

Youth in foster care now have more options when they are 18 years old:

Postsecondary Educational Services and Support

18 years - 23rd birthday

Status

- In college, vocational school, etc. full time (9 hrs/semester)

Benefits

- \$1,256 per month

Can apply to re-enter "MY Future, MY Choice" at any time

My Future, My Choice (extended care)

18 years - 21st birthday
(22nd birthday if disabled)

Status

- In high school/GED/college, etc.
or
- Work 80 hrs/month
or
- In job training program
or
- Disability prevents the above

Benefits

- Live with foster parent, or in group home, apartment or dorm
- Get help with education and living expenses
- Resources to empower a young adult's future

Can choose to enter PESS if in college/vocational school full time

Can choose to leave "MY Future, MY Choice" at any time

Leave Foster Care

18 years - 21st birthday

Temporary Aftercare Services

- Emergency rent payment
- Emergency car repairs
- Employment assistance
- Mental health or substance abuse services

Can apply to re-enter "MY Future, MY Choice" at any time



Senate Bill 1036, the Nancy C. Detert Common Sense and Compassion Independent Living Act," was signed into law on June 24th, 2013. Effective January 1, 2014, current and former foster youth will have a variety of independent living services available to support their success.

"My Future, My Choice" is the theme for this new program because it gives youth a variety of eligibility options which allow them to remain in foster care until 21, or 22 if they have a documented disability. Extended Foster Care will provide young adults with case management services, judicial oversight of their progress toward independence, room and board, as well as any other services they need to provide them with a sound platform for success as independent adults.

Postsecondary Education Supports and Services (PESS) are also available to young adults, whether they decide to enroll in extended foster care or not. A set rate of \$1256.00 is available to all students enrolled in PESS to assist them with living expenses and to alleviate financial burdens while completing their higher education goals. Aftercare services are also available to those not enrolled in PESS or EFC. These services are temporary in nature and are designed to provide a safety net for Young Adults who find themselves in need of a helping hand.

This legislation was designed specifically to provide young adults with the flexibility they need to transition into adulthood at a pace that is most appropriate for their individual circumstances. The Department is working with child welfare professionals around the state and nation to provide guidance and training to the local community based agencies who are working to implement these changes.

Eligibility for Extended Foster Care: Young adults who turned 18 while residing in licensed care AND who are currently:

- Attending high school or working on GED; or
- Enrolled in college or vocational education program; or
- Employed at least 80 hours per month; or
- Participating in a program designed to promote or eliminate barriers to employment; or
- Have a diagnosed and documented disability that would prevent you from participating in any of the activities listed above.

Living Arrangement Options:

- With a licensed foster parent.
- In a licensed group home.
- Supervised living arrangements (i.e.: college dormitory, rental home or apartment).

Grandfathering of Existing Independent Living programs:

Any youth remaining in the grand fathered independent living programs is eligible for EFC if within the age limitations. However, any youth who wishes to enter EFC (or PESS, if enrolled in qualifying post-secondary program), forfeits the status of being grand fathered. Grandfathered programs can continue conceptually until Dec. 31, 2018. Practically, "old" independent living programs should expire sooner, as youth are discharged, voluntarily or involuntarily. If discharged, reinstatement would be under new EFC (pre-HS completion) or PESS.