



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

RFI 26-DCYF-ILS 108

Information Requested: *Independent Living Skills Program*

Response Due Date: All responses must be received in their entirety by 5:00PM Pacific Time on October 30, 2026

Submit Questions and Responses To: Rachel Denney, *RFI Coordinator*
Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Email: Rachel.Denney@dcyf.wa.gov

Schedule of RFI Activities: Issue RFI: 10/1/2026
Participant Questions Due: 10/15/2026
RFI Responses Due: 10/30/2026

Solicitation and Amendments Will Be Posted on: WEBS Website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/webs/>

Applicable WEBS Commodity Codes:

918-63 Housing Consulting
952-78 Safe Housing
952-47 Foster Home and Adoption Services
952-54 Homemaker
952-55 Homeless Prevention Services
952-37 Emergency Shelter
952-21 Counseling
952-26 Day Care (Adult)
952-42 Family Planning
952-43 Family and Social Services
952-59 Human Services
952-62 Mental Health Services: Vocational, Residential, Etc.
952-68 Personal Care Services
952-13 Big Brother, Big Sister, and Similar Type Program Services
952-15 Human Services; Case Management

971-64 Residential Space Rental or Lease
952-85 Support Services
952-91 Transitional Domicile
952-92 Transitional Living
952-90 Training and Instruction
952-95 Youth Care Services

Purpose

The State of Washington, Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is issuing this Request for Information **26-DCYF-ILS 108** to gather information from prospective agencies, organizations, housing providers and interested parties regarding the design and delivery of an integrated Independent Living Skills Program (IL) and the Foster Care Housing Program (FCHP) for eligible transition-age youth.

The insights gained from this RFI will be used to structure a future Request for Proposals (RFP). Responses should highlight best practices, resource constraints, and innovative strategies for blending services.

Background

In 2021, the legislature directed DCYF to strengthen the administration and competency of the Independent Living Program and direct independent living services. The program was required to centralize administration and develop a framework for service delivery, including best practice recommendations. DCYF was required to codesign the program with adolescents, caregivers, providers, and stakeholders. DCYF was also required to develop and launch a competitive request for proposal process and solicit bidders to provide independent living services under the new framework.

During the design phase the program incorporated recommendations from the co-design process, updated the program's framework and requirements feeding into a new payment methodology. The programs funding mechanism moved from a budget based to a fee for service model. This allowed DCYF to pay for services as provided, set a case load standard and further align the work statewide.

The Independent Living Skills Program is a voluntary program designed to assist youth prepare for adulthood. Program activities and services prepare youth to live independently by increasing their skills, knowledge, and competency to include, but not limited to:

- (1) Education;
- (2) Employment;
- (3) Financial management;
- (4) Housing;
- (5) Emotional support; and
- (6) Permanent connections to caring adults.

At the same time IL was being updated DCYF was also creating relationships with Public Housing Authorities (PHA) to receive or designate federal housing vouchers for child welfare involved youth under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative. The FYI program allows PHAs to request Housing Choice Vouchers specifically for youth ages 18-24 who are exiting foster care and are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

To access the FYI vouchers, HUD requires that the PWCA guarantee 36 months of supportive services be available to eligible youth receiving rental assistance through the program. These services include:

(1) Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services);

(2) Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits;

(3) Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FYI-eligible youth to rent a unit with a voucher;

(4) Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.);

(5) Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models;

The service requirement was originally placed upon the IL Program and providers while DCYF asked the legislature for funding support. Once funding was obtained DCYF created a Foster Care Housing Program (FCHP) to fund the services in a separate contract from ILS. .

To align the programs DCYF is incorporating FCHP into IL and will procure new contracts in 2027.

Objective/Scope/Description

DCYF is combining the work in the IL and FCHP contracts and is interested in collecting information from prospective vendors to determine how to integrate the programs while maintaining each program's purpose and intent. The combined services must address:

1. **Housing Stabilization & Navigation:** Housing search assistance, landlord outreach, lease compliance education, and move-in logistics.
2. **Independent Living Skills:** Financial literacy, budget management, counseling on credit/debt, and household maintenance.
3. **Education and Career Advancement:** Post-secondary education planning, vocational training coordination, and employment placement assistance.
4. **Case Management & Counseling:** Regular individual case management meetings, mental health/wellness referrals, and crisis intervention.
5. **Waiting List Mitigation:** Strategy to serve youth on waiting lists, those actively exploring housing options, and need immediate assistance.

Project Approach and Goals

Goals

To create an integrated, flexible, and participant-centered program providing each youth with the right level of assistance at the right time, strengthens housing stability and independent living skills, and supports successful, sustainable independence.

1. **Integrate IL and FCHP** into one coordinated, youth-centered program with a single access point and unified service continuum.
2. **Provide flexible levels of support** through participation tiers
3. **Increase housing stability** by connecting youth to housing navigation, placement, retention, stabilization, and eviction-prevention services.
4. **Strengthen independent living skills** by providing practical support in budgeting, household management, transportation, problem-solving, education, employment, and community navigation.
5. **Promote youth choice and self-sufficiency** by allowing access to services when needed without requiring unnecessary ongoing case management.
6. **Create a seamless pathway between service levels** so youth can move into more intensive support when circumstances change and step down as stability and independence increase.

Approach

Combining the IL and FCHP contracts is a strategic move designed to prevent homelessness among youth aging out of foster care. Synchronizing these resources creates a unified, "on-demand" service framework. The proposed integrated program would provide one program with three tiers of support with flexible access to housing and independent living services based on need.

This model is intended to reduce duplication, improve access, allow youth to move between levels of support based on their current circumstances and coordinate housing stability while developing independent living skills.

The program would highlight:

- Youth choice and self-direction
- Housing stability
- Independent living skill development
- Education and employment
- Financial literacy
- Flexible service intensity
- Easy re-engagement when circumstances change
- Coordination between housing and supportive services

Tier 1-On Demand

- A non-physical space that provides access services as needed
- No monthly case management requirements
- Access services when needed such as:
 - Transportation resources
 - Service navigation/referral
 - Help gathering vital documents
 - Life skills classes and events

- Ability to move into different levels as needed

Tier 2-Standard

- Regular but flexible support
- Quarterly in person face-to-face meetings
- Monthly virtual/phone meetings with case manager to work on IL Skills
- Continued progress completing stated goals
- Access to life skills classes and events
- Housing navigation
 - Helping youth complete needed items to apply for FYI vouchers as needed
 - IYHP-Independent Youth Housing Program
 - Landlord communication/assistance
- Ability to move into different levels as needed

Tier 3-Intensive

- Youth with intensive needs that need more contact than previous levels
- Monthly in person face to face meetings
- Actively helping youth use FYI vouchers find housing, lease up, and move in
- Homeless or at imminent risk of being homeless
- Moving from an unstable housing situation
- Landlord/housing advocacy
- Eviction prevention
- Need significant assistance
- Once significant circumstance is mitigated youth will transition to a lower level of service providing access to intensive services for others in need

The following timeline provides an outline of RFI activities and deadlines:

Action	Date
Issue RFI	October 1, 2026
Participant Questions Due	October 15, 2026
Answers to Aggregated Participant Questions Distributed via Amendment in WEBS	October 20, 2026
Responses due by 5:00pm Pacific Time	October 30, 2026

Request for Information Process

Participation in this RFI is voluntary. Your response to this RFI is important to the Department and is greatly appreciated.

No preference or advantage will be given to any Vendor due to their response to this RFI or their involvement in any demonstrations conducted outside of a competitive solicitation process. This RFI document and process will not result in the award of a contract.

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes only and does not constitute a solicitation. DCYF will not reimburse or make payment for any costs incurred in the preparation and submittal of your response. The representations made by the Vendor in their Responses will be considered material representations of fact upon which reliance shall be placed if DCYF determines to enter into a subsequent RFP or contract.

Notice of this RFI is being sent to known potential contractors and will be published on the [Washington's Electronic Business Solution](#) (WEBS), the procurement website hosted by the State [Department of Enterprise Services](#) (DES). All RFI communications and process steps will be facilitated by and happen within the WEBS system; registration with WEBS is required for participation in this RFI process (please follow this link to register: [The Department reserves the right to utilize freely any ideas and information received as a result of this RFI in planning and developing potential solutions.](#)

All materials submitted in response to this RFI become the property of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families and responses shall be deemed public records as defined by RCW 42.56.

Contact Information

Upon release of this RFI document, all communications concerning this RFI must be directed to the RFI Coordinator listed on the cover page of this RFI document. The RFI Coordinator is the sole point of contact in DCYF for this RFI.

Contact the RFI Coordinator **by email** if you have any questions or concerns related to any portion of this RFI document. Vendors are to rely only on written statements issued by the RFI Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFI Coordinator will have no bearing on this RFI.

Questions and Answers

Vendors may e-mail questions to the RFI Coordinator. Questions will be accepted until the date and time set forth on page 6 of this RFI. Please submit your questions to the RFI Coordinator as a bulleted list in a separate word document that includes vendor name and a reference to RFI No. 26-DCYF-ILS 108 in the document title. Early submission of questions is encouraged.

Questions and answers will be posted on [Washington's Electronic Business Solution](#) (WEBS) and will be made available to all RFI participants. Vendors may only rely on written statements issued by the RFI Coordinator.

Instructions for Written Vendor Responses

DCYF requests that vendors participating in this RFI submit responses including:

1. Vendor name, address, and contact information.
2. Reference to RFI No. in response file titles.
3. Answers to the questions included in Appendix A.

Attached appendices have been generated and attached to this RFI with the purpose of communicating and providing context for the desired future state, and in order to gather information from vendors. A list of these appendices and a brief description of their contents is provided below:

Appendix A – Key RFI Questions

Please answer each question as listed and provide the requisite level of detail for DCYF to meaningfully understand the standard and differentiating aspects of the vendor's solution. Collected data may be used to inform future client services contracts and procurement.

Attachments (e.g., PDFs for brochures) are permitted to be submitted along with the completed Appendix A responses, as long as they are clearly referenced in the responses to indicate their intent and relevance.

Appendix B IL Contract

Appendix C IL Fee Table

Appendix D FCHP Contract

Appendix E FCHP Fee Table