

October 25, 2023



Foster Youth Learn Life Skills at  
**The 20<sup>th</sup> Annual “Independent City”**

(Bakersfield, CA) – The Kern County’s Department of Human Services Independent Living Program’s Event called, **Independent City**, works hard to prepare foster youth to be on their own. Through Extended Foster Care Programs, foster youth can be eligible to remain in the child welfare and probation systems until age 21. **Independent City** is one of many offerings that help to prepare and equip these youth with the tools they will need to succeed.

The **20th Annual Independent City** is an all-day event that features opportunities for local foster youth to learn about the ups and downs of adulthood. Independent City is an interactive experience with vendors and community partners designed to teach youth how to juggle between college classes, employment, and the challenges of life, like renting an apartment and turning on utilities. Participating youth are linked with many community resources during a vendor fair, and will participate in workshops lead by Peer Support Workers teaching about the do’s and don’ts of job interviewing, and other important skills.

**Independent City** takes place Saturday, October 28· 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Bakersfield College.

***Remember, privacy is important to our foster children who are still minors, and this event is not open to the public.***

**The media is invited to interview approved Foster Youth between 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. after checking in with Jana Slagle 661.342.8054. We will also have staff available for interviews to explain the purpose of the day and the ILP program.**

Please join us for this wonderful opportunity to highlight the obstacles faced by our Foster Youth and the work that is being done to help them in their successful transition into adulthood. Without some kind of transition program, statistics show 10-25% of emancipated youth become homeless within 18 months out of care and 20% of former foster youth will be incarcerated within the first two years of emancipation.

But the Independent Living Program, or ILP, helps to provide opportunities and options to help empower Kern County’s challenged teens, and change those statistics. The ILP Program serves over 500 youth in foster care and offers services to another 600 after they exit the foster care system until they turn 21.

For additional information, please contact Jana Slagle at 661.633.7104 or [slaglej@kerndhs.com](mailto:slaglej@kerndhs.com)

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