



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Taylor Hatch
Secretary

DATE: January 27, 2026
TO: Regional Licensing Chiefs
Community Directors
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
FROM: Martha Harbin, Assistant Secretary, Quality and Innovation
Brooke Bass, Assistant Secretary, OCFW
SUBJECT: 2026 Foster Parent Cost of Living Allowance Increase

This memorandum provides guidance to regions and Community-Based Care Lead Agencies (Lead Agency) regarding the statutorily required foster parent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA), effective January 1, 2026, for Level I-V foster parent pursuant to section 409.145(3)(b), Florida Statutes (F.S.).

During the 2013 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature passed section 409.145(3), F.S., which establishes base room-and-board rate payments for foster parents and requires an annual cost of living adjustment. The adjustment must equal the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, All Items, not seasonally adjusted, or successor reports, for the preceding December compared to the prior December as initially reported by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Effective January 1, 2026, the room and board rates to foster parents will be adjusted as follows:

Age Range	2025 Room and Board Rate	Room and Board Rate Effective January 1, 2026
Zero to Five (0 – 5)	\$586.90	\$602.75
Six to Twelve (6 – 12)	\$601.94	\$618.19
Thirteen to Twenty-one (13 – 21)	\$704.56	\$723.58

Effective July 1, 2022, lead agencies shall pay a supplemental room and board payment to foster parents, and relative and nonrelative caregivers who are participating in the Relative Caregiver Program (which includes Nonrelative Caregiver Financial Assistance). Pursuant to s.409.145(3)(d), the supplemental payments are for the purpose of providing independent life skills and normalcy supports to children who are 13 through 17 years of age. For 2026, the supplemental monthly payment is \$72.36, which is based on 10 percent of the monthly room and board rate for children 13 through 21 years of age.

Section 65C-16.013, Florida Administrative Code, outlines that a lead agency can negotiate a Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (MAS) up to 100% of the statewide foster care board rate. Based on

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the 2026 foster parent cost of living allowance increase, a lead agency will now be able to approve MAS amounts up to the above mentioned updated statewide foster care board rates. Any rate over the 2026 statewide foster care board rates must be approved by the Department's Regional Community Directors.

Section 65C-44.003(9), Florida Administrative Code, outlines that a lead agency can negotiate a Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) payment up to 100% of the statewide foster care board rate. Based on the 2026 foster parent cost of living allowance increase, a lead agency will now be able to approve GAP amounts up to the above mentioned updated statewide foster care board rates. Any rate over the 2026 statewide foster care board rates must be approved by the Department's Regional Licensing Office.

As of January 1, 2026, all Level I-V foster parents previously receiving a 2025 room and board rate in the amount of \$586.90, \$601.94, or \$704.56, for the child(ren) in their care must be paid the increase as specified in section 409.145(3), F.S.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Lead agencies acquiring additional information related to foster care room and board rates may contact Teanna Houston at Teanna.Houston@myflfamilies.com.

Lead agencies acquiring additional information related to Maintenance Adoption Subsidy may contact Sonya Graham at Sonya.Graham@myflfamilies.com.

Foster and adoptive parents seeking additional information on enhanced payments for foster care room and board payments, or maintenance adoption subsidy may contact their local Lead Agency.

cc:

Angela Shave, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Quality and Innovation

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Tami Gonyea, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Policy and Program for the Office of Child and Family Well-Being

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