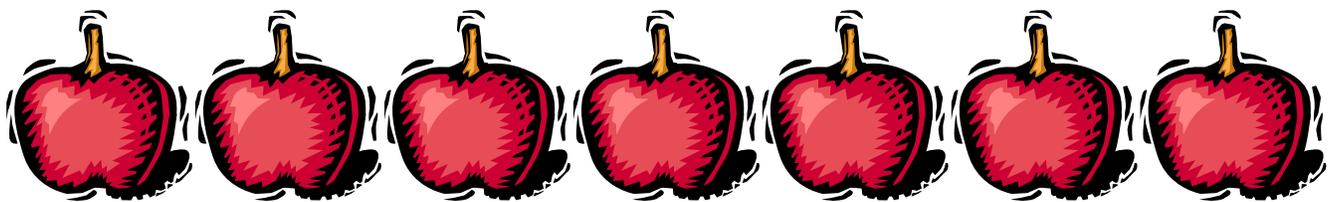


## **Section B: Program Information**

### **(5) Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

**Children's Administration  
Department of Social and Health Services**



## **Annual Progress and Services Report FY 2006 Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and ETV**

In Washington State, the Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration (CA) administers, supervises and oversees the Title IV-E program and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). CA has continued efforts to implement and improve the Chafee Independent Living Program. Community collaboration continues to be a guiding force in our work with adolescents and their caregivers. Contact information for the CA Program Manager is as follows:

**Rick Butt, Independent Living Program Manager**  
**Department of Social and Health Services**  
**Children's Administration**  
**Post Office Box 45710**  
**Olympia, WA 98504-5710**  
**(206)923-4891 Phone**  
**(360) 902-7903 Fax**  
[ribu300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:ribu300@dshs.wa.gov)

Children's Administration (CA) continues to improve its infrastructure for services and making social workers, youth, and community stakeholders aware of the resources available to youth transitioning from state care. CA is working diligently to limit the gap in services delivery and to make Independent living programs available to all eligible youth across the state. Services are currently provided to youth and young adults age 15 through 21. CA has made promising inroads with systems integration to improve educational, housing, and employment outcomes for young adults as they transition out of foster care.

Children's Administration is currently serving approximately 1100 youth/young adults (not including Tribal youth). This 25% increase from last year is due mainly to greater outreach efforts both within Children's Administration and the community as a whole.

### **Eligibility for the Chafee Program**

#### **I. Independent Living Services (ILS)**

The following individuals are eligible for any contracted independent living skills program.

- 1) Youth who are at least age 15, and have not yet reached his/her 18th birthday, and are currently in Tribal out-of-home care or a dependent in the legal custody of DSHS;
- 2) Youth who are adopted from State or Tribal custody on or after his/her 16th birthday.

***Please note youth are not eligible if:***

- Youth was adopted before the age of 16 years old;
- Youth is under age 18 and in a voluntary placement agreement;
- Youth is placed under a CHINS order.

#### **II. Transitional Living Program (TLP)**

Youth are eligible for contracted transitional living programs if:

- 1) Youth has aged out of foster care or Tribal out of home care, is age 18 or older but has not yet reached age 21;
- 2) Youth who were not eligible for ILS services at time of transition may still be eligible for TL if they meet the following criteria:

- Youth has or had an open DCFS case at time of transition from care; **and**
- Youth had been in out-of-home care for the previous six months prior to transition from care; **OR**
- Youth was dependent and returned home within a year of reaching the age of majority (18).

### **III. Education and Training Vouchers**

Youth must meet eligibility criteria for either Independent Living Services or Transitional Living Services, as well as, meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for Education and Training Voucher services:

- 1) Youth must have completed high school or have a GED;
- 2) Youth must either:
  - be enrolled at least half-time in a post-secondary degree or certificate program; or
  - be accepted for the next term.
- 3) Students who have been receiving vouchers on their 21st birthday who are making acceptable progress towards graduation may continue to receive vouchers up to age 23.

### **Assist youth in transition from dependency to self-sufficiency**

The Washington State legislature established statutory authority to serve former foster youth ages 18 through 21 in June 2001. CA immediately began implementing services to address the needs of this population. Services to former foster care youth are delivered via a Transitional Living Contract. Only providers who have IL programs are permitted to have Transitional Living Programs so they can develop relationships and support systems with the young people over time.

To achieve consistency in the assessment and case planning for young people transitioning from care, the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Tools are being used by all Independent Living contractors in Washington State. The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) is a nationally recognized web-based tool that helps youth in out of home care prepare for adulthood. The ACLSA consists of developmentally based youth and caregiver assessments. Score reports pop up immediately after the assessment, showing areas of greatest strength and challenge, and can be used to create a learning plan to aid in their transition into adulthood.

Most case workers and service providers have been trained on the utilization of the ACLSA tool. This tool enables CA to collect aggregate data indicating areas for program focus and to document pre and post outcomes for youth.

In addition to providing independent living and transitional living services to youth in foster care, Washington State also has the Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP). This program was developed when the legislature passed the Homeless Prevention, Protection and Engagement Act (HOPE) in 1999. RLS programs are for youth, ages 16 to 18 in the custody of the State or Tribe. The RLS programs provide long-term housing, assessment, and life skills training to youth who are state-dependent, who are not returning to their families, and who have been unsuccessful in traditional foster care.

Children's Administration recognizes that transition planning is important to youth. Two such efforts to assist youth in their transition into adulthood are:

- Multi-disciplinary staffings for youth 17.5 years of age to create a transition plan with them as they exit foster care.
- Contracted Independent Living Programs also report on transition living planning in their quarterly progress reports of youth.

## **Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment**

Foster youth need assistance in receiving the necessary education, training and skills in order to find and maintain employment. Youth are provided this service through the contracted IL and TL programs, incorporating employment services into employment modules and workshops or link and/or refer to existing community resources. Employment services shall be provided at all times of the year and shall coincide with the summer and holiday hiring, school breaks, and near the end of the school year. Youth are provided with the following:

- Coaching on activities related to employment readiness, interviewing, resume writing and appropriate dress.
- Assistance in gaining and retaining employment.
- Assistance in obtaining or securing items needed in order to gain or maintain employment, such as a social security card, dress attire and transportation (if possible).
- Assistance in utilizing community employment resources to assist in gaining employment.
- Information on how to enroll in any of the available Workforce Investment Act youth programs or register with the Employment Security One Stop Career Centers (if available).

## **Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions**

Educational stability and achievement for children in foster care is a critical aspect of ensuring a successful transition to self-sufficiency. During the 2003 Legislative Session, "an act relating to the educational attainment of children in foster care" was passed. As a result of this act, the SHB 1058 Oversight Committee was created. In the 2005 Legislative session, Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1079 expanded the membership and duties of the 1058 Oversight Committee to include higher education. Committee membership was expanded to include representatives from higher education, community and technical colleges, workforce development, foster care alumni, foster parent representatives and other involved stakeholders. Most existing subcommittees expanded to include issues of adolescent transition and new subcommittees have been developed in support of ESHB 1079 including:

- **Postsecondary**, assesses strategies to assist current and former foster youth in learning about, preparing for, enrolling and completing postsecondary education or training opportunities.
- **Foster Care Endowed Scholarship (RCW 28B.116)**, assists in publicizing the program, program development, application screening process, soliciting grants and donations from public and private sources and performing outreach to targeted students.
- **High School Completion**, identifies barriers to high school completion (i.e. WASL, TRIO, credit retrieval, discipline), develop recommendations to improve high school completion rate.

### **Committee accomplishments for FY2006 include:**

- Development and release of the Social Workers Practice Guide to Educational Advocacy,
- Development of the education component for the CHET (Child Health and Education Track) well being screening,
- Development and release of a new shelter care order template, which clearly articulates the Department's authority to:
  - notify the child's school that the child is in out-of-home placement
  - enroll the child in school
  - request the transfer of educational records
  - request and authorize evaluation of special needs
  - attend parent/teacher conferences
  - excuse absences

- grant permission for extracurricular activities
- authorize medications which need to be administered during school hours and sign for medical needs that arise during school hours
- complete or update school emergency contact records.

Other efforts in Washington State to improve educational outcomes for youth in care include contracted IL providers continue to prepare and mentor foster youth ages 15 to 18 to complete high school or a GED program, and enter post-secondary education programs. Formal tutoring, educational advocacy, and homework assistance programs have been instituted in many regions.

The Education Consortium (members include Casey Family Programs; CA Region 4; Seattle Public Schools, Team Child; Treehouse; UW NW Institute for Children and Families)– created in April 2004, continues to proactively raise awareness of the needs of foster care students in the schools and to collaboratively promote their academic success through coordinated training, inter-systems communication and individually tailored academic planning and support for foster children in Seattle Public Elementary Schools.

The Governor’s Scholarship continues to be offered. This scholarship program was instituted in 2001 by former Governor Gary Locke. He had established a golf tournament to raise funds for scholarships for foster youth to attend higher education institutions. This program is administered by the Washington Education Foundation. Governor’s Scholarships were awarded to 26 foster youth this year. This program continues to work in concert with Washington State’s Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program to identify youth bound for post-secondary education and help them with mentoring and financial assistance.

CA and other community stakeholders continue to work on a comprehensive effort to meet the post secondary education needs of youth from foster care through the *Foster Care to College Partnership*. The intent of this partnership is to reach out to those youth who will be emancipating from foster care by helping them graduate from high school and attend college utilizing the scholarship aid that is currently available to them. Currently the Foster Care to College Partnership has hired a program manager to oversee the duties associated with such a program and contract negotiations are underway to begin program implementation. This program will offer a variety of services to youth to assist them in the completion of their education and enter into post secondary educational programs.

**Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults**

Contracted IL providers, foster parents and community service providers continue to link youth with dedicated adults as the youth transitions out of care. The Foster Care to College partnership will support this effort by providing a mentoring program to youth who identify themselves as college bound providing this service from high school into college. Washington State’s faith based initiative will also identify mentors for youth transitioning out of care.

Youth centered personal and emotional support is facilitated through the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) which was implemented in 2004. The assessment of IL needs and completion of the IL plan for all foster youth ages 15 to 18 is a requirement. In completing the plan for each youth they have to identify persons to help them achieve their goals.

**Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age.**

The Washington State legislature established statutory authority to serve former foster youth ages 18 to 21 in June 2001. Services to former foster care youth are delivered via a contract amendment to the Independent Living contract. These contracted programs are known as ***Transitional Living Programs (TLPs)***. CA has TLP programs in every region of Washington State. Service delivery to

former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 21 continues to substantially increase since the establishment of the programs in 2001. These programs assist eligible youth in securing housing, employment and employment-related training and education, and maintaining self-sufficiency.

Thirty percent of the program funds can be utilized for Room and Board. Funding is made available to eligible youth ages 18 to 21 on an individual basis. "Room and Board" is defined as assistance provided to a former foster care youth from age 18 up to 21 in the form of payment for rent, utilities, deposits and housing costs. Room and board or housing costs are budgeted and tracked separately by CA to ensure that not more than 30 percent of the state's Chafee Independent Living funds are used for housing expenses. Transitional Living case managers work with each youth to locate affordable housing, negotiate leases and make rent and utility payments. Rent subsidies are available as long as the youth is employed or seeking employment, or enrolled in an educational program.

Services to former foster youth are delivered by contracted Transitional Living service providers. If contracted service agencies are not available, youth may still apply for transition funds through a local Children's Administration (CA) office. Contracted private agencies continue to develop partnerships with housing and employment agencies and help young people stay connected to supportive adults and peers. Contracted Transitional Living Programs provide the following services:

- Educational services, including basic literacy and computational skills training, either in local alternative public high schools or in a high school equivalency program that leads to obtaining a high school equivalency degree;
- Assistance in securing and maintaining safe and stable housing;
- Assistance and counseling related to obtaining vocational training or higher education, job readiness, job research assistance, and job placement programs;
- Counseling and instruction in life skills such as money management, home management, consumer skills, parenting, healthy marriages, health care, access to community resources, and transportation and housing options;
- Individual and group counseling; and
- Networking with federal agencies and state and local organizations such as the United States Department of Labor, employment and training administration programs including the Workforce Investment Act which administers Workforce Development Councils, the Job Corps, Vocational rehabilitation, volunteer programs, and housing authorities. Transitional Living programs are currently offered in every CA region.

Washington State's 2006 legislation passed HB 2002 – foster care to 21. The intent of the legislation is to permit DSHS to continue foster care and support services to age 21 for 50 young adults per year for a total of 150 in 2008 while these young adults attend a post-secondary institution. The major provisions of the new legislation are:

- Fifty young adults in 2006, 2007 and 2008 (for a total of 150 young adults on-going) may continue to receive services until age 21 while they pursue post secondary education.
- WSIPP shall conduct a study measuring the outcomes for foster youth who have remained in foster care until age 21.

Children's Administration is in the process of implementing this legislation and will have a program available for the Fall 2006.

### **Education and Training Voucher Program**

Education and Training Voucher services to former foster care youth are currently delivered via a contract with Independent Living service providers. They provide the following services:

- Outreach, identification, eligibility determination of ETV recipients
- Helping youth fill out the ETV application, FAFSA application, and other financial aid applications
- Mentoring recipients of ETV, including:
  - Working with other agencies such as the Washington Education Foundation, the Orphan Foundation of America, the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, and post-secondary institutions to identify additional resources for youth
  - Helping youth to develop education and career plans
  - Providing support for youth through their post-secondary education
- Tracking youth progress in their post-secondary program
- Submitting quarterly reports detailing demographic information, information about the use of ETV funds, and other tracking information to help better the ETV program

Children's Administration currently has ETV programs in each region of the state. CA also has a separate ETV program for all 29 federally recognized Tribes which is administered by the IL Program Manager. In FY06 CA served 200 youth through the ETV program. 75 of these youth were first time recipients of ETV. In FY05 there were 179 recipients of ETV.

Coordination between ETV contractors and the Washington Education Foundation, the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, and other agencies continued to occur in an effort to enable former foster care youth to have access to the maximum amount of financial assistance (e.g., federal student financial aid programs, grants, scholarships, and ETV services). CA will centralize the administration of the ETV program for FY 2007 in efforts to maximize funds and coordination of services.

### **Collaborations**

Community Collaboration continues to be a vital part of Children's Administration's (CA) efforts to strengthen its delivery of services to foster youth, former foster youth, and the community as a whole. Some of these efforts are:

- Washington State has made great strides in having foster youth and alumni involved in the many facets of decision making regarding policies and practices. Children's Administration in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, Mockingbird Society and Washington Education Foundation continues to support the Statewide Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action" which consists of current and former recipients of CA services. This Board serves in an advisory function to provide input to CA on its policies and practices in efforts to provide better services to youth in care.
- The Foster Care to College (FCTC) Partnership, a partnership between Children's Administration, the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, Washington Education Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and Treehouse. The FCTC partnership creates a college access program designed to increase the number of foster youth who complete high school and go on to attend post secondary education and training.
- Treehouse, a private non-profit agency serves foster youth by providing clothing and school supplies, funding for enrichment activities and summer camp, and in-school tutoring.
- The Youth In Transition – Collaborations for Resource Development Committee in Region 2 meets regularly to discuss issues pertinent to current and former foster youth.

Projects/Goals for the coming year are to establish youth advisory groups at the local level, create portfolios for each youth in care, and to create an instruction manual for youth and social workers. The manual will include information about IL and TL services throughout the state.

- The YMCA Transitions program in Region 4 helps moderate-to-high functioning young adults, age 18-23, who are or have been in foster care with assistance in obtaining and maintaining stable housing and developing independent living skills.
- The Young Adult Housing Task Force is a workgroup established to create housing linked with services for young adults (18 through 23 years old) in King County exiting state care (foster care, juvenile justice system) with a felony or sexually deviant background.
- Ready to Rent is a program of United Way's Out of the Rain Homeless Initiative in partnership with Mutual Interest and the Rental Association of Puget Sound.
- The Washington State Independent Living Coordinator and other CA staff are closely aligned with Casey Family Programs, the private foundation whose headquarters is in Seattle, Washington. Collaborative efforts between CA and Casey Family Programs occur at both the direct service level and the systems improvement level to help adolescents in foster care achieve self-sufficiency.
- Youth Resources in Region 5 is aimed at developing community Resources for homeless youth including foster youth.
- Treehouse, United Way of King County and the YMCA Independent Living Program collaborated together and received a grant to provide Individual Development Accounts to 25 youth in King County.
- The Transitional Collaborative Services in Region 4 consists of both public and private agencies who meet monthly to do resource sharing and identify gaps in service to youth transitioning out of care.

### **Medicaid**

Washington State will continue to offer Medicaid to eligible youth up to age 19 provided they are attending school and on target to graduate. If a youth/young adult is identified with a Developmental Disability they can receive Medicaid until age 21. HB 2002 will also provide Medicaid coverage to the 50 young adults enrolled in its program for 2006, 2007 and 2008 to a total of 150 ongoing until the young adults reach age 21.

### **Tribal Participation**

Tribal youth are assured access and availability of Independent Living services across the state. Tribal youth may choose Tribal IL contracted services or non-tribal providers, assuming space availability. Once the Tribal youth ages out of foster care (18), s/he is eligible for Transitional Living Services (TLS) across the state.

Agreements with the Tribes regarding allocation of the Chafee Independent Living funds were reached in the year 2000. A solicitation process occurs each year where all federally recognized Tribes in Washington State are given an opportunity to apply for Chafee funding. Letters were sent to each Tribe offering an IL contract for this fiscal year. To date, every Tribe that has requested Chafee funds for their own IL program has been approved for funding. This year CA has contracts with 21 tribes. Ten percent of the total IL allocation is designated for Tribal contracts. Outreach with the Tribes regarding IL/TL/ETV programs continues on a regular basis. Tribes are sent letters with an offer of technical assistance from the IL Program Manager. The IL Program Manager

also attends various other Tribal meetings to educate members about IL services. Several IL Coordinators in each of the regions also meet regularly with the Tribes and discuss IL issues and collaboration. Packets detailing information about services to adolescents in foster care or tribal out of home care were also provided at the State ICW summit in May 2006.

### **Trust Funds**

Washington State does not have established trust funds for youth receiving independent living or transition assistance.

### **Accomplishments for FY2006**

- The IL contracts were revised to be more outcomes based.
- Children's Administration continued its statewide youth advisory board "Passion to Action" and had youth present in many of its committees and workgroups.
- Regional youth and alumni groups have been established in some regions.
- Greater Seattle Alumni Network (a local alumni group) became the first chapter of the Foster Care Alumni of America.
- The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) tool has been made part of practice in the service delivery to youth. This tool is being used to collect aggregate data. Most staff and IL providers have been trained on the ACLSA tool.
- A mass promotion of services available to adolescents in foster care was conducted. Packets including calendars, posters and brochures were sent to all youth age 16-18 in the foster care system, and to 1000 providers serving adolescents. Letters explaining all the services available was direct mailed to over 4000 foster parents. Presentations and/or packets were also provided at the ICW summit, statewide school counselor conference, statewide faith based advisory board, BRAAM Panel, and regional adolescent offices. (This was accomplished through a collaborate effort with the Washington Education Foundation).
- Contracted educational advocates are available in each of the 6 regions of Washington State to assist foster youth to improve educational outcomes.
- A common application process was developed to incorporate the Education and Training Voucher program, Governor Scholarship and other local scholarship opportunities for foster youth.
- Two statewide IL provider meetings were held.
- HB 2002 was passed which enables 50 young adults per year to remain in foster care while they pursue their post secondary education.
- An online group called "ILPWA" was set up so that IL providers and others working with youth in and out of foster care from around Washington State can share ideas and communicate with each other.
- Independent Living Providers and Transitional Living Program (Grantees) met quarterly through teleconferencing to discuss collaborative efforts. Two such collaborations in Spokane and Olympia were highlighted at the Pathways to Adulthood conference in May 2006.
- The Statewide Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action", consisting of current and former recipients of CA services, participated in a variety of different functions (speaker panels, meetings, workgroups, and committees) to ensure the youth voice is represented. Children's Administration utilizes this Board by having their participation in many of its workgroups and relies on the Board for feedback in its planning and when making changes to the foster care system.

### **Planned Activities for FY 2007**

- ETV will be centralized and coordinated with the Foster Care to College Program. This will enable CA to better coordinate the delivery of services to youth pursuing higher education.
- The Foster Care to College mentoring program will be implemented in 2 or 3 regions.

- A statewide website will be developed for current and former foster youth.
- Youth leadership summit will be convened in October with a focus of strengthening existing youth councils and establishing new ones.
- HB 2002- Foster Care to 21 program will be developed and implemented which enables 50 young adults per year to remain in foster care while they pursue their post secondary education.
- Statewide IL provider meetings will be held to discuss program design and collaboration.
- Joint Statewide Independent Living Provider and Transitional Living Program (Grantees) meeting will be held to promote collaboration between both programs.
- Finalize contract review process for Tribal IL programs to make contracts more outcome-based.
- Development of a statewide plan to actively involve youth in providing input to the Children's Administration on implementation of the Program Improvement Plan (completed September 2006) and the Annual Progress and Services Reports for the Child and Family Service Plan FY 2005 – 2009 and beyond. Two major strategies for involving youth include: 1) involvement of the Youth Advisory Board (Passion to Action) at the state and regional level and 2) a statewide survey by Washington State University of youth in an out-of-home placement to identify what is working well, their issues, and their concerns.
- Estimated number of youth the State plans to award ETV vouchers to in FY2007 is 220.