

December 23, 2019

Dear County and Tribal Social Service Director:

The federal Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018 requires new safety requirements in congregate care, commonly known as children's group residential facilities. The law requires that all adults working in congregate care settings (residential treatment centers, group homes, shelters, etc.) complete enhanced background checks, which include fingerprint-based criminal records checks of national crime information databases and child abuse registry checks.

Minnesota was able to enact the enhanced FFPSA background studies requirement on July 1, 2019. Every employee working in a facility must have a completed enhanced background study in order for a county or tribe to receive federal Title IV-E reimbursement for children placed in that facility. This federal law has resulted in a number of barriers to state compliance. Therefore, in an effort to encourage expedited compliance for facilities, keep children safe, and to support county and tribal reimbursements, the department will reimburse Title IV-E children's group residential facility providers for the costs of the enhanced background studies.

In order to qualify for the reimbursement, facilities have until Feb. 15, 2020, to complete the enhanced background studies, including the fingerprint portion, for all staff working in the facilities. Facilities will have to provide documentation for the completed studies for all staff working from July 1, 2019, to Feb. 15, 2020. Communication announcing the new background studies reimbursement opportunity was sent to all Title IV-E children's group residential facilities on Dec. 23, 2019.

Again, these efforts are being implemented to support the new FFPSA safety measures for children residing in congregate care settings, and to help counties and tribes realize maximum Title IV-E claiming and reimbursements.

We are committed to working with you to encourage providers to come into compliance with the background study requirements as soon as possible. We will continue to convene meetings with counties, tribes and providers to discuss long-term options to support Title IV-E claiming for these foster care placements.

Sincerely,



Jodi Harpstead
Commissioner