

Interagency Rates Committee (IRC) Child Placement Agency & Educational/Non-Residential Programs FY2026 Budget Application Tip Sheet

Important

- NEW for FY 2026: Rate applications will be submitted via *Microsoft OneDrive*. Each provider agency will have access to a folder in Microsoft OneDrive for submitting the budget application documents.
- DHS licensed programs should upload approval documents into the CJAMS Provider Portal & will also need to submit a **complete** budget application package to the IRC.

The following budget application forms are due to Licensing Agencies by January 15, 2025:

- Levels of Intensity Score Sheet
- Levels of Intensity Checklist
- Personnel Cost Detail Forms (Budget Forms E2-E6)
- Narrative justifying any staffing related changes (if applicable).
- Difficulty of Care Computation Form (TFC, TFC-MF, & TMP-TFC Providers Only)
- Board Rate Computation Form (TFC, TFC-MF, & TMP-TFC Providers Only)

Fillable Templates:

- Rate Application Checklist
- Non-Residential Checklist
- Budget Identification Form
- Levels of Intensity Score Sheet
- Program Description Form
- Lease Mortgage Summary
- Difficulty of Care Computation Form
- Board Rate Computation Form

COMPLETED BUDGET APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED TO MSDE NO LATER THAN **FEBRUARY 15, 2025.**

NOTE: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS **MAY NOT** BE HAND DELIVERED.

All required documents are to be uploaded to the assigned folder in *Microsoft OneDrive* as part of filing these documents with the Maryland State Department of Education.

Required Rate Application Documents to submit to MSDE

- FY 2026 Rate Application Checklist
- FY 2026 Non-Residential (NR) Checklist (NR Providers Only)
- FY 2026 Budget Workbook Forms
- FY 2026 Budget Identification Form
- APPROVED FY 2026 Levels of Intensity Score Sheet
- APPROVED Staffing Forms (Personnel Cost Detail Budget Forms E2 through E6)

- Copy of the Current Child Placement Agency License, MSDE certificate of approval, or accreditation for Non-Residential Programs
 - Copy of most current state contract page(s)
 - Child Placement Agencies
 - Non-Residential Programs
- INCLUDE CONTRACT COVER PAGE & ATTACHMENT A OR EBP CERTIFICATE**
- FY 2026 Lease/Mortgage Summary and Supporting Documentation
 - FY 2026 Program Description Form
 - 2024 Audited Financial Statement
 - APPROVED FY 2026 Difficulty of Care Computation Form (TFC, TFC-MF, & TMP-TFC Providers Only)
 - APPROVED FY 2026 Board Rate Computation Form (TFC, TFC-MF, & TMP-TFC Providers Only)
 - Written narrative as separate Word document to explain staffing changes and budget line item variances (if applicable).

Filing Instructions

- Required documents must be uploaded by the due date.
- Hand delivered budget applications WILL NOT be accepted at the Maryland State Department of Education.

Application for Rate Determinations

Submitted by February 15, 2025	}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 2026 rate before July 1st.
After February 15, 2025 before May 1, 2025	}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held to FY 2025 approved rate.
After May 1, 2025	}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rate approved prior to expiration of the FY 2025 rate on June 30, 2025. • Held to the FY 2025 approved rate.

Submission Requirements

DO NOT SEND PASSWORD PROTECTED DOCUMENTS.

- Download the rate application forms and instructions from the [IRC Website](#).
- The following documents must be signed and dated by the person authorized on behalf of the corporation and included with the completed FY 2026 rate application:
 - Rate Application Checklist
 - Budget Identification Form
 - Budget Workbook Form A
- Use the Rate Application Checklist to verify submission of all the required documents.
- Include the email address and telephone number of the Budget Preparer or the appropriate authorized contact designated to discuss questions about the rate application package.
- Submit one (1) signed copy of the Budget Workbook Forms. Include an electronic copy of the Budget Workbook Forms in Excel 2007 format.

Key Things You Need to Know

- Refer to the FY 2026 Provider Instructions for completing the rate application.
- A program must have a current rate prior to Contract Award with Maryland State Agencies and Local Management Boards.

Projected Average Daily Census (Minimum Requirements)

Child Placement Agencies	90% current contract capacity.
Non-Residential	85% current contract capacity unless otherwise instructed.

NON-RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS SHOULD CONSULT WITH DJS IF FURTHER GUIDANCE ABOUT PROGRAM OCCUPANCY IS NEEDED.

- Refer to [DHS Policy SSA 19-16 CW Guidelines for Foster Care Board Rate and Expenditures](#) for guidance in completing the Difficulty of Care Computation and Board Rate Computation Forms.
- The Levels of Intensity (LOI) Score Sheet must be approved by the program's state licensing agency. All documents requiring approval must be received by the appropriate licensing agency no later than January 15, 2025. The approval shall be in the form of the representative's dated signature on the page(s) of the budget.

BUDGET APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO REFLECT THE ACTUAL ANTICIPATED COSTS.

Position Numbering Schedule

- Each person employed as a salaried staff or consultant/contractor must be listed on Forms E-2 through E-6 using a unique control number. Refer to the Provider Instructions for more details.

- Ranges for the same position title will not be accepted to ensure that budgets accurately reflect the number of staff necessary to operate the programs.
- Refer to the FY 2026 Cost Guidelines for recommended salaries for staff.

ONLY INCLUDE "S" OR "C" IN COLUMN 7 FOR FY 2026 EXPENSES.

Order to Complete Budget Forms



- **Form B-1 Column 3, Line 01a: Fees from Government Agencies**
 - Enter the amount from Form C, Line 5 Allowable Cost.
- **Form B-2: Approved FY 2025 Allowable Net Expenses:**
 - The approved FY 2025 annual rate times the projected FY 2025 census should match the total entered in Column 2.
 - Do not cut and paste the FY 2025 Column 3 projected expenses into the FY 2025 Column 2 approved expenses.
 - Column 2 should reflect the expenses based on the FY 2025 **approved rate not the request.**

THE IRC IS NOT REQUIRED TO RETURN A BUDGET TO REFLECT THE APPROVED FY 2025 RATE. THE PROGRAM SHOULD UPDATE THE COLUMN TO REFLECT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FY 2025 RATE REQUESTED AND APPROVED RATE.

- **Form C: Census**
 - Enter the census on which the program budget is based on Line 6 Projected Average Daily Census FY 2026.
 - Enter the average daily census for the previous calendar year on Line 10 (Average Daily Census for Calendar Year 2024).
 - Line 6 should not be less than Line 10 without a written explanation for the change.
- **Form C: Current Rates**
 - Please remember to refer to your agency's current Rate Letter.

**PROVIDERS DO NOT NEED TO INCLUDE COPY OF THE CURRENT RATE LETTER.
REFER TO THE APPROVED RATE AND CATEGORY ON THE FY 2025 RATE LETTER.**

- **Form C: Billable Days:**
 - This does not mean calendar days. Use the combined total of the number of days each youth was in care and the subsequent number of days the agency billed for services.
- **Form A: Capacity:**
 - *Child Placement Agency Programs & Non-Residential Programs* must enter the current contract capacity and attach a copy of the contract rate appendices that show the current rate and capacity.
 - Capacity needs to be consistent on supplement rate application forms.

**THE “CAPACITY” ENTERED ON BUDGET FORM A - SECTION II: CENSUS INFORMATION
WILL BE THE “CAPACITY” THAT APPEARS ON THE RATE LETTER.**

Budget Justification

- Include a written narrative to explain any income (Form B-1) or expenses (Form B-2) that changes by \$1,000 (increase or decrease) and/or 4% (increase or decrease) from the FY 2025 Actual Budget and FY 2026 Projected Budget. DO NOT add a tab to the workbook or enter text in any of the cells to explain the variance.
- The omission of the budget justification for the variance is a common error returned for corrections. Attach a written explanation for any expense that changes by \$1,000 (increase or decrease) AND/OR 4% (increase or decrease) from the previous year.
- A written explanation for any staffing changes and lease/mortgage special circumstances must also be outlined in this document.
- Form B-2 – Any expenses listed on Line 5 (Contracted Services) and/or Line 28 (Other) must include an itemized explanation.
- DO NOT add additional spreadsheets to explain the budget or add text to the cells within the rate application workbook. This may cause validation errors when program budgets are uploaded into the rate setting methodology. Budget workbooks submitted with altered template formulas, cells, or spreadsheets will be returned for correction.
- Explain any expenses that are not self-explanatory and/or include multiple cost items (i.e., Contracted Services, Other, Depreciation, Travel, etc.).
- Describe the reason for any personnel changes (classification, significant salary increases, number of positions, hours worked, etc.).

**A DETAILED EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCE PROVIDES A HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE REQUESTED PROGRAM EXPENSES
AND THE APPROVED IRC RATE TO INFORM THE ASSESSMENT DECISIONS RELATED TO RATE REFORM.**

Rate Application Review

- The Rate Section reviews all budget applications for completeness, accuracy, and consistency.
- Additional information on any aspect of the rate application may be requested.

- If the rate package is incomplete, program staff (Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and/or Budget Preparer) will receive an email notification identifying the missing or incomplete items. The email notification will identify a due date for response.
- The Licensing Agency may be copied on this notification email.
- Programs with incomplete budget applications will be held to the FY 2025 rate.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Incomplete submissions	No contact information & inconsistent program names	Not referencing the FY 2025 rate letter for current rate	Missing lease/mortgage supporting documentation	Missing CPA contract pages
Different capacity on budget and supplemental forms	Licensing approvals don't match budget Forms E2-E6	No budget justification	Label Excel files to match program name on Form A	Use Word document for budget narrative
Incorrect proportion of staff hours & position numbers	Lack of timely response to follow-up inquires	Lease/Mortgage Summary doesn't match documentation	Do not link or copy into cells in budget workbook	Do not add extra tabs to budget workbook

Additional Information

Contact the staff of the Interagency Rates Committee/MSDE Rate Section at irc.rates@maryland.gov.