

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the independent living housing
3 grant; amending s. 409.1451, F.S.; creating the
4 independent living housing grant for a specified
5 purpose; providing definitions; providing eligibility
6 requirements; requiring a community-based care lead
7 agency to calculate the amount of financial assistance
8 based on certain factors; requiring a community-based
9 care lead agency to enter into formal agreements with
10 eligible young adults; providing requirements for such
11 agreement; requiring a community-based care lead
12 agency to terminate an agreement under certain
13 circumstances; requiring specified notice be given to
14 a young adult before an agreement is terminated;
15 specifying the circumstances under which a community-
16 based care lead agency can enter into a subsequent
17 agreement; providing the duties of a community-based
18 care lead agency; prohibiting a community-based care
19 lead agency from charging a fee for certain services;
20 requiring the Department of Children and Families to
21 advertise the independent living housing grant and
22 provide relevant information to certain person;
23 amending s. 39.6035, F.S.; conforming provisions to
24 changes made by the act; amending ss. 409.1455 and
25 420.0004, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing

26 an effective date.

27

28 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

29

30 **Section 1. Subsections (4) through (12) of section**
 31 **409.1451, Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (5)**
 32 **through (13), respectively, present subsections (9) and (11) are**
 33 **amended, and a new subsection (4) is added to that section, to**
 34 **read:**

35 409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

36 (4) INDEPENDENT LIVING HOUSING GRANT.—The independent
 37 living housing grant is established to assist eligible young
 38 adults aging out of foster care afford rent for residential
 39 housing. The purpose of this grant is to help eligible young
 40 adults successfully transition into independent living.

41 (a) As used in this subsection, the term:

42 1. "Dwelling unit" means a structure or part of a
 43 structure that meets the criteria for affordable housing in s.
 44 420.602(3) and is rented for use as a home, residence, or
 45 sleeping place.

46 2. "Fair market rent" means periodic payments due to a
 47 landlord from a tenant for occupancy of a dwelling unit that is
 48 based on the fair market rental rate for a dwelling unit that
 49 meets the criteria for affordable housing in s. 420.602(3).

50 3. "Income" means money received at periodic intervals

51 from any source, including, but not limited to, wages or other
52 remuneration from an employer.

53 4. "Personal contribution" means the share, calculated as
54 a percentage, of an eligible young adult's income that he or she
55 contributes toward the rental of a dwelling unit.

56 (b) A young adult is eligible for financial assistance
57 under this subsection if he or she:

58 1. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 22 years of
59 age or, in the case of a young adult who has a diagnosed
60 disability, is not yet 25 years of age.

61 2. Was living in licensed care on his or her 18th
62 birthday.

63 3. Is not in extended foster care under s. 39.6251.

64 4. Resides in this state.

65 5. Applied for federal, state, or local financial
66 assistance for housing and was accepted for such financial
67 assistance, was placed on a waitlist for such assistance, or has
68 not been notified of his or her acceptance or denial for
69 financial assistance within 30 days after the submission of an
70 application.

71 6. Completed the financial literacy curriculum offered by
72 the Department of Financial Services for young adults or
73 individuals with a diagnosed disability, as applicable.

74 7. Provides documentation to the department or community-
75 based care lead agency that the young adult is:

76 a. Progressing toward a secondary education credential or
77 a vocational education credential;

78 b. Participating in a program or activity designed to
79 promote or eliminate barriers to employment;

80 c. Employed for at least 80 hours per month; or

81 d. Unable to participate in an activity listed in sub-
82 paragraphs a.-c. due to a diagnosed physical, intellectual,
83 emotional, or psychiatric condition that limits his or her
84 participation.

85 (c) The community-based care lead agency shall calculate
86 the amount of financial assistance available to an eligible
87 young adult. In calculating the amount of financial assistance
88 available under this subsection, the community-based care lead
89 agency must:

90 1. Establish the young adult's monthly personal
91 contribution to the fair market rent in an amount equal to 33
92 percent of his or her monthly income.

93 2. After calculating the young adult's personal
94 contribution, determine the amount of the demonstrated unmet
95 need, after applying any federal, state, or local financial
96 assistance for housing, necessary to cover at least 100 percent,
97 but no more than 115 percent, of the fair market rent for the
98 dwelling unit.

99 (d) The community-based care lead agency shall enter into
100 a formal agreement with the young adult for financial assistance

101 under this subsection. The agreement must do all of the
102 following:

103 1. State the amount of financial assistance determined
104 under paragraph (c).

105 2. Require the young adult to agree to pay rent and
106 provide proof of each month's rent payment to the community-
107 based care lead agency.

108 3. Require the community-based care lead agency to create
109 a financial plan with the young adult as part of his or her
110 transition plan required under s. 39.6035.

111 (e)1. The community-based care lead agency shall terminate
112 the formal agreement with the young adult if he or she is no
113 longer eligible for financial assistance under this subsection
114 or fails to comply with the terms of the agreement. Before
115 termination of an agreement, the community-based care lead
116 agency must notify the young adult by certified mail, return
117 receipt requested, that his or her agreement is to be terminated
118 and inform the young adult of his or her right to appeal such
119 termination.

120 2. If the community-based care lead agency terminates a
121 formal agreement because the young adult is no longer eligible
122 for financial assistance, the community-based care lead agency
123 may enter into a subsequent agreement with the young adult at a
124 later date when he or she is eligible again.

125 3. If the community-based care lead agency terminates a

126 formal agreement because the young adult fails to comply with
127 the terms of the agreement, the community-based care lead agency
128 may not enter into a subsequent agreement with the young adult
129 for financial assistance under this subsection.

130 (f) The community-based care lead agency must do all of
131 the following:

132 1. Notify the department when the lead agency executes a
133 formal agreement with an eligible young adult for financial
134 assistance under this subsection.

135 2. Disburse, in the manner specified in the formal
136 agreement, to the young adult the monthly amount for rent.

137 3. Notify the department if the community-based care lead
138 agency terminates a formal agreement for financial assistance
139 under this subsection.

140 4. Review, and update if necessary, the young adult's
141 financial plan with him or her every 6 months until the young
142 adult is no longer receiving financial assistance under this
143 subsection.

144 (g) A community-based care lead agency may not charge a
145 fee for the administration of financial assistance under this
146 subsection.

147 (h) The department must do both of the following:

148 1. Disburse to the community-based care lead agency the
149 full amount of financial assistance as stated in the formal
150 agreement within 10 days after the lead agency notifies the

151 department of the agreement.

152 2. Advertise the availability of the independent living
 153 housing grant and provide relevant information, such as
 154 eligibility criteria and application procedures, to children and
 155 young adults who are leaving, or were formerly in, foster care;
 156 caregivers; case managers; guidance and family services
 157 counselors; principals or other relevant school administrators;
 158 and guardians ad litem.

159 ~~(10)~~~~(9)~~ FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR YOUNG ADULTS RECEIVING
 160 SERVICES.—Financial awards to young adults receiving services
 161 under subsections (2), ~~and~~ (3), and (4) and s. 39.6251 may be
 162 disregarded for purposes of determining the eligibility for, or
 163 the amount of, any other federal or federally supported
 164 assistance for which the department is required to determine
 165 eligibility for the program.

166 ~~(12)~~~~(11)~~ FUNDING DURING EMERGENCY.—Notwithstanding the
 167 eligibility criteria in subsections (2), ~~and~~ (3), and (4), the
 168 department may distribute federal funds to all young adults
 169 deemed eligible by the funding source in the event of a state or
 170 national emergency.

171 **Section 2. Subsections (1) and (5) of section 39.6035,**
 172 **Florida Statutes, is amended to read:**

173 39.6035 Transition plan.—

174 (1) During the year after a child reaches 16 years of age,
 175 the department and the community-based care lead agency, in

176 collaboration with the caregiver and any other individual whom
177 the child would like to include, shall assist the child in
178 developing a transition plan. The required transition plan is in
179 addition to standard case management requirements. The
180 transition plan must address specific options for the child to
181 use in obtaining services, including housing, health insurance,
182 education, financial literacy, a driver license, and workforce
183 support and employment services. The plan must also include
184 tasks to establish and maintain naturally occurring mentoring
185 relationships and other personal support services. The
186 transition plan may be as detailed as the child chooses. This
187 plan must be updated as needed before the child reaches 18 years
188 of age and after the child reaches 18 years of age if he or she
189 is receiving funding under s. 409.1451(2) or (4). In developing
190 and updating the transition plan, the department and the
191 community-based care lead agency shall:

192 (a) Provide the child with the documentation required
193 under s. 39.701(3).

194 (b) Coordinate the transition plan with the independent
195 living provisions in the case plan and, for a child with
196 disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
197 transition plan.

198 (c) Provide information for the financial literacy
199 curriculum for youth offered by the Department of Financial
200 Services.

201 (d) Provide information about independent living services
202 and programs which is tailored to the individual needs and plans
203 of the child, including, at a minimum, the specific benefits of
204 each program and how such benefits meet the needs and plans of
205 the child, the advantages and disadvantages of participation in
206 each program considering the needs and plans of the child, and
207 the financial value of each program to the child. The community-
208 based care lead agency shall discuss this information with the
209 child, and the child must sign a document indicating that he or
210 she:

- 211 1. Received such information.
- 212 2. Discussed such information with the community-based
213 care lead agency representative.
- 214 3. Understands how such services and benefits would meet
215 his or her individual needs.
- 216 4. Understands how such services would assist him or her
217 in accomplishing future plans.

218 (5) The department or community-based care lead agency
219 shall continue to periodically meet with a young adult to review
220 and, if necessary, update the transition plan beyond his or her
221 18th birthday if the young adult receives funding under s.
222 409.1451(2) or (4).

223 **Section 3. Subsection (11) of section 409.1455, Florida**
224 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

225 409.1455 Step into Success Workforce Education and

226 Internship Pilot Program for foster youth and former foster
227 youth.—

228 (11) REPORT.—The department shall include a section on the
229 Step into Success Workforce Education and Internship Pilot
230 Program in the independent living annual report prepared
231 pursuant to s. 409.1451(7) ~~s. 409.1451(6)~~ which includes, but is
232 not limited to, all of the following:

233 (a) Whether the pilot program is in compliance with this
234 section, and if not, barriers to compliance.

235 (b) A list of participating organizations and the number
236 of interns.

237 (c) A summary of recruitment efforts to increase the
238 number of participating organizations.

239 (d) A summary of the feedback and surveys received
240 pursuant to paragraph (6)(h) from participating former foster
241 youth, mentors, and others who have participated in the pilot
242 program.

243 (e) Recommendations, if any, for actions necessary to
244 improve the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of the pilot
245 program.

246 (f) Employment outcomes of former foster youth who
247 participated in the pilot program, including employment status
248 after completion of the program, whether he or she is employed
249 by the participating organization in which he or she interned or
250 by another entity, and job description and salary information,

251 if available.

252 **Section 4. Subsection (13) of section 420.0004, Florida**
253 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

254 420.0004 Definitions.—As used in this part, unless the
255 context otherwise indicates:

256 (13) "Person with special needs" means an adult person
257 requiring independent living services in order to maintain
258 housing or develop independent living skills and who has a
259 disabling condition; a young adult formerly in foster care who
260 is eligible for services under s. 409.1451 ~~s. 409.1451(5)~~; a
261 survivor of domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28; or a
262 person receiving benefits under the Social Security Disability
263 Insurance (SSDI) program or the Supplemental Security Income
264 (SSI) program or from veterans' disability benefits.

265 **Section 5.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.