

**County of Santa Clara**  
**Social Services Agency**  
Department of Family and Children's Services



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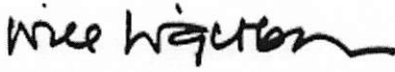
CSFC SSA02 120804

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Family and Children's  
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DATE: December 8, 2004

TO: Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr., Chairperson  
Supervisor Don Gage, Vice-Chairperson  
Children, Seniors & Families Committee

FROM:   
Will Lightbourne  
Agency Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Independent Living Program Annual Report and Contracts

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Accept Independent Living Program Annual Report and and report on Contracts.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

## **CONTRACT HISTORY**

Please see "Reasons for Recommendation."

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Children, Seniors and Families Committee requested this Independent Living Program Annual Report and report on Contracts.

## **OVERVIEW**

The Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) Independent Living Skills Program (ILP) serves youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who are either preparing to exit from foster care or who have recently emancipated. Youth referred by the Juvenile Probation Department and from other counties and states are also served.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2004, the Independent Living Program served 554 youth:

- 473 completed ILP services
- 41 completed high school/GED or adult education
- 320 continued enrollment in high school/GED or adult education
- 111 enrolled in college
- 201 obtained employment (includes full & part time, military, Job Corps and California Conservation Corps)
- 547 were unmarried, 7 were married
- 376 were ages 16–21 years
- 178 were ages 16–21 years referred by the Probation Department
- 213 were ages 18–20 years

## **SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY ILP SERVICES**

ILP services focus on individualized service objectives to improve each young person's ability and confidence to make decisions and achieve goals in four primary areas: housing, employment, education, and life skills training. ILP services also include supportive services,

such as group and/or individual counseling, workshops, referrals to community resources, employment development, vocational training, job placement/retention, and colleges financial aid. Services are monitored, coordinated and supported as necessary by DFCS ILP staff include:

- Collaboration with 5 contract agencies that provide live skills training and link youth to housing, educational and employment development opportunities in the community
- ILP services for youth placed out-of County/State
- Transitional Housing Placement Programs (THPP) for current foster youth
- Emancipation Conferences
- Extended Medi-Cal for Former Foster Care Children (FFCC)
- Assistance with Immigration Issues
- Support of the Santa Clara County Chapter of the California Youth Connection
- The Unclassified Office Specialist II Program
- Certificates and vouchers for drivers' education, training and DMV fees

Services also hinge on key community partners providing housing, education/training, employment and live skills opportunities for our current and former foster youth.

#### ILP Contract Agencies

Five community-based youth service organizations provide foster youth referred from DFCS and Juvenile Probation with the necessary life skills training, workshops and assistance and resources necessary to successfully make a successful transition to self-sufficiency. The ILP contractors provide their services in four geographical areas (North, South, East, West County) and one category of out-of-home placement (youth in group homes).

The contract agencies' budget information is as follows:

Agency	FY 04 Budget*	FY 04 Budget	FY 05 Budget	Year-to-Date Expenditures
Bill Wilson Center	\$185,067	\$185,067	\$182,941	\$37,041 as of 8/04
Community Solutions	\$181,032	\$181,032	\$182,941	\$52,485 as of 9/04

Family and Children's Services	\$176,793	\$176,307	\$182,941	\$59,566 as of 10/04
Social Advocates for Youth	\$165,250	\$165,250	\$182,941	\$60,644 as of 10/04
Unity Care Group	\$185,696	\$183,614	\$182,941	\$46,703 as of 9/04
Totals	\$893,838	\$891,270	\$914,705	\$256,439

Note: The contract amount for each agency for the 19-month period, December 2002 – June 2004 was \$275,613

Youth receive incentives distributed by contract agencies (e.g., cash, gift certificate, food or items) to participate in monthly events and weekly workshops where youth obtain helpful information, skills and resources (as well as college credits) beneficial to their transition to independent living. Attendance averages 10–35 youth per workshop. Events and workshops are usually held on weekends or during evening hours. Incentives are provided by the 5 ILP contract agencies from their allocations. For FY 05, \$65,526 is budgeted for incentives, and expenditures for 240 children have totaled \$12,558.

Emancipated Youth Stipends are paid directly to the youth by the ILP contract agencies program to meet the special needs of emancipated foster youth ages 18–21 years who have aged out of the foster care system and continue to participate in the ILP program. Stipends may be used for specific costs in the areas of transportation, health services, housing assistance, aftercare, work related costs, and costs associated with children of emancipated youth. This is a state funded ILP program. Contractor agencies are reimbursed from a separate fund administered by the Social Services agency. Eligible youth can receive up to \$1500 per fiscal year from this funding source. For FY 05, \$80,655 is budgeted for stipends. As of September 30, 2004, 84 youth have received stipends totaling \$24,952.

Employment is an integral part of transitioning to independent living. ILP assists foster youth in career assessment and developing job search skills necessary to obtain good paying, stable jobs. Youth are assisted during the job search process, and receive ongoing job leads and feedback about their job search efforts. Job retention skills are developed to support the youth throughout his or her work career. Please see "Key Community Partners" for more information about employment services for youth.

### ILP Services for Youth Placed Out-of County/State

ILP services are provided by the ILP program in the community in which the youth resides, under the direction of the local ILP coordinator. DFCS ILP staff provide assistance as necessary. The Santa Clara County ILP reimburses other counties for incentives and Emancipated Youth Stipends paid to Santa Clara County youth. Incentives for participation totaling \$10,000 are set aside for FY 05. Reimbursement to date totals \$1,225 for 6 youth.

### Transitional Housing Placement Programs for Current Foster Youth

Transitional Housing Placement Programs (THPP) provide housing and supportive services to prepare foster youth who are approaching emancipation to live independently and assume responsibility for meeting their own needs, thereby reducing the likelihood of homelessness and/or the need for public social services following emancipation. THPP facilities are licensed by state Community Care Licensing and authorized by the California Department of Social Services to provide this type of care. These programs ordinarily receive primary funding from the Aid to Families of Dependent Children Foster Care (AFDC-FC) program. The agencies providing THPP include:

- The Bill Wilson Center THPP currently has 5 youth ages 17-18 years in the program. Placement costs are paid for primarily with state and federal funds at a rate of \$3,380.00 per month per child.
- The Bill Wilson Center also has a special THPP called the "Supportive Living Pilot Model" designed for 16-18 year old female youth from the Children's Shelter. Currently there are 5 youth in this program. Placement costs are paid for primarily with state and federal funds at a rate of \$3,380.00 per month per child.

[The County share of cost for both Bill Wilson Transitional Housing Placement Programs in FY 04 was \$189, 232, which includes matching AFDC-FC funds (\$143,834) and Children's Placement Funds for AFDC-FC ineligible youth (\$45,398)].

- The Unity Care Group is the contract agency for a pilot "Transition Housing Program" for youth ages 16-18 years (currently serving 6 youth). In FY 04, the pilot was budgeted for \$92,000 and expenditures were \$92,000. For FY 05, the pilot is budgeted for \$42,856 for the final 6 months of County funding of the pilot (through December 2004), as the program transitions to become a state licensed THPP. As a THPP, primary funding for the program will come from AFDC-FC, which includes a County matching share (approximately 30% for federally eligible youth and 60% for non-federally eligible youth).

### Emancipation Conferences

Emancipation Conferences help youth and people in his or her circle of support to develop an emancipation plan. The areas commonly covered in a conference include: education, housing, employment, finances, health care planning, acquiring necessary documentation, and identifying additional support people and necessary resources. In FY 04, 142 Emancipation Conferences were held. For FY 05, 63 Emancipation Conferences have been held as of November 24, 2004.

### Extended Medi-Cal for Former Foster Care Children (FFCC)

Extended Medi-Cal for Former Foster Care Children (FFCC) is available to all former foster youth who are eligible for the FFCC benefits. The FFCC program makes it possible for the youth to remain eligible for Medi-Cal benefits if emancipation occurs on or after the youth's 18th birthday and eligibility can extend to age 21. Currently 183 former foster youth receive extended Medi-Cal coverage. As of July 2004, Santa Clara County youth were 4.5% (189 youth) of the 4151 children statewide receiving FFCC Medi-Cal, making utilization by County youth among the highest in the state. There is no cost to the County for this coverage.

### Assistance with Immigration Issues

DFCS provides assistance with immigration issues for foster youth to assure that the youth is on track to receive immigration documentation prior to emancipation, including the assistance of Catholic Charities to obtain legal documentation under federal law allowing for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). Under this law, immigrant children who are in permanent placement under the Juvenile Dependency Court are eligible to obtain lawful immigration status and a "green card." In November 2003, DFCS held its first citizenship orientation workshop attended by approximately 25 youth, their caregivers and social workers. This orientation provided information about eligibility requirements to become a U.S. citizen, and offered each youth the opportunity to receive individual consultation regarding his or her specific case.

### Support of the Santa Clara County Chapter of the California Youth Connection

DFCS ILP staff provide guidance, assistance and support to the Santa Clara County Chapter of the California Youth Connection (CYC). The local CYC chapter receives \$9,995 annually from ILP funding administered by the Social Services Agency.

### The Unclassified Office Specialist II Program

The Unclassified Office Specialist II Program at the Social Services Agency provides clerical positions for some former foster youth. Former foster youth are employed throughout the Agency, and receive close supervision and training to ensure successful employment. Over the past two years, 22 former foster youth applied for County Office Specialist positions. Seven (7) were offered full-time clerical positions and 6 accepted a position. All 6 of these young adults remain successfully employed with the Agency.

### Certificates and Vouchers for Drivers' Education, Training and DMV Fees

Certificates for drivers' education and training, and vouchers for DMV fees are available to emancipated foster youth who are participating in the ILP program and either working or attending school. Being able to driving empowers youth in their capacity to become more independent. Since the program started in August 2000, more than 50 certificates have been issued. These certificates were purchased in a prior year from the state ILP allocation.

## KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The DFCS ILP works closely with key community partners to ensure that former foster youth are provided opportunities to be successful in reaching their educational, employment and housing goals. Key partners include:

### Education

Evergreen Valley College (EVC) received \$12,170 for FY 05 from the Community College Foundation to provide life skills training for foster youth. Training topics include: Choices and Consequences, Computer and Web Site training, Daily Living Skills, Education, Employment, Interpersonal/Communication Skills and Survival Skills. EVC also teamed with the ILP staff in providing experiential educational training to increase youth's awareness of the numerous resources available on community college campuses and many other community locations.

The Silicon Valley Children's Fund's Youth Education Scholarship Program (YES) is a renewable scholarship fund for former Santa Clara County foster youth. The YES project offers financial support for tuition, books, housing, food, transportation and other needed items. Currently there are 34 youth participating in the YES program.

The Chafee Grant is a federal and state funded program designed to provide financial assistance for education and training, including post-secondary training, to ILP eligible youth under the age of 23 who have aged-out of foster care. In California, \$4,030,000 was spent as of August 6, 2004. Statewide, 1,003 students were awarded grants as of August 6, 2004. (Because the youth applies for this grant through the school in which he or she plans to enroll, DFCS has no means to track how many Santa Clara County foster youth are currently receiving a Chafee Grants.)

### Employment

The Silicon Valley Workforce Investment Network (SVWIN) operates three One-Stop Career Centers in San Jose, Campbell and Gilroy, under provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. They also provide workforce development services for the several cities in the County and the unincorporated areas of the County. SVWIN Services are available to adults age 18 and over, as well as youth between the ages of 14 and 21 years. Services are designed to help youth successfully transition to adulthood, gain employment and further their education and training. Funding is derived primarily from the U.S Department of Labor. Other sources include state and federal grants and private industry.

### Mentoring

The Child Advocates Transitioning Teen Project [formerly called the Advocates for Successful Transition to Independence (ASTI) program] assists youth approaching the age of emancipation to preparing for life on their own. This project, a component of Court Appointed Special Advocates of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, collaborates with the ILP program in promoting positive mentor-like relationships with foster youth. The project provides one-on-one support to foster youth in hands-on application of skills learned through ILP, such as in the areas of life skills, employment and housing.

### Housing

Transitional Housing Programs (THP) provide housing and services for young adults in the community, including former foster youth. Transitional Housing Programs are designed to address the needs of runaway and homeless young adults. The programs are funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and/or Department of Health and Human Services. The agencies that provide THP include:



- The Unity Care Group THP for homeless young adults age 18 to 21 years.
- The Community Solution THP for homeless pregnant or parenting teens age 18 to 21 years.
- The Community Solution THP for homeless pregnant or parenting teens age 16 to 18 years.
- The Bill Wilson Center THP for homeless young adults age 18 to 21 years
- Bill Wilson Center THP for homeless pregnant or parenting teens age 18 to 21 years.

The Emergency Housing Consortium (EHC) also has a shelter "Transitional Living Program" for youth funded by the federal Department of Health and Human Resources for homeless youth age 16 to 21 years. EHC's clients are assisted to transition into permanent housing operated by the EHC.

#### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

Negative action will result in the Childrens, Seniors, and Families Committee not accepting the ILP annual report.

#### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Clerk of the Board will follow usual procedures for a report of this type.