
OVERVIEW

A priority of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is to improve the success of foster youth transitioning into adulthood from the state's foster care system. The goal is to help young adults make the transition from foster care to independence, which is the ability to take care of oneself physically, socially, economically, and psychologically.

Federal law mandates that state and local governments offer an extensive program of education, training, employment, and financial support for a young person leaving foster care. Participation in such programs must begin several years before high school completion and continue, as needed, until the youth is discharged from foster care, establishes independence, or reaches 23 years of age.

**Independent Living
Preparation**

Independent Living (IL) is an ongoing process of maturation, skill development, and assuming responsibility for self. IL services should provide practical experiences that are designed to assist youth in developing the skills needed for a successful transition to adulthood; see [FOM 722-03C, Older Youth: Preparation, Placement, and Discharge](#), for all requirements of IL preparation.

**ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA**

In Michigan, Federal funding under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood is called Youth in Transition (YIT) funding. Federal law defines YIT eligible youth as those who experienced foster care after the 14th birthday and who are under age 23; see [FOM 721, Foster Care, for the definition of foster care](#). An eligible youth can receive YIT-funded goods and services.

Determination

A YIT eligibility determination must be completed in MiSACWIS prior to any funding approval. When a youth's eligibility changes, a new determination must be completed. Examples of eligibility changes are when a case goes from open to closed or from an ineligible placement to an eligible placement.

Age

A youth who has been placed in a MDHHS supervised foster care placement after his/her 14th birthday, and meets all other criteria, is eligible for YIT-funded goods and services until his/her 23rd birthday.

Eligible Placements

A youth who has been in an eligible foster care or juvenile justice placement through the MDHHS, is eligible for YIT-funded services. Eligible placements include:

- Licensed foster family homes.
- Relative provider homes.
- Group homes.
- Emergency shelters.
- Child caring institutions.
- Independent living and semi-independent living placements.

Ineligible Placements

YIT is not available while the youth is in one of the ineligible placements.

Facilities

A youth placed in an ineligible facility listed below may be eligible for YIT funding if released to an eligible placement.

- A public or private secure placement facility.
- A non-secure public child caring institution for more than 25 children.
- Detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or other facilities operated primarily for the detention of children determined to be delinquent.
- Jail.

Parental Home

A youth who continues to reside in the parental home, regardless of removal and out-of-home placement of siblings; see [FOM 722-01](#),

[Placement with Respondent/Adjudicated Parent and Siblings in Foster Care.](#)

A youth removed from one parent and placed immediately with a non-offending parent, regardless of removal and out-of-home placement of siblings; see [FOM 722-01, Placement with a Non-Offending Parent and Siblings in Foster Care with Court Jurisdiction.](#)

A youth who has reunified with a parent is YIT eligible if he/she was in a MDHHS supervised eligible placement at some point after his/her 14th birthday and meets all other criteria for eligibility.

SPECIAL ELIGIBILITY SITUATIONS

Juvenile Justice

A youth who has or had an open juvenile justice case and is, or was, placed in an eligible placement under the supervision of MDHHS after the 14th birthday is eligible for YIT-funded services until the 23rd birthday. This may include a youth who has never had an open abuse/neglect case. It may also include a youth committed to MDHHS and supervised under the County of Wayne's contract with a Community Management Organization (CMO).

A youth in a secure setting or who is incarcerated is not eligible while in those placements.

AWOLP/ Runaway

If a youth is Absent without Legal Permission (AWOLP) but returns to an eligible living arrangement the youth is eligible to receive YIT funds, provided he/she meets all other eligibility criteria.

Immigrant Youth Not Documented

A youth who is court ordered under the care and supervision of the department is eligible, whether or not he/she is a citizen or legal resident of the United States.

Tribal Youth

A youth placed and supervised by a tribal child welfare court may be eligible for YIT funds provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.

Married youth

A married youth may be eligible for YIT funds provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.

Incarcerated Youth

An incarcerated youth is not eligible to receive YIT funds. When a youth is no longer incarcerated, he/she may receive YIT funds if he/she meets all other eligibility criteria.

Closed cases

A youth whose case is closed and met all the eligibility criteria for YIT during the time he/she was under MDHHS supervision, is eligible for YIT if currently between the ages of 18 and 23.

In some cases, a youth whose case is closed and who fits the above criteria but is 16-17 years old may be eligible. Exceptions may be made if all the following criteria are met:

- The youth met the eligibility criteria for YIT while his/her case was open.
- A YIT-funded item or service was accessed prior to the case closing.
- Requested YIT services will support the youth through the stages of transition.
- Requested YIT funds will be used to gain access to goods and services designed to assist the youth to:
 - Successfully prepare for, achieve, and maintain an independent living situation.
 - Prepare the youth for functional independence.
 - Ensure the youth's physical, social, economic, and psychological needs are met; see [FOM 722-03C, Older Youth: Preparation, Placement, and Discharge](#).

- Prior to YIT funding approval for a youth with a closed case, an assessment of need must be completed. This is documented on the [DHS-5305, Request for Youth in Transition Funds Checklist](#).

Out-of- State/County Residency

- **Open Case:** If a youth is placed in another state, the state of origin must fund the identified independent living services for that youth while the case is open. The originating state is also responsible for foster care maintenance payments and case planning, which includes a written description of the programs and services that will be provided to help a child age 14 or over prepare for the transition from foster care to independence.
- If a youth with an open case moves to a new county from his/her county of origin, the county of origin must cover YIT expenses.
- **Closed Case:** A youth 18-22 years-old who has a closed foster care or juvenile justice case but was eligible for YIT-funded services while the case was open is eligible for YIT funding in a new state or county to which he/she moves. The county or state in which the youth currently resides is responsible for providing closed case YIT services regardless of the county or state in which the foster care or juvenile justice case was open.
- If a youth with a closed case is age 16 or 17 and found eligible for YIT funding, he/she must be served in the county or state in which he/she resides.

YOUTH SERVICE PLANS

For an eligible youth who is currently in care, the case service plan must identify goals and methods for achieving them in the following areas:

- Education, including obtaining a high school diploma or GED, and post-secondary and vocational education.
- Employment, including job placement and retention training.

- Interactions with dedicated adults in approved mentoring relationships.
- Relationship skills.
- Life skills, including preventive health care, substance abuse prevention, sexual responsibility, sexual assault, dating violence, and responsible parenting.
- Housing.

Young people must actively participate in developing their service plan and accepting responsibility for the successful completion of the plan; see [FOM 722-08C, Parent-Agency Treatment Plan and Service Agreement](#).

When a youth uses YIT funding, the need for that specific item or service must be documented on the DHS-5305, Request for Youth in Transition Funds Checklist. Additionally, when completing the service plan, all independent living services and supports that were provided during that report period must be documented in the Child Assessment of Needs and Strengths (CANS) for youth in care due to abuse/neglect and in the JJ Strengths and Needs Assessment for juvenile justice youth. This includes all services or goods provided with YIT funds, the outcome of those services and any barriers to achieving identified goals.

Assessment of a youth's benefit from services provided with YIT funds is an ongoing process and should be documented in future reports. For a youth receiving independent living services from a YIT-contracted agency, a youth service plan must be completed to address the goals and services in the same manner as identified for the case service plan.

PRIVATE CHILD PLACING AGENCY FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT

If a youth is placed through a private child placing agency, YIT funds will not be authorized until it is verified that the service is not covered by the Private Agency Foster Care (PAFC) contract.

A private child placing agency provider is required to provide daily living/IL skills training.

**APPROVED
EXPENSES**

All expenditures must support the youth in achieving self-sufficiency and be documented in the youth's service plan. YIT funds may be used to provide services that are not available from other funding sources or agencies. YIT funds may be used to provide goods and services listed below after all other resources for the same goods or services have been exhausted.

Education***High school education support, services, and supplies.***

- Tutoring.
- Summer school to retake a class or to accelerate studies.
- Books and supplies for classes such as lab fees, calculators, and uniforms.
- Expenses for school-sponsored **educational** field trips.
- Fees/expenses related to extra-curricular activities such as clubs, athletics, theater, or music.
- Senior expenses: senior pictures, class ring, senior fees, graduation invitations, cap and gown, yearbook and diploma plaque.

Some senior expenses are reimbursable through case services. YIT can pay the balance on these items. Only an additional \$50 can be accessed in the case of prom expenses.

- Prom dress or prom tuxedo rental, including shoes and accessories, for **senior** prom up to \$150 for youth who are not eligible to use case services.

Pre-college expenses.

- College applications - up to a total of \$150.
- SAT/ACT fees - up to three of each test.
- SAT/ACT preparation classes.
- Dormitory holding fees/deposit prior to being Education and Training Voucher (ETV) eligible.

Adult education.

- GED program and test.
- Tutoring for GED.
- Study skill training.
- Alternative education programs.
- Non-ETV funded college coursework.
- Non-ETV funded vocational coursework.

Note: YIT funding is not to be used for post-secondary education expenses for students who are receiving ETV funding or attending an ETV eligible institution and are otherwise eligible for ETV funding. For example, a youth who is attending a university and loses temporary eligibility for ETV due to low grades, is not eligible to receive YIT for tuition payment; see [FOM 960, Education and Training Voucher \(ETV\) Program](#).

Youth who have reached the 5-years allowed maximum of ETV funding cannot access YIT funding to cover post-secondary expenses.

- Computer/Tablet – a maximum lifetime limit of \$1,500 will be allowed for the purchase of a computer or tablet, and related accessories (accompanying software, printer, carrying case, etc.)

Note: A youth receiving ETV funding, or who is otherwise eligible for ETV, may not use YIT funding for post-secondary computer needs.

**Vocational and
Employment
Services**

- Birth certificate - for closed cases only.
- State identification card or driver's license.
- Certification courses such as electronic, plumbing, first aid, lifeguard, cosmetology, etc.

- Interview clothing - a maximum of \$250.
- Uniforms and footwear.
- Job skill training classes that relate directly to the youth's goal.
- Vocational equipment such as tool set, or cosmetology kit.
- License/certification fees.

Independent Living Training

Training for skills such as cooking, laundry, accessing community resources, learning how to use public transportation, budgeting, banking, financial management, etc.

Parenting

Classes, trainings, etc.

Mentoring and Family Connection

- Connecting a youth to a mentor and mentoring program.
- Family connection services not covered by family reunification services funding.

Housing

There is a lifetime limit of \$1,500 for first month's rent and security deposit. Prior to providing assistance, the caseworker must verify the suitability of the living arrangement and the youth's ability to maintain the residence (e.g. ability to make future rent payments), and document this information in the service plan or a [DHS-5305, Request for Youth in Transition Funds Checklist](#).

YIT funds may not be used to fund ongoing room and board expenses.

YIT funds may not be used to acquire real property, including houses, trailers, or land.

Youth must be in out-of-home care at the age of 18 to utilize YIT for first month's rent and security/utility deposit and can use it between the ages of 18-23.

Start-Up Goods

There is a lifetime limit of \$1,000 for start-up goods, which may include things like furniture, cleaning, hygiene, and household goods.

Youth must be in out-of-home care at age 18 to utilize YIT for start-up goods and can use it between the ages of 18-23.

If a youth is a parent or expecting a baby, there is an additional \$500 allowed for start-up goods, to be used specifically for items needed for the baby. Examples include car seats, cribs, strollers, etc.

When a father requests funds for start-up goods for his child, verification of legal parentage must be provided. Acceptable forms of documentation include affidavit of parentage, child support order, birth certificate with the father's name identified, or a court order naming the youth as the legal father.

No more than 30 percent of the state's YIT allocation may be spent on housing, including first month's rent/deposits and start-up goods.

Medical and Health

- Preventive health care (pregnancy, smoking avoidance, substance abuse, hygiene, and nutrition). Pre-natal appointments and tests not covered by Medicaid or other health insurance.

Mental Health

- Behavioral health services **for youth with a closed case only**. Health insurance must be accessed prior to utilizing YIT.
- Interpersonal/communication or relationship-building classes.

Membership Fees

- For memberships such as sports, community organizations, associations.

Transportation

- Transportation for educational or employment purposes.

- Gas cards or reimbursement for gas when used for a documented transportation need to employment, education or other activity related to self-sufficiency.
- Bus cards.
- Medical, including counseling transportation (closed case services only).
- Driver's training courses and testing.

Note: For State wards, driver's training must first be accessed through Case Service Payment. YIT can pay the balance over \$300 maximum allowable under Case Service Payment; see [FOM 903-9, Case Service Payment](#).

Vehicle Purchase

- Vehicle purchase if county allocation allows it and it does not prevent other youth from being served.
- There is a \$5,000 lifetime authorization limit to purchase, not lease, a vehicle. A [DHS-720, YIT Exception](#), must be completed and signed by the county director or designee when the purchase is over the general \$600 limit.
- The vehicle must be used as a primary means of transportation to support the youth's employment, education, or independent living goals.
- The youth must have a valid driver's license and valid automobile insurance or an estimate for automobile insurance.
- The youth must demonstrate the ability to maintain any payments, insurance or other expenses associated with owning a vehicle.
- A vehicle inspection by a licensed mechanic that assesses the mechanical condition of the vehicle is required. The mechanic must use the Kelly Blue Book (KBB) rating system for the condition of the vehicle, and rate as Excellent, Very Good, Good, or Fair.
- Verification of the Kelly Blue Book value of the car, supporting the purchase price of the vehicle in the assessed condition.

Note: If the assessed condition is not supported by the purchase price, YIT cannot be used to purchase the vehicle.

- Documentation for the mechanic's inspections and the KBB or NADA value must be maintained in the case files and uploaded into MiSACWIS.
- Supervisor approval is required prior to the purchase of the vehicle.

Vehicle Insurance

- There is a lifetime limit of a 6-month payment for vehicle insurance.
- The youth must provide three estimates for comparison. The youth is not required to accept the least expensive option.
- Payment for vehicle insurance is only available for a vehicle titled in the youth's name.

Vehicle Repair

- Prior caseworker approval for the cost of repairs as estimated by a certified mechanic is required unless an emergency occurs outside regular MDHHS work hours.
- The vehicle must be registered in the youth's name, or there must be sufficient documentation that the vehicle is the primary transportation used by the youth for work, school, or independent living activities.
- The cost of repairs may not exceed \$900, and if over \$600 a DHS-720, YIT Exception, must be completed and signed by the county director or designee.
- There is a lifetime limit of \$900 for vehicle repairs.

Coalition Building

- Funds to plan for local programming of transitional/independent living services to youth.
- Funds to coordinate an existing program.
- Funding is limited to payments for coffee and meals at state rates within the current guidelines.

- Expenses for youth groups or peer support groups related to independent living.

Note: Peer support groups must not have fewer than four youth per group.

- Reimbursable for youth supervised by MDHHS only. Youth supervised by a private child placing agency are not eligible.
- Development and piloting of new initiatives with prior written approval of the central office IL service YIT analyst.

ITEMS NOT COVERED BY YIT FUNDS

- Entertainment appliances or expenses; televisions, video games, stereos, concert tickets, etc.
- School trips that are not associated with education (for example spring break trip).
- Special recognition gifts to youth unless the gift is an allowable expenditure that helps the youth meet his or her goals.
- Orthodontia.
- Vacation travel.
- Pageants and fashion shows.
- Graduation parties or gifts.
- Birthday party, wedding, or baby shower expenses.
- Court costs, probation fines and costs, parking/traffic tickets.
- Matching funds for AmeriCorps members.
- Services that can be funded through alternative sources such as school districts or private child placing agencies.

Sales Tax

Sales tax is not to be paid on purchases made by MDHHS on behalf of a youth, with two exceptions:

- Reimbursement to youth for YIT eligible purchases that included sales tax.
- Sales tax due for the purchase of a vehicle.

BULK PURCHASES

Local offices may purchase items in bulk such as bus passes/tokens, and gas cards, however all expenditures of YIT must be tied to an individual youth. If a local office chooses to buy items in bulk, the following rules apply:

- The item must be able to assist the youth in meeting the goal of self-sufficiency.
- The purchase should be made based upon the prior year's expenditures on similar items.
- Documentation must exist that comparative research on similar products was completed supporting the bulk purchase.
- The county must follow [ACM 423, Bulk Purchases](#).
- In addition to following ACM 423, a YIT request must be completed for each item distributed from a bulk supply.

GIFT CARDS FOR YOUTH

While it is important to recognize a youth's birthday or special achievement, YIT funds cannot be used to purchase a gift, unless the gift is a YIT-approved item that can be linked to a specific goal for the youth.

YIT may be used to purchase gift cards when found appropriate, When an individual gift card is redeemed for a youth, the receipt itemizing the purchase made with the gift card must be uploaded into MiSACWIS and YIT request must be completed. Gift cards should be purchased in denominations of \$25 or less. All gift cards must be redeemed within the fiscal year purchased. Local county offices must follow [ACM 423, Bulk Purchases](#), and monitor how many gift cards are purchased and how many have been utilized.

**ACCESSING YIT
FUNDS**

Local offices may access YIT funds only for reimbursable goods and services listed above. YIT funds must **not** be used for goods and services normally covered under the foster care rate or reimbursed by foster care. Reimbursable goods and services are those goods and services **not** covered under the age-appropriate rate for foster care (scheduled uniform rate), determination of care supplements for foster care, or special needs items covered by case services payments.

- **Open Case:** A youth will access YIT funds through the assigned foster care worker or juvenile justice specialist.
- **Closed Case:** A youth will access YIT funds through the last assigned foster care worker or juvenile justice specialist or local MDHHS office in the county where the youth currently resides.

Documentation

All YIT funding requests must include documentation that other funding sources were researched and were not available.

YIT requests are entered into MiSACWIS for open cases, and a service authorization must be completed. For a youth with a closed case, a non-CPS intake and service authorization must be entered and approved in MiSACWIS.

For youth with a current or former subsidy case, a paper form of the DHS-4713 can be completed in lieu of a service authorization.

The [DHS-5305, Request for Youth in Transition Funds Checklist](#), is required to be completed for every YIT request processed at the county level. Once approval for the expenditure is obtained at the local level, the DHS-5305 must be placed in the financial section of the case file and uploaded to the *service authorization* section of MiSACWIS.

**Reimbursement
Without Prior
Approval**

All YIT expenditures require prior MDHHS supervisor approval. However, in the event a youth submits a reimbursement request for a YIT eligible expense without documentation of prior approval, a

[DHS-720, Youth in Transition Exception Request Form](#), can be completed and sent to the YIT Analyst in the Education and Youth Services Unit. Exception requests must be sent within 12 months of the purchase, must include all supporting documentation, and are subject to availability of funds.

Reasonable Availability

Local offices must not expend YIT funds on goods and services that are available from other (state/federal) sources. However, these goods and services must be reasonably available. Contact the [YIT analyst](#) for assistance whenever a question regarding reasonableness arises, for example, a youth placed on a six-month waiting list, depending on the service and the youth's needs, may not be reasonable.

Lifetime Limit

There is no lifetime limit for each youth, except in the case of start-up goods, first month's rent/security deposit, vehicle purchase/insurance/repair, and computer. However, discretion should be used in disbursing funds to ensure that every eligible youth is provided appropriate services.

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD)

Monitoring of services and funding, required as part of the application for and use of YIT, occurs through MiSACWIS. The NYTD/YIT Eligibility tab within a youth's case captures the following:

- The number and characteristics of youth receiving services.
- The type and quantity of services being provided.

Outcomes are measured by cohorts of youth who take the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey bi-annually through age 21. The survey shows outcomes of educational attainment, employment, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, non-marital childbirth, incarceration, and high-risk behaviors.

**HUMAN
TRAFFICKING
SCREENING**

Youth receiving YIT funded goods or services must be screened when there is a reasonable cause to believe that he or she may be a victim of human trafficking; see [SRM 300, Human Trafficking of Children](#), for the indicators.

**INDEPENDENT
LIVING
CONTRACTOR
PAYMENTS**

The [DHS-3469, Statement of Expenditures](#), must be used by contracted agencies/persons who are providing services for eligible youths. For each youth who received a YIT service/payment, a completed YIT request, including type of service received, must be attached to the DHS-3469.

**FUNDING AND
PAYMENT****Local Office
Allocation**

YIT funds are allocated to each of the MDHHS county offices for distribution. These funds are available for the provision of IL-related goods and services to eligible youth. County offices may use a portion of these funds to contract services. However, plans must be developed to ensure that eligible youth who are not using contractual services continue to have access to goods and services.

**Payments to
Contractors**

Non-standard contract language must be reviewed and approved by the YIT analyst, who will then submit it to the Bureau of Grants and Purchasing.

Payments for goods and services will not be made to a contractor until the contract is signed by both MDHHS and the contractor. Goods and/or services conveyed to a youth by a contractor are ineligible for payment if those goods and/or services were rendered on a date prior to both parties signing the contract.

Fiscal Monitoring

Each county is responsible for managing and tracking the YIT allocation.

Payments

For non-contractual expenditures of YIT funds, see [ACM 426, Youth in Transition Payments](#).

MDHHS workers are required to use the MDHHS-5602, Payment Request, to authorize payments for each eligible youth. Supervisory signature, indicating approval of the purchase, is required. The original invoice and/or receipts must be obtained and uploaded into MiSACWIS, then sent with the YIT request to the Accounting Services Center. Copies of invoice/receipts should be uploaded into MiSACWIS, to the person's active case.

Residential foster care providers must enter the YIT request into MiSACWIS and then forward it to the MDHHS monitor when YIT-funded services are provided. Allocation of funds is made at the beginning of the fiscal year to each county through the MDHHS Child Welfare Field Operations Administration.

**EXCEPTION
REQUESTS**

All payments up to \$600 per request may be authorized by caseworker and supervisor for eligible youth, provided they are approved expenditures as defined in [FOM 950](#).

Services exceeding \$600 require prior written approval from the county director or designee. A [DHS-720, Youth in Transition Exception Request Form](#), must be completed and signed by the county director or designee. First month's rent and security deposit have a lifetime limit of \$1,500 and does not require an exception approval. In addition, start-up goods have a lifetime limit of \$1,000 (\$1,500 for a parenting youth) and does not require an exception approval.

If the request for a resource, service, or reimbursement is not specifically stated as an approved expenditure in the YIT policy, the DHS-720, and the supporting documentation regarding the expenses, must first be sent to the YIT program office. Requests should be sent to the YIT email box, provided at the end of this section.

Once the DHS-720 is signed by the YIT program office, it is sent to the county director or designee for signature.

All exception requests must be uploaded into MiSACWIS along with all supporting documentation.

Contractual expenditures of YIT funds must comply with contract requirements as established by the Bureau of Grants and Purchasing and the Overpayment, Collections and Pysch Hospital Reimbursement Division of MDHHS. Documentation and reporting requirements are established by the YIT program office. Other requirements may be established by individual (MDHHS) initiated contracts.

LEGAL BASE

Federal

Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 675(1)(B)

Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 675(1)(D)

Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 671(a)(9)(C)

Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 677

POLICY CONTACT

Questions about this policy item may be directed to the [MDHHS-YIT](#) mailbox.