

## **HHS Awards \$35 Million to States for Increasing Adoptions**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today awarded \$35 million to 38 states and Puerto Rico for increasing the number of children adopted from foster care. States use the funds from the adoption incentive award to enhance their programs for abused and neglected children.

“Adopting a child from foster care is a wonderful way to enrich any family’s life,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “We congratulate the states that performed so well this year and we thank the parents who are providing loving and permanent homes.”

The Adoption Incentives program was created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The original program authorized incentive funds to states that increased the number of children adopted from foster care. In order to get payments, states had to increase the number of children adopted relative to baseline data.

Under the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351), the adoption incentives were revamped to provide stronger incentives for states to redouble their efforts to find children – particularly older children and children with special needs – loving adoptive homes. In addition, the law introduced the concept of an adoption rate, which is derived from comparing current year adoptions to the number of children in care at the end of the previous year. States receive additional money if they exceed their highest foster child adoption rate for previous years back to 2002. The Adoption Incentive program gives states \$4,000 for every foster child adopted above their 2007 baseline, plus a payment of \$8,000 for every foster child age nine and older and \$4,000 for every other special needs child adopted above the respective baselines. In addition, states receive \$1,000 for every foster child adopted over and above the level of the state’s highest foster child adoption rate for previous years.

“We are pleased with the positive results states have achieved under the new adoption incentive guidelines,” said David Hansell, acting assistant secretary for children and families. “Older children with special needs are the hardest to find homes for, but they are especially deserving of the safety and stability of an adoptive family.”

States receiving today’s funding are Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island,

South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Puerto Rico also qualified for an incentive award.

A list of each state's adoption incentive award amount can be found at

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2009/fy09\\_adoption\\_incentive\\_awards.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2009/fy09_adoption_incentive_awards.htm).