



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Placement Program Report

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Introduction

Pursuant to Texas Family Code 264.762 added by House Bill 4 (85th Texas Legislative Regular Session), the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) shall, not later than September 1 of each year, publish a report on the Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program.

The report must include data on permanency outcomes for children placed with relative or other designated caregivers, including:

- The number of disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement;
- The reasons for any disruptions in a relative or other designated caregiver placement; and
- The length of time before a relative or other designated caregiver who receives monetary assistance from the department under this subchapter obtains permanent managing conservatorship of a child.

Background

Kinship care is the term used to describe care provided to a child in DFPS conservatorship by relatives or fictive kin who live outside of the child's home.

The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver (RODC) Program supports continuity and stability for children in the conservatorship of DFPS, by providing financial assistance to eligible kinship caregivers. Previously, the RODC Program provided an initial, one-time cash payment, or Integration Payment, of \$1,000 for the first child and \$495 for each additional child in a sibling group, to defray the costs incurred for essential child care items at the time of placement. Eligible caregivers were also able to receive an Annual Reimbursement of \$500 per year, per child, to be paid on the anniversary date of placement.

As a result of the passage of House Bill 4 (85th Texas Regular Legislative Session), there were changes to the RODC Program. The changes included replacing the Integration Payment and Annual Reimbursement with a monthly reimbursement payment. Currently, the rate is \$11.55 per day, per child, and is paid monthly.

Monthly reimbursement payments are time-limited and may be paid for up to twelve (12) months. However, if DFPS determines there is good cause for an exception, payments may be made for up to an additional six (6) months.

Good cause exceptions listed in the Texas Administrative Code Rule §700.1007 include:

- the identification, release, or location of a previously absent parent of the child;
- awaiting the expiration of the timeline for an appeal of an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship;
- allowing additional time for the caregiver to complete the approval process for adoption of the child;
- waiting for approval of a child's placement from another state ;
- a delayed determination of the child's Indian Child status, or awaiting the approval of the Indian Child's Tribe; and
- any other circumstance surrounding the child or the caregiver that DFPS deems to necessitate the extension.

An annual reimbursement of up to \$500 per year, per child for child-related expenses for up to 3 years or until the child turns 18, whichever occurs first may be provided if DFPS transfers conservatorship of the child to the kinship caregiver, and the caregiver does not receive Permanency Care Assistance.

Analysis of Available Data

The data in this report represents state fiscal year 2018 (FYTD 18) year to date through May 2018.

In FYTD 18ⁱ, the overall rate of children placed with relatives or kinⁱⁱ has increased to 46 percent from 44 percent for the same period of time in state fiscal year 2017 (FY 17).ⁱⁱⁱ The national average for relative placement is 32 percent.^{iv} As relative and kinship placements have been increasing in past years, it is too soon to determine the overall impact that the new kinship reimbursement payment has made on the resulting increase.

The Number of Disruptions in Kinship Homes

There were 1,991 (8.0%) non-foster care kinship placements in FYTD 18 that disrupted, meaning the placement ended and the child's next placement was in some type of non-kinship foster care. This number is slightly higher than the 1,734 (7.4%) disruptions that occurred in FY 17.^v

The Reasons for Disruptions

Disruption reasons data was obtained for all children placed in a kinship home who had a subsequent move into a non-kinship paid foster care living arrangement. The

most common reason caseworkers identified for a disruption in a kinship home was the child's behavior.^{vi}

Although it is too early to determine the impact the kinship reimbursement payment has had on the overall kinship disruption rates, the funding has reduced stress and offered financial relief for many kinship caregivers. Relieving caregivers of their financial stress enables them to focus more attention on meeting the emotional and behavioral needs of the children they are caring for.

The Length of Time to Obtain Permanent Managing Conservatorship

The average time it takes for a relative to be awarded Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)^{vii} of a child in FYTD 18 for caregivers who received a payment under HB 4 was 14 months^{viii}.

Conclusion

The new payment program started September 1, 2017. This report includes data through May 2018. With only nine months of available data, it is too early to determine what impact payments to eligible kinship caregivers has had on child placements and exits from the system. DFPS expects to have sufficient data to provide a more comprehensive impact analysis in the 2019 annual report.

ⁱ Unless otherwise noted, all reference to FY 18 refer to the time period of September 1, 2018 through May 31, 2018.

ⁱⁱ This includes both those in kinship foster care and non-foster care kinship placements.

ⁱⁱⁱ DFPS data warehouse report Executive Dashboard. Based on children in substitute care on May 31.

^{iv} <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster/>

^v DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics

^{vi} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics

^{vii} Unless otherwise noted, relative PMC means a relative or kin obtained PMC but did not exit under the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) program.

^{viii} DFPS Management and Reporting Statistics