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On Behalf Of: myself
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I was in foster care since I was twelve years old, and I joined ILP at 16. During that time, I did not have consistent adults in my life that were willing to help me understand how things worked, and even now at 24 I am still figuring it out as I go - sometimes later than my peers who had such consistency. With this, when I was told about ILP's services, I was sold on it from the start. As a 16 year old, I was starting to think about how I wanted to navigate the world. I started thinking about rent, taxes, buying a house, getting a job, etc. Thinking about it all sounded daunting! Having an adult that not only tells you how to build adult skills and shows you how was an amazing opportunity that I simply could not pass up. What has been the most impactful for me was the fact that my ILP workers were always there for me. They always had ways of showing that they cared, whether it be they showed up to my house every month to talk, they stayed past their time to listen to me. Some ILP workers even went above and beyond, such as taking me to the DMV in the early morning hours and taking the time to explain things to me. They really helped me with my self-confidence and figuring out where to go in terms of life, education, etc. My ILP worker was the one who first encouraged me to go to college. Even then, they saw what I was capable of and greatly encouraged it, even pressuring me sometimes to fill out the FAFSA and start the college application process. ILP was a consistent force throughout my teen and early adulthood. I don't know where I would be at this point without them! They provide a cushion for youth who really need it and are willing to use ILP for their intended services. That is why I say that I greatly support SB911, and funding for independent living skills services should continue for current and former foster youth.