



Response to the  
Independent Living Services Advisory Council  
2013 Annual Report

Department of Children and Families

December 17, 2013

Esther Jacobo  
Interim Secretary

Rick Scott  
Governor

**Florida Statutes established the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, and mandates the issuance of an annual report from the Council, as well as a response from the Department of Children and Families.**

**Statutory Authority:**

409.1451

(7) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The Secretary of the Department of Children and Families shall establish the Independent Living Services Advisory Council for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services. This advisory council shall continue to function as specified in this subsection until the Legislature determines that the advisory council can no longer provide a valuable contribution to the department's efforts to achieve the goals of the independent living transition services.

(a) Specifically, the advisory council shall assess the implementation and operation of the system of independent living transition services and advise the department on actions that would improve the ability of the independent living transition services to meet the established goals. The advisory council shall keep the department informed of problems being experienced with the services, barriers to the effective and efficient integration of services and support across systems, and successes that the system of independent living transition services has achieved. The department shall consider, but is not required to implement, the recommendations of the advisory council.

(b) The advisory council shall report to the secretary on the status of the implementation of the system of independent living transition services; efforts to publicize the availability of Aftercare Support Services, the Road-to-Independence Program, and Transitional Support Services; the success of the services; problems identified; and recommendations for department or legislative action; and the department's implementation of the recommendations for department's implementation of the recommendations contained in the Independent Living Services Integration Workgroup Report submitted to the appropriate substantive committees of the legislature by December 31, 2002. **The department shall submit a report by December 31 of each year to the Governor and the Legislature which includes a summary of the factors reported on by the council and identifies the recommendations of the advisory council and either describes the department's actions to implement these recommendations or provides the department's rationale for not implementing the recommendations.**

(c) Members of the advisory council shall be appointed by the secretary of the department. The membership of the advisory council must include, at a minimum, representatives from the headquarters and district offices of the Department of Children

and Family Services, Community-Based Care lead agencies, the Department of Education, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the State Youth Advisory Board, Workforce Florida, Inc., the Statewide Guardian Ad Litem Office, foster parents, recipients of Road-to-Independence Program funding, and advocates for foster children. The secretary shall determine the length of the term to be served by each member appointed to the advisory council, which may not exceed 4 year.

(d) The Department of Children and Families shall provide administrative support to the Independent Living Services Advisory Council to accomplish its assigned tasks. The advisory council shall be afforded access to all appropriate data from the department, each Community-Based Care lead agency, and other relevant agencies in order to accomplish the tasks set forth in this section. The data collected may not include any information that would identify a specific child or young adult.

### **Recommendations by the Independent Living Services Council for the Florida Department of Children and Families**

As required by statute, the Department is submitting the following response to the recommendations for the Department of Children and Families contained in the Independent Living Services Advisory Council's 2013 report.

**Survey Data: Ensure the youth voice/perspective is built into everything we do. Make the youth survey data available by county and/or circuit. Ask Connected by 25 to prepare a retrospective longitudinal data sheet in excel showing the data by state from each of the surveys. Consider adding a representative from the Independent Living Services Advisory Council data workgroup, to an existing larger data workgroup, to review and analyze how survey data is being used. Enhance communications and technical assistance from DCF to the CBCs about how to use the data. Review best practices for using the survey data and present findings to the CBCs and service providers. Add preliminary questions to the beginning of surveys to identify the survey population (opted out, enrolled in EFC or PESS). Review and make recommendations for removing or adding questions to the My Services and FLNYTD surveys.**

*DCF Response: The Department recognizes the value of the youth voice/perspective and data for effective policy development and improved practice change. The Department will work with Independent Living Services Advisory Council and CBCs to determine the most helpful means for utilizing the available data. In addition, the Department will revise, remove or add questions to the My Services and FLNYTD surveys if necessary for the transition to extended foster care and restructuring of Independent Living.*

**Permanency: Continue to focus on all permanency options so that no child leaves the foster care system without a permanent family connection.**

*DCF Response: The Department remains committed to supporting permanency achievement for teens in care through projects with community-based care agencies including the Casey Program Permanency Roundtables.*

**Pregnant and Parenting Teens: Assist the Independent Living Services Advisory Council with identifying the issues and obstacles faced by teen mothers and fathers in foster care, the scope of this problem and best practice models for serving this population.**

*DCF Response: The Department welcomes the work of the Independent Living Services Advisory Council in addressing this need and will assist the new workgroup with identifying the issues and obstacles faced by teen mothers and fathers in foster care.*