

April 20, 2020

Purchase of Service Agencies

Frequently Asked Questions | COVID-19

Note: The responses in this document are based on the most current guidance at the time of posting. They may be updated as the situation evolves.

Overall Questions

Q. DCFS---Is there an email address to submit general consents, if you do not have an Illinois.gov email?

A. Providers without Illinois.gov email accounts should encrypt emails before sending. However, all POS case management staff should have an Illinois.gov email address. As such, this eliminates the need to submit consents via encrypted messages. Ordinary and routine consents should be sent to DCFS.OrdinaryRoutineConsentMailbox@Illinois.gov.

Q. Some nonpublic schools are concerned with cash flow at this time. With respect to the SBA loan for PPP, intended to support businesses committed to maintaining employees that these loans which may be forgiven or paid back, there has been some speculation that if forgiven under current rules as regulations it would be treated as a grant and would offset our rate. Meaning we could see a decline in rate 2 years from now. Is this the intention?

A. ISBE is reviewing and will be providing guidance.

Q. Can you please clarify the termination date for the 20% rate supplemental payments? There were conflicting end dates on notices that DCFS provided. Thanks!

A. The dates are contingent upon conditions within the state and have been extended once so far. Current effective dates (as of 4/17/20) include March 16 through April 30, which may be extended again as necessary.

Residential

Q. Has DCFS talked about whether residential/TLP/ILO youth would be receiving stimulus checks for those that haven't submitted a tax return, and if they have SSI collected by the department, does that change anything regarding receiving stimulus checks?

A. Regarding SSI, the IRS is in the process of developing procedures associated with the issuance of stimulus payments to Americans, as called for under the CARES Act. These procedures are evolving, and the IRS has not yet worked out all of the details. DCFS is monitoring for additional guidance.

In the meantime, youth can visit <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>. The website can help to confirm eligibility and answer many common questions about the program.

Foster Care:

Q. It's great that reporting/investigations are continuing with minimal delays -- Is the DCFS adoption process still moving with similar efficiency? If not, other than court hearing cancellations, what other adoption-related delays are being experienced or being expected?

A. Subsidy processing is currently moving forward with minimal disruptions. There is a concern about the potential expiration of background check and investigatory study (home study) timeframes, which may delay adoption finalization. DCFS held regional joint meetings with Adoption Supervisors and Adoption Panel Attorneys to identify joint strategies for getting adoptions finalized.

Permanency teams are identifying which counties are proceeding with adoptions during this time. Leadership has asked Adoptions staff to review any children pending permanency in a county that

is either having court in person, by phone, or video in order to move those cases forward, rather than wait until restrictions are completely lifted.

Q. A week ago, the Governor announced the intent to increase tests in IL from 4k to 10k within 10 days; is there information on where those additional tests may be available south of I-80? Is there any prioritization for children/families in care before the family member shows advanced life-threatening symptoms?

A. DCFS encourages POS agencies and other interested parties to review the IDPH COVID-19 webpage (<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>) for the latest information on testing.

Q. What guidance/direction can you give workers regarding when a foster family is not receptive to online or phone parent-child contact? What will be the implications of lack of contact and unavailable services over time for families working toward reunification?

Caseworkers should continue to communicate with caregivers about the importance of contact between children and parents and how essential this contact is particularly during this crisis.

The DCFS Operations team has also met with the Office of Legal Services to address the issue of reasonable efforts. It is our position that parents can only make “reasonable progress in services” if the child welfare system is able to offer them the means to do so. Under the law, DCFS is equally responsible for making “reasonable efforts” in delivery of services to parents.

As all of Illinois is under a Stay-at-Home order, providers have begun utilizing alternative means to serving our families, including phone and videoconference. DCFS Operations has been working with the Office of Budget and Finance and DoIT@DCFS to find ways to deliver services and visitation to parents via technology. DCFS is in the process of providing Chromebooks for each POS and DCFS office to facilitate video visitation and connection to service providers. We are in the process of confirming local office plans for the use of visiting rooms for this purpose. DCFS is also reviewing its contracted service provider list to confirm that each paid provider is living up to contractual obligation to continue to provide needed services to our families via technology.

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