




Policy Number:	SSA/CW #26-10
Policy Title:	Compensation for Individuals with Lived Experience
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Approved By:	Dr. Alger M. Studstill, Jr.  Executive Director Social Services Administration
Revision Date(s):	N/A
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Originating Office:	Office of the Executive Director Social Services Administration
Summary of Change:	N/A
Required Actions:	This policy requires consistent practice of compensation for individuals with lived experience - child welfare and adult services - at both the local and state level.
Key Words:	Compensation, Lived Experience, Workgroup
Related Federal Law	<a href="#">42 U.S.C. § 677</a> ; <a href="#">45 CFR 1357.15(a)(2) and (l)</a> <a href="#">2 CFR 200.459</a> ; <a href="#">8 U.S.C. §§ 1324a</a>
Related State Laws	N/A
COMAR	N/A
State Plan Implications?	No

## **Purpose And Summary**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent statewide framework for compensating individuals with lived experience who contribute their expertise to formal agency activities. Individuals who have personal experience with child welfare, adult services, or related human service systems bring essential insight that strengthens policy development, program design, and service delivery. This policy affirms that lived experience is a form of expertise and ensures that individuals who participate in workgroups, advisory boards, policy development sessions, and other formal engagements are recognized and compensated for their time, knowledge, and contributions.

This policy applies to all state and local activities that engage lived experts in child welfare and adult services, including youth, young adults, parents, caregivers, resource parents, kinship caregivers, and individuals who have received or interacted with adult services. By establishing clear and consistent expectations for compensation, this policy promotes equity, reduces barriers to participation, and supports meaningful engagement of lived experts in shaping policies and practices that improve outcomes for children, adults, and families.

## **Related Laws And Regulations**

Federal statute allows for external partners, such as lived experts, who provide feedback on programs and practice, to receive compensation through Title IV-E, and Title IV-B funding. Per the Child Welfare Policy Manual [§5.1 Q/A # 3](#), at 45 CFR 1355.33 (b), there are requirements for “external partners” that the State can include to participate in the development of the State's Child and Family Services plan (CFSP) as appropriate partners to include on the review team. The State may cover per diem and travel expenses for its external partners' participation to the extent that it so chooses. In addition, [CWPM §7.4 Q/A # 8](#), details that Title IV-B funds may be used to pay for those costs for external partners who are engaged by the agency in the development of the CFSP and Annual Progress and Services Reports (APSR), participating in the CFSR/Program Improvement Plans (PIP), and planning related to Court Improvement Program (CIP). This also includes the individual's participation in preparatory calls, webinars, or post-event activities.

States may use Chafee funds, [42 U.S.C. § 677](#), in any manner that is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the program, which includes personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors, and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults. Participation in activities that promote interactions with dedicated adults and increase skills for transitioning to adulthood, such as Youth Advisory Boards, can be compensated.

## Definitions

Lived Experience – Direct current or past experience with or involvement in the child welfare or adult services system.

Lived Expert – Youth and young adults, birth parents, caregivers, resource parents, kinship caregivers, and individuals who are or have received or interacted with child or adult services.

Chafee Funds – The federal funding program “John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood”. Funds can be used for youth in foster care, ages 14 and older, and youth “likely to age out of foster care” to participate in age-appropriate and normative activities. Funds can be used to assist youth in transitioning to adulthood, usually through employment, education, financial management, and housing assistance.

Title IV-B Funds – Flexible federal funds authorized under the Social Security Act, for child maltreatment prevention, family preservation, and out-of-home care support. Includes funding for Kinship Navigator programs, incorporating lived experience, and additional prevention services.

Title IV-E Funds – Federal funds authorized under the Social Security Act, these funds reimburse states for maintenance, administrative, and training costs. Funds cover monthly care stipends and a portion of the administrative costs for the out-of-home care program, but have strict eligibility requirements for reimbursement.

## Procedures And Timeframes

### 1. Local Department of Social Services - Compensation for Individuals with Lived Experience

- 1.1. Whenever a Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) engages an individual with lived experience to participate in a workgroup, youth advisory board, focus groups, policy groups, or other formal activities, they must be compensated for their time.
- 1.2. The LDSS must utilize Chafee, Title IV-E, Title IV-B (as appropriate), and flex funds allocated to the LDSS.
  - 1.2.1. To compensate undocumented individuals without federal work authorization, only state funds can be used.
  - 1.2.2. If gift cards are to be used, then the LDSS must ensure adherence to the Department’s Gift Card policy.
- 1.3. The consistent rate of compensation must be as follows:
  - 1.3.1. Young Adult: \$25 per hour
  - 1.3.2. Adult: \$25 per hour
  - 1.3.3. Full day: \$150
- 1.4. The LDSS must have a formal compensation agreement for lived experts with the lived expert(s) to be compensated, which includes the following,

- 1.4.1. Purpose of the engagement;
- 1.4.2. Duration of the engagement;
- 1.4.3. Responsibilities of the lived expert(s);
- 1.4.4. Deliverables and/or expected outcomes from the engagement;
- 1.4.5. Amount of compensation for engagement; and
- 1.4.6. Signature by the lived expert(s) and LDSS representative.

## **2. Social Services Administration - Compensation for Individuals with Lived Experience**

- 2.1. The Office of Family Advocacy, within the Social Services Administration (SSA), must oversee and ensure the consistent practice of compensating lived expert(s) who are engaged in workgroups, youth advisory boards, focus groups, policy groups, or other formal activities.
- 2.2. An approved vendor that has been procured following State of Maryland procedures must be utilized to compensate the lived expert(s).
- 2.3. The consistent rate of compensation must be as follows:
  - 2.3.1. Young Adult: \$25 per hour
  - 2.3.2. Adult: \$25 per hour
  - 2.3.3. Full day: \$150
- 2.4. For short-term or single engagements, the SSA team planning the event must submit a request for the amount of compensation needed to the Office of Family Advocacy at least thirty (30) days before the engagement with the lived expert(s) is scheduled to begin.
- 2.5. For an engagement that will be weekly, ongoing, or have a duration longer than ninety (90) days, the Office of Family Advocacy will work with the requesting team as well as TEAM to develop a contractual PIN for the engagement. Exceptions may be made for youth who serve terms on youth advisory boards.
  - 2.5.1. The classification to be used for the contractual PIN must be Student Technical Assistant.
  - 2.5.2. The hourly rate of compensation must be \$21.00.

### **Documentation**

SSA and LDSS must use the [Compensation Agreement for Lived Experts](#) to document compensation. Documentation must be uploaded into CJAMS for lived experts who are in out-of-home care.

### **Forms And Attachments**

[Compensation Agreement for Lived Experts](#)

### **Related Information**

N/A