

Young adults often have a tough time navigating the network of programs and services available in our community — not to mention coping with the regular responsibilities of becoming an adult. The Independent Living Program can help.



The County of Ventura Human Services Agency provides public services that promote self-sufficiency, safety, health and well-being. Our programs and services help ensure the protection of children, the elderly, and dependent adults. We also provide a safety net for individuals and families who need assistance with basic necessities, such as food, housing and health care. Additionally, we help people secure employment through education, training, job search skills, and job placement.

If you are interested in learning more about how to help transitional-age foster youth, call (805) 654-3447 or visit www.vchsa.org/ilp



COUNTY OF VENTURA

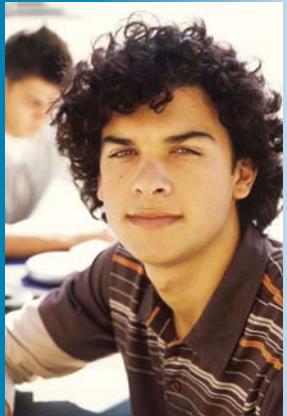
24-Hour Toll-Free Hotline (800) 754-7600

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www.vchsa.org

Independent Living Program

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Connecting young adults to support services



COUNTY OF VENTURA

Independent Living Program



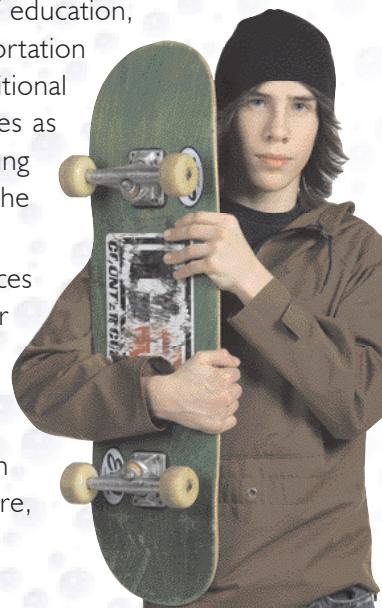
Overview

The Human Services Agency's Children & Family Services staff provides Independent Living services to foster youth between the ages of 16 and 21; some services are also available to young adults through age 24. The goal of the Independent Living Program is to help foster youth reach their personal and professional goals during their transition to adult life.

How does the Independent Living Program operate?

Foster youth begin developing a Transitional Independent Living Plan early on in their participation in the Independent Living Program. Youth work closely with their case manager to develop a plan that outlines goals in the areas of education, employment, housing, transportation and health. The Transitional Independent Living Plan serves as the foundation for each young person's experience in the Independent Living Program.

Children & Family Services recognizes that assisting foster youth in implementing their Transitional Independent Living Plans is critically important to their success in early adulthood. Therefore,



Children & Family Services maintains responsibility for coordinating the intensive services often necessary to help foster youth make progress toward their goals.

Children & Family Services:

- Coordinates and facilitates regular conferences with each foster youth in the program
- Ensures accurate and timely documentation of progress toward goals
- Oversees referrals to other public and private services that may help the young person succeed
- Aligns services with each young person's goals
- Ensures services are unique and unduplicated
- Ensures as much of the program funding as possible goes directly to youth

What services does the Independent Living Program offer?

The Independent Living Program offers a range of services designed to support foster youth who are beginning their transition to adult life. The specific set of services offered to each young person depends on the goals and milestones that he or she has set, and the availability of funding.

Examples of services include:

- Education – monetary assistance for eligible youth; help with completing college financial aid forms; referrals to tutoring programs

- Employment – career exploration classes; job readiness training; linkages to Job & Career Centers
- Health – linkages to Medi-Cal; referrals to health care resources
- Housing – monetary assistance for eligible youth; assistance with housing searches; assistance in identifying "host homes" that house young adults after they leave foster care
- Transportation – monetary assistance for eligible youth; referrals to community-based organizations
- Life Skills – weekly life skills classes; social events celebrating young people's successes
- Other Needs – linkages to the Children's Services Auxiliary; referrals to community-based organizations

While Children & Family Services provides many of these services directly to youth, staff recognizes the value in contracting with providers to offer specialized classes, field trips, and activities. Additionally, Children & Family Services places great emphasis on linking youth to other programs administered by the Human Services Agency, including Food Stamps and Workforce Investment Act activities, and connecting them with local community-based organizations that offer a range of vital programs.

How can community members partner to assist transitional-age foster youth?

Youth preparing to leave the foster care system often need extensive help as they plan to transition to independent living. Many benefit from continued assistance even after they are living on their own. Children & Family Services ensures that program funding is utilized efficiently and effectively, but community support can help meet additional needs. For more information on how you can make a difference, call (805) 654-3447.

