

RESOURCES FOR YOUTH TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER CARE TO ADULTHOOD

In addition to programs specifically for foster youth, the resources below are available to youth transitioning to adulthood. Establishing links in the community for youth exiting foster care assists them in moving toward self-sufficiency. Contact the Transition Planning Specialist (TPS) in your area for more information about these resources and for ideas regarding a specific youth.

Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA):

The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment is an evaluation of youth life skills. The assessment is completed online and scored automatically. Also available are assessments for: Parenting of Infants, Parenting of Young Children, Pregnancy Issues, and Values. It is free and available at www.caseylifeskills.org. This site also provides resources to help prepare youths for living on their own. Contact your TPS for information regarding organization and youth ID's.

Area Education Agency: Youth who receive Special Education services through school have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP addresses transition issues related to learning, living and working. Consult with the local AEA for more information.

Central Point of Coordination (CPC): Located in each county. The county funds services for adults with mental retardation and mental health needs when eligibility requirements of the county plan are met. The CPC Administrator should be notified around the time the youth reaches age 16 in order to facilitate planning for adult needs. CPC contact information, along with county plans can be accessed through the DHS web site at www.dhs.state.ia.us/mhdd/county_system/cpc_admin.html.

Community Colleges: Provide continuing education, occupational training, high school diplomas, and GED testing. Guidance in educational and vocational opportunities is also provided. An office of career planning and job placement is available. Tutoring and other assistance can be provided to students who have received special education services or meet other requirements. Applications are available at the Admissions office or online.

Community Mental Health Centers: Provide support for persons with mental health or psychological problems. Usually services are provided on a sliding fee scale according to income or with a TXIX medical card.

Conservator: Appointed by the District Court to handle the finances of a person who is not capable of managing his/her own financial affairs.

Department of Transportation: Administers both the written and driving tests for driver's license. A photo identification card is available for those who aren't able to drive. **Motor Vehicle Information Center:** Located in Des Moines; handles questions on driver's license, vehicle registration, handicap parking permits, and truck driving information. 1-800-532-1121.

Domestic Violence Services: Provide telephone counseling and other support, which may include a shelter for women and their children if they have been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, 1-800-942-0333.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This is the application for the federal PELL grant. College financial aid offices also use this information to determine eligibility for other forms of aid. Most foster youth that are court ordered until age 18 qualify for ward of the court status. Once this box is checked, do not include any information about parents.

Guardian: Appointed by the District Court to make decisions regarding personal matters for someone who is not capable of making life decisions for themselves. It isn't necessary that the ward live with the guardian.

Iowa College Access Network

Find downloadable documents to help plan, apply pay for and succeed in college (i.e. college planning guide for juniors and seniors, list of current tuitions costs at Iowa colleges, and a financial aid guide). www.icansucceed.org

Iowa Workforce Development Centers: Contain listings of statewide job openings, unemployment, employment services, testing available, no charge to employer or people seeking employment, resume services are available. These are located throughout the state, 1-800-562-4692. Some have programs that specialize in working with youth that have mild disabilities.

Iowa College Student Aid Commission: a state agency that provides information and assistance in preparing for college. Applications for state scholarships and grants are found on the website at: www.iowacollegeaid.org

Iowa Legal Aid: Provides free civil legal services related to family law, child support, consumer law, landlord/tenant issues, and custody. This is a statewide service, 1-800-332-0419.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS): A State agency that assists youth who have special needs to receive career assessment and training in order to gain employment. If a youth has been in Special Education, has a mental or physical disability, or has special health considerations, a referral should be made during the junior year of high school.

Job Corps: This is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training for at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 24. They offer a variety of training programs at over 110 centers. Youth must be from a home that is considered low income and be able to benefit from and complete the training. A single parent program is available. Denison, Iowa is the closest center at 712 263-4192 or 1-800-733-5627.

Low Rent Housing/HUD: The Family Unity Program can provide former foster youth ages 18 to 21 with Section 8 rental assistance. It's not necessary for them to be parenting. Contact your local Public Housing Authority for more information.

Payee: Appointed by the Social Security Administration or other entity to handle benefits generated by that agency when a person is not able to handle their own benefits. This does not extend to wages that are earned.

Social Security Administration: Youth with disabilities may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). At age 18, Social Security will re-determine whether a youth continues to qualify for benefits as an adult. Minor children qualify for a child benefit on the work record of a parent that receives Social Security benefits or is deceased. Unless the child is determined to be disabled, this benefit will stop when the child turns 18 or, if still attending high school at age 19. When a youth leaves foster care, it is necessary to notify Social Security of address changes and file for a change of payee. Contact your area Social Security office. The statewide number is 1-800-772-1813.

Student Financial Aid Offices: (usually located at a college or university) Provide advice, references, and forms for student loans, grants, or work-study arrangements.

TRIO Programs: Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Educational Opportunity Centers are federally funded programs designed to encourage students to seek higher education. Services may include career exploration, choosing a college, financial aid, and support to increase success in college. Contact your local college to obtain the name of the contact person for the TRIO program in your area.

Title XIX-Medicaid: Youth aging out of foster care will likely remain eligible for medical coverage under one of several Medicaid programs until age 21. Notify the DHS IV-E worker of the youth's forwarding address when the foster care case closes so that an automatic re-determination of eligibility can be completed.

Transitional Living Programs: These programs are funded by federal government grants to provide housing and services to homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 21. They are structured to help homeless youth achieve self-sufficiency. These are the current programs in Iowa are: Foundation 2 in Cedar Rapids, UAY in Iowa City, House of Mercy in Des Moines and Youth & Shelter Services in Ames.

Welfare to Work: Provides career assessment, employment opportunities that include work experience and on-the-job training, and a variety of support services including emergency housing, child care, transportation, and clothing assistance. Youth ages 18 to 24 that have aged out of foster care are eligible and may be referred to this program prior to turning 18.

Workforce Investment Act: Federal legislation designates foster care placement as an eligibility factor. Provides career guidance and counseling, basic and occupational skills training, work experience, mentoring, and leadership development activities to youth ages 14 through 21.