Pathways to Success
Milestones of Foster Care

For Youth and Young Adults

This guide is about you and your pathways to success.

With each birthday, you become eligible for certain benefits and encounter greater responsibilities.

Check out the major milestones, programs and opportunities below.

Pay attention to green traffic signals. These represent key opportunities for success

STOP

Permanency Hearings - You have a voice in your own life! The court MUST get your input about the permanency goal in your case. This means you can go to court and talk with the judge directly, you can write a letter to the judge, or you can talk with your team about your wishes. This is an opportunity for you to share what you want to happen in your life.

AGE 9

Informal Job Experience

- You can start working informal jobs like snow shoveling, gardening, delivering newspapers and golf caddying.

AGE 11

College in Colorado

As of 6th grade, you should be registered for a CollegeinColorado.org portfolio. It's a free online tool that helps you to plan for college, career or technical school and your future career. It includes free and secure cloud storage where you can upload your vital documents and any important personal information so you'll always know where to find them.

https://collegeincolorado.org

AGE 12

Consent to Adoption

STOP

Before the court finishes an adoption, you have to consent. Talk with your team about this decision. It cannot happen without your agreement.

Adult Charges

- You can now be charged with a crime as an adult.

AGE 13

Financial Aid for School

If you are in foster care anytime after you turn age 13, you can claim independent status on your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). This means you don't have to provide your parents' financial information on the forms. You should check question 52 to identify yourself as a young person who was in foster care in order to qualify for a Pell Grant.

To complete the FAFSA application, visit: https://www.fafsa-application.com

COLORADO Office of Children, Youth & Families Division of Child Welfare

ROCKY MOUNTAIN children's law center

AGE 14

Help with Getting a Job

- You are eligible for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services, which means you can get help looking for employment or gaining job skills through your local workforce center. You qualify for help from age 14 to 21. You should mark that you were in foster care on the application in order to be eligible.

For information on WIA services visit:
http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDLE-EmployTrain/CDLE/1251621078706

AGE 15

Well-Being

- Starting at age 15, you can consent to your own mental health services and seek out the help you might need to be successful.

Chafee Program (While In Foster Care)

- If you have been in foster care or out-of-home placement a total of six months or more, you may qualify for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This voluntary program can help you achieve your goals, learn new skills, and get connected to opportunities, services and supports.

AGE 16

Independent Living Plan

This plan is required to be completed no later than two months after your 16th birthday. It details the ways you and your team can help you prepare for adulthood. You have a key role in coming up with the plan and should be a central part of the process. You help your team to determine how they can support you.

Governor's Summer Job Hunt

- From age 16 to 21 this program matches you with summer jobs in a variety of settings. It's a great opportunity to get work experience and build your resume.

For more information about this program, visit:
http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDLE-EmployTrain/CDLE/1248095317847

Chafee Program (Adoption & Guardianship)

- If you were adopted or entered guardianship on or after your 16th birthday, you may qualify for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program until age 21. This voluntary program can help you achieve your goals, learn new skills, and get connected to opportunities, services and supports.

AGE 17

Planning Ahead

When you are in out-of-home placement at the age of 17, the court MUST take a look at your individual situation and figure out whether you will be ready to be on your own at age 18 or whether you could benefit from additional supports to meet your goals. The courts looks to see if you are:

- Working on your high school diploma or GED;
- Enrolled in college or a career and technical program for a certificate;
- Participating in a workforce program to get new job skills; OR
- Working at least 80 hours per month.

If you have a medical condition, the court might also look to keep your case open so you can continue to get the help you may need to be successful.

This is another opportunity for you to have a voice in your case. Be honest about your goals and how your team (including the judge) can help you reach them.

Talk with your team about all the services and supports you will have if you stay connected, as well as how foster care can look different for you if you stay in care.

Scholarships

- **Helen McLoraine Scholarship** – This program provides financial assistance for part-time or full-time post-secondary or vocational study for young people under the age of 23, who were in Colorado foster care for a minimum of 24 months between the ages of 13 and 18. Applicants may have emancipated, been adopted at age 15 or older, or be participating in the guardianship assistance program or independent living arrangement.

  http://www.denverfoundation.org/grants/page/scholarships-for-college-students

- **Boundless Opportunity Scholarships** – These scholarships are available at select two- and four-year colleges and universities in Colorado for non-traditional student populations, including students who have been in foster care and in the juvenile justice system. Eligibility varies by school so check the website.

  http://www.danielsfund.org/Scholarships/Opportunity/Index.asp#Colorado

- **Forward Steps' Guardian Scholars Scholarship** - This program provides financial assistance for emancipated foster care youth in Colorado wishing to continue their post-secondary education and applies mostly to students applying to the Community College of Denver.

  http://forwardsteps.org

Post-Secondary Education Support Services

- There are many schools in Colorado with specialized support services for young people who were in foster care. When choosing a school be sure to ask how they can help you be successful.

AGE 18

Age of Majority

You have reached the "Age of Majority" which means you are entitled to most adult rights and take on new adult responsibilities.

For more information about your new rights and responsibilities visit: http://www.cobar.org/index.cfm/ID/20885

Emancipation Transition Plan

You and your team develop a formal emancipation plan at least 90 days before you are expected to leave the system. This plan should expand on your previous Independent Living Plan to identify your key connections and supports as you prepare to transition. Your team wants to make sure everything is in place before you transition so that you are as successful as possible.

Chafee Program (18—21)

- If you were in out-of-home placement on your 18th birthday, you qualify for Chafee Independent Living services until age 21. If you are not already connected to this voluntary program contact your local Department of Human Services.

Educational and Training Vouchers

- If you were in out-of-home placement on your 18th birthday, you qualify for Educational and Training Vouchers of up to $5,000 per year to help with your college or career and technical education.

To apply for an ETV, visit: www.statevoucher.org

Medicaid Health Insurance

- If you were in out-of-home placement on your 18th birthday, you qualify for Former Foster Care Medicaid until age 26.

Youth Family Unification Housing Vouchers (FUP)

- If you are between the ages of 18 and 22, are homeless or living with friends or don't have a stable place to live, and you were in foster care on or after your 16th birthday, you may be eligible for an 18-month housing voucher through this program.

Selective Service

- Males ages 18-25, including some non-citizens, must register for the selective service ("the military draft"). You can do this at any post office or online, but by law, you have to do it within 30 days of your 18th birthday.

To register online visit: www.sss.gov

SSI / SSDI Payments

- If you were receiving *Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)* prior to turning 18, your eligibility has to be re-determined now that you are a legal adult. This process can begin 90 days prior to your anticipated exit from the foster care system.

AGE 21

Chafee Program

- Chafee Independent Living services end. You have successfully transitioned to adulthood with supportive connections and positive life skills!

Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV)

- If you want financial assistance for college or career and technical education to continue until age 23, you have to apply for the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program before age 21.

To apply for an ETV, visit: www.statevoucher.org

AGE 22

Youth Family Unification Housing Vouchers (FUP)

- Your eligibility to apply for FUP Housing Vouchers ends.

AGE 23

Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV)

- Extended Educational and Training Voucher assistance ends (if you were enrolled before age 21).

AGE 26

Health Insurance

- Former Foster Care Medicaid ends.
- By law you must purchase or qualify for free or inexpensive insurance. **Connect for Health Colorado** is where you can learn about your options and apply for your new insurance.

Browse your health insurance options at: http://connectforhealthco.com

At any age, you can receive these services without parental consent. If you need help, ASK.

- Contraception
- STD testing
- Breast and pelvic exams
- Prenatal, delivery, and post-delivery care
- Substance abuse or alcohol treatment

Pathways To Success Milestones of Foster Care developed by: