

Myths and Realities of the Independent Living Program



DCF's Independent Living (IL) Program is designed to support youth as they prepare to exit foster care and transition to self-sufficiency. The Independent Living Program provides services and supports to eligible individuals who experienced foster care at age 14 or older, with specific requirements varying for individual services.

General Program Information

Myth

All participants in the Independent Living Program receive identical benefits.



Reality

Because the Independent Living Program has specific eligibility requirements for different types of funding and support, financial assistance may vary by individual. All benefits are **determined individually** for each youth in the program.

Youth and young adults do not work with an Independent Living Program coordinator until after they have exited foster care.



Independent Living Program coordinators build partnerships and connections with youth and young adults before they exit foster care, getting to know each individual through case management and transition planning. Although many services and supports are not available until after youth exit care, coordinators can **begin working with them early** to support a smooth transition.

No supports are available to youth in foster care to help them work toward their goals.



All foster care **case management providers must offer services and supports** for youth age 14 and older, regardless of their case plan goal, to help them build independent living skills and prepare for a transition from foster care. Providers work with each foster youth to develop and pursue personal goals.

Financial Support and Education

Participation in Independent Living Program services guarantees all financial needs will be fully met.



Independent Living Program services offer **some financial support** to youth and young adults who have exited foster care, but funding is intended to supplement, not replace, employment income. Participants must work or be in school to help meet their needs. The Independent Living Program also connects individuals with community resources, assists with navigating systems and helps build relationships to support them through challenges.

Financial supports are available immediately when an individual begins with Independent Living Program services.



The Independent Living Program works with each individual to **assess needs and determine appropriate support** through planned coordination to help meet unique goals and needs. While direct funding may be available for select immediate needs, this funding is not guaranteed or always available.

All educational expenses for young adults will be paid with Independent Living Program services.



Though financial supports are available to eligible youth, these funds often **do not cover all expenses** related to attending a college, university or trade school. Individuals should be prepared for costs not covered by the Independent Living Program, including those not covered by the state tuition waiver.

Housing and Transportation

Independent Living Program services guarantees housing for young adults after they exit foster care.



The Independent Living Program **does not provide physical housing**, but coordinators connect eligible youth and young adults to community housing resources and assist with the process. They also help with applications for Section 8 housing vouchers available to those who have aged out of care.

Independent Living Program services provides vehicles for purchase or funding for youth and young adults to obtain their own vehicles.



The Independent Living Program **does not provide vehicles or funds** to purchase them. Resources may be available to eligible youth for driver's education and licensing, depending on the funding available, but these resources are not guaranteed.

Additional Resources



Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs)

With more than 4,500 team members in 26 licensed centers, CMHCs **provide services to all** who need them. Find a center near you at acmhck.org/about-cmhcs/.



1-800-CHILDREN

Powered by the Kansas Children's Service League, 1-800-CHILDREN offers a 24/7, free and confidential **parenting helpline and community resource directory** helping to connect families to local resources.

Call 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373) or visit online at 1800childrenks.org.



Family Mobile Crisis Helpline

Contact the Family Mobile Crisis Helpline for help anytime with a **mental health crisis** for any Kansan age 20 and younger. In-person support from statewide mobile crisis providers is available.

Call and text 1-833-441-2240 or visit fmch.dcf.ks.gov to chat online.

Connect With Independent Living Program Services



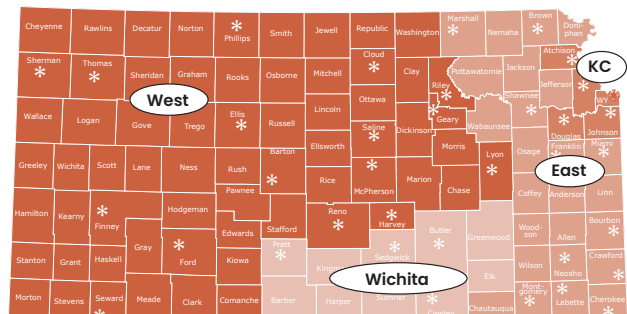
Call us at 1-785-296-4653.



Explore our services at il.dcf.ks.gov.



Email your local IL coordinator.



DCF.EastIL@ks.gov

DCF.KansasCityIL@ks.gov

DCF.WestIL@ks.gov

DCF.WichitaIL@ks.gov