Helping young adults find their way after being in care.

Operating under a contract with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Pathways Independent Living Program prepares young people to leave the foster care system with the skills and knowledge to support themselves and lead healthy and productive lives.

The program is a collaboration between Aunt Martha’s Youth Service Center, Illinois Collaboration on Youth, Universal Family Connection, Youth Outreach Services, and Youth Service Project.

How it works

The program supports participants during the transition from foster care to independence through training, coaching, and access to resources. Participants receive a monthly stipend toward housing and living expenses alongside training in financial literacy, budget development and monitoring, and managing a savings account.

Pathways Community Support Workers partner with program participants to identify individualized goals that will lead to self-sufficiency. Community Support Workers provide coaching and support, and help participants take advantage of the program’s benefits and services.
Coaching and support

The program prepares participants for independence by focusing on eight key areas:

- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Budgeting
- Life skills
- Health and well-being
- Recreational/social support
- Parenting

“I work at Pathways to make the lives of the youth we serve a little easier, to rebuild trust, and to help them realize they can have a positive relationship with an adult.”

- Asia Thompson-Jackson, Community Support Worker, Universal Family Connection

Who is eligible?

Young adults ages 19-21 who have achieved a high school diploma or GED, desire to reside in the Chicago area, are involved with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, and are willing to work toward education and employment goals.