

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

ACTION TRANSMITTAL 2021.04

PROCEDURES 302 SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE DEPARTMENT APPENDIX M, TRANSITION PLANNING FOR ADOLESCENTS

DATE: February 26, 2021

TO: All DCFS and POS Permanency Staff and Supervisors and Adoption Staff and Coordinators; DCFS Youth Hotline Staff

FROM: Marc D. Smith, Acting Director

EFFECTIVE: Immediately through September 30, 2021

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Action Transmittal is to notify all DCFS and POS Purchase of Service Permanency Workers and Supervisors, Adoption Staff and Coordinators and Youth Hotline Staff of expanded and extended options for assistance to older youth during the pandemic. Youth who qualify are those who are approaching age 21 or are former youth in care whose cases have closed since April 1, 2020. These additional funds are designated to ensure housing continuation, re-entry or new assistance, and advocacy supports for youth transitioning from care during this COVID-19 health crisis. This assistance is possible through and in accordance with the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act Division X of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 which became law on December 27, 2020 and the Illinois Gubernatorial Executive Order 2020.22 issued on April 7, 2020.

Additionally, this Action Transmittal issues new procedures for the temporary DCFS Re-Entry Alternative Contract (RAC) Program, and new forms **CFS 2032-6, Re-Entry Alternative Contract (RAC) Intake Form**, and **CFS 2032-7, Re-Entry Alternative Contract Approval Form**.

This Action Transmittal replaces Action Transmittal 2020.13. During this time period, youth are eligible for the expanded assistance options described below. Staff should discard AT 2020.13 issued on December 11, 2020 and use this updated Action Transmittal 2021.04.

II. PRIMARY USERS

DCFS and POS Permanency Workers and Supervisors, Adoption Staff and DCFS Youth Hotline Staff.

III. INSTRUCTIONS

DCFS and POS Permanency Staff and Supervisors and Adoption Staff and Coordinators and DCFS Youth Hotline Staff should discuss all available options for assistance through the pandemic with youth who are aging out of care and who were formerly in care, while the provisions remain in effect. Other Department supports including, but not limited to, the Scholarship Program, Employment, Job Training and Apprenticeship Program (EJTAIP), and Supporting Emancipated Youth Services Program (SEYS) are options in addition to the expanded programs listed below and should be included in discussions with youth.

A. OPTION 1: REMAIN IN CARE

Eligibility: Youth who will turn 21 through September 30, 2021 may elect to stay in their DCFS paid placement [Independent Living (ILO), Transitional Living Program (TLP), Foster Home Specialized (FHS), Therapeutic Foster Home (TFH), Foster Home Boarding DCFS (FHB), Foster Home Private Agency (FHP), Institution Private Agency (IPA), Group Home (GRH), Home of Relative (HMR), Home of Fictive Kin (HFK)] or in a POS Agency-managed placement through September 30, 2021 unless extended by Illinois Gubernatorial Executive Order or Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act Division X of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. In addition, stipend payments may be extended up to a maximum of twelve 12 months or until their 22nd birthday, whichever occurs first.

Benefits: Youth will be able to remain in a safe, stable living arrangement with casework support, financial support and Department support services through September 30, 2021. Additional stipend payments may be extended up to a maximum of twelve 12 months or until their 22nd birthday, whichever occurs first.

Process: The assigned worker must send the following information to DCFS.CPUDCFSEmailbox@illinois.gov:

- Youth Name
- DCFS ID
- Date of Birth (must turn 21 before September 1, 2021)
- Placement Type
- Provider Name
- Provider ID

The above information must also be sent to the DCFS Regional Administrator for youth in DCFS-managed placements, or, for cases managed by a POS Agency, to and the assigned DCFS-POS Monitor.

- B. OPTION 2: RE-ENTRY ALTERNATIVE CONTRACT (RAC).** This option is for youth over the age of 21 whose case has closed since April 1, 2020 and who have not yet turned 22.

RAC Eligibility:

- Be a former youth in care who aged-out after April 1, 2020 and on or before September 30, 2021.
- Youth in the DCFS Youth in College/Youth in Scholarship Program are not eligible for RAC funds.
- Youth are eligible for up to 12 months of payments, until their 22nd birthday, whichever occurs first.
- Participate in virtual RAC meetings to update transition plan, connect to resources and reengage with DCFS supports.
- Submit a copy of photo identification (driver's license, state identification card, school or employment identification).
- Provide a current address, phone number and email address.
- Provide their social security number. This is required to obtain a provider identification and receive payment generated by the Illinois Office of the Comptroller (IOC)

RAC Benefits:

Youth can receive a monthly stipend of \$312.00 from DCFS until their 22nd birthday. Payments may be backdated to the case closure date. Back payment may be made in one lump sum. The 12 month payment period for this program may continue up to September 30, 2022.

- The first and last payments will be prorated to the case closure and 22nd birthday dates.
- The payment will be made directly to the youth either via direct deposit or check.
- Upon request youth will be referred to community resources, healthcare services, and housing/advocacy. This differs from SEYS in which youth are brought back into care and have a caseworker assigned.

RAC Intake Process

RAC Approval 30-Days Prior To Exiting Care at Age 21

When a youth is within 30-days of exiting care the permanency worker and supervisor can authorize a RAC and send approval directly to the CPU. In these cases, a virtual RAC meeting is not required. The worker and supervisor should meet with the youth prior to exiting care and review the RAC requirements and responsibilities. Upon completion of the meeting and verification that the youth meet RAC criteria, the worker and supervisor complete, sign and date the **CFS 2032-7** and send it to the CPU.

Youth Who Have Exited Care

- Youth request a RAC by contacting the Youth Hotline's toll-free number at 866-459-6884 during standard state business hours.
- The DCFS Youth Hotline worker will complete the **CFS 2032-6 Re-Entry Alternative Contract Intake Form** and discuss the benefits, process, and youth responsibilities for obtaining and maintaining an approved RAC.
- The Youth Hotline worker, in consultation with the Youth Hotline Supervisor or Administrator, shall make an initial determination of the youth's eligibility for RAC and other programs.

If the youth appears to be RAC-eligible:

- The Youth Hotline will send the **CFS 2032-6** to Countdown to 21 (C21) Intake by the end of business on the day of the intake.
 - C21 Intake will contact the youth within 48 business hours and schedule a virtual RAC Meeting. The RAC Meeting will occur within 5-business days after the intake is received from the Youth Hotline. C21 will provide to the youth a link to the meeting, facilitators name, email and phone contact.
- Upon completion of the RAC Meeting, the RAC Facilitator will inform the youth of the RAC eligibility decision.
- If the youth is determined to meet the RAC eligibility requirements, the RAC Facilitator will complete the **CFS 2032-7** and submit the case opening information from the form to the DCFS Central Payment Unit.
- The Youth Hotline will be notified of the eligibility decision following the RAC Meeting and will document the disposition in their records.
- CPU will email the youth with confirmation of approval, re-entry effective date, direct deposit enrollment information and anticipated monthly payment dates.

RAC Eligibility Dates and Payment Schedule & Eligibility for Youth Who Have Aged Out or Will Age Out in Fiscal Year 2020, Request Re-Entry and Have an Approved RAC Prior to their 22nd Birthday

Aged-Out @ 21	Eligibility Dates	Payments	Amounts (based on \$312/monthly)
April 2020	07/01/20-03/31/21	9-month-back dated one-time payment	Est. \$2,808.00
May 2020	07/01/20-04/30/21	10-month-back dated one-time payment	Est. \$3,120.00
June 2020	07/01/20-05/30/21	11-month- back dated one-time payment	Est. \$3,432.00

The last month is prorated based on birth date. (Example: birthday is 04/15 then last payment is for 15 days.)

RAC Eligibility Dates and Payment Schedule & Eligibility for Youth Who Have Aged Out or Will Age Out in Fiscal Year 2021 and 2022, Request Re-Entry and Have an Approved RAC Prior to their 22nd Birthday

Aged-Out @21	Eligibility Dates	Payments	Amount (based on \$312.00/monthly)
July 2020	07/01/20-06/30/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
August 2020	08/01/20-07/30/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
September 2020	09/01/20-08/31/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
October 2020	10/01/20-09/30/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
November 2020	11/01/20-10/31/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
December 2020	12/01/20-11/30/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
January 2021	01/01/21-12/31/21	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
February 2021	02/01/21-01/31/22	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
March 2021	03/01/21-02/28/22	Back dated one-time payment & monthly	Est. \$3744.00
April 2021	04/01/21-03/31/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00
May 2021	05/01/21-04/30/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00
June 2021	06/01/21-05/31/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00
July 2021	07/01/21-06/30/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00
August 2021	08/01/21-07/31/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00
September 2021*	09/01/21-08/31/22	Monthly	Est. \$3744.00

The last month is prorated based on birth date. (Example: birthday is 04/15 then last payment is for 15 days.)

*Program terminates

Termination of the RAC

Youth who aged-out between 04/01/20-09/30/21 will be eligible for a RAC payment through their 22nd birthday. However, the RAC will be terminated for the following reasons:

- A monthly RAC payment is returned to the state as “undeliverable”/“return to sender”/“no longer at address” from the address listed on file with DCFS. Payment will be discontinued and the youth terminated from the program if the youth does not provide an updated address within 30-days of a return check.
- The youth is sentenced to the Department of Corrections or being held in a County Jail system for more than 14-days.

- DCFS can terminate the RAC payments if there is evidence of misuse of the funds, fraud, and/or refusal to provide information required remain in good standing with the RAC program.

If the youth does not appear to be RAC-eligible or the youth does not want to participate in the RAC Program:

- Other options will be presented to youth and appropriate referrals will be made, including a referral to the Family Advocacy Center Alumni Program closest to the youth.
- The Youth Hotline will forward the **CFS 2032-6 Re-Entry Alternative Contract Intake Form** to the DCFS YHAP Coordinator by forwarding the form to DCFS.YHAP.Coordinator@illinois.gov.
- YHAP will confirm with the Youth Hotline receipt of the form and follow up with the youth and the Youth Hotline will document the resolution in their records.

C. OPTION 3: APPLY FOR SERVICES AVAILABLE TO FORMER YOUTH IN CARE

Discuss other options available to youth formerly in care, and consider the pandemic-related flexibilities and expansions for:

2021 DCFS Scholarship Program:

[2021 DCFS Scholarship IT \(January 8, 2021\)](#)

[Memo to 2021 Scholarship Applicants](#)

[CFS 438-2021 Scholarship Program Student Application-2021 ONLY \(Fillable\)](#)

[CFS 438-2021 Scholarship Program Student Application-2021 ONLY \(with lines to complete by hand\)](#)

Employment, Job Training and Apprenticeship Incentive Program:

Refer to Action Transmittal 2021.02

[CFS 449-2 Employment Job Training Apprenticeship Incentive Program Application](#)

Education and Training Voucher: Expanded eligibility during COVID-19

Refer to Action Transmittal 2021.03

[CFS 449-3 Application for Education and Training Voucher Funds](#)

Supporting Emancipated Youth Services:

Refer to Procedure 301.60 f)

https://www2.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/notices/Documents/Procedures_301.pdf

DCFS Tuition & Fee Waiver:

Refer to Procedure 314.75

[CFS 438-A Tuition and Mandatory Fee Waiver Program \(Fillable\)](#)

D. OPTION 4: YOUTH HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (YHAP):

Eligibility: Youth between the age of 21 and not yet 27 remain eligible for all services provided by YHAP as described in DCFS Procedures 302-Appendix M regardless of whether their case is open or closed until October 1, 2021:

Benefits:

- **Youth Housing Advocacy Program**-provides a housing advocate who works with the youth to obtain and maintain adequate housing.
- **Youth Cash Assistance Program**-provides funding to purchase items needed to obtain or maintain adequate housing such as security deposits, rent and utility arrears, furniture and basic household items.
- **Youth Housing Subsidy**- provides up to \$500 to the agency or person from whom the youth rents an apartment each month, until October 1, 2021, after the youth pays 30% of their income on housing (rent and utilities). The youth will work with their housing advocate and the Youth Housing Assistance Program Coordinator to determine the amount of the monthly subsidy.

E. OPTION 5: FAMILY ADVOCACY CENTER (FAC) ALUMNI SERVICES

Eligibility: FAC's are available to assist former youth in care up to age 30.

Services:

- Help youth get a copy of important documents, including birth certificate, Social Security card and medical records;
- Help youth get a state identification card or a driver's license;
- Help with transportation when youth start a job or training program;
- Help youth connect to community-based adult services to receive needed support; and
- Help with housing referrals and application.

To access a list of Family Advocacy Centers:

- Visit the DCFS website for statewide list of [Family Advocacy Centers](#)
- On the D-Net, click the Resources tab then click Family Advocacy Centers. Scroll to the bottom for the statewide list as well as lists broken out by region.

To find an FAC by zip code or your location, visit: The **S**ervice **P**rovider **I**dentification and **E**xploration **R**esource (SPIDER) website at <https://spider.dcf.illinois.gov/>

- Enter your zip code or an address
- Select "Maximum Distance" from the dropdown
- Click "Locate Address"
- Click on "Keyword"
- Type in "Family Advocacy Center"
- Click "Search"

IV. FORMS

The following forms are for use through September 30, 2021 or as long as RAC provisions remain in effect:

CFS 2032-6 Re-Entry Alternative Contract Form is for use only by Youth Hotline Staff.

CFS 2032-7 Re-Entry Alternative Contract Form is for use by workers, supervisors and C21 Staff and is available on the DCFS Website and the T Drive.

V. QUESTIONS

Permanency staff should direct any questions regarding this Action Transmittal through their chain of supervision and Private Agency staff should direct questions regarding this Action Transmittal to their APT Monitor. All other staff can direct their questions by e-mail through Outlook at DCFS.Policy. Non-Outlook users may send questions to DCFS.Policy@illinois.gov.