

2024 Budget Priority Independent Living Services

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 have the necessary skills and support to transition into adulthood successfully.

What is Needed?

Stabilize the rate of the Independent Living Program to ensure the availability of independent living services, backfill for declining federal funding, and a rate that will sustain independent living service providers. The current rate does not cover the costs of retaining staff and the rising costs of doing business.

WACF strongly encourages the legislature to fund ILS for **\$4,250,000**. Failing to do so limits the ability of community-based agencies to provide these critical services.

Independent Living Services

In Washington State, youth exiting the foster care system are at higher risk for various adverse outcomes, including homelessness, financial and employment instability, ongoing systems involvement, and recidivism. WACF aims to support and stabilize the provider community to ensure positive and stable outcomes for all youth exiting the foster care system.

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 obtain the support they need to make a successful transition into adulthood. IL services assist youth in obtaining housing, including navigating local housing resources, and housing vouchers, and provide housing maintenance and skill building to ensure that housing stability is sustainable for young people. IL also provides essential educational support, prepares young people for stable employment and financial independence, and ensures 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.

For Additional Information, Please Contact

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