

ARE YOU A VOLUNTEER WITH A TEEN CAP CLIENT? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES HELPS YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE GET READY FOR ADULTHOOD THROUGH THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM:

- The IL program serves youth in care ages 14-18. Each youth is assigned an IL worker who helps the youth develop an Independent Living Transitional Plan to prepare them for transitioning into adulthood. If you have a client who is 14– 18, ask the caseworker for the name and phone number of the IL worker assigned to your client. *Practice pointer:* All youth, regardless of their permanency plan, are eligible for an IL worker once they reach 14 years of age. Under federal law, a youth may not have OPPLA, where the youth ages out of foster care, as a permanency plan until the youth is 16 years old.
- The IL worker will refer your client to independent living classes, which address skills and needs such as resume building, housing, money management, finding community resources, and education options. The IL worker will help your client get a NV ID or driver's license, a health card and retrieve their credit reports. The IL worker will also help your client access funds for college.
- The IL worker also provides your client with access to Chafee funds, which are monies specifically for teens to use on education, sports, cultural interests, and self-sufficiency goals. The amount available depends on your client's age, starting at \$300 to a maximum of \$750 per year. *Practice pointer:* Chafee funds use a July-June fiscal year, so the end of school is a good time to ask your client's IL worker about unused Chafee funds.
- The IL worker should conduct periodic CFTs to develop and update your client's Transitional Living Plan. These Plans are designed to get the client thinking about their future and set goals for independence. If your client will be exiting foster care to a supportive independent living program on their 18th birthday, the IL worker should conduct CFTs six months before your client's 18th birthday and 30 days before your client's 18th birthday.

THE CLIENT HAS THREE OPTIONS UPON TURNING 18 YEARS OF AGE:

- At the age of 18, your client is legally an adult. At that point, your client has three options: (1) if the client is still in high school, then the client can remain in foster care, (2) the client can transition to a support program managed through Step Up, or (3) the client can exit care. *Practice pointer:* If the client is still in school, the client can delay making a choice until graduation; in other words, the client does not have to pick a path on their birthday.
- If your client exits care or transitions to a program at Step Up, the court will terminate DFS Custody (meaning wardship) at a hearing near the time of the transition.

STEP UP MANAGES TWO PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO HELP YOUTH BETWEEN 18 AND 21 WHO WERE IN FOSTER CARE BECOME INDEPENDENT ADULTS:

- The most popular program is the Clark County Voluntary Jurisdiction Program (formerly known as the AB350 Program and sometimes called “CC VOL JUR”). If your client enters this program, the client will receive monthly payments of \$773 on a debit card to help meet their monthly budget until their 21st birthday. In exchange, the client must work on their transition plan, with a focus on getting their high school diploma, and then college or employment.
 - Under this program, wardship is terminated and the client will no longer be under DFS custody. However, the youth consents to limited jurisdiction by the court to settle any dispute over participation in the program. *Practice pointer:* Because the court maintains jurisdiction under this program, the CAP attorney keeps their file open until the program ends (either by the client’s request, the client’s 21st birthday, or by court order).
 - The client can only enter the Voluntary Jurisdiction Program directly upon leaving foster care. The youth cannot enter FAFFY and later switch to CC VOL JUR.
- The other program managed by Step Up is FAFFY (Funds to Assist Former Foster Youth). Under this program, the court case is closed. *Practice Pointer:* With closure of the case, the CAP attorney’s representation ends.
 - The amount paid to the client is the same; the manner of payment is different. Step Up pays the rent, up to \$773, directly to the youth’s landlord. Any money left over goes directly to the youth on gift cards.
 - Foster youth can enter this program any time after 18th birthday. *Practice pointer:* If your client is terminated from the Voluntary Jurisdiction program, the client can enter the FAFFY program and still have support.
 - The client must work on education and employment goals.
- Other benefits managed by Step Up: Step Up has a move-in stipend, for housing (up to \$1000, one time), a graduation stipend (\$500 for a diploma and \$250 for GED/HiSET), and some emergency funds and supplies. Step Up also provides assistance with the tuition voucher for college and help with “aged out youth” Medicaid (available until the client is 26).

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? WE ARE HERE TO HELP:

- Call or email our Pro Bono Project CAP Liaison at the Pro Bono Project: Carmen Ramirez, (702) 386-1551 or CRamirez@lacs.org
- Check out the resources on our website: <http://www.lacsprobono.org/resources-and-training/childrens-attorneys-project/>
- Call or email your mentor. Don’t know who your mentor is? Email our Pro Bono Project CAP Liaison Carmen Ramirez for a virtual introduction: CRamirez@lacs.org
- Attend a support luncheon.
- Keep an eye out for a lunchtime CLE.