

 <p>Michigan Department of Human Services</p> <p>CSA</p> <p>Children's Services Administration Communication Issuance</p>	Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informational Memorandum (IM) <input type="checkbox"/> Program Instruction (PI) <input type="checkbox"/> Policy Guide (PG)	
	Issuance Date: 12-10-12	Obsolete Date: none
	Response Due: None	
	Log No.: 12-181	
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	Originating Office: Health, Education, and Youth Unit, Permanency Division	
	Subject/Title: Public Assistance for Older Youth in Care	
	Distribution: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DHS Child Welfare Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Agency Child Welfare Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSA Central Office Managers/Staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Native American Tribes <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DHS County Directors <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Services Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

The purpose of this memo is to outline policy regarding public assistance eligibility for foster care youth who are parents as well as foster youth attending post-secondary institutions. See the attached Fact Sheet as an easy reference.

Youth in foster care who are 18 years of age or older, who are parents with custody of their child, and are living either independently or with another adult who has no supervisory responsibility of the youth, may be eligible for one or more forms of public benefits including: cash assistance (FIP), food assistance (FAP) and child daycare (CDC). Outlined below are the specific eligibility criteria for this population, including when a youth may be required to participate in the **Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope.** (PATH) program, formally known as the JET program, through the local Michigan Works! Agency.

Cash Assistance (FIP)

Youth who enter the **Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care** (YAVFC) program receive a daily payment that is considered an Independent Living Stipend (ILS). If he/she is a parent and caring for his/her child, an ILS will also be made for the youth's dependent child. The youth is therefore ineligible to apply for FIP and thus not required to attend PATH. Youth participating in YAVFC can receive an ILS up to age 21. (FOM 902-21 pg. 5)

A youth with an open foster care case (*not YAVFC*) in an independent living placement is eligible to receive an ILS when participating in their approved Independent Living Agreement. This agreement is developed in collaboration with the youth's assigned case worker. If the youth is a parent with custody of his/her child and living independently or with an adult who has no supervisory responsibility, the youth parent can apply for FIP for the child as an ineligible grantee. In this situation, because the youth parent is not receiving FIP for him/herself, there are no PATH participation requirements. Youth in this living arrangement can receive an ILS until age 20. (FOM 903-3 pg. 9)

Once a youth closes foster care or YAVFC he/she can apply for FIP. At the point these youth are applying for FIP they are considered an adult grantee, like any other adult parent who is applying for benefits. The same standards and requirements apply to former foster care youth as all other FIP recipients. This may include participating in the PATH program.

For those that are required to participate in PATH, the program does allow the youth/parent to participate in college as their required activity for 12 months. They simply need to attend orientation at the MWA to enroll in PATH, provide the verification to the MWA as required, and be enrolled in a course of study that the MWA has deemed to be within local occupational demand and trends. If the youth participates in vocational education training as their core activity at the MWA, they will be meeting their required hours. Financial aid (grants, loans, scholarships) does not count toward income or assets when determining eligibility for FIP.

Michigan enforces a 48-month time limit for any individual to receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the federal fund source for FIP. Once a youth starts receiving FIP as an adult grantee this 48-month clock begins (when the youth is receiving FIP as an ineligible grantee, that clock does not yet start.) Foster care workers should encourage youth to enter YAVFC for financial assistance and the services and support it provides. By utilizing the YAVFC program, these youth parents are able to take advantage of the ILS and the ability to attend college without the requirements of PATH that are associated with FIP.

Food Assistance (FAP)

Food Assistance (FAP) is an income-based program not affected by foster care status. Youth in foster care must meet the eligibility requirements in order to receive FAP.

Although policy has been changed disallowing FAP for college students who do not meet any other FAP eligibility criteria, foster/former foster youth who are parents and caring for their children may be eligible for FAP. This group does not fall under the education component and are reviewed for FAP eligibility based on other criteria. Financial aid (grants, loans, scholarships) does not count toward income or assets when determining eligibility for FAP.

Child Care (CDC)

A foster care youth who is a parent with custody of his/her child and receiving an ILS is not categorically eligible for CDC, as a FIP recipient would. In order to be eligible for CDC, the youth receiving an ILS needs to meet the income threshold. If the youth meets the income threshold and has a valid need for CDC (due to attending college courses and/or employment) he/she may be eligible for this benefit. Eligibility is determined by Eligibility Specialists (ES) or Family Independence Specialists (FIS). For youth that are in college and requesting CDC, verification of the youth's college attendance is a requirement of the application for CDC and must be provided to the assigned ES or FIS worker. Financial aid (grants, loans, scholarships) does not count toward income or assets when determining eligibility for CDC.

Eligibility for parenting foster youth age 18 – 21

Eligible for:	Independent living stipend for self	Stipend for baby/child	Family Independence Program (FIP)	Food Assistance Program (FAP)	Child Care (CDC)
Open foster care case in IL placement (<u>not YAVFC*</u>)	Yes, if following IL Agreement with case worker.	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, as an ineligible grantee. • No PATH participation requirements. • Does not count toward 48-month time limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be eligible. • Based on income. 	Based on income and having an identified need.
Open foster care case (<u>YAVFC</u>)	Yes, if following YAVFC requirements.	Yes, if following YAVFC requirements.	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be eligible. • Based on income. 	Based on income and having an identified need.
Closed foster care case	NO	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, PATH requirements will apply. • 48-month time limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be eligible. • Based on income. 	Based on income and having an identified need.

* Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care (See FOM 722-16)