

PROMISING PROGRAM MODELS

FOR EXTENDED FOSTER CARE & TRANSITION SERVICES

JUNE 2019 | BY KATHERINE GAUGHEN AND BARBARA HANSON LANGFORD



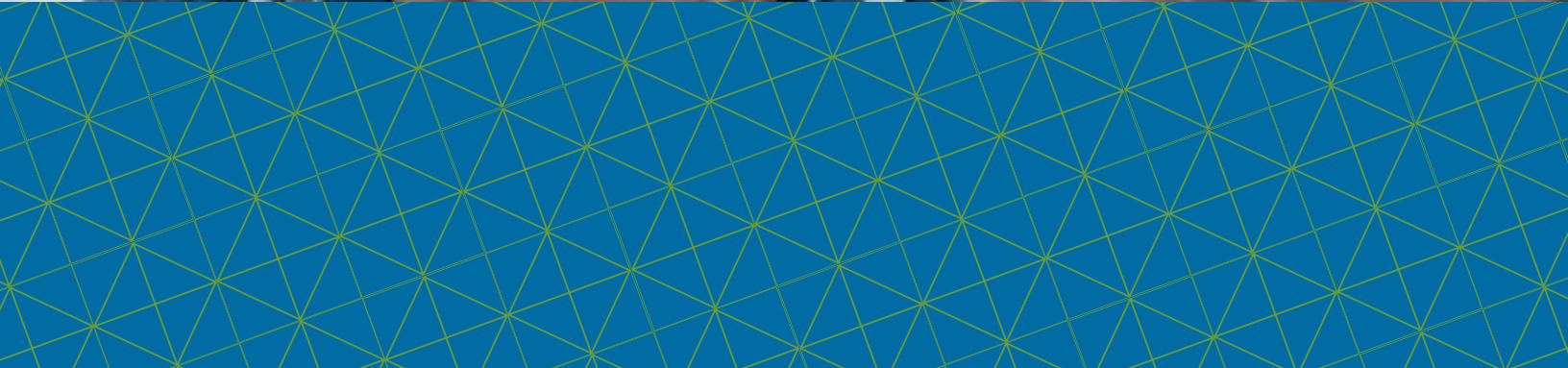


PROMISING PROGRAM MODELS

FOR EXTENDED FOSTER CARE & TRANSITION SERVICES

INTRODUCTION	1
FOSTER CARE BEYOND 18: DOING IT RIGHT	3
EXTENDED FOSTER CARE DESIGN	5
1. ELIGIBILITY	6
2. PLACEMENT	9
3. CASE MANAGEMENT, TRANSITION PLANNING & PERMANENCY PLANNING	14
4. CASE REVIEW	19
5. TRANSITION SERVICES	21
CONCLUSION	25

INTRODUCTION



Since the passage of the Fostering Connections Act in 2008, 28 states and the District of Columbia have taken advantage of new federal funding to extend supports and services for young people between the age of 18 and 21 through their Title IV-E foster care program.

An additional 17 states provide some degree of extended foster care through state-only funded programs. The recently enacted Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First) provides further opportunities for state leaders to support older youth who have experienced foster care by expanding eligibility of Chafee services up to the age of 23 (for states that have extended their Title IV-E foster care program through Fostering Connections or comparable state program). Family First also allows all states to extend Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) for young adults up to age 26.

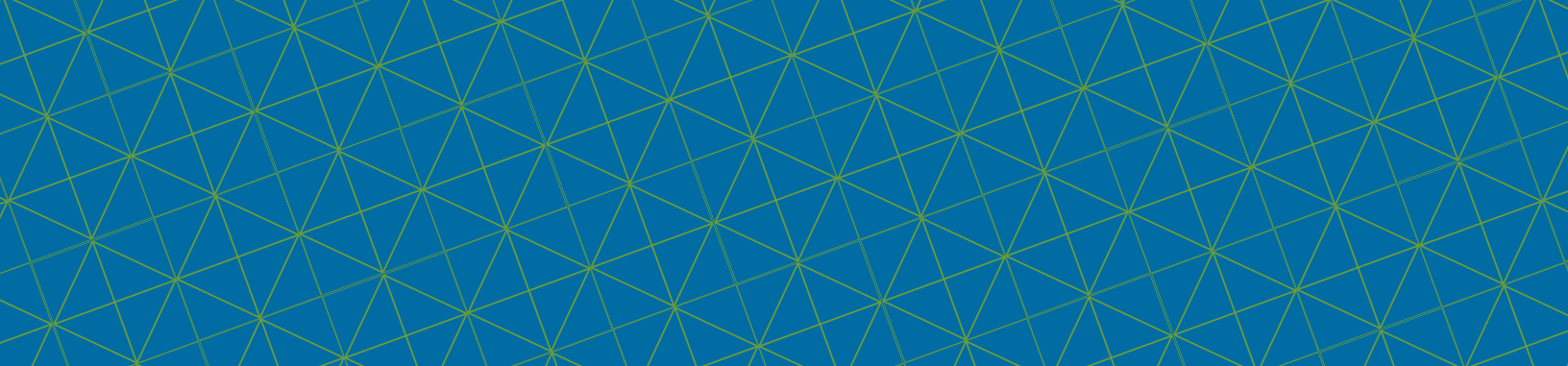
In the decade since the passage of Fostering Connections, many states have considered how best to design extended foster care and transition services for an expanded young adult population. Recent research has shown that extended foster care is but one critical piece of a larger service array that is needed to improve outcomes for older youth transitioning from foster care.¹ Currently, the utilization rate of extended foster care remains relatively low: only around 25% of young people who were in care on their 18th birthday (FY 2016) remained in care on their 19th birthday (FY 2017).² To effectively build that broader service array and serve more young people, as well as to take full advantage of the opportunities to expand transition services under the Family First Act, states' leaders need to ensure they create a robust and high quality extended foster care program as a core foundation of services for older youth and young adults.

THIS BRIEF IS INTENDED TO SUPPORT CHILD WELFARE LEADERS IN FURTHER IMPROVING THE DESIGN OF EXTENDED CARE PROGRAMS BY HIGHLIGHTING PROMISING APPROACHES AND MODELS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IT PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF STATE DESIGNS RELATED TO ESSENTIAL PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS OF EXTENDED FOSTER CARE AND SHARES PROMISING PROGRAM COMPONENTS RELATED TO ELIGIBILITY, PLACEMENT SETTINGS, CASE MANAGEMENT MODELS, CASE REVIEW, AND TRANSITION SERVICES.

1 Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., Park, K., Harty, J., Feng, H., Torres-García, A., & Sayed, S. (2018). Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of youth at age 21. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

2 Annie E. Casey Foundation. Fostering Youth Transitions: Using Data to Drive Policy and Practice Decisions, <https://www.aecf.org/resources/fostering-youth-transitions>. Accessed on 1 April 2019.

FOSTER CARE BEYOND 18: DOING IT RIGHT



To be effective, foster care for older youth and young adults must look and feel different than traditional foster care for young children. In the 2011 publication, *Foster Care Beyond 18: Doing It Right*, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative lays out several critical components of effective extended foster care design:

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

Foster care to 21 must be based on the developmental needs of adolescents and young adults, which are different than those of younger children, and it must respond to the developmental impact of trauma and loss. Extended foster care must recognize that young people in care are gradually transitioning to adulthood as they move toward greater independence – in the areas of residence, employment, education, finances, romance, and possibly parenting – even as they are developing vital interdependent relationships.

GEARED TOWARD PERMANENCY

Given the increasing urgency of connecting young people in extended foster care with permanent families and committed caring adults, child welfare agencies must give priority to permanency planning. The Fostering Connections Act requires states that extend their foster care program beyond 18 also extend adoption and guardianship subsidies for youth who transitioned to permanency at age 16 or 17 using the same criteria. Extended foster care programs that do not respond to the urgency of solidifying permanent relationships will merely postpone young people's exit from foster care to a disconnected young adulthood.

YOUTH-DIRECTED

Young people should play a lead role in directing their transition plan. Case workers and legal representatives must ensure their work is youth-driven, responsive, and

respectful of the unique needs of each young person. Successful extended foster care programs also ensure that young adults are critical stakeholders in designing the program and services that will support them as they transition to adulthood.

INFORMED BY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

The latest adolescent brain research continues to offer critical direction for those working with youth in or emerging from foster care to promote growth, healing, hope, belonging and purpose. By improving the environment surrounding a young person, supporting his or her racial and ethnic identity and sexual orientation and understanding how the developing brain is driving behaviors but is still neuroplastic, we can best support youth in and emerging from foster care. We know that adolescents will benefit from consistent relationships and connections with caring adults, developmentally sound and accessible opportunities to exercise risk and autonomy, and the opportunity to nurture their great capacity for resilience.³

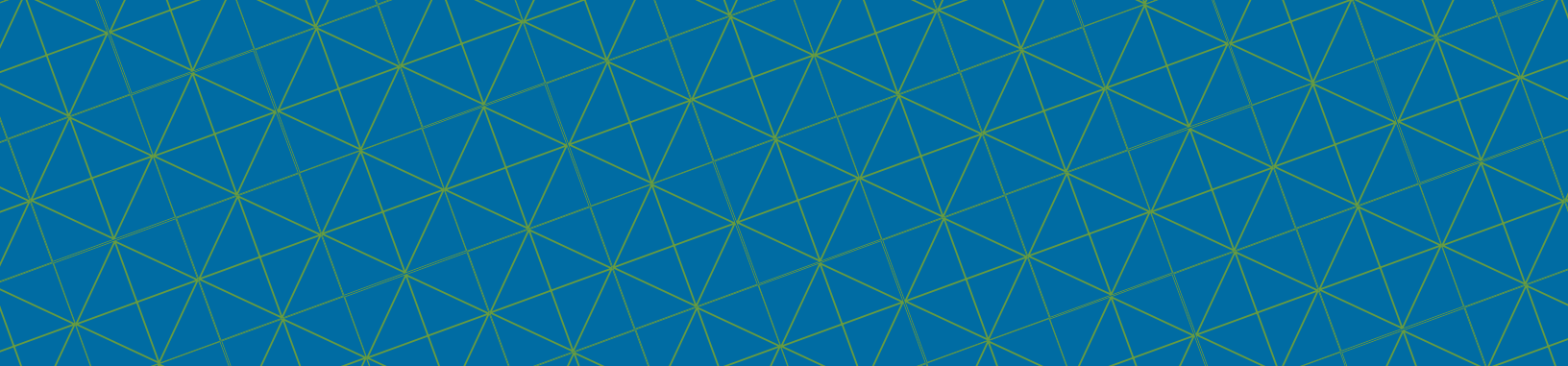
ADVANCES EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Leaders will only be successful in improving overall outcomes for youth and young adults when they are able close gaps in outcomes for youth and young adults of color. Extended foster care design must also include a thorough analysis of outcomes by race ethnicity and the development of targeted equity strategies to reduce those disparities⁴

3 Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2017). *The Road to Adulthood: Aligning Child Welfare Practice with Adolescent Brain Development*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation: Baltimore, MD. Retrieved on January 20, 2019 from <https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcecdoc/aecf-theroadtoadulthood-2017.pdf>.

4 For additional resources to address disparities in outcomes, see the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Race Equity and Inclusion Action Guide*, available at <https://www.aecf.org/resources/race-equity-and-inclusion-action-guide/>

EXTENDED FOSTER CARE DESIGN



1. ELIGIBILITY

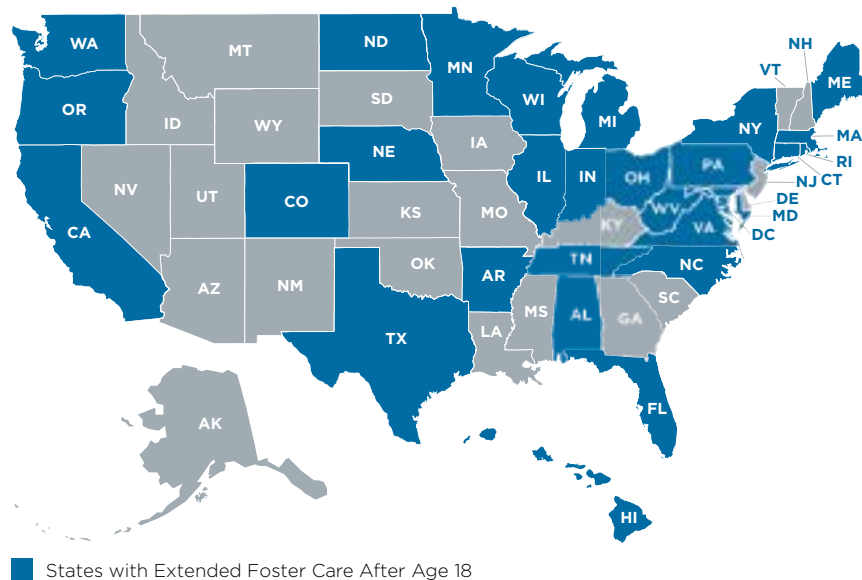
The first design issue states need to consider is how they craft eligibility requirements for extended foster care – who is eligible for services and what mechanism is used to enroll in the program.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

To receive federal reimbursement through the Title IV-E program, participants must:

- have attained the age of 18 but be not yet 21;
- be in the custody of a public children services agency upon attaining the age of 18; and
- meet at least one of the following five criteria:
 1. Completing **secondary education** or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
 2. Enrolled in an institution that provides **post-secondary or vocational education**;
 3. Participating in a program or activity designed to **promote or remove barriers to employment**;
 4. **Employed for at least eighty hours per month**;
 5. Incapable of doing any of the activities described above due to a **medical condition**.

FIGURE 1. STATES EXTENDING FOSTER CARE BEYOND 18 UNDER A FEDERALLY-APPROVED TITLE IV-E PLAN



NOTE: Louisiana and New Mexico have recently extended foster care and are in the process of gaining Title IV-E plan approval.

Under federal regulations, states also have several options related to eligibility for an extended foster care program.

- The child welfare agency can choose to presumptively continue to serve young people after age 18 or a young person can enter through a voluntary placement agreement.
- States have the option to allow young people to leave and return to care and to receive the same supports and services as those provided to young people who remained in care continuously.

STATE DESIGNS & OPTIONS

The majority of states that have extended IV-E foster care programs have **fully extended eligibility to age 21 and for all five federal eligibility criteria**. A few notable exceptions include:

- Indiana, which extended their IV-E program for young people up to age 20 and uses Chafee funds to support young adults age 20-21 as a bridge year;
- Tennessee, which has limited eligibility only to those completing secondary, post-secondary or vocational education or to those with a medical condition; and
- Louisiana, which has limited eligibility to young adults completing secondary education.

States who have limited eligibility criteria for foster care have often done so to make the program politically and/or fiscally viable with the intention to expand eligibility over time. Stakeholders in Indiana, Tennessee and Louisiana are all currently exploring expanding their eligibility criteria. With the passage of the Families First Act, allowing states who have extended foster care to use Chafee funds to support young adults through 23, the bridge year that Indiana thoughtfully designed to provide a gradual transition to adulthood is now less essential as a design feature. Similarly, leaders in Tennessee and Louisiana recognize the need to support multiple pathways to success and are actively working toward expanding eligibility to support young adults participating in post-secondary education and/or employment activities.

Most states utilize a **Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA)** as the administrative mechanism to extend eligibility beyond the age of 18. A VPA is a written agreement between a child welfare agency and young person that details terms of the relationship, including the expectation that the young adult will continue to meet eligibility requirements and the responsibilities of the agency to provide room and board, case management and other supportive services. Use of a VPA offers several advantages. First, it provides a developmentally appropriate approach for supporting young people, in which the young person decides whether or not to stay in (or re-enter) care. Secondly, states are able to re-determine IV-E eligibility based on the young person's income – not their family of origin's income, which generally results in higher IV-E penetration rates for this population, particularly when that determination occurs at age 18. Federal requirements are also more flexible with case review requirements when a VPA is issued. Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, North Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia all use VPAs.

A handful of states, including Washington DC and Oregon, utilize a **presumptive eligibility** approach under which all young people in care at age 18 are “presumed” to continue into extended care. This approach generally yields higher uptake rates while minimizing administrative burdens of re-determining eligibility. Additionally, a few states utilize a **hybrid approach** in their administrative procedures. For example, in Tennessee, the agency presumptively extends care for those who are IV-E eligible on their 18th birthday and uses a VPA for those who are not.

Most states allow young people to **exit and re-enter care** with few restrictions. Of the 28 states and territories that have Title IV-E approved extended foster care programs, only Oregon does not have a provision for re-entry. As previously noted, Oregon is also one of the few states with presumptive eligibility for foster care. Young adults need to actively petition to leave extended foster care, and this requirement generally makes it far less likely that a young adult will exit care, particularly at younger ages.

Finally, only California and Indiana offer extended foster care to young adults leaving the juvenile justice system, although other states, such as New Mexico, are actively considering such provisions.

GIVEN THE SIGNIFICANT OVERLAP IN CHILD WELFARE AND YOUTH JUSTICE POPULATIONS IN MOST STATES, DESIGNING AN EXTENDED CARE SYSTEM THAT SUPPORTS BOTH POPULATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE REPRESENTS A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES IN THE FUTURE.

Efficient and effective service provision is critical for older youth leaving the juvenile justice system as they attempt to navigate a successful transition to adulthood.⁵ Unfortunately, youth transitioning from the juvenile justice system face even worse outcomes than their peers leaving the child welfare system. Within twelve months of their release from institutional placement, only 30% of delinquent youth were involved in either school or employment.⁶ These youth are significantly more likely than their peers to have substance abuse or mental health challenges.^{7 8} In some states, almost half return to the justice system after they are released.⁹ Given the significant overlap in child welfare and youth justice populations in most states, designing an extended care system that supports both populations of young people represents a critical opportunity for states in the future.

-
- 5 Altschuler, D., Stangler, G., Berkley, K., and Burton, L. (2009). *Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*. Retrieved on October 19, 2015 from <http://www.jimcaseyouth.org/sites/default/files/documents/Georgetown%20child%20welfare%20and%20juvenile%20justice.pdf>
- 6 Bullis, M., Yovanoff, P., Mueller, G., & Havel, E. (2002). Life on the “outs”: Examination of the facility-to-community transition of incarcerated adolescents. *Exceptional Children*, 69, 7–22.
- 7 National Mental Health Association. (n.d.). Mental health treatment for youth in the juvenile justice system: A compendium of promising practices. Retrieved October 19, 2015, from https://www.nttac.org/views/docs/jabg/mhcurriculum/mh_mht.pdf.
- 8 Reclaiming Futures. (2008). Model policies for juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment. Retrieved October 19, 2015 from <https://csgjusticecenter.org/jc/publications/model-policies-for-juvenile-justice-and-substance-abuse-treatment-a-report-by-reclaiming-futures-2/>
- 9 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. (2006). Juvenile offenders and victims: 2006 report. Retrieved October 19, 2015, from <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/nr2006/downloads/NR2006.pdf>.

2. PLACEMENT

Support for housing is generally the most significant determinant as to whether or not young adults choose to participate in voluntary extended foster care programs. Placement is also the design element that the federal government provides the most flexibility in implementing and the area in which states can creatively think about what continuum of housing options best suit a young adult population.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Under Fostering Connections, states can receive Title IV-E reimbursement for expenses related to placement costs for IV-E eligible youth up to age 21. Placement options for young people over the age of 18 include traditional settings such as foster and kinship homes, group homes, residential treatment centers, as well as “supervised settings in which the individual is living independently”.
- “Supervised settings in which the individual is living independently” is a new placement setting typically referred to as Supervised Independent Living (SIL). States have broad discretion in defining SILs, including making Title IV-E maintenance payments directly to young adults. Federal regulations encourage states to be innovative in determining supervised independent living arrangements that best meet the needs of young adults in care and do not require those settings to be licensed in order to draw down IV-E reimbursement.

Under the Family First Act, federal reimbursement for congregate care is strictly curtailed. Family First places a limit of two weeks on federal payments for placements that are not foster homes or qualified residential treatment programs that use a trauma-informed treatment model and have licensed nursing and clinical staff. The only exceptions are for young adults in the juvenile justice system; prenatal, postpartum or parenting support for teen moms; supervised settings for youth *18 or older*; or high-quality residential activities for youth that have been victims of trafficking or are at risk of it¹⁰

STATE DESIGNS & OPTIONS

Even with the significant flexibility offered in federal regulations, most states offer the same placement options for young people over 18 as they provided for young people under age 18: family foster homes, relative foster homes, group care and residential treatment centers. With the passage of the Family First Act, federal IV-E reimbursement will not be available to states for group care beyond two weeks, except in very limited circumstances. As a result, a dramatic decline in the use of group homes for young adults in extended foster care is expected.

10 H.R. 253 – 115th Congress: Family First Prevention Services Act of 2017. www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr253.

Innovation in placement settings for young adults is happening mostly through the use of supervised independent living settings (SILs). Most states do not license SILs, because it is not required in order to draw down Title IV-E reimbursement. In general, states have defined SILs as including supervised and semi-supervised apartments, college dormitories, relative homes, shared housing, host homes and direct stipends. The availability of these options vary widely across states.

WITH THE PASSAGE OF THE FAMILY FIRST ACT, FEDERAL IV-E REIMBURSEMENT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE TO STATES FOR GROUP CARE BEYOND TWO WEEKS, EXCEPT IN VERY LIMITED CIRCUMSTANCES. AS A RESULT, A DRAMATIC DECLINE IN THE USE OF GROUP HOMES FOR YOUNG ADULTS IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE IS EXPECTED.

In most states, the majority of young adults continue to reside in family-based settings. On average, nearly 25% of young people remain in either group care or residential care. The percentage of young people in SILs varies widely, which is likely attributable to the state's capacity to develop these options.

Many states offer direct stipends to young people with varying degrees of usage and at varying rates. For example, Nebraska utilizes direct stipends for all young people in extended care. Minnesota also utilizes direct stipends as a placement option for young adults who can live independently without a caregiver. To determine the amount of the stipend, Minnesota uses a uniform assessment – the Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth (MAPCY) – which assess placement experience; supervision needs; mental/physical health

and development; preserving connections; developing identity; education; transportation, and communication support indicators; as well as the additional needs of a youth who is a parent.^{11 12}

When designing placement options for young adults in extended foster care, it is important to develop a range of housing options that will allow young people to gradually gain independence in supportive settings. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Issue Brief, [Extending Foster Care Beyond 18: Housing Options for Young Adults](#), highlights a range of housing options that states have developed for young adults.¹³ A few notable states have invested in creating a continuum of placements options for older youth and young adults.

-
- 11 Minnesota Department of Human Services (2014). *Northstar Care for Children: Supporting Safe, Permanent Families for Children Practice Guide*. Retrieved on February 12, 2019 from <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7024-ENG>.
- 12 Minnesota Department of Human Services (2015). *Northstar Care for Children: Supporting Safe, Permanent Families for Children Minnesota Assessment of Parenting for Children and Youth Practice Guide*. Retrieved on February 12, 2019 from <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfsrserver/Public/DHS-7060-ENG>.
- 13 Gaughen, K. (2014). *Success Beyond 18: Extending Foster Care Beyond 18: Housing Options for Young Adults*. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Baltimore, MD. Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.acf.org/m/resource/doc/JCYOL-HousingOptionsforYoungAdults-2014.pdf>

In California, for example, young people age 18 to 21 can remain in kinship care, foster care, or congregate care while they complete secondary education. In addition, California has developed a range of supervised independent living placements available to young people, including:

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT PROGRAM (THPP) AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT-PLUS-FOSTER CARE (THP+FC)

THPP and THP+FC allow young people to practice the skills needed to live independently upon exiting the foster care system. In addition to providing supervised transitional housing, the programs also provide supportive services based on a young person's transitional living plan. THPP and THP+FC are more structured than Supervised Independent Living Placements.

SUPERVISED INDEPENDENT LIVING PLACEMENT (SILP)

A SILP is a supervised setting as specified in a young person's transition plan. This may include apartment living, room and board arrangements, college dorms and shared roommate settings. A young person placed in a SILP may receive the foster care maintenance payment directly. The payment for a young person living in a SILP is the equal to the basic foster care rate for 15 – 21 year olds.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM-PLUS (THP-PLUS)

THP-Plus is a transitional housing placement option for young people ages 18 to 24 who exited foster care at or after age 18. Young people in this program are not eligible for Title IV-E reimbursement. The program's goal is to provide a safe living environment, for up to 24 months, while assisting the young person in developing the life skills necessary to be successful living independently. The program provides supervised transitional living housing and supportive services based on a transition plan.

Many states have also found that partnering with local and state housing authorities can be an effective way to design long-term housing options for young people in extended foster care. Partnerships with housing agencies offer promise for child welfare leaders seeking to build a continuum of care. Public housing agencies have significant infrastructure already in place and existing planning processes that can be valuable mechanisms for including and/or prioritizing youth in care as a priority population.

To develop long-term, stable housing options for young adults transitioning from foster care, it is important to leverage both Title IV-E funds, as well as other funding streams that support housing, such as the Family Unification Program (FUP) and the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) Transitional Living Program (TLP).

The Family Unification Program is a Housing and Urban Development program that provides a pool of housing choice vouchers and supportive services to families involved in the child welfare system and experiencing housing problems, as well as to youth ages 18-21 that have aged out of foster care. The local public housing agency administers the program in collaboration with the child welfare agency. Vouchers are only available to young adults transitioning from foster care

PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES HAVE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE ALREADY IN PLACE AND EXISTING PLANNING PROCESSES THAT CAN BE VALUABLE MECHANISMS FOR INCLUDING AND/OR PRIORITIZING YOUTH IN CARE AS A PRIORITY POPULATION.

for 18 months. As such, FUP is best utilized as part of a broader strategy to bridge to a long-term housing opportunity such as while waiting to clear the regular Section 8 waitlist. Some states give priority on the Section 8 waitlist to youth who have aged-out of foster care, either immediately upon emancipation or at the termination of their FUP voucher.¹⁴

The Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) makes use of FYSB's TLP to serve youth who age out of foster care. TLPs provide site based residential facilities and help youth learn the skills to move progressively to independence. TLPs provide case management, life skills training, and other supportive services. Michigan has an explicit agreement with the TLPs for youth who age out of care. Contracts with TLP providers currently require

at least 25 percent of the slots be reserved for youth aging out of foster care. A youth can access a TLP as early as two months prior to leaving care and can reside in a TLP for up to 21 months. The slots are intended for youth who are expected to be homeless after their case is closed.¹⁵

Indiana's Connected By 25 initiative created the Willard Park Permanent Supportive Housing Program, in partnership with the Indiana Housing and Community Development Corporation, to address chronic homelessness among young people leaving foster care. Willard Park program residents have their rent and utilities paid by way of vouchers. Unless their income changes, Willard Park program participants can stay in their homes as long as they like. Residents have access to a wide range of services, including a mental health clinic, Family and Social Services, WorkOne and Planned Parenthood. The Willard Park program also has a resource/drop-in center.

Similarly, in **Forsyth County, North Carolina**, a partnership between the local child welfare agency, community foundations and the local housing authority, created the SECU Commons. The Commons delivers an integrated program aimed at serving three populations identified as at-risk of becoming homeless – families with minor children, young people aging out of foster care and young adults with high functioning autism. With transitional housing, health care and social services, as well as an on-site job training campus, The SECU Commons provides participating residents with the broad-based support to help them achieve employment, permanent housing and stability.

14 Pergamit, M.R., McDaniel, M., & Hawkins, A. (2012). "Housing Assistance for Youth Who Have Aged Out of Foster Care: The Role of the Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation: Washington, DC. Retrieved on February 1, 2019 from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/housing-assistance-youth-who-have-aged-out-foster-care>

15 *Ibid.*

Other states have designed housing options to support specific subsets of young adults in extended care. For example, the **John Seita Scholars Program at Western Michigan University** supports young adults living in the dorm as they pursue their college education. Young adults are provided year-round on-campus apartments, meals, and community activities. The program further supports youth by using trained student leaders and surrogate parents, called “campus coaches.” The program’s students are expected to live on campus, keep their grades up, and check in regularly with their campus coaches, either in person or by text message. The coaches are paid to monitor such things as academic performance and behavior, and they provide support as needed. In addition to the campus coaches, the Michigan Department of Human Services has placed an employee in the Seita office to coordinate state grant monies and to act as an in-house caseworker for students who are still in the foster care system.

Pregnant and parenting young adults also require specialized housing supports. A recent brief by Child Trends and the Healthy Teen Network identified five core components of supportive housing for pregnant and parenting youth -- supports and resources to promote: (1) self-sufficiency; (2) housing stability; (3) financial stability; (4) successful and engaged parenting and attachment; and (5) healthy relationships.¹⁶

The **Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (G-CAPP) Second Chance Homes Network** is a good example of a continuum of placement settings that provide comprehensive supports and resources for pregnant and parenting young adults ages 13-21. The Second Chance Homes network provides adult-supervised parenting teen group homes, transitional living, and independent living. The program helps teen mothers become self-sufficient by providing them with a safe living environment, support for long-term economic independence, child development, parenting and life skills. G-CAPP has a network of 11 homes located across Georgia, and each home serves an average of five young women (ages 13-21) and their children. Most participants stay in the program for an average of 11 months but can live in the homes until their 21st birthday.

16 Barry, M., Desodero, G., Ikramullah, E., Manlove, J., Max, J., & Scott, M.E. (2014). Bricks, Mortar, and Community: The Foundations of Supportive Housing for Pregnant and Parenting Teens Findings from the Field. Retrieved on November 1, 2018 from <https://www.healthyteennetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Core-Components-of-Supportive-Housing-for-PPT-Findings-from-the-Field.pdf>

3. CASE MANAGEMENT, TRANSITION PLANNING & PERMANENCY PLANNING

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The federal requirements for case management for young people over the age of 18 are largely the same as for those youth who are in care up to age 18. Each young person must have a caseworker who has a face-to-face meeting with that young person at least once per month. Additionally, Fostering Connections requires a transition plan be developed during the 90-day period before the youth attains age 18, or before the age at which a young adult must exit extended foster care. The transition plan must be personalized at the direction of the child, be as detailed as he or she chooses, and include specific options regarding housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for

mentors and continuing support services, work force supports and employment services.

Child welfare agencies remain responsible to work toward a permanency plan for young adults 18 and older. However, if young adults entered through a voluntary placement agreement, agencies are not required to obtain a judicial determination for reasonable efforts to finalize a permanency plan every 12 months as they are with youth up to age 18. Although not a federal requirement, effective

ALTHOUGH NOT A FEDERAL REQUIREMENT, EFFECTIVE PRACTICE WOULD CONTINUE A FOCUS ON PERMANENCY FOR OLDER YOUTH.

practice would continue a focus on permanency for older youth. A recent study by the National Center for Youth Law¹⁷ highlighted a variety of strategies that states should adopt to achieve permanency for young adults, including:

- Requiring a robust and ongoing search for relatives and other meaningful adults
- Requiring weekly parental visitation
- Requiring monthly permanency planning and family finding services, including the young adult, and
- Removing financial and services barriers to permanency, such as
 1. Providing equitable financial payments for relative and meaningful non-relative adults

17 Johnson, A., Speigman, R., Mauldon, J., Grimm, B., & Perry, M. (2018). *Promoting Permanency for Teens: A 50 State Review of Law and Policy*. National Center for Youth Law: Oakland, CA. Retrieved on February 8, 2019 from <https://www.youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Promoting-Permanency-for-Teens.pdf>

2. Automatic, continuing eligibility for all independent living services and supports, even if a young adult has achieved adoption, guardianship or reunification

Using these strategies, a number of states, such as Arizona and Connecticut, have had significant success in achieving legal and relational permanency for young adults in extended foster care. On the whole, however, states continue to struggle with achieving permanence for older youth in care. ChildTrends' analysis of the 47,298 transition-age youth in the US in 2015, which found that the vast majority of young adults exited foster care to independence.¹⁸ (See Figure 2)

FIGURE 2: EXIT REASONS OF YOUTH WHO LEFT FOSTER CARE

	16-17 YEAR OLDS	18-21 YEAR OLDS
ADOPTION	7%	<1%
EMANCIPATION	4%	85%
GUARDIANSHIP	16%	2%
REUNIFICATION	64%	10%
TRANSFER TO ANOTHER AGENCY	7%	2%

STATE DESIGNS & OPTIONS

A developmental approach to case management recognizes young people’s continued brain development, the appropriate role of risk taking and the importance of supportive adult relationships. Effective case management is also trauma-informed and youth-centered. A handful of states with strong case management systems for young adults recognize that working with young adults often requires *more* time than a child under 18 and balances caseloads appropriately; allow case managers to work flexibly to be responsive to young adults’ needs after normal business hours or on weekends; provide relatively easy access to a pot of flexible funds to support young adults in emergencies; and continue to emphasize permanency in all aspects of their work. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative’s Issue Brief, [Success Beyond 18: Quality Case Planning with Young Adults in Extended Foster Care](#), highlights what quality case planning looks like with young adults in foster care.¹⁹

18 ChildTrends (2017). Transition Age Youth in Foster Care in the U.S. Retrieved on February 8, 2019 from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Transition-Age-Youth_United-States.pdf

19 The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Success Beyond 18: Quality Case Planning with Young Adults in Extended Foster Care. Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014. Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/quality-case-planning-with-young-adults-in-extended-foster-care/>

In general, states have opted to use case management models similar to those they use for children under age 18, including similar caseload ratios. Some states, such as Louisiana, have significantly reduced caseloads, recognizing that young adults often need more intensive case management services. As part of Louisiana's extension of foster care, the state adopted the Youth Villages LifeSet (YVLifeSet) model, which requires a 1:10 caseload ratio, so that case managers can conduct weekly face-to-face visits with young adults and so there is a case manager on-call to meet young adults' needs 24-hours a day, seven days a week.²⁰ State child welfare workers will be trained in and implement the model in consultation with Youth Villagers consultants.

Many states, including Maine and California, provide specialized training for case managers who work with young adults in extended foster care. Several states, including Georgia and Tennessee, have also created specialized case management teams that work exclusively with young adults. These teams are typically limited to urban areas, as it is not often possible to do in rural areas because of staffing ratios and geographical distance.

Although most states build on their current case management model to serve young adults, a few states, such as Ohio, have designed entirely new case management systems for extended foster care. Ohio is a county-administered state in which the state and counties share the non-federal cost of foster care maintenance. Although widespread support existed for the extension of foster care, county stakeholders were clear that they could not take on the additional financial burden of serving young adults ages 18-21. In response, the state designed an extended foster care program that is centrally administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and sub-contracted to local public and private agencies. The state's willingness to creatively design a new system of care for older youth ensured that young adults continued to receive the supports and services as they transition to adulthood.

Most states continue to use a **public case management model** for extended care. However, many of those states supplement their case management teams with **specialized contracted services**. For example, Hawaii and Indiana use a public-private model of case management, in which privately contracted case managers handle day to day case management responsibilities at a higher level of intensity, while the public case manager maintains formal responsibility for the young adult: completing monthly visits, filing court reports; completing data entry in automated case management systems, and participating in reviews. Several counties in California - as well as communities in Massachusetts, Mississippi and New York - have adopted First Place for Youth's My First Place Model to deliver case management services. My First Place™ is an education and employment program model that employs housing and case management supports to enable youth to develop a sense of permanency and build the skills they need for a successful transition to self-sufficiency. Participants are assigned to a team of program staff, consisting of a master's-level Social Worker, an Education and Employment Specialist, and a Housing Specialist. With the support of this team, and within the program-embedded Steps to Success and Healthy Transitions frameworks, each

young person works to identify, plan for, and achieve their personal long-term goals in education, employment, housing, and healthy living. As part of the My First Place program, young people receive rent-free housing in shared apartments for the duration of their time in program.²¹

Regardless of the model, it is critical that permanency is at the forefront of case management practice. Successful development through adolescence and early adulthood is strongly tied to a young person’s family relationships.²² Without the security of permanence, young people in foster care can lack the base of operations they need to explore the new roles of adulthood.²³ Young people in foster care often maintain strong hopes for connection to their families of origin,²⁴ and many who age out of foster care return to live or reconnect with their biological families or attempt to do so.²⁵ The urgency of achieving family permanency for young people in foster care greatly intensifies as they approach adulthood because of the significant challenges that they will face if they age out of foster care without a permanent connection to at least one caring adult.²⁶

REGARDLESS OF THE MODEL, IT IS CRITICAL THAT PERMANENCY IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF CASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE. SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ADOLESCENCE AND EARLY ADULTHOOD IS STRONGLY TIED TO A YOUNG PERSON’S FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

In particular, if a young person is not ready to be a part of a legal family, efforts must be made to help that person work towards building family as they define it. Young adults should be fully engaged as the drivers of their permanency planning process and be supported in developing relationships that allow them to feel that they truly belong to a family. Birth family members should be engaged in planning with the young person regardless of their ability to be the caregiver. Older youth must be supported in their desire to maintain or renew connections with birth family members and see that their ties to biological family members are respected and valued.

The **Connecticut Department of Children and Families** (DCF) has done a particularly good job of ensuring that a focus on permanency continues throughout extended foster care. The state has adopted Permanency Teaming as an intentional casework process that maintains important relationships and

21 For more information on First Place for Youth, visit <https://www.firstplaceforyouth.org/>

22 Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2015). “Issue Brief #2 Social Capital: Building High Quality Networks for Young People in Foster Care. Retrieved on November 1, 2018 from <https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/jcyoi-IssueBrief2SocialCapital-2012.pdf>

23 Avery, R.J. & Freundlich, M. (2009). You’re all grown up now: Termination of foster care support at age 18. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32, 247-257.

24 Petr, C.G. (2008). Foster care independent living services: Youth perspectives. *Families in Society*, 81(10), 100-108.

25 McCoy, H.J., McMillen, C. & Spitznagel, E.L. (2008). Older youth leaving the foster care system: Who, what, when, where, and why? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 735-745.

26 Walters, D., Zanghi, M., Ansell, D., Armstrong, E. & Sutter, K. (2010). *Transition planning with adolescents: A review of principles and practices across systems*. Tulsa, OK: National Resource Center for Youth Development.

ensures ongoing progress towards permanence.²⁷ Building on a family's strengths and resiliencies, Permanency Teaming urgently works to safely return the child home or, when that is not possible, identify another family to provide safe permanency. Permanency Team meetings with young adults in extended care help formalize relationships, clarify the specific supportive roles that adults will play in the life of the child, provide clarity as to what the child can expect from the adults in his or her life, and provide the opportunity to bring the various adults together to meet one another and collaboratively build the "network of supports" that will continue beyond the intervention of the agency. As a result of this work, 35% of young adults exiting extended foster care in Connecticut reside with a biological parent or extended family member. Ninety-five percent of young adults also report having at least one positive adult connection and in 79% of those cases, that person was a family member.



The Wendy's Wonderful Kids program has been very successful in finding permanent adoptive homes for older youth in foster care. Through the Dave Thomas Foundation, Wendy's Wonderful Kids provides grants to adoption agencies to hire and train recruiters in their evidence-based, child-focused recruitment model. Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiters work with smaller caseloads of children, ensuring they have the time and resources to give each child focused attention. The adoption recruiters start with familiar circles of family, friends and neighbors and then reach out to the communities in which they live, aggressively pursuing any leads. Research has shown that

teenagers referred to the program at age 15 were *three times as likely to achieve adoption* than their peers who were not referred to the program.²⁸ In 2017, the Foundation launched an ambitious 12-year business plan to scale the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

You Gotta Believe is an organization based in the New York City Metropolitan region that focuses exclusively on finding permanent families for young adults. You Gotta Believe's youth-centered model engages every young adult directly to identify significant people in their lives who may be willing to be their families. When unable to find an existing friend or family tie, You Gotta Believe pursues other possibilities for family for youth. Once a family is identified, the organization offers a rigorous [10-week parent preparation classes](#) to train and prepare potential parents/families for the joys and challenges ahead. You Gotta Believe has found permanent families for nearly 60% of youth referred since 2000.²⁹

27 Connecticut Department of Children and Families (2014). Child and Family Permanency Teaming Practice Guide. Retrieved on November 1, 2018 from <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DCF/Policy/BPGuides/PermanencyTeamingBPGpdf.pdf?la=en>

28 Malm, K., Allen, T., DeVooght, K., Ellis, R., McKlindon, A., Vandivere, S., and Smollar, J. (2011) Technical Report #1: Wendy's Wonderful Kids Program Description and Implementation, Child Trends, Washington, D.C. Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.davethomasfoundation.org/document-category/research/>

29 For more information on You Gotta Believe, visit www.yougottabelieve.org

4. CASE REVIEW

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Under Fostering Connections, the same case review requirements for young people in extended care are in place as for youth under 18 and receiving a Title IV-E payment. This includes periodic case reviews (every 6 months) by either the court or an administrative panel. For states that opt to use a VPA, a judicial finding that remaining in care is in the best interest of the young adult is required within 180 days of the signing of a VPA.

For young people continuing in care without a VPA, *within 12 months of removal and every 12 months thereafter*, a judicial determination that reasonable efforts were made to finalize the child's permanency plan is required. If young adults leave care and return under voluntary placement agreement, court involvement beyond the initial judicial determination of placement is not required.

STATE DESIGNS & OPTIONS

In designing case review processes, many states have built on existing approaches to foster care review that are familiar to agency staff and court personnel. It is worth noting however, that young adults have different needs and greater abilities to participate than children under 18. Like other design aspects of extended care, review processes must be developmentally appropriate: young people should be actively engaged in the review process; reviewers should give deference to their views and their preferences regarding plan content, services and placement; and young people should be allowed to assume increasing responsibilities for their lives as they approach adulthood.³⁰ In their Issue Brief [Re-examining the Foster Care Review Process: Extended Foster Care as a Catalyst for Improved Practices and Better Outcomes](#), the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative identified three core principles to guide jurisdictions in designing and implementing review processes for young adults:

- Reviews should be conducted in venues that are youth/young adult friendly.
- Young people should be fully prepared for the oversight and review process and supported in meaningfully participating.
- The review process should provide context–appropriate advocacy for youth and young adults that includes support for their full involvement in the review proceedings and advocacy for achievement of case goals and resolution of other issues.³¹

30 Berkeley, K., Pokempner, J. & Shokoff, A. (2013). *Success Beyond 18: Re-examining the Foster Care Review Process: Extended Foster Care as a Catalyst for Improved Practices and Better Outcomes*. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Retrieved November 1, 2018 from <https://www.aecf.org/m/resource/doc/JCYOI-SuccessBeyond18-ReExaminingtheFosterCare-2013.pdf>

31 *Ibid.*

In most states, young people continue to have at least one annual permanency review in court. Beyond that annual hearing, states vary in how they structure their case review process. In California, DC, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Texas and West Virginia, the court conducts periodic reviews at least every six months. In Hawaii, Nebraska, and North Dakota, one of the periodic reviews is a court hearing and an administrative panel conducts the second annual review. In Illinois, all young people have two annual reviews by an administrative panel, and court reviews are determined on a case-by-case basis. In Michigan, an administrative body outside the court system exclusively hold periodic reviews.

IN MOST STATES, YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUE TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE ANNUAL PERMANENCY REVIEW IN COURT.

Most states continue to provide – or give young adults the option to request – legal representation. In DC, Illinois and West Virginia, the young adult’s Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) continues to provide legal services. In Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota and Texas, the young person has a right to request legal counsel and, if requested, counsel is provided at public expense. No official legal representation is provided in some states, including Maine and Tennessee.

Some jurisdictions have created **separate court review dockets** and **specialized foster care review boards** for older youth and young adults that are specifically designed to engage and empower them in the review. Judges and hearing officers, foster care review board members, and other staff participating in these reviews bring special interest and expertise to these reviews. For example, in Chicago, the Cook County Benchmark Permanency Hearing Program assists young adults preparing for independence. Young adults receive individualized attention from a judge at a series of hearings held at certain benchmarks in the young adult’s life. The focus is on helping youth identify and plan long-term educational and career goals. The hearings also give young people a better understanding of what independence from the foster care system entails.

Similarly, Washington, DC also has a **one child/one judge model**, where, to the extent possible, a single judge follows a child through the life of their case. Many young adults have developed a strong relationship with their judge by the time they transition from care.

Several states are also designing creative ways to ensure that young adults feel supported during the review process. In Tennessee, specialized Foster Care Review Boards use peer advocates – young adults who were in foster care and received post-custody supports – to consult with those currently in care about options for support, help young people communicate their preferences to the Board, and help the Boards assess and address systemic issues for improving the independent living program. Building on the work of Tennessee, Louisiana is actively exploring creating peer mentor advocates to walk alongside young adults in extended care as they go through the case review process.

5. TRANSITION SERVICES

Extended foster care provides an important foundation of support as young people create and implement their transition plan. For most young people, a placement and a case worker is not sufficient to ensure positive outcomes as they transition from foster care. Many states are grappling with how to best create a continuum of supportive services to help young people navigate the transition from care with growing independence and responsibility.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

While Fostering Connections provides new Federal funds through Title IV-E, this funding only supports maintenance (placement) and administrative costs, not supportive services. The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee) is the only federal funding stream that specifically supports transition services for young adults in foster care. Until recently, Chafee funds were only available to young adults through age 21, but the Families First Act provides new opportunities to support older youth by expanding eligibility of Chafee services up to the age of 23 and ETVs up to age 26 in states that have opted into the Title IV-E extended foster care program. There is no additional Federal funding available under Chafee or the ETV program, only expanded eligibility. Nonetheless, given what we know about the challenges that many young adults transitioning from foster care face, investing federal funds to support young adults until age 23 is an important opportunity.

STATE DESIGNS & OPTIONS

States generally offer four major categories of transition services:

- Educational supports
- Employment supports
- Health supports
- Financial stability supports

Because of the limited federal funding that specifically supports transition services, child welfare agencies have generally found most success partnering with their other youth-serving agencies to build an array of sustainable transition services. Sometimes this means collaborating to develop new programs to serve young adults in extended foster care, but most often it involves simply ensuring that young adults transitioning from foster care become a priority population for existing services and supports offered in the state. For example, in Indiana, stronger relationships with the state's workforce and housing departments has led to an overhaul in supportive services for young adults, including eliminating



services that the child welfare agency was providing that were duplicative of services offered by other public agencies in the state.

Several states have focused on **strengthening educational supports** in extended care, often through partnerships with local community colleges, public universities and state departments of education. Importantly, many of these services continue to support young adults beyond their 21st birthday to create a bridge to independence.

SEVERAL STATES HAVE
FOCUSED ON **STRENGTHENING
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS**
IN EXTENDED CARE, OFTEN
THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH
LOCAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES,
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND STATE
DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION.

- In Illinois, young adults who are attending an accredited post-secondary program on their 21st birthday, and have completed at least one term at full-time status with the equivalent of a 2.0 GPA or higher, are eligible for the Youth in College / Vocational Training Program. The program provides a \$491 monthly grant payment and covers costs of mandatory books that are not covered by financial aid. The young person can remain in the program through the semester they turn 23 years old as long as they maintain full time status with at least a 2.0 GPA each term. Youth who meet the eligibility requirements can also access the ETV program.
- Maine funds 40 Alumni Transition Grants to pay for postsecondary education for young people who had signed a VPA and are between 21-27 years old.
- West Virginia's public colleges and universities have a tuition waiver program in place for all young people who graduate from high school while in foster care,
- The Washington State Passport to Careers scholarship provides youth from foster care, as well as youth who have experienced unaccompanied homelessness, financial aid and tailored high school and postsecondary support services. There are two programmatic pathways – one for college and one for apprenticeships. If activated before age 22, students can benefit from the program until age 27. The program was established through state law in 2007 and expanded in 2018. It is fully state funded at \$2.75 million per year.
- In Virginia, any young person who experienced foster care is eligible for the Great Expectations program at Virginia's Community Colleges, which will give them a coach, access to emergency funds, and a tuition waiver. The Great Expectations coaches continue to work with students as they transition to work, or on to a university.
- In California the state invests \$20 million annually into the NextUp program, which is available at 45 community colleges and provides targeted support to foster youth to help them to enroll in and complete college. Students qualify if they were in foster care on or after their 16th birthday, and include many youth who are actively participating in extended foster care. Students can continue to participate up to age

26, which allows them to continue to receive postsecondary support after they exit extended foster care to create a bridge to adulthood.

- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) awards Chafee funding in the form of contracts to postsecondary institutions to support Independent Living Skills Coach programs on campus. These programs serve students who have experience in foster care and provide scholarships, 24/7 access to a Life Skills Coach, mentorship opportunities, peer community building activities, career networking, and life skills trainings. Currently there are ten contracts awarded to both universities and community colleges across the state and the programs serve youth up to their 23rd birthday.

States who have developed **innovative employment supports** have creatively engaged both public and private partners to support young adults.

- To address unemployment among youth in the foster care system in Los Angeles, the Child Welfare Initiative (CWI) works to improve relationships and the coordination of services across the Department of Child and Family Services, the Probation Department, and local workforce investment boards. CWI is helping systems communicate and share resources to make sure older and youth formerly in foster care and probation access employment opportunities by removing policy and practice barriers, and implementing shared case management models. As a result, CWI is increasing the number of Los Angeles youth in foster care who receive employment or job training services.
- In 2009, Massachusetts partnered with state One-Stop Career Centers to create a single sheet certification of eligibility for young people in foster care. The caseworker simply fills out the form and gives it to the young person, who in turn takes it to the One-Stop to prove eligibility and expedite the job-application process.
- In 2017, the New Mexico Child Advocacy Network along with a group of young adult advocates, developed and worked for the passage of New Mexico Senate Bill 231, the Foster Youth Tax Credits Law. The bill allows taxpayers who employ “qualified foster youth” for at least 20 hours per week to claim a tax credit of up to \$1,000.

STATES WHO HAVE DEVELOPED
**INNOVATIVE EMPLOYMENT
SUPPORTS** HAVE CREATIVELY
ENGAGED BOTH PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE PARTNERS TO SUPPORT
YOUNG ADULTS.

As previously noted, in states that extend IV-E eligibility, young people over the age of 18 are *categorically* eligible for Medicaid coverage until age 26. Despite the availability of insurance, young adults often find it challenging to identify health care providers that accept Medicaid. The Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF) worked to address this issue by awarding grants to two community health care centers to provide health and dental services to young people currently or formerly in foster care between the ages of 14-24. Health services are supported with transportation assistance, peer support and help in navigating the healthcare system.

Communities are also doing innovative work to help older youth in foster care develop financial capability skills that are needed to support the transition to adulthood and are central to achieving other outcomes such as stable housing, education, and employment. These efforts not only help young people gain the knowledge they need for financial security, but also help build their skill to make important financial decisions.

The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative pioneered the Opportunity Passport, implemented in all of the Jim Casey Initiative sites. The Opportunity Passport offers financial literacy classes to help young people learn basic concepts about credit, credit building, savings, budgeting, identity protection, and more. Young people are also supported to open an account at a financial institution and the opportunity to match their savings for a wide range of assets, such as a vehicle, educational expense, or housing-related cost. Adults supporting young people for the Opportunity Passport help young people with decisions about assets and help with other financial challenges that may arise, such as credit problems, debt relief, purchasing insurance, and more.

Other communities, such as the United Way California Capital Region and the Mile High United Way in Denver, offer young adults in foster care the opportunity to match their savings for an asset through Individual Development Accounts. Maryland recently passed legislation that establishes savings accounts for all youth and young adults in foster care ages 14-20. Each young person receives a one-time contribution to their account and can add to it on an on-going basis. Funds are transferred to the young person when they exit foster care. Other examples of financial capability efforts for youth in foster care include:

- Five organizations recently participated in a credit building Fellowship facilitated by Prosperity Now. These organizations are implementing strategies to help young people build their credit so they can access loans, scholarships, housing and more. The details of the Fellowship and strategies these agencies are putting in place are summarized in [Starting Strong: Credit Building for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care](#).
- The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley helps youth with foster care experience remediate any problems that are identified on their credit reports. The project is an outgrowth of the federal requirement for states to check the credit of all young people in foster care beginning at age 14.
- Connectedby25 in Indiana has a partnership with the Bank of Indianapolis to help youth who have experienced foster care increase their credit scores. The program offers young people the opportunity to take out a small dollar loan and reports the payback of monthly installments to the credit agencies.
- Some Jim Casey Initiative sites have paired young people with financial coaches to address a specific financial challenge in their lives and help with goal setting around that challenge. Financial coaches with experience working with at risk populations such as immigrants and those who have experienced domestic violence can use their skills to support youth transitioning from foster care.

CONCLUSION



In the decade since the passage of Fostering Connections, many states have worked in diligent and creative ways to design extended foster care and transition services for an expanded young adult population. This brief highlights promising state designs related to essential programmatic elements of extended foster care: eligibility, placement settings, case management models, case review, and transition services.

Under the Family First Act, states that have extended their Title IV-E foster care program have the opportunity to expand eligibility of Chafee services up to the age of 23. Family First also allows all states to extend Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) for young adults up to age 26. Given what we know about adolescent brain development, and the challenges young people face transitioning to adults, many leaders are recognizing the need to both extend foster care supports as well as additional transition services. In the next decade, state leaders have new opportunities to further build out and strengthen a robust and high quality extended foster care program as a core foundation of services for older youth and young adults. Through thoughtful design of these supports, and a targeted focus on ensuring equitable outcomes, state leaders can ensure all young people have the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

ABOUT MAINSPRING CONSULTING

The driving force behind any initiative is a clear vision, effective leaders, and committed partners. Mainspring Consulting helps leaders harness the power of that driving force to strengthen and grow their work. We work with foundation officers, policymakers, and state and community leaders to design effective programs and initiatives for children, families and communities, develop sound strategies to leverage resources, and to create effective plans to move from good thinking to action.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE JIM CASEY YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

The **Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative** is an effort of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that works to ensure that young people ages 14 to 26 who have spent at least one day in foster care after their 14th birthday have the resources, relationships and opportunities to achieve well-being and success. With partnerships in 17 states, the Jim Casey Initiative focuses on four key indicators: permanency, stable housing, educational success and economic security, and pregnancy prevention and parenting support. The Initiative's approach, rooted in adolescent brain research, employs best practice principles to authentically engage young people in the decisions that shape their lives; applies a racial and ethnic equity lens to reduce system-level disparities; leverages community partnerships to develop and aligns resources toward a shared result; uses data and evaluation to assess progress to improve outcomes; and builds public will to create better policies and practices that sustain enhancements over time.

Mainspring Consulting has been a longstanding technical assistance partner with the Initiative, supporting its network of sites on financing and sustainability issues and conducting fiscal analyses or supporting the design of extended foster care programs in 12 of the Initiative's sites. Those engagements, in addition to our work in three additional states supporting leaders seeking to create extended care programs, provided the critical foundation for the creation of this brief. This research was funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We thank them for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Foundation.



