

Title: Supporting Foster Youth & Families Through the Pandemic Act: Grant Opportunity

Background: The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, P.L. 116-260, enacted into law on December 27, 2020, makes continuing appropriations for specified federal agencies and provides temporary flexibilities and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency. Division X of P.L. 116-260, titled, the “Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act,” includes additional, supplemental, or enhanced funding for several programs authorized under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act and requires title IV-E agencies to take a number of actions to protect and support youth/young adults currently or formerly in foster care. Allowable expenses include collaborating with service providers who are currently working with youth and young adults formerly in foster care to provide services through the agencies to which such youth are already connected.

Overview: The Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Children Services (DCFS) requests applications for one-time grant funds available through the Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act to provide funding to service providers who are currently working with youth and young adults formerly in foster care to provide emergency shelter to youth in crisis or other crisis interventions for youth who have aged out of foster care. All funding must be expended by April 30, 2022.

Eligible Applicants: In order to be eligible for this one-time funding opportunity, applicants must be an existing service provider currently working with youth and young adults formerly in foster care.

Non-Profit Service Organizations: Funding is available to support existing non-profit service providers currently working with youth and young adults formerly in foster care to develop a written plan that outlines what qualified expenditures will be made for crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services to be delivered to youth who have aged out of foster care.

These organizations must meet the following **minimum eligibility requirements:**

1. A mission and vision that aligns with addressing the needs of youth who have aged out of foster care;
2. A demonstrated history of service to youth who have aged out of foster care; and
3. A history of demonstrating clear strategies for engagement with youth aging out of foster care;
4. Proof of 501(c)(3) non-profit organization status; and
5. Completed W-9 form.

In order to be eligible for funding, the written plan must be specifically related to crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services provided to youth who have aged out of foster care. Eligible expenses may include:

- First Aid / Trauma Supplies
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Food and Nutrition Assistance
- Crisis Shelter Expenses
- Transportation/transportation assistance to ensure youth can reach crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services
- Outreach/Information Campaigns regarding the crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services
- Information Technology

Application Guidelines: Organizations applying for Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act Grant Funding must submit a completed application to DHS to include:

1. Application Cover Page.
2. Narrative document that includes the organization's mission and vision statements as well as a summary of the organization's history of service to youth who have aged out of foster care and strategies for engagement with youth aging out of foster care. This document shall not exceed two (2) typed pages, double-spaced.
3. Supporting documentation demonstrating the organization's history of service to youth who have aged out of foster care and strategies for engagement with youth aging out of foster care such as a recent annual report, current strategic plan, or references from youth previously or currently served by the organization and community partners with whom the organization collaborates.
 - a. All of these examples are not required. If one piece of supporting documentation clearly demonstrates the organization's history of service to youth who have aged out of foster care and strategies for engagement with youth aging out of foster care, then that is sufficient.
 - b. However, if references will be the only supporting documentation submitted, at least two (2) references are required (one from a youth previously or currently served by the organization and one from a community partner with whom the organization collaborates), but please do not exceed four (4) references.
4. Proof of 501(c)3 status.
5. Completed W-9 form.
6. Written plan detailing:
 - a. The crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services that will be funded by the grant by April 30, 2022;
 - b. The timeline for these crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services to be implemented;
 - c. How the organization will conduct outreach to ensure youth who have aged out of foster care can access the crisis shelter options, equipment, and/or services; and
 - d. The proposed budget for each service/item as applicable.

Further information may be requested by DHS in order to select awardees. The maximum amount that may be requested is \$10,000. DCFS will determine the actual amount to be awarded.

Award Information: Applications will be reviewed in the order received and awarded upon review and final approval. Review and approval processes will begin as soon as applications are received. Those submitted after 4:30 p.m. on September 10, 2021 will not be accepted. Total funds awarded cannot exceed the amount approved for this section. Funds must be used or distributed by April 30, 2022 based on the organization's submitted plan. Funds are for eligible costs, as detailed above, incurred through April 30, 2022. Once funds are awarded, monthly reports will be required and submitted to DCFS that detail expenditures for that month, including required financial reports or receipts for review and verification. The monthly reports will be submitted by the 10th of the following month, or the next business day if the 10th falls on a weekend or holiday. Any awarded funds not spent in accordance with the applicants written plan by April 30, 2022 must be returned to DHS within fourteen (14) calendar days.

Application Submission Requirements: Applications and supporting documentation outlined above are requested as soon as possible but **must be received via email by 4:30 p.m. on September 10, 2021** at crystal.jones@dhs.arkansas.gov and Cheryl.wills@dhs.arkansas.gov. Late submissions will not be accepted.