

**Northstar Care  
for Children**

**Coming Soon to SSIS:  
Release 14.4 & Beyond**

**SSIS Worker Mentors**

**August 14, 2014**

Northstar Care for Children

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**Northstar Care  
for Children**

- Northstar Foster Care
- Northstar Kinship Assistance
- Northstar Adoption Assistance

Northstar Care for Children

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**Northstar Care for Children**

- If you aren't able to get your questions answered now, please send them in.
- We sometimes post the answers to questions on the DHS website under:  
**Northstar Care for Children FAQ**
- Send policy questions to:  
[northstar.care@state.mn.us](mailto:northstar.care@state.mn.us)
- Send SSIS questions to:  
[dhs.ssishelp@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.ssishelp@state.mn.us)



Northstar Care for Children

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**1. Background**

**Northstar Care addresses the barrier**

- The benefit discrepancy was a serious barrier, particularly American Indian children, African American children, sibling groups, and older children.
- Northstar Care eliminates that benefit discrepancy for young people age 6 and over – same benefits for foster care, kinship, and adoptions.
- It unifies benefits for children age 5 and younger as well, although the benefits are not uniform.




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**1. Background**

**Moving toward permanent families**



- Northstar Care is about assisting young people who can't be reunified in getting a new permanent family.
- As a result, it deals with *family foster homes* and *supervised independent living* settings.
- It makes no changes in group homes, residential treatment, or other similar out-of-home placement settings.

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**1. Background**

**Three Components, one for each Legal Status**

- Each component lines up with a legal status.
- **Northstar Foster Care** for young people in family foster homes and extended foster care – supervised independent living.
- **Northstar Kinship Assistance** for eligible young people *in foster care* who undergo a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative.
- **Northstar Adoption Assistance** for eligible young people *in foster care* who are adopted.

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## Northstar Care for Children

- NEXT** →
1. Background
  - 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits**
  3. Phase-in and Transitions
  4. Eligibility Determination Overview
  5. Eligibility Determination for NKA
  6. Agency Responsibilities
  7. Case Examples

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### 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

#### MAPCY Assessment Basics

- MAPCY stands for the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth
- MAPCY is a consistent tool that follows the child from family foster home to permanency.
- The MAPCY assessment shifts the focus away from how “sick” the young person is.
- The assessment tool focuses on the child’s well-being, development, safety, and permanency.




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### 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

#### Uniform Assessment is Central

- A uniform assessment is central to Northstar Care for Children.
- The MAPCY determines the size of one of the primary ingredients in the young person’s monthly benefit.
- (Similar to how the old DOC Assessment previously determined the size of part of the monthly foster care benefit).



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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Assessment Approval

- When the Assessor is done, it must be approved by an agency-designated Approver.
- SSIS will not pay off of a MAPCY until it has been approved.
- For a small group of high needs kids, requested Extraordinary Level increases need to be approved by DHS.
- Until state approval is received, SSIS will pay the standard levels but not any extraordinary levels.




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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Built-in Emergency Rate

- Counties and tribes are not required to use the MAPCY unless the young person is in a family foster home for 30 days or longer, although best practice would be to complete it by two or three weeks.
- There is a default **Emergency Rate** (Level D) that is available to counties and tribes without a MAPCY, but only for the initial 30 days.



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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Three Main Benefits

For most young people, there are three main benefits:

- 1) **Medical Assistance**
- 2) **Monthly Basic Payment** (based on age)
- 3) **Monthly Supplemental Difficulty of Care Payment** (determined by the MAPCY)

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits



### Medical Assistance

- Most young people on Northstar Care for Children will qualify for Medical Assistance.
- A small number of “at-risk” children on Northstar Adoption Assistance receive MA but no monthly benefit (Level A).

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Monthly Basic Payment

Other than the at-risk children, all young people on Northstar Care receive a **Monthly Basic Payment** based on their age.

Northstar Care Monthly Basic Payment Rates	All Foster Care and entering permanency ages 6+	Entering permanency ages birth-5
Basic: Ages 0-5	<b>\$565</b>	<b>\$283</b>
Basic: Ages 6-12	<b>\$670</b>	<b>\$335</b>
Basic: Ages 13+	<b>\$790</b>	<b>\$395</b>

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Monthly Supplemental Difficulty of Care Payment

- Most young people on Northstar Care also receive a monthly **Supplemental Difficulty of Care** payment based on their current MAPCY Assessment Level.
- As with legacy Foster Care DOC, this gets translated into a daily rate which can be used for partial month payments.

Levels	FC and Enter Perm 6+	Enter Perm 0-5
B	\$0	\$0
C	\$100	\$50
D	\$200	\$100
E	\$300	\$150
F	\$400	\$200
G	\$500	\$250
H	\$600	\$300
I	\$700	\$350
J	\$800	\$400
K	\$900	\$450
L	\$1000	\$500
M	\$1100	\$550
N	\$1200	\$600
O	\$1300	\$650
P	\$1400	\$700
Q	\$1500	\$750

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Monthly Supplemental Difficulty of Care Payment

In order to make a monthly **Supplemental Difficulty of Care** payment in SSIS:

- You need a current, approved MAPCY assessment.
- You need a **placement** in SSIS with that young person and that foster parent.
- Previously, a placement was good practice but not required to make a payment.

Levels	FC and Enter Perm 6+	Enter Perm 0-5
B	\$0	\$0
C	\$100	\$50
D	\$200	\$100
E	\$300	\$150
F	\$400	\$200
G	\$500	\$250
H	\$600	\$300
I	\$700	\$350
J	\$800	\$400
K	\$900	\$450
L	\$1000	\$500
M	\$1100	\$550
N	\$1200	\$600
O	\$1300	\$650
P	\$1400	\$700
Q	\$1500	\$750

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

Level	Supplemental Difficulty of Care	Total Monthly Benefit
Basic	\$0	\$670
Level D	\$200	\$870
Level J	\$800	\$1470
Level Q	\$1500	\$2170

- Adding the Basic and Supplemental Difficulty of Care together yields the total monthly benefit.
- Here are some examples for **6-12 year olds**.

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Uniform Benefits for Those Age 6 and Above

- Northstar Care unifies benefits and makes them uniform for young people who are 6 and older.
- If a young person 6 or older who is in Northstar Foster Care is eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance, then if they stay with the same caregiver(s) they get the same benefits when their legal status changes.

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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate

- Northstar Care unifies benefits but does **not** make them uniform for young people who achieve permanency at age 5 or younger.
- If a young person in Northstar Foster Care is eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance and staying with the same caregiver(s), then they get half of their foster care benefits when their legal status changes.




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## 2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits

### Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate



- Minnesota has not had much difficulty getting the younger children to permanency.
- This **Pre-School Entry Alternate Rate** is higher than they would have gotten under legacy Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) or legacy Adoption Assistance, but it is not uniform.
- This was one of compromises made to get Northstar Care through.

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## Northstar★ Care for Children

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2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits
- 3. Phase-in and Transitions**
4. Eligibility Determination Overview
5. Eligibility Determination for NKA
6. Agency Responsibilities
7. Case Examples



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### 3. Phase-in and Transitions

- Northstar Care for Children is for children who enter one of its components in 2015 or after.
- The Pre-Northstar Care legacy programs are retained for the children already in them and are slowly phased out as children exit.




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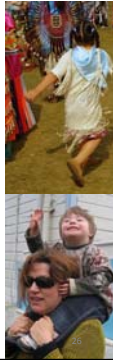
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### 3. Phase-in and Transitions

#### Legacy Programs Continue

- Northstar Care begins January 1, 2015.
- But all the “legacy” programs continue.
- There are **four** legacy programs:
  - Legacy Foster Care (LFC)
  - Relative Custody Assistance (RCA)
  - Legacy Adoption Assistance (LAA)
  - Minnesota Permanency Demonstration Project (MnPD – the proving ground for Northstar Care that added young people 2005-2010)




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### 3. Phase-in and Transitions

#### Legacy Programs Close at Thanksgiving

- To implement Northstar Care, no new legacy Adoption Assistance or Relative Custody Assistance cases may start after November 26.
- November 26 is the Wednesday right before Thanksgiving.
- That means that if the court hasn’t finalized (adoption decree or order of permanent transfer of legal and physical custody) **on or before November 26, 2014**, all the legacy paperwork is void.
- Hurry up... or else wait.




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**3. Phase-in and Transitions**

**Hazardous Period – Nov 27-Dec 31, 2014**



- Chances are, adoptions and transfers of custody with final court action between November 27 and December 31, 2014 will result in children being “marooned.”
- Unable to qualify for legacy programs.
- Unable to qualify for Northstar Care.
- ***Beware of this period.***

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**3. Phase-in and Transitions**

**Transitions are from the Legacy Programs**



- Sometimes a young person ***leaves a legacy program*** and ***switches to Northstar Care.***
- That’s known as a ***transition.***
- There are rules that apply to them.

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**3. Phase-in and Transitions**

**Status Transitions Phase-in**

- A status transition is the primary way out from legacy foster care to Northstar Foster Care.
- Ordinarily, a young person residing in a family foster home setting prior to January 1, 2015, would remain in the legacy pre-Northstar Care foster care unless a status change occurs.
- Status transitions occur automatically when a young person in foster care experiences specific changes in status, moving a young person ***out of legacy*** Pre-Northstar Care foster care and ***potentially into Northstar Care for Children.***

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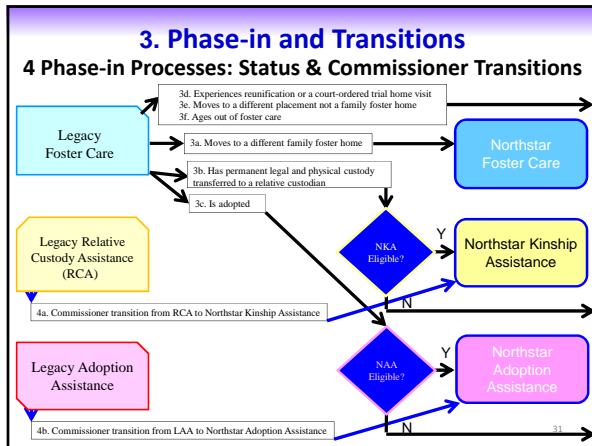
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### 3. Phase-in and Transitions

#### Status Transitions in SSIS



- SSIS will automatically track foster care status transitions from legacy to Northstar Care.
- They will be based on where the young person was on December 31, 2014.
- So get your placements up-to-date for year end!

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### Northstar★ Care for Children

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### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Eligibility is specific

- The MAPCY assessment may be the same and the benefits may be unified across the three components.
- However, due to federal regulations, the eligibility varies for each of the three components of Northstar Care:
  - Northstar Foster Care
  - Northstar Kinship Assistance
  - Northstar Adoption Assistance

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### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Eligibility is specific



- As a result, not all young people who are in Foster Care will be eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance or Northstar Adoption Assistance.
- Also, some young people will be eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance but not for Northstar Adoption Assistance, or vice versa.

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### 3. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Eligibility is specific

- The following is an over-all summary of eligibility for Northstar Care for Children.
- There are some specifics that are not covered in full detail.




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### 3. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Eligible Settings

Young people in any of the following settings *may* be eligible:

- Family foster homes (BRASS Code 181).
- Shelter in family foster care (BRASS Code 181).
- Therapeutic foster homes (BRASS Code 180).
- Foster homes licensed through a private foster care agency (child-placing agency, BRASS Code 180 or 181).
- Corporate foster homes (sometimes informally known as CADI homes, referring to the Medical Assistance Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals Waiver that sometimes pays for some of their costs, BRASS Code 181).

(Continued on next slide)<sup>37</sup>

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### 3. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Eligible Settings

(Continued from previous slide)

- Youth (18 up to age 21) in extended foster care, whether with a caregiver (BRASS Code 181) or in a supervised independent living setting (BRASS Code 188).
- Legally transferred to relative custodian(s).
- Adopted by adoptive parent(s).

All of these settings use the MAPCY as part of benefit determination.




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### 3. Eligibility Determination Overview

#### Ineligible Settings – Not Northstar Care

- Respite care (BRASS Code 189).
- Northstar Care for Children **does not ever** include group homes, residential treatment centers, and the like.
- In these settings, rates paid to the setting are determined by contract rather than through the MAPCY, and they will not be included in Northstar Care for Children.




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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Foster Care

- Northstar Care recognizes a wider range of circumstances than Title IV-E.
- The home must be **at least one** of the following:
  - licensed for child foster care,
  - or in the process of becoming licensed (you have six months),
  - or be a Pre-Adoptive Placement,
  - or be a supervised independent living setting (for extended foster care only).

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance

- Northstar Kinship Assistance is for children **leaving foster care** due to a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative.
- The county or tribe typically completes the application for eligibility for Northstar Kinship Assistance, but the eligibility determination is made by DHS.
- We plan to build the eligibility determination process into SSIS. More on this a little later...

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance

- The young person must have lived with the prospective relative custodian for six consecutive months while that custodian has been a licensed foster parent.
- That makes it extra important to **get relatives licensed** as quickly as practical.



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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance



- The importance of **getting relatives licensed quickly** is recognized in state law.
- Statute now requires that if there are disqualifications as a result of a background study, both counties and DHS must expedite any requests for set-asides or variances.
- Tribes may wish to arrange for something similar in their own licensing processes.

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance

- In unusual cases, DHS may grant an **exemption** to the requirement that the young person must have lived with the prospective relative custodian for six consecutive months while that custodian has been a licensed foster parent.
- However, an exemption can **never** be granted for a background study or to a permanent barrier due to a background study.
- This highlights the importance of getting **background studies** done and getting any problems with them resolved early on.

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance

- The prospective adoptive parent(s) must meet the background study requirements.
- The young person must have a special needs determination (the same as legacy Adoption Assistance).




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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligible for Northstar Adoption Assistance

- As with legacy Adoption Assistance, a relatively small group of young people will be designated as **“at-risk”**.
- They meet none of the special needs criteria **except** for being documented as having a potential to develop a disability that has not yet manifested.
- At-risk young people are eligible for limited benefits (Level A) unless and until the potential disability manifests itself at a later date.
- These limited benefits include Medical Assistance but no monthly benefits.

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligibility Not Quite Parallel



- We tried to make the three components of Northstar Care as similar as practical.
- However, Northstar Care eligibility is based on federal Title IV-E regulations.
- Title IV-E regulations vary with the three different legal statuses.

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#### 4. Eligibility Determination Overview

##### Eligibility Not Quite Parallel

- The key point for **Foster Care** is being in a home that is licensed or getting licensed (first six months) or other special status situations.
- The key point for **Kinship Assistance** is the young person having been with that prospective relative custodian as a licensed foster parent for six months.
- The key point for **Adoption Assistance** is the special needs determination.

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**Northstar Care for Children**

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Significant Practice Shift for Workers: RCA to NKA**

- After November 26, 2014, Relative Custody Assistance (RCA) will become a closed legacy program.
- Beginning January 1, 2015, Northstar Kinship Assistance (NKA) replaces Relative Custody Assistance as the benefit for a young person who gets a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody(TPLPC).
- There are a number of significant practice changes from RCA to NKA.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Significant Practice Shift: Before Court**

- With RCA, much of the work could be done **after** the court ordered transfer of legal and physical custody (TPLPC).
- With Northstar Kinship Assistance, the eligibility determination and the Benefits Agreement all need to be completed **prior** to the finalization of the court order.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Significant Practice Shift: Before Court**

- Northstar Kinship Assistance unifies process and benefits for families.
- Eligibility Determination for Northstar Kinship Assistance and Northstar Adoption Assistance will be a similar process .
- Eligibility Determination is the new name of what we currently know in legacy Adoption Assistance as the Certification – language change.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Significant Practice Shift: Means and Offsets**

- Relative Custody Assistance has been means tested against gross family income.
- Northstar Kinship Assistance is not.
- RCA also considered a wide range of income offsets to reduce the monthly payment.
- NKA considers a narrow group of income offsets.
- As a result, the amount of RCA benefit was typically 50%, 60%, 70% or more lower than what a young person would have received if they had continued in foster care.
- Even legacy Adoption Assistance was better than RCA.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**When does the Eligibility Determination need to be completed?**

- SSIS 14.4 release.
- Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination can be completed **after** a Kinship Placement Agreement has been signed.
- **BUT** needs to be finalized AND approved by DHS **AND** a Northstar Kinship Benefit Agreement needs to be signed **prior** to the court ordering a TPLPC.
- If not completed prior to TPLPC finalizing, the young person will not be eligible for Northstar Kinship Assistance.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**What will the Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination look like in SSIS?**

- Much of the content will be similar to what we've done with legacy Adoption Assistance for many years.
- But it will be automated within SSIS, which will reduce the work required at the local level and at DHS.
- And SSIS will assist with the workflow as well!



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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**What will the Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination look like in SSIS?**



- Similar style to the service plans that are currently in SSIS
- Initial set up screen
- Much of the information that is needed for eligibility will be derived from information that has previously been completed in SSIS (worker will not need to answer a question)

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**What will the Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination look like in SSIS?**

- Even though much of the information for the Eligibility Determination is derived from SSIS, the worker will still need to answer a few questions.
- Depending on how the worker answers a question, SSIS will direct them down the path to complete the Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination
- Will determine if the child is Title IV-E or Non Title IV-E Northstar Kinship Assistance
- Worker will have ability to print Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination from a draft form (Eligibility Status Report)

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**What will the Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination look like in SSIS?**

- When worker has completed the Eligibility Determination, submit to DHS for review and approval (within SSIS, no need to print)
- SSIS will display a list of required supporting documentation depending on how questions were answered that the worker will need to submit to DHS to verify the Eligibility Determination
- Workers will need to indicate on the SSIS generated list of supporting documentation how they will submit documents to DHS (attach, email, fax, or snail mail).
- The worker will **not be allowed** to submit the Eligibility Determination until they have indicated how **every** document will be submitted to DHS.
- DHS will have ability to put dates on the list of supporting documentation so the worker will know when documentation has been received at DHS

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**What will the Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination look like in SSIS?**

- DHS will review and verify the Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination
- Options to **request correction, approve** or **deny**
- DHS will approve **within** SSIS.
- Worker will automatically get notification that they can complete the Northstar Kinship Benefit Agreement based on the results of the Eligibility Determination.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Exemption Request Process**

- As noted earlier, the young person must have resided and be currently residing in the relative custodian's home for at least 6 consecutive months during the same time that the relative custodian was fully licensed as a child foster parent for that 6 consecutive months or longer.
- In unusual circumstances, DHS will grant an exemption to this requirement.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Exemption Request Process**

- When completing the Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination and the worker answers that the placement and licensing timelines have not been met, they will automatically be led down the path of the exemption request process.
- Worker will need to complete an Exemption Request "form" as part of the Eligibility Determination in SSIS.
- The Exemption Request will be submitted with the rest of the Eligibility Determination.
- Submission process to DHS will remain the same, no further action will be required.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Exemption Request Process**

The following information will need to be provided to request an exemption:

- Documentation of the child's needs based on the 10 best interest factors
- A statement as to why an expedited move to permanency is in the child's best interest
- Explanation why expedited permanency cannot be achieved without provision of Northstar Kinship Assistance
- How the prospective relative custodian(s) are uniquely qualified to meet the child's needs
- Explanation of agency's efforts to meet required timelines or why timelines were not in the child's best interest
- All other eligibility criteria must be met

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**NKA Income Offsets**

- Child Income Offsets will need to be submitted at the same time as the Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination
- Northstar Adoption Assistance and Kinship Assistance consider the following income offsets: RSDI, Veteran's Benefits, Black Lung, and Railroad Survivor Benefits
- SSIS will have screen for this entry, worker will need to submit verification of benefits
- Income offsets will autofill in Benefit Agreement once verified at DHS
- After finalizing, relative custodians then have to report future changes in these child income sources.
- SSIS will calculate \$75 threshold

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Northstar Kinship Benefit Agreement**

- Once DHS approves both Northstar Kinship Assistance Eligibility Determination and Income Offsets, the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement tab will be activated in SSIS
- Worker will receive notice that they can now complete the Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement
- Worker will complete a short set up screen and then have the ability to print the Kinship Benefit Agreement and obtain appropriate signatures for submission to DHS

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**



**Northstar Adoption Assistance**

- Although it's less far along in design, we anticipate that Northstar Adoption Assistance will have Eligibility Determination done in SSIS.
- Some of the specifics will be different, but it will resemble Northstar Kinship Assistance closely.

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**5. Eligibility Determination for NKA**

**Summary**

- Moving from RCA to NKA is a huge shift in practice and work for county workers. We anticipate growing pains.
- It will be an important time saver for workers to complete fields in SSIS so that efficiencies can be maximized when SSIS is deriving information for the Northstar Kinship Eligibility Determination.
- Increased communication between local SSIS and SSIS DHS will allow for workers to know where in process their work is for each case.

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## Northstar Care for Children

1. Background
2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits
3. Phase-in and Transitions
4. Eligibility Determination Overview
5. Eligibility Determination for NKA
- 6. Agency Responsibilities**
7. Case Examples



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### 6. Agency Responsibilities

#### Legally Responsible Agency



- The legally responsible agency is responsible for the young person.
- It's the Minnesota social service agency that is assigned responsibility for **placement, care, and supervision** of the young person through a court order, voluntary placement agreement, or voluntary relinquishment.

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### 6. Agency Responsibilities

#### Financially Responsible Agency

- The financially responsible agency is about money.
- It's the social service agency that pays the **local share** of Northstar Care Foster Care, Northstar Kinship Assistance, and Northstar Adoption Assistance.
- It could be a county agency or one of the two American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribes – Leech Lake and White Earth.
- Under Northstar Care for Children, the agency that is financially responsible at the time of foster care placement continues to be responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency.

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### 6. Agency Responsibilities

#### When Two Agencies are Involved

- Usually the legally responsible agency and the financially responsible agency are the same.
- But sometimes they aren't.
- Most commonly, this involves a tribe with legal responsibility and a county with financial responsibility.




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### 6. Agency Responsibilities

#### When Two Agencies are Involved



- Whether two counties, or a tribe and a county, sometimes the legally and financially responsible agencies are different.
- When they are different, then they **must work together on** Northstar Care for Children.

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### 6. Agency Responsibilities

#### Exactly how they work together varies by subject:

1. Placement
2. Case of Record in SSIS
3. MAPCY Assessments and Reassessments in Northstar Foster Care
4. Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in Foster Care
5. Payments for Northstar Foster Care
6. Case Planning, Permanency, and Court
7. Kinship or Adoption Placement Agreement
8. Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Eligibility Determination
9. Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement
10. Payments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance
11. MAPCY Reassessments for Northstar Kinship or Adoption Assistance
12. Notice of MAPCY to Caregivers in NKA or NAA

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**6. Agency Responsibilities**

**MAPCY Assessments**



- 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.
- Exactly how that occurs varies.
- Suppose that a tribe is legally responsible and a county is financially responsible.
- The tribe might complete the assessment on paper, while the financially responsible county enters it into SSIS and subsequently approves it and provides the notice to the caregiver(s).

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**Northstar Care for Children**

1. Background
2. MAPCY Assessment and Benefits
3. Phase-in and Transitions
4. Eligibility Determination Overview
5. Eligibility Determination for NKA
6. Agency Responsibilities

**NEXT** → **7. Case Examples**

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**Case Examples**

**#1: Initial placement - Ariel**



- **Placement:** Ariel, age 14 was removed from her parents' home and was placed in the care of her aunt and uncle through a CHIPS petition.
- The county social service agency is the legally responsible agency.

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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Assessment:** During the first 30 days of placement the county social service case manager visited with Ariel's mother, father and relative foster parents to assess needs and develop the out-of-home placement plan.
- As part of the visit with the relative foster parents, the county case manager completed the MAPCY assessing the child's needs and the foster parent's care of the child.



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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Documentation:** The case manager used a blank paper copy of the MAPCY to review the assessment with the relative foster parents and entered the information into SSIS when he returned to the office.
- This included a written paragraph that explained his selection of high child's needs for Ariel and selections of extensive and exceptional parenting indicators.
- When finished, the case manager selected the score tab and the score screen appeared with the selected needs and parenting indicators as well as the resulting Northstar benefit level of Level G.



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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Approval:** The case manager selected the action of sending for approval to the agency designated MAPCY approver. In this case, the approver was the case manager's supervisor.
- (In a future release, SSIS will provide an alert for the approver that a MAPCY is ready for review.)
- The approver reviewed the score screen showing the summary of the MAPCY assessment.
- The approver reviewed the score screen showing the summary of the MAPCY assessment.



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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Approval continued:**
- The approver had two actions available:
  - 1) approve the MAPCY or
  - 2) send it back to the assessor as a draft.
- DHS MAPCY Training encourages the approver to ask the assessor questions about the MAPCY when the child's needs and the parenting indicators do not agree.
- In a case where a child with high needs is receiving basic care from the foster parent, in order to support placement stability the out-of-home placement plan would address services to meet the child's needs in the home.



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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Northstar Care benefit level:** The MAPCY assessment determined a MAPCY score of 52.
- That translates into a benefit level for a 14-year-old of Level G.
- Monthly payment:
  - Basic monthly payment for a child age 14 is \$790
  - Plus Level G supplemental difficulty of care is \$500
  - Equals a monthly payment of \$1290.



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### Case Examples

#### #1: Initial placement - Ariel

- **Notice to the caregiver:** When the MAPCY was approved, the first two pages of the rating report were printed and provided to the foster parent.
- The rating report is a summary of the individual assessment of the child's needs and the parenting provided.
- It includes information about reassessment and appeal procedures for the caregiver.



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### Case Examples

#### #2: Reassessment - Ariel

- **Reassessment:** Subsequent to Ariel's initial foster care placement, the case manager arranged professional assessments.
- These determined that she had high developmental and mental health needs.
- The caregivers knew this, because they were providing more intensive parenting.
- It was also determined that Ariel was eligible for PCA services to support the care in the foster home.
- Northstar Care requires a MAPCY reassessment at 6 months from the initial assessment (annually after that).
- However, the agency may do them more frequently.
- The agency and the foster parents agreed to complete the reassessment at 4 months of placement.



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### Case Examples

#### #2: Reassessment - Ariel

- **Extraordinary levels:** When this MAPCY reassessment was completed, Ariel's needs met the five initial tests for the Extraordinary Level request.
- One of the five initial tests is the agency's determination that without the parental care of this caregiver, her level of care would require a more restrictive placement setting.
- Ariel was also receiving services that she was eligible for through Medical Assistance and other programs.



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### Case Examples

#### #2: Reassessment - Ariel

- **Extraordinary levels continued:**
- It's crucial to provide the necessary services for a child with disabilities, medical or behavior conditions that support the child living with the family.
- The MAPCY extraordinary levels measure specific support gaps that cannot be met through MA Waiver or other programs, so that the caregiver needs to fill these gaps in order to prevent residential placement.
- This ultimately supports permanency.



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### Case Examples

**#2: Reassessment - Ariel**



- **Extraordinary levels continued:**
- In Ariel's assessment the agency identified a support gap related to PCA services.
- Because of Ariel's specific special needs, PCA providers were often very hard to find, and the caregiver was not able to find PCA to arrange the number of hours that were available to them.
- The agency approver approved the MAPCY reassessment.
- Because it included extraordinary levels, the Extraordinary Level request was then sent to DHS for review.
- DHS received the request, but it took a few days for DHS to review it.

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### Case Examples

**#2: Reassessment - Ariel**



- **Northstar Care benefit level:** The reassessment determined a MAPCY score of 69 and a **standard level** Northstar benefit level for Ariel of Level J (up from the original assessment at Level G).
- **Standard level monthly payment:**
  - Basic monthly rate for 14 year old is \$790
  - Plus Level J supplemental difficulty of care is \$800
  - Equals a standard level of \$1590.
- The **standard level** represents everything except for any Extraordinary Level increase.

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### Case Examples

**#2: Reassessment - Ariel**



- **Northstar Care FINAL benefit level:** After a team review, DHS approved 3 additional levels as part of the Extraordinary Level process.
- This increased Ariel's benefit level from Level J to Level M (J to K to L to M).
- **FINAL benefit level monthly payment:**
  - Basic monthly rate for 14 year old is \$790
  - Plus the Supplemental DOC for level M is \$1,100
  - Equals a monthly payment of \$1890.
- In this case, the reassessment resulted in a substantial increase from the original assessment of \$1290.

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### Case Examples

#### #2: Reassessment - Ariel

- **Notice to the caregiver:** When the MAPCY was approved, the rating report, including the extraordinary levels was printed and provided to the foster parents.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Placement:** Calibri was removed from her parental home.
- The case was transferred to tribal court.
- In this case, the tribal social service agency is the **legally responsible agency** and the county is the **financially responsible agency**.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Assessment:** During the first 30 days of placement the tribal social service case manager visited with Calibri's mother, father and relative foster parents to assess their needs and develop the case plan.
- This was all done according to the tribal agency's practice.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Assessment continued:**
- As part of the visit with the relative foster parents, the tribal case manager completed the MAPCY assessing the child's needs and what the foster parents were doing to meet those needs.
- Part of the assessment was that the relative foster parents needed before and after school child care for work for 25 hours a week.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Assessment continued:**
- When the tribal case manager was done with it, she provided the completed assessment to the financially responsible county agency.
- Upon receipt, the county entered it into SSIS.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Assessment continued:**
- This case manager was already on the county agency's list of authorized external assessors.
- The financially responsible county agency reviewed the legally responsible agency's documentation, entering the tribal case manager as the assessor.



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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Assessment continued:**
- The financially responsible agency then completed the approval process.
- In Calibri's case, the county approved the tribal case manager's assessment.
- It then provided notice to the caregiver, same as in Case Example #1 for Ariel.




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### Case Examples

#### #3: Two Agencies - Calibri

- **Northstar Care Benefit Level:**
- **Standard benefit level monthly payment:**
  - Basic monthly rate for a child age 10 is \$670
  - Plus Level E supplemental difficulty of care is \$300
  - Plus a Child Care Level Increase of 2 moves it up the level to G, which means a child care allowance of \$200
  - Equals a benefit level monthly payment of \$1170.




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### Case Examples

#### #4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell

- **Placement:** Rockwell is a 4 year old who was placed in the home of a non-relative foster home since he was removed from his parental home at age one.
- Since placement, the parental rights of the birthparents have been terminated.
- When the MAPCY assessment was completed, the Northstar benefit level was Level E, which included a 2 level increase for child care.




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**Case Examples**

**#4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell**

- **Northstar Care Benefit:**
- Foster care **Standard Benefit Level** monthly payment:
  - Basic monthly rate for a child age 4 is \$565
  - Plus Level C supplemental difficulty of care is \$100
  - Plus child care level increase of 2 moves the level to E (a \$200 child care allowance)
  - Equals a monthly payment of **\$865**.



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**Case Examples**

**#4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell**

- **Permanency:** The county agency and the non-relative foster parents signed an **Adoption Placement Agreement**.
- They are now negotiating an **Adoption Assistance Benefit Agreement** prior to the finalization of the adoption of Rockwell.



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**Case Examples**

**#4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell**

- **Existing MAPCY:** Since the most recent reassessment is just a few months old, a new MAPCY reassessment is not necessary.
- Instead, the county agency and prospective adoptive parents use the most recent reassessment of Level E.



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### Case Examples

#### #4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell

- **Pre-School Benefit:** Due to Rockwell being under the age of six at the time of his adoption, the alternative rate pre-school entry applies.
- This means that if Rockwell is eligible for a monthly Northstar Adoption Assistance payment (special needs and so forth), the Northstar Care benefit will be fifty percent of the foster care benefit amount.




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### Case Examples

#### #4: Pre-School Entry - Rockwell

- **Pre-School Benefit continued:**
- For Rockwell, the Northstar benefit level is E.
- The monthly foster care benefit is **\$865**, while the monthly Northstar Adoption Assistance payment is **\$433**.
- That's a reduction, but less of a reduction than would have occurred prior to Northstar Care.




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### Case Examples

#### #5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.

- **Placement:** T.N. Roman, age 9 was removed from his parental home and placed with his aunt and uncle.
- The county social service agency is the legally and financially responsible agency for the placement.
- The county case manager made monthly home visits in the relative foster parents' home.
- Then followed up with the county foster care licensing staff, to check on the progress of their foster care license.
- The relative foster parent's license was effective within 90 days of placement.




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### Case Examples

#### #5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.

- **Assessment:** The MAPCY assessment had a score of 39, which for a 9-year-old translates into a benefit level of E.
- **Northstar Care benefit level:**
- **Standard level monthly payment:**
  - Basic monthly rate for a child age 7 is \$670
  - Plus the supplemental DOC for level E is \$300
  - Equals a monthly payment is \$970.



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### Case Examples

#### #5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.

- **Permanency:** At the six-month review hearing, T.N. Roman's parents agreed to a permanent transfer of physical and legal custody to his aunt and uncle, who were the foster parents.
- The agency talked with the parents and the relative foster parents about adoption.
- The relatives said they saw a transfer of permanent legal and physical custody as in N.T. Roman's best interest, and subsequently the agency agreed and ruled out adoption.



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### Case Examples

#### #5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.

- **Kinship Placement Agreement:** A **Kinship Placement Agreement** was signed, transforming the foster care placement into a kinship placement analogous to an adoptive placement.



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### Case Examples

**#5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.**

- **Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement:** The county social service agency negotiated a **Northstar Kinship Assistance Benefit Agreement** with the relative foster parents.
- The court deferred the finalization of the permanent legal and physical transfer for 3 months to determine eligibility of Northstar Kinship Assistance and execute the Benefit Agreement.
- T.N. was determined by DHS to be eligible and the Benefit Agreement was signed prior to finalization.



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### Case Examples

**#5: Transfer of Custody - T.N.**

- **Northstar Care benefit level:** The Northstar benefit level remains Level E.
- The monthly Northstar Kinship Assistance of \$970, the same as under foster care.



Wow! This haircut is taking a really long time!

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## Northstar★ Care for Children

Images from Wikipedia, Wikimedia, and public sources

Is Northstar Care as good as ice cream?



Well, Northstar Care is very good, but probably not as good as ice cream.

Northstar★ Care for Children

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