



# Springboard to Adulthood Program

## 2024-25 Resource Manual

# Resources for Families and Youth in Care

## Support Services and Groups

### *Help for Adults who have been DCFS Wards*

- YWCA Rockford: The YWCA's Family Advocacy Center provides services to help adults who have been DCFS wards.
- NAMI Online Support Groups – Northern Illinois: NAMI Illinois is hosting online support groups.
- Alumni Foster Care Services - Illinois Foster Care Alumni provides assistance to youth who were previously in foster care with assistance till the age 30.
- Foster Care Alumni of America is a community of individuals who were previously in foster care. For more information about Foster Care Alumni of America, visit [here](#).
- Foster Youth in Action partners with foster youth advocates and supportive adults to establish youth-led groups. To learn more about Foster Youth in Action, visit [here](#).
- iFoster provides resources to at-risk children and youth through partnerships with companies, government agencies, and non- profits nationwide. To learn more about iFoster, visit [here](#).
- Kaleidoscope Find Your Future Is a program where they match young people with employers in the community who give them a chance to build their resume, develop job readiness skills and grow their professional networks. To learn more, visit [here](#).
- Foster Club Connects the foster care alumni community and to transform policy and practice. To learn more, visit [here](#).

## Scholarships for Youth In Care

- **DCFS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS**The application is accessible on January 1 of each year and must be submitted by March 31. It includes a full tuition and fee remission for Illinois public colleges, as well as other perks including a monthly board payment and an Illinois medical card. This scholarship is accessible to any youth in foster care, youth who have aged out of care at the age of 18 or older, or anybody who has been adopted or placed under guardianship in Illinois. Find out more here: Scholarship Program TIP SHEET: Locate DCFS Form CFS 438 for the current year to apply. All DCFS Scholarship application packages must be submitted online to [DCFS.Scholarship@illinois.gov](mailto:DCFS.Scholarship@illinois.gov).
  - [Apply Here](#)
  - [Download PDF Here](#)
- **Education and Training Voucher (ETV): \$5,000:**The ETV is a national program that is exclusively available to adolescents in care or who have aged out of care at the age of 18, as well as youth who have transitioned from care to adoption or guardianship at the age of 16 or older. You may receive up to \$5,000 per year for educational expenditures. All the details, including the application, can be found here: EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER TIP SHEET. To apply, use DCFS Form CFS 449-3.
  - [Apply Here](#)
  - [Download PDF Here](#)
- **Tuition and fee waivers:**Youth in Illinois foster care can get tuition and fee waivers if they attend a public, in-state college or university. You must still be in care, have aged out of foster care at the age of 18 or older, or have been placed in adoption or guardianship by DCFS. Keep in mind that lodging and board are NOT included! To receive the waiver, fill out DCFS Form 438A.
  - [Download Form Here](#)
- **DCFS Youth in College Placement:**If you are under DCFS care and attending a full-time approved college or vocational school, you are qualified for the Youth in College placement and will receive a monthly board payment of \$1506. See additional information here: YOUTH IN COLLEGE TIP SHEET Use DCFS form CFS 449 to apply.
  - [Download PDF Here](#)

## Medical Assistance

- Former Foster Care Medical Benefits: Foster care services from IL Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) ended when aging out at age 18 or older.
- HealthChoice Illinois for Former Youth in Care: Former Youth in Care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), or a child of a youth in care, are now able to enroll in a HealthChoice Illinois managed care plan.
- Illinois All Kids (CHIPRA): All Kids services are available at no cost or at low cost. Premium and co-payments are determined based on your family income and size.
- Medical assistance: Provided by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (DHFS). Families who receive TANF also receive a MediPlan Card that covers most medical needs. Learn more here.

## Housing Assistance

- Youth Housing Assistance Program: Youth under the age of 21 years old can be referred to YHAP for housing support.
- Illinois DMH Permanent Supportive Housing Bridge Subsidy Program: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for individuals who meet defined criteria of eligibility and who are diagnosed with a serious mental illness.
- Homeless Youth Services: The Homeless Youth program is a holistic model designed to increase the safety of youth ensuring that their basic survival needs are met while also providing safe and stable housing; education and employment services, and the life skills necessary to become self-sufficient.
- Little City Housing Program and Transitional Living. Offers a variety of living options, both at Little City and in neighboring communities, providing adults the opportunity to make their own life choices, develop independence, integrate into the community and live life to its fullest potential.
- UCAN Independent Living Program provides young adults with the skills, support and resources necessary for a successful transition from DCFS care.

- Ignite Housing Housing to youth aged 14 to 26 and a comprehensive model that includes supportive services, mentoring, and customized action plans that ensure youth are on a path that includes personal and economic growth. From emergency housing to supportive apartment living, each youth will engage in career and education goal-setting, proactive physical and mental health management, and financial planning.
- Northwest Compass Connecting individuals who are unstably housed with resources, support, and housing options. HYPE program, Career Readiness, Money Management, Outreach, Legal Assistance, etc.

## **Educational Assistance**

- Added Chance Career Education. Employment program that works with youth in care of the state aged 16-20 years. The Added Chance Program provides these older adolescents and young adults with a formalized, yet creative, training experience, followed by extensive counseling, actual employment and employment follow-up in order to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency by the time they emancipate from DCFS.
- Center For Child Welfare and Education The Center for Child Welfare and Education secures equitable opportunities for youth and families with risk factors to reach their full potential. One of the primary populations served is youth and families involved with foster care. The center's work contributes to the body of professional knowledge and influences policy, training and practices to help improve outcomes.

## **Food Assistance**

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Also known as food stamps, SNAP helps low-income individuals and families buy food. SNAP benefits are loaded onto an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. Learn more [here](#).
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): A federally funded program that provides cash assistance to low-income families to help with living

expenses. TANF recipients may also be eligible for SNAP benefits and medical assistance. Learn more [here](#).

- Food banks Food banks like the Northern Illinois Food Bank collect food donations and distribute them to food pantries and other organizations that provide food to families in need. Learn more [here](#).