



# Iowa Department of Human Services

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Terry E. Branstad  
Governor

Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

December 27, 2016

Michael Marshall  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol Building  
L O C A L

Carmine Boal  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol Building  
L O C A L

Dear Ms. Boal and Mr. Marshall:

Enclosed please find copies of reports to the General Assembly relative to Independent Living Services.

This report was prepared pursuant to the directive contained in Iowa Code Section 234.35(4).

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

Sincerely,

Sally Titus  
Deputy Director,  
Department of Human Services

ST/tm

Enclosure

cc: Terry E. Branstad, Governor

# Iowa Department of Human Services



*Independent Living Services Report*

December 2016

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## Executive Summary

This report is prepared for the Governor and the Iowa General Assembly pursuant to the requirements of the Code of Iowa section 234.35(4). The Department of Human Services is required to annually report the program statistics of children for whom the state paid for independent living services during the immediately preceding state fiscal year (SFY).

This foster care program has been known as Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) since 2004. SAL services from six contractors are summarized below for SFY16:

No. served	184	
Youth from this No. of Iowa Counties	55	55%
Dept. of Human Services (DHS)		
Cases	124	67%
Male	65	35%
Female	59	32%
Juvenile Court Services (JCS)		
Cases	60	33%
Male	43	23%
Female	17	9%
Voluntary Cases	1	<1%
Youth Discharged/Exited From SAL	150	82%

Performance expectations focusing on participants' safety, permanency and well-being were either met or exceeded on a statewide basis for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016.

## Introduction

Code of Iowa section 234.35(4) requires the Department of Human Services (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 . . . 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." This report addresses those areas of the program.

## Overview

Supervised apartment living arrangements provide older foster care children (beginning at age 16½) with an environment in which they can experience living in the community with varying levels of supervision. Participants must have the ability to live in the community with less supervision than that provided by a foster family or foster group

care. They must also be able to follow the provisions of their case plan and participate in activities and services to achieve self-sufficiency.

SAL is the least restrictive type of foster care placement in Iowa and the program is designed 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 adulthood.

Youth aged 18 who continue to meet foster care payment and other eligibility requirements may be served in SAL if they have been in foster care immediately before reaching the age of 18 and have continued in foster care since reaching the age of 18. Youth aged 18 or older must also agree to stay in care by signing a voluntary placement agreement.

A DHS Service Area Manager or designee may waive the requirement for continuous foster care placement for a child who leaves foster care at age 18 and voluntarily returns before the child's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete high school or obtain a high school diploma equivalency. 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 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete their high school education or obtain a high school equivalency diploma. SAL is an important option for youth who leave the child welfare system and later learn they need help.

There are two types of SAL arrangements. One is a cluster setting (for age 16½ and older) which provides support in a structured setting for up to six children residing in apartments or bedrooms in one building. The other is a scattered site setting (for age 17 and older) which is the less restrictive of the two types of living arrangements. Each offers different levels of supervision and focus on developing life skills to assist in preparation for self-sufficiency.

Cluster sites are structured settings and supervised by the SAL contractor with staff on site when more than one youth is present. Children must be able to contact supervising agency staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Scattered sites are less restrictive settings. Youths typically live in an apartment unit with services and supports available from the SAL contractor that focus on supervision and guidance with activities of community living. Youth live on their own with access to SAL staff around the clock, typically by phone.

During SFY16, the DHS continued to contract with six SAL providers that were originally selected to provide SAL services using a competitive Request For Proposal (RFP) process. This procurement allowed a funding cycle of up to six-years, SFYs 2012 – 2017. The six SAL contractors in SFY16 were:

- Florence Crittenton Home of Sioux City with services in surrounding counties
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- Hillcrest Family Services with services in Dubuque
- Lutheran Services of Iowa, Inc. with services in or around Waverly
- Quakerdale operating out of Waterloo with services in nearby counties
- Woodward Youth Corporation with services in Polk and Johnson Counties
- Youth Homes of Mid-America with services in Polk County

Over the course of the program, 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 to 17 years of age for scattered site settings. These age changes and the increase of the number of cluster sites during this funding cycle were intended to better ensure that each youth received the appropriate living arrangement and supportive services based on each youth's strengths and needs.

SAL programs are required to place an emphasis on education and a former requirement that youth in SAL both attend school and work part time was removed. Youth are expected to attend school to obtain their high school diploma or equivalency and are not required to work. Work in itself builds certain skills and it is allowed if it does not negatively affect a youth's academic participation. Youth who are no longer attending high school but remain foster care eligible under the age of 18 may attend post-secondary school or choose to work.

Youth in the SAL program receive a monthly stipend of \$787.50 per month that is intended to help them pay their monthly living expenses. This was increased in the current funding cycle to replace the previous amount that was well below poverty guidelines and contributed to participants living in rundown neighborhoods. The lower stipend also caused youth to drop out of school and find jobs to pay bills.

## Data Summary

The total number of unduplicated youth for whom the state paid for SAL services during SFY16 was 184, up slightly from 180 in SFY15. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of these were DHS cases and 33 percent were JCS cases. On average there were about 58 youth in SAL daily.

The *SFY16 SAL SUMMARY* table below shows: the number of youth served overall; agency placement responsibility; legal status; and, an exit summary. This information is organized by county, excluding the counties that did not have a youth in SAL.

Of the six contractors, most provided services around Iowa's more urban areas. This is often due to availability of apartment units and landlords willing to rent to youth under the age of eighteen. These areas also have a richer array of community services.

## SFY16 SAL SUMMARY

County Name	Total Served SFY16	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2016	Placement Responsibility				Legal Status						Exit Reason						
			DHS = 124		JCS = 60		Voluntary	Child In Need of Assistance (CINA)	Delinquent <sup>1</sup>	Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)	Custody Transferred	Total	Return Home	Placed with Suitable Person	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
			M	F	M	F													
<b>55</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>183<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>150</b>
Appanoose	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Benton	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Black Hawk	6	2	2	3	0	1	0	0	4	2	0	6	0	0	1	2	0	1	4
Boone	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Buena Vista	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Carroll	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Cass	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Cedar	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cerro Gordo	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cherokee	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Clarke	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Clay	6	1	1	1	3	1	0	0	2	4	0	6	0	0	4	1	0	0	5
Clayton	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Clinton	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Crawford	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Dallas	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Delaware	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Des Moines	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dubuque	5	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	1	4	0	5	1	0	4	0	0	0	5

<sup>1</sup> DHS placement responsibility generally reflects child in need of assistance (CINA) cases and JCS placement responsibility generally reflects cases of children who have been adjudicated for committing a delinquent act. Occasionally when the data systems report “delinquent,” as in this case, some of those cases are also associated with CINA. The 86 reported as “delinquent” legal status in this table includes 26 CINA-shared cases. Therefore, the number 86 under Delinquent Legal Status appears to exceed and not align with the JCS Placement Responsibility number of 60.

<sup>2</sup> Data was not available for one of the cases in this view of the data.

SFY16 SAL SUMMARY Continued

County Name	Total Served FY2016	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2016	Placement Responsibility				Legal Status						Exit Reason						
			DHS = 124		JCS = 60		Voluntary	Child In Need of Assistance (CINA)	Delinquent	Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)	Custody Transferred	Total	Return Home	Placed with Suitable Person	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
			M	F	M	F													
Emmet	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Fayette	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Guthrie	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hardin	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Harrison	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	1	4
Henry	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Jasper	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Jefferson	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Johnson	5	1	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	2	0	5	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
Jones	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Kossuth	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lee	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Linn	20	4	8	7	3	2	0	2	11	5	2	20	1	0	12	1	1	1	16
Lyon	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marshall	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Mills	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Monona	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Montgomery	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Muscatine	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Page	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Plymouth	4	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	4	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Polk	47	9	18	10	12	7	0	6	15	22	4	47	2	0	20	9	1	6	38
Pottawattamie	5	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	5	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Poweshiek	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

## SFY16 SAL SUMMARY Continued

County Name	Total Served FY2016	Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/2016	Placement Responsibility				Legal Status						Exit Reason						
			DHS = 124		JCS = 60		Voluntary	Child In Need of Assistance (CINA)	Delinquent	Termination of Parental Rights (TPR)	Custody Transferred	Total	Return Home	Placed with Suitable Person	Aged Out	Change in Placement	Change in Level of Care	Runaway	Total
			M	F	M	F													
Sac	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Scott	5	1	3	2	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	5	0	0	1	0	1	2	4
Shelby	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Story	3	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
Wapello	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Warren	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Washington	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Wayne	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Webster	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Winnebago	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Winneshiek	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Woodbury	14	2	4	8	2	0	0	0	12	2	0	14	1	1	9	0	0	1	12
<b>Totals</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>150</b>

### Exit Reason

One hundred and fifty (150) youth exited the program during the year. Of those:

- 53 percent aged out of care (left care because they reached 18 years of age or older)
- 4 percent returned home
- 1 percent went to live with another suitable person
- 15 percent had a change in placement or level of care
- 9 percent percent ran away from placement

## Outcomes

SAL contracts are outcome-based and aligned with federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) expectations for safety, permanency, and well-being. The expected outcomes for SFY16 were:

1. **Safety Outcome and Performance Measure – Children are protected from abuse and neglect while in care**

There will be no confirmed or 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.

**Target: 100%**  
**Statewide achievement: 100%**

2. **Permanency Outcome 1 and Performance Measure – Permanent connections are maintained while in care**

The contractor will ensure that permanent connections for each child in care are maintained or secured through active connections with the child's positive support system.<sup>3</sup> Contractors ensure that at least 75 percent of the children in care will have contact with the youth's positive support system at least twice a month.

**Target: 75%**  
**Statewide achievement: 96%**

3. **Permanency Outcome 2 and Performance Measure – Children's engagement with their community is ensured while in care**

The contractor will ensure that 75% of children served will participate in an organized community activity<sup>4</sup> at least four times per month. Informal activities such as going to the mall are encouraged but do not contribute to the performance measure.

**Target: 75%**  
**Statewide achievement: 94%**

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<sup>3</sup> If a child lacks a positive support system, SAL contractors work with the child, the child's family, and the referring worker to create one. One way this is accomplished is by assessing other adults (like teachers or school staff, coworkers, mentors, or other positive adult role models) and potential relationships that could benefit the child.

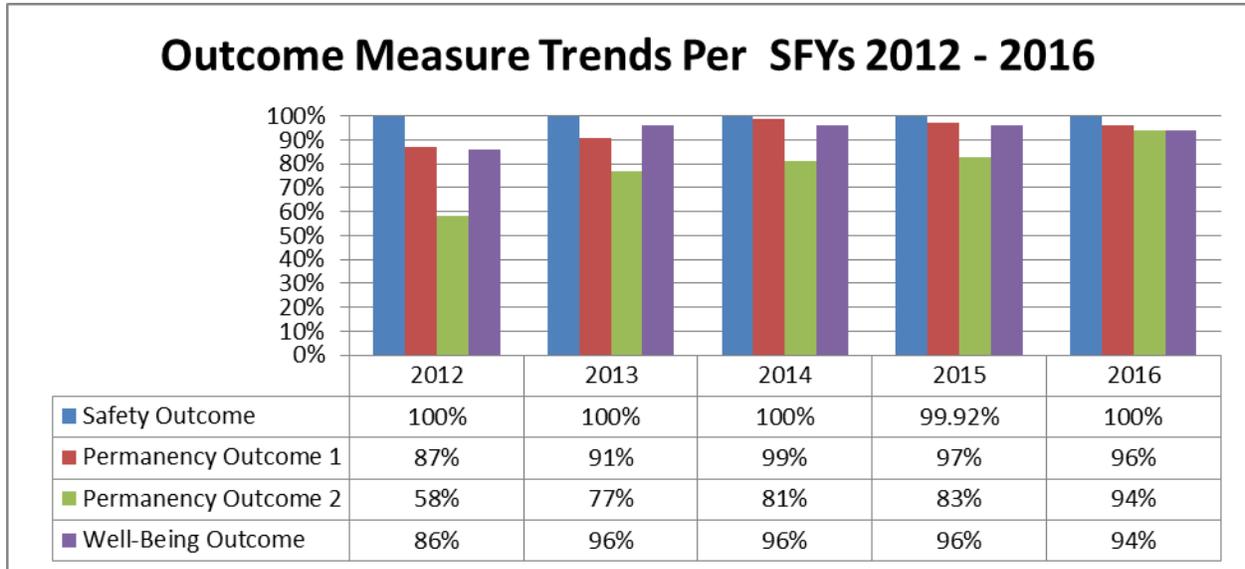
<sup>4</sup> These are community-based activities that can include groups, organizations, clubs, extra-curricular school or faith-based activities, or employment.

**4. Well-Being Outcome and Performance Measure – Increased educational achievement**

Eighty-percent of children served comply with satisfactory school attendance<sup>5</sup> leading to a high school diploma or equivalency.

**Target: 80%**  
**Statewide achievement: 94%**

Statewide outcome achievement trends for SFYs 2012 - 2016 are shown in the following graph:



**Conclusion**

The SAL program continues to be a small but valuable alternative for older foster youth who most likely will not be reunified with their family or adopted and who are deemed capable to live on their own with guidance and support.

This child welfare service will be re-procured for SFY18, with new contracts scheduled to begin July 1, 2017. The new contracts will emphasize stability (i.e., keeping youth engaged in SAL through their full periods of eligibility or until they move to a supportive family setting or another supportive setting with someone from their positive support system. The new contracts will also focus on attaining life skills in preparation for independent living and connections to Iowa’s Aftercare programs for youth who had been involved with Iowa’s child welfare system.

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<sup>5</sup> Satisfactory school attendance means a child attends a public school, an accredited nonpublic school, or competent private instruction in accordance with the provisions of Iowa Code Chapter 299A, during a school year, leading to a high school diploma. Satisfactory school attendance may also include approved program participation leading to an equivalency of a high school diploma.