



John B. Mattingly
Commissioner

July 7, 2011

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To Whom It May Concern:

Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is announcing the start of a new Supplemental Security Income (SSI) / Title II Identification and Enrollment program. This program will allow us to maintain compliance with Social Security Administration (SSA) rules and regulations while improving the future of many of our foster children. Ensuring that eligible children are enrolled on disability benefits is in their best interest because these benefits can provide economic security and on-going eligibility for services after the children are no longer in the City's custody. While in the legal custody of ACS, Social Security benefits assist ACS in offsetting the cost of foster care for those youth who qualify. This revenue will be used to mitigate service reductions.

SSI provides payments to individuals (including children under age 18) who are disabled and have limited income and resources. Whereas Title II provides payments to individuals, including foster children, who have a deceased, disabled or retired parent/grandparent, if the adult was insured for benefits at the time of application. In a June 2010 Office of the Inspector General Evaluation Report, SSA reports State and Local Government agencies -- such as ACS - have traditionally been among its most dependable representative payees. SSA has determined that the state and local government agencies - appointed as legal guardian for a child by the court - has a much higher standing on SSA's representative payee preference list than anyone having a custodial relationship. Accordingly, ACS will be filing to become representative payee for any child receiving SSI or Title II benefits for which we have legal custody.

ACS has contracted with Public Consulting Group (PCG) to implement this program on behalf of the children for whom ACS has legal custody. PCG provides expert consultation and implementation of Foster Care SSI / Title II Identification and Enrollment programs for similar agencies nationwide.

The SSI / Title II Identification and Enrollment project has a two step process. Initially PCG will identify ACS dependent foster children who are already receiving Social Security benefits that ACS is unaware of and apply for ACS to become the representative payee for these benefits, when appropriate.

To that end, ACS has completed a data match to the SSA State Data Exchange (SDX) of those children that have a verified SSN (approximately 60% of the foster care population) to determine which children are already receiving Social Security benefits.

This match resulted in approximately three hundred children in foster care identified as receiving SSI benefits for which ACS is not the payee. This was only 3% of all children in the custody of ACS.

The second step of the SSI / Title II Identification and Enrollment program consists of evaluating all ACS dependent foster children for initial eligibility for SSI / Title II benefits, if they are not already receiving Social Security benefits. To determine eligibility PCG analysts will be evaluating financial and medical data for each foster youth by reviewing ACS case management systems, reviewing hard copy case files and talking to case planners and managers to gather all pertinent data needed to apply for Social Security benefits. We will need your assistance in making our children eligible for these benefits.

ACS intends to file applications with SSA to become the representative payee for all children in our legal custody that are receiving or can be eligible to receive SSI / Title II benefits. We look forward to working with you in the implementation of this important program. **If you are currently a representative payee for Social Security benefits for a foster child that is in the custody of ACS, please contact ACS immediately at 212-676-8858.**

Please consider this letter a release for information and authorization to cooperate with, and assist, Public Consulting Group to assure that the children have every opportunity to access SSI / Title II benefits. If you have cases you believe are receiving SSI / Title II benefits or may be eligible for SSI / Title II benefits, please bring them to the attention of Public Consulting Group. PCG can be contacted at 1-877-908-1741. Referrals can be made over the phone or online at www.ssireferrals.com.

We thank you in advance for your help. Should you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Polumsky at 1-877-908-1741 ext. 2682 or Assistant Commissioner, Jose Mercado, at 212-676-8858.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

John B. Mattingly
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