



November 14, 2024

Young people aging out of foster care have so much potential, but without family support, many transition-age foster youth struggle to meet even basic adult needs and expectations.

Some statistics:

- Half of older teens who leave foster care age out versus being reunited or connected with a family.
- A third have been removed from their home and placed in foster care multiple times.
- Half have experienced three or more foster care placements.
- A third experienced a group home or institutional placement during their most recent foster care stay.
- Less than a quarter of young people receive services to help them with employment, education or housing.

## Life Set Program

### Description of Service

The purpose of the LifeSet program is provide support to foster youth ages 16 and older in out-of-home care. The young people participating in LifeSet have been identified as needing intensive support due to complex needs that might negatively impact a successful transition to adulthood. LifeSet will provide outcome-focused and comprehensive services to young people identified by the DCS Specialists and the Permanency and Youth Services Unit (PYS). The program will provide intensive, individualized, evidence-informed, and community-based programming that acts as a bridge from foster care to successful adulthood for young people. The program will provide positive and sustainable outcomes focused on relational permanency, housing, mental and physical health, career and employment, life skills, and education.

### Eligibility Criteria

- Young people who are 16 and older who are in DCS out-of-home care.
- Young people who have been identified by DCS as needing intensive support due to complex needs such as: lack of natural supports and/or community connections, unstable living arrangements and/or frequent moves, unstable mental health that may impact a successful transition to adulthood.

### Referral Process

- DCSS will submit the LifeSet referral (CSO-3687) to The Permanency and Youth Services (PYS) inbox [youthservices@azdcs.gov](mailto:youthservices@azdcs.gov).
- PYS will review the referral and request any additional follow-up information that may be needed.
- PYS will submit the service request and complete the service approval for eligible youth through Guardian to LifeSet.
- LifeSet will review the referrals and accept service approvals for eligible youth.

### DCS Specialist's Role

- Identify young people age 16 and older in out of home care who meet the eligibility criteria for the LifeSet program and are not already receiving a duplicated service (Successful Transition to Adulthood, Keys to Success, etc) and submit a referral to [youthservices@azdcs.gov](mailto:youthservices@azdcs.gov).
- Communicate with the young person and their supports to ensure their case and transition plan supports their goals listed on the LifeSet referral.
- Communicate and work collaboratively with the LifeSet specialists regarding the young person and their progress in the program.

### PYS Role

- PYS will receive and review referrals for the program from the DCS Specialist.
- PYS will submit the service request and service approvals through Guardian for eligible young people.

### How Is LifeSet Different?

LifeSet is applied with proven practices that are supported through expert guidance. It emphasizes one-on-one engagement with a specialist available 24/7, who utilizes experiential learning, teaching life skills that build confidence and a network of support, resulting in a successful transition to adulthood.

- Improved mental health by 13%
- Increased employment by 7%
- Increased earnings by 17%
- Reduced homelessness by 22%
- Reduced domestic & partner violence by 30%
- Reduced economic hardships by 13%

### LifeSet Specialist's Role

- Request the most updated information from the referring DCSS and PYS before conducting an initial appointment to complete the LifeSet pre-enrollment assessment.
- Make contact with the young person to schedule the LifeSet pre-enrollment assessment and develop a service plan tailored to the strengths and needs of the young person, consistent with the LifeSet model.
- Meet with the young person face-to-face at least once weekly and be available for communication with the youth when needed
- Communicate and work collaboratively with the young person, DCS, and any other appropriate supports to design an individualized program.
- Communicate strengths, needs, and barriers to ensure success of the youth in the program.
- Implement interventions and best practices individualized to meet the specific needs of each young person. These may include, but are not limited to: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, Casey life skills assessments, preparing adolescents for young adulthood, foster club permanency pacts, pregnancy prevention, physical health and mental health care modules.

### Young Person's Role

- Communicate with DCS, the LifeSet Specialist, and other supports to develop their individualized service plan.
- Communicate strengths, needs, and barriers to DCS and LifeSet Specialists to ensure success in the program.

Please email questions to [YouthServices@azdcs.gov](mailto:YouthServices@azdcs.gov)