

260C.331 COSTS OF CARE.

Subdivision 1. **Care, examination, or treatment.** (a) Except where parental rights are terminated,

(1) whenever legal custody of a child is transferred by the court to a responsible social services agency,

(2) whenever legal custody is transferred to a person other than the responsible social services agency, but under the supervision of the responsible social services agency, or

(3) whenever a child is given physical or mental examinations or treatment under order of the court, and no provision is otherwise made by law for payment for the care, examination, or treatment of the child, these costs are a charge upon the welfare funds of the county in which proceedings are held upon certification of the judge of juvenile court.

(b) The court shall order, and the responsible social services agency shall require, the parents or custodian of a child, while the child is under the age of 18, to use the total income and resources attributable to the child for the period of care, examination, or treatment, except for clothing and personal needs allowance as provided in section 256B.35, to reimburse the county for the cost of care, examination, or treatment. Income and resources attributable to the child include, but are not limited to, Social Security benefits, supplemental security income (SSI), veterans benefits, railroad retirement benefits and child support. When the child is over the age of 18, and continues to receive care, examination, or treatment, the court shall order, and the responsible social services agency shall require, reimbursement from the child for the cost of care, examination, or treatment from the income and resources attributable to the child less the clothing and personal needs allowance. Income does not include earnings from a child over the age of 18 who is working as part of a plan under section 260C.212, subdivision 1, paragraph (c), clause (8), to transition from foster care.

(c) If the income and resources attributable to the child are not enough to reimburse the county for the full cost of the care, examination, or treatment, the court shall inquire into the ability of the parents to support the child and, after giving the parents a reasonable opportunity to be heard, the court shall order, and the responsible social services agency shall require, the parents to contribute to the cost of care, examination, or treatment of the child. When determining the amount to be contributed by the parents, the court shall use a fee schedule based upon ability to pay that is established by the responsible social services agency and approved by the commissioner of human services. The income of a stepparent who has not adopted a child shall be excluded in calculating the parental contribution under this section.

(d) The court shall order the amount of reimbursement attributable to the parents or custodian, or attributable to the child, or attributable to both sources, withheld under chapter 518A from the income of the parents or the custodian of the child. A parent or custodian who fails to pay without good reason may be proceeded against for contempt, or the court may inform the county attorney, who shall proceed to collect the unpaid sums, or both procedures may be used.

(e) If the court orders a physical or mental examination for a child, the examination is a medically necessary service for purposes of determining whether the service is covered by a health insurance policy, health maintenance contract, or other health coverage plan. Court-ordered treatment shall be subject to policy, contract, or plan requirements for medical necessity. Nothing in this paragraph changes or eliminates benefit limits, conditions of coverage, co-payments or deductibles, provider restrictions, or other requirements in the policy, contract, or plan that relate to coverage of other medically necessary services.

Subd. 2. Cost of group foster care. Whenever a child is placed in a group foster care facility as provided in section 260C.201, subdivision 1, paragraph (b), clause (2) or (3), the cost of providing the care shall, upon certification by the juvenile court, be paid from the welfare fund of the county in which the proceedings were held. To reimburse the counties for the costs of promoting the establishment of suitable group foster homes, the state shall quarterly, from funds appropriated for that purpose, reimburse counties 50 percent of the costs not paid by federal and other available state aids and grants. Reimbursement shall be prorated if the appropriation is insufficient.

The commissioner of corrections shall establish procedures for reimbursement and certify to the commissioner of finance each county entitled to receive state aid under the provisions of this subdivision. Upon receipt of a certificate the commissioner of finance shall issue a state warrant to the county treasurer for the amount due, together with a copy of the certificate prepared by the commissioner of corrections.

Subd. 3. Court expenses. The following expenses are a charge upon the county in which proceedings are held upon certification of the judge of juvenile court or upon such other authorization provided by law:

(1) the fees and mileage of witnesses, and the expenses and mileage of officers serving notices and subpoenas ordered by the court, as prescribed by law;

(2) the expense of transporting a child to a place designated by a child-placing agency for the care of the child if the court transfers legal custody to a child-placing agency;

(3) the expense of transporting a minor to a place designated by the court;

(4) reasonable compensation for an attorney appointed by the court to serve as counsel, except in the Eighth Judicial District where the state courts shall pay for counsel to a guardian ad litem until the recommendations of the task force created in Laws 1999, chapter 216, article 7, section 42, are implemented.

The state courts shall pay for guardian ad litem expenses.

Subd. 4. **Legal settlement.** The county charged with the costs and expenses under subdivisions 1 and 3 may recover these costs and expenses from the county where the minor has legal settlement for general assistance purposes by filing verified claims which shall be payable as are other claims against the county. A detailed statement of the facts upon which the claim is based shall accompany the claim. If a dispute relating to general assistance settlement arises, the responsible social services agency of the county denying legal settlement shall send a detailed statement of the facts upon which the claim is denied together with a copy of the detailed statement of the facts upon which the claim is based to the commissioner of human services. The commissioner shall immediately investigate and determine the question of general assistance settlement and shall certify findings to the responsible social services agency of each county. The decision of the commissioner is final and shall be complied with unless, within 30 days thereafter, action is taken in district court as provided in section 256.045.

Subd. 5. **Attorneys fees.** In proceedings in which the court has appointed counsel pursuant to section 260C.163, subdivision 3, for a minor unable to employ counsel, the court may inquire into the ability of the parents to pay for such counsel's services and, after giving the parents a reasonable opportunity to be heard, may order the parents to pay attorneys fees.

Subd. 6. **Guardian ad litem fees.** (a) In proceedings in which the court appoints a guardian ad litem pursuant to section 260C.163, subdivision 5, clause (a), the court may inquire into the ability of the parents to pay for the guardian ad litem's services and, after giving the parents a reasonable opportunity to be heard, may order the parents to pay guardian fees.

(b) In each fiscal year, the commissioner of finance shall deposit guardian ad litem reimbursements in the general fund and credit them to a separate account with the trial courts. The balance of this account is appropriated to the trial courts and does not cancel but is available until expended. Expenditures by the state court administrator's office from this account must be based on the amount of the guardian ad litem reimbursements received by the state from the courts in each judicial district.

History: 1999 c 139 art 3 s 36; art 4 s 2; 1999 c 216 art 7 s 22,23; 2001 c 178 art 1 s 44; 2003 c 112 art 2 s 50; 2005 c 164 s 29; 1Sp2005 c 7 s 28; 2007 c 147 art 1 s 23