
ROAD-TO-INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

65C-31.004, F.A.C.; 65C-31.007, F.A.C.; 65C-31.008, F.A.C., §409.1451(5)(B) FLA. STAT. (2006)

Age: Can apply from 18 to 21, and renew up to age 23

Eligibility Requirements: § 409.1451(5)(b)2; 65C-31.004(1)(a), F.A.C.

- Young adult must be 18 but not yet 21 at the time of initial application (can renew up to 23)
- Living in foster care or SIL on 18th birthday,
- After reaching 16 years of age were adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian and have spent a minimum of 6 months in foster care within the 12 months preceding such placement or adoption, or
- 6 months in foster care before 18th birthday (calculated over young adults lifetime)
- Dependent pursuant to Chapter 39 on 18th birthday
- Resident of Florida
- Enrolled in full-time high-school (unless disability requires part-time), adult education high school, GED program or admitted in full time eligible post secondary institution (unless disability requires part-time)
- Any foster child who has earned a standard high school diploma, a special diploma or a special certificate of high school completion. This means that if a youth completes high school early, he or she will be able to go on to attend either a community college, college or university, or a qualifying vocational program.

Application Process: 65C-31.004(1)(c), F.A.C.; § 409.1451(5)(b)5b

- Service worker shall help young adult complete RTI Application, if requested
- Service worker shall provide young adult with brochure “Independent Living Benefits Due Process Rights”
- Complete RTI Application – with help of service worker if needed
 - Can apply prior 6 months prior to 18th birthday 65C-31.004(1)(c)1, F.A.C.
- Documentation of enrollment in full-time school, or admitted to full-time school (unless disability requires part-time)
- Young adult shall submit application to IL service worker
- IL service worker has 10 working days to review and approve or deny.
 - Approved: notification to young adult within 10 days of determination
 - First payment distributed at the beginning of the month of the young adults 18th birthday 65C-31.004(1)(c)3, F.A.C.
 - Denied: service worker shall notify young adult within 10 days, provide young adult with process for appeal, and notify of other assistance – transitional, aftercare support services. 65C-31.004(1)(c)4, F.A.C.
 - Young adult can request a fair hearing to appeal 65C-31.009, F.A.C.
 - See Guideline for Fair Hearing Process
- If young adult does not apply prior to 18th birthday, they can apply one more time before 21st birthday. No retroactive benefits. 65C-31.004(1)(c)5, F.A.C.
- Maximum award is currently \$1,013.22 per month

- Can be paid to young adult, or if requested in writing, to a third party
- Young adult must also apply for other grants and scholarship § 409.1451(5)(b)3, Fla. Stat. (2006)
 - Can complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) – based on young adults income

RTI Renewal Process 65C-31.004(2), F.A.C.; § 409.1451(5)(b)j, Fla. Stat. (2006)

- Must renew yearly
- Can renew up to 23rd birthday if:
 - Complete number of hours required by school
 - Maintain appropriate progress
- Must take place 90 days before young adults birthday
- Young adult must provide report card each semester, enrollment form showing continued enrollment

RTI Reinstatement. A young adult who does not qualify for or chooses not to seek renewal may apply for reinstatement once prior to the 23rd birthday § 409.1451(5)(b)

RTI Needs Assessment – High-School or Post Secondary

- Must be completed by each young adult that receives RTI.

High School Needs Assessment – determines the funding needs of young adult formerly in foster care who is in high school. 65C-31.007, F.A.C.

- As of July 23, 2007 the maximum award is \$1,013.22 a month (federal minimum wage x 40 hours a week) and a minimum of \$25.00
- Young adult has to have applied and be eligible for RTI
- Must meet with student, or phone is ok if out of state
- If student does not give all necessary information then service worker must provide a written list of documents needed.
- No later than 30 days prior to 18th birthday or if 18, within 30 days of receiving application and documents.
- After care and transitional support will not count against the award.
- SSI/SSA benefits may be counted against RTI award only if young adult wants these amounts included.
- Special needs allowance – special field of study, special equipment for disabled students, childcare costs for students with dependent children, and medical and dental costs not covered by insurance.
- Amount young adult earns when they would earn if they worked more than 20 hours at Florida’s minimum wage is counted against the amount of the RTI award. Anything less doesn’t count against award amount.

Post Secondary Needs Assessment 65C-31.008, F.A.C.

Determines funding needs (living and educational needs) of young adult formerly in foster care who is in post secondary education

- Must be done 2 times a year (academic year and summer – in school or working)
- Young adult has to have applied and be eligible for RTI

- Young adult must provide: Student Budget from Financial Aid Office, tuition, fee exemptions, grants, scholarships, SSI/SSA, or any other source of funds that may reduce cost of attending school.
- Amount young adult earns when they would earn if they worked more than 20 hours at Florida's minimum wage is counted against the amount of the RTI award
- Summer months – young adult can work or attend summer classes for which they can receive RTI award
- First \$1,500 of grants or other scholarships does not reduce the amount of RTI award. \$500 for summer school
- Young adult or service worker can ask for a recalculation of RTI award as long as the amount of change is \$50 or more monthly for the remainder of award period