

HELPING YOUTH TRANSITION

FROM OUT-OF-HOME CARE TO ADULTHOOD

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Minnesota's county social workers have a responsibility to assist adolescents in out-of-home care with preparation for successful adulthood. This work is required by Minnesota statute 260C.212 subd. 1. It is also good social work practice and acknowledges a primary adolescent need to discover self and gain autonomy.

Minnesota Statute requires that youth age 16 and older who are in out-of-home care because of a permanency disposition have an independent living plan. It is important to understand that an independent living plan does not conflict with, or replace the goal of achieving permanency for adolescents. In fact, youth who are state wards and youth whose permanency disposition is long-term foster care, should be the highest priority for county services that promote preparation for independent living and permanency. These youth will leave the child welfare system without the support of their birth families. It is the counties' responsibility to assure that they leave out-of-home care with a high school diploma; employment and/or acceptance to post-secondary education; health care coverage; a savings account; a safe and affordable place to live; a means of transportation; knowledge of community resources; and connections to positive adults and family members.

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide social workers with the information and resources to do this work effectively.

The content of this Best Practices Guide includes:

- Guidance on assessing youth's independent living skills using an on-line assessment tool
- Guidance on developing a complete and meaningful Independent Living Plan
- Resources for each section of the Independent Living Plan
- Information on teaching youth life skills and where to find curriculum
- An explanation of the Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF) program, which provides counties with funding to help prepare youth for adulthood
- Information on how caregivers and other significant adults can help prepare youth for adulthood.

Why is this work important?

Research¹ shows that youth transitioning from out-of-home placement:

- Are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system
- Are at higher risk of teen pregnancy and parenting
- Have lower reading and math skills and high school graduation rates
- Have disproportionately high rates of physical, developmental, and mental health problems
- Are more likely to experience homelessness
- Have higher rates of alcohol and other drug abuse

¹ Casey Family Programs (2001). *It's my life: A framework for youth transitioning from foster care to successful adulthood*, 7. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

- Have higher rates of unemployment and likelihood of dependence on public assistance
- Are likely to be living with parents or other relatives within one year of leaving placement.²

Why does this picture look so bleak? It is partly because of the circumstances under which children enter placement – abuse and/or neglect, which affects their ability to learn and form healthy relationships. It is also because of what happens to them once they are in the system, such as disrupted placements and frequent moves. There are also societal barriers, such as poverty, racism and substance abuse that negatively affect families and youth from achieving successful outcomes. Collectively, families, agencies and communities must do better, improving the experience of out-of-home placement.

Although youth transitioning out of placement clearly face many challenges, they have the ability to succeed in life with the support of caring adults and communities. It is the county agency’s job to help youth identify their strengths and acquire skills so that they can envision a future filled with promise.

II. ELEMENTS OF TRANSITION PLANNING

- Assessment of hard skills: Hard skills are tangible skills that can be taught according to a learning plan.
- Assessment of soft skills: Soft skills are developed through social experiences.
- Developing an Independent Living Plan with the youth’s involvement.
- Gathering essential documents: Documents such as a certified copy of their Birth Certificate, a Social Security card, and a state issued identification card are required for basic adult living. Neither housing nor jobs can be obtained without these documents. They need a safe place to store their documents and also need to know the process for replacing them if lost.
- Teaching youth life skills.

Each of these elements is covered in the following pages.

III. LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT

A young person’s plan for independent living should be based on an assessment of their life skills.

DHS recommends the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) which is available at www.caseylifeskills.org

The ACLSA is an assessment of youth independent living skills. It consists of statements about life skills that the youth *and* his/her caretakers complete. **The resulting ACLSA Score Report should be used as a starting point for discussion and development of an independent living plan by the social worker, the youth, the caretaker and other supportive adults in the youth’s life.**

² Courtney, M. E., & Dworsky, A. (2005). [Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19](#). Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago

The ACLSA is appropriate for all youth in placement.

Additional information on the ACLSA:

- The ACLSA and the scored reports are free.
- No permission is needed to use the ACLSA or any of the tools at the Ansell-Casey Web site.
- There are versions of the ACLSA for four age groups. The assessment for youth ages 16 to 18 has 118 questions.
- The ACLSA full-length assessment takes 15-30 minutes to finish. There is a short assessment, but it is not recommended.
- Supplements to the ACLSA are available that apply specifically to youth who are Native American, gay or lesbian, pregnant or parenting, and to assess youth's values or education.
- Youth can be assessed as often as appropriate for their situation.
- The ACLSA Score Report contains the assessment scores, a brief description of how the scores are calculated and a summary of the responses. The assessment is scored electronically and will pop up on the computer screen within one minute of clicking the "I'm Finished" button at the end of the assessment.
- The youth and his/her caregiver should complete the assessment without discussing their responses with each other. For youth with reading difficulties, it is helpful to have a caregiver present when they are taking the ACLSA.
- If the youth or caregiver does not have access to a computer, they can complete a paper version of the ACLSA. Their responses can then be entered into the online ACLSA and a Score Report will be sent via e-mail.
- A free Life Skills Guidebook is available on the Casey Web site and can be used with the Score Report to create a customized life skills teaching plan. It includes activities and exercises that can be used for teaching youth.

In addition to the ACLSA, other assessments that youth have completed should be considered. These may include:

- Psychological test results
- Vocational interest and aptitude tests (available free at [Workforce Centers](#))
- Academic assessments.

IV. DEVELOPING AN INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN

[Minnesota Statute Section 260C.212 subd.1](#) requires "an independent living plan for a child age 16 or older who is in placement as a result of a permanency disposition. The plan should include, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

- **Educational, vocational, or employment planning**
- **Health care planning and medical coverage**
- **Transportation, including, where appropriate, assisting the child in obtaining a driver's license**
- **Money Management**
- **Planning for housing**
- **Social and recreational skills**

- **Establishing and maintaining connections with the child’s family and community.**

The independent living plan form that includes these objectives is in the [Social Services Information System \(SSIS\)](#) as an attachment to [the Out-of-Home Placement Plan](#).

It is also best practice to develop an independent living plan for youth on your caseload who have been reunited with their families. Therefore, the plan form can also be found in the Adolescent Life Skills (ALS) workgroup in SSIS.

The Independent Living Plan should not necessarily be limited to the seven objectives listed in Minnesota Statute.

The Independent Living Plan should be developed from information gathered from the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, and any other psychological, educational, or vocational testing the youth has undergone.

Youth should steer the development of their Independent Living Plan. Schedule a meeting which includes the youth and their current caregiver, and have a conversation about the results of their completed Ansell Casey Assessments. The youth and his/her caretaker might assess the youth’s life skills differently, which can lead to a productive discussion. Ask the youth to list additional supportive people in their life who can help them carry out an independent living plan. This list might include friends, parents, extended family members, teachers, religious leaders, an employer, a neighbor, etc, and invite them to a meeting.

Focus the initial meeting on the youth’s strengths and start with the skills area they are most interested in working on. The Independent Living Plan should be based on the youth’s goals over one, two, or five years, addressing steps needed to accomplish the goals and overcome barriers. Goals and objectives should be specific to the youth’s age, individual interests, culture, and the region in which they live. Include some long-term goals, as youth may not see, for example, why they should attend school regularly.

The plan should be reviewed and updated every six months. The youth may think of additional supportive people in his/her life that should be invited to meetings that update the plan. New information should be added to the plan, and goals and objectives should be written specific to the changes in assessment data, age, experiences, previously mastered goals, and maturity.

Everyone involved in the development of the Independent Living Plan, most notably the youth, should sign it. A signed copy should be kept in the case file.

See Appendix A for a sample of an Independent Living Plan.

[Family Group Decision Making](#) providers statewide are trained on how to use this process to create Transition Plans for youth. Contact a local provider for help with meeting arrangements and facilitation. Although statewide, availability of this option will vary by county.

The following pages offer information and list resources for each of the Independent Living Plan objectives required by Minnesota Statute, as well as **samples of goals and objectives** that might be included in an Independent Living Plan. Each outcome in the

Independent Living Plan becomes a goal by including the date by which the youth will master the goal.

A. EDUCATIONAL, VOCATIONAL, AND EMPLOYMENT PLANNING

Practice Recommendations:

- Stay in communication with the youths' school.
- Stay focused on school stability and continuity – it is critical for educational success.
- Provide support services to promote academic success.
- Monitor the educational progress and planning of each youth – attend Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 accommodation plan meetings and provide informed input to assure integration with the child welfare driven Independent Living Plan.
- Request that services such as rehabilitative services get involved early on.
- Identify one person in the school to take a special interest in the youth and to act as their advocate.
- Involve parents and caregivers – encourage them to develop relationships with school staff, know where to go when there are school problems, and provide homework support.
- Ensure the collection of all educational records for youth.
- Assure that the youth acquires reading and writing literacy, math and technology skills.
- Help youth attain aptitude and vocation interest assessments.
- Assure that youth benefit from career development, vocational and job training offered through their high school.
- Encourage extracurricular activities to help youth develop positive social skills and self-esteem.
- Encourage obtaining a high school diploma rather than a GED – youth with a GED tend to have lower post-secondary enrollment and earnings than those with a diploma.
- Arrange for post-secondary education planning and supports.
- [See Appendix B for Post-Secondary Planning – 10 Steps for Youth.](#)
- Be aware that youth under state guardianship (i.e. state wards) are eligible for tuition waivers at Minnesota state colleges and universities - [see Appendix C](#)
- Become familiar with Education and Training Vouchers that will help former youth in care pay for post-secondary education - see page 26. Information is also available online at :
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/children/documents/pub/DHS_id_000553.hcsp
- Familiarize yourself with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – [see Appendix D](#) – Tips for Foster Youth Completing the FAFSA or at <http://www.nasfaa.org/annualpubs/FosterYouthFAFSA.pdf>

Sample goals and objectives for independent living plan:

By June 2009, youth will complete an education plan that will include:

Skills/behaviors:

- Attend an educational program regularly

- Follow academic and behavioral expectations at school
- Demonstrate acceptable attendance
- Master studies by maintaining a 2.0 grade point average each quarter
- Complete homework and class work on time
- Ask for help when needed
- Become involved in an extracurricular activity at school
- Identify GED testing site
- Successfully master the GED assessment
- Use the Minnesota Career Information System to explore careers and post-secondary education
- Participate in school conferences
- Take the ACT test
- Identify and apply to three post-secondary institutions
- Complete financial aid paperwork.

[See Appendix F for Education Information and Resources Online](#)

B. EMPLOYMENT

Practice recommendations:

- Help youth identify natural skills and abilities
- Encourage career exploration
- Support development of job readiness skills and employment skills solutions
- Work with job placement agencies
- Develop employment-based collaborations between business, social services, education and employment agencies (i.e. internships, volunteerism and paid employment).

Sample Goals and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009 youth will obtain and maintain meaningful employment.

Skills/Behaviors:

- Identify career interests by completing interest inventories (e.g. Minnesota Career Information System)
- Establish long and short term employment goals
- Attend a job or career fair
- Identify and use many resources to locate employment, including newspapers, local employment agencies, yellow pages, etc.
- Complete a resume and cover letter
- Complete and return two job applications
- Learn about potential job interview questions by participating in a mock job interview
- Go to a job interview with appropriate dress, grooming and materials
- Spend one or more days job shadowing a person who works in that area of interest
- Demonstrate good attendance at work
- Get to work on time for scheduled shifts
- Demonstrate good work attitude

- Demonstrate self control, leadership skills, group cooperation, anger management, and ethical behavior at work
 - Demonstrate appropriate appearance at work by following dress code and maintaining clean and professional work clothing.
- See Appendix F for Employment Information and Resources Online.

C. HEALTH CARE – MEDICAL COVERAGE

Practice recommendations:

- Arrange comprehensive physical, dental, vision, hearing, mental health and substance abuse screenings before youth leave care. Integrate this information into the Independent Living Plan.
- Arrange home and relationship safety education for youth.
- Educate youth about their mental health issues, sexual decision-making, and constructive ways of dealing with stress.
- Help youth learn to understand how to apply for insurance, access health care, and keep appointments with health care providers.
- Identify individuals who can help youth maintain safety and wellness.
- Assist youth in consolidating and updating health records.

Sample Goals and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009, youth will live a healthy lifestyle

Skills/Behaviors:

- Demonstrate knowledge of health care insurance coverage options
- Identify name, telephone number and address of dentist, medical doctor and therapist, and demonstrate how to make an appointment
- Complete applications for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare.
- Demonstrates knowledge of mental/emotional health needs
- Identify reasons to seek therapy
- Participate in counseling with a therapist
- Takes prescribed medication as directed by physician
- Demonstrates knowledge of what to do if a mental health crisis occurs
- Recognizes and correctly use of over the counter drugs for pain, fever, etc.
- Demonstrate use of oral thermometer and how to deal with a cold or the flu
- Identify food groups that promote a healthy, balanced diet
- Maintain appropriate weight
- Demonstrate regular medical and dental care
- Identify negative effects of cigarette, alcohol and drug use
- Make healthy choices about cigarette, alcohol and drug use
- Knows how to prevent pregnancy the spread of sexually transmitted diseases

By June 2009, youth will practice good emergency and safety skills

Skills/Behaviors:

- Demonstrate knowledge of smoke detectors and how to change the batteries
- Demonstrate ability to access emergency telephone numbers and complete first aid training
- Complete CPR training

- Identify common fire hazards
- Identify household hazards that may cause injury
- Can determine when to go to an emergency room rather than a family doctor or clinic
- Demonstrate an understanding of domestic violence and how to seek help.

[See Appendix F for Health/Medical Insurance Information and Resources Online.](#)

D. TRANSPORTATION

Practice Recommendations

- Arrange opportunities for youth to learn to use public transportation
- Provide the youth with bus cards
- Plan with the foster parents the steps necessary to become a licensed driver
- Arrange for youth to take driver's education and get their driver's license
- Provide opportunities for youth to practice driving
- When the youth receives a drivers license develop a plan with the foster parents regarding driving privileges and financial responsibilities
- If foster parents plan to include the youth in their car insurance policy ensure that the youth is added as a "named insured" or "additional insured."
- Help youth learn how to purchase auto insurance and a reliable vehicle
- Help youth learn basic auto maintenance
- Provide youth with a bicycle if they need it for transportation to work.

Sample Goal and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009, youth will be able to meet his/her transportation needs

Skills/Behaviors:

- Demonstrate ability to read a map and follow directional signs
- Locate a destination by following both written and verbal directions
- Identifies and can use public transportation in his/her region of the state
- Demonstrates ability to read public transportation schedules and maps
- Knows the privilege and responsibility associated with having a driver's license
- Obtains and studies Minnesota's driver's manual
- Participates in classroom driver's education classes
- Obtains a learner's permit and practices driving the foster parents' car twice per week
- Participates in behind-the-wheel driver's training
- Tests for and obtains a driver's license
- Visits an auto insurance agent to discuss coverage
- Visits a used car lot with foster parent(s) to learn wise consumer skills
- Can estimate the cost of owning and operating a car for a month/year
- Demonstrates knowledge of auto loans and car payments
- Understands safety guidelines for auto drivers and passengers.

[See Appendix F for Transportation Information and Resources Online](#)

E. MONEY MANAGEMENT

Practice recommendations:

Surveys of youth who have completed life skills training reveals that money management was the most helpful thing they learned.

- Engage foster parents or other caretakers in teaching money management skills
- Help the youth create a monthly budget and open a savings account
- Involve youth in a life skills training group which includes money management in the curriculum
- Involve youth in learning money management skills on-line.

Sample Goals and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009, youth will demonstrate money management skills

Skills/Behaviors:

- Develops realistic short and long-term budgets
- Obtains information about opening a checking and savings account
- Demonstrates understanding of the procedures for writing and cashing checks
- Reconciles and balances a mock checking account with sample bank statement
- Maintains positive balance in a savings account
- Demonstrates understanding of debit cards and can record debit card transactions
- Demonstrates an understanding of credit and loans, terms, interest and their advantages and disadvantages
- Demonstrates ability to make wise credit decisions and an understanding of the importance of a good credit record
- Demonstrates knowledge of identity theft
- Knows how to read a paycheck stub, e.g. gross and net pay, income taxes and other deductions
- Knows how to complete state and federal tax forms
- Understands and can calculate sales tax
- Has saved enough money for an apartment damage deposit and first month's rent
- Has a list, including costs, of what they will need, when they move out on their own.

[See Appendix F for Money Management Information and Resources Online.](#)

F. PLANNING FOR HOUSING

Practice recommendations:

- Provide life skills trainings that teach youth how to live independently
- Provide opportunities for youth to practice living on their own –housekeeping, grocery shopping, cooking meals, working out disputes with roommates
- Develop knowledge of housing issues and housing resources for youth aging out of care
- Create alliances with housing providers
- Ensure that youth have a safe, affordable place to live when they leave care – discharge to shelter care is not an acceptable plan
- [See Appendix E – Foster Care Benefits Up to Age 21.](#)

Sample Goals and Objectives Independent Living Plan

By June 2009 youth will locate and plan for appropriate housing

Skills/Behaviors:

- Demonstrates knowledge of different types of housing available, and is able to calculate costs related to each option
- Identifies community resources that assist in locating housing
- Demonstrates knowledge of a lease's vocabulary, rights, and responsibilities
- Demonstrates knowledge of tenant's rights and responsibilities
- Identifies supplies and furnishings needed for housing
- Identifies benefits and potential problems associated with having a roommate
- Develops a housing plan that includes a budget, furnishings needed, community supports, transportation and employment
- Develops a safety plan in the event of fire or gas leak.

By June 2009, youth will demonstrate housekeeping skills.

Skills/Behaviors:

- Demonstrates knowledge of cleaning products and their uses
- Demonstrates use of a washing machine and dryer
- Can sew on buttons and make minor clothing repairs
- Maintains a clean living space
- Knows how to use a plunger and prevent sinks and toilets from clogging
- Knows how to dispose of garbage
- Can change a fuse or reset a circuit breaker
- Can do minor household repairs.

By June 2009, youth will demonstrate food management skills

Skills/Behaviors:

- Disposes of food that has passed the expiration date
- Stores food appropriately
- Demonstrates ability to follow recipes and cook meals for one
- Demonstrates ability to plan a menu for a week, develop a grocery list, and carry out the grocery shopping with a limited budget.

[See Appendix F for Housing Information and Resources Online.](#)

G. SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL SKILLS

Practice recommendations:

- Train caregivers how to respond to “teachable moments” to assist youth in healthy identity formation
- Provide activities that support youth in developing a positive sense of self
- Acknowledge and support youth who identify as gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transgender and help them find information and resources
- Help youth develop their racial and ethnic identity
- Either provide a life skills training group or refer youth to one and ensure that transportation is provided

- Connect the youth with a mentor.

Sample Goals and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009, youth will demonstrate good personal appearance and hygiene.

Skills/Behaviors:

- Bathes regularly at appropriate intervals, including use of soap and shampoo
- Demonstrates proper care of skin, hair, nails and teeth
- Demonstrates regular use of deodorant and other appropriate toiletries
- Demonstrates compliance with school dress code
- Demonstrates compliance with work dress code
- Dresses in a culturally appropriate manner in free time.

By June 2009, youth will demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills

Skills/Behaviors:

- Identifies several characteristics of a positive relationship
- Appropriately meets and greets new people
- Compares and contrasts assertive and aggressive behavior
- Demonstrates assertiveness when solving real-life problems
- Identifies and demonstrates strategies to resolve conflicts
- Demonstrates respect for people of a different race, culture, religion, class, political party affiliation, diverse belief systems, or sexual preference
- Identifies effects of peer pressure and practices how to say “no”
- Can develop a realistic plan with appropriate steps identified to achieve a goal
- Can anticipate and describe the consequences associated with different choices
- Identifies healthy boundaries and how to avoid exploitation.

By June 2009 youth will have successfully participated in three new social/recreational activities.

Skills/Behaviors:

- Attend YMCA summer camp
- Attend a youth group retreat, including the group initiatives course
- Attend guitar lessons once per week.

[See Appendix F for Social and Recreational Information and Resources On-line.](#)

[See Appendix G for the Forgotten Children’s Fund.](#)

H. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Practice recommendations:

- Provide assessments, services and activities that address cultural needs (There is a version of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills assessment for Native American youth)
- Connect youth with opportunities to select well-screened mentors who can act as role models and teach youth specific skills
- Make sure the youth knows why they are in placement
- Help youth get the information they need to create a Life Book
- Refer youth to a Life Book planning group
- Help youth identify and connect with birth family members with whom they can maintain a safe and appropriate relationship

- Make sure someone is teaching youth how to find the community resources they will need when they age out of care.

Sample Goals and Objectives for Independent Living Plan

By June 2009, youth will access community resources

Skills/Behaviors:

- Obtains a Birth Certificate, picture I.D. and Social Security card
- Identifies names, addresses and telephone numbers of community agencies such as health clinics, employment agencies, public assistance/housing agencies, motor vehicle division
- Knows who to contact if lost, frightened, depressed, anxious, sick, injured, out of food and money, utilities disconnected, or heat goes out
- Demonstrates knowledge of community emergency medical response system
- Locates resources in the telephone book yellow pages, at the library and online
- Knows the location of the post office and how to use it
- Knows where and how to register for selective service
- Knows how to register to vote, how and where to go to vote
- Knows the location of the nearest parks, banks, and laundromats
- Uses newspaper ads to locate employment, housing or services
- Identifies public transportation options
- Demonstrates knowledge of community legal services
- Knows how to contact a local church of their religious affiliation
- Knows how to contact siblings and other birth relatives.

[See Appendix F for Family and Community Connections Information and Resources](#)

V. GATHERING ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS

These Web sites describe how to get the documents youth will need in order to apply for employment and obtain housing. Some documents, such as immunization records or Birth Certificates can be difficult to obtain, so youth will often need help in writing to request documents or paying fees. Check out these websites for help:

Federal identity and employment eligibility requirements:

<http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-9.htm>

Birth Certificate: <http://dc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm>

Social Security card: <http://www.ssa.gov/> and click on [Your Social Security Card Number](#)

Photo Identification or driver's license: <http://www.dmv.org/connect-to-local-dmv.php>

High school or post-secondary academic transcripts: <http://www.ordertranscripts.com>

Immunization record: <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/immuniz-records.htm>

Temporary work visa, if not a US citizen: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/ead.htm>

Work permit, if needed <http://www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/empm.html>

VI. TEACHING YOUTH INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

A. Group Work

Teaching life skills to groups of youth has been a very successful approach in Minnesota and is highly recommended.

- Group work is an efficient use of a youth worker's time, and provides an excellent way for youth to learn and practice social skills.
- Youth enjoy being with their peers, particularly those who share the experience of out-of-home care.
- A successful group provides a safe environment in which youth can share their feelings without fearing that they will be laughed at or ignored.
- As trust is developed in a group, youth can try new things and perhaps not succeed, but know the group will be there for support.
- A group allows youth to share their viewpoints and learn from the experiences of others, and fosters an environment where they can talk openly about their feelings.
- Youth learn to work as part of a group, better appreciating what s/he can contribute.
- A group can provide attainable challenges where all participants win, work together, share accomplishments, overcome risks, and learn problem solving techniques.
- Groups also offer a fun way to learn independent living skills. When youth are having fun, they are involved, motivated, focused and more likely to remember what they learn.

DHS SELF staff offer an annual two-day workshop on how to teach adolescents life skills in a group. Notices of the training are sent to all counties.

The following Web sites offer independent living skills curriculum to use with youth in groups:

- Casey Life Skills: www.caseylifeskills.org
- The National Resource Center for Youth Services: www.nrcys.ou.edu
- Youth Communication: www.youthcomm.org
- Daniel Memorial Institute: www.danielkids.org
- Project Adventure: <http://www.pa.org>
- Social Learning: www.SocialLearning.com/
- Independent Living Resources, Inc.: <http://www.independentlivingresources.com>
- Northwest Media <http://www.northwestmedia.com/>
- Relationship Skills for Teens: http://www.buildingrelationships.org/love_u2.htm
- 4Girls <http://4girls.gov/> (Click on For Educators)
- Project Butterfly (for girls and young women of African descent): <http://www.projectbutterfly.com/curriculum.php>
- Expanding the Circle (for Native American youth): <http://ici1.umn.edu/etc/default.html>

B. One-to-One

Foster parents and other caretakers of youth are the perfect one-to-one life skills instructors for youth because their home can be a learning laboratory to practice skills, and the community is a rich resource of field trips for learning. (See Page 20-22)

Some counties use in-home family service aides or volunteer mentors to work with youth one-to-one.

The Web sites listed above offer curricula that can also be used with individuals. Youth can also be guided through the on-line learning sites listed below.

C. On-Line Learning for Youth

Youth can learn life skills on the computer.

The V Street: Web site is interactive and requires a \$24.00 annual subscription.
<http://www.VStreet.com>

Foster Club: <http://fyi3.com> provides a national network, resources and encouragement for youth in foster care to be involved, informed and independent.

Teen Central: <http://teencentral.com> is an anonymous helpline Web site developed by experts in teen counseling and psychology.

Youthhood.org: <http://youthhood.org> has information for youth regarding health, education, social situations and self-advocacy.

Teen Voices: <http://teenvoices.com> is a website for teen and young adult women.

Out Proud: <http://outproud.org> offers information and resources for queer and questioning youth.

Mapping Your Future: <http://mapping-your-future.org/planning/> has information on planning a career, selecting and paying for school.

Career Voyages: <http://www.careervoyages.gov/> includes online videos for various careers.

Next Steps: <http://www.nextsteps.org/career/index/html>

Kids Health: <http://kidshealth.org/teen/> includes information on body, mind, sexual health, food, fitness, drugs, alcohol, diseases, infections, medical conditions, relationships, emotions and staying safe.

4Girls: <http://4girls.gov/> is for girls addressing body, nutrition, mind, relationships, drugs, alcohol, smoking, bullying, safety and their future.

Driver's license: <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs/index.html> has information on how to get a driver's license, costs, driver's manuals and more.

Buying a car: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/cars/CarHandbook/Default.htm>

Metro Transit: <http://www.metrotransit.org/> shows how to use the bus and rail systems in the metro area.

Banking on Our Future: <http://www.bankingonourfuture.org/master/cfm/main/home> is a computer game that teaches financial literacy. The middle school level curriculum is appropriate for high school youth as well.

Easy recipes for youth: <http://kidshealth.org/teen/recipes/>

Register to vote online: <https://ssl.capwiz.com/congressorg/e4/nvra>

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and metro area.

VII. THE SELF PROGRAM FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT LIVING PLANS

The Minnesota Department of Human Services administers the Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally (SELF) program. Federal funds for the program are available through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. Beginning in 2007, SELF funds are available to counties and tribes on a competitive basis. Counties and tribes will be asked to describe a plan for teaching youth the life skills necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.

A. Eligible Youth

Funds may be used to provide services to adolescents ages 14-21 who have the potential to become self-sufficient adults and:

- Are currently in out-of-home placement
- Have been in out-of-home placement any time after age 14.

Placement is defined as one approved by a county social services agency, juvenile or tribal court. This may include relative or kinship placement, foster care, residential treatment, group homes or shelter care.

Services may begin any time after a youth is identified as SELF eligible and may continue up to age 21, regardless of placement status or living situation. Youth who are adopted after age 14 may continue receiving SELF funded services up to age 21. **Youth who will remain in placement until age 18 or completion of high school are the highest priority for SELF funded services.**

B. Use of Funds

Flexibility is the hallmark of the SELF program. Creative use of funds is encouraged so individual needs can be met. While restrictions are minimal, services must promote development of life skills and a successful transition to adulthood. SELF funds should support the implementation of Independent Living Plans.

SELF funds may be used to cover room and board costs **only** for youth who age out of placement at age 18 or older. These costs may include rent, damage deposits, utilities and telephone installation. The residence must be approved by the agency serving the youth before SELF funds may be used. Agencies serving youth may:

- Make case-by-case decisions about the type, duration and amount of room and board assistance each youth needs
- Require youth receiving room and board assistance to participate in or graduate from a life skills training program
- Determine on a case-by-case basis the level of supervision and case management needed for youth receiving room and board assistance.

[See Appendix F](#) For a list of ways SELF funds and community resources have been used successfully by social services staff statewide.

C. Reporting

Counties must enter individual client data into the Social Service Information System (SSIS) for each youth served. A youth is considered served if they have an Independent Living Plan and at least a part of that plan has been carried out. **The client data is entered by opening an Adolescent Living Services (ALS) workgroup in SSIS and completing the SELF Client Report Information screen.** The reporting year for services is September 1 to August 31.

In addition, counties and tribes need to complete a paper SELF Client Data form and send it to DHS for youth served who do not have an open county social services case.

Minnesota Statute ([Juvenile Court Act 260C.212 subd.1](#)) requires an Independent Living Plan for a child age 16 or older who is in placement because of a permanency disposition. The plan should include, but not be limited to, the following objectives:

- Educational, vocational, or employment planning
- Health care planning and medical coverage
- Transportation including, where appropriate, assisting in obtaining a driver's license
- Money management
- Planning for housing
- Social and recreational skills
- Establishing and maintaining connections with the child's family and community.

The Independent Living Plan form that includes these objectives is in the Social Services Information System (SSIS) as an attachment to the Out-of-Home Placement Plan.

It is also best practice to develop an Independent Living Plan for youth on caseloads who have been reunited with their families. The plan form can also be found in the Adolescent Life Skills (ALS) workgroup in SSIS.

VIII. EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHERS (ETV'S) FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Federal funds for post-secondary education are available for young people who have been in an out-of-home placement. Each year the Department of Human Services will issue Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) to as many as 200 youth formerly in out-of-home placements.

A. Eligible Youth

Youth must be accepted into a post-secondary school or program before applying for an ETV, and must be age 18 to 21 at the time they begin the school or program. In addition, to meet eligibility criteria, they must have:

- Been in a county or tribal court approved out-of-home placement after age 14, or
- Been adopted at age 16 or older

Youth do not currently need to be working with a county social worker to apply.

B. Deadline

The annual deadline for ETV applications is June 1st. Awards are made for a full academic year, beginning with the fall semester.

C. Use of ETV Funds

ETVs can fund higher education programs that include accredited universities, colleges, community colleges, vocational technical colleges, and other programs that prepare students for employment in a recognized occupation. Youth may use ETVs to pay for tuition, books and fees. If the youth is a full-time student, they may also use ETVs for other expenses including:

- On-campus and off-campus room and board
- Transportation
- Child care
- Purchase of a computer.

An ETV cannot exceed \$5,000 per academic year, and youth must also apply for federal and state financial aid. Students can re-apply for each academic year.

Students who are awarded an ETV will be expected to stay in communication with an assigned mentor, submit transcripts each semester, submit documentation of expenses and maintain a 2.0 or higher grade point average.

Detailed information about Education and Training Vouchers and an application form are available at

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/children/documents/pub/DHS_id_000553.hcsp.

Click on Children, then click Adolescents, then click on Education and Training Vouchers. For more information call the Department of Human Services, (651) 296-4471.

IX. HOW CAREGIVERS CAN HELP YOUTH PREPARE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Caregivers should be involved in four critical areas as youth transition to adulthood:

- Complete the caretaker section of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment
- Participate in the development and updating of the youth's Independent Living Plan
- Transport youth to independent living skills groups
- Help youth learn the skills they need to complete their Independent Living Plan by teaching them in the home and community.

Caregivers are uniquely situated to teach youth skills in the home on a daily basis. Examples include:

- Meal planning, grocery shopping, dining etiquette
- Cleaning, laundry, home safety
- Housing expenses and planning for a move
- Using public transportation
- What's involved in getting a driver's license, car and insurance
- Car repairs
- Keeping track of important documents
- Creating a community resource directory
- Banking, credit cards and loans, saving money – planning for large purchases
- Budgeting, spending, comparison shopping
- Personal hygiene
- Relationships and sexuality
- Decision making, setting short and long term goals
- Communication skills
- Finding, getting and keeping a job
- Study skills.

Ready, Set, Fly! – A Parent's Guide to Teaching Life Skills was developed by foster/adoptive parents and teens. It suggests activities and teachable moments for caregivers to use in the home to build the independent living skills of youth on a one-to-one basis. Ready, Set, Fly! is free and can be printed from the following Web site: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org> Click on resources.

Training for Foster Parents

Call the Child Welfare Training System Area Manager to arrange for 12 hours of training in the community. The curriculum is entitled "Leaving Home Again: A Foster Parent Guide to Helping Youth in Care Transition to a Healthy Adulthood."

For Youth Workers and Caregivers: Self-Sufficiency Preparation Check List

When working with a youth who is 16 years old or older, this checklist can be a good place to start in helping them become more self-sufficient. Answer each question with a “Y” for yes and an “N” for no for each task. The “no” answers will provide a list of specific tasks or areas of training that need to be addressed.

Youth’s Name _____ Date _____

50 Things You Can Do to Help Someone Get Ready for Independent Living!

(Adapted from New Life Youth Services, Cincinnati, Ohio)

1. Help them get a certified copy of their Birth Certificate.
2. Help them get a Social Security card.
3. Enroll them in an education program in which they can succeed.
4. Explore any medical insurance benefits a youth is eligible for.
5. Help them get a state issued photo identification card.
6. Help get copies of medical and dental records.
7. Help youth put together a life book.
8. Start a Records Book that will contain the youth’s important records.
9. Help them open a bank account.
10. Teach them how to write and cash a check.
11. Take the youth for a dental check-up. Develop a relationship with a dentist who would be willing to see the youth when they are on their own.
12. Take the youth for a physical. Develop a relationship with a doctor who would be willing to see the youth when they are on their own.
13. Help them renew contact with family members.
14. Help them develop at least one friendship.
15. Line them up with a good counselor.
16. Show them some new ways to have fun.
17. Take them to join a local recreation center.
18. Connect them with a church group, 4-H, Scouting, extracurricular activities in school.
19. Help them find a job or a better paying job.
20. Make sure they really understand birth control.
21. Show them the best place to shop for food, clothing, furniture, etc.
22. Help them learn how to look up possible resources in the phone book and Internet.
23. Help them through an independent living skills workbook.
24. Teach them how to read a map. Give the youth a map of the community.
25. Take them on a tour of the community.
26. Teach them how to use the public transportation and read schedules.
27. Buy the youth an alarm clock and teach them how to use it.
28. Help the youth get a library card and show them how to use it.
29. Help them get a driver’s license and price insurance.
30. Role-play contacts with police, bank tellers, doctors, property owners, etc.
31. Role-play job interviews.
32. Help them put together a resume and a fact sheet with information needed for filling out applications.

33. Make a list of important telephone numbers.
34. Teach them how to cook five good meals.
35. Teach them how to store food.
36. Teach them how to use coupons and comparison shop.
37. Teach them how to read a paycheck stub.
38. Teach them how to use an oven and microwave.
39. Teach them how to clean a kitchen and bathroom thoroughly
40. Take them to a session of adult court, e.g. traffic, criminal
41. Teach them how to find and retain a lawyer and when one is needed.
42. Help them to understand a lease or rental agreement.
43. Teach them how to do, or at least get help with, yearly tax return forms.
44. Teach them how to write a letter and use the post office.
45. Help them develop good telephone communication skills.
46. Explain to them tenant and property owner rights.
47. Teach them how to find a safe, affordable place to live.
48. Work with them on how to budget and manage finances.
49. Work with them on how to find and get along with a roommate.
50. Talk to them often about their feelings, and about what it might be like to live on their own.

HOW CAREGIVERS CAN HELP ADOLESCENTS MEET THEIR NEEDS

Youth need to feel a sense of safety and structure – How caregivers can help:

- Be emotionally, physically and sexually safe for the youth in your home.
- Compliance with rules and structure is important, but is not the *purpose* of placement.
- Tell youth directly that they are safe – that adults do not engage in sexual behavior with youth in their home. Literally, have the conversation.
- Be honest with youth regarding decisions being made about them.
- Include them in decisions.
- Help youth talk about how they perceive the system and adults' ability to keep them safe.
- Help youth learn how to advocate for themselves.
- Remember that consistent and rigid are not the same thing.

Youth need to experience active participation, group membership and belonging – How caregivers can help:

- Help youth to articulate the types of relationships they want with various significant people in their lives (family of origin, foster family or extended family/friends).
- Encourage youth to get involved in cultural events in the community.
- Offer to help youth create a Life Book if they don't have one.
- Support participation in clubs/organizations/teams – even if there are concerns about the youth's behavior. Find ways to make it possible to participate.

Youth need to develop self-worth through meaningful contributions – How caregivers can help:

- Find opportunities for youth to give back in ways that are of interest to them.
- Look for opportunities for youth to participate in community action/organizing around issues of interest to youth.
- Discuss the purpose of giving back – help youth connect it to feeling of value to others
- Explicitly verbalize times they make a contribution.
- Non-stop, over-the-top enthusiasm about youths' capacity to contribute in meaningful ways.

Youth need to discover self, gain independence, and gain control over their life – How caregivers can help:

- Do not use the threat of kicking a youth out of the home as a means of enforcing compliance
- Share power
- Talk with youth, not about them or at them
- Don't over-react to experimentation
- Remember that weird hair or funky clothes are not a reflection on the caregiver or the quality of parenting
- Talk with youth about what control over one's life looks like in the adult world.

Youth need to develop significant, quality relationships with peers and at least one adult – How caregivers can help:

- Let youth see a variety of people.
- Talk honestly with youth about the pros and cons of their various friends.
- Encourage involvement of other adults besides yourself in the lives of youth.
- Talk with youth about what real friendships look like.
- Seek creative ways to let youth be in contact with kids who are viewed as a bad influence. Chances are that those youth are also looking for some structure and an interested, available adult.
- Connect youth with a mentor.

Youth need to discuss conflicting values and form their own – How caregivers can help:

- Talk openly with youth, especially in cross-cultural placements, about different world views.
- Make a point to ask youth how they feel about areas where values seem to be different – encourage them to explain how they arrived at their thinking and share personal values or beliefs with them.
- Help youth to learn how to think critically about issues outside themselves.
- Help them to see that there are many ways to walk through the world, and that their world view is shaped by their own, unique experiences.
- Become educated about sexuality and gender so that information can be conveyed to youth.

Youth need to feel pride of competence and mastery – How caregivers can help:

- Encourage, encourage, encourage
- Provide rides
- Teach basic life skills in the home
- Expose youth to music and the arts.

Youth need to expand their capacity to enjoy life and know that success is possible – How caregivers can help:

- Role model how to have fun
- Engage in a variety of activities
- Discuss the idea of positive views of the future
- Help them tell their stories from a point of view of resiliency
- Help them understand the idea of HOPE.

APPENDIX A Sample of Independent Living Plan

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SUPPORT FOR EMANCIPATION AND
LIVING FUNCTIONALLY (SELF)
Independent Living Assessment and Training Plan

Client: Jane Doe Date: 10-10-10
Worker: Ima Planner County: X

<p>1. Employment & Career Jane currently is a senior in high school. She is working at the local McDonalds approximately 30-35 hours/week. She is interested in going to school for social work or nursing but has not decided for sure. She has visited SMSU but has not visited MN West for their nursing program. Jane has identified the high school principal, her social worker, and former foster mom as resources to assist her in this area.</p>	<p>Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses</p>
<p>Assessment of Need: Jane has had some issues at work. She was fired from McDonalds once for giving away food. They recruited her back but has called in a number of times, at last minute, in order to go out with friends. This resulted in almost a month of getting no hours, which is an issue since she lives on her own. Jane must maintain work in order to continue to living on her own.</p> <p>Jane also needs to continue to explore career choices, colleges, and financial assistance.</p>	
<p>Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jane will work a minimum of 25 hours per week through the end of the school year. 2. Jane will call in to work only if she has found a replacement worker for the time she continues to work at McDonalds. 3. Mrs. Painter the principal will meet with Jane to explore college options by September 15th. 4. Jane will contact colleges and schedule visits by October 1st. 5. Dee Manny, Jane's former foster parent will bring Jane to the visits at her chosen colleges, as they are scheduled. 6. Jane will complete applications to colleges and send them in by November 15th, with the assistance of Mrs. Painter, Dee Manny, or Ms. Peach her social worker. 7. Ms. Peach will supply Jane with information on financial aide such as the FAFSA and ETV by December 1st. 8. Jane with the assistance of Ms Peach will fill out her income tax return, FAFSA and ETV by February 15th. 	

2. Transportation/Driver's License Jane owns her own car and has a valid driver's license. She does not owe any money for the car or repairs.	Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses
Assessment of Need: Jane has had some trouble paying for her car insurance while she was not working. She also has not been consistent about up keep on the car, which is important since her only means to school 15 miles away is her car.	
Plan: 1. Jane will keep 2/3 of every paycheck to pay for things such as rent, utilities, car insurance, gas, and food. 2. Jane will bring her car to school to have the shop class do basic up keep on her car every 3 months or every 3000 miles.	

3. Money Management Jane has struggled with money management and being able to pay her bills since moving in to her own place. She moved in to her own place with basic household items, her rent and deposit paid by Social Services, and \$700 in her checkbook to utilize if she had any emergencies. Social Services has agreed to pay her rent in full for 3 months, 2/3 of her rent for 3 months, and 1/3 of her rent for the last 3 months. She has identified Ms Peach and Dee as person's who will assist her in this.	Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses
Assessment of Need: Upon moving in to her own place Jane spent all of her slush fund money and pay checks. She was overdrawn by \$200 in her checkbook. One of the checks was for her car insurance. Most of the money she spent was borrowing money to her boyfriend, eating out, and buying others food. She also did not input all of the checks and ATM withdrawals in her check registry.	
Plan: 1. Social Services will pay Jane's rent in full for the 1 st 3 month's in her own apartment. They will pay 2/3 of her rent for the next 3 months, and 1/3 of her rent for the last 3 months, through her graduation. 2. Jane will save \$350/ month for the 1 st 3 months, \$232/ month for the next 3 months, and \$116/ month for the last three months. 3. Jane will pay rent, utilities, and car insurance by the 5 th of every month. 4. Jane will input all checks and ATM withdrawals in her checkbook. 5. Jane and Ms. Peach will meet before the 5 th of every month to reconcile Jane's checkbook and assure the bills are paid. 6. Jane will track every 25 cents she spends on an expense ledger for 1 month. 7. Dee has agreed to assist Jane with paying for her car insurance for up to 2 months, should an emergency arise in which Jane is unable to do so.	

<p>4. Social/Recreational Skills Jane is a very outgoing and personable young woman. She has in the past had difficulty dealing with criticism from others and would respond with fighting and threats. She no longer uses these tactics and is able to walk away from arguments. Living on her own with little money she has found that she is sometimes bored and will then tend to hang with crowds that are involved with drugs and alcohol.</p>	<p>Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses</p>
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Assessment of Need:
Jane tends to move towards groups of people that use drugs and alcohol. While she doesn't participate in the drug use she will occasionally drink. She also has difficulty with saying no to peers that want money from her.

Plan:
1. Jane will not give money to peers for any reason. She will chart her expenditures for one month in order to monitor this.
2. Jane will identify 10 ways she can entertain herself without being in the presence of others using drugs or alcohol by November 1st.
3. Jane will participate in 2 of her chosen activities each week.
4. Ms. Peach and Dee will assist Jane with accessing these programs or activities, such as applying for membership and scholarship to the YMCA.

<p>5. Housing Jane has safe and affordable housing. She has a month by month lease. She does well with keeping her apartment clean. She has friends over but there have been no noise complaints.</p>	<p>Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses</p>
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Assessment of Need:
Jane has money management issues and has not been saving money for when she has to become responsible for her own part of the rent.

Plan: See Money Management for plan.

<p>6. Health Care/Medical Coverage Jane has no medical issues. She does however suffer from depression and anxiety. She does a superb job of personal hygiene.</p>	<p>Competent Learning Wants to Learn Refuses</p>
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Assessment of Need: Jane makes all of her own medical and mental health appointments. She is regular with taking her birth control but is infrequent with her psychotropic medication. She no longer participates in individual therapy as she feels as though she has gotten from that what she will. Jane takes good care of her herself hygiene wise and does well with balancing junk food with healthier choices.

Plan:

1. Jane will schedule an appointment with her psychiatrist and discuss her infrequent use of her medications.
2. Jane and her psychiatrist will develop a medication plan and Jane will follow recommendations to continue medications.
3. Jane will fill her prescriptions before she meets with Ms. Peach each month.
4. Jane and Ms. Peach will meet before the 5th of every month to ensure that Jane has a month's supply of medications. They will place the medications in pill caddies which Jane will keep on the bathroom counter.

7. Educational/Vocational Plans
Jane is currently a senior in high school on target to graduate at the end of the school year. She has a desire to attend college or vo-tech for social work or nursing. She is not decided on where to attend and whether she will attend post secondary school next fall or not. She has identified Mrs. Painter, Ms. Peach, and Dee as people that will assist her in this area.

Competent
Learning
Wants to Learn
Refuses

Assessment of Need: Jane is living on her own and calls in to the school, herself, when she must be absent from school. She is bright but often is preoccupied with other things at school and doesn't do her work. She is undecided about her post secondary plans.

Plan:

- Jane will call in to school no later than 8:10am if she is sick and will not be attending.
Jane will supply the school with appointment cards and doctor's statements if she must miss school for appointments or has been ill for more than 1 day.
Ms. Peach will check the parent porthole 2/month to check attendance and progress at school.
Mrs. Painter will meet with Jane 2/month regarding progress at school or any issues Jane may be having.
Mrs. Painter will meet with Jane to explore colleges that offer the programs Jane is interested in by September 15th.
Jane will schedule college visits by Oct 1st.
Dee will attend college visits with Jane as they are scheduled.
Jane will apply to colleges of choice by November 15th.
Ms. Peach will supply financial aide information to Jane, such as FAFSA and ETV's by December 1st.
Ms. Peach will arrange a day for Jane to job shadow a social worker and nurse by October 1st.

8. Establishing & Maintaining Connections w/Family & Community
Jane's biological family all lives in Georgia. She has an ex-stepmother that lives in a nearby town that she has sporadic contact with due to a tenuous relationship in the past.

Competent
Learning
Wants to Learn
Refuses

Assessment of Need:

Jane has ongoing struggles with her biological family. They have infrequent contact with her and she is often expected to contact them. Her mother couldn't pass the homestudy in order for Jane to return with her. Her father because of work requirements did not believe he could parent her full time. Jane loves her family however struggles with their inability to support her mental health and sobriety therefore she does not want to live back in Georgia. While she has been living in Marshall for a number of years she has just a handful of people she depends on for support.

Plan:

1. Jane and Dee Manny will have face to face contact once a week.
2. Jane and Dee Manny will have phone contact as often as they desire.
3. Jane and her ex-stepmother will be in contact at minimum, once a month.
4. Jane will maintain phone contact with any family member she is comfortable with as often as she is comfortable.
5. Jane will visit her biological family at Christmas and summer.
6. Jane's father will make flight arrangements for both trips.
7. Jane's father will pay for one trip in it's entirety and Social Services will pay 1/2 of the flight for the other trip.

9. Budget: Itemize expenditures anticipated in completing this plan.

Applications for college.....	\$60
Car maintenance.....	\$100
Rent.....	\$350/month
Utilities.....	\$18/month
Cable/Phone.....	\$53/month
Gas.....	\$100/month
Car Insurance.....	\$97/month
Food.....	\$150/month
Graduation Expenses.....	\$550
Recreation.....	\$200/month
Trips to Georgia.....	\$800

Worker (Signature)

Client (Signature)

Date

Date

For more information call Claire Hill at (651)296-4471.

File in client's case record. **It is not necessary to send a copy to DHS.**

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 282-5329 (voice). TTY/TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.

APPENDIX B Post-Secondary Planning

Ten Steps for Youth

8th and 9th Grades

1. Think about career possibilities and explore different occupations.
2. Find out which courses to take in high school to prepare academically for college and work hard to get good grades.
3. Save money to pay for school.

10th Grade Begin 16+

4. Think about selecting a school. Find out about different types of schools, and decide which school characteristics are most important.
5. Take the Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT).

11th Grade

6. Gather information from schools, attend college fairs and begin college visits.
7. Retake the PSAT for a chance at a National Merit Scholarship.
8. Take the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT) in the spring.

12th Grade

9. Apply to the schools they like best. Retake the ACT and SAT if they are not happy with their scores.
10. Apply for financial aid Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarships and grants. Avoid student loans, if possible.

APPENDIX C Tuition Waivers for State Wards

System Procedures for Chapter 5 - Administration

Procedure 5.12.2 Tuition Waiver for Persons Under the Guardianship of the
Commissioner of Human Services for Board Policy 5.12

5.12.2 Tuition Waiver for Persons Under the Guardianship of the Commissioner of Human Services

Part 1. Authority.

M.S. 136F.70, Subd. 1, provides the board with authority to waive tuition for certain persons, courses, and programs.

Part 2. General Provision.

The presidents may waive tuition for persons under the age of 21 who are under the guardianship of the commissioner of human services provided that those persons are qualified for admission to a Minnesota state college or university and that those persons contribute toward their expenses by gainful employment if they are able to work.

The president may continue to waive tuition for persons removed from the guardianship of the commissioner of human services until they reach the age of 21 provided those persons were under the guardianship of the commissioner of human services when they reached the age of 18, are qualified for admission to a Minnesota state college or university, and contribute toward their expenses by gainful employment if they are able to work.

If the person has attained the age of 21 and has made satisfactory progress in his/her academic program but has not completed the program, the individual may petition the college or university through their academic program advisor for continuation of the waiver until that program is completed. The academic program advisor will make a recommendation to the president. The decision to continue to waive tuition will be at the discretion of the president.

Related

Documents:

- [Policy 5.12, Refunds, Withdrawals and Waivers](#)
- [System Procedure 5.12.1, Active Duty with the Armed Forces](#)
- [Statute Reference\(s\): MS 136F.70, Subd. 1](#)

APPENDIX D FOSTER YOUTH: TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

Questions on the FAFSA which may cause difficulty for foster youth:

Question #53
Step 3, page 4:
Orphan or
Ward of the
Court

Q: I am a dependent child of the court of my county under the 300 series. Is this the same as a “ward” of the court (600 series)?

A: The term “ward” is used to mean both wards and dependents of the court. Check “yes” to this question.

Question #53
Step 3, page 4:
Orphan or
Ward of the
Court

Q: I am no longer under the court because my foster parents took legal guardianship of me a few years ago. However, my foster parents do not support me with their own financial resources. They still get a foster care check each month for me. Are they my legal guardians?

A: No, you are a “ward of the court” because you were a ward before this guardianship and because your county has continued to provide financial support for you. Your guardians do not meet the definition of legal guardians for purposes of this financial aid form. You are considered independent. The income in question is your relatives and is not reported on your application. Do not include as part of your income any TANF or Cal Works* received by another for your support or care.

Question #53
Step 3, page 4:
Orphan or
Ward of the
Court

Q: I turned 18 and graduated, so my court case was closed. My college is saying I am no longer an independent student because I’m no longer a ward of the court. Am I considered dependent or independent?

A: A student is considered to be independent if he or she is a ward of the court, or was a ward of the court until the individual reached the age of 18.

Question #53
Step 3, page 4:
Orphan or
Ward of the
Court

Q: I am a ward of the court but graduated from high school and then went to live with my mother for two months. Did I lose my independent status?

A: No, not if she hadn’t been supporting you while you were in foster care. A student is considered to be independent if he or she is a ward of the court, or was a ward of the court until the individual reached the age of 18.

Question #51-52

Step 3, page 4:
Student Status

Q: I have a child who will be living with me and our income will be from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF or Cal Works). Do I check “yes”? Is TANF or Cal Works* considered to be like earned income?

A: TANF or Cal Works is considered untaxed income and would be listed on Worksheet A on FAFSA page 8. The child is considered a legal dependent of the applicant. Check “yes” to this question.

Question #84
Step 5, page 6:

Number in
Household

Q: I live with my foster parents and their children. Are they my “family members?”

A: No. You are considered independent and as such, you are a family of one person (yourself).

Question #40
Step 2, page 4:

Untaxed
Income
Worksheet A,
Page 8

Q: My foster parents get TANF (or Cal Works) for me because I am a ward of the court. Is this my income?

A: No, you are considered independent. The income in question is your foster parents and is not reported on your application. Do not include as part of your income any TANF or Cal Works received by another for your support or care.

Question #40
Step 2, page 4:

Untaxed
Income
Worksheet A,
Page 8

Q: My grandmother (aunt, etc.) gets TANF or Cal Works for me because I am a ward of the court. Is this my income?

A: No, the income in question is your relatives and is not reported on your application. Do not include as part of your income any TANF or Cal Works received by another for your support or care.

Question #40
Step 2, page 4:

Untaxed
Income
Worksheet A,
Page 8

Q: I am a ward of the court but my grandmother gets only TANF or Cal Works for me because I didn’t qualify for foster care payments. Should I list this income as my income or part of my income?

A: No, you are considered independent. The income in question is your relatives and is not reported on your application. Do not include as part of your income any TANF or Cal Works received by another for your support or care.

Question #40
Step 2, page 4:

Untaxed
Income Child
Care Expenses
Page 8

Q: I am a single mom with one child and will get TANF or Cal Works as soon as my court case is dismissed. I will get free day care for my child (from a grandmother, aunt, or free day care center) while I go to college. Does this “free” income have to be reported on the FAFSA?

A: No. This information is not referenced on the FAFSA or in the instructions.

Question #100
Step 7, page 6:
Signatures

Q: I have filled out this form as an independent student. Do I need my father and/or mother's signature(s)? I don't live with them, but I see them sometimes.

A: No. You are considered an independent applicant, no other signatures are required.

* Cal-Works is a public assistance program in the state of California. It is not applicable to Minnesota youth.

APPENDIX E Foster Care Benefits Up To Age 21

Prepared 9-1-04 by Ann Ahstrom, Children's Justice Initiative

Statutes and Administrative Rules Related to Court Jurisdiction, Services and Continued Foster Care for Children beyond their 18th Birthdays

I. Court jurisdiction to 19th birthday: The following statute authorizes the court to continue jurisdiction past the child's 18th birthday to the child's 19th birthday when it is in the child's best interests to do so. This option is not available when the child is under court jurisdiction solely due to truancy. The actual statute follows:

Minn. Stat. § 260C.193 Subd. 6. Termination of jurisdiction. The court may dismiss the petition or otherwise terminate its jurisdiction on its own motion or on the motion or petition of any interested party at any time. Unless terminated by the court, and except as otherwise provided in this subdivision, the jurisdiction of the court shall continue until the individual becomes 19 years of age if the court determines it is in the best interest of the individual to do so. Court jurisdiction under section 260C.007, subdivision 6, clause (14), may not continue past the child's 18th birthday.

II. Assistance for state wards to age 21: The following administrative rule requires that state wards have access to social services and financial assistance to develop independent living skills. This access continues to age 21 if the "child" is incapable of self-sustaining employment or in need of further training or education. The actual administrative rule follows:

9560.0470 STATE GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE UP TO AGE 21. The local agency in the child's county of residence shall provide a child who has reached the age of 16 years with social services and access to financial assistance to help the child develop independent living skills. An individual who is under state guardianship at age 18 continues to be eligible for social services and access to financial assistance up to age 21 if the individual is incapable of self-sustaining employment or is in need of continuing education or training beyond high school.

For the purposes of this part, social services include counseling, training in independent living skills, and access to community resources.

Six months before a child under state guardianship reaches age 18, the local agency in the child's county of residence shall inform the child, in writing, of the child's right to request the continuation of social services and access to financial assistance beyond age 18.

III. Availability of foster care to age 21: The following administrative rule requires access to planning, maintenance and services for two populations of children eligible to receive foster care to age 21:

Non-state wards (termination of parental rights has not occurred). Foster children who are not state wards must:

Be in foster care immediately prior to 18th birthday; and

In foster care at the time of the request;

State wards (termination of parental rights has occurred, child under state guardianship).
Foster children who are state wards:

May request case planning, services, and financial assistance at any time before their 21st birthday

Agency's obligation is to develop plan to meet the child's vocational, educational, social, or maturational needs. Maintenance (foster care payments) or counseling benefits must be tied to that plan.

9560.0660 FOSTER CARE BENEFITS UP TO AGE 21. Within the six months prior to a child's 18th birthday, the local agency shall advise the child, the child's parents or legal guardian, and the foster parents of the availability of benefits up to age 21 of the foster care program.

Upon the request of a person between the ages of 18 and 21 who is not under state guardianship as dependent/neglected and who had been receiving foster care benefits immediately prior to his or her 18th birthday and who is in foster care at the time of the request, or upon the request at any time between the ages of 18 and 21 of a person who had been under state guardianship as dependent/neglected, the local agency shall develop, in conjunction with the foster child and other appropriate parties, a specific plan related to that person's vocational, educational, social, or maturational needs and shall assure that any maintenance or counseling benefits are tied to that plan.

Note: If a county denies foster care benefits up to age 21, the foster child, his/her parents, or the foster parents may appeal the decision to the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The request for an appeal hearing must be in submitted in writing within 30 days of the county notification of denial. The appeal can be completed and submitted on-line at

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/agencywide/documents/pub/dhs_id_016399.hcs p#P28-1188

APPENDIX F Online information for Social Workers

EDUCATION INFORMATION:

The Minnesota Department of Education: Career exploration and post-secondary school information is available at <http://education.state.mn.us> Click on Learning Support, then Adult and Career Education and Service Learning.

Transition Services for High School Students: <http://education.state.mn.us> Click on Learning Support, then Special Education, then Secondary Transition.

PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights): <http://www.pacer.org> offers training, advocates and resources for transitioning youth with disabilities.

GED Sites and Testing: <http://education.state.mn.us> Click on Learning Support, then Adult and Career Education and Service Learning.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the twin cities metro area. Click on Education.

Team Child – Advocacy for Youth: <http://www.teamchild.org> has information about how to advocate for the education and transition needs of youth in out-of-home care, especially using IEPs and 504 plans.

Youthhood.org: <http://www.youthhood.org/youthhood/index.asp> has information for teachers and students.

Mapping Your Future: <http://mapping-your-future.org/planning/> has information on planning a career, selecting and paying for a school.

Minnesota State Colleges (Vo-techs) and Universities: <http://www.mnscu.edu/> has links to all the state colleges.

Minnesota Private Colleges: www.mnprivatecolleges.com

The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office: www.mheso.state.mn.us has everything one needs to know about financing for a post-secondary school.

FinAid – The Smart Students Guide to Financial Aid: www.finaid.org has more information on financial aid for post-secondary education.

Orphan Foundation Scholarships: <http://www.orphan.org> has scholarships for up to \$10,000 for post secondary education for youth not adopted under age 25 who have spent at least 12 months in foster care.

The Page Education Foundation: <http://www.page-ed.org> has post-secondary education scholarships for youth of color who attend a Minnesota school.

Horatio Alger Scholarships: <https://www.horatioalger.com/scholarships/index>. offers scholarships to youth residing in (list the counties) who plan to get a Bachelors Degree and so will either begin at a community college or attend a four year college. The application deadline is October 15th for students who will begin college the following fall.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION:

Casey Family Programs - *It's My Life: A guide to employment and career development for youth and young adults.*

<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ItsMyLifeEmployment.htm>

For ideas about planning a career, visit:

- Career Voyages: <http://www.careervoyages.gov/> – includes online videos on careers.
- Next Steps: <http://www.nextsteps.org/>

Job Shadowing 2005: <http://www.jobshadow.org> contains information on how to set up job shadowing opportunities for youth.

Department of Employment and Economic Development:

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/youth> has information for youth, child labor laws, Youthbuild, Minnesota Youth Program, Workforce Investment Act Youth Program. DEED Rehabilitation Services: <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/rehab/index.htm> helps those with disabilities.

Employment Action Center: <http://www.eac-mn.org/> a division of Resources, Inc. has help for job seekers.

Work Force Centers: <http://www.mnworkforcecenter.org/> provides employment services for youth and how to find a local community Workforce Center.

US Department of Labor: includes *Apprenticeship programs*

<http://www.doleta.gov/jobseekers/apprent.cfm>, which offer on-the-job training and classroom instruction in more than 200 skilled trades.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the metro area. Click on Employment.

Youthbuild: <http://www.youthbuild.org> is a program for unemployed out-of-school youth, age 16-24. Training on how to build and rehabilitate affordable housing in their communities, while offering job training, secondary education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities. To find information about local Youthbuild programs go to <http://www.youthbuild.org/localprogram.html>.

Americorps: <http://www.americorps.org/> is a network of national programs that employ youth age 17 or older, offering a modest wage, sometimes housing, and higher education funds when the 10-12 month period of service is complete. Youth work for nonprofit and faith-based organizations and public agencies.

City Year: <http://www.cityyear.org> is a program of AmeriCorps which unites young people of all backgrounds, ages 17-24, for a demanding year of community service and leadership development in 16 U.S communities and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Job Corps: <http://jobcorps.doleta.gov/centers/mn.cfm> is a job training and residential education program for “at risk” youth between the ages of 16-24. Youth can be a U.S. citizen, U.S. National, resident alien, refugee, asylee or parolee. Minors must have signed parent or guardian consent. The Job Corp is located on Snelling Avenue in St. Paul, MN.

Military Enlistment: <http://www.todaymilitary.com> - Information on all branches and programs of the military, including ROTC.

Your Ticket to Work: <http://www.ssa.gov/work/Ticket/ticket.html> is a self-sufficiency and employment program for people with disabilities who are interested in going to work.

HEALTH INFORMATION:

Kids Health: <http://kidshealth.org/teen/> includes information for teens on body, mind, sexual health, food, fitness, drugs, alcohol, diseases, infections, medical conditions, relationships, emotions and staying safe.

4 Girls: <http://4girls.gov/> is a girls’ health site that addresses body, nutrition, mind, relationships, drugs, alcohol, smoking, bullying, safety and their future. Resources for educators are included.

Planned Parenthood: <http://www.plannedparenthood.com> offers affordable birth control, gynecological care, pregnancy testing, counseling, STD and HIV testing, listings of local sites and how to schedule an appointment.

Child and Teen Checkups Program:

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/healthcare/documents/pub/DHS_id_006270.hcsp is a comprehensive child health program provided to children and teens from newborn through the age of 20 who are enrolled in Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare. Visit the above website and click on Child and Teen Check-ups (C&TC) Coordinator’s List to find out where to arrange for the service in a community.

It is essential that youth have health care coverage when they exit placement.

Public Assistance Programs: information is available at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Healthcare, Child and Teen Check-ups

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/healthcare/documents/pub/DHS_id_006247.hcsp

For information on **low cost clinics** for poor, uninsured or underinsured Minnesotans (normally charge a sliding fee) go to Other Health Care Resources

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/healthcare/documents/pub/DHS_id_006861.hcsp

Cobra: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov> is health insurance that can be purchased when employment ends.

Private Insurance – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota:

<http://www.bluecrossmn.com> offers a couple of plans that might appeal to young adults:

- For recent post-secondary school graduates: temporary plans that last 30, 60 or 90 days – long enough for a graduate to find a job with permanent health insurance.
- For working adults – Options Blue consists of a health savings account, which allows individuals to deposit between \$1,000 and \$5,100 in a tax-free savings account that can roll over into the next year. The accounts are paired with high-deductible health plans with lower monthly premiums.

Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA): <http://www.mchamn.com/> is individual health insurance for Minnesota residents who have a pre-existing health condition. MCHA sells insurance to people:

- Who have been denied private health insurance
- Who have been denied coverage for certain medical conditions
- Who had coverage end through no fault of their own.

Child and Adolescents Bipolar Foundation: <http://www.bpkids.org/index.html> is a parent-led, not-for-profit, Web-based membership organization of families raising children diagnosed with, or at risk for, early-onset bipolar disorder.

Pacer: <http://www.pacer.org> is an organization to help children and youth with disabilities and has several publications available.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the twin cities metro area. Click on Health.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services: www.dhs.state.mn.us has information on [Economic Supports](#) including child care, food support, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), housing and additional adult supports which youth may be eligible for when they age out of care.

Social Security: www.socialsecurity.gov has a screening tool under Disability and SSI, to determine eligibility for programs and benefits.

SAMSHA: <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/youth/> The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has information about prevention and treatment issues for youth.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION:

Minnesota Department of Public Safety: <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/dvs/> has information regarding driver's manuals, how to get a driver's license, costs and much more.

Office of the Attorney General, Car Handbook: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/cars/CarHandbook/Default.htm> has information about buying a car.

Metro Transit: <http://www.metrotransit.org/> how to use bus and rail systems in the twin cities metro area.

MinnesotaHelp. Info: <http://www.minnesotahelp.info> has information about transportation options as well as other statewide services, based on zip code.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the twin cities metro area. Click on Transportation.

MONEY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION:

Independent Means: <http://www.independentmeans.com> has a free publication entitled "Raising Financially Fit Kids".

Understanding Taxes: <http://www.irs.gov/app/understandingtaxes/index.jsp> includes a site for youth to explore, and a site for educators on how to teach youth about taxes.

Casey Life Skills: <http://www.caseylifekills.org> a resource with curriculum options related to financial management. http://www.caseylifekills.org/pages/res/res_index.htm.

National Resource Center for Youth Services: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu> has several downloadable resources about money management skills.

HOUSING INFORMATION:

Minnesota Department of Human Services, Adolescent Services: http://public.dhsintra.net/main/groups/children/documents/pub/dhs_id_008415.pdf lists shelters and transitional housing programs in Minnesota.

Office of Minnesota Attorney General: <http://www.ag.state.mn.us> has information on housing and the Landlords and Tenants Rights and Responsibilities Book.
<http://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/housing/lt/default.htm>

Minnesota Department of Human Services, Housing Resource Toolbox:
http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/economic_support/documents/pub/dhs_id_005667.hcsp provides information about housing options in Minnesota.

Rent Wise: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/offices/> is a curriculum offered through Extension Offices on finding, paying for and keeping housing.

Minnesotahelp.Info: <http://www.minnesotahelp.info> has housing options statewide, based on zip code.

Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless: <http://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/> has a crisis assistance directory with information regarding shelters and transitional living programs

Casey Life Skills: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org> has curriculum resources to teach youth the skills they will need to find and maintain housing.

National Resource Center for Youth Services: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/resources.htm> has several resources regarding housing.

Easy Recipes for Teens: <http://kidshealth.org/teen/recipes/>

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL INFORMATION:

4-H Clubs: <http://www.4-H.org>

America's Promise: <http://www.americaspromise.org>

Canadian Youth in Care: <http://www.youthincare.ca>

Casey Life Skills: <http://www.caseylifeskills.org> has curriculum resources that caretakers can use to teach youth relationship, communication and social skills.

Casey Family Program: <http://www.casey.org/Resources/> Click on Knowing Who You Are for tools to help youth in care develop their racial and ethnic identity.

Fosterclub.com: <http://www.fosterclub.com/index.cfm> has information by and for foster kids.

Teen Central & Teen Voices (See page 16)

MENTOR: <http://www.mentoring.org> works with a network of state and local mentoring partnerships to leverage resources and provide the support and tools that mentoring organizations.

Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays: <http://pflag.org/>

Outfront Minnesota: <http://outfrontmn.org/> is Minnesota's GLBTQ online community center.

Out Proud: <http://www.outproud.org> offers information and resources to queer and questioning youth.

Minnesotahelp.info: <http://minnesotahelp.info> can be searched for local Web sites for scouting, 4-H, boys and girls clubs, YMCA camps, parks and recreation, and community education by zip code or city.

Kids Health: <http://kidshealth.org> includes information for teens on relationships and emotions.

4Girls: <http://4girls.gov/> is a girls' health Web site that includes information on relationships.

Relationship skills for Teens: <http://www.dibblefund.org/> has Love U 2 curriculum used by alternative schools and MN SELF staff for teaching relationship skills.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the twin cities metro area. Click on Things To Do.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS INFORMATION:

University of Minnesota, "Expanding the Circle": <http://ici1.umn.edu/etc/default/html> offers a curriculum intended for Native American youth. It can be used in a group or one-to-one. The Web site includes many other resources.

Project Butterfly: <http://www.projectbutterfly.com/curriculum.php> offers a workbook and other resources for girls and young women of African descent.

National Resource Center for Youth Services: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu> See their catalog for *Passages: A Journal for Growing Home* and *Finding Our Place: the Inside Story on Foster Care – a Guide by and for Young People in Care*.

Adoption Shop: <http://adoptionshop.com/> has life books including one for teens called *For When I am Famous*.

Minnesotahelp.info: <http://www.minnesotahelp.info> a wealth of community resources and information can be found for any part of the state by entering a zip code. **Community education programs, libraries** and resources regarding **culturally competent services** are a few of the many resources available on this Web site.

How to Register to Vote: <https://ssl.capwiz.com/congressorg/e4/nvra/> allows youth to register to vote online.

Project C3: <http://www.c3mn.org/> is a searchable database containing resources for youth in central Minnesota and the twin cities metro area. Click on Community Living.

APPENDIX G The Forgotten Children's Fund

Based on statutes and rules in effect as of 5/20/99

The American Legion Auxiliary Forgotten Children's Fund exists to meet the "special needs" for children in placement. The children need not have a parent who is a veteran. "Special needs" are those items or activities for which the local social services agency might not ordinarily assume financial responsibility such as music lessons, music instruments, graduation expenses, and class rings.

To apply for these funds, write a letter of request, and include the child's name, child's date of birth, placement status, item desired, and cost.

Send request to:

Forgotten Children's Fund
Family and Children's Services
Department of Human Services
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3832

If the request is approved, the local social services agency will receive an authorization and instructions for claiming reimbursement.

APPENDIX H Ideas for use of SELF Funds

Create Life Skills Trainers

- Train foster parents or group home staff to teach life skills in their homes
- Hire a coordinator to develop Independent Living Plans or conduct life skills training groups
- Contact neighboring counties to pool funds to hire a coordinator
- Pair an adolescent with a trained mentor who will teach life skills and act as a support person
- Recruit volunteers and community resource providers to present topics within their specialty to groups of youth.

Purchase Life Skills Training

- Purchase life skills training from the county mental health center or an area non-profit or private agency
- Use out-of-county services, such as those funded with SELF grants, to serve youth placed outside the county
- Use county family service aides to teach life skills, such as money management
- Network with county providers of self-sufficiency programs for adults or special needs clients, who may be able to expand or modify their service to fit the needs of older adolescents
- Cover the cost of attending a summer camp that incorporates living skills into its activities.

Support Education/Employment

- Facilitate high school completion by providing tutors for youth who need help.
- Use the Minnesota Career Information System available at many high schools and area technical colleges.
- Connect youth with Workforce Centers for career assessment and counseling.
- Cover post-secondary entrance exams and application fees.
- Pay travel and child care costs for foster parents who accompany youth on post-secondary school tours.
- Arrange employment opportunities through city, county or state employment offices. Pay for necessary work uniforms and other employment supports.
- Find professionals in the community who are willing to let a youth shadow them on the job.
- Arrange innovative job opportunities, where youth can learn employment skills and explore career opportunities. Use SELF funds to cover or subsidize wages.
- Pay U.S. citizenship application fees.
- Assist youth to complete a resume.

Motivate Youth

- Pay for the items that mark a high school graduation such as senior pictures, cap and gown

- Use a matched savings plan to help youth attain goals related to independent living (e.g. damage deposit, apartment furnishings)
- Pay for extra-curricular activities that promote self-esteem and self-reliance, such as music and self-defense lessons, Weight Watchers, athletic fees, parenting, first aid or stress management classes.

Help with Transportation

- Purchase a bicycle to reduce the need for a vehicle
- Purchase bus cards
- Arrange driver's training (discuss car insurance and issues of liability with parent(s) and foster parents)
- Pay for driver's license fees
- Help youth pay for car insurance or car repairs if they need a car to get to a job or school (SELF funds may NOT be used toward purchase of a car)
- Pay volunteers, coordinators, or foster parents to transport adolescents as they work on completion of their Independent Living Plan.

Additional Free or Low Cost Ideas

- Consider combining SELF with children's mental health funds, special education funds, etc. to offer a life skills training program.
- Consider combining funding and staff time with juvenile court services to offer a life skills training program.
- High schools and alternative schools may give youth high school credit for attending a life skills training group. Ask to use classroom space, the gym or pool.
- Public health nurses may provide health screening, information, referral, training and counseling on a wide variety of health issues.
- Sexual assault services and battered women's shelters may provide information and training.
- Law enforcement departments may talk to youth about topics such as drugs, self-defense, risks of gang involvement, or working in the law enforcement field.
- Lawyers or judges may talk with youth about legal rights, including what to do if arrested.
- Tenant unions or property owners may volunteer to train youth about tenant rights and responsibilities, leases, what to look for in a place to live. This may include a tour of an apartment building.
- Area universities and technical colleges have campus tours which explore dormitory living, financial aid and special services available.
- Youth who have aged out of placement may volunteer to co-facilitate a life skills group, or talk to youth about what they need to know before they leave care.
- County extension services are connected to the University of Minnesota and 4-H youth development. They have a collection of training materials. County extension staff can teach money management and many other home management skills. Some county extension offices hire staff whose area of expertise is youth.
- Churches are good places to hold life skills training sessions with youth groups. They have kitchen facilities so the youth can prepare meals. Some churches have small

- emergency funds. Congregations may be willing to donate something a youth or youth group needs.
- Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE – a part of community education) is a good resource for minor parents. It is a positive, fun, supportive way to learn about the development of babies and preschoolers.
 - Area employers may talk with youth about the qualities employers look for when they hire; give a tour of their business; conduct mock job interviews; allow an interested youth to job shadow an employee.
 - A car salesman may take youth on the lot after hours to look at cars and learn how to buy a car wisely.
 - An insurance agent may speak with youth about the need for medical, auto, and renter's insurance, and what it costs.
 - Local service clubs (such as the Jaycees or Lions Club) may make a donation to a life skills training program, give a scholarship to a youth, act as mentors to youth, involve youth in one of their fundraisers and share some of the proceeds.
 - Local restaurants may provide gift certificates, free or reduced meals for youth meetings.
 - Public libraries have computers youth can use. A librarian will speak with youth about how to use the library as a research tool. Get the youth library cards.
 - Thrift stores and garage sales are good field trips for teaching youth how to live on a tight budget.
 - City, county and state parks are inexpensive places for many activities with youth including picnics, camping, swimming, hiking, campfires, softball and cross country skiing.
 - YMCA and YWCA may give free passes so youth can use the gym and pool. They may donate free memberships. The Ys have summer residential camps statewide for teens and offer scholarships for low income, at-risk youth.
 - Youth might join senior citizen groups in some of their activities or volunteer to help them with projects. Seniors may mentor, tutor or teach youth life skills, tell stories about their struggles in life, or offer youth jobs such as lawn mowing or household chores.
 - Ask friends to teach youth skills such as cooking, basic care maintenance, home repairs, fishing, photography, parallel parking. Ask for help in teaching youth how to balance a checkbook, file a tax return, administer first aid, apply for college, financial aid or a scholarship, appreciate other cultures or how to paint a room.



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It's My Life: A Framework for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care to Successful Adulthood

A holistic approach for those who play a role in how young adults envision and achieve success in adulthood.

It's My Life was created by, for, and with youth.

It draws on the expertise and insights of youth in foster care, alumni of care, social workers, researchers, and education specialists.

It is designed for child welfare professionals and others responsible for guiding and supporting teens as they prepare for adulthood.

A strengths-based, integrated approach

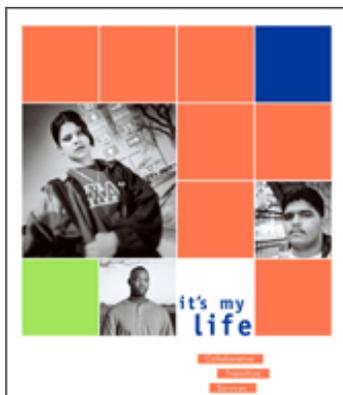
It's My Life focuses on seven key elements that determine a young person's ability to succeed:

- Cultural and personal identity formation
- Community connections and supportive relationships
- Physical and mental health
- Life skills
- Education
- Employment
- Housing

For each of these necessary and related elements, the book offers:

- Ways for young people to be actively involved in their care
- Social work practice guidelines
- Ways for youth, caregivers, communities, and agencies to work together
- Information about policy decisions that affect the lives of young people leaving foster care
- Ways to measure outcomes of transition practice

It's My Life was published in 2001 by Casey Family Programs. It is available for download in two versions: a 99-page book and a 37-page summary of the book.



Download

[It's My Life \(PDF: 481KB\)](#)

[Summary: It's My Life \(PDF: 251KB\)](#)

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Children

The Minnesota Department of Human Services helps keep children safe and provides families with supports to care for their children. This includes child protective services, out-of-home care, permanent homes for children and children's mental health services.



Adolescent services

- [Education / training vouchers](#)
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Adolescent Services

New Funds Available to help eligible youth with post secondary education costs

Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) help youth transition to self-sufficiency by funding post-secondary education as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965. Education Vouchers cannot exceed \$5,000 per academic year, and must be coordinated with other sources of financial aid. An ETV cannot exceed the total cost of attendance at a post-secondary school or program. An ETV may be awarded for more than one year of a post-secondary program, but youth must re-apply for each academic year. For example, students may receive up to \$5,000 for their freshman year and apply for an equal amount their sophomore year. Each year the deadline for ETV applications is June 1. Applications received by June 1 will result in awards for the semester beginning in August of each year. Each youth who receives an ETV award will be connected with a mentor who will:

- Together with youth, tour the chosen post-secondary program's campus to locate and connect with all available supports, such as housing, tutoring, counseling and health services
- Support the youth academically and emotionally on a regular basis

Each youth who receives an ETV award will be connected with a youth worker from Lutheran Social Services in Wilmar who will:

- Release and direct ETV funds to cover the attendance costs of the youth's post-secondary program and
- Monitor the youth's educational progress by reviewing each semester's transcript.

Who Can Apply for an ETV?

The first three criteria on this list are required in order to apply for an ETV.

- You must be age 18 to 21 at the time you begin your post-secondary school or program and
- You must be accepted into an accredited post-secondary program and
- You experienced a county approved out-of-home placement after the age of 14,
- You are under state guardianship or
- You were adopted at age 16 or older.

How Do I Apply for an Education and Training Voucher?

Before you apply for an ETV, you must be accepted into a post-secondary school or program.

You must:

- Apply for other financial aid
- Submit a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#), which shows an expected parental contribution.
- Submit a transcript from the school you most recently attended
- Complete the [ETV Application form](#).

Hennepin and Ramsey Counties receive an annual allocation of ETV funds and will choose ETV recipients from within their own counties. Hennepin and Ramsey County social workers will maintain an open case on each ETV award recipient, act as mentors and academic guides, or find adults to fulfill this role for each youth.

If you have a Hennepin County social worker and meet the eligibility criteria, ask your social worker for Hennepin County's ETV form. This form and all its supporting documentation must be submitted to your social worker.

If you have a Ramsey County social worker and meet the eligibility criteria, contact Marvin Davis, Foster Care Licensing Supervisor, at 651-266-4705 and ask for Ramsey County's ETV form. This form and all its supporting documentation must be submitted to Marvin Davis.

If you reside in Hennepin or Ramsey County and meet the eligibility criteria, but no longer have a county social worker, print out and complete the ETV application form on this Web site. A printed copy of the application form and all its supporting documentation must be mailed to:

Claire Hill, Social Services Program Consultant
 Minnesota Department of Human Services
 444 Lafayette Road
 St. Paul, MN 55155-3832

If you are a resident of any other Minnesota county or Indian reservation and meet the eligibility criteria, print out and complete the ETV Application form on this Web site. Youth do not need to have a social worker to apply. A printed copy of the application form and all its supporting documentation must be mailed to:

Claire Hill, Social Services Program Consultant
 Minnesota Department of Human Services
 444 Lafayette Road
 St. Paul, MN 55155-3832

What Kind of Higher Education Program Can ETVs Fund?

Related Pages

- [For Adolescents](#)
- [For Grantees and Counties](#)
- [Funds Available to help eligible youth with post secondary education costs](#)
- [Funds for Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally](#)
- [Licensing Information](#)

Related Links

- [Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless](#)
- [State and Federal Sites](#)

A school or program must meet the following criteria:

- admits, as regular students, only persons having a high school diploma or GED, or regularly admits persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in our state
- is a public or non-profit institution
- is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, and has been in existence for at least two years
- Has an educational program that meets one of the following criteria:
 - Awards a bachelor's degree or not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a bachelor's degree (e.g., community college), or
 - Provides an eligible program to prepare students for employment in a recognized occupation.

An institution does NOT meet the definition of higher education if:

- More than 50 percent of its courses are offered by correspondence
- It enrolls 50 percent or more of its students in correspondence courses
- It has a student enrollment in which more than 25 percent of the students are incarcerated.

How is the Total Cost of Attendance Defined?

The costs of attendance at Minnesota colleges and universities are determined by each school. This information is online at:

- <http://www.mnprivatecolleges.com/ourcolleges/tuition.php>
- <http://www.mhso.state.mn.us> (Click on Paying for College, then click on The Price of College)

Education and Training Vouchers can be used for any of the following costs of attendance:

- For students attending the institution on at least a half-time basis: Tuition and fees, books, supplies, transportation and miscellaneous personal expenses, including a reasonable allowance for the documented rental or purchase of a personal computer
- Room and board, which includes youth living in on- or off-campus housing.
- Reasonable costs associated with a study abroad program approved for credit by the school
- For less than half-time students, tuition and fees and allowance only for books, supplies and transportation
- For a student with one or more dependents, an allowance based on the estimated expenses for child care, and number and ages of the children and the reasonable cost of child care in the students community. This allowance will be granted only after all other sources of child care assistance have been explored and denied. Child care will only be covered for class time, study time, field work, internships and commuting time.
- For a student with a disability, an allowance related to the students disability, including special services, personal assistance, transportation, equipment and supplies that are reasonably incurred and not provided for by other assisting agencies
- For a student engaged in a work experience (internship, field placement) an allowance for reasonable costs associated with a cooperative education program
- For a student who receives student loans, allowance for the actual cost of any loan fee, origination fee or insurance premium charged to the student or parent, or the average of any such fee or premium charged by the government, lender or guaranty agency making or insuring such a loan.

What is Expected from Education and Training Voucher Recipients?

If you are awarded an ETV, you will be required to meet with either a county social worker or a non-profit youth worker from your region of the state. Together you will review your personal budget and sources of financial aid, tour your chosen campus, determine how often contact with your mentor will be, arrange for housing, employment and any other support services.

You will be required to maintain an e-mail address in order to keep in touch with your mentor or youth worker and the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

You will be expected to maintain a 2.0 grade point average. You will be required to provide your mentor or youth worker with a copy of each semesters transcript to verify your grade point average and number of credits completed.

You will need to submit a new ETV application for each academic year, if you need financial assistance.

Online Information:

[Free Application for Federal Student Financial Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) enables students to apply for student assistance online.

[The Orphan Foundation](#) offers scholarships to youth who have spent one year or more in out-of-home placement. Many Minnesota youth have been scholarship recipients.

[The Alan Page Foundation](#) offers scholarships to students of color who show financial need and plan to attend a Minnesota college.

[The National Foster Parent Association](#) offers scholarships for foster care youth who wish to further their education beyond high school, including college or university studies, vocational and job training and correspondence courses, including the GED.

[The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office](#) provides information on the financial aid process and financial aid programs, including an interactive financial aid estimator, Minnesota tuition and fees chart, a Minnesota college trivia game, an online tuition reciprocity application, and loan counseling and repayment calculator.

[The Financial Aid Information Page](#) has links to student financial aid. It links to a database of more than 180,000 private scholarships, fellowships, grants and loans; advice on identifying scholarship scams; electronic calculators, including those for computing expected family contributions, loan repayments and savings.

[The College Board](#) provides background information about student financial aid available for students and parents.

[The Internet System for Education and Employment Knowledge \(ISEEK\)](#) has information on careers, higher education options, financial aid and jobs.

[College is Possible](#) is sponsored by the Coalition of America's Colleges and Universities and is a resource guide for students, families, and educators. It includes links to recommended books, Web sites and brochures.

The Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae) provides information to help families learn about planning and paying for college. <http://www.salliemae.com> Interactive calculators and a glossary of financial aid terms, as well as a link to the college preparation Web site at <http://www.wiredscholar.com> is included.

[Student Gateway to the U.S. Government](#) has compiled a variety of student aid information and tools for students and administrators.

[National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators](#) provides information, not only for student aid administrators, but for students, parents and counselors.

[Nellie Mae Financial Assistance](#) is a New England Loan Marketing Association. It provides federal and private student loans to students and families across the country. The Web site includes information for students thinking about or already in college, parents and financial aid administrators and guidance counselors.

[Fast Web](#), is a free service that matches students with access to information on 600,000 scholarships, fellowships, internships, grants and loans from corporations, institutions, philanthropic organizations, foundations and clubs.

[Minority Scholarships Gateway List](#) Created by Black

[Excel](#)

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9560.0470 STATE GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE UP TO AGE 21.

The local agency in the child's county of residence shall provide a child who has reached the age of 16 years with social services and access to financial assistance to help the child develop independent living skills. An individual who is under state guardianship at age 18 continues to be eligible for social services and access to financial assistance up to age 21 if the individual is incapable of self-sustaining employment or is in need of continuing education or training beyond high school.

For the purposes of this part, social services include counseling, training in independent living skills, and access to community resources.

Six months before a child under state guardianship reaches age 18, the local agency in the child's county of residence shall inform the child, in writing, of the child's right to request the continuation of social services and access to financial assistance beyond age 18.

STAT AUTH: MS s [256.01](#); [256.91](#); [256E.05](#); [257.175](#); [259.24](#); [260.111](#); [260.241](#); [260.242](#); [260.40](#); [260C.101](#); [260C.317](#); [260C.325](#); [260C.451](#); [393.07](#)

HIST: 15 SR 2533; L 1999 c 139 art 4 s 2

Current as of 08/31/05