


DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
311 WEST SARATOGA STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201

DATE: November 1, 2010

POLICY #: SSA #11- 12

TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Assistant Directors of Social Services
Local Department of Social Services

FROM: Carnitra D. White 
Executive Director
Social Services Administration

RE: Graduation/ High School Senior Expenses

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: Out-of-Home Placement Services (Foster Care Services)
and Transitioning Youth Services

ORIGINATING OFFICE: Child Welfare Practice & Policy

ACTION REQUIRED OF: All Local Departments

REQUIRED ACTION: Providing Financial Assistance to Graduating High School
Seniors

ACTION DUE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Deborah Ramelmeier, Director
Child Welfare Practice & Policy
(410) 767-7506

Background

This policy directive provides guidance to local departments of social services on how financial assistance is provided to graduating seniors to assist with graduation expenses.

Purpose

The Social Services Administration recognizes graduation as a monumental milestone in an adolescent's transition into adulthood. In an effort to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of our graduating seniors, local departments shall ensure financial assistance is made available to contribute to graduation expenses.

We are aware that local departments are currently providing financial assistance to graduating high school seniors. On average, the financial assistance has ranged from \$200 to \$1,000 per senior. In order to provide consistency across the state and ensure all graduating seniors have access to funds for senior-related expenses, this policy directive identifies the maximum dollars local departments may contribute to graduation expenses and clarifies how these expenses shall be coded in MD CHESSIE.

Effective immediately, local departments shall provide graduating high school seniors with financial assistance **up to \$750** to contribute to the following prioritized expenses:

Priority 1

- Senior Class Dues/Package
- Graduation Fees
- Cap and Gown

Priority 2

- Class Ring
- Senior Pictures
- Yearbook
- Prom Expenditures (ticket, attire, pictures and/or transportation)

Please note- Expenses are prioritized based on high school requirements. Items detailed under the Priority 1 listing should be covered prior to the Priority 2 list.

Eligibility

Youth must be:

- Committed to the Department;
- Enrolled in a public/private high school or education program; and,
- Graduating from a high school or education program within the school year financial assistance is provided.

Documentation & Billing

1. All requests shall be submitted to the youth's caseworker in writing, detailing each item and its associated cost(s). School notices and/or purchase order receipts specifying items and costs are considered proper documentation.
2. Supervisors shall review and approve all qualifying requests within five working days of receiving requests.
3. Local Departments shall pay vendors directly, or reimburse providers for expenditures.
4. Reimbursable expenditures may not exceed a maximum of \$750.
5. All expenditures shall be documented in a service log within MD CHESSIE as category--Education Expenses/High School. Local Departments' shall utilize their Chaffee or Super Flex Fund allocation to cover graduation expenses.

If you have any questions regarding this new policy, please contact Deborah Ramelmeier, Deputy Executive Director of Programs, Social Services Administration, via email at DRamelme@dhr.state.md.us.