



Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer
Director

December 30, 2014

Michael Marshall
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol Building
LOCAL

Carmine Boal
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
LOCAL

Dear Mr. Marshall and Ms. Boal:

Enclosed please find the Independent Living Services Report to the General Assembly.

This report was prepared pursuant to Iowa Code Section 234.35, Section 4.

This report is also available on the Department of Human Services website at
<http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Partners/Reports/LegislativeReports/LegisReports.html>.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

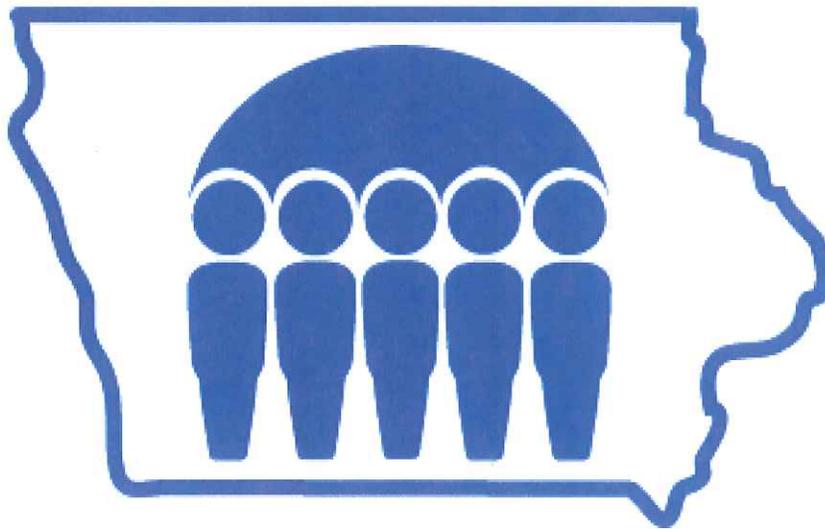
Jennifer Davis Harbison
Policy Advisor

JDH/mm

Enclosure

cc: Governor Terry E. Branstad
Senator Jack Hatch
Senator David Johnson
Representative David Heaton
Representative Lisa Heddens
Legislative Services Agency
Aaron Todd, Senate Democrat Caucus
Josh Bronsink, Senate Republican Caucus
Carrie Malone, House Republican Caucus
Zeke Furlong, House Democrat Caucus

Iowa Department of Human Services



Independent Living Services Report

December 2014

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Overview.....	3
Outcomes.....	4
Data Summary.....	5
Exit Reasons.....	10
Conclusion.....	11

Executive Summary:

Iowa Code 234.35 (4) requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to report annually on the independent living foster care placement (now called supervised apartment living, SAL). The report must include any enhancements to the program.

The four significant enhancements made to the SAL foster care program is SFY 2012 have continued to make the SAL program a more effective foster care placement option for older youth during SFY 2014. The enhancements include:

- Increased minimum age for youth to be placed in SAL foster care to better ensure appropriateness and maturity necessary for successful placement;
- Increased youth's monthly maintenance stipend (payment) to strengthen the ability to rent a safe and stable living arrangement and to focus primarily on education (as opposed to employment "in order to make ends meet");
- Contractors are required to meet specific outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being, through various performance measures;
- Enhanced required services necessary for youth to be successful in the program.

Introduction:

Iowa Code 234.35(4) requires the DHS to "report annually to the governor and general assembly by January 1 on the numbers of children for whom the state paid for independent living services during the immediately preceding fiscal year. The report shall detail the number of children, by county, who received such services, were discharged from such services, the voluntary or involuntary status of such services, and the reasons for discharge." The legislative action was a result of a Citizen's Aide/Ombudsman report, dated January 14, 2003, regarding a youth, Reggie Kelsey, who was in the foster care system and eventually aged out. On May 28, 2001, Reggie's body was found in the Des Moines River. Reggie's death was ruled a suicide.

The independent foster care program (renamed in 2004 to SAL) is the least restrictive type of foster care placement in Iowa. The program is set up for older youth for whom neither reunification nor adoption is likely and who are perceived by referring workers and SAL contractors as capable of living within the community with the appropriate level of services, supports, and supervision. Services and supports are tailored to prepare the youth for a level of self-sufficiency necessary to be successful in emerging adulthood.

Overview:

The DHS renewed seven agency contracts for SFY 2013. The seven agencies were awarded a two year contract effective 07/01/11. The SAL contractors are Florence Crittenton Home of Sioux City, Hillcrest Family Services, Lutheran Services of Iowa, Inc., Quakerdale, Woodward Youth Corporation, Youth Homes of Mid-America, and Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. There are two types of SAL living arrangements,

scattered site settings and cluster site settings. Youth placed in a scattered site setting live in an apartment unit with services and supports centered on supervision and development of life skills to assist in preparation for self-sufficiency. Youth have access to SAL staff 24/7 (typically by phone) but live on their own. Cluster site settings are those in which up to six youth reside in apartments located in one building or a house with adequate numbers of bedrooms and are supervised by one agency, with staff on site at all times when more than one youth is present in the cluster site setting.

In order to focus on outcomes, several key program components were changed. The minimum age for placement into a SAL program was raised from 16 years of age to 16 ½ years of age for cluster site settings, and 17 years of age for scattered site settings. Increasing the minimum age, along with increasing the number of cluster site settings from 1 setting prior to the SFY 2012 Request for Proposal (RFP) to currently 6 settings has and is expected to continue to better ensure that youth receive the appropriate level of living arrangements and services according to each youth's strengths and needs.

The RFP also required programs to place emphasis on education, removing the former requirement that youth in SAL both attend school and work part time. Youth are expected to be attending school to obtain their high school diploma (or, when deemed more appropriate, their GED) and are not required to work unless doing so would not compromise their education. If youth are under 18 years and no longer attending high school, they may attend post-secondary school or choose to work at least an average of 80 hours per month.

Another change increased the monthly stipend from \$573.90 per month to the current rate of \$787.50 per month. The previous amount was well below poverty guidelines and contributed to participants living in rundown neighborhoods that were often infested with drug activity. The low stipend also caused youth to drop out of school and find jobs to pay bills.

Outcomes:

SAL contracts are outcome-based and are aligned with federal Child and Family Service Review outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being. The expected outcomes for SFY 2014 were:

- Safety outcome performance measure: There will be no founded cases of abuse or neglect of the youth in the SAL contractor's care by the contractor or subcontractor or by other youth in the contractor's SAL foster care program.
- Permanency Outcome 1 performance measure: The contractor will ensure that permanent connections are maintained or secured through active connections with the youth's family members and/or other people important in the youth's life, with at least 75 percent of youth served maintaining at least twice a month

contact with the youth's positive support system.

- Permanency Outcome 2 performance measure: The contractor will ensure youth engagement within the community, with at least 75 percent of youth served regularly participating in organized community activity (including extra-curricular school activities, faith based activities, community clubs, volunteer work) at a minimum of four times per month.
- Well-Being Outcome performance measure: Emphasis on educational achievement for youth, with at least 80 percent of youth served complying with satisfactory school attendance leading to a high school diploma or GED.

The cumulative results for the first year, SFY 2012 were:

- Safety Outcome, 100% met.
- Permanency Outcome #1, 87% met.
- Permanency Outcome #2, 58% met.
- Well-Being Outcome, 86% met.

The cumulative results for SFY 2013 were:

- Safety Outcome, 100% met.
- Permanency Outcome #1, 93% met.
- Permanency Outcome #2, 87% met.
- Well-Being Outcome, 95% met.

The cumulative results for SFY 2014 were:

- Safety Outcome, 100% met.
- Permanency Outcome #1, 99% met.
- Permanency Outcome #2, 81% met.
- Well-Being Outcome, 96% met.

The Safety outcome remained at 100 percent met; two of the outcomes improved from SFY 2013 to SFY 2014 and one, Permanency Outcome 2 decreased by 6 percent. However, just to look at the outcome percentages doesn't give the complete picture. One of the SAL contractors, which served just over half of all youth served in the SAL program during SFY 2014, met each of the four outcomes 100 percent. DHS has at least two SAL contractors (and this can vary to up to three) that serve a very small percentage of overall youth in the SAL program per SFY. DHS staff meets with SAL contractors on a quarterly basis, with the primary goal being continual improvement of the program. The meetings have proven to be effective in problem solving and networking among contractors.

Data Summary:

The total number of unduplicated youth for whom the state paid for SAL services during SFY2013 was 133, down from 202 from SFY 2013. The downward trend in SAL services aligns with the downward trend in children in care. Core services to support

families in providing safe care within their homes continues to result in less kids in care. The spreadsheet below shows the number of youth served by county; under the responsibility of either the DHS or juvenile court services, by legal status, whether discharged from such services, and the reasons for discharge.

Of the seven contractors, the majority provided services in Iowa's more urban areas, primarily due to availability of apartment units and landlords willing to rent to youth under the age of eighteen and a richer array of community services.

For SFY 2014, 5 percent of youth in the SAL program were placed on a voluntary basis (placement status for youth 18 through 19 years of age still working on their high school education) as compared to 3 percent for SFY 2013. In order for youth to continue to be served past their 18th birthday, the youth must agree to stay in care in addition to completing their high school education. The increase for SFY 2014 is significant when you take into account the number youth placed in the SAL program for SFY 2013 (202) and for SFY 2014 (179), expressing increased commitment from youth placed in the program to complete their high school education and be eligible for additional voluntary aftercare services and supports. The SAL foster care program is Iowa's only foster care program that allows for a youth who has left foster care at age 18 to voluntarily return into care prior to their 20th birthday in order to complete their high school education or obtain a general equivalency diploma. This is an important option for youth who leave the system and who later learn they need help.

SFY 2014 SAL SUMMARY

County Number	Total Served FY2014		Placement Responsibility		Legal Status							Exit Reason						
	Total Served FY2014	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2014	DHS	JCS	Voluntary	CINA	Delinquent	TPR	Custody Transferred	GUARDIANSHIP TO SUITABLE PERSON	Total	Return Home	Transfer Custody To Another Parent	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

County Number	Total Served FY2014 Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2014		Placement Responsibility		Legal Status							Exit Reason						
			DHS	JCS	Voluntary	CINA	Delinquent	TPR	Custody Transferred	GUARDINASHIP TO SUITABLE PERSON	Total	Return Home	Transfer Custody To Another Parent	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
6	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7	5	0	2	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
8	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	2	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
15	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	3	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
24	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
26	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29	3	2	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
30	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
31	7	2	5	2	1	3	2	0	0	1	7	0	0	5	0	0	0	5

County Number			Placement Responsibility		Legal Status							Exit Reason						
	Total Served FY2014	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2014	DHS	JCS	Voluntary	CINA	Delinquent	TPR	Custody Transferred	GUARDINASHIP TO SUITABLE PERSON	Total	Return Home	Transfer Custody To Another Parent	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
33	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
34	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
37	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
44	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
47	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
48	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	5	1	5	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
51	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
52	9	2	3	6	0	3	6	0	0	0	9	1	0	3	0	0	3	7
53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56	3	1	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
57	15	6	9	6	0	6	7	2	0	0	15	1	0	6	0	0	2	9
58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

County Number	Total Served FY2014		Placement Responsibility		Legal Status							Exit Reason						
	Total Served FY2014	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2014	DHS	JCS	Voluntary	CINA	Delinquent	TPR	Custody Transferred	GUARDINASHIP TO SUITABLE PERSON	Total	Return Home	Transfer Custody To Another Parent	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
62	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
63	3	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
64	5	1	3	2	0	3	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	2	0	1	1	4
65	3	0	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67	2	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
68	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
69	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
70	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
73	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
74	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
75	5	1	4	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
76	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
77	39	13	20	19	3	11	24	1	0	0	39	0	0	21	1	0	4	26
78	4	1	3	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
79	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
81	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
82	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
83	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
84	2	1	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
85	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	2

County Number	Total Served FY2014	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2014	Placement Responsibility		Legal Status							Legal Status						
			DHS	JCS	Voluntary	CINA	Delinquent	TPR	Custody Transferred	GUARDIANSHIP TO SUITABLE PERSON	Total	Return Home	Transfer Custody To Another Parent	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
86	5	0	4	1	0	3	1	1	0	0	5	1	0	4	0	0	0	5
87	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
88	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
90	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
91	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
92	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
93	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
94	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
95	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
97	11	2	8	3	0	5	3	3	0	0	11	0	1	7	1	0	0	9
98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
99	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	179	46	104	75	9	75	82	10	2	1	179	8	1	101	4	4	15	133

Exit Reasons:

There were 133 youth discharged from the program during the year. Of those discharged, 76 percent aged out of care (left care because they attained 18 years of age or older). Another 6 percent were discharged to return home, 6 percent had a change in placement or level of care as opposed to 12 percent in SFY 2013 (typically to a more restrictive placement due to behavior issues, often due to substance abuse and/or mental illness), and 11 percent ran away from placement, as compared to 5 percent in SFY 2013. The decrease in youth who had a change in placement or level of care this past SFY is a positive trend and indicates the standardized screening tool being used is making a positive impact. The majority of runaways for SFY 2014 were youth who were in voluntary foster care due to being 18 years and older and not having

completed their high school education. There has been an increase in youth voluntary foster care as workers continue to work vigilantly in ensuring youth complete their high school education and be eligible for various aftercare services and supports. The increase in runaways is being discussed during quarterly meetings and continues to be an area of focus.

Exit Reason		
Return Home	8	6%
Transfer Custody To other parent	1	1%
Aged Out	101	76%
Change in Placement	4	3%
Change in Level of Care	4	3%
Runaway	15	11%
Total	133	100%

Conclusion:

The SAL program continues to be a small but valuable alternative program for older foster youth who most likely will not be reunified or adopted and who are deemed capable to live on their own with guidance and support. Important recent improvements include: a revamped contract requiring providers to meet goals that are aligned with other federal child welfare outcomes; an increase in minimum age for participation; an increase in the monthly maintenance stipend, and; enhanced required services to youth participants.