



# SOUTHERN AREA CONSORTIUM OF HUMAN SERVICES

## *Emancipating Foster Youth* Literature Review

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Purpose.....	2
Introduction.....	2
Cost to Society .....	3
Successful Transitions for Emancipating Foster Youth.....	4
Further Elaboration of Major Needs .....	5
Adult Mentors .....	5
Education .....	5
Employment.....	6
Housing .....	7
Health Care .....	7
Difficulty Collecting Outcomes .....	8
Efforts to Improve Outcomes.....	9
Resources .....	10
Appendix A- BASSC: Emancipating From Foster Care- Action Plan .....	15
Appendix B: Promising Practices Highlights .....	22
California .....	22
Foster Youth-Friendly One-Stops.....	22
Education/Career Preparation .....	23
Housing.....	29
Coordinating Youth Services.....	31
Youth Leadership.....	31
Community Services and Support .....	32
Across the Nation.....	35

## PURPOSE

*The following review of research is guided by two general questions:*

- 1) *What are the characteristics and needs of older youth emancipating from foster care, especially those to facing the transition from foster care to living on their own?*
- 2) *What kinds of services do exist and should exist to prepare youths for independent living and to support them after they have left care, and how effective are those services?*

## INTRODUCTION

*"We should dream of and plan for a day when fewer children require foster care. But until that day comes, we have a moral responsibility to prepare young people leaving foster care to become whole adults who can fulfill their potential and build bright and promising futures."*

-President Jimmy Carter

Each year, approximately 4,200 California youth emancipate, or “age out”, of the foster care system. In a number of studies, emancipated foster youth speak out about their frustration being “cut off” from the system once they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to fend for themselves, with limited life skills, financial assistance or support networks.

Research from the social and medical sciences, as well as familial trends and public opinion studies found that the typical young adult (who never had the added struggle of life in foster care) is not fully self-sufficient from their parents until age 26. Average financial costs covered by mom and dad during this launch into adulthood are estimated at approximately \$44,500. For foster youth, for whom the state serves as parent, they receive less than 5% of that total.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly, statistics show the majority of emancipating foster youth (EFY) are not ready to attain complete financial and emotional independence by age 18, as most of the former foster youth in California fail to achieve self-sufficiency.

Recent research on California’s youth leaving foster care finds:

- ❖ Only a third had drivers' licenses, fewer than four in 10 had at least \$250 in cash, and less than a quarter had dishes and utensils with which to set up housekeeping
- ❖ Foster care alumni experience post-traumatic stress disorder at a level that is five times that of the general population (21.5%)<sup>2</sup>
- ❖ 46% have not completed high school

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<sup>1</sup>Delgado, M., Fellmeth, R., Packard, T., Prosek, K., & Weichel, E. (2007); Post P. (2004)

<sup>2</sup> Pecora, P., et al. (2005).

- ❖ Only 20% of foster youth who complete high school even begin to pursue postsecondary education (compared with 60% of their peers), and of those less than 3% attain a college degree (compared with 24% of the general population)
- ❖ 65% emancipate without a place to live<sup>3</sup>
- ❖ Foster children comprise less than 0.3% of the state's population, and yet 40% of persons living in homeless shelters are former foster children<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ 51% of youth are unemployed within 2-4 years of emancipation<sup>5</sup>
- ❖ Emancipated foster youth earn an average of \$6,000 per year, a number well below the national poverty level (the self-sufficiency standard for a single adult with no children in Los Angeles County is \$20,751 per year)<sup>6</sup>
- ❖ Emancipated females are 4 times more likely to receive public assistance than the general population
- ❖ 67% of females who emancipated from the child welfare system in California had at least one birth within five years of leaving care<sup>7</sup>
- ❖ Over 70% of all State Penitentiary inmates have spent time in the foster care system<sup>8</sup>

## COST TO SOCIETY

The lack of a "safety net" for these former foster youth-now young adults-means that they truly struggle to "make ends meet" often ultimately becoming a more burdensome and larger cost to society than if a much smaller, up-front investment had simply been made to better prepare and advise them during transition and the years preceding it.

For example, consider these typical *annual* costs cited according to various experts who work closely with emancipated foster youth:

- Housing an emancipated foster youth in a program providing support services (mental health, educational and vocational counseling, job placement, financial literacy and life skills training, mentoring) such as Hillside in Pasadena- between \$20,000 - \$25,000.
- Incarceration for the same young adult - between \$55,000 and \$115,000 (depending upon the type of facility), according to the State's Safety and Welfare Remedial Plan filed in April 2007.
- Residence in a mental health facility - \$215,000
- Supporting a single homeless adult- \$54,996, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless (taking into account people who are homeless utilize expensive programs, such as emergency shelters, jails, and psychiatric hospitals)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> California Department of Social Services. (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Delgado, M., Fellmeth, R., Packard, T., Prosek, K., & Weichel, E. (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Mosqueda, J. and Rodriguez, J. (2005).

<sup>6</sup> Pecora, P., et al. (2005); Goerge, R., et al. (2002).

<sup>7</sup> Needell, B. (2002), Cuccaro-Alamin, S. et. al. (2002).

<sup>8</sup> According to the May 12, 2006 Select Committee Hearing of the California Legislature

<sup>9</sup> *Supporting THP+ for California's Emancipating Foster Youth: A Compilation of Statistics* (2006).

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR EMANCIPATING FOSTER YOUTH

In California, eligibility policies, program administration, funding, and services for this population vary county by county. As a result, current programs for EFY are fragmented and under-funded, fail to provide comprehensive assistance and services, and do not reach a significant number of former foster youth in a meaningful way.<sup>10</sup>

Successful transition, for youth, ages 14 to 23 years, means that upon leaving the care of the public child welfare system, a young person is pre-disposed to a life of meaning and purpose.

According to research, successful transition to adulthood for these youth is characterized by:

- ❖ Their connection to family, peers and caring adults during their transition from care and afterwards;
- ❖ The completion of age appropriate educational levels;
- ❖ A safe and stable place to live;
- ❖ An opportunity for career exploration and employment;
- ❖ An understanding of how to manage financial assets;
- ❖ Access to healthcare coverage (including mental health services); and
- ❖ Opportunities for social and civic engagement.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, the following additional variables predicted the level of success (a composite of educational attainment, income, mental and physical health, and relationship satisfaction) for more than a thousand Casey Family Programs foster care alumni (n=1,087) who were served in 23 communities across the country between 1966 and 1998:

- ❖ Life skills preparation
- ❖ Scholarships for college or job training
- ❖ Male gender
- ❖ Participation in clubs and organizations for youth while in foster care
- ❖ Less positive parenting by their last foster mother
- ❖ Minimized academic problems (as indicated by use of tutoring services in their last foster home)
- ❖ Minimized use of alcohol or drugs (as indicated by use of treatment services near the end of their time in foster care).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Delgado, M., Fellmeth, R., Packard, T., Prosek, K., & Weichel, E. (2007)

<sup>11</sup> Brown, D (2004).

<sup>12</sup> Pecora, P.J., et al (2003).

## FURTHER ELABORATION OF MAJOR NEEDS

### Adult Mentor(s)

*“A permanent connection is someone you can talk to, someone that you can laugh with, and someone that can help you through a problem. It is someone who tells me: ‘Never be afraid of where you came from,’ and ‘Don’t be afraid to move forward with your life.’ People come in and out of our lives, but a permanent connection is forever.”*

-Former Foster Youth

- The single most important aspect of any transitional program is the availability of mentoring and a support system. Case studies reveal that successful former foster youth attribute their success in large part to the support of a person or group of people.
  - Research studies indicate that the presence of positive adult role models is critical for youth in foster care because family separations and placement disruptions have been found to hinder the development of enduring bonds.<sup>13</sup>
- A recent report revealed that one of the biggest reasons foster youth do not attain a higher education is that they lack a stable adult mentoring presence in their lives<sup>14</sup>
  - They greatly benefit from having a mentor to encourage them and guide them through the process of applying for, adjusting to, and succeeding in college.

### Education

*"It is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to achieve in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education."*

- Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

- Youth who were formerly in foster care experienced various disruptive school changes from elementary through high school.<sup>15</sup>
  - One study found that more than 30 percent of youth in foster care had eight or more placements with foster families or group homes. Sixty-five percent experienced seven or more school changes from elementary through high school.<sup>16</sup>
- Foster youth often are delayed in completing their secondary education because of health conditions, behavioral problems, disruptions in their education, and mental health issues.
  - Studies show that many of them never do complete their education.
- A disproportionately high number of youth who were formerly in foster care completed high school via a GED.
  - GED: As many as 32% of foster youth complete their high school degree by completing the GED (as opposed to 6% in the general

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<sup>13</sup> Delgado, M., et al. (2007)

<sup>14</sup> Newberger, J. (2001); Shirk, M & Gary Stabler, (2004).

<sup>15</sup> Pecora, P.J., et al (2005).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

- population).<sup>17</sup>
- While having a GED is more beneficial than not completing high school, research indicates that people who obtain diplomas instead of GEDs are more successful as adults.
  - GED recipients are more than twice as likely as those completing regular high school diplomas to not enroll in post-secondary education.<sup>18</sup>
  - For those youth who are academically prepared to pursue post-secondary education, high costs often impede their educational path.
    - Barriers: Access to tuition, monetary support, health & mental health services
  - While reports show that 70% of foster youth want to attend college, only half complete high school, and only 15 % take the necessary courses to gain college admission. Fewer than 10% of foster youth who graduate high school go on to college. Fewer than 2% of foster youth who go on to college graduate.<sup>19</sup>
    - Without a college degree, former foster youth are more likely to face homelessness, incarceration, and lower lifetime earning potential.

## Employment

- Children who emancipate from the child welfare system are unlikely to find employment opportunities.
- If employed, former foster care youth earn significantly lower wages than their low-income peers
  - One third have incomes at or below the poverty level—earning less than \$6,000 per year in wages—below the federal poverty level of \$7,890 for a single individual. This difference is even more drastic in the state of California, for example the self-sufficiency standard for a single adult with no children in Los Angeles County is \$20,751 per year<sup>20</sup>
  - Over a three-year period, no more than 45% of Casey Family Program foster youth reported earnings in any one quarter.<sup>21</sup>
- Currently employment training is mainly provided through community-based organizations, Workforce Investment Boards, and ILSP.
  - An average 71% of youth who have been offered ILP services over the previous six years have taken advantage of those services; the numbers stay very consistent, (ranging from 69% to 73%)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Wolanin, T.R. (2005).

<sup>18</sup> Bozick, R. & DeLuca, S. (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Velayas, S. (2007).

<sup>20</sup> Pecora, P., et al. (2005); Goerge, R., et al. (2002).

<sup>21</sup> Hamm, D. (2004).

<sup>22</sup> Found online at: [http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/SOC405A-In\\_415.htm](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/SOC405A-In_415.htm)

## Housing

*"Just getting a place, finding someone to rent to you as a young person is hard. When you're coming out of the system, with its stigmas and stereotypes that makes two strikes against you."*

-Ebony (former foster youth)

- Foundational to emancipating foster youths ability to live safely and decently is their ability to secure safe and affordable housing.
  - Without housing, youth are less likely to complete their education, find employment, and gain access to health care, all of which jeopardize their ability to make a successful transition to independence.<sup>23</sup>
- Youth who emancipate from the child welfare system are unlikely to find safe, affordable housing.
  - Youth reported difficulty renting housing because of a lack of an employment history, a credit history or a co-signer.<sup>24</sup>
  - Just to be able to afford a studio in California, a foster youth would need to work 92 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, at minimum wage-or earn \$15.48 per hour at a 40-hour per week job, 52 weeks per year.<sup>25</sup>
  - THPP, THP-Plus, and STEP provide a promising solution to the housing needs of former foster youth, but are profoundly under-funded.<sup>26</sup>
  - Instead of ending up on the street, *more than a third* of the youth who age out of foster care go back to live with their biological family, even where the circumstances of abuse and neglect that precipitated their entry into foster care remain unchanged over the years.<sup>27</sup>
  - Historically, federal constraints on using funding for room and board have hindered the development of housing alternatives for these youth.

## Health Care

- Nearly 50% of foster children suffer from chronic health conditions such as asthma, visual and auditory problems, dental decay and malnutrition.<sup>28</sup>
- Mental health services for former foster youth under the age of 21 are primarily funded through State of California EPSDT monies.
- A majority (just under four-fifths) of all adult foster care alumni have significant behavioral health disabilities requiring some form of behavioral health intervention
  - EFY Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: 30.0% (General Pop.: 6.9%)
  - EFY Episode of Major Depression: 41.1% (General Pop.: 19.8%)
  - EFY Panic Syndrome: 21.1% (General Pop.: 5.0%)
  - EFY Modified Social Phobia: 23.3% (General Pop.: 13.8%)
  - EFY Alcohol Dependence: 11.3% (7% in the General Pop.)

<sup>23</sup> Los Angeles County Economy and Efficiency Commission. (2002).

<sup>24</sup> Government Accountability Office. (2004).

<sup>25</sup> Delgado, M., et al. (2007)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Krinsky, M. (2005).

<sup>28</sup> Ensuring Healthy Young Adults Program Issue Brief (2006): Available online at: [http://www.ahwg.net/projects/Foster%20Youth%20Brief\(larger%20font\).pdf](http://www.ahwg.net/projects/Foster%20Youth%20Brief(larger%20font).pdf)

- EFY Drug Dependence: 21.0% (4.2% General Pop.)<sup>29</sup>
- One study of a housing program for foster teens in Southern California found that participants' mental health declined after leaving foster care and living alone for the first time.
  - Many former foster teens become depressed and struggle with loneliness as they attempt to become self-sufficient without the safety net of a caring family.<sup>30</sup>

## DIFFICULTY COLLECTING OUTCOMES<sup>31</sup>

In federal fiscal year 2003, 30 states attempted to contact youth who had been emancipated from foster care for initial information to determine their status, including education and employment outcomes. Of those states, most reported that they were unsuccessful in contacting more than half of the youth. Further, 21 states reported attempting to follow up with emancipated youth after a longer period of time had elapsed but had trouble reaching all the youth. Many states today that are attempting to collect outcome information on former foster care youth continue to experience difficulties.

Officials report that collecting outcome data is especially challenging since there is little they can do to find youth unless the youth themselves initiate the contact. Further, some officials are concerned about the value of the outcome data since they believe that youth who are doing well are more likely to participate in the follow-up interviews, thus skewing the results.

*Some state officials, caseworkers, and youth interviewed suggested strategies states may need to develop to maintain contact with former foster care youth, include:*

- offering incentives to the youth to stay in touch
- establishing a toll-free telephone line that will make the process of staying in touch as easy as possible
- use other resources that may help locate the youth or provide the necessary data, such as other service providers or other social services information systems.

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<sup>29</sup> Needell, B., et al. (2005)

<sup>30</sup> Hurley, K. (2002). *Almost Home*. National Housing Institute

<sup>31</sup> United States Government Accountability Office. (November 2004).

## EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

Currently there is no established standard of programs for children aging out of foster care but below are some general strategies that innovative programs are currently utilizing to attempt to fill this gap:

- Linking of educational and career promotion to housing programs to assure youth are equipped to meet adult challenges successfully.
- Offering opportunities for youth to actively and meaningfully participate in the development of programs and creation of plans designed to assist them achieve self-sufficiency.
- Using state and private funds to support independent living programs in developing: practice living settings within the foster environment, transitional living opportunities, scattered site housing, supportive landlord programs, HUD arrangements and stipends to assist EFY.
- Assist youth in applying for admission, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities to post-secondary institutions.
- Utilizing community connections to broker vocational training and employment opportunities for youth.
- Developing mentoring programs to provide foster youth with supportive, caring, and consistently available adults.
- Find opportunities for youth to develop their social, civic and leadership skills as well as positively contribute to his/her community.

***Refer to Appendix A for a detailed action plan developed by The Bay Area Social Services Consortium (BASSC), to address the nine major challenges facing emancipating foster youth.***

***Refer to Appendix B for specific examples of promising practices occurring both across the state and nationwide.***

## RESOURCES

- Bozick, R. & DeLuca, S. (2005). Better late than never? Delayed enrollment in the high school to college transition. *Social Forces* 84, (1), pp. 531-554.
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- Chafee Independent Living Evaluation Project*, Comp. Maria Woolverton, Mark Courtney, Matt Stagner, and Michael Pergamit. Available at: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse\\_neglect/chafee/chafee\\_overview.html#overview](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/chafee/chafee_overview.html#overview)
- Collaborative effort between the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Urban Institute and its partners – the Chapin Hall Center for Children and the National Opinion Research Center. The study was called for in the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, and is designed to evaluate programs funded by the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program over a five-year period. The goal of the study is to determine the effects of ILS funded under the CFCIP in achieving key outcomes for youth. Four programs will be evaluated: an employment services program in Kern County, CA; an intensive case management/mentoring program in Massachusetts; a tutoring /mentoring program and an intensive life skills training program in Los Angeles County, CA. By December 2007, ACF expects to complete the evaluations of these four.
- Courtney, M.E. & Dworsky, A. (2005). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 19*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children.
- Courtney, M.E., Bost, N. & Tereo, S. (2004). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: conditions of youth preparing to leave state care*. Chicago: Chapin Hall. Available at: <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/publications/pdfs/chapin.pdf>
- The Midwest Evaluation examined the transition to adulthood of 732 youth aging out of the foster care system in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, the types of independent living services they received, and outcomes related to adult self-sufficiency. Youth were interviewed at three points in time to measure their progress from age 17 through age 21.
- Delgado, M., Fellmeth, R., Packard, T., Prosek, K., & Weichel, E. (January 2007). *Expanding Transitional Services for Emancipated Foster Youth: An Investment in California's tomorrow*. Children's Advocacy Institute, University of San Diego School of Law. Available at: <http://www.caichildlaw.org>
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- Foster Care Guide for Partnership Development* (2005) identifies the services and supports that are available under different foster care laws and related legislation and programs. It was developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/ Youth) and is designed to promote collaboration among foster care support systems. Available at: <http://jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/fostercareguide.pdf>
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- Presents data collected from case records and interviews about the life experiences, educational achievements, and current functioning of more than a thousand Casey Family Programs foster care alumni. The main goals of the study were to determine how youth placed in Casey foster care are faring as adults, and to determine predictors of success in later life — whether certain supports are associated with long-term outcomes for foster care youth.
- Pecora, P., et al., (2005). *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings From The Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. Available at: <http://www.casey.org/NR/rdonlyres/4E1E7C77-7624-4260-A253-892C5A6CB9E1/923/CaseyAlumniStudyupdated082006.pdf>
- Examined how children in foster care have fared as adults, and what changes in foster care services could improve their lives. Case record reviews were conducted for 659 alumni (479 of whom were interviewed) who had been in the care of Casey Family Programs or the Oregon or Washington state child welfare agencies between 1988 and 1998. Findings for three domains are presented: Mental Health, Education, and Employment and Finances.
- Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care (2004). *Fostering the Future: Safety, permanence and well-being for children in foster care*. Washington: Author. Available at: <http://pewfostercare.org/research/docs/FinalReport.pdf>

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## Web resources

- *The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative* is a national foundation whose various resources support the organizations mission to help youth in foster care make successful transitions to adulthood.  
<http://jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/fostercareguide.pdf>  
(*Foster Care Guide for Partnership Development* (2005) available at: <http://jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/fostercareguide.pdf>; *Supporting Foster Youth to Achieve Employment and Economic Self-Sufficiency* (2005) available at: [http://jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/supporting\\_foster\\_youth.pdf](http://jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/supporting_foster_youth.pdf))
- *The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice* has several permanency related articles and resources.  
[http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pr\\_casey\\_center\\_news.html](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/pr_casey_center_news.html)
- *The National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning* has an array of permanency resources, from bibliographies and PowerPoint presentations to webcasts and printed materials.  
[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info\\_services/permanency-planning.html](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/permanency-planning.html)
- *The Youth Transition Funders Group* is a network of grantmakers whose mission is to help all youth make a successful transition to adulthood by age 25. Website includes various publications, articles, ways to get involved, and promising practices.  
<http://www.ytfg.org/>
- *Network on the Transitions to Adulthood*, supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, examines the changing nature of early adulthood (ages 18-34), and the policies, programs, and institutions that support young people as they move into adulthood. The Network is both documenting these cultural and social shifts, and exploring how families, government, and social institutions are shaping the course of young adult's development.  
<http://www.transad.pop.upenn.edu/>
- *Promising Practices: Foster Youth Transition* provides promising practices related to foster youth transition for the state of California.  
<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/ytatideassubjectindex.html>

**Appendix A**

**A CALL FOR ACTION**

*Reference:*

Lenz-Rashid, S. (2006). *A BASSC Policy Monograph: Emancipating From Foster Care in the Bay Area*. Zellerbach Family Foundation: San Francisco, CA  
 (Report available at: <http://www.bassc.net/html/pdfs/FINALAgingOutOfFosterCare.pdf>)

**Challenge 1: Cease Early Discharge of Foster Youth**

- Need for the child welfare and judicial systems to examine the early discharge practices of older youth.
- In October 2005 the California state legislature passed a new law (SB 1633) requiring counties to allow GED preparation to count as “working on high school proficiency.”
  - Consequently, older foster youth should be allowed to remain in county-funded foster care placement until age 19. However, it is unclear how this information is being disseminated to county child welfare workers or to the juvenile courts that make the final decision about the closing of a foster care case.
  - Also, as a result of this legislation, some youth may be required by their child welfare workers and the courts to leave high school and pursue a GED educational plan if they are not expected to graduate from high school before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. This practice may need to be further examined in terms of youth’s educational rights.

<b>Program/ Policy</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>California SB 1633 - extends foster care benefits to youth who are seeking high school equivalency certificate up until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday</b>	<i>Regional Policy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information disseminated to child welfare workers SB 1633 was passed in October 2005</li> <li>• Some child welfare workers, attorneys, and judges may require foster youth, who are in jeopardy of not graduating from high school by age 19, to leave high school to pursue GED preparation</li> </ul>	<i>Regional Policy Change</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Welfare Directors should examine child welfare and juvenile court practices with regard to requiring youth to leave high school to pursue a GED (i.e. what are the educational rights of these foster youth?)</li> </ul>
<b>Extend foster care benefits until age 21 (such as Los Angeles County)</b>	<i>Programmatic</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County would have to fund the benefits from internal county dollars</li> </ul> <i>Regional Policy Change</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge about the county cost of NOT housing youth until age 21 (i.e. incarceration costs, hospitalizations, homeless services, etc.)</li> </ul>	<i>Programmatic Change</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer foster care benefits to youth accessing full-time educational plans (i.e. 2 or 4-year college, vocational training)</li> </ul> <i>Regional Policy Change</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in empirical research examining these costs on a county by county level</li> </ul>

**Challenge 2: Increase Support for Housing Interventions**

- A more thorough examination of the various housing options is needed. Counties (Social Services, Housing Authority), cities, and community-based organizations can work collaboratively to ensure there are a variety of funding option and choices for youth aging out of care, depending on their needs.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>THPP (16 to 19)</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of referrals to community-based organizations with THPP scattered site models</li> <li>• Lack of foster parent (i.e. In-Care) THPP models</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate child welfare workers to refer appropriate youth</li> <li>• Pilot In-Care Model and train foster parents in ILSP, so they can offer comprehensive THPP services</li> </ul>
<b>THP-Plus (18 to 24)</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of current community-based organizations to house THP-Plus programs</li> <li>• Lack of information to providers that in October 2005 AB 824 was signed into law enabling providers to serve former foster youth until age 24</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% county match required to access 40% state THP-Plus funding</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community adult housing providers to examine opportunities for offering THP-Plus housing to 18 to 24 year olds</li> <li>• Work with current THP-Plus providers to ensure they are serving up to age 24</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with HEY and FYA to modify state legislation to reduce county match</li> <li>• Work with local foundations/endowments to help provide match</li> <li>• Collaborate with other state and federal housing or mental health agencies to provide the county match (CYC recommended in 2004 Fall Conference Report)</li> </ul>
<b>Federal HOME Funds</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No collaboration with county child welfare or CBOs in establishing relationships with cities to access Federal Home Funds</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring together CBOs and city officials to examine funding opportunities for offering housing to 18 to 24 year olds via Federal Home Funds</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emulate Tri-City Homeless Coalition’s model and approach to working with city officials</li> </ul>
<b>Permanent Housing</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of current community-based org. offering permanent housing programs for trans. youth</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with County Housing Authority to develop “Youth Self-Sufficiency” type program, like in Alameda Co.)</li> </ul>

**Challenge 3: Develop Creative ILSP and Employment Training Interventions for Disconnected Youth**

- There is a lack of participation in ILSP and community-based employment training, especially for youth in foster care with mental health issues, geographic concerns, or behavioral issues.
  - An examination of various program models (one-stop versus scattered site versus caregiver training) and developmentally-appropriate curriculum should be conducted.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>Develop County In-home ILSP (for youth who do not want to or cannot access a one site ILSP)</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training foster parents and group home administrators can be time consuming (cost-benefit analysis has not been conducted) and coordination of funding may be a barrier</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of ILS programs using evidenced-based practice curricula (especially for employment training)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use ILSP funding to give foster and group home providers a stipend to participate in training of how to teach independent living skills to older foster youth</li> <li>• Conduct empirical research/youth evaluations to ensure training occurs (youth outcome and satisfaction data can be collected)</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a training program (possibly in collaboration with the Bay Area Academy) to train foster parents, kin providers, and group home administrators on a successful evidence-based practice model of ILSP</li> </ul>
<b>Develop County Satellite ILSP or contract out for Satellite program</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overhead costs</li> <li>• No empirical outcome research on contracted ILSP services</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot contracting out ILSP to community-based organizations (use ILSP funds to do so)</li> <li>• Conduct research/youth evaluations to ensure training occurs (collect youth satisfaction data)</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Training Programs</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside of ILSP, employment training programs are typically 40 hours over one week and a one site model (no job placement or retention services)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In ILSP, replicate Project Self-Sufficiency model (pilot program to serve older foster youth) of Youth Employment Partnership in Alameda County and Hire UP Program of Larkin Street Youth Services in San Francisco County (empirically-tested evidence based practice model)</li> </ul>

**Challenge 4: Address the Mental Health Needs of Youth**

- An emphasis should be placed on fully utilizing EPSDT monies.
- Counties could implement a Transitional Youth Mental Health Team to ensure a smooth transition for these youth from the foster care system, and perhaps into the adult mental health system.
- Lastly, Proposition 63 monies should be utilized for transitional youth leaving foster care for housing and other supportive services.

**Challenge 5: Assess and Treat Substance Use**

- Given the high numbers of current and former foster youth utilizing alcohol and illicit substances, counties should examine utilizing an assessment tool for early intervention and prevention, and explore training in the area of substance use for child welfare workers.
- Exploration of starting a California CARE program in each county is also necessary.

<b>Program/Policy</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>EPSDT/ Proposition 63</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear how each county uses EPSDT funding for mental health services for current and former foster youth</li> <li>• Lack of Transitional Youth Services (TYS) in adult county mental health programs (only in Solano, SF, and San Mateo)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Welfare Directors and Mental Health Directors should work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive plan to best use EPSDT and Proposition 63 monies for transitional youth (especially those with a history of foster care placement)</li> <li>• Implement YYS in adult county mental health to meet the unique needs of these youth</li> </ul>
<b>Mental health housing</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of mental health transitional housing for 18 to 21 year olds (only 2 counties thus far)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with community adult housing providers to replicate Fred Finch’s Coolidge Court model to 18 to 24 year olds</li> </ul>
<b>Substance use assessment</b>	<p><i>Regional Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of empirical research examining substance use of foster youth – no assessment tool utilized by any child welfare agency</li> </ul>	<p><i>Regional Policy Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in empirical research examining substance use of older foster youth (i.e. replicate Washington State Dept Social and Health Svcs by Kohlenberg et al., 2002)</li> </ul>
<b>Substance use treatment</b>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of housing options for current and former foster youth with substance use issues (only 2 sub use residential treatment models in the Bay Area for youth under age 18)</li> <li>• Lack of transitional youth substance use treatment housing programs</li> <li>• No counties accessing state CARE funds (only Sacramento and Los Angeles)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with group homes to provide sub use treatment model (replicate Thunderroad or Walden House youth services)</li> <li>• Work with adult sub use housing providers to provide transitional youth residential services</li> <li>• Work with county substance use directors to access CARE program funds for community-based organizations to access for substance abuse services for youth</li> </ul>

**Challenge 6: Improve Education Outcomes**

- Work with local school superintendents to offer more supportive foster youth programs such as been in the Oakland Unified School District’s Social Services for Foster Youth Program.
- Advocacy is also needed to ensure non-public schools meet educational standards.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>Foster Youth Services (FYS) Programs</b>	<i>Programmatic</i> • Lack of knowledge about how FYS are serving foster youth and the effectiveness of FYS	<i>Programmatic Change</i> • Ensure child welfare workers know local FYS workers • Work collaboratively with FYS programs to ensure older youth’s needs are met (i.e. access to transcripts, advocacy, etc), conduct research
<b>Transition to Higher Education</b>	<i>Programmatic</i> • Unclear what funding is available for youth as they transition to college/ vocational training	<i>Programmatic Change</i> • Have ILSP Coordinators develop policies available to youth and service providers that clearly stipulate what funding is available

**Challenge 7: Increase Social Support**

- Family Finding should be initiated
- Increase advocacy for CASA to work with older youth in care, and collaborations with mentoring programs
- Increased social support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or questioning youth is also imperative.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>
<b>Family Find</b>	<i>Programmatic</i> • Creation of a Family Find Social Work Unit may be logistically difficult given the structure of a child welfare agency	<i>Programmatic Change</i> • Replicate Santa Clara County’s Family Find Social Work Unit
<b>CASA for older youth</b>	<i>Programmatic</i> • Lack of recruitment of CASA workers to work with older foster youth (yet, California CASA is developing materials to train local CASA agencies on how to recruit CASA workers to work with older youth under a Stuart Foundation grant)	<i>Programmatic Change</i> • Child Welfare Directors should work with local CASA agencies to develop a strategic plan to recruit CASA workers to work with older youth in care (adequate training of workers is imperative)

<p><b>LGBTQ Youth</b></p>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of services for LGBTQ youth</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge about estimates of LGBTQ youth in care</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institute all CYC recommendations for serving LGBTQ youth (see page 48 of report)</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Policy Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in empirical research examining estimates of LGBTQ older foster youth</li> </ul>
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**Challenge 8: Educate Foster Youth about Their Rights and Privileges**

- There is a lack of clear understanding about the rights and privileges of former foster youth among community-based organizations.
  - Counties need to educate housing and other supportive service programs about the rights foster youth have upon emancipation, along with the various “extras” some youth can receive (i.e. money/stipends for housing or education, transportation passes, laptops etc).
  - Mandated Emancipation Conferences should occur and all counties should develop and disseminate an Emancipation Binder to every youth aging out of care like the one now available in Contra Costa County.

Program	Barriers	Action Steps
<p><b>Emancipation Resource Binder (ERB)</b></p>	<p><i>Programmatic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of information by youth and community service providers about the full rights and privileges of current and former foster youth (i.e. access to child welfare and probationary records, contact with siblings, funding and other support, etc.)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Programmatic Change</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Emancipation Resource Binder (replicate Contra Costa’s ERB), which includes firm county policies with regards to funding opportunities (i.e. Emancipated Youth Stipends, computers, vouchers, etc.), including those available from ILSP</li> </ul>

**Challenge 9: Pursue Further Research**

- More research is needed to fully understand the efficacy and client satisfaction of community-based and county services for youth aging out of care.
  - Best practices can be emulated, but only if empirical research shows that such program are working for these young people.

Program	Barriers	Action Steps
<p><b>Develop a Peer Review Team to thoroughly examine each county’s service delivery system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of funding for Peer Review Team (PRT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with private foundations to help provide funding for PRT</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collect data on how many older youth age out of care each year in each county and what their needs are</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of empirical information, lack of longitudinal data</li> <li>• Lack of funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in research examining the estimates of youth aging out of care and use School of Social Work professors to conduct research and secure funding</li> </ul>

<b>Evidence-based and strengths- based practice (especially with ILSP and community based organizations)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of empirical information, lack of longitudinal data</li><li>• Lack of funding</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct empirical research on effectiveness of ILSP and other community based organizations and use School of Social Work professors to conduct research and secure funding</li></ul>
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## Appendix B

### PROMISING PRACTICE HIGHLIGHTS-CALIFORNIA

#### Foster-Youth-Friendly One-Stops

- **North Central Counties Consortium-Colusa, Glenn, Lake, Sutter, and Yuba Counties**

The NCCC embarked on the Foster Care Youth Project, one of three pilot EDD programs supported by the governor's WIA fifteen percent funds. The goal of the project is to improve transition services for foster youth. The NCCC wanted to educate partners located in the One-Stops on serving foster youth, educate the target population about how to use the One-Stops, and educate agencies that are working with current and emancipated foster youth on the services available at the One-Stops.

**Evidence:** The county One-Stop operators were successful in accomplishing their outreach goals not only to the target population but to other organizations as well. They recorded increased service levels of both current and emancipated foster youth; improved relationships between the Departments of Social Services and One-Stops; increases in population coming in to One-Stop, whether they are being enrolled or not; and development of trust between youth and One-Stop staff so that youth are using the One-Stop system.

*North Central Counties Consortium's Foster Care Youth Project Helps Improve Transition Outcomes* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/NCCCFYPilot.pdf>

- **Voice our Independent Choices for Emancipation Support (V.O.I.C.E.S.) - Napa County**

V.O.I.C.E.S. Emancipation Center opened its doors in November 2005, and became-as far as the leaders know-the first-ever youth-led emancipation center in the United States. The Center is operated by youth and adults working together and provides a place for youth to gather services ranging from subsidized housing, a program that helps them find employment, an education program that also provides scholarships to deserving youths, a family-finding program that helps youths re-connect with their birth or chosen families, opportunities for leadership and community development. Also, in July 2007 V.O.I.C.E.S. launched its Changes program which provides youths access to specialized coaches who will support them in identifying and using community-based health resources (currently the program has 16 partners including hospitals, clinics, and children, family and insurance services).

**Evidence:** Since the program began 21 months ago it has serviced 175 clients, ages 16-25 in Napa County. Partnering agencies have extended their commitment to co-locate staff there.

*Napa V.O.I.C.E.S.: A Foster Youth One-Stop Initiated and Run by Youth* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/NapaVOICES.pdf>

- **Casey Great Start (CGS)-Sacramento County**

The Great Start program challenges foster youth to enter post-high school training and counsel and coach youth to work with employers. Great Start empowers youth with the life skills that they need to succeed and teach social responsibility, self-determination, and economic independence. The Great Start program also provides youth with services in employment, training, education, transitional housing, support services, case management, and follow-up for transitioning foster and probation youth. These services are offered at two of the One-Stop Career Centers in the areas where foster youth concentrations are the highest. The goal is to help current and former foster youth (12-24 years old) make a successful transition into adulthood.

**Evidence:** In 2006 Casey Great Start provided direct service to 160 youth. They received 245 referrals from the Independent Living Program and they connected these youth to resources. They connected 230 foster youth to employment.

*Sacramento's Casey Great Start Young Adult Program Helps Youth Meet Needs and Make Plans* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/SacramentoCaseyGreatStart.pdf>

### **Education/Career Preparation**

- ***Project HOPE-Alameda County***

The Alameda County Workforce Investment Board (ACWIB) prepares aging-out and emancipated foster youth for adulthood and the labor market through a County-wide partnership with the child welfare system known as Project HOPE: **H**elping **O**ur young **P**eople with **E**ducation and **E**mployment. The project is aimed at incorporating employment preparation services into the child welfare system. Project HOPE was one of the first programs in the nation to address the needs of foster youth by connecting County Children and Family Services with Workforce Investment Act services. To expose foster youth to a variety of community services, Project HOPE also connects them to the One-Stop career center system in Alameda County.

**Evidence:** Prior to Project HOPE, the County's workforce investment and child welfare systems did not have a history of engagement with each other. Today, both systems are working together to integrate their programs to reduce transition barriers for foster youth.

*Project HOPE: A County-Wide Partnership Extends Services to Emancipated Foster Youth* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/alamedaprojecthope.pdf>

- ***Office of Education, Youth Development Services-Contra Costa County***

The Contra Costa County Office of Education received a grant to convene countywide foster youth service providers in order to better address educational outcomes for group home youth. The strategy that was developed centered on the co-location of Education Liaisons, who are employed by CCCOE and housed at Employment and Human Services offices as well as Probation. Having Liaisons on-site provides social workers with easy access to educators familiar with school processes and procedures and created an environment that fosters collaboration. Each school district in Contra Costa County identified a Foster Youth Services Liaison who works with the County Liaison to assist with enrollment, record location, and school success. The Education Liaisons also participate in the Team Decision Making process. All transitioning youth meet with a team of professionals prior to emancipation to help them plan for a successful transition. The Workforce Investment Act Counselors work closely with the Independent Living Skills program to further support high school completion, post-secondary school opportunities, and career preparation. The WIA counselors are located at school districts and at One Stops throughout the county.

**Evidence:** In the 2005-2006 program year 550 group home youth and 950 foster and kinship families received services through the Foster Youth Service Program. Five hundred fifty-seven school records were transferred to other schools. The average number of days between entering placement and enrolling in school was two days. Eight hundred foster youth received an Education Plan and post-secondary educational support services through the Independent Living Skills program.

*Contra Costa County Foster Youth Services Program* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/ContraCostaFYServices.pdf>

- ***Foster Bridge Program -Fresno County***

Launched in the summer of 2006 by the DCFs, Fresno Workforce Investment Board, Fresno City College, Stuart Foundation, and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, this education and career pathway program for emancipated foster youth is an intensive program designed to offer current

and former foster youth the support and guidance they need in order to make a smooth transition into college and/or vocational training. The Bridge is conducted at Fresno City College. Services available to a foster youth are financial assistance, college / vocational training, career planning, assessments, assistance with enrollment into Fresno City College, childcare assistance, transportation assistance, peer support, college preparation, and Fresno City College faculty support. Students enrolling in this program enter a cohort of classes consisting of English, Math, and Guidance Studies. The foster youth have direct access to their academic counselor and set out educational plans. The students are monitored for two semesters leading up to the career/ vocational program of their choice. Students receive individualized attention concerning their personal and academic paths.

**Evidence:** The first cohort participated in a math “spa” over the summer, two weeks of remedial math work taught by an FCC math professor. The skill levels ranged from below third grade math level to higher than 10th grade. While outcome data is not yet available for the first cohort, anecdotal evidence is prevalent. Youths’ work together is also a way they are starting to advocate for one another. In addition, they are putting aside their preconceived notions about college.

*Fresno County Foster Bridge Program Provides Transition Support* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/FresnoFosterBridge.pdf>

• **Youth Employment Services (YES) Program- Glenn County**

YES is a semester-based after-school program which consists of a two-phase program. The first phase involves classroom instruction in job readiness, pre-employment skills, life skills, and work-based training preparation. The classroom portion is an ROP course which affords students academic credit. The second phase entails 100 hours of paid work experience with a local employer (either public or private). The paid work experience follows only upon successful completion of the classroom portion of the Program. Special accommodations (priority enrollment and late entry) are afforded to foster youth. Funding for the limited number of slots within YES represents a collaborative effort from multiple Glenn County agencies, including the HRA, Office of Education, Probation, and the Health Services Department.

**Evidence:** Administratively, the agencies involved have moved beyond the transition to the partnership, and they regularly coordinate all their efforts, including the development of work experience opportunities. As many as 250 youth have participated in the program annually. Successful completion rates for both phases range in the high 90’s percent. In addition, since the program stresses the importance of academics, many youth, who are not high school seniors, continue in school, often taking advantage of an unsubsidized part time job that fits their school schedule. When graduating seniors, who are not college-bound, do their paid work experience during the summer, they frequently take the opportunity to take a first real job.

*Youth Employment Services (YES) Provides Work-Preparation Services to Foster Youth* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/GLENNYES.pdf>

• **Youth Transition Action Team (YTAT)-Glenn County**

This team applies the “All Youth–One System” principles of providing an integrated set of services across systems that include four core elements: academic excellence; career preparation; youth development and support; and youth leadership. The team consists of foster parents, community members, and representatives of WIA, law enforcement, the probation department, the board of supervisors, ILP, child welfare, community colleges, mental health, California Youth Connection, former foster youths, GCOE FYS, WorkAbility, and youth employment services. YTAT meets monthly and focuses on successful transitions for foster youths. YTAT is developing a mentoring program to provide every foster youth in the county with a supportive, caring, and consistently available adult.

*Youth Employment Services (YES) Provides Work-Preparation Services to Foster Youth* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/GLENNYES.pdf>

• **The Job Market One-Stop -Humboldt County**

The Job Market in Eureka is the focus of workforce development services in Humboldt County. It serves as the One-Stop Center for the largest area of the county. The Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services, Social Services Branch, made two changes that are helping to make the Eureka One-Stop more youth friendly. The partners are using the Youth Employment Opportunity Program (YEOP) peer counselors working at the One-Stop Center to meet with any youth who comes to the center and help them get connected to services. In addition, the partners decided to describe the available services along a continuum, from the least intrusive self-service options through peer counseling and on to high intervention services. A brochure for youth to highlight these options has been developed.

**Evidence:** The numbers of youth aged 14 – 18 rose 50% over the 1st quarter of 2006. Also other foster youth-serving programs are including The Job Market One-Stop in their trainings (including Independent Living Skills trainings and school curriculum). Staff at the One-Stop have also responded positively to having youth counselors meet with youth customers.

*Humboldt County Peer Counselors Help Foster Youth Navigate Employment Referral Options-* Humboldt County report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/HumboldtPeerCounselors.pdf>

• **Adolescent Career Transition (ACT)-Kern County**

In 2002, the Kern High School District Career Resource Department staff decided to send in a separate proposal to the WIB to work with emancipated foster youth. The WIB approved the proposal and has funded the program, known as Adolescent Career Transition (ACT), since that time. ACT is designed to assist youth, age 18, who are emancipating from the foster care system achieve self-sufficiency. Paid work-experience of up to 500 hours is coupled with life skills courses to assist youth with the transition to adulthood. Referrals to this program are made via Department of Human Services, Independent Living Program staff who continues to work with CRD staff to ensure the success of the young adults. Monthly workshops are conducted around topics of interest as determined by participants to further assist their transition to adulthood. Monthly incentives are available to eligible participants providing further external motivation for success. The goal is for each young person to get an unsubsidized, private sector job by the end of their time in the program.

**Evidence:** The following chart presents some of the recent data:

Total Number Served	Hired (at WEX site)	Attending Post-Secondary	Military	Diploma Attained / Diplomas Possible	WIA Goals Attained
68	19	28	4	8/13	178

*Kern County Adolescent Career Transition (ACT) Provides Paid Work Experience* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/KernCountyACT.pdf>

• **Project Success-Kern County**

The Career Resource Department staff received feedback from participants in the district’s paid work experience program for emancipated foster youth (Adolescent Career Transitions, or ACT) that the program was great, but they needed work experience sooner. After hearing from the ACT participants, the Career Resource Center (CRC) staff decided to take some of their existing in-

school Workforce Investment Act (WIA) grant money to provide work preparation classes, one-on-one counseling, and paid work experience for foster youth who were in school. Project Success provides foster youth (14—18 years old) the opportunity to obtain 5 credits towards high school graduation in an 8th period class in Career Development. The course focuses on employability skills, soft skills and attainment of independent living skills needed for life after emancipation. Successful completion of the 6 week course entitles youth to 100 hours of paid work experience.

**Evidence:** The program is evaluated using the WIA criteria: Improving basic skills, gaining employment, etc. The following chart shows data for foster youth served in October of 2006:

Total Number Served (inc. CE)	Number Completed / Possible Completers	Diploma Attained / Diplomas Possible	HS Certificate of Completion	Hired (at WEX site)	WIA Goals Attained
130	89/129	21/31	5/6	8	274

*Kern County’s Project Success Offers Career Preparation and Paid Work Experience for In-School Foster Youth* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/KernCountyProjectSuccess.pdf>

• **Office of Education All Youth-One System, Lake County**

This model uses a four-pronged approach: (1) Youth development is addressed through such activities as “Independent City” in which LCOE FYS participates each year in partnership with Child Protective Services. In addition, FYS offers a curriculum called “Personal Development for Teens.” (2) Youth leadership is addressed by connecting youths to “Leadership Summits” and other opportunities for students to develop and showcase their leadership skills. (3) During the summer between the eighth and ninth grades, FYS assists the youth in developing an academic plan, helping to ensure that every foster youth is given the opportunity to earn a diploma and to stay in a stable school placement. Follow-up meetings are conducted to address barriers, assess how the plan is working, and revise the plan as necessary. (4) Career preparation is addressed through an extensive process of assessment; referral to such partners as WIA and Transition Partnership Programs for job development and career placement; and, exploration of trade schools and colleges. Independent living and related skills necessary for employment are addressed through “Life on my Own,” a program developed in collaboration with Child Protective Services. This program is offered to foster youths in high schools. Youths are also connected to regional occupational programs and community college classes that align with their career goals.

• **Early Start to Emancipation Program (ESTEP)-Los Angeles County**

Creates community connections for youth through a *community college-centered* model of program delivery. This model brings youth onto their local community college campus for workshops, and introduces them to the vast academic, financial and vocational resources available at the college and other resources in their neighborhood to help them attain basic skills, job readiness skills, high-school diplomas, entry and retention in post-secondary education, advanced training, and employment or registered apprenticeship programs. The program’s goal is to support these youth in their successful transition to adulthood through essential preparation and mentoring. Dedicated outreach staff, known as Outreach Advisors (OA), provide the necessary one-on-one relationships youth need to overcome obstacles they may face as they plan for emancipation. OAs provide in-home assessments, help the youth develop their Transitional Independent Living Plan, and to identify and achieve 10 Tangible Outcomes essential for successful independent living.

- **Evidence:** As of 2006, the program helped over 16,000 16 to 21 year-old foster and probation youth in Los Angeles County. TCCF's unique model of service delivery has been successful in achieving an 80% retention rate of youth in its ILP program.

- ***The Guardian Scholars Program-Orange County***

Sponsored by the Orangewood Children's Foundation, *The Guardian Scholars Program* is a comprehensive program consisting of financial aid, life coaching, mentoring, housing and personalized attention. It enables emancipated foster youth to successfully engage in attending a college, university or vocational school, which fits their educational preparedness, degree objectives and long-term career goals. Scholars receive a great deal of individual attention, have access to a variety of educational supports, receive assistance with housing, are linked with a mentor and are encouraged to become part of a community of learning. Combining education with life-skill development and loving support differentiates this program from other scholarships.

**Evidence:** Retention rate of nearly 70 percent, better than the community at large.

Website: <http://www.orangewoodfoundation.org/docs/Guardian%20Scholars/GS-ProgramDescr%20revised.pdf>

- ***Kaleidoscope of Employment for Youth Success (K.E.Y.S)-Placer County***

K.E.Y.S. is a collaborative contract with the Placer County Office of Education, Foster Youth Services, Department of Rehabilitation, and PRIDE Industries. K.E.Y.S. provides employment services to 16- through 19-year-old foster youth who face significant barriers to employment and are in out-of-home placement. Employment services include enhanced skills development in the following areas: comprehensive vocational assessment; paid community work experience; job placement; job search techniques; job specific tours; linkage to community resources; résumé writing; interviewing techniques; money management; peer support; and job retention. Youths have an opportunity to be placed in an External Situational Assessment, a 5- to 10-day paid community-based work experience in an identified area of interest.

- ***Youth Empowerment Services (YES)-San Diego County***

In 2000 the key partners—Casey Family Programs, San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP), and ACCESS, Inc.—developed the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Program. Now called the YES Transition Network, it provides services that address the unmet needs of many emancipating foster youth, especially in the areas of remedial education, housing, work readiness skills, and connections to employment opportunities. It serves current and former foster youth as well as other at-risk youth from 13 through 24. YES has a strong and active employment services component, but staff recognize the fact that youth cannot successfully deal with employment and career issues until they have addressed other life challenges as well. To that end, they work with youth on a continuum of services and activities that blend employment with the other transition issues they must handle.

**Evidence:** Casey Family Programs has continuously reviewed the YES Program and has expressed a high level of satisfaction with the services and strategies employed. Casey Family Programs have established the YES Program as one of the two models of transition services to be developed within their system of service. The SDWP has also consistently reviewed files and has given high marks not only for numbers achieved but services provided.

*San Diego Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Offers Connections to Range of Services* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/SanDiegoYes.pdf>

- ***Tutor Connection-San Diego County***

Tutor Connection is a unique collaboration between the SDCOE FYS program; Casey Family Programs; the California State University San Marcos (CSUSM); San Diego County Health and

Human Services; and Child Welfare Services. Casey Family Programs provides a standard curriculum to future teachers enrolled in a prerequisite course, Pluralism in Schools, within the College of Education at CSUSM. In turn, the future teachers provide one-on-one tutoring to youths in foster care as a community service learning project. The SDCOE FYS program serves as a referral source to the Tutor Connection; acts as an intermediary to ensure that substitute caregivers allow for service provision; provides a curriculum to CSUSM students that is specific to foster youth legislation and mandates; and plans to replicate the Tutor Connection model at another university in San Diego County.

**Evidence:** As of February 2006, more than 675 future teachers had participated in the program. More than 800 foster youths (Feb. 2006) had received tutoring services through this program and demonstrated academic growth in as little as 12 weeks.

- ***College Connection-San Diego County***

College Connection is composed of a FYS College Connection Advisory Council, with representatives from community colleges, universities, health and human services agencies, community service agencies, and others working together to create a seamless approach to increasing awareness of available opportunities to further foster youth education. This program provides opportunities for foster youths to experience college and university campuses through College Connection Day events designed to optimize real-life higher education experiences. A typical event involves upward of 75 foster youths who spend a day on a college campus. Students may simulate applying to the college, registering for classes, attending mock classes, or participating in a variety of other activities.

- ***Independent Living Skills Program- San Francisco County***

The San Francisco Independent Living Skills Program works to build lifelong relationships with the youth who come through their doors. They have found that a continued connection is as just as important as any of the skills that they teach. The program offers four independent living (IL) skills courses, each for a different age group. The Early IL course for youth aged 14-15 focuses on group work and building self-esteem, and the Core IL course for ages 16-18 helps with life skills, schoolwork and college preparation. There is a transition program for 17 and 18-year-olds to plan their emancipation, and aftercare for youth 18-21 that works to get them housing, jobs and financial skills. All of the San Francisco IL Skills Program's staff and services are in their main office, which also has TVs and movies to provide a friendly community space.

**Website:** <http://www.sfilsp.org/home.html>

- ***Shasta County Independent Living Program***

Beginning in 2005, the Youth & Family Programs Agency contracted with Shasta County to run the Independent Living Program (ILP) for youth ages 16 to 21. Youth & Family created an ILP that combines experiential learning with a relationship-based approach; each youth is assigned a permanent caseworker.

*Shasta County Independent Living Program Builds Enduring Relationships with Transitioning Youth* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/ShastaILP.pdf>

- ***Workforce Investment Board-Youth Transitions Program- Tulare County***

The YTP, which began in November 2006, places students and trainees in clerical jobs with Tulare County at Health and Human Services Agency locations. The YTP serves current and former foster youth ages 16-21. About 50% of participants are in care and 50% have emancipated. Youth can work for up to 1600 hours over two years, earning \$7.50 per hour. Each youth is assigned a mentor to guide them through the experience. When a given youth and his/her mentor feel he/she is ready for a permanent job, he/she can enter into the competitive job process for County positions. The Transitions collaborative offers training, job placement, mentoring, and

support services. These young people gain the skills and confidence necessary for successful transitioning to adulthood, employment and self-sufficient lives.

*Tulare County Youth Transitions Program Offers Paid Work Experience* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/TulareYouthTransition.pdf>

- ***Project T.R.E.N.D.S.S.-Ventura County***

A pilot project that operated between July of 2003 and June of 2004 by the Ventura County Youth Council expanded and enhanced services available to foster youth. T.R.E.N.D.S.S. stood for **T**eens **R**eaching for **E**mployment **N**ow and **D**eveloping **S**elf-Sufficiency. The project targeted foster youth ages 16-21, with a primary focus on emancipating or recently emancipated youth, ages 18-19. Services included career counseling, information on local employers and occupations, vocational training, subsidized work experience, job preparation workshops, job placement assistance, and follow-up support to ensure long-term success. Even though Project T.R.E.N.D.S.S. ended, self-sustaining networks were established to continue to connect workforce and child welfare services in the county.

**Evidence:** Project T.R.E.N.D.S.S. provided at least 35 foster youth throughout Ventura County with career counseling, information on local employers and occupations, vocational training, subsidized work experience, job preparation workshops, job placement assistance, and follow-up support to ensure long-term success. Most stayed with the required activities. “We [saw] that when youth connect to the activities we have going for them, it helps them to focus and stay out of trouble,” commented Frank Ramirez, Youth Services Manager for Ventura County.

*Ventura County Project T.R.E.N.D.S.S. Coordinated Services across Systems* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/VenturaTRENDSS.pdf>

## **Housing**

- ***Tri-City Homeless Coalitions’ Project Independence- Alameda County***

Project Independence (PI) helps youth, from 18 to 24, who have aged out of the foster care system in Alameda County, and their children, by providing them with affordable housing linked to comprehensive supportive services. PI youth live in subsidized apartments at scattered sites and participate in case management, education and vocational training, employment placement, financial literacy training, mental and physical healthcare and addiction recovery programs. This housing plus services strategy is effective because it provides youth with a stable foundation and adult support while they finish their education or job training, find new employment and/or overcome psychological problems that interfere with their ability to live independently. Foster youth must be employed before entering the program and be able to pay a deposit and one month’s rent. All youth start the program by paying one third of their income towards rent then gradually increase the amount of rent they pay as they become more independent. Tri-City Homeless Coalition pays the remaining rent from public and private funding sources such as the California State HOME program and most recently, the Foster Youth Housing Initiative. The rental subsidy portion of the program lasts up to two and a half years.

Website: [http://www.tricityhomeless.org/Programs/project\\_independence.html](http://www.tricityhomeless.org/Programs/project_independence.html)

- ***First Place Fund for Youth- Alameda County***

Located in Oakland, First Place Fund’s *Emancipation Training Center* serves about 500 youth a year, and it is open to everyone who chooses to join. It includes resources for finding housing and work, and offers tutoring, therapy and emergency support for food and utility bills. Their most requested program is the *Supported Housing Program*, which provides safe and affordable apartments to 86 emancipated foster youth. First Place Fund owns the participant’s unit or the lease to the unit and subsidizes the participant’s rent. Gradually, the portion paid by First Place Fund is reduced to the point that the participant is paying the full rent at the end of the two-year

program. Moreover, First Place Fund provides the participant with life skills training, move-in assistance, a move-in stipend of \$200, a \$50 food stipend, and monthly community building events wherein participants select and plan an event as well as weekly visits from a social worker. First Place Fund presents an excellent model of a transitional housing program because it allows the participant to have a sense of permanency; the unit does not represent another in a long line of temporary placements. For the *Emancipation Specialist Program*, which helps 40 at-risk youth graduate from high school, teens meet regularly with caseworkers known as Youth Advocates. The Youth Advocates offer long-term support and help with decision-making as well as with schoolwork.

**Evidence:** Outcome data suggests that youth who participate in First Place Fund's program are six times less likely to become incarcerated, four times less likely to be homeless, four times less likely to receive public assistance, and 50% more likely to be employed.

- ***My Home THP+- Stanislaus County***

Youth live with "lifelong connections" and receive an integrated model of transitional housing, employment, and permanency services case-managed by an ILP/Aftercare social worker in coordination with the youth and lifelong connection. The My Home THP+ is limited to 24 months and requires that youth contribute in gradually increasing amounts for their room, board and/or utilities. Current funding will support approximately 16 eligible Stanislaus County youth annually. The desired outcome is that emancipating youth will have a stable home environment where they will be provided with housing and emotional support. This housing stability will allow the youth to pursue their educational goals or to seek vocational training whereby they may find employment and become functioning members of society.

**Evidence:** Foster youth who received THP+ services will be three times less likely to be incarcerated, four times less likely to be homeless and twice as likely to complete high school than those who aren't helped.

- ***Bridges to Independence- Los Angeles County***

This program provides transitional housing for former foster youth, ages 18-21, throughout Los Angeles County. Residents maintain their own apartment while receiving DCFS provided case management services, counseling, education and career assistance and weekly life skills training in areas such as budgeting and meal preparation. The cornerstone of the program is a unique public/private partnership between UFC, DCFS, the Community Development Commission of Los Angeles County, the Weingart Foundation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program has served over 1,100 youth since inception. The collaboration has different programs for three categories of emancipated youth. The A group are those with a plan to attend college or the military or have a family. The B group have high school education but no resources. The C group has been involved in gangs, drugs, alcohol or prostitution. Youth who stay in one of these programs eighteen months, must open a bank account and save money, be involved in education or work or both. Classes are provided in how to keep an apartment, develop a menu, and cook. Covenant House serves the C group who receive intensive services.

- ***Larkin Street Youth Services' LEASE Program-San Francisco County***

Larkin Street Youth Services is the only organization providing the full spectrum of services needed to help San Francisco's most vulnerable youth move beyond life on the street. Offers a range of housing options – from emergency shelter to permanent supportive housing – in addition to essential wraparound services including education, technology and employment training; healthcare, including mental health, substance abuse and HIV services; and case management. Larkin Street's continuum of care is nationally recognized as a model of innovative and effective care.

**Evidence:** 75% of those who enroll in comprehensive services find a permanent pathway off the streets.

Website: <http://www.larkinstreetyouth.org/about/index.php>

## Coordinating Youth Services

- ***Centralized Case Management System-Imperial County***

Imperial County serves youth through a case management approach that is centralized through one contractor who refers youth to additional services. These referred services are both WIA and Non-WIA services. This approach has lent itself to improved controls and flexibility throughout their service system, including an ability to see where systemic improvements need to occur in providing quality services and overall improvement of performance. Strengthening partnerships through cross agency integration of both WIA and non-WIA to stretch limited funding and achieving ultimate goal of serving youth of Imperial County has assisted in creating a win-win for both service system and for youth. Through this service delivery system, Imperial County is able to target specific youth populations, including current and former foster youth. Additionally, their local Youth Council has implemented a policy of Priority of Need where Foster Youth and Emancipated Youth are given a high score of priority for enrollment into the WIA youth services. **Evidence:** Since transitioning to centralized case management, their overall performance has increased despite budget reductions of 60 percent. In fact, performance is 34 percent above their benchmark. In addition, they've seen minimal changes in the number of youth served. In 1999, they were serving an average of 570 youth with a budget of 2.5 million dollars. By 2004, their funding had declined to 1 million dollars for youth, yet they were able to serve 550 youth and exceed their performance agreements.

*Imperial County Establishes a Centralized Case Management System* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/GLENNYES.pdf>

- ***Miscellaneous Court Order to Support Cross-Agency Cooperation-Orange County***

OCWIB and OCSSA staffs have secured court-ordered information sharing. They worked together to secure a miscellaneous court order that allows five agencies to share information. The court order permits them to share all relevant information and recordings including, but not limited to, Transitional Independent Living Plans, Vocational Assessments, WIA contract progress reports, and outcome reports among the members of multidisciplinary services teams.

*Orange County Miscellaneous Court Order Supports Cross-Agency Cooperation* report available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/OrangeCtyCourtOrder.pdf>

## Youth Leadership

- ***Emancipation Conferencing- Glenn County***

The Glenn County Office of Education FYS program participates in emancipation conferencing for foster youths in their senior year of high school. The emancipation meetings are youth led and provide an opportunity for youth to discuss their feelings about what will happen after their emancipation hearing. Other members of the emancipation conference team include foster parents, relatives or adults who may be a support person for the youth, a WIA representative, and social workers. The team develops a plan to ensure that foster youths have a support system in place when they leave the foster care system. The plan includes strategies to address living arrangements, continuing or higher education, career plans, adult connections, and the building of a support network.

- ***The California Youth Connection***

The California Youth Connection is guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth with the assistance of other committed community members. California Youth Connection promotes the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system. California Youth Connection strives to improve social work practice and child welfare policy. CYC Chapters in counties throughout the state identify local issues and use grassroots and community organizing to create change.

Website: <http://www.calyouthconn.org/site/cyc/>

- ***Attitude Explosion Leadership Conferences-Sacramento County***

A conference designed and produced by youth where information can be shared about community resources and about other topics that youth feel are important. The conference targets foster youth nearing emancipation from the foster care system and is designed to help them transition successfully to life on their own. The topics presented are all selected by the youth and include the role that a positive attitude plays in one's success, accepting personal responsibility for appropriate behavior, career decision-making, and a host of other relevant topics. "The conference is about the fundamentals and the enduring impact of a positive attitude," said Powell. "By offering these annual conferences, we are encouraging young people to think about their future and to take responsibility for making appropriate decisions." It is also a venue designed to familiarize youth with community resources as well as let them know that there are support sources available. The presenters offer suggestions as to how the youth can enhance their attitudes at home, on the job, and in their community. There are also sessions geared to the needs and interests of caregivers.

**Evidence:** Held annually for four years. On average, approximately 300 youth and 50 care providers attended each conference. The response has been positive each time. "Every year we would receive calls asking when the next event would be," Powell said. "Our vendors and supporters continued to assist us. We also had a positive response from social workers, probation officers, and staff at nonpublic schools."

*Attitude Explosion Leadership Conferences for Emancipating Foster Youth* available at: <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/SanJuanConference.pdf>

## **Community Services and Support**

- ***California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I)-Alameda, Fresno, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Stanislaus*** (Orange and Humboldt County are new county partners joining in 2007 or early 2008)

A pilot program of California's Family to Family Initiative (F2F); CC25I is a foster youth transitions reform initiative targeted towards youth ages 14 to 24. The CC25I aims to accomplish the following objectives: 1) provide financial, technical and administrative assistance to several counties to provide supports and services for transitioning foster care youth; 2) develop effective strategies and tools for counties to conduct ongoing evaluation of the impacts that services and programs developed for transitional youth are having on the desired client-level outcomes (high school graduation, employment, secure housing, etc); and 3) document the county systems changes that take place over the course of the Initiative's implementation. CC25I counties receive up to \$480,000 in grant assistance over three years to implement plans developed as a result of a self-assessment process and technical assistance.

**Evidence:** County planning and implementation of CC25I proposals is on track and sites are very excited by their work and progress. Partnerships are being expanded and promising programs and practices are developing within the counties. This includes new partnerships with local education agencies, financial institutions, local Workforce Investment Boards, and the start-up of three new Gateway programs and three new Transitional Housing Plus programs (THP+). The increased focus on K-12 education outcomes and post-secondary education has resulted in several CC25I

counties considering development of Guardian Scholar programs. In addition, several counties are implementing matched savings accounts (Individual Development Accounts) to encourage financial competency, savings, and asset development.

*California Connected by 25 Initiative* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/CAconnectedby25.pdf>

• ***First Place Fund for Youth: Emancipation Specialist Program-Alameda County***

The Emancipation Specialist Program serves approximately 70 foster youths per year. The program provides discharge planning and weekly case management for youths who are within one year of discharge. Emancipation specialists consider the psychological needs of the youth in helping them to develop plans, emancipation goals, and community linkages in the areas of housing, education, and employment. These specialists are trained clinicians who deliver therapeutic case management services in nontraditional settings. In addition to the Emancipation Specialist Program, First Place Fund for Youth also operates an Emancipation Training Center, which provides training and assistance to approximately 450 current and former foster youths annually, and a Supported Housing Program, which provides affordable housing and a wide range of services and supports.

• ***San Pasqual Academy-San Diego County***

First-in-the-nation residential education campus designed specifically for foster teens, offering an alternative placement option in the continuum of care for San Diego County foster teens. Provides foster teens with a stable, caring home, a quality, individualized education, and preparation for independent living. San Pasqual Academy is built around a unique partnership of public and private agencies. New Alternatives, Inc., a non-profit agency, administers the residential component of the Academy. Foster youth, who live in homes with up to seven peers and house parents, learn how to run a household, including preparing meals and managing household functions and finances. In addition to the care and supervision provided by the residential program, New Alternatives, Inc. offers services through the on-campus Health and Wellness Center, a Day Rehabilitation Clinic, an Intergenerational Mentoring Program, and an Alumni Housing Program. The San Diego County Office of Education provides the on-site high school program. Class sizes are kept small to ensure personal attention and individual access to computers. Extra-curricular programs include sports, music, culinary arts instruction, and yoga. The YES Program, offers a Work Readiness and Self-Sufficiency Program on campus. Each youth must request placement at the Academy, which makes a big difference in the youths' attitudes about being there. Since youth choose to be at the Academy, they take ownership of their home and school.

**Evidence:** Entering its seventh Academic year. In the class of 2005, 22 youth graduated; 16 went directly on to college. The other six enrolled in the Academy's transitional living program, which requires them to enroll in college and get a job within a certain time frame.

*San Pasqual Academy Emphasizes Cross-Agency Collaboration* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/SanPasqualAcademy.pdf>

• ***Fostering the Future-San Mateo County***

Fostering the Future (FTF) is a collaboration of nonprofits, governmental agencies and Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Center for Venture Philanthropy. Launched in 2005 after two years of extensive planning, FTF creates a model of transition support for youth ages 11 to 25 that are in foster or kinship care or who have emancipated. At the base is the asset team approach, which offers three distinct support services: (1) Asset coaches work with youth one-on-one and in groups to help them create goals and objectives that will lead toward attainment of their dreams. The coaches help youth build a strong base of educational and developmental assets by pulling on their strengths and talents, while developing skills and connections with the community. (2) A

housing advocate works directly with emancipating youth and kinship youth moving out of the home of a relative caregiver. She works one-on-one and in groups to help young people learn how to determine the best housing situation, how to locate housing and build the skills to retain the housing. She is also working with landlords and associations in the region to make more housing available to the youth. (3) A legal advocate works with youth, caregivers, social workers, and school personnel on educational rights. She provides training opportunities for these audiences and direct intervention where needed. If other legal needs arise, she will assist the youth or refer them to the appropriate person for help. In addition to providing direct service to young people, the program also addresses local systems change. Many services formerly available only to foster youth are now available to youth in kinship care. This is seen as a strong effort to protect the viability of at-risk families and keep young people out of foster care.

*In San Mateo County, Fostering the Future Develops Model to Support Transitioning Youth and to Change Local System* report available at:

<http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/promisingpractices/SanMateoFosteringTheFuture.pdf>

• **County Permanency Team- Tulare County**

The Tulare County Permanency Team has been in operation since December 2004. It includes a coalition of agencies and nonprofit organizations focused on improving services provided to Tulare County foster youths to support them in achieving permanency following emancipation. Critical issues identified by the team include living skills development, transitional housing, regard for foster children as valued assets, mentoring, and promotion of foster youths' awareness of their rights. Members of the team include representatives from the TCOE FYS program; Court Appointed Special Advocates of Tulare County, College of the Sequoias, foster parent education, Community Services & Employment Training, Inc., juvenile court attorney in private practice, Tulare County Child Welfare Services/Independent Living Program, Tulare County Foster Youth Advisory Council, Tulare County Housing Authority, Tulare County Juvenile Court, Tulare County Probation Department, Tulare County Public Defender (Juvenile Division), and Youth Development Zone.

Some strategies employed by other states include:

***Arizona***

- Extended foster care program allows emancipating youth to remain in care on a voluntary, contractual basis. In exchange for a \$585 monthly stipend and services from the social service agency, the youth must actively pursue education or vocational training. Under certain circumstances, youth who are employed but not attending school or who are involved in therapy may also remain in care. Monthly stipends are sent directly to the participating youth.

***Connecticut***

- CWS established a liaison position with the Job Corps program to meet with foster care youth to determine whether they are appropriate candidates for the program, and to monitor their progress, address any obstacles or concerns, and help youth plan for the future.
- Independent living officials collaborate with business owners, nonprofit organizations, and other state agencies to develop an experiential employment training program that gives youth 16 and older the opportunity to learn skills through participation in workshops covering all aspects of a local business. For example, some youth work in a boatbuilding business and learn skills ranging from carpentry and construction to sales and financial management.
- Work to Learn Program provides an opportunity for foster youth to experience vocational opportunities and employment. Starts at 14 where youth visit employers – idea is to help them learn what opportunities are available. At 16 or 17, youth are given the opportunity to actually work. Right now, this program is in 3/5 of the state – working on instituting it in the rest.
- Strong Youth Advisory Boards are present at each and every office of the state where youth (16 or older) serve on youth advisory boards to help with policy, and advisory about youth homes.
- Strong post-secondary program – able to keep kids in the system until age 23. Have policy in place (but not a statute) where youth can attend any post-secondary program that they are accepted into (anywhere in the country) as long as they cover the first \$500 and apply for all grants and scholarships. Approx. 400 youth currently enrolled in some post-secondary program. Computer provided for each youth high school graduate who's going on to post-secondary.

***Florida***

- CW officials work with local housing authorities to assist youth in accessing federal housing vouchers provided by HUD. For example, in Tallahassee, Florida, the local housing authority secured 30 of 100 available housing vouchers for youth emancipating from foster care and established a case manager position especially for the youth in the program.
- The independent living program officials worked with the state's youth mental health department to access the Assertive Community Treatment for Teens Program. The program consisted of community-based teams—nurses, job developers, housing and education officials, and other relevant stakeholders—who work together to develop integrated service plans for youth with serious and persistent mental illness.
- Independent living staff utilize a community resource know as the speakers' bureau—a service that links members of the community with youth to talk about a wide range of professions and activities.

***Hawaii***

- Emancipating youth are engaged in the process of goal-focused emancipation by having the option to convene a meeting with adults in their lives with whom they would like to share the youth circle. The youth comes up with emancipation or life goals and volunteers are solicited from the circle to help with specific tasks. The focus of the circles is "becoming an adult." Youth direct who is there, how the meeting begins, what food is served, and many of the transition goals. The circles reconvene a few times during the transition to independence to check on goal progress and alert participants as to needs or changes in the plan.

### *Illinois*

- Youth may remain wards of the court until age 21 provided they are involved in a postgraduate educational or vocational training program. In order to remain wards, the youth must petition the court. Extended foster care is the youth's option, not the court's. If jurisdiction is retained, the court holds status hearings and the youth continues to have an assigned caseworker. However, the caseworker's involvement depends on the youth's needs. Youth may remain in state-subsidized foster homes, transitional living programs, or on their own.

### *Idaho*

- Idaho uses the Casey Family Program to provide care for children and youth when reunification is not a goal. Casey uses innovative practices to foster long-term family relationships, such as flying youth out of state to meet extended family members. Casey also employs case workers who specialize in working with older youth.
- In Idaho, CASAs are typically appointed to a "sibling unit," so CASAs do not serve adolescents exclusively. About 50% of youth in care have a volunteer CASA; staff makes up the balance. All youth are served, but not all are served by volunteers.

### *Maine*

- The Opportunity Passport program is being piloted in Portland, Maine as well as other cities around the country. It involves three components:
  - *Debit Account:* Many young people leaving care are unable to open a regular bank account because of a lack of income or permanent address. As a result, many rely on check cashing businesses, which charge exorbitant fees. Assisting youth in opening a debit account enables them to deposit paychecks, obtain cash, learn how to use the banking system and manage money on a daily basis.
  - *Individual Development Account:* This matched savings account is designed to help young people learn to build material assets and reward responsible behavior. The program will match, dollar-for-dollar, every deposit the person makes into the account, up to \$1,000 a year, for three years. These funds can be withdrawn and used only for specific purposes such as tuition, job training, a down payment on a car, medical expenses or other emergencies.
  - *Door Openers:* Working with local businesses, schools and organizations, the program creates special opportunities for former foster care youth, such as help in getting and keeping a job, developing long-term help in obtaining low-interest student loans or tuition waivers, and help connecting with adults in the community who can serve as mentors.

### *New York*

- The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and the Office of Housing Policy and Development (HPAD), in cooperation with the New York City Housing Authority, has a Section 8 Priority Code for young people aging out of the foster care system. This

program provides Section 8 vouchers or public housing units to qualified current and former ACS Independent Living clients.

- In December of 2005, the Children's Aid Society opened the Next Generation Center in the South Bronx. The Next Generation Center helps youth make the transition to independence by giving them the skills and support they need to be able to rely on themselves. It is open to all young people ages 14-24, but it focuses on youth leaving foster care. Youth who join work closest with those on the staff who they bond with, instead of being assigned a social worker. Currently (summer of 2007), the Next Generation Center is moving to a state-of-the-art new building. The new center will feature a full teaching kitchen and computer lab, a sound studio, a performance space and a youth-run café-in addition to the services in education, health care, housing, job training and legal help that are already offered. The center currently serves about 200 youth. It hopes to double or triple this number when it moves to its new location because of the serious need for its services.

### ***North Carolina***

- Division of Social Services' LINKS Program allows maximum flexibility in eligibility for services by setting aside funding that can be accessed directly to accommodate the individual needs of young people aging out of the system. Caseworkers evaluate youths' strengths and resources, explore other resources, and use these funds to supplement existing resources as needed. The LINKS Special Funds Program is a resource for youth who are willing participate in planning and implementing solutions to problems. Youth may be eligible for four funds:
  - The Trust Fund* can be used for non-housing costs that might be barriers to a youth's transition to adulthood. Examples include auto repair, insurance, computers, and furniture.
  - Transitional Housing Funds*. Up to \$1,500 per year is available to help with room and board expenses. These funds might also be used to repair homes owned or being purchased by youth. Youth who receive these funds must also retain Transitional Services to ensure all needs are addressed.
  - Extremely High Risk Funds*. Up to \$1,500 per year is available to any youth determined to be at high risk. These funds must be spent on services, activities, or purchases that can reduce defined risks. Each county determines risk.
  - Scholarship/Conference Funds* can be used toward conference attendance involving foster youth, or as educational incentives to encourage youth to remain in school or purchase school materials.

### ***Ohio***

- *Lighthouse Youth Services* focuses on housing and provides apartments owned by private landlords. Teens that are close to aging out are referred to the program by county children's services and stay about six months, often until high school graduation. Almost all of the teens interviewed are accepted; the few who don't make the cut are those who can't function independently. In addition to providing apartments, *Lighthouse* pays security deposits, rent, utilities, phone bills and furnishings, and allot each youth a weekly allowance for food, part of which goes into savings. Counselors have a caseload of about 10 clients, and check in weekly. They provide assistance in obtaining GEDs, applying for college and finding apartments when clients leave care.

### ***Pennsylvania***

- At the *Philadelphia Achieving Independence* (AI) Center, there are 16 different groups that offer services in the building. Together, these groups try to meet young people's individual needs: from help with school from Temple University, to sex education from Planned Parenthood, to transitional housing from the Valley Youth House. Youth

members of the AI Center can pick and choose the services they want, and every member gets an individualized plan. Every youth also gets a coach, similar to a social worker, who helps them figure out their options and offers support when problems come up.

### *Texas*

- Established local, cross-system network composed of youth in foster care, emancipated youth, caregivers and professionals to facilitate linkages and improve the delivery of services to youth transitioning out of foster care.
- The child welfare agency worked with the Orphan Foundation of America—a nonprofit organization—so youth could access a Web-based mentoring program. Youth participating in the program were matched with online mentors based on mutual interests, and they communicated regularly via e-mail or by phone.
- Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC), in Dallas, Texas provides services such as job training, life skills training and social work support, transition planning and housing, and also services from state, federal and private agencies.

### *Virginia*

- Youth Input for Independent Living Skills Training-In Arizona, a strong coalition of youth organized by the Children's Action Alliance has advocated that the choice of independent living skills topics and the design of the teaching need to be chosen by foster care youth. In Virginia, the Youth Advisory Council, made up of current and former foster youth, ages 15 – 21, provides invaluable insight to the development of independent living skills and other services.

### *Washington*

- The Foster Care to 21 Program allows youth pursuing a post-secondary education to remain in care. Youth who participate must be able to stay with their current foster family or current group home placement—it's therefore a good option for youth who are happy with their placement. Youth who live independently or return to their biological family may not participate in the program.
- The Independent Youth Housing Program, which began in July, 2007 provides housing stipends and case management services to youth, until age 23, who have exited the foster care system at age 18.
- The Educational Advocacy Program is focused on improving the educational outcomes of youth in care by addressing individual needs. Educational Advocates work in collaboration with social workers, but their role is somewhat different. Educational Advocates offer trainings to caregivers and social workers on what type of educational benefits are available for youth in care, and also work directly with youth on building self-advocacy skills.
- The Foster Care to College Program pairs foster youth with mentors of similar vocational interest. The program, which is geared towards educational achievement (completion of high school and seeking post secondary education), is funded through foundations. The program includes seminars starting in sixth grade. The seminars focus on what youth need to do in order to prepare for post-secondary education.
- Washington is the only state to have dependency guardianships. Dependency guardianships are a form of care where the youth is still considered to be in the care of the state, but the caregiver has the responsibilities of a guardian. The caregiver can request services, sign for medical services, etc. A dependency guardianship relationship may apply to both kinship care and non-relative foster care. Dependency guardianships are less common now because the Department generally pushes for permanency.