

YOUTH AGING OUT SURVEY ISSUE: TRANSITION TO ADULT PROGRAMS

What services does your state provide to youth as they transition to adult programs?

Alaska

In Alaska, we have created four Independent Living Specialists one in each of the four regions to provide assistance for youth transitioning to adulthood. The ILS monitor the youth while in custody and assist the primary caseworker in determining what services the youth needs while in custody and then become the primary worker once the youth leaves state custody. While in custody, the ILS can provide aid in funding for tutoring and accompanies youth to the annual education conference held at one of the state universities. The ILS also works with the Youth Advisory Group (Facing Foster Care in Alaska) to provide support for youth to advocate for themselves and other foster youth. Youth also have the opportunity to participate in IL training on topics that will aid them in dealing with life on their own. Participants are given a gift card to encourage their participation in these training opportunities.

Arizona

Youth in Arizona may sign an agreement to voluntarily remain under the care and supervision of the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) while participating in a case plan of services, designed to assist them in making a successful transition to adulthood. Youth who choose to participate in continued care have access to a DCYF case manager who assists them initiate processes for transfer into adult service programs, i.e. adult behavioral health services.

Youth who do not wish to remain in care past age 18 are also assisted in enrolling in adult service programs by their DCYF case manager. Many areas of the state have protocols in place for determining eligibility for adult services (i.e. behavioral health) which are designed to ensure services do not lapse during the transition. These youth also have access to aftercare services through the Transitional Independent Living Program (TILP) where a case manager is assigned to develop an individualized service plan that may include assistance in negotiating the adult service system.

Colorado

- Chafee Foster Care Independence Program services (To include the YES! Academy) are provided through county departments of social/human services for transitioning youth/young adults up to age 21. Those services include mentoring, coaching, internships, employment prep and transportation. Services are provided to increase access skills to obtain medical/mental health care, housing and education.
- The YES! Academy provides a Chafee help desk for referrals and Ansel-Casey assessments and learning plans development assistance to Colorado's rural counties and direct care services to eligible Chafee homeless youth.
- For Special Needs (Developmentally Delayed): Children enrolled in the CHRP waiver receive independent living skills through their individual plans. Some of these youth also receive services through Chafee. Adams County utilizes their CCB (Community Centered Board) to provide Chafee services. Counties are expected to work closely with CCBs to work on transitioning children into the adult system at 21 years of age.

Connecticut

The Department has a Memorandum of Agreement in place with two State Agencies who work with adult populations - The Department of Mental Retardation and The Department of Mental Health and Addictive Services(DMHAS) to provide after service programs, including housing, case management and some financial assistance to youth who qualify for their programming and are aging out of our services.

The Department is also working collaboratively with DMHAS and The Department of Social Services in designing, funding, establishing and monitoring a Supportive Housing Program that will include a designated number of apartments for youth between the ages of 18 to 24 who have aged out of the foster care system. The Department has a requirement that each youth 18 and over who are leaving our care must have a formal discharge conference six (6) months prior to their discharge. This meeting is to work with youth on issues surrounding their move towards adulthood and self-sufficiency. These include but are not limited to community and family connections, housing options, employment options, etc.

District of Columbia

Our agency has an MOA with the District's DDS (Developmental Disability Services) to transition you into their system. It includes referrals being made 3 years prior to transition, an assignment of a DDS case manager who collaborates with the child welfare Social Worker and a smooth transition once the youth exits care.

Additionally, referrals are made to DMH (Department of Mental Health) and the Healthy Families Collaboratives for youth after care community supports.

Illinois

IDCFS have many services that are available to youth as they work toward independence and self-sufficiency. Here are the Divisions that work directly with the older adolescents:

- Office of Education and Transitional Services (OETS)
- Educational services for H.S./GED and post Graduate
- Employment Education and Development
 - i. Youth Employment Incentive Program
 - ii. Youth In College
 - iii. Scholarship Program
 - iv. Life Skill development (Ansell Casey)
 - v. Youth Advisory Board
- Purchase of Service Independent/Transitional Living Agencies (Contracted by IDCFS to serve the Adolescent Older Population toward self sufficiency)
 - (a) POS Agencies contract with IDCFS to provide direct services to youth in areas of
 1. Permanency
 2. Housing
 3. Education
 4. Vocation
 5. Life Skills
 6. Advocacy
 7. Self Sufficiency Development
 8. Personal Goals
 9. Family /Significant Other Positive Relations
- Office of Permanency & Placement
 - (a) CANS (Child /Adolescent Needs Assessment)
 - (b) CAYIT – Staffing with all pertinent persons to discuss permanency
- Office of Clinical Services

- (a) Mental Health Services
- (b) Special Needs Identification and Service provision

IDCFS has adult based CILA and Adult Guardianship if necessary. The agency will work with our DCFS Mental Health services in partnership with the Dept. of Human Services. Our DCFS Legal and Guardian Office will also help with the particulars for probate court. If the client qualifies, SSI (Policy 2002.16 SSI Special Needs Allowance) benefits through Maximus will also be accessed and re-determined for adult services. Public Aid services, such as TANF can also be of some assistance.

Indiana

- Youth that are 18 and “age out” of foster care are eligible for Chafee Independent Living Services
 - i. Room and Board funding with case management up to \$3000 until age 21.
 - ii. Education and Training Vouchers up to \$5000 per year until age 21 and if enrolled in school at age 21, funding is available through age 23.
 - iii. Medicaid health coverage age 18 up to age 21.
 - iv. Emancipation Goods and Services up to \$1000 to help with start up items for those youth that are being placed in a group home.
- Youth that “age out” of foster care are eligible for Medicaid up to their 21st birthday
- Job Corps
- Work One
- Learn More Indiana—provides answers to questions and resources on education and career options
- State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana—offering assistance to college bound citizens with help in completing FAFSA, as well as providing information on various scholarships and grants
- Indiana INTERNnet—a matching program that links employers to students, colleges, and universities

Kansas

Youth receive transition services and planning prior to leaving care. Youth and social workers with foster care and Independent Living programs meet together to prepare a transition plan to include housing, employment, education and medical needs.

Maryland

Maryland provides After Care services as needed for youth who age out of care. Those services depend on need and the youth willingness to meet the service agreement. The services include but are not limited to: rent, security deposit, uniforms, medical assistance and cost to cover counseling, transportation cost for their car or insurance, food, personal items, furniture and more. Of course, it is our goal to plan with the youth to avoid some of the listed items using a timeline and budget. Educational costs are another option if the youth were enrolled in school prior to their 21st birthday and maintained satisfactory grades. The John H. Chafee, Educational Tuition Voucher (ETV) allows youth to receive funds up to their 23rd birthday if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Minnesota

Through our Chafee funding we provide funding to both counties (to serve youth ages 16+ who will age out of care) and community agencies (ages 18 to 21) to provide independent living skills training either in a group format or individually.

We also administer state funding via contracts with community agencies to serve both populations (youth in care and youth who have aged out of care) with intensive programs that promote independent living skill development.

As submitted earlier we also administer the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program in Minnesota.

The Department of Human Services offers training to both foster parents and public social workers on building transition skills for youth who will be aging out of care.

We have also published a best practice manual for our county and grantee community of professionals who are working with these populations. See link to Best Practices Manual below:

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_FILE&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&Rendition=Primary&allowInterrupt=1&noSaveAs=1&dDocName=dhs_id_057253

In the very near future we will launch a transition website to assist youth and professionals with developing an independent living plan that will provide the user with local resources to match the identified needs. See beta site below:

<http://216.81.233.83/MinnesotaBeta1/default.aspx?se=youth>

Montana

All youth have access to contract staff and social workers to develop a transitional plan. Usually this includes assistance with higher education, living on their own, etc.

Nebraska

Nebraska provides services to transition to adulthood through Chafee, Education and Training Vouchers Programs, the Nebraska Former Ward Program and a Positive Youth Development Grant, through Family and Youth Services Bureau), designed to enhance leadership and community involvement skills.

New Mexico

NM has a Youth Services Bureau that includes eight Youth Services Consultants. The YSCs and caseworkers aid youth in foster care to develop life skills and to connect with education, employment, medical/mental health services, and other services to aid them in their transition to adulthood. We have the Adolescent & Adoption Resource Team (AART) that reviews cases of all transitioning youth with staff to ensure that transition issues are being addressed in a timely manner. The reviews occur every 60 days until the youth ages out.

New York

Most youth do not transition to adult “programs”, although prior to a youth leaving care a plan for services, education and housing is developed with the youth. If a youth is discharged prior to turning 18 (youth may remain in care until they turn 21 years of age), a period of trial discharge is arranged during which the youth may return to care if the need arises (6 months – see previous survey). Following that, supervision is required until the youth turns 21 – this involves offers of services and support. In addition to Chafee and state funded services, when a youth leaves care, Medicaid continues for one year, after which the youth is encouraged to apply for on-going coverage through New York Family Health Plus Medicaid program. New York offers a housing subsidy (in addition to any Chafee funded room and board) mentioned in a previous survey response. Should a youth require residential or services programs, such as on-going mental health treatment, the discharge plan address this.

Services that must be available to youth in as they transition include: financial, employment, education and housing training, counseling and assistance; life skills training; promoting the involvement of mentoring and caring adults – no one is discharged to “independent living” rather there must be an adult that has made the commitment to parent or act as a parent to the youth. In addition, should a youth require services such as mental health or substance abuse treatment, that is not within the purview of the county child welfare/social services department, the youth’s plan for services must specify how these services will be provided and by whom.

North Dakota

North Dakota’s Chafee Foster Care Independence Program provides services to foster youth/young adults through the age of 21. Those youth receiving the Education and Training Vouchers receive services until the age of 23. ND has a Chafee program in each of our 8 regions. The majority of youth participate in the program prior to aging out of foster care, and the IL Coordinator is involved in the youth’s Child and Family Team Meetings for at least a year prior to the youth’s discharge from care. The IL Coordinator participates in the youth’s transition planning process. Housing and employment are among the domains planned for. The youth’s individualized needs regarding mental health, addiction, and developmental disabilities are also assessed and planned for. Referrals to various agencies are completed as needed. Some youth do not wish to participate in Chafee programming at the time of their discharge, but may reconsider at any time prior to their 21st birthday. The IL Coordinators assist the young adult with meeting their housing, employment, and educational needs. While the official Child and Family Team Meetings end at the time of the youth’s discharge from care, the IL Coordinators attempt to continue the team process.

Ohio

Independent living services, based on the assessment required by Ohio Administrative Code, include but are not limited to: Daily living skills, Securing and maintaining a residence, Home management, shopping, Money management, Utilization of community services and systems, Accessing and utilizing transportation, Utilization of leisure time, Personal care, hygiene and safety, Pregnancy prevention and/or parenting skills, Time management, Enhancement of personal decision making and communication skills, Assistance in obtaining a high school diploma or GED, evaluating personal educational goals, and planning for post secondary education and training, Planning for job and /or career development, Securing and maintaining employment, Planning for ongoing and emergency personal health care needs, building a positive self-image and self-esteem, development of positive adult relationships and support systems.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma has numerous services and resources to prepare and support each youth in transition to adulthood. Services include a life skills assessment and individualized, youth driven independent living/transition case plans; intensive educational support; a tutoring initiation; life skills instructions through conferences and seminars; career awareness and post-secondary preparation; and the Yes I Can Network that provides toll-free access to youth development funds and case management. Resources include preparation, supportive, and housing youth development funds; a tuition waiver for instate public colleges and career technology center; gas cards to support employment, education, and sibling connections; phone cards to support sibling and other permanent connections; portfolios to maintain all essential documents; and, various life skills instruction books and curriculum.

South Carolina

The Foster Parent Association has a contractual agreement with the agency to provide household showers for youth who will be emancipating from the foster care system or who will be attending college. When a youth has been identified, the foster parent association plans a household shower to include current and former caseworkers, foster families, and other attendees identified by the youth. The association then purchases items from a wish list prepared by the youth, e.g. pots, pans, linens, sheets, silverware,

microwave, etc. which are necessary to establish housekeeping. This program continues to be extremely successful.

Being able to obtain and retain a job is critical in achieving self-sufficiency. The Family Independence and child welfare programs formed a partnership to ensure that foster youth have the opportunity to learn employment readiness and retention skills. The TANF program has experienced extraordinary success in preparing “welfare” families for employment. Employment skill development was identified as an area that needed improvement for foster youth leaving the system. Since a successful program already existed within our agency and could be utilized to teach these skills to foster youth, a logical partnership was developed. Each foster care youth is to be referred to the program 30 days prior to their 16th birthday and again six months prior to their planned exit from foster care. An individual assessment of each adolescent is to be completed to determine interests, aptitude, etc. This results in the development of an employment self sufficiency plan. The two programs share costs for allowable services within their funding capacity. The program encompasses all adolescents regardless of their residence, i.e., foster, group homes, therapeutic placements, etc. Age of foster youth is the only eligibility criteria.

The Independent Living Program provides the following services to support youth in employment efforts:

- Transportation assistance to and from employment for up to 3 months
- Certification courses (first aid, life guard, etc.)
- Interview clothing
- Initial supply of work uniforms and footwear
- Time limited childcare (1 month)
- Car repair (if youth has a personal car)
- Job skills training classes, i.e., computer classes, etc.
- Summer job opportunities
- Job mentor
- Apprenticeship Programs as available (none available in current fiscal year)

Texas

In 1986, the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program, a component of the Transitional Living Services Program, was implemented to better address the needs of youth aging out of foster care to ensure older youth in substitute care are prepared for the transition from foster care to adulthood. Services provided to youth to in care and in support of their transition from care and after care include:

Life Skills Training in core areas such as money management, job preparedness, planning for the future. PAL staff, through a collaboration with public and private organizations, assist youth in identifying and developing support systems and housing for when they leave care.

Transitional Living Allowance (TLA) PAL services include transitional living allowances for those having aged out of care, up to \$1000 per eligible youth. These funds pay for rent or assistance to help a young person move into an apartment. They cannot receive more than \$500 at one time.

Aftercare Room and Board Assistance is based on need. This funding pays for living costs such as groceries or utilities.

Case Management is provided to assist with transition planning and help connect the youth to needed resources.

Support Services are provided to youth preparing to age out of care and are funded through purchased service dollars and supports from stakeholders such as local child welfare boards. Support services can include high school and college items, counseling, tutoring, driver's education, mentoring. Ansell-Casey Youth Life Skills Assessment is an evaluation of basic life skills. The instrument assesses youth abilities in different domains: communications, daily living, housing and money, work and study habits, social relationships, and self care.

Additional Transitional Living Services Program services provided to youth in preparation for transition to adult living include:

- Circles of Support (COS), based on the Family Group Decision Making model, are facilitated meetings with participants that a youth identifies as "caring adults" who make up their support system. COS participants can be a youth's foster care provider, a teacher, relatives, church members, or mentors. These participants come together to review the young person's transition plan, including strengths, goals and needs. Each participant identifies a personal way they can help support the youth's transition from care and attainment of their goals. They then sign the Transition Plan to seal their agreements.
- Positive youth development and youth leadership development activities.
- Educational / Vocational Services to help a young person complete high school, obtain their GED, or prepare for advanced education such as college or vocational schools. Youth receive essential services such as mentoring, tutoring, transportation to potential colleges for visits, and help with filling out financial aid or scholarship applications.
- Uninterrupted Medicaid coverage (automatic renewal) for youth who age out of foster care at age 18 through the month of their 21st birthday, effective September 2005.

Vermont

- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation scholarship money.
- Vocational Rehabilitation.
- School to Work Program.
- Transition classes at the high school level.
- Transitional Living Program (Runaway and Homeless Youth Act)
- VT Dept. of Labor
- Youth Development Coordinators

Virginia

In Virginia, foster care youth can continue to receive services until age 21. Transitional services include housing, post-secondary education, employment, financial, counseling, etc.

Wyoming

Case management. Workers often partner with the Adult Waiver group at the Division of Developmental Disabilities. In a few of our counties, the contract worker for the Chafee program also serves the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

What key partnerships does your state provide to youth as they transition to adult programs?

Alaska

The University of Alaska
Alaska Department of Labor/ Workforce Investment Act
Covenant House- an IL grantee in Anchorage
Casey Family Programs

Arizona

The state Department of Health Services (DHS) and Division of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS) both participate in partnerships with various divisions within the Department of Economic Security to provide support and assistance to youth transitioning out of foster care. Two examples are the partnership between DCYF, Family Assistance Administration and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the state Medicaid program and the partnership between DCYF and the Division of Employment and Rehabilitative Services (DERS).

The first partnership produced a new category of eligibility under AHCCCS for youth aging out of foster care. This category of care, titled Young Adult Transitional Insurance (YATI), provides health care services under the state Medicaid program to youth who reach the age of 18 while in the state foster care program, with eligibility continuous to the 21st birthday. The second partnership resulted in the co-location of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors at two DCYF sites, where DCYF staff provide specialized case management services to youth aging out of care. Partnerships with local mental health providers have resulted in protocols for transitioning youth into the adult behavioral health system.

Colorado

Colorado Department of Education/Special Education, Denver Indian Resource Center, Colorado Work Force Centers, Colorado Department of Human Services Office of Adult, Disability and Rehabilitative Services and Office of Behavioral Health and Housing; Easter Seals, Colorado Bar Association, Arapahoe County Bar Association and Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the local CCBs for special needs youth.

Connecticut

We partner with a number of other State Agencies along with some community agencies in planning youths' discharges and planning for their future needs.

District of Columbia

We are in discussions with DMH to devise a similar MOA as we have with DDS, which would address youth transitioning into the adult mental health system. The MOA would include seamless transition, increase housing options, and assignment of case management services.

As mentioned above we have a current MOA in place with DDS to address youth transitioning with Developmental Disabilities.

Illinois

Key Partners as youth emancipate are:

- Agency support and availability
- Identification of significant others / positive support systems i.e. family, friends, foster parents
- Educational Institutions / Vocational –Permanent Jobs
- Relevant Resources i.e. medical, dental, mental health services, community resources (child care, social security when needed)

So that we do not have a revolving system, the agency has work with other Community resources and partnerships to assist in the process prior to youth emancipating from the state system. The various studies provided by Chapin Hall have helped guide the discussions around how we as a system can be more effective with our youth while in care. This will prepare clients to be effective on his/ her own. We tried to blend family resources as well. The reconnections with various family members are also intricate to the clients' transition. We have also developed Stabilization Centers, Housing Assistance and Homeless Hotlines for additional services if a youth becomes unstable.

Indiana

- Department of Workforce Development
- Department of Family Resources
- Wraparound services with community-centered organizations such as “Choices”
- Partnerships with various service providers who implement Chafee program for youth in foster care- and youth aging out of foster care
- BDDS – the family case manager would make all necessary referrals for those needing Adult Services when their DCS case is dismissed

Kansas

Collaboration with Workforce Investment Centers (WIA), Vocational Rehab and educational institutions.

Maryland

The partnerships most often used are the Semi Independent Living placements with private agencies that allow the mature youth to earn their own apartments and learn how to live independently from direct caregivers and foster parents. Youth are connected to resources such as Workforce Development training to prepare for job readiness training and job placement in order to prepare for the responsibility of established marketable employment.

Minnesota

Most of key partnerships are with community agencies who receive funding from the Department of Human Services to promote the acquisition of independent living skills. At the state department level we have formed partnerships with the following:

- Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Minnesota Housing and Finance
- Minnesota Department of Corrections
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Education

The below link provides greater detail on the partnerships and recent efforts to coordinate services and promote best practices.

<http://www.deed.state.mn.us/youth/SYV/SYV.htm>

Montana

We partner with several agencies across the state for these services. Most are non-profit organizations.

Nebraska

Nebraska does not provide any services designed to transition youth to adult programs.

New Mexico

We partner with the Public Education Department, DD Waiver/Dept. of Health, Job Corps, WIA contractors, Workforce Boards, tribal social services from numerous tribes, contractors, Medicaid, and many others.

New York

New York’s requirements for case management, assessment and planning include standards for involving all service providers in the development of the youth’s plan. This means that we expect the child welfare department will involve local mental health, education, etc. in planning. At a higher, county planning

level, New York requirements include standards for involving all community providers, advocates and others in developing the local plan for services to children and families. The goal is to have those relationships and partnerships in place when a child or youth presents needs for services from across systems.

North Dakota

Partnerships for Children's Mental Health.
Developmental Disability Services
Vocational Rehabilitation
Job Corp
Workforce Investment Act Programming
Institutions of Higher Education

Ohio

All youth and returning young adults receive individual and/or group counseling. PCSAs are responsible for the provision of case management services to all participating youth during and after group training sessions. PCSAs provide, or make arrangements for, counseling and/or therapy services for those youth who experience emotional difficulties.

PCSAs provide program components where youth and their parents improve their relationships during the transition from substitute care to returning home or moving into an independent living situation. Participants and caregivers also provide other services and assistance designed to improve a teen's transition to independent living such as:

- a) the provision of group training experiences for parents/caregivers preparing the youth for independent living;
- b) training of professional therapy/social service staff and direct caregivers in effective and engaging methods to teach youth necessary independent living skills; and,
- c) mentoring programs within foster care, including recruitment and development of mentor foster care givers and alternative interdependent living arrangements for appropriate youth the provision of group training experiences for parents/caregivers preparing the youth for independent living;
- d) training of professional therapy/social service staff and direct caregivers in effective and engaging methods to teach youth necessary independent living skills; and,
- e) mentoring programs within foster care, including recruitment and development of mentor foster care givers and alternative interdependent living arrangements for appropriate youth.

There has been the development of a Statewide Youth Advisory Board – this is a collective voice of the emancipated youth to address the needs and concerns experienced by this special population of young adults.

Oklahoma

Through the Federal Shared Youth Vision, Oklahoma Department of Human Services has partnered with Workforce Oklahoma to provide tutoring and GED classes, career assessments, and some job placement. This partnership has resulted in a grant through the Shared Youth Vision to provide educational and employment readiness services to youth in group homes in one area of the state. The plan is to replicate this model statewide. Another Department of Labor grant has allowed Oklahoma to set up a six week youth academy that provides on-campus housing, life skills, training in advanced manufacturing, a job internship, and promise of a job upon completion of the program.

The Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse has obtained one year funding for transitioning youth with mental health issues from the care and custody of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to a supported transitional living situation.

South Carolina

The Youth Leadership Development Institute, a project undertaken in conjunction with the Columbia Urban League, offers a youth curriculum encompassing employment and career, individualized counseling, transportation, and a year round mentoring and tutoring program. The program serves foster care youth (78% of participants) and TANF youth in eight counties that include Aiken, Florence, Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, Sumter, York and Richland. The Columbia Urban League, UPS, and the Department are pursuing an employment partnership between the three organizations to develop job opportunities for youth 17 and older.

In an effort to better meet the mental health needs of adolescents, the Department of Mental Health has collocated staff in 12 DSS offices. The purpose is to: (1) link the skills, experience and knowledge of mental health and child welfare professionals to better serve families; (2) foster a collaborative attitude and approach between child welfare and mental health professionals in serving youth and families; (3) promote and enhance individual and family strengthening and functioning, thereby, enabling youth to successfully transition from foster care; (4) expedite permanency for youth in foster care, and/or (5) support foster and adoptive families to deal with crisis situations and avoid disruptions of youth from their homes. The Department of Mental Health also provides mental health services in nearly 50% of school settings in South Carolina. Youth in foster care and their families have access to these services. The Department of Mental Health plans to continue expansion of school based services.

DSS staff from Darlington County and State Office as well as representatives from Coker College, the business community, foster youth and foster parents previously engaged in a planning process to assess the needs of youth within the county and develop a community plan to support the transition of foster youth to independence. The three areas identified as needing intervention were personal development, career planning, and relationship building. As a result of the latter concern, a foster youth association was developed in the county. Coker College partnered with S. Graham & Associates, Leadership Institute of Chicago, to develop a youth leadership model. Currently, the youth association has expanded to a rural multi-county youth association (Growing Up and Out) that meets on the Coker campus with an oversight committee composed of Coker staff, foster parents, DSS staff, and private provider staff. Attendance at the monthly meetings averages 20 – 30 youth from the counties of Darlington, Florence, Chesterfield, Lee and Marlboro. A youth curriculum, developed through S. Graham & Associates and the Coker Leadership Center, has been evaluated for piloting in the youth association. The Provost and Dean of the Faculty was the keynote speaker (“Teens Can Make It Happen”) for the 2006 Independent Living Conference. Each youth received a copy of the publication with the same title written by Stedman Graham. The theme of the book supports positive youth development with a concentration on Who Am I, Where Am I Going, and How Am I Going to Get There? The book has been incorporated into the youth association meetings in this program year.

Texas

The Texas Dept. of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) continues partnerships with state agencies such as the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Disability Services to support the transition from youth services to adult living.

Virginia

- VA 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. The team is developing an active network on the state and local levels to provide "transitional services to employment" for the neediest youth in Virginia. The stimulus for this process is the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice and Labor's commitment to a strategic vision to provide transitional services to our nation's neediest youth using the Department of Labor Workforce Development Act program as the catalyst.

- The Virginia's Comprehensive Services Act for At-risk Children and Youth (CSA), implemented in 1993, created a collaborative system of services and funding at both state and local levels. CSA is a child-centered, family focused and community-based system for addressing the strengths and need of troubled and at-risk youth and their families in Virginia. CSA has created collaborative teams at both state and local levels. At the state level, the State Executive Council (SEC) assures collaborative programmatic and fiscal policy development. The SEC includes state agency leaders from:

- Virginia Department of Social Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services
- Medical Assistance Services
- Juvenile Justice
- Supreme Court of Virginia

Local government, providers and parent representatives also serve on this council.

Wyoming

- Division of Developmental Disabilities, youth and adult waivers
- Department of Health, mental health division
- Department of Education, Special Education departments in each county
- Various community agencies that assist in the transition into adult programs.

What strategies has your state developed to effectively coordinate and link youth to adult programs and services?

Alaska

Strategies for coordination of services include the following:

- ILS participate in six month reviews of youth sixteen and older.
- Exit plans are developed for all youth seventeen and older and a final plan is developed prior to the youth being released from state custody. The exit plan includes the needs of the youth and a list of services available to address the needs. IL resources are also explained to the youth prior to leaving state custody.
- As a part of the annual education conference, youth are able to experience campus life and to meet with representatives from the university system. Youth also have the opportunity to hear from representatives of the vocational training community.

Representatives from the state's Independent Living Program participate in conferences held by other organizations to inform them of special needs of foster youth and to let them know that there are resources available for youth that qualify for Chafee funding.

Arizona

The state has focused efforts on streamlining referral processes, sharing information through multi-disciplinary team meetings and providing coordinated case management and other service supports to expedite the youth's enrollment in adult programs and services. The development of partnerships has been guided by the wisdom of youth in care, alumni, service providers, child advocates, national child welfare experts, department staff and others.

Colorado

Linkages through a system of care model to increase accessibility and efficiency and reduce redundancy.

We use 2-1-1 Colorado linking system for referrals for human services and non-profits on the toll free call of 211 or the 211 website.

We use the Former Offender Resources Guide and Education Services (FORGES) listed on the Department of Corrections website that links former offender friendly services by proximity, zip code or county.

Connecticut

The Department continues ongoing training of Adolescent Staff to ensure and increase their knowledge of adult programs available to youth aging out of our system. We also have signed MOU's in place on two programs and once formalized will have one in place for the Supportive Housing Program.

The goal of the Department is to maintain our youth in voluntary programming past their 18th birthday, hopefully to 23 so that they are in a position, educationally, vocationally, in their job readiness and emotionally to leave us and become self-sufficient, interdependent young adults.

District of Columbia

The most effective strategy has been increased cross agency collaboration and an increase in public-private partnerships.

Illinois

IDCFS have agreements & networks with the following state agencies:

- DHS – Department of Human Services (State and City)
- Office of Mental Health
- Department of Alcohol and Substance Addictions DASA
- Department of Public Aid DPA
- Department of Rehabilitation DORS

- Illinois State Board of Education ISBE
- Chicago Public Schools; Parochial and Suburban Educational Institution
- City Wide Colleges CCC
- Medical and Mental Health Institutions and Hospitals
- Purchase Of Service / Independent/Transitional Living Agencies contracted with IDCFS

Indiana

Indiana actively markets its Chafee Programs through trainings, conferences, bulletins and newsletters. Referrals start at age 16 from the Department of Child Services Family Case Managers. At age 16 an Independent Living Plan is developed, and at 17 a Transition Planning Conference is held with the youth, mental health agency, probation officer, foster care parents, residential case managers and any other adult

or agency needed. The Independent Living Field Specialist monitors the child date summary to see what youth might need a referral.

Kansas

Transition planning starts at age 16 for all youth in out of home placement. This provides an opportunity for relationship building with youth and workers who will serve through the Independent Living case once no longer in foster care.

Maryland

Maryland attempts to coordinate and link the youth to adult programs and services through its Life Skills training, and resource networking activities where youth learn how to access resources and advocate for their needs. The After Care services allow youth to contact the agency or return to the agency for services and receive referrals for additional supportive services. Currently, Maryland's Child Welfare staff is focused on improving its After Services. The strategy being developed is to increase marketing for the 1-800 number that youth can use to seek direction, gain clarity on the services they are eligible to receive and work with the staff person responsible for serving the youth in need of information on programs to meet their needs.

Minnesota

Our strategy was to pursue contracts with community agencies who were serving both youth (< 18) and young adults (ages 18 to 21) populations in transition. In this manner the youth who age out of foster care can be picked up by the programming available to them as "adults" which includes a housing component.

Montana

We are currently developing a website for youth, we have developed a very comprehensive and intense outreach with our ETV program for youth across the state.

Nebraska

Nebraska offers problem solving and referral services for youth transitioning to adulthood, but does not link or coordinate with adult programs and services.

New Mexico

We have formed workgroups to address needs in housing and employment that includes many different partners. We ensure that the AART team looks at transition issues for each youth reviews the cases. We provide Chafee Medicaid to our youth that age out. Once we identify a resource that can help our youth we work to educate all field staff about the resource and how it can be used to help youth.

New York

Integrated County Planning – see above.

North Dakota

Our foster care system, including Chafee Programming, utilizes the Wraparound Process, consisting of the Child and Family Teams, and a Single Plan of Care planning approach.

Ohio

PCSAs are encouraged to coordinate with other child and family serving agencies, within and among counties, to develop service systems that meet the needs of youth in care. Many county agencies have developed formal protocols related to service provision for youth in care and those returning after emancipation. For example, some PCSAs and their local Workforce Investment Act (WIA) boards have forged strong communication links that enable them to work together in assisting youth. At the state

level, ODJFS and WIA bureau staff provide assistance to local agencies in the development of service plans for young people.

Oklahoma

The first strategy is a life skills assessment and independent living/transitional plan for each youth 16 and above that is reviewed every six months. Obtaining legal documents and five basic areas are covered during each review. The five areas are Education, Employment, Housing, Health, and Permanent Connections. Links that are needed with adult programs are identified at these reviews and referrals for services are made.

South Carolina

Transition planning meetings are to be held with youth beginning at least one year prior to the youth's 18th birthday in order that planning for continuance of supportive connections can be addressed, as well as the identification of additional supports, to ensure the youth's successful transition from foster care.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed between the Department of Social Services and the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to expedite referrals for youth who are aging out of foster care and who have disabilities that meet the criteria for assistance through DDSN. The memo is creating specific referral requirements and timelines for staff of both agencies.

P.A.T.T.Y. - Providing Assistance to Transitioning Youth (Aftercare Services)

At age 18, youth who are not ready to live independently have the option of entering into a yearly voluntary agreement with the agency for extended care until age 21. Another option for youth who leave care on or after their 18th birthday is to return to the agency for assistance at any point until their 21st birthday without reentering the system. As a parent surrogate, the agency has developed procedures to maintain an open door policy for the possible return of foster care youth. There is an array of services and resources such as financial assistance, housing, educational support, employment support and/or other appropriate supportive services available to former foster care youth. The same services and resources are available to both youth remaining in the system and to eligible foster care graduates. The overall services and service delivery system is developed, defined and continuously modified by recipients, staff and providers.

At the request of the Governor's Office, the Independent Living Program submitted a proposal to the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices and was selected in April 2006 to participate in a one year NGA *Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care*. Through a competitive process, South Carolina was one of six states (California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and South Carolina) selected to participate in the Policy Academy. During the year, state policy makers from across systems worked with national and state experts to develop specific responses to public policy issues. The purpose of the Academy was to improve outcomes for youth transitioning out of foster care by assessing the current service delivery system and youth outcomes; developing a framework for implementation including an assessment of the existing system, priorities and goals, strategies and action steps, essential partners, and common measures, and designing and implementing strategies to ensure that youth leaving foster care have the supports and skills to successfully enter adulthood. Partners of the Academy have elected to continue the work that has been initiated through this effort.

The Education and Employment Development Committee of the Policy Academy addressed the need for youth in foster care to have increased opportunities to develop career readiness skills. As a result, the DSS Workforce Development Program will expand to include youth in foster care. Foster youth will have increased access to Workforce Investment Area programs statewide. Procedures are being developed statewide for referral of youth to WIA One Stop centers. Foster youth will have increased access to career and labor market information, career counseling and career planning services in secondary schools

by dissemination of information about available school services, including the WorkKeys Assessment, to caseworkers, foster parents, group home staff and foster care youth. In the current program year, Independent Living Coordinators have included information in training materials for caseworkers, foster parents, group home staff and foster youth regarding WIA office locations, One Stop offices, and the Department of Labor's *Vision for Youth* that identifies foster youth as an at risk population. An Independent Living Coordinator for employment will be hired in June 2007 to further develop and implement employment activities and supports.

South Carolina's yearly Independent Living Conference for youth ages 13 – 21 includes state and community exhibitors who participate to provide information and linkages for youth to their programs. The 2006 conference included the following organizations: Columbia Urban League, SC Foster Parents Association, Columbia Housing Authority, SC Department of Motor Vehicles, Workforce Investment Area Centers, One Stop Shop, Appleseed Justice Center, AmeriCorps, Institutions of Higher Learning, the Military (Air Force, Army, Navy), Kuder Vocational Assessment, C. R. Neal Dream Center, Growing Up and Out (five county youth Association), Richland County Youth Board, GOALL, SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, USC Center for Child and Family Studies Youth Survey, and Creative Impressions. The conference featured workshops focused on education, employment and housing.

Texas

The collaborations noted above ensure that schools, workforce counselors, transition counselors, developmental disability professionals and child welfare staff are working together to ensure youth transitioning from care and from secondary school to have the help and support they need to obtain skills for adult living, increased independence, and employment experience and jobs. For youth in special education programs, the Individual Education Plan identifies specific agencies that should be involved and what services should be provided. The school systems in Texas provide adult service agencies with information about youth with disabilities transitioning out of high school that may need services.

A cross-agency Memorandum of Understanding between TWC and DFPS was signed in May 2006. This agreement is intended to ensure and strengthen local collaborations between the two agencies through cooperative agreements between DFPS regions, local workforce boards and other community partners in order to streamline services, eliminate duplication and meet Preparation for Adult Living objectives for older foster youth and those who have transitioned to adult living. All regions developed and signed MOUs with local workforce boards, effective August 1, 2006. The term of these MOUs is five years.

Transition Centers now exist in several cities across the state. In a transition or one stop center, a young person can go to one location to complete their GED certification, receive Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) services, take a community college prep course, talk to an onsite apartment locator service, receive employment training and placement services, and obtain referrals to adult service providers or programs in their community.

Partnerships with colleges and universities in Texas help PAL students, including Texas A&M University at Commerce, University of Texas at Arlington, Texas State University, Texas A&M University at Kingsville, and Western Texas College. Provisions include residential housing scholarships for former foster care youth, PAL youth college conferences, college tours, staff to assist students with financial aid applications, work-study programs, and campus employment, and staff or faculty mentors to high school seniors planning to attend the university. The University of Houston "Urban Experience" program provides social and emotional support, as well as coordination of education, employment, and counseling to foster care alumni.

Vermont

The Governor's Youth in Transitions Initiative, Youth and Higher Education Initiative and Youth and Health Care Initiative.

Virginia

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) requires the 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) to develop a transitional living plan with the youth, age 16 and over. The VDSS and the LDSS coordinate services on state, regional and local levels with other agencies and community organizations for current and former foster care youth. Some examples include:

- Working with local Community Service Boards to develop and offer independent living groups.
- Using AmeriCorps workers
- Working with local organizations to set up fully furnished apartments to transition youth in and out of foster care
- School systems collaborating with LDSS
- Local mental health services
- Woodrow Wilson Training Academy
- Training resources from community agencies

Wyoming

Cross training with the Division of Developmental disabilities so each group understands what the other offers

Name and contact information of state individual regarding transition to adult programs

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