



I'M GOING TO LIVE MY DREAMS



The Department of Human Services has many supportive services available to assist youth preparing to transition from the foster care system or young adults in foster care eligible for the emancipated youth program.



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FOSTER CARE TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

KERN COUNTY DEPARTMENT
OF HUMAN SERVICES



INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

The Independent Living Program [ILP] is a federally funded program that provides services to assist eligible youth and young adults up to age 21 in making a successful transition from foster care to independent living. The goal of the program is to enable youth to achieve self-sufficiency prior to exiting the foster care system by providing an independent living skills assessment, assistance with developing a written Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP), collaborating with caregivers and community partners to provide life-skills training and opportunities for increased responsibility in the lives of each youth/young adult. Services:

- Transitional Independent Living Plan
- Education Planning
- College and Financial Aid Applications
- Career Planning, Job Leads, Resumes
- Transitional Housing for Emancipated Youth
- Emancipation Conferences and Special Life Skills Workshops
- Transportation Assistance
- Referrals to Community Resources
- Introduction to California Youth Connection [CYC]
- Incentives for ILP participation
- Mentoring
- Assistance in Obtaining Birth Certificate, Social Security Card, California Identification Card and Savings Account
- Viewing Your Child Welfare Case Files
- Proof of Dependency Letters

ILP offers activities such as a High School Graduation Celebration Dinner, Summer Life Skills Classes at CSUB, Independent City, and a variety of ILP Workshops.

In addition, ILP in partnership with the Kern High School District's Career Resource Department, provides Life-Skills Classes. These classes are taught in two Tiers. Tier-I classes are for 16-17 yr olds who are not yet seniors and will provide foundational life skills information coupled with a job shadow/service learning experience as an introduction to employment. Tier-II classes are for seniors on up to age 21 and will build on Tier-I information by providing more advanced instruction. The focus will be on life after exiting the foster care system focusing on post-secondary education, training, and employability skills. Youth completing Tier-II can be placed at a worksite and receive up to 100 hours of paid work experience (depending on available funding).

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

Eligible foster youth can voluntarily remain in foster care after the age of 18 as Non-Minor Dependents (NMDs) until age 21. NMDs are required to sign an agreement, live in an approved placement, meet monthly with their Social Service Worker/Probation Officer, and complete a TILP. Attend court hearings or administrative reviews every 6 months and agree to meet one or more of the following requirements: completing high school or equivalent program (i.e. GED); enrolled in college, community college or vocational training program; participating in a program designed to remove barriers to employment; employed at least 80 hours a month; unable to do one of the previously mentioned requirements because of a medical condition. NMDs can exit and re-enter foster care as needed or until they are no longer eligible. Various housing options are available.



HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Building Blocks Transitional Housing Program:

Building Blocks is a collaborative effort between the Department of Human Services (KCDHS), the Housing Authority of Kern (HACK), and Covenant Community Services Inc (Covenant). Former foster youth, who are 18-21 years of age, are eligible to apply for this comprehensive on-site program that teaches youth how to pursue educational and employment goals, get acclimated to the community, develop and maintain a budget, enhance daily living skills, and reach personal goals. Participating youth will be required to work full or part time and may attend school. Youth who successfully complete the program are provided with a section 8 voucher to assist them with affordable housing in the community.

The housing complex itself is a rehabilitated residential facility in Southwest Bakersfield which can accommodate a maximum of 12 youth, who each share a furnished apartment with a roommate. There are laundry facilities on-site, rent is subsidized, and youth are allowed to reside there for up to 24 months.

To be considered for admission, applicants need to complete a Transitional Housing Application, obtained from the Independent Living Program.

Transitional Housing Placement Plus Program (THP-PLUS):

Kern County Department of Human Services has contracted with Covenant Community Services Inc. (Covenant) to administer Kern's THP-Plus Program. The CHOICES THP-Plus Program can accommodate up to 58 participants, and allows participants the opportunity for safe, secure housing while they develop and obtain necessary education, employment, and life skills needed for independent living. To be eligible for this program a youth must be 18-24, and have aged out of the foster care system. CHOICES THP- Plus offers the HOST Home and Scattered Site Models. HOST Home Model - Participants live with a HOST family, who has been screened and certified by Covenant, for up to 36 months. Participants receive a rental subsidy, living allowance, and individualized case management services to assist them with achieving educational, employment, and life skills goals.

Scattered Sites Model - Participants obtain and live in their own apartment for up to 24 months. Participants receive a rental subsidy, living allowance, and individualized case management services to assist them with achieving educational, employment, and life skills goals.

To be considered for admission, applicants need to complete a Transitional Housing Application, obtained from the Independent Living Program.

EMANCIPATED YOUTH SERVICES

- There are many Emancipated Youth Services available through the Kern County Independent Living Program to emancipated foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who were in the foster care system after their 16th birthday. These services enable youth to achieve and maintain self-sufficiency, give them the ability to live on their own and educate them as to how to deal with the issues and demands independent living can present. Emergency Response: The Child Welfare Service's investigation will determine if abuse or neglect is occurring, if a child is at risk in the home and if protective custody is necessary.
- Transportation assistance is available through the distribution of bus passes, or by enabling eligible youth to earn their driver's license.
- Medical insurance is available to emancipated youth through the Medi-Cal program until the age of 26.
- Youth preparing to emancipate are given the opportunity to apply for food stamps so that if eligible they exit the Foster Care system with CalFresh in place.
- Assist with securing housing
- Make necessary referrals on behalf of the youth

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The California Chaffee Grant Program gives up to \$5000 in monetary benefits annually to foster youth and former foster youth for use toward college courses or vocational school training. We help participants to complete financial aid and scholarship applications for programs such as this, as well as provide assistance in completing the FAFSA application for college. Reimbursements for college textbooks may be available.

Kern County Department of Human Services partners with the Kern High School District's Career Resource Department to assist current and former foster youth with employment needs. Through the Kern High School District, youth can access programs like Project Success, Adolescent Career Transition (ACT), and Kern @ Work. These programs provide youth with the life skills training and paid work experience opportunities necessary to prepare for a successful future.

DREAM CENTER

The Kern County Network for Children, working in conjunction with community partners, created an innovative resource center for foster youth located at 1801 19th Street in downtown Bakersfield. Through the Dream Center, youth can access The Learning Center, attend workshops, be linked with services and receive assistance with education and employment. Youth can also get showers, do laundry, and receive clothing for job interviews. ILP Social Workers and AB-12 Social Workers are stationed at The Dream Center.

Dream Center 661.636.4488