

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, which became law on December 27, 2020, provides **significant assistance to young people with experience in foster care** during the pandemic by: **(1)** allowing young people to **stay in foster care** past age 21, **(2)** allowing young people who “aged-out” during the pandemic to **re-enter foster care**, **(3)** **increasing funding to meet the basic needs** of older and former foster youth—through age 26!, and **(4)** **increasing funding for education and training vouchers.**

Implementation is just getting started and FAAZ has recommendations!

Continuation of Placement + Services



- DCS cannot require a young person to leave foster care due to age...
- ...even if they are unable to meet extended foster care participation requirements (school, work, etc.) due to the pandemic
- Effective until September 30, 2021

...The Feds Say

FAAZ Says...



- Provide **additional supports** to young people who will have to leave care on September 30th, so they are **ready for independence in the context of COVID:**
 - Financial capability coaching
 - Information on pandemic relief, including how to access social safety net services
 - Peer support

Re-entry into Foster Care

The Feds Say...

- Youth who left foster care due to age during the COVID-19 public health emergency (defined as January 27, 2020 until September 30, 2021) can re-enter care...
- ...even if they are unable to meet extended foster care participation requirements (school, work, etc.) due to the pandemic
- Effective until September 30, 2021

ENTER NOW!

- Provide for **immediate re-entry through every available door**
- **Remove requirement that young people must be “actively participating” in TILP** (Transitional Independent Living Program) **prior to re-entry**
- Identify **point people**, preferably people **with lived experience**, to receive requests and **help young people navigate the re-entry process**
- Use Chafee funds to **clear any back payments or debts incurred while young people were out of care**—especially those who exited after the law was passed!

...FAAZ Says



Increased Funding to Support Basic Needs

- **\$10.5M to Arizona!** in increased Chafee funds
- Chafee funds can be used for all purposes currently allowed by the Chafee Act, including **direct financial assistance**, meeting basic needs, housing, education, and employment support
- Chafee funds can be used for costs related to obtaining a driver’s license and driving
- **Young people are eligible through age 26 until September 30th!**

...The Feds Say

FAAZ Says...



Get funds to young people 2 ways:

1. Provide a **one-time \$500 stimulus check** to all youth ages 18 through 26 who aged out of foster care
2. Provide **targeted, needs-based assistance** using an online application. DCS already has an application portal! FAAZ thinks the application process can be improved by:
 - o Have **clear eligibility and approval criteria** and let young people know what they are before they apply!
 - o Put all required information into the online application and **eliminate follow-up phone calls** with DCS. This is too time consuming, subjective, and some young people who need help won't seek it if they must interact with DCS staff
 - o **Get approved payments to young people in a week or less** and have a way to expedite it if there is an emergency

Increased Funds for Education + Training Vouchers

The Feds Say...

- **\$1.5M in additional ETV funds to AZ!**
- From April 1st to September 30th:
 - o young people are eligible **through age 26**
 - o **enrollment and satisfactory academic progress requirements are waived**
 - o more **flexibility** in what funds can be used for
- **Maximum ETV award per youth is raised to \$12,000** through September 30, 2022



- **Create the ETV 2nd Chance Plan to help young people re-engage in college!**
 - o Many young people who **stop out or drop out** are often faced with **debt to the school**
 - o Unlike student loans, being indebted to the college **prevents a student from enrolling in classes**, or in some cases, even obtaining their transcript
- Consolidated Appropriation Act funds can be used to **cover these debts** and **create a path** for young people to **re-enroll and move towards their educational dreams!**

...FAAZ Says

