

THE PHILADELPHIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Children and Youth Division
Policy and Procedure Guide

Issue Date: March 17, 2010

TO: All CYD Social Work Services Staff (SWSS)¹ and Provider Agency Staff

FROM: Dell Meriwether, Deputy Commissioner, Children and Youth 
Pamela Mayo, Operations Director 
Paul Bottalla, Policy and Planning Director 

RE: Notification Regarding Benefits under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and the Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

Purpose:

The purpose of this Guide is to ensure that current foster youth and former foster youth who were in DHS custody at age 16 years or older, are informed that they may be eligible for benefits under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and the Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program.

Discussion:

The Foster Care Independence Act was signed into law in December of 1999. Title I of the Act is the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program which provides grants to states to assist current and former foster youth to achieve self-sufficiency through a successful transition to adulthood. Funds, activities and programs are focused on youth age 16 and older in foster care as well as older youth 18-21, who have exited from the foster care system.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 was signed into law on October 7, 2008 and amends the Foster Care Independence Act. Through Fostering Connections, CFCIP and the ETG benefits are now extended to youth 16 and older who exit foster care to adoption and permanent legal guardianship.

Identification of eligible youth and notification regarding these benefits will be sent by Administration and Management (A&M).

Services available to youth through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Education and Training Grant include:

- Needs Assessment/Case Planning
- Life Skills Training
- Prevention Services Employment
- Job Placement

¹ Social Work Services Staff (SWSS) refers to the CYD chain of command including Social Work Services Trainees, Social Work Services Managers 1, Social Work Services Managers 2, Social Work Supervisors, Social Work Administrators, and Human Service Directors.

- Education
 - Vocational Training
 - High School Support and Retention
 - Preparation for GED
 - Assistance in Obtaining Higher Education
- Support
 - Individual and Group Counseling
 - Stipends
 - Services for Teen Parents
 - Mentoring
- Subsidized Employment

Policy Manual Sections Affected:

Section 5700 Case Supporting Services

Section 5300 Adoption Services

Section 5000 Service Delivery

POLICY

The Department has the responsibility to notify eligible youth of benefits available to them.

Eligibility:

- Youth aged 16 - 20 who are currently in placement.
- Youth who are in placement and who will turn 16 while continuing in care.
- Youth who enter placement after the age of 16.
- Current or former youth ages 16 - 20 who exited the system to independence, reunification, or emancipation and are not yet 21.
- Youth age 16 – 20 who exit DHS custody to adoption or PLC after October 7, 2008.

The provider agency is responsible for notification to youth who will be discharged to adoption or PLC and their prospective parents or caregivers beginning the first day after the effective date of this policy. Adoption home studies and PLC home studies shall not be approved without evidence of such notification. A & M will notify youth in this category, and their parents or caregivers, who were discharged to adoption or PLC after October 7, 2008, but before the effective date of this policy .

Procedure

Administration and Management (A&M) Responsibilities:

Identify youth who:

- *are 16 years and older and who are currently in placement.*
- *are in placement and turn 16 after this policy becomes effective.*
- *are 16 and older and entering placement.*
- *were in foster care at the age of 16 to 20 and exited DHS custody to independence, reunification or emancipation.*
- *were in foster care at the age of 16 and older but exited DHS custody to adoption or PLC after October 7, 2008. Mailings to this group should be up until the effective date of this policy.*

A&M will then generate and submit to the Mailing Unit letters for each identified youth (and caregiver, if applicable), informing them of the Chafee and ETG benefits. A&M will also send a copy of the letter for each youth to the assigned Administrator for insertion into the youth's case record.

If the youth was discharged from care after October 7, 2008:

- the letter will be sent to the last known address of the youth.

If the case is still open:

- Administration and Management will send a copy of the letter to the youth's assigned Administrator for insertion in the youth's case record.

If the case is closed and the record is in the record room:

- a copy of the letter will be sent to the record room to be included in the youth's case record.

DHS Worker Responsibilities:

For youth aged 16 and older who are still in placement and for whom there is no planned discharge:

- The DHS worker will continue referring these youth to the Achieving Independence Center. There is no change in this procedure from the existing practice. Notification of Chafee and ETG benefits will occur through the aforementioned A&M and mailing process.
- A copy of the letter notifying the youth/caregiver about the Chafee and ETG benefits will be inserted in the specific child's case record.

For youth aged 16 and older who were discharged from placement to adoption, PLC, or independence as of October 7, 2008 and after and the record has not been sent to the

Record Room:

- A copy of the letter notifying the youth/caregiver about the Chafee and ETG benefits will be inserted in the specific child's case record.

Note: When the copy of the Chafee benefits letter is received by the DHS worker and it needs to be translated, the worker will submit the letter for document translation services, insert a copy of the original letter and a copy of the translated letter into the child's case record, and mail the translated letter.

Provider worker responsibilities:

For youth who are 16 and older and who are scheduled to exit the system to adoption or PLC from the time that this policy and procedural guide is issued and forward:

- Prior to finalization of an adoption or a Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC) for a youth age 16 and older, the provider agency must provide written notification to the youth and prospective custodian or adoptive parent. Providers must develop a letter based on the model letter attached to this policy. The letter should be signed by the provider and must accompany all PLC family profiles and adoption home studies in order for these documents to be approved.
- Providers will submit a copy of the signed letter to the DHS worker to be inserted in the youth's case record.

The Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program:

The ETG Program generally provides Vouchers of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per student annually for post-secondary education or training programs. Interested youth ages 16-20 may apply by completing the Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program Application. To be eligible for those benefits, the youth must apply no later than age 21.

Youth may access these benefits and obtain forms and information by visiting or calling the:

Achieving Independence Center (AIC)
1118 Market Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3601
215-574-9194

Questions regarding this Guide may be addressed to:

Samuel Harrison III, Policy and Planning Administrator	215-683-4112
Bari Rose-Epstein, Policy and Planning Supervisor	215-683-4116
June de Vries, Policy and Planning Program Analyst	215-683-4117



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DELL MERIWETHER

Date:

DHS #:

Dear Youth's Name/Adoptive Parent/Permanent Legal Custodian,

I am writing to inform you that Youth's Name, as a current or former foster youth who was in care at age 16 or older, may be eligible for benefits under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and/or the Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program.

Services available to youth under the CFCIP are intended to prepare them for the transition to adulthood, and include life skills preparation classes, basic independent living services, and youth conferences.

The ETG Program generally provides vouchers for post-secondary education or training programs of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per student annually. To be considered for this grant, the student must complete the Federal Application for Student Aid (FASA) and the Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant Program Application. The student may apply up to age 21.

For more information regarding the Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and/or the Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program and to acquire necessary applications, visit or call the Achieving Independence Center (AIC) at:

Achieving Independence Center
1118 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-3601
(215) 574-9194
Or contact: Mr. John Jones, Outreach Coordinator
(215) 683-6458

Sincerely,

Pamela Mayo,
Operations Director
Children and Youth Division