

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Child and Family Services Agency**



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-14-5**

TO: All Staff

FROM: Sandra Gasca-Gonzalez  
Deputy Director for Program Operations

DATE: July 14, 2014

RE: Gift Cards and Vouchers

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Children and families involved with the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) sometimes have financial needs that may not be anticipated either by CFSA, the District and federal governments, or community programs. When these situations occur, CFSA is able to provide for the unanticipated needs through the use of gift cards and vouchers. Gift cards and vouchers may also be used to maintain family stability or to prevent a removal or placement disruption. CFSA encourages social workers to identify and provide the specific types of services or supports that can address children's and family's needs through timely access to gift cards and vouchers.

As appropriate and necessary, it is the policy of CFSA to use gift cards and vouchers to provide timely individualized services or supports that promote children's safety, permanence, and well-being. This administrative issuance provides guidance to CFSA social workers when they are providing, purchasing, or arranging gift cards or vouchers to meet the needs of a child and the child's family.

If you have questions regarding this issuance, please contact the Office of the Deputy Director for Program Operations (OPO).

### **Services and Supports**

The following gift cards and vouchers provide assistance to children and families when timely access to the associated services is needed. The social worker shall ensure that the client receives information on available local community resources (such as food banks) and reviews the parameters of these services and supports with the client. (In this issuance, a client is a child, youth, or family member who receives services referred or paid by CFSA.)

1. McDonald's Gift Certificates - Food Gift Cards - Metro Fare Cards
  - a. McDonald's gift certificates may be provided to clients who have been identified in need of a meal either during a visit to CFSA or while out with a CFSA social worker. Each gift certificate is redeemable in the amount of \$1.00, and a book of certificates is valued at \$10.00. Maximum allowable amounts may differ within administrations and may be based on clinical judgment and client needs. Social workers shall consult with their program manager.
  - b. Food gift cards are given in an emergency to clients and caregivers who request help from CFSA, or during a home visit when a CFSA social worker has identified clients or caregivers as being without sufficient food for the family. Gift cards are redeemable in the amount of \$10.00 and \$20.00. Maximum allowable amounts may differ within administrations and may be based on clinical judgment and client needs. Social workers shall consult with her or his program manager.

- c. Metro fare cards are given in an emergency to clients and caregivers who request help from CFSA or when a CFSA social worker has identified clients or caregivers in need of help with transportation to get to school, a doctor's appointment, visits to family members, court-ordered appointments, etc. Metro fare cards are redeemable in the amount of \$5.00 and \$10.00. Maximum allowable amounts for Metro fare cards may differ within administrations and may be based on clinical judgment and client needs. Social workers shall consult with their program manager.
  - d. CFSA allocates an annual back-to-school clothing allowance for youth in a foster, kinship, or group home. This payment, in the form of a voucher, is a one-time payment provided at the start of the school year to assist with the purchase of clothing. *For details, see [Youth Clothing Allowance policy](#).*
  - e. The Office of the Deputy Director for Entry Services may authorize a staff member to receive and distribute gift certificates, food gift cards, or Metro fare cards. All certificates and gift cards must be kept locked in a secured location until the time of distribution.
  - f. Social workers shall request the gift certificates, food gift cards, and Metro fare cards from the authorized OPO staff member, as needed. Social workers are required to complete and sign a *Support Services Application (see attachment A)*, obtain the signature of their supervisor, and return the signed form to the authorized OPO staff member.
    - i. Once approved by the authorized program staff member, the social worker completes and signs the *Gift Card Receipt Form (see attachment B)* in order to receive the food or metro gift cards.
    - ii. The social worker shall secure the signature of the client on the *Gift Card Receipt Form* (second signature line) to acknowledge receipt of the food or metro gift card.
    - iii. A copy of this signed form shall be kept on file by the authorized program staff member.
2. Furniture Vouchers and Burlington Coat Factory Gift Cards (for clothing)
- a. CFSA utilizes furniture vouchers to help support parents and guardians who do not have sufficient furniture for sleeping and living arrangements for the dependent children or youth in their care.
  - b. Furniture vouchers are redeemable for specific furniture items (such as beds and dressers) as identified by the social worker for the safety and permanence of the children or youth. In addition to the above-stated criteria, furniture requests from a social worker must receive the approval of the assigned program manager or program administrator.
  - c. Burlington Coat Factory gift cards (including clothing items from Baby Depot) help to support clients and caregivers who do not have sufficient or appropriate clothing for children or youth in their care.

*Note: requests for a Burlington Coat Factory gift card shall not be accepted from a foster or kinship home that has started to receive board payments, or from youth who receive a monthly stipend while in an independent living program.*
  - d. Burlington Coat Factory gift cards are redeemable in the amounts of \$50, \$100, \$125, \$150, and \$200. The maximum request shall be \$200 per child with no more than two requests per child per fiscal year. Any additional requests shall require the approval of OPO's deputy director.
  - e. Burlington Coat Factory gift cards will be kept by the supervisory project liaison in a locked, secured location until the time of distribution.
  - f. In order to secure a furniture voucher or a clothing gift card, the social worker shall complete the following steps:
    - i. Prior to requesting a clothing gift card, visit CFSA's *Children's Donation Center* to determine if there is appropriate clothing available for each client identified with a specific need.

- a) If appropriate clothing is not available at the Children's Donation Center, the request should be for an initial placement into foster care, or clothing replacement due to fire, eviction, etc., or uniforms for children who may not be attending school.
  - b) Clothing gift cards of \$125 may be requested for youth under age 13 and \$150 for youth age 13 and older.
  - c) A program manager or program administrator may approve requests up to \$200. For requests over \$200, the signature of the Deputy Director for Program Operations is required
- ii. Prior to requesting furniture vouchers, the social worker shall seek community resources, a list of which is available from the *Children's Donation Center*.
    - a) Write a brief description of the reason for the request including why the family cannot contribute financially to the provision of furniture or why the request cannot be accommodated by other means, in addition to a description of the client's placement
    - b) Each piece of requested furniture must be listed on the *Support Services Application* (see item # iii below).
    - c) Furniture voucher requests shall be a one-time request per family.
  - iii. Complete and print a *Support Services Application* and include each client's FACES.NET identification (ID) number. Clients must have a FACES.NET client ID to receive services.
  - iv. Secure the signature of the assigned supervisor and scan the signed form along with all supporting documentation, and forward to the OPO supervisory project liaison at [cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov) for review and final approval.
    - a) The supervisory project liaison shall process the application within 7 business days and forward an electronic copy of the *Purchase Authorization Form* to the social worker and supervisor.
    - b) For furniture requests, the *Purchase Authorization Form* will also be forwarded to the furniture vendor.
      - 1) The furniture vendor will contact the family to schedule a date for furniture delivery.
      - 2) If the family has concerns regarding the delivery (such as broken or damaged furniture), the family shall immediately contact the supervisory project liaison at [cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov).
- g. Ensure that copies of each application and supporting documentation are placed in the child's or family's file.
3. The OPO supervisory project liaison shall reconcile all transactions with CFSA's Fiscal Operations administration on a quarterly basis, as well as conducting periodic checks of each program area for compliance with this policy and those identified below under *Other Services and Supports*.

### **Other Services and Supports**

For services and supports to children and families not described above, please see the following policies and administrative issuances:

1. Administrative issuance CFSA-12-11 [Demand Payments](#)
2. Administrative issuance CFSA-07-09 [Driver's Licenses for Youth in Care](#)
3. Administrative issuance CFSA-11-2 [Graduation Expenses](#)
4. [Child Fatality Policy](#) (Procedure D: Funeral Arrangements and Assistant with Burial or Cremation Expenses)
5. [Purchase Card Policy](#)

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**Support Services Application**

Before requesting support services, please be sure you have completed the following steps:

- Visited the Donation Center (1<sup>st</sup> Floor at CFSA) - clothing only
- Sought community resources for furniture
- Provided the client information on local food banks and other community food resources (food only and can be done after assistance is provided)

Date of attempt : \_\_\_\_\_ ( please allow 7 business days for processing). Return your completed application to: [cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov) .

Date	Social Worker Name	Administration	Phone

**Services Request: (Circle the appropriate request)**

Food Card (McDonalds/Safeway/Giant)	Metro Card	Clothing Card	Furniture Voucher
\$	\$	\$	\$

**Justification: (Circle the reason and provide detailed explanation)**

Initial	Emergency	Court Order (please attach)	Other (please explain)

**Client Information**

CFSA Client Name	Ward	DOB	FACES Client ID

Authorized Purchaser/Receiver	
Name	Phone Number

Authorized Purchaser/Receiver Address

**Signatures**

Supervisor/Program Manager (Print)	Date	Supervisor/Program Manager (Signature)	Date
Supervisory Projects Liaison (Print)	Date	Supervisory Projects Liaison (Signature)	Date

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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**Gift Card Receipt Form**

Date	Staff Name	Administration	Phone

**Support Services Request(ed): (Circle the appropriate request)**

Food Card (McDonalds/Safeway)	Metro Card	Clothing Card	Furniture Voucher
\$	\$		\$

Card Amount	Card Number

CFSA Client Name	FACES Client ID

I, the undersigned, do hereby recognize receipt of a gift card/voucher as outlined above, which is to be used for the sole purpose of obtaining services on behalf of the client(s) named.

I assert that the gift card/voucher is for the sole purpose of obtaining needed services on behalf of a ward(s) of the District of Columbia's Child and Family Services Agency. I agree, if required, to provide an actual receipt of the services received.

By signing below I understand that this card *will not be replaced if lost or stolen* and if found to be in violation of the intended use, I will forfeit support services assistance for the fiscal year in which the offense occurred.

Print Name	Signature	Date
Print Name	Signature	Date