



NICA BENEFIT HANDBOOK  
ADDENDUMS



## Addendums

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## [Reflecting 7/1/22 Update to Caregiver Rates of Pay](#)

The purpose of this addendum is to reflect the recent change to the Medicaid rates of pay for caregivers. These rates are effective back to 7/1/2022. The CNA rate has increased to \$17.32, the LPN rate to \$26.25, and the RN rate to \$30.07. The links in the text below have been updated to direct you to the appropriate reimbursement fee schedules which reflect the new changes.

## **Nursing Care Provided in Home by Parent or Legal Guardian:**

When professional nursing or attendant care is required, NICA may reimburse a parent or legal guardian for medically necessary and reasonable residential custodial care as documented on the PNCF. This would be as an alternative or in addition to paying for professional nursing care or other professional attendants.

For participants born since June 7, 2002:

Reimbursement is subject to the limitations specified in Sections 766.302(10) and 766.31, Florida Statutes. These sections specify that NICA may reimburse a parent or legal guardian for up to 10 hours of family residential or custodial care that they provide directly to the participant within a 24- hour period. If more than 10 hours are authorized, other caregivers can be reimbursed for care authorized and provided in excess of 10 hours. NICA does not reimburse for any hours when the participant is in school or PPEC. If a participant requires more than 10 hours of care and if the parent is considered a medical professional (e.g., CNA, LPN, RN), the 10-hour limit is waived. A parent can be reimbursed at their level of licensure (at the Florida Medicaid rate) for the hours of care deemed medically necessary and provided by the parent. For example, if the parent is an LPN and the PNCF authorizes 12 hours of CNA care and 12 hours of LPN care, and the parent provides all 24 hours of care, that parent would be reimbursed for 12 hours at the [CNA](#) rate and 12 hours at the [LPN](#) rate.

## Reflecting the 1/1/23 Update to Electricity Stipend

The purpose of this addendum is to reflect the recent change to the electricity stipend rates. These rates are effective 1/1/23 and reflect an 18.1% increase per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cost per Kilowatt hour for the South Atlantic region for November 2022. The original \$100/month rate has increased to \$118/month. Participants must still fall under one of the categories laid out in the handbook to qualify for the stipend.

## Electricity Stipend

Effective October 15, 2021, upon request, NICA may pay families a monthly stipend to offset the additional electricity costs associated with the use of medically necessary equipment related to the participant's neurological injury. The monthly stipend amount for 2021 is \$100 and is indexed to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics cost per Kilowatt](#) hour for the South Atlantic region. The stipend will be adjusted each January 1st to reflect the percentage change in Kilowatt hour from November of the prior year (i.e. the annual change from the most recent November rate to the November rate prior to that). To qualify for the stipend families will need to fall under one of two categories.

### Category 1:

Participant has additional electricity costs associated with the use of one of the following: an electric bed, oxygen concentrator, or a CPAP/BIPAP.

### Category 2:

Participant has additional electricity costs associated with the use of a feeding pump, suction machine, and a third piece of medically necessary equipment.

Families should reach out to their Nurse Case Manager to request the stipend and inform their case manager of current necessary medical equipment being used in the home. This must be requested by the parent or guardian and can be paid starting on the 1st of the month following the participant's entry into the program.

## [Reflecting 1/1/23 Update to the Fresh Food Stipend](#)

The purpose of this addendum is to reflect the recent update to rates for the Monthly Fresh Food Stipend. These rates are effective 1/1/23 and are based on the November 2022 USDA Thrifty Food Plan report. The link in the text below has been updated to direct you to the November 2022 Thrifty Food Plan report. Please note that if receiving either reimbursement for pre-packaged specialized nutritional products or the Fresh Food Stipend, per diem associated with medical mileage will only be reimbursed for parent/caregivers.

### Specialized Nutritional Products

For participants who are unable to eat a typical diet and require modified soft/puréed food due to a digestive system dysfunction related to the neurological injury, beginning at age 2, NICA will reimburse pre-packaged specialized nutritional products OR provide a monthly stipend for fresh foods to be prepared into purée at home. Families choosing either option may need to provide a letter of medical necessity.

#### Option 1: Reimbursement for Pre-Packages Specialized Nutritional Products:

NICA will reimburse for specialized nutritional products that provide needed nutritional value and are medically necessary. Puréed baby foods, enteral formulas, and other specialized nutritional products will be reimbursable for as long as they are medically necessary. Families must submit a receipt with any reimbursement request.

#### Option 2: Monthly Fresh Food Stipend:

NICA encourages families to use fresh foods and beginning October 1, 2022, NICA will provide a monthly stipend for those fresh foods needed for families to process puréed food at home. The monthly stipend is based on the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan which estimates the monthly cost for a nutritious diet based on age. The monthly stipend effective October 1, 2022 will be based on the [November 2022 USDA Thrifty Food Plan report](#). NICA will update the monthly stipend amount for families each January 1st based on the most recent USDA Thrifty Food Plan monthly average report available.

**If families opt for the monthly fresh food stipend, there will be no reimbursement for specialized nutritional products.**

## Reflecting 1/1/23 Update to Equipment Warranties & Protective Accessories

The purpose of this addendum is to add clarification that NICA will reimburse for extended warranties for equipment items NICA has purchased and/or reimbursed for the participant. Along with warranties, protective accessories for equipment items NICA has purchased and/or reimbursed for the participant will be reimbursed as well. The text below now reflects this addition/clarification.

### EQUIPMENT

NICA will purchase or reimburse actual expenses for equipment that is requested for a participant's care. Because the equipment needed by NICA participants varies widely, a list of equipment that has been covered to date has can be found in Appendix A.

To order or reimburse for equipment that is less than \$3,000, NICA will require a written statement from the parent or legal guardian of the participant as to why the equipment is necessary (if not clearly related to the injury) and an insurance denial if the item is potentially covered by the participant's insurance plan.

To order or reimburse for equipment that is more than \$3,000 NICA will require a letter of medical necessity OR a prescription, and an insurance denial if the item is potentially covered by the participant's insurance plan. In some cases, (such as a stander or a wheelchair) NICA will also need the order specifications if buying directly from a vendor.

There are specific pieces of equipment where NICA has a relationship with a vendor for a specialized type or brand of equipment and would like to order the equipment requested from these vendors directly. You can find a list of this equipment in Appendix A with a "\*" beside the equipment name. In these cases, the documentation needed in the categories above would still apply.

Beginning 1/1/23, for those pieces of equipment that NICA purchases or reimburses for the participant, extended warranties and protective accessories can be reimbursed.

\*NICA Nurse Case Managers can be contacted if there is an uncertainty about whether the equipment item requested may or may not need an insurance denial.

## Clarification on 1/1/22 Per Diem, Hospitalization Travel Reimbursement, and Equipment/Supply Mileage

The purpose of this addendum is to clarify reimbursement for meals and incidentals as well as clarify reimbursement of mileage for supplies and equipment. If receiving either reimbursement for pre-packaged specialized nutritional products or the Fresh Food Stipend, per diem associated with medical mileage will only be reimbursed for parent/caregivers. Mileage and per diem will be reimbursed for instances of hospitalization. Parameters for per diem reimbursement for hospitalizations will be based on whether the parent is staying overnight with the participant in the hospital. The text below reflects these updates.

### Travel Reimbursement

NICA will reimburse expenses incurred when a NICA participant travels to and from medically necessary appointments, such as physician visits, therapy, or other medically necessary travel. Additionally, NICA will reimburse mileage associated with trips to the pharmacy for prescriptions related to the participant's birth injury (requires dated receipt and label), and any non-routine supply/equipment related travel (For example, if a piece of equipment is broken and needs repair, with proper documentation, mileage may be reimbursed for the travel to and from taking the equipment to be repaired).

If the participant is driven, NICA will reimburse parking fees and tolls (upon submission of receipts), as well as documented mileage at the following rates:

- When using reliable transportation:
  - Mileage for medical appointments or pre-approved travel will be reimbursed at twice the GSA rate for a government furnished vehicle.
- When using a personal vehicle:
  - Mileage for medical appointments or pre-approved travel will be reimbursed at the GSA rate for a privately owned vehicle.

To be reimbursed for mileage, NICA must have documentation of the reimbursable appointment the participant attended. Mileage reimbursement will be calculated by the participant's Nurse Case Manager using the addresses for the locations provided by the parent or legal guardian. If the parent or legal guardian wants a specific map route used for the reimbursement, they will need to provide the map used to arrive at the location to their Nurse Case Manager for reimbursement.

When a participant must travel, one-way either 30 miles or in excess of 45 minutes, from home for a medical, therapeutic, or otherwise reimbursable appointment, NICA will reimburse for meals and incidentals at the GSA day-of-travel rate (75% of the per diem) for up to two caregivers and the NICA participant, if applicable (i.e. participant can consume food orally, does not have a digestive system dysfunction which impedes the ability to consume food, and is not receiving reimbursement for pre-packaged specialized nutritional products or the monthly Fresh Food Stipend). No receipts are required. Note that the rate utilized is the rate effective in the destination city.

Effective 1/1/2022, when a participant is hospitalized, and the hospital is more than 30 miles one-way or 45 minutes away, medical mileage and per diem for up to two caregivers will be reimbursed. Mileage can only be reimbursed for one round-trip per day. If a parent stays overnight in the hospital with the participant, the day-of-admission and the day-of-discharge per diem will be reimbursed at the GSA day-of-travel rate (75% of the per diem), the days in between admission and discharge will be reimbursed at the full per diem rate. If the parent does not stay overnight in the hospital with the participant, per diem will be reimbursed at the GSA day-of-travel rate (75% of the per diem) for each day the participant is hospitalized.

When the participant and one parent/guardian travel at least 50 miles from home and must stay overnight, NICA will reimburse accommodations of the actual expense up to 1.3 times GSA lodging rate (plus applicable sales taxes) for the destination city.

Meals and incidentals are also reimbursed for overnight travel in accordance with GSA policies for up to two caregivers and the NICA participant, if applicable.

Beginning January 1, 2022, if the participant is flown, NICA will reimburse airline coach travel fares for the participant and two parents/guardians and will reimburse accommodations of the actual expense up to 1.3 times GSA lodging rate. Please note this GSA rate is intended to cover all travelers.

Upon submission of receipts, NICA can reimburse medically necessary transportation expenses not otherwise mentioned above. Please contact your Nursing Case Manager if you have questions about reimbursement of other travel-related expenses.