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**Department of Children and Families  
Response to the Independent Living Services  
Advisory Council  
2019 Annual Report**

December 31, 2019

Chad Poppell  
Secretary



Ron DeSantis  
Governor

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the establishment of the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (the Council) in 2002, the Council has provided recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of independent living services as part of a comprehensive report to the Legislature. As required in s. 409.1451(7), F.S., the Department of Children and Families (department) is submitting responses to the Council's recommendations as part of the Council's 2019 Annual Report.

## **ILSAC RECOMMENDATION FOR MEMBERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

The department supports the expectations outlined relevant to Council membership but suggests lowering the requirement that the Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary attend 90 percent of the meetings. If the Council only sets eight meetings for the year and one is missed, they will have theoretically fallen below the 90 percent target, thereby jeopardizing their leadership role.

The department proposes that all Council members attend at least 75 percent of the scheduled meetings and that January's meeting determines the schedule for the calendar year. Any additional Council or subcommittee meetings planned after the schedule is agreed upon, should not count toward the 75 percent.

The department also proposes that the Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary commit to serving two-years but be allowed to serve a subsequent two-years if unopposed by the Council. The Council should vote on leadership during the January meeting.

## **ILSAC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCE**

### **DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

The department supports the recommendation that the FSFN Payment Reference Guide be updated to revise language regarding allowance and cell phones. The language will be worded in such a way that supports the Council's intent to make allowance a standard payment that allows a young adult to have pocket money to spend on miscellaneous items of their choosing, not specifically based on need. This money will guarantee them an opportunity to practice budgeting. Additionally, payments for cell phones will be moved to a needs category to be considered separately.

The department also intends to clarify in policy guidance that all payments for the cost of supporting a young adult in Extended Foster Care (EFC) should be based on a needs assessment, except for allowance. Expenditures associated with EFC will vary across the state based on supervised living arrangement settings, utility amounts, clothing, childcare, transportation, qualifying activity costs, and personal incidentals. While those expenditures will vary, the allowance will remain a universal set amount yet to be determined.

The department will consider setting the allowance amount to the \$100.00 minimum. If the purpose is to provide equitable distribution of an allowance amount to young adults in EFC that is not based on a cost of care needs assessment, more feedback from stakeholders is required. Any proposed amount will need to go through appropriate department policy review channels, ensuring the solicitation of stakeholder's comments.

## **ILSAC RECOMMENDATION FOR KEYS TO INDEPENDENCE**

### **DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

The department will consider proposing legislation to expand eligibility for the Keys to Independence program to include young adults while they are participating in Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS). If proposed, the department will also ask for increased funding to support the additional PESS population.

## **ILSAC RECOMMENDATION FOR POSITIVE PATHWAYS**

### **DEPARTMENT RESPONSE**

The department recognizes students using the department's tuition and fee exemption (exemption) are comprised of young adults that have exited the foster care system through adoption, guardianship, placement in the custody of a relative or non-relative, or turning 18-years-old while in the department's custody. Students that have experienced foster care need campus-based supports at postsecondary educational institutions to help them succeed in meeting their educational goals.

The department will continue to support the work of Positive Pathways, acknowledging that the number of students utilizing the exemption has increased; thus increasing the number of former foster youth on campuses at Florida's public postsecondary education institutions. The department will explore the appropriate funding sources available to sustain the services administered by Educate Tomorrow through Positive Pathways.