

Local Law 115 of 2025 Report Luggage for Youth in Foster Care

Local Law 115 of 2025 requires ACS to ensure that youth entering foster care; moving from one foster care placement to another; and exiting foster care are provided luggage (defined to be “a suitcase, duffel bag, backpack or similar reusable container designed to hold an individual’s personal belongings and is not a disposable bag or trash bag.”) LL 115 of 2025 requires ACS to submit annual reports (no later than January 31 of each year, starting with 2026, regarding the provision of luggage to youth in foster care the preceding year, including the following information: ACS’s efforts to provide the luggage; any barrier to providing the luggage; and any additional efforts to be taken in the upcoming year. The law became effective August 13, 2025.

ACS strongly supported this legislation and ensuring that children and youth entering foster care, leaving foster care or changing foster care placements have “luggage” as defined in this legislation and that no young person is ever compelled to put their belongings in a trash bag. We know that entering foster care or changing foster care placements can be traumatic and scary, and we seek to ensure that when this does happen that it be done in a manner that is as supportive as possible. Placing ones personal belongings in garbage bags can feel demeaning and devaluing and we oppose this practice.

There are three key points where youth may be in need of a bag: a) when child protection specialists are conducting removals; when children are leaving the Children’s Center for a foster care placement; when children are placed at a foster care agency and are either changing placements or leaving foster care. We have taken the steps outlined below to ensure that bags are available at all three points. We have not encountered barriers to this effort.

For Child Protection:

If the child protection specialist (CPS) is conducting a planned removal, the CPS will bring luggage bags with him/her. If it is an emergency removal or CPS needs ACS vehicle/ACS transportation services each of the over 90 vehicles that support CPS in this work is required to have at least 2 duffel bags in their cars at all times. Drivers are required to check that they have the bags at the outset of their shift and to replenish supplies if needed. In addition, the child protective borough offices all have duffel bags in their supply rooms, and the Child Advocacy Centers do as well.

The Children’s Center

The Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center continues to provide children and youth entering foster care with the luggage they need to store and secure their personal belongings during the admission process and upon transition to placement. We offer unlimited black duffel bags and large stylish tote bags to all youth in need of these items.

Foster care agencies

Our contracted foster care providers are required to provide youth in foster care with luggage whenever a child in care needs one, including when they change foster care placements and when they return home to their families. In August 2025, ACS supplied foster care agencies with 600 duffel bags to support their efforts already in place, in addition to 2000 duffel bags that ACS supplied in 2024.

Additional effort in the coming year: After exploring several luggage types, considering practicality and functionality, ACS identified a new bag type and has sought to incorporate youth voice by asking the Youth Leadership Council's feedback on the bag. Once this process is complete, ACS will procure this luggage to distribute to foster care agencies in 2026 and beyond to ensure youth are moving with their belongings with dignity.