

# Older Youth Pandemic Relief



Implementation Highlights from:  
Illinois & Kentucky



FosterClub

Juvenile Law Center  
Fighting for the rights  
and well-being of youth

# Presenters and Hosts



Kyle Johnson  
LEx Leader from Illinois



Tyler Hunter  
LEx Leader from Kentucky



James McIntyre  
FCAA - Illinois



Jennifer Pokempner  
Juvenile Law Center



Arielle Weston  
Illinois Department of Children  
& Family Services

Kim Peck  
Illinois Office of Education and  
Transition Services



Lorraine Wilbur  
Kentucky Department for  
Community Based Services



Angel Petite  
FosterClub

# Agenda

1. Summary of the Law and Implementation Updates
2. Highlights from Kentucky
3. Highlights from Illinois
4. Q&A
5. What's Next

# Summary of Provisions

- Extended Services (Moratorium)
- Re-Entry, including an obligation to notify and develop a public awareness campaign
- Chafee
  - Increase of \$400 million w/\$50 million in ETV
  - Eligibility through age 26
  - Lift 30% cap on room and board (“housing”)
- Education & Training Vouchers (ETV)
  - Increased max award from \$5000-\$12,000
  - Waive the enrollment requirement
  - Waive the requirement to make satisfactory academic progress (SAP)
  - Youth are eligible even if they attend at less than full time status
  - ETV can fund costs outside of the Cost of Attendance (COA)

# Updates on Implementation

- Children's Bureau Program Instruction (March 9, 2021),
  - The PI and all attachments can be found here:  
<https://www.fosterclub.com/blog/public-policy/program-instructions-released-older-youth-pandemic-relief>
- Children's Bureau Information Memorandum (Jan 15, 2021),  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/im-21-05.pdf>



**Kyle Johnson**  
**LEx Leader**



**James McIntyre**  
**FCAA - Illinois**

# Illinois Lived Experience Leadership

# Illinois

**Kim Peck**

**Department of Children and Family Services  
Downstate Education and Transition Services Administrator  
DCFS, Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS)**

**Arielle Weston**

**Department of Children and Family Services  
Youth Housing Assistance Program Coordinator  
Office of Housing and Cash Assistance (OHACA)**

# Youth Engagement

- Survey for youth.
- Town Hall planned in the future to make sure needs are being met.
- “How to support youth in care during the pandemic” presentation hosted by the Foster Care Alumni of America - IL Chapter in partnership with DCFS discuss housing, healthcare, and financial assistance available to youth in care after they turn 21. A presentation held for service providers on 3/30 and a presentation for current and former youth in care is scheduled for 4/3.
- Flyers about Extension of and Re-Entry to Care posted on all DCFS Social Media sites.
- Letter mailed to all youth who aged out of care about options under RAC.



# Moratorium and Extension of Services

- Illinois released Directive in April 2020 that youth could remain in their placement at age 21. All board payments increased by **\$100** April – July 2020.
- Youth can remain in their placements and receive stipend payments until **Sept 30, 2021**.
- Placements can include: Independent Living (ILO), Transitional Living Program (TLP), Foster Home Specialized (FHS), Therapeutic Foster Home (TFH), Foster Home Boarding DCFS (FHB), Foster Home Private Agency (FHP), Institution Private Agency (IPA), Group Home (GRH), Home of Relative (HMR), Home of Fictive Kin (HFK) or an Agency-managed placement.

# Re-Entry Process

- Youth over the age of 18 whose case has closed since January 27, 2020 and who have not yet turned 22 can receive a monthly stipend of \$312 from DCFS until their 22nd birthday.
- Youth can call the Youth Hotline's toll-free number at 866-459-6884.
- The Hotline worker completes a Re-Entry Alternative Contract Intake Form and discusses the benefits, process, and youth responsibilities for obtaining and maintaining an approved RAC.
- The Youth Hotline worker determines eligibility.
- If eligible, a referral is sent to the existing Countdown to 21 (C21) Intake by the end of business on the day of the intake.

# Re-Entry Process

- C21 Intake will contact the youth within 48 business hours and schedule a virtual RAC Meeting. The RAC Meeting will occur within 5-business days after the intake is received from the Youth Hotline.
- A C21 facilitator runs the RAC meeting, works with the young person, and completes the intake for eligible youth.
- If a youth is not eligible or does not want to re-enter, they will be referred to other services, including linkage to Family Advocacy Centers that serve former foster youth up to age 30.
- Youth who age out of care at age 18+, and are under the age of 21, can request full re-entry to care through the Supporting Emancipated Youth Services (SEYS) program.

# Re-Entry Benefits

- Eligible for up to 12 months of financial support.
- **\$312** a month.



# Expansion of the Youth Housing Assistance Program

- **Eligibility expansion:** Ordinarily for youth under age 21 (or up to age 23 if receiving a FUP/FYI voucher.) Now Youth between the age of **21 and not yet 27**

# Youth Housing Advocacy Program

- Provides a housing advocate who works with the youth to find and maintain obtain and maintain adequate housing, employment, and community supports.
- Housing advocates helps youth understand rights/responsibilities as a tenant, help youth apply for any cash assistance as needed, through YHAP.

# Youth Cash Assistance Program

- Provides funding to purchase items needed to obtain or maintain adequate housing such as:
  - security deposits,
  - rent and utility arrears,
  - furniture and basic household items
- It also assists with basic needs such as transportation, clothing, food and other items as needed.

# Youth Housing Subsidy

Provides up to \$500 to the agency or person from whom the youth rents an apartment each month, until October 1, 2021, after the youth pays 30% of their income on housing (rent and utilities).

**FUP/FYI** – special Section 8 vouchers in certain counties that cap a youth's rent at 30% of their income for 3 years. Process takes longer than finding market-rate housing. Reach out to YHAP Coordinator for information if you are interested.



# Expansion and Enhancement of Existing Programs: The Employment/Job Training/Apprenticeship Incentive Program

- Program currently provides **\$158** per month for youth who work at least 20 hours per week or 80 a month
- Program will temporarily reduce the work requirement to 10 hours per week or 40 hours per month **retroactive to July 1, 2020 and through September 30, 2021.**
- The monthly payment is increased from **\$158 to \$300** for the period **July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.** Retroactive payments will be calculated based on youth eligibility for the entire period or portion of the period that youth meet program requirements under the new criteria, as determined by the Office of Education and Transition Services.

# Implementing all ETV Flexibilities

- Increase in individual award amount to **\$12,000**.
- Waived the enrollment and satisfactory academic progress requirement.
- Will provide ETV funds for costs for less than full-time enrollment and outside of the cost of attendance.
- Expand the age of eligibility through **age 26**.
- Youth can submit an Application for ETV Funds, CFS 449-3 to request funds.

# Pandemic Tech Payment

- Youth in post secondary programs receive **\$750** in the Fall and Spring to help with additional school and program related costs.
- Youth will receive a payment of **\$1500** or **\$750** in the mail. An email has been sent notifying youth of payment coming and the reason for it.



**Tyler Hunter**



Kentucky Lived Experience Leadership

# Kentucky

**Lorraine Wilbur**

**Chafee Program Administrator**

**Kentucky Department for Community Based Services**

**Transitional Services Branch**



# Youth Engagement

- Engaged State Youth Advisory Board in implementation plan and plans for public awareness.

# Moratorium and Extension of Services

- Currently in effect and built on existing state policy.
- Court jurisdiction and review remains.
- Youth continue in existing foster care placements if possible.

# Re-Entry

- Request to return to care on [KYRISE.KY.GOV](http://KYRISE.KY.GOV).
- Youth are responded to w/in **48-72 hours**.
- Meet with specialist and previous state worker to determine eligibility and living arrangement and services if eligible.
- Previous state worker will then petition the court to reinstate commitment.
- Flexibility for placements for returning youth 21+.
  - Youth work with IL worker to identify a living arrangement that may be part of an existing SIL program and can receive financial assistance and case management.
  - Youth 21+ can remain in current living arrangement (if appropriate) to avoid unnecessary uprooting.



# Direct Financial Assistance

- **\$2000 per youth ages 18-26** who are in care or have aged out of care.
- Funds processed by the agency's fiscal department.
- There may be a second round of payments.
- Youth can sign up on the Pandemic Relief website that will be connected with the existing IL website: [KYRISE.KY.gov](https://KYRISE.KY.gov)

# Development of Service Navigators/Advocates

- Expanded contract with a state IL provider for service navigation for youth throughout the state.
- Navigators can help youth connect with services and supports and walk them through the process.
- Youth can apply for services and get the help of a Navigator through the Pandemic Relief website.

# Addressing Housing Needs

- Providing **\$1000** startup funds to youth moving into apartments with FYI vouchers and providing those funds to youth who were recently housed.
- Funding short term hotel stays for youth awaiting move in dates for vouchers of other programs.

# Expansion of Crisis Fund



- Increase funds available through the crisis fund.
- Expand eligibility through **age 26.**

# Driving and Transportation Assistance

- Providing youth up to **\$4000** for this purpose.
- Current and former foster youth 18 – 26.
- Assistance purchasing a vehicle, car repairs, and car insurance.
- Partnering with Goodwill Cars to Work for this initiative.

# Expansion of Employment Program



- Increase age of eligibility through age **26**.
- Hired 5 **peer navigators** to help with outreach and engagement.

# ETV

- Will provide participants maximum award of **\$12,000**.
- Current participants were able to attend financial literacy training at the end of February and received **\$3,500**.
- Expanded eligibility to those **not** currently enrolled or making satisfactory progress.
- Providing flexible funds to cover costs to help re-enroll.

# Public Awareness



- Established a Pandemic Relief Website.
- Contracting with a digital media company to do public awareness campaigns to target young people.



# Q&A



FosterClub

Juvenile Fighting for the rights  
and well-being of youth  
Law Center



What's  
Next?

- **Implementation tools:**  
[fosterclub.com/oypr](https://fosterclub.com/oypr)
- **Contact us at:**  
[oypr@fosterclub.com](mailto:oypr@fosterclub.com)