

Foellinger Foundation Independence Continuum



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Moving from Dependence to Independence

Foellinger Foundation Independence Continuum: In fall 2016, Foellinger Foundation convened representatives from ten local non-profit organizations to work with the Director of Programs and an Evaluation Consultant to provide more clarity around measuring how clients of these organizations “move from dependence to independence.” After a year-long series of conversations, the *Foellinger Foundation Independence Continuum* was developed and refined to provide more definition around the multifaceted nature of independence. The continuum also illustrates how organizations can recognize and measure progress towards independence across an array of assets, conditions, and behaviors. The continuum was developed by Mindy Hightower King, Ph.D., Dawn Martz, and Evaluation Exchange Members.



Foellinger Foundation Independence Continuum

Dependence **In-Crisis** **At-Risk** **Safe** **Stable** **Thriving** Independence

Family Development Goal: Adults engage in behaviors that support themselves and their families moving from dependence to independence.

Income	Less than 75% Poverty Level	75-149% Poverty Level	150-219% Poverty Level	220-349% Poverty Level	+350% Poverty Level
Education	No skills or credentials	Seeking HSE, vocational training, or ESL skills	HS diploma, HSE or vocational training	Career and educational plan in place	Implementing career and educational plan
Employment	Unemployed	Seeking job or temp/seasonal job	Employment in semi-stable job	Permanent and stable job	Permanent and stable employment of choice
Childcare	No childcare or unreliable childcare	Childcare is not safe, reliable, or affordable	Childcare is safe and somewhat affordable	Childcare is safe, reliable, and affordable	Childcare is safe, reliable, affordable, and high-quality
Health Care & Health Status	No insurance or regular care; undiagnosed illness likely	Public insurance; diagnosed but untreated illness likely	Public insurance; treatment for diagnosed illness	Private insurance; choices limited; treatment for diagnosed illness	Private insurance; doctor of choice; regular preventive care
Nutrition	Food intake disrupted due to lack of resources	Inconsistent access to low quality food	Consistent access to low quality food	Consistent access to quality food with little variety	Consistent access to a variety of foods of choice
Housing	Homeless or unstable housing	Temporary or transitional housing	Subsidized housing with support for utilities	Stable housing and utilities	Stable and affordable housing and utilities
Transportation	No transportation or unreliable transportation	Transportation inconsistently available and/or safe	Transportation available and reliable, and mostly safe	Transportation is affordable, reliable, and always safe	Transportation is affordable, reliable, safe, and sustainable
Support Systems	Poor or no emotional and physical support from relatives, neighbors, and friends	Infrequent positive interactions with relatives, neighbors, and friends	Consistent positive interactions with relatives, neighbors, and friends	Consistent positive interactions with reciprocity	Frequent positive interactions with reciprocity
Family Interactions	No, few, or negative interactions with family members	Low levels of emotional and physical support from family members	Basic emotional and physical support from family members	Good emotional and physical support received from family members with reciprocity	Excellent emotional and physical support received from family members with reciprocity

Programs and initiatives focused on early childhood and youth development impact children and youth in families across the continuum.

Though these goals remain consistent for all children and youth, relevant outcomes may depend on family characteristics that facilitate or impede progress towards independence.

Youth Development Goal: Youth/parents engage in behaviors that promote positive social, emotional, and academic development and facilitate a successful transition to adulthood.

Early Childhood Development Goal: Children achieve developmental milestones; parents/providers engage in behaviors to support children's health and well-being.

Independence Continuum Income Standards

Based on 2024 Federal Poverty Guidelines

Dependence	In-Crisis	At-Risk	Safe	Stable	Thriving	Independence
	Less than 75% Poverty Level	75-149% Poverty Level	150-219% Poverty Level	220-349% Poverty Level	350% or More Poverty Level	
	1 person: Less than \$11,295	1 person: \$11,285 - \$22,439	1 person: \$22,590 - \$32,581	1 person: \$33,132 - \$52,559	1 person: \$52,710 or More	
	2 people: Less than \$15,330	2 people: \$15,330 - \$30,455	2 people: \$30,660 - \$44,663	2 people: \$44,968 - \$71,335	2 people: \$71,540 or More	
	Family of 3: Less than \$19,365	Family of 3: \$119,365 - \$38,471	Family of 3: \$38,730 - \$56,545	Family of 3: \$56,804 - \$90,111	Family of 3: \$90,370 or More	
	Family of 4: Less than \$23,400	Family of 4: \$23,400 - \$46,488	Family of 4: \$46,800 - \$68,328	Family of 4: \$68,640 - \$108,888	Family of 4: \$109,200 or More	

References & Notes

1. *Do you know the way to self-sufficiency? A case study report* (2003). Massachusetts Association for Community Development & Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Available at: <https://www.masscap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WFD-Case-Study-Report-2003.pdf>
2. *The self-sufficiency standard for Indiana: Prepared for the Indiana Institute for Working Families, A program of the Indiana Community Action Association* (2016). University of Washington, School of Social Work. Available at: <http://www.incap.org/iwfw/self-sufficiency/2016-Self-sufficiency-report.pdf>
3. *On the road: Exploring economic security pathways in Indiana*. Prepared for the Indiana Institute for Working Families, A program of the Indiana Community Action Association (2016). University of Washington, School of Social Work. Available at: http://www.incap.org/iwfw/self-sufficiency/IN16_ESP-Web_01072016.pdf
4. *Why healthcare, poverty, and community development are inseparable*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Available at: <http://www.whatworksforamerica.org/pdf/lavizzo-mourey.pdf>
5. **Notes on Income:** Poverty-level income for a family of four based on 2024 Federal Poverty Standard = \$31,200. Annual income estimates for each of the five stages on the Continuum are as follows: In-Crisis = Less than \$23,400; At-Risk = \$23,400 - \$46,488; Safe = \$46,800 - \$68,328; Stable = \$68,640 - \$108,888; Thriving = \$109,200 or more.
6. **Notes on Food:** Indicators adapted from United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=84972>.
7. **Notes on Health Status:** Although addiction and mental health disorders are not always present, when they are, they can significantly affect movement toward independence. Potential addiction and mental health indicators for each of the five stages on the Continuum are as follows: In-Crisis = Individuals with untreated addiction; At-Risk = Individuals seeking treatment for addiction; Safe = Individuals in treatment for addiction; Stable = Individuals who have been treated for addiction and maintain sobriety; Thriving = Individuals who have been treated for addiction, maintain sobriety, and support others to do the same.