



Mississippi Supervised Independent Living Program Requirements

The Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) was passed by Congress on February 9, 2018. Family First includes historic reforms to child welfare financing streams by providing prevention services to families of children who are at imminent risk of entering foster care. It underscores the importance of children growing up in families and seeks to avoid the traumatic experience of children being separated from their families and entering foster care. Specifically, federal reimbursement will be available for trauma-informed mental health services, substance use disorder treatment and in-home parenting skills training to safely maintain in-home family placement. It also aims to improve the well-being of children already in foster care by safely reducing placement of children in non-family-based settings (e.g. residential treatment programs), and instead placing children in the least restrictive, most family-based setting appropriate to their individual needs. This legislation sparks a sweeping overhaul of the child welfare system, the largest seen in nearly 40 years. Opportunities for real and lasting change are available, and the physical and mental health benefits to children and families will be extraordinary.

Upon implementation of Family First in Mississippi, Title IV-E funds can only be used for nonfamily-based placements that are designated as: 1. Placements for pregnant or parenting youth; 2. Supervised independent living for youth 18+; and 3. Qualified Residential Treatment Programs (QRTP) for youth with treatment needs. Family First created a specific nonfamily-based placement type, called a Qualified Residential Treatment Program (QRTP) along with a structure around placing children in these types of placements. QRTPs serve children with specific treatment needs who need short term placement out of their home.

Statement of Purpose: This application is for the designation of a Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) in Mississippi. The SILP designation is dependent upon a program becoming properly licensed.

Thank you for your interest in becoming designated as a Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) in Mississippi. Below are the requirements for SILPs and for the placement of children in them.

Scope of Services:

A Supervised Independent Living Program is a licensed or approved setting in which young adults who have obtained their 18th birthday in foster care can reside in the least restrictive, non-traditional environment while continuing to receive casework and supportive services that promote independence and will help them become self-sufficient. The program should encompass a balance between independence and dependence. Young adults in the program should not require 24-hour supervision and should have daily responsibilities. A SILP is a supervised setting in which the youth is living independently and is paired with a supervising agency.

Mississippi SILP requirements:

- Mississippi's SILP must be in one of the following settings: host homes, college dormitory, shared housing, semi-supervised apartments or supervised housing and paired with a supervising agency. (Setting types are tentative pending finalization of MS Department of Mental Health standards)
- Youth (ages 18-21) currently in foster care who have been assessed and determined to be ready for living independently with supportive services provided by the approved provider.
- Youth participating in the program shall:
 - a) Turn 18 while in MDCPS custody) and be participating in a high school, GED/HiSET, or post-secondary program.
 - b) Be in compliance with attendance policy established by the youth's high school, GED/HiSET, or post-secondary program. Young adults who are unable to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition may also be eligible for services and supports. Supportive services shall be provided by the program provider.
 - c) Be employed or actively seeking employment unless otherwise prevented by disability or full-time school attendance.
- SILP programs shall comply with all fire, sanitation and safety regulations as determined by the MDCPS Licensing Requirements for Child Placing Agencies;
- The SILP staff shall personally observe and determine that the living situation is clean, safe and document the availability of specific and relevant resources that can provide suitable social, physical, vocational and emotional needs of the child;
- The agency shall allow age-appropriate youth to be employed. The agency shall provide transportation to available employment sites when a youth is employed. The agency shall use employment and work experiences to provide constructive training for children. Children may not be substituted for staff members at the agency, nor perform required duties of agency employees.
- The agency shall ensure compliance with laws governing the employment of minors, regardless of where the minor is employed.
- The agency shall assist youth in preparing for and entering post-secondary training and educational institutions (when applicable).
- A contract must be developed with the youth and SILP outlining specific rules and requirements. Youth must be made aware that failure to comply with contract requirements may result in being asked to leave the SILP.
- Every SILP must have a SILP Specialist on staff.
- SILP shall maintain a case record for every youth placed in the program in a designated area approved by MDCPS.

Mississippi Supervised Independent Living programs must meet MDCPS licensure requirement in addition to relative MS Department of Mental Health Certification Requirements.

MDCPS