

SEPTEMBER 2021

Family Urgent Response System (FURS)

Immediate Trauma
Informed Support
for Youth & Caregivers

ALLIANCE
for CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

Calls to the Cal-FURS Statewide Hotline & Cal-FURS Eligibility

Q: Who is eligible to receive assistance from Cal-FURS?

A: Current and former foster youth (up to age 21) and their caregivers are eligible to receive immediate trauma-informed support through Cal-FURS.

However, every caller who calls the Cal-FURS statewide hotline will receive phone support from trained and caring counselors even if not within the FURS-eligible population.

The statewide hotline staff will refer the caller to local resources if more than phone support is needed and the caller does not meet the eligibility criteria of FURS (reference [ACL 20-89](#)). If a caller does meet the eligibility criteria of FURS, then they will also be eligible to receive a mobile response if in-person is needed and desired.

Q: How is eligibility verified?

A: Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff have access to limited information in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) which enables them to verify if the call or text involves a child or youth who is currently or was previously in foster care.

Q: What are the educational/experience backgrounds of the Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff who answer the phone and provide in person services?

A: The Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff is a multi-disciplinary team of staff with different levels of education: There are licensed clinical staff who have a master's degree, unlicensed therapists with a master's level education who are accruing their clinical hours, and experienced staff with a behavioral health background and bachelor's degree.

Peer staff have lived experience, either as a former foster youth or a caregiver of a foster youth.

Q: What are the training requirements for Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff?

A: Training programs for Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff include, but are not limited to, crisis de-escalation, trauma informed, healthy parenting, healthy sexual development, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGI) and cultural responsiveness.

Q: **When there is a call to the Cal-FURS statewide hotline, is there follow up from the hotline staff after the call?**

A: Yes. Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff will link callers to the same staff who built the initial rapport with the caller. However, if the staff member is not working on the subsequent day, a follow-up call will be made by another staff member or may need to be scheduled with the requested staff member outside the 24-hour window for follow up.

Q: **Does the Cal-FURS statewide hotline provide additional language support/services?**

A: Yes. Bilingual staff are available. Additionally, the Cal-FURS statewide hotline has a contract with a 24/7 language agency that provides immediate interpreter services.

Q: **Can providers call Cal-FURS on behalf of children/youth and caregivers?**

A: A provider can call to learn more about available services or to receive advice, support or guidance about eligible youth. However, a provider cannot request an in-person mobile response on behalf of a caregiver or youth without the youth or caregiver's knowledge and consent. A referral for a mobile response will not be made unless the caregiver or youth speaks to the hotline staff and agrees to an in-person response.

Q: **Can a bio parent call the Cal-FURS statewide hotline?**

A: Yes. Cal-FURS provides services to youth who have exited foster care to family reunification. Biological parents can call to receive support and will be eligible for all services if their child is a current or former foster youth.

Q: **Are caregivers of youth that are connected with intensive services, such as Wraparound or FSP, able to call Cal-FURS?**

A: Yes, current and former foster youth and their caregivers are eligible to receive immediate trauma-informed support regardless of case plan services or connection to intensive services.

Q: Would families in voluntary cases be eligible or only if they had prior court child welfare involvement?

A: Only current and former foster youth and their caregivers are eligible to receive immediate trauma-informed support through Cal-FURS. If the child or youth was previously in foster care and the family now has a voluntary case, then the family would be eligible for Cal-FURS.

However, as noted above, every caller who calls the Cal-FURS statewide hotline will receive assistance by phone. The Cal-FURS statewide hotline staff will refer the caller to local resources if more than phone support is needed and the caller does not meet the eligibility criteria of FURS (reference [ACL 20-89](#)). If a caller does meet the eligibility criteria of FURS, then they will also be eligible to receive a mobile response if in-person support is needed and desired.

Q: Are there plans to increase eligibility criteria and extend to Informal Kinship Families?

A: Advocates hope to work to extend to all families as resources are available.

Q: How does Cal-FURS engage with foster youth residing in a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) and their existing services?

A: Cal-FURS provides youth with phone-based support and in person support, if requested, and works with STRTP staff to ensure the youth is receiving the full range of services.

Q: If someone calls the Cal-FURS Statewide Hotline requesting transportation, do they get connected to the Mobile Response Team, or are they redirected elsewhere?

A: “Mobile Response” refers to an in-person mobile response during situations of instability, to preserve the relationship of the caregiver and the child or youth following a call to the Cal-FURS Statewide Hotline. Any calls solely requesting transportation will be referred to the appropriate social worker or probation officer or other community-based resources.

Mobile Response Teams

Q: What happens if the caregiver wants a mobile response but the youth does not? Does a mobile response go out still based off the adults wish? (if the former foster youth is not 18)?

A: Mobile response is based on the expressed desire of the caller. The mobile response team will work to address concerns of both caregiver and youth.

Q: When responding to an STRTP placed youth who is placed out of county, will there be a personal response? If not, what is the response and follow up?

A: An in-person response can be provided to youth in an STRTP. All mobile responses will be provided by the county where the youth or caregiver is currently located, so in this situation the mobile team in the county where the STRTP is located would go out.

Referrals

Q: Are there any linkages to local Regional Centers as well?

A: Yes. Cal-FURS developed a resource database that includes key resources in every county in California so referrals and linkages can occur.

Q: Is this resource available or appropriate for law enforcement to use to de-escalate a situation that it involves a child or youth in foster care?

A: Yes. Law enforcement can and should refer youth and caregivers to the Cal-FURS statewide hotline.

Data

Q: What is the approximate wait time to reach a live person?

A: When someone calls the Cal-FURS statewide hotline they will hear a short recording (less than 40 seconds long) and then will be connected to a live person after the recording concludes.

Reporting Requirements

Q: What is a Summary Report?

A: The Summary Report is a tool created to help mobile response teams communicate key information to the county social worker or probation officer for children currently in foster care, and to CDSS. This report will not be included in case plans or court reports. It is intended only to be used to ensure linkage to ongoing supportive services. Access the Summary Report [here](#).

Q: How are calls being documented in CWS/CMS and what is the connection to social workers and probation officers?

A: Starting in November 2021, county workers will be able to document calls in CWS/CMS for youth who are currently in foster care. The only information that will be captured is that a mobile response occurred. No information will be documented in CWS/CMS for youth who are not currently in foster care. Counties will receive instructions soon.

Q: Will other parties to the case be notified if the Cal-FURS statewide hotline is contacted, such as Minor’s Counsel or Parent’s Counsel?

A: Minor’s or parent’s counsel will not receive a copy of the summary report. However, if a Child and Family Team (CFT) is convened or the case carrying worker needs to communicate with the minor or parent’s counsel, they may be contacted about the needs of the child.

Additionally, if contact is made with the FURS Statewide hotline but no mobile response referral is provided, there will be no notification to anyone, including an assigned child welfare worker or probation officer.

Outreach

Q: Is there a flyer/card/handout available to provide youth and caregivers with the FURS contact info?

A: Yes. Caregiver and youth directed flyers are available to download at the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Cal-FURS [webpage](#). Flyers are available in multiple languages. Magnets and other communications tools will be available in the future.

Q: Is CDSS thinking about using Cal-FURS as a way to identify candidates for prevention services through the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) through the community pathway?

A: Not at this time.