

DCFS Pilot Program Elderly/Frail Child Caregivers



Barbara Flynn Currie
Majority Leader

Illinois House of Representatives
94th General Assembly

April 2006

DCFS Pilot Program Elderly/Frail Child Caregivers

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, is entered into this 7th day of April, 2006, by and between the State of Illinois, acting through the Department of Children and Family Services, hereunder referred to as the “Department” and State Representative Barbara Flynn Currie, Majority Leader of the Illinois House of Representatives.

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois has the duty to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Family Services is the lead state agency for ensuring the protection of abused and neglected children and providing services for children requiring substitute care when separated from their natural parents; and

WHEREAS, the Department is responsible for providing social work, legal services, and permanency planning for children requiring substitute care that results in guardianship and adoption; and

WHEREAS, permanency planning for children in substitute care includes placement with grandparents or other relatives who may be elderly or frail and whose status may change due to advanced age, disability, or death which may require successor placements for the children in their care; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of grandparents and other relatives age 60 and older are adopting or becoming the subsidized guardians of children placed in their care by the Department; and

WHEREAS, elderly and frail caregivers, and the children in their care, would benefit significantly by the provision of information, social work, and legal services to ensure a safe and secure successor placement of the children in the event of the disability or death of their caregivers.

The Department agrees:

To allocate approximately \$100,000 for a pilot program of services that will include the provision of necessary social work and legal services to be provided to selected older and ill caregivers, and the families of recently deceased caregivers, including those who will or have adopted or will or have taken guardianship of children previously in Department custody.

The Department agrees to select a provider for this service by June 15, 2006, and to create an advisory committee to oversee this pilot.

Social work services to selected caregivers shall have the goal of securing a future care and custody plan for children in their care, including the provision of information to the caregivers and families about standby guardianship, guardianship, standby adoption, and adoption. The services will assist the caregiver in developing a plan for the child if the caregiver should become incapacitated or terminally ill, or should die while the child is a minor. The contract shall include the development of a process and any necessary forms to document the information given to caregivers and to document plans for future custody. This process will include the provision of information and forms to assist the family in the event of incapacity or death of the elderly caregiver in each child's case file and adoption or guardianship subsidy files as applicable to the child.

The Department shall also include in the agreement with an appropriate provider the provision of legal services to assist selected older and ill caregivers, and the families of deceased caregivers, with the goal of securing future care and custody plans for children in their care. Future care and custody plans may include: standby guardianship, successor guardianship, standby adoption, and successor adoption.

As a pilot effort, the services provided under the contract will also include an assessment of State policies and procedure under which the social work and legal services may continue to be provided in a timely and cost-effective manner to older and ill caregivers, and to families of deceased caregivers in order to ensure permanency for children in their care and improve gaps in service that may now exist.

The report may also include recommendations regarding 1) a protocol for identification of elderly and frail caregivers who may be in need of future care and custody planning services; 2) methods of outreach to elderly and frail caregivers; 3) training for Department and private agency staff on methods of assisting older and ill caregivers to make future care and custody plans for children in their care; and 4) a protocol for ensuring that older and ill adoptive parents document designation of a future caregiver, and the acceptance of responsibility by a future caregiver, a copy of which would be included in each child's case file and adoption or guardianship subsidy file as applicable to the child.

The contract must require an interim report by January 1, 2007, on the results of the services provided and any legislative impacts, together with recommendations regarding necessary changes in policies, procedures, rules, and resources that will enable the State to meet its responsibilities and a final report April 15, 2007. Services provided under the contract will be limited by the availability of funding, and the availability of the social work and legal services to meet the needs of older caregivers that may be available to achieve the goals of this agreement. The provider of these services has the authority to designate the geographic area of the pilot project.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois House of Representatives caused this Memorandum of Understanding to be executed by their authorized representatives on this 7th day of April, 2006.

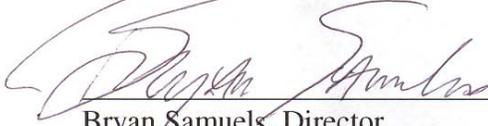
For the Illinois House of Representatives



Date 4/7/06

State Representative
Barbara Flynn Currie, Majority Leader
Illinois House of Representatives

For the Department of Children and Family Services



Date 4-7-06

Bryan Samuels, Director
Department of Children and Family Services