



Transitional Medi-Cal & Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP+) for Foster Youth Aging Out of Care

A Fact Sheet Prepared by the Youth Law Center

When a foster youth turns 18, does he or she lose Medi-Cal coverage?

No. A youth who is in foster care on his/her 18th birthday is entitled to Medi-Cal coverage with no share of cost (free to the youth) when he/she leaves foster care until his/her 21st birthday.¹ This extension of eligibility, known as Extended Medi-Cal Eligibility for Former Foster Care Children (FFCC), applies to youth in probation supervised foster care placements but does not apply to youth who are incarcerated, in the Kin-GAP program, undocumented, or in non-foster care residential treatment facility placements.²

It is the responsibility of the county to make sure that foster care youth are transitioned into the extended Medi-Cal program without requiring the foster care youth or foster care parent to complete an application.³ The youth's social worker is required to assist the youth in filling out any necessary Medi-Cal forms before the termination of the court's jurisdiction, or emancipation of the child from foster care.⁴ However, if a youth in foster care is nearing his/her 18th birthday and is afraid that the necessary forms have not been filled out, the child should contact his/her caseworker, or a county Medi-Cal eligibility worker, to verify that there is nothing he/she needs to do or information that needs to be updated in order to guarantee continuous service.

Does Medi-Cal for former foster youth depend upon income eligibility or financial need?

No. There are no income or resource tests for former foster youths regardless of their living arrangements.⁵ Even if the child has significant financial resources, a large income, or lives at home, he/she will still be eligible for this program.

Does Medi-Cal coverage for former foster youth depend on residency?

Yes. The youth must remain living in California in order to be eligible for this program. If a youth can prove that he/she was receiving foster care benefits on his/her 18th birthday in another state, the youth will be eligible for Medi-Cal.⁶

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 1396a (a)(10)(A)(ii)(XVII); Cal. Wel. & Inst. Code § 14005.28; All County Welfare Directors Letters (ACWDL) 00-41 and 00-61 (available at <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/eligibility/Pages/2000ACWDLs.aspx>).

² ACWDL 00-61.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*, Cal. Wel. & Inst. Code § 391(C).

⁵ ACWDL 00-61.

Is there an annual review to determine whether or not the youth is still covered by Medi-Cal?

Yes. Medi-Cal requires an annual review to determine continuing eligibility. At this eligibility review, the foster youth will have to prove residency in California, that he/she is under the age of 21, and that he/she wants to continue to receive Medi-Cal coverage under this program.

If the former foster youth has a baby, is the infant eligible for this Medi-Cal coverage?

No. An infant born to a former foster youth will be considered to be in the infant's own "family unit," and regular Medi-Cal rules will apply.⁷

What is the Transitional Housing Program—Plus (THP+) and who is eligible for the program?

THP+ is a program designed to assist emancipated youth as they move from dependency to self-sufficiency by providing youth with housing and supportive services.⁸ THP+ offers transitional housing that is not licensed by the California Department of Social Services, but rather, certified by counties to provide housing and supportive services.⁹

Youth are eligible for THP+ if they:

- Are between the ages of 18 and 24;¹⁰ and
- Have emancipated out of foster care (whether supervised by child welfare or probation) from a county that has elected to participate in the program (A county may also choose to include former foster/probation youth who currently live in the county, but who emancipated from a different county);¹¹ and
- Are pursuing (or are willing to pursue) county-approved goals by using the Supportive Transition Emancipation Program (STEP)/THP+ Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP).¹²

A youth may not receive services from THP+ for more than a total of twenty-four months.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) § 30-912 (Available at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/ord/entres/getinfo/pdf/ssman4.pdf>).

⁹ 22 CCR. § 86001(t)(2).

¹⁰ Cal. Wel. & Inst. Code § 11403.2(a)(2).

¹¹ Cal. Wel. & Inst. Code § 11400(a)(2); CDSS MPP § 30-913.1.

¹² Cal. Wel. & Inst. Code § 11403.2(a)(2); CDSS MPP § 30-915; The form for this program is known as STEP 8, and may be found at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/forms/English/step8.pdf>

Medi-Cal Resources:

Health Care Rights of Children in Foster, Health Consumer Alliance (2006)
<http://www.healthconsumer.org/cs043FosterCareRights.pdf>

Medi-Cal for Children Turning 18 While in Foster Care, Health Consumer Alliance
<http://www.healthconsumer.org/cs036Fostercare.pdf>

Overview of the Medi-Cal Program (National Health Law Program July 2008)
<http://www.healthconsumer.org/Medi-CalOverview2008TOC.pdf>

Transitional Housing Program Plus Resources:

Children and Family Services Division of the California Department of Social Services(CDSS) *Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth (THP-Plus)*
<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1353.htm>

CDSS, *Transitional Housing Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation (THP-Plus)*
<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/THP-PlusBrochure.pdf>

Sonja Lenz-Rashid, *Emancipating From Foster Care in the Bay Area: What Types of Programs and Services are Available for Youth Aging Out of the Foster Care System?*, The Center for Social Services Research (2006)
<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/bassc/pdfs/FINALAgingOutOfFosterCare.pdf>

County Transitional Housing Contacts
<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/res/pdf/TransitionalHousingContact.pdf>

John Burton Foundation Resources and Guide to Implementing THP Plus
<http://www.johnburtonfoundation.org/Publications.htm>