



## SSI & Youth “Aging Out” of Foster Care:

*WIC 13757 (Assembly Bill 1331) Requires Counties to Screen Youth & Apply for SSI*

**In January 2008, WIC 13757 was enacted as a safety net for severely physically and mentally disabled foster youth who are exiting the state's foster care system. The new law is designed to ensure that these youth who are potentially eligible for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits have applications submitted on their behalf well in advance of their exit from foster care so that, with SSI in place, they can make a safe and supported transition.**

### *What is Supplemental Security Income?*

SSI is a federal benefit that provides a monthly income and Medi-Cal to individuals with qualifying physical or mental disabilities. In addition, individuals who are eligible for SSI benefits may be eligible for certain housing opportunities, vocational programs, and other services.

### *What does WIC 13757 require of counties?*

- Screen all youth who are in foster care and are between the ages of 16.5 and 17.5 years of age for a physical or mental disability using an “SSI Disability Screening Guide.”
- Submit an SSI application on behalf of those youth who are determined likely eligible for benefits.

### *How can minors' attorneys help?*

- WIC 13757 mandates are directed at Counties only. In Los Angeles, the screening will be done by individual social workers using a Disability Screening Tool, attached. DCFS workers will forward information regarding potentially eligible youth to DCFS's Department of Revenue Enhancement in Glendora. Minor's attorneys (MA) can help by ensuring that every youth they represent between the ages of 16.5 and 17.5 have been screened. If the screening has not taken place, the MA should request the court to order that the screening be conducted.
- Once an applications for SSI is submitted, the Social Security Administration can take anywhere from 4 months to 1 ½ years to resolve the application. The MA should encourage the court to retain jurisdiction until an application has been resolved.
- MA's will be notified by Revenue Enhancements via email when an application for SSI has been denied. The MA should immediately refer the matter to The Alliance using the procedures described in the attached document.

### **For more information contact:**

*Laura Streimer, Legal Director, The Alliance for Children's Rights at (213) 368-6010*

*Anjuli Arora Dow, Attorney, The Alliance for Children's Rights at (213) 368-6010*

[www.kids-alliance.org](http://www.kids-alliance.org)