

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P.O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

March 8, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: AREA EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS AND
CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: FREDERIC M. SIMMENS, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: COPIES OF CHILD WELFARE MANUAL

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S DIVISION

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform county staff they may charge individuals requesting a copy of the Child Welfare Manual. The manual is currently available to all staff via the Intranet. Public access will be made available in the near future via the Internet and will be accessible through public libraries. Due to budget cuts and high costs for printing, Central Office will not mass produce copies of this manual for staff as we have in the past. However, one hard copy will be made available to each county office.

The Department of Social Services Administrative Manual (Section 5 – Records and Record Management) states the following:

“Person’s or agencies requesting access to and/or copies of public documents may be charged a fee. Fees for copying public records will not exceed the actual cost of document search and duplication. Upon request, DSS will certify in writing that the actual cost of document search and duplication is fair, reasonable and does not exceed the actual cost incurred by DSS. DSS may reduce or waive the fee when it is determined that it is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute to public understanding of the operations or activities of DSS and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requestor. (NOTE: Federal employees, auditors and other state agencies will not be charged a fee for such information or requested to complete the forms.)”

Please reference Administrative Manual (Section 5-100) for directions to complete the following forms. Staff may also view this information via the Intranet link: <http://dssweb/dpl/adman/POLICIES/5-100.pdf>. Staff should copy the two forms pertaining to this subject from the DSS Administrators Manual or from the Intranet.

“Request For Document form (Section 5-100, EXHIBIT 2) – This form is to be completed by the requestor. If a written request is received and contains the necessary

information, Children's Division staff will complete Section 1 of the form for the requestor and process it as normal.

“Acknowledgement of Fees” form (Section 5-100, EXHIBIT 3) – This form must be signed by the requestor indicating whether they agree to pay the fee. If the requestor agrees to pay the fee, 50% of the total estimated cost is required before actual research or copying will begin. If the requestor refuses to pay the fee, Division staff will take no further action. Division staff will not release any copies of information until full payment is received by the requestor.

Upon receipt of the completed “Acknowledgement of Fees” form and at least the amount of the deposit, Division staff will gather and copy the requested information, complete Section IV of the “Acknowledgement of Fees” form and forward the form to the requestor. If the requestor submitted full payment, Division staff will also forward copies of the requested information at this time.

ALLOWABLE FEES AND FORWARDING OF FEES:

Following discussions with the Department's Legal Services, it has been determined a charge of, not less than, ten cents (\$0.10) per requested page may be imposed to the requestor. However, fee charge should not exceed twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per page. As per Administrative Manual, Division staff will forward all monies received, along with a copy of the final “Request For Document” form, to the Division of Budget and Finance (DBF.)

CASE RECORD COPIES:

Policy in the current Child Welfare Manual states person's requesting a copy of their personal record may receive an initial copy at no cost. Division staff shall use the above mentioned directions for any additional copies made for the requestor.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.
2. Review DSS Administrative Manual for form completion directions.
3. All questions or comments should be cleared through normal supervisory channels.

FMS/CG/ct