OFFICE OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN
Families and Children Letter FCL #025

To: Directors, Public Children Services Agencies
    Administrators, Title IV-E Courts

From: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director
      Office of Families and Children
      The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Date: March 22, 2022

Subject: Funding for Foster Youth Graduating in 2022

Background
As offered in the past, the Office of Families and Children would like to celebrate the educational accomplishments of our youth in foster care who are graduating from high school, or who have successfully earned their High School Equivalency Diplomas (formerly known as a GED). It is important to recognize the graduates for over a decade of dedication and hard work toward reaching this academic achievement.

Funding for Graduates
Special funding allocations will be made available to your agency through the Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS) for this purpose. With these funds, agencies are encouraged to offer each graduate a check or gift card in recognition of successfully completing this milestone achievement.

To determine the individual award levels and county allocation amounts, the Office of Children and Families will need to receive a signed copy of the attached allocation agreement. This document indicates the total number of graduates from your agency, and each graduate’s first name and SACWIS PID. In order to ensure adequate processing time, these agreements must be submitted to Felicia.Saunders2@jfs.ohio.gov no later than noon on April 13, 2022. Allocation requests cannot be accepted after this date.

Questions
If you have questions, please contact Felicia Saunders at Felicia.Saunders2@jfs.ohio.gov.
GRADUATION ALLOCATION

Title IV-E Agency: _______________________

We agree to use the allocation received to provide our 2022 graduating foster youth with a check for the amount awarded in recognition of successfully completing this milestone achievement. We understand if given in the form of purchased gift cards, the gift card requirements issued by the Office of Family Assistance must be followed.

PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING

Total Number of 2022 Graduates: ______

Names and SACWIS ID numbers:

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Public Children Services Director or Designee Signature: _______________________

Date: __________

Submitted for Payment to Felicia.Saunders2@jfs.ohio.gov by noon on April 13, 2022

To be completed by the Office of Families and Children

PO#:__________  Invoice#:__________  Amount: $__________

Approved for Payment by: _____________________________________________________________________

Date: __________
GIFT CARD REQUIREMENTS

While the use of gift cards is permissible, restrictions and limitations have been placed on the use and reporting of gift cards. In addition, these restrictions apply to all types of gift cards such as gas cards, cards from retailers that may be used like cash at that retailer (e.g., Walmart and Kroger), and prepaid credit cards (e.g., Visa).

Purchase of Gift Cards
The Office of Families and Children cautions agencies to use gift cards as sparingly as possible. While gift cards are a popular and easy item for the participant to use, agencies should be cognizant of the necessary restrictions on the use of the cards. The requirements and restrictions are as follows:

- Agencies will need to develop agreements that define a mechanism for refunding the dollars, as well as laying out the time frame necessary to complete these actions.
- Agencies must track the use of gift cards and identify any unused or remaining balances.
- An agreement should be developed between the agency and the retailer involving the return of any unexpended amounts.
- Any unspent funds on a gift card must be returned to ODJFS at the conclusion of the program.
- Gift cards may not be used for costs which are unallowable (e.g., entertainment, alcohol, etc.) or to the medical services.

Our office recommends that agencies track the expenditures against a gift card. The agency should implement procedures that afford the agency accurate and clear reporting on balances on gift cards. In addition, our office recommends that agencies limit the number of gift cards purchased as well as restrict the dollar amount on the cards to help ensure that the agency is in compliance with federal requirements.