

Aging Out of Foster Care in Texas

What you need to know



If you think you were in foster care when you turned 18 and are unable to access transition benefits and services, contact your PAL worker. You can find your PAL worker at bit.ly/31lsD4k or call the PAL state office at (512) 460-7394.



If you need help to advocate for your transitional benefits and services, contact the **Texas Foster Youth Justice Project**. The Project can provide you with free legal help from attorneys. Call (877) 313-3688 or email info@texasfosteryouth.org.



**Texas Foster Youth
Justice Project**



**TEXAS RIOGRANDE
LEGAL AID**



What does “aging out of foster care” mean?

A person ages out of foster care if they are in foster care on their 18th birthday.

How do I know if I am in foster care?

You are in foster care if the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has temporary or permanent managing conservatorship (or custody) of you. CPS is a part of DFPS.

Can I still be in foster care if I...

- am staying in a foster home? **Yes.**
- am staying in a residential treatment center? **Yes.**
- am staying in a hospital? **Yes.**
- am a CWOP (Child Without a Placement)? **Yes.**
- am staying in an unlicensed or unpaid placement? **Yes.**
- am staying in another state? **Yes.**
- am staying on the street or on a couch? **Yes.**
- ran away from my placement? **Yes.**
- am in a juvenile or adult jail or prison? **Yes.**
- am staying with family or friends? **Yes.**

It doesn't matter where your placement is or where you sleep! If DFPS has temporary or permanent custody of you until your 18th birthday, you will age out of foster care.

Why does it matter if I age out of foster care?

Only youth who age out of foster care are eligible for certain benefits that can help you transition to living on your own.

What happens if I don't sign an extended foster care agreement before I turn 18?

You need to sign an extended foster care agreement if you plan to remain in extended foster care. If you don't sign one before you turn 18, you can always sign one later if you want to return to extended foster care (which you can do until your 21st birthday, if a placement is available). **Anyone who ages out of foster care is eligible to sign an extended foster care agreement!**

What benefits can I get if I age out of foster care?



Extended foster care (including SIL – supervised independent living): if a licensed placement is available or if an SIL program accepts your application, you can stay in extended foster care until your 21st birthday



Transition and financial support services: you have access to ongoing case management from a local service provider to help you find a place to live, apply for jobs, apply to college, and plan for your future



Transitional living allowance: if you completed your PAL class and are living independently, you can ask your PAL worker to help you request up to \$1,000 (max \$500/month). You must be working or going to school to qualify.



Aftercare room and board: if you are having trouble paying rent, bills, or buying groceries, you can ask for help to pay those expenses (up to \$3,000 max, \$500/month)



Former Foster Care Child (FFCC) Medicaid: if you were in foster care and were receiving foster care Medicaid when you turned 18, you are entitled to Medicaid benefits until your 26th birthday

- *If you were in jail or prison and therefore not receiving foster care Medicaid when you turned 18, you can apply for Medicaid for Transitioning Foster Care Youth (MTFCY), which you can receive until your 21st birthday*



College Tuition and Fee Waiver: the State of Texas will waive all your tuition and fees for any public Texas college, university, or training program (some youth who did not age out and those adopted from foster care are also eligible!)



Education and Training Voucher: young adults who age out of foster care, as well as youth who were adopted or subject to a Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) agreement at age 16 or older, can apply for up to \$5,000/year to help pay for expenses related to your education, including housing