

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER
CHILD WELFARE SERVICES CWS-AL-06-09**

TO: COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: CHILDREN'S SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SOCIAL WORKERS, ADOPTION
SUPERVISORS, FOSTER CARE SUPERVISORS, LINKS LIASIONS**

DATE: August 14, 2009

SUBJECT: USE OF LINKS FUNDS FOR INTERNET SEARCH

EFFECTIVE DATE: IMMEDIATELY

As you may already know, several North Carolina counties are participating in a Family Finding project that supports location of relatives and others who may become resources for youth in care. However, not all counties are able to participate in this project.

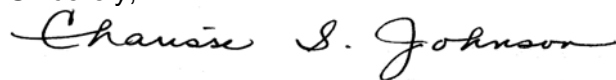
This letter is intended to inform or remind all counties that LINKS allocations and LINKS Special Funds/Transitional are available to reimburse counties for internet searches for relatives and kin and to support some of the costs of contact between LINKS-eligible youth and probable long-term supporters.

The use of the internet to locate relatives requires a thoughtful and planned approach. Youth may have unrealistic expectations about people they have known in the past but with whom they have lost touch. Relatives and others who were once close to the child may feel threatened by an agency approaching them after many years of no contact. However, the internet can be an effective tool in helping youth to contact persons who may become part of their long-term personal support network. A key component of using the tool effectively is to search for as many possible supports as possible. Contacted individuals need to have full control over the degree to which they wish to become re-involved with the youth.

If your county is interested in reimbursement from LINKS Transitional Funds to conduct internet searches such as through *Intellius* or *US Search*, please let your Foster Care Supervisor and LINKS Liaison know of your willingness to support this activity. Training and planning to use the internet for searches should be a component of your overall plan. LINKS Transitional Funds are reimbursed to the county through the use of the Authorization for Funds Access form (DSS-5216) and the Request for Reimbursement form (DSS-5217) as described in [Chapter XIII – Child Welfare Funding Manual](#).

LINKS Transitional Funds may also be used to support contact between eligible youth and probable supporters. As a general rule, LINKS may be used for the cost to the youth, such as for public transportation to visit, for prepaid telephone cards, for suitable clothing, for meal costs as well as for worker time to help the youth prepare for the visit or to process the experience. For additional information, please contact Danielle McConaga at (919) 334-1110 or at Danielle.McConaga@ncmail.net.

Sincerely,



Charisse S. Johnson, Chief
Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry Bradsher
Jack Rogers
Sarah Barham
Hank Bowers
Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders
Children's Programs Representatives
Local Business Liaisons