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	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY Approved by: <u>Brenda Donald</u> Agency Director Date: <u>April 8, 2013</u>	REVISION HISTORY:
LATEST REVISION: March 11, 2013	EFFECTIVE DATE: April 8, 2013	

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, and regulations, including but not limited to the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act of 1974 and its implementing regulations, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Title 4 of the DC Official Code, provisions in Title 29 of the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR), and the <i>LaShawn A. v. Gray</i> Implementation and Exit Plan (IEP). <i>This policy supersedes CFSA administrative issuances CFSA-10-12 (Transition Interviews for Youth) and CFSA-10-15 (Transition Planning for Youth).</i>
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA staff and CFSA-contracted agency personnel.
III. RATIONALE	The transition for any adolescent to young adulthood can be fraught with challenges, fears, and doubts. In order to mitigate these natural challenges, a youth’s transition requires solid support from family and community, regardless of whether a youth is currently in the District’s foster care system or the youth has remained safely at home with family throughout childhood. CFSA recognizes the importance of providing strong backing for youth to achieve positive transition outcomes and to ensure that youth in CFSA’s care can successfully develop into healthy and responsible citizens. Therefore, CFSA has developed a concrete strategy for preparing youth to transition from dependency on the child welfare system to adult self-sufficiency. CFSA’s Office of Youth Empowerment is the vehicle whereby youth receive assistance accessing resources and services for financial management, educational and vocational goals, health and mental health services, housing, and aftercare services. This policy document outlines the parameters of this assistance.

IV. POLICY	<p>It is CFSA’s policy to prepare youth for the transition to young adulthood when a youth turns age 15, and to continue transition planning every 6 months until the youth reaches age 20. At age 20, a youth’s transition planning increases to every 90 days until the youth turns age 21. In addition, at age 19½, a youth’s social worker may refer the youth for aftercare services if it is anticipated that the youth will age out of the system at 21. A primary goal of the transition planning process is to encourage and educate youths to think beyond today and to envision their tomorrows with vigor and focus. For this reason, youth are at the center of their transition planning process, supported by CFSA’s Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE). OYE connects each youth with service providers that can help youth master an array of skill sets useful for a successful transition from the foster care system. During this process, CFSA ensures that youth are consistently supported by individuals who make up the youth’s “team”, including persons whose participation in team meetings will fluctuate according to a meeting’s focus (e.g., permanency goals versus transition-specific planning; see <i>Procedure A</i> for a list of individuals who make up a youth’s team). Individuals who make up a youth’s team collectively determine with the youth the services that are best suited for the youth’s path toward self-sufficiency. For more details on OYE’s practice procedures, please refer to the OYE Practice Operational Manual (POM).</p>
V. CONTENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Transition Planning for Youth Ages 15-17 B. Transition Planning for Youth Ages 18-21 C. Special Populations D. Applications for Transitional Funds E. Aftercare Services
VI. PROCEDURES	<p>Procedure A: Transition Planning for Youth Ages 15-17</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within 30 days after a youth’s 15th birthday, the youth’s assigned ongoing social worker enrolls the youth in OYE via FACES.NET to initiate the preparation for transitioning the youth to young adulthood. 2. Each youth’s transition involves a transition team. Team members include but are not limited to the following individuals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The youth b. The youth’s mother and father, as well as other identified family members c. Community-based partners, e.g., staff from the Department of Mental Health, the Department on Disability Services (including the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Developmental Disabilities Administration), Department of Employment Services, and non-profit service providers d. OYE independent living (IL) specialist (i.e., the consultative social worker) e. The assigned ongoing CFSA or private agency social worker, as well as the social worker’s supervisor f. Guardian <i>ad litem</i>

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- g. Court-appointed special advocate (CASA), if applicable
 - h. The youth’s resource parent or staff from the youth’s group home
 - i. Other supportive or significant individuals identified by the youth and his family
3. Within 3 months of the youth turning 15, the assigned ongoing social worker shall schedule a transition team meeting in order to develop the youth’s transition plan.
- a. Meetings shall occur at a time and place that works best for the youth and the youth’s family and support.
 - b. Locations shall be family and child-friendly so that participation by all team members (including life connections with small children) is supported.
4. Transition plans shall be developed as “living documents” (i.e., easily modified to reflect changes in the youth’s needs and desires) with direct input from the youth for identifying specific, achievable goals for transitioning from care.
- a. Transition plans include but are not limited to the following components:
 - i. Summaries of the youth’s current functioning and needs in the following domains:
 - a) Education and vocation
 - b) Self-care, including physical, emotional, mental, and reproductive health
 - c) Financial literacy
 - d) Family and other important relationships
 - e) Transportation
 - f) Parenting, if applicable
 - ii. Results of education and vocation assessments
 - iii. Other evaluations, e.g., individual education plans and psycho-educational evaluations
 - iv. Descriptions of the youth’s goals for future education, employment, and living arrangements
 - v. Specific steps for the youth and other team members to take to address the youth’s needs and help them progress toward their goals, including timelines for accomplishing those steps
 - vi. Documentation of health care insurance, including health care power-of-attorney and proxy (if applicable)
 - vii. Signatures of all participants
- Note: Plans may include information based on a life skills assessment, if applicable. Life skills assessments are not mandatory but social workers should encourage youth to be assessed in preparation for developing a personalized learning plan that identifies areas of strength, along with areas where additional learning may be beneficial.*

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Ideally, the transition plan, as well as the permanency plan, should be integrated into one case plan for the youth, anticipating and addressing any challenges or barriers that the youth might encounter during the transition process. c. Plans should be developmentally appropriate to the youth and incorporate a written sequence for the accomplishment of tasks by multiple parties, not solely the youth. d. Similar to concurrent permanency goals, transition plans shall include concurrent transitional options, particularly for housing, medical care, and financial security. e. The assigned social worker will distribute an electronic version of the agreed-upon plan to all team members no later than 5 business days after the transition plan meeting. f. The ongoing social worker shall attach a copy of the transition plan to the next report submitted to the Family Court. g. In order to ensure that a youth’s transition plan is actively supporting the transition process, the ongoing social worker shall document in FACES.NET his or her close monitoring of goals, tasks, and timelines outlined in the plan. h. Although the transition team shall meet every 180 days (or more frequently, if needed) to update the transition plan and to focus on individual domains cited above, as needed, it is incumbent upon individual team members to assist the youth as needed on an ongoing basis with the various tasks and goals outlined in the plan. <p>5. CFSA and CFSA-contracted private agency social workers shall assist the youth in establishing and scheduling meetings with individuals who are willing and able to function as a lifelong connection for the youth, and to reinforce a mutual commitment to achieving positive permanency outcomes.</p>
	<p>Procedure B: Transition Planning for Youths Ages 18-21</p> <p>As noted in <i>Procedure A</i>, transition planning begins at age 15. Transition planning meetings occur every 180 days until a youth reaches age 20, at which point, transition planning meetings occur every 90 days. All of the procedures cited above for youth ages 15-17 apply to the transition planning processes for youths ages 18-21. Additional guidelines are outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As is the case with youth ages 15-17, life skills assessments are not mandatory but social workers should encourage youth on an annual basis to identify areas of strength, along with areas where additional services may be beneficial for achieving positive permanency outcomes. 2. The ongoing social worker organizes a 6-month progressive schedule of transitional planning process meetings for youth between the ages of 18 and 20 years old, the first of which occurs 30 days prior to the youth turning 18 years old.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. When youths turn 20 ¼ and 20 ½ years, the assigned social worker schedules additional transition meetings to review, update, and if necessary, revise transition goals and tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition meetings for 20 year olds must include specific options for housing, health insurance, education, and linkages to continuing adult support services (as noted under <i>Procedure A: 4c[i-vii]</i>). 4. By the time a youth turns 20 ¾ years old, transition plans are finalized, including plans for employment, housing, and other services as needed to ensure successful self-sufficiency. 5. Transition plans for youth ages 18-21 shall include but not be limited to the same components outlined in <i>Procedure A:4c(i-vii)</i> in addition to specific steps that team members shall take to assist the youth in progressively increasing his or her independence, including work force supports, education, and lifelong connections. 6. If at any time a youth refuses to participate in transition planning, the ongoing social worker shall make and document all good faith efforts to engage the youth and to develop a plan under the young adult's direction.
	<p>Procedure C: Special Populations</p> <p>CFSA's transition planning process shall accommodate youth living under special circumstances, including but not limited to youth who are incarcerated; youth living in residential facilities that are outside of a 50-mile radius of the Washington, DC metropolitan area; as well as youth with developmental disabilities who may be living in nursing facilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regardless of a youth's individual circumstances (i.e., any of the special populations described above), the assigned ongoing social worker shall ensure that transition planning occurs for every youth on his or her caseload, as outlined under <i>Procedures A and B</i> above, including scheduled transition planning meetings with the youth's team. 2. To ensure that transition planning is not compromised by a youth's inability to attend transition meetings, social workers shall exercise creative options to ensure a youth's opinions and thoughts are included in the youth's transition planning process. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. For youth who are incarcerated, a social worker may need to visit the incarcerating facility (in compliance with that facility's regulations). Alternatively, the social worker may need to ensure a youth is included in his or her own transition meetings via teleconference. b. For youth in a residential facility further than 50 miles away from the Washington, DC metropolitan area, the ongoing social worker must ensure that the transition meeting is scheduled to accommodate the youth's ability to participate via teleconference.

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	<p>3. Youth who are 18 years old and have a developmental disability (DD) may not be able to participate in the transition planning process. In such cases, the ongoing social worker shall nonetheless continue with transition planning, schedule meetings, and engage the youth’s team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing social workers with youth on their caseload with a DD diagnosis shall ensure a timely and smooth transition of DD services for youth who are about to turn 21 years old (<i>see Procedure E: Aftercare Services</i>). <p>4. Pregnant youth or young parents have special considerations (e.g., pre-natal care, child care, and parenting skills) that the ongoing social worker shall address and include in the youth’s comprehensive case planning process, including applicable services that are put in place during permanency and transition planning.</p>
	<p>Procedure D: Applications for Transitional Funds</p> <p>1. Funds to facilitate the transition out of foster care may only be requested by youth aged 18-21 who have completed transition interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition interviews are quality assurance surveys specifically designed for youth to provide feedback on their overall experience in foster care. They are conducted 90 days prior to the date when the youth is expected to transition out of foster care. <p>2. Applications to receive transitional funds must be specific to household items (e.g., linens and kitchenware) and completed no later than 45 days prior to the date the youth is expected to achieve permanency.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Applications must include a list of and justification for household items necessary for the youth’s successful transition to permanency. b. Transitional care funds do not exceed \$500, based on need. <p>3. All requests for transitional funds are approved, processed, and distributed through OYE, and made payable directly to the youth.</p> <p>4. Funds must be distributed prior to legal termination of CFSA’s custodial responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If CFSA fails to distribute approved funds prior to case closure for whatever reason, and a youth has completed the transition interview process, CFSA shall distribute funds as soon as possible.
	<p>Procedure E: Aftercare Services</p> <p>1. Aftercare services are voluntary for all youth.</p> <p>2. Through CFSA’s contracted partnerships with the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities (HFTC) Collaboratives and through contracted services from <i>CASAs for Children of DC</i>, CFSA commits to offering aftercare services to youth for 2 calendar years following the transition of youth from the child welfare system.</p>

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3. "Aftercare" includes but is not limited to the following services (contingent upon budget and appropriations):
 - a. Housing assistance
 - i. "Rapid Housing" services are offered, provided, and managed by OYE for youth who meet the following CFSA director-vetted eligibility criteria:
 - a) Demonstration of maturity, progress, and achievement of self-sufficiency goals as outlined in their transition plans
 - b) Part-time employment if currently enrolled in an academic or vocational program, or full-time employment if not enrolled in such a program
 - c) Approval by the OYE administrator
 - ii. Although applications should be submitted no later than 90 days prior to the youth's transition from care, the youth's assigned ongoing social worker shall submit the Rapid Housing application as early in the transition process as possible in order to assess the needs of the youth.
 - b. Aftercare case management
 - c. Employment and vocational guidance and referrals
 - d. Ongoing life skills development
 - e. Guidance for accessing public services
 - f. Parenting support (e.g., parenting classes and daycare vouchers) for those with dependent children
4. The referral process for aftercare services begins when a youth turns 19 ½ years old and the assigned social worker completes the Youth Aftercare Referral Packet.
5. Whether a CASA worker or an HFTC Collaborative ("aftercare providers"), the assigned aftercare provider will participate in the CFSA transition planning process when the youth turns age 20, and assume full case responsibility at the youth's 21st birthday.
6. Youths who decline aftercare services must sign a "waiver" prepared by the assigned OYE specialist; youth can still reconsider participation within 2 calendar years of their 21st birthday and are still eligible for services under the following circumstances:
 - a. The youth contacts the previously-assigned aftercare provider to indicate reconsideration, at which point the provider will re-open the case; or
 - b. The youth contacts OYE directly.
7. Youth with moderate to severe developmental disabilities who qualify for services through the Department on Disability Services' Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) will receive direct services from DDA and are therefore not eligible for CFSA-supported aftercare services.
 - Other instances of ineligibility are decided on a case-by-case basis.

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