

# Independent Living Skills Toolkit

A guide for working with  
foster youth ages 14 and up



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# Welcome

## Independent Living Staff, Caregivers and Service Providers

As your partner in improving lifelong outcomes for transitioning foster youth, the ODJFS Transitional Youth Programs team hopes this toolkit will be a helpful resource for you. Its structure mirrors that of Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5101:2-42-19, “Requirements for the Provision of Independent Living Services to Youth in Custody.” This rule requires all youth 14 and older who are in the custody of a public children services agency (PCSA) or private child placing agency (PCPA) to receive independent living services to help prepare them for the transition from agency custody to self-sufficiency.

No later than 60 days after each youth’s 14th birthday—or 60 days after the youth enters custody, whichever comes first—the PCSA or PCPA must work with the youth, the youth’s caregiver and the youth’s case manager to conduct a life skills assessment. The life skills assessment will be used to develop the youth’s written independent living plan, which must be completed within 30 days of the assessment. Based on the life skills assessment, the independent living plan can include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Academic support
2. Post-secondary educational support
3. Career preparation
4. Employment programs or vocational training

5. Budget and financial management
6. Housing education and home management
7. Health education and risk prevention
8. Family support and healthy marriage education
9. Mentoring
10. Supervised independent living
11. Room and board financial assistance

This toolkit focuses on all of these service categories. In each section, you’ll find detailed information, recommendations and resources for supporting normalcy and making sure the youth in your care have the knowledge and skills they need to be self-sufficient not only when they turn 18, but in the years beyond. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to support many of the suggested activities. The Appendices provide more guidance regarding this. In addition, we’ve indicated with a dollar sign all the activities that  may qualify for Chafee or TANF independent living funding.

Too often, youth leave care without sufficient knowledge of the daily living skills that most of us take for granted. This toolkit aims to prevent that. It can be used as a checklist, and also as a reference guide of best practices. It will be updated regularly so if you have suggestions for future editions, please let us know. Just email [Transitional-Youth-Programs@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Transitional-Youth-Programs@jfs.ohio.gov). Thank you!

# Academic Support

The term “academic support” can refer to a wide variety of instructional methods, educational services or school resources to help students accelerate their learning progress, catch up with their peers, meet learning standards and generally succeed in school. In practice, academic support encompasses a broad array of strategies, including tutoring, supplemental courses, summer learning experiences, after-school programs, teacher advisors, volunteer mentors, and alternative ways of counseling and instructing students. For more information, visit [edglossary.org/academic-support](http://edglossary.org/academic-support).

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) holds schools and child welfare agencies jointly accountable for ensuring the educational stability of students in foster care. Both schools and child welfare agencies are responsible for maintaining the students’ connections with peers, teachers and other adult supporters at the school during transitions from foster care. ESSA requires collaboration among school districts, individual schools and child welfare agencies to ensure that foster youth have equitable opportunities for academic achievement and social development. For example, schools and agencies must work together to do the following:

- Maintain a foster child’s school placement after his or her removal from home or a substitute care

disruption when it’s deemed to be in the child’s best interest to do so.

- Transport the child to the school of origin.
- If a transfer is necessary, immediately enroll the child in the new school “without delay, regardless of whether relevant records are available,” in order to facilitate consistency of educational programming.

For more information about ESSA requirements, visit [jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/educational-stability.stm](http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocf/educational-stability.stm).

## Academic Counseling

Caseworkers, foster parents and caregivers play an important role in supporting youths’ academic progress. Here are some suggestions:

- Schedule a timely appointment with the youth and their school guidance counselor to review the youth’s transcripts and identify/address their educational achievements and/or concerns.
- Regularly monitor the youth’s progress throughout the school year.
- Meet regularly with the guidance counselor to assess the youth’s progress and/or concerns.
- Review the course catalog with the youth to determine classes of interest.
-  Explore alternative credit recovery options and online learning programs.

- Talk to youth about their future academic plans; the importance of their academic success; their strengths and weaknesses in school subjects based on grades, GPA and interests; careers they might be interested in; and the skills and education required for those careers.
- Review the Ohio Department of Education’s “Career Connections” information at [education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Connections](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Career-Tech/Career-Connections).
- Help youth register an account on **OhioMeansJobs.com** and show them how to take the Career Profile assessment and explore careers. (Click on the icon for K-12 students—the image of the cardinal in a graduation cap.)
-  Provide youth with cash incentives for improved grades and progress. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used for this purpose. See the Appendices for more information.
- Review “Earning an Ohio High School Diploma” and “Ohio Curriculum Choices Checklist for High Schools” in the Appendices.



## High School Equivalence Diploma

Anyone who withdraws from high school without receiving a diploma can take equivalency tests (formerly known as General Educational Development tests, or the GED) to earn an Ohio High School Equivalence Diploma.  Although the test was designed for those 18 and older, 16- and 17-year-olds with signed consent forms also can take it. For more information, visit [ged.com](http://ged.com). Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to purchase GED preparation material, study guides and application fees. See the Appendices for more information.

- Discuss with youth the difference between a high school diploma and a GED.
-  Work as a team to locate GED class locations and study resources.
- After youth complete GED classes, make sure they have information about applying to take the test and help them with the application process, if needed. For more information, visit [education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/Ohio-Options-for-Adult-Diploma/GED/Applying-for-the-GED](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Testing/Ohio-Options-for-Adult-Diploma/GED/Applying-for-the-GED).
-  Assist youth with transportation to and from GED classes or exams.

## Tutoring

The one-on-one, individualized help that tutoring provides can improve school performance, study habits and even self-esteem.

- Devise a plan for how, when and who will help the youth attain academic success.
- Follow up with instructors to see how the youth is progressing.
- Assess the youth’s progress in school and be able to identify trends indicating the child may be struggling in a subject.
- Communicate with teachers and professors about additional options for the youth, such as study sessions, study materials, etc.
- Help the youth locate additional study materials for a particular subject, such as library books, online tutorials, etc.
- Explore tutoring resources that may be available at school or in the community, and help make arrangements for tutoring.
-  Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to purchase tutoring services and materials. See the Appendices for more information.

## Help with Homework

For youth who struggle to keep up with homework assignments, the following activities can help:

- Be aware of all the youth's school work, including projects, due dates and materials needed.
-  Work together to find additional resources for help completing assignments, such as books or online tutorials.
- Encourage the youth to develop and maintain strong relationships with all teachers or professors.
- Make sure the youth has a quiet place at home to study.
-  Consider offering incentives for good or improved grades. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used for this purpose. See the Appendices for more information.
- Maintain a continuous line of communication with the youth, service team and school faculty regarding school work, assignments, projects, grading scales, etc.

## Study Skills Training

Good study skills can help youth do well not only in school, but also in life.

- Discuss with youth what study skills are and why they're important.
- Provide material describing different study styles and habits.
- Encourage youth to outline materials already covered in class.
- Work together to create a daily study schedule.
- Discuss time management skills and offer suggestions.
- Encourage youth to study in a variety of environments and conditions to determine which are most effective.

## Literacy Training

The ability to read and write is the basis for all future education and employment. These strategies can help youth build their literacy skills:

- Provide the youth with a summer reading list.
- Encourage them to enroll in a summer or holiday reading  program.
- Encourage them to enroll in a summer or holiday reading program.
-  Work as a team with school counselors and other staff to identify literacy resources.
- Encourage the youth to read and discuss with them what they've read.
- Encourage weekly family reading time in foster and group homes.
- Encourage youth to start or join a book club and to attend community book fairs.
- Encourage youth to explore areas of interest using internet search engines.
- Help the youth access educational resources such as books, notebooks and computers. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used for this purpose. See the  Appendices for more information.

# Post-Secondary Educational Support

Post-secondary education means any education beyond high school. That can include education at four-year colleges, community colleges, vocational schools or trade programs. Most sustainable career paths require some form of post-secondary education.

## Entrance Exams

Most four-year colleges require applicants to submit scores from one of the following tests, and many award scholarships to students who score well. Both tests are typically taken by high school juniors and seniors. The last chance for seniors to take them is usually in September, prior to submitting college applications. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to pay for study guides, test preparation courses and exam fees. See the Appendices for more information.

- **ACT** – The ACT contains multiple choice tests covering four areas: English, math, reading and science. The ACT’s writing test is optional and does not affect the composite score. For more information, visit [act.org](http://act.org).
- **SAT** – The main sections of the SAT are critical reading, writing and math. Most questions are multiple choice, except for some math problems. In addition, the writing section has an essay question. For more information, visit [collegeboard.org](http://collegeboard.org).

The **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)** is a test used to determine qualification for the military and to assign test takers to military jobs. It often is offered to students when they are in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, although anyone eligible for enlistment may take it. The entire test is three hours long. It typically is administered in a computerized format at Military Entrance Processing Stations or Military Entrance Test sites. In the computerized version, questions become harder or easier based on earlier answers. For more information and practice tests, visit [official-asvab.com](http://official-asvab.com).

## Test Preparation

**OhioMeansJobs.com** offers a variety of free college entrance and career preparation practice tests. If they haven’t already, youth should visit **OhioMeansJobs.com**, click on the icon for K-12 students (the image of the cardinal in a graduation cap) and register a free account. Here are some other ways to help youth prepare for important tests:



-  Help them locate test preparation materials, study guides and/or test preparation services in their community.
-  Make sure they’re aware of test application due dates, fees and fee waiver options they may be eligible for as a current or emancipated foster youth.

## Counseling about College

It's never too early to talk to youth about college, especially if they're interested in careers that require a college degree.

- Have conversations with youth about their hobbies, interests and skills so you can help identify colleges with programs that match their interests.
- Show them how to take the Career Profile assessment at **OhioMeansJobs.com**. The assessment will ask them to indicate how much they like or dislike 60 activities. This will generate a list of occupations they might enjoy. The in-demand occupations – those that offer good pay and many job openings – will be shown first. On **OhioMeansJobs.com**, in-demand jobs are designated with a thumbs-up sign. Youth can click on any occupation to learn more about it, and also to be linked to education and training opportunities.
- Help the youth use search engines – such as the College Navigator on **OhioMeansJobs.com** – to find ideal universities and/or programs.
- Encourage them to participate in college fairs and college visit days at local universities. Accompany them, if possible, and encourage them to leave their names and contact information with the college representatives.
- Encourage youth to communicate with their school guidance counselor about their college plans.
- Help connect the youth with an older college student who was a former foster youth. Ask the older student to share their college life experiences and the things they wish they had known before starting college.
- Show youth how to research college admission requirements on the internet. Many four-year colleges accept the Common Application. Make sure youth are aware of this and that



they visit **commonapp.org** for the essay prompts. The summer before senior year is a great time to choose a prompt and start drafting. Some colleges that accept the Common App require additional essays, as well.

- Help the youth meet all college application deadlines, which vary by school. It might help to keep a checklist of schools, application requirements and deadlines, as well as a folder to store copies of completed paperwork. Often, schools require letters of recommendation, as well. Youth should think about who they'd like to ask to write one, and be sure to give that person(s) plenty of time. Visit **ohiohighered.org/students/prepare-for-college** for more information.

## Financial Aid and Scholarships

College planning can be overwhelming, and the financial aid process even more so. Here's how adult supporters can help make it less daunting:

- Emphasize the importance of excelling academically in high school and how it could lead to grants and scholarships. Explain how extracurricular activities and community service can help win college acceptances and scholarships.
- Help the youth complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and be sure to indicate in questions 53 through 58 that the youth is a current or emancipated foster youth or was homeless (if applicable). The application becomes available each year on Oct. 1. The last possible date to submit it is June 30. However, most schools require it much earlier than June 30, and early submission often results in more aid. For more information, visit individual college websites and **fafsa.ed.gov**.

- Staff at a local Ohio Benefit Bank location also may be available to help the youth complete the FAFSA application. For more information, visit [ohiobenefits.org](http://ohiobenefits.org).
- Each college has a FAFSA deadline. Help the youth stay on top of all financial aid application and scholarship deadlines. It might help to keep a checklist of schools and FAFSA deadlines, as well as a folder  to store copies of completed paperwork.
- Most scholarships are granted by the colleges themselves, but youth can search for additional scholarships, as well. At [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com), you can do this by clicking on the icon for K-12 students (the image of the cardinal in a graduation cap), then “Fund It,” and then “Scholarship Opportunities.” Students can enter their intended major, school year, zip code, grade point average and the name of a college to find scholarships they might be eligible for. With one click, they can get more information about a scholarship, and with another click they can be taken to an online application. They also can save the entire search or an individual scholarship to their [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) “backpack” for later reference.
- Partner with the youth’s caseworker, school guidance counselor and caregiver to communicate with college representatives about financial aid and deadlines.
- Provide information about the Education Training Voucher Program (see the information at right).

## Education and Training Voucher Program

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides federal assistance for education for young people who aged out of foster care or who were adopted after age 16. Up to \$5,000 is available to eligible youth and may be renewable each year until their 23rd birthday, as long as they began receiving ETV funding prior to turning 21.

To qualify, youth must be ages 18 to 20 when they first apply. They must enroll in a full-time post-secondary education or training program, they must continue to be enrolled, and they must make satisfactory progress. This means they must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA or equivalent. At the discretion of the program manager and the state/county coordinator, ETVs may be awarded for one semester to students whose grades fall below a 2.0 GPA.

 Funding may be used to pay for tuition, room and board, student loan repayment, books and supplies, transportation, and other related expenses. Applicants must complete the standardized ETV form and submit documentation for each semester directly from the school to ETV confirming enrollment, including the cost of attendance and unmet needs. For more information, visit [fc2success.org](http://fc2success.org).

## Student Loans

Explain to youth the difference between scholarships, grants and loans, including the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans. College financial aid packages often include a mixture of scholarships, grants and loans. Only loans must be repaid. Depending on the type of loan, interest may begin accruing either immediately or six months after enrollment ends. To help youth avoid student loans, Chafee and TANF independent living funds  can be used to pay for college fees and expenses. See the Appendices for more information.

Explain to youth how interest works. Stress their responsibility for repaying loans and the importance of minimizing or avoiding loans. For more information, visit [ohiohighered.org/students/pay-for-college](http://ohiohighered.org/students/pay-for-college) and [studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized](http://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized).

If student loans are needed, here is a brief summary of the two types:

- **Direct Subsidized Loans** – can be used only for undergraduate programs. Eligibility is based on financial need, as determined by your FAFSA. The federal government pays the interest while you are in school. Repayments begin six months after you are no longer enrolled as a full-time student.
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loans** – available to undergraduate and graduate students. There is no requirement to demonstrate financial need, and the school determines the amount that can be borrowed, based on the cost of attendance and other financial aid. The borrower pays the interest, and it begins accruing immediately. If the interest is not repaid while you are in school and during grace periods, it is added to the principal amount.

## Tutoring while in College

Many colleges offer free tutoring  for students to help them better manage their workloads and better understand concepts taught in class. Encourage youth to take advantage of these services so they can keep up with schoolwork and avoid becoming overwhelmed. In addition:

- Discuss the importance of time management.
- Suggest they use a daily planner to keep track of class times, tests and assignment due dates.
- Suggest they block out regular periods of time each day to complete reading assignments and homework.
- Encourage them to set an alarm clock so they don't miss classes or tutoring sessions.
- If additional tutoring is needed, remember that post-emancipation funding can be used to pay for it. Chafee and TANF independent living funds also can be used to pay for school supplies, laptop computers, printers or other resources needed to succeed in college. See the Appendices for more information.

## Ohio Reach

Ohio Reach has liaisons and mentors at more than a dozen four-year and community colleges throughout Ohio. The organization improves post-secondary outcomes for foster youth and alumni through leadership, empowerment, advocacy, research and networking. Ohio Reach collaborates with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies and many others to support the educational goals of former foster youth. To learn more, visit [OhioReach.org](http://OhioReach.org).

# Career Preparation

It's important for youth to aspire not just to a job, but to a career that can sustain them – and, most likely, a family – for a lifetime. Careers typically require some form of post-secondary education, whether that means a four-year college, two-year community college or vocational training.

## Career Planning

- Have conversations with youth about their hobbies, interests and skills so they can identify careers that match their interests.
- Show them how to register an account and take the Career Profile assessment at **OhioMeansJobs.com**. The assessment will ask them to indicate how much they like or dislike 60 activities. This will generate a list of occupations they might enjoy. The in-demand occupations – those that offer good pay and many job openings – will be shown first. On **OhioMeansJobs.com**, in-demand jobs are designated with a thumbs-up sign. Youth can click on any occupation to learn more about it, and also to be linked to education and training opportunities.
- Show youth how to use the Budget Calculator on **OhioMeansJobs.com**. By taking this 20-minute quiz about their interests and lifestyle, they'll be able to see the minimum salary they'll need to support that lifestyle.



- Arrange for youth to attend career fairs to learn more about occupations that interest them. You can learn about upcoming career fairs in your area by going to **OhioMeansJobs.com** and clicking on the “Events” icon (the image of the calendar).
- Encourage youth to participate in any career counseling or career assessments offered at their school or vocational center.
- Help facilitate job shadowing, job tours and/or mentoring opportunities if these are not available through their school or vocational center. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to support these opportunities – for example, by paying for work attire, supplies or fees. See the Appendices for more information.
- Starting no later than age 16, encourage youth to pursue volunteer work experiences, internships and part-time work.
- Review “In-Demand Occupations Requiring an Associate’s Degree” and “In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Bachelor’s Degree” in the Appendices.



## Job Placement

- Show youth how to use the job- and internship-search tools available at **OhioMeansJobs.com**, including the Resume Builder and Rater and the Interview Practice Center.
  - Show youth how to search for jobs on **OhioMeansJobs.com**, including how to use the online “backpack” to save important information.
  - Share the OhioMeansJobs publication “Find Your Next, Better Job! A Job Search Workbook” (JFS 08089). To download a copy, visit **www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp**.
  - Help youth attend a resume writing course, practice interviewing, and/or take advantage of job coaching opportunities.
  - Explain the importance of writing a short cover letter tailored to each position they apply for; give them samples.
  - Explain the importance of emailing a thank-you note after an interview.
  - Talk about the importance of first impressions; projecting a positive attitude; having a simple, professional email address; and always displaying a positive image of themselves on social media. Many employers use social media to screen job candidates.
  - Discuss the characteristics employers seek in employees, including diligence to their work, being on time, being a problem solver, and having good relationships with customers.
  -  Make sure the youth has appropriate work attire for interviews and employment. Examples: long-sleeve, button-down dress shirt and tie; dress pants; suit jacket; dress or skirt; button-down blouse; closed-toe shoes; no hats. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to buy work clothes. See the Appendices for more information. In addition, youth can obtain business attire for free from Suits for Success, an initiative of Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now Ohio (ACTION Ohio). For more information, email **fosteractionohio.org**. Free clothing also is available at the annual Fostering Pathways to Success conference.
- Recommend that youth take the WorkKeys® practice tests at **OhioMeansJobs.com**. The tests measure skills in math, reading and locating information. Youth can use their scores to search for jobs that match their abilities. In addition, some employers search for candidates who are WorkKeys® certified when they hire for open positions.
  - Help the youth obtain any necessary work permits. Work permits must be signed by the school district.
  - Help the youth make a list of things to consider when choosing a job/ employer, such as benefits, work environment, dress code, hours, location, opportunity to advance, etc.
  - After they find a job, ensure that youth understand the employer’s rights and responsibilities, as well as employee benefits.
  - Support youth in managing their work schedules. For example, transportation arrangements should be made  to allow them to arrive well before their start time. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to pay for transportation.
  - Introduce youth ages 14 and up to services available at their local OhioMeansJobs center.

# Employment Programs and Vocational Training

Employment programs and vocational training can be an excellent alternative to college. Youth can build careers in skilled trades that need workers, all without taking on student loan debt.

## Employment Programs

Ohio is home to countless employment programs that can help youth get the training, experience and connections they need to begin building careers. To explore them, visit [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) and click on “Explore It,” then “Ohio-Based Employment Programs.” You can filter the results by target group and services offered.

## Vocational Training

Many community colleges and technical and vocational schools throughout Ohio offer vocational training programs that prepare students for entry-level positions in a variety of fields. Help youth explore these options. In addition, they can visit their county department of job and family services or OhioMeansJobs center to learn more about the following:

- **The Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP)** – CCMEP provides employment and training services to eligible low-income 16- to 24-year-olds to help them stabilize their life issues and get the skills and education they need to not only get a job, but succeed at work.

- **Ohio Youth Works** – Ohio Youth Works provides educational, employment and training supports to low-income 14- and 15-year-olds so they can gain work experience while earning a paycheck.

## ApprenticeOhio

Ohio ranks second in the nation and first in the region in the number of apprentices, with opportunities available in more than 200 occupations. These programs allow individuals to earn wages while they learn the skills needed for a well-paying career in almost any industry. All apprenticeship programs include at least 2,000 hours of full-time, on-the-job training and 144 annual hours of classroom instruction.

Apprentices must be at least 18 (16 for some industries) and fit to work in the occupation. Most programs require a high school or vocational school diploma or GED, and most conduct skill testing for applicants. Ten community colleges across the state offer tuition reimbursement to participating students for completing pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs in occupations identified by local businesses as needing workers. For more information, visit [apprentice.ohio.gov](http://apprentice.ohio.gov).

# Budget and Financial Management

Money management is an acquired skill that most of us learn through trial and error. Explain to youth that budgeting their money will help ensure that they will always have enough for the things they need.

A good place to start is the Budget Calculator at [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com). Youth can answer a few questions about their interests and lifestyle to figure out the salary they'll need to support that lifestyle. They should take this number into consideration when choosing a possible occupation. The Budget Calculator survey will ask them to estimate their monthly expenses (current or future) for everything from housing to internet service. You can help with this. The website shows the average Ohio household costs to use as a guide. Brainstorm with the youth all their possible future expenses, including such things as car insurance, renters' insurance and laundry expenses.

## Living within a Budget

- Discuss with youth the four categories of expenses:
  - **Fixed Expenses** – These are often made monthly and don't change, such as rent or car payments.
  - **Variable Expenses** – These are paid regularly and vary, such as gas or groceries.
  - **Periodic Expenses** – These happen at irregular times and must be paid, such as car repairs or a security deposit on an apartment.
  - **Discretionary Expenses** – These are for things that are nice to have but not a necessity, such as expensive clothing or movie tickets.
- Share with youth some mock budgets that show all necessary expense categories and distinguish between necessities and desirables.
- If youth have access to a computer, encourage them to explore free online budgeting sites, such as [Mint.com](http://Mint.com).
- Task the youth with creating a budget that will allow them to save for a vacation, meals in a restaurant or luxury items (such as cell phones, laptops, tablets, gaming systems, etc.).
- Encourage youth to start preparing their future budgets, including rent, utilities and other living expenses.
- Make sure youth know to visit [benefits.ohio.gov](http://benefits.ohio.gov) or their county department of job and family services, and/or [ohiobenefits.org](http://ohiobenefits.org) or their local Ohio Benefit Bank site, if they're having trouble paying for basic necessities.

## Bank Accounts

- Help youth open a checking and saving account with minimal or no fees. Explain the difference between the two accounts and why it's important to keep money in a bank instead of at home:
  - It's safer.
  - They can earn interest.
  - They'll be more likely to avoid unplanned spending.
  - They can more easily plan and work toward financial goals.
  - They can use their bank as a reference for future landlords, utility companies and loan applications.
- Help youth decide if online banking is a good option for them. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages based on their needs and circumstances.
- Walk youth through how to manage a checking account. Show them how to write and record checks.
- Show youth how to pay bills online. Discuss the pros and cons of autopayment for regular expenses; if they have a regular income, show them how to set up autopayment.
- Explain the importance of keeping track of their bank balance to make sure they have sufficient funds to cover their upcoming nondiscretionary expenses and to make sure they're not being charged for anything they didn't purchase. If they use online banking, they can check their balance as often as they like. At a minimum, they should check it weekly.
- Encourage youth to choose a day and time – for example, Saturday mornings or Sunday evenings – to check their bank balance and make sure they have enough money to cover expenses until their next deposit. They may want to pay bills at this time, as well. Encourage them to keep a calendar of bill due dates.

- Show the youth how to maintain a checkbook ledger, how to record all payments and withdrawals, and how to check their ledger against their monthly bank statement. The statement will show their deposits and withdrawals during the last month, in addition to the account balance on the day the statement was created.
- Make sure youth know how to complete common banking transactions, including deposits and withdrawals.
- Make sure they are aware that banks charge overdraft fees.
- Make sure they understand the difference between debit and credit cards.
- Explain that money orders and bank-certified checks can be used to pay bills and/or make large purchases. Explain how to obtain them.
- Give the youth money to open an account and consider offering incentives related to maintaining the account. Chafee and TANF independent living funds can  be used for this purpose. See the Appendices for more information.

## Smart Shopping Skills

- Advise youth to always read labels, always read the fine print, and always be aware of stores' return policies before making purchases. Some stores might provide only in-store credit for returns.
- Encourage youth to make a list before they grocery shop and to stick to their list.
- Encourage them to add the costs of what they put in their cart as they shop, to avoid surprises at the cash register.
- As an exercise, ask youth to make a grocery list and then help them compare the cost of those items at two different stores. Encourage them to shop at the less expensive store.

- Teach the youth about good shopping practices, such as:
  - Cleaning out their refrigerator prior to shopping to avoid buying duplicate items.
  - Looking at newspaper sale ads before shopping.
  - Not shopping when they're hungry.
  - Buying generic instead of name brand items.
  - Purchasing items on sale or clearance, if possible.
  - Subscribing to or picking up a Sunday newspaper for the coupons (though generic items might still be cheaper than name brands, even with the coupons).
  - Looking at their receipts to see how much they've saved by using coupons and/or buying items on sale.

## Credit and Loans

Custodial agencies are required to request annual credit reports from all three reporting agencies—Equifax, Experian and TransUnion—for youth 14 and older in their care. The reports show loans and credit lines opened, the dates the accounts were opened, the credit limits or loan amounts, the account balances and the payment history.

- Discuss these reports with youth and explain why they're important. (For more information, see OAC 5101:2-42-19.)
- Encourage youth to request credit reports annually after they emancipate. You can get free copies of your credit reports every 12 months at **AnnualCreditReport.com**.
- Caution youth about frequently applying for and using credit and loans, as doing so could negatively impact their credit score and ability to get future loans.

- Discuss the different types of loans (car loans, student loans, personal loans) and how they work, including terms, interest and repayment options.
- Strongly discourage the use of payday lenders, which loan small amounts of money at high interest rates in return for repayment when borrowers receive their next paycheck. Compare the terms and agreements of payday lenders with those of credit card companies.

## Taxes

- Explain how taxes work and the different types of taxes (federal, state and local).
- Explain to youth that when they're hired for a job, they will be asked to fill out tax forms so their employer will know how much tax to deduct from their paychecks. Help them complete these forms, if possible.
- Make sure youth understand the difference between gross and net pay.
- Stress the importance of providing their current contact information to any employers they had during the previous year, to make sure their W-2 forms arrive at the correct address.
- When youth receive their W-2, review it with them and explain how to read it.
- Explain that most people who earn income have to file a federal tax return by April 15.
- Help youth file their taxes – and/or ensure that they are filing their taxes – either at **irs.gov** or by filling out and mailing paper forms. Free forms are available at many post offices and libraries. Most likely, they can use form 1040A or 1040EZ. For more information, visit **irs.gov**.
- Staff at a local Ohio Benefit Bank location may be available to help youth complete tax forms. For more information, visit **ohiobenefits.org**.

- The IRS offers free tax-filing help to those who earn up to \$54,000 a year, through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. To find a VITA provider near you, visit [irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers](https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers).
- Warn youth about tax scams in which someone calls or emails pretending to be from the IRS and saying they owe money. The IRS never contacts people by email, text or social media to request personal or financial information, and they don't threaten people with lawsuits or jail. Report potential scams to the Ohio Attorney General's Office at [OhioProtects.org](https://www.ohioprotects.org) or by calling (800) 282-0515.

# Housing Education and Home Management

While youth are in care, custodial agencies are responsible for providing the least restrictive appropriate and stable housing for them. For youth 16 or 17, housing can be defined as any of the following, as long as the living arrangements are supervised or semi-supervised:

- Foster homes
- Residential facilities
- Group homes
- Dormitories
- Apartments
- Host homes

As early as possible, before the emancipation process begins, start educating youth about their housing options. During the transition planning process, talk to them about how to find safe and appropriate housing, how to find supportive services, and how to pay  for housing. For more information, see the Appendices.

## Locating Housing

Ask youth to identify two places they would like to live in their community. Compare them by asking these questions:

- Based on their budget and income, is it affordable and sustainable?
- Judging from local crime report, is the neighborhood safe?
- Is it conveniently located to things the youth will need, such as a grocery store, gas station, etc.?

- Are transportation options available for getting them to work or school?
- Is it close to the youth's support team (adult supporters, friends, family, etc.)?

## Rental Applications

- Download and print a copy of the Ohio Legal Services publication "Ohio Landlord/Tenant Law: What You Should Know!" from [ohiolegalservices.org](http://ohiolegalservices.org). Give it to youth and discuss it with them.
- As an exercise, print a blank housing application and complete each section with the youth.
- Once possible housing is identified, look up reviews of the apartment, landlord and, if possible, neighbors at [rentalprotectionagency.com](http://rentalprotectionagency.com).
- Accompany the youth on an apartment walk-through.
-  Help the youth with the application process, which could include fees, references, background checks and credit reports.
- Help identify reliable adults who can be used for housing and employment references. Ideally, these will be permanent adult connections.
- Suggest that the foster parent and youth create a mock rental agreement for the last few months of the youth's time in care. If the youth is a good tenant and follows the agreement, request that the foster parent provide a good reference, vouching for such

things as the youth's cleanliness, trustworthiness, and respect for people and property.

## Leases

- As an exercise, print a mock lease agreement. Review standard leasing language and explain such things as rental terms, late fees, security deposit forfeitures and notices to vacate the unit. **Remember: A lease is a binding legal contract between a landlord and tenant.**
- After a rental application is approved but before the youth signs the lease, sit down to discuss the lease details. For example, how much is the security deposit? What utility costs will the youth be responsible for? Chafee and TANF independent living funds  can be used to help with rent and utility deposits and payments, as well as furniture. See the Appendices for more information.
-  Help the youth set up security payments for utility accounts.
- Encourage the youth to participate in a thorough move-in inspection to avoid being held responsible for any prior damages.
- Inform the youth about actions that could cause them to be evicted, such as late rental payments, property damage, criminal activity on the property, noise disturbances, or unauthorized occupants or pets.
- Once the lease agreement has been signed, be sure to obtain copies of all signed documents. The youth should keep these copies and the move-in inspection in a secure location.

## Home Management

Youth should be developing age-appropriate home management skills, such as how to do laundry, clean a house, live cooperatively with others, plan meals, prepare food, grocery shop, and perform

simple home repairs and maintenance. Some of these skills can start being taught when they're as young as 12 to 14.

- **Laundry** – Caregivers can show youth how to sort and launder their clothing based on the washing instructions, teach them how to use the home's washer and dryer, and explain the different laundry products available. This also is a good time to discuss future laundry expenses.
- **Housekeeping** – Caregivers can show youth how to wash dishes, change bedding, clean a bathroom, and sweep, mop and vacuum floors. Explain that maintaining a clean living environment is important for health and safety reasons. Take the youth to the store to review the basic supplies needed to clean a home. Encourage youth to read safety precautions on labels to avoid mishandling or mixing potentially dangerous cleaning products.
- **Living cooperatively** – Ideally, youth have been learning to live cooperatively with others since their initial placement. Discuss such things as personal space, cleanliness, establishing boundaries, sharing, privacy, and showing respect for others and their belongings.
- **Food Preparation** – Caregivers should actively involve youth in age-appropriate meal planning and food preparation. They should allow youth to work with them in the kitchen and show them how to safely use basic appliances and utensils. Youth should be supervised until they're able to safely use all appliances.
- **Meal planning** – Caregivers should ask youth to find a recipe, review the ingredients, prepare a grocery list, purchase ingredients and cook the  meal. This is a good time to discuss such things as nutrition, portion size and, if relevant, food allergies.

- Food safety – Educate the youth about food expiration dates, safe food storage and handling, and how to identify spoiled items.
- Home repairs – Caregivers should allow youth to watch or help them complete basic home repairs, such as unclogging a drain, plunging a toilet, changing a light bulb, flipping a circuit breaker, changing a vacuum bag or belt, or resetting the time on appliances after a power outage.
- Home safety – Caregivers should show youth how to use and maintain smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers. Youth also should be able to identify common fire hazards, such as exposed electrical outlets or unattended hot plates, irons or curling irons. Caregivers should explain the safety hazards of using gas and electric stoves, microwaves, toaster ovens and portable heating units in small living areas. **Youth should be supervised until they're able to safely use these types of appliances.**

# Health Education and Risk Prevention

Schools teach health education, but adult supporters can reinforce those lessons to encourage youth to take care of themselves physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, and to ensure that they have accurate information.

## Hygiene

Youth should be encouraged and expected to practice good hygiene. Look for teachable moments to discuss proper hygiene and how hygiene can affect their health and social status. In addition, caregivers can do the following to encourage healthy hygiene:

- Make sure youth bathe and shave at regular intervals and use soap, shampoo, deodorant and lotion.
- Make sure youth take care of their skin, hair, nails and teeth.
- Make sure girls have an ample supply of feminine hygiene products and that they understand how to use them, including how often to change a sanitary pad or tampon. Encourage them to use a calendar or cellphone app such as Period Tracker to monitor their menstrual cycles.
- Educate active and athletic youth about the importance of freshening up throughout the day, as needed.
- Help youth prepare a hygiene pack to carry throughout the day. Include such things as soap, wipes, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, undergarments, lotion, a toothbrush and toothpaste.

## Nutrition

Make sure youth know that good nutrition can help them stay healthy and maintain a healthy weight. Discuss the importance of eating a healthy, balanced diet. Encourage them to eat mostly vegetables and fruits, in addition to lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy, and to avoid excessive sugar, processed foods and fried foods. Be sure to take any unique dietary needs and/or cultural or religious practices into account. For more information, visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov).

## Fitness and Exercise

Make sure youth know that being physically active can help them burn off stress and stay physically and mentally healthy. Most experts recommend at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. This can be anything from brisk walking or biking to running or an organized sport. Encourage youth to find an activity they enjoy and make time for it each day.



Chafee and TANF independent living funds can be used to purchase such things as gym memberships, fitness camps, personal trainers and activity trackers.

## First Aid Information

Everyone should know basic first aid, including youth in care.

- Make sure youth have a basic first aid kit, including bandages, medical adhesive tape, antibiotic cream and a thermometer.
- Discuss examples of emergency situations, basic emergency procedures and what to do in an emergency.
-  Give youth the opportunity to take a CPR, first aid and/or babysitter certification class.

## Health Care

In Ohio, youth who emancipate from foster care are eligible for Medicaid until they turn 26. Medicaid managed care plans cover preventative care, hospitalization, emergency care, prescriptions and more. For more information, visit [Medicaid.ohio.gov](https://www.medicaid.ohio.gov).

- OAC 5101:2-42-19 requires custodial agencies to give youth all the documents they need to obtain medical and dental benefits when they emancipate. These documents must include the youth's:
  - Birth certificate
  - Social Security card
  - Current state identification card
  - Health and education records
  - A letter verifying that the youth emancipated from agency custody
- Encourage youth to keep these documents in a secure and accessible place.
- Prior to emancipation, help the youth enroll in a Medicaid managed care plan. Make sure they understand what the plan covers.
- Make sure youth understand that they are the “insured” and that the word “provider” can mean a clinic, hospital, doctor, laboratory, health care practitioner or pharmacy.
- Make sure youth know they can check their Medicaid eligibility, view their account and renew their benefits at

[benefits.ohio.gov](https://www.benefits.ohio.gov). Also make sure they know the phone number and location of their county department of job and family services.

- Accompany youth to medical and dental appointments. Make sure they understand any diagnosis, that they ask questions if they don't, and that they obtain and know how to use any prescribed medication.
- Instruct youth to keep a current list of their prescribed medications.
- Talk to youth about the importance of managing not only their physical health, but their mental health, especially during times of transition.
- When a doctor prescribes psychotropic medication, make sure the doctor explains the importance of taking it regularly, as prescribed. Youth also can keep a log to track their medication usage.
- Teach youth how to order medication refills either over the phone or with a pharmacy cellphone app. Explain that they'll need their insurance card, and that they may have to pay a copay when they pick up their medication. Most pharmacies will not disburse medication to youth under age 18 without an adult, so caregivers should continue being responsible for the youths' medications until emancipation. However, it's important to teach them how to manage these prescriptions before they leave care.

## Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Research shows that young people are less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol when:

- Caregivers communicate their expectations.
- Adults listen to them, spend time with them, and explicitly tell them not to use alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.
- They feel like their community cares about them.

- They have something positive to do with their time.

Here are some actions foster parents and adult supporters can take to reduce the risk of substance and alcohol abuse:

-  Encourage youth to take part in school and community activities, such as music, sports, arts or a part-time job.
- Set clear household rules about alcohol and drugs, such as “kids under 21 will not drink alcohol,” “no using drugs,” “kids will not ride in a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs,” and “kids will not stay at a party where alcohol or drugs are present.” Establish appropriate consequences for breaking rules.
- Get to know the youth’s friends and the friends’ parents. It’s a great way to build support and share your rules about alcohol and drugs.
- Get educated about alcohol and drugs and share what you learn.
- Be a role model and set a positive example.
- Keep track of their activities. Ask questions, require them to check in with you, and know what is happening in their life.
- Make sure your home is not a source of alcohol or prescription drugs for the youth or their friends.
- Encourage youth to participate in substance abuse prevention programs in their school and community. Help with transportation to these activities and talk afterward about what they learned.
- Know the warning signs of alcoholism and substance use and intervene if you suspect the youth has a problem.
- For more information, visit or [ncadd.org](http://ncadd.org) or [StartTalking.Ohio.gov](http://StartTalking.Ohio.gov).

## Sexual Health

Many teenagers engage in risky sexual behavior that can have consequences they don’t anticipate. If possible, encourage youth to enroll in evidence-based educational programming, such as “Reducing the Risk,” the curriculum used by the Ohio Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP). “Reducing the Risk” covers a wide variety of topics, including healthy relationships, self-esteem, friendships, dating, marriage, family interactions, financial literacy, and education and career success. The interactive curriculum takes a holistic approach and motivates youth to avoid high-risk behaviors.

## Pregnancy Risk

Although nearly all teens say they don’t want to become pregnant, many still do. Adult supporters can help youth think through the consequences of an unplanned pregnancy. Start a conversation by asking these questions:

- If I (or my girlfriend) became pregnant now, when would the baby be born?
- Within a few days of finding out about the pregnancy, what would I do?
- How would a pregnancy change the next year of my life?
- How would my life change if I became a teenage parent?

For young men, share resources about responsible fatherhood from **fatherhood.ohio.gov** – for example, the “Are You Ready to be a Dad?” flyer under the “Resources” tab.

For both young women and men, talk to them about things that can be done to avoid pregnancy. Show them how the risk of pregnancy drops dramatically when people abstain or use protection correctly and consistently. Discuss the types of protection available. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/healthyyouth](http://cdc.gov/healthyyouth), [hhs.gov/ash/oah](http://hhs.gov/ash/oah) or [stayteen.org](http://stayteen.org).

## STD/HIV Risk

Young people ages 15 to 24 account for half of all new sexually transmitted disease (STD) infections, even though they make up just over a quarter of the sexually active population. To ensure that youth in care understand the risk of STDs and know how to avoid them, adult supporters can encourage them to abstain or use condoms. They also can make sure youth have accurate information about STDs. For example, it's possible to have an STD but experience no symptoms. In other cases, symptoms could include burning with urination, unusual discharge, genital sores, or prolonged sore throat or eye infection. Some STDs are treatable with antibiotics; some can be treated but not cured.

Research shows that the most effective programs for reducing high-risk behavior in youth teach them how to solve problems, communicate with others, plan for their future, and help them develop positive connections with family, schools and communities. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/healthyyouth](http://cdc.gov/healthyyouth) or [hhs.gov/ash/oah](http://hhs.gov/ash/oah).

## Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime in which individuals are forced to engage in labor and/or sex. Ohioans of all ages and demographics can become victims of human trafficking, but children and teenagers are particularly vulnerable, especially runaway and homeless youth. It's estimated that more than 1,000 Ohio children a year become victims of sex trafficking, and at least 3,000 more are at risk.

The Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force offers a free 50-minute training video on its website, [humantrafficking.ohio.gov](http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov), for anyone who lives with, works with or simply cares about youth, to help recognize the signs of human trafficking. Individuals licensed through the Counselor,

Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board can get a free continuing education credit for completing it.

If you suspect human trafficking might be occurring, consider this checklist of questions from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security:

- Does the youth appear disconnected from family, friends and community organizations?
- Has the youth stopped attending school?
- Has the youth had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- Has the youth engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Does the youth appear disoriented, confused or show signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the youth have bruises in various stages of healing?
- Is the youth fearful, timid or submissive?
- Does the youth show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep or medical care?
- Is the youth often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of where they go or who they talk to?
- Does the youth appear to be coached on what to say?
- Is the youth living in unsuitable conditions?
- Does the youth lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the youth have freedom of movement? Can the youth freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?

Answering "yes" to any of the above doesn't necessarily mean human trafficking is occurring, but it could be. For more information, visit [dhs.gov/blue-campaign/indicators-human-trafficking](http://dhs.gov/blue-campaign/indicators-human-trafficking).

# Family Support and Healthy Marriage Education

Youth who have positive relationships with people who can support them during good times and bad – whether that’s family, friends and/or other adult supporters – are more likely to make good choices and manage difficult times. Adult supporters can help youth learn the skills they need to experience healthy relationships.

- Talk to youth about relationships of all kinds—with friends, family, teachers, work supervisors and others.
- Model how a supportive, healthy relationship should look. For example, model:
  - Positive and open communication
  - Honesty, respect and trust
  - Managing conflict and differences without threats or violence
  - Respect for personal boundaries
- Support the youth in their choice of friends.
- Talk about the signs of a potentially harmful or violent relationship, such as:
  - Controlling behaviors (constantly texting or keeping tabs on you, jealousy or a quick temper)
  - Embarrassing or disrespectful language
  - Threatening or scaring you
  - Cyberbullying, spreading rumors about you
- Connect youth to programs that foster healthy relationships, such as the Ohio PREP program.

- Share resources about parenting and responsible fatherhood – for example, the “Are You Ready to be a Dad?” flyer at [fatherhood.ohio.gov](http://fatherhood.ohio.gov).
- For more information, visit [healthymarriageandfamilies.org](http://healthymarriageandfamilies.org), [hhs.gov/ash/oah](http://hhs.gov/ash/oah) or [odvn.org](http://odvn.org).

## Relationship Safety

According to the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, an estimated one in five teens who have been in a serious relationship report being hit, slapped or pushed by a partner, and one in three girls say they’ve been concerned about being physically hurt by a partner. Educate youth about the different forms of abuse:

- **Emotional abuse** – putting you down; criticizing your family, friends, how you dress, etc.; threatening to harm you more if you don’t do what he/she wants; threatening to hurt him/herself or others you care about if you don’t do what he/she wants.
- **Physical abuse** – hitting, slapping, pushing, punching, choking/strangling, etc.
- **Sexual abuse** – forcing you to have any sexual contact you don’t want to have
- **Monitoring/Controlling/Stalking** – calling, texting all the time, checking on you, following you, controlling your life and decisions

- Isolating – wanting you to spend time only with them, making it hard for you to see other people
- Financial abuse – taking your things, money, using your credit card without your permission, etc.

Make sure youth know the conditions that can greatly heighten the danger in an abusive relationship:

- Victim/survivor is ending the relationship, or planning to do so.
- Abuser is depressed and/or has talked about or attempted suicide.
- Abuser makes threats to seriously harm or kill.
- Abuser is stalking.
- Abuser has access to weapons and/or has used weapons before, especially guns.
- Abuser has an impairment due to alcohol, drugs or mental illness.
- Abuser has a history of contact with police, courts, protection orders, etc., with no change in behavior.

Offer this advice to any youth who may be experiencing abuse in a relationship:

- Listen to yourself; trust yourself. Nothing is more important than your safety, and you have a right to be safe and free from harassment.
- The abuse is not your fault. Being the target of someone else's bad behavior is nothing to feel ashamed of, judged or embarrassed about.
- You may be afraid the abuse will get worse if you tell someone, but it's likely to get worse anyway.
- Don't let the abuse isolate you. Keep friends around as part of your safety plan. Try not to be home alone, and don't tell others if you will be. If you have to be home alone, make sure all the doors and windows are locked, and identify at least two places you can go if the home becomes unsafe. Keep your cell phone on you in case you need to call for help.

- Make sure you can get to and from school and/or work safely. See if it's possible to change your class schedule to avoid an abuser, if needed. Walk to and from classes with others. Try to find a trusted teacher, coach, guidance counselor, nurse, school administrator or supervisor with whom you can talk.
- Work a different shift, if possible. Talk to a supervisor about not scheduling you to close. If possible, change the store, restaurant or work location, or talk to your supervisor about changing job duties so you will not be as visible.
- Identify safe people you can tell about your situation; keep their contact information with you. Develop a code word with your safe person(s) to use if you are unsafe and your abuser is present, and decide in advance what you want your safe person to do if you use that word.
- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. If you think your abuser can use GPS to track where you are, you can turn off GPS on your cell phone. Don't respond to hostile, harassing, abusive or inappropriate texts or messages. Block the abuser from calling, if you can.
- Consider disabling your social networking sites or set privacy settings as high as possible. Don't answer instant messages or accept social media requests from anyone you don't know. Save a record of all harassing or abusive messages, posts and emails. Choose unique passwords that aren't easy to guess and change them regularly. Always report inappropriate behavior to the site administrators.
- You can call the National Teen Dating Helpline anonymously for help: (866) 331-9474 or (866) 331-8453 TTY.
- In Ohio, you can seek a civil protection order against the person who is abusing you. If you do, you have the right to ask for an "ex-parte" court

hearing. This means your abuser will be ordered to stay away from you until your hearing. You can call a domestic violence program to ask for an advocate to help you with your legal options and to develop a safety plan. Call (800) 934-9840 to find the program closest to you.

# Mentoring

Research shows that youth with mentors are more confident, have fewer behavioral problems, are less likely to break the law, less likely to engage in substance abuse, less likely to succumb to peer pressure, and more likely to believe they can succeed in school. Research also shows that the best mentors:

- Are supportive and encouraging.
- Listen first and speak last.
- Set high expectations and encourage youth to achieve.
- Are genuinely interested in youths' lives.
- Don't judge youth.
- Have confidence in youths' ability to make decisions.
- Help youth put their challenges in perspective and see both sides of a situation.

Adult supporters can mentor youth, and they also can connect them with local mentoring programs, such as those offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters or the Community Connectors program, which funds partnerships between schools, businesses, faith-based organizations and others to give more Ohio students access to mentors. For more information, visit [communityconnectors.ohio.gov](https://communityconnectors.ohio.gov) or [mentoring.org](https://mentoring.org).

# Supervised Independent Living

Per Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.82, children services agencies can place 16- and 17-year-old youth in their custody into agency-funded independent living arrangements. These can be supervised or semi-supervised and may include independent living programs and activities. Youth in these settings are given increased responsibilities, such as paying bills, assuming leases and working with a landlord, while still under adult supervision.

# Transition Plans

At least 180 days prior to the youth's emancipation, the PCSA or PCPA is required to work with the youth to develop a final transition plan. The plan should be youth-driven and can be as detailed as the youth would like. However, OAC 5101:2-42-19 requires that it include information about the following:

-  The youth's option to receive post-emancipation services
- Health care, including health insurance and health care power of attorney
- Employment services
-  Secondary and post-secondary education and training
-  Obtaining and paying for housing
- Budgeting for necessary living expenses
- Obtaining a credit report
- Registering for selective service 
- Obtaining a driver's license 
- Any court fees associated with the youth's name
- Any benefits the youth receives and how to continue them 

In addition, OAC 5101:2-42-19 requires PCSAs and PCPAs to obtain the following documents and give them to youth prior to their emancipation:

- The youth's birth certificate
- The youth's Social Security card
- A current state identification card and information about how to obtain a driver's license
- The youth's transition plan
- The youth's health and education records
- A letter verifying that the youth emancipated from agency custody

# After Foster Care

Providing independent living services before emancipation can increase the chances of a successful transition. The following services are available after emancipation, as well. Per OAC 5101:9-6-08.6 and 5101:9-6-35, they may be paid for with Chafee and TANF independent living funds. See the Appendices for more information.

## Room and Board Financial Assistance

PCSAAs and PCPAs may use up to 30 percent of their Chafee allocations for room and board expenses for 18- to 21-year-old emancipated youth. After that, they can use TANF independent living funds. This can include financial assistance for rent deposits, utilities and other household start-up expenses.



## Post-Emancipation Services

Any young adult who emancipated from foster care at age 18 or later can return to the PCSA or PCPA to request post-emancipation services at any time up until they turn 21. The agency will conduct a “strengths and needs” evaluation, develop a mutually agreed-upon plan, and then provide services and supports to complement the youth’s own efforts



to achieve self-sufficiency [OAC 5101:42-2-19.2].

Post-emancipation plans must clearly outline the responsibilities of the youth and the agency. They must be signed by both the youth and a representative of the agency and then entered into SACWIS. Post-emancipation services can include any of the 11 independent living services, in addition to educational financial assistance and other financial assistance to help the youth live independently

## Bridges

Bridges is a new voluntary program that provides a “bridge” from foster care to self-sufficiency. Youth who age out of foster care at 18 or older can request housing or other supportive services at any time up to their 21st birthday, as long as they meet at least one of the following requirements:

- Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential
- Enrolled in an institution that provides a post-secondary or vocational education
- Employed for at least 80 hours a month
- Participating in a program or activity designed to remove barriers to employment
- Incapable of doing any of the above activities due to a medical condition

To help youth take advantage of Bridges, adult supporters should follow these steps:

1. Visit the Bridges website or email **Bridges@jfs.ohio.gov** to find the grantee in the youth's region.
2. Contact the regional grantee to begin the application process.
3. Collaborate with the youth and the regional grantee to complete the application and transition into Bridges.

You can start the application process before the young adult emancipates from PCSA custody, but it can't be finalized until custody has terminated.

Participants may opt in or out of the program at any time, as long as they meet at least one of the above criteria. For more information, visit the Bridges website or email **Bridges@jfs.ohio.gov**.

# Appendices



# Independent Living Flowchart

**Youth in custody enters as age 14+ or attains age 14**  
Should begin receiving Independent Living Services

**Within 60 days**  
**Independent Living Assessment**  
Identifies strengths and needs of the youth, per OAC 5101:2-42-19

**Within 30 days**  
**Independent Living Plan Development**  
Should be mutually constructed with the youth to address developmental skill areas needing service; not all 11 may apply

**Ensure Proper Documentation**  
PCSA's must ensure that entire process is documented in SACWIS, including dates for each process completion and movement to next step.

**Independent Living (IL) Plan Finalized**  
Case plan amendments **MUST** be submitted within 7 days of the approved IL plan  
*\*Readiness review of IL plan must be conducted every 90 days*

**Identify Needed Services and Make Referrals**  
Identify action steps; youth should begin receiving services

**Action Steps**  
Enroll youth in IL classes, community programming or school courses

**Funding Sources**

<b>Chafee 5101:9-6-35</b> For services outlined in OAC 5101:2-42-19(D), OAC 5101:2-42-19.2(E-F)	<b>TANF IL 5101:9-6-08.6</b> For services outlined in OAC 5101:2-42-19(D), OAC 5101:2-42-19.2(E-F)
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**Obtain Annual Credit Reports from all 3 Credit Reporting Agencies**  
OAC 5101:2-42-19, FCASM Procedure Letter 298

**National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**  
Within 45 days of their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, direct the youth to participate in the NYTD survey. Those who participate will receive follow-up surveys at ages 19 and 21.

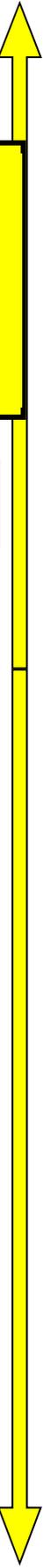
**Bridges Introduction**  
**180 days** before their emancipation date, inform the youth about the Bridges program.

**Post-Emancipation services**  
At least **90 days** before their emancipation date, inform the youth about all available post-emancipation services.

**Transition Plan**  
**90 days** before their emancipation date, discuss with youth their strengths and needs, mutually develop a transition plan, and provide information and resources regarding their next step: Bridges or post-emancipation services (OAC 5101:2-42-19.2)

**Termination of Custody**

**Emancipation Plan** OR **Bridges**





## Independent Living Funding Guidance

### 5101:9-6-08.6 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Independent Living (IL) Allocation

### 5101:9-6-35 Chafee Allocation

	<b>CHAFEE</b>	<b>TANF IL</b>
<b>Funding Cycle</b>	<b>Federal Fiscal Year</b> FFY17 = 10/01/16 -09/30/17 FFY18 = 10/01/17 – 09/30/18	<b>State Fiscal Year</b> SFY17 = 07/1/16 – 06/30/17 SFY18 = 07/01/17 – 06/30/18
<b>Eligibility</b>	Youth in agency custody who has attained the age of 14.  Adults 18-21 who emancipated from PCSA custody at 18 or older.	Youth 14 and older and currently in agency custody, youth in custody under the age of 14 who are likely to remain in custody until age 18.  Adults 18-21 who emancipated from PCSA custody at 18 or older.
<b>Funding Source</b>	The catalog of federal domestic assistance (CFDA) number is 93.674	The catalog of federal domestic assistance (CFDA) number is 93.558
	80% federal funds with 20% state match	100% federal funds
<b>Eligible Services</b>	Services outlined in 5101:2-42-19 and 5101:2-42-19.2	Services outlined in 5101:2-42-19, 5101:2-42-19.2 and FCASM Procedure Letter – TANF Independent Living Allocation and Spending (DRAFT)
<b>Expenditure/RMS Coding</b>	<b>Expenditure/RMS Coding</b>	
	Expenditure codes for contracts and purchased services as defined below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JFSFP 635 (TANF IL) Contracts, purchased services, and other costs for TANF IL program in accordance to OAC rules 5101:2-42-19 and 5101:2-42-19.2.</li> <li>• JFSFP 872 (Chafee 18-21) Room and board costs paid on behalf of young adults. This does not include costs associated with foster care in situations where a voluntary agreement exists. Aggregate amount cannot exceed 30% for room and board of a PCSA’s allocation in any given year.</li> <li>• JFSFP 873 (Chafee-other) Non-room and board related services for youth receiving IL services under the above listed rules.</li> <li>• <i>RMS Code for salaries</i> 774 (Chafee) Activities related to preparing youth for living on their own.</li> </ul>	
<b>Suggested Services/Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent, deposits, utilities and other household needs, including college essential items.</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent, deposits, utilities and other household needs, including college essential items.</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-secondary fees and applications</li> <li>• Supplies for post-secondary or secondary classes i.e. Tools, uniforms, computer, laptop, printer, software, tablet graphing calculator</li> <li>• Cash incentives for school success, employment success or other accomplishments, passing standardized graduation tests, match for savings</li> <li>• Workshops, classes, driver education</li> <li>• Bus passes</li> <li>• College bound stipends</li> <li>• Watches/Fitbit devices</li> <li>• YMCA or gym membership</li> <li>• Used car - not to exceed \$28,000 (Must also support their self-sufficiency goal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-secondary fees and applications</li> <li>• Supplies for post-secondary or secondary classes i.e. Tools, uniforms, computer, laptop, printer, software, tablet graphing calculator</li> <li>• Cash incentives for school success, employment success or other accomplishments, passing standardized graduation tests, match for savings</li> <li>• Workshops, classes, driver education</li> <li>• Bus passes</li> <li>• College bound stipends</li> <li>• Watches/Fitbit devices</li> <li>• YMCA or gym membership</li> <li>• Used car (youth should be employed)</li> <li>• Car repairs (\$2000 max)</li> <li>• Furniture (\$1000 max)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Restrictions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 30% of allocation can be used for Room &amp; Board</li> <li>• Cannot be used for Room &amp; Board for youth in custody unless the youth is 18 years old and voluntarily remains in care.</li> <li>• Training for foster parents</li> <li>• Rehabilitate buildings to house youth in IL program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Room &amp; Board cannot exceed 4 consecutive months</li> <li>• Cannot be used for Room &amp; Board for youth in custody unless the youth is 18 years old and voluntarily remains in care.</li> <li>• Medical care</li> <li>• Child care</li> <li>• Staff salaries</li> <li>• Juvenile justice services, court fines and fees</li> <li>• Child support/Title IV-D</li> <li>• Title IV-E services</li> <li>• Foster care maintenance</li> <li>• Construction or purchase of buildings or facilities</li> <li>• Purchase of real property</li> <li>• Public education</li> <li>• Cost sharing/matching of another federal program.</li> </ul>

# Independent Living Funding Examples

*Below are examples of how Chafee and TANF independent living (IL) funds can be used to support youth younger than 21, both pre- and post-emancipation. These scenarios are not meant to be all-inclusive, but to help county agencies identify activities that support the independent living requirements set forth in OAC 5101:2-42-19 and 5101:2-42-19.2.*

## **Academic Support**

Jessica is 14 and recently entered foster care. Prior to her removal from her family, she had a very poor school attendance record. The county PCSA told her that if her attendance improved, she would be rewarded. For the first six weeks, Jessica did not miss one day of school. She received a \$100 cash incentive for her accomplishment. (Chafee & TANF IL)

The local school board told a county PCSA that all middle and high school students in the district would now access all textbooks, assignments and other materials online instead of on paper. The schools had tablets for students to rent during the school year, or they could use their own tablets or laptops. The PCSA decided to purchase tablets and tablet covers for the middle and high school youth in its care. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Post-Secondary Educational Support**

John is a college-bound emancipated young adult. The county PCSA offered

him and other emancipated youth a monthly stipend of \$600 if they maintain a certain GPA, an agreed-upon course load, and if they verify their enrollment. This will allow them to reduce their work hours so they can focus on their studies. (Chafee & TANF IL)

April is an emancipated young adult who attends college and works part-time. She receives financial support from grants and ETV, as well as the county PCSA. She also is a licensed driver, owns a car and has proof of insurance. When her car needs repairs, the PCSA can pay up to \$2,000 toward the repair cost. (TANF IL Only)

## **Career Preparation**

Michael is in foster care and is interested in doing application programming for Google. He heard about an employee recruitment event in Cleveland and told his caseworker and caregivers that he would like to attend. This means he would have to pay a registration fee and stay overnight in Cleveland. To help him reach his career goals, the PCSA agreed to pay the registration fee, the overnight lodging for both Michael and the caseworker, and even made sure he had professional clothing to wear. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Sara is an emancipated youth and college student majoring in aeronautical engineering. She has been invited to spend six weeks over summer break at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida as

an intern. Sara will be responsible for some of the expenses associated with the internship. The county PCSA can help her with these costs if she volunteers for post-emancipation services. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Employment Programs and Vocational Training**

Kyle is in foster care and has chosen to attend vocational school for auto repair. He will need to purchase his own tools, safety equipment and lab fees, which total \$400. The PCSA can cover these costs. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Christina is in foster care and recently became a certified nurse's aide, thanks to the support of her PCSA, which helped her pay for classes and exams. She just got a job at a nursing home and will have to work late hours. Unfortunately, her foster parents can't help with transportation. To help her keep the job, the PCSA will pay for her to take driver's education classes. In addition, until Christina can get her driver's license, the agency also will contract with a staff member to drive her to and from work. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Budgeting and Financial Management**

Ashley is a high-school sophomore who recently got her first job, working part-time for a grocery store. She plans to put 60 percent of her paycheck into a savings account. Her PCSA has agreed to match what she saves each month. (Chafee & TANF IL)

A county PCSA held a "Savings 101" presentation for current and former foster youth. The featured speaker was a local bank employee who described such things as types of loans, checking and savings accounts, depositing and withdrawing, etc. Afterward, participants visited the

bank, and the PCSA gave each of them \$100 to deposit into a new account. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Housing, Education and Home Management**

A county PCSA held a hands-on "How to Cook" presentation for current and former foster youth. The featured speaker was a chef from a local restaurant, who talked about kitchen safety and basic cooking techniques. All youth in attendance received cooking supplies and a \$25 incentive for participating. The speaker also received a small fee. (Chafee & TANF IL)

A county PCSA held an event called Amazing Race: Home Edition, modeled after the TV show. Youth completed a race/obstacle course full of activities designed to teach them basic housekeeping skills, such as laundry, ironing, dishes, dusting, mopping, etc. Everyone received a small incentive and a home management kit for participating. This activity was demonstrated during the "Let's Imagine For Experiences" (L.I.F.E.) workshop at the 2017 Fostering Pathways to Success Conference in Columbus. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Health Education and Risk Prevention**

A county PCSA hired a certified personal trainer from the local YMCA to provide group and personal training to youth in care. The PCSA also purchased YMCA memberships, activity trackers, and workout clothes and supplies for participating youth and gave them cash incentives for reaching personal fitness goals. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Carrie is an active member of her high school's Drug Free Clubs of America program and was chosen to be an ambassador at this year's national conference. Her school doesn't have funds

for her to attend the conference. Because she is in foster care, her county PCSA can support this experience with independent living funds. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Family Support and Healthy Marriage**

Terrance is an 18-year-old new father who recently emancipated from foster care. He loves his son very much and wants to be the best dad he can be. However, he realized quickly after his son's birth that doesn't know much about infant care or child development. A friend told him about a parenting workshop for teen dads at a local rec center. Dads attend two 90-minute sessions, with their babies, each month. When they complete the program, they receive a "Daddy Kit" with age-appropriate supplies and toys. The workshop costs \$75. Terrance can't afford it, but he really wants to attend – so he contacted his former caseworker at the county PCSA and volunteered for post-emancipation services. As a result, the PCSA can pay for him to attend the workshop. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Ryan is 18, just graduated from high school and is prepared to emancipate. He has worked part-time for the same employer for the last two years and has just been offered a full-time position. He would like to move out of town and live with his grandparents on their farm, but that would mean he'd need a car to get to work. He can't afford a car, but he does have a driver's license and can afford car insurance. Because the car would allow Ryan to maintain his permanent connection with his grandparents and stable employment, the county PCSA can purchase a used car for him. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Mentoring**

John is 20 and thinks he might like to become a lawyer. A local attorney who specializes in personal injury has agreed to let John job-shadow him for a day and to be his mentor. The county PCSA supported John by buying appropriate clothes for him to wear. It also agreed to give him a \$100 incentive for completing this mentoring activity. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Mary is a 17-year-old high-school senior who mentioned to her caseworker that she'd like to give back to children in her community. To support Mary in this effort, the PCSA decided to offer her an incentive. It will give Mary \$50 for mentoring two eighth graders who will soon be transitioning to high school. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Room and Board**

Sam is 18, emancipated from foster care, and recently joined an ApprenticeOhio program so that he can earn a living wage while he works and attends classes full-time. Sam's independent living caseworker helped him find an apartment in the town where he's working. The county PCSA can use its Chafee allocation to pay for Sam's security deposit, first month of rent, and utility turn-on fees and deposits. If the PCSA has already used 30 percent of its Chafee allocation for room and board, then it can use TANF IL funds to pay for these things. The PCSA also can set up an agreed-upon post-emancipation plan with Sam to help with his rent until he can pay it himself. It can use Chafee funds to cover this cost until it reaches the 30 percent allocation. Then it can use TANF IL funds for up to four consecutive months. The PCSA also can use its Chafee allocation to pay for Sam's furniture and housing supplies. If it uses the TANF IL allocation to buy furniture, there is a \$1,000 cap. Household supplies can include, but are not limited to, linens, small appliances,

dishes, pots and pans, cookware, silverware, a TV, laundry supplies, a fire extinguisher, a carbon monoxide detector and rental insurance. (Chafee & TANF IL, some restrictions apply)

## **Room and Board**

Tony is 18, emancipated from foster care, and registered to take classes full-time at Wright State University. He has an academic scholarship and an ETV. He also works part-time and will continue to work while enrolled in school. However, he still will have an outstanding balance for the semester and will need help purchasing books and supplies. The county PCSA can help Tony with many of these expenses, including a laptop, a printer, software and typical dorm-room necessities, such as specific sheets, comforter, shower shoes, outerwear, storage containers, hangers, a desk light, etc. The PCSA even can pay Tony a monthly living stipend. If he ever has one-time college-related expenses – for example, for events, tests or special equipment – the PCSA can help with those, as well. (Chafee & TANF IL)

## **Normalcy Activities**

Four youth in a PCSA's custody are graduating from high school. To celebrate and reward them, the agency threw them a combined graduation party. It also gave each of them a gift and a cash incentive. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Sam just turned 16 and is very excited to get his driver's permit. He and his foster parents researched reputable driver's education centers and found one near their home. The county PCSA agreed to pay for the \$350 four-week course. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Adam is 14 and just made his high school's freshman football team. He and his foster dad attended the first meeting, where they learned it will cost \$350 for Adam to play. This includes a participation fee, meal fee, uniform fee and other expenses. Fortunately, the county PCSA can cover these costs with independent living funds. (Chafee & TANF IL)

Amanda is a high school senior whose friend Eric asked her to prom. Eric offered to pay for the tickets and dinner. However, Amanda's foster family estimates that it will cost about \$300 to buy Amanda a dress, shoes, jewelry and corsage. They mentioned this to Amanda's caseworker and were happy to hear that the County PCSA can support these expenses using independent living funds. (Chafee & TANF IL)

# Incentive Examples

Fairfield County Job & Family Services provided these examples of incentives it offers to youth in foster care for completing various independent living activities.

Note: All incentives require verification by the Independent Living Worker before payment is made. Some incentives also require prior approval.

## Academic Support

- Passing Grade Level..... \$50
- Receiving an award at school..... \$25
- Graduation ..... \$500
- Significant grade or school behavior improvement..... \$25

## Budget and Financial Management

- Opening a checking account ..... \$25
- Completing the bill payment exercise ..... \$10/mo
- Memorize Social Security Number ..... \$15
- Complete your taxes (assisted by IL worker) ..... \$25

## Career Preparation

- Obtaining a job.....\$50
- Completing one-on-one job application raining ..... \$10
- Maintaining a job for 6 months... \$100
- Appropriate participation in a professional meeting (SAR, CR).... \$20
- Shadowing or interviewing in career field..... \$25
- Meeting with a recruiter ..... \$25
- Summer Work Program ..... \$50

## Employment and Vocational Training

- Accepted into Vocational Program.. \$25
- Completing a Vocational Program... \$25
- Meeting work hours for school employment program ..... \$25

## Family Support and Healthy Marriage

- Attend and Participate in a Permanency Roundtable ..... \$25

## Health Education and Risk Prevention

- Successfully completing PREP..... \$50
- Able to correctly write medications information ..... \$25
- Attend Take Back the Night (Domestic Violence Awareness) ... \$25

## Housing, Educational and Home Management Training

- Assisting with a home project (prior approval required) ..... \$20
- Basic Household Needs Exercise... \$20

## Mentoring

- Voluntary community service ..... \$25 (2-hour minimum; not court-ordered or required for a class)

## Post-Secondary Educational Support

- College visit ..... \$25
- Complete the ACT..... \$25
- FAFSA ..... \$25
- College Application..... \$25
- Attending other college-related conference ..... \$30

## Room and Board Financial Assistance

- Saving half of recommended startup funds by emancipation ..... \$500 (Savings of \$1000)

## Additional Items (multiple categories):

- Complete an Independent Living Class/ Group activity ..... \$10-\$20
- Attend Fostering Pathways to Success Conference ..... \$75
- Set and reach an individual goal of choice as approved..... \$25





# Earning an Ohio High School Diploma

## Classes of 2018 and beyond

*There is no one-size-fits-all way to graduate. Ohio gives you several options to qualify for a high school diploma. Choose the way that works best for you!*

To earn a high school diploma in Ohio, you must complete courses and then choose an option on the right to show that you are ready for college or a job. Here's what you need to do to graduate. Your school counselor will give you more details.

### Complete Courses

Take and earn a state minimum of 20 credits in specific subjects.

English language arts	4 credits
Health	½ credit
Mathematics	4 credits
Physical education	½ credit
Science	3 credits
Social studies	3 credits
Electives	5 credits

### Other Requirements

You also must receive instruction in economics and financial literacy and complete at least two semesters of fine arts. Your district may require more than 20 credits to graduate.

### Show That You Are Ready

Use at least one option to show that you are ready for college or a job.

#### Ohio's State Tests

Earn at least 18 points on seven end-of-course state tests. End-of-course tests are:

<b>Algebra I or Integrated Math I</b>	<b>English I</b>
<b>Geometry or Integrated Math II</b>	<b>English II</b>
<b>American Government</b>	<b>Biology</b>
<b>American History</b>	

Each test score earns you up to five graduation points. You must have a minimum of four points in math, four points in English and six points across science and social studies. Your school and district receive grades on the Ohio School Report Cards for all students' scores *and participation* on state tests.

**OR**

#### Industry credential and workforce readiness

Earn a minimum of 12 points by receiving a State Board of Education-approved, industry-recognized credential or group of credentials in a single career field and earn a 13 on WorkKeys, a work-readiness test. The state of Ohio will pay one time for you to take the WorkKeys test.

**OR**

#### College and career readiness tests

Earn remediation-free scores in Mathematics and English language arts on either the ACT or SAT.

The Ohio Department of Higher Education works with Ohio's universities to set the remediation-free scores for the ACT and SAT tests. Periodically, for a variety of reasons, these scores may be adjusted. For all high school juniors, the remediation-free scores set by Feb. 1 of their junior year will be used to meet their graduation requirement. The most up-to-date information regarding remediation-free scores can be found on the Department's graduation requirements webpage.

**and**

You have choices. Check them out at [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov), search *graduation requirements Classes of 2018 and beyond*. Then talk to your school counselor.

May 2017



# Ohio Curriculum Choices Checklist for High Schools

## Graduating Classes of 2015 through 2019

A family may feel that its son or daughter is not prepared to achieve the increased credit requirements, succeed in the higher-level courses in mathematics and science and/or is planning a career that does not require these courses. In this case, the parent or guardian may request that the child be excused from the new high school curriculum requirements for graduation. *The Curriculum Choice provision is available only to the graduating classes of 2015 through 2019.* Your son or daughter may continue to take and strive to complete the higher-level courses. If successful in the higher-level courses, he or she will not be subject to any college consequences. *Note: the minimal state graduations requirements change for the graduating classes of 2018 and 2019.*

### STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Student name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent or guardian of student requesting Curriculum Choice: \_\_\_\_\_

Date student entered high school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Checklist:

- Student is in his or her third year of high school (*exception: a student in the class of 2015 may still choose this option during his or her senior year*)
- School meeting with student and family to explain Curriculum Choice and resulting district graduation requirements.  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of administrator: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_
- Student in the classes of 2015 to 2017 has minimally met the 2013 Ohio graduation requirements (*see curriculum requirements listed below*).
- Student in the classes of 2018 or 2019 has met the modified state minimal graduation requirements (*see curriculum requirements listed below*).
- Student has met the assessment requirements for his or her graduating class.
- A Student Success Plan was created during the student's third year of high school. Current seniors in the class of 2015 can create a plan during the 2014-2015 school year.  
Which of the following goals is in the plan?  
 Two-year degree program  
 Business industry credential  
 Apprenticeship
- Plan includes:  
 Student's interests, skills and knowledge that support his or her career goals  
 High school courses and programs related to and that support the student's career goals  
 Outside-of-school activities that support his or her career goals  
 The results of OhioMeansJobs K-12 or other similar career information planning systems  
 Record of assessments (both current and planned)

Examples of Student Success Plans are [here](#).

## 2013 CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS:

- English language arts 4 units
- Health 1/2 unit
- Mathematics 3 units
- Physical education 1/2 unit
- Science 3 units
  - 1 unit of biological sciences
  - 1 unit of physical sciences
  - 1 unit of science
- Social studies 3 units
  - 1/2 unit American history
  - 1/2 unit American government
  - 2 units other Social studies
- Electives 6 units
  - 1 unit or 2 half units in business, technology, fine arts or foreign language
- Fine Arts Two semesters completed in grades 7-12
- Any additional local curriculum graduation requirements

## CURRICULUM CHOICE REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASSES OF 2018 AND 2019:

- English language arts 4 units
- Health 1/2 unit
- Mathematics 4 units
  - 1 unit of probability and statistics, computer programming, applied mathematics, quantitative reasoning, or any other course approved by the department using standards identified [here](#).
  - 3 units of other high school mathematics
- Physical education 1/2 unit
- Science 3 units inquiry-based laboratory experience that engages students in asking valid scientific questions and gathering and analyzing information
  - one unit of physical sciences
  - one unit life sciences
  - one or more units of advanced sciences study
- Social studies 3 units
  - 1/2 unit American history
  - 1/2 unit American government
  - \_\_\_\_ units other Social studies
- Electives 5 units
- Fine Arts two semesters completed in grades 7-12
- Any additional local curriculum graduation requirements

Direct questions to: [curriculumchoice@education.ohio.gov](mailto:curriculumchoice@education.ohio.gov).



# In-Demand Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree

Listed According to Job Openings

Listed below are the in-demand occupations statewide that require an associate's degree. Many of these occupations also require some combination of on-the-job training and/or relevant work experience. Discuss these options with your OhioMeansJobs Center's workforce specialist.

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Physical Therapist Assistants	\$43,960	\$55,700	None	\$	339
Dental Hygienists	\$54,330	\$67,500	None	\$	259
Radiologic Technologists	\$41,140	\$53,120	None	\$	259
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	\$31,450	\$41,850	None	\$	232
Paralegals and Legal Assistants	\$30,280	\$43,450	None	\$	221
Web Developers	\$36,120	\$58,710	None	\$	205
Respiratory Therapists	\$43,200	\$53,900	None	\$	194
Occupational Therapist Assistants	\$46,710	\$56,820	None	\$	177
Computer Network Support Specialists	\$36,160	\$54,470	None	\$	148
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	\$26,050	\$31,230	None	\$	98
Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technicians	\$38,120	\$59,680	None	\$	89

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Electronics Engineering Technicians*	\$38,120	\$59,680	None	\$	89
Electrical Engineering Technicians*	\$38,120	\$59,680	None	\$	89
Electrical Engineering Technologists*	\$38,820	\$55,070	None	\$	89
Manufacturing Production Technicians*	\$38,820	\$55,070	None	\$	89
Non-Destructive Testing Specialists*	\$38,820	\$55,070	None	\$	89
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	\$51,870	\$62,650	None	\$	88
Industrial Engineering Technicians	\$36,140	\$49,130	None	\$	87
Quality Control Analysts	\$31,930	\$46,170	None	\$	73
Mechanical Engineering Technicians	\$36,050	\$48,280	None	\$	69
Civil Engineering Technicians	\$37,000	\$51,293	None	\$	66
Human Resources Assis., ex. Payroll & Timekp	\$28,100	\$36,950	None	\$	56
Medical Equipment Repairers	\$33,400	\$50,500	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	54
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	\$51,270	\$61,173	None	Less than 5 years	49
Architectural Drafters*	\$34,620	\$48,318	None	\$	38
Civil Drafters*	\$34,620	\$48,318	None	\$	38
Mechanical Drafters	\$36,840	\$49,230	None	\$	36
Nuclear Medicine Technologists	\$55,420	\$68,060	None	\$	28
Electro-Mechanical Technicians	\$38,720	\$54,460	None	\$	15

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Avionics Technicians	\$43,990	\$58,520	None	\$	10
Aerospace Engineering and Operations Technicians	\$53,680	\$71,219	None	\$	7

\*Statewide "Annual Job Openings" occupational projections - Bureau of Labor Market Information  
 ‡ - "Relevant Work Experience" data unavailable | † - "Starting Wage" data unavailable





# In-Demand Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

Listed According to Job Openings

Listed below are the in-demand occupations statewide that require a bachelor's degree. Many of these occupations also require some combination of on-the-job training and/or relevant work experience. Discuss these options with your OhioMeansJobs Center's workforce specialist.

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Registered Nurses	\$50,820	\$61,280	None	\$	4,833
General and Operations Managers	\$49,430	\$89,950	None	5 years or more	1,904
Accountants and Auditors	\$44,730	\$63,350	None	\$	1,438
Computer Systems Analysts	\$57,240	\$82,510	None	\$	978
Software Developers, Applications	\$57,000	\$84,920	None	\$	836
Managers, All Other	\$54,810	\$93,320	None	Less than 5 years	762
Medical and Health Services Managers	\$64,740	\$87,430	None	Less than 5 years	698
Management Analysts	\$45,960	\$74,290	None	Less than 5 years	624
Financial Managers	\$64,620	\$106,320	None	5 years or more	621
Sales Rep., Wholesale & Mfg. Tech./Sci. Prod.	\$41,240	\$68,370	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	610

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$37,860	\$59,510	None	\$	602
Human Resource Specialists	\$36,010	\$54,670	None	\$	452
Mechanical Engineers	\$52,240	\$73,010	None	\$	430
Sales Managers	\$69,960	\$111,860	None	Less than 5 years	396
Cost Estimators	\$37,260	\$56,610	None	\$	384
Business Operations Specialists, All Other	\$40,910	\$62,410	None	\$	374
Industrial Engineers	\$55,100	\$76,680	None	\$	366
Computer and Information Systems Managers	\$79,600	\$118,320	None	5 years or more	359
Industrial Production Managers	\$58,360	\$85,260	None	5 years or more	346
Purchasing Agents, ex. Whole., Retail, & Farm	\$42,850	\$61,070	Long-term on-the-job training	\$	342
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	\$30,580	\$39,010	None	\$	334
Loan Officers	\$34,670	\$57,530	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	298
Civil Engineers	\$52,000	\$76,190	None	\$	286
Network and Comp. Systems Admins	\$50,350	\$69,550	None	\$	282
Administrative Services Managers	\$53,880	\$77,810	None	Less than 5 years	276
Financial Analysts	\$49,010	\$69,580	None	\$	273
Securities/Commodities/Fin. Serv. Sales Agents	\$32,560	\$59,990	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	272
Construction Managers	\$60,260	\$84,990	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	271
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	\$29,420	\$37,310	None	\$	270
Training and Development Specialists	\$37,110	\$55,570	None	Less than 5 years	250
Graphic Designers	\$29,450	\$43,100	None	\$	244

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	\$48,920	\$58,060	None	\$	232
Architectural and Engineering Managers	\$87,930	\$120,520	None	5 years or more	226
Biofuels/Biodiesel Technology and Product Development Managers*	\$87,930	\$120,520	None	5 years or more	226
Engineers, All Other	\$53,310	\$84,560	None	\$	191
Validation Engineers*	\$53,310	\$84,560	None	\$	191
Robotics Engineers*	\$53,310	\$84,560	None	\$	191
Manufacturing Engineers*	\$53,310	\$84,552	None	\$	191
Computer Programmers	\$43,250	\$68,180	None	\$	184
Marketing Managers	\$76,010	\$118,730	None	5 years or more	173
Wholesale and Retail Buyers, Except Farm Products	\$38,610	\$54,060	Long-term on-the-job training	\$	171
Credit Analysts	\$45,870	\$65,170	None	\$	163
Human Resources Managers	\$71,250	\$100,130	None	5 years or more	163
Social and Community Service Managers	\$46,580	\$64,170	None	5 years or more	156
Database Administrators	\$50,900	\$75,890	None	Less than 5 years	152
Public Relations Specialists	\$34,450	\$49,520	None	\$	132
Aerospace Engineers	\$72,520	\$107,560	None	\$	129
Compliance Officers	\$37,990	\$56,470	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	120
Environmental Compliance Inspectors*	\$37,990	\$56,470	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	120
Regulatory Affairs Specialists*	\$37,990	\$56,470	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	120
Software Developers, Systems Software	\$66,370	\$92,570	None	\$	120

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Electrical Engineers	\$54,640	\$77,220	None	\$	119
Biological Technicians	\$29,670	\$38,917	None	\$	117
Environmental Scientists and Specialists, Including Health	\$46,900	\$65,915	None	\$	115
Operations Research Analysts	\$52,450	\$79,420	None	\$	112
Substance Abuse & Behavioral Dis. Counselors	\$30,770	\$40,890	None	\$	106
Software Quality Assurance Engineers and Testers*	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects*	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Data Warehousing Specialists*	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Business Intelligence Analysts*	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Search Marketing Strategists*	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Computer Occupations, All Other	\$47,040	\$78,240	None	\$	103
Information Technology Project Managers*	\$47,040	\$78,229	None	\$	103
Computer Network Architects*	\$65,830	\$98,738	None	\$	96
Insurance Underwriters	\$43,800	\$61,340	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	93
Interpreters and Translators	\$26,620	\$41,370	Short-term on-the-job training	\$	91
Sales Engineers	\$58,220	\$93,040	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	91
Logisticians	\$48,630	\$69,590	None	\$	89
Logistics Analysts*	\$48,630	\$69,590	None	\$	89
Chemists	\$43,280	\$67,890	None	\$	85
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	\$62,430	\$89,260	None	\$	83
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	\$47,450	\$69,560	None	\$	69

Occupation Title	Starting Wage	Median Annual Wage	On-the-Job Training	Relevant Work Experience	Annual Job Openings*
Purchasing Managers	\$73,140	\$107,130	None	5 years or more	68
Commercial and Industrial Designers	\$40,290	\$60,424	None	\$	64
Information Security Analysts	\$57,620	\$80,780	None	Less than 5 years	55
Materials Engineers	\$60,630	\$89,680	None	\$	53
Financial Quantitative Analysts*	\$47,320	\$70,120	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	49
Fraud Examiners, Investigators and Analysts*	\$47,320	\$70,120	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	49
Risk Management Specialists*	\$47,320	\$70,120	Moderate-term on-the-job training	\$	49
Actuaries	\$59,460	\$89,430	Long-term on-the-job training	\$	45
Chemical Engineers	\$57,250	\$86,110	None	\$	40
Environmental Engineers	\$63,000	\$88,410	None	\$	40
Technical Writers	\$43,930	\$59,450	Short-term on-the-job training	Less than 5 years	40
Natural Sciences Managers	\$68,580	\$111,910	None	5 years or more	27
Food Scientists and Technologists	\$39,730	\$54,538	None	\$	26
Biomedical Engineers	\$47,430	\$68,224	None	\$	25
Health & Safety Engineers, ex. Mining Safety and Inspectors	\$59,050	\$82,320	None	\$	24
Computer Hardware Engineers	\$58,000	\$88,850	None	\$	19
Materials Scientists	\$54,310	\$91,640	None	\$	13
Personal Financial Advisor	\$44,600	\$79,640	None	\$	0

\*Statewide “Annual Job Openings” projections - Bureau of Labor Market Information

‡ - “Starting Wage” data unavailable | § - “Relevant Work Experience” data unavailable





Mike DeWine, Governor  
State of Ohio

Kimberly Hall, Director  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

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