



Ohio Revised Code

Section 5153.163 Payments to adoptive parent of child with special needs; kinship guardian assistance.

Effective: September 30, 2025

Legislation: House Bill 96

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "Adoptive parent" means, as the context requires, a prospective adoptive parent or an adoptive parent.

(2) "Relative" has the same meaning as in section 5180.42 of the Revised Code.

(B)(1) Before a child's adoption is finalized, a public children services agency may enter into an agreement with the child's adoptive parent under which the agency, to the extent state funds are available, may make state adoption maintenance subsidy payments as needed on behalf of the child when all of the following apply:

(a) The child is a child with special needs.

(b) The child was placed in the adoptive home by a public children services agency or a private child placing agency and may legally be adopted.

(c) The adoptive parent has the capability of providing the permanent family relationships needed by the child.

(d) The needs of the child are beyond the economic resources of the adoptive parent.

(e) Acceptance of the child as a member of the adoptive parent's family would not be in the child's best interest without payments on the child's behalf under this section.

(f) The gross income of the adoptive parent's family does not exceed one hundred twenty per cent of the median income of a family of the same size, including the child, as most recently determined for



this state by the secretary of health and human services under Title XX of the "Social Security Act," 88 Stat. 2337, 42 U.S.C.A. 1397, as amended.

(g) The child is not eligible for adoption assistance payments under Title IV-E of the "Social Security Act," 94 Stat. 501 (1980), 42 U.S.C.A. 671, as amended.

(2) State adoption maintenance subsidy payment agreements must be made by either the public children services agency that has permanent custody of the child or the public children services agency of the county in which the private child placing agency that has permanent custody of the child is located.

(3) State adoption maintenance subsidy payments shall be made in accordance with the agreement between the public children services agency and the adoptive parent and are subject to an annual redetermination of need.

(4) Payments under this division may begin either before or after issuance of the final adoption decree, except that payments made before issuance of the final adoption decree may be made only while the child is living in the adoptive parent's home. Preadoption payments may be made for not more than twelve months, unless the final adoption decree is not issued within that time because of a delay in court proceedings. Payments that begin before issuance of the final adoption decree may continue after its issuance.

(C)(1) A public children services agency may enter into an agreement with a child's relative under which the agency, to the extent state funds are available, may provide state kinship guardianship assistance as needed on behalf of the child when all of the following apply:

(a) The relative has cared for the eligible child as a foster caregiver as defined by section 5103.02 of the Revised Code for at least six consecutive months.

(b) Both of the following apply:

(i) A juvenile court issued an order granting legal custody of the child to the relative, or a probate court issued an order granting guardianship of the child to the relative, and the order is not a



temporary court order.

(ii) The relative has committed to care for the child on a permanent basis.

(c) The relative signed a state kinship guardianship assistance agreement prior to assuming legal guardianship or legal custody of the child.

(d) The child had been removed from home pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement or as a result of a judicial determination to the effect that continuation in the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child.

(e) Returning the child home or adoption are not appropriate permanency options for the child.

(f) The child demonstrates a strong attachment to the relative and the relative has a strong commitment to caring permanently for the child.

(g) With respect to a child who has attained fourteen years of age, the child has been consulted regarding the state kinship guardianship assistance arrangement.

(h) The child is not eligible for kinship guardianship assistance payments under Title IV-E of the "Social Security Act," 42 U.S.C. 673(d), as amended.

(2) The public children services agency that had custody of a child immediately prior to a court granting legal custody or guardianship of the child to a relative of the child described in division (C)(1) of this section is authorized to enter into a state kinship guardianship assistance agreement with that relative.

(3) State kinship guardianship assistance for a child shall be provided in accordance with a state kinship guardianship assistance agreement entered into between the public children services agency and relative of the child described in division (C)(1) of this section and is subject to an annual redetermination of need.

(D) No payment shall be made under division (B) or (C) of this section on behalf of any person



eighteen years of age or older beyond the end of the school year during which the person attains the age of eighteen or on behalf of a person with a mental or physical disability twenty-one years of age or older.

(E) The director of children and youth shall adopt rules in accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code that are needed to implement this section. The rules shall establish all of the following:

- (1) The application process for all forms of assistance provided under this section;
- (2) The method to determine the amount of assistance payable under division (B) of this section;
- (3) The definition of "child with special needs" for this section;
- (4) The process whereby a child's continuing need for services provided under division (B) or (C) of this section is annually redetermined;
- (5) Any other rule, requirement, or procedure the department considers appropriate for the implementation of this section.

(F) The state adoption special services subsidy program ceases to exist on July 1, 2004, except that, subject to the findings of the annual redetermination process established under division (E) of this section and the child's individual need for services, a public children services agency may continue to provide state adoption special services subsidy payments on behalf of a child for whom payments were being made prior to July 1, 2004.

(G) Benefits and services provided under this section are inalienable whether by way of assignment, charge, or otherwise and exempt from execution, attachment, garnishment, and other like processes.