



## Children Services for Youth and Young Adults

### Services for Multi-System Youth

Multi-system youth are children and adolescents who have complex needs that require the coordinated services of multiple partners in the child-serving system. Some youth have such complex physical, emotional, and behavioral needs that a single agency alone can't support them. The Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services developed a state-level program in 2019 to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to children, youth, and families with complex multi-system needs. The aim of this program is to prevent custody relinquishment of children and youth solely so they can obtain needed treatment. The program also helps support children and youth who have been relinquished and are transitioning back to community and/or non-custody settings.

#### State-Level Partners

The Multi-System Youth Technical Assistance and Funding Team includes the following members:

- Ohio Family and Children First
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
- Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Ohio Department of Youth Services
- Ohio Department of Medicaid
- Ohio Department of Education

#### Services Available for Local Organizations

A family or any local agency can apply for "technical assistance" to help serve a child or youth with multi-system needs. Technical assistance includes:

- Facilitation of outreach to and engagement of state and local partners to provide clinically appropriate services, supports, and resources for children/youth and their families.
- Facilitation of managed care and other insurance involvement.
- Requests for clinical review.
- Assistance with coordination among interested parties.

Agencies that can apply include county Family and Children First Councils, public children services agencies, boards of developmental disabilities, boards of mental health and addiction services, and others.

#### Multi-System Youth Custody Relinquishment Funds

County Family and Children First Councils may seek multi-system youth custody relinquishment funding. Funding may be requested only to support children and youth who are at risk of custody relinquishment or who have already been relinquished and need services and/or supports to transition to community and/or non-custody settings. For more information or to apply, visit [fcs.ohio.gov/MSY-TA-Funding-Requests](https://fcs.ohio.gov/MSY-TA-Funding-Requests).

### Independent Living and Transition-Age Services

Starting at age 14, youth in the custody of a children services agency must be assessed and provided independent living services. This includes all custody types, including temporary shelter custody, temporary custody, permanent custody, and custody covered under voluntary agreements for care. Independent living services are intended to prepare youth for the transition from agency custody to self-sufficiency. They are tailored for each youth based on their unique strengths and needs.

#### Independent Living Skills

When a youth comes into custody at age 14 or turns 14 while in agency custody, a skills assessment is completed in the first 60 days. Within 30 days after that, a plan is implemented focusing on the following 11 areas:

- Academic supports.
- Post-secondary education.
- Career preparation.
- Employment or vocational training.
- Budget and financial management.
- Housing, education, and home management training.
- Health education and risk prevention.
- Family support and healthy marriage education.
- Mentoring.
- Supervised independent living.
- Room, board, and financial assistance.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services created an **Independent Living Skills Toolkit (JFS 08046)** to help service providers with planning. Public children services agencies receive support through federal Chaffee funds and Ohio's TANF independent living fund to provide financial assistance to agencies offering services to youth ages 14 and older. Every youth in foster care receives a handbook at age 14 to inform them about their rights.

#### Final Transition Planning

Children services agencies begin the final transition planning period no later than 90 days before the youth's planned emancipation date. During this time, the children services agency works with the youth to develop a detailed plan for housing, employment, and education opportunities and helps the young adult determine what supports they will need as they transition to adulthood. When young adults leave foster care, they receive vital documents, such as their certified birth certificate, copy of their credit report, their Social Security card, and their driver's license or state ID card. They also receive information about their eligibility for post-emancipation services, either through the Bridges program (see the next page) or services available from their local children services agency.

#### Post-Emancipation Services

Young adults who age out of foster care may request Young Adult Services from their county public children services any time until their 21st birthday. These consist of brief, intermittent services to help youth in need become self-sufficient. For contact information for local agencies, visit [jfs.ohio.gov/county](http://jfs.ohio.gov/county).

### Bridges

Bridges is a voluntary program to support young adults leaving foster care at age 18, 19, or 20. It provides supportive services such as housing and financial assistance, help with medical coverage, community resources, life skills instruction, help finding employment, and help continuing their education. While in Bridges, young adults work with a liaison who helps them access these services.

#### Who is eligible for Bridges?

Young people may be eligible for Bridges if they aged out of foster care at age 18, 19, or 20 and meet at least ONE of these requirements:

- Working to complete high school or a GED program.
- Enrolled in a college or vocational school.
- Participating in a program or activity to reduce barriers to employment.
- Employed at least 80 hours per month.
- Are unable to do any of the above due to a physical or mental health condition.

For more information, visit [bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov](http://bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov).

### Adoption Assistance Connections to Age Twenty-One (AAC to 21)

Adoption Assistance Connections to Age Twenty-One (ACC to 21) is an adoption subsidy program for young adults aged 18, 19, or 20 who were adopted from foster care at age 16 or 17. The program provides a monthly subsidy payment, Medicaid coverage, and referrals to services and supports in the young adult's community.

#### Who is eligible for AAC to 21?

A young adult may be eligible for AAC to 21 if they were adopted from foster care at age 16 or 17. Other requirements to be eligible include:

- The adoptive parents had an Adoption Assistance Agreement that became effective when they were age 16 or 17.
- The adoptive parents are still helping pay for the young adult's basic needs while they are transitioning to becoming a self-sufficient adult.
- The young adult enlisted in the military or married.
- The young adult must be in high school, college/vocational school, employed part-time, participating in a program to help them find a job, OR have a physical or mental health condition preventing them from education or work.

For more information, visit [bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov/other-resources/adoption-assistance](http://bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov/other-resources/adoption-assistance) or email [AdoptionAssistanceToAge21@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:AdoptionAssistanceToAge21@jfs.ohio.gov).