

**Comparison of Nebraska’s Current Supports and Services for Youth Age 18 – 21 and Services in the Voluntary Program Included in Cost Analysis**

Current Services	Services in Proposed Voluntary Care to 21 Program
<b>Eligibility</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All youth who exit care to independent living or to adoption or guardianship after age 16 are eligible for IL services up to age 21, which include case management and limited housing support.</li> <li>• Youth that age out of care and are enrolled in postsecondary education or vocational training may participate in the Former Ward Program and receive up to \$352 per month for living expenses, payment for college dorm, and Medicaid. Youth must enter the Former Ward program prior to discharge from DHHS or meet one of two exceptions:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A youth’s attendance is postponed due to a mental or physical incapacity which prevents participation in an educational program for a temporary period of time: A youth may sit out one term from the time of discharge from ward status through age 20. This includes the semester immediately following discharge if this was the plan before discharge; or</li> <li>2. A youth who has entered into the program, is attending classes and then experiences an interruption due to mental or physical incapacity. The youth may sit out until such time as the incapacity abates</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Current and former foster youth age 17-23 may participate in the Education Training Voucher (ETV) Program to assist with expenses related to post-secondary education and receive up to \$1500 per year</li> </ul>	<p>Youth who meet the following criteria could opt to enter the voluntary program and receive continued placement, case management support, and Medicaid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing secondary education or in a program leading to an equivalent credential</li> <li>• Enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education</li> <li>• Participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers, to employment</li> <li>• Employed for at least 80 hours per month, or</li> <li>• Have a medical condition that renders youth incapable of engaging in any of these activities.</li> <li>• The ETV program would remain available with the same program requirements and voucher amounts.</li> </ul>
<b>Case Management and Transition Planning</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent Living Specialists provide one on one support in implementation of the IL plan to youth that are age 16 –21 transitioning to independent living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All youth who opted to stay in care 18 – 21 would have a case manager who would be responsible for monthly in-person visits, and supporting youth in setting transition goals, accessing needed supports and services, and taking the steps needed to reach goals.</li> <li>• Administrative or court reviews of progress toward the goals of the transition plan would happen every six months.</li> </ul>
<b>Placement and Housing Support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth 17 up to age 19 in IL may receive \$210 for deposit and up to \$352 monthly for housing expenses mailed directly to youth.</li> <li>• Youth that are eligible for the Former Ward Program (see eligibility requirements above) receive up to \$352 per month for living expenses. If in a dorm, HHS pays dorm expenses directly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth who opted to stay in care would have the following placement options available to them:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relative foster care</li> <li>○ Non-relative foster care</li> <li>○ Group home</li> <li>○ Scattered Site Housing</li> <li>○ Host Home</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Current Services	Services in Proposed Voluntary Care to 21 Program
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ College Dorm</li> <li>○ Direct Stipend</li> <li>• Case managers would have flex funds available to assist youth who needed emergency assistance or start-up housing support.</li> </ul>
<b>Judicial Oversight and Reviews</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No judicial oversight or administrative review process in place for youth age 19 – 21 who are discharged and in IL services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 month periodic case reviews would be conducted by either the court or an administrative body.</li> <li>• Annual judicial reviews to determine that the agency made reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan would be required unless young people are placed through Voluntary Placement Agreements. With Voluntary Placement agreements a judicial finding that the voluntary placement is in the best interest of the child would be required with 180 days of placement.</li> </ul>