

**Child and Family Services Policy Manual: Substitute Care for Children
Foster Care: Independent Living and Transition Living Plan Services Including
Documents Youth Must be Provided Upon Aging Out of Care**

Background

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, Public Law 106-169 was enacted into law on 12-14-99. This law amended Section 477 of the Social Security Act and replaced the former Independent Living Initiative with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). CFCIP was further amended on 1-17-2002. The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) was enacted to track independent living services and to assess outcomes for youth on 10-1-2010. Effective September 29, 2015, "The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act requires case plans to document services to assist youth age 14 and above to successfully transition into adulthood.

The six purposes of the CFCIP are to:

1. To identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
2. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions;
4. To provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
5. To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 - and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency, and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the

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transition from adolescence to adulthood; and

6. To make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary training and education, to youths who have aged out of foster care.

7. For those youth likely to remain in foster care until their 18th birthday are ensured regular ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally – appropriate activities.

Definitions

- **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)** is the name of the independent living/ transitional services program in Montana. Services provided under the program are intended to assist eligible youth in attaining the attitudes, values, education, skills and experiences necessary for transitioning to adulthood.
- **Foster care** (as used to define eligibility for services under CFCIP) means 24 hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the state/tribe/BIA has placement and care responsibility.
- **Foster care status** refers to a young person's status as opposed to a particular placement. A young person who is under the care and supervision of the state or tribe is considered to be in foster care.
- **Foster care placement** includes, but is not limited to, paid and non-paid placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions and pre-adoptive homes.
- **National Youth in Transition Database:** The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) will collect case-level information on youth in care including the services paid for or provided by the State agencies that administer the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), as well as the outcome information on youth who are in or who have aged out of foster care.

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- **Permanency Plan:** The permanency plan of PPLA should only be used on a case by case basis for goals of independent living or emancipation. Permanency provides a context for independent living preparation for youth regardless of their permanency goal or plan. Independent living services are a supplement to, not a replacement for, permanency services. Regardless of whether a young person will return to birth family, live with kin, be adopted, or age out of the system to live on their own, he or she will need to have the skills, knowledge, and competencies for adult life.
- **Transitional Living Plan (TLP):** The TLP is a written document that is a part of the overall case plan for a youth. It should clearly identify the best possible permanency plan for the youth, well defined goals and objectives for becoming self sufficient and the how and when the goals and objectives will be met.
- **Life Skills Assessment** refers to the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA). The Assessment is available at www.caseylifeskills.org.

Eligible Youth

- Youth may qualify for the CFCIP and ETV programs if the youth:
 - is age 14 years or older and currently in foster care;
 - “aged out” of foster care and is not yet 21 years old; and
 - was in foster care at age 18, or
 - after their 16th birthday, have had a guardianship established or adoption finalized.
- Priority for services is given to youth who have exited foster care because they reached the age of 18 and to youth 14 years or older likely to be in foster care until age 18.
- The child protection specialist (CPS), supervisor or permanency-planning specialist (PPS) identifies youth who are likely to “age out” of foster care.

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Placement Changes Across Regions	Youth will be served by the Regional Chafee service provider based on the youth's geographical location not the county of financial responsibility. For example, a youth in Miles City but placed in Billings will receive CFCIP services from the Billings Region's contracted service provider.
Other States	Youth who move to or from another state do not lose their eligibility for services.
Youth under age 18	<p>If an eligible youth under the age of 18 is placed in another state, the sending state is responsible for foster care maintenance payments and case planning, which includes a written description of the programs and services that will be provided to help a child 14 years or over prepare for the transition from foster care to independence and periodic review of the case plan. The Regional CFCIP provider will assist the CPS staff in writing the description of the transitional programs and services that are to be provided to the youth. Regional service providers will not provide direct services to any youth place in another State.</p> <p>When requesting ICPC approval for placement of a youth in another state, the sending worker should request information from the receiving state regarding the CFCIP services in the receiving state and the contact information for the CFCIP coordinator in that state.</p> <p>If the youth is being placed in a residential treatment center, part of the services provided to the youth by the residential treatment center should be services to assist the youth in preparing for independence. It is the responsibility of the placing worker to ensure that appropriate transitional services are provided to the youth in the state in which the youth is living.</p>
Youth ages 18-21	If an otherwise Chafee eligible youth between the ages of 18-21 moves to a state or is living in a state other than the state which had placement and care responsibility of the youth, the state of the youth's current residence is responsible for providing and paying for services needed by the youth if those services are a part of the CFCIP plan of the state in which the youth is living.

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If an otherwise Chafee eligible youth moves to another state and wishes to access ETV, the state of the youth's current residence is responsible for providing the Education and Training Voucher. If a youth previously accessing CFCIP services in Montana is attending school in another state for the sole purpose of education and is considered by that school to be an 'out of state' resident, that youth will be considered eligible for ETV under MT's CFCIP if they are not eligible in the state they are residing. Additionally, youth from another state who attend a Montana school for the sole purpose of education and is considered by that school to be an 'out of state' resident, will not be eligible for ETV under MT's CFCIP.

ETV applications are available on-line at:

<http://www.smartaboutcollege.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-planning.jsp>

**Referral for
Services**

The primary CPS for a youth will receive a CAPS alert 6 months prior to the youth's 14th birthday alerting the worker to the youth's eligibility for CFCIP services. Each month, the CFCIP Program Manager at Central Office will send an electronic spreadsheet with an updated list of youth eligible for Chafee Services to the CFCIP contracted service providers. The CFCIP Program Manager will send the list to providers no later than the 15th of each month. CFCIP contracted service providers will make initial contact within 5 business days from receipt of the updated list of eligible youth and schedule a face to face meeting to discuss the CFCIP program and various services available. The referral may be sent electronically via e-mail spreadsheet..

Referral of Chafee eligible youth to the appropriate Regional CFCIP service provider is the responsibility of the youth's CPS. If a youth is moving or changing placements from one Region to another the Regional CFCIP in the sending Region will be expected to cooperate with the receiving Region's CFCIP to ensure transitional services and programs are maintained.

**Sharing Case in
CAPS and
Updating the EDHL
Screen**

To ensure timely services to youth and accurate NYTD reporting, the CPS must share the youth's case (in CAPS) with the PPS (if not already done so) and the Central Office staff responsible for entering NYTD data into CAPS within 5 working days of receiving the alert. Currently that Central Office staff

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**Youth Centered
Meetings**

person is Lisa Yim. At the time the worker shares the youth in CAPS with the Central Office staff person they must also go to the EDHL screen and update the youth's education information

The CPS is responsible for working with the Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Coordinator to arrange for a Youth Centered Meeting.

Youth Centered Meetings are used to focus on the youth that are primarily 14 years and older in developing plans for transition to adulthood. These can be used for younger youth, if needed. Youth Centered Meetings must focus on the youth's needs, strengths, goals, and permanent connections. These meetings allow the youth to identify their supports or goals and to drive the focus of the plan.

Referral Process:

Child Protection Specialists or the assigned worker of the youth will make a referral to the Family Group Decision Making Meeting Coordinator in their area for a youth that has turned 14 years old, and for whom Child and Family Services has permanent or long term custody, or has TIA/TLC and the youth is likely to age out of care prior to the state receiving permanent or long term custody. If the youth is older than 14 year of age and a referral has not been made, the CPS worker will make a referral. The referral will be documented on the FGDM Referral Form with a notation that a Youth Centered Meeting is being requested.

Invitees:

The youth, the Regional CFCIP, the Child Protection Specialist and the FGDM Coordinator will work together to develop the invitation list. Service providers working with the youth and possibly extended family will be asked for any additional invitee suggestions. Invitees could include: birth family, foster parents (past and current), service providers (current or possible future), assigned CPS, siblings of the youth, school personnel, employer, pastor, etc.

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Meeting and Plan:

The meeting should include a sign in sheet; welcome; an agenda developed between the Facilitator, the youth and the assigned CPS; statement of purpose; identification of the youth's needs, strengths and goals; and identification of permanent connections, etc. The youth may complete the YCM questionnaire prior to the meeting and share with the meeting participants his/her information. Regional CFCIP staff may assist the youth in completing this survey. This may assist participants in helping the youth in achieve his/her goals. The format of the meeting should include as many suggestions from the youth that is appropriate and possible. The format of the meeting should follow the general guidelines of a Family Group Decision-making Meeting with ground rules, etc. The meeting participants will develop a plan with the youth.

Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA)

Regional CFCIP staff will assist youth and placement providers in completing a life skills assessment for all eligible youth 14 years old or older within 30 days of initial contact. The ACLSA must be updated at least annually and may be more often triggered by the youth's needs. The results of the ACLSA must be reflected in the youth's Transitional Living Plan

Transitional Living Plan

A transitional living plan (TLP) which identifies the programs and services necessary to assist a youth in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency must be developed with youth 14 years and older within 60 days of the youth's 14th birthday or 60 days of the youth's placement in foster care. The TLP must also incorporate the results of the ACLSA

Prompt referral to the Regional CFCIP provider will help to ensure that the contracted service provider assigned to the youth has adequate time to arrange for the TLP to be completed in the required time frame.

Development of the transitional plan may be incorporated into other planning meetings regarding the youth such as YCM, permanency staffing, FCR, IEP, etc. The CPS, Regional CFCIP,

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youth and youth's foster care provider are expected to work together to develop and implement an appropriate transitional living plan for the youth in conjunction with the youth's overall case plan. If the youth has a case manager or mentor or if there are any other adults who may be able to offer assistance with the plan such as birth family members or school personnel, these individuals should be included.

Youth must be encouraged to actively participate in the development of the plan, and whenever possible attend in-person meetings to develop or update their TLP. If it is not possible for a youth to attend in person, participation via telephone is acceptable.

The CPS remains the primary worker for the youth. The Regional service provider's role is to facilitate the development and implementation of the youth's TLP. The CPS and Regional service provider must work cooperatively to ensure the TLP is updated and re-written at least every six months, or more often if the youth's needs have changed.

The TLP must be updated within 90 days prior to the youth attaining 18 years of age (or within 90 days before age out/discharge if a youth extended foster care past his/her 18 birthday), documenting our efforts in offering the youth assistance, support, and implementing a personalized transitional plan including options such as housing, health insurance, education, mentors, support services, work force supports and employment.

**Documents Youth
Must be Provided
Upon Aging Out of
Care**

All youth aging out of care, who have been in out of home placement for 6 or more months, must be provided with the following:

- An official or certified copy of their United States birth certificate.
- A social security card issued by the Commissioner of Social Security.
- Health insurance information.
- A copy of their medical records.
- A driver's license or identification card issued by the State of Montana.

Staff are encouraged, but not required, to provide the above

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documents and information to youth aging out of care who have been in out of home placement for less than 6 months.

The TLP should address how CFSD, with the assistance of the Chafee contracted service providers, will collect the documents and information listed above so they are available to the youth when they age out of care.

Youth Participation and Contact with Regional CFCIP Staff

While participation in the CFCIP is optional on the part of the youth **a placement provider cannot refuse services on behalf of a youth.** The Regional CFCIP must notify the youth's CPS if the youth is uncooperative or refuses services. Regional CFCIP staff must make face-to-face contact with the youth at least monthly to review the progress and update the TLP as needed.

Health-Care Power of Attorney

The Regional service provider must include and assist youth in obtaining information on health-care power of attorneys to youth's transition plans. The transition living plan will also include information on the importance of designating someone to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the youth in foster care if the youth is unable to do so and does not have or want a relative who would otherwise be so designated under State law to make such decisions. This law provides the child with the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law.

Youth will receive assistance from the Regional service provider, CPS and placement provider in compiling a personal information packet as part of the TLP.

Cash Stipends

Cash stipends may be available for eligible youth age 14 until age 21 years who have completed a life skills assessment and have a current (less than six months old) TLP. Stipend must be clearly identified as necessary to assist a youth in achieving the goals of the TLP.

Cash stipends must be age-appropriate and directly linked to

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the needs identified in the Ansell-Casey assessment and the goals stated in TLP and the overall case plan.

No youth cash stipends are to be entered into CAPS or PERQS for payment. All Cash stipends will be issued to either the Regional CFCIP or the Tribal FCCIP providing services to the youth and will be paid from AWACS. Regional service providers are responsible to collect receipts for all goods/services purchased, in whole or part, via a youth cash stipend. The original receipt is to be placed in the youth's CFCIP file. A copy of the receipt is to be included in the monthly billing submitted to Central Office to be kept as part of the contract file and to be scanned into DOCGEN. Failure to ensure the youth/foster parent spends the cash stipend on the goods/services requested and approved on the stipend request form or failure to secure receipts from the youth/foster parent for all stipend purchases may result in the denial of future stipend requests by the youth.

Youth may receive assistance for:

Education/Work

- secondary school educational expenses, including tutoring not available through the school system, driver's education, application fees, dorm deposits, tuition, books or supplies;
- vocational training including apprenticeships or other job training;
- job readiness assistance, such as resume/application assistance, etiquette instruction, appropriate interview/work clothing, haircut, etc; and
- cost of travel to educational, apprenticeship or job sites.

Youth obtaining a GED or high school diploma are eligible for a \$100 incentive payment.

Youth may request funds to purchase or repair a used vehicle. The youth must have a viable plan for maintaining a vehicle.

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The amount of transportation assistance will be limited to a lifetime maximum of \$500 from stipend funds.

Counseling and Medical

- counseling or therapy when it has been determined that such services will assist in the process and other funding is not available;
- medical expenses which are deemed medically necessary and for which other funding is not available.

The amount of assistance, if any, to be provided will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Household Set-up

- basic apartment or dorm room set-up. Set-up is limited to the purchase of basic necessities;
- security deposits, phone activation and utility connection fees.

Room and Board

No MFCIP funds may be used for room and board costs for youth under the age of 18 or for youth over 18 in a paid or unpaid foster care placement.

All room and board stipend requests must be accompanied by the rental/lease agreements the youth will enter into, including dates of rental, amounts and times tables for rent payments, deposits and other necessary items associated with room and board agreements (excluding post-secondary dorm fees). These agreements need to be placed in the youth's CFCIP file and a copy submitted to Central Office to be kept as part of the contract file and to be scanned into DOCGEN.

- rental deposits and post secondary on campus living expenses (including meal plan)
- assistance with monthly rental payment;
- assistance with monthly utility payments;

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- assistance with purchasing food.

Room and board assistance may be made to a placement provider on behalf of an eligible youth, only if foster care funds are not being used.

The amount of assistance will be based on the youth's personal circumstances and needs, other available community resources, previous use of funds and the availability of funds.

The need for room and board assistance must be clearly demonstrated. Youth must meet one of the following criteria in order to access room and board assistance:

- youth must be employed full-time; or
- actively seeking full-time employment unless attending school or can demonstrate why he/she should not be expected to work full-time; or
- enrolled on a full-time basis in a post-secondary education program that does not meet the requirements for assistance through the ETV program; or
- youth is enrolled on a part-time basis in a post-secondary education program and it has been determined by program management that the youth's circumstances are such that the youth should not be required to attend school full-time or to work and attend school.

**National Youth in
Transition
Database (NYTD)**

The Division will engage in two data collection and reporting activities that will allow ACF to track independent living services and to assess the collective outcomes of youth. First, Regional service providers must locate and collaborate with eligible youth to ensure completion of the NYTD survey. Second, CFSD must report biannually to ACF certain demographic data on each youth who receives independent living services paid for, or provided by the Montana Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).

Information on

The Regional service providers are to collect the outcomes information by conducting a survey of youth in foster care

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NYTD Outcomes

within the first 45 calendar days after the date of the youth's 17th birthday, also referred to as the baseline population. The Regional service providers will, with the assistance of the Chafee Program Manager and CPS/PPS, track these youth as they age and conduct a new outcome survey within the first 45 calendar days after the date of the youth's 19th birthday; and again within the first 45 calendar days after the date of the youth's 21st birthday, also referred to as the follow-up population. NYTD survey data cannot be collected before or after this 45 day timeframe.

The Regional service providers will collect outcomes information on these older youth after they leave foster care, regardless of whether they are still receiving independent living services when they are 19 and 21 years old. The NYTD survey and administrative pages are available at:

<https://js.hhs.mt.gov:8447/NYTD/authenticate>

<https://js.hhs.mt.gov:8447/NYTD/authenticateAdmin>

CAPS

In addition to NYTD, the Regional service providers must provide monthly service logs on all **paid and non-paid** independent living services and supports they provide to all youth in eleven broad categories: independent living needs assessment; academic support; post-secondary educational support; career preparation; employment programs or vocational training; budget and financial management; housing education and home management training; health education and risk prevention; family support and healthy marriage education; mentoring; and supervised independent living. States will also report financial assistance they provide, including assistance for education, room and board and other aid. The service logs must be submitted to the Chafee Grant Program Manager in Central Office. Contract payments will not be issued for any month the Regional CFCIP fails to provide timely and accurate service log submissions. The info on these service logs will be entered into CAPS by central office staff so it can be reported to ACF in order to comply with NYTD requirements. Field staff will not enter service info or any payments utilizing Chafee funding on CAPS. Also no payments utilizing Chafee funding are to be entered on PERQS.

Services in CAPS

SBSAB – Room and Board Financial Assistance

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SBSAF – Education Financial Assistance
 SBSAL – Transportation Assistance
 SBSAO – Other Financial Assistance
 SBSAA – Independent Living Needs Assessment
 SBSAD – Budget and Financial Management
 SBSAE – Post Secondary Education Support
 SBSAH – Housing Education and Home Management Training
 SBSAI – Academic Support
 SBSAJ – Career Preparation
 SBSAK – Health Education and Risk Prevention
 SBSAM – Mentoring Services
 SBSAP – Transitional Living Plan
 SBSAU – Family Support and Healthy Marriage Education
 SBSAV – Employment Programs and Vocational Training
 SBSRA – Independent Living Needs Reassessment

**Education and
Training Vouchers**

The Student Assistance Foundation is the contractor for the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) portion of the Chafee Program.

The amount of funding each youth receives depends on the number of youth who apply for ETV in a state fiscal year. The maximum amount allowable per federal regulations for an eligible youth to attend an eligible institution of higher education is \$5,000 per year. However, award amounts might be significantly less than the \$5,000 depending on the number of youth who apply for ETV in Montana.

The total amount awarded is dependent on other assistance available and cannot exceed the cost of attendance as defined by the Higher Education Act.

If a youth is still enrolled (based on the academic institution's definition of "enrollment"), in a postsecondary education or training program and has been making satisfactory progress toward completing the program, despite not actually taking classes at the time the youth turns 21, the youth's eligibility for ETV assistance may continue until age 23. The determination as to whether the youth continue to be eligible must be made based on the individual institution's policy on enrollment and standards for satisfactory academic progress.

Application

Youth who wish to apply for assistance through the ETV

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Process	<p>Program may obtain an application from any Regional service provider, the Student Assistance Foundation (406-495-7750) or online at: http://www.smartaboutcollege.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-planning.jsp</p> <p>ETV applications must be postmarked either by January 15th or July 15th and will be considered for the entire academic year. Youth will need to re-apply annually for continued assistance. Renewal applications must include a copy of the youth's most recent transcript. Students must be in good standing with the school and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 in order to receive continued assistance under the program.</p> <p>If a youth is not eligible for assistance under the ETV, the youth may be eligible for comparable assistance utilizing basic Chafee funds.</p> <p>Room and Board assistance may be used to supplement assistance provided under the ETV programs when necessary.</p>
Regional CFCIP Service Providers	<p><u>Region 1</u> Hi-Line Homes Program, Inc 605 3rd Ave South Glasgow, MT 59230 Phone: 406-228-9431 Fax: 406-228-2984</p> <p><u>Region 2</u> Kairos Youth Service, Inc PO Box 3066 Great Falls, MT 59403 Phone: 406-727-0076 Fax: 406-452-8382</p> <p><u>Region 3</u> The Children for Children & Families 1501 14th St West, Ste 230 Billings, MT 59102 Phone: 406-294-5092 Fax: 406-294-5091</p> <p><u>Region 4</u></p>

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Helena Area
Youth Homes
619 Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: 406-449-3038

Bozeman Area
Human Resource Council, Dist IX
32 S Tracy
Bozeman, MT 59715
Phone: 406-585-4869

Butte Area
Human Resource Council, Dist XII
25 West Silver Street
Butte, MT 59701
Phone: 406-782-8250

Region 5

Youth Homes, Inc.
550 N California Street
Missoula, MT 59807
Phone: 406-721-2704

Tribal Contacts

Tribal Contractors

MFCIP – CSKT
PO Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855
Phone: 675-2700
Fax: 275-2883

References

Sec. 477 of the Social Security Act
ACF Child Welfare Policy Manual
45 CFR Part 1356
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148)
H.R. 4980 Act of 2014 “To Prevent and Address Sex Trafficking of Children in Foster Care, to Extend and Improve Adoption Incentives, and To Improve International Child

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Support Recovery.

Rev. 10/03
Rev. 10/05
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Rev. 10/11
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