

SIX SERVICE AREAS

Education/Training

- Education Planning
- Coordination with Schools
- Post-secondary Planning

Employment

- Career Exploration
- Employment Readiness
- Finding a Job; Keeping a Job
- Career and Vocational Planning

Housing

- Apartment and Household Management
- Transportation
- Tenant and Landlord Rights and Responsibilities

Life Skills

- Money Management
- Consumer Skills
- Health
- Legal Issues and Education
- Interpersonal Skills
- Decision-Making and Problem-Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Daily Living Skills
- Parenting Skills

Prevention/Wellness

- Finding Adult Doctors, Dentists and Mental Health Providers
- Drug and Alcohol Issues
- Pregnancy Prevention
- Socially Transmitted Infections (STI)
- Violence and Abuse Issues

Supports/Permanent Connections

- Community Resources
- Mentoring
- Family and Friends

The Purpose of the Pennsylvania Independent Living Program

VISION: A system of services and supports that empowers youth and young adults to reach their fullest potential.

MISSION: Pennsylvania Independent Living Practices engage youth and young adults in a coordinated, cross-system effort to improve their successes and permanent connections, as they become responsible and productive citizens.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Pennsylvania Independent Living Program is to make every effort possible to reduce or eliminate the instances of homelessness, poverty, delinquent or criminal behavior, and non-marital childbirth and to increase employability, high school graduation rates, enrollment in post-secondary or vocational institutions and successful transition to adulthood.

Timeline of Services

History – What Guides the IL Program

- 1980's
 - National Independent Living Movement
 - Willie Palmer vs. Mario Cuomo

- 1986 - 1987
 - Social Security Act was Amended with the establishment of the “Independent Living Initiative”
 - Federal IL Regulations were issued

- 1988 - 1993
 - PA Independent Living Programs began
 - Foster Care IL Program was expanded
 - Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation

- 1999
 - Foster Care Independence Act of 1999
“John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program”

- 2001 - 2009
 - Education and Training Voucher (PA - ETG)
 - College Cost Reduction Act of 2007
 - Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008.
 - Pennsylvania Independent Living and transition program funding, including the Chafee IL allocations to counties, were included in the Needs-Based Plan and Budget application for Fiscal Year 2009-2010. State funding for non-Chafee eligible youth and purposes now available.

Willie Palmer vs. Cuomo

As another fiscal year comes to a close and the scrambling to submit state independent living plans and budgets continues, it should be noted that independent living for foster care youth came into play, mainly because of one individual.

In 1983 a young man by the name of Willie Palmer was emancipated from Foster Care simply because it was his 18th birthday. He was unemployed, uneducated and had no permanent placement to return to. He was not skilled in independent living and resumed a life on the streets.

In 1985, Willie sued the state of New York for their neglect and disconcerts for him as a foster care youth and human being. He believed that no young person should be discharged from care without any ideas or skills on how to be self-sufficient or without their education. He believed young people should receive job skills and absolutely should not be discharged to the streets. Willie won his case and is considered to be the genesis to the national independent living movement. After his case was settled, other cases all over the nation began popping up, Connecticut, Michigan, Texas and eventually the Federal government saw a need to step in and take action.

In 1987, the 4-E initiative was introduced and the Independent Living Act, under Title XX became law. Funding resources and skills training requirements were now in place for youth between the ages of 16-18 years old. It makes it optional for states to continue care until the age of 21. States would be allotted specific amounts of funding bases on the 1984 census of youth in care. Under the law states would have to spend that money on youth transitioning from foster care to independence, this was to include training and start up expenses.

Of course the IV-E Initiative has since been replaced by the Chafee Independent Living Act of 1999. It supplies most states with an increase in funding and makes it mandatory for states to extend the age criteria to age 21.

It made it optional for states to provide medical coverage to age 21, does not exclude youth who are adopted to be eligible for this program and requires specific reporting to be done by states to make them accountable for the use of these funds. As states and service providers continue to implement the new law into their programming and best practices, it is appropriate to recall how the whole thing really got started.

Unfortunately, Willie Palmer died a violent death shortly after the Independent Living Act was passed in 1987 – on the streets with only a garbage bag full of his things. He never received any compensation for his suffering nor did he receive any follow up care. But because of Willie Palmer, many wonderful changes and new ideas have been added to the quality of care for foster care youth and other young people in alternative care all over America.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Foster Care Independence Act of 1999)

Main Points:

- Doubles the Federal Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative funding nationwide to \$140 million.
- States required to service youth up to age 21 and can now use up to 30% of IL funds for room and board for those youth ages 18-21 who have left foster care.
- Optional Medicaid insurance to youth 18-21 who have left foster care.
- Increases youth's savings account limit from \$1000 to \$10,000 so that youth in foster care can save and still be eligible for Title IV-E foster care payments.
- Clarifies that IL activities should not be seen as an alternative to adoption for children, and should occur concurrently with efforts to find adoptive families.
- Requires Health and Human Services, in conjunction with state/local officials and experts, to develop and assess outcome measures to assess state performance.
- Requires state to use Title IV training funds to train adoptive/foster care parents, workers in group homes, and case managers to help them address issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living.
- Authorizes additional funds for adoption incentive payments to states that increased the number of children adopted from foster care.
- Includes a focus on prevention activities and service for youth.
- Stresses the importance of youth's personal responsibilities for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Nearly 20,000 young people leave foster care each year when they reach 18 without an adoptive family or guardian. Under previous laws, federal financial support ended just as they were making the transition to independence. With the 1999 John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, \$700 million was authorized nationally through year 2005 to help sustain youth in successful independent living.

Purpose and Goals of PA Independent Living Program

VISION

A system of services and supports that empowers youth and young adults to reach their fullest potential.

MISSION

Pennsylvania Independent Living Practices engage youth and young adults in a coordinated, cross-system effort to improve their successes and permanent connections, as they become responsible and productive citizens.

PURPOSE

To make every effort possible to reduce or eliminate the instances of homelessness, poverty, delinquent or criminal behavior, and non-marital childbirth, and to increase employability, high school graduation rates, enrollment in post-secondary or vocational institutions, and successful transition to adulthood.

Goals

1. To identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting, and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventative health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
2. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
3. To help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions;
4. To provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
5. To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood and
6. To make available vouchers for education and training, including post-secondary learning and education, to youths who have aged out of foster care (this point was added in the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001).

For more information on the Chafee Foster Care Independence program go to: www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/programs.htm

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT: A strength based approach to serving youth in care.

Youth involvement: plan, deliver, and evaluate services with youth involvement at all levels. Teach youth to develop their plans & goals in partnership with others.

- Youth Voice on an Individual Level – Youth must be included and actively involved in all forums where decisions are made that affect their lives and futures, such as family service plan meetings, individual service plan meetings, IL plan meetings, school meetings, and court reviews, for example.
- Youth Voice on the Systems Level – Youth should be included in all committees and groups deciding how services for youth in care are designed and provided.
- Youth as a Resource to Youth – Mechanisms, such as a state sponsored hotline, should be created to facilitate peer-to-peer support, counseling and advocacy.

Valuing strengths: focus on the strengths of the youth, their families and their community. Help teens constructively capitalize on the many coping skills they have developed. Identify and develop the creativity within each youth.

Creating safe & healthy environments: value differences. Ensure emotional & physical safety.

Learning by doing: give youth the opportunity to practice new skills & responsibilities. Understand that learning takes time and includes both success & failure.

Assessment & feedback: encourage self-assessment and feedback from others.

Promoting healthy partnerships: demonstrate belief in the ability of youth to achieve their goals.

Successful independence requires interdependence: Help youth identify resources and build lasting relationships.

Fact / Myth – Chafee IL Eligibility Requirements

- 1.) The difference between the Regular IL Program and the Aftercare Program is that Aftercare serves youth over the age of 18.
Fact / Myth
- 2.) A youth must be at least 16 years old but less than 18 to participate in an Independent Living Program.
Fact / Myth
- 3.) A youth must have been adjudicated dependent or dependent and delinquent to participate in an Independent Living Program.
Fact / Myth
- 4.) County Children and Youth agencies are the only authorized agency to run an Independent Living Program.
Fact / Myth
- 5.) The County-Operated IL program consists of county staff being the primary point of contact for the program.
Fact / Myth
- 6.) Any youth who left foster care after the age of 16 can participate in the same Independent Living Services.
Fact / Myth
- 7.) There are four Pennsylvania Independent Living Program Designs.
Fact / Myth
- 8.) Any youth up to age of 21 who is in an Independent Living Program while still in substitute care is considered to be in the regular IL.
Fact / Myth

FOUR PENNSYLVANIA INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM DESIGNS

DESIGN	DESCRIPTION
<p style="text-align: center;">County-Operated</p>	<p>County staff, children and youth, probation, etc., operate the county's independent living program by conducting IL skills training several evenings per week over a program determined period of time, or in the case where transportation is a problem and group process is not feasible, to individual youth at the youth's placement or residence. In this approach the county staff are the primary point of contact for the program. These staff provide assessment, case planning/management, and IL skills instruction while coordinating needed services with other community agencies.</p> <p>This type of IL program consists of the IL caseworker setting up a practice situation with an appropriate person or business in the community. IL staff discusses the skills that have been taught and the expected levels of performance and a system for feedback to the youth and the staff. For instance, if the session is on budgeting and meal planning, ideally the youth would be expected to plan a meal, do the shopping, and prepare and serve the meal.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Purchase of Services (One Provider)</p>	<p>In this design, the county contracts with a private provider to develop and operate the county's IL program. Several counties have chosen to use this design because of the inability to provide necessary staff resources for IL services. The contracted provider delivers skill training and other IL services in a group setting at a central location or, in the case where transportation is a problem and group process is not feasible, to individual youth at the youth's placement. This design is especially suited to counties where staff resources cannot be allocated to IL, in rural counties, or areas where transportation is a problem.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Purchase of Service (Multiple Providers)</p>	<p>This design is best suited for counties that are both large in population and/or land area. Counties using this approach choose providers to implement a portion of the overall program based either on their geographic location or on a particular specialty. A county agency staff person coordinates the various aspects of the program between the providers and within the agency. The private providers are generally responsible for completion of all program-reporting forms. Counties implementing this design have experienced problems generating referrals to the program. Care must be taken to incorporate a referral process into the program and provide in-service training to casework staff about the program and the referral process to reduce some of the obstacles that can rise when using this type of service provision.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Shared-Responsibility</p>	<p>In this design, the county children and youth agency provides IL services to youth in placement within the county using agency staff and contracts with private residential facility or group home that has IL services as one component of its program to provide the IL services to county youth referred. The county agency and the private provider share the responsibility for program reporting.</p>

Chafee IL Eligibility Requirements

In general, a youth must:

- be at least 16 years old but less than 21 (In PA, youth can be served at age 14);
- be in or have been in out-of-home placement on or after age 16;
- have been adjudicated dependent or adjudicated delinquent with shared case management with the CYS agency or adopted after age 16

Regular Independent Living Program

Any youth up to the age of 21 who is participating in any component of the ILP while still in substitute care is considered to be in the regular ILP.

Aftercare Program

Any youth ages 16-21 who left foster care after the age of 16 can participate in the same services provided to youth in the regular ILP, but these youth would be considered to be in aftercare. However, youth are only eligible for Aftercare Room and Board Services if they have left care on or after the age of 18.

Room and Board

Only available to youth who have left substitute care on or after age 18.

Education and Training Voucher (ETG)

Vouchers are available to youth who are or were in substitute care at age 16 or after and are participating in the ETG program by their 21st birthday, until they reach the age 23, provided they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Note: The eligibility requirements listed above apply **only** to federally-funded Chafee IL programs. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (starting July 1, 2009) counties may use state and county-match funds to serve additional youth preparing to transition or already in transition into adult life. Funding through Appendix 10 of the Needs-Based Plan and Budget allows counties to work with youth who are involved in their systems, but who do not meet the strict Chafee IL guidelines. For example, counties may now begin to use state funds to work with youth never placed; youth who are adjudicated delinquent only and younger youth in need of support services and training. Counties can also use Appendix 10 to create Room and Board programs for youth who left care before age 18.

Federal Legislation

Legislation – What Defines the IL Program

□ **Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) (P.L. 105-89)**

- ASFA provides states with the tools and incentives, through statutory and regulatory requirements, to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well being for children and their families with a focus on timeliness.
- It requires that reasonable efforts be made to finalize permanency plans for all youth. ASFA provides the impetus to dismantling the barriers to permanency that exist for children in placement and the need to achieve permanency for these children

□ **Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA) (42 U.S.C §677)**

- FCIA replaced the Independent Living Initiative section of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §677.
- FCIA was enacted in response to an increased awareness that youth were exiting the substitute care system with poor outcomes, including: reliance on public assistance, unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, and early childbearing.
- FCIA provides states with more funding and greater flexibility in carrying out programs designed to help children make the transition from substitute care to self-sufficiency, and establishes the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.
- FCIA requires states to identify youth most likely to remain in care until age 18 and to provide services to those youth to help them make the transition to self sufficiency; as well as, to make independent living services available to these youth until age 21. FCIA allows states to use up to 30% of their Chafee program funds for room and board for youth who have aged out of the substitute care system on or after turning age 18, recognizing that many youth face poor housing options after leaving substitute care.
- Finally, FCIA allows states the option to provide Medicaid coverage to young adults between the ages of 18-21 who were in substitute care on their 18th birthday.

Federal Legislation

▣ **Social Security Act – F.C.I.P. (P.L. 74-271)**

- The Social Security Act and related laws establish a number of programs to provide for the material needs of individuals and families, to protect aged and disabled persons against the expenses for treatment of illnesses that may otherwise exhaust their savings, to keep families together, and to give children the chance to grow up healthy and secure.
- Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides the federal funding for substitute care placement for children and youth.
- The Social Security Act also requires that courts make various findings regarding the well being of youth at permanency hearings. Included in these court findings is the determination of the services that youth age 16 and older require to make the transition from substitute care to independence. It also requires that the court make findings that reasonable efforts have been made to finalize the child's permanency plan. These findings must be made to receive Title IV-E funding.

▣ **Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220)**

- WIA is to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States.
- The purpose of Title I, Workforce Investment Systems, is to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce investment systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants, and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.
- Title II reauthorizes Adult Education and Literacy Programs. It is the purpose of this title to create a partnership among the Federal Government, States, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services.
- Title III contains amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act, provides for linkages with other programs, and authorizes the Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission. Title IV contains amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. Title V contains General Provisions relating to the Act.

Federal Legislation

▣ Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETG)

- Youth that may be eligible to receive grants under this program include:
 - youth otherwise eligible for Independent Living Program Grant services under the State CFCIP; Chafee eligibility in PA is youth who: are at least 16 years old but less than 21 years old as of the beginning of the July; are in, or have been in, out-of-home placement on or after age 16; and have been adjudicated dependent and/or delinquent with shared case management responsibility between the county children and youth agency and juvenile probation office.
 - youth adopted from foster care after attaining age 16; and
 - youth participating in the ETG program on their 21st birthday, until they reach the age 23, provided they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Other youth eligible for this program include: 1) current Pennsylvania residents who were formerly in substitute care in another state or who were adopted after age 16 from the child welfare system in another state; and 2) youth involved in the juvenile justice system with shared case management responsibility between the county children and youth agency and juvenile probation office. Pennsylvania youth formerly in substitute care who have established residency in another state are eligible for the ETG program in the state which they currently reside.

- Youth participating in ETG on their 21st birthday shall remain eligible until 23 yrs, provided they remain enrolled in a full-time post-secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress.
- Institutions of Higher Education include those that:
 - admit only students with a high school diploma or equivalent;
 - award a bachelor's degree or not less than a two-year program that provides credit towards a degree;
 - public or non-profit; credited or pre-accredited;
 - provide not less than one year of training towards gainful employment; and
 - admit only students beyond the age of compulsory school attendance.
- The ETG program provides up to \$5,000. The award the youth receives will not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the total cost of attendance
 - The cost of attendance will be determined by PHEAA through the educational institution and can include the following:
 - tuition and fees; room and board; rental or purchase of required equipment, materials or supplies (including a computer); allowance for books, supplies, transportation required residential training; and special study projects.

ETG Application can be found at www.pheaa.org , www.independentlivingpa.org ,
<http://www.ilp.pitt.edu/>

▣ College Cost Reduction Act of 2007

- Among other initiatives, the Act addressed the issue of post-secondary education rates for youth in substitute care or those who were considering adoption. Beginning in 2009-2010, youth who were in substitute care or who were adopted on or after their 13th birthday are considered “independent students” for financial aid purposes and no family/parent information is considered; youth should be eligible for increased financial aid.

▣ **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008**

- Requires states to assure that youth who are placed in substitute care can attend (if appropriate) the school that they were in before placement. The Act permits states to allow youth to remain in substitute care until age 21 with continued federal support if they do not have permanent families. The Act also addresses the rights of homeless and emancipated youth to secondary education and clarifies their status as “independent students” for post-secondary financial aid programs.

State Legislation

Legislation and Initiatives – What Defines the IL Program

The Juvenile Act (Act 333)

- The Act provides the Commonwealth with the authority to intervene in the lives of children who arguably need state protection
- Board Extensions – Note: Keeping youth in care until age 21 is best practice in Pennsylvania. Youth have the right to request the court to allow them to remain in care until 21 to continue a course of treatment and/or instruction
- Act 126 amended the Juvenile Act to incorporate the Adoption and Safe Families Act (AFSA) provisions and bring Pennsylvania into compliance with federal law, including planning for permanent placement of children and a limitation on the time children may spend in out-of-home placements.

Child Protective Services Law (Act 124)

- The Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) is primarily a reporting statute which integrates the reporting, investigating and recording of child abuse and also provides for the swift delivery of protective services.
- The CPSL was amended in 1998 to expand the time period for maintaining reports of suspected child abuse and expanding the number of matters to be referred by county children and youth agencies to law enforcement officials for investigation.

Special Grant for Independent Living and Transition Work

- The Chafee IL program was never intended as the only source of funding for IL work, but many counties did not provide matching resources and services were often not provided to all eligible youth.
- Beginning in the 2009-2010 budget year, counties include their requests for funding for transition and Independent Living work as part of the Needs-Based Plan and Budget Process. Counties no longer submit a separate Chafee IL funding application, but rather integrate their requests and plans for federal funding with state/county funding and resource planning. County agencies are asked to consider the total needs of their older youth population and not to be constrained by federal requirements.
- The Special Grant also encourages counties to look at the needs of in-home youth, never placed youth and those youth who are adjudicated solely as delinquents. Counties are encouraged to serve youth from the age of 14 regardless of placement history. They are also encouraged to provide room and board programs and other supportive housing options for youth who exited care before the age of 18 and who are ineligible for Chafee room and board programs.

Program Resources

□ Practice Standards

- **Pennsylvania Independent Living Standard for Child Welfare Practice**
- The purpose of the Practice Standards is to set a high level of quality service to youth and families in Pennsylvania.
- A guide of standards to adhere by when developing and implementing Independent Living Services.
- For more information: <http://www.ilp.pitt.edu/>

□ Program Bulletin

- **Independent Living Service Guidelines**
- The purpose of the Program Bulletin is to transmit guidelines and requirements for the successful development and implementation of Independent Living (IL) Services through Children and Youth Social Services.

□ Grant Bulletin

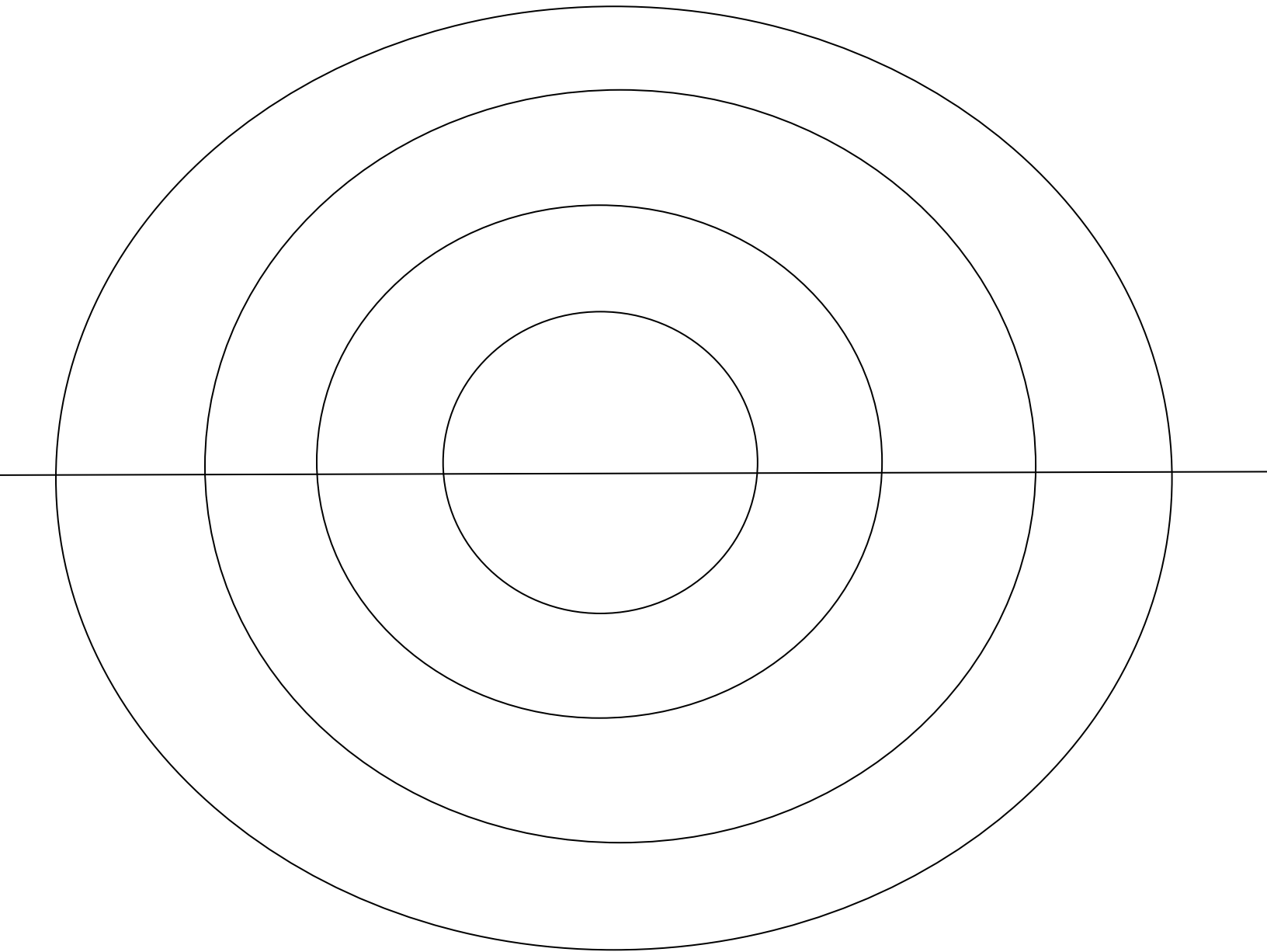
- **Title IV-E Independent Living Grant Guidelines**
- The purpose of the Grant Bulletin is to transmit guidelines for the preparation and submission of county children and youth agency application for Title IV-E Independent Living (IL) funds for State Fiscal Year.

□ Foster Youth Manual: Know your rights

- **Foster Youth Manual**
- The purpose of the Foster Youth Manual is to provide youth with information about rights while in care and offer suggestions for how one can prepare to leave the system and meet goals as a successful, happy, healthy, and productive adult.
- For more information: www.independentlivingpa.org and/or www.jlc.org

□ Judicial Guide

- **Judicial Guide**
- The purpose of the Judicial Guide is to provide the court in planning for youth the support they need to age out of care as self-sufficient, healthy, and productive adults. The guide informs the courts of the ages-appropriate needs and milestones that all adolescents experience, as well as the special needs of foster care youth who are making the transition to adulthood.
- For more information: www.jlc.org.



MY SOCIAL WORLD

Strategies to Facilitate Permanent Connections

Identify Connections

- Collect and Use case record
- Review old cards, letters, and pictures
- Past recruitment responses
- Identify person Involved in youths life over time

Make Checklist

Include:

- Other family
- Siblings
- Sibling's families
- Significant adult relationships
- Teachers
- Therapists
- Friends
- Friends' parents
- Parents' friends

Make Contact with Potential Connections

Past Connections

- Post office
- Internet phone directory
- Phone book
- Agency
- Drive around old neighborhood
- Write letters

Current Connections

- Write letters

Engage Other Connections

- Expand
- Community resources
- Collaborative partners
- State/Federal/Local agencies
- SWAN Website – www.diakon-swan.org

SWAN

Units of Service

Child Profile, Child Preparation, Child Specific Recruitment

1. **Child Profile:** This is a detailed timeline and social summary of the foster youth's life. This report will encompass the youth's placement history, birth and early development, psychological functioning, medical information, identify family resources, etc. This report will take approximately 90 days to complete once the affiliate agency receives the SWAN referral.
2. **Child Preparation:** Once the Child Profile has been completed the worker can refer for Child Preparation. This service includes ten counseling sessions that can focus on preparation for adoption or independent living. These sessions occur at a minimum of twice a month, and may even be able to take place at the youth's residence.
3. **Child Specific Recruitment:** This service is utilized if through the preparation process the youth decides that they would like the Agency to seek out adoptive parents for them. If this service was requested an actual recruitment strategy would be developed and carried out.

40 Developmental Assets

External / Internal

Search Institute has surveyed over two million youth across the US since 1989 and has found that in short, the majority of young people in the country are lacking in sufficient developmental assets needed for healthy living. These assets can be broken down into two types: External and Internal.

External Assets – contain four categories

1. Support
2. Empowerment
3. Boundaries and Expectations
4. Constructive Use of Time

Internal Assets – contain four categories

1. Commitment to learning
2. Positive Values
3. Social Competencies
4. Positive Identity

Visit www.search-institute.org for more information

Guiding Questions – Youth

- Are you concerned that when you leave foster care you'll know who you have to count on?
- Who are the teens you know or have heard about who have left foster care? How would you describe their situations? What do they say they need now?
- My guess is that you will wish you had someone you can really count on at some point later in your life. Can you think of some times that you might wish you had someone to be there for you?
- Who in your family was affectionate to you?
- Who in your family recognized you as special?
- Was/is there anyone in your family that makes you feel safe?
- Who cared for you when your parents could not? Who paid attention to you, looked out for you, cared about what happened to you?
- With whom have you shared holidays and/or special occasions?
- Who do you like? Feel good about? Enjoy being with? Admire? Look up to? What to be like someday?
- Who believes in you? Stands by you? Compliments or praises you? Appreciates you?
- Who can you count on? Who would you call if you were in trouble? Wanted to share good news? Bad news?
- Who would you call that would listen? Give advice?
- Who are the three people in your life with whom you have had the best relationship?
- Would it help to review where you have lived in the past? To help you recall important adults in your life?
- Who have you felt connected to in the past?
- Who from the past or present do you want to stay connected to? How? Why?
- Should he or she be part of your planning team?

Guiding Questions – Youth

- How are you feeling about this process? What memories, fears, and anxieties is it stirring up?
- What do you want to accomplish in the next year? Five years?
- What does your life look like in ten years from now?
- Who do you see yourself still connected to?
- What does “family” look like for you? How do you define “family”?
- Who is in your family? How many?
- Where do they live? How far away or close?
- How often do you see them? When, where and why?
- Do you live with them? Now, ever? When, why? What role do the people around you play in helping you accomplish your goals now?
- What do/don’t you need/want from them? What do/don’t they need/want from you?
- How will you feel if you try to find such a relationship and you make it work? How will your life be better, more fun, more hopeful, more satisfying, and/or more secure?
- How will you feel if you don’t try to find such a relationship and you don’t try to make it work? Will your life be worse, less fun, less hopeful, less satisfying, and/or less secure?

*Consider which of these questions you use based on the specific situation of each child/youth and their relationship with past and current caregivers.

Importance of Permanent Connections

Permanent Connections provide for:

- Social Development and Supportive Relationships
- Decrease in poverty
- Increase in employability and long-term employment
- Mental well-being
- Educational opportunities
- Development of assets

Permanency Obtained: Youth who have a permanent family connection fare better in their transitioning years. It is important to provide actual information about the Permanency Family so that all the youth's collaborative team members have the most up-to-date family contact information.

Supportive Adults: Young people who have successfully transitioned from care consistently credit their success to one or more supportive individuals. These persons provide a permanent relationship to the young person that will last well beyond the youth's emancipation from the foster care system.

Supports Offered: Levels of support may vary; they may supply the youth with advice, emergency housing, career guidance, a place to go for holidays, help with finances, etc.

Permanent Connections become the foundation for Independent Living.

Independent Living Resources

Permanent Connections are defined as positive relationships that are intended to last a lifetime. They may be either formal (adoption or reunification with family), or informal in nature (mentors or peer support groups). They consist of life-long relationships that can provide for emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well being on a permanent basis. Very often these relationships are identified by the youth.

National

Ansell-Casey www.caseylifeskills.org

Casey Family to Family www.aecf.org/initiative/familytofamily

Child Welfare League of America www.cwla.org

Daniel Memorial www.danielkids.com

FYI3.com www.fyi3.com

National Resource Center for Youth Services www.nrcys.ou.edu

National Youth Advisory Board www.nyab.org

National Independent Living Association www.nilausa.org

National Independent Living Services Resource Center www.nilrc.org

National Foster Parent Association www.nfpainc.org

State

Kids Voice www.kidsvoice.org

Juvenile Law Center www.jlc.org

PA State Youth Advisory Board www.independentlivingpa.org

PA State Resource Family Association www.psrfa.org

PHEAA www.pheaa.org and/or www.educationplanner.org

SWAN -State Wide Adoption and Permanency Network www.diakon-swan.org

University of Pittsburgh Independent Living Project www.pitt.edu

WIA – Workforce Investment Act www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us

Local

Local Human Service Organizations – contact your county officials for more info

Local Transitions Councils – contact your county officials for more info

Local Civic Organizations – contact your county officials for more info

Local Housing Options Team – contact your county officials for more info

Roles of Collaborative Partners

Collaborative partners are to work together to aid in empowering youth in accomplishing goals, reaching new levels, and transitioning successfully into adulthood. Though collaborative partners have the same goal each has specialty areas and specific responsibilities to the youth.

Role of the IL Worker –

IT IS IMPERATIVE TO THE YOUTH THAT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTNERS ARE IDENTIFIED TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE SUPPORT IS GIVEN TO ALL NEEDS OF THE YOUTH.

Needs Assessor/Advisor

- Evaluate and assess education, employment, housing, life skill, and supportive needs.
- Conduct ongoing formal/informal needs assessments.

Life Skills Trainer/Teacher/Role Model

- Individual and/or group instruction in life skill areas.
- Monitor life skills training attendance and performance.
- Evaluate life skills and obtain youth feedback.

Supportive Services/Counselor

- Support and counsel youth in completion of all Independent Living program areas.
- Crisis intervention
- Support youth across all service systems.
- Tutoring and academic and career advisement.

Community Service Organizer/Advocate

- Community resource link for youth.
- Establish community referral network.
- Advocate for youth services.

Case Manager/Record Keeper

- Develop and monitor the Independent Living plan.
- Implement policies and ensure program guidelines.
- Complete and maintain case records.

Team Facilitator/Coordinator

- Identify and organize Independent Living team members.
- Mediate differences and resolve conflicts.
- Coordinate services.
- Assign roles and responsibilities.

Independent Living Roles and Responsibilities

CASEWORKER

Role: To coordinate assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring of independent living services.

Responsibilities:

1. Establish positive relationships with youth and among all key members of the IL team.
2. Identify members of the IL team.
3. Develop, clarify, refine and communicate team roles and responsibilities on an ongoing basis.
4. Design an ongoing independent living assessment process tailored to fit the needs and realities of the youth's situation that involves key players.
5. Develop a partnership between youth, caregiver(s), birth parents/key family members, and community providers.
6. Facilitate development of a plan with outcomes and milestones designed to meet the needs and challenges identified by the IL assessment process.
7. Ensure that all team members clearly understand assigned tasks and timeframes.
8. Design and facilitate a process for monitoring progress in implementing plans.
9. Manage conflict and resistance in the IL team process.
10. Revise and adjust plans and tasks when needed.
11. Celebrate and acknowledge achievement of milestones and progress.

YOUTH

Role: To develop and practice self-sufficiency skills in order to maintain independence from public support after discharge from foster care.

Responsibilities:

1. Cooperate with members of IL team and planning process.
2. Provide information about goals, needs, and challenges in IL planning.
3. Participate in IL planning meetings.
4. Assume an increasing role in planning as milestones are achieved.
5. Educate team members regarding realities of school, work, and social life.
6. Complete assigned tasks with support of the team when needed.
7. Identify sources of support and assistance in developing self-sufficiency skills.
8. Describe opportunities and methods to learn and practice skills and complete tasks.
9. Discuss problems, barriers and obstacles to developing and practicing skills and completing tasks.
10. Learn and practice skills.
11. Describe best methods for acknowledging progress.
12. Celebrate success.

DIRECT CAREGIVER (Foster parent or Childcare staff)

Role: To facilitate learning and practice of self-sufficiency skills on a daily basis according to the IL plan.

Responsibilities:

1. Participate in and cooperate with IL team.
2. Create and ensure an environment that supports learning and practice of self-sufficiency.
3. Participate in IL assessment process by observing tasks, and completing assessment tools.
4. Identify IL skills that can best be taught in the particular placement environment.
5. Model and demonstrate assigned IL skills to be taught in the home.
6. Break skills down into smaller, simpler tasks.
7. Provide ongoing coaching and support.
8. Provide appropriate feedback.
9. Provide encouragement, support and acknowledgement of progress.
10. Support youth's educational and employment efforts.
11. Support other IL activities through transportation, cooperation and communication.
12. Support youth in developing a Life Book and a plan for life.
13. Join with the team in celebrating youth's success.

BIRTH FAMILY MEMBERS

Role: Support and encourage youth's progress toward self-sufficiency.

Responsibilities:

1. Participate in and cooperate with IL team.
2. Allow youth to practice IL skills during home visits.
3. Provide encouragement and support of progress.
4. Provide information needed for youth's Life Book.
5. Join with the team in celebrating youth's success.

COMMUNITY PROVIDERS (Mental Health, Employment, Substance Abuse)

Role: Provide services according to IL plan.

Responsibilities:

1. Participate in and cooperate with IL team.
2. Provide information regarding assessed needs, barriers and challenges to youth's self-sufficiency.
3. Identify outcomes and milestones of service.
4. Educate team members as to philosophy, rationale, methodology and limitations of service.
5. Inform team as to cooperation, progress, barriers and setbacks.
6. Educate team as to how they can support efforts.
7. Join with team in celebrating youth's successes.

Specific Resource Partners: (refer to YAB website – 411 section and county by county listing www.independentlivingpa.org)

- a. 4-H
- b. ACT 101
- c. PA CareerLink
- d. PHEAA (Education Planner)
- e. Public Assistance
- f. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- g. Upward Bound
- h. Youth Advisory Board
- i. Cooperative Extension
- j. Family Centers

EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS (Guidance counselors, teachers, vocational specialists, and educational advisors)

Role: Support youth's educational planning and progress.

Responsibilities:

1. Participate in and cooperate with the IL team.
2. Provide information regarding youth's educational strengths, needs, barriers, and progress.
3. Describe special services, opportunities and programs that may be appropriate for youth.
4. Assist the youth with exploring and planning for post secondary or vocational education
5. Join with the team in celebrating the youth's successes.

Specific Resource Partners: (refer to YAB website – 411 section and county by county listing www.independentlivingpa.org)

- a. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)/PHEAA State Grant
- b. Intermediate Units
- c. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- d. PA CareerLink
- e. PHEAA Community Partners (ETV)
- f. Local Transitions Coordinating Councils
- g. Education Law Center

BOYFRIEND OR GIRLFRIEND (Best friend or love relationship)

Role: Support with and participate in IL team.

Responsibilities:

1. Cooperate with and participate in IL team.
2. Learn about how they can help their friend.
3. Describe how they can support and encourage the youth's progress toward self-sufficiency.
4. Join with the team in celebrating the youth's success.

PHEAA Community Partners

Community Solutions: Agency Partners working together for your success

Department of Public Welfare (DPW)

DPW handles much more than cash assistance or medical card programs. In fact DPW oversees all Children, Youth and Families, Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Income Maintenance, Medical Assistance and Social Program issues in the Commonwealth.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Children, Youth and Families:<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Adoption services❑ Child Abuse❑ Child Day Care❑ Foster Care❑ Juvenile Justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Behavioral Health Initiatives❑ County Mental Health System❑ State Mental Hospitals❑ Substance Abuse Services |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Income Maintenance<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Cash Assistance❑ Eligibility Information❑ Food Stamps❑ Medical assistance❑ Employment and Training❑ Energy Assistance❑ Child Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Mental Retardation<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Community Living❑ Early Intervention❑ Multi year plan❑ State Centers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Medical Assistance Programs<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Client services and information❑ Provider services and information❑ Health choices and long term care | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Office of Social Programs<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Women's issues❑ Family Issues❑ Disability Programs❑ County Initiatives |

Team PA CareerLink

Team PA CareerLink is a cooperative effort to provide one-stop delivery of career services to job seekers, employers, and other interested individuals. It is a partnership of agencies all working together to make certain each job seeker or employer gets individualized services best suited to their needs.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Area Agency on Aging<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Employment for 55 and older➤ Bureau of Employer and Career Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Link job seekers/employers➤ Veteran Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Placement services to veterans➤ Welfare Services<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Referrals and Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Employment and Training (WIA)<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Job readiness➤ Unemployment Compensations<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Protection against income loss➤ Team Pennsylvania<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Economic Development➤ Office of Vocational Rehabilitation<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Referrals and Information |
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Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

OVR provides services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, start, and/or maintain employment. OVR has offices throughout Pennsylvania staffed by over 400 counselors. Eligibility for OVR services include: You have a disability and the disability causes you substantial problems in preparing for, getting, or maintaining a job, and you want to work.

➤ Diagnostic Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Medical, Psychological, and Audiological exams and tests	➤ Restoration Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Physical and Occupation Therapy❑ Wheelchairs, Hand Controls, and Rehabilitation Technology
➤ Vocational Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Aptitude, Interest, General Ability, and Academic Exams❑ Work Tolerance❑ Hands-on training	➤ Training <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Basic Academic❑ Vocational/Technical❑ On-the Job❑ Independent Living Skills
➤ Counseling <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Helping to find ways to better help yourself	➤ Placement <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Counseling, Job Seeking❑ Job Club❑ Job Development

Pennsylvania Higher Education (PHEAA)

PHEAA is dedicated to providing access to higher education. That includes everyone from graduating high school seniors to adults who have been out of high school for 1, 2 or many years. PHEAA helps people find access to education and training by administering a variety of financial aid programs.

➤ www.EducationPlanner.org <ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Career key personality assessment❑ Information on hundreds of careers❑ Test prep assistance for PSAT, SAT, and ACT❑ Tips on choosing the right school, college, or major❑ Free Scholarship search❑ Information on Athletes❑ Tips for applying to college❑ Online applications for financial aid and admissions
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For a listing of these offices in your area, contact the Regional PHEAA office for your copy of Community Solutions: Agency Partners Working Together for Your Success.

West: 724.347.5891 or 412.650.0370
East: 570.826.1476 or 215.735.2877
Central 570.323.7001 or 717.245.0062