

June 22, 2021

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-73

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance and instruction with regards to the utilization of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program) Funds received from the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, that will be disbursed through a prepaid cash card.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

June 22, 2021

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 21-73

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM MANAGERS
ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM COORDINATORS
ALL FOSTER CARE MANAGERS
ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES
ALL FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY SUPERVISORS
ALL COUNTY RFA AND ADOPTION PROGRAM MANAGERS
ALL CDSS ADOPTION REGIONAL OFFICES

SUBJECT: FEDERAL CHAFEE CASH PAYMENT FOR THE COVID-19
PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY FOR ELIGIBLE CURRENT AND
FORMER FOSTER YOUTH AT LEAST 18 AND NOT YET 27
YEARS OF AGE

REFERENCE: [SUPPORTING FOSTER YOUTH AND FAMILIES THROUGH THE
PANDEMIC ACT, DIVISION X OF THE CONSOLIDATED
APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2021, PUBLIC LAW \(P.L.\) 116-260,
ENACTED DECEMBER 27, 2020, ALL COUNTY LETTER 20-117,
ALL COUNTY LETTER 20-117E, ACYF-CB-PI-21-04, TITLE 7
CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS \(CFR\) 273.9\(c\)\(8\);
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 11400\(V\)](#)

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide guidance and instructions to county placing agencies regarding the utilization of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program) Funds received from the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, that will be disbursed through prepaid cards to eligible individuals.

BACKGROUND

Division X of the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, P.L. 116-260, also known as the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act (Act), provides temporary flexibilities and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

and public health emergency. One of the provisions included in the Act is additional funding under the Chafee program to assist current and former foster youth to address critical financial needs.

California has dedicated most of these funds to go to eligible current and former nonminor dependents, as defined in [Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11400, subdivision \(v\)](#), by way of a one-time COVID-19 disaster relief payment for the general welfare and support of these individuals in the form of a prepaid card, as described below.

ELIGIBLE POPULATION AND OUTREACH

Current and former foster youth who are or were nonminor dependents eligible for Extended Foster Care (including probation-supervised and dual jurisdiction youth) and who are at least 18 and not yet 27 as of the date of eligibility verification, are eligible to receive a supplemental prepaid card. The prepaid card assistance payment is not conditioned on the youth opting into the Extend Foster Care (EFC) program – current and former nonminor dependents who are or were eligible to participate in EFC are eligible to receive a supplemental prepaid card.

Federal law provides states with flexibility to serve young adults who are not yet 27 through September 30, 2021. In order to comply with the duration of the federal flexibilities, no eligibility verifications may be submitted after Friday, September 3, 2021, and no prepaid cards may be issued after September 30, 2021. A second round of prepaid cards may be issued prior to September 30, 2021 to those youth identified by September 3, 2021 if funds amounting to more than an additional \$100 per young adult are remaining.

Young adults who currently reside out-of-state are eligible for the support payment, if their nonminor dependency jurisdiction originated in the State of California and they also meet the above requirements. Young adults who reside outside the United States are not eligible. Young adults who currently reside in the State of California but whose foster care jurisdiction originated from another state are eligible to receive this support payment if adequate post-18 jurisdiction verification is provided from the originating state. Acceptable documentation includes, but is not limited to: a court order or official State documentation that the young adult received federal or state support in foster care at the relevant age; a documented phone call, written statement, or verifiable electronic data match, which confirms the young person was in foster care, from a state, county, or tribal agency administering a program under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, a State Medicaid agency, or a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement; a documented phone call or a written statement from an attorney, a guardian ad litem, or a Court Appointed Special Advocate that confirms that the young

adult was in foster care at an applicable age, and documents the person's relationship to the young adult or a document showing eligibility or receipt of a benefit that establishes the young adult was in foster care, such as receipt of Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) Medi-Cal benefits.

In an effort to enhance the ability to get the prepaid cards to all eligible former foster youth, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has entered into an agreement with Think of Us to do a statewide outreach campaign to be shared on multiple social media platforms, their [website](#) at [Think of Us](#), a Think of Us Chaffee Cash Card sign up [portal](#) which can be found at [Check For Us](#) and via text. Additionally, they will contact youth who are known to them in their database about the offering. The outreach campaign will begin in June 2021 and go through September 1, 2021. Think of Us will ensure that all youth who are reached through their platforms are connected to the local child welfare or probation agencies or to CDSS.

PROCESS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF PREPAID CARDS

To ensure young adults are connected to this assistance, CDSS will work with counties on the verification of eligibility and distribution of cash cards for all eligible current and former foster youth. Counties will be responsible for the verification of all young adults ages 18 through 20, including those youth who are not currently participating in EFC and those youth who are residing in California but whose dependency jurisdiction was from another state. The CDSS will be responsible for those 21 and over, including those youth receiving, or eligible to receive, support after age 21 as outlined in [ACL 20-117E](#) and [ACL 21-51](#). In addition to the verification of those former foster youth 21 and over, CDSS will be responsible for the distribution of prepaid cards for all young adults in the eligible population.

CASH CARD PAYMENT

These one-time, unanticipated funds, provided to youth by California as disaster relief pursuant to the Division X of the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, are not considered earned or unearned income for purposes of the CalWORKs, CalFresh, Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), CalWORKs Stage 1, and Emergency Child Care Bridge voucher programs, and will not count against the resource limits for 12 months from receipt of the payment.

COUNTY ACTIVITIES

In addition to verifying the eligible population of foster youth and former foster youth **ages 18 through 20** on the list provided by CDSS, counties should develop and initiate an outreach approach to locate youth of these ages who may not be in contact with their case managers or probation officers. The approach for individual notification and outreach must be developed by the county child welfare and probation agencies.

In addition to the above, counties shall:

- Review the list run by CDSS of eligible young adults ages 18 through 20 at the time the list is generated. This list secured from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) will be sent to each county to be used as a reference sheet for the youth who are eligible to receive a prepaid card.
- Initiate contact and provide notification to each young adult identified on the secure list and inform them of eligibility to receive a direct support payment. Given the mobility of young adults, counties are encouraged to make multiple attempts to locate, to initiate contact and to make outreach efforts in ways likely to reach and engage youth adults, including, but not limited to phone calls, texts, email, and social media platforms when applicable and appropriate.
- Verify the eligibility of these young adults through a telephonic connection to ensure youth identity. Verify with the young adult which type of prepaid card they wish to receive, i.e., a virtual prepaid card or a physical card, and document that information on the list sent back to the CDSS.
- Document the completed contact in the young adult's case file via the CWS/CMS contact notebook section. If attempts are unsuccessful, these should also be documented in the CWS/CMS contact notebook section.
- Counties will verify and submit their verifications utilizing a CDSS provided spreadsheet. A spreadsheet can be requested by contacting FYverify@dss.ca.gov.
- Send their verified list of youth every Friday by 5:00 PM (starting when they receive their list) to this dedicated email: FYverify@dss.ca.gov.

CDSS ACTIVITIES

The CDSS will work closely with Think of Us, and additional former foster youth-serving programs to assist former foster youth ages 21 up to age 27 in obtaining eligibility verification and to assist in the distribution of prepaid cards for this population. The CDSS will conduct the eligibility verification process for this population.

The CDSS will be responsible for ensuring all young adults are sent a prepaid card in the format of their choosing based on the information they receive from the counties or

directly from the youth. The CDSS will also submit names and addresses to the vendor processing the prepaid cards on a weekly basis for all youth. A current address is not required to receive a prepaid card through electronic means.

Counties are not required to outreach to young adults aged 21 and older at the time the list described above is provided. However, counties that know the whereabouts of young adults in this age group are encouraged to provide this information directly to the Transition Aged Youth (TAY) Policy Unit at FYverify@dss.ca.gov.

NOTE: *Federal law prohibits the use of funding to provide assistance for young adults between the ages of 21 and 27 after September 30, 2021.

A forthcoming County Fiscal Letter will cover the administrative funding provided to counties in order to complete the outreach and verification tasks.

Questions about eligibility and/or the verification process should be directed to FYverify@dss.ca.gov. Questions or requests for clarification regarding the policy information in this letter should be directed to the TAY Policy Unit within the Children and Family Services Division of CDSS at (916) 651-7465 or TAYPolicy@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

ANGIE SCHWARTZ
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

Attachment

CDSS Chafee Prepaid Card Program

Prepaid Card Tips for Counties

What if the card was undeliverable or not received?

- Provide the recipient with all the following information and have them call the Customer Service Lost/Stolen/Non-received team at 877-227-0956 for help to get a replacement card issued to their confirmed or updated address. Caller should have this information available to assist the agent with their request:
 1. **Their First and Last Name as it was ordered on the card**
 2. **Address the card was issued to (even if incorrect, the agent will use this to locate the card in the system and authenticate the caller; address can be updated if needed prior to issuing a replacement card)**
 3. **Proxy card number (if possible, from returned cards file – CDSS administrator can also provide this information)**

What should recipients watch for in the mail?

- The card will arrive via USPS First Class Mail in a white envelope. The CDSS logo will be visible in the top left corner above the return address:



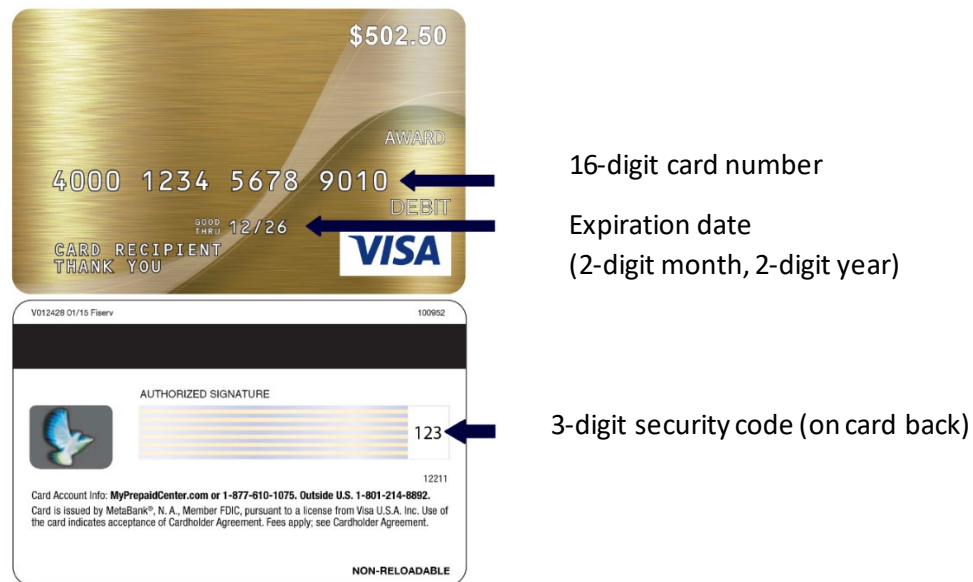
Where can the recipient use the Visa® Prepaid Card?

- The card can be used everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted, except gas pumps.

Card is issued by MetaBank®, N.A., Member FDIC, pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. No recurring payments. Can be used everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted. Card valid for up to 12 months, funds do not expire and may be available after card expiration date, fees may apply. Card terms and conditions apply.

How do recipients activate their card?

- Once They receive a card, direct them to call 1-877-610-1075 or visit MyPrepaidCenter.com and follow prompts to activate the card.



Card balance tips

- Current balance can be confirmed by dialing 1-877-610-1075 or by entering the card number at MyPrepaidCenter.com.
- Transaction History available at MyPrepaidCenter.com
- Only use for the current balance or less
- The card can only be used for the current balance or less. If your purchase amount is more than the value on the card, see Using multiple forms of payment below.
- Select credit, not debit
- Select credit, not debit, when making online, mail/phone purchases.

Does this card have cash access?

- Yes, this card can be used at an ATM. Dial 1-877-610-1075 or visit MyPrepaidCenter.com and follow prompts to set or reset your PIN for ATM usage. If prompted at the ATM, select Checking Account, not Savings Account. For ATM fees and restrictions, see the Cardholder Agreement inside the envelope.

Card is issued by MetaBank®, N.A., Member FDIC, pursuant to a license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. No recurring payments. Can be used everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted. Card valid for up to 12 months, funds do not expire and may be available after card expiration date, fees may apply. Card terms and conditions apply.

Most common decline reasons

1. Card was swiped for more than the card balance.
2. Card was used at a gas pump.
3. Card was not activated before use.
4. Card was swiped as debit without creating a PIN.

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