Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines Bulletin Appendix

Frequently Asked Questions and Recommendations for Implementation

December 2014

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Introduction: How to Use this Document

This document was created by a workgroup comprised of child welfare professionals and youth who were formerly in foster care who also worked together on Pennsylvania's 2008 Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) and subsequent Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP was approved by the federal Administration for Children and Families in June 2010. The themes in the PIP include: Quality Practice; Sustaining Change; Child, Youth and Family Engagement; Collaboration; Enhancing Assessments and Timely Permanence. The PIP focused on the importance of youth engagement as a key strategy to improve outcomes for youth and the need for continued improvement of Independent Living (IL) services. The Youth Independent Living Services Guidelines Bulletin (Bulletin) issued by the Department of Public Welfare's (DPW) Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) establishes the policy related to IL services in PA. The Bulletin and Appendix are amended to include changes in federal and state law that address Medicaid extension, credit history searches, resumption of dependency jurisdiction and address entry/re-entry to foster care after age 18, and new criteria to meet the definition of a child.

This Appendix is not meant to replace the Bulletin, but rather to compliment it as a practical resource to support successful implementation of IL services across the Commonwealth. Please refer to the Bulletin for DPW's official guidance, policy and procedures.

This Appendix is divided into several sections targeted at key stakeholders as identified in the Table of Contents. Each stakeholder may view the section provided for their specific role in implementing IL services. There is a specific section for each of the following key stakeholders: youth and young adults; birth families and kin; resource families; IL coordinators; administrators and fiscal officers; child welfare professionals; juvenile justice professionals; and judges, attorneys and court personnel. In addition, a section on youth status and eligibility for services (page 10) and the statutory and regulatory authority (Appendix B) are provided. All readers are strongly encouraged to read both of these sections before moving to other sections of the Appendix because this information is used as the foundation for the implementation of IL services in PA.

The Appendix also includes a wide array of resources for stakeholders implementing the Bulletin. These resources include sample documents, state-related and national websites, and other information pertaining to youth in the child welfare system. This Appendix is not intended to be considered as an exhaustive compilation of all resources but rather to serve as a catalyst for enhancing the provision of IL services to youth served by the child welfare system. All readers are encouraged to further the implementation of IL services through the use of effective resources in the local communities.

Special thanks to the following Child, Youth and Family Engagement PIP Workgroup members for their work on this document:

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Eligibility

The following table identifies the funding streams available to pay for IL services and specific situations in which to use a specific funding source. CFCIP funds are limited to fund only those youth who meet specific eligibility criteria. In general a youth must be younger than 21 years old at the beginning of the State fiscal year and:

YOUTH STATUS and ELIGIBILTY	CFCIP Funds	State/Local Funds
Be in, or have been in, out-of-home placement on or after age 16[1], including youth adopted or entering permanent legal custodianship arrangements after age 16 and have been adjudicated:		
	✓	✓
• Dependent; or • Dually adjudicated dependent and delinquent; or • Delinquent with shared case responsibility between the CCYA and the Juvenile Probation Office (JPO); or • Adjudicated delinquent only;	✓	✓
	✓	✓
		✓
and, after meeting any of the above criteria the following eligibility and funding source applies if the youth:		
• Is a pre-adoptive or adoptive youth; or	✓	✓
• Is a qualified alien child; or	✓	✓
• Is an undocumented alien child or alien child legally admitted on a temporary basis for work, study or pleasure; or		✓
• Is a youth with special needs.	✓	✓
Youth who do not meet any of the above criteria, but for whom the county identifies as in need of IL services.		✓

[1] CCYA may provide IL services with state and local funds to youth under 16 with an approved request to OCYF.

Appendix A: Stakeholder Frequently Asked Questions

Youth and Young Adults

What is Independent Living? Why should I participate?

- IL services are intended to assist you in developing the skills you will need to become a productive and healthy adult. These services provide the tools to prepare you to achieve your DREAMS!

- IL programs help current and former foster care youth, ages 16-21, make a good transition into adulthood.

- IL is a voluntary service – you make the choice to participate.

- IL programs are a free safety net to access additional services, including:
  - Daily living skills;
  - Home management;
  - Budgeting and money management;
  - Career and educational planning;
  - Housing assistance; and/or
  - Mentoring.

Where can I get services? Who refers me and how do I enroll?

- You may be referred for IL services by your foster parents, caseworkers, staff members at your placement setting or an IL Coordinator. Call your local County Children and Youth Agency for more information.

Am I eligible to participate in Independent Living?

- All youth, ages 16-21, involved with County Children and Youth Agencies or a Juvenile Probation Office, regardless of the type of placement setting, are able to get IL services.

- If you left care on or after your 16th birthday, you are eligible for IL services.

- If you relocate to a different state or county, you may receive IL services in those areas.

- You may continue to receive IL services until your 21st birthday.

What is an assessment? Why do I need to take one?

- Assessments help identify your strengths and areas where you would like to grow.

- Assessments help you, your caseworker and important people in your life understand what needs you may have so that they can best assist you.

- Assessments are not a test; you will not receive a grade.

What is an Independent Living Plan?

- It sets out your goals for learning the skills you need to be independent and able to support yourself when you leave care.

- You will develop a plan to identify the services that you will need to help you achieve your dreams.

Where will I live?

- IL services can help you find an apartment or a semi-independent living arrangement.
- IL services can help you better understand the roles and responsibilities of apartment living.
- You are also eligible for emergency shelter, should you become homeless.
- IL services can help you apply for public housing grants.
- You can also receive IL services and still live with your foster parents, family members, group home, or basically anywhere.

What are stipends?

- Stipends are money earned by you or awarded to you for specific purposes to meet your individualized needs.
- For instance, stipends may be money for:
  - Work or school uniforms; and
  - High school graduation expenses.
- Each county has its own policies on stipends. See your IL coordinator for more information.

Why do I have multiple caseworkers?

- Some counties have staff whose main focus is to help youth develop life skills and plan to transition into adulthood. Typically, they are called IL Coordinators, Workers, or Specialists.
- They partner with other staff who works with foster parents, families and private providers.
- No matter how many workers you have, it is their job to support you in the achievement of your dreams.

Will my county pay for me to go to college?

- Although County Children and Youth Agencies cannot pay for you to attend post-secondary education or training, they can assist you with completing the necessary financial aid forms needed to get scholarship and grant monies.
- One of the most important forms you need to complete is called the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This form is used to apply for federal financial aid, such as the Pell Grant, student loans, and college work-studies and needs to be filled out before applying for any other forms of financial aid programs. More information can be found at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/.
- Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) is a grant to help you pay for post-secondary education or training. You may qualify if you were in care at the age of 16 or older (which includes youth/young adults who left foster care for permanent legal custodianship or adoption after attaining 16 years of age.) Award amounts cannot exceed the cost of attendance and are subject to the availability of funds. More information and the ETG application can be found at the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) website www.pheaa.org. Follow links to Other Educational Aid and select the PA ETG program link.

- You may also be eligible for waivers to cover the costs of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and college application fees.

- For more information on obtaining money for education, including the PA State Grant, visit: www.pheaa.org.

- For other higher education assistance, try the Education Planner at www.educationplanner.org.

What are my rights as a youth in care?

- All youth have the following rights:

  - To be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect; and

  - To be engaged in planning and decision making.

- Check out the Know Your Rights Manual for more information about your rights at www.independentlivingpa.org.

- Please refer to Appendix M: Educational Rights and Resources for more information.

How long can I stay in care?

- At age 18, you may make a request to the court to stay in care until your 21st birthday if you are participating in any of the following:

  - High school or taking classes to obtain your GED;
  - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;
  - Community college/2 year college;
  - 4 Year college or university;
  - Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help you find a job. This could be your county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteer work; or
  - Have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents you from doing any of the above and is part of your permanency plan.

Can I return to foster care after I am discharged?

- Yes, you may request the court to resume dependency so that you are able to reenter foster care up to age 21 if you were discharged from foster care on or after age 18 or three months prior to reaching age 18.

- You should contact the county children and youth agency in the county where you are currently living, if different from your original placement. You may also contact your attorney/guardian ad litem, judge, IL worker or caseworker.

- You must be participating in at least one of the education, employment or medical/behavioral health areas discussed in the "how long can I stay in care?" question. If not, you can ask the county children and youth agency to help you to meet one of those requirements so you may return to care.

I am over age 18 and want to stay in foster care (or return) but I don't want to live in a foster home or group home. What other choices do I have?

- Unsupervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP) settings are very flexible placement types and can include apartments, boarding arrangements, living with a friend's family, dormitory, etc.

- U-SILP settings are designed to help you transition to life as an adult, but give you the supports and services you probably still need until you can manage everything by yourself.
- These placement options may not be available at the moment you wish, because of availability or because the agency has assessed that you are not ready to assume this responsibility at that time.
- Transitional Living Residence (TLR) placements are also excellent opportunities for you because they provide additional supports you may need until you have the confidence and skills for a U-SILP setting.

Can I keep my baby with me if I am in foster care?

- Yes. As a parent you have full rights to your child when you are in care unless there are safety concerns about the care your child receives and the court determines otherwise.
- You should be given the same chance to parent as any other parent has.
- All efforts must be made to place you together with your child.
- The court should not find your baby dependent solely because you are in foster care.

My caseworker told me they found problems with my credit history. What should I do?

- The agency must check your credit history every year after you turn age 16 until you leave foster care. They can help you show you how to do this yourself when you are 18 or older and no longer in foster care.
- You shouldn't have a credit history until you are 18 or older and have a loan, credit card or utilities, such as heating or electricity bills. If you do have a credit history before you are 18, someone may have used or stolen your identity (this is often called "identity theft".)
- The agency will assign someone to work with you to correct your credit history. It is very important for you to participate with them, as needed. A good credit history is very important for things like getting a job, a car loan or student loan, an apartment and more.

Can my family or I, prevent the agency from checking my credit history?

- You may object to a credit history review only if you are 18 or over and in placement and the agency documents your wish in your case record.
- Your family may not prevent the agency from checking your credit history while you are ages 16 and 17 and while you are in placement.

What is transition planning?

- Transition planning helps you prepare to leave care and become independent.
- County Children and Youth Agencies and their partners are required to work with you to develop an individualized plan as you prepare to leave foster care.
- It is a requirement that a personalized transition plan be completed and submitted to the court during the 90 days prior to you leaving foster care.
- Please refer to Appendix U: Sample Transition Assessment and Appendix V: Sample 90 Day Transition for more information.

What documents do I need as I transition out of care?

- Birth Certificate;
- Social Security Card;
- State Photo ID or U.S. Passport;
- Driver's Permit and/or License (if available);
- Health Information/Medical Records (including immunizations);
- Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy;
- Educational Information (including IEP Transition Plan);
- Medical Access Card (if needed);
- Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (if needed);
- Any credit history information available and documents to correct any wrongdoings of others;
- Family/Tribal Contact Information;
- Immigration Documents;
- Legal documents relating to custody or guardianship;
- Voter Registration;
- Registered for Selective Service (if male);
- Child Profile;
- Life Book;
- Court Order; and
- 90 Day Transition Plan.

What are some services that can help me as I transition out of care?

- **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM**) is a meeting where your family and friends gather together to help you plan for your dreams and future. You may decide who will participate in this meeting.

- **Family Finding** helps reconnect you with family members using casework and internet search technology.

- **Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)** is a contract that DPW manages with a group of providers to work with your caseworker to help you find family members and individuals who can support and assist you when you leave care. You and your resource family may contact the Legal Services Initiative Warmline (888-739-2512) for legal questions such as how or where to get the legal documents needed to identify the person who can make health care decisions/power of attorney.

What type of health insurance can I get once I'm discharged from care? What do I need to know?

- After you leave care, you may be eligible for Medical Assistance (MA). Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), if you were discharged from foster care on or after your 18th birthday and were receiving MA coverage prior to your discharge, you may be eligible for Medical Assistance until age 26. Every year, your file is subject to an annual review for ongoing eligibility. Therefore you must notify the County Assistance Office (CAO) whenever you change your mailing address. Ask your caseworker if you are eligible and if you've been automatically enrolled.

- If you were discharged from care prior to age 18, or did not have MA coverage at the time of your discharge, you may apply for Medical Assistance at your local CAO or online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

- You may also be able to purchase MA Adult Basic from the DPW. To apply, visit www.insurance.state.pa.us.

- You should also select someone to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to make the decisions. As part of this, you should have a legal document that identifies that person so they can carry out your wishes.

What is a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy? Why should I have one?

- A Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy is a legal document that allows a person who you trust to make important decisions about your medical treatment in the event you are unable to make them yourself.
- After you turn age 18, you should have a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy and select someone to make these health care decisions in the event something would happen to you. This person should be aware of your wishes and can inform doctors or medical personnel of your wishes.
- If you do not have a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy, medical treatment will be provided based on your family's decisions, if they are available.
- The person you identify to make these decisions on your behalf is called a Health Care Representative. This person must be aware that you have chosen them and you should discuss your wishes with them so they can inform others if needed. You can change your mind and select another person at any time but you must have a new document created and signed.
- Your caseworker or Guardian ad Litem can help you take the steps needed to create a legal Health Care Proxy.

Where can I find more information about Independent Living Services?

- Check out the Youth Advisory Board website at www.independentlivingpa.org.

Birth Families and Kin

What are Independent Living (IL) services?

- IL services are voluntary services intended to assist youth in developing the skills they need to become productive and healthy adults.

Can my son or daughter live with me and still receive Independent Living services?

- Yes. Even if your child is no longer in care, she/he is eligible to receive IL services. Some agencies also offer IL services to youth who were never placed out of the home.

Will my family have to be involved with Children & Youth?

- Families are not required to be currently involved with a County Children and Youth Agency to be eligible for their teens to receive services.

What types of services are available?

- There are lots of different services available to help teens transition into adulthood. Some services include the following:

    - Job readiness and job searching;
    - Budgeting;
    - Financial management;
    - Educational planning;
    - Housing search and assistance; and/or
    - Mentoring.

Where can I get Independent Living services for my son or daughter? Who refers and how do I enroll?

- Contact your local County Children and Youth Agency.

How much will Independent Living services cost?

- IL services are free. They are provided though federal, state and local funds and are coordinated by your local County Children and Youth Agency.

What is my role and how am I involved in planning for Independent Living services?

- Provide your son or daughter with the guidance and support they need.

- Participate in the development and implementation of your son or daughter's IL Plan.

- Take part in assisting your son or daughter with developing the skills they need to become productive and healthy adults.

- Please see Appendix H: Sample Independent Living Plan for more information.

Will the County Children and Youth Agency pay for post-secondary education or training?

- No. However, the agency can assist you with completing the necessary financial aid forms needed to get scholarship and grant money.

- One of the most important forms that your son or daughter needs to complete is called the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. This form is used to apply for federal financial aid, such as Pell Grant, student loans, and college work-studies and needs to be filled

out before applying for any other forms of financial aid programs. More information can be found at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/.

- Your son or daughter may qualify for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) if they were in care at the age of 16, or older, or were adopted from the foster care system at 16 years of age, or older.

- Youth who were in placement anytime after age 13 may identify themselves as an independent student (not dependent on their parent or guardian) when applying for federal financial aid. This happens automatically based on answering questions during the online application for federal financial aid. This maximizes the amount of federal aid a student may receive because parent/guardian/kin income is not calculated when determining the award amount.

What are some services that can help my son or daughter transition out of care?

- **Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)** is a meeting where family and friends gather together to help your son or daughter plan for their future. He/she may decide who will participate in their meeting. FGDM may also be used to plan for other family circumstances.

- **Family Finding** helps reconnect youth with family members using internet search technology.

- **Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)** is a group of providers who work with County Children and Youth Agencies to help prepare youth for transition out of care and find individuals who can support and assist them when they leave care.

What type of health insurance can my son or daughter receive after leaving placement? What do I need to know?

- After youth leave care, your son or daughter may be eligible for Medical Assistance (MA).

- If your son or daughter was discharged from foster care on or after their 18th birthday and was receiving MA coverage prior to their discharge, they may be eligible to receive MA coverage until age 26. Ask your caseworker if they have been automatically enrolled. Every year, their file is subject to an annual review for ongoing eligibility. Therefore they must notify the County Assistance Office (CAO) whenever they change their mailing address.

- If your son or daughter was discharged from foster care prior to age 18, or did not have MA coverage at the time of their discharge, they may apply for MA at the local CAO or online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

- Your son or daughter may also be able to purchase MA Adult Basic from the DPW. To apply, visit www.insurance.state.pa.us.

- Your son or daughter may select someone to make health care decisions in the event that they are unable to make the decisions (see Appendix S, Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy and Sample). Your son or daughter should have a legal document naming someone to make health care decisions they are unable to make the decisions.

My son or daughter left home after agency placement and I hear they are homeless, what can I do?

- If your son or daughter was discharged on or after 18, or 90 days before reaching age 18, they can make a request to return to agency foster care until age 21 if they are in an education program, working at least 80 hours per month, in a program to help them find employment, or

have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents them from any of the above. Contact your county agency for more details.

Can we prevent the agency from checking our child's credit history while in agency placement?

- No, federal law requires the County Children and Youth Agency to annually check the credit history for children in foster care over age 16.
- The agency is also required to assist the youth in resolving any inaccuracies of the credit report and to report any suspected fraud or theft matters to authorities.

Where can I find more information about Independent Living services?

- You can visit www.independentlivingpa.org.

Resource Families

What are Independent Living services?

- IL services are voluntary services intended to assist youth in developing the skills they need to become productive and healthy adults.

What types of services are available?

- There are many different services available to help teens transition into adulthood. Some services include the following:
    - Job readiness and job searching;
    - Life skills;
    - Budgeting;
    - Financial management;
    - Educational planning;
    - Housing search and assistance; and/or
    - Mentoring.

Where can I get services for youth in my care?

- Resource families may ask about IL services from either the caseworker at the County Children and Youth Agency or the private provider agency, if applicable. The IL services for the youth should be a single, coordinated plan that is supported both at the County Children and Youth Agency and any private provider agency under contract with the county as well.

- If you are a resource family working for a private provider agency, first contact your youth's caseworker at the private agency to determine how to access services for the youth in your care.

- If you are a resource family working directly with the County Children and Youth Agency, contact the assigned caseworker in the county that has custody of the youth in your care.

- Most agencies also have a support group or local associations for resource parents. These are opportunities to share ideas and experiences about maximizing IL services for older youth.

How much will Independent Living services cost?

- IL services are free. They are provided though federal, state and local funds coordinated by your local County Children and Youth Agency.

What is my role and how am I involved in planning?

- Provide youth with the guidance and support they may need.

- IL skills, such as how to do laundry or create a budget, should be taught in your home, too.

- Participate in the development and implementation of your son's or daughter's goals. This might include involvement with an IL Plan or a Child Permanency Plan.

- Take part in assisting your son or daughter to develop the skills they need to become productive and healthy adults.

- Please see Appendix H: Sample Independent Living Plan for more information.

Will the County Children and Youth Agency pay for post-secondary education or training?

- No. However, they can assist you and your son or daughter to complete the necessary financial aid forms to get grant and scholarship money.

- One of the most important forms to complete is called the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. This form is used to apply for federal financial aid, such as Pell Grant, student loans, and college work-studies and needs to be filled out before applying for any other forms of financial aid programs. More information can be found at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/.

- Your son or daughter may qualify for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) if they were in care at the age of 16, or older, or were adopted from the foster care system at 16 years of age, or older.

- Youth who were in placement anytime after age 13 may identify themselves as an independent student (not dependent on parent/guardian) when applying for federal financial aid. This happens automatically based on answering questions during the online application for federal financial aid. This maximizes the amount of federal aid a student may receive because parent/guardian/kin income is not calculated when determining the award amount.

What type of health insurance can youth receive after leaving placement? What do I need to know?

- The youth may be eligible for Medical Assistance (MA). If they were discharged from foster care on or after their 18th birthday and were receiving MA coverage prior to discharge, they may be eligible to receive MA coverage until age 26. Ask the caseworker if the youth was automatically enrolled. Every year, their file is subject to an annual review for ongoing eligibility. Therefore the youth must notify the County Assistance Office (CAO) whenever they change their mailing address.

- If they were discharged from care prior to age 18, or did not have MA coverage at the time of their discharge, your son or daughter may apply for Medical Assistance at your local County Assistance Office or online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

- Your son or daughter may also be able to purchase MA Adult Basic from the DPW. Visit www.insurance.pa.gov to apply.

- Your son or daughter may select someone to make health care decisions in the event that they are unable to make the decisions (see Appendix S, Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy and Sample). Your son or daughter should have a legal document naming someone to make health care decisions they are unable to make the decisions.

Why does the Children and Youth Agency check credit histories after age 16?

- Federal law requires the County Children and Youth Agency to annually check the credit history for children in foster care over age 16.
- The agency is also required to assist the youth in resolving any inaccuracies of the credit report and to report any suspected fraud or theft matters to authorities.

How long can a youth remain in foster care?

- Youth age 18 and older may make a request to the court to stay in care until their 21st birthday if they are participating in any of the following:
    - High school or taking classes to obtain your GED;
    - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;

- Community college/2 year college;
- 4 Year college or university;
- Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help a youth find a job. This may be the county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteer work; or
- Have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents a youth from doing any of the above and is part of their permanency plan.

Can a former foster child return to foster care after they are discharged?

- Yes, youth may request the court to resume dependency so they can reenter foster care up to age 21 (resumption of jurisdiction) if they were discharged from foster care on or after age 18 or three months prior to reaching age 18.

- The youth may contact the county children and youth agency in the county where they are currently residing (if different from their original placement) or the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. They may also contact their attorney, judge, IL worker or caseworker. When a youth has moved, the motion to resume dependency jurisdiction is filed in the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. If the youth requests, and the court approves, jurisdiction may be transferred to the youth's current county of residence.

- The youth must be participating in at least one of the education, employment or medical/behavioral health areas discussed in the "How long can a youth remain in foster care?" question. If not, they should be provided assistance in meeting one of the eligibility requirements so they may return to care.

I know a youth 18 or older who wants to stay in foster care (or return) but doesn't don't want to live in a foster home or group home any longer. What other choices are available?

- Unsupervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP) settings are very flexible placement types and can include apartments, boarding arrangements, living with a friend's family, dormitory, etc.

- U-SILP settings are designed to help youth transition to life as an adult, but provide the supports and services they will likely need.

- These placement options may not be available at the moment requested, because of availability or because the agency has assessed that the youth may not be ready to assume this responsibility at that time.

Where can I find more information on Independent Living services?

- You can visit www.independentlivingpa.org.

Independent Living Services Coordinators

Please see page 15 of the Bulletin.

What is my role as the Independent Living Services Coordinator?

- As the IL Services Coordinator, your ultimate responsibility is to ensure older youth make a successful transition from out of home placement.
- As the IL Services Coordinator, you are the County Children and Youth Agency's designated individual who is responsible to coordinate the requirements of this bulletin.
- The IL coordinator may also be responsible to comply with the requirements of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and to make available timely services designed to achieve positive outcomes for youth. The IL Services Coordinator may have other tasks and responsibilities in addition to this role.
- Additionally, you may also be the primary IL contact for OCYF and the PA Child Welfare Resource Center and should have knowledge of IL services, the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program and the implementation of the IL services grant.

What are basic service requirements that are mandated?

- Identification, referral, needs assessment, planning, coordination and delivery of IL services, including Aftercare service, for eligible youth up to age 21 regardless of whether the youth is currently in care or not.
- Services should be tailored to meet the youth's needs based on the assessment of needs in the areas of life skills, education, employment, support, permanency, prevention and housing.
- Please see Appendices D: Sample Driver's Permit and Licensing Policy, K: Life Skills Program Options, L: Prevention Resources, M: Educational Rights and Resources for Youth and P: Employment Resources.

What are Aftercare services?

- Aftercare services are IL services that are mandated to be offered to youth who exited care on or after their 16th birthday.
- Aftercare services may include the full range of services available to IL participants, including any service areas addressed in the assessment, counseling and/or stipends. However, if the youth entered an adoptive or Permanent Legal Custodianship situation before turning age 16, he or she would not be eligible for any stipends.
- The difference between Aftercare services and re-entering foster care (for eligible youth) is significant. Youth should be given clear examples of the differences of services and placements available to them to avoid miscommunication.
- Please see Appendix R: Sample Aftercare Services Youth Notification for more information.

Who is responsible for providing Independent Living services to youth while they are in care?

- No matter where a youth is placed while in care, including youth placed out of county or out of state, it is the county of origin's responsibility to provide or coordinate IL services.

Who is responsible for providing Independent Living services to youth after they leave care?

- The county or state where the youth is residing after leaving care is responsible for providing IL services.
- Counties are expected to communicate and coordinate effective services based on the needs of the youth.

How can stipends be used?

- Youth may receive stipends as follows:
  - As an incentive for program participation and/or completion;
  - Based on need for specific purposes such as security or utility deposits, tools, uniforms for work or school and clothing for job interviews; and/or
  - As the County Children and Youth Agency determines necessary, to meet the individual needs of youth specific or time-limited purposes such as a class ring, prom or formal attire or yearbook. When stipends for youth are a part of an agency's IL services, the County Children and Youth Agency must have written policy and procedures addressing the administration of stipends.
- Please see Appendix O: Sample Stipend Youth Notification.

How does the planning process work with youth receiving Independent Living services?

- IL planning should be led by youth and coordinated with other stakeholders committed to the permanency and well-being of the youth.
- IL planning is a critical component of the Child Permanency Plan and planning process. Counties are encouraged to use one plan, the Child Permanency Plan (CPP), to document all of the permanency and IL services necessary for the youth.
- The IL section of the Child Permanency Plan, or the separate IL Plan attached to it, should outline the youth's strengths, needs assessment results, specific goals in the areas of housing, education and training, employment, life skills, prevention and support, what tasks need to be completed to achieve these goals and who will assist the youth in this work.
- Please see Appendices H: Sample Independent Living Plan, L: Prevention Resources and N: Mentoring/Support.

What is the difference between a Transition Plan and an Independent Living Plan?

- The Transition Plan is a legal requirement of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. This Transition Plan must be reviewed by the court at least 90 days prior to the youth's discharge from care, or as directed by the court. It must include concrete resources and plans that take into account the youth's physical and mental health needs, housing needs and other transition needs.
- The Transition Plan that is reviewed by the court 90 days before the youth leaves care should be based on the progress and goals of the previous IL plans. Furthermore, this plan should inform any aftercare plans developed with youth.
- The Transition Plan must be developed with input of the youth and based upon the results of the needs-assessment. At a minimum, a plan must include goals and services in the following domains: life skills, prevention services, education and training, employment, support, housing, physical health and mental health.

- Please see Appendices U: Sample Transition Assessment and V: Sample 90 Day Transition Assessment.

Where can I get training on providing and coordinating IL services?

- Training and technical assistance is free and available from the PA Child Welfare Resource Center www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu and the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) www.diakon-swan.org.

- Please see Appendix T: Independent Living Resources on the Internet.

How should I coordinate services for youth placed with private provider agencies?

- Communication and effective coordination of IL services is critical when partnering with private provider placement agencies. Typically, the private provider agency has a caseworker or liaison assigned to the youth. This person should be contacted to assist in the assessment, planning, coordination and delivery of IL services.

What if the private provider agency does not have an Independent Living program where the youth is placed?

- Regardless of whether or not the private provider placement agency has a formal IL program, the youth must be able to receive support to achieve IL goals in the placement setting. This partnership must be tailored to meet the youth's needs and based on the capacity of the placement setting.

- Ultimately, it is the county of origin's responsibility to ensure that the youth receives IL services tailored to meet his or her needs. Therefore, the County Children and Youth Agency may want to develop contractual language with the private provider agency detailing expectations for IL services to eligible youth.

How are Chafee Room and Board Services different from Location of Housing Services and the new Special Grant Housing Initiative?

- Chafee Room and Board services are federally funded and can only be used for youth who have discharged from care on or after age 18. The eligibility and service terminates at age 21.

- Chafee Room and Board services are available to provide resources to fund expenses such as rent, utilities, security deposits and food.

- Location of Housing Services provide instruction to understand the types of housing available, landlord/tenant roles and responsibilities, housing issues and assistance in locating and securing housing.

- The OCYF-funded Special Grant Housing Initiative was implemented during State Fiscal Year 2009-2010 and provides counties the opportunity to request state funds with local match to do the following:

    - Transition youth aging out of care, or who have aged out (and who are not Chafee eligible);

    - Prevent children from entering out of home placement because of housing issues; or

    - Facilitate the return of children to their families if housing is the issue preventing the child's return.

What is the difference between a Room and Board Policy and a Room and Board Contract?

- The Room and Board policy is a statement, which must be signed by all youth, explaining the services available and guidelines of the county's Room and Board Program.

- The Room and Board contract is created by the County Children and Youth Agency and is signed by the youth accessing Room and Board services. It documents the specific details of that youth's Room and Board assistance including its purpose, duration, amount of assistance, rules and guidelines while receiving assistance. The county's responsibilities and youth's responsibilities should be clearly outlined.

- Please see Appendix Q: Sample Room and Board Youth Notification.

What additional funding is available for housing and how can I access it?

- There are a number of federal resources available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD programs are managed at the local/county level by the Continuum of Care. The Continuum of Care is comprised of county agencies and homeless and housing assistance providers that propose housing programs to be funded by HUD. You can find your local Continuum of Care network here: http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts&st=PA&cSort=cocNum

- In addition to federal resources, many counties have local resources available for housing and can partner with the Housing Authority to provide housing assistance to youth.

What is the Education and Training Grant (ETG?)

- The Education and Training Grant is a federal grant award for any youth who was in out of home placement on or after his or her 16th birthday. Award amounts cannot exceed the cost of attendance and are subject to the availability of funds. The youth must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to be eligible.

- In PA, the grant application is available online at: http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml.

- If a youth moves to another state, he or she can check for eligibility online at www.statevoucher.org. (Note: the ETG is known as Education and Training Voucher or ETV outside of PA).

Can notebook computers be purchased for students entering or enrolled in a college or university?

- Yes. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program funds, as well as state and local funds, may be used to purchase notebook computers for students who are enrolled or have completed all phases of the admission and acceptance process into a college, university or Chafee Education Training Grant approvable institution of higher education where a computer is required.

- Computers purchased for students should be recorded separately as stipends. These purchases are not assets and DPW approval is not required. County Children and Youth Agencies are advised to include this information in their annual application and budget for IL Services.

- The following guidelines are recommended:

  - Contact the educational institution to determine the minimum requirements for hardware and software for the course of instruction. For instance, Arts, Music, Engineering, or Architecture courses may require more costly computers and software programs. Many institutions have discount packages.

  - Registration should be made in the youth's name.

- Design and use an acknowledgment and disclaimer document that indicates the youth has received a computer and accessories and that the youth has the sole responsibility for care, maintenance, damage and any losses.

- Copy and file all documentation, including warranties, in the youth's IL case record.

If my county has given me responsibility for our Independent Living budget, what should I consider?

- You are encouraged to assess the needs of the eligible IL population and work with your County Children and Youth Agency Administration to submit the IL Services Special Grant as part of the annual Needs Based Plan and Budget.

- You can produce a realistic IL budget by focusing on historical data and trends related to youth outcomes as well as engaging youth currently receiving services to determine their anticipated needs and any program improvements they may recommend.

- Please see Appendices K: Life Skills Program Options and L: Prevention Resources for more information on program creation.

Are youth eligible for SWAN services if they are receiving Independent Living services?

- Yes. The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network's services may help youth find permanency even if their goal is not adoption. These services may be used to help youth find personal connections from their past or possible personal connections moving forward.

- Youth in the custody of CCYA, including those who do not have a goal of adoption, are eligible to receive child profile, child preparation, child specific recruitment services and family profile. In addition to these services, youth with a goal of adoption are eligible to receive placement and finalization units of service. Youth who exited care to legal permanency through adoption, permanent legal custodianship or placement with a fit and willing relative (formal kinship care) are also eligible for post-permanency services.

How can SWAN services help youth who are receiving Independent Living services?

- SWAN services may help youth deal with grief and loss.

- SWAN services can help prepare youth for transition by providing them with information about their medical history and placement history.

- Please see Appendix E: SWAN Units of Service for a chart detailing the services.

How are Independent Living services coordinated with Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Behavioral Health?

- The County Children and Youth Agency should develop a collaborative partnership with the county Mental Health/Mental Retardation and behavioral health systems.

- The county Mental Health/Mental Retardation should be educated about the youth that the County Children and Youth Agency is serving and how some of these youth are eligible for and can benefit from Mental Health/Mental Retardation services.

- The County Children and Youth Agency should understand the services available through Mental Health/Mental Retardation and the behavioral health systems, how to access them for eligible youth and how to coordinate with the Mental Health/Mental Retardation agency in instances when youth will require long-term or intensive services from the Mental

Health/Mental Retardation agency that may extend past the involvement of the County Children and Youth Agency.

- Please see Appendix G: Resources for Youth with Disabilities.

What are my responsibilities related to youth accessing and maintaining health insurance coverage?

- The County Children and Youth Agency is required to enroll youth eligible for Medical Assistance (MA) if they were discharged from foster care on or after your 18th birthday and were receiving MA coverage prior to discharge. The CY60 acts as the application and should be submitted timely to the CAO. A copy should also be provided to the youth. Every year, the youth's file is subject to an annual review for ongoing eligibility. Therefore the youth must be instructed to notify the County Assistance Office (CAO) whenever they change their mailing address.

- If a youth is discharged from care prior to age 18, or did not have MA coverage at the time of their discharge, you should assist youth apply for MA at the local CAO or apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

- Youth may also be able to purchase MA Adult Basic from the DPW. To apply, visit www.insurance.state.pa.us.

What is a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy? Why should a youth over 18 have one?

- A Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy is a legal document that designates someone to make important decisions about a person's medical treatment in the event they are unable to make them on their own.

- Youth over 18 exiting agency care should have a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy and select someone to make these health care decisions in the event something would happen to them. This person should be aware of their wishes and can inform doctors or medical personnel of these wishes.

- The County Children and Youth Agency is required by federal law to develop a policy to inform and assist youth establish a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy, so that medical treatment can be provided based on the youth's decisions.

- You can further assist youth by helping them identify and inform their Health Care Representative to make medical treatment decisions on their behalf. They must be aware that and informed of the youth's wishes so they can inform others if needed. The proxy holder can change their mind and select another person at any time but must have a new document created and signed.

- Please see Appendix S: Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy and Sample

How are Independent Living services coordinated for youth involved with the local Juvenile Probation Office?

- Since youth who are either dually adjudicated dependent and delinquent or solely adjudicated delinquent are eligible for IL services, County Children and Youth Agencies should create partnerships with their local Juvenile Probation Office to develop policies and procedures to ensure all eligible youth are provided with services appropriate to their identified needs.

What statewide practices are available to help youth receiving IL services?

- Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, Diligent Search and other practices supported in PA are critical to help youth find legal permanency or informal permanent connections and resources.

- Please see Appendix F: Statewide Practices Available for Older Youth.

How long can a youth remain in foster care?

- Youth age 18 and older may make a request to the court to stay in care until their 21st birthday if they are participating in any of the following:
  - High school or taking classes to obtain their GED;
  - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;
  - Community college/2 year college;
  - 4 Year college or university;
  - Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help a youth find a job. This may be the county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteer work; or
  - Have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents a youth from doing any of the above and is part of their permanency plan.

Can a former foster child return to foster care after they are discharged?

- Yes, youth may request the court to resume dependency so that they can reenter foster care up to age 21 (resumption of jurisdiction) if they were discharged from foster care on or after age 18 or three months prior to reaching age 18.

- The youth may contact the county children and youth agency in the county where they are currently residing (if different from their original placement) or the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. They may also contact their attorney, judge, IL worker or caseworker. When a youth has moved, the motion to resume dependency jurisdiction is filed in the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. If the youth requests, and the court approves, jurisdiction may be transferred to the youth's current county of residence.

- The youth must be participating in at least one of the education, employment or medical/behavioral health areas discussed in the "How long can a youth remain in foster care?" question. If they are not, every effort should be made to have the youth meet one of the eligibility criteria so that they are able to return to care.

What options are available for a youth 18 or older who wants to stay in foster care (or return) but doesn't don't want to live in a foster home or group home any longer.

- Unsupervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP) settings are very flexible placement types and can include apartments, boarding arrangements, living with a friend's family, dormitory, etc.

- U-SILP settings are designed to help youth transition to life as an adult, but provide the supports and services they will likely need.

- These placement options may not be available at the moment requested, because of availability or because the agency believes the youth may not be ready to assume this responsibility at that time.

Who in our agency is responsible for performing credit history reviews for youth in foster care age 16 and older?

- Each county is recommended to designate at least one individual who is capable of meeting the federal requirement of contacting each credit reporting agency for each youth. The classification of the employee may vary from county to county depending on the number of youth in the agency's care.

How can I use the credit history review requirement and make it beneficial to our youth?

- Youth shouldn't have a credit history until they are 18 or older and have a loan, credit card or utilities, such as heating or electricity bills. If they do have a credit history before age 18, it is likely that they are a victim of identity theft.

- Upon each annual review of a child's credit history, the IL worker or caseworker should use this opportunity to inform the youth of the results of the review and discuss the importance of establishing and maintaining a good credit history.

- Youth age 18 and older may obtain their annual free credit report online at the www.annualcreditreport.com website. Agency staff should assist current and former foster youth through this process.

What are the agency's responsibilities if a youth has a credit history or poor credit history?

- The agency is required to provide assistance (including, when feasible, from any court-appointed advocate for the child) in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report.

- Please see Appendix W: Credit History Review and Resolution.

Can a youth prevent the agency from checking their credit history?

- Foster youth age 18 and older may refuse a credit history review. The agency must document their efforts to comply with the requirements.

- A youth's family may not prevent the agency from checking a credit history for foster youth 16 and 17 years of age.

Administrators and Fiscal Officers

How are Independent Living services funded?

- Since state fiscal year 2009-2010, IL services are funded as a special grant to counties. All funding for IL services is contained within the Special Grant Initiative. IL services are funded by a combination of federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and optional state and local funds. There is a required match for the use of state funds. County agencies are not required to provide a match for the use of federal funds.

- Funding requests for IL services are made consistent with the annual OCYF, Needs-Based Plan and Budget Bulletin, Special Grant Initiative application. Funds requested through the IL Special Grant initiative are not transferable to other program areas.

- County agencies choosing to use state and local funds to supplement federal funds for IL services may provide services to youth who are not eligible for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program because state and local funds are not restricted to the same federal requirements, allowing for greater flexibility in meeting the needs of youth.

- Counties may provide IL services directly, through a private agency or a combination of both.

What is the role of the Independent Living Services Coordinator and do I need to have one?

- Yes. All County Children and Youth Agencies are required to have an IL Services Coordinator who is designated to coordinate the requirements of this Bulletin.

- The ultimate responsibility of the IL Services Coordinator is to ensure older youth make a successful transition from out-of-home placement.

- Additionally, they will be the primary IL contact for the OCYF and the PA Child Welfare Resource Center and should have knowledge of IL services, the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program and the implementation of the IL Services Grant.

- The IL coordinator may also be responsible to comply with the requirements of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and to make available timely services designed to achieve positive outcomes for youth. The IL Services Coordinator may have other tasks and responsibilities in addition to this role.

Are Independent Living services for youth no longer in care mandatory?

- Yes. IL services for youth no longer in care are **mandatory**. Every county must offer services to IL eligible youth up until their 21st birthday and include these costs in the Needs Based Plan and Budget.

Who pays for Independent Living services to youth no longer in care?

- The county of residence (the county where the youth is living at time of eligibility for services) is responsible for services for youth no longer in care.

- If a youth moves out of state, the state of residence is responsible. State IL coordinators can be found online at http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/resources/ilcoords.php.

What funding can be used for room and board services?

- Federal Chafee, state and local IL funds can and should be used for Room and Board services. Room and Board services eligibility and programmatic options can be found in the Bulletin on page 26.

- Federal Chafee funds can only be used for Room and Board for youth who have discharged from care on or after age 18. State and local funds dedicated for IL services through the Needs Based Plan and Budget can be used to provide Room and Board for all youth, including those not meeting the Chafee eligibility requirements.

- Counties are encouraged to request and use state and local funds through the OCYF Special Grant Housing Initiative to do the following:

  - Transition youth aging out of care, or those who have aged out (and are not Chafee eligible);

  - Prevent children from entering out of home placement because of housing issues; and

  - Facilitate the return of children to their families if housing is the reason preventing the child's return.

- Please see Appendix Q: Sample Room and Board Youth Notification.

What are stipends and how are they managed? (See page 24 of the Bulletin)

- Youth may receive stipends as follows:

  - As an incentive for program participation and/or completion;

  - Based on need for specific purposes such as security or utility deposits, tools, uniforms for work or school and clothing for job interviews; and/ or

  - As the County Children and Youth Agency determines necessary to meet the individual needs of youth for specific or time-limited purposes such as a class ring, prom or formal attire or yearbook.

  - When stipends for youth are a part of an agency's IL services, the County Children and Youth Agency must have written policy and procedures addressing the administration of stipends (see page 24 of the Bulletin).

- Please see Appendix O: Sample Stipend Youth Notification.

What statewide practices are available to help youth receiving Independent Living services?

- Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, Diligent Search and other practices supported in PA are critical in helping youth find legal permanency or informal permanent connections and resources.

- Please see Appendix F: Statewide Practices Available for Older Youth.

Are youth eligible for SWAN services if they are receiving Independent Living services?

- Yes. Youth in the custody of CCYA, including those who do not have a goal of adoption, are eligible to receive child profile, child preparation, child specific recruitment services and family profile. In addition to these services, youth with a goal of adoption are eligible to receive placement and finalization units of service. Youth who exited care to legal permanency through adoption, permanent legal custodianship or placement with a fit and willing relative (formal kinship care) are also eligible for post-permanency services.

How can SWAN services help youth who are receiving Independent Living services?

- SWAN services may help youth find permanency even if their goal is not adoption. These services may be used to help youth find personal connections from their past or possible personal connections moving forward.

- SWAN services may help youth deal with grief and loss.

- SWAN services can help prepare youth for transition by providing them with information about their medical history and placement history.

- Please see Appendix E: SWAN Units of Service for a chart detailing the services.

How long can a youth remain in foster care?

- Youth age 18 and older may make a request to the court to stay in care until their 21st birthday if they are participating in any of the following:
  - High school or taking classes to obtain their GED;
  - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;
  - Community college/2 year college;
  - 4 Year college or university;
  - Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help a youth find a job. This may be the county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteer work; or
  - Have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents a youth from doing any of the above and is part of their permanency plan.

Can a former foster child return to foster care after they are discharged?

- Yes, youth may request the court to resume dependency so that they youth can reenter foster care up to age 21 (resumption of jurisdiction) if they were discharged from foster care on or after age 18 or three months prior to reaching age 18.

- The youth may contact the county children and youth agency in the county where they are currently residing (if different from their original placement) or the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. They may also contact their attorney, judge, IL worker or caseworker. When a youth has moved to another county, the motion to resume dependency jurisdiction is filed in the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. If the youth requests, and the court approves, jurisdiction may be transferred to the youth's current county of residence.

- The youth must be participating in at least one of the education, employment or medical/behavioral health areas discussed in the "How long can a youth remain in foster care?" question. If they are not, every effort should be made to have the youth meet one of the eligibility criteria so that they are able to return to care.

What is suggested to provide information to the court that a youth is meeting any one of the five criteria to remain under the jurisdiction of the court?

- The intent of the federal and state laws is to provide a safety net and opportunity for youth who either need continued supports of the agency or who, after leaving foster care, find themselves in a critical position and wish to return to agency placement for those supports.

- The CCYA, in many cases, should be able to verify whether a youth meets at least one of the criteria through ongoing casework supervision and IL Services programming.

- Verifying hours worked during a month or participation in programs to promote or remove barriers to employment can be achieved through several means to include contacts with

employers or programs or periodic reviews of pay statements. Agencies are encouraged to provide ongoing employment related programming or services to youth who are employed for any period of reduced hours.

- Staff and resource families are encouraged to assist youth meet these requirements and prevent unnecessary or unplanned discharge.

- CCYA may use the Sample Permanency Hearing Education/Employment Verification tool in Appendix J as one approach to provide this information to the court. It should also be filed in the case record to demonstrate compliance with federal and state law.

What options are available for a youth 18 or older who wants to stay in foster care (or return) but doesn't don't want to live in a foster home or group home any longer.

- Unsupervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP) settings are very flexible placement types and can include apartments, boarding arrangements, living with a friend's family, dormitory, etc.

- U-SILP settings are designed to help youth transition to life as an adult, but provide the supports and services they will likely need.

- These placement options may not be available at the moment requested, because of availability or because the agency believes the youth may not be ready to assume this responsibility at that time.

Who in our agency is responsible for performing credit history reviews for youth in foster care age 16 and older?

- Each county is recommended to designate at least one individual who is capable of meeting this federal requirement of contacting each credit reporting agency for each youth. The classification of the employee varies from county to county dependent on the number of youth in the agency's care.

How can we use the credit history review requirement and make it beneficial to our youth?

- Youth shouldn't have a credit history until they are 18 or older and have a loan, credit card or utilities, such as heating or electricity bills. If they do have a credit history before age 18, it is likely that they are a victim of identity theft.

- Upon each annual review of a child's credit history, the IL worker or caseworker should use this opportunity to inform the youth of the results of the review and discuss the importance of establishing and maintaining a good credit history.

- Youth age 18 and older may obtain their annual free credit report online at the https://www.annualcreditreport.com website. Agency staff can assist youth through this process.

What are the agency's responsibilities if a youth has a credit history or poor credit history?

- The agency is required to provide assistance (including, when feasible, from any court-appointed advocate for the child) in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report.

Please see Appendix W: Credit History Review and Resolution.

Child Welfare Professionals

What are Independent Living services and why are they important?

- IL services are federally mandated services designed to prepare and support youth and young adults as they transition out of the child welfare system.
- IL services focus on six main service areas: life skills, employment, education, support/permanency, prevention and housing. All services should be tailored to meet the needs of each youth as an individual.
- These services are important because their goal is to reduce the likelihood of homelessness, teen pregnancy, unemployment and other negative outcomes young adults may face without proper support and guidance.
- Please see Appendices H: Sample Independent Living Plan, K: Life Skills Program Options, L: Prevention Resources, and P: Employment Resources.

Who is the Independent Living Services Coordinator and what does he or she do?

- The ultimate responsibility of the IL Services Coordinator is to ensure older youth make a successful transition from out-of-home placement.
- The IL coordinator may be designated by the County Children and Youth Agency to coordinate the requirements of this bulletin.
- The IL coordinator may also be responsible to comply with the requirements of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and to make available timely services designed to achieve positive outcomes for youth. The IL Services Coordinator may have other tasks and responsibilities in addition to this role.
- Additionally, they will be the primary IL contact for the OCYF and the PA Child Welfare Resource Center and should have knowledge of IL services, the Chafee Education and Training Grant Program and the implementation of the IL Services Grant.

How are youth referred for Independent Living services?

- The IL Services Coordinator at each County Children and Youth Agency manages the referral process for eligible youth. Check with the IL Coordinator for details on how the process works, as it differs somewhat from county to county.
- At a minimum, youth must have their needs assessed within 45 days of turning 16 years of age.

Are youth with mental health and physical health disabilities eligible for Independent Living services?

- Yes. Youth with special needs should receive IL services tailored to meet their needs. This may include specialized instruction or support, coordinating services with the county Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Behavioral Health, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), or the Special Education department at the youth's high school.
- Please see Appendices C: Transitional and Supportive Housing Options for Youth and G: Resources for Youth with Disabilities.

Should a youth be referred for Independent Living services regardless of permanency goal?

- Yes. IL services must be provided to all youth regardless of their permanency goal. Preparing for adulthood and working to achieve permanency are integrated efforts.

Is Independent Living a permanency goal?

- No. IL refers to a set of coordinated services and an approach to ensuring youth and young adults transition successfully to adulthood.

- Permanency for youth, even those most likely to discharge from care and live on their own, is of the utmost importance to ensure youth are supported and successful in life.

What are aftercare services?

- Aftercare services are IL services that are mandated to be offered to youth who exited care on or after their 16th birthday.

- Aftercare services may include the full range of IL services available, including any service areas addressed in the assessment, counseling and/or stipends. However, if the youth entered an adoptive or Permanent Legal Custodian situation before turning age 16, he or she is not eligible for any stipends.

- The difference between Aftercare services and re-entering foster care (for eligible youth) is significant. Youth should be given clear examples of the differences of services and placements available to them to avoid miscommunication.

- Please see Appendix R: Sample Aftercare Services Youth Notification.

Who is responsible for providing Independent Living services to youth while they are in care?

- No matter where a youth is placed while in care, including youth placed out of county or out of state, it is the county of origin's responsibility to provide or coordinate IL services.

Who is responsible for providing Independent Living services to youth after they leave care?

- The county or state where the youth is residing after leaving care is responsible for providing IL services.

- Counties are expected to communicate and coordinate effective services based on the needs of the youth.

How does the planning process work with youth receiving Independent Living services?

- IL planning should be led by youth and coordinated with other stakeholders committed to the permanency and well-being of the youth.

- IL planning is a critical component of the child permanency plan and planning process. Counties are encouraged to use one plan, the Child Permanency Plan (CPP), to document all of the permanency and IL services necessary for the youth.

- The IL section of the Child Permanency Plan, or the separate IL plan attached to it, should outline the youth's strengths, needs assessment results, specific goals in the areas of housing, education, employment, life skills, prevention and support, what tasks need to be completed to achieve these goals and who will assist the youth in this work.

What is the difference between a Transition Plan and an Independent Living Plan?

- The Transition Plan is a legal requirement of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. This Transition Plan must be reviewed by the court at least 90 days prior to the youth's discharge from care, or as directed by the court. It must include

concrete resources and plans that take into account the youth's physical and mental health needs, housing needs and other transition needs.

- The Transition Plan that is reviewed by the court 90 days before the youth leaves care should be based on the progress and goals of the previous IL plans. Furthermore, this plan should inform any Aftercare plans developed with youth.

- The Transition Plan must be developed with input of the youth and based upon the results of the needs assessment. At a minimum, a plan must include goals and services in the following domains: life skills, prevention services, education and training, employment, support, housing, physical health and mental health.

- Please see Appendices H: Sample Independent Living Plan, U: Sample Transition Assessment and V: Sample 90 Day Transition Assessment.

Are there any services or supports to help youth with special needs transition?

- Starting in 2010, the Social Security Administration (SSA) may accept a Social Security Insurance (SSI) application from a disabled youth in foster care up to 90 days before federal foster care payments are expected to end. This is an exception to the general rule of accepting an SSI application in the month before the end of eligibility. This policy will aid disabled youth in foster care to make the transition to adult life by helping to ensure they have income and health benefits in place.

- Please see Appendix C: Transitional and Supportive Housing Options for Youth.

What is the Education and Training Grant (ETG?)

- The Education and Training Grant is a federal grant award for any youth who was in out of home placement on or after his or her 16th birthday. Award amounts cannot exceed the cost of attendance and are subject to the availability of funds. The youth must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to be eligible.

- In PA, the grant application is available online at: http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml.

- If a youth moves to another state, he or she can check for eligibility online at www.statevoucher.org. (Note: the ETG is known as Education and Training Voucher or ETV outside of PA).

Are youth eligible for SWAN services if they are receiving Independent Living services?

- Yes. Youth in the custody of CCYA, including those who do not have a goal of adoption, are eligible to receive child profile, child preparation, child specific recruitment services and family profile. In addition to these services, youth with a goal of adoption are eligible to receive placement and finalization units of service. Youth who exited care to legal permanency through adoption, permanent legal custodianship or placement with a fit and willing relative (formal kinship care) are also eligible for post-permanency services.

How can SWAN services help youth that are receiving Independent Living services?

- SWAN services may help youth find permanency even if their goal is not adoption. These services may be used to help youth find personal connections from their past or possible personal connections moving forward.

- SWAN services may help youth deal with grief and loss.

- SWAN services can help prepare youth for transition by providing them with information about their medical history and placement history.

- Please see Appendix E: SWAN Units of Service for a chart detailing the services.

What is a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy? Why should a youth over 18 have one?

- A Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy is a legal document that designates someone to make important decisions about a person's medical treatment in the event they are unable to make them on their own.

- Youth over 18 exiting agency care should have a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy and select someone to make these health care decisions in the event something would happen to them. This person should be aware of their wishes and can inform doctors or medical personnel of these wishes.

- The County Children and Youth Agency is required by federal law to develop a policy to inform and assist youth establish a Health Care Power of Attorney or Proxy, so that medical treatment can be provided based on the youth's decisions.

- You can further assist youth by helping them identify and inform their Health Care Representative to make medical treatment decisions on their behalf. They must be aware that and informed of the youth's wishes so they can inform others if needed. The proxy holder can change their mind and select another person at any time but must have a new document created and signed.

Please see Appendix S: Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy and Sample

What statewide practices are available to help youth receiving Independent Living services?

- Family Finding, Family Group Decision Making, Diligent Search and other practices supported in PA are critical in helping youth find legal permanency or informal permanent connections and resources.

- Please see Appendix F: Statewide Practices Available for Older Youth.

How long can a youth remain in foster care?

- Youth age 18 and older may make a request to the court to stay in care until their 21st birthday if they are participating in any of the following:
  - High school or taking classes to obtain their GED;
  - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;
  - Community college/2 year college;
  - 4 Year college or university;
  - Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help a youth find a job. This may be the county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteering; or
  - Have a medical or behavioral health condition that prevents a youth from doing any of the above and is part of their permanency plan.

Can a former foster child return to foster care after they are discharged?

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- The youth may contact the county children and youth agency in the county where they are currently residing (if different from their original placement) or the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. They may also contact their attorney, judge, IL worker or caseworker. When a youth has moved to another county, the motion to resume dependency jurisdiction is filed in the county that terminated juvenile court jurisdiction. If the youth requests, and the court approves, jurisdiction may be transferred to the youth's current county of residence.

- The youth must be participating in at least one of the education, employment or medical/behavioral health areas discussed in the "How long can a youth remain in foster care?" question. If they are not, every effort should be made to have the youth meet one of the eligibility criteria so that they are able to return to care.

What is suggested to provide information to the court that a youth is meeting any one of the five criteria to remain under the jurisdiction of the court?

- The intent of the federal and state laws is to provide a safety net and opportunity for youth who either need continued supports of the agency or who, after leaving foster care, find themselves in a critical position and wish to return to agency placement for those supports.

- The CCYA, in many cases, should be able to verify whether a youth meets at least one of the criteria through ongoing casework supervision and IL Services programming.

- Verifying hours worked during a month or participation in programs to promote or remove barriers to employment can be achieved through several means to include contacts with employers or programs or periodic reviews of pay statements. For youth who realized a periodic reduction of hours, and below the 80 hours per month criteria, agencies are encouraged to provide employment related services to youth who are employed for any period of reduced hours.

- Staff and resource families are encouraged to assist youth meet these requirements and prevent unnecessary or unplanned discharge.

- CCYA may use the Sample Permanency Hearing Education/Employment Verification tool in Appendix J as a way to provide this information to the court. It should also be filed in the case record to demonstrate the compliance with federal and state law.

What options are available for a youth 18 or older who wants to stay in foster care (or return) but doesn't don't want to live in a foster home or group home any longer.

- Unsupervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP) settings are very flexible placement types and can include apartments, boarding arrangements, living with a friend's family, dormitory, etc.

- U-SILP settings are designed to help youth transition to life as an adult, but provide the supports and services they will likely need.

- These placement options may not be available at the moment requested, because of availability or because the agency believes the youth may not be ready to assume this responsibility at that time.

Who in our agency is responsible for performing credit history reviews for youth in foster care age 16 and older?

- Each county is recommended to designate at least one individual who is capable of meeting this federal requirement of contacting each credit reporting agency for each youth. The classification of the employee may vary from county to county dependent on the number of youth in the agency's care.

How can I use the credit history review requirement and make it beneficial to our youth?

- Youth shouldn't have a credit history until they are 18 or older and have a loan, credit card or utilities, such as heating or electricity bills. If they do have a credit history before age 18, it is likely that they are a victim of identity theft.

- Upon each annual review of a child's credit history, the IL worker or caseworker should use this opportunity to inform the youth of the results of the review and discuss the importance of establishing and maintaining a good credit history.

- Youth age 18 and older may obtain their annual free credit report online at the https://www.annualcreditreport.com. Agency staff can assist youth through this process.

What are the agency's responsibilities if a youth has a credit history or poor credit history?

- The agency is required to provide assistance (including, when feasible, from any court-appointed advocate for the child) in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report.

Please see Appendix W: Credit History Review and Resolution.

Juvenile Justice Professionals

What are Independent Living services and why are they important?

- IL services are federally mandated services designed to prepare and support youth and young adults as they transition out of the child welfare system or juvenile justice system.

- IL services focus on six main service areas: life skills, employment, education, support/permanency, prevention and housing. All services should be tailored to meet the needs of each youth as an individual.

- These services are important because their goal is to reduce the likelihood of homelessness, teen pregnancy, unemployment and other negative outcomes young adults may face without proper support and guidance.

How are Independent Living services funded?

- Since state fiscal year 2009-2010, IL services are funded as a special grant to counties. All funding for IL services is contained within the Special Grant Initiative. IL services are funded by a combination of federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and optional state and local funds. There is a required match for the use of state funds. County agencies are not required to provide a match for the use of federal funds.

- Funding requests for IL services are made consistent with the annual OCYF, Needs-Based Plan and Budget Bulletin, Special Grant Initiative application. Funds requested through the IL Special Grant initiative are not transferable to other program areas.

- County agencies choosing to use state and local funds to supplement federal funds for IL services may provide services to youth who are not eligible for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program because state and local funds are not restricted to the same federal requirements, allowing for greater flexibility in meeting the needs of youth.

- Counties may provide IL services directly, through a private agency or a combination of both.

Can the Juvenile Probation Department apply for Independent Living services funding?

- No. The County Children and Youth Agency is the agency responsible for submitting an application for IL services funding through the County Needs-Based Plan and Budget. However, it is the expectation that the County Children and Youth Agency and Juvenile Probation Office collaborate to identify the needs of youth who are eligible or can benefit from IL services and develop a plan and budget which to address those needs.

How does the provision of Independent Living services fit into a youth's Aftercare Plan?

- One issue that must be addressed in an Aftercare plan is competency development. IL skills are one of the competencies that a young adult returning from placement, or as part of supervision, needs to develop in order to establish himself or herself as a productive member of the community.

- Please see Appendices R: Sample Aftercare Services Youth Notification, J: Sample Trial Discharge Review, Mutual Agreement and Court Order, U: Sample Transition Assessment and V: Sample 90 Day Transition Assessment.

What is the Education and Training Grant (ETG)?

- The Education and Training Grant is a federal grant award for youth adjudicated dependent, dependent and delinquent, or delinquent with shared case responsibility between the CCYA and Juvenile Probation Office who was in out of home placement on or after his or her 16th birthday. Award amounts cannot exceed the cost of attendance and are subject to the availability of funds. The youth must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in order to be eligible.

- In PA, the grant application is available online at: http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml.

- If a youth moves to another state, he or she can check for eligibility online at www.statevoucher.org. (Note: the ETG is known as Education and Training Voucher or ETV outside of PA).

Judges, Attorneys and Court Personnel

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- These services are important because their goal is to reduce the likelihood of homelessness, teen pregnancy, unemployment and other negative outcomes young adults may face without proper support and guidance.

- Please see Appendix K: Life Skills Program Options.

How does the planning process work with youth receiving Independent Living services?

- IL planning should be led by youth and coordinated with other stakeholders committed to the permanency and well-being of the youth.

- IL planning is a critical component of the child permanency plan and planning process. Counties are encouraged to use one plan, the Child Permanency Plan (CPP), to document all of the permanency and IL services necessary for the youth.

- The IL section of the Child Permanency Plan, or the separate IL plan attached to it, should outline the youth's strengths, needs assessment results, specific goals in the areas of housing, education, employment, life skills, prevention and support, what tasks need to be completed to achieve these goals and who will assist the youth in this work.

- Please see Appendix H: Sample Independent Living Plan

What is the difference between a Transition Plan and an Independent Living Plan?

- The Transition Plan is a legal requirement of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. This Transition Plan must be reviewed by the court at least 90 days prior to the youth's discharge from care, or as directed by the court. It must include concrete resources and plans that take into account the youth's physical and mental health needs, housing needs and other transition needs. An Independent Living plan is developed with input from the youth and is based on their assessed needs to identify services. The independent living plan is to be included in the Child's Permanency Plan for every youth who is age 16 or older.

- The Transition Plan that is reviewed by the court 90 days before the youth leaves care should be based on the progress and goals of the previous IL plans. Furthermore, this plan should inform any Aftercare plans developed with youth.

- Please see Appendices U: Sample Transition Assessment and V: Sample 90 Day Transition Assessment.

What are some of the ways that the court helps young adults in care prepare for adulthood?

- The court plays a central oversight role in the cases of all dependent youth. In addition, the court has an obligation to engage the youth and consult with them in an age appropriate way regarding their permanency and transition plan (42 U.S.C.A. 675 (5)(C)(iii); 42 Pa.C.S.A. 6351).

- The court must make findings at all permanency review hearings of the services that youth who are age 16 and older need to transition from foster care to independent living. While these findings may not be as detailed as the youth's IL Plan, they should reflect the youth's key IL needs and how they are going to be met.

How long can a youth remain in foster care?

- Youth age 18 and older may make a request to the court to stay in care until their 21st birthday if they are participating in any of the following:
  - High school or taking classes to obtain your GED;
  - Vocational/Trade school or an apprenticeship program;
  - Community college/2 year college;
  - 4 Year college or university;
  - Working at least 80 hours per month or participating in a program to help a youth find a job. This may be the county's IL Program, paid or unpaid internships or volunteer work; or
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periodic reduction of hours, and below the 80 hours per month criteria, agencies are encouraged to provide employment related services to youth who are employed for any period of reduced hours.

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- These placement options may not be available at the moment requested, because of availability or because the agency believes the youth may not be ready to assume this responsibility at that time.

How can the Guardian ad Litem and other attorneys work effectively with youth receiving Independent Living services?

- The Guardian ad Litem and other attorneys should have individual, face-to-face discussions with youth receiving IL services to focus on the youth's permanency and IL goals.
- The Guardian ad Litem and other attorneys should encourage youth to speak in court or to submit their thoughts in writing if they are too shy to speak. Youth who have a relationship with their judge and attorney are more likely to have input and an impact on their plans and goals.
- Most youth prefer to meet with their attorney before the court hearing, either in person or by phone, to discuss their goals, achievements, strengths and challenges. Presenting a comprehensive view of the youth's progress is important so the youth can move forward to permanency and independence.
- The Guardian ad Litem may assist the agency in meeting the requirements of the Fair Credit Reporting Act by interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in a youth's credit history report."
- Please see Appendix N: Mentoring/Support.

Appendix B: Statutory and Regulatory Authority

The following information is provided as an appendix to the Bulletin. This information is located in the first section of all other bulletins released by the OCYF. An exception was made in this bulletin to present the Independent Living content first and relocate the statutes and regulations as an appendix because of the high number of pages. All parties identified in the scope of the bulletin are encouraged to review the following information in its entirety.

FEDERAL STATUTE

1. Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) (P.L. 105-89)
ASFA provides states with the tools and incentives, through statutory and regulatory requirements, to achieve the goals of safety, permanency, and well being for children and their families with a focus on timeliness. It requires that reasonable efforts be made to finalize permanency plans for all youth. ASFA provides the impetus to dismantle the barriers to permanency that exist for children in placement and emphasizes the need to achieve permanency for these children. The OCYF issued Bulletin 3130-01-01, entitled "The Second Revised Interim Implementation Guidelines for the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 (P.L. 105-89)", to assure compliance with ASFA.

2. Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA) (42 U.S.C §677)
FCIA replaced the IL Program section of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §677. FCIA was enacted in response to an increased awareness that youth were exiting the substitute care system with poor outcomes, including: reliance on public assistance, unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, and early childbearing. FCIA provides states with more funding and greater flexibility in carrying out programs designed to help children make the transition from substitute care to self-sufficiency, and established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). FCIA requires that states identify youth most likely to remain in care until age 18, and to provide services to those youth to help them make the transition to self-sufficiency. FCIA also requires that states provide IL services to these youth until age 21. FCIA allows states to use up to 30% of their CFCIP funds for room and board services for youth who have aged out of the substitute care system on or after turning age 18, recognizing that many youth face poor housing options after leaving substitute care. Finally, FCIA requires that states ensure that youth participating in the IL program are provided with information about the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the youth if the youth becomes unable to participate in such decisions and the youth does not have, or does not want, a relative to make such decisions, whether a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document is recognized under State law, and how to execute such a document if the youth wants to do so.

3. Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments (P.L. 107-133)
This piece of legislation amended the FCIA to provide FCIA eligible youth with funds to pay for post-secondary education and training. The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program, known in PA as the Education and Training Grant (ETG) provides FCIA eligible youth with up to $5,000 a year toward the cost of attendance at a post-secondary program of education or training.

4. Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
This piece of federal legislation provides significant opportunities for states and creates important mandates and options that may require changes in state law and practice. Among other things, the Act includes the following:

- Requires that reasonable efforts be made to place siblings together;
- Provides states the option to receive Title IV-E reimbursements for relative guardianship assistance payments to certain children and related provisions;

- Provides eligibility for IL services, Education Training Grant and Medical Assistance (MA) to youth who enter kinship guardianship or adoption arrangements at age 16 or older;
- Requires that a plan for educational stability is made for the youth, which includes coordination between the education and child welfare systems so that the youth remains in the school attended by the youth upon placement, or has immediate enrollment and record transfer in the local school;
- Requires that a personalized transition plan be created with the youth within the 90 days before the youth is discharged from the child welfare system at age 18 or older. The new requirement also mandates that the transition plan be reviewed by the court before the youth is discharged from care;
- Provides states the option to extend Title IV-E foster care, adoption and guardianship to age 21 and amends the existing federal definition of a child care institution to include a supervised setting in which an individual who has attained 18 years of age is living independently, consistent with conditions the Department of Health and Human Services establishes in regulation;
- Increases adoption bonus incentives to states to $8,000 for older youth adoptions, and gradually 'delinks' eligibility for Title IV-E adoption subsidy support from AFDC income limits; and
- Provides the opportunity to apply for grants to create family finding and kinship navigator programs and residential settings that provide treatment for parents with their children.

The law provides states with the option to expand their definition of 'child' thereby allowing states potentially to draw down Title IV-E funds for the cost of placement and services for youth in foster care until age 21. In Fostering Connections, the new definition of 'child,' added to Section 475 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675), includes, at State/Tribal option, an individual in foster care, or an individual adopted or in kinship guardianship (if a Title IV-E assistance agreement became effective after the child turned age 16), who has not attained 19, 20, or 21 years old, when the youth meets prescribed conditions for continued payments. The conditions for continued Title IV-E payments apply to youth over age 18 and require the youth to be completing secondary school (or equivalent), enrolled in post-secondary or vocational school, participating in a program or activity that promotes or removes barriers to employment, employed 80 hours a month, or to be incapable of any of these due to a documented medical condition.

On February 24, 2009, OCYF issued a Special Transmittal, entitled "Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008." This special transmittal addresses the enactment of the new federal legislation and provides guidance and direction on the immediate impact of portions of this Act on agency operations. Please contact your appropriate OCYF Regional Office with any questions on this Special Transmittal.

On September 17, 2010, OCYF issued Bulletin 3130-10-04, entitled "Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen," with the intent to reiterate Fostering Connections as it relates to educational stability and access to post-secondary education.

5. Social Security Act (P.L. 74-271)

The Social Security Act and related laws establish a number of programs to provide for the material needs of individuals and families, to protect aged and disabled persons against the expenses for treatment of illnesses that may otherwise exhaust their savings, to keep families together, and to give children the chance to grow up healthy and secure. Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides the federal funding for substitute care placement for children and youth. The Social Security Act also requires that courts make various findings regarding the well being of youth at permanency hearings.

Included in these court findings is the determination of the services that youth age 16 and older require to make the transition from substitute care to independence. It also requires that the court make findings that reasonable efforts have been made to finalize the Child's Permanency Plan. These findings must be made to receive Title IV-E funding.

The Social Security Act also requires that youth who are discharged from substitute care at age 18 or after be given copies of their identification, educational and medical records. Recent changes in the Act now allow agencies to apply for Supplemental Security Income for an eligible youth up to 90 days prior to discharge from foster care, allowing for a smoother transition from agency support, and more timely receipt of SSI payments by the youth.

6. Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (P.L. 108-446)

IDEIA guarantees all students receive a free appropriate public education. IDEIA protects the rights of children with disabilities: mental retardation, speech or language impairments, serious emotional disturbance, autism, specific learning disabilities and other health impairments. All youth eligible for special education must receive an Individualized Education Program (IEP). IDEIA also requires post-secondary transition planning to begin for youth at age 14. The transition plan must be included in the youth's IEP and should address the services and instruction needed to help the youth make the transition from high school to adulthood, including the outcomes of post-secondary education and training, employment and community living. IDEIA also emphasizes the importance of self-determination of disabled youth in planning for their future. To maximize the benefit that a youth receives from the IEP and IL services, the County Children and Youth Agency should coordinate services with the youth's special education team.

7. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (P.L. 101-336)

The ADA prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities and transportation. It also mandates the establishment of Telecommunications Device for the Deaf/telephone relay services. A purpose of the ADA is to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities, as well as clear, strong, consistent and enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Another purpose of the ADA is to ensure that the federal government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in the ADA on behalf of individuals with disabilities and to invoke congressional authority, including the power to enforce the 14th amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination facing people with disabilities on a daily basis. IL and FCIA IL services must be provided in compliance with the ADA.

When youth with disabilities enter post-secondary education or training programs they no longer have an IEP. If youth require special assistance or accommodations to help ensure that their disability does not interfere with their ability to learn, the ADA may apply, requiring that services or accommodations be made for the youth. Most post-secondary programs have offices of disabilities or student support services that can help with arranging these services.

8. Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 93-112)

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Act (the Act) is to provide a statutory basis for the Rehabilitation Service Administration to establish within the Departments of Health, Education and Welfare an office for the handicapped, and to authorize specified programs. A purpose of the Act is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society through comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs of vocational rehabilitation, IL centers and services, research, training, demonstration projects and the guarantee of equal opportunity. The Act is to ensure that the federal government

plays a leadership role in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with severe disabilities, and in assisting states and providers of services in fulfilling the aspirations of such individuals with disabilities for meaningful and gainful employment and IL. The Act also prohibits discrimination based on disability by any federal agencies, or by any agencies supported by federal funds. IL and FCIA IL services must be provided in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act.

9. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431 et. seq

This act provides funds to assist youth who are homeless to succeed in school. This act mandates that youth who are homeless have the right to remain in the school they were enrolled in prior to becoming homeless, or in the last school they attended, as well as be provided with transportation to the home school. Schools are required to provide immediate enrollment for youth who are homeless even if all the documents needed for enrollment are not available.

This law is significant for youth in foster care because its definition of 'homeless' includes youth who are "awaiting foster care," thus including youth who live in shelters or are placed in emergency, interim or respite care, evaluation or diagnostic centers, or placed for the sole purpose of evaluation. Please refer to OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-04, entitled "Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen."

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

The purpose of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) is to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States. The purpose of Title I, Workforce Investment Systems, is to provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce investment systems that increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation. Title II reauthorizes adult education and literacy programs. It is the purpose of this title to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services, in order to (1) assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency; (2) assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and (3) assist adults in the completion of secondary school education. Title III contains amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act, provides for linkages with other programs, and authorizes the Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission. Title IV contains amendments to the Rehabilitation Act. Title V also contains general provisions to further support efforts to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through investment in the workforce and technology, research, and training. Title V also makes clear that the federal government must play a leadership role in promoting and supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities.

11. College Cost Reduction and Access Act—29 U.S.C. 1087 vv (d), Amended by Higher Education Opportunity Act

This act defines an independent student for the purposes of federal financial aid eligibility as an individual who:

- Was in foster care, or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older. This criterion includes youth who were adopted from care or entered kinship guardianship arrangements from foster care at age 13 or older; or

- During the school year in which he or she applies, has been determined to be a homeless or an unaccompanied youth under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, or documented as homeless by a shelter provider or provider of services under the Homeless and Runaway Youth Act.

Students meeting one of these criteria and applying as an independent student for the purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) do not need to provide any financial information about their parents or guardians, and no parental contribution is calculated.

12. Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L., 111-148)
The purpose of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (P.L., 111-148), signed March 23, 2010 provides guidance and amends three sections of Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act to ensure that children receiving IL services and/or ETG funds and those who are aging out of foster care have information and education about the importance of having a health care power of attorney or health care proxy and to provide the youth with the option to execute such a document.

The Act also provides Medical Assistance coverage for youth who at any time on or after their 18th birthday were in Pennsylvania's or another state's foster care system and were enrolled in Medical Assistance. Youth will be eligible beginning January 1, 2014 for this coverage until age 26.

13. The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (P.L., 112-34)
The purpose of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (P.L., 112-34) signed September 30, 2011 is to amend Section 475(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 675(5) by adding the requirement that "each child in foster care under the responsibility of the State who has attained 16 years of age receives without cost a copy of any consumer report (as defined in section 603(d) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA)) pertaining to the child each year until the child is discharged from care, and receives assistance (including, when feasible, from any court-appointed advocate for the child) in interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report."

STATE STATUTE

1. 42 Pa.C.S., Chapter 63. The Juvenile Act, Section 6302, (relating to the Definition of Child)

- **§6302 Definition – Child (3)**
- Revises the definition of a child to be an individual who is under the age of 21 years and was adjudicated dependent before reaching the age of 18 years, who has requested the court to retain jurisdiction and remains under such jurisdiction as a dependent child because the court determined that the child meets at least one criteria of education, employment or employment program, or incapable of doing any for a medical or behavioral health condition.

2. 42 Pa. C.S., Chapter 63. The Juvenile Act, Section 6351. (relating to Disposition of a Dependent Child)

- **§6351 (e) Permanency Hearings**
  Establishes a time frame in which the court shall conduct permanency hearings for the purpose of determining and reviewing the permanency plan for a child who is in substitute care. It also requires that the court consult with the youth regarding the permanency plan in an age-appropriate manner. For youth resuming jurisdiction after age 18, the court is required to conduct permanency hearings until the court jurisdiction is terminated, but no later than when the child attains 21 years of age.

- **§6351 (f) Matters Determined at Permanency Hearing**
  Establishes what the court shall determine at each permanency hearing. These determinations include: appropriateness of the placement, appropriateness and feasibility of the permanency plan, and for youth age 16 and above, the services that are needed to make the transition to independence, and that a personalized transition plan is developed within the 90 days before the child is discharged and reviewed by the court prior to discharge. The court also must determine if the child, between 18 and 21, continues to meet the definition of "child".

- **§6351 (j) Resumption of Jurisdiction**
  Establishes the right that a child may request the court to resume dependency jurisdiction before age 21 provided they meet the definition of "child" and their former dependency jurisdiction was terminated on or after their 18th birthday or within 90 days prior to their 18th birthday.

3. **62 P.S., Chapter 1. Public Welfare Code, Article VII. Children and Youth**

   - **Section 701. Availability of Services**
     Requires the Department to assure the availability and equitable provision of adequate public child welfare services to all children regardless of religion, race, settlement, residence, economic or social status.

   - **Section 702. Consultation**
     The Department is required to consult with and assist each County Children and Youth Agency or its successor in carrying out child welfare duties and functions as authorized by law.

   - **Section 703. Rules and Regulations**
     The Department is required to make and enforce the rules and regulations necessary and appropriate to accomplish the child welfare duties and functions vested by law in County Children and Youth Agency districts or their successors.

4. **62 P.S., Chapter 20. Institution Districts, Section 2168. Powers and Duties of County Commissioners as to Children**
   Establishes that the duty of the County Children and Youth Agency in protecting and promoting the welfare of children and youth is to provide child welfare services designated to keep children in their own homes; to prevent neglect, abuse and exploitation; to help overcome problems that result in dependency, neglect or delinquency; to provide foster family homes and child care institutions as adequate substitute care for any child in need of such care; and upon the request of the court, to provide such services and care for children and youth adjudicated dependent, neglected or delinquent.

STATE REGULATION

1. **Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3130 (relating to Administration of County Children and Youth Agency)**
   Provides the regulatory base for the administration and provision of child welfare duties by public County Children and Youth Agencies.

2. **Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3140 (relating to Planning and Financial Reimbursement Requirements for County Children and Youth Agency Social Service Programs)**

Provides the regulatory base to ensure the proper accomplishment of the child welfare duties and functions vested by statute in the counties and clarifies that supervised Independent Living services, life skills education and transitional living placements are reimbursable child welfare services.

- **§3140.22 (e)(3) (relating to Supervised independent living service)**
  The provision or arrangement of living quarters and social services designed to support and supervise children who are living on their own. The child may be in the custody of the child's parents, the County Children and Youth Agency, or another agency or individual.

- **§3140.22 (f)(9) (relating to Life skills education)**
  Practical education and training to the child and other family members, either in or outside of their own homes, in skills needed to perform the activities of daily living, including child care and parenting education, home management and related functions.

- **§3140.22 (h)(1) (relating to Residential service)**
  Twenty-four-hour out-of-home care in a non-secure facility for children not related to the provider which does not meet the criteria for community residential service or emergency shelter service.

3. **Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3680 (relating to Administration and Operation of a Children and Youth Social Service Agency**)
   Provides the regulatory base to ensure that an agency that provides social services for children and families does so in a manner that protects the health, safety and rights of the clients receiving services and includes Supervised Independent Living (SIL), family foster care and maternity homes.

4. **Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3700 (relating to Foster Family Care Agency)**
   Provides the regulatory base for approval of foster parents.

5. **Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3800 (relating to Child Residential and Day Treatment Facilities)**
   Provides the regulatory base to ensure that an agency which provides care to children in a residential facility does so in a manner that protects the health, safety, and well-being of those clients. These regulations also include guidelines for transitional living placement settings at §§3800.291-293.

   - **§3800.5 (relating to Definitions)**
     Transitional living residence - A home or living unit for fewer than five children, who are 16 years of age or older, with or without their own children, who are all able to live in a semi-independent living setting. A child's own children are counted to determine the maximum number of four children per transitional living residence.

     Note: §3800.3(2) (relating to exemptions) does not govern Transitional Living Residences which are located in freestanding private residences.

6. **Education of Homeless Students- February 29, 2008**
   The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act includes in the definition of homeless youth, children and youth awaiting foster care placement. These youth are entitled to attend the school they were enrolled in prior to being placed and to transportation assistance, if needed. These youth are also entitled to immediate enrollment in school even if all required documents are not available.
   Per the PA Department of Education, Basic Education Circular, Education for Homeless Youth, 42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq., issued February 29, 2008, "awaiting foster care placement" is defined to include youth who live in any of the following:

- Shelter care – physically unrestricted facilities for temporary care (see 42 Pa. C.S. §6302 [relating to definitions]);
- Emergency care – residential care and supervision in a non-secure setting, not to exceed 30 days (see 55 Pa. Code §3130.37 [relating to emergency and planned temporary placement services]);
- Interim care – planned temporary placement services including residential care and supervision of a child in a foster family home or twenty-four-hour out-of-home care in a non-secure facility for children not related to the provider (see 55 Pa. Code §3130.37);
- Respite foster care – short-term foster placement designed to provide relief to the primary foster family responsible for the child; and
- Evaluative or diagnostic centers, or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation - hospitals and other residential facilities used for evaluation and diagnosis.

Local school officials should consult with their County Children and Youth Agency whenever necessary to determine if a child meets the definition of awaiting foster care placement, including, on a case-by-case basis, whether a child who does not clearly fall into one of these categories is nevertheless a child awaiting foster care placement.

Appendix C: Transitional and Supportive Housing Options for Youth

PROGRAM	FUNDING SOURCES	SERVICES	ELIGIBILITY
Transitional Living Program (TLP) or Residence (TLR)	Runaway and Homeless Youth Act 42 U.S.C.A. § 5701 Transitional Living Programs (TLP) Funded by Family and Youth Service Bureau w/in the Department of Health and Human Services – www.grants.gov. TLP Grants are awarded competitively. They are not distributed to every county in the state. County agencies and/or private providers can apply. TLR are funded by state Act 148 and county funds through the Needs-Based Plan and Budget. Counties pay 20% of the cost and the state pays 80%. Title IV-E placement maintenance funds may reimburse a portion of this placement cost provided both the youth and the placement setting are Title IV-E eligible. Counties can provide TLR directly or contract with a private provider as they would any child welfare service.	Placement/Room and Board A semi-IL setting Home or living unit for fewer than five children who are age 16 or older (with or without their own child) **AND** any required child welfare services or those ordered by the court. IL or any services that help the youth become more independent and/or self-sufficient.	A dependent or delinquent youth who is 16 years of age or older (with or without their child) who demonstrates competency in the following areas: (1) Health, general safety and fire safety practices; (2) Money management; (3) Transportation skills; and (4) Child health and safety, child development and parenting skills, if the child has a child living with him at the residence. 55 Pa. Codes §§ 3800.5 and 3800.291
Licensed Supervised Independent Living Placement (L-SILP)	Funded by state Act 148 and county funds through Needs Based Plan and Budget. Counties pay 20% of the cost and the state pays 80%. Title IV-E placement maintenance funds may reimburse a portion of this placement cost if the youth is Title IV-E eligible.	A semi-IL setting, scattered site or clustered apartments, shared housing, and specialized apartments designed for youth to acquire skills prior to transferring to another apartment.	Dependent or delinquent youth age 16 until attaining 21 are eligible for L-SILP. Agencies must be licensed under the 55 Pa. Code Chapter 3680 regulations (relating to the Administration and Operation of a Children and youth Social Service Agency.) It is strongly recommended that the physical

PROGRAM	FUNDING SOURCES	SERVICES	ELIGIBILITY
	Counties can provide L-SILP directly or contract with a private provider as they would any child welfare service. Counties may make payment directly to a youth when no actual placement provider is involved.	May house nor more than three youth in the unit and may include a youth's child. Social Services - any required child welfare services or those ordered by the court. IL or any services that help the youth become more independent and/or self-sufficient. Promotes permanent connections with caring adults.	site meet the Title 55 Pa. Code, Chapter 3700 regulations (relating to Foster Family Care Agency) §§ 3700.66, 67 and 69(a). Eligible youth must be assessed for their preparedness, have some IL skills and preparation for living on their own, but keeping in mind that placing a youth in an L-SILP gives them an opportunity to learn. Youth should not be excluded from this opportunity because they do not yet have all the skills they need to be on their own.
Unlicensed Supervised Independent Living Placement (U-SILP)	Funded by state Act 148 and county funds through Needs Based Plan and Budget. Counties pay 20% of the cost and the state pays 80%. Title IV-E placement maintenance funds may reimburse a portion of this placement cost if the youth is Title IV-E eligible. Counties can provide U-SILP directly or contract with a private provider as they would any child welfare service. Counties may make payment directly to a youth when no actual placement provider is involved.	A semi-IL setting, scattered site or clustered apartments, host home or shared housing, and higher education on-campus residences or dorm living Social Services - any required child welfare services or those ordered by the court. IL or any services that help the youth become more independent and/or self-sufficient. Promotes permanent connections with caring adults	Dependent or delinquent youth age 18 until attaining 21 are eligible for U-SILP. Eligible youth must be assessed for their preparedness, have some IL skills and preparation for living on their own, but keeping in mind that placing a youth in an U-SILP gives them an opportunity to learn. Youth should not be excluded from this opportunity because they do not yet have all the skills they need to be on their own.

PROGRAM	FUNDING SOURCES	SERVICES	ELIGIBILITY
Chafee Room and Board	Chafee Foster Care Independence Act through the annual Needs Based Plan and Budget process. Counties must apply for all Chafee funds through Needs Based Plan and Budget.	Provides emergency, temporary (30 days), extended (3 months), or can be used as "step-down" program where payment is provided over a year or more to youth in decreasing payments for housing. Supportive services must be provided to youth receiving Chafee Room and Board funds.	Any CFCIP eligible IL youth, 18 years of age or older, who are discharged from care on or after their 18th birthday. May be provided until 21 years of age. Room and board funds may be used to meet one-time or startup expenses. Room and board funds may not be used to supplement costs of SILP setting payments made directly to a youth for personal incidental costs (food, clothing, and shelter.)
Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)	Funded through local Housing Authority. Usually have long waiting lists but IL professionals can advocate to have former IL youth moved to top of waiting list by special waiver. http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/	Provides youth with voucher that, when accepted by approved landlord, can be used to pay for portion of rent or full rent based on youth's needs. Voucher is tied to the youth, not the apartment. Therefore, youth can move and not lose eligibility.	Young adults 18 and older and no longer in county custody (aftercare youth.)
Supportive Housing Program (SHP)	Federally funded through Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the McKinney-Vento Act http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/homelessJoin your local Continuum of Care to apply for funds: http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts&st=PA&cSort=#tl Also check with your local Office of Housing and	Scattered site apartments with supportive services. Corporation for Supportive Housing website provides additional information www.csh.org	Federal eligibility requires that young adults, age 18 and over, meet federal definition of homelessness. Programs using county funds may be more flexible with eligibility related to homelessness.

PROGRAM	FUNDING SOURCES	SERVICES	ELIGIBILITY
	Community Development or Housing Authority about Affordable Housing Trust Funds (AHTF.) AHTF may be used to fund housing projects targeted at IL aftercare youth.		
Family Unification Program (FUP)	Federally funded through Housing and Urban Development (HUD.) http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/family.cfm	Subsidized tenant-based rental vouchers that are accessed through the local Housing Authority.	Young adults (18-21) aging out of care and families who can avoid placement with housing assistance.
Special Grant Housing Initiative	Funded as a special grant through PA Need-Based Plan and Budget.	Approved County Children and Youth Agencies with this funding develop service delivery. Varies by county.	Youth aging out of care, or who have aged out (and are not CFCIP eligible). May be used to meet one-time or startup expenses for youth. Funds may not be used to supplement costs of SILP.

Appendix D: Sample Driver's Permit and Licensing Policy

Age appropriate freedoms

Efforts to apply age appropriate rules, roles, and responsibilities are essential to the successes and ongoing development of youth most likely to remain in care until age 18. For many teenagers, obtaining a driver's license is an important milestone and step towards independence. No laws prohibit youth in care from obtaining their licenses, however, the higher costs of insuring teen drivers living in a household must be considered. In many communities, public transportation is limited, if available, and driving is an essential component to obtaining goals of employment, education, and success.

NOTE: The agency may wish to consult with their agency solicitor and to develop their own contract to ensure that the youth understands the rules, expectations and requirements associated with obtaining a driver's permit and license.

Applicable Laws

Learner's Permit

For individuals who are 16 years of age or older, the first step to obtaining a driver's license is applying for a learner's permit. An individual must successfully complete a physical examination, vision screening (Medical Examiners will have to certify physical completion on the permit application, Form DL-180) and knowledge test. Youth will have to bring proof of birth date, proof of identity, and their Social Security card. A fee must be paid when the permit is issued.

Young drivers may begin behind-the-wheel practice once the permit is issued. Once the permit is issued, basic driving skills and safe habits are developed under adult-supervised conditions. Requirements under the law include the following:

- Six months of learning: A six-month skill-building period to practice and gain experience is required before a young driver may take the road test for a junior license.

- Supervising adult for permit holder must be at least 21: An experienced, licensed driver aged 21 or older must accompany the young driver at all times.

- 50 hours of adult-supervised skill building: A parent or guardian (legal documentation of guardianship relationship may be required) must certify, via Parent or Guardian Certification Form (Form DL-180C), that the young driver's six months of skill building included at least 50 hours of practical, adult-supervised driving experience.

- Nighttime driving restriction begins at 11 p.m. The young driver may not be behind the wheel between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Young drivers may travel for employment and for volunteer or charitable service during these hours, but they must carry proper documentation regarding their need to travel.

- The number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts in the vehicle. This applies to all drivers under age 18.

- Learner's permits are valid for one year. After one year, the learner's permit can be renewed for another year for a fee.

Junior License
Young drivers who graduate to a junior license have satisfactorily completed all learners' permit requirements, including the required road test, but several restrictions still apply.

Requirements under the law include the following:

- Nighttime driving restriction begins at 11 p.m. Even with a junior license, a young driver may not be behind the wheel between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

- Exceptions for employment and volunteer or charitable service will apply to the nighttime restrictions, but young drivers must carry proper documentation regarding their need to travel.

- The number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts in the vehicle. This applies to all drivers under age 18.

Agency Guidelines

Application
The caseworker and/or the youth's parent (depending upon court status) must give permission when the youth applies for a permit or license. The parent, guardian, or a person *in loco parentis* (such as the youth's caseworker) must sign the PA Department of Motor Vehicle Learner's Permit Application and Consent Form for foster youth under the age of 18. Resource parents cannot legally sign this form. Copies of the application and consent form should be added to the youth's case-file.

Required Forms:

- Learner's Permit Application (Form DL-180); and
- Parent or Guardian Consent Form (Form DL-180TD).

Supervised Driving Requirements
Resource parents should participate in teaching the youth appropriate driving skills, such as setting a good driving example and allowing the youth to practice at their own pace and in various driving conditions, such as on highways, country roads and inclement weather.

When young drivers are issued a learner's permit, they will also receive a Parent/Guardian Certification Form (Form DL-180C), which is a form that documents the 50 hours of behind-the-wheel practice. This form must be signed by a parent, guardian, or a person *in loco parentis* (such as the youth's caseworker). The person signing the form does not have to be the same person who supervised the youth's 50 hours of behind-the-wheel practice.

Young drivers must bring the completed certification form with them when they return to take the road portion of the driver licensing test six months or more after obtaining their permit. Even if a young driver does not return to the driver license center for the road test, but, instead takes an end-of-course skills test with his or her driver's education teacher, the young driver must still provide a completed Parent/Guardian Certification form to the teacher before a road test can be administered.

Required Form:
- Parent/Guardian Certification Form (Form DL-180C)

Expectations
Once a permit or license is obtained, the young driver must follow the resource home rules and guidelines and must receive permission from the resource parents when wishing to drive. Foster

parents should and may limit the number of passengers in the youth's car, enforce a curfew, and not allow the youth to eat, drink, or use a phone while driving.

The foster youth should also have passing grades or a part-time job, and be actively pursuing their IL goals and demonstrate responsible behavior in order to pursue their license and/or permit. Youth are expected to engage in safe driving practices and follow all laws and placement rules, including obeying speed limits and driving curfews. **State law requires that licensed drivers have car insurance.** County Children and Youth Agencies should consult with their agency solicitor regarding insurance company requirements for youth who have either their learner's permit or license.

Costs

Youth in foster care may either be added to the policy of the resource family or have a separate policy of their own. The cost and requirement of automobile insurance is often a barrier for youth in care and their resource families. It is extremely important that all parties make an informed decision prior to obtaining a driver's permit or license because of the higher insurance costs that may be charged on the resource family's personal policy. Also, insurance companies have varying methods of determining this added cost and many factors that further impact the cost. In some cases the cost of insurance is applied after obtaining the license, while other companies may require insurance after obtaining a learner's permit.

The youth should be saving money to purchase his/her own vehicle and car insurance. Depending on the insurance company, minors may not able to purchase car insurance on their own. Resource parents and the youth are encouraged to shop around for good rates. Many insurance companies give discounts to students with good grades and to individuals who have completed a driver's education course.

For more information on safe driving practices, including the PA Driver's Manual, and licensing requirements, visit the Penn DOT website: http://www.dmv.state.pa.us or call (800) 932-4600.

Appendix E: Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Units of Service

PA's Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) is the state's delivery system for permanency services to children in foster care. All children in foster care are eligible to receive a continuum of permanency services to facilitate their permanency goal. All children who are not being returned to the care of their parents should be referred for SWAN services to help facilitate timely permanency.

Child Profile

A child profile is a written report that provides a thorough review and assessment of the child's life. A SWAN child profile includes the child's developmental, medical, behavioral, social and educational history as well as birth family information and placement chronology. The child should participate with the worker in the development of the child profile to the fullest extent possible. A child profile can be a helpful tool to help identify permanent life connections for children in out of home care.

Child Preparation for Permanency

Child Preparation for Permanency is a SWAN unit of service that helps children work through the grief and loss issues they have experienced which can often become barriers to helping them achieve permanency. Children in out-of-home placement have experienced varying degrees of trauma. This service involves the development and implementation of a written child preparation plan that is developed through the collaborative efforts of the county and SWAN affiliate agency.
There are several key goals of Child Preparation for Permanency that include the following:

- To enable the child to understand the reasons for their removal from the home and the reasons why they may not be able to return to their birth or legal family;
- To help the child learn how to begin to accept the reality of being a member of several families;
- To be enable the child to visualize becoming a member of another family;
- To provide an opportunity for the child to resolve losses, through a process of grieving in a safe atmosphere, to ask questions, and to feel positively about a prospective family**;** and
- To help the child establish a more secure foundation for identity formulation by maintaining their biological and placement history.

Child Specific Recruitment (CSR)

CSR is a unit of service offered through SWAN to identify or recruit a permanent family resource or permanent connection for any child in foster care with any permanency goal. The service includes an array of activities used to identify an individual or family who is interested in adopting or providing permanency to a specific child. The SWAN affiliate agency works closely with the county children and youth agency to develop a written recruitment plan which is then implemented and managed by the SWAN affiliate agency.

The county and affiliate will examine all possible recruitment activities to develop a CSR plan. Some of the CSR activities that may be part of the plan include a thorough review of the case file, sometimes referred to as record mining, family finding, the services of the PA Adoption Exchange, Match Parties, Waiting Child Segments, Photo listing Books and hosting family group conferences may be included in CSR.

Children who have a goal of reunification, but who in fact may not be able to return home should be referred for this service in an effort to help shorten their time in care and/or help identify a permanent connection should they be at risk of aging out of care without a permanency resource. CSR can help to identify kin resources who may be able to provide permanency to the child and if none are available, recruitment efforts to locate an adoptive family can begin. If adoption is not feasible, CSR can be used to help identify a permanent, but perhaps not legally recognized, connection for the youth.

Family Profile
A Family Profile is a written report on a prospective resource family that includes the familial history as well as social and medical information on the family. SWAN Family Profiles are available to any family who is willing to provide permanency to a child in out of home placement and in the custody of the county agency including kinship, permanent legal custodianship and prospective adoptive families. In addition to the written report, all families who receive a SWAN Family Profile receive extensive training about the permanency process and the needs of children in care, including training on child abuse and neglect issues.

Placement
The placement unit of service is only available for children with a goal of adoption. Services provided include assisting the county with selecting an appropriate family, the development and implementation of a placement plan, and supervision of pre-placement visits between the child and prospective adoptive family.

Finalization
The finalization unit of service is only available for children with a goal of adoption. Services begin at the point of placement and include, but are not limited to, supportive services, home visits, supervisory reports and collaboration with the attorneys and courts to facilitate the adoption in a timely manner.

Post-Permanency Services
SWAN Post-Permanency Services are offered to any family who has provided permanency to a child from the child welfare system whether through adoption, kinship or permanent legal custodianship. All SWAN Post-Permanency Services are designed to last for six months. Services required beyond six months require authorization from the SWAN Prime Contractor.

Services include Advocate for Post-Permanency Services, Support Groups and Respite:

- Advocate for Post-Permanency Services is a management function performed by a SWAN affiliate agency to help families access services within their communities to meet their needs.

- Support Groups offered through SWAN vary and are often determined by the needs of the community. Support Groups are offered to children, youth and parents.

- Respite is the short-lived temporary placement of a child with another caregiver. SWAN respite is planned and is not intended to be used in crisis situations. All SWAN respite providers must be approved and are often well known to the family. Respite providers may be family friends or kin, or be an approved child care facility such as a day-camp. Respite allows both the child and the parents some time away from each other while helping to maintain the parent's relationship and consistent level of parenting.

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Units of Service

All children in out of home care in the custody of their county children and youth agency and/or children who are dually adjudicated are eligible to receive most SWAN services. Below is a chart indicating what SWAN services children in out of home care are eligible for based upon their permanency goal.

SWAN Units of Service	Reunification	Adoption	PLC	Fit and Willing Relative	APPLA
Child Profile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Preparation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Child Specific Recruitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Profile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Placement		✓			
Finalization		✓			
Post Permanency		✓	✓	✓	

You and your resource family may contact the SWAN Legal Services Initiative Warmline (888-739-2512) for legal questions.

Appendix F: Statewide Practices Available for Older Youth

American Bar Association (ABA) Center on Children and the Law:
The Barriers to Permanency Project

The Barriers to Permanency Project helps to identify, analyze, and correct the delays that cause lengthy waits for foster youth to achieve permanency. The Project has focused on reforms such as: the early identification of children's needs; refining court procedures in permanency planning areas; training of child welfare agency and legal staff and sharing information with other counties and states. In 2003, PA contracted with the ABA to conduct the PA Permanency Barriers Project based on the highly successful New York model. This project focuses on the following five major tasks in the counties:

1. Identifying and analyzing the cause of delays in achieving permanency;
2. Interactively developing recommendations and implementing reforms;
3. Establishing written protocols, procedures and providing multidisciplinary training;
4. Monitoring reforms and changes; and
5. Sharing project results throughout the state.

Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC):
Permanency Practice Initiative (PPI)

This initiative utilizes various strategies to decrease the use of out-of-home placement, congregate services in particular and foster care in general and increasing permanence at the onset for older youths in care. The Permanency Practice initiative calls for the incorporation of strengths-based social work practices with specific court related changes that will safely accomplish the following seven goals:

1. Reduce the number of children/youth adjudicated dependent and in court-ordered placement;
2. Reduce the time children/youth spend in the foster care system;
3. Reduce the number of children/youth who re-enter care;
4. Reduce the Dependency Court caseload;
5. Reduce placement costs in order to ensure that funds are redirected to other services, including placement prevention, aftercare, and adoption services;
6. Reduce the level of care (i.e., reduce the number or percent of children in restrictive placements and increase the number of children in kinship care, when placement is needed); and
7. Increase placement stability, which equates to fewer moves for a child.

Family Finding

Family Finding helps connect youth with family members, kin and other significant individuals using internet search technology (Accurint), case record review and family interviewing. This strategy uses intensive searches and outreach efforts at the beginning of a case and/or later in a placement case in order to find as many potential permanent resources for a child as early as possible.

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)

The PA FGDM process is a strengths-based empowerment model designed to join the wider family group, including relatives, friends, community members, and others, to collectively make decisions to resolve an identified concern. FGDM is an important family engagement strategy that can be utilized by child welfare, juvenile probation and community agencies whenever a critical decision about a child is required.

FGDM in PA is primarily based on aspects of the Family Unity Model and the Family Group Conferencing process established in New Zealand. FGDM conferences in PA generally include: extensive preparation; an opening and sharing of strengths, concerns, and resources; private family time; family presentation of the plan and plan acceptance by the referring agency; and plan implementation and monitoring.

In FGDM processes, a trained coordinator who is independent of the case brings together the family group and agency personnel to create and implement a plan to safeguard children and other family members. FGDM processes position the wider family group to lead decision making and agency personnel agree to support plans that adequately address agency concerns.

FGDM processes are not conflict-resolution approaches, therapeutic interventions or forums for ratifying professionally crafted decisions. Rather, FGDM processes actively seek the collaboration and leadership of family groups in crafting and implementing plans that support the safety, permanency and well-being of their children.

National Governor's Association (NGA) Child Welfare Policy Academy:
Safely Reducing the Number of PA Children in Foster Care
This is a multi-state initiative to safely reduce the number of children in foster care. The academy is being conducted in partnership with Casey Family Programs and state jurisdictions. This policy academy offers state child welfare systems the opportunity to work with national and state experts to improve outcomes for children and families who come to the attention of the child welfare system.

PA's NGA goal was to safely reduce the number of children in foster care by 15-20 percent by 2010.

Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN)
SWAN is the state's delivery system for permanency services to children in PA's foster care system. All children in foster care are eligible to receive services to facilitate their permanency goal through SWAN.

SWAN:
Legal Services Initiative (LSI)
The goal of LSI is to expedite permanency for children and youth in care by identifying and overcoming barriers to these goals found in the legal system. Specifically, LSI paralegals are now located in almost every county in PA to expedite the court process for children in foster care by preparing court filings, conducting diligent searches, family finding and various other duties specific to the needs of the county agency.

Appendix G: Resources for Youth with Disabilities

Independent Living services should be tailored to meet the needs of individual youth regardless of disability. This resource guide provides useful websites and information to help better serve youth with disabilities.

Disability Rights Network of PA has a tremendous array of resources and information for people with disabilities. The publications section of this website contains tool kits that can help youth with disabilities and the professionals working with them access services. http://drnpa.org/

Disability Website is a national resource with referral and resource information categorized by states and topics such as: transportation, housing, community life, technology, among other information. http://www.disability.gov/

Department of Labor and Industry in PA devotes a section of its website to Disability services. Services such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and other bureaus dedicated to supporting people with disabilities.
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/disability_services/10355

Hiram G. Andrews Center is a post-secondary educational campus designed to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities interested in learning a trade and life skills. http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/hiram_g__andrews_center/10357

Self Determination Housing Project of PA is a statewide advocacy network aimed at empowering people with disabilities to have control over their housing choices. A toll-free resource telephone line exists to help people find housing and have their questions answered. http://www.sdhp.org/

DPW hosts several resources for people with physical disabilities including attendant care, support services, licensed human service provider facilities, and many others. http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/fordisabilityservices/index.htm.

Mental Health Services: Public mental health services are coordinated through local Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities (MH/ID) agencies. These agencies are part of county government and can typically be found as part of a county's web page.

Appendix H: Sample Independent Living Plan

Federal and State laws require that an Independent Living Plan (ILP) be included in the Child's Permanency Plan (CPP) for every youth who is age 16 or older. County Children and Youth Agencies may also develop an ILP for youth under the age of 16. Federal and State laws also requires that during the 90 day period immediately prior to the date the child will discharge from the child welfare system at age 18 or older, that CCYA must provide assistance to youth in developing a Transition Plan. The planning process must be youth lead and based on the youth's unique needs as identified in their needs assessments. The various assessment and planning processes should be integrated to ensure that youth understand and receive services toward meeting their goals.

Youth Name:

Date of IL Plan:

Period Covered by the IL Plan:

Initial: Revised:

Current Placement Provider/Agency:

CYS Caseworker:

<u>Independent Living Strengths/Needs: Results of Needs Assessment and Discussion with Youth</u>

a. Education
   - Strengths:
   - Needs:

b. Employment/Job Training
   - Strengths:
   - Needs:

c. Housing
   - Strengths:
   - Needs:

d. Life Skills
   - Strengths:
   - Needs

e. Support/Mentoring
   - Strengths:
   - Needs:

f. Prevention
   - Strengths:
   - Needs:

<u>Current Services Being Provided</u>

A. Services Provided by the County Children and Youth Agency

B. Services Provided by Other Agencies

Type of Service Agency to Provide the Service

Objectives	**Actions to be Taken**	**Persons Responsible**	**Completion Date**

Use additional sheets if necessary.

Signature Page:

Signing constitutes your review and agreement with the Plan.

Youth	Date
IL Provider	Date
Placement Provider Representative	Date
Foster Parent (If Applicable)	Date
Birth Parent (If Applicable)	Date
Guardian Ad Litem	Date
CYS Caseworker	Date

Appendix I: Refusal of Independent Living Services

I, _____, have been informed of my right to participate
(Name of youth)
and receive Independent Living Program services. I am not interested in participating in these services at this time. I understand that I may participate in the future, up until age 21, by contacting my caseworker and requesting services.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the availability of IL services.

_____ _____
Youth Signature Date

_____ _____
Witness Signature Date

Appendix J: Sample Permanency Hearing Education/Employment Verification

This is a sample or example of how agencies may provide additional, supportive information to the courts to demonstrate youth have met the requirements to remain in agency substitute care beyond age 18.

This document is required to be completed and presented to the court for the scheduled permanency review hearing, not to exceed six months. Youth over the age of 18 and requesting the court to remain in agency substitute care must meet any one or combination of the following criteria:

I, _____, have fulfilled my requirements to remain
(Name of Youth)
in agency substitute care since my last permanency review hearing and have checked those that apply in the next section. I understand that I must continue to meet <u>at least one</u> of the requirements while I am in agency substitute care and that if I fail to do so, may no longer be able to remain in care. I have also agreed to provide information such as grade reports, transcripts, pay statements, Independent Living Plan or health records to my agency caseworker to provide evidence in meeting my obligation. I also understand that as long as I meet one of the above criteria, I may request to the court that I be permitted to remain in substitute care at each Permanency Hearing until age 21, at which time I am no longer permitted to remain in care.

Check each that applies	Requirements to Remain In Agency Care over the age of 18
	Youth only need to check one of the following unless others apply and have been discussed with the agency caseworker.
_____	1. Completing secondary education or an equivalent credential; *[Ex. High school, taking classes in preparation for a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) exam]*
_____	2. Enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education; *[Ex. Full- or part-time in a college or university, or enrolled in a vocational or trade school.]*
_____	3. Participating in a program actively designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; *[Ex. Actively engaged with Career Link, attending classes on resume writing and interviewing skills, or Independent Living classes or individual services.]*

_____ 4. Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or
[Ex. This may be full- or part-time employment and may include more than one place of employment.]

_____ 5. Incapable of doing any of the activities described above due to a medical or behavioral health condition. (This must be regularly updated in the child's permanency plan.)
[Ex. This may include a temporary condition such as recovery from a serious automobile accident or major surgery.]

Youth comments: *Please provide any information about how you met each requirement checked above. This can include information about: school, work, employer contact, and pay statements, etc.*

Agency Caseworker Verification:

I, _____, have reviewed and approved the above
Agency Caseworker
information to be accurate and consistent within the requirements to remain in agency substitute care for youth over the age 18.

_____ _____
Youth Signature Date

_____ _____
Agency Caseworker Signature Date

Appendix K: Life Skills Program Options

Purpose:
A primary component of providing Independent Living services deals with teaching young people life skills. Life skills include those tangible, concrete skills such as money management, cooking, grocery shopping and those "soft skills" youth need such as self-esteem, good communication skills, anger management techniques, among other skills. See the lists of "hard" and "soft" life skills on page 25of the Bulletin.

This appendix is meant to serve as a guide for options in establishing life skills programs. Typically, counties develop their life skills programs through a combination of the following ways:

Life Skills Taught by Caregiver in the Home
Research shows that when life skills are taught by caregiver in the home it is the most effective way for youth to learn life skills. When foster parents, adoptive parents, kin and other caregivers teach life skills in the home setting they are more likely to learn the skills and use them. Caregivers can find free resources to teach youth life skills through http://lifeskills.casey.org/. In addition, by simply modeling effective life skills and allowing youth the opportunity to practice, like using the oven to cook a family dinner, helping out with grocery shopping, and balancing his or her own checkbook, youth have an excellent opportunity to improve their knowledge and application of life skills.

One-on-One Life Skills Taught by Caseworker
Casework staff plays an important role in ensuring youth master life skills. Life skills that are learned in the community and in real-life settings are extremely important. Casework staff assists in facilitating this real life learning and application by teaching, modeling and shadowing youth as they learn life skills.

Year Round Group Life Skills Sessions
Life skills taught in group sessions with multiple youth are effective in bringing youth together, building social skills, and encouraging networking among youth in similar situations. In this framework, life skills are taught in the classroom or in the community to multiple youth. Some life skills classes may be taught by resources from the community or casework staff. As with all life skills instruction, hands-on application and learning opportunities are important.

Intensive Weekly Group Life Skills Sessions
Another option for teaching life skills is to organize weekly life skills sessions that run for a limited period of time (for example: fall life skills class and spring life skills class each lasting 10 weeks). These classes are typically more intensive and youth engage in the classes as a cohort. Classroom learning as well as real-life applications and learning opportunities are woven throughout the curriculum.

Choosing the Right Option
Each county should determine which life skills options they offer and caseworkers should consider all of these options and any others based on the unique needs of their youth. For example, due to geographic limitations or transportation barriers, it may not be feasible for a county to hold intensive weekly group life skills sessions. Or, counties may want to offer some group sessions and then support foster parents, adoptive parents and caregivers to transfer learning by teaching the skills in the home.

Engaging Youth in Designing their Life Skills Program

As with all Independent Living services, and based on guidance in the Federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, youth are expected to be engaged in the planning and evaluation of life skills. Engaging youth early in the process and checking in with them as they learn life skills yields powerful results; youth are more likely to “buy in” to the process and achieve their life skills goals. Holding a planning meeting with youth asking them what type of life skills they need to learn and how they would like to learn them is one easy way to create “buy-in” and gain valuable feedback.

Appendix L: Prevention Resources

Preventing high risk behaviors and negative consequences is an important part of IL services. The following topic areas and corresponding resources will assist youth in making better choices:

Drugs and Alcohol
Not only is the use of illegal drugs and alcohol against the law for teens, these substances impede one's judgment and overall functioning. Research shows that primary substance abuse prevention should focus on empowerment to cope with the root cause of the problem and to provide accurate information about the risks of substance abuse.

Here are some helpful websites:

- http://www.drugabuse.gov/Prevention/Prevopen.html
- http://teens.drugabuse.gov/
- http://www.thecoolspot.gov/
- http://ncadistore.samhsa.gov/catalog/results.aspx?topic=100&h=audiences

Tobacco Use & Smoking
The best way to prevent tobacco use is to never start. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance found in cigarettes, cigars, and smokeless tobacco.

Here are some prevention websites:

- http://www.notobacco.org/
- http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/teen-smoking/hq00139

However, once a teen has started smoking, the sooner they quit the better their health and the less money they spend on this harmful product.

Here is a website to help Teens quit:

- http://www.teenquit.com/

Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)/Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Prevention
The best way to prevent pregnancy is to abstain from sexual intercourse. However, caseworkers and caregivers should ensure that youth are educated about the realities of being sexually active, including the risks of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and diseases.

- http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/

Violence
Many youth have gone through trauma they do not fully understand while also lacking the coping mechanisms to deal with the anger they may feel due to their situation. These circumstances may lead to violence and acting out. Other youth may be the victims of violence, in the form of bullying or dating violence. Some youth may have joined a group where violence is the norm and expected. In any situation, it is important to help teens understand that violence of any nature is not tolerated in society and does not solve problems.

Here are some resources to start the conversation on violence prevention:

- http://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/stryve/

- http://www.loveisrespect.org/

Prescription Drug Abuse

Prescription drug abuse by teens and young adults is a serious problem in the United States. A report released by the Partnership for Drug Free America estimates that one in five teens has abused a prescription pain medication; one in five teens report abusing prescription stimulants and tranquilizers; and one in 10 has abused cough medication. Many teens and adults think that prescription drugs are safe because they have legitimate uses; however, taking them without a prescription can be as dangerous and addictive as illicit drugs.

Here are some resources to start the conversation on prescription drug abuse:

- http://www.drugfreeworld.org
- http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescr_drg_abuse.html

Identity Theft

Young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are at the greatest risk for identity fraud as they are less likely to take steps to protect their personal information. Identity theft occurs when someone uses personally identifying information, like name, Social Security number, or credit card number of another without permission, to commit fraud or other crimes. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that as many as ten million Americans have their identities stolen each year.

The Federal Trade Commission recommends that individual take specific steps to minimize risk, and minimize the damage if a problem develops. These steps include the following:

- Deter-shred documents, protect your Social Security number, don't give out personal information, avoid unsolicited emails, create unique passwords and store personal information in a secure place.

- Detect- monitor your financial accounts and billing statements, order your free credit reports each year, watch for missing bills, unexpected credit card charges, denials for credit and alerts regarding purchases you did not make.

- Defend- Place fraud alerts on credit cards as soon as you suspect a problem, close accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently, contact the company's fraud department for the account, keep copies of records and documents, file a police report and report your complaint to the Federal Trade Commission.

Additional information about identity theft protection can be found at these websites:

- www.ftc.gov/idtheft
- http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/websites/idtheft.html
- http://www.attorneygeneral.gov/consumers.aspx?id=289
- www.AnnualCreditReport.com

Appendix M: Educational Rights and Resources

The following is not legal advice. You are unlikely to be able to resolve a specific situation using only this handout; County Children and Youth Agencies may also want to consult with their agency solicitor, to suggest parents and guardians seek legal advice if the parent/guardian feels they need it, and to encourage youth in care to speak to their attorney or GAL. See also: DPW Bulletins; 3130-10-04 Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen and OMHSAS-10-01 "Educational Portion of "Non-Educational" Residential Placement."

1. The Right To Attend School

Children in PA have the right to attend school where they live either until they graduate from high school or until the end of the school year in which they turn 21 (whichever occurs first).

- This includes children in foster care home placements.
- This also includes children in "children's institutions" (*e.g.,* shelters, group homes, supervised independent or transitional living placements, maternity homes, residential treatment facilities, etc.).
- The "host" district is the district where the child's placement is located. The host district must provide or arrange to provide education and special education services to children.
- Youth who drop-out of school and decide to re-enroll may do so at any time until age 21. Older youth may attend full day school and should not be forced into twilight or night school programs simply due to their age.

2. School Enrollment

Children in PA may be enrolled by a parent, guardian or "other person having control or charge of the student." Children should be enrolled the next business day or no later than FIVE business days after receipt of four required documents.

- A foster parent, caseworker, or Juvenile Probation Officer may enroll the child in school.
- The district must enroll the child after receiving four things:
  - Proof of age (need not be birth certificate);
  - Proof of immunizations;
  - Proof of residence; and
  - A sworn statement of the child's disciplinary record.
- Immunizations may be proven by phone. The new school district calls the old school district or the doctor's office and is assured that the child is immunized. Records may be provided later.
- To show residency, a youth in substitute care may present a letter from his or her placement agency documenting where s/he now resides. When a child changes schools the "old" school can transfer records to the "new" school without the consent of an educational decision maker. Records should be forwarded to the new school within 10 business days of receipt of the request. Caseworkers should ensure that the new school has made the request for the records to ensure prompt transfer.

3. Right to Enroll in Regular Public School

With only a few exceptions, upon enrollment in a new district the child has a right to attend the regular public school located within the community. There are three exceptions as follows:

- Exception #1: A child currently expelled from a public or private school for an offense involving a weapon may be placed in an alternative education program or given alternative education services for the duration of the expulsion.

- Exception #2: A child returning from a delinquency placement to a school district within a Class One county (Philadelphia) must attend a "transition center," after which he or she will either be placed in an alternative education program or a regular school.

- Exception #3: When the special education decision maker has agreed to a non-regular-school placement in an IEP, the child must be given a comparable placement by the new district. Educational decision makers should only agree to such placements when there is a true educational basis for the decision. It is improper to base the decision on convenience.

***NOTE**: Children should not be automatically placed in alternative programs, including on-grounds schools, simply because they are in substitute care.*

School Stability

If continued attendance at the current school is appropriate and in the child/youth's best interest, attempts should be made to keep the child/youth at the same school. This rule also applies if a child is in a residential setting. For further information on this determination, see the OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-04, titled *Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen*.

- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351), requires child welfare professionals to have a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child while placed in out-of-home care, including the following:

  - Assurances that each placement of the child placed in out-of-home care takes into account the appropriateness of the current educational setting and the proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement; and

  - An assurance that the child welfare agency has coordinated with appropriate local educational agencies (as defined under section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) to ensure that the child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of each placement.

- If the child/youth is "awaiting foster care placement" under McKinney-Vento, contact the school district's McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. If problems arise, the McKinney-Vento Regional Coordinator may be contacted. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison will be able to provide this contact information. If the Regional Coordinator disagrees with the recommendation or decision, any involved party may contact the McKinney-Vento State Coordinator. Also, remember that if it is alleged that the child/youth is homeless, the child/youth has the legal right to remain in the same school or the school he or she was attending at the time of placement or to enroll in the school the parent chooses until any dispute is fully resolved. Contact information for McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons and coordinators may be obtained at

http://homeless.center-school.org/index.cfm?pageid=2895.

- Even if the child/youth is not "awaiting foster care placement" under McKinney-Vento, work with the school district to keep the child/youth in the same school pursuant to the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act requires that child welfare professionals collaborate with school districts to ensure that when a student changes placement, the student shall remain in his or her current school unless this is not in their best interest. The school district should be advised that such efforts are "strongly encouraged" by the PA Department of Education pursuant to the *Enrollment of Students* Basic Education Circular (BEC) issued January 22, 2009. The BEC is available online at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon%27s_statutes/7503/enrollment_of_students/507350 and *24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306*.

- If the child/youth must be moved to another school placement, consider aligning the move with the new school year or other natural break in the school program to avoid disruption.

- For further information on this determination, see the OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-04, titled *Educational Stability and Continuity of Children Receiving Services from the County Children and Youth Agency Including the Use of an Education Screen*.

4. Evaluation For Special Education Eligibility

Children with suspected disabilities attending public school have a right to be evaluated to see if they qualify for special education services.

- The request for an evaluation must be in writing. See Permission to Evaluate Form online: http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/early_intervention/8710/forms/522291.

- The school district has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation (including charter schools) from the date the special education decision maker signs a permission to evaluate form.

- If the child moves to a new district during the 60 calendar days, the new school district must complete the evaluation within the original time frame unless the educational decision maker agrees otherwise (*i.e*. the 60 calendar day time clock does not start over if a child moves).

- If a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, they must be re-evaluated every three years (two years if the child has mental retardation), but the special education decision maker may ask for re-evaluation every year if needed.

- If a special education decision maker is dissatisfied with an evaluation, he/she may request an independent evaluation. Please see The Right to Special Education in Pennsylvania: A Guide for Parents and Advocates, located online athttp://www.elc-pa.org/resource/elc-parent-guide-right-to-special-education-2014/, for more information.

5. Special Education Services

Children with disabilities may be entitled to special education services.

- Children are eligible for special education if they have one of a list of identified disabilities and, as a result of the disability, require specially designed instruction.

- Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) children with disabilities who qualify for special education are entitled to a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

  These children are entitled to receive the following, where appropriate:
  - Specially designed instruction (in academics, vocational training, physical education, travel training etc.);
  - Related services (e.g., transportation, speech therapy, counseling, etc.);
  - Assistive technology devices and services (e.g., communication devices and training on how to use those devices);
  - Supplementary aids and services: supports designed to enable the child to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate;
  - Behavioral support services: when the child's behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others, the child should receive positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address the behavior; and
  - Transition Services: at age 14 the child's post-secondary school goals are assessed and services are provided to help the child achieve that goal.

- Special education decision makers who disagree with any aspect of their child's program may resolve disputes through mediation or due process hearings. They may also file complaints with the PA Department of Education.

- The rules regarding the provision of special education services are significantly different when a student is enrolled in private school or charter schools.

- **When a child moves to a new school district, the child's IEP (special education program) must be followed by the new school district.**
  - If a child with an IEP moves from one district to another, the new district must give the child "comparable" services until the school adopts the new IEP or the school and special education decision maker agree to a revised program.
  - Also consider whether the child needs a re-evaluation.

NOTE ON DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRANSITION SERVICES IN THE IEP AND INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) PLAN: While IL planning and services must begin at age 16, counties can provide IL services prior to that time. Transition services within the IEP, many of which overlap with IL services, must begin at age 14. Transition services can include: instruction in using public transportation, budgeting, cooking, access to college preparation programming (including information on application for Chafee Grants and other financial aid resources), high school and post-secondary vocational programming and linkages to OVR. IL workers are encouraged to coordinate IL planning and services with a special education student's transition planning and services to maximize the benefit to the youth.

6. Special Education Decision Makers

- Special Education Decision Makers work to engage the parent or, if the parent is not actively involved, the resource parent as the special education decision-maker. Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a birth or adoptive parent who is active in the child/youth's education is presumed to be the special education decision-maker unless a court has taken away the parent's right to make education decisions for the child/youth. If there is

no active parent, the special education decision-maker may be a person who is acting as a parent and in whose home the child/youth is living, or, if neither is available, a resource parent. If a child/youth does not have a parent, a person with whom the child/youth is living, or a resource parent, the school district should appoint a surrogate parent within 30 days. A court can at any time appoint a person to act as the child/youth's special education decision-maker when in the student's best interests. An individual appointed by a court for this purpose is the only person who may make special education decisions for the child.

- **REMEMBER**: Unless the person has been appointed by a Judge to consent to the initial evaluation for a child, neither child welfare professional nor any person employed by an agency involved in the care or education of the child can make special education decisions for a child.

- If engaging the parent or another special education decision-maker is not possible, (e.g., parental rights have been terminated or the parent cannot be located or the resource parent is unable or unwilling to perform this role), identify an individual to recommend as the surrogate parent or education guardian to the court or school. Special education decision-makers may request an appointment in one of the following ways:

  - Request that the school district appoint a surrogate parent within 30 days if (1) the school, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate a parent; and (2) there is no resource parent to fill this role; or (3) the child/youth is an unaccompanied homeless youth/child; or
  - Request that a family court Judge appoint a surrogate parent or education guardian. Even if there is a parent or resource parent available, a court can always appoint an alternative special education decision-maker if doing so is in the child/youth's best interests.

- For more information, see *Who Can Make Special Education Decisions for a Child with a Disability in Out of Home Care in Pennsylvania?* at http://www.elc-pa.org/resource/elc-fact-sheet-education-decision-makers/

7. School Discipline and Special Education Students

In general, children who receive special education services may be disciplined in the same way as other students except if the conduct is a manifestation of their disabilities or misbehavior due to the school not following child's IEP. A manifestation determination meeting must be held with 10 days of the conduct at issue.

- Even if a child's misbehavior is related to his or her disability, a school district may transfer the child to an appropriate alternative education program for up to 45 days when the behavior involves a weapon, drugs, or serious bodily injury to another person.

- If the child's misbehavior is NOT a manifestation of the child's disability, then the district may proceed with the regular education discipline procedures. Even if the child is sent to an alternative school or expelled, the district must ensure the child can make appropriate progress toward his or her IEP goals.

- If the education decision-maker disagrees with the determination (i.e. a determination that the misbehavior was not a manifestation of the disability), s/he can ask for a due process hearing. However, requesting a hearing will not stop the disciplinary action from proceeding.

- Children not yet receiving special education may be entitled to these protections if the parent has requested an evaluation in writing and has not yet been found ineligible.

***This is a complicated area of the law that may change; it may be helpful to seek legal advice for specific situations. ***

8. Section 504 Plans For Youth With Disabilities Who Do Not Qualify For Special Education Services.

Children with disabilities who do not qualify for special education services may be entitled to receive reasonable accommodations at school.

- "Disability" is defined, under these laws, as "any physical, mental or other health impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities." Major life activities include learning, walking, seeing, breathing, etc.

- Because public schools receive federal funding, they may not discriminate against students with disabilities. Thus, the district must provide the supports, services, and accommodations necessary to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in and to obtain the benefits of school programs.

- For example, a child with ADHD may need preferential seating, extra time to take tests and help with organizational skills. A youth with a mobility limitation may need classes to be on the first floor of a school or access to an elevator.

- The district and education decision-maker will create a "504 plan" or a "Service Agreement" that describes the accommodations that the youth will receive.

9. Services For Gifted Students

In PA, children who are "mentally gifted" are entitled to receive gifted education services.

- "Mentally gifted" students are entitled to receive gifted services, whether or not the student is also eligible for special education services.

- The school district and parents create a gifted individualized education program (GIEP) to outline the services, educational goals and objectives for the child.

- It is important to remember that students in foster care are equally entitled to receive gifted education services.

- Students placed by their parents in private schools or charter schools are not entitled to these services.

More information on gifted education is available at www.elc-pa.org.

10. The appropriate transfer of credits and issuance of a diploma.

- Per 22 Pa. Code § 4.74, PA regulations provide that credit granted by a public school "shall be accepted by all public schools and institutions in this Commonwealth upon the transfer of a student." If credit transfer is a problem for the youth, speak with the school's guidance counselor to address additional credits the student might have earned. Review with the education decision maker and the school all courses the student took and ensure that the school accurately counted the student's credits and partial-credits. Also, ensure that the school recognizes coursework substantially similar to the district's curriculum.

- Credit recovery programs should be considered, if available.

- If necessary, encourage the present school district to contact the prior school district or facility to assess whether credits accrued will satisfy the current school's graduation requirements. If the current school district cannot issue a diploma, determine whether a prior school district can. A youth with an IEP who completes his/her IEP program to the satisfaction of the IEP team must receive a diploma from his/her resident school district.

- A recent addition to PA's regulations provides that PA Department of Education can waive one or more of the state's high school graduation requirements on a case-by-case basis in order "to accommodate students who experience extenuating circumstances." 22 Pa. Code § 4.24(j). Waivers will be based upon receipt of a written request from a school district superintendent to the Secretary and may be granted to accommodate students who experience extenuating circumstances (including serious illness, death in immediate family, family emergency, frequent transfers in schools, or transfer from an out-of-state school in 12th grade).

11. Access To Education Records

Education decision makers have the right to receive a copy of, and control access, to their child's education records (these rights transfer to the child at age 18).

- Release of educational records is governed by a law known as the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- School records include most of the information a public school keeps on a child (grade, discipline, attendance, and special education records etc.) but do not include the personal notes of a teacher or administrator that are kept private.

- Parental consent is necessary to disclose school records to someone or some entity outside of the school system until a youth turns age 18. (The youth takes on that role at age 18.) The parent retains these rights unless one of the following exist:
  - Termination of parental rights has occurred;
  - The court has granted educational rights to another person; or
  - A judicial order authorizing the release of the records has been issued.

- Records can be transferred between schools without the education decision maker's consent. (When a youth transfers to a new school, the old school can transfer the records without seeking the consent of the education decision maker). If an education decision maker believes the child's education records are inaccurate or misleading, they have a right to request that the records be changed. If the school refuses to change the records the education decision maker may have a hearing to decide whether the record is inaccurate or

misleading. Even if the parent does not prevail at the hearing, he or she may attach a clarifying statement to the record.

12. School Discipline

- School districts may only discipline students according to the rules published and disseminated to students in a code of student conduct.

- Before a student is disciplined (detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, etc.) the student and parents must be told the reason for the discipline and the student must be given a chance to tell his or her side of the story.

- For a suspension of less than three days, anyone may ask for a meeting with the principal, on behalf of the student (Note: Suspensions of less than three days do not qualify for hearings).

- If the suspension is between four and ten days, the student must be offered an informal hearing no later than the fifth day of the suspension. The student must be allowed to make up missed assignments and to return to school at the end of the suspension.

- Students facing transfer to an alternative school are entitled to a formal hearing in Philadelphia and an informal hearing elsewhere in the state. Every alternative education program must review each student at the end of each semester to see if the student is ready to return to regular school. Child welfare professionals should check with the school as to when the semester ends in order to provide letters of support and advocate for the child/youth's return to regular education at that time. Note: Alternative education programs must offer at least 20 hours of academic instruction per week plus 2.5 hours of counseling.

- Students facing expulsion are entitled to a formal hearing before the school board or a committee. The expelling school district maintains the responsibility to provide some form of education to the expelled student, under the age of 17, unless the student relocates to another school district. If a student with a disability is expelled, the student is still entitled to (1) an education that will enable the student to continue to participate in the general curriculum and to progress towards meeting IEP goals, and (2) behavior interventions, services, and modifications to prevent recurrence of the misbehavior. A student who has been expelled from one school district is still entitled to attend regular school in another district to which they have moved unless currently expelled for a weapons offense (and in that situation, the student should be offered an alternative education program.) For a suspension of less than three days, anyone may ask for a meeting with the principal, on behalf of the student. (Note: Suspensions of less than three days do not qualify for hearings.)

13. Academic Services and No Child Left Behind Act Requirements.

- If the youth's school has failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress for more than two years in a row, the youth may:
  - Be eligible for free tutoring services, called Supplemental Educational Services; and
  - Be able to transfer to a better performing school in their school district.

- Children attending "persistently dangerous schools" are afforded the right to transfer to a "safe" school (that is, a school that is not on the list of dangerous schools).

- Children who are the victims of certain violent criminal offenses at school and have filed a police report also have the right to transfer to a “safe” school.

- Every school district must have a Student Services Plan for grades K-12 (or starting at Pre-Kindergarten if the district offers it) based on the needs of its students. In its Student Services Plan, each district must provide services in **each one** of the following categories:
  - Developmental services for students (such as guidance counseling and psychological services);

  - Diagnostic, evaluation, and referral services for students who are having problems achieving educationally despite their learning potential (such as crisis intervention, evaluation for special education, or psychological counseling); and

  - Consultation and coordination services for students who are experiencing chronic problems that require multiple services by teams or specialists (such as referral to community agencies or case management).

14. Rights Of Students And Families Whose Native Language Is Not English

- Students who are English Language Learners (ELL) are entitled to programs and services (such as English-as-a-Second-Language instruction) to help the child learn English as well as adjustments to the child’s other classes to make sure the child can understand what is being taught.

- Districts must provide interpretation and translation services to enable students and families to communicate with school personnel.

- ELL students must be given an opportunity to participate in special education, gifted, vocational, other school programs and extra-curricular activities.

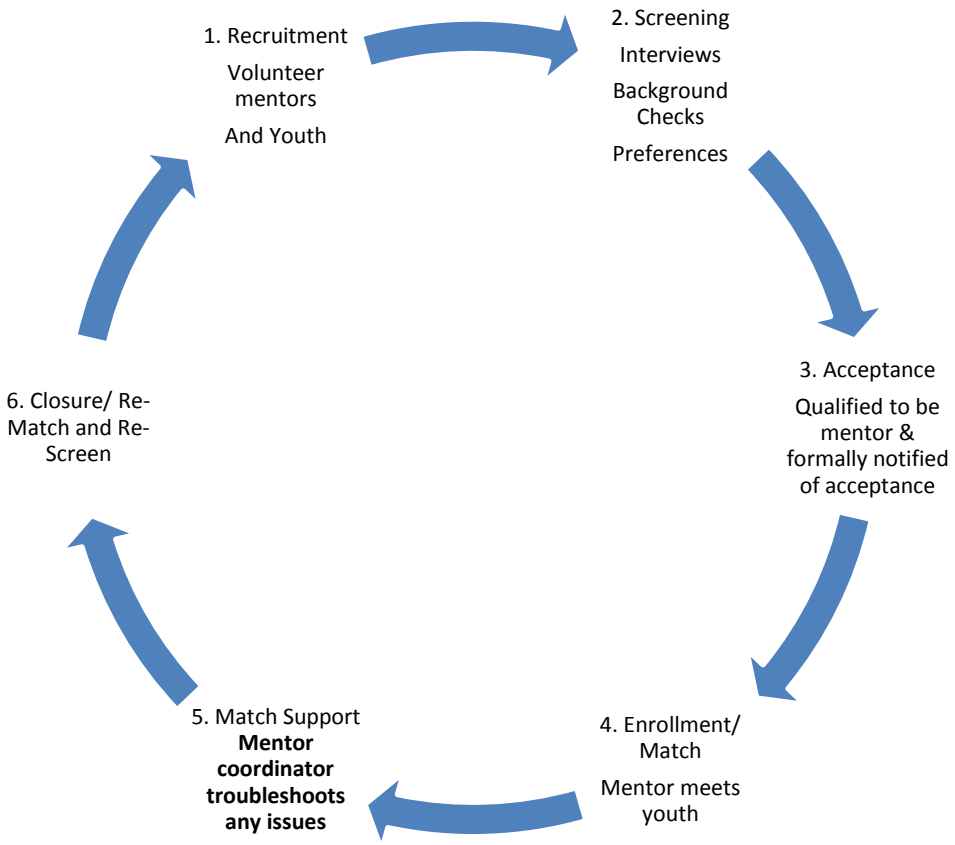
*The Education Law Center’s website provides valuable resources and can be accessed online at **www.elc-pa.org**. The agency also provides resources and assistance by contacting the Helpline at 215-238-6970.*

Appendix N: Mentoring/Support

Studies have shown that youth who are mentored maintain positive permanent connections that continue beyond age 21, and that they are less likely to engage in drug or alcohol use, resort to violence or drop out of school. Youth who are mentored are more likely to improve their grades and their relationships with others. Peer mentoring has been beneficial when former foster youth mentor current foster youth.

This appendix outlines the phases of a successful mentoring program and is intended to be a foundation for planning and discussion. Any mentoring program should be designed to ensure the safety of all those involved and be tailored to meet the needs of the local youth and community. Agencies implementing a mentoring program are encouraged to have policies and procedures reviewed by legal counsel.

The flowchart below outlines the critical phases of a mentoring program. It is meant to be a cyclical process that begins with the recruitment of volunteer mentors and youth.



1. Recruitment

A. Youth Recruitment

Recruiting youth who are in need of mentors and who are expressing an interest in being matched with a mentor is the first step of implementing a successful mentoring program. Some engagement strategies to use with youth include the following:

- Explaining the benefits of mentoring relationship in youth friendly language;
- Developing and use brochures, talking points, video presentations or any other media to engage and interest youth in the mentoring relationship; and
- Using youth who have already experienced mentoring programs to discuss the benefits with other youth.

B. Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers may be alumni of the foster care system or adults from the community. Young alumni involved in aftercare services are often a good place to start recruiting peer mentors. Other recruitment strategies include the following:

- Contacting human service agencies and Senior Citizen Centers;
- Partnering with service organizations such as Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, and other community groups;
- Partnering with local businesses or asking to be invited to their “community days”;
- Setting up information tables at local gyms or YMCA/YWCA;
- Contacting your local United Way;
- Developing and using brochures and other media to present youth and youth activities in a positive light to volunteers;
- Partnering with local faith-based organizations; and/or
- Developing public service announcements for local television and radio stations.

2. Screening

The screening process for volunteers and youth is the most critical step in the process to ensure the safety of all participants and that the most successful matches of individuals are made. It is also the most time intensive. Standard screening requirements may include the following:

A. Volunteer Screening

- A driver’s license and minimum car insurance coverage required by state law or access to public transportation;
- Criminal Background Check;
- FBI clearance is encouraged but not required for volunteers;
- Child Abuse History Record Clearance;
- An interview focusing on the following components:
  - The age of youth or youth related interests that the volunteer feels they would work best with;
  - Hobbies;
  - Interests;
  - Expectations for the mentoring relationship;
  - Reasons why the individual wants to volunteer;
  - Friends, family and relationships;
  - Drug/alcohol use;
  - A visit in the volunteer’s home;
  - An interview with the youth; and

    - An interview with the youth's caregiver.

- Agency policies to include the following:
    - Ground rules of the mentoring program;
    - Safety issues; and
    - The agency's right to refuse volunteers who will not be approved as mentors.

B. Youth Screening

- County Children and Youth Agencies must screen youth for participation in the mentoring program. The caseworker should participate in the referral process with the youth and their caretakers. County Children and Youth Agencies should consider policies and procedures related to mentors for youth with disabilities.

- County Children and Youth Agencies should screen youth to determine their appropriateness to participate in a mentorship relationship. This screening process includes developing policies and procedures to address the participation of youth who are currently acting out sexually or physically.

3. Acceptance

After all screening actions are complete, youth and volunteers should receive a formal notification of their approval or rejection to participate in the mentoring program. Agencies should work with their solicitor regarding rejection notifications.

The acceptance for both the youth and volunteer mentor should be based on the following:

- Successful interview;
- Successful completion of all background checks; and
- Successful home visit at the prospective mentor's residence.

4. Enrollment/Matching

The enrollment/matching process is based on the information gathered during the screening process. Quality matches of youth with volunteers is the goal from the onset in order to ensure the stability of positive, productive, long lasting and meaningful relationships for both parties. This process should include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Matching the youth with the mentor based on several of their common interests, background, needs, etc;
- Supervising a face-to-face meeting with the youth or mentor at youth's home with the parents or caregivers present;
- Facilitating a "get to know you" icebreaker;
- Exchanging contact information;
- Discussing the youth's IL plan;
- Discussing expectations for the match and ground rules for the relationship; and
- Discussing match supports that are available from the agency (see below).

5. Match Support

Match support is sometimes overlooked but is a crucial component of any match's success. This is especially true for the first three to six months of the match relationship. The following guidelines are encouraged:

- The agency caseworker checks in once per month with the mentor, youth and caregivers;
- Use a questionnaire aimed at determining what activities they are doing, where, how the relationship is developing, etc;

- Troubleshooting any problems to be proactive in discovering issues and providing support;
- Consistency in the schedule of meetings between the youth and the mentor;
- Volunteers should commit to at least one year of match with the youth; and
- Maintain documentation of activities, required paperwork, and any concerns and resolutions.

6. Closure/Re-Match/Re-Screen

Matches may need to close for a variety of reasons, (e.g. volunteer or youth moves, disinterest on behalf of volunteer or youth, busy schedules). The closure process should include the following:

- An exit interview conducted with youth and the mentor; and
- Written notification of the match's closure that is sent to the mentor, youth and parent/caregiver.

If a volunteer or youth wants to be re-matched after a match is closed, for whatever reason, the volunteer and youth should go through another screening and matching process. It is important, for safety reasons and to ensure the most accurate information is being reviewed, to conduct a thorough re-assessment and re-matching process.

Outcomes

Measuring and tracking outcomes is an important facet of any mentoring program. By measuring outcomes, one can determine the effect the mentoring relationship has had on the youth's life. In other words, how has this youth changed as a result of the mentoring relationship?
Here are some strategies for developing and tracking outcomes:

- Develop a logic model to visualize the connection between resources, inputs, outputs, and outcomes;
- Determine which measurement tools to use based on your population and program design – satisfaction surveys, outcome measurement tools, pre-tests/post-tests, etc.;
- Develop a tracking system or incorporate metrics into an already existing database;
- Review results on a semi-annual or annual basis to determine progress; and/or
- Share outcomes with funders or community.

Training

Orientation training as well as ongoing professional development training strengthens the mentors and mentorship programs. A minimum of six to eight hours of training is recommended with two or more training opportunities offered throughout the year.

Orientation training should include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Knowledge and awareness;
- Practice and discussion, such as case studies, role play, etc.;
- Adolescent development;
- Communication skills;
- Dealing with difficult issues and challenging behaviors;
- Discussion with experienced mentors; and
- Questions and answers.

Ongoing training should include, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Knowledge and awareness;
- Socializing and networking; and
- IL goals and activities.

Other Suggestions for Outreach:

- Mentor resource groups;
- Electronic communication for volunteers; and
- A mentor newsletter.

Website resources:

- www.nationalserviceresources.org
- www.tutormentorexchange.net
- www.mentoring.org/start_a_program/
- www.youthmentoring.org
- www.mentoryouth.com
- www.bbbs.org
- www.liveunited.org
- www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp

Appendix O: Sample Stipend Youth Notification

The following information is presented as examples for agencies to develop stipend programs and notification to youth. It also suggests how youth may earn stipends. The dollar amounts and categories are provided solely as examples and are not intended to be requirements.

"Sample" County Independent Living (IL) Program Stipend Notification

Definition and Purpose of a Stipend:
A stipend is money earned by a youth for participating in the IL Program. This notification is provided to you and explains how you may earn stipends. All stipend awards are based on the availability of funds and are subject to change.

Achievement Stipends:
Achievement stipends are awarded for achieving goals related to life skills, education, housing, employment, prevention, and support.

- Complete needs assessment $20
- Attend life skills class (eligible for six total) $10 each
- Obtain employment (part-time or full time) $50
- Maintain employment for at least one year $50
- Graduate high school $100

Nest Egg Stipend:
The Nest Egg stipend allows you to save for the future. This stipend is awarded when you meet the following conditions:

- Maintain active participation in the IL program;
- Create and maintain a personal budget; and
- Open a savings account.

When you save up to $500 in a bank account you may earn a stipend match up to $500.

Discretionary Stipend:
The Discretionary Stipend is available and may be awarded for independent living needs (e.g. work uniform, school books, and housing deposit), special occasions (e.g. prom, class ring, senior photos, student yearbook) and other approved emergency expenses.

You are eligible to receive up to $500 in discretionary stipends while enrolled in the IL Program. All stipends are approved at the discretion of the IL Coordinator and based on the availability of funding.

I have read and understand this policy and I agree to follow the guidelines.

_____ _____
Youth Signature Date

_____ _____
IL Coordinator/IL Caseworker Signature Date

Appendix P: Employment Resources

A youth's employment experience must also be assessed to determine his or her readiness for employment, including competitive job interviews, employment, and any existing skills in locating, obtaining and maintaining employment. This area may be assessed with the help of testing, a review of the youth's employment experience and individual counseling. A youth's employment successes are more likely to occur in placement settings that encourage and support the youth in all aspects of employment.

Programs and services related to employment may include:

- Subsidized employment;
- Practice interviews;
- Job application/search assistance;
- Job shadowing;
- Referral to job placement services; and
- Job follow-up activities.

Areas to assess:

- Career exploration;
- Employment readiness;
- Getting a job;
- Keeping a job; and/or
- Career/vocational planning.

Laws

In PA, as in many states, minors are limited to certain occupations and hours when they may be employed. More information can be found in the Child Labor Law Act of 1915, (P.L. 286, No. 177). This law specifically states, "No minor under eighteen years of age shall be employed or permitted to work in, about, or in connection with any establishment, or in any occupation, for more than six consecutive days in any one week, or more than forty-four hours in any one week, or more than eight hours in any one day." (Section 4)

Resources

PA Specific Employment Search Websites:

- http://www.scsc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/civil_service_home/9164
  http://www.paontheweb.com/pennsylvaniajobs.php
- http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=5278&mode=2
- http://pennsylvania.careers.org/
- http://www.pacareerzone.com

PA Specific Highlights:

Commonwealth Workforce Development System links businesses and individuals to PA's workforce development and is available online.

The PA Department of Labor & Industry offers the PA CareerLink and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

Regional Career Education Partnership Network

Regional Career Education Partnerships (RECEP), created by the PA Department of Labor and Industry, organizes within its local workforce area a collaborative network (e.g., schools, businesses, workforce and economic development entities, community-based organizations, local government agencies, WIB's, etc.) to better facilitate a variety of career preparation activities for youth, beginning in high school and continuing to post-secondary transition, with emphasis on those youth most in need of services. RECEP works with the following:

- Employers and other workplace partners to build demand for working with youth and to provide services to promote and support partner participation;
- Schools and youth organizations to build staff awareness of the value of learning outside the classroom, to promote buy-in, and to provide services that support school involvement;
- Youth, to connect them with appropriate, high-quality experiences and improve the quality of work-based learning; and
- All partners, to provide the communications.

More information is available online at the following websites:

- www.paworkforce.state.pa.us
- http://widinggroup.typepad.com/parcep/

DPW offers the Bureau of Employment & Training Programs.

The Commonwealth Workforce Development's website is https://www.cwds.state.pa.us/.

General information for youth is also available at these websites:

- http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ItsMyLife/Employment.htm
- http://www.teens4hire.org/resources.asp
- http://www.hireteen.com/
- http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Teens.shtml

Appendix Q: Sample Room and Board Youth Notification

The following information is presented as one example of a Room and Board notice for youth.

The IL Program offers services to youth who have left placement on or after their 18th birthday. This includes assistance with room and board (rent & food) payments.

You may request these services on a contractual basis. Services and funding will cease if contract obligations are not met. Services may be temporary, extended, or used during an emergency situation. Services are intended for youth who agree to assume complete responsibility for their living costs by the closing date of the contract.

Room and Board services must be requested and utilized prior to a youth's 21st birthday.

The following support is available for youth:

Emergency Room and Board
This short-term arrangement is available if you are at risk of homelessness or to prevent potentially serious conditions that may jeopardize your physical health. Payments are made to the housing resource on your behalf for no more than 20 nights. You must work with the IL coordinator on a daily basis to find more stable housing.

Short Term Room and Board
Short term room and board is designed to assist you if you are in need of assistance while on semester breaks from post-secondary education. This assistance may be provided for a period of time up to 90 days. Payments may be made to approved housing resources as defined by the IL Program coordinator.

Extended Room and Board
Extended room and board payments are meant to assist you while transitioning to a permanent housing arrangement. You may be eligible for payments for the following:

- Security deposit;
- Start-up costs (furniture, dishes, other household needs);
- Rent assistance/subsidy such as:
  - Months 1-3 (100% subsidized)
  - Months 4-6 (80% subsidized)
  - Months 6-8 (60% subsidized)
  - Months 8-10 (40% subsidized)
  - Months 10-12 (20% subsidized)
  - Month 13 (subsidy ends)

The actual amount of Room and Board stipends may vary and is based upon the youth's needs and available funding.

I have read, understand, and agree with the above notification.

_____ _____
Youth Signature Date

_____ _____
IL Coordinator/IL Caseworker Signature Date

Appendix R: Sample Aftercare Services Youth Notification

The following information is presented as one example of an Aftercare Services Youth Notification.

The "County" Independent Living Program offers Aftercare Services to youth who exit care on or after their 16th birthday. Services include a needs assessment, goal planning, life skills classes, referral to community services and one-on-one assistance with the Independent Living Caseworker.

Other services include support and financial assistance on a contractual basis to address the areas of housing, education, employment, life skills and prevention.

You may be eligible for services up until your 21st birthday and may participate whether or not you have ever participated in an Independent Living Program in the past.

I have read, understand and agree with the above notification.

_____ _____
Youth Signature Date

_____ _____
IL Coordinator/IL Caseworker Signature Date

Appendix S: Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy and Sample

What is a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy?

A Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy (Proxy) is a legal document that authorizes an individual who volunteers to become the Health Care Representative (HCR) to make health care decisions on behalf of a person in the event they are not able to make decisions for themselves. For example, if this person is unconscious, mentally incompetent, or otherwise unable to make decisions, the Proxy gives the HCR the legal authority to make decisions that will affect this person's care and treatment, allow access to medical records, as well as, decide to donate organs, authorize an autopsy, and dispose of their body, in the event of their death.

Who can be a Health Care Representative (HCR)?

A HCR must be over age 18 and is not a person's doctor or health care provider. This can include family members, friends or a trusted individual. The HCR must be willing to accept the responsibility of making critical health care decisions; however, they are immune from liability so long as they act in good faith. The HCR should be aware of a person's wishes in the event they are unable to make decisions for themselves. The HCR is the only person with the legal authority to make decisions about the care and treatment, even if others disagree. A person may designate an alternate HCR.

Why is having a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy important?

In the event that a person should become seriously ill or injured and cannot make medical decisions for themselves, someone will have to make those decisions on behalf of the individual. A person having a Proxy, and with an HCR they trust, will ensure that their wishes will be conveyed to medical providers. A person without an HCR leaves decisions about their care up to family, physicians or health care providers, and not necessarily in that order.

The following key points about the HCR and Proxy are provided.

- The Proxy must be signed by the Proxy owner and the HCR in the presence of two witnesses or one notary public;
- The signed Proxy cannot be overruled by family or physicians without court intervention; and
- The Proxy owner can revoke the Proxy at anytime by destroying the document and notifying the HCR orally or in writing.

Proxy Directive
(Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care)
Designation of Health Care Representative

I understand that as a competent adult, I have the right to make decisions about my health care. There may come a time when I am unable, due to physical or mental incapacity, to make my own health care decisions. In these circumstances, those caring for me will need direction and they will turn to someone who knows my values and health care wishes. By writing this durable power of attorney for health care, I appoint a Health Care Representative (HCR) with the legal authority to make health care decisions on my behalf and to consult with my physician and others. I direct that this document become part of my permanent medical records.

A) Choosing a Health Care Representative:

I,_____, hereby designate_____,

Of_____
(Home address and telephone number of health care representative)

as my HCR to make any and all health care decisions for me, including decisions to accept or refuse treatment, service or procedure used to diagnose or treat my physical or mental condition and decisions to provide, withhold or withdraw life-sustaining measures. I direct my HCR to make decisions on my behalf in accordance with my wishes as stated in this document, or as otherwise known to him or her. In the event my wishes are not clear, my HCR is authorized to make decisions in my best interests, based on what is known of my wishes. This durable power of attorney for health care shall take effect in the event I become unable to make my own health care decisions, as determined by the physician who has primary responsibility for my care, and any necessary confirming determinations.

B) Alternate Representatives:

If the person I have designated above is unable, unwilling or unavailable to act as my health care representative, I hereby designate the following person(s) to act as my health care representative, in order of priority stated:

1. Name_____ **2.** Name_____

Address_____ Address_____

City_____State_____ City_____State_____

Telephone_____Telephone_____

C) Specific Directions: Please initial the statement below which best expresses your wishes.

____My HCR is authorized to direct that artificially provided fluids and nutrition, such as by feeding tube or intravenous infusion, be withheld or withdrawn.
____My HCR does not have this authority, and I direct that artificially provided fluids and nutrition be provided to preserve my life, to the extent medically appropriate. *(If you have any additional specific instructions concerning your care you may use the space below or attach an additional statement.)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

D) Copies:

The original or a copy of this document has been given to my health care representative and to the following:

1. Name_____ **2.** Name_____

Address_____ Address_____

City_____State_____ City_____State_____

Telephone_____Telephone_____

E) Signature:

By writing this durable power of attorney for health care, I inform those who may become entrusted with my health care wishes and intend to ease the burden of decision making which this responsibility may impose. I have discussed the terms of this designation with my health care representative and he or she has willingly agreed to accept the responsibility for acting on my behalf in accordance with my wishes as expressed in this document. I understand the purpose and effect of this document and sign it knowingly, voluntarily and after careful deliberation.

Signed this_____day of_____, 20_____

Signature_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Telephone_____

F) Witnesses:

I declare that the person who signed this document, or asked another to sign this document on his or her behalf, did so in my presence, that he or she is personally known to me, and that he or she appears to be of sound mind and free of duress or undue influence. I am 18 years of age or older, and am not designated by this or any other document as the person's HCR, nor as an alternate HCR.

1. Witness_____ 2. Witness_____

Address_____ Address_____

City_____ State_____ City_____ State____

Signature_____ Signature_____

Date_____ Date_____

Appendix T: Independent Living Resources on the Internet

This list is intended to be helpful to IL Programs but is not meant to be exhaustive. There are many other websites with free resources for IL Programs. Please contact the PA Child Welfare Resource Center at 717-795-9048 before you purchase any resources because it may exist in the Independent Living Resource Lending Library and be available to you at no charge.

PA Youth Advisory Board (YAB) – This website is full of resources for Independent Living professionals and youth. You can also find the nearest regional YAB meetings in your area. The mission of the YAB is to educate, advocate, and create positive change in the child welfare system. For more information, please visit the website at www.independentlivingpa.org

Casey Life Skills – This is the host site for the Casey Life Skills Assessment as well as other free and low cost resources for youth. http://lifeskills.casey.org/

Permanency Pact – FosterClub – Internet-based free tool designed to encourage life-long, kin-like connections between a young person and a supportive adult. http://www.fosterclub.com/

Education Planner – This is an excellent site that guides youth through the entire post-secondary education process including an employment inventory, college/trade school search, applying for financial aid, etc. www.educationplanner.org

Youth Fostering Change, Teen Success Agreement – A youth developed written agreement for older youth, caregivers, and social workers to provide older youth age-appropriate activities and opportunities. This is a project of the Juvenile Law Center.
http://www.jlc.org/sites/default/files/topic_related_docs/Teen%20Success%20Agreement%20Packet%208%2029%2012.pdf

Transition Health Care Checklist – This is a very comprehensive checklist appropriate for youth as they transition to adulthood. It also includes several appendices helpful for youth and staff. To download this tool and resource, please visit the PA Department of Health website at www.health.state.pa.us/transitionchecklist

Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention – This website has the latest research and tools related to pregnancy prevention.
http://www.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.home

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago – As a leader in the field of research for "aging-out" youth, this site contains analysis and research on a wide variety of issues affecting current and former foster care youth. http://www.chapinhall.org/research/areas/Child-Welfare-and-Foster-Care-Systems

Internal Revenue Service – This site is an excellent resource for anyone interested in learning or teaching others how to file federal, state, and local income taxes.
http://www.irs.gov/app/understandingTaxes/index.jsp

Young Money – This website is a comprehensive source of information with free tools to learn about budgeting, bank accounts, credit cards, health insurance, etc. http://finance.youngmoney.com/home-budget/

Federal Trade Commission – This national agency website offers information about protecting consumers from unfair business practices.
http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft

AnnualCreditReport.com – This website is a centralized service for consumers to request free annual credit reports. It was created by the three nationwide consumer credit reporting companies - Equifax, Experian and TransUnion
http://www.annualcreditreport.com

Pennsylvania Attorney General – The PA Attorney General's website is another resource that can be beneficial to young consumers to obtain information or lodge complaints.
http://www.attorneygeneral.com/consumers.aspx

US Department of Justice – Division of Fraud – This resource offers information about credit identity theft.
http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/websites/idtheft.html

Annie E. Casey Foundation - Youth and Credit: Protecting the Credit of Youth in Foster Care
This guide provides advice on the best way for caseworkers and other adults to comply with the new federal law requiring child welfare agencies to request an annual credit report for youth in foster care starting at age 16 and until they leave the child welfare system — and to help young people resolve any issues that come up in those credit report checks.
http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid=%7B0AEC8ADC-43E8-441A-B651-B2F51EF725E9%7D

Credit Builders Alliance – Accessing Credit Reports for Foster Youth: A Reference Guide for Child Welfare Agencies
This reference guide is intended to provide child welfare agencies (CWAs) with basic information about the platforms and services the three major credit reporting agencies (CRAs) – TransUnion, Experian, and Equifax -- offer to help CWAs meet the federal requirements.
http://www.aecf.org/m/blogdoc/aecf-AccessingCreditReportsforFosterYouth-2013.pdf

Sample Host Home Rental Agreement - This referenced document provides an example of what a Host Home Agreement can include. http://www.in.gov/dcs/files/11_Tool_-_Host_Home_Agreement.pdf

National Resource Center for Youth Development – This website is geared more towards IL professionals and includes policy briefs, publications, and links to statewide and national resources.
http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) – This agency administers the Chafee Education Grant (ETG.) The ETG is a grant for current and former foster care youth for post-secondary education. Award amounts cannot exceed the cost of attendance and are subject to the availability of funds. http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml

Foster Care Alumni of America – This national group focused on connecting alumni of the foster care system to transform policy and practice. http://www.fostercarealumni.org/

University of Pittsburgh, PA Child Welfare Resource Center – This website hosts the monthly "e-blasts" that go to Independent Living coordinators. The "e-blasts" are full of free and low cost resources on a variety of topics. www.ilp.pitt.edu

Lambda Legal – This website is from a national organization committed to the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV. See the Resources for LGBTQ Youth fact sheet from the News and Publications menu. http://www.lambdalegal.org/publications/factsheets

Juvenile Law Center – This website offers a variety of resources for youth including the Youth Know Your Rights Manual, a database of county resources for older youth and a wide variety of local resources listed for each county in PA. http://www.jlc.org/resources/publications/know-your-rights-guide-youth-substitute-care

The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare - The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) provides child welfare professionals with easy access to vital information about selected child welfare related programs. The primary task of the CEBC is to inform the child welfare community about the research evidence for programs being used or marketed in California. The CEBC also lists programs that may be less well-known in California, but were recommended by the Topic Expert for that Topic Area. http://www.cebc4cw.org/

Find Youth Info Program Directory – Find Youth Info.gov provides a wealth of resources for youth serving agencies. Also included is a program directory of model programs. http://findyouthinfo.gov/program-directory

GetNYTD.org – Pennsylvania's National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) website for data entry and meet NYTD requirements. http://www.getnytd.org

Appendix U: Sample Transition Assessment

Transition Assessment

The following document is a suggested best practice assessment process, which will ultimately inform the required transition plan. The transition planning process should be led by youth and include all of the relevant personal and community resources. This assessment should inform the goals, action steps and timelines for the youth's transition plan. It is highly recommended that this transition assessment begin when youth turn 16 or are referred for Independent Living services.

Name of Youth:

Date of Birth: Case Number:

Youth's Current Address:

Caseworker (CYS):

IL/Transition Case Manager:

Court review Date:

Anticipated Date of Discharge:

Date Form Completed:

1. HOUSING

If other than the current placement, what is the youth's anticipated living arrangement after discharge from care? Please provide the anticipated plan and two contingency plans.

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge:

Specify:

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge: (Contingency Plan #1)

Specify:

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge: (Contingency Plan #2)

Specify:

Please use one of the following for type of housing planned after discharge:

1. Home of Relative
2. Supervised Independent Living
3. Adult group home
4. Housing provided by job/military
5. Public housing
6. Transitional Living Program/ Supportive housing
7. Privately rented housing (with roommates)
8. Shelter

Living Arrangement (list)	Cost to Maintain Arrangement (Rent, utilities, personal expenses, food, etc.)
Housing after Discharge:	
Contingency Plan 1:	
Contingency Plan 2:	

2. BUDGET

A. If applicable, describe the specific source of the youth's current and projected income (after discharge from agency placement or IL services) and the anticipated monthly income. If the source of income is employment, please list the name of the employer.

	Current	Projected
Source(s) of income		
Monthly Income		
Money in savings and/or checking	Name of Bank	Name of Bank
Name of Employer		
Hours per week		
Pay Rate		

B. If applicable, list the youth's estimated monthly expenses, after discharge, for the preferred living arrangement listed in question 1. (Does the youth have a realistic budget and adequate income to meet expected expenses?)

Type of Expense	Dollar Amount

Total Expenses	
Total Income	
Surplus/Deficit	

If the projected budget is not adequate to meet the expenses, what is the plan to address the deficit? Explain here.

3. LIFE SKILLS

Identify if the youth received services in the following skills areas and date(s) addressed:

Skills Area	Yes or No
Housing Skills and Practice Instruction related to housing search (including public and subsidized housing; and Mental Health/Mental Retardation group homes if appropriate.	Y N
Has the youth had an opportunity to practice adult living skills in a program such as a Supervised Independent Living or Transitional Living program?	Y N
Instruction in maintaining stable housing Other housing services (describe):	Y N
Life Skills Financial management and budgeting	Y N
Daily living instruction	Y N
Soft skills (communication, social skills, team-work, etc.)	Y N
Other life skills (describe):	Y N

Employment Skills	
Employment readiness/career information	Y N
Referral to CareerLink	Y N
Job shadowing	Y N
Summer or after-school jobs	Y N
Resume preparation; job interviewing	Y N
Social and workplace interaction skills	Y N
Other employment skills (describe):	Y N
Education Services	
Post-secondary educational planning and support	Y N
High school retention support	Y N
Tutoring	Y N
Study Skills	Y N
Referral to Student Assistance Program (SAP)	Y N
Transitional Individualized Education Plans (IEP)	Y N
Other educational activities (describe):	Y N
Wellness/Prevention (Well-Being)	
Wellness (physical and mental health; finding adult-system providers)	Y N
Healthy relationships	Y N
Prevention – for example, Drug and Alcohol (D&A), pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), etc.	Y N
Other wellness/prevention services (describe):	Y N

Mentoring/Permanent Connections Participation in Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Units of Service – child profile, child preparation and/or child specific recruitment. Mentoring	○ Y ○ N ○ Y ○ N

4. PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

List information for individuals on whom the youth can rely for support after discharge from care.

Name/Address	Contact information	Relationship to youth
Name Address 1 Address 2	Phone Email	
Name Address 1 Address 2	Phone Email	
Name Address 1 Address 2	Phone Email	
Name Address 1 Address 2	Phone Email	
Name Address 1 Address 2	Phone Email	

If youth cannot identify any or sufficient permanent connections, is the youth ready for discharge from care? What is the plan to build permanent connections for the youth? Explain here:

5. EDUCATION

If the youth is still in high school or taking his/her General Equivalency Diploma (GED), list the school or program she/he attends, the address and telephone number.

Name of School:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Key Contact or Liaison Name:

Contact's Title:

Phone Number:

Was the youth advised that he/she may remain in substitute care while enrolled in school?

○ Yes ○ No

If the youth is currently enrolled in high school:

What is the current grade level?

○ 8th ○ 9th ○ 10th ○ 11th ○ 12th

Is an IEP in place? ○ Yes ○ No

Has a transition IEP been developed? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, is the transition IEP in effect? What are the provisions? (Briefly describe):

Are the IEP or disability services adequate? ○ Yes ○ No

Will the youth change schools after discharge? ○ Yes ○ No

If yes, when was or will the new school be contacted?

If the youth has not graduated from high school or earned a GED and is not enrolled in high school or a GED program, what is the youth's plan to complete his/her high school education? Explain here:

Describe the youth's plan for post-secondary education (if applicable):

Post-secondary institution or training program that the youth will attend:	
Was the youth informed of the SAT and college application fee waiver process?	◯ Yes ◯ No If no, explain:
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form was completed.	◯ Yes ◯ No
Chafee Education and Training Grant and PA State Grant applications submitted.	◯ Yes ◯ No
Contact with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) if applicable. Provide the OVR training/resource specialist's name.	◯ Yes ◯ No
List all scholarship and financial aid applications that were completed and submitted.	
List other applications to colleges, universities or other types of post-secondary training that were completed.	
Describe the youth's housing plans while in school and on vacations (describe cost and how cost will be met in question 1 if the youth chooses not to remain in care.)	

6. DESCRIBE THE YOUTH'S PLAN for EMPLOYMENT/CAREER

CAREER GOALS	
Vocational Training or job shadowing plans	
CareerLink or Workforce Investment Act (WIA) applications for summer or full-time employment	◯ Yes ◯ No
Contact with OVR. Provide the OVR training/resource specialist's name.	◯ Yes ◯ No
Does youth have paper or electronic copy of his/her resume?	◯ Yes ◯ No If no, when?

Is the youth currently employed? If yes, list the name of the employer.	○ Yes ○ No If no, does youth have any work experience?
Other:	

7. PREVENTION & WELLNESS

The youth's plan for healthcare after discharge from agency placement (List below):

Type of health insurance (or plan for application):	
Has the agency or the youth applied for Medical Assistance?	○ Yes ○ No If no, when:
Has the youth applied for SSI? (if applicable) Effective 2010, the Social Security Administration (SSA) may accept an SSI application from a disabled youth in foster care up to 90 days before federal foster care payments are expected to end. This is an exception to the general rule of accepting an SSI application in the month before the month of eligibility. This policy will aid disabled youth in foster care to make the transition to adult life by helping to ensure that they have income and health benefits in place.	○ Yes ◉ No
Name, phone and address of the primary medical provider:	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2
Name, phone and address for additional health care provider, if applicable :	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2

Name, phone and address for primary mental health provider (if needed):	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2
If the youth is prescribed medication, is s/he able to take the medication on his/her own?	◯ Yes ◯ No If no, explain the medication distribution plan for aftercare
Was the youth informed about designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on their behalf if they are unable to make such decisions and the youth does not have or does not want, a relative to make such decisions?	◯ Yes ◯ No If yes, when:
Did the youth request and receive assistance on how to execute a health care power of attorney or health care proxy?	◯ Yes ◯ No
Name, phone and address of local health clinic for uninsured:	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2
Name, phone and address of local family planning clinic:	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2
Name, phone and address of local community mental health provider for uninsured:	Name Phone Address 1 Address 2

Behavioral Health

Is the youth currently receiving treatment or therapy for behavioral health needs (including drug and/or alcohol treatment)? If yes, please specify the youth's specific diagnosis/treatment needs, including any needed medications:

Yes No

Is youth currently in counseling/ therapy/treatment? Yes No	Name & Phone of Provider: Name Phone	Date of last appointment: Date of next appointment:
Has youth previously completed counseling/therapy/treatment? Yes No	Name & Phone of Provider: Name Phone	Date of last appointment: Reason for discharge:

Does the youth have any specific behavior health care needs (including treatment for drug and/or alcohol abuse) that require continued treatment (including any prescribed medication) after discharge?

Yes No

(If yes, describe plans for follow-up care, medications needed and resources provided)

Does the youth have a disability that would prevent him or her from working? Yes No	If yes, has an application for SSI been submitted? Yes No Date Submitted:
Does the youth have significant behavioral health issues? Yes No	If yes, has a referral for a case manager been made to the county office of behavioral health? Yes No Date of referral:

Is the youth mentally challenged? Yes No

If yes:

Has he or she registered with the Office of Mental Retardation? Yes No Date registered:

Has a Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) been completed? Yes No Date Completed:

Has a supports coordinator been assigned? Yes No

Name: Phone:

Is the youth autistic? Yes No

If yes, has the Bureau of Autism been contacted? Yes No Date contacted:

Reproductive/Sexual Health		
Has youth received comprehensive reproductive/sexual health information? ○ Yes ○ No	Name Address City, State, Zip Phone	Date of last Date of next
Is youth receiving reproductive/ sexual health care or treatment? ○ Yes ○ No	Name Address City, State, Zip Phone	Date of last exam: Date of next exam:
Is youth currently pregnant? ○ Yes ○ No If yes, is youth currently receiving treatment? ○ Yes ○ No	Name Address City, State, Zip Phone	Date of last appt: Date of next appt:

8. TRANSITION CONFERENCES

List the transition planning meetings or conferences that were held or are scheduled for the youth and their dates (these may include: Child Permanency Planning, Family Service Plan meetings, Family Group Decision- Making meetings)

Type of Meeting	
Child Permanency Plan ○ Yes ○ No	Family Group Decision-Making (FGDM) ○ Yes ○ No
IL Planning Meeting ○ Yes ○ No	Transition Planning Meeting ○ Yes ○ No
Transition IEP Meeting ○ Yes ○ No	
Other:	

9. COMMUNITY RESOURCE CHECKLIST

Resource	Yes or No
Was the youth informed of his/her right to request to remain in, or return to, agency placement and care until age 21 provided they meet the required criteria?	○ Yes ○ No
Was information presented to the youth regarding re-entry into care or trial discharge?	○ Yes ○ No

Did the youth receive the Guide to Scholarships and Financial Aid?	○ Yes ○ No
Was the youth informed of his/her eligibility for Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) funding for post-secondary education? Was youth given an application?	○ Yes ○ No
Was the youth informed of Social Security Disability or any other applicable Social Security benefits and his/her possible eligibility?	○ Yes ○ No
If youth is an American Indian or Alaskan Native adoptee, was the youth informed of the right to petition the court for tribal identification information from his or her adoption records?	○ Yes ○ No
For any youth who is an adoptee, was information provided on how to request data from his or her adoption records, from the court, agency, Adoption Medical History Registry and the Department of Health's Office of Vital Statistics?	○ Yes ○ No
Did the youth receive the Know Your Rights Manual?	○ Yes ○ No
Other resources including websites: www.educationplanner.org; http://lifeskills.casey.org/; www.pheaa.org; www.fosterclub.com; etc…	○ Yes ○ No

10. YOUTH WHO ARE PARENTS

Child's name	Date of Birth	Address where child resides	Is youth in contact with the child?
Name Case Number# if dependent		Caregiver Name Address	○ Yes ○ No
Name Case Number# if dependent		Caregiver Name Address	○ Yes ○ No
Name Case Number# if dependent		Caregiver Name Address	○ Yes ○ No
Name Case Number# if dependent		Caregiver Name Address	○ Yes ○ No

Has youth taken/completed any parenting classes?	○ Yes ○ No	Name of provider:
Has referral to WIC, Family Center, Fatherhood Programs and/or other parent support programs been made?	○ Yes ○ No Provider:	Are there plans for referrals? ○ Yes ○ No Agencies?

Briefly describe youth's plans/goals for contact with his/her children after discharge. (Will the child live with the youth? Does the youth need/have child care for the child? Did the youth applied for child care subsidies? If the child is not residing with the youth, does the youth have a goal that the children live with him/her?)

11. IMMIGRATION

Is the youth a United States Citizen? ○ Yes ○ No	Country of origin:
If not a U.S. citizen, is the youth eligible for Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS)? ○ Yes ○ No *Youth is unmarried* *Youth is in foster care, appointed a guardian, or adopted* *Youth is under 21 years of age* *Family Court has found youth "eligible for long term foster care"*	
If eligible for SIJS, was the youth referred to an immigration attorney? ○ Yes ○ No	
Name of Attorney/Law Office:	
Phone Number:	Date of referral:
SIJS application has been completed/submitted. Date Submitted:	
Interview with immigration officer has been scheduled. Date:	
Medical appointments for SIJS have been arranged. Date:	
SIJS filing fee payments have been arranged. Briefly Explain:	

12. YOUTH WHO ARE/WERE IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Is the youth currently on probation? ○ Yes ○ No

Name of probation officer:

Conditions of probation (Explain)

Based on the following criteria

Is the youth eligible to apply to have his or her record expunged? ○ Yes ○ No

Youth's charge was dismissed OR ○ Yes ○ No

It has been 6 months since youth was discharged from consent decree supervision OR ○ Yes ○ No

Youth was discharged from probation 5 years ago and has never been charged with another crime ○ Yes ○ No

Youth is over 18 years old and the District Attorney has consented to expunge record ○ Yes ○ No

If eligible, has youth spoken with his or her attorney or probation officer about expunging records?

○ Yes ○ No

Date contacted:

Record has been expunged (date of order to expunge):
Has youth received a copy of "Juvenile Record: A Know Your Rights Guide for Youth in Pennsylvania? This guide is available from free download at http://www.independentlivingpa.org/rights.htm Yes No If no, when will youth receive a copy?

13. KEY TRANSITION DOCUMENTS FOR YOUTH

Item	Date or projected date given to youth
Birth Certificate	
Social Security Card	
State Photo ID or U.S. Passport	
Health Information/Medical Records including immunizations	
Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy	
Educational Information/Records	
Copies of any Credit History Records	
Copy of IEP (if applicable)	
Medical Access Card (if available)	
CY60 – Proof of former foster care status and Medical Assistance Coverage (if discharged after age 18)	
Social Security Benefits (if needed)	
Family/Tribal Contact Information	
Immigration Documents	
Legal documents relating to custody or guardianship	
Court review	
Court order	
Selective Service Registration - males only	
Voter Registration	

14. SUGGESTED DOCUMENTS FOR YOUTH

Child Profile	
Life Book	
Driver's Permit and/or License	
Bank Accounts – Checking/Savings	

15. ADDITIONAL YOUTH OR COUNTY-SPECIFIC AREAS FOR ASSESSMENT

Reminder that all identified areas of need should be discussed with youth to jointly develop goals and an action plan in the youths CPP/IL plan.

Appendix V: Sample 90 Day Transition Plan

This 90 day Transition Plan should be completed after a comprehensive transition assessment and connected to the youth's Permanency/Independent Living Plan. The Transition Assessment included with this plan should be started at least one year before the youth is expected to transition and updated as needed in order to prepare for a successful transition.

Name of Youth: Date of Birth:

Case Number: Caseworker (CYS):

IL/Transition Case Manager:

Court Review Date: Anticipated Date of Discharge:

Date Form Completed:

1. HOUSING

If other than the current placement, what is the youth's anticipated living arrangement after discharge from care? Please provide the anticipated plan and two contingency plans.

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge:

Specify:

Address:

Monthly cost: (include any rent, utilities, etc.)

Projected monthly income:

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge: (Contingency Plan #1)

Specify:

Address:

Monthly cost: (include any rent, utilities, etc.)

Projected monthly income:

Please use one of the following for type of housing planned after discharge:

1. Home of Relative
2. Supervised Independent Living
3. Adult Group home
4. Housing provided by job/military
5. Public housing
6. Transitional Living Program/ Supportive housing
7. Privately rented housing (with roommates)
8. Shelter

Anticipated type of housing planned after discharge:
(Contingency Plan #2)

Specify:

Address:

Monthly cost: (include any rent, utilities, etc.)

Projected monthly income:

2. BUDGET

If applicable, describe the specific source of the youth's anticipated monthly income after discharge from placement or IL services. Additionally, list the youth's monthly expenses after discharge for the preferred living arrangements listed in question 1.

Income:	Expense:
Monthly Surplus:	Monthly Deficit:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

3. LIFE SKILLS

Has the youth complete Independent Living instruction? Please identify areas in which the youth has not received Life Skills services and may need additional support

Yes No

Does the youth have adequate plans for transportation upon discharge? Driver's License? Access to public transportation? Describe:

Yes No

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

4. PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

Identify if the youth has received services in the following skills areas and date(s) addressed:

Does the youth have permanent connections in the community?

Please list contact information of people in the community who the youth can rely on for support after being discharged from care.

Name:	Name:	Name:
Relationship:	Relationship:	Relationship:
Address:	Address:	Address:
Address 2:	Address 2:	Address 2:
Phone:	Phone:	Phone:
Email:	Email:	Email:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

5. EDUCATION

Has the youth graduated from high school or earned a General Education Diploma (GED)?

○ **Yes** ○ **No**

Check highest grade completed?

○ **Lower than 8th Grade** ○ **8th** ○ **9th** ○ **10th** ○ **11th** ○ **12th**

○ **1 year post secondary** ○ **Associates Degree**

Post-Secondary Education Plans:

What are the youth's plans for post-secondary education (if applicable)?

Education Contacts: (e.g. Guidance Counselor, Admissions Counselor, Financial Aid Counselor, etc.)

Name:

Relationship to Youth:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

6. EMPLOYMENT

Is the youth employed?

○ **Yes** ○ **No**

Employer:

Location:

Supervisor's name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

7. PREVENTION & WELLNESS

Does the youth have any specific physical or behavioral health needs that require continued treatment (including any prescribed medications)? If yes, please describe plan for follow-up care and resources provided.

○ **Yes** ○ **No**

Please provide contact information for all medical providers.

Insurance Name:

Policy ID#: Address:

Phone number: Address 2:

Date of last medical exam:	Date of next medical exam:
Date of last dental exam:	Date of next dental exam:
Date of last vision exam:	Date of next vision exam

Medications and # of refills remaining:

Date of SSI Application (if applicable)

Effective immediately, the Social Security Administration (SSA) may accept an SSI application from a disabled youth in foster care up to 90 days before federal foster care payments are expected to end. This is an exception to the general rule of accepting an SSI application in the month before the month of eligibility. This policy will aid disabled youth in foster care to make the transition to adult life by helping to insure that they have income and health benefits in place.

Has the youth been informed about designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on their behalf if they are unable to make such decision and the youth does not have or does not want, a relative to make such decisions?

Yes No

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

8. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Resources Provided:

Emergency Contact:

Family Resources:

Other key contact information:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

9. TRANSITION CONFERENCES

Please attach conference plans and or documentation.
In a narrative, please describe the youth's involvement in the transition plan.

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

10. YOUTH WHO ARE PARENTS

Briefly describe youth's plan/goals for contact with his/her children after discharge.

Will the children live with the youth? ○ Yes ○ No

Does the youth need /have childcare for the children? ○ Yes ○ No

Has the youth applied for childcare subsidies? ○ Yes ○ No

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

11. IMMIGRATION

Is the youth a United States Citizen? ○ Yes ○ No

If no, provide an action plan and documentation describing what's being done to resolve the concern.

12. YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Attach the youth's conditions of probation as well as youth's plans to meet each condition and any services provided. (If applicable)

Youth's Public Defender:

Name of Probation Officer:

Record Expunged on:

Please provide an action plan to address areas where the youth may need additional support.

13. KEY TRANSITION DOCUMENTS FOR YOUTH

Item	
Birth Certificate	◯ Yes ◯ No
Social Security Card	◯ Yes ◯ No
State Photo ID, Driver's License or U.S. Passport	◯ Yes ◯ No
Health Information/Medical Records including immunizations	◯ Yes ◯ No
Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy	◯ Yes ◯ No
Educational Information/Records	◯ Yes ◯ No
Copy of IEP (if applicable)	◯ Yes ◯ No
Copies of any Credit History Records	◯ Yes ◯ No
Medical Access Card (if available)	◯ Yes ◯ No
CY60 – Proof of former foster care status and Medical Assistance Coverage (if discharged after age 18)	◯ Yes ◯ No
Social Security Benefits (if needed)	◯ Yes ◯ No
Family/Tribal Contact Information	◯ Yes ◯ No
Immigration Documents	◯ Yes ◯ No
Legal documents relating to custody or guardianship	◯ Yes ◯ No
Court review	◯ Yes ◯ No
Court order	◯ Yes ◯ No
Selective Service Registration - males only	◯ Yes ◯ No
Voter Registration	◯ Yes ◯ No

14. SUGGESTED DOCUMENTS FOR YOUTH

Child Profile	◯ Yes ◯ No
Life Book	◯ Yes ◯ No
Driver's Permit and/or License	◯ Yes ◯ No
Bank Accounts – Checking/Savings	◯ Yes ◯ No

15. YOUTH SPECIFIC OR COUNTY SPECIFIC PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Please provide any youth/county specific plans that are not listed elsewhere in this document.

16. DISCHARGE PLAN CREATION, REVIEW and SIGNATURE STATEMENT

Youth must sign youth initials next to all that apply:

- [ ] I was informed of my right to remain in placement and care until age 21 for educational, employment or medical/behavioral health reasons.
- [ ] I was informed of my right to request the court to return to placement and care until age 21 if I was discharged after age 18 or 90 days prior to my 18th birthday.
- [ ] I was informed that I may be eligible to receive Medical Assistance coverage until age 26 if I was discharged on or after age 18 and receiving Medical Assistance at the time of my discharge.
- [ ] I have participated in the development of my discharge plan
- [ ] I understand this plan and believe the information in the plan is accurate.
- [ ] I received a copy of all the resources & documents listed in this plan.
- [ ] I believe this discharge plan will help me achieve the long-term goals I have set for my life.
- [ ] I received a copy of this plan.
- [ ] I had the opportunity to address my own specific needs related to my discharge and have them considered as part of this discharge plan.

SIGNATURES:

Youth: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date _____

Resource Parent: _____ Date _____

Permanent Connection: _____ Date _____

IL Case Manager/IL Coordinator: _____ Date _____

CYS Caseworker: _____ Date _____

Private Provider Agency: _____ Date _____

Guardian Ad Litem/Child Advocate: _____ Date _____

Court Appointed Special Advocate: _____ Date _____

Other: _____ Date _____

Other: _____ Date _____

Appendix W: Credit History Review and Resolution

What is a Credit Report?

A credit report is a record of a person's credit activities. It lists any credit card accounts or loans the person has, the balances, and how regularly payments are made, as well as identifying information. Nationwide Credit Reporting Agencies (CRAs) are private companies that sell the information in credit reports to creditors, insurers, employers and other businesses that use it to evaluate a person's applications for credit, insurance, employment, or renting a home. There are three nationwide CRAs (TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian).

What Information is in a Credit Report?

A credit report contains identifying information, lists of accounts, credit inquiries, items of public record, and positive and negative entries.

- Identifying Information – The name (including nicknames and abbreviations), addresses (current and past), Social Security number, date of birth, and employment information used to identify an individual.
- Credit Accounts – The type of accounts (credit card accounts, mortgages or home equity loans, and installment accounts, like car loans), the date the accounts were opened, any credit limits, loan amounts, account balances, and payment history. This includes the contact information for the holder of the account.
- Credit Inquiries – When a person applies for credit or a loan, the lender may ask for a copy of the borrower's credit report. The credit inquiries section of a credit report will list lenders who have accessed a person's credit report within the last two years.
- Public Records and Collections – Information including bankruptcies, foreclosures, lawsuits, wage garnishments, liens, and judgments from state and county courts, and overdue debts from collection agencies.
- Positive Accounts and Negative Items– Positive information includes the payment of loans and other debts. Negative items include late payments and debt that was charged-off or was sent to a collection agency. Account numbers and addresses for creditors also are listed.

Should Youth in Foster Care Have a Credit Report?

No. Because minor children do not usually have the legal capacity to sign a contract or apply for credit on their own, most children and youth do not have credit reports. Therefore, if a credit report does exist for a person younger than 18, whether in foster care or not, it may be due to error, fraud or identity theft. The credit reporting agencies will not knowingly disclose credit report information for a minor, except to a parent, guardian or custodian of the child.

Therefore, in most cases, the CCYA requesting a credit report for a youth in foster care will simply be confirming that no such report exists. However, when a credit report does

exist for a youth, it indicates that there is likely a need to correct information and take action to protect the identity and future credit worthiness of the youth.

What is Child Identity Theft?

Child identity theft happens when someone uses a minor's personal information to commit fraud. A thief may steal and use a child's information to get a job, government benefits, medical care, utilities, car loans, or a mortgage. Avoiding, discovering, and undoing the damage resulting from the theft of a child's identity can be a challenge.

Adults can monitor their own credit reports every few months to see if someone has misused their information, and order a fraud alert or credit freeze on their credit files to stymie further misuse. A thief who steals a child's information may use it for many years before the crime is discovered.

Children and youth in foster care are particularly vulnerable to identity theft because their personal information is often shared widely among various caretakers, service providers and schools. The misuse of the child's identity may not be discovered until the youth exits the foster care system and applies for a cell phone, job, student loan or apartment.

When a child or youth in foster care is a victim of identity theft, there may be a credit report associated with the youth, but it may contain errors in the identifying information, like the date of birth and address. This is because the thief may use the child's Social Security number, but his own date of birth and address. The CCYA may have knowledge of different birthdates, Social Security numbers, and names used for the child or youth in foster care and providing this information to the CRAs will help them determine if a credit report does exist for the youth.

How Does the CCYA Make Contact with the Credit Reporting Agencies?

Youth in foster care qualify for a free credit report annually from each of the major credit reporting agencies under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). The common method to obtaining credit reports for adults using the www.annualcreditreport.com website, cannot be used to obtain the credit report of a minor child.

To facilitate successful implementation of the requirement to check credit reports for youth in foster care, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) met with each of the three major CRAs, individually and as a group, to discuss the new requirement to obtain the credit report of youth ages 16 and older in foster care and to obtain information to provide to state child welfare agencies on how best to comply with this new requirement since the website cannot be used. Each of the three main CRAs has provided information that is included in this appendix.

ACF had discussed the idea of the CRAs developing a universal or automated process to obtain the credit reports of youth in foster care because no such mechanism or system was currently available. During the development of this Appendix each CRA has developed improved mechanisms to assist states comply with federal requirements. The following information is provided based on what is currently available. Each CRA has provided information on who to contact at each of the agencies so that each the CCYA and each CRA can develop a workable approach to obtaining the credit reports of youth in foster care.

Experian prefers that credit history checks be completed online but requires counties to sign a user agreement. There are no charges to use Experian. Since Pennsylvania is state supervised, county administered, the state may not enter into an agreement with Experian; therefore, counties must individually set up with them. Counties may also submit paper submissions. For more information on the enrollment process for online access, please contact Paul Hernandez at Experian at paul.a.hernandez@experian.com or telephone 972-390-3710.

TransUnion prefers that credit history checks be completed online but requires counties to sign a user agreement. There are no fees for child welfare agencies to use TransUnion. Since Pennsylvania is state supervised, county administered, the state may not enter into an agreement with TransUnion; therefore, counties must individually set up with them. Counties may also submit paper submissions. For more information on how to obtain the user agreement and online access for TransUnion, please contact Angela Pescatore, Sr. Customer Service and Sales Support at TransUnion, at aharp@transunion.com or telephone 714-680-7268.

Equifax prefers that credit history checks be completed online and requires counties to sign a user agreement and submit an online application. In order to start enrollment counties must contact Equifax to obtain their user agreement. Counties must review the agreement and edit the agreement omit any language concerning fees. Before signing the agreement make sure that Equifax is in agreement to all changes, if so counties may sign and begin enrollment. Once both parties have signed the contract, Equifax will direct the county to complete their online application with a unique Online Application link that must be completed within 45 days. When the Online Application is completed the county will receive information on access to Equifax's ePORT system. Please note counties should not pay any fees to Equifax. If for some reason Equifax is not willing to omit the fees related to this service please contact OCYF. Counties may also submit paper submissions. For more information on how to obtain the user agreement and online access for Equifax, please email CFS@equifax.com.

OCYF will notify CCYA of new information or changes when available.

Who is Responsible to Obtain Credit Reports?

The CCYA must identify a Credit History Coordinator and designate staff responsible to obtain credit reports. This role may be filled by any staff person of the agency and need not be an IL or agency caseworker. It is recommended that non-caseworker staff manage most activities; however, caseworker or IL staff are the most appropriate staff to share the results (including no findings) with the youth.

Does the Requirement to Obtain Credit Reports Apply to Youth Age 18 and Older in Foster Care?

For states that have exercised either the Title IV-E option to redefine "child" and increase the maximum age for title IV-E or that exercised the AFDC plan option to serve and claim title IV-E for youth past age 18, the requirement to assist foster youth age 18 or older in obtaining credit reports is applicable. However, because these young people have reached the legal age of majority, they may also request their own free credit report. Therefore, the CCYA must have an approach in place to work with the young adult in foster care to obtain their credit report and then work with them to dispute any inaccuracies. If a youth over age 18 objects to having his credit report requested, the

CCYA must document efforts and file in the youth's case record. In this instance, the CCYA will not be considered out of compliance if it fails to obtain a credit report due to the young adult's objection.

Foster Youth process for disputing the file through the National Consumer Assistance Center (NCAC):

- If the agency chooses to dispute items on the youth's report, they must submit to us the court ordered document indicating that the youth is in foster care and documentation for the agency to act in the capacity of the court order.
- The agency shall send all identification information of the youth, including full name, current address, and social security number, date of birth, address within the past two years or the credit report number from the report that was received.
- The agency shall indicate what accounts do not belong to the youth, indicating that the youth is a minor child. A dispute process will be initiated with the designated creditor and the results will be sent to the designated agency.
- Note: The CCYA may also choose to dispute any information reported directly with the data furnisher.

How to Clear a Youth in Foster Care's Credit Report

If it is discovered that a foster child is a victim of identity theft, take the following steps on the youth's behalf to prevent further harm. Each CRA has varying processes to handle requests for minors when they have been a victim of identity theft but below is a general outline of what to do. Keep a written record with the details of your efforts and copies of all correspondence. Agencies must designate a responsible staff person or other agency to resolve any discrepancies. In some counties, it may be appropriate to use court-appointed advocates for this task.

1. Contact the credit reporting companies

Contact the three nationwide CRA. Explain that the child is a minor and cannot legally enter into any type of contract. To prove that the child is a minor, send the credit reporting companies a copy of the child's birth certificate or other documentation of age, such as a court order, and a letter asking them to remove all accounts, application inquiries, and collection notices from the credit report associated with the child's name or personal information. Documentation may also be needed to verify that the youth is in foster care and the agency is authorized to act of the youth's behalf.

2. Place an initial fraud alert

If a credit report was created for the child as a result of identity theft, consider placing an initial fraud alert on the report. An initial fraud alert requires potential creditors to verify a person's identity before extending credit. When a creditor knows that a minor child is involved, it will not ordinarily extend credit.

To place an initial fraud alert, contact any one of the three credit reporting companies. The company that you call must contact the other two. All three will place the initial fraud alert on the report they have for the child. After placing the initial fraud alert, the credit reporting company will explain the youth's rights, including the right to get a free credit report from each credit reporting company.

3. Consider a credit freeze

If there is a credit report for the child, the CCYA can also consider placing a credit freeze. During a credit freeze (also known as a security freeze), potential creditors cannot get the child's credit report, which makes it less likely an identity thief can open new accounts. The CCYA must contact each of the three credit reporting companies directly to place a freeze. The credit reporting companies may ask for proof of the child's Social Security number, proof that the CCYA are legally able to represent/are the child's legal representative, and a copy of the child's birth certificate. Putting a freeze on a minor's credit report can be a useful deterrent to additional fraud.

The CCYA must lift the freeze from the credit report before the minor child applies for student or auto loans, an apartment, or job. Once the child turns age 18, he/she can ask to lift the freeze himself.

Although businesses do not ordinarily extend credit to a minor, the CCYA also should consider placing an extended fraud alert – which lasts for seven years – on the credit report. When a business sees an alert on a credit report, it must verify the borrower's identity before issuing credit. Identity theft victims – including children and youth in foster care– can have an extended alert placed on their credit reports if they can provide an Identity Theft Report to the credit reporting company.

What It Is	What It Does	How to Get It	What it Costs	How Long It Lasts
Initial fraud alert	Requires creditors to verify an identity before granting credit and makes it harder for a thief to open fraudulent new accounts.	Contact one credit reporting company. It will share your request with the other two companies.	Free	90 days
Extended fraud alert	Requires creditors to verify an identity before granting credit	Contact one credit reporting company. It will share your request with the	Free	7 years

	and makes it harder for a thief to open fraudulent new accounts.	other two companies.		
Credit freeze	Stops creditors from getting your credit report unless you lift the freeze.	Contact each credit reporting company.	Depends on state law	Depends on state law

4. Call every company where an account was fraudulently opened or misused

If it is known where the child's information was misused, contact that business and explain to the business that the individual is a minor. Otherwise, when the CCYA receives the child's credit report, review it for any accounts opened in the child's name. If there is a fraudulent account in the child's name, contact the company where the account was opened. Ask the company to close the fraudulent account and flag the account to show it is a result of identity theft. Follow up with each business in writing.

Once the CCYA have resolved identity theft disputes with the company, ask for a letter stating that the company has closed the disputed accounts and has discharged the fraudulent debts. This letter will enable the youth in foster care to dispute erroneous charges if errors relating to the account reappear on his credit report in the future.

5. File a report with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

Visit www.ftc.gov or call 1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338) to file a report about the theft of the child's identity.

After filing a report with the FTC, print a copy. It will be called an Identity Theft Affidavit. Give a copy of the FTC Identity Theft Affidavit to the police if filing a police report.

6. File a police report

Usually, adults must file a police report about identity theft before they can use certain legal remedies to clear a credit report. The situation may be different for children, because credit reporting companies may correct a child victim's credit report without a police report. Even so, it is important to consider filing a police report, because it may needed to resolve other instances of identity theft.

Also, send the credit reporting company a letter or other documentation explaining that the child is a minor who cannot legally enter into a contract. After providing proof that the victim is a minor, the credit reporting companies and businesses should correct the fraudulent information that the identity thief created.

7. Obtain an Identity Theft Report

Ordinarily, providing information that the youth is a minor should be sufficient to correct fraudulent debts on the youth's credit report, but the CCYA also might consider taking advantage of rights available to identity theft victims under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA). The FCRA enables identity theft victims to block erroneous charges from appearing on their credit reports and to get documents like applications and contracts to prove the underlying crime. For more information, see Remedying the Effects of Identity Theft at http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/idtheft/idt09.pdf.

To take advantage of these remedies, an identity theft victim must get an Identity Theft Report.

Creating an Identity Theft Report involves 3 steps:

1. Submit a complaint about the theft to the FTC. When you finish writing all the details, print a copy of the report. It will print as an Identity Theft Affidavit.
2. File a police report about the identity theft, and get a copy of the police report or the report number. Bring the FTC Identity Theft Affidavit when you file a police report.
3. Attach the FTC Identity Theft Affidavit to your police report to make an Identity Theft Report.

Some companies want more information than the Identity Theft Report includes, or want different information. The information you need to provide depends on the policies of the credit reporting company and the business that sent the information about you to the credit reporting company.

Appendix X: Sample Supervised Independent Living (SILP) READINESS ASSESSMENT TOOL

THE CASEWORKER AND THE NON-MINOR DEPENDENT (YOUNG ADULT) SHOULD COMPLETE THIS ASSESSMENT TOGETHER. IT MAY TAKE UP TO 45 MINUTES TO COMPLETE.

Note: Different licensed or unlicensed SILP settings require different difference levels of readiness. This should be taken into consideration upon evaluation. For those planning to move into a SILP with the greatest level of independence and fewest supports, the Caseworker should pay special attention to questions marked with a "*****".

Name: _____ Caseworker Name:_____

Address of proposed SILP:

_____

Young adult will be living (check one):

___ Alone or with child only. ___With peers. ___ With adult connection.

Briefly describe the SILP setting:

Section 1-5: KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR ITEMS

Using your knowledge of the young adult's past behavior and information obtained during your conversation with the young adult; assess each of the areas below. Indicate in the notes section the readiness indicators for each subject area.

Section 1: Budgeting and Money Management

1. * **Rent/bill payment**:

Does the young adult know how to pay rent and bills on time?

Has young adult ever been responsible for paying their own bills (e.g. cell phone, rent, utilities)? If so, ask them to describe this experience.

Does young adult understand the consequences of not paying rent (e.g. eviction, court record impacting ability to find future housing) and/or bills (damaging credit, incurring late fees, losing service)?

Is young adult planning to live with another adult in the SILP setting who can assist in this area?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

2. Banking:

Does young adult know how to manage a bank account?

If young adult has a bank account, ask them to describe how they currently manage their money. Do they have a history of overdrafts and/or excessive ATM fees? Does young adult balance their checkbook?

If young adult does not currently have a bank account, does s/he know how to obtain one and how to bank responsibly (e.g. avoid overdrafts and/or excessive fees)? Is there a plan to establish a bank account?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

3. Responsible Spending:

Does the young adult understand the risks associated with buying on credit (such as credit cards, “rent-to-own” stores or payday loans)?

Have young adult name them: e.g. paying excessive interest, accumulating debt, damaging credit history, etc.

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

4. Budgeting:

Does the young adult have a clear understanding of their daily expenses and what their expenses will be when residing in the SILP setting?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Skills need to be developed

Explain:

5. Money Management:

Does the young adult know how to manage money on a monthly basis?

If young adult will be receiving financial aid for school, can they explain how they will manage the funds to ensure that they will be available throughout the school term as needed?

Ask young adult to explain how the income they receive will be used to cover bills that arrive at different times of the month, if required.

____ Yes ____ No ____ Skills need to be developed

Explain:

Section 2: Tenant Rights and Responsibilities

1. Maintaining Housing:

Does the young adult understand basic tenant rights and responsibilities in order to maintain their housing?

Will young adult be required to sign a lease? If so, have they reviewed it and do they understand the terms of the documents?

Is the young adult aware of their rights as a tenant (e.g. limits on the security deposit that a landlord can collect, right to repairs of serious defects in unit, right to privacy and limits on the landlord's right to enter the unit, etc).

Is the young adult aware of their responsibilities as a tenant (e.g. paying rent on time, avoiding unnecessary damage to the unit, abstaining from illegal activities in the unit, being a conscientious neighbor to other tenants, etc).

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

Section 3: Daily Tasks

1. Food Preparation:

Can the young adult shop for food and prepare meals?

Have young adult name a few items or meals that they can prepare and describe how to shop for food. .

Is the young adult planning to live with another adult in the SILP setting who can assist in this area?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

2. Laundry:

Does the young adult know how to do laundry?

Have young adult explain the process of doing laundry and how to use a Laundromat to verify if they are capable of doing their own laundry.

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

3. Transportation:

(Answer the applicable question below.)

If the young adult is a driver or plans to become a driver in the near future, are they able to drive responsibly?

Ask the young adult to describe what is necessary to own and operate a car (e.g. a valid license, insurance, money for gas and repairs, annual vehicle registration). Can they describe a plan for obtaining all of these?

Can the young adult describe the consequence for driving under the influence (loss of license, significant fines and jail time)?

Is the young adult free of any history of irresponsible driving behavior (e.g. tickets, accidents, driving without a license or while intoxicated)?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

If the young adult does not drive or have a car, do they know how to use available public transportation?

Ask the young adult to describe what public transportation they use to get to their job, school or other daily activities. .

Has the young adult verified that they will be able to get to school, work, etc. at necessary times from the identified SILP setting?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

4. Timeliness:

Is the young adult able to wake up on their own to get to work, school or other daily tasks in a timely manner?

Ask the young adult to describe to you how they ensure getting up and out on time: e.g. using an alarm clock, getting to bed on time, getting enough sleep, leaving enough time to get ready in the morning, etc.

Has the young adult demonstrated a history of being able to make it to work/school/appointments on time consistently?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

5. Medical Care:

Can the young adult explain how to seek medical care when necessary?

Have the young adult describe what they would do if they were sick for an extended duration, experienced unusual or severe pain or had an emergency medical condition.

Does the young adult know how to obtain and/or renew necessary prescription medications?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

6. Community Resources:

Is the young adult aware of relevant community resources and how to access them?

If the young adult is in school are they connected to educational support programs?

Is the young adult aware of Independent Living services available through the county or provider agency?

Does the young adult know how to get help if they encounter housing problems, runs out of food, has a legal issue, etc.?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

Section 4: Independent Living

1. *Identifying Documents:

Does the young adult have copies of the following identifying documents? (*Write Yes or No in the line provided. If no please explain in the space provided under the list.)*

____ Social Security Card

____ State ID or Driver's License

____ Birth Certificate

____ Immigration Documents

____ Health Information and Records

____ Medical Card

____ Voter Registration Documentation

____ Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Proxy

____ Grievance policy and contact information

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

2. ***Safety**:

Is the young adult knowledgeable about safe social and personal habits, including relationships, drinking/drugs and sexual activity?

Ask the young adult to describe their relationship with those who they will be sharing living space. Has there been any history of violence with those residing in the unit (including partner violence)? Are any individuals residing in the unit engaged in dangerous behavior that could pose a threat to the young adult (e.g. drug dealing, violent criminal activity)?

Can the young adult list birth control and STD prevention methods? (e.g. using condoms or practicing abstinence will prevent against both; to prevent against pregnancy take birth control pills, use a diaphragm, use an Intrauterine Device, etc.).

Can the young adult describe two strategies for responsible drinking? (e.g. using a designated driver, drinking in moderation, not drinking with strangers, not mixing alcohol with other substances, staying hydrated, etc.)

____ Yes ____ No ____ Skills need to be developed

Explain:

3. ***Prescriptions and OTC drugs:**

Does the young adult understand the importance of following directions on over-the-counter medications and prescriptions?

Have young adult explain why this is important: e.g. accidentally overdosing or mixing of certain medications can harm your body, make you sick or kill you, taking too much medication can make you drowsy and unable to perform certain tasks such as driving, etc.

Is the young adult currently taking any medications regularly and if so, do they understand how to properly take them and the consequences of discontinuing use?

____ Yes ____ No ____ Skills need to be developed

Explain:

4. Problem-Solving Skills:

Can the young adult successfully manage conflict and engage in positive relationships with others in the living environment?

Does the young adult's history indicate that they are able to manage conflict (e.g. no recent physical altercations instigated by young adult, ability to get along with others at current and/or previous placements?)

Have young adult describe how they can calm themselves down when they are angry: e.g. taking a walk, listening to music, talking to a friend, writing, etc.

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

Section 5: Parenting

(Complete only if young adult has or will have a child or children residing with them.)

1. Budgeting:

Did the household budget adequately account for the expenses related to the child(ren)?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

2. Childcare:

Does the young adult have a childcare plan that is affordable, realistic, convenient and safe?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

3. Safety:

Does the young adult understand how to create a child safe environment (e.g. not leaving dangerous objects within reach, installing child safety plugs, keeping medicines and cleaning products away from child, keeping windows secured, etc?)

Does the young adult know how to respond to an emergency (accidental poisoning, illness or injury, etc.)?

Are there any indications that the young adult is at risk for abusing or neglecting their child?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

4. Support:

Does the young adult know how to access support resources specifically related to parenting?

Does the young adult have an understanding of how to manage the stressors associated with parenting?

____ **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Skills need to be developed**

Explain:

This is a test

SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENT (SILP)

READINESS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

A. Based on the readiness indicators above, the Caseworker should determine which of the below best describes the young adult's situation. If the SILP is not approved, the specific numbered indicators which led to this determination should be indicated.

_____ Yes, The young adult is ready for an SILP: assessment of knowledge and behavior items indicate readiness and he/she can afford identified housing and has a stable income. (Complete item B below)

_____ Yes, the young adult is ready for SILP with assistance from a permanent connection in addition to Caseworker, which could include living skills training: assessment of knowledge and behavior items indicates readiness with assistance. Specific goals will be incorporated into the Independent Living Plan to support young adult to live in SILP. (Complete item B below)

_____ No, the young adult is not ready for an SILP; the IL case plan will be developed to become ready for SILP: assessment of knowledge and behavior items indicate young adult is not ready for SILP and/or they cannot afford identified housing and/or they do not have a stable income (and/or cannot afford security deposit). Specific goals will be incorporated into the Independent Living Plan to move towards readiness.

If Young Adult <u>is not</u> ready for SILP – identify item numbers from assessment above which indicate a lack of readiness:

Section 1:_____

Section 2:_____

Section 3:_____

Section 4:_____

Section 5:_____

B. (Mark with "X" which one applies.)

If SILP is approved; youth _____is _____ is not approved to receive funds directly.

Date of assessment: _____

Print Name of Caseworker: _____

Caseworker Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name of young adult: _____ Date: _____

Young adult Signature: _____ Date: _____