I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Child Welfare Services, through the use of Permanency Planning-Families for Kids Funds, are public social services directed toward the accomplishment of the following purposes:

(1) Protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, including handicapped, homeless, dependent, or neglected children;
(2) Preventing, remediating, or assisting in the solution of problems which may result in the neglect, abuse, exploitation, or delinquency of children;

(3) Preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families by identifying family problems, assisting families in resolving their problems, and preventing breakup of the family where the prevention of child removal is desirable and possible;

(4) Restoring to their families children who have been removed, by the provision of services to the child and the families;

(5) Placing children in suitable adoptive homes, in cases where restoration to the biological family is not possible or appropriate; and

(6) Assuring adequate care of children away from their homes, in cases where the child cannot be returned home or cannot be placed for adoption. The purpose of the Families for Kids initiative is to eliminate the foster care backlog (children in agency custody/placement responsibility for more than 12 months) by engaging the community in the process of building and sustaining a service system that incorporates the following five goals:

1) Community-based support that promotes a family’s ability to cope with difficult situations (for families who come in contact with the child welfare system);

2) One coordinated (interagency) assessment process that involves the family in a comprehensive evaluation of their strengths and needs;

3) One caseworker/casework team to ensure that everyone is working together towards a permanent plan for the child;

4) One single, stable foster care placement within the child’s own community to ensure stability until a permanent home is achieved; and

5) A permanent home within one year. Permanence is defined as “a positive, lasting relationship with at least one adult that promotes a sense of mutual belonging and that is legally secure” (meaning that DSS no longer maintains legal custody or placement responsibility).

II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES

The cognizant federal agency is the Administration for Children and Families, U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The State Division of Social Services, which administers the services program under Title XX, is the designated single State agency to administer child welfare services. Costs will be determined in accordance with 45 CFR, Parts 74 and 92. A copy of which is available on the CFR web site at: http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfr-table-search.html.

Allocations for Permanency Planning - Families for Kids Funds, are made to county departments of social services based on population. Information on county populations was obtained from the “Projected County Age Group Totals” at http://demog.state.nc.us. The allocation can be used to support direct services (provided by agency staff or purchased) and system reform activities (when approved in writing by the Division) aimed at ensuring permanence for children who are:

1) At imminent risk of entering DSS custody or placement responsibility;

2) In agency custody/placement responsibility for less than 12 months;
3) In agency custody/placement responsibility for more than 12 months and for whom the plan is not reunification with birth parents; or

4) Who have left DSS custody/placement responsibility within the previous 12 months (including post-adoption services).

In addition to its Permanency Planning allocation, a county Department of Social Services may seek reimbursement from the Division of Child Development, Child Day Care section for child day care provided to prevent out-of-home placement and to reunify families or achieve another permanent placement for a child.

III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

Crosscutting Requirements

The compliance requirements in the Division of Social Services "Cross-Cutting Requirements" in Section D (DSS-0) are applicable to this grant.

A. Activities Allowed or Unallowed

Permanency Planning – Families for Kids funds can be used to support direct services (services provided to clients by the local DSS staff, or purchased) and system reform activities (when approved in writing by the Division of Social Services) aimed at ensuring permanence for children who are:

1. At imminent risk of entering DSS custody or placement responsibility;

2. In agency custody or placement responsibility for less than 12 months;

3. In agency custody or placement responsibility for more than 12 months and for whom the plan is neither long term foster care nor reunification with parents; or

4. Have left DSS custody or placement responsibility within the previous 12 months (including post-adoption services).

Fees may be charged for day care in accordance with the fee policy established in Chapter 12: Fees, of the policy manual on Child Care Subsidy, from the Division of Child Development. A copy of this policy and any related change notices and/or administrative letters is available on-line at http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/.

B. Allowable Costs/Cost Principles

Reimbursable costs include:

- Costs for Intensive Family Preservation Services or other services designed specifically to prevent out-of-home placement;

- Costs for Intensive Family Reunification Services during the first six months of entry into out-of-home placement;

- Costs for foster care and adoption staff time on behalf of children in the identified population;
PERMANENCY PLANNING - FAMILIES FOR KIDS

- Costs for Post-Adoption Services and Independent Living Services;
- Costs for supportive services to family members, relatives, caretakers, as needed to achieve permanence;
- Recruitment and training of foster and adoptive parents;
- Travel, training, and supervisory support costs for identified staff in accordance with the Division’s cost allocation plan and Fiscal Manual instructions;
- Legal services designed specifically to achieve permanence for children;
- Expenses incurred for other backlog reduction and system reform activities formally approved in writing by the Division as being consistent with the 5 Families for Kids goals.

Non-reimbursable costs include:

- Staff time or supportive services on behalf of children who have been in agency custody or placement responsibility for more than 12 months and for whom the plan is either long-term foster care or reunification with birth parents;
- Any type of residential care or child day care payment;
- Purchase of therapeutic services covered by other funding resources;
- Education services;
- CPS Case Planning and Case Management Services;
- Data Processing services; and,
- Medical services, except cosmetic services not covered by other funding sources;

All grantees that expend State funds (including federal funds passed through the N. C. Department of Health and Human Services) are required to comply with the cost principles described in the N. C. Administrative Code at 09 NCAC 03M.0201.

C. Cash Management

This requirement has not been passed to sub-recipients as funds are received locally on a reimbursement basis.

E. Eligibility

Permanency planning funds must be spent in accordance with the policy contained in the Dear County Director letter dated September 17, 1996, Subject: Use of Permanency Planning Funds; Families for Kids Initiative. This letter replaced the Chapter II, Vol. I, Sec.1000, III Permanency Planning Allocation manual instructions. This letter stands as the current, official policy for using these funds for all 100 counties until those manual instructions are rewritten. A copy of this letter should be accessible in every local county Department of Social Services.
Allocations are based on the most recent county population estimates. Jackson and Swain Counties receive an additional allocation for services to Native American populations.

G. Matching, Level of Effort, Earmarking

Funding for reimbursement comes from a combination of Federal (75%)/State (25%) [Regular Permanency Planning] and Federal (75%)/County (25%) funds [Special Permanency Planning]. A county must budget local funds in order to secure the required local matching share when federal/State financial participation is less than one hundred percent to the county department of social services. This audit procedure is covered in the Crosscutting requirements.

H. Period of Availability of Federal Funds

Federal funds are received by the state over the course of the Federal Fiscal Year (October 1-September 30) and are distributed over the course of the State Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30).

I. Procurement, Suspension and Debarment

All grantees that expend federal funds (received either directly from a federal agency or passed through the N. C. Department of Health and Human Services) are required to conform with federal agency codifications of the grants management common rule accessible on the Internet at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/chart.html.

All grantees that expend State funds (including federal funds passed through the N. C. Department of Health and Human Services) are required to comply with the procurement standards described in the North Carolina General Statutes and the North Carolina Administrative Code, which are identified in the State of North Carolina Agency Purchasing Manual accessible on the Internet at http://www.doa.state.nc.us/PandC/agpurman.htm#P6_65.

Nongovernmental subrecipients shall maintain written Procurement policies that are followed in procuring the goods and services required to administer the program.

No sub-award, contract, or agreement for purchase of goods or services is to be made with any debarred or suspended party. Auditor should consult listing of debarments on the following web site: http://epls.arnet.gov.

L. Reporting

County Departments of Social Services request reimbursement for services via the DSS-1571 form. No other reporting by the county DSS is required.

M. Subrecipient Monitoring

County departments of social services frequently contract with other entities/agencies to provide allowable services. Local agencies are responsible for monitoring of these subrecipients.