

# COVERED 26



## Former foster youth are eligible for free health care

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires states to provide young adults under 26 with free health care if they were in foster care at age 18 or older. This ensures that former foster youth can access the health care services they need – just like non-foster youth who can stay on their parents' insurance plans until 26.

### Former foster youth qualify for free Medi-Cal coverage if they:

- Were in foster care in ANY state at age 18 or older,
- Currently live in California, AND
- Are under the age of 26.

Youth are eligible regardless of income.

### Do youth still in foster care need to reapply for Medi-Cal when they leave foster care?

NO. As of January 1, 2014, young adults should be automatically moved into the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth when they leave foster care at age 18 or older. Youth who were in foster care in another state or who left foster care prior to January 1, 2014, may still need to sign up for this program.

### 4 reasons former foster youth should sign up for the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth:

- 1 No Income Requirements.**  
Former foster youth qualify for free coverage until 26 regardless of how much money they earn, eliminating the need to answer income questions when they go to sign up.
- 2 Continuous Coverage.**  
Once enrolled in the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth, youth stay covered until 26 with no need to reapply each year.
- 3 Flexibility.**  
Youth enrolled in the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth can choose fee-for-service coverage in many counties, which means they can go to any doctor, clinic, therapist or hospital that takes Medi-Cal. This flexibility is critical given this population's high mobility.
- 4 Comprehensive Coverage.**  
The Medi-Cal program for former foster youth includes medical care, vision exams, dental care, substance abuse treatment, and mental health coverage.

Youth who sign up for the free Medi-Cal program for former foster youth will be assigned the 4M aid code, allowing them to receive all the advantages listed above until they turn 26.

## **How do young adults sign up for the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth?**

Former foster youth should sign up through a county social services office. They can apply using a simple, one-page application for former foster youth (MC 250A). Most counties have specific staff, phone numbers, or offices to help former foster youth. For information on the best way to apply in each county, visit: [coveredtil26.childrennow.org/how-to-sign-up](http://coveredtil26.childrennow.org/how-to-sign-up).

## **What if a young adult is not sure at what age he or she left foster care?**

Some young adults may not realize they were in foster care at age 18 or older because, for example, they lived with relatives, left their placement without approval, or were placed in probation-supervised foster care as a result of a juvenile delinquency case. These youth may qualify for the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth and should be encouraged to apply using the short, one-page application (MC 250A). The county will verify the age at which the young adult left foster care.

## **Are young adults required to bring proof of their former foster youth status when they go to sign up?**

NO. Young adults who self-identify as former foster youth should be immediately enrolled in the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth and assigned the '4M' aid code. The young adult will receive free health care services while the county verifies that he or she was in foster care at age 18 or older.

## **How can my organization help?**

- Tell former foster youth about the advantages of enrolling in the Medi-Cal program for former foster youth.
- When providing enrollment assistance to young adults under the age of 26, be sure to ask if they were in foster care at age 18 or older and tell them that former foster youth qualify for free Medi-Cal coverage until age 26 regardless of income.
- Encourage young adults to email us at [coveredtil26@childrennow.org](mailto:coveredtil26@childrennow.org) if they have trouble enrolling or have more questions.

Here's how Children Now can help support your outreach efforts:

### **[www.coveredtil26.org](http://www.coveredtil26.org):**

Visit our youth-friendly website for information and outreach materials.

### **Trainings and Presentations:**

For training support or for presentations email [coveredtil26@childrennow.org](mailto:coveredtil26@childrennow.org).

