



## **Florida Department of Children and Families Independent Living Transition Services Outcome Measures and Oversight Activities January 2014**

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### **I. Background**

Section 409.1451, Florida Statutes (2012) requires the Department of Children and Families to administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults who exit foster care at age 18 to make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults. The goals of independent living transition services are to assist older children in foster care and young adults who were formerly in foster care to obtain life skills and education for independent living and employment, to have a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults. Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is outsourced to nineteen Community-Based Care lead agencies.

### **II. Purpose**

This report provides information required in section 409.1451(6), F. S. (2012) as follows:

1. An analysis of performance on the outcome measures developed under this section reported for each Community-Based Care lead agency and compared with the performance of the Department on the same measures.
2. A description of the Department's oversight of the program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal deficiencies found, corrective actions required and current status of compliance.
3. Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since the last report. For the purposes of the first report, any rules adopted or proposed under this section must be included.

The majority of activities described in this report occurred during the period January through December 2013, unless otherwise noted.

Oversight of Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is also provided by the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC), which was created by the Florida Legislature with the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services.

### **III. Outcome Measures for Community-Based Care Lead Agencies**

Between 2009 and 2013, the Department maintained five (5) baseline Independent Living measures into the Community-Based Care lead agency contract template. In support of changes enacted in 2012-2013 legislative session, the Department is evaluating changes to the five (5)

baseline contract performance measures to ensure they capture requirements associated with extend foster care and the redesign of independent living programs.

In the interim, the Department has a number of current and former foster care youth based surveys which provide a window into the real-life outcomes for this population.

### My Services and Florida National Youth in Transition Database Surveys

In 2013, the Department of Children and Families continued to contract with Connected by 25, Inc., a private vendor, for all survey collection and analysis services for youth currently residing in the foster care system, as well as young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. The decision to contract these services is in large part driven by federal requirements and possible federal financial penalties if those requirements are not met. Specifically, the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey requires a set minimum number of young adults who have aged out of the foster care system to be interviewed on a continual basis to avoid federal financial penalties.

#### My Services Survey

The My Services survey is an online survey tool that is delivered to youth between the ages of 13-17 who are currently residing in the foster care system. The My Services survey is the primary tool utilized by the Department and Community-Based Care lead agencies for reviewing the overall quality and efficacy of services delivered to teens residing in the Florida foster care system. The survey provides Community-Based Care lead agencies local level data on how foster care youth perceive the value of the service they receive.

There are (3) three age-specific surveys that make up the My Services survey. Links to the each of the three (3) My Services age-specific questionnaires are provided below.

Ages Thirteen (13) to Fourteen (14)

[http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011\\_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2013-1.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2013-1.pdf)

Ages Fifteen (15) to Sixteen (16)

[http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011\\_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2015-1.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2015-1.pdf)

Age Seventeen (17)

[http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011\\_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2017%20%20.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/2011_12/Independent%20Living%20-%20My%20Services%20Florida%20Questions%20Ages%2017%20%20.pdf)

The Spring 2013 My Services survey was completed and 1,319 teens that were residing within the Florida foster care system participated in the survey process. Data analysis and review of the Spring 2013 survey has been completed and the finalized report has been posted to the Florida Department of Children and Families' Independent Living web site at the following link:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/indliving/docs/MyServicesSpring2013SurveyReport.pdf>

Prior survey results are available at the link provided below:

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/reports-and-surveys>

The My Services survey was not conducted during Fall 2013 due to the contract procurement process. An interim contract has been secured to ensure that the Spring 2014 survey is conducted. Proposals to contract for ongoing services have been received and are being evaluated.

### National Youth in Transition Database

In February 2008, the final federal rule for the Chafee National Youth in Transition Database was promulgated. The National Youth in Transition Database, commonly referred to as NYTD, requires states to provide for youth to report their own perceptions of the services provided to them. Additionally, each state must report on all services provided to youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care every six months in the following areas: academic support; post-secondary educational support; career preparation; employment programs or vocational trainings; budget and financial management; housing education and home management training; health education and risk prevention; family support and healthy marriage education; mentoring; and supervised independent living. Failure to comply with federal minimum survey requirements could result in federal financial penalties. The last federally required NYTD submission occurred in 2012 and the Department was found to be compliant with all federal NYTD requirements.

### Florida NYTD

The Florida NYTD survey is an online survey tool that is delivered to young adults between the ages of 18 and 22 who previously aged out of the Florida foster care system. The Florida NYTD survey is administered once each year in the spring and utilizes the same questions as those found in the Federal NYTD survey. The survey provides data on how youth that have aged out of foster care are managing their lives as independent adults. The Spring 2013 Florida NYTD survey was completed and 1,852 young adults participated in the survey process. Data analysis and review has been completed and the final report has been posted to the Department of Children and Families Independent Living web site at the following link: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/inliving/docs/NYTDSpring2013StatewideFLSurveyReport.pdf>

The reports for prior Florida NYTD surveys can be found here:  
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/reports-and-surveys>

For more information on the Department's Independent Living program, visit our web site.  
<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living>

## **IV. Departmental Oversight**

During the 2013 calendar year, the Department's Contract Oversight Unit was responsible for monitoring the Community-Based Care lead agencies' compliance with s. 409.1451, F.S. (2012), and Florida Administrative Code, 65C-31, Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department. In addition, the Department's Quality Assurance System conducted case file reviews to assess the quality of services delivered to children in Florida's child welfare system.

- a. Contract Oversight:** The Department's Contract Oversight Unit randomly selected the case files of youth eligible to receive independent living services and young adults formerly in foster care. Their review focused on whether Community-Based Care providers were meeting the requirements in Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code in the delivery of services. This included a review to ensure that the youth and young adults receiving these services were actually eligible to receive them. The Contract Oversight Unit reported deficiencies in the delivery of independent living services to the Department's contract managers and Department

leadership. The contract managers created Corrective Action Plans (CAP) for the Community-Based Care lead agencies when warranted. The Corrective Action Plans (CAP) required the Community-Based Care lead agencies to develop action steps and revise processes to bring services into compliance with federal regulations, Florida Statute, Florida Administrative Code, and their contracts.

Table 1 summarizes the monitoring of the Community-Based Care lead agencies for the 2013 calendar year, and the action taken by the Department to address deficiencies.

Table1: Contract Oversight Results of the Independent Living (IL) Program by Community-Based Care Lead Agency				
Circuit	CBC	Contract	Finding	Corrective Action Plan Status
1	Lakeview Center	AJ481	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan completed.
2, 14	Big Bend CBC	BJ101	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
3,8	Partnership for Strong Families	CJ809	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	DJ031	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan completed.
5	Kids Central, Inc.	PJL04	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
6	Eckerd Youth Alternatives	QJ20R	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
7	Community Partnership for Children	NJ205	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
7	St Johns County BOCC	NJ204	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
9	CBC of Central Florida	GJL57	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
10	Heartland for Children	TJ201	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
11, 16	Our Kids	KJ114	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
12	Sarasota Family YMCA	QJ2B0	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
13	Eckerd Youth Alternatives	QJ3E0	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
15	ChildNet	IJ705	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan under development.
17	ChildNet	JJ212	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
18	CBC of Brevard	GJK46	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
18	CBC of Central Florida	GJK45	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
19	United for Families	ZJK84	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Contract terminated.
20	Children's Network of Southwest Florida	HJ300	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan closed.

In 2014, the Department will incorporate new performance measures into its contracts with the Community-Based Care lead agencies to ensure that the Extended Foster Care and Postsecondary Education Services and Support programs are being implemented. These new performance outcome measures will also provide the Department an oversight tool to ensure that thorough case management services are being provided and that there is timely judicial oversight over the young adults' transition plans.

- b. **Quality Assurance:** The Department’s quality assurance system provides uniform Quality of Practice Standards for ongoing service provision by case management organizations. Data collected in reviewing these standards reflects or measures performance; it provides local administrations a “window into practice” in real-time, and helps focus quality improvement efforts at the local and state level. Legislation passed in 2013 eliminated the pre-independent living services assessment and staffing requirements. Additional statutory changes shifted the responsibility for delivering of life skills to youth in foster care to their caregivers, in keeping with the push for normalcy; however, Community-Base Care lead agencies maintain responsibility for ensuring that the caregivers are providing life skills lessons to the youth in their care. Language was also removed from statute requiring the Department or Community- Based Care lead agency to include an educational or career path in each youth’s case plan. Accordingly, in 2014 the Department must reassess its Quality Assurance Standards related to those measures.

Table 2 provides the statewide summary of performance for independent living standards. Individual reports by Community-Based Care lead agency can be found at: [http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qa/QA\\_Reports/Forms/AllItems.aspx](http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/qa/QA_Reports/Forms/AllItems.aspx)

Table 2: Quality Assurance Findings Related to Independent Living Standards					
Item Number	Quality Assurance Standard	FY 2009-2010	FY 2010-2011	FY 2011-2012	FY 2012-2013
44.0	If the case involves a youth who has reached 13 but not yet 15 years of age and he/she is living in a licensed, out-of-home care placement, a pre-independent living assessment was completed that identified service needs and services were provided. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	78%	87%	76%	75%
45.0	If the child is 13 years of age or older and in licensed foster care, the case management agency provided guidance and assistance in developing an educational and career path that is based on the child's individual abilities and interests. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	78%	79%	86%	77%
46.0	The teen-aged focus child is afforded opportunities to participate in normal life skills activities in the foster home and community that are reasonable and appropriate for his/her respective age or special needs. (applicable to licensed out-of-home care cases)	76%	72%	77%	80%
47.0	For youth 15 years of age but not yet 18, the agency appropriately monitored the youth's progress toward successfully transitioning from foster care to independence through regular informative staffings.	78%	79%	75%	77%

### **c. Fiscal Oversight:**

#### *Fiscal Monitoring of the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies*

The Department's Lead Agency Fiscal Accountability Unit, within Financial Management, focuses on oversight of the fiscal components of the outsourced child welfare activities provided by and through the Community-Based Care Lead Agencies. This unit reviews each CBC's annual Cost Allocation Plan. Cost Allocation Plans describe how CBCs capture and allocate costs charged to the contract, including expenditures for oversight of the Independent Living program. The Unit completes onsite reviews to determine whether Community-Based Care Lead Agencies are complying with their Cost Allocation Plans. If the Unit determines that a CBC is not complying with their Cost Allocation Plan, the Unit provides technical assistance to bring them back into compliance.

During calendar year 2013, the Department's Lead Agency Fiscal Accountability Unit completed on-site monitoring visits for each of the following Community-Based Care Lead Agencies:

- Eckerd Community Alternatives
- Lakeview Center (d/b/a First Families Network)

In addition, the Lead Agency Fiscal Accountability Unit provided assistance to the Office of Child Welfare in developing guidance and reference documents for costs pools used to capture expenditure-related activities for Extended Foster Care and the Road-to-Independence Program.

In addition, this unit conducted statewide training for Community-Based Care (CBC) Lead Agencies and Department CBC Lead Agency Contract Managers. Training was provided on the reconciliation process, which ensures that the expenditure reports CBC Lead Agencies submit to the Department correlate directly with the client payment information that CBC Lead Agencies record in Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN).

#### *Spending Plans*

Changes made during the 2012-2013 legislative session removed language from s. 409.1451(5), F.S. (2012), that required each Community-Based Care lead agency to submit an Independent Living program spending plan to the Department.

## **V. Rule Promulgation**

Provisions relating to the delivery of independent living services are included in multiple chapters of the Administrative Code, including:

- Chapter 65C-28, Out-of-Home Care, providing direction for delivery of services to youth in foster care. Specifically, 65C-28.009, Adolescent Services, implements s. 409.1451(3), F.S. (2012)

- Chapter 65C-30, General Child Welfare Provisions, providing direction on delivery of services to youth under supervision of the Department.
- Chapter 65C-31, Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department, providing direction on the delivery of services to young adults, specifically those provided by s. 409.1451(5), F.S. (2012)

During the 2010 legislative session, the Department of Children and Families was given rule making authority to govern the payments for services to youth or young adults provided under section 409.1451, Florida Statutes; however, between 2010 and 2013 the Department promulgated only one emergency rule. No additional amendments to rule were undertaken in support of the Governor's efforts to limit overly burdensome regulations. The rule making authority to govern the payments for services to youth or young adults was stricken from statute when legislation created by SB 1036 became effective in January, 2014.

In July, 2013 the Department began the rule promulgation process to draft new policy requirements for Extended Foster Care and the Postsecondary Education Services and Supports (PESS) program. Rule drafting workshops were held throughout the second half of 2013, with input received from numerous stakeholders. It is expected that final rules for Chapters 65C-41, Extended Foster Care and 65C-42, Postsecondary Education Services and Supports (PESS) and Aftercare programs will be adopted in 2014.

Additional legislative changes to the Independent Living program will require the Department to amend rules in 2014 within Chapters 65C-13, Foster Care Licensing, 65C-14 Group Care, 65C-28, Out-of-Home Care, 65C-30, General Child Welfare Provisions, and Chapter 65C-31, Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department.

## **VI. Summary of Other Activities**

Throughout 2013, the Department and Community-Based Care lead agencies continued to partner with a variety of organizations such as the Quality Parenting Initiative, Youth SHINE, Florida Children's First, the Independent Living Services Advisory Council, Casey Family Programs, National Resource Centers, Florida State Foster and Adoptive Parent Association, and others, to promote various initiatives, including:

- The Department supported the work of the Quality Parenting Initiative and Florida State Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (FSAPA) to develop a life skills services progress tool for caregivers to support foster youth in acquiring the skills they will need to be successful in the future.
- The Department worked with numerous stakeholders to implement the extension of foster care and redesign of independent living programs, working on such endeavors as developing new rule and policy, raising public awareness, and provide training for caregivers, CLS attorneys, judges, and case managers.
- The Department has staffed a Campus Coach Coordinator position at Headquarters that is responsible for assisting with creating campus-based academic support and service programs for former foster care youth at Florida's public postsecondary academic institutions. These campus-based supports and services are designed to improve postsecondary participation, student retention, academic outcomes, and degree completion rates for former foster care youth.
- Department Regional/Community-Based Care Extended Foster Care Workgroups are currently operating at the local level to support implementation of Extended Foster Care

requirements. These workgroups remain focused on ensuring that locally-based services and supports are in place and meeting needs of former foster care youth. These workgroups also coordinate with the judiciary to identify and contact former foster youth who already have exited the system of care, but may be eligible to return for services.

- The Department and Community-Based Care lead agencies continue to engage current and former foster care youth organizations to ensure that foster care youth have a voice in shaping the future of foster care.
- The Department continues to provide administrative support to the legislatively created Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC). The Advisory Council provides oversight of the program by reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services. Information about the Advisory Council, its members, activities, subcommittees, as well as meeting dates and locations are provided on the following link:<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/advisory-council>
- The Department, in conjunction with the Agency for Health Care Administration, is in the process of fully implementing provisions of the Affordable Health Care Act that allow eligible former foster care youth to receive Medicaid to age 26.