



The Washington Association for Children and Families (WACF) represents all Independent Living providers across Washington state. WACF advocates alongside our members to help strengthen the services provided to youth and young adults to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and support to make a successful transition into adulthood. In Washington State, youth exiting the foster care system are at higher risk for a variety of adverse outcomes, including homelessness, financial and employment instability, and ongoing systems involvement and recidivism. WACF's work aims to support and stabilize the provider community to ensure positive and stable outcomes for all youth exiting the foster care system.

### Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services Providers (ILS) have been working closely with DCYF on a request for funding that would greatly expand the number of youth that could be served across the state. ILS Providers currently serve about 28% of all eligible young people. By the state taking this critical step of funding this work, not only will more youth in foster care be impacted by a wider availability of services, but youth exiting juvenile rehabilitation (JR) will also become eligible for these critical transition services.

In addition, too many foster youth are at risk of exiting care into homelessness. SB 6560 stated that no young person leaving a system of care should exit into homelessness, and by investing in IL Services, young people leaving foster care and juvenile rehabilitation can obtain some of the support they need to make a successful transition into adulthood. IL services can assist youth in obtaining and maintaining housing; provide essential educational support; prepare young people for stable employment and financial independence; and ensure they have the life skills they need to succeed. IL Providers do this by providing consistent relationship-based support that is youth-centered and focused on empowering young people to make a positive transition from systems of care.

- **Youth currently served: approximately 1200** (749 in foster care and 421 alumni of foster care)
- **Juvenile Rehabilitation youth (JR) currently being served:** (no youth are eligible currently)
- **Youth eligible for IL services: 4344** (1087 in foster care, 500 JR, and 2757 alumni of foster care)

WACF strongly encourages the legislature to provide state funding for **Independent Living Services \$7,214,500** state (\$2,900,000 federal) to increase the rate paid to Independent Living Providers to be able to expand much-needed services to youth who may be **risk of exiting foster care into homelessness**.

#### For Additional Information, Please Contact

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