



POLICY TITLE:	Youth Clothing Allowance		
 	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY		
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Robert L. Matthews - Director	November 30, 2021	November 1, 2013	November 19, 2021

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, regulations, including but not limited to provisions in Title 4 of the DC Official Code, and Chapter 60 and 62 of Title 29 of the DC Municipal Regulations.
II. APPLICABILITY	All Agency employees, contracted personnel, contracted agency personnel and resource providers.
III. RATIONALE	Children who enter foster care often have limited resources, including clothing. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all children residing in a foster home or congregate care facility receive clothing needed for school and leisure activities and funds are allocated for this purpose.
IV. POLICY	It is the policy of CFSA to provide a clothing allowance for youth ages 15 up to 21 who are placed in a foster home or congregate care facility for a minimum of 30 consecutive days. The amount of clothing allowance to be allocated shall be determined by CFSA. Funds for the clothing allowance are included in the existing foster care board payment or the CFSA-approved contractual funding provided to private agencies. Social workers shall inform youth and resource providers that there is a policy regarding clothing allowances and shall ensure that youth receive clothing allowances in accordance with this policy.
V. CONTENTS	<p>A. General Requirements for Clothing Allowance</p> <p>B. Monitoring and Tracking of Allowances</p> <p>C. Complaints and Grievances</p>
VI. PROCEDURES	<p>Procedure A: General Requirements for Clothing Allowance</p> <p>1. The resource provider has an obligation to provide each youth in their care with their own clean, stain and damage free, well-fitting, seasonal clothing appropriate to the youth's age, gender identity, and individual needs. Resource providers shall use the monthly board and care payment to allocate a clothing allowance of a minimum of \$83.34 a month (\$1000 annually) to all youth ages 15 up to 21 who are placed in their care for a minimum of 30 consecutive days for the purchase of clothing. This policy should not be construed as limiting or capping the amount of money to be spent on clothing for the youth.</p> <p><i>Note: In instances where a youth is in immediate need of clothing, the social worker or resource provider may obtain an emergency clothing voucher through CFSA.</i></p>

2. Separately from the allowance described in item #1 above, CFSA shall also allocate an annual back-to-school clothing allowance for youth. This is a one-time payment of \$300 that will be provided prior to the start of the school year to assist with the purchase of clothing.
 - a. All youth ages 15 up to 21 who are in a licensed resource home or congregate care facility are eligible to receive an annual back-to-school clothing allowance.
 - b. Funds shall be distributed yearly on or before August 31st.
 - c. Youth must be in foster care at the time of distribution.
3. The social worker shall ensure that the youth has sufficient clothing and that the resource provider provides the youth with the designated amount of clothing allowance required by CFSA.
4. The resource provider shall discuss with the youth how the clothing allowance will be distributed based on the youth's clothing needs.
 - a. After discussing how the clothing allowance will be distributed with the youth, the resource provider shall inform the social worker of the plan.
 - b. The social worker shall document the distribution plan in FACES.NET.
5. In instances where the youth is deemed to have sufficient clothing, the resource provider may allocate the funds at a later time when the need arises (e.g., a change in season requiring additional clothing). The resource provider is still responsible for allocating the designated amount of clothing allowance to the youth (as noted above, totaling either \$83.34 per month, or \$1000 annually).
6. If the clothing allowance funds are not provided for the youth and they are deemed to have insufficient clothing, the social worker shall work with the youth to ensure past funds are provided to the youth as designated. (*See Procedure C for more information.*)
7. The resource provider may distribute the clothing allowance directly to youth in instances where they deem the youth has the maturity level to manage funds appropriately.
8. The resource provider shall provide necessary guidance and coaching to the youth to help reinforce financial management and budgeting skills when shopping for clothing, and to develop the tools needed to be a knowledgeable consumer. The resource provider can help youth develop these skills by demonstrating and discussing the following tools needed to be a "smart shopper":
 - a. Developing a savings plan and a budget
 - b. Identifying needs vs. wants
 - c. Finding a sale or choosing a less expensive option (e.g., bargain shopping)
 - d. Using coupons to make purchases

	<p>9. The resource provider shall allocate the clothing allowance, as described above, even when the youth is employed.</p> <p>10. Clothing allowances may not be withheld as a form of discipline.</p> <p>11. All clothing purchased shall become the property of the youth and must be sent with the youth upon their exit from foster care or move to a new placement.</p>
	<p>Procedure B: Monitoring and Tracking of Allowances</p> <p>1. In instances where the resource provider purchases the clothing, they shall keep receipts of all clothing purchased with clothing allowance funds and furnish receipts upon request by CFSA.</p> <p>2. In instances where the resource provider distributes clothing allowance funds directly to youth, the resource provider shall maintain accurate records of all clothing allowance payment distributions for purposes of monitoring and/or auditing, including, at a minimum, signed documentation from the youth acknowledging the amount of funds given and the date the clothing allowance was received.</p> <p>3. In instances where the social worker suspects inappropriate use or mismanagement of clothing allowance funds provided directly to the youth, the social worker may review the receipts to verify allowance purchases.</p>
	<p>Procedure C: Complaints and Grievances</p> <p>1. Social workers shall inform youth and resource parents on their caseload of the procedures outlined in this policy for complaints and grievances.</p> <p>2. If a youth has a grievance regarding the receipt or suspension of a monthly allowance, they may contact their social worker and/or the ombudsman for review.</p> <p>3. If the youth contacts the social worker, the social worker shall review the concern and make a determination within 5 business days of receipt of the complaint.</p> <p>4. If the youth is not satisfied with the determination of the social worker, the youth may elevate their grievance to the Agency ombudsman no later than 30 calendar days after the social worker's determination of the youth's complaint. Any determination made by the Agency ombudsman shall be final.</p>