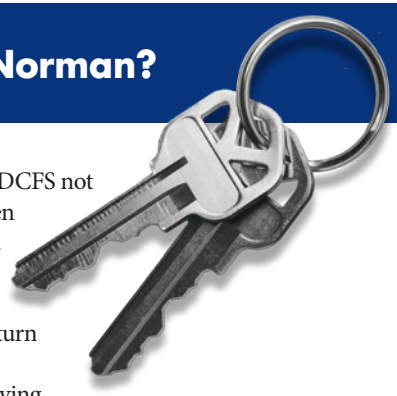
What is Norman?



It is the policy of DCFS not to remove children for poverty alone. DCFS cannot remove your child, or fail to return your child to you because of your living circumstances (lack of shelter, food, clothing, or other items) unless there is reason to believe that the conditions cause imminent risk to your child's life or health. If such risk does occur, DCFS has the duty to provide services to assist with these problems.

DCFS has created services, often referred to as "Norman Services," for families who have one or more children who are at risk of being placed in DCFS care or who have children who cannot be returned home and one of the reasons for this risk is: lack of food, lack of shelter, lack of clothing or lack of other items that if providing this service will keep your child in your care or, if the child is in DCFS custody, will help your child return home.

Eligibility

These families are often referred to as Norman families. Therefore, if:

- A DCFS investigator is considering placing your children in DCFS custody based on one of the reasons stated above
- You have an open DCFS case and your caseworker is considering placing your children in DCFS custody for one of the reasons listed above
- Your DCFS caseworker or the court tells you that your child cannot be returned to you because of one of the reasons listed above

You may be eligible to receive one or more of the services listed in this brochure.

Right to Appeal and How to Appeal

If your request for housing, emergency cash assistance or any other service you believe should have been provided to you is denied, reduced or delayed you have the right to appeal DCFS' decision immediately. If your request for emergency cash assistance is denied or reduced, you should receive a letter from your caseworker or the person that denied or reduced your request stating the reason for the denial or reduction. Even if you do not receive this letter, you may still appeal anyway.

To appeal a DCFS decision on cash assistance or services, you must send a written request within 45 calendar days of the date of the decision. You should send your written request for appeal along with your name, your address, your children's names, your children's dates of birth and the individual responsible for the delay, denial or reduction of services to:

DCFS Administrative Hearings Unit
Norman Assistance Appeals
406 East Monroe Street, Station 15
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1498
Fax: 217/557-4652

If you have asked for assistance or information and you are unsatisfied, you may also contact the DCFS Advocacy Office for Children and Families at 800/232-3798.

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (800/940-1119) may be able to provide or refer you to a program for legal services.

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services

312.814.6800

www.DCFS.illinois.gov

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Norman Services

Information on Housing Advocacy, Cash Assistance and Other Services

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services

Norman Services

This brochure provides information on services that you may be eligible to receive. You should contact your caseworker about your eligibility for theses services. If you disagree with your caseworker's decision, you may appeal (see back of this brochure)

Assistance with the Illinois Department of Human Services' (IDHS) Public Aid Program (TANF)

DCFS and IDHS should work together to coordinate the service requirements of each program. Your DCFS caseworker can assist you in getting benefits through public aid.

If your children are about to return home and you will be eligible to receive TANF when your children are returned, IDHS will allow Norman families to apply for public aid (TANF) before the child is returned home.

If your children are being placed in DCFS care for less than 90 days and you currently receive public aid (TANF), IDHS will provide eligible Norman families an "adult only" grant if DCFS believes that the children will be placed in DCFS custody for 90 days or less.

Housing Advocacy Program

In order to assist the family find affordable housing, DCFS has created the Housing Advocacy Program (HAP). HAP provides a worker to assist Norman families obtain housing. HAP workers will provide the following assistance:

- Refer families to an emergency or domestic violence shelter
- Develop relationship with landlords through ongoing contact
- Provide apartment listings
- Prepare families to meet with potential landlords
- Assistance with transportation to view apartments or meet with landlords, when necessary
- Assist the family in applying for income assistance programs
- Link the family to community resources to meet subsistence needs, including the emergency cash assistance program
- Provide follow-up services to prevent future housing problems
- Transport appropriate families to domestic violence shelters
- Negotiate with landlords
- Provide assistance to obtain subsidized housing, such as Section 8

If you have children in DCFS custody, a referral for this program should be made in time to allow you to obtain housing before your children are returned to you.

Emergency Cash Assistance Program

The Emergency Cash Assistance Program can help you purchase items that are needed to keep your child in your care or to allow your child to be returned from DCFS care when you cannot afford to purchase those items yourself. The following is a partial list of items it can be used to obtain:

- Security deposit and/or first month's rent
- Housing repairs
- Utilities
- Food
- Clothing
- Furniture and/or equipment
- Transportation

The Emergency Cash Assistance program is intended to provide adequate cash assistance to help families meet subsistence needs, like those listed above. It is not intended to be an ongoing subsidy. Emergency Cash Assistance will only be provided when it would prevent the removal of your children by DCFS or allow your children to be returned home from DCFS placement.

Other Assistance Programs

Norman families are not excluded from receiving assistance from other DCFS programs. Talk to your caseworker about your service needs to determine if other programs may assist you.