

Independent Living Services

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X. INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES (ILS)

Foster care youth's approaching the age of emancipation from care are in critical need of skills preparation to live successfully. Too often the skills needed to live autonomously are not addressed in working with these children. Often their self-esteem is poor and they lack the knowledge needed to assume adult responsibility for themselves. As a result, former foster children are disproportionately represented on the public assistance payrolls, in the prison system and in shelters for the homeless. Assisting youth acquire the skills they need will enable youth to overcome obstacles as they achieve self-sufficient and become productive adults.

A. ILS Policy

The Independent Living (IL) Program is a program that shall be developed in every county to guide youth toward success as adults. This is accomplished by providing independent living services for all eligible youth as authorized in their ISP and, when possible, through group activities. IL services shall occur concurrently with continued efforts to achieve permanency.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- identify youth eligible for IL services and
- provide guidelines on service delivery to meet the goal of self-sufficiency.

The Department is required to collect information on each youth who receives independent living services paid or provided by the State in thirteen broad categories and to transmit this information to Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Independent living services shall be directed toward achieving the following outcomes:

- Independent living needs assessment
- Academic support
- Post-secondary educational support
- Career preparation
- Employment programs or vocational training
- Housing education and home management training
- Budget and financial management
- Health education and risk prevention
- Family support and healthy marriage education
- Mentoring
- Supervised independent living
- Room and board financial assistance and
- Education financial assistance

B. Legal Basis

Congress directly addressed the need for improved Independent Living Programs by passing The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, Public Law 106-169 that amends Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. P. L. 106-169, replaced the former Independent Living Initiative, and established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program which is designed to provide states with greater flexibility to implement services to help youth make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. Public Law 115-123, Family First Prevention Services Act expands the use of Education and Training Vouchers.

C. Youth Covered By Policy

All youth ages fourteen (14) years and older served by DHR shall receive IL services. This includes:

- youth in DHR custody who are currently living in a licensed or approved out-of-home care placement or who are on a trial home visit;
- youth receiving on-going child protective services;
- youth in care, 18 or older, who have established their own non-contract independent living placement (refer to Transitional and Independent Living Program and Placement Requirements Policy, Section V);
- youth ages eighteen through twenty years who (1) have been discharged from the system of care, (2) were in foster care on their eighteenth birthday, and (3) have returned to DHR to request services (refer to *Smooth Transitions Into Adulthood* policy, Section III, for additional information)

D. Program Development

When programs are successfully implemented with active participation from the youth, youth will become productive members of society. The planning and development of IL services can be individualized in each county, but must include the following components for all youth:

- control over their future;
- competency;
- permanency; and
- usefulness.

Partnering with youth in developing independent living services that prepare them for self-sufficiency promotes positive youth development. States must certify that adolescents directly participate in designing their own program activities that prepare them for independent living and that adolescents accept personal responsibility for living up to their role in the program development. Child welfare staff must partner with youth on an individual and group basis.

1. Promoting a Sense of Control Over Their Future

When youth in foster care are included in identifying and planning the delivery of their services, they begin to gain a feeling of control over their lives and can plan for their future. Child welfare staff shall involve youth in:

a. Individualized Service Plans (ISPs)

All youth shall be actively involved in the development of their ISP. Every ISP for youth ages fourteen (14) years and older shall have individual goals based on mandated ILP outcomes. The steps to achieve the goals shall be determined through a skills assessment that identifies skill needs.

b. Life Skills Development Groups

Teaching life skills in a group setting accomplishes several goals. It offers child welfare staff an opportunity to teach the same skill to several youth at one time, and it offers youth an opportunity to meet and learn from other youth, while developing social skills. Group classes should be held in counties with several IL youth on a monthly, quarterly, or semiannual basis. Each class time, date, location, and topic will be announced to all IL youth that reside in the county. If youth in the custody of another county reside in the county conducting the group class, the county conducting the class shall also include those youth. The county holding custody shall also be advised of the time, date, location, and topic. The county conducting the classes shall advise the custody-holding counties of incentive amounts to be paid to youth who attend the classes and may also request contributions for class expenses.

c. Youth Advisory Councils (YACs)

YACs are intended to empower youth by providing them with opportunities to directly participate in designing activities to help prepare them for self-sufficiency. The role of YACs is to advise and assist groups or individuals responsible for making decisions about the IL program. All county offices should develop a YAC unless a small IL population prohibits the development. County staff shall encourage youth to participate in the Regional YAC.

2. Promoting a Sense of Competency

Youth shall have support in developing a sense of competency that prepares them for self-sufficiency. This competency includes educational attainment and life skills development through the provision of IL services. See section E. Services for further information on developing competency.

3. Promoting a Sense of Permanency

A dependable network of reliable and responsible individuals is necessary to provide youth with a sense of continuity and belonging, and can serve as resources for assistance with problems encountered in the future. To assist youth in achieving a sense of permanency, child welfare staff shall partner with the youth to:

- define permanent family connections from either their current or past life;
- understand how to safely relate to relatives;

- identify a responsible adult to continue to be a support system after they leave care;
- encouraging them to serve as mentors to younger adolescents in foster care to increase their self-esteem and to give younger adolescents an opportunity to learn from the older youth.

4. Usefulness

Youth in foster care need opportunities to provide services that benefit others while providing them opportunities to practice skills, gain valuable experience, and develop relationships within the community. County Departments shall develop partnerships to promote volunteer and employment opportunities for youth in their community.

E. Provision of IL Services

To provide the four components of positive youth development as listed in section D, the following services shall be authorized by the ISP team. The services shall be directed toward the IL outcomes listed in section A and include the following:

- Assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, GED, vocational training, or college degree;
- Preparation for the transition to post-secondary training and institutions, visits to colleges, tutors (as needed), and other mentors to assist youth in their educational needs; Exploring careers including coaching in pre-employment skills (e.g., job searching, interviewing) necessary to enable youth to obtain employment and to retain a job (e.g., work habits and behavior);
- Collecting materials necessary to obtain or retain employment;
- Training in daily living skills (e.g. budgeting, financial management, obtaining and maintaining shelter, obtaining and preparing food);
- Education in preventive health activities (e. g., smoking avoidance, nutritional education, pregnancy prevention, substance abuse prevention);
- Development of interpersonal skills (e.g. effective communication, decision-making, problem solving, anger management, management of past losses, and establishing healthy relationships);
- Assistance in understanding the physical and emotional changes of adolescence;
- Preparation to assess their need for and obtain their own medical, dental, and mental health services when they leave care; and
- Provision of personal and emotional support through interactions with adults and mentors as youth age out of foster care.

F. National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

Public Law 106-169 requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop a national data collection system to track the independent living services provided to the youth and to develop outcomes that measure states' success in preparing youth for their transition from foster care to independent living. To meet this requirement the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) was created and requires the Department to engage in two data collection activities.

The Department is responsible for surveying youth who will turn age 17 and are in a valid placement within 45 days of the youth's 17th birthday. The youth will be surveyed again at ages 19 and 21.

The following placement types are considered valid placements:

- Foster Homes;
- Foster Homes of Relatives;
- Group Homes;
- Residential Facilities;
- Child Care Institutions;
- Pre-Adoptive Homes;
- Emergency Shelters.

The following placement types are not considered valid placements:

- Jail;
- Forestry Camps;
- Own Home;
- Detention Facilities;
- Hospitals;
- Psychiatric Facilities;
- Training Schools (e.g. Job Corps).

The Department collects and reports outcome information on a new cohort of youth every three years. NYTD surveys are used to collect and report data on the following six outcomes:

- Financial self-sufficiency;
- Experience with homelessness;
- Educational attainment;
- Positive adult connections;
- High-risk behavior; and
- Access to health insurance.

Federal guidelines require the foster care worker to engage and contact youth who have been identified to complete the survey. The youth will access the survey by way of the DHR Homepage. If the worker completes the survey on behalf of the youth, the worker

will access the survey through FACTS. The survey must be completed within 45 days from the time the youth turns 17 years old.

Three BOE reports are generated for the workers to support the youth who participated in the survey. The data collected allows the Department to provide and assess the collective outcomes of youth. These reports are:

NYTD Baseline Report containing the names of youth who will have a birthday in the next month will be generated on the 1st of each month.

- NYTD Delta Report containing changes to youth who may not be part of the baseline or youth who came into care and are now part of the baseline will be generated one week after the baseline report and every week thereafter.
- NYTD Tracking report will be generated weekly during the month of the youth's birthday and tracks whether or not the youth submitted the survey.

G. Transitional and Independent Living Placement Resources

Transitioning from the dependence of childhood to living independently as an adult is a process requiring a decrease in adult supervision. Some youth are able to begin living in independent placements before being discharged from foster care. When such placements are available, youth may progress from foster care placement to transitional living placement to independent living placement prior to discharge from care. Youth who are reentering foster care after age 18 may also benefit from these placements.

1. Placement Criteria

The child and family planning team shall determine the appropriateness of transitional living or independent living as a proposed placement for youth as indicated through an assessment of the youth's level of independent living skills. For youth whose permanency goal is another plan permanent living arrangement (APPLA) *goal needs to be changed* and a previous court order has identified a specific placement, the court must approve the change in placement when transitional or independent living is determined appropriate. If there is no court involvement, the parent/legal custodian must consent to the placement unless the youth is 19 years of age. The Department can assist youth 18 years of age up to age 21 to establish their own placement, as long as the placement is deemed safe and all adults residing in the home meet C/AN and suitability clearances.

Experiential living activities shall have been provided to youth to allow them to practice basic life skills preparation prior to placing them in a transitional or independent living setting. Youth shall meet the following criteria prior to actual placement in a transitional or independent living setting:

- Be between the ages of sixteen (16) and twenty-one (21);
- Have a plan for living independently outlined in their transition plan;

- Be motivated to participate in a transitional or independent living program;
- Demonstrate the ability to provide a progressively increased financial share of basic needs for food, clothing and shelter;
- Be willing to accept assistance to achieve success in the program;
- Be able to implement personal safety strategies;
- Participate and cooperate in the development and monitoring of an individualized contract with specific goals and objectives;
- Estimate the length of stay in the program needed to meet these goals; and
- Exhibit self-control in a community based setting.

NOTE: DHR shall not sign or co-sign for youth to lease an apartment or house.

Prior to the age of twenty-one (21), youth who have successfully participated in positive youth development shall be provided a supervised independent living component allowing them to engage in the following activities:

- Select housing with the potential of meeting their needs.
Youth who select their housing are likely to be proud of it and maintain it.
- Pay their own bills and maintain their own budget.
Programs shall provide youth with the opportunity to practice budgeting and bill paying while they are living in a less supervised and more private setting. It is likely they will make mistakes and need some assistance while under supervision.
- Work out landlord/roommate disputes.
Programs shall anticipate potential issues with landlords and/or roommates and have a planned response for dealing with both.
- Establish a satisfactory housing arrangement at the end of the program.

When youth complete the program, they shall be established in a safe and affordable living arrangement that they can continue if they so chose. The program should “walk away” from the youth instead of the youth “walking away” from the program.

2. Youth with Children

Youth who become pregnant or have children while in foster care may utilize transitional or independent living as a placement resource when all other requirements in the section above are met. The ISP team shall review and approve all proposed placements for appropriateness. The issues to be addressed shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- Custody of the foster youth's child;

- The youth's ability to provide a safe, stable living situation for the child;
- Scheduling education, job training, and/or work to allow the youth to safely and adequately meet the child's needs;
- Assisting the youth to access available resources to obtain day care, medical care, child support, and other financial assistance; and
- Training in parenting skills.

3. Individualized Service Plan (ISP) Requirements

Youth in foster care who are moving into transitional or independent living settings shall remain in DHR custody/planning responsibility. Prior to their moving into any licensed or approved transitional or independent living setting, the following areas, at a minimum, shall be assessed by the child and family planning team with goals and steps included in the ISP to address identified needs. The areas include:

- Reason for the move;
- Living arrangement and anticipated date of the move;
- Level, nature and frequency of supervision needed;
- Names and telephone numbers of persons to contact in the event of an emergency;
- Identification of life skills the youth needs to acquire and assignment of growth-related tasks appropriate to the youth's age, circumstances, and developmental stage;
- A method to assess when youth have acquired the attitudes, behaviors, and skills identified in the ISP;
- Specific educational/vocational and/or employment goals, and the steps and tasks needed to accomplish each of these goals;
- Money management (e.g., who will be responsible for specific bills, how much money will be saved);
- Frequency and type of contact youth will have with family members and relevant others (e.g., social worker, mentor, counselors, former caregivers);

Note: The child welfare worker shall have, at a minimum, one face-to-face contact per month with a youth living in a community independent living setting. The contact shall take place in the youth's apartment.

- Follow up steps or services needed based on the change in living arrangements;

- Thorough exploration of any plan for sharing living arrangements including, but not limited to, age and gender of roommate; anticipated living expenses; and youth's share of those expenses; and
- A crisis plan which identifies steps to be taken if the youth experiences difficulties (e.g., inadequate finances; loss of shelter; job or income; loss of significant relationships with family and relevant others).

An ISP meeting must be held when changes are made to the youth's living arrangements. Removal from transitional or independent living setting may be made without concurrence of the ISP team only when the youth presents a clear and present danger to self and/or others in the residence. In such a situation, an ISP meeting shall be held within seventy-two (72) hours of the move to review and revise the youth's plan accordingly.

4. Planning Successful Transitions

To best assure youth are actively involved with their plan to successfully transition out of foster care, caseworkers will use a state approved transition plan, skill framework and skill assessment. Caseworkers can develop the transition plan for youth with a permanency goal of APPLA as early as 16 years old. Utilization of this plan is mandatory for youth 17 years of age and older regardless of their permanency plan. The plan should be reviewed monthly during caseworker visits with youth and developed ongoing at the direction and involvement of the youth in accord with the ISP. As youth participate with their plan and its development, they should learn skills to help accept ownership and personal responsibilities of their future.

H. Funding

1. Funding Source For Different Case Types

Independent Living (IL) services are provided to youth in on-going protective service cases, foster care cases and youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who left care prior to their 21st birthday. However, the funds that are used to pay for the IL services vary according to the case type. Independent Living Grant Funds may only be used for youth ages 14 through 20 in foster care placement or for youth who were in foster care on their eighteenth birthday (18) and who return to request services prior to reaching the age of twenty-one (21). IL funds may be used for up to six (6) months for youth who emancipated from care within 30 days of their 21st birthday, provided the services are mapped out in their closing ISP.

The Foster Care Independence Act specifies the amount of money each state receives for the Independent Living Program and identifies specific purposes for use of the funds. All states must provide matching funds to receive the federal funds. The annual ILP budget shall be planned to ensure the funds are appropriately spent (not just encumbered) by the end of each fiscal year.

Because all county IL funds are considered local funds, the local funds policy in the Administrative Manual shall be followed. To assist in determining whether flex funds or IL funds are to be used in paying for IL services, the following guidelines are given.

- IL services for youth in DHR custody placed in an out-of-home setting or are in their own home on a trial home visit shall be paid through IL funds, as well as other funding sources when IL funds have been depleted.
- IL services for youth in open protective service cases and/or youth in DHR legal custody who have been returned to their parent(s)/legal custodian(s) from whom custody was removed (not a trial home visit) shall be paid through flex funds. IL funds shall not be used.
- Services for youth ages eighteen through twenty years who (1) have been discharged from the system of care, (2) were in foster care on their eighteenth birthday, and (3) who have returned to DHR to request services (refer to Smooth Transitions Into Adulthood policy, Section III, for additional information) shall be funded through IL funds or flex funds.
- Services for youth ages eighteen through twenty years who were discharged from foster care prior to their eighteenth birthday, and who have returned to DHR to request services, shall be funded through flex funds. Independent Living funds shall not be used.

2. Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

Alabama's ETV Program provide funds to youth currently in foster care and youth formerly in foster care to remain eligible until they attain twenty six (26) years to attend accredited colleges, universities, vocational and/or technical training institutions. In no event may a youth participate in the program for more than 5 years (whether or not consecutive). The funds are granted through the Chafee Independence Program. Legislation authorizing the ETV Program was a separate section of the Chafee Act. Use of these funds has no impact on ILP county allocations except that youth receiving ETVs should use these funds for eligible educational expenses. No county funds are needed to access ETV funds. Youth may receive up to \$5000.00 per year as they pursue higher education. The funds may be used for tuition, books, computers, school supplies, health insurance, transportation, childcare and qualified living expenses related to post-secondary education. Youth must complete a new application each year to determine eligibility.

A representative from the provider will maintain contact with each youth to insure all requirements for ETV funds are met and provides any needed assistance.

The county is responsible for assuring youth eligibility and referring the youth to the online application portal. An application must be completed on the Internet by going to www.fosteringhopeal.org and locating the link to Alabama ETV. Each county can establish a log in to the portal through the funding provider.

a. Use of DHR Computer by Youth

If the youth has no other computer access and needs to apply by Internet, the county may choose to let youth use the DHR Internet. DHR's Center for Information Services has given approval for the youth to do so if the following measures are taken.

The youth must sign the confidentiality form (REF053) that is signed by staff and the REF058 supplement that explains the student's rights and responsibilities while using the DHR computer. Both forms will be maintained by the County Security Administrator in the audit file containing confidentiality forms signed by staff.

- The social worker will sign onto the Internet for the youth and will remain present during the youth's usage.
- The social worker will be responsible for any unauthorized use or downloading by the youth.
- An audit trail will be maintained in the county (on file with confidentiality forms). The trail will consist of documentation showing the worker's name, youth's name, date, and time of the computer's use by a youth.
- The youth may sign up for one of the free e-mail accounts available on the Internet. This will allow the youth the ability to later check their e-mail when other computers are available.

b. The Youth's Responsibility

The youth is responsible for applying for the voucher, providing the needed information, and maintaining contact with the funding provider, as required. This is accomplished by applying at the same website, www.fosteringhopeal.org, and the youth uses the application form that is on the main page. **DO NOT GIVE THE YOUTH THE AGENCY PASSWORD**, as this would provide access to information on other youth from the county.

No grant is awarded until the youth actually applies for the Education Training Voucher. Once the youth's application is received, the funding provider will process it quickly to determine the amount of unmet financial assistance needed up to \$5000 per year.

The youth must have computer access and an email address while they are in college. ETV funds can be used to pay for these costs and should be included in the student's budget submission with the application. Computers are also typically available at campus libraries.

In order to continue receiving the grant, the youth must maintain "satisfactory progress" in school which means that their grades are adequate to the requirements of the certificate or degree. Normally this

would mean a “C” average or better in courses critical to completion. If a youth’s performance drops below the “satisfactory” level, he/she will be allowed to continue to receive the grant for one more grading period in hopes that performance will improve. They can be very helpful in assisting the struggling youth obtain assistance so that he/she can succeed academically.

c. Youth Eligibility

- The youth must be eligible for the IL program (in DHR custody).
- The youth is either in foster care, aged out of foster care on or after their 18th birthday, was adopted from foster care or placed in Kinship Guardianship care after their 16th birthday.
- The youth must have finished high school or have their GED and must be in a full or half-time post-secondary program or are accepted for next term. The youth must be making acceptable progress toward graduation to (2.0 GPA) continue receiving the grant.
- The youth must be a citizen or documented alien (eligible for other federal benefits).
- The youth may not have more than \$10,000 in personal reserves.

d. Qualifying Schools

The youth must be attending a post-secondary institution of higher learning or post-secondary vocational training school. The school must be accredited by a nationally accredited agency or association or has been granted pre-accreditation status. The school must be eligible to accept Pell Grants on behalf of their students. The school must offer a 4-year bachelor’s degree, a two-year associate’s degree or a state or nationally recognized certificate.

e. Eligible Costs

The amount of the grant is based on the cost of attendance which is the total amount it will cost a youth to attend school, usually expressed as a yearly figure. This includes:

- Tuition and fees or other equipment or materials that is required of all youth in the same course of study;
- On-campus room and board or a housing and food allowance for off campus youth;
- Allowances for books, supplies, transportation, loan fees for the school year;
- If applicable, dependent care;

- Costs related to a disability (e.g. eyeglasses, tutoring, adaptive software);
- Miscellaneous expenses including rental or purchase of a personal computer;
- Reasonable costs for study-abroad programs or a cooperative education program;
- Reasonable expenses for transportation (we will not be purchasing vehicles);
- School-sponsored medical insurance for those students who do not have other insurance (i.e., Medicaid or All-Kids).

The youth's cost of attendance is determined and evaluated with their existing financial award in order to determine how much money they can receive. A youth may receive both Pell Grant and the ETV which, when combined, are equal to or less than the cost of attendance.

f. Administration

All of the ETV scholarships are being administered by a designated funding provider. The program will submit checks directly to third party providers or directly to the youth for approved budgeted expenses.

I. Fostering Hope Tuition Scholarship Program

The Fostering Hope Scholarship Act of 2015 was signed into law on May 5, 2015, and was created to provide scholarship assistance to children currently in the legal custody of the Department and children who were adopted from the Alabama foster care program at the age of 14 or older. Children may apply to any two or four-year institution of higher learning in the State of Alabama or other publically funded state training program.

1. Eligible Children

- Children currently in the legal custody of the foster care program at the time of graduation from high school or at the time of receipt of a General Education Development (GED) certificate;
- Children who are/were in the permanent legal custody of the foster care program when his/her adoption or Kinship Guardianship care is/was finalized (age 14 or older) and has graduated from high school or has earned a GED certificate;
- Children who have been accepted for enrollment in a degree-granting, training, or certification program;

- Children who are enrolled and working toward a degree, certificate, or completion of a job training program, and who are making adequate progress toward completion of said degree, certificate, or training program;
- Children who have net personal assets worth less than thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) subject to adjustment to account for inflation;
- A student who earns grants, scholarships, or other awards (excluding loans) sufficient to pay his/her tuition, room and board, and other fees, may not participate in the Fostering Hope program.

2. Application/Referral Process

- Application process is the same as ETV. The funding provider will maintain a portal whereby youth can apply for both Educational Assistance Programs at the same time.
- Children may apply for this scholarship by going to www.fosteringhopeal.org.
- Scholarships will be awarded on a first come-first served basis.

3. Expenses/Fees Covered

- Tuition at any public, two or four-year institution of higher education in the State of Alabama; (72 academic hours maximum toward an associate's degree and 144 academic hours maximum toward a bachelor's degree. **NOTE:** Fees will not be paid towards any advanced degree.
- Required fees at any public two or four-year institution of higher learning in the State of Alabama;
- Required fees for job training or skills certification offered by any public, two or four-year institution of higher education in the state;
- Required fees for other publically funded training programs in the state, not considered an associate's degree, as approved by the Department;

4. Student Requirements

- Student must be accepted and/or enrolled in a degree-granting, training, or certification program;

- Student must be making adequate progress toward earning a degree, certificate, or completion of a training program to remain eligible;
- Students must complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), or the equivalent, before each year in which he/she receives a Fostering Hope scholarship;
- Student must apply for all federal student financial aid grants to include Pell Grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, and Education Training Vouchers, as identified by the Department or Federal Student Aid offices;
- To continue eligibility after the first year, students must complete annual volunteer requirements of 50 hours per semester or 100 hours per calendar year or are required to work 5 hours per week
- Students must remain in good academic standing with the school or program in which he/she is enrolled.

5. Mentors

- All participants will have a mentor provided by the Department;
- Mentors will provide support services to scholarship recipients to include adaptation to independent living, academic, and other collegiate activities;
- Coordinate and assist County Directors and County ILP staff and contract ILP staff to identify interested and eligible foster youth. |
- Coordinate and assist with providers to identify interested and eligible adopted youth. |
- Provide training regarding the scholarship program to Department of Human Resources staff, foster parents and foster parent groups, group home staff, residential treatment facility staff, high school guidance counselors and Independent Living age youth and any community stakeholders and service providers, per their request.
- Assist county staff to educate and prepare eligible high school seniors interested in participating in the Foster Hope Scholarship Program in groups and individually between the start of the school year. |
- Provide information related to college tours for eligible high school seniors. |

- Assist and/or coordinate with all eligible students with completing Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA)
- Coordinate meetings with Admission staff at colleges, universities, technical, trade and training schools which qualify, as needed.
- Provide academic and independent living support to all participants in the Fostering Hope Scholarship Program via face to face contact one time per semester on the student's campus to review student progress, or lack thereof; offering individualized support to assistance and mentoring to each youth, via monthly phone contact, as needed
- Coordinating and assisting county staff, foster and adoptive parents and eligible participating students by linking them to needed services and supports at their college/university.

6. General Notes

- Fostering Hope scholarship funds will be utilized to pay tuition and mandatory fees before any other grant, loan, voucher, or scholarship the student may be applied:
- Fostering Hope funds will be paid directly to the school or university;
- Tuition and fees will be disbursed based on the fiscal year calendar;
- Fostering Hope monies may not be spent for any other purposes except those listed in this policy;
- Fostering Hope funds will be disbursed only if there is sufficient funding for the fiscal year;
- Scholarship funds may not be reduced by the amount of any federal aid, scholarship funds, or grant funds otherwise received by the student or by the amount of any private donations made to assist the Fostering Hope program.