

November 4, 2022

The Division of Family Services, Adoption Program has been made aware of several issues surrounding the implementation of the February 2022 release of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Child and Family Services Manual, Chapter F: Adoption, Section 2: Adoption Assistance. Based on feedback that the Adoption Program has received, VDSS is currently working on changes to the following subsections of guidance: Subsection 2.6.3.1: Administering the Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Tool (VEMAT), and Subsection 2.6.3: Enhanced Maintenance Payments.

Regarding Subsection 2.6.3.1, VDSS is reviewing and making changes to the following language: *“The maximum allowable amount for enhanced maintenance payments is based on the child’s VEMAT score. The final payment amount is based on negotiations between the LDSS, the Assistance Negotiator, and the adoptive parent. The maximum amount remains the same for any subsequent negotiations of enhanced maintenance payments for the duration of the Adoption Assistance Agreement. As a result, the enhanced maintenance payment must only be increased if, during the previous negotiation, the adoptive parents accepted less than the maximum allowable payment.”* If you or your agency are aware of an adoptive parent who requested the re-administration of the VEMAT at any point after February 1, 2022 and was denied solely because the parent had accepted the maximum allowable payment at the time of signing of the initial Adoption Assistance Agreement, please immediately contact your agency’s Regional Adoption Negotiator. Additionally, for any new requests for the re-administration of a VEMAT, which would be denied based on the language above between today and when revised guidance becomes effective, please contact your Regional Adoption Negotiator for direction.

Regarding Subsection 2.6.3, VDSS is reviewing and making changes to the following language: *“For children in LDSS custody, an enhanced maintenance payment will not be approved if the child has not received ongoing enhanced maintenance payments over the previous 12 months.”* If you or your agency received or receives a request specific to this subsection of guidance at any point after February 1, 2022, please immediately contact your agency’s Regional Adoption Negotiator for direction.

VDSS will be issuing a more detailed broadcast that will outline the specific changes to the guidance. That broadcast will be issued after it is published in the Town Hall for a 30-day public comment period.

For questions, please contact the Regional Adoption Negotiator.

Central - Martha Patrick - martha.patrick@dss.virginia.gov

Eastern - Shelly Latoski - shelly.latoski@dss.virginia.gov

Piedmont - Krista Deford - krista.deford@dss.virginia.gov

Northern - Kimberly Busch - k.busch@dss.virginia.gov

Western - Christine Blair - christine.blair@dss.virginia.gov