

TRIP ELIGIBILITY AND REIMBURSEMENT AT-A-GLANCE

Youth / Young Adult Eligibility Criteria	Caregiver Eligibility Criteria
<p>Young people are eligible for assistance through TRIP if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet one of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are at least 14 ½ years of age, but less than 18 years of age and are in foster care as defined in G.S. 131D-10.2(9); or ○ Were in foster care upon their 18th birthday and have entered into a Voluntary Placement Agreement with a county to participate in Foster Care 18 to 21; and all of the criteria below. • Have obtained approval of their caregiver in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard OR from the county child welfare agency, as needed; • Have contacted the county child welfare agency, as needed, to obtain any other approval or information needed to attend driver's education courses, obtain a learner's permit or driver's license and consulted with the county and their caregiver regarding their readiness to drive; • Have one or more goals on their DSS-5096a Transitional Living Plan which specify the steps they must take to meet the criteria for which they are seeking support (i.e. enroll in and complete driver's education); and, • Have a written agreement with their caregiver and county child welfare agency that includes, at a minimum, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Their plan to contribute toward ongoing costs associated with driving that are not or will not be covered by TRIP or LINKS; ○ Any educational criteria needed, such as budgeting and understanding insurance; and, ○ Caregiver's agreement to support the young person in obtaining driving experience. 	<p>Caregivers are eligible for reimbursement under TRIP for costs incurred in association with assisting youth in their care with obtaining a learner's permit or driver's license if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet one of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are providing care for a youth in foster care as defined in G.S. 131D-10.2(9), who is at least 14 ½ years of age, but less than 18 years of age; or, ○ Are providing placement to a young adult 18 years of age or older, but less than 21 years of age, who has entered into a Voluntary Placement Agreement with a county to participate in Foster care 18 to 21; and all of the criteria below. • Have applied the reasonable and prudent parent standard, as appropriate, in the decision-making processes related to any approval the young person would need from the caregiver to attend driver's education courses or obtain a learner's permit or driver's license; • Have contacted the county child welfare agency, as needed, to obtain any other approval or information needed for the young person to attend driver's education courses, obtain a learner's permit or driver's license and consulted with the county and the young person regarding the young person's readiness to drive; and, • Have a written agreement with the young person and the county child welfare agency that includes, at a minimum, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Young person's plan to contribute toward ongoing costs associated with driving that are not or will not be covered by TRIP or LINKS; ○ Any educational criteria the young person must meet, such as budgeting and understanding insurance; and, ○ Caregiver's agreement to support the young person in gaining driving experience.

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Assessing Readiness of Youth

For many young people in foster care, not having a license to drive is a barrier to accessing education, healthcare, and other activities. For these youth, driving is not merely a privilege, but a route to independence. Thoughtful planning between the county child welfare agency, the young person, and the caregiver to ensure the young person is prepared to assume the responsibility of driving is key to addressing this barrier to independence.

To assess readiness, county child welfare agencies should work with youth (under age 18) and their caregivers to complete the TRIP Readiness assessment. The assessment facilitates discussion about safety issues related to medical, mental health, or emotional conditions, substance use, and other areas that may impact a young person's judgement and safety behind the wheel. This assessment tool is used to facilitate a conversation about a young person's readiness to drive and jointly plan to address barriers to a young person's readiness. This assessment should not be used to create or contribute to barriers to driving.

Application, Required Documentation, and Reimbursement Process

Steps Young People or Caregivers Must Take

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria previously described, young people or caregivers must provide the following documents to the county child welfare agency to receive reimbursement:

- Receipts of eligible costs incurred
- Documentation of enrollment in driver's education / documentation of course completion

Steps County Child Welfare Agencies Must Take

When the county child welfare agency determines that the reimbursement request is for an eligible driving related cost, the county will reimburse the young person or caregiver for the incurred cost by using county funds.

The county must submit requests for reimbursement along with the supporting documentation directly to the State LINKS Coordinator, using the TRIP Request for Reimbursement form. Reimbursement requests must be submitted by the 15th of the month for services rendered the previous month.

When a county child welfare agency submits the TRIP Request for Reimbursement, the agency must also provide the following supporting documentation:

- Receipts for eligible costs incurred
- Documentation of enrollment in driver's education / documentation of course completion

Submitting Reimbursement Requests to the Division

TRIP Reimbursement request forms, receipts for eligible costs incurred, and documentation of driver's education enrollment / documentation of course completion must be submitted to via email to linksreimbursement@dhhs.nc.gov by the 15th of the month for services rendered the previous month.