0826 STANDARDS OF ASSISTANCE

0826.05 FAMILY INDEPENDENCE STANDARDS OF ASSISTANCE

REV:07/1999

To utilize the table below, select the appropriate amount from the cash assistance monthly standard column according to the number of eligible persons in the assistance plan.

Payment to eligible families is made semi-monthly. The conversion of monthly dollar amounts to semi-monthly payment amounts is done automatically by INRHODES.

PLAN SIZE	CASH ASSISTANCE MONTHLY STANDARD	CASH ASSISTANCE SEMI-MONTHLY AMOUNT
1	$ 327.00	$ 163.50
2	449.00	224.50
3	554.00	277.00
4	634.00	317.00
5	714.00	357.00
6	794.00	397.00
7	874.00	437.00
8	954.00	477.00
9	1,034.00	517.00
10	1,114.00	557.00
11	1,194.00	597.00
12	1,274.00	637.00
13	1,354.00	677.00
14	1,434.00	717.00
15	1,514.00	757.00
Add for each person over 15:	$80.00	40.00

0826.05.05 Adjustment to Standard - Subsidized Housing

REV:05/1997

The payment standard is reduced by fifty dollars ($50) for any family residing in subsidized housing. Subsidized housing is defined as housing for a family whose rent is restricted to a percentage of its income.

0826.05.15 Determination of Assistance Plan Size

REV:05/1997

The unit of eligible family members consists of and includes the persons listed below when they are required to be included in the assistance unit (as specified in Section 0804) and are otherwise eligible or when a request for their support is made, they are in need, and are otherwise eligible.

Eligible Child(ren)

An eligible child who meets the eligibility factor of age as defined in Section 0806.10, and who is living with a relative, as defined in Section 0806.15, is included in the assistance unit.

Also included is an eligible child between the ages of eighteen (18) and nineteen (19) years if s/he is a full-time student in a secondary school (or at the equivalent level of vocational or technical training) and reasonably expected to complete the program before or in the month of her of his nineteenth (19th) birthday.

Eligible Relative(s)

The natural or adoptive parent (or needy relative of acceptable relationship) who is providing continuous care or support to the eligible child(ren), including such parent whose eligibility is established by the presence of an SSI child in the home who meets the eligibility requirements, is included. The natural or adoptive custodial parent, (re)married and living with the spouse, must be included in the unit along with her/his spouse.

For an unwed natural father (or one of his relatives) to qualify as an eligible relative, his paternity must have been established under applicable state law (see Section 0806.15).

Pregnant Woman

A needy pregnant woman is included; if the unborn child had been born and was living with her in the month of the payment, she is eligible for cash assistance for a plan size of one (1), but only when she reaches the sixth month of pregnancy (see Table in Section 0806.40.10) and when the pregnancy is verified.

Non-Needy Relative

If the eligible children are residing in the home of a non-needy relative not required to be included in the filing unit, the cash assistance standard corresponding to the plan size for the number of eligible children (minus any available income) is the basis of the cash assistance grant.

Parent or Child Receives SSI

Whenever the parent (or loco parentis) or a child receives an SSI payment, such a person is excluded from the count of eligible members.

Persons Not Married

When there are two or more dependent children living in the same household with two (2) other persons not married to each other, and each of such persons is a relative who has responsibility for the support or care of one or more of the dependent children, the household may comprise two (2) separate cash assistance cases and payments, provided the two persons do not have a child in common (or the members of the household are not otherwise required to compose a single assistance unit). If the caretakers have a common eligible child, all members of the conjoint family must be consolidated into a single unit receiving one payment.

Whenever there are two (2) cash assistance units in the same household, the standard level of payment applicable to the size of each assistance unit serves as the basis of need upon which separate cash assistance grants are established for each assistance unit.

0826.05.20 Children in Custody of DCYF

REV:05/1997

DCYF is responsible for children committed by the Family Court to its care or who are under that Department's voluntary or legal supervision or guardianship. Financial support is given through the Foster Care program when DCYF places the child with foster parents, a relative, or in a specialized group setting.

0826.05.20.05 Children in Placement with Relatives

REV:05/1997

In situations where DCYF places a child with a relative other than a parent, the relative, if s/he meets the eligibility requirement of relationship, has a choice of applying for cash assistance for support of the child or receiving a Foster Care payment. The relative is advised by the DCYF worker of the amount of payment for which s/he would be eligible for the child and for himself/herself, including Medical Assistance, if eligible, compared to the amount of foster payment and Medical Assistance s/he would receive for the child only. A boarding payment is never made to the parent by DCYF.

0826.05.20.10 Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

REV:05/1997

If the agency representative has questions concerning the care and/or supervision of any child or has reason to suspect possible child abuse or neglect, referral is made to DCYF in accordance with the procedures described under General Provisions, Section 0118.

0826.10 MINIMUM MONTHLY PAYMENT

REV:07/1999

Pursuant to RIGL 40-5.1-14, no payment of cash assistance shall be made for any month if the amount of such payment would be less than ten dollars ($10).

Monthly Deficit Less Than Ten Dollars ($10)

If the monthly deficit in a cash assistance grant is less than ten dollars ($10) after eligibility is determined and appropriate income applied, no cash payment can be made for that month.

Families denied payment solely because of this limitation are considered recipients of cash assistance for all other purposes.

An adverse notice must be mailed at least ten (10) days prior to the effective date, informing the recipient that no cash payment can be made because the deficit is less than ten dollars ($10) per month but that eligibility for cash assistance continues. In all other respects, except for a cash payment, this case remains an active case. This also includes those situations where payment is reduced to zero due to rounding, e.g., ninety-nine (99) cents rounded down to zero.

During the initial month, the family may only receive a partial payment of the appropriate standard. The payment amount is reduced in proportion to the number of days from the filing date until the end of the month. For proration purposes, a thirty (30) day standard is used as the number of days in each month.

Monthly Deficit Ten Dollars ($10) or More

If the monthly deficit is ten dollars ($10) or more, the payment is issued regardless of the amount. If the monthly deficit is less than ten dollars ($10) per month, no payment is issued as per regulations set forth above.

Changes in Family Composition or Income

Any changes in family composition, income, or resources must be acted upon by the agency representative within ten (10) days by updating the INRHODES file. All pertinent eligibility and cooperation requirements must continue to be met.

0826.13 CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

REV:05/1997

The clothing allowance is a one-time payment issued separately from the regular payroll for children of cash assistance families. The amount of the clothing allowance shall be determined subject to the amount appropriated for that purpose.

0826.15.15.10 Undelivered, Lost, or Stolen CSE Checks

REV:05/1997

See the Child Support Manual for procedures for replacement of checks issued through the Department of Administration, Division of Taxation - Child Support Enforcement.

0826.20 PAYMENT OF BURIAL EXPENSES

REV:05/1997

When a member of a family active on cash assistance dies and the family requests payment to meet funeral and burial expenses, the agency representative determines from information in the case record whether any income or resources of the deceased or of legally liable relatives are available to meet burial expenses.

The agency representative records the pertinent information on an AP-48 referral form and transmits it, attached to a copy of the most recent DHS-2, to the GPA Unit for determination of eligibility for payment to meet burial expenses. If eligibility exists, the GPA caseworker authorizes a payment through GPA funds pursuant to policy in Section 0622.

0826.25 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

REV:12/1999

To the extent that the Department has allocated resources for this purpose, DHS may provide assistance to individuals in families who are FIP recipients to meet certain emergency needs as defined within this section which cannot be met with the cash resources available to the family.

0826.25.05 Catastrophic Assistance

REV:12/1999

In the event of a catastrophe caused by fire, flood, lightning, severe wind, or other act of nature, DHS may authorize catastrophic assistance funds not subject to the two hundred dollar ($200) limit specified in Section 0826.25.10.

Compensable fire damage is further restricted to that caused by flame, smoke, and subsequent secondary water damage where there is damage to the dwelling. Furthermore, the incident must be reported immediately

to the fire department. Other specific exclusions under any circumstances are destruction for which a landlord can be held responsible, willful destruction or willful neglect by the recipient or a member of her/his family, damage covered by insurance policies, and isolated mechanical or electrical failures where there is no secondary damage.

These emergency funds may be authorized for clothing for FIP recipients or repair or replacement of essential household equipment and furnishings in the event of such catastrophe.

Whenever reasonable, repair of soot-, smoke-, and/or water-damaged items or of partially destroyed items of household goods or furnishings must be considered before replacement can be authorized.

0826.25.05.05 Criteria for Catastrophic Assistance

REV:12/1999

Funds for clothing and/or essential household equipment and furnishings, if necessary, are provided in the event of a catastrophe, only if all of the following conditions are met:

- To be considered, the incident must be reported immediately by the recipient to the agency at the district office.

- The incident must be a catastrophe caused by fire, flood, lightning, severe wind, or other act of nature.

- The catastrophe or disaster must have occurred at the address recorded in the case record. However, if it occurred at a different address, the recipient must demonstrate that s/he had moved and was living there prior to notifying the agency. Acceptable evidence of residence may include, for example, a moving bill, rent receipt, or statement from a utility company attesting to the recipient's responsibility for service on the date and at the address in question. When the catastrophe occurred at an address other than the address of record, the facts of the situation along with verification of residence are presented to the Regional Manager for a decision on whether this condition for emergency assistance has been met.

- Coverage is limited to possessions of the recipient or those of other member(s) of the FIP assistance unit.

- Whenever possible, community resources must first be explored and utilized.

- Whenever reasonable, a partially destroyed item of household goods or furnishings must be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is required, the purchase of used items must be considered before funds for new items can be authorized.

- Any repairs to the basic structure of a recipient-owned dwelling, such as roof, stairs, septic systems, plumbing, wiring, siding, etc., are specifically not covered regardless of the reason for the repair.

- Thefts of clothing and household furnishings and equipment are specifically not covered.

- If repeated emergencies occur for one case, or the circumstances are questionable, payment may be denied.

0826.25.05.10 Agency Responsibilities

REV:12/1999

The recipient must report the catastrophe immediately. A representative of the Housing Services Unit (HSU) must visit the site as soon as possible to begin to help the recipient and to authorize initial clothing and/or essential household equipment and furnishings, if necessary, as outlined below.

The HSU is responsible for determining at once the need for immediate replacement of clothing which is provided through FIP funds. If an individual recipient's clothing has been destroyed, funds for immediate replacement of clothing can be authorized up to the maximum of one hundred twenty-three dollars ($123) per person.

The eligibility technician is responsible for authorizing payments for replacement clothing through INRHODES SPEC/Cats.

The HSU caseworker is responsible for verifying and documenting the need for repair or replacement of essential household items.

A home visit to the site must be made within two (2) working days of the recipient's notification of the catastrophe to document the facts related to Section 0826.25.05.05, if repair or replacement of essential household items is requested.

A written report must be prepared by the HSU caseworker for review by the Regional Manager as the final approving authority for authorization of payment for such items. The contents of the report must follow the sequence of conditions or requirements listed in Section 0826.25.05.05. It must contain firsthand information and documentation required to support and verify the recipient's request for repair or replacement.

A police or fire department official and any appropriate collateral source is contacted and a written report requested to accompany the report to the Regional Manager. If a written report cannot be obtained, an oral report will suffice, provided that the official's name, title, telephone number, and all relevant facts are recorded in a memorandum. Unless there is a delay in obtaining a police or fire report, the HSU caseworker must submit her/his report within five (5) working days of the recipient's notification.

The report must also contain a statement signed by the recipient attesting to the circumstances of the catastrophe and the extent of the damage. Also required is a detailed list of damaged or destroyed major

items of household equipment and furnishings by room, including an indication as to whether each item is to be obtained from a non-agency community resource, repaired, replaced with a used item, or replaced with a new item. If repair or replacement is indicated, only items contained in "Household Furniture and Furnishings Emergency Replacement List", a copy of which is in the possession of each Regional Manager, can be replaced at agency expense. Items not on the list, such as a television or other entertainment equipment, are not replaced.

The maximum amount of catastrophic assistance which can be authorized for clothing per recipient is one hundred twenty-three dollars ($123). The HSU caseworker may recommend that the ET authorize up to this amount, as necessary, less any amount previously authorized, if the individual recipient's clothing was destroyed.

The report should also include a brief narrative describing the immediate action taken (such as use of emergency shelter, the extent of any personal injury, whether hospitalization was required, etc.) and any other data needed to allow the Regional Manager to further evaluate the situation and to better assist the recipient.

The Regional Manager reviews the report and discusses it, if necessary, with the HSU caseworker and determines the final amount of the payment.

Throughout the process, the Case Chronology (CLOG) in INRHODES must be annotated by both the HSU representative and the ET, as appropriate with the chronology of contacts and information relating to the catastrophe.

0826.25.05.15 Denial of Catastrophic Assistance

REV:12/1999

If payment for catastrophic expenses are denied, the Housing Unit caseworker codes the CATS panel in SPEC, including the Reason Ineligible field with the appropriate code, and approves the denial adding a detailed reason(s) for the denial in the free form text; INRHODES issues the notice of denial.

0826.25.10 Moving Expenses

REV:12/1999

Emergency assistance for moving expenses shall be limited to the lesser of actual cost or the sum of two hundred dollars ($200). No expense shall be reimbursable unless DHS has pre-approved the expenditure. Such assistance is limited to payment of in-state moving expenses for families who are forced to move their place of residence.

Acceptable instances of "forced to move" are situations which threaten the health and well being of families, including but not limited to:

*Fire/Natural disaster;

*Uninhabitable housing;

*Unsafe (substandard) housing;

*Unsafe living conditions which include a situation where one's safety is threatened, e.g., by a neighbor, and it can be documented by something such as a police report;

*Lead hazard problems causing the housing to be unsafe;

*Domestic violence;

*Foreclosure (self-owned home);

*Evictions;

*Situations where the tenant has been asked to vacate;

*Homelessness; or

*Other situations/circumstances not otherwise delineated which: create an immediate threat to the family's safety and well being, or can reasonably be expected to result in eviction within sixty (60) days.

Criteria for documentation of the above situations are listed in Section 0826.25.10.05.

0826.25.10.05 Verification Criteria for Payment of Move

REV:01/2002

FIP recipients must provide documentation of their need for emergency assistance for moving as follows:

* Fire/natural disaster: a written report from a police or fire department official and/or any appropriate collateral source, such as the Red Cross;

* Uninhabitable housing: a notice from the local code enforcement authority vested with the authority to issue such notice of a finding that the residence is unfit for inhabitation;

* Unsafe (substandard) housing: memorandum from local code enforcement or HSU caseworker detailing such conditions. The memo must be approved by the Housing Unit Supervisor;

* Unsafe living conditions: police report;

* Lead hazard: Inspector's Report from the RI Department of Health;

* Domestic violence: 1) through an assessment by the domestic violence advocate and/or HSU caseworker and one of the following: a No Contact Order, a District Court Restraining Order, a Family Court Restraining Order; an Order of Protection or a Restraining Order from another state related to domestic violence; police report related to domestic violence; court records related to domestic violence; or

medical records related to domestic violence; or 2) recommendation from a domestic violence advocate. Referral of the individual to the domestic violence advocate should be made in accordance with Section 0814.10 if the individual has not already been referred.

* Foreclosure: letter of foreclosure from the mortgagor;

* Eviction: notice and demand to vacate property, or court pleading initiating an eviction, or court order of eviction;

* Situations where the tenant has been asked to vacate: letter from landlord demanding termination of tenancy;

* Homelessness: letter from shelter or previously verified by DHS AND bill or receipt from storage site/facility; and

* Other situations/circumstances: the housing worker must document the circumstances and reasons in a memorandum, including any available appropriate supporting documentation to the Chief Casework Supervisor.

0826.25.10.10 Authorization of Moves: Procedures

REV:12/1999

The Department reimburses the recipient for the incurred expense for an approved move up to a maximum of two hundred dollars ($200). It is the responsibility of the recipient to pay a vendor. The Department has no further responsibility to meet the moving expense.

The Department makes no provision to meet the cost of out-of-state moves. This prohibition may be waived by the Regional Manager in unusual or exceptional circumstances.

A payment for a move will be issued only once in a twelve (12) month period unless (a) the need for a move results from a fire or natural disaster, or (b) a waiver is granted by the Regional Manager for unusual or exceptional circumstances based on a report by the HSU.

When a request for payment of a move is received by the eligibility technician, s/he advises the client to contact the HSU.

Responsibilities of Housing Services Unit

The Housing Services Unit caseworker is responsible for determining the need for and authorization of reimbursement for moves. The recipient must meet the criteria for moves listed in Section 0826.25.10.

The HSU caseworker must:

* Determine that the recipient meets the criteria for emergency assistance for moving expenses as specified in Section 0826.25.10;

* Ascertain that the recipient has located a new place to move and inform the recipient a) that the new location must first

pass pre-rental inspection, and b) of her/his responsibilities in the moving process: that s/he must arrange for her/his own move; that s/he is free to choose the methodology, vendor, and/or payment method;

* Arrange for a pre-rental inspection of the new apartment;

* Determine whether the new apartment passes the pre-rental inspection;

* If it passes inspection, document the recipient's cost of moving;

* If the reimbursement of the move is approved, authorize the moving payment through INRHODES by completing a MOVE panel in SPEC, and forward DHS-48A with the new address indicated along with a copy of the rent receipt or lease to the appropriate eligibility supervisor;

* If the reimbursement of the move is denied, follow the denial procedures outlined in Section 0826.25.10.15.

* Annotate throughout the process the Case Chronology (CLOG) in INRHODES the chronology of contacts and information relating to either the approval or denial of the move.

0826.25.10.15 Denial of Moving Payments

REV:12/1999

If a moving payment is denied, the HSU caseworker codes the MOVE panel in SPEC, including the Reason Ineligible field with the appropriate code, and approves the denial adding a detailed reason(s) for the denial in the free form text; INRHODES issues the notice of denial.

0826.30 PROTECTIVE PAYMENTS

REV:05/1997

Protective payments are payments made to an individual on behalf of a parent or caretaker relative to meet the needs of eligible children or families. Protective payments are made in the situations described in Sections 0826.30.05 and 0826.30.10.

0826.30.05 Minor Parents and Pregnant Minors

REV:05/1997

Cash assistance for eligible minor parents and their child(ren) and pregnant minors will be paid to the parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative on behalf of the minor parent, unless otherwise determined by the agency representative. Under the latter circumstance, when the minor resides in an adult-supervised supportive living arrangement, the payment may be made to the minor parent or pregnant minor.

0826.30.15 Authorizing a Protective Payee

REV:05/1997

When it is established that a protective payment must be made, the agency representative refers the case to the appropriate agency representative to review the situation with the recipient and, with her/his consent and participation, if possible, select some appropriate and responsible person (other than the parent) to act as the payee on behalf of the parent and to pay the expenses of the family.

However, in all cases, if after making all reasonable efforts, the agency is unable to locate an appropriate individual to whom protective payments can be made, the agency may continue to make payments on behalf of the remaining members of the assistance unit to the sanctioned caretaker relative.

The protective payee must update and co-sign the current Statement of Need in the case file, and a notation added to the case log (CLOG). Only the pertinent information on the form relating to the eligible person(s) is to be completed. The agency representative forwards the Statement of Need to appropriate staff in order for the change in payee to be effected.

Notification

A parent or caretaker relative is notified of the change to a protective payee as well as of her/his right to a hearing, if s/he is dissatisfied with the decision. If the recipient requests a hearing on the issue within the ten (10) days, the payment is continued to her/him until the hearing decision.

Authorization/Termination of Payment

In order to authorize an alternate payee, the agency representative utilizes the SPEC/AGNT (Alternate Reporter/Payee) using procedures outlined in Sections 1124.04 through 1124.08 in General Procedures. Instructions for changing or terminating an alternative or protective payee are found in Section 1124.10 through 1124.12.