



# FOSTERING CONNECTIONS

## Supporting Emerging Adulthood for Young People in New Mexico

### WHAT IS FOSTERING CONNECTIONS?

Fostering Connections (NMSA 32A-26-1) allows young people who were in foster care to opt into age-appropriate supports until age 21. Those who opt in will remain under the legal jurisdiction of the children's court, allowing them continued access to supports like personalized case-management, living stipends that can be used for a variety of living arrangements, and court review to ensure compliance of the Children, Youth & Families Department and a healthy transition to adulthood. Fostering Connections provides these young people more time to finish school, practice increased responsibility, develop skills to become healthy adults, and build supportive networks and social capital.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Young people who were in foster care and are currently 18 years old, including those who were adopted or in a guardianship after their 14th birthday, but their parent or guardian no longer provides emotional or financial support, and are:

- Completing secondary school (or the equivalent),
- Enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school,
- Participating in a program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment,
- Employed at least 80 hours per month, or
- Incapable of meeting an above requirement due to a medical or behavioral condition

### WHEN DOES IT TAKE EFFECT?

Fostering Connections took effect on July 1, 2020, but it will be implemented over three years. Eligibility will roll out based on young people's age; those who are:

- 18 years old may opt in as of July 1, 2020,
- 18 or 19 years old may opt in as of July 1, 2021, and
- 18, 19, or 20 years old may opt in as of July 1, 2022

### WHAT ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE 19 OR 20?

Young people who are 19 or 20 years old will continue to receive their independent living stipend and existing support from their Youth Transition Specialist.

### HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE OPT IN TO FOSTERING CONNECTIONS?

Young people who are 18 years old and think they are eligible can contact their Youth Transition Specialist or email [info.YouthServices@state.nm.us](mailto:info.YouthServices@state.nm.us) for more information or to opt in.

**LEARN MORE** by contacting:

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