

CFSA's OYE (Office of Youth Empowerment) Older Youth Services

Overview (via The Children's Law Center [undated])

"Through the Office of Youth Empowerment ("OYE"), CFSA provides an array of services and supports and provides linkage to community-based services and support to older youth in foster care. Services and supports are intended to help them develop their strengths and address their needs as they prepare to transition out of the foster care system and into their lives as independent adults." – Children's Law Center

Age 14:

- Within 30 days of your 15th birthday, your social worker is **required** to enroll you with the Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) by completing a Universal e-Referral Form.
- Your social worker should begin the transition planning process. Between the ages of 15 and 20, **you should be having transition planning meetings at least once every 6 months.**

Age 15 ½:

- Your social worker should be holding transition planning meetings for you at least once every 6 months beginning at age 15, so this is the latest date by which your first transition planning meeting should have occurred.

Age 17:

- If you are case-managed by CFSA or living in a congregate care placement, you are eligible to be transferred to an OYE social worker for case management. If you have not yet been told whether you will be transferred to a new social worker or who that social worker will be, you should contact your current social worker to find out if there is a plan to transfer you.
- If you are pregnant or parenting, you are eligible to be transferred to a social worker within the Generation Unit, a specialized unit within OYE that serves teen parents.

Age 18:

- You are eligible for the Career Pathways Unit, which assists youth who are not college-bound in seeking vocational training and/or employment.
- You are eligible for CFSA's subsidized employment program, which connects youth in foster care to internships. The program is open to both college-bound and non-college-bound youth.

Age 20:

- Transition planning meetings should occur at least once every 90 days until your case closes.

Age 20 ½:

- Mandatory 21 JumpStart Reviews will occur when you are 20.5 years old. The review can include you, your social workers, supervisors, GALs, placement providers, OYE Education and/or Career Pathways Specialists and any additional individuals that you identify as a member of your team. A youth aftercare representative will be introduced. During the meeting, your housing plan will be discussed. Additionally, barriers to a successful transition will be identified and next steps will be assigned to members of your team.
- At age 21, you are eligible for a transitional care package, with a value of up to \$1,000, from CFSA. Your social worker is responsible for ensuring that you receive your care package. Please note that, in order to receive your transitional care package, you must first enroll in and complete the Making Money Grow program (see under programs and policies).

21 Jumpstart

- This meeting is designed to identify any barriers that may exist and hinder a successful transition out of foster care. Once these barriers are identified, they are addressed and necessary resources will then be highlighted. The meeting will not take place without you present.
- All 21 JumpStart Reviews will be held 10 am – 3 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. A late night will be available every other Wednesday with the last Review ending at 7:30 pm. All reviews will be scheduled for 1 hour.
- The 21 Jumpstart review facilitator will send the social worker and supervisory social worker an email from cfsa.oyejumpstart@dc.gov requesting that they provide 3 dates and times that they and you are available per the JumpStart meeting schedule. The social worker will also be responsible for providing email contact information for you and all team members
- Once a date is confirmed by you, your social worker and supervisory social worker, the 21 JumpStart facilitator will send the team an Outlook invite to confirm the date and time of scheduled review. Please note: All 21 JumpStart Reviews must be confirmed by email via an Outlook invite.
- The 21 JumpStart Review facilitator will invite necessary OYE staff to the review.
- The social worker will be required to send your most recent Youth Transition Plan no later than 2 weeks before the scheduled review.
- As part of the 21 JumpStart process, social workers are now required to provide the closing summaries no later than 1 week from case closure and the Medicaid Aftercare 30B form 30 days prior to your transition from care to the Office of Youth Empowerment for processing.

Programs (information from Child and Family Services Agency – November 2018):

Case Management Services

1. Youth between the ages of 15 and 20 years placed in a congregate care facility or DC foster home are assigned to OYE for primary case management unless there is a determination that it is in the youth's best interest to be assigned to a non-OYE social worker.
2. Irrespective of who has case management responsibility, youth are to be informed of their rights under the District of Columbia Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster Care.
3. The youth's case plan must document:
 - a. The youth's education, health, visitation, and court participation rights
 - b. The youth's right to receive a credit report annually, and
 - c. A signed acknowledgement by the youth that the youth was informed of these rights and that they were explained in an age appropriate way.

College and Career Preparation Services

1. OYE offers college and career preparation services to all youth in foster care who are interested in, applying to, or enrolling in post-secondary education.
2. OYE holds individual counseling sessions with the youth, or facilitates team sessions, to provide assistance with college or vocational program search and selection, entrance pre-requisites, applications, and the financial aid process.
3. OYE facilitates and sponsors (subject to availability of funds) on-site visits to secondary education institutions.
4. OYE provides limited financial assistance to cover academic testing and program enrollment fees, and graduation expenses subject to the availability of funds. a. Assistance is to be made available only after alternative means of funding the activities have been exhausted.
5. OYE provides limited tuition assistance (not to exceed \$5,000 per year) for post-secondary education through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) Education and Training Vouchers (ETV), subject to the availability of funds, to youth who:
 - a. are between 18 to 20 years of age at the time of application and who have not reached 23 years of age
 - b. have United States citizenship or legal residency
 - c. were in out-of-home care at the age of 15 years or older, or adopted or achieved permanency through legal guardianship at the age of 16 or older
 - d. possess a high school diploma or equivalent
 - e. are enrolled in a post-secondary school, or career or technical training program, as a full-time or part-time student
 - f. have submitted an application for financial aid, including the completion of a Free Application for Federal Student Aid ("FAFSA"), to the post-secondary school or training program
 - g. initiate the post-secondary education or training before age 21 years, or six months prior to aging out of foster care

- h. maintain satisfactory academic progress (i.e., at least a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or academic standing consistent with the institution's FAFSA graduation requirements
6. For youth interested in career opportunities and advancement, OYE career counseling sessions focus on professional development, interviewing, and resume-building.
 7. OYE partners with public and private job-training programs and employers to offer youth opportunities for work experience, vocational training, certification and sustainable employment.

Asset Building/Financial Literacy Services

1. For youth between the ages of 15 to 20.5 years, the Asset Building/Financial Education program is to be made available to develop the skills to save, build and manage assets as they prepare to transition out of foster care.
2. Eligible youth who enroll in the Asset Building/Financial Education program will receive financial coaching in personal budgeting, financial planning, and credit counseling. The program also includes a Matched Savings Program wherein CFSA contributes to the youth's savings account.

Making Money Grow

Making Money Grow is a financial literacy and match saving programs for youth in care. All DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) youth in care ages 15 - 20.5 are eligible to participate in the financial literacy program that teaches youth how to manage their finances, save for the future, and transition out of care with up to \$12,000.

- a. All youth in foster care ages 15 - 20.5 interested in enrolling in the program can contact OYE to schedule an orientation and open an account. Youth can bring a photo ID and a check or money order for their initial deposit.
- b. An account will be opened with Citibank within 10 business days and youth can make regular deposits. Capital Area Asset Builders (CAAB), a local non-profit organization granted by CFSA, manage the matched savings program for participants.
- c. Youth who enroll in the program will receive one-on-one financial coaching and will be matched 1:1 up to \$500 annually for 15 – 17 year olds or 2:1 up to \$1,000 annually for 18 – 21 year olds.
- d. As long as your account is opened while you are in foster care, you can continue to make deposits and be matched up to age 21.
- e. The matched money can only be withdrawn for allowable uses, which include:
 - i. Education: Tuition, textbooks, and school fees
 - ii. Housing: Security deposits, rent or a down payment on a home
 - iii. Vehicle expenses: car, insurance, taxes and fees
 - iv. Start-up business pursuits

- v. Healthcare, health insurance or other medical expenses
- f. You can utilize the matched funds up until your 23rd birthday.
- g. You can voluntarily un-enroll from the program and withdraw your personal savings. Youth will however not have access to the funds matched by CFSA. If you want to use the match savings funds, then you need to submit a special request to CFSA for consideration.

Foster Care Transition Services

1. Transition services are available to all youth in care age 14 years and older for a connection to adult human service support agencies and community service providers to assist youth across the following independent living domains:
 - a. life skills, self-care and health literacy
 - b. finances and money management
 - c. educational, vocational and career planning
 - d. permanent housing
 - e. transportation planning
 - f. social integration and community connections
 - g. sexual health and family planning
2. Until the youth reaches 20 years of age, transition and planning meetings with youth occur semi-annually.
3. At age 20 years, transition planning meetings occur at least every 90 days until the youth exits foster care.
2. The youth transition plan is developed and updated in consultation with the youth and, at the option of the youth, with up to two members of the case planning team who are chosen by the youth and who are not the youth's social worker or resource provider.
 - a. The Agency may reject the person(s) the youth identified to be a member of the case planning team at any time if the Agency has good cause to believe that the individual would not act in the youth's best interests
3. Youth exiting care will receive consultation to promote continuity of health insurance following transition from care into their state of residence.
4. Upon exit from foster care, youth are to be provided with original versions or official copies of their birth certificate, social security card, District identification card, Medicaid card, immunization records, school records, health care records, immigration documents, and a signed Ward letter indicating that the youth had previously been in foster care.

Aftercare Services

1. Youth are eligible for the following aftercare services for two years from the date of the youth's exit from foster care:
 - a. Assistance in the search for stable housing
 - b. Aftercare case management
 - c. Employment and vocational guidance, including referrals
 - d. Ongoing life skills development
 - e. Guidance for accessing public services
 - f. Referral to parenting classes and daycare vouchers
 - g. Referral and linkage to adult systems
2. Youth access to aftercare services shall be facilitated through OYE referral to service providers
3. Youth qualifying for services through other adult systems shall not receive CFSA-sponsored aftercare services.
4. It will be determined if youth are eligible for YAC services when they are 20.5; however, they will not be referred to the program until 3 months prior to aging out. The assigned aftercare worker will attend the 3 month YTP meeting and complete the referral at that time.

Youth Aftercare Program

The Youth Aftercare program connects transitioned aged youth with a Resource Development Specialist to create an individualized plan to facilitate access to services that support transition into adulthood. The YAC program is available to young adults ages 21-23 that have aged out of foster care. The YAC unit will provide both individual support and group opportunities that offer connections to the following supports:

- a. Housing Assistance
- b. Medical/Mental Health Support
- c. Education/Vocational Training Preparation
- d. Employment Assistance
- e. Budget & Financial Management
- f. Life-Skills Development
- g. Guidance on Accessing Public Services & Benefits
- h. Transportation Stipend
- i. Limited Emergency Support

*No youth in any of the transitional housing programs (Wayne Place or the Elizabeth Ministries program) are eligible for aftercare services until they exit those programs. This is because case management and transportation stipends are built into those programs.

Aging out: Steps to take (American Academy of Pediatrics – 2015)

Note that this section is not specific to youth aging out of care in DC but general advice for youth anywhere in the US

- By law, youth aging out of foster care have a **right** to receive help transitioning. A case worker or someone else in the system **has** to help them.
 - A transition plan should be created **BEFORE** aging out. Starting at least a six months to year out is recommended.
 - Put together a team that can help with transitioning. This can include a family member you can trust, a doctor, an adult friend, a teacher or coach, a professional [an attorney]
 - ***If you decide to reunify or emancipate before aging out, (turning 21 in foster care) please verify with your social worker that you will receive the benefits that are guaranteed to people who were in the system.***
1. Figure out emergency contacts
 - a. Mentors are good emergency contacts
 2. Complete legal form that names your Power of Attorney
 - a. Power of Attorney gives someone the authority to make decisions for you when you cannot make them for yourself. E.g. terminal illness, incarceration.
 3. Develop a transportation plan
 - a. Find out from caseworker if free bus passes or metro cards are available for transportation.
 4. Sign up for your own health insurance.
 - a. ***Youth aging out of foster care are eligible for Medicaid until 26.*** Paperwork to get a youth enrolled with Medicaid as an adult should be completed with a social worker before the youth's 21st birthday.
 - b. <https://www.dchealthlink.com/>
 - c. Inquire about finding a ***medical home***. A medical home means that one person coordinates your care. The coordinator makes sure that all your care providers share information. That's so they don't give you conflicting care or overlook treatment you need.
 - d. Acquire a form from your doctor that details
 - i.* Current health, and shows that you are up to date on shots
 - ii.* A list of my meds that includes the doses I take and information on why I take each med
 - iii.* Copies of all prescriptions

- e. Obtain a copy of your medical records
 - f. Inquire about getting your birth family medical history
5. Get copies of
- a. Birth Certificate
 - b. Social Security card
 - c. High School Diploma / GED and transcripts
 - d. Court documents that prove you were in care
6. Get government issued ID
- a. A District of Columbia ID would be your default option if you are in foster care in DC (no matter where you are placed or chose to live after aging out)
 - b. You can obtain an ID card in MD or VA if you get one while you were placed in a home there, but be sure to get a DC one as well when you age out
 - c. If you do not have an ID at all **BE SURE** that you have one by the time you age out (be it your default option, one you got while placed, or both [which is recommended])

Checklist:

- Emergency contact information
 - Power of attorney form
 - Health insurance card
 - Bus pass (or other plan for transportation)
 - Contact information for doctor, dentist, and counselor
 - Current medical history form
 - Meds list
 - Medical records
 - Birth certificate
 - Social Security card
 - High school diploma or GED certificate
 - Government-issued photo ID
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