Service Standards

Youth Independent Living Services

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Definition

Youth Independent Living Services are designed for older adolescents who have been separated from their homes, may have been disconnected from long-term family relationships, and may have assumed parenting responsibilities. These youth need skills and support to lead self-sufficient, healthy, productive, and stable adult lives. Youth receiving these services may be in state custody, living in a foster care or kinship care home, or in a residential treatment or group home setting and typically face numerous challenges due to multiple, changing living arrangements. These challenges include a lack of: connection to effective support for educational achievement and school continuity; access to employment preparation and jobs; personal financial education, competency and security; and sources of encouragement to save and start to accumulate assets.

Note: *An organization that provides Counseling, Support and Education Services (CSE); Mental Health and/or Substance Use Services (MHSU); Case Management (CM); Workforce Development Services (WDS); Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VOC); Family Foster Care and Kinship Care (FKC); Refugee Resettlement Services (RRS); Pregnancy Support Services (PS); and/or Mentoring Services (MS) as part of its YIL program, will complete the appropriate section(s), in addition to YIL, as complementary service sections.*

Note: *Please see YIL Reference List for the research that informed the development of these standards.*

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

No Self Study Evidence

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 1: Person-Centered Logic Model

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

The organization implements a program logic model that describes how resources and program activities will support the achievement of positive outcomes.

Note: *Please see the Logic Model Template for additional guidance on this standard.*

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

Logic models have been implemented for all programs and the organization has identified at least two outcomes for all its programs.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Logic models need improvement or clarification; or
- Logic models are still under development for some of its programs, but are completed for all high-risk programs such as protective services, foster care, residential treatment, etc.; or
- At least one outcome has been identified for all of its programs.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Logic models need significant improvement; or
- Logic models are still under development for a majority of programs; or
- A logic model has not been developed for one or more high-risk programs; or
- Outcomes have not been identified for one or more programs.

4

Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Logic models have not been developed or implemented; or
- Outcomes have not been identified for any programs.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

* • Program logic model that includes a list of outcomes being measured	
• See program description completed during intake	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel

YIL 1.01

A program logic model, or equivalent framework, identifies:

a. needs the program will address;
b. available human, financial, organizational, and community resources (i.e. inputs);
c. program activities intended to bring about desired results;
d. program outputs (i.e. the size and scope of services delivered);
e. desired outcomes (i.e. the changes you expect to see in persons served); and
f. expected long-term impact on the organization, community, and/or system.

Examples: *Please see the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide and COA Accreditation's PQI Guide for more information on developing and using program logic models.*

Examples: *Information that may be used to inform the development of the program logic model includes, but is not limited to: (a) characteristics of the service population; (b) needs assessments and periodic reassessments; and (c) the best available evidence of service effectiveness.*

Examples: *YIL services can address the attainment of foundational, short-term, achievable outcomes that lay the groundwork for longer-term positive outcomes. Depending on age, time in the program, and other factors, outcomes such as school graduation or training completion can either be immediate or can begin with improving on test scores or reading at or above grade level. Steps toward achieving economic self-sufficiency can include achieving such financial growth goals as completing a financial education program, understanding and obtaining a good credit rating, or building a savings account.*

YIL 1.02

The logic model identifies desired outcomes in at least two of the following areas:

a. change in clinical status;
b. change in functional status;
c. health, welfare, and safety;
d. permanency of life situation;
e. quality of life;
f. achievement of individual service goals; and
g. other outcomes as appropriate to the program or service population.

Interpretation: *Outcomes data should be disaggregated to identify patterns of disparity or inequity that can be masked by aggregate data reporting. See PQI 5.02 for more information on disaggregating data to track and monitor identified outcomes.*

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 2: Personnel

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Personnel have the competency and support needed to provide services and meet the needs of youth.

Interpretation: *Competency can be demonstrated through education, training, or experience, including lived experience when applicable. Support can be provided through supervision or other learning activities to improve understanding or skill development in specific areas.*

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- With some exceptions, staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) possess the required qualifications, but the integrity of the service is not compromised; or
- Supervisors provide additional support and oversight, as needed, to the few staff without the listed qualifications; or
- Most staff who do not meet educational requirements are seeking to obtain them; or
- With few exceptions, staff have received required training, including applicable specialized training; or
- Training curricula are not fully developed or lack depth; or
- Training documentation is consistently maintained and kept up-to-date with some exceptions; or
- A substantial number of supervisors meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization provides training and/or consultation to improve competencies when needed; or
- With few exceptions, caseload sizes are consistently maintained as required by the standards or as required by internal policy when caseload has not been set by a standard; or
- Workloads are such that staff can effectively accomplish their assigned tasks and provide quality services and are adjusted as necessary; or
- Specialized services are obtained as required by the standards.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- A significant number of staff (direct service providers, supervisors, and program managers) do not possess the required qualifications and, as a result, the integrity of the service may be compromised; or
- Job descriptions typically do not reflect the requirements of the standards, and/or hiring practices do not document efforts to hire staff with required qualifications when vacancies occur; or
- Supervisors do not typically provide additional support and oversight to staff without the listed qualifications; or
- A significant number of staff have not received required training, including applicable specialized training; or
- Training documentation is poorly maintained; or
- A significant number of supervisors do not meet the requirements of the standard, and the organization makes little effort to provide training and/or consultation to improve competencies; or
- There are numerous instances where caseload sizes exceed the standards' requirements or the requirements of internal policy when a caseload size is not set by the standard; or
- Workloads are excessive, and the integrity of the service may be compromised; or
- Specialized staff are typically not retained as required and/or many do not possess the required qualifications; or
- Specialized services are infrequently obtained as required by the standards.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Table of contents of training curricula	
*	• Procedures or other documentation relevant to continuity of care and case assignment	
*	• List of program personnel that includes: 1. Title 2. Name 3. Employee, volunteer, or independent contractor 4. Degree or other qualifications 5. Time in current position • See organizational chart submitted during application	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Sample job descriptions from across relevant job categories • Documentation tracking staff completion of required trainings and/or competencies • Training curricula • Caseload size requirements set by policy, regulation, or contract, when applicable • Documentation of current caseload size per worker

On-Site Activities

*	• Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel • Review personnel files

YIL 2.01

Personnel providing counseling and case coordination services are qualified by:

a. a bachelor's degree in a human service field; and
b. two years of relevant youth work experience, including experience in case work, group work, and case coordination.

Interpretation: *Appropriate experience, including lived experience, and specialized training can compensate for a lack of a bachelor's degree depending on the role or type of services being provided.*

YIL 2.02

Supervisors are qualified by:

a. an advanced degree in a human service field, experience delivering youth services, and supervisory experience; or
b. a bachelor's degree in a human service field, two years of direct service experience with a comparable population, and three years of supervisory experience.

Interpretation: *Years of experience providing services, in addition to formal trainings, certifications, and/or leadership experience can compensate for a lack of a degree.*

YIL 2.03

All direct service personnel are trained on, or demonstrate competency in:

a. positive youth development;
b. normative youth development and the effects of early trauma, educational gaps and delays, and abuse and neglect on youth development;
c. local housing resources; and
d. how to identify informal support networks of family, friends, and community resources.

YIL 2.04

When staff with lived experience provide services to youth, the organization:

a. clearly defines their roles and responsibilities;
b. includes them as equal partners on the team;
c. helps other program personnel understand the position and its purpose at the program;
d. establishes guidelines for recruitment and selection;
e. ensures they are trained to perform their roles and responsibilities;
f. provides ongoing support and supervision to address any issues that occur, including helping them manage personal triggers that may arise on the job;
g. facilitates opportunities to connect and consult with others performing similar roles;and
h. ensures they are offered opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

NA: The organization does not have lived experience positions.

Examples: *Staff with lived experience can play an important role in welcoming, engaging, empowering, supporting, and advocating for youth. These workers may experience challenges in their employment including stigma from co-workers, inappropriate expectations from other staff, role confusion, triggers from past trauma, and lack of opportunities for support and advancement.When they are viewed and included as full partners who have input into program decisions and given appropriate support, staff with lived experience can help organizations ensure their culture and practices prioritize the experience and involvement of persons served and their families.*

Examples: *Organizations may use other terms to describe staff with lived experience including staff with lived expertise, peer support workers, peer support specialists, peer/youth partners, and peer/youth advocates.*

YIL 2.05

The organization promotes stability and service continuity by:

a. assigning a worker at intake or early in the contact;
b. minimizing the number of workers assigned to the individual during their contact with the organization; and
c. ensuring a smooth transition for persons served when reassignment of direct service personnel is necessary.

Examples: *Examples of practices that promote a smooth transition include proactive communication, "warm" person-to-person hand-offs, knowledge transfer, and follow-up.*

YIL 2.06

Caseloads support the achievement of youth outcomes, are regularly reviewed, and generally range between 10 and 20 cases.

Interpretation: *The number of cases carried should be smaller when youth receive counseling or other intensive services, and the worker's travel time or geographic area is extensive, than when a worker is providing primarily follow-up contact and less intensive, more centralized services.*

Examples: *Factors that may be considered when determining employee workloads include, but are not limited to: (a) the qualifications, competencies, and experience of the worker, including the level of supervision needed; (b) the work and time required to accomplish assigned tasks and job responsibilities; (c) case complexity, special needs, and circumstances; (d) age and population characteristics, including ethnic and cultural factors; (e) case status and progress toward achievement of desired outcomes; and (f) service volume, accounting for youth that have higher service needs.*

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 3: Intake and Assessment

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

The organization's intake and assessment practices ensure that youth receive prompt and responsive access to appropriate services.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- In a few rare instances, urgent needs were not prioritized; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Culturally responsive assessments are the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Urgent needs are often not prioritized; or
- Services are frequently not initiated in a timely manner; or
- Applicants are not receiving referrals, as appropriate; or
- Assessment and reassessment timeframes are often missed; or
- Assessments are sometimes not sufficiently individualized;
- Culturally responsive assessments are not the norm, and this is not being addressed in supervision or training; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Participation of persons served is inconsistent; or
- Intake or assessment is done by another organization or referral source and no documentation and/or summary of required information is present in case record.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- There are no written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Screening and intake procedures	
*	• Assessment procedures	

* • Copy of assessment tool(s)	

Site Visit Evidence

* • Strategies for engaging youth • Community resource and referral list

On-Site Activities

* • Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Youth • Review case records

YIL 3.01

The organization partners with community entities and providers to:

a. identify youth with potential need; and
b. increase youth interest and the likelihood that needed supports and services will be used.

Interpretation: *This standard promotes the "no wrong door" concept that youth will not be turned away when a narrow service does not meet comprehensive need. Instead, youth should be engaged at any point of entry and should be referred to or served by an appropriate constellation of providers.*

YIL 3.02

Youth are screened and informed about:

a. how well their request matches the organization's services; and
b. what services will be available and when.

NA: Another organization is responsible for screening, as defined in a contract.

YIL 3.03

The youth and worker meet within a time period consistent with established program timeframes and state guidelines.

YIL 3.04 (FP)

Prompt, responsive, intake practices:

a. allow youth to provide input on what they need and want;
b. gather information necessary to identify critical service needs and/or to determine if a more intensive service is necessary;
c. provide opportunity for youth to share information about their identity, background, and personal characteristics that may influence their service preferences or needs;
d. provide the basis for further assessment;
e. give priority to urgent needs and emergency situations, including health and safety concerns;
f. support timely initiation of services;
g. determine if youth are eligible to receive services and funding; and
h. provide placement on a waiting list or referral to appropriate resources when youth cannot be served or cannot be served promptly.

YIL 3.05

Prior to or at initiation of services each worker and youth:

a. confirm the youth's age and legal status and, as appropriate, obtain necessary, authorized, written approvals for service from a legal guardian;
b. contact prior placements for confirmation about services the youth may have received, as appropriate; and
c. arrange to meet where the youth lives so the worker can observe and document if the arrangement is safe, healthy, and provides suitable social, emotional, and physical care and support.

Interpretation: *"Legal status" refers to whether youth are in state custody or are legally emancipated.*

YIL 3.06

Youth participate in an individualized, trauma-informed, culturally and linguistically responsive assessment that is:

a. conducted in a place of the youth's choice, when possible;
b. completed within established timeframes;
c. appropriately tailored to meet the age, developmental level, and the preferences of youth served; and
d. focused on information pertinent for meeting service requests and objectives.

YIL 3.07

Comprehensive assessment tools are used in conjunction with youth input to identify:

a. strengths, needs, challenges, and protective factors;
b. emotional literacy, interpersonal skills, and current level of peer group and community involvement;
c. involvement in challenging, interesting activities;
d. family connections, and relationships with other responsible adults;
e. availability and use of informal supports;
f. life skills;
g. academic progress and attainment;
h. housing; and
i. physical and behavioral health care needs.

Interpretation: *The Assessment Matrix - Private, Public, Canadian, Network determines which level of assessment is required for COA Accreditation's Service Sections. The assessment elements of the Matrix can be tailored according to the needs of specific individuals or service design.*

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 4: Service Planning and Monitoring

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Each youth participates in the development and ongoing review of a service plan that is the basis for coordinating and delivering appropriate services and support.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- With few exceptions, staff work with persons served, when appropriate, to help them receive needed support, access services, mediate barriers, etc.; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Case reviews are not being done consistently; or
- Level of care for some youth is clearly inappropriate; or
- Service planning is often done without the full participation of youth; or
- Appropriate family involvement is not documented; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing; or
- Individual staff members work with persons served, when appropriate, to help them receive needed support, access services, mediate barriers, etc., but this is the exception.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Service planning and monitoring procedures	

Site Visit Evidence

No Site Visit Evidence

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Youth

- Review case records

YIL 4.01

An assessment-based service plan is developed in a timely manner with the full participation of youth, and their family when appropriate, and includes:

a. agreed upon goals, desired outcomes, and timeframes for achieving them;
b. services and supports to be provided, and by whom;
c. possibilities for maintaining and strengthening family relationships and other informal social networks;
d. procedures for expedited service planning when crisis or urgent need is identified; and
e. documentation of the youth's participation in service planning.

Interpretation: *Although personnel should help identify available services and their potential risks and benefits and participate in evaluating options, youth should be the primary planners of their goals and objectives and have the right to decide what services and supports will be provided.*

Examples: *Personnel can help to engage and motivate youth in the service planning process by demonstrating: (a) sensitivity to their needs and personal goals; (b) a non-judgmental manner, (c) respect for their autonomy, confidentiality, sociocultural values, identity, lifestyle choices, and complex family interactions; (d) flexibility; and (e) appropriate boundaries.*

YIL 4.02

The organization partners with the youth to regularly review their case at a frequency that meets their needs and:

a. assesses service plan implementation;
b. reviews progress toward achieving service goals and desired outcomes;
c. determines the continuing appropriateness of the agreed upon service goals; and
d. makes adjustments to the service plan when indicated.

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 5: Supportive Housing for Youth in Transition

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

The organization provides safe and accessible housing in community settings where youth can continue to receive needed supports and work towards independence.
NA: The organization does not provide supportive housing to youth in transition.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Youth participation is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Acceptance procedures	
*	• House rules, including those related to overnight guests	
*	• Supervision and security procedures	

*	• Procedures for entering a youth's room or apartment	
*	• Eviction/discharge policy	
*	• Eviction/discharge procedures	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Leasing and/or placement agreements, as applicable

On-Site Activities

*	• Interviews may include: 1. Program director 2. Relevant personnel 3. Youth

YIL 5.01 (FP)

Acceptance procedures include:

a. fair and objective selection criteria;
b. written notification regarding reasons for non-acceptance; and
c. connecting youth deemed ineligible to alternative housing options.

Interpretation: *Youth in transition oftentimes do not meet conventional housing criteria due to lack of sufficient income or rental histories. Organizations that provide housing to youth in transition should modify acceptance criteria – within legal and/or contractual boundaries – to accommodate this service population.*

YIL 5.02

Housing is provided in settings that are readily accessible to public transportation, shopping, and community-based services and resources.

YIL 5.03

Youth are notified in writing of:

a. items that are discouraged or prohibited; and
b. any safety procedures the program follows, or consequences that can result, when prohibited items are brought to the residence.

YIL 5.04

Youth participate in the development of house rules and are encouraged to self-govern.

YIL 5.05

Youth are permitted to have guests, including overnight guests, as appropriate to the population and type of living situation, and are informed of their responsibility for the behavior of their guests.

YIL 5.06

The program ensures appropriate supervision and security for its youth resident population, as applicable.

YIL 5.07 (FP)

Youth are notified in writing about circumstances that permit maintenance personnel to enter a room or apartment without the occupant's permission, and receive at least 24-hours' notice when access is required in non-emergency situations.

YIL 5.08 (FP)

Searches of a youth's property are conducted in a trauma-informed manner that respects their rights, dignity, and self-determination and include, as appropriate to the frequency and invasiveness of searches:

a. communicating policies for searches to residents in writing;
b. definition and documentation of reasonable cause and assessed risk of harm to self or others;
c. trained staff; and
d. an administrative review process including documentation, notification, and the timetable for review.

YIL 5.09 (FP)

Written policies and procedures regarding eviction and discharge:

a. are provided and explained to youth at intake;
b. are clear and simple, avoiding overly rigid and bureaucratic language and rules;
c. define specific behaviors, conditions, or circumstances that may result in eviction and discharge;
d. include timely due process provisions; and
e. describe the conditions or process for re-admittance.

Interpretation: *Programs should be tolerant of youth behaviors and might expect some degree of non-compliance from youth in transition. Early discharge as a disciplinary strategy can have severely negative implications for service delivery goals, and outcomes and records of eviction impact creditworthiness and can hinder youth from obtaining secure housing arrangements in the future.*

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 6: Family, Community, and Workplace Connections

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Services and supports effectively draw upon a full range of available family, school, workplace, neighborhood, and community resources that establish the youth as an active participant in their development.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Youth participation is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Procedures for facilitating community and social connections	
*	• Procedures for referring youth to services	

Site Visit Evidence

*
- Community resource and referral list
- Informational materials provided to youth
- Educational curricula utilized by the organization, if applicable

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Youth

- Review case records

YIL 6.01

To facilitate access to all available services and active membership in the community, the organization:

a. remains knowledgeable about local, regional, and state resources, including networking and leadership opportunities; and
b. finds and creates opportunities for individuals to develop positive ties to the community based on mutual interests and abilities.

YIL 6.02

The organization maintains, or has access to, a comprehensive, up-to-date documentation system of community programs and services that includes:

a. name, location, and telephone number;
b. contact person or referral system;
c. services offered;
d. languages offered;
e. fee structure; and
f. eligibility requirements.

Interpretation: *The organization ensures the community resource documentation system remains up to date by evaluating resources on an ongoing basis to assess the safety, quality, and availability of services provided.*

YIL 6.03

The organization strives to engage youth directly as key partners, and to promote sufficient relevant resources, by encouraging youth participation in local or state leadership and advocacy activities, including community advisory and partnership groups.

YIL 6.04

Program activities facilitate:

a. youth-family connections;
b. development of social support networks and healthy, meaningful relationships with caring individuals;
c. participation in peer group activities where they can meet, lend support, and share positive experiences; and
d. a coordinated response to youth interests and needs.

Examples: *"Caring individuals" may include mentors, community members, and friends.*

YIL 6.05

Youth have the opportunity to develop comprehensive daily living and interpersonal skills, including:

a. financial literacy, including budgeting, saving, building credit, and filing taxes;
b. use of community resources;
c. accessing public assistance;
d. nutrition and food preparation;
e. stress management and coping;
f. time management;
g. relationship building, effective communication, and conflict resolution;
h. critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making;
i. hygiene, self-care, and personal safety; and
j. exercising legal rights and responsibilities, such as voting.

Interpretation: *Hands-on learning in the youth's natural environment should be conducted, when possible, in order to enhance the development of skills and assist with transferring skills to real world settings and situations.*

YIL 6.06

The organization provides housing support services, including:

a. information on obtaining housing and household management;
b. education regarding available community housing options;
c. education on tenant rights and responsibilities;
d. assistance obtaining a safe, suitable living environment; and
e. advocacy for safe, affordable, appropriate housing for youth with a goal of independent living.

YIL 6.07

Youth are helped with pursuing their educational or vocational goals, including assistance with:

a. locating and/or enrolling in schools or programs appropriate to their needs, interest and abilities;
b. identifying and applying for financial resources; and
c. developing good study habits including obtaining tutoring, as needed.

Examples: *Educational and vocational programs may include high school or GED programs, colleges or universities, vocational training programs, and special education services.*

YIL 6.08

Youth are helped to obtain and maintain employment, including assistance with:

a. accessing resources to explore personal strengths and interests, future work aspirations, and potential employment options;
b. using local workforce development resources, including job development and placement services or skills training;
c. accessing online resources, including job search engines, hiring platforms, and networking sites;
d. developing good work habits, skills, and self-awareness essential to sustained employment; and
e. writing cover letters and resumes, completing job applications, and preparing for interviews.

YIL 6.09 (FP)

Youth are linked to necessary health services, including:

a. medical services, such as routine care and medication management or monitoring;
b. dental services;
c. behavioral health services;
d. age-appropriate education regarding family planning, HIV/AIDS, and STI prevention, and general information about the prevention and treatment of disease; and
e. insurance coverage, when available.

YIL 6.10

Youth receive additional support services, as needed, including:

a. crisis intervention;
b. transportation;
c. legal assistance, including assistance with citizenship and naturalization;
d. parent education and family support;
e. child care; and
f. activities that support social, cultural, and recreational interests, and religious observance.

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 7: Transition from the Service System

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

Youth participate in planning for transition to the community and are prepared for adulthood with positive experiences and skills to move successfully to living and managing on their own.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- For the most part, established timeframes are met; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Timeframes are often missed; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Youth participation is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Transition planning procedures	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Information provided to youth

On-Site Activities

*
- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Youth

- Review case records

YIL 7.01

The organization works with youth to develop a transition plan at least 3 months prior to discharge.

YIL 7.02

The organization prepares youth for a successful transition by providing youth and collaborating providers with information on:

a. the transfer or termination of custody, as applicable;
b. applicable legal protections and services to which the person may have access because of a disability;
c. how to access specialized services and navigate adult-serving systems;
d. affordable community-based physical and behavioral healthcare;
e. court and public assistance systems;
f. child care services; and
g. peer support, as appropriate.

YIL 7.03

During the transition process, and prior to case closing, the organization helps youth to explore the range of housing options available to them and engages them in an evaluation of the risks and benefits of different alternatives.

YIL 7.04

The organization ensures that an adequate living arrangement is in place for every person transitioning to independence and provides:

a. supervised household management practice, when possible; and
b. tenancy and landlord supports, as appropriate.

YIL 7.05

For every person transitioning to independence, the organization ensures that basic resources are in place, including:

a. a source of income;
b. affordable health care;
c. access to at least one committed, caring adult; and
d. access to positive peer support.

YIL 7.06

The organization provides youth transitioning to independence with at least six months notice of the cessation of any health, financial, educational or other benefits that will occur at transition or case closing.

YIL 7.07

The organization assists youth in obtaining or compiling documents necessary to function as an independent adult, including:

a. an identification card, or a drivers license when the ability to drive is a goal;
b. a social security or social insurance number;
c. a resume, when work experience can be described;
d. medical records and documentation, including a Medicaid card or other health eligibility documentation;
e. an original copy of the youth's birth certificate;

f. bank account access documents;
g. religious documents and information, when appropriate;
h. documentation of immigration, citizenship, or naturalization, when applicable;
i. death certificates when parents are deceased;
j. a life book or a compilation of personal history and photographs, as appropriate;
k. a list of known relatives, with relationships, addresses, telephone numbers, and permissions for contacting involved parties;
l. previous placement information; and
m. educational records, such as high school diploma or general equivalency diploma, and a list of schools attended, when age-appropriate.

Youth Independent Living Services

YIL 8: Case Closing and Aftercare

Purpose

Young adults who receive Youth Independent Living Services obtain safe and stable housing, develop life skills and competencies including work readiness, achieve educational and financial growth goals, and establish healthy, supportive adult and peer relationships.

The organization works with youth to plan for case closing and, when possible, to provide aftercare.

Rating Indicators:

1 All elements or requirements outlined in the standard are evident in practice, as indicated by full implementation of the practices outlined in the Practice Standards.

2

Practices are basically sound but there is room for improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- Minor inconsistencies and not yet fully developed practices are noted; however, these do not significantly impact service quality; or
- Procedures need strengthening; or
- With few exceptions, procedures are understood by staff and are being used; or
- Proper documentation is the norm and any issues with individual staff members are being addressed through performance evaluations and training; or
- In a few instances, the organization terminated services inappropriately; or
- Active participation of youth occurs to a considerable extent; or
- Collaborating providers are not consistently notified of case closings.

3

Practice requires significant improvement, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards. Service quality or program functioning may be compromised; e.g.,

- Procedures and/or case record documentation need significant strengthening; or
- Procedures are not well-understood or used appropriately; or
- Services are frequently terminated inappropriately; or
- Transition or aftercare planning is not initiated early enough to ensure orderly transitions; or
- Several case records are missing important information; or
- Youth participation is inconsistent.

4 Implementation of the standard is minimal or there is no evidence of implementation at all, as noted in the ratings for the Practice Standards; e.g.,

- No written procedures, or procedures are clearly inadequate or not being used; or
- Documentation is routinely incomplete and/or missing.

Table of Evidence

Self Study Evidence

*	• Case closing procedures	
*	• Aftercare and follow-up procedures	

Site Visit Evidence

*	• Relevant portions of contract with public authority, as applicable

On-Site Activities

*

- Interviews may include:

1. Program director
2. Relevant personnel
3. Youth

- Review case records

YIL 8.01

Planning for case closing:

a. is a clearly defined process that includes assignment of staff responsibility;
b. begins at intake; and
c. involves the worker, the youth, and others, as appropriate to the needs and wishes of the youth.

YIL 8.02

Upon case closing, the organization notifies any collaborating service providers, as appropriate.

YIL 8.03

If an individual has to leave the program unexpectedly, the organization makes every effort to identify other service options and link the youth with appropriate services.

Interpretation: *The organization must determine on a case-by-case basis its responsibility to continue providing services to persons whose third-party benefits are denied or have ended and who are in critical situations.*

YIL 8.04

The organization provides each person with:

a. a transition plan summary, including the individual's options;
b. a list of emergency contacts, and
c. the organization's contact information.

YIL 8.05

The organization follows up on the transition plan, as appropriate, when possible, and with the permission of the youth.

NA: The organization has a contract with a public authority that prohibits or does not include aftercare or transition planning follow-up.

Examples: *Reasons why follow-up may not be appropriate include, but are not limited to, cases where individuals are transferred to long-term care settings or a higher level of care, or where there may be a safety risk, such as in cases of domestic violence.*