

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

December 19, 2000

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 00-84

TO: COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
 COUNTY FISCAL OFFICERS
 COUNTY INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: APPLYING NON-SPECIFIC JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE
 INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM AMENDMENTS TO THE INDEPENDENT
 LIVING PROGRAM

ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES FOR EMANCIPATED YOUTH STIPENDS

The purpose of this All County Letter is twofold. First, it explains how certain non-specific John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program federal amendments to 42 United States Code Section 677 et seq. apply to the California Independent Living Program. Second, it identifies allowable costs that counties may pay from the Emancipated Youth Stipends.

I. HOW CERTAIN NON-SPECIFIC CHAFEE BILL AMENDMENTS APPLY TO ILP

The Chafee Bill, that became effective on December 14, 1999, includes several specific amendments that changed ILP requirements nationwide. However, some of the Chafee Bill amendments were written in such a way to purposely allow states individual flexibility to determine age eligibility for ILP services and to implement programs designed to help current and former foster youth make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. The Department, in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association, has developed the following policy interpretations to ensure consistent statewide application of the non-specific federal amendments to California's ILP.

A. Must a Youth Remain in Foster Care Until Age 18 to be Eligible for ILP?

The phrase "children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age" does not mandate that the youth must be in foster care on their 18th birthday to be eligible for ILP services. In California, eligible youth for ILP are between 16-21 years of age and are either currently in foster care or were in foster care on or after their 16th birthday.

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
 Federal Law or Regulation
 Change
 Court Order
 Clarification Requested by
 One or More Counties
 Initiated by CDSS

Additionally, in the spirit of the Chafee Bill, counties are encouraged to extend ILP services to foster youth younger than 16 years of age and who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age. An example of a program currently being offered to foster youth several years before high school graduation is Los Angeles County's Early Start to Emancipation Preparation. The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services contracts with the California Community College Foundation to provide Early Start to Emancipation Preparation services to foster youth as young as 14 years of age. For these younger foster youth the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation program functions as a stepping stone to ILP.

B. When Does ILP Eligibility for Youth Expire?

Eligibility for ILP services exists to the day prior to the youth's 21st birthday.

C. The 30 Percent Housing Allocation

A county may spend less than but cannot exceed more than 30 percent of the sum total of their federal and State General Fund Extended ILP allocation for the room and board needs of emancipated youth from their county who are at least 18 years of age and up to the day prior to their 21st birthday. Room and board for former foster youth under the age of 18 is not allowed.

Allowable expenditures for the 30 percent housing allocation may include but not be limited to the following:

- Food purchases.
- Payment of rental deposits and/or utility deposits.
- Payment of rent and/or utility bills.
- Emergency assistance - the determination of which is a county's interpretation.

Furthermore, no county may claim reimbursement from the 30 percent housing allocation prior to December 14, 1999, as there was no federal authorization prior to that date.

II. EMANCIPATED YOUTH STIPENDS

County Fiscal Letter No. 00/01-09, dated July 11, 2000, was sent to all County Welfare Directors and County Fiscal Officers informing them of their county's Emancipated Youth Stipend allocation for Fiscal Year 2000-01. Emancipated Youth Stipends are to be used to administer the special needs of emancipated foster youth. The \$3.5 million for Emancipated Youth Stipends for Fiscal Year 2000-01 is 100 percent State General Fund and requires no county match. Any Emancipated Youth Stipend expenditures that are in excess of a county's Emancipated Youth Stipend allocation will be a county-only cost.

The following are the seven expenditure categories of allowable costs that may be paid at county discretion from the Emancipated Youth Stipends. The California Department of Social Services understands that it is impossible to identify every possible cost. There may be costs that may have been inadvertently omitted or emergency costs that can occur due to some unforeseen situation. Therefore, each county is empowered to determine whether to claim reimbursement from this allocation. A county must justify in writing why they are submitting a claim for an item not included in one of the seven categories listed below.

Category 1. Transportation Costs

- Public or private transportation may be used.
- When using public transportation: Reimbursement will be at the actual cost with a receipt.
- When using private transportation: Reimbursement will not exceed \$.31 per mile.
- Public parking will be reimbursed at the actual cost with a receipt or \$2.00 per day without a receipt.
- The cost of driving lessons for the emancipated youth.
- The cost of car insurance for the emancipated youth.

The following are allowable roundtrip destinations:

- The youth's school.
- The youth's child(ren)'s childcare, preschool or school.
- Religious services or related activities
- Attending court proceedings.
- Medical appointments for the youth and/or their child(ren).
- Sibling(s) visitation.
- Work and/or work related training.
- ILP-sponsored events and classes.

Category 2. Work Required Costs

- Training.
- Clothing and/or uniforms.
- Tools.
- Professional/union dues.
- Costs incurred due to the job/interview process.
- Vocational/educational assessments.

Category 3. Contracted Services Costs - examples of which include:

- Educational planning.
- Job preparation.
- Career assessment and development.
- Personal awareness.
- Life skills training.
- Financial aid workshops.
- Computer classes.

Category 4. Health Services Costs

- Non-Medi-Cal funded physical and/or mental health medical treatment needs of the emancipated youth that are beyond the financial means of the emancipated youth.
- The cost of tuition for classes, activities, or services on or related to:
 - a) Nutrition.
 - b) Family planning.
 - c) Parenting skills.
 - d) Sexuality and sexual behavior.
 - e) Drug/alcohol use.
 - f) Prenatal drug/alcohol exposure.
 - g) Home health and safety management.
 - h) First aid.
 - i) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
 - j) Eating disorders.
 - k) Hygiene and personal care.

Category 5. Costs Related to the Child(ren) of the Emancipated Youth

- Non-Medi-Cal funded costs physical and/or mental health medical treatment needs of the child(ren) that are beyond the financial means of the emancipated youth.
- Food.
- Clothing.
- Bedding.
- Diapers.
- Childcare, preschool and/or school.
- Infant furniture such as a high chair, car seat, crib, bed and stroller.

Category 6. Housing Assistance Costs

- Food.
- Rent and/or utility deposits.
- Rent and/or utility charges.
- Moving expenses.
- Furniture and/or household items.
- Costs incurred through roommate network agencies.

Category 7. Emancipated Youth Aftercare Costs

- Educational assistance.
- Educational counseling.
- Crisis counseling.
- Job placement and retention training.
- Vocational training.
- Legal assistance.

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If you have any questions regarding this All County Letter please contact Sonya St. Mary, Manager, Placement Resources Unit at (916) 445-7001.

Sincerely,

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Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

c: California Welfare Directors Association
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
California Youth Connection
Residential Care Providers Association in Los Angeles County
Foster Care Alliance
African-American Foster Parent and Group Home Association
Care Homes of Los Angeles County
Pat Pianko, Region IX, Department of Health and Human Services