

April 30, 2020

### **Extended Foster Care Eligibility During COVID-19 Sheltering in Place Order**

A young adult in Texas who ages out of foster care upon turning age 18 can participate in Extended Foster Care provided the young adult meets one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Signs a voluntary extended foster care agreement,
- If 18 or up to 22 years old:
  - Regularly attends high school or is enrolled in a program leading toward a high school diploma or high school equivalence certificate (GED);
- If 18 or up to 21 years old:
  - Regularly attends an institution of higher education or a post-secondary vocational or technical program (minimum six hours per semester);
  - Actively participates in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment
  - Is employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
  - Is incapable of doing any of the above due to a verified documented medical condition.
- Has an available licensed or contracted placement.

During this national health crisis, extended foster care has become a critical component in assisting young adults maintain stability and evade homelessness; however, eligibility requirements must still be met.

Below is guidance on how to continue to assist young adults participating in extended foster care:

- Young adults must continue to actively participate in a program or activity that promotes, or removes barriers to, employment; or continue working on their educational plan. These activities can be performed in a virtual setting, over the internet and/or by phone.
- If a young adult has lost their job because of this pandemic, they can maintain eligibility for extended foster care by enrolling in online programs that enhance job skills, engage in online job searches and submissions through websites such as the Texas Workforce Commission, or other online repositories of job listings; as well as direct applications with specific employers.
- Young adults working on their educational plan who can no longer physically attend school must participate in online classes as offered by the educational institution to remain in compliance. Documentation of eligible activities will remain the same.

If you are working with a young adult who is at risk of not meeting eligibility or have questions about whether a given activity meets requirements for eligibility; please contact one of the below State Office Transitional Living Services Staff who can help in determining if given activities meet eligibility requirements and help to ensure affected youth are able to maintain requirements for extended care.

- Ophelia Jaushlin, Extended Foster Care, Supervised Independent Living, TJJD Lead  
[Ophelia.Jaushlin@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Ophelia.Jaushlin@dfps.state.tx.us) or (512) 568-9527
- Gaye Vopat, Transitional Living Services Team Lead  
[Gaye.Vopat@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Gaye.Vopat@dfps.state.tx.us) or (512) 460-7394
- Todd Serpico, Preparation for Adult Living Program Specialist  
[Todd.Serpico@dfps.state.tx.us](mailto:Todd.Serpico@dfps.state.tx.us) or 512-647-0280

**For additional information visit:**

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Protection/Youth\\_and\\_Young\\_Adults/Transitional\\_Living/Extended\\_Foster\\_Care/default.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/Youth_and_Young_Adults/Transitional_Living/Extended_Foster_Care/default.asp)