State of Tennessee
Department of Children's Services

Identifying and Accessing Independent Living Services Manual

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Establishing the Independent Living (IL) Program Eligibility and Service Referral Record in TFACTS:

The IL Program Eligibility and Service Referral function in **TFACTS** supports the determination of Chafee services eligibility, but also accommodates the referral of non-paid services such as Life Skills instruction. The establishment of this record is required in order to make case service referrals, or otherwise record the service provisions outlined in this protocol. There are four (4) IL Program Eligibility Types, to be established and utilized as follows:

1. **Custodial**: This eligibility type is established for all youth in state custody 14 years of age or older.
2. **Extension of Foster Care Services:** This eligibility type is established for all young adults receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care.
3. **SPG/Adoption**: This is only to be used for youth who exited state custody at or after 16 years of age, who are still under a contract for subsidy and need applicable IL Services.
4. **Transitional Living**: This is only to be used to record services administered by a contracted Transitional Living provider.

Regional Family Service Workers (FSW) or Team Leaders (TL) can establish the Custodial eligibility record when there is a need to make referrals for IL Services or record Life Skills instruction for youth still in state custody. All requests for a system override, (if needed), must be sent to the identified representative with the DCS Office of Independent Living.

Staff with the DCS Office of Independent Living will establish and approve the DCS Extension of Foster Care Services, SPG/Adopption, and Transitional Living Program Eligibility records. The Extension of Foster Care Services eligibility record must be established and approved within thirty (30) business days of approval for Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults, so coordination between the Regions and the DCS Office of Independent Living is imperative.

A storyboard is available in the **TFACTS** Knowledge Base on this subject (entitled: ***TFACTS IL Eligibility and Service Referral Guide-in the Case Management Storyboards***).

Life Skills Assessment and Life Skills Instruction

The first step when identifying Independent Living Services for youth is to assess need. This is accomplished with young adults receiving voluntary services upon their request and with their consent. The following is a guide for administering and utilizing the Casey Life Skills Assessment:

The following outlines the specific guidelines and points for consideration to effectively assess life skills strengths and concerns for youth and young adults. Links to help staff and caregivers locate resources that can be used to help youth build life skills proficiency are included. Conventions for utilization of the Life Skills Assessment module in **TFACTS** complete this protocol.

Guidelines Specific to the Administration of the Casey Life Skills Assessment:

The following are the primary guidelines associated with administration of the Life Skills Assessment:

1. All youth in state custody 14 years of age or older must complete a Life Skills Assessment at least annually.
2. Young adults 18-21 receiving Extension of Foster Care Services may have an assessment recommended if the young adult or the Child and Family Team (CFT) identify a need, but are not required to do so. Young adults will otherwise have needs assessed based on self-reporting or factors identified by the C&FT if barriers to attaining the goal of the Transition Plan or the young adult's safety and/or well-being are identified.
3. The FSW is responsible for developing the Independent Living Plan or Transition Plan as a part of the Family Permanency Plan as required by DCS Policy ***16.51, Independent Living and Transition Planning***. The results and recommendations of the individualized life skills assessment will be used to develop individualized strength, concern, outcome, and action step information, if applicable. The CLSA must be completed no later than fourteen (14) days after a youth enters custody in order to fully integrate the results in the IL or Transition Plan. The Life Skills Assessment results must be recorded in **TFACTS** in advance of Family Permanency Plan development.

The assessment currently recommended is the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA). There are also CLS "Additional Assessments" Supplements that can be optionally administered based on other factors, such as the need to assess pregnant or parenting youth, etc.

If there is not access to a computer, the CLSA can be printed so the youth and/or caregiver can take the assessment. The FSW can key it in the computer and the computer will process and provide immediate results.

It is extremely important that the results are discussed with the youth, and caregiver whenever possible, and must be used to develop outcomes in the IL section of the Family Permanency Plan. Information and tools (such as Resources to Inspire) are available on the website that can help the FSW, the youth, and the youth's team address the applicable areas concern.

The following storyboard provides information on how to use the functions on the Casey Life Skills Assessment website to complete life skills assessments.

How to Create and Administer the Casey Life Skills Assessment

Guidelines for Utilization of the Life Skills Assessment Module in TFACTS:

The ***Life Skills Assessment*** module in **TFACTS** is a repository for Life Skills Assessment scores or other relevant information. Its purpose is to consolidate the information related to administration of life skills assessments in a youth and family's electronic record, facilitate easier access to this information when conducting CFTM's, developing Family Permanency Plans/IL Plans in **TFACTS**, ready access to the history of such assessment information in the Family Case, and aggregate reporting. It does not contain functionality that tabulates assessment scores, although the data entered can be managed via reports to provide a range of information to include trends across demographic groups, locations, etc. The Life Skills Assessment results must be recorded in **TFACTS** in advance of Family Permanency Plan development.

The following storyboard provides information on how to use the functions on the Casey Life Skills Assessment website to complete life skills assessments.

How to Enter Casey Life Skills Assessment Information in TFACTS

Alternative Life Skills Assessment Protocol:

There are two situations when it may not be possible to complete a Life Skills Assessment timely, particularly for initial Family Permanency Plans:

1. When a youth is on runaway or escapee status; and
2. When a youth is developmentally delayed to the extent that a specialized and clinically identified assessment must be completed.

Utilize the following steps to ensure that the Family Permanency Plan can be completed:

1. When the **TFACTS** Life Skills Assessment type of *"Other"* is selected, the system disables the "Raw Score" fields on the "Life Skills Assessment" screen. All that is required is some instance of narrative in the *"Other Assessment Information"* narrative boxes, adequately explaining why a life skills assessment could not be administered or with applicable information. This will allow the assessment to be completed and routed for approval.
2. Route the assessment record to the applicable Team Coordinator (TC) for approval.

These are the only instances that warrant such modified entry of the assessment information in **TFACTS**. The appropriate Life Skills Assessment must be administered at the first available opportunity, and the results utilized to complete the Family Permanency Plan in **TFACTS**.

Consider the following when using Life Skills Assessment information to guide IL Plan (Permanency Plan) Development:

1. The IL Plan is developed as part of the initial Permanency Plan for youth 14 up to 17 years of age. Youth 17 years and up will have a Transition Plan developed (refer to the **Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide** for more information).
2. Review and revision of the IL Plan occurs with the same frequency as the review and revision of the Family Permanency Plan (refer to DCS Policy **16.31, Permanency Planning**) for more information). The IL Plan must be updated at least annually for non-custodial youth receiving Extension of Foster Care Services as adults and life skills concerns will be addressed on the Transition Plan for youth 17 years of age or older, as applicable. However, it may be appropriate to administer life skills assessments (as applicable), and update Independent Living skills concerns, outcomes, and action steps more often if the youth or young adult's circumstances change and the CFT warrants it. The Life Skills Assessment results must be recorded in **TFACTS** in advance of Family Permanency Plan development, as applicable.

Youth and young adults must be afforded every opportunity to actively participate in identifying their Independent Living needs and associated services, and in the development of their Independent Living/Transition Plans. The recommendations made by youth and young adults must be incorporated to the extent that the CFT agrees such recommendations to be in the youth or young adult's best interest, comply with applicable policies and statutes, and do not adversely affect the safety or well being of the youth, young adult or others. It is appropriate for the CFT members to discuss the possible consequences of not accepting or following recommended action steps with youth and young adults.

Provision of Life Skills Instruction

1. Youth in custody must receive life skills instruction as a component of Independent Living Services, as outlined in DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, *Section A*. Such instruction must also be offered to young adults receiving Extension of

Foster Care as Adults if they request it, and encouraged if young adults appear to display problems generalizing life skills instruction already received. The scope of such instruction must be consistent with life skills assessment results and recommendations, and provided in accordance with the youth or young adult's developmental capabilities. Youth who exited state custody to permanency through adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship, or who are solely receiving scholarship assistance, and/or limited IL Wraparound services may be offered such services but are not required to participate.

2. Life skills instruction may include, but is not limited to, formal classroom instruction, informal in-home learning opportunities, community workshops, school-based programs, and standardized curricula as provided by trained staff and resource parents. All eligible youth, and participating young adults, must have the opportunity to receive the following areas of instruction:

   a) Acquisition of safe and affordable housing, and household management;

   b) Budgeting;

   c) Building credit;

   d) Consumer competence;

   e) Nutrition and food preparation;

   f) Stress management and coping;

   g) Time management;

   h) Interpersonal relationships and communication;

   i) Problem solving and decision making;

   j) Hygiene, self-care, smoking cessation, reproductive health and personal safety;

   k) Exercising legal rights and responsibilities, such as voting, legal representation, self-advocacy, youth's rights, and youth boards;

   l) Education on housing issues, to include locating safe and affordable housing options, tenant's rights and responsibilities, housing assistance;

   m) Instruction on education issues, to include assistance with developing an appropriate education plan, completing secondary education and accessing resources for post-secondary educational institutions or vocational programs; and

   n) Instruction on obtaining and maintaining employment to include the development of good work habits and skills, self-confidence and presentation skills, resume writing, completion of job applications, job seeking skills, and the use of local employment assistance and placement programs.

3. The <u>DCS Office of Independent Living</u> serves as a centralized resource to assist FSW's, provider agencies and caretakers by performing the following functions:

   a) Support FSW's, provider agencies and caretakers, by relaying pertinent skill and content information as it relates to the identification of independent living outcomes, life skills assessment and life skills instruction.

   b) Train FSW's, provider agency staff and caregivers on identifying and utilizing life skills assessment tools. Will assist with individualizing assessment tools as needed.

   c) Make life skills curricula available to FSW's, provider agency staff and caregivers. Will provide training and assistance on delivery of such instruction, and on individualizing instruction as needed.

   d) Identify community-based life skill instructional resources.

e) Coordinate the delivery of life skills workshops, with a focus on providing intensified instruction to youth at risk of emancipating to adulthood from state custody; and

4. Youth identified as having special needs will require an individualized approach to benefit from the life skills assessment and instructional tools. FSW's must consult with clinical professionals to ensure that the appropriate life skills assessments and instructional interventions are utilized. The FSW must outline outcomes derived from these assessment results, and the instructional recommendations that proceed from them, in the youth's Independent Living Plan.

5. Refer to the ***Alternative Life Skills Assessment Protocol*** (Page 5 of this manual), in advance of initial planning, to address circumstances that may affect administration of a life skills assessment.

6. FSWs and other applicable staff must document life skills instruction that youth or young adults receive from DCS staff, resource parents, and providers as case services in **TFACTS**. IL Specialists document life skills instruction when they directly provide the training. The FSW documents such instruction in all other instances, except when such documentation is required of provider agencies.

7. Contracted independent living providers must provide, track and document life skills instruction in accordance with the **Provider Policy Manual** and their established contracts.

Identifying Needed Independent Living Wraparound Services:

1. Independent Living Wraparound funding is established as a resource to support the provision of certain Independent Living Services for eligible youth and young adults. These resources are administered as a flexible funding resource to support Outcome and Action Steps as established in the Independent Living or Transition Plan. The resources should be utilized in conjunction with available community resources. The focus of resource utilization should be on intensifying their use as youth approach adulthood, and diminishing their use as young adults become self-sufficient. Refer to DCS Policy ***16.51, Independent Living and Transition Planning.***

2. The established menu of IL Wraparound Services and the eligibility guidelines associated with each are outlined in the IL Wraparound List (below). These guidelines may be adjusted based on the identification of overall needs over time, or diminished funds. Youth who exited state custody to permanence via adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship are eligible for a limited portion of these services, as outlined in the IL Wraparound List.

3. **TFACTS** provides automated functionality that assists with the establishment of eligibility and the specific IL services that are available to the youth based upon such eligibility (see the section of this manual entitled: ***Establishing the IL Eligibility Record in TFACTS***). The FSW or designated staff are responsible for identifying the needed Independent Living Services supported by IL Wraparound funding, based on the Outcome and Action Steps outlined in the youth or young adult's Family Permanency Plan (refer to DCS Policy ***16.51, Independent Living and Transition Planning***). The DCS TL is responsible for providing initial review and approval for services, as appropriate.

4. The Director of IL or designee is responsible for additional pre-approval to purchase the identified services.

5. The Regional Fiscal Director is responsible for managing the funds and assuring that all purchases are allowable under the established regulations.

6. Independent Living Program Specialists are available to provide training and technical assistance to Regional DCS staff to facilitate the following:

a) Identification of needed services based on Independent Living or Transition Plan information; and;

b) Accessing IL Wraparound Services as outlined in this section and DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, and identifying community resources.

7. A quarterly review of fund expenditures must be conducted with Regional, Central Office and Funding Unit staff to ensure appropriate usage and determine the need for adjustments.

How to Access Independent Living Wraparound Funding:

1. All IL Wraparound funds must be accessed through the Regional Funding Unit for youth in custody. IL Wraparound services for youth who exited custody via Adoption or Subsidized Permanent Guardianship are administered by the Office of Independent Living. The FSW or designated staff must use the approved fiscal process to request provision and payment of IL Wraparound services, goods or incentives. It is necessary for the FSW or designated staff to specify the incentive category and item(s) requested.

2. Eligible youth or young adults must have a "Completed" or "Approved" IL Eligibility record in **TFACTS** in order to make referrals for IL Wraparound services.

   a) Youth and young adults receiving Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) assistance are not eligible to receive Chafee funded services associated with post-secondary educational cost of attendance. This includes services such as transportation grants, childcare assistance and others as outlined below.

   b) Special provisions will be made available for eligible youth or young adults who achieved permanency through adoption or subsidized permanent guardianship still under an adoption or SPG contract, or other youth or young adults receiving limited service provisions (Scholarship Services). In such cases, it is not required that recipients have an IL Plan or Transition Plan established.

3. Using the Independent Living Plan or Transition Plan and the service eligibility guidelines for reference, the TL must provide the initial review and approval of the services. The Funding Unit will ensure the following occur:

   a) The IL Director or designee must provide additional pre-approval before fiscal authorization. No payments must be made unless prior approval has been obtained through the Director of IL or designee;

   b) Obtain the appropriate signatures on the ***Authorization to Vendor*** form. The Funding Unit is responsible for reviewing the applicable terms and obligations with the potential vendor, to include the possible tax status that may be associated with accepting the funds;

   c) Purchase the service(s);

   d) Record the date of purchase of the approved services; and

   e) Maintain a record of the applicable requests, approvals, and purchases.

Wraparound Funds Available for Independent Living Services:

The following charts outline the available Independent Living Wraparound Services, and specific eligibility criteria and required verifications that must be met related to each; the funding limits are per state fiscal year, unless otherwise specified. Note-Youth or Young Adults receiving ETVs assistance are not eligible to receive certain other Chafee funded services. Refer to the IL Wraparound List for detailed information regarding Independent Living Wraparound Services.

Special Contracts and Partnerships

Name	Eligibility	Verification Required with Referral
Youth Villages Transitional Living	• Young adults who are emancipated to adulthood from state custody at or after their eighteenth (18th) birthday, who were in foster care placement at their eighteenth (18th) birthday; • Young adults released from a foster care placement to permanency, who were in state custody starting at age seventeen (17) or older; or • Youth ages seventeen (17) or older in state custody and in a foster care placement for the purpose of assessment to determine eligibility, appropriateness for services and preparation for transition to adulthood. • Transitional Living Services are available up to age 21.	Referral Form and Review by the designated Office of Independent Living gatekeepers.
Resource Centers	• Youth and young adults ages16 up to 24. • Youth and young adults must be in state custody and in a foster care placement OR emancipated to adulthood while in state custody and in a foster care placement.	The Office of Independent Living will verify eligibility status of youth served.

Maintenance or Establishment of Traditional Placement Support:

1. Young adults eligible for Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care per DCS Policy ***16.52 Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults*** remain eligible for traditional DCS funded Placement Support, as follows:

a) The young adult may maintain a supported placement to the extent that they maintain eligibility for Foster Care Services per DCS Policy ***16.52 Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults***, Sections A and B, or until attainment of his or her 21st birthday.

b) The supported placement must be in the least restrictive environment possible, and the young adult must agree to the placement arrangement.

c) It is expected that provider agency contracts will be adjusted to the lowest level of payment possible. If clinical concerns warrant the possible continuation of a higher level of care and reimbursement, such justification must be submitted in writing for review by the Regional Administrator (RA) and Independent Living (IL) Director for approval. The written justification must be drafted and signed by a licensed clinician, and include a

reasonable plan for the reduction of the level of care or for the young adult's transition to adult residential services.

2. The standards outlined in DCS Policy 16.46, Section F apply when maintaining or considering placement for young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services, as applicable to the young adult's circumstances and based on the recommendations of the young adult and Child and Family Team. However, a Placement Exception Request is not required to place a young adult under such circumstances.

Placement Characteristics for Young Adults Receiving Extension of Foster Care Services are addressed as follows:

1. The guidelines for young adults remaining in a foster care placement setting as a result of transitioning directly from DCS custody to Extension of Foster Care Services are set forth in DCS Policy ***16.4, Resource Home Approval.***

   - Concerns regarding placement adjustments for youth still in state custody as they transition to adulthood or who are receiving Extension of Foster Care Services, as outlined above, are subject to review according to DCS Policy ***31.7, Building, Preparing and Maintaining Child and Family Teams***. The CFT is the mechanism by which such placement decisions are reviewed.

2. When circumstances exist that warrant placement change or if a traditional placement is identified as the best housing service option by the young adult and his or her Child and Family Team when eligible young adults return from a break in service:

   a) A Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Assessment (CANS, of the type; Extension of Foster Care) is completed and approved prior to a placement Stability CFTM or within 10 days of approval of the Re-Establishment of Extension of Foster Care and prior to the initial CFTM.

      - The assessment results and other information pertinent to making a decision about the best housing option are reviewed at the Placement Stability or initial CFTM.

   b) The young adult completes and signs DCS form ***CS-0559, Authorization for Release of Child-Specific Information***, authorizing the Department to engage in full disclosure of information with resource parents and/or provider agencies.

   c) Additionally, the young adult:

      - Completes and signs DCS form ***CS-0668, Authorization for Release of Information***, to authorize the following:

         i) A criminal history check, to include a local criminal records check from local law enforcement records within the immediate six (6) months preceding placement. All criminal charges listed in the local criminal history check for which there is no final disposition identified must be clarified by obtaining additional, official documentation from the local court with jurisdiction, within 24 hours or one business day of the placement.

         ii) A **DCS Records Check** that includes a check of CPS records in TFACTS and a **Social Service Management System (SSMS) check**. This must be completed by the appropriate designated DCS staff member on DCS form CS-0741, Database Search Results. This is to determine if there is a past Child Protective

Service (CPS) indication identifying the applicant as an indicated perpetrator of child abuse or neglect.

Note: DCS records checks after-hours and weekends only. The Central Intake phone number is 1-877-237-0004. The local field staff will be responsible for these checks during business hours.

iii) An Internet Records Clearance. This search must be conducted taking into account maiden and any other previous legal names. This documentation must include the following:

- A National Sexual Offender Registry Clearance
- A Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance

Note: Central Intake Performs the internet records clearance after-hours and weekends only. The local field staff will be responsible for this clearance during business hours.

iv) The young adult is scheduled for fingerprinting immediately after the placement is made. Fingerprinting must be completed within 15 days. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in removal from the placement.

v) Assessment results and other information gathered from the young adult and from members of the Child and Family Team are used to recommend medical and other evaluations, as applicable and appropriate to the young adults needs.

Note: Refer to DCS Policy ***16.46 Child /Youth Referral and Placement***, Section I, for additional guidance on Information Disclosure.

d) The following placement referral process is utilized:

- Upon determination that a young adult may need traditional placement services, the FSW must immediately contact the PSD for assistance with locating an appropriate placement. The PSD staff completes form ***CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement Referral and Checklist*** in TFACTS. In case of an emergency or if TFACTS is unavailable, form CS-0727 will be maintained as a “print, fill-in” form on the DCS Forms web page. The PSD staff will begin gathering any known information about the young adult and identify the range of potential placement options.
- The PSD placement specialist or appropriate designed staff person will participate in the CFTM (if possible) and be prepared to provide the team with available options if the team determines placement is necessary. If the PSD placement specialist or appropriate designated staff person is unable to participate in the CFTM, they must provide the FSW assigned to the young adult the information about potential placements.
- The PSD staff will document efforts toward placement in the young adult’s TFACTS record.
- Placement Matching-The PSD staff will match a young adult’s placement using the following criterion: Potential risk to children or to the community.
- When making a referral for placement, the following items will be submitted to the provider by PSD staff as available and applicable:

Referral: (All referral documents are available in TFACTS)

- Cover Letter (Not Available in TFACTS, but will be maintained in case of emergencies);
- Critical medical information. Examples: Known medical concerns, the need for medical treatment, current prescription medication, etc.;
- Any "zero tolerance" issues that may exist;
- Any known criminal charges or convictions;
- Psychological assessment, if appropriate;
- Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS):
- Permanency Plan Packet including revisions, if available, at the time the placement is needed includes Permanency Plan/Transition Plan), and DCS form ***CS-0158, Notice of Equal Access to Programs, Appeal Rights***;
- Rights and Responsibilities Agreement;
- ***CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement*** (if applicable); and

In addition to the placement referral information, the following information is forwarded to the private provider agency as soon as possible:

Admission:

- Additional Court Order(s) if available and applicable;
- School records;
- Immunization records;
- Birth Certificate;
- Social Security Card.

Insurance Information:

- Managed Care Organization(MCO) Behavioral Health organization (BHO); or
- Copy of TennCare application

Establishment and Administration of the Independent Living Allowance

Establishing the Independent Living Allowance (ILA) Contract and Payment Arrangement:

1. Following completion of a training course coordinated by an Independent Living Program Specialist, the young adult must complete and provide a ***Substitute W-9 form*** and utilize form ***CS-0812, Personal Household Budget,*** to develop a budget. The Independent Living Program Specialist (ILPS) following the training must make these forms available to the young adult. The training will be documented as a Case Service in TFACTS and in Care Coordination Notes.

   NOTE: The address for the youth should reflect their permanent living address because this is where all of the financial information will be mailed. It is incumbent upon the youth to notify program staff of any change in address. Appropriate routing and changes in address can take extended periods and require significant notice to avoid service interruption.

2. All young adults must also complete form ***FA-0825, Automated Clearinghouse Credits (ACH).*** This form must be made available to the young adult by the Independent Living Program Specialist following the training, and must be submitted with a VOIDED check or a VOIDED savings deposit slip. The ACH provides direct deposit information and will allow

DCS to directly deposit the ILA into the youth's bank account. The ACH requires an American Bankers Association (ABA) number that is the same as the routing number (the first set of numbers found on the bottom of personal checks).

Note: If the youth banks with a Credit Union, the Credit Union will need to fill out the Aba number. Anticipated changes in banking partners will be forwarded to program staff as soon as practical to avoid service interruption.

3. Young adults eligible to receive the ILA must review and sign form ***CS-0762, Independent Living Allowance Agreement,*** prior to establishment of the service. Independent Living Program Specialists must ensure that the eligible young adults review and sign the applicable IL Allowance Agreement and forward the form for processing.

   The young adult is advised to establish two bank accounts: a checking or savings account that will accept the ILA as a direct deposit, a Tax Savings Account"

4. ***The Independent Living Allowance payment that youth receive from DCS is taxable income***. It is recommended that young adults establish a method to deposit 10% of every ILA payment into the "Tax Savings Account".

5. **Young adults scheduled to receive the ILA must be instructed not to use the funds in the tax savings account.** The establishment of this savings account is designed to ensure that the young adults have funds available to make quarterly Estimated Tax Payments on the taxable ILA income, utilizing **IRS Form 1040-ES and associated payment vouchers**. It is the responsibility of the young adult to make these payments. The dates that young adults are expected to submit the vouchers and payments, and other application information, is available via the applicable year's payment voucher and from the United States Internal Revenue Services.

6. The direct deposit will usually begin approximately thirty (30) days after the ***Substitute W-9 form***; ACH form and collateral information are submitted.

7. All eligible young adults receiving the ILA must complete ***IRS form 1040, Individual Tax Return*** annually. This is the responsibility of the young adult.

Updating the Independent Living Allowance (ILA) Contract and Payment Arrangement:

1. Independent Living Program Specialists must ensure that eligible young adults review and sign an updated and applicable IL Allowance Agreement whenever a change is warranted. Such a change may be due to an updated rate or version of the agreement.

2. Young adults must complete and submit a Substitute W-9 when he/she moves to a residence different from that initially identified when the ILA contract was established.

3. Young adults must complete and submit form ***FA-0825, Automated Clearinghouse Credits (ACH)***, and submit a voided check or savings deposit slip, whenever he/she closes the bank account that receives the ILA direct deposit, and opens another account that will receive the ILA direct deposit.

4. The young adult must immediately supply notification under the following circumstances:

   a) He/she closes the bank account that receives the ILA direct deposit;

   b) He/she experiences overdraft charges on the bank account that receives the ILA direct deposit; or

   c) The bank closes the account that receives the ILA direct deposit for any reason.

5. The young adult must contact the Independent Living Program Specialist monitoring his/her ILA eligibility to provide all of the above information and documents, as applicable.

Establishment and Delivery of the DCS Administered Scholarships

Identifying Post-Secondary Educational Options**:**

1. It is recommended that youth and young adults receive assistance from supportive adults in preparation for submitting applications for ETV's and/or the State Funded Scholarship. Supportive adults include, but are not limited to, resource parents, birth parents, relatives, mentors, teachers, and DCS staff. FSW's must provide this assistance for youth and young adults in state custody or receiving Extension of Foster Care Services status. Assistance must be rendered to help youth and young adults:

   a) Receive recommendations regarding the youth's post-secondary educational options from high school guidance counselors, when applicable, to ensure the appropriateness and feasibility of program choices;

   b) Obtain information about specific post-secondary educational institutions that the youth may be interested in, and review such information with the youth to facilitate an informed decision;

   c) Visit the post-secondary programs in advance of enrollment;

   d) Apply for federal and state financial aid awards by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually. Also, to identify and apply for privately endowed grants and scholarship; and to

   e) Determine the youth's eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services and the related post-secondary assistance.

2. Regional Independent Living (IL) Program Specialists and Education Specialists are available to provide technical assistance to FSWs and other supportive adults, and to support the completion of the tasks as outlined.

DCS Administered Scholarship Service Provisions:

1. The DCS Office of Independent Living maintains oversight of the DCS administered scholarships. The following services are available to eligible young adults who are pursuing their post-secondary education:
2. ETV assistance is available to assist young adults with the cost of attendance as specified by the post-secondary education programs they attend and in accordance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 and DCS Policy **16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services**. State Funded Scholarship awards are based on the needs of the student and in accordance with DCS Policy **16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services.**
3. All ETV and State Funded Scholarship awards are subject to variance based on the number of young adults who are eligible and apply, and the amount of assistance available.
4. Other costs associated with educational program enrollment, or for assessed needs related to attendance at such programs, may be accessible for eligible youth through regional IL Wraparound Funds as outlined in DCS Policy **16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services,** as applicable.
5. ETV and/or State Funded Scholarship funds may be used to assist young adults with payment for room and board. **Room** and **Board** is defined as:
   a) **Room**: Housing resources (such as campus housing) that can be funded by the financial aid structure established for educational institutions.
   b) **Board**: Resources that support basic needs (other than housing, such as a meal plan) that can be funded by the financial aid structure established for educational institutions.

Application Procedures for ETVs and/or State Funded Scholarships:

1. Applications for ETVs and State Funded Scholarships are accepted at the beginning of each academic year, and for subsequent semesters or terms of enrollment. Applications for technical programs, others that may have variable enrollment periods, or for students starting an academic program at the second semester or during a summer semester must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
2. All youth or young adults who wish to apply for these funds must meet eligibility criteria as outlined in DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***, and must:
   a) Complete an application, form ***CS-0599, Application for Post-Secondary Funding***; and
   b) Complete and sign at least one (1) copy of form ***CS-0668, Authorization for Release of Information***, which will enable the FSW, IL Program Specialist, and/or the Scholarship Coordinator to obtain financial information from the school's financial aid office as well as schedules, attendance records and grades. This will enable the amount of the grant award to be determined and provide some oversight and support to the youth or young adult during transition and adjustment to the post-secondary educational experience. Additional requests for information may require the submission of additional release forms.
3. In addition to the forms listed above, the following must be included with initial applications:
   a) Acceptance letter from the post-secondary educational or vocational training program;
   b) Copy of a High School Diploma or GED;
   c) Copy of ACT or SAT scores, if applying to a program that requires them; and
   d) Copy of the FAFSA Student Aid Report applicable to the financial aid year.

4. Returning students must include the following with each application:
   a) Copy of the FAFSA Student Aid Report applicable to the financial aid year or other verification of financial aid application; and
   b) Grade or progress report for the previous semester or term.
5. Any application that does not have completed information regarding financial resources and need must be held until the additional information is obtained. No award letter can be sent to the educational program until this information is received.
6. Youth or young adults who achieved permanence through Subsidized Permanent Guardianship must submit the applicable verification in addition to the items requested in the ETVs and State Funded Scholarship File Index.
7. Young adults who achieved permanence through Adoption must also submit a copy of the adoption decree with the application packet, in addition to the items requested in the ETVs and State Funded Scholarship File Index.
8. It is recommended that applications for ETVs and State Funded Scholarships, and all supporting documents, be submitted to the Scholarship Coordinator no later than July 15th of the calendar year the youth plans to attend school.
9. Subsequent applications should be submitted as follows:
   a) Application deadline for spring semester is December 15.
   b) Application deadline for summer school is May 15.
   c) At least forty-five (45) calendar days before the applicable term begins for vocational or technical programs that have variable start dates.
   d) In special circumstances, applications may be accepted at a later date at the discretion of the Director of Independent Living. The circumstances related to late application must be explained in the designated area of the application.

   Administration of funding to the educational programs in a timely manner, or at all, cannot be assured if applications are submitted late.

10. Independent Living Program Specialists may assist eligible DCS custodial youth, eligible youth and young adults who exited custody to Adoption or Subsidized Permanent Guardianship and young adults receiving DCS Extension of Foster Care Services, with the application process. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application is completed in its entirety, includes all applicable signatures and additional items, and is submitted by the applicable deadline.

ETVs and State Funded Scholarship Award Procedures:

Once the DCS Scholarship Coordinator receives the application and all necessary verifications outlined in DCS Policy ***16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services***:

1. A letter that contains the award amounts and billing instructions must be sent to the post-secondary institution, and a copy sent to the student and if applicable, the FSW.
2. The DCS Scholarship Coordinator will work with the post secondary program to establish the final grant award.
3. The DCS Office of Independent Living must verify the eligibility of the youth or young adult for the service and establish the service record in TFACTS.

4. Improper withdrawal from educational programs by youth and young adults that results in costs incurred with no concurrent educational progress achieved may result in rescinding of the awarded scholarship.
5. The Central Office Finance Division, in conjunction with the IL Director/designee and the Scholarship Coordinator, will ensure that appropriate funding approvals are made in the system and that invoices are properly processed.

Monitoring ETVs and State Funded Scholarships:

1. The DCS Scholarship Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the ETVs and State Funded Scholarship applications, and monitoring the initial and on-going eligibility of scholarship applicants. The DCS Scholarship Coordinator must also coordinate with Central Office Finance Staff to ensure appropriate entry and processing of payments in the designated system.
2. The DCS Scholarship Coordinator must monitor the initial and on-going eligibility of scholarship applicants, with assistance from Independent Living Program Specialists and assigned FSWs (when applicable).
3. The DCS Scholarship Coordinator must maintain a file (see File Index, below) for each ETVs and/or State Funded Scholarship applicant that contains, at a minimum, the items required for application and on-going verification of eligibility as outlined in this manual.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) and State Funded Scholarships (SFS) File Index

Name:

Semester/Term:

Reviewed By (As Applicable):

Reviewed Date (As Applicable):

File Index

DCS Involvement Confirmation

☐ Verification of Identity and Citizenship/Immigration Status (as applicable)

☐ Subsidized Permanent Guardianship verification (if applicable)

Independent Living Allowance

☐ Independent Living Allowance Agreement (if applicable)

☐ Independent Living Allowance Waivers (if applicable)

Grades and Class Schedule

☐ Grades /Transcripts (if applicable)

Financial

☐ Billing from School

☐ DCS Invoice

DCS Scholarship

☐ DCS Financial Aid Award Letter

Application and Verification

☐ Post-Secondary Application

☐ Other Waivers, Releases and Verifications

☐ Post-Secondary Acceptance Letter

☐ Financial Aid Award Issued by school

☐ School Cost Information

☐ Secondary Diploma, GED, etc. as applicable

☐ Adoption Finalization Documents (if applicable)

☐ FAFSA Student Aid Report or Other Verification of Financial Aid (as applicable)

All items are also required for State Funded Scholarship applicants/recipients, as applicable.

Refer to DCS Policy: **16.53, Eligibility for Independent Living Services** for more information.

Provision of Case Management Services to Young Adults Receiving Foster Care Services:

1. Young adults receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care will receive case management services, and such services will be provided by the assigned Family Service Worker.
2. Independent Living Program Specialists will serve the function of supportive advisors, relaying pertinent skill and content information. It is appropriate for the Independent Living Program Specialists to serve in a centralized monitoring function for young adults receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care who are attending post-secondary educational programs, and for such young adults receiving the ILA.
3. The assigned FSW will assist young adults in assessing strengths and needs, identifying resources, navigating educational systems, accessing health care, budgeting and developing healthy relationships.
4. The assigned FSW will assist young adults in developing the capacity to financially self-support. The FSW will also assist the young adults in accessing financial support via the appropriate DCS and community resources when needed. Additionally, it is appropriate to assist young adults in accessing IL Wraparound funding through the Regional Funding Units to support Outcomes and Action Steps established in the young adult's Transition Plan.
5. Young adults receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services must have face-to-face contact monthly. Contact is also required as follows:
   - The FSW will make at least one home visit to the young adult's residence upon receipt of the case. The assigned FSW will also make at least one home visit to the young adult's residence whenever the young adult establishes a different residence. Contact may need to increase if the young adult exhibits difficulty following the action steps outlined in the Transition Plan. Additionally, it may be necessary for contact to increase when a young adult enters a new job, job-training program, college etc., until the young adult is established. Provider agencies continuing to provide services to such young adults must render them on the basis of their contracts, as applicable.
6. Verification of the young adult's eligibility status must be obtained on-going. This verification will be completed, signed, and obtained by/from the educational programs or employer on their letterhead, program sanctioned document format or pay stub; monthly when the young adult is enrolled in a GED program, employed or engaged in activities to remove barriers to employment, and per applicable grade period or semester when the young adult is in high school, college or other post-secondary program. Verification must be obtained annually from an applicable clinician when eligibility is established on the basis of disability. It is the responsibility of the primary FSW to procure verifications and to monitor progress.
7. Young adults will have the opportunity to attend the scheduled court or Specialized Foster Care Review Board review of their case, as applicable. The FSW will ensure that the young adults receive written notification of the review date and location within 14 days of the review.
8. Young adults should also have an adult resource that can serve as support in emergency and non-emergency situations. The FSW will monitor such mentoring relationships, and provide advisement to young adults should concerns arise.
9. All interactions with young adults, to include the required face-to-face contacts, must be documented as **TFACTS case recordings**.
10. DCS will continue to assist the young adult receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care by coordinating access to health care and dental services through public health insurance, employment, or college health insurance options as available. Young adults should be counseled to continue to use the custodial guidelines for dental screens and

regular medical check-ups to monitor their health and well-being. It is the responsibility of DCS to assist a young adult with any necessary healthcare advocacy.

11. The assigned FSW is responsible for development and revision of the young adult's Transition Plan. Services provided to young adults must support the Outcomes and Action Steps outlined in their Transition Plan (refer to DCS Policy **16.51, Independent Living and Transition Planning** and the **Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide**).
12. The assigned FSW must assist young adults with family concerns and facilitate contact with siblings still in state custody (as applicable and appropriate).
13. The Family Service Worker is responsible for filing necessary forms and collateral documents in the young adult's case file (Refer to the **Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide**).
14. DCS may provide limited services to non-custodial youth or young adults not receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care Services. This includes Independent Living Wraparound Services and/or the DCS Administered Scholarships to eligible youth who exited custody to Adoption or Subsidized Permanent Guardianship, or eligible young adults 21 years of age or older. Youth and young adults who receive such limited service provision will not require the case management schedule outlined above. Oversight will be rendered by IL Office staff on the basis of the specific service provisions established. **The cases of youth who attain 21 years of age, who were receiving Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care at that point, are transferred to the applicable staff with the Office of IL; all procedures to properly terminate Extension or Re-Establishment of Foster Care are followed.** The Office of Independent Living maintains a case file following the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) and State Funded Scholarship (SFS) File Index (see page 23 of this manual).

Termination or Denial of Independent Living Services and the Program Review Request Process

1. The youth or young adult must be notified in writing that DCS plans on denying, changing or terminating an Independent Living Service by using form ***CS-0760, Notice of Denial, Termination or Change in Independent Living Services.***
   a) The specific reasons are clearly outlined in this correspondence.
   b) The notification is made via certified letter with a response requested within ten (10) calendar days of the denial, change, or termination.
   c) Form ***CS-0761, Independent Living Program Review Request*****,** is included with this correspondence.
   d) This notification is also documented in a case recording.
2. The youth or young adult must have the opportunity to participate in a CFTM, when the IL Service to be changed or terminated is an on-going service (primarily scholarships, ILA, and transportation services). This CFTM is convened within ten (10) calendar days of the change/termination notification. The FSW works with the young adult to develop a plan that identifies supports and services available in the young adult's community that may be accessed following change or termination of the IL Service.
3. Youth or young Adults have the right to appeal decisions made by DCS related to the denial, change, or termination of an Independent Living Service. The following procedure is followed:
   a) The youth or young adult develops a written statement utilizing form ***CS-0761, Independent Living Program Review Request,*** which outlines the specific reasons they are not in agreement with the decisions made by DCS related to the provision of service.

The young adult's request is submitted to the Family Service Worker within ten (10) calendar days of receiving notice of the decision.

b) The Family Service Worker completes and signs the applicable portion of the form and submits it to the Regional Administrator and the Director of Independent Living (the form can be uploaded to the Program Review record in TFACTS).

c) Staff with the Office of Independent Living establishes the Program Review record in **TFACTS**.

d) The form, ***CS-0761, Independent Living Program Review Request,*** is reviewed jointly by the applicable Regional Administrator and the Director of Independent Living. This decision is binding, with the final authority held by the Director of IL.

e) The decision is recorded in TFACTS, and a copy of the completed form with the decision and all signatures is returned to the youth or young adult.

Forms:

CS-0668, Authorization for Release of Information

CS-0599, Application for Post Secondary Funding

CS-0762, Independent Living Allowance Agreement

CS-0812, Personal Household Budget

CS-0842, Substitute W-9

FA-0825, Automated Clearinghouse Credits (ACH)

CS-0760, Notice of Denial, Termination, or Change in Independent Living Services

CS-0761, Independent Living Program Review Request

CS-0968, Voluntary Placement Agreement

CS-0559, Authorization for Release of Child-Specific Information

CS-0727, Initial Intake, Placement Referral and Checklist

CS-0158, Notice of Equal Access to Programs, Appeal Rights