

South Carolina Chafee Program



**John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for
Successful Transition to Adulthood And
Educational and Training Voucher Program
Guidelines for Services**



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Introduction to Successful Transition into Adulthood

The Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood was established with the passage of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (PL 106-169) and amended by the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (PL 115-123). Chafee funds are intended to provide youth with opportunities to learn needed skills and increase the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to independence.

The Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program was established by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act of 2001 (PL 107-133). This program provides resources for youth who are transitioning from foster care to meet their education and training needs.

The Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 made it a requirement that, beginning at age 17, a youth in foster care must begin to implement their transition plan. This plan must be formalized within the 90 days prior to the youth's 17th and 18th birthday. Transition Planning continues until age 21.

The purpose of this booklet is to inform current and former foster youth of the funded resources available to support a successful transition into adulthood.

Pathways to Success

The journey to adulthood is a critical transition for youth in foster care. It is a time when young adults learn to take on the primary responsibility for their futures. Young adults are also responsible to balance accompanying concerns of employment, education, healthcare, housing and home management. Young adults improve the success of their outcomes by maintaining significant relationships with those who will continue to support and encourage them beyond the transition to independence.

Youth can be best prepared by learning about both the challenges and the opportunities in the following areas:

- ❖ Gaining life skills on a monthly basis
- ❖ A supportive relationship with an adult and/or interpersonal connections to help them achieve their personal goals
- ❖ Education and training that enable youth to obtain and retain steady employment
- ❖ Gainful employment with future possibility for career growth
- ❖ Safe, stable, and affordable housing and access to transportation for work and school
- ❖ Coverage within a managed care system for both physical and mental health

Supporting Teen/Older Youth

DSS embraces a strength-based culture to authentically engage and partner with the teen and older youth population it serves. DSS supports transitional growth of teen and older youth by providing equal access to inclusive planning, individualized services, and community resources helping them achieve their full potential. DSS promotes youth normalcy and ability to take lead in their own lives while building resiliency and preserving their family connections.

For this purpose, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee) provides services and funding needed to enhance opportunities to learn independent living skills necessary to become self-reliant and increase the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to independence.

The Chafee Program provides funds to achieve goals for:

- ❖ Academic
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Housing

The Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides resources for youth who are transitioning from foster care to meet their post-secondary education and training needs.

Establishing Youth-Centered Goals

Casey Life skills assessment is used to identify a youth's basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths, and needs. This tool is used to **create an individualized case plan** based on the specific needs of the youth. Case planning should be a collaborative process involving the youth and other adults identified as being significant to the youth, willing to support and encourage the transition to independence.

Step 1: Write down your GOAL

Step 2: Make your goal detailed and SPECIFIC

**List at least 3 action steps you will take to reach this goal*

Step 3: Make your goal MEASURABLE

**How can you track my progress?*

Step 4: Make your goals ATTAINABLE

**What additional resources do you need for success?*

Step 5: Make your goal RELEVANT

**List why you want to reach this goal*

Step 6: Make your goal TIMELY

**Put a deadline on your goal and set some benchmarks*

Transition Planning

Transition Planning begins when the youth turns 14 and each following birthday. Transition planning is used to identify current status, desired goals, and steps to achieve those goals. Transition planning assists the youth to identify and engage individuals in his or her support system to strengthen the success of transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

Formalizing the Transition Plan occurs at ages 17 until 21st birthday to ensure supportive resources and guidance are provided to increase successful transition into adulthood. Progress is evaluated monthly and the transition plan is updated as needed until the young adult is no longer connected to DSS case management.

❖ *Use your voice*

❖ *Actively participate in the development of the transition plan*

❖ *Take ownership of your decisions and action commitments*

❖ *You have the right to invite significant others to support your journey*

Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is key to helping young people encompass the skills, knowledge, and tools to manage money effectively so that they can become financially stable, build assets, and achieve their personal goals. This includes being able to save money, distinguish the difference between wants and needs, manage a budget, pay bills, establish good credit score, purchase a vehicle, pay for college, purchase a home, provide care for any dependents, and plan for retirement.

Annual Credit Reporting for Youth in Care

The Identity Theft Prevention Coordinator (ITPC) will submit a credit report history request for each foster care youth age 14 and older annually and will work with the credit agencies to remove any discrepancies.

****It is important to keep your identity protected and do not share your personal information.***

Extension of Foster Care

On April 25, 2022, Governor McMaster, signed H. 3509 into law. This law enables South Carolina to operate a Title IV-E reimbursable extended foster care program (EFC) for young adults ages 18- 21. DSS has entered the planning phase of EFC to implement strategies which demonstrates that policies, decisions, and practices align with our values and belief that partnering with teens and older youth will improve outcomes.

The purpose of Extension of Foster Care (EFC) is to provide a pathway for youth who would otherwise leave the foster care system at age 18 and have not yet reached age 21, to voluntarily remain in or return to the placement and care responsibility of DSS.

Extension of Foster Care (EFC) will improve the agency's overall approach to responding to the needs of older youth. It will enable more appropriate independent living services. It will allow more time for the agency to achieve permanency and stability in the lives of young people who would otherwise age out of foster care at age 18 without a permanent home or adult connections. It will allow the agency to maximize the untapped resources of Title IV-E funding. Most importantly, EFC will promote successful outcomes for transitioning young adults.

Aftercare Services

How to request an AfterCare service line to receive case management support and access to Chafee/ETV funded services once you leave foster care?

- ❖ Young adult can request the Aftercare service line on the day of official exit from DSS custody.
- ❖ Young adult can contact previous DSS case manager.
- ❖ Young Adult can go to their nearest DSS county office and request an “AfterCare Service Line” to be opened.
- ❖ Young adult can email IndependentLiving@dss.sc.gov

How to request a voluntary return to a DSS Placement?

Young adults who reached age of majority while in DSS custody are eligible to voluntarily return to DSS placement until 21st birthday. Young adults are eligible if they are enrolled in school or working, have identified an academic or employment goal, or have a disabling condition preventing goal completion. DSS county case management will work with young adult to identify safe housing options and community resources.

Eligibility Criteria

Who is Eligible to receive Chafee funded support services?

Youth currently in foster care age 14 until 21st birthday

Youth formerly in foster care who at age 14 or older left foster care for reunification and have not reached age 21

Youth formerly in foster care who at age 16 or older left foster care for adoption, guardianship, kinship care and have not reached age 21

Youth who have aged out of foster care at age 18 or older and have not turned age 21

How to apply?

Youth and their DSS case manager will discuss transition goals during the monthly face to face visits. DSS case manager will submit the application on youth's behalf with all the supporting documentation.

****Approvals are based on Chafee Program funds availability and may not cover entire expense.***

**** Funds are transferred to DSS county office for payment to vendor or reimbursement to provider or youth.***

Academic Support

Participation and supplies/equipment for school sponsored activities and/or school related fees (Max \$400)

Participation and supplies/equipment for non-school sponsored activities (Max \$400)

Tutoring services (Max \$1000)

Academic credit recovery credit courses (Max \$200)

GED Program or SC Dept of Education virtual school program fees and materials per subject (Max \$200)

Participation in summer programs, leadership/scholar programs that will provide youth with opportunities to develop academic goals, work force training and life skills, spiritual development, or diversity and cultural sensitivity skills (Max \$400)

Academic Support (cont.)

Senior Year Bundle Total Allotment (\$1000)

Prom Package: One (1) Senior prom ticket, prom attire, prom pictures, personal care services (does not include product purchase).

Graduation Package: Graduation invitations, cap and gown, year book, diploma plaque, senior year school spirit attire, high school senior jewelry (such as ring, dog tag, pendent), senior fees, senior class sponsored trip, and senior pictures (Senior ROTC, Team sports, and/or Graduation). Graduation Items may be purchased in Junior Year to prepare for Senior Year.

Pre-College Expenses

Dual Enrollment Fees and Supplies. (Max \$400)

SAT/ACT preparation classes and SAT/ACT test fees (Max \$200)

College applications (Max \$150)

Recognition for successfully achieving secondary academic goals (high school diploma, GED, certificate of completion) (\$100)

Post-Secondary Support

Personal Computer Bundle for students enrolled in post-secondary programs includes laptop, software, and warranty.

College Dorm Room Essential Bundle

College related fees (Max \$300)

Academic Incentive - post-secondary students with at least a 3.0 GPA taking six or more credit hours are eligible for \$100 per semester (Max \$300/year)

Participation in leadership/scholar programs/organizations that will provide youth with opportunities to develop academic goals, work force training and life skills, spiritual development, or diversity and cultural sensitivity skills up to (Max \$400)

Recognition for successfully achieving academic goals (vocational or technical school, or college graduates) (\$100)

Employment

Licensure and/or Certification to include vocational program costs, equipment, and supplies **Max \$3,000**

Job skill training classes **Max \$1000**

Interview Attire - **\$100/year**

Uniforms and footwear - **\$100/year** (proof of employment required)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

can provide at no cost: financial assistance in obtaining HS diploma/GED, GED preparation, one-on-one assistance with a Youth Workforce Consultant, tutoring and study skills training, occupational skills training, resume and interview preparation, soft skills training, job referrals and placements.

<https://scworks.org/workforce-system/WIOA>

Transportation

Bus Pass (Max \$200)

Transportation to Dual Enrollment, GED, vocational school, work, or job skills training. Total Allotment for this category is (Max \$300)

Transportation college visits/orientation, home visits from college, or college. Total Allotment for this category is (Max \$300)

Bicycles- Max up to \$150 to include a helmet, lock, and reflective gear.

Driver's Education Course - Max \$500

State IDs, knowledge test, and driver's license fees

Repairs and/or maintenance to a vehicle up to \$1,800/yr. Registration must be in youth's name. If youth is a co – signer, then the registration must read youth's name AND the other individual's name.

Insurance assistance up to \$1500/yr. Insurance policy must have youth's name as insurer not as an additional driver. Must provide proof of enrollment or income/wages to support ongoing insurance expenses.

Housing Support

These expenses are eligible for young adults who are preparing to establish their own independent residence after becoming age 18 and have not yet reached their 21st birthday.

The young adult agrees to engage with an Aftercare Case Manager monthly to assess transition progress and to ensure young adult is managing financial expenses, maintaining employment, academic enrollment, and healthy home management skills.

Young adults should strongly consider voluntary remaining in DSS placement to financially prepare and strengthen successful transition.

To qualify for assistance, young adult must provide:

- ❖ Transition Plan Meeting and identify contingency permanency plans to avoid unstable housing situations such as unexpected changes in income and health.
- ❖ Budget Analysis
- ❖ Provide proof of employment for two (2) months and earning sufficient income to maintain the residence
- ❖ Signed lease agreement
- ❖ Completion Financial Literacy/Management course with Chafee Identity Theft Coordinator.

Housing Support (cont.)

****Young adult should be aware that this is a one-time award and thoughtfully consider readiness to utilize these funds.***

Housing Essential Bundle

Dependent Bundle (for those pregnant or with child)

Utilities deposit to include electric, gas, water, internet, and phone (land line or mobile) (Max \$300)

Furniture and/or utility appliances (Max \$2,000)

Rental Application Fees and Administration Fees (Max \$300)

Rental Security Deposit (up to one month of rent)

Rental assistance for up to \$500/month for a total of \$3,000. The first installment of 3 months assistance will be released to the county. The second installment of 3 months will require updated proof of employment and budget sheet.

Supervised Independent Living Program fees

Interim Housing for College Students

A setup fee of \$400.00 for young adults transitioning from foster care to housing with the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs or Department of Mental Health.

Education Training Voucher

Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) are grants awarded for youth with foster care experience who are pursuing a post-secondary education. ETV funds are released up to \$5,000.00, as long as funds are available. Funds are released per academic year for up to 5 years, whether consecutive or not, or until their 26th birthday, whichever comes first.

Who is Eligible?

- ❖ Youth who are currently in DSS custody
- ❖ Youth who were in the custody of DSS at 18 years of age and have not reached 26th birthday
- ❖ Youth who left care to adoption/kinship/guardianship at or after age 16 and have not reached 26th birthday
- ❖ Youth who left care to reunification at or after age 14 and have not reached 26th birthday

ETV Award

The ETV award is to be applied to all costs associated with the cost of attendance to a post-secondary school. The awarding of ETV funds depends on the cost of the school, and the amount of grants and scholarships the youth receive.

ETV (cont.)

Required Documentation

- ❖ ETV application
- ❖ Financial Award Letter/ Tuition Statement
- ❖ Previous Transcripts (for returning students)
- ❖ Release of Information Form
- ❖ ETV Participation Agreement

ETV awards are based upon college school attendance, and the number of credits students are taking. The tuition and fees are listed on official school financial statement. Due to limited availability, funds for supported expenses such as housing, meals, and transportation, may not be released. Other services may be approved, but not available after cost of attendance is paid.

Youth must notify ETV Program Coordinator if:

- ❖ Withdraws from any classes
- ❖ Drops out of school
- ❖ Loses any projected financial aid
- ❖ Falls below academic statue of a 2.0 GPA



YEA! is an advisory group created to ensure that youth voice is heard when agencies are developing programs and policies for teen and young adults. YEA! meets regularly to discuss and provide input with policy change, program development, review current data, and share their lived experiences at state-wide and national conferences.

YEA! has been part of program and policy developments:

Better Together Campaign

Strategic Planning of GPS

Court Youth Engagement

Extension of Foster Care

Supervised Independent Living

Transition Planning

Older youth transition support resource guide

Division X Stimulus Program

Financial Literacy Training series

and many more!

YEA! values:

Diversity

We believe in the power of diversity and inclusion. Together we are stronger. Our diverse races, ethnicity, family heritage, geography, gender identity, sexuality, religious beliefs and economic experiences make us uniquely prepared to lead as a collective. All voices are essential, irreplaceable, valuable and matter to YEA!

Expertise

We value and uplift the importance of lived experience. Everyone is an expert in their own story. Together our combined histories and experience of the foster care system make us stronger and wiser.

Continuous Learning

We believe in the power of taking chances and making mistakes. Sometimes failure leads to the biggest success. Together we are committed to gaining new awareness and skills through equitable education, empathy, remaining open-minded and a commitment to finding learnings and lessons in every opportunity.

Supportive Relationships

We support and uplift one another in our journeys. We acknowledge the role and impact we can have in one another's life. Together we stand as a community of advocates and leaders who commit to holding up and holding each other accountable, as we progress towards personal development and systemic change.



The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) is a national database that (1) surveys youth about their thoughts and experiences of foster care services and (2) tracks the transition services that youth receive.

The survey measures a youth's transition into adulthood. By taking the NYTD survey, youth have the opportunity to use their voice to assist lawmakers and child welfare agencies in identifying the needs of young people. Surveys will begin at age **17**, again at age **19**, and once more at age **21**.

SCNYTD Voice

SCNYTD Youth Voice is a peer network group that encourages their peers to maintain connected to share their personal experiences as transitioning from foster care to adulthood. The information gathered from NYTD surveys helps South Carolina determine what impact they have made on a young adults' life and how to improve supportive resources.

- ❖ *Get involved*
- ❖ *Stay connected*
- ❖ *Share your story in a meaningful way*
- ❖ *Give lawmakers an idea of how you're doing*
- ❖ *Impact the types of services to improve future*
- ❖ *Help change "the system" and make a difference*

Services Not Included:

Private mental health counseling

Baby-sitting/ Youth sitting services

Vacation travel/ Passports

Medical, dental and vision needs

Legal disputes/needs

Traffic violations

Property damages

Criminal charges

Entertainment expenses (TV, game system)

Secondary School Tuition and Uniforms

Any services that can be funded through
alternative sources (i.e. school districts or
placement agencies)

South Carolina Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 1520
Columbia, SC 29202-1520

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IndependentLiving@DSS.SC.GOV

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