

**Villa of Hope**

**Transitional Program**

**Program Description**

The Villa of Hope’s Transitional Services Program provides direct services to adolescents who are residing in foster care and who have been identified by their Monroe County Foster Care worker as being at risk of not successfully achieving their goal of independent living, upon discharge from foster care. Services can also be offered to 18-20-year-old youth who have signed themselves out of care, but for whom Monroe County will be their guardian until they are 21.

The program uses a community based approach and the primary goal of the program is to prepare adolescents to enter and successfully progress through the mainstream of community life, as independent young adults. The program focuses on helping clients develop their emotional and social maturity, as well as teach basic life skills necessary for independent living. Additionally, the role of the social worker is to link, refer, and support youth. Services are provided in the home and community settings. Staff can provide transportation to youth or assist them in using the public transportation system to get to appointments. Youth are helped to develop and expand their informal support networks, as well as developing social support networks and build healthy, meaningful relationships with caring individuals. Services draw upon a full range of family, school, workplace, neighborhood, and community resources that establish the young person as an active participant in his or her development.

Many of the youth have been effected by significant social and emotional difficulties such as sexual and physical traumas, loss and separation issues from their family of origin, and difficulty developing and maintaining positive and supportive relationships.

Risk factors in these adolescents include difficulty maintaining adequate school functioning in order to complete their education; an identified lack of the skills necessary to live independently; interpersonal difficulties; and insufficient external supports.

Youth must show evidence of the need for skill development in at least one of the following areas:

1. Interpersonal relations
2. Job seeking and maintaining skills
3. Educational/vocational
4. Money management
5. Stable housing
6. Using community resources
7. Preparation for discharge from foster care
8. Parenting

Transitional Services Program is administered by the Youth Opportunity Unit (YOU Team) at Monroe County Department of Human Services. Referrals are made or authorized by the YOU Team. Decisions regarding the case are made collaboratively with the YOU Team, the transitional social worker, and the youth. The ultimate goal is assisting and prearing the young adult with the skills needed to be successful and manage on their own after discharge from formal services. Including service plan goals, accessing community resources, accessing additional financial resources, discharging, etc.

**Philosophy**

The Villa of Hope operates within the Sanctuary Model that promotes and supports positive change in clients, their families and the team through integrating trauma theory and creating therapeutic communities, which provide safety for both clients and the staff who work with them. Families and providers establish respectful, family-centered relationships that facilitate collaborative and productive service planning and delivery. Youth are prepared for young adulthood with positive experiences and skills to move successfully to living and managing on their own.

In addition, staff receive training in use of the Casey Life Skills Assessment, which identifies a youths needs in areas of life skills development, and offers skill based modules to develop those skills.

Staff remain knowledgeable about local, regional, and state resources including networking and leadership opportunities, educates the community about the needs of individuals receiving support, and finds and creates opportunities for individuals to develop positive ties to the community based on mutual interest and abilities.

**Goals of Transitional Services**

The primary goal of the Villa of Hope’s Transitional Services is to prepare adolescents to enter and successfully progress through the mainstream of community life, as independent young adults. Services promote age appropriate community involvement and decision making. Within this primary goal, the program works with youth in the following areas:

* Independent Living skills, which allow the youth to successfully maintain themselves in the community such as:
  + Household management
  + Budgeting, saving, money management, and investing (linkage to programs to assist further with this)
  + Building credit
  + Consumer competence
  + Nutrition and food preparation
  + Stress management and coping
  + Time management
  + Problem solving and decision making
  + Hygiene, self-care, and personal safety
  + Exercising legal rights and responsibilities
* Formal and Informal relationships with peers and adults that are healthy, supportive and nurturing.
* Locating/Enrolling in education or vocational programs
  + High school or GED programs
  + Colleges
  + Vocational training programs
  + Special education services
* Employment skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment.
  + Resume writing, completion of job applications
  + Development of good work habits, skills, and self-awareness
  + Development of self-confidence and presentation skills
  + Access to employment information and data to understand job options, and clarify current and future work.
  + Job searching
  + Interview skills development, preparation for interviews
  + Use of local employment resources, job finding, and placement options
* Ongoing communication about accessing services and barriers that may arise.
* Parenting education and family support
* Linkage to necessary health services
  + Medical services, such as routine care and medication management
  + Dental services
  + Counseling, mental health services, and chemical dependency services
  + Family planning, age appropriate education regarding HIV/AIDS, STD prevention
  + Insurance coverage
* Housing support services such as:
  + Education around available community housing options
  + Education on tenant rights and responsibilities
  + Assistance obtaining a safe living environment
  + Advocacy for safe, affordable, appropriate housing for youth
* Assisting in obtaining documents necessary to function as an independent adult such as:
  + An identification card
  + Social security card
  + Birth certificate
  + Insurance cards/medical records
  + Religious documents
  + Documentation of immigration, citizenship status
  + Death certificates
  + Educational records
  + Previous placement information
* Crisis intervention
* Transportation
* Legal assistance
* Child care and development
* Linking to activities that support social, cultural, and recreational interests, and opportunities to participate in peer group activities where they can meet, lend support, and share positive experiences
* Engaging youth directly as key partners, and encouraging youth participation in local or state leadership and advocacy activities, including community advisory and partnership groups.
* Linkage to services in the community