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## **YCi info Search: Services to Foster Youth through One-Stop Centers**

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In an effort to serve Foster Youth, YCi received a request from the State Youth Council for the following information:

**“What effective practices are out there for Foster Youth, and in particular:**

- a. what types of services are being provided; and
- b. what connections are there for Foster Youth to One-Stops?”

YCi received the following responses to the YCi inquiry:

### **1. Kings County**

The Kings County youth program is contracted out to the Kings County Office of Education, ROP Department. Through the ROP department we handle countywide - WorkAbility, Dept. of Rehabilitation Coop, School-to-Career, Tech Prep, WIA Youth Services and Independent Living Program for foster children. The county funding for the foster program provides the students with a terrific mentoring program, paid work-experience, field trips, and independent living instruction. The local WIB has included "aged out foster youth" as a local eligibility criteria. We enroll them just after they graduate from high school or "age out". The students receive a continuous stream of services and we get out-of-school enrollments.

Foster children are a top priority for Kings County. A consortium of agencies and organizations completed two Transitional homes for aged out foster children in the last 2 years. The homes will house six youth each. The boys' house in 2001 was a dilapidated HUD home that was completely refurbished through donations of material and labor by businesses, cities, individuals, and agencies. The girls home in 2002 was a "soon to be torn down" historical dwelling that was moved into Lemoore next to the museum and refurbished. Students contract with the Housing Authority to live in the homes. They pay \$100 per month and split the utilities. Since aged-out foster youth all qualify for the Youth Service program, they get paid work experience and help with budgeting and communication skills as well as career preparation and post secondary education assistance.

If you would like more information, just email me [gwoolley@kings.k12.ca.us](mailto:gwoolley@kings.k12.ca.us)  
Glenda Woolley, Coordinator, Kings Youth Service - 559-584-1441 x 2941

### **2. Merced County**

The Merced County Department of Workforce Investment has a contract with Merced College to provide for State Welfare-to-Work funded services in an Independent Living Program. Up to fifty (50) WtW eligible former foster children, ages 18 - 25 are offered job readiness training, work experience and direct services such as emergency child care, emergency education expenses, clothing, temporary housing support and transportation.



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The contract is for \$165,953 and will run through June 30, 2003. Unfortunately, it appears that this will be the last year for this contract as Welfare-to-Work dollars will lack funding beyond 2003.

3. **Sacramento County:** There is a really good model for One Stop Employment Programs for foster youth. The Sacramento Bee wrote an article about the program and it was highlighted on KXTV Channel 10. The program hired two emancipated foster youth and created their headquarters out of the Employment Development Office in Sacramento. The emancipated foster youth work directly with the foster youth in Sacramento County. Contact person: Kathryn Soderquist, Sacramento Great Start Program - 916-262-3226.
4. **Harbor WorkSource Center - San Pedro.** Our local community college partner is Los Angeles Harbor College in Wilmington. They provide a 6-week Life Skills course for Foster Youth who are nearing their 18th birthday. Towards the end of the course, they bring the class to our center one evening and we introduce them to our services, focusing on our Youth partners - EDD's YEOP, the Archdioceses Youth Employment Program (in and out-of-school) and Job Corps. We also do some basic career counseling with them and introduce them to our self-service resources, including the PC Lab (Job Corps does a similar session here once a month). We also attend the annual conference that the college produces & present to the foster parents on our services. Our managers are members of the college's Advisory Council on Foster Care & Kinship. For more information, contact Barbara Simcoe – 310-732-5701.
5. **Long Beach:** At the Youth Opportunity Center in **Long Beach** our newest one-stop partner is Casey Family Programs. Our relationship began as Casey was seeking to create a drop-in center in Long Beach for the identified 4000 emancipating foster youth. Through facilitated meetings covering a variety of topics, in particular employment, agencies were connected such as LA County, DPSS, foster home agencies, and LA County probation with a goal to provide 50 foster youth summer work experience in the Greater LB area. As a result our goal was met, the YOC was introduced to over 200 foster youth and relationships with agencies were formed. Youth will be seen by Casey staff here at the YOC and will be introduced and have access to all of the YOC programs and services. For more information, contact Cecile Harris Walters, Coordinator – Youth Opportunity Center Greater Long Beach Workforce Development System (562) 570-4715
6. Trinity Occupational Training, Inc. administers the WIA Youth Employment and Training Program in **Trinity County, CA**. In the Summer of 2002 we were awarded a CAPIT/CBFRS grant from our County Health and Human Services Department to serve one foster youth with Summer Employment Opportunities. The young lady received paid work experience as a clerical assistant at our One Stop facilities in Weaverville and Hayfork, CA. She also received computer skills training, basic education skills enrichment, work readiness skills training, and life skills training. She obtained positive work



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references from her supervisors and trainers and developed an employment portfolio. She increased her grade level achievement in reading, spelling, and math, which indicates that her performance in high school may improve. She added to her work history and developed office skills. These outcomes should result in increased employability in the future. At the end of six weeks in the program, she returned to high school. Her foster mother and her social worker and other CPS staff served in an advisory capacity when work place issues came up or there were questions and concerns.

For information about our interagency collaboration with Health & Human Services to serve the employment and training needs of foster youth, contact Carol Anne Spring, Youth Program Coordinator, Trinity Occupational Training, Inc. (530) 623-5538

- 7. Golden Sierra** - Our youth program has collaborated with an independent living provider (Remi-Vista), which is new to El Dorado County. The Independent Living program is different than typical programs in that the youth actually live on their own while learning post foster care skills for self sufficiency. The youth, aged 16-19, while still attending secondary school, reside in apartments/houses and receive guidance about how to live on their own from staff and community programs. One of the requirements for the youth to be in the program is that they must work or conduct active job search and other activities related to living on their own. When a foster youth turns 18 or graduates from high school, they can no longer remain in foster care. This program is designed to prepare them for that transition.

Golden Sierra will be co-enrolling these youth into the youth program under WIA. The plan is to provide each foster youth with in-depth career assessment, work readiness skills (inc. resume, LMI, master app, etc.), financial incentives, short-term paid work experience, support service payments for work clothing etc., and connect each youth to the One-Stop system.

For information, contact Michele Diegel, Youth Services Coordinator, Golden Sierra Job Training Agency (530) 642-5550

- 8. Los Angeles (city)** partnered with the Casey Family program to provide services to foster youth through Community Build, one of our contractors - I suspect that there are a lot of best practices in that partnership and would certainly be willing to but together a little more info.

Also, Los Angeles Youth Council is planning a Summit on Foster Youth & employability - we are in the early planning stage, but it will be modeled on the Youth Offender Summit we just concluded which was extremely successful!

For additional information, contact Diana Nave (310) 831-1975.



9. **Siskiyou County** - The Siskiyou Training and Employment Program is the local service provider of WIA in Siskiyou County. Recently, our office established a partnership with the Independent Living Program (ILP) for Foster Youth in Siskiyou County. I represent STEP, Inc. and the Workforce Connection, Community Employment Center, on a newly established committee to assist foster youth with their goals. STEP, Inc. has teamed up with ILP, Siskiyou County Behavioral Health, College of the Siskiyous and Remi Vista Foster Care Services in an effort to coordinate services throughout the county for foster youth. The ILP Program conducts weekly classes for foster youth on life skills training and service agencies in our county. STEP Inc. will present at one of these classes in regards to the services offered at our One-Stop as well as through the WIA Youth Program.

In addition, the STEP Youth Program has been working closely with the ILP Coordinator to deliver WIA youth services to interested youth. Efforts to assist foster youth with their educational and employment objectives have just begun. However, we feel strongly that the partnership will prove beneficial to foster youth in Siskiyou County.

For additional information, contact Janie Gaither, Youth Vocational Advisor, STEP, Inc. at 800-344-7837 or by e-mail, [jgaither@ncen.org](mailto:jgaither@ncen.org).

10. **Golden Sierra** - In a joint program with Nevada County/Superintendent of Schools Foster Youth Independent Living Program, the Golden Sierra Job Training Agency, a One-Stop partner, offered 14 foster youth basic skills, work readiness classes, occupational skills training and the opportunity to earn a laptop computer.

Many different agencies contributed to the program:

- The Independent Living program assisted the foster youth with Golden Sierra's eligibility process and provided transportation and mentoring throughout the program.
- The One-Stop Career Center provided assessment and job search materials, video equipment and guest experts.
- The Superintendent of Schools Office contributed meeting space.
- Nevada Union Adult Education loaned us the use of their computer lab and offered technical assistance.
- The Nevada County Food Bank provided snacks and the food for a sit-down banquet.

The program was delivered in a series of eight intensive seminars – which included activities such as internet job searches, "occupational pictionary", a necktie tying contest, and a sit-down banquet. Topics ranged from job search techniques, and child labor laws to creating a household budget. The final seminar was a 3-day computer camp during which the young people setup a laptop and learned how to use Microsoft Office programs. After participating in the seminars and at the end of the 3-day Computer Camp, the youth



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earned a laptop and color printer to keep.

To help motivate the young people, a number of incentives were incorporated into the program. We gave out small prizes from a secret grab bag of items for participation during each seminar. This proved to be quite fun and helped keep the young people focused. In addition, the youth earned cash incentives for improving their math and reading skills, and completing short-term program goals. The largest incentive was the opportunity to participate in the 3-day Computer Camp.

The foster youth are now using their new computers for school, work, job search and computer games. We continue to work closely with the Independent Living Program. For example, the ILP Program recently organized a map reading class and the foster youth completed a community scavenger hunt during which they had to find their way to various agencies. Golden Sierra and the One-Stop Career Center were two of the destinations.

If you have any questions, please call Noramah Burch, Youth Coordinator, Golden Sierra Job Training Agency, Nevada City Office, (530) 265-3201, [noramahb@oro.net](mailto:noramahb@oro.net).

11. **Orange County** - The Orange County WIB's Youth Café Center (YCC) has had success connecting foster youth to One-Stops by:

- Working collaboratively with Social Services and other agencies to develop a streamlined referral system that eases access by youth to the YCC;
- Solidifying a referral system with local foster care agencies, group homes, and other foster youth care-givers;
- Offering on-going tours of the YCC to group homes so that youth are familiar with the One-Stop and are able to access services when ready/needed;
- Becoming a central referral location for local transitional living programs;
- Referring youth to shelters, sober living programs, food banks, mental health services, and other services;
- Partnering youth with a worksite supervisor/mentor when youth is participating in work-experience; and
- Offering specific services including but not limited to job search techniques, clothing assistance, direct housing referrals, summer employment, alternatives to post-secondary education, and year around activities.

For additional information, contact Mercedes Julian, OCWIB/CSA-SPD (714) 567-7522  
[mjulian@csa.co.orange.ca.us](mailto:mjulian@csa.co.orange.ca.us)



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12. Our **Pasadena** WIA Youth Program connects to foster care students primarily through the local community foster care group homes. We service students by working closely with the Department of Children /Family Services Case Worker or the Foster Care Parent. We currently service students from the Arrowhead Emancipation Program, a group home in Altadena. For more information, contact:  
Lenora Thompkins, Coordinator WIA Youth Program-Pasadena  
Phone: (626) 568-4547  
Fax: (626) 795-5328
13. **Tacoma, WA** - GREAT (Graduation Ready to Excel in America's Technology) program. At the August One-Stop Conference in Anaheim, program staff gave a clear picture of the program's evolution over the past three years. Here are the basics of their program:
- Staff - one case manager/job developer, a computer trainer, and a conflict resolution trainer.
  - Participants are ages 17 to 24 and are/have been in the state foster care system.
  - Components of the program are work readiness instruction, conflict resolution training, computer training, a 260-hour work- based internship, and portfolio development.
  - Students receive an hourly wage for both classroom training and internship.
  - Students receive basic skills tutoring and GED testing as needed. However, the emphasis is on employability through mastery of the Microsoft Office Suite.
  - Funding sources include private sources (Chaffee, Casey), JTPA, welfare to work, and local retail partners.
  - The program partners with local agencies for services such as mental health and housing.

**If you have additional information regarding Foster Youth and WIA Services, please email [lporter@nww.org](mailto:lporter@nww.org)**

**Thanks to all of the sites who responded to our request for information!**