

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

P. O. BOX 88

JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

March 1, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: REGIONAL EXECUTIVE STAFF, CIRCUIT MANAGERS,
CHAFEE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM STAFF,
AND CHILDREN'S DIVISION STAFF

FROM: FREDERIC M. SIMMENS, DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FOR THE CHAFEE EDUCATION AND
TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

SECTION 4: OUT-OF-HOME CARE, CHAPTER 21: CHAFEE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

FORMS MANUAL: INTRODUCTION OF CS-ILP-6 – CHAFEE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER APPLICATION AND
INSTRUCTIONS

REFERENCE: CHILDREN'S DIVISION

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of this memorandum is to advise staff of the available funding for foster and former foster youth interested in pursuing post-secondary education or training through the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program.

BACKGROUND:

The passage of the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 offered important new help to young people transitioning from foster care. The Act established the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and nearly doubled the funding our state received for independent living services. In addition, the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 added a sixth purpose to the Chafee program and in FY 2003, Congress appropriated \$42 million for payments to states to implement the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program. These statutory changes to the Chafee program provide additional resources to make available vouchers of up to \$5,000 per youth, per year for post-secondary education and training. Although the ETV program is integrated into the overall purpose of the Chafee program, it has a separate budget appropriation from the base Chafee program and only post-secondary education or training requests can be payable from the ETV program.

Early and ongoing support for education is extremely important in preparing youth for self-sufficiency. Setting, monitoring and incorporating educational goals as part of their permanency plan will assist youth in understanding the importance of having a vision of educational success. At a minimum, our foster youth should have a GED as their educational goal, but it is our desire that youth shall have the opportunity to receive post-secondary education and training. The ETV Program gives the Children's Division the opportunity to provide educational and training funds for eligible youth to attend an institution of higher education to assist them in pursuing a higher education to reach their goals.

Those eligible for ETVs include:

- Youth currently eligible for Chafee services; and
- Youth who were adopted or achieved legal guardianship from foster care (legal status 1) after their 16th birthday;

Additionally;

- Youth participating in a higher education program on their 21st birthday shall remain eligible until age 23, provided they are making satisfactory progress;
- Youth must have a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Youth must demonstrate academic success or motivation in school (generally a "C" average or its equivalency or as otherwise agreed upon with the plan) or in training program;
- Youth must be accepted to an accredited or pre-accredited public or non-profit college/university, vocational school or certified training program;
- Appropriate scholarships, grants and other financial assistance must first be explored and utilized; and
- There must be reasonable assurance the youth will graduate from the educational or training program.

Youth may receive up to the lesser of the total cost of attendance or \$5,000, per year. A year is defined as a twelve (12) month period beginning with the month the youth is enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program. The cost of attendance includes:

- Tuition and fees;
- Room and board for former foster youth who left care at age 18 or after or was adopted after age 16, but have not reached age 21. Room and board assistance may also be eligible for youth 21-23 if they are enrolled full-time in a post-secondary educational or training program;
- Rental or purchase of required equipment, materials or supplies;
- Allowance for books, supplies, transportation, etc.; and
- Special study projects.

An institution of higher education is a school that:

- Awards a bachelor's degree or not less than a two year program that provides credit towards a degree; or,
- Provides not less than one year of training towards gainful employment; or,
- Is a vocational program that provides training for gainful employment and has been in existence for at least two years.

And the school must meet all three of the following criteria:

- Admits as regular students only persons with a high school diploma or equivalent;
- Public, private or non-profit; and,
- Accredited or pre-accredited and is authorized to operate in that state.

Eligible youth may apply for post-secondary education/training assistance by completing the attached Chafee Education and Training Voucher application, CS-ILP-6. This application is also available on the DSS Intranet at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cs/index.htm> and the DSS Internet at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/> under Children's Services programs or directly to the Chafee web site at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/chafee/index.htm>. The application can be printed from these sites and completed by hand or the youth may complete the application on-line and print it off and return to their Case Manager or ILP Specialist.

Once the youth has completed the application and provided the necessary documentation, the application shall be forwarded to the ILP Specialist assigned to the county for processing. ETV assistance will be reviewed and made on a semester basis.

Case Managers shall make every effort to inform the older youth in their caseload about the ETV. Copies of the attached CS-ILP-6 shall be made available to age appropriate eligible youth, especially those currently enrolled in a post-secondary educational or training program.

Adoption Specialists should make copies of the attached form and send the application to all former foster care youth who were adopted after age 16.

NECESSARY ACTION:

1. Review this memorandum with all Children's Division staff.
2. Copy and distribute the CS-ILP-6 form as needed. This form will NOT be available at the warehouse.
3. All comments and questions regarding this memorandum should be cleared through normal supervisory channels.

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