



2018-2020 Policy Priorities

GOAL: Improving timely filing of SSI applications and appeals so that youth with disabilities age out of foster care with the support afforded by SSI.

Background: Currently, county child welfare agencies are obligated to file Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications on behalf of transition-age foster youth with disabilities to ensure that these young people, who are not able to support themselves due to those disabilities, have the support they need when they age out of foster care. However, we see in our casework instances of youth who likely qualify for SSI for whom no timely application has been filed, and cases in which youth or their caregivers have been forced to shoulder the responsibility of completing and filing applications. As a result of these violations, many youth with disabilities age out of foster care without a financial safety net, vulnerable to exploitation, homelessness, incarceration, and other adverse outcomes.

Policy Statement: The Alliance is prioritizing enforcement of county obligations around timely SSI applications for eligible youth.

The Alliance State and Local Policy Action Plan Includes:

- Training partners, including social workers, Foster Family Agencies (FFAs), courts, and those who work with caregivers around how and when to pursue SSI, who is responsible for doing so, and how to use existing resources to submit a high-quality application;
- Educating policymakers about the obligation to file timely SSI applications on behalf of youth with disabilities, and to support youth through SSI appeals, and
- Advocating for youth with disabilities by enforcing their right to a timely SSI application and representing those youth in appeals.
- Advising local agencies on policies, training, and implementation to ensure compliance with legal responsibilities to youth with disabilities, and
- Supporting leveraging of existing resources to improve the quality of SSI applications filed on behalf of foster youth with disabilities.