

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 11: Independent Living	Effective Date: July 1, 2006
	Section 8: Chafee Room and Board Services	Version: 1

POLICY	OLD POLICIES: 404.48, 404.481, 404.482, 404.483
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) has determined the following former foster youth meet the eligibility requirements for room and board (R&B) services (See [Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Service Standards](#) for details of services):

1. A youth who turns 18 years of age while placed in foster care¹; or
2. A youth who turned 18 years of age in foster care, who was a “ward or in the custody of another state” and had a case plan identifying the need for Independent Living (IL) services; or
3. A youth age 18 to 21 who was on a trial home visit on his or her 18th birthday or in runaway status with an open Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or probation youth case.

DCS will assure that all youth receiving R&B services also receive case management.

DCS will assure that R&B funds are not expended for youth under 18 years of age.

DCS will assure that R&B funds are not expended for a youth to reside with his or her biological family or legal parent.

DCS will assure that R&B payments are made only through a contracted service provider that is providing IL case management services to youth referred for services.

Code References

[42 USC 677: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will sign the [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/CW 2114\)](#) for eligible youth, who meet the criteria described in the policy statement above, for R&B services when requested.

¹ Foster care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parent, guardian, or custodian and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. Facilities that are outside the scope of foster care include, but are not limited to: detention facilities; psychiatric hospital acute care; forestry camps; or facilities that are primarily for the detention for children who are adjudicated delinquents.

The IL Specialist will:

1. Verify eligibility of youth described in number three (3) on page one (1) of this document, provide eligibility information to the requestor, and approve the [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/CW 2114\)](#) for eligible youth; and
2. Provide assistance to Chafee IL service providers regarding eligibility for all youth applying for R&B services.

The contracted Chafee IL Service Provider will:

1. Assure that eligible youth referred for R&B services are assisted in locating affordable, safe housing and employment to meet their financial needs;
2. Assure that case management services are provided to all youth receiving R&B services;
3. Assure that R&B funds are expended for the referred youth's rent and utility expenses only and that rental payments are made to landlords and utility payments are made to the utility company;
4. Assure that a case file is maintained with tracking of expenditures for all youth being provided R&B services;
5. Assure that youth who receive R&B funds begin to take responsibility incrementally for rent and utility payments beginning in the second month and take full responsibility by the sixth month; and
6. Request approval from the DCS Permanency Manager for additional assistance in cases where the youth is unable due to extenuating circumstances to accept full responsibility for payment of rent and utilities in the sixth month.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Trial Home Visits

Trial Home Visits (THV) are encouraged for youth who voice a strong desire to return to their parents' homes following case dismissal. This provides the youth with an opportunity to experience life with his or her family while being provided a safety net if the youth determines that living independently would be more appropriate. The youth remains eligible for R&B services if he or she turns 18 while on a THV.

Case Conference for Transition Planning

When a youth is within six (6) months of turning 18 years old in foster care and his or her case being dismissed or is over 18 and is within six (6) months of his or her case being dismissed, the youth's FCM should hold a case conference involving the youth and those involved in the youth's case including their placement case worker, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Guardian ad Litem (GAL), parents, counselor/therapist, etc.

This conference provides the opportunity for the youth to explain future plans regarding secondary education or moving out and locating employment. [Tool 11.A: Budget Worksheet](#) should be reviewed with the youth to determine if the youth has a viable plan based on possible earnings and expenses. Guidance should be provided by those involved in the conference to assist the youth in carrying out their decision.

Once the youth has identified the county in which he or she desires to live after the case is dismissed, the [Service Referral Form](#) for transition services should be made to a contracted agency in the county of choice if the youth is not currently receiving Chafee services. The

period of time between the beginning of transition services and case dismissal allows time for the youth to develop a relationship with a contracted agency worker who will assist the youth with locating suitable employment and affordable housing. The agency worker may continue to assist the youth if the youth chooses to continue voluntarily when the case is dismissed.

Voluntary Services Application at Case Dismissal

Once the youth's CHINS or Probation case is dismissed, the [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/CW 2114\)](#) must be completed by the youth, signed by the DCS FCM managing the case and submitted to the Chafee IL contracted service provider that will then be signed by the agency.

Room and Board Services

R&B funds are for the payment of rent deposits and payments and utility deposits and payments only. R&B services include a lifetime maximum of \$3,000 for assistance through age 21. R&B payments will only be made through a contracted service provider who is also providing independent living case management services to the youth. Youth may access this assistance as long as the youth continues to participate in case management services and participate in a full time schedule of work, or part time work and part time school. Requests for additional funds will be considered on a case-by-case basis by DCS Central Office Staff only, based on availability of funds.

Because stability of youth can be unpredictable, it is possible that a youth may become homeless due to a job loss, eviction, or other reason despite the fact that they were self-sufficient through the fifth month of receiving R&B assistance. In the event this occurs, the youth may request assistance again provided they have not expended the maximum funds allowed as identified above and have not reached the age of 21.

Housing Options

Potential housing options may include host homes, resource family homes, youth shelters, shared houses/apartments, single room occupancy units, boarding houses, semi-supervised apartments, subsidized housing, scattered site apartments, and transitional group homes. The monthly room and board assistance should be based on need and should be determined using [Tool 11.A: Budget Worksheet](#).

Payment for R&B Services

If the youth is already 18, the housing deposit can be paid within the month prior to the youth's case being dismissed. This will hold the apartment for the youth until the case is dismissed and he or she is ready to move in. If the youth is leaving the system at age 18, the payment may not be made until the 18th birthday.

Most youth leaving placement have not had the opportunity to be employed and will most likely not have employment or any monetary savings. Youth will need housing as they leave their placement which should be located with the deposit and first months rent paid even though the youth is not employed at the time. Most landlords will work with the Chafee IL service provider as long as the landlord is assured that the agency will continue to work with the youth in obtaining employment and providing case management to ensure the rent will be paid.

Once a youth's case is dismissed and the youth is not employed, seeking employment must be a priority to ensure that the youth can begin to take some responsibility for the second month's rent and gradually increase the youth's responsibility for his or her own expenses.

Employment is a requirement of the youth receiving R&B assistance so this issue needs to be addressed at the first meeting with the youth. The youth also must be informed of the requirement to accept responsibility for the entire rent payment and utility bills within six (6) months of the beginning of assistance. This assistance is intended to temporarily supplement the youth's efforts, not as a means of on-going supplemental support.

Required Activities for Youth Prior to Receiving R&B Assistance

The following activities are to be conducted by the Chafee IL service provider with youth prior to receiving R&B services:

1. Arrange an interview and visit with apartment complex managers to allow the youth to understand the leasing process and view apartments or other housing options in more than one location;
2. Assist the youth in developing a budget to determine the amount of rent he or she is able to pay based on income and other expenses;
3. Provide education on tenant rights and responsibilities and the importance of following rules and regulation policies of the apartment complex or landlord;
4. Assist the youth in obtaining a free annual credit report from all three (3) agencies (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/credit/cre34.shtm>) to ensure poor credit will not be an obstacle to renting;
5. Explore with the youth the option of other housing arrangements such as [Tool 11.B: Host Home Agreement](#) with current or former resource parents or relatives (not to include legal or biological parents) and shared housing with other foster youth;
6. Arrange a visit with the youth to utility companies (electric, gas, water, phone) to gather information regarding the requirements of the company related to hook up charges, deposits, and the monthly cost of services;
7. Arrange visits with local homeless shelters, mental health day shelters, food pantries, and other services that are available in the event that the youth should ever become homeless; and
8. Provide education on the purpose of credit, the use of credit, maintaining good credit, and how credit can affects many facets of their adult life.

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Service Referral Form – Available in ICWIS](#)
2. [Chafee IL Voluntary Services Application and Service Agreement \(SF 52692/CW 2114\)](#)
3. [Tool 11.B: Host Home Agreement](#)
4. [Tool 11.A: Budget Worksheet](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Use of Chafee and Education And Training Voucher Program For Housing Assistance

Youth may not access housing assistance from both the Chafee R&B funds and the Education and Training Voucher Program (See separate policy, [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#)) at the same time. Those attending school full time or part time must access assistance for housing through the Education and Training Voucher Program at www.statevoucher.org.