

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2580

As Passed House:
February 18, 2020

Title: An act relating to requiring the department of children, youth, and families to submit a report regarding independent living services.

Brief Description: Reporting on independent living services.

Sponsors: Representatives Caldier, Callan, Dent, Corry and Frame.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Human Services & Early Learning: 1/24/20, 1/29/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/18/20, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to submit a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2020, and annually thereafter that includes certain information about independent living services.
- Requires the DCYF to provide a complete explanation of why it was unable to provide certain information about independent living services if unable to provide that data in the required report.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & EARLY LEARNING

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Senn, Chair; Callan, Vice Chair; Frame, Vice Chair; Dent, Ranking Minority Member; Eslick, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McCaslin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Corry, Goodman, Griffey, Kilduff, Klippert, Lovick and Ortiz-Self.

Staff: Luke Wickham (786-7146).

Background:

Independent Living Services.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

State law authorizes the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to provide Independent Living Services (ILS) to youth, including individuals who are age 18, and have not turned 23 years of age, who are or have been in the care and custody of the DCYF or are participating in extended foster care.

The federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood program provides funding for independent living and education and training vouchers. The DCYF contracts with 12 ILS providers and 17 tribes to provide support and services to eligible youth. The DCYF caseworkers refer youth age 15 or older to ILS, and the provider must make at least three attempts to engage the youth in this voluntary program.

Youth are eligible for ILS if they are:

- age 15 or older;
- under age 23; and
- in foster care in an open dependency action through the DCYF or a tribal child welfare agency for at least 30 days on or after his or her fifteenth birthday.

Once a youth is eligible, he or she remains eligible until age 23, even if he or she achieves his or her permanent plan.

The DCYF contracts with local community-based agencies and federally recognized tribes throughout the state to provide ILS, which includes:

- assistance in achieving basic educational requirements such as a high school equivalency certificate;
- enrollment in vocational and technical training programs offered at the community and technical colleges;
- obtaining and maintaining employment;
- accomplishing basic life skills such as money management, nutrition, preparing meals, and house cleaning; and
- funding up to \$500 is available for enrichment activities related to the youth's independent living goals.

A baseline skill level in ability to function productively and independently shall be determined at entry. Performance must be measured by demonstrating improvement from involvement in the program.

Each recipient of ILS must have a plan for achieving independent living skills by the time the recipient turns age 21. This plan must be written within the first 30 days of placement and reviewed every 90 days. A recipient who does not adhere to the plan will be reassessed by the program and may be declared ineligible for ILS.

Summary of Bill:

The DCYF must submit a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2020, and annually thereafter that includes the following information about independent living services:

- a description of the services that independent living providers are contracted to provide;
- a description of the services delivered by each independent living provider;

- the number of children who were served by each independent living provider;
- the average and median per capita expenditures on independent living services;
- the number of young adults 18 to 21 years of age who received independent living services; and
- a description of the services administered to youth who transition between counties after their eighteenth birthday.

If the DCYF is unable to provide this data, the DCYF must provide a complete explanation of why the DCYF was unable to do so.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) The ILS changes from county to county, and there is a lack of accountability for these services. The only records on ILS show how much money is spent on the programs but not on the outcomes achieved by these programs. Foster youth are struggling, and we need to help them.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Caldier, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.