

Journey Home Transitional Living (ILA) Program
Overview and Description

Introduction

Journey Home is continually striving to identify and overcome areas of need in substitute care for the youth that we serve. As part of our Foster Care Program, we offer a thriving Independent Living Program that has been quite beneficial in preparing youth in foster care for emancipation and transitioning into adulthood, including lighting the path for youth to transition to the Ohio Bridges Program. However, despite our efforts, we believe there continues to be a “gap” for youth during this transitioning phase, as they emancipate from the foster care system that does not allow them the opportunities to truly develop “independence” successfully. While in foster care, youth and families must adhere to more strict foster care policies, and once the youth’s custody is terminated, and they emancipate, there is a lack of rules and guidance, leaving them to figure things out more on their own in the absence of family to help guide them.

As a means of bridging this gap, Journey Home is adding the function of Independent Living Arrangement (ILA) to our licensure with Ohio Department of Children and Youth, by developing the Journey Home Transitional Living (ILA) Program. We believe our ILA will assist youth ages 17 and older, who remain in the custody of a public agency, to emancipate and transition into adulthood more successfully and to be more equipped to be independent and utilize programs that have been developed to continue to assist them as emancipated youth.

Transitional Living (ILA) Program Design

Each participant in the Journey Home Transitional Living ILA will be provided with a single bedroom within a 3 bedroom apartment. Journey Home will provide a bed and mattress, a dresser for the youth’s clothing, and a small refrigerator in each bedroom. The apartment will have a fully furnished kitchen, bathroom and living area that will be shared by the youth residing in the apartment. The participant’s bedroom will be able to be locked to ensure privacy and safety of the participant’s personal belongings. The ILA Resident Staff will maintain a the code or key for safety purposes and periodic room checks. Participants will also have a locked cabinet/closet area within the apartment that is identified as theirs for storage of food and other items they purchase for themselves. Internet access will also be provided, as many participants may need the use of internet for their academic and work needs. Participants and/or Custodial Agency will be responsible for the youth’s bedding, bathroom linens and initial clothing needs.

Each participant in the Journey Home Transitional Living ILA will be provided a weekly stipend to assist them in providing for their own needs, including purchasing food, hygiene supplies, cleaning supplies, clothing, transportation, incidental needs and other activities outside of their residence. Participants will also have opportunities to complete additional tasks within and around the apartment complex to earn additional money for use.

Additional privileges and wants of participants, including cell phones, game systems, cable or satellite television, among other “wants” will not be provided, but can become a part of the participants budget if they desire to include such.

These independent living apartments will allow participants to have the opportunity to ease into adulthood while maintaining a safety net to assist them in the process.

Journey Home Foster Care, in conjunction with Quality Moments, as the behavioral health affiliate, will ensure the apartment building has 24 hour staff available to guide and assist participants in learning independence and the responsibility of living independently. The use of exterior surveillance cameras and security systems will be utilized to ensure safety and adherence of youth to curfew.

All staff members will ensure the Transitional Living ILA policies and procedures are being followed, while allowing participants some freedoms and the ability to make many decisions independently to gain the needed confidence to enter into adulthood with the tools to seek success.

Journey Home Foster Care will ensure the following ILA staff and programing:

- ILA resident staff (includes overnight supervision)
 - Ensures overnight safety of participants
 - Ensures security of the building
 - Assists in any needs overnight
 - Oversees medication management and safety
 - Completes periodic room checks
 - Reports progress and violations of policy or contract by participants to the Foster Care Coordinator
 - Assists youth in learning to meet their own needs, including budgeting, cooking, cleaning, time management, ensuring medical services, making and keeping appointments, obtaining transportation and juggling the challenges of living on their own, while providing guidance and safety to make affordable mistakes
- Foster Care Coordinator/IL Coordinator
 - Ensures development of the Residential Placement Contract, as well as regular reviews of the Contract to address compliance, progress and areas of needs
 - Assists participant in completion of the IL Assessment
 - Develops and maintains an IL Plan (updated every 90 days)
 - Oversees placement of participant in the ILA
 - Assists participants in obtaining copies of vital documents for independence, including but not limited to:
 - Birth Certificates
 - Social Security Card
 - State Issued Identification Card/Drivers License (when able)
 - Copy of their Credit Report
 - Medical Records and Insurance Cards
 - Works with participants to develop a positive emancipation plan
 - Assists participants in opening and maintain a savings account
 - Assists participant in ensuring attendance and completion of school work to achieve successful graduation
 - Completion of Bi-Weekly contact with participants in their residence
 - Completion of Monthly Reports for custodial agencies regarding the youths progress within the ILA

- Will ensure Bridges referrals are made and contact with the Bridges Program is established with participants at least 30 days prior to anticipated emancipation
- May assist other staff in tasks to help participants in developing positive transition skills and to achieve successful emancipation

Quality Moments will ensure the following ILA staff and programing:

- Behavioral Health/Mental Health Assessment
- Weekly to Bi-Weekly Counseling/Therapy Services
- Daily TBS and CPST Services, including
 - Assists participant in developing positive coping skills and managing emotions, stress and interactions with others
 - Assists participant in seeking, obtaining and maintaining employment
 - Assists in the development of a positive emancipation plan
 - Assists participant in learning to meet their own needs, including budgeting, cooking, cleaning, time management, ensuring medical services, making and keeping appointments, obtaining transportation and juggling the challenges of living on their own, while providing guidance and safety to make affordable mistakes
- Weekly TBS Groups designed to develop positive independent skills

Qualifications for Placement

- Participants must be between 17 years of age and 21 years of age
- Participants must remain in the custody of a public children services agency
- Participants must sign a contract indicating their willingness to comply with the ILA Requirements, Rules and Policies.

Transitional Living ILA Requirements

- Participants must comply with the signed Transitional Living ILA Contract
- Participants must comply with the 10 pm to 7 am curfew, unless other arrangements are made and approved by the Foster Care Coordinator to accommodate employment or other situations.
- Participants maintain educational requirements established
- Participants must obtain and maintain employment, unless disability or social security will be the participants means of income
- Participants must establish and maintain a savings account, with the understanding that at least one-half of any income they receive must be saved
- Participants will engage and participate in all programing established by Journey Home Foster Care and Quality Moments
- Participants will work toward their own independence
- Participants will refrain from using illegal substances or committing illegal or criminal acts
- Participants will budget their weekly stipend to ensure their needs are met
- Participants will comply with all additional requirements of their Transitional Living ILA Contract not otherwise outlined herein

Project Management

The Journey Home Transitional Living (ILA) Program will be managed by Journey Home Foster Care with assistance of staff from the Quality Moment.