



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for
Human Services

September 17, 2021

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, MANAGERS,
SUPERVISORS, AND SOCIAL WORKERS**

SUBJECT: Time-Limited Flexibility for use of Supplemental Chafee (LINKS) Funding

REQUIRED ACTION: ☒ Immediate

The Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 116-260) enacted on December 27, 2020, provides supplemental appropriations for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood and allows flexibility on the spending of those funds that expires on September 30, 2021.

Young adults who are or were in foster care have been in foster care have experienced job loss and other impacts of the pandemic and many of them have not benefited from prior COVID relief efforts, including stimulus checks. On September 10, 2021 NC DHHS, NC DSS sent a Dear County Director letter instructing counties to provide one-time unrestricted payments to this population of very vulnerable young adults.

All young adults who are at least 18 years old and are not yet 27 and were in foster care at age 14 or older are eligible. Assessment of financial need is not required, and no county match is required.

The amounts of one-time unrestricted payments per eligible young adult which may be made under this program are as follows:

- Eligible young adults 18-20--\$2,500.00
- Eligible young adults 21-26--\$5,000.00

Required Steps

As funding for these young adults expires September 30, 2021, specific steps must be followed to ensure funds are obligated and counties are reimbursed timely. County departments of social services must complete the following steps:

1. Conduct diligent efforts to identify, locate, and reach out to eligible young adults. Diligent efforts to conduct outreach means those efforts that are reasonably likely to identify, locate, and inform young adults of these payments for which they are eligible.
2. Create a financial obligation (check requisition, purchase request, etc.) for each eligible young adult located who will be receiving the one-time unrestricted payment by September 30th, 2021. This does not require counties to cut a check by September 30th, only to create the obligation.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

MAILING ADDRESS: 2409 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2409

www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6390 • FAX: 919-733-3052

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

3. Complete the attached DSS-5217a Request for Payment of Time-Limited Supplemental LINKS Funds.
4. Submit completed DSS-5217a and copies of each check requisition via email to linksreimbursement@dhhs.nc.gov by September 30, 2021. These can be submitted at any time, they should not need to be held.

After the request forms are received NC DSS will submit to the DHHS Controller's Office for payment to counties. Counties will receive these payments through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). There is no 1571 reporting requirement for these funds.

These funds are capped, 100 percent federal funds with no county match required. Attached is a spreadsheet showing budgeted funds, per county. Counties will be reimbursed only up to their per-county budget amount. As counties are reviewing their situation, please communicate budget needs via the LINKS email so we may evaluate total funds availability and attempt to redirect funds as time allows.

If you have any questions, please contact LeAnn McKoy, Foster Care 18-21 Coordinator at leann.mckoy@dhhs.nc.gov or by phone at (919) 527-6375 or Shirley Williams, Special Programs Manager at shirley.williams@dhhs.nc.gov or by phone at (919) 527-6404. You may also contact your Regional Child Welfare Consultant.

Sincerely,

Carla McNeill

Carla McNeill, MSW
Section Chief for Permanency Planning
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare
North Carolina Department of Health and Human
Services

Cc: Susan Osborne, Assistant Secretary for County Operations
Richard Stegenga, Deputy Director, Business Operations
Lisa Tucker Cauley, Senior Director of Child, Family and Adult Services
Teresa Strom, Section Chief for County Operations
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Child Protective Services and Prevention
Linda Waite, Section Chief for Licensing and Regulatory

Attachments:

- DSS-5217a Request for Payment of Time-Limited Supplemental LINKS Funds

CWS-37-2021