

Pathways to Success

Independent Living

The South Carolina Chafee Independent Living Program and Educational and Training Voucher Program

Guidelines for Services

Youth Version



The South Carolina Department of Social Services
Columbia, SC 29202

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (SCDSS) INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) YOUTH BOOKLET

Welcome! In this book you will learn about independent living services and resources available to you to help you as you mature into young adulthood and find success! Thanks to the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program, which was created in 1999, the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) has people and resources to help you as you prepare for independent living!

- Are you a youth in foster care age 13 to 21?
- Are you a youth who aged out of foster care at age 18?
- Are you a youth who was adopted on or after your 16th birthday?
- Are you a youth who left care to guardianship/kinship/ reunification on or after your 16th birthday?
- Are you a youth who is currently in adoption preservation placement?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then this is the book for you!

What do we mean by “independent living”? And what services are out there for you? Independent living is the process of developing the skills necessary to balance life’s responsibilities—all of the essentials that go along with school, work, and bills. The SCDSS Independent Living Program is designed especially to help you achieve your independent living goals! In this book you will learn about all of the great resources available to help you with important areas of your life like education, jobs, graduation, transportation, and much, much more!

In this book we will go through the different aspects of independent living for which Chafee may provide services. Follow along in order, or look up the topic that interests you on our Table of Contents page. If you want to know if you are eligible for these services, make sure to take our quizzes along the way! Each topic will feature a brief description and a list of examples of services Chafee may provide.

Oh, and one more thing before we get started! Be sure to check out the NYTD website at www.nytdstayconnected.com where you will also learn about scholarship information, tips and tricks related to independent living, youth groups in South Carolina, and more! You’ll definitely want to visit the website in addition to knowing what resources and services are available to you. That’s what this book is for!

If you ever have any questions about independent living, you are always welcome to contact the IL Program team at independentliving@dss.sc.gov. We’re here to help!

Let’s discover some of the exciting independent living possibilities out there for you! Well, come on, then! Turn the page, and let’s get started!

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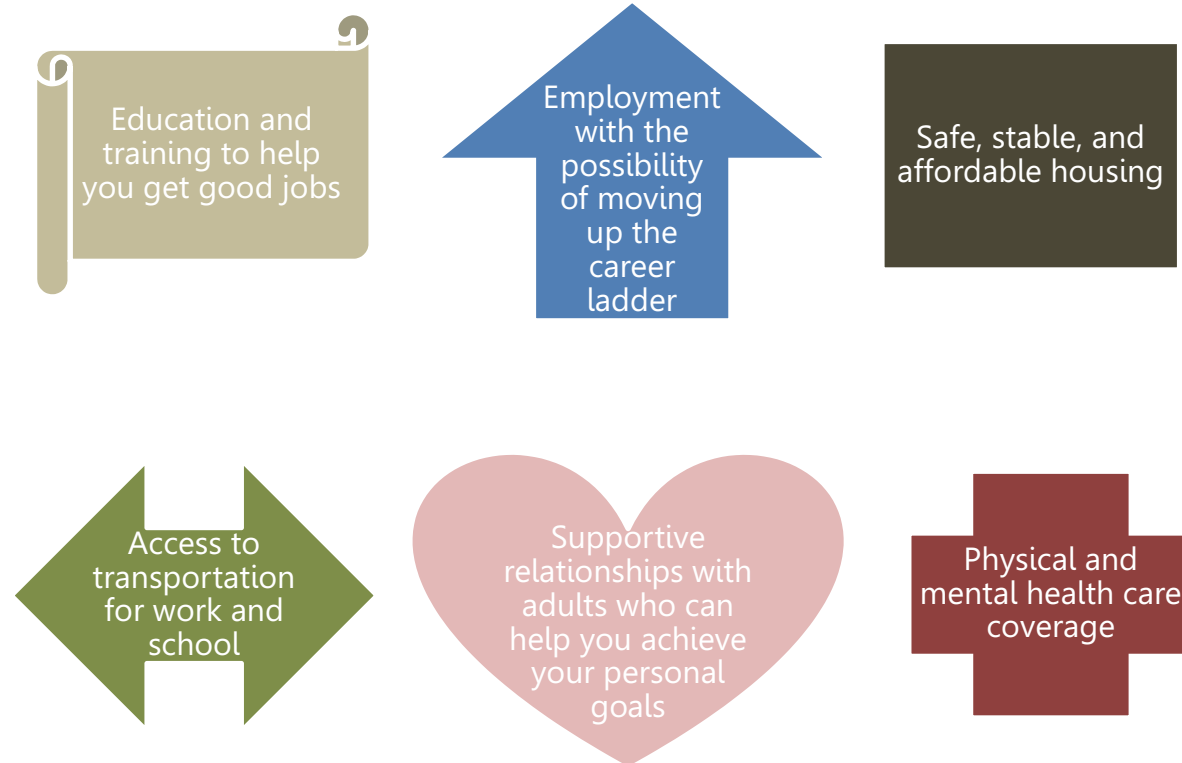
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THE CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) PROGRAM PURPOSE STATEMENT

The journey to adulthood is important, challenging, and exciting. It is a time when you will take charge of your future and decide what you want to do, where you want to be, and how you want to get there. Sometimes it seems like too much for one person to handle, but there is help available to get you started on the right track!

What do you need to succeed? You need information, opportunities, and support! The South Carolina Department of Social Services and the Chafee Independent Living Program believe you can be prepared for your future when you learn about these independent living opportunities:



The South Carolina Department of Social Services and the Chafee Independent Living (IL) Program believe that you should have every opportunity to reach your dreams! The IL Program provides services and funding for you to learn the independent living skills necessary to reach your fullest potential.

ESTABLISHING YOUR INDEPENDENT LIVING GOALS

If you are 13 or older, you have probably already completed a Life Skills Assessment with your case manager. Sometimes your case manager will work with your care provider to assist you with this assessment.

The Life Skills Assessment is used to identify your basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths, and needs. The information gathered with this tool is used to create an individualized case plan that is based on your unique needs. Case planning should be a group effort, involving you, your case manager, your care provider, appropriate family members, and other adults who are important to you in your life.

Case plans should have specific goals about employment, education, housing, life skills, physical and emotional health, and spiritual development. The plan should include steps that must be taken to achieve your goals. You should take a Life Skills Assessment once every year, and your case plan should be revised as you and your needs change. If you are unfamiliar with your case plan or if you are not sure if you have completed a case plan, be sure to speak with your case manager!

ELIGIBILITY FOR CHAFEE AND ETV SERVICES

Should you apply for Chafee and ETV services? Take the short quiz on the next page to find out...

Put a check in the box if the question describes you. If you can check off at least one question, then you may be able to receive, or be "eligible" for, Chafee and/or ETV services. So speak up and let your case manager know! Or, if you have exited foster care and no longer have a case manager, go to the DSS county or regional office in your area.

TURN THE PAGE TO TAKE THE CHAFEE IL QUIZ!

To give you some extra help on your journey to independent living, we will be giving you IL tips like this one along the way!

IL Tip #1: Set goals. By having clear and practical dreams for your future, you will be able to strive towards important goals that you want to accomplish. Write down the goals that you have for yourself and put them where you can always see them. That way, you'll be able to see how far you've come!

CHAFEE IL QUIZ

Please check off any of the following that apply to you to see if you are eligible for Chafee IL services!

- Are you age 13 or older and in foster care?
- Are you between the ages of 18 and 21 and in a DSS Voluntary Placement Agreement?
- Did you leave foster care or aftercare placement between the ages of 18 and 21?
- When you were 16 or older, were you adopted or did you exit foster care to positive permanence (i.e. kinship care/guardianship/reunification)?
- Are you under 23 years of age, receiving the Educational and Training Voucher, enrolled in school, and making adequate progress?
- Are you in adoption preservation placement?

If you were NOT able to check off at least one of these boxes, please STOP here.



If you were able to check off at least one of these boxes, then you may be eligible for Chafee and ETV services! Read on to find out how!



APPLYING FOR CHAFEE IL SERVICES

Many youth are interested in knowing HOW to apply for Chafee Independent Living services. All you need to do is speak up and let your case manager know what services in this book you need to support you and your independent living goals. It's that easy! Just follow these steps!

Step 1: Look through the book and identify which services you would like to request.



Step 2: Fill out the Youth Service Request Checklist (see p. 40).



Step 3: You may complete Form 30198 at age 17+ and fax it to 803-898-7641 OR give your case manager your list and ask him/her to fill out DSS Form 30198 to apply for Chafee Independent Living services. (Don't forget to provide your case manager with all of the required documentation he or she needs for each request.)



Step 4: The completed request must be signed by you, the case manager, supervisor or another approved source. Applications are sent to the Regional Independent Living Advocate designated for the county or regional office assigned to the case. Applications will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as they are received.



Step 5: Case managers are contacted via email or telephone by the IL Advocates when more information is needed. A decision regarding approval will be made, and the county will be notified within 21 working days of the receipt of the completed funding request and ALL necessary documentation.

All service requests must be submitted to SCDSS before your 21st birthday. If you submit a service request after your 21st birthday, your request will not be approved. Keep in mind that this process can take approximately 3 to 4 weeks. Please contact your case manager for more information about Chafee IL services.

DAILY LIVING SKILLS SERVICES

Life is about more than going to work and school. You need to have fun, make friends, and take some time to improve yourself and your community! And there are Chafee services available to help you with the parts of living that can be just as challenging and rewarding as writing a paper or punching a time clock. Daily Living Skills includes services that promote independence by teaching social skills.

Here are some examples of Daily Living Skills services:

Life Skills Classes

- Life skills classes help prepare you as you transition into adulthood. These classes will help you learn new skills and build on existing skills to help you as you move through life.
- Life skills training classes include classes such as financial management courses, parenting skills classes, and even cooking classes.

Mentoring Services/Expenses

- A mentor is a positive role model who will guide, encourage, and help you to develop independent living skills (e.g. making a budget, planning for meal preparation, etc.). Not only is a mentor a listener, teacher and encourager, he or she can also serve as a friend to have fun with too!
- We encourage you to connect with a positive adult in preparation for adulthood. Having a mentor truly makes a difference (see our IL Tip #2 below)!
- The request must be DSS approved before mentoring begins.
- The mentor may be identified by you or through DSS.

IL Tip #2: Mentorship makes a difference. Studies show that youth who have a mentor in their lives are more likely than their peers to get better grades and set and achieve higher career goals! So do yourself and your future a favor and find a mentor! Look at your life goals and think about the kind of person who would be an ideal fit for you. You can make the connection, or you can contact SCDSS and ask them to identify a good mentor for you.

DAILY LIVING SKILLS SERVICES (continued)

Esteem-building Activities

- Starting (and finishing!) small projects is great for your self-esteem! It's a wonderful way to celebrate your achievements! Get involved with teams and or activities that are connected with your school, job, church, or other leadership organization.
- Some examples include joining a chorus, band, arts programs, cheerleading, and team sports.

Summer Camps

- Are you interested in attending a summer camp? Summer camps can provide you with opportunities to take part in fun activities like zip lining, kayaking, biking, hiking, canoeing, and swimming!
- The camp must be school-sponsored and related to your participation in activities such as ROTC, band, chorus, cheerleading, or team sports or camps that are related to leadership and/or spiritual development.
- SCDSS also sponsors summer leadership camps (see IL Tip #3 below).

Other Community Leadership Programs/Camps

- Are you interested in community leadership programs and camps that will provide you with opportunities to develop workforce training and skills? If so, speak to your case manager today about registering!
- This does not apply to summer programs for daycare or recreation-only purposes.

For all requests you are required to provide a detailed receipt (list of items purchased with their individual prices and the total).

IL Tip #3: Attend a Summer Leadership Camp! Each year the SCDSS Program sponsors a youth training event for youth in foster care. SCDSS will pay for your participation in and transportation to the camp. If you are interested in attending a summer leadership camp, please contact your case manager or care provider for a camp application. And make sure to visit the SC National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) website at www.nytdstayconnected.com for the latest information on summer camps!

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: JOB PREPARATION AND TRAINING

Studies show that the earlier you get to work, the more successful you will be in your long-term career goals. So go out there and get a job! And if you're a full-time student, a part-time gig is all it takes to earn a little extra cash, make some new friends, and gain a sense of personal responsibility!

We all work so we can get paid, but sometimes you need to pay to get to work—whether it's for a smart suit to impress the interview committee, training to learn important skills, or a shiny new uniform. Chafee IL job preparation and training services will cover these costs, so you can focus on earning more money and building your career! Chafee can help you afford the things you need in order to get and/or to keep a job.

Here are some examples of job preparation and training services:

Certification Courses

- Electronic, first aid, life guarding, etc.
- Amount varies.

Interview Clothing

- \$200 for ages 15-17
- An additional \$300 when you reach 18 until age 21 for a maximum of \$500.
- You must be actively seeking employment.

Uniforms and Footwear

- \$250
- Indicate employer and type of work (e.g. Shift Manager for McDonald's).

Professional Attire for Work or School

- Only if you are age 18-21 and do not have an open foster care line of services.
- \$600/year
- Provide proof of full-time school enrollment or indicate employer and type of work (e.g. Shift Manager for McDonald's).

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: JOB PREPARATION AND TRAINING (continued)

Job Skills Training Classes

- The class must directly relate to your career goals.
- Amount varies.

Vocational Equipment

- Amount varies.

Birth Certificate Necessary for Employment

- If you are 15 years of age or older.
- Amount varies.

License/Certification Fees

- Amount varies.

Child Care

- For 1 month.
- Maximum of \$400 when you are not receiving ABC vouchers.
- Case manager must verify that you are not receiving ABC vouchers AND indicate employer and type of work.

For all requests you are required to provide a detailed receipt.

For information on transportation services related to employment, please see the transportation services chart on pages 13-14.

IL Tip #4: Get out of your job application comfort zone. Forget the mindset that you are limited in the types of businesses you can work for! Apply to all kinds of employers for jobs—you never know where your skills might be needed!

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Do you need safe and reliable transportation to school and/or work? Do you know this can be paid for out of Chafee funds? Gas, repairs, insurance...there are so many costs that come along with just getting from here to there! The Chafee IL Program recognizes how important it is for you to reach your destination safely, cheaply, and quickly, and there are services available to help you get around! Please be aware that transportation assistance is for postsecondary, vocational, adult education, and employment purposes only.

If you are in placement and are interested in Chafee IL transportation services, please speak to your foster parent, group home staff member, or other care provider. If you are not in placement, please speak to your case manager.

Here are some examples of transportation services:

Driver's Education Course

- If you are age 16 or older and cannot take the course in school.

Bicycle (for work, school or to promote healthy living)

- If you are between the ages of 13-15 up to \$150 for a bike and \$75 for a helmet and lock. If you are between the ages of 16-21 up to \$250 for a bike and \$75 for a helmet and lock.
- Provide documentation showing that you are working (e.g. paycheck) or are in school (e.g. print-out of class schedule) or an IL goal related to healthy living.
- Purchase of helmet is mandatory.

State IDs, Knowledge Test, and Beginner's Permit Fees

- Amount varies.

Transportation to Adult Education/GED

- Maximum of \$50/week
- Approval based on distance and need.

Transportation to Job Skills Training

- Maximum of \$50/week.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES (continued)

Transportation to Adult Education, College, or Vocational School

- Maximum of \$50/week.
- Provide documentation showing you are in school (e.g. print-out of class schedule).
- Approval based on distance and need.

Transportation Assistance for College Students to Visit Home

- Twice a semester to maintain connections.
- \$75/visit for a maximum of 4 visits/year.

Transportation to Work

- \$50/week for a maximum of 3 months up to a total of \$650, renewable on a case by case basis.
- Provide documentation showing you are working (e.g. paycheck).

Repair and/or Maintenance of a Car

- Must own car and need for education and/or employment.
- Must provide a documented need for repair **in order to maintain safe operation of car.**
- \$1,750/year (Case manager must verify repairs).
- Provide an invoice/estimate in your name AND one of the following also in your name: car title OR vehicle registration and insurance card.

Insurance Assistance

- You must be age 18-21.
- You must own the car and need transportation to school or work.
- \$600/year
- Provide vehicle title OR vehicle registration AND one of the following in your name: bill/estimate for car insurance OR receipt from insurance company.

EDUCATION SERVICES: SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chafee IL education services consist of 3 groups: secondary education (e.g. middle or high school), postsecondary education (e.g. college, university, technical/trade school, and vocational school), and adult education (e.g. GED and non-ETV vocational and technical schools). The services offered in each of these categories sometimes overlap. For example, you may receive up to \$1,000 a year for tutoring when you are in high school and when you are in college.

But remember, you must first be eligible! If you were eligible to “Start” on p. 7, you may be eligible for these services!

Here are some examples of secondary education services:

Books and Supplies for Specialized Classes

- Lab fees
- Special calculators
- Uniforms for classes such as cosmetology, nursing, etc.
- Insurance for school-issued equipment

Tutoring

- Up to \$1,000/year

Personal Computer

- Up to \$1,500 for 11th and 12th grade students if the school does not provide personal computer.
- You may self-purchase your own with a case manager or request a SCFPA Laptop Bundle.
- The SCFPA Laptop Bundle Form is on the www.scfpa.com website under “Resources.”
- Provide detailed receipt.

Academic Support

- Summer school

EDUCATION SERVICES: SECONDARY EDUCATION (continued)

Educational Field Trips

- Please provide a description and schedule of activities.

Senior Expenses

- Senior pictures (\$200 limit)
- Senior ring (\$300 limit)
- Senior prom ticket
- Senior prom attire reimbursement (max \$200 w/receipts)
- Senior fees
- Graduation invitations (max \$250)
- Cap and gown (max \$150)
- Yearbook
- Diploma plaque

Pre-College Expenses

- College applications (up to \$150)
- SAT/ACT fees (up to 3 of each test) ***Note: These fees should be waived for youth in foster care or voluntary placement.***
- SAT/ACT preparation classes
- College Goal Sunday transportation (www.che.sc.gov)
- Birth certificate necessary for enrollment in postsecondary institution.

IL Tip #5: Scholarships and vouchers are free money for school. The loans you take out for school have to be paid back—with interest. Vouchers and scholarships do not have to be paid back!

EDUCATION SERVICES: POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Services for postsecondary education include colleges, universities, and vocational and technical schools with a FAFSA school code (see p. 24-25 to learn more about FAFSA).

Here are some examples of postsecondary education services:

Books and Supplies for Specialized Classes

- Lab fees
- Special calculators
- Uniforms for classes such as cosmetology, nursing, etc.
- Insurance for school-issued equipment

Tutoring

- Up to \$1,000/year

Personal Computer

- Up to \$1,500
- You may self-purchase your own with a case manager or request a SCFPA Laptop Bundle.
- The SCFPA Laptop Bundle Form is on the www.scfpa.com website under "Resources."
- Provide detailed receipt.

Educational Field Trips

- Please provide a description and schedule of activities.

Senior Expenses

- College ring (\$450 limit and can be paid with Chafee funds as long as you have not yet reached age 21)
- Senior fees
- Cap and gown
- Graduation invitation

EDUCATION SERVICES: ADULT EDUCATION

Our adult education services include programs that help you to attain a high school degree or its equivalent. You may also receive funding assistance to complete additional coursework to achieve your goals. This section includes vocational schools and career certificate programs at schools without a federal school code (see p. 24-25).

Here are some examples of adult education services:

GED Program

- Cost and materials are covered.
- Provide detailed receipt.

Tutoring for GED

- Up to \$1,000/year
- Provide detailed receipt.

Study Skills Training

- Up to \$200
- Provide detailed receipt.

Alternative Education Programs

- Amount varies.
- Provide detailed receipt.

Non-ETV College Coursework

- Amount varies.
- Provide detailed receipt.

Non-ETV Vocational Coursework

- Amount varies.
- Provide detailed receipt.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) AWARD QUIZ

Scholarships and loans aren't the only options for youth who need funding for higher education! There's also the Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Award, which provides services for youth with foster care experience who are pursuing a postsecondary education in an approved educational program. Take the following quiz to see if you are eligible for ETV services!

- Are you in the custody of the Department of Social Services with independent living as a part of your case plan?
- Were you in DSS custody at 18 years of age?
- Were you adopted on or after your 16th birthday?
- Did you exit care to positive permanency (kinship care/guardianship/reunification) on or after your 16th birthday?
- Are you in Adoption Preservation Placement?

If you were NOT able to check off at least one of the boxes, please STOP here.



If you were able to check off at least one of the boxes, then you may be eligible for ETV services! Read on to find out how!



THE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) AWARD

Here are some examples of how ETV Award funding can be used:

- ★ Tuition and Fees
- ★ Books, Supplies, and Uniforms
- ★ Room and Board On/Off-Campus
- ★ College and/or Dorm Deposits
- ★ College Placement Tests
- ★ School Medical Plan for Students Age 21-23
- ★ Meal Plans or Meal Cards
- ★ Parking Fees
- ★ Specialized Supplies
- ★ School-related Travel for Ages 21-23 **(after cost of attendance is paid)**
- ★ Personal Allowance for Food and Transportation for Commuting **(after cost of attendance is paid)**
- ★ Personal Items **(after cost of attendance is paid)**
- ★ Child Care for 1 Month for up to \$400 when You Are Not Receiving ABC Vouchers

IL Tip #6: For the ETV Award, tuition comes first. ETV has a maximum of \$5,000, and tuition and books receive priority. Make sure you have accounted for your housing costs!

ETV ELIGIBILITY AFTER AGE 21

You may be eligible to receive ETV funding until age 23 if you are already receiving ETV funding, are currently enrolled in postsecondary education, and are making adequate progress.

The following factors may be considered in determining your eligibility:

- ★ Acceptance to a technical school, college, university, or other program that meets the ETV criteria
- ★ Academic achievement or a marked improvement in educational functioning
- ★ Long-term goal and plan for meeting that goal

THE MAXIMUM ETV AWARD VALUE: Up to \$5,000 per year

The maximum award value for an ETV award is, as you see above, up to \$5,000 per year—as long as funds are available through the Educational and Training Voucher Program. When you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, either online or at school, you will have access to all of the state and federal scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible.

The awarding of ETV services depends on the cost of the school and the amount of grants and scholarships you receive. The \$5,000 award is to be applied to all costs associated with the cost of attending a postsecondary school. ***Please remember that the award covers your tuition and books first: if the entire amount is required to pay your tuition, you will not have any money left to use for other postsecondary expenses.***

Please complete your FAFSA forms as early as possible and make sure to get copies of the financial aid print-out, the school's billing statement, and the maximum financial aid award. Please keep copies of these documents for yourself. When filling out your FAFSA paperwork, answer "yes" to the question that you are a ward of the state or were a ward of the state at age 13. This will make sure that you are granted independent status for student aid.

Also make sure to research other scholarships and awards online, including the website of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (www.che.sc.gov) and the scholarship funding information that is included on DSS form 30198. If you do not use all of your ETV funds during the fall/spring semesters, the remaining amount may be used for summer school.

APPLYING FOR AN ETV AWARD

1. Ask your case manager to fill out DSS Form 30198, which is the only form to be used in making requests.



2. Please do not forget to sign the ETV application! Without your signature, the request cannot be approved.



3. Be sure to attach copies of the required documentation necessary to process the funding request (see p. 23).



4. ETV requests for the fall semester should be submitted by June 30 of each year. Meeting this deadline will ensure that the funds will be in the county offices in time for the fall term. All college funds are approved for the entire academic year of the fall/spring semesters.



5. If you plan to attend summer school, funding requests should be made at least two months before the beginning of the summer session.



6. It is very important that all the necessary information is submitted with the ETV funding request. The Regional Independent Living Advocate will contact case managers when more information is needed; however, this delays the approval process.

Note: You must submit ETV funding requests each year to ensure that you continue to receive educational assistance.

ETV AWARD: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

All ETV requests require you to submit important documents in order for your application to be processed. Make sure you have all of the items below.

1. Acceptance Letter—For all freshman students or first time ETV requests
2. Financial Aid Award Letter (or documentation from the school showing the amounts of financial aid awarded per award)
3. Sign the financial aid release form provided by DSS.
4. Documentation from the school (or its website) showing the total annual cost of attendance.
5. Lease agreement if you are out of care, living off campus, and would like for rent to be considered for room and board payments out of ETV monies
6. Contact your case manager at least two weeks before each semester begins to make sure your money has been sent to the school.

The Chafee ETV Award has a \$5,000 maximum per year, and this is for postsecondary schooling only, NOT for high school or vocational schools without a federal school code (see www.fafsa.ed.gov). Please also note the services that are NOT included, which are listed on p. 33 of this booklet. Since there is a \$5,000 maximum, and books and tuition receive priority, make sure you have accounted for your housing.

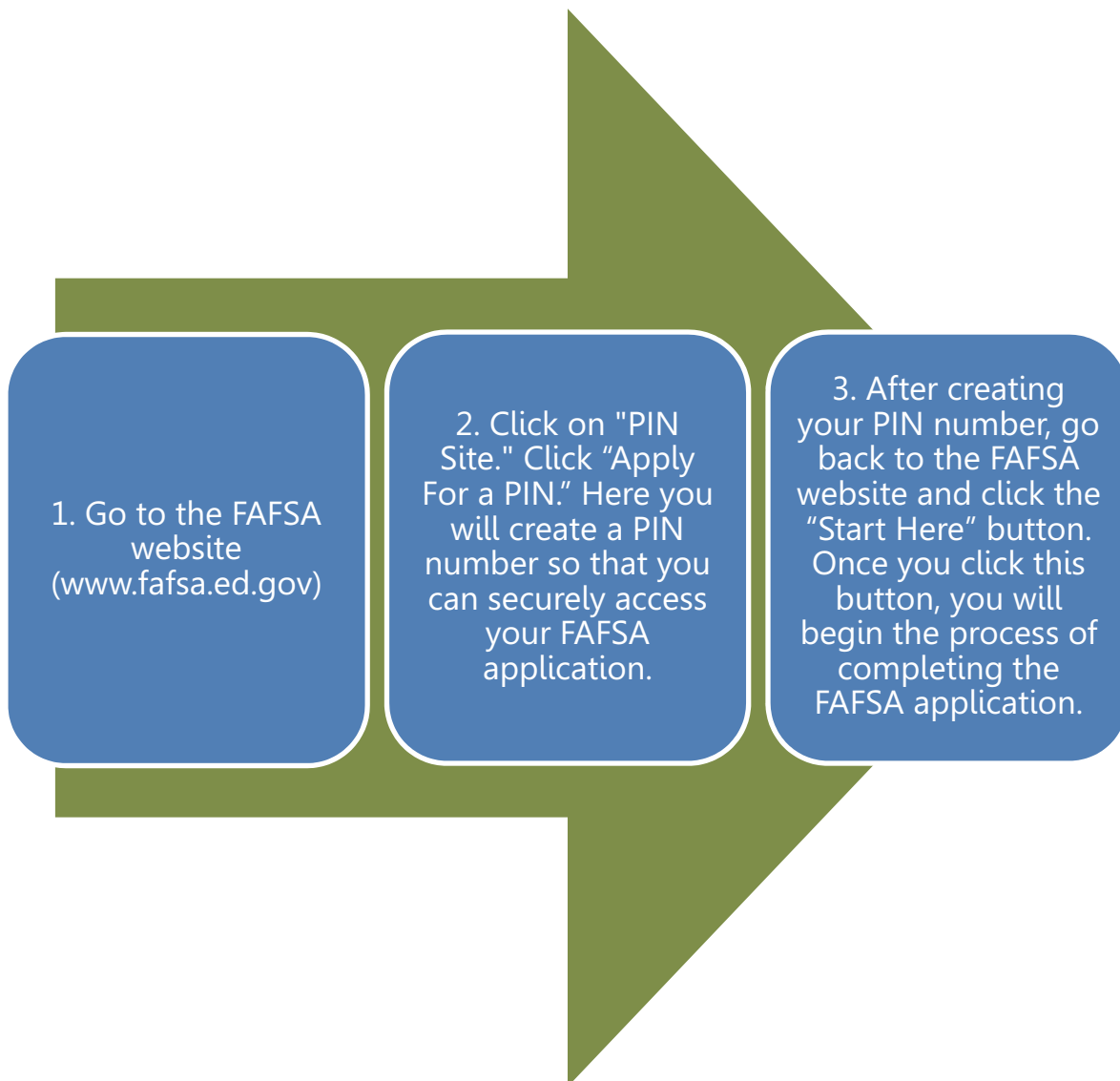
Please ensure COMPLETE documentation has been submitted to your case manager, and **make sure that you keep a copy of everything you submit for yourself.** Incomplete requests that are lacking documentation could be delayed. Contact your case manager to find out if you have been approved for an ETV Award.

IL Tip #7: Don't forget the detailed receipt for ETV requests! Please include a list of the items for which you need services and how much each one costs.

THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID (FAFSA)

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is an online application that allows individuals to apply for financial resources to attend college or career school. The United States Department of Education wants to ensure that all qualified people have the opportunity to further their education. Federal financial aid is determined primarily based on need. So if you are thinking about college or career school and need financial assistance, FAFSA is the place to start.

Here is what you have to do:



OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT FAFSA

Some documents that may be needed to complete a FAFSA application include a driver's license (if applicable) and tax information.

If you have been in foster care after the age of 13, you are considered an independent student. This means that on your FAFSA application you only have to include your personal income and tax information. You do NOT have to include income and tax information about your parents.

Financial Aid may ask for proof of your independent student status. Contact your state IL Program staff at independentliving@dss.sc.gov if you require documentation to prove your status.

If you have received a social security number recently, you may experience problems when beginning the FAFSA process. If you are experiencing problems, you should go to the FAFSA website at www.fafsa.ed.gov for contact information.

For more information and to apply, please go to the US Department of Education FAFSA site at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.

IL Tip #8: Enjoy the Process. Remember that even if you do everything right, you're not going to get every financial aid opportunity that's out there. So have fun with the process and apply for as many scholarships and awards as you can! Be creative and think of unique scholarships that match your background, interests, and needs. With the right attitude, you can make your school funding search an adventure of self-discovery!

For more scholarship opportunities, check out www.nytdstayconnected.com

APPLY! APPLY! APPLY!

The state of South Carolina wants to help you get a good education! When you attend a South Carolina public college or university, free money is available based on your financial need!

The purpose of the SC Need-based Grant is to give more financial aid to South Carolina's neediest students. A student may receive up to \$2,500 annually if enrolled full-time or up to \$1,250 annually if enrolled part-time as a degree-seeking student at an eligible SC public institution. The Need-based Grant is given to you throughout the school year. Plan ahead and know when the money will be available to you.

The South Carolina Need-based Grant is a wonderful opportunity, and we strongly encourage you to apply!

Source: http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/GoingToCollege/NBG_Hm.htm

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Student must demonstrate financial need.

Student must be enrolled for the first time in a 1-year program, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or a professional degree.

Students who are presently in Foster Care Youth or Independent Living may be eligible for up to an additional \$2,000. Please contact a financial aid counselor at your institution to determine your eligibility. Make sure to complete the Foster Care Waiver Form, which can be found at www.che.sc.gov.

DEADLINE: Complete with FASFA Application

SPECIAL RECOGNITION SERVICES

Hard work should be rewarded! Have you received some kind of special recognition or an exciting opportunity as a result of your accomplishments? You should be able to take advantage of these wonderful opportunities. Think of how they'll look on your resume and college applications! Special Recognition provides services for tuition, uniforms, or other items needed to recognize or develop special achievements or talents. The amount may vary for each of the services listed below.

Here are some examples of special recognition services:

Scholars Programs When Selected or Referred by School

- Provide a recommendation letter from the agency honoring/sponsoring you.
- Amount varies.

Attendance at Youth Conferences

- Provide the event description and schedule.
- Amount varies.

Assistance with Governor's School Expenses

- Provide the event description and schedule.
- Up to \$500/year

Conference Presentation

- Provide the event description and schedule.
- Amount varies.

Honor/Award Travel Expenses for You to Travel When Being Honored or Awarded

- Provide the event description and schedule.
- Provide a recommendation letter from the agency honoring/sponsoring you.
- Academic incentive for post-secondary students with at least a 3.0 GPA taking six or more credit hours are eligible for \$100 per semester (max \$300/a year)
- Amount varies.

State Championship Team

- Scholarships must be applied to before requesting Chafee IL services.
- Participation in fundraising may be required.

GRADUATION AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Congratulations! You've graduated! We are so proud of you!

A recognition ceremony is held every year to celebrate your achievements. Complete the graduate invoice, Form 30237, and give it to your case manager. Please make sure your case manager registers you for the IL Graduation Celebration, so you may be recognized for all of your hard work and success!

Here are some examples of graduation awards and scholarships:

High School Graduates

- By diploma, certificate, or GED
- Provide your transcript or other documentation to verify graduation.
- Amount varies.

Vocational or Technical School Graduates

- Provide your transcript or other documentation to verify graduation.
- Amount varies.

College Graduates

- Provide your transcript or other documentation to verify graduation.
- Amount varies.



IL Tip #9: Celebrate your achievements. Doing something you do well—and being recognized for it—reminds you of the unique strengths you have as an individual. Celebrate the things in life that make you special!

HOUSING AND TRANSITION SERVICES QUIZ

If you need help with putting a deposit on a new place or paying your rent over the summer, Chafee does offer services for costs related to establishing a residence after turning age 18, and interim housing for postsecondary students. Take the following quiz to determine your eligibility!

- Did you exit care at 18 years of age or older (not adopted)?
- Are you age 18 to 21?
- Do you need services to assist you with establishing your own residence with your name on the lease?
- Do you have a sufficient income to cover all of your expenses once Chafee assistance has run out?

If you were NOT able to check off ALL of the boxes, please STOP here.



If you were able to check off ALL of the boxes, then you may be eligible for housing and transition services! Read on to find out how!



HOUSING AND TRANSITION SERVICES

The purpose of this funding is to help you save money and adjust to living on a budget. It is expected that you will have an income that will cover all of your expenses once Chafee housing and transition services end. Housing and transition expenses are discussed and planned at your Transition Planning Meeting (see p. 34-35). **Please note that this is a one-time award. Make sure this is the right time for this extra help because Chafee will only give you these services once.**

Here are some examples of housing and transition services:

Phone Deposit

- Max \$150

Electric, Gas, or Water Deposit

- Based on the providing utility agency for a maximum of \$300

Furniture

- Limited to \$2,000
- Limited to \$2,500 if you are pregnant or have a child

Rental Application Fees

- Max \$300

Rental Deposit

- Based on the landlord

Rental Assistance for up to 6 Months

- Paid as 3 months full and 3 months de-escalating ("deescalating" means the amount goes down each month)

Summer Housing for College Students

- Up to \$450/month for a maximum of 3 months

HOUSING AND TRANSITION SERVICES (continued)

Housing Assistance for December-January Holidays for College Students

- Based on current board rate
- Only offered if dormitories are closed

Interim Housing for College Students for Apartment-style Dormitory Housing that Remains Open during Holiday Breaks

- Up to \$40/day
- Only offered if you have no permanent connection or need to maintain employment while in school.

Youth with Disabilities

- A setup fee of \$400 or household shower through the SCFPA is available if you are transitioning from foster care to housing with Disabilities and Special Needs or the Department of Mental Health.

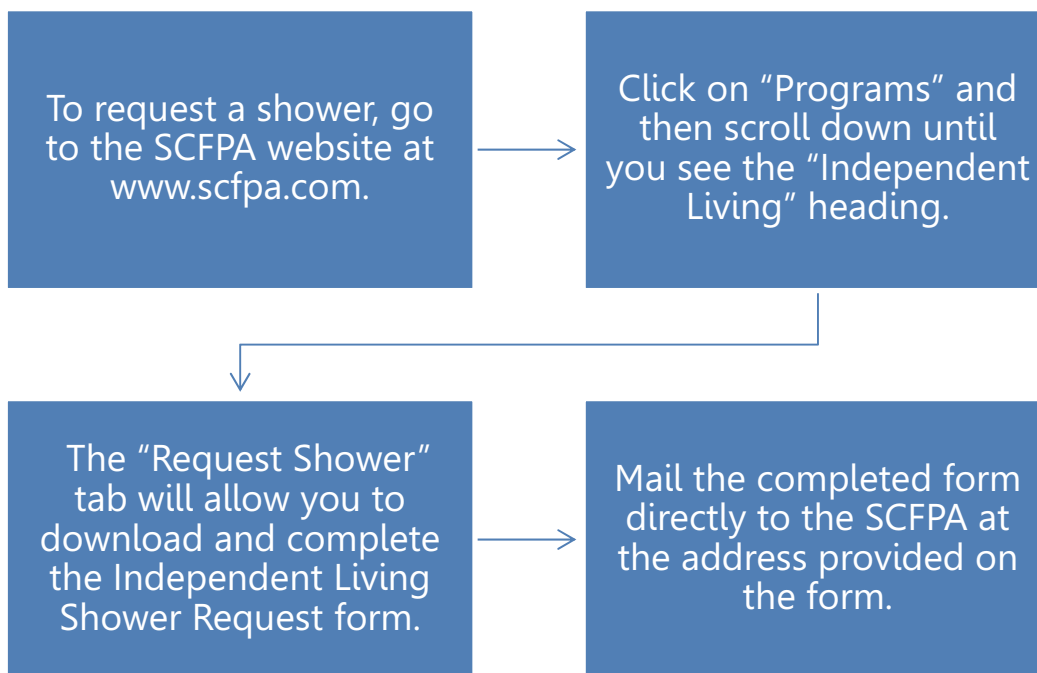
Emergency Housing Assistance

- Time-limited emergency assistance is available if you are homeless or at risk of homelessness while you are locating more stable housing arrangements.

IL Tip #10: Know how much you can afford. Before finding an apartment, figure out how much you can afford. A common way to budget for your rent is to look for a place that costs about as much a month as you earn in a week—but that all depends on your other bills and how you want to use your money. Know what your expenses are and how much you want to save.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATION (SCFPA) TRANSITION SHOWER

Are you starting college or have you recently transitioned out of care? What if you need a bunch of really basic household items, like towels, dishes, and sheets? You may be eligible for a household or dorm shower provided by the SC Foster Parent Association (SCFPA)! The SCFPA offers something called a "shower" that may not have anything to do with water, but will provide you with basic dorm room and household necessities that help keep your place looking good. You may receive a dorm room shower when you go off to college and/or shower when you transition out of care.



IL Tip #11: Know what you are signing in your lease. Before you sign your name to any lease, make sure you read it carefully. Don't hesitate to ask a trusted adult to read and review your lease. Never sign any contract without knowing for sure what it is you are signing.

SERVICES NOT PROVIDED BY CHAFEE

Personal hygiene products
Private mental health counseling
Baby-sitting or most child care expenses
Non-educational school-sponsored trips
Vacation travel
Clothing for use other than as described in this guidelines publication
Medical needs
Transportation for visitations other than as described here
Purchase of a car
Food other than as described here
Entertainment appliances/expenses
Services that can be funded through alternative sources (i.e. school districts or placement agencies)
Memberships for organizations and/or clubs (except high school academic honorary organizations)

IL Tip #12: Join a group! One of the best ways to stay happy and healthy is to have an active and positive social life. If you spend your free time with people who care about you and who share your interests, you are more likely to do well in school and at work, and to take good care of yourself.

THE HOUSING AND TRANSITION REQUEST

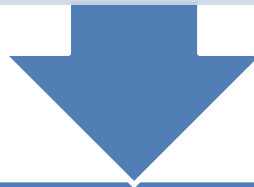
1. Go to your Transition Planning Meeting.

Your case manager must arrange a TRANSITION PLANNING MEETING to include all of your significant supports (i.e. supportive adults, etc.).



2. Complete an Independent Living Budget Analysis.

Meet with your case manager to discuss the planned monthly budget and how rental costs/living costs will be covered once IL funds are depleted. A Budget Analysis must accompany ALL housing requests.



3. Provide a detailed list if applicable.

Required Documentation: For all requests you are required to provide documentation showing the detailed pricing of items requested. No pricing documentation is required for Supervised Independent Living setup fees if you have DDSN/DMH set up fees.

THE TRANSITION PLAN: PREPARING YOUR WAY TO ADULTHOOD

A Transition Plan is your chance to help make your dreams and goals for the future a reality by putting them in writing. The Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 made it a requirement that, beginning at age 17, you must begin to develop a Transition Plan and put it into action.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services uses the Providing Assistance to Transitioning Youth (P.A.T.T.Y.) form 30206 for this purpose. When you turn 17, this plan must be formalized, meaning it must be described on the P.A.T.T.Y. form and kept on file. This form is used again at the formal Transition Planning Meeting that must take place 90 days prior to when you leave care.

The Life Skills Assessment is used to identify areas in which services and skills are needed to help you make a successful transition to independence. Make sure that you take time to identify and contact people in your support system who can help you with this process. Service providers, foster parents, family members, and any other people who matter to you and have a positive connection with you should be invited to participate in the Transition Planning Meeting to develop the Transition Plan.

Your progress will be evaluated, and the Transition Plan will be updated monthly until at least 6 months after you leave care.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSITION PLAN

Preparing for adulthood is an exciting process! The more you know about what you have to do to accomplish your goals, the better prepared you will be to take advantage of the opportunities that are out there waiting for you!

You should be actively involved in the development of a plan for your future. This is your life, but your voice will not be heard if you do not speak up or have enough facts to support your dreams. Do your research and have faith in your own abilities. Surround yourself with people who care about you and who have real-world experience. Listen to the practical advice they provide and balance these guidelines with the dreams you hope to achieve.

Even though you should receive plenty of help, in the end it is up to you and the decisions you make to determine whether or not your Transition Plan is a success. So take charge and make it happen!

SOUTH CAROLINA YOUTH GROUPS AND ADVISORY BOARDS: GET INVOLVED!

Looking to have fun and make new friends? Want to join a group of youth with experience in foster care? The South Carolina Independent Living Youth Association (SCILYA) has several youth groups that meet in areas all over the state!

At these SCILYA youth groups, you will have the opportunity to socialize with other youth in foster care and learn more about independent living! And, if you enjoy being a leader in your county/regional youth group, consider asking an adult to nominate you for membership on Go Out and Learn Life (GOALL), the state youth advisory board, or SC NYTD Youth Voice, the state youth advisory panel. You can find more information about GOALL and SC NYTD Youth Voice on the next page!



GOALL



SC NYTD YOUTH VOICE



SOUTH CAROLINA IL YOUTH ASSOCIATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SCILYA YOUTH GROUPS

For the latest information on youth groups that meet in your area, please check out the SC National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) website at www.nytdstayconnected.com! Just click on the "SCILYA" logo that looks like the one above!

GO OUT AND LEARN LIFE (GOALL)

GOALL, the South Carolina state youth advisory board, consists of young leaders, 16 to 21 years of age, who are in foster care or receiving after care services. The youth on GOALL have been nominated by a youth group facilitator, case manager, group home staff, or other DSS providers. All nominees must have demonstrated exceptional leadership skills in a youth group setting (e.g. group home, youth group, school team, etc.) prior to being nominated.

GOALL is dedicated to speaking up on behalf of youth in foster care. GOALL stays informed and shares information regarding independent living resources and services available to youth in foster care. GOALL also meets twice a year with SCILYA youth groups and presents at state and national independent living conferences. GOALL provides an opportunity for its members and SCDSS affiliates to improve the foster care system and work towards a higher goal of effective change.

Each year GOALL members identify a list of improvement opportunities for the foster care system, and they use their monthly meetings to brainstorm, research, and problem-solve. GOALL members present their recommendations to key decision makers, and as a result, members of GOALL have made significant contributions to the child welfare system in South Carolina.

If you would like more information about GOALL or would like to communicate with GOALL, please email goall@sc.edu.

SC NYTD YOUTH VOICE

SC NYTD Youth Voice is a youth-run group composed of youth in foster care or formerly in care who use their experiences to advocate on behalf of themselves and other youth in foster care. They are here to put your voice into action!

SC NYTD Youth Voice is the state youth advisory panel for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Youth 17-23 years of age are eligible for membership on SC NYTD Youth Voice. SC NYTD Youth Voice provides advice about NYTD, shares information about the NYTD survey and its research findings, and educates others about independent living services offered to youth in foster care.

For more information about SC NYTD Youth Voice, please email info@nytdstayconnected.com.

THE SC NYTD WEBSITE: ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT

Getting your driver's license, choosing and affording a school, finding a good job, making time for relationships, paying the bills...there are so many important things to think about as you transition to adulthood! You want to make informed decisions, but with everything going on all at once, who has time to get all of the facts?

You do! Just take a few minutes to check out the South Carolina National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) website at www.nytdstayconnected.com. We have done the research for you! The SC NYTD website is the one-stop online transitional resource for independent living.

Not sure how to go about finding a roommate or putting together a professional-looking resume? Click on "Tricks and Tips." We have gathered information on everything you need to know about how to make your future a success: interviewing for jobs, applying to college, managing your money, getting your driver's license, eating healthy, and more! There are links to websites, blurbs on where to look and what to look for, and plenty of practical advice, all in one place. We have even provided some resume templates you can use!

Want to know about scholarships for school? Click on our "Scholarships" link and find a list of over fifteen scholarships, including deadlines and eligibility criteria. And while you're there, look at the list of post-secondary schools in South Carolina under our "Education" tab to get an idea of all of the exciting options you have so close to home!

Looking to improve your social life? Hey, who isn't? "Tips and Tricks" has some great advice on how to make new friends and maintain healthy and lasting relationships. Also make sure to check out our "Youth Groups" tab to find links to groups for youth with experience in foster care that meet in your area.

And what about the important survey that inspired all of this? Our website also includes easy-to-read reports on the findings from the SC NYTD survey. See what other youth had to say about their experiences in foster care and their hopes and plans for the future.

SC NYTD is working every day to update our website and make sure it provides you with the support you need to take charge of your own life. As tough as it might seem sometimes, you can do it! We believe in you! Please check out the SC NYTD website below and let us help you take some of the stress out of becoming an adult!

www.nytdstayconnected.com

SCDSS Children and Youth in Foster Care Bill of Rights

I have the right to:

1. Be treated as a normal and important human being.
2. Be cared for with love and affection.
3. Be provided adequate food, shelter and clothing.
4. Be heard and involved with the decisions of my life.
5. Be informed about and have involvement with my birth family and siblings, including the right to reject visits or contacts.
6. Complete information and direct answers to my questions about choices, services and decisions.
7. Reasonable access to my caseworker or a person in the agency who can make decisions on my behalf.
8. Express my opinion and have it treated respectfully.
9. Request the support and services that I need.
10. Individualized care and attention based on my unique skills and goals.
11. Ongoing contact with significant people in my life such as teachers, friends, my personal supports and relatives.
12. Access to my case record to help me meet my goals.
13. Personal property, personal space and my privacy.
14. Be notified of changes that affect my permanence, safety, stability or well-being.
15. Practice my own religion.
16. Know what is expected of me in my foster placement.
17. Be cared for without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion or disability.
18. Caretakers who are interested in me and will support my involvement in sports and school activities.
19. Have goals.
20. A plan for my future and the support I need to accomplish it.

DSS Form 30163 (JUN 08) Edition of JAN 01 IS OBSOLETE.

Written by Go Out and Learn Life (GOALL)
SCDSS State Youth Advisory Board

DSS Form 30163

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YOUTH SERVICE REQUEST CHECKLIST

Check the boxes of the services that you need and give this form to your case manager. He or she will fill out a Service Request Form and attach any receipts or additional information to it. Your request will then be sent to the Independent Living team at the DSS State Office. It may take up to three weeks for the check to be processed and sent to your county office. Make sure that you record the date that you submitted it at the bottom of this page and keep a copy for yourself.

Daily Living Skills

- 1. Life Skills Classes
- 2. Mentoring Services
- 3. Esteem Building Activities
 - a. Team Sports
 - b. School Activities
- 4. Summer Camp that builds IL skills and/or Spiritual Development

Adult Education

- 1. Adult Education
- 2. GED Program
- 3. Alternate Educ. School
- 4. Non-ETV College Coursework
- 5. Non-ETV Vocational Coursework
- 6. Tutoring for GED
- 7. Study Skills Training

Educational Support

- 1. Tutorial Services
- 2. Summer School
- 3. Books and/or Supplies for Specialized Classes
- 4. Educational Field Trips
- 5. Birth Certificate
- 6. Computer for college

Note: Attach CAPSS "Education" screen for all IL requests

Senior Expenses

- 1. Graduation Invitations
- 2. Graduation Cap and Gown
- 3. Senior Pictures
- 4. Senior Ring
- 5. Yearbook
- 6. Diploma Plaque
- 7. Senior Fees
- 8. Senior Prom Ticket
- 9. Reimbursement for Prom Attire

Graduate Award (Complete form 30237)

Pre-College Expenses

- 1. SAT/ACT Fees
- 2. College Applications
- 3. SAT/ACT Preparation Classes
- 4. *College Goal Sunday* Transportation

Special Recognition

- 1. Youth Conference
- 2. Honor/Award Travel
- 3. Governor's School Expenses
- 4. Conference Presentation
- 5. School-Selected Scholars Programs
- 6. State Championship Team Expense
- 7. Academic Incentive

Transportation

- 1. Driver's Education
- 2. Bicycles – school, work, healthy living
- 3. Transportation to College
- 4. Home Visit from College
- 5. Transportation to Work/ Job Skills Training
- 6. Car Repairs by Certified Technician
- 7. Transportation to Adult Ed
- 8. Driver's License Fee, Permit Fee, State ID
- 9. Car Insurance Assistance

- ETV- Education and Training Voucher (Post-secondary funds)

YOUTH'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE:

Employment Services

- 1. Certification Courses
- 2. Child Care/One Month
- 3. Interview Clothing
- 4. Uniforms and Footwear
- 5. Job Skills Training Classes
- 6. Vocational Equipment
- 7. Birth Certificate
- 8. Certification/Licensing Fees
- 9. Professional Attire for Work/ College (18+ and out of care)

Housing/Transition Expenses

- 1. Electric Deposit
- 2. Gas Deposit
- 3. Water Deposit
- 4. Telephone Deposit
- 5. Furniture
- 6. Rental Application Fee
- 7. Rental Deposit
- 8. Rental Assistance
- 9. Student Interim Housing
- 10. SIL Set-up Fees
- 11. Youth w/DDSN or DMH Set-up Fees
- 12. Emergency Housing Assistance

How to Request Independent Living (IL) Services

Before you ask for services from Independent Living (IL), take time to think of what you will be doing in the next six months. Do you need someone to teach you how to save and manage money wisely? Are you hoping to improve your grades or expand your learning with the help of a tutor? Are you graduating? Do you want to learn to drive? Will you be leaving foster care soon? Before you contact anyone about IL services, you have to know what you need. So, the first thing to do is...

1. Complete the Youth Service Request Checklist (see next page).
2. **Call your case manager.** Ask for the fax number or email address to use in submitting your request form. If your case manager does not answer, be sure to leave a voice message and give him/her at least 24 hours to respond to you. Try this three times, waiting 24 hours between each call.
3. If you do not receive a response from your case manager after leaving a third message, call your DSS county office or IFCCS office and ask the operator to connect you to your case manager's supervisor.
4. Calmly let the supervisor know that you have attempted to contact your case manager, but (s)he was not able to call you back. Let the supervisor know what IL services you have written down on your request. Ask for the fax number or email address to submit your request.
5. If the supervisor does not answer the first time you call, leave a voice message and wait 24 hours three times before emailing the IL Program directly.

If you have left three voice messages and waited 72 hours for your case manager and his/her supervisor, send the following message to IndependentLiving@dss.sc.gov. If you do not have email access, please call the state Independent Living office at 803-898-4476.

Subject Line: Youth IL Service Request

Message:

Hello IL Program Staff,

My name is _____. I have tried to contact my case manager and supervisor to request IL services, but I need your help. Please call me at (____) _____ - _____

Thank you

