



# Transition and Discharge Planning for Young Adults at 18 or older with Safety Related Concerns to Participation in the EFC Program

## STANDARD WORK

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The Extended Foster Care (EFC) Program is an opportunity for young adults to engage and invest in a successful transition to adulthood. The EFC program aids young adults to further their education, to receive supportive services such as skill building, housing and support for lawful employment, and to obtain or maintain permanent connections with supportive adults. The Department has confidence all young adults would benefit from being served in the EFC Program and will work with young adults to facilitate their eligibility and participation. When a young adult demonstrates serious, ongoing dangerous behavior posing a safety threat to themselves, peers, or the community the Department will work to address these barriers through interventions and supports directed at eliminating the behavior. If the behavior cannot be resolved, the Department will provide the young adult with transition planning for discharge to address basic necessities (including housing options, medical care, food, and hygiene), and opportunities and requirements for future re-engagement into the EFC. **Young adults maintain the right to file a grievance or appeal the adverse action of the denial of services through the CSO-3470 form.**

This standard work outlines how the DCS Specialist will transition and create a plan with young adults who pose a current, ongoing, documented safety threat to other youth in the home or the community at large to remedy safety concerns during the 30-day period prior to the young adult reaching age 18. The transition plan will be created and finalized with the young adult as a condition of **advancement into EFC, and when discharging from foster care.**

### Section 1. DCS Specialist Responsibilities for Transition Planning prior to 18:

For all young adults in out-of-home care, including those in detention or in secure care at ADJC, who are within the 30-day period prior to reaching the age of 18, the DCS Specialist will, in collaboration with the young adult, finalize transition plan that documents individual goals, needs, and required actions identified with the young adult, which will address, at a minimum, the following needs:

- housing;
- health insurance;
- education;
- local opportunities for mentors;
- continuous support services;
- work force supports;
- employment services;
- transportation, to include discussion of youth's interest in a driver's license;
- the importance of designating another person to make health care treatment decisions on the youth's behalf if unable, or they become unable, to do so, and do not have or do not want a relative who would otherwise be authorized by state law to make such decisions; and
- the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document. (For more information, see [Advance Directives and Health Care Directives at Life Care Planning](#)).

The DCSS must identify the required actions clearly and specifically to articulate the young adult's responsibilities in working toward individual goals, the support(s) provided or arranged through DCS (and other entities), and how actions and goals will be monitored.

### Section 2. Identifying and Addressing potential barriers for Participation in EFC:

**While finalizing the Transition Plan, concerns about the young adult's participation in the EFC program may arise. Young adults who express interest in the EFC Program may be identified as having potential barriers to participation in EFC when demonstrating one or more of the following:**

- A documented pattern\*, within the preceding 12 months, of being AWOL. (A pattern of being AWOL in itself is not a barrier, but demonstrates a safety concern for the youth which must be addressed).
- A documented pattern, within the preceding 12 months, of inconsistent participation or unwillingness to participate in secondary education, other educational programming, or workforce activities. (In situations where youth are stating or demonstrating unwillingness to participate in workforce or educational programming the DCS Specialist needs to explore with the youth educational limitations they are experiencing. Do they feel they have an unaddressed learning disability or employment barriers impacting their participation? Discussion with the youth must explore their current stress levels and how they are feeling about the transition to being an adult.);
- A documented pattern, within the preceding 12 months, of unwillingness to engage with DCS through refusal or failure to participate in the agreed upon actions outlined in their individualized case plan (i.e. meeting with DCS Specialist, complete education credits, work hours, aggressive or threatening behaviors towards caregivers, etc.)
- Are actively abusing\*\* substances as demonstrated by documented use of illegal substances or abuse of prescription medication that is contributing to identified areas of disengagement, and the young person is currently unwilling to participate in a treatment program; or
- A documented pattern of unlawful possession of a firearm or assaultive behaviors.

**Barriers to participation do not preclude a young adult from program participation, and rather should signal to the Specialist that additional engagement efforts to remove barriers may be necessary. When Transition Planning for young adults identified with a barrier for participation , the DCS Specialist will:**

- Review the participation requirements of the EFC program and confirm the young adult's understanding and willingness to participate.
- Reinforce the Department's intent to support the young adult to continue in EFC and address any difficulties identified through supportive services and regular engagement.
- For young adults willing to participate, create or modify the transition plan with the young adult to include **specific actions and timelines** for the young adult and Specialist to address the related concern(s) listed above. Include in the plan supports to be provided or arranged by the DCS, such as a referral to Arizona Families F.I.R.S.T. (AFF) or another treatment program (if determined to be a need)).
- Fully explore barriers with the young adult to understand the root causes of the young adult's trauma. Pushing limits and boundaries, and appearing to refuse to follow expectations are part of normal adolescent development. When the DCS Specialist has documented a pattern of concern the focus of the transition planning needs to address the root causes and not be limited to the behaviors.
- For young adults who are unwilling to work with the DCSS to address their barriers to participation in EFC, schedule a meeting with the young adult and their supports prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to discuss their desire to participate in EFC, and if necessary, create a supportive discharge plan, as outlined in section 4.

### **Section 3. Identification of when EFC may not be the appropriate supportive program for young adults.**

**In certain circumstances, EFC may not be the appropriate program for assisting the young adult to achieve their goals. EFC may not be the appropriate program for young adults who are turning 18 and are currently experiencing one or more of the following community safety-related scenarios that have been clearly documented in the case file or Guardian:**

- In a state of incarceration stemming from charges related to weapons, gang/cartel involvement or violent crimes, sex, human and drug trafficking, and whose release date is scheduled prior to reaching the age of 18 and who have not been willing to address these concerns;
- Pending adult charges relating to weapons, gang/cartel involvement, and/or violent crimes, sex, human and drug trafficking;
- Active affiliation or involvement with a gang/cartel as documented by the young adult's own information or information received through a verified resource (i.e. law enforcement, juvenile or adult justice, or another verifiable sources); or
- Are actively abusing\*\* substances, showing a documented pattern of addiction as demonstrated by use of illegal

substances or abuse of prescription medication that is contributing to identified areas of disengagement, and are currently unwilling to engage in treatment.

For young adults who have one or more safety-related scenarios, schedule a meeting with the young adult and their supports at minimum 15 days prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to create a supportive plan to connect the young adult with appropriate community supports and services, as outlined in Section 4 and policy, Chapter 5 Sections 31 and 34 .

#### Section 4. Discharge from Foster Care

**When the young adult is unwilling to remain safe and consider the safety of other young adults, complete a supportive Transition and Discharge Plan for the young adult as outlined in policy, Chapter 5 Sections 31 and 34. The DCS Specialist will:**

- Complete CSO-3470 Notice of Discharge from Foster Care form in addition to the transition plan with the young adult, which may include transition to the Transitional Independent Living Program. The discharge plan will include safety-related concerns, and all efforts made toward addressing continued barriers to resolution. Provide to DCS Supervisor and Program Manager for Approval.
- Hold a discharge planning meeting to include the young adult, their supports, service providers, the DCS Specialist and Supervisor. The team will review the documented safety concerns, efforts to resolve concerns or barriers, and the confirmation the young adult understands their discharge plan, right to file a grievance or appeal the adverse action of the denial of services(if eligible for Extended Foster Care), any aftercare services they may participate in, and the intent to discharge them from foster care on their 18th birthday.
- Submit completed CSO-3470 Notice of Discharge from Foster Care form which has been approved by the Supervisor and Program Manager to the Permanency and Youth Services Manager or designee at [youthservices@azdcs.gov](mailto:youthservices@azdcs.gov) for final review and approved 7 days prior to discharge.
- After approval of discharge plan by the PYS Manager, close the young adult's DCS Young Adult Program case effective the date of their 18th birthday following Chapter 3: Section 10, and standard closure procedures.
- Complete all related closure documentation within 5 business days of the young adult's 18th birthday.

#### Section 5. Safety Concerns while Participating in EFC

For young Adults **over the age of 18 in the EFC program** who are demonstrating safety concerns through their actions and unwillingness to create and participate in planning through their case/transition plan to resolve barriers, follow the procedures outlined in Chapter 5, Section 34 of the DCS Program Policy Manual.

*\*A **pattern** means the multiple actions or inactions demonstrated by the young person that are of a frequency that contributes to or directly results in a lack of progress or termination of a service or activity outlined in the individual case plan, or creates a barrier to initiating participation in a service or activity outlined in the individual case plan. This includes connections to agency representatives who provide, facilitate or otherwise arrange for necessary services, including the DCS Specialist. The pattern of behavior may also include actions that place the safety of other young adults in their living arrangement or the community at large at substantial risk of harm.*

*\*\* Inherent to adolescent development is an element of unhealthy risk-taking behavior which even the best planning and support cannot eliminate. Youth who are actively abusing substances refers to excessive use of a drug in a way that is detrimental to self, society, or both. Young adults who are or have experimented with substances are not to be considered as abusing substances, and should not be considered for discharge planning.*