

F-203 ONTARIO CHILD BENEFIT EQUIVALENT (OCBE) POOLED FUND



In this document, the non implicit gender applies to both men and women.

Version 1 effective February 17, 2010

(previously SE-30)

Object

Ensure the good management of the OCBE funds with the primary goal to assist youth and children in their accession to independent living.

Policy

Valoris has a responsibility to assist and guide youths and children in care or formal customary care to develop social skills and interpersonal skills to foster resilience and facilitate their transition to adult life.

Acting as a good parent, Valoris seeks to provide these children and young people the same opportunities as other children living with their families to access a higher level of education.

Procedure

1. Fund Eligibility Requirements

Youth ages 15, 16, and 17 in Valoris' care or having received formal customary care for 12 consecutive months.

Also eligible:

- i) Youth who would have been admissible to the Savings Program between July 1st, 2008 and September 30, 2009 who are still in Valoris' care;
- ii) Youth who are subject to an Extended Care and Maintenance (ECM) agreement, who would have been admissible to the Savings Program between July 1st, 2008 and September 20, 2009;
- iii) Youth who would have been admissible to the Savings Program between July 1st, 2008 and September 30th, 2009, who returned to Valoris' care and who have an ECM agreement.

In the three instances described above, Valoris must calculate the amount of the payment for each month that the youth was entitled to the OCBE Pooled Fund during this period and disburse the savings to the youth, including interest.

2. Disbursements required by the OCBE Pooled Fund

Where a youth has been in care or in formal customary care for 12 consecutive months when he or she turns 15 years old, Valoris shall allocate the OCBE payment amounts to the Savings Program for that youth beginning with the month that the youth turned 15 years old.

Where a youth meets the eligibility requirement of being in care or in formal customary care for 12 consecutive months after he or she turns 15 years old, Valoris shall allocate the OCBE payment amount to the Savings Plan for that youth starting with the month that he or she turned 15 years old or came into care or customary care.

3. Fund Objectives and Discounted Results

The Fund shall promote the achievement of the following objectives (in the short, medium and long terms):

- i) higher educational achievement – participation in activities that maximize his or her learning potential and promote success in both primary and secondary educational settings, and the future pursuit of post-secondary education and vocational learning opportunities;
- ii) higher degree of resiliency – participation in activities that promote social skills and interpersonal relationship development.
- iii) smoother transition to adulthood – participation in activities that promote the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to transition from care and live independently, including knowing how and where to access required supports.

The objectives of the Fund are to:

- i) provide opportunities for all youth and children in care or in formal customary care, 0 to 17 years old, to participate in recreational, educational, cultural and social activities consistent with their plans of care;
- ii) establish a Savings Program for eligible youth in care or in formal customary care, 15 to 17 years old.

4. Financial Management of the Fund

Valoris must establish a separate account in the general ledger in order to retain and accumulate all disbursements from the OCBE Pooled Fund made by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. The Pooled Fund will be held separate from operating costs and all other accounts, and may not be used for activities or for staff currently financed through Child Welfare services' pluriannual financing model.

Valoris must provide all children and youth with an opportunity to benefit from the OCBE Pooled Fund, regardless of whether or not the Agency receives OCBE funding in their name, as in the case of a Ward of another Agency.

Valoris must provide each eligible youth and the Protection Services worker assigned to the youth with quarterly statements indicating the amount of savings in the youth's name, including any accrued interest.

Valoris will contribute to a Savings Program for youth ages 15 to 17 an amount equivalent to the maximum monthly disbursement from the OCBE Pooling Fund.

Expenses incurred by the Fund must be executed according to Valoris' approved expense authorization process.

The Pooled Fund must not be used to pay for a child or youth's medical, dental, clinical or therapeutic care.

If necessary, the Fund may be used to retain the services of a third party for temporary, specific services required to meet the child or youth's needs.

Valoris will disburse the total savings to the eligible youth no later than six months after the date that care has ended.

In the case where a youth cannot be found when care or formal customary care has ended, Valoris shall hold the funds saved for the youth for a maximum of one year from the date that care has ended. If Valoris has not succeeded in locating the youth and the savings are not disbursed within one year, Valoris will reallocate the savings to the Activities Program.

In the event of a youth's death, the savings will be reallocated to the Activities Program.

5. Clinical Management of the Pooled Fund

The Protection Services worker must explain the specific requirements of the Savings Program to the youth, including the fact that each youth may participate in a Financial Literacy program in order to acquire the financial skills appropriate to the youths' cognitive and developmental skills. The worker will also explain how the savings will be disbursed to youth who have successfully met the Savings Plan requirements.

Valoris' Protection Services worker will document the following in the youth's file: all discussions with the youth concerning the Savings Program and its requirements, the method and dates of disbursement of the savings, quarterly savings statements, and progress made by the youth toward meeting the program's requirements.

The Protection Services worker will work with all eligible youth to help them to meet the Savings Program requirements: acquire financial skills and demonstrate financial competency relevant for independent living, establish a personal bank account or alternative savings mechanism to receive funds where banking is not feasible, develop an appropriate plan for the use of the savings, and secure stable housing.

The Protection Services worker will document in the child or youth's plan of care the established objectives for the youth's participation in recreational, educational, cultural and social activities in order to achieve the objectives previously mentioned. The steps taken to attain these objectives will be documented in the child or youth's file.

Planning of the savings program and activities related to the OCBE Pooled Fund must include the participation of children and youth and other service providers, educators and caregivers in meeting the Fund's objectives.

The Child Protection Services worker shall develop a plan regarding the use of the savings in transitioning the youth towards adulthood. These plans will be added to the youth's plan of care.

Valoris shall disburse the total amount of savings and any accrued interest to eligible youth six months following the date that care has ended through the youth's bank account. If the youth has not successfully met the requirements of the Savings Program, Valoris will meet with the youth to establish a plan for the disbursement of all or part of the savings to third parties on the youth's behalf.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. a youth completing a custodial sentence under the Youth Criminal Justice Act), Valoris will have the discretionary power to extend the time period within which the savings will be disbursed to the eligible youth.

Valoris must make reasonable efforts to locate a youth once care ends and allow time for the youth to contact the Agency. The Protection Services worker will document these efforts in the youth's file.

6. Communication Plan

Valoris must ensure that employees, foster parents, paid external resources and children in care are well informed about the objectives of the Fund and this procedure.

7. Reporting Requirements

Valoris will provide the Ministry with the required reports concerning the use of funds that may include the following:

- i) the number of children and youth in care or in formal customary care, between 0 to 17, on whose behalf the Pooled Fund has been accessed and the percentage of total children and youth in care accessing the Pooled Fund;
- ii) the total number of children and youth having participated in activities/programs, and the number and percentage of Pooled Fund users, by age, who have participated in activities focused on higher educational achievement, a higher degree of resiliency, social skills and relationship building and a smoother transition into adulthood;
- iii) expenditures by higher educational achievement, a higher degree of resiliency, social skills and relationship building and a smoother transition into adulthood;
- iv) a list of community partners/agencies providing activities for which the Pooled Fund was accessed;
- v) total fiscal year revenues into and expenditures from the Pooled Fund.

Valoris must declare total fiscal year revenues, expenditures and the balance of the Pooled Fund as a separate account on the general ledger in audited financial statements, reporting to the Ministry and other required reporting.

Unused portions of the Pooled Fund may be retained for future use in accordance with this procedure.

This procedure must be reviewed periodically in order to ensure its accuracy and relevance.

Definitions, annexes and references

Definitions

Parents: Parents are defined as biological or adoptive parents, stepfathers, stepmothers, or other people responsible for the child prior to an intervention by Valoris.

Fund: Pooled fund of OCBE grants, whose goal is to improve access to the Activities Program for all children and youth between the ages of 0 to 17 in who are in care or in formal customary care.

Activities Program: Recreational, educational, cultural and social activities

Savings Program: Effective September 30, 2009, a portion of the funds deposited in the OCBE Pooled Fund for children in care or in formal customary care will be allocated to a Savings Program.

References

- Policy Directive CW-002-08 OCBE Pooled Fund, effective November 14, 2008
- Addendum to Policy Directive CW-002-08