

Vermont Youth in Foster Care & Identification/Driving Credentials

Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Family Services Division (FSD)

Amanda Churchill Kipp, LICSW
Policy and Practice Specialist

Vermont Youth in Foster Care

- There are currently 208 youth ages 15+ in foster care in Vermont.
- These youth have been in DCF custody for an average of 27 months.
- They live in foster homes, group homes, with parents, independently, all over Vermont, and out of state.
- Youth will be adopted, return home, or become independent at 18.

Youth Development Program (YDP)

- DCF has a statewide contract to provide transition and aftercare case management (YDP) for foster youth **ages 14-22**
 - Elevate Youth Services (EYS) subcontracts with 8 agencies in all 12 DCF districts to provide direct local services
- YDP case managers support youth to achieve goals related to transitioning to adulthood successfully, including obtaining identification and driving credentials
- About 450 youth served each year (25% of eligible pool)
 - 64% are in school
 - 56% are employed
 - 87% are in school or employed
 - 18% experience homelessness
 - 11% have children
- YDP has flexible funding available and allocates \$100,000+ for transportation annually
 - Driver education, driving practice, car insurance, car maintenance, repairs, tires, etc.

DCF & DMV Partnership

- A DMV cost waiver for youth ages 14-22 who are or were in foster care would support youth with more easily obtaining identification and permits/licenses.
 - DCF estimates approximately 150 youth and less than \$15,000 annually.
- Title IV-E of the Social Security Act requires DCF to assist youth in custody with obtaining essential identity documents and drivers' licenses.
 - YDP supports youth and DCF in this work and remains a challenging administrative task.

Easing Administrative Burden & Redirecting Staff Efforts

- The overall cost of identification, permits, and licenses for foster youth is small and the administrative burden of processing funds for this is high.
- Increased case management and administrative capacity could support additional young people in more meaningful ways.

Reducing Barriers

- All people, especially those transitioning to adulthood, need **identification** to access employment, education, housing, banking, credit, and to generally take steps toward living independently – **safely and legally**.
- Having access to **independent transportation**, particularly in a rural state like Vermont, significantly improves education and employment outcomes.
 - Only 37% of YDP youth over age 16 have a driver's license.
- If costs were waived, it would improve outcomes for young people and provide additional support to those who experience DCF custody.

Additional Resources

- DCF's Driving Guide: [Driving Guide for Youth](#)
- Youth Development Program (YDP): <https://vtyouthdevelopmentprogram.org/>
- DCF's Resource Site for Youth in Vermont: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/fsd/youth>
- [DCF-FSD Policy 75: Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard](#)
- [DCF-FSD Policy 160: Supporting Adolescents in DCF Custody](#)