

## ADOLESCENT AND TRANSITIONAL AGE SUPPORTS

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<b>Policy</b>	<p>The Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides adolescents and Transitional Age Youth (TAY) with necessary supports and opportunities to transition successfully into adulthood. All youth in care age 14 and up are eligible for transitional support and planning efforts.</p>
<b>Case Transfer Conference</b>	<p>A Case Transfer Conference shall be held for every DCF youth age 14 or older, in out-of-home placement and committed as abused, neglected or uncared for.</p> <p><b>Cross reference:</b> V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide</p>
<b>Transitional Support Specialist</b>	<p>A Transitional Support Specialist (TSS) is a Social Worker who has a caseload primarily consisting of youth 16 years-23 years old.</p> <p>The TSS has completed training for certification through the Academy of Workforce Development.</p>
<b>Youth Advisory Boards</b>	<p>DCF has a Youth Advisory Board in each Region comprised of youth in out-of-home care. DCF also maintains a Statewide Youth Advisory Board comprised of youth representing each Region.</p> <p>The Regional Youth Advisory Boards meet at a minimum of once a month. DCF's Statewide Youth Advisory Board meets at minimum on a quarterly basis or as requested.</p> <p><b>Legal reference:</b> Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-10c.</p>
<b>Services Post-Majority Administrative Requirements</b>	<p>Youth who are committed abused, neglected, or uncared for as of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday shall have their current family case closed in the computer system and re-opened as a "Services Post-Majority" case in order to continue receiving services.</p> <p>Youth in Services Post-Majority (SPM) cases shall be eligible to receive continued support from DCF if one of the following criteria is met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the youth is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential</li><li>• the youth is enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education</li><li>• the youth is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or to remove barriers to employment.</li></ul>

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#### Services Post-Majority - Administrative Requirements (continued)

The TSS shall

- ensure that the youth's SPM case contains the current Individual Case Plan and placement, payment, medical, educational, legal and other necessary information from the previous case record
- complete, and have the youth sign, the DCF-779 "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Services Post Majority"; DCF-550 (system generated), and DCF-551 (system generated), and file the originals in the case record. The DCF-779 shall also be completed and signed by the youth if the youth is declining DCF services post-majority
- file in Superior Court for Juvenile Matters on behalf of the youth, a Motion for Determination Regarding Continuance in Care within 120 days of the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if a youth has signed a DCF-779, indicating a desire to receive DCF services post-majority. The Court must rule on the motion within 180 days of the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If there is no approved permanency plan, a Motion for Review of Permanency Plan shall be filed concurrently with the Motion for Determination Regarding Continuance in Care and then annually thereafter. In all other cases a Motion for Review of Permanency Plan shall be filed annually in accordance with the current schedule.

DCF shall continue to hold Administrative Case Reviews (ACR) every six months for as long as the youth is receiving services.

At age 16, Omega Assessment is held through the ACR. At age 18, a youth generated case plan is developed.

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#### Adolescent Services Credit Reports

The Department of Children and Families shall provide a free consumer credit report to each youth in out-of-home placement ages 14-18, at least once each year until the youth is discharged from DCF care. Young adults 18 and over may access their credit reports with support and assistance from the TSS.

**Note:** State and federal law state that the credit report requirement applies to "foster children" age 14 and over. However, federal law defines "foster child" very broadly and includes almost any child who is in out-of-home placement. Therefore, this policy applies to all youth placed by DCF in out-of-home care.

**Legal reference:** Conn. Gen. Stat. §17a-114b; 42 U.S.C. §475(5)(I); "consumer report" is defined in 15 U.S.C. 1681 (a).

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#### Accessing Credit Reports

The DCF Office of Fiscal Services (OFS) shall act as a liaison to the three major credit reporting agencies (TransUnion, Experian and Equifax). A Fiscal Services representative shall secure the necessary credit reports and pass them on to the youth's assigned TSS noting any anomalous credit activity.

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#### **Accessing Credit Reports (continued)**

Youth age 18 and over shall have the option to sign a consent for OFS staff to secure consumer credit reports or the assigned TSS may teach youth how to obtain the credit report for themselves by using the free online service [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com).

At the end of each fiscal year quarter, the OFS shall obtain from the computer system a list of DCF youth in out-of-home placement who are turning 14 years of age. Within 15 days after the youth's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, the youth's name and other necessary information shall be submitted by OFS to the three major credit reporting agencies using procedures developed in conjunction with those agencies.

At the end of each fiscal year, the OFS staff shall obtain from the computer system a list of all DCF foster youth who are age 14 -18 and submit the names and other necessary information to the credit reporting agencies within one year of the date the last credit report was requested.

When a credit report is received from an agency, the assigned OFS staff shall review it for anomalous credit activity. The credit report shall then be sent to the youth's TSS with a note stating whether there are any issues that may require resolution.

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#### **Review and Resolving Credit Report Issues**

The TSS shall provide the credit report to the youth and help the youth interpret it and resolve issues.

The TSS shall send a copy of the credit report to the youth's attorney using the DCF-777 "Credit Report to Child's Attorney", which requests that the attorney also review the report with the youth and assist with any problem

The TSS shall work with the assigned OFS credit agency liaison, the youth's attorney, the youth's creditors and DCF legal staff, as necessary, to resolve all issues on the credit report including the expungement of fraudulent information.

The credit reporting agencies may require a copy of the youth's birth certificate and the court order of commitment before expunging information. The TSS shall obtain the birth certificate and court order for the OFS staff. If the birth certificate or court order is not provided to OFS staff in a timely manner, the OFS staff shall notify the TSS' Program Supervisor and Supervisor. The credit reporting agency will provide written acknowledgement to the OFS staff of the request for expungement and the action taken.

Credit fraud or identify theft discovered shall be reported to OFS, which shall notify the Office of the Chief State's Attorney using the DCF-778 "Credit Report Letter to State's Attorney". The TSS shall promptly provide any additional information requested by the Chief State's Attorney for investigation and prosecution.

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#### **Review and Resolving Credit Report Issues (continued)**

All documentation to and from the credit reporting agencies shall be copied by OFS staff to the TSS and filed in the uniform case record.

All conversations and activity related to a youth's credit report shall be documented in the computer system.

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#### **Secondary School Senior Year Expenses**

DCF shall provide financial assistance to a committed youth for his or her secondary school senior year expenses up to a maximum of \$1,000.

To be eligible, the youth shall be committed to DCF as abused, neglected or uncared for, or in Services Post Majority and enrolled in:

- a high school
- a State of Connecticut Department of Education (SDE) private school
- or
- an alternative education program (e.g., adult education, GED program, Job Corps).

A youth requesting secondary school senior year expense funds shall submit a request in writing to his or her TSS, with supporting documentation of the item(s) and the cost(s).

The TSS and Social Work Supervisor shall review the request. All payments shall be subject to approval by the Social Work Supervisor and the Program Supervisor.

If the request is approved, the TSS shall enter the payment into the computer system. The TSS shall apply for a vendor number for the youth, if one has not already been created and funding shall be issued directly to the youth.

If funds are denied, the youth shall be notified of the right to an administrative hearing through the issuance of the DCF-800 "Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension Reduction or Discontinuance of Department of Children and Families Benefits."

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#### **Driver's Permit and License**

If a youth age 16 or older who is in DCF care wishes to secure a driver's license, the TSS shall review the request with the youth and caregiver and determine whether the youth has exhibited sufficiently responsible behavior. If a youth is eligible to receive a driver's license this shall be documented in the computer record system. DCF shall provide financial assistance to obtain a driver's license.

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#### Driver's Permit and License (continued)

Youth under age 18 shall successfully complete a certified driver's education program in order to obtain a driver's license. DCF shall pay 100% of the cost of one driver's education program for eligible youth. The Department shall also pay 100% of the cost of the license, and the learner's permit.

At age 16, a youth may take the written exam to obtain his or her driver's permit. A youth may take the driving test to obtain his or her license six months after obtaining the permit.

The Program Supervisor or designee shall sign the Department of Motor Vehicles form 2D, "Parents' or Guardians' Certification," for youth who are ages 16 and 17.

The TSS shall verify with the owner of any car that the youth plans to drive that the required insurance is being carried and that the owner assumes responsibility for the actions of the youth while he or she is driving the car.

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#### Secondary Education and General Equivalency Diploma (GED)

Youth who are committed abused, neglected, uncared for, or for whom the Commissioner is the statutory parent, shall be in full-time attendance in a secondary school (high school) program, adult high school credit diploma program or general equivalency diploma (GED) program. Adult high school or GED programs may be approved by the team in lieu of secondary school on a case-by-case basis in consult with PSE Specialist and USD-II Superintendent. Youth shall be required to complete the adult high school or GED program by age 21.

All youth shall be encouraged to remain in and graduate from secondary school. If it is in the best interest of the youth to pursue alternative means to secondary education completion, the TSS shall seek prior approval from the USD-II Superintendent. The TSS shall prepare a memorandum for approval of alternative secondary education completion and the following documents shall be included in memorandum:

- school transcripts
- test scores
- GED practice and test scores
- anticipated Post-Secondary Education or Employment Plan
- anticipated time frame for GED completion.

Youth who have been approved to attend a GED program shall be offered additional support services, to include tutoring, in order to complete the program within six months.

**Cross Reference:** V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide, Educational planning.

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#### Adolescent and Adult Programs

The Department of Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, provide an array of services to the adolescents in its care and the young adults who have chosen to remain with DCF.

**Cross Reference:** DCF Policy 21-3, "Delivery of Services Using a Client's Preferred Method of Communication"

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#### Life Skills Education and Training

DCF shall provide youth in the Adolescent and Transitional Age Supports Program with the tools necessary to achieve self-sufficiency by providing instruction in life skills training, which shall include skills in:

- daily living and social relationships
  - self-care
  - work and study
  - career planning
  - community and civic engagement
  - financial literacy
  - communication
  - reproductive health care counseling consistent with national guidelines.
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#### Transitional Living Program - Supportive Work Education and Transition Program (SWETP)

DCF shall provide a range of transitional living options for youth in care who need to practice their life skills within a supportive instructional environment including the Supportive Work Education and Transition Program (SWETP). Transitional living programs primarily offer youth an opportunity to learn and practice independent living skills.

To be eligible for a transitional living program, the youth shall be:

- in DCF out-of-home care
- age 16 and over
- able to function in a residential environment that focuses primarily on the practice and development of independent living skills.

A youth shall be ineligible for transitional living program if he or she:

- is married
- is on active duty with any of the armed forces of the United States
- is displaying actively psychotic, violent or assaultive behavior
- has active substance use or behavioral health issues that exceed the level of service offered through the program.

Program staff shall develop, in conjunction with the youth and DCF, a service agreement (DCF-2166 A) that shall include roles, responsibilities, goals and time frames for the youth.

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#### **Community Housing Assistance program ("CHAP")**

DCF shall offer a Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) and provide financial assistance to youth who were committed abused, neglected, or uncared for as of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday who demonstrate an interest in and ability to pursue post-secondary education or vocational training. DCF shall offer youth in care several living options coupled with support services to assist with their gradual move towards successful adult living. Housing options include but are not limited to:

- individual and shared apartments
- boarding arrangements
- on-campus dormitories.

#### **CHAP Eligibility and Program Requirements**

To be eligible for admission to the Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP), a youth shall:

- be committed abused, neglected, or uncared for, upon the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- have obtained a high school diploma or a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- if approaching age 18, have signed a DCF-779, "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Services Post Majority (SPM)," prior to the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday indicating his or her desire to continue receiving services
- have successfully completed a DCF-approved Life Skills Program or are actively participating in such program
- have a Post-Secondary Education Plan approved by a DCF Post-Secondary Education Consultant or approved Community Housing Employment Enrichment Resources Program (CHEER)
- be enrolled and in good standing (in accordance with the standards of the institution) in an educational or vocational program
- have a referral packet reviewed and approved by the DCF Central Office CHAP Coordinator.

Youth over 18 who have not graduated high school and/or are under credited can access CHAP support (excluding the stipend) if the TSS and the DCF Central Office Chap Coordinator grant an exception.

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**CHAP Eligibility and Program Requirements (continued)**

The goal for most young adults involved in CHAP is for them to have 40 productive hours per week, although this is flexible and depends on individual needs. A productive hour is defined as time devoted, but not limited to:

- classes
- study
- extra-curricular activities
- part-time work
- internship
- volunteering
- training
- apprenticeship
- treatment activities
- when in CHAP, youth involved in social activities and connections
- any combination of these activities

The goal for most youth is that 25% of time shall be dedicated to a part-time job, internship, training or apprenticeship program.

During summer breaks, the youth shall work, take classes or intern and is encouraged to save half of his or her earnings. Yearly documentation of the youth's savings plan and ability to maintain a bank account shall be documented in the computer system each September.

The DCF-2251, "DCF CHAP Contract" shall be written by TSS in conjunction with the youth and signed twice a year as part of the ACR process. The contract shall be reviewed quarterly, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- agreed-upon place of residence
- roles and responsibilities of the youth, DCF and Community Case Manager and caregiver
- plan for full-time educational, vocational program, or employment program
- financial arrangement (e.g., budget, savings)
- statement regarding a proposed timeline to attain successful launch to adulthood and review dates to determine progress, including anticipated length of community case management
- statement regarding the youth's successful completion in a DCF-approved Life Skills Program or other recommended programming.

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#### CHAP Eligibility and Program Requirements (continued)

Youth who are at risk of losing DCF benefits shall be afforded an opportunity to participate in the Summit Consultation process with invited supports.

Youth may ultimately be given written notice through the DCF-800, "Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension, Reduction, or Discontinuance of Benefits." The TSS shall also mail or give directly to the client the DCF-800A, "Client's agreement to Suspend, Reduce or Terminate DCF Benefits." If the youth signs a DCF-800A, his or her case shall be closed. If the youth wishes to have a hearing pursuant to the DCF-800, the youth must complete the reverse side of the DCF-800 and forward it to the Administrative Hearings Unit within 60 days of the date the notice was mailed.

**Cross Reference:** V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide, Transition Planning

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#### CHAP Funding

Funding for CHAP housing is based on the most up to date Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fair market rental rates for a one bedroom apartment that includes heat or based on housing costs allowed under the foster care rate for youth age 16 years and older. Stipend amounts are based on the current cost of living set by federal and state guidelines.

Note: Refer to the <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/home.html> under "Data Sets" Tab

DCF may provide eligible CHAP youth with:

- a one-time apartment deposit not to exceed the first and last month's rent. If the youth successfully completes his or her post-secondary education or vocational program, the youth may keep the deposit)
- a maximum of \$2,000.00 which must be used for the purchase of furniture
- a maximum of \$500.00 for the purchase of housewares and household supplies. Youth living in on-campus housing may access these funds for room start-up items if needed;
- a payment voucher or a direct payment to a vendor not to exceed \$100.00 for the purchase of food staple items. In an emergency basis an additional voucher may be needed, and the Program Supervisor may authorize an additional payment.

When calculating a youth's monthly subsidy, tuition, and room and board budgets shall be kept separately. The Office of Fiscal Services has guidance for regional staff. CHAP categories and line item limits contained within this policy shall not be exceeded.

If a youth receives Social Security benefits or any other entitlements, this funding shall be subtracted from the funding limits provided in this policy and shall be considered as part of the overall budget for the youth.

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#### CHAP Funding (continued)

If a youth is participating in a paid internship, fellowship or any learning opportunity that involves a subsidy, this funding shall be considered as part of the overall budget for the youth.

Additional funding for housing and living are available during school breaks if the youth has reached the post-secondary education funding limit.

If a youth in post-secondary education returns to stay with his or her biological parent(s) of legal guardian(s) during school breaks, the youth shall be eligible for the CHAP stipend only.

If a youth is attending an approved post-secondary education program out of state and is living off-campus, the HUD fair market rental rates for that state and area where the youth is living shall be used when calculating the monthly rental subsidy. DCF CHAP boarding rates shall be utilized if the youth is boarding out of state.

If a youth is attending a college or vocational program in which housing or any of the items in the stipend categories are being provided, the youth shall be eligible only for those categories not covered or that do not exceed the identified CHAP stipend amounts. This includes summer internships and bridge programs.

If a youth will be residing in the home of a relative, friend or former foster parent, the responsible adult(s) in the home shall sign the youth's CHAP contract, agreeing to such an arrangement. The roles, rules and responsibilities of all persons involved must be identified and agreed upon in the youth's CHAP contract and updated quarterly.

**Note:** Any funding going directly to an identified adult in the household for rent is considered taxable and reportable income.

Youth shall commit to a savings plan. TSS will assist the youth in opening a bank account.

Youth are to be encouraged to save 50% of earned income in an interest-bearing savings account and saved for the youth's transition period from DCF.

Employment during the summer shall be encouraged for youth. Employment sites shall be geared toward providing youth with experiences related to his or her career goals whenever possible. Unpaid internships related to the youth's course of study shall also be encouraged and, when appropriate, may be used as a substitute for paid summer employment.

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#### **Adolescent Parent Program and Funding**

DCF shall provide funding for a youth in care who is the custodial parent of a minor child.

All services and opportunities that will assist the youth to become a healthy, responsible parent (e.g., fatherhood training) shall be made available within DCF budget appropriations.

When a birth has been confirmed and paternity has been legally established, the child's information shall be entered and linked to the youth in care in the electronic record.

The TSS shall ensure that a committed youth under the age of 18 who is the custodial parent of a minor child is enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the Department of Social Services (DSS). The youth may also be eligible for Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). TSS shall assist youth 18 and over in enrolling in this program. Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) provides:

- licensed day care so the youth may attend high school
- medical coverage
- financial payments for the minor child.

DCF shall be responsible for any day care expenses incurred by the youth for work-related purposes. If written notification is received from DSS that day care funds through that agency are exhausted, DCF shall pay for the cost of a licensed day care provider.

Youth ages 18 or older who are CHAP, CHEER and SWETP participants and are the custodial parent of a child shall receive financial assistance from DCF. DCF payments shall include funds for:

- the youth's living needs
- the minor child (at \$250.00 per month per child if not already included in a program rate)
- licensed day care if needed.

Medical coverage for the minor child shall be provided by the Department of Social Services.

The TSS shall document in the computer system the requests for, and provision of, financial assistance and equipment.

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**Reproductive Health** Youth served by DCF shall have access to a full array of reproductive health services. DCF shall follow the Centers for Disease Control's, American Academy of Pediatrics' and American College of Obstetrics' recommendations for regular health care services including providing youth with information about the importance of delaying the initiation of sexual activity and about contraceptive options. DCF shall follow the established guidelines for meeting the reproductive health care needs for adolescents in care.

Youth ages 12 and up shall receive health guidance annually regarding responsible sexual behaviors, including abstinence. The array of birth control options (including but not limited to IUDs, birth control pills and condoms) and methods to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) shall be made available along with instructions on how to use them effectively.

All sexually active females shall be offered a yearly routine gynecologic examination, including associated testing. The TSS shall make the referral to a gynecologist, family planning clinic or OB/GYN clinic as needed or requested by youth. The TSS shall ensure that well child visits are completed in the case record (EPSDT).

DCF shall identify young parents for additional interventions focusing on delaying additional pregnancies.

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**PSE Participation for Youth Receiving Services from DMHAS** Youth who have been accepted into a Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) program shall be eligible for funding to pursue post-secondary education (PSE).

DCF staff shall work with DMHAS to address and prioritize each youth's treatment needs while pursuing post-secondary education.

**Cross Reference:** DCF Post-Secondary Education Practice Guide.

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**Transitional Period** A one-time transitional period may be provided to youth launching from the Department who request additional time prior to the termination of services. This transitional period may be no more than six months.

The decision regarding the application for extension of services shall be made by the Commissioner.

Applications for an extension should be submitted using DCF-781. Applications should be submitted to the DCF Commissioner's Office two months prior to anticipated launch date. The decision of the Commissioner will be communicated to the region and area office from which the application originated.

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### Community Housing Employment Enrichment Resources (CHEER)

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) may offer a Community Housing Employment Enrichment Resource (CHEER) that provides financial assistance to youth who were committed abused, neglected, or uncared for as of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and who demonstrate motivation to pursue a post-secondary employment training and career development program.

Funding shall be based on available DF budget appropriations.

CHEER may include training for non-certified vocational or technical programs, apprenticeship programs or job readiness development. CHEER may also provide job placement assistance.

CHEER shall provide several living options coupled with support services to assist the youth with a gradual move towards successful adult living. Housing options may include, but are not limited to

- individual and shared apartments
- boarding arrangements
- on-site living arrangements offered by an employment program.

While involved in CHEER, a youth shall receive community case management services up to his or her 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Case management shall be provided by CHAP private providers that demonstrate competencies in job training, job coaching and job placement.

PSE plans shall be approved by a DCF PSE Consultant. If the youth also plans to participate in CHEER, the plan shall also be approved by the CHEER Coordinator.

**Cross Reference:** DCF Post-Secondary Education Practice Guide

### CHEER Eligibility and Program Requirements

To be eligible for admission to CHEER, a youth shall:

- be DCF committed abused, neglected, or uncared for, at the time of the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- have obtained a high school diploma or Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED)
- if approaching age 18, have signed a DCF-779, "Notice at Age of Majority and Agreement for Service Post Majority (SPM)," prior to the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday indicating his or her desire to continue receiving services
- have successfully completed a DCF-approved Life Skills Program
- be motivated to pursue employment training or job readiness services that will lead to gainful employment
- participate in activities consistent with job training or job acquisition with the goal number of hours established
- have an approved post-secondary employment training plan (CHEER plan) approved by the CHEER Coordinator and the Area Office Adolescent Program Supervisor

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#### CHEER Eligibility and Program Requirements (continued)

- be in good standing in accordance with the standards of the employment program
- have a referral packet reviewed and approved by the DCF Central Office CHEER Coordinator
- be enrolled prior to age 21.

Exceptions to the above criteria may be granted due to extraordinary circumstances.

A DCF-2252 "CHEER Contract" shall be written by the TSS and the youth and signed twice a year as part of the ACR process. The CHEER contract shall be reviewed quarterly by the youth, the TSS and the Community Case Manager (if applicable).

The CHEER contract shall include, but not be limited to

- agreed-upon place of residence
- roles and responsibilities of the youth, DCF and Community Case Manager
- plan for full-time employment training and employment
- financial arrangements (e.g., budget, savings)
- statement regarding a proposed timeline to attain self-sufficiency and review dates to determine progress, including anticipated length of community case management
- statement regarding the youth's successful completion in a DCF-approved Life Skills Program and other recommended programming
- statement regarding actions and adjustments if the youth does not meet expectations
- statement regarding DCF-approved roommates.

If a youth will reside in the home of a DCF-approved relative, friend or former foster parent the responsible adult(s) in the home shall sign off on the youth's CHEER contract agreeing to such an arrangement. Roles, rules and responsibilities of all involved persons shall be identified and agreed to in the youth's CHEER contract and updated on a quarterly basis.

**Note:** Any funding going directly to the identified adult in the household for rent is considered taxable and reportable income.

Youth who are married or on active duty with any of the armed forces of the United States shall not be eligible for continuing CHEER services.

**Cross reference:** V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide, CHEER Description

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### **CHEER Funding**

Funding for CHEER housing shall be based on the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) fair market rental rates for a one bedroom apartment that includes heat. The amount of a youth's stipend shall be based on the current cost of living pursuant to state and federal guidelines

If a youth receives Social Security benefits or any other entitlements, these monies shall be subtracted from the funding limits provided in this policy and shall be considered as part of the overall budget for the youth.

**Note:** A CHEER stipend may be used for a youth in out-of-state and boarding arrangements. If a youth is attending an approved CHEER program out of state and living arrangements are not provided, the HUD fair market rental rates for that state and area shall be used when calculating the rent portion of the stipend. DCF CHEER boarding rates shall be used if the youth is boarding out of state.

To determine a youth's stipend, the TSS and community case manager, if applicable, shall develop a monthly budget with the youth based on expenditures for rent, food, utilities, telephone, transportation, and clothing.

If a youth is participating in a paid internship, fellowship or any learning opportunity that involves a subsidy, this funding shall be subtracted from the funding limits noted in this policy and shall be considered part of the overall budget for the youth.

When calculating the stipend, the post-secondary education annual funding limit shall be taken into consideration. After training costs, materials and other fees related to the approved program are calculated and subtracted from the annual PSE limit, the remaining amount may be used for the stipend.

Once the stipend is determined, a monthly payment shall be sent to the youth for these items. The youth shall save all documentation for these expenditures and produce them on request. The TSS and Community Case Manager shall monitor spending on these items to assess the youth's budget.

Youth shall be encouraged to save and deposit 50% of income from employment during the first nine months of the CHEER contract in an interest-bearing savings account.

Youth shall begin to assume the cost of their care at month six of the CHEER contract by utilizing earnings from employment. DCF shall assume 100% of the cost from 0-6 months, 80% of the cost from 6-9 months, 60% of the cost from 9-12 months, 30% of the cost from 12-16 months, 15% of the cost from 16-20 months, and 0% of the cost from 20-24 months.

A youth in CHEER may reside in another program approved by DCF through which housing and living expenses are included. These youth shall be eligible for funding for their employment training programs up to the amount of Central Connecticut State University tuition, books, and fees.

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- CHEER Part-Time Attendance**
- A youth may be approved for CHEER on a part-time basis if
- the youth presents with or develops a physical health, behavioral health or substance abuse need
  - the youth has been identified as a special education student or the youth has had a 504 Accommodation Plan and continues to need special accommodations
- or
- the TSS has approved and documented the need and exception.
- 

**CHEER Change of Program**

A youth may elect to change their CHEER program. The youth must apply for a PSE program by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the CHEER contract in order to be eligible for additional opportunities unless the area office team supports the request.

All requests for PSE programs shall include a complete PSE packet that has been approved by the Adolescent Program Supervisor and submitted to the DCF Post-Secondary Educational staff for final review and approval.

A youth who has participated in a PSE program may elect to participate in CHEER instead as his or her second post-secondary opportunity.

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**Reporting of Missing from Care to DCF Careline and/or Law Enforcement**

Area Office staff and providers shall notify Careline and Risk Management of children missing from their care per the Notification of Exceptional Circumstances policy. Careline and Risk Management will follow the notification process for Critical Incidents and Significant Events as outlined in policy.

If circumstances indicate that a Silver Alert may need to be issued, the police shall be contacted to review the situation and determine if they would issue a Silver Alert. A manager must approve this request to call the police for a Silver Alert. If a Silver Alert was issued without the knowledge of DCF, once it is known, it must be communicated up the chain of command.

**Cross References:** DCF Policy 22-1-2, "Notification of Exceptional Circumstances" and V.I.T.A.L Practice Guide, Assisting Young Persons Missing from Care

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**Detained and Incarcerated Youth**

There is bifurcated case management shared between the Area Office and the DCF Department of Corrections (DOC) Liaisons for DCF committed youth within DOC facilities. The DCF case shall remain open until the youth's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

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#### **Detained and Incarcerated Youth (continued)**

To be eligible for services while incarcerated or detained, youth shall:

- be committed as abused, neglected or uncared for
- have been in a DCF out-of-home placement immediately prior to detention or incarceration
- be under the age of 18 or a SPM youth
- be a prior DCF youth who is requesting re-entry under an exception.

A re-entry request under an exception applies to a previously committed DCF youth, held within a DOC facility who is no longer under DCF care. The youth may request re-entry before 23\* years old to assist in supporting them once they leave DOC.

Youth shall call the DCF Careline to ask for re-entry. Careline staff shall review the referral request and assign it to the last Area Office that was assigned to work with the youth.

\*Available continued services for eligible youth who have completed their DOC sentence and returned to the community is based on the anticipated length of time they have before they launch from DCF care. While incarcerated, the youth, the DCF DOC Liaison and TSS shall develop a plan for the youth upon their release. A youth with a longer time frame (1 year plus) in need of a CHEER or CHAP placement would be eligible for these options. A youth with a shorter period (6 months) before a launch from care, would be eligible for short-term re-entry service array.

If the youth is sentenced to longer than one year, the case oversight shall be transitioned to the DCF DOC liaison. In the computer system, the DCF DOC liaison shall be given an NA assignment to assist in supporting the youth. The area office will close the primary assignment. Four to six months before the youth is scheduled to leave DOC, the youth's case shall transfer back to an Area Office. The DCF DOC liaisons shall contact the Program Supervisor to initiate the transfer back to the office.

The Program Supervisor shall assign the case to a TSS. The Area Office assignment is based on where the youth will be residing upon their discharge from DOC. The TSS, the DCF DOC Liaison and the youth shall meet at the DOC facility to facilitate the transition. Additional meetings shall be scheduled as needed.

Once the youth leaves the DOC facility, the NA case assignment to the DCF DOC Liaison will be closed. The case shall become a primary assignment to the TSS.

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#### **Detained and Incarcerated Youth (continued)**

The DCF DOC Liaisons responsibility for bifurcated case management is youth-centered and focused on planning for discharge from DOC. The DCF DOC liaisons shall be responsible for:

- conducting twice a month visits with the youth while they are incarcerated and enter narratives in the computer system
- referring the youth for a LIST assessment and monitor the LIST teaching modules with a credentialed provider while the youth is within DOC
- completing permanency work with the youth, focusing on the Permanency Pact toolkit
- developing a re-entry plan for the youth in collaboration with the Area Office. The re-entry plan is based on the needs of the youth and length of time the youth has prior to turning 23 years old
- for youth moving to a DOC Halfway House from a DOC facility, visiting the youth twice monthly at the community Halfway House along with the TSS. Engagement with community providers will begin while the youth is in DOC and continue in the Halfway House
- ensuring monthly commissary payments are made for eligible youth throughout their stay at DOC.

**Cross Reference:** V.I.T.A.L Practice Guide, Supporting Young Adults in Correctional Settings.

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#### **Bail Policy**

In cases in which a DCF youth is incarcerated pre-trial and bail is set, DCF shall not post the bond.

Consultations with the Legal Department are recommended any time a young adult is detained with bail set. The purpose of the consult is to review the case and seek alternative bail funding or options for the youth

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#### **Incarcerated Youth Who Are Not Committed or in a DCF Out-of-Home Placement**

In cases in which an incarcerated youth or the youth's family is involved with DCF but the youth is not committed to DCF or is not in a DCF out-of-home placement, the TSS shall assist the family by providing reasonable and available services such as transportation to visit the youth and accompanying the family to court hearings.

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## ADOLESCENT AND TRANSITIONAL AGE SUPPORTS

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#### Planning for Incarcerated Youth

The DCF-DOC liaison shall arrange for, invite participants to, and attend an Initial Planning Conference (IPC) for a youth prior to the next criminal court hearing.

The IPC shall be held at the correctional facility whenever possible and include appropriate correctional staff.

Other invitees shall include the youth whenever possible, all appropriate DCF staff, service providers, family members and the youth's attorney and guardian ad litem, if applicable.

For those youth having significant mental health or addiction problems or who are cognitively limited, invitees may also include DCF Central Office staff, as well as staff from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) or the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

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#### Services to DCF Youth upon Release from Incarceration

In collaboration with the youth's primary DOC clinician and the DCF-DOC liaison, the TSS shall make timely referrals to appropriate community resources to promote a successful transition from DOC custody and continuity of care.

The TSS, along with the DCF-DOC liaison, shall develop a plan to fill the youth's medication prescriptions at the time of release.

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#### Transition Plan

DCF develops a youth guided transition plan for each youth in DCF care at age 16 through the Department's Omega Assessment process at the Administrative Case Review. A life skills assessment should be formally reviewed at age 16 as well. The transition plan is reviewed at the first ACR after the youth's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A youth developed case plan (Passport) completed by the youth at age 18 (with assistance from the TSS) shall be reviewed through the ACR. This document will guide monthly interactions with youth. As a youth approaches launch from the Department, a Youth Launch Inventory shall be completed.

Youth shall be encouraged to attend this planning meeting in-person, if possible. If in-person participation is not possible, virtual participation through electronic means is acceptable.

**Legal reference:** 42 U.S.C. § 675(1)(D).

**Cross-reference:** DCF Policy 20-1, "Case Planning Overview" and V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide, Transition Planning

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**Health Care Proxy** In addition to the Transition Plan, all transition aged youth committed abused, neglected or uncared for, shall be given the option to execute a DCF-3013, "Appointment of Health Care Representative" and a DCF-3014, "Living Will" and shall be informed of related legal rights. The youth and his or her attorney shall be provided with the health care proxy documents prior to the ACR by the TSS.

**Legal reference:** Conn. Gen. Stat. §19a-577 and §19a-575.

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**Youth 18 and Older Launching from DCF Care** For youth age 18 and older who are launching from DCF care, DCF, during the 90-day period immediately prior to the date on which the youth will leave care, shall hold an Administrative Case Review for the purpose of ensuring the youth has a concrete plan. Youth Launch Inventory will be reviewed.

The ACR shall be held at a place and time that meet the youth's needs. When suitable technology is available the youth do not need to attend this meeting in person and can participate virtually.

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**Information to be Provided to Youth Launching from Care** The TSS shall consult with the Office of Fiscal Services and shall document any trust account funds owed to the youth. If there are trust funds, the TSS shall assist the youth in obtaining proper financial management services and arrange for the funds to be disbursed at the time of the youth's transition.

Upon launch from care, each youth who is over 18 years of age, and has resided in foster care for at least 6 months, shall be provided proof of placement in foster care. The TSS shall complete the DCF-782, "Proof of Foster Care" and provide to the youth. A copy shall be kept in the uniform case record.

Upon transition from care, each youth who is over 18 years of age, and the legal guardian of a youth who is under 18 years of age, shall be given a copy of the youth's:

- educational records
- medical records, including medical history of biological family members, to the extent known and obtained from DCF records and as permitted by law
- original birth certificate and an extra copy
- original Social Security card and an extra copy
- passport
- immigration and citizenship papers.

The TSS shall consult with the Area Office legal staff before turning over confidential records.

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## ADOLESCENT AND TRANSITIONAL AGE SUPPORTS

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**Information to be Provided to Youth Launching from Care (continued)**

If the youth's whereabouts are unknown, the TSS shall send a DCF-800, "Notice of Proposed Denial, Suspension, Reduction or Discontinuance of Department of Children and Families Benefits," to:

- the youth at his or her last known address
- the youth's most recent caregiver
- the youth's attorney and guardian ad litem
- any person, including a provider, who may have knowledge of the whereabouts of the youth.

If the youth chooses to appeal DCF's decision to discontinue benefits, the youth may request a Fair Hearing pursuant to the instructions on the DCF-800.

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**Youth's Decision to Decline Services**

Rigorous engagement strategies should be used to ensure that all youth have a planned and thorough launch from DCF care. A suggested process to follow for youth who wish to decline services is the Summit Process. This process is outlined in the V.I.T.A.L Practice Guide.

**Cross Reference:** V.I.T.A.L. Practice Guide, Transition Planning and Declining Services.

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**Rigorous Engagement for Youth Under Age 18**

The TSS shall conscientiously pursue efforts to engage a committed youth who:

- is on runaway status
- is experiencing a placement disruption
- is presenting with signs and symptoms of adverse childhood experiences or child traumatic stress including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- is disengaged from services
- has sought alternative placement not approved by DCF.

Best efforts shall be employed to persuade the youth to remain in care. If those efforts are exhausted and the area office management approve, a legal consult shall be held. The TSS shall file a Motion to Revoke Commitment with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters if the youth is committed to DCF as abused, neglected or uncared for and is under 18 years of age. The TSS shall nevertheless continue to engage the youth regarding services even after the Motion to Revoke Commitment has been filed. The Office of Community Relations and the Youth Ambassadors are available to support in these circumstances.

**Cross Reference:** V.I.T.A.L Practice Guide, Self-Advocacy: Access to Youth Ambassadors and Youth Advisory Boards.

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## ADOLESCENT AND TRANSITIONAL AGE SUPPORTS

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#### **Re-entry to the Adolescent Services Program**

The Department of Children and Families may offer a youth who was committed as of his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and subsequently left DCF care the opportunity to re-enter the Department Services Post Majority program.

A youth may apply for re-entry if the youth:

- was committed as abused, neglected or uncared for at the time of his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
  - left DCF care after age 18, but before age 23
  - is not married
  - is not on active duty with any of the armed forces.
- 

#### **Adolescent Services Program Components**

Adolescents who are approved for re-entry may be eligible to participate in appropriate services as determined by DCF. These services include, but are not limited to:

- referrals to community services
  - referrals to obtain medical, dental, behavioral health, substance abuse, cognitive, educational, and vocational evaluations
  - referrals for trauma assessment or treatment
  - assistance with coordination of services
  - case management services
  - assistance with obtaining needed documents
  - assistance with obtaining medical benefits
  - financial assistance for secondary or post-secondary educational and vocational programming
  - assistance with transitioning to community providers.
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