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PRESS RELEASE
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NH DHHS Announces Approval to Extend Foster Care to Age 21

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) announces that the age limit for foster care in New Hampshire is extended from age 18 to age 21. The announcement follows approval of DCYF’s Title IV-E State Plan amendment by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF). As a result, DCYF is receiving additional federal Title IV-E funds to create the Hope Program, which will allow youth to remain with their foster families through age 21 and continue to receive DCYF services, providing critical support as they transition to adulthood.

“New Hampshire’s DCYF has made great strides to create a new set of standards and increase the number of licensed foster homes to historic highs to provide for New Hampshire’s vulnerable children,” said Governor Chris Sununu. “The expansion of foster care to include those between the ages of 18 to 21 is yet another step in the right direction to provide our kids with the supports they need to thrive.”

“We are excited about this opportunity for youth in foster care, who will continue to benefit from the support of a loving family as they make decisions that will shape their futures,” said DCYF Director Joseph Ribsam. “As these youth start to think about college, employment, and housing options, they still need the safety net that a family provides. We are grateful for the funding that will allow our foster youth to remain with the caring adults in their lives as they begin new chapters.”

The Hope Program was informed by the NH Youth Advisory Board, which is comprised of teens in out of home care between the ages of 14 and 21. The Advisory Board is made up of three regional teams across the state that work on initiatives aimed at improving the lives of youth in care and advocating for positive change in their lives.

The Hope Program is voluntary for young adults ages 18-21 who are enrolled in high school or a high school equivalency program; in college, or a vocational program six or more hours per semester; employed 80 hours per month; or participating in a program designed to promote employment. Participants in the Hope Program will continue to receive case management and other supportive services through DCYF.

Young adults can work with their DCYF caseworker to enroll in the Hope Program. For more information on the Hope Program, please visit <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcyf/documents/dcyf-policy-1977.pdf>.

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