



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

January 11, 2021

Reminders:

- For monthly housing assistance, obtain monthly vendor bill: rental billings must be received 21 days prior to due date; utility bills must be presented upon receipt.
- Housing assistance beyond the initial six month benefit period for the same individual during the same incident requires further approval.
- Before referring for Housing Assistance, assess the family's income, housing expenses, and ability to be self-sufficient after the assistance ends.
- Avoid promising Housing Assistance to a family before eligibility is confirmed.
- Forward all requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time needed to process the request.

To review the full policy regarding Housing Assistance, go to DCS Policy Manual, *Chapter 3: Section 7.3, Housing Services*

Housing Assistance Program

Description of Service

Housing assistance is intended to help achieve permanency for children when the lack of adequate housing is a significant barrier to family preservation, family reunification or achievement of the permanency plan for at least one child in an open DCS case. Assistance is provided in the form of vendor payments.

The amount of financial assistance may not exceed \$1,800.00 in a six-month period, per household, per case incident*, and may only be used for:

- Rent/rent arrears
- Utilities (installation and payments)/utility arrears
- Deposits (rental or utility).

Client Eligibility

To qualify for housing assistance, the Family Functioning Assessment must demonstrate that the lack of adequate housing is a significant barrier to family preservation, family reunification, or permanency for the child.

Other eligibility criteria are:

- at least one child in the household is a participant in an open DCS case;
- the applicant must be a U.S. citizen or otherwise lawfully present in the U.S.;
- total family income is insufficient to cover housing expenses;
- other sources of housing assistance have been explored, exhausted, or unavailable; and
- the recipient of assistance agrees to participate in a plan towards the goal of maintaining housing after the benefit period ends to ensure economic self-sufficiency.

Housing assistance may be provided to more than one household during one case incident if all eligibility criteria are met for each household. For example housing assistance may be provided to:

- a biological parent upon reunification (initial request), and subsequently provided to a kinship caregiver (second request) if the child re-enters care and the permanency plan becomes adoption or guardianship by the kinship caregiver;
- two (2) separate households during one case open incident if children in the family reside or are placed in different households.

How to Request Housing Assistance

The DCS Specialist:

- obtains necessary information from the parent/caregiver, utility bill or vendor information including a W-9, vendor name; address; federal employer identification or social security number; type of service; amount; and date payment is due;
- completes the [Housing Assistance Referral form \(CSO-1098A\)](#) in its entirety, including dates of case notes;
- signs the Housing Assistance Referral form indicating the information has been verified;
- forwards this information to the DCS Supervisor for review and approval.

The DCS Supervisor and Program Manager reviews and, upon approval, the Program Manager sends the Housing Assistance Referral, W-9, and statement of outstanding expenses to the regional contact and DCS Specialist. The regional contact reviews the packet for completeness, completes the service authorization, and forwards to Centralize Invoicing.

Additional Requests:

A second request for additional housing assistance after the initial six-month authorization for the same household during the same case incident, must be forwarded and approved by the Program Administrator who reviews and forwards any housing assistance request requiring approval from the Deputy Director of Field Operations.

A case incident is defined as a family's case being opened from investigation to case closure. A new investigation after a case is closed constitutes a new incident.