



Supporting Adolescents and Young Adults in Foster Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Key Questions and Resources-Version 1.0



1. Food/Toiletries

Do you have a 2-week supply of:

- Nutritious food including fresh (e.g. fruits, veggies, eggs and meats) and non-perishable items (e.g. tuna fish, pasta, beans)?
- Paper goods (toilet paper), toiletries (deodorant and shampoo), and personal hygiene products (tampons)?
- Supplies for disinfecting? The CDC and EPA put out information on products and disinfecting methods here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

Resources

- Food pantries: check your county's food pantries and determine whether they are open before referring.
<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/>
- Check online and through social media to identify any "pop-up" food pantries or organizations that are giving out food and other goods during the crisis.
- Local supermarkets or stores (i.e. CVS, Walgreen's, etc.).
- Online grocery delivery (e.g. ShopRite, Amazon).



2. Financial Support

- Do you have access to your bank account (ATM cards, online banking)? Do you know what your bank's current operating procedures (e.g. open, limited hours) are and how you can conduct banking if your local branch is closed?
- Did you file an income tax return last year or have you filed yet for 2020? *Be sure your address is up to date as you may be eligible for additional stimulus or recovery checks.*
- Are you getting the Independent Living stipend? *Requests are processed by CP&P on the third Friday of the month. If you need a replacement card, call 1-888-929-2460.*
- Do you need additional financial assistance due to loss of wages or other extenuating circumstance (e.g. purchasing of additional supplies and groceries)? If so, please discuss with your worker.



Resources

- LOBA or flex funds
- Independent Living Stipend
- One Simple Wish
- FosterClub has created a list of resources that might be helpful to youth in foster care: <https://www.fosterclub.com/c19>
- U-Haul is offering 30 days of free storage to college students who are displaced due to COVID-19.
- Cell phone, utility, and cable companies may have free or dis-counted offers including wireless Hot Spots (e.g. T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Comcast).
- Check online regarding rent and loan forgiveness or no-penalty, suspended payments that may be relevant for youth.
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3. Transportation

- Do you have places that you NEED to go? *At this time, you should limit travel to places that are required such as trips to the grocery store, work or medical appointments.*
- If yes, where do you need to go, and do you have a plan on how to get there and back? *Most public transportation is operational but might be running on limited schedules and if social distancing cannot be practiced, it's not recommended. Please check online or the carrier for operational changes. Do you have any personal connections (e.g. family, friend, current/former resource parent, mentor) that can assist with transportation?*

Resources

- Uber and Lyft may have limited operations in certain geographic areas.
- LOBA or flex funds to purchase bus cards if needed.



4. Supportive services (ongoing continuity: life skills, mentoring and therapeutic supports)

- Are you enrolled in supportive services like life skills or therapy? If so, is the provider still providing the usual service to you or have they moved online or by telephone?
- Do you have access to the technology you need to engage in these services the best way possible under these circumstances?
- Do you have any questions regarding the status of services you are receiving right now?
- A lot of people are experiencing increased anxiety during this time, which is totally natural. Do you feel you need additional support right now?

Resources

- Youth 2nd Floor Helpline: <https://www.2ndfloor.org/> or 1-888-222-2228
- Crisis Text Line: <https://www.crisistextline.org/> or Text 741741
- Mental Health Cares: 866-202-4357

5. Healthcare

- Do you have the name and phone number of your health insurance carrier (e.g. Medicaid, Aetna, Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield) HMO, primary care physician (PCP), and local pharmacy?
- Did you know that you can find out if you are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine and where to obtain it at: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>.
- Are you having any healthcare issues right now that need to be addressed? *This may include any issues obtaining access to medical providers, including having all insurance information up to date so that insurance is attainable.*
- Do you have a 30-day supply of prescribed and over-the-counter medication and medical equipment, such as a thermometer for temperature checks if necessary? *Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil) or Aleve right now; only Tylenol/acetaminophen.*
- If having sexual contact, does youth have access to prophylactic and sexual health supplies (condoms, birth control, dental dams, etc.)?
- Do you know that it is important to wash your hands frequently and for 20 seconds with warm water and soap?
- Did you know that DCF has a COVID-19 website? It is <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/coronavirus.html>. There is lots of helpful information there about the pandemic and it is updated frequently.
- Did you know that you can call your local Health Department or 211 to ask questions about COVID-19?

Resources

- Handwashing video: <https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>
- CDC link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>
- “Let’s disinfect” section of: <https://www.fosterclub.com/foster-parent-training/course/responding-covid-19>

6. Social Connections

- Do you have a way to keep in touch with friends and family? *It could be good to use social media apps to keep in touch (e.g. WhatsApp, TikTok, Hangouts, etc.)*
- Please be reminded to practice social distancing, please visit the www.cdc.gov for more information.

- Visit <https://www.fosterclub.com/c19> for information and resources specific to youth in foster care.



7. Safety (at home and in the community)

- How are you feeling in your current living situation? Any safety concerns?
Remember to maintain social distancing (6 feet from other individuals), wear a mask, and be cautious about gathering in large groups of people.



8. Education

- At this time schools continue to utilize a variety of methods for instruction including in-person, hybrid and all-virtual models as determined by each school district.
- Do you need any school supplies (e.g. books, calculator, notebook, pens and/or pencils) or require technology to participate in virtual academic instruction?
- If you have an IEP, you may need additional support for virtual instruction, please discuss any potential needs with your caseworker.
- Do you have a classroom or homework assistance telephone line that can be accessed?
- For youth in in-person high school equivalency classes (e.g. GED classes), what instructional activities are available to you?
- If in college or planning to attend college in the summer/fall: Are you aware of application and registration deadlines?
- Are you aware that COVID Emergency Relief Flexibilities, including federal student loan forbearance, have been extended through at least Sept. 30, 2021. Therefore, the borrower will not be charged interest until payments are reinstated.
<https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>.

Resources

- Are there any local resources through Family Success Centers, county human services, schools, local and potentially pop-up charities etc. that are giving out supplies?
- LOBA or flex funds
- umbrella: www.umbrella.org
- One Simple Wish: <https://www.onesimplewish.org/>
- Together We Rise (for displaced college students):
<https://www.togetherwerise.org/help-displaced-students/>

- Some additional free educational re-sources:
<http://www.amazingeducationalresources.com/>
- A list of free online classes from 190 universities:
<https://qz.com/1437623/600-free-online-courses-you-can-take-from-universities-worldwide/>



9. Entertainment/Recreation

FYI for CP&P Staff

- Youth may be bored where they are residing. Ask how they are keeping themselves entertained and engaging in physical exercise and recreation when and where possible.
- Netflix has a 30 days free trial account that youth may be able to access.
- Check whether the youth have access to individual or small group (no more than 10) activities that they can access at this time (e.g. online games, cards, read a book)?

General resources, guidance, and contact information

This is a difficult time for everyone!

Youth in foster care have the additional stressor of being involved in the child welfare system during this pandemic and may have specific needs during this crisis. If a youth is open with CP&P, CP&P is responsible for finding a solution, in partnership with the youth, to meet that need.

Please see some key contacts on the next page that may be able to support youth during this time!

- For any youth enrolled in post-secondary school that has an **educational need** that cannot be met by CP&P, embrella may be able to help.
 - Please contact Marjorie Blicharz, M.Ed., embrella Director of Scholarship Programs at mblicharz@embrella.org.
- **Pathways to Academic and Career Exploration to Success (PACES)** coaches may be available to provide support with school coordination:

PACES Agency	E-mail
Region 1 – Bergen, Hudson, Passaic, Morris, Sussex & Warren	
Care Plus	
Jodi Martino, Program Director	jodima@careplusnj.org
Region 2 – Middlesex, Hunterdon & Somerset Region 3 – Mercer, Monmouth & Ocean	
embrella	
Marjorie Blicharz, Program Director	mblicharz@embrella.org
Region 4 – Essex and Union	
Community Access Unlimited	
Tana Owens, Supervisor	TOwens@caunj.org
Region 5 – Burlington & Camden Region 6 – Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester & Salem	
Robins Nest	
Erin Klein, Program Director	eklein@robinsnestinc.org

One Simple Wish: <https://www.onesimplewish.org/> can support various ancillary needs and is able to assist youth during this crisis.

Please also be advised that the Office of Adolescent Services will be available to support CP&P staff and youth by emailing dcf_adolescentservices@dcf.state.nj.us or calling 609-888-7100 (if you get the voicemail please listen to see if additional contact information is provided during this time of crisis).

Wrap Around Services

For **youth 18+ that are closed or aged out of CP&P** – If a young adult formerly open with CP&P that are in need of assistance, they may be able to access supports through the following wrap around administrators:

Independence: A Family of Services (IFS)

Counties Covered: Essex, Middlesex and Union

Calvin Bradley, 973-518-9657; cbradley@ifsnj.org

Note: Checks will be available for distribution on Fridays only.

Acenda Health

Counties Covered: Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem

Joann Moore, 844-422-3632 ext. 121; jmoore@acendahealth.org

Note: Requests submitted by Wednesday morning should be processed the same week. Checks are typically dispersed on Friday afternoons.

Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM) RAPS

Catholic Charities Diocese of Metuchen (CCDOM) Crossroads

Counties Covered: Bergen, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Warren, Hunterdon, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean and Somerset

Karen Gruss: Kgruss@ccdom.org, 908-246-1373 (cell) for both CCDOMs

Michelle Manning: mmanning@ccdom.org

Lauren Gmitter: lgmitter@ccdom.org

Lori Birchler: lbirchler@ccdom.org

Note: CCDOM is no longer processing checks for Walmart. For groceries, please select your nearest Shoprite.

Oaks Integrated Care

Counties Covered: Burlington and Camden

Kathie Steinburg-Rose, 609-518-5470 x 44603 (leave a message)