

NWF Health Network Policy & Procedure

Series:	500: Special Populations	
Policy Name:	Services for Transitioning Youth and Young Adults	
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Resources:

[DCF Forms and Applications for Independent Living and Transitioning Youth](#)

Policy

It is the policy of Northwest Florida Health Network (NWFHN) along with its contracted providers, to ensure that transitioning youth and young adults involved in the dependency system will have the knowledge, skills, and resources to transition to independence pursuant CFOP 170-17.

For detailed information see:

[CFOP 170-17 Services for Transitioning Youth and Young Adults](#)

Procedure

A. Life Skill Development and Success Planning

1. Each youth and young adult in out of home care will be provided the opportunity to develop life skills.
 - a. Beginning at age 13, primary dependency case manager (DCM) will complete the Life Skill Progress Documentation Log (DCF Form CF-FSP 5444) during monthly home visits with the youth and caregiver as an informal assessment of life skills and plan for any deficiencies that need to be developed. Completed forms will be uploaded to the FSFN file cabinet under the Independent Living category of Assessments. An Independent Living FSFN Chrono Note will be entered with the applicable NYTD categories checked as to what was discussed and assessed with the log.
 - b. Beginning at age 16 and for young adults in Extended Foster Care, the Independent Living Specialist will ensure a formal life skill assessment and plan is completed annually. This will be documented on the youth/young adult page in FSFN and the assessment will be uploaded to the Independent Living file cabinet in the assessments category. Informal assessments during monthly home visits by primary DCM using the Life Skill Progress Documentation Log should continue during this time.
 - i. The primary DCM will ensure life skill development will be addressed beginning at age 13 with a case plan task. At subsequent Judicial Review hearings information will be provided to the court as to how the youth has been prepared to transition to adulthood and their progress of acquiring life skills. Beginning at age 15, a specific

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- task for efforts to obtain a Learner's Permit and/or Driver's License should be added to the case plan.
- ii. Beginning at age 15, the primary DCM will ensure that all youth are referred to the Keys to Independence program.
 - iii. The primary DCM will provide life skill curriculum to youth in out-of-home care.
 - iv. The Independent Living Specialist will provide life skill curriculum to young adults in the Independent Living Program.
 - v. Foster Family Support Specialist and DCMs will provide guidance to foster parents and caregivers on how to develop life skills.
 - vi. The Independent Living Program will serve as the point of contact for Florida's National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Survey.
2. For youth to be ready to transition to adulthood quality Success Planning should occur to establish the youth's goals and plan to achieve, increase placement stability, support educational achievement, promote life skill development and build a network of supportive adults and resources.
1. Within 30 days of youth turning 16 or coming into care if over 16, an Independent Living Specialist will facilitate introductory contact with the youth and caregiver, as available. During this contact information regarding the Success Planning process and the role of the Independent Living Program is provided.
 2. Independent Living Specialist will begin informally developing youth's Success Plan during ongoing contact after the youth turns 16 until a written My Pathways to Success Plan is completed, no later than 90 day after the youth's 16th birthday or prior to the 16-year-old Judicial Review Hearing, whichever comes first.
 3. Prior to formalizing the success plan, Independent Living Specialists communicate with the primary DCM and review any available documents to further gather information in preparation for helping the youth develop the plan.
 4. At a minimum, the youth, caregiver and Independent Living Specialist are required to attend the formal success plan meeting. The primary DCM, GAL, AAL, adoptions specialist, Sunshine Representative (if applicable), Disability Specialist (if applicable) and any individual identified as a support by the youth should also be invited. The youth may be afforded the opportunity to invite any supportive adults they would like to the meeting.
 5. The My Pathways to Success Plan is required to be filed with the court and uploaded into FSFN under a Transition Plan Meeting Note (Initial, Ongoing or Closing) every time it is reviewed. The Resource and Records Exchanged which specifically addresses 17-year-old required documents is to be completed and attached to the My Pathways to Success Plan at each review of the plan during the 17th year.
 6. Review and Updating of Success Plans
 - a. Each time a Success Plan is reviewed and updated, a FSFN meeting note will be entered with the written plan attached.
 - b. My Pathways to Success Plans must be updated prior to each Judicial Review Hearing for youth ages 16 to 17 and young adults in Extended Foster Care.

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- c. Within 90 days prior to a youth turning 18, a closing My Pathways to Success Plan must be completed; this plan shall be filed with the court along with either the EFC Agreement or the My Decision to Leave EFC form signed by the youth.
- d. If there is an intent to remain in the foster home post 18, the Independent Living Specialist or designee will notify the Foster Family Licensing Specialist as soon as intent is known so backgrounds checks can be completed on the youth and within the 90 days before the youth's 18th birthday.
 - i. Young adults participating in the PESS program shall have My Pathways to Success Plan, specifically the financial assessment, completed every 6 months.
 - ii. Young adults participating in Aftercare Services shall have the Aftercare Services Plan or My Pathways to Success Plan completed every 3 months.

B. Critical Documents and Credit Checks

- 1. Critical documents include, but are not limited to, birth certificate, social security card, identification card, learner's permit/driver's license, Medicaid Card and an open bank account or the identification necessary to open a bank account and to acquire essential banking and budgeting skills.
- 2. The special 17-year-old Judicial Review Social Study Report specifically lists all critical documents and requires information to be provided on the status of the youth obtaining the documents. These documents are outlined in F.S. 39.701.
- 3. Northwest Florida Health Network (NWFHN), and its contracted providers monitor and complete credit checks. Credit checks are completed annually on youth ages 14 and up, in out-of-home care, during the youth's birth month and young adults in Extended Foster Care who have signed a release allowing credit checks to be completed. These checks are uploaded to FSFN in the File Cabinet, Assets and Income Tab, and to a Case Note which includes a letter (to the youth/young adult) explaining the importance of checking credit and contact information for any questions. If a discrepancy is identified in a credit report, the youth/young adult will be assisted in filing a dispute.

C. Extended Foster Care (EFC)

- 1. It is the intent for youth that are in the custody of the Department and/or licensed care upon their 18th birthday and that meet the eligibility requirements in Section 39.6251(2) and 65C-41.003 F.A.C. to remain in Extended Foster Care under the jurisdiction of the court until the earliest of the following dates:
 - a. the young adult reaches age 21 or 22 with a documented disability (documentation must be in the case file from a professional that extending jurisdiction for another year will increase the young adult's transition to independence)
 - b. the young adult achieves permanency through an adult adoption
 - c. the young adult signs the My Decision to Leave EFC form.
- 2. At the time of completion of the closing Success Plan prior to the youth turning 18, Independent Living Specialist will discuss EFC with the youth and offer the "Extended Foster Care Agreement," CF-FSP 5432. Youth will automatically enter EFC at 18 unless they sign a "My Decision to Leave EFC," CF-FSP 5375. The EFC Checklist should be utilized as a supervisory review tool to ensure best practice standards are met.
- 3. The permanency goal for young adults who remain in EFC is transition to independence. A case plan shall be completed within 30 days of the young adult turning 18 or within 30 days of being readmitted to foster care. Case plans will be reviewed and updated annually. Case plans will be

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unique to each young adult and address the young adults qualifying activity, programs and services available to be successful in qualifying activity, and long-term goals and services to meet those goals. Judicial Review hearings will be held at least every 6 months. The Independent Living Specialist will prepare an EFC Judicial Review Social Study Report for the hearing with a Success Plan and other applicable documents attached; these documents will be submitted to CLS pursuant to 65C-28.006 F.A.C.

4. A young adult in EFC must reside in an approved living arrangement. All living arrangements require a Supervised Living Arrangement Assessment (SLAA), CF-FSP 5431, and Shared Living Plan (SLP), CF-FSP 5430, to be completed by the IL Specialist prior to or at the time of placement. A living arrangement is considered approved once the IL Program Manager has reviewed and SLAA and SLP.
 - a. SLP will be used to document the room and board rate as well as details for what is provided by the room and board rate.
 - b. SLP will be discussed in detail with the IL Specialist, Young Adult and placement provider to discuss expectations of the living arrangement.
 - c. SLP must be approved by the Independent Living Supervisor and if over \$2500 NWFHN CEO or their designee to approve the room and board rate.
5. A young adult's monthly allowance amount will be determined by a needs assessment. The needs assessment will be completed through a budget either in the most recent My Pathways to Success Plan or the Shared Living Plan. If the allowance amount needs to be changed at any time while the young adult is in EFC an updated Shared Living Plan documenting the needs assessment and change to allowance payment will be completed. The young adult will receive notice of any changes to allowance amount at least 10 business days prior to the change.
6. The Independent Living Specialist will be responsible for completing face-to-face home visits with each young adult at least every 30 days. During home visits the Independent Living Specialist will assess safety but also discuss with the young adult their transition to independence, qualifying activity, life skill development, SLAA and SLP as needed. An Out of County Services request will be submitted if the young adult is residing in another county.
7. Young adults may remain in EFC for their 21st year if they are actively participating in EFC at age 21 and have a documented disability for which they would benefit from an additional year of EFC to transition to independence. This extended year will be documented within 180 days of the young adult's 20th birthday during a Success Planning meeting.
8. A young adult may reapply for EFC by executing a Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA), CF-FSP 5377, at any time prior to their 21st birthday as long as they meet eligibility requirements. The EFC Checklist should be utilized as a supervisory review tool of the application to ensure best practice standards are met.
 - a. The VPA will be considered an application to reenter EFC and will require additional documentation; specifically, proof of participation in a qualifying activity.
 - b. Independent Living Specialist will assist the young adult with the application process, obtaining required documentation, and offer Aftercare Services if additional assistance is needed in enrolling in a Qualifying Activity to establish eligibility for EFC.
 - c. The young adult will be notified of a decision on the approval or denial of the application within 10 business days.

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- i. If denied, the Independent Living Specialist will seek the concurrence from the Department's designated regional operations representative and follow due process procedures.
 - ii. If approved, the Independent Living Specialist will notify CLS within 3 business days in order to petition the court for reinstatement of jurisdiction. Services will begin immediately upon approval of the application.
 - iii. If documentation is missing with the initial application, the young adult will be provided with 10 business days to obtain the information. If not provided, then the application can be denied upon receipt of concurrence from the Department's designated regional operations representative and following due process procedures.
9. A young adult will be given proper notice and due process if termination or reentry denial from EFC is to occur. A young adult may be terminated from EFC due to not participating in a qualifying activity and/or not residing in an approved living arrangement.
 - a. The "Notice of Extended Foster Care Program Termination," CF-FSP 5376, will be drafted by Independent Living Specialist and Independent Living Program Manager and sent with a termination summary to the Department's designated regional representative for concurrence. Once received with final signature the notice will be mailed by certified and regular mail to the young adult's last known address.
 - b. It is preferred that the Notice also be hand delivered or emailed to the young adult, if possible.
 - c. The Notice will include "Due Process Rights," CF/PI 175-74, a "Request for Fair Hearing," CF-FSP 5380, and an "Application for Aftercare Services," CF-FSP 5391.
 - d. The young adult will have 10 business days to request a fair hearing on the notice and continue to receive financial benefits as they were. The young adult will have 30 days to request a fair hearing prior to being discharged from the removal episode.
 - i. If the young adult requests a fair hearing within 10 business days of the termination, the stipend will remain paid as it was until the conclusion of the fair hearing.
 - ii. The young adult will have up to 30 calendar days to request a fair hearing before the final termination from the program before it becomes effective.

D. Postsecondary Education Supports and Services (PESS)

1. It is the intent for young adults who are eligible for Postsecondary Education Supports and Services (PESS) under 409.1451 F.S. and 65C-42 to be offered the opportunity to apply and receive the guidance needed to become self-sufficient until or unless one of the following occurs:
 - a. The young adult reaches the age of 23.
 - b. The young adult is no longer enrolled in a postsecondary education institution that accepts the Bright Futures Scholarship Program for the required number of hours.
 - c. The young adult does not meet annual renewal criteria.
 - d. The young adult is no longer a resident of Florida unless they remain enrolled in a Florida school as an instate resident.
 - e. The young adult is incarcerated for a period of 30 days or more.
2. At the time of application, the assigned Independent Living Specialist will assist the young adult in ensuring all documentation is included in the packet to establish eligibility and approval. In

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addition to completion of the “Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Initial, Renewal and Reinstatement Application,” CF-FSP 5382, the PESS checklist should be utilized to ensure all best practice standards are met.

3. The My Pathways to Success Plan will be completed with the young adult at the time of application to assess the young adult’s financial literacy and executive functioning, self-regulation, and similar skills and to ensure a plan is developed for them to achieve self-sufficiency. This plan shall be reviewed and updated at a minimum of every 6 months and at least once during their 22nd year or during the year before graduating from postsecondary education. This will be documented in FSFN utilizing the meeting note type of transition plan-ongoing with the written document attached.
4. As the goal of PESS is for the young adult to achieve self-sufficiency, the young adult will be offered the opportunity and assistance in developing life skills, counseling services, financial literacy, educational supports, and development of a supportive adult network. A plan to achieve goals the young adult identifies in the Success Plan will be developed.
5. Face to face contact will be completed with the young adult a minimum of every 90 days unless the young adult requests less. This contact will be an opportunity to discuss with the young adult the progress on developing appropriate life skills, the Success Plan and any services needed to achieve the goals identified, educational progress, and assistance needed in transitioning to self-sufficiency.
6. All efforts will be made for NWFHN to utilize the stipend to pay for the young adult’s housing and pay the remainder to the young adult unless it is determined that the young adult is financially responsible enough to manage the full stipend while maintain secure housing.
7. The young adult’s eligibility for the stipend will be assessed and renewed annually. The renewal packet can be initiated up to 90 days prior to the annual date but will be submitted no more than 30 days prior to the annual date. The PESS renewal checklist should be utilized to ensure all best practice standards are met.
8. A young adult can apply for reinstatement to PESS if they have previously been terminated; however, they must meet criteria for initial and renewal eligibility. The young adult should be able to show they have made some academic progress since their termination.
9. All applications for PESS will be reviewed for an approval decision and the young adult shall be notified of that decision within 10 business days of the date of the application. If documentation is missing that is required to approve the application, the young adult will be notified they have an additional 10 business days to submit the required information.
10. If the young adult’s initial, renewal, or reinstatement application is denied or if they are to be terminated from PESS, they will be provided proper notice to include information on due process. The young adult will also be noticed of other programs they may be eligible for such as Extended Foster Care or Aftercare Services.
 - a. If the young adult requests a fair hearing within 10 business days of the termination, the stipend will remain being paid as it was until the conclusion of the fair hearing process.
 - b. The young adult will have up to 30 calendar days to request a fair hearing before the final termination from the program becomes effective.

E. Aftercare Services

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1. It is the intent for young adults who are eligible for Aftercare Services under 409.1451 F.S. and 65C-42 to be offered the opportunity to apply and receive the guidance needed to become self-sufficient, enter EFC or establish eligibility for PESS until or unless one of the following occurs:
 - a. The young adult turns 23
 - b. The young adult meets the goals of their Aftercare Services Plan
 - c. The young adult is not completing activities and making progress on their Aftercare Services Plan
2. At the time of application, the young adult will be assisted in completing the "Application for Aftercare Services," CF-FSP 5391, and the "Aftercare Services Plan," CF-FSP 5400. The Aftercare Services Plan will address:
 - a. Amount of financial assistance being provided with a timeline
 - b. Specific activities that the young adult will complete in order to be considered making progress on the plan
 - c. If the plan is completed due to an emergency situation for a young adult also receiving PESS, the plan shall include detailed information as to the emergency and the assessment as to how the young adult's resources are insufficient
3. The Aftercare Services Plan shall be reassessed and renewed at least every 3 months while the young adult is in the program. The plan will be uploaded FSFN attached to a meeting note type of transition plan ongoing.
4. All applications for Aftercare Services will be reviewed for an approval decision and the young adult shall be notified of that decision within 10 business days of the date of the application. If the services request to prevent homelessness, no written application is required to provide services but shall be completed within 10 business days.
5. Referrals and services shall be initiated as soon as possible but no later than 10 business days from the approval of the application.
6. If the young adult's application is denied or if they are to be terminated from Aftercare Services, they will be provided with proper notice to include information on due process.
 - a. If the young adult requests a fair hearing within 10 business days of the termination, the financial services will remain being paid as it was until the conclusion of the fair hearing process.
 - b. The young adult will have up to 30 calendar days to request a fair hearing before the final termination from the program becomes effective.

F. Appeals and Fair Hearings

1. If a young adult requests a fair hearing for denial or termination from any program, the "Oral Request for Fair Hearing," CF-FSP 5381 or "Request for Fair Hearing," CF-FSP 5380 will be completed.
2. The request and supporting notice of adverse action shall be sent to the Office of Appeal Hearings and legal representative for the Department within 1 business day by the Independent Living Specialist. Within 3 business days any additional supporting documentation for adverse action will be forwarded to the Regional Legal Counsel and the legal representative for the

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Department. NWFHN's general counsel and CBC representative shall also be notified of the request for a fair hearing.

3. Appeals shall be documented on the FSFN youth/young adult page by the Independent Living Specialist.

G. Annual Contact

1. NWFHN shall at least annually attempt to contact each youth adult who has aged out of foster care, who is potentially eligible for continuing care pursuant to F.S.

For additional information, please see F.S. found here:

[Florida Statute 409.1451 \(5\)](#)

- H. Supervisor Consultations should be completed as outlined in CFOP 170-9 Chapter 10.