



Youth Housing Assistance Program

DCFS may provide Youth Housing Assistance to help attain or maintain housing stability for youth that the department currently has or previously had legal responsibility. There are two parts to Youth Housing Assistance: *Housing Advocacy* and *Cash Assistance*, each of which is explained below.

Housing Advocacy

Housing advocacy services assist clients in obtaining and/or maintaining stable housing. Services include:

- Assistance in securing affordable housing
- Consumer education
- Budget counseling
- Linkages to community-based resources (i.e. assistance with utilities, clothing and food)
- Follow-up services for a minimum of three months after the client secures appropriate housing

Note: Housing Advocacy does not include any money.

Eligibility:

Youth receiving housing advocacy services must meet all three of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 17 ½ and less than 21 years of age; (Youth referred for a Family Unification Program or Fostering Youth Initiative housing subsidy can receive services after they turn 21.)
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS, **or** have aged out of DCFS care; (Note: Youth that entered adoption or subsidized guardianship after their 14th birthday are also eligible.); **and**
3. Have an income that is sufficient to meet rent and utility costs; **or** be working on obtaining that income. (While housing advocacy can begin before income is in place, it is extremely unlikely that youth will be able to secure housing without sufficient income. Housing advocates can often help with employment.)

Cash Assistance

Assistance will vary depending on a client's situation. Cash assistance may be authorized for the following reasons:

- Housing security deposit
- Rent (limited circumstances)
- Beds for the client and the client's children
- Current utility bills or utility deposits
- Appliances
- Partial housing subsidy for a period of one year following case closure (housing costs must exceed 30% of income and assistance cannot continue past the client's 21st birthday)
- Other items required by the client to avoid or manage a crisis

Eligibility:

Youth receiving Cash Assistance must meet all four of the following criteria:

1. Be at least 17.5 and less than 21 years of age; (Youth referred for a Family Unification Program or Fostering Youth Initiative housing subsidy can receive services after they turn 21.)
2. Be legally the responsibility of DCFS in an approved placement **or** have aged out of DCFS care. (Note: Youth that moved to adoption or subsidized guardianship **after age 16 may be** eligible for cash assistance);
3. Have completed a budget statement (Form CFS 370-5C) that demonstrates that with any subsidy and all other income they will be able to cover all remaining living expenses (e.g. housing, utilities, clothing, food); and
4. Need cash assistance in order to attain or maintain stable housing

Referral Process or Questions

For more information, contact the Youth Housing Assistance Coordinator at 312-328-2159 or e-mail DCFS.YHAP.Coordinator@illinois.gov