

**MY LIFE,
MY DECISION.**



IT'S MY MOVE!

www.itsmymove.org

Transition to Independence

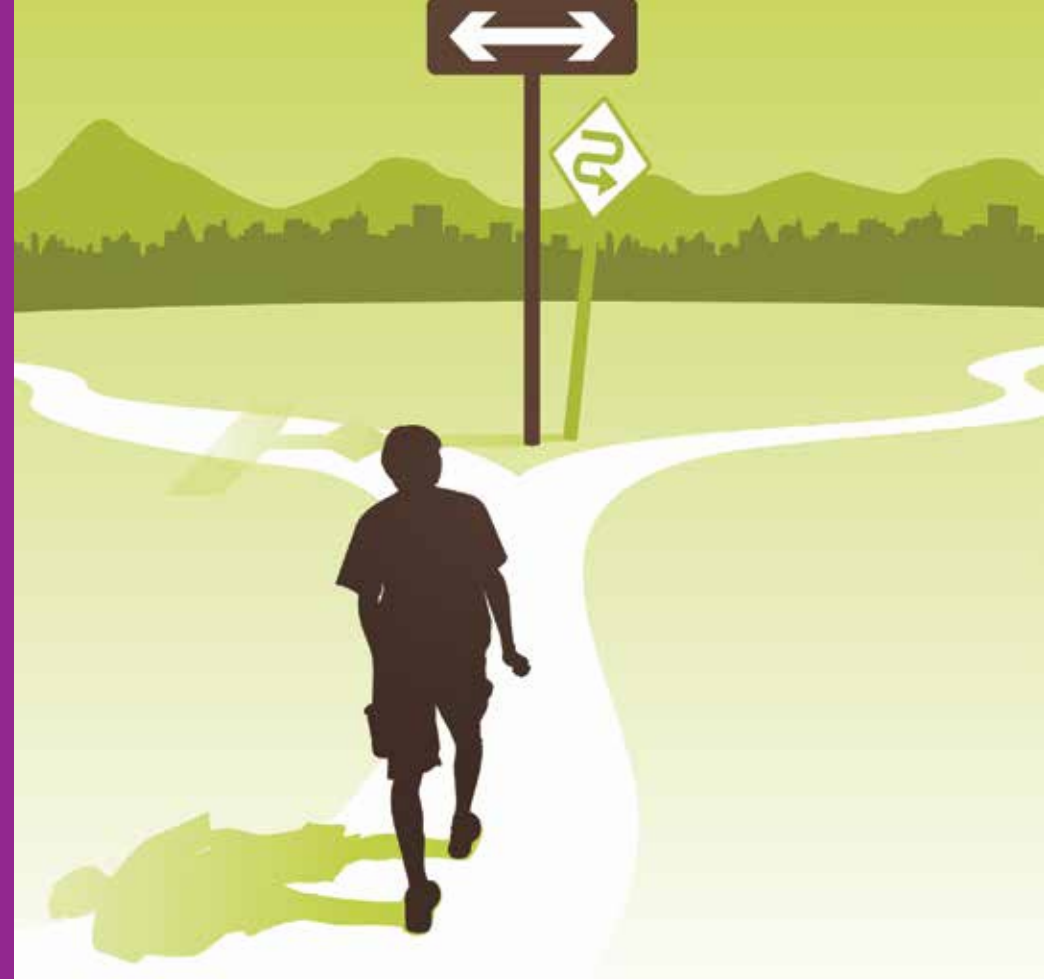
MY LIFE, MY DECISION. *IT'S MY MOVE!*

It's My Move is a program about getting what you want for your life. You are about to become an adult now. The past is behind you and your future is in your hands. But how do you know if you are making the right choices about school, work and home life?

It's My Move gives you a chance to try new things without doing it alone. It's a step by step journey into adulthood.

Acknowledgements

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Your future is in your hands!

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IT'S MY MOVE!

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This program is being presented with financial assistance as a grant from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

There is an American Proverb that says, "**Today Is The First Day Of The Rest Of Your Life.**" Your future starts today so every move you make, every decision you make, matters. Put some time and thought into each.

Education Options

- **University:** Offers a 4-year Bachelors degree in a certain field of study.
- **Community College:** A local college usually offering a two-year Associate degree.
- **Technical College:** A two-year training program in a variety of subject areas.
- **Vocational School:** Providing vocational education, in a school where students are taught the skills needed to perform a particular job.
- **On-line College or University:** Two year or four year program with classes on the internet.
- **AmeriCorps:** A year of national service that will help you pay for your education when you complete it.
- **Job Corps:** A free Department of Labor program offering young adults age 16-24 the chance to get training and job skills.
- **High School Equivalency** are tests which (when passed) certify that the taker has high school-level academic skills.
- **Apprenticeship:** An Employer's formal training program that combines on-the-job learning with instruction for a specific trade or vocation.
- **Internship:** Hands on, real work experience for a good company.

Study Skills

Pursuing education is a commitment so be prepared to:

- Make time daily to study
- Use the school's library for books and computers
- Explore tutoring opportunities and study groups
- Prepare to meet with your instructors on a regular basis
- Commit to school work first – then play and remember some times will be busier than others
- Organize major assignments and do work in advance so you don't get overwhelmed

Check out these websites!

- **WV Education Portal** - www.wv.gov/education/pages/students.aspx
- **College Foundation of WV** - www.cfwv.com
- **WV GEAR UP** - www.wvgearup.org
- **Affordable Colleges Foundation** - www.affordablecollegesonline.org/online-colleges/west-virginia/
- **Pathways to the Future** - www.PathwaysWV.org
Pathways to the Future is a collection of resources, tools and people to help students, including those with disabilities, through the journey from youth to adulthood.





Education Opportunities

Foster Care Tuition Waiver

In 2000, the West Virginia Legislature enacted a law called HB-4784. It allows eligible youth in foster care to receive free tuition if attending a West Virginia public college or university.

Who is eligible?

With some limitations, the tuition waiver program is available to ANY youth who:

- graduated from high school or passed the High School Equivalency examination while in the legal custody of the State DHHR;
- was in family foster care or residential care for at least one year immediately before graduation;
- applies for the free tuition within two years of graduating from high school or passing the High School Equivalency exam;
- has been accepted to a West Virginia public college or university;
- applies for other student financial aid, not student loans, following federal financial aid rules, including the Pell Grant.

What is not covered?

Room and board and the cost of books are not covered.

Do you have to apply?

Yes. You must continue to meet academic goals set by the West Virginia college or university you are attending to keep your free tuition.

Where do you apply?

Apply at the financial aid office of the college or university. A letter verifying your eligibility signed by DHHR management will be required. For assistance, contact the MODIFY with CED program at 866-720-3605.

This program is possible because of a partnership between the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Children and Families and the Center for Excellence in Disabilities.

Chafee Education & Training Vouchers

Chafee Education and Training Vouchers for *It's My Move* can help with expenses connected to going to a college, university or vocational school.

Who is eligible?

- Youth adopted or finalized legal guardianship from foster care after age 16 years old
- Youth who aged out of foster care thru the age of 20
- Youth placed in legal guardianship

What does it pay for?

- Tuition – college or vocational school
- Room and board
- Books
- Fees
- Supplies
- Transportation

Do you have to apply each year?

Yes. You must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average and complete your course work. Costs are covered until age 23 if you are enrolled and making satisfactory progress at least one semester before your 21st birthday.

Where do you apply?

Interested youth should contact the MODIFY with CED program at: modifyced@hsc.wvu.edu (304) 558-6067 or toll free (866) 720-3605.

Ways to Find a Job

If you aren't employed yet:

- Read the local newspapers
- Go to Job Fairs
- Ask your employed friends if their workplaces are hiring
- Visit your County Employment Office
www.cabellcounty.org/employment/Application1.htm
- Check out Work Force Investment Opportunities
www.workforcewv.org
- Check out these websites:
 - **www.careers.org** - If it is about your career, it is here.
 - **www.workforcewv.org** - Allows you to search and apply on-line for a job, and find the training to help you meet your needs.
 - **www.jobshadow.com** - A site to provide a successful job shadowing effort.
 - **www.HERDFWV.org** - Human Resources and Development Foundation Employment and Training Support

Job Interview Dos and Don'ts

Prepare. Prepare an answer to the question, "What do you know about our company?" Take extra copies of your resume, any letters of recommendations, or references.

Get Ready. Make sure you are dressed well - hair should be styled appropriately, cover all tattoos, take out piercings. Don't smoke before the interview.

Be On Time. On time means five to ten minutes early. Know how to get there so you don't get lost. Bring your resume and a pen to take notes.

Stay Calm. Listen to the entire question before you answer and pay attention - you will be embarrassed if you forget the question. When answering questions avoid using slang or inappropriate language.

Be Attentive. Give the interviewer 100% of your attention. Turn off your cell phone so you won't be tempted to glance at it to see if you have new messages, etc.

Do Your Best. Be confident and don't complain. Never bring up personal issues, you are there to interview for a job, not tell your life story.

Show What You Know. When discussing your career accomplishments, match them to what the company is looking for. Be honest about your accomplishments and work experience.

Watch Your Times. During final interviews, make sure to communicate your available times so you don't short-change school.

Follow Up. Always follow-up with a thank you note.

IT'S YOUR MOVE

GET A JOB

- >>> money
- >>> you make adult decisions
- >>> confidence
- >>> independence

DON'T GET A JOB

- >>> broke
- >>> people decide for you
- >>> poor self-esteem
- >>> rely on others for help

You're Hired! How to Keep Your Job

- Always show up to work 100% prepared and ON TIME!
- When filling out a W-4, make sure you understand the number of dependents that you should claim.
- Know in advance if you want your paychecks "direct deposit" or if you prefer a printed check.
- Think about who you want to list as your emergency contacts.
- Understand your employer's time off policy. Know how far in advance you must request time off and the correct procedure for doing so.
- Don't ask for an excess number of days off. Realize that you may have to work instead of attending an activity and schedule appointments on your day off.
- Never make or receive personal calls, texts, etc. on work time.
- Maintain a positive attitude. Always be ready to go above and beyond your job description and help out when needed
- Understand that in service industry jobs there may be times when work hours are reduced due to slow business so you may need to find an additional job to supplement your income.
- Don't slack off. Try to maintain the attitude, "I'm happy to have a job" and be willing to help and take on more responsibility.
- If you decide to change jobs or leave a position, make sure to give a timely notice. This may help you get a good job reference when you are ready to transition to a different job.



MODIFY

(Mentoring and Oversight for Developing Independence with Foster Youth)



Community Support Services

The program provides support and serves former foster care recipients between 18 to 20 years of age to complement their own efforts toward self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Project Services

- Independent Living Services
- Transitional Living Services
- Educational Benefits
- Job Preparation
- Community Support Services

Project Eligibility

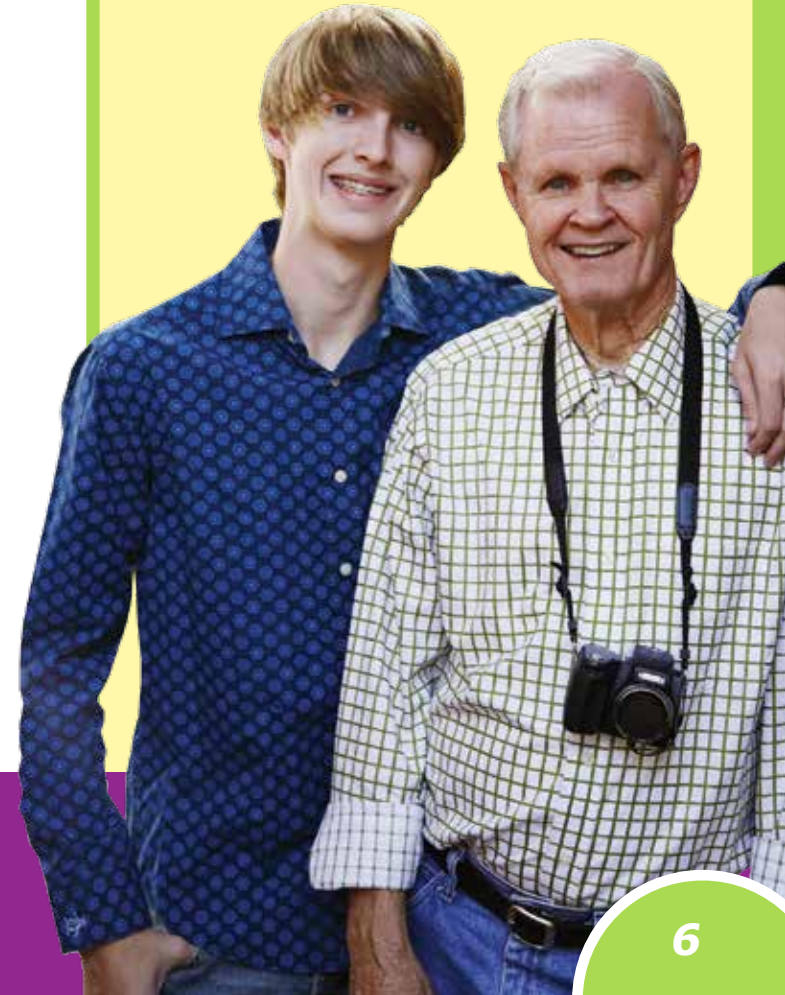
Youth ages 18-20 exiting the foster care system or who have left foster care and have not yet reached age 21.

You can request services yourself by calling 1-866-720-3605 or 304-558-6067 and also by e-mail modifyced@hsc.wvu.edu. For more information visit modify.cedwvu.org

Check out more sites on the web www.itsmymove.org/myfuture

Good Financial Habits

- Collect your change & cash in regularly
- Live within your actual wages
- Be wary of credit – consult with a trusted adult before applying for any credit, contracts or leases
- If you have to have a mobile phone, listen to the sales person as they explain the contract and consider if you really need (and can afford) all the options before adding them on
- Use coupons and read the sales papers
- Buy used at reputable dealers (Goodwill, Salvation Army, Resale Shops, etc.)





What are the things that need to be done to take care of a home? They include cooking, doing laundry, housekeeping, staying safe, and paying rent after choosing where to live.



Housekeeping

- Keep the refrigerator clean – check it weekly and throw out old food.
- Don't throw mail on the counter, sort between junk mail and bills and toss out what's not needed.
- Wash clothes weekly. Sort between dark clothes, jeans, light clothes, underwear, etc. Don't mix colors because they'll bleed.
- Store clean laundry right away to avoid mixing it with the dirty clothes.
- Keep dishes clean. Don't let them pile up.
- Dust and vacuum weekly.
- Change sheets weekly.
- Empty the garbage can when it's full and mark trash day on the calendar.
- Keep the bathroom toilet, shower and sink clean.
- Do not leave dirty items, old food, and garbage in any place other than the garbage can.

Fast & Easy Recipe

Creamy Ramen Noodles

Ingredients

1 package of ramen noodles, any flavor, with seasoning packet
2 cups of water
2 tablespoons butter
¼ cup of milk



- Boil water on high heat.
- Add dried noodles and cook 3 minutes at medium heat or until noodles are tender. Stir occasionally.
- Drain away water. Return noodles to sauce pan.
- Add butter, milk and contents of seasoning packet, stir all together.
- Heat on low heat and stir until noodles are coated with sauce.
- Turn off stove and serve.

Option: Add your favorite vegetable and/or meat for variety.

Ready to Move in or Move on? Questions to ask as I am making my decision:

- Is it in a safe neighborhood?
- Is there public transportation near?
- What utilities are my responsibility?
- Is it furnished? If not, how much will it cost to get a bed set, table and chairs, etc.?
- How long is the lease?
- Can I really afford this place on my own?
- Should I get Renter's Insurance?

In-Home Safety

Safety

- Keep doors and windows locked at all times.
- Always know who is at the door before you open it.
- Never allow anyone you don't know into your home.
- Never tell anyone that you live alone or that you are home alone.
- Always leave a light on at night when you are away, especially your porch light.
- Attend a food handler's class to learn ways to avoid food borne illnesses.

Fire

- Make sure you have working smoke detectors.
- Change smoke detector batteries twice per year - when daylight savings time begins and when it ends.
- Make sure you have a working fire extinguisher that is appropriate for all types of fire.
- If you have gas appliance or heat, make sure you have a working carbon monoxide detector.
- Have a fire escape plan. Always have a backup plan in case your main exit is blocked.
- Avoid the use of extension cords, use surge protectors if necessary.
- Never use anything other than a properly rated fire extinguisher to put out a grease fire.
- Never wear clothing with loose fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Never leave your kitchen unattended if your stove is on.

IT'S YOUR MOVE

FURNISHED APARTMENT

- >>> Apartment is move in ready
- >>> No heavy lifting
- >>> Probably better stuff than I can afford right away
- >>> Easy to move my stuff when leaving

UNFURNISHED APARTMENT

- >>> *Have to look for furniture*
- >>> *Will need help moving stuff in*
- >>> *My furniture reflects my tastes*
- >>> *I have furniture to start another home with*

Always have emergency numbers posted within reach such as fire, police and ambulance.



Check out these websites:

www.searchKOW.com

An innovative center to find out about businesses in a 32 county area of West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky.

www.herald-dispatch.com

A local website for local news, sports, movies and so much more.

<http://wv.thebeehive.org>

WV Beehive makes it easy to find the best available tools and information to manage the challenges in your everyday life.

Check out more sites on the web
www.itsmymove.org/myhome



“Don’t be shy about asking for help. It doesn’t mean you’re weak, it only means you’re wise.” – Unknown

Housing and Preventing Homelessness

Rental Help

Subsidized Apartments:

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) helps apartment owners offer reduced rents to low income tenants.

To search for a subsidized apartment go to:

www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2.cfm?state=WV,%20West%20Virginia

Public Housing Program/Housing Choice Vouchers:

Public housing provides safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Housing choice vouchers are also available to assist very low income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities with rent for a private market apartment.

If you are interested in applying for public housing or a housing choice voucher, contact your local Public Housing Authority at:

www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/wv.cfm

“Don’t let your fear of being judged stop you from asking for help when you need it.” – Unknown





Experiencing Homelessness:

WVDHHR Homeless Program provides services for individuals or families in immediate need of housing and who have no income or means of obtaining housing. Services include emergency shelter, food and medical care.

- www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/children_adult/homeless/eligibility.asp

To apply for Homeless Services, contact the shelter in county where you are located visit:

- www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/children_adult/homeless/shelter.asp
- www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/county/

HOMELESS SHELTERS

Monongalia County: **Bartlett House, Inc. (304) 292-0101**

Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties: **Community Networks Inc. - Bethany House (304) 263-3510**

Ohio County: **Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, Inc.**

Cabell and Wayne Counties: **Harmony House (304) 523-2764**

Mason County: **Southwestern Community Action Council (304) 675-1124**

Randolph County: **North Central West Virginia Community Action Association Inc. (304) 636-5193**

Kanawha County: **Roark-Sullivan Center (304) 340-3616**

Raleigh and Wyoming Counties: **Pin Haven - Stone Haven Shelter (304) 252-6396**

Marion County: **Scott Place Shelter (304) 366-6543**

Kanawha County: **YWCA Sojourner's Shelter for Women, Children, and Families (304) 340-3562**

Your County not Listed? Contact your local DHHR Office

Homeless Resources

For a directory of Homeless Resources go to:

<http://wvceh.org/resources>

Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio or Wetzel County

Contact Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless
(304)-232-6105
www.wheelinghomeless.org/

Huntington, Cabell or Wayne County

Contact Huntington, Cabell, Wayne Continuum of Care
(304) 526-4400
<http://services.cabell.lib.wv.us/>

Kanawha Valley or Charleston area

Contact Kanawha Valley Collective
(304) 344-8053
<http://kanawhavalleycollective.org/>

All other counties

Contact Balance of State Continuum of Care
(304) 842-9522
<http://wvceh.org/>





MY SELF ↑↑↑

Every person is composed of body, mind, and spirit. But we usually just take care of the “body.” It is important to take care of your “whole” self. Here are a few tips.

Top Ten Things You Can Do To Keep Yourself Happy

- Spend time with people you like.
- Get outside in the sun everyday if possible.
- Get enough rest.
- Volunteer or join an organization.
- Don't worry too much.
- Don't smoke or use drugs.
- Exercise to relieve stress and improve your mood.
- Spend time with pets.
- Learn about good food and eat it.
- Balance work, study and play.
- “Know some joy in every day.” (Nicholas Hobbs – The Troubled and Troubling Child).

USDA Food Pyramid

- Eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day.
- Drink water – up to 8 glasses a day.
- Snack wisely.
- Try cooking instead of eating out – it can be healthier and cheaper.
- Eat foods you like, but know serving sizes – be careful of “super-sized” portions.

Well-Being Resources

Most people do not think about finding a doctor until they need one. Usually they are in a big hurry like when you are hurt or suddenly feel ill. Finding a good doctor is very important so start now before you need one.

- If you are using the WV Medical Card, it is important that you know your community and list potential health care providers before you need them (for example, getting sick!)
- Contact the County WV Department of Health & Human Resources to find out which medical providers take the WV Medical Card (doctors, dentists, eye doctors, counselors, psychiatrists, etc.)
- Contact the County Health Department – they offer medical services and referrals.
- If you are covered under private insurance, contact the insurance agent to make sure you fully understand how your insurance works (how much coverage you have and what your financial responsibility may be, etc.)

When you find medical professionals you are comfortable with, keep a list of:

- Physician, Dentist (and other) names, numbers and locations.
- Any medications you take on a regular basis – prescription and over-the-counter.
- Mental Health Provider contact information.





The Dangers of Tobacco, Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Tobacco is harmful to you no matter how you use it. Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals. These include nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide, as well as formaldehyde, ammonia, hydrogen cyanide, arsenic, and DDT. Nicotine is highly addictive. Smoke containing nicotine is inhaled into the lungs, and the nicotine reaches your brain in just six seconds. In large doses, it's a lethal poison, affecting the heart, blood vessels, and hormones. Nicotine in the bloodstream acts to make the smoker feel calm.

As a cigarette is smoked, the amount of tar inhaled into the lungs increases, and the last puff contains more than twice as much tar as the first puff. Most of the chemicals inhaled in cigarette smoke stay in the lungs. The more you inhale, the better it feels—and the greater the damage to your lungs.

Tobacco

- Addictive
- 43 chemicals that can cause cancer
- A depressant

Alcohol and Drugs

- Highly addictive
- Waste of time and money
- Also a depressant

Drug Abuse Dangers

- Inability to sleep
- Feeling down, or hopeless
- Thoughts of death or suicide

IT'S YOUR MOVE

INSTEAD OF THIS:

- >>> Biscuits, white bread and rolls
- >>> Doughnuts and pastries
- >>> Sugar cereals
- >>> Snack crackers

TRY THIS:

- >>> Low-fat grain breads and rolls like wheat or rye
- >>> English muffins and small whole grain bagels
- >>> Oatmeal, low-fat granola and whole-grain cereal
- >>> Pretzels (unsalted) and popcorn (unbuttered)

Tips for Exercise Success

- Wear loose fitting clothes and comfortable shoes.
- Exercise the same time every day if you can.
- Record your workout and celebrate your success!
- Exercise with a friend.
- Play music while you exercise.
- Remember to stretch out first.
- Don't overdo it. Not too much at one time.



Check out these websites:

www.dare.com

The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) Program gives kids the life skills they need to avoid involvement with drugs, gangs, and violence.

www.sadd.org

SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) offers materials and educational programs to help fight destructive decisions faced by teenagers.

www.prevlink.org

Drug and alcohol treatment programs.

1-844-HELP4WV / www.help4wv.com

Helpline that provides assistance for persons struggling with an addiction or mental health issues. Includes a comprehensive list of state resources.

Check out more sites on the web

www.itsmymove.org/myself



MY SELF



COPING **Learning How to Deal**

Hey, we all face stressors in our lives and we all deal with these in different ways. However, what worked as a teenager may not work as well for you now as you are entering higher education settings, the work place, or even now that you are in your own apartment. So, take a deep breath, be honest with yourself and think about how you can “learn to deal” as a young adult.

For example, dealing with frustration. What are you in a habit of doing? Taking a “time-out”, grabbing your IPOD, calling your best friend to vent, etc? Now think: what happens if I am on the job and I become frustrated? Taking a “time out” or walking away, listening to the IPOD or calling someone during your work hours could possibly get you fired from a job. If you are in a college class, you may be asked to leave the class as you are distracting & this could jeopardize your attendance record. If you are in an apartment, listening to loud music could even get you evicted.

What do you do?

Now is the time to talk to trusted others about helping you to discover healthy and mature ways to manage emotionally. Ways that can “buy you some time” until you are able to talk to a support person if needed. You can do it! You can “replace” old habits with new coping skills.

How do you handle relationship issues?

As you are getting older, more people may be entering your life and your personal relationships are maturing. Do you have someone to talk with to ask those “What should I do if...” type questions?





To find Local AA Groups:
www.step12.com/west-virginia.html

For Narcotic Anonymous Groups:
www.drugstrategies.org/NA-Meetings/West-Virginia/

For information about Adolescent
Suicide Prevention & Early Intervention:
www.wvaspen.com and www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

To find out more about Domestic Violence
& ways to keep yourself safe, please click
the Domestic Violence website to find
local numbers for shelters and helpful
information:
www.wvcadv.org

To contact the local Branches
Domestic Violence Shelter, please call:
1.888.538.9838



Consider the following when you are creating or expanding your support system:

- Trusted family or friends
- Church Minister
- Campus Services & Support Groups
- Former or current Counselors
- Your physician
- Your community behavioral health center such as Pretera Center in Huntington: www.pretera.org



Expectant & Parenting Resources

Teen parents

Being a new mother or father is extremely challenging for people of all ages. If you are expectant or parenting, there are lots of resources to help you with decision making, learning about your baby, and his or her needs, and accessing services and resources to support you. Do seek support as nothing replaces having a trusted adult to talk to about your decisions and concerns.

Your Health

Getting prenatal care early, eating well, taking prenatal vitamins, staying away from drugs and alcohol are all extremely important during pregnancy! Practicing safer sex and planning for your health, planned parenthood, and sexual health are all important topics once you are a parent . . .

LINKS AND RESOURCES:

- www.wvdhhr.org/rfts/
- www.wicprogram.org
- www.benefitsapplication.com/program_info/WV/WIC/?gclid=m
- www.itsmymove.org/docs/resources/PAYAModule5-Unplanned-Pregnancy.pdf

Expectant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care Resource Guide

http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/pregnant-and-parenting-youth/Expectant-and-Parenting-Youth-in-Foster-Care_A-Resource-Guide.pdf

The National Crittenton Foundation

<http://www.nationalcrittenton.org>

Your Rights

You have rights as a parent, even if you are in foster care. Nobody can “take your baby” without cause.

Some information and legal resources include:
www.nationalcrittenton.org/rights-and-resources
www.lawv.net

Your Choices

Discovering that you are about to become a mother or father is pretty overwhelming. Here are some resources to help you navigate decisions and planning during a pregnancy, or even after a baby is born:

- <http://youroptions.com/unplanned>
- www.cdc.gov/teenpregnancy/index.htm

“I was so worried that the state was going to take my baby.”



PARENTING RESOURCES

“I wasn’t sure what she was crying about. I felt like a really bad mother.”

The best moms and dads are always open to learning more about child development, basic care routines, bonding and social development, play and structure and discipline.

- www.wvdhhr.org/birth23
- www.fatherhood.gov
- www.pbs.org/parents
- www.parenting.com
- www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/parenting-resources
- www.babycenter.com/0_postpartum-depression-and-anxiety_227.bc
- http://main.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_key_health_picky

Need baby stuff?

Check at your local community service organizations, missions, church organizations, etc. for clothes, car seats, supplies, etc. <http://gabrielwv.org>

“I was overwhelmed with how much stuff a baby needs – how was I going to get everything I needed? I didn’t even have a job yet.”

MY CHECKLIST

Essential Documents/Activities	YES	NO	In Process	Date of Completion
I am a parent of a wonderful child (children).				
I have an official birth certificate for my child				
I have a Social Security card for my child				
I have immunization/medical records for my child				
I have the name/address of physicians and hospitals utilized since birth				
I have obtained pediatric services or have a list of resources				
I have linked with childcare services or have a list of resources				
I have contacted an area agency for Title XX support for childcare (if applicable).				
I own all appropriate safety equipment for child/age appropriate (crib, carseat, receptacle plugs, baby gates)				
I have completed an infant/child CPR and first aid course.				





You are becoming a young adult and there are responsibilities you have in your community. When you turn 18 you will need to register to vote and if you are a male, you will need to sign up for selective service. This information will guide you to see the magic of volunteering, tips on how to be a good neighbor, and how to participate in local and state government.

Why do people volunteer?

As a young adult you may ask yourself, "Why do I want to volunteer?" One good reason is to develop and learn new skills. You can find a way to give back to others the same values that are given to you. Experiencing the importance of helping others will make you feel good. It is also a fun thing to do and a great way to make new friends.

We all find ourselves in need at one time or another. Volunteering provides help to those in their hour of need.

Consider that most people find themselves in need at some point in their lives. So today you may be the person with the ability to help, but tomorrow you may be the recipient of someone else's volunteer effort. Even now you might be on both sides of the services cycle; maybe you are a tutor for someone who can't



read, while last month the volunteer ambulance corps rushed you to the hospital. Volunteering also includes "self-help". So if you are active in your neighborhood crime watch, your home is protected while you protect your neighbors' homes too. Adding your effort to the work of others makes everyone's lives better.

There are many questions you should ask yourself before you decide where you would like to volunteer.

- ***What are my talents, abilities and skills?***
- ***What do I want to get out of it? Why am I volunteering?***
- ***What kind of work would I be good at and/or willing to learn?***
- ***How much time do I have to give? When am I available?***
- ***How far am I willing to travel? What are my transportation needs?***
- ***What don't I want to do as a volunteer?***
- ***Do I want an ongoing, regular or short term one-time assignment?***
- ***Do I want to work alone or with a group?***

Once you decide what kind of volunteer work you would like to do, you can contact several companies through email or call them directly.

IT'S YOUR MOVE

VOTE

- >>> Part of the solution
- >>> My voice is heard
- >>> Be part of the action

NOT VOTE

- >>> Part of the problem
- >>> Just complain
- >>> Be by yourself



Check out these websites:

www.fosterclub.com

The national network for young people in foster care.

www.volunteerwv.org

Find opportunities to volunteer across the state.

www.whitehouse.gov

Stay up-to-date on policy issues.

Check out more sites on the web

www.itsmymove.org/myworld

Internet Issues

- Check to see if your Academic Program offers you a free account.
- Never share your password.
- Be careful to protect your on-line banking – guard against identity theft.
- If you do purchase items on-line, make sure you see the secure lock logo on the page.
- Be wary of online predators – please think twice before giving out personal info such as where you live, where you hang out, etc.
- Suggestion: Keep your social media accounts private.
- Remember, be careful about what you post (language used, pictures posted, etc.) as you are leaving an electronic footprint; one that will live on forever and can be read by potential employers, family, friends, and even, perhaps your children in the future!
- Consider having an email address that is more professional that you can use when filling out on-line job applications, responding to professionals in the community, etc.

Sexting

Sexting is the slang term for the use of a cell phone or other similar electronic device to distribute pictures or video of sexually explicit images.

- It's illegal and can have adult consequences.
- You can be charged with distributing child pornography if you send pictures of yourself or anyone under the age of 18.
- You can be charged with possession of child pornography if you have sexually explicit pictures of anyone under the age of 18.
- If you are 18 years or older and you forward sexually explicit pictures of someone who is under 18, you can be charged as a sex offender.
- Don't assume any picture you send will remain private.
- Remember that digital images can be stored forever, even if you delete them.

MY DECISION

You are approaching independence. You might be feeling many different things.

It's ok to be scared.

It's ok not to know everything.

It's ok to ask questions.

It's ok to be you!



Transition Choices

As you transition to independence you will have a very important choice to make. Do you want to be on your own or go into a transition program? It's your responsibility to be informed and make good choices. Below are some transition programs:



Stepping Stones, Inc.

It's My Move
P.O. Box 539
Lavalette, WV 25535
(304) 429-2297
www.itsmymove.org

It's My Move gives you a chance to try new things without doing it alone. It's a step by step journey into adulthood with caring people at your side.

- Learn about people and places that can help you.
- Connect with people who can help you think about your future career, get a job and do well at work.
- Step up into your own apartment gradually, with a 3-step program that teaches you what you need to know along the way.
- Learn important skills for taking care of your home, your life and your world.

You make your dreams come true by making good choices. *It's My Move* gives you the time, support and advice you need to get it right.

For more information about our program, go to pages 15 through 18.

Burlington United Methodist Family Services

Pathways - Transitional Living Program
145 Southern Drive
Keyser, WV 26710
(304) 788-5241
www.bumfs.org/home

Pathways is a transitional living program designed to prepare youth 16 to 21 with the skills needed for independence. We utilize a three phase program with a group home, supported apartments and independent living, using a holistic approach that promotes emotional, spiritual and behavioral stability required for successful community reintegration. All youth participate in education, employment and life skills components to achieve their goals.

Youth Services System

87-15th Street
P. O. Box 6041
Wheeling, WV 26003
(304) 233-9627
www.youthservicessystem.org



Youth Services System (YSS) Inc. is a West Virginia non-profit organization that has served over 16,000 young people in the last 34 years. YSS began in 1974 to offer new and innovative options to West Virginia's at-risk youth. We offer a range of services, all aimed at resolving crisis and building skills and social connections for youth.

Daymark

1592 Washington Street, East
Charleston, WV 25311
(304) 340-3690
www.daymark.org

The New Connections Independent Living program is for older youth (16-21) who are in the custody of the state, or who are homeless. Five on-site apartments are rented to youth who are working and attending school. Residents maintain their own apartments, buy groceries, prepare their own meals, and manage their own money. New Connections staff provides help in setting up the apartment, support, and twenty-four hour a day supervision.



It's Your Move! Making a Good Choice About Your Transition

- Consider calling the Transitional Living Programs yourself and asking questions about the program.
- Visit the program websites listed in this Guidebook.
- Talk to your social worker.
- Talk to people who have had experience with the program.
- Think about your plans for the future. What transition choice will best prepare you for the life you want?

*"I am independent and
It's My Move gives me
the freedom to make my
own choices."*

— Brad

*I want to show other youth
that you can do whatever
you set your mind to.
Trust me, I've done it so I
know it's possible."*

— Troy



IT'S MY MOVE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Yours and Ours

If you are reading this Guidebook, then you are at an exciting point in your life! Though you probably feel you are ready to move on in your life, a part of you may also realize "Yikes! I can't do it all on my own!"

Transitional Living is both scary and full of opportunities. So while you are probably ready to take on more personal responsibility, you may not have had many opportunities to prove yourself capable yet.

Stepping Stones, Inc. "It's My Move" Program recognizes this and offers different starting points for you and the important people in your life to consider as you prepare to transition to independence.

If you haven't had much opportunity to:

- practice living skills on your own
- do household tasks like laundry, light maintenance
- manage your personal time while taking care of school responsibilities
- learn how to cook, plan a menu and shop
- develop job skills and perhaps hold a job
- show responsibility by doing things on your own or with friends in the community
- conduct a job search
- organize household tasks
- look at real household budgets and try to figure the financial part of it out
- access services and make your own appointments, etc.

- plan, budget, shop and prepare healthy meals on your own
- manage personal banking
- demonstrate good time management
 - prioritizing school, work and play
- becoming a productive member of the community

then you may be ready to start in our Transition to Adulthood Program

If you have already experienced a level of independence, but still need support (financial and emotional) to:

- budget wisely
- cover living costs such as rent, transportation and groceries
- continue your education or start vocational school, college, etc.
- find an affordable & safe apartment
- attain employment that offers you a living wage

then you may be ready for our Supported Independent Living and Transition Coaching Program.



IT'S MY MOVE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Yours and Ours

General Expectations

We will:

- assist you with searching for a living situation that changes as you meet your goals.
- assist you in linking to resources to support you in taking care of your basic needs.
- when healthy, re-connect with significant people in your life.
- explore what independence means for you.
- get a State Issued ID and copies of your social security card, birth certificate, etc.
- assist you in getting your Driver's License.
- support hobbies and reading for fun.
- help you get involved in community events.
- explore multi-cultural events, the Arts, and local activities.
- get you connected to community service projects.
- support you when you are challenged and/or feeling discouraged.
- celebrate with you as you meet your personal achievement goals.

From this you will be able to:

- establish your personal style.
- reach your independence goals in a way and in a community of your choice.
- consider if you would like to explore ways to resolve issues of past relationships.
- empower you to use your community - for resources, recreation.
- start giving back - being generous with your time and your talents to help others.
- approach and work through issues with trusted adults - no matter how difficult.
- live a safe, healthy & legal lifestyle.



Reach your independence goals in a way and in a community of your choice

IT'S MY MOVE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Yours and Ours

LIFE SKILLS

We will challenge you with Life Skills training to help you better understand how to:

- explore academic options.
- get a job.
- navigate housing options.
- take care of your medical/dental/counseling needs.
- budget, shop and prepare healthy meals, and take care of your basic needs.
- use public transportation.
- establish healthy relationships.
- connect to your community in meaningful ways.
- develop a support system.

From this you will be able to:

- enter into a college, vocational school or certification training program.
- develop and keep an updated professional resume.
- make good housing decisions.
- develop a healthy lifestyle and manage your own health appointments.
- know how to make simple and healthy meals that appeal to you.
- know the bus routes you will need for school, work and play.
- make and keep good friends that will support you as you mature.
- identify natural supports and mentors that you can turn to in time of need.

ACADEMICS

We will support you as you:

- finish High School or get your High School Equivalency
- prepare for entrance exams.
- explore what academic path will be right for you.
- connect you with financial aid.
- walk with you as you visit campuses.
- connect you with tutors.
- help you establish study skills.
- find out what else your school can offer you.

From this you will be able to:

- move into post-secondary education.
- figure out what will be best for you: certification programs, 2 or 4 year college programs, etc.
- establish good study habits.
- access your school's resources.

IT'S MY MOVE PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS

Yours and Ours

FINANCIAL

We will help you:

- start a savings plan.
- monitor your banking online.
- develop a budget and learn to live within it.
- carefully consider credit and major purchases before you make them.

You will then be able to:

- watch your savings grow.
- live within your means.
- prepare for life on your own.
- protect your credit score.



EMPLOYMENT

We will help you to:

- find and maintain a job.
- practice interviewing techniques and do mock interviews so you will know what to expect.
- fill out job applications.
- get ready for your first day on the job (with uniforms, clothing, etc.).

From this you will:

- gain interviewing skills.
- establish a work history.
- gain work references.



***Prepare for life
on your own.***



MY CHECKLIST

Essential Documents/Activities	YES	NO	In Process	Date of Completion
I have obtained a state issued identification card.				
I have obtained a Social Security card.				
I have obtained a certified copy of my birth certificate.				
I have obtained a driver's license (if applicable) or I know where to get a study guide and where and how to take a drivers exam.				
I have registered with Selective Service (if a male 18 or older).				
I have completed a credit check prior to turning 18.				
I have applied for disability benefits prior to age 18 (if applicable).				
I have obtained Proof of Citizenship (if applicable).				
I have obtained my education records.				
I have obtained my medical records (including my immunization record).				
I have applied for and received a Medical Card (if applicable).				
I have obtained religious documents and information (if applicable).				
I have obtained death certificate(s) (if parent(s) are deceased).				
I have established an individual portfolio that contains my medical history (current medical information, identified primary care physician, dentist, optometrist, etc.), my family medical history (any information that could be relevant to potential future medical issues) my financial information (account numbers, cd maturity dates, W2,s, taxes, receipts, etc.), critical documents, work documents (current resume, employment dates, emergency contacts, etc.) and personal information (passwords, wills, living will, medical power of attorney, social worker name, etc.).				
I have developed a resume (when work experience can be described).				
I have a Food Handlers Card.				
I have a library card.				
I have a realistic Independent Living Plan that is reviewed by the MDT.				
I have completed the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) within the past year.				
I have completed an Individual Learning Plan based on ACLSA results within the last year.				
I have met with a MODIFY Specialist and I am aware of all independent living services available to me now and after I turn 18.				

For the Readily at Hand Interactive Checklist go to:
www.itsmymove.org/rah/

MY CHECKLIST

Essential Life Skills/Experiences	YES	NO	In Process	Date of Completion
I am participating in and receiving ongoing life skills instruction.				
I have completed a career interest inventory.				
I can demonstrate basic home repairs and basic safety (overflowing commode, leaky faucet, change light bulb, vacuum canister, filter replacement, fuse box, smoke detector, refrigerator contents, etc.).				
I can demonstrate understanding of basic home and fire safety.				
I can demonstrate that I know how to and can utilize independent kitchen safety, menu planning, and budgeting				
I know where to get tax forms, how to fill them out as well as how to submit them. I fully understand tax filing requirements and where to access free assistance.				
I have prepared a 3 course meal on my own with invited guest(s).				
I have explored, participated and maintained at least 1 hobby that I am likely to continue as an adult.				
I have completed and enrolled (or on waiting list) for drivers education.				
I know how to purchase tickets, ride a bus, make exchanges and can navigate public bus transportation independently.				
I know how to purchase and utilize taxi, air and train transportation independently.				
I am participating in career and educational exploration/counseling.				
I have established a checking or savings account.				
I have established a safety deposit box.				
I am employed or have work experience.				
I am currently volunteering or have volunteer experience.				
I have 3 non-parent adults to provide support.				



IT'S MY MOVE

Stepping Stones, Inc.

P.O. Box 539

Lavalette, WV 25535

(304) 429-2297

b4kids@steppingstonesinc.org

www.itsmymove.org

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