

## Community-Based Care Lead Agency Standards for Independent Living Transitional Services

Areas	Minimum Standards
<b>Life Skills Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily living skills should include instruction in nutrition, menu planning, grocery shopping, meal preparation, dining decorum, kitchen cleanup, food storage, home management, and home safety. Opportunities for youth to apply these skills would include developing menus, shopping for ingredients, preparing meals, cleaning the kitchen and dishes at the conclusion of the meals, and appropriately storing leftover food.</li> <li>• Self-care skills should include instruction about topics such as hygiene, health, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, parenting skills, and responsible sexuality. Opportunities for youth to apply these skills would include discussions as well as role playing and rehearsal of parenting and hygiene skills.</li> <li>• Money management skills should include budgeting, saving, managing credit, opening bank accounts, filing income taxes, and becoming an informed consumer. Opportunities for youth to apply these skills would include opening checking and savings accounts, developing budgets based on income and monies in bank accounts, filing taxes, and working with caregivers to monitor their respective budgets.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based care providers should develop contacts with housing programs and develop working agreements with government housing authorities and landlords willing to set aside rental units for foster youth while also waiving income, credit, and co-signing requirements.</li> <li>• Providers should develop or create housing options for youth by acquiring apartments or apartment leases that are set aside for rental to foster youth. These programs are typically referred to as “scattered site” housing, as foster youth live with limited supervision in these units that are scattered around town.</li> <li>• An independent living coordinator or a case worker should regularly visit youth in independent living housing to help resolve any problems that may occur and to help ensure youth are properly caring for themselves and the property.</li> </ul>
<b>Education Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should assign youth an education advocate to help youth gain access to needed resources and participate fully in curricular and extracurricular activities. These assigned advocates should communicate regularly with school personnel and monitor school enrollment, attendance, course selection, educational placement, and performance. If foster youth are struggling academically, their advocates should help them obtain appropriate support, accommodations, and services to improve their chances of success. To ensure that youth receive appropriate support, the advocate should educate school personnel on the special needs of foster care youth and promote closer collaboration among school guidance counselors, foster parents, and providers (e.g., the independent living coordinator and foster parent should attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) staffing and the guidance counselor should attend foster youth staffings.)</li> <li>• Independent living providers should help foster youth develop a career plan. The plan should include the youth’s interests, strengths in school, visions for</li> </ul>

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	<p>career and personal life, and opportunities for career and work experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should assist youth in accessing postsecondary education to increase the likelihood that foster youth will follow through on plans for future education. To encourage youth to go on to post-secondary education, independent living coordinators need to be particularly involved in helping youth with entrance and financial aid applications. They also should take youth to visit college campuses and maintain relationships with the financial aid offices of local colleges. Once they are enrolled in an educational or vocational program, providers should offer services to help the youth remain in school. For instance, if the student is living on campus, providers should find places for youth to spend holidays and summer vacations when college housing is not available.</li> <li>• Providers should assign tutors to foster care youth. Tutors can help youth improve their grades and, as a result, their chances to succeed. Since many of these youth fall behind in school, access to additional academic help is crucial. Assistance can come from the school system, local universities, local literacy programs, and volunteer organizations such as the Kiwanis Club.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should develop partnerships with employment programs and local industries so foster youth will have opportunities to learn about career options and gain career-related work experiences. These partnerships may lead to opportunities such as career days, job shadowing, job mentoring, and internships. Youth are more likely to pursue their educational and career goals when they have the opportunity to earn money while working in a field they are interested in.</li> <li>• Providers should offer job search training in areas such as resume writing and interviewing. These classes can help youth develop the techniques and skills they need to get and keep a job. For example, providers should conduct mock interviews with the youth to help them learn crucial interviewing skills.</li> <li>• Providers should help youth obtain part-time work while in foster care. Since part-time work while in foster care is a strong predictor of long-term educational and economic success, connecting young people in foster care to part-time jobs should be a high priority. Community leaders, educators, employers, and child welfare officials should develop community-based opportunities for foster youth. Youth who have the opportunity to earn money while working in a field of interest are more likely to pursue their educational and career goals.</li> </ul>
<b>Health Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should ensure that youth are provided health care education prior to leaving the foster care system. Basic health education includes first aid, nutrition, physical fitness, mental and emotional health, medication use, and basic methods of assessing one's own medical needs. The curriculum also should include education on responsible sex and information on communicable diseases.</li> <li>• Providers should require that each youth undergo health screenings prior to leaving the foster care system, including screenings for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, gynecological health, eating disorders, and emotional health. The provider should offer basic health</li> </ul>

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	<p>care management consistent with youths' specific health problems. For example, if a health screening finds that a foster youth has asthma, the provider should make sure the youth knows how to manage his or her asthma.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providers should help youth develop a health plan as part of their transition plan from foster care to prepare them to manage their health care needs when they are living independently. Providers should ensure that each youth's transition plan includes all previous health information (e.g., immunizations, past health care treatment), future routine health care needs (e.g., annual physicals and dental cleanings), health insurance options (Medicaid or private provider), and specific health care providers the youth can visit to continue his or her health care, such as a primary care physician and dentist.</li> <li>• Providers should identify community health resources and link youth with these services. For example, providers should identify physicians who are willing to serve Medicaid enrollees and/or former foster youth at low or no cost. Providers also should cultivate relationships with the health care community and educate them on the special needs of this population. One way to do this is to invite members of the medical community to serve on the board of directors of a community-based care organization. Local county health departments or local walk-in clinics are also good resources for low-cost health care. Some community-based care providers are better positioned to offer certain types of health care because they belong to larger parent organizations that offer these services.</li> </ul>
<b>Aftercare and Transitional Services Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before youth leave the foster care system, providers and youth should jointly develop and sign a formal transition plan describing how the youth will successfully move from state custody to independence. At a minimum, the plan should indicate what steps the youth will take to meet his or her education and vocational goals, identify community services the youth can turn to if he or she needs assistance, and outline individualized tasks the youth will undertake to meet specific challenges identified on his or her personal independent living assessment.</li> <li>• In addition to the transition plan, foster care providers should connect each youth aging out of the system with adult mentors in the community. Mentoring relationships provide support and advocacy for foster youth and assist them with personal, academic, and career development. A supportive mentoring relationship is crucial for young adults aging out of the foster care system who lose their support structures, such as a foster family or group home environment. Providers should offer specialized training to mentors (e.g., crisis management, effective communication techniques) to help youth deal with the obstacles of young adult life and should have a strong employment history in order to assist with work readiness.</li> </ul>
<b>Training Minimum Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training requirements should include an overview of the foster care system and all the services required by law to be delivered to the youth. Training that outlines these services is important because staff are now required to submit to the court a report showing how the law has been met in providing each youth the services and assessments necessary to prepare him or her for independence (s. 39.701, Florida Statutes).</li> </ul>



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<p>At a minimum, employment indicators should include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage of youth opening and maintaining an active bank account;</li> <li>• percentage of youth with a medical care provider;</li> <li>• percentage of youth who are unwed parents;</li> <li>• percentage of youth 18 and over with housing;</li> <li>• percentage of youth homeless for at least one night;</li> <li>• percentage of youth arrested;</li> <li>• percentage of youth on probation; and</li> <li>• percentage of youth incarcerated by the Department of Corrections or the Department of Juvenile Justice.</li>   <li>• percentage of youth who are employed;</li> <li>• average length of time youth retain their jobs;</li> <li>• percentage of youth in jobs with health benefits;</li> <li>• percentage of youth employed in jobs paying above minimum wage.</li> </ul>