



INDEPENDENT LIVING REDESIGN FOR YOUNG ADULTS 18 & OVER

INTRODUCTION

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 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, and 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) is 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. The specifics for the payment of this stipend depend on a number of facts, including whether the young adult is also in Extended Foster Care and his or her financial management maturity level.

Finally, Aftercare services are available to young adults 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.

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE (EFC)

Extended Foster Care (EFC) is a voluntary program that allows young adults who turn 18 in licensed care to stay in foster care until their 21st birthday as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. Young adults with a disability can stay until their 22nd birthday.

Young adults enrolled in Road-to-Independence or other Independent Living programs on or before December 31, 2013, may remain in those programs through grandfathering.

BENEFITS OF EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

EFC gives participants the opportunity for consistency in their lives and access to an array of services and supports while they continue their academic career, maintain employment, or participate in activities that remove barriers to their employment. Furthermore, young adults have the option to leave and re-enter EFC as long as they meet the eligibility requirements.

With continued case management services, long term placements, and services to promote personal growth and independence, EFC participants have a platform for progress and success.