



Fostering Futures and CSA

*Information for Children's Services Act (CSA) Coordinators
Family Assessment and Planning Team (FAPT) Members
Community Policy and Management Team (CPMT) Members
(Updated August 2019)*

This brief informational document has been updated to provide an informal summary about the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Fostering Futures program and CSA for use by CSA coordinators, and FAPT/CPMT members. It is by no means comprehensive, but includes basic facts that may be helpful. For more detailed information, please access the *VDSS Foster Care Policy Manual, Chapter 14 (July 2019)* or contact your Regional VDSS Permanency Consultant.

Legal Authority for Fostering Futures

Legal authority for Fostering Futures is found in the Virginia Appropriation Act, Item 344 (L. 1-4). This language identifies the eligible population of youth and directs VDSS to develop and maintain the program within specific parameters.

Eligibility for Fostering Futures

As of July 1, 2019, all youth in foster care who attain age 18 are eligible for participation in Fostering Futures. This includes youth in the custody of the local Department of Social Services (LDSS) or placed through a VDSS Non-Custodial Foster Care Agreement.

Fostering Futures youth are eligible and mandated for CSA maintenance (if the youth is not determined as Title IV-E eligible) and services just as foster youth under the age of 18 are eligible and mandated. All CSA policies apply including, but not limited, to:

- service planning, review and recommendations by the FAPT,
- approval of funding by the CPMT,
- completion of the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment; and
- utilization review.

Youth who are placed through ***CSA Parental Agreements*** are not eligible for Fostering Futures as these youth are not in the custody of the LDSS or placed through a DSS Non-Custodial Agreement at the time of their 18th birthdays.

- The youth must sign a “Voluntary Continuing Services and Support Agreement” (VCSSA) on or within 30 days of their 18th birthday. The VCSSA is valid as of the date of the last signature. (The only required signatures are the youth’s and the LDSS Director or Director’s designee.)
- The youth must be engaged in one or more of the following as documented on the VCSSA:
 1. Completing secondary education or equivalent
 2. Enrolled full-time or half-time in post-secondary or vocational program; includes remedial work, online or correspondence courses, etc.
 3. 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 youth
 4. Employed at least 80 hours a month
 5. Incapable of engaging in any of the above due to a medical condition

Please see the VDSS Foster Care Manual Chapter 14 for more detailed information on the five criteria.

- The local DSS must promptly file a petition with the court for approval of the VCSSA. The court must determine that approval of the VCSSA is in the youth’s best interest within 180 days of the effective date of the VCSSA. If the court hearing is not held within 180 days, the youth is not eligible for Title IV-E or CSA and local-only funds must be used.
 - It is important to note that a youth is eligible for Fostering Futures as of the date of the last signature on the VCSSA for up to 180 days or the time of the court hearing. There is no need to wait to provide services until the court approves the VCSSA.

Process for Transition of Services and Funding from Foster Care to Fostering Futures

- If the youth enrolls in Fostering Futures within 30 days of his/her 18th birthday, foster care maintenance and services are continuous. ***The previous funding source (CSA or Title IV-E) continues to pay maintenance until the effective date of the VCSSA.***
- The Family Services Specialist must make the referral to the Title IV-E Benefits worker for determination of Title IV-E eligibility within 10 days of the signing of the VCSSA.
- The Benefits Worker has up to 45 calendar days to make the determination of Title IV-E eligibility. Consequently it is necessary to continue using CSA or Title IV-E (based on the youth’s prior eligibility) maintenance funds for this period of time until the Title IV-E determination is made. If the Fostering Futures youth is determined eligible for Title IV-E, the Fostering Futures Title IV-E maintenance benefits will back-date to the effective date of the VCSSA. If the youth is not eligible for Title IV-E, CSA will continue/begin to pay maintenance costs.
- Eligibility for Title IV-E is based on the income and resources of the youth.
- It is important that youth continue to receive services and support during the time of transition to Fostering Futures. This is a significant time of change for the youth who must be able to access resources and services. Because of the time allowed for the Fostering Futures Title IV-E

determination, FAPTs/CPMTs should ensure that both maintenance and funding for services are approved on an time-limited but ongoing basis past the youth's 18th birthday.

- Example: A CSA funded youth will turn 18 on October 10th. The last FAPT review prior to his 18th birthday is September 3rd. FAPT should authorize maintenance and necessary services for *up to 90 days* after the youth's 18th birthday (around January 10th) or until the next FAPT review to ensure there is no break in services. Maintenance and services cease if the youth does not sign a VCSSA within 30 days of his/her 18th birthday.

Living Arrangements and Payment of Maintenance and Services

- Fostering Futures youth are eligible and mandated for services, just as are foster youth under the age of 18. The FAPT should consider and recommend any supportive services to assist the youth in transitioning to adulthood. Services are based on the youth's individual needs and may include a broad range of supports and interventions. Funding for services is authorized by CPMT.
- If the youth is in a foster home, maintenance is managed the same as for a child under the age of 18. The foster parent continues to receive basic and (if appropriate) enhanced maintenance as determined by the Virginia Enhanced Maintenance Assessment Tool (VEMAT). The youth remains eligible for all maintenance costs, including the supplemental clothing allotment. If the youth is Title IV-E eligible, Title IV-E will pay these maintenance costs. If the youth is not Title IV-E eligible, and local CSA 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 when residing in a foster home. If the youth is Title IV-E, the minor child is considered Title IV-E. If the youth is CSA, the minor child is considered CSA.
 - If the youth is placed in a Treatment Foster Home (TFC) foster parents continue to receive maintenance and enhanced maintenance paid either by Title IV-E or CSA. All appropriate placement costs, such as Private Provider Support and Supervision, continue to be paid by CSA.
- If the youth moves to an Independent Living Arrangement (ILA), then the maximum monthly room and board maintenance payment is made directly to the youth (\$721). 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 ILA, 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 family from whom the youth was originally removed.

- Living arrangements may include a supervised apartment setting. Providers who are appropriately licensed to supervise ILAs in the community (see [Licensure and Service Provision in ILAs OCS Administrative Memo 16-07.pdf](#)) 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-size-fits-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 ILAs, 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 the local agency), college dorms, renting a room in a private home, etc.
 - The current exception continues to exist for foster youth in congregate care (e.g., group homes, residential) who attain age 18 but will graduate from high school prior to their 19th birthdays. Costs are funded either by Title IV-E or CSA until the graduation month or it becomes evident the youth will not graduate on time. The youth may then enroll in Fostering Futures.
 - Foster youth placed in congregate care who turn 18 and will not graduate high school by his/her 19th birthday **may remain in the placement until the last day of the birthday month in which they turn 18**. The existing funding source (Title IV-E or CSA) may pay until the end of the month or until the youth enrolls in Fostering Futures, whichever is first.
- Youth who were committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) while they were in foster care who attain age 18 are eligible for Fostering Futures 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 services under Fostering Futures, please contact the Office of Children's Services at csa.office@csa.virginia.gov or (804) 662-9815.

