

CASA Volunteer Guide

Supporting Texas Foster Youth Ages 17+

Using the My Future Plan Worksheet

Empowering Youth in Transition Planning

Understanding Your Role as a CASA Volunteer

Why It Matters

Transition planning is critical for foster youth ages 17+. CASA volunteers play a vital role in helping youth prepare for adulthood and independence.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you reviewed the youth's My Future Plan worksheet recently?

Does the youth know they have a CASA advocate supporting their transition?

Are there gaps in the youth's plan that need attention?

How can you best support this youth's goals and dreams?

CASA Advocacy

As a CASA volunteer, your key responsibilities include:

Building trust and a consistent relationship with the youth

Reviewing the My Future Plan worksheet with the youth regularly

Encouraging the youth to take ownership of their transition plan

Advocating for services and resources the youth needs

Acting as a mentor and supportive adult throughout the process

Connecting youth to community resources and support networks

Attending court hearings and reporting on transition planning progress

Celebrating youth milestones and reinforcing their strengths

The My Future Plan Worksheet

The My Future Plan Worksheet is a structured tool designed to guide Texas foster youth ages 17+ through the key responsibilities and decisions of adulthood. It empowers youth to take ownership of their future while giving CASA volunteers a clear framework to provide meaningful, targeted support throughout the transition planning process.

A Roadmap to Adulthood

The worksheet is organized into 9 main sections that youth complete as a checklist. Each section covers a critical area of adult life — from education and housing to health and finances. Colorful icons and progress tracking features keep youth engaged and motivated, while reinforcing that this is their plan and their future.

The 9 Sections at a Glance

Sections 1–3

Includes:
Foundation & Adult Responsibilities
School & Education
Housing & Future Planning

Sections 4–6

Includes:
Transition Support
Jobs & Life Skills
Health & Benefits

Sections 7–9

Includes:
Finance & Benefits
My Voice & Decisions
CASA Support & Notes

Youth Ownership & CASA Support

Youth lead the process — CASA volunteers guide, encourage, and advocate alongside them

Progress tracking and colorful icons help youth stay motivated and on track toward independence

Section 1: Foundation & Adult Responsibilities

Why It Matters

Understanding adult responsibilities is the foundation for a successful transition.

Youth need to be prepared for:

Voter registration at age 18

Selective Service registration (males)

Money management and financial independence

Knowing their adult rights and responsibilities

Accessing community resources independently

CASA Discussion Questions

Do you know what changes when you turn 18?

Are you registered or planning to register to vote?

Do you know about Selective Service registration requirements?

Have you started learning how to manage a budget?

Do you know where to find resources for adults in your community?

Have you reviewed the Foundation section of your My Future Plan worksheet?

CASA Advocacy

Volunteer action steps for this section:

1. Review adult rights and responsibilities resources with youth.
2. Discuss steps toward financial independence and budgeting basics.
3. Assist youth in understanding voter and Selective Service registration.
4. Encourage youth to check off progress in the Foundation section of their worksheet.
5. Reinforce that knowing their rights empowers them for adulthood.

Section 2: School & Education

Why It Matters

Education is a critical pathway to independence and long-term stability for foster youth.

CASA Discussion Questions

Are you on track to graduate or earn your GED?

Have you completed or started your FAFSA application?

Have you explored college, trade school, or vocational programs?

Do you know about the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) for tuition aid?

CASA Advocacy

Encourage discussions regarding:

Graduation progress and credits checked

ACT and/ or SAT tests taken

College applications submitted

FAFSA submission deadlines

College tours and vocational alternatives

ETV and other tuition aid options

Education resource deadlines and next steps

Volunteer Role in Education Planning

Why It Matters

CASA volunteers play a key role in helping youth navigate education options and funding.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you visited any campuses or attended any college/vocational info sessions?

Do you know the deadlines for financial aid and ETV applications?

What career paths interest you, and how can education help you get there?

CASA Advocacy

Ask if youth have been informed about:

ETV (Education and Training Voucher) program

FAFSA and state financial aid deadlines

Local college and vocational training options

Tuition waivers for foster youth in Texas

School counselor and transition support contacts

Section 3: Housing & Future Planning

Why It Matters

Stable housing is one of the most critical needs for youth transitioning out of foster care.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you started a housing plan for after foster care?

Do you know about Extended Foster Care (EFC) or SIL options?

Have you submitted any housing applications?

What does a safe, stable home look like to you?

If you choose not to stay in care or go to college, have you considered military enlistment as an option?

CASA Advocacy

Encourage youth and take action:

Review the youth's housing plan together

Explain Extended Foster Care and SIL eligibility

Ensure housing applications are submitted on time

Connect youth to local housing resources and programs

Reinforce the importance of planning ahead

Youth Goals & Planning Ahead

Youth Goals

Youth should work toward completing key housing milestones on the My Future Plan worksheet.

Worksheet Checklist Items

Complete a written housing plan before turning 18

Learn about Extended Foster Care (EFC) up to age 21

Explore Supervised Independent Living (SIL) options

Discuss other options such as military enlistment

CASA Support Tips

How CASA volunteers can help:

Discuss all available housing options with youth

Verify that applications are submitted before deadlines

Connect youth to transitional housing programs

Advocate in court for housing stability resources

Remind youth: planning early leads to better outcomes

Section 4: Transition Support

Why It Matters

Connecting to transition services helps youth build a support network before leaving foster care.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you visited or learned about your local Transition Center?

Do you know what post-care services are available to you?

Have you connected with any community resources for youth aging out?

CASA Advocacy

Facilitate introductions to Transition Centers and ensure youth know available post-care services.

Ongoing Support Beyond Foster Care

Why It Matters

Support does not end at age 18 — youth need connections to continue thriving after care.

CASA Discussion Questions

Do you know who to contact if you need help after leaving foster care?

Are you aware of Extended Foster Care and continued support options?

CASA Advocacy

Support youth in accessing services by:

Providing information on community resources and referrals

Encouraging youth to attend Transition Center events and programs

Ensuring youth understand Extended Foster Care eligibility

Offering ongoing encouragement and check-ins after placement ends

Section 5: Jobs & Life Skills

Why It Matters

Employment readiness and life skills are essential for youth transitioning out of foster care.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you attended or signed up for PAL (Preparation for Adult Living) classes?

Do you know about job readiness programs and Texas Workforce Commission resources?

Have you explored career options or vocational rehabilitation if applicable?

CASA Advocacy

Encourage PAL participation and help youth connect with job training and career exploration programs.

Volunteer Actions: Supporting Employment & Independence

Why It Matters

CASA volunteers play a key role in helping youth build independence and career confidence.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you discussed vocational rehabilitation options if the youth has a disability?

Are there specific career paths or job programs the youth wants to explore?

CASA Advocacy

Ask whether:

PAL classes and job readiness workshops are scheduled

Texas Workforce Commission programs have been explored

Vocational rehabilitation has been discussed if applicable

Independence skills are being actively developed

Section 6: Health & Benefits

Why It Matters

Understanding health coverage helps youth stay healthy and independent after foster care.

CASA Discussion Questions

Do you know your health insurance options after age 18?

Have you heard of Transitional Medicaid and how long it lasts?

Do you have a doctor or clinic you plan to continue seeing?

Do you know what SSI is and whether it applies to you?

CASA Advocacy

Encourage youth to learn and plan regarding:

Transitional Medicaid coverage (available until age 26)

How to access medical, dental, and mental health care post-18

SSI payee options and what they mean for youth

Scheduling and managing their own healthcare appointments

Connecting to community health resources

Volunteer Role in Health & Benefits

Why It Matters

CASA volunteers help youth navigate complex health benefit systems confidently.

CASA Discussion Questions

Has youth reviewed their Medicaid coverage and eligibility timeline?

Does youth understand how to use their insurance for ongoing care?

Has youth been informed about SSI and representative payee options?

CASA Advocacy

Ensure youth have been informed about:

Transitional Medicaid eligibility and enrollment steps

How to find and schedule healthcare providers independently

SSI benefits and payee arrangements if applicable

Mental health and counseling resources post-care

Long-term health planning and wellness strategies

Section 7: Finance & Benefits

Why It Matters

Financial independence is a key goal for youth transitioning out of foster care.

Youth Goals

Open and manage a personal bank account.

Know who your SSI payee is and understand your benefits.

Work toward financial independence and self-sufficiency.

CASA Advocacy

Ensure youth have a bank account and understand how to manage their finances.

CASA Support for Finance & Benefits

Why It Matters

CASA volunteers play a vital role in building youth financial literacy and confidence.

CASA Discussion Questions

Do you have a bank account and know how to use it?

Do you know if you receive SSI and who manages it?

CASA Advocacy

Ask whether:

Youth has a bank account set up and active

Budgeting and money management have been discussed

Financial literacy resources have been shared

Financial planning goals are included in the transition plan

Section 8: My Voice & Decisions

Why It Matters

Youth must feel heard and empowered to make their own decisions as they approach adulthood.

CASA Discussion Questions

Do you know your rights when you turn 18?

Do you feel your voice is heard in your planning?

Are you comfortable making decisions about your future?

CASA Advocacy

Ensure youth understand and can exercise:

Their rights at age 18

How to advocate for themselves

Decision-making skills and confidence

Access to life skills videos and resources

Section 9: CASA Support & Auxiliary Sections

Why It Matters

These sections help youth stay organized and connected to their support network.

CASA Discussion Questions

Have you completed your About Me section?

Who have you listed in I Can Reach Out To?

Would you like to watch Life Skills by CASA videos?

Do you have questions noted in your worksheet?

Do you know what is Important To Know for your future?

CASA Advocacy

Review the worksheet's auxiliary sections with youth:

About Me: Personal goals and background

I Can Reach Out To: Support contacts and resources

Notes/Questions: Ongoing questions and reflections

Important To Know: Key info for clear communication paths

You've Got This!

Supporting Youth One Step at a Time

Review plans regularly with youth •
Encourage open communication and
advocacy • Connect with Texas CASA for
resources, training, and volunteer support.

Thank you for advocating for foster youth.