

## **SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION UNIT (SSAU)**

**Who We Are:** The SSAU is responsible for the administration of state and federal adoption assistance resources to support the placement of special needs children into committed adoptive homes. These resources include financial, medical, and post-adoption support services. Without such services, children with special needs would be at risk of languishing in the state foster care system.

**What We Do:** The SSAU provides regular support, guidance, and training to county and regional DFCS staff and upper management regarding adoption assistance policy, procedures, and practice. The SSAU's primary function centers around determining eligibility for adoption assistance and post adoption services; and providing ongoing support to adoptive families and children through the management of adoption assistance cases.

Adoption Assistance benefits, if approved, provide adoptive parents with a monthly payment, Medicaid, and one-time approval of funds to go toward adoption-related expenses. Post adoption services include In-home Crisis Intervention Services, Georgia Center for Resources and Support, the Adopted Teen Empowerment and Mentoring Program (ATEAM), and Special Services funds to provide assistance with respite and uncovered treatment costs.

**How We Serve:** The SSAU provides a wide range of services and consultation regarding adoption assistance, post adoption services, and records management.

### **Adoption Assistance Program Consultant:**

- Approves adoption assistance applications for their assigned regions, utilizing state and federal special needs criteria and Title IV-E rules.
- Evaluates specialized rate applications for children with higher level needs, reviewing professional evaluations and caregiver statements to determine a monthly rate.
- Guides county workers in the rate review process when negotiating adoption assistance rates with adoptive parents, using rate review protocol and following state and federal guidelines regarding rate limits.
- Facilitates regional adoption assistance trainings for county adoption and foster care workers, in coordination with PAD Managers.
- Attends Fair Hearings for appeals related to adoption assistance benefits.
- Provides ongoing consultation and guidance to county/regional staff, RAC's, PAD Managers and private entities regarding adoption assistance policy and practice.
- Makes the determination of adoption assistance eligibility past age 18.

### **ICAMA Coordinator:**

- Assists Georgia families receiving adoption assistance with setting up Medicaid/Medical Assistance when they move to another state; and assists families moving to Georgia from other states with setting up Adoption Assistance Medicaid in Georgia

### **The Records Retention Manager:**

- Receives and processes adoption-related documents for permanent retention, as required by state law. DFCS-involved adoption records are sent to the SSAU by county DFCS offices; and non-DFCS involved adoption records are sent to the SSAU by county Superior Court clerks.

### **Contracts Administrator:**

- Manages contract and budget administration for adoption services.

### **Regional PAD Manager:**

- Manages ongoing adoption assistance cases within their assigned regions following the finalization of the adoption. PAD Managers work in the regions, not at the state office.
- Ensures monthly adoption assistance payments are timely and accurate, processing payment reports in coordination with Regional Accounting and county DFCS staff.
- Reaches out to adoptive parents annually to obtain any updates and to ask if support is needed, utilizing an Information Update form.
- Assists the Rev Max Unit in the annual Adoption Assistance Medicaid renewal process.
- Provides assistance to adoptive parents and county staff in their assigned regions regarding referrals for post adoption services, when contacted.
- Facilitates regional adoption assistance trainings for all DFCS regions in coordination with Adoption Assistance Program Consultants.
- Makes on-site visits to county offices to assist county case managers in the transfer of adoption assistance cases to the PAD Unit after adoption finalization, as needed.

### **Field Engagement Standards:**

#### **Adoption Assistance Program Consultant**

- Program Consultants may be contacted directly by phone or e-mail by Case Managers, Supervisors, or other staff to discuss adoption assistance applications, adoption assistance policy/practice, and problem-solving of adoption assistance-related issues. Field staff may also contact Program Consultants to request and set up training in the county/region.
- Program Consultants may participate in conference calls with field staff to discuss issues that involve other parties, including State Adoption Unit staff, county/regional adoption staff, private child placing agency staff, and adoptive parents. Such participation should be discussed ahead of time.
- Program Consultants are sent applications for adoption assistance through the SHINES system. County staff manage the gathering of needed documentation to support such applications. E-mails to Program Consultants indicating the submission of an application is appreciated but not required.

#### **Regional PAD Manager**

- PAD Managers may participate in calls or e-mails with county staff regarding CPS referrals or a return to foster care regarding children on their caseload.
- PAD Managers may be contacted by phone or e-mail to set up a county site visit to work on the transfer of adoption assistance cases; or to set up adoption assistance training.
- PAD Managers may be contacted by phone or e-mail by field staff who still have responsibility for an Adoption Assistance case to coordinate the monthly payments of adoption assistance, to ask for information and assistance regarding post adoption service referrals (i.e. Crisis Intervention). They may also be contacted to discuss the requirements for transfer of the case to the PAD Manager after finalization of the adoption.

#### **The ICAMA Coordinator**

- The ICAMA Coordinator may be contacted by phone or e-mail by field staff regarding a family moving to another state and needing Medicaid set up in the other state. Such contact should be made prior to the move, if possible. The ICAMA Coordinator must receive the Adoption Assistance Agreement and the Adoption Assistance Memorandum for each involved child.

## SSAU DIRECTORY

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