

Best Practices for a Successful Warm Handoff into Bridges

The intended goal of the warm hand off process is to create a transparent shift, when custody terminates, from the custodial agency (PCSA, Title IV-E court, DYS) to Bridges.

Custodial Agency Best Practice

A Bridges referral does not alleviate the custodial agency’s transitional planning requirements as outlined in OAC 5101:2-42-19.

6 Months Prior to Emancipation	90 Days Prior to Emancipation	30 Days Prior to Emancipation	Emancipation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information to the youth about Bridges which is a <u>voluntary program</u> available to young adults who left foster care in Ohio at ages 18, 19 or 20. • Provide information on the eligibility criteria for Bridges. Program is for young adults who are either in school, working, participating in an employment program, or have a medical condition that prevents them from going to school or working. • Provide information that Bridges provides guidance and support as the young adult transitions to adulthood after emancipation from foster care. • Assess the fit of Bridges with the young adult’s individual needs, including if a linkage with another system better serves the young adult (e.g. Developmental Disabilities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your agency’s youth is interested in Bridges, the referral link can be accessed as early as 90 days prior to emancipation at http://bridgestosuccess.ifs.ohio.gov/index.stm. • The custodial agency is not required to refer every emancipating youth to Bridges. • Custodial agency to complete the final transition plan, including a housing plan for the youth upon emancipation. Leveraging agency resources to ensure housing during the Bridges enrollment process. • <u>A Bridges referral should not be considered the final transition plan.</u> <u>Bridges cannot provide funds to the young adult until their application is approved.</u> This process could take up to a month or longer if acceptable documentation is not provided. • Assign the Bridges Regional Coordinator to the on-going case (see attached). Communicate the scheduled emancipation date via email or phone with the Regional Coordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with the assigned Bridges provider the information about the youth and their final transition plan. The Bridges provider is assigned 30 days before emancipation. • Continue to include the Bridges representative in transition planning. • Determine if one of the eligibility criteria can be met for the youth to be enrolled in the bridges program upon the youth emancipating from care. • Assist youth in collecting the required documentation (30 days of paystubs, school enrollment letter etc.) See the Bridges Eligibility Reference Chart (BERC) for eligibility criteria and acceptable documentation. • Ensure the youth’s person profile in SACWIS is completely up to date; i.e. address, contact information, medical history, education and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate any changes to the Bridges provider. Enter the custody termination date into SACWIS; this enables the Bridges application to be submitted by the Bridges provider. Any post emancipation services provided by the custodial agency during the application and approval process should be documented in the Bridges case. • The referring custodial agency will be notified when the application has been final approved, if an application has been denied, or the young adult voluntarily decides to not participate in Bridges. • The young adult may still receive Young Adult Services (YAS) from their county PCSA if not enrolling in Bridges.

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Bridges Provider Best Practice

90 Days Prior to Emancipation

- Ninety (90) days prior to emancipation the Regional Coordinator will be assigned to the open SACWIS case.
- The role of the Regional Coordinator during this time is to share information about Bridges and how Bridges aligns with the transition plan that has been created by the custodial agency and the potential applicant. The Regional Coordinator is available to participate (in person or via phone) in transition planning meetings.
- Communicate with youth and Caseworker regarding Bridges eligibility criteria and required documentation for enrollment.

30 Days Prior to Emancipation

- Thirty (30) days prior to emancipation the Regional Coordinator will open a Bridges case in SACWIS and assign the Bridges Supervisor & Liaison. This will allow for continuation of planning with the youth and the custodial agency.
- The final transition plan may include a potential monthly budget, which will inform the housing plan, ensuring sustainability for the youth. It also allows the liaison to begin the application in SACWIS before emancipation to ensure timely submission upon termination from the agency's custody.
- ODJFS will attempt to process complete applications within 2 – 3 business days. This time frame is not guaranteed.
- Once the young adult's application has been fully approved or denied, the Bridges provider will communicate this to the custodial agency.

For more information about Bridges, visit: bridgestosuccess.jfs.ohio.gov/index.stm

