

Iowa Department of Human Services Announces Pandemic Recovery Assistance for Iowa Foster Youth Alumni

DES MOINES, Iowa – July 1, 2022 – The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) announced today that they will be offering a *Summer Pandemic Recovery Payment* to youth who have aged out of foster care, ages 18 through 22. The much-needed financial boost for these young adults comes at a time when many are struggling to regain stability after the long, devastating effects of COVID 19.

In March 2021, as part of the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) was awarded \$4.7 million in supplemental funds for the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee), to benefit older youth in foster care and those who age out. DHS has disbursed \$1.7 million in direct payments to help stabilize more than 1,500 youth who have aged out of foster care and are now trying to recover from economic setbacks experienced during COVID-19.

Doug Wolfe, Foster Care Transition Program Manager, DHS, appreciates how difficult it has been to remain stable and on track during the pandemic. “It’s hard moving from foster care to adulthood in the best of circumstances; it’s a lot of change and the choices made can follow these youth for a lifetime,” said Wolfe. “The pandemic made transitioning to adulthood that much harder, and for that reason, it’s nice to be able to use the Chafee supplemental funds to give youth some extra help for rent, food, or other things they need.”

Of youth who received the initial payments from DHS, 88% indicated it was “very helpful” in their recovery from the pandemic. “It caught me up with my bills during a very rough financial patch,” stated Jenni, a relief recipient. However, many young adults continue to battle through the aftermath of COVID 19. Those who lost income and had few options during the height of the pandemic, are still trying to get back on track from interruptions in their work, school, or housing arrangements.

DHS will utilize the remaining Chafee funds, in cooperation with [YSS](#) and the [Iowa Aftercare Services Network](#) (IASN), to deliver the direct payments designed to help further assist these young adults. Eligible youth can apply for the *Summer Pandemic Recovery Payment* of \$900 through an online application portal beginning on the *Fourth of July* (July 4, 2022), through *Labor Day* (September 5), 2022.

To receive a *Summer Pandemic Recovery Payment*, all youth must submit a NEW application through the online portal, regardless of whether they have applied for prior payments and whether they were

-more-

approved or received a payment prior to July 4th. Additional information regarding the *Summer Pandemic Recovery Payment*, including complete eligibility requirements, is available on the Iowa Aftercare website: <https://iowaaftercare.org>.

For DHS's full list of COVID-19 resources, visit <https://dhs.iowa.gov/COVID19>.