

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

This assistance is coordinated through the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program of Child Protective Services.

1) Tuition and Fee Waiver (for Higher Education)

(a provision of Texas State Law, Section 54.211 of the Texas Education Code. While U.S. citizenship or qualified alien status is not required, it is strongly encouraged as young adults without such status will have difficulty obtaining any federal financial assistance at college.)

To be exempt from the payment of tuition and fees at a Texas state supported institution of higher education, the youth must:

1. Have been in DFPS Conservatorship in foster or other residential care on or after:
 - the day preceding the youth's 18th birthday;
 - the day the youth graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma; or
 - the day of the youth's 14th birthday, if the youth was eligible for adoption (parental rights being terminated) on or after that day ; and
 - Enroll as an undergraduate by their 25th birthday or in a dual credit course or other course for which a high school student may earn joint high school and college credit.

Note: Other eligible youth include those who are adopted and the adoption occurred after September 1, 2009, adopted youth subject to an adoption assistance agreement and permanent managing conservatorship of the youth was granted to a non-parent on or after September 1, 2009.

2) Education and Training Voucher

(Certain youth who have been in DFPS foster care may receive up to \$5,000 per student (based on need), per year to cover the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education.. ETV funds may be used to cover Tuition/fees for a non state-supported institution or if youth is not eligible for the state tuition and fee waiver for former foster care youth. Visit the ETV website at <http://www.bcfs.net/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=988> or at www.texasyouthconnection.org under the education tab

PAL staff and youth may access a complete listing of Texas Institutions of Higher Education at <http://www.collegefortexans.com/cfbin/inst.cfm>

The Education and Training Voucher Program will allow Texas to help youth make a smoother transition to self-sufficiency and independence by providing funding that will help youth receive education, training and services not otherwise covered by another funding source.

BENEFITS

The ETV Program can help with:

- Residential housing**three months in advance
- Room and board costs/food
- Tuition/fees (for non state-supported institution or if youth is not eligible for the state tuition and fee waiver for former foster care youth)
- Personal items
- Books/supplies
- Child care
- Transportation needs
- Computer or other required equipment

- Costs for attendance at an institution of higher education that do not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- If you are 21 and your Medicare benefits have been terminated, you may request the Education and Training Voucher Program to pay for your health insurance through the school you are attending.
- If you wish to attend a **Career School or College** (as described on the Texas Workforce Commission website), ETV may assist with the cost of attendance even if the program is less than 12 months. For more information about these schools you may access the website at <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/svcs/propschools/prophp.html>

ETV Eligibility Requirements:

Those who are eligible to participate are:

- Youth in DFPS foster care who are at least 16 and who are likely to remain in foster care until turning 18, or
- Youth who age out of DFPS foster care but have not yet turned 21, or
- Youth who are adopted from DFPS foster care after turning 16 years old who are not yet 21, or
- Youth participating in the education/training voucher program on their 21st birthday can remain eligible until 23 as long as they are enrolled and making satisfactory progress toward completing their postsecondary education or training program

ETV Qualifications:

- Youth between 16 and 21 who have a high school diploma or equivalent and who **are enrolled** at least part-time (6 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
- Youth who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance (age 18) and who **are enrolled** at least part-time (6 hours) in an accredited or pre-accredited program that provides training toward gainful employment
- Online/Correspondence/Distance Students PLEASE Contact ETV staff to seek approval for your program

In addition, the assistance provided under the ETV Program cannot duplicate other benefits from DFPS to assist with the same costs.

Mail, E-mail or Fax the ETV application and required supporting documents to:

Baptist Children and Family Services
 Attn: ETV Program
 4415 Piedras Drive West, Suite 100
 San Antonio Texas 78212
 Phone: 1-877-268-4063
 FAX: 210-208-5605

(E-Mail documents in a PDF format only)

3) Aftercare Room and Board Assistance (*based on need, up to \$500 per month with a total cap of \$3000 of accumulated payments per young adult – variances may be considered in emergency or special circumstances.*)

- Must be between 18 and 21 years of age;
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien;
- Must have aged out of foster care at age 18 or older (PRS conservatorship and control must have been maintained until age 18);
- *Must be in an educational program, employed or actively seeking employment (for those who are able to work), or be receiving pre-vocational or vocational training services; and
- Must prove financial need.

* Note: Some time-limited exceptions may be made in special medical or emergency situations.

4) Transitional Medicaid [*a provision of federal (Chafee Foster Care Independence Act) and Texas State Law*] / **Star Health Program**

- Must be a current Texas resident between 18 and 21 years of age;
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien.
- Must have aged out of foster care at age 18 or older (PRS conservatorship and control must have been maintained until at least age 18);
- Must have no other medical coverage (private insurance or other category of Medicaid);
- Must not have resources valued at more than \$10,000; and
- Must meet the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) income guidelines for this category of Medicaid.

Must call Jordan Young, DHS Centralized Benefits Section at 1-800-248-1078, ext. 8126 or 512-908-8126 for annual re-certification and to report change of address.

5) Former Foster Care in Higher Education (FFCHE) Program (*a state funded "health care benefits" program for certain former foster youth who:*

- Are at least 21 year of age or older, but younger than 23 years of age;
- Would be eligible for assistance as an independent foster care adolescent; and
- Are enrolled in a public institution of higher education located in Texas and certain private institutions of higher education located in Texas.

Youth may call HHSC's Central Benefits Services toll-free at 1-800-248-1078 or 2-1-1 to request an application. PAL staff and youth may also refer to the FFCHE information available on the www.texasyouthconnection.org website.

6) Transitional Living Allowance (*up to \$1,000 to be distributed in increments not to exceed \$500 per month*)

- Must have been in DFPS paid foster or Medicaid-paid substitute care within the 24 months prior to initiating the allowance;
- Must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien;
- Must have completed the Preparation for Adult Living Program Life Skills training;
- Must be making or have made a plan to move into an independent living arrangement, or a supervised or semi-supervised setting;

- Must be employed, be actively seeking employment (for those youth who are able to work), be enrolled and attending school or college, or be receiving pre-vocational or vocational training services; and
- Must provide all information required by regional CPS staff.

Note: All payments must be made by the young adult's 21st birthday.

The **Texas Youth Hotline** is a resource for youth 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 and information and referrals. The hotline can help young adults locate services available in their communities

The **Texas Youth Connection** website, designed with input from youth is a resource for youth in the Texas Foster Care system, alumni of foster care or for youth seeking general tips and information. This website offers information and resources in education, finances, records, diversity, health, contacts, job links, food, housing, books, stories, hotlines and other hot stuff. Check this resource out at: www.texasyouthconnection.org