

# Finding 3

## Requirements for Independence

### Foster Youth, Age 14+

In addition to ensuring foster youth have a connection to extended family, siblings, culture and at least one positive consistent adult, the following are items the CRB can recommend to help foster youth have a successful transition to adulthood:

- **Foster Children’s Bill of Rights.** Ensure youth, age 14 and older, have reviewed, signed and received the Foster Children’s Bill of Rights and that they have the Important Contact Information sheet that lists all of the parties involved in their case. ORS 418.201. Ensure youth, age 14 and older, have received information to help them understand how to:
  - Establish a bank account in the foster child’s name;
  - Acquire a driver’s license as allowed under state law;
  - Remain in foster care after reaching 18 years of age;
  - Access the Tuition and Fee Waiver for foster youth;
  - Obtain a copy of his or her credit report;
  - Obtain medical, dental, vision, mental health services or other treatment; and
  - Participate in crafting his or her comprehensive transition plan.
- **Youth Transition Plan.** Ensure youth, age 14 and older, have received assistance with their Youth Transition Plan. Recommend this be documented in the DHS court report for the youth’s next permanency hearing and that the CRB be provided a copy at the next CRB review.
- **Independent Living Program.** Ensure youth, age 16 and older, have been referred to ILP and knows how ILP can assist with goals, independence, education, employment and housing. Ensure youth received information on following services:
  - - **ILP Skills Training** – Money management, household maintenance, transportation, legal issues, health, community resources, housing options, personal hygiene, employment readiness
    - **ILP Discretionary Funds** – ILP Discretionary Funds are available to any youth, age 14 or older, who has an open ILP Skills training service. Flexible funding assists youth with achieving his/her goals for transition. The youth’s caseworker or ILP provider requests access to these funds for the youth.

- **Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG).** When youth are accepted and enrolled in a post-secondary education, youth can request ETG funds, up to \$5,000 per year. ETG funds must be requested prior to age 21 to continue receiving funds to age 23. Youth may also request funds for a laptop.
- **ILP Housing Subsidy.** The ILP Housing Subsidy program provides up to \$795 per month for a foster youth, age 16 and older, to live independently for up to three years until age 21. Requires 40 hours of activity per week and involvement in ILP skill building services.
- **Chafee Housing.** For youth, age 18 but not yet age 21, with at least 180 days (6 months) of placement after age 14, Chafee Housing is available. Requires 40 hours of activity per week and enrollment in ILP skill building services.
- **Continuing Education.** Ensure DHS/ILP has talked with youth, who are in their Junior year of high school, about:
  - Touring colleges or looking at trade schools;
  - How DHS/ILP will assist youth with college applications and financial aid deadlines during their senior year. For example, OSU has an admission deadline of February 1, and the OSAC Scholarship Application is due by March 1; and
  - The requirements for the Oregon Foster Youth Tuition Fee Waiver through their FAFSA Application
- **Transition Toolkit.** Ensure DHS has gathered or is in the process of gathering for youth, age 17 and older, the required items for the youth's Transition Toolkit that must be provided to the youth when the court relieves the Department of custody. These are the essential documents, written records, and official forms that youth transitioning out of care need to have regarding their medical history for employment purposes or to continue their post-secondary education:
  - (a) Information concerning the case of the *child* or *young adult*, including family and placement history, location and status of each *sibling*, if applicable, and contact information youth may use to seek additional information;
  - (b) Health and education records, including:
    - (1) Health and immunization records; and
    - (2) Educational summary and records.

(c) A copy of each of the following, and documentation that each has been provided to the youth in official form:

- (1) Birth certificate;
- (2) Official proof of the citizenship or residence status of youth in a form acceptable to employer required to verify immigration status;
- (3) Social security card or a copy of the original;
- (4) Driver's license or other form of state identification or copy of original;
- (5) Where applicable, a death certificate of a *parent*; and
- (6) Written verification of youth's placement in substitute care through the Department or one of the federally recognized tribes.

If DHS does not yet have all of the above items, recommend the caseworker gather these documents as soon as possible but at least by 60 days prior to the dismissal court hearing and that this be documented in the DHS case file and court report.

- **Benchmark Review.** Ensure for foster youth, age 17 and older, that DHS has or will schedule the youth's Benchmark Review six months prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, to ensure they understand their Youth Transition Plan and how to access services for:
  - Education;
  - Housing;
  - Continued Medical Coverage;
  - Community Resources;
  - Plan for Employment or Continued Academic or Vocational Education;
  - Agreement on the Person with Decision-Making Authority for Health and Mental Health Services;
  - Identification of Health, Mental Health, Dental Providers and Supportive Relationships.

Ensure DHS is planning to meet with youth at least 60 days prior to the date of case dismissal to inform them of the date, time and location of the hearing, the right and importance of attending, and the right to request assistance with transportation to the hearing. Recommend that the Benchmark Review be documented in the case plan and court report for the next permanency hearing.

- **Foster Care Until Age 21.** Ensure youth know if they leave care at age 18, they can go back to DHS to ask for voluntary services and receive assistance from DHS and ILP until age 21.