



HOME STUDY GUIDE

- Welcome
- Questions Answered
- Fees Involved
- Assistance Available



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WELCOME!

Thank you for your inquiry about the home study services offered by Children's Hope International. The Ohio office of Children's Hope International is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family services to complete home studies for families residing in Ohio who plan to adopt internationally. Fees are noted within this guide.

If you would like for Children's Hope International to complete your home study, please fill out the enclosed application. Please note the following Children's Hope Policies:

CHILDREN'S HOPE POLICY ON HOME STUDY AND POST ADOPTION FAMILIES

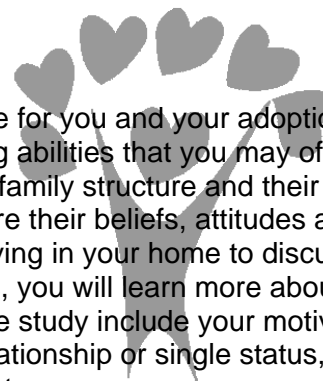
1. Children's Hope will give first priority on home studies and post adoption reports for families who use Children's Hope as both their home study agency and as their child placing agency.
2. Children's Hope's Ohio Regional Office cannot complete domestic adoption home studies.
3. Due to increased restrictions because of the Hague convention, whether Children's Hope's Ohio Regional Office may complete a home study when the family is using another child placing agency will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, if a family wants to adopt internationally and wishes for Children's Hope to complete their Home Study, they will need to use Children's Hope to complete both the Home Study and the adoption.
4. Children's Hope Ohio Regional Office is not able to provide home study/post adoption services for Colombia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russia or Vietnam if a family is using another placing agency. CHI will *consider* providing home study/post adoption services for China depending on the type of interagency agreement we would be required to sign (CHI will only consider 'exempt provider' interagency agreements at this time, however, we cannot promise that we will be able to sign all 'exempt provider' agreements).
5. If a family leaves Children's Hope as a placing agency to work with another placing agency and Children's Hope's Ohio Regional Office completed the family's home study, for Colombia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Russia or Vietnam, Children's Hope will not be able to provide home study/post adoption services for that family (including updating/revising a completed Home Study as needed). For other countries, we will need to review the interagency agreement that the new placing agency would require CHI to sign. CHI will only consider reviewing 'exempt provider' interagency agreements at this time. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to sign all 'exempt provider' agreements. However, we can offer the following to assist the family while protecting our licenses, accreditations and ability to continue to place children in the countries we work in:
 1. Request or assist, if appropriate, the family to find another home study/post adoption service provider, and
 2. Upon receiving an original, signed release for CHI to work with the new home study/post adoption agency, release the family's home study information, including the electronic version of the home study, to the new agency. Refunds will not be granted for previously completed Home Studies or where the fees paid covered services already rendered by this agency.

In order to access Children's Hope International–Ohio's Agency Policies and Procedures, as well as Children's Hope International Agency MEPA Complaint Procedures, visit our website at http://www.childrenshopeint.org/ohio/CHI_Ohio_Agency_Policies.doc or contact us at 877.408.4673 and we will send you those policies.

Once we have reviewed your initial, completed application, we will mail our "Home Study and Post Adoption Guide" and all the forms you must complete for the home study (including the Ohio Child Abuse Clearance forms and instructions for being fingerprinted for Ohio and FBI criminal history clearance).

We look forward to assisting you in your adoption. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the home study process.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED



What is the Home Study Process Like?

The home study is a process of education and self-evaluation. It is a time for you and your adoption assessor to look at your readiness to adopt and identify special parenting abilities that you may offer to an adopted child. The process allows the adoptive family to look at their family structure and their support system. During the home study, adoptive parents will also explore their beliefs, attitudes and coping skills. Your adoption assessor will meet with you and everyone living in your home to discuss the adoption process. Through a series of group and individual meetings, you will learn more about the kind of children you might best parent. Topics discussed during the home study include your motivation for wanting to adopt, your life experiences and history, your marriage relationship or single status, your ability to support your family financially, your health and your support system.

When you complete the application for adoption, you will be assigned an Adoption Assessor who will work with your family to complete the home study process. The home study process can take two to four months to complete (most of this depending on you). During the home study process, certain documents are required to be viewed by your caseworker (see page 5). Families will receive notification when their home study has been completed and approved. In some cases when the agency is not able to approve a home study, the family can meet with the caseworker and, if needed, the agency, to discuss the reasons why the family was not approved and the possible alternative options for the family.

Can We Adopt More Than One Child?

Children's Hope International will assist qualified families in the international adoption of sibling groups, including twins, where such is available in the country of adoption. However, because of concerns for the best interest of the child and research supporting this policy, Children's Hope does not permit the adoption of two unrelated children at the same time. We will, however, work with parents to complete a separate adoption after some adjustment time has been taken (Children's Hope requires that families be home with their adopted child for a minimum of 6 months before starting the adoption process of another child again).

Can We Be Approved For Both Foster Care and Adoption?

Yes. However, at this time, Children's Hope works with qualified families to complete their home assessment for children that are available for international adoption only. Please note, however, that we would be happy to assist families interested in adopting domestically or those interested in becoming a foster caregiver by referring them to an ODJFS licensed agency or a PCSA. Families interested in adopting domestically can also find information about and view children available for adoption domestically by viewing the Ohio Adoption Photo Listing (OAPL) and the Ohio Adoption Guide via the web at www.state.oh.us/odjfs.

Are there any other disqualifiers?

Yes. You may not be eligible to adopt if you, your spouse or anyone residing in your home:

- 1) Has ever been convicted or plead guilty to a disqualifying criminal offense (see following list);
- 2) Has an untreated mental health disorder which may place a child at risk;
- 3) Has a current substance abuse problem; or
- 4) Has a communicable disease or medical condition which would put a child at risk or would prevent you from being able to physically care for a child.

All prospective adoptive parents and all adult residents of an adoptive home, as a precondition to being approved for an adoptive placement, will be required to complete a criminal records check with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation and, where applicable, the FBI. Fees associated with such background checks will be approximately \$18-55/person.

Disqualifying Criminal Offenses

Homicide

Aggravated murder
Murder
Voluntary manslaughter
Involuntary manslaughter

Assault

Felonious assault
Aggravated assault
Assault
Failing to provide for a functionally impaired person

Menacing

Aggravated menacing

Patient abuse and neglect

Patient abuse, neglect

Kidnapping and related issues

Kidnapping
Abduction
Child stealing (as this law existed prior to July 1, 1996)
Criminal child enticement

Sex offenses

Rape
Sexual battery
Corruption of a minor
Gross sexual imposition
Sexual imposition
Importuning
Voyeurism
Public indecency
Felonious sexual penetration (as this former section of law existed)
Compelling prostitution
Promoting prostitution
Procuring
Prostitution
Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles
Pandering obscenity
Pandering obscenity involving a minor
Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
Illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance

Robbery and Burglary

Aggravated robbery
Robbery
Aggravated burglary
Burglary

Other

Placing harmful objects in food or confection

Offenses against the family

Unlawful abortion
Endangering children
Interference with custody
Contributing to unruliness or delinquency of a child
Domestic violence

Weapons control

Carrying a concealed weapon
Having a weapon while under disability
Improperly discharging a firearm at or into a habitation or school

Drug offenses

Corrupting another with drugs
Trafficking in drugs
Illegal manufacture of drugs or cultivation of marijuana
Funding of drug or marijuana trafficking
Illegal administration or distribution of anabolic steroids
Possession of drugs or marijuana that is not a minor drug possession offense

Arson

Aggravated Arson
Arson

REQUIRED HOME STUDY DOCUMENTS



Please Note: You must have 75–80% of the following documents into this office before your Adoption Assessor will be able to start the Home Study process. We will send a packet of documents to you once your application is approved.

- 1) Children's Hope Home Study Procedure and Agreement
- 2) Copy: Birth Certificates for each family member (note: Will need a certified copy of adoptive parents' birth certificates for most dossiers)***
- 3) Copy: Marriage Certificate, if married***
- 4) Copy: Divorce Decree(s), if applicable***
- 5) Medical Form for each family member (note: Will need additional medical form for adoptive parents for dossier)
- 6) Copy of Automobile Insurance card, supporting document confirming that an adopted child will be covered at time of placement.
- 7) Copy of FBI and Ohio BCII (Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation) results for anyone in the home age 18 and over (instructions will be provided)
- 8) Copy of Employment letter or Non-employment letter (instructions will be provided)
- 9) Original Financial Statement (Form will be provided) (note: additional financial statement must be completed for dossier)
- 10) Original Safety Audit (Form will be provided; Completed by your social worker/Adoption Assessor)
- 11) Original Fire Inspection of your home, completed by your local fire department (Form will be provided)
- 12) Statement of No Criminal Convictions (Form will be provided)
- 13) Disclosure of history of abuse (Form will be provided)
- 14) 5 Typed & Signed Letters of Reference: 3 from non-family members, 2 from family members (sent directly to our office)
- 15) Ohio Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Results, on each adult in home (Anyone in the home 18 or over)
- 16) Information Sheets (for your Adoption Assessor) (Forms will be provided)
- 17) Copy of Veterinarian Documents showing your pets' updated vaccinations
- 18) Well Water Test Results, if applicable
- 19) Post Adoption Commitment (must be notarized; form will be provided)
- 20) Proof of Training (Families must complete a minimum of 10 hours of training prior to submission of your dossier; a minimum of 3-4 hours of training must be completed prior to the completion of the home study).

If you have questions about any of these requirements, please feel free to contact us.

A person seeking to adopt a minor who knowingly makes a false statement that is included in the written report of a home study conducted pursuant Section 3107.02 or Section 5103.03 of the Revised Code is guilty of the offense of falsification under Section 2921.13 of the Revised code.

***Please send these records in with your application, if possible, so we may start your immigration paperwork.

WHAT ARE THE FEES INVOLVED?

CHILDREN'S HOPE INTERNATIONAL - OHIO

HOME STUDY FEES

HOME STUDY FEE SCHEDULE:

\$200.00 upon Application (non-refundable)
\$700.00 upon registration and agreement to begin Home Study (non-refundable once services have been rendered)
\$700.00 upon completion of Home Study (non-refundable)
\$1600.00 Total Home Study if Children's Hope is the child placing agency, plus travel reimbursement fee noted below.

- The fee for an UPDATE of a home study previously completed by Children's Hope is \$500.
- The fee for an ADDENDUM (including a CIS Addendum/Amendment) to a home study where a home visit is required is \$300 (where home visit not required, the fee is \$100 for most Addendum needs and \$200 for change of country requests).
- The fee for an ADDENDUM/UPDATE PACKAGE (for a CIS Addendum/Amendment and subsequent Home Study Update) where multiple home visits are required is \$650
- The fee for an UPDATE if original was conducted by Children's Hope but you are going through a different Agency for placement is \$750 (only permitted in limited situations).
- The fee for a home study UPDATE if original was not conducted by Children's Hope, but you now wish to go through Children's Hope, is \$900.
- The fee for a Home Study Conversion (where a family changes countries and needs a Home Study that reflects the new country's requirements) is \$400
- The fee for families receiving a home study, but not using Children's Hope as the placement agency is \$1700** (only permitted in limited situations).

Additional fees: For all of the above, travel reimbursement will be charged at the current rate set by the IRS for mileage over 60 miles one way. Social Worker will submit statement for exact travel reimbursement fee.

*** Please see Agency Policy and Procedures, Section 2, Home Study and Post Adoption ONLY Families*

POST ADOPTION REPORT FEES

POST ADOPTION REPORT FEE SCHEDULE:

\$250.00 per report, PAID IN FULL UPON COMPLETION OF HOME STUDY

Your exact fee is determined by the number of reports required by the country you are adopting from.

Additional fees: Travel reimbursement will be the current IRS standards per mile for mileage over 60 miles one way. Social worker will submit statement for exact travel reimbursement fee.

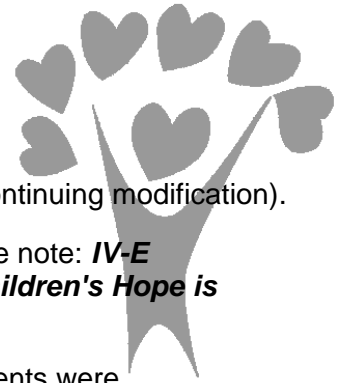
Post Adoption Report Retainer Fee*

Total Fee if Adopting From China, Ethiopia or Vietnam: \$750.00 (This fee is due **upon completion of Home Study**)

Total Fee if Adopting From Colombia, Russia or Kazakhstan: \$1000.00 (This fee is due **upon completion of Home Study**)

*Please Note: In order to ensure completion of all Post Adoption Reports, we must collect the entire Post Adoption Report Fee upon completion of your home study. If you have questions as to why it is so important for these reports to be completed, please contact Kellie at 877.408.HOPE(4673).

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE



Adoption Subsidies

There are two sources of Adoption Subsidy, Federal and State (both subject to continuing modification).

(1) Federal Adoption Assistance Program - Title IV-E Adoption Assistance (Please note: ***IV-E assistance is not available for families adopting internationally, however Children's Hope is required to make this information available to all of our adoptive families.***)

Eligibility for Federal Subsidy (Title IV-E) is based on whether the child's birth parents were receiving welfare benefits or would have been eligible to receive them. IV-E provides up to \$250 per month and a medical card.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance is a federally funded financial program whose purpose is to make permanent homes for children whose birth parents were receiving or eligible for welfare benefits.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance provides:

- A negotiated monthly stipend of up to \$250 until the child reaches the age of 18 (21 if the child has a mental or physical handicap)
- Categorical eligibility for Medicaid coverage for the adopted child. This coverage continues as long as adoption assistance is in effect regardless of the adoptive parent's income.
- Child is deemed an ADC eligible child for the purpose of qualifying for Title XX services (a variety of social services).

Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance: Eligibility for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance may be based on if the child's biological parents were eligible for ADC or if the child receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The adoptive child must also meet the definition of a special needs child (See Footnote 1, above for definition). A public or private agency must have permanent custody of the child. The adoptive family's income is totally irrelevant in determining eligibility.

Application for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance: To apply for Title IV-E Assistance, the adoptive parents must fill out the Ohio Department of Human Services (JFS) 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker of the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. Beginning July 1, 1993, IV-E Assistance may begin at adoptive placement, if the child is found eligible.

Amount of Federal IV-E Assistance: The amount of the IV-E assistance is arrived at by a mutual agreement reached between the adoptive family and the custodial agency(ies). The amount is based on the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive family and should be negotiated. Federal regulations do not permit payment over the foster family care rate for the individual child.

Applying for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance after a Final Decree of Adoption: IV-E assistance may be established after a final decree of adoption. Eligibility for assistance may be considered after finalization if, upon appeal of the adoptive family, conducted in accordance with Ohio's State Hearing Procedures, the family establishes one of the following extenuating circumstances that prevented the family from applying prior to adoption:

- Relevant information about the child's needs was not available prior to adoption;
- The child exhibits special needs after the adoption that are traceable to the child's pre-adoptive experiences or medical history;
- The adoptive family is not informed about the adoption assistance program prior to the adoption, or information about other factors affecting the child's eligibility was inaccurate or incomplete at the time of adoption; or
- An agency administrative error prevented a Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Agreement from being completed before finalization of the adoption in the case of an otherwise eligible child.

If the state hearing establishes that extenuating circumstances existed, then eligibility for adoption assistance may be considered without regard to the normal timeliness standard. If the child meets the remaining eligibility requirements for Title IV-E Assistance, the adoption assistance may be established.

Appeal Process for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance: The adoptive parents have a right to a state hearing before the ODHS if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. For a complete explanation of the state hearing process, refer to JFS Form 4059 "Explanation of State Hearing Procedures".

Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses

Non-recurring adoption expenses are expenses that are directly related to the adoption process. The Non-Recurring Adoption Expense Subsidy is designed to promote the adoption of special needs children by providing eligible families with the opportunity for reimbursement of certain costs related to adopting a child with special needs. Non-recurring adoption expenses are those onetime expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs. Applications and agreements for the Non-Recurring Adoption Expense Subsidy must be completed by the adoptive family prior to adoption finalization.

Eligibility for Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses: There is no income eligibility directed towards the adoptive family in determining whether or not payments for non-recurring adoption expenses will be made. The child, however, must meet the special needs requirements (see Footnote ¹).

Amount of Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses: The adoptive family is able to receive reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per child for adoption related expenses. The expenses may include the following:

- Adoption Homestudy
- Legal fees and court costs
- Transportation, meals and lodging
- Reasonable adoption fees
- Medical exams for adoptive parents
- Expenses related to supervision of adoptive placement

The adoption expenses cannot be covered or reimbursed by other federal funds. The amount of payment shall be determined by a written agreement signed by both the adoptive parents and the custodial agency prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Application for Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses: To apply for non-recurring adoption expenses, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS 01431 "Application for Reimbursement of Non-Recurring Adoption Expenses". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. Application and agreement of reimbursement must be processed prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Appeal Process for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance: The adoptive parents have a right to a state hearing before the ODHS if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. For a complete explanation of the state hearing process, refer to JFS Form 04059 :Explanation of State Hearing Procedures".

¹ "Special needs" include children who fall into the following categories: Any child over the age of six, **Any child who is a member of a minority or ethnic group** (qualifies most internationally adopted children as special needs), Any sibling group that should be placed together, Any child who has remained in the permanent custody of an agency for more than one (1) year, Any child that has a medical condition, physical impairment, mental retardation or developmental disability, Any child that has an emotional disturbance or behavioral problem, Any child that has a social or medical history or background or the child's biological family has a social or medical history which may place the child at risk of acquiring a medical condition, a physical, mental or developmental disability or an emotional disorder, Any child that has been in the home of his/her prospective adoptive parents as a foster child for at least one (1) year and would experience separation and loss if placed in another setting due to his/her significant emotional ties with these foster parents as determined and documented by a qualified mental health professional, Any child who has experienced previous adoption disruption or multiple placements.

(2) State Adoption Subsidy Program

Eligibility for State Subsidy is based upon the adoptive family's size and gross income. There are three available benefits involved with the State Subsidy Program:

- Maintenance Subsidy (provides up to \$250/month; cannot receive both State Maintenance Subsidy and IV-E); and
- Special Service Subsidy (based on child's present and future needs and is negotiable).
- Non-Recurring Expenses (cannot exceed \$2,000).

Purpose of State Adoption Subsidy Program: The State Adoption Subsidy Program is a financial assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs. Through maintenance subsidy payments and special service subsidy payments, the State Adoption Subsidy Program is intended to:

- Assist adoptive parents who are qualified and wish to adopt a special needs child, but the needs of the child are beyond the economic ability and resources of the adoptive parents;
- Providing funding for services to meet the special needs of the child at the time of adoptive placement and any future needs that may be anticipated; and
- Support and sustain the adoptive placement after finalization of the adoption.

A) State Maintenance Subsidy: The State Maintenance Subsidy a state adoption assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs (see Footnote 1, above), but who do not meet the IV-E requirements for federal assistance. A child cannot be both IV-E and State Maintenance eligible. The PCSA in your county is responsible for administering and determining the eligibility for the State Adoption Subsidy Program. Applications must be completed by the adoptive family prior to finalization.

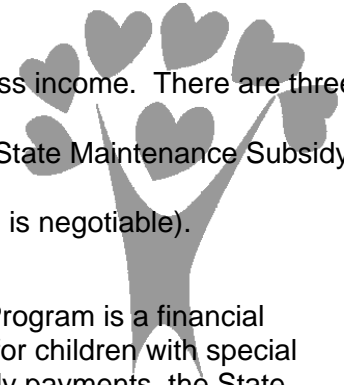
State Maintenance provides:

- A monthly stipend of up to \$250 for support of the child until the age of 18 (21 if the child is a full time student or has a mental or physical handicap)
- Medicaid coverage if the child has special need for medical or rehabilitative care.

Eligibility for State Maintenance Subsidy: The child must meet the definition of Special needs (see Footnote 1, above) and must be in the permanent custody of a public or private agency. **However, international adoptions may be eligible for this subsidy.** The adoptive family's eligibility shall be based on their annual gross income. To determine eligibility, the custodial agency will use the JFS income chart, which is updated annually by the department.

Application for State Maintenance Subsidy: To apply for State Maintenance Subsidy, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS Form 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. The subsidy may begin at placement if the child is found eligible. The application must be completed and amount negotiated prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Appeal Process for State Maintenance Subsidy: The adoptive parents have a right to a county hearing if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. All appeals should be send to the Administrator/Executive Director of the custodial agency, unless otherwise directed by agency policy.



B) Special Service Subsidy: Special Services Subsidy is a state adoption assistance program whose purpose is to make permanent homes possible for children with special needs (see Footnote 1, above).

Special Services Subsidy provides:

- Payment for a range of medical, psychological, rehabilitative and support services for the child until the age of 18 (21 if the child is a full time student or has a mental or physical handicap);
- Medicaid coverage if the child has special need for medical or rehabilitative care.

Eligibility for Special Services Subsidy: The child must meet the definition of Special needs (see Footnote 1, above) and must be in the permanent custody of a public or private agency. **However, international adoptions may be eligible for this subsidy.**

Please Note:

- The Special Service Subsidy may be combined with IV-E Adoption Assistance or with the State Maintenance Subsidy.
- The subsidy may be used if health insurance, Medicaid or other programs are not available to cover the services.
- The family's statement that they could not adopt the child because of their financial circumstances and the child's special needs without financial subsidy will allow the family to apply for Special Services Subsidy. However, the family's gross income may be taken into consideration when determining the type of expense that is covered by the agency and the amount of subsidy.

Application for Special Services Subsidy: To apply for Special Services Subsidy, the adoptive parents must fill out JFS Form 01613 "Application for Subsidized Adoption". The adoption worker from the custodial agency should furnish applicants and inquirers with a written outline of the application process along with other rules of the program. The subsidy may begin at placement if the child is found eligible. The application must be completed and amount negotiated prior to the finalization of the adoption.

Amount of Special Services Subsidy: The amount of the Special Services Subsidy is a mutually agreed upon amount between the adoptive parents and the custodial agency. This amount is based upon the needs of the child and the circumstances of the adoptive parents and should be negotiated.

Appeal Process for Special Services Subsidy: The adoptive parents have a right to a county hearing if their application is denied, or if they disagree with any other actions taken during the application process. All appeals should be sent to the Administrator/Executive Director of the custodial agency, unless otherwise directed by agency policy.

C) Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS Program): The PASSS Program was designed to give adoptive parents additional funds to help their adoptive child reach the goals they have set. This program is to be used as a last resort when all personal funds have been exhausted. Adoptive parents can apply for the PASSS program within the county that they reside.

The Post-Adoption Special Services Subsidy program is for all adoptive families in Ohio whose child may be experiencing adoption-related difficulties or issues that were pre-existing, but were not apparent at the time of adoption. Such services are available to prevent the disruption of an adoption. PASSS services may include:

- Medical services
- Psychological services
- Psychiatric services
- Counseling services
- Residential treatment

For more information regarding the PASSS program, please contact your county's PCSA.

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