

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. The shapes are primarily triangles and polygons, creating a dynamic, layered effect. The text is centered in the white space between these shapes.

Transitional Living Services and Benefits for Foster Care Youth

Workshop Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of the benefits and services that are available to foster care alumni
- Gain a better understanding of the role of the PAL Specialist and PAL contract provider
- Be able to identify local DFPS PAL Specialists

Texas College Tuition and Fee Waiver

The waiver provides exemption of tuition and fees at Texas public institutions of higher education for youth formerly in Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship, adopted youth, and certain other youth. Students must enroll in a state supported school or a dual credit course by their 25th birthday.

Eligible students can attend any Texas state-supported colleges and universities, including public medical school, public dental schools, or public technical institutes.

Who is eligible? All individuals in DFPS Conservatorship (substitute care) in one of the circumstances listed below.

FOSTER YOUTH:

- ▶ the day preceding the student's 18th birthday;
- ▶ the day of the student's 14th birthday, if also eligible for adoption on or after that day;
- ▶ the date the student graduates from high school or receives the equivalent of a high school diploma.

RETURN TO THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY OF A PARENT:

- ▶ if a youth was age 14 and older on or after June 1, 2016 and in DFPS's Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC); OR
- ▶ if a youth was age 16 or older on or after June 1, 2016 and was in DFPS's Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC).

PMC TO A NON-PARENT:

- ▶ PMC was granted to a non-parent on or after September 1, 2009.

ADOPTED YOUTH:

- ▶ adoption occurred on or after September 1, 2009; OR
- ▶ adopted and the subject of an adoption assistance agreement for monthly financial assistance and Medicaid. (No age limit for college enrollment for these students.)

DUAL CREDIT COURSES

- ▶ Students can use the waiver to enroll in a dual credit course that offers joint high school and college credit.

General Information

- fees are waived if required for education purposes (i.e., lab or other mandatory fees).
- skills training programs offered at community and technical colleges must be funded with state formula funds to be eligible for the tuition waiver.
- DFPS PAL or Adoption Eligibility staff verify eligibility for the waiver letter (Form 1003). Students submit the waiver letter when registering for school.
- Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THCEB) offer outreach programs to ensure that foster youth in grades 9-12 are aware of the tuition and fee waiver.
- As of January 1, 2016 each state college/university now has a **Foster Care Student Liaison** to help former foster youth access services and receive assistance.

Education & Training Voucher

The federal ETV program may provide up to \$5,000 an academic year to eligible students for college related expenses including rent, books, utilities, childcare, computers, personal expenses, transportation and tuition, if applicable. Funds awarded are based on the college's estimated cost of attendance.

Who is eligible? All individuals in DFPS Conservatorship (substitute care) in one of the circumstances listed below.

FOSTER YOUTH:

- who are at least 16 and likely to remain in care until 18; or
- who age out foster care but are not yet 21.

YOUTH WHO ENTER PERMANENCY CARE ASSISTANCE (PCA):

- not yet age 21 and entered the PCA program after age 16

ADOPTED YOUTH:

- not yet age 21 and are adopted after turning age 16

OTHER:

- Texas Juvenile Justice Department - youth must be in the custody of or under the jurisdiction of a local juvenile probation department AND were in a Title IV-E placement receiving Title IV-E payments on the day they turn 18.
- Tribal youth in tribal foster care

Students age 21 up to age 23:

An eligible student who has participated in, applied for and been approved for ETV before his/her 21st birthday may remain eligible until the month of their 23rd birthday as long as they are continuously enrolled and making satisfactory academic progress toward completion of their school approved degree or certificate program.

*Note: Undocumented youth are not eligible for ETV.

ETV General Information:

Eligible students can attend an *accredited or pre-accredited **private, public or non-profit** institution of higher education that:

- provides a bachelor's degree or not less than a two-year program that provides credit towards a degree or certification; or
- provides not less than a one-year program of training to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; or
- offers training programs and have been in existence for at least two years preparing students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation (training may be less than a year).

Students must enroll in:

- at least 6 semester hours; or
- 3 semester hours if enrolled in a summer session or a dual college credit course.

ETV General Information Continued

Correspondence, Distance Education, or Continuing Education courses are allowed if part of a student's academic degree or certificate program. Prior approval by the ETV staff is needed to ensure proper school accreditation and course qualifications.

*Note: all of the schools/programs listed above must be accredited or have been granted pre-accreditation status by an agency or organization that has been recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

Students apply at: www.texasetv.com or call 1-877-268-4063.

Other DFPS Scholarships

If a youth/young adult aged out of DFPS foster care, completed the PAL life skills training program, and met other requirements they may be eligible for scholarships. These funds can be used to supplement any school expenses not covered by the ETV program, scholarships, or federal grants.

Note: Scholarships received may affect the amount of ETV funds to be awarded because they are factored in with other sources of funds received by the student.

<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/education/scholarships.asp>

DFPS Scholarships

- ▶ **Freshmen Success Fund for Foster Youth (est. April 2013):** This is a one-time grant of \$1,000 available for first time college freshmen formerly in DFPS foster care. These grants must cover basic, non-tuition related expenses such as books and supplies, computers and software, tools and uniforms, and transportation. Students must be enrolled in a Texas state-supported college, university, or vocational school that accepts the tuition and fee waiver.
- ▶ **C. Ed Davis-PAL Scholarship (est. July 2012):** This scholarship is for basic, non-tuition needs for former foster youth who are majoring in government, political science, history, or other pre-law field. Scholarships are for \$1,000 per academic year and are available to sophomore, junior, or senior year students.

Other Benefits & Services

The federal Preparation For Adult Living (PAL) Services program prepares youth for adult life when they leave foster care. The program provides services, benefits, resources, and supports and makes efforts to connect youth to community resources they will need in their transition to a successful adulthood.

Supportive services and benefits are provided by PAL Staff or PAL Contract Providers to eligible young adults up to age 21 to become self-sufficient and productive. PAL is funded by the *federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program*, state general revenue funds and/or community match (20%).

Who is eligible? Youth in DFPS paid substitute care are the priority population for PAL services.

FOSTER YOUTH/YOUNG ADULTS:

- who are at least age 16 or older and likely to remain in foster care until at least age 18.
- young adults who have aged out of DFPS conservatorship at age 18 or have left the Extended Foster Care Program may qualify for PAL services up to their 21st birthday.

Based upon funding availability, PAL services may be provided to these additional eligible populations:

- youth age 16 who are likely to remain in DFPS conservatorship until age 18, and who are in a non-paid substitute care placement (relative or kinship placement);
- youth as young as 14 in DFPS conservatorship, who are likely to remain in care until age 18;
- youth age 16 and 17 in DFPS conservatorship while living with a parent or guardian, and who are likely to remain in care until age 18;
- youth who have been legally emancipated while in DFPS conservatorship; and
- youth or young adults who are undocumented, who may qualify if they meet eligibility criteria.

Required PAL Services

Life skills assessment (Casey Life Skills Assessment) appropriate to the youth's individual needs to assess strength and needs in life skills attainment. Assessments are conducted before life skills training. www.caseylifeskills.org

- ❖ Youth age 16 if they haven't taken the assessment
- ❖ Youth age 15 and older in PMC beginning in FY18
- ❖ Youth age 14 and older in PMC beginning in FY19

Life Skills Training (age 16 to 18) 5 hours of training in each of the following core areas:

- ❖ Health and Safety;
- ❖ Housing and Transportation;
- ❖ Job Readiness;
- ❖ Financial Management;
- ❖ Life Decisions/Responsibility;
- ❖ Personal/Social Relationships

Benefits & Services

- ❑ **Transitional Living Allowance** - Up to \$1,000 to help with expenses for a successful adulthood if funds are available, must meet the qualification requirements to include completion of PAL Life Skills Training.
- ❑ **Case management** to help young adults with self-sufficiency planning and resource coordination. Case management is provided by community contractors or PAL staff while young adults receive financial assistance. Efforts are made to partner with local housing authorities, workforce development boards, and other community resources to ensure that youth in need receive services to help them achieve successful outcomes.
- ❑ **Aftercare Room and Board Assistance** - The purpose is to alleviate or prevent homelessness. This is not an automatic benefit; young adults must show a need for emergency or stabilizing assistance, had been in DFPS conservatorship the day before turning age 18, not yet reached age 21 and meet qualification requirements. Up to \$500 a month (not to exceed \$3,000 of accumulated payments)

Texas Medicaid for Former Foster Youth 18-25

Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Program

The FFCC program provides continuous healthcare coverage through age 25 to young adults who age out of Texas foster care and are receiving Medicaid when they aged out. This population will receive healthcare services in two separate programs based on age;

- Young adults aged 18 through 20 will be enrolled in STAR Health but can switch to STAR upon request; and

Young adults aged 21 through 25 will receive Medicaid through the STAR plan of their choice.

To be eligible for the FFCC program, the young adult must:

- Be age 18 through 25;
- Have been in Texas foster care on his or her 18th birthday or older;
- Be receiving Medicaid when he or she aged out of Texas foster care; and
- Be a U.S. Citizen or be a qualified alien for example have an I-551 permanent resident card.

Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY)

Provides medical coverage to young adults age 18 through 20 who are not eligible for the FFCC program because they were not receiving Medicaid at the time they aged out of foster care. The following eligibility criteria apply:

- Be age 18 through 20 years of age;
- Have been in Texas foster care at age 18, or older;
- Have no other healthcare coverage;
- Meet program rules for income; and
- Be a U.S. Citizen or have a qualified alien status.

PAL Lead Coordinators

❖ http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coordinators.asp

❖ www.dfps.state.tx.us

Find a Service

Services for Youth in Foster Care

Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program

PAL Statewide Staff

❖ texasyouthconnection.org

Role of PAL Specialists

- ❖ Serve as the subject matter experts regarding the Transitional Living Services program and resources for transitioning youth. Regional PAL Staff coordinate these services and resources between caseworkers, contractors and the community, where appropriate, on behalf of DFPS youth;
- ❖ Develop and provide regular training and education to caseworkers, contract providers, caregivers, partner agencies and the community about needs of transitioning youth;
- ❖ Case manage a workload of youth between the ages of 15½ to 21 and identify their PAL program administrative status and needs;
- ❖ Refer/certify eligible youth and young adults to PAL contractors or community resources or provide the service themselves; and
- ❖ Identify eligible youth for the Tuition and Fee Waiver and Employment Preference, obtains supervisory approval, and issues the Tuition and Fee Waiver form and Employment Preference Letter.

Role of PAL Contract Providers

Life Skills Contract

- To administer the independent life skills assessment to determine the youth's general readiness to live independently and to help identify appropriate services to meet the youth's individual needs
- To provide fundamental skills an adult needs to help them live independently through life skills training

Case Management & Aftercare Services Contract

- To assist in the development of and adjustment to the transition plan
- To monitor the progress toward completing the goals of the transition plan
- To assess the need for Aftercare Room and Board and financial assistance
- To make referrals to community resources
- To provide supportive counseling and guidance

Resources

- ▶ Texas Education Code §§54.366, 54.367, 40 Texas Administrative Code §700.1630.
- ▶ P.L. 110-351, 42 U.S.C. §677, 40 Texas Administrative Code §700.1613
- ▶ PAL Staff Contact List:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/PAL_coordinators.asp

- ▶ Texas Youth Connection website: <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/txyouth/>
- ▶ http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10000.asp#CPS
- ▶ http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/handbooks/CPS/Files/CPS_pg_x10200.asp#CPS_10200
- ▶ http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/default.asp
- ▶ Texas Higher Education Foster Care Liaisons Information & Resource Guide, <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/media/2075/he-liaisons-guide-final-updated-76.pdf>
- ▶ BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES Revised November 2017
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Preparation_For_Adult_Living/#reference
- ▶ COLLEGE PROGRAMS/RESOURCES FOR DFPS FOSTER YOUTH, ADOPTED YOUTH & CERTAIN YOUTH THAT EXIT TO A PARENT OR NON-PARENT OR ENTER THE PCA PROGRAM-September 2017
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/default.asp