



STATE OF VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES,
AGING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

**DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND
AGING SERVICES**

FLEXIBLE FAMILY FUNDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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STATE OF VERMONT
DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND AGING SERVICES

FLEXIBLE FAMILY FUNDING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Flexible Family Funding Program (FFF) reflects an acknowledgement that families, as caregivers, offer the most natural and nurturing home for children and many adults with disabilities. Care and support provided by families are of benefit to the individual, as well as to the service system. By avoiding the need for more intensive and costly out-of-home services, Flexible Family Funding has assisted families to continue to support people with developmental disabilities at home.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Flexible Family Funding Program is to offer support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to enhance their ability to live together. These funds are used at the discretion of the family for services and supports that benefit the individual and family. For adults, it is important that the individual have a voice in the use of the FFF allocation. Examples of acceptable uses of FFF include family respite, assistive technology, individual and household needs (e.g., clothing, heating oil, rent, etc.), and recreational services. These funds can be used for any legal good or activity that the family and individual choose.

ELIGIBILITY

Developmental Disabilities Services Eligibility Determination:

The designated agency is responsible for determining eligibility for Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS). An individual must be eligible for Developmental Disabilities Services to be considered for FFF.¹ The staff member who coordinates the FFF program at the designated agency meets with the family and together with the applicant fills in the information required on the Flexible Family Funding Data Sheet (see Attachment A) and DDS application, if requesting additional services/supports (see exclusions). The original, completed FFF datasheet must be retained by the agency.²

If the individual is determined not to have a developmental disability, the family/individual must be informed of the Developmental Disabilities Services appeals procedure. This must be done in writing, as well as by a method the family/individual understands, if different than in writing.

Criteria:

To receive Flexible Family Funding, a recipient must be:

- ✓ A person with a developmental disability who lives with his/her family. For the purposes of the FFF program, family members are defined as unpaid biological, adoptive and/or step-parents, adult siblings, grandparents, aunts/uncles, nieces/nephews and legal guardians. **OR**
- ✓ A family member who lives with and supports a person with a developmental disability.

¹ Eligibility is determined according to the standards set in the *Regulations Implementing the DD Act of 1996*.

² Records must be kept as required by Medicaid

Exclusions:

- ✓ Individuals receiving home and community-based waiver supports are not candidates for the Flexible Family Funding program.
- ✓ Individuals who are receiving FFF and then move to Medicaid waiver services are no longer eligible for FFF. Anyone who received both waiver and FFF services prior to FY 08 will no longer be able to do so as of July 1, 2008.
- ✓ Individuals living independently, or with their spouse, are not candidates for the Flexible Family Funding Program.

RECORD KEEPING

At the time of enrollment into the program, the Division of Disability and Aging Services requires a Flexible Family Funding Data Sheet be maintained at the agency. A family shall not receive a FFF allocation prior to the completion of the required data sheet. It is important that the information contained on the data sheet be as accurate as possible and is *updated* as necessary, but at least annually. Items requiring further explanation are noted below:

- ✓ **Description of Disability and/or Diagnosis**—Description of disability applies to young children under first grade; a diagnosis is required for children in first grade and older and adults.
- ✓ **Gross Annual Household Income**—This includes parental or guardian income, child support payments, and SSI of minor children. For individuals over 18, count only the income of the adult with developmental disabilities. Income for individuals 18 and over includes public monetary benefits (e.g., SSI, Social Security, etc.) and any earned income. “Gross income” means total earnings prior to any deductions or taxes. Income is subject to verification.

- ✓ **Number in Family**—Count household members claimed as a dependent by parents or guardian. If the person with developmental disabilities is over 18, the number in the family is one (1). If more than one minor child is eligible, the household income for the family is counted in total, not divided by the number of children.
- ✓ **Level of Support Authorized**³—Determined by the designated agency, based on the FFF Sliding Scale (see Attachment B) and funding available. For families with more than one family member with a disability, the scale amount is given for each child.
- ✓ **Enhanced Flexible Family Funding (EFFF)**—The only EFFF at this time are those who have been grandfathered as of August 1, 2002. EFFF cannot exceed \$3000, and any enhanced dollars must be used for respite. No duplications between home and community based waiver funding and enhanced FFF will be allowed.
- ✓ **Resource Availability**—The designated agency must determine whether the level of FFF authorized is within its budget appropriation. If some resources are present but insufficient to meet the total need, the designated agency may prorate the authorized allocation until resources are available to meet the full allocation. If no resources are available, the family/individual must be placed on the waiting list until resources become available.

Regardless of resource availability, a FFF Data Sheet must be completed for each family requesting service, including those applicants whose income exceeds the sliding scale. This data sheet shall be maintained at the designated agency. This will result in accurate FFF waiting lists if sufficient resources are not available to serve every person requesting Flexible Family Funding or if people do not meet current eligibility for the program.

³ It is the responsibility of the Designated Agency to inform the family about the potential tax implications of this funding for workers. It is the responsibility of the family to share information regarding the tax implications of such wages with the worker. If FFF or EFFF is used to pay respite workers, the family must adhere to the State minimum wage rate for hourly respite services.

At times, the availability of one-time funding enables families/individuals on the waiting list to receive temporary FFF. If this is the case, the family/individual remains on the waiting list until permanent funding is received.

- ✓ **Signatures**—The applicant must co-sign with the designated agency's FFF coordinator.

AGENCY REPORTING

The designated agency is required to maintain and/or submit the following reports according to the frequency outlined below:

- ✓ **Flexible Family Funding Data Sheet**—this is required for the original allocation of Flexible Family Funding. The Division's FFF liaison will forward a compilation to the designated agency's staff to update and return on an annual basis.
- ✓ **Financial/Service Utilization Report**—this is required quarterly within thirty (30) days of the end of the quarter. The report must detail the individuals served by name, date of birth, social security number, amount paid to each family broken out by category (respite or goods), and a total administrative charge.
- ✓ **Families/Individuals Receiving One-Time Funded FFF**—Individuals receiving FFF through one-time funding should be so noted in the one time funding column on the spreadsheet forwarded to the Division.

AGENCY ALLOCATION

- ✓ **Annual Allocation**—The Division allocates FFF appropriations annually based on previous year usage and numbers of individuals on waiting lists.
- ✓ **Administrative Charge**—The administrative charge must be calculated using the designated agency's Department-approved administrative rate and is subtracted out of the total allocation, not taken from each individual.

DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND AGING SERVICES
FLEXIBLE FAMILY FUNDING DATA SHEET

Individual's Name: _____ Soc. Security #: _____

Sex: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Telephone: _____

Parents/Guardians: _____

Address: _____

Description of Disability/Diagnosis: _____

Statement of Family Situation (Required Only for Continued Approval of EFFF):

Would you like information regarding family &/or peer support organizations? Y N

Would you like to be put in contact with other families in the area? Y N

Children's Personal Care Services: Y N Other services? If yes, please list: Y N

Gross Annual Household Income: \$ _____ Number in Family: _____

We, the undersigned, certify that the above information is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Parent/ Guardian FFF Coordinator Date

FOR DESIGNATED AGENCY USE ONLY

Amount of FFF Authorized: \$ _____

Resource Availability: Allocated One-time Funding/Wait List Wait List

DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND AGING SERVICES
FLEXIBLE FAMILY FUNDING SLIDING SCALE

FAMILY SIZE/GROSS ANNUAL INCOME/MAX. DOLLAR AMOUNT								
% of Maximum Allotment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
100	<25,000	<30,000	<35,000	<40,000	<45,000	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000
	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300
90	<30,000	<35,000	<40,000	<45,000	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000	<65,000
	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170	\$1,170
80	<35,000	<40,000	<45,000	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000	<65,000	<70,000
	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040	\$1040
70	<40,000	<45,000	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000	<65,000	<70,000	<75,000
	\$910	\$910	\$910	\$910	\$910	\$910	\$910	\$910
60	<45,000	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000	<65,000	<70,000	<75,000	\$80,000
	\$780	\$780	\$780	\$780	\$780	\$780	\$780	\$780
50	<50,000	<55,000	<60,000	<65,000	<70,000	<75,000	<80,000	<85,000
	\$650	\$650	\$650	\$650	\$650	\$650	\$650	\$650
0	>50,000	>55,000	>60,000	>65,000	>70,000	>75,000	>80,000	>85,000
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: For children under age 18, income is defined as gross household income including earned income, child support payments and SSI of minor children. Individuals 18 and over should be considered as a single household, regardless of residency with family. Income for individuals 18 and over includes public monetary benefits (e.g., SSI, Social Security, etc.) and any earned income. Income is subject to verification.