



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. However, young adults who demonstrate unresolvable threats to peers, themselves or community through their actions (including affiliation with individuals or groups known to present a danger to citizens or community) will be provided with transition planning for discharge to address basic necessities, and opportunities and requirements for future re-engagement into the EFC.

This standard work outlines how the DCS Specialist will transition and create a plan with young adults who are demonstrating substantial non-compliance or unwillingness 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 within the 30-day period prior to reaching the age of 18 in out-of-home care, the DCS Specialist will finalize with the young adult a transition plan which documents individual goals, needs, and required actions identified with the young adult to minimally include the following areas:

- 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 does not have or does 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](#)).

Required actions must clearly and specifically 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. Identification of Poor Prognosis 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 are identified as having a poor prognosis for participation in EFC when demonstrating one or more of the following:

- A pattern* of being AWOL or are AWOL but return to care during the 30-day period prior to reaching the age of 18;
- A pattern of inconsistent participation or unwillingness to participate in secondary education, other educational programming, or workforce activities;
- A pattern 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 use of illegal substances or abuse of prescription medication that is contributing to identified areas of disengagement, and the young person is not currently engaged or had a history of refusing to participate in a treatment program; or
- A pattern of unlawful possession of a firearm or assaultive behaviors.

Poor prognosis for participation does not preclude a young adult from program participation. When Transition Planning for young adults identified with a poor prognosis, the DCS Specialist will:

- Review the participation requirements of the EFC program and confirm the young adult's understanding and willingness to participate and reinforce the Department's intent to support the young adult to continue in EFC and in 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 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 AFF or another treatment program (if determined to be a need in order to continue into the EFC program).
- For young adults who are unwilling to address their pattern of concerns, schedule a meeting with the young adult and their supports prior to their 18th birthday to create a discharge plan, as outlined in section 4.

Section 3. Identification of when EFC is not the appropriate supportive program for young adults.

In certain circumstances, EFC is not the appropriate program for assisting the young adult to achieve their goals. EFC is not the appropriate program for young adults who are turning 18 and are experiencing one or more of the following community safety-related scenarios:

- 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;
- 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 an 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 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 prior to their 18th birthday to create a discharge plan, as outlined in Section 4.

Section 4. Discharge from Foster Care

When the young adult is unwilling to address their pattern of concerns, or one or more of the safety-related scenarios apply, complete a Transition and Discharge Plan for the young adult. The DCS Specialist will:

- Create a discharge plan addendum on DCS Letterhead 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 any efforts made towards or 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) and any aftercare services they may participate in and the intent to discharge them from foster care on their 18th birthday.
- Submit discharge plans for young adults at 18 to the Permanency and Youth Services Manager or designee at

youthservices@azdcs.gov to be reviewed and approved.

- After approval of discharge plan, 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. Unsatisfactory Participation in EFC

Young Adults **over the age of 18 in the EFC program** who are demonstrating substantial non-compliance or who demonstrate community safety concerns through their actions and unwillingness to create and participate in planning through their case/transition plan will be discharged from the EFC and their DCS Young Adult Program case closed by the DCS Specialist by following 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.*

*** 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.*