Transitional Living Programs 28-1-4

Policy

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) shall provide a range of transitional living options for youth receiving Services Post Majority (SPM) who need to strengthen skill building.

Transitional Living Program - Young Adult Services and Support Program (YASS)

Transitional living programs primarily offer youth an opportunity to develop, practice and strengthen life skills.

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

- in DCF out-of-home care
- age 18 and over
- able to function with minimal support in an environment that focuses on the acquisition and practice of skill building and independent living.

A youth shall be ineligible for the transitional living program if they:

- are married
- are on active duty with any of the armed forces of the United States
- are demonstrating recent or active psychotic, violent or assaultive behavior
- have active substance use or behavioral health issues that exceed the level of clinical support and service offered through the program
- are on an extensive or complicated medication regimen
- have a recent psychiatric hospitalization
- have a history of clinical needs that warrant a higher level of care.

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.

Community Housing Assistance Program ("CHAP")

DCF shall offer a Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) and provide financial assistance to youth who were committed as abused, neglected or uncared for as of their 18th birthday who demonstrate an interest in and ability to pursue post-secondary education or vocational training. Funding for CHEER shall be based on available DCF budget appropriations.

Continued on next page

Transitional Living Programs 28-1-4

Community Housing Assistance Program ("CHAP"), continued

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

To be eligible for admission to (CHAP), a youth shall:

- be committed abused, neglected or uncared for, upon the youth's 18th 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 18th birthday indicating the youth's desire to continue receiving services
- have successfully completed a DCF approved life skills assessment
- have a Post-Secondary Education (PSE) 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 if the TSS and the DCF Central Office CHAP Coordinator grant an exception. These youth will be considered "Non-CHAP" and provided a $200 monthly stipend for basic needs.

Continued on next page

CHAP Program Require-ment

The goal for most young adults involved in CHAP is for them to have up to 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 the following:

- 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 for 25% of time to 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 their earnings. Yearly documentation of the youth's savings plan and ability to maintain a bank account shall be documented in the DCF computer system each September.

The DCF-2251, DCF CHAP Contract shall be written by the Transitional Support Social Worker (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)

Continued on next page

CHAP Program Requirement, continued

- 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 of a DCF approved life skills assessment.

Youth at Risk of Losing Benefits

Youth who are at risk of losing DCF benefits shall be afforded an opportunity to consult with their team along with invited supports. A summit consultation or similar process will be used. The TSS worker will ensure rigorous efforts shall be applied in order to keep the youth engaged.

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 sign a DCF-800A, the case shall be closed. If the youth request 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. If the youth is over the age of twenty-one, they are not eligible for a hearing as continuation in the program is at the sole discretion of the Commissioner and within available funds.

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

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.

Cross Reference: https://www.huduser.gov/portal/home.html (under "Data Sets" tab)

Continued on next page

CHAP Funding, continued

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 complete his or her post-secondary education or vocational program, the youth may keep the deposit)
- a one-time maximum of $2,000.00, which must be used for the purchase of furniture
- a one-time 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 one-time 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, the 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.

Employment during the summer shall be encouraged for youth. Employment sites shall be geared toward providing youth with experiences related to the youth's 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.

Note: where applicable, DMHAS/DDS youth can access the above funding.

Additional Income

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.

Continued on next page

Additional Income, 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.

Alternate Housing Arrange-ments

If a youth in post-secondary education returns to stay with their biological parent(s) or 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 Savings Goals

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

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