

Independent Living Services for Tribal Youth

Each year the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) Child and Family Services (CFS) Program applies for federal Title IV-E John Chafee Foster Care Independent Program (CFCIP) funds as provided for in the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. Child and Family Services, in turn, makes available a full array of independent living services to tribal youth. Tribal youth must meet the same eligibility criteria as non-tribal youth. Tribes will access Independent Living (IL) funds for their youth through the designated Regional CFS IL Coordinator. Funds for tribal youth will be distributed based on the completion of the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) and the youth's IL Plan for meeting transitional living goals.

Youth who turn age fifteen (15) and are in alternate (foster) care become eligible for the Independent Living program when the youth has:

- Resided in an eligible placement setting which includes tribal foster care, residential care, or similar foster care placement (detention facilities, forestry camps, hospitals or other settings primarily designed for services to delinquent youth are excluded) AND
- Resided in an eligible placement setting for 90 cumulative days (total days, not necessarily consecutive days).

If a child is determined eligible for independent living services and is subsequently adopted, the child remains eligible for independent living services until age 21.

Independent Living Services include:

- Employment programs;
- Job readiness training;
- Assistance with job services;
- Employment placement;
- Required clothing for employment;
- Education and training programs;
- Health care counseling and education;
- Preventative health care services;
- Social skills development;
- Basic living skills training; and
- Personal safety training
- Room and board*
- Counseling services including self-esteem, individual, family, and group counseling;

* Room and board services are only available to those youth who have turned 18 and aged out of foster care. Room and board can include limited housing payments, deposits, utilities, furnishings and foodstuffs. If a youth is "on run" when the youth turns 18, but is still in Tribal and/or IDHW custody, the youth is considered to have aged out of foster care.

Continued Care – When a youth turns 18 years of age and the plan is for the youth to continue in a paid licensed placement while the youth completes high school, the youth's case can remain open and the foster home can continue to receive foster care maintenance payments. The youth can also remain open for Title XIX Foster Care Medicaid.

Application Process

The process for an IL eligible youth from a tribe within the boundaries of Idaho to apply for services whether in the custody of the Tribal Court or in state custody is as follows:

- Review the eligibility criteria listed above to determine eligibility;
- The Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) www.caseylifeskills.org is completed by the youth, the youth's caretaker and the youth's tribal social services worker;
- The results from the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) are used by the youth's tribal social services worker to develop an Independent Living Plan with the youth. It is critical that the youth be included in all independent living case planning meetings. *Each youth must have an individualized written plan for permanency and independent living skill development completed;*
- An application form is completed by the youth's tribal caseworker (see application below);
- Send the application to the Regional IL Program Coordinator with whom the tribe works. An up-to-date list of Regional Independent Living Program Coordinators and their contact information can be found at <http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/AdoptionFosterCare/IndependentLivingProgram/tabid/158/Default.aspx>
- Following receipt of the youth's application, the Regional Independent Living Program Coordinator will contact the youth's tribal caseworker to coordinate services.

Idaho tribes can receive information regarding Idaho's Independent Living Program through the website above. Tribal staff are always welcome to attend local independent living training through the annual Resource Parent Conference, New Worker Academy, and regional IL training in local field offices. The Department's Independent Living Program Specialist in Central Office is also available to provide independent living support and training to Tribal Social Services staff.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare collaborates with our Idaho Tribes to make Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding available to tribal youth who are currently, or previously, in tribal custody and meet the independent living eligibility criteria. ETV brochures and application forms are available to the tribal members on the IL website.

