



# STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR  
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
KEVIN W. CONCANNON, DIRECTOR

RECEIVED

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 18, 2006

Michael Marshall  
Secretary of Senate  
State Capitol  
LOCAL

Margaret Thomson  
Chief Clerk of the House  
State Capitol  
LOCAL

**RE: Independent Living Services Annual Report**

Dear Members of the Iowa General Assembly:

Section 234.35, subsection 4, directs the Department of Human Services to report to the Governor and the General Assembly annually by January 1 on data concerning youth who received independent living (IL) foster care services during the immediately preceding fiscal year and to assess the data as part of any evaluation of services or consideration for improving the services. Effective June 1, 2004 IL Iowa Administrative Rules were revised; the foster care placement was renamed to Supervised Apartment Living (SAL). Following is the report data and assessment as required.

### Report Data

SAL foster care is a foster care type of placement, in which youth served must be at least 16 years of age and have the capacity to function outside the structure of a foster family or group care setting. There are two types of SAL living arrangements, scattered-site and cluster. Youth placed in a scattered-site arrangement live in an apartment unit within the community with supervision provided by a provider that the Department contracts with to provide needed supervision and skills to assist the youth in preparation for self-sufficiency. Cluster arrangements are those in which four to six youth reside in apartments located in one building and are supervised by one agency, with staff on site at any time that more than one youth is present in the cluster arrangement. The vast majority of youth participating in the SAL program are placed in a scattered-site arrangement, living in their own apartment within the community, primarily because at this point there is only one provider in the state that has an active SAL cluster program. Staff and providers are aware of the benefits that a cluster arrangement provides for youth, with more provider staff involvement and more interaction between the youth. Youth between the ages of 16 and 18 are often not prepared to live on their own in their own apartment and loneliness is often an issue that can cause the youth to divert from their plan of course. That is why it is critical for the youth to receive individualized services, tailored to their needs.

The total number of youth for whom the state paid for SAL services during state fiscal year (SFY) '06 was 178. Attached is a spreadsheet detailing the number of youth served, by county, who received such services, were discharged from such services, and the reasons for discharge. All youth were court-ordered to receive SAL services; there were no voluntary placements for the past SFY.

Clearly the largest percent of youth receiving SAL services, 30%, were from Polk County, with Scott County (8%) and Linn County (8%) coming in next, amounting to three out of Iowa's ninety-nine counties representing almost 50% of all youth served in the program, with no youth represented from 55 counties. This over and under representation for this particular foster care placement is not surprising when compared to overall representation of youth in foster care by county. Additionally, out of the 13 child placing agencies that the Department contracts with to provide SAL services, the majority provide 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. Moreover, only a handful of the 13 providers contracted with have active SAL programs, with over half of providers only occasionally serving youth in this type of placement. The over represented counties are those counties in which there are stronger SAL programs.

When reviewing numbers served by departmental service area, the Des Moines service area, which includes Polk County, clearly served the most youth in this particular type of placement, with the Davenport service area coming in second (which includes Scott County), the Cedar Rapids service area third (including Linn County) and the Waterloo service area (including Black Hawk County) and Sioux City service area (including Woodbury County) fourth. Again, the rationale for this is apartment/landlord availability and strength of the program serving that particular area.

All 178 of the youth served were court ordered to placement (involuntary, under the age of 18); this is unusual compared to past years where there have always been a few youth served on a voluntary placement (placement status for youth 18 through 19 years of age still working on their high school education). In order for youth to continue to be served past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the youth (or person acting on behalf of the youth) must agree to stay in care in addition to completing their high school education. Additionally, funding must be available for the services. While funding is always an issue, it is not uncommon for youth who could remain in foster care past 18 years of age to choose not to. 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 (regardless of level of placement, i.e., family foster care, group care, SAL) to voluntarily return to a SAL foster care placement prior to their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete their high school education or obtain a general equivalency diploma; this is an important option for those youth who could elect to stay past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in order to complete their education but choose not to, oftentimes wanting to be "free" from "the system" and believing they can do better on their own, only to find out otherwise several months down the road. There were 91 youth discharged from this particular

program during SFY '06. Of those discharged, 63% "aged out" of care (left care because they have attained 18 years of age or older), with another 19% being discharged to return home, 12% had a change in placement or level of care (typically to a more restrictive placement due to behavior issues, often due to substance abuse and/or mental illness), 5% ran away from placement, and 1% were placed with a suitable person (i.e., relative, guardian).

It is interesting to note that almost a third (31%) of total youth placed in SAL during SFY '06 were managed through juvenile court services (indicating adjudicated delinquent) as opposed to the Department. Such data profiling of youth characteristics is important to keep in mind when evaluating effectiveness of program services. Often times, SAL placement is a "last resort" placement for older teens that can't go home and for who other foster care placement settings (group care or family foster care) are not options due to the needs and issues of the youth. Many of these youth have mental health and substance abuse issues; additionally some are adjudicated as a sex offender, which eliminates other placement options, particularly family foster care, due to safety factors. Case planning and services need to be tailored to meet the individual needs of each youth served.

#### **Evaluation of SAL services**

Eligibility for SAL placement is based, among other things, on a comprehensive assessment of the youth that reviews available information on the youth, especially as it pertains to the youth's ability to live independently, participate in services and activities to achieve self-sufficiency, and in following the provisions of their case plan (see attached Preplacement Screening for Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care in addition to the Request for Approval of Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care Placement, both of which must be completed prior to placing a youth in SAL). Additionally, a transition plan must be completed and updated at each case review for youth in foster care who are 16 years of age and older; the plan reviews strengths and needs of youth particularly around life skills and the possible need for disability services as an adult, significant information needed for appropriate placement into the SAL program.

During 2006, a committee of SAL providers and Department staff continued to meet to discuss program effectiveness and implications of program changes. Providers indicate that this population of youth is often behind their peers in life skills, including employment skills, attendance/performance at school, money management, and skills leading to a healthy lifestyle and relationships. These are all important life skills that providers work on with the youth while in the program to prepare them as much as possible for self-sufficiency.

With the "de-linking" of child welfare services and rehabilitative services for children, request for proposals for services and placement options will be completed and awarded during calendar year 2007.

This will be an opportunity to not only build in specific outcomes that will best prepare youth for adulthood/self-sufficiency but also measure program effectiveness/efficiency. Additionally this will be an opportunity for reviewing the effectiveness/efficiency of current SAL living arrangements and the possibility of developing a SAL living arrangement(s) that will provide for a better continuum of living arrangements to best meet the needs of the population served.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Nelson".

Mary Nelson, ACSW LISW  
Administrator, Division of Child and Family Services

**PREPLACEMENT SCREENING FOR SUPERVISED APARTMENT LIVING FOSTER CARE**

Date:

Client Name	Date of Birth	FACS ID	County
Current Living Arrangement			Legal Status: <input type="checkbox"/> CINA <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquent <input type="checkbox"/> Voluntary
Date Life Skill Assessment was completed: <i>(Attach a copy of the results to this assessment.)</i>			

**School and Work History**

**Currently enrolled in school or GED**

Grade	School	IEP? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
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- Performing at appropriate level in school
- Mild to moderate problems at school including underachievement or discipline problems
- Serious school difficulties including suspensions, frequent truancy, significant discipline problems or failing

**Not currently enrolled in school**

Last School Attended	Last Grade Completed
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**Currently employed**

- Full-time
- Part-time

**Not currently employed**

Date Last Worked

- Has held a job for at least six months with few to no problems
- Has held a job for at least one month or has mild attendance or disciplinary problems
- Serious difficulties finding or maintaining employment
- No work history
- No opportunity to work

**Medical or Mental Health Issues (Including Pregnancy)**

Diagnosis:

Medications:

Is the youth able to manage own medication?  
 Yes       No       N/A

### Substance Abuse

- No notable substance use difficulties currently or in recovery for at least one year
- Mild to moderate substance use problems that occasionally present problems of living or in recovery for less than one year
- Moderate to serious substance abuse problem that requires treatment and exacerbates current problems and conditions

Describe current substance abuse treatment:

### Parenting

Does the youth have any children?

- Yes. If yes, how many?
- No

Does the youth have custody of the children?

- Yes
- No

Does the youth's child have any health concerns or special needs?

- Yes. If yes, please describe:
- No

### Cooperation/Compliance at Current Placement

- Generally compliant and cooperative
- Occasionally noncompliant to some rules or adult instructions
- Frequently noncompliant to rules and adult instructions

### History of Delinquency

- Yes. If yes, describe:
- No

Date and degree of most recent charge:

Currently on probation?

- Yes. If yes, describe youth's compliance with terms of probation:
- No

### History of Violence Toward Self, Others, or Property

- Yes. If yes, describe:
- No

Current (within past three months) violent/aggressive behavior:

- Yes. If yes, describe:
- No

List names of team members consulted in making the recommendations for SAL placement:

Other comments:

List the plan of services and resources available to address the identified needs of the youth in SAL placement (i.e., positive connections, economic, community programs):

Number of hours of supervision that will be authorized:

Overall assessment of suitability for Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care:

- Appropriate for SAL-scattered site
- Appropriate for SAL-cluster site
- Not appropriate for SAL

What is the plan if SAL placement is not approved or if SAL services are terminated:

Case Manager/JCO

Date

**REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF SUPERVISED APARTMENT LIVING FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT**

<i>Youth's Name</i>	<i>Date of Birth</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Date</i>
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**The youth must meet the following criteria for approval of Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care:**

- Youth is at least 16 years old.
- Needs foster care placement and services according to Employees' Manual XIII-J.
- Pre-Placement Screening for Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care*, form 470-4063, is attached.
- Youth will have an approved living arrangement that meets required standards.

**If under age 18 (check one):**

- Attending high school and working (or in work training) part time.
- Attending GED program and working (or in work training) part time.
- Attending post-secondary classes and working (or in work training) part time.
- Attending high school, GED or post-secondary program. Work requirement waiver is requested until \_\_\_\_\_ month/year.

Reason for waiving work requirement:

- Working full time.

**If age 18 or over (check one):**

- Attending high school and working (or in work training) part time.
- Attending GED program and working (or in work training) part time.
- Attending high school or GED program. Work requirement waiver is requested until \_\_\_\_\_ month/year.

Reason for waiving work requirement:

- Request waiver of requirement for continuous placement in order for youth to return to foster care to complete high school or obtain GED. Youth is working (or in work training) part time or work requirement waiver is requested until \_\_\_\_\_ month/year.

Reason for waiving work requirement:

An initial allowance in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ (maximum \$400) is requested to assist the youth in paying for deposits, furnishings, and other start-up costs.

<i>Worker</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Supervisor</i>	<i>Date</i>
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**APPROVAL FOR SUPERVISED APARTMENT LIVING FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT**

The request for a Supervised Apartment Living Foster Care Placement is:  Approved  Denied

Work requirement waiver is:  Approved  Denied

The request for an initial allowance is approved in the amount of: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Service Area Manager or Designee</i>	<i>Date</i>
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If youth is under age 18, obtain Juvenile Court Order for Supervised Apartment Living Placement after receiving SAM approval.







COUNTY	Total Remainin g in SAL as of 6/30/06	Exit -- Return Home	Exit -- Placemen t w/ Suitable Person	Exit -- Independ ent Living	Exit -- Aged Out	Exit -- Change in Placemen t	Exit -- Change in Level of Care	Exit -- Runaway
ADAIR		1			2			
ALLAMAKEE							1	
BENTON								
BLACK HAWK	5							
BOONE	2	1			3	1		
BUCHANAN								
CASS								
DALLAS	1							
DES MOINES								
DUBUQUE	1							
EMMET								
FAYETTE								
FLOYD	1							
GREENE								
GRUNDY								
HARDIN	1	2					1	
HENRY	2							
HOWARD								
HUMBOLDT								
JASPER		1						
JOHNSON	2				3			
JONES	1							
LEE	1							
LINN	7	1			2			
MADISON								
MAHASKA	1							
MARION								
MARSHALL	2				2			
MUSCATINE		1						
PAGE								
PLYMOUTH	1							
POLK	30	6	1		2	4	1	2
POTTAWATTAMIE	3						1	

COUNTY	Total Remaining in SAL as of 6/30/06	Exit -- Return Home	Exit -- Placement w/ Suitable Person	Exit -- Independent Living	Exit -- Aged Out	Exit -- Change in Placement	Exit -- Change in Level of Care	Exit -- Runaway
POWESHIEK	1							
SCOTT	9	2			5	1	1	
SIoux		1						
STORY	3				3			
TAMA	1							
UNION	1							
WAPELLO	2				1			
WARREN					1			
WEBSTER	3							1
WINNESHIEK	2							
WOODBURY	2	1			4			
	86	17	1	0	57	6	5	5
		19%	1%	0%	63%	7%	5%	5%

# Exits from SAL by Reason

