



# Extended Foster Care Program

## *Successful Transition to Adulthood*

### I AM TURNING 18, WHAT IS NEXT?

An 18th birthday is a major turning point. Legally, 18 year olds are adults, but the department recognizes young adults may benefit from additional support. For this reason, YOU have the opportunity to participate in Extended Foster Care until your 21st birthday. Participating in Extended Foster Care, means that young adults will have continuous assistance and support while pursuing higher education and/or employment. Young adults will continue to have a DCS Specialist who will work with them to document their goals and to help provide the services and supports necessary to achieve those goals.

### I AM APPROACHING 18, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "SIGN A VOLUNTARY"?

It means young adults who are participating in Extended Foster Care are willing to sign a voluntary agreement and actively participate in a case plan that they help create with their DCS Specialist. Active participants show efforts to work towards educational and or occupational goals. DCS Specialists will work to help support goals, provide resources and any services that may fit the young adult. The program also includes participating in a review twice a year to ensure your case plan meets your need.

### EXTENDED FOSTER CARE ELIGIBILITY

- 18, 19, or 20 years of age;
- is a resident of Arizona;
- has signed a Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement;
- resides in a supervised living arrangement approved by the Department;
- has an individualized case plan and is in one or more of the following:
  - ▶ completing secondary education or an educational program leading to a GED or be enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education;
  - ▶ employed at least eighty hours a month;
  - ▶ Participating in a program or activity that promotes employment or removes barriers to employment;
  - ▶ or unable to be a full-time student or to be employed because of a documented medical condition



## WHERE CAN I LIVE WHILE PARTICIPATING IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE?

Having stable housing is a key part in helping you achieve your goals and leads to a successful transition to adulthood. Communicate and plan with your DCS Specialist where you intend to live and explore your options listed below!

### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Different housing options may be considered as an appropriate Supervised Independent Living (SIL) setting. Young adults may reside in a SIL while receiving DCS case management. These may include:

Living in a DCS paid living arrangement in one of these types of settings:

- Foster Home
- Group Home
- Kinship Caregiver

## DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE READY FOR A MORE INDEPENDENT LIVING ARRANGEMENT?

Work with your DCS Specialist or other supports to create a detailed budget and a housing transition plan. Subsidy may not cover all of your living expenses and should be set up prior to leaving your DCS paid living arrangement.

Live on your own and receive subsidy in one of these types of settings:

- Apartment Settings
- Shared Housing Settings
- Host Home Settings
- Non-College Dorm Setting
- College Dorm Settings

## IS THERE ANY HELP FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SIGN A VOLUNTARY?

There sure is! DCS has supports for youth who choose not to participate in EFC. Contact [YouthServices@AZDCS.GOV](mailto:YouthServices@AZDCS.GOV) for more information!

## CAN I "RE-ENTER" LATER, EVEN IF I CHOOSE NOT TO STAY IN CARE AT 18 OR OLDER?

Sometimes youth leave foster care at 18 or older for various reasons. Whatever the reason, a youth may discover that their original plan did not work out and they need assistance. This can occur through "re-entry". The young adult's case can be re-opened and a DCS Specialist is assigned. Re-entry can occur when a young adult meets the Extended Foster Care eligibility requirements and is not yet 21 or older. Most importantly, re-entry is about helping you achieve your goals!

## DCS IS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

It's important that you feel supported by your DCS Specialist while you're in EFC. If you need support communicating with your DCS Specialist about your needs, try to ask their supervisor to support a conversation between you. If you still feel your needs are not being met or your voice is not being heard, please contact the Ombudsman at [Ombudsman@azdcs.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@azdcs.gov).



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