



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

DATE: October 28, 2011

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: *John Cooper* John Cooper, Assistant Secretary for Operations
Jamie Self Jamie Self, Ed.D., Executive Director Family and Community Services

FROM: *Christie Ferris* Christie Ferris, Director of Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Road to Independence Post Secondary Needs Assessment

DUE DATE: Effective Upon Receipt

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify the definition of the term “room and board” for the purposes of properly completing the Road to Independence Post Secondary Needs Assessment.

BACKGROUND: There currently is inconsistency among Community-Based Care (CBC) service providers as to how the term “room and board” (rent only versus rent, food, and utilities) is being calculated within the Road to Independence Post Secondary Needs Assessment Cost of Attendance (COA). This inconsistency in the application of the definition “room and board” is causing variability in Road to Independence payments to young adults based on factors other than basic financial need. Some of these other factors include geography or a young adult’s ability/willingness to seek a Fair Hearing determination as to the validity of the Cost of Attendance calculations contained within their specific Independent Living Needs Assessment.

Additionally, the United States Department of Education, Office of Federal Student Aid currently defines the Cost of Attendance to include;

“tuition and fees; on-campus room and board (or a housing and food allowance for off-campus students); and allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees, and, if applicable, dependent care. It also includes miscellaneous and personal expenses, including an allowance for the rental or purchase of a personal computer”
(<http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/Glossary.jsp>).

As such, the practice of excluding food and other allowances appears to contradict established federal guidelines associated with determining the Cost of Attendance.

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ACTION REQUIRED: As of the publishing date of this memo the term “room and board” for purposes of completing the Road to Independence Post Secondary Needs Assessment shall include: housing; utilities; and food allowance unless otherwise specified within the post secondary institutions Cost of Attendance calculations.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions, or for additional information please contact Hans Soder at (850)717-4632, (850)410-8543, or Hans_Soder@dcf.state.fl.us.

cc: Community-Based Care Lead Agencies
Contract Managers