

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE



When youth exit Nebraska's foster care system the state stops being their legal guardian and is no longer responsible for their care. Thus, youth who are discharged from foster care are basically on their own. Sometimes this happens for youth even younger than age 19. There are two new opportunities in Nebraska that may be able to help these young people in their transition to adulthood.

Medicaid Coverage from Ages 18-26

As of January 1, 2014, **many young adults exiting foster care are eligible to receive Medicaid coverage until they turn 26** under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).* Young adults who already exited foster care and aren't yet 26 years old could also be eligible.

**The ACA is a federal act that was signed into law by President Obama in 2010 to make sure that all Americans are able to have affordable health insurance coverage.*

Services include:

The full benefits of Medicaid, such as:

- Screening, prevention, and early intervention services
- Diagnostic services and treatment for physical and mental health conditions
- Dental and vision care

Young adults may be eligible if they:

- Were in foster care at age 18 or aged out of foster care at age 19 or 21
- Were enrolled in Medicaid while in foster care

How to apply:

Young adults who may be eligible for this coverage can apply for Medicaid online at <http://www.accessnebraska.ne.gov> (make sure they click "yes" when asked if they want to find out if they can get help paying for health coverage, and make sure they answer the question about whether they were ever in foster care). They can also contact the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Medicaid Division at 1-855-632-7633, 402-473-7000 (in Lincoln), or 402-595-1178 (in Omaha).

For more information:

- Visit our B2I website at: <https://neappleseed.org/b2i>
- Visit our Medicaid to 26 website at: <https://neappleseed.org/coveredtil26NE>
- Contact Nebraska Appleseed directly at 402-438-8853

The Bridge to Independence Act

The Bridge to Independence Act includes three statewide programs in Nebraska that provide services and support for young adults between the ages of 19 and 21 who were formerly in foster care.

Bridge to Independence Program (B2I)

For young adults who had an abuse or neglect case and were in an out-of-home placement at age 19, were discharged to independent living, or exited foster care to a guardianship at age 16+:

- Medicaid coverage
- Monthly stipend
- Young adult-directed case management services

Extended Adoption Program

For young adults who entered into an adoption agreement at age 16+:

- Medicaid coverage
- Extended adoption payments

Extended Guardianship Program

For young adults who entered into a guardianship agreement at age 16+ and choose not to participate in the B2I program:

- Medicaid coverage
- Extended guardianship payments

Young adults may be eligible if they are doing one of the following:

- Going to school (e.g. high school, GED program, college, vocational education program)
- Working part time (at least 80 hours per month)
- Participating in a work program or activity (e.g. internship, volunteering)
- Unable to do any of those things because of a medical condition

How to apply:

The application is online at www.dhhs.ne.gov/b2i. For details about this, young adults can contact their caseworker, their guardian ad litem, their local DHHS office, or Nebraska Appleseed's Intake and Information Line at 1-800-845-3746.