

# Agency Responsibilities under Northstar Care for Children

**DRAFT** August 4, 2014

#	Subject	Legally Responsible Agency	Financially Responsible Agency
<b>1</b>	<b>Placement</b>	<p>The legally responsible agency is the social service agency that has legal responsibility for placement, care and supervision of a child placed away from their parent.</p> <p>Legal responsibility may be a court order, voluntary placement agreement or voluntary relinquishment to a local county social service agency, American Indian Child Welfare Initiative Tribe or Minnesota Tribe that assumes initial court jurisdiction or when a case transfers from state court to tribal court and legal responsibility is transferred from the county to the Tribe.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency is the social service agency in Northstar Care for Children that pays the local share of Northstar Foster Care, Northstar Kinship Assistance and Northstar Adoption Assistance.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency is always a county or American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribe.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency at the time of foster care placement continues to be financially responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Case of Record in SSIS</b>	<p>The legally responsible agency may use SSIS for its work, if it has access to it. However, the financially responsible agency maintains the case of record in SSIS.</p>	<p>Enters the child’s placement and permanency planning information from the legally responsible agency into SSIS and maintains the placement of record.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>MAPCY Assessments and Reassessments in Northstar Foster Care</b>	<p>Ordinarily, the legally responsible agency takes the initiative. In consultation with the caregiver (and youth if appropriate), the legally responsible agency assessor completes the assessment.</p> <p>At this point, the legally responsible agency must complete a paper version and send it to the financially responsible agency for final approval. The department is considering options for future possible improvements to SSIS that might reduce the need for this paper-based part of the</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency has final approval for the assessment or reassessment. However, the financially responsible agency must seek the assistance of the legally responsible agency in its completion.</p> <p>Exactly how that occurs varies. There are three situations:</p> <p>1) The legally responsible agency has all assessment capabilities. The agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is willing and able to do the assessment in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Ensures that all its assessors are trained on the assessment tool.</li> <li>• Has one or more internal agency-designated approvers who are working to ensure agency and statewide consistency</li> </ul>

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		<p>MAPCY process.</p> <p>However, if the legally responsible agency is unwilling or unable to do the assessment, then the financially responsible agency should seek input from the legally responsible agency and complete the assessment based on that input, discussions with the caregiver, discussions with the youth if appropriate, and other case information available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through its agency-designated approver(s), ensures that the required documentation of high needs and high parenting levels is adequately covered.</li> </ul> <p>In this situation, the financially responsible agency must give great deference to the legally responsible agency’s approved assessment.</p> <p>2) The legally responsible agency has most assessment capabilities. The agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is willing and able to do the assessment in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Ensures that all its assessors are trained on the assessment tool.</li> <li>• Does not have an internal agency-designated approver at this time.</li> <li>• In this situation, the financially responsible agency must verify that the required documentation of high needs and high parenting levels is adequately covered. In addition, the financially responsible agency approver must work with the partner legally responsible agency to ensure statewide consistency with individual assessments and (if appropriate) with assessments through time.</li> </ul> <p>3) The legally responsible agency is unwilling or unable to do the assessment. In this situation, the financially responsible agency should seek input from the legally responsible agency and complete the assessment based on that input, discussions with the caregiver, discussions with the youth if appropriate, and other case information available.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency maintains the assessment of record within SSIS.</p> <p>Upon receipt, the financially responsible agency must enter the assessment into SSIS. The department is considering options for future possible improvements to SSIS that might reduce the need for this paper-based part of the MAPCY process.</p> <p>For the highest needs young people, Extraordinary Level Requests require DHS approval. The financially responsible</p>

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			agency must submit these requests on a timely basis.
4	<b>Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in Foster Care</b>	The legally responsible agency is not responsible to provide notice to the caregiver about the completed assessment.	The financially responsible agency must send a written notice to the caregiver within 15 days of the approved assessment.  The notice to the caregiver must include a summary of the assessment, a statement of rating and benefit level and how to request a fair hearing.
5	<b>Payments for Northstar Foster Care</b>	The legally responsible agency does not issue payments for Northstar Foster Care.	Payments to caregivers must be made monthly.  The financially responsible agency issues monthly Northstar Foster Care payments directly to the foster parent(s).  Caregivers must have access to the financially responsible agency's records of payment transactions.  The financially responsible agency's payments are included in the Northstar Care fiscal reconciliation process.
6	<b>Case Planning, Permanency, and Court</b>	The legally responsible agency is responsible for case planning, permanency and legal processes consistent with federal laws and applicable state or tribal code.  Reunification and adoption must be ruled out as permanency options before transfer of physical and legal custody is considered.	The financially responsible agency is not responsible for case planning, permanency or legal processes.  However, the financially responsible agency enters and maintains the placement and case planning of record within SSIS.
7	<b>Kinship or Adoption Placement Agreement</b>	The legally responsible agency determines the placement decision, selects the prospective adoptive parent(s) or prospective relative custodian(s). When selected, the agency and caregiver sign the agreement (plus a DHS representative for an Adoption Placement Agreement).	The financially responsible agency is not responsible for the placement decision or selection of prospective adoptive parent(s) or relative custodian(s).
8	<b>Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination</b>	Provides the financially responsible agency the information necessary to prepare the Northstar Kinship Assistance or Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination.	The financially responsible agency prepares the Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination for review and final approval by DHS. This process is completed in SSIS.
9	<b>Northstar Kinship or</b>	The legally responsible agency works	In order to receive Northstar Adoption Assistance or Northstar

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	<b>Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement</b>	<p>with the caregiver and the financially responsible agency to sign the Northstar Kinship Assistance or Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement prior to the tribal or juvenile court finalizing the adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.</p> <p>Receives a copy of the Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement.</p>	<p>Kinship Assistance benefits on behalf of a child, a written binding Benefit Agreement must be signed by the caregiver(s) and the financially responsible agency prior to the tribal or juvenile court finalizing the adoption or transfer of physical and legal custody.</p> <p>The Financially Responsible Agency completes the negotiation of the Benefit Agreement with the caregiver(s) and works with the legally responsible agency to ensure the Benefit Agreement is signed prior to finalization of the adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.</p>
10	<b>Payments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance</b>	<p>Minnesota DHS is responsible to make Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance payments.</p> <p>The legally responsible agency has no responsibility for these payments.</p>	<p>Minnesota DHS is responsible to make Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance payments.</p> <p>The financially responsibility agency at the time of foster care placement continues to be financially responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency.</p>
11	<b>MAPCY Reassessments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance</b>	<p>If the caregiver contacts the legally responsible agency to request a reassessment , the agency may assist the caregiver by forwarding the written request to the financially responsible agency.</p> <p>Ordinarily, in consultation with the caregiver (and youth if appropriate), the legally responsible agency assessor completes the assessment.</p> <p>However, if the legally responsible agency is unwilling or unable to do the assessment, then see 4 “MAPCY Assessments and Reassessments in Northstar Foster Care” above.</p>	<p>The caregiver(s) contact the financially responsible agency when requesting a reassessment.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency has final approval for the reassessment. However, the financially responsible agency must seek the assistance of the legally responsible agency in its completion. Please see the three situations under 4 “MAPCY Assessments and Reassessments in Northstar Foster Care” above.</p>
12	<b>Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in NKA or NAA</b>	<p>The legally responsible agency is not responsible to provide notice to the caregiver about the completed reassessment.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency sends a written notice to the caregiver within 15 days of the approved reassessment.</p>