

Code of Virginia

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Title 63.2 - WELFARE (SOCIAL SERVICES)

Chapter 13 - Adoption Assistance for Children with Special Needs

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§ 63.2-1300. Purpose and intent of adoption assistance; eligibility.

The purpose of adoption assistance is to facilitate adoptive placements and ensure permanency for children with special needs. Adoption assistance may include Title IV-E maintenance payments, state-funded maintenance payments, state special services payments and nonrecurring expense payments made pursuant to requirements set forth in this chapter.

A child with special needs is a child who is a citizen or legal resident of the United States who is unlikely to be adopted within a reasonable period of time due to one or more of the following factors:

1. Physical, mental or emotional condition existing prior to adoption;
2. Hereditary tendency, congenital problem or birth injury leading to substantial risk of future disability; or
3. Individual circumstances of the child related to age, racial or ethnic background or close relationship with one or more siblings.

A child with special needs will be eligible for adoption assistance if (i) the child cannot or should not be returned to the home of his parents and (ii) reasonable efforts to place the child in an appropriate adoptive home without the provision of adoption assistance have been unsuccessful. An exception may be made to the requirement that efforts be made to place the child in an adoptive home without the provision of adoption assistance when the child has developed significant emotional ties with his foster parents while in their care and that the foster parents wish to adopt the child.

1974, c. 507, § 63.1-238.1; 1978, c. 536; 1981, c. 359; 1987, cc. 650, 681; 2000, cc. 290, 830, § 63.1-238.03; 2002, c. 747; 2010, c. 271.

§ 63.2-1301. Types of adoption assistance payments.

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A. Title IV-E maintenance payments shall be made to the adoptive parents on behalf of an adopted child placed if it is determined that the child is a child with special needs and the child meets the requirements set forth in § 473 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 673).

B. State-funded maintenance payments shall be made to the adoptive parents on behalf of an adopted child if it is determined that the child does not meet the requirements set forth in § 473 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 673) but the child is a child with special needs. For this purpose of state-funded maintenance payments only, a child with special needs may include:

1. A child for whom the factors set forth in subdivision 1 or 2 of § [63.2-1300](#) are present at the time of adoption but are not diagnosed until after the final order of adoption, when no more than one year has elapsed from the date of diagnosis; or
2. A child who has lived with his foster parents for at least 12 months and has developed significant emotional ties with his foster parents while in their care, when the foster parents wish to adopt the child and state-funded maintenance payments are necessary to enable the adoption.

C. State special services payments shall be made to the adoptive parents and other persons on behalf of a child in the custody of the local board or in the custody of a licensed child-placing agency and placed for adoption, pursuant to this chapter, if it is determined that:

1. The child is a child with special needs; and
2. The adoptive parents are capable of providing the permanent family relationships needed by the child in all respects except financial.

D. Nonrecurring expense payments shall be made to the adoptive parents for expenses related to the adoption including reasonable and necessary adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees and other legal service fees, as well as any other expenses that are directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs including costs related to the adoption study, any health and psychological examinations, supervision of the placement prior to adoption and any transportation costs and reasonable costs of lodging and food for the child and the adoptive parents when necessary to complete the placement or adoption process for which the adoptive parents carry ultimate liability for payment and that have not been reimbursed from any other source, as set forth in 45 C.F.R. § 1356.41 . However, the total amount of nonrecurring expense payments made to adoptive parents for the adoption of a child shall not exceed \$2,000 or an amount established by federal law.

1974, c. 507, § 63.1-238.2; 1982, c. 171; 1983, c. 292; 1987, cc. 650, 681; 2002, c. [747](#); 2010, c. [271](#).

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§ 63.2-1302. Adoption assistance payments; maintenance; special needs; payment agreements; continuation of payments when adoptive parents move to another jurisdiction; procedural requirements.

A. Adoption assistance payments may include:

1. Title IV-E or state-funded maintenance payments that shall be payable monthly to provide for the support and care of the child; however, Title IV-E or state-funded maintenance payments shall not exceed the foster care payment that would otherwise be made for the child; and
2. State special services payments to provide special services to the child that the adoptive parents cannot afford and that are not covered by insurance or otherwise, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Medical, surgical and dental care;
 - b. Hospitalization;
 - c. Individual remedial educational services;
 - d. Psychological and psychiatric treatment;
 - e. Speech and physical therapy; and
 - f. Special services, equipment, treatment and training for physical and mental handicaps.

State special services payments may be paid to the vendor of the goods or services directly or to the adoptive parents.

B. Adoption assistance payments shall cease when the child with special needs reaches the age of 18 years. If it is determined that the child has a mental or physical handicap, or an educational delay resulting from such handicap, warranting the continuation of assistance, adoption assistance payments may be made until the child reaches the age of 21 years.

C. Adoption assistance payments shall be made on the basis of an adoption assistance agreement entered into by the local board and the adoptive parents or, in cases in which the child is in the custody of a licensed child-placing agency, an agreement between the local board, the licensed child-placing agency and the adoptive parents.

Prior to entering into an adoption assistance agreement, the local board or licensed child-placing agency shall ensure that adoptive parents have received information about their child's eligibility for adoption assistance; about their child's special needs and, to the extent possible, the current and potential impact of those special needs. The local board or licensed child-placing agency shall also ensure that adoptive parents receive information about the process for appeal in the event of a disagreement between the adoptive parent

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and the local board or the adoptive parent and the child-placing agency and information about the procedures for revising the adoption assistance agreement.

Adoptive parents shall submit annually to the local board within thirty days of the anniversary date of the approved agreement an affidavit which certifies that (i) the child on whose behalf they are receiving adoption assistance payments remains in their care, (ii) the child's condition requiring adoption assistance continues to exist, and (iii) whether or not changes to the adoption assistance agreement are requested.

Title IV-E and state-funded maintenance payments made pursuant to this section shall be changed only in accordance with the provisions of § 473 of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 673).

D. Responsibility for adoption assistance payments for a child placed for adoption shall be continued by the local board that initiated the agreement in the event that the adoptive parents live in or move to another jurisdiction.

E. Payments may be made under this chapter from appropriations for foster care services for the maintenance and medical or other services for children who have special needs in accordance with § [63.2-1301](#). Within the limitations of the appropriations to the Department, the Commissioner shall reimburse any agency making payments under this chapter. Any such agency may seek and accept funds from other sources, including federal, state, local, and private sources, to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

1974, c. 507, § 63.1-238.3; 1976, c. 216; 1977, c. 533; 1978, c. 536; 1980, c. 280; 1981, c. 359; 1982, c. 171; 1985, c. 568; 1987, cc. 650, 681; 1988, c. 417; 1989, c. 191; 2000, c. [290](#); 2002, c. [747](#); 2010, c. [271](#).

§ 63.2-1303. Qualification for adoption assistance payments.

Qualification for adoption assistance payments shall be determined by the local board in response to an application for adoption assistance submitted in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board.

1974, c. 507, § 63.1-238.4; 1976, c. 216; 1981, c. 359; 1987, cc. 650, 681; 2002, c. [747](#); 2010, c. [271](#).

§ 63.2-1304. Appeal to Commissioner regarding adoption assistance.

Any applicant for or recipient of adoption assistance aggrieved by any decision of a local board or licensed child-placing agency in granting, denying, changing or discontinuing adoption assistance, may, within 30 days after receiving written notice of such decision, appeal therefrom to the Commissioner. Any applicant or recipient aggrieved by the failure of the local board or licensed child-placing agency to make a decision within a reasonable time may ask for review by the Commissioner. The Commissioner may delegate the duty and authority to duly qualified hearing officers to consider and make determinations on any appeal or review. The Commissioner shall provide an opportunity for a hearing, reasonable notice of which shall be given in writing to the applicant or recipient and to the proper local board in such manner and form as the

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Commissioner may prescribe. The Commissioner may make or cause to be made an investigation of the facts. The Commissioner shall give fair and impartial consideration to the testimony of witnesses, or other evidence produced at the hearing, reports of investigation of the local board and local director or licensed child-placing agency or of investigations made or caused to be made by the Commissioner, or any facts that the Commissioner may deem proper to enable him to decide fairly the appeal or review. The decision of the Commissioner shall be binding and considered a final agency action for purposes of judicial review of such action pursuant to the provisions of the Administrative Process Act (§ [2.2-4000](#) et seq.).

2003, c. [467](#).