

# Legally and Financially Responsible Agency Roles under Northstar Care for Children

Under Northstar Care for Children, one agency will usually be both legally and financially responsible for a child in placement, though there may be different staff or units within that agency handling legal and financial aspects. This document addresses cases involving more than one agency, where the legally responsible and financially responsible agencies differ. Although this can involve two counties, more often this involves a tribe with legal responsibility and a county agency with financial responsibility.

## Overview

Subject	Legally Responsible Agency	Financially Responsible Agency
Definition	<p>The legally responsible agency is responsible for a child's placement, care and supervision. Legal responsibility may be through a court order, voluntary placement agreement or voluntary relinquishment. This may be to a local county social service agency, American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribe, or Minnesota tribe that assumes initial court jurisdiction, or when a case transfers from state court to tribal court and legal responsibility is transferred from a county agency to a tribal agency.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency is responsible for paying the local share of Northstar Foster Care, Northstar Kinship Assistance and Northstar Adoption Assistance. The financially responsible agency is usually a county, but it can also be American Indian Child Welfare Initiative tribes.</p> <p>Under Northstar Care for Children, the agency that is financially responsible at the time of foster care placement continues to be responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency.</p>
Case of record in Social Services Information System (SSIS)	<p>The legally responsible agency may use SSIS for its work, if it has access to it. However, the financially responsible agency maintains the case of record. Therefore, if the agencies are different, the legally responsible agency needs to send appropriate information to the financially responsible agency.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency enters a child's placement and permanency planning information into SSIS and maintains the case of record.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency gets this information from the legally responsible agency.</p>

**(Overview continued)**

Placement, case planning and permanency	The legally responsible agency is responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Making placement decisions</li><li>■ Case planning</li><li>■ Permanency planning (e.g., reunification, adoption, and transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative)</li><li>■ Ensuring local practice is consistent with federal law and applicable state law or tribal code</li><li>■ Providing information to the financially responsible agency for entering into SSIS.</li></ul>	The financially responsible agency is not responsible for making placement decisions, case planning or permanency planning.
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## Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY)

Subject	Legally Responsible Agency	Financially Responsible Agency
Completing and approving a MAPCY	The legally responsible agency is generally responsible for completing the MAPCY in consultation with the caregiver(s) and youth, if appropriate.	The financially responsible agency gives final approval for MAPCYs and should consult with the legally responsible agency in its approval. If a legally responsible agency is unable to complete a MAPCY, the financially responsible agency is responsible for completing and approving the MAPCY in consultation with and input from the legally responsible agency, caregiver(s), and youth, if appropriate.
Caregiver requests for MAPCY after permanency	Once permanency is established, the legally responsible agency is no longer legally responsible for a child. Any requests for reassessments made to this agency should be forwarded to the Minnesota Department of Human Services (department), which will initiate a post-permanency reassessment process.	Post-permanency reassessments must be completed and approved by the financially responsible agency.
Notice of completed MAPCY to caregivers	The legally responsible agency is not responsible.	The financially responsible agency provides written notice to the caregiver about a completed MAPCY. This notice must be sent within 15 days of an approved MAPCY and include a summary of the MAPCY, a statement of rating and benefit level, and how to appeal.

## Payments

Subject	Legally Responsible Agency	Financially Responsible Agency
<p>Payments for Northstar Foster Care</p>	<p>The legally responsible agency is generally not responsible for issuing payments.</p> <p>When a legally responsible agency issues payment to a foster parent (or to a child-placing agency, which then issues payment to a foster parent), the financially responsible agency reimburses the legally responsible agency.</p> <p>Any payments made by the legally responsible agency are not included in Title IV-E or the Northstar Care fiscal reconciliation process. All reimbursements are through the financially responsible agency.</p> <p>Agencies issuing payments to foster parents must allow them access to the agency's records of payment transactions.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency is generally responsible for issuing payments. Financially responsible agencies may issue payments directly to foster parents or may work with child-placing agencies, which would then issue payments to foster parents. If the legally responsible agency is involved, the financially responsible agency reimburses the legally responsible agency.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency's payments are always included in Title IV-E and the Northstar Care fiscal reconciliation process. The financially responsible agency receives any federal Title IV-E and/or Northstar Care state share of revenue from the department.</p> <p>If reimbursing the legally responsible agency, the amount includes the Title IV-E portion and state share. A child must be the client, although the legally responsible agency or child-placing agency may be the payee.</p> <p>Agencies issuing payments to foster parents must allow them access to the agency's records of payment transactions.</p>
<p>Payments for Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance</p>	<p>The legally responsible agency has no direct responsibility for these payments.</p>	<p>The department issues payments for Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency at the time of foster care placement continues to be financially responsible for the local share of any maintenance payments after permanency through the fiscal reconciliation process.</p>

## Permanency

Subject	Legally Responsible Agency	Financially Responsible Agency
<p>Making adoptive and kinship placements</p>	<p>The legally responsible agency has exclusive authority to make preadoptive and pre-kinship placements and is responsible for completing the Adoption Placement Agreement (APA) and Kinship Placement Agreement (KPA).</p> <p>For children whose permanency goal is transfer of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative, the legally responsible agency must make a determination that reunification and adoption are not appropriate permanency options.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency is not responsible for making adoptive and kinship placements.</p>
<p>Completing eligibility determinations for Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance</p>	<p>The legally responsible agency provides the financially responsible agency with information necessary to complete an eligibility determination.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency completes an eligibility determination and sends it for review and final approval by the department.</p>
<p>Executing benefit agreements for Northstar Adoption Assistance and Northstar Kinship Assistance</p>	<p>The legally responsible agency works with caregivers and the financially responsible agency to sign a benefit agreement prior to the juvenile or tribal court finalizing an adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.</p>	<p>The financially responsible agency completes negotiation of a benefit agreement with the caregiver(s) and works with the legally responsible agency to ensure a benefit agreement is signed prior to final court action.</p> <p>The financially responsible agency verifies that a benefit agreement has been signed by the caregiver(s), the legally and financially responsible agencies, and the department prior to the juvenile or tribal court finalizing an adoption or transfer of permanent legal and physical custody.</p>