

Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services

## 412 Youth Zone



*Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) contracts with several agencies to provide mandated services for youth who qualify for Independent Living (IL) services. This includes life skills, prevention services (physical and behavioral health and wellness), assistance with pre-employment and employment activities, high school retention, assistance in locating housing, and connections to other community services.*

To better inform the IL Youth about available opportunities and give them a neutral place where some programs could be accessed, in 2015 the county issued a request for proposals to establish a convenient one-stop center. The result was the establishment of the 412 Youth Zone, a 30,000 square foot space in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh.

Operated by Auberle, and designed with input from the DHS youth advisory board, System Improvement Through Youth, the 412 Youth Zone contains offices, space for visiting professionals, a full industrial kitchen and common area for meals, a playroom, meeting rooms/classrooms, lounge area, lockers, washer/dryer and specialized area for exercise/dance. It also has meeting space where child welfare caseworkers, Educational Liaisons and others can meet with the youth for Conferencing and Teaming meetings and for Transition Planning.

The 412 Youth Zone is staffed by a management staff and Youth Coaches who are knowledgeable about the impact of trauma on young people in foster care, and knowledgeable about available resources. The 412 Youth Zone provides a range of services that provide valuable learning and life experiences for youth, including GED preparation, life skills workshops, and prevention/support services such as on-site medical and behavioral health services. Teen parents can bring their children and enjoy the Bright Spaces playroom, and also participate in enrichment activities and parenting education groups. There are also engaging art activities, opportunities for physical exercise, the ability to cook and eat a meal in a homelike atmosphere, a state-of-the-art computer lab,

and a lounge area in which youth may simply enjoy the opportunity to interact with peers while playing a video game or relaxing. And plans are in place for Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board to have an on-site workforce provider offer work-based programs and services.

Because youth who exit foster care without a permanent family are more likely to experience homelessness than their peers, the center will also offer supports for homeless youth, including washers and dryers, showers and information on available housing programs.

Auberle is working with DHS and many other partners to develop engaging, innovative programs for youth who use the center. This includes:

- Kelly Strayhorn Theater and Ally Studios
- The Greater Pittsburgh YWCA
- Catholic Charities
- Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh
- UPMC School of Nursing
- Greater Pittsburgh Community Foodbank
- University of Pittsburgh Office of Child Development
- Bright Spaces
- Hill House Association
- Carnegie Bosch Institute/Carnegie Mellon University
- University of Pittsburgh
- Point Park University
- Duquesne University
- MLK Community Mural project
- Huntington Bank
- Allegheny County Library Association
- Beverly's Birthdays
- Tickets for Kids