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Supporting Transition Age Youth In and Beyond Foster Care

**Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services
T3C Webinar**

State Office Transitional Living Services Team



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Transitional Living Services

**Experiential Life Skills
Training for youth ages
14 and older**

**Rights for Children and
Youth**

**Personal Documents at
ages 16 and 18**

**Annual Credit Reports
ages 14-17**

**Permanency
Conferences and Circle
of Support**

**Preparation for Adult
Living (PAL) services
and benefits**

**National Youth in
Transition Database
(NYTD)**

Post Secondary Education

Education and Training Voucher
(ETV)

- Tuition and Fee Waiver
- Temporary Housing Assistance
Between Academic Terms
- College Partnerships



Transitional Living Services

Extended Foster Care, Return to Extended Foster Care and Supervised Independent Living

**Housing Resources
811 Project
FYI
FUP**

Medical Coverage

**Transition Centers
(18)**

**Texas Workforce Commission,
Workforce Solutions
Boards and Centers**

**Statewide and
Regional Youth
Leadership Councils**

**Youth Take Flight
Instagram**

**Other resources and
benefits**



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Importance of Youth and Young Adult Engagement

Building Rapport/ Needs



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- Youth need to be the driver in their cases.
- Building rapport and listening to them and what they want is highly important even if what they are wanting doesn't match best practices order (i.e. reunification, kinship, temporary placement etc.)
- Many youth have mentioned that they really want their caseworker and other who are involved in their cases to **“ Learn the child not the file.”** this starts with building rapport and getting to see what the youths hopes and dreams are and how can we come alongside of them to help them succeed in what they are wanting to do in their life.



Stability & Security



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Frequent placement moves can:

- Disruptive and unsettling
- Affect emotional and psychological well-being
- Affect education outcomes

Stable and secure placements can provide:

- Sense of belonging
- Safety
- Personal growth
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Relationships



Building Trust & Relationships

- **Lack of trust can affect**
 - Ability to bond
 - Development of close friendships
 - Sense of safety in relationships

- **Consistency**
 - Break down barriers
 - Healthy relationships
 - Secure attachments
 - Positive personal and social interactions



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Life Transitions

- ❖ Statistics show that many foster youth who age out without adequate support struggle with homelessness, unemployment, lack of education, and mental health challenges.
- ❖ Without a safety net, they are at a higher risk of falling into cycles of poverty, substance abuse, or legal troubles.
- ❖ Support from foster placements during this transitional period is essential.
- ❖ It helps youth build a solid foundation by teaching them the skills they need for independent living, such as budgeting, meal planning, securing stable housing, and finding reliable employment etc.
- ❖ Beyond practical skills, these foster placements are supposed to provide emotional encouragement, letting them know they have someone to turn too when things get tough.



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Youth Voice: Nothing About Us Without Us!

Regional Youth Leadership Council (YLC)

- ✓ Meet at least quarterly
- ✓ Facilitated by Youth Specialists and PAL staff

Statewide Youth Leadership Council

- ✓ Comprised of two elected or appointed youth or young adults (ages 16 to 21) per region
- ✓ Address identified issues and concerns and formulate recommendations for improving services to children and youth in foster care
- ✓ Review state policies and programs and provide feedback
- ✓ Meet at least 3 times a year in different areas of the state

YLC participation includes:

- ✓ Opportunities for Community Services and Outreach projects
- ✓ Advocacy training to ensure the voices of foster youth are heard
- ✓ Leadership building skills; Planning and facilitating events
- ✓ Learn how to strategically share their story





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Additional Resources

- **Texas Youth Helpline**
 - Parents and Teens
 - 1-800-989-6884 Call, Text or Chat
- **Youth Take Flight Instagram**
 - Information, resources, positive youth stories and inspiration to reach life goals
 - <https://www.instagram.com/youthtakeflight/>
- **HHS Ombudsman Foster Care**
 - Law: 84th Legislative Session in 2015 to help children and youth under age 18 get the services they need.
 - 844-286-0769
- **DFPS Website**
 - Services for Youth and Young Adults
https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/default.asp





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Transitional Living Services Overview

PAL Preparation for Adult Living





Transitional Living Services

Rights of Children and Youth in Foster Care

- Document that outlines the rights children and youth who are in DFPS conservatorship have according to law and policy.
- Primary caseworker required to review the rights with the child or youth.
- Included in the Texas Foster Care Handbook for Youth
 - ❖ **DFPS or Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) staff** provide at age 10 and older when they enter DFPS conservatorship, or if they turn age 10 while they are in conservatorship.
 - ❖ **PAL staff** reviews with each youth on their workload when at least age 15 and 6 months but no later than the youth's 16th birthday. If a youth comes into foster care after 16, PAL staff reviews it with the youth within 60 days after they are assigned to the staff's workload. (new policy section 10214-May 2024)



Transitional Living Services

Permanency Conferences/Circle of Support

- ❖ Child's Plan of Service identifies goals, tasks
- ❖ PAL staff participate
- ❖ Identification of a Caring Adult



Health Care Benefits FFCC

Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Program

This population will receive healthcare services in two separate programs based on age;

- Young adults aged 18 through 20 will be enrolled in STAR Health but can switch to STAR upon request; and
- Young adults aged 21 through 25 will receive Medicaid through the STAR plan of their choice.

To be eligible for the FFCC program, the young adult must:

- Live in Texas;
- Have aged out of foster care in the state of Texas at age 18 or older, or have aged out of foster care at age 18 or older in any state on or after January 1, 2023;
- Be age 18 through 25 ;
- Have been a federally funded Medicaid recipient when they aged out of foster care; and
- Meet all other Medicaid eligibility criteria such as U.S. Citizenship or Alien status

Manage Benefits @ www.YourTexasBenefits.com or call 211



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Health Care Benefits MTFCY



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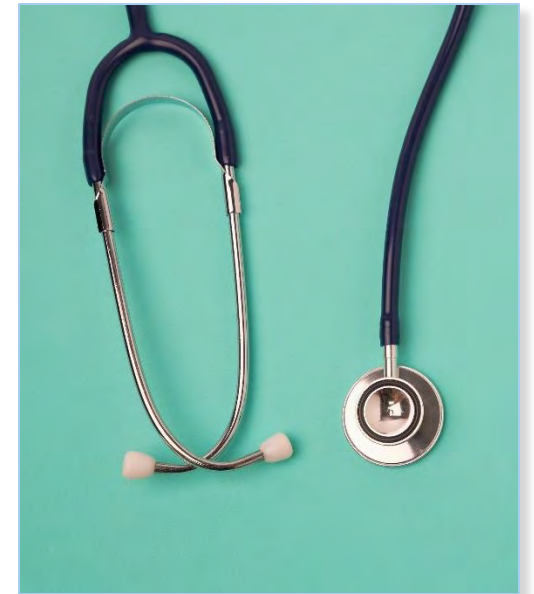
Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY)

Provides medical coverage to young adults ages 18 through 20 who are not eligible for the FFCC program because they were not receiving Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care.

The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Be age 18 through 20 years of age;
- Have been in Texas foster care at age 18, or older;
- Have no other healthcare coverage;
- Meet program rules for income; and
- Be a U.S. Citizen or have a qualified alien status.
- Have been in the foster care of another state on the date they turned 18 if that date happened on or after January 1, 2023

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/medical_benefits.asp





Transitional Living Services

Annual Credit Reports

- ✓ Youth in care ages 14-17
- ✓ Three credit reporting agencies
- ✓ DFPS disputes bad credit on behalf of youth under 18
- ✓ Caseworker will explain the report and importance of good credit
- ✓ A young adult in Extended Care requests their own report at:
<https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>





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PAL Services





Life Skills Training Assessments & Classes



Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)



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- Provided to youth in PMC at age 14 starting in FY19.
- All other youth in DFPS conservatorship will receive at age 16.
- An annual review is conducted through the child's plan of service (CPOS).

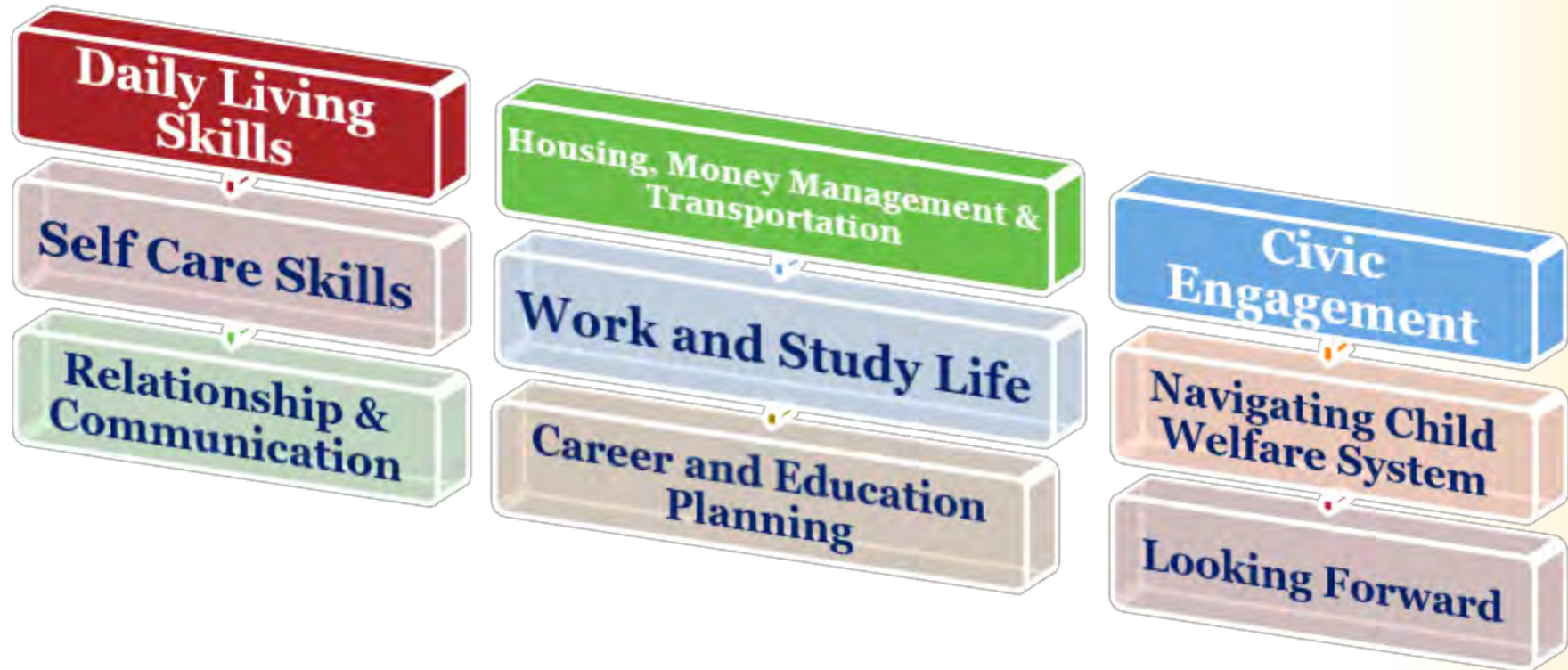


Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)



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Life Skills Training Classes

Youth receive Life Skills training classes through a PAL contractor. Life Skills Training Classes are provided to youth starting at age 16. Completion is a requirement to receive the Transitional Living Allowance.

Life skills training

- Provided to youth ages 16-18
- Preferred in-person; in some cases can be virtual or independent study guide.
- 5 hours instruction in 6 separate key subjects (30 hours total)
- Health and Safety; Housing and Transportation; Job Readiness; Financial Management; Life Decisions/Responsibility; Personal/Social Relationships



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Experiential Life Skills

- **Financial Management**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Job Readiness**
- **Housing and Transportation**
- **Life Decisions/Responsibility**
- **Personal/Social Relationships**



Experiential Life Skills



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Life-skills and experiential trainings are tailored to a youth's skills and abilities and must include, at a minimum:

- ✓ Performing basic household tasks
- ✓ Maintaining personal hygiene
- ✓ Mental Health services
- ✓ Doing laundry
- ✓ Grocery shopping
- ✓ Meal preparation and cooking

24- Hour Residential Child Care Requirements*

*Section 4500 Basic Life Skills and Social Skills pg.44



Transportation needs



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Work

Normalcy

- **Reliable and Consistent transportation:**
 - Places of employment
 - Texas Workforce Center/Regional Transition Centers to seek employment

- **Normalcy can include:**
 - social events
 - dating
 - extracurricular activities (hobbies, sports)
 - worship services
 - prom/graduation

pal events

- **Regional Events to include:**
 - Life Skills Training
 - Regional Teen Conferences
 - Aging-Out Seminars
 - Youth Leadership Council

- **Statewide Events:**
 - Transport to event if local
 - Meeting PAL workers to hand off TAY

Preparation For Adult Living (PAL) Conferences, Activities and Events

- ❖ PAL Experiential Camp (PEAKS)
- ❖ PAL Statewide Teen Conference
- ❖ PAL Statewide College Conferences



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Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Chafee Services

Pre and Post Transition and Financial Support Services

- Pre-ages 17-21 in care or extended care. Task focused.
- Post-ages 18-21 out of care. Child's Plan/Transition Plan focused goals.

Additional PAL Financial Benefits

- **Transitional living allowance** of up to \$1,000 is distributed in increments of up to \$500 per month, for young adults up to age 21 who participated in PAL training, to help with initial start-up costs in adult living.
- **Aftercare room and board assistance** (ages 18-21) is based on need of up to \$500 per month for rent, utilities, utility deposits, food, etc. (not to exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments per young adult).
- **Supportive financial services** (based on need and funding availability) may include: graduation items, tutoring, driver's education fees, or GED.



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Transitional Living Services Employment and Education



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Transitional Living Services Personal Documents

Age 16-copy of original document

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card or replacement
- Personal Identification Card issued by DPS

Age 18-copy or original documents (if not already provided)

- Birth certificate
- Social Security card or a replacement Social Security card
- Driver license or personal state identification certificate/card issued by DPS
- Immunization records
- Information contained in the youth's health passport
- Medicaid Card or other proof of the youth's enrollment in Medicaid or an insurance card from a health plan that provides health coverage to youth in foster care. (HB700)
- Proof of Foster Care (Form 4200)



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Transitional Living Services Personal Documents



Personal Documents

- Caseworker explain the purpose and use before the youth leaves foster care.
 - Example: Social Security card is needed to obtain a job, or proof of Medicaid enrollment is needed to obtain medical services.
- Caseworker assists youth with plan development for keeping their documents in a safe place and note on the personal document checklist.
- Caseworker ensures youth who are 14 years of age or older has an email address through which they may receive encrypted copies of documents and records, even after they leave conservatorship.
 - Policy last updated February 2023 (HB 700). New updates September 2024.



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Transitional Living Services Driver License and State ID Fee Waiver

Driver License and State Identification Card Fee Waiver

- Texas Transportation Code Section §521.1811 or §521.1015
- Youth in DFPS conservatorship and young adults at least 18 years of age, but younger than age 21, who reside in a DFPS paid foster care placement.
- DFPS or CBC staff provides Form 2042
- Policy updates September 2024- includes document resource guide



Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Workforce Collaboration

➤ **Transition Centers**

- Serve youth currently or formerly in foster care ages 15 to 25 (varies per center)
- Central clearing house of services to include employment, education support, PAL services, and referrals to community resources (varies per center).
- Co-locate with community partners.

➤ **Texas Workforce Commission**

- Agreement with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to prioritize workforce services for youth and young adults currently and formerly in foster care.
- TWC funds Workforce Advocates and other related expenses at all 18 Transition Centers

➤ **Workforce Solutions Boards**

- Agreement with 28 local Workforce Boards in to prioritize workforce services for youth and young adults currently and formerly in foster care. Plan to include Transition Centers in agreements starting 2021.



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Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Transition services are a subset of Vocational Rehabilitation services for those individuals aged 14-22. Transition services are provided to help students with disabilities move from high school to successful work and independent living. VR provides these services to students while they are attending high school so they will be prepared when they exit.

In most cases, the services provided to students with disabilities fall into one of these 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) categories:

- ❖ Career Exploration
- ❖ Work-Based Learning
- ❖ Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities
- ❖ Job Readiness
- ❖ Self-Advocacy

Note: Vocational Rehabilitation services continue to be available after high school, if necessary.

For assistance in locating a VR office for vocational rehabilitation services, please email vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov or call (512) 936-6400 to be connected to VR staff.



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Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Driver Education Funding Program

Who is Eligible?

Driver Education training will be paid for by TWC for eligible youth or young adults who are:

- **You are younger than 18 years old and residing in foster care now**
- **You are at least 18 years old, but younger than 21, in foster care being paid for by the Department of Family and Protective Services**
- You experienced dating violence, or you are a child of someone who experienced dating violence [\[1\]](#)
- You experienced family violence, or you are a child of someone who experienced family violence [\[2\]](#)
- **You are younger than 26 years old and aged out of the Texas Foster Care system or have experienced homelessness [\[3\]](#)**
- You are younger than 26 years old and have experienced or are experiencing homelessness [\[4\]](#)





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Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Driver Education Funding Program

- ✓ DFPS/CBC Determines/Verifies Eligibility
- ✓ Choose a TDLR Registered Provider/TWC Vendor Driving School
- ✓ Submit Application
- ✓ Driver Education Class/Behind-the Wheel Training/Testing
- ✓ 5 Day review process by TDW/Check Email regularly for approval to start driver education
- ✓ Coordinate start date with driving school



Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Driver Education Funding Program

How to Apply

1. Youth or young adult will need to choose an approved driving school from a list of TWC vendors can be found [here](#). If the driving school a youth or young adults wants to go to is not on the list, email TWC and they will reach out to the vendor to see if the vendor would like to join the program.
2. Once a youth or young adults selects an approved driving school, they can follow the [TWC Application Instructions](#) to:
 - Complete the [TWC application](#). TWC application must be signed by the DFPS or Community Based Care caseworker if the youth is under age 18; and
 - Submit proof of eligibility. DFPS staff provide proof of eligibility for the program. DFPS staff must use DFPS Foster Care Verification Form 4200 or Youth or Young Adult in Foster Care Residency Verification for a Driver License or State Identification Card Fee Waiver Form 2042.
 - Email both documents to DriverEducationProgram@twc.texas.gov.
1. If a youth or young adult does not have a computer, they can
 - go to a [Local Workforce Solutions Office](#) to get an application and/or use a computer;
 - go to a local library to use a computer; or
 - DFPS staff can submit an application and eligibility verification on behalf of the youth or young adult and include them in the communication to TWC.



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Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Driver Education Funding Program

DFPS and CBC staff responsibilities

- ❖ Inform youth, young adults and caregivers about this program.
- ❖ Assist youth with the application process when needed and provide verification for foster care.
- ❖ Must follow current policy related to driver license, driver assessment and approval prior to submitting a verification form for this program.
- ❖ This policy, in addition to the driver license fee waiver information, can be found in CPS Handbook policy section 6454.
Updated Resource Guide September 2024.



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Employment Preference



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- Youth who were in the permanent managing conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on the day preceding the individual's 18th birthday over other applicants for the same position who do not have a greater qualification.
- Young adults are entitled to an employment preference only if they are 25 years of age or younger (day before turning 26).
- PAL Staff provide the Employment Preference form letter to qualifying youth when they are 18 years of age and as requested.
- State Application for Employment
 - 1) Were you a foster youth under the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services on the day before your 18th birthday? Yes or No
 - 2) If yes, are you currently 25 years of age or younger? Yes or No



Tuition and Fee Waiver



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Tuition and Fee Waiver (provided by Texas Law)

Provides exemptions from payment of tuition and fees at a **Texas state supported college or university** to individuals formerly in Texas state foster care and adopted youth.

- ❖ The waiver must be enrolled “activated” by the student’s 25th birthday for non-adoptive youth.
- ❖ To be exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, youth or young adults **must have been in DFPS conservatorship.**
- ❖ Eligible population are individuals in DFPS conservatorship and meets one of the certain criteria to receive the waiver.



What is the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program?

- Supports postsecondary education goals.
- Federally-funded (Chafee) and state-administered program.
- Students ages 16 to 23 MAY be eligible for up to \$5000 of financial assistance per year for up to 15 semesters.
- Students who were in DFPS conservatorship and meet certain eligibility criteria.



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What expenses can ETV cover?



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The ETV Program pays expenses determined by the school where the student is enrolled.

- Rent and utilities
- Room and board costs/food
- Tuition and fees (for schools that do not accept the state tuition and fee waiver)
- Personal items
- Books and supplies
- Childcare
- Tutoring
- Transportation
- Computer or other related software and equipment
- Medical insurance through the school
- Other costs determined by the school



Education and Training Voucher New Policy

10327.3 Expenses of Students in DFPS Paid Foster Care October 2024

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) staff must inform students in DFPS paid foster care that they are eligible for the ETV program but may only use ETV funds for the following:

- Tuition and fees (if not already covered by the state college tuition and fee exemption).
- Books, computers, supplies, tools, uniforms, and specialized software.
- Other allowable expenses included in the cost of attendance (COA) that are not covered under extended foster care.

If the school's allowable COA for housing, utilities, food, or personal items exceeds what the student is being provided by their extended foster care placement, the student can use ETV funds for those costs as well.



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Financial Pilot: Senate Bill 1379

- Agreement with Capitol Credit Union
- Three tier system based on ages 14-21
 - **Tier 1:** Savings Account for youth ages 14-15
 - **Tier 2:** No fee checking for youth ages 16-17
 - **Tier 3:** Cash rewards checking for ages 18 and older





Financial Pilot Account Features

- Survey before entering pilot and after tier completion
- Financial Mentor provided by Capitol Credit Union
- Financial training component
 - Zogo software
 - Incentives
- Savings and checking account features include:
 - Sole owner
 - No co-signer
 - No fees
 - Full functionality of the Mobile App, ATM network and Shared Branch Network.

[Shared Branch Network Locator](#)

[CPS Handbook 6457](#)

[CPS Meeting In A Box Archive \(texas.gov\) May 2024](#)





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Housing Program

The Evolution of a Housing Program for
Transition Aged Youth



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Introduction

- **Increasing Homelessness**
- 12% Increase Homelessness
- 15% Unaccompanied Youth
- 16% Families with Children
- 50% Foster Care Involvement
- 25% Transitional Youth
- 15% Texas Population C<18
- **Lack of Affordable Housing**
- **Foster Youth to Independence**
- **Housing Program Specialist**
- **Housing Program**





Housing Program Goals & Strategies

Primary Goals:

1. To secure housing for as many Transition Age Youth/Young Adults (TAY) as possible
2. To prevent and end homelessness

Primary Strategies:

1. To create a user-friendly, appealing, helpful, coordinated, and comprehensive **housing program** that encourages youth engagement and respects self-determination;
2. To implement a **housing plan** to prepare & plan for housing; and
3. To offer **flexible housing options and processes.**

In Care Housing Options & Settings

- Foster Homes & Foster Family Homes
- Supervised Independent Living
 - Non-College Dorms
 - Dorms
 - Apartments
 - Shared Housing Settings
- Residential group care facilities
- Emergency Shelters
- In-Care Transitional Living Programs



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In Care Housing Eligibility



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18, 19, or 20 years old...

- ✓ Regularly attending high school or a program leading to a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate (GED);
- ✓ Regularly attending an institution of higher learning or postsecondary;
- ✓ Vocational or technical program (minimum of 6 hours per semester);
- ✓ Participating in a program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment;
- ✓ Employed at least 80 hours a month; or
- ✓ Incapable of performing the activities described above due to a documented medical condition

21 years old...

- ✓ Regularly attending high school or a program leading to a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate (GED).



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Out of Care Housing Options

- **Foster Youth to Independence (FYI)**
- Family Unification Program (FUP)
- Section 811 (Disabilities)
- Transitional Living Programs (TLP)
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Emergency Housing Vouchers
- Rapid Rehousing Programs
- Permanent Supportive Housing Programs
- Homeless Shelters





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General Eligibility

Eligibility Requirements to Apply:

- 18 to 24 Years of Age
- Left Foster Care or Transitioning Out
- At Risk or Homeless

Additional Eligibility Requirements:

- PHA Screening (Income/Criminal Background)
- Landlord Screening



Challenges



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- Understanding/Awareness
- Utilization
- Affordable Housing Units
- Preparation and Planning
- Youth are not Adults (Processes)
- Requirements/Time
- Engagement of Youths/Young Adults
- Insufficient Menu of Individualized Supports
- In-Home Services
- Mental Health/Behavioral Services
- Services for Ages 22-28





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Contact Information

[DFPS Regional PAL Staff
and State Office TLS Staff](#)

[DFPS PAL Transition and
Financial Support
Contractors](#)

[Transition Centers](#)

[Supervised Independent
Living Providers](#)





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Thank You

*"From foster care's
embrace I part.*

*Seeking shelter, a
brand-new start.*

*A home to heal, to
dreams release.*

*Ending
homelessness,
finding peace."*

- Jim Currier





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