



## **Section B: Program Information**

### **(4) 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 2007 - FY 2008  
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)  
and Education and Training Vouchers (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 IL/TL CA Program Manager is as follows:

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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 foster 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 1300 youth/young adults (not including Tribal youth). This 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 and care 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 (ETV)**

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. This tool enables CA to collect aggregate data indicating areas for program focus and to document pre and post outcomes for youth.

Social workers and service providers continue to be trained on the utilization of the ACLSA tool. Washington State in collaboration with Casey Family programs developed ACLSA training specifically for caregivers to inform them of the tool and to identify ways they can assist the youth in their development of the learning plans. This training to caregivers began in September 2006.

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. A new checklist for youth exiting care has been developed for social workers to use as a guide in these staffings.
- 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, which incorporate 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. Under the direction of 2003 legislation, Substitute House Bill 1058 "an act relating to the educational attainment of children in foster care" CA has partnered with OSPI to improve the educational stability and achievement of children and youth in foster care:

- Regional development of protocol agreements with 112 school districts outlining strategies for school stability and collaboration
- Trainings and presentations for educators regarding the education needs of foster children
- Creating publications and other materials for social workers, educators and caregivers

The Education Oversight Committee continues its' work to improve school stability and educational outcomes for children and youth in foster care.

CA has also designed and implemented a comprehensive Education Advocacy Training curriculum for social workers. This face-to-face training provides CA social workers with the information necessary to engage in education planning and advocacy for the children and youth on their case loads (birth through post secondary). It also provides a foundation to a holistic approach involving foster parents, relative caregivers, parents, children and other individuals in education planning and advocacy. Social worker and caregiver education guides are also distributed during this training.

Social workers who attend the training will be able to identify the following:

- The importance of education planning and advocacy and its impact on the long term well being outcomes for foster children and youth
- State and federal laws, CA policy and Braam settlement requirements as they relate to education
- Education information that needs to be tracked and recorded
- Their role and responsibilities in education planning and advocacy
- Key elements of the education domain in the CHET screening and tracking process
- Critical timeframes for education planning and decision making
- Short term and long term benefits of early intervention and early learning
- How to make a request for a special education assessment
- The education support resources available, including the Education Advocacy Program
- Post secondary support programs and funding resources for foster youth

There are many other efforts happening in Washington State to improve educational outcomes for youth in care. The 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 occur in many regions.

As a member of the Foster Care to College (FCTC) partnership, whose primary intent is to help foster youth successfully graduate high school and pursue post-secondary education goals did implemented two programs in 2006-07: the "How to Go to College" seminars and a mentor program component. The seminars were offered in all six regions to both 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders with a focus on how to graduate and get into a post secondary education program. The mentorship program, with a phase-in start up, has implemented mentoring programs in four regions with a fifth coming in Fall 2007. Youth are matched with mentors who share a similar academic/vocational interest.

CA in collaboration with the members of the Foster Care to College Partnership did a mass mailing in December 2006 where an information packet that included all the various services available to foster youth was sent to youth age 15-18, caregivers, tribes, CA staff working with adolescents and community partners.

The 2007 state Legislative session also passed a bill which involves CA contracting, through a solicitation process, with at least one non-governmental entity to implement a program of supplemental educational transition planning for foster youth beginning at age 14 and every 6 months thereafter.

The Governor's Scholarship continues to be offered. This scholarship program was instituted in 2001 by former Governor Gary Locke who established a golf tournament to raise funds for scholarships for foster youth to attend higher education institutions. This program is administered by the College Success Foundation. Governor's Scholarships were awarded to 31 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.

There are several other scholarship opportunities available to foster youth to help promote post secondary attendance. They include: Treehouse Coaching to College, YMCA Transitions and Seattle University Fostering Scholars.

**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 supports 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 also identifies 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 or vocational 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. This legislation permits 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 this 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 implemented this legislation and the program began in September 2006. Children's Administration has reached its target of 50 youth for fiscal year 2006 and is currently working on filling the additional 50 slots for fiscal year 2007.

Washington State's 2007 legislation passed HB 1922 which creates an Independent Youth Housing program which provides housing vouchers to youth exiting foster care. This program is currently being implemented through Community, trade and Economic Development (CTED).

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

In an effort to maximize funds and coordinate efforts, the Education and Training Voucher program was centralized in August of 2006 and is administered by CA headquarters. Services to former foster care youth include:

- 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 College Success Foundation (formerly 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

The current staffing for the program includes a Program Manager and a Customer Service Specialist 2 that responds to inquiries and day to day needs of the youth served.

CA provides tribal youth from the 29 federally recognized Tribes with the opportunity to receive ETV by allocating 10% of the total ETV funds to be used for tribal youth.

In FY06 CA served 207 youth through the ETV program. 75 of these youth were first time recipients of ETV. In FY05 there were 179 recipients of ETV. It is anticipated that the ETV program will show a 2% increase in youth served in FY0, serving a total of 212 students, as the centralized system continues to communicate the availability of the program to CA staff and contractors.

CA continues to coordinate with the College Success Foundation, the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, and other agencies in an effort to maximize former foster care youth access to financial aid assistance (e.g., federal student financial aid programs, grants, scholarships, and ETV 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:

- As referenced above, 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, College Success Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and Treehouse. The FCTC partnership intent is to increase foster youth high school graduation & educate youth on how to access and attend post-secondary education and training programs.
- Children's Administration in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, Mockingbird Society and Washington Education Foundation continues to support a Statewide Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action" which consists of current and former recipients of CA services. This Board has been in operation for over 2 years and has been a vital part of helping shape change in our child welfare system. The 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. This Board has 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 in many of its workgroups and relies on them for feedback in its planning and when making changes to the foster care system.
- 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.
- LIFTS (Living Interdependently for Tomorrow's Success) in Region 2, provides funding to supplement IL program services to add a GED-prep program in the Tri-Cities, increase group and individual ACLSA Plan assistance for youth, and expand links to community services and resources.
- Transition Network in Region 2 meets regularly to discuss issues pertinent to current and former foster youth. This collaboration is made up of Catholic Family & Child Service, Children's Administration (Region 2), South-Central Washington Workforce Council, Casey Family Program, foster youth and alumni. Projects/Goals for the coming year are to have the IL provider offer in Spring 2007 the Powerful Families curriculum which focuses on financial planning, credit management and responsibility and smart purchasing for youth who are nearing transition out of foster care, and to TL youth; to offer the "GET SET" program provided by Casey Family Programs in Summer, 2007; Transition Network "kickoff" event in Summer/Fall 2007, to recruit additional youth, professional, and partner members; leadership training for youth interested in forming youth/alumni advisory groups, peer support-mentorship groups.
- YMCA Young Adult Services in Region 4 opened a young adult community resource center (The Center) in February 2007. The Center is the gateway to YMCA services for foster youth, foster alumni and other transitioning youth ages 15-25. The YMCA provides supportive housing, case management and referral services through its three core programs: Independent Living Program, Transitions and Young Adults in Transition.

- 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.
- Homeless Youth and Young Adult Committee in Region 4 is a subcommittee of King County's Ten Year Plan to end Homelessness. This committee is looking at the reasons for homelessness, resources currently available (permanent housing, transitional housing) and the gaps in services, etc.
- 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.
- The Greater Pierce County Community Network is helping identify and provide better services to foster youth in Region 5.
- Treehouse, United Way of King County and the YMCA Independent Living Program collaborate together and provide Individual Development Accounts to 25 youth in King County. They will be providing an additional 25 slots late summer 2007.
- The Transition Collaboration 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**

New 2007 legislation extends Medicaid coverage to individuals who:

- Are under 21 years of age;
- On or after July 22, 2007 were in foster care under the legal responsibility of DSHS or a federally recognized tribe located within the state; and
- On their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, were in foster care under the legal responsibility of DSHS or a federally recognized tribe located within the state.

The legislation does not apply retroactively to youth aging out of foster care prior to July 22, 2007.

In addition, DSHS continues Medicaid to eligible youth up to age 20 provided they are attending high school and on target to graduate. Youth and young adults diagnosed with a developmental disability may receive Medicaid until age 21 as long as there is no placement disruption and continue in an education program. In 2006, HB 2002 provided Medicaid coverage to 50 young adults enrolled in its program for 2006, 2007 and 2008. Youth may continue in this program as long as they are enrolled in a secondary education program or until they turn 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 24 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 sent to each of the 29 federally recognized tribes in December 2006.

### **Trust Funds**

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

### **Accomplishments for FY2007**

- Children's Administration continued its statewide youth advisory board "Passion to Action" and had youth present in many of its committees and workgroups. This Board celebrated its 2 years in operation.
- Children's Administration published a brochure that provides overview of the Chafee programs.
- Children's Administration developed a multi-disciplinary checklist for youth exiting care.
- An overview of the various services available to adolescents in foster care was developed and made available to social workers.
- In October 2006 Washington State hosted a foster youth and alumni leadership summit where foster youth and alumni from around the state came together to begin development of local action groups. Regional action groups have now been developed in each of the 6 regions in Washington State.
- The Foster Care to College partnership provided "How to go to College" seminars to youth from 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as, a mentoring program to 4 of the regions in Washington State.
- The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) tool training has been made available to foster parents.
- A mass promotion of services available to adolescents in foster care was conducted in December 2006. Packets including posters and brochures were sent to all youth age 15-18 in the foster care system, caregivers, tribes and community partners.
- 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 is available to foster youth and alumni which incorporate the Education and Training Voucher program, Governor Scholarship and other local scholarship opportunities for foster youth.
- HB 2002 was implemented which enabled 50 young adults per year in 2006, 2007 and 2008 to remain in foster care while they pursue their post secondary education. Washington State met its goal of 50 youth for fiscal year 2006.
- The online group called "ILPWA" continues to be available 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.
- Region 1 hosted an Independent Living conference to foster youth age 15-18 to provide them with trainings and information on resources needed to help promote self- sufficiency.
- One member of the Passion to Action Statewide youth advisory board was selected as a Foster Club all-star.
- Education summits were conducted in each of the regions in Washington State which focused on building collaborative relationships between caregivers, social workers and the public schools.

- Training was provided to nearly 1400 social workers on educational advocacy highlighting the educational needs of children and youth birth through post secondary.
- Children's Administration developed new education policies for children and youth.
- Contracted IL/TL services have been extended to include the Columbia Gorge areas of Region 2, in Klickitat and Skamania Counties.

#### **Accomplishments of the ETV program:**

- Children's Administration centralized its ETV program to provide a more consistent program to youth utilizing the voucher program.
- The "Washington State Education and Training Voucher Program Guidelines" that explains the program to social workers, Independent and Transitional Living contractors and CA coordinators which will be available in May 2007.
- A 4 page publication that describes the program to Youth; this publication will be available by May 2007 and is intended to be given to youth interested in participating in the program.
- Standard forms for youth to utilize as they apply for the program and request funding for expenditures the program covers in support of their educational endeavors.
- Revision of the "Common Application" that youth may utilize to apply for ETV and other funding that provides scholarships and support in their pursuit of post secondary education.
- Establishment of an email account that all youth may use to communicate with the program: [etvwash@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:etvwash@dshs.wa.gov)
- Establishment of a Toll-free number for ease of communication: 1-877-433-8388.

#### **Planned Activities for FY 2008**

- The Foster Care to College mentoring program will be implemented in all regions.
- The development and launching of a web site that provides access to information about the Chafee programs, resources available, and other topics of interest to adolescents aging out of care is slated to occur in the current fiscal year.
- Youth leadership mini-convening will be held in June 2007 and a summit will be convened in October 2007 with a focus of strengthening existing youth councils and establishing new ones.
- HB 2002- Foster Care to 21 program will do promotions to obtain the additional 50 youth authorized for 2007.
- 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.
- Update the Independent Living Policy.
- An IL/TL program review to identify gaps and further strengthen services to adolescents through community collaborations is planned for this next fiscal year
- Distribute the ETV Guide and marketing for the program.