

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

ENGROSSED

House Bill 4730

By Delegate Burkhammer

[Introduced January 22, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §49-2-129a, relating to the development of a continuum of services and
3 supports for youth who are preparing to exit foster care or who have aged out of that care.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CHILDREN.

**§49-2-129a. Development of a continuum of independent living and transitional support
services for youth aging out of foster care.**

1 (a) By January 1, 2027, the Department of Human Services shall develop and maintain a
2 coordinated continuum of services and supports for all youth who are preparing to exit foster care
3 or who have recently aged out of care.

4 (b) The development process shall include, at a minimum, consultation with:

5 (1) Representatives of contracted providers delivering independent living and transitional
6 services across diverse geographic regions; and

7 (2) Individuals with lived experience in foster care; and community partners and
8 stakeholders providing housing, employment, educational, and supportive services to
9 transitioning youth.

10 (c) The department shall ensure that the continuum of supports is in place prior to the
11 youth exiting or aging-out of foster care, and that the continuum of supports has network adequacy
12 for statewide coverage.

13 (d) The department shall ensure that the continuum of supports includes program models
14 designed to meet the differing levels of independence and supervision required by youth as they
15 progress toward self-sufficiency.

16 (e) The continuum shall include, at minimum:

17 (1) Three phases of supportive living arrangements providing on-site independent living,
18 scattered site living arrangements and supportive independent living; and

19 (2) Services to support youth to achieve self-sufficiency must include, at a minimum,
20 services designed to improve practical and daily living skills, social and emotional skills, and
21 education and career development skills.

22 (f) The department shall, in collaboration with contracted providers, develop and
23 implement a per diem rate structure for independent living and transitional youth services. The rate
24 structure shall:

25 (1) Account for the varying levels of supervision, staffing, and program intensity required to
26 meet the individual needs of youth;

27 (2) Be designed to maximize federal Title IV-E reimbursement until the age of 21;

28 (3) Include an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for youth consistent with guidance
29 issued by the Social Security Administration;

30 (4) Be reviewed for sufficiency at least once every three years;

31 (5) Be adjusted as necessary to ensure the adequacy and equity of reimbursement rates
32 to support quality service delivery and provider sustainability;

33 (6) Include rate variability to account for fair market rent rates and assure quality staffing;

34 and

35 (7) Be inclusive of a monthly stipend paid directly to youth to cover basic costs needed for
36 a safe dwelling when the youth achieves independent living.

37 (g) Data collection and continuous quality improvement;

38 (1) The department shall implement a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process to
39 evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility, and outcomes of independent living and transitional
40 support services;

41 (2) The CQI process shall include: performance measures and outcome indicators
42 addressing National Youth in Transition Database outcomes, including housing stability,
43 employment, education, permanency connections, and overall well-being; mechanisms for
44 obtaining input from youth participants and contracted providers; and

45 (3) Starting December 1, 2027, and annually thereafter, reports to Legislative Oversight
46 Committee on Health and Human Resources of aggregate findings and recommendations for
47 system improvement and shall include reporting on the proportionate share of Title IV-E
48 expenditures, Chafee education and training grants, and state dollars.