Guide for caseworkers

Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)

This guide is to assist you as the caseworker, support the young person you are working with to transition to independent living, apply for the TILA payment. We recognise that for a young person leaving out-of-home care to independent living, it can be a positive yet challenging time, and we are certain that with your assistance and commitment to improving their outcomes, you will empower them to reach their goals as detailed in their independent leaving care plan.

If you require further information on TILA, please contact the TILA team at tila@dss.gov.au

## Overview

Follow these steps to help the young person you are assisting apply for the TILA payment:

## Pre assessment check

## Before completing a [TILA application form](https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-application-form), as a caseworker you must ensure:

* the young person meets all of the [eligibility](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/eligibility) criteria outlined in the [TILA Operational Guidelines](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-operational-guidelines)
* the young person has not already accessed their full TILA entitlement
* the proposed amount, use of, and timing of the TILA funds are appropriate.

You must verify the young person’s [eligibility](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/eligibility) by sighting the following documentation that confirms the young person is:

* an Australian citizen by either birth or has been granted Australian citizenship (e.g. birth certificate, citizenship certificate)
* aged from 15 to 25 at the time of submitting application (e.g. birth certificate or driver’s licence)
* has been in, or is currently in, formal care as described in the [eligibility criteria](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/eligibility)
* has a transition to independence plan.

## Privacy notice

You must explain the following privacy notification to the young person as outlined in Section 3 of the [TILA Operational Guidelines](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-operational-guidelines):

**Privacy Notice for Claimant**

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988, and is collected by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and Services Australia for the assessment and administration of payments and services. This information is required to process your application or claim.

Your information may be used by the departments or given to other parties for the purposes of research, investigation or where you have agreed or it is required or authorised by law.

You can get more information about the way in which the Department of Social Services will manage your personal information, including the department’s privacy policy at dss.gov.au/privacy-policy or by requesting a copy from that department.

You can get more information about the way in which Services Australia will manage your personal information, including the department’s privacy policy at servicesaustralia.gov.au/privacy or by requesting a copy from that department.

Only de-identified information will be used by the departments or given to other parties for the purposes of research or investigation.

For more information on privacy, go to [Services Australia](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/privacy) and the [Department of Social Services](http://www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy).

## TILA application process

Follow the below steps for a TILA application:

**Table 1 - TILA application process**

| Steps | Details |
| --- | --- |
| Step 1: Assessment | You will need to:* Discuss the [transition to independence plan](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/publications-articles/transitioning-from-out-of-home-care-to-independence-a-nationally-consistent-approach-to-planning-2011) with the young person applying for TILA.
* Assess whether the young person is [eligible](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/eligibility) for TILA and it is applicable at this time.
* Agree on what TILA will be used for and whether a lump sum payment or instalments at a minimum of $250 is the best approach for the young person. The [What can TILA be used for](https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-benefits-payments-transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/what-can-tila-be-used-for) factsheet provides information on the different goods and services TILA can be used for.
* Complete and both sign the [TILA Application Form](https://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-application-form).
* Retain the TILA form for your organisation's records if required.
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| Step 2: Claim lodgement | * Complete and submit the electronic claim for the TILA payment via the Unidentified Government Gateway (UGG). Instructions for registering for UGG access can be found at [Appendix 3](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-operational-guidelines) of the [TILA Operational Guidelines](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/benefits-payments/transition-to-independent-living-allowance-tila/tila-operational-guidelines).
* Confirm in the UGG application you have sighted the young person’s identification and citizenship documents.
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Once the TILA claim has been submitted in the UGG, Services Australia will:

* match the young person to their existing Services Australia record
	+ **Note:** if no record exists, contact Services Australia at TILA@servicesaustralia.gov.au to organise the creation of a new record
* check whether the young person has already been paid $1,500 of TILA
* check whether issuing the approved amount of TILA in the claim, it will exceed the TILA limit of $1,500.

## Payment process

* If the amount claimed will exceed the young person’s TILA limit, Services Australia will issue payment of the remaining balance.
* TILA payments are electronically transferred to your organisation’s bank account using the details provided at the time of registering for UGG access. The young person will not receive the TILA payment themselves.
* If Services Australia is unable to match the young person to an existing Services Australia customer record, staff from Services Australia will contact you for further information to assist them to make a match or to create a new customer record.
* Once the application has been processed, Services Australia will issue a payment advice letter to the young person’s address provided and email your organisation’s online mail box within the UGG.
* Please allow up to five (5) working days for the application to be processed and longer for a response letter to reach the young person’s nominated mailing address.

## Purchase process

You are to purchase the agreed items and services for the young person and the receipts of the items purchased with TILA are not required to be submitted to the Australian Government. You are to monitor the use of TILA funds for the young person and maintain appropriate records.