



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB1508

Introduced 2/4/2025, by Sen. Sara Feigenholtz

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

20 ILCS 505/46 new

Amends the Children and Family Services Act. Requires the Department of Children and Family Services to, no later than July 1, 2026, establish the Office of Alumni Support (Office) to provide assistance, guidance, and support to any former youth in care needing or requesting assistance, guidance, or support. Provides that the Office shall link former youth in care to existing supports, determine what additional supports are necessary to improve outcomes for former youth in care based upon identified needs, including researching existing evidence-based and evidence-informed practice models of providing assistance to former youth in care, and implement necessary changes to provide the additional supports. Provides that current and former youth in care shall provide input, guidance, and direction on the establishment and operation of the Office. Sets forth a list of stakeholders the Department shall engage with when developing the Office. Creates the Former Youth in Care Crisis Support Services Program for the purpose of providing former youth in care in crisis immediate funds to address urgent needs, including, but not limited to, emergency housing, healthcare, food, transportation, and items urgently needed to maintain the former youth in care in a work or educational setting. Provides that the Office of Alumni Support shall manage and operate the program. Requires the Department to submit quarterly progress reports to the General Assembly on the establishment of the Office. Requires the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit to determine if the Department is meeting the requirements of the amendatory Act. Provides that the performance audit shall be conducted 2 years after the effective date of the amendatory Act. Effective immediately.

LRB104 05807 KTG 15838 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Children and Family Services Act is amended
5 by adding Section 46 as follows:

6 (20 ILCS 505/46 new)

7 Sec. 46. Office of Alumni Support; Former Youth in Care
8 Crisis Support Services Program.

9 (a) Legislative findings and intent. The General Assembly
10 finds that:

11 (1) Youth in care experience multiple traumas prior to
12 exiting care. They suffer abuse, neglect, or abandonment
13 causing them to be placed in care, trauma from being
14 removed from their families and communities, and many
15 suffer additional trauma while in care, including multiple
16 placement changes, delayed access to necessary treatment,
17 and maltreatment while in care.

18 (2) Research has shown that former youth in care
19 statistically have worse outcomes than their peers in the
20 general population across a broad range of measures of
21 well-being, including housing, employment, and education.
22 These outcomes lead to homelessness, unemployment,
23 incarceration, and psychiatric hospitalization, causing

1 former youth in care to utilize costly State-funded
2 programs and social supports at higher rates than their
3 peers.

4 (3) According to U.S. Census Data from 2023,
5 approximately 57% of men and 54% of women ages 18 to 24
6 live in their family home with their parents. For former
7 youth in care who were removed from their families, living
8 with their parents is often not an available or stable
9 option. When youth exit care, they are expected to live
10 entirely independent from not only financial support from
11 the State, but also from the guidance, encouragement, role
12 modeling, and mentoring that they received from
13 caseworkers, foster parents, child care staff, and other
14 adults during their time in care.

15 (4) Evidence-based programs have shown that assistance
16 and support provided to former youth in care can improve
17 outcomes in target areas, including leading to increases
18 in employment and earnings, increased housing stability,
19 increased economic well-being, and significant impacts on
20 health and safety outcomes for the youth.

21 (5) It is the intent of the General Assembly to direct
22 the Department of Children of Family Services to create,
23 with the guidance, direction, and involvement of current
24 and former youth in care, an Office of Alumni Support to
25 provide assistance and support to former youth in care by
26 (i) helping former youth in care navigate existing

1 supports, (ii) determining what additional supports would
2 be beneficial to former youth in care, including
3 researching existing evidence-based and evidence-informed
4 practice models of providing assistance to alumni of the
5 child welfare system, and (iii) implementing any
6 additional supports to improve outcomes for former youth
7 in care.

8 (b) Office of Alumni Support. No later than July 1, 2026,
9 the Department shall establish the Office of Alumni Support to
10 provide assistance, guidance, and support to any former youth
11 in care needing or requesting assistance, guidance, or
12 support.

13 (c) The Office of Alumni Support shall link former youth
14 in care to existing supports, determine what additional
15 supports are necessary to improve outcomes for former youth in
16 care based upon identified needs, including researching
17 existing evidence-based and evidence-informed practice models
18 of providing assistance to former youth in care, and implement
19 necessary changes to provide the additional supports. The
20 Office of Alumni Support shall be established and operated
21 with the input, guidance, and direction of current and former
22 youth in care and shall include such input and direction in all
23 aspects of its work.

24 (d) At a minimum, the Office of Alumni Support shall
25 provide assistance to former youth in care by linking young
26 adults to existing supports or providing additional supports

1 in all of the following areas:

2 (1) Housing support, including, but not limited to,
3 referrals to funded housing sources specifically targeted
4 to former youth in care.

5 (2) Educational support, including referrals for
6 assistance accessing post-secondary education and
7 financial aid available to former youth in care,
8 including, but not limited to, assistance with housing
9 during school breaks.

10 (3) Vocational support, including referrals for job
11 training programs and financial support.

12 (4) Peer-mentoring from former youth in care to guide
13 other youth through the transition to adulthood.

14 (5) Connections to family support and relationships
15 including assisting former youth in care with connecting
16 with siblings and other family members.

17 (6) Public benefits support, including assistance with
18 qualifying and applying for federal and State benefits as
19 the youth may be eligible.

20 (7) Support for former youth in care who are
21 parenting, including referrals for assistance for
22 childcare and necessary infant and child safety items.

23 (8) Medical and mental health coverage supports,
24 including assistance with navigating insurance coverage
25 and providers.

26 (9) Emergency funds, through the Former Youth in Care

1 Crisis Support Services Program.

2 (10) Technology services through a mobile application
3 developed by a third-party vendor with expertise in
4 developing mobile applications with the input from youth
5 in care and former youth in care. The mobile application
6 shall be designed to be downloaded by youth prior to
7 exiting care to store documents necessary for adult living
8 and other critical personal information in a secure
9 cloud-based environment, provide linkage to resources as
10 needed, and send notifications to youth about resources
11 and opportunities.

12 (e) To develop the Office of Alumni Support, the
13 Department shall actively engage with stakeholders, including,
14 but not limited to:

15 (1) At least 4 representatives from the Statewide
16 Youth Advisory Board, including at least one youth in care
17 from every region.

18 (2) At least 2 representatives from the Foster Care
19 Alumni of America - Illinois Chapter.

20 (3) Representatives from private sector service
21 providers currently providing alumni services to former
22 youth in care.

23 (4) The Director of the Department of Children and
24 Family Services, or the Director's designee.

25 (5) The Cook County Public Guardian, or the Cook
26 County Public Guardian's designee.

1 (6) Representatives from the managed care organization
2 providing health care coverage to current and former youth
3 in care.

4 (f) The Former Youth in Care Crisis Support Services
5 Program.

6 (1) There is created within the Department the Former
7 Youth in Care Crisis Support Services Program. The purpose
8 of the Former Youth in Care Crisis Support Services
9 Program is to provide immediate funds to address urgent
10 needs to former youth in care in crisis.

11 (2) Eligibility and application.

12 (A) Former youth in care between the ages of 18 and
13 30 may access immediate monetary funds to address
14 urgent needs, including, but not limited to, emergency
15 housing, healthcare, food, transportation, and items
16 urgently needed to maintain the former youth in care
17 in a work or educational setting.

18 (B) The Department shall not require former youth
19 in care to apply for funds through a single point of
20 contact, but instead shall accept requests for
21 monetary support made directly by the former youth in
22 care or by a child welfare agency or other community
23 services provider on behalf of the former youth in
24 care.

25 (C) The Department shall also consider
26 reimbursement requests from child welfare agencies and

1 other community service providers who provided funds
2 to address urgent needs of former youth in care prior
3 to submitting an application on behalf of the former
4 youth in care to prevent a crisis.

5 (3) The Office of Alumni Support shall manage and
6 operate the Former Youth in Care Crisis Support Services
7 Program.

8 (g) Reporting. The Department shall report to the General
9 Assembly on the Department's progress in establishing the
10 Office of Alumni Support on a quarterly basis for the first
11 year with reports due on December 1, 2025, March 1, 2026, and
12 June 1, 2026. At a minimum the report shall address:

13 (1) how the Department is engaging current and former
14 youth in care;

15 (2) what evidence-based practices and
16 evidence-informed practices the Department has identified
17 as potential models for alumni support;

18 (3) what supports are currently implemented in
19 Illinois;

20 (4) what is needed to overcome identified barriers;
21 and

22 (5) whether there is available federal funding for
23 services and additional support to be provided.

24 (h) Performance audits. Two years after the effective date
25 of this Amendatory Act of the 104th General Assembly, the
26 Auditor General shall commence a performance audit of the

1 Department to determine whether the Department is meeting the
2 requirements of this Section. Upon completion of each audit,
3 the Auditor General shall report its findings to the General
4 Assembly. The Auditor General's reports shall include any
5 issues or deficiencies and recommendations. The audits
6 required by this Section shall be in accordance with and
7 subject to the Illinois State Auditing Act.

8 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
9 becoming law.