

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 11: Older Youth Services Section 04: State Youth Advisory Board	
	Effective Date: August 1, 2023	Version: 5

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POLICY OVERVIEW

The Indiana Foster Youth Alliance (IFYA) meets quarterly and provides older youth in foster care or previously in foster care the opportunity to acquire leadership skills, advocacy skills, and take an active role in changing the service standards and policies of the Older Youth Services (OYS) programs.

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PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will fund the IFYA. The IFYA is available for Child in Need of Services (CHINS), Older Youth Case Management, and Juvenile Delinquent/Juvenile Status (JD/JS) youth 14 to 23 years of age in foster care and former foster youth 18 to 23 years of age who were in foster care for a period of at least six (6) months with a Case Plan/Prevention Plan identifying the need for Older Youth Services (OYS).

The following youth are eligible for membership on the IFYA:

1. Youth 14 to 23 years of age who are in foster care as a CHINS or JD/JS;
2. Youth 14 to 23 years of age who were formerly in foster care as a CHINS or JD/JS between 14 to 18 years of age that were returned to their own homes and remain a CHINS or JD/JS with a Case Plan/Prevention Plan establishing the need for OYS;
3. Youth 18 to 23 years of age who were formerly in foster care on their 18th birthday as a CHINS or JD/JS and had a Case Plan/Prevention Plan establishing the need for OYS;
4. Youth 18 to 23 years of age who would otherwise meet the eligibility criteria above and who were in the custody of another state or were a “ward of another state” through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) if there is a verification of wardship and all eligibility criteria from the state of jurisdiction are met;
5. Youth 16 to 23 years of age who were adopted or placed in a guardianship at or after age 16 and were wards of DCS prior to adoption or guardianship;
6. Youth 18 to 19 years of age who are participating in CC;
7. Youth 14 to 15 years of age who have received approval from the youth’s parent, guardian, or custodian and Child and Family Team (CFT) members may participate in the IFYA with special consideration/approval from IFYA board members and the Independent Living (IL) Specialist; and
8. Youth receiving Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds may serve on the IFYA until age 23.

Note: The IFYA is an inclusive environment for all older youth regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, creed, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, sexual identity, or gender identity (see the Youth Advisory Board Service Standards).

The Family Case Manager (FCM) or Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) will:

1. Assist eligible youth, who demonstrate the desire and willingness to voice their opinion on foster care related matters and participate in public speaking opportunities, in submitting an Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application (see the Indiana Youth Advisory Board website);
2. Complete the recommendation section in the Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application, or assist the youth in obtaining a recommendation from a service provider or current member of the IFYA; and
3. Assist youth in removing any transportation barriers.

The interested youth must submit the completed Indiana Foster Youth Alliance Application to the IFYA Adult Facilitator. The IFYA will review the applications and determine if the applicants meet the IFYA eligibility requirements. Applications are subject to the approval of the IFYA and the DCS Local Office Director (LOD) for the county of wardship or the youth's current residence if the youth is no longer a ward.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Foster Care

Foster care is 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parent, guardian, or custodian and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility.

Indiana Foster Youth Alliance (IFYA) Adult Facilitator

The IFYA Adult Facilitator is an individual from an outside agency with whom DCS has a contract to facilitate all aspects of the IFYA, which includes collecting the Indiana Foster Youth Alliance Application forms and assisting the IFYA members in developing the skills necessary to successfully oversee the activities of the IFYA.

Note: IFYA members will be a part of the selection and interview process for the Adult Facilitator.

Older Youth Services

The purpose of OYS is to:

1. Assist identified youth who are expected to remain in foster care until their 18th birthday or after in making the transition to self-sufficiency;
2. Help identified youth receive the necessary education, training, and services to overcome potential barriers to employment;
3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary education and/or training programs;
4. Provide personal and emotional support for youth aging out of foster care;
5. Assist youth in locating and identifying community resources that will be available to the youth after DCS involvement has ended; and
6. Encourage positive personal growth in older youth through "teachable moments".

Forms and Tools

- Case Plan/Prevention Plan (SF 2956) - available in the case management system
- [Indiana Foster Youth Alliance website](#)
- [Indiana Foster Youth Alliance Application](#)
- [Youth Advisory Board Service Standards](#)

Related Policies

N/A

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LEGAL REFERENCES

- [42 USC 677: John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood](#)
- [Pub. L. No. 113-128: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(previously the Workforce Investment Act of 1998\)](#)

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 11.04

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

Benefits of Participation in the Indiana Foster Youth Alliance (IFYA)

It is expected that participation in the IFYA will:

1. Balance the youth's need for support and empowerment;
2. Accommodate a broad range (type and intensity) of youth participation;
3. Demonstrate clear, concrete, and sincere appreciation of youth contributions;
4. Assist youth in assuming roles traditionally reserved for adults for which they have no prior experience;
5. Allow for consistent opportunities to give structured feedback regarding the quantity and quality of services and supports provided to youth in care and after they have aged out;
6. Facilitate the development of personal responsibility;
7. Initiate opportunities for youth leadership and service development;
8. Develop coordination with the Workforce Investment Act Youth Councils (for further information, see Chapter 2 sections 126-129 of the Workforce Investment Act);
9. Provide an opportunity to learn from youth what is really important to them;
10. Improve the quality of Older Youth Services (OYS) by obtaining direct input and feedback from youth members receiving services;
11. Assist with the opportunity to develop or change public policy; and
12. Provide an opportunity to gain leadership and advocacy experience (e.g., serve on regionally or state-based boards or committees as needed or requested by local communities).

Youth Development

The IFYAs are designed to provide a forum for youth 14 to 23 years of age to develop an agenda related to services and areas of interest the youth believe would be beneficial in assisting foster and former foster youth in reaching their full potential as the youth move into adulthood.

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