

# Independent Living Policies & Procedures Manual

2019

*Revised 1/2/2020*

**FORWARD  
CAREERS**  
DEVELOPING A THRIVING WORKFORCE

# Table of Contents

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• Overview	
○ Acronyms and Definitions.....	3
• Eligibility.....	4
• Program and Service Elements	
○ Case Transition Out of County Care.....	5
○ Transition to Other Transitional Resource Areas.....	5
○ Intake and Development of the Independent Living Plan.....	5
○ Assessment.....	5
○ Goal Development and Ongoing Program Participation.....	6
○ Direct Service Provision.....	6
○ Youth Advisory Council.....	6
○ Transitioning Out of Independent Living .....	7
• Policies	
○ Confidentiality.....	8
○ Non-Discrimination .....	9
○ Grievance / Appeals Procedure .....	10
○ Supportive Services .....	11
○ Reasonable and Actual Cost list .....	13
○ DCF Innovation Grant and IL Incentives .....	14
○ Supporting Young Adults up to Age 26 Who Are YAC Members.....	15
○ Brighter Stars / Educational Training Vouchers .....	16
○ National Youth in Transition Database .....	16
• Program Goals .....	17
• Paperwork and Client Files	
○ Monitoring.....	18
○ Records Retention .....	18
• Program Data / Reporting	
○ eWISACWIS .....	19
○ Salesforce .....	20
• Monitoring .....	20
• Resources / Links .....	20

## Overview

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The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act recognized that youth aging out of foster care are one of the most vulnerable and disadvantage populations. The Chafee Foster Independence Program targets funding for assessment, services and measuring of self-sufficiency outcomes of eligible youth. Funded programs must ensure support of youth by addressing housing, health, education, employment, financial literacy, social emotional well-being and monetary needs, among other targeted areas in order to reduce the numbers of youth discharged from care without social supports or assistance in making the transition to self-sufficiency. Funding is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF).

In 2016, DCF changed the operation of the state's Independent Living Program, moving to a regional model. In January 2016, the first regional agencies began serving young adults ages 18-21 in Regions 2 and 6, and the request for proposal was issued for Regions 1, 5 and 7 that spring. A proposal was submitted by the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin (WDBSCW), in partnership with Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) and Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington Workforce Development, Inc. (WOWWDI) (now known as Forward Careers, Inc. (FCI). The contract was awarded and Region 5, an area covering 15 counties, began providing Independent Living Services on January 1, 2017.

Serving as the grant administrator, WDBSCW monitors contracts, provides oversight, coordinates on-site monitoring, writes the annual plans and sets overall policy for the program. Within the framework provided by DCF and WDBSCW, FCI has created local policies, protocol and processes for services within the grant – those items are outlined in this manual.

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### Acronyms and Definitions

- Department of Children and Families (DCF): State funding entity that provides oversight for the IL and County programs
- Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) / Brighter Stars: Scholarship program for those who aged out of care to pay for advanced education, up to \$5000 available per school year
- Independent Living Transition and Discharge Plan (ILTD): Typically completed by county workers. Outlines a youth's plans for after county care and includes information on the following: housing, transportation, education, employment, health/well-being and supportive services
- Out-of-home care (OHC) or "foster care" means a foster home, treatment foster home, group home, residential care center, shelter care facility, the home of a relative - not a parent (aka, court-ordered Kinship Care), or the home of a nonrelative where the child is under the placement and care responsibility of the Department of Children and Families or a county or tribal child welfare agency (i.e., county or tribal social or human services department). OHC does not include long-term correctional facilities or detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools or any other facility operated primarily for the detention of children.
- Transition Resource Agency (TRA): The regional agencies that are responsible for providing services to eligible youth and young adults after they age out of foster care (typically those between the ages of 18-21)
- Youth advisory council (YAC): See separate section

## Eligibility

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Youth are eligible for certain services based on their age and the amount of time they were placed in out-of-home care.

- Any youth who turns 17 ½ while in OHC, or who is 17 ½ + when entering OHC, is automatically eligible for all services provided through the independent living program regardless of the length of time in placement.
- Youth between the ages of 14\* and 17 ½ are eligible for services after they have attained a total of six months in an OHC placement, for as long as they are in an OHC placement.
- Youth adopted after their 16th birthday or older from an OHC placement are eligible for **some** services up to the age of 21. **Note:** Youth who are eligible by way of adoption are not eligible for room and board supports.
- Youth who enter Court Ordered Guardianship or Long Term Kinship Care on or after their 16th birthday from an OHC placement are eligible for services up to the age of 21.
- Youth that age out of an OHC placement on or after their 18th birthday are eligible for services up to the age of 21.

### Notes:

- The “6 months in out of home care criteria” does not have to be consecutive months.
- Youth ages 21 and 22, who are enrolled in and attending a postsecondary program may continue to receive Education and Training Voucher funds up to the age of 23.
- Cases with dispositions of Missing from Care, Trial Reunification, or Temporary Detention at age 18 or older still qualify for services.
- Youth who are reunified or incarcerated prior to turning 18 **and remain in that status at time of aging out** are not eligible for services. For the purposes of eligibility, being incarcerated pertains to time in county jail, prison, or a juvenile correctional institution. Detention is not considered incarceration and a youth being detained in a detention center at the time of aging out is not disqualified from receiving services.
- Illegal residents can be served in the IL program so long as they meet the above eligibility criteria.

## Program and Service Elements

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### **Case Transition Out of County Care**

A smooth hand over of a youth's case from County care to the TRA should be the priority of everyone involved in the youth's life. As such, guidelines have been created by DCF on how transitions should work. Prior to the youth aging out, TRA's can be involved to help develop resources and plans but cannot provide financial assistance.

- **Preparing for the Transition:** The County caseworker maintains responsibility for the case until the conclusion of the case transition staffing and while the youth is still formally under county jurisdiction/care/court order. Items to be completed include: creation and completion of the IL Transition and ILTD plan, preparing youth and TRA in advance for staffing/transition meeting. The TRA is responsible for preparing for the staff/transition meeting by reviewing ewisacwis, the ILTD and finding resources that may appeal to the youth
- **Case Transition Staffing:** Should occur at least 90 days prior to youth's aging out of care and should include the agency worker, TRA worker, youth and adult supported identified by the youth. At the meeting, the ILTD should be reviewed as well as holding a discussion of the youth's future goals, services available and how to access them.
- There should be at least one in-person case transition staffing with TRA and the youth initiated by the county, although more meetings can occur, reaching back as far as age 14. The TRA must become familiar with the youth, youth goals and accomplishments through in person discussions before the case is fully transitioned.
- Once the case has been transitioned, the TRA will document the transition and assume responsibility in ewisacwis (by checking the Region 5 box).

### **Transition to Other Transition Resource Areas**

For many youth in care, the county in which they were living when they went into care may not have enough foster homes or residential facilities, so youth are often placed outside their "home" county for care. In these circumstances, youth often make connections in these communities and want to remain there after aging out. In these circumstances, it is almost always most appropriate to transfer youth to the local TRA. Guidance from DCF indicates that: If a youth relocates to a county in a different region, the original TRA may continue to serve that youth if it is feasible or transfer that youth to the TRA in the new region.

### **Intake and Development of the Independent Living Plan**

After the transition meeting, an intake appointment will be set with the ILC and the client where initial paperwork is to be completed (Consent and Release of Information and Rights and Responsibilities/Acknowledgement Form), and the program is explained in greater detail including the steps, services available/benefits, process and requirements. The ILC will then begin discussions on the strengths and goals of the client. This discussion, after initial ILC prompting using open ended questions to gather more detailed information, should be led by the client and should cover items on the Independent Living Plan: housing, education, employment, physical and emotional health, daily living skills, permanent connections, finance management and transportation.

The most immediate needs should be discussed first and steps need to be outlined to meet those needs, keeping in mind what will be most important for the transition out of care. Referrals may be made to other service providers, depending on the need and coaching is to be provided on how to access services and phone calls/inquiries or made jointly if the participant is uncomfortable. To not overwhelm the participant, the development of the Independent Living Plan may take several meetings to complete initially and it should be treated as a living document, meaning it will be changed/updated as needed throughout the entire period of program participation. While the client is still in care, the ILC may provide assistance with plan development, referral/connection with outside resources and any other, non-funded service. Once the client ages out of care, the ILC may provide the full breadth of available services, including access to supportive service funds and DCF scholarship funds.

### **Assessment**

Objective assessment of clients is critical to their success in the program and can be conducted to determine academic levels, occupational skills, independent living skills and service needs of each participant, which includes a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, education levels, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs. Assessments must consider a client's strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement and while ongoing assessment is an integral part of assisting clients in

reaching their goals, a balance must be struck as over assessing can be counterproductive. Assessment of independent living skill knowledge that has been conducted by the Counties (using tools like Daniel Webster forms) or local assessment, either formal (using Casey Life Skills assessment tools) or through an initial informal assessment may be conducted to help clients develop the IL plan and but other, early and ongoing assessments can be left to referral agencies.

### **Goal Development and Ongoing Program Participation**

Beginning as soon as the IL participant ages out of care, the ILC is working towards fostering greater independence by the IL participant by empowering the individual to make more and more independent choices and having less reliance on the supportive service funds of the program. Funding is structured to provide initial support, then fade as the program progresses or as emergencies arise. Activities and progress in the program are defined by achieving goals outlined on the IL Plan. Beginning with initial assessment and outlining of IL skills needed, the ILC will work with the IL participant to reach milestones in the following areas: housing, education, employment, physical and emotional health, daily living skills, permanent connections, finance management and transportation.

### **Direct Services Provision**

Services provided to those in Independent Living vary by client but involve helping the youth or young adult achieve independence. Completion of the Independent Living Plan should point to which services are needed and all young adults should be made aware of resources/services available in the following areas: housing, health, education, employment, financial literacy, social emotional well-being and monetary needs. Specific services also vary but can include:

- Facilitating connections to local resources – connecting to mental health/health resources, food pantries, homeless shelters, domestic violence services, etc.
- Supporting the youth's own efforts to become self-sufficient – helping with upgrading education and employment, co-enrollment in workforce programs, supporting good choices
- Providing ongoing assessment of youth's abilities, needs, goals: updating IL plan regularly and holding ongoing discussions of youth status and needs
- Providing financial resources for food, housing, transportation and other emergency needs: supportive services
- Assisting youth in identifying and maintaining connections to life-long caring adults: mentor programs, reconnecting with siblings, talking through developing positive/healthy relationships
- Mentoring and coaching youth in financial matters: understanding financial matters, starting a check/savings account, understanding credit
- Assisting in acquiring public assistance and replacing lost documents: applying for food share and badger care, getting birth certificate and driver's license, when appropriate
- Assisting youth in arranging transportation for transition related activities – knowledge of local resources and how to use them

### **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)**

The Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council (YAC) began in 2005 and consists of former and current youth in the foster care system who provide a voice for all foster care youth in Wisconsin. Youth start on regional councils, but have the ability to become members of the Statewide Advisory Council. YAC's mission is to:

- Work with governmental systems to inspire change through:
  - Education
  - Advocacy
  - Training
  - Awareness
- Improve the image of youth by addressing foster care issues

A few of the Wisconsin Youth Advisory Council's many accomplishments include:

- Panel presentations and participation at numerous conferences:
- Membership on various committees and councils:
- Participation in advocacy and training opportunities:
- Participation in national internship and youth board opportunities:
- Organizing the first youth-led Hands Around the Capitol event in the state

**Transitioning Out of Independent Living**

When an individual turns 21 and ages out the Independent Living program it will be the first time the young adult does not have a paid supporter in his/her life but should also mean increased independence. If the program has been successful, the individual should have a clear path established and be on his/her way to financial stability. This is a milestone to be celebrated and recognized.

Every young adult who leaves the Independent Living Program should have:

- Information about community resources that assist with emergency housing, transportation, and economic supports
- A solid understanding of financial literacy
- A clear career path with an understanding of the steps already completed and steps left to complete
- Self-sustaining employment

## Policies

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### Confidentiality

Except as otherwise authorized by law, the Contractor may not disclose confidential information for any purpose other than purposes associated with the administration of services under this Contract.

"*Confidential Information*" means all tangible and intangible information and materials accessed or disclosed in connection with this Agreement, in any form or medium (and without regard to whether the information is owned by DCF or by a third party), that satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

1. Personally Identifiable Information (see *Case Management Services Manual* for full policy on PII);
2. Non-public information related to DCF's employees, customers, technology (including data bases, data processing and communications networking systems), schematics, specifications, and all information or materials derived there from or based thereon; or
3. Information designated as confidential in writing by DCF.

"*Personally Identifiable Information*" means an individual's last name and the individual's first name or first initial, in combination with and linked to any of the following elements, if the element is not publicly available information and is not encrypted, redacted, or altered in any manner that renders the element unreadable:

  - i. The individual's Social Security Number;
  - ii. The individual's driver's license number or State identification number;
  - iii. The number of the individual's financial account, including a credit or debit card account number, or any security code, access code, or password that would permit access to the individual's financial account;
  - iv. The individual's DNA profile; or
  - v. The individual's unique biometric data, including fingerprint, voice print, retina or iris image, or any other unique physical representation, and any other information protected by State or Federal law.



## **Non-Discrimination**

Every participant must be informed of and have a copy of the Equal Employment Opportunity Statement:

The Contractor assures that no participant, staff person or administrator shall be discriminated against, denied benefits, denied employment, or excluded from participation in connection with any Contractor funded program on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, National origin (ethnic status), age, disability, developmental disability as defined in s.51.01(5) Wis. Stats., physical condition, marital status, offender status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, arrest or conviction record, or refusal to submit to sexual contact or sexual intercourse. Participation shall be open to citizens and nationals of the U.S., lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens, lawfully admitted refugees and parolees and other individuals authorized by the U.S. Attorney General to work in the U.S.

Appropriate efforts will be made to overcome sex stereotyping, including the encouragement of nontraditional employment for Contractor funded participants. Reasonable accommodations will be made to the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise eligible applicant or participant, unless it can be demonstrated that the Accommodations would impose an undue hardship on the operation of the program.

Employment and training services shall be targeted to those who can most benefit from, and most in need of such services in accordance with the program's plan of services and enrollment priorities.

The Contractor further assures that it shall comply with all other provisions of applicable Federal and State Regulations as outlined below:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (42 U.S.C. 200d et seq.), [as implemented by the Department of Labor (DOL), 29 CFR Part §31. As clarified by Executive Order 13166-Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency, and resulting agency guidance, national origin discrimination includes discrimination on the basis of Limited English Proficiency (LEP). To ensure compliance with Title VI, you must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access and equal opportunity to your program in accordance with DOL Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Federal Register Vol. 68, No. 103.. Meaningful access may entail providing language assistance services, including oral and written translation, where necessary.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs or activities (20 U.S.C. 168 et seq.), as implemented by the DOL 29 CFR Part § 36;
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of age (42 U.S.C. 6101) as implemented by DOL 29 CFR Part §35;
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1972, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability (29 U.S.C. 794) as implemented by DOL 29 CFR Part §32;
- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex ( including gender identity, sexual orientation and pregnancy),protection is afforded to individuals due to retaliation for having file a complaint of discrimination.
- The Age Discrimination Act of 1967 (ADEA)
- The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA), prohibits discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance and employment.
- The Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA), makes it illegal to pay different wages to men and women if they perform equal work in the same workplace and retaliation against persons because the person complained
- Title I, II, and III of the American with Disability Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the operation of public entities, public and private transportation systems, places of public accommodation, and certain entities conducting testing (42 U.S.C. §§ 12131 – 12189), as implemented by the Department of Justice regulations at 28 C.F.R Part 35 and 36.

## **Grievance/Appeals Procedures**

Every participant must be informed of and have a copy of the grievance procedure available to them.

1. Upon entering any Forward Careers, Inc. (FCI) program/service, all persons shall be informed in writing of their right to file a complaint/grievance, if they believe that their rights under the law or regulations have been violated. This procedure has been designed so that final resolution occurs within 60 calendar days after the complaint is filed.
2. These are the procedures for participants to use to resolve complaints/grievances and appeals regarding alleged violations of grant regulations, applicable Wisconsin statutes, other applicable federal or state requirements, the provisions of this document or the terms of the grant agreement. To be valid, systems for resolving participant complaints/grievances must provide for due process. The elements of due process include: notice to the parties involved, reasonable timing, an impartial decision-maker, the right of representation and the right to present and question evidence.
3. In the event of a complaint of a non-criminal nature, the participant, his/her case manager, the case manager's immediate supervisor and a representative of the FCI, Inc. Administrative Office, shall attempt to resolve the issue of the complaint in an informal manner. The Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin must be notified immediately and kept informed of the informal attempts to resolve the complaint. If informal attempts do not resolve the issue, the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin must be made part of the formal resolution process.
4. If a participant wishes to file a formal complaint, it must be in writing within one year after the issue has arisen. This establishes the filing date. The complaint/grievance must be sufficiently accurate and complete to be evaluated on its own. (There is no time limit in the case of complaints that allege fraud or criminal activity.) The complaint should be directed to the EEO Officer at the FCI, Inc. Administrative Office, 892 Main Street, Suite A, Pewaukee, WI 53072. The correct form will be supplied when requested. The FCI Administrative office may provide technical assistance when requested.
5. The FCI Administrative Office, with involvement from the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, shall investigate the complaint and attempt to achieve a satisfactory settlement of the matter within 15 working days. If the FCI Administrative Office cannot resolve the complaint within 15 working days, it shall inform the complainant, in writing, that a hearing will be scheduled within the 30 days of the filing date. The FCI Administrative Office will forward the complaint and a written summary to the FCI Hearing Panel and provide copies to appropriate parties.
6. Within two weeks after receipt of the complaint, the FCI Hearing Panel shall hold a hearing on the complaint. (In no case will the hearing be held more than 30 calendar days after the formal complaint was initiated in Step 5.) The participant, the agency complained against and a representative of the FCI Administrative Office shall appear before the Hearing Panel at the hearing and present testimony on the issue.
7. Within one week after the hearing, the Hearing Panel shall issue a written decision for resolution of the complaint to the complainant and other parties. The communication from the Hearing Panel shall explain the reasons for the decision and also include the procedures by which the decision may be appealed to the State.
8. To file a service delivery complaint with the DCF, the applicant/participant can obtain a complaint form from the provider agency's Equal Opportunity Coordinator, from the DCF Equal Opportunity Officer (EEO), (608) 266-5335/ (866) 864-4585 TTY (Toll Free), or from the DCF website under the title **DCF Service Delivery Discrimination Complaint form** DCF-F-2466-e (instruction for completing the form can be found on the back of the form).
9. To file a general complaint with Department of Child and Families, an online form can be submitted at the following link: [https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/contact/submit\\_a\\_complaint](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/contact/submit_a_complaint).

## Supportive Services

### Eligibility for Funding Assistance/Guidelines:

- Funding is only available to those who have aged out of the foster care system and are under 21.
- Must be completed prior to funding:
  - Independent Living Plan (ILP) that is developed jointly with ILC and IL participant
  - Budget outlining **living expenses and need for supports**
  - **Salesforce entry related to FoodShare and BadgerCare Plus enrollment (FoodShare eligibility is not an automatic, document in case note attempts to apply and outcome)**
- IL participants must be in compliance with and following through on their ILP. Funding will only be provided when needed and for those items which support the ILP.
- Funds are only allowable if related to a DCF program objective (housing, education, employment, transportation, health/well-being, permanent connections).
- Other funding sources should be explored. Whenever possible, concurrent enrollment of IL participants into WIOA or other programs is encouraged to support efficient coordination of resources and services.
- **Costs can only be covered when the individual is actually using the resource/service. Example 1: rent will only be provided to secure an apartment up front or when the individual is actually in residence. Rent should be pro-rated for "move out" months to cover only the days the individual was in residence. Example 2: School costs will only be paid at the start of a semester or when the individual is actually in school. Costs cannot be paid for costs incurred before program enrollment.**
- FCI reserves the right to withhold funds for activities which do not diminish barriers (the ILC, in consultation with Program Management staff, is authorized to determine which activities would not diminish barriers), or support the IL Plan.

**Allowable Costs:** The IL supportive services may fund the cost of the following as long as all above qualifications are met, all supporting documentation is completed and submitted to FCI:

- Acquiring personal documents, such as birth certificates or social security cards
- Required physicals and the cost for mental health services that are not covered by health insurance (will be covered on a case by case basis)
- Insurance other than health care
- Driver's Education and related fees (obtaining a driver license, such as instructional costs and fees)
- Transportation costs (mileage reimbursement, gas, gas cards, bus passes, and/or taxi tickets):
  - IL participants must be actively seeking other resources.
  - If multiple transportation options are available, the least expensive option will be funded. IL participants can use a more expensive option but will only be compensated for the amount of the less expensive option
  - For those who are actively job seeking or are starting a job, assistance can be provided until the first paycheck\* or until other resources become available
  - For mileage reimbursement, the vehicle does not need to be the participant's, nor does the participant need to be the driver
  - \*Based on individual need and circumstances, additional costs can be covered for as long as IL participant is in compliance with his/her ILP
- Groceries:
  - IL participants are required to use their food share cards (if eligible) for food purchases.
  - For those needing additional assistance when transitioning from home to home or job to job or school to job, etc., IL funds can be used up to \$40 per week
- Work-related clothes: Gift cards for Goodwill or other places can be used for purchasing work clothes, or clothes for interviewing. The type of position will be considered when purchasing clothes. Tools and work-related required items (steel toed shoes) will be purchased following the reasonable cost list below. If more expensive items are purchased, IL participant can pay the difference.
- Child Care:
  - Participants are required to apply for County Child Care or other resources.
  - Child care will be paid up to the budget amount for one month and then gap funding will be provided,

if needed, to supplement child care after County or other subsidies.

- Childcare must be provided by a licensed/certified childcare provider. In limited and unusual situations and only with prior FCI review and approval, unlicensed providers or family members may be able to provide short-term care but will only be reimbursed at 50% of the licensed provider costs.
- Staff must verify that the participant is not eligible for full childcare assistance through other eligible programs. Documentation must be provided with the request verifying that the customer is not eligible for other childcare assistance programs or is receiving less assistance than the total cost of childcare.
- **Housing Assistance:**
  - A referral to a local housing support agency must be made and a housing need assessment completed (examples of agencies: Family Promise, Hebron House, etc. – they will use their assessment tool to determine need).
  - Types include: Rent, utilities, basic necessities, furniture and appliances and emergency funds.
  - Up front homesteading costs (establishing a new residency) are allowed up to \$2,000 and include security deposit, first month's rent, furniture, and basic necessities
  - Homesteading does not include pre-homestead costs, such as extended stay hotels (per DCF on conference call 2/20/17, extended stay hotels do not count towards 30% rule)
    - Kelsey Hill 8/7/19 email: "Housing a youth in a hotel should be a last resort decision. It should be infrequent and for short-term stays only, provided as an interim solution as more stable and permanent housing option is secured."
  - A sliding scale will be used to avoid long term dependence on the funds. Typical situations will follow the following scale down to 0% for IL after 10 months: 2<sup>nd</sup> month's rent 90% IL, 10% IL participant, 3<sup>rd</sup> month's rent, 80% IL, 20% IL participant, 4<sup>th</sup> month's rent, 70% IL, 30% IL participant, etc.
  - Further rent assistance will be made on an as-needed basis and as long as the IL participant is moving towards self-sufficiency and in compliance with his/her ILP.

#### **Other Allowable Costs per DCF Policy**

- Other allowable items:
  - Job training
  - Education expenses
  - Work readiness
  - Stipends
  - Incentives
  - Transportation
  - Life skills instruction
  - Mentoring
- Financial assistance for rent, utilities and food may not exceed 30% of allocated funds
- Fines that prohibit moving forward with a driver's license: will be considered on a case-by-case basis and need to be approved by DCF IL Coordinator. Must provide the following: amount of the fine, barriers present because of the fine, steps taken to remove/pay the fine and reasons why utilizing IL funds is necessary
- Supportive service and ETV funds cannot be used at the same time to pay for housing.
- Extenuating circumstances can be presented to FCI Program Management staff with proper justification. Decisions will be based on need and allowable activities as outlined in DCF's allowable costs policy.

#### **Unallowable (Disallowable) Costs**

- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco products
- Cash disbursements and cash ATM withdrawals
- Fines, penalties, late fees, and damages are not allowable expenditures
- Undocumented expenses
- Funds cannot be used for religious or anti-religious activities
- Funds cannot be used for political activities
- The purchase of pets or pet related expenses
- Sports or other recreational activities at college or elsewhere (per Emily 5/18/17)
- Expenses for children of IL participants (9/15/17)

**Process for Requesting Program Funds:** See Case Management Services Manual for sop

## Reasonable And Actual Cost List

Work Related Items	Reasonable Cost
Steel Toe Work Boots	\$80
Weld Helmets	\$50
Scrubs	\$40
White sneakers	\$50
Other tools, items costs either are supplied by school/business or cp can estimate with research	

Work Readiness / Supports	Reasonable Cost
Cell phone	\$80
Cell phone monthly plan	\$60
Pre-paid cards	\$50
Wifi	\$50
Groceries / per week	\$40
Gas / per week	\$30
Clothing (provide gift cards)	\$75

Transportation Related	Actual Cost
Waukesha Bus Pass	\$46
Hartford Taxi	\$26
City of WB taxi	\$45
Washington County Taxi	\$20

Costs just are what they are - pay actual cost	
Bus tickets	Uber
Non-WIOA school costs	Bus Ticket
Birth Certificates, Driver's license	Car Repairs
U-Haul for moving	Household
Non-work related shoes	
Hygiene Items	
documentation of actual cost needed	

Client meals during meetings	Not to exceed
Breakfast	\$13.00
Lunch	\$14.00
Supper	\$23.00
follow guidelines for FCI employees	

Housing Related Costs	
Apartment Start-Up	\$2,000
Rent per month	up to \$650
Security Deposit	up to \$1200
Utilities per month	up to \$100

Quote Information		
Waukesha County	Hotel Stay	
	Baymont Inn	\$75.00
	Extended Stay America	\$77.00
	Super 8	\$80.00
Washington County	AmericInn	\$90.00
	Quality Inn	\$84.00
	Super 8-Hartford	\$60.00
Washington County	<u>Apartments</u>	
	Hillside Village Apts	\$675
	Morningside Hills Apts	\$765
	Walnut Grove Apts	\$785
Washington County	Paradise Place Apts	\$675
	Cast Iron Living	\$750
	Oriole Ponds Apts	\$750

## DCF Innovation Grant and IL Incentives

### Allowable & Amounts of Incentive Payments

Incentive payments may be awarded following guidelines provided by Department of Children and Families, when funding is available, when appropriate for the individual, and as cash equivalent incentives through gift cards only. Allowable gift cards may include:

- Gas cards (or other transportation related)
- Grocery Cards
- i-tunes/Apple Cards
- Target/Amazon Cards (or other retail related)

DCF Grant IL clients who are working towards employment readiness may receive incentive payments for reaching on-the-job milestones and/or for overcoming barriers to employment. To evaluate progress and measure success, scorecards will be used to track clients' progress towards their individual goals. The following scorecards have been developed to determine incentive amounts.

### Scorecard #1: On-the-Job Training Milestones

A paid work experience is a planned, structured work-based learning experience that allows participants to work at a business, develop work readiness skills and, potentially, experience the environment similar to a career that interests them. Clients can work 10 - 40 hours per week, for a maximum of 240 hours and incentives are paid based on number of hours completed. The following services may constitute work experience:

- Employment opportunities;
- Pre-apprenticeship programs;
- Internships; and
- On-the-job training (OJT) opportunities.

#### DCF Innovation Grant Incentive Scorecard #1: On-the-Job Milestones

Hours Completed	Incentive Amounts
0 to 9	\$0.00
10 to 39	\$100.00
40 to 79	\$200.00
80 to 159	\$300.00
160 to 239	\$400.00
240	\$500.00

### Scorecard #2: Barrier Screening Milestones

When first entering the program and throughout program participation, clients are assessed for barriers that impact the ability to get and maintain employment. Utilizing the locally developed "Barrier Screening Tool," barriers are documented, options explored and a plan for overcoming/dealing with the barrier is developed. The "Barrier Incentives Tool" is then utilized at program end to evaluate progress and achievements made at overcoming those barriers.

#### DCF Innovation Grant Incentive Scorecard #2: Barrier Screening Milestones

Barrier Type	Progress	Barrier Type	Progress
Mobility / physical demands		Communication	
Environmental conditions		Social skills	
Medical		Financial Knowledge	
Mental health		Attitude	
Suicidal ideation		Community/peers	
Domestic violence		Violence/aggression	
Trauma impact		Self-direction	
Learning style		Attitude towards school / work	
Alcohol/Drugs		Financial barriers	
Legal		Transportation	
Nutrition and physical health		Career planning	
Daily living / Self-care skills		Training and education barriers	
Family care		Work readiness/Soft skills/Job seeking knowledge	
<b>Incentive Calculation</b>	Total # of Barriers Overcome:	multiplied by \$25 per barrier =	Total Incentive Award:

## Supporting Young Adults up to Age 26 Who Are YAC Members

Guidance provided 04/12/2019

In the Family First Prevention Services Act passed in February 2018, Congress gave the states that offer extended out-of-home care to youth in care the option to extend their Independent Living (IL) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) supports and programming to age 26 for eligible youth. As previously communicated to partners, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) is not currently in the position to expand its ETV or IL programming – or ask its contracted agencies to do so – up to that new upper age limit. At this time, the federal government has not provided additional funding to accompany this expanded eligibility option, and the Department has to be diligent about considering the programmatic, budgetary, and workload impacts that may come with such changes. In 2019, DCF IL staff will complete analyses on these considerations, and ETV and IL eligibility as a whole, to determine best next steps.

However, because the Family First legislation provides Wisconsin the option to support youth up to age 26, DCF will permits its Transition Resource Agencies (TRA) to use their IL allocations to support local and state youth advisory council (YAC) members up to the age of 26. This change is specific to YAC costs only (not ETV or IL programming and service provision more broadly) and is effective immediately. DCF currently supports youth members up to age 26 at the state level YAC due to the combination of IL and Citizen Review Panel funds used to support that group and will continue to do so.

### Guidelines for YAC Meal and Stipend Expenditures

TRAs can expend the portion of their budget dedicated to supporting their YAC on such things as youth incentives/stipends, transportation costs, meeting needs, activities, supplies, meals for local YAC and meals outside of what DCF provides for statewide YAC meetings. If a TRA does not currently have a budget line dedicated to YAC, DCF strongly suggests they create one to adequately prepare for and monitor fund allocation related to this cost category. All YAC expenditures must be in accordance with the TRA's contract with DCF, which stipulates that travel expenses shall be reimbursed at the State of Wisconsin reimbursement rates. This means, for example, meal expenses shall not exceed the state limits; see the attached *Guidelines for YAC Meal and Stipend Expenditures* resource for additional information. TRAs will continue to report their IL expenses using DCF's SPARC system.

Transition Resource Agencies (TRAs) should refer to the following guidelines when estimating costs associated with supporting Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members. All expenditures related to YAC must fall within the John H. Chafee Act's spending parameters and stipulations within the TRA's contract with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Guidance provided below regarding stipends and gas cards is just that – guidance. The state does not have parameters for gift card amounts, and the information about stipends and gas cards includes recommendations, not requirements. Conversely, the information provided about mileage and meals is in line with the State of Wisconsin's reimbursement rates, and compliance with these state rates in support of YAC and other program needs *is* a requirement of the TRA contract. All purchases should be reasonable, in line with the event type and the youth's participation, and align with purchasing requirements.

- **Stipends for youth events:** DCF provides youth members a \$50.00 per day stipend for every full day of involvement at both in-state and out-of-state events. For half-day events (4 hours or less), DCF provides youth with a \$25.00 stipend. **Chaperones/advisors do not receive a stipend.**
- **Transportation support for youth events:** Youth members who transport themselves to events can receive a gas card and/or mileage reimbursement.

The TRA may provide mileage reimbursement according to its agency's mileage reimbursement rate or the state's established reimbursement rate, not to exceed the state's reimbursement rate.

The TRA may calculate the gas card amount according to its agency's mileage reimbursement or the state's mileage reimbursement rate ( <a href="https://doa.wi.gov/Documents/DEO/PocketTravelGuide2015-2017.pdf">https://doa.wi.gov/Documents/DEO/PocketTravelGuide2015-2017.pdf</a> ). DCF's Bureau of Youth Services uses the following scale for providing youth with gas cards and this may inform TRA practice as well: <b>Miles</b>	Reimbursement Amount
0-50	\$25.00
51-100	\$50.00
100+	\$75.00

## Brighter Stars / Educational Training Vouchers

Brighter Star, Wisconsin's Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program, allows eligible youth/young adult students to receive up to \$5,000 per school year in financial aid. The student must be enrolled in (or accepted to) an accredited or pre-accredited post high school program. Funds may be spent on Tier 1 expenses, identified below. If a youth does not have a Tier 1 expense, or once those expenses have already been addressed, Brighter Star funds can be used to pay for other items in Tier 2.

### Tier 1 Expenses

- Tuition
- Balances due at school
- On-campus room and board
- Meal cards
- Books and school supplies (such as uniforms, tools, equipment)
- Federal Student Loans
- Study abroad through qualifying schools

### Tier 2 Expenses

- Rent
- Food
- Transportation
- Health insurance premium costs
- Disability services
- Dependent childcare expenses to licensed child care providers

### Notes:

- Per IL FAQ's 12/5/19: ETV should be considered and applied after other forms of aid are factored in, except loans. This means if someone is getting full pell and going to a tech college, ETV will not be able to be used for tuition, books, etc., so should be considered for room/board and other allowable Tier 2 expenses.
- ETV payment for summer courses can pull from either the academic year before or the academic year after, assuming there are funds available from the chosen academic year.
- A GPA of 2.0 or higher in the prior term is required to continue receiving funds. Youth who do not complete coursework are not able to immediately receive funding for the next semester/school year unless there are extenuating circumstances. Such circumstances should be noted on the DCF Scholarship application or be reviewed with the DCF IL Coordinator if utilizing ETV funds.

## How to Access Funds

Funds are accessed through WDBSCW by providing the following items

### 1) IL Funding Checklist

- IL Funding Request Form
- 4 months of budget
- Documentation of items
- IL Funding Checklist

### 2) IL Funds Request Form (financial aid award letter, account summary showing costs, class schedule, textbook requirement listing, school supplies list and prices, documentation of other needed costs)

### 3) IL Payment Contract Request

### 4) Rent/Housing Request Checklist (when seeking room/board costs: Lease agreement, eviction notice, proof participant is only one living in the residence, verify no other funding options are available, verify participant has a plan to pay subsequent payments without WDBSCW assistance, landlord's name and address)

## National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

The National Youth in Transition survey is a data collection system that fulfills federal reporting requirements and is used to track the provision of independent living services. Debuted in January 2009, the database tracks specific outcome measures for the purpose of measuring state's success in preparing youth for the transition to independence. Surveyed at 17 (baseline year), 19 and 21, youth responses are used in program planning and administration of funds.

In December 2013, DCF partnered with the University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC) to administer the survey, and the following process for survey collection was developed:

- Survey must be completed **within 45 days** of youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- All young people who participated in survey data collection as part of the baseline at 17-years old.
- Survey must be completed **within the 6-month reporting period** of their 19<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- States must meet youth participation rate standards (**80%** survey participation rate for youth in OHC placements and **60%** survey participation rate for youth no longer in OHC) or possibly be penalized between 1-5% of annual Chafee dollars

Independent Living Coordinators role with NYTD is to encourage participation in the survey with those who are 19 and 21 (and remind them about the \$20 gift card they receive for survey completion) and to keep contact information in ewisacwis current.



# Program Goals

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The Department of Children and Family Services outlines the overarching goals and outcome measures for the Independent Living Program as follows:

**Regional Outcome:** Develop a pro-youth network of services, providers, employers and community members that come together to support youth in transition in all areas of the region that are readily accessible where youth reside.

**Youth Outcomes:** Increased education, employment, safe and stable housing, permanent connections and health and well-being for youth resulting in reduced victimization, homelessness, unemployment and incarceration.

Specific youth outcomes include:

- Housing: Youth is in safe, stable and affordable housing and has access to a range of housing options
- Education: Youth has high school diploma has the support to successfully complete postsecondary education or training or employment
- Employment/Income: Youth has the skills needed for successful employment and a living wage
- Health and Social Emotional Well-Being: Youth's physical, mental and emotional health needs are met with ability to access services when needed
- Permanent Connections: Youth is connected to multiple permanent supportive adults independent of formal systems
- Transportation: Youth has a reliable mode of transportation
- Financial Management: Youth has the financial literacy (budgeting skills, savings account, etc.) to achieve financial self-sufficiency

Items measured on annual plan (Annual and mid-year reporting must be completed and submitted to WDBSCW (typically due in December and July))

## Engagement

- # of transition meeting
- Newly engaged youth
- Youth engaged in prior reporting period with continued service provision
- Total youth being served by your agency:
- Youth primarily served by another agency:
- Youth previously engaged with your agency but since disengaged / reason for disengagement

## Education

- Youth who graduated high school during the reporting period
- Youth who obtained a GED/HSED
- Youth enrolled in post-secondary
- Youth who successfully completed the most recent semester of post-secondary
- Youth who attained a certificate, 2 yr degree or 4 year degree
- Youth who the agency helped find housing after an episode of homelessness

## Employment

- Number of youth employed
- Youth hired in the reporting period
- Youth with at least 30, 90 days of successful employment
- Youth who left work with a positive reference

## Housing

- Youth in stable housing at the end of the reporting period
- Youth who reported homelessness at any point

## Health and Well-Being

- Youth who are insured
- Youth connected to a health care provider
- Youth connected to a mental health care provider
- Youth are engaged in planning for their future
- Youth have the tools/resources needed to increase self-sufficiency
- Youth identify something from which they get enjoyment

## Connections

- Youth who identify more than one supportive individual (unpaid) in their life
- Youth who report feeling a part of their greater community

# Paperwork and Client File Documentation

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## **Client Files**

- Case Transition Questionnaire (Region 5 form, housed on google drive, completed by County worker)
- **IL Needs and Goals form** (once developed) and/or FCI Independent Living Plan
- **IL Needs and Goals or other types of assessment** (Casey or other Life Skills assessment); completed at enrollment and when needed during program participation
- Consent and Release of Information: at enrollment
- Photograph and Publicity Form: at enrollment
- Acknowledgement Form: at enrollment
- Supportive Service Requests (if applicable): when needed
- Rent Assistance form (if applicable): when needed

## **Records Retention**

- If the individual is enrolled in Independent Living only, records must be retained for 3 years
- If the individual is co-enrolled in WIOA, records must be retained for 7 years

# Program Database / Reporting

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## eWISACWIS

**Overview:** eWisacwis is the Department of Children and Families official client database, which is comprised of hundreds of separate screens. The IL portion of the database is limited to just a few screens and allows access to the most relevant information needed by IL Coordinators. Most of the information entered in the screens is completed by County Workers while youth are still in county care and is intended to provide a cleaner transition of information for IL Coordinators.

**Independent Living Screens:** After logging in, select Actions, Independent Living, Maintain Independent Living, search. Each IL participant is assigned a unique identifier: a person ID. This ID or the individual's last name, first name, dob can be used to search for the individual record. When the individual record is located, there is an option to click on the individual's name or to click on the radial button next to the client's name, both fields provide a different set of records for the client.

**Basic / demographic information** (select client's name): Basic contact and demographic information – first completed by County staff, keep contact information current, Characteristics Medical/Mental Health – okay to access by IL Coordinator

**Independent Living Information Screens** (select radial button): Basic Information Heading on each screen: Youth name, etv status, il status, dob, age and tra il coordinator (IL Coordinator should find and select her name). If ETV or IL status are different than you think they should be, contact WDBSCW Program Manager

**Screens:** Most information is updated by County Workers. IL Coordinator responsibilities listed below:

1. Contacts: keep information updated
2. Assessment/Plan:
3. Referral: Once client ages out of county care, change County "Region 5 responsible for IL services" to indicate Region 5 has assumed responsibility for client's care
4. ILTD: *Note: Discharge Date (date exited/done with county care)*
5. IL Services: used to track ongoing service provision to clients. Used by county prior to aging out and TRA after aging out.
  - ◆ To enter a service: click insert then yes to create a new screen.
  - ◆ Select the type of IL Service
  - ◆ Types and definitions
    - Academic support: high school completion, dropout prevention, counseling while in school
    - Budget and Financial Management: financial literacy instruction, setting up and managing a bank account, credit, credit card usage, developing a budget
    - Career Preparation: any activities that help prepare the client for employment; getting required documents, work readiness training (mock interviews, workshops, job leads, help filling out applications, soft skill training, etc.)
    - Employment Programs and vocational training: formal programs that provide employment training (multiple day work readiness workshops, employment prep type boot camps, so-enrollment in workforce programs) or short term vocational training (fork lift training, first aid certification)
    - Family support / healthy marriage education: healthy relationship education, counseling regarding relationships
    - Financial assistance – ETV: when receiving ETV/Brighter Stars funding
    - Financial assistance – other: other supportive service requests. Include what is being paid for in the service/activity field
    - Financial assistance – room and board: Rent, security deposits,
    - Health education and risk prevention: healthy living, mental health, doctor appts., healthy eating
    - Housing education and home management training: searching for an apartment, how to talk with a landlord, reading and following a lease, cleaning, apt rules, landlord/tenant law resources
    - Mentoring: involved in a mentoring program
    - Post-secondary educational support: support while starting or in post-secondary education
  - ◆ Set begin date and actual or anticipated end date
  - ◆ Select County/Agency providing service/activity: Region 5
  - ◆ Type in service/activity: short description of what was completed/assigned
  - ◆ Enter Provider / responsible person: could be IL Coordinator and client

- ◆ Enter a comment when more explanation is needed, click save

6. **IL Notes:** Per DCF instruction, the notes section was added to allow Independent Living workers to add specific IL notes. Until and if further guidance is provided by WDBSCW, the notes section of ewisacwis should be used by TRA IL case workers only when “sharing” individuals with the county (co-case managing for those still in care but perhaps over 18) as a way to better communicate with county IL staff.

To enter a note, select insert then complete the following fields:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| ➤ Date  | Health/wellbeing, Healthy relationships,                               |
| ➤ Contact type: (Collateral, Email, Face to face, Social media, Phone, Text, Other) | Housing, Other, Permanent connections or Transportation)               |
| ➤ Begin time  | ➤ IL Note Details: short description of what was discussed / completed |
| ➤ End time  |  |
| ➤ Note type (Education, Employment, Financial,                                      |  |

7. **Outcomes:** this field indicates who completed the NYTD survey while still in care at age 17. For those who did, they are encouraged to complete the survey again at 19 and 21. IL Coordinators must keep contact information current so clients can be reached for the survey and encourage you to complete the survey.

### **Salesforce**

Salesforce Information can be accessed on WDBSCW's IL google docs.

- [Tracking the Data for Independent Living Grant](#)
- [Data Entry for Independent Living Grant in Salesforce](#)

## Monitoring

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- The WDBSCW and/or DCF will monitor general compliance and adherence to the terms of the contract and scope of services. Monitoring will be conducted on a periodic basis
- On-site monitoring will be scheduled at a mutually agreed upon time with at least 10 days advanced notice

## Resources / Links

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- Department of Children and Families Independent Living: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/independentliving>
- Ewisacwis: <https://apps.dcf.wisconsin.gov/ewisacwis>
- Salesforce: [www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com)
- Google docs: shared IL drive, responsibility of SouthCentral. Request user name/password from WDBSCW
- DCF SharePoint: <https://share.dcf.wisconsin.gov/login/default.aspx>, then select Forms Authentication