

YOUTH AGING OUT SURVEY
ISSUE: CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

What partnerships has your state developed that are not traditionally viewed as serving youth?

Colorado

Family-to-Family (Child Welfare as a “Community Concern” Reform)
Collaborative Management/House Bill 1451 (Cross-Systems Reform)
Project 1:27 (Faith-Based Partnerships Initiative)
State Youth Council of State Workforce Development

Connecticut

The DCF is involved in a number of creative partnerships around employment, education, culture, rights of passage, prevention and parenting.

Delaware

One IL provider has partnered with a local church.

Iowa

Iowa is currently participating in the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, with the ultimate goal of increasing opportunities for successful transition to self-sufficiency, particularly with regard to education and employment, to youth, who are in or were in foster care, between the ages of 14 and 23. Polk County (Des Moines and surrounding suburbs) is the project site and a private agency, the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa, administering the initiative; it is IDHS’s goal to advocate for best practices learned from the initiative on a statewide basis. Involving Youth Policy Institute, which is a private agency contracted in matters of public policy, provides a broad perspective which is helping some of the best practices learned from Casey’s Youth Opportunities Initiative to move beyond Polk County.

Iowa DHS contracted with a child welfare agency, Children and Families of Iowa to administrate the Iowa Foster Care Youth Council, Elevate. Elevate has effectively partnered with community members, businesses, foster parents and public employees to support youth and educate the public about the needs of youth in care or who have aged out of care.

Iowa DHS contracted a private agency to administer the Iowa Aftercare Services Network. IASN is a network of private agencies across the state to assist youth as they leave foster care and enter adulthood. Aftercare is a voluntary support system, which offers case management, guidance, and a monthly stipend when certain criteria are met such as working full time or going to school.

Maine

The Maine Youth Transition Collaborative (MYTC) works in collaboration with the DHHS OCFS to develop lasting partnerships with public and private organizations and the business community. Organizations such as Jobs for Maine’s Graduates, the Foursquare Foundation, Common Good Ventures, Bangor Savings Bank, LL Bean and the University of Southern Maine’s Muskie School of Public Service are key participants in this collaborative with DHHS.

Minnesota

Minnesota is currently partnering with two foundations to support youth development.

The Otto Bremer foundation is contributing \$10,000 to the costs associated with our annual youth development conference called Tomorrow's Leaders Today. It is intended for youth ages 16 to 20 that are or have been in out of home placement.

The other is the Gary Stevens Foundation (recently renamed Life's Headwaters) which has expressed an interest in staffing and funding a Hennepin/Ramsey County Youth Leadership Council. Life's Headwaters has recently participated in a weekend long exploration of a youth advisory model for Minnesota. Life's Headwaters' executive director has requested a budget from Foster Club Inc. who the Department would contract with to provide the initial training for a Youth Leadership Council in three sites in Minnesota.

Mississippi

At this current time, the partnerships established primarily focus on serving youth and children. Though the agency contracts with many different providers, these partnerships emphasize service support to youth and children.

Missouri

Missouri continues to reach out to the faith based community and is initiating contact with the business community to collaborate to meet the needs of youth in foster care.

New York

OCFS established the Adolescent Services and Outcomes Workgroup in June, 2002 as part of the state PIP. Workgroup partners include representatives from offices within OCFS (policy, program development, legal, training, workforce development). Other partners include local departments of social services, voluntary foster care agencies, Adolescent Services Resource Network, Youth in Progress and other state agencies. The OCFS Office, Workforce Development and the Department of Labor have begun to engage county and state WIAs and WIBs.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Collaborative on Youth in Transition is a subgroup of the System of Care Collaborative. The group was formed initially in response to the Shared Vision Initiative of the Department of Labor, but has since broadened its scope to include private agencies and agencies not in the original group. This collaborative continues to meet monthly to share ideas, information on upcoming events, pending legislation, etc. These information sharing meetings are very helpful in increasing awareness of existing resources.

Tennessee

A Memorandum of Understanding has been executed with the Department of Labor, Workforce Development which provides access to all services available at any of their 16 full service locations. Tennessee DCS works collaboratively with the Departments of Mental Retardation Services, Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities, Workforce Development and Vocational Rehabilitation Services to provide assistance and ongoing support for many of the needs of the populations served by these agencies. The state is currently in negotiations with AmeriCorps Vista program for access to volunteers which will build community support around the work of our agency and specifically youth boards across the state. We have a public/private partnership with Youth Villages to provide Transitional Living services to youth who have a greater need upon achieving adulthood. We are very fortunate to have a supportive governor whose focus always includes our youth. Therefore, we have embarked on a program sponsored by the governor to provide mentors to all youth in care age 14-16. By accessing the support of the governor, private providers, and supportive communities throughout the state, we will be able to provide extra support for these youth.

Virginia

The Virginia Team for Youth, an interagency team which includes Departments of Social Services Independent Living Program, Correctional Education, Juvenile Justice, Education, Rehabilitative Services, Job Corps and the Virginia Employment Commission Workforce Investment Act Youth Services Program, has developed an active network to provide “transitional services to employment” for the neediest youth in Virginia. This was in line with the federal initiative, Shared Youth Vision. In the past year, 10 regional forums were provided for the youth workers, transitional specialist, and case managers from various agencies and organizations.

Washington

Foster Care to College is a visionary partnership of six private and public agencies designed to support adolescents in Washington state foster care to prepare for, pursue, persist in and succeed in post-secondary education and training programs statewide, regionally and nationally. Washington State partners with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to provide training to CA Social Workers and Education staff in the state.

How have these partnerships enhanced or expanded services to youth?

Colorado

Family-To-Family shifts paradigms from youth being an agency-concern to a community-concern where services are now provided through wrap-around plans in the community a youth lives versus moving and disconnecting youth from their permanent connections through in-home and family preservation services.

Collaborative Management/House Bill 1451 shifts silo paradigms to collaborative initiatives where youth served by multiple systems are served in a coordinated manner...agencies that save money are authorized to reinvest in additional programming and not lose it.

Project 1.27 links faith-based leaders and organizations with child welfare agencies to increase opportunities for youth adoption...a “mother church” trains and nurtures other churches on the adoption process, a church member services wraparound plan, and partnership opportunities with public child welfare agencies.

State Youth Council provides a positive youth development focus for workforce development specialists who have a need to assist child welfare youth in gaining employment and/or education/training.

Connecticut

These partnerships have allowed our youth to be involved in DCF, DOL and Casey Work to Learn program which include sheltered workshops, employment mentoring, job shadowing and full time opportunities. The Black Greek Alliance and DCF have partnered to establish a computer literacy program for all youth in care which offers our youth not only skill building but the opportunity to receive a computer if they complete the program. In terms of Rights of Passage the DCF is collaborating with many community groups to offer our youth the opportunity to recognize and celebrate their heritage. In terms of education the DCF is partnering with local and state boards of education to offer our youth additional supports and programs to meet their needs. We also work with private tutoring programs to support our youth’s academic needs.

Delaware

The church has established a pool of volunteers to serve youth who have exited care. The church provides mentoring, tutoring, rent subsidies, furniture donations, holiday sponsorship, care packages for students and much more.

Iowa

The Elevate youth council for youth in, or who have been, in foster care (described above) is one of the partnerships of which Iowa is most proud. Elevate has expanded from a small local group (less than two years ago) to at least four statewide chapters; has involved foster parents, mentors and providers; and has helped over 150 young people develop friendships and the skills to sustain them. Elevate has been invited to present their stories of hope at numerous local and national venues. More important than all of the attention and additional funding Elevate has received, however, has been the tremendous support the young people in Elevate have gained in the process. Someone said that Elevate is like an ant colony; there are people hustling around everywhere trying to help out and be part of this support group. Instead of a “top down” program, Elevate has allowed the people really involved to assign tasks, develop hierarchy, and sustain effective communication. The cooperation of youth and adults partnering to accomplish the primary goal of support of youth, is truly inspiring.

Maine

The objectives of MYTC coincide with the DHHS Office of Child and Family Services reform goal that all older youth in care will have adequate life skills and lasting community and permanency connections in place when they leave care. Linkages with community businesses and programs have been developed for what are called “door openers.” An example of a door opener would be a grocery store chain reserving slots for employment of youth in care, or a local car repair shop offering discounted parts and labor rates for youth in care. MYTC staff are located in southern Maine and central Maine, though provide service to northern Maine and eastern Maine, as well. Community partnerships have been established and are comprised of individuals from the business community, individuals from the various state departments, and the private sector. Bangor Savings Bank has arranged for any youth in care in Maine to be able to electronically deposit and manage their Passport funds for any banking institution in Maine and another statewide banking institution recently joined the MYOI effort.

New York

OCFS issued a practice guidance paper which provides local districts and voluntary agencies a framework for working with adolescents in foster care. This framework is intended to strengthen services to foster care youth and former foster care youth. Proposed regulations have been drafted. Monitoring tools have been developed to assess adolescent safety, permanency and well-being. Monitoring and training has occurred in some of the local districts.

North Carolina

By increasing awareness of other services, we promote appropriate referral and lessening duplication of services.

Tennessee

Tennessee now has the ability to offer a wider array of services for our youth as a result of these creative partnerships. By utilizing the specialties and foci of these groups, we are able to better coordinate existing resources in providing quality care and support for our youth and families.

Virginia

As a result, meaningful relationships have been established which have increase awareness, utilization, and sharing of resources for transitional services for youth.

Washington

We provide services through community-based providers in five areas:

1. **Communications** - Provides targeted outreach to youth in foster care between the ages of 13 and 21 to get the word out, college is a real possibility and to provide them with the resources necessary to achieve their post-secondary aspirations.
2. **Make It Happen, The College Experience** - Offer an all expenses paid summer program to provide a series of workshops and activities designed to help high school students between 10th and 12th grade or in a GED program prepare for post-secondary education.
3. **Mentoring** - Pairs positive, professional adults with youth who have similar vocational interests. These adults help young people complete necessary college or training program entry paperwork and provide motivation, encouragement and support throughout the college experience.
4. **Seminars** - Provides seminars to youth beginning in sixth grade and their caregivers to get youth excited about the prospect of pursuing education and training beyond high school and to introduce them to skills and resources that will help them succeed.
5. **Training** - provides training to caregivers, educators and social workers to provide them with the necessary information and resources to support foster youth throughout high school and in obtaining post-secondary education

How have these partnerships created new funding resources for youth?

Connecticut

We now share funding of programs with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiatives, Court Support Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and State Education to name a few.

Iowa

Iowa DHS utilized Chafee funding to seed the Elevate youth council. Elevate was asked to present their work to the Iowa legislature. One of the presenters commented that money is tight. Elevate was asked to submit a proposal and were ultimately funded with a \$120,00 line item appropriation. Elevate has secured additional funding to partner with the youth advisory council to the local Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Elevate is partnering with United Way to participate in a program where youth will review and recommend small financial awards to youth for such things as music lessons, camps, or to help with emergencies such as inability to pay rent. Elevate's partnership with United Way has also helped them secure a sizeable grant from Principal Financial Group.

In 2006, the Iowa legislature approved the "PAL bill". This legislation expanded Iowa's Aftercare program to include a monthly stipend for eligible youth leaving foster when working or going to school full time. In addition, the bill funded Title XIX coverage for all youth aging out of foster care after May 1, 2006 and who are under 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

Iowa's Aftercare program, described above, is funded with \$100,000 to address the specific needs of those youth who age out of state paid foster care and have a SED (Axis I) diagnosis.

Maine

Jobs for Maine's Graduates has provided significant in kind resources that enable youth in care to be served by their effective and proven program.

The Foursquare Foundation has secured funding from additional foundations for the establishment of community network development and on-line resources for youth in care.

Common Good Ventures and the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service have recently submitted a grant in collaboration with the Maine Council of Churches for mobilizing the community to support youth in transition.

Bangor Savings Bank has provided significant resources and will be important to fundraising for the matched savings program included in the Opportunity Passport.

The efforts of YLAT and the National Scholarship Fund (NSF) are leading to the development of scholarships for youth in care for post secondary education. Additionally, NSF is working on developing employment opportunities for youth in care who are in college. These opportunities are designed to provide health insurance coverage as well as paid work.

Minnesota

The partnership with Gary Stevens represents the only funding currently identified to pursue an organized youth leadership council. The funding from the Otto Bremer foundation will allow some youth to attend the annual youth leadership conference who otherwise could not afford the cost.

North Carolina

No new funding, but better use of existing funding in various agencies by not duplicating services.

Tennessee

Tennessee is being creative with funding streams by accessing and utilizing existing service systems for our youth. Moreover, the public/private partnerships and the support of our governor have given us the ability to engage communities for supportive funding that heretofore was the responsibility of our state agency.

Virginia

Currently, these new partnerships have not created new funding for youth, but have assisted in maximizing resources and existing funds.

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