



Foster Youth Career Development Access and Success

The Challenge

Career development, training, and employment is key to every child's development and preparation for adulthood, it is especially critical for children in foster care who must navigate multiple systems during and after care- often without the benefit of a permanent relationship with an adult, family, or community to support them on that journey. While studies show that youth outside of the foster care system receive support from their families until the age of 25, foster youth 'age out' of the foster care system at 18 and are often left to face this transition on their own, in the face of daunting odds.

What We Know

California offers a wide range of career development and employment preparation opportunities to its young people – through our public schools, community colleges, after-school initiatives, community-based training programs, workforce development, apprenticeship, and employer-sponsored training. Unfortunately, most foster youth are not routinely being counseled and supported to take full advantage of these opportunities. In order to improve employment outcomes for foster youth it is critical to leverage and access what's in place for any young person and ensure that it is available to all foster youth.

An Opportunity to Make a Difference

Through a grant from the San Francisco Foundation, New Ways to Work will work with county teams in the Bay Area including County Office of Education staff, District Career/Technical Education leaders, Social Workers, Independent Living Skills Program staff, and others from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties to improve foster youth access to the educational offerings referenced above. Anticipated outcomes of this project include increased collaboration between child welfare, education, and workforce development staff and programs, increased awareness among foster youth, caregivers, and CWS staff, of the range of available educational options and programs available to foster youth at the county, district, and school levels, and increased outreach to foster youth by teachers, academy directors, and career technical education professionals.

About New Ways to Work

New Ways to Work builds community connections that prepare youth for success. We help create powerful partnerships among government and community partners - including schools, community organizations, social services, philanthropy, and the private sector - to ensure better access to quality career and educational opportunities for youth, particularly our nation's most vulnerable young people.

Since 2003, New Ways has focused attention on supporting successful transitions for current and former foster youth, with a focus on the need to provide them with career development and employment experiences both during and after care. Through the **Youth Transition Action Teams (YTAT)** initiative, New Ways supports a state-wide peer network of eighteen California counties seeking to create a comprehensive, integrated, and sequenced set of services and supports for foster youth, utilizing the New Ways developed All Youth-One SystemSM framework as a guide for action. Visit our website at www.newwaystowork.org to learn more about the Youth Transition Action Teams.

For more information please contact Lisa Elliott, New Ways to Work Project Coordinator at lelliott@newwaystowork.org or 707-824-4000 x 27.