

Need to Know Series:

# Preparing Youth for Success: Services for Foster Care Youth and Former Foster Care Youth



## Youth In Progress

New York State Foster Care  
Youth Leadership Advisory Team

“The mission of Youth In Progress is to enhance and advance the lives of today’s and tomorrow’s youth by supporting their sense of self and responsibility. To do this, we pledge to educate everyone involved in the various systems Youth In Progress members represent to the realities of this experience.”

[www.youthinprogress.org](http://www.youthinprogress.org)

# What is the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program?

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was created by federal legislation aimed at helping youth in care to:

- 🌀 establish permanent, nurturing relationships with caring adults;
- 🌀 develop basic life skills such as money management and finding an apartment;
- 🌀 obtain the education/vocational training that young people need to make a transition from foster care to responsible adulthood; and
- 🌀 take an active role in planning for their future.



# What Chafee Services are Available in New York State?

All local departments of social services in New York State are required to provide a variety of services that will help you make a successful transition from foster care.



These services are:

- 🌀 Assessment and Casework Counseling
- 🌀 Education Services/Vocational Training
- 🌀 Life Skills Training
- 🌀 Independent Living (IL) Stipends
- 🌀 Post-discharge Services

**Assessment and Casework Counseling** includes setting your permanency planning goal such as adoption or discharge to the community/Another Planned Living



Arrangement with a Permanency Resource (APLA), and documenting the goals and activities that you and your caseworker develop in your case plan to help you gain the skills you need when you leave care.

**Education Services/Vocational Training** includes education, training, and services to help you gain the academic skills you will need to receive your high school diploma or GED, and be prepared to enter college or a vocational training program to learn a trade.



**Life Skills Training** is a way for you to develop a variety of skills to help in your transition to adulthood. Starting at age 14 and based on an assessment, you should be receiving life skills training that are appropriate for your age and abilities in the areas listed below:

- 🌀 career counseling
- 🌀 job search
- 🌀 apartment finding
- 🌀 budgeting
- 🌀 shopping
- 🌀 cooking
- 🌀 housecleaning



**Independent Living (IL) Stipends** are provided to eligible foster youth who are 16 years of age or older and are actively participating in their independent living programs. An IL stipend serves as an incentive for you to participate in the program, and it will also provide you with money management experience. If you are 16 or older, check with your caseworker to see if you are eligible to receive an IL stipend.



## Post-discharge Services

**Aftercare Services** are available to former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 21. If you are going to be discharged to the community/APLA, the district is required to offer you a trial discharge. To participate in a trial discharge, you would need to agree to live on your own in the community but remain in the custody of the district. A trial discharge can last 6 months or longer. Your caseworker would visit you and help you obtain needed services during the trial discharge period. The most important thing to understand is that if you are living on your own in the community and lose your housing, you would not be able to re-enter foster care unless you have agreed to be on a trial discharge. When your trial discharge period ends, you would have the opportunity to agree to be under the district's supervision until the age of 21. This means that your caseworker would visit you and help you obtain needed services.

**Transition Plan** is a plan for an older youth who will soon be exiting foster care. The plan includes options in areas that are important for you to address before you leave care, to help you make a successful transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. It is your personalized plan and can include as much detail as you would like to see in it. Your Transition Plan will help you identify your options in such areas as housing, health care and health insurance, and education/vocational training. You and your caseworker must begin developing your Transition Plan **180** days prior to your scheduled discharge, and it must be completed **90** days prior to your leaving care.



**Medicaid Until 21** is available to you as a former foster care youth if you left care on or after your 18 birthday and you are under the age of 21. This is true regardless of your income and/or resources as long as you live in New York State. In order to receive Medicaid, you must be a U.S. citizen or have satisfactory immigration status. The local department of social services may ask you to submit



papers that prove that you meet this requirement, and it may also request your Social Security number. It is very important that you submit the requested information. If you do not present it, you may lose your Medicaid coverage. It is also important that you

let your local department of social services know when you change your address. You risk losing your Medicaid coverage if your current address is not on file.

**Room and Board Services** may be available through your local department of social services. You must be a former foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who left foster care on or after the age of 18 to be eligible for these services. These services, when available, may help you pay your rent and/or utilities, obtain furnishings for your apartment, and cover your security deposit.



# Resources

**Casey Life Skills Assessments** — This organization includes free online assessments for youth at various ages and their caregivers. It includes the ability to develop individualized plans using online resources. [www.caseylifeskills.org](http://www.caseylifeskills.org)

**Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program** — Youth can find information on eligibility and the online application process to help pay for their college or vocational training. [www.statevoucher.org](http://www.statevoucher.org)

**Foster Club** — This national network for kids in foster care includes information and resources for youth in care and former foster care youth. [www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com)

**Orphan Foundation** — This organization provides a wealth of information, including Educational Training Voucher funding opportunities and other financial assistance, and internship resources for foster care youth and former foster care youth. [www.orphan.org](http://www.orphan.org)

**Youth in Progress** — This is New York State's Youth Leadership Advisory Group's website, which provides youth, staff, and foster parents with information on monthly regional meetings, annual youth speak-outs, videos and various other resources, including the English and Spanish version of the Handbook for Youth, which covers rights and responsibilities of youth in out-of-home placement in New York State. [www.youthinprogress.org](http://www.youthinprogress.org)



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