

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL</b>	
	<b>Chapter 11:</b> Independent Living	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2009
	<b>Section 4:</b> State Youth Advisory Board	<b>Version:</b> 2

## POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will fund one Indiana Youth Advisory Board (YAB) for Child in Need of Services (CHINS) and Probation youth aged 16 to 21 in foster care and former foster youth aged 18 to 21 who were in foster care for a period of six (6) months with a case plan identifying the need for independent living (IL) services. See [Youth Advisory Board Service Standard](#) for more information.

**Note:** Youth receiving Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds may serve on the YAB until age 23.

DCS will assure that one (1) eligible youth is selected from each of the 18 regions to participate on the YAB.

**Note:** If a region is unable to identify a YAB representative, an additional member from another region may be selected to maintain adequate YAB membership levels. The selection of all members is the responsibility of the YAB.

The following youth are eligible for membership on the State YAB:

1. Youth ages 16-21 who are in foster care as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent with a case plan establishing the need for IL services;
2. Youth ages 16-21 who were formerly in foster care as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent between the ages of 16-18 that were returned to their own homes and remain a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent with a case plan establishing the need for IL services;
3. Youth ages 18-21 who were formerly in foster care for a minimum of six (6) months as a CHINS or adjudicated a delinquent between the ages of 16-18 under the supervision of DCS and had a case plan establishing the need for IL services;
4. Youth ages 18-21 who would otherwise meet the eligibility criteria above and who were in the custody of another state or were a "ward of another state" will be eligible if through the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) there is a verification of wardship and all eligibility criteria from the state of jurisdiction; or
5. Youth ages 16-21 who were adopted at or after age 16 and were wards of DCS prior to adoption.

### Code References

[42 USC 677: Chafee Foster Care Independence Program](#)

## PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM), Probation Officer, and/or Chafee IL contracted service provider 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 \(IYOU010901App\)](#); and
2. Complete the recommendation section on all [Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application \(IYOU010901App\)](#) or assist the youth in obtaining a recommendation from a service provider or current member of YAB.

The youth must submit their completed [Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application \(IYOU010901App\)](#) to the YAB Adult Facilitator. The YAB will make a decision about whether to accept any youth who submits an application.

**Note:** If the DCS Local Office Director has a concern about any youth who has submitted a [Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application \(IYOU010901App\)](#) he or she must contact the DCS Permanency Manager to express the concern. A youth may be excluded from participation based on the concerns of the DCS Local Office Director.

## PRACTICE GUIDANCE

### **Youth Development**

The YABs are designed to provide a forum for youth aged 16 to 21 to develop an agenda related to services and areas of interest that the youth believe would be beneficial in assisting foster and former foster youth in reaching his or her full potential as the youth move into adulthood. The youth will develop topics of interest, develop interpersonal skills, and seek adult guidance in bringing ideas to fruition. This program will prepare youth in transitioning from adolescence to adulthood by recognizing and accepting personal responsibility.

### **Meetings, Transportation, Stipends, and Childcare**

Meetings will be held at least six (6) times annually. Meetings will be held during overnight stays on the evening prior to conferences in which the youth will participate or on Saturdays. See [Youth Advisory Board Service Standard](#) for details.

Childcare will be available for any participating YAB member that requires assistance. Financial stipends of \$25 will be provided to each YAB member participating in meetings as well as hotel accommodations and meals for overnight stays. The state mileage rate of \$.44 per mile will be made available for transporting the youth to the meetings. Hotel accommodations and meals will be provided for the youth's caregiver, Chafee service provider, or other adult chosen by the youth (e.g. - spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend, relative, etc) for overnight stays with the youth. Financial stipends of \$25 will also be made available for the person transporting the youth to the YAB meetings.

### **Participation in the State IL Youth Conferences**

The YABs will collaborate annually with the contracted agency developing the State IL Youth Conferences to review and discuss topics of interest and provide input into the conference session and activities. The YAB members will provide assistance to the contracted agency during the conferences in areas of interest and proficiency.

The YAB will participate in one (1) conference per year as a board. The conference they attend will be of the board's choosing. Youth will be encouraged to participate in other conferences or DCS event throughout the year. Other conferences in which the YAB members may participate include Children Our Best Investment and the State Foster Parent Conference.

## FORMS AND TOOLS

[Indiana Youth Advisory Board Application \(IYOU010901App\)](#)

## RELATED INFORMATION

### **Benefits of Participation**

It is expected that participation on the YAB will:

1. Balance youth need for support and empowerment;
2. Accommodate a broad range (type, intensity) of youth participation;
3. Demonstrate clear, concrete, sincere appreciation of youth contributions;
4. Provide preparation to 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 them in care and after they have aged out;
6. Facilitate development of personal responsibility;
7. Initiate opportunities for youth leadership and service development;
8. Develop coordination with the Workforce Investment Act Youth Councils;
9. Provide an opportunity to learn from youth what is really important to them;
10. Improve the quality of IL services by obtaining direct input and feedback from youth members that are receiving services; and
11. Assist with the opportunity to develop or change public policy.

### **YAB Adult Facilitator**

DCS will contract with an outside agency to have an individual serve as the YAB Adult Facilitator. The YAB Adult Facilitator must hold a master's degree in social work or a comparable human service field and have experience in case work and group work. The YAB Adult Facilitator is responsible for collecting all [Indiana Youth Advisory Board Applications \(IYOU010901App\)](#) and facilitating all aspects of the YAB. The facilitator is not expected to "run" the YAB, rather to assist the membership in developing the skills necessary to successfully oversee the activities of the YAB.