



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Guidelines: Child Welfare Services

Title	Aftercare Services for Former Foster Youth and Young Adults
Document No.	545
Authority	Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351); Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-123); John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood 42 USC 677; 8 USC 1641; S.C. Code 8-29-10
Standards	Guiding Principles and Standards (GPS) Practice Model
Application	Transition Services and Support (TSS) and Child Welfare Services Foster Care and Adoptions Staff
Purpose	
To explain policies governing the foster care program that assists eligible former foster youth and young adults between ages 14 and 25, in the transition to adulthood, including, but not limited to, development of life skills and assistance with competencies, experiences, and supports necessary for these young adults to obtain education, stable housing, employment, transportation, health services, well-being, and permanent supportive relationships.	
Policy Statement	
The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) provides aftercare services as outlined in this section to eligible former foster youth and young adults between the ages 14 and 25.	
Policy Administration	
The Division of Child Welfare Services' Office of Operations is the owner of this policy. The Operations Director, or designee, shall review this policy annually from the date published in the Child Welfare Services Policy Manual, or as needed due to changes in law or practice.	
Policy Guidelines	
A. Eligibility Requirements for Aftercare Services	1. Otherwise eligible former foster youth and young adults who meet one of the following criteria are eligible to receive after-care services: a. At or after age 14 achieved reunification b. At or after age 16 achieved adoption or legal guardianship (to include kin and/or fictive kin) c. Reached the age of majority at age 18 in the legal custody of DSS d. Reached the age of majority at age 18 while in foster care, under the placement and care responsibility of another state, and currently residing in South Carolina e. Reached age of majority at 18 in the legal custody of DSS while in South Carolina, but now resides in another state,

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	and the new state of residency denies offering aftercare services or services equivalent to aftercare services 2. Former foster youth and young adults who meet the eligibility criteria above <i>at the time of foster care exit</i>, must also be lawfully present in the United States and living in a permissible setting: a. Former foster youth and young adults must be United States citizens or otherwise lawfully present in the United States, for example, a “qualified alien.” Young adults who cannot demonstrate lawful presence in the United States are not eligible; and b. Former foster youth and young adults must not be living in a wilderness camp or other facility that exists primarily for detention or correction. Note: For more information, please see <u>Policy 540: Eligibility for Chafee and Educational and Training Voucher Funded Services</u>.
B. Establishing an Open Aftercare Service Line	After receiving a request from a former foster care youth or young adult and determining eligibility for aftercare services, the following occur: 1. Transition Services and Support (TSS) staff must open an aftercare service line within five (5) business days of the former foster care youth or young adult submitting the request. 2. A case manager shall be assigned within five (5) business days of receiving the request. 3. Aftercare service lines for those SC former foster care youth or young adults residing in another state shall follow the guidelines listed below: a. Former foster youth who reached age of majority at 18 in SC but now reside in another state, are eligible for Chafee and Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) funded services. b. SC shall provide an eligibility letter to the new state of residency and a list of all past received Chafee and ETV funded services to reduce the likelihood that the young adult does not receive overlapping services from both states. c. If the new state of residency denies providing aftercare services, and provides a denial letter, the state of origin must assume responsibility for providing services. SC shall then open an aftercare line. The aftercare service line shall be opened by a TSS staff member within the State Office. 4. Aftercare service lines for out of state former foster young adults now residing in SC shall follow the guidelines listed below: a. Former foster youth or young adults who reached the age of majority at 18 in the legal custody or under the placement and care responsibility of another state child welfare

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	agency, but who now reside in SC, are eligible for Chafee and ETV funded services. b. The state of origin shall provide an eligibility letter or a letter denying services, and a list of all past received Chafee and ETV funded services to ensure that the young adult does not receive overlapping services from both states.
C. Aftercare Services	Eligible former foster youth and young adults for aftercare services shall receive the following: 1. Transition Planning, 2. Service Navigation, 3. Chafee funded services, 4. ETV Awards, and 5. Referrals to contracted provider for additional transition services and support.
D. Termination or Denial of Participation in Aftercare Services	1. The following former foster youth and young adults shall be denied, disqualified, terminated, or suspended from participation in aftercare services: a. Those who are residing in a wilderness camp or other facilities that exist primarily for detention or correction during foster care experience; b. Those who are not U.S. citizens or lawfully present in the United States, for example qualifying aliens; c. Those who are active-duty military service members; d. Those who are married; e. Who are convicted of a felony offense; f. Who present behaviors and/or actions considered a safety threat to self and or/others; g. Those who are declining to engage with a case manager's outreach for at least 60 business days; and h. Those who are failing to make satisfactory progress toward a successful transition to adulthood as demonstrated by a pattern of failure to achieve transition plan goals within established time frames. 2. A person who is denied, disqualified, terminated, or suspended from participation must receive written notice by certified mail of the adverse decision and is entitled to appeal the adverse decision using the agency's fair hearing procedures within 30 calendar days of receiving such notice. Note: For more information, please see <u>DSS Brochure 2410: Fair Hearings</u>.
E. Providing Aftercare Services Until 21 st Birthday	1. Case managers shall authentically engage with and encourage participation in transition services and supports to accomplish successful transition and growth to adulthood.

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	2. Case managers shall provide monthly contact, or more frequently depending on the needs of the youth or young adult as follows: a. A combination of virtual (emailing, telephone calling, facetimeing, mailing letters, and texting) and face-to-face contact based on needs of the youth. b. Aftercare participants residing in another state receive virtual monthly contacts. 3. Case managers shall co-develop an updated Transition Plan using DSS Form 37182: Transition Plan Amendment with the former foster youth or young adult within 30 days of opening an aftercare line to review agreements and expectations of the service line, identify goals and any barriers, and to establish commitment actions to improve transition outcomes. 4. Case managers shall co-develop a Transition Plan Amendment with the former foster youth or young adult within 30 business days of receiving a referral to review agreements and expectations of the service, identify goals and any barriers, and establish commitment actions that improve transition outcomes. The Transition Plan Amendment undergoes continuous assessment and updates to monthly progress in CAPSS documentation. a. At a minimum, DSS Form 37182 shall be updated annually. Case managers shall support the safety, stability, permanency, well-being, and continued growth across designated life domains. 5. Case managers (e.g., a TSS Program Coordinator, DSS TSS staff member, contracted provider, etc.) shall make concerted efforts to maintain and develop supportive relationships to include preserving connections to siblings, extended family, fictive kin, any other significant person, tribe, friends, neighborhood, community, faith, and school. 6. Case managers shall: a. Submit Chafee and/or ETV funding requests; b. Identify community resources, assist with referral or application processes, follow up with received services, and ensure connection is solidified to the support services; c. Provide any possible assistance with securing and/or replacing missing essential documents; and d. Document National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) services until the Aftercare service line is closed. 7. The contracted provider shall provide on-call phone number for any crisis management and/or emergency situations. 8. Case managers, young adults, or a contracted provider can request a Transitional Teaming to address progress and barriers.
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F. Providing Aftercare Services for Adults Aged 21 Until the 26th Birthday	1. If an aftercare service line is active on a young adult's 21st birthday, and the young adult is continuing in post-secondary education, receiving housing vouchers, and/or engaged in services with a contracted provider, the case shall be assessed and assigned accordingly. a. The aftercare service line may be reopened for former foster youth and young adults who meet eligibility criteria and are between ages 21 and 26. Eligible individuals may access ETV awards, housing referrals, and contracted provider referrals, as long as they have reached their 21st birthday and have not yet turned 26. 2. Young adults actively receiving services through the contracted provider may maintain an aftercare service line until their 26th birthday. 3. Young adults who are active recipients of housing voucher programs, such as Foster Youth Independence (FYI), may maintain an aftercare service line until their 26th birthday. 4. Monthly virtual contact shall occur to assess self-sufficiency, academic, or housing stability progression. Note: <i>Face-to-face contact is not required.</i> 5. Once a young adult is no longer participating in post-secondary education, contracted provider services, or housing voucher programs, the aftercare service line shall be updated with the most recent contact information, and the young adult shall be notified of case closure.
G. Aftercare Service Line Closures	1. When a former foster youth or young adult declines to engage with a case manager's outreach for a minimum of 60 business days, it will prompt the closure process. a. Outreach is defined as emailing, mailing a letter, telephone calling, texting, facetimeing, messaging through social media and any attempts for face-to-face contact, at minimum, once each calendar month. b. If concerted efforts to engage warrant the closure of the service line, case managers will consult with their team leader about case closure. c. All concerted efforts are documented in CAPSS within five (5) business days by the assigned case manager of the TSS staff. 2. The following tasks are to be completed by the assigned case manager of the TSS staff before closure: a. Enter the most recent contact information entered in CAPSS dictation including any additional contact sources (e.g., family, friends, providers, etc.). b. Make sure all Chafee and ETV funds are at a zero balance in the business office.

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	c. Make concerted efforts to transfer all essential documents to adults and available government benefit awareness. 3. An aftercare service line shall not be closed without notifying the recipient by email, phone call, text, along with mailing a written notice by certified mail to their last known address. 4. A person who is denied, disqualified, or terminated, or suspended from participation shall receive written notice by certified mail of the adverse decision and is entitled to appeal the adverse decision using the agency's fair hearing procedures within 30 calendar days of receiving notice. Note: For more information, please see DSS Brochure 2410: Fair Hearings.
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Forms and Related Documents	DSS Brochure 2410: Fair Hearings DSS Form 30198: John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood Funding Request DSS Form 30206: Transition Plan DSS Booklet 30255: NYTD Services DSS Booklet 30258: Chafee and ETV Program Guidelines for Services DSS Form 37166: Education and Training Voucher Application DSS Form 37182: Transition Plan Amendment
Related Management Reports	SCDSS – Accountability, Data, and Research Teen Report

Glossary
Aftercare Services: Assistance provided to an eligible youth and young adult who has experienced foster care and who is between 14-25 years of age during service delivery, to obtain education, housing, employment, well-being, health services, and permanent supportive relationships. CAPSS: Child and Adult Protective Services System Case Manager: for the purposes of this policy, staff assigned to manage the aftercare client's needs, transition planning, and service navigation (e.g., Transitional Youth Advocate case manager, TSS Program Coordinator, and/or contracted provider) Contracted Provider: state provider contracted to provide transition services and service navigation to aftercare clients Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV): Grants, funded by the federal government and administered by the states, awarded to eligible young adults currently or formerly in foster care who are pursuing post-secondary education in an approved educational program. Eligible young adults may receive this support until the 26th birthday, or five nonconsecutive years, whichever comes first. Housing Vouchers: vouchers supporting housing stability for former foster youth Legal Custody: The right to the physical custody, care, and control of the child; the right to determine where the child shall live; the right and duty to provide protection,

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food, clothing, shelter, ordinary medical care, education, supervision, and discipline for a child and in an emergency to authorize surgery or other extraordinary care. The court may in its order place other rights and duties with the legal custodian.

National Youth Transition Database (NYTD): is a national research study that tracks the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood services and surveys outcome measures of youth transitioning from foster care in each state.

Placement and Care Responsibility: The authority conveyed through the court, through written authorization prior to the child's eighteenth birthday, or through a voluntary placement agreement to provide supervision of the young adult and the young adult's placement.

Supervised Independent Living: Any housing arrangement that is licensed or approved by the DSS and which makes support services for a successful transition to adulthood available to the young adult. Case management for the young adult must be provided by the department or a contracted provider. The young adult must reside in the setting voluntarily and the setting does not include wilderness camps or training schools, nor does it include any facility that exists primarily for the detention or correction of children, youth, or young adults.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee): Provides funds to assist current and former foster care youth or young adults in achieving self-sufficiency. Funds assist youth aged 14 until the 21st birthday in a wide variety of areas designed to support a successful transition to adulthood. Activities and programs include, but are not limited to, help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and maintaining connections to caring adults.

Transition Plan: A written case plan that is personalized, as detailed as the young adult may elect, and that includes specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and for continuing support services, work force supports, and employment services. A transition plan also must include information about the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the young adult if the young adult becomes unable to participate in such decisions and the young adult does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized to make such decisions, and provides the young adult with the option to execute a health care power of attorney or health care proxy.

Transition Progression: A youth, young adult, and adult actively participating in agreed upon transition goals, such as, but not limited to, enrolled in school, employed, or participation in any programs that will improve school, employment readiness, life skills development, and engagement with the aftercare case manager.

Transition Plan Amendment: updated Transition Plan for aftercare clients to further assess the progression of self-identified transition goals, barriers, and needs for a successful transition to adulthood

Transitional Teaming: Creating and sustaining working teams with young people, their support system, and professionals who share a common purpose, unity in effort, and a demonstrated effectiveness in problem solving towards transitional growth.

Young Adult: a person who is at least 18 and no older than 21 years of age

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Youth: a person who is at least 14 and no older than 17 years of age
