

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Commissioner's Office
11 State House Station
109 Capitol Street
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel: (207) 287-3707; Fax: (207) 287-3005
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

MEMORANDUM

TO: Health and Human Services Committee
FROM: Office of Child and Family Services
DATE: April 14, 2021
RE: LD 1091 re: CAA Law and Funding

Question - Dr. Landry said he would bring plans for outreach with the CAA law and funding –

Yes, below is OCFS comprehensive plan on implementing the Supporting Youth and Families Through Pandemic Act.

OCFS Extended Support Pandemic Relief Program

Under new temporary federal legislation: ***Consolidated Appropriations Act “Supporting Youth and Families Through Pandemic Act” (P.L. 116-260), 2021***, Maine was awarded additional Chafee funds for the purpose of providing housing, monthly financial support, age appropriate supervision, and case management support to young people from foster care between the ages of 21 and 27, while continuing to ensure their safety, permanency, and well-being.

These funds are intended to provide a flexible source of funding to meet the financial needs of eligible young people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding under this program is viewed as an opportunity to support young people’s resilience and to create opportunities for economic, social, and educational success during this pandemic and beyond. Certain previous title IV-E restrictions, such as youth’s age or failure to meet the education and employment conditions, are waived.

This Program is available only from 4/1/21 to 9/30/21, or the young person’s 27th birthday, whichever comes first.

To Be Eligible, the Young Person Must meet the following:

- Be at least 21 years old, but not yet attained age 27 between 4/1/21 and 9/30/21; *and*
- Have been in foster care at age 14 or older in any state; *and*
- Enter into a ***Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Relief Agreement*** with OCFS.

Procedures for the Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Relief Program:

- The Youth Transition Specialist (YTS) where the young person resides will serve as the young person’s assigned Caseworker
- YTS will open the young person in MACWIS as a “Service Case”
- YTS will partner with the young person to develop and sign a ***Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Relief Agreement***
- YTS will work with young person to develop, review and revise a transition plan (located in the Agreement) to the extent the young person wishes

- YTS will ensure young person has an up-to-date Vendor Form
- YTS will make quarterly Face-To-Face contacts either in person or via video platforms, or more frequency when needed to meet the needs of the young person
- YTS will inform young people that Chafee funds received as part of this Program will not count as income against other state benefits
- YTS will document all contacts in Narrative Log
- YTS will complete National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Life Skills screens for young people using the method for documenting NYTD Life Skills for youth who are not open to OCFS as outlined in the NYTD PP (pages 52-58)

Financial Assistance to be Provided:

- Funding ends on 9/30/21 or the young person's 27th birthday, whichever comes first.
- Funds provided under this Agreement are not to be considered income or count against or benefit programs.
- For young people who are NOT Title IV-E eligible, OCFS will provide unrestricted monthly direct financial Chafee payments to eligible young people in the amount of \$1000/month to assist them in meeting their daily living needs during the pandemic (Room and Board Payments).
- For young people who are Title IV-E eligible, must use Title IV-E Funds for maintenance costs (\$1000/month) to assist them in meeting their daily living needs during the pandemic (Room and Board Payments).
 - Young person must have up-to-date vendor form
 - Each month, Dulcey Laberge, Youth Transition Program Manager will authorize a payment to be sent directly to the young person. This will be done as a batch payment through Dan Dresser.
 - Title IV-E payments will require a state match (35% General Funds/75% IV-E funds; i.e., for a monthly payment of \$1000 = \$350 GF and \$750 IV-E per month)
- OCFS may also provide unrestricted one-time payment (Limited to \$3000 lifetime total amount for young people regardless of Title IV-E Eligibility) for the following reasons, *when accompanied by a receipt*:
 - College/Training Program Tuition and Fees not eligible for Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) funds
 - Past College/Training Program debt preventing a young person from enrolling in a postsecondary program
 - Books, school supplies, tools, not covered by ETV funds
 - Work-related needs (tools, uniforms, PPE, etc.)
 - Remote learning needs(equipment, office furniture, internet, etc.)
 - Medical/dental/vision/medication needs not covered by MaineCare
 - Medical debt
 - Childcare expenses
 - Driving and transportation assistance when applying for financial assistance through the *OCFS Driving Pilot (included in the lifetime limit of \$3000)*:
 - Obtaining a driver's license (driver's education classes and testing fees, private lessons, practice hours, license fees)
 - Vehicle Insurance
 - Roadside Assistance, deductibles, and auto repairs
 - Assistance in purchasing an automobile

Public Awareness Campaign:

- Young people provided input regarding program development through a formal survey and other informal opportunities to provide feedback, such as young person testimony for OCFS' Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP).
- Young Person Notification and Program Recruitment:
 - List of eligible young people obtained from MACWIS

There were approximately 300 youth who had aged out of foster care or exited to permanency through adoption or permanency guardianship that could be eligible for this funding. If the youth was not IV-E eligible at the time they exited care they would not be eligible for maintenance costs, such as room and board expenses (monthly stipend). If they were IV-E eligible, they could receive financial support for special needs as outlined above and driving and transportation assistance.

- Direct outreach to the eligible youth by the OCFS Youth Transition Workers (in process)
- Program Flyer to be developed and distributed widely:
 - Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG) College Success Navigators
 - College Step Up Program
 - Youth on OCFS' Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP)
 - Youth currently receiving ETV funds but not on V9
 - YLAT social media
 - Youth not open to OCFS who were contacted for the NYTD 21 year old Follow-Up Survey
 - Announcement on MaineCare website
 - Announcement on OFI website
 - Announcement on DHHS website
 - Flyer posted at Homeless Shelters
 - Flyer provided to Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine (AFFM) to distribute

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Funds:

- Funds available to eligible young people until 9/30/22
- 10% allowed for Admin expenses
- May continue providing ETV funds to youth who are on a V9 Agreement or who exited foster care at age 14 to Reunification, or at age 16 to Adoption or Permanency Guardianship
- For eligible youth, an increase of ETV from \$5000 to \$12,000
- May be used for expenses that are not part of the cost of attendance to help support the young person to remain enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program
- Waives requirement for young person to be in good academic standing
- Does not waive 5-year limit (consecutive or non-consecutive) for receiving funds

