

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



**Administrative Issuance: CFSA-12-10**

TO: All Staff

FROM: Debra Porchia-Usher  
Principal Deputy Director

DATE: December 21, 2012

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, contracted agencies, District and federal government, 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. Through timely access to gift cards and vouchers, CFSA encourages social workers to identify and provide the specific types of services or supports with gift cards and vouchers that address children's and family's needs.

It is the policy of CFSA to make available timely individualized services or supports that promote children's safety, permanence, and well-being, including through the use of gift cards and vouchers. This administrative issuance provides guidance to CFSA social workers when providing, purchasing or arranging gift cards and 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 Principal Deputy Director for Program Operations (OPDD).

### **Services and Supports**

The following services and supports are available through gift cards and vouchers that provide assistance to children and families when timely access to such services is needed. The social worker shall ensure that the client receives information on available local community resources (such as food banks) and review 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 or a CFSA contracted agency.)

1. McDonald's Gift Certificates - Food Gift Cards - Metro Fare Cards
  - a. McDonald's gift certificates shall be provided to clients who have been identified either during a visit to CFSA or while out with a CFSA worker and in need of a meal. Each gift certificate is redeemable in the amount of \$1.00, and a book of certificates is valued at \$10.00. Maximum allowable amounts for gift certificates to clients and families may differ within administrations and may be based on clinical judgment and client needs. Social workers shall consult with her or his program manager.

- b. Food gift cards are given in an emergency to clients and caregivers who request help from CFSA, or clients or caregivers who have been identified by a CFSA worker during a home visit as being without sufficient food for the family. Gift cards are redeemable in the amount of \$10.00 and \$20.00. Maximum allowable amounts for food gift cards to clients and families 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 clients or caregivers who have been identified by a CFSA worker as 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 to clients and families may differ within administrations and may be based on clinical judgment and client needs. Social workers shall consult with her or his program manager.
  - d. Each Administration and the Office of Entry Services shall authorize a staff member to receive and distribute the gift certificates, food gift cards, or Metro fare cards and keep them locked in a safe until the time of distribution.
  - e. Social workers shall request the gift certificates, food gift cards, and Metro fare cards from the authorized staff member, as needed. Social workers shall be required to complete and sign the *Family Services Support Application (see attachment A)*, obtain the signature of his or her supervisor, and return the signed form to the authorized program staff member. Once approved by the authorized program staff member, the social worker shall complete and sign the *Gift Card Receipt Form (see attachment B)* and receive the food or metro gift cards. A copy of both of the signed forms shall be kept on file by the authorized program staff member.
  - f. CFSA's Accounting Department staff will reconcile all transactions with the authorized program staff member once per week, and conduct periodic checks of each program area for compliance with Agency policies.
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. 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 the children or youth.  
*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.*
  - 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. Furniture requests in addition to the above-stated criteria must receive the approval of the program manager. Burlington gift cards are redeemable in the amounts of \$50, \$100, \$125, and \$150. The maximum request shall be \$150 per child with no more than 2 requests per child per fiscal year. Any additional requests shall require the approval of the principal deputy director.
  - c. Burlington gift cards will be kept by the supervisory project liaison in a locked safe until the time of distribution.
  - d. In order to secure a furniture voucher or a Burlington Coat Factory gift card, the social worker shall complete the following steps:
    - i. Visit CFSA's *Children's Donation Center* to determine if there is appropriate clothing available for each client identified with a specific need and to seek community resources for furniture prior to making the Agency request. The *Children's Donation Center* has a list of available community resources.

- ii. Complete a *Support Services Application* for each client or family and include each client's FACES.NET identification (ID) number. List each piece of furniture being requested on the Application.
  - iii. Furniture voucher requests shall be a one-time request per family.
  - iv. 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.
  - v. Request clothing gift cards of \$125 for youth under age 13 and \$150 for youth age 13 and older. A program manager may approve requests up to \$200. For requests over \$200, the signature of the program administrator is required
  - vi. Print the completed *Support Services Application Form*, secure the signature of his or her supervisor, scan signed form along with all supporting documentation and forward to the Supervisory Project Liaison in OPDD at [cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov](mailto:cfsa.vouchers@dc.gov) for review and final approval. The supervisory project liaison shall process the application within 5 business days and forward an electronic copy of the *Purchase Authorization Form* to the social worker and supervisor. For furniture requests, the *Purchase Authorization Form* will also be forwarded to the vendor (Family Furniture).
  - vii. Ensure that copies of each application and supporting documentation are placed in the child's or families' file.
- e. The social worker shall notify the family member who is the authorized signatory to go to Family Furniture, located at 7870 Central Avenue in Landover, Maryland, and sign the *Purchase Authorization Form*. The Family Furniture store will deliver the furniture to the family.
  - f. The supervisory project liaison shall reconcile all transactions with the CFSA Accounting Department once per week and conduct periodic checks of each program area for compliance with agency policies.

### **Other Services and Supports**

For services and supports to children and families that are 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](#)

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY**



**Support Services Application**

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

- Visited the Partners for Kids in Care Office (clothing only)
- 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 5 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 a 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

**Signatures**

Supervisor/Program Manager (Print)	Date	Supervisor/Program Manager (Signature)	Date

Supervisory Projects Liaison (Print)	Date	Supervisory Projects Liaison (Signature)	Date