

# VDSS - Youth Services (Independent Living) Highlights - February 2025

## FY 2026 Chafee & ETV Funding Package!

Access now on FUSION - [Services for Older Youth Page](#) or the Child Welfare Funding Application and Reporting Page.

Funding Applications are due no later than **Tuesday, March 7, 2025**. Please submit applications to [va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov) as early as possible to allow the Youth Services team adequate time to calculate funding requests and prepare funding letters. Thanks!

## Drive To Thrive!

\*\* BL 877 is accessible in LASER. \*\*

\*\* Guidebook posted on FUSION [DTT Guidebook 12-11-24-Print.pdf](#)\*\*

\*\* Submit Drive To Thrive Referral Form [Services for Older Youth](#) to [va.ilp@virginia.gov](mailto:va.ilp@virginia.gov) \*\*

**\*\*Transition Plans and Life Skill Assessments must be current prior to submitting D2T requests. Requests will be delayed without up to date plans and assessments!\*\***

If you have any questions regarding the Drive To Thrive program, contact Transportation Specialist - Avis Thomas - [avis.thomas9@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:avis.thomas9@dss.virginia.gov)

## NYTD 19-Year-Olds Cohort 5A

**19-Year-Old** NYTD survey list is available in [SafeMeasures](#). ALL NYTD surveys in OPEN cases MUST be entered in OASIS by **January 15, 2024**. ALL CLOSED cases MUST be entered in Oasis by **March 14, 2025**.

NYTD Forms can be located in English and Spanish on FUSION - [Services for Older Youth SURVEYS CAN \(AND SHOULD\) BE ENTERED PRIOR TO THE YOUTHS 19<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY.](#)



## Ongoing Youth Services Projects

**FYI Guidehouse** Assessment - Concluded and presented current State assessment with recommendations to the Statewide FYI workgroup to assist Virginia in improving the delivery of the FYI Housing Vouchers to eligible Youth statewide.

**FYI Sub-workgroups** - Ongoing. If you are interested in participating in a sub-workgroup, contact [Gwen.Castillo@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:Gwen.Castillo@dss.virginia.gov)

**Spring Youth Services Trainings** - Joint trainings with VDSS and Project LIFE. Dates - TBD

## Pathways to Trooper Academy

Virginia State Police are building connections with youth with foster care experience that may be interested in the law enforcement field to increase State Trooper recruitment.

Interested Youth/Young Adults can contact a recruitment officer for more information. IL Coordinators/FC Workers, IL Community Partners can also connect with a recruitment officer for additional information. ILCs and LDSS can connect with Project LIFE staff to coordinate a presentation in your regions.



## Project LIFE

View and SHARE the Project LIFE Newsletter [PLIFE latest Newsletter](#) for Youth Activities in your Region!

See PLIFE newsletter for IL workshop registration information in all 5 Regions!

## Project LIFE Spring 25 Youth Conference

**Save the Date: April 25 - 27, 2025** Lynchburg, VA "Livin' It Up: Catch the Vibe to Thrive in 2025!" Explore growing up, finding your way, and tackling adulthood. Based on youth requests, the focus will be on things like prioritizing your mental health, higher education, and investing your money! **Registration is now open! Registration closes March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025.** [Conference Overview - Project LIFE](#)



# TALENT SHOW

TIME TO SHINE LIKE A STAR

**FEBRUARY 27TH, 2025  
6 PM TO 10 PM**

UMFS AUDITORIUM  
3900 WEST BROAD ST.  
RICHMOND, VA 23230

CAN YOU SING? CAN YOU DANCE?  
CAN YOU ENTERTAIN THE CROWD?

PROJECT LIFE INVITES YOU  
COME IMPRESS US ON FEB. 27TH, 6:00PM TO 9:00PM  
FOR OUR VALENTINE TALENT SHOWCASE  
SHOW OFF YOUR POETRY  
TELL A JOKE, PLAY AN INSTRUMENT, SHOWCASE YOUR ART  
SPIT A RHYME OR BUST A MOVE. DURING THIS LIVE SHOW!  
DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED & A GOOD TIME WILL BE HAD!

## JOIN PROJECT LIFE & ROANOKE DSS FOR RESPONSIBLE PARENTING SESSIONS

Address: 1510 Williamson Rd. NE, Roanoke, VA 24012

\*This will be a 3 month long program to complete 9 modules\*

First session: January 8th, 2025 @ 6pm  
Second session: February 12th, 2025 @ 6pm  
Third Session: March 12th, 2025 @ 6pm

\*Any youth that complete all 3 months with all 9 sessions will be awarded \$75!\*

### Eligibility:

- Youth must be between the ages of 14 - 23
  - Youth under 18 need consent from their custodial agency
- Youth must be in foster care, fostering futures, or previously in fostering futures
- Youth do NOT have to be a parent to participate in these sessions



[Registration Link](#)

PROJECT LIFE'S  
YOUTH DRIVEN WORKSHOP  
BY: STEPHANIE McVICKER  
PARENTING TOGETHER WILL HOST

# HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Treat yourself to something as awesome as yourself! You deserve it, girl!

February 20th, UMFS-RRC bldg#12  
6:00pm to 8:00pm

# Trainings/Resources

## Virginia DMAS

Insights on Implementing a Language and Disability Access Plan.

<https://youtu.be/3R8o3XnmzLI>

Additional information - [Forum on Language and Disability Access](#)

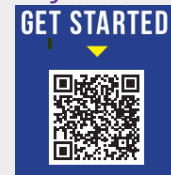


## SPEAKOUT – The Power of Permanent Connections for Youth in Foster Care – Video

YouTube Link - <https://youtu.be/09B30nLKXps>

## Job Corps

For Youth Exiting Foster Care: If your student has been in the foster care system in the last six months, they are automatically eligible for the program. [Enrollment Flyer](#)



## WIOA Northern

The WIOA Youth Program assists eligible young adults ages 17-24 to gain the skills needed to succeed in tomorrow's workforce.

[WIOA Youth Program - Virginia Career Works Northern Region](#)

## Opportunities Booklet!

Choosing a College Starts with Knowing Your Options

The *Opportunities* guide helps high school students choose the right college, understand admission requirements, identify types of financial aid and more.

[Opportunities Guide and Workbook | ECMC](#)

## Pennsylvania SWAN – Foster Care Webinar Series

Reducing the Abuse to Prison Pipeline for Foster Youth

March 10, 2025 – 11am

Explore the impact of the school-to-prison pipeline, starting with evidence of its harmful effects on vulnerable youth. [Registration Link](#)

## VDSS - Housing Support Program!

Reminder! Discuss the Housing Support option with all eligible youth.

Youth who turn 18 in foster care on or after July 1, 2022, and are not participating in Fostering Futures.

- Never entered Fostering Futures
- Terminated Fostering Futures

Send Housing Support Communication Form(updated 1/25), FUSION [Foster Care Forms](#), to [va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov). Funding assistance will be transferred to Budget Line 869 via LASER after each individual housing support request has been reviewed and approved.

Please send any questions and or requests for funding to the Housing Support Specialist Solange Francis – [va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov).



# Youth Voices

# Youth Opportunity

## SIJS Backlog Coalition

The End SIJS Backlog Coalition, in partnership with ILRC, announces a **Know Your Rights training** for SIJS youth impacted by the backlog on **Thursday, March 6th from 7-8:30 pm ET | 6-7:30 pm CT | 4-5:30 pm PT**. Youth who attend will learn about their rights as SIJS youth and how to stay safe. This workshop is for impacted SIJS youth only and not for attorneys or other advocates.

Youth can register for this event through [this link](#)! Registration will close by EOD on Monday, February 27th, so we have enough time to finalize interpretation needs. The session will last an hour and a half and include a Q and A section.

[End SIJS Backlog](#)

### Join the End SIJS Backlog Coalition's **SIJS Youth Leadership Council**

Are you a young person with SIJS? Apply to join the Youth Leadership Council (YLC), a nationwide group of SIJS Youth leaders!



#### Requirements:

- Must have Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- Be between the ages of 16 and 26
- Attend regular meetings
- Serve on the YLC from March 2025 to March 2026
- Be an English and/or Spanish speaker

#### What you'll get to do:

- Educate other SIJS youth on their rights
- Build your resume and meet other SIJS youth across the country
- Grow your leadership skills
- Be paid to work on a team and advocate for important SIJS issues

Applications are due February 14, 2025  
Visit [bit.ly/SIJSYLC](http://bit.ly/SIJSYLC) to apply today!



### Únete al **Comité de Líderes con SIJS** de la End SIJS Backlog Coalition

¿Eres un joven con SIJS? Aplica para unirte al Comité de Líderes con SIJS, un grupo nacional de líderes jóvenes con SIJS!



#### Requisitos:

- Tener el Estatus Especial para Jóvenes Inmigrantes (también conocido como la visa juvenil o SIJS)
- Tener entre 16 a 26 años de edad
- Asistir a reuniones regularmente
- Servir en el comité de Marzo 2025 a Marzo 2026
- Hablar inglés y/o español

#### Lo que harás:

- Educar a otros jóvenes con SIJS sobre sus derechos
- Mejorar tu resumen y conoce a otros jóvenes con SIJS a través del país
- Desarrollar tus habilidades de liderazgo
- Recibir pago por trabajar en equipo y abogar por temas importantes relacionados con SIJS

Las solicitudes se recibirán hasta el 14 de febrero de 2025. Visita [bit.ly/SIJSYLC](http://bit.ly/SIJSYLC) para ¡aplicar hoy!



## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

# FOR YOUTH WITH SIJS

**MARCH 6, 2025**

7-8:30 PM ET | 6-7:30 PM CT | 4-5:30 PM PT

Do you have Special Immigrant Juvenile Status? Join us on Zoom to learn your rights as a SIJS youth so you know how to protect yourself and stay safe.

Visit [bit.ly/SIJS-KYR](http://bit.ly/SIJS-KYR) to register!



- [know-your-rights-web.pdf](#)
- [Red Cards / Tarjetas Rojas | Immigrant Legal Resource Center | ILRC](#)
- [06.19.17 Red Card 1 Pager Formatted](#)