CURRENT PRACTICE

Currently, certain abused and/or neglected children, who live in a foster home, group home, or treatment center, can receive federal benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) & Social Security Survivor’s Benefits.

However, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is not required to use that money for additional services for that child. Rather, DHR is keeping this money to reimburse itself for the cost of that child’s care.

$8,500

The average amount of SSI/SSDI benefits DHR can claim on behalf of a single foster child each year.

FEDERAL LAW

requires states to use a foster child’s benefits in a manner determined to be in that child’s best interests.

UNDER SB 524/HB 575, DHR WOULD BE REQUIRED TO:

- Provide notice to the foster youth and their attorneys when applications for benefits are made; and
- Place the child’s federal benefits into an account for the child to access upon leaving care.

WHEN A FOSTER YOUTH’S BENEFITS ARE SAVED INTO AN ACCOUNT,

They are better prepared to support themselves upon aging out of the child welfare system.

ONE YEAR OF SSI/SSDI BENEFITS IS EQUIVALENT TO:

- Almost 1 YEAR
  Childcare for a 2-4 year old
- 6.8 YEARS
  Books & supplies for college
- 5.5 YEARS
  SNAP benefits
- 9.7 MONTHS
  Rent for a one bedroom

1. The average weekly cost of childcare for a 2-4 year old in either a child care center or family child care program is $166.05; the yearly cost is $8634.60. Maryland Family Network, (2013) Child Care Demographics 2013. http://mdchildcare.org/mdinfo/cpta/demographics.pdf
2. Based on the average ($1243) of the estimated yearly cost of books and materials at UM College Park ($1130), UM Baltimore County ($1200), and Prince George’s County Community College ($1400). Data not available for Baltimore City Community College or Community College of Baltimore County.
3. Based on the average ($4732) yearly cost of tuition at Prince George’s County Community College ($38250), Baltimore City Community College ($26400), and Community College of Baltimore County.
4. The average yearly SNAP benefit per person in Maryland, for FY 13, is $1528.68. http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/185NAPay5pp.htm
5. The average monthly rent in Maryland is $876, which was calculated by averaging the Fair Market Rent for all metropolitan areas in Maryland: https://www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/fmfr/14FMF/sdmr2014_top200_final_summary.pdf

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