



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES

CHILD WELFARE POLICY

Chapter 11: Older Youth Services

Section 08: John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) Room and Board Services

Effective Date: September 1, 2023

Version: 4

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POLICY OVERVIEW

Room and Board (R&B) services provides funding that has a lifetime maximum of \$3,000 to assist eligible older youth with payment of rent, utilities, and deposits to support older youth as they transition from adolescence to adulthood.

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PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) has determined the following former foster youth meet the eligibility requirements for R&B services (see Older Youth Services [OYS] Service Standards for details of services):

1. An older youth who turns 18 years of age while placed in foster care;
2. An older youth who turned 18 years of age in foster care, who was a “ward or in the custody of another state”; or
3. An older youth between 18 years of age up to the day before the older youth’s 23rd birthday who was on a trial home visit (THV) or in runaway status on the older youth’s 18th birthday and had an open Child in Need of Services (CHINS) or Juvenile Delinquent/Juvenile Status (JD/JS) older youth case.

Eligible older youth may access R&B services as long as the older youth continues to:

1. Participate in case management services; and
2. Work full-time schedule; or
3. Work part-time schedule and attend school part-time.

Note: R&B funds may only be used for rent, utility payments, and deposits. R&B services may be used until the day before the older youth’s 23rd birthday (see Practice Guidance).

The Independent Living Specialist (IL) will ensure:

1. All older youth receiving R&B services also receive case management through Voluntary OYS (see policy 11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services);
2. R&B funds are not expended for an older youth under 18 years of age;
3. R&B funds are not expended for an older youth residing with the older youth’s biological or adoptive family or a legal parent; and

4. R&B payments are made only through a contracted service provider that is providing Older Youth Service (OYS) case management services to older youth referred for services.

The Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) or IL Specialist will complete an OYS Voluntary Services Referral for eligible older youth, who meet the criteria described above.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Foster Care

Foster care is 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.

Older Youth Services

The purpose of OYS is to:

1. Assist identified youth who are expected to remain in foster care until their 18th birthday or after in making the transition to self-sufficiency;
2. Help identified youth receive the necessary education, training, and services to overcome potential barriers to employment;
3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary education and/or training programs;
4. Provide personal and emotional support for youth aging out of foster care;
5. Assist youth in locating and identifying community resources that will be available to the youth after DCS involvement has ended; and
6. Encourage positive personal growth in older youth through "teachable moments".

Forms and Tools

- [11.A Tool: Budget Worksheet](#)
- [11.B Tool: Voluntary Services Host Home Agreement](#)
- [Indiana Education and Training Voucher Program](#)
- [OYS Service Standards](#)

Related Policies

- [11.07 Voluntary Older Youth Services](#)
- [11.09 Voluntary Services Host Home](#)
- [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [42 USC 677: John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 11.08

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Housing Options for Room and Board (R&B) Assistance

Potential housing options may include informal host homes, shared houses/apartments, single room occupancy units, boarding houses, semi-supervised apartments, and subsidized housing. The monthly R&B assistance should be based on need and determined using the Budget Worksheet.

Payment for R&B Funds

If the older youth is already 18 years of age, a housing deposit may be paid within the month prior to the older youth's case being dismissed to hold an apartment for the older youth until the case is dismissed and the older youth is ready to move in. If the older youth is leaving the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) care at age 18, the payment may not be made until the older youth's 18th birthday.

The R&B assistance will be tailored to the needs of the older youth. Older youth who need the maximum assistance may access these funds using the payment guide, as described below. While receiving R&B funds, older youth are expected to make incremental payments toward their own housing and utility expenses beginning in the third (3rd) month of assistance, and older youth should be prepared to accept full responsibility by the sixth (6th) month unless there are extenuating circumstances. In cases where there is a request for an adjustment to the payment guide, approval must be received from the DCS Independent Living (IL) Specialist. In cases where older youth are unable to accept full responsibility for 50% of their rent in the fourth (4th) month and each incremental payment thereafter, approval must be received from the DCS IL Specialist. Requests for an extension of this capped amount will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the DCS Older Youth Initiatives Manager or designee, based on availability of funds. R&B payments will only be made through a contracted service provider who is providing older youth case management services to the older youth.

Payment Guide for R&B Funds

The following is a payment guide detailing the older youth's responsibilities for payment. The R&B funds are subject to approval by the IL Specialist. DCS will not expend funds if the older youth is unable to pay the older youth's portion, as detailed below:

1. Deposit and first (1st) and second (2nd) month's rent may be paid for older youth;
2. Older youth pays 25% of the rent for the third (3rd) month;
3. Older youth pays 50% of the rent for the fourth (4th) month;
4. Older youth pays 75% of the rent for the fifth (5th) month; and
5. Older youth pays all of the rent for the sixth (6th) month and thereafter.

Note: An alternative payment arrangement including length of stay and rental amount will be negotiated under the Voluntary Services Host Home Agreement. This agreement is subject to approval by DCS. Requests to adjust the Voluntary Services Host Home Agreement must be approved by an IL Specialist (see policy 11.09 Voluntary Services Host Home). Requests for adjustments to the payment guide must be approved by an IL Specialist.

Room and Board (R&B) Services During Instability

Because stability may be unpredictable, it is possible that an older youth may become homeless due to a job loss, eviction, or other reason, despite the fact the older youth was self-sufficient through the fifth (5th) month of receiving R&B assistance. In the event this occurs, the older youth may request assistance again, provided the older youth has not expended the lifetime maximum of \$3,000, has not reached the age of 23, or is actively seeking employment. This assistance is intended to temporarily supplement the older youth's efforts, not as a means of on-going supplemental support.

Note: Requests for additional funds in excess of \$3,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis with approval by the DCS Older Youth Initiatives Manager or designee, based on availability of funds.

Trial Home Visits (THV)

A THV is encouraged for older youth who voice a strong desire to return to their parents' homes following case dismissal. This provides the older youth with an opportunity to experience life with the older youth's family while being provided a safety net if the older youth determines that living independently would be more appropriate. The older youth remains eligible for R&B services if the older youth turns 18 while on a THV.

Housing Assistance

Older youth may not access housing assistance from both the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) R&B funds and the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program at the same time. Those attending school full-time or part-time must access assistance for housing through the ETV Program (see policy 11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program).

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