



# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## **Fostering Futures**

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Foster Care Program Manager

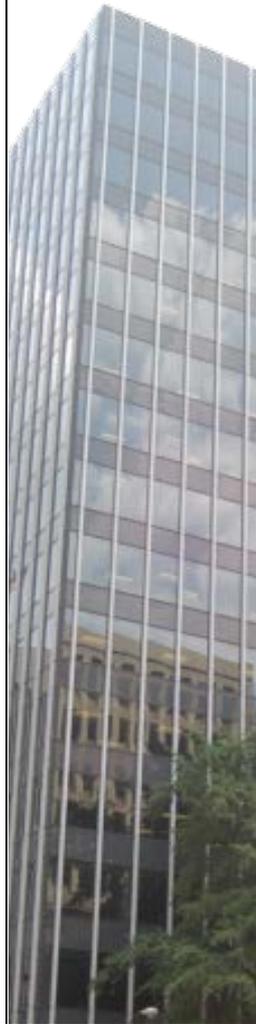
Virginia Department of Social Services

*People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect  
to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and their  
communities*



# Why the Change is Needed

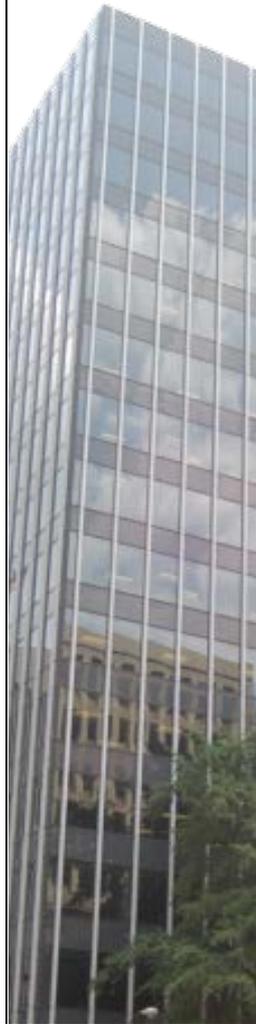
- Shift in the population at large
  - The age of independence is moving further into adulthood, well beyond the age of 18
- Negative outcomes for children exiting foster care, including higher rates of:
  - Unemployment
  - Homelessness
  - Early parenting
  - Dependence on public assistance
  - Lack of secondary and postsecondary education
  - Involvement with the criminal justice system



# Authority to Implement Fostering Futures



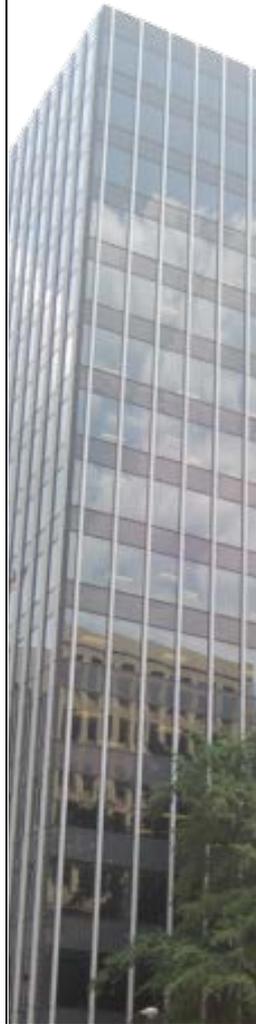
- The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
  - Allows for extension of Foster Care services to age 21
  - Allows for the extension of Adoption Assistance until the age of 21 if the youth is adopted after age 16.
  - Would allow for the extension of kinship guardianship assistance to 21



# Authorizing Budget Language



- FY2017 Virginia State Budget, Item 346 #3c
  - The Department of Social Services shall set out the requirements for program participation in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 675 (8) (B).
  - The budget language includes an enactment clause stating youth become eligible for this program on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday effective July 1, 2016.





# Basic Requirements

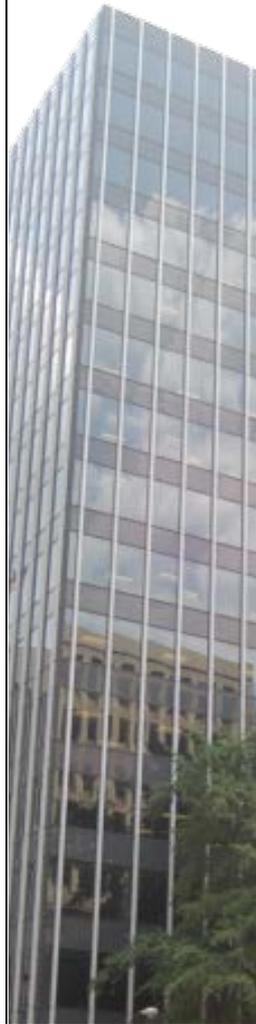
- Must “age out” of foster care, or
- Must have been in foster care immediately prior to their commitment to DJJ and leave a DJJ facility after age 18 and before turning 21.
- Must be between 18 and 21





# Basic Requirements

- All participants will sign a **Voluntary** Continuing Services and Support Agreement (VCSSA)
  - Youth are automatically in the program upon turning 18.
  - The agreement isn't just a service agreement, it acts as an entrustment agreement.
  - The agreement must be approved by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.





# IV-E Funding Determination

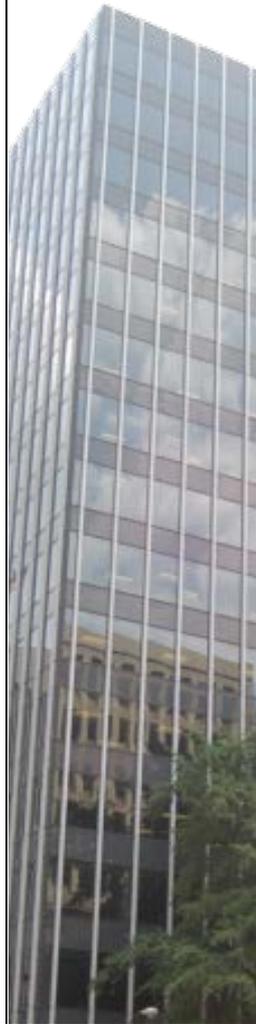
- The Continuing Services and Support Agreement (VCSSA) starts a new foster care episode.
  - The LDSS conducts a IV-E eligibility determination based on the youth's income.
  - It is anticipated that upwards of 75% of participants will be found eligible for IV-E funding.
  - No further reviews of IV-E eligibility are required.





# Continuing Eligibility Criteria

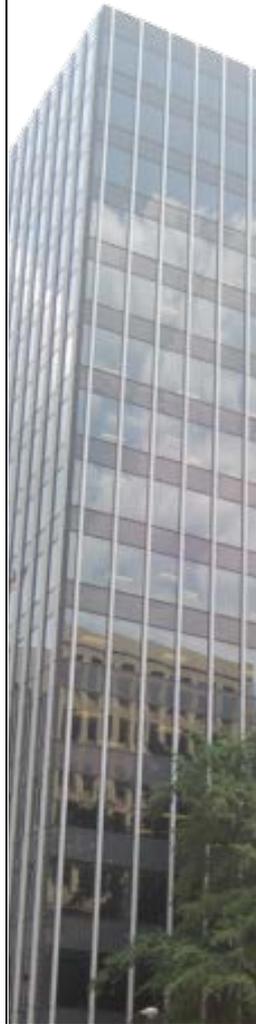
- Participants must meet at least one of these five criteria to continue to be eligible for the program:
  1. Completing secondary education or in a GED program
  2. Enrolled in college or a vocational program
  3. Attending classes to promote employment or remove barriers to employment
  4. Working at least 80 hours per month, or
  5. Unable to meet one of the four conditions above due to a documented medical reason





# Continuing Eligibility Criteria

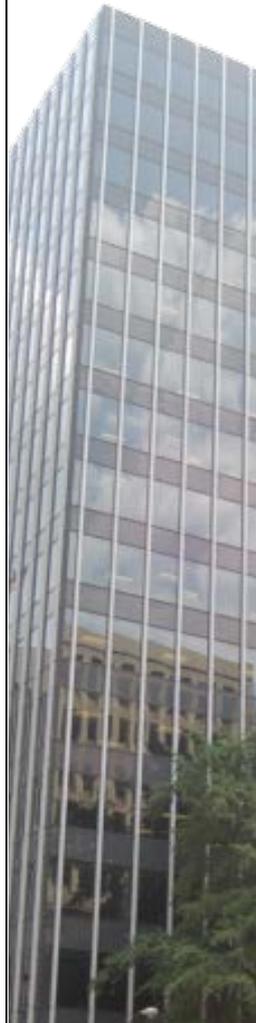
- Completing secondary education or in a GED program
  - Includes enrollment in a secondary school, e.g. public high school, alternative high school, private school, adult education classes, program leading to GED, or special education activities described in the IEP
- Enrolled in college or a vocational program
  - May include remedial courses, coursework without formal admission to the institution, attendance at multiple institutions, or correspondence or on-line courses affiliated with a licensed institution





# Continuing Eligibility Criteria

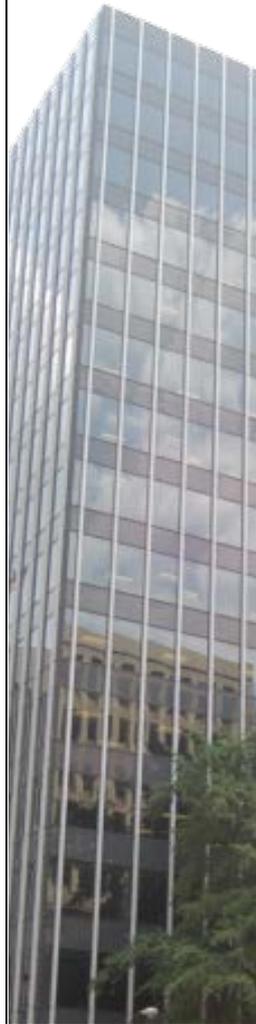
- Attending classes to promote employment or remove barriers to employment
  - May include, but is not limited to internships, volunteering, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, driver's education, less than half-time secondary education, or participation in a substance abuse program
- Working at least 80 hours per month
  - May include paid employment full or part time, including paid internships, apprenticeships, or work study programs





# Continuing Eligibility Criteria

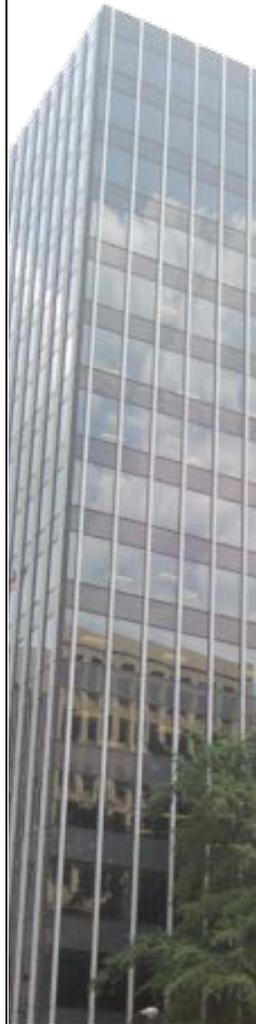
- Unable to meet one of the four conditions above due to a documented medical reason
  - A medical condition is a short-term or long-term physical health impairment or a mental/emotional or behavioral health, developmental or cognitive disability or impairment.
  - The youth does not have to be currently receiving or seeking treatment or remediation for the condition.
  - The condition must be verified by a medical professional as preventing the participant from meeting another criterion.





# Court Approval and Reviews

- Within 30-days of the participant signing the Voluntary Continuing Services and Support Agreement (VCSSA), the local department shall file a petition for approval of the Agreement.
- A hearing shall be scheduled within 45-days of the petition being filed.
- Subsequent reviews are not required by the court; however, the court may choose to continue reviews or the local agency will complete the reviews through the existing Administrative Panel Review process.





# Living Situations

- Participants may reside in a Supervised Independent Living setting. These settings include:
  - On their own
  - With their spouse
  - In a college dormitory
  - With a family or extended family member
  - In a foster family home – including treatment foster care and LDSS approved
  - Military reserves
  - Job Corps or vocational school





# Living Situations

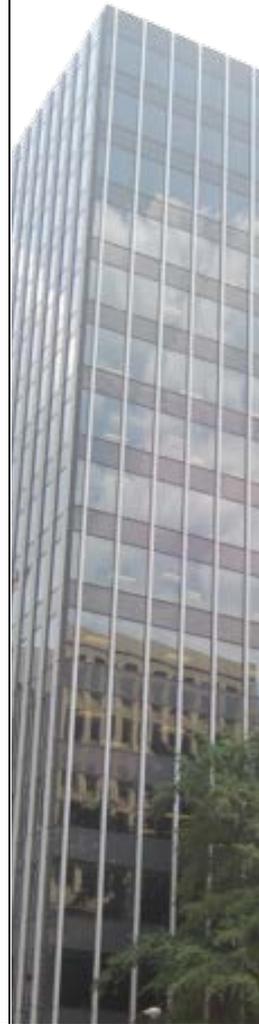
- Placements **not allowed**:
  - Group Homes
  - Residential Facilities
- Special circumstances:
  - Active Military
  - Long Term Incarceration





# Exception for youth on track to graduate before 19

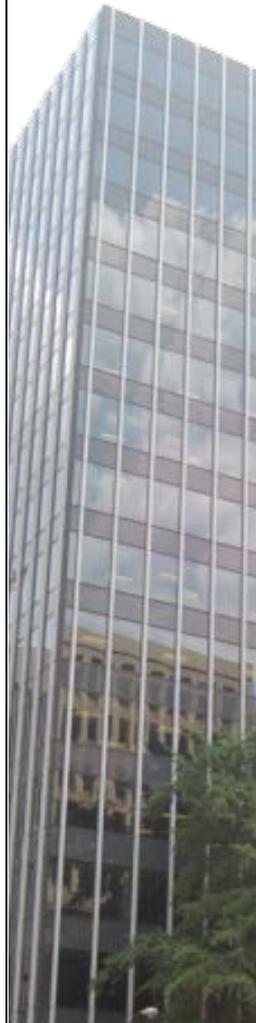
- Youth placed in a group home or residential program prior to turning 18
  - Can remain eligible for foster care placement in their group home or residential setting under the current title IV-E exception, until such time as they graduate or it is determined that they will not graduate before turning 19.
  - Then they will transition into Fostering Futures and must transition to another type of placement.





# Maintenance Payments

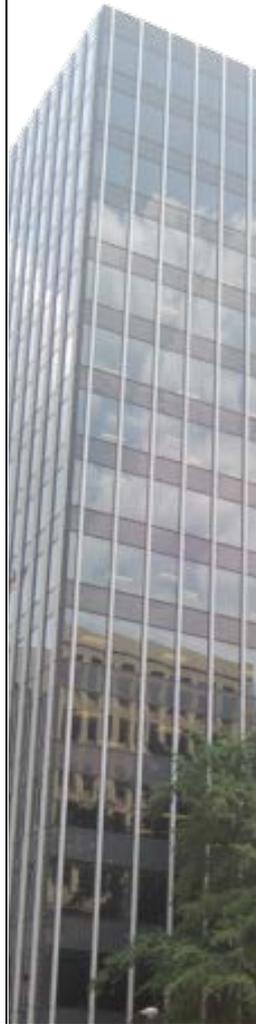
- Are intended to cover the participant's costs for food, shelter, clothing, supplies and personal incidentals.
  - Rate is the 13 and over amount: \$700/ month as of July 1, 2016
- May be made directly to the youth placed in an IL arrangement with responsibility to pay for rent, groceries and other basic expenses.
  - This replaces the current IL stipend (a service) which will no longer be used





# Maintenance Payments

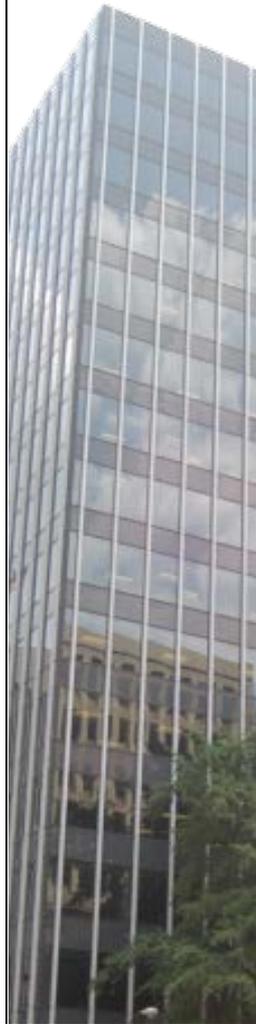
- Enhanced maintenance can be paid when the participant is placed in a foster home where VEMAT is utilized.
- Participants are eligible for annual clothing money.
- Maintenance payments can be made for the minor child(ren) of a Fostering Futures participant residing with the participant.



# Basic LDSS Case Management Requirements



- Visit (face to face) with the participant at least monthly
- Conduct Independent Living (IL) skills assessments and develop IL Transition Plans
- Develop a foster care plan with participant which addresses permanency and family connections
- Continue requests for funding for services with the local Family Assessment and Planning Team for services





# Exit from Fostering Futures (1)

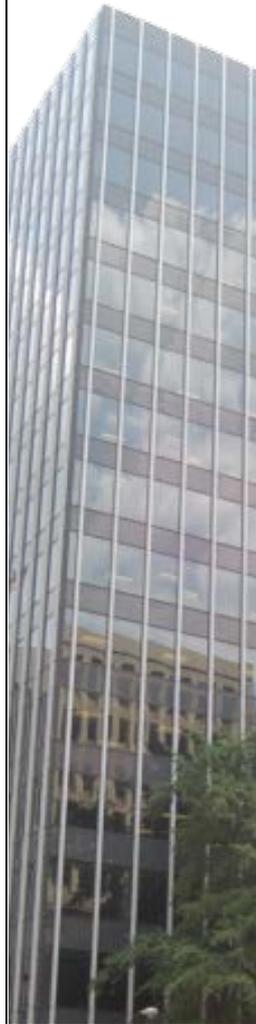
- Participation may be terminated at any time by the participant through verbal or written notification to the service worker.
  - The LDSS must respond in writing informing the participant of the consequences of terminating the agreement, the right to re-enter the program at any time prior to reaching age 21 if eligibility criteria are met, and the procedures for reentering the program.
  - The LDSS must provide 30 days notice before ending payments or services.





# Exit from Fostering Futures (2)

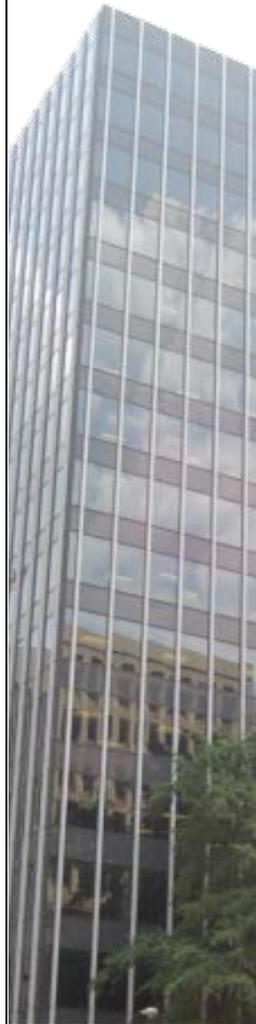
- Participation may be terminated at any time by the LDSS if it is determined that the youth no longer meets the eligibility criteria.
  - The LDSS must notify the youth in writing of the basis for the termination and that all services and support will be discontinued 30 days from the date of the agency's notice, unless the participant is able to meet eligibility criteria again during that period.
  - Procedures for appealing the termination must be included with the notification.
  - Information about criteria and procedures for re-entering the program must be included with notification.





# “Re-entry”

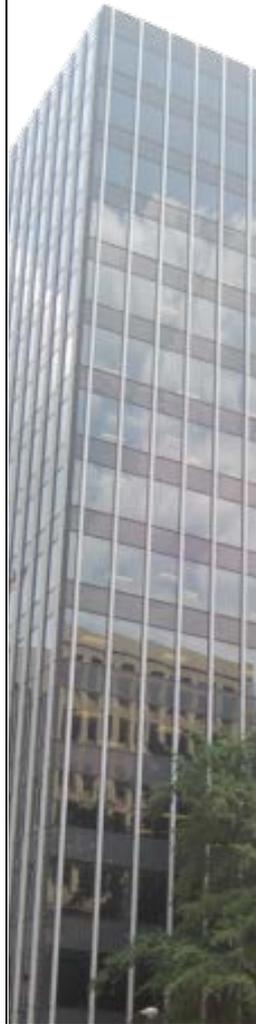
- Participants who have exited the program, may re-enter by signing a new VCSSA at any time prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, provided they meet one of the eligibility requirements.
- There is no limit to the number of times the young adult can re-enter, nor is there a limit to the time between exit and re-entry.
- If the participant has been out of the program for more than six months, another court hearing to approve the agreement is required.





# DJJ Eligibility

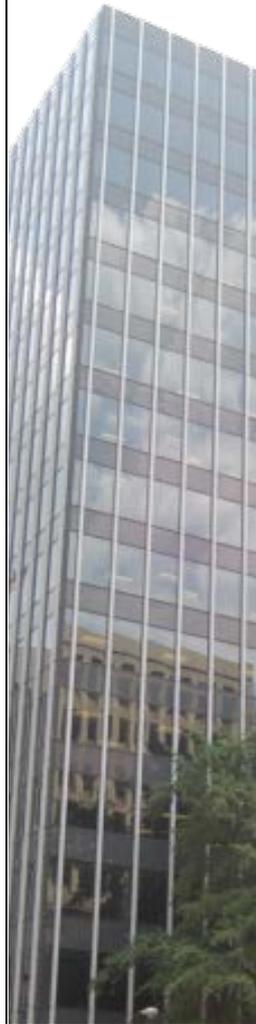
- Youth who were in the custody of a LDSS immediately prior to their commitment to DJJ who turn 18 on or after July 1, 2016 are eligible
  - Upon release from commitment, and
  - At any time before they turn 21, and
  - Are eligible for re-entry, should they exit the program and want to re-enter
- Youth must meet one of the five eligibility criteria





# Adoption Assistance

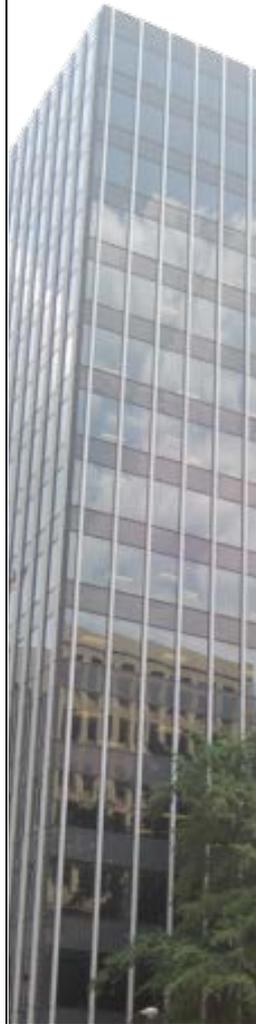
- Any child who is adopted at age 16 or older and turns 18 after July 1, 2016 may continue to receive adoption assistance up to the age of 21 through Fostering Futures, if they are not already eligible for an extension related to special needs.
  - They must meet one of the five eligibility criteria.
  - The adoptive family must file an annual affidavit indicating the youth is still eligible.
  - Adoption assistance is always paid to the family.



# Adoption Assistance



- Case management requirements do **not** apply to this group of eligible youth.
- Adopted youth are not eligible for “re-entry.”
  - If they do not meet criteria when turning 18 or are determined not meet criteria at any point, they are no longer eligible for the extension of adoption assistance.





**ANY QUESTIONS?**





VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF  
SOCIAL SERVICES

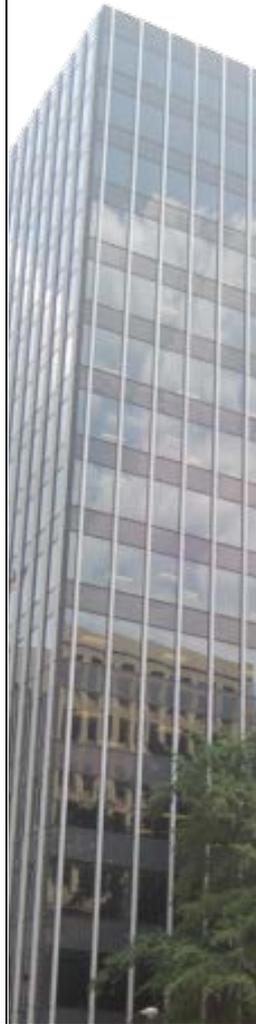


# Education and Training Vouchers Program



## Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program

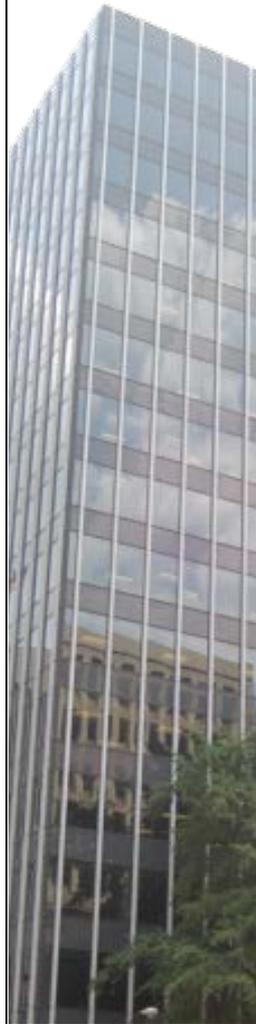
- ETV Program was enacted as part of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments in 2001. This program is integrated into the overall purpose and framework of the Virginia's Independent Living Program.
- The purpose of the ETV Program is to fund goods and services designed to assist eligible youth in successfully completing a “post-secondary” educational or vocational training program by covering up to a maximum of \$5,000 or the total cost of attendance (whichever is less) per year.





## Eligible ETV funded expenses:

- ❑ Tuition and fees
- ❑ Room and board
- ❑ Rental or purchase of required educational equipment, materials, or supplies (including computer, software, and computer related accessories)
- ❑ Allowance for books and transportation
- ❑ Required residential training related to an educational or vocational program
- ❑ Special study projects related to education
- ❑ Child care
- ❑ Other related expenses

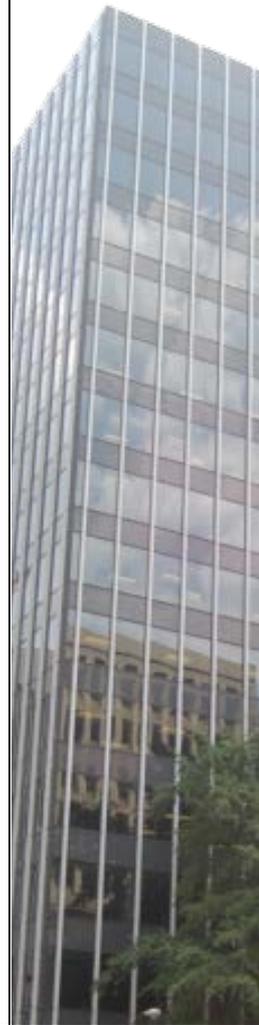




# Who is eligible to access ETV funds?

## A. Youth ages 16-21 must:

- Have had their most recent foster care episode provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia;
- Eligible for services under Virginia's Independent Living Program (ILP);
- Have received their high school diploma or equivalent, or GED certificate;
- Have applied for financial aid through the post-secondary school or training program, if applicable, they wish to attend or participate in; and
- Make satisfactory academic progress by maintaining at least a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or have an academic standing consistent with the institution's graduation requirements for the federal student financial aid program.

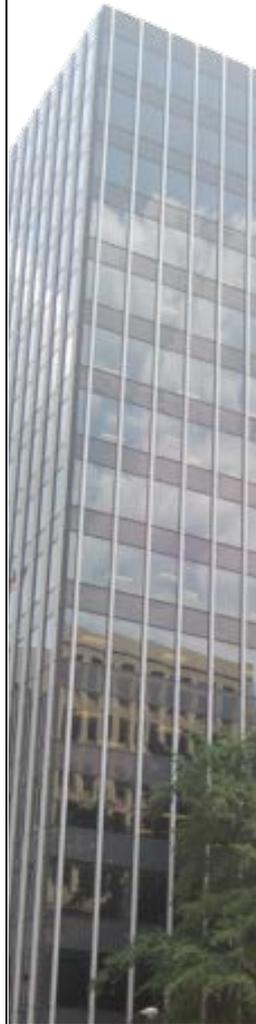


# Who is eligible to access ETV funds? (Continued)



## **B. Youth ages 21-23 years old that are eligible to receive vouchers under this program must meet the following eligibility criteria:**

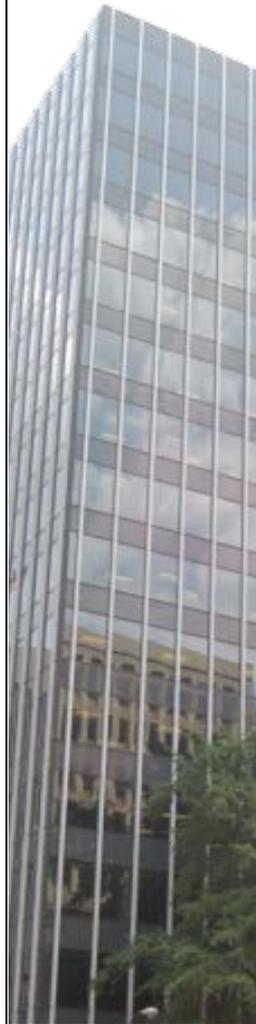
- Meet all eligibility requirements listed in Section 13.13.2.1 “Eligible Population for Youth Ages 16 to 21” with the exception of bullet number two (Eligible for services under Virginia’s ILP);
- Are participating in the voucher program on the date they attain age 21 in order to be eligible to receive assistance until reaching the age of 23; and
- Enrolled full-time or part-time in a post-secondary education or training program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program OR meet Fostering Futures requirements.





# Review of the ETV application process

- Student must complete the FAFSA if required
- Secure a copy of the Financial Aid Award Letter
- Secure information on the Total Cost of Attendance
- Student/worker jointly complete the ETV application
- The youth is eligible for up to \$5,000 in ETV funds
- Please list all expenses referenced on the Cost of Attendance report into the ETV application.
- Casey Life Skills Assessment and Transition Plan must be current.



# ETV funds



In order to access ETV, the youth needs to contact their local department of social services Independent Living Coordinator or case worker.





# VDSS IL Program contacts

- **Letha Moore-Jones, MSW, MACE**
  - *State Independent Living Coordinator & Youth Services Supervisor*
  - (804) 726-7576
  - [letha.moore-jones@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:letha.moore-jones@dss.virginia.gov)
- **Bethany Robinson**
  - *ETV Program Specialist*
  - (804) 726-7905
  - [bethany.robinson@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:bethany.robinson@dss.virginia.gov)

