

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-18-5

TO: CFSA Staff and Contracted Providers
FROM: Heather D. Stowe, Ph.D., Principal Deputy Director
DATE: March 22, 2018
RE: Program and Financial Requirements for Youth in Contracted Independent Living Programs

Independent Living Programs (“ILPs”) are designed to assist older youth who are preparing to transition out of foster care. Program and resident requirements for ILPs are delineated in Title 29 of District of Columbia Code of Municipal Regulations, Chapter 63 (“29 DCMR Ch. 63”).

Over and above the ILP requirements of 29 DCMR Ch. 63, this Administrative Issuance outlines:

- the minimum eligibility requirements that youth must meet in order to qualify to become ILP residents;
- the Agency approval process for ILP applications; and,
- management of monthly stipends.

Questions should be directed to the Administrator of the Office of Youth Empowerment (“OYE”).

A. Minimum Eligibility Requirements for Youth Residence in a Contracted ILP

Youth must:

- 1) Be at least 20 years of age.
- 2) Have graduated from high school, received a GED or obtained vocational certification.
- 3) Be attending college or a vocational program as a full-time student, or be employed at least 20 hours weekly in a job he or she has held for at least three months. This may include a paid internship or fellowship, gap year program or AmeriCorps service.
- 4) Have no pending or unresolved criminal proceedings at the time of application to the ILP.
- 5) Enter into a roommate living situation.
- 6) Have a checking account with a minimum balance of \$100 and an active Making Money Grow matched savings account reflecting consistent deposits over a 3-month period.

CFSA may terminate the youth’s participation in the ILP program and require the youth to “step down” to another placement situation if the youth:

- Fails to meet program requirements outlined in the [*Independent Living Standards of Excellence*](#);
- Fails to make sufficient progress toward meeting the goals of his or her Youth Transition Plan; or,
- Violates provider rules.



B. Application and Approval Process for Youth Participation in a Contracted ILP

- 1) The youth will complete the [Application for Independent Living Program Participation](#) form providing reasons that he or she believes an ILP would be an appropriate placement.
- 2) The youth will read and agree to the standards by signing the [Independent Living Standards of Excellence](#) form. The social worker and an Independent Living team member will also sign the form.
- 3) The youth's social worker, in consultation with the team, including the placement provider, will complete a letter of recommendation that explains why the youth is a good candidate for an ILP program which will include the reasons if a team member(s) disagrees. The letter of recommendation should be approved by the supervisory social worker and then sent to the OYE Administrator for approval.
- 4) The OYE Administrator collaborates with the Deputy Director for Program Operations in determining whether to send the application to the Agency Director for final approval.
- 5) The Agency Director makes a determination on the application within 3 days of receipt. If the Director denies the request, a written justification will be provided to the youth.
- 6) The application may be submitted up to 45 days prior to the youth's 20th birthday.

C. Monthly Stipends for Youth in Contracted ILPs

- 1) CFSA will review the [Monthly Stipend Schedule](#) for cost of living adjustments and publish it at the beginning of each District government fiscal year. The published amount shall not be less than \$500 per month to cover the costs of food, clothing, transportation, toiletries, and incidentals.
- 2) Residents will receive a monthly allowance of at least \$20 per week.
- 3) For youth in a residence for which there are monthly rent and/or utility charges, CFSA will issue an additional room and board monthly stipend of not less than \$700 to cover the costs of rent and utilities specifically.
- 4) Parenting residents with a non-ward child will receive a supplemental stipend of \$125 per month for each child.
- 5) The ILP provider, in consultation with the social worker, may withhold any amount over the stated minimums of items C.1 through C.4 if the youth exhibits behaviors that risk termination from the program. Withheld funds must be deposited into either the youth's Making Money Grow account or an interest-bearing account in the youth's name, and transferred to the youth's control upon exit from foster care, or used to directly purchase allowable items per the Stipend Schedule.

D. Tracking of Expenditures of Monthly Stipends

The social worker, ILP provider, and the youth shall meet on a pre-determined schedule to discuss:

- 1) Distribution and receipt of the stipend and allowance;
- 2) The youth's ability to develop a personal budget and track expenses; and
- 3) The youth's ability to spend and save in accordance with the budget.

The ILP provider and social worker may adjust the stipend disbursement schedule and terms depending on the youth's ability to manage funds and track expenses.

