



## Empowering Youth Update

Aug. 29, 2025

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### Welcome, Brittani, to the Foster Youth Transitions Unit!

Brittani Lamb joined the Foster Youth Transitions Unit in June. She leads policy related to youth missing from foster care and expectant and parenting youth. She also helps support the Education and Training Voucher and STAY programs. Additionally, Brittani is the current interim Education and Training Voucher coordinator. Her background includes a Bachelor of Arts in social work from St. Olaf College, a Master of Social Work from Augsburg University, a

fellowship in adolescent health, and several years of direct child welfare practice at private organizations.

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### **New court review requirement for youth before age 18**

New legislation requires a court review to ensure youth in foster care receive the required notice and planning before their 18th birthday (Laws 2025, chapter 3, article 10, sections 21-22). This review process applies to all youth in foster care, including court-ordered placements and voluntary placements under Minnesota Statutes 260C and 260D. The responsible social services agency must report the considerations, eligibility and planning with a youth in foster care to the court through a court review during the 90-day period before the youth turns age 18.

The new court review process in Minnesota Statutes 260C.202 is administrative; however, it allows the youth or another party to request an in-court hearing if they believe the agency did not make reasonable or active efforts. When the court receives the report, it issues an order and findings.

For more information, see [DCYF Bulletin 25-68-20](#).

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### **Quality assurance reviews for extended foster care**

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families now has a quality assurance process in place for youth who leave foster care after turning 18.

Every month, the department will verify through the Social Service Information System (SSIS) that youth have:

- Received a Notice of Benefits Past Age 18
- A 180-day transition plan
- Active Medical Assistance
- An up-to-date Out-of-Home Placement Plans.

The primary worker will receive an email with the findings when the quality assurance is complete. This ensures case managers are aware of state and

federal requirements and reminds workers that these documents must be completed.

The department has begun sending emails to the primary case worker when youth turn age 17.5 to remind them of the Notice of Benefits Past Age 18 and the new court review requirement. It also sends emails before a youth turns age 20.5 to remind workers of the 180-day transition plan.

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### **SSIS virtual coffee talk on MNYTD**

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 23

Time: 9–10:30 a.m.

Location: Webex

Registration is required. Register on the [SSIS Engagement and Information site](#).

This virtual event will be recorded and posted on the [Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy SSIS Training page](#) within 10 business days.

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### **MNYTD Cohort 6 begins Oct. 1, 2025**

A forthcoming bulletin on the Minnesota Youth in Transition Database surveys will ask agencies to do the following with their 17-year-old foster youth:

- Talk to youth about taking the survey now, and again at ages 19 and 21.
- Inform youth that the surveys allow them to have their voices heard and help other youth. Youth voices can influence services and help secure funding for independent living services (ILS).
- Encourage (but do not pressure) youth to participate in the survey
- Incentivize youth to take the survey with \$20 in cash or a gift card (paid through STAY funds)
- Inform youth about The Improve Group, which will be reaching out about additional surveys at ages 19 and 21, with incentives of \$100 each time.

- Introduce youth to the [MNYTD](#) website.
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### **College funds for current and former foster youth**

Minnesota has two programs for post-secondary education funding for eligible current and former foster youth: the [Education and Training Voucher](#) (ETV, administered by DCYF) and [Fostering Independence Grants](#) (FIG, administered by the Office of Higher Education).

The award process is underway for both programs for the 2025-2026 academic year, and students are already benefiting from these funds. Although the majority of grants are distributed at the beginning of the school year, youth can continue to apply throughout the year.

Students who attend a [FIG-participating school](#) and indicate foster care experience at age 13 or older on their FAFSA will automatically have their information sent to DCYF for consideration for an ETV award; no application is needed. Students who attend a school outside of Minnesota or a Minnesota school that is not participating in FIG must complete an [ETV application](#).

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### **Contact us**

Contact Minnesota DCYF Foster Youth Transitions Unit staff at [dcyf.csp.foster.youth.transitions@state.mn.us](mailto:dcyf.csp.foster.youth.transitions@state.mn.us).

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### **About the Empowering Youth Update**

The quarterly Empowering Youth Update is a resource for county, Tribal and private agency staff working with youth in the child welfare system. It covers topics related to the [Foster Youth Transitions Unit](#) at the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), including:

- [Education and Training Vouchers](#) (ETVs)
- Extended Foster Care

- The [STAY \(Successful Transition to Adulthood for Youth\) program](#) (which includes the [STAY in the Community](#) and [YLC \(Youth Leadership Council\)](#) programs)
- The Minnesota Youth in Transition Database ([MNYTD](#))
- Medical Assistance (MA)
- Minor parents
- Pregnant and parenting youth
- Other information and resources to empower youth.