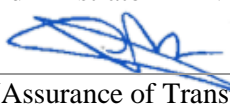


# Family Travel Assistance Program

	<b>DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES</b> <b>Community Services</b> <b>STATEWIDE POLICY</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Family Travel Assistance Program
<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b>	DCFS/JJS 600.04
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b>	February 7, 2022
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Domonique Rice, Deputy Administrator – Division of Child and Family Services
<b>DATE:</b>	2/3/2022
<b>SUPERSEDES:</b>	New Policy
<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	Cindy Pitlock, Administrator – Division of Child and Family Services 
<b>DATE:</b>	2/3/2022
<b>REFERENCES:</b>	42CFR 431.53 (Assurance of Transportation); Visitation (DCFS/JJS 500.08); Family Engagement (DCFS/JJS 500.13)
<b>ATTACHMENTS:</b>	Attachment A: Family Travel Request Attachment B: Release of Liability

## I. SUMMARY

The Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Juvenile Justice Services, shall assist eligible families visiting a youth who has been committed to a DCFS state facility or an in-state or out-of-state Residential Treatment Center (RTC), and shall assist families with participating in their child’s treatment and case plans, as resources allow.

## II. PURPOSE

Establish a process for Youth Parole Bureau staff to assist families in the attainment of needed travel resources, including air and ground transportation, meals, and lodging, to visit youth in a facility, a Residential Treatment Center, or to participate in treatment or case plan related services.

## III. DEFINITIONS

As used in this document, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. Facility: Caliente Youth Center, Nevada Youth Training Center, and Summit View Youth Center.
- B. Family: A youth’s family is the group of individuals who support a youth emotionally, physically, and/or financially. A family is defined by its members and each family defines itself. A family can include individuals of various ages who are biologically related, related by marriage, or not related at all.
- C. Residential Treatment Center (RTC): A facility or distinct part of a facility which provides extensive behavioral, psychiatric, or alcohol treatment while the individual is attending school and living in residence at the program.

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## IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

### A. General Practice

1. All funds associated with the Family Travel Assistance Program shall be utilized for families to visit their child and/or be able to participate in treatment or case plan related services.
  - a. Taxi or bus vouchers may be provided to family members to participate in treatment or case planning related services with their child.
2. The parent/guardian of a youth placed in a Residential Treatment Center (RTC) funded by Medicaid may be eligible for Medicaid funded travel and shall be referred to the RTC provider, with any additional needed supports to be provided by the Family Travel Program. Refer to 42 CFR 431.53 (Assurance of Transportation).
  - a. Verification of this attempt shall be obtained prior to the use of DCFS funding and shall be documented on Attachment A in the comments section.
3. All facility visits arranged through the Family Travel Assistance Program shall follow the visitation guidelines as outlined in Visitation (DCFS/JJS 500.08) and within each facility's Standard Operating Procedures.
4. Families shall be advised of visitation guidelines during the youth's intake process at the facility the youth is placed, per Family Engagement (DCFS/JJS 500.13). The Family Handbook is located here: [https://dcfs.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dcfsvgov/content/Programs/JJS/Nevada\\_Family\\_Handbook\\_Final\\_7\\_19\\_19.pdf](https://dcfs.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/dcfsvgov/content/Programs/JJS/Nevada_Family_Handbook_Final_7_19_19.pdf)
5. Families shall be advised of the Family Travel Assistance Program by the Youth Parole Counselor (YPC) during the initial home meeting.
6. Families may request access to the Family Travel Assistance Program through facility or Youth Parole Bureau staff.
7. Facilities may contact the Youth Parole Bureau to discuss any issues/problems with family members during visitations that may affect future travel requests. The approval/denial of future requests shall be made on a case-by-case basis.

### B. General Procedures

1. Families may request travel assistance through the Youth Parole Counselor or the DCFS website using the "Request Travel Assistance" link on each facility's webpage.
2. The Social Services Program Specialist, or designee, shall determine: 1) eligibility for assistance using either SNAP income levels or family size, and 2) the cost of the trip to ensure appropriate transportation, meal, and lodging funds are allocated to the family.
3. Unless an emergency, travel requests must be submitted at least thirty days prior to travel to allow for Superintendent review/approval, request processing, travel document dissemination and receipt.

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4. Family Travel Request form (Attachment A) may be initiated by either the YPC or the Social Services Program Specialist.
  - a. Family Travel Request form (Attachment A) shall be approved by a Youth Parole Unit Manager and the visiting facility's Superintendent.
  - b. The approved form shall be uploaded to the youth's electronic case management record under General Documents.
5. The funding for the trip shall be approved by the Chief of the Juvenile Services Programs Office, as the family travel budget is their responsibility.
6. The YPC shall work directly with the family to coordinate their travel needs. This may include travel to a facility, in-state RTC, out-of-state RTC, or to a location where the youth's treatment or case planning services are located.
7. Lodging and transportation shall be provided by vendors at the sole discretion of DCFS.
8. A lodging release of liability form (Attachment B) shall be completed by the head of household traveling to see the youth.
  - a. Lodging assistance shall not be provided if there is a failure or refusal to complete and submit a release of liability form.
9. Lodging and meals shall be based on U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) state and regional guidelines by fiscal year.
10. For out-of-state travel, Medicaid benefits (42CFR 431.53) shall be used first before any travel assistance funds are utilized.
11. Any substitutions of traveling family members shall require additional approval from the YPC and/or facility Superintendent, at least seven days prior to the trip. Ages and relationships must be provided at time of substitution.
12. Any unused travel funds shall be returned by the family to the Social Services Program Specialist, their designee, or YPC.
13. Travel cancellations shall be made by the Social Services Program Specialist, or designee, immediately upon notification by the family, to avoid any unnecessary charges.

### C. Limitations

1. The Family Travel Assistance Program shall be available as resources allow on a first come, first-serve basis.
2. Family members who use resources provided by the Family Travel Assistance Program for purposes other than expressly authorized, or do not abide by the terms of the assistance, shall no longer have access to the program.
  - a. Any limits, suspensions, or discontinuations shall be made in writing to the primary family contact by the Social Services Program Specialist, or designee. A copy of any

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such documents shall be sent to the relevant facility and/or uploaded into the youth's file.

3. DCFS reserves the right to limit the number of family members or number of trips per family to accommodate other families.
4. DCFS reserves the right to deny any request for travel assistance and will provide the reason for denial upon request.

## **V. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

- A. The Youth Parole Bureau shall create a Standard Operating Procedure consistent with this policy, to include:
  1. How travel vendors are chosen, including any written agreements necessary, and a list of approved vendors.
  2. Procedures for denying, suspending, and reinstating travel assistance.
  3. For Medicaid eligible youth, process for verification Medicaid funds were utilized before any general funds (family travel funds) were used.
  4. Process for review/approval outside of the initial 30-day travel request.
  5. Data collection to include:
    - i. Total number of requests broken down by facility
    - ii. Total number of trips approved broken down by facility
    - iii. Total number of trips completed broken down by facility
    - iv. Average cost of trips
    - v. Average number of days of each trip