

Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities Exiting Foster Care: Creating a Resource Guide

Use this Resource Guide to conduct asset mapping activities in the communities you serve. Youth and young adults with disabilities exiting foster care will have limited personal possessions. They may also lack knowledge, resources, and a relationship with an adult to guide them in establishing their own home, continuing their education, and finding work. Knowledge of your community can be crucial in identifying resources for these youth and young adults.

For each identified resource you will want to gather

- Name of the organization and a contact person
- Phone number and website
- Information about eligibility criteria, hours of operation, location and any tips accessing their resources.

Government Issued Identification

Not having a government issued identification card will eventually create a problem in accessing daily living services, employment, and housing. This will include a state ID/driver's license and social place of birth, which will help in securing a birth certificate.

Extended Foster Care

More than half the states have extended foster care beyond 18 years old.

- [Browse State Policies](#)

Daily Living

State Assistance:

State's website for applying for: Health Care Coverage, Cash Assistance, Women Infant & Child (WIC), Food Assistance Program (FAP), Child Development & Care (CDC), State Emergency Relief

Homeless/Housing:

There are groups who help people who are homeless and those in need of low-income or affordable housing. Some groups are governmental agencies, and some are community-based organizations. You may be able to find centralized information on a regional/county website.

Clothing:

There are groups who help people that need clothes. Some groups have free used clothes and in other groups the clothes cost money. Non-profit community-based groups and groups run by churches may have free clothes. Thrift Stores sell used clothing (ex: Salvation Army, Goodwill, Kiwanis Club).

This resource was produced for Project Launch by Michigan Alliance for Families. Project Launch is a project of PACER Center and is funded by the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Service Administration. The contents of this resource were developed under a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Education (H235F200010). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and should not assume endorsement by the federal government.



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Laundry:

Being able to wash clothes can also create some challenges. Most communities have laundromats; however, there may be organizations (including churches) that may offer free access to washers and dryers.

Food:

There are groups who help people that need food. Groups may require a valid ID card, serve specific geographic regions, require an appointment, have limits on how often you can get food, and/or have specific hours of operation. Individuals who receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) can use those funds to purchase eligible food. “Double Up Food Bucks” is a program, available in 25 States, that allows people using SNAP benefits to double their dollars when shopping for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating locations.

- [Double Up America](#)

Household Items:

There are groups who help people that need household and personal items. Thrift Stores sell used household items (ex: Salvation Army, Goodwill, Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity ReStore). Churches may have regularly scheduled rummage sales.

Transportation:

Public transportation varies throughout each state. Areas with public transportation may have reduced fares based on income and/or disability. A rider must fill out an application to receive the reduced fare. Check with your local/regional public transportation system for details.

Utility Assistance:

Utility companies may offer assistance programs for customers with low incomes and may provide help with identifying funding to avoid shut off. There are community-based groups with staff members who work directly with the utility companies to assist households financially and to avoid shut off (ex: Salvation Army, faith-based organizations, Community Action Agencies).

- [Assurance Wireless \(free cell phone and wireless service\)](#)

Libraries:

Libraries offer many services for youth and young adults with disabilities. Libraries may require a government issued ID card establishing residence in the area they serve. This can be a place to use the internet, including setting up and accessing e-mail.

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Employment

Vocational Rehabilitation:

[Rehabilitation Services Administration \(RSA\)](#): RSA provides formula grants to State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Agencies to administer the State VR Services, State Supported Employment Services, and Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and four Territories.

- 34 of these States and Territories have one VR agency that serves individuals with all types of disabilities.
- 22 States have two VR agencies: one agency that serves individuals who are blind or have visual impairments, and a separate agency that serves individuals with all other types of disabilities.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are available to students with disabilities who are age 14 to at least 21 (may be up to age 26) and accepted or enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education. Pre-Employment Transition Services are an early intervention delivered in a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences with the goal of ultimately leading to competitive, integrated employment outcomes. For more information contact your local VR agency.

Client Assistance Program (CAP):

[Client Assistance Program](#) can provide you with information, referral, and advocacy services if you are an individual with a disability having trouble getting vocational rehabilitation services.

American Jobs Centers:

American Jobs Centers provide services like career counseling, job listings, training referrals, and other employment-related services. To find your local one-stop service center call 877-US-2JOBS (TTY: 1-877-889-5267).

- [American Jobs Center](#)
- [Locate American Jobs Centers by State](#)

Education

Adult Education & Family Literacy Act (AEFLA):

AEFLA seeks to create a partnership between states, the federal government, and local adult education providers to help adults get the basic skills they need, including reading, writing, math, English language proficiency, and problem-solving, to become productive workers, family members, and citizens. AEFLA includes Adult Basic Education.

- Contact your [state eligible agency](#) to learn more.

College & University Programs for Foster Care Students:

The [National Postsecondary Support Map](#) provides links and information on state tuition waivers, statewide education support programs, and 4-year campus-based support programs for students who experience foster care.

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Community Colleges, Colleges and Universities will have a person or office designated to meet the needs of students with disabilities. A student must identify as having a disability and make a request for a reasonable accommodation. There may be a process for documenting the disability and accommodations.

Extension:

Extension provides non-formal education and learning activities to people throughout the country — to farmers and other residents of rural communities as well as to people living in urban areas. It emphasizes taking knowledge gained through research and education and bringing it directly to the people to create positive changes. The nation's more than [100 land-grant colleges and universities](#) [have](#) a critical mission — extension. Through extension, land-grant colleges and universities bring vital, practical information to agricultural producers, small business owners, consumers, families, and young people.

Community Education & Recreation:

Many communities offer educational and recreational activities within their community. These could include cooking and budgeting classes, along with hobby related classes.

Disability Related Resources

Social Security Administration (SSA):

SSA administers more than just retirement benefits. They also administer the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to provide monthly payments to adults and children with a disability or blindness who have [income](#) and [resources](#) below specific financial limits. In some states your SSI application is also a Medicaid application. SSA is a very complicated system to understand and navigate; knowing who in your community can help youth/young adults apply will be useful information.

- [Locate SSA office](#)

Centers for Independent Living (CIL):

CILs are consumer-driven, community-based, cross-disability organizations that promote independence and self-determination for people with disabilities. They are consumer-driven because people with disabilities form a majority of their governing boards, as well as a majority of their staff and a majority of individuals in decision-making positions. They are “community-based” because they are designed and operated by people with disabilities within their local communities.

- [Nationwide Directory for CIL](#)
- [Client Assistance Program](#) - CAP can provide you with information, referral, and advocacy services if you are an individual with a disability having trouble getting services from CIL.

Disability Advocacy Organizations:

- [The Arc](#) – The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. Look for your state organization and local chapters.

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Legal Aid:

Legal aid is for people who may not be able to afford an attorney. Legal aid services can include the legal services for situations involving: domestic violence, family law, rental evictions or home foreclosures, public assistance such as Medicaid, food stamps, SSI Disability, SSDI benefits, public housing evictions, disability benefits, etc. Check your State Bar Association for information and location of Legal Aid Clinics.

- [Legal Services by State](#)

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN):

NDRN is the nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems and Client Assistance Programs (CAP). There is a P&A/CAP agency in every state and U.S. territory as well as one serving the Native American population in the four corners region. Collectively, the P&A/CAP network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States.

- [Locate State or Territory Member Agency](#)
- [Administration for Community Living](#)

Health Care

The resources in this category need to be comprehensive to cover physical health, oral health, reproductive health, mental health, and substance abuse.

Youth in foster care and young adults in extended foster care may have health coverage through Medicaid. This does not guarantee that they have a health care provider and may need information about physicians in the area who take Medicaid. Identify:

- Crisis Lines
- Native American Outreach Services
- Health Departments
- Community Mental/Behavioral Health
- Universities that have student-run free clinics

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