



Office of Children and Family Services

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Administrative Directive

Transmittal:	20-OCFS-ADM-04
To:	Commissioners of Social Services Executive Directors of Voluntary Authorized Agencies
Issuing Division/Office:	Administration
Date:	February 25, 2020
Subject:	Replacement Clothing for Children in Foster Care
Suggested Distribution:	Directors of Social Services Child Protective Services Supervisors Child Welfare Supervisors Foster Care Supervisors
Contact Person(s):	Section VI
Attachments:	None

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	NYS Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
06-OCFS-INF-10		18 NYCRR 427.16	SSA §475 (4)(A)	<i>Standards of Payment for Foster Care of Children Program Manual</i>	

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Directive (ADM) is to advise local departments of social services (LDSSs) and voluntary authorized agencies (VAs) of changes in the Welfare Management System (WMS) regarding the authorization and payment of replacement clothing for children in foster care residing in foster boarding homes (FBHs). This ADM does not change the WMS authorization process for initial clothing for children in foster care residing in FBHs or child care facility settings.

II. Background

The cost of initial and replacement clothing for children in foster care are allowable federal and state expenses. The Federal Social Security Act (SSA)¹ identifies clothing as allowable expenditures in the federal definition of foster care maintenance payments. New York State regulation² states that LDSSs shall authorize allowances to buy necessary clothing.

When a child is placed in foster care, the LDSS or VA caseworker must review the child's wardrobe with the foster parent(s) or VA staff and the child, if appropriate. If additional clothing is needed, the LDSS must authorize an allowance for necessary initial clothing. Initial clothing needs vary for each child. Due to varying circumstances, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) does not prescribe definite wardrobe requirements. Caseworkers, foster parent(s) or VA staff should review initial clothing needs and use their best judgment, depending on individual circumstances, to determine an adequate basic wardrobe. Children who are old enough to make clothing decisions should be involved in the process. The review of the child's clothing should be done tactfully, without embarrassing the child. Certain worn-out or stained articles of clothing may still be important to the child, representing a remaining link with their birth family. The caseworker, foster parent(s) or VA staff should be sensitive in dealing with this situation.

State reimbursement for initial clothing is not subject to the maximum yearly clothing replacement allowances promulgated by OCFS. The amount of the initial clothing allowance is determined by the LDSS with custody or guardianship of the child, and it must be sufficient to provide an adequate basic wardrobe. The expenditures require prior approval by the LDSS with custody or guardianship of the child. The foster parent(s), LDSS, or VA staff will purchase the needed items, and the LDSS will reimburse the foster parent(s), LDSS, or VA for the eligible clothing costs. When claiming a payment for initial clothing, receipts must be provided for a child who is placed in either a foster home or child care facility. When a child is transferred from one foster care placement to another, the child's wardrobe should follow the child to the new placement and again be reviewed by the new foster parent(s) or VA staff. If additional clothing is needed, an initial clothing allowance may be issued. The allowance is not subject to the maximum yearly replacement allowance.³

For children placed in FBHs, once the child's clothing is at an adequate level, the foster parent(s) is entitled to a replacement clothing allowance based on the age of the child. The replacement clothing allowance is to be used to replenish the child's clothing throughout their foster care placement. The cost of the replacement clothing is subject to the maximum yearly allowances set by the LDSS, and the state reimbursement for replacement clothing is subject to the Maximum State Aid Rates (MSARs). For children placed in FBHs, replacement clothing does not require prior approval. Upon discharge, the child must be permitted to take all possessions and clothing

For children in child care facility settings, replacement clothing is included in the Administrative Rate and the MSAR, not as a separate expense.

¹ SSA §475 (4)(A).

² 18 NYCRR 427.16(a) (2).

³ *Standards of Payment Processing Manual*, Chapter 8.

III. Program Implications

Currently, LDSSs may authorize replacement clothing in WMS using one of the following three options:

- Include replacement clothing with the monthly room and board payment in roster generation, based upon POS type 68 rate tables and an indicator in the Benefits Issuance Control System (BICS).
- Pay replacement clothing on an as needed basis using an LDSS determined dollar amount.
- Pay replacement clothing based on a POS 68 rate table.

Presently, all replacement clothing expenditures must be substantiated with backup documentation, such as receipts. Collecting, maintaining, and processing receipts for replacement clothing purchased for children in FBHs often presents an undue burden for foster parents, LDSSs, and VAs. This ADM sets forth changes to the authorization and payment process for replacement clothing that will alleviate the burden of collecting receipts for replacement clothing while minimizing the potential loss of Title IV-E funds. This new process **only** applies to replacement clothing. Receipts are still required to authorize, pay, and claim initial clothing expenses.

The process set forth in this ADM requires all LDSSs to authorize payments for replacement clothing by utilizing BICS replacement clothing rate table. Replacement clothing payment lines are no longer allowed to be authorized with LDSS-determined dollar amounts.

Effective April 1, 2020, two options will exist for payment of replacement clothing. One option is to add the replacement clothing amount with the monthly room and board payment in roster generation based upon POS type 68 rate tables. For those LDSSs that opt to not add replacement clothing with the monthly room and board payment, all replacement clothing payments will require authorization in WMS using the contracted dollar amount of "C" on the WMS POS 68 line. The replacement clothing payments will then access POS 68 rate tables in BICS and be subject to the MSAR edit in BICS. Any amount above the MSAR will be adjusted to non-reimbursable.

The name of POS code 68 is also changed from "Replacement Clothing" to "Clothing Allowance" in order to align the POS code name with the language used in the annual ADMs that set forth MSAR for "clothing allowances."

IV. Required Action

LDSSs must shorten any POS 68 lines, currently written with a dollar amount, using a "To" date on the POS line of March 31, 2020. POS lines must be rewritten with a "C" in the amount (AMT) field.

If not already established in BICS, LDSSs **must** set up rate tables for POS 68 with a daily dollar amount. Rate table updates and maintenance instructions can be found in the *BICS Services Payment Processing Manual*, Chapter 8, beginning on page 15.

LDSSs that want to begin to combine the clothing allowance with the monthly room and board payment may set the indicator for this in BICS on April 1, 2020, or earlier. Any existing POS 68 lines must be shortened in WMS with a "To" date earlier than the date set in BICS.

V. Systems Implications

BICS

- Clothing Allowance payments may be added to the room and board (POS 61 and 62) payments during roster generation. The POS 68 rate table must exist and the “FC CLOTHING PER DIEM IND” must be set to “Y” on the district LDINFO screen in BICS. Roster generation will access the POS 68 rate table and automatically add the clothing allowance rate to the room and board line on the roster. No additional action is needed to combine clothing with room and board payments.
- All clothing allowance payments, whether combined with room and board payments or authorized with a service type 68 POS line, will access the BICS rate table to determine the payment amount and will go through the MSAR edit in BICS.
 - Any amount above the MSAR would be adjusted to non-reimbursable.

WMS:

- Effective April 1, 2020, all replacement clothing payments, now known as “Clothing Allowance,” will require authorization in WMS using the contracted dollar amount of “C” on the WMS Purchase of Service (POS) line.

VI. Contacts

For BICS and Statewide Service Payment System (SSPS) issues, please contact Maureen Godwin, Maureen.Godwin@ocfs.ny.gov or Nancy Pare, Nancy.Pare@its.ny.gov.

Any other questions can be directed to ocfs.sm.finance.IVEFC.POSypes@ocfs.ny.gov

VII. Effective Date

This ADM is effective as of the date of its issuance.

/s/ Derek J. Holtzclaw

Issued by:

Name: Derek J. Holtzclaw
Title: Deputy Commissioner for Administration
Division/Office: Administration