

VIA E-mail
Ref:

Richard FitzZaland
Federation of Community Social Services of BC
E-mail: rick@fcssbc.ca

Dear Mr. FitzZaland,

I wanted to provide you with an update regarding regulation changes to the Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) program as part of the ministry's response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regulation Update:

On March 17, 2020 British Columbia declared a public health emergency due to COVID-19. As part of MCFD's response to COVID-19, the ministry has developed emergency measures regarding the 48-month duration for young adults on the Agreements with Young Adults Program.

The intention of these measures is to prevent **young adults currently on AYA** from experiencing a loss to the full 48-month duration of AYA support **due to any program interruptions or pauses, or the inability to find employment during a natural program break, because of COVID-19.** This change is also intended to prevent those who will turn 27 from becoming ineligible for AYA if they are unable to complete their program before their 27th birthday as a result of the pandemic.

If a young adult on AYA experienced any of the above circumstances due to COVID-19 they may be eligible to have their time on the AYA program since March 17, 2020 not count towards the 48 month limit, and they should check with their worker for more information. **Currently, these measures are only available until June 30th,** however, the ministry will continue to re-evaluate its measures based on the advice of the Provincial Health Officer.

What this means:

Interruptions in Programs Due to the Pandemic

- Young adults on AYA whose programs are paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic will continue receiving monthly AYA support. This will not affect their 48-month AYA program maximum.

Scheduled Program Breaks (e.g. summer breaks, between semesters, etc.)

- If a young adult's program is on a scheduled break and the MCFD/DAA social worker is satisfied that they cannot find work as a result of the pandemic, they may continue to receive support through AYA. This will not affect their 48-month AYA program maximum.
 - **NOTE* young adults do not have to prove that they have applied for work. The social worker just needs to believe that it's unlikely that they would be able to find a job because of COVID.*

Turning 27 During the Pandemic

- The MCFD/DAA social worker may also continue payments for young adults who turn 27 during the time their program is suspended due to COVID-19 or, if they turn 27 when the program resumes, for the duration of that term.

Programs Continuing through the Pandemic

- For those whose programs continue through the pandemic (e.g. programs moved to virtual settings or those that have been unchanged), their 48 month program duration will continue as usual. This includes AYAs accessing the new temporary life-skills program.

Currently, these measures are only available until June 30th, however, the ministry will continue to re-evaluate its measures based on the advice of the Provincial Health Officer.

Thank-you for your continued support to youth and young adults in these uncertain times.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Kamper, Assistant Deputy Minister
Strategic Priorities Division
Ministry of Children and Family Development