



Gerd W. Clabaugh, MPA
Director

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Update 3: Children at Home Program Transition, Implementation and Expansion Planning.

We have passed the half way mark of the month of July and we continue to work hard to transition and expand the Children at Home Program.

We have been learning about needs, requests, and past procedures of the program. Thank you for all of your questions and feedback. They truly have guided our thinking and planning. We have been putting our heads together to get policies and procedures standardized for transition and implementation.

Our intent is to open and transparent in the transition, implementation and expansion phases and keep interested parties updated with progress.

Administrative Update (Iowa Department of Public Health/ IDPH)

IDPH and DHS contract is fully executed. This also means funds have been released from DHS to IDPH.

Once IDPH had a contract in place from DHS, IDPH was able to work on paperwork to direct funds to Visiting Nurse Services to operate day to day functions of the Children at Home Program.

As you might imagine, there is a process with many steps to receive approval for contractors and create contracts for new programs. I am happy to report the paperwork has made it through the IDPH fiscal department and as of Monday it was in our Department Director's office awaiting signature. I am hopeful that we will be able to get contract work wrapped up next week and finalized so that VNS can officially get started. They are ready!!!

Contractor Update (Visiting Nurse Services/VNS)

Just as IDPH staff began work prior to our contract start date of July 1st, VNS staff has also been working ahead to prepare for this new project. Once the contract has been finalized at IDPH, VNS will be ready to hit the ground running. We have had several work sessions and have made good progress towards implementation.

VNS has interviewed for staffing for the program and have begun to work on transition, application and eligibility materials and setting up internal processes. They also have spent quite a bit of time with parents and interested parties on the phone fielding questions.

Transition information will be available the beginning of August and applications for funding will be accepted at that time for transition counties.

Next steps for VNS include:

Finalizing what is needed to transfer a family from the previous contractor.

Finalizing the application and eligibility process along with the appropriate documentation needed.

Developing website content for Children at Home Program.

Program Update (Children at Home)

We have made progress in the areas of standardizing services and funds as the Children at Home Program moves forward and expands statewide.

As we have stated in previous updates, It is important to note that while the eligibility requirements for participation the program will not change, current participants may find a change in covered items or the amount of funds available as parameters and guidance for the program are standardized for statewide implementation. I again want to be diligent in noting that the Children at Home program was operated VERY differently across contractors in the past.

Moving forward, this means that some expenses that were approved in some counties may no longer be approved. It also means additional expense categories may open for participants. With the cap of funding per child ranging from \$400- \$1,400 depending on which county a family resided, current participants will likely find a change in the amount of funds available to them. Depending on what county they live in the cap may be greater or less than what was available to them last year.

We have worked to put together some basic guidelines and policies for transition and implementation. As with any new program, policies and procedures will need to be revisited as lessons are learned during implementation. We plan to revisit policies and procedures at least quarterly and make changes as needed. We also will be gathering data this first year in regards to funding request patterns so that we can better plan for future years.

In the spirit of being transparent and sharing information as soon as possible, below you will find standardized guidelines to date. Additional details surrounding developed guidelines will be made available as program is implemented.

2016-2017 Guidelines

The Children at Home program is designed to assist families in securing the services and supports that they identify as necessary in helping their child to remain at home.

An underlying principle of the Children at Home program is that families retain control of decisions, which affect their child and family.

Financial assistance is intended to enable families to obtain those services and supports that are not met by other service programs. (Children at Home funding is payer of last resort).

The focus for funds are to be directed towards health and safety of a child as it relates to their disability.

Application materials will require eligibility determination (disability & income).

Request for funds will require provider justification (Physician, Social Worker, Therapist etc.) on how expense ties to disability and assists in the ability for child to remain in the home.

To qualify for the Children at Home program(No changes except additional counties will be added October 1):

Transition Period July- September

A family must reside in one of the following counties:

Blackhawk, Boone, Cass, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clinton, Crawford, Dubuque, Floyd, Grundy, Harrison, Jackson, Johnston, Keokuk, Mahaska, Mills, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Story, Wapello, Washington, Woodbury.

After October 1st: Open to residents of all Iowa counties.

Family must include a child with a disability, which is defined as an individual who is less than 22 years of age and meets the definition of developmental disability.

Family's intent is to secure those services and supports that would enable your child to remain living in the family home.

Family's federal net (not gross) taxable income for the most recent tax year is less than \$60,000.

Allowable Funding Request Categories

(Each request will be evaluated individually based on information provided in application materials.)

Equipment

Adaptive

Therapeutic

Functional

Technology * additional documentation may be required.

Therapy

Inclusion Activities

Parent/ Caregiver Education

Personal Care

Respite/Adaptive Child Care

Medical related expenses

Transportation

Nutrition

Categories that will NOT be considered for funding

Adoption fees

Animals or training of animals that do not fall within the Service Animal category (as defined by the Americans with Disability Act)

Basic child items (non adaptive) clothes, shoes, school supplies, food

Basic living expenses (rent, water, utilities, heat/LP, etc.)

Childcare for a child age 12 or younger unless there are extenuating circumstances specifically pertaining to a child's disability that is above and beyond everyday child care costs.

Costs incurred from illegal activities such as court costs and fines.

Gas cards (note: travel/transportation to appointments is an allowable request –however reimbursement will not be made in gas cards)

Guardianship costs

Insurance deductibles and co-pays
Phone, Phone minutes
Purchase of or repair of vehicles (Modification/adaptation of vehicles is an allowable request)

Available Funding

Annual (Fiscal year July 1-June 30th) Cap per child: \$700.00 as funds remains available.

Notes:

The program is expanding October 1st from 23 counties to all 99 Iowa Counties. Available funding will be monitored quarterly and adjustments to this cap may need to be made if uptake is greater than projected.

In the 4th Quarter (March) remaining available funds will be evaluated and should there be a projected excess of funds, cap may be lifted and families could submit additional funding requests.

A Few Notes for Take Away Messaging:

Applications are NOT being accepted at this time (VNS is working hard to create the eligibility and application process). We will send an update out just as soon as the process is in place to do so. We are shooting for the beginning of August.

Prior to October 1st Applications will only be accepted from participants from 2015-2016 eligible counties. (Blackhawk, Boone, Cass, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clinton, Crawford, Dubuque, Floyd, Grundy, Harrison, Jackson, Johnston, Keokuk, Mahaska, Mills, Mitchell, Monroe, Montgomery, Story, Wapello, Washington, Woodbury)

On October 1st applications will be accepted for all 99 counties.

Initially, VNS will be able to approve up to \$700.00 of eligible requests per child per year. This may be adjusted (increased or decreased) as we monitor spending trends.

We are working to create a program that will be available, equitable and sustainable for eligible families statewide.

FAQ

Both VNS and I have been receiving lots of questions about:

- * Applications that were in process but were not completed with previous contractors.
- * Expenses that have already been incurred for the month of July that families/vendors believed would be covered under Children at Home Program.

We have built flexibility in to the transition process. Families who have applications in “limbo” or have incurred expenses for the Month of July are encouraged to communicate with VNS staff.

We also have been receiving questions about what documentation is needed to transfer a family. VNS is working out the details and will release specifics in the beginning of August when they are ready to accept transfers and applications for funds.

Again, we are more than happy to receive feedback as we move forward.

You can do that via the comment link on the IPDH website (<https://www.idph.iowa.gov/family-health/family-support>) or by sending me an email. Past updates are also posted at this site for your review.

Thanks again for you interest in the program.

If you would like to be removed from this update list please send me an email and I will take your contact information off updates.

Kelly

Kelly Ann Schulte, LMSW
kellyaschulte@yahoo.com (for quickest response)
kelly.schulte@idph.state.gov
515.778.2212