

Florida Medicaid Coverage Up to Age 26 for Young Adults Formerly in Foster Care

The federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires states to provide young adults who aged out of foster care an opportunity to receive health care coverage under Medicaid until they reach the age of 26.

Who is eligible for the new former foster youth Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)?

Beginning January 1, 2014, young adults formerly in foster care are eligible for Medicaid under the ACA if they:

- Are under the age of 26;
- Aged out of foster care at 18;
- Were on Medicaid while in foster care; and
- Are not eligible for other Medicaid coverage (e.g. pregnant, parent, disabled).

What is considered “foster care” for purposes of this new Medicaid coverage?

For this coverage, foster care means licensed or unlicensed 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians, for whom the Department has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in licensed foster family homes, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities and child care institutions, or placements in unlicensed homes or relatives or non-relatives.

How do Young Adults formerly in foster care in Florida enroll for this new coverage?

To access this new coverage in Florida, young adults are required to complete a regular Florida Medicaid application by:

- Applying online through the Florida Department of Children Families (DCF) ACCESS website at: <https://dcf-access.dcf.state.fl.us/access2florida/access/default.do?performAction=init>, or
- Contacting their local DCF ACCESS Office. (To find the nearest local office, call 211 from any telephone in Florida.)

While it is possible to apply for coverage through the Federally-Facilitated Marketplace (FFM), DCF’s ACCESS system is the recommended application process at this time. Due to delays in processing FFM applications, applicants who applied through the FFM are still waiting for coverage. If you previously applied through the FFM, you should apply again through DCF ACCESS. Completing a second application through ACCESS will not have a negative impact on your previous FFM application but may



help you access Medicaid coverage sooner.

Does income impact eligibility for this coverage?

No, young adults formerly in foster care are eligible for this new coverage regardless of their income. Therefore, young adults formerly in foster care can work and earn income without fear of losing their Medicaid coverage. At this time, however, Florida's ACCESS application process does include income and tax filing-related questions applicants will have to answer in order to complete the application.

Are young adults formerly in foster care in other states eligible for this coverage in Florida?

No. While the ACA provides states with the option of covering young adults formerly in foster care who have moved from other states, Florida has chosen only to provide this coverage to young adults who aged out of foster care in Florida.

Some states have chosen to extend this coverage to young adults for other states. Therefore, young adults considering a move from Florida to another state should check with that state first to determine whether they will be able to continue their Medicaid coverage from that state until age 26.

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Tips for applying for former foster youth Medicaid coverage through the DCF ACCESS system:

- For quicker results, use the ACCESS website to apply online instead of applying through your local DCF ACCESS office.
<https://dcf-access.dcf.state.fl.us/access2florida/access/default.do?performAction=init>.
- If you have an existing ACCESS account because you currently receive other public benefits (e.g. food stamps), create a new, separate account to apply for Medicaid coverage. Applicants attempting to apply through existing ACCESS accounts have experienced system problems preventing them from completing their applications.
- If you have problems with the ACCESS application process, contact the ACCESS Customer Call Center (CCC) at (866) 762-2237. Take detailed notes on any questions or problems you have while completing the application so you can refer to them later if you need to contact the CCC. Each time you attempt to contact the CCC, keep track of how long it takes for you to get through to a representative and whether or not the representative was able to provide you with the assistance you needed.
- If you continue to encounter problems with the ACCESS application process and are unable to get assistance from the customer call center, please contact Amy Guinan at: 1-800-436-6001 or amy@floridalegal.org.