

# AB 12 Fact Sheet

## About AB 12

Assembly Bill 12 (AB 12), the California Fostering Connections Act, was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on September 30, 2010. This bill takes advantage of several components of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 to provide federal funding for California's existing kinship guardian assistance program (Kin-GAP) and extend foster care benefits to age 21. Stakeholders, including foster youth, are providing input into how the bill will be implemented.

## Extension of Foster Care Benefits to Age 21

Under AB 12, foster care benefits will be extended to youth until they reach the age of 21. Implementation of this provision is challenging from both a fiscal and caseload perspective and will take place over a period of three years for eligible youth as follows:

- January 1, 2012, care extends up to age 19
- January 1, 2013, care extends up to age 20
- January 1, 2014, care extends up to age 21

In order to receive benefits after the age of 18, youth must agree to reside in an eligible, supervised foster care placement and must be:

- Completing high school or equivalent program (GED); or
- Enrolled in college, community college or a vocational education program; or
- Participating in a program to remove barriers to employment; or
- Employed at least 80 hours a month; or
- Unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition.

Foster youth opting to remain in extended care will have several options for placement which include:

- Remain in existing foster home of a relative or non related legal guardian; licensed foster family home; certified foster family agency home or, with the approval of the juvenile court, the home of a non-related legal guardian
- Group home placement for high school graduates, only available if placement is necessary due to a medical condition
- THP-Plus Foster Care, which provides youth with affordable housing and supportive services that are supervised by Children & Family Services and reviewed every six months by the juvenile court
- Supervised Independent Living, which may include housing in an apartment, room and board arrangements, college dorms or a shared roommate in a supervised living situation

## Kin-GAP

Kin-GAP is a California program designed to support foster children who have been placed in long-term foster care with a caregiver who is a relative. The program provides reimbursement to relative caregivers who are unable to adopt the child but can offer permanent placement in the relative's home.

AB 12 makes a number of changes to the California's state-funded Kin-GAP program, most significantly by converting it into a federally subsidized program, including requiring only 6 versus 12 months of placement prior to exiting foster care and allowing for benefits to be adjusted periodically. The federal government will now pay 50% of cost for federally-eligible participants. This will save California tens of millions of dollars of state general fund, and beginning in 2012 those savings will help augment the cost of extending benefits to foster youth past the age of 18.

# AB 12 Timeline

2010  
2011  
2012  
2013  
2014

**September 30, 2010:**  
Assembly Bill 12 signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

**January 1, 2011:**  
Implementation of Federal Kin-GAP program begins. There are 120 youth in Ventura County who are eligible for Kin-GAP.

**March - June 2011:**  
Ventura County stakeholders, including foster parents, foster youth and social workers, develop local AB 12 implementation plans

**April 2011:**  
Supervisor Bennett sponsors a conference to develop strategies for helping youth transition successfully from foster care to adulthood  
VC Children & Family Services launches a web page ([www.vchsa.org/ilp](http://www.vchsa.org/ilp)) to house information and updates about AB 12 implementation

**July 2011:**  
CDSS scheduled to release regulations for Federal Kin-GAP  
VC Children & Family Services implements outreach strategies targeted to those interested in fostering youth ages 19 and older

**August 2011:**  
VC Children & Family Services social workers discuss options with older foster youth who will remain eligible for foster care at age 19 starting in January 2012. Up to 50 Ventura County foster youth will become eligible for extended services in 2012.

**October 2011:**  
CDSS scheduled to release instructions for counties regarding implementation of components of AB 12 such as THP-Plus Foster Care, Independent Living Program, Supervised Independent Living, county contributions, and others

VC Children & Family Services staff meets with current and prospective caregivers to explore options for continuing support for youth via extended foster care, host home models, and other arrangements

**November 2011:**  
VC Children & Family Services staff implements new State rules for AB 12 and provides related training to caregivers

**January 1, 2012:**  
Foster Care Benefits extend to age 19

**July 1, 2012:**  
CDSS releases regulations for extension of foster care

**December 1, 2012:**  
Appropriation bill for final year of benefits extension submitted for 2013-2014 legislative cycle

**January 1, 2013:**  
Foster Care Benefits extend to age 20

**January 1, 2014:**  
Pending approval of State appropriations legislation for FY 2013-2014, Foster Care Benefits extend to age 21