

**TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
NOTICE**

NO. 18-05

DATE January 26, 2006

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL ONE-STOP CENTER SYSTEM LEADS

FROM: GAY GILBERT 
Administrator
Office of Workforce Investment

SUBJECT: John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

1. **Purpose.** To inform states and local areas about the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and how WIA youth programs can access its Education and Training Vouchers to assist foster care youth and those aging out of foster care complete post-secondary education and training.
2. **References.** The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-169).
3. **Background.** The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), Title I of the Foster Care Independence Act (Public Law 106-169), provides formula grants to states to assist current and former foster youth to achieve self-sufficiency through a successful transition to adulthood.

Funds, activities, and programs focus on youth in foster care, as well as older youth 18 - 21, who have aged out of the foster care system. Provisions include:

1. Services to assist youth in transitioning to self-sufficiency;
2. Education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. Preparation for entry into post-secondary training and education institutions;
4. Personal and emotional support including mentors and counseling;
5. Financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other support, and services for those youth who are over 18 and current or former foster care youth; and
6. Vouchers for post-secondary education and training, including tuition, books, and school equipment.

4. **CFCIP Education and Training Vouchers.** The CFCIP Education and Training Vouchers provide resources specifically to meet the post-secondary education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care. The Education and Training Vouchers Program allows states to provide money for these youth to attend an institution of higher education (as defined by the Higher Education Act, sections 101, 102) and provides them with up to \$5,000 per year or the total “cost of attendance” (as defined by the Higher Education Act, section 472), whichever is less. This includes payment for tuition and fees; room and board; rental or purchase of required equipment; materials or supplies (including a computer); tutoring; books; transportation; required residential training; special study projects; and child care.

At age 21, students in good standing may continue to receive vouchers until the age of 23, which more closely approaches the level of support that parents provide their own children who pursue post-secondary education.

5. **Leveraging Chafee Resources for Foster Care Youth in WIA Youth Programs.** The U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Justice formed a strategic federal partnership to better serve the neediest youth. Under the Federal Partnership’s “Shared Vision for Youth,” needy youth, particularly youth in foster care and those aging out of foster care, will be given priority for services and investments. WIA youth investments targeted at our neediest youth, including youth in foster care/or those aging out of foster care will be used to: 1) provide basic skills remediation; 2) improve school retention rates; 3) increase placements in employment and internship opportunities; 4) promote the attainment of a high school diploma or GED; and 5) increase enrollments and successful completion of post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeship activities, and community colleges and four-year colleges.

The collaborative efforts of the partnership create an opportunity for state and local workforce professionals to leverage resources including Chafee funds to assist foster care youth served under the WIA youth programs.

Chafee provides for education, financial, housing and other support services to foster care youth which can also benefit these youth enrolled in WIA youth programs. Additionally, current and former foster care youth under Chafee have access to an Independent Living Coordinator in the public child welfare agency to assist youth make a successful transition to adulthood. These services may be made available to foster care youth in WIA programs. Workforce system professionals working with youth currently in foster care, and those who are aging out, are encouraged to coordinate with the youth’s Independent Living Coordinators to leverage CFCIP Education and Training Vouchers to assist these youth complete post-secondary educational programs and training, obtain essential job skills, and become productive citizens.

6. **Models of Collaboration.** Local workforce areas nationwide have developed collaborative efforts linking foster care youth and Chafee sponsored services via the local Department of Social Services (DSS). WIA programs are able to provide foster care youth with wrap-around services needed to help them make a successful transition to adulthood. The following WIA programs are collaborating with local DSS and utilizing Chafee funds to assist foster care youth.

- **The Imperial County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)-- El Centro, California.**

In May 2005, the Imperial County WIB and the Department of Social Services (DSS) developed a joint work agreement to support foster care youth by connecting them with the appropriate case managers from DSS and WIA. This pilot project establishes cooperative work relationships with all parties and leverages resources to help meet the needs of foster care youth.

- **Project HOPE (Helping Our Young People with Employment & Education)-- Hayward, California.**

The Alameda County Workforce Investment Board (ACWIB) and the Children and Family Services Department coordinate their programs offering foster care youth employment information that are not part of the Children and Family Services Department or Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP). A key component of *Project HOPE* is a campaign to educate foster care social workers and foster care parents regarding services provided under WIA and the One-Stop Career Centers.

- **The Achieving Independence Center-- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.**

Philadelphia's Department of Human Services, the Workforce Development Corporation, and the Youth Network partnered to create the *Achieving Independence Center*. This partnership has established goals and service strategies to assist foster care youth in the program attain gainful employment through job preparation skills and hands-on training; find safe and affordable housing; complete post-secondary education and training; and enhance life skills through Independent Living Skills Training.

7. **Additional Resources.** National Organizations have also implemented programs and provide resources to support youth in foster care and those aging out of the foster care system. For more information visit:

National Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/links/nrcyd.htm>

National Foster Care Coalition: www.natl-fostercare.org

8. **Actions Required.** States are requested to share this Training and Employment Notice with local areas.
9. **Inquiries.** Questions should be directed to the appropriate regional office.