

The New Expectant Parent Payment (EPP) for Pregnant Minors and Non-Minor Dependents in California Foster Care: Frequently Asked Questions

Basics:

Q: Where can I get basic information about the new expectant parent payment?

A: All-County Letter 21-123 issued by the California Department of Social Services provides basic information about the EPP benefit and includes some recommendations for counties related to identifying and enrolling eligible youth.

Q: When is this benefit available?

A: Beginning January 2022. However each California county must establish its own eligibility and enrollment process and procedures. Speak to your county social services agency to understand how to apply.

Q: How much is the benefit?

A: Prior to automation of processes (which will not occur before July 2023), the EPP payment will be issued as a lump sum of \$2,700; once automation has been finalized, an amount equivalent to the home-based foster care infant supplement shall be paid monthly for the final three months of a minor/NMD's pregnancy.

Eligibility:

Q: Is there an eligibility income cap?

A: No, there is no income cap. The EPP benefit is available to any pregnant minor or non-minor dependent who receives AFDC-FC or ARC payments, including those placed in Short Term Residential Treatment Placements (STRTPs), Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs), Transitional Housing Placements (THPP) or home-based foster care.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org

Eligibility:

Q: Does a youth have to have a specific legal status to qualify for this benefit?

A: No, there are no immigration status restrictions. The EPP benefit is available to any foster youth are available to pregnant minor or non-minor dependent who receives AFDC-FC or ARC payments, including those placed in Short Term Residential Treatment Placements (STRTPs), Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs), Transitional Housing Placements (THPP) or home-based foster care.

Q: Would a youth who has already aged out of foster care be eligible?

A: No, however pregnant people not in foster care may qualify for the CalWORKS benefit. Eligibility for CalWORKS begins in the second trimester, or fourth month, of pregnancy. [Here](#) is some more information about CalWorks, and [here](#) is a link to the online CalWORKS application where you can see if you qualify. (Pregnant people in foster care are NOT eligible for CalWORKS, that is one reason the EPP benefit was established.)

Q: Is this funding also available to foster youth who already gave birth?

A: No. This is a prenatal benefit, so it is not available to a youth who has already given birth; however, there is a different benefit, called the infant supplement, that may be available once a baby is born. When a non-dependent infant (meaning the baby is not in foster care) is living with their minor or non-minor dependent parent in an eligible placement, the parent is eligible for the infant supplement, which begins the month the infant is born. The infant supplement is included in the foster care maintenance payment which goes to the dependent parent's caregiver, meaning the money goes to the caregiver/placement, who then must share it with the parent to support the infant.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org

Eligibility (Cont.):

Q: Can a young father in foster care qualify for this financial support?

A: For now this benefit is only for the minor or non-minor dependent who is carrying the pregnancy. The infant supplement is available to any parent in foster care, including fathers, once the child is born if that parent is a custodial parent full or part-time.

Q: Can youth in Juvenile court established guardianships (post dependency) and youth in Probate guardianships receiving AFDC-FC receive this benefit?

A: Expectant parent payments are available to pregnant minors and non-minor dependents who receive AFDC-FC or ARC payments, including those placed in Short Term Residential Treatment Placements (STRTPs), Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs), Transitional Housing Placements (THPP) or home-based foster care.

Q: If the youth plans to give their baby up for adoption, are they still eligible for the funds?

A: Yes. A pregnant person still has pregnancy-related needs and needs to prepare for labor and birth and to have a safe and healthy pregnancy.

Q: Is this benefit only for babies born in 2021?

A: Yes, this benefit is for pregnant minors and nonminor dependents and eligibility begins January 1, 2022.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org

Enrollment:

Q: Is there a referral already generated for this funding or is it up to the county to come up with the referral?

A: Nothing is automatic. Each county will have to come up with its own referral process. ACL 21-123 says: "Counties should establish procedures for identifying and enrolling eligible children/NMD. It is also recommended that counties identify opportunities in which case management workers may be able to share information about the benefit with young people, such as during Child and Family Team meetings (CFTs) or during required annual conversations about sexual and reproductive health. Further guidance will be forthcoming on working with pregnant children/NMDs to spend this money wisely and budget for parenthood."

Payments:

Q: For minors in an STRTP and NMD's, does this payment go directly to the youth? In our THP-NMD program-the infant supplement gets sent straight to us (the housing provider) and once we receive it, we cut a check to the youth. Will this process remain the same for this payment as well?

A: No. WIC 11465(e) authorizes the EPP payment to be made directly to the pregnant minor or non-minor dependent. It cannot be given to the placement/caregiver. That makes it very different than the infant supplement.

Q: Who will the benefit payment be issued to?

A: To the pregnant minor or non-minor dependent. If eligible and once enrolled, the payment will go to the minor or NMD, no matter the placement type. That makes it very different than the infant supplement.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org

Payments (Cont.)

Q: What if the youth does not have a checking or savings account?

A: Every county has the authority to determine the form and format for issuing the EPP payment and may choose to offer it in multiple forms. It is not uncommon for youth in foster care not to have bank accounts. For this reason, counties are encouraged to look into different forms of payments that work for youth such as debit cards or electronic payments (apps) consistent with current county practice.

Q: If someone applies for the EPP in their last month of pregnancy, do they only get part of the benefit?

A: No, they get all of it right now. According to ACL 21-123, the EPP payment shall not be prorated. If the pregnancy is not identified before the seventh month of pregnancy, the child/NMD shall still receive the entire three months of payments.

Q: What if someone receiving the EPP delivers the baby prematurely, do they still get the full benefit?

A: Yes they do. According to ACL 21-123, the EPP payment shall not be prorated, and overpayments shall not be established or collected.

Q: In Los Angeles County, there is something called the Expectant Infant Supplement. Is the Expectant Infant Supplement different than Expectant Parent Payment?

A: The Expectant Infant Supplement is a county program only available in Los Angeles county. The Expectant Parent Payment is a state benefit that is available in all counties. There are important differences between the two programs. These differences are described in detail in a recent webinar from the Reproductive Health Equity Project (RHEP), which can be found here.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org

Misc.

Q: What if I have more questions that aren't answered here?

A: Questions can be submitted to the California Department of Social Services through their Healthy Sexual Development workgroup, at CFSSexualDevelopmentWorkgroup@dss.ca.gov

You are also welcome to [submit questions](#) to RHEP and we will do our best to respond promptly.

For more information, go to www.fosterreprohealth.org