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**Date:** February 25, 2014  
**To:** Provider Agency Executive Directors  
**From:** Benita Miller  
**Subject:** Exceptional Payment Requests – College Room and Board for Youth

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This memorandum serves as guidance to provider foster care agencies for submitting requests to Children's Services for Exceptional Payments for youth who reach their 21st birthday while attending a college or university full-time, reside on or off campus and need financial assistance for room and board. Such assistance is provided so long as they continue to remain in good academic standing until their 23rd birthday.

**ACS will consider requests for Exceptional Payments for review under the following conditions:** Agency case planning staff must coordinate an initial contact **no less than one month** prior to the upcoming semester/trimester with the ACS Office of Child and Youth Initiatives (OCYI) staff for youth requesting an Exceptional Payment for College Room and Board. A designee from the executive office of the foster care agency must make a written request for a College Room and Board Exceptional Payment (CRB EP) to the office of the Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Family Permanency Services (FPS). OCYI will help the youth to access the documentation required to substantiate their eligibility (see appendix) for an Exceptional Payment. The youth will be required to provide all current contact information including his/her current home and cell phone numbers and personal and college/university email addresses.

**Youth ages 21 to 23, and residing in campus housing while attending college/university full time, may return to their foster families during authorized school breaks under an exceptional pass-through payment to the foster parent.** This Exceptional pass-through payment applies to all youth who resided in foster care prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, currently reside on-campus at a college/university with his/her room and board provided by ACS on an approved Exceptional Payment; and will be returning to reside in New York City during school breaks and vacations and currently have no stable housing option in New York City. The provider agency is responsible to identify a foster home willing to house student during indicated school break if the youth does not have an identified foster resource to which to return.

**As an additional college support, the Charles Evans Emergency Educational Fund** is available to assist youth who were formerly involved in the foster care system in New York City, ages 21-25, to continue and/or complete their educational endeavors. The Fund provides one-time emergency financial assistance to full/part time college students who are faced with an unexpected financial emergency that would prevent them from continuing their education without interruption. The Fund is not intended to be used for routine expenses or as a consistent supplement to a student's educational funding source.

The Office of Child and Youth Initiatives, the Office of Shared Response and the Housing Academy Collaborative staff within Family Permanency Services are available to assist and support your agency's efforts to achieve permanency for youth transitioning from foster care. We urge you to contact these areas for assistance when your agency experiences delays or challenges in discharge planning for youth who are in care.

Please feel free to contact Phyllis Brodsky, College Room and Board Coordinator in the Office of Child and Youth Initiatives by phone at (212) 341-3318 or by e-mail at [phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us) if you have any questions.

Your continued commitment to successful planning for our youth is greatly appreciated.

## Appendix

Please be sure the below information is incorporated within the youth's request for an **Exceptional Payment for financial assistance for college room and board**. Having this information will assist in expediting requests and reduce the need for additional clarification:

- Invoice from Bursar's office documenting fees for room, board and student fees and financial aid, grants and scholarships awarded.
- Proof of full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 credits per semester/trimester).
- Current transcript confirming youth has maintained a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
- School calendar for indicated semester (or the beginning of each trimester for colleges/universities that operate on a trimester system). Substitute W9 form completed by the school or private landlord if youth is residing in off-campus housing (the Substitute W9 form must be completed in order for the school or landlord to be registered as a vendor with the New York City's Comptroller's Office; the registration process results in a unique Vendor ID number under which payment is made.)

If youth is residing in off-campus housing, a signed lease specifying monthly rent is also required.

The youth must submit any subsequent request for an Exceptional Payment **no less than one month** prior to the next semester/trimester to allow sufficient processing time.

**Requests for Exceptional Pass-Through Payments for the student's foster resource require a written request from the agency Executive Director including:**

- Foster care placement for the youth during authorized school breaks/holidays that includes foster parent information (facility ID, address, current certification dates) or an alternate foster care placement if the youth does not have an identified foster resource to which to return.
- Specific dates the student will reside in the foster home.

**Subsequent requests for continued college room and board assistance must be initiated by the student** approximately six weeks prior to the beginning of the semester (or the beginning of each trimester for colleges/universities that operate on a trimester system). OCYI support staff will request the following documentation from the youth to determine his/her eligibility:

- Invoice from Bursar's office documenting fees for room, board and student fees and financial aid, grants and scholarships awarded.
- Proof of full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 credits per semester).
- Current transcript confirming youth has maintained a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0.
- School calendar for indicated semester
- Substitute W9 form completed by the school or private landlord if youth is residing in off-campus housing
- If youth is residing in off-campus housing, a signed lease specifying monthly rent is also required.

All documents must be both faxed and mailed via USPS to OCYI staff. When youth has not/cannot obtain required documents, OCYI staff will contact the case planner for assistance in obtaining the needed documentation. When the case planner cannot assist, OCYI staff will first contact the student to obtain permission to contact the school. OCYI staff will then contact the school bursar or admissions office to obtain documentation.

OCYI staff will reach out to CRB EP students **one month prior to the following semester** to:

- Confirm youth's registration for the semester or trimester
- Remind youth of documentation needed to process the Exceptional Payment

If the **student resides in off campus housing**, the landlord must be registered with the New York City Comptroller's office. This is a free, on-line registration process, which results in a unique Vendor ID number under which the landlord is paid. The youth will be responsible for obtaining a completed substitute W-9 form from the landlord and submitting it to ACS with any requests for payment.

- OCYI will review all submitted information for accuracy.
- OCYI will periodically review ongoing eligibility for the Exceptional Payment.

Beyond the initial request for college/university room and board payment, the **youth must communicate with OCYI staff to advise them of any updates and changes in his/her enrollment or academic status.**

- The youth must submit any subsequent request for an Exceptional Payment **no less than one month** prior to the next semester/trimester to allow sufficient processing time.

**Youth ages 21 to 23, and residing in campus housing while attending college/university full time, may return to their foster families during authorized school breaks under an exceptional pass-through payment to the foster parent.** This Exceptional pass-through payment applies to all youth who resided in foster care prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and:

- Currently reside on-campus at a college/university with his/her room and board provided by ACS on an approved Exceptional Payment; and
- Will be returning to reside in New York City during school breaks and vacations and currently have no stable housing option in New York City.

In order to arrange this, the youth must directly request in writing, to the agency Executive Director as a letter or e-mail that is subsequently forwarded to ACS, to return to the prior foster home placement and attach a confirmation from the agency Executive Director. This written request must include the following:

- The student's request to return to the prior foster home during school breaks and holidays. (The dates of breaks and vacations will be verified by OCYI by checking the school calendar.)
- A written affirmation from the foster parent agreeing to the youth returning home during school breaks and holidays, and a written confirmation of the arrangement from the agency's Executive Director.

The provider agency is responsible to identify a foster home willing to house student during indicated school break if the youth does not have an identified foster resource to which to return.

**Requests for Exceptional Pass-Through Payments for the student's foster resource require a written request from the agency Executive Director including:**

- Foster care placement for the youth during authorized school breaks/holidays that includes foster parent information (facility ID, address, current certification dates) or an alternate foster care placement if the youth does not have an identified foster resource to which to return.
- Specific dates the student will reside in the foster home.

The agency Executive Director or designee must submit the request for reimbursement of pass-through payment to the foster parent with the affirmation and confirmation to the attention of Phyllis Brodsky by email to [Phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us) or by fax to (917) 551-7374. The agency is required to ensure pass thru payments are issued in a timely manner and should not wait until the end of each semester to issue pass-thru payment to the foster parent.

**The Charles Evans Emergency Educational Fund** provides one-time emergency financial assistance to full/part time college students who are faced with an unexpected financial emergency that would prevent them from continuing their education without interruption. The Fund is not intended to be used for routine expenses or as a consistent supplement to a student's educational funding source. Requests must be urgent in nature. To obtain an application, youth can go to [www.newyorkersforchildren.org](http://www.newyorkersforchildren.org) or contact Phyllis Brodsky by email to [Phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:Phyllis.brodsky@dfa.state.ny.us) or by phone at (212) 341-3318.