

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER JML 26-021

DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES TO PRESERVE FEDERAL EARNED BENEFITS FOR ELIGIBLE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

WHEREAS, pursuant to Executive Order 14359, “Fostering the Future for American Children and Families signed by President Donald J. Trump on November 13, 2025, the President correctly acknowledged the critical need to provide “young Americans in or transitioning out of the foster care system with the tools they need to become successful adults” and directed the Secretary of Health and Human Services initiate and develop the “Fostering the Future” initiative and related programs;

WHEREAS, The State of Louisiana is committed to President Trump’s initiative to foster the future for American children and families;

WHEREAS, some children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families Services (DCFS) receive, or are eligible to receive, earned federal survivors’ benefits administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB);

WHEREAS, these earned survivors’ federal benefits are the legal property of the child, not the State;

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of children who are eligible for such federal survivors’ benefits that those funds be conserved, used for unmet needs, and made available to them as they transition to adulthood;

WHEREAS, the State of Louisiana recognizes the growing national movement among states, counties, and cities to ensure that youth in foster care are not deprived of their earned federal benefits.

NOW THEREFORE I, JEFF LANDRY, Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

Section 1: The DCFS shall take the appropriate steps to screen every child currently in care and every child entering care to determine whether the child is receiving or may be eligible for earned federal survivors' benefits administered by SSA, VA, or RRB.

Section 2: Upon a determination that a child currently in care or that enters care is eligible to receive earned federal survivors' benefits, the DCFS shall take the appropriate steps to either apply for or assist the representative payee in apply for benefits on behalf of the child.

Section 3: The DCFS shall provide written notification to the child, the child's guardian ad litem (or legal representative), and the child's caseworker of any application for federal benefits, determination, appeal, or appellate decision.

Section 4: The DCFS shall develop policies and procedures to identify a representative payee who is independent of the [Department] whenever possible and to establish clear fiduciary obligations for any individual or entity serving as payee. If no appropriate payee is found, the Department shall apply to be a representative payee of the child.

Section 5: If the DCFS is selected as the representative payee to manage a child's benefits, the Department shall select an account type that best preserves the funds and eligibility for other supports. Appropriate account types may include, but are not limited to, ABLE accounts, Personal Needs Accounts, or trust-style savings vehicles. The Department shall also explore the use of 503A Trump Accounts for eligible children in its custody.

Section 6: The DCFS shall not use any portion of a child's federal benefits to reimburse itself or any contractor for the cost of the child's care or maintenance while in the legal custody of the DCFS.

Section 7: The DCFS shall provide training to all relevant personnel concerning fiduciary obligations, proper use of representative payee status, and compliance with federal and state law regarding management of beneficiary funds.

Section 8: The DCFS shall provide each child receiving federal benefits with an annual accounting detailing the use, conservation, and balance of those funds.

Section 9: The DCFS shall provide financial literacy education beginning no later than age 14, including instruction on budgeting, saving, and accessing conserved funds. Representative payees shall also receive appropriate training.

Section 10: Upon a child's exit from the custody of DCFS, the balance of the conserved funds shall be released to the child, if over the age of eighteen, or to the child's lawful representative payee, as appropriate.

Section 11: The DCFS shall promulgate the necessary policies, procedures, and training to fully implement this Executive Order by October 1, 2026.

Section 12: This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.

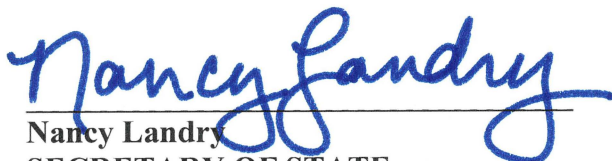


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of Louisiana in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 24th day of February, 2026.



JEFF LANDRY
GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA

**ATTEST BY THE SECRETARY
OF STATE**



Nancy Landry
SECRETARY OF STATE