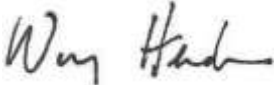


To: DCF/DMCPS Administrator  
DCF Area Administrators  
Child Placing Agency Directors  
Child Welfare Agency Directors  
County Departments of Community Programs Directors  
County Departments of Human Services Directors  
County Departments of Social Services Directors  
Group Home Providers  
Tribal Social Service/Indian Child Welfare Directors  
Private Child Placing Agencies  
Residential Care Center Providers  
Shelter Care Providers  
Tribal Chairpersons

From: Wendy Henderson   
Administrator

Re: Funding to Support Youth Aging Out of Care During COVID-19

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide the process for funding to counties, Transition Resource Agencies, and tribal Independent Living programs to support housing costs for youth aging out of care during COVID-19.

## BACKGROUND

Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency on March 12, 2020, due to the spread of COVID-19 in the state of Wisconsin. DCF recognizes that youth aging out of out-of-home care are exceptionally vulnerable during the nation's current COVID-19 pandemic, and on May 7, 2020, [issued policy guidance](#) outlining options for ensuring stability of housing and basic needs for these youth. DSP recognizes the need to provide additional financial support to cover unforeseen costs of supporting youth to voluntarily remain in the home of their last placement or to secure and maintain alternative housing. These funds will be provided to county child welfare agencies through reimbursement of one-time child-specific payments over the next three months, and to Transition Resource Agencies and tribal Independent Living programs through an increase to their existing contracts.

## INFORMATION SUMMARY

### *County Child Welfare Agencies:*

As outlined in the May 7, 2020, policy guidance, for youth who are living in a foster home, agencies are encouraged to work with the youth, the foster family, and the licensing agency to determine whether the youth may be able to voluntarily remain in the home after aging out until alternative housing is available (e.g., until beginning college, or due to delays in finding an apartment during the Safer at Home order). The DCF Exceptions Panel will be as flexible as possible on any foster care licensing exceptions necessary to allow the youth to remain in the home as a household member.

DCF will reimburse counties for the cost of one-time payments to support maintaining youth in their previous placement home. DCF will also reimburse counties for similar payments to relatives or unlicensed caregivers, as well as the costs of rent and other basic needs in other housing settings. Youth that are not remaining in their previous placement may also be served through the Transition Resource

Agencies, as outlined below.

- DCF will reimburse payments for youth who aged out of care or will age out of care between March and August of 2020.
- DCF anticipates having sufficient funding to make payments for three months (June, July, and August), in order to promote housing stability. If additional funding should become available this period may be extended.
- Payments made to support the youth remaining in the home of their most recent placement should be no more than the previous monthly foster care rate.
- Payments to support other housing situations may cover rent, security deposits, utilities, and basic household supplies. Other expenses such as food, clothing, and transportation may also be covered if those needs cannot be met through other means.

The Department will provide an amendment to the state/county contract for the increased costs for payments issued as outlined above. Counties must use the one-time payments mechanism in SACWIS to provide payment when children are continuing to live in their previous placement home or with another individual supported by the county. Directions for entering COVID19 Youth Aging Out one-time only payments can be found in the How Do I Guide: [Creating a COVID-Youth Aging Out One-Time Payment](#). Additional guidance for county agencies regarding the State/County contract amendments will be provided through scheduled conference calls with county financial managers on May 21, 2020.

*Transition Resource Agencies and Tribal Independent Living Providers:*

DCF will be providing one-time increases to the Transition Resource Agency and tribal Independent Living provider contracts to enable them to pay housing expenses for other youth aging out of care, including both rental housing providers and informal supports.

- The priority population for these funds is youth who aged out of care or will age out of care from the beginning of the public health emergency in March through the end of August. If funding remains after the needs of those youth have been addressed, it may be used to meet the housing needs of other IL-eligible youth.
- Youth eligibility and eligible expenses remain as outlined in existing contract terms, except that these funds are not subject to the Chafee limit of 30% of expenditures on housing and no additional match requirement will be applied.
- A contract amendment will be required, and agencies will request reimbursement for expenditures incurred per contract terms using a new SPARC code.

Additional guidance for Transition Resource Agencies and Tribal Independent Living providers regarding the contract amendments will be provided through a conference call on Wednesday, May 20, 2020.

CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACT:

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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

LINKS: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/press/2020/covid/youth-aging-out.pdf>  
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ewisacwis-knowledge-web/quick-reference-guides/payment/Creating-One-Time-Payments-for-COVID-Youth-Aging-Out.pdf>