

Foster Care Benefits

What cash aid supports me in foster care?

Three programs provide support for most youth in foster care. The program that applies to you depends on your situation.

- Aid to Families with Dependent Children (**AFDC-FC**) supports youth in licensed placements, such as foster families, foster family agencies, and group homes. AFDC-FC also supports youth who live with approved non-related extended family members (NREFMs.) Youth placed with approved relatives must meet federal eligibility rules to receive AFDC-FC.
- **CalWORKs** supports youth placed with relatives who do not meet the AFDC-FC eligibility requirements.
- Supplemental Security Income (**SSI**) supports youth with disabilities.

How much money do these programs pay?

- **AFDC-FC** pays a basic rate based on the age of the youth. As of July 1, 2014 the rate was \$838 per month for a youth 15-20 years old. Youth with special needs may qualify for a specialized care increment, and youth who are regional center clients qualify for a regional center rate.
- **CalWORKs** benefits are based on the number of people in the CalWORKs household and the county where the family lives. For example, as of October 1, 2014, a family of 1 qualifies for \$333 or \$315 depending on the county, and a family of 3 qualifies for \$670 or \$638 depending on the county.
- **SSI** benefits depend on the youth's living situation. For example, a youth under 18 living with his or her parents receives \$784.40 per month. A youth in foster care qualifies for a nonmedical out of home care rate of \$1133.00 per month, and a young adult living on his or her own qualifies for \$877.40 per month.

What if I have a baby?

- If you are on **AFDC-FC** your baby will be eligible for an infant supplement of \$411 per month.
- If you are on **CalWORKs**, your baby will be added to the CalWORKs grant.

- If you are on **SSI**, your baby may be eligible for CalWORKs. If you are living with a relative who receives CalWORKs, your baby will be added to the relative's CalWORKs grant. If you are not living with a relative who is getting CalWORKs, your baby can qualify for a child-only CalWORKs grant.
- If your child has a serious medical condition or disability, he or she may be eligible for **SSI**. If you think your child may be eligible, check with an SSI expert.

Can I receive the cash benefits myself?

- You can receive an **AFDC-FC** basic grant (\$838) yourself if you are over 18 and in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP.) When you are in a SILP you can get the infant supplement (\$411) for your baby, but you cannot get a specialized care increment or regional center rate. In certain circumstances foster youth under 18 can get the **AFDC-FC** check if they are temporarily living apart from their caregiver.
- **CalWORKs** benefits are paid to the relative caregiver.
- The **SSI** program appoints a representative payee to get the check for minors under the age of 18. Once you turn 18 you can get the SSI check yourself unless the Social Security Administration decides that you are not capable of managing your money. In certain circumstances you can become your own representative payee before you turn 18 if the Social Security Administration determines you are capable of managing your benefits.

When do my benefits end?

- **AFDC-FC** and **CalWORKs** continue until 21 if you agree to stay in foster care and participate in the Extended Foster Care school and work participation requirements, or if you are not able to participate because of a medical condition. If you do not want to meet the participation requirements, AFDC-FC ends at 18 and CalWORKs ends at 18 (or 19 if you are still in high school and expected to finish by 19.)
- **SSI** does not end at 18, but the Social Security Administration will evaluate you to see if you meet the adult disability standards. You will continue to get SSI during this evaluation. If you meet the adult standards, you will continue to get SSI as an adult. If Social Security decides you do not meet the adult standards and you disagree, you can appeal.