Pathways to Success

The South Carolina Chafee Independent Living Program
And
Educational and Training Voucher Program
Guidelines for Services

The South Carolina Department of Social Services
Columbia, SC 29202
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Pathways to Success

South Carolina Chafee Independent Living Program

The journey to adulthood is a critical transition for youth in foster care. It is a time when young adults learn to take on the primary responsibility for their futures and the accompanying concerns of employment, education, healthcare, housing and home management, and maintaining significant relationships with those who will continue to support and encourage them beyond the transition to independence.

Youth can be best prepared by learning about both the challenges and the opportunities in the following areas:

- A supportive relationship with an adult and/or interpersonal connections to help them achieve their personal goals
- Education and training that enable youth to obtain and retain steady employment
- Gainful employment with future possibility for career growth
- Safe, stable, and affordable housing and access to transportation for work and school
- Coverage within a managed care system for both physical and mental health

The South Carolina Department of Social Services and the Chafee Independent Living Program believes that youth should have the opportunities to reach and maintain successful self-sufficiency. For this purpose, the Chafee Independent Living Program provides services and funding needed to enhance opportunities to learn independent living skills necessary to become self-reliant.
Establishing Youth-Centered Independent Living Goals

When a youth in foster care reaches the age of 13 or a youth enters care at age 13 or older, the case manager will assist the youth in completing a Life Skills Assessment. Sometimes, the case manager will work with the care provider to assist the youth with this assessment.

The Life Skills Assessment is used to identify a youth’s basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths, and needs. The information gathered with this tool is used to create an individualized case plan based on the specific needs of the youth. Case planning should be a collaborative process involving the youth, the case manager, the care provider, appropriate family members, and other adults identified as being significant to the youth and willing to support and encourage the youth as he or she prepares to transition to independence.

Case plans should contain specific goals to include employment, education, housing, life skills, physical and emotional health, and spiritual development. The plan should include steps that must be taken to achieve these goals. A Life Skills Assessment is re-administered on a yearly basis. Case plans should be revised as the youth develops and his or her needs change.

Transition Planning

The Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 made it a requirement that, beginning at age 17, a youth in foster care must begin to develop and implement a transition plan. The South Carolina Department of Social Services uses the Providing Assistance to Transitioning Youth (P.A.T.T.Y.) form 30206 for this purpose. This plan must be formalized at age 17. This form is used again at the formal transition planning meeting that must take place 90 days prior to a youth turning 18 and/or leaving care. The Life Skills Assessment is used to identify areas in which services and skills are needed in order to make a successful
transition to independence. Assisting the youth to identify and engage individuals in his or her support system is essential. Service providers, foster parents, family members, and any other individuals with whom the youth has a positive connection should be invited to participate in the transition planning meeting to develop the transition plan.

Progress is evaluated and the transition plan is updated monthly until the youth leaves care and for a minimum of 6 months after the youth leaves care. (Human Services Procedure Manual Section 832.01.01)

The P.A.T.T.Y. form is also used when youth ages 18 – 21 who have emancipated from care request aftercare services.

**Why is the Transition Plan Important?**

It is important for youth to understand the process that needs to take place as they prepare for adulthood. They should be encouraged to use their voices by actively participating in the development of this plan. Youth should be assisted in identifying their future goals and the steps necessary to achieve those goals. Youth in foster care have the right to invite others to their transition planning meeting who are significant to them and will continue to support them as they prepare for independence and beyond.

Youth must also acknowledge their responsibility in making the transition successful. This relies heavily on the youth’s ability to make appropriate decisions and follow through on the objectives identified in the transition plan.

**Who is Eligible for Chafee and ETV funds?**

Chafee Independent Living funds are federal funds that are earmarked for youth in foster care, ages 13 to 21. To be eligible for these funds while in foster care, the youth must have entered care as a result of an allegation of abuse or neglect by the parent/caregiver. There must be a finalized removal hearing prior to the youth’s 18th birthday in order for the youth to be eligible for Chafee, ETV, or aftercare services. See page four for eligibility criteria.
Criteria for Chafee and ETV Recipients

- Youth in foster care (from age 13 until the 21st birthday) are eligible for all Chafee funding and up to $5,000.00 in ETV funding for post-secondary schooling (college).

- Youth age 18 and older in voluntary aftercare who have not yet reached age 21 are eligible for all Chafee funding and up to $5,000.00 in ETV funding for post-secondary schooling (college).

- Youth who have emancipated out of care after age 18, but have not yet reached their 21st birthday are eligible for all Chafee funding and up to $5,000.00 in ETV funding for post-secondary schooling (college). An aftercare line must be opened and monthly contacts documented as long as aftercare youth are receiving funds.

- NEW** Youth who leave care to positive permanency (adoption/kinship/guardianship) at or after age 16 are eligible for ALL Chafee funding EXCEPT housing funds. They are also eligible for up to $5,000.00 in ETV funding for post-secondary schooling (college).

- NEW** Youth who are in post-legal Adoption Preservation Placement (from age 13 until the 21st birthday) and are case managed by SCDSS are eligible for ALL Chafee funding EXCEPT housing funds while they are in Adoption Preservation Placement. They are also eligible for up to $5,000.00 in ETV funding for post-secondary schooling (college) while in placement.

Additional notes:

- Youth are eligible to receive ETV up to age 23 if the youth started receiving ETV prior to the 21st birthday

- Youth who are incarcerated are not eligible for Chafee or ETV funding or eligible to sign the Aftercare Agreement for Voluntary Placement for Young Adults 18-21 Years Old (form 30136) during the time they are incarcerated (includes DJJ youth behind the fence)
Youth now have a Youth Service Request Checklist (page 40 of the Youth Version of the Pathways to Success IL Guidelines booklet) to submit to case managers. Funding requests for Chafee Independent Living Funds are submitted to the Independent Living Coordinator on DSS Form 30198. The completed request must be signed by the case manager and supervisor or another approved source on page 5. Please include the required documentation for each item checked on page 2 of the form 30198 (see appendix A). Applications are sent to the Independent Living Program Coordinator designated for the county or regional office assigned to the case.

Applications will be reviewed as they are received on an ongoing basis. Case managers are contacted via email or telephone by the IL Coordinators when more information is needed. A decision regarding approval will be made and the county will be notified within 21 working days of the receipt of the completed funding request and ALL necessary documentation. Applications can be faxed, emailed, or mailed. If the application is faxed, it is not necessary to mail the original or email the request. Email requests to independentliving@dss.sc.gov.
**Available Funded Services**

**CHAFEE Services**

**Daily Living Skills**

This includes programs which promote independence by teaching social skills. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Life skills classes (i.e. financial management, parenting, etc.)
- Mentoring Services/Expenses (Does not cover behavioral interventionists)
- Esteem-building activities connected with school or employment (such as chorus, band, arts programs, cheerleading, or team sports.)
- Summer camps that are school sponsored and required related to a youth’s participation in activities such as ROTC, band, chorus, cheerleading, or team sports or camps that are related to spiritual development.
- Other community leadership programs/camps that will provide youth with opportunities to develop work force training and skills. Does not apply to summer programs for daycare or recreation-only purposes)

**Adult Education**

This includes programs which help the youth to attain a high school degree or its equivalent. Youth may also receive funding assistance to complete supplemental coursework to achieve goals.
Examples of Adult Education items include but are not limited to:

- GED Program - cost and materials
- Tutoring for GED - up to $1000/year
- Study Skills training - $200
- Alternative educational programs
- Non-ETV college coursework
- Non-ETV vocational coursework

**Education Support Services**

Services and supplies needed to meet a youth’s educational goals.

Examples Include:

- Tutoring – up to $1000/year
- Summer School
- Books and supplies for specialized classes such as lab fees, special calculators, uniforms for classes such as cosmetology, nursing, etc. and insurance for school-issued equipment
- Expenses for school sponsored educational field trips
- Birth certificate necessary for school
- Senior Expenses: Senior prom ticket, senior fees, graduation invitations, cap and gown, year book, diploma plaque, senior pictures (max $200), senior ring (Senior rings have a limit of $300. College rings have a maximum of $450 and can be paid with Chafee funds as long as the youth has not yet reached age 21).
- Personal Computer (Post-secondary students only)
Graduate Awards

- Recognition for high school graduates (whether by diploma, certificate or GED) $100
- Vocation or Technical School graduates- $200
- College graduates -$250

A recognition ceremony is held annually for all graduates. It is necessary to complete the graduate Invoice (form 30237) and mail or fax it to the Independent Living Coordinator who serves your county or regional office.

Pre-College Expenses

- College applications (up to $150)
- SAT/ACT fees (up to 3 of each test) Note*These fees should be waived for foster youth*
- SAT/ACT preparation classes
- College Bowl Sunday transportation (www.che.sc.gov)

Special Recognition

Funds for tuition, uniforms, or other items needed to recognize and develop special achievements or talents of youth. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Scholars Programs when selected or referred by school
- Attendance at youth conferences
• Honor/award travel expenses for youth to travel when being honored or awarded
• Assistance with Governor’s School expenses up to $500 per school year
• Conference presentation

**Transportation**

Transportation assistance is for post-secondary, vocational, or adult education and employment purposes only. Examples include:

• Driver’s Educations Course (for youth age 16 and older, if youth cannot obtain the course in school)
• State IDs, knowledge test, beginner’s permit and driver’s license fees
• Bicycles up to $250 and $75 for a helmet and lock. (Purchase of helmets is mandatory.)
• Transportation to Adult Ed/GED - $10/day for a maximum of $50/week
• Transportation to adult education, college or vocational school - $10 per day for a maximum of $50/week.
• Transportation to job skills training - $10/day for a maximum of $50/week
• Transportation assistance for college students to visit home two times each semester to maintain connections - $75 per visit for a maximum of four visits per year.
• Transportation to work - $50/week for a maximum of 3 months up to $650. Renewable on a case by case basis.
• Repair and/or maintenance to a car which a youth owns and is needed for education and/or employment $1,750/year (case worker must verify repairs)
• Insurance assistance when youth (ages 18 – 21) own the car and need transportation to school or work - $600/year.
Employment Services

This includes services needed to obtain or maintain employment.

Examples include:

- Certification courses such as electronic, plumbing, first aid, life guarding, etc.
- Child care for one month – Maximum of $400, when the youth is not receiving ABC vouchers
- Interview Clothing - $150 for ages 15-17, an additional $250 when youth reaches 18 until age 21 for a maximum of $400
- Uniforms and footwear - $200
- Job skill training classes that directly relate to the youth’s goals
- Vocational equipment
- Birth certificate necessary for employment (for youth ages 15+)
- License/Certification fees
- Professional attire for work or school for youth age 18 until age 21 that do not have an open foster care line of services - $400/year

Housing and Transition

These expenses are related to emancipation and establishing their own independent residence after becoming age 18 or post-secondary students in need of assistance with interim housing. Youth who leave care to adoption, guardianship, kinship care and youth in post-legal adoption preservation placement are not eligible for housing and transition funds.

To qualify for assistance with emancipation expenses, youth must be employed and earning sufficient income to maintain the residence once Chafee housing assistance has ended. In order to receive Chafee housing and transition
assistance, SSI recipients must be the payee of their SSI benefit. Also, boarding arrangements for youth age 18 and 19 will not be approved for youth who are eligible to remain in voluntary aftercare placement or eligible to return to voluntary aftercare placement.

Housing/Transition expenses are discussed and planned at the youth’s transition planning meeting. When making Housing/Transition funding requests, it is necessary to include a copy of the youth’s Budget Analysis (DSS Form 30238), and the youth’s Planning Assistance to Transitioning Youth Form (P.A.T.T.Y.- DSS Form 30206), which have been created and reviewed along with the youth. Youth should be aware that this is a one-time award and thoughtfully consider readiness to utilize these funds. These funds are not intended for temporary residence or transitional residency.

Examples of Housing Assistance include the following:

- Phone deposit
- Electric, gas, or water deposit (based on the providing utility agency for a maximum of $300)
- Furniture (limited to $2,000, unless the youth is pregnant or has a child. In the latter case $2,500 is available due to additional furniture needs.)
- Rental Application fees
- Rental Deposit
- Rental assistance for up to 6 months, paid as 3 months full and 3 de-escalating months. Youth who are in the last trimester of pregnancy may receive 6 full months and 3 de-escalating.
**Basic Household Necessities**

Basic household necessities through a household shower or dormitory room shower are provided by the SC Foster Parents Association (SC-FPA). To request a shower, it is necessary to complete the Independent Living Shower Request form and mail it directly to the SC-FPA. The address is included on the form which is available on their website (www.scfpa.com.)

**Interim Housing for College Students**

Summer housing funds are available for youth who are no longer in foster care and in need of housing assistance for the summer. The South Carolina Chafee Independent Living program will pay $450/month for a maximum of 3 months for summer housing for students. Housing assistance is also available at $15/day (based on overnight stay) for December-January holidays if dormitories are closed. Interim housing funds could be applied to apartment style dormitory housing that remains open during holiday breaks (up to $30/day) if the youth has no permanent connection or needs to maintain employment while in school.

**Youth With Disabilities**

A setup fee of $400.00 or an emancipation shower through the SC-FPA is available for youth transitioning from foster care to housing with Disabilities and Special Needs or Department of Mental Health.

**Emergency Housing Assistance**

Time limited emergency assistance is available for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness while locating more stable housing arrangements.
Services NOT Included:

- Personal hygiene products
- Private mental health counseling
- Baby-sitting or most child care expenses
- Non-educational school-sponsored trips
- Vacation travel
- Clothing for use other than as described in this guidelines publication
- Medical needs
- Transportation for visitations other than as described here
- Purchase of a car
- Food other than as described here
- Entertainment appliances/expenses
- Services that can be funded through alternative sources (i.e. school districts or placement agencies)
- Memberships for organizations and/or clubs (except high school academic honorary organizations)
ETV Services

ETV funds are provided for foster youth pursuing a post-secondary education in an approved educational program.

Who is Eligible?

Only youth in the custody of the Department of Social Services with independent living as part of the case plan or youth who were in the custody of DSS at 18 years of age are eligible for ETV funds. Youth are eligible for ETV funds as long as they are in college, making adequate progress, and have not reached the age of 21, even if they are not in care. Youth are eligible until age 23 if they are enrolled in post-secondary education and began participating in the ETV program prior to turning 21.

Youth who are adopted on or after their 16th birthday or exited care to positive permanency (kinship care/guardianship) on or after their 16th birthday, may be eligible for ETV funds.

The following factors may be considered in determining eligibility:

- Acceptance to a technical school, college, university, or other program that meets the ETV criteria
- Students who demonstrate academic achievement or show a marked improvement in educational functioning
- The long term goal and plan for meeting that goal.
ETV Awards
Youth may be eligible to receive up to a maximum of $5,000 per year as long as funds are available through the Education and Training Voucher Program. Youth who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, either online or at their school, will have access to all state and federal based scholarships and grants for which they may be eligible. The awarding of ETV funds depends on the cost of the school and the amount of grants and scholarships the youth receives. The $5,000 award is to be applied to all costs associated with the cost of attendance to a post-secondary school.

Youth should be encouraged to complete FAFSA forms as early as possible and to obtain copies of the financial aid print out and the school’s billing statement and maximum financial aid award.

Youth should also be reminded to answer “yes” to the FAFSA question that they are a ward of the state or they were a ward of the state at age 13. This ensures being granted an independent status for student aid.

Youth should research other scholarships and awards online, including the website of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (www.che.sc.gov) and the scholarship funding information that is included on DSS form 30198. If a youth does not use all of their ETV funds during the Fall/Spring semesters, the remaining amount can be used for summer school.
Services Available Through ETV funds

Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- College and/or dorm deposits
- College placement tests
- Tuition and fees
- Books, supplies and uniforms
- Personal items
- Meal plans or meal cards
- Room and board on/off campus
- Parking fees
- Required educational computer software
- Lab equipment
- School related travel (ages 21-23)
- Personal allowance for food and transportation for commuting students
- School medical plan for students ages 21-23
- Child care for one month when youth is not receiving ABC vouchers (up to $400)
Youth now have a Youth Service Request Checklist (page 40 of the Youth Version of the Pathways to Success IL Guidelines booklet) to submit to case managers. Funding requests for Chafee Independent Living Funds are submitted to the Independent Living Coordinator on DSS Form 30198. Case managers should ensure that the youth signs the ETV application on page 3. Without the youth’s signature, the request cannot be approved. Be sure to attach copies of the required documentation necessary to process the funding request (See Appendix A).

ETV requests for the fall semester should be submitted by June 30 of each year. Meeting this deadline will ensure that the funds will be in the county offices in time for the fall term. All college funds are approved for the entire academic year of the fall/spring semesters. If a youth plans to attend summer school, funding requests should be made at least two months before the beginning of the summer session.

It is very important that all the necessary information is submitted with the ETV funding request. The Independent Living Program Coordinator will contact case managers when more information is needed; however, this delays the approval process.

(Note: Case Managers MUST submit ETV funding requests each year to ensure that the youth continues to receive educational assistance).
NOTE: These are requirements for funding requests to the state office. Counties may require receipts for items even though state office does not require receipts.

CHAFFEE IL FUNDING

Daily Living Skills requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

1. Mentoring- mentoring outline (form 30235) and a copy of the background check summary, sex offender registry check and the central registry check for the mentor

Adult Education requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels. This section includes vocational schools and career certificate programs at school without a federal school code (see www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Education Support Services and Supplies requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels

1. Tutoring- Tutoring Request and Progress Report (form 30236)
2. Copy of the background check summary, sex offender registry check and the central registry check
3. Educational field trips- itinerary (and out-of-state travel form if required)
4. Personal Computer- College Acceptance Letter and proof of enrollment (schedule, financial aid award)

For computers- youth have two choices;

A. Self-purchase on his/her own (with caseworker)- Up to $1,500 in Chafee funds are allowed for a laptop/desktop computer

B. OR request a SCFPA Laptop Bundle using their form (on the www.scfpa.com website under “Resources”). This form should accompany the funding request.
Senior Items requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

Pre-College Expenses requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

1. Transportation to College Bowl Sunday- starting point, college name and round trip mileage

Graduate Award requests-
1. Caseworker needs to verify graduation status before requesting and submit the Graduate Invoice (form 30237)
2. CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels

Special Recognition requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

1. Itinerary (and out-of-state travel form if required)
2. Awards/Honors- recommendation letter from agency honoring/sponsoring youth

Transportation requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

1. Car Repairs- Invoice/ Estimate in youth’s name AND one of the following in the youth's name (Car title in youth’s name OR vehicle registration and Insurance card together)
2. Bicycle- documentation showing youth is working or in school
3. Transportation to Adult Ed./College/post-secondary school- documentation showing youth is in school.
4. Transportation to work- documentation showing youth is working
5. Car Insurance- Vehicle title OR Vehicle registration AND one of the following in the youth’s name- (Bill /estimate for car insurance OR Receipt from insurance company)

Employment Services requests-
For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.
1. Interview clothing- youth must be actively seeking employment and this must be annotated on page 2, item C of the funding request (form 30198)
2. Work Clothing- indicate employer and type of work (i.e. Shift Manager for McDonald’s) on page 2, item C of the funding request (form 30198)
3. Professional Attire- provide proof of full time school enrollment or indicate employer and type of work (i.e. Shift Manager for McDonald’s) on page 2, item C of the funding request (form 30198)
4. Child care- case worker must verify that youth is not receiving ABC vouchers and this must be annotated on page 2, item C of the funding request (form 30198) AND indicate employer and type of work
5. For all other requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested

**Housing and Transition (Emancipation Expenses) requests**

For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels. An aftercare service line must be opened before requested services will be reviewed by state office IL Program staff.

1. Caseworker must arrange a TRANSITIONAL PLANNING MEETING to include all significant supports for the youth (i.e. supportive family, etc.). Complete and sign the P.A.T.T.Y (form 30206) at this planning meeting. P.A.T.T.Y. must accompany ALL emancipation requests.
2. Emancipation Budget Analysis (form 30238)- meet with youth to discuss the planned monthly budget and how rental costs/ living costs will be covered once IL funds are depleted. Budget Analysis must accompany ALL emancipation requests.
3. Emancipation requests for boarding type arrangement-
   A. Boarding arrangement requests must be staffed between requesting office and state office IL Program staff. Boarding will not be considered for youth who are eligible to remain or return to voluntary aftercare.
   B. Case worker must conduct a face to face meeting at the boarding facility to assess the safety and appropriateness of the facility and a note verifying the meeting took place must be added to the funding request (Page 2, letter F).
   C. Monthly visits are required for boarding youth until the end of the rental period for which emancipation funds were used.
   D. The operator of an unlicensed boarding facility must pay for and provide an FBI background check to accompany the funding request
4. No pricing documentation is required for Supervised Independent Living setup fees or for youth with DDSN/ DMH set up fees.
5. For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested (i.e. lease agreement, apartment flyer or information from online website, utility deposits, quote, invoice, wish list printout)
6. Furniture- Invoice, receipt, or printout from vendor
ETV FUNDING

Chafee ETV (EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER) FUNDING- $5,000 maximum for post-secondary schooling only, NOT for high school or vocational schools without a federal school code (see www.fafsa.ed.gov)

For all requests- documentation showing the itemized pricing of items requested and CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels.

1. Acceptance Letter- For all freshmen students or first time ETV requests
2. Financial Aid Award Letter (or documentation from the school showing the amounts of financial aid awarded per award)
3. Documentation from the school (or its website) showing the total annual cost of attendance
4. Lease agreement if the student is out of care, living off campus and would like for rent to be considered for room & board payments out of ETV monies
5. CAPSS education screen showing current educational levels

Please note the services that are NOT included under Chafee (IL guidelines booklet, page 13). Please ensure COMPLETE funding requests are submitted. Incomplete requests, lacking documentation will not be processed.
The South Carolina Independent Living Program

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Program was established with the passage of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (PL 106-169). Chafee funds are intended to provide youth with opportunities to learn needed independent living skills and increase the likelihood of successful transition from foster care to independence. The Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program was established by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act of 2001 (PL 107-133). This program provides resources for youth who are transitioning from foster care to meet their education and training needs.

The National Youth in Transition Database is a national database that (1) surveys youth about their thoughts and experiences of foster care services and (2) tracks the independent living services that youth receive. The South Carolina Department of Social Services and The Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of South Carolina are partners in this study, which is required by the US government.

All Independent Living services funded by Chafee and ETV must be reported as NYTD services in the child welfare management and adult protective services information system (CAPSS).