Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Andy Beshear, Governor **Eric Friedlander, Secretary**

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Kentucky launches new program for young people transitioning from foster care

Youth Villages' LifeSet provides help to young people in Lexington and Louisville areas

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 23, 2020) – The Kentucky Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), an agency of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), is launching a new program this month to help young people who reach adulthood in foster care, one of the groups the most impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.

Youth Villages, a national nonprofit organization, is offering the LifeSet program to young people between ages of 17 and 21 who are transitioning from foster care in Lexington, Louisville and their surrounding counties.

Gov. Andy Beshear said his administration wants to ensure that youth exiting foster care have a stable transition to adulthood.

"Part of a good child welfare network includes measures that will give older youth better outcomes," Gov. Beshear said. "Unfortunately, many will age out of foster care into adulthood without an adoptive family to guide them along the way. But

with LifeSet, these young Kentuckians can get help with the skills and resources they need to live on their own."

CHFS Secretary Eric Friedlander said many foster youth have experienced multiple adversities, but additional support like LifeSet can make a difference.

"We are mindful of the trauma these youth have experienced, and we know it can amplify stressors of adulthood," Friedlander said. "LifeSet can be part of a solid support system that gives them what they need to succeed. This support is not only reassuring, it can be life-changing."

The evidence-informed LifeSet program model gives young people a bridge to maturity, with a trained specialist by their side to navigate the complexities of early adulthood. Specialists meet with young people at the location of the youth's choosing, face-to-face weekly, helping them set and achieve their goals around housing, transportation, education, employment, health and relationships through experiential learning

DCBS Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub said LifeSet can help youth stop living through cycles of instability.

"Just like other teens and young adults, youth aging out of foster care have goals and dreams, and supports like LifeSet can get them closer to see those ambitions becoming reality," she said. "Especially during this unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, we need to give youth aging out of care all the support they need to thrive and become self-sufficient adults."

"The launch of LifeSet is the result of extensive planning with DCBS and shows the state's strong commitment to making sure that young people who experience foster care have the support they need to become successful adults," said Patrick Lawler, CEO of Youth Villages. "This is particularly important right now as the COVID-19 crisis has put even more stress on these young people at a critical time of their lives."

Miranda-Straub said DCBS and Youth Villages have already received several youth referrals and enrollments for LifeSet services and that she and her team hope the program can be expanded to more areas of the state. Currently, youth living in these 25 counties are eligible for LifeSet services: Bath, Boyle, Bullitt, Bourbon, Clark, Estill, Fayette, Garrard, Hardin, Henry, Jefferson, Jessamine,

Lincoln, Madison, Meade, Mercer, Montgomery, Nelson, Oldham, Powell, Rockcastle, Scott, Shelby, Spencer and Woodford.

A recent survey of transition-age foster youth across the country conducted by FosterClub found that 65 percent had lost work during the pandemic, 51 percent had food insecurity and 23 percent had been forced to move or feared losing their housing.
Funding for the expansion of services is coming through a public-private partnership between DCBS and Youth Villages and is a part of the nonprofit's drive to expand effective services for transition-age youth across the country.

In addition to Kentucky, Youth Villages provides LifeSet through direct services in Georgia, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon and Tennessee and through partnerships in New York, Pennsylvania, Washington, Connecticut, Illinois and the District of Columbia.

Learn more about state resources for Kentucky foster youth transitioning out of care on the Kentucky RISE (Resources for Independence Success and Empowerment) portal -- https://prdweb.chfs.ky.gov/kyrise/ -- a one-stop site for helpful information about all services available to current and former foster youth, including education benefits, housing options and aftercare services.

About Youth Villages

Youth Villages is a national leader in children's mental and behavioral health committed to building strong families, delivering effective services and significantly improving outcomes for children, families and young people involved in child welfare and juvenile justice systems across the country. Founded in 1986, the organization's 3,000 employees help more than 30,000 children annually in 21 states across the U.S. Youth Villages has been recognized by the Harvard Business School and U.S. News & World Report and was identified by The White House as one of the nation's most promising results-oriented nonprofit organizations. Learn more at www.youthvillages.org.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government,

with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.

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