

To: All Child Welfare Operations Staff
From: Samuel B. Harrison III, Deputy Commissioner
Re: Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act Updated Guidance

On April 27, 2021, Commissioner Ali issued a memorandum informing all CWO staff about the *Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act* which set aside significant emergency relief for young people in child welfare placement and young people who were discharged from child welfare placement during the pandemic.

The flexibilities and waivers of the participation requirements enabled DHS to provide re-entry to the child welfare system for youth who turned 21 and aged out of DHS during the pandemic and allowed youth and young adults up to age 22 who are currently in DHS foster care to remain in care until September 30, 2021.

The flexibilities and participation requirement waivers provided by these federal provisions **will end on September 30, 2021. As of October 1, 2021:**

- Young adults can only remain in care until age 21.
- Young adults can only re-enter care until age 21.
- Participation requirements to remain in care or re-enter care (in school, working, in treatment, or unable to do so) will go back into effect. Board extensions must be updated/ current.
- Pandemic Cash assistance will no longer be available to young adults ages 23 through 26.

It is urgent that the following actions are taken so that young adults are prepared to transition to independence and those who are eligible can take advantage of any assistance:

- CUA Case Managers and DHS Social Work Services Managers must prepare young adults on their caseloads who will exit placement on September 30, 2021, ensure that they have a strong discharge plan, and connect them with the Achieving Independence Center (AIC).
- CUA Case Managers and DHS Social Work Services Managers must notify eligible youth and young adults about the availability of the Pandemic Cash Assistance Program and encourage them to apply. Eligibility and access instructions are detailed below.
- CUA Case Management Directors and DHS Social Work Administrators, as appropriate, should review all of the appropriate case information to know whether:
 - Young adults who will be discharged on September 30, 2021 have been identified and notified.
 - Young adults have discharge plans and have been referred to the AIC.
 - Youth and young adults have been notified of the availability of Pandemic cash assistance and have been encouraged to apply.
- While conducting Ongoing FTC conferences, Older Youth Review meetings etc., facilitators of these meetings should address all the information mentioned above to make sure that the youth receives all appropriate services and benefits. CWO staff should come prepared to discuss the information.

Pandemic Cash Assistance

The program provides a one-time cash payment to eligible applicants.

○ **Eligibility**

- Parenting youth ages 14 through 22 and who are/were in foster care at the age of 14 years or older.
- Applicants ages 18 through 22 who are/were in foster care at the age of 14 years or older.
- Applicants ages 23 through 26 who were in foster care at the age of 14 years or older. Per federal regulations, **funds are only available until September 30, 2021 for this population.**

○ **Amount**

- Effective August 16, 2021, the payment is \$800 per eligible person.
- The \$600 differential is available to those who received an initial \$200 payment prior to August 16, 2021. Youth and young adults should connect with their Valley Youth House or Turning Points for Children representative if this applies to them.

○ **How to apply**

Youth and young adults should fill out an online survey to see if they are eligible for the Pandemic Cash Assistance Program. Application completion does not guarantee cash assistance. Applicants must meet all eligibility criteria to qualify. Links to the survey can be found on the DHS website at:

<https://www.phila.gov/2021-06-11-pandemic-relief-payments-available-now-for-eligible-youth/>.

○ **Application deadline**

Applicants who are ages 23 through 26 need to apply by September 30, 2021. All other applicants can apply at any time. This program is first come, first served.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

Attachments:

Forms:

Related Policies or Procedures: Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act memorandum, issued April 27, 2021

Other Resources: Pandemic Cash Assistance Survey –
<https://www.phila.gov/2021-06-11-pandemic-relief-payments-available-now-for-eligible-youth/>
Achieving Independence Center - 215-574-9194
DHS Hotline - 215-683-6100
DHS Housing Liaison - dhs_housing@phila.gov
DHS Resumption Liaison - DHS.Resumption@phila.gov

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

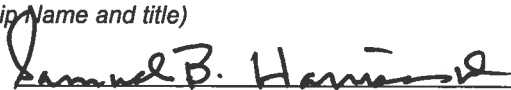
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APPROVAL SIGNATURE

(Authorizing Leadership Name and title)

Signature:



Date: 9/21/2021

Name: Samuel B. Harrison III

Title: Deputy Commissioner, Child Welfare Operations