

*Handouts for the Webinar*

# **Foster Care 18 to 21 and Guardianship Assistance: What You Need to Know**

Dec. 13, 2016

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Family and Children's Resource Program, part of the  
Jordan Institute for Families  
UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work

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NC Division of Social Services

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# Creating a Successful Foster Care 18 to 21 Program

## Understand the **Benefits** of an Extended Foster Care Program:

- Creates increased opportunities for success and overall well-being for young adults aging out of foster care.
- Young adults participating in the program are more likely to obtain a high school diploma, enroll in college, and are less likely to be perpetrators of crimes.
- Allows young adults to experience independence while having a “safety net” to fall back on.
- Offers ongoing support during the critical transition into self-sufficiency.

## Know the **Values and Principles** of Foster Care 18 to 21:

- Ensure that all young adults establish and maintain permanent lifelong connections to caring and committed adults.
- Allow young adults to gain real life experiences with independence, and allow them to learn from their mistakes.
- Work in partnership with young adults to develop and reach independent living goals.
- Empower young adult to take ownership of planning and developing goals, while learning decision-making skills along the way.

## Consider Young adults as **Partners in Planning**:

- Engage them as a partner in planning for permanence through independence.
- Help them identify key members of their Transition Support Team.
- Provide support in developing independent living skills.
- Respect that young adults have valuable insights that can help develop solutions.
- Believe that young adults can provide valuable contributions in planning for their future.
- Recognize that the young adult will be part of the solution.

## Offer **Support** to Young Adults in Foster Care:

- Create opportunities for involvement in extracurricular and community groups to ensure the young adult is spending time with multiple caring adults.
- Provide information, skills, and supports the young adult needs to drive the direction of their own life – help them see the results of their choices and actions.
- Focus on helping the young adult find and engage with family – support him/her in establishing healthy, lasting family relationships.
- Recognize that simply extending existing foster care programs and policies, which were put in place for children and youth under age 18, will not meet the developmental needs of young adults ages 18 to 21.

## Messages for Young Adults

- The goal is to help you succeed.
- You are an equal party in decision making and transition planning.
- The program offers supports all young adults need, such as meaningful adult relationships.
- It's voluntary: You can stop services any time.
- Social workers will be there to offer guidance and support when you're making decisions.
- You must play a part in planning.



THE KEY IS TO PROVIDE **QUALITY TRANSITION PLANNING** THAT IS **YOUNG ADULT CENTERED** AND **STRENGTH BASED**, WHILE OFFERING **GUIDANCE** AND **SUPPORT** ALONG THE WAY



### About this webinar

This webinar was developed through funding from the North Carolina Division of Social Services by the Family and Children's Resource Program, part of the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work


 In the future a recording of this webinar will be available on [ncswLearn.org](http://ncswLearn.org).

### Goals for this Webinar


By the end of this session, we hope you will be able to:

- Explain to others **why** NC is adding these programs
- Message to others **key takeaways** and **implementation points** about these programs
- Take the steps needed to **prepare** for successful implementation




### A Special Note About Questions

- We will monitor questions via the chat box and answer them as possible throughout the webinar
- There will also be a **follow-up document** developed that will include answers to questions asked during this webinar (which will be e-mailed to all registered participants and posted with the webinar recording)
- The recorded webinar will reside on the Family and Children's Resource Program webpage (<http://fcrp.unc.edu/webinars.asp>)




## Guardianship Assistance Program



### NC's Guardianship Assistance Program

*A way to support permanency for youth when reunification and adoption aren't possible. Under GAP, county child welfare agencies make monthly payments (same as foster care board rate) to guardians. Benefits continue to age 21 for youth who enter GAP at age 16 or 17.*



- An option thanks to *Fostering Connections (2008)*
- N.C.G.S. § 108A-49.1
- Uses monthly graduated rates set by the NCGA



### Why GAP?

**Benefits**



- Helps youth stay connected to family and culture
- Increases stability and continuity
- Prevents youth from remaining in foster care
- Reduces agency supervision and intervention
- Doesn't require TPR
- Provides relatives/kin assistance to care permanently for youth



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### GAP Criteria

- Reunification and adoption ruled out
- In NC child welfare agency custody
- In licensed home at least six months
- Between 14 – 18 years old
  - OR a sibling to a 14-18 year old and is placed for guardianship in same home
- Prospective guardian committed to providing permanency
- Strong attachment between youth & guardian




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### Practice Implications

- Concurrent planning is critical
- Conversations about permanency options should occur in CFTs
- Be prepared to license relatives
  - GAP: an incentive to pursue licensure

*GAP is **NOT** an easy way to get youth out of care.*

*GAP is appropriate **only** after reunification and adoption have been ruled out.*




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### Case Plan/PPAT Considerations

- Why were reunification and adoption ruled out?
- Why separation from siblings (*if applicable*)?
- Describe why guardianship is in youth's best interests
- Verify youth's eligibility for GAP benefits

**START EARLY**


*Don't wait to talk with youth, parents, and prospective guardians about permanency options, including guardianship*




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### Timeline

1. Rule out reunification and adoption.\*
2. Court makes guardianship the permanent plan.\*
3. Complete Guardianship Assistance Checklist and Agreement.
4. Court grants legal guardianship to guardian.
5. Monthly cash assistance begins the next month.




*\* 1 & 2 can happen simultaneously*



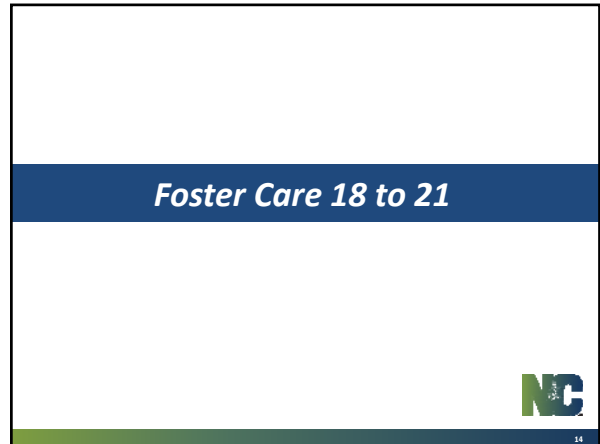
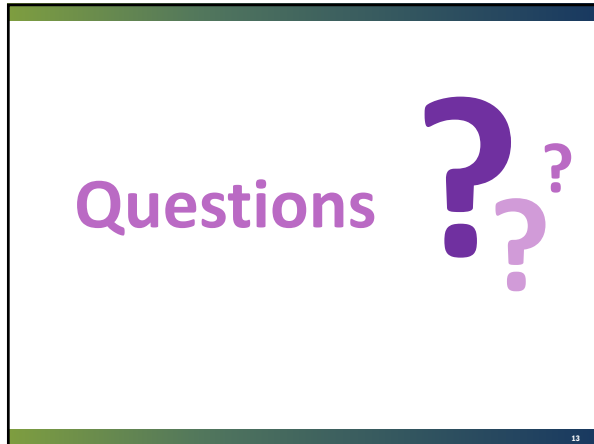
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### Messaging to Youth and Prospective Guardians

- **Relative notifications** should:
  - Encourage relatives to consider being licensed and
  - Describe the possibility of guardianship assistance benefits
- **CFTs and PPAT meetings** should include discussion of:
  - Permanency options and
  - Requirements for guardianship assistance



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### NC's Foster Care 18 to 21 Program

*This is our state's Extended Foster Care Program. It lets young adults who might otherwise age out of foster care at age 18, to voluntarily agree to continue receiving foster care services, while transitioning into adulthood.*

- *Fostering Connections* (2008) OK's use of Title IV-E so young adults can stay in foster care up to age 21
- NC's law: N.C.G.S. 108A-48  
 ✓ [http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_108A/GS\\_108A-48.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_108A/GS_108A-48.pdf)

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	CARS	FC 18 to 21
<b>Funding</b>	County & State	Title IV-E & SFHF
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enrolled full-time pursuing H.S. diploma or equivalent</li> <li>• Course of study at college level, or</li> <li>• Course of vocational or technical training with goal of employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary/post-secondary ed.</li> <li>• Voc. education</li> <li>• Program or activity to employment barriers</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Medical condition/ disability prohibits meeting ed./ employment requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Licensed Placement</b>	Required	Not required
<b>County Participation</b>	Optional	Required

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### Program Eligibility Requirements

**Must meet at least one of the following:**

1. Enrolled in H.S. or GED program; or
2. Enrolled in postsecondary or vocational ed. institution; or
3. In program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment; or
4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
5. Incapable of completing educational or employment requirements due to medical condition or disability.

**Must meet all of the following:**

- In foster care on 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; and
- Be at least 18 but not yet 21 years old;
- Enter into a VPA with county DSS; and
- Agree to reside in placement approved by DSS.

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Funding Sources	IV-E Determinations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All young adults in program eligible for monthly foster care maintenance payments</li> <li>• Payments = standard board rate set by NCGA</li> <li>• Available funding: Federal Title IV-E funds and State Foster Home Funds (SFHF)</li> <li>• County child welfare agencies held harmless from contributing 50% of the nonfederal share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each entry into program is considered a new foster care episode.</li> <li>• Eligibility determinations must be completed upon every entry/re-entry.</li> <li>• Determinations based solely on young adult without regard to family they were removed from as a minor, or relatives young adult may be residing with currently.</li> </ul>

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### Foster Care Maintenance Payments

Can be made to:

- A licensed foster parent, child placement agency, or foster care facility
- The young adult, a rental agency/landlord, or a relative/family friend



Can be used for any type of living expense:

- Room and board/rent, food, transportation costs, educational supplies, and other living expenses

Young adults receiving SSI/SSA, ETVs, and NC Reach are still eligible for monthly foster care maintenance payments.

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### Voluntary Placement Agreements

- Both the young adult and the county child welfare agency must sign
- Young adult:
  - is an equal party in the agreement
  - must agree to the agreement's provisions
- VPA is effective the date the young adult turns 18
  - OR, if over age 18, the date VPA is signed



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### Court Requirements

- Both the young adult and the county child welfare agency must sign the VPA
- Initial review hearing is held within 90 days of the date the VPA for Foster Care 18 to 21 is signed.
- Additional hearings held upon written request of the young adult or the county child welfare agency
- The court may schedule additional hearings to review the placement and progress of the young adult

Guardians ad Litem are not appointed to young adults in the Foster Care 18 to 21 program.

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### County Oversight

- Develop and maintain:
  - Transitional Living Plan
  - 90-Day Transition Plan
- Transition Support Team (TST) meetings
- Monthly contacts
- Independent living skills and support services
- Ongoing review of program eligibility
- Placement services
- Yearly credit checks



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### Placement Options

#### Foster Care Home/Facility

- Family Foster Home
- Therapeutic Foster Home
- Group Home

#### College/University Dormitory

- On-Campus Dormitory
- On-Campus Apartment
- College Co-Ops

#### Semi-Supervised Independent Living Arrangement

- Shared Housing (Apartment, Townhome, House)
- Non-College Dormitory
- Host Home
- Relative/Kinship



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### A Semi-Supervised Independent Living Arrangement

An *unlicensed, least restrictive living arrangement with approval and ongoing oversight by a county child welfare agency.*

- Young adults live on their own, while receiving support to help them become independent and self-sufficient.
- Select placements based on the adult's best interest and an assessment of his or her needs, goals, and preference.



The placement is appropriate for young adults who are high functioning, responsible, and developmentally sound.

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### Terminating Benefits & Services

Foster Care 18 to 21 benefits and services must be terminated when the young adult:

- Reaches age 21
- No longer meets eligibility criteria
- Requests services be terminated

OR



- The court determines the young adult has violated the VPA for Foster Care 18 to 21



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### 30-Day Written Notice

- If the court terminates Foster Care 18 to 21 services, agency must send the young adult a 30-day written notice
- A Motion for Review (AOC-J-140) must be attached to the written notice
- This is the young adult's chance to appeal the court's decision





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### Unlimited Re-Entries


Re-entry into Foster Care 18 to 21 can occur if the young adult:

- is at least 18 but not yet 21
- was in foster care upon turning 18
- meets at least one program eligibility requirement
- is willing to enter into and abide by a VPA
- is willing to reside in an approved placement



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## Questions



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### Implementing Foster Care 18 to 21 "The Right Way"




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### Understanding the Benefits of Foster Care 18 to 21 in Helping Young Adults Reach Self-Sufficiency

- Some 18-year-olds aren't ready to be self-sufficient
- Compared to those exiting care at 18, young adults in extended foster care were more than 2x as likely to:
  - Have a job
  - Be enrolled in a school or training program

Those with a high school diploma or GED were over 3x as likely to be enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college



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### Creating a Successful Program



*Geared towards permanency through independence*



*Driven by young adults*



*Developmentally appropriate*

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### Rethinking Service Delivery to Young Adults

- Let's change how we think about permanency for young adults.
- We must be responsive and respectful of their needs.
- The goal of the program is for young adults to become *independent* and be *successful*.



**The Key**  
Quality transitioning planning that's young adult-centered and strength-based.

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### Values and Principles

*The success of the program depends on all those involved*



- Establish and maintain permanent lifelong connections to caring and committed adults
- Let young adults gain real life experiences with independence, and let them learn from their mistakes
- Work in partnership with young adults
- Empower them to take ownership of planning and to learn decision-making skills in the process
- Be a safety net during the transition to self-sufficiency, so they can succeed as independent adults in the community

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### Engaging Young Adults

*How to talk with young adults about Foster Care 18 to 21*

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### Why would anyone want to stay in Foster Care after age 18?

- More time to grow up and prepare for transition to adulthood
- Choice of going to school or working
- Opportunity for continued housing and caregiver support
- Live on your own, with a roommate, or a relative
- Experience greater independence in a supportive environment

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### Why I will participate

- I love the family that I am with and previous families
- Time to come up with a plan for life outside foster care
- Continue to build stronger relationships with the family I was with
- More time to spend with bio family






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### Important to know from young adult perspective


- Important to get this information out because we have a lot of teens who are approaching this mark
- Teens have families they love and want to continue that relationship
- Time to prepare for what is coming
- Give teens hope and help prevent them ending up homeless

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### Talking to Young People about the Program


- The goal is to help you succeed.
- You are an **equal party** in decision making and transition planning.
- The program offers supports all young adults need.
- It's voluntary: you can stop services any time.
- Social workers will be there to offer guidance and support when you're making decisions.
- You must play a part in planning.



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### Young Adults as Partners in Planning

- Engage them as partners in planning for permanence through independence
- Help them identify members of their Transition Support Team
- Provide support in developing independent living skills
- Respect young adults: they have valuable insights and can help develop solutions
- Believe they can provide valuable contributions in planning for their future
- Recognize that they will be part of the solution



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### Start Early

*Tips for Social Workers and Youth Approaching age 18*

**Tell youth about:**

- Foster Care 18 to 21
- Program benefits
- Eligibility requirements
- Re-entry an option any time prior to turning 21


- **Review the VPA** for Foster Care 18 to 21 with youth
- **90-Day Transition Plan:**
  - TLP should include services to help youth meet 1+ eligibility requirements
  - Develop permanent connections with committed, caring adults
  - Give chances for increased responsibility



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### From Former Foster Youth

REASONS TO LEAVE		REASONS TO STAY	
To reconnect with family	Inconveniences	Structure	Financial / parenting support
Just done!	Misinformation or NO information	Education	Sibling contact
Flexibility	First chance to make choice	Resources	Relationships
Restrictions	Intimidation of court process	Safety net	Experiences / exposure
Do what I want	Placement	Not ready	Preparation
You're ready		Stability	
Family		Gives more time	



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## Summary



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### Accessing Forms for these Programs

- Go to:  
<https://attendee.gototraining.com/r/3481989877100919810>
- Register
- You can then access all forms and policy.
- There is *no* accompanying webinar
  - This was just the best way to make it available to everyone.



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### Questions

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### Impact on you and your agency

*Type into chat.....*

*One thing you will do in response to what you have learned today....*



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*Follow-Up Document for the Webinar*

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**Webinar handouts:** [https://ncswlearn.org/ncsts/webinar/handouts/46\\_webinar\\_handouts\\_12\\_13\\_16.pdf](https://ncswlearn.org/ncsts/webinar/handouts/46_webinar_handouts_12_13_16.pdf)

**Recording:** if you missed the webinar or want to view it again, go to: <http://fcrp.unc.edu/webinars.asp>

## **Answers to Questions Asked During the Webinar, Plus Additional Resources**

*Responses in this document are from the NC Division of Social Services Child Welfare Services Section.*

### **I. Questions about the Guardian Assistance Program (GAP)**

#### **ELIGIBILITY**

**Are youth who are not in DSS custody eligible for the GAP?**

No.

**To be eligible for GAP, must a child be placed with their guardian prior to entering the GAP, or are they eligible if they were in any licensed placement?**

Before they can be eligible for GAP, the young person must have been placed in the licensed home of the prospective guardian for six consecutive months.

**When guardians become licensed, do they have to be open to accepting other children? That's been a question raised by guardians in the past.**

There is no requirement for that—although it would usually be welcome!

**If the rights of the parents have already been terminated, would parental rights have to be reinstated before young person can qualify for GAP?**

When parental rights have been terminated, reunification has been ruled out. The court would need to verify that adoption is not in that youth's best interest; then workers can move ahead to bring the young person into GAP.

**How do you "rule out" adoption prior to age 18?**

The court may effectively “rule out” adoption for a number of reasons. For example, it may be that the youth is not interested in being adopted, or it may be that the guardian is a relative who is unwilling to adopt because it would involve termination of parental rights.

**Since policy now says that we maintain reunification as an option, what are the requirements for the courts to rule out reunification in order for the youth to be eligible for GAP? Would this just be cases in which reunification is a concurrent plan instead of a primary plan?**

Reunification shall remain the primary or secondary plan for the youth unless the court makes findings under G.S. 7B-901 that reunification efforts would be unsuccessful or inconsistent with the juvenile's health or safety. Guardianship or custody to the relative or guardianship or custody to a court-appointed caretaker would be appropriate primary and secondary plans at that time.

**Could guardianship assistance apply to the sibling (age 14-18) of a child who has been adopted and the courts have determined that adoption is not in that child's best interest?**

Not at this time.

**What if the young person came back to foster care after adoption had failed? Will they still qualify for GAP?**

Eligibility for guardianship assistance is based on the youth meeting the eligibility requirements at the time the child welfare agency and prospective guardian are entering into the agreement, so it is possible for a young person who has previously been adopted to qualify for GAP.

**Does the home have to be licensed for 6 months prior to receiving guardianship?**

The prospective guardian(s) would have to be licensed for six consecutive months and the youth has to have been placed in that home for at least six months prior to receiving guardianship assistance.

**If a relative is not licensed and wanted to accept the guardianship assistance program, would the guardianship be held until the 6-month time frame?**

The six-month requirement for licensure and placement would have to be met in order for the prospective guardian to receive guardianship assistance benefits. The decision to grant guardianship when these requirements have not yet been met will be a joint decision between the child welfare agency, the prospective guardian, and the youth. The Court may have input as well. This decision would

include consideration of a number of factors such as the age of the youth, financial implications of guardianship without assistance benefits, and the prospective guardian's interest in licensure.

### **Will GAP be available to youth in NC custody who are placed with relatives through ICPC in another state?**

Yes. Note that Medicaid is provided with GAP, but it is not regulated by the federal Administration for Children and Families. As a result, NC counties will probably need to have more contact with other states to get Medicaid approvals for young adults in the GAP who are placed through ICPC.

### **PAYMENTS**

#### **For youth aged 14 to 18, does the GAP monthly assistance go directly to the guardian?**

Yes.

#### **What are the monthly payment amounts under GAP?**

The monthly payment amount for GAP is the monthly foster care maintenance payment amount as set by the NC General Assembly.

#### **How long can payments continue? To what age?**

Payments continue to age 18 as long as the guardian remains legally and financially responsible for the youth. Benefits can continue to age 21 if the youth enters into guardianship arrangements at 16 or 17 and, when they turn 18, meets one of the requirements for the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program.

#### **What benefits do youth lose if they enter into Gap at age 14 or 15?**

Youth exiting foster care to guardianship at ages 14 and 15 would not be eligible for Education and Training Vouchers or NC Reach. To be eligible for ETV youth would have to have been in foster care on or after their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, adopted at or after age 16, or exiting to guardianship at or after age 16. To be eligible for NC Reach youth need to have aged-out of foster care or been adopted after age 12. State law would have to be changed to allow NC Reach for youth entering into guardianship assistance arrangements.

## **2. Questions about the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program**

### **FORMS & POLICY**

#### **Will the policy and forms be available by Dec. 15, 2016 as anticipated?**

Foster Care 18 to 21 policy was published on 12/1/16. It can be found in Section 1201: Child Placement Services, XII. Foster Care 18 to 21 Services for Young Adults (see link below). The forms were published and available by January 1, 2017 and are available here:

<https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/forms/dss/>.

#### **Can you provide a link to the state standards on these programs for readers to print, save, and review?**

Below is a link to the Foster Care 18 to 21 policy in the Child Welfare manual:

<https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/manuals/dss/csm-10/man/CSs1201c12.pdf>

The following are NC General Statutes that have been revised regarding Foster Care 18 to 21:  
[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_108A/GS\\_108A-48.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_108A/GS_108A-48.pdf)  
[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_131D/GS\\_131D-10.2B/pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_131D/GS_131D-10.2B/pdf)  
[http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter\\_7B/GS\\_7B-910.1.pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/EnactedLegislation/Statutes/PDF/BySection/Chapter_7B/GS_7B-910.1.pdf)

The following Administrative Rules have been revised to address Foster Care 18 to 21 (not yet published): 70B .0102; 70M .0402.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

**To join this program, must the youth have been in a licensed placement prior to turning 18? I have a youth in kinship on APPLA aging out of that program.**

No. It doesn't matter what their placement status was prior to age 18, as long as they were in DSS custody when they turned 18.

**What about youth who have IDD or youth with significant mental health diagnosis? Are they eligible for Foster Care 18 to 21?**

We understand there are many young adults in this category. In the future, DSS will be working with partners at NC's Division of MH/DD/SAS to advance our support for this group of young adults. Best guidance until then: take into consideration the goal of the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program—helping young adults become independent and self-sufficient. Along the way, decisions in this arena should be made on a case-by-case basis.

**What about youth who are AWOL or incarcerated on their 18th birthday? Are they eligible upon their return to the community or release from incarceration?**

Being missing or incarcerated when turning 18 is not a disqualifier for the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program. Young adults are eligible to return as long as they are in DSS custody on their 18th birthday.

**Can the young adult get married and still be eligible for the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program?**

Yes, the young adult can be/get married and still be eligible for the program.

**What about youths that do not have DSS involvement? Can these youth become eligible for this program?**

No. One of the eligibility requirements for the program is that the youth must have been in the custody of a county DSS and aged out of foster care at age 18.

**Are young adults who have previously aged out of foster care eligible for this program?**

Yes, as long as they were in DSS custody on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, have not yet reached their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and meet at least one of the five eligibility requirements.

**What if a child ages out of care from another state and then comes to our state--are they eligible?**

The young adult would need to be referred back to the state in which they were in foster care for services. If that state offers extended foster care services, they may request NC's assistance with supervision and services through ICPC.

**CARS**

**For youth currently in care under a CARS--will they stay under the CARS or transfer into this program?**

Current CARS youth will continue in place under those agreements, with no change. If a CARS were to terminate and an eligible youth wanted to come back, they would enter the Foster Care 18 to 21 Program.

**For students under a CARS and living in a college dorm, does the Division pay the student or continue to pay their licensed foster home?**

This would be a county decision; however, counties are encouraged to consider the young adult as the payee of the maintenance payment, when appropriate. Keep in mind the goal of the program: helping young adults become independent. Part of becoming independent and self-sufficient is managing/ budgeting income. Consider what is in the young adult's best interest, whether it is the foster parent being the payee and giving the young adult an allowance to cover food, transportation, school supplies, etc., or the young adult being the payee and paying the foster parent "rent" every month to hold a room in the home. The maintenance payment is meant to assist the young adult in becoming self-sufficient; paying the entire amount to a foster parent to solely hold a bed in the home and not financially support the young adult in any other way is not appropriate.

**PAYMENTS AND BENEFITS**

**If a young person gets involved with the law, and is on probation, would that affect their benefits?**

No. We must anticipate that young adults will make mistakes and should not hold them to higher standards than other young adults. This is an opportunity for the young adult to experience natural consequences and learn from their mistakes, while receiving support and guidance from the county and other service providers.

**What are the rates for licensed residential non-treatment independent living programs?**

The board rates for young adults in Foster Care 18 to 21 are the same rates established by the general assembly: <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/dcdl/famsupchildwelfare/CWS-07-2015.pdf>.

**If the youth opts to get the payment, but wants to stay in their licensed foster placement, does the foster parent still get paid by the county their usual board rate, or will the youth be responsible for paying them?**

There will only be one payment of \$634 each month. If the county, foster parent, and young adult all agree for the young adult to be the payee of the maintenance payment, there can be conditions put into

place in regards to the young adult paying the foster parent “rent” out of the maintenance payment each month. This is a great way for the young adult to learn money management skills.

**What happens to these young adults in college who go somewhere in the summer, in between spring and fall classes? If the young person stays in a facility during breaks, does the facility get the payment?**

This is something that should be determined on a case-by-case basis. The decision of how to handle maintenance payments for young adults who may leave their approved placement during school breaks should be made in partnership with the young adult, county, and placement provider. Please see Foster Care 18 to 21 policy, Part C. Eligibility and Funding – Temporary Absences from Placement for more information.

**What if the young adult lives with the mother from whom they were previously removed? Who will receive payment?**

Placement with a biological parent or adoptive parent from whom the young adult was removed from as a minor is not an eligible placement. The young adult would not be eligible for services or benefits.

**If the youth decided to go to college and receive the funds, would they still be eligible for Pell grants or other educational grants?**

Yes, young adults who receive supplemental funding through ETVs and NC Reach are still eligible to receive monthly maintenance payments.

**Can young adults still get LINKS money in conjunction with this payment?**

Yes, LINKS funding, if available, can be used in conjunction with monthly foster care maintenance payments.

**PLACEMENTS**

**So a "placement" at a college dorm can qualify?**

Yes, college residences will be approved placements. With these, quarterly assessments are not required as long as the placement is college- or university-sponsored.

**In a case where the young adult disrupts a placement and cannot easily find another—are we obligated to continue to help him/her look for a new placement?**

Yes, the county and the young adult should work in partnership to secure another placement. Eligible placement options have expanded with this program. Assist the young adult with thinking outside the box (sharing an apartment with another young adult, renting a room from a family in the community, reaching out to relatives/family friends, etc.) in order to secure placement. Remember, these placements do not have to be licensed, only approved by the county child welfare agency.

**What happens if the court doesn't agree with or support the decision as to where the youth chooses to live and the department has agreed to support that placement?**

If the court doesn't agree with a placement the young adult and the agency support, the court can order that a new placement be secured and the young adult and county must abide by the court's order.



**If the young adult desires to live with their grandparent, and the biological parent that allegedly abused the young adult and led to DSS getting custody lives in that home, can this still be an approved placement funded by this program?**

Unfortunately, no. The young adult cannot reside in the same home as a biological or adoptive parent from whom they were removed from as a minor and receive benefits and services through this program.

### **RETURNING TO THE PROGRAM**

**If a young person leaves the program unplanned, what would be the requirements if they wanted to return months later?**

They must meet the same eligibility requirements required for initial entry into the program: the young adult must have aged out of foster care at age 18, have not yet reached his/her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and meet at least one of the five eligibility criteria for the program.

**To re-enter, the young adult must meet only one of the 5 criteria?**

Yes, in addition to meeting the age requirement (i.e., they must be at least 18 and not yet 21 years old).

### **REQUIRED CONTACTS**

**If contacts don't have to happen in the home, who is assuring that the living situation is appropriate — especially if youth are residing in non-licensed homes?**

Quarterly in-home assessments **are** required. The purpose of these assessments are to ensure the home continues to be appropriate and free of safety hazards. If the young adult requires additional support, monthly or bi-monthly in-home assessments can be made. However, quarterly in-home visits are the minimum requirement.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Logistically, how does this program work with Cardinal? For example, with authorizations? Does it require monthly face-to-face CFT meetings versus TST meetings?**

In regards to NC child welfare policy, requirements would be the same for every young adult, no matter the placement type. Meaning, requirements for every young adult in the program would follow Foster Care 18 to 21 policy. However, if there are additional requirements through Medicaid or the LME/MCO, those must be met in addition to the requirements for Foster Care 18 to 21.

**Are LINKS social workers the ones implementing/maintaining this program with their young adults?**

This is up to each county.

**What if a young adult age 18-21 signs a VPA and has a child? Is that minor child considered dependent?**

Young adults who may be caring for a minor child are eligible for benefits and services. When appropriate, the young adult should maintain custody of their child and be able to care for their child in their home. It is the county's responsibility to assist that young adult with parenting skills so that he/she can become self-sufficient and continue to care and provide for the child.

**If a young adult moves away from their county of origin--or where they were in custody-- which county maintains support?**

Any time a young adult moves out of their county of origin, an intercounty agreement should be completed. This is an addendum to the VPA and should be a partnership planning process between the two counties as well as the young adult. It is the responsibility of the two counties to develop a plan that is in the best interest of the young adult and one that both counties agree upon.

**Remember:** You can request to have young adults from SaySo speak to your clients, CFTs, and others to help them think about the opportunities that Foster Care 18-21, ETV, and other programs can offer. Successful “graduates” can be memorable resources and models for self-advocacy! Contact information for SaySo can be found here: <http://www.saysoinc.org/>