

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



June 20, 2003

Regulation Package #0602-14

CDSS MANUAL LETTER NO. EAS-03-06

TO: HOLDERS OF THE EAS MANUAL, DIVISION 90

Regulations Package #0602-14**Effective 6/27/03****Sections 90-200, 90-205, 90-210, 90-215 and 90-220**

This manual letter has been posted on the Office of Regulations Development website at http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/Eligibilit_617.htm.

Assembly Bill (AB) 427, Chapter 125, Statutes of 2001, created the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP) which promotes self-sufficiency by providing an assistance payment to emancipated foster youth until their 21st birthday under specified circumstances and helps to support a vulnerable population at risk of homelessness, unemployment, welfare dependency and incarceration. Youth participating in the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP) are also eligible for the STEP when they emancipate.

The Aid to Families with Dependent Children – Foster Care (AFDC-FC) Program provides a payment to foster youth until their 18th birthday (can be extended to 19 under certain circumstances). The STEP provides a monthly stipend and medical benefits to these youths until their 21st birthday under specified circumstances. STEP will also provide a case worker for the child who will assist in the development of a STEP - Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) which outlines the child's goals for transitioning to adulthood including education and employment. These funds and services will help the former foster youth to finish their high school education, attend a college or technical training program, or develop work skills to become self supporting. By allowing the youth to finish their schooling and/or gain work skills, the youth will be more likely to acquire gainful employment and be less likely to end up homeless, incarcerated, or dependent upon public assistance.

These proposed regulations implement STEP pursuant to AB 427. This includes the adoption of regulations to provide definitions, STEP eligibility requirements, STEP county responsibilities, and STEP rates.

These regulations were adopted on a regular basis effective June 27, 2003 and were considered at the Department's public hearing held on November 13, 2002.

FILING INSTRUCTIONS

Revisions to all manuals are indicated by a vertical line in the left margin. The attached pages are to be entered in your copy of the Manual of Policies and Procedures. The latest prior manual letter containing EAS changes was EAS-03-05.

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Pages 976 thru 983

Attachments

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**ELIGIBILITY AND ASSISTANCE STANDARDS
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DIVISION 82

Chapter 82-500	Child Support Enforcement Program Regulations
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Chapter 88-400	Chart for Determining Relatedness of Caretaker Relatives
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DIVISION 89 DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Chapter 89-100	Assistance Payments Demonstration Project (APDP) and California Work Pays Demonstration Project (CWPDP)
Chapter 89-200	Minor Parent
Chapter 89-300	Renumbered to Chapter 89-100, Section 89-105 by Manual Letter No. EAS-95-06, effective 7/9/95
Chapter 89-400	Renumbered to Chapter 89-100, Section 89-110 by Manual Letter No. EAS-95-06, effective 7/9/95
Chapter 89-500	Renumbered to Chapter 89-100, Sections 89-115 through 89-130 by Manual Letter No. EAS-95-06, effective 7/9/95
Chapter 89-700	Repealed by Manual Letter No. EAS-98-03, effective 7/1/98

DIVISION 90 KINSHIP GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PAYMENT PROGRAM

Chapter 90-100	Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program
Chapter 90-200	Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP)

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| CHAPTER 90-200 SUPPORTIVE TRANSITIONAL EMANCIPATION PROGRAM (STEP)

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90-200 STEP PURPOSE 90-200

- .1 The purpose of the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP) is to provide financial assistance for those youth who have emancipated from the Foster Care system and are in need of financial assistance.
- .2 In administering the regulations in Chapter 90-200, the county must comply with all civil rights laws, and the rules, and regulations of Division 21. This provision also applies to contractors and subcontractors performing any and all county functions.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Section 11403.1, Welfare and Institutions Code.

90-205	DEFINITIONS (Continued)	90-205
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(w)	(1)	Ward means a child who has been adjudged a ward of the court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 601 or 602.
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(x) through (z)	(Reserved)
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NOTE:	Authority cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 300, 601, 602, and 11403.1(b)(1), Welfare and Institutions Code.
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90-210 STEP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 90-210

In order to be eligible for a STEP payment, the youth shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

.1 Age Requirement

.11 A youth meets the minimum age requirement for STEP on his or her 18th birthday. Eligibility for STEP ceases the day before the youth's 21st birthday.

.2 Emancipation from Foster Care or the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program

.21 The applicant must have been receiving a Kin-GAP Payment on their 18th birthday; or

.22 The applicant must have been in Foster Care on the day before their 18th birthday and:

.221 The applicant was a court dependent; or

.222 The applicant was in a Foster Care placement pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement; or

.223 The parental rights of the parent(s) of the applicant were either relinquished or terminated involuntarily and the applicant was in a Foster Care placement; or

.224 The applicant was a ward of the court and receiving an Aid to Families with Dependent Children – Foster Care payment; or

.225 The applicant was the ward of a legal guardian and receiving a State Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Foster Care payment.

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.23 It is important to note that in most instances the funding source while the youth was in Foster Care does not affect the applicant's eligibility for STEP; so long as the applicant meets one of the conditions in Sections 90-210.221 through .223 above, the applicant may be eligible. For example, an applicant who was a dependent of the court and receiving a CalWORKs payment, an SSI/SSP payment, or county only funding, may be eligible to participate in STEP.

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90-210	STEP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS (Continued)	90-210
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.3 Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program - Transitional Independent Living Plan (STEP - TILP) (STEP 8, Rev. 8/02)

.31 A STEP - TILP must be in place for the youth which includes educational, vocational, or other goals related to self-sufficiency.

.32 The youth must be participating in the activities identified in the STEP - TILP.

.4 Participating County

.41 The youth must have emancipated, as defined in Section 90-210.2, from a county which is participating in the STEP. If the county is not participating in the STEP, the youth is ineligible for a STEP payment.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 300, 601, 602, 11363, 11401, 11403.1(a)(3), and (b), Welfare and Institutions Code.

90-215 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES 90-215

.1 County with Payment Responsibility

.11 The county which had payment responsibility for the Foster Care or Kin-GAP child prior to emancipation shall have payment responsibility for the STEP payment if that county is participating in the STEP Program.

.2 County Responsibilities

.21 The county with payment responsibility shall process the youth's application.

.22 The county with payment responsibility shall prepare a STEP - TILP (STEP 8, Rev. 8/02) for each STEP youth and work with the youth to attain the goals identified in the STEP - TILP.

.23 A redetermination of all of the STEP youth's circumstances which are subject to change shall be completed annually.

.231 The county worker shall review the youth's STEP - TILP annually. Once the county worker has reviewed the STEP - TILP and determined that the youth is continuing to participate in the STEP - TILP as required in Section 90-210.32, the county worker will forward the STEP 2 - Referral, Transmittal, and Communication Form (STEP 2, Rev. 7/02) to the eligibility worker.

.232 The eligibility worker shall annually review the youth's age, placement type, STEP - TILP status, and any other eligibility factors subject to change.

.3 Optional Program

.31 Participation

Participation in the STEP Program is at county option. Counties who wish to participate in the STEP Program shall file a Letter of Intent with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) no later than April 1st of each year.

.32 Program Termination

.321 Notification

Once a county has chosen to participate, it may also choose to discontinue participation. Once a county decides to discontinue STEP, they must notify CDSS 90 days prior to the proposed termination date of the county program.

90-215 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued) 90-215

.322 Youth Currently Being Served

Once a county has notified CDSS of its discontinuance of the STEP Program as required in Section 90-215.321, that county must continue to serve those youth currently participating in STEP consistent with the provisions of his or her STEP - TILP or until they are no longer age eligible for the program. The county is not required to serve any new youth.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 10554, 11403.1(a)(3), (b)(2), (b)(4), (c), (g), and (g)(1), Welfare and Institutions Code.

90-220 STEP RATES 90-220

.1 Counties shall determine STEP rates in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11403.1(e).

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.11 The STEP rate effective July 1, 2001, is \$597. (The STEP rate is the equivalent of the AFDC-FC rate for the 15 to 19 year-old age group.)

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.2 STEP payments shall be delivered in one amount no later than the fifth of the month and shall be paid on a prospective basis.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code. Reference: Sections 10554 and 11403.1(e), Welfare and Institutions Code.

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