

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

October 1, 2021

PI 21-22

TO: Human Service Zones
Division of Juvenile Services
Tribal Social Services
Field Service Specialists

FROM: Kelsey Bless, Permanency Administrator

SUBJECT: QRTP Placement & Excess Maintenance

PROGRAMS: Residential Facility Rates 623-05-20-40
Category 60- Excess Maintenance Payments (EMP) 623-05-30-30
Category 80- Extra QRTP Supervision 623-05-30-40
QRTP Placements 624-05-20-17
QRTP - Court Involvement 624-05-20-18

RETENTION: Until Manualized

EFFECTIVE: October 1, 2021

The ND Department of Human Services created a fee for service rate structure for North Dakota Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP). NDAC 75-03-15 and NDAC 75-03-40 describe program rules and financial reimbursement options for ND QRTP's. The newly developed fee for service structure offers increased reimbursement for children based on the QRTP assessment process and third-party assessors CANS scores. If the child is approved for QRTP there will be three levels of payment to accommodate the child's needs; base rate, level 2 or level 3.

The ND payment system must reimburse the difficulty of care rates (level 2 or level 3) as an Excess Maintenance Payment (EMP) on top of the base rate each QRTP facility receives per child. Children and Family Services (CFS) reviewed the current maintenance payment policy and has made updates to offer efficiencies and remove the CFS approval process for a level IV EMP when a child is placed in a QRTP. The Qualified Individual, Maximus Ascend, is approving the level of care by granting a QRTP approval. Case managers will be required to update the FRAME group home approval "comments box" by indicating the assessment level granted by Maximus Ascend. The level can be found on the approved assessment, this level is what the QRTP facility will be billing for each month. All QRTP bills will reflect both the base rate (standard = ST) and the difficulty of care (IR = Category 64). At this time, the bills will continue to be sent directly to the custodial case manager for review prior to

submission and authorization of payment to the CFS FCSA Eligibility Unit. Case managers are expected to look at the placement dates and the difficulty of care rate billed.

The new QRTP administrative rules also offered the opportunity for QRTP's to engage in performance-based contracting. Each ND QRTP may choose to voluntarily contract with the Department in order to receive quarterly compensation if they sign the contract and the QRTP:

1. Accepts all children approved for QRTP;
2. Discharges all children in accordance with NDAC 75-03-40-36; and
3. Provides six-months of aftercare services and the child does not return to QRTP level of care.

Children and Family Services will be managing the oversight of the contract/s and will be directly involved with any exception request for admission (SFN 895) or discharge (SFN 896) made by the QRTP.

Lastly, children are eligible to be placed out of state in licensed QRTP's; note there are limited out of state QRTP options available as many states residential facilities are not yet licensed at the QRTP level of care. In addition, a child must be approved through the ICPC process. Out of state QRTP's may have additional billing requirements that will need to be addressed prior to placement, including the cost for their state Qualified Individual assessment regulations related to child placement.

If you have questions, feel free to contact Kelsey Bless, kmbless@nd.gov or 701-328-3581 for payment or policy related questions, Brittany Fode, brifode@nd.gov or 701-328-4934 for QRTP related questions or Kyle Vorachek kvorachek@nd.gov or 701-328-4152 for ICPC related questions.

Residential Facility Rates 623-05-20-40

A qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) is an approved foster care facility setting ~~detailed-specified~~ in Family First Prevention Services Act (PL 115-123) federal legislation, NDCC 50-11 and NDAC 75-03-40-~~administrative-rules~~. The Department establishes a daily rate "~~fee for service~~" per NDAC 75-03-15, "~~Rate-Setting~~", for all licensed/approved North Dakota-~~qualified residential treatment programs QRTP's~~.

The daily foster care maintenance rates include resident room and board, food, care, clothing, personal supplies, education, recreation, child ~~service-related~~~~service-related~~ transportation, ~~difficulty of care costs~~, liability insurance coverage, utilities, etc.

During a child's placement in a ~~residential-facility~~~~QRTP~~, reimbursement may be available for eligible families to facilitate reunification efforts. Funding may be provided to cover the costs of the family expenses, meals, lodging, occasionally mileage, or commercial transportation as outlined in the irregular payment categories. North Dakota will reimburse allowable travel expenses to the facility with consideration of actual costs, not to exceed state per diem rates. Costs will be reimbursed based on North Dakota in-state

rates, even if travel is to another state facility. Commercial transportation will be reimbursed at the actual rate. The facility and custodial case manager are expected to seek the lowest possible rate when commercial transportation is required.

- For foster care billing purposes, these costs are considered a reunification cost and entered as an irregular payment in CCWIPS, Category 50, Code 52.
- Verification of expenditures are required and must be retained for audit purposes.

A bill must be received at the CFS Eligibility Unit before reimbursement can be made to the facility.

ND Daily Maintenance Residential Facility Rates

Qualified Residential Treatment Program Facilities (Q RTP)	PROVIDER NUMBER	EFFECTIVE DATE	DAILY RATE
Dakota Boys Ranch Assn. – Minot Campus Box 5007, Minot, ND 58702-5007	7357	01-01-21	\$ 488.72
Dakota Boys Ranch Assn. – Fargo Youth Home 1641 31st Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103	7358	01-01-21	\$ 488.72
Home on the Range 16351 I-94, Sentinel Butte, ND 58654-9500	7359	04-01-21	\$ 494.68

Q RTP fee for service rates are determined by the department and authorized by the CFS Eligibility Unit in the ND payment system specific to the ND base rate and the child's difficulty of care rate.

<u>North Dakota Qualified Residential Treatment Program (Q RTP)</u>	
<u>Dakota Boys Ranch Assn. – Minot Campus Box 5007, Minot, ND 58702-5007</u>	<u>Provider # 7357</u>
<u>Dakota Boys Ranch Assn. – Fargo Youth Home 1641 31st Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103</u>	<u>Provider # 7358</u>
<u>Home on the Range 16351 I-94, Sentinel Butte, ND 58654-9500</u>	<u>Provider # 7359</u>

The child's difficulty of care (DOC) rate is determined by the CANS assessment weighted score and is billed as an addition to the base rate as an irregular payment, category 64.

<u>Payment Rates</u>	<u>EFF. DATE</u>	<u>DAILY RATE</u>
<u>Base Level</u>	<u>10-01-21</u>	<u>\$297.74/day</u>
<u>Level 2 (IR category 64 = \$185.30/day)</u>	<u>10-01-21</u>	<u>\$483.04/day</u>
<u>Level 3 (IR category 64 = \$404.76/day)</u>	<u>10-01-21</u>	<u>\$702.50/day</u>

The rate is determined by the department and is added to the base rate as a Category 64.

<u>Variable Payment Rates</u>	<u>EFF. DATE</u>	<u>DAILY RATE</u>
<u>Emergency Rate (IR category 64 = \$75/day)</u> <i>Maximum of 30 days when a child is initially placed and denied the Q RTP level of care</i>	<u>10-01-21</u>	<u>\$372.74/day</u>
<u>Respite Rate</u> <i>Maximum of 7 days when a child is offered temporary onsite respite care at a Q RTP.</i>	<u>10-01-21</u>	<u>\$297.74/day</u>

If a child placed as an emergency placement does not receive an approval from the Qualified Individual within 30 days, the entire Q RTP stay is non-reimbursable.

Category 60 - Excess Maintenance Payments (EMP) 623-05-30-30

Category 60 irregular payments are specific to Excess Maintenance Payments (EMP), also known as a specialized family foster care irregular payment. An EMP may apply when undue demands are required to care for a child. An EMP may be approved for a licensed or approved (Tribal Affidavit) family foster home due to the physical, emotional, and/or material resources in excess of the demands expected in normal foster parenting. An EMP can be approved at any time throughout the life of the case. The foster care case manager must submit the signed SFN 904 to the CFS Eligibility Unit for payment authorization to the foster parent.

The [SFN 904](#) "Agreement to Furnish Specialized Foster Care Services, must be:

1. Signed by the primary provider, foster care case manager and the CFS Field Service Specialist;
2. Specific to a six month maximum timeframe;
3. Specific to the placement dates of the primary provider in which the agreement is signed, not to exceed the last day of the primary placement.

If a placement change occurs for a child in care and the approval is granted for the receiving family foster home, the foster parents are entitled to payment reimbursement for each full day within the approved duration of time for which they provide care. Duplication of the EMP reimbursement is not allowed for the date the child is transferred from one home to the next.

The EMP levels are:

Level	Code	EMP Rate/Day
Level I	Code 61	\$1.67/day (estimated \$50/mo.)
Level II	Code 62	\$3.33/day (estimated \$100/mo.)
Level III	Code 63	\$5.00/day (estimated \$150/mo.)

The payment system will only calculate the EMP per day, the range from \$50 to \$150 is based off a 30 day calculation. The payment system will automatically generate the value based on the EMP daily rate.

Level IV Code 64

Excess maintenance payment for level IV requires additional approval from the ~~Regional Representative and~~ Children & Family Services Foster Care Administrator. The total amount of the EMP is determined based on the SFN 1865 and must exceed level I, II, and III maximum amounts. The EMP total for level IV must be manually entered into the payment system once determined. A partial month of payment must be prorated.

QRTP Placement: Level IV EMP approval requirements **do not apply** to children placed in qualified residential treatment program (QRTP) placements. The Department has a contract with a third-party vendor who determines the approvals and difficulty of care levels for children placed in a QRTP.

Out of State Providers:

Out-of-state placements are reimbursed at the rate of the receiving state. The receiving state may have a rating scale to determine if an excess maintenance payment is needed to accommodate the child in placement, if not the foster care case manager can use the ND SFN 1865 to determine need. If a North Dakota child is placed in an out of state family foster home, which receives direct reimbursement from the Department, and the need of the child exceeds the out of state maintenance rate, an EMP may be approved. Out of state foster care agencies that bill North Dakota for child placement costs including a difficulty of care rate along with their standard daily rate, are not required to have a SFN 904 on file, as North Dakota will reimburse the therapeutic agency as billed.

Case managers seeking out of state residential, must complete the ICPC process and receive approval for placement into a licensed qualified residential treatment program (QRTP). North Dakota will not reimburse for any placement days in a residential facility unless the facility is licensed as a QRTP.

Category 80 – Extra QRTP Supervision 623-05-30-40

A Category 80, Code 80, irregular payment may be considered if a child requires extra one-on-one supervision in a residential facility (QRTP). The irregular payment option is specific for a limited period of time to stabilize or transition the child to a setting that may better address the child's needs.

Prior to considering a request for extra supervision in a QRTP, the foster care case manager must thoroughly review the situation to ensure that the current setting is indeed an appropriate ~~care situation~~placement for the child ~~for the time being~~.

Approval for a Category 80 irregular payment requires ~~additional~~ approval from the Children & Family Services Foster Care Administrator. This irregular payment is for a specified one-on-one caregiver, for a set number of hours per day at a specified rate, and for a limited period of time. Category 80 is rarely used, but available in special, limited circumstances. The approval must be placed in the eligibility file for auditing purposes. The ~~foster care~~custodial case manager must submit the email approval and SFN 1042 detailing the facility costs to the CFS Eligibility Unit for payment authorization ~~to the foster parent~~.

QRTP Placements 624-05-20-17

Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) seeks to restrict the use of residential settings and instead emphasizes placement of foster children in family settings. Federal regulations grant authority to states to place in approved foster care settings; one being a qualified residential treatment program (QRTP). A QRTP shall use a trauma-informed treatment model ~~and employ registered or licensed nursing staff and other licensed clinical staff~~ to engage in short term treatment. The QRTP placement is only available to:

1. Children under the public custody of a Human Service Zone, ~~Tribe~~Tribal Nation or Division of Juvenile Services; and
2. Children, not in public custody, who have been approved for placement and reimbursement by the NDDHS Voluntary Treatment Program.

CANS Assessment

North Dakota ~~has elected to utilize~~is utilizing the Child and Adolescent Strengths and Needs (CANS) assessment which is a multi-purpose tool developed to support decision making, level of care and service planning, while monitoring outcomes. The CANS

assessment will be completed by the contracted Qualified Individual and an assessment report, identifying the child's difficulty of care level, will be provided to the custodial case manager.

- ~~• If interested in learning more about the CANS tool "Standard CANS Comprehensive 2.0", it is available at: <https://praedfoundation.org/general-manuals-cans/>~~

Qualified Individual

The term 'Qualified Individual' means a trained professional or licensed clinician who is not an employee of the state child welfare program and who is not connected to, or affiliated with, any public agency or placement setting in which children are placed.

The Department ~~contracted holds a contract~~ with an independent third-party vendor, ~~Maximus Ascend, known to ND as "Ascend" in efforts to hire who hires~~ contracted employees to complete a third-party formal assessment for the QRTP level of care. The ~~contracted employees hired by Ascend~~ Qualified Individuals are will be located throughout North Dakota and assigned cases based on geographic area and ability to meet timeliness standards. All Qualified Individual assessment efforts will be monitored and reviewed by an ~~Ascend~~ Utilization Review Clinician ~~located in the headquarter office of Tennessee~~. The Qualified Individual will complete the assessment and provide a recommendation ~~to Ascend~~. The ~~Ascend~~ Utilization Review Clinician will review the recommendation along with supporting documentation to determine the child's approval/denial status and difficulty of care level ~~of care based on eligibility based on the pre-determined~~ North Dakota QRTP algorithm. Random cases will be reviewed and staffed ~~by Ascend~~ with the Department of Human Services QRTP Clinical Alignment Team (Administration from DHS Children and Family Services and Field Services).

The Qualified Individual will:

1. Receive the referral information including the Universal Application (SFN 824) and all supporting documentation from the custodial case manager ~~via fax~~.
2. Work timely in conjunction with the custodial case manager, family and members of the child and family team to complete interviews ~~timely~~.
3. If the child is placed as an emergency placement the Qualified Individual will also speak with the QRTP therapist and/or QRTP treatment coordinator.
4. Meet with the custodial case manager in a mutually convenient location where the child is also able to participate in the interview for assessment, likely the case manager's office or in the QRTP if already placed. If the assessment visit is being completed onsite at a QRTP, the QRTP shall ensure and provide the Qualified Individual with a private office space ~~in order to to~~ complete the assessment and interviews ~~in private~~.

- a. If a child is placed out of state, ~~Ascend can complete~~ the CANS assessment can be completed via a secure virtual platform., ~~Skype, FaceTime or Telephone call.~~
 - b. The Department has granted one out of state exception; if a North Dakota child is placed in the Moorhead, Minnesota Detention Center a Qualified Individual can arrange to visit the child in the detention center location. This exception was granted based on close proximity to Fargo and a contract for detention center services in the Fargo-Moorhead area.
 - c. In special circumstances, if a child is unable to meet face-to-face, the custodial case manager may request the Qualified Individual complete a virtual assessment.
5. Complete required interviews within 5 working days of the referral date.
 6. Assess the strengths and needs of the child using ~~Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (the CANS)~~ assessment tool.
 7. Determine whether the needs of the child can be met with family members or through placement in a family foster home or, if not, recommend a type of setting that would provide the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment.
 8. Determine whether the needs of the child are consistent with goals for the child, as specified in the case plan ~~for the child.~~
 9. Develop a list of child-specific short and long-term goals.
 10. Provide, in writing, a formal QRTP Assessment Report to the custodial case manager within 10 working days of the referral date.

The Qualified Individual has the authority to make an approval or denial determination based on the ND Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) level of care. The Qualified Individual cannot dictate which QRTP a child can be placed; their role is to determine if the QRTP level of care is appropriate.

Grandfathered in Youth

~~Youth will be "grandfathered in" to a North Dakota licensed QRTP if placement occurred prior to October 1, 2019. The youth will receive a formal baseline CANS assessment initiated by Ascend. Ascend will contact the custodial case manager with the details regarding arrangements to complete the required assessment. Upon notice from Ascend, the custodial case manager will be responsible to:~~

- ~~1. Submit a new Universal Application (SFN 824)~~
- ~~2. Submit supporting documentation and rationale as to why the QRTP level of care is the most appropriate.~~

~~Grandfathered in youth will either be determined:~~

~~1. Approved for the QRTP Level of Care,~~

~~a. The 90-day approval period starts on the date of the QRTP level of care determination.~~

~~b. The placement maximum date starts effective October 1, 2019.~~

~~2. Denied for the QRTP Level of Care,~~

~~a. A new placement must occur within the 30 days from the date of the QRTP denial.~~

~~b. If the custodial case manager chooses to seek a reconsideration of the denial and the denial is upheld, the 30-day time frame starts on the date the initial denial was made. If the appeal was overturned, the 90-day approval starts on the date the initial determination was made.~~

Emergency Placement

An emergency placement into a QRTP is allowable prior to a completed assessment by the Qualified Individual. It is the responsibility of the custodial case manager to submit the Universal Application (SFN 824) and relevant supporting documentation to ~~Ascend~~ the Qualified Individual and the desired QRTP's for ~~admission~~ placement acceptance.

1. If the child is placed as an emergency placement and is approved by the Qualified Individual for the QRTP level of care, the child's 90-day approval period starts on the date of admission.
2. If the child is placed as an emergency placement and is denied by the Qualified Individual, the child's length of stay in a QRTP is not to exceed 30 days from date of admission. The Department will allow reasonable discharge planning and payment to occur, not to exceed 30 days.
3. Emergency placements "~~back-to-back~~back-to-back" are prohibited. If the child was placed on an emergency basis and is denied, a child may not re-enter the QRTP as an emergency placement. ~~Back-to-Back~~Back-to-Back is further defined that an emergency placement cannot occur for 30 days from discharge unless an onset or increase of high-risk behaviors are present. High-risk behaviors include danger to self or others, self-injurious behaviors, sexual aggression, fire setting and runaway if present with additional dangerous behaviors, or the youth runs to unsafe environments where the likelihood to be victimized is high. If an emergency placement is determined necessary in less than 30 days, the custodian must request permission from ~~the central office~~Children and Family Services (CFS) via dhscfs@nd.gov. This will provide authorization to place a child back into a QRTP as an emergency placement. If reviewed and approved by ~~the central office~~CFS, the

case manager will be notified and responsible to submit a reconsideration request ~~to Ascend~~.

4. Although the custodial case manager is primarily responsible to work directly with ~~Ascend~~the Qualified Individual, the Q RTP is expected to ensure an approval is granted for a child to remain in that level of care. If the Q RTP does not receive notice that the placement has been approved within 15 days of admission, the Q RTP should be asking the custodial case manager for the assessment report. Custodial case managers must also provide a copy of the assessment report including the difficulty of care level to the Q RTP for billing purposes.

Placement Approvals into Q RTP

A child who has been approved and placed at the Q RTP will be granted an approval for a 90-period beginning at the date of placement. The custodial case manager does not need pre-approval ~~from either Ascend or the Court~~ before placement can occur.

- Initial 30-day window: The approval to be placed in a Q RTP is valid up to 30 days; meaning a child must be placed in the Q RTP within 30 days of receiving the approval from the Qualified Individual. If the Q RTP placement is not available for more than 30 days, a new SFN 824 and CANS assessment must be completed.
- ~~Pending Approval: There may be cases where the child is in need of acute hospitalization to stabilize prior to a Q RTP treatment stay. The CANS assessment may indicate a pending approval for a Q RTP, not to exceed 10 days. If the child successfully discharges from acute hospitalization the pending approval would allow transition into a Q RTP upon discharge. The custodial case manager would need to notify Ascend of the acute discharge via fax to ensure the pending approval remains valid.~~
- Bed Hold: If a child who has been approved and placed at a Q RTP is in need of needs temporary psychiatric hospitalization, the temporary acute care is allowable. ~~If the~~The Q RTP is willing to accept the child back into placement, the facility is allowed reimbursement for a 14-day bed hold for reimbursement to the Q RTP and a new assessment is not required, so long as the approval has not expired.
- Transition: A child may be transitioned from one Q RTP to another if it is determined in the best interest for their treatment. The current ~~Ascend~~ Q RTP approval will follow the child to their new Q RTP location, while the placement maximums and approval timeframes remain.
- Post-Discharge 30-day window: The approval to be placed in a Q RTP is valid up to 30 days; meaning a child who discharges from a Q RTP, but still has a period of time allowed within their 90-day approval can only be re-admitted to a Q RTP within 30 days of discharge. If the re-admission is requested more than 30 days from discharge, a new SFN 824 and CANS assessment must be completed.

Placement Maximums

QRTP placement is closely regulated by federal regulations and the age of the child. A foster child 13 years of age and older shall not exceed placement into a QRTP for more than 12 consecutive months (365 days) or 18 non-consecutive months (545 days). A foster child age 12 and younger shall not exceed placement in a QRTP for more than 6 consecutive months (180 days).

A child who has been placed at a QRTP for 12 consecutive months has reached their placement maximum and may not re-enter a QRTP facility for a period of 90 days unless high-risk behaviors are present. High-risk behaviors include danger to self or others, self-injurious behaviors, sexual aggression, fire setting and runaway if present with additional dangerous behaviors, or the youth runs to unsafe environments where the likelihood to be victimized is high. If placement is determined necessary in less than 90 days, the custodian must request permission from the ~~central-office~~Children and Family (CFS) via dhscfs@nd.gov. This will provide authorization to place a child back into a QRTP. If reviewed and approved by the ~~central-office~~CFS, the custodial case manager will be notified and responsible to submit the universal application and supporting documentation ~~to Ascend~~.

- **Turning age 13 Example**: If a 12-year-old is placed at the QRTP and turns 13 during their placement stay, those days already placed at a QRTP are part of their placement maximums of 12 consecutive months because the child is now 13. The placement maximums in this example begin the date the child entered the QRTP when he/she was 12. The child is 12 and six months of placement is expiring, however the child will soon turn age 13 and has a valid QRTP approval that extends beyond the child's 13th birthday, a placement extension request must still be made to the Department. This is a notification of the current placement, birthday of the child, approval to continue treatment and a request to extend until the 13th birthday to fill the gap.

The placement maximums are specific to the QRTP level of care (both in and out of state), not individual facilities. It is important that case managers are aware of and track the placement maximums, while recognizing the importance of referring children to a QRTP only if he/she needs treatment. If the length of stay is greater than the federal requirements, state approval from the ND Department of Human Services Executive Director is required. This process for a placement extension will be requested by the custodial case manager at least 30 days prior to reaching placement maximums.

In order to request a placement extension beyond the allocated federal maximum, the custodial case manager must:

1. Complete the SFN 826 in its entirety, detailing all necessary and required information;
2. Write a summary indicating the child's needs and barriers to achieving treatment goals requiring a longer stay in the facility;
3. Provide supporting documentation of progress and discharge plans;

4. Detail the requested/estimated amount of time required to complete the treatment; and
5. Submit the required paperwork to ~~the Department~~Children and Family Services (CFS) via dhscfs@nd.gov with an email subject titled "QRTP Placement Extension Request".
6. The QRTP Clinical Alignment Team will review the request and respond accordingly within 3 working days of submission.
 - a. ~~If determined unnecessary to submit to the Executive Director, the custodial case manager will receive notice to discharge.~~
 - b. ~~If determined necessary to submit to the Executive Director, the custodial case manager will receive a final decision of placement extension.~~

Case Manager Responsibility

The custodial case manager is responsible to seek least restrictive most appropriate placement settings for each child in foster care. It is the responsibility of the custodial case manager to ensure all referral information and supporting documentation is provided to Ascend the Qualified Individual and the desired QRTP. If the required referral paperwork is not filled out and supporting documentation is not submitted with the application, Ascend the Qualified Individual has the authority to reject ~~and send back or be denied the referral~~ due to insufficient information.

The custodial case manager is responsible to:

1. Complete the referral paperwork in its entirety inclusive of the Universal Application (SFN 824) and supporting documentation. Supporting documentation may include a recent psychiatric evaluation, diagnostic evaluation, treatment plan, specialist evaluation, IQ Testing, IEP, etc.
2. Submit referral documentation to:
 - a. ~~Each~~The QRTP desired for placement and
 - b. ~~Fax to The Qualified Individual contracted vendor Ascend at 877-431-9568 to begin the assessment; each fax must include, an Ascend Referral Fax Cover Sheet. A copy of the cover sheet can be obtained from the Ascend website.~~
 - c. If the child was placed at a QRTP on an emergency, the SFN 824 ~~to Ascend~~ shall ~~also~~ include any intake assessments completed onsite by the QRTP.
3. Engage in discharge planning upon admission to the QRTP.

4. Track the 90-day approval period timeframes. ~~length of stay a child is in a QRTP during the approval periods. If a child remains in a QRTP after an approval period ends, the QRTP is at risk of non-payment and the custodial agency will be responsible for reimbursement.~~
5. Track the child's placement maximums (6 months or 12/18 months based on age). The dates in any QRTP located in or out of state are considered part of placement maximum days and cannot exceed the federal placement maximums defined above.
6. Submit evidence at each court review and each permanency hearing held ~~with respect to the child~~ demonstrating that ongoing assessment of the strengths and needs of the child continues to support ~~the determination~~ that the needs of the child cannot be met through placement in a family setting at this time. Custodial case managers want to ensure the court grants general placement and care authority in the court order, this allows the flexibility to move a child to a higher or lower level of care as appropriate. If the court order limits the child's placement to only a family setting or only a QRTP level of care, the case will need to go before a judge to be granted authority to move the child if a different level of care is warranted.
7. Seek least restrictive family setting placements ongoing. Federal regulation specifically indicates that the unavailability of a family foster home is not a sufficient reason to place a child in a QRTP. Federal regulations emphasize that a shortage or lack of foster family homes is not an acceptable reason for determining that the needs of the child cannot be met in a lower level of care.
8. Communicate with the child, as developmentally appropriate, about the placement decisions being made to assist in meeting their permanency plan~~:-~~
 - a. The ~~client-child~~ may request to remain at the QRTP level of care, however, level of care determination is made specific to the appropriateness of a treatment setting and not equivalent to the comfortability of a child's placement preference.
 - b. Residential settings are intended to be time limited for treatment needs and services. It is important for the child to know the QRTP ~~(whom they have a relationship with) will be providing~~ is required to provide aftercare services for up to six months. This requirement of aftercare services offers continuity of care and connections to not only the QRTP, but service providers and local supports ~~supports locally~~ in the child's community.
9. Submit the approved QRTP Assessment Report to the:
 - a. ~~The~~ QRTP facility accepting placement to ensure appropriate and ongoing services are provided to meet the needs of the child and for reimbursement/billing purposes, and

- b. ~~The CFS~~ Field Service Specialist to ensure accurate placement approval dates in FRAME and for timely reimbursement of payment to the Q RTP. ~~FRAME~~ Group Home Approvals (GHA) will be reviewed and approved for the period of time timeframe in which there reflected in the Q RTP assessment report ~~reflects~~. The GHA comments box must indicate the difficult of care level specified on the Q RTP Assessment report. ~~However, if the court order expires prior to the 90-day approval, the group home approval cannot exceed the court order expiration date.~~
- c. Discharge ~~option~~ placement provider; example TFC agency or foster parent upon request.

Universal Application (SFN 824)

The state form is completed by the custodial case manager detailing current and immediate need for out of home treatment. In addition to this ~~form; form,~~ the custodian must attach ~~additional~~ supporting information ~~to determine placement to best meet the needs of the child.~~ This form must be submitted to ~~Ascend~~ the Qualified Individual and the desired Q RTP.

- The state form must be completed electronically.
- The state form is fillable and savable for future editing.

Continued Stay Review (SFN 826)

The state form is completed by the custodial case manager for all children placed in a Q RTP for treatment. The continued stay review form must be completed no greater than 30 calendar days prior to placement approval expiration and **no less than 20 calendar days before the placement approval expires**. The Qualified Individual will have 10 working days to review the request to continue in a Q RTP.

- The state form must be completed electronically.
- The state form is fillable and savable for future editing.

Continued Stay Review (CSR) Timelines and Process

Upon receipt of the CSR form, the Qualified Individual will coordinate and lead all continued stay reviews interviews to determine ongoing approval in the Q RTP level of care.

- **3 months** = A document review. The ~~Ascend utilization~~ Utilization Reviewer will conduct a phone interview with the custodial case manager.
- **6 months** = A full review. The Qualified Individual will conduct in-person interviews with the custodial case manager, the youth, the Q RTP treatment coordinator and any other relevant parties.

- **9 months** = A document review. The ~~Ascend utilization~~Utilization Reviewer will conduct a phone interview with the custodial case manager.
- **12 months** = A full review. The Qualified Individual will conduct in-person interviews with the custodial case manager, the youth, the Q RTP treatment coordinator and any other relevant parties.

~~Ascend will coordinate and lead all continued stay reviews to determine ongoing approval in the Q RTP level of care.~~

Approval Extension Request Form

~~Ascend, as the contracted~~The Qualified Individual contracted vendor, generated a form for custodial case managers to complete in order to request an extension for the Q RTP approval period. The extension may be granted for a period of up to 14 days. If approval is needed for longer than 14 days, the continued stay review (SFN 826) shall be completed. The Extension Request Form is only required when a discharge plan and discharge date has been identified and an extension is requested to meet the discharge plan. The form can be found on the ~~Ascend~~contracted vendor website.

Reconsiderations~~–Submit to Ascend~~

If a child receives a denial for the Q RTP level of care, it is the responsibility of the custodial case manager to reconvene necessary parties to identify local or in-state resources to meet the child's needs. If it is determined, information needed for the Q RTP approval was missing, the custodial case manager may choose to submit a reconsideration request ~~to Ascend~~.

If requesting a reconsideration, the custodial case manager must:

- Submit a reconsideration request form ~~found online on the Ascend website~~;
- Identify any ~~Any~~ documentation not previously submitted resulting in the denial or any new supporting information ~~or documentation~~;
- Detailed rationale as to why the Q RTP level of care is most appropriate; and
- Submit ~~to Ascend~~ the request within 5 working days of receiving the initial denial.

~~Ascend~~The Qualified Individual will review the information within 5 working days of receipt of the reconsideration and determine an approval or denial for Q RTP. While awaiting the decision of the reconsideration, custodial case managers must simultaneously work to identify a ~~community care~~ plan, resources and supports to best meet the needs of the child.

DHS Temporary Approval

Q RTP Clinical Alignment Team may consider granting a temporary approval on a ~~case-by-case~~ case-by-case basis in efforts to not disrupt a child's treatment. A temporary approval will allow the custodial case manager permission to submit a second "reconsideration request" ~~to Ascend~~ detailing new information before the required discharge.

Ex. Youth has completed the assessment process ~~with Ascend~~ and was recommended a higher level of care. During the window to discharge, there were no higher level of care beds available. While attempting to locate appropriate level of care placement, the youth began engaging in treatment at the Q RTP and has stabilized in efforts to remain at the Q RTP level of care in lieu of a placement transition. With a DHS temporary approval, a custodial case manager may submit a second reconsideration ~~to Ascend~~ with new information regarding the child's engagement at the Q RTP. Such reconsiderations are prohibited from being submitted ~~to Ascend~~ without temporary approval ~~form DHS~~ from Children and Family Services.

In order to request a DHS temporary approval, the custodial case manager must:

1. Write a summary indicating the child's recent change in treatment engagement;
2. Provide supporting documentation of clinical treatment team notes and recommendations;
3. Submit to dhscfs@nd.gov with an email subject titled "Q RTP-DHS Temporary Approval Request".

The Q RTP Clinical Alignment Team will review and respond to the request within 3 working days of submission.

- ~~a. If determined unnecessary to submit to Ascend, the custodial case manager will receive notice to discharge.~~
- ~~b. If determined necessary to submit to Ascend, the custodial case manager will receive a final decision of temporary approval to complete a second reconsideration.~~

Managing Q RTP Denials

The role of ~~Ascend the Qualified Individual~~ is to determine an approval or denial into a Q RTP. If the determination results in a denial of Q RTP, ~~Ascend the Qualified Individual~~ will recommend a higher or lower ~~categories-level~~ of care. If a lower level of care is recommended, the custodial case manager may seek any combination of lower levels of care to meet the child's needs in the least restrictive environment.

If a case is denied the Q RTP level of care, the custodial case manager shall reconvene necessary parties to identify local or in-state resources to meet the child's ~~needs;~~ needs, which may include members of the Child and Family Team. If necessary, the custodial case manager may submit all supporting documentation to the Regional Review Team

Coordinator. The Regional Review Team Coordinator will determine if the case requires a Regional Review Team meeting. Regional Review Team members shall ensure all resources have been exhausted to transition or accommodate the individual in the least restrictive environment.

Regional Review Teams operate under clinical administration of the regional Human Service Centers. The custodial case manager shall refer to the Human Service Center office affiliated with the county in which the case originated. Regional Review Teams organize local agency collaboration and engage families, case planning, resource development, identification of service gaps, while recruiting and retaining viable placement resources to meet local needs. If State Review Team is required, the intention is to not case manage the case nor identify placements, rather to support, provide technical assistance and access to financial resources.

~~On occasion, local teams may be unable to identify sufficient resources and services to meet the child's needs. The Regional Review Team Coordinator may request a State Review Team meeting. The Regional Review Team Coordinator shall submit all supporting documentation provided by the case manager including:~~

~~Rationale as to why QRTP remains the least restrictive level of care;~~

~~The submitted Universal Application (SFN 824), which received the denial;~~

~~Current supporting information, inclusive of mental health evaluations, treatment plan, diagnostic evaluations, specialist evaluations, completed IQ Testing, IEP, previous placement setting tried and failed, as well as current options sought including all in state and out of state placement options; and~~

~~Email such documentation to the State Review Team Coordinator at SRT@nd.gov with an email subject line indicting 'Region #: QRTP Denial'~~

~~The State Review Team Coordinator will communicate with the QRTP Clinical Alignment Team to review denials and determine if the case does rise to the level of a formal state review. The QRTP Clinical Alignment Team will meet within 3 working days of receiving the request. If warranted, the State Review Team will meet within 3 working days of the QRTP Clinical Alignment Team receiving the denial request.~~

~~-~~

~~The Department of Human Services recognizes the need for staffing cases when local resources/supports are insufficient to meet identified needs. However, local agencies and Human Service Zones are required to engage families, case plan, develop resources, identify service gaps, while recruiting and retaining viable placement resources to meet local needs. The intention of the State Review Team is to not identify placements, rather to support regions in promoting resiliency by providing technical assistance and access to financial resources and supports if a community care plan is developed to meet the complex needs of a child.~~

QRTP Aftercare Services

When a child is approved and admitted for QRTP treatment, the child is required to be provided aftercare services by the QRTP facility per NDAC ~~7475~~7475-03-40 post discharge.

- ~~• If a child was grandfathered in on October 1, 2019 and remained placed beyond 30 days the child does not meet the eligibility of a treatment resident and is eligible for aftercare services.~~

If a child is placed as an emergency placement and denied for QRTP level of care, the child does not meet the eligibility of a treatment resident and the facility is not required to provide the aftercare services.

Aftercare services shall include coordinating of services, supporting the current placement location (relative, foster home, parent, etc.), tracking of client outcomes and other tasks as defined by the QRTP. The outcomes will be collected by the QRTP in conjunction with the youth and the family ~~for~~ at six-months post-discharge.

Out of State Placements

~~North Dakota foster children in need of out-of-state placement may only be placed in a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) facility that meets the federal standards. Foster care funding will only support the reimbursement of placement in a QRTP residential level of care. Placement maximums also apply to children placed in an out of state QRTP.~~

~~residential facility out of state prior to October 1, 2019 may remain in placement until treatment is complete. The out of state facility remains eligible because the residential facility is licensed in that state of jurisdiction and approved by that state's IV-E plan; making the placement reimbursable with foster care funding.~~

-

~~Placement length of stay maximums do not apply to out of state facilities as the child is not placed in a licensed QRTP.~~

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The Department does not prohibit children from being placed outside of the state of North Dakota, however it is highly discouraged to place a child away from their connections and reunification or permanency plan options. If seeking an out of state placement, Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) must be followed. Before seeking out of state ~~residential QRTP~~ placement, all in-state QRTP facilities must deny the child for admission. The current list of approved out of state facilities is located online at the Children and Family Services website.

QRTP Payments

~~The Department will authorize all eligible QRTP payments directly to the QRTP facility based on billing. A child is prohibited from being placed at a QRTP without an approval, with the exception of emergency placements not to exceed 30 days.~~

~~If the child is placed at a QRTP and their approval expires, the child must be discharged from the placement location effective the date of expiration. It is imperative that custodial case managers monitor the approval timeframes, if a child remains in a QRTP without approval, the payment will 100% be the responsibility of the custodial agency and the days in a QRTP placement will go against the child's placement maximum. Such placements will be elevated to the Executive Office for review of noncompliance.~~

~~Ascend~~ **Qualified Individual Contracted Vendor** Contact Information

~~Maximums Ascend~~

Fax: (877)-431-9568

Phone: (844) 933-3772

Email: ND_FFPSA@MAXIMUS.com

Website: https://maximusclinicalservices.com/svcs/north_dakota_ffpsa

- Fax Coversheet
- Desk Reconsideration Request Form
- Extension Request Form
- Trainings and Education

~~The Qualified Individuals utilizes the~~ If interested in learning more about the CANS tool "Standard CANS Comprehensive 2.0". The tool ,it is available at: <https://praedfoundation.org/general-manuals-cans/>.

Q RTP - Court Involvement 624-05-20-18

Federal regulations require the Qualified Individual to provide notification to the designated court of jurisdiction, by submitting the completed assessment report to the . ~~Ascend is required to contact the~~ court directly.

State Court Cases, ~~Ascend the Qualified Individual~~ will:

1. E-file documentation using the child's court file number/s provided on the Universal Application (SFN 824),
2. Submit the Universal Application (824) or Continued Stay Review (SFN 826); and
3. Submit Assessment Report detailing the decision of approval or denial for a Q RTP.

Tribal Court Cases, ~~Ascend the Qualified Individual~~ will:

1. Email the assessment report and completed Universal Application (SFN 824) or Continued Stay Review (SFN 826) to Tribal Court.

State Juvenile Court Review Process:

The North Dakota Juvenile Court administrative review process will require a Juvenile Court Director or designee to complete and file Q RTP review documents in the child's court file. Federal regulation allows up to 60 days for court approval for placement into a

Q RTP; however, North Dakota Juvenile Court has shorter timeframes and will be alerted when the Ascend Q RTP assessment report is e-filed.

The Juvenile Court Director or designee must:

1. Consider the assessment, determination, and documentation made by the Qualified Individual conducting the assessment;
2. Determine whether the needs of the child can be met through placement in a family foster home or, if not, whether placement in a Q RTP provides the most effective and appropriate level of care for the child in the least restrictive environment and whether that placement is consistent with the short- and long-term goals for the child; and
3. Review and provide a letter of approval or denial to the custodial case manager.

If the Qualified Individual has denied placement of a child into a Q RTP, North Dakota Juvenile Court will not take further action. Any party to the case may request a review hearing, it is possible the Ascend Qualified Individual could be subpoenaed to detail rationale as to why the Q RTP denial occurred. The option to request a review hearing is available to any party to the case per state law.

If the Juvenile Court Director reviews the Q RTP assessment report indicating an approval and has further questions regarding the case, placement or permanency plan, the Juvenile Court Director has the authority to contact the custodial case manager directly in efforts to receive additional information to finalize the court administrative review.

Court Orders ~ Q RTP Placements

NDCC 27-20.3 or NDCC 27-20.4 grants care, custody and control of a child to a public agency. The agency has the authority to seek placement options to best meet the needs of the child. The flexibility in court orders granting placement and care authority allows custodians to move a child quickly and efficiently from one provider to another without going back into a court hearing. The Q RTP approval requirement by a Qualified Individual is a federal mandate (FFPSA PL 115-123) to restrict congregate/residential placements as ongoing options to children in foster care. The Q RTP level of care was required by the federal government as a short-term intensive, trauma informed treatment option to support case planning and child needs. Title IV-E federal foster care regulations prohibit specifying a provider in a court order. Court orders shall not indicate specific language related to the decision of the Q RTP approval/denial process.

Case managers will want to ensure the affidavit offers flexibility to the custodial agency regarding level of care in efforts to move the child when appropriate without going back to court for permission to place or discharge a child from a placement.

- ~~1. Court Order Eligible Example: "The court grants County/Human Service Zone the placement and care responsibility for the child. It is known to the court and the court agrees the child requires a temporary residential treatment placement until goals are met and the child can be transitioned to a lower level of care. When treatment goals are met, the agency has the authority to place the child in the level of care, which best meet the child's needs."~~
- ~~2. This language in a court order would be eligible for payment to the Q RTP provider.~~
- ~~3. Court Order Ineligible Example: "The court agrees the child requires a Q RTP treatment placement at Home on the Range."~~
- ~~4. This language in a court order would be ineligible for payment to the Q RTP provider.~~