

JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Policy Solutions to Improve Outcomes for All
Youth and Young Adults Who Experience Foster Care

APR
2022



Legislative History of the Chafee Program

1985

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 authorizes new entitlement funds to help young people transition from foster care

1999

Foster Care Independence Act creates the Chafee Program as we know it today

2008

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act extends Title IV-E foster care eligibility to age 21

2014

Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act updates purpose of Chafee; empowers youth engagements and decision making; promotes developmentally appropriate activities

2018

Family First Prevention Services Act extends reach of program to youth up to 23; ETV up to 26

2020

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provides an additional \$400 million to Chafee for COVID relief for young people

2001:

PSSF Amendments of 2001 authorizes ETV program

2009:

Creation of Senate Caucus on Foster Youth

2010:

Creation of Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth (House)



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What is the Chafee Program?

- **Flexible federal funding** to states, territories, and Indian tribes
- Up to 30 percent of funding can be for room and board for youth over 18
- To support current and former foster youth in their transition to adulthood.
- Eligible to youth age 14 to 21 (or 23 in some states)
- Typical Chafee supportive services
 - Case work
 - Educational assistance
 - Career exploration
 - Mentoring
 - Preventive health

THE APPROACH



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Building the Chafee Redesign Policy Initiative Methodology and Timeline

Fall-Winter 2020

Literature review of research & policy reform proposals, priority on recommendations from young people

December 2020 – April 2021

Focus groups with young people, interviews with diverse stakeholders; Transition memo to new administration

May 2021 – July 2021

Analysis, policy development; strategic sharing and collecting feedback. Monitoring and learning from pandemic relief implementation

Fall-Winter 2021

Develop campaign model; finalize policy framework and recommendations; engage strategic partners; launch campaign activities

2020

2021

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

2022

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

January



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"You expect me to
take on the world
at age 18."

– FOCUS GROUP



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THE OPPORTUNITY



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Why Redesign Chafee?

- **The vision is right**, but the program lacks the design and resources to achieve its goal of nurturing successful transitions to adulthood. We also know racial inequities exist.
- Today's policymakers have the benefit of twenty years of policy research and insights from young people with lived experience. We know more about what works.
- **Chafee is woefully under-delivering** the help that's needed. Prior to the pandemic, only a third of youth leaving foster care at age 18 received any Chafee-funded support services.

Why act now?

- Key focus of Biden Administration is advancing policies to promote equity
- Biden Administration is also committed to engaging voices of young people
- Key Congressional champions eager to “take the next step” on support for older youth

THE REFORM



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Journey To Success Recommendations



POLICY SPOTLIGHT:

Health and Healing

- Expand the nature and scope of services available and funded through Medicaid, such as peer support and virtual behavioral health supports, with a focus on BIPOC youth
- Increase the Federal Match Assistance Program (FMAP) to 100% for all mental health and supportive services provided under the Early Childhood and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT); gradually reduce FMAP to 90% over a five-year period
- Reduce the use of and increase oversight of psychotropic medication by updating the requirements in the Title IV-B Health Oversight and Coordination plan



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POLICY SPOTLIGHT:

Health and Healing

- Redesign the Chafee program to focus on health and healing, family and permanency, and housing and economic security, and make services available to young adults ages 18-26 who were in foster care during their adolescence or encountered similar systems (e.g., homelessness, juvenile justice)
- Fund a core array of community-based services and resources that support the successful transition from foster care to adulthood
- Improve the array of (and access to) mental health services to meet the complex needs of young people, including non-clinical services that help build and strengthen family, peer, and community connections



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**POLICY SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO EXPERIENCE FOSTER CARE**