

Guidelines for Foster Parent Reimbursement

Collin County CPS Board

Effective October 1, 2019

On behalf of the Collin County Child Protective Services Board, we would like to personally thank each and every one of you for caring for the foster children of Collin County. We are so grateful to you and want to assist you in your care and support of these children.

The following guidelines are established to give foster parents caring for **Collin County Foster children** additional financial assistance. While it is our desire to help and encourage foster parents as much as possible, all requests are **considered and either approved or declined fully at the discretion of the Collin County CPS Board and/or our newly re-organized, Foster Friends, 501 © 3 non-profit.**

We have included the enclosed guidelines to inform you of the many services and types of assistance available to you and the foster children. This information also provides the necessary timelines required by the County to submit reimbursement requests. We want to do everything we can as a Board to help you. Should you have questions about these guidelines, please contact your CPS representative.

Understanding the Purpose of the CPS Board of Directors and Foster Friends 501 © 3 Non-Profit Board

The Collin County Commissioners Court appoints eleven (15) local citizens to serve on the Collin County CPS Board. In addition, Foster Friends, a 501 © 3 non-profit consisting of thirteen (15) volunteers who work in conjunction with the CPS board members. The mission of the Board is to provide leadership to achieve excellence in the protection, care, support services and utilization of resources and to enrich and enhance the quality of lives of abused children and their families in Collin County.

The Board has the responsibility to oversee the distribution of the County Budget for the foster children of Collin County. Some of the items that the County Budget pays for are clothing, legal publications, citations, medical costs and emergency shelter. The Board works directly with the Collin County Auditor's Office to process payments once approved.

The Board meets on the fourth Monday of each month. At this time, all requests for funds or reimbursements are reviewed. The Board considers all requests on an individual basis. All requests are considered and approved or declined fully at the discretion of the CPS Services Board and/or Foster Friends non-profit board.

The Board receives grants, jury funds, and donations in addition to promoting fundraising in the community. One Hundred Percent (100%) of the proceeds go directly to provide goods and/or services to Collin County foster children. Both the CPS and Foster Friends' Board members are non-paid volunteers.

Please note that the annual Collin County CPS Board budget year runs from October 1 through September 30 of the following year. All reimbursement requests for the current year must be submitted TWO WEEKS prior to the September Board Meeting (4th Monday of September) in order to be processed in the current year budget. Any receipts received after the two-week cut off through September 30 may be reimbursed if there are any remaining funds in the budget and will be addressed at the October Board meeting.

Understanding the Reimbursement Process

The CPS Board or Collin County Auditor's Office will reimburse or pay all Board approved expenditures. Payments or reimbursements come from either the County budget or Board funds. Requests for goods or services that are not payable or reimbursable with county funds are paid with Board funds. The Board determines when reviewing the requests what funds will be used to pay the approved request.

Overview of the Board reimbursement process:

If the request is approved and determined that funds from the Board account will be used to pay the request, a check is written by the Board treasurer and mailed directly to the payee.

Overview of the county reimbursement process:

If the request is approved and determined that county funds will be used to pay the request, an Affidavit is completed by the Board treasurer and delivered with the completed request to the Collin County Auditor's office for processing. The Affidavit and attached paperwork are then reviewed and checked for accuracy. Next, the request is sent to Accounts Payable at the Auditor's office for processing and entered into the system for check production. Afterward, the requests are presented at the Commissioners weekly meeting for approval. Upon approval by the Commissioners Court, the paperwork is processed to be included in the Application for Disbursement and signed off on by the County Judge. After approval, the request is sent to the Treasurer and the checks are mailed accordingly.

Understanding the County Reimbursement Timeline

There are a number of variables that determine the processing timeline at the County level. These variables include:

- * Delivery of paperwork to the Auditor's Office
- * Paperwork processing by the Auditor's Office
(Reviewing and accuracy checking)
- * Processing by Accounts Payable
- * Timing of Commissioners Meeting
(Meetings can be cancelled for various reasons including holidays)

Reimbursements usually take 2 – 3 weeks once they are delivered to the Auditor's office. As you can see, there are many steps involved in obtaining reimbursement funds from the County due to the checks and balances in place at the County level.

Items that CAN be considered for reimbursement:

Clothing—up to \$450 per year per child;

Educational Needs

- Summer school
- Enrichment programs
- Tutoring, *some private school expenses
- Required classroom supplies, such as notebooks, pens, and paper
- Art supplies
- Locker and towel fees
- Rental or purchase of musical instruments for school band
- School activity fees, such as class project or field trips

Special Needs Expenses – camps (educational), regular after-school activities fees, such as volleyball, basketball, organized sports, dance, extra-curricular activities, music lessons, driver's license education

Special Event Expenses - graduation, prom, dances, class rings

Medical Expenses - expenses not covered by Medicaid or expenses incurred before Medicaid becomes effective

Hardship Situations - situations may arise as a result of accepting care of foster children. The Board will consider temporary payment on a case by case basis and may include such things as food, transportation, shelter, and utilities.

Personal Incidentals- personal hygiene products; cosmetics; over-the-counter medications; special dietary foods; infant and toddler supplies, including high chairs and diapers, gifts for birthdays, special occasions, and holidays; reasonable and occasional costs for such items as tickets or other admission fees for sporting, entertainment, or cultural events; fees related to clubs, such as the Boys Scouts of America or the Girl Scouts of the USA; special lessons, including horseback riding; miscellaneous items such as stamps, envelopes, writing paper, film, and the cost of film development for a personal camera; reasonable travel provided for the child to visit parents, siblings, relatives or other caretakers at home or at other appropriate locations, funeral costs (limited if pre-approved)

Items that CANNOT be considered for reimbursement:

Any item/service/good purchased over **90** days in the past. The Board cannot consider any receipt(s) for reimbursements that are older than **90** days and include:

Costs for after-school enrichment programs that include games, time to work on homework, or private music or art lessons

Child Care Expenses (Day Care)

Tuition for private school, even if attendance is court-ordered

GED-related expenses (can be considered if pre-approved)

Immigration Expenses

Home Land Security Expenses

Drug screening

Expenses related to the Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program

Specialized assessments such as psychiatric, medical, or educational assessments

The above lists are not meant to be comprehensive. All requests will be considered by the Boards on an individual basis and are approved or declined fully at the discretion of the CPS Services Board and/or Foster Friends non-profit board.

Clothing

Each Collin County foster child has a **\$450.00 per year** clothing allowance that begins with the first clothing reimbursement provided by the Board for the child. The clothing allowance period is from **October 1** through **September 30** to coincide with the Collin County Fiscal Year. Unused clothing funds expire and do not roll into the next allowance period.

The Board understands that many times foster children are received by foster parents without basic clothing to meet their needs and that children outgrow or wear-out their existing clothing. This includes items from under to outerwear, shoes, and school uniforms. Please note that clothing funded by County or Board funds are the property of the child and should follow the child should the child need to move to another home.

The Board anticipates these funds are used throughout the year to provide clothing for your foster child. The Board understands that situations arise where additional clothing is needed, even though the child has depleted their yearly clothing allowance. The Board will consider additional requests for funds on a case by case basis.

Collin County requires certain guidelines be followed for reimbursements. The reimbursement procedure is presented on subsequent pages in this document along with the required submission form.

The Current CPS Coordinator is Janyne Davis. If you have questions, her direct number is (972) 633-6651

Please note, incomplete and/or incorrect paperwork will be returned to the foster parent to correct which will further delay the payment process.

How to Process a Clothing Reimbursement

The Board has worked to make the reimbursement process as easy as possible while still working within the County requirements.

Guidelines to follow for clothing reimbursement:

- Clothing must be purchased individually for each foster child. Do not mix sibling items on a receipt.
- Clothing must be purchased on an individual receipt. Do not purchase groceries, household items, medicines, etc. and include clothing expenses with these items.
- Fully and legibly complete the attached ***Clothing Reimbursement Request***. Please do not copy the receipt description. Please identify each article of clothing (i.e. socks, shoes, sweater, jeans, etc.)
- Attach original/legible store receipts that **are less than 90 days old.**
- Mail completed form(s) with original receipt(s) to the following address:

CPS Coordinator
Attn: Janyne Davis
DFPS
2205 Los Rios Blvd.
Plano, TX 75074

- Payment will be received approximately three (3) weeks after Board approval if Collin County policies for reimbursement have been followed.

Please note that the Collin County CPS Board meets the fourth Monday of each month. In order to ensure a reasonable turn-around of payments and reimbursements, ALL REQUESTS (with proper paperwork) should be submitted to the CPS Reimbursement Coordinator so that he/she can submit to staff for processing **no later than the second Friday of the month. Incomplete and/or incorrect paperwork will be returned to the Foster Parent for correction.**

**How to Process a Reimbursement Request
For Items Other than Clothing**

Guidelines to follow for reimbursement:

- Fully and legibly complete the attached Reimbursement Request. Please include as much pertinent information as possible to describe the expense.
- If applicable, attach original/legible store receipts that **are less than 90 days old.**
- Mail completed form(s) with original receipt(s) to the following address:

CPS Coordinator
Attn: Janyne Davis
DFPS
2205 Los Rios Blvd.
Plano, TX 75074

- Payment will be received approximately three (3) weeks after Board approval.

Please note that incomplete and/or incorrect paperwork will be returned to the foster parent to correct, which will further delay the payment process.

+++++

**How to Request Educational Need, Special Need, Special Event, Medical
Expense or Hardship Funds**

Please contact your caseworker directly for assistance with these requests. The caseworker will work with you to complete a Special Needs request that will be processed and forwarded to the Board for approval at the monthly meeting.

If the request involves a prepayment, the Board will require a contract, quote or proposal be submitted with the request in order to approve.

In order to ensure that the Board is able to quickly review and approve a request without delay, it is imperative that as much information and details be included as possible. The Board wants to assist when possible, but when key information is missing, decisions must be delayed.

