

**Level of Care Workgroup
Meeting Minutes
December 16, 2013
1:30-4:30**

Present:

Workgroup Members: Jodie Allen, Jenna Davenport, Susan Henrie, Jackie Meyer, Ronda Newman, Barb Nissen, Katie McLeese Stephenson, Ryan Suhr

Anna Eickholt, Legislative Aid for Senator Dubas

Unable to attend:

Michele Anderson, Karen Knapp, Lana Temple-Plotz

The group reviewed the three aspects that will comprise the foster care rate:

- 1) Basic compensation for foster parents from the USDA rates (essential parenting level)
- 2) Additional compensation for foster parents based on their assessed caregiver responsibilities for a youth (enhanced and intensive parenting level)
- 3) Support payment to the Foster Care agency to compensate for the recruiting, training and support of foster families that are serving youth in their homes.

The focus of our work group is in the second component of the rate related to the level of care and the foster parents assessed responsibilities. We discussed that our next steps are:

- 1) Determine if the work group recommends that the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility (NCR) have weighting assigned to of the eight domains and how that would work.
- 2) Provide an initial DRAFT recommendation regarding the rates for the essential, enhanced and intensive parenting by age level

The workgroup discussed the methodology used by the state of Vermont and by the Nebraska Family Collaborative (NFC) with regard to weighting. Vermont uses a combination of weighting of LOC 3- Supervision/Structure/Behavioral & Emotional in conjunction with the overall score to determine the rates paid to their foster homes. As delineated on pg. 29 in the Ne Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee Level of Care Assessment Subcommittee Final Report from November 2012 the Vermont rates include:

Rating on LOC 3	Total Score on NCR	Daily Rate
2	< 16	\$30
2	> 16	\$36.66
3	< 19	\$36.66
3	19-21	\$43.32
3	> 22	\$50

The scoring on the NCR tool can range from 8-24 with a 1, 2 or 3 rating for each of the eight domains. The domains include:

- LOC 1: Medical/Physical Health & Well-Being
- LOC 2: Family Relationships/Cultural Identity
- LOC 3: Supervision/Structure/Behavioral & Emotional
- LOC 4: Education/Cognitive Development
- LOC 5: Socialization/Age-Appropriate Expectations
- LOC 6: Support/Nurturance/Well-Being
- LOC 7: Placement Stability
- LOC 8: Transition to Permanency and/or Independent Living

NFC is currently weighting LOC 1, 3 and 6. We discussed the methodology that they use in their weighting which is reflected in the chart below:

	Score 1-8	Score 9-17	Score 18-23	Score 24
Minimum	3 for weighted	3 for weighted		
Moderate		4-5 for weighted	4-5 for weighted	
Intensive		6-9 for weighted	6-9 for weighted	9 for weighted

The work group had extensive discussion regarding each of the eight domains and determined and our recommendations include:

- 1) That the language used in the examples in the tool needs to be reviewed and edited. For example the tool in LOC 1 sites a foster parent providing physical therapy. The group discussed that unless you are a licensed Physical Therapist that this is outside of a foster parent's scope of practice and expertise.
- 2) That the tool needs to be weighted. While all eight areas are important, it was agreed that there are a few that are even more important and should be weighted to reflect this.
- 3) After extensive discussion the group recommends that the NCR is weighted in the following areas:
 LOC 1: Medical/Physical Health & Well-Being
 LOC 3: Supervision/Structure/Behavioral & Emotional
 LOC 7: Placement Stability
- 4) There was general agreement with the method of weighting used by the NFC, but there will need to be further discussion used following the sampling process.

It was agreed that in preparation for the next work group meeting that the agencies present would have the NCR completed by their staff for a sampling of youth. We agreed to nine or more with the sample being comprised of youth in all three age groups and all three levels of FC Pay reimbursement. The agencies will also compare this sampling to the current FC Pay level and bring that to the next meeting. Jodie Allen offered to provide the FC Pay score for the youth if anyone needed that.

The group then discussed the financial compensation that should be considered for the various levels of care. The group developed a draft for review and discussion that will likely need further refinement. It

was decided that since the USDA rates account for the differences in raising a child by age group that the Level of Care aspect of the rate would not, since it is based on the Foster Parent's responsibilities.

The proposed draft rates are:

AGE	ESSENTIAL PARENTING	ENHANCED PARENTING	INTENSIVE PARENTING
0-5	\$20	\$27.50	\$35
6-11	\$23	\$30.50	\$38
12-18	\$25	\$32.50	\$40

The group discussed how these rates cannot be considered in isolation and that while this proposal includes both the basic rates based on the USDA and the level of care rate added as appropriate, this also needs to be considered with the support payment to the agency to cover the costs of recruiting, training, licensing and supporting the foster youth and the placements.

Additional discussions included:

- Differences in how respite care is incorporated and compensated for by agencies and a desire for there to be more consistency in these practices
- Need to consider the impact of both rural issues and drive time and mileage and how that is addressed

Next Steps for the Work Group:

- Agency Supported Foster Care Providers represented by the work group will bring a sampling completed NCR's by age range and intensity and the comparison to FC Pay for the next meeting
- Further discussion regarding the weighting process
- The group will further discuss the proposed rates
- The group needs to have further discussion regarding the pre-assessment process and proposed rate
- A plan for making edits to the NCR examples needs to be determined

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for January 7th from 10:00-12:00. Katie will work on the location and get back to the group.