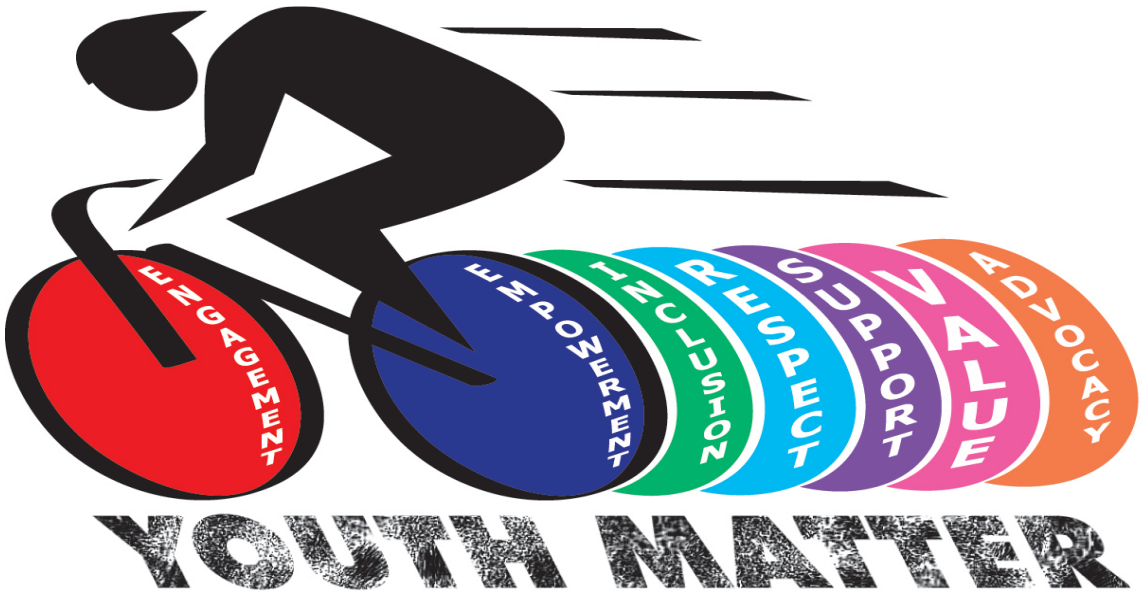
Out of Home Placement Services

Ready By 21 Policy Manual

FY 2016 Edition



Maryland Department of Human Resources
Social Services Administration

October 2015
Publication Number: DHR/PUB/SSA 5043

How to Use this Manual

This manual is a living electronic document which will be updated periodically. This manual is a supplement to the Out-Of-Home Placement Manual. The instructions in this manual are intended to be used in conjunction with all other written policies of the Social Services Administration/ Department of Human Resources. This manual replaces previous policy directives. It includes current policy and practice.

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Introduction

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) Out-of-Home Placement (OHP) program provides transitional services to committed youth in any OHP (foster care, kinship care, pre-adoptive placement), 14 through 20 years of age, regardless of permanency plan or placement type. The overarching goal is preparation for self-sufficiency. The goal for Maryland's Transitional Youth Services is also to assist youth with making a successful transition from OHP to adulthood.

The youth who receive transitional services are provided basic living skills primarily in partnership with their resource provider and caseworker. The youth also have the opportunity to participate in appropriate individual and group life skills building classes and activities. Together the youth, resource provider and caseworker assess the youth's proficiency in life skills. The assessment outcomes are used to determine the ability of the youth to meet their daily living activities. Individual goals and services are arranged and offered according to the needs of the youth.

Through the delivery of transitional youth services, youth are encouraged to take an active role in planning the activities and services needed for self sufficiency. Transitional services are designed to prepare youth for self-sufficiency. These services also focus on developing and enhancing social and emotional supports, social skills, proficiency in education, and employment status and goals.

Transitional services should address the youth's:

1. Maturity level;
2. Physical or emotional handicaps;
3. Educational status and goals;
4. Social and emotional supports;
5. Financial resources other than DSS; and
6. Vocational goals.

Transitional planning for youth shall begin at age 14. The transitional plan shall include: the agreed upon steps to be taken to meet the goals; the youth's responsibility for aspects of the plan; the responsibility of the agency and other persons who shall assist the youth to accomplish those steps; the date of the plan; the date when the plan was reviewed or updated; and signatures of the youth, local department of social services (LDSS) caseworker, and other participants responsible for the plan and activities.

Youth Engagement Model

The Youth Engagement Practice Model is specifically designed to focus on addressing the needs, and ensuring the involvement, of youth (ages, 14-21) who are committed to Maryland's child welfare system. As an extension of Maryland's Family Centered Practice Model, the Youth Engagement Model is centered on assuring the safety, well-being and permanency of every youth, while building on the strengths of family and community to meet the youth's needs. Most recently, the challenges facing older youth in the child welfare system have significantly changed the well being and positive permanency outcomes after exiting care. The State of Maryland's Social Services Administration created a practice model to establish a partnership between youth and child-serving staff to ensure concerted efforts are made to assist the youth in achieving permanency, establishing a positive network of supportive adults, and attaining life skills to be self sufficient after exiting the child welfare system. The Social Services Administration hopes this model will be the catalyst for child welfare administrators, staff and providers to pay close attention to the lens used to view young people, and the role we play in supporting them as they launch into adulthood.

Why Focus Efforts on the Youth Population

Each year, approximately 20,000 young adults age out of the child welfare system ("Child Welfare Information Gateway", 2010). Many of these adults exit the system without the skills, education, or resources to become self sufficient. Their outcomes often reflect homelessness, unplanned pregnancies, incomplete education, drug use, and crime. Currently, in the State of Maryland, over half of the child welfare population is between the ages of 14 and 21 (Maryland CHESSIE, 2015). Given state-specific data, the need for greater preparation and positive supports to assist older youth in their transition into adulthood is imperative. Maryland wants to ensure all youth to be self sufficient by age 21.

Maryland's Perspective

Soliciting youth input and listening to their concerns are of vital importance to improving their life outcomes. As a state child welfare agency, the Social Services Administration recognizes that youth are most directly impacted by the child welfare decisions made on their behalf. It is also understood that the treatment of a young person by a child welfare system has implications for the duration of that young person's life. As an expert on their own lives, youth must be considered partners in the child welfare decision making process. Failing to properly engage youth in life decisions can have an adverse effect on both child welfare and the larger community.

All levels of the child welfare system and community partners have a responsibility for communicating realistic options to young people and negotiating reasonable alternatives.

Regardless of their jurisdiction, all youth in Maryland should receive consistent services, a quality standard of resources and comparable child welfare experiences. Child welfare

interventions and service planning with youth must take into consideration their immediate needs, and ensure that services are designed to prepare youth to be self-sufficient and connected to a support system after child welfare services have ended.

The mission of Maryland's Youth Engagement Model is to improve services to youth in Maryland's child welfare system and draw on the experiences and recommendations of youth to enhance child welfare policy and practice.

How the Model Was Developed

The Department of Human Resources' Social Services Administration made intense efforts to engage internal and external partners throughout the model development. Two major groups, the Project Team and the Steering Committee, are responsible for shaping the content and leading the development process. Collectively, the groups are comprised of current and former foster youth, families, service providers, executive leadership, local child welfare department staff, child-serving agency staff and community leaders. Within seven months, after monthly meetings and several conversations with Youth Advisory Boards around the state, the model was formed.

Vision

All child welfare staff in Maryland are equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools to help youth transition into adulthood as productive citizens; and all youth are actively engaged in making decisions about their lives.

Goals

The goals of the Maryland Youth Engagement Practice Model are to:

- Create clear and consistent policies & practice standards to guide our work with youth within Maryland's child welfare system
- Increase efforts to ensure youth in Maryland:
    - Are involved and engaged as partners throughout service planning and delivery;
    - Accomplish positive goals;
    - Achieve permanent connections;
    - Acquire the skills to become self-sufficient adults.
- Enhance child welfare staff's capacity to work with youth more effectively
- Enhance organizational capacity to support staff working with youth
- Increase youth participation and incorporate youth voice in all aspects of the child welfare continuum (e.g. policy development, department trainings)
- Construct a process to ensure existing youth-related policies and strategies outlined by the Social Services Administration and Maryland's Ready by 21 Initiative are embedded in practice

Key Outcomes

The Social Services Administration aims to improve youth well being through the following key outcomes. Key Indicators are included for evaluation purposes.

Desired Outcomes	Key Indicators
Youth acquire and demonstrate the necessary life skills to become self-sufficient.	Increased number of youth who exit the child welfare system and become productive adults.
Youth establish and maintain permanent connections to a network of supportive adults and peers.	Increased number of youth exiting the child welfare system with a network of community, peer, and adult support.
Youth are empowered to advocate for themselves and actively participate in service planning and delivery.	Increased number of youth participating in youth advisory boards across the state. Increased youth participation in the development, review, and enhancement of child welfare practice and policy.

Core Values & Guiding Principles

The following core values and principles guide youth-related practice in the State of Maryland.

Respect Youth and staff must treat each other with respect. Mutual cooperation is encouraged to ensure that youth and staff are able to work together in a respectful, courteous manner to address the needs and goals of the youth.

Value Youth voice and perspective are important. All efforts and accomplishments are celebrated. The thoughts and ideas of youth help facilitate improved services and resources to meet individual needs and goals.

Inclusion Youth have a right to be included in all decisions about their future. Youth participation is encouraged in all planning and decision making processes deemed developmentally appropriate.

Advocacy Youth will develop the skills, through education and opportunities, to give voice to their opinions, advocate for themselves, and become leaders in their communities.

Empowerment Youth matter in Maryland. Their roles as experts in their lives is understood and valued. By keeping youth informed, building on their strengths, and providing the space and responsibility to make their own decisions, youth are encouraged to reach their full potential.

Support Youth are assisted in creating a network of support, made up of caring individuals who will provide lifelong connections.

Core Strategies

The following strategies are essential to ensuring youth in Maryland's child welfare system are fully engaged and have the resources and supports necessary to meet their full potential. The integration of these strategies into a purposeful plan of activities helps facilitate an organizational and practice culture in which the voice of youth is recognized and reflected in policy and practice.

Youth Advisory Boards

The Social Services Administration and local departments develop state and local youth advisory boards (YAB's) as a vehicle to:

- Foster a network of support amongst youth in care;
- Give voice to youth's successes, issues and concerns within the local departments; and,
- Obtain youth's recommendations on child welfare policy and practice.

Through involvement on a youth advisory board, youth build leadership skills and are empowered to share their perspectives for their benefit and others. The Social Services Administration and local departments use the feedback and recommendations from youth to improve the worker-youth relationship and ensure youth receive needed resources and services.

Family Involvement Meetings

Family involvement meetings (FIMs) are convened to engage youth and families in making critical decisions. FIMs provide a forum for youth and families to be active partners in discussing child welfare involvement.

Youth are invited to attend all FIMs and youth understand the purpose of the FIM prior to the meeting. Meetings regarding the life of a young person should be youth-driven and family guided. Youth should actively contribute to the conversations with child welfare staff, family, and community partners around the following key decision making points:

- Removal or Considered Removal
- Placement Change
- Recommendation for Permanency Change
- Youth Transitional Plan
- Voluntary Placement Agreement

Community Partnerships

The Social Services Administration and local departments partner with community stakeholders to expand the resources and supports available to youth who are committed to Maryland's child welfare system. Local schools, organizations, businesses, community leaders and residents

share responsibility for the successful outcomes of youth in their community. In collaboration with the community, local departments will ensure an environment where resources and opportunities are made available so youth can reach their full potential.

Transitional Youth Services

All youth, starting at age 14, will begin to receive services and supports tailored to their individual needs. In preparation for adulthood, local departments shall:

- Develop service plans with youth to define needs and goals
- Annually administer a state approved assessment tool to identify strengths and skill level to successfully complete their transition plan
- Provide youth with opportunities to learn and practice life skills through placement and independent living life skills classes

Organizational Assessment/Monitoring/Evaluation

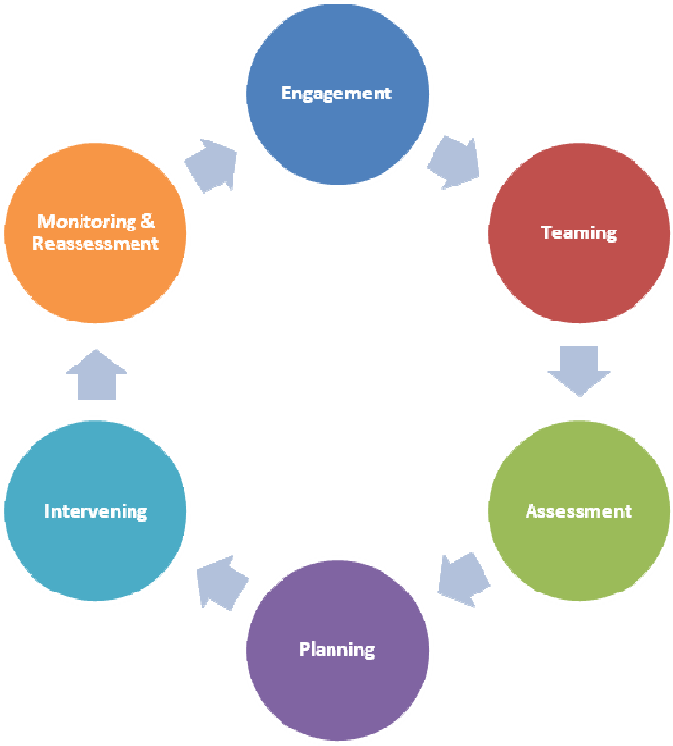
The importance of organizational capacity and the ongoing assessment of policy and practice are as relevant to the youth engagement model as they are to the statewide Family-Centered Practice Model. All levels of the child welfare organization must work to develop and adopt practice standards that enhance the functioning of families and improve the safety, well-being and permanence outcomes for youth. Administrative leaders must promote opportunities for professional growth and establish workloads that will allow caseworkers and supervisors to reasonably manage services delivered to youth and families. There will be a continuous process for analyzing data trends to refine the policies and procedures that direct practice. Youth are involved throughout this process to provide feedback and recommendation that ensure quality of service.

Standards of Practice

The Youth Engagement Model's standards of practice provide a framework for how the Social Services Administration works with youth throughout the course of their involvement with Maryland's child welfare system. A child welfare practice standard is a reference point for the planning, service delivery, and evaluation of how services are provided to children and families in the child welfare system. The practice standards for the Youth Engagement Model are designed to:

- Provide guidance to caseworkers, supervisors, administrators, and other direct service providers on practices that promote positive outcomes for youth;
- Establish consistency in practice with youth across the state; and
- Share expected levels of performance for all staff, partners, providers, and agencies working with youth in Maryland's child welfare system.

Aligning with Maryland's Family Centered Practice Model, the youth engagement practice standards are divided into six practice concepts outlined as the agency's model of practice---Engagement, Teaming, Assessment, Planning, Intervening and Monitoring/Reassessment.



This model of practice represents the Social Services Administrations' continuous process to achieve desired outcomes for the children, youth and families served.

Section 1
Transitioning Youth Services

Maryland Transitional Youth Services are services to prepare a youth for independence and are available to committed youth or youth under a voluntary placement agreement in any out-of-home placement 14 to 21 years of age, regardless of permanency plan or placement type. The overarching goal is preparation for self-sufficiency. The goal for Maryland's Transitional Youth Services is also to assist youth with making a successful transition from Out-of-Home Placement to adulthood.

.01 Transitional Planning

The purpose of the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan is to ensure all youth 14 to 21 years of age establish a personalized comprehensive written plan outlining his or her preparations for transitioning from out-of-home placement to adulthood. Transitional planning is the responsibility of the caseworker to ensure that the youth has acquired skills and has overcome barriers to complete school, obtain and maintain gainful employment, find adequate and affordable housing, financial literacy, identifying family/friend support, self care, and access health and mental health care. Transitional planning also ensures that the youth is participating in age appropriate or developmentally appropriate activities.

Age appropriate or developmentally appropriate activities are suitable, developmentally appropriate activities for children of a certain age or maturity level based on the capacities typical for the age group and the individual child.

When appropriate, the youth's parents/legal guardians, resource provider or representative payee shall be involved in the development of the transitional plan. During the case planning for the transitional plan at least two other supportive adults of the youth's choice shall be a part of the process. The youth may choose to select one of these individuals to be designated as an advocate regarding reasonable and prudent standard. The LDSS may object to an individual selected by the youth on the basis that it is not in the youth's best interest to have the individual involved. This is not including the caseworker or other local department staff.

The caseworker shall ensure that the core areas of service, in the transitional plan, are reviewed and have been achieved by the youth. In order to ensure this, the caseworker shall be aware of the youth's level of learning. The Casey Family's Life Skills Guidebook identifies four levels of learning:

- Awareness;
- Knowledge & Understanding;
- Knows How; and,
- Can or is Able to.

Level one: awareness, focuses on the youth's familiarity with a particular area of service. Level two: knowledge & understanding, focuses on the youth's ability to describe or explain the subject matter being taught. Level three: knows how, refers to the youth's ability to somewhat apply what is learned through instruction. Level four: can or is able to do, refers to the youth's ability to apply learned knowledge outside of the teaching environment. All information shall be recorded in the youth's case record, MD CHESSIE.

The core areas of service shall include:

- Education,
- Employment,
- Health/ Mental Health,
- Housing,
- Financial Literacy/ Resources, and
- Family/Friends Support.

According to Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, all states are required to assist and support a youth in developing a transition plan as he/she ages out of foster care. The plans must be personalized at the direction of the youth and developed 90 days prior to the youth's 18th birthday. The State of Maryland has developed the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan to comply with this Federal mandate. To properly identify the needs of Maryland youth and ensure youth obtain the resources and skills needed to be self-sufficient, local departments will begin administering the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan at age 14 to align with the state case plan and Maryland's Ready by 21 Benchmarks.

One area highlighted by the Fostering Connections Act is the importance of health care planning for the transitioning or exiting youth. The Act requires that the state discuss the importance of appointing a person to make health care decisions if the youth is incapacitated. In the State of Maryland, such a person is called a Health Care Agent.

.02 Age of Majority

To be eligible for out-of-home placement services, a child must be in the care and custody of a local department of social services by order of a juvenile court prior to the child's 18th birthday. A youth is eligible to remain in out-of-home placement until the end of the month of the youth's 18th birthday, or until the 21st birthday if the youth is in school or vocational/job training, working, or has a disability that prevents these things. The youth must be incompliance with a signed independent living service agreement.

.03 Youth with Disabilities

All youth with disabilities should remain in care until age 21. They are entitled to receive all of the services indicated for all foster care youth in care. Based on the needs of the youth, plans should be made at least 18 months to 1 year prior to the anticipated discharge date or their 21st birthday. Designated staff from Adult Services and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) should be included in the planning process to make adequate transition

plans for the youth. Additional information can be found in the DDA/SSA Procedural Guidance.

Youth that may require a legal guardian after aging out of foster care at 21 years old shall be referred to the LDSS adult services division for an assessment. This referral shall occur 6 months prior to the youth's 21st birthday. If the adult services division determines the youth will require a legal guardian, the adult services division will file a petition for adult guardianship at the youth's 21st birthday.

.04 Timeframes and Directions for Completing

- 120 days prior to the youth's 14th birthday, the caseworker shall prepare the youth for the development of his or her transition plan. The caseworker shall explain the purpose, content areas, significance and role in the development and implementation of the plan. The youth shall also complete the Casey Life Skills Assessment prior to the first transitional planning Family Involvement Meeting (FIM) in which the transitional plan shall be created.

- Beginning at age 14, the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan shall be developed jointly by the caseworker and youth. The plan should focus on the six core areas of service which are education, employment, health/mental health, housing, financial literacy/resources, and family/friends support. The caseworker and youth shall review and revise the transition plan every 180 days. These plans shall be established, reviewed and revised in the youth's transitional planning FIM. The FIM shall match the time frames of the establishment or updating of the transition plan.

- Youth shall identify at least 2 additional participants in the Transitional Planning FIM and development of the youth's transitional plan outside of the resource parent, caseworker and other local department staff. The youth may choose to select one of these individuals to be designated to be the youth's advisor and as necessary, advocate with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard to the youth. The youth shall be encouraged by the caseworker to invite their family/friend supports.

- Youth shall be provided with information that shall assist him/her in understanding the importance of designating a health care agent and information on how to exercise the option to execute a health care agent appointment that designates another individual to make health care treatment decisions if the youth becomes incapacitated.

- LDSS staff shall use the Casey Life Skills Assessment, Ready by 21 Benchmarks, and results from life skills trainings as a guide to develop the transition plan.

- Youth shall complete the Casey Life Skills Assessment annually beginning at 14 years old. The caseworker shall assess the youth's level of learning through the Casey Family's Life Skills Guidebook.

- Youth's transitional plan shall be finalized 90 days prior to the youth's 18th birthday. For youth 18 and over, a transitional plan shall be finalized prior to exit from foster care. . The finalized plan shall include a plan for stable housing that is reasonably expected to remain available to the youth for at least 12 month after the date of exit from foster care.

- Youth's transition plan shall be incorporated in the youth's independent living service agreement.

.05 Maryland Youth Transitional Plan – Health Care Agent

The Fostering Connections To Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Act), in part, broadens service delivery to older youth by extending IV-E eligibility up to age 21 for IV-E eligible youth who meet certain criteria as of October 2010. The Act also requires that all states assist and support a youth in developing a transition plan as the youth ages out of out-of-home placement. One area highlighted by the Act is the importance of health care planning for the transitioning or exiting youth. The Act requires that the State discuss the importance of appointing a person to make health care decisions if the youth is incapacitated. In the State of Maryland, such a person is called a Health Care Agent.

The following passages amend the policies and documents indicated to include discussion of the importance of appointing a health care agent, and inclusion of said discussion and the option to appoint a health care agent as part of the transitional planning process.

The Maryland Youth Transitional Plan document has a page specifically dedicated to Health. This Health page has a section on the Health Care Agent. The caseworker, when developing the transition plan with the youth shall:

1. Describe a Health Care Agent and discuss the importance of appointing someone to make health care decisions should the youth become incapacitated;
2. Provide the youth with a copy of the Advance Directive for Selecting a Health Care Agent – http://www.oag.state.md.us/Healthpol/infosheet.pdf; and
3. Document on the Transition Plan that the discussion took place and that the youth received a copy of the Advance Directive.

.06 Ready by 21 Benchmarks

The Ready by 21 Benchmarks shall be utilized as a tool in designing the transitional plan for youth ages 14-21 and Independent Living Service Agreement for youth ages 16-21. The benchmarks are separated in age groups and categories which will assist the caseworker in designing tasks and measuring outcomes for self sufficiency. The outcomes for achieving these benchmarks may be different for each youth due to the youth's mental and physical capabilities. The caseworker shall consider the youth's ability to achieve the benchmarks prior to determining the outcomes.

Age14	BENCHMARKS
	Education
	• Youth shall begin to participate in life skills classes and begin to acquire skills that are appropriate to his/her functioning level. • Youth in every school system understand graduation requirements. • Youth shall have basic literacy and numeracy skills (at least 5th grade proficient). • If applicable, youth shall have an appropriate identification of special education. • If applicable, an appropriate parent surrogate shall be identified for youth. • Youth shall begin to obtain the needed student service learning hours towards graduation.
	Employment
	• Youth shall obtain a work permit from the school. • Youth shall begin to explore career interest.
	Health/Mental Health
	• Youth shall participate in sessions on sexual relationships- sexual education that includes forms of birth control, how to practice safe sex, practices to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, and the HIV virus. • Youth shall understand the risks associated with drug and alcohol use. • Youth shall understand the importance of preventive and routine health care. • Youth shall understand the importance of medications and how to use medicine properly. • Youth shall identify the providers he/she shall use. • Youth shall understand his/her diagnosis. • Youth shall be able to communicate his/her needs to the psychiatrist/therapist.
	Housing
	• Youth shall live in an approved safe placement with a caring, competent adult.
	Financial Literacy/Resources
	• Youth shall have a bank account (savings and/or checking) and understand how to utilize services from the bank. • Youth shall demonstrate the ability to purchase items and understand the purchase process – including cost, sales tax, and tips. • Youth shall be provided with a free credit report at the age of 14 and annually thereafter.
	Family & Friends Support

	• Youth shall develop an understanding of positive, safe relationships. • Youth shall develop a photo history. • Youth shall be assisted in developing a genogram.
Ages 15/16	**BENCHMARKS**
	Education
	• Youth shall have a concrete plan detailing how he/she shall complete high school, earn a certificate of program completion, or obtain a GED, which includes specific steps to meet any gaps in required courses. Plans shall be signed by appropriate school personnel, parent, and youth and maintained in school records. • Youth shall have an awareness of colleges, trade schools, or technical trainings and what is needed to reach goals. • Youth shall have an opportunity to participate in a driver's education program. • Youth shall be assisted in obtaining a driver's license or Maryland identification card. • Disconnected youth shall have an established re-engagement plan.
	Employment
	• Youth shall receive assistance in the exploration of employment and/or occupational interests and the skills and/or training required for possible fields of interest. • Youth shall understand what minimum wage means. • Youth shall develop a realistic concept of the type of jobs available to youth. • Youth shall explore options for summer youth employment. • Youth shall engage in work experience, job shadowing and/or volunteer activities. • Youth shall be aware of appropriate attire for job interviews and work. • Youth shall understand how to access transportation to and from work.
	Health/Mental Health
	• Youth shall be provided with information that shall assist him/her in understanding the importance of medical conditions, family medical history, and how to be responsible with healthy diet and exercise. • Youth shall understand the importance of maintaining medical documents. • Youth shall be able to identify supports. • Youth shall understand safe and healthy relationships (in regards to dating).
	Housing
	• Youth shall be able to go shopping for food, prepare simple food and meals, and safely store food. • Youth shall be able to identify a safe haven for short stay housing, if needed. • Youth shall begin to acquire necessary household items and caring for them, whether school-based or prepaid.

	Financial Literacy/Resources
	• Youth shall be able to safely and effectively manage their money; establish alternatives to using check cashing services, payday lending, etc. • Youth shall understand basic financial skills – checking/savings, loans/contract/budgets, and credit cards use. • Youth shall establish savings goals. • Youth shall have a budgeted clothing allowance.
	Family & Friends Support
	• Youth shall identify appropriate, committed adult supports. • Youth shall understand the importance of developing lifelong relationships with caring adults.
Ages 17/18	**BENCHMARKS**
	Education
	• Youth shall obtain the necessary student service-learning hours to graduate. • Youth shall have a concrete plan for postsecondary education, employment and/or training. • All youth shall complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), unless otherwise noted. • Transition plans for youth shall include specific educational goals and financial assistance plans. • Youth shall understand how to utilize the Maryland Tuition Waiver and/or ETV. • Youth shall be enrolled in college, or if not interested in college, youth shall take advantage of vocation programs that allow certifications to be earned. • Graduating disabled youth shall understand their service needs and shall receive information on how to access Disability Support Services. • Youth shall register to vote and shall understand the voting process.
	Employment
	• Youth shall have an opportunity to participate in an internship, externship or volunteer opportunity relevant to a career field of his/her choice. • Youth shall understand the opportunities that shall allow him/her to increase employment skills. • Youth shall be assisted in developing a resume. • Youth shall have had at least two summer jobs by age 18. • Youth shall be engaged in planning for employment that shall increase his/her earnings and marketable potential. • Youth with special needs shall be educated about the employment transition services and resources available. • Youth shall receive assistance in enrolling in any desired occupational skills training.
	Health/Mental Health

	• Youth shall understand the importance of following through with medical care and appointments. • Youth shall be able to ask the doctor questions and obtain information needed to understand his/her health and any existing medical conditions. • Youth shall understand the importance of medical insurance and take advantage of obtaining the services needed with their medical insurance. • Youth shall be able to identify and utilize community resources. • Youth shall understand his/her rights. • Disabled youth shall be referred to other programs/services for additional assistance prior to exiting care. • Youth shall be provided with information that shall assist him/her in understanding the importance of designating a health care agent and information on how to exercise the option to execute a health care agent appointment that designates another individual to make health care treatment decisions if the youth becomes incapacitated.
	Housing
	• Youth shall be able to identify possible housing options, if needed, including prospective roommates, subsidized housing, • Youth shall have a "safety plan" if current housing fails and assistance with re-engaging with family. • Youth shall understand housing history. • Youth shall be able to understand tenant rights and tenant- landlord relationships. • Youth shall understand the importance of safety and being selective in who is allowed to enter his/her personal space. • Youth shall possess the life skills needed to maintain an apartment and make some independent decisions.
	Financial Literacy/Resources
	• Youth shall have basic knowledge of entitlement programs, qualifications and how to apply/receive assistance with application for SSI (Social Security Insurance), MA (Medical Assistance), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), TCA (Temporary Cash Assistance), WIC (Women, Infants and Children), etc. • Youth shall obtain a free credit report. • Youth shall understand how to avoid identity theft or correct it. • Youth shall understand the benefits of remaining in care until age 21. He/she shall understand the policy, eligibility requirements, and supportive services of After Care Services that he/she can receive if leaving care prior to age 21. • Youth shall obtain his/her original birth certificate and social security card.
	Family & Friends Support
	• Youth shall develop a community resources guide.
	BENCHMARKS

Ages 19-21	Education
	• Youth shall have access to postsecondary supportive services (e.g., financial aid, counseling, tutorial). • Youth with disabilities exiting school shall be aware and engage with community supports.
	Employment
	• Youth shall continue to maintain progressive, responsible work experience opportunities within their chosen career pathway. • Youth shall understand unfair job practices and know how to seek guidance.
	Health/Mental Health
	• Youth shall understand how to obtain medical services after he/she leaves care. • Youth shall be aware of health care coverage options if he/she is not insured through the employer. • Youth shall understand how to manage any medical condition he/she may have. • Youth shall be able to identify the providers he/she shall use for health, dental, and mental health care. • Youth shall have his/her updated medical records and psychological/psychiatric evaluation upon exiting care. • Youth shall be assisted in applying for medical assistance, if needed.
	Housing
	• Youth shall possess the life skills required to maintain housing, with support. • Youth shall be prepared for SILA or private vendors that provide independent living in arranged placements. • Youth shall have a plan developed that includes a budget and all services needed to maintain an apartment or home. • Youth shall have a developed plan for living after foster care.
	Financial Literacy/Resources
	• Youth shall understand the importance of financial investments. • Youth shall maintain a financial cushion. • Youth shall understand the need for budgeting funds and shall demonstrate the ability to manage money, and obtain necessary resources. • Youth shall understand budget management, priority spending, and the income sources shall be used to supplement his/her expenses. • Youth shall be able to maintain a savings account.
	Family & Friends Support

	• Youth shall obtain adequate child-care services, if applicable. • If desired, youth shall learn how to positively develop relationships with his/her family of origin.

.07 Out-of-Home Program Handbook for Maryland's Youth in Foster Care

"Preventing Sex Trafficking & Strengthening Families Act" requires all youth in foster care be aware of their rights. The "Out-of-Home Program Handbook for Maryland's Youth in Foster Care" must be provided to all youth 14-21 in foster care regardless of permanency plan or living arrangement. The handbook must be explained to the youth by their caseworker in an age or developmentally appropriate manner. The youth shall have the opportunity to ask questions concerning their rights. After the caseworker explains the handbook, the youth must sign the "Youth Acknowledgement Form", DHR/SSA 2089. The signed form shall be placed in the case record and scanned into the MD CHESSIE file cabinet. The caseworker shall document on case plan 2 section IIIa question 14, that the youth received the handbook and it was explained to the youth in an age or developmentally appropriate manner.

At any point while the youth resides in foster care, the youth may ask questions concerning their rights or request another copy of the handbook.

.08 MD CHESSIE

- The Maryland Youth Transitional Plan is located on the DHR Knowledge Based website, Social Services Administration, Out-of-Home Placement, under the forms folder.
- After completion of the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan, the document is to be scanned and upload in the MD CHESSIE file cabinet.
- A hard copy of the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan with the signatures and date signed should be kept in the record.
- The caseworkers shall document the type of contact (e.g., face-to-face) and reason for Family Involvement Meeting (e.g., youth transitional planning meeting).
- The caseworker shall use the Maryland Youth Transitional Plan to develop the Case Plan 4 ILP Service Agreement.
- On Case Plan 2 Section IIIa, the caseworker shall document ongoing age or developmentally appropriate activities in question 3 and that the resource provider is following prudent parent standard in question 14.

Section 2
Casey Life Skills Assessment

Every youth age 14 to 21 must have a life skills assessment to determine their strengths and needs in order to develop steps for preparation toward adulthood. The tool assesses the youth's life skills needed for their well being, confidence, and safety as they navigate high school, post secondary education, employment and other life milestones. The assessment tool assists the caseworker as he/she prepares to work with the youth. The individual assessment is to be updated as needed, but at minimum annually. The State of Maryland utilizes the Casey Life Skills Assessment Tool for individual youth assessment. The Casey Life Skills Assessment is available on the Internet at www.caseylifeskills.org.

.01 Topics

The assessment covers the following topics:

- Maintaining healthy relationships
- Work and study habits
- Planning and goal-setting
- Using community resources
- Daily living activities
- Budgeting and paying bills
- Computer literacy
- Permanent connections to caring adults

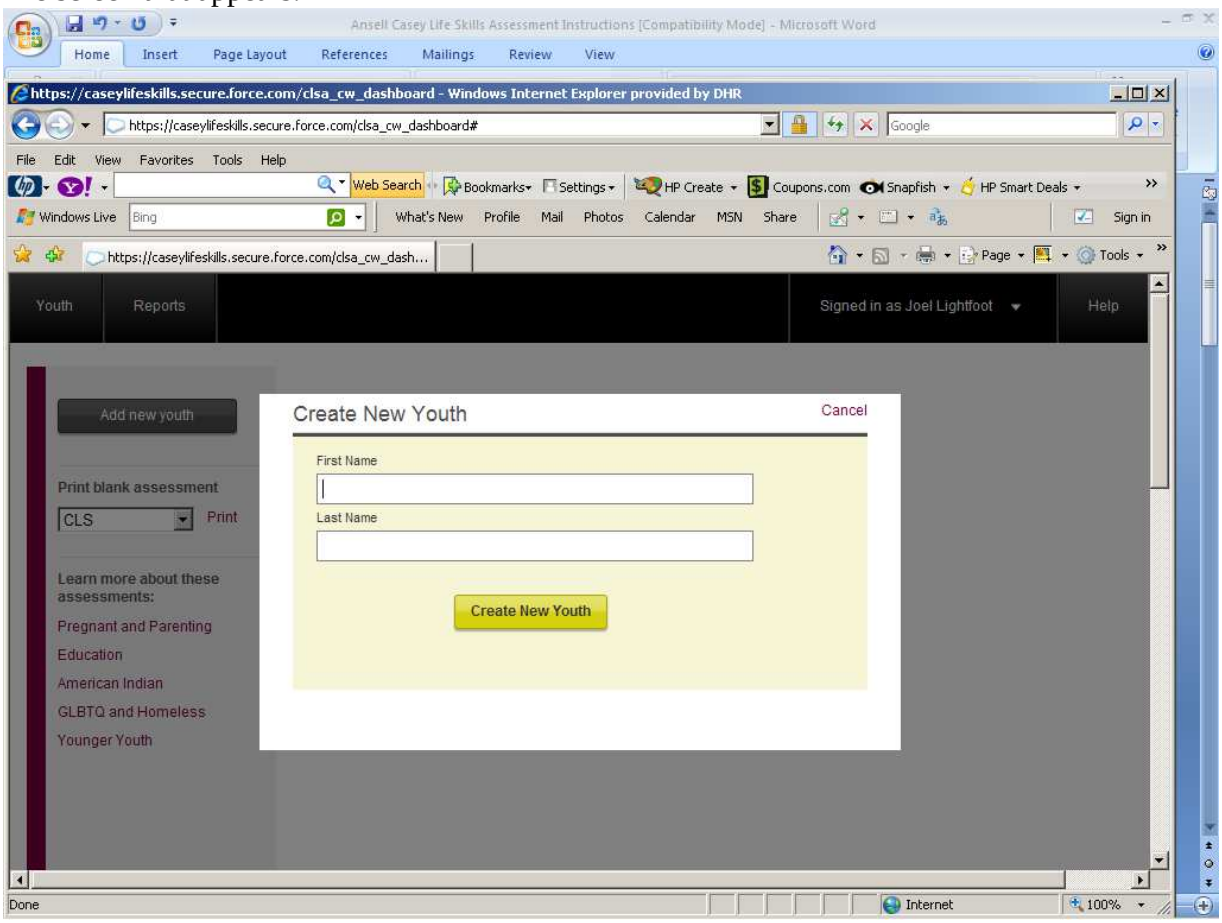
.02 How to get started

In order to administer the Casey Life Skills Assessment or access youth data, the local department must create a profile that contains the local department's name, address and phone number. After this is completed, a local department representative shall create a login that is associated with the local department profile.

The local department shall identify two (2) staff to serve as the administrators for the website account. The administrators shall be responsible for registering and creating the departments' profile, (de)activating caseworker accounts and receiving login requests.

A youth profile must be added before the caseworker can give the youth the assessment. To add a youth to the department, log onto the Casey Life Skills Website by typing **http://caseylifeskills.force.com** in the web browser address line. Once on the site, click on "Sign in" in the upper right corner. Type in your e-mail address and password and press enter. The caseworker must login to the system, and click the left side of the screen onto the "Add New Youth" button.

The screen that appears:



The youth's name shall be entered as first name and last initial in the "First Name" box and the MD CHESSIE number shall be entered as the "Last Name".

The youth is to complete the assessment at the local department and have them click the "Start Now" button, or can send the youth an e-mail invitation by clicking the "Send Via Email" button. The Youth will be able to click on the link provided and complete the assessment.

When the assessment is complete a message will be sent to the caseworker and the department representative.

.03 How to Use the Results

Casey Life Skills Assessment results are designed to be used in a collaborative conversation between a caseworker, or other service provider and any youth between the ages of 14 and 21. The conversation shall be strengths-based that actively engages the youth in the process of developing independent living goals.

Results of the assessment should be reviewed with the youth during the next caseworker visitation and shall drive the youth's Independent Living Service Agreement and Maryland Youth Transition Plan.

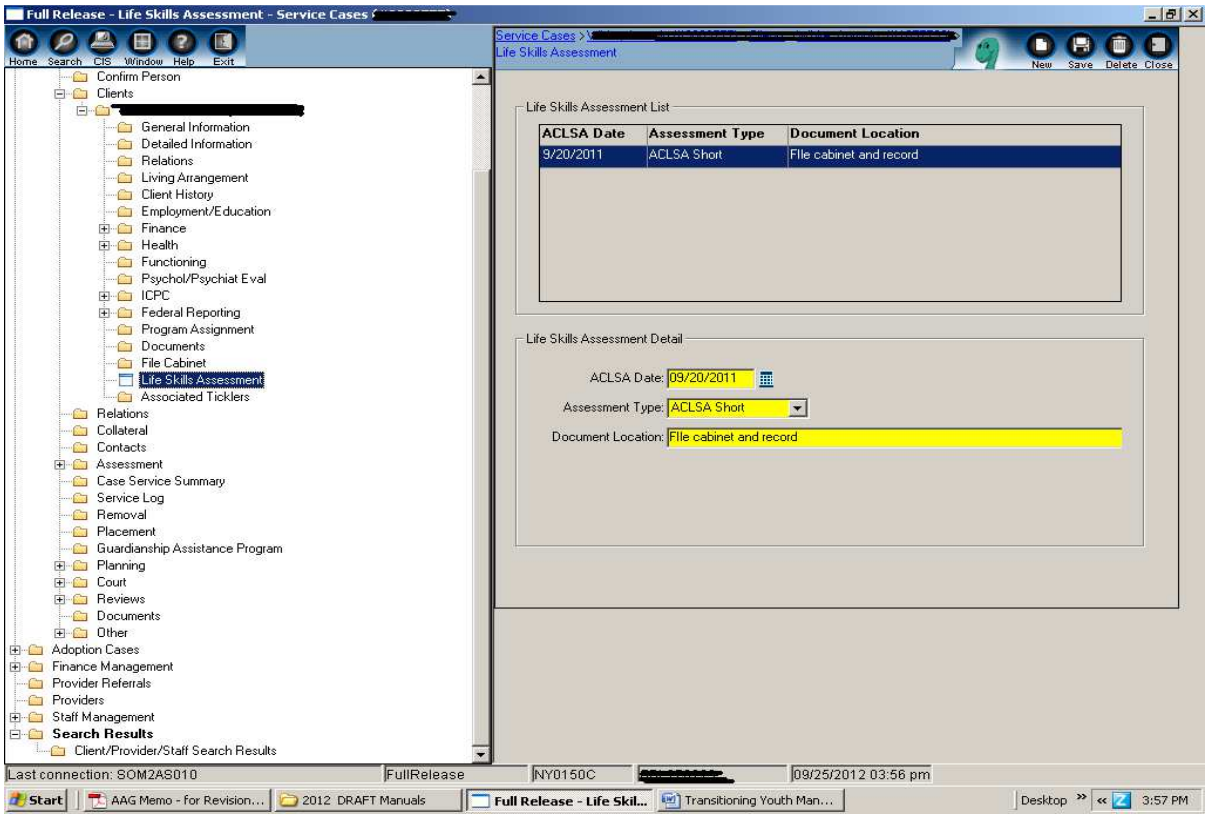
In a situation when the youth is unable to independently complete the assessment due to serve cognitive delays, the caseworker shall assist the youth in completing the assessment. If the youth is unable to answer the questions and complete the assessment with the caseworkers' assistance, the caseworker shall document this in the contact notes and Case Plan 2.

.04 Private Resource Providers

If a private resource provider is administering the assessment to the youth, the LDSS caseworker shall request that the private provide email the link of the youth's assessment results. This can be done from the assessment results page, click Send as a Link, once the "Second Assessment" email box appears, enter the email address of the person you wish to send the result, then click "Send Email".

.05 MD CHESSIE

Document all completed Casey Life Skills Assessments in MD CHESSIE. This shall be documented in the Clients folder under Life Skills Assessment. On the Life Skills Assessment screen under Assessment Type select CLSA IV.



Section 3
Life Skills

Life skills are an essential tool in youth developing the necessary skills to become self sufficient. Life skills are taught in a variety of different settings including: placement resource provider, private agency, or LDSS. When life skills are taught by the resource provider the youth receives hands on experiences, however the life skills classes through the LDSS allow the youth to gain knowledge as well as form peer relationships. The LDSS shall ensure when possible all youth 14-21 participate in group life skills classes. Maryland has identified 7 areas for teaching life skills that coincide with the Ready by 21 benchmarks. The LDSS shall ensure that these areas are addressed in the curriculum for life skills classes.

.01 Education

Goal: **Understand high school or GED curriculum**

Objectives:

- Knowledge of graduation requirements.
- Develop a personal education plan.
- Taking the necessary courses to meet education plan.
- Identify and understand personal educational special needs (IEP).
- Understand the benefits of education/vocational training.

Goal: **Knowledge to assess post secondary education resources**

Objectives:

- Knowledge to apply for and utilize Maryland Tuition Waiver.
- Knowledge to apply for and utilize Education Training Voucher.
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Ability to complete a college application.

Goal: **Understands the importance of education and its relationship to employment.**

Objectives:

- Identify personal values related to education.
- Explain the level of education/vocational training needed to achieve your employment goals.
- Match knowledge, strengths, and abilities to educational opportunities.
- Explain the qualifications necessary to achieve your educational goal.
- Create an educational plan, which includes time frames, goals, and resources needed.
- Discuss the plan with teachers, employer or counselors.
- Complete application forms for education or training programs.

.02 Employment

Goal: **Able to identify careers of interest**

Objectives:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the career field of interest.
- Explain the difference between a job and a career.
- Indentify career fields that match skills and abilities.

Goal: **Employment Search**

Objectives:

- Read and interpret employment information in newspaper ads and other print material.
- Use the Internet to locate job openings.
- Describe the importance of personal contacts in the employment search.
- Be able to properly complete employment application.
- Development of a resume'.

Goal: **Successful Interviewing**

Objectives:

- Identify appropriate attire to wear at an interview.
- Identify appropriate language and behaviors during the interview process
- Be knowledgeable about the job you are applying for.

Goal: **Understands how to maintain employment**

Objectives:

- Identify the behaviors and attitudes (e.g., being on time, following directions, assuming responsibility) that affect job retention and advancement.
- Describe proper workplace attire.
- Identify the importance of supervision and accept supervision.
- Demonstrate the ability to organize and manage time to complete work place tasks.
- Demonstrate ways for dealing with criticism.
- Demonstrate negotiation skills in resolving workplace differences.
- Demonstrate working cooperatively with others.
- Understands employee wage deductions and benefits.

.03 Health/Mental Health

Goal: **Able to maintain good emotional health**

Objectives:

- Identify examples of stress.
- Identify situations which may cause conflict which may lead to stress.
- Identify ways to reduce stress (ie. exercise, deep breathing).
- Describe the signs and symptoms of depression and other emotional health problems.
- Describe resources in the community to obtain help with depression and other emotional health problems.

Goal: **Maintaining good physical health**

Objectives:

- Identify ways to treat minor illness (cold, flu or cut).
- Knowledge of practicing safe sex.
- Risk associated with drugs and alcohol.
- Explain importance of vaccination to prevent contagious diseases like measles, mumps, and chicken pox.
- Take medication as prescribed by medical personnel.
- Attend regular doctor/dentist appointments (e.g., yearly).
- Explain family health history.
- Describe personal medical history.
- Keep up to date medical records.

.04 Housing

Goal: **Maintaining housing**

Objectives:

- Explain necessity of paying rent or mortgage on time.
- Understanding a lease agreement.
- Understanding tenant rights and responsibilities.
- Understanding utilities related to the household.

Goal: **Understands the importance of household cleanliness**

Objectives:

- Describe what it means to have a clean house.
- Explain benefits of maintaining a clean house.
- Describe what needs to be cleaned on a daily, monthly and seasonal basis.
- Describe the proper use and storage of cleaning products.
- Describe cleaning techniques and related equipment.
- Describe how to minimize roaches, mice, and other pests.

Goal: **Knows and understands how to prepare food safely**

Objectives:

- Describe why cleanliness in the cooking process is important.
- Describe how improper cooking and handling of food can cause physical illness.
- Describe safe ways to defrost, clean, and cook meats and vegetables.
- Demonstrate safe ways to prepare and cook meats and vegetables.

Goal: **Understands the importance of home safety**

Objectives:

- Describe use and maintenance of a smoke and carbon monoxide detector and fire extinguisher.
- Describe a fire emergency evacuation route.
- Explain prevention of home breaking and entering.
- Explain ways to prepare for natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, tornados, earthquakes, national alerts, snow emergencies).
- Explain strategies for child proofing a house (e.g., outlet plugs, cabinet locks, and gates on stairways).
- Identify items needed for a first aid kit/household emergency kit (e.g., band aids, disinfectant, flash light, batteries).
- Describe how to prevent poisoning.

Goal: **Can grocery shop for a week within a budget**

Objectives:

- Develop a shopping list
- Explain strategy to keep from going over budget when shopping (e.g., use a calculator to keep a running total as you shop).
  Indentifying the necessities required for the week.

.05 Financial Literacy/Resources

Goal: **Open and maintain a checking and savings account**

Objectives:

- Identify types of personal identification needed to open an account.
- Open a checking and savings account.
- Learn to use web banking and ATM.
- Fill out deposit and withdrawal forms.
- Read bank statement.
- Balance register with statement monthly.
- Explain the consequences of writing checks with insufficient funds.

Goal: **Understands the benefit and cons of using credit**

Objectives:

- Identify three advantages of using credit (e.g. provides cash in emergencies, allows one to make purchases over the phone or Internet, is safer than carrying cash).
- Identify three disadvantages of using credit (e.g. can lead to debt, high cost of interest payments, can take years to repay, end up paying more than the original price).

Goal: **Understand the importance of developing and maintaining a credit history and credit rating**

Objectives:

- Explain what a "credit history" and a "credit rating" are and how they are related and tracked.
- Describe how to develop a sound credit rating.
- Knowledge of how to obtain credit report.
- How to correct a credit report.
- Describe how your credit history impacts your ability to make major purchases (e.g., car, house).

Goal: **Understands the responsibility of filing income tax returns**

Objectives:

- Identify all types of income tax required in ones locality (e.g. federal, state, city, county).
- How to file tax forms and make tax payments.
- Explain the consequences for failing to file timely tax forms and payments.
- Explain the documents and information required for filing taxes.
- Identify places where tax forms are available.
- Describe where in the community one can get help in completing tax returns.
- Determine the best ways to have tax forms completed and filed (e.g., do it yourself, pay for the service, find a free service, electronic filing).

Goal: **Develop a realistic monthly spending plan**

Objectives:

- Explain the importance of planning one's expenditures.
- Create a list of spending plan categories (e.g., food, clothes, leisure activities).
- Identify whether a category is fixed or flexible.
- Assess current situation and allocate money to each category.
- Can develop a routine for paying monthly expenses.
- Identify strategies for paying bills.
- Select a strategy for paying monthly bills.
- Recognize the consequences of not paying bills on time.

- Develop a system for storing receipts and other payment records (e.g., tax returns, warranties).

Goal: **Shopping on a budget**

Objectives:

- Describe how one's shopping habits impact one's spending plan.
- Identify three alternative shopping options (e.g., flea markets, department stores, newspaper ads, second hand shops, garage sales, mail order, Internet, discount outlets, and lay-away).
- Compare the good and bad points of different shopping options.
- Explain when and how to look for sales.
- Find and use coupons.
- Interpret and use unit pricing information to select the best buy for one's budget.
- Interpret and use product label information to select the best buy.
- Compare prices on different brands to get the best price.
- Use alternative shopping options to get the best price (e.g., flea markets, classified ads, thrift shops, yard sales, catalogs, outlets).

.06 Family & Friends Support

Goal: **Develop and maintain healthy relationships**

Objectives:

- Identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Describe how to manage an unhealthy relationship (e.g. clarify boundaries, seek counseling, seek legal help, ending relationship).
- Describe how relationships change over time.
- Describe ways to develop and/or enhance a new relationship with family, friends, mentors, co-workers, and romantic interests.
- Explain the roles and responsibilities that both parties play in maintaining relationships.
- Identify individuals you can confide in.

Goals: **Develop and use a personal support system**

Objectives:

- Define a personal support system.
- Develop a personal support system including supportive adults.
- Understand the importance of lifelong relationships.
- Name two or more people who provide support to you (include at least 1 adult).
- Develop or continue a life book with pictures and family history.

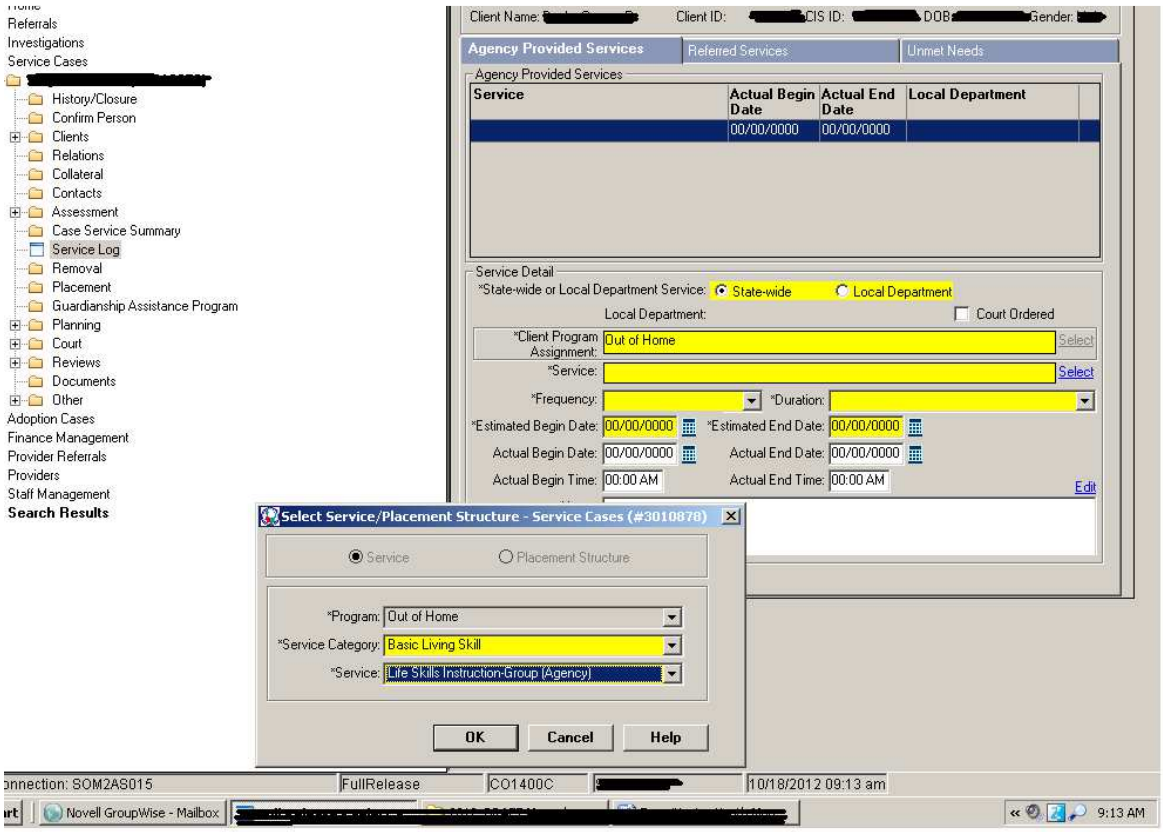
Goal: **Understand community resources and supports**

Objectives:

- Define and give examples of different community resources.
- Understand where you can receive support services (Medical Assistance, TCA, and Daycare).
- Develop a community resource guide.

.07 MD CHESSIE

Life skills trainings shall be documented in MD CHESSIE. After the completion of each life skills class the caseworker or independent living coordinator shall document the completion of the training. This shall be documented in MD CHESSIE in the "Service Log" folder. On the "Service Log" screen choose the first tab "Agency Provided Services"; choose Service Category "Basic Living Skill", Service "Life Skills Instruction Group (Agency). In the "Notes" add additional information concerning the life skills training.



Section 4
Youth Advisory Board

.01 Purpose, Role and Benefits

1. The purpose of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is to provide a vehicle in which information about Independent Living Services can be gained and recommendations for improvements made.
2. The role of the YAB is to empower youth to have a positive effect in their communities, encourage youth to develop skills necessary for independent living and leadership development, assist in the planning of the annual teen conferences, and review State and federal legislation that may affect Maryland Independent Living Services.
3. The YAB provides a system with which youth in Maryland receiving Independent Living Services can gain information about foster care independent living and make recommendations for improvement in services.
4. The YAB is a vehicle that communicates and distributes information to the administration, lawmakers and youth in foster care. The YAB strives to motivate other youth in foster care to participate in Independent Living Preparation Services.
5. The YAB is also involved in the decision making process of polices and regulations affecting independent living preparation services.

02 State Youth Advisory Board

The Maryland State Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) builds on the concept that input from youth is essential to the effectiveness and success of programs designed to serve them. The SYAB serves a major role in program development and is comprised of a group of youth who are encouraged to contribute to the development of program planning. SYAB participants are viewed as valued partners in the development of the Maryland Transitional Living Services. Participation on the SYAB contributes to personal development and leadership ability.

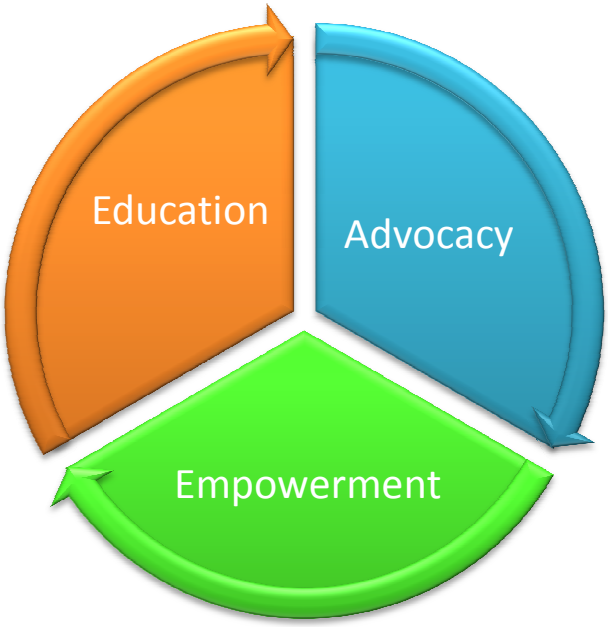
Through involvement on the SYAB, youth have the opportunity to build leadership skills and are empowered to share their perspectives for their benefit and others. The Social Services Administration and local departments use the feedback and recommendations from youth to improve the caseworker-youth relationship and ensure youth receive needed resources and services.

The SYAB Officers are the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. The officers of the SYAB are elected by a majority vote of the Members at the last meeting of the calendar year. The Chairperson presides at SYAB Meetings. The chairperson shall generally manage the business of the SYAB. The Chairperson shall:

- Call the SYAB meetings to order
- Facilitate the SYAB meetings
- Adjourn the SYAB meetings

The Co-Chairperson shall perform the duties delegated to the Co-Chairperson by the Board. The Co-Chairperson presides at SYAB meetings in the Chairperson's absence.

Our core focus revolves around 3 principles:



Education

The SYAB will serve as a forum to educate former and current foster youth on state policies and practices.

Advocacy

Empowering foster youth to have a positive effect in their communities is an essential focus for the SYAB. The board members will advocate for other foster youth, giving a voice to youth's successes, issues and concerns within the local departments; and obtain youth's recommendations on child welfare policy and practice.

Empowerment

The SYAB provides its members with a unique opportunity to develop and discover leadership skills that will enable the youth to transition into their professional career. Youth will be given an opportunity to be a part of our Speakers Bureau to represent the State Youth Advisory Board. The youth will also assist in the Planning of the Annual Teen Conference. The Teen Conference is a valuable opportunity for foster youth from across the State of Maryland to network and receive great information on topics that may impact their lives. Youth participate in workshops that are held by professionals and foster youth.

.03 Local Requirements

- Each local department shall establish a local youth advisory board or participate in a regional youth advisory board.
- Each local department is responsible to ensure that foster care youth are able to participate directly in the design of their own program activities that prepare them for independence.
- Each local department shall appoint one board member to serve on the SYAB. The local department is responsible for providing transportation and supervision of youth participating in the State monthly meeting.

Section 5
National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

.01 Introduction and Definition

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), required by the Chafee Act of 1999, tracks the services and outcomes of youth transitioning from foster care as of October 2010 (FY2011). NYTD requires state child welfare agencies to collect outcome data via a survey of all youth that are in foster care around their 17th birthday, then survey a cohort of those young people again at age 19 and 21.

Definitions:

- **Served Population:** The served population includes any youth ages 14 and older who has received one or more independent living services paid for or provided by the State agency in a report period (45 CFR 1356.81(a)). A youth's foster care status is not relevant to whether he or she is in the served population.
- **Baseline Population:** The baseline population is comprised of all youth who were in foster care at some point during the 45 days after their 17th birthday in a specified year, regardless of whether the youth receives any independent living services (45 CFR 1356.81(b)). Youth who enter foster care more than 45 days after they turn 17 are not included in the baseline population.
- **Follow-up population:** Youth who were part of Baseline population, who completed a survey during the Baseline year, and who turned 19 years or 21 years old during the NYTD reporting period.

Survey schedule:

- The State is required to contact the youth within 45 days after the youth turns 17 to gather Baseline survey data.
- The State is required to contact the youth during the 6 month federal reporting period* when the youth turns 19 to gather Follow-up survey data.
- The State is required to contact the youth during the 6 month federal reporting period* when youth turns 21 to gather Follow-up survey data.

  * NOTE—Federal reporting period is either October to March, or April to September.

Federal Fiscal Year	All youth receiving Independent Living Services via Service Log: 14 Years-old and above		Baseline Outcomes: Survey Required (17-year-olds)	Follow-up Outcomes: Survey Required (19-year-olds)	Follow-up Outcomes: Survey Required (21-year-olds)
Reporting Time	**FFY A Period: Oct-Mar**	**FFY B: Apr-Sep**	**FFY: Oct - Sep**	**FFY: Oct - Sep**	**FFY: Oct – Sep**
FFY 2011	X	X	X (Cohort 1)		
FFY 2012	X	X	BYE—No Surveys this year		
FFY 2013	X	X		X (Cohort 1)	
FFY 2014	X	X	X (Cohort 2)		
FFY 2015	X	X			X (Cohort 1)
FFY 2016	X	X		X (Cohort 2)	
FFY 2017	X	X	X (Cohort 3)		
FFY 2018	X	X			X (Cohort 2)
FFY etc.	Process continues each FFY		Survey process follows this pattern—New cohort starts every 3 years		

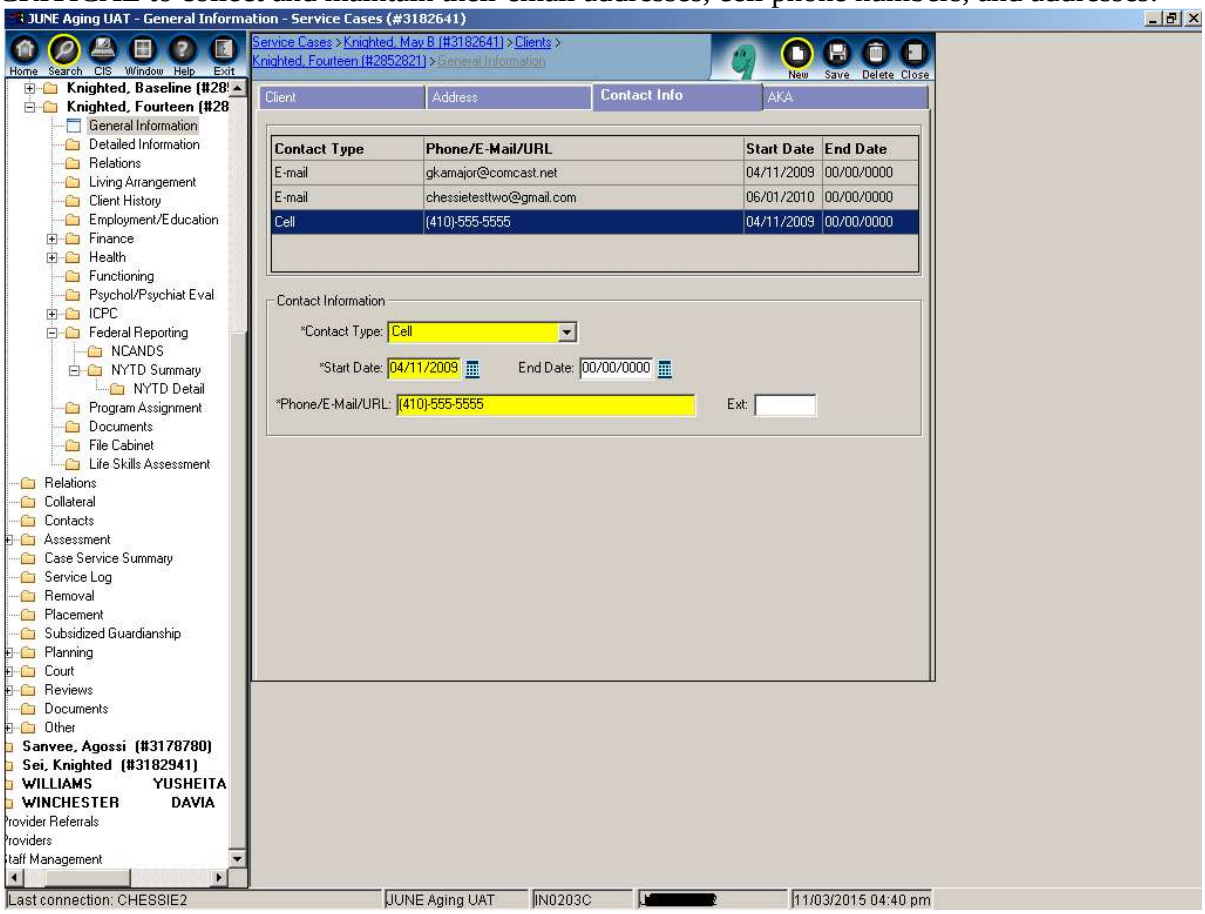
The federal regulation requires that states report to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) the independent living services and supports provided to all youth in eleven broad categories:

- independent living needs assessment;
- academic support;
- post-secondary educational support;
- career preparation;
- employment programs or vocational training;
- budget and financial management;
- housing education and home management training;
- health education and risk prevention;
- family support and healthy marriage education;
- mentoring; and
- supervised independent living.

States will also report financial assistance provided including assistance for education, room and board and other aid.

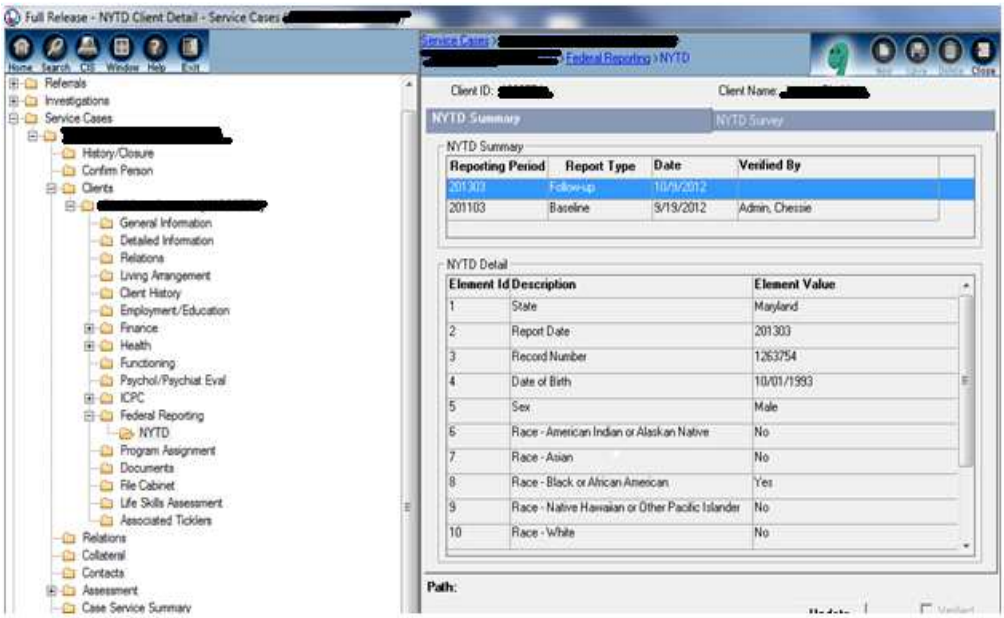
Implementation of NYTD is essential to improving the understanding of youth leaving foster care and thereby improving outcomes for this population. The outcome data will allow states, the federal government and the field in general to make more informed decisions about policy and practice.

Critical Contact Data to Collect BEFORE Youth in Out-of-Home Placement reach Age 17
In order to make the best use of computers and the internet to contact youth to complete the survey, it is critical to update the youth's contact information with their current email address. When a youth is approaching 17 (and later turns 19 and 21), in Out-of-Home Placement, it is CRITICAL to collect and maintain their email addresses, cell phone numbers, and addresses:



NYTD Screen
In order to document the NYTD information in MD CHESSIE the caseworker will need to review the NYTD screen. The NYTD screen consists of 2 tabs: NYTD Summary and NYTD Survey. The caseworker will need to click on NEW and create a new reporting period on the NYTD Summary tab. Then Click on the NYTD Survey tab. Complete the survey and press save then verified.

Additional information on NYTD related to MD CHESSIE can be found in NYDT MD CHESSIE Tip Sheet.


Full Release - NYTD Client Detail - Service Cases
Home Search PIS Window Help Exit
Referrals
Investigations
Service Cases
History/Closure
Confirm Person
Clients
General Information
Detailed Information
Relations
Living Arrangement
Client History
Employment/Education
Finance
Health
Functioning
Psychol/Psychiat Eval
ICPC
Federal Reporting
NYTD
Program Assignment
Documents
File Cabinet
Life Skills Assessment
Associated Tickders
Relations
Collateral
Contacts
Assessment
Case Service Summary
Federal Reporting > NYTD
Client ID:
Client Name:
NYTD Summary
NYTD Survey
NYTD Summary
Reporting Period | Report Type | Date | Verified By
201303 | Follow-up | 10/9/2012
201103 | Baseline | 9/19/2012 | Admin, Chessie
NYTD Detail
Element Id | Description | Element Value
1 | State | Maryland
2 | Report Date | 201303
3 | Record Number | 1263754
4 | Date of Birth | 10/01/1993
5 | Sex | Male
6 | Race - American Indian or Alaskan Native | No
7 | Race - Asian | No
8 | Race - Black or African American | Yes
9 | Race - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | No
10 | Race - White | No
Path:

Section 6
Independent Living Case Planning

.01 John F. Chafee Federal Mandate

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act requires that each youth age 14 and older have, as part of their case plan, an Independent Living Plan (Case Plan 4) that specifies the services they are receiving to help the youth transition to successful adulthood. Every youth in care, at age 14, is provided with a written description of the programs and services which will help prepare the youth for the transition from foster care to independent living. The plan should be designed to help the youth develop competencies and connect the youth to services in the following areas:

1. Education (including counseling and support)
2. Vocational and Career Counseling and Placement
3. Physical and Mental Health Care (including family-planning and sexual health)
4. Housing
5. Relationships with Caring Adults (As a part of the permanency plan of independence)
6. Knowledge of Community Resources and Public Benefits/Services
7. Expertise in Daily Living Skills (including budgeting and home management)
8. Communication and self-advocacy skills.

.02 Services Goals

The goal of providing independent living services to OHP youth is to:

1. Identify children/youth who are likely to remain in out-of-home placement 18-20 years of age, and help them make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as: assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, post-secondary education, job placement;
2. Assist youth in out-of-home placement receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. Assist youth in out-of-home placement prepare for post-secondary training and prepare for higher institutions of learning;
4. Provide support and resources for the youth to obtain personal and emotional support, through the placements, mentoring and the promotion of dedicated adults;
5. Provide financial support, housing, counseling, employment resources and opportunities, educational resources, and other appropriate supportive services and resources;
6. Make available information on the process to obtain the educational tuition voucher and, Maryland State Tuition Waiver;
7. Create an opportunity for youth to participate in the local youth advisory boards to provide input on the policies and procedures that impact the delivery of services.

.03 Independent Living Service Agreement

The Independent Living Service Agreement is unique in that a specific emphasis must be placed on the youth's input and preferences in its development. Its purpose is to guide the acquisition of skills youth will need to be successful as adults. The integration of outcomes that anticipate the youth's increasing ability to manage all aspects of their own lives self-sufficiently, with all available options for the establishment of legal, physical, and relational permanency and support, is essential. This work must be viewed in the context of a life-long process.

As part of the preparation in developing the independent living service agreement the youth shall:

- Complete the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA); this must occur in advance of plan development, as the results and recommendations generated from the assessment must guide the creation of measurable outcomes in the service agreement.

At the age of 14, the local department and the youth shall develop a written service agreement in conjunction with the youth's transition plan. This service agreement shall be updated every 180 days as part of the case reconsideration process. If the youth enters care after their 14th birthday the caseworker shall establish an independent living case plan at 60 days, 120 days and then every 180 days thereafter.

When appropriate, the youth's parents/legal guardians, resource provider or representative payee shall be involved in the development of the service agreement. During the case planning for the service agreement and transitional plan at least two other supportive adults of the youth's choice, outside the caseworker and resource parent, shall be a part of the process. The youth may choose to select one of these individuals to be designated to be the youth's advisor and as necessary, advocate with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard to the youth. The LDSS may object to an individual selected by the youth on the basis that it is not in the youth's best interest to have the individual involved. This is not including the caseworker or other local department staff.

The service agreement shall be signed by the youth, the youth's caseworker, and the youth's parents/legal guardian (if the youth is not yet 18 years old and the parents or legal guardian are available to be involved in planning for the youth).

The service agreement shall, at minimum, contain the following:

1. The services to be provide by the local department and timeframe of the service agreement.
2. Youth activities, tasks and responsibilities. This shall include documenting that the youth is participating in ongoing age and developmentally appropriate activities.
3. The parents, legal guardian, representative payee or significant others activities and responsibilities for assisting in the achievement of the plan. This includes documenting that the resource provider is following reasonable and prudent parent standard.
4. The source, method, frequency and amount of financial or budgeting support.
5. That visits shall be face-to-face according to state visitation requirements. (i.e., out of state, college, SILA).

6. That any party to the service agreement has a right to request a conference with the caseworker, supervisor or local department director (or designee) when terms of the agreement are not being met by any party or there is a need for modification.
7. That every six (6) months (180 days) there shall be a scheduled review of the service agreement for evaluation of progress towards achieving the plan.
8. Written encouragement to the youth to seek and use periodic medical and dental care. (Document any known refusal(s) by the youth to seek or receive medical care, dental care and prescribed medication).
9. Provision for re-placement of a youth who does not succeed in the semi- independent living setting.

.04 MD CHESSIE

- The Independent Living Service Agreement is located in MD CHESSIE under the Planning folder Out-of-Home Case Plan, Case Plan 4 ILP Service Agreement.
- The Independent Living Service Agreement shall be completed as part of the Case Planning/ Case Reconsideration.
- The Independent Living Service Agreement shall include documentation of the youth's participation in the case planning process and the supportive adults that participated.
- The Independent Living Service Agreement shall be approved by the supervisor.
- A hard copy of the Independent Living Service Agreement with the signatures and date signed should be kept in the record.
- On Case Plan 2 Section IIIa, the caseworker shall document ongoing age or developmentally appropriate activities in question 3 and that the resource provider is following prudent parent standard in question 14.

Section 7
Semi Independent Living Arrangement (SILA)

Semi Independent Living Arrangement (SILA) provides youth an opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills and activities. The youth is placed in an approved setting, such as an apartment and receives monitoring and supportive independent living preparation skills. Specific tasks should be included in the independent living service agreement and transitional plan of the youth while they receive services from the local department of social services and/or the service provider contracted through the State.

.01 Eligibility

Youth are eligible to receive a SILA through the local department of social services (LDSS) when the caseworker and youth agree that a SILA is in the youth's best interest. The youth is eligible to participate in a SILA if the youth meets the following criteria:

- Between16-21 years old (Youth ages 18-21 can only be considered for IV-E eligibility) ;
- Continually enrolled in and regularly attending school or vocational training or is working at least 80 hours per month;
- Agrees to the requirements of the independent living service agreement;
- Needs help in transitioning to self-sufficiency; and
- Is capable of contributing to the cost of living through:
    - Earned income through employment
    - Income through scholarships, stipends, grants, work study, Social Security, or any combination.

Youth not meeting the requirements listed above may be eligible for participation in a semi-independent living arrangement if the youth has a documented disability in living skills and the youth's case plan documents how the youth's disability can be accommodated in a semi-independent living arrangement.

.02 Appropriate SILA Arrangements

Youth who are eligible to receive a monthly SILA stipend shall identify housing. If the youth is unable to locate appropriate housing, the caseworker shall play an active role in assisting the youth in locating housing. The following are appropriate types of housing to receive a SILA stipend:

- Apartment or house
- Boarding house
- College housing

A youth may live with a roommate/housemate and still receive a monthly SILA stipend as long as it is clear the SILA stipend will pay only the portion of the youth's housing cost. **The**

roommate does not have to be another foster youth. Youth over the age of 18 can cohabitate with their significant other as long as the other party is able to pay their share of the bills. The caseworker shall use discretion prior to approving cohabitation. The youth shall be in a stable relationship free of any history of domestic violence. Youth may not receive a SILA stipend when the youth is residing in a paid placement including placements paid by Medical Assistance.

Youth attending college, vocational training, or pursuing employment opportunities out-of-state may also receive a SILA stipend.

The following are not appropriate living arrangement to receive a SILA:

- Hotel or motel;
- Shelter or rescue mission;
- Tourist home; or
- Residing in the residence of the parents.

.03 Goods and Services

When deciding the amount of a monthly SILA payment the following are goods and services eligible to be covered through a SILA stipend:

- Food;
- Transportation;
- Clothing;
- Recreation;
- Education;
- Utilities; and
- Housing.

.04 Application and Approval Process

Youth that are eligible to receive a SILA stipend may receive a monthly payment equal to 100% of the regular foster care board rate. In order for the youth to be approved to receive a SILA stipend and to determine the amount of the stipend, the following procedures shall occur:

- Youth shall complete a "Request for Semi-Independent Living Arrangement" form DHR/SSA 848. The form shall be completed and signed by the youth and submitted to the caseworker.
- The caseworker shall request a Family Involvement Meeting (FIM) to be held to discuss the proposed SILA within 10 business days from the time the form was submitted. A request for receiving a SILA stipend triggers two of the key points in scheduling a FIM: change of placement and youth transitional plan. A transitional plan FIM is the most appropriate forum to discuss the SILA, but a change in placement also triggers a FIM.
- The caseworker shall request the youth bring supporting documentation to the FIM. The caseworker shall inform the youth of the necessary supporting documentation at the time

the request is submitted. **Supporting documentation must include a copy of a lease, or sample lease from the housing company, and income verification**.

- In order to determine the amount of the SILA stipend the youth, caseworker and other FIM participants shall discuss the amount of the youth's bills and the amount of funds the youth can contribute to the expenses. The LDSS shall make sure the stipend amount and the youth's income is enough to pay the necessary bills. At any point, the caseworker and youth can renegotiate the amount of the stipend based on changes to the youth's income or need. The LDSS shall not suspend or reduce the amount of the stipend as a punishment to the youth. The youth is not required to have a savings account to receive a SILA stipend. The amount of the stipend shall be determined in the FIM in order for the youth to be able to move forward in finalizing the new living arrangement.

The payment shall be made directly to the youth unless the youth has a representative payee. The caseworker shall work with the youth on a monthly basis to ensure the necessary bills are being paid with the SILA stipend. If the youth is unable to manage the stipend the caseworker shall identify a payee for the youth. The caseworker shall not mandate the youth to move out of a semi independent living arrangement due to inability to manage financing. The caseworker shall actively work with the youth on budgeting skills and money management and identify a payee until the youth is ready to handle their finances again.

.05 Monitoring & Supervision

Once the local department has determined that a youth will benefit from a semi independent living arrangement and the youth has identified housing that the local department approves; the youth may begin to receive the monthly SILA stipend. In order for the local department to approve the identified housing, the local department caseworker shall visit the proposed housing with the youth and walk through the residence to ensure the appropriateness of the residence. The caseworker shall complete a "Home Health Report" DHR/SS 1083 form. The stipend shall begin on or before the date the youth moves into the approved living arrangement but cannot overlap if the youth resided in a paid placement. A youth residing in a paid placement (foster home, group home, RTC, or IL program) shall begin to receive a monthly SILA stipend on the day the youth begins to reside in the SILA. The local department may utilize Chafee funds or flex funds to purchase necessary items for the youth prior to the youth receiving the first SILA stipend. The LDSS shall ensure the youth has an appropriate bed and other necessary living items (bed linens and towels).

The caseworker shall assist the youth with moving if necessary. The caseworker must have face to face contact with the youth at the SILA within 5 days of the youth moving into the residence. The caseworker shall complete a Safe-C OHP within 5 days and continue to assess for safety as per Policy SSA# 12-27. The caseworker shall continue to see the youth at least monthly but shall be more available during the initial 60 days of the youth residing in a SILA. Additional information concerning Caseworker Visitation can be found in policy SSA-CW# 16-04. The caseworker or additional support LDSS staff is encouraged to conduct additional monthly visits

depending on the needs and independent living goals of the youth. During these monthly visits the caseworker shall provide additional individual life skills to the youth.

The caseworker shall continuously assist the youth with setting up and maintaining a budget. The caseworker shall set up monthly visiting around the time the youth is due to receive their SILA stipend to monitor that the youth is paying the rent and other necessary bills. If the caseworker discovers at any point the youth is not paying the rent and utilities, the caseworker shall meet with the youth to discuss the lack of budgeting and money management.

The youth is still in out-of-home placement and the LDSS is under obligation to provide for this youth. Some youth may have more difficulty adjusting to paying bills and living independently. In this situation, the caseworker may have to take the youth to pay the rent to ensure that the youth is following through. This would have to be done around the same time the SILA stipend is sent to the youth to show step by step the process of paying bills. The caseworker shall not make a youth leave a SILA because they are having difficulty budgeting. It is the caseworker's responsibility to assist and teach the youth the proper way of budgeting and managing money.

The caseworker must document supervision of the SILA placement in each face to face contact with the youth. The contact note must address the safety, permanency, and well-being of the youth. The contact note must also document the independent living services provided to the youth each month and updated information on the tasks in the youth's transition plan and Independent Living Service Agreement.

Youth residing in a SILA shall have a transitional planning FIM every 180 days to review and revise their transition plan and Independent Living Service Agreement. During this case planning process the youth should be driving the goals of the transition plan and case plan. The caseworker shall ensure that the youth invites at least 2 supportive adults to the FIM in addition to the LDSS caseworker and staff. Every 180 days a case plan (case plan 2 and Independent Living Service Agreement) must be prepared by the caseworker and must outline the youth's adjustment to the placement, safety of the residence, and the supervision and services provided to the youth. The case plan must outline the independent living services provided during the reporting period.

.06 Appeals Process

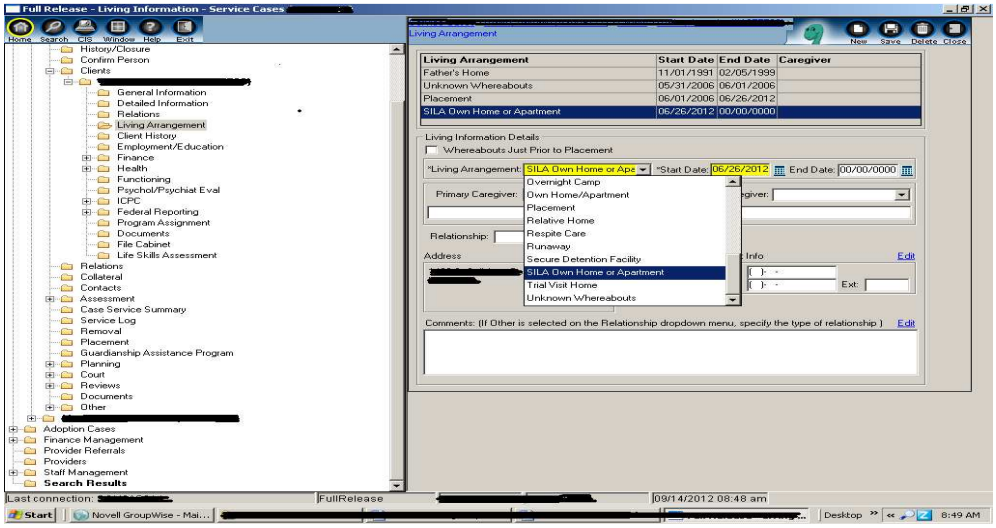
- If the LDSS determines they will not approve the youth for SILA the youth shall be informed during the meeting and be given the right to appeal the decision. The LDSS shall inform the youth at the end of the meeting of their decision at that time the youth is explained the right to appeal the decision. If the youth decides to appeal, the caseworker or LDSS staff shall enter the reason the youth desired to appeal the decision and send the form to the Social Services Administration within 2 business days of the meeting. This form, supporting documentation, and a written explanation from the meeting as to why the youth was denied shall be scanned and electronically sent or faxed to the State Independent Living Coordinator at the Social Services Administration at DHR.
- Once the Social Services Administration receives the appeal, a staffing will be held at the Social Services administration to review the request. The staffing at the Social

Services Administration will include the State Independent Living Coordinator and other appropriate staff from the state level and local department level. The appeal review will occur within 10 business days from the date received from the LDSS. A written decision from the appeal review will be sent to the caseworker and LDSS administration within 2 business days of the appeals review. The LDSS shall follow the decision made by the appeals review.

- If SSA supports the LDSS's decision to deny the SILA stipend, SSA will follow COMAR 07.02.10.21.

.07 MD CHESSIE

The following is the correct procedure to document a youth living in a Semi-Independent Living Arrangement (SILA) and receiving a monthly SILA stipend. This shall be documented in MD CHESSIE in the client folder under living arrangement. On the living arrangement screen choose the drop down option of "SILA Own Home or Apartment".



The youth may not be paid the stipend directly in MD CHESSIE because the youth may not be listed as a vendor or a placement provider. Therefore, in order to document in MD CHESSIE a payment made directly to the youth such as SILA stipends, the LDSS pays the youth through FMIS after a MD CHESSIE "Referred Services" Service Log is completed and authorized. The following is the process to complete this task.

- Caseworker creates a "Referred Services" Service Log, and monthly creates a Purchase Authorization in MD CHESSIE to pay a monthly stipend to the client. The caseworker clearly enters in the Service Log Justification – "SILA Stipend for (*Client Name*)", and includes the client's SSN and full 'remit to' address for FMIS processing. The LDSS is selected as the vendor, and the expenditure is charged to an appropriate budget code.

Purchase Authorizations are routed in MD CHESSIE through the approval process: Supervisory Approval, Funding Approval, and Payment Approval.

Fiscal receives required paperwork including original receipts and a fully approved original and copy of the 312-F form or MD CHESSIE screens print(s) reflecting living arrangement for SILA stipends, and electronically approves payment in MD CHESSIE. Payment interfaces to the local AFS system from which a check is produced payable to the LDSS.

Budget Codes

Payments made for SILA shall be paid from the maintenance budget through Service Log using the following codes:

Housing:
5117 – IV-E Eligible Youth ages 18-21 years
5118 – Non IV-E Eligible Youth ages 16-21 years
5119 – Youth ages 16 – 21 years still in State custody

Section 8
Runaway/Missing

.01 Definition

A youth that has not returned to their placement or living arrangement at a prearranged time and has not contacted the LDSS staff or the resource provider to inform them of a situation preventing the return at the prearranged time shall be considered to be runaway/missing. A youth that informs the caseworker or resource provider that they are leaving the placement or living arrangement that the local department has approved and will not provide information of where they are going, is considered to be runaway. **If a youth leaves an approved placement or living arrangement and the caseworker has knowledge of where the youth is living the youth is not considered to be runaway/missing.** If the LDSS has knowledge of where the youth is residing, the caseworker will make unannounced visits in an effort to have face to face contact with the youth. A youth that does not maintain curfew set by the resource provider, (depending on the age) is not considered to be a runaway/missing.

.02 Steps

The local department staff/caseworker shall follow the following steps when a youth is determined to be missing/runaway or abducted:

- Immediately have the resource provider contact the police and file a runaway/missing persons report. If the resource provider cannot, it is the caseworker's responsibility to contact police and file a report. Whoever contacts the police shall request a police complaint number. This is to be completed for children regardless of age. If the child is over 18 years old and the police will not take a report the staff/caseworker shall document the attempt in MD CHESSIE. State and Federal law prohibits police from establishing any waiting period to accept a report for any missing youth.
- Caseworker shall obtain a copy of the report from the resource provider or the police department.
- Caseworker shall supply the police department with an up-to-date picture of the youth and ensure the police department has entered the child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.
- Caseworker shall contact National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) by filing a missing child report on the designated NCMEC website **cmfc.missingkids.org**. Once entered on the website, the page should be printed and scanned into MD CHESSIE. The caseworker shall work with NCMEC on any additional information required.
- Caseworker shall immediately document in MD CHESSIE the youth is on runaway. This shall be documented on the living arrangement screen, choosing the drop down of "Run Away".
- Caseworker shall compile information of the last whereabouts of the youth.
- Caseworker shall notify court and counsel.

- Caseworker shall notify parents/legal guardians (unless guardianship is granted to the LDSS).
- Caseworker shall contact the youth's friends, employer, school staff, neighborhood acquaintances (placement and origin) to inquire about the youth's whereabouts.

All these steps shall be completed within 24 hours of the youth being reported as runaway/missing or abducted.

.03 Case Management

Once the initial steps for documenting a runaway/missing youth have been taken, (section .02 of this chapter) the caseworker shall do the following until the youth returns or the out-of-home placement case is closed by the courts:

- Document weekly efforts to locate the youth. These contacts shall be documented in MD CHESSIE and shall discuss all reasonable efforts the caseworker has made to locate the youth. This includes: continuous conversation with family and friends, reviewing the youth's facebook page, and visiting likely areas the youth may be residing.
- Consult police/ law enforcement weekly concerning progress towards locating the youth and any leads the police may have discovered.
- Maintain contact with the resource provider. The placement can be held up to 30 days from the date the child left. The resource provider can be paid for up to 30 days if the placement is held. After 30 days the child shall be exited from the placement in MD CHESSIE.
- If information is discovered that the child maybe residing in another State, contact the police in the State where it is believed the child is residing.

.04 Once the Youth is Located

Once the youth has been located the caseworker shall:

- Ensure the youth has transportation to the LDSS, if the youth contacts the caseworker by phone to request assistance.
- Ensure transportation for the youth to return back to the LDSS, if another agency or state locates the youth. It is the LDSS's responsibility to ensure and pay for transportation. The caseworker shall contact the Compact Administrator for the Interstate Compact on Juveniles at the Department of Juvenile Services for assistance in returning the child.
- Notify court, counsel, and parents (unless guardianship is granted to the LDSS) that the youth has been located.
- Notify police/law enforcement that the youth has been located and ensure the youth is removed from National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database.
- Notify NCMEC that the child has been located.
- Document in MD CHESSIE all information the youth discloses concerning their whereabouts while a runaway/missing or abducted.
- Obtain a medical examination of the youth within 24 hours of return.

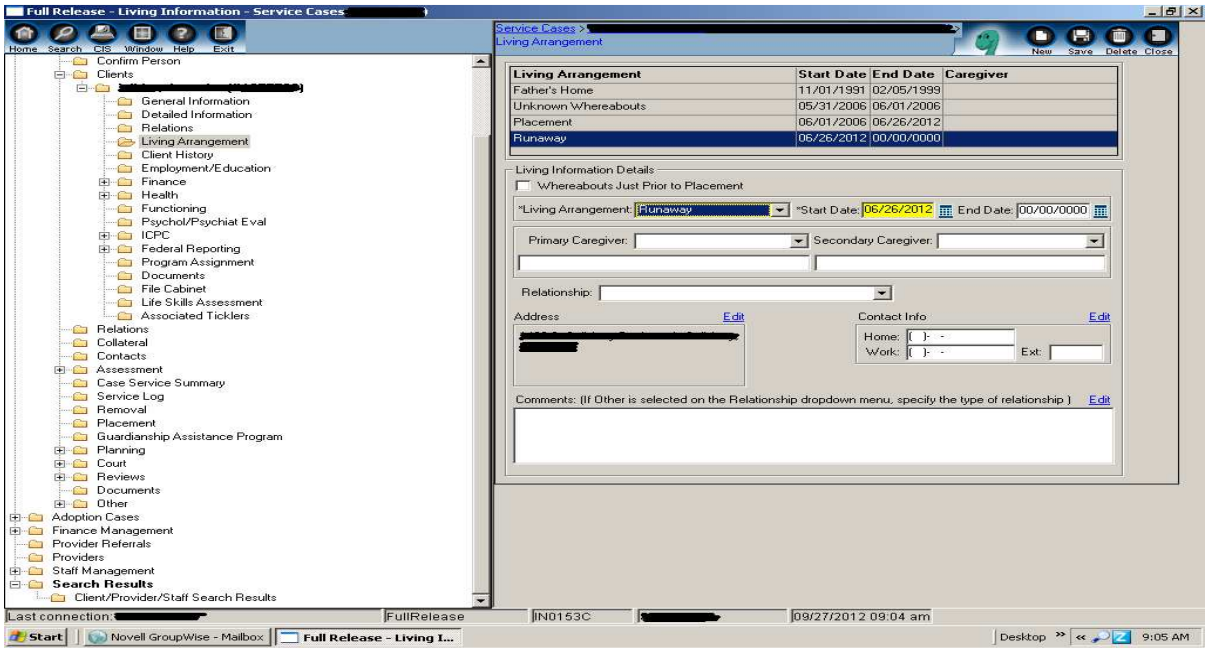
- Complete a Safe-C OHP within 5 business days.
- Conduct a face to face contact with the youth within 5 business days.

Within 5 business days of the child's return, the caseworker shall conduct a face-to-face visit with the child at the placement. During this visit, the caseworker shall have a conversation with the child concerning the reason(s) the child ran away, the child's experiences and where the child resided during the runaway/missing or abducted episode. The caseworker shall process with the child the reason(s) the child ran away and discuss accommodations that may prevent the child from running away again. The child may have multiple reasons for running away and the caseworker shall address each of the reasons. The caseworker shall ask specific questions as to where and with whom the child was residing, and how the child was taking care of him/herself. The caseworker shall also ask if the child has a "special friend" he/she was residing with during the runaway episode, the nature of the relationship and whether they felt safe. The caseworker shall make close observations to any evidence of physical abuse, substance abuse, or new tattoos/brands the child may have gotten while on runaway. The caseworker shall pay close attention to any unexplained purchases such as new clothes, cellular phone, sex paraphernalia, large amounts of cash or any other known indicators of possible sex trafficking victimization. **The discussion and all information must be documented in MD CHESSIE on a contact note.** In the child's case plan the caseworker shall discuss how the LDSS has addressed the factors that led to the child's runaway episode. The caseworker shall also specifically address the services put in place for the child.

If during the conversation the caseworker suspects the child has been a victim of human sex trafficking or the child admits to being a victim of human sex trafficking, the caseworker shall immediately make a Child Protective Services report and notify the local law enforcement within 24 hours. For youth *suspected* of being victims, the caseworker shall refer the child for a full human trafficking assessment and for *confirmed* victims; the caseworker shall refer the child to appropriate specialized therapeutic services within 48 hours. Resources are available through the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at www.traffickingresources.org or 1-800-373-7888 and Turn Around, Inc. at http://www.turnaroundinc.org or 410-837-7000 (office) 443-279-0379 (24 hour Helpline).

.05 MD CHESSIE

Youth on runaway shall be documented in MD CHESSIE. This shall be documented in the "Clients" folder under "Living Arrangement". On the Living Arrangement screen select the drop down "Runaway".



DHR/SSA monitors youth on runaway by a monthly report generated by MD CHESSIE. It is important that the caseworker maintains accurate information in MD CHESSIE specifically on runaway/missing or adducted youth.

Section 9
Education

.01 Maryland Tuition Waiver

Maryland's Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients is available to foster care youth who are enrolled as a candidate for an associate, a bachelor's degree or a vocational certificate at a Maryland public institution of higher education. The youth must be enrolled on or before he or she reaches the age of 25.

Eligibility:
In order to be eligible for the Maryland Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients program, a youth must have:

1. A. Been placed in out-of-home placement by the Maryland Department of Human Resources; and
   B. Resided in an out-of-home placement in Maryland at the time he or she graduated from high school or successfully completed a general equivalency examination; or
2. Resided in an out-of-home placement on his or her 13th birthday and was placed into guardianship or adopted out of an out-of-home placement after his or her 13th birthday; or
3. Been the younger sibling of a child who meets the qualifications stated either in 1or 2 and was placed into guardianship or adopted concurrently out of an out-of-home placement by the same guardianship or adoptive family.

The youth must complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 1st of each year. This application is available at www.fafsa.gov.

The tuition waiver provides exemption from paying any tuition and mandatory fees at a Maryland public institution of higher education. The referenced youth must be enrolled as a candidate for an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree or a vocational certificate at a Maryland public institution of higher education, on or before his or her 25th birthday. *Any scholarships or grants that the youth receives shall not be applied to the tuition cost*. The youth continues to be exempt from paying tuition and fees until 5 years after first enrolling as a candidate for an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree at a Maryland public institution of higher education or the date that the youth is awarded a bachelor's degree, whichever one comes first. The tuition waiver *does not* apply to room and board and other expenses incurred as part of the overall cost of attendance.

Guidelines for Applying:

1. The DHR/SSA Education/Health Specialist shall contact the Independent Living Coordinators in May and November of each year to inform them that Maryland's Tuition Waiver list is being developed.

2. The Independent Living Coordinator shall ensure that youth are in the appropriate program assignment in MD CHESSIE by the date that is given by the Education/Health Specialist.
3. The DHR/SSA Education/Health Specialist shall send Maryland's Tuition Waiver list that is generated from MD CHESSIE to the Maryland Higher Education Commission in June and December.
4. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) shall ensure that Maryland's Tuition Waiver list is disseminated to the financial aid offices at Maryland public colleges and universities.
5. Students shall complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by ***March 1st of each year*** at www.fafsa.gov.
6. Students must contact the financial aid office at their institution to alert them that they are eligible for the tuition waiver in order for the wavier to be activated.
7. The financial aid offices at Maryland public colleges and universities shall refer to Maryland's Tuition Waiver list that is provided to them by the MHEC to ensure that a student is eligible for the tuition waiver program.

NOTE: If the student's name is not on Maryland's Tuition Waiver list, the financial aid office shall contact DHR/SSA's Education/Health Specialist for verification.

.02 Federal Education Training Vouchers Program

The federal government makes available through an amendment of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program additional funds for post secondary educational opportunities. The funds can only be used for qualified educational expenses. This program is known as the Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV).

Maryland's Education and Training Voucher Program is administered by Foster Care to Success, formerly known as the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA), and provides up to $5,000 per federal fiscal year for college and vocational training for full time students. Part-time student may receive no more than $2,500.

Foster care youth are eligible for ETV if they are:

- A current foster/kinship care youth, voluntarily placed or committed to the State of Maryland;
- A youth adopted from foster care after the age 16;
- A youth who after age 16 entered into guardianship placement from foster care or
- A former foster youth who left care at the age of 18, but is not yet 21.

Additionally, foster care youth must be:

- Age 18,19,or 20 when making first application for ETV
- A high school graduate or a GED recipient; and
- Accepted/enrolled at a college, university or vocational school that is accredited.

To be eligible for the ETV program, youth must also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by or before March 1st in the year that the youth plans to attend an institution of higher learning.

Participation in the ETV program is renewable until the youth's 23rd birthday as long as the youth began receiving ETV funds before the youth turned 21.

The Education and Training Voucher shall not be applied to tuition and fees associated with enrollment at Maryland colleges or universities. The Maryland Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients will cover the cost for those expenses. ETV shall be used for balances associated with room and board, books, school supplies and living expenses for those youth who attend college in Maryland.

Guidelines for Applying:

- Students must complete and file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by ***March 1st of each year*** at www.fafsa.gov.
- Students should go to www.statevoucher.org, click on Maryland, and complete the online application.
- Once eligibility status is determined, the student should take the financial aid release form to the financial aid office of the institution.
- The Financial Aid Office must submit documents to the Maryland ETV program on behalf of the student.
- Youth must apply for the ETV program every year to remain eligible for the program.

Section 10
Credit Reporting

.01 Introduction & Definitions

On October 1, 2011, the "Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act" (Public Law (P.L.) 112-34) added a new section to 42 U.S.C 675(5) (I) with respect to assuring that youth in foster care receive without cost a copy of a consumer credit report annually until discharged from foster care and receive assistance in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the credit report.

What is a Consumer Credit Report?
A consumer credit report is a record of a person's history of borrowing and repaying debts. This detailed report of financial behavior includes: credit card accounts, identifying information and matters of public record (i.e., liens, bankruptcies, overdue child support, et cetera). There are nationwide Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) which function as private companies that sell the information on consumer credit reports to creditors, insurers, employers and other businesses that use it to evaluate a person's credit worthiness. There are three (3) recognized nationwide CRAs in the United States (Equifax, TransUnion and Experian).

Do Youth in Foster Care have a Consumer Credit Report?
Youth younger than 18 years old are not eligible to enter into a legal contract for credit and therefore should not have a consumer credit report on file. If a credit report does exist for a person younger than 18 years old, it may be due to error, credit fraud or identity theft. The CRAs will not knowingly disclose credit report information for a minor, except to the parent/guardian or custodian of the child. In most cases, when requesting a credit report for a youth younger than 18 years old, DHR/SSA will simply be confirming that such a report does not exist. When a consumer credit report does exist for a youth younger than 18 years old, there is likely a need to correct information and take action to protect the identity and future credit worthiness of the youth.

What is child identity theft?
Child identity theft happens when someone improperly uses a minor's personal information to apply for credit and loans. Misuse of a child's identity is often discovered when the youth begins to apply for credit and loans upon turning 18 years of age or thereafter. A consumer credit report is needed to determine whether a youth's information is being misused. If someone is misusing a youth's personal information and committing fraud, immediate action is required to rectify the matter.

.02 Youth 14-17

DHR/SSA will provide the LDSS with consumer credit reports for youth ages 14-17 in Out-of-Home Placement annually. DHR/SSA staff will obtain the appropriate names and information through MD CHESSIE. DHR/SSA will then access the three (3) nationwide CRAs and submit

the appropriate demographic information required to process a youth's consumer credit reports. The Assistant Director of Services in the LDSS will receive an encrypted email with a copy of the youth's consumer credit report upon availability.

Once results are received the LDSS shall:

- Discuss the results of the credit report with each youth, emphasizing the importance of credit in their lives. This conversation should be documented on the youth's transitional plan. For youth younger than 18 years old, they may not legally enter into a contract for credit and therefore no credit history should technically exist.
- There are two (2) major types of credit issues that adversely impact credit, both of which must be resolved to restore credit worthiness – credit fraud and credit error. If fraudulent credit history or credit error exists, these discrepancies must be resolved by the caseworker and youth filing a dispute with the respective CRA within 30 days of receiving the credit report. All CRAs have online forms to dispute credit report information or a letter may be written explaining the credit issue. The caseworker shall include copies of all evidence, court documents or other materials that identify the source of the credit issue(s). If the credit issue(s) cannot be resolved by the caseworker and youth within 6 months in consult with the CRAs, then the matter may be referred by the Assistant Director of the LDSS to the Out-of-Home Placement Unit of SSA for review and assistance.
- To prove that the child is a minor, send the CRAs a copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation of age, such as a redacted court order, and a letter requesting them to remove all accounts, application inquiries, and collection notices from the credit report associated with the youth's name or personal information. Documentation may also be needed to verify that the youth is in foster care and the agency is authorized to act on the youth's behalf.
- If a consumer credit report was created for the youth as a result of identity theft, consider placing an initial fraud alert on the report. An initial fraud alert requires potential creditors to verify a person's identity before extending credit. To place an initial fraud alert, contact any one of the three CRAs. The company that you call must contact the other two CRAs. All three CRAs will place the initial fraud alert on the report they have for the child.
- If there is a credit report for the child, you can also consider placing a credit freeze. If you place a credit freeze (also known as a security freeze), potential creditors cannot get the child's credit report, which makes it less likely an identity thief can open new accounts
- Document the steps taken in Contact Notes in MD CHESSIE, as well as in the Service Log. Document steps taken in the Maryland Youth Transition Plan "Money Management".
- Maintain a hard copy of the credit reports and letters of dispute in the case file.

.03 Youth 18-21

LDSS Caseworkers Responsibilities

- Provide computer access and instruction to assist youth 18 years old or older with obtaining his/her consumer credit report by accessing www.annualcreditreport.com during the month of their birthday, and every year thereafter, until he/she ages out of care.
- A youth 18 or older may refuse to obtain his/her consumer credit report and/or refuse to have credit issues corrected. The youth's decision shall be documented on the transitional plan, and in MD CHESSIE contact notes. The youth shall be counseled with respect to the ramifications of these decisions.
- Discuss the results of the consumer credit report check with the youth, emphasizing the importance of credit in their lives; this conversation shall be documented on the youth's transitional plan.
- If fraudulent credit history exists or a credit error is discovered, the caseworker shall assist the youth in contacting the CRA to have the information corrected. It is the caseworkers responsibility to assist the youth in following up and providing documentation if necessary to the CRA. If the credit issue cannot be resolved by the caseworker and youth in consult with the CRAs then the matter may be referred by the Assistant Director for review and assistance. The Assistant Director may consult with the Social Services Administration for assistance.
- Document the steps taken in contact notes in MD CHESSIE, as well as in the Service Log. Document steps taken in the Maryland Youth Transition Plan "Money Management" Section on page five.
- A hard copy of the consumer credit reports and any follow up letters of dispute shall be maintained in the case file.

.04 MD CHESSIE

The receipt and discussion of youth credit reports must be documented annually in MD CHESSIE. Any follow up concerning credit repairs to the youth's credit report shall also be documented. The receipt and discussion of annual credit reports shall be documented on the Service Log under "Basic Living Skills/ Annual Credit report provided (agency)" and on Case Plan 2 section III question 15. The caseworker shall document the repair to any inaccuracies to the youth's credit reports on a contact note.

Section 11
Case Closure

.01 Youth 14-18

Cases for youth under the age of 18 years old shall not be closed unless custody or guardianship is transferred to an adult (parent or relative) or the youth is adoption. This mean a court order must state the permanency plan is reunification to the parent or legal guardian and the name of the parent or legal guardian shall be named in the order or a relative may be awarded custody and guardianship of the youth and the court order shall reflect this. The LDSS shall not recommend that a youth under the age of 18 be emancipated by the courts. If another party to the case is requesting emancipation prior to age 18, the LDSS shall object to the request. The only exception to this is if the youth gets married.

.02 Youth 18-21

The caseworker shall immediately schedule a FIM when the caseworker is made aware that a youth is considering leaving care prior to age 21; a youth is non-compliant with program or placement requirements; or the local department is considering rescission due to the youth's incarceration or other circumstance. The youth's support network (i.e. parents, siblings, extended family, friends, and service providers) and the youth's attorney shall be invited. The following shall be discussed/explored as part of the FIM:

1. Services and referrals made for the youth in the past and any unmet needs;
2. The youth's self expression (verbally or in writing) detailing why he/she no longer desires to remain in care;
3. The advantages of remaining in out-of-home placement, such as educational opportunities, housing, and monetary assistance;
4. If the youth is non-compliant, an explanation of what is required for the youth to remain in care and the opportunity for the youth to explain his/her circumstances, identify barriers to compliance and request support;
5. Exploration of innovative approaches to help the youth to remain in care;
6. If placement is an issue, other possible placement options, including applicability of SILA;
7. The Caseworker shall work with the youth on a plan to obtain housing, employment, and financial stability for at least 12 months after exiting foster care.;
8. Inform the youth in writing of their right to re-enter care and the procedures for re-entering care (Annual Notice of Benefits brochure);
9. Enroll the youth in health insurance that will continue after exiting foster care; and
10. Arrange for the youth to be screened for eligibility for public benefits and assist with the application process.

A transition plan shall be developed during the 90 day period immediately prior to the date of rescission – 42.USC.675 (5) (H).

1. The plan shall be developed by the child, any representatives of the child as appropriate and the caseworker.
2. The plan shall be personalized at the direction of the child and may be as detailed as the child elects.
3. The plan shall include specific options on:
    a. Housing;
    b. Health insurance;
    c. Education;
    d. Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services; and
    e. Work force supports and employment services.

No youth may be transitioned to homelessness.

The youth shall sign the transition plan and receive a copy along with the FIM minutes. A copy of the plan shall be sent to the youth's attorney.

If the youth and the youth's attorney request discharge from care at a court hearing and the above protocol has not been followed, the local department shall object to any motion to rescind custody and request that the court delay any rulings until a FIM Meeting is held.

If a youth is requesting his/her out-of-home placement case to be closed, prior to the court hearing the caseworker shall:

1. Visit the residence in which the youth will reside to assess the environment for safety;
2. Obtain the youth's address, telephone#, and name of a family member or friend who will serve as support to the youth;
3. Provide the youth with the Health Passport, Medical Assistance Card, original or certified copy of birth certificate, social security card, copy of last court order, Maryland issued ID and copy of educational records contained in the case record at no cost;
4. Provide the youth with information relating to Independent Living Aftercare and Enhanced Aftercare, including the 1-800-332-6347 number for the State of Maryland;
5. Provide the youth with a contact number at the local department to get updated home and email addresses, electronic communications (Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.) and telephone contact number(s); and
6. The local department shall develop a written exit plan which lists documents provided, reasons for rescission, resource referrals provided, information about Independent Living After Care eligibility and any other information relevant to the youth's circumstance. The exit plan shall be signed by the youth, caseworker and the local director (or designee).

The director of the local department (or their designee) shall approve all requests for rescission due to noncompliance. The youth does not have to agree to rescission due to noncompliance.

Planned or at 21

Exit interviews may be held prior to the youth leaving care. The interviews must occur, at a minimum 180, 90, and 30 days prior to the youth exiting care, and can be included within the context of one of the regular monthly visits. The purpose of the interview/meeting is to:

1. Obtain Discharge Information,
2. Discuss aftercare service availability and limitations,
3. Share the toll free Youth Helpline (800-555-1345),
4. Enroll the youth in health insurance that will continue after emancipation;
5. Arrange for the youth to be screened for eligibility for public benefits and assist with the application process;
6. Ask youth to check in with the local department every 3 months after exiting care, and
7. Inform the youth that the caseworker will be performing outreach every 60 days during the aftercare services (for youth under 21). The outreach is the opportunity to check on the youth's welfare and other measurable outcomes, such as how they are doing regarding employment, housing, education, and relationships, and also to see if they need additional assistance.

The Discharge Information must include at a minimum:

1. Residential location and address;
2. Telephone number (residential and cell, if applicable);
3. Email address;
4. Contact person for the youth.

.03 Ready By 21 Survey

Maryland's Ready By 21 Initiative focuses on preparing older youth exiting the foster care system to be independent self sufficient adults. In an effort to better serve youth (14-21 years old) in out-of-home placement and track outcomes for youth exiting the foster care system, a survey has been developed "Ready By 21 Survey". This survey will assist in tracking each youth's readiness for independence and improving future services for youth.

The survey must be completed by **all** youth prior to exiting foster care at 21 years old. The survey shall be completed 30 days prior to the youth's 21st birthday. A list of the youth that must complete the survey can be found in business objects report RE682R. The caseworker shall present the survey to the youth during a face to face contact and provide the youth ample time to complete the survey. The survey shall be scanned into MD CHESSIE, and results of the completed survey entered in survey monkey a: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/readyby21. All surveys shall be entered into survey monkey within 30 days of completion and participation of all youth is expected to be at 100% compliance. A survey shall be completed for youth on runaway, out of state, and severely disabled, however the entire survey will not need to be completed in survey monkey just the first page. The survey shall be reviewed prior to case closure to ensure the youth has all necessary documents or services the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) can provide prior to closure.

.04 Exiting Documents

All youth, prior to exiting foster care after the age of 18 years old, must receive the following items:

1. Original Birth Certificate
2. Original Social Security Card
3. Maryland State Identification Card or Driver's License
4. Medical Assistance Card
5. Health Passport (medical history and records)
6. Annual Credit Report

*Caseworker must document in MDCHESSIE on a contact note that the youth received the documents prior to exiting.

.05 Annual Notice of Benefits

The Annual Notice of Benefits brochure shall be provided to all youth who are at least 13 years old in an Out-of-Home Placement regardless of permanency plan goal(s) or living arrangement type. This includes youth under a Voluntary Placement Agreement. This brochure is distributed to the youth at their Permanency Planning or Review Hearing; and ensures that all youth, from ages 13 to 21, in out-of-home placement have information about benefits they may be eligible to receive upon leaving out-of-home placement. Information regarding benefits includes tuition assistance, health care benefits, housing, job training and internship opportunities, and rights to re-enter foster care and procedures for re-entering foster care.

Section 12
After Care Services

Independent Living Aftercare services are available on a voluntary basis to youth 18 to 21 years old who were in out-of-home placement on their 18th birthday and exited care after their 18th birthday. Youth are not eligible who left foster care prior to their 18th birthday, nor are they eligible after they reach age 21. Independent Living Aftercare services are designed to support former foster care youth ages 18 to 21 years old in their effort to achieve self-sufficiency. These services are divided into two types:

- Independent Living After Care Services
- Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Services

.01 Independent Living Aftercare Services

Eligibility

- Exited out-of-home placement after their 18th birthday, but have not attained the age of 21or exited via adoption or relative guardianship after their 16th birthday ;
- Need continued help in making the transition to self-sufficiency; and
- Participate in the development of a service agreement and sign and comply with its terms.

Goals:

1. Financial assistance to purchase goods and services;
2. Temporary assistance with room, board, and utilities;
3. Counseling;
3. Employment assistance;
4. Education;
5. Medical assistance; and
6. Other appropriate services to assist with self sufficiency.

Case Management:

Eligible former foster youth shall apply for independent living after care services through the local department of social services in the county in which they currently reside. After the local department verifies that the youth meets the eligibility requirements, the local department staff shall contact the youth within 5 business days of application. The caseworker assigned to the youth must meet with the youth within 10 business days to conduct an assessment to determine the appropriateness of aftercare services and linkage to other agency or community services. If the caseworker determines the youth is appropriate for after care services the youth and caseworker shall enter into an independent living service agreement. The tasks outlined in the service agreement shall address the needs the youth presented at the time of application. **Aftercare services are designed to be up to 180 days**. Aftercare services may be extended based on the need of the youth with appropriate agency authorization. Service can not extend past the youth's 21st birthday.

A youth may apply and reapply for aftercare services as many times as needed up to the 21st birthday. The evaluation of a youth's need for the aftercare service involves a clinical assessment on a case-by-case basis. The goal of the aftercare services is to prevent homelessness and promote self sufficiency. Therefore, extensive efforts must be made with the youth to set realistic and achievable goals in the service agreement in order to assure compliance. **Youth in independent living after care are not eligible for placement into a paid foster care living arrangement.**

The caseworker is responsible for having monthly face to face visits with the youth. The caseworker shall have knowledge of the youths living arrangement and if a task on the service agreement is locating housing the caseworker shall conduct a visit in the home.

MD CHESSIE:

1. Create Non-CPS Referral
   a. Type of Referral is "Independent Living Aftercare"
   b. Type of Service requested = Independent Living Child
2. Re-Open Service Case
   a. Program Assignment = Independent Living
3. Living Arrangement should reflect where the child is physically residing

.02 Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Services

As of October 1, 2013, Voluntary Placement for Former Children In Need of Assistance allows former **Maryland** foster youth to re-enter out-of-home placement through the signing of a voluntary placement agreement. Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement Services specifically provide services to former foster youth that exited Maryland DHR foster care after age 18. Youth in enhanced aftercare are eligible for all services provided to youth in out-of-home placement services.

Eligibility:

- Youth was in the care and custody or guardianship of a Maryland local department of social services on his/her 18th birthday;
- Youth left foster care prior to age 21;
- Youth is not older than 20yrs 6 months at the time of application for enhanced after care voluntary placement services;
- Youth cannot have exited foster care due to reunification, adoption, guardianship, marriage, or military duty; **and agree to enter into one of the following within 30 days of signing the agreement:**
  - Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential; **or**
  - Enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational training; **or**
  - **Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to unemployment; or**
  - Employed at least 80 hours per month; **or**

- Incapable of doing any of the above described activities due to a medical condition.

In most cases the LDSS will choose ***Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to unemployment.*** This means that the youth is willing to work with the LDSS on removing barriers for unemployment.

Protocol for Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement:

1. The youth contacts the LDSS that held custody or guardianship at the time of case closure either by telephone or in person to request services. **Youth must enter into an Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement with the local department of social services which closed the youth's CINA or Guardianship case.**
2. A referral for Non-CPS Services is generated in MD CHESSIE. The type of service requested shall be "Enhanced After Care VPA".
3. Within 48 hours, the LDSS staff shall:
   a. Determine if the youth meets criteria for Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement;
   b. Hold a FIM (include the youth and their support network; i.e. parents, siblings, extended family, friends, and service providers, if applicable) to explain the Voluntary Placement Agreement and Independent Living Service Agreement. The services the youth requires shall be outlined in the service agreement.
   c. The LDSS shall review and provide a copy of all DHR policies and regulations to the youth pertaining to Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement.
   d. The youth must sign an Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement and an Independent Living Service Agreement.
4. The LDSS Director (or their designee) shall approve all requests for Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreements.
5. The LDSS shall make diligent efforts to immediately locate an appropriate placement or living arrangement if the youth's presenting need is homelessness. Youth may reside in a paid independent living program or be provided with a Semi Independent Living Arrangement (SILA) stipend. Congregate care or foster family homes may only be used as an interim measure until an independent living program is available or arrangements for SILA can be made.
6. The youth shall agree to comply with all placement provider requirements.
7. If the LDSS and youth identify a SILA, the youth must meet the eligibility for this type of living arrangement as outlined in COMAR and policy within 120 days of the start of the SILA.
8. The youth shall agree to provide documentation to the LDSS as requested concerning medical and educational information or sign a "Release of Information" to allow the LDSS to access this information.

Case Management:

Once a youth has signed the Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement, the youth shall receive all services that a youth in out-of-home placement receives. This includes but is not limited to:

- Monthly face to face visits with the youth;

- Completion of case reconsiderations 60 days, 120 days and 180 days thereafter (includes case plans 1, 2 and 4.);
- Annual medical exams;
- 5 day initial medical exam; and
- Safe-C OHP.

Court Authority and Involvement:
If the youth continues to need placement services in excess of 180 days, a court hearing must be conducted for the court to review the placement. The LDSS shall file a petition far enough in advance to ensure that a hearing is held within 180 days of the signing of the Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement. The court will review the case every 180 days thereafter and may order tasks or services to be completed or provided. After the court hearing, the court must be notified of the termination of the voluntary placement agreement. The LDSS can request the court to terminate the voluntary placement agreement if the youth does not comply with the terms of an Independent Living Service Agreement, joins the military or gets married. The youth may terminate the voluntary placement agreement by submitting the request in writing to the LDSS and court.

If the LDSS or youth desire to terminate the voluntary placement agreement prior to the filing of the petition, the court does not require notification. If the LDSS opts to close the case prior to court involvement due to the youth's non compliance, the LDSS must provide the youth a 30 day written notice, with the right to appeal.

Termination:
The local department shall terminate Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Services for the following reasons:

- Youth's failure to comply with the service agreement;
- Failure to maintain employment or enrollment in educational program or participating in a program to remove barriers;
- Marriage;
- Military duty;
- Youth turns age 21;
- Dies; or
- Voluntarily terminates services.

MD CHESSIE:

1. Create Non-CPS Referral
   a. Type of Referral is "Independent Living Aftercare"
   b. Type of Service requested = Enhanced After Care VPA
   c. Open a new services case but case connect to previous cases
2. Re-Open Service Case
   d. Complete Legal Custody Screen selecting "Voluntary Placement Agreement-Enhanced After Care".
   e. Complete Removal Information Screen selecting removal type "Enhanced After Care Voluntary Placement Agreement".

f. Removal date is the date the voluntary placement agreement was signed by the youth.
g. Youth should be the case head.
h. Program Assignment = Out-Of-Home
i. Youth shall be placed in a placement using the placement folder or if receiving SILA documented on the living arrangement tab.
j. Education tab must be filed out of youth.

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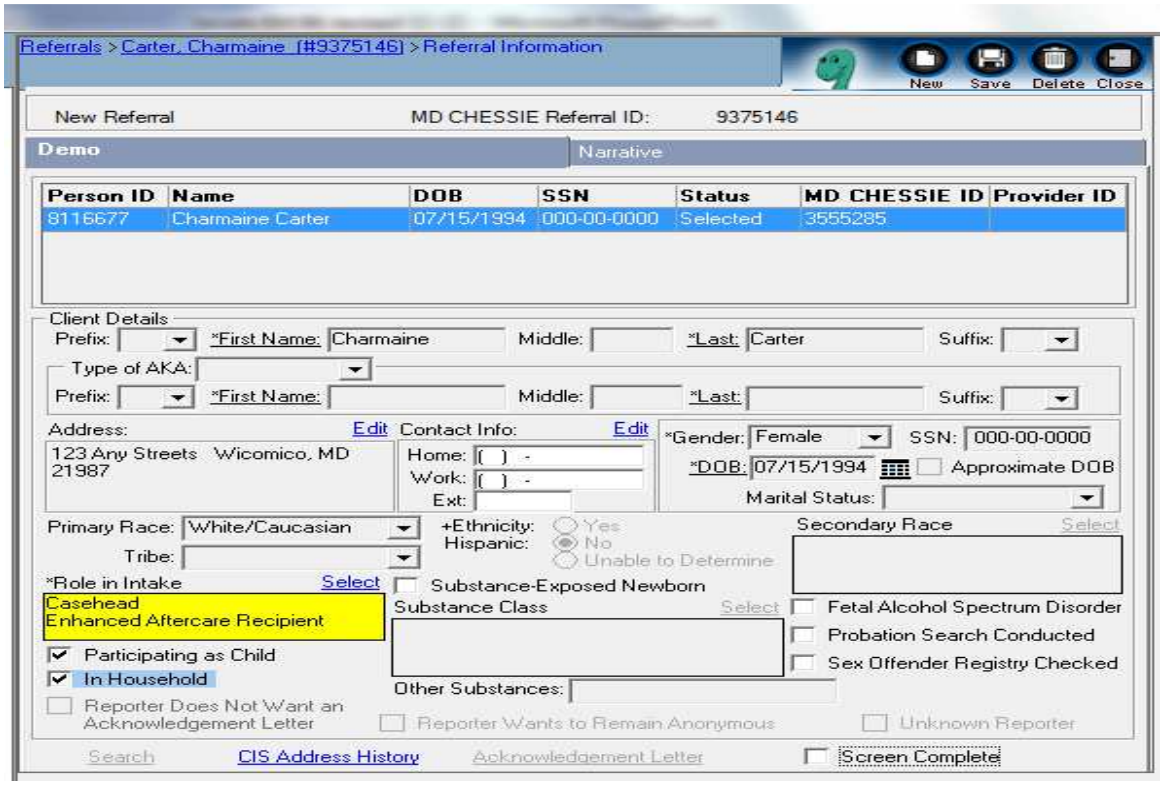


Referral Screen

Referrals > Carter, Charmaine (#9375078) > Referral Information

New Save Delete Close

Non CPS MD CHESSIE Referral ID: 9375078

Demo | Narrative | Non CPS

*Type of Non CPS Referral: Independent Living Afterca

*Type of Service Requested Select: Enhanced Aftercare VPA

Suggested Type of Resources Select

*Referred for Local Dept. Services *Not Referred for Local Dept. Services

*Reason for Not Referring for Services: Edit

Comments: Edit

396 Form Administrative Override Approval

Referral Screen

Service Cases > Carter, Charmaine (#3227349) > Removal > Charmaine Carter (3555285) > 09/04/2013

New Save Delete Close

Client Name: Charmaine Carter Client ID: 3555285 CIS ID: 421009326

DOB: 07/15/1994 Gender: Female

Removal Information | Reasonable Efforts and Factors

Physical Removal

*Removal Date: 09/04/2013 Removal Time: 10:00 AM

*Removal Type: Enhanced Aftercare Voluntar

*Family Structure: Single Female

*Child Removed From:

Primary Caregiver:

Secondary Caregiver:

Address of Primary Caregiver:

Caregivers do not Hold Legal Custody of Child

Legal Removal

Relative(s) with Legal Custody Select

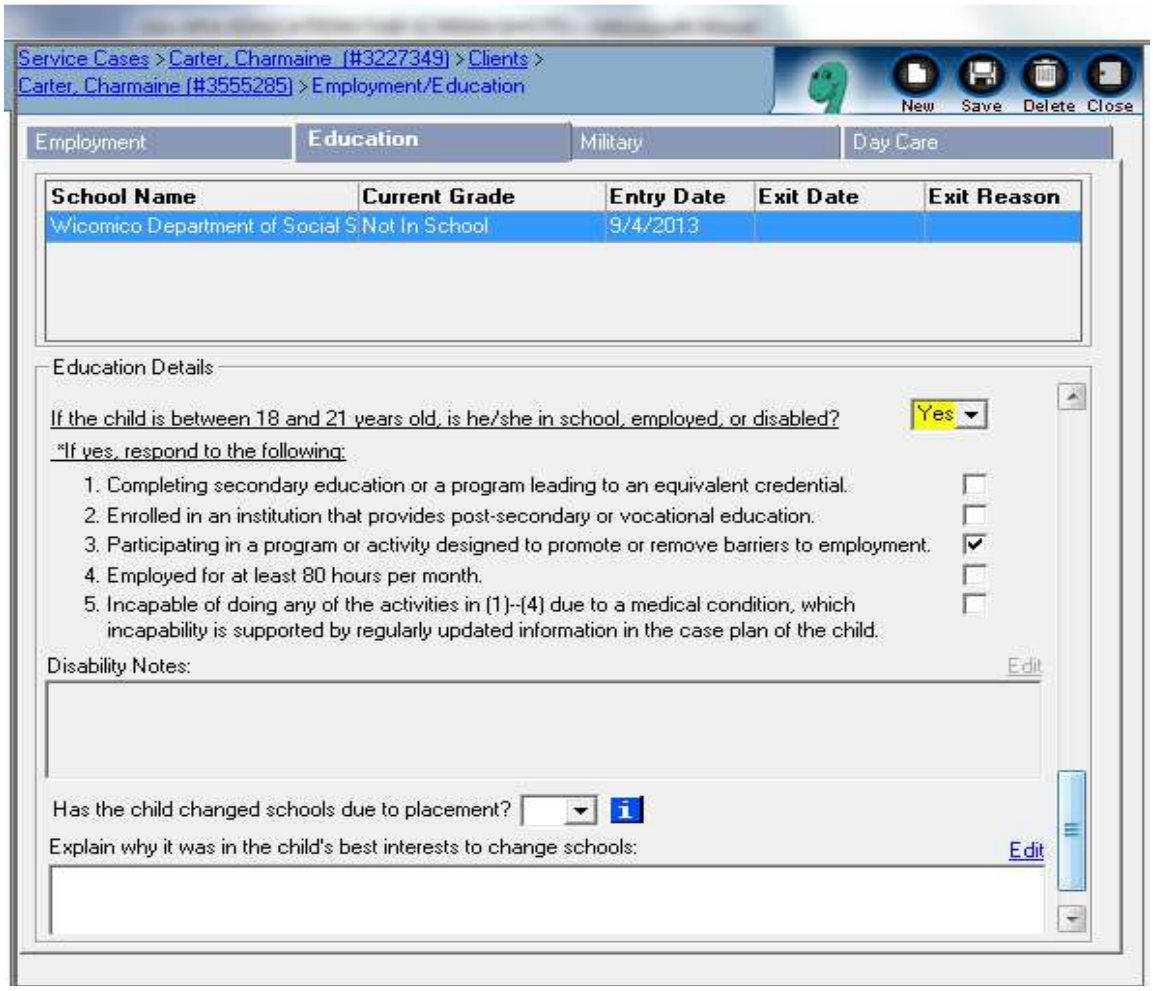
Date child last lived with relative(s): 00/00/0000

Exit Custody and Care

Return Date: 00/00/0000 Return Time: 00:00 AM

Exit Care Reason:

Service Case Removal Information Tab



Education Tab

Section 13
Budget and Funding Codes

Yearly overview of activities – life skills, milestones, leadership development, travel plans, major accomplishments shall be included in a report to justify all Chafee flex funds on an annual basis. Present a budget plan for Chafee allocations that refers to anticipated costs for life skills classes, milestone activities, and travel plans, transportation cost associated with life skills classes, leadership development training, stipends for the YAB members and stipends for youth that attend professional meetings to represent the department.

Refer to annual charge codes to make sure allocations are recorded properly, charge codes should be as follows:

1. 5113 Goods and services ages 14 to 18
2. 5114 Goods and services ages 18 to 21
3. 5115 Goods and services ages 18 to 21 (left foster care on or after age 18, Independent Living After Care)
4. 5116 Goods and services ages 18 to 21 (left foster care before age 18, Independent Living After Care adoption & guardianship case 16 yrs old)
5. **5117 Semi IL Housing ages 18 to 21 IV-E**
6. **5118 Semi IL Housing ages 16 to 21 non IV-E**
7. 5119 Semi IL Housing ages 16 to 21 State Custody
8. G2110 Group Expenses