**BRIDGES PROGRAM WAIVER PROCEDURE**

***Purpose***

Why are Bridges participants strongly encouraged to attend all hearings?

1. A Bridges participant is a party to the case and is to attend all hearings.
2. Hearing attendance encourages the emancipated young adult to advocate for him/herself and become more independent.
3. Attendance provides the emancipated young adult with more complete information regarding his/her participation in the program.
4. Attendance provides the court with more complete information regarding the services young adult is receiving and if the young adult has the support needed to meet his or her goals.

***Procedure***

1. The Bridges program strongly encourages the emancipated young adult to attend the hearing in person. If attending in person is not possible, then the young adult’s attorney and/or Bridges’ worker is to work with the court to arrange for the emancipated young adult to participate via Skype or other alternative means.
2. The emancipated young adult’s attorney and/or Bridge’s worker shall inform the emancipated young adult that it is his or her responsibility to attend the Bridges court hearing, unless the emancipated young adult is unable to do so due to work, school or some other approved reason.
3. At least 14 days prior to every hearing, the attorney and/or Bridges’ worker is to meet with the emancipated young adult and discuss the hearing and the young adult’s responsibility to attend. The attorney/Bridges’ worker is to bring the waiver form to this meeting.
   1. If the emancipated young adult cannot attend the hearing, the emancipated young adult is to sign the form waiving his/her presence at the hearing. The emancipated young adult must also fill out the information sheet attached to the waiver. The signed waiver form and information sheet should be presented to the Judge or Magistrate before each hearing.
   2. For emancipated young adults who will attend the hearing, the attorney/caseworker shall discuss with the emancipated young adult what will happen at the hearing and inform the young adult that the hearing will be informal and that the young adult will be asked how he/she is doing in the Bridges Program. The attorney/caseworker should encourage the young to feel free to ask any questions or discuss any issue with the Judge or Magistrate.