

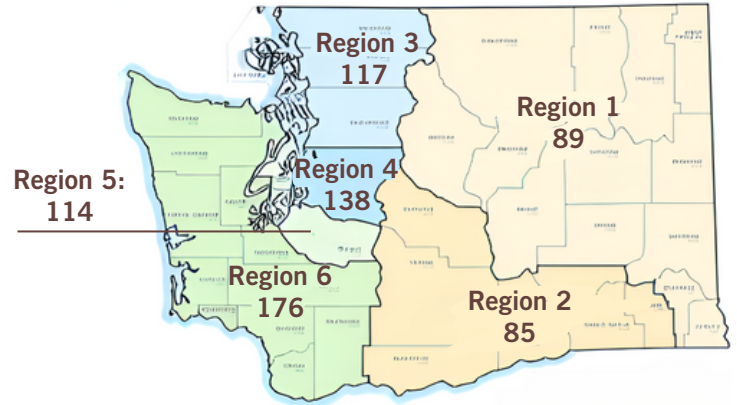
Driver's Assistance Program

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023

Participants & Services Provided

There were a total of 2,150 requests from 855 unique youth and young adults. The obstacles experienced by youth in foster care while completing the steps to licensure, explained in detail further on in this report, are the primary reasons why not all requests were successfully fulfilled. A total of 1,765 requests were issued payment within the contract timeframe for 719 unique participants.

Number of Participants per DCYF Region



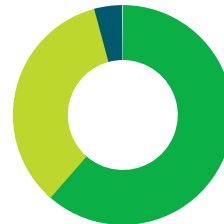
\$1,298 Average Program Cost Per Participant Served

719 Total Unique Participants issued payment

51 Driver's Ed course completed

36 Licenses achieved based on payment

Legal Status



- 61% Washington State Foster Care
- 34% Extended Foster Care
- 4% Tribal Jurisdiction
- >1% Federal

Services Provided	Total Number of Requests for Service	Number of Unique Participants who Submitted a Request	Number of Eligible Participants Served (received payments)
Auto Insurance	1,185	294	247
Driver's Education Course	555	494	408
Learner's Permit	60	56	52
Identicard	51	48	42
Driver's Test	128	92	81
Licensure	69	61	51
Other (Practice Drives, etc.)	102	85	57
Unduplicated Total	2,150	855	719

Metrics Defined

Participants Served: Number of unique participants for whom Treehouse issued payments for one or more services.

Steps to Becoming a Licensed Driver

as experienced by youth in foster care

Step 1: Pre-Apply with the DOL/Get ID Card

2 to 3 weeks

Obstacles Experienced:

- Caregivers may be unable or unwilling to allow youth to get licensed or to add youth to their personal insurance due to liability and/or extra costs.
- Caseworkers are unaware of or unclear about the DCYF forms they must complete to facilitate the licensure process, and getting youth the correct forms has also been a struggle.
- Some care teams have reported issues pre-applying to the DOL online, requiring them to go in person to the DOL office. This can be a barrier if they do not live close by and do not have transportation.

Step 3: Complete 50 hours of driving

6 to 9 months

Obstacles Experienced:

- Youth don't have access to an insured vehicle for 50 hours of required driving practice.
- Youth don't have a licensed adult able to monitor the required 50 hours of driving practice. This especially impacts youth in group homes.
- Youth ages 16 and 17 are often unable to complete their driving practice hours or obtain auto insurance because there is no adult policy to which they can be added.
- Increased gas prices effect the caregiver's ability to support with driving hours.

Step 2: Register in driver's education, Get a learner's permit, Finish driver's education

3 to 6 months

Obstacles Experienced:

- There is confusion about the timing between securing a learner's permit and enrolling in courses.
- Completing driver's education courses is a challenge when a change in placement occurs.
- When unable to complete courses, it is difficult to obtain a refund or transfer course credits.
- Unreliable or limited transportation to and from driving school and/or the DOL.
- There are limited accommodations for those with special needs and language barriers.

Step 4: Pass Knowledge and Driving Tests

3 to 5 months

Obstacles Experienced:

- Difficulty passing the tests after an extended wait time due to the 50 hours of practice required.
- Need to re-take the tests multiple times in order to pass.

Step 5: Go to DOL to obtain Driver's License

1 to 2 weeks

Obstacles Experienced:

- There is often confusion about this process. They need to pre-apply through the DOL before arriving and they often need to schedule an appointment.

*The entire process can take
12 to 21 months to complete.*

Barriers

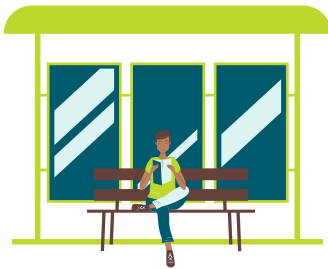
- We recently noticed we receive refunds when insurance policies are cancelled or adjusted. Since we are a third-party payee, it is difficult to know which youth's insurance policy we are receiving a refund for.
- Gathering or paying quotes through third-party insurance websites may cause payment issues. We have learned that we need to use the insurance company's direct website.
- Some rural areas only have one driving school option. Their classes fill up quickly and they often have long waitlists. Youth have shared a loss of motivation to complete courses and licensure process when the process takes longer than anticipated.
- We continue to refine our outreach process to inform partners most effectively on how to properly submit funding requests and complete the licensure process. Delays in completing requests can be caused by different levels of understanding from referral sources and internal staff about Driver's Assistance and licensure processes. These delays set back youth who are eager to work towards educational or career goals.
- Incorrect contact information on request pages results in delays because staff must reach the participant or care team members for follow-up.
- Youth and care teams are unfamiliar with the Department of Licensing process of achieving a license or a learner's permit.
- Social Workers often need guidance locating and completing DCYF forms that are required when youth get their ID or license. They are unfamiliar with the process and how they can support youth in achieving their ID, permit or license.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Barriers Addressed
Increase funding to financially support youth in purchasing their own vehicle.	Youth are not motivated to finish the licensure process because they do not have access to a vehicle and/or cannot afford to purchase one. This lack of a license limits their future opportunities.
Provide resources or access to driving practice to youth who have completed Driver's Education and need 50 hours of driving before licensure.	Youth cannot complete the licensure process without a caregiver or other support person willing to supervise practice hours.
Expand program eligibility to include youth in shelter care, youth who become adopted within the program year and unaccompanied refugee minors under the care of the DSHS ORIA program.	Eligibility is confusing to youth and young adults, families and caseworkers and isn't inclusive of all youth experiencing foster care in Washington state.
Require training for social workers and caseworkers around supporting youth trying to obtain their driver's licenses or the other aspects of Driver's Assistance. Specifically, require training around youth securing their identification card, social security card and birth certificate.	Information gaps among the adult professionals that serve youth on the steps to becoming a licensed driver are a consistent barrier. Caseworkers and tribal caseworkers regularly ask Treehouse staff for DCYF forms and coaching on internal DCYF and DOL processes. Access to training around the initial steps would greatly reduce barriers to licensure.

Stories from Participants

Some driving schools can be difficult to get a hold of over the phone or by email. One of our Drivers Assistance Coordinators remained persistent and tried a different approach. They worked with the youth's caregiver to three-way call the driving school. Through this conversation they managed to establish a point of contact at the school they can call directly to register and pay for future students.



A college student attending Seattle University requested help locating a driving school near their campus that would be an easy commute. Our team found a driving school that was a couple blocks away, but the business was no longer in service. Through further discussion we learned that the student takes public transportation to and from school. We determined their bus route and managed to find a driving school in a neighborhood on their route. The student is now registered for driver's education and has a plan to take the bus from their college to the driving school and back home.

It can be a challenge securing auto insurance for a young person who resides with a caregiver who does not drive or have their license. In one situation, we partnered with the youth's Treehouse Education Specialist and the other family members who resided in the home to add this youth to their policy. Since then, they have submitted monthly requests for auto insurance funding since November 2022.



When we learn that a youth is close to turning 21 and will soon exit Extended Foster Care, our team tries to offer as many services as possible since they will no longer be eligible for Drivers Assistance after they age out. We assisted a youth who was approaching 21 who was not aware of our scope of services. Although they had their license, this youth expressed anxieties about driving. Our team suggested that they take an adult driving course to practice driving with a trained professional. Drivers Assistance funds were used to pay for a course that they could start when they were ready. This youth did not qualify for auto insurance funding at the time, so we connected them to a partner insurance agent to answer any questions they had when they were ready to set up their insurance.