



Independent Living Transition Services Outcome Measures and Oversight Activities

Reporting Period

January – December 2014

Department of Children and Families
Office of Child Welfare

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**Florida Department of Children and Families
Independent Living Transition Services
Outcome Measures and Oversight Activities
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I. Background

Sections 39.6251 and 409.1451, Florida Statutes, require the Department of Children and Families to administer a system of independent living transition services to enable older children in foster care and young adults in foster care at age 18 to make the transition to self-sufficiency as adults. The goals of these services are to assist older children and young adults who are in foster care to obtain the life skills necessary to achieve their education and employment goals. These services are also focused on empowering the young adult to seek a quality of life appropriate for their age, and to assume personal responsibility for becoming self-sufficient adults. Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is outsourced to 17 Community-Based Care (CBC) lead agencies.

II. Purpose

This report provides information required in subsection 409.1451(6), F.S., as follows:

1. An analysis of performance on the outcome measures developed under this section reported for each CBC lead agency.
2. A description of the Department's oversight of the program, including, by lead agency, any programmatic or fiscal deficiencies found, corrective actions required and current status of compliance.
3. Any rules adopted or proposed under this section since the last report.

The activities described in this report occurred from January 2014 through December 2014, unless otherwise noted.

Oversight of Florida's Independent Living Transition Services Program is also provided by the Independent Living Services Advisory Council (ILSAC). ILSAC was created by the Florida Legislature for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and delivery of independent living transition services.

III. Outcome Measures for Community-Based Care Lead Agencies

The CBC outcome measures in reference to youth and young adults in care are primarily reviewed through system derived data and a series of client self-reporting surveys. These outcomes are essentially focused on:

- Education accessibility;
- Case management support to teens and young adults in foster care; and
- Direct life skills provisions.

The Department measures these outcomes through each of the CBC lead agency contracts.

A. Education

Percent of Young Adults in Foster Care at Age 18

This measure calculates the percent of young adults in extended foster care at age 18 who have earned a high school diploma or GED or are enrolled in a secondary education program. The educational attainment outcome measurement was integrated into the standard template for the CBC contracts on July 1, 2014.

The results below show high school and GED achievement rates as of December 30, 2014, for young adults ages 19-22 who are currently or were formerly in foster care. Sixty-seven percent of the 1,760 young adults being served by the CBCs in extended foster care, during the 2014 calendar year, have earned a high school diploma or GED.

Region	# Former Foster Youth Ages 19-22	GED Achieved		HS Diploma Achieved		Attained GED or HS Diploma	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Central	333	82	24.60%	154	46.20%	236	70.90%
Northeast	236	33	13.90%	75	31.70%	108	45.70%
Northwest	181	44	24.30%	84	46.40%	128	70.70%
Southeast	477	129	27.00%	218	45.70%	347	72.70%
Southern	255	25	9.80%	159	62.30%	184	72.10%
Suncoast	278	56	20.10%	131	47.10%	187	67.20%
Totals:	1760	369	20.90%	821	46.60%	1184	67.20%

Source: Florida Safe Families Network, December 2014

B. Case Management

Percent of Young Adults in Extend Foster Care who have Monthly Contact with Their Case Manager

The next table represents a monthly data set from July 2014 to November 2014 of the number of young adults entering extended foster care. The data suggests an upward trend each month. Of the total number of young adults in extended foster care (EFC), on average, 60 percent received a monthly visit by their case manager.

Month	Total # Young Adults Entering EFC	Received CM Visit (Yes)	Did Not Receive CM Visit (No)	% of Total Visited Monthly
Jul-14	369	242	127	66%
Aug-14	393	215	178	55%
Sep-14	411	228	183	55%
Oct-14	425	262	163	62%
Nov-14	442	279	163	63%
Totals:	2,040	1,226	814.00	60%

Source: Florida Safe Families Network, December 2014

C. Direct Life Skills

Percent of Young Adults in Foster Care at Age 18

The Department contracts with Connected by 25, Inc. to administer two client self-reporting surveys: *My Services Survey* and *National Youth in Transition Database Survey (NYTD)*. This contract enables the Department to meet federal reporting requirements and avoid potential federal financial penalties if requirements of the surveys are not met.

1. *My Services Survey*

The My Services survey is an online survey tool delivered twice per year to youth between the ages of 13-17 who are currently residing in the foster care system. The My Services survey replaced the former, paper-based Independent Living Transitional Services Critical Checklist and is now the primary tool utilized by the Department and CBCs for reviewing the overall quality and efficacy of services delivered to teens residing in the Florida foster care system. There are two age-specific surveys that make up the My Services survey. Both are conducted and analyzed through the contract with Connected by 25.

Links to each of the My Services age-specific questionnaires are provided below.

a. [Ages Thirteen \(13\) to Seventeen \(17\)](#)

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/independentliving/docs/MyServicesSpring2014.pdf>

b. [Ages eighteen \(18\) to twenty-two \(22\)](#)

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/independentliving/docs/FloridaNYTDSurveyReportSpring2014.pdf>

The fall 2014 My Services survey was recently completed and more than 1,200 teens who are currently residing in the foster care system, participated in the survey process. Data analysis of the fall 2014 survey results are currently ongoing, and a finalized report outlining findings is scheduled to be posted to the Florida Department of Children and Families' Independent Living website in the spring of 2015. Prior survey results, including those associated with the spring 2014 My Services survey, are currently available at the link to the DCF Independent Living website below:

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-livingarchive-data>.

The use of the My Services survey tool offers the Department and CBCs an opportunity to analyze which required Independent Living services are being delivered to teens in foster care. In addition, the survey provides insight on whether the teens view these services as being valuable and helpful into their adulthood.

2. *National Youth in Transition Database*

The National Youth in Transition Database, commonly referred to as NYTD, requires states to provide a survey for youth and young adults at ages 17, 19, and 21 to report their perceptions of the services provided to them. Additionally, each state must report

on all services provided to youth in foster care and young adults formerly in foster care every six months in the following areas: academic support; post-secondary educational support; career preparation; employment programs or vocational trainings; budget and financial management; housing education and home management training; health education and risk prevention; family support and healthy marriage education; mentoring; and supervised independent living. Failure to comply with federal minimum National Youth in Transition Database survey requirements could result in financial penalties. In 2014, the Department was found to be in compliance with the National Youth in Transition data requirements and met all currently established federal requirements in this area.

In addition, Florida also surveys young adults ages 18-22 who aged out of foster care. This survey is called the Florida NYTD. Using the same instrument as the federal NYTD, the Florida survey is completed annually over a 3-month window in the spring. The results for the 2014 Florida NYTD survey are available at this link: <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-livingarchive-data>.

IV. Department Oversight

During calendar year 2014, the Department's Contract Oversight Unit monitored the CBCs' compliance with sections 409.1451 and 39.6251, F.S. and Chapter 65C-31, Florida Administrative Code, *Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department*. In addition, the Department's Quality Assurance System includes requirements for case file reviews to assess the delivery of services for children in the child welfare system.

a. Contract Oversight

The Contract Oversight Unit randomly selected cases of youth and young adults eligible to receive Independent Living Services and young adults in foster care to conduct a file review to determine whether the requirements in Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code were met. This included a review of eligibility requirements for independent living services.

Table 1 (next page) summarizes the monitoring of the CBCs for the 2014 calendar year and the action taken by the Department to address deficiencies. The individual monitoring reports can be found at: <http://papp1.dcf.state.fl.us/asc/databases/CERS/default.asp>.

Table1: Contract Oversight Results of the Independent Living (IL) Program by Community-Based Care Lead Agency				
Circuit	CBC	Contract	Finding	Corrective Action Plan Status
1	Lakeview Center	AJ481	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
2, 14	Big Bend CBC	BJ101	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
3,8	Partnership for Strong Families	CJ809	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	DJ038	Monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
4	Kids First of Florida	DJ035	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
5	Kids Central, Inc.	PJL04	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
6	Eckerd Youth Alternatives	QJ20R	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
7	Community Partnership for Children	NJ205	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
7	St Johns County BOCC	NJ206	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
9	CBC of Central Florida	GJL57	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
10	Heartland for Children	TJ201	Monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
11, 16	Our Kids	KJ114	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
13	Eckerd Youth Alternatives	QJ3E0	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
15	ChildNet	IJ705	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan under development.
17	ChildNet	JJ212	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan under development.
18	CBC of Brevard	GJ401	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan underway.
18	CBC of Central Florida	GJK45	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.
19	Devereux CBC	ZJK85	Some monitored IL requirements not met.	Corrective Action Plan under development.
20	Children's Network of Southwest Florida	HJ300	Monitored IL requirements not met.	No Corrective Action Plan required.

Source: Contract Evaluations Reporting System, November 2014

b. Quality Assurance

The Department's Quality Assurance system provides uniform Quality of Practice Standards for ongoing service provision by case management organizations. Data collected in reviewing these standards reflects or measures performance; it provides local administrations a "window into practice" in real-time, and helps focus quality improvement efforts at the local and state level.

The Independent Living Quality Assurance standards for 2014 focused primarily on Targeted Permanency Areas identified to review were reunification, adoption, guardianship, preserving connections, child and family involvement in the case planning process, and direct supervisory oversight of cases with Another Planned Permanency Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a goal.

Information on case reviews conducted by CBC Quality Assurance staff was based on the case management standards, which provides the statewide summary of performance for targeted

permanency feedback standards (see table below). File reviews that were conducted from July 1-September 30, 2014 are posted at:
http://www.centerforchildwelfare.org/qa/QA_Docs/StandardsCM_FY14-15.pdf.

Statewide Permanency Feedback Standards	APPLA Cases	Strength Total	% Strength	Area Needing Imp. Total	% Area Needing Imp.	Not Rated Cases
Permanency Outcome 1 = 85.3%						
Is the child in a stable placement at the time of the review and were any changes in placement that occurred during the period under review made in the best interest of the child and consistent with achieving the child's permanency goals?	173	142	82.1%	31	17.9%	523
Was the appropriate permanency goal established for the child in a timely manner?	173	153	88.4%	20	11.6%	523
Are concerted efforts being made to achieve reunification, guardianship, adoption, or other permanent planned living arrangement?	173	148	85.5%	25	14.5%	523
Permanency Outcome 2 = 80.8%						
Were concerted efforts made to ensure that siblings in out-of-home care are placed together unless a separation was necessary to meet the need of one of the siblings?	84	79	94.0%	5	6.0%	612
Were concerted efforts made to ensure that visitation between a child in out-of-home care and his or her mother, father, and siblings was of sufficient frequency and quality to promote continuity in the child's relationship with these close family members?	115	89	77.4%	26	22.6%	581
Were concerted efforts made to maintain the child's connections to his or her neighborhood, community, faith, extended family, Tribe, school, friends?	160	133	83.1%	27	16.9%	536
Were concerted efforts made to place the child with relatives when appropriate?	145	112	77.2%	33	22.8%	551
Concerted efforts were made to promote, support, and/or maintain positive relationships between the child in out-of-home care and his or her mother and father or other primary caregiver(s) from whom the child had been removed through activities other than just arranging for visitation?	102	77	75.5%	25	24.5%	594
Well-Being Outcome 1 = 68.0%						
Were concerted efforts made to assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents (both at the child's entry into out-of-home care [if the child entered during the period under review] or an ongoing basis) to identify the services necessary to achieve case goals and adequately address the issues relevant to the agency's involvement with the family, and provided the appropriate services?	195	159	81.5%	36	18.5%	501
Were concerted efforts made to involve parents and children (if developmentally appropriate) in the case planning process on an ongoing basis?	162	118	72.8%	44	27.2%	534

Source: CMS Reviews Q1 2014-15 QA Web Portal

c. eFiscal Oversight

During the 2014 calendar year, the Department’s Community-Based Care Fiscal Oversight Unit provided fiscal monitoring, technical assistance and financial risk assessments for the following CBCs:

Circuit	CBC	Date of Visit	Corrective Action Plan (CAP)_status
7	Community Partnership for Children	January 29-30	No CAP required
7	St Johns County	31-Jan	No CAP required
4	Family Support Services of North Florida	March 4-6	No CAP required
4	Kids First of Florida	March 6-7	No CAP required
18	CBC of Central Florida	April 9-11	CAP Implemented
19	Devereux CBC	December 8-12	No CAP Required

The majority of the CBCs that received fiscal monitoring, technical assistance and financial risk assessments over the course of the 2014 calendar year were found to be in compliance with their approved Independent Living cost allocation plan for reporting Chafee Administration costs.

V. Rule Promulgation

Provisions relating to the delivery of independent living transitional services are included in multiple chapters of Florida Administrative Code, including:

- Chapter 65C-28, *Out-of-Home Care*, providing direction for delivery of services to youth in foster care. Specifically, 65C-28.009, *Adolescent Services*, implements s. 409.1451(3), F.S.
- Chapter 65C-30, *General Child Welfare Provisions*, providing direction on delivery of services to youth under supervision of the Department.
- Chapter 65C-31, *Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department*, providing direction on the delivery of services to young adults, specifically those provided by s. 409.1451(5), F.S.

In addition, the Department has proposed new rules governing the extended foster care (65C-41) and Postsecondary Education Services and Support (65C-42) programs initiated by Florida law on January 1, 2014. The rule promulgation process will continue with input from numerous stakeholders through early 2015.

VI. Summary

The Department works closely with stakeholders throughout the state to support young adults in extended foster care and Independent Living programs. Specific initiatives and practices that target youth that are striving toward independence include the Department’s #ItCANbedone campaign, Florida Youth Leadership Academy, Crossover Youth Practice Model and Casey Family Programs’ Permanency Roundtables and Permanency Values Training.

Also of note:

- The Department's Campus Coach Coordinator program assists colleges and universities with creating campus-based academic support and service programs for youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care. At several Florida public postsecondary academic institutions, these campus-based supports and services are designed to improve postsecondary participation, student retention, academic outcomes, and degree completion rates for former foster care youth.
- The Department and CBCs continue to engage with current and former foster care youth through organizations such as Florida Youth SHINE, in an effort to ensure that the youth have a voice in shaping the future of foster care.
- The Department continues to provide administrative support to the legislatively created Independent Living Services Advisory Council. The Advisory Council provides oversight of the program by reviewing and making recommendations concerning the implementation and operation of the independent living transition services. Information about the Advisory Council, its members, activities, subcommittees and meeting dates are provided at the link: **<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/advisory-council>**.
- The Department, in conjunction with the Agency for Health Care Administration, is in the process of fully implementing provisions of the Affordable Care Act that allow eligible young adults formerly in foster care to receive Medicaid to age 26.
- The Department, in conjunction with the Department of Economic Opportunity, is reviewing employment, education and earnings potential of this population by utilizing the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) from the Department of Economic Opportunity.

As a result of our new service methodologies, cross system partnerships and data sharing capabilities, the Nancy Detert Independent Living legislation has led to a more inclusive Independent Living program structure. We are experiencing a higher enrollment in post-secondary education and more than 50% of youth who reached age 18 have elected to remain in extended foster care. An average of 2,400 young adults enrolled in the programs during fiscal year 2013-2014.

There is a current trend of young adults transitioning between programs as their life condition changes. One youth may flow through all four programs in one year based on changes in his or her eligibility status. As a result, a termination from one portion of the Independent Living program may lead to the youth being enrolled in another part of the program. Hence, it is important to see the IL program as one comprehensive program, with four areas of service. The Department has worked to ensure that all young adults, ages 18-21, in care have active Medicaid coverage. Additionally, it has empowered statewide partners to reach out to those young adults, ages 21-25, who are no longer actively involved in any IL service. The Department has partnered with the College Reach Committee, which focuses on increasing access and providing a continuum of care for young adults served by the Department once they are enrolled in post-secondary education.

The Department looks forward to providing a high level of quality care to its youth and young adults, with the intent of embracing, educating and empowering the young adults towards a positive future.