Services to Youth Ages 18 - 21

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families

Policy: 700.0240

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The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families is responsible for the delivery of appropriate mental health services to children with serious emotional disturbances and/or functional developmental disabilities as defined in RIGL 42-72-5 and the provision of aftercare services and supports to youth between the ages of eighteen (18) to twenty-one (21) who were formerly in foster care.

Once Family Court jurisdiction has been terminated or if there is no Family Court involvement, a youth who is receiving services from DCYF at the time of the youth's eighteenth (18th) birthday may be eligible to receive transitional services and supports in one of the following ways:

- Youth with serious emotional disturbances (SED) or youth with functional developmental disabilities (DD) are a priority population. These youth will remain open to the Department and will continue to receive services, including residential placement, in accordance with their service plans. These youth may be eligible to receive services funded through the State Managed Health Care Program in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5 (d).

- Youth who are residing in out-of-home placements and who require assistance with accessing housing, employment, postsecondary education and medical insurance coverage will be closed to DCYF upon acceptance into an aftercare services program.

- Youth who can safely move from foster care into the homes of parents or relatives or who have other viable transition plans will be closed to DCYF. Eligible youth will be provided access to medical insurance coverage and postsecondary education assistance.

Services and supports to youth ages 18-21 continue to prepare these youth for the challenges and opportunities presented by adulthood. The primary goal is for youth to achieve an appropriate level of independence, recognizing and accepting personal responsibility for the transition from adolescence to adulthood. All services and supports are voluntary.

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) rule, **Categorically Needy Post Foster Care Coverage Group (0342.100)**, provides that Medical Assistance benefits will be provided to youth under twenty-one (21) years of age who were in foster care on their eighteenth (18th) birthday, who have been closed to DCYF and who are residents of Rhode Island. These youth are deemed categorically needy and there is no income or resource test applied when determining eligibility. Upon closing to DCYF, the DCYF worker must inform the youth that the youth must provide DHS with notice of all address changes to ensure that all Medical Assistance correspondence will be delivered to the youth and that coverage will be maintained.

Related Procedure

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Procedure From Policy 700.0240: Services to Youth Ages 18 – 21

A. **Youth with serious emotional disturbances (SED) or functional developmental disabilities (DD), in accordance with RIGL 42-72-5, will remain open to DCYF.**

1. Eligibility - A youth must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible for services:
   a. The youth must be a resident of the State of Rhode Island.
   b. The youth must be under the age of twenty-one (21), must have been in the care and custody of DCYF (including youth in care pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement) receiving services from the Department prior to attaining eighteen (18) years of age and continuously receiving these services thereafter.
2. Services and Supports
   a. In accordance with RIGL 42-72-3, a youth between eighteen (18) and twenty-one (21) years of age with a serious emotional disturbance (SED) or a functional developmental disability (DD), who began to receive services from the Department prior to attaining eighteen (18) years of age, is considered to be a "child" for the purposes of the provisions of RIGL 42-72-5.
   b. A youth open to DCYF who has a serious emotional disturbance or a functional developmental disability in need of DCYF services will remain open to the Department and will continue to receive services, including residential placement, in accordance with the youth's service plan, as approved and consented to by the youth's parent or guardian.
3. Termination - Services and supports shall be terminated when any of the following conditions apply:
   a. The youth achieves service plan goals or fails to follow service plan components and expectations.
   b. The youth withdraws from services.
   c. The youth is no longer a resident of Rhode Island.
   d. The youth reaches twenty-one (21) years of age.
4. If a youth is closed to the Department before the youth reaches the age of 21, the youth, if eligible, can receive medical coverage and education assistance in accordance with Section C. below.

B. **Youth in foster care, who are enrolled in aftercare services, will be closed to DCYF upon reaching the age of eighteen (18).**

1. Eligibility - A youth must meet all of the following requirements to be eligible for aftercare services:
   a. The youth must be a resident of the State of Rhode Island.
   b. The youth must be at least 18 years of age but less than 21 years of age.
   c. The youth must exit foster care on or after the youth's eighteenth (18th) birthday.
      i. Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for a child who is placed away from the child's parents or guardians and for whom the Department has placement and care responsibility through either court order pursuant to a dependent, neglect and/or abuse petition or voluntary placement agreement.

ii. ~~Foster care does not include placement in a training school or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children who are determined to be wayward or delinquent.~~

2. ~~Referral and Application Process~~

a. ~~Worker and/or supervisor and youth assess and identify the need for aftercare services.~~
b. ~~Worker assists youth in accessing aftercare services.~~
c. ~~Once a youth is accepted into an aftercare services program, worker participates with youth and program staff in the intake process.~~
d. ~~Once Family Court jurisdiction has been terminated, worker closes case to the Department and documents transitional services in RICHIST (refer to RICHIST On Line Help, Maintain Case Window, Participant Tab – Youth age 18 – After Care).~~
e. ~~Worker provides youth with written explanation of transition services when youth is closed to DCYF.~~

3. ~~Responsibility – A youth must:~~
   a. ~~Voluntarily elect to receive aftercare services.~~
   b. ~~Actively take part in developing and participating in a transition to independence plan.~~
   c. ~~Either be seeking employment or be employed or attend an educational or vocational program. This requirement may be temporarily waived if the youth is doing volunteer work while awaiting enrollment in school or actively pursuing employment. If the youth is employed, the youth shall contribute toward the costs of services on a sliding scale basis.~~
   d. ~~Indicate recognition and acceptance of personal responsibility in the transition toward independence.~~
4. ~~Medical Coverage~~
   a. ~~Post Foster Care Medical Assistance through DHS will be provided to a youth under twenty-one (21) years of age who was in foster care on the youth's eighteenth (18th) birthday, who has been closed to DCYF and who is a resident of Rhode Island.~~
      i. ~~When the DCYF worker closes the youth to DCYF in RICHIST, the staff in the DCYF Federal Benefits Unit update and transfer to DHS the Medical Assistance case in accordance with DHS protocol.~~
      ii. ~~Youth must have proof of citizenship (e.g., birth certificate) and identity (e.g., local, state or federal issued identification card with photo) when the youth is discharged from DCYF. If youth does not have a driver's license or a photo identification card, worker assists youth in obtaining a photo identification card.~~
      iii. ~~Copies of these documents are included in the Medical Assistance record that is sent to DHS by the Federal Benefits Unit.~~
   b. ~~A post foster care adolescent may be residing independently or with others, including family members.~~
   c. ~~A redetermination must be completed once in a twelve (12) month period to ensure that the post foster care adolescent is a resident of Rhode Island.~~
      i. ~~DHS will mail the annual redetermination form to the child each year.~~
      ii. ~~The form must be completed and returned to DHS in order for the coverage to be maintained.~~
      iii. ~~Returned mail will cause the medical coverage to be terminated.~~
      iv. ~~If Medical Assistance is terminated because DHS did not receive the completed redetermination form, youth can contact DHS and regain eligibility under this coverage until reaching age twenty- one (21).~~

d. ~~If the youth establishes residency in another state, the youth will not be eligible for medical coverage through the State of Rhode Island. If a youth who was eligible for Medical Assistance under this coverage group~~

reestablishes residency in Rhode Island, the youth can regain eligibility under this coverage until reaching age twenty-one (21).

e. The youth is responsible for notifying DHS within ten (10) days of any changes in the youth's residence.

5. Education and Employment Supports
   a. State-funded Higher Education Opportunity Grant and Federal Chafee Educational and Training Voucher and Teen Grant Programs. DCYF Policy 700.0210, Higher Education Assistance, outlines specific eligibility criteria for each program.
   b. Assistance with obtaining and maintaining employment.
6. Aftercare Program Services and Supports
   a. Youth will reside with families or on their own with community supports.
   b. Youth will have an individual self-sufficiency plan based on an assessment of the youth's strengths and needs to assist the youth in developing and/or enhancing life skills to maintain a safe, healthy and stable home as youth transitions to independence.
   c. The program maintains individual contact with the youth at a frequency defined in the self-sufficiency plan to assess youth's progress in achieving self-sufficiency and to coordinate and evaluate services and supports.
   d. Management support activities include services to enable the youth to access community resources and develop support systems.
7. Declining and Withdrawing from Services
   a. A youth who initially declines aftercare services may opt to receive services within six (6) months of the date of case closure to the Department. Youth contacts DCYF Intake for authorization for referral to aftercare services.
   b. A youth who voluntarily withdraws from aftercare services may opt to re- engage in services within six months of the youth's withdrawal from aftercare services. Youth contacts service provider to re-engage in services.
8. Termination - Aftercare services and supports shall be terminated when any of the following conditions apply:
   a. The youth has achieved the goals of the self-sufficiency plan or has failed to follow self-sufficiency plan components and expectations.
   b. The youth voluntarily withdraws from aftercare services.
   c. The youth is no longer a resident of Rhode Island.
   d. The youth reaches 21 years of age.
   e. There are insufficient funds to continue the services.
9. The Department shall create a waiting list for youth who are determined eligible but not referred for aftercare services because all funds appropriated in the quarterly allotments for the aftercare services program as referenced in RIGL 42- 72-5 (e) are committed during the fiscal year. Names shall be entered on the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis once the youth is determined eligible.
10. In the event that aftercare services are interrupted due to an insufficiency of funds for any youth, the youth shall have priority in re-engaging in such services once funding becomes available.
11. If aftercare services are interrupted due to insufficient funds or if a youth is on a waiting list for or is closed to an aftercare program before the youth reaches the age of 21, the youth, if eligible, can receive medical coverage and education assistance in accordance with Section C. below.

C. ~~Youth, who can safely move from foster care into the homes of parents or relatives or who have other viable transition plans, will be closed to DCYF upon reaching the age of eighteen (18).~~

1. ~~Youth, if eligible, is offered the following transitional services:~~
    a. ~~Post Foster Care Medical Assistance will be provided to a youth under twenty-one (21) years of age who was in foster care on the youth's eighteenth (18th) birthday, who has been closed to DCYF and who is a resident of Rhode Island in accordance with procedures outlined in section B. 4. above.~~
    b. ~~Education and Employment Supports~~
        i. ~~State funded Higher Education Opportunity Grant and Federal Chafee Educational and Training Voucher and Teen Grant Programs. DCYF Policy 700.0210, Higher Education Assistance outlines specific eligibility criteria for each program.~~
        ii. ~~Referral to employment assistance resources.~~
2. ~~Once Family Court jurisdiction has been terminated, worker closes case to the Department and documents transitional services in RICHIST (refer to RICHIST On Line Help, Maintain Case Window, Participant Tab – Youth age 18 – After Care).~~
3. ~~Worker provides youth with written explanation of transition services when youth is closed to DCYF.~~

D. ~~**Appeals**~~

1. ~~Any individual who is determined to be ineligible for services in accordance with sections A. B. or C. above shall be entitled to file an administrative appeal with the Department.~~
2. ~~The Department's appeal process is outlined in **DCYF Policy 100.0055, Complaints and Hearings**.~~