOSTER, AND KINSHIP FAMILIES.

Subdivision 1. **Program established.** The commissioner shall design and implement a coordinated program to reduce the need for placement changes or out-of-home placements of children and youth in foster care, adoptive placements, and permanent physical and legal custody kinship placements, and to improve the functioning and stability of these families. To the extent federal funds are available, the commissioner shall provide the following adoption and foster care-competent services and ensure that placements are trauma-informed and child and family-centered:

(1) a program providing information, referrals, a parent-to-parent support network, peer support for youth, family activities, respite care, crisis services, educational support, and mental health services for children and youth in adoption, foster care, and kinship placements and adoptive, foster, and kinship families in Minnesota;

(2) training offered statewide in Minnesota for foster, adoptive, and kinship families, and the professionals who serve the families, on the effects of trauma, common disabilities of adopted children and children in foster care and kinship placements, and challenges in adoption, foster care, and kinship placements; and

(3) periodic evaluation of these services to ensure program effectiveness in preserving and improving the success of adoptive, foster, and kinship placements.

Subd. 2. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

(b) "Child and family-centered" means individualized services that respond to a child's or youth's strengths, interests, and current developmental stage, including social, cognitive, emotional, physical, cultural, racial, and spiritual needs, and offer support to the entire adoptive, foster, or kinship family.

(c) "Trauma-informed" means care that acknowledges the effect trauma has on children and the children's families; modifies services to respond to the effects of trauma; emphasizes skill and strength-building rather than symptom management; and focuses on the physical and psychological safety of the child and family.

History: *1Sp2017 c 6 art 7 s 28; 2018 c 182 art 1 s 60; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.611 FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL SHARES.

Subdivision 1. **Federal share.** For the purposes of determining a child's eligibility under title IV-E of the Social Security Act for a child in foster care, the financially responsible agency shall use the eligibility requirements outlined in section 472 of the Social Security Act. For a child who qualifies for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, the financially responsible agency and the commissioner shall use the eligibility requirements outlined in section 473 of the Social Security Act. In each case, the agency paying the maintenance payments must be reimbursed for the costs from the federal money available for this purpose.

Subd. 2. **State share.** The commissioner shall pay the state share of the maintenance payments as determined under subdivision 4, and an identical share of the pre-Northstar Care foster care program under section 260C.4411, subdivision 1, the relative custody assistance program under section 142A.65, and the pre-Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance program under chapter 259A.

Subd. 3. **Local share.** (a) The financially responsible agency at the time of placement for foster care or finalization of the agreement for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance shall pay the local share of the maintenance payments as determined under subdivision 4, and an identical share of the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program under section 260C.4411, subdivision 1, the relative custody assistance program under section 142A.65, and the pre-Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance program under chapter 259A.

(b) The financially responsible agency shall pay the entire cost of any initial clothing allowance, administrative payments to child caring agencies specified in section 317A.907, or other support services it authorizes, except as provided under other provisions of law.

(c) In cases of federally required adoption assistance where there is no financially responsible agency as provided in section 142A.606, subdivision 5, the commissioner shall pay the local share.

(d) When an Indian child being placed in Minnesota meets title IV-E eligibility defined in section 473(d) of the Social Security Act and is receiving Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance, the agency or entity assuming responsibility for the child is responsible for the nonfederal share of the payment.

Subd. 4. **Nonfederal share.** (a) The commissioner shall establish a percentage share of the maintenance payments, reduced by federal reimbursements under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, to be paid by the state and to be paid by the financially responsible agency.

(b) These state and local shares must initially be calculated based on the ratio of the average appropriate expenditures made by the state and all financially responsible agencies during calendar years 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. For purposes of this calculation, appropriate expenditures for the financially responsible

agencies must include basic and difficulty of care payments for foster care reduced by federal reimbursements, but not including any initial clothing allowance, administrative payments to child care agencies specified in section 317A.907, child care, or other support or ancillary expenditures. For purposes of this calculation, appropriate expenditures for the state shall include adoption assistance and relative custody assistance, reduced by federal reimbursements.

(c) For each of the periods January 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, and fiscal years 2017, 2018, and 2019, the commissioner shall adjust this initial percentage of state and local shares to reflect the relative expenditure trends during calendar years 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014, taking into account appropriations for Northstar Care for Children and the turnover rates of the components. In making these adjustments, the commissioner's goal shall be to make these state and local expenditures other than the appropriations for Northstar Care for Children to be the same as they would have been had Northstar Care for Children not been implemented, or if that is not possible, proportionally higher or lower, as appropriate. Except for adjustments so that the costs of the phase-in are borne by the state, the state and local share percentages for fiscal year 2019 must be used for all subsequent years.

Subd. 5. **Adjustments for proportionate shares among financially responsible agencies.** (a) The commissioner shall adjust the expenditures under subdivision 4 by each financially responsible agency so that its relative share is proportional to its foster care expenditures, with the goal of making the local share similar to what the county or Tribe would have spent had Northstar Care for Children not been enacted.

(b) For the period January 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, the relative shares must be as determined under subdivision 4 for calendar years 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014 compared with similar costs of all financially responsible agencies.

(c) For subsequent fiscal years, the commissioner shall update the relative shares based on actual utilization of Northstar Care for Children by the financially responsible agencies during the previous period, so that those using relatively more than they did historically are adjusted upward and those using less are adjusted downward.

(d) The commissioner must ensure that the adjustments are not unduly influenced by onetime events, anomalies, small changes that appear large compared to a narrow historic base, or fluctuations that are the results of the transfer of responsibilities to Tribal social service agencies authorized in section 142A.03, subdivision 9, as part of the American Indian Child Welfare Initiative.

History: *2013 c 108 art 17 s 14; 2014 c 275 art 1 s 84; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 27,34; 2015 c 71 art 1 s 51; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.612 ADMINISTRATION AND APPEALS.

Subdivision 1. **Responsibilities.** (a) The financially responsible agency shall determine the eligibility for Northstar Care for Children for children in foster care under section 142A.604, and for those children determined eligible, shall further determine each child's eligibility for title IV-E of the Social Security Act, provided the agency has such authority under the state title IV-E plan.

(b) Subject to commissioner review and approval, the financially responsible agency shall prepare the eligibility determination for Northstar Care for Children for children in Northstar kinship assistance under section 142A.605 and children in adoption assistance under section 142A.606. The AFDC relatedness determination, when necessary to determine a child's eligibility for title IV-E funding, shall be made only by an authorized agency according to policies and procedures prescribed by the commissioner.

(c) The financially responsible agency is responsible for the administration of Northstar Care for Children for children in foster care. The agency designated by the commissioner is responsible for assisting the commissioner with the administration of Northstar Care for Children for children in Northstar kinship assistance and adoption assistance by conducting assessments, reassessments, negotiations, and other activities as specified by the commissioner under subdivision 2.

Subd. 2. **Procedures, requirements, and deadlines.** The commissioner shall specify procedures, requirements, and deadlines for the administration of Northstar Care for Children in accordance with sections 142A.60 to 142A.612, including for children transitioning into Northstar Care for Children under subdivision 7. The commissioner shall periodically review all procedures, requirements, and deadlines, including the assessment tool and process under section 142A.607, in consultation with counties, Tribes, and representatives of caregivers, and may alter them as needed.

Subd. 3. **Administration of title IV-E programs.** The title IV-E foster care, Northstar kinship assistance, and adoption assistance programs must operate within the statutes, rules, and policies set forth by the federal government in the Social Security Act.

Subd. 4. **Reporting.** The commissioner shall specify required fiscal and statistical reports under section 142A.03, subdivision 2, paragraph (o), and other reports as necessary.

Subd. 5. **Promotion of programs.** Families who adopt a child under the commissioner's guardianship must be informed as to the adoption tax credit. The commissioner shall actively seek ways to promote the Northstar kinship assistance and adoption assistance programs, including informing prospective caregivers of eligible children of the availability of Northstar kinship assistance and adoption assistance.

Subd. 6. **Appeals and fair hearings.** (a) A caregiver has the right to appeal to the commissioner under section 142A.20 when eligibility for Northstar Care for Children is denied, and when payment or the agreement for an eligible child is modified or terminated.

(b) A relative custodian or adoptive parent has additional rights to appeal to the commissioner pursuant to section 142A.20. These rights include when the commissioner terminates or modifies the Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance agreement or when the commissioner denies an application for Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance. A prospective relative custodian or adoptive parent who disagrees with a decision by the commissioner before transfer of permanent legal and physical custody or finalization of the adoption may request review of the decision by the commissioner or may appeal the decision under section 142A.20. A Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance agreement must be signed and in effect before the court order that transfers permanent legal and physical custody or the adoption finalization; however, in some cases, there may be extenuating circumstances as to why an agreement was not entered into before finalization of permanency for the child. Caregivers who believe that extenuating circumstances exist in the case of their child may request a fair hearing. Caregivers have the responsibility of proving that extenuating circumstances exist. Caregivers must be required to provide written documentation of each eligibility criterion at the fair hearing. Examples of extenuating circumstances include: relevant facts regarding the child were known by the placing agency and not presented to the caregivers before transfer of permanent legal and physical custody or finalization of the adoption, or failure by the commissioner or a designee to advise potential caregivers about the availability of Northstar kinship assistance or adoption assistance for children in the state foster care system. If a human services judge finds through the fair hearing process that extenuating circumstances existed and that the child met all eligibility criteria at the time the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody was ordered or the adoption was finalized, the effective date and any associated federal financial participation shall be retroactive from the date of the request for a fair hearing.

Subd. 7. **Transitions from pre-Northstar Care for Children programs.** (a) A child in foster care who remains with the same caregiver shall continue to receive benefits under the pre-Northstar Care for Children foster care program under section 142A.418. Transitions to Northstar Care for Children must occur as provided in section 142A.604, subdivision 6.

(b) The commissioner may seek to transition into Northstar Care for Children a child who is in pre-Northstar Care for Children relative custody assistance under section 142A.65 or pre-Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance under chapter 259A, in accordance with these priorities, in order of priority:

(1) financial and budgetary constraints;

(2) complying with federal regulations;

(3) converting pre-Northstar Care for Children relative custody assistance under section 142A.65 to the Northstar kinship assistance component of Northstar Care for Children;

(4) improving permanency for a child or children;

(5) maintaining permanency for a child or children;

(6) accessing additional federal funds; and

(7) administrative simplification.

(c) Transitions shall be accomplished according to procedures, deadlines, and requirements specified by the commissioner under subdivision 2.

(d) The commissioner may accomplish a transition of a child from pre-Northstar Care for Children relative custody assistance under section 142A.65 to the Northstar kinship assistance component of Northstar Care for Children by declaration and appropriate notice to the caregiver, provided that the benefit for a child under this paragraph is not reduced.

(e) The commissioner may offer a transition of a child from pre-Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance under chapter 259A to the adoption assistance component of Northstar Care for Children by contacting the caregiver with an offer. The transition must be accomplished only when the caregiver agrees to the offer. The caregiver shall have a maximum of 90 days to review and accept the commissioner's offer. If the commissioner's offer is not accepted within 90 days, the pre-Northstar Care for Children adoption assistance agreement remains in effect until it terminates or a subsequent offer is made by the commissioner.

(f) For a child transitioning into Northstar Care for Children, the commissioner shall assign an equivalent assessment level based on the most recently completed supplemental difficulty of care level assessment, unless the commissioner determines that arranging for a new assessment under section 142A.607 would be more appropriate based on the priorities specified in paragraph (b).

(g) For a child transitioning into Northstar Care for Children, regardless of the age of the child, the commissioner shall use the rates under section 142A.609, subdivision 5, unless the rates under section 142A.609, subdivisions 3 and 4, are more appropriate based on the priorities specified in paragraph (b), as determined by the commissioner.

Subd. 8. **Purchase of child-specific adoption services.** The commissioner may reimburse the placing agency for appropriate adoption services for children eligible under section 259A.75.

History: *2013 c 107 art 1 s 9; 2013 c 108 art 17 s 15; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 34; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.65 RELATIVE CUSTODY ASSISTANCE.

Subdivision 1. **Citation.** This section may be cited as the "Relative Custody Assistance Act."

Subd. 2. **Scope.** The provisions of this section apply to those situations in which the legal and physical custody of a child is established with a relative or important friend with whom the child has resided or had significant contact according to section 260C.515, subdivision 4, by a district court order issued on or after July 1, 1997, but on or before November 26, 2014, or a Tribal court order issued on or after July 1, 2005, but on or before November 26, 2014, when the child has been removed from the care of the parent by previous district or Tribal court order.

Subd. 3. **Definitions.** For purposes of this section, the terms defined in this subdivision have the meanings given them.

(a) "MFIP standard" means the transitional standard used to calculate assistance under the MFIP program, or, if permanent legal and physical custody of the child is given to a relative custodian residing outside of Minnesota, the analogous transitional standard or standard of need used to calculate assistance under the TANF program of the state where the relative custodian lives.

(b) "Local agency" means the county social services agency or Tribal social services agency with legal custody of a child prior to the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.

(c) "Permanent legal and physical custody" means permanent legal and physical custody ordered by a Minnesota Juvenile Court under section 260C.515, subdivision 4.

(d) "Relative" has the meaning given in section 260C.007, subdivision 26b or 27.

(e) "Relative custodian" means a person who has permanent legal and physical custody of a child. When siblings, including half-siblings and stepsiblings, are placed together in permanent legal and physical custody, the person receiving permanent legal and physical custody of the siblings is considered a relative custodian of all of the siblings for purposes of this section.

(f) "Relative custody assistance agreement" means an agreement entered into between a local agency and a person who has been or will be awarded permanent legal and physical custody of a child.

(g) "Relative custody assistance payment" means a monthly cash grant made to a relative custodian pursuant to a relative custody assistance agreement and in an amount calculated under subdivision 7.

(h) "Remains in the physical custody of the relative custodian" means that the relative custodian is providing day-to-day care for the child and that the child lives with the relative custodian; absence from the relative custodian's home for a period of more than 120 days raises a presumption that the child no longer remains in the physical custody of the relative custodian.

Subd. 4. **Duties of local agency.** (a) When a local agency seeks a court order under section 260C.515, subdivision 4, to establish permanent legal and physical custody of a child with a relative or important friend with whom the child has resided or had significant contact, or if such an order is issued by the court, the local agency shall perform the duties in this subdivision.

(b) As soon as possible after the local agency determines that it will seek to establish permanent legal and physical custody of the child or, if the agency did not seek to establish custody, as soon as possible after the issuance of the court order establishing custody, the local agency shall inform the relative custodian about the relative custody assistance program, including eligibility criteria and payment levels. Anytime prior to, but not later than seven days after, the date the court issues the order establishing permanent legal and physical custody of the child, the local agency shall determine whether the eligibility criteria in subdivision 6 are met to allow the relative custodian to receive relative custody assistance. Not later than seven days after determining whether the eligibility criteria are met, the local agency shall inform the relative custodian of its determination and of the process for appealing that determination under subdivision 9.

(c) If the local agency determines that the relative custodian is eligible to receive relative custody assistance, the local agency shall prepare the relative custody assistance agreement and ensure that it meets the criteria of subdivision 6.

(d) The local agency shall make monthly payments to the relative custodian as set forth in the relative custody assistance agreement. On a quarterly basis and on a form to be provided by the commissioner, the local agency shall make claims for reimbursement from the commissioner for relative custody assistance payments made.

(e) For a relative custody assistance agreement that is in place for longer than one year, and as long as the agreement remains in effect, the local agency shall send an annual affidavit form to the relative custodian of the eligible child within the month before the anniversary date of the agreement. The local agency shall monitor whether the annual affidavit is returned by the relative custodian within 30 days following the anniversary date of the agreement. The local agency shall review the affidavit and any other information in its possession to ensure continuing eligibility for relative custody assistance and that the amount of payment made according to the agreement is correct.

(f) When the local agency determines that a relative custody assistance agreement should be terminated or modified, it shall provide notice of the proposed termination or modification to the relative custodian at least ten days before the proposed action along with information about the process for appealing the proposed action.

Subd. 5. **Relative custody assistance agreement.** (a) A relative custody assistance agreement will not be effective, unless it is signed by the local agency and the relative custodian no later than 30 days after the date of the order establishing permanent legal and physical custody, and on or before November 26, 2014, except that a local agency may enter into a relative custody assistance agreement with a relative custodian more than 30 days after the date of the order if it certifies that the delay in entering the agreement was through no fault of the relative custodian and the agreement is signed and in effect on or before November 26, 2014. There must be a separate agreement for each child for whom the relative custodian is receiving relative custody assistance.

(b) Regardless of when the relative custody assistance agreement is signed by the local agency and relative custodian, the effective date of the agreement shall be the date of the order establishing permanent legal and physical custody.

(c) If MFIP is not the applicable program for a child at the time that a relative custody assistance agreement is entered on behalf of the child, when MFIP becomes the applicable program, if the relative custodian had been receiving custody assistance payments calculated based upon a different program, the amount of relative custody assistance payment under subdivision 7 shall be recalculated under the Minnesota family investment program.

(d) The relative custody assistance agreement shall be in a form specified by the commissioner and shall include provisions relating to the following:

(1) the responsibilities of all parties to the agreement;

(2) the payment terms, including the financial circumstances of the relative custodian, the needs of the child, the amount and calculation of the relative custody assistance payments, and that the amount of the payments shall be reevaluated annually;

(3) the effective date of the agreement, which shall also be the anniversary date for the purpose of submitting the annual affidavit under subdivision 8;

(4) that failure to submit the affidavit as required by subdivision 8 will be grounds for terminating the agreement;

(5) the agreement's expected duration, which shall not extend beyond the child's eighteenth birthday;

(6) any specific known circumstances that could cause the agreement or payments to be modified, reduced, or terminated and the relative custodian's appeal rights under subdivision 9;

(7) that the relative custodian must notify the local agency within 30 days of any of the following:

(i) a change in the child's status;

(ii) a change in the relationship between the relative custodian and the child;

(iii) a change in composition or level of income of the relative custodian's family;

(iv) a change in eligibility or receipt of benefits under MFIP, or other assistance program; and

(v) any other change that could affect eligibility for or amount of relative custody assistance;

(8) that failure to provide notice of a change as required by clause (7) will be grounds for terminating the agreement;

(9) that the amount of relative custody assistance is subject to the availability of state funds to reimburse the local agency making the payments;

(10) that the relative custodian may choose to temporarily stop receiving payments under the agreement at any time by providing 30 days' notice to the local agency and may choose to begin receiving payments again by providing the same notice but any payments the relative custodian chooses not to receive are forfeit; and

(11) that the local agency will continue to be responsible for making relative custody assistance payments under the agreement regardless of the relative custodian's place of residence.

Subd. 6. **Eligibility criteria.** (a) A local agency shall enter into a relative custody assistance agreement under subdivision 5 if it certifies that the following criteria are met:

(1) the juvenile court has determined or is expected to determine that the child, under the former or current custody of the local agency, cannot return to the home of the child's parents;

(2) the court, upon determining that it is in the child's best interests, has issued or is expected to issue an order transferring permanent legal and physical custody of the child; and

(3) the child either:

(i) is a member of a sibling group to be placed together; or

(ii) has a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disability that will require financial support.

When the local agency bases its certification that the criteria in clause (1) or (2) are met upon the expectation that the juvenile court will take a certain action, the relative custody assistance agreement does not become effective until and unless the court acts as expected.

(b) After November 26, 2014, new relative custody assistance agreements must not be executed. Agreements that were signed by all parties on or before November 26, 2014, and were not in effect because the proposed transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of the child did not occur on or before November 26, 2014, must be renegotiated under the terms of Northstar Care for Children in sections 142A.60 to 142A.612.

Subd. 7. **Amount of relative custody assistance payments.** (a) The amount of a monthly relative custody assistance payment shall be determined according to the provisions of this paragraph.

(1) The total maximum assistance rate is equal to the base assistance rate plus, if applicable, the supplemental assistance rate.

(i) The base assistance rate is equal to the maximum amount that could be received as basic maintenance for a child of the same age under the adoption assistance program.

(ii) The local agency shall determine whether the child has physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral disabilities that require care, supervision, or structure beyond that ordinarily provided in a family setting to children of the same age such that the child would be eligible for supplemental maintenance payments under the adoption assistance program if an adoption assistance agreement were entered on the child's behalf. If the local agency determines that the child has such a disability, the supplemental assistance rate shall be the maximum amount of monthly supplemental maintenance payment that could be received on behalf of a child of the same age, disabilities, and circumstances under the adoption assistance program.

(2) The net maximum assistance rate is equal to the total maximum assistance rate from clause (1) less the following offsets:

(i) if the child is or will be part of an assistance unit receiving an MFIP grant or a grant from a similar program of another state, the portion of the MFIP standard relating to the child as calculated under paragraph (b), clause (2);

(ii) Supplemental Security Income payments received by or on behalf of the child;

(iii) veteran's benefits received by or on behalf of the child; and

(iv) any other income of the child, including child support payments made on behalf of the child.

(3) The relative custody assistance payment to be made to the relative custodian shall be a percentage of the net maximum assistance rate calculated in clause (2) based upon the gross income of the relative custodian's family, including the child for whom the relative custodian has permanent legal and physical custody. In no case shall the amount of the relative custody assistance payment exceed that which the child could qualify for under the adoption assistance program if an adoption assistance agreement were entered on the child's behalf. The relative custody assistance payment shall be calculated as follows:

(i) if the relative custodian's gross family income is less than or equal to 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines, the relative custody assistance payment shall be the full amount of the net maximum assistance rate;

(ii) if the relative custodian's gross family income is greater than 200 percent and less than or equal to 225 percent of federal poverty guidelines, the relative custody assistance payment shall be 80 percent of the net maximum assistance rate;

(iii) if the relative custodian's gross family income is greater than 225 percent and less than or equal to 250 percent of federal poverty guidelines, the relative custody assistance payment shall be 60 percent of the net maximum assistance rate;

(iv) if the relative custodian's gross family income is greater than 250 percent and less than or equal to 275 percent of federal poverty guidelines, the relative custody assistance payment shall be 40 percent of the net maximum assistance rate;

(v) if the relative custodian's gross family income is greater than 275 percent and less than or equal to 300 percent of federal poverty guidelines, the relative custody assistance payment shall be 20 percent of the net maximum assistance rate; or

(vi) if the relative custodian's gross family income is greater than 300 percent of federal poverty guidelines, no relative custody assistance payment shall be made.

(b) The following provisions cover the relationship between relative custody assistance and assistance programs:

(1) The relative custodian of a child for whom the relative custodian is receiving relative custody assistance is expected to seek whatever assistance is available for the child through MFIP or, if the relative custodian resides in a state other than Minnesota, similar programs of that state. If a relative custodian fails to apply for assistance through MFIP or other program for which the child is eligible, the child's portion of the MFIP standard will be calculated as if application had been made and assistance received.

(2) The portion of the MFIP standard relating to each child for whom relative custody assistance is being received shall be calculated as follows:

(i) determine the total MFIP standard for the assistance unit;

(ii) determine the amount that the MFIP standard would have been if the assistance unit had not included the children for whom relative custody assistance is being received;

(iii) subtract the amount determined in item (ii) from the amount determined in item (i); and

(iv) divide the result in item (iii) by the number of children for whom relative custody assistance is being received that are part of the assistance unit.

(3) If a child for whom relative custody assistance is being received is not eligible for assistance through MFIP or similar programs of another state, the portion of MFIP standard relating to that child shall be equal to zero.

Subd. 8. **Annual affidavit.** When a relative custody assistance agreement remains in effect for more than one year, the local agency shall require the relative custodian to annually submit an affidavit in a form to be specified by the commissioner. The affidavit must be submitted to the local agency each year no later

than 30 days after the relative custody assistance agreement's anniversary date. The affidavit shall document the following:

(1) that the child remains in the physical custody of the relative custodian;

(2) that there is a continuing need for the relative custody assistance payments due to the child's physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral needs; and

(3) the current gross income of the relative custodian's family.

The relative custody assistance agreement may be modified based on information or documentation presented to the local agency under this requirement and as required by annual adjustments to the federal poverty guidelines.

Subd. 9. **Right of appeal.** A relative custodian who enters or seeks to enter into a relative custody assistance agreement with a local agency has the right to appeal to the commissioner according to section 142A.20 when the local agency establishes, denies, terminates, or modifies the agreement. Upon appeal, the commissioner may review only:

(1) whether the local agency has met the legal requirements imposed by this chapter for establishing, denying, terminating, or modifying the agreement;

(2) whether the amount of the relative custody assistance payment was correctly calculated under the method in subdivision 7;

(3) whether the local agency paid for correct time periods under the relative custody assistance agreement;

(4) whether the child remains in the physical custody of the relative custodian;

(5) whether the local agency correctly modified the amount of the supplemental assistance rate based on a change in the child's physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral needs, or based on the relative custodian's failure to provide documentation, after the local agency has requested such documentation, that the child continues to have physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral needs that support the current amount of relative custody assistance; and

(6) whether the local agency correctly modified or terminated the amount of relative custody assistance based on a change in the gross income of the relative custodian's family or based on the relative custodian's failure to provide documentation of the gross income of the relative custodian's family after the local agency has requested such documentation.

Subd. 10. **Child's county of residence.** For the purposes of the Unitary Residency Act under chapter 256G, time spent by a child in the custody of a relative custodian receiving payments under this section is not excluded time. A child is a resident of the county where the relative custodian is a resident.

Subd. 11. **Financial considerations.** (a) Payment of relative custody assistance under a relative custody assistance agreement is subject to the availability of state funds and payments may be reduced or suspended on order of the commissioner if insufficient funds are available.

(b) A local agency may not seek and the commissioner shall not provide reimbursement for the administrative costs associated with performing the duties described in subdivision 4.

(c) For the purposes of determining eligibility or payment amounts under MFIP, relative custody assistance payments shall be excluded in determining the family's available income.

(d) For expenditures made on or before December 31, 2014, upon receipt from a local agency of a claim for reimbursement, the commissioner shall reimburse the local agency in an amount equal to 100 percent of the relative custody assistance payments provided to relative custodians.

(e) For expenditures made on or after January 1, 2015, upon receipt from a local agency of a claim for reimbursement, the commissioner shall reimburse the local agency as part of the Northstar Care for Children fiscal reconciliation process under section 142A.611.

History: *1997 c 203 art 5 s 21; 1998 c 406 art 1 s 14,15,37; 1998 c 407 art 9 s 14; 1999 c 139 art 4 s 2; 1999 c 159 s 110-113; 1999 c 245 art 8 s 26-33; 2000 c 260 s 97; 2001 c 178 art 1 s 44; 1Sp2001 c 9 art 10 s 66; 2005 c 159 art 2 s 1,2; 2012 c 216 art 6 s 13; 2013 c 108 art 17 s 16-18; 2014 c 312 art 25 s 28; 2015 c 78 art 1 s 10; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.75 JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAM.

The governor shall designate the Department of Children, Youth, and Families as the sole agency responsible for supervising the preparation and administration of the state plan for juvenile justice required by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended.

The governor shall designate the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee as the supervisory board for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families with respect to preparation and administration of the state plan and award of grants.

The governor shall appoint members to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee in accordance with the membership requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended. Section 15.059, subdivision 3, governs the compensation of the members.

History: *1987 c 312 art 1 s 22; 1994 c 483 s 1; 2001 c 161 s 51; 2004 c 206 s 43,52; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 95,96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34*

142A.76 OFFICE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES.

Subdivision 1. **Definition.** As used in this section, "restorative practices" means a practice within a program or policy that incorporates core restorative principles, including but not limited to voluntariness, prioritization of agreement by the people closest to the harm on what is needed to repair the harm, reintegration into the community, honesty, and respect. Restorative practices include but are not limited to victim-offender conferences, family group conferences, circles, community conferences, and other similar victim-centered practices. Restorative practices funded under this statute may be used at any point including before court involvement, after court involvement, to prevent court involvement, or in conjunction with court involvement. Restorative practices are rooted in community values and create meaningful outcomes that may include but are not limited to:

(1) establishing and meeting goals related to increasing connection to community, restoring relationships, and increasing empathy; considering all perspectives involved; and taking responsibility for impact of actions by all parties involved;

(2) addressing the needs of those who have been harmed;

(3) recognizing and addressing the underlying issues of behavior;

(4) engaging with those most directly affected by an incident and including community members that reflect the diversity of the individual's environment;

(5) determining the appropriate responses to specific incidents through the use of a collaborative process;

(6) providing solutions and approaches that affirm and are tailored to specific cultures; and

(7) implementing policies and procedures that are informed by the science of the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

Subd. 2. **Establishment.** The Office of Restorative Practices is established within the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. The Office of Restorative Practices shall have the powers and duties described in this section.

Subd. 3. **Director; other staff.** (a) The commissioner of children, youth, and families shall appoint a director of the Office of Restorative Practices. The director should have qualifications that include or are similar to the following:

(1) experience in the many facets of restorative justice and practices such as peacemaking circles, sentencing circles, community conferencing, community panels, and family group decision making;

(2) experience in victim-centered and trauma-informed practices;

(3) knowledge of the range of social problems that bring children and families to points of crisis such as poverty, racism, unemployment, and unequal opportunity;

(4) knowledge of the many ways youth become involved in other systems such as truancy, juvenile delinquency, and child protection; and

(5) understanding of educational barriers.

(b) The director shall hire additional staff to perform the duties of the Office of Restorative Practices. The staff shall be in the classified service of the state and their compensation shall be established pursuant to chapter 43A.

Subd. 4. **Duties.** (a) The Office of Restorative Practices shall promote the use of restorative practices across multiple disciplines, including but not limited to:

(1) pretrial diversion programs established pursuant to section 388.24;

(2) delinquency, criminal justice, child welfare, and education systems; and

(3) community violence prevention practices.

(b) The Office of Restorative Practices shall collaborate with Tribal communities, counties, multicounty agencies, other state agencies, nonprofit agencies, and other jurisdictions, and with existing restorative practices initiatives in those jurisdictions to establish new restorative practices initiatives, support existing restorative practices initiatives, and identify effective restorative practices initiatives.

(c) The Office of Restorative Practices shall encourage collaboration between jurisdictions by creating a statewide network, led by restorative practitioners, to share effective methods and practices.

(d) The Office of Restorative Practices shall create a statewide directory of restorative practices initiatives. The office shall make this directory available to all restorative practices initiatives, counties, multicounty agencies, nonprofit agencies, and Tribes in order to facilitate referrals to restorative practices initiatives and programs.

(e) The Office of Restorative Practices shall work throughout the state to build capacity for the use of restorative practices in all jurisdictions and shall encourage every county to have at least one available restorative practices initiative.

(f) The Office of Restorative Practices shall engage restorative practitioners in discerning ways to measure the effectiveness of restorative efforts throughout the state.

(g) The Office of Restorative Practices shall oversee the coordination and establishment of local restorative practices advisory committees. The office shall oversee compliance with the conditions of this funding program. If a complaint or concern about a local advisory committee or a grant recipient is received, the Office of Restorative Practices shall exercise oversight as provided in this section.

(h) The Office of Restorative Practices shall provide information to local restorative practices advisory committees, or restorative practices initiatives in Tribal communities and governments, counties, multicounty agencies, other state agencies, and other jurisdictions about best practices that are developmentally tailored to youth, trauma-informed, and healing-centered, and provide technical support. Providing information includes but is not limited to sharing data on successful practices in other jurisdictions, sending notification about available training opportunities, and sharing known resources for financial support. The Office of Restorative Practices shall also provide training and technical support to local restorative practices advisory committees. Training includes but is not limited to the use and scope of restorative practices, victim-centered restorative practices, and trauma-informed care.

(i) The Office of Restorative Practices shall annually establish minimum requirements for the grant application process.

(j) The Office of Restorative Practices shall work with Tribes, counties, multicounty agencies, and nonprofit agencies throughout the state to educate those entities about the application process for grants and encourage applications.

Subd. 5. **Grants.** (a) Within available appropriations, the director shall award grants to establish and support restorative practices initiatives and for the restitution program described in section 142A.765. An approved applicant must receive a grant of up to $500,000 each year.

(b) On an annual basis, the Office of Restorative Practices shall establish a minimum number of applications that must be received during the application process. If the minimum number of applications is not received, the office must reopen the application process.

(c) Grants may be awarded to private and public nonprofit agencies; local units of government, including cities, counties, and townships; local educational agencies; and Tribal governments. A restorative practices advisory committee may support multiple entities applying for grants based on community needs, the number of youth and families in the jurisdiction, and the number of restorative practices available to the community. Budgets supported by grant funds can include contracts with partner agencies.

(d) Applications must include the following:

(1) a list of willing restorative practices advisory committee members;

(2) letters of support from potential restorative practices advisory committee members;

(3) a description of the planning process that includes:

(i) a description of the origins of the initiative, including how the community provided input; and

(ii) an estimated number of participants to be served; and

(4) a formal document containing a project description that outlines the proposed goals, activities, and outcomes of the initiative including, at a minimum:

(i) a description of how the initiative meets the minimum eligibility requirements of the grant;

(ii) the roles and responsibilities of key staff assigned to the initiative;

(iii) identification of any key partners, including a summary of the roles and responsibilities of those partners;

(iv) a description of how volunteers and other community members are engaged in the initiative; and

(v) a plan for evaluation and data collection.

(e) In determining the appropriate amount of each grant, the Office of Restorative Practices shall consider the number of individuals likely to be served by the local restorative practices initiative.

Subd. 6. **Restorative practices advisory committees; membership and duties.** (a) Restorative practices advisory committees must include:

(1) a judge of the judicial district that will be served by the restorative practices initiative;

(2) the county attorney of a county that will be served by the restorative practices initiative or a designee;

(3) the chief district public defender in the district that will be served by the local restorative justice program or a designee;

(4) a representative from the children's unit of a county social services agency assigned to the area that will be served by the restorative practices initiative;

(5) a representative from the local probation department or community corrections agency that works with youth in the area that will be served by the restorative practices initiative;

(6) a representative from a local law enforcement agency that operates in the area that will be served by the restorative practices initiative;

(7) a school administrator or designee from a school or schools that operate in the area that will be served by the restorative practices initiative;

(8) multiple community members that reflect the racial, socioeconomic, and other diversity of the population of a county that will be served by the local restorative justice program and the individuals most frequently involved in the truancy, juvenile offender, and juvenile safety and placement systems;

(9) restorative practitioners, including restorative practitioners from within the community if available and, if not, from nearby communities;

(10) parents, youth, and justice-impacted participants; and

(11) at least one representative from a victims advocacy group.

(b) Community members described in paragraph (a), clause (8), must make up at least one-third of the restorative practices advisory committee.

(c) Community members, parents, youth, and justice-impacted participants participating in the advisory committee may receive a per diem from grant funds in the amount determined by the General Services Administration.

(d) The restorative practices advisory committees must utilize restorative practices in their decision-making process and come to consensus when developing, expanding, and maintaining restorative practices criteria and referral processes for their communities.

(e) Restorative practices advisory committees shall be responsible for establishing eligibility requirements for referrals to the local restorative practices initiative. Once restorative practices criteria and referral processes are developed, children, families, and cases, depending upon the point of prevention or intervention, must be referred to the local restorative practices initiatives or programs that serve the county, local community, or Tribal community where the child and family reside.

(f) Referrals may be made under circumstances, including but not limited to:

(1) as an alternative to arrest as outlined in section 260B.1755;

(2) for a juvenile petty offense;

(3) for a juvenile traffic offense;

(4) for a juvenile delinquency offense, including before and after a delinquency petition has been filed;

(5) for a child protection case, including before and after adjudication;

(6) for a children's mental health case;

(7) for a juvenile status offense, including but not limited to truancy or running away;

(8) for substance use issues;

(9) for situations involving transition to or from the community; and

(10) through self-referral.

Subd. 7. **Oversight of restorative practices advisory committees.** (a) Complaints by restorative practices advisory committee members, community members, restorative practices initiatives, or restorative practices practitioners regarding concerns about grant recipients may be made to the Office of Restorative Practices.

(b) The Office of Restorative Practices may prescribe the methods by which complaints to the office are to be made, reviewed, and acted upon.

(c) The Office of Restorative Practices shall establish and use a restorative process to respond to complaints so that grant recipients are being held to their agreed upon responsibilities and continue to meet the minimum eligibility requirements for grants to local restorative practices initiatives for the duration of the grant.

Subd. 8. **Report.** (a) By November 15 of each year, grantees must provide the following information to the director: (1) information on their program's impact on recidivism, public safety, and local financial investments in restorative practices; and (2) summary data on the amount of grant funds paid to restorative practice participants, as defined in section 595.02, subdivision 1b, paragraph (a), clause (2), and the purpose of the payment to the participants.

(b) By February 15 of each year, the director shall report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over public safety, human services, and education, on the work of the Office of Restorative Practices, any grants issued pursuant to this section, and the status of local restorative practices initiatives in the state that were reviewed in the previous year, and the information submitted under paragraph (a) for the previous year.

History: *2023 c 52 art 5 s 27; 2023 c 70 art 12 s 22; 2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34; 2024 c 123 art 9 s 1; 2025 c 21 s 93; 2025 c 24 s 2; 1Sp2025 c 3 art 13 s 1,2*

142A.765 RESTORATIVE PRACTICES; RESTITUTION PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) As used in this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(b) "Juvenile" has the same meaning as given to the term "child" in section 260B.007, subdivision 3.

(c) "Juvenile offense" means a violation of local, state, Tribal, or federal law, other than a juvenile petty offense or a major traffic offense, committed by a juvenile within the boundaries of the state of Minnesota.

(d) "Juvenile petty offense" has the meaning given in section 260B.007, subdivision 16.

(e) "Major traffic offense" has the meaning given in section 260B.225, subdivision 1, paragraph (b).

(f) "Victim" has the meaning given in section 611A.01, paragraph (b).

Subd. 2. **Establishment; purpose.** The Office of Restorative Practices must establish a restorative practices restitution grant program. Restorative practices restitution grants must be used to reimburse victims for economic losses or other harm resulting from an act that would constitute a juvenile offense, juvenile petty offense, or major traffic offense committed by a juvenile if the juvenile participates in a restorative process to address the harm.

Subd. 3. **Eligibility; application; amount.** (a) A restorative practices initiative is eligible for a grant under this section in any fiscal year in which the Office of Restorative Practices awards the restorative practices initiative a grant under section 142A.76, subdivision 5. A restorative practices initiative may submit an application under this section before the Office of Restorative Practices acts on an application submitted pursuant to section 142A.76, subdivision 5.

(b) Applicants must submit an application in the form and manner established by the Office of Restorative Practices. Applications must include a letter of support from the restorative practices advisory committee in the jurisdiction where the applicant will operate or, if the restorative practices advisory committee has not been established, at least two letters of support from potential restorative practices advisory committee members, one of whom must be a member described in section 142A.76, subdivision 6, paragraph (a), clause (1), (2), or (5).

(c) A grant issued under this section may be in an amount of up to 15 percent of the amount awarded to the restorative practices initiative under section 142A.76, subdivision 5.

Subd. 4. **Reimbursement procedures.** (a) A grant recipient must establish policies and procedures to verify that a person is a victim of an act that would constitute a juvenile offense, juvenile petty offense, or major traffic offense committed by a juvenile and the amount of economic loss or other harm sustained by the victim.

(b) A grant recipient must establish policies and procedures for the payment of reimbursement to victims and to record the amount paid. Payment may be made directly to a victim or, if applicable, to a court administrator or probation officer.

(c) Policies and procedures established under this subdivision must be approved by the restorative practices advisory committee in the jurisdiction where the restorative practices initiative operates.

Subd. 5. **Data practices.** (a) Personal history information and other information collected, used, and maintained by a restorative practices initiative operating a restorative practices restitution program under this section are private data on individuals as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 12, and the grantee shall maintain the data in accordance with the provisions of chapter 13, if:

(1) the identity and location of any crime victim may be determined from the data; or

(2) the identity and location of any juvenile who committed an act that would constitute a juvenile offense, juvenile petty offense, or major traffic offense committed by a juvenile may be determined from the data.

(b) Personal history data and other information collected, used, and maintained by the Office of Restorative Practices are private data on individuals as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 12, if:

(1) the identity and location of any crime victim may be determined from the data; or

(2) the identity and location of any juvenile who committed an act that would constitute a juvenile offense, juvenile petty offense, or major traffic offense committed by a juvenile may be determined from the data.

(c) The Office of Restorative Practices must establish written procedures to ensure that only individuals authorized by law may enter, update, or access data classified as nonpublic or private data on individuals. An authorized individual's ability to enter, update, or access not public data must correspond to the official duties or training level of the individual and to the statutory authorization granting access for that purpose. All queries and responses, and all actions in which not public data are entered, updated, accessed, shared, or disseminated, must be recorded in a data audit trail. Data contained in the audit trail have the same classification as the underlying data tracked by the audit trail.

History: *2024 c 80 art 1 s 96; 2024 c 115 art 16 s 34; 2024 c 123 art 9 s 2; 2025 c 21 s 93*