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# RELATIVE AND OTHER DESIGNATED CAREGIVER (RODC) PROGRAM

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## A. What is the Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program?

The Relative and Other Designated Caregiver Program (RODC) supports continuity and stability for children in the conservatorship of DFPS by providing financial assistance to eligible kinship caregivers. Under the RODC, DFPS may enter into Caregiver Assistance Agreements (CAA) with a relative or other designated caregiver who has not been verified as a foster parent or otherwise licensed to provide 24-hour residential childcare to provide monetary assistance for caring for children in the Temporary Managing Conservatorship of the Department.

## B. Who Qualifies?

Caregivers are eligible for the RODC payment if:

- The child they are caring for is currently in TMC of the Department;
- They have an approved home assessment;
- They are not already verified as foster parents or as a group home and receiving foster care maintenance payments;
- They sign and abide by a Caregiver Assistance Agreement; and
- The total household income does not exceed 300% of the federal poverty limit.

## C. How Much is the Monthly Payment?

The RODC Payment is currently set at \$11.55 per day, per child; this is approximately \$346.50 per month, per child.

## D. How Long Can the Caregiver Receive Payments?

The monthly reimbursement payments are available for up to 12 months after placement of the child in the caregiver's home with a one-time, six-month extension for good cause.

## E. Examples of Circumstances that Justify Good Cause for Payments to Go Beyond 12 Months

- Attempting to find a previously absent parent of the child;
- Awaiting the expiration of the timeline for an appeal of an order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship;

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- Allowing additional time for a kin caregiver to complete the approval process for verification or adoption of the child;
  - Waiting for approval of a child's placement from another state;
  - A delayed determination of the child's Indian Child status, or when awaiting the approval of the Indian Child's Tribe; or
  - Any other circumstance involving the child or caregiver that DFPS deems as justification for an extension.

## **F. What if the Child Moves?**

The payments follow the child, but the duration of the payment stays the same. For example, if a child lives with an eligible grandmother for 4 months and then moves to an eligible aunt's home for 8 months, the 12-month payment period does not restart for the aunt.

## **G. How is the RODC Payment Dispersed?**

The payment is paid monthly similar to foster care payments, but because it is considered a reimbursement, it is paid in arrears. In other words, the payments are determined by the number of days the child was with the kinship caregiver the previous month. Payments are processed for care days in the prior month on or about the 15th of each month and disbursed at the end of that month for care days in the prior month.

## **H. Should Relatives Still Apply for TANF before Receiving the RODC Payment?**

Grandparents are no longer required to apply for and be denied the TANF Grandparent Grant (a one-time payment of \$1,000 per sibling group) before qualifying for the RODC Payment. Grandparents should still apply for the Grandparent Grant and may receive it in addition to the RODC payment.

## **I. What if a Caregiver Receives PMC of the Child?**

If a caregiver receives PMC of a child, the caregiver can request the \$500 annual reimbursement per child for child-related costs. DFPS can reimburse caregivers in this amount for up to three years or until the child turns 18, whichever comes first.

## **J. What Can Judges Do to Support RODC Payments?**

- Be familiar with the eligibility criteria;
- Know that DFPS can only make the payment based on a reimbursement process; and
- Understand that if courts make orders regarding different dates of payments, this may delay the payment process for other relative caregivers, since every region is processing a large number of relative caregiver payments every month according to a set schedule.

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## K. DFPS Must Keep Track

DFPS is required to publish an annual report on the funds disbursed, permanency outcomes for the children who are placed with relatives, and the length of time between the beginning of RODC and the award of PMC to the caregiver. [Tex. Fam. Code § 264.762](#).