

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROJECT
**THE ABC'S OF TRANSITION
AND THE INDEPENDENT LIVING
PROGRAM**
INFORMATION MANUAL
FOR TRANSITION AGE YOUTH AND THEIR CAREGIVERS



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CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 5 |
| A. WHO DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT OR NEED HELP?..... | 5 |
| II. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING | 6 |
| A. WHO IS AN EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS HOLDER? | 6 |
| B. WHAT DO I NEED TO COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL? | 6 |
| C. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ON TRACK TO GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL? | 6 |
| D. WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO MAKE CERTAIN I GRADUATE WITH A DIPLOMA? | 7 |
| E. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVES FOR COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL?.... | 7 |
| III. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR FOSTER YOUTH | 8 |
| A. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR TUTORING? | 8 |
| B. BUT I DON'T HAVE A PERMANENT PLACE TO STAY AND WANT TO GET BACK IN- TO SCHOOL. CAN I GO BACK TO MY OLD SCHOOL? | 8 |
| C. I WAS JUST MOVED TO A NEW FOSTER HOME. DO I HAVE TO TRANSFER TO A NEW SCHOOL? | 9 |
| D. WHO PAYS TO BRING ME TO MY SCHOOL OF ORIGIN? | 9 |
| E. WHAT IF I WANT TO GO TO THE SCHOOL NEAR MY NEW HOME, BUT THEY WON'T LET ME ENROLL WITHOUT MY RECORDS? | 10 |
| F. WHAT OTHER EDUCATION RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS A FOSTER YOUTH? | 10 |
| G. WHAT SERVICES CAN I GET IF I NEED HELP WITH MY LEARNING? | 11 |
| H. HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION?..... | 11 |
| IV. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL? | 12 |
| A. GOING TO A TRADE SCHOOL OR OBTAINING VOCATIONAL TRAINING | 12 |
| B. ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE..... | 12 |
| C. ATTENDING A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY | 13 |
| D. HOW CAN I TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY FROM A COMMUNITY COL- LEGE? | 13 |
| E. GETTING PRIORITY ENROLLMENT FOR COLLEGE CLASSES | 14 |
| V. PAYING FOR COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL | 14 |
| A. WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID? | 14 |
| B. HOW DO I APPLY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID? | 14 |
| C. HOW DO I APPLY FOR STATE FINANCIAL AID? | 15 |
| D. WILL I NEED MY PARENTS' OR FOSTER PARENTS' INFORMATION TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID? | 15 |
| E. HOW DO I PROVE THAT I AM OR WAS A "WARD OF THE COURT?" | 15 |
| F. WHAT IS THE CHAFEE GRANT PROGRAM? | 16 |
| G. DO I QUALIFY FOR A CHAFEE GRANT? | 16 |
| H. CAN I QUALIFY FOR A CHAFEE GRANT IF I AM UNDOCUMENTED? | 16 |
| I. IF I RECEIVE A CHAFEE GRANT ONE YEAR, CAN I RENEW IT THE NEXT YEAR? | 17 |
| J. WHAT IF I STILL HAVE AN UNMET NEED AFTER APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID? | 17 |
| K. WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA COLLEGE PROMISE GRANT? | 17 |
| L. WHAT ARE SCHOLARSHIPS?..... | 17 |
| M. WHAT IS THE UNITED FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN FUND? | 18 |
| N. WHAT IS THE BURTON SCHOLARS BOOK FUND? | 18 |

| | |
|---|----|
| VI. SUPPORTS IN COLLEGE | 18 |
| A. WHAT IS THE GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM? | 18 |
| B. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN THE GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM? | 19 |
| C. HOW CAN EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS (EOP AND EOP&S) HELP ME ONCE I GET TO COLLEGE? | 19 |
| D. WHAT IS THE FYSI PROGRAM?..... | 19 |
| E. DO CURRENT AND FORMER FOSTER YOUTH GET PRIORITY HOUSING AND PRI- ORITY ENROLLMENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES? | 19 |
| VII. THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM | 20 |
| A. WHAT CAN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (“ILP”) DO FOR ME? | 20 |
| B. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ILP? | 20 |
| C. WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ILP? | 20 |
| D. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF I HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS? | 20 |
| E. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF I AM ON PROBATION? | 21 |
| F. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF MY CASE IS CLOSED? | 21 |
| G. HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR ILP? | 21 |
| H. WHAT IF I DON’T WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ILP? | 21 |
| I. WHAT IS A TILP? | 21 |
| J. WHY IS THE TILP SO IMPORTANT?..... | 21 |
| K. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SERVICES I MAY BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH ILP? | 22 |
| L. WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED TO TURN IN TO GET SERVICES? | 23 |
| M. IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT OF ILP MONEY I CAN GET? | 23 |
| N. CAN I STILL RECEIVE ILP SERVICES IF I AM WORKING?..... | 23 |
| O. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I’M NOT GETTING HELP TO BECOME INDEPENDENT?.... | 23 |
| VIII. IMMIGRATION | 24 |
| IX. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I TURN 18? | 25 |
| A. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR AB 12? | 25 |
| B. WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR AB 12?..... | 25 |
| C. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO GET EXTENDED FOSTER CARE BENEFITS? | 25 |
| D. WHAT IS A TRANSITION MEETING OR CONFERENCE?..... | 25 |
| E. WHAT HOUSING OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE? | 26 |
| X. WHEN YOUR CASE CLOSES | 27 |
| A. WHAT SERVICES MUST MY SOCIAL WORKER OR PROBATION PROVIDE ME BE- FORE MY CASE CLOSES? | 27 |
| B. WHAT SERVICES MUST MY SOCIAL WORKER OR PROBATION PROVIDE ME BE- FORE MY CASE CLOSES? | 28 |
| C. ARE THER ANY PROGRAMS THAT CAN HELP ME WHEN I TRANSITION OUT IF I HAVE A DISABILITY? | 28 |
| D. HOW DO I APPLY FOR SSI? | 28 |
| E. WILL I STILL HAVE MEDI-CAL WHEN MY CASE CLOSES? | 28 |
| F. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO EXTEND MY MEDI-CAL COVERAGE UNTIL BY 26TH BIRTHDAY? | 29 |
| G. WHERE CAN I FIND A DOCTOR OR DENTIST? | 29 |
| H. WHERE CAN I FIND A MENTOR? | 29 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| XI. EMPLOYMENT | 30 |
| A. HOW OLD DO I HAVE TO BE BEFORE I CAN START WORKING? | 30 |
| B. WHAT CAN I DO TO START WORKING? | 30 |
| C. AT WHAT AGE CAN I GET A WORK PERMIT? | 30 |
| D. DOES A WORK PERMIT REQUIRE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE? | 30 |
| E. WHAT SHOULD I DO ONCE I HAVE A WORK PERMIT? | 30 |
| F. CAN I STILL GET A JOB IF I AM PREGNANT? | 30 |
| G. HOW CAN I FIND A JOB IN MY AREA? | 30 |
| | |
| XII. EXPECTANT AND PARENTING FOSTER YOUTH | 31 |
| A. WHAT IF I AM EXPECTING A CHILD OR PARENTING?..... | 31 |
| B. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL EBENEFITS?..... | 31 |
| XIII. RECORDS | 31 |
| A. CAN I SEE MY DCFS RECORDS? | 31 |
| B. ARE MY JUVENILE RECORDS AUTOMATICALLY SEALED? | 31 |
| C. CAN I SEAL MY RECORDS IF I HAVE A JUVENILE COURT RECORD? | 31 |
| D. IS THERE A FEE I MUST PAY TO SEAL MY JUVENILE COURT RECORDS? | 32 |
| E. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY RECORDS ARE SEALED? | 32 |
| F. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SEAL MY JUVENILE COURT RECORDS? | 32 |
| | |
| XIII. IDENTITY THEFT | 33 |
| A. WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT? | 33 |
| B. WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT? | 33 |
| C. HOW CAN I KEEP FROM BECOMING A VICTIM? | 33 |
| D. WHAT CAN I DO IF I BELIEVE I AM A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT? | 34 |
| E. HOW CAN I MONITOR MY CREDIT? | 34 |
| F. WHAT IS A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER? | 34 |
| G. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A GOOD CREDIT RATING? | 35 |
| H. HOW CAN I ESTABLISH GOOD CREDIT? | 35 |
| | |
| XIV. CONCLUSION | 36 |

I. INTRODUCTION

As the time nears for you to leave “the system,” you might have fears about your future. On the one hand, you might be concerned about where you will live, whether you will have enough money for college, or whether you have the necessary skills to obtain a job. On the other hand, you might also be excited about finally being able to live on your own and take your life into your own hands.

NOTE FOR PROBATION YOUTH: This manual is for foster youth and former foster youth. Some probation youth are also considered foster youth if they are in or were in a court-ordered suitable placement (like a group home or being ordered to live with a relative other than your parents). Even though we talk about social workers (CSWs) throughout this manual, if you are a probation foster youth, you can get the same information from your Probation Officer (PO) that other foster youth can get from their CSWs. Ask your PO if you qualify as a foster youth or former foster youth!

This manual will give you an understanding of the resources available to you as you transition to adulthood. There are many services available to you that you might not even know about, such as continued Medi-Cal coverage (health insurance), tuition assistance, tutoring, and scholarship opportunities. When in doubt, please contact Public Counsel for guidance and assistance at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500. All of the information in this manual can also be found at: **www.MyLifeMyRights.org**.

A. WHO DO YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT OR NEED HELP?

First, remember that you are not alone. There are people and agencies that want to help you.

If your case is open, the first person you should call is your **Children’s Social Worker (CSW)**. If they aren’t able to help you, you can ask for their supervisor. Their supervisor also has a supervisor. Don’t give up until you get the help you need!

You can also call **your dependency attorney**. If you don’t know who your attorney is, or how to contact them, you can call the Children’s Law

Center’s main line at (323) 980-1700, and they can look it up for you.



If your case is closed and you need help accessing housing or services, call your **Transition Coordinator (TC)**. You can find a list of all the TCs at ilponline.org.

If you are still not getting what you need after reaching out to the people above, you can contact the **ombudsperson**. An ombudsperson’s job is to resolve problems. As a foster youth there are several different offices that you can call. See below for all of the contact information.

If you are in Los Angeles County:

- For problems with DCFS in general, contact the DCFS Ombudsperson at 213-351-5720. Visit <http://www.ilponline.org/Forms/Ombudsman> to read more about all the ways this Ombudsperson can help you!
- For issues with the Independent Living Program, call (877) 694-5741.
- If you are having a problem with a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTPs and sometimes called group homes), you can contact the Children’s Group Home Ombudsperson: (888) 445-1234 or go to <https://ombudsstrtp.lacounty.gov/> You can also call the California Community Care Licensing Division Complaint hotline at

If you are outside of Los Angeles:

- If you live outside of Los Angeles County and are having difficulties getting the help you need from your county’s Department of Children’s Services, contact the State of California at (877) 846-1602.
- If you are outside of Los Angeles County and have a problem with a group home, contact the state Community Care Licensing Complaint Hotline at (844)538-8766.

Remember, there are lots of people available who want to help foster youth. Keep reaching out, and you will find someone who can help!

II. EDUCATIONAL PLANNING



The first step to a successful transition is graduation from high school. There are a number of reasons that high school is important to your success in life. High school graduates earn about 35 percent more than those without a high school diploma. College graduates make 132 percent more! Over a lifetime it all adds

up.

Without a high school education, you will find it more difficult to get a job that will allow you to afford the cost of living on your own and/or attend the college of your choice. It is important that you know your educational rights and do everything you can to finish your requirements for high school.

A. WHO IS AN EDUCATION RIGHTS HOLDER?

Until a person turns 18, an adult holds their education rights and has the power to make decisions related to their education. This person is called an education rights holder, or ERH. The ERH can be a mom, dad, other family member, or a court volunteer (called a Court Appointed Special advocate or CASA). Some adults such as CSWs and STRTP staff cannot be ERHs.

Ideally your ERH will communicate with you and take your concerns and preferences in mind when making educational decisions. If you do not know who your ERH is, or if you don't think your ERH is acting in your best educational interest, call your attorney right away. They can tell you who your ERH is and they can also ask the judge to change your ERH if necessary. Once you turn 18, you become your own ERH and get to make the decisions.

B. WHAT DO I NEED TO COMPLETE HIGH SCHOOL?



Generally, you must complete a minimum number of courses to graduate with a diploma. In the Los Angeles Unified School District

you must complete 210 credits with a grade of "D" or better in order to graduate.

Other districts have different requirements. If you are going to a non-LAUSD school, make sure to check with your counselor to find out what is required.

C. HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ON TRACK TO GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL?

You have a right to request your academic transcript and to speak with your high school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate. Be certain to check your transcripts and ask questions about the credits you'll need to graduate. There are lots of ways to make up credits if you're behind. Some options include:

- Taking classes at a community college while a high school student
- Adult school (usually in evenings or weekends)
- Online credit recovery (talk to your school about programs).

Talk to your counselor about credit recovery options. What's available may differ year to year depending on funding and by district. See **Tab A (p. 37)** for some options.

NOTE: If your counselor or school administrator suggests that you should check out of your regular high school to go to adult school or community college, think twice about it and call Public Counsel at (213) 385- 2977, ext. 500 to get more information. Generally, you have a right to stay in your regular high school if you want to.



D. WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO MAKE CERTAIN I GRADUATE WITH A DIPLOMA?

- 1) Make sure to ask your high school counselor **each semester** if you are on track to graduate!
In LAUSD, you have an assigned counselor through the Specialized Students Services program. These are counselors who help make sure foster youth get what they need to complete their education.
- 2) Request a copy of your transcript each semester to check your credits. Please see **Tab C (p. 39)** for a **Records Request** you can use to get your transcript make sure you're earning the credits you need to graduate.
- 3) Ask for help, attend school regularly, and study hard. If you are struggling with a class, talk to your teachers, use the tutoring services that are listed in this manual, and take advantage of any after-school or weekend classes.
- 4) Make sure you are enrolled in A-G courses. These are needed to go to a California State University or a University of California (like UCLA)! In LAUSD, you **must** be provided with the opportunity to take the A-G curriculum. Please see **page 13** for an explanation of A-G courses and page 46 for a chart of all the A-G courses required!

E. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVES FOR COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL?

OPTION 1: If you go to a school within LAUSD, you can pass the HiSET Exam and receive a high school equivalency certificate. Check out this website to see if you meet the requirements to take the exam:

<http://hiset.ets.org/requirements/ca>

LIMITATIONS: If you only pass the HiSET, but don't finish your high school requirements, you generally could not go straight to a 4-year college and would need to start out in a community college or trade school/vocational training. Some private universities and colleges may also accept the high school equivalency certificate, but you need to check.

NOTE: If you need help paying for a prepara-

tion class for the exam and you are ILP eligible, contact your CSW (if case open) or Transition Coordinator (if case closed) to get assistance from ILP. See **pages 20-24** for more information about ILP. You can also check out Adult Schools in LAUSD; some offer the HiSET and preparation classes for free.

OPTION 2: You can pass the General Education Development (GED) test and receive a California high school equivalency certificate. Check out this website to see if you're eligible:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/gd/>.

LIMITATIONS: Just like with the HiSET, you generally could not go straight to a 4-year college and would need to start out in a community college or trade school/vocational training.

NOTE: Similar to the HiSET, you can get assistance paying for preparation classes and the exam through ILP.

OPTION 3: You can also pass the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE). Each person who passes is awarded a Certificate of Proficiency, which is equivalent to a California high school diploma. Check out this website to see if you're eligible as well as more information about the exam and deadlines for registering, as it is only offered during certain times of the year:

<http://www.chspe.net/registration/>

LIMITATIONS: Again, with only the CHSPE, you generally could not go straight to a 4-year college and would need to start out in a community college or trade school/vocational training. Also you might not be eligible to apply for certain military service programs.

OPTION 4: Because foster youth transfer homes and schools so much, there is a law (AB 216, formerly AB 167) that makes it easier to graduate from high school when you're behind in credits.



III. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR FOSTER YOUTH

You are eligible for this law if:

- you are in **foster care**, AND
- you **transfer schools any time after your second year of high school**,
- AND you **are not reasonably expected to graduate on time**.

If you are eligible and choose to graduate under AB 216, you only have to complete California's minimum credit requirements (130 credits of specific courses) to graduate. If you transfer schools after your second year of high school and are not likely to graduate on time, make sure to discuss AB 216 with your school counselor or principal.

See **Tab D (p. 40)** to see which classes you need to take under AB 216 and for a sample letter that you can give to your school if you think you're eligible for this exception! See page 41 for a sample letter to request AB 216.

LIMITATIONS: By graduating with only the state minimum requirements under AB 216, you will probably not have all the courses you would need to apply to a 4-year college and would need to start out in a community college or trade school/vocational training. Make sure to discuss your future plans with your school counselor to see if AB 216 is right for you.

OPTION 5: By passing the HiSET test (see Option 1 above) or the GED (see Option 2 above), and 10 specific extra classes, you can graduate with a regular Adult School diploma. You can also take 34 specific classes and graduate with an Adult School diploma.

LIMITATIONS: Again, since you aren't taking all of the courses you need to apply to a 4-year university, you will probably not have all the courses you would need to apply to a 4-year college and would need to start out in a community college or trade school/vocational training.

As a foster youth, you may face additional challenges in completing your education that other youth may not. There are several resources available to help you overcome these challenges and meet your educational goals.

A. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR TUTORING?

There are a number of different ways that you can receive tutoring. We hope that you will take advantage of as many options as possible!

OPTION 1: Foster youth and probation youth ages 5-21 who live in Los Angeles County are also eligible for free, in-home tutoring through Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program. For more information call (562)922-6161 or go to <https://www.lacoe.edu/Student-Services/Foster-Youth-Services/Tutoring>.

OPTION 2: Talk to your CSW about getting tutoring through DCFS. You can also check out <https://dcfs.lacounty.gov/youth/education/> for resources.

OPTION 3: There are many community organizations, churches, and schools that provide after-school and weekend tutoring for youth who want to learn more, need help, or are struggling.

B. I DON'T HAVE A PERMANENT PLACE TO STAY AND WANT TO GET BACK INTO SCHOOL. CAN I GO BACK TO MY OLD SCHOOL?

Absolutely! Under the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act, you can go back to your old school—even if you don't have all the necessary paperwork, like a birth certificate or your immunization records. The school must enroll you even if you don't have these documents.

If you choose to stay at your "school of origin" (also known as your "home school"), you have the right to **get free transportation** to and from school. This will usually be in the form of bus tokens. If you are in LAUSD and are having a problem enrolling into a school or getting transportation, you should contact the Los Angeles Unified School District's Homeless Education office at (213) 241-3840

If you are in another district, check out <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/> to find your district liaison. Each school district is required to have a Homeless Student Liaison. If you are still having trouble getting the help you need, call Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977 ext. 500.

C. I WAS JUST MOVED TO A NEW FOSTER HOME. DO I HAVE TO TRANSFER TO A NEW SCHOOL?

No. AB 490, AB 1933, and the Fostering Connections Act are laws that protect the rights of foster youth to a stable and consistent education. You have the right to remain in your school of origin and school feeder pattern as long as you are in foster care and it is in your best interest. Your school of origin is the school you were attending when you entered foster care or changed placement. It can also be any school you've attended in the last 15 months if you have a connection to that school.

Example: Even if you move near the end of 8th grade, you should be able to stay in your same middle school AND go to the same high school that all of your middle school friends go to! Also, if your foster care case closes in the middle of the school year, you can stay in your same school until the end of the school year. If you're in high school, you can stay at your school of origin until graduation, no matter when your case closes!

Even if there is a disagreement about what school you should attend, you have the right to stay in your current school until this issue is worked out. See **Tab F (p.42)** for a sample letter telling your school about your right to attend your school of origin and your right to immediately enroll there.

Under these laws, your social worker is required to consider how far your new placement is from your school and how this move would affect your education. Your social worker should do everything he or she can to place you somewhere near your current school so that you don't have to change schools. Your social worker also has to inform your attorney and education rights holder within 24 hours of any placement move that might result in a school change.

NOTE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS: Under AB 1933, you also have the right to attend the school listed in your IEP, which is your school of origin, if it is in your best interest. The school has to be informed in **writing** of a change in school by the social worker or probation officer **at least 10 days in advance**. If you want the school district to pay for transportation, special education laws apply.

If you want to transfer from your school of origin when you change home placements, you can do that, too. If you change your mind, you should still be able to return to your school of origin. See **Tab G (p. 43)** for a sample letter to your school telling them about your decision to transfer schools and your ability to reenroll in your school of origin later, if needed.

If you and your education rights holder (ERH) disagree with your school placement, your ERH or your attorney can request a hearing with the dependency court judge to tell the judge why you and your ERH want you to stay in your old school (or move to a new school) and ask for help!

D.WHO PAYS TO BRING ME TO MY SCHOOL OF ORIGIN?

DCFS (or the child welfare agency in your county) must give you bus passes or pay your caregiver for the cost of driving you to your school of origin. Ask your CSW or your dependency attorney for help getting this money. If you are having difficulties getting the help you need let your dependency attorney know.

E. WHAT IF I WANT TO GO TO THE SCHOOL NEAR MY NEW HOME, BUT THEY WON'T LET ME ENROLL WITHOUT MY RECORDS?

Under AB 490 and the Fostering Connections Act, you have the right to be **immediately** enrolled in school even if you don't have the necessary paperwork (like a birth certificate, immunization records, or school records). You also have the right to be placed in a regular public school before an alternative school is chosen. See **Tab H (p. 44)** for a sample request for immediate enrollment and update of credits.

EXAMPLE: Even if you are placed in a group home that has its own school, you have the right to attend a regular public school unless your IEP says you need a special non-public school and the group home's school will meet your needs.

In addition, your old school must transfer all your school records to your new school within two days of any request.

If you are in LAUSD and you have a problem with school enrollment, securing placement in a regular public school, or getting your school records transferred to the right place, you should call the LAUSD Specialized Support Services at (213) 241-3840 . If you are not in LAUSD, you should contact the AB490 or foster youth liaison for your school district. If you still need help, call your CSW, your dependency attorney, or Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500.

NOTE: The law specifically says that a foster youth cannot be denied attendance or enrollment if he/she lost or cannot find his/her proof of immunization.

F. WHAT OTHER EDUCATION RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS A FOSTER YOUTH?

PARTIAL CREDITS AND NO PENALTY FOR COURT ABSENCES: Foster youth change schools and placements too often and have to attend court hearings and other meetings that take them out of school. Your grades can't be lowered if you were absent because you had to go to court or because you had a change in placement. Also, you have a right to receive partial credit for work that you did at one school, even if

you weren't able to finish the semester!

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: The law says that even if you move to a new school, you immediately meet the residency requirements to start or continue participating in interscholastic sports or other extracurricular activities! Also, you have the right to participate in extracurricular activities just the same as any other student. So, if a group home says you can't play on the football or baseball team, this is not right.

CHECKING IN WITH YOUR JUDGE: At each court hearing, the judge for your case is required to check in on how you're doing in school. Be sure to let the judge know if you need extra help in school!

FREE EDUCATION ATTORNEY: If your attorney and judge see that you are having problems with your education, the judge can appoint a free education attorney (sometimes called a 317 (e) attorney) to help you solve this problem.

ACCESS TO THE SAME SERVICES: Finally, you have the right to access all of the same academic and other school services that are available to all other students.



G. WHAT SERVICES CAN I GET IF I NEED SPECIAL HELP WITH MY LEARNING?



If you have a hard time focusing in class, difficulty completing math problems, and/or need a counselor to talk to at school, you may qualify for special education and related services and be entitled to an Individualized Education Program. If this is the case, you aren't alone!

Nearly one-third of foster youth are eligible for special education and related services, and so are many famous people! Basketball player, businessman, and philanthropist Magic Johnson has dyslexia, and Albert Einstein, one of history's most famous mathematicians had a learning disability!

If you are eligible for special education and related services, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be created to meet your unique needs as part of your free public education. Your IEP may include "related services" that will help you to become a better student. These services may include: transportation to and from school, counseling, nursing, speech and language services, mental health counseling, reading assistance, and physical/occupational therapy.



H. DO I QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION?

If you believe that you may have a learning disability or other disabilities that affect your learning or ability to do well in school, you should talk to your Education Rights Holder (see page 6) and work with them to:

- 1) **Request for a Special Education Evaluation in Writing.** The school must provide your ERH with an "assessment plan" to be signed within **15 days** of the request (or the school must provide *written* notice that they refuse to assess you and explain why). By signing the assessment plan, you and your ERH are agreeing to an evaluation. The school must perform an evaluation and conduct a formal IEP meeting within **60 days** of their receipt of your signed assessment plan.

- 2) **Attend the IEP Meeting and Help Create the Plan.** This initial IEP meeting is held at the school "IEP Team", who should either know you, be qualified to provide services to you, or be able to interpret and answer questions about the assessment.

During the IEP team meeting, the school psychologist will present the results of the evaluation and the IEP team will decide together whether or not you meet the eligibility criteria for an IEP. If the IEP team agrees that you are eligible, an IEP document will be created with an educational program that is specially designed to meet your unique needs. It works like a contract and **must** be implemented after everyone agrees that it is the right plan for you.

NOTE: If you're 16 years old or are transitioning into independent living, post-secondary education (i.e. college or vocational training), or employment, it is very important that an **Individualized Transition Plan** ("ITP") is also developed at the IEP meeting. The ITP should establish goals for you, and may include services such as help creating a résumé, job training, help applying to colleges, and so much more.

At the end of the IEP meeting, the school site **must provide your ERH with a written copy of the IEP** document to review. You and your ERH should make sure the IEP meets your needs and has all the necessary services when your ERH signs. The IEP cannot be implemented until your ERH signs. It does not have to be signed during or right after the meeting. You and your ERH have the right to take the IEP home and review and discuss prior to signing.

- 3) **Follow up after the IEP Meeting.** If you believe that the school is not implementing the IEP, your ERH has the right to request another IEP meeting that must be held within 30 days. If the school refuses to schedule an IEP within the 30 days they have the right to file a compliance complaint with the California Department of Education (CDE).

By law, you IEP team must meet annually to review present academic levels, determine

Whether your IEP goals were met, create new goals for the following year, and decide what services should be provided. But you can request an IEP meeting at anytime and the school is required to hold the IEP within 30 days of the request.

If you or your ERH is having trouble getting you the services you need at school, and you have an open dependency or delinquency case, talk to your attorney at court! They can request that a free education attorney, called a 317(e) attorney, be appointed to help you. You can also call Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500.

For more information about special education, please visit <http://www.publiccounsel.org/tools/publications/files/Special-Education.pdf> for our "Special Education" brochure.

IV. WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

There are a number of paths that you can do after high school to get more training to pursue the career of your dreams. These include four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, and vocational programs.

NOTE: On pages 11-12, we talked about **special education** services. If you have an IEP or 504 accommodations plan, you may be able to get extra help at **all community colleges and California universities**. They have their own offices for students with disabilities, each with a team of people whose job is to help you get the services you need to succeed in college. Check with your college or university to learn about the process for obtaining these services!

A. GOING TO A TRADE SCHOOL OR OBTAINING VOCATIONAL TRAINING!



Trade schools, like Los Angeles Trade-Technical College, are designed to prepare students to work in a trade (such as auto repair, cosmetology, cooking, paralegal studies and so much more). Some of these schools do

not require a high school diploma. Talk to your high school/college counselor and search online for the options near you.

NOTE: Be careful when looking for trade and vocational schools. You want to make certain that they are **accredited** and that **employers will accept a certificate from the school**. Some schools promise things that are not true. Don't just take the schools at their word. Speak with graduates of the school to find out about their experience and what they are doing now. Ask them to give you the names of employers who will accept the school's graduates and call the employers to see what they think! Also, private trade and vocational schools can be expensive; before signing up, check to see if you can get the same courses at a community college.

Visit California's Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education search tool: <https://search-bppe.dca.ca.gov/> to find an accredited school!

B. ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE!

For admission to community college you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Be at least 18 years old, with or without a diploma, OR
- Be a high school graduate, OR
- Have the equivalent of a high school diploma.



NOTE: You may take community college classes while you are also in high school!

If you do not have a high school diploma you may still be able to receive federal funding. In this case you must either (1) enroll in a career pathways program receiving Title IV funding (2) Pass an approved Ability to Benefit Test administered by the Department of Education or (3) Pay for and complete six credits towards a degree or certificate. Contact your community college for more information.

If you are interested in transferring from a community college to a university, talk to your college counselor about the requirements. You'll need to complete specific coursework before you can transfer, depending on your class level and your major.

C. ATTENDING A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY!

Admission to any four-year college or university is competitive. To compete for admission to a California State University (“CSU”) or University of California (“UC”) campus, a student must have **passed the “A-G” courses with a “C” or above:**

- **A:** 2 years of Social Science
- **B:** 4 years of English
- **C:** 3 years of Math (more recommended)
- **D:** 2 years of Laboratory Science
- **E:** 2 years of Foreign Language (more recommended)
- **F:** 1 year of Visual or Performing Arts
- **G:** 1 year of an approved elective

In addition, most college and university applications require a personal statement, letters of recommendation, a résumé, and that the student has taken the SAT or the ACT. For more information on the SAT, go to <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>. Private colleges and universities usually have requirements similar to CSU and UC schools, but they can vary.

Talk to your high school/college counselor, your social worker, your mentor, and/or your caregiver about how to make certain that you have everything you need to get into a college or four-year university.

Here are some helpful websites if you are looking to go to college:

- https://admission.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/preparing_for_USC_brochure.pdf – designed to help students gauge their interests, track their achievements, and head in the right direction.

- <https://www.californiacolleges.edu/#/> – designed as a central resource to help students understand the application process and research all of their California college options.
- www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions – for information about admission to the University of California.
- <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/> – for information about getting California foster youth into college and helping them succeed in college.

D. HOW CAN I TRANSFER TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY FROM A COMMUNITY COLLEGE?

Transferring to a UC or CSU is an option for every community college student! There are usually resources at each college campus, called Transfer Centers, available to assist students with the transfer process.

If you are serious about transferring to a four-year university from a community college, you should speak to your academic counselor at the community college to develop an academic transfer plan as soon as you enroll. This will help prevent you from staying in the community college longer than needed. Please visit www.assist.org to find information about the university of your

choice, your major at the school, and the lower-division courses you will need to complete to transfer to the university.



E. GETTING PRIORITY ENROLLMENT FOR COLLEGE CLASSES!

A law, called AB 194, gives foster youth and former foster youth priority registration for classes at community colleges, CSUs, and some UCs. This means that you'll be able to sign up for classes before most other students! Ask the academic counselor at your college for information on how to get priority registration. Most community colleges, CSUs, and UCs have staff that are specially trained to work with foster youth. They can help you get priority enrollment as well. See **pages 18-19** for more information about these programs.

NOTE: You can also often get priority enrollment if you join Extended Opportunity Program and Services ("EOPS") or if you are eligible for services through Disabled Student Programs and Services ("DSPS"). Ask your college's EOPS and DSPS offices about this benefit!

V. PAYING FOR COLLEGE OR VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

College might seem far away, but it is closer than you think! You should start thinking about what colleges and universities you would like to attend. Would you like to stay in California and attend a nearby school? Or would you rather attend college on the East Coast?



Would you like to start off at a two-year community college or vocational school or go straight to a four year university? These are all things you need to start considering now, as some of these decisions might also affect the type of financial

aid you will need. No matter what your decision, do **not** let the fact that you were in foster care get in the way! Start setting goals for yourself now and take the steps necessary to accomplish them. Many foster youth have attended college and go on to lead very successful lives—you, too, have the power in your hands to become the next success story. Check-out <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/> to learn

all about how you can succeed in college as a foster youth.

A. WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

A. The goal of financial aid is to help students pay for college. The amount of financial aid you receive depends on your need. As a current or former foster youth, you might have very little financial support and a great need for financial assistance. Financial aid is available from the federal government, from the state of California, from certain colleges and universities, and from private foundations. It is very important that you apply for financial aid on time and as early as possible to ensure that you get the best financial aid package available.



B. HOW DO I APPLY FOR FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID?

In order to receive financial aid from the federal government, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is available on October 1 and **must be filed by March 2nd** of each year. You can complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This application is free, so if the website tries to charge you, you may have gone to the wrong place. Make sure you've gone to the websites listed above!



If you need help completing the FAFSA, you can ask your school counselor, CSW, or TC for help. Also, there are many financial aid workshops available to foster youth throughout the year that can help you complete the FAFSA and answer any financial aid questions you might have. Please ask your CSW, TC, or attorney about these workshops.

NOTE: If you do not have your high school diploma or its equivalent (i.e. HiSET, GED, or CHSPE), you may not be able to receive federal financial aid.

C. HOW DO I APPLY FOR STATE FINANCIAL AID?

The state of California also provides financial assistance to California high school graduates and GED recipients in the form of a Cal Grant. The Cal Grant is free money that you will not have to pay back. It is different from a loan. In order to receive a Cal Grant, you must file both the FAFSA and Cal Grant Grade Point Average Verification Form by March 2nd. In the fall semester, ask your school counselor how the Cal Grant GPA Verification Form will be completed at your school. Usually schools upload it for you. You must also:

- (1) be enrolled at least half time,
- (2) have financial need,
- (3) be a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident, or qualify under the CA DREAM Act (see note below), AND
- (4) be a California resident when you graduate from high school or earn your GED.

For more information, please log on to www.calgrants.org.

NOTE: In October 2011, the Governor signed the California DREAM Act! This means that undocumented youth are now eligible to receive both private and state-funded financial aid for college. Generally, to be eligible, you must (1) have entered the United States before age 16, (2) have attended a California high school for at least three full academic years, AND (3) have graduated or will graduate from a California high school, received your GED, or passed the CHSPE. Contact your college's financial aid office or check out http://www.csac.ca.gov/dream_act.asp to get additional information!

D. WILL I NEED MY PARENTS' OR FOSTER PARENTS' INFORMATION TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?

No. As long as you have or had an open case in the juvenile court (i.e. you are a foster youth) on your 13th birthday—even if you were adopted—you are considered a “ward of the court” and are deemed an **“Independent Student.”** This also applies if you are in legal guardianship. This means that you will not need to submit any tax or financial documents from your biological, adoptive, or foster parents or your legal guardians. Your financial aid need will be based solely on your personal income and resources.

TIP: Questions 52-60 of the FAFSA are very important because they determine how much money you will receive for school! You can Ask your social worker or attend one of the free financial aid workshops that DCFS hosts for assistance with FAFSA.

E. HOW DO I PROVE THAT I AM OR WAS A “WARD OF THE COURT?”



You can prove that you are/were a “ward of the court” with a **Ward of the Court Verification Letter.** This is a letter that your CSW writes on your behalf and includes your court case number and the dates when you entered and/or exited the system. Having this letter proves that you were in foster care and qualifies you for federal and state financial aid, emancipation stipends, transitional housing programs, educational scholarships and grants, and continued health care.

Make sure to ask your CSW for this letter **before you leave foster care.** If you are having problems getting a copy of this letter, please let your attorney know right away.

Additionally, the California Department of Social Services can verify your participation in the foster care system for the purpose of financial aid eligibility. If you are unable to obtain a Ward of the Court Verification Letter, please email Susan Roberts directly at susan.roberts@dss.ca.gov to verify your status as a current or former foster youth.

F. WHAT IS THE CHAFEE GRANT PROGRAM?

The Chafee Program is a federally funded program that **gives up to \$5,000 to eligible former foster youth** for career and technical training or college courses at California community colleges, California State Universities, University of California campuses, career and technical schools, independent and private colleges, and schools in other states.



To **apply** for a Chafee Grant, you must submit a FAFSA (see **page 14**) and the California Chafee Grant Program Application. The Chafee Grant Program Application is available after January 1st and **awards are given on a rolling basis so you should apply as early as possible**. Since funds are limited, not everyone who applies for the Chafee Grant will receive it the first time they apply. Priority is given to students who have applied before. The Chafee Grant Program Application may change from year to year so make sure you submit the newest version of the application. Your application will be returned to you if it is not the most updated version of the form.

You can find and submit the Chafee Grant Program Application online at <https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/fosteryouthapplication> or call the California Student Aid Commission at (888) 224-7268 to have an application mailed to you. You will also need to have your CSW or TC complete the California Chafee ETV Program Certification Form. Once submitted, you can check the status of your Chafee Grant Program Application online at the above website.

G. DO I QUALIFY FOR A CHAFEE GRANT?

You qualify for a Chafee Grant if you meet ALL of these eligibility criteria:

- You are a current or former foster youth who was in court-ordered out-of-home care at any time between 16-18 years old, AND
 - ◊ This includes youth who were adopted or in a legal guardianship after age 16.
- You are enrolled at least half time in a post-secondary program as defined by your school, AND
- You completed the FAFSA and financial aid application at your school, AND
- You had the financial aid office at your school complete a Need Analysis Review (NAR), AND
- You meet or continue to meet financial aid academic progress as defined by your school, AND
 - ◊ In other words, you attend class regularly and get good grades.
- You are a minimum of 16 years old but have not reached your 26th birthday as of July 1st of the award year.

After you apply, your FAFSA and Chafee Grant Program Application will be reviewed and your foster youth status will be verified. Your school will determine your financial aid eligibility and you will then receive a letter regarding your award status. You do not need to have a high school diploma or a GED to receive a Chafee Grant.



H. CAN I QUALIFY FOR A CHAFEE GRANT IF I AM UNDOCUMENTED?

Yes! Even if you are undocumented, you are still eligible for the Chafee Grant (in addition to the benefits provided by the CA DREAM Act). The process for applying for the Chafee Grant, however, is a little different if you are undocumented.

Before you complete the Chafee Grant Program application, you must complete the California

Dream Act Application, which is available at <https://dream.csac.ca.gov>. After you complete the California Dream Act application, you should complete the online Chafee Grant Application using your Dream Act ID number instead of a social security number.

I. IF I RECEIVE A CHAFEE GRANT ONE YEAR, CAN I RENEW IT THE NEXT YEAR?

Yes! Your Chafee Grant may be renewed every year through your 25th birthday. Unlike the FAFSA, you only have to submit a Chafee Grant Program Application once. You can renew your application by submitting an updated FAFSA and asking your school to submit a Chafee Need Analysis Report (NAR) each year. But **remember** that you can lose your Chafee Grant if you leave school, get failing grades, get kicked out of school, or are at risk of getting kicked out of school.

Since the Chafee Grant is federally- and state-funded, it is subject to availability of funds. Renewal applicants are given top priority and are awarded grants first. It is possible that you will not get the Chafee Grant the first year you apply. It is important that you apply for and renew the Chafee Grant on time and that you stay in school and keep your grades up.

J. WHAT IF I STILL HAVE AN UNMET NEED AFTER APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID?

If you still have an unmet need after applying for financial aid, **you can receive up to \$4,999 per year for college or \$2,500 for vocational school from ILP Tuition Assistance.** Assistance is based on need and limited to availability. Talk to your CSW (if your case is open) or your Transition Coordinator (if your case is closed) about this assistance.

NOTE: If you decide to attend college in Northern California or anywhere out of state, ILP can provide transportation assistance for airplane tickets, buses, trains, etc. (up to two round trips each year). Assistance is based on need and limited to availability. As with all ILP services, you must submit a Request for ILP Services Form to your CSW or TC along with any required documentation.

K. WHAT IS THE CALIFORNIA COLLEGE PROMISE GRANT?

The California College Promise Grant (formerly Board of Governor's {BOG} Fee Waiver) waives all of your enrollment fees at California community colleges. It is available to current and former foster youth who demonstrate a financial need. You can apply for the BOG Fee Waiver online at <https://www.cccapply.org/en/money/california-college-promise-grant>. If you prefer, you can print out and complete a waiver application and take it with you to your first meeting with the financial aid counselor at your school.

L. WHAT ARE SCHOLARSHIPS?

Scholarships are money for college that you don't have to pay back. Each scholarship has different requirements, so if you see a scholarship you are qualified for, you should apply! There are some scholarships that are specifically for foster youth (see below).

There are also lots of other scholarships for people interested in certain subjects or sports, or who come from certain neighborhoods or backgrounds. Check out the U.S. Department of Labor scholarship finder at <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx> to find scholarships you may be eligible for. There are many other resources out there. Talk to your high school or community college counselor for additional scholarship resources.



M. WHAT IS THE UNITED FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN FUND?



The United Friends of The Children (UFC) is a non-profit organization that focuses on youth who have transitioned from foster care. **The UFC offers a College Sponsorship in the amount of \$15,000 (\$3000 per year for a total of five years).** For more information about this opportunity, please visit

www.unitedfriends.org, or contact UFC educational support at (213) 580-1850 or via email at: info@unitedfriends.org.

Aside from scholarships, the UFC offers a College Readiness Program for 7th through 12th graders, transitional housing, and career and education development for a limited number of foster youth.

N. WHAT IS THE BURTON SCHOLARS BOOK FUND?

Eligible students will be provided \$200 for the school year to spend on books and supplies. Students must meet all of the following eligibility requirements to apply:

- Must be enrolled in 6 or more units
- Must not be eligible for, or participating in Next Up
- Must have been enrolled in foster care on or after 13th birthday
- Must have completed a FAFSA or Dream Act Application

You can learn more and apply at jbaforyouth.org/burton-book-fund-information/

VI. SUPPORTS IN COLLEGE

A. WHAT IS THE GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM?

The Guardian Scholars Program provides support services to current and former foster youth to help them obtain a university, community college, or trade school education. Some schools call the Guardian Scholar Program by a different name, for example: The Renaissance Scholars

Program, Scholars Transitioning and Realizing Success (STARS), Leaders Involved in Creating Change (LINC), etc. How each program supports current or former foster youth may differ but below are examples of some of the services that may be offered:

- Grants and scholarships to cover tuition and living expenses
- Housing – priority for campus housing and availability of year-round housing either on- or off-campus
- Academic advisement – assistance with class selection and registration
- Employment services, mentoring and career counseling – job placement, shadowing, and advising
- Personal guidance, counseling, tutoring – regular contact with a consistent counselor to develop and monitor an education plan
- Supplemental Support Services – child care, transportation help, book and supply vouchers, etc.

Contact the college you're interested in to see if they have specific support programs for current or former foster youth. Make certain to ask about and sign up for the Guardian Scholars Program or a similar program when you enroll at your new college or vocational school! You can check if the college you are interested in has a foster youth support program by going to the College Pathways website:

<http://www.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/>

B. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN THE GUARDIAN SCHOLARS PROGRAM?

The process is actually very easy. The first step is to identify yourself as a current or former foster youth on the FAFSA. Specifically, you must answer “YES” on FAFSA Question #52, which states: “At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?”

Also, if you see the following statement or any version of it on any of the applications for admission to the colleges or universities you are applying to, you should check the box next to it: “I am a former or current Foster Youth and am interested in financial aid and/or other benefits & services available to Foster Youth.” Having received the Chafee Grant also helps identify you as a current or former foster youth.

Once you are identified as a current or former foster youth—and if the school offers a Guardian Scholars Program or something similar—



someone may contact you to make sure that you have all of the benefits and supports in place to make your transition to college much easier. You should definitely take advantage of this great program! **If**

for some reason no one calls you, make sure you ask about the program. You will need to apply to be able to participate so make sure you contact your school right away.

C. HOW CAN EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS (EOP and EOP &S) HELP ME ONCE I GET TO COLLEGE?

Similar to the Guardian Scholars Program, EOP and EOP & S's primary goal is to encourage foster youth (and other youth who may need extra help) to enroll and stay in college, and to help you reach your goals once you get to college! EOPS offers academic counseling, financial aid, and other support services. EOP programs are at Cal States and EOP & S are at community colleges. Check out this website for more information about these programs:

<http://www.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/>. Eligibility requirements for EOP and EOP & S vary, but usually require you to have qualified for the California College Promise

Grant and completed the FAFSA. Sometimes you need to have earned below a certain GPA in high school, and sometimes you need to maintain a minimum GPA while at college. **You then will then need to apply at the school you are attending. Check with your college's EOP/EOP &S office for details and application deadlines!**

D. WHAT IS THE FYSI PROGRAM?

Every community college has a person appointed as their Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) liaison. This person can help you navigate the enrollment, financial aid, and academic planning process. You can learn more about FYSI liaisons and download a list of FYSI contacts at <https://www.ccstudentmentalhealth.org/resource/foster-youth-success-initiative-fysi-liaisons-directory/>

E. DO CURRENT AND FORMER FOSTER YOUTH GET PRIORITY HOUSING AND PRIORITY ENROLLMENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES?

It depends. California law (AB 1393) requires UCs and CSUs to give foster youth priority for on-campus housing. California community colleges are not required to give priority to foster youth, but many do—check with your school. In addition, CSUs that have student housing open during school breaks (or on a year-round basis) are required to give first priority to current and former foster youth. UCs are only required to do so for foster youth who are otherwise eligible for a particular campus housing facility.

HOWEVER, be sure to contact your school's Guardian Scholars program if you need help getting year-round housing and are worried that you aren't eligible—they will usually do all that they can to make sure that you get the help you need.

California law (AB 194) also requires that community colleges and CSUs give priority course enrollment to foster youth. Make sure you talk to your foster youth support program (see page 16 above) to be sure you get priority enrollment. Priority enrollment is not required at UCs, but many of them also offer priority enrollment—just ask!

VII. THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

The goal of the Independent Living Program (ILP) is to help you reach your goals for independence, success and to prepare you to live a healthy, productive, responsible, and self-sufficient life.

A. WHAT CAN ILP DO FOR ME?

ILP, which is funded by federal money and run by the county, can provide you with:

- Money for college,
- Financial workshops,
- A life coach,
- Housing,
- Car insurance,
- College preparation help,
- AND MORE...

B. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR ILP?

You are eligible for ILP as long as you are between **16 and 21 years old** (up to and including the day before your 21st birthday) AND were just **one** of the following:

- In foster care any time **after** your 16th birthday, even if it was for **one** day and even if you were later adopted or reunified with your parents, OR
- In a group home any time **after** your 16th birthday as a result of an order by the delinquency/dependency court or placement by probation, OR
- In placement any time **after** your 16th birthday in a home that is away from your parents or guardians pursuant to a court order (also known as a “suitable placement order”).
- Receiving Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (“Kin-GAP”), OR
- Living with the non-related legal guardian you were placed with by the dependency court after age 8, regardless of how old you were when you exited foster care.

C. WHO IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ILP?

Unfortunately, you are not eligible for ILP if you:

- 1) Are in a voluntary placement, OR
- 2) Are currently placed in a detention facility, locked facility, forestry camp, training school, a facility primarily for the detention of youth who are delinquent, or a medical or psychiatric facility, OR
- 3) Exited foster care before your 16th birthday and are not receiving Kin-GAP or are in a non-related legal guardianship established before you were 8 years old.

D. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF I HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS?

As long as you are physically and mentally able to benefit from ILP services, you are eligible for ILP. **Only** a doctor or mental health professional can determine whether you cannot physically and mentally benefit from ILP. Your CSW cannot



make this determination. Even if you have been found to be unable to benefit from ILP, your CSW must still ask **every six months** whether you want to participate in ILP. Your doctor or mental health professional must reassess your eligibility every six months as well.

NOTE: If your doctor decides that you cannot benefit from regular ILP services because of an illness or disability, your CSW must work with you to provide “ILP Equivalent Services” instead. This means your CSW must make an alternative plan to help you learn the skills to live independently.

For example, if you have a developmental disability, there are special Life Skills classes to help you prepare for independent living and there are Regional Center services and placements for teens and young adults. There are also mental health treatment and in-home supportive services programs designed to help youth with disabilities live independently.

E. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF I AM ON PROBATION?

YES! ILP services are available to both foster and probation youth who are in suitable placement. For instance, a probation group home is an example of a type of probation suitable placement.

F. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ILP IF MY CASE IS CLOSED?

If your case is closed, you are eligible for ILP services if:

- Your case was closed after your 16th birthday, OR
- Your case was closed before your 16th birthday AND your guardian still receives Kin-GAP payments for you, OR
- You were placed with a non-related legal guardian by the dependency court **after your 8th birthday.**

NOTE: Although you no longer have a CSW or attorney assigned to you, you can still connect with a Transition Coordinator (TC) who may provide services to you until your 21st birthday. See below for information on how to contact your TC.

G. HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR ILP?

If you are eligible for ILP, it doesn't matter if your case is open or closed. If your case is open, call your CSW. If your case is closed, contact a TC directly for ILP services! They are the people responsible for making sure you receive the ILP services that you need to meet your goals for transitioning to independence and adulthood. To find a Transition Coordinator, call the Los Angeles County Children and Family Services Youth Development Services Division at: (877) 694-5741, or visit their website at: www.ilponline.org.

If, for some reason, you aren't able to get ILP services through your CSW or TC, **call the Foster Youth Ombudsperson.** For the ombudsperson's contact information, see [page 5](#).

H. WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ILP?

You have the right to decline to participate in ILP. However, you might change your mind. Your CSW or PO must ask you about participating in

ILP **at least once every six months.** Even if you decide you don't want to participate now, you still have the chance to participate later. But don't wait too long! You don't want to pass up on all of the great ILP services and benefits you are entitled to.

I. WHAT IS A TILP?

The Transitional Independent Living Plan or "TILP" is a document that provides the **basis for all of the financial benefits and services you will receive as part of ILP.** The TILP is created at a meeting with your CSW and you have the right to invite anyone who may help you complete a detailed TILP. Go to <http://ilponline.org/Documents/TILP.pdf> for a blank copy of the TILP forms.

NOTE: California law requires that every foster youth in out-of-home care participate in developing a TILP beginning at age 16. However, it is Los Angeles County DCFS policy that **foster youth participate in developing a TILP starting at age 14.** Your CSW is required to have an in-person meeting with you every 6 months. The TILP must be attached to the court report at each status review hearing.



J. WHY IS THE TILP SO IMPORTANT?

For two reasons: (1) As a young person it is important to learn how to plan for your future and this is a tool to do so and (2) The TILP determines your financial benefits and ILP services (like housing, college financial aid, and work clothing). For these reasons, your plan should be complete and detailed.

The TILP should list **(1) your goals for the next six months, (2) the services you need to reach them, (3) people who are responsible for helping you reach these goals, and (4) set a target date for completion of the goals.**

You will need the services described in your TILP to help make it on your own as an adult. Now is a good time to start thinking about your future and what you would like to be doing

as an adult. Think of the TILP as the roadmap to help make the dreams for your future come true. Even if you are not sure about what you want to do as an adult, it never hurts to begin developing a good plan. You can update your TILP as many times as you want to reflect your changing interests, goals, and needs.

K. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SERVICES I MAY BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH ILP?

Important Note: For any money you receive through ILP, you need to **SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS** so you can show how you spent the money they gave you. If you do not save your receipts, you may not be able to get additional services from ILP in the future.

- 1) **Individualized Transition Skills Program:** Your social worker can refer you to ITSP, and you will be assigned a Transition Development Specialist (TDS). This person is a Life Coach, who can help you with things like getting your state I.D., looking for a job, or opening a bank account.
- 2) **Graduation Expenses:** Did you know that, as a high school senior, you can request ILP assistance to cover up to \$700 of graduation expenses? Graduation expenses include things like your cap and gown, graduation ceremony invitations, senior portraits, yearbook, class ring, prom, and grad night tickets.



All you need to do is fill out an application and have your school counselor certify that you will be graduating. This is done with a signed letter from your high school counselor and the embossed school seal. You must submit the letter to your CSW or Transition Coordinator (“TC”) to have ILP cover your graduation expenses. If you have graduation expenses due before you receive your graduation funding from ILP, you will have to pay for your graduation expenses and later get reimbursed. Be sure to **save your receipts!**

If you have expenses near the beginning of the school year (like your yearbook portrait fee) talk to your CSW or TC as soon as possible about getting this money. Each request can take over a month to process so it’s always smart to ask early!

3) **Celebration:** Celebration is a very fun event! It is a graduation ceremony available only to foster youth participating in the ILP program who have a 2.8 GPA or higher. Participating foster youth get free clothing, make-up and/or hair care, transportation to the event, dinner, and scholarships. Youth also get the opportunity to see and maybe meet a famous celebrity or politician. If you qualify for Celebration, ask your CSW or TC to make certain you get to attend—the deadline for applications is March of each year, and you don’t want to miss out!

4) **Driving Lessons:** ILP may be able to provide you with funds to use towards the cost of driving lessons! To be eligible, you must be 18 years old or older, and meet the general eligibility guidelines (talk to your CSW or TC about this). The funds may only be applied to the cost of behind-the-wheel training and DMV testing. The funds may be available prior to taking the training—just ask!

California law requires that all drivers possess a valid and unexpired driver’s license. These funds for driving lessons are intended to help you obtain a driver’s license so that you can travel to your college classes or get to your job. Good luck!

5) **Car Insurance:** California law also requires that all drivers have a minimum of liability car insurance. Car insurance is intended to cover damages and injuries related to a car accident and, depending on your coverage, theft and vandalism. **ILP may be able to provide you with funds for your own car insurance!** Car insurance is need-based, and is limited to the availability of funds. Talk to your TC to learn more about these funds.

Also talk to your caregiver about insurance. In some cases, they can carry you on their car insurance until your 24th birthday as long as you are in school.

7) **Household Startup/ Security Deposit**

Funds: If you participate in ILP, are at least 18 years old and have not reached the age of 21, and live in your own apartment or college dorm, you can receive a one-time payment for household startup items or to use for a security deposit. This money can be used to pay for things such as pots and pans, linens, kitchen utensils, or other items to help you later establish a household. This money is NOT for youth who are in a Transitional Housing program. Ask your ILP coordinator for more information!

8) **Money for:**

- Exam fees (like the SAT)
- Tuition for college or a trade school (**See page 17** for more details)
- Costs associated with attending information sessions or college tours
- Books and supplies for school
- Bus passes
- Nice clothes for a job interview, a uniform for a job, or clothes for school
- Employment or vocational related tools or dues
- A computer and computer training

To see a list of things ILP is currently able to assist with, go to [https://www.ilponline.org/Documents/Request for Funds Information.pdf](https://www.ilponline.org/Documents/Request%20for%20Funds%20Information.pdf)

NOTE: To get this money, you must have a current TILP. Also, all the money amounts listed for ILP-related services and stipends are approximate as these amounts may change from year to year depending on availability of funding. Remember: **SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS.**

L. WHAT DOCUMENTS WILL I NEED TO TURN IN TO GET SERVICES?

All you have to do is submit a Request for ILP Services Form to your CSW or TC. You can find the Request for ILP Services Form on the ILP Online website (www.ilponline.org), or ask your TC for a blank form.

NOTE: Depending on the service you are requesting, you may need to provide additional documentation.

M. IS THERE A LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT OF ILP MONEY I CAN GET?

The amount of available ILP funds depends on the federal and state budget. Although you are entitled to ILP benefits, the extent of benefits available depends on the money set aside for ILP each year.

NOTE: Your TC is responsible for providing transition services to you until your 21st birthday. But you may be eligible for **housing services until your 24th birthday.**

N. CAN I STILL RECEIVE ILP SERVICES IF I AM WORKING?

Yes. HOWEVER, make sure that you list “employment training” as one of the goals in your TILP! When you are working as part of your TILP, the money you make is disregarded and cannot be used to offset (or take away from) the ILP money to which you are entitled. This is because the purpose of your employment is to gain knowledge of needed work skills, habits, and responsibilities to help you stay employed for a long time.

For example, let’s say you are making \$1,000 per month. If employment is one of your TILP goals, you are still eligible for things like graduation expenses, even if you might make enough money to pay for these expenses on your own.

O. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I’M NOT GETTING HELP TO BECOME INDEPENDENT?

If you are experiencing a problem with your TILP (for example, you don’t have an updated TILP, your CSW or PO is not involving you in developing your TILP, or you aren’t getting the services you need), please let your attorney or judge know right away. Your attorney can help enforce your right to a TILP in dependency court. The judge can help make certain you receive these services.

VIII. IMMIGRATION

If you are denied an ILP service that you requested, you can appeal the decision. The form you need to appeal the denial is located at http://ilponline.org/Documents/RFF%20Decision%20Review%20Form%209_29_15%20finalized.pdf.

ILP has 30 days to respond after your request. **If you are having problems accessing ILP services more than 30 days after you have submitted the form to your CSW or TC**, let your attorney know right away. If you are not able to get ahold of your TC, you can contact the ILP managers for ILP and probation. You can find their names at ilponline.org. If you are having difficulties getting the help you need, call the ILP Ombudsperson for L.A. County at (877) 694-5741 or for California at 877-846-1602.

If you want to voice a general complaint, you have the right as a foster youth to file a complaint with the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman. You can let them know about the problems you are experiencing and they will look into the matter for you. You can file a complaint online at: <https://fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/youth-complaint-form/> or via telephone at 1-877-846-1602. Depending on the situation, the Ombudsman's Office will respond to complaints anywhere from 24 hours to seven days. You can file a complaint on your own behalf or you can have someone you trust file it for you.

If your foster parent(s) are interfering with the goals in your TILP, you should let someone know right away! You can let your CSW know about the situation and see if they can help. If not, the best option would be to let your attorney or judge know about the problem. Again, the Court can help enforce your TILP. You can also contact the Office of the Foster Care Ombudsman.



If you are not living with one or both of your parents, you may qualify for a green card as a “special immigrant juvenile.” Youth with cases in Juvenile Court (dependency or delinquency or adoption), Probate Court (under a permanent guardianship), or Family Court can be eligible.

To apply, you must be under 21 years old and unmarried. Also, you must have an open court case (or be able to re-open your court case) and the court must order that:

- Reunification with one or both of your parents is not possible as a result of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, AND
- It is in your “best interest” to stay in the United States and not to return to your home country.

After the court makes this order, you will need to apply to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services for “special immigrant juvenile” status. It is important to talk to an immigration lawyer or advocate before you apply.

It is also very important that you ask about your immigration status and get copies of your immigration documents before your dependency or delinquency case closes. If your case has already closed and you do not have immigration status, but you are still under 21, you should find if you are eligible to re-open your case and re-enter foster care to get help. Unfortunately, if you are over 21, it may be too late to get “special immigrant juvenile” status, even if you would have qualified for it before you turned 21.

Although most foster youth qualify as a “special immigrant juvenile,” some do not. If you do not qualify for “special immigrant juvenile” status, you should find out if you are eligible for another kind of immigration status, like a U Visa or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Always make sure to consult with an immigration attorney.

IX. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I TURN 18?



It used to be that when a foster youth turned 18, their dependency case closed. However, studies have shown that youth who continue to get support from the foster care system past 18 years old do better in life – they earn more, have fewer pregnancies, are more able to live on their own, and are more likely to graduate from college. That is why AB12 was passed in 2010. Now youth can choose to remain in foster care and continue to receive supportive services up to age 21.

A. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR AB 12?

To be eligible for AB12 and stay in care after 18, you must have had a foster care/suitable placement order on your 18th birthday.

NOTE: Even if you are AWOL or awaiting placement on your 18th birthday, you are still eligible as long as there is an order for foster care or suitable placement.

If your dependency court case closed because you were adopted or were given a legal guardian, you are not automatically eligible to re-enter foster care after 18. However, your caregiver may be eligible to continue to receive monthly cash benefits from the County for you if your caregiver is still supporting you and:

- Your caregiver began receiving KinGAP benefits for you after your 16th birthday.
- You left foster care for a non-relative legal guardianship at any age.
- Your adoptive parents began receiving Adoption Assistance Payments (AAP) after your 16th birthday.

If your adoptive parents or legal guardian received extended benefits for you after you turned 18, but are not supporting you, you may be able to re-enter foster care under AB12. See **page 27** for more information on how you can re-enter foster care.

B. WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS FOR AB 12?

In order to participate in AB12 and keep your case open, you must be:

- 1) Completing high school or working toward your GED/HiSET or CHSPE, OR
- 2) Going to college or vocational school, OR
- 3) Employed at least 80 hours a month, OR
- 4) Participating in a program to remove barriers to employment (for example a job training program, substance abuse treatment, driver's ed, mental health treatment, or many other possible programs), OR
- 5) Unable to do 1, 2, 3, or 4 because of a documented medical condition.

C. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO TO GET EXTENDED FOSTER CARE BENEFITS?

Talk to your social worker and attorney if you would like to continue to receive foster care benefits after you turn 18. If you are turning 18 soon, contact your attorney now about keeping your case open so you will be able to continue to get benefits after you turn 18. Remember, **if you leave foster care before you turn 18, you will not be able to re-enter and take advantage of AB12 benefits!** For more information on AB12, checkout: <https://www.jbaforyouth.org/ca-fostering-connections/>

If you feel that you no longer want to be involved with the Dependency Court or DCFS, you can ask your judge to close your case. However, the judge has the ultimate say whether to close your case or keep it open.

D. WHAT IS A TRANSITION MEETING OR CONFERENCE?

You should get a Transition Planning Conference 90 days before your case closes or 90 days before you turn 18 years old – whichever comes first (OR before you age out of guardianship with a non-related legal guardian).

If you are about to turn 18 years old and you have not had a Transition Planning Conference, contact your attorney right away to ensure that this important meeting is scheduled. Your attorney can discuss with you the things you want to make sure to address at the Transition Planning Con-



-ference.

During the Transition Planning Conference, a 90-Day Transition Plan (90-Day TP) is developed to help you identify short- and long-term educational, occupational, and personal goals.

See page 27 to find out what needs to be discussed and what documents you should receive at this meeting. If any documents or services have not been provided to you, make sure that these are documented in the 90-Day TP and that a responsible person is identified to help you access them.

Your CSW is required to be present at the meeting. There is also usually a facilitator who will help write down what happens. You can also invite your family, friends, advocate, TC, or any member from the community. With the input of these trusted people, you can design your own 90-Day TP. If your case remains open after 90 days, your CSW should continue to work on updating your TILP with you.

E. WHAT HOUSING OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

Under AB 12, you can continue to stay with your current caregiver or live in another foster home. If you are living in a group home, you can stay there until you turn 19 or finish high school, whichever comes first.

There are also some additional types of housing that you become eligible for when you turn 18 .

- 1) **Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP):** In a SILP, your case is open, but you can live in a college dorm, rent a room from a friend or family member, or get your own apartment. Youth living in SILPs receive their foster care payments directly and use the money to pay for rent and living expenses on their own.

In order to live in a SILP, your CSW has to do a readiness assessment to decide that you are ready to live in a SILP. After the readiness assessment, the place you want to live must pass a health and safety inspection. Talk to your CSW if you are interested in learning more about living in a SILP.

If you disagree with the results of your readi-

ness assessment or health and safety inspection, you have the right to appeal. Ask your CSW how to appeal the decision, or talk to your attorney so they can bring the situation to the court's attention.

- 2) **Transitional Housing Programs:** Transitional housing is usually an apartment that you share with another foster youth or former foster youth. Transitional housing programs help you learn how to live on your own and how to save money and stick to a budget. Some transitional housing programs are for youth with open cases (called THPP for youth under 18, THP-NMD for youth 18 and above). Other transitional housing is for youth with closed cases between the ages of 18 and 25.

Requirements: Each program differs, but you are generally required to have **some employment**. This is so you can pay rent. But, much of the rent will be returned to you when you leave the transitional housing program. Some transitional housing programs require you to be **ILP eligible** while others do not. If you are ILP eligible, you qualify for transitional housing up to your 25th birthday; however you are only allowed to stay in transitional housing for a limited amount of time, ranging from 18-36 months depending on the program.

Depending on the program, you can self-refer or be referred by your CSW or a community partner. Contact your CSW to find out which types of transitional housing you might be eligible for and apply! **If your case is already closed**, contact a Transition Coordinator to help you understand your transitional housing options. You can also call DCFS Transitional Housing Program at (213) 351-0190.



Problems? If you think that you are eligible but encounter problems enrolling in transitional housing, call the Foster Youth Ombudsperson for L.A. County at (213) 351-5720 or for California at (877) 846-1602.

As a tenant in a transitional housing program, you have rights! If you feel like you are being unfairly exited from a transitional housing program, please contact Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500.

X. WHEN YOUR CASE CLOSES

A. WHAT SERVICES MUST MY SOCIAL WORKER OR PROBATION OFFICER PROVIDE ME BEFORE MY CASE CLOSES?

Remember, your CSW must hold a Transition Planning Conference with you no more than 90 days and no fewer than 30 days before the court hearing to talk about whether your case should be closed. It is also recommended that you have a Transition Conference 90 days before you turn 18, even if you plan on keeping your case open. The purpose of this conference is for you to participate in developing a plan just for you on your options for housing, health insurance, education, employment, mentorship, and continuing support when you become independent. You can invite whomever you like to participate in the Transition Planning Conference and to help support your transition to independence.



NOTE: the Court should not terminate your dependency case unless: **(1)** you are in court (or you stated you do not wish to be there); **(2)** you have received the necessary documents (**see page 28**) and **(3)** your CSW has helped you with the following services:

- Completing an application for Medi-Cal or other health insurance
- Referring you to transitional housing
- Helping you obtain a job
- Applying for admission to college or a vocational program and obtaining financial aid

- Maintaining relationships with people that are important to you (like your siblings or school counselor)
- Registering to vote
- Registering for Selective Service or Alternate Service
- Receiving a medical and dental examination
- Completing and filing an application for Supplemental Security Income (this only applies to you if you have an eligible disability)
- Completing an application for CalFresh benefits (if you are eligible and want them) and sending the application to the Department of Public Social Services (“DPSS”). If you get SSI benefits or are undocumented, you cannot get CalFresh benefits.

i. You may also qualify for CalFresh with an open case if you are living in a SILP under AB12.

- Information notifying you that current and former foster youth are given preference for student assistance and internship positions with state agencies until you are 26.
- Connecting you to your TC so you can continue to access ILP services.

Under AB12, you have the right to keep your case open after 18 as long as you remain eligible. See **page 25** for more information. If your case closes, and you later want to re-enter the system you can do that if you are still eligible.

To get started, call, or go in person to your local Child Welfare or Probation office. When you call, tell them you need help re-opening your case:

- DCFS: 800-540-4000
- Probation: 866.931.2222

B. WHAT IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS MUST MY SOCIAL WORKER OR PROBATION OFFICER PROVIDE ME BEFORE MY CASE CLOSES?

Before your case closes, your CSW must also give you all of the following documents:

- A certified copy of your **Birth Certificate**
- A **Death Certificate** for any deceased parent(s)
- Original **Social Security Card**
- An **advanced health care directive** form
- Written **Transition Plan**
- Official California **Identification Card (or Driver's License)**
 - ⇒ Your CSW must provide you with form **DL 937, Verification for Reduced Fee Identification Card**. This form allows you to pay a reduced fee of \$6 for your ID card instead of \$20.
- Proof of **County Dependency Status (proof that you were a foster youth)**
 - ⇒ Your CSW can certify your dependency status via a Ward of the Court Verification Letter.
- Your **Health and Education Summary**
 - ⇒ Including the name(s) of all of the medication(s) prescribed to you, instructions on how to properly use your medication(s) and where to get refills, and your education and medical records.
- Original **Medi-Cal Card**
- Written information about your **Family History**
- Written information about your **Placement History**
- Written information about the **Whereabouts of your Siblings**
- Written information on how to **Access the Documents in your DCFS File**
- The **Name and Contact Information of your DPSS Outreach Worker**.
 - ⇒ If you are applying for food stamps, you'll need this information if you have questions about your application or move homes.
- The Judicial Council form you would use to file a 388 Petition to resume dependency jurisdiction**

If your case is about to close and you still have not received these documents, please contact

your CSW immediately and ask for them. If you are having trouble communicating with your CSW, you may contact your attorney for assistance.

NOTE: The Court may keep your case open if the CSW has not provided you with the services or documents you need in order to emancipate and if the Court finds that closing your case would not be in your best interest. Talk to your attorney if you are not ready to close your case!

C. ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS THAT CAN HELP ME WHEN I TRANSITION OUT IF I HAVE A DISABILITY?

Yes! The Department of Rehabilitation assists people with disabilities with a variety of services. Go to <https://www.dor.ca.gov/> to see what they offer and find the location of the nearest Department of Rehabilitation.

If you need help accessing services or understanding if you qualify, you can contact Disability Rights California's Client Assistant Program (CAP) at 800- 776-5746.

You may qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If you qualify for SSI because you have a physical or mental disability, you will receive a check each month from the government to help you pay for your living expenses. You will continue to be eligible for additional help, like scholarships, job training, and ILP services, without affecting your SSI eligibility.

D. HOW DO I APPLY FOR SSI?

When you turn 16 years old, your CSW must complete a document (the SSI Screening Guide) to check to see if you are eligible. If you might be eligible, DCFS must help you apply for SSI. Even if you qualified for SSI before you turned 18, your eligibility will be re-determined once you turn 18. If you have any questions regarding your eligibility for SSI, please call the Social Security Administration at: (800) 772- 1213. If you are denied SSI, you can appeal the decision. If you decide to appeal, you should talk to a lawyer at the Alliance for Children's Rights at (213) 368-6010.

E. WILL I STILL HAVE MEDI-CAL WHEN MY CASE CLOSES?



Yes. As a current or former foster youth, you are eligible for extended Medi-Cal services up to the age of 26. However, you must be living in the state of California in order to continue receiving Medi-Cal coverage. If you move to another state, you will have to check the

rules for state sponsored health insurance there. Other states may have similar health insurance programs. You may also temporarily lose your eligibility for Medi-Cal if you are in jail or prison or live in a residential treatment facility.

NOTE: You must have a medical and dental exam three months before your case closes. If you have not had a medical or dental exam and your case is about to close, please let your CSW, PO, or attorney know so that they can arrange to have these appointments scheduled for you. Also, your CSW or attorney can ensure that your Medi-Cal coverage is extended.

F. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO EXTEND MY MEDI-CAL COVERAGE UNTIL MY 26TH BIRTHDAY?

When your case is about to close, your CSW will send your Medi-Cal eligibility information to the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Your Medi-Cal coverage should be automatically extended. You should not lose coverage or have to re-apply for Medi-Cal! If you move or change your address, it is very important that you inform DPSS so that your Medi-Cal stays current. For more information, please call DPSS at their self-service line (866) 613-3777.

Remember your coverage is not based on your income so if you get private insurance through your job, you should still keep your Medi-Cal coverage. Medi-Cal will be secondary to your private insurance, meaning medical providers will bill your private insurance first and then bill Medi-Cal for any amount not covered.

G. WHERE CAN I FIND A DOCTOR OR DENTIST?

If you like and trust the doctor or dentist who

treated you while you were in placement, you can continue seeing him/her. As long as you have Medi-Cal, you will not have to pay for healthcare unless you receive treatment not covered by Medi-



-Cal (such as a cosmetic procedure). You are eligible for Medi-Cal until your 26 birthday. If you need help accessing medical or dental services or if you receive a bill that you feel you should not have to pay, please contact the Alliance for Children's Rights

at (213) 368-6010 or Health Consumer Center, a project of Neighborhood Legal Services, for assistance at:(800) 433 - 6251.

H. WHERE CAN I FIND A MENTOR?

Mentors are trusted adults who provide guidance to youth. Mentors can help you find a job, fill out job or college applications, take you on trips to museums or theme parks, or simply lend an ear when you had a bad day. Many kids already have mentors in their lives. If you are a current or former foster or probation youth and would like to connect with a trusted adult mentor, please contact the Alliance for Children's Rights at (213) 368-6010.



XI. EMPLOYMENT

Do you want to earn money to help pay for your own apartment? Are you trying to save up for clothes or college textbooks? Are you just looking for real world experience and a chance to develop new skills? Getting a job is a great way to meet all of these goals and learn a lot about yourself!

In this section, we'll talk about restrictions on employment for teens, steps to take before getting a job, and how to find help in your job search.

A. HOW OLD DO I HAVE TO BE BEFORE I CAN START WORKING?

In general, you must be **14 years old** before someone can hire you to work for them in California.

B. WHAT CAN I DO TO START WORKING?

Obtain a work permit. A work permit is a legal document that all minors in California must have in order to work. You can get a work permit from your high school's academic or career counselor. You can also download and print an application on the internet at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/dlseformb1-1.pdf>

C. AT WHAT AGE CAN I GET A WORK PERMIT?

Youth who are 12 to 17 years old are required to obtain a work permit before starting a job. A work permit is **not** required for minors if they are working in the following jobs: **(1)** agricultural jobs, **(2)** jobs in private homes such as gardening and babysitting, **(3)** newspaper delivery jobs, and/or **(4)** casual work in a family-owned business.

D. DOES A WORK PERMIT REQUIRE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Yes. Minors under the age of 18 must attend school in order to get a work permit. However, a student does **not** need a work permit if: **(1)** he/she graduated high school before the age of 18, or **(2)** he/she passed the California High School Proficiency Exam ("CHSPE") or the HiSet before the age of 18.

E. WHAT SHOULD I DO ONCE I HAVE A WORK PERMIT?

Congratulations! Now that you have a work permit, you can go ahead and start working! See below for help with your job search.

NOTE: Before you can start working, your employer must receive your work permit.

F. CAN I STILL GET A JOB IF I AM PREGNANT?

Yes! The same age rules and work permit requirements described above apply whether you're pregnant or not. Also, federal and state laws make it illegal for employers to refuse to hire you because you are pregnant. If you think you are being discriminated against because you are pregnant or recently gave birth, you can reach out to Public Counsel's Audrey Irmas Women and Girls' Project at wgr@publiccounsel.org.

G. HOW CAN I FIND JOBS IN MY AREA?

Searching for a job might seem like an overwhelming process, but help is out there! There are many employment centers and services that can help you both find and secure employment. YouthSource Centers are full-service career centers located in almost every community throughout Los Angeles County. They offer a variety of job search services to you for **free!** Examples of services include:

- Access to job listings
- Help with assessing your skills
- Job skills training
- Information about local education and training providers
- Tutoring and computer training
- Mentoring and counseling

To find a YouthSource Center near you, check out: <https://ewddlacity.com/index.php/employment-services/youth-age-16-24/youthsource-centers>

XII. EXPECTANT AND PARENT- ING FOSTER YOUTH

A. WHAT IF I AM EXPECTING A CHILD OR PARENTING?

If you are expecting a baby or already parenting, we have a few tips for you.

Check out www.teenparent.net to find out about your rights, resources and people you can connect with to help you out.

If you are currently in foster care, you can choose to have an “Expecting and Parenting Youth” (EPY) conference. This is a voluntary meeting with your social worker, an expert in rights and resources for young parents, and anyone else in your “village” that you would like to attend. The goal of this meeting is to help you have a positive birth experience, parent successfully, and to remove any barriers to reaching your personal goals. You’ll be able to get help with baby items, with your education, housing and everything in between. This is available to mothers and fathers that have an open DCFS case. Ask your social worker or lawyer to make a referral to this program for you.

Take a look at our booklet called “Legal Issues for Teen Families” <http://www.publiccounsel.org/tools/publications/files/Legal-Issues-For-Teen-Families.pdf> This booklet contains important information about how to get your baby’s social security number and birth certificate, paternity and custody issues and more.

B. AM I ELIGIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL BENEFITS?

Yes! If you are participating in AB 12 extended foster care and living in a SILP, you should receive the early infant supplement once you are seven months pregnant. This is a monthly payment of \$415 until your baby is born. It can be used to buy things you need to prepare for the arrival of your baby. Once your baby is born, you will receive the Infant Supplement of \$900 a month in addition to your SILP, until your case closes. Fathers who are in foster care may also receive these benefits if the baby is living with you. If you are living in a foster home these benefits will go to your caregiver but should still be

XII. RECORDS

used for things your baby needs.

If you can find a person you trust and who can pass a background check to create a parent support plan (PSP). This is a plan you develop with your mentor who will help you with parenting. Items can include rides to your child’s doctor appointments, taking care of your child while you do homework, etc. Once you fill out your plan and it get’s approved by your CSW you can receive an addition \$200 a month. This money can be used to pay your mentor for the support they are offering or for anything else your child may need.

A. CAN I SEE MY RECORDS?

Yes. You have a right to inspect the documents in your dependency court file. However, in order to receive a copy of any documents in your file, you must first ask the Court for permission. You also do not have a right to inspect documents in your file that include information about your siblings or other foster children. This is done to protect the other children’s privacy. Please talk to your attorney about getting access to your records and case file. You can also make a request in person at the Clerk’s Office located at the Edmund D. Edelman Children’s Court, 201 Centre Plaza Drive, Juvenile Court Services, Room #2700, Monterey Park, CA 91754, or call (323) 307-8000.

To see your delinquency court records, you should go to the courthouse that heard your case and ask for a copy of your juvenile record. You do not have to ask for Court permission to get a copy of your juvenile court docket.

B. ARE MY JUVENILE RECORDS AUTOMATICALLY SEALED?

Maybe. If you successfully completed probation AND you were not convicted of a serious crime, the court should automatically seal your records.

However, if you did not satisfactorily complete probation, the court will not seal your records automatically. Instead, you will need to go to court yourself to ask the court to seal your records.

C. CAN I SEAL MY RECORDS IF I HAVE A JUVENILE COURT RECORD?

Yes. If you have a Juvenile Court record (meaning you were arrested and/or have a juvenile delinquency adjudication), you may be eligible to seal your records. You can seal your records if:

- You are at least 18 years old and you have completed probation, OR you are under 18 but at least five years have passed since your last arrest, AND
- You have not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving a crime of “moral turpitude” (i.e. fraud, theft, or sex/drug related offenses), AND
- You can show the court you have been “rehabilitated”, AND
- Your case started and ended in Juvenile Court, AND
- You do not have an open civil suit related to your juvenile record.



If all of these apply to you, you should think about sealing your record. To seal your record, you submit a Petition to Seal Juvenile Delinquency Court Records (“Petition”) at any one of the

Juvenile Delinquency Courts in Los Angeles County.

NOTE: Unfortunately, traffic and parking violations cannot be sealed.

Your Petition will be heard at the same Court where your delinquency case was last heard. For example, if your delinquency case was last heard at Eastlake Juvenile Court, but you live close to Los Padrinos Juvenile Court, you can turn your Petition in at Los Padrinos, but it will be sent to Eastlake and it will still be heard at Eastlake. For more information, see Public Counsel’s booklet “Sealing Your Juvenile Record.” If you still

have questions, you can contact the Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500.

D. IS THERE A FEE I MUST PAY TO SEAL MY JUVENILE COURT RECORDS?

No. Starting on January 1, 2016, you should not have to pay a fee to seal your juvenile records as long as you are under the age of 26. Also, you should be able to seal your records even if you still owe restitution, or money the court said you need to pay as part of your probation.

E. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER MY RECORDS ARE SEALED?

Once your court records are sealed, they later get destroyed! If you committed a 601 offense (a status offense like being truant), your Juvenile Court file will be destroyed five years after it was sealed. If you committed a 602 offense (a misdemeanor or felony), your file will be destroyed on your 38th birthday. Please note that the probation department, police department, and other agencies can (but don’t have to) destroy their records after five years.

F. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SEAL MY JUVENILE COURT RECORDS?

If you have a Juvenile Court record, it is very important to make sure that it gets sealed. Your Juvenile Court record can impact your ability to get a job. Employers prefer to hire people who have not gotten in trouble with the law. Also, having a Juvenile Court record can affect your ability to care for a sibling who is still in foster care. Social workers and courts prefer to place children with relatives who do not have a criminal history.

If you have gotten in trouble with the law, it’s not too late to get back on the right track! Sealing your Juvenile Court records is a great first step towards a fresh new start. When court records are sealed, the Court and others must act as if nothing ever took place. So, if someone asks the Juvenile Court, the probation department, or the District Attorney about a sealed record, then the law requires them to answer, “We have no record of that matter.”

NOTE: Because a juvenile delinquency adjudication is NOT a criminal conviction, if you were asked on a job application whether you were ever convicted of a crime, you can

truthfully answer “no” (even if you haven’t yet sealed your records).

XIII. IDENTITY THEFT

A. WHAT IS IDENTITY THEFT?

Identity theft is when someone else uses your personal information—such as your name, Social Security number, or address—without your permission for an unlawful purpose. They may try to open credit card or utility accounts, make charges on existing accounts, or get loans, blank checks, or home mortgages. This can ruin your credit and leave you with hundreds—even thousands—of dollars in debt! Once your identity is stolen, it can take months or even years to clear up what was damaged. In California, identity theft is a felony crime and carries very serious consequences.

B. WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT IDENTITY THEFT?

Did you know that identity theft among foster youth is common? Foster youth make prime targets for identity theft because each time a youth changes schools or placements, his/her personal information gets passed through dozens of hands. Furthermore, most foster youth might not know they have been victimized until after they transition from foster care and try to establish credit on their own. By that time, the victim might have built up a tremendous amount of debt.

C. HOW CAN I KEEP FROM BECOMING A VICTIM?

While there is no guarantee it won’t happen to you, there are precautions you can take to limit your chances of becoming a victim of identity

- 1) **You should never give your personal information to anyone over the telephone or internet unless you are sure you are dealing with a reliable source.** Typically, if you start a conversation with a bank or credit card company that you deal with, you will be asked to verify your Social Security number or other identifying information. This is done to protect your privacy. In these circumstances, it might be okay for you to dis-

- close your personal information.
- 2) **Keep in mind that thieves will “fish” for information via telephone, email, and mail.** They use this information to open up accounts or commit fraud in your name. If a stranger calls you from a company with which you are not familiar with, think twice before giving them any personal information. Do not open emails from people you don’t know. Never provide personal information in exchange for money or packages that are being “held” for you. Remember that few things in life are free! If you had a real source of money just sitting around waiting for you, chances are you would have learned about it from someone you trust, like your CSW or attorney.
- 3) **Do not let others borrow your Social Security number, your ATM PIN number, or your credit cards.**
- 4) **Store important documents that you intend to keep in a safe place**—ideally, a lockbox or a filing cabinet that locks. If you discard any documents containing your personal information, always shred them. Do not simply throw these documents away in the trash can. Thieves will even steal your garbage to get this information!
- 5) **Don’t allow your mail to stack up or leave it unattended.** Thieves will steal mail as well. If you will be away on vacation, have someone you trust pick your mail up for you. You can also contact the United States Post Office online at <https://holdmail.usps.com/holdmail/>



and place your mail on hold. Mail can be held for three to 30 days and will resume delivery on the date that you select.

D. WHAT CAN I DO IF I BELIEVE I AM A VICTIM OF IDENTITY THEFT?

If you believe someone has stolen your identity, it is very important that you file a police report right away. Identity theft can result in both a bad credit and criminal history for you. An identity thief might use your name if they are arrested for engaging in a criminal activity. Even if you have never broken the law, you might find that you were denied employment because you have a criminal record. Once an identity thief has your personal information, they can use it in more ways than one to ruin your reputation and good name.

If you are a current foster youth, and are afraid your identity may have been stolen, you can ask your attorney or CSW for help in checking your credit. If the judge knows you are having issues with identity theft, he or she can keep your case open until you get help in resolving the issue. If you are a current or former foster youth whose identity was stolen, please call the Next Step Program at the Alliance for Children's Rights at (213) 368-6010. You can also contact the Identity Theft Unit at the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) at 800.593.8222 if you need help.

E. HOW CAN I MONITOR MY CREDIT?

A great way of monitoring your credit is through a document called a credit report. Ask your CSW to help you obtain a free copy of your credit report. You can also obtain a copy online at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>

If you're 18 or over, your credit report lists all of the accounts that have ever been opened under your name and Social Security number. When you receive your credit report, check for unusual accounts or activity, unknown addresses, and unknown places of employment. These can all be clues that you are a victim of identity theft.

TIP: Because credit reporting agencies do not knowingly create credit files on minors, youth under the age of 18 should not even have a credit report on file. **This means that,**

if you're under 18, any system running a credit check shouldn't be able to find a file at all! If you do have something on file, it might mean that you've been a victim of identity theft.



You are entitled to receive **one free credit report per year from each of the three credit reporting agencies** (Experian, Equifax, and

TransUnion). For example, you can request one credit report from Experian in April at www.experian.com, a second credit report from Equifax in August at www.equifax.com, and a third credit report from TransUnion in December at www.transunion.com. The benefit of doing this is that you can monitor your credit all year long and be notified of any fraudulent activity early on. Remember that you can get copies of your credit report for free. Beware of companies or people that want to charge you for copies of your credit report!

F. WHAT IS A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER?

Your Social Security number is very important. It is a number that is issued by the Social Security Administration to identify United States citizens and immigrants who are legally authorized to work and live in the United States. It is a lifelong form of identification and is very valuable. You will be asked for your Social Security number every time you apply for a loan or a job or when filling out important documents. As such, your Social Security number is also linked to your credit history. **You should always protect your Social Security number!**

You should never let your friends or family members "borrow" your Social Security number. This could really affect you in a bad way. Even if your loved ones have good intentions, if they fail to timely pay bills that are opened in your name, you will be stuck paying the bill! If you fail to pay, your credit will be negatively affected and you will have a hard time opening up accounts in the future and/or getting a home or apartment. You can even lose your driver's license.

It is also not a good idea to lend your Social Security number to friends and/or family members who are in the United States without papers; this can also affect their chances of one day becoming lawful permanent residents. Undocumented persons cannot knowingly make false claims of citizenship. Using a Social Security number that is not yours or using someone else's birth certificate amounts to making a false claim of citizenship. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services might deny someone's application based on this type of fraud. You should always take great precautions to protect your personal information.

G. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE A GOOD CREDIT RATING?

Having good credit is very important and allows you to obtain a car loan, rent an apartment, set up utility accounts (gas, light, water, etc.), open a cell phone account, buy a home, and obtain a good job. The better your credit rating, the lower the interest rate will be on credit accounts that you open in your name. This means that you will pay less interest and not have to pay as much money in the long run.



For your information:

- An **excellent** credit rating is between: 750-840
- A **good** credit rating is between: 660-749
- A **fair** credit rating is between: 620-659
- A **poor** credit rating is between: 340-619

H. HOW CAN I ESTABLISH GOOD CREDIT?

It might be hard for you to obtain credit if you have never opened a credit account before. This is because banks have no way of knowing whether you will pay your bills. It may be good to start off small. For instance, opening up a credit account at a department store may be a good way to start because your credit limit will be much lower than a regular credit card. You should pay your bill on time each month and try to only charge what you know you can pay back.

EXAMPLE: If you only make \$500 per month, then it might not be wise to use a credit card to buy a TV worth \$200 because it will take you a long time to pay it back. You will

end up paying much more than the original \$200 when you are done paying off the balance. This is because interest gets added to the original amount charged (which is called the "principal"). The longer it takes you to pay off the balance, the more interest gets added on, and the more you have to pay back. This is how most banks make money. If you do not pay your bills on time, banks can also charge you late fees and increase your interest rate even more. You can get into really bad debt if you are not careful.

Also, it is never a good thing to open up too many accounts. While having one account and paying it on time may be a good first step to establishing your credit rating, having too many credit cards or department store accounts can lower your credit rating. This is true even if you have not charged anything in a while.

Learning how to manage your finances and establishing good money habits now can help prepare you for independent living!



XIV. CONCLUSION

We hope that you found this manual useful. Remember that you are not alone and that there are many people and organizations that can help you. If you need assistance with any of the topics covered in this manual, please contact Public Counsel at (213) 385-2977, ext. 500. Public Counsel is dedicated to helping ensure positive outcomes for current and former foster youth.

Public Counsel is the largest pro bono law firm in the U.S., and also is the Southern California affiliate of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Public Counsel coordinates the contributions of thousands of volunteer lawyers each year. Public Counsel serves those in need—such as children and the elderly, literacy projects and low-income housing providers, refugees and the homeless—by providing legal representation and matching financially eligible clients with volunteer attorneys.

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TAB A

ADVOCATING FOR FOSTER YOUTH:

PARTIAL CREDITS/MISSING CREDITS/CREDIT RECOVERY

Foster youth often transfer mid-semester and/or attend multiple schools. Unfortunately, credits and records do not always transfer with the students. It is essential to assist foster youth in locating missing and partial credits as well as ensuring that records are transferred each time there is an educational placement change.

- 1) **MISSING CREDITS** – Obtain transcript(s) and check-out grades from former school(s) and ensure that new school has copies. Review transcripts. If any credits are missing, contact school(s) to ensure that all obtained credits are reflected on transcript. Contact any of the resources listed on this document for assistance with obtaining records or in working with the school to adjust records.

PARTIAL CREDITS – All youth are eligible for partial credits under California Education Code Section 48645. However, this process requires advocacy and varies from school to school. Schools should either provide partial credits based on seat time at a previous school and/or work out an alternative plan to ensure that the credits are counted toward graduation. Contact any of the resources listed on this document for assistance in working with the school to ensure you are granted these credits.

- 3) **CREDIT RECOVERY** – There are multiple ways to make up credits (either because you never took the class and/or failed the class), both at your local high school and in the community. Ask high school counselor for necessary paperwork (i.e. concurrent enrollment form) and enroll in one of the following programs. They are currently free for concurrently enrolled high school students with proper paperwork:

- ⇒ Online programs offered through school (i.e. APEX)
- ⇒ Adult school – can be teacher-directed or independent studies, depending on the class. Locate adults schools at: <https://otan.us/provider-directory/>
- ⇒ Occupational Center – located within individual school districts
- ⇒ Skills Center – located within individual school districts
- ⇒ Community College – locate California community colleges at: <https://www.cccco.edu/Students/Find-a-College>

Remember, this is a team effort and you are not alone. Attorneys, social workers, caretakers, school counselors, WRAP teams, CASAs, and other stakeholders should all work together to ensure that youth are receiving appropriate educational support. Here are some additional resources to assist foster youth in addressing their educational concerns:

- 1) **DCFS Educational Consultants** – (323) 526-6084
- 2) **LACOE Foster Youth Services** – (562)922-6541
- 3) **LAUSD Specialized Student Services (LAUSD only)** – (213) 241-3840
- 4) **AB 490 district representatives** – <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/ab490contacts.asp>
- 5) **Public Counsel Transition Age Youth Program**

TAB B

OPTIONS FOR OBTAINING DIPLOMA/DIPLOMA EQUIVALENT

- 1) **Diploma from regular high school**
 - ⇒ Complete the district requirements to graduate (typically between 210-230)
- 2) **Diploma from a continuation high school**
 - ⇒ Target population: ages 16-18 and credit-deficient
 - ⇒ School often located on or near comprehensive high school campuses
 - ⇒ Typically half-day programs where students are afforded opportunity to earn credits at a faster rate than a comprehensive high school
 - ⇒ CAUTION: If student has IEP, team must determine if continuation school is appropriate
- 3) **Diploma from a Community Day School**
 - ⇒ Target population: expelled students, probation youth, youth requiring small, structured learning environments
 - ⇒ These programs are full-day and typically have a low student-to-teacher ratio
 - ⇒ Students are often placed at CDS schools post-expulsion or by probation. For those interested, they should contact local school district and/or LACOE to discuss options
- 4) **Diploma through the HiSET Plus Program**
 - ⇒ Requires 10 specific classes (50 credits) + passing the HiSET
 - ⇒ These programs are usually offered at adult schools, continuation schools, AEW/C programs, Skills Centers, Occupational Centers, etc.
 - ⇒ To enroll, contact local school district to discuss options for the GED Plus Program
- 5) **Diploma from an Adult School (age 18+)**
 - ⇒ These programs usually require 170-180 credits to obtain a diploma, and are either free or low-cost. **Availability of these programs is in flux due to pending budget cuts**
 - ⇒ To find locations, visit the California Adult Schools website:
<https://otan.us/provider-directory/>
- 6) Diploma through an **independent studies program**
 - ⇒ These programs vary by school district
 - A. **AEWC program** (most districts) – Youth ages 16-18 can enroll in the AEW/C program (Alternative Education & Work Center); AEW/C also offers the GED Plus Program
 - B. In LA and Orange Counties, youth in grades 7-12 can enroll in an independent study charter school called **Opportunities for Learning**. To find locations, visit their website: <http://www.emsofl.com>
 - C. In LA and San Bernardino Counties, youth in grades 7-12 can enroll in an independent study charter school called **Options for Youth**. To find locations, visit their website: <http://www.ofy.org/>
- 7) Diploma via **AB 216**
 - ⇒ Eligible population: **foster youth** (and/or probation youth with suitable placement order) who transferred schools after the second year of high school for which it would be unreasonable to graduate on time absent AB 216. School should work with student to determine reasonableness
 - ⇒ If eligible, student may graduate with the state minimum requirement of 130 credits. They must still pass the CAHSEE unless they are otherwise exempt (i.e. Sp Ed)
- 8) Diploma via **alternative high school diploma programs**
 - ⇒ Examples include: Youth Build, Job Corps, LA Conservation Corps, Community College Bridge programs (classes count toward high school diploma and AA degrees)
- 9) **HiSET**
 - ⇒ Target population: 18 years and older Note: you can take the HiSET at 17 under certain specific condition.
 - ⇒ To learn more, visit the HiSET website: <http://hiset.ets.org/requirements/lausd>
 - ⇒ DCFS/ILP can assist with the cost of classes and the exam
- 10) **CHSPE** (California High School Proficiency Exam)
 - ⇒ Eligible population: 16 years old and completed at least one semester of 10th grade
 - ⇒ Equivalent to high school diploma but still must satisfy A-G requirements for college
 - ⇒ To learn more, visit the CHSPE website: <http://www.chspe.net/>

TAB C

Sent Via:
 Fax to ()
 U.S. Mail
 Hand Delivered

Principal/Designee's Initials: _____
Date Received: _____

REQUEST FOR RECORDS

Date: / /

Principal: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Re: **Request for Records**

Student Name: _____
 Special Education Student

D.O.B.: / /

Dear Sir or Madam:

In order to help me better understand my child's educational progress and how to help him/her in school, I am writing to request a copy of all school records for (student name) _____, including, but not limited to, the cumulative file and **ALL**:

- Individualized Education Programs ("IEPs")/504 Plans;
- Disciplinary Records, including, but not limited to, suspension and expulsion notices and referrals to a counselor or other school official;
- Attendance Records;
- Standardized Test Scores;
- Reports;
- Assessments and protocols;
- Grades/Progress Reports;
- Notes by teachers or other staff members;
- Memoranda;
- Special Education Service Logs.

As you are aware, the law requires that the records be provided within five (5) business days of the request. See Cal. Educ. Code §§ 56504, 56043(n) (special education students) and 49069 (all students); see also FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g) and 34 C.F.R. § 99.10 (discussing access to records generally).

Also, specifically, low-income parents have a right to receive copies of school records free of charge. See Cal. Educ. Code § 56504. I request that any fees associated with the production of copies be waived based upon financial hardship.

Please [Fax to () _____] or Mail or Arrange for pickup on / / a copy of these records to my attention. Thank you in advance for your prompt action regarding this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at () _____.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

TAB D

AB 216 Graduation Requirements

Education Code §51225.3(c)
2011-2012

Foster youth who transfer after their second year of high school can receive a high school diploma by:

- 1) **Completing all of the following one-year courses while in grades 9 to 12 [EC § 51225.3(a)], AND**
 - Three courses in English (30 units)
 - Two courses in mathematics (20 units)
 - One year of Algebra I unless previously completed, EC § 51224.5. If already passed Algebra prior to 9th grade, still need to complete 2 courses in math.
 - Two courses in science (20 units)
 - biological science
 - Physical science
 - Three courses in social studies (30 units)
 - United States history and geography
 - World history, culture, and geography
 - One-semester course in American government and civics
 - One-semester course in economics.
 - One course in visual or performing arts or foreign language (10 credits)
 - A course in American Sign Language counts
 - Two courses in physical education, unless the pupil has been exempted (20 credits)

**** This curriculum does not meet the A-G requirements of California State Universities**

TAB E

Sent Via:
 Fax to ()
 U.S. Mail
 Hand Delivered

Principal/Designee's Initials: _____
Date Received: _____

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF DISTRICT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THE STATEWIDE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Date: / /

Principal: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Re: **REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF DISTRICT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THE STATEWIDE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

Student Name: _____
 Special Education Student

D.O.B.: / /

Dear Sir or Madam:

We are writing to inform you that (**student name**) _____, a student in your school, is or will soon be eligible to graduate, having completed the statewide minimum graduation requirements.

As a foster youth who transferred schools after the second year of high school, (**student name**) is exempt from completing any District coursework requirements beyond the statewide minimum because he/she is not reasonably able to do so prior to your school's upcoming graduation date. Cal. Educ. Code § 51225.3(a) & (c).

_____ (**student name**) was transferred to your district on (date). Student's records show that he/she has completed the statewide minimum requirements for graduation, including:

- (1) Three courses in English.
- (2) Two courses in mathematics.
- (3) Two courses in science, including biological and physical sciences.
- (4) Three courses in social studies, including United States history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics; and a one-semester course in economics.
- (5) One course in visual or performing arts or foreign language.
- (6) Two courses in physical education.

Please provide me with confirmation that (**student name**) _____ is authorized to graduate having completed these courses. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

TAB F

Sent Via:
 Fax to ()
 U.S. Mail
 Hand Delivered

Principal/Designee's Initials: _____
Date Received: _____

RIGHT TO ATTEND SCHOOL OF ORIGIN AND TO IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

Date: / /

Principal: _____ School: _____
Address: _____

Re: RIGHT TO ATTEND SCHOOL OF ORIGIN AND TO IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT

Student Name: _____ D.O.B.: / /
 Special Education Student

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1933, **(student name)** _____, a student and foster youth in your school, has the right to attend his/her school of origin despite his/her recent change in home placement. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(1).

As a foster child, **(student name)** _____ is entitled to remain at his/her school of origin for as long as **(student name)** remains in foster care. If his/her foster care case closes, he/she has a right to remain at the school until the end of that school year. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(1). Furthermore, **(student name)** _____ has the benefit of matriculating with his/her peers in accordance with the established feeder patterns of this school district. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(3).

(School name) _____ is **(student name)** _____'s school of origin because:

(check one)

_____ This is the school he/she was enrolled in when he/she was permanently housed. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(e).

_____ This is the school he/she was last enrolled in while in foster care. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(e).

_____ This is a school he/she attended within the last 15 months and with which he/she has a connection, _____ and the foster care education liaison, **(parent/caregiver/person holding education rights)** _____, and **(student name)** _____ have met and agreed that it _____ is in the student's best interests to deem **(school name)** _____ the school of origin. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(e).

Accordingly, this letter respectfully requests that **(student name)** _____ be immediately enrolled and allowed to attend **(school name)** _____. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(7)(B).

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

CC: _____ **School District Foster Youth Liaison**
_____ **County Office of Education Foster Youth Liaison**
_____ **(if applicable, person preventing student from attending the school of origin and that person's supervisor)**

TAB G

Sent Via:
 Fax to ()
 U.S. Mail
 Hand Delivered

Principal/Designee's Initials: _____
Date Received: _____

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL TRANSFER AND RIGHT TO REENROLL IN SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

Date: / /

Principal: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Re: Notification of School Transfer and Right to Reenroll in School of Origin

Student Name: _____
 Special Education Student

D.O.B.: / /

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 1933, (student name) _____, a student and foster youth in your school, has the right to continue to attend his/her school of origin despite his/her recent change in home placement. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(1).

At this time, the foster care education liaison, (**parent/caregiver/person holding education rights**) _____, and (**student name**) _____ have met and agreed that it is in the student's best interest to attend (**new school name**) _____.

At this time, (**parent/person holding education rights**) _____, and (**student name**) _____ have met and agreed that it is in the student's best interest to attend (**new school name**) _____.

However, please note: if the parent/caregiver/person holding education rights and/or student determine within 15 months that (**student name**) _____ would like to reenroll in his/her school of origin, the student should be reenrolled in the school of origin.

As you know, the law requires that foster youth (and other youth) receive partial or full credit for work completed at all other schools and that a child's records from any old schools be transferred to the new school within two (2) business days. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(4)(C). **To be certain that this student receives all of his credits and the records, please immediately transfer those records to (new school)** _____.

If you have any questions, please contact me at () _____. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian/Student/Advocate

Enclosure(s)

TAB H

Sent Via:

- Fax to ()
- U.S. Mail
- Hand Delivered

Principal/Designee's Initials: _____

Date Received: _____

REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ENROLLMENT OF FOSTER YOUTH

Date: / /

Principal: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Re: Request for Immediate Enrollment of Foster Youth & Accounting for All Credits

Student Name: _____

D.O.B.: / /

Special Education Student

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to request that (**student name**) _____ be immediately enrolled in school.

As you are aware, **the law requires that foster and homeless youth be immediately enrolled in school**, even without health, education, and immunization records, proper uniforms or clothes, and even if there are outstanding fees, fines or other items owed to a school. See Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(4)(B); McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 11431-11435.

The law also requires that foster youth (and other youth) receive partial or full credit for work completed at all other schools and that a child's records from any old schools be requested and transferred to the new school within two (2) business days. Cal. Educ. Code Sec. 48853.5(d)(4)(C). **To be certain that (student name) _____ receives all of his/her credits and the records from his/her old school, please immediately request those records and update his/her transcript to account for all of the credits.**

Thank you in advance for your prompt action regarding this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at () _____.

Sincerely,

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

TAB I

LAUSD High School Credit Requirements

TO EARN YOUR DIPLOMA IN 4 YEARS IN LAUSD, YOU WILL NEED TO:

1. **Earn 210 credits (if you graduate in 2016)** (pass all required classes with an 'A', 'B', 'C', or 'D') or **Earn 210 credits** (if you graduate after 2016) (pass all required classes with an 'A', 'B', or 'C')

Credits:

| | | |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0 to 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9th grade (year 1) |
| 55 to 105 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10th grade (year 2) |
| 110 to 165 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11th grade (year 3) |
| 170 to 210 | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12th grade (year 4) |
| 210 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eligible for Graduation! |

- Each semester you take 6 periods/classes
- Each class is worth 5 credits
- At the end of the semester, you can accumulate up to 30 credits
- You earn 30 credits **when you pass all classes!!** (6 classes x 5 credits = 30 credits)

PASS YOUR CLASSES!

Attendance is absolutely important to passing your classes. You can only learn if you are in class, pay attention, and practice what you learn by doing your work. If you're not in class, you lose out on points. Accumulate points!

KEEP TRACK OF YOUR CREDITS!

Please see the next page for a list of all your A-G requirements (the classes you're required to take and pass in order to apply to a four-year college or university).

AB 216 EXCEPTION

Remember: a law called AB 216 says that, if you're a foster youth who has moved to a new school in the 11th or 12th grade, you may be eligible to graduate with only 130 credits in specific classes. Ask your school counselor if you are eligible for this exception!



Office of the Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
UCLA Early Academic Outreach Program
A-G Planning Chart

| Subjects to meet and exceed admission requirements for the UC and CSU systems | Required Number of Years | 9 th | | 10 th | | 11 th | | 12 th | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| | | 1 st semester | 2 nd semester | 1 st semester | 2 nd semester | 1 st semester | 2 nd semester | 1 st semester | 2 nd semester |
| A. History/Social Science Courses include US History, World History, Government, geography | 2 Required 3 Recommended* | | | World History | World History | US History (AP) | US History (AP) | Govt* (AP) | Economics* (AP) |
| B. English/Composition and Literature | 4 Required | English 9 (H) | English 9 (H) | English 10 (H) | English 10 (H) | English 11 (H/AP) | English 11(H/AP) | English 12(H/AP) | English 12 (H/AP) |
| C. Mathematics includes Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. Advanced Courses like Trigonometry and Calculus are also recommended. | 3 Required 4 Recommended* | Algebra I or Geometry | Algebra I or Geometry | Geometry or Algebra II | Geometry or Algebra II | Algebra II or Math Analysis | Algebra II or Math Analysis | Math Analysis or Calculus* | Math Analysis or Calculus* |
| D. Laboratory Science Includes biology, chemistry and physics & integrated/inter-coordinated science | 2 Required 3-4 Recommended* | Biology | Biology | Chemistry (H/AP) | Chemistry (H/AP) | Physics* (H/AP) | Physics* (H/AP) | AP Biology* (H/AP) | AP Biology* (H/AP) |
| E. Language Other Than English Includes Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Chinese and Russian, etc. | 2 Required 3-4 Recommended* | Language Other Than English I | Language Other Than English I | Language Other Than English II | Language Other Than English II | Language Other Than English III* | Language Other Than English III* | Language Other Than English IV* (AP) | Language Other Than English IV* (AP) |
| F. Visual and Performing Arts (drama, orchestra, photography, etc) | 1 Required | | | | | | | | |
| G. College Preparatory Electives | 1 Required | | | | | | | | |
| Exams PSAT/ACT/ SAT Reasoning SAT (Subject Tests) | Required Exams | PSAT (October) | | PSAT (October) | SAT (Feb) SAT (Subject tests) (June) | PSAT (October) | SAT (Dec) SAT (Subject Tests) May/June | SAT (Oct/Nov/ or Dec.) SAT Subject Tests | |