



# Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Town Hall

## Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2022- 5:00pm to 7:00pm  
Virtual Meeting

### Welcome and Introductions

DCYF Statewide Program Manager, Sherrie Flores, and DCYF Adolescent Transitions Program Manager, Gavyn Tann welcomed attendees and introduced the Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Redesign Project.

- [Sign-in Sheet](#)

### Independent Living (IL) and Transition Planning Redesign Project

<p><b>Discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jen Ajinga, an alumni of care of Washington, current foster parent in California, and therapist specializing in trauma, walked attendees through a reflection on home. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ As a former foster kid, I feel like home is what you bring with you, not the building or place. It is still unfortunate that it is so common having to move with little notice and losing your connections.</li> <li>○ Moving North would be better. As a Black, Native American I wouldn't have people knocking on my door telling me I am too loud or violating my space. It is a good area 10 miles north.</li> <li>○ Being a foster kid is like being on the show Wife Swap, but it is longer than two weeks and your foster family doesn't have to play by your rules. It is stressful.</li> <li>○ When I moved school systems, I found that some school systems are more racist than others. It is a worry that I need to find a school my son is comfortable with.</li> <li>○ I had never been to a good area, so I would have to move because there were discrimination and fights. Teachers wouldn't let me eat in class even though I was rushing and trying to figure things out that weren't easy. I felt really sad that I had to move, then move again and again. The bullying and retaliation from the teachers was tough.</li> <li>○ The bus schedule can take two extra hours if I have to move. I had to memorize the new schedule so I wouldn't be late.</li> <li>○ Moving to a different state or further away, you'll have to follow the new rules or laws of wherever you are. You have to think about child care and where the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) office is.</li> <li>○ We need to address what home feels like and the practical things that change when a young person is moved.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• DCYF is working to solidify contracts to support this work, specifically payment. We are scheduled to start our co-design session at the end of May.</li> <li>• Lived experts on the call are highly encouraged to be a part of the redesign work. If you are a lived expert (former or current foster care) please send your information to Lily Cory (<a href="mailto:lily.cory@dcyf.wa.gov">lily.cory@dcyf.wa.gov</a>).</li> <li>• Are you talking about working with kids? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Our team is connecting with young people who are in Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR). Youth who are currently in the facility are being connected with in a different setting. This work will be shared with them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When you are building the conditions, immersing and aligning are those done before we start in May or with us?</li> </ul>
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- We will all come together and we will say “how do we want the space to look” and the lived experts in the group will determine the community expectations, how we will engage and how we will report out.
  - I just wanted to make sure it was really collaborative, rather than you guys deciding and us having to fill in.
  - Yes, we are here to really co-design and make sure you are all partners in this work.
- Can you explain what the third party you are hiring will be doing?
  - We have not finalized the contract, but the third party will help co-facilitate and assist with data collection, data analyses, literature reviews and report writing.
- I was talking to my case manager about this, I want to start my own business to start t-shirts. Do you guys help with that?
  - We do not, unfortunately. We can work with our team to see if we can get you connected with someone who may be able to do that. This co-design process will not include business support, but it will include solution building and community building.
  - Those are good things to talk to your Independent Living Skills (ILS) case manager about!
  - This could be something that is incorporated into the redesign, however. For example: exploring all employment options including entrepreneurial projects.
  - Contact Victoria Ackerman, [Victoria.Ackerman@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:Victoria.Ackerman@dcyf.wa.gov) for connection to business support.
  - We get asked about this a lot from youth. Having those resources would be helpful.
- Will some of the co-facilitators have lived experience?
  - Yes, some of the co-facilitators will have lived experience and we will all be going on this journey together.
- Is juvenile detention is separate from Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR)?
  - That’s a great question. Detention is always run by the county. Each county in the state has a detention center. Rehabilitation is state-run.
  - Is it the same thing as detention? Or is it completely different?
  - I feel it is completely separate, but others may have different opinions. We provide treatment and services. People can be committed to JR for up to five years.
  - I have more questions about this.
  - You can email me at [scott.lohr@dcyf.wa.gov](mailto:scott.lohr@dcyf.wa.gov)
- That is a huge impact from 2016 to today. Amazing! 50%-95% is huge.
  - Yeah, 95% of individuals in our care participate in Reentry Team Meetings (RTMs). We want that to be 100%.
- Since a lot of us don’t have family, do the RTMs include others?
  - Yes, it is built into our policies in JR. Our definition of family is anyone who is a primary support for the youth as they leave.
- With the people you were talking about like mentors, would it be possible for people who have “graduated” the system and have been out doing their thing for a while, could they come back and be that peer-to-peer mentor?
  - We are looking at the possibility of peer mentorship. I really like that idea. If there are others from JR on this meeting, how long does it have to be after leaving JR?
  - It is 3-5 years after release with no new crimes committed during that period.
  - I don’t know if those are DCYF policies or legislative policies. I can look into that.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ That is a really long time. Of course there should be some time to get things together, but there comes a point in time where helping someone who was in your position is healing, to both you and the person in the position you were in.</li><li>○ I am going to check to see if that is our own policy or a legislation.</li><li>● Is it just one RTM or a process of several before the youth is discharged?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ There are four types of RTMs: initial (first 30 days of coming into JR), release (prior to returning to community), interim (every 6 months for individuals who have more than 52 weeks in JR), final (for youth who have parole, this is at the end of their parole term).</li></ul></li><li>● There are some people that are locked up that didn't even do anything. They are just in the mix of having bad people around. It hurts my feelings when innocent people are in the mix of wrongdoing.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I appreciate you sharing the impact that experience has. We are currently working towards exploring different ways to offer more legal support to individuals in our care in the situation you are talking about.</li></ul></li><li>● Will the next town halls build on this one or are they repeating today's agenda?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ They each build upon each other, similar format different information and activities.</li></ul></li><li>● So JR provides resources like education?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes.</li><li>○ That is great. I didn't know anything about this when I was younger.</li></ul></li><li>● I am so glad I was able to join this. I have connected with some of the alumni here tonight. I appreciate this platform to connect.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I think we should do a class for business</li></ul></li><li>● My brother was in the juvenile detention and went into foster care. Could it be useful if I use my outside perspective of how it did and did not help my brother?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Yes, I think you should participate in the co-design if you are interested. As long as you are not speaking for your brother or others, but speaking from your own perspective that will be very beneficial to us.</li></ul></li><li>● Will we ever meet in person, or will this all be on zoom?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The co-design meetings and the town halls will be on zoom.</li></ul></li><li>● How are we defining "young person" in this context? Is there a max age limit?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Young person in this context refers to ages 14-23.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Follow up/Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reach out to Sherrie Flores (<a href="mailto:sherrie.flores@dcyf.wa.gov">sherrie.flores@dcyf.wa.gov</a> - Independent living), Gavyn Tann (<a href="mailto:Gavyn.tann@dcyf.wa.gov">Gavyn.tann@dcyf.wa.gov</a> - Transitions/Report) or Lily Cory (<a href="mailto:lily.cory@dcyf.wa.gov">lily.cory@dcyf.wa.gov</a> - Youth Engagement/Co-design) if you would like to connect on Independent Living, Transition Planning and the Co-design work. We would love to connect with anyone who is close to this work. We can connect 1:1 if the days and times don't work for you.</li><li>● The next town hall will be Tuesday, June 21, 5 – 7 p.m. <a href="#">Join Here</a> <b>Access Code: 892 0426 8776</b> <b>Password: DCYFIL</b> <b>Call in Number: 1.253.215.8782</b> <b>Passcode: 864838</b></li></ul>