



We provide free legal help to people who have experienced foster care, who are homeless, or who lack family support.

Legal issues that we can help with:

- Obtain your identification documents
- Advocate for your rights while you are in foster care
- Assist with transition planning if you feel your needs are not being met
- Help your voice be heard in court
- Request your CPS records after you turn 18
- Access and keep Medicaid benefits
- Connect you with DFPS staff who are responsible for providing your benefits, including your tuition waiver
- Understand your immigration status and replace lost or stolen documents
- Change or correct your name or gender marker
- Seal juvenile records and expunge eligible criminal records
- Help to resolve current or old Class C citations and help to restore driver license eligibility
- Assist in returning to extended foster care
- Appeal a denial of SSI benefits
- Ask the court for visits with your siblings
- Emancipation for 16- and 17-year-olds who are not in foster care.
- We cannot represent you on active criminal cases, other than Class C misdemeanors.



TFYJP can provide information, advice, or referrals, but cannot always offer legal representation.

To learn more about us visit:

www.TexasFosterYouth.org

or simply scan below.



*The Texas Foster Youth Justice Project
is a program of*



Main 956.996.8752 Toll free 833.329.8752

www.TRLA.org

 Toll Free 877.313.3688

 info@texasfosteryouth.org

 www.TexasFosterYouth.org

What is foster care and for how long are benefits available to youth?

If the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has temporary or permanent managing conservatorship (or custody) of a young person, then they are in foster care.

You are in foster care if you are:

- a CWOP (Child Without a Placement)
- a runaway from placement
- in juvenile/adult jail or prison
- staying in a foster home
- staying with family or friends
- staying in another state
- staying in a hospital
- staying in a residential treatment center
- staying in an unlicensed or unpaid placement
- staying on the street or on a couch

Why it matters if you are in foster care when you turn 18.

If DFPS has temporary or permanent custody of you when you turn 18, then you will age out of foster care. Only then will you be eligible for certain benefits that can help you transition to living on your own.

Extended foster care for ages 18-20

As long as you're under 21, if you want to stay in foster care after you turn 18 then you need to sign an Extended Foster Care Agreement. Signing it does not mean you must stay in foster care until you turn 21.

If you were in foster care when you turned 18, the following benefits are available.

- **Extended foster care and supervised independent living (SIL).** 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. If you are still in high school or in a GED program, you can stay in foster care until the last day of the month of your 22nd 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 (TLA).** If you completed your Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) classes 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, applying for jobs, or going to school to qualify.
- **Aftercare room and board (ARB).** If you are having trouble paying rent, bills, or buying groceries or need money for deposits for housing and utilities, 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.

Apply for your benefits!

To apply for extended foster care/SIL, transition services, TLA, and ARB, contact your PAL worker.

To apply for Medicaid and other public benefits like food stamps and TANF, use the Your Texas Benefits app or visit:

www.YourTexasBenefits.com



If you were in foster care but did not age out, the following benefits may be available.

- **College Tuition and Fee Waiver.** The State of Texas will waive all tuition and fees for any public Texas college, university, or training program. The following people are eligible:
 - Most youth who were adopted from foster care
 - Youth who were in foster care and the court granted custody to a non-parent
 - Youth who were in permanent CPS care at age 14 or older and youth in temporary CPS care at age 16**To obtain a copy of your tuition waiver, contact your PAL or adoption assistance worker**
- **Education and Training Voucher (ETV).** Receive up to \$5,000 a year to help pay for certain expenses related to your college education, including housing, utilities, food, and childcare. ETV funds will only cover your school's cost of attendance after all other financial aid is applied. Students may receive ETV funds until the age 23. You are eligible if you are:
 - a young adult who aged out of foster care
 - a young adult who was adopted or subject to a Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) agreement at age 16 or older**To apply visit: www.TexasETV.com**
- **Housing Vouchers.** Apply for the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI), or Family Unification Program (FUP) housing vouchers to help pay for housing costs. The vouchers may be used for up to 3 years as long as you remain eligible. You are eligible if you are a young adult aged 18-24 who spent at least one hour in CPS care. **To apply contact your DFPS housing liaison.**

