



## Agency Recommendation Summary

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requests \$3,510,000 (\$3,075,000 General Fund-State) and 0.5 full time equivalents (FTE) in the 2025-27 Biennial Budget to provide young people with services and supports through the Independent Living and LifeSet programs, as they exit systems of care and transition into adulthood.

## Program Recommendation Summary

### 090 - Program Support

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## Fiscal Summary

Fiscal Summary <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2026	2027	2025-27	2028	2029	2027-29
<b>Staffing</b>						
FTEs	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>Operating Expenditures</b>						
Fund 001 - 1	\$1,237	\$1,838	\$3,075	\$1,838	\$1,838	\$3,676
Fund 001 - 7	\$228	\$203	\$431	\$203	\$203	\$406
Fund 001 - A	\$2	\$2	\$4	\$2	\$2	\$4
Total Expenditures	\$1,467	\$2,043	\$3,510	\$2,043	\$2,043	\$4,086
<b>Revenue</b>						
001 - 0393	\$2	\$2	\$4	\$2	\$2	\$4
001 - 0541	\$228	\$203	\$431	\$203	\$203	\$406
Total Revenue	\$230	\$205	\$435	\$205	\$205	\$410

## Decision Package Description

This decision package requests funding for the Independent Living and LifeSet programs. These programs teach life skills to young people exiting systems of care, resulting in a successful transition to independence and adulthood.

### Independent Living

Independent Living (IL) is a voluntary program available to youth between the ages of 15-22 who are or were in foster care. Eligibility for the program includes youth who were in an established dependency with DCYF or a Tribal court and in an out of home foster care placement for at least 30 days after becoming dependent between the ages of 15-17. Once a youth becomes eligible for the program, they are eligible until their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. IL services are provided by local community-based providers and tribes, designed to promote self-sufficiency and responsible living. These independent living skills include supports for employment assistance, education, financial management, daily living skills, vocational training, emotional support and help establishing stable and healthy relationships.

The IL program serves 750 youth per month statewide and is funded by federal and state sources. The enacted 2023-25 biennial budget provided an additional \$750,000 of one-time state funding in FY24 and FY25 for a rate increase to contracted independent living providers.

This funding expires at the end of FY25. Therefore, to sustain the current rates and to continue serving the same number of young people served today, DCYF requests \$750,000 per fiscal year as on-going funding.

### LifeSet

LifeSet is an individualized evidence-based program, developed by Youth Villages, designed to empower young people ages 17 to 22 who have been involved in the foster care, juvenile justice, and behavioral health systems; to improve their lives, become independent, and succeed in school or at work as they exit these systems of care. The LifeSet program provides intensive community-based services that are comprehensive and tailored to each young person's needs. Trained specialists help young people identify and achieve their goals. These specialists help young people establish positive, healthy relationships and connections, provide education and employment supports, find housing, provide financial literacy education, improve mental wellbeing, and assist in developing life skills to ensure continued success and stability in transitioning to independence or adulthood. Specialists engage with young people face to face at least once a week providing support and guidance, communicate regularly throughout the week via email, text messages, or phone calls, and are available 24/7. Each team can serve 32-40 individual youth daily with 74 youth expected to be served annually after the first year of implementation based on average lengths of enrollment.

The LifeSet program is currently funded in six counties: King, Yakima, Benton, Franklin, Spokane, and Snohomish. This request seeks to expand services to two additional counties, one per fiscal year: Clark County in FY26 and Pierce County in FY27. With this expansion, over

600 eligible young adults are expected to be served statewide.

DCYF requests a 0.5 Management Analyst 5 FTE to administer the program. This position will ensure successful delivery of program services, monitor outcomes achieved for young people participating in the program, coordinate and collaborate with LifeSet providers and stakeholders, provide contract management and oversight.

## Assumptions and Calculations

### **Expansion, Reduction, Elimination or Alteration of a current program or service:**

This request funds an expansion of the LifeSet program and maintains current funding for Independent Living.

### **Detailed Assumptions and Calculations:**

Independent Living - DCYF requests \$750,000 GF-S per fiscal year to maintain the program at the current funding level and continue to serve the existing population of 750 youth per month.

LifeSet – Life Set is an existing program, requesting to expand services to Clark County in FY26 and Pierce County in FY27. With this expansion, DCYF anticipates serving 600 youth statewide.

The cost per location is \$573,000 per fiscal year.

### **Workforce Assumptions:**

DCYF requests \$160,000 (\$160,000 GF-S) and 0.5 Management Analyst 5 FTE in the 2025-27 Biennial Budget for statewide administration, coordination, oversight, and monitoring of the LifeSet program.

### **Historical Funding:**

#### Independent Living

##### FY2026

- Total Funds = \$3,600,000
- Near General Fund = \$1,141,000
- Other Funds = \$2,500,000 estimated Federal Chafee funds

##### FY2027

- Total Funds = \$3,600,000
- Near General Fund = \$1,141,000
- Other Funds = \$2,000,000 estimated Federal Chafee

#### LifeSet

##### FY2026

- Total Funds = \$2,995,000
- Near General Fund = \$1,554,000
- Other Funds = \$994,000

##### FY2027

- Total Funds = \$2,995,000
- Near General Fund = \$1,554,000
- Other Funds = \$994,000

## Strategic and Performance Outcomes

### **Strategic Framework:**

This package supports the Governor's Results Washington goal area for Health and Safe Communities as it improves housing stability for young people exiting systems of care and more broadly supports young people's well-being in areas of physical and behavioral health.

Additionally, this request aligns with the goals for a Prosperous Economy by increasing employment rates for young people transitioning into adulthood.

The request aligns with DCYF's strategic goals for improving quality and availability of provider services as well as making successful transitions into adulthood through funding community-based organizations to delivery high quality intensive case management services that support young people as they move into independence through the development of "adulting" skills, acquiring and maintaining housing, and achieving employment.

### **Performance Outcomes:**

This request supports DCYF's strategic quality and outcome performance measures, related to Performance Based Contracting and achieves the following outcomes:

- Employment/vocational
  - Metric: Percent of young adults with employment/vocational stability
- Housing stability
  - Metric: Percent of young adults who have been residing in stable housing with a family or independent for the previous 90 days from discharge.

## Equity Impacts

### **Community Outreach and Engagement:**

Independent Living:

DCYF works collaboratively with IL providers through regular meetings and updates. In addition, recommendations for IL were produced through a co-design process that engaged youth with lived experience, caregivers, DCYF staff, and service providers. These recommendations continue to inform DCYF's ongoing efforts to support IL.

LifeSet:

DCYF worked collaboratively with system professionals, community providers and young people with lived experience. A letter from Passions to Action (P2A), Washington's child welfare youth and alumni advisory board supported work with LifeSet by stating "this [LifeSet] service would have been helpful for when we emerged into adulthood making the transition less challenging."

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### **Disproportional Impact Considerations:**

The report *Housing Status of Youth Exiting Foster Care, Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Systems*, showed black youth made up 15% of all youth exiting systems of care in FY 15 but were 18% of youth experiencing housing instability within 12 months of exiting a system of care (DSHS, 2017). This data shows disproportionality as to which youth are most at risk for housing instability upon exiting a system of care in Washington State and emphasizes the need for programs like Independent Living and LifeSet.

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### **Target Communities and Populations:**

Nearly two-thirds (60%) of young people served by LifeSet teams in FY24 identified as a young person of color, however, the majority (66%) were Hispanic or Latino. Funding additional teams in Clark and Pierce counties will expand the populations served. Over half (51%) of the young people served by Independent Living identify as a young person of color.

### **Community Inputs and Incorporation:**

#### Independent Living

Contracted service providers recommendations were considered and incorporated whenever possible. DCYF has engaged providers for input.  
LifeSet

As part of DCYF's proposal to Youth Villages for the private/local portion of funding included, DCYF used a collaborative process to develop its application that included system professionals, community providers, and young people with lived experience. The voices of young people who have participated in DCYF's services as they transitioned from foster care into adulthood was included throughout. Additionally, an endorsement letter was provided by Passion to Action (P2A), Washington state's child welfare youth and alumni advisory board in support of the proposal where members identified that including the voices of young people with lived experience in developing the proposal was a key strategy for including those historically marginalized by government decisions.

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**Other Collateral Connections**

**HEAL Act Agencies Supplemental Questions**

Not Applicable.

**Puget Sound Recovery:**

Not Applicable.

**State Workforce Impacts:**

Not Applicable.

**Intergovernmental:**

Not Applicable.

**Stakeholder Impacts:**

DCYF anticipates support from Independent Living and LifeSet contracted service providers, the Washington Association for Children and Families, and the Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition.

**State Facilities Impacts:**

Not Applicable.

**Changes from Current Law:**

Not Applicable.

**Legal or Administrative Mandates:**

Not Applicable.

**Governor's Salmon Strategy:**

Not Applicable.

**IT Addendum**

**Does this Decision Package include funding for any IT-related costs, including hardware, software, (including cloud-based services), contracts or IT staff?**

No

**Objects of Expenditure**

Objects of Expenditure <i>Dollars in Thousands</i>	Fiscal Years		Biennial	Fiscal Years		Biennial
	2026	2027	2025-27	2028	2029	2027-29
Obj. A	\$49	\$49	<b>\$98</b>	\$49	\$49	<b>\$98</b>
Obj. B	\$16	\$16	<b>\$32</b>	\$16	\$16	<b>\$32</b>
Obj. E	\$1	\$1	<b>\$2</b>	\$1	\$1	<b>\$2</b>
Obj. G	\$1	\$1	<b>\$2</b>	\$1	\$1	<b>\$2</b>
Obj. J	\$4	\$0	<b>\$4</b>	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>
Obj. N	\$1,384	\$1,964	<b>\$3,348</b>	\$1,964	\$1,964	<b>\$3,928</b>
Obj. T	\$12	\$12	<b>\$24</b>	\$12	\$12	<b>\$24</b>

**Agency Contact Information**

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