

# Extended Foster Care Federal Stimulus Bill: Temporary Program Changes Until Sept. 30, 2021

*Eligibility for Extended Foster Care (EFC) has been extended until Sept. 30, 2021.*

## Temporary Program Changes to EFC

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is following the federal regulations (listed as Division X) in the new stimulus bill. *Division X – Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act* provides additional assistance to youth for the time period of Jan. 27, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2021. *Section 4: Preventing Aging Out of Foster Care During The Pandemic* states that youth may not be found ineligible for EFC due to:<sup>1</sup>

- Turning age 21.
- An inability to meet one of the participation requirements:
  - Enrolled in high school or a high school equivalency program;
  - Enrolled, applied for, or can show intent to timely enroll in a post-secondary academic or post-secondary vocational certification program;
  - Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment, including part-time employment;
  - Employed 80 hours or more a month; or
  - Unable to engage in any of the above activities due to a documented medical condition.

The legislation also allows youth to:

- Voluntarily re-enter the EFC program if they had “aged” out of the program at age 21 between Jan. 27, 2020, to present day.
- Remain in the program until Sept. 30, 2021.



Youth who re-enter or remain in EFC will continue to receive all of the same benefits they received before age 21. These benefits include but are not limited to:

- Monthly health and safety visits.
- Ongoing transition planning.
- Case management and service referrals.
- Assistance with developing permanent connections.

## Field Guidance

- Establish dependency through the court as soon as possible.
- Please follow the current procedures for youth to re-enter and participate in the program.
- Contact youth who aged out of EFC from January 27, 2020 forward, and let them know that they are eligible to re-enter.
- Re-entering youth are not eligible for back pay.

1. <https://rules.house.gov/sites/democrats.rules.house.gov/files/BILLS-116HRI333SA-RCP-116-68.pdf>



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q How does a youth re-enter EFC?

A Youth who would like to re-enter EFC need to contact itake at 1-866-END-HARM (1-866-363-4276) and ask to re-enter.

### Q Do youth need to be actively participating in one of the five participation categories to be eligible?

A No. Youth do not need to be actively engaged in a participation category to be eligible to re-enter.

### Q Does the agency still have the obligation to approve/not approve the proposed Supervised Independent Living (SIL) environment as a part of the EFC re-entry process?

A Yes. The process for re-entry of a youth age 21 is the same as the re-entry process for youth under age 21.

### Q Are there living environments that would preclude youth from being allowed to return to EFC (perhaps other housing programs that they are participating in)?

A Youth participating in housing programs such as Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) or have received a voucher from a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded program such as the Family Unification Program or Foster Youth Independence (FYI) initiative may not be eligible to receive both services. Please talk with youth who are in a housing program that may not allow dependent youth to participate and help them determine which program is best.

### Q Should case workers still do EFC redetermination for eligibility upon receiving an intake?

A We still need to determine eligibility of the youth for the program even though we cannot deny services based on the youth's lack of participation in one of the five participation categories.

### Q Can a youth call to request re-entry from jail or mental health hospitalization?

A Youth continue to be eligible for EFC while they are in jail or Mental Health Hospitalization.

### Q Does the case open in the office where the case was closed or does the case open where the youth currently resides?

A The case will be opened to the office that is closest to the youth's residence if their family case is closed. If the youth's family case is open, they will be assigned to the office that holds the family case.

### Q Are youth aged 21 eligible to be considered for the EFC SILS Housing Support Funds if they move into/plan to move into a new environment during this period?

A Yes, if they have not reached their lifetime maximum amount of \$3,500 and are moving into a new SIL setting.

### Q Are youth eligible to enter/re-enter into EFC if they currently live in another state?

A Youth ages 18-20 are eligible to enter/re-enter EFC if they were a Washington State dependent on their 18th birthday regardless of the state they are currently living in.

### Q Does the case worker need to reach out to the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) for youth who are re-entering and live in another state?

A Staff may follow up with headquarters ICPC and ask if the receiving state is accepting non-minor dependents reentering care after age 21. Please be specific that this is an over 21 year-old re-entering care because of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.

### Q Are any youth not eligible for the program beyond age 21?

A Yes. Youth who exited the program before their 21st birthday due to non-compliance or choice are not eligible to re-enter.

### Q Can a youth be dismissed from EFC during this time? What would be a reason for dismissal from EFC?

A Yes. Youth are able to leave the program voluntarily at any time. Youth also need to follow the other program requirements listed in the EFC Participation Agreement. We need to work with youth on any barriers that could be keeping them from meeting program requirements before seeking to dismiss their dependency.

### Q Do workers need to file dependencies in court?

A Yes. Youth are eligible for placement assistance once they sign the EFC Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA). The case worker will need to file and establish a non-minor dependency action as soon as possible.

### Q What does the caseworker do if a youth reaches out to them to re-enter EFC?

A The caseworker should connect the youth to an intake worker so that they may request EFC services or verify an intake has been created on their behalf.

### Q Are youth who are eligible to re-enter into EFC from January 27, 2020 to current date eligible for back pay from the time their case was dismissed?

A No. Youth who aged out of the program at the age of 21 between January 27, 2020 to current date were not eligible for the program or to re-enter the program until the Governor's Proclamation was issued on Friday, Jan. 29, 2021.

### Q Are there any youth not eligible to re-enter EFC under the new rules?

A Youth who had their dependency dismissed for any reason other than turning age 21 after January 27, 2020, and youth who turned age 21 before January 27, 2020, would not be eligible to re-enter. Youth are not required to be actively participating in one of the participant requirements, however, they do need to reside in an approved placement setting.

## Contact your regional EFC Lead with any questions not listed in this publication.

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DCYF PUBLICATION AP\_0002 (04-20-2021)