The Emancipation Decision: Are You Ready?

What is emancipation?

Emancipation is the graduation stage for those in DCFS care who are prepared to move into self-sufficiency. They are no longer under the direct supervision of DCFS and are free to live in the general community. Emancipation means you are ready to be responsible and take control of your life as a "Mature Youth."

Preparing for emancipation

Are you a Mature Minor?

A "Mature Minor" is a person at least 16 years of age but not older than 20 who has:

- Demonstrated the ability and capacity to manage his/her own affairs and to live wholly or partially independent of his/her parents or guardian (Statute No.: 750 ILCS 30/3-2)
- Obtained a high school diploma or GED
- Secured employment
- Made arrangements to continue his/her education

Transitioning into emancipation

Youth emancipating from DCFS care will no longer have access to or may have difficulty accessing:

- Cash benefits
- A medical card
- Educational supports
- Substance abuse treatment services
- Mental health counseling
- Life skills training
  - Budgeting
  - Family planning
  - Health and safety
  - Nutrition
- Job placement assistance/training
- Caseworker supports

Are you ready for emancipation?

- Do you have a job?
- Do you have adequate financial resources?
- Do you have a stable place to live?
- Do you have access to medical care?
- Do you have access to educational resources?
- Do you have a support system?
- Do you have sufficient day care resources if required?

Emancipation services toward reaching self-sufficiency

DCFS will provide the following programs to aid in the transitioning process.

YOUTH IN COLLEGE (YIC)/VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

- Ages 16-21 AND youth in care only
- Monthly grant
- Books (not covered by financial aid)
- Possible assistance with tutoring

YOUTH IN SCHOLARSHIP (YIS)

- Ages 16-21; youth in care & adopted & sub-guardianship
- 48 merit-based awards per year
- Medical card & monthly grant
- Books (not covered by financial aid)
- Possible assistance with tutoring for youth in care

EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EIP)

- Ages 17-21; youth in care only
- $150 monthly payment with documentation of Employment or Job Training Program

EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV)

(Maximum $5,000 annual award to youth meeting eligibility)

- Possible uses of vouchers: tuition payment, books, housing, uniforms, supplies, transportation, and trade school
- School must be listed as accredited at www.ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx

COMMUNITY COLLEGE PAYMENT PROGRAM

- Ages 16-21; youth in care only
- Payment of tuition, mandatory fees, books, uniforms, and supplies not covered by financial aid grants

Caseworkers assist all eligible youth in care **with preparation for the following programs:**

- Transitional Living Program (TLP)
- Independent Living Options (ILO)
- YIC, Scholarship Program, EIP, ETV

For more information call:
DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services
312-814-5959

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services
www.DCFS.illinois.gov

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Annual High School Academic Plan Meeting

WHAT: The **Annual High School Academic Plan (CFS 407 HS)** is completed by the caseworker during the Annual High School Academic Plan Meeting at the start of each school year, August through October. Caseworkers are to convene a meeting where the student's academic progress is reviewed, problems/issues are discussed, and post-secondary planning is begun. The form is to be brought to the youth's next Administrative Case Review.

WHY: To ensure that all DCFS youth are prepared for post-secondary education, vocational training, or employment, and that they learn about the department's programs that support their plans. Academic problems or issues that are identified during this meeting will be addressed, and communication with school counselors, other relevant school staff, and NIU education advisors/POS liaisons is encouraged.

WHO: Caseworkers, youth, caregivers, school counselors and other relevant school staff should be included in order to fully address each youth's individual situation and plans. If youth has an IEP, is lacking credits, or has other specific educational issues, a NIU education advisor should be invited to participate in the meeting.

THE ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PLAN • YEAR BY YEAR

Freshman Year	Sophomore Year
• Review academic progress from elementary school/middle school & identify strengths • Identify possible future goals related to career options and/or academic interests • Review DCFS transitional services for youth 14 and older • Use the Ansell Casey Life Skill Assessment in the discussion • Discuss study habits, and any study/support groups or other supports/resources that may be needed, i.e. tutoring • Identify possible extra-curricular activities • Complete the Education Profile (CFS 407-4) • Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and education advisor	• Review progress from freshman year: is this youth on track academically? • Acknowledge accomplishments • Identify any educational problems or issues • Review discussion from Freshman year regarding academic and/or vocational interests • Student visit www.careercounseling.com if needed to clarify career interests • Discuss opportunities for internships, dual credit programs, mentors, volunteer experiences as appropriate • Begin to explore possible post-secondary colleges and vocational programs • Register for PSAT if appropriate • Communicate with school counselor as needed • Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and education advisor
Junior Year	**Senior Year**
• Review progress from sophomore year: is this youth on track academically? • Acknowledge accomplishments • Discuss graduation requirements • Identify any educational problems or issues • Focus on post-secondary goals • Involve the school counselor to identify colleges, universities, or vocational programs of interest; take tours • Notify youth re: www.collegezone.com to gather information related to school options, financial aid, college costs, scholarships • Arrange for youth to register and prepare for ACT/SAT • Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and education advisor	• Review academic progress, graduation requirements and post secondary options • Discuss graduation requirements • Review post-secondary options available to DCFS youth, decide which apply for their situation • Give youth a copy of the Get Goal'd brochure • Outline youth's responsibilities in applying for DCFS programs • Finalize list of colleges, universities, or vocational training options and note application deadlines • List out tasks for youth related to college or vocational program admission • Assist youth in completing FAFSA in January of the graduation year • Apply for DCFS Scholarship in January • Complete the AHSAP, including goals for current year, and distribute copies to student, caregiver, counselor, and education advisor

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DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services

Life Skills Program

The Life Skills Program is designed to enhance youth independent living skills while promoting economic and social self-sufficiency. Caseworkers utilize the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment Instruments to establish an individual base line for the life skills needs of each youth. Individualized transition plans, goals and timelines are developed to include youth, caregiver and caseworker involvement. Life skills training can consist of group and/or individual instructions, and may include hands-on training. Youth will receive a $150 stipend for completing the entire life skills course.

- DCFS must have a legal relationship with the youth.
- Youth must be ages 14 through 20.
- Youth must reside in substitute care where placement includes, but is not limited to, situations such as Foster Home Private (FHP), Home of Relative (HMR), Foster Home Adoptive (FHA), Foster Home Boarding (FHB), or Youth In College (YIC), etc.
- Youth must be assigned to a DCFS or Purchase of Service (POS) caseworker.

Referral Process:
DCFS or POS permanency caseworkers send referral packets to the OETS transition manager. Recommendations for service delivery are accepted. Referral packets should include:

- A completed CFS 912 (Life Skills Referral) form.
- A current social history report (prepared within the past six months). An Integrated Assessment report is acceptable in lieu of a current social history report.
- A current service plan (CFS 497) face sheet, which includes the entire child summary and signature page.
- A completed and scored Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment and the Life Skills Individual Plan consisting of a maximum of ten goals assigned to a life skills provider.
- Consent for Release of Information (CFS 600-3) that allows OETS to share youth's information with the transition agency.

For more information, contact:

Cook Region
Transition Manager
6201 S. Emerald Dr.
Chicago, Illinois 60621
773-371-6134

Northern Region
Transition Manager
8 E. Galena Blvd., 3rd Fl.
Aurora, Illinois 60506
630-801-3446

Central & Southern Regions
Transition Manager
2309 W. Main St.
Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62959
618-993-7100

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Community College Payment Program

The Community College Payment Program allows youth under DCFS Guardianship enrolling in an Illinois community college the opportunity to have their in-district tuition, fees, required books, supplies, uniforms and equipment, paid by DCFS if they are not paid by financial aid grants. Payment requests can be submitted for career and technical education programs that are part of the community college curriculum. **Requests for out-of-district and prior fiscal years' tuition will not be approved.**

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must be a youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible
- Must be accepted for enrollment by an in-district community college
- Must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Must apply for financial aid through FAFSA within required deadline set by the college, designate community college to receive funds, and provide all documentation requested by the school. FAFSA funding is to be used before requesting payment from DCFS.

Benefits:

- Payment of in district community college tuition, fee, required books, supplies, uniforms, and equipment not covered by financial aid grants.
- Services and assistance as required from my permanency worker and/or DCFS education advisors.

Permanency Worker Responsibilities:

- Assist youth with completing school enrollment, FAFSA, financial aid, and all other paperwork requested by the school.
- Complete CFS407-3, review with youth and have youth read and sign Service Agreement portion of application.
- Submit completed CFS407-3 to DCFS Community College Payment Program Coordinator at least 30 days prior to class start date.

Youth Responsibilities:

- Complete ALL necessary steps to receive FAFSA related financial aid.
- Participate in education support/tutoring offered by school to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).
- Send an official copy of class schedule and grades to caseworker within two weeks of having access to them.
- Sign FERPA forms allowing school to communicate with permanency worker and CCPP coordinator.
- If the youth does not drop classes by drop/add date, he or she will be responsible for paying bill.

Payment Request Process:

Community College must submit the completed CFS407-3 along with student schedule, invoice and proof of financial aid status for each semester that payment is being requested to:

DCFS Community College Payment Program
2001 NE Jefferson Avenue, Peoria, IL 61603
Phone: 309-671-7969 • Fax: 309-671-7946

Illinois Department of DCFS Children & Family Services
www.DCFS.illinois.gov

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Education & Training Vouchers

Resource for Lifetime Achievement

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program assists youth with post-secondary education related expenses not covered by financial aid grants.

Eligibility:

- Youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible or who aged out of care at age 18 or older

OR

- Achieved permanency at age 16 or older through either subsidized guardianship or adoption

Benefits:

- Payment of up to $5000 annually of education related expenses such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment and/or transportation not covered by other grants or scholarships
- Funding available until age 21
- If enrolled in a post-secondary program and student has used ETV funding before age 21 and making satisfactory progress toward completion of the program, funding is available until age 23

Requirements:

- Attend post-secondary school listed as accredited by US Department of Education
- Make satisfactory academic progress
- File FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) annually
- Complete any additional financial paperwork required by the school
- Submit completed application with requested documentation each term

Approval decisions and actual voucher award amounts are determined by the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS).

Applications and Questions:

DCFS • Office of Education and Transition Services • 2001 NE Jefferson Ave., Peoria, IL 61603
Phone: 309-671-7969 • Fax: 309-671-7946

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Employment Incentive Program

The Employment Incentive Program (EIP) is designed to provide financial and supplemental services to help adolescent youth gain marketable skills through on-the-job work experience or through job training programs. Youth who complete the EIP are equipped with the employment skills and work ethics necessary for a successful transition to independence.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Be 17 years of age, and not yet 21
- Have a high school diploma or a General Education Development (GED) certificate
- Be under court-ordered legal responsibility of DCFS
- Complete Casey life skills assessment
- Be involved in job training through a certified job skills training program (e.g., Job Corps, apprenticeship, internship), or be employed for at least one month prior to applying for the EIP and working a minimum of 20 hours per week

Benefits:

- Monthly payment of $150.00 with documentation for a maximum of 12 months or age 21, whichever comes first
- Start-up funding for work-related items (e.g., tools, work clothing, etc.). Funding is need-based and limited to a one-time disbursement of up to $200.00 with required documentation.

Referral Information Requirements:

- Employment Incentive Program Application (Form CFS 449-2)
- Current Client Service Plan (Form CFS 497)
- Service Agreement signed by youth and caseworker
- Verification of employment or job training program participation

For more information, contact:

Chicago
312-814-6804

Springfield
217-557-2689

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Youth Housing Assistance Program

DCFS may provide Youth Housing Assistance to help attain or maintain housing stability for youth that the department currently has or previously had legal responsibility. There are two parts to Youth Housing Assistance: *Housing Advocacy* and *Cash Assistance*, each of which is explained below. Often a client will need housing advocacy services first. Once housing is identified, that same client needs cash assistance. Other clients will not need housing advocacy at all and will simply utilize cash assistance. Still others just need help finding housing and do not need any cash assistance. Call for details.

Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy services assist clients in obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing. Services include:

- Assistance in securing affordable housing
- Consumer education
- Budget counseling
- Linkages to community based resources (i.e. assistance with utilities, clothing and food)
- Follow-up services for a minimum of three months after the client secures appropriate housing

Note: Housing Advocacy does not include any money.

Eligibility:

Youth receiving housing advocacy services must meet all three of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 17 ½ and less than 21 years of age;
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS within six months of case closure, **or** have aged out of DCFS care; (Note: Youth that entered adoption or subsidized guardianship after their 14th birthday are also eligible.); **and**
3. Have an income that is sufficient to meet rent and utility costs; **or** be working on obtaining that income. (While housing advocacy can begin before income is in place, it is extremely unlikely that youth will be able to secure housing without sufficient income. Housing advocates can often help with employment.)

Cash Assistance

Assistance will vary depending on a client's situation. Cash assistance may be authorized for the following reasons:

- Housing security deposit
- Rent (limited circumstances)
- Beds for the client and the client's children
- Current utility bills or utility deposits
- Appliances
- Partial housing subsidy for a period of one year following case closure (housing costs must exceed 30% of income and assistance cannot continue past the client's 21st birthday)
- Other items required by the client to avoid or manage a crisis

Eligibility:

Youth receiving Cash Assistance must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 18 and less than 21 years of age;
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS and ready for case closure or have aged out of DCFS care. (Note: Youth that moved to adoption or subsidized guardianship are NOT eligible for cash assistance);
3. Have completed a budget statement (Form CFS 370-5C) that demonstrates that with any subsidy and all other income they will be able to cover all remaining living expenses (e.g. housing, utilities, clothing, food); and
4. Need cash assistance in order to attain or maintain stable housing

Referral Process or Questions

Please discuss this letter with your caseworker. For more information, caseworkers may contact the Youth Housing Assistance Coordinator at 312-814-5571 (Phone) or 312-814-7134 (Fax).

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Youth Housing Assistance Program
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I used to be in DCFS care. I am now 21 years old. May I receive these services?
A. No, you are no longer eligible for any of these services when you turn 21, no matter what.

Q. Am I entitled to this money?
A. No. This program is based on need, not entitlement.

Q. Will you pay for my housing?
A. No, the idea of housing advocacy is to help you find housing that you can afford. For those eligible for cash assistance, we can also help with certain housing start-up expenses, such as a security deposit.

Q. I need a job. What can I do?
A. Any education and transition coordinator can assist you in attaining employment by referring you to employment and training programs and services.

Q. I was adopted or entered subsidized guardianship. Am I eligible for housing advocacy?
A. Yes, you are eligible for housing advocacy if you were adopted or moved to subsidized guardianship after your 14th birthday. (Note: Housing Advocacy does not entitle you to money.)

Q. I was adopted or entered subsidized guardianship. Am I eligible for cash assistance?
A. No, if you were adopted or moved to subsidized guardianship you are not eligible for any cash assistance.

Q. Can my husband/wife/boyfriend/girlfriend/partner live with me? What about children?
A. If anyone in your household is eligible for services, we can serve your household, however you define it. We will look at your household income to determine if housing you find is affordable for you.

Q. What about roommates?
A. Sometimes having one or more roommates is the best way to make your housing affordable. You may want to consider this option. We will ask some questions about your roommates' income to make sure this housing situation is affordable for all of you.

Q. Do you have an apartment I can move into right now?
A. No, we do not have any apartments. Our housing advocates will provide assistance with finding housing on the open market, anywhere in Illinois.

Q. What if I don't live in Illinois?
A. First, call your local child welfare office (where you are) and ask for Chafee services. Tell them you aged out of the Illinois child welfare system. If you need help accessing these services, call the number below and we will try to help. If you still need help, but can find your own housing and can afford the monthly rent, we may be able to help you by mailing a check for the security deposit to your landlord. Call to see if this is possible.

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Scholarship Program

Eligibility Requirements:

- The department must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of DCFS guardianship at age 18 or older, or the department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant immediately prior to the adoption or guardianship being finalized.
- The applicant must be at least 16 years old, but not yet 21, on the scholarship application deadline of March 31 each year
- Successfully compete for a DCFS college scholarship
- Maintain at least a "C" average each semester
- Maintain full-time status (12 hours Fall & Spring, 6 hours or an approved internship in Summer). Enrollment will be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Submit your class schedule at the start of each semester and your grades at the end of the semester **(no schedule and grades, no payment!)**
- Report changes to any contact information promptly to the DCFS scholarship administrator

Benefits:

- A grant award in the amount of $511 per month. Direct deposit is strongly recommended.
- Medical card provided to Illinois students until the earlier of four years or age 23
- Tuition waiver available to any Illinois state funded community college or university
- Reimbursement of the cost of books not covered by financial aid
- Benefits available for five consecutive year or through the semester the youth turns 23, whichever occurs first
- This program is a chance of a lifetime!

Important Plans To Consider:

- Arranging transportation to the school location
- Planning for housing when school is closed for breaks and holidays
- Devising a backup plan for education finances if your monthly grant is lost or stolen
- Seeking tutorial assistance through the school, and meeting with OETS staff if your grades are low, if you are having problems in a particular course, or if you must withdraw from any classes
- Youth who withdraw from classes must notify the OETS business office
- Apply for financial aid annually.

What the Scholarship DOES NOT Cover:

- Orientation fees
- Computers or Internet services
- Room/board costs
- Repayment of student loans
- Tuition to private, out-of-state or vocational training programs
- Study abroad
- Phone bills
- Dorm room damages
- Laboratory fees
- Transportation to and from school
- Study enhancement programs
- Supplies
- Library fines

See reverse side for more details.

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Important Dates

Please mail the following documents to the Office of Education and Transition Services by the following dates:

August 15	Schedule, Summer Grades, Address Changes
January 15	Schedule, Fall Grades, Address Changes
June 15	Schedule, Spring Grades, Address Changes

Pay Run Dates for 2016

MONTH	MAILING
JANUARY	1/12/16
FEBRUARY	2/9/16
MARCH	3/9/16
APRIL	4/11/16
MAY	5/10/16
JUNE	6/9/16
JULY	7/12/16
AUGUST	8/9/16
SEPTEMBER	9/12/16
OCTOBER	10/12/16
NOVEMBER	11/14/16
DECEMBER	12/12/16

NOTE: All mailing dates are estimated.

Important Phone Numbers

Central Payment Unit	800-525-0499	Education Advisors	815-753-5562
Direct Deposit	217-557-0930	Chicago Office	312-814-6800
Medical Card Hotline	800-228-6533	Springfield Business Office	217-557-2689
Youth Hotline	866-459-6884		

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Rev. 2/16

Youth In College/Vocational Training Program

Eligibility Requirements:

- DCFS must have court ordered legal responsibility for youth.
- Youth must have high school diploma or GED certificate or be enrolled as a full-time student in an accredited university or a vocational training program.
- Must complete the CFS 449 (Youth in College/Vocational Training Program application).
- Must be at least 16 years old and not yet 21
- Maintain at least "C" average each semester.
- Maintain full-time status (12 hours Fall & Spring, 6 hours in Summer, or an approved summer internship). Enrollment will be verified through the National Student Clearinghouse.
- Submit youth class schedule at the start of each semester and your grades at the end of each semester (no schedule and grades, no payment!)
- Report any change of address promptly to your YIC Coordinator.
- Apply for financial aid every year to cover tuition or room and board costs.
- Youth transitioning to the YIC program at age 21 must have completed at least one semester of a post secondary program at full time status with a 2.0 GPA or higher.

Benefits:

- Youth may choose to attend an accredited vocational school, four-year college or community college.
- A monthly grant in the amount of $511. Direct deposit is strongly recommended.
- Reimbursement available for books not covered by financial aid.
- Education advisors and OETS staff are available for assistance.
- Benefits available through the semester the youth turns 23.
- Youth are eligible for a one-time start up funding in the amount of $200 to be used for initial living expenses.

Important Plans To Consider:

- Arranging transportation to the school location
- Planning for housing when school is closed for breaks and holidays
- Devising a backup plan for education finances if your grant is lost or stolen
- Seeking tutorial assistance through the school, and meeting with your education advisor and OETS staff if your grades are low, if you are having problems in a particular course, or if you must withdraw from any classes.
- Education and Training Voucher Program for expenses not covered by Youth in College/Vocational Training Program.

What the Youth In College/Vocational Training Program DOES NOT Cover:

- Orientation fees
- Computers or Internet services
- Room/board costs
- Laboratory fees
- Supplies
- Study abroad
- Study enhancement programs
- Phone bills
- Library fines
- Dorm room damages
- Repayment of student loans
- Transportation to and from school
- Tuition

See reverse side for more details.

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SEPTEMBER	9/12/16
OCTOBER	10/12/16
NOVEMBER	11/14/16
DECEMBER	12/12/16

NOTE: All mailing dates are estimated.

Important Phone Numbers

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Youth Hotline	866-459-6884		

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Promoting Academic Excellence

- ✓ Get involved by attending school activities, parent/teacher conferences and parent board meetings
- ✓ Communicate often with youth's teacher(s) and counselor
- ✓ Assist youth with identifying academic interests, goals, strengths and areas needing improvement
- ✓ Show interest in your child's academic world by assisting him/her with getting organized, inquiring about his day and designating a distraction-free study area
- ✓ Assist with developing time management skills and prioritizing assignments
- ✓ Review completed assignments and assist with test preparation
- ✓ Encourage daily reading to assist with improving reading and comprehension skills
- ✓ Encourage youth to perform his/her best and congratulate all accomplishments
- ✓ Explain standardized exams, support and encourage youth's best performance
- ✓ During the month of March, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th graders will take the Illinois Standardized Achievement Test (ISAT)
- ✓ Discuss high schools of interest during 5th grade, explain that 7th grade reading and math scores from the ISAT will determine high school eligibility
- ✓ During sophomore year of high school, encourage youth to begin identifying colleges or universities of interest
- ✓ During junior year of high school, encourage youth to attend college tours
- ✓ Ensure that students register to take the ACT during their junior year of high school
- ✓ All high school juniors must take the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) or its equivalent during the Spring
- ✓ During the months of October and November, 12th graders should begin sending out applications to college(s) of interest
- ✓ Ensure that seniors complete the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form in January
- ✓ 12th grade students should apply for DCFS Scholarship January through March
- ✓ 12th grade students should apply for self-identified college scholarships, noting application deadlines
- ✓ Complete all financial aid paperwork at school
- ✓ Attend college orientations once accepted
- ✓ Enroll into the DCFS Youth in College at least 2 months prior to attending college of choice

Office of Education and Transition Services
100 W. Randolph
Chicago, Il 60601
312-814-6800

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Department of Children and Family Services' Department of Healthcare and Family Services Medical Card

Qualifications and Procedures

- A child/youth who is in the legal custody of DCFS and placed in substitute care.
- A child/youth in the legal custody of DCFS, who is placed in certain living arrangements on the last day in substitute care may receive a medical extension for a year when returning to the home of parent or upon case closure of the child/youth case.
- Youth who are age 18 when returned to the home of a parent or upon case closure are eligible for a medical card extension up to age 26. Please discuss the details for enrollment with your case worker before case closure.
- Parenting youth in the legal custody of DCFS, and live in substitute care, will receive a medical card for their children who reside with them.
- The medical card is valid for one month at a time and is mailed monthly.
- The medical card is mailed to the same address as the financial assistance for the child/youth. Keep those addresses current.
- The medical card goes with the child/youth if a change in placement occurs.

HFS Medical Card Usage

- The medical card serves as a health insurance card for the child/youth. The card pays for many health care services, including medical and dental exams, immunizations, prescriptions, hospital care, etc. Keep it readily available at all times.
- The medical card can be used only with providers who are enrolled with the HFS and who **accept** the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.
- **Out-of-state providers must be enrolled in HFS and accept the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.**
- Some uses of the medical card may require prior approval. Examples are: prescriptions that are "non-preferred" drugs and some durable medical equipment and supplies (bath lifts, wheelchairs, oxygen, etc.). Contact your physician or pharmacist with questions.
- Non-emergency medical transportation requires prior approval and should be approved through the DCFS regional medical liaison. Service may only be furnished by providers enrolled with HFS who accept the medical card and HFS payment as payment in full.
- If the medical card is lost, immediately contact your caseworker to request a replacement card and/or Recipient Verification Letter.

DCFS Medical Card Hotline (1-800-228-6533: Monday through Friday - - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

- You should contact the Medical Card Hotline directly if you do not receive a medical card for a child/youth in your care.
- You should contact the Medical Card Hotline directly regarding medical extension eligibility requirements.
- You should notify your caseworker to contact the Medical Card Hotline if the address on the medical card needs to be changed or the child/youth's name and/or birth date is incorrect.
- Providers may call the Medical Card Hotline to verify the correct recipient number and periods of eligibility for a child/youth they are serving.
- A child/youth in DCFS custody should not be charged a co-pay. If this occurs, call the Medical Card Hotline for assistance.

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Countdown to 21

The Countdown to 21 program is designed to support the successful transition of older youth to independence. The Program ensures that youth are involved in long term planning activities regarding their final living arrangement prior to leaving the Department's care, connections are established with family and community supports, realistic educational and vocational goals are established and in process, and participation in financial literacy training to promote financial stability.

Youth who successfully complete the eligibility criteria below can earn a one-time payment of $1,200 in emancipation funds. The purpose of the emancipation funds is to provide financial support as they leave the child welfare system and become self-sufficient.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Youth must be in a Department approved placement.
2. Youth must participate in a Discharge-Clinical Intervention for Placement Preservation (D-CIPP) at age 19 and develop a plan and are referred to Financial Literacy Course.
3. Youth must complete the CFS-2032-1 Youth Driven Transition Plan or CFS-375-2-ILO TLP Quarterly Discharge Transition Launch Plan.
4. Description and address of living situation post emancipation.
5. Youth must identify a supportive resources person to work with the youth and participate in D-CIPP.
6. Successful completion of the Department approved Financial Literacy Course.
7. Youth must participate in a D-CIPP 90-days prior to 21 y/o, or case closure, to review plan, Emancipation Funds Application and Budget

For more information or to schedule a D-CIPP,
please call 312-814-6800 and ask to speak to a D-CIPP intake staff member.

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