

---

## **SUBSIDIZED ADOPTION**

in Fairfax County

---

### **Information for Prospective Adoptive Parents**

Fairfax County's Adoption Program offers financial assistance and support to adoptive families, including subsidies to help with the costs of adopting and caring for a child with special needs. Eligibility for assistance is based on the child's needs; assistance amounts are determined by state and federal guidelines, and may be subject to change based on funding availability.

#### ***What is subsidized adoption?***

Subsidized adoption, also called adoption assistance\*, provides financial payment – and, in some cases, services – to adoptive parent(s) on behalf of a child with special physical, emotional or behavioral needs.

Adoption assistance helps both adoptable children and adoptive families. It facilitates the adoption of children who are considered hard to place because they have special needs and have few families available to care for them; and it helps adoptive families with the cost of raising a child with special needs. Without the subsidy, these children are likely to remain in long-term foster care.

\* Adoption assistance is based on the availability of federal and state funds appropriated for this purpose. In Virginia, all jurisdictions must follow the subsidy policy established by Virginia's Department of Social Services.

#### ***Who is eligible for adoption subsidy?***

Children who were adopted through Virginia public social services agencies and certain children adopted through Virginia private agencies may be eligible. Eligibility for basic adoption assistance is based solely on the child's special needs, not on the financial circumstances of the adoptive family.

A child's eligibility is determined by the jurisdiction where the child is in foster care and where the adoption of that child is being facilitated – not where the adoptive parents live. For example, if parents from Michigan adopt a child through Fairfax County's Adoption Program, Fairfax County determines the child's eligibility assistance.

As a general rule, a child's eligibility is determined before his or her final order of adoption is entered. In some cases, children for who no subsidy was sought before the final order of adoption may qualify for subsidy after the adoption is final.

#### ***What adoption assistance is available for children in Virginia?***

Once a child is found eligible on his or her special needs, families may be able to receive financial assistance. In Virginia, adoption subsidies include:

- **Monthly Maintenance Payments** – financial assistance to help meet the child's daily living expenses. Payments are made to adoptive families at a rate set by Virginia and based on the child's age.
- **Payment for Non-Recurring Expenses** – assistance for one-time adoption related expenses. This assistance – up to a capped limit – can help with adoption expenses, such as court costs; attorney fees directly related to finalizing the adoption; and placement costs or fees of a private, child-placing agency.

- **Medicaid** – direct payments to health care service providers for eligible children. Medicaid coverage may be available for children meeting certain criteria, providing that the subsidy agreement is in effect before the adoption is legally final.
- **Special Services Payments** – financial assistance to help with the costs associated with the child’s special needs that are not covered by a family’s private insurance or Medicaid (if applicable). When considering the amount of special service payments to be made, the agency takes into consideration the needs of the child, family circumstances and the availability of community resources to meet the child’s needs.

***Other aspects of adoption assistance:***

Adoption assistance or subsidy may continue until a child is 18 years old, provided that the adoptive parent(s) remain financially or legally responsible for supporting the child. For some children with physical or mental disabilities, subsidy may be extended until age 21.

As required by Virginia law, the agency and the adoptive parent(s) sign an adoption assistance agreement. In order to keep the agreement in effect, parents are required to submit an annual affidavit to the agency stating that they remain legally or financially responsible for the child in their care.

Regardless of where the adoptive family lives, the agency originating the subsidy is responsible for the payments and management of the subsidy. The adoptive family, however, may need to locate community resources in the area that can provide needed services to their child with special needs.

**To learn more about adoption assistance, ask your social worker, or call the  
Fairfax County Department of Family Services  
Foster Care and Adoption Program  
703-324-7639 • TTY 703-222-9452**

**[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs)**



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-7639; TTY 703-222-9452. To request this information in an alternate format, call 703-324-5870; TTY 703-222-9452.

May 2008