DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

DATE
February 8, 2008

CIRCULAR LETTER #
SSA 08 – 13

TO:
Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors of Social Services
Local Departments of Social Services

FROM:
Cathy F. Mols, Executive Director
Social Services Administration

RE:
Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive; This Circular Letter replaces and supersedes Circular Letter SSA # 87 – 12
(Foster Parent Finder’s Fee For Foster Parent Referrals).

PROGRAMS AFFECTED:
Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care)
And Resource Units

ORIGINATING OFFICE:
Resource Development Placement and Support Services

BACKGROUND
The history of utilizing existing foster parents in the foster parent recruitment process dates back to 1987. Under the preexisting policy dated January 1, 1987, the referring foster family received a $50.00 finders fee when the prospective foster family became approved and received their first foster child.

On February 1, 2006, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) re-instituted the Cash Incentive Program for current foster families who recruit prospective foster families. The cash incentive was increased and disbursed in three intervals, $25.00 after attending the orientation meeting, $50.00 after completion of the application and $75.00 after the first child was placed in the home.

ACTION REQUIRED OF:
Out-of-Home Placement Services
Foster Care and Resource Units
REQUIRED ACTION: Employ, monitor and report monthly on the use of the Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Cash Award Incentive Plan.

ACTION DUE DATE: January 1, 2008

CONTACT PERSON: Kevin Keegan, Director
Resource Development Placement and Support Services
410-767-7910

PURPOSE
To support the current foster parent recruitment and retention drive, a new and improved foster parent Cash Award Incentive initiative has been designed to better utilize existing foster parents as part of the foster parent recruitment and retention team. This policy provides a Cash Award Incentive for current foster parents who recruit, encourage, mentor, and support others to become approved public foster families who serve children placed in Maryland’s foster care system.

FOSTER PARENT CASH AWARD INCENTIVE

DEFINITION
Under this policy, current foster parents/families receive a $500.00 Cash Award Incentive for referring others to become foster parents/families. The Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive is to be disbursed as follows: $250 after the first foster child is placed with the newly approved foster parent/family and another $250 to be received one year later at the reconsideration date as long as a child has resided in the home over the past year and the home remains open to placement of new foster children.

REQUIREMENTS
A foster parent/family can make up to four referrals per fiscal year that qualify for the cash award incentive. The new foster parent must provide public foster care services to at least one child placed in foster care in Maryland in order for the referral to qualify for the incentive program, including fostering to adopt.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE
Any existing approved foster parent/family actively providing public foster care services is eligible for the Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive for referring a prospective foster parent/family.

Current foster families are prohibited to receive the Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive if they recruit families during foster parent recruitment and retention promotional events, local Department of Social Services foster parent recruitment and retention activities, community based and local foster Parent association recruitment events, etc. All referrals made by current foster parents/families during promotional events will be found ineligible.
CASH AWARD INCENTIVE RATES & CHARGE CODE

The Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive consists of one $500.00 award per referral, not to exceed four new qualifying awards per fiscal year. The award is to be distributed in two intervals of $250.00. The project code to be used for the Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive is 0304.85 and the PCA code is GC860.

RESPONSIBILITY OF LDSS

Each local department is required to get-the-word-out to their current public foster parents, local foster parent association and the community. Each local department is required to track and document each foster parent recruiter and note the date of the referral. Listings of all perspective foster parents and the person who referred them is to be documented and tracked with the Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive Tracking Form and the revised Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention Monthly Report. In addition, each local department is required to track each prospective foster parent from the initial referral, to the placement of the first child, to his or her one-year anniversary.

If the referring foster parent and the prospective foster parent reside in different counties, the original tracking form must be maintained in the resource home record of the referring foster parent/family. A copy of the tracking form must be retained in the resource home record of the prospective foster parent/family. The Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive Tracking Form must be signed and dated by all resource workers and their supervisors.

RESPONSIBILITY OF DHR/SSA

DHR/SSA will develop a flyer and/or another venue to be distributed to the local departments for the purpose of publicizing the Foster Parent Cash Award Incentive. DHR/SSA will monitor all disbursements of the Foster Parent Cash Incentive through the revised Foster Parent Recruitment and Retention monthly report.
# FOSTER PARENT CASH AWARD INCENTIVE TRACKING FORM

(Instructions on reverse side)

Date: __________________________
State Fiscal Year: __________________________
Name of Referring Foster Parent/Family(s): __________________________
Address: __________________________
Telephone #: __________________________
Client ID #: __________________________

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<th>Name of Prospective Foster Parent/Family</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
<th>Address (Include zip code)</th>
<th>Name of County if Different From That of the Referring Foster Parent/Family</th>
<th>Date of Approval</th>
<th>Client ID #</th>
<th>Date Received First Child</th>
<th>Date of Reconsideration</th>
<th>Date of First Cash Incentive Installment</th>
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Resource Worker’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________
Supervisor’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Signature of Resource Worker of prospective foster parent/family, if different from that of the referring foster parent/family:

Date: __________________________
Supervisor’s Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

DHR/SSA 2015 (12/07)