



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SAFETY

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE SERVICE MODEL REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023

Pursuant to Laws 2023, First Regular Session, Chapter 141, Section 1, the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) established the Extended Foster Care Program (“Program” or “EFC”) for qualified young adults. This session law also required the Department to submit a report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC), the Senate Health and Human Services committee and the House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee a report on the extended foster care comprehensive service model.

This Program, identified as the Extended Foster Care Success Coaching Program (EFC Success Coaching), must include supportive services and case management provided by contracted community providers, and must be implemented within 150 days of the general effective date. On September 26, 2023 the DCS awarded contracts to six (6) community providers. Implementation of the EFC Success Coaching began November 14, 2023 with the administering of required training to the community providers’ Success Coaches and Supervisors.

The Department is committed to implementing the EFC Success Coaching Program with fidelity to requirements established in Chapter 141, which includes the submittal of this initial, and the provision of continuing quarterly reports.

Supports and Services Provided Through the EFC Success Coaching Program

The supports and services provided to young adults will be delivered through coach-like engagement promoting the young adults’ strengths and self-advocacy. Program supports and services begin with an Age of Majority meeting which identifies each individual young adult’s needs in areas that include but are not limited to: housing, education, employment, permanent connections, health and well-being.

Services may include:

Housing: Ensuring current housing meets the needs of the young adult, and/or assistance with the identification of less restrictive living arrangements; supporting the young adult in their understanding of rental responsibilities including a lease and creating a budget; completing rental documentation and assisting the young adult with move-in.

Education: Securing school transcripts and developing an educational case plan; providing information, guidance and assistance to: understand educational and vocational goals; complete educational and vocational assessments; understand educational opportunities available; complete school enrollment; apply for financial aid; participate in college tours; monitoring academic

progress; and support of and participation in educational meetings.

Employment: Completion of a career assessment; identifying or creating job shadow, internships, or volunteer opportunities; enhancement of pre-employment skills; creation of a professional resume; job placement support; assistance to navigate employment-related requirements such as background checks (and addressing criminal history, if needed); building skills to be successful in the workplace; creating sustainable transportation plans which may include referral for driving school or information and guidance with a vehicle purchase; referral to other workforce programs such as Workforce Investment (WIOA) programs and vocational rehabilitation services; and support the young adult's understanding of taxes and other employment responsibilities.

Permanent Connections: Promote permanent connections with family and friends including finding and maintaining relationships with mentors; support connections to community; assist to mediate conflicts or issues between young adults and caregivers; assist and support engagement in community activities such as clubs, school events, sports, etc.; complete necessary assessments and build skill sets towards "personal agency", relationships, conflict management, crisis management, self-reliance, and critical thinking.

Health and Well-Being: Support young adults' connections to mental and physical health providers; assist young adults' understanding of health care issues and build self-advocacy skills; explore healthy relationships and programs which address intimate partner violence; provide assistance to enroll in substance abuse and other health-care programs (if needed); encourage and support youth to engage in a healthy life-style through enhanced nutrition, self-care and exercise, etc.

Program Requirements

The Program serves young adults 17.5 years of age and older who have been identified as likely to reach the age of 18 in out-of-home care and young adults ages 18, 19, or 20 who are residents of Arizona and have signed a Voluntary Extended Foster Care Agreement. All young adults must reside in a supervised living arrangement approved by the DCS and have an individualized case/transition plan which outlines the activities the young adult identifies as necessary to aid in the successful transition to adulthood. Transition plans will outline the supportive services the DCS provides the young adult to work toward identified goals. All young adults are expected to participate in the Extended Foster Care Quality Review panel that monitors required participation 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.

Young Adults' Responsibilities

Young adults are responsible for meeting the requirements of the program (under section b) above) and engaging in activities/tasks to resolve barriers to meeting those requirements. They will participate in weekly engagement with their Success Coach and for young adults age 18 and older, participate in the required Extended Foster Care Quality Review panels; communicate their needs to their Success Coach; engage collaboratively in selecting living arrangements which includes notification of changes to their living arrangement; notify the Success Coach within 48 hours of changes to school, employment, or therapeutic activities (unless there are barriers to doing so); provide documentation/verification of eligibility requirements upon request; and share educational, medical and health records necessary to inform the transition plan.

Transition Planning

For young adults less than age 18, the Success Coach will work in partnership with the young adult, the DCS Specialist, and other supportive persons and professionals to develop transition plans (which are a part of the overall DCS Case Plan). The Success Coach will assume full responsibility for this partnership when the young adult reaches 18 years of age, unless otherwise specified.

Using the Youth Thrive framework, the transition plan will reflect the young adult's personal goals and clearly document the services and supports necessary to assist the young adult to achieve positive outcomes including permanent connections with supportive adults. The transition plan will incorporate relevant elements found under section (a) of this report, individualized to the young adult. The transition plan will additionally document the following:

- cost of care (including Independent Living Subsidy for young adults who qualify);
- allowances;
- medical and dental services through AHCCCS or another insurance program;
- transportation;
- counseling;
- skills training; and other transitional support services as identified with the young adult and their supports.

Health Insurance Coverage

Young adults who reach the age of 18 in out-of-home care are eligible for pre-enrollment into an AHCCCS plan through completion of the Young Adult Transitional Insurance (YATI) referral form. This is a responsibility held by the DCS, however the Success Coach will support the young adult with gaining adult intakes with medical and behavioral health professionals as well as scheduling services as needed. For young adults who meet all requirements for Title XIX eligibility as specified in the State Plan except for citizenship, they will be provided with AHCCCS emergency health care services through the Federal Emergency Services Program (FESP). Success Coaches will also support young adults in understanding this health care program and assist them to explore other resources such as clinics and services which are low cost or have sliding scale fees.

Educational Opportunities for Young Adults

All young adults participating in EFC Success Coaching will have an established education plan. This plan will provide preparatory and supportive interventions such as vocational/career interest inventories, academic enrichment activities, and activities to increase hopefulness and mental health empowerment. Success Coaches will assist the young adult in advocating with educational partners to ensure educational stability. Opportunities will be individualized to the young adult and will include relevant elements found under section (a) in this report.

Opportunities for Mentors

A key indicator of long-standing stability is relational permanency—ensuring young adults have at least one supportive person they rely upon for help when needed. The EFC Success Coaches will engage young adults to identify key persons where relationships may be fostered or bolstered, to ensure permanent supportive relationships. Mentors may be found through formal mentoring programs, or with the assistance of the Success Coach, the young adult may identify family members, teachers, coaches, and other community members to engage as a mentor. Success Coaches may foster connections by encouraging the young adults to spend time building these connections or by providing a space or hosting an event that facilitates relationship-building. The DCS will work with the EFC Success Coaching provider agencies to identify community organizations that currently provide or are willing to explore mentorship.

Transportation Services for Young Adults

The Program will work with young adults to identify and support transportation needs including building knowledge and skills about public transportation, private transport options, preparing for and gaining a driver's license, obtaining and maintaining a personal vehicle, or some other option that meets the young adult's needs. If the young adult is interested in gaining a driver's license the success coach may refer young adults eligible to drive to the DCS Driving School program to gain their driver's license.

Housing

The Program will ensure young adults reside in safe, stable and secure housing including semi-supervised living arrangements. For young adults less than age 18, the DCS housing options will be determined by what living arrangement best meets the young adult's needs with preference toward family or another lesser restrictive living arrangement consistent with the best interest of the young adult. Young adults age 18 or older will have access to the same array of living environments as their young peers, with additional options.

Supervised Independent Living (SIL) is a type of living arrangement where qualified young adults participating in voluntary extended foster care may live on their own while receiving supervision and support services. A young adult residing in a SIL may be eligible to receive a monthly stipend through the Independent Living Subsidy if the living arrangement is not receiving another payment from the Department. These may include settings such as apartments, shared housing, Host Homes (which may include a kinship caregiver's home), Non-College Dorm setting (Job Corp; or a

general residential operations using an empty facility building (housing unit) on the property), or a college dormitory.

The Transitional Housing Program (THP) is another option for young adults age 18 and older. The THP provides an array of transitional housing opportunities to young adults up to their 21st birthday. There are 3 phases to the THP:

Phase One: This phase provides the young adult the experience of living in an environment that is supervised less than 24 hours/7 days per week, but does have on-site coordinators, single bedroom apartments or shared living options which are fully furnished. Meals are provided along with after-hours assistance, supportive transportation planning, and a monthly allowance to supports personal needs.

Phase Two: This phase supports young adults learning the responsibility of paying bills as they must provide \$400 monthly toward their housing costs as well as purchase all of their food. The DCS continues to supplement the cost of the housing and young adults are provided an increased monthly allowance. All participants are expected to secure additional income (such as through employment or student financial aid, etc.) to cover their living expenses. This phase offers a furnished single bedroom apartment or shared living option, an on-site coordinator, and after hour assistance.

Phase Three: This phase assists young adults in other living arrangements, including the DCS Independent Living Subsidy program, to locate affordable, permanent housing which the young adult will maintain after exiting the foster care system. This service includes housing navigation and post-lease assistance/support for up to three (3) months.