

If your Agency has questions pertaining to Bridges, please feel free to email the Bridges Mailbox at: **bridges@jfs.ohio.gov**
Find more information about Bridges on the Bridges Website at:
Bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov.

Eligibility

Question: I have a young adult that emancipated in July 2017, are they eligible to enroll?

Answer: As long as the young adult emancipated on or after their eighteen birthdays and have not turned twenty-one, they may be eligible to enroll in Bridges as long as they meet one of the five program eligibility requirements for the program.

Question: If a child with a physical or mental disability remains in the custody of the PCSA until the age of 21 will they be eligible for Bridges? What about remaining in a foster home?

Answer: Bridges is a safety net for young adults who currently would not have a safety net once they emancipate. If they do not emancipate because the PCSA retains custody, the young adult would not be eligible to enroll in Bridges. If there is a system and a plan in place for a young person that keeps them in the custody of a PCSA until their 21st birthday, then Bridges may not be the best option. If the young person is remaining in the custody of a PCSA due to a disability then he or she should be able to remain in their foster home.

Question: If we have a child placed in Ohio from Florida three years ago are they eligible to apply for Bridges?

Answer: If the child was in custody of Florida and placed in Ohio, they will not be eligible for Bridges. However, if they aged out of Florida's child welfare system and Florida is a Fostering Connections state, they can request Florida continue to provide them services until they turn twenty-one.

Bridges Implementation

Question: What funding does this program provide?

Answer: Bridges provides financial assistance for anything that foster care maintenance would cover. The amounts may be different but the allowable costs are the same. For more information please refer to the Bridges website.

Question: What is the expected timeframe between the emancipation date and approval by ODJFS for services to begin?

Answer: The timeframe between emancipation and approval for Bridges will vary on a case by case basis. Once the young adult has emancipated, they are eligible to apply, assuming they meet the other eligibility criteria. Once the application, supporting documents, and VPA are submitted, the application will be routed to ODJFS and the determination process will begin. The goal would be to make this timeframe as short as possible, however, PCSAs can continue to provide post-emancipation supports until a young adult is enrolled in Bridges.

Question: How will the process work for youth who have already emancipated?

Answer: A young adult can complete the Interest Form found on the Bridges Website at <http://bridgestosuccess.ifs.ohio.gov/index.stm>, or reach out directly to the assigned regional coordinators where the young adult will be living.

Question: What are the regions and the respective counties assigned to those regions?

Answer: There are 5 regions within the state: Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest. Each region and their respective counties can be found on the Bridges website under the "Other Resources" menu.

Young Adult Housing

Question: Will emancipated youth have to leave their current housing situations? Ex. Youth is currently in IL housing through network provider or residing with former foster caregivers?

Answer: The young adult will not have to leave their current housing arrangement if they do not wish to, if the arrangement is safe for their well-being and falls within ODJFS licensing guidelines.

Juvenile Courts

Question: What information needs to be provided to our juvenile courts?

Answer: The PCSA can share the judicial toolkit with the juvenile courts (<http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/resources/default.asp>). In addition, the assigned Bridges regional coordinator will be responsible for reaching out to each individual juvenile court.

Question: What information needs to be provided to our juvenile court about this program for them to support holding off on emancipation, if necessary? Have the courts been trained/informed of the details of Bridges?

Answer: The courts have been informed via webinars and trainings, however we will continue to provide educational opportunities to all court officials. The webinars were recorded and can be found here:

<http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/JCS/CFC/courtCafe/default.asp#>)

Also, the regional coordinators will be reaching out to the court administrators for each individual court to develop a court specific process.

Title IV-E

Question: Will Bridges participants still be part of IV-E? Who will be responsible for determining IV-E eligibility for the Bridges program?

Answer: If the young adult is determined IV-E eligible, ODJFS will receive federal match to support their participation in Bridges. A representative from the regional Bridges agency assigned to work with the young adult will be responsible for determining IV-E eligibility.

Agency Responsibility

Question: If a child that is turning 18 has no plans to go to college or vocational school and has no job, what is the process for documenting that the young adult is not interested? What goes into SACWIS and to our regional coordinator?

Answer: It needs to be documented (via activity log in SACWIS) that the worker spoke to the young adult about Bridges and the young adult's unwillingness to enroll in the program.

Question: What is the responsibility of the agency when an emancipated youth decided to cross state lines and verbalizes that they still want to be part of Bridges? Is the program applicable to that youth?

Answer: A young adult who is eligible for Bridges can still participate in Bridges even if they leave Ohio. Ohio will notify the receiving state via the ICPC process and request the receiving state provide the monthly visitation. If the receiving state denies the request, the Bridges representatives will be responsible for ensuring the visits are conducted. The Bridges representative will also be responsible for working with the young adult to develop the Bridges plan and hold 90-day reviews. If a young adult comes from another Fostering Connections state to Ohio, Ohio will ensure that courtesy visits are conducted by a Bridges representative. If the young adult is not from a Fostering Connections state, the sending state will continue to request these visits be conducted by a PCSA.