STANDARD FOR WORKING WITH OLDER YOUTH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard is to provide direction and guidance to the Child and Family Services (CFS) program to ensure a seamless process of case planning and decision making for older youth that addresses both the youth's permanency needs and independent living skills development in preparation for transition to adulthood. This standard is intended to achieve statewide consistency in the development and application of CFS core services and shall be implemented in the context of all applicable laws, rules and policies. The standard will also provide a measurement for program accountability.

INTRODUCTION

Specialized planning for older youth who have lived in or aged out of care is necessary to assure that they successfully transition care into living independently as a young adult. Older youth should be provided with a seamless process of service planning and decision making that addresses both the youth's permanency needs and independent living skills development. Decisions concerning a youth's permanency plan are made on a case by case basis, taking into account the unique needs of the youth and the circumstances surrounding the youth's placement.

Through relationships with family, friends, and community, staff must assure that youth will have the resources necessary to succeed in all areas or "domains" of their lives. These domains include: identity formation, community connections and supportive relationships, physical and mental health, life skills, education, employment, and housing.

TERMS

Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA)
An online automatically scored evaluation of independent living skills. Idaho requires the use of this assessment as part of plan development for youth ages 15 and older. The ACLSA must be completed at least annually for older youth in care or receiving Independent Living services and serves as the basis for the youth's independent living services on the case plan. The assessment is completed electronically and completed by the youth with necessary assistance from the worker or caregiver. It is not a test and is designed to evaluate which skills the youth needs to develop before becoming age 18.

Chafee Independence Program Act of 1999
Legislation that establishes independent living services for older youth in care.

Idaho Chafee Foster Care Independence Program State Plan (CFCIP)
A plan designed to achieve the purposes of sections 477(b) (20)(A) and sections 477(a) (1-5) of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Act by assisting youth in achieving a goal of self-sufficiency. Idaho's plan states that youth are eligible for IL services between the ages of 15 and 21 years when they have been in an eligible alternate care placement for 90 cumulative days following the 15th birthday. The state's program assists youth in making a successful transition from alternate care to living as independently as possible as adults. Some program outcomes measures include achievement of educational goals, establishing and maintaining a home, avoiding criminal activities, establishing relationships with competent adults, and gaining employment. Statistics related to avoidance of dependency, minimization of high risk behaviors and pregnancy prevention are also used to measure the effectiveness of the state's program plan. (See State of Idaho Chafee Foster Care Independence Program State Plan 2005-2009.)

Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV)
A program established through an amendment to the Chafee Act which appropriated funds for states to provide educational and vocational training funds and services to youth. A maximum of $5,000 per youth per year may be used to assist youth to attend an institution of higher education. (See State of Idaho Chafee Foster Care Independence Program State Plan 2009-2014)

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
An act that amended Parts B and E of Title IV of the Social Security Act to connect and support relative caregivers, improve outcomes for children in foster care, provide for tribal foster care and adoption access, improve incentives for adoption, and for other purposes. One provision of the Fostering Connections Act affecting older youth in care is a transition plan during the 90-day period immediately prior to a youth's 18th birthday.

Integrated Transition Practice Framework
A holistic approach used by child welfare professionals and others responsible for guiding and supporting older youth as they prepare for adulthood. The approach, developed by the Casey Family Program (*"It's My Life")*, draws on the expertise and insights of youth in foster care, alumni of foster care, social workers, researchers, and education specialists. It emphasizes a strengths-based, integrated approach and focuses on seven key elements that influence a youth's likelihood of successful transition to adulthood. These elements include cultural and personal identity formation, community connections and supportive relationships, physical and mental health, life skills, education, employment, and housing.

Life Skills
Knowledge and abilities that support a youth's independent functioning. Examples of life skills include the following: maintaining a home, accessing transportation, understanding legal rights and responsibilities, accessing and utilizing community resources, budgeting, identifying safety concerns, identifying health care needs, decision making and problem

solving skills, effective communication, developing healthy and meaningful relationships, and developing a sense of one's self and cultural awareness.

Independent Living Services
These services may 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, counseling services including self-esteem, individual, family, and group counseling, social skills development, basic living skills training, and personal safety training.

Room and Board Services
These Services are available to those youth who have turned 18 AND aged out of foster care. They must have been in care on their 18th birthday. Room and board may include limited housing payments, deposits, utilities, furnishings and foodstuffs. If a youth is on run when the youth turns 18 but still in IDHW custody, the youth is considered to have aged out of foster care and is eligible for room and board services. Room and board services may be paid through independent living funds.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)
Beginning in October 2010, states are required to report on independent living services provided to youth in care who are age 15 or older, regardless of Idaho's IL eligibility for being in foster care 90 days or longer after the age of 15. NYTD also requires baseline and follow-up surveys for a sample of youth at ages 17, 19, and 21.

IMPLEMENTING THE STANDARD

Every youth who is 15 years of age and older and is in the custody of IDHW must have a case plan that specifically addresses life skills, education, employment, housing, use of community resources and life long connections which provide support within their community. Independent living services are a set of services that an older youth are expected to need for a smooth and successful transition into adulthood, regardless of which permanency plan is in place for the youth. Independent living skills alone, without the support of some type of family connection, may not be adequate to meet the youth's needs for safety, permanency, and well-being.

A full array of independent living services must be available to youth in tribal foster care. They must meet the same eligibility criteria, assessment, and plan development requirements as youth who are not in tribal foster care. Tribes access IL funds for youth through the designated IDHW Regional Independent Living Coordinator.

Eligibility for IL and ETV
To be eligible for Independent Living Services in Idaho, youth must meet all of the following criteria:

- A youth must be, or have been, the responsibility of the State or Indian Tribe through a court order.

- Only youth between the ages of fifteen (15) to twenty-one (21) years are eligible for services and use of funds through the independent living program;

- A youth must have resided in an eligible placement setting which includes foster care, group care, Indian boarding school, or similar foster care placement and excludes in-patient hospital stays, detention facilities, forestry camps, or other settings primarily designed for services to delinquent youth;

- A youth must have resided in an eligible foster care setting for ninety (90) cumulative days after the 15th birthday

- Room and board services are available only to IL eligible youth who have aged out of foster care settings upon reaching the age of 18 year, but have not yet reached the age of 21.

If a youth is found eligible for independent living services and subsequently reaches legal permanency status of adoption or guardianship, the youth remains eligible for independent living services until age 21.

IL eligible youth with legal permanency status of adoption or guardianship on/or after the 16th birthday are eligible for the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV's).

Courtesy Supervision and Case Transfer for Youth over 18

Courtesy Supervision
Youth enrolled in an educational setting outside of their hub of residence are eligible to receive courtesy supervision. Courtesy supervision can be requested by the hub that has primary case management responsibility. Courtesy supervision will be established through the IL coordinator in the hub of residence (permanent) and in the hub of the current educational setting (temporary).

Courtesy Supervision includes, but is not limited to the following: monthly face-to-face contact with the youth; text messages; email; phone; other means of communication; and monthly contact with the primary case manager to discuss contacts with the youth. The courtesy supervision case manager will be the local point of contact for the youth while they are residing in the area.

iCARE will not be impacted. Notes on contacts with the youth via courtesy supervision will be entered in the IL section of iCARE by the case manager providing the contact.

Service requests will be made through the primary case manager.

Case Transfer
When a youth plans to permanently move to another hub to attend school, to work or live with family or friends and has no plan to return to the hub of residence, a case transfer may be initiated.

A case transfer should be initiated by the hub that holds primary case management. Case transfer will be established through the IL coordinators of both hubs.

When the case has been transferred, the youth will be assigned a new case manager. The primary case manager in the original hub of residence is responsible for ensuring the youth and the new case manager initiate contact before case transfer is entered into iCARE and becomes effective. It is essential that youth do not lose services in the transition.

The primary case manager will close the IL PI and Plan in iCARE and the new case manager will open a new IL PI and Plan.

Birth Family Connections and Involvement
Unless otherwise indicated, staff shall encourage birth parents and other family members to contribute toward the care of their youth to the greatest extent possible. These contributions may include providing emotional, cultural, financial, or material support. In situations where the youth may be at psychological or physical risk from family members, care must be taken to ensure that the contributions do not compromise the youth's safety. The primary purposes of birth family connections and support are to ensure that the relationships with birth parents, siblings, and other family members remain intact.

Worker Contact
While a youth is in care, worker contact follows the standard for monthly face to face visits. The contact and narrative must include discussion on the youth's progress in meeting independent living goals as outlined in the youth's IL plan. Contact with youth over age 18 who have exited care does not require monthly face to face visitation but contact should be frequent enough to monitor youth's progress and identify any current needs; contact may be face to face, by letter, e-mail or by phone, unless the youth is in continued care.

Assessment of Independent Living Needs
After a youth is determined to be eligible for IL services, the Casey Life Skills Assessment (CLSA) must be completed electronically and used in developing the youth's

independent living services. See the CFS Manual for instructions on completing the CLSA.

In addition to the results of the CLSA used to identify independent living services needs of youth, assessment includes the full participation of the youth and gathering of information from family and fictive kin, foster parents, school personnel, and others having knowledge of a youth's preparedness for living independently. Youth are invited to include others they identify as helpful to assessment and planning. Planning is based on a youth-centered and strength-based approach. Assessment of a youth's independent living needs must be updated at least annually, as needed to reflect changes in the youth's development and life circumstances. ("How To" guide located on the IL SharePoint site under IL Documents/IL Tools)

Independent Living Plan Development

Every youth, 15 years of age or older and in the custody of IDHW, must have an individualized written case plan for permanence that includes independent living skill development that is updated at least annually. The plan is based on the results of the assessment of independent living needs.

The foster care provider may be an important source of guidance for the youth while the youth is working towards independent living. An assessment of the foster care provider's own needs for information or training on working with older youth is necessary for the foster family to be successful in helping the youth.

The youth's plan must include specific goals to be accomplished and dates for completion, as well as provision of services with timelines to meet the case plan goals. When developing the plan with the youth, consideration should be given to any services that can be provided by independent living service providers such as the following: community service providers; public agencies like Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, public schools, higher education; and private agencies which may or may not provide services through the regional CFS program.

If services are being provided by someone other than the IDHW social worker, such as a contractor, a quarterly report detailing progress or lack of progress towards case plan goals in the area of life skills attainment, must be submitted to the worker and a copy maintained in the youth's case file.

The youth's independent living plan including goals and services is created in iCARE separate from the family service plan and summarized in the Alternate Care Plan if the youth is still in care. The plan must be shared with the youth and foster care provider. An Independent Living Plan is also used if the youth is 18 and no longer residing in a foster care setting and for youth younger than 18 no longer in care but eligible for and receiving

IL services. A strengths-based, youth-centered, and family-centered process is used for case management and service delivery.

The individualized written IL plan for the youth includes the 7 Integrated Transition Practice Framework (ITPF) domains. The domains are as follows:

(1) Cultural and personal identity formation:

- Value and promote birth family connections. Invest in providing a continuum of information, opportunities and supports that enable youth to connect with birth families as they choose;
- Assess and provide service planning that addresses cultural needs;
- Connect youth to activities that address cultural needs; and
- Provide activities which support youth in developing a positive sense of self, with specific ideas on dealing with racism and discrimination.

(2) Supportive relationships and community connections:

- Connect youth with community resources;
- Connect youth with adult mentors;
- Create job/career opportunities for youth; and
- Create leadership opportunities for youth.

(3) Physical and mental health:

- Arrange comprehensive screenings to assess physical health, mental health and substance abuse before youth leave care;
- Arrange safety training for youth that addresses social relationships, home safety, preventing accidents and violence, reporting unsafe events, and safety response plans;
- Provide information to youth on pregnancy and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) including HIV infection;
- Assist youth in learning how to manage their own health care needs;
- Connect youth with appropriate health resources in their own community; and
- Provide youth information about available health care resources, including Medicaid or other insurance options.

(4) Life skills:

- Provide instruction for youth in goal setting and attainment; problem solving and decision-making; and self-advocacy;
- Assess youth's level of self-determination and sense of hope for the future;
- Provide youth opportunities to practice life skills in a "real world" environment, such as money management and transportation issues;
- Provide youth with information on the responsibilities of parenting and effective parenting skills, including prevention of abuse and neglect; and

- Provide services to help youth face the challenges of forming healthy attachments with others.

(5) Education:

- Structure and coordinate educational advocacy;
- Provide educational case management;
- Involve parents and caregivers along with youth;
- Make basic skill acquisition a priority;
- Recognize the impact of trauma on a youth's ability to develop and learn;
- Coordinate special education services;
- Provide career development, vocational and job training;
- Arrange for post-secondary planning and supports;
- Encourage co-curricular or extracurricular engagement; and
- Ensure collection and retrieval of all educational records for youth.

(6) Employment:

- Assist youth in identification of natural skills and abilities;
- Encourage career exploration through experience;
- Support development of job readiness training and employment skills including how to fill out a job application and create a resume;
- Work with job placement agencies and assist youth with job coaching;
- Provide preparation and training in non-traditional careers for young women;
- Teach youth how to save money and accumulate assets; and
- Provide opportunities for internships, volunteer opportunities and paid employment.

(7) Housing:

- Provide life skills classes that teach youth how to live independently such as finding an apartment and paying his or her own bills and maintain their own budget;
- Provide opportunities for youth to practice living on their own;
- Provide information on available resources to accommodate housing needs;
- Work out landlord/roommates disputes;
- Provide opportunities to learn about assuming a lease or establishing his/her own housing arrangement at exit or at the end of a transitional-living experience; and
- Ensure that youth have a safe, affordable place to live when leaving care.

("How To" guide located on the IL SharePoint site under IL Documents/IL Tools)

IL Transition Planning at Age 17 and Before Age 18

The purpose of transition planning is to assess the youth's readiness, resources and skills and provide services to prepare the youth to live independently after leaving care. The IL Transition Plan is part of the youth's case plan which is required for all youth in care who are age 15 or older. An IL Transition Plan is required at two points, when the youth in care turns 17 and when the youth is within 90 days of leaving care.

As youth move closer to age 18, they have increasing responsibility for decision-making in their case planning. The youth is included in all case planning meetings. Youth assist in identifying the adults who attend planning meetings. Attendees may include birth parents, resource parents, siblings, tribal members, or adults from a youth's natural network of support, (teachers, coaches, mentors, or former resource parents). Representatives from multiple systems within the community, including health, mental health, education, recreation, employment, juvenile justice, family court, or faith-based organizations, should be included in the planning process, as indicated. If the youth is eligible for independent living services, service planning is done in collaboration with service providers who are helping the youth attain their independent living goals.

At Age 17

No later than 60 days before or after the youth's 17th birthday, an initial transition planning meeting must be held. Transition planning participants include the youth for whom the plan is being developed, resource parent/alternate care provider, biological parent(s) when appropriate, youth mentors, educators, service providers, and others requested by the youth or specific to the youth's needs. The plan should provide for a stable transition and support network for the youth during the transition period and following the exit from care. The Transition Plan must be personalized and directed by the youth.

If a case plan including independent living domains and services has been developed prior to the age of 17, it must be reviewed and updated to ensure that it is current and reflects the current status of the youth. If IL services have not been developed prior to the age of 17, all components of the IL Plan described above within this Standard must be developed. In addition, a plan including IL transition services must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assistance in accessing and maintaining housing;*
- Health insurance options including how to apply for Medicaid and a referral to the Medicaid program, if potentially eligible;*
- Specific options on education;*
- Local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services;*
- Workforce supports and employment services; *

- Listing of resources and contact information including phone numbers and addresses. The Permanency Pact identifies contacts who have pledged to be available to the youth have the youth leaves care;
- Connections to peer supports, such as the Foster Care Alumni Association (FCAA) http://www.fostercarealumni.org/ Information about Idaho's FCAA Chapter can be found by clicking on "FCAA Chapters";*
- Support as needed during transition to self-sufficiency; and
- Birth Certificate and Social Security Card.

Within 90 days of age 18

During the 90-day period immediately prior to a youth's 18th birthday, or at exit from foster care if the youth remains in care past the age of 18 to complete high school, the Independent Living Plan/Transition Plan must be reviewed and updated to ensure that it is current and reflects the current status of the youth. As a youth approaches age 18, transition planning should already be in place and the youth should be acquiring life skills and information necessary to successful transition after exit from foster care. The team must review what has been accomplished on the plan and what steps need to be taken to assure the youth will move to independent living. Courts may request this final transition plan prior to the youth aging out of care.

In addition to the IL Transition Plan requirements listed above for IL Transition Plans, youth must also be given information about the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the youth. If the youth becomes unable to participate in such decisions and does not have, or does not want, a relative who would otherwise be authorized under State law to make such decisions, the youth should also be provided with the option to execute a health care power of attorney, health care proxy, or other similar document recognized under State law. In Idaho, the document and description are found at http://www2.state.id.us/ag/living_wills/index.htm.

The Social Security Administration may accept an SSI application from youth with disabilities living in foster care up to 90 days before federal foster care payments are expected to end. This is an exception to the general rule of accepting an SSI application only in the month before the month of eligibility. The policy allows youth with disabilities more time to establish income and health benefits without a delay at the time of the 18th birthday. For reference when communicating with SSA, this information is found in the Program Operations Manual, Part 5-SSI, Chapter 006-SSI Application Process, Subchapter 01-General Applications and Interviewing Policy, Transmittal No. 18, 01/2010.

At age 18, complete the following tasks:

► Update youth addresses in iCARE when they leave foster care. This allows the Resource Development Unit (RDU) to transfer Medicaid eligibility and inform the Social Security Administration so youth can continue to receive SSI monies.

► Close the placement in iCARE within 2 days of the 18th birthday if youth will not be continuing in care.

See the subsection on "Continued Care Beyond Age 18" in this section of this standard for further direction if youth will remain in care to complete secondary education

Credit Reports for youth in foster care

P. L. 112-3 amends the Title IV-E case review system definition to require that each child in foster care who is age 16 and older must receive a copy of a consumer credit report regarding the youth's credit history. A new report must be received by the youth each year until the youth is discharged from foster care. Each youth must be assisted in interpreting the credit report and resolving inconsistencies (section 475(5)(I) of the Act).

The charts below describe the process in implementing the requirement in to practice and how to resolve problems that may come as a result of receiving the credit report.

Step 1	**Step 2**	**Step 3**	**Step 4**	**Step 5**
RDU	**RDU**	**IL Coordinator**	**Case Worker**	**Youth**
Will run a Credit Report for each youth ages 16-18 annually based on DOB.	Will post a copy of the credit report on the youth's Share Point site.	Will receive all alerts in their assigned regions.	Will obtain from SharePoint a copy of the credit report.	Will receive a copy of the credit report and have a conversation with the caseworker about the results.
	Will alert the IL coordinator that the credit report has been posted.	Will alert the case worker assigned to the case and walk them through the process.	Will plan a meeting with the youth to translate the report within 30 days of the alert and post response date in SharePoint.	

Problem Resolution Process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Case Worker	**RDU**	**Case Worker**	**Youth**
Will discuss issues with youth for any possible information or clarification regarding what is found on the report.	Will send a dispute letter. Will list IL coordinator down as person of reference in the letter.	Will follow required instructions to clear the credit report with youth.	Will work with case worker to clear the credit report.
Will report this conversation and request dispute in share point.	Will post feedback to caseworker and alert the IL coordinator.	Will check link on IL Share Point site for additional information regarding disputes.	

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)
NYTD requirements were established in the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Act of 1999 but not implemented until October 2010. Data elements required for youth in care who are 15 and older are integrated with other information gathered on the youth and entered in iCARE.

A second NYTD data requirement are baseline and follow-up surveys of youth services on a sample of youth at age 17, 19, and 21.

("How To" guide located on the IL SharePoint site under IL Documents/NYTD)

Permanency Pact
Youth transitioning from foster care are often unsure who they can count on for ongoing support. Many of their significant relationships with adults have been based on professional connections which will terminate once the transition from care is completed. It is critical to the youth's success to identify those adults who will continue to provide various supports through and beyond the transition from care. Clarifying exactly what the various supports will include can help to avoid gaps in the youth's safety net and misunderstandings between the youth and the supportive adult(s).

Suggested Supports include: a home for the holidays, a place to do laundry, emergency place to stay, food/occasional meals, care package at college, employment opportunity, job search assistance, career counseling, housing hunt, recreational activities, mentor, transportation, educational assistance, relationship counseling, assistance with medical issues, storage, motivation, someone to discuss problems with, a phone to use, a computer to use, clothing, spiritual support, legal advise, etc.

Copies of the Permanency Pact for each of the adults who has indicated a willingness to provide support should be made for the youth and placed in the Health and Education Passport, a document distributed to youth when they age out of care.

Health and Education Passport

Before a youth exits foster care the caseworker ensures that the youth has received their Health and Education Passport. The Health and Education Passport includes the following:

- Birth Certificate;
- Social Security Card;
- Immunization Record - complete and up to date;
- Health Records and Medical Card - allergies, hospitalizations, treatments, medications; list of all past medical exams with diagnoses (if there are any), childhood diseases;
- Information about the importance of designating another individual to make health care treatment decisions on behalf of the person if he/she is unable to participate in such decisions, specifically as found in Idaho's Living Wills and Idaho's Natural Death Act at http://www2.state.id.us/ag/living_wills/index.htm ;
- Education Record - past and present schools attended, report cards, IEP's, transcripts, letters of achievement;
- Independent Living Plan - Most recent independent living plan;
- Letter of Verification of Dependency in the State of Idaho - A letter of verification establishes eligibility for future independent living services and enables the youth to receive independent living services from another state if he/she leaves Idaho;
- Permanency Pact developed with the youth before the youth leaves care. The Permanency Pact focuses on situations that may occur and where the youth would receive help in those situations. It includes a list of people the youth might contact if in need of help or support;.
- State and Regional Resource Guide, as available; and
- ETV information.

Declaration of Commitment to Provide Permanent Living Arrangement
The "Declaration of Commitment to Provide a Permanent Living Arrangement" is appropriate in all foster care cases in which at least one of the youth's concurrent goals is another planned permanent living arrangement other than adoption, guardianship, reunification, or permanent place with relatives. All other permanent placement options must be explored in depth before this arrangement may be used. In all foster care cases in which the permanency goal is another planned permanent living arrangement, the Department is required to show that the youth is in a "permanent" living arrangement with a foster parent or relative caregiver and that there is a commitment on the part of all parties involved that the youth remains in that placement until he or she reaches the age of majority.

The "Declaration of Commitment to Provide a Permanent Living Arrangement" form must be signed by the youth and foster parent or relative caregiver, placed in the youth's file, and documented in narrative in iCARE. Foster parents or relative caregivers are not required to sign this form but efforts should be made to explain the importance of permanency and encourage them to make that commitment. The youth should not be moved from this placement just because the resource parent or relative caregiver does not sign the form. However, if a resource parent or relative caregiver is reluctant to sign the Declaration of Commitment agreement, thought should be given as to whether or not this is the most appropriate and "permanent" situation available for this youth.

Continued Care Beyond Age 18
When a youth reaches age 18 and the plan is for the youth to continue in a licensed placement while the youth completes high school, the youth's case may remain open and the resource parent may continue to receive foster care maintenance payments funded through IV-E. The youth may also remain open for Title XIX Foster Care Medicaid if the purpose of continued care is not to complete their secondary education or they are not IV-E eligible. The criteria for IV-E funded Continued Care are as follows:

- The youth must have already been found to be IV-E eligible prior the youth's 18th birthday;
- The youth must be working full time towards a secondary education. This can be accomplished in the form of traditional high school, alternative high school or a GED/Equivalency;
- Youth must be on track to graduate by age 19;
- Youth must remain in a licensed foster care home or facility; and
- Youth must complete and sign a "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form immediately upon reaching their 18th birthday. (Youth are unable to sign legal agreement prior to the 18th birthday).

Regional staff receives an iCARE alert when a youth is nearing 18 years of age. Regions are required to send to the Resource Development Unit a re-determination and a "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form signed by the youth if the plan is for the youth to remain in alternate care. The "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18

Years of Age" form replaces the "Voluntary Placement Agreement" for this purpose. The placement must remain open in iCARE and their "Education" and "Legal" sections must be complete. The "Education" section of iCARE must reflect that the youth is continuing foster care for the purpose of finishing high school and is on target to graduate before the 19th birthday; adding narrative in this section ensures clarity of that status. In the "Legal" section of iCARE, a statement must be made in the narrative to the effect that this is a "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" and not a "Voluntary Placement Agreement" that is designed to be signed by parents**.** Monthly face to face contact is required on all continued care arrangements and documented in iCARE accordingly.

The Resource Development Unit (RDU) will extend IV-E funding and Medicaid for IV-E eligible youth for six months when the re-determination and "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form is received from the region. At this time, as determined by the youth and their social worker/clinician, the youth may apply for Medicaid independently through Self Reliance or continue through RDU. The "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form must be completed with the youth's name, signature and date once the youth turns 18 and can legally sign. The re-determination should have the expected date of school completion for verification purposes. IV-E funding will be terminated after six months and the social worker/clinician will receive an alert from iCARE that another re-determination and "Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form is needed for continued care. At this point funding transfers to Title XIX. If the youth has completed school, dropped out, or left placement, RDU must be notified at once to avoid an overpayment.

If the case is Title XIX (state funds), the region is still required to send the re-determination and **"**Mutual Agreement for Youth Turning 18 Years of Age" form to the RDU. The youth remains open for Title XIX and Medicaid.

When the youth continues in alternate care and is no longer title IV-E or title XIX eligible, IL funds may be used to pay for the youth's continued residence in the resource home if this is determined to be in the best interest of the youth. The foster care basic reimbursement rate for youth ages 13-18 will be used to negotiate payment with resource parents for housing. When working with the youth in locating housing other than with resource parents, staff should coordinate with local and state housing authorities, exploring all resources including Section 8 and Family Unification Program availability for youth.

If a youth continues to be eligible for Social Security (SS) benefits after the youth turns 18 years of age, the Department could continue to be payee for those benefits. Prior to a youth turning 18, the case worker should contact RDU and the Social Security Liaison to determine if the SS benefit can continue beyond age 18 and what steps need to be taken to ensure the benefits are not lost.

Independent Living for Tribal Youth not in DHW Care
The Department 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 access IL funds for youth through the designated DHW Regional Independent Living Coordinator. Funds for tribal youth are allocated based on the completion of the Casey Living Skills Assessment and the youth's Independent Living Plan for meeting transitional living goals.

All requirements for IL Plan and IL Transition Plan development must be completed as described earlier in this document. According to local arrangement, regional DHW staff may train or assist tribal social service staff to complete IL Plans.

IL Services for Youth Who Have Exited Care
All IL eligible youth who leave alternate care and subsequently contact IDHW to request services must receive a Casey Life Skills Assessment to assess their current needs for achieving goals to ensure their successful transition into adulthood. Additionally they will actively participate in the development of their plan. Although contact with the youth does not require monthly face to face visitation, contact should be frequent enough to monitor youth's progress and identify any current needs. Contact can be face to face, by letter, e-mail or by phone.

IL Services for Youth Who Have Moved To or From Idaho From Another State
IL services may be provided to eligible youth 15 to 21 who have exited foster care settings in any states' public child welfare agency if there is an assessed independent living need and providing services is appropriate to assist them to successfully transition to self-sufficiency. American Indian/Alaska Native youth, for whom a tribe is legally responsible for placement and care and who satisfies the eligibility criteria, may also receive IL services.

Each state defines IL eligibility but all are required to provide services to youth who aged out of care. If a youth has an open IL Plan, the state that developed the plan has responsibility for funding of IL services, to the extent required and available.

To contact the IL Coordinator in another state to verify eligibility or coordinate services associated with a move, go to the web site for the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) and click on the link "State by State." This web site is http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/state-pages/coordinators

Education and Training Voucher (ETV)
ETV is available to youth who are eligible for services under Idaho's Independent Living Program; however, for purposes of the voucher program, in cases where the youth has been adopted after reaching IL eligibility, ETV is restricted to youth who have legal permanency status of adoption or guardianship on or after their 16th birthday.

Youth participating in ETV on their 21st birthday remain eligible until 23 years of age as long as they remain enrolled in a full or part-time post secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress in completing their course of study or training. Satisfactory progress for ETV purposes is defined as maintaining a GPA of at least 2.0.

The Education and Training Voucher Program assists youth who have a high school diploma or GED to attend an institution of higher education as defined by the Higher Education Act (HEA). To be considered a public or nonprofit institution of higher education, an educational entity must meet the following criteria (section 101(a) and (b) of HEA):

> (1) admits as regular students only persons with a high school diploma or equivalency degree (GED), OR students above the age of compulsory school attendance in the State where the institution is located;
> (2) is authorized by the State to provide post-secondary education;
> (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or at least a two year program (e.g., an associate degree) that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree OR provides at least a one-year training program to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation; and
> (4) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, recognized by the Department of Education, or has been granted pre-accreditation status by the agency or association.

A proprietary (for-profit) institution must provide a training program to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and meet the same criteria as described in (1) and (2) above for public or nonprofit schools. In addition, the institution must: be accredited by an agency or association recognized by the Department of Education; be in existence for at least two years; and, have at least 10 percent of its funding come from sources other than title IV of HEA (section 102(a)(1)(A) and 102(b) of HEA).

A post-secondary vocational institution must be a public or nonprofit school in existence for at least 2 years, which provides a training program to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. The school must also meet the criteria described in (1), (2) and (4) above (section 102(a)(1)(B)) and 102(c) of HEA).

Certain institutions may not be considered an "institution of higher education" if they have a high percentage of distance learning classes or students, incarcerated students and students without a high school degree, or have previously filed for bankruptcy or have been convicted of fraud using HEA funds (section 102(a)(3) and (a)(4) of HEA).

Funding is available to eligible youth to assist with the cost of attendance as defined by the educational institution up to $5,000 per academic year. Youth who were eligible for services under Idaho's current Chafee program are eligible for ETV with the exception of youth who were adopted or had a completed guardianship before the age of 16.

Cost of attendance may include tuition and fees, room and board, child care, rental or purchase of required equipment, allowance for books, transportation and other identified service needs to support the youth's education goals.

ETV Program Application Requirements

1. An ETV Program Application must be completed by the youth and endorsed by their case worker.
2. An ETV Program Application must include the written Independent-Living service plan for achieving educational goals, including documentation of collaboration with service providers and IDHW's role in supporting the youth.
3. An ETV Program Application must include a signed release of information form for the sharing of information between IDHW, Institutions of Higher or Technical Education and service providers.
4. An ETV Program Application must be signed by the youth, the youth's case manager, the case worker's supervisor and the CFS Program Manager;

A copy of the completed ETV Program Application must be sent to State Independent Living Coordinator. Due to the nature of the ETV Program and the need to monitor the youth's educational progress, case managers must provide support to youth involved in the ETV Program by maintaining monthly face to face, e-mail or telephone contact with the youth. The case manager requests semester or quarter grades to monitor the youth's academic progress.

Applications for funding through the ETV Program may be made yearly as long as the youth continues to make progress toward their academic or vocational training goals.

Any action taken not consistent with this standard must be pre-approved by the FACS Division Administrator or designee. The action, rationale and approval must be documented in the file.