



Fostering Futures

*Information for Children's Services Act (CSA) Coordinators
Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) Members
Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) Members*

This brief informational document is intended to be an informal handy reference about the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Fostering Futures program for use by CSA coordinators and to be shared with FAPT and CPMT members. It is by no means comprehensive, but includes basic facts that may be helpful. For more information, please access the *VDSS Foster Care Policy Manual, Chapters 14A and 14B (July 2016)*.

General Information:

Legal Authority for Fostering Futures

Legal authority for Fostering Futures is found in the 2016-2018 Virginia Appropriation Act, Section 346 (L. 1-4, M.). This language carves out the eligible population of youth and directs the Virginia Department of Social Services to develop the program.

Eligibility for Fostering Futures

Implementation of Fostering Futures creates two cohorts or populations of DSS youth ages 18-21 who are eligible for different "foster care services."

- Youth who attain age 18 on or after July 1, 2016 while in the custody of the local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or placed through a DSS Non-Custodial Foster Care Agreement are eligible for Fostering Futures.
- Youth who attained age 18 prior to July 1, 2016 while in DSS foster care placement are eligible (with two exceptions) only for Independent Living (IL) services.

Both populations, those served by Fostering Futures or those receiving Independent Living services, are eligible and mandated for CSA services. All CSA policies apply including, but not limited, to:

- review and recommendations by the Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT),
- approval by the Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT)
- completion of CANS
- utilization review

NOTE: Youth who were placed through ***CSA Parental Agreements*** are not eligible for Independent Living Services or Fostering Futures as these youth were not in the custody of the local DSS or placed through a DSS non-custodial agreement at the time of their 18th birthdays.

Foster Youth who attain age 18 on or after July 1, 2016 (Fostering Futures only)

- The youth must sign a “Voluntary Continuing Services and Support Agreement” (VCSSA) at age 18. The local DSS files the petition and the Court determines if it is in the best interests of the youth to remain in foster care. Any youth, including those who were not previously eligible for IV-E, will be eligible for IV-E if these requirements are met and the youth’s income does not exceed guidelines.
- The youth must be engaged in at least one of the following:
 - Completing secondary education or equivalent
 - Enrolled full-time or half-time in post-secondary or vocational program; includes remedial work, online or correspondence courses, etc.
 - Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; very broadly defined, e.g., could be working to obtain driver’s license; is individualized based on needs of child
 - Employed at least 80 hours a month
 - Incapable of engaging in any of the above due to a medical condition
- Monthly caseworker visits are required. LDSS have additional funding in DSS budget line 855 for these caseworker visits so the visits are considered a routine agency cost.
- If the youth is in a foster home, the foster parent will continue to receive basic and (if appropriate) enhanced maintenance as determined by the VEMAT. The youth remains eligible for all maintenance costs, including clothing. The youth is considered to be in foster care placement. If the youth is IV-E eligible, IV-E will pay maintenance costs. If the youth is not IV-E eligible, and CSA local procedures for approval are followed, CSA pays maintenance costs.
- Minor children of youth in foster care placement under Fostering Futures are eligible for maintenance payments if residing in the foster home. If the youth is IV-E, the minor child is considered IV-E. If the youth is CSA, the minor child is considered CSA.
- If the youth is placed with a Licensed Child Placing Agency (“TFC home”) then all appropriate placement costs, including Private Provider Support and Supervision, continue to be paid.
- Regardless of type of placement (e.g., foster home, IL arrangement), any additional services such as counseling, mentoring, are provided based on FAPT recommendation and CPMT approval, just as with foster youth under the age of 18.
- If the youth moves to an IL arrangement, then the maximum monthly room and board maintenance payment is made directly to the youth (\$700). The existing IL stipend (\$644) for these youth is not applicable. These maintenance payments are subject to FAPT review and CPMT approval, unless the locality has a written CPMT policy which exempts maintenance-only cases.
- In an IL arrangement, the maintenance payment is made directly to the youth, unless the youth gives written permission for it to be paid to another individual or business entity.

- The living arrangements are chosen by the young adult, *not* the agency or the FAPT, and may be anywhere, including the removal home.
- Living arrangements may include supervised apartment living. Providers may be paid for supervision of these arrangements; however, this amount must be negotiated with clear expectations of what is to be provided for the rate. These arrangements must also be *individualized*; consistent with the intent of CSA, the services and supports should be based on the youth's specific needs and not purchased at a standard, "one-for-all" per diem rate. For some youth, supervision will be minimal; others may need more intensive supervision. Supervised apartment arrangements are intended to provide youth with the opportunity to learn to live on their own with a "safety net." Typically supervised apartment arrangements do not provide the level of support, supervision, and treatment interventions which are found in a therapeutic environment such as a treatment foster home or a group home. Services should be designed to meet the youth's specific behavioral/emotional, medical and other needs.
- Youth may not reside in group homes or residential programs under Fostering Futures; only foster homes or Independent Living Arrangements, which are broadly defined and include, but not limited to, living with friends or relatives in a home, in apartments (supervised by a provider or unsupervised other than by the agency), college dorms, renting a room in a private home, etc.
- Youth may leave and re-enter Fostering Futures as many times as needed. If "out" for more than six months, the youth will need to sign a new agreement and return to court to resume Fostering Futures.
- Youth who were committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) from foster care who attain age 18 on or after July 1, 2016 are eligible for Fostering Futures when released from commitment.

Exception/Special Circumstances

- Regardless of when the foster youth's birthday falls (before or after July 1, 2016) the current exception continues to exist for youth who are in foster care placement and attain age 18 but will graduate prior to their 19th birthdays. Costs are funded either by IV-E or CSA until the graduation month or it becomes evident the youth will not graduate on time. Foster youth meeting this exception are the only youth who may be in congregate care placements past the age of 18.
 - If the youth's 18th birthday is on or after July 1, 2016, the youth will enroll in Fostering Futures *after* graduation or will enroll in Fostering Futures if and when it becomes apparent the youth will not graduate on time.
 - If the youth's 18th birthday was before July 1, 2016, the youth is eligible for only IL services after graduation or becomes eligible for IL services if and when it becomes apparent the youth will not graduate on time.

Foster Youth who attained age 18 prior to July 1, 2016

- Youth placed in Permanent Foster Care (PFC) who attained age 18 prior to July 1, 2016 remain eligible for PFC until age 21 if the youth remains in the foster home. If the youth is not IV-E eligible, CSA continues to pay maintenance and services as it would for any foster youth. However, these youth may not be placed, even temporarily, into group homes or residential treatment.
- Changes are minimal to none for this population (foster youth who attained age 18 prior to July 1, 2016). These youth will continue to be eligible for IL services until age 21.
- The youth is eligible for the stipend of \$644 a month and IL services. CSA funds are used to pay the stipend. The stipend may not exceed \$644 unless local-only funds are used.
- IL services should be determined on an individualized basis and when possible other payor sources such as Medicaid should be accessed prior to CSA. CSA funds are used for the stipend and to purchase IL services if appropriate procedures (e.g. FAPT review) and requirements (e.g. CANS) are met.
- The youth must sign the DSS IL services agreement but does not sign the Voluntary Continuing Services and Support Agreement.
- No requirement for court involvement.
- Current statutory requirement applies and limits the ability to “opt-back in” to IL services within 60 days.
- Youth who were in the custody of the LDSS but committed to DJJ at the time of their 18th birthday (prior to July 1, 2016) are eligible for IL services when released from commitment.

If you, as the CSA Coordinator, or your local FAPT or CPMT members have questions regarding the CSA process for youth receiving IL services or under Fostering Futures, please contact the Office of Children’s Services at csa.office@csa.virginia.gov or (804) 662-9815.

