

Reference Sheet- Benefits for Youth Transition from Foster Care to Adult Living

PREPARATION FOR ADULT LIVING (PAL) SERVICES/BENEFITS:

The DFPS Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program assists older youth in foster care prepare for their departure and transition from DFPS care and support. Supportive services and benefits are provided by PAL Staff or PAL Contract Providers to eligible young adults up to age 21 to become self-sufficient and productive. PAL is funded by the *federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, State general revenue funds and/or community match (20%). PAL services include:

- Life skills assessment (Casey Life Skills Assessment) to assess strength and needs in life skills attainment www.caseylifeskills.org (assessments are conducted before Life skills training):
- Life skills training (age 16 to 18) in the following core areas:
 - Health and Safety;
 - Housing and Transportation;
 - Job Readiness;
 - Financial Management;
 - Life Decisions/Responsibility;
 - Personal/Social Relationships
- Educational/vocational services
- Supportive services (based on need and funding availability) may include:
 - graduation items,
 - counseling,
 - tutoring,
 - driver's education fees, or
 - mentoring.
- A transitional living allowance of up to \$1,000 - distributed in increments of up to \$500 per month, for young adults up to age 21 who participated in PAL training, to help with initial start-up costs in adult living.
- Aftercare room and board assistance (ages 18-21) is based on need of up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. (not to exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments per young adult).
- Case management to help young adults with self-sufficiency planning and resource coordination.

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10200.asp#CPS_10200

***Contact Regional Preparation for Adult Living Staff for more information about all Transitional Living Services at:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coord_inators.asp

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POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM: ETV is a *federally-funded (Chafee)* and state-administered program. Based on the cost of attendance (as established by higher education), youth in foster care or other eligible young adults ages 16 up to the age of 23 may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 in financial assistance per year to help them reach their postsecondary educational goals if they meet the following criteria:

- Meet college enrollment and be enrolled at least 6 semester hours in an *accredited or pre-accredited*
 - public or non-profit program that provides a bachelor's degree or not less than a 2 year program that provides credit towards a degree or certification; or
 - a public or non-profit program that provides not less than a one-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment; or
 - a public or non-profit program, or a private institution that has been in existence for two years and offers training programs to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation (training may be less than one year).
- Students participating in the ETV Program on their 21st birthday may remain eligible until the month of their 23rd birthday as long as they are enrolled in ETV and making satisfactory academic progress toward completing their postsecondary education or training program as determined by the institution.

Students interested in continuing education courses or distance learning courses must contact ETV staff for prior approval to ensure accreditation and that courses lead to a degree or recognized certificate program.

Individuals eligible for ETV include:

- Youth in foster care who are at least 16 and likely to remain in care until 18; or
- Youth who aged out of foster care but have not yet turned 21; or
- Youth who were adopted from DFPS foster care after turning age 16 and are not yet 21; or
- Youth who enter Permanency Care Assistance after age 16; or
- Youth who are in the custody of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (formerly TJJC) and are in a Title IV-E placement when turning age 18.

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10300.asp#CPS_10320

Note: Young adults in the Extended Foster Care Program, enrolled in higher education and eligible for ETV may have certain expenses paid by the ETV program (ex., books, computers, child care, and transportation). ETV will not cover residential housing, personal items and food since this is provided for in the Extended Foster Care program.

Apply for the ETV Program at: <http://www.discoverbcfs.net/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?&pid=988>

COLLEGE TUITION AND FEE WAIVER-Texas Law (Sec. 54.366 and 54.367-Texas Education Code (2009): The college tuition and fee waiver provides exemptions from payment of tuition and fees at Texas' **state supported institutions** of higher education to individuals formerly in Texas state foster care) and adopted youth. To be exempt from the payment of tuition and fees youth or young adults must have been in DFPS conservatorship. Exemptions occur:

- the day before the student's 18th birthday;
- the day of the student's 14th birthday, if the youth was eligible for adoption (parental rights being terminated) on or after that day;

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- the day the student graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- if a youth was adopted and the adoption occurred on or after September 1, 2009;
- if permanent managing conservatorship of the youth was granted to a non-parent on or after September 1, 2009; or
- when a student is enrolled in a dual credit course or other course in which the student may earn joint high school and college credit. *Note: Youth enrolled in a dual credit course may access ETV funds to cover certain educational expenses related to college attendance.*

Youth or young adults may also be eligible to enroll in AA-level courses or vocational / certificate courses at their local state supported community colleges. Young adults must be enrolled as an undergraduate **no later than his or hers 25th birthday.**

Adopted youth subject to an adoption assistance agreement that provides monthly payments and Medicaid benefits are also eligible for the college tuition and fee waiver. For these students there is no age limit to enroll in college in order to take advantage of the tuition and fee waiver.

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10300.asp#CPS_10311

TEMPORARY HOUSING ASSISTANCE BETWEEN ACADEMIC TERMS (EFFECTIVE 9/1/2011): Texas' institutes of higher education are required to assist full-time students formerly in DFPS conservatorship or who have been legally emancipated in locating temporary housing between academic terms (Christmas and summer holiday breaks). Students must request the housing assistance and are encouraged to inquire at financial aid offices, student affairs offices, admissions offices, or housing/residence life/residential living offices.

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS VACCINE FOR STUDENTS ENTERING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (EFFECTIVE 1/2/2012): Students under age 30 entering a Texas institution of higher education must be vaccinated for bacterial meningitis. For DFPS foster youth, payments for doctor's visits and vaccination costs are covered by Texas Medicaid (STAR Health or Traditional); Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY); or the Former Foster Care Youth in Higher Education (FFCHE) program. Young adults are encouraged to check college admissions policies for more information about vaccination requirements.

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HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

MEDICAID FOR TRANSITIONING FOSTER CARE YOUTH (MTFCY) / STAR HEALTH: Provides continuous medical coverage to young adults age 18 to 21 that have aged out of foster care and meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Be between 18 and 21 years of age;
- Aged out of Texas foster care / DFPS custody at age 18;
- Have no other healthcare coverage (private insurance or other category of Medicaid);
- Meet the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) income and assets guidelines.

Young adults may call the Medicaid Help Desk for replacement MTFCY cards at 1-855-827-3748. To reenroll in MTFCY, the young adult must complete Form 1011 which may be requested by calling 2-1-1 or the form is available at the HHSC website:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/help/healthcare/children.shtml>

STAR Health/Health Passport: For information about STAR Health, to re-enroll in MTFCY and if a young adult wants access to his or hers Health Passport visit www.fostercartx.com. Young adults may contact the regional Well-being specialists as a STAR Health resource contact. More information about STAR Health is available at:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Medical_Services/guide-star.asp

2-1-1 TEXAS: To report any changes to an address or other contact information, young adults must contact **2-1-1** and report calling about Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY). Young adults may also go to <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com> to set up an account, update contact information, report changes in his or her case, receive an identification card, or find out about other benefit information. Additionally, **2-1-1** may be contacted for non-medical issues such as applying for food stamps and medical assistance for other members of the family. More information about **2-1-1** may be accessed at <https://www.211texas.org/211/>

FORMER FOSTER CARE IN HIGHER EDUCATION (FFCHE) PROGRAM: SINCE October 1, 2009, the Health and Human Services Commission has offered a state funded, healthcare benefits program to certain former foster care youth. The following criteria applies:

- Be age 21 year or 22;
- Be enrolled in a college or technical school;
- Have been in DFPS foster care at age 18;
- Have no other healthcare coverage; and
- Meet the DHS income and assets guidelines.

To request a FFCHE application, young adults may contact **2-1-1** and request Form H1868 and Form H1870 to be mailed to them or visit the HHSC website and download the forms at:

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/help/healthcare/children.shtml>

HTTP://WWW.DFPS.STATE.TX.US/HANDBOOKS/CPS/FILES/CPS_PG_X10000.ASP#CPS_10150

TEXAS YOUTH HOTLINE is a resource for young adults who are under 21 years of age, including those who have aged out of the foster care system. Youth may contact the statewide hotline at **1-800-210-2278** for telephone counseling, information, and referrals. The hotline can help young adults locate services available in their communities.

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TEXAS YOUTH CONNECTION is a website designed with input from youth and young adults and is a resource for youth in the Texas Foster Care system, alumni of foster care seeking general tips and information. This website offers information and resources in education, finances, records, diversity, health, contacts, job links, food, housing, books, stories, Transition Center information, hotlines and other hot stuff. This website is also the location of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Youth Survey. Check this resource out at: www.texasyouthconnection.org



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