

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHAFEE INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHERS FOR CHILDREN BEING RAISED BY GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES

- 7.1 Under the new law, what independent living services and other assistance will now be available to youth who leave foster care for legal guardianship with relatives after turning 16?**
- 7.2 What sort of transition plans are youth leaving foster care or ceasing to receive Chafee Program services supposed to have?**

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The act clarifies that youth ages 16 or older who leave foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption are eligible for the same independent living services provided by their state to youth in foster care. The new law also makes youth ages 16 or older who leave foster care for kinship guardianship eligible for educational and training vouchers (ETVs) — under pre-existing law, children adopted from foster care after age 16 are already eligible for ETVs. Independent living services are administered by state child welfare agencies using federal funds available through the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee Program). Specific services available to youth vary widely by state but basic independent living services often include life skills preparation classes, youth conferences and similar services designed to prepare youth for the transition to adulthood. The ETV Program generally provides vouchers of up to five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per student annually for post-secondary education or training programs. (§477(a)(7) & (i)(2); P.L. 110-351 §101(e))

7.2 What sort of transition plans are youth leaving foster care or ceasing to receive Chafee Program services supposed to have?

The new law requires, as part of the “case review system,” that in the 90-day period immediately prior to when a child turns 18 (or 19, 20 or 21 as the state may elect), that a caseworker and any other appropriate representatives of the child must work with the child to develop a personalized transition plan that is as detailed as the child chooses. The plan should include specifics on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, and work force supports and employment services. This transition plan is required for *all* youth for whom foster care maintenance payments are being made. Youth who have returned home or for whom kinship guardianship assistance or adoption assistance payments are being made must also have a transition plan if they are also receiving Chafee Program benefits or services. (§475(5)(H) & (i)(2); P.L. 110-351 §202)