North Dakota Foster Care

Handbook for YOUth

ND YOUth Leadership Board

Created January 2014
Revised 2016

Children & Family Services

North Dakota Department of Human Services

The North Dakota Department of Human Services Children & Family Services Division is responsible for many programs and services offered to North Dakota residents.

North Dakota foster care services are county administered under the supervision of the state; "State Supervised – County Administered". This means that each county has a Social Service Board and a County Social Service office which follow federal and state laws, as well as policy to best meet the needs of children and families.

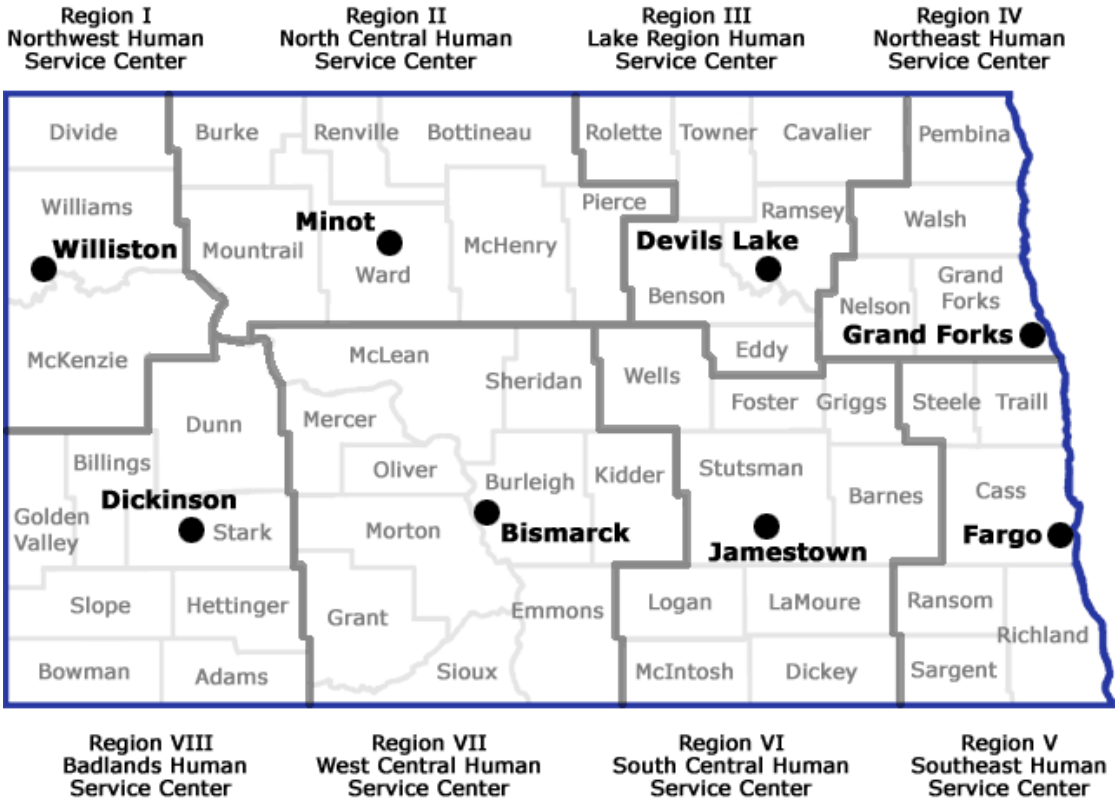
Federal Government

North Dakota State Government

ND Department of Human Services

Children & Family Services

Region 1 Human Service Center	Region 2 Human Service Center	Region 3 Human Service Center	Region 4 Human Service	Region 5 Human Service Center	Region 6 Human Service Center	Region 7 Human Service Center	Region 8 Human Service Center



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Important State Office Contacts

Children & Family Services 701-328-3591
Foster Care Administrator 701-328-1018
Permanency Administrator.....701-328-3581
Chafee Independent Living Administrator 701-328-4934

North Dakota State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue
3rd Floor, Judicial Wing
Bismarck, ND 58505
Fax: (701) 328-3538

Chafee Independent Living Contacts

Region 1
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-i-williston
PATH at 701-572-7650 in Williston

Region 2
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-ii-minot
PATH at 701-839-8887 in Minot

Region 3
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-iii-devils-lake
PATH at 701-662-4913 in Devils Lake
701-477-0525 in Belcourt

Region 4
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-iv-grand-forks
PATH at 701-775-7725 in Grand Forks

Region 5
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-v-fargo
PATH at 701-280-9545 in Fargo

Region 6
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-vi-jamestown
PATH at 701-280-9545 in Fargo

Region 7
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-vii-bismarck
PATH at 701-224-9611 in Bismarck

Region 8
www.nd.gov/ndYOUth/region-viii-dickinson
PATH at 701-225-3310 in Dickinson

All websites have many services listed specific to your region in North Dakota!

Write down questions YOU have about foster care:

(YOU can ask your case manager to answer these questions for YOU!)

1. _____
_____
_____

Answer: _____
_____
_____

2. _____
_____
_____

Answer: _____
_____
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3. _____
_____
_____

Answer: _____
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4. _____
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Answer: _____
_____
_____

5. _____
_____
_____

Answer: _____
_____
_____

Frequently Asked Questions

The ND YOUth Leadership Board developed questions they felt would be helpful for YOU.

For YOUth Entering Foster Care For the First Time

1. Can I tell people that I am in foster care?
   - That is a decision YOU have to make. People may ask YOU questions YOU are not ready to answer? Talk to your case manager about this.

2. Can I call my friends or see them?
   - If approved by your case manager and your foster parents.

3. Can I sleep over at a friend's house?
   - If approved by your case manager and your foster parents.

4. Can I see my family while in foster care?
   - If approved by your case manager and your foster parents.
   - If there are no safety concerns.

5. Can I live with my siblings?
   - Talk to your case manager about this option. It may depend on availability of foster homes, space, and family safety.

6. Can my siblings stay with me for an overnight while I am in foster care?
   - Depends on where YOU are placed (home, facility, etc.).
   - Maybe if approved by your case manager and foster parents.

7. How do custodians match YOUth with foster families?
   - Families fill out a form indicating the age range of YOUth they feel they can best serve. Then case managers work to locate a family to best your needs. Also, placement is based on availability in your community.

8. Who can I talk to if I do not trust my foster parents?
   - First talk to your case manager. Otherwise talk to a friend, counselor, other professional, teacher, therapist, doctor, etc.

9. Can I be in extracurricular activities?
   - Yes, with approval from case manager, foster parents, and biological parent/s.

10. Can I go on the annual camping trip with my boy scouts/girl scouts troop?
    - If approved by your case manager and your foster parents.

11. Can I get my permit and driver's license?
    - If approved by case manager, it depends on the policy set forth by your Custodial Agency.

12. Can I ride in a vehicle with friends under the age of 18?
    - Not likely due to liability issues and concerns. However, exceptions can be made with proper permission and approval from foster parents, case manager, and/or biological parents.

13. Do I get help paying for things I need?
    - Yes. Talk to your case manager about things YOU may need (new clothes, shoes, backpack, activity fee, hobby item, toiletries YOU prefer, senior pictures, prom dress, etc).

14. Will I get help paying for college since I am in foster care?
    - Maybe. If YOU "age-out" of foster care, meaning YOU turn age 18 then are discharged from care, then yes YOU would be eligible for the Education & Training Voucher (ETV) scholarship. Also, YOU could apply for financial aid, grants, and other scholarships!! $$

15. When I turn age 18, am I kicked out of foster care?
    - No. YOU can decide if YOU want to remain in foster care under the 18+ Program. The 18+ Continued Care Agreement needs to be signed by your case manager, YOU, and your foster parents. YOU can stay in care until the age of 21 if YOU choose. Talk to your case manager for more information.

Remember: The only way others can help YOU is if YOU tell them what is wrong.

What does it mean to be "placed" in foster care?

A judge can place YOU in foster care under the custody of a North Dakota public agency (County Social services, Division of Juvenile Services, or Tribal Social Services). Placing YOU in foster care is not a bad thing; it will keep YOU safe and protected until things get better at home. This means YOU must live in a new place away from your family for a period of time. This new foster home is a "placement."

Foster Care Placements

Family Foster Home:

A household (one or more individuals over the age of 21) wanting to care for children in need of a place to live. Licensed foster parents are background checked, have their house checked to ensure safety and must go through special training.

Kinship Care:

A relative or someone not related to YOU who YOU consider to be "like family" or someone YOU have an important relationship with who will care for YOU in their home. This person could be an aunt, uncle, grandparent, God parent, teacher, etc.

Ask your case manager how a relative or a person YOU think of as being family (kinship) can become your caretaker. They may not know how to locate that person (name, phone number, city,) but maybe YOU could help!

Residential Child Care Facility or Group Home (RCCF):

This is a large group home or licensed facility with caring 24-hour staff that provide care to YOUth. This placement provides individualized treatment, recreation, etc.

Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF):

Similar to an RCCF, except that the care is for YOUth with higher needs.

Emergency Shelter Care:

A provider that cares for YOUth in crisis on a short-term basis, typically 3-4 days until a more appropriate placement can be identified.

Relative & Kinship Care:

If a relative or a close family friend is interested in providing a safe place for YOU while YOU are in foster care, encourage them to contact your case manager as soon as possible! YOU may provide your case manager the names of these people too!

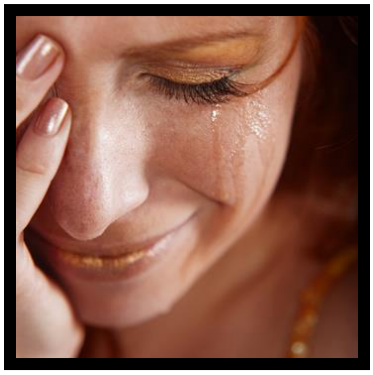
Relatives and close family friends will have to participate in a home assessment and will need to be approved in order to provide care for YOU.

Separation and Loss

YOU have the right to feel sad

Now that YOU have been removed from your home and placed in foster care, we understand that there are different feelings YOU may have: scared, nervous, sad, alone, mad, and for some, YOU may feel happy or hopeful.

Although it may feel as though no one can understand what YOU are feeling or going through, YOU are encouraged to be honest with yourself about what YOU are feeling. Talk to someone YOU trust about these feelings. This could be your case manager, parents, a relative or close family friend, foster parents and/or caregiver, a teacher, your guardian ad litem, a counselor, or therapist.



YOU have the right to grieve for your family.
It is okay to be sad and miss your family. Ask your case manager if YOU get to see your parents or siblings. If YOU are not allowed to see your family, YOU should know why.

YOU have the right to be angry or upset.
It is ok to be upset about foster care. It is also ok to be angry that YOU cannot see your family every day. It is important to talk to someone about these feelings. If YOU feel like hurting yourself; tell someone immediately so they can keep YOU safe.

YOU have a right to have your family respected at all times.
During your time in foster care, there will be times YOU want to talk about your family. It is important that others do not speak negatively about your family. Although it may be hard to talk about the things that have happened, your case manager will need to learn more about past events in order to help your parents learn how to make positive life changes so YOU can go home.

As a North Dakota Foster YOUth, YOU have the right to:

These rights should be shared with YOU by your case manager and caregivers.

- Know why YOU are in foster care and the plans for the future.
- Have YOU and your family treated with respect.
- Have food, clothing, a clean bed, and items for personal hygiene.
- Have a safe, clean place to live with a reasonable amount of privacy and safety for your personal property.
- Be allowed to take with YOU any personal items, clothing and any gifts or possessions that have been acquired when YOU leave a foster home.
- Have medical, vision, and dental care provided.
- Be safe from physical, sexual, and verbal abuse and neglect.
- Be treated fairly and without discrimination or put-downs because of your race, gender, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, or religious beliefs.
- Practice your cultural traditions and religious faith in reasonable ways and with programming supports.
- Receive an education and help with emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth.
- Have opportunities to participate in community activities.
- Have input in your planning, including participating in your Child and Family Team meetings.
- Have contact and visits with your family as approved by your legal custodian.
- Communicate with your case manager/social worker.
- Use your voice if YOU are concerned for your care, safety, plan, or well-being.
- Be represented in judicial situations; talk with your social worker if these rights are not being met or YOU are being harmed in other ways.

YOUth Perspectives about Foster Care

Below are statements from current and former ND foster care YOUth.

- *"There are others who have been through similar situations. Just remember YOU are not alone and there are so many people willing to help YOU. At times it may seem that everyone is out to get YOU or your family. YOU have to stick it out and talk to your case manager and foster parents. They will do what they can for YOU. They are there to help. YOU probably hear that a lot, but it is the truth. Don't give up because if I was able to do it…….. YOU can too!" (C -Age 18)*

- *"I remember feeling like there was no one I could turn to when I was placed in foster care. I felt alone, like no one could understand what I was going through. I started talking to adults that I trusted, like my teachers. People may be negative towards YOU, but remember there are many foster care alumni who became successful…. YOU can be a success story too! Things happen in life that may bring YOU down; stay strong, keep your head up, and keep on keeping on." (P -Age 21)*

- *"At times it feels like YOU cannot trust anybody and that there is nobody rooting for YOU. Do not give up. YOU need to know the resources that foster care provides YOU. My advice is to take advantage of every opportunity thrown at YOU. Just because of what the rules may be in the system, do not let rules get YOU down. Keep your head up and stay focused on what is good for YOU." (S -Age 18)*

- *"While in care, I felt that my foster parents were sheltering me and overprotective. After aging out of care, I realized that my foster parents only did the best they could. My foster parents really cared and wanted the best for me and my future. Being in foster care allowed me to receive resources to be successful that I would not have gotten otherwise (ACT testing, drivers education classes, school activities, etc.) Just hang tight, make the best of every situation and remember that tomorrow is another day!" (T -Age 18)*

- *"Some of my most memorable times have been because of foster care. Someone out there might think being in a foster care is like being in jail, but really it is not. Foster care shaped me into who I am right now! I was able to stay out of trouble and when I look back at all the trouble some of my friends got into, I have to say having a family that loves YOU and takes care of YOU is such a blessing. I am happy with my life and that is how every kid should be, "HAPPY"." (F -Age 18)*

YOU Have A Responsibility To:

- Communicate with your case manager often.
- Work with your case manager to develop a plan for YOU.
- Work with your case manager and caregiver to make sure that your needs and case plan are addressed.
- Work with your case manager and caregiver about rules at your placement.
- Respect and follow house rules responsibly.
- Participate in the process and make the best of it.
- Try your hardest to make good choices and decisions.
- Tell your case manager when YOU do and do not want to have visits with your parents/siblings.
- Stay Safe: Do not run away no matter how bad things may seem. If YOU run away, YOU may not be able to return to the same foster home or placement. YOU could spend the night in juvenile detention, be transferred to a correctional center (like YCC), or YOU could be ***seriously*** hurt. Running away from the situation is not going to fix it….. people care so tell someone!
- Follow the chain of command if YOU need something or have concerns about how YOU are being treated. Start with your case manager. See "Where to Turn for Help: Chain of Command" page #19.

Providers Have the Responsibility To:

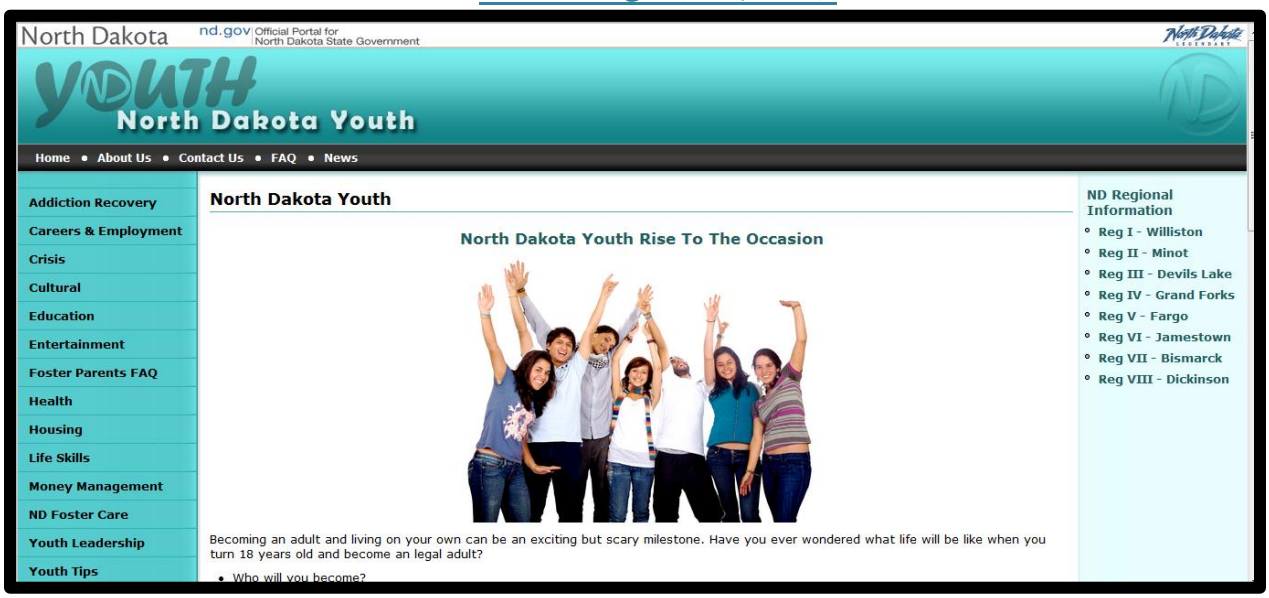
- Let YOU live as normally as possible. For example, participate in sports and extracurricular activities, go to prom, visit family and friends.
- Keep YOU safe and provide for your basic needs (food, clothing, and shelter).
- Treat YOU with dignity and respect.
- Keep information about YOU and your family confidential, unless it is in your best interest to share it with other professionals.
- Show understanding, give guidance and accept YOU for YOU.
- Participate in meetings regarding your case plan and future.
- Prepare YOU for your next move whether it is going home, to another placement, or to live independently.
- Help in your growth and development by encouraging your success in areas such as school and daily life skills.
- Make sure YOU get medical and dental care.
- Help YOU cope with your feelings about being in foster care.
- Receive training to best provide care for YOUth.
- Make their home ready and welcoming.
- Engage in activities related to your culture.

Case Managers Have the Responsibility To:

- ☐ See YOU regularly and talk to YOU alone at least once a month face-to-face.
- ☐ Return your calls as soon as he/she is available to do so.
- ☐ Notify YOU of court hearings and changes with your case plan.
- ☐ Build a relationship with YOU to best represent YOU and your interests.
- ☐ Help YOU with your plan to transition to adulthood and refer YOU to the ND Chafee Independent Living program at age 16.
- ☐ Help YOU understand what services, supports, and benefits YOU are eligible for, including Medicaid once YOU leave care.
- ☐ Schedule visits between YOU and your family (parents, sibling, and relatives), or anyone else YOU would like to contact that is appropriate and safe.
- ☐ Make recommendations to the court on what they believe to be in your best interest.
- ☐ Make sure that YOU feel safe at all times.

✓ Out the ND Youth Website

www.nd.gov/ndyouth



Individual Case Plan

Your case plan, previously called a "perm plan," is a plan for making sure that YOU receive safe and good care while away from your parents. The plan outlines your needs and states the services YOU will be provided. This plan will include information about your health, education, recreation, safety, and other items that are important for YOU. Your plan will also include a permanency option for YOU; maybe YOU go home, live with a relative, live independently, hope to be adopted, etc.

Child & Family Team Meeting

A Child and Family Team Meeting is your meeting and YOU should be leading it! It is a time to develop the best plan for YOU with all of your identified supports. YOU can also invite two additional members of your choosing to join your team!

Supports may include:

- Case Manager
- Parent/s
- Siblings (if age appropriate)
- Foster care provider (foster family, group home staff, etc.)
- Teacher
- Mentor
- Chafee IL Coordinator
- Guardian Ad Litem
- Counselor/Therapist
- Identified relatives
- Friends
- Coach

During your Child & Family Team Meeting YOU should answer:

1. How have the last three months been for YOU?
2. What is going well?
3. What is not going so well?
4. How is school?
5. Have YOU been to the doctor?
6. What independent living goals are YOU working on?
7. What is your favorite thing about your current placement?
8. Is there anything making YOU nervous, angry, or upset?
9. Do YOU have any needs or questions?

Your case manager will help keep the meeting focused on YOU. This is your meeting to make a plan to best prepare YOU for a smooth transition into adulthood.

Communication Tips

Tips on how to properly communicate with others.

1. Have a very clear idea of what YOU want and why YOU want it.
    - Reasonable and appropriate requests such as:
        - *"I would like to go to the school dance on Friday night, may I go?"*
        - *"Can I stay overnight at my friend's house after the football game?"*
        - *"I would like to work, can I get an after school job?"*
2. Rehearse what YOU will say and how YOU will ask.
3. Speak clearly.
4. Maintain eye contact.
5. Take your time when talking.
6. Think before YOU speak.
7. Repeat what YOU hear to be sure YOU understand.
8. Be respectful.
9. Be aware of your body language (do not look or act angry, impatient, sassy, etc.)
10. Be flexible and willing to compromise.

Keep Track of Communication Information

- ☐ When YOU talked to people.
- ☐ Who YOU talked to and their contact info.
- ☐ What YOU both decided or agreed upon.
- ☐ The steps YOU took to advocate for your request.

Follow-Up (As Needed)

- ☐ Now that YOU have made your contacts and have tracked what happened, YOU may feel like YOU have done all YOU can do. NOT YET! Following up is CRITICAL. Many times, the people YOU are trying to reach are very busy.
- ☐ How to follow up:
    - Phone call
    - Email

REMINDER it is important to say THANK YOU!

Even if the conversation did not turn out how YOU wanted; showing appreciation for others time will only help YOU with future meetings/requests.

Foster Care Discharge Checklist

During the 90-day period immediately prior to your 18th birthday, your case manager and other professionals will help YOU develop a **written transition plan** that is personalized and includes achievement of the following items:

- ☐ YOU were referred to the ND Chafee Independent Living Program.
- ☐ YOU were given the ND 18+ Continued Foster Care (DN 1174) brochure informing YOU of the option to remain in foster care after reaching age 18 or availability to return to foster care within six months of discharge if applicable.
- ☐ YOU have discussed your consumer credit report: YOU know how to obtain your own credit report and understand why it is important to obtain it.
- ☐ YOU have received a copy of your birth certificate.
- ☐ YOU have received a copy of your social security card.
- ☐ YOU have received a Photo ID.
- ☐ YOU have been given the ND drivers permit study guide.
- ☐ YOU have five adults YOU can contact.
- ☐ YOU have been made aware of the Selective Services.
- ☐ YOU have a copy of your last court order or discharge letter.
- ☐ YOU have a savings account set up.
- ☐ YOU have copies of family mementos upon discharge.
- ☐ YOU have received a high school diploma or GED.
- ☐ YOU have a copy of your high school or GED transcripts.
- ☐ YOU have a copy of your Individual Education Plan (IEP) from school (if applicable).
- ☐ YOU attend classes and activities appropriate to your case plan.
- ☐ YOU understand current and future educational opportunities.
    - Graduate High School or get GED
    - College/ Trade School
    - Scholarships/ Funding
        - Education & Training Voucher $$$$
        - Scholarships
        - Financial Aid
- ☐ YOU know how to access Job Services and apply for jobs.
- ☐ YOU have developed a resume.
- ☐ YOU have a copy of the names of all medical doctors, therapists, counselors and their phone numbers.

- YOU have a copy of your Medicaid Card (MA #) and have been informed that YOU may be eligible for MA until the age of 26 if YOU "age-out of foster care."
- YOU have a copy of your immunization record.
- YOU know when your last medical appointments were (eyes, physical, mental health, and dental exam).
- YOU have a copy of all the names of your medications.
- YOU have information on how to create a Health Care Directive.
- YOU have information about how to re-apply for social security benefits; SSI or SSDI (if applicable).
- YOU have information about how to maintain healthy relationships.
- YOU have a plan for a safe and stable place to live post discharge.
- YOU have completed the Housing Authority assistance application.
- YOU have a copy of the "Landlord and Tenant Rights in ND."
- YOU know where to go if YOU become homeless.
- YOU have been enrolled in the Tribe (if applicable).
- YOU have a copy of your Tribal certificate (if applicable).
- YOU have a copy of your Tribal Enrollment Card (if applicable).
- YOU have a copy of a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) (if applicable).
- YOU have been made aware of local resources to best serve YOU.

Where to Turn for Help: Chain of Command

If YOU feel that YOU are not being treated fairly, there are people who YOU can turn to for help, clarification, or questions.

First Start With Your Case Manager:

Name: _____

Phone #:_____

Your Case Manager's Supervisor:

Name: _____

Phone #:_____

Custodial Agency Director:

Name: _____

Phone #:_____

Regional Human Service Supervisor:

Name: _____

Phone #:_____

Guardian Ad Litem:

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

If YOU do not feel that your problem is being resolved, YOU may call the ND Department of Human Services: Children & Family Services and ask to speak to the ND Foster Care Administrator at 701-328-1018, Permanency Administrator at 701-328-3581, or Chafee Independent Living Administrator at 701-328-4934.

Physical discipline is NOT allowed. If someone uses physical discipline on YOU or YOU feel YOU have been abused and/or neglected, YOU can call and report it to local law enforcement and it will be investigated. **Your name is confidential** (by law).

In case of emergency call 911.

Chafee Independent Living Services

It is the mission of the ND Chafee Foster Care Independent Program to ensure that YOUth involved in the foster care system receive services and support which will enable YOUth to successfully transition to living independently.

What is Independent Living?

Independent living is an ongoing process that results with YOUth having the resources and skills to live successfully as an adult, thus "independent" of the various systems. YOU do not "attend" independent living nor do YOU "complete" it. ☺

ND Chafee Independent Living Benefits

The ND Chafee Independent Living program helps foster YOUth prepare for living on their own. The program provides supportive services and benefits to eligible YOUth ages 16-21.

<u>The Chafee IL Program consists of:</u>

- Life skills assessment to identify your strengths and needs
- Life skills training in the following core areas:
  - ✓ Self care
  - ✓ Health and safety
  - ✓ Housing
  - ✓ Transportation
  - ✓ Employment
  - ✓ Budget and financial management
  - ✓ Employment

- Supportive services may include:
  - ✓ Assessment and trainings
  - ✓ Prep for college entrance
  - ✓ Assistance with filling out applications, scholarships, etc.
  - ✓ Support and guidance
  - ✓ Funding

- Flex General Funding can support your:
  - ✓ Clothing for work
  - ✓ Household items
  - ✓ GED class fee
  - ✓ Car battery or vehicle repair
  - ✓ Gas to get to/from work
  - ✓ Bus ticket

- Flex Room/Board Funding
  - ✓ Rental deposit
  - ✓ Rent money
  - ✓ Utilities

Chafee IL Coordinators are located in each region across the state of North Dakota to help YOU plan and manage resources available to YOU.

<u>Common Chafee Independent Living life skills include:</u>

- Housing
  - How to find an apartment?
- Employment
  - What to look for in a job?
- Household Basics
  - How to maintain a safe and clean home?
- Taxes
  - How to file taxes?
- Banking
  - How to balance a checkbook?
- Internet Safety
  - What to put on Facebook?
- Education
  - Is College for me?
- Money Management
  - How to budget my paycheck?

Education & Training Voucher

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program is a federally-funded (Chafee) and state-administered education program.

ETV Eligibility:

1. **YOUth** who "aged-out of foster care," were discharged on or after their 18th birthday, or continue in 18+ Continued Care past their 18th birthday, and who have not reached their 21st birthday at the time of application.
2. YOUth who were adopted or entered kinship guardianship from foster care after age 16, but have not reached their 21st birthday.
3. YOUth participating in the ETV Program on their 21st birthday can remain eligible until they turn age 23, as long as they are enrolled and making satisfactory progress toward completing their post-secondary education or training program.
4. YOUth who are United States Citizens or qualified non-citizens.
5. YOUth who are, or will be enrolled into a program at an accredited or pre-accredited college, university, technical, or vocational school.
6. YOUth who agree to be an active participant in the Chafee Independent Living Program while they are receiving ETV funding.
7. ETV award preference will be given to YOUth who were in foster care for twelve months or greater.

ETV provides YOUth with up to **$5000** of financial assistance per academic year to help reach your post-secondary educational or vocational training goals. YOUth are given a **$20,000 lifetime maximum** to go to school to further your education.

ETV applications are due to ND Department of Human Services Children and Family Services by:

- Fall Semester = August 15th
- Spring Semester = December 15th
- Summer Semester = May 15th

Youth Recipients of the ETV have said:

- "The **ETV** has been so helpful in furthering my education." ~M -Age 19
- "YOU are able to pursue more options after high school with the **ETV**." ~C -Age 18
- "The **ETV** has helped me out SO much to be able to go to college and has allowed me to accomplish my education goals!" ~P -Age 21
- "The **ETV** is helping me pay for college. Thank YOU so much!" ~K -Age 17
- "I received the lifetime maximum of $20,000 to go to college after foster care! That is a lot of money that I do not have to pay back in loans!" ~H -Age 23
- "The **ETV** helped me buy a laptop for my first semester of college. I was able to use that laptop for all of my college years." ~J -Age 23

Other Financial Assistance for College

To receive financial aid from the government such as a PELL Grant, YOU must apply for federal financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year that YOU attend college.

Financial Aid & Educational Scholarships:

www.fafsa.ed.gov ~ Federal Financial Aid
www.finaid.org
www.orphan.org
www.fastweb.com
www.collgeboard.org.
www.college.gov
www.scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarships-by-state/north-dakota-scholarships/

ND YOUth Leadership Board

The statewide YOUth Leadership Board is a group of young people who are currently in foster care or are Foster Care Alumni *(were once in foster care)*. YOUth Representatives apply to be a member of the board each spring. They are strong, they advocate, they are YOUth, they promote independent living skills and they are each successful today!!

The board creates a quarterly newsletter called "**SAY IT,**" which stands for "**Strong Advocating YOUth Independent Today.**" The newsletter is emailed from ND Department of Human Services Children and Family Services to custodians and Chafee IL Coordinators to share with North Dakota YOUth.

The ND YOUth Representatives are paid members of the board and they each give input and a YOUth perspective for developing policy and programs. They make recommendations to improve services for children and YOUth in foster care. They gather in Bismarck quarterly to discuss topics that they want addressed in our child welfare system; topics that effect YOUth in our state. The board created the ND YOUth website and this handbook!

**** Applications for board membership are due by May 15th each year ****

ASK YOUR CASE MANAGER OR CHAFEE IL COORDINATOR FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THIS EXCITING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY!!

ND Medicaid

If you were in Foster Care at age 18 or older in North Dakota, you likely qualify for free ND Medicaid until you reach age 26! YOU must contact your local county social services office to enroll. Be sure to say you are a former foster youth when you go to sign up! Services likely to be covered include medical care, vision exams, substance abuse treatment, mental health services, counseling, and dental care.

If YOU have trouble enrolling or have more questions YOU may call your Case Manager, Regional Independent Living Coordinator, or the ND Department of Human Services; Children & Family Services and ask to speak to the ND Foster Care Administrator at 701-328-1018, Permanency Administrator at 701-328-3581, or Chafee Independent Living Administrator at 701-328-4934, or

Tips To Transition Your Health Care

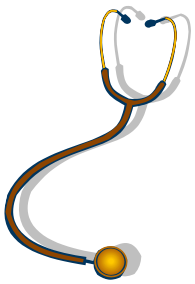
Getting older means your health care needs may change. Eventually, YOU will need to transition from a Pediatrician to a Family Practice Physician for adults. Your current clinic will help YOU know when the time is right to find a new doctor. They want to help YOU get the services and treatment that are best for YOU as you become a young adult.

Stay well

- Learn about your medical condition or disability
- Learn how to manage your own care and treatments
- Learn about the medications that YOU are taking
- Know the warning signs for emergency help
- Know how tobacco, alcohol, and drugs affect your health
- Maintain physical fitness, eat a proper diet, maintain a good weight, and sleep
- Know who YOU can talk to about your mental health

Who can help plan your medical transition?

- Your doctor or nurse practitioner
- Your social worker
- Your parents
- A friend who has been through the process



How do YOU pick a new doctor?

- Ask your current doctor for a referral
- Ask your social worker, therapist, or a professional for advice on selecting a new doctor or reference of a new physician

Take steps to move toward adult health care:

1. Start early – Plan ahead!
2. Know how to explain your health care needs. Make a list of all the things YOU need to keep yourself healthy.
3. Keep a record of your appointments, medical history, phone numbers of doctors and your medications.
4. Begin to make your own medical appointments.
5. Write down questions for your doctor or nurse practitioner before your visit.
6. Learn about your health insurance.
7. Talk to your pediatric doctor about when the best time would be to transfer your care.
8. Go to your Primary Care Provider (doctor) for routine checkups and when YOU are feeling sick. This will help YOU maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Medical Information

** Fill out and fold into your wallet **

Name:	DOB:	My Dr. Name:
Parent/Guardian Name:	Emergency Contact:	My Dr. Phone #:
Parent/Guardian #:	Emergency Contact #:	My Allergies:
Notes:		My Medications:

18+ Continued Foster Care

If YOU want or need to stay in foster care after turning 18, North Dakota has "18+ Continued Foster Care" that is available to eligible current and former foster care YOUth up to the age of 21 years old if YOU meet certain criteria.

YOU must:

1. Be between the ages of 18 and 21.
2. Need continued foster care services.
3. Have aged-out of foster care at age 18 or greater from County Social Services, Tribal Social Services (Title IV-E eligible only) or Division of Juvenile Services.
4. Qualify in at least one of the program eligibility categories.
5. Agree to and sign the 18+ Continued Foster Care Agreement (SFN 60).
6. Return to foster care within six months of their last discharge date.

Program Eligibility

YOU must fall into one or more of these categories:

1. **Education**
   a. YOU must participate in secondary or post-secondary education on a full or part-time basis. *(High School, GED, College, etc.)*

2. **Employment**
   a. YOU must work at least 80 hours per month.

3. **Employment Preparatory Program**
   a. YOU must attend a program that is designed to promote or remove barriers to employment. There could also be educational components tied to this type of programming *(Job Corps).*

4. **Medical Condition or Disability**
   a. YOU must be unable to participate in educational or employment activities stated above due to a medical condition or disability. A medical condition or disability would have likely been identified long before a child enters 18+ Continued Foster Care.

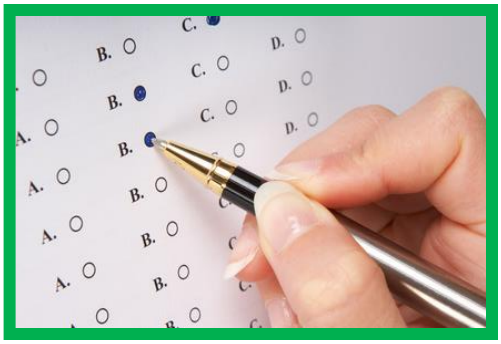
Talk to your case manager about the options available to YOU for 18+.

In North Dakota, YOU are allowed up to six month once YOU leave care to decide if YOU would like to voluntarily sign back into foster care if things are not going as planned.

NOTE: The hardest part has been finding foster homes with space to take YOUth back into the house once YOUth leave care.

National YOUth in Transition Database (NYTD)

What is NYTD? NYTD collects two forms of data!
(1) Surveys are completed by select foster care youth
(2) IL service data is provided and collected on all foster care youth. The data will help improve service delivery to North Dakota foster care youth!



Who Completes the Survey? Every three years, North Dakota will ask 17 year old foster care youth if they would like to take the NYTD survey. Youth who choose to complete the first *NYTD* survey at age 17 will be asked again to take part 2 at age 19 and survey part 3 at age 21.

Do I have to take the NYTD Survey?
No, you decide if you want to take the NYTD survey at age 17. If you choose not to, there will be no penalty for you or to the state of ND. However, if you participate at age 17 and then you do not complete surveys at ages 19 or 21, North Dakota will be subject to the loss of funding at that time.

The ND NYTD Survey Group is one way for YOU to offer input and make change to ND foster care!

Super Important: If you take the survey at age 17, you become part of the ND NYTD Survey Group **until you are the age of 21**. ND will need to contact you to take the follow up NYTD surveys at ages 19 and 21.

Benefits: The survey allows you to use your experience to make things better for future foster youth. If you participate at age 17, you receive an incentive gift card for your time! ☺

Confidentiality/How Information Is Used:
IL services and survey data will be used to evaluate and improve programs in North Dakota, then shared with the federal government. Your name and personal information will not be released.

For more information about NYTD, contact 701-328-4934

Stay Connected

If you take the first survey at age 17 and your contact information changes (address, phone number, email), please contact CFS. This is very important in order for the ND NYTD Survey Group to locate you for the 19 and 21 year old surveys.

Questions & Answers

For YOUth Transitioning Out of Foster Care – Foster Care Alumni

1. What is Independent Living (IL)? How does it work?
   - For more information ask your case manager to meet with an IL coordinator.

2. Am I allowed to go to college? If so, how do I pay for it?
   - Yes. As long as YOU graduated from high school or get your GED, YOU can apply for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), ETV (Education Training Voucher), student loans, etc.

3. Is there a person I can sit down with and get help filling out the FAFSA and choosing what college?
   - Yes. The Chafee Independent Living Coordinator, case manager, or school counselor.

4. Who do I talk to about housing assistance, food stamps, and medical care?
   - Your Chafee Independent Living Coordinator and/or eligibility worker.

5. I want to move in with a relative out of state, can I get assistance to relocate?
   - Talk to case manager, Chafee Independent Living Coordinator, etc.

6. Help I am homeless what can I do?
   - Talk to your Chafee IL Coordinator to see if YOU can apply for medical assistance, food stamps, and housing assistance. There are also shelters throughout the state one can stay at until YOU find housing.

7. What if I moved here from a different state of which I was in care and I am now over 18? Who should I talk to?
   - YOU should find the local county building to ask for assistance or contact your previous case manager asking them to look up information or a contact locally in the state YOU reside.

8. What am I eligible for after 21, and whom can I talk to?
   - Talk with case manager/referral.

IMPORTANT DATES

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Name	Who Are They?	Phone # / Email