

OMAHA INDEPENDENT LIVING CONTRACT

BETWEEN THE

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CHILD WELFARE UNIT  
AND

NEBRASKA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

This contract is entered into by and between the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, **DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES CHILD WELFARE UNIT** (hereinafter "DHHS"), and **NEBRASKA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION** (hereinafter "Contractor").

**PURPOSE.** The purpose of this contract is to pilot the development and implementation of an Independent Living Plan for youth in foster care or leaving foster care in the Eastern Service Area (Omaha Metro) including Douglas and Sarpy Counties, also known as the "Omaha Independent Living Plan". The Plan is a collaborative effort of the Department, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Sherwood Foundation and the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation.

**I. TERM AND TERMINATION**

- A. **TERM.** This contract is in effect from July 1, 2008 until June 30, 2011.
- B. **TERMINATION.** This contract may be terminated at any time upon mutual written consent or by either party for any reason upon submission of written notice to the other party at least Thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of termination. DHHS may also terminate this contract in accord with the provisions designated "FUNDING AVAILABILITY" and "BREACH OF CONTRACT." In the event either party terminates this contract, the Contractor shall provide to DHHS all work in progress, work completed, and materials provided to it by DHHS in connection with this contract immediately.

**II. CONSIDERATION**

- A. **TOTAL PAYMENT.** DHHS shall pay the Contractor a total amount not to exceed \$1,610,606.00 (One million six hundred ten thousand six hundred and six dollars) for the services specified in the "Omaha Independent Living Plan" (Attachment A) and the "DHHS Contributions to the Omaha Independent Living Plan" (Attachment B).
- B. **PAYMENT STRUCTURE.** Payment shall be structured as follows: A payment of \$871,289.00 will be made upon submittal of a billing statement, a signed and dated final detailed description of the work completed and a signed and dated final expenditure report for the time period of July 2008-June 30, 2009 funded by DHHS as defined in Attachment B. DHHS acknowledges that the Contractor has provided a narrative report of the activities accomplished in Year One (Attachment C). A

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second payment in the amount of \$739,317.00 will be made upon the submittal of a billing statement, a signed and dated final detailed description of the work completed and a signed and dated final expenditure report for the time period from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 funded by DHHS as defined in Attachment B. This payment will be made available to the Contractor on a quarterly basis. The quarterly payments will be made as follows:

1. The first quarter payment will be made no earlier than October 15, 2010, contingent upon submittal of a billing statement, a signed and dated detailed narrative describing work completed and a signed and dated expenditure report for the time period of July-September 2010.
2. The second quarter payment will be made no earlier than January 15, 2011, contingent upon submittal of a billing statement, a signed and dated detailed narrative describing work completed and a signed and dated expenditure report for the time period of October-December 2010.
3. The third quarter payment will be made no earlier than April 15, 2011, contingent upon submittal of a billing statement, a signed and dated detailed narrative describing work completed and a signed and dated expenditure report for the time period of January-March 2011.
4. The fourth quarter payment will be made no earlier than July 15, 2011, contingent upon the submittal of a bill, a signed and dated detailed narrative describing work completed and a signed and dated expenditure report for the time period of April-June 2011.

C. DHHS reserves the right to withhold payment until required reports are received.

D. The Contractor is responsible for any and all costs associated with the production and delivery of reports. No other charges may be submitted under the terms of this contract without prior approval and agreement of DHHS.

E. The Contractor agrees not to accept payment from the youth or family of the youth unless an established part of DHHS's case plan includes a fee for services.

### **III. SCOPE OF SERVICES**

A. The Contractor shall do the following: The Contractor agrees to perform the following services: Services and activities necessary to carry out the Omaha Independent Living Plan as described in Attachment A.

B. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: The Department acknowledges that the Contractor has provided a final report summarizing activities for the period of July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 (Attachment C). The Contractor will submit a final report summarizing activities for the period July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010 no later than October 15, 2010. The Contractor will also submit a final report summarizing activities for the period July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011 no later than September 1, 2011. The report will include, but not limited to the number of youth served, an overall description of programs, services, and activities and recommendations on any programmatic improvements.

- C. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY: The Contractor agrees be held accountable for the services they provide. Data on provider performance on the outcome measures described within the Omaha Independent Living Plan (Attachment A) will be posted on the Internet as part of DHHS's position to be transparent and accountable.
- D. DHHS shall do the following: All DHHS's responsibilities are described within Section II-Consideration.

#### **IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

##### **A. ACCESS TO RECORDS AND AUDIT RESPONSIBILITIES.**

1. All Contractor books, records, and documents regardless of physical form, including data maintained in computer files or on magnetic, optical or other media, relating to work performed or monies received under this contract shall be subject to audit at any reasonable time upon the provision of reasonable notice by DHHS. Contractor shall maintain all records for five (5) years from the date of final payment, except that records that fall under the provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) shall be maintained for six (6) full years from the date of final payment. In addition to the foregoing retention periods, all records shall be maintained until all issues related to an audit, litigation or other action are resolved to the satisfaction of DHHS. All records shall be maintained in accordance with generally accepted business practices.
2. The Contractor shall provide DHHS any and all written communications received by the Contractor from an auditor related to Contractor's internal control over financial reporting requirements and communication with those charged with governance including those in compliance with or related to Statement of Auditing Standards (SAS) 112 *Communicating Internal Control related Matters Identified in an Audit* and SAS 114 *The Auditor's Communication with Those Charged With Governance*. The Contractor agrees to provide DHHS with a copy of all such written communications immediately upon receipt or instruct any auditor it employs to deliver copies of such written communications to DHHS at the same time copies are delivered to the Contractor, in which case the Contractor agrees to verify that DHHS has received a copy.
3. The Contractor shall immediately correct any material weakness or condition reported to DHHS in the course of an audit and notify DHHS that the corrections have been made.
4. In addition to, and in no way in limitation of any obligation in this contract, the Contractor shall be liable for audit exceptions, and shall return to DHHS all payments made under this contract for which an exception has been taken or which has been disallowed because of such an exception, upon demand from DHHS.

- B. AMENDMENT. This contract may be modified only by written amendment executed by both parties. No alteration or variation of the terms and conditions of this contract shall be valid unless made in writing and signed by the parties.

- C. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION. The Contractor shall comply with all applicable local, state and federal statutes and regulations regarding civil rights and equal opportunity employment, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Public Law 93-112; the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, Public Law 101-336; and the Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 48-1101 to 48-1125. Violation of said statutes and regulations will constitute a material breach of contract. The Contractor shall insert this provision in all subcontracts.
- D. ASSIGNMENT. The Contractor shall not assign or transfer any interest, rights, or duties under this contract to any person, firm, or corporation without prior written consent of DHHS. In the absence of such written consent, any assignment or attempt to assign shall constitute a breach of this contract.
- E. ASSURANCE. If DHHS in good faith, has reason to believe that the Contractor does not intend to, is unable to, or has refused to perform or continues to perform all material obligations under this contract, DHHS may demand in writing that the Contractor give a written assurance of intent to perform. Failure by the Contractor to provide written assurance within the number of days specified in the demand may, at DHHS's option, be the basis for terminating this contract.
- F. BREACH OF CONTRACT. DHHS may terminate the contract, in whole or in part, if the Contractor fails to perform its obligations under the contract in a timely and proper manner. DHHS may, by providing a written notice of default to the Contractor, allow the Contractor to cure a failure or breach of contract within a period of thirty (30) days or longer at DHHS's discretion considering the gravity and nature of the default. Said notice shall be delivered by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested or in person with proof of delivery. Allowing the Contractor time to cure a failure or breach of contract does not waive DHHS's right to immediately terminate the contract for the same or different contract breach which may occur at a different time. DHHS may, at its discretion, contract for any services required to complete this contract and hold the Contractor liable for any excess cost caused by Contractor's default. This provision shall not preclude the pursuit of other remedies for breach of contract as allowed by law.
- G. CONFIDENTIALITY. Any and all information gathered in the performance of this contract, either independently or through DHHS, shall be held in the strictest confidence and shall be released to no one other than DHHS without the prior written authorization of DHHS, provided, that contrary contract provisions set forth herein shall be deemed to be authorized exceptions to this general confidentiality provision. This provision shall survive termination of this contract.
- H. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. In the performance of this contract, the Contractor shall avoid all conflicts of interest and all appearances of conflicts of interest. The Contractor shall immediately notify DHHS of any such instances encountered so that other arrangements can be made to complete the work.
- I. COST PRINCIPLES AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS. The Contractor shall follow the applicable cost principles set forth in OMB Circular A-87 for State, Local and Indian

Tribe Governments or A-122 for Non-Profit Organizations. Audit requirements are dependent on the total amount of federal funds received by the Contractor, set in the table below and Attachment 1, Audit Requirement Certification. Audits must be prepared and issued by an independent certified public accountant licensed to practice. A copy of the annual financial review or audit is to be made electronically available or sent to: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Financial Services, P.O. Box 95026, Lincoln, NE 68509-5026.

Amount of annual federal payments	Audit Type
<i>Less than \$500,000</i>	<i>Audit that meets Government Auditing Standards</i>
<i>500,000 or more in federal payments</i>	<i>A-133 audit</i>

- J. **DATA OWNERSHIP AND COPYRIGHT.** All data collected as a result of this project shall be the property of DHHS. The Contractor shall not copyright any of the copyrightable material produced in conjunction with the performance required under this contract without written consent from DHHS. DHHS hereby reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use the copyrightable material for state government purposes. This provision shall survive termination of this contract.
- K. **DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION OR DECLARED INELIGIBLE.** The Contractor certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.
- L. **DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE.** All references in this contract to laws, rules, regulations, guidelines, directives, and attachments which set forth standards and procedures to be followed by the Contractor in discharging its obligations under this contract shall be deemed incorporated by reference and made a part of this contract with the same force and effect as if set forth in full text, herein.
- M. **DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE.** Contractor certifies that it maintains a drug-free workplace environment to ensure worker safety and workplace integrity. Contractor shall provide a copy of its drug-free workplace policy at any time upon request by DHHS.
- N. **FEDERAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.** The Contractor shall comply with all applicable provisions of 45 C.F.R. §§ 87.1-87.2. The Contractor shall not use direct federal financial assistance to engage in inherently religious activities, such as worship, religious instruction, and/or proselytization.
- O. **FORCE MAJEURE.** Neither party shall be liable for any costs or damages resulting from its inability to perform any of its obligations under this contract due to a natural disaster, or other similar event outside the control and not the fault of the affected party ("Force Majeure Event"). A Force Majeure Event shall not constitute a breach of this contract. The party so affected shall immediately give notice to the other party of the Force Majeure Event. Upon such notice, all obligations of the affected party under this contract which are reasonably related to the Force Majeure Event shall be suspended,

and the affected party shall do everything reasonably necessary to resume performance as soon as possible. Labor disputes with the impacted party's own employees will not be considered a Force Majeure Event and will not suspend performance requirements under this contract.

- P. FUNDING AVAILABILITY. DHHS may terminate the contract, in whole or in part, in the event funding is no longer available. Should funds not be appropriated, DHHS may terminate the contract with respect to those payments for the fiscal years for which such funds are not appropriated. DHHS shall give the Contractor written notice thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of any termination. The Contractor shall be entitled to receive just and equitable compensation for any authorized work which has been satisfactorily completed as of the termination date. In no event shall the Contractor be paid for a loss of anticipated profit.
- Q. GOVERNING LAW. The contract shall be governed in all respects by the laws and statutes of the State of Nebraska. Any legal proceedings against DHHS or the State of Nebraska regarding this contract shall be brought in Nebraska administrative or judicial forums as defined by Nebraska State law. The Contractor shall comply with all Nebraska statutory and regulatory law.
- R. HOLD HARMLESS.
1. The Contractor shall defend, indemnify, hold, and save harmless the State of Nebraska and its employees, volunteers, agents, and its elected and appointed officials ("the indemnified parties") from and against any and all claims, liens, demands, damages, liability, actions, causes of action, losses, judgments, costs, and expenses of every nature, including investigation costs and expenses, settlement costs, and attorney fees and expenses ("the claims"), sustained or asserted against the State of Nebraska, arising out of, resulting from, or attributable to the willful misconduct, negligence, error, or omission of the Contractor, its employees, subcontractors, consultants, representatives, and agents, except to the extent such Contractor liability is attenuated by any action of the State of Nebraska which directly and proximately contributed to the claims.
  2. DHHS's liability is limited to the extent provided by the Nebraska Tort Claims Act, the Nebraska Contract Claims Act, the Nebraska Miscellaneous Claims Act, and any other applicable provisions of law. DHHS does not assume liability for the action of its Contractors.
- S. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR. The Contractor is an Independent Contractor and neither it nor any of its employees shall for any purpose be deemed employees of DHHS. The Contractor shall employ and direct such personnel as it requires to perform its obligations under this contract, exercise full authority over its personnel, and comply with all workers' compensation, employer's liability and other federal, state, county, and municipal laws, ordinances, rules and regulations required of an employer providing services as contemplated by this contract.

T. INVOICES. Invoices for payments submitted by the Contractor shall contain sufficient detail to support payment. Any terms and conditions included in the Contractor's invoice shall be deemed to be solely for the convenience of the parties.

U. INTEGRATION. This written contract represents the entire agreement between the parties, and any prior or contemporaneous representations, promises, or statements by the parties, that are not incorporated herein, shall not serve to vary or contradict the terms set forth in this contract.

V. LOBBYING.

1. No Federal appropriated funds shall be paid, by or on behalf of the Contractor, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this contract or (a) the awarding of any Federal agreement; (b) the making of any Federal grant; (c) the entering into of any cooperative agreement; and (d) the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal agreement, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this contract, the Contractor shall complete and submit Federal Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.

W. NEBRASKA NONRESIDENT INCOME TAX WITHHOLDING. Contractor acknowledges that Nebraska law requires DHHS to withhold Nebraska income tax if payments for personal services are made in excess of six hundred dollars (\$600) to any contractor who is not domiciled in Nebraska or has not maintained a permanent place of business or residence in Nebraska for a period of at least six months. This provision applies to individuals, to a corporation if 80% or more of the voting stock of the corporation is held by the shareholders who are performing personal services, and to a partnership or limited liability company if 80% or more of the capital interest or profits interest of the partnership or limited liability company is held by the partners or members who are performing personal services.

The parties agree, when applicable, to properly complete the Nebraska Department of Revenue Nebraska Withholding Certificate for Nonresident Individuals Form W-4NA or its successor. The form is available at:

[http://www.revenue.ne.gov/tax/current/f\\_w-4na.pdf](http://www.revenue.ne.gov/tax/current/f_w-4na.pdf) or  
[http://www.revenue.ne.gov/tax/current/ffill-in/f\\_w-4na.pdf](http://www.revenue.ne.gov/tax/current/ffill-in/f_w-4na.pdf)

X. NEBRASKA TECHNOLOGY ACCESS STANDARDS.

The Contractor shall review the Nebraska Technology Access Standards, found at <http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/accessibility/tacfinal.html> and ensure that products and/or services provided under the Contract comply with the applicable standards. In the event such standards change during the Contractor's performance,

the State may create an amendment to the Contract to request that Contract comply with the changed standard at a cost mutually acceptable to the parties.

- Y. **NEW EMPLOYEE WORK ELIGIBILITY STATUS.** The Contractor shall use a federal immigration verification system to determine the work eligibility status of new employees physically performing services within the State of Nebraska. A federal immigration verification system means the electronic verification of the work authorization program authorized by the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, 8 U.S.C. § 1324a, known as the E-Verify Program, or an equivalent federal program designated by the United States Department of Homeland Security or other federal agency authorized to verify the work eligibility status of a newly hired employee.

If the Contractor is an individual or sole proprietorship, the following applies:

1. The Contractor must complete the United States Citizenship Attestation Form, available on the Department of Administrative Services website at [www.das.state.ne.us](http://www.das.state.ne.us).
2. If the Contractor indicates on such attestation form that he or she is a qualified alien, the Contractor agrees to provide the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services documentation required to verify the Contractor's lawful presence in the United States using the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) Program.
3. The Contractor understands and agrees that lawful presence in the United States is required and the Contractor may be disqualified or the contract terminated if such lawful presence cannot be verified as required by NEB. REV. STAT. § 4-108.

- Z. **PROMPT PAYMENT.** Payment shall be made in conjunction with the State of Nebraska Prompt Payment Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 81-2401 through 81-2408. Unless otherwise provided herein, payment shall be made by electronic means.

**ACH Enrollment Form Requirements for Payment**

"It is the responsibility of the vendor to complete and sign the State of Nebraska ACH Enrollment Form and to obtain the necessary information and signatures from their financial institution. The completed form must be submitted before payments to the vendor can be made."

Download ACH Form:

[http://www.das.state.ne.us/accounting/nis/address\\_book\\_info.htm](http://www.das.state.ne.us/accounting/nis/address_book_info.htm)

- AA. **PUBLIC COUNSEL.** In the event Contractor provides health and human services to individuals on behalf of DHHS under the terms of this contract, Contractor shall submit to the jurisdiction of the Public Counsel under NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 81-8,240 through 81-8,254 with respect to the provision of services under this contract. This clause shall not apply to contracts between DHHS and long-term care facilities subject to the jurisdiction

of the state long-term care ombudsman pursuant to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Act.

- BB. RESEARCH. The Contractor shall not engage in research utilizing the information obtained through the performance of this contract without the express written consent of DHHS. The term "research" shall mean the investigation, analysis, or review of information, other than aggregate statistical information, which is used for purposes unconnected with this contract.
- CC. SEVERABILITY. If any term or condition of this contract is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal or in conflict with any law, the validity of the remaining terms and conditions shall not be affected, and the rights and obligations of the parties shall be construed and enforced as if this contract did not contain the particular provision held to be invalid.
- DD. SUBCONTRACTORS. The Contractor shall not subcontract any portion of this contract without prior written consent of DHHS. The Contractor shall ensure that all subcontractors comply with all requirements of this contract and applicable federal, state, county and municipal laws, ordinances, rules and regulations.
- EE. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. Time is of the essence in this contract. The acceptance of late performance with or without objection or reservation by DHHS shall not waive any rights of DHHS nor constitute a waiver of the requirement of timely performance of any obligations on the part of the Contractor remaining to be performed.

NOTICES. Notices shall be in writing and shall be effective upon receipt. Written notices, including all reports and other written communications required by this contract shall be sent to the following addresses:

**FOR DHHS:**

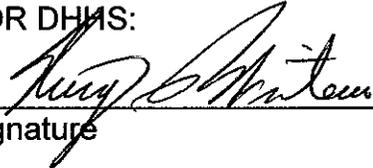
Shirley Pickens White, Prog. Coordinator  
Division of Children and Family Services-  
Child Welfare Unit  
P.O. Box 95026  
Lincoln, NE 68509-95026  
402 471-9196

**FOR CONTRACTOR:**

Jennifer Skala, Associate Vice  
President of Community Impact  
Nebraska Children and Families  
Foundation  
215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
402-817-2001

**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, the parties have duly executed this contract hereto, and each party acknowledges the receipt of a duly executed copy of this contract with original signatures.

FOR DHHS:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Kerry T. Winterer  
Chief Executive Officer  
Department of Health and Human Services

DATE: 9/13/2010

FOR CONTRACTOR:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Mary Jo Pankoke  
Executive Director  
Nebraska Children and Families  
Foundation

DATE: 9/16/10

**NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
*Division of Children and Family Services, Policy Section-Child Welfare Unit*  
**AUDIT REQUIREMENT CERTIFICATION**

*Subgrantees and certain contractors receiving funds from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services are required to complete this document. Reference to the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations, in this document is "Circular A-133".*

**Grant Name** Chafee Foster Care Independence Program  
**Grant #** \_\_\_\_\_ **CFDA\* #** 93.674

Program Name, Grant #, and CFDA # need to be filled out by the DHHS program office

\*(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance)

**Contractor's Name** Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

**Address:** 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200

**City:** Lincoln **State:** Nebraska **Zip Code:** 68508

**Federal Tax Identification Number (FTIN)** 91-1829974

**Contractor's Fiscal Year** Jan. 1, 2010 to Dec. 31, 2010

All written communications from the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) engaged under #1 or #2 below, given to the contractor including those in compliance with or related to Statement of Auditing Standards (SAS) 112 *Communicating Internal Control related Matters Identified in an Audit* and SAS 114 *The Auditor's Communication with Those Charged With Governance* must be provided by the contractor to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services immediately upon receipt, unless the contractor has directed the CPA to provide the copy directly to the Department and has verified this has occurred.

Check either 1 or 2 and complete the signature block on page 2:

1. \_\_\_ As the contractor named above, we expect to expend less than \$500,000 from all Federal Financial Assistance sources, not just the grant named above, and including commodities in our current fiscal year. Therefore, we are not subject to the audit requirements of Circular A-133.

We are, however, responsible for engaging a licensed Certified Public Accountant (CPA) to conduct and prepare either, a review (expenditures less than \$75,000) or audit report (expenditures \$75,000-\$499,999) of our organization's financial statements and a report issued by the CPA. We acknowledge the audit must be completed no later than nine months after the end of our organization's current fiscal year. A copy of the report must be submitted to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services address as shown below within the earlier of 30 days after receipt of the auditor's report(s), or nine months after the end of the audit period.

2. ~~X~~ As the contractor named above, we expect to expend \$500,000 or more from all Federal Financial Assistance sources, not just the grant named above, and including commodities in our current fiscal year. Therefore we are subject to the single audit requirements of Circular A-133.

We will engage a licensed Certified Public Accountant to conduct and prepare the audit of our organization's financial statements and components of the single audit pertaining to those financial statements. We acknowledge the audit must be completed no later than nine months after the end of our current fiscal year.

We further acknowledge, as the contractor, that a single audit performed in accordance with Circular A-133 must be submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse. The reporting package, as evidence the audit was completed must contain:

- The contractor's financial statements,
- a schedule of Expenditure of Federal Awards,
- a Summary Schedule of Prior Audit Findings (if applicable),
- a corrective action plan (if applicable) and
- the auditor's report(s) which includes an opinion on this contractor's financial statements and Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, a report on this contractor's internal control, a report on this contractor's compliance and a Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs.

We further acknowledge the auditor and this contractor must complete and submit with the reporting package a *Data Collection Form for Reporting on Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations* (SF-SAC).

We further acknowledge a copy of this subgrantee's financial statements, auditor's report and SF-SAC must be submitted, at the time these documents are submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, to the:

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Financial Services  
Grants and Cost Management  
P.O. Box 95026  
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

or the Contractor must notify the Department when the reporting package becomes available and provide the Department with access to an electronic version of its annual audit and financial report. Notification of availability will be sent to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Financial Services, Grant and Cost Management in a format similar to the following:

The Contractor's latest A-133 Audit is now available for your use at:  
<http://www>.

The Contractor's financial report is available at:  
<http://www>

The foregoing submissions or notification and electronic access to the annual audit and financial report must be made within the earlier of 30 days after receipt of the auditor's report(s), or nine months after the end of the audit period.

Michael J. Timmins

Print/Type Name

CFO

Print/Type Title



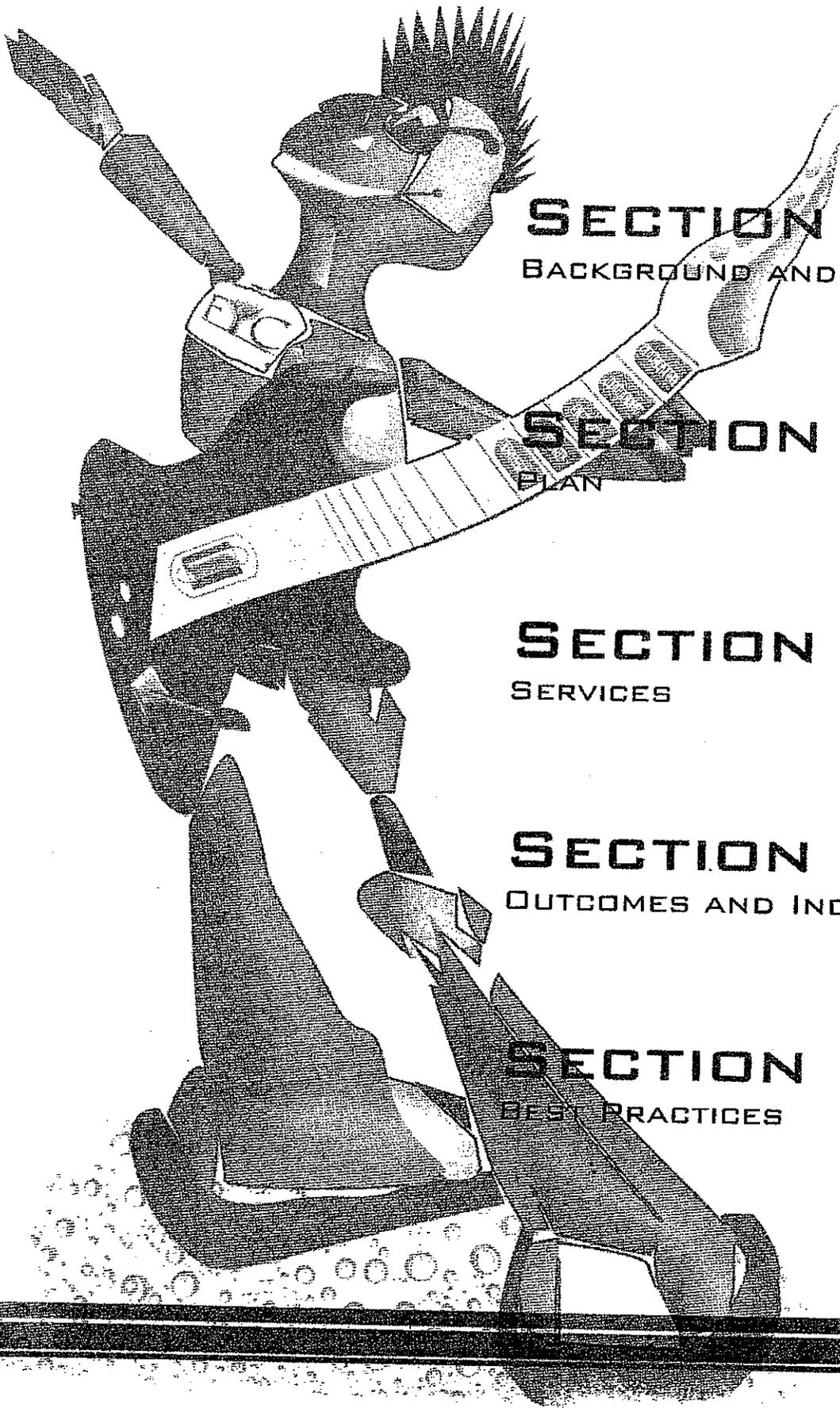
Signature

9/16/10

Date

(402) 476-8906

Telephone Number



**SECTION 1**  
BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

**SECTION 2**  
PLAN

**SECTION 3**  
SERVICES

**SECTION 4**  
OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

**SECTION 5**  
BEST PRACTICES

## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

### VISION

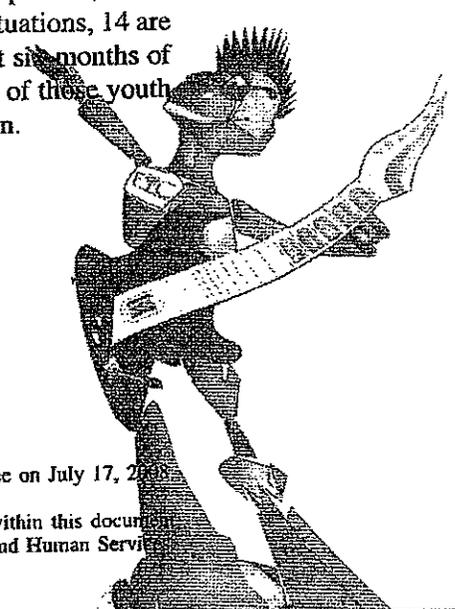
Youth in Omaha have the supports and lifelong connections for successful transition to adulthood.

### MISSION

Create a supportive community which helps youth establish connections to supports and lifelong relationships to successfully transition to adulthood.

### NEED

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Office of Protection & Safety's (Division of Children and Family Services) 2005 Annual Report states that Nebraska has one of the nation's highest rates of youth in out-of-home care; increasing by 12% since 2003. A 2003 Child Welfare League of America report indicates that of every 1,000 youth in Nebraska, 13.8 are state wards. Currently, in the Eastern Service Area, 791 youth are 16 years and older and in care. 212 are living with parents, either place back or never removed, 505 in other type of out of home living situations, 14 are already in independent living and 60 are on runaway status. In the first six months of 2007, data show 139 youth, who were over age 18, were discharged; 7 of these youth were discharged to guardianship and 59 were discharged to reunification.



\* *NOTE:* This document was drafted by the Omaha Independent Living Steering Committee on July 17, 2008.

\*\**DEFINITION:* Unless specifically noted otherwise, the term "youth" or "foster youth" within this document designates youth who are current or former wards of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

**FOCUS AREA D: OTHER NEEDS:  
ENSURING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION**

Action: 1). Develop a DHHS policy that requires a 'Personal Id Packet', which includes birth certificate, social security card, medical history and educational history, that is given to youth at the time of their discharge

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Provide youth a cell phone with established guidelines for usage (text messaging and incoming calls)

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3) Establish need-based mentoring program for independent living questions and assistance

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 4). Include school counselors, teachers and personnel in team to support transitioning youth (youth determined)

Implementation: Year 3

**FOCUS AREA E: TRANSPORTATION**

Action: 1). Review DHHS foster youth drivers license policy to strengthen youth's opportunity to acquire license.

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Create fund to provide foster youth assistance for transportation (public, private, purchase and maintenance)

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3). Create emergency transportation access list

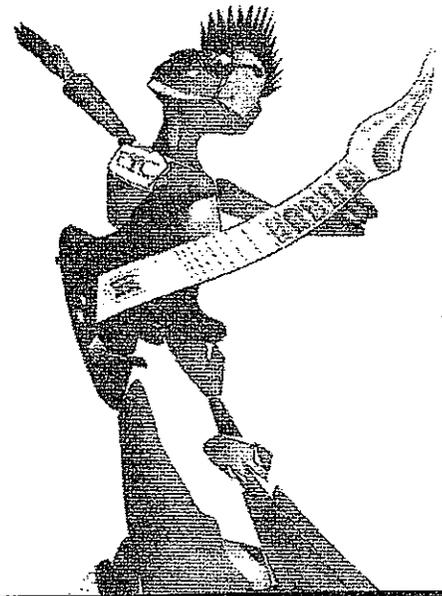
Implementation: Year 2

Action: 5). Establish fund to help subsidize auto insurance

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 4). Develop special discounts for car insurance for youth similar to senior discounts

Implementation: Year 3



PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Youth have sufficient and affordable health insurance and services for physical, mental and behavioral health (including substance use).

Potential Partners (not limited to)

Building Bright Futures National Resource Center Insurance companies One World Health Center Medicaid Kaiser Permanente The Texas Department of Community Health and Medicaid NABH Universities Community colleges Urban Indian Center American Medical Association NE Regents 211	Boys Town Alegent Health CSI/ Campfire Medical Health Providers CASA Teammates Medical Passport OMNI Community Alliance Uta Halee Hospital associations Community service grants Preparation for Adult Living Specials (Central Plains Center for Services) Independent Living Programs (TLP)
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FOCUS AREA A: MEDICAL INSURANCE



Action: 1). Assessment of medical costs for youth

- Conduct cost-benefit analysis
- Establish champion in the medical community
- Educate community on medical needs of foster youth

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Expansion of medical coverage

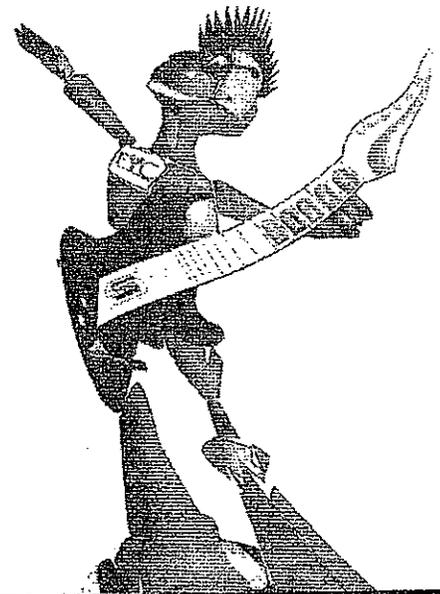
- Discount medical services up to age 23
- Medicaid Providers to provide preventive healthcare to foster youth
- Expand health coverage to Foster youth until 23

Implementation: Year 3

Action: 3). Work with colleges and universities to accept Medicaid for youth medical services

- Bring colleges together to develop referrals and resources that provide information and a connection to nearby services
- Allow Medicaid providers to practice at college health center

Implementation: Year 1-3



**FOCUS AREA B: CARE COORDINATION**

**Action:** 1). Engagement of Medicaid, managed care vendors, and the medical community to determine actions to transition youth off Medicaid

- Create resource directory of providers
- Provide education on 211

Implementation: Year 1

**Action:** 2). Provide a medical advocate

- Take an inventory of where youth are receiving medical services
- Establish medical home for youth in care
- Identify providers who can/will commit to services for children at a younger age. continuity of care starts earlier
- Provide Health care education before and after leaving system to include: first aid, nutrition, physical fitness, mental and emotional health, medication use, and basic methods of assessing one's own needs
- Work with existing Health Fairs to provide screenings to foster youth

Implementation: Year 2

**Action:** 3). Give youth more input and information for services received

- Help youth develop a health plan as part of their transitional plan, including: all previous health information (immunizations, past treatment), future routine health care needs, health
- Insurance options, (Medicaid or private provider), and referrals to specific health care providers (primary care physician, dentist).
- Provide information via website and resource book for youth to undergo health screening prior to leaving the system, to include: screening for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, gynecological health, eating disorders, and emotional health.

Implementation: Year 1

**Action:** 4). Provide fund to help with medical bills not covered by other sources (e.g. tattoo removal, contact lenses, braces)

Implementation: Year 2



**FOCUS AREA C: CRISIS SUPPORT**

**Action:** 1). Establish a mentor program to help with difficult situations (Find out how many CASAs work with older youth)

Implementation: Year 2

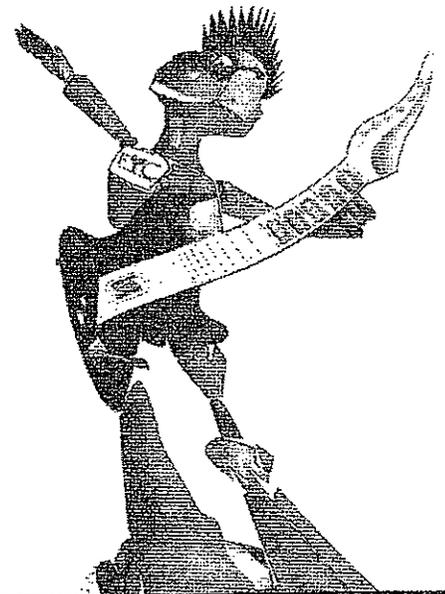
**Action:** 2). Develop Crisis Plan (Plan B Contingency) for mental and physical health needs

- Seek opportunities to expand youth mental health services into adulthood
- Existing organizations can expand outpatient treatments
- Assertive community treatment for severely emotionally disturbed to develop plan

Implementation: Year 3

**Action:** 3). Provide Emergency Medical Assistance (connect with other Omaha Services)

Implementation: Year 2



**TRAINING, POLICIES AND EDUCATION**

All Independent Living supports have the capacity to address the needs of youth in transition.

Potential Partners (not limited to)

Community Businesses Youth serving Organizations Medical associations Building Bright Futures Ansell Casey Preparation for Adult Living Child Savings Institute Campfire	Denver-MileHigh KNOVADA one stop-shop Online access- MAINE Department of Health and Human Services Foster Parents UNMC Monroe Meyer Women's Fund
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**FOCUS AREA A: YOUTH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

Action: 1). Establish a group/partnership of community leaders and youth that meet regularly to listen to the needs of youth in care and responds to those needs/mobilizes actions

Implementation: Year 1

**FOCUS AREA B: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT**

Action: 1). Conduct community assessment according to outcome areas and actions to identify gaps and resources for youth

Implementation: Year 1



**FOCUS AREA C: ANSELL-CASEY LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT (ACLSA)**

- Action: 1). Webinar training sessions biannually for providers on the ACLSA, a multiple choice assessment on where they see their future
- Youth write independent living plan based on Ansell-Casey and keep a copy for themselves
  - Designated location for all assessments is established to keep record with password to access – youth, parent, worker
  - Support for follow-thru with assessments (means of accountability are established) before age 19

Implementation: Year 1

**FOCUS AREA D: INSTITUTIONAL/ STATE POLICIES**

- Action: 1). Expand Independent Living services to include 14-24 year olds using current number of DHHS funded slots and a private partnership (DHHS funded slots remain the same, as slots are freed when youth reaching permanency)

Implementation: Year 1

- Action: 3). Share youth's information with designated professionals after youth has transitioned and/or moved- allow for information to be shared - DHHS policy with youth's consent

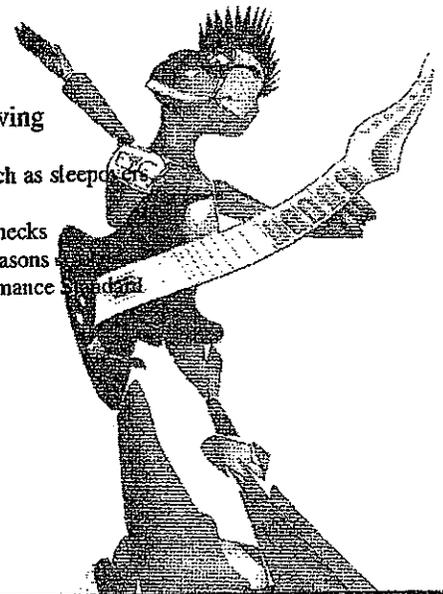
- Educate and train all involved in the system of existing and new policies

Implementation: Year 1

- Action: 4). Review of current DHHS policies regarding the following

- Background checks will not be required for youth activities such as sleepovers, school trips
- Common autonomy, age appropriate on decisions/background checks
- Youth will have permission to leave Nebraska for appropriate reasons
- Youth advice and input to service providers is a Contract Performance Standard

Implementation: Year 2



**FOCUS AREA E: WEBSITE**

Action: 1). Website development and maintenance with the involvement of youth

- A website that includes: Financial Support, Medical Care, Housing, Daily Living, Training and Education, Supportive Relationships, Community Connections and Crisis Support, Former Ward Application and the Ansell Casey Assessment

Implementation: Year 2

**FOCUS AREA F: HANDBOOK**

Action: 1). Develop a handbook with and for youth

- Contains targeted website information and is provided to youth, foster parents, schools and case workers

Implementation: Year 1

**FOCUS AREA G: SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOPS/CONFERENCES**

Action: 1). Training in-service for all professionals in contact with youth

- Health/sex education training for youth providers
- Independent Living skills provided via conferences for youth, caseworkers, and other supportive adults
- Former ward training included in Caseworker/PALS Regional Training Meeting

Implementation: Year 1



## SECTION 3

### SERVICES

#### FEDERAL INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 passed by Congress offers help to youth transitioning from foster care. In honor of the legislation's sponsor, the late Senator Chafee (R-RI), the program is titled the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.

**The John H. Chafee Foster Independence Program** is a federally funded program for foster youth ages 16-21. The Chafee program strives to:

- Help youth transition to self-sufficiency
- Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain and maintain adequate employment
- Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and educational institutions
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and positive interactions with dedicated adults
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate supports to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age
- Offer vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary education, to former foster youth ages 18-21



Goals of the John H. Chafee Foster Independence Program:

*Increase funds to states to assist youth to make the transition from foster care to independent living.*

- Funds can be used to help youth make the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency by offering them: the educational, vocational and employment training necessary to obtain employment, prepare for post secondary education, training in daily living skills, substance abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention and/or preventive health activities, and connections to dedicated adults.
- States must contribute a twenty (20) percent state match to Independent Living Program funds.
- States must only use federal training funds (authorized by Title IV-E of the Social Security Act) to help foster parents, adoptive parents, group home workers and case managers to address issues that adolescents preparing for independent living face.

*Recognize the need for special help for youth ages 18 to 21 who have left foster care.*

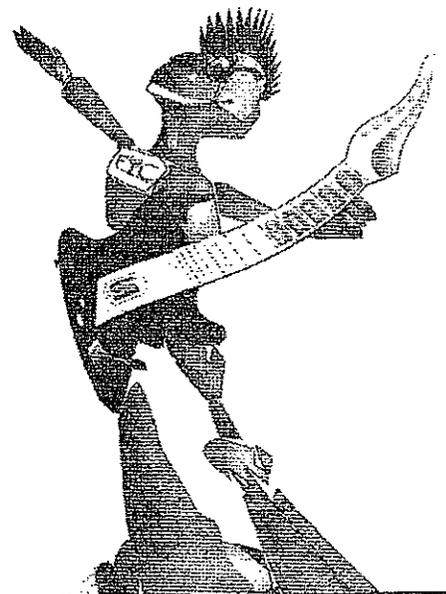
- States must use a portion of funding for assistance and services for older youth who have left foster care but have not reached age 21.
- States can use up to thirty (30) percent of their Independent Living Program funds for room and board needs of former wards ages 18 to 21.
- States may extend Medicaid to 18, 19 and 20-year-olds who have been emancipated from foster care. Access independent living funds is not contingent upon states exercising this option.

*Offer states greater flexibility in designing independent living programs unique to the needs of their youth.*

- States can serve children of various ages who need help preparing for self-sufficiency (not just those ages 16 and over as in previous law), children at various stages of achieving independence, and alter their methods to best serve youth in different geographical locations; they may also use a multiple providers.
  - The asset limit for maintaining eligibility for foster care payments through the federal foster care program was altered; allowing youth up to \$10,000 in savings.
- 
-

*Establish accountability for states in implementing independent living programs.*

- The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) must, in consultation with federal, state, and local officials, advocates, youth, service providers, and researchers, develop outcome measures to assess state performance. Outcomes include educational attainment, employment and avoidance of dependency, homelessness, non-marital childbirth, high-risk behaviors, and incarceration.
- DHHS must also track the number of children receiving services, services received and provided and implement a plan for collecting needed information. DHHS must also be reported to Congress and propose state accountability procedures and penalties for non-compliance.
- States must coordinate the independent living funds with other funding sources for similar services.
- States are subject to penalty if they misuse funds or fail to submit required state performance data.



## NEBRASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

### **Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment**

The (ACLSA) is an evaluation of the youth's life skills. The assessment is designed to be completed on-line at [www.caseylifeskill.org](http://www.caseylifeskill.org). However, a copy of the assessment can be printed off and completed with the youth if you do not have access to a computer or the internet when meeting with the youth. A second assessment is offered. This assessment asks the care provider to rate the youth's skills.

The Ansell-Casey Life Skills site offers several other resources, in addition to the assessments. Resources include:

- A guidebook outlining important life skills and identifying activities and exercises for teaching youth.
- Ready, Set, Fly, a booklet of ideas for creative life skills activities to help adults work with youth to reach their goals.
- An ACLSA & Life Skills Guidebook Manual that gives instructions on using resources together.

The assessment is scored electronically and you will receive an Individual Report (IR). These reports are a summary of the youth and/or care provider's responses to the ACLSA. This report will be e-mailed to the address entered at the Login Information page. Open the e-mail and click on the link to view the scored report.

The Individual Report provides a bar graph showing the percentage of correct answers in each of the life skills domains. This will help determine which areas and skills the youth has mastered and which they need to work on.

Central Plains provides training 6 times per year in 6 locations on use of the ACLSA.

### **Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS)**

PALS is a transitional and independent living program designed to provide support and guidance to current and former foster care youth (ages 17-21). PALS Specialists work one-on-one with youth to assess their strengths and abilities, as well as assist the youth in identifying a personal vision for becoming a successful independent adult. Common youth goal areas include (but are not limited to): securing safe and stable housing, securing/maintaining employment, obtaining reliable transportation, and pursuing education/vocational goals.

- Website: [www.central-plains.org](http://www.central-plains.org)

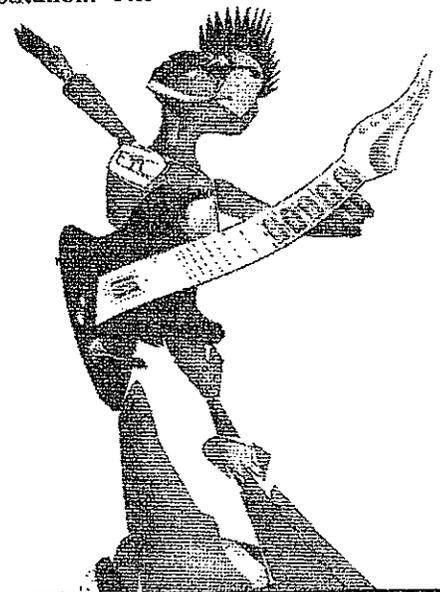
## Former Ward Program

**Purpose:** To assist former wards of the State in continuing their education through room and board assistance.

**Eligibility:** Youth must be at least age 18 and have not reached his/her 21st birthday, be single, be a former ward of the Department or ward through relinquishment and placement in out of home care at the time of his/her discharge. Eligible youth must enter the Former Ward Program prior to discharge from the Department or meet one of the following exceptions:

- A young persons attendance is postponed due to a mental or physical incapacity which prevents participation in an educational program for a temporary period of time
- A young person may sit out one school term from the time of discharge from wardship through age 20. This includes the semester immediately following discharge, if that was the plan before discharge
- Youth that have entered into the Former Ward Program, are attending classes and then experience an interruption due to mental or physical incapacity may sit out until such time as the incapacity abates.
- Youth may also be in the Former Ward Program while completing high school if he/she had his/her 19th birthday while still attending high school, the plan is for the youth to complete high school and continue his/her education and he/she remains in the foster home while finishing high school.

**Benefits:** Youth will be covered by Medicaid if income and resource criteria are met. Youth may receive a monthly payment to assist in meeting living expenses up to a maximum of \$352.00 per month. If a young person is living in a dormitory the Department will pay the dorm fees, including a deposit directly to the institution. The young person may receive a grant of \$100.00 for other expenses.



## **Transitional Living Programs**

**Purpose:** These programs are designed to provide assessment, preparation and support for youth transitioning to independent living, as well as provide apartment units for youth. Staff will work with youth one on one and may also provide group activities related to learning independent living skills. Training and support are provided throughout the transitional process, during the day, evening and on weekends. Transitional Living Program staff takes responsibility for implementing the youth DHHS Independent Living Plan.

**Eligibility:** Youth, minimum age 17, who are in the State's custody or who were dismissed from custody after their 18th birthday (includes pregnant and/or parenting youth). Youth can participate up to age 21.

**Benefits:** Program staff assists youth through assessment, preparation and one on one support which continues after the youth moves to an independent living arrangement. The Transitional Living Programs either own or sign leases for youth in apartments and pay for phone installation and phone bills, furniture and basic household supplies. Financial incentives may be provided when youth reach certain goals or completes identified tasks.

### *Transitional Living Programs*

**Omaha Home for Boys**  
4343 No. 52nd St.,  
Omaha, NE 68104

**Christian Heritage Transitional Program**  
2930 Ridge Line Road, Suite 110  
Lincoln, NE 68516

**Christian Heritage Transitional Program**  
3811 Central Ave., Suite B  
Kearney, NE 68848

**Turning Point**  
620 South Jeffers Street  
North Platte, NE 69101

**CEDARS**  
620 North 48th Street  
Lincoln Nebraska 68504



## **Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV)**

This program provides assistance with expenses related to post secondary education for current and former foster care youth (ages 17-23). These funds (up to \$5000 per year) can be used toward tuition, fees, books and supplies, as well as college application fees, tutoring expenses, and a college medical insurance provider. Also, the youth have regular (at least monthly) communication with their ETV Coordinator. ETV Coordinators provide encouragement and offer suggestions to help youth overcome barriers to their education.

## **Mary J. Terwilliger Foster Care Scholarship**

Mary J. Terwilliger has established a scholarship fund of up to \$5,000.00 per year for a student or potential student, age 17 and over, who is currently or was formerly a ward of the State of Nebraska. The scholarship fund was established in 2006 because of Mary's strong belief in goal setting and educational opportunities being made available to those who may not have "traditional" resources to achieve them. The scholarship can be used for tuition and books for a student who plans to attend one of the three University of Nebraska campuses located in Lincoln, Kearney and Omaha.

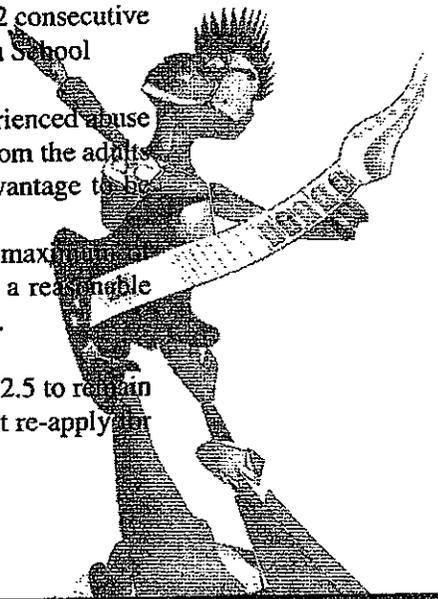
General scholarship and financial aid information can be found at:

- University of Nebraska-Lincoln: [www.unl.edu/scholfa](http://www.unl.edu/scholfa)
- University of Nebraska-Kearney: [www.unk.edu/offices/financial\\_aid](http://www.unk.edu/offices/financial_aid)
- University of Nebraska-Omaha: [www.ses.unomaha.edu/finaid/scholarship\\_info.php](http://www.ses.unomaha.edu/finaid/scholarship_info.php)

The applicants must:

- Have been in foster care in the State of Nebraska for a minimum of 12 consecutive months Have maintained a minimum C average or equivalent in High School
- Demonstrate financial need
- Have a disadvantaged background (for example those that have experienced abuse or neglect, have experienced poverty, lack supportive relationships from the adults in their family or have other factors that have put them at a disadvantage to be successful in educational settings)
- Demonstrate through transcripts and letters of recommendation (a maximum of three) that they have the necessary academic responsibility to have a reasonable chance of being successful within the University of Nebraska system.

Scholarship recipients must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5 to remain eligible for future scholarship consideration. Scholarship recipients must re-apply for each subsequent year to be considered for continued assistance.



### **Native American Programs**

DHHS has Independent Living Program contracts with Nebraska area tribes to provide the same services described above for any youth living on the reservation. Contracts are with Santee, Omaha, Winnebago and Ponca.

### **Governor's Youth Advisory Council**

Appointed by the Governor, the Governor's Youth Advisory Council:

- Strives to give youth from diverse populations and geographic locations in the State a united voice
- Provide opportunities for youth involvement on state and local boards and committees which develop programs to serve youth
- Keeps abreast of the bills, laws, policies and decisions that might have an impact on youth in their communities
- Increases the level of communication between youth, community and government
- Increases youth and adult partnerships in order to build better communities

### **Foster Youth Council**

- Involves and represents youth currently or formerly in foster care, ages 14 -24
- Focuses on helping youth transition into independent living while recognizing and taking advantage of their strengths
- Advises DHHS Director on issues, policies and practices that affect youth in foster care
- Publishes and distributes a quarterly newsletter "Nebraska Connected" for youth in foster care, with articles related to transitional and independent living

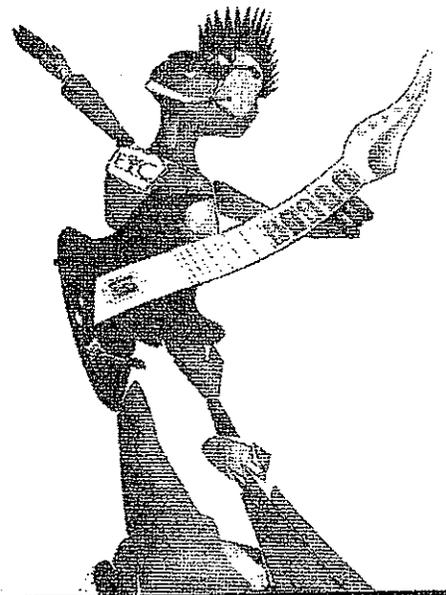
### **Sibling Camp (Camp Catch-Up)**

- Provides the opportunity for siblings separated in foster care to spend time with each other in a fun, learning environment.
- Provides siblings involved with foster care the opportunity to build permanent relationships with siblings that they no longer live with.
- Offers opportunities for siblings to gain skills for successful independent living through workshops and camp activities.



## **Independent Living Conferences**

The one-day conferences provide numerous activities, workshops and exhibits to assist current and former foster youth in becoming prepared, connected and responsible adults. The conferences connect local foster youth, parents, and workers with local programs that will help them flourish during their transition to adulthood and out of the foster care system. Currently, conferences have been or will be held at Northeast Community College (Norfolk, NE), Mid-Plains Community College (North Platte, NE) and Western Nebraska Community College (Scottsbluff, NE).



## OMAHA INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Most Independent Living Services and Supports for youth transitioning from State custody to independence in Omaha are funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services through the Chafee program, a federally funded program for foster youth age 16-21 or through State funds (e.g. Former Ward program). The following descriptions of services may not be a true representation of all that exists for services that help youth transition to adulthood, however they provide a base for understanding available programs.

### **Omaha Home for Boys**

The Omaha Home for Boys Program is a 15-month program that guides, assists and directs young adults between the ages of 17-22 to become independent and self-sufficient adults in the community. The program was developed by the Omaha Home for Boys in 1995 and has since been an integral part of promoting independence for young adults in the Omaha community.

The mission of the program is to help young adults make the transition from out of home care to living responsible lives as self-sufficient adults and contributing members of society. The program accepts state wards, former state wards and private placements at no cost to the applicant. Participants experience independent apartment living in a supervised setting while residing at The Omaha Home for Boys-owned apartment complex called Jacob's Place for three months. Participants are then eligible to transition to their own apartment in the Omaha community while receiving continued support from the program staff.

Participants advance through four levels while taking part in vocational training, life skills courses and community service. Participants take part in an extensive job development curriculum customized to assist them in refining job-search skills and obtaining employment. Participants are also encouraged to advance their education with assistance from The Omaha Home for Boys scholarship program and the Educational Training Voucher program. Every participant in the program is given every opportunity to confidently grow into an autonomous young adult.

Currently, the Omaha Home for Boys is serving 13 former IL residents on scholarship, 9 current IL residents on scholarship, and 10 current ward/former ward. Over the past year, Jacob's Place served 17 former wards with a total of 72 residents.

## **DHHS Contracted Services in Omaha providing preparation for Independent Living**

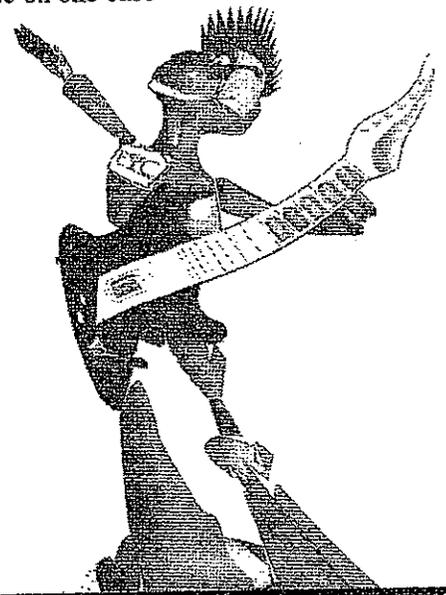
DHHS contracted services for Group Home A, Group Home B, and Agency Supported Foster Care, include the following contract language:

### **Adult Living Preparation and Life Skills Training Plan**

- The Contractor shall provide age-appropriate adult living preparation, life skills training, and develop a written plan.
- The Contractor shall annually administer the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment to any youth in their care age sixteen (16) and older.
- The Contractor shall utilize the on-line curricula or other life skill curricula.
- The Contractor shall ensure that all youth who are eighteen (18) years old, take the on-line ACLS assessment.
- The Contractor shall, in conjunction with the youth, prepare a written plan to assist youth in preparation and transitioning to adult living. The plan shall be current and shall follow the youth upon discharge. The plan shall include outcomes identified through the assessment to assist the youth to develop and demonstrate independent living skills. This plan shall be formalized as part of the Comprehensive Service Plan, as outlined in the Department case plan and evaluated by the team.

### **Bridges to Success**

CampFire and Child Savings Institute (supported by Community Family Preservation and Support Grant) are for youth 16–18, who will soon be released from the State of Nebraska's custody and will be living on their own. The goal of the program is to teach youth the skills needed to survive through a 10 week class, as well as, one on one case management, which is tailored to each youth's individual needs.



### **Former Ward Program**

For youth age 18 to 21, single and a former ward, this program assists former wards in continuing their education through room and board assistance. Youth will be covered by Medicaid if income and resource criteria are met. Youth may receive a monthly payment to assist with living expenses up to \$352.00 per month.

#### **Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program:**

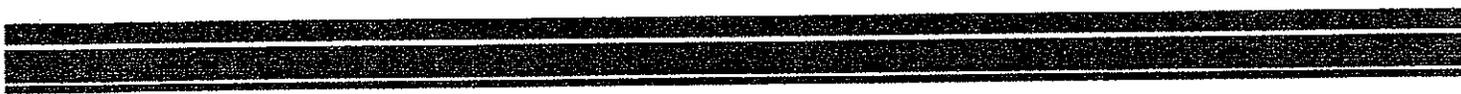
For eligible youth who maintain a C average, ETV provides monetary assistance for current and former foster youth with funding assistance to help with post secondary expenses. The ETV program involves youth in developing and designing an approved education and training plan that will assist their transition to self-sufficiency as an adult.

- Youth in Omaha also have additional support through an Educational Mentor. The Educational Mentor meets directly with the youth (often on-campus) and provides assistance in a variety of areas: tutoring, financial aid, housing, transportation, medical care, etc.
- Currently, 120 youth in the Omaha Metro Area are involved in the Education and Training Voucher Program

### **Preparation for Adult Living Services (PALS)**

The program is designed to provide support and guidance through assessment, preparation and one-on-one support which continues after the youth moves to an independent living arrangement.

- Youth in Omaha also have additional support through an Educational Mentor. The Educational Mentor meets directly with the youth (often on-campus) and provides assistance in a variety of areas: tutoring, financial aid, housing, transportation, medical care, etc.
- Currently, 120 youth in the Omaha Metro Area are involved in the Education and Training Voucher Program.
- There are five PALS Specialist (3 full-time, 2 part-time) in the Omaha Metro Area.
- This program served 182 youth in Omaha during the year ending September 30, 2007.



## SECTION 4

### OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

The Omaha Independent Living Steering Committee developed the following outcomes and indicators for successful transition to adulthood (reducing the numbers of children re-entering the system as adults (breaking the cycle) and increasing the number of confident teenagers transitioning to adults).

*\*Note:* The following data are rudimentary and shown only for contextual purposes. Once a strategic plan has been approved, more detailed and complete data will be provided.

#### PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Youth have supportive relationships, are able to access services in the community to achieve their personal goals, have a voice and connections in their community.

##### Outcome Measures:

1. Increased access to information and resources in their community
2. Increased long term relationships with other significant adults (willing to continue the relationship as the youth becomes an adult)
3. Increased number of foster parents that go beyond providing for the immediate needs of a child (instead will parent for a lifetime)

##### Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of youth that report that they are successful in accessing information and resources in the community (i.e., housing, health care, and transportation)
- Number of youth that report that there is at least one adult in the community that they could go to for emotional support or for job/school advice or guidance
- Number and percent of young people that report there are enough people they can count on for emotional support or for job/school advice or guidance

##### Supplemental Data: Juvenile Arrests

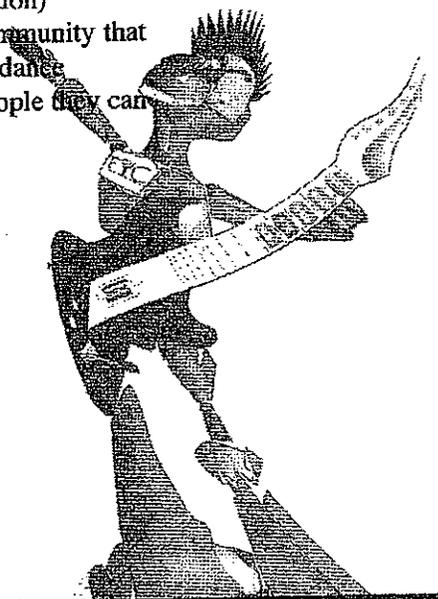
Omaha - juvenile arrests as percent of total arrests<sup>1</sup> 68.3%

Murder 12.5%  
Forcible rape 10.9%  
Robbery 23.4%  
Felony-aggravated assault 12%  
Misdemeanor assault 9.5%

Nebraska- juvenile arrests as percent of total arrests<sup>2</sup> 17%

<sup>1</sup> Omaha Police Department, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Nebraska Commission of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, 2006



## EDUCATION

Youth receive sufficient education and training to enable them to obtain and retain employment.

### Outcome Measures:

1. Increased school attendance rates
2. Increased school graduation rates
3. Increased college attendance or technical school attendance

### Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of youth with a high school diploma or GED. Current Data: 84% of Nebraskans, 18-24 years old, have at least a high school diploma or GED<sup>3</sup> (2005).
- Number of youth that achieve an attendance rate that meets or exceeds the average attendance rate in their school
- Number of youth that are enrolled in or have completed education or training beyond high school
- For youth *not* attending high school, the number and percent of youth with a high school diploma or GED
- Of those with a high school diploma or GED, the number and percent of young people that are enrolled in or have completed education or training beyond high school (i.e. military, Job Corps, vocational education, two or four year college, apprenticeships, Americorps, technical certification, and employer-sponsored training).

### Supplemental Data: Graduation Rates and Educational Attainment

Omaha School Districts 2004-2005 graduation rate<sup>4</sup> 80%

Omaha Public Schools graduation rate 68%

Nebraska 2005-2006 graduation rate<sup>5</sup> 88.8%

16% of 18-24 year olds in NE have less than a high school diploma<sup>6</sup>

30.9% of 18-24 year olds in NE have a high school diploma

43.1% of 18-24 year olds in NE have some college or an Associate's degree

10% of 18-24 year olds in NE have a Bachelor's degree

<sup>3</sup>American Community Survey, 2005

<sup>4</sup>Nebraska Department of Education 4- year high school completion rate, based on standards published by the National Center for Education Statistics

<sup>5</sup>Nebraska Department of Education

<sup>6</sup>American Community Survey, 2005

## EMPLOYMENT

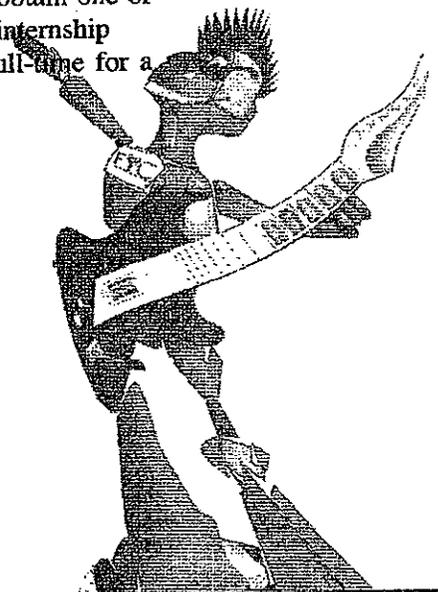
Youth generate a sufficient income to support themselves by obtaining and retaining steady employment

### Outcome Measures:

1. Increased employment rates
2. Increase in youth who are work-ready
3. Decrease in youth living in poverty
4. Decreased job mobility
5. Decreased juvenile crime
6. Decreased run away and homelessness

### Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of youth that participate in one or more work-related learning/work experiences (e.g. field trip to work site, career fair, job shadowing, school-based enterprise, paid or volunteer work in the school or community, summer camp)
- Number of youth that obtain one or more part-time jobs while in school (e.g. after school or summer) or participate in an internship
- Number of youth that worked 40 hours per week for a duration of 6 months or more
- Number of children and youth living at or below the federal poverty line
- Number and percent of youth that participate in one or more work-related learning/work experiences (e.g. field trip to work site, job shadowing, paid or volunteer work in the school or community)
- For those attending high school, number and percent of youth that obtain one or more part-time jobs (e.g. afterschool or summer) or participate in an internship
- For those not attending school, number and percent that worked full-time for a duration of six months or more



## DAILY LIVING AND HOUSING

Youth have access to safe, stable, affordable housing in the community that is near public transportation, work, and/or school.

### Outcome Measures:

1. Increased safe and affordable housing for youth
2. Decreased runaway and homelessness
3. Increased financial stability

### Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Number of youth that have a housing plan and accumulate savings toward that housing plan
- For young people out of care, number and percent of young people who report that their housing is safe, stable, and affordable
- Number and percent of young people who report that they have access to transportation for work or school
- Number of youth who participate in financial education
- Number of youth with an IDA or other saving account

## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Youth have sufficient and affordable health insurance and services for physical, mental and behavioral health (including substance use).

### Outcome Measures:

1. Decreased number of youth suicides
2. Decreased number of youth abusing drugs
3. Increased availability of adequate health insurance
4. Increased access to health services
5. Decreased rate of unplanned pregnancies

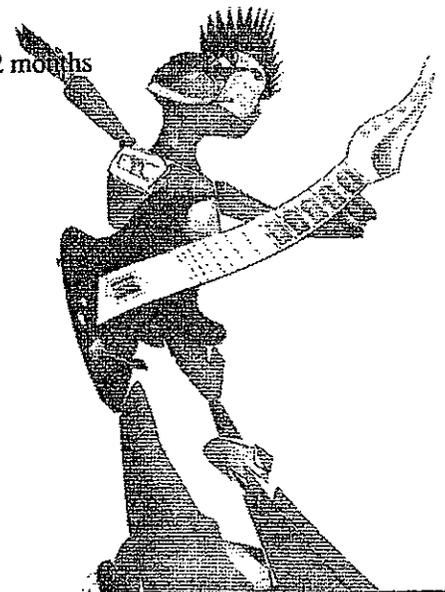
### Indicators to Measure Progress:

- Estimate of youth with mental health disorders
- Number of youth that have health insurance (physical health only, mental health benefits, dental benefits, with both mental health and dental benefits)
- Number of youth that report that they have access to critical physical and behavioral health services
- Number of youth suicides
- Number of youth using tobacco, alcohol, and/or illicit drugs
- Rate of teen pregnancies

### Supplemental Data: Mental Health Disorders, Youth Suicide and Drug Use<sup>7</sup>

25% of youth who felt so sad or hopeless that it prevented usual activity  
18% of youth who seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months  
17% of youth who made a suicide plan in the past 12 months  
47% used alcohol in last 30 days  
31% used tobacco in last 30 days  
18% used marijuana in last 30 days

<sup>7</sup>Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003



## SECTION 5 BEST PRACTICES

*\*Note:* The following research on best practice models is preliminary and shown only for informational purposes. Once a strategic plan is approved, more detailed and complete research will be included).

### PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

#### Oregon: The Powerhouse Mentoring Program

Powerhouse provides one-on-one, community-based mentoring for Multnomah County foster youth ages 13 – 21 as a part of their overall transition plan. The mission of Powerhouse is to provide community support and resources to youth preparing for and aging out of foster care. The goals of the Powerhouse Mentoring Program are:

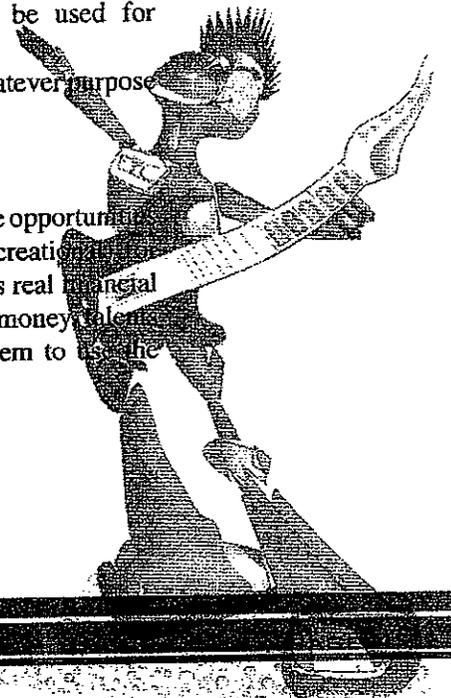
- Increase the number of youth who have a network of community support
- Increase the number of youth completing high school
- Increase the number of youth enrolled in post-secondary programs
- Increase the number of youth with stable employment and housing

Source: <http://www.theinhome.com/Powerhouse.htm>

#### Michigan: Opportunity Passports™ - Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

- Individual Development Account (matched savings account) to be used for designated purposes.
- Debit (checking) account with ATM card and no paper checks, for whatever purpose the youth desires.
- “Door openers” designed by the community.

The Opportunity Passport is a tool designed to organize resources to create opportunities (financial, educational, vocational, health care, entrepreneurial and recreational) for alumni of the foster care system and youth still in foster care. It provides real financial opportunities plus knowledge about how to make the most of a youth's money, talents and life. Youth will receive financial literacy training that prepares them to use the Opportunity Passport successfully.



Individual Development Account (IDA): Think of this as a “savings and more” account. Save a dollar, and receive a matching dollar for a specified goal – all the way up to \$1,000 a year. This means that you can turn \$1 into \$2 in your IDA just like that if you want to use the money to:

- Take college courses
- Pay medical and dental costs or insurance
- Buy a car and auto insurance
- Make a deposit on an apartment
- Invest in stocks or an Individual Retirement Account (IRA)

The money in an IDA is intended to help youth develop a foundation towards independence.

- Youth earn and save money for short-term and long-term asset building.
- Matched by the grant 1:1.
- Requires 8 hours of financial literacy training and completion of regular surveys to track outcomes.

Allowable Uses for IDA Match:

- Housing down payment or rent deposit.
- Medical, dental or other health costs.
- Insurance (renter's, health, auto).
- Education or training costs.
- Car purchase and licensing.
- Microenterprise.
- Investments (stocks, 401(k) or IRAs.)

Debit Account: The Opportunity Passport includes a debit account at a bank to help you manage your money and avoid steep check cashing fees.

Door Openers: The Opportunity Passport offers many special services in addition to the financial opportunities. It assists youth with things such as preparing for and finding a job, connecting with caring adults and learning the skills needed to live independently

Source: Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, <http://www.michigan.gov/fyit/0,1607,7-240-44524-162619--,00.html>; Michigan's Foster Youth in Transition Website; <http://www.michigan.gov/fyit>

## EDUCATION

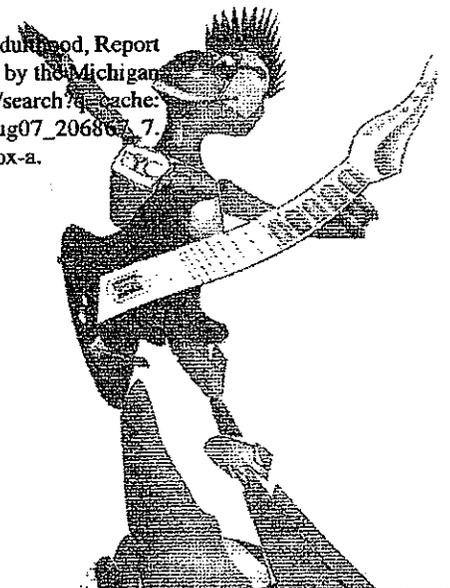
### Michigan

**Tuition waivers and higher education supports** In April 2007, the Michigan Campus Compact, a membership organization of 43 public and private colleges, co-hosted an educational summit with DHS, the Michigan Supreme Court and the Department of Education (DOE). Regional summits that include colleges, DHS and private agency foster care staff began in June with a meeting at Madonna College in southeast Michigan.

**Chafee Educational Training Vouchers (ETVs)** In January 2006, DHS contracted with a private agency to manage ETVs, including increased marketing to caseworkers, financial aid officers, high school counselors, foster parents, court staff, Guardians ad Litem, and foster youth. As a result, the number of ETV's awarded has doubled from 2006 to 2007.

**Education planners** The Washtenaw Superintendents' Association has developed policy guidelines for improving educational outcomes of youth transitioning out of foster care. Working through locally-appointed foster care education liaisons who are supported by the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, schools will ensure these students are afforded the opportunity to stay in their school of origin, provided transportation to the school of origin, allowed to immediately enroll in school and supported to stay on track academically. The intermediate school district expects to serve 50-75 students a year. This pilot will be presented to other Intermediate School Districts as a promising practice model to follow.

Source: Interdepartmental Task Force on Services to At-Risk Youth Transitioning to Adulthood, Report Card on Progress and Challenges, August 2007, submitted to the Michigan Legislature by the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan Supreme Court, [http://72.14.205.104/search?cache:1qJxEY\\_nurYJ:www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07\\_206867.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a](http://72.14.205.104/search?cache:1qJxEY_nurYJ:www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07_206867.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a).



## Washington

The **Treehouse Coaching-to-College** program matches volunteers who serve as coaches to high school foster youth to encourage them to pursue post-secondary options. The coaches help foster youth with college and financial aid applications and identify potential career paths.

The **Washington State Governor's Scholarship for Foster Youth** helps youth who will emancipate from the state or federally recognized foster, group, or kinship care to enroll in and complete degrees or certificates at eligible colleges in Washington. Youth receive a mentor the first two years in college and scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000, depending on need.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.

## Maine

Maine's Children's Cabinet has created **Keeping Maine's Children Connected**, an initiative that establishes a formal system of communication among state agencies, school districts, correctional facilities, and in-patient psychiatric care units; and stresses the importance of a stable school placement for youth in foster care, juvenile justice, and mental health systems. Maine is training and placing liaisons in each of these systems and school districts to develop and support each youth's education plan. This interagency effort aims to improve educational outcomes by reducing the number of school changes and increasing a youth's sense of belonging to a community and school.

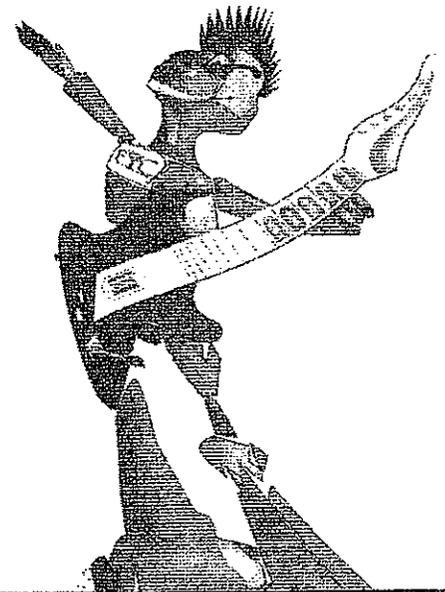
Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.

## California

The **Guardian Scholars** program in California combines public and philanthropic funds to provide a comprehensive scholarship program at a number of state colleges and universities.

At **Cal State Fullerton**, former foster youth are awarded five-year scholarships, guaranteed year-round, on-campus housing, and given access to on-campus employment opportunities, one-to-one counseling, peer and faculty mentoring, biweekly meetings with program staff and volunteers, and assistance with career planning and development.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.



## EMPLOYMENT

**Annie E. Casey School-to-Career Partnerships** operating in Baltimore, Maryland; Hartford, Connecticut; New York, New York; Oakland, California; Providence, Rhode Island; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; and Maine—provide workplace skills in a hands-on environment for foster youth ages 16–24. Modeled after a public-private partnership started in Baltimore in 1999, the program offers eligible youth a variety of services, including job-readiness training; job opportunities with major employers such as UPS, Home Depot, and Marriot International; tuition reimbursement; health benefits; work supports; and job retention services. In 2003, more than 340 youth across eight program sites were placed in jobs with an average wage of \$7.92 per hour. Fifty-one percent received health benefits, and the program had an 81 percent retention rate.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.

### Tennessee

Tennessee has engaged employers in finding employment opportunities for foster youth as they age out of the system. Nashville companies such as Asurion and US Bank have earmarked job positions for former foster youth. US Bank also provides bank accounts to foster youth and matches their savings to help them buy a car, go to college, or find housing.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.

### South Carolina

In South Carolina, the Department of Social Services has partnered with the Columbia Urban League to provide a leadership development curriculum, job shadowing, and employment for foster youth. Students attend a 20-hour summer job camp in Columbia to prepare for a six-week job shadowing experience. Once they successfully complete the summer job camp, participants spend the next six weeks at a work site and receive a \$600 stipend. Students also attend quarterly workshops during the year. Funded by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, from 2004 to 2005 the program served approximately 200 students in seven counties.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.

## DAILY LIVING AND HOUSING

### Michigan

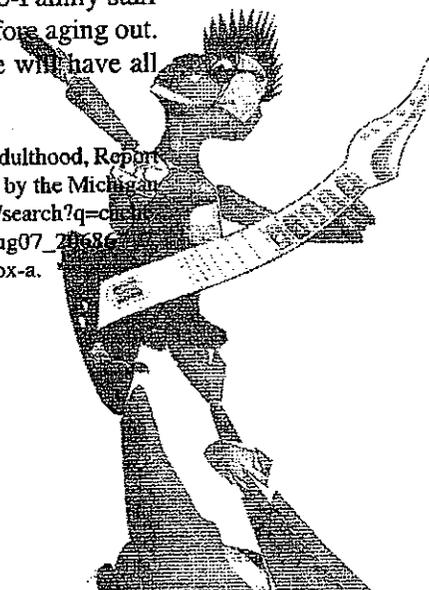
**Access to a driver's license:** Although DHS cannot address the issue of increased rates of auto insurance faced by families who provide foster care to a teen driver, the department is committed to making sure every foster youth will either have a driver's license, or have completed the requirements to get a license before he or she ages out of care. In some counties this includes recruiting community volunteers who will accompany youth while they complete their practice driving hours. The department is also informing workers and foster parents that federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act dollars can be used to cover the cost of driver training classes.

**Homeless youth initiative:** The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) awarded grants totaling \$3 million to fund nine homeless youth projects serving 55 counties. The funding provides rental assistance and supportive services over a two-year period for homeless youth aged 18-24. MSHDA anticipates that 250-300 youth will be served, and will provide quarterly reports on how many former foster youth access the services, beginning October 2007.

**Wayne County housing resource center:** MSHDA awarded a \$500,000 grant in December 2006, and the Department of Human Services (DHS) will provide a staff person beginning in 2007. The two-year pilot will provide referrals, housing information, supportive services, and rent subsidies for 50-60 former foster youth in Wayne County.

**Access to critical documents:** DHS policy is in place that requires a caseworker to make sure each youth has received a certified copy of his or her birth certificate, a social security card and state-issued photo ID. In northern Michigan, Family-to-Family staff are conducting permanency meetings for every child at least one year before aging out. The objective is to ensure 100 percent of youth aging out of foster care will have all necessary documents.

Source: Interdepartmental Task Force on Services to At-Risk Youth Transitioning to Adulthood, Report Card on Progress and Challenges, August 2007, submitted to the Michigan Legislature by the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan Supreme Court, <http://72.14.205.104/search?q=ch...>  
[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07\\_206861.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07_206861qJxjEY_nurYJ:www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07_206861.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a)



## Oregon

### Springwater Traditional Living Program

- 100% voluntary program - residents have the right to discharge themselves at any time
- Young Adults age 16-21
- Co-Ed Household
- Maximum of 7 residents in house
- Average length of stay is 6-9 months, and a maximum of 2 years
- Staffed 24 hours a day with Life Skills Trainers who offer support
- Learn daily living skills, self-management skills, and behavior management skills
- Intensive 1 on 1 case management

### Program Requirements

- The individual (young adult) must initiate placement by contacting the program
- Active participation in developing a case plan unique to the individual
- Attend mandatory 3 groups weekly
- Develop a Springwater Savings Account

Life Skills Group: a workshop environment to teach skills to achieve independence in daily life. Skills may include: resume writing, job search, tax info, banking services, budgeting, hygiene, apartment search, communication skills, medication, and time management.

Peer Group: Designed to educate young adults about social and mental awareness. Professional support is provided in an instructional manner to teach cognitive skills. Youth have the opportunity to express any concerns about feeling safe, positive, healthy, and effective. Issues such as peer mediation, communication skills, mental health (depression), personal empowerment, and leadership ability are addressed and explored.

Recreation Group: Begins with a community dinner prepared by staff. Provides a relaxed environment in which young adults learn about and explore issues such as physical fitness, mental strength, personal focus, team building, personal care, and nutrition needs to enhance motivation and self-empowerment. Activities may take place at Springwater or in the community and range from exercising to visiting art galleries to watching movies.

Source: [http://www.theinnhome.com/Springwater\\_Transitional\\_Living.htm](http://www.theinnhome.com/Springwater_Transitional_Living.htm)

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## South Dakota

The Independent Living Program provides Starter Kit and Youth Organizer services for teens who are in or have been in foster care.

### Starter Kit

By participating in the Independent Living Program, teens age 16 to 18 have the chance to earn up to \$1,200 through incentives and activities such as:

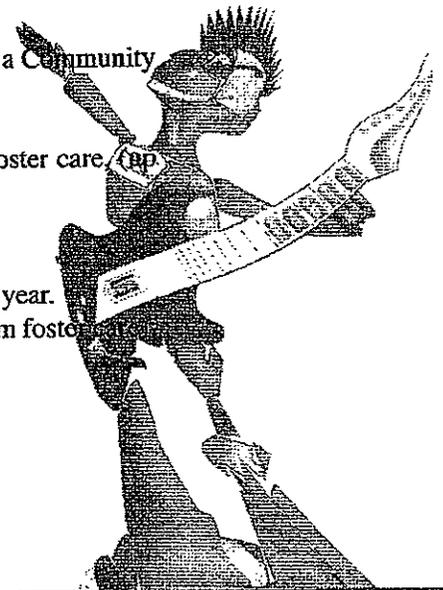
- Attending classes or workshops
- Working with community resource people
- Receiving their high school diploma or GED
- Positive behaviors

When youth leave foster care, the special funds they have earned are available to help them move out on their own. Funds may be used for:

- Kitchen items: pots and pans, cooking utensils, serving bowls, dishes, etc.
- Bathroom items: bath towels and mats, shower curtain and hook set, etc.
- Bedroom items: sheets, blankets, pillows, etc.
- Miscellaneous items: lamps, iron/ironing board, phone, small TV, trash cans, etc.
- Housekeeping items: laundry and cleaning supplies
- Food staples and personal hygiene items
- Items such as a CD player and VCR are considered luxury items and should **not** be purchased with this money.

The following activities qualify for the starter kit:

- Attending an Independent Living class offered by or coordinated by a Community Resource Person (up to 75 hours): \$3 an hour.
- Completing approved driver's education training: \$15.
- Working with a Community Resource Person, age 14 to exit from foster care (up to \$25 a year): \$2 an hour.
- Attending a regional workshop (age 14-18): \$20 a workshop.
- Attending the Teen Conference (age 16-18): \$50 a conference.
- Active participation in Youth Advocacy group (up to 2 years): \$40 a year.
- Membership in an Independent Living workgroup (age 15 to exit from foster care): \$25 a year.



- Completion of high school diploma/GED: \$100.
- Maintaining a job for 6 months or 2 summers (age 16 to exit from foster care): \$25 for 6 months.
- Maintaining a checking account with no insufficient checks (age 16 to exit from foster care): \$20 a year.
- Making and keeping medical appointments (age 16 to exit from foster care): \$10 a year.
- Keeping the Youth Organizer up to date: \$50 at exit from foster care.
- Pass high school Life Skill Class (\$25)
- Positive legal behavior (no law enforcement involvement): \$50 at exit from foster care.
- Completion of exit interview: \$20 at exit from foster care.
- Investigation of post-secondary options or access: \$20.
- Develop and follow money management with a Community Resource Person: \$10 a year.
- Positive progress on a case plan: \$10 a quarter.
- Working with a mentor (age 16 to exit from foster care): \$25 a year.
- Volunteering (non-court ordered): \$25 at exit from foster care.

### **Youth Organizer**

The Youth Organizer Program is designed to help teens age 16 and older leaving the foster care system. A Youth Organizer works with a youth to gather the information they need as they move out on their own. The program contains 13 sections for keeping information in the following categories:

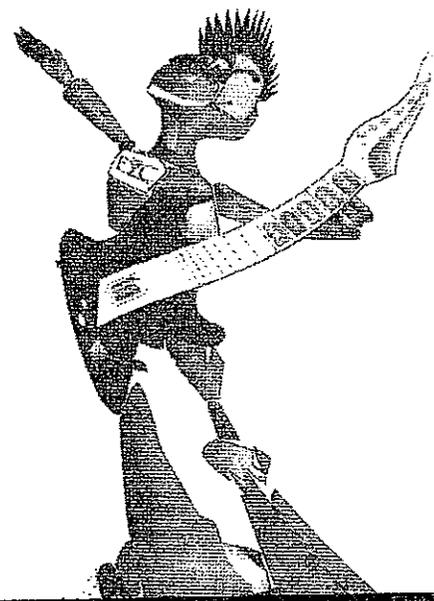
- Banking
- Emergency
- Employment
- Housing
- Independent living
- Insurance
- Medical
- Paid and unpaid bills
- Personal and family resources
- School
- Taxes

Source: South Dakota Department of Social Services, Child Protection Services, Independent Living Program: <http://dss.sd.gov/cps/independentlivingprogram/starterkit.asp>, <http://dss.sd.gov/cps/independentlivingprogram/youthorganizer.asp>)

## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Some states have extended Medicaid eligibility beyond age 18, ensuring life skills training teaches youth how to monitor and take responsibility for their health, and developing mechanisms to help youth track their medical history. Under FCIA, states have the option to expand Medicaid eligibility to youth who were in foster care on their 18th birthday, are under age 21, and do not exceed income and asset levels as determined by the state. If states choose to take advantage of this option, their expenditures continue to be matched at their standard federal Medicaid matching rate. Presently, 13 states have chosen to expand Medicaid eligibility: **Arizona, California, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.** Arizona has no income ceiling for foster youth to qualify for Medicaid, and Texas offers Medicaid coverage to all former foster youth up to age 21 who are at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Even without state legislation, many current and former foster youth may be eligible for Medicaid based on their income or poverty level, pregnancy or parenthood, or disability status. States such as **Florida, Virginia, and Washington** have also enacted their own policies for Medicaid eligibility that offer coverage to current and former foster youth who are in an approved postsecondary education program.

Source: L. Eyster and S. Oldmixon, *State Policies to Help Youth Transition Out of Foster Care*, Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices, January 2007.



## Florida

Objective: Providers should teach health care education; offer health screenings; prepare youth to manage their own medical, dental, and mental health needs; and link them with community health resources

### Minimum Standards:

- Health care education before leaving system to include: first aid, nutrition, physical fitness, mental and emotional health, medication use, and basic methods of assessing one's own needs
- Require that each youth undergo health screening prior to leaving the system, to include: screening for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases, gynecological health, eating disorders, and emotional health.
- Help youth develop a health plan as part of their transitional plan, including: all previous health information (immunizations, past treatment), future routine health care needs, health insurance options, (Medicaid or private provider), and referrals to specific health care providers (primary care physician, dentist).

Source: Independent Living Minimum Standards Recommended for Children in Foster Care, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, November 2004, Report No. 04-78.

## Texas

**The Transition Resource Action Center (TRAC)** is a one-stop center that offers access to affordable housing, livable-wage jobs and a safety net for young adults transitioning out of substitute care. This website provides information and links to the following resources regarding physical and mental health.

### Counseling:

Azle Pastoral Counseling Care- Marriage, Family and Individual Counseling: Provides counseling to help individuals and families resolve their personal and interpersonal conflicts and to learn to cope with unchangeable situations.

Mental Health Mental Retardation of Tarrant County - Screening and Crisis Services: Provides 24/7 crisis hotline; also screens for mental health services for those who face the challenges of mental illness, mental retardation, autism, addiction and early childhood developmental delays.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS): provides programs and support for people with disabilities and families of children with development delays.

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Galaxy Counseling Center: Its mission is to promote healthy family relationships and reduce the incidence of child abuse and family violence through a family-oriented approach to therapy.

Catholic Charities of Dallas and Ft. Worth: Since the late 1800's and the early 1900's, the Catholic Charities, have put into action the Gospel mandate to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, and care for the sick.

#### Medicaid:

Transitional Medicaid: free medical care to youth under the age of 21 who have been in the care of the state.

How to get Medicaid: Direct link to the Texas Health and Human Service Commission's page on how to get Medicaid, Food stamps, medical care etc once you are 21 years old or older.

Texas Medicaid Program: A direct link to the official State of Texas Medicaid homepage.

Continuous Medicaid Coverage: The Department of Community Health (DCH) received approval from Medicaid to add language to the state's Chafee Plan creating eligibility for 18-21 year old former foster youth. DHS and DCH databases will be linked in 2007, to make Medicaid coverage seamless.

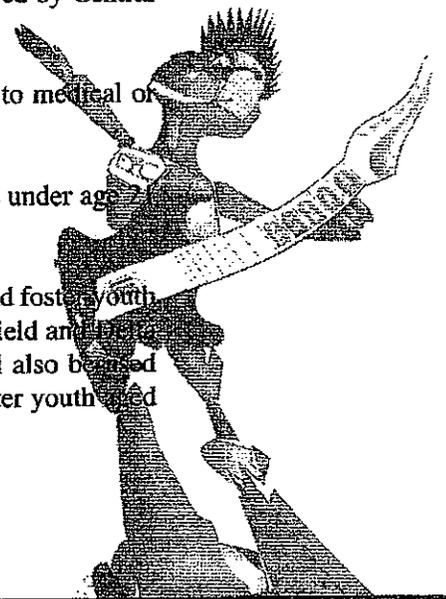
#### Medical Care:

Community Health Services: Medical and dental care administered by Central Dallas Ministries.

Medical Transportation Program: helps you with transportation to medical or dental care.

Texas Health Steps (THSteps): provides free checkups to people under age 21 who have Medicaid.

Access to Dental Care: Utilization and cost data for 16-18 year old foster youth are being used as the basis for a proposal to Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Blue Cross Dental to expand services to all foster children. These data will also be used to estimate the costs of providing dental insurance to former foster youth aged 18-25.



Online resources:

Child and Youth Health: Offers a wide selection of articles and useful information for young adults age 12-25.

Go Ask Alice!: Columbia University's Health Q&A Interactive Service.

Healthykids.com: an online portal for information on health and development.

Teengrowth.com: TeenGrowth is the Web site thousands of teens go for their health information.

Teens Health: Teens Health was created for teens looking for honest, accurate information and advice about health, relationships, and growing up.

Teenhealthfx.com: online resource for any and all questions regarding your health, your relationships, your body and your sexuality.

The Teen Health and the Media: a virtual meeting place for teens, parents, educators, health professionals, and others who share a strong commitment to teen health.

The Healthy Site: Want to become Healthy?

THINK: Teenage Health Interactive Network: information about health fitness for teens.

We're Talking!: Teen health info from the Palo Alto Medical Foundation.

Source: Transition Resource Action Center, <http://www.traconline.org/health/health.htm>



## Michigan

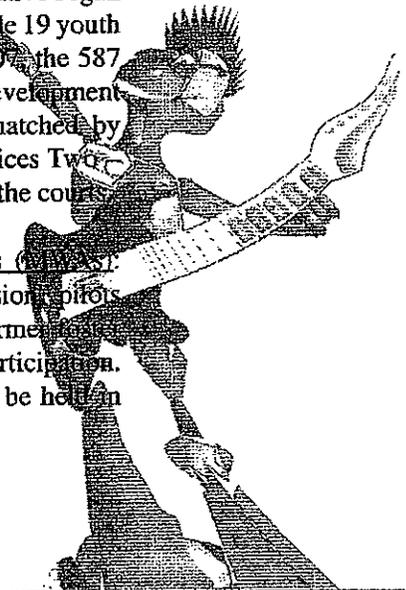
### Implemented Initiatives:

Youth-friendly Web Site: Identified by youth and adult task force members as a first priority, the web site, [www.michigan.gov/fyit](http://www.michigan.gov/fyit), was developed based on youth input and went live in June 2007. It includes information for youth on finding a place to live, how to look for a job, how to dress appropriately and important interview tips; key points when purchasing a used car and buying insurance; opening a bank account; deciding between a debit card, credit card or ATM card; finding financial aid resources for college; health information including substance abuse and pregnancy prevention, parenting tips, mental health and disabilities; links to other agencies and relevant websites and inexpensive entertainment options in their local area.

STEP Summer Training and Employment Programs: In the summer of 2007, the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) placed a priority on enrolling foster youth in Michigan Works! Agency summer youth jobs programs in Detroit and Benton Harbor. DLEG provided 51 foster youth in Detroit and 12 in Benton Harbor with paid work experience and work-based learning activities integrated with classroom instruction. In addition, Wayne County DHS placed 22 foster youth in a paid internship program, which included a weeklong orientation on job preparation and retention skills, and employer-provided mentors.

Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative: In December 2002, DHS began the grantfunded Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, a major national effort to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care. Although grant funds are phasing out and will end by 2010, DHS has committed to expand the initiative statewide. The initiative began with two youth boards in 11 counties, and in FY 2007 has expanded to include 19 youth boards in 29 counties, comprised of and led by 200 youth. As of May 2007, the 587 youth enrolled in the program had saved almost \$450,000 in Individual Development Accounts (matched savings accounts) and made 220 asset purchases matched by \$100,000. In September 2007, the state youth board expects to release Voices Two, their second list of priorities needing to be addressed by state agencies and the courts.

Automatic Referral of Foster Care Youth to Michigan Works! Agencies (MWS): DLEG successfully sought a \$500,000 federal grant for "Shared Youth Vision" pilots to integrate education and employment services targeted to current and former foster youth. A grant implementation team has been developed and includes DHS participation. A kick-off event for the pilot and the Shared Youth Vision initiative will be held in Southeast Michigan in August.



Adoption for Older Youth: In April 2007, DHS revised contracts with private foster care placing agencies to provide performance-based pay for increasing adoptions of older youth that have been waiting longest for a permanent home. In collaboration with the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), DHS has developed a statewide adoption oversight committee (AOC) to review barriers to permanency in the current system, identify best practices and track success of the contract revisions. The AOC is comprised of public and private adoption providers, adoptive family support groups, adoptive parents and youth and other related professionals. The Adoption Oversight Committee has been meeting since March 2007 and through its various subcommittees, is making recommendations for changes in legislation, policy and the delivery of adoption services.

### **Early Stage Initiatives**

Healthy Behaviors Education: DCH, with assistance from foster youth, has identified key content and links to add to the foster youth website. Local MYOI youth board coordinators are enlisting community partners to provide classes on healthy cooking, disease prevention, drug and alcohol addiction, smoking, teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and safe dating relationships. A curriculum is being developed and education requirements will be added to DHS structured independent living contracts.

Housing Education and Information: Key information and links have been added to the foster youth website. MSHDA has developed a curriculum outline with clear lessons and topics, and DHS training staff will develop the program. Youth will be trained as trainers and the first classes will be piloted in Detroit and Traverse City.

Student Advocacy Center: Educational advocacy models, such as the Student Advocacy Center in Washtenaw County, provide individual education planning, link students with tutors, and ensure the youth's needs are met to successfully complete high school. A plan to expand the current Student Advocacy Center model has been developed. A meeting is pending to pursue funding, determine timelines and plan for implementation.

Mentors for Foster Youth: A partnership is being developed between DHS and Michigan State University Extension to develop and implement a model for transition coaches using tools such as the web-based Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment, beginning in the northern region (Grand Traverse and surrounding counties) where mentoring programs for other youth are currently established. It is anticipated that 15 VISTA volunteers will be assigned to assist in developing and implementing this project. In addition, Spectrum Children's Services has developed a program in Wayne County to recruit and train mentors, match them with foster youth, and host fun mentor/mentee activities to support the relationships.

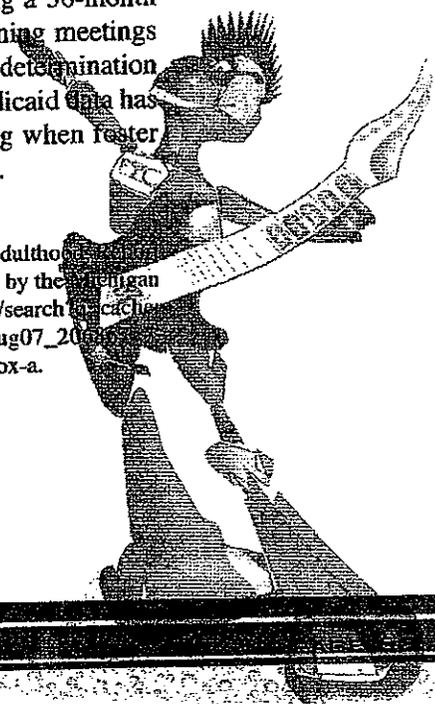
Single Record Student Database: The Department of Education (DOE) has designed a single record student database that would allow student records to be accessed through an online database. While this would benefit all Michigan students, it is especially important to foster youth who face delays in enrollment every time a change in foster placement means a change in school placement. The student transcript module is being built, but DOE needs approximately \$2 million to support activation and full input of student records.

Extension of Foster Care Beyond Age 18: DHS has developed policy that recommends foster care workers request a voluntary extension of foster care for all court wards that are in school or working until age 20. The Child Welfare Institute has added information to new worker training to focus on the need for extending care. Further education of judges, court staff and Guardians ad litem is needed. Legislation is needed to allow youth to voluntarily return to care after their case has been closed. State and federal funding is needed in order to implement.

Permanent Connections to Caring Adults: DHS, with technical assistance from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice, and the National Resource Center for Transitioning Youth, is developing a Circle of Support model of service that will bring together a team of people identified by the youth, find those important family members or other significant adults with whom the youth has lost contact, and re-build relationships that can lead to a permanent legal connection. Training on the use of technology for family-finding will be introduced to DHS workers in September at the SCAO conference. Eight Michigan counties will begin piloting the model in FY 2008. The goal is that no foster youth will leave care without a permanent connection to at least one caring adult.

Automatic Enrollment in Tuition Incentive Program (TIP): TIP is available to all Michigan youth who have been Medicaid eligible for 24 months during a 36-month period. Enrollment of foster youth will be part of the permanency planning meetings conducted for each youth. A required element of the meeting will be a determination of TIP eligibility and completion of the form. In addition, a query of Medicaid data has been requested to determine how best to collect information confirming when foster youth meet eligibility. Enrollment will occur at the earliest date possible.

Source: Interdepartmental Task Force on Services to At-Risk Youth Transitioning to Adulthood, Report Card on Progress and Challenges, August 2007, submitted to the Michigan Legislature by the Michigan Department of Human Services and the Michigan Supreme Court, [http://72.14.205.104/search/cache?\\_ga=1qJxEY\\_nurYJ:www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07\\_2007.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a](http://72.14.205.104/search/cache?_ga=1qJxEY_nurYJ:www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/DHS-AgingOut-ReportCard-Aug07_2007.pdf+michigan+foster+youth+report+card&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a)



## Florida

### Independent Living Minimum Standards Recommended for Children in Foster Care

Objective: Providers should require continuing education and training for staff in order to better serve the needs of youth and to improve their advocacy skills for promoting community delivery of services to these youth.

#### Minimum Standards:

- Training in an overview of the foster care system and all the services required by law to be delivered to the youth. Staff are now required to submit to the court a report showing how the law has been met in providing each youth the services and assessments necessary to prepare him or her for independence.
- Training in data collection and program evaluation including data sampling and evaluation techniques that indicate whether youth are advancing toward self-sufficiency.
- Training in administering and interpreting the Ansell-Casey and Daniel Memorial life skills assessment instruments.
- Crisis intervention and behavior management training.
- Training addressing the needs of youth with disabilities, including educational disabilities.

Training standards should require outreach with other community service providers, like schools, medical providers, and employment agencies.

Source: Independent Living Minimum Standards Recommended for Children in Foster Care, Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, November 2004, Report No. 04-78.

## OUTCOMES

The Foster Youth Council and the Community Youth Partnership Board will serve as vehicles for local leadership, information gathering, identification of priorities, and implementation of the Omaha Independent Living Plan strategies to positively impact youth transitioning in to adulthood. As a result, the following outcomes will be achieved:

- Personal and Community Engagement - Youth have supportive relationships, are able to access services in the community to achieve their personal goals, have a voice and connections to their community.
- Education - Youth receive sufficient education and training to enable them to obtain and retain employment
- Employment - Youth generate a sufficient income to support themselves by obtaining and retaining steady employment.
- Daily Living and Housing - Youth have access to safe, stable, affordable housing in the community that is near public transportation, work and/or school
- Physical and Behavioral Health - Youth have sufficient and affordable health insurance and services for both physical and behavioral health.
- Training, Education and Policies - All Independent Living supports have the capacity to address the needs of youth in transition.

## BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Omaha Independent Living Steering Committee, consisting of Omaha youth, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Sherwood Foundation and the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation, was formed to develop and implement a four month, four phase planning process for youth transitioning to and in independent living in Omaha, NE.

From September 26 to December 18, 2007, the Omaha Independent Living Steering Committee met weekly to develop the following youth-driven plan. Over forty youth serving organizations and community partners participated in the plan's development. Each participating organizations/community member listened to the youth's ideas and then helped them to create the actions for reaching the intended outcomes. As a result, the following plan has been created detailing actions within six outcome areas. For each action, community partners identified the timeline for completion, potential partners including possible and existing partners that have already volunteered to help (not exclusive) and needed resources for the actions to be implemented. The entire plan encourages the connection to existing resources and organizations and will implement a full assessment of resources and gaps in the Omaha area.

This planning process resulted in a four year Independent Living Plan for youth in the Omaha area. While the planning focused on youth who are or have been in foster care, it is anticipated that the resulting plan will benefit many other youth in this phase of life. It is also anticipated that the plan developed for Omaha will serve as a prototype for a statewide plan that will effect youth across Nebraska.

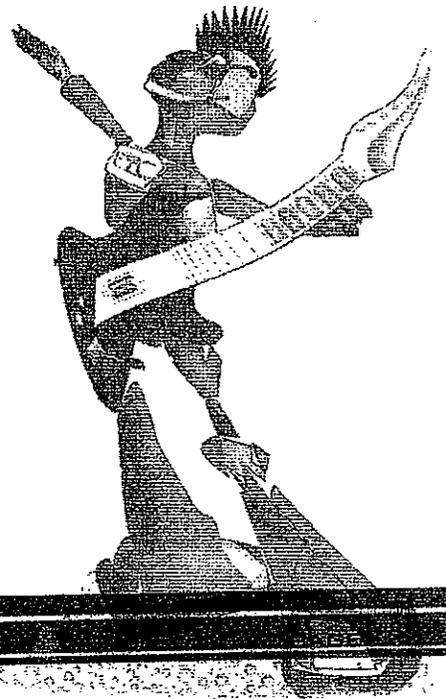
#### FOUR PHASE PLAN

Phase 1: Seek Evidence-Based Independent Living Practices/Models –With advise from national experts, NCFE will conduct an extensive literature review to include four levels of evidence based practices and models.

Phase 2: An Independent Living Steering Committee led by youth, will be formed to guide the planning process. Solicit and utilize an Independent Living Steering Committee to visit model programs/systems in the U.S. It is proposed that the Steering Committee be comprised of staff from DHHS, NCFE, Sherwood and a number of youth that equals the total number of staff.

Phase 3: An Independent Living Stakeholder meeting will be held in Omaha, NE (date: November 6, 2007 at 6:00pm). Facilitate planning meetings with youth and other stakeholders weekly.

Phase 4: Quality assurance and research methods will be in place to assure quality and return on investment for new strategies and services implemented in Omaha. By August 31, a four year Independent Living Implementation plan will be completed.



## SECTION 2

### THE PLAN

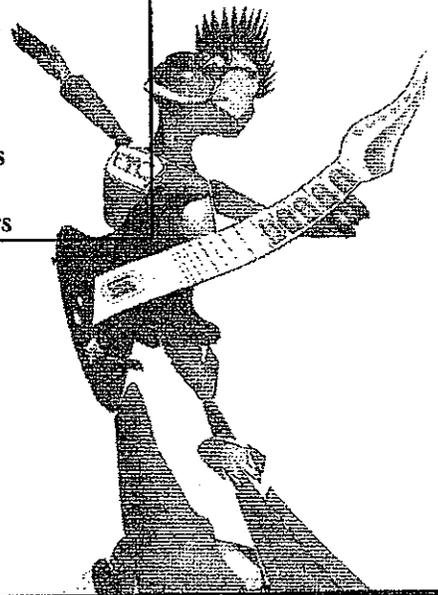
\*NOTE: Items in gray are Level 2 Priority; Level 2 Priorities are needed but may need further partnerships and consideration for implementation as part of the plan.

### PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Youth have supportive relationships, are able to access services in the community to achieve their personal goals and have a voice and connections in their community.

Potential Partners (not limited to)

Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association	University of Nebraska at Omaha's Media Department
Omaha Public Schools	NETV
Foster parents	Saddle Creek Records (branch)
Case workers	The Rose
Department of Health Human Services	Media Center
Churches	Local courts
YMCA	Youth Leadership Omaha
Community centers	Toastmasters
Child Savings Institute	Bridges to Success
Heart Gallery	Emergency transportation services
Community business	UNMC Monroe Meyer Women's Guild
Schools	National Resource Center on Independent Living
Post-secondary educational institutions	Nebraska Children's Home
State and national existing camps	DHHS Mediation Center
Camp Catch-Up, Camp Kitaki.	Existing mentoring programs
Covenant, Camp 2 Belong	Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club
Chafee and DHHS funded organizations	Community Learning Centers
Service Array	



#### **FOCUS AREA A: FOSTER YOUTH COUNCIL**

Action: 1). Establish Omaha Foster Youth Council that is youth-designed, youth-run, and youth-driven.

- Youth from the OLIP Steering Committee and FYC Member will provide Leadership
- FYC members will begin to recruit youth at the CFSR Focus Group – Sunday, Jan 6 at Collaborating Center
- Foster Youth will complete survey to identify the needs of foster youth
- Educate key stakeholders on those needs
- FYC will act as the hub of community partnerships with banks, businesses, youth serving organizations, etc.
- Recruit and mentor other foster youth
- DHHS will send letters and information packets to every youth in care over age 15 OPS School Counselors will be engaged to recruit youth
- Develop marketing materials
- Develop a fund for FYC activities, such as presentations and projects.
- Develop an FYC speaker's bureau to present and train professionals (at community events, volunteer agencies, etc).
- Provide training to FYC members and provide information from existing trainings for foster parents, psw's, GALs, etc...
- Have youth review current DHHS training, policy, and programs and give input and perspective.
- FYC's create age appropriate videos on rights of youth in the Nebraska foster care system.
- FYC's create videos for educating caseworkers, foster parents, educators, GALs, CASA's, and others on foster care from a foster youth's perspective.
- FYC will discuss grievance process and determine grievable decisions.

Implementation: Year 1

#### **FOCUS AREA B: CREATE RFP FOR SPECIAL SOCIAL EVENTS FOR FOSTER YOUTH**

Action: 1). Establish activities/places for youth (age 15-24) to connect outside of school or work via RFP from youth serving organizations to FYC

Implementation: Year 2



FOCUS AREA C: SIBLINGS

Action: 1). Organize non-structured, fun, sibling visits

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Provide Camp Catch-up Twice a Year

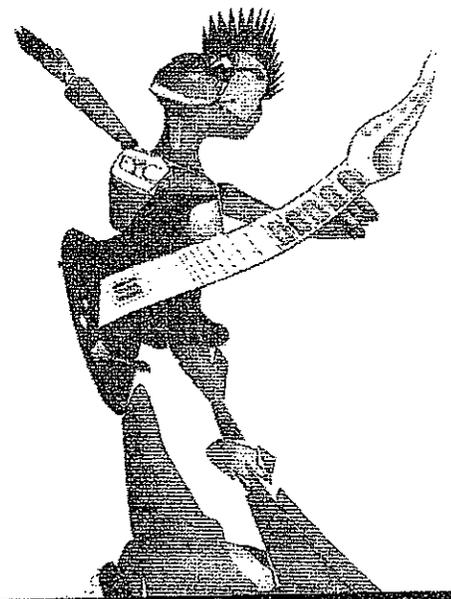
Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3). Establish password protected website for siblings to connect via the internet(similar to Facebook or MySpace)

Implementation: Year 3

Action: 4). Provide sibling contact information to youth

Implementation: Year 2



**FOCUS AREA D: FOSTER PARENTS**

Action: 1). Conduct research to determine effective strategies and characteristics of youth profiles and foster placements

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Provide Education for foster/adoptive parents on benefits and rights (FYC involvement)

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3). Create marketing campaign for foster parent recruitment

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 4). For older youth, provide matching process for youth to have a voice in their placement via characteristics, mutual interests and preferences (E-Match)

Implementation: Year 3

Action: 5). Develop action steps that cultivate the kinship ties of foster youth, emphasizes family bonds and permanency

- Find and maintain foster and kinship families who can support youth in their own neighborhoods
- Involve youth, birth families and social service providers in all placement decisions
- Establish teams of people (identified by the youth) to help the youth reconnect with family members with whom they have lost contact and help rebuild those relationships that can lead to a permanent connection
- Provide relationship training for both the youth and adult counterparts

Implementation: Year 2



**FOCUS AREA E: MENTORS**

Action: 1). Survey FYC to determine areas of need for mentors to be established

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Establish need based mentors for specific tasks, activities, and/or questions (E-matching)

- Engage need-based mentors via existing mentoring programs, businesses and community organizations

Implementation: Year 2

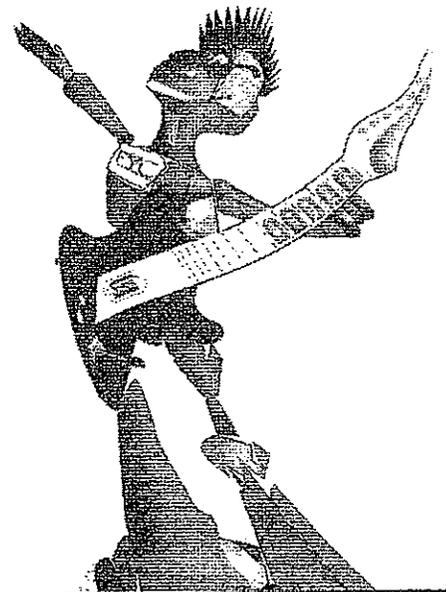
**FOCUS AREA F: COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Action: 1). Scholarships for attending college retreats at public, private and community colleges

Implementations: Year 2

Action: 2) Provide scholarships for any camp

Implementation: Year 2

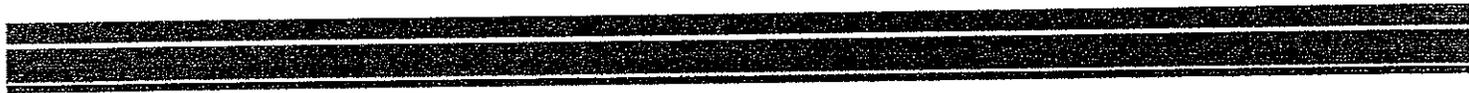


## FOCUS AREA G: COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

### Action: 1). Engage Youth in community service and volunteerism

- Provide education for businesses/organizations on the needs/issues of youth in care and volunteering
- 
- Use ACLS Assessment to find areas for which youth are most interested and then connect them to community activities
- 
- Develop community collaboration to eliminate barriers (confidentiality, transportation, etc.)
- 
- Youth engage in Community service – selection of many options to engage for giving back to community
- 
- Establish sponsors for after school programs for older youth
- 
- Identify and provide youth information about available community activities

Implementation: Year 1-3

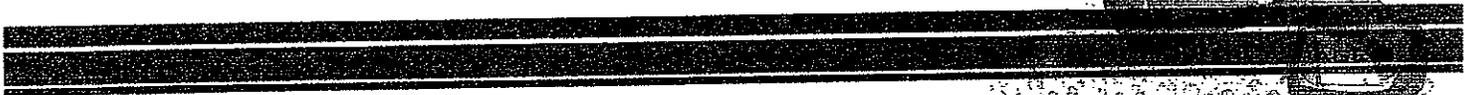
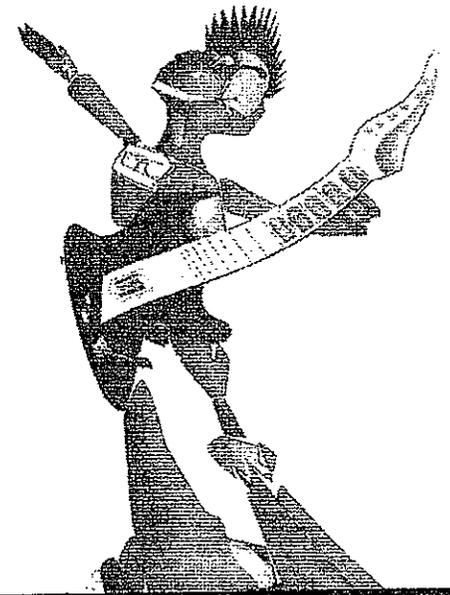


EDUCATION

Youth receive sufficient education and training to enable them to obtain and retain employment.

Potential Partners (not limited to)

Department of Health and Human Services Omaha Schools and Colleges Preparation for Adult Living Specials (Central Plains Center for Services) Independent Living Programs (TLP) Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Associations CASA Building Bright Futures Omaha Funders Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Unlocking the Potential for Success University of Nebraska Scholarship Civic Groups	Existing Mentoring Endowed Agencies Omaha Foundation on Advertising Churches Omaha World Herald Foundation Jaycees Private Donors/Organizations Churches US Banks (Tennessee) – DHB 25 Businesses Labor Unions Ralston Marriott Nebraska Department of Education Kansas Program
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**FOCUS AREA A: FORMER WARD**

- Action: 1). Outsource Former Ward Program from DHHS to contractor connected with Independent Living Programs
- Implementation: Year 1
- Action: 2). Establish School Liaisons between DHHS and individual school districts to provide youth support, education and preparation for college
- Implementation: Year 1
- Action: 3). Youth develop electronic application that is:
- Simplified and streamlined;
  - Linked to DHHS website and Omaha college applications
  - Completed by youth prior to age 19
- Implementation: Year 1
- Action: 4). Create a readiness checklist that provides a check and balance system between youth, foster parent and case worker and assures that youth receive and understand information
- Implementation: Year 1
- Action: 5). DHHS Income Maintenance workers utilize IRS forms rather than pay stubs
- Implementation: Year 1
- Action: 6). Provide special assistance fund to youth who do not go directly to school and allows kids to follow a normal schedule.
- Implementation: Year 3
- Action: 7). Expand specialized staff with caseloads involving only former wards or former wards
- Implementation: Year 3
- Action: 8). Independent living specialists, case workers, school liaisons work with youth to develop Education Plan
- Implementation: Year 3
- 
-

**FOCUS AREA B: EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVES**

Action: 1). Establish an array of incentives for youth to take college prep courses (based on youth's Interests) incorporate Non-federal match IDAs

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Provide opportunities at colleges for youth to gain exposure and independent living skills

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3). Work with Omaha partners, colleges and universities to establish scholarships for Former Wards

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 4). School receives additional support/funding/services when youth in care graduate from high school

Implementation: Year 3

Action: 5). Agreement made on number of transfer credits given by Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers and other schools to be accepted by eastern service area schools

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 6). Make laptop available to each youth

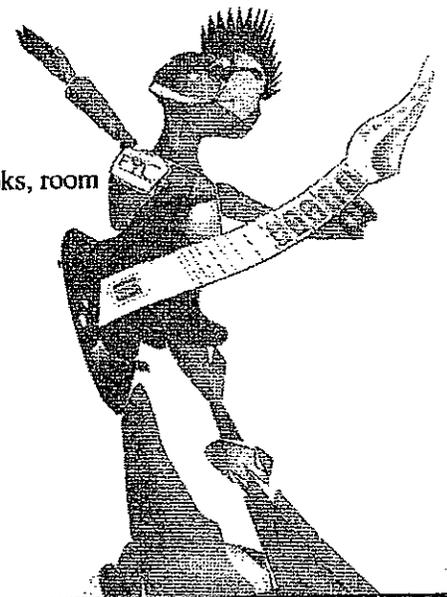
Implementation: Year 2

Action: 7). Provides scholarships that cover all costs, such as books, room and board, and clothing (not just tuition scholarships)

Implementation: Year 4

Action: 8). Establish fund for needed graduation expenses

Implementation: Year 1



**FOCUS AREA C: SCHOOL RECORDS**

Action: 1). Provide electronic school record for each youth in care (I-Grad Program)

Implementation: Year 3

**FOCUS AREA D: SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT/ REPRESENTATIVES**

Action: 1). School boards have a youth advisory board

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 2). School counselors/personnel are educated on how to support youth during the transition to adulthood

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 3) Develop pool of tutors for school based needs

- Establish Peer education and leadership in schools

Implementation: Year 3

Action: 4). Establish discretionary fund for youth to have access to money for special events (such as prom dresses, sports, camps, etc).

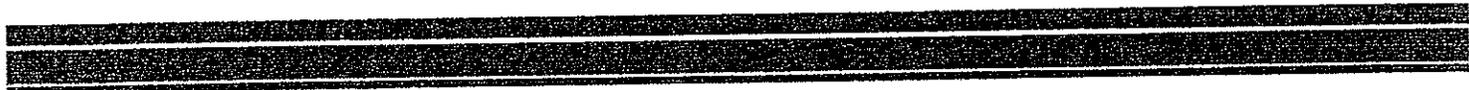
Implementation: Year 3

Action: 5). Help youth find majors with tuition reimbursement options

Action: 6). Help youth determine educational costs between public, private, 4 years, 2 years and technical schools

Action: 7). Identify college mentors

Action: 8) Conduct educational seminars for foster youth from EducationQuest and Eduserve



**FOCUS AREA E: FOSTER PARENTS**

Action: 1). Provide resources and training materials on college preparation to foster parents

Implementation: Year 2

**FOCUS AREA F: STABILITY**

Action: 1). Youth have the opportunity to stay in same school even if their placement changes – provide transportation or parent must agree to commute during placement decision

Implementation: Year 2



## EMPLOYMENT

Youth generate a sufficient income to support themselves by obtaining and retaining steady employment.

Potential Partners (not limited to)

Omaha Colleges/UNMC Omaha Chamber of Commerce United Way – Financial Stability Center	Preparation for Adult Living Specials (Central Plains Center for Services) Independent Living Programs (TLP)
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### FOCUS AREA A: APPRENTICESHIPS

Action: 1). Establish business apprenticeships or job shadowing opportunities

- Have business participate in Omaha Youth Community Partnership
- Create "Door Openers" for youth - establish relationships with area businesses that can provide internships or employment for youth
- Earn college or high school credits or stipends depending on goals of youth
- Establish skill base, age, history for entry level position
- Establish need-based mentors among Omaha professionals
- Promote and connect youth with trades that are needed (e.g. Plumbers)

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 2). Conduct survey with Omaha Chamber of Commerce members to find out what which employers provide tuition assistance

Implementation: Year 1

#### FOCUS AREA B: INCENTIVES

Action: 1). Provide incentives for finding employment and retaining employment

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Establish a job fair for state wards (invite companies that provide benefit packages)

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 3). Establish matched savings accounts for work related expenses

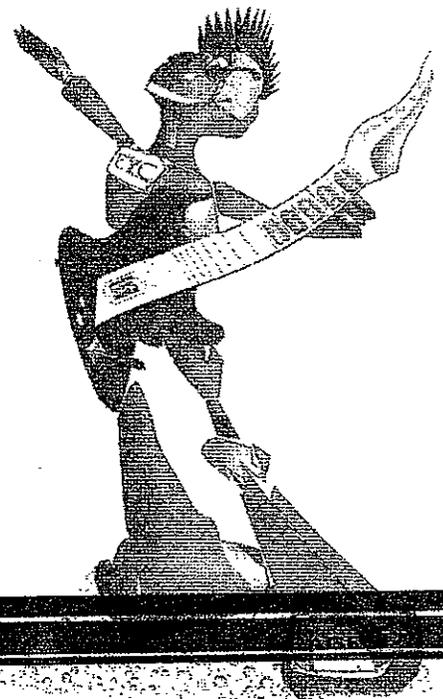
Implementation: Year 1

#### FOCUS AREA C: JOB PREPARATION

Action: 1). Establish or partner with one-stop career centers (i.e. Workforce)

- Youth have access to resources equipment, attire, tools, resume help
- Work with career enhancement services already in existence, connecting them to youth not in college

Implementation: Year 2



## DAILY LIVING AND HOUSING

Youth have access to safe, stable, affordable housing in the community that has easy access to transportation, work, and/or school

Potential Partners (not limited to)

OPPD/MUD Omaha Housing Authority Omaha Landlord Association PALS United Way Jim Casey Youth Opportunities	Omaha bank and financial institutions DHHS Cell phone companies Community service organizations Local insurance companies Omaha school liaisons
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### FOCUS AREA A: HOUSING

Action: 1) Establish transitional housing apartments in three areas of Omaha connected to resources and a residential assistance

Implementation: Year 2

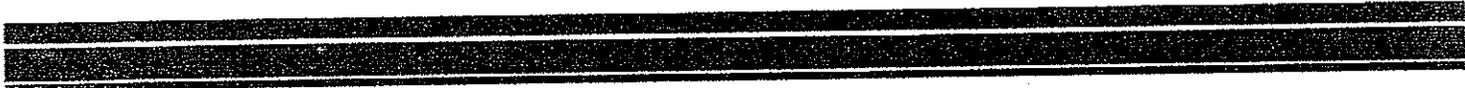
Action: 2). Meet with Omaha Housing Authority to help with scattered site housing options for former wards or current state wards in independent living situations

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 3). Provide Youth with a housing advocate

- Identify and educate landlords who work with former wards
- Increase landlords willing to work with former youth

Implementation: Year 2



**FOCUS AREA B: FINANCIAL**

Action: 1). Work with Omaha bankers to establish low or no-interest loans for foster youth

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 2). Establish fund (IDA) for youth when they leave foster care. By participating in the independent living services, teens can earn money through incentives and activities such as attending classes, workshops, accessing need-based mentors or by receiving their high school diploma or GED. Youth will determine how funds can be used.

Implementation: Year 1

Action: 3). Provide money management training-monthly seminars with partnering financial institutions

Implementation: Year 1

**FOCUS AREA C: FURNITURE AND APPLIANCES**

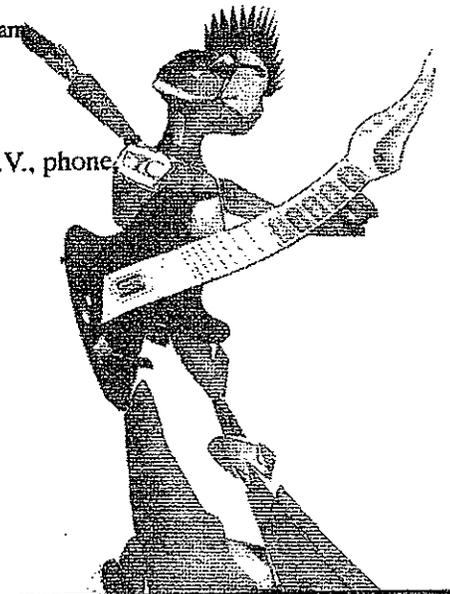
Action: 1). Provide coordinator to assist youth with independent living needs

- Establish Grandma's Couch program to provide foster youth with furniture and appliances
- Work with local businesses to establish youth discounts (similar to senior citizen discounts/POGO)
- Youth assist in contacting businesses to establish discount program

Implementation: Year 2

Action: 2). Provide basic technology (e.g. Computers, Internet, T.V., phone, laptop, etc.) within housing arrangement

Implementation: Year 3



**DHHS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OMAHA INDEPENDENT LIVING PLAN**

**YEAR 1 - See Accomplishments**

	A	B	C	D	E
ACTIVITY	STAFF IN-KIND	CURRENT FUNDING MAINTAINED WITHIN DHHS	GRANT TO NCFE - CURRENT ACTIVITIES	GRANT TO NCFE - NEW ACTIVITIES	TOTAL
Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Youth Council	0	0	0	\$50,320	\$ 50,320
Personal & Community Engagement: Siblings	0	0	\$ 78,780		\$ 78,780
Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Parents	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Mentors	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Events	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Volunteerism	0	0	0	0	0
Education: Former Ward	\$ 272	0	0	0	\$ 272
Education: Educational Incentives	\$ 200	0	0	0	\$ 200
Education: School Engagement	\$ 342	0	0	0	\$ 342
Education: Foster Parents	0	0	0	0	0
Education: Stability	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Apprenticeships	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Job Prep.	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Housing	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Financial	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Furniture/Appliances	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Other	0	\$ 8,400	0	0	\$ 8,400
Daily Living: Transportation	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Medical	0	0	0	0	0

Insurance					
Phys/MH: Care Coordination	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Crisis Support	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Youth/Community Partnership	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Community Assessment	\$ 185 \$ 365	0	0	0	\$ 550
Training: Life Skills Assessment	0	0	0	\$ 350	\$ 350
Training: Institutional/state policies	\$ 360	0	\$ 288 \$ 682 \$ 500 \$ 668		\$2498.00
Training: Website	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Handbook	0	0	\$	\$	0
Training: Workshops/Conferences	\$ 960	0	0	\$ 192 \$ 192	\$ 1,344
<b>LEVEL ONE SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,684</b>	<b>\$8,400</b>	<b>\$80,918</b>	<b>\$51,054</b>	<b>\$143,056</b>
Personal and Community Engagement: Peers	0	0	0	0	0
Personal and Community Engagement: Foster Parents	\$ 800 \$ 500 \$2,000	0	0	0	\$ 3,300
Education: School Records	0	0	0	0	0
Education: School Engagement/Representation	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
<b>LEVEL TWO SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$ 3,300</b>
<b>TOTAL)</b>	<b>\$5,984</b>	<b>\$8,400</b>	<b>\$80,918</b>	<b>\$51,054</b>	<b>\$146,356</b>

**TOTAL GRANT TO NCFE – YEAR ONE**

**\$ 80,918 (Column C)**

**\$ 51,054 (Column D)**

**\$131,972**

### DHHS Year 2 Objectives 2010

1. By January 15, 2010, employ a Corporate Relations position to help secure Door Openers, create partnerships with non-youth serving organizations, raise private funds from non-youth serving organizations, and assist with the marketing and communication of the OILP opportunities to invest in Omaha area foster youth. Measurement: Employment paperwork, including job description and performance standards. (DONE)
2. By January 2010, a Housing Advocate position will be employed by Heartland Family Services and will begin implementation of the OILP Youth Housing Plan. (DONE)
3. Beginning January 2010 and ongoing thereafter, provide scheduled opportunities for building organizational, systemic, and professional knowledge and capacity to apply best practices, proven programs, and effective policies in the provision of housing and supportive services for rural youth in transitional and independent living programs. (ON-GOING)
4. By February 2010, a new brand for the Omaha Independent Living Plan will be unveiled and implemented. Measurement: View branding products. (DONE)
5. By April 2010, the Housing Advocate will have created a community-wide RentWise training network for foster youth and community housing service providers. (DONE)
6. By May 2010, a collaborative plan for Independent Living (IL) services with Out-of-Home Care Contractors and existing IL programs will be completed. (DONE)
7. By June 2010, marketing and recruitment materials will be developed and used to inform and recruit youth and community partners to the Foster Youth Council and OILP initiatives. Measurement: View materials produced. Document new youth members and community partners engaged in OILP work as a result of recruitment efforts. (DONE)
8. By June 2010, a First Jobs Academy Model will be established for foster youth in partnership with the Bright Futures Foundation, the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and Goodwill Industries. (IN PROGRESS)

### YEAR 2 DHHS Budget

ACTIVITY	A STAFF IN-KIND	B CURRENT FUNDING MAINTAINED WITHIN DHHS	C GRANT TO NCFE - CURRENT ACTIVITIES	D GRANT TO NCFE - NEW ACTIVITIES	E TOTAL
Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Youth Council	0	0	0	\$42,620	\$ 42,620
Personal & Community Engagement: Siblings	0		\$78,780 \$ 1,950 \$ 4,784	\$16,300 \$ 3,900 \$17,000 \$10,000 \$ 1,000 \$10,000	\$143,714

Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Parents	0	0	0	\$ 5,268	\$ 5,268
Personal & Community Engagement: Mentors	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Events	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Volunteerism	0	0	0	0	0
Education: Former Ward	0	0		0	
Education: Educational Incentives	\$200	0	0	0	\$ 200
Education: School Engagement	0	0	0	0	0
Education: Foster Parents	0	0	0	\$ 2,672	\$ 2,672
Education: Stability	0	0	\$100,000	0	\$100,000
Employment: Apprenticeships	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Job Prep.	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Housing	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Financial	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Furniture/Appliances	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Other	0	\$8,400	0	0	\$8,400
Daily Living: Transportation	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Medical Insurance	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Care Coordination	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Crisis Support	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Youth/Community Partnership	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Community Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Life Skills Assessment	0	0	0	\$ 144 \$ 350 \$ 365	\$ 859
Training: Institutional/state policies	\$ 360 \$ 800	0	\$ 288 \$ 682 \$ 500 \$ 668	\$180,000 96	\$183,394
Training: Website	0	0	0	0	0

Training: Handbook	0	0	788	\$ 60,000	\$ 60,788
Training: Workshops/Conferences	\$ 960	0	0	\$ 192 \$ 192	\$ 1,344
<b>LEVEL ONE SUB-TOTAL (1)</b>	<b>\$2,320</b>	<b>\$8,400</b>	<b>\$188,440</b>	<b>\$350,099</b>	<b>\$549,259</b>
Personal and Community Engagement: Peers	0	0	0	0	0
Personal and Community Engagement: Foster Parents	0	\$37,500	0	\$ 5,000	\$ 42,500
Education: School Records	0	0	0	0	0
Education: School Engagement/Representation	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
<b>LEVEL TWO SUB-TOTAL (2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$37,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$ 5,000</b>	<b>\$ 42,500</b>
<b>Chafee Funds (3)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$195,778</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$195,778</b>
<b>TOTAL (1+2+3)</b>	<b>\$2,320</b>	<b>\$45,900</b>	<b>\$384,218</b>	<b>\$355,099</b>	<b>\$787,537</b>

**TOTAL GRANT TO NCCF – YEAR TWO**

**\$ 384,218 (Column C)**

**\$ 355,099 (Column D)**

**\$ 739,317**

**YEAR 3 Objectives**

9. By October 2010, 100% of youth participating in the Permanency Summit will influence practices that keep siblings together (SUMMIT MOVED TO SEPTEMBER 24)
10. By August 2010, at least 50 youth from the Eastern Service Area will spend time with their siblings at Camp Catch-Up. (DONE)
11. By October 2010, 100% of Youth Involved in the FYCs will know their sibling visit rights (IN PROGRESS)
12. By October 31, 2010, 100% of youth involved in the FYCs will know the Independent Living resources available to them (IN PROGRESS)
13. By October 31, 2010, the NFYC Speaker's Bureau will provide 36 trainings and presentations to NE's youth and professionals (IN PROGRESS)
14. By October 31, 2010, NCCF will provide resources (need based funds formerly the friends of foster care) to 72 youth ages 16- 21 in care or formerly in care to help in transitioning to adulthood. (IN PROGRESS)

15. By October 31, 2010, at least 250 current and former foster youth will be involved in a FYC sponsored activity. Measurement: Youth participant sign-in sheets and tracking by FYC Coordinator. (DONE)
16. By October 31, 2010, 100% of FYC members will show enhanced functioning in at least one of the following outcome domains: Daily Living and Housing, Employment, Education, Physical or Mental Health, or Community and Personal Engagement. Measurement: Survey instruments administered at designated intervals.
17. By October 31, 2010, at least 50 foster youth will benefit from a relationship with a need-based mentor.
18. By October 31, 2010, the Housing Advocate will have assisted at least 100 foster youth in the Omaha area secure and retain affordable and safe housing.
19. By October 31, 2010, ten (10) Door Openers for Opportunity Passport enrolled youth will be established.
20. By October 31, 2010, 85% of youth ages 14 – 19 in out of home care will be invited to join the foster youth council
21. By October 31, 2010, at least 166 youth will have utilized the Need Based Fund to help them meet educational, daily living, transportation, housing, employment and health care needs.
22. By October 31, 2010, foster youth will be able to access information and resources via a functional and easy to use independent web site.

	A	B	C	D	E
ACTIVITY	STAFF IN-KIND	CURRENT FUNDING MAINTAINED WITHIN DHHS	GRANT TO NCFF - CURRENT ACTIVITIES	GRANT TO NCFF - NEW ACTIVITIES	TOTAL
Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Youth Council	0	0	0	\$42,620	\$42,620
Personal & Community Engagement: Siblings	\$3,117	\$78,780 \$ 1,950 \$ 4,784		\$16,300 \$ 3,900 \$17,000 \$ 1,000 \$10,000	\$146,831
Personal & Community Engagement: Foster Parents	0	0	0	\$ 5,268	\$ 5,268
Personal & Community Engagement: Mentors	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Events	0	0	0	0	0
Personal & Community Engagement: Community Volunteerism	0	0	0	0	0
Education: Former Ward	0	0			

Education: Educational Incentives	\$200	0	0	0	\$ 200
Education: School Engagement	0	0	0	\$ 432	\$ 432
Education: Foster Parents	0	0	0	\$ 2,672	\$ 2,672
Education: Stability	0	0	55,411	0	55,411
Employment: Apprenticeships	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Job Prep.	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Housing	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Financial	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Furniture/Appliances	0	0	0	0	0
Daily Living: Other	0	\$8,400	0	0	\$8,400
Daily Living: Transportation	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Medical Insurance	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Care Coordination	0	0	0	0	0
Phys/MH: Crisis Support	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Youth/Community Partnership	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Community Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Life Skills Assessment	0	0	0	\$ 144 \$ 350	\$ 494
Training: Institutional/state policies	\$ 360 \$ 800	0	\$ 288 \$ 682 \$ 500 \$ 668	\$180,000 96	\$ 183,394
Training: Website	0	0	0	0	0
Training: Handbook	0	0	0	\$	\$
Training: Workshops/Conferences	\$ 960	0	0	\$ 192 \$ 192	\$ 1,344
<b>LEVEL ONE SUB-TOTAL (1)</b>	<b>\$5,437</b>	<b>\$93,914</b>	<b>57,549</b>	<b>\$480,738 – 60,000 – 130,572 290,166</b>	<b>\$ 477,066</b>
Personal and Community Engagement: Peers	0	0	0	0	0
Personal and Community Engagement: Foster	\$16,000	\$32,500	0	0	\$ 48,500

Parents					
Education: School Records	0	0	0	\$ 46	\$ 46
Education: School Engagement/Representation	0	0	0	0	0
Employment: Incentives	0	0	0	0	0
<b>LEVEL TWO SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$32,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$ 46</b>	<b>\$ 48,546</b>
<b>Chafee Funds</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$391,556</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$ 391,556</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$21,437</b>	<b>\$126,414</b>	<b>\$ 449,105</b>	<b>\$204 290,212</b>	<b>\$ 887,168</b>

**TOTAL GRANT TO NCFE – YEAR THREE**

**\$ 449,105 (Column C)**

**\$ 290,212 (Column D)**

**\$ 739,317**

**Year 3 Budget Justification**

**Foster Youth Council - \$42,620 Total**

- a) Meeting Costs (equipment, food, materials, room):** \$900 will be used to hold monthly meetings for the FYC council in Omaha. 3,000 will be used to provide food for monthly meetings

Calculation: 12 months x \$75 a room = \$900 +  
\$10 per meal x 25 youth x 12 meetings = \$3,000

- b) Coordinator:** \$40,000 x .35 FTE = \$14,000 will be used to pay YaMika O'Neil as the Omaha Foster Youth Advisor Position to lead council meetings and recruit and engage youth in meetings/activities.

- c) Youth Stipends:** \$19,920 will be used for youth involvement in developing actions from Meetings and for engaging in Speaker's Bureau .

Calculation: \$12 an hour x 5 x 25 youth x 12 meetings = \$18,000 +  
\$12 an hour x 4 hours x 5 youth x 8 speaking engagements = \$1,920

- d) Youth activities:** \$4,800 will be used for activities and items in the Year 3 Plan that youth will lead and need funding for to achieve Personal and Community Engagement.

**Sibling Connection – \$58,200 Total**

- a) **Community Grant:** \$47,200 (\$16,300 + 3,900 + 17,000 + 10,000): Public and Private Dollars will be subgranted to Community partners to provide transportation, supervision and a series of opportunities to nurture relationships and Sibling bonds.
- b) **FYC Coordinator Costs** \$ 1,000 – YaMika O’Neil will dedicate time to organization the funds available and coordinate the meeting and process with youth to make decisions to develop sibling connections.
- c) **FYC Social and Sibling Events** \$10,000 - FYC Core Council members will determine events that are lead by the FYC to generate relationship and positive supports for siblings and permanent relationships.

**Foster Parent Recruitment: \$2,672 Total**

Dollars will be used for Training sessions from FYC for foster parents and development of messages and materials for parent recruitment

Calculation: 4 meetings x 500 (space, food, printing and consultant costs) + Youth stipends 12 per hour x 3- 4 youth x 4 meetings

**Education - School Engagement: \$ 432 Total**

Dollars will be used to cover costs for the Endless Dreams training and for development of school based youth advisory boards.

Calculation:

3 trainings x 3 youth x 4 hours x \$12 an hour = \$432

**Education – Stability: \$55,411 Total**

Transportation costs will be covered for youth to go to school, school functions and to address barriers for youth to remain in school.

Calculation: 10 miles x 23 trips per month x 9 months x .505 = \$1,045.35 x 53 youth

**Training – Life Skills Assessment**

- a) **Two training sessions** will be provided for Training sessions on ways to avoid duplication and utilize the youth assessment between providers and systems.

Calculation: 3 youth x \$12 per session x 2 sessions = \$144

- b) **Materials needed for youth on how to Ansel Casey Assessment utilization**

Calculation: 700 youth x 5 pages x 10 cents per copy = \$ 350

**Training: Institutional/state policies**

Dollars will be subgranted to OHB and PALS Branching Out Program to provide an array of services from 14 – 24 years old.

Calculation: 100 youth x 1,800 cost per youth for PALS program = 180,000

**Training, Policies and Education**

**a) FYC member review policies related to Independent Living Outcomes**

Calculation: \$96 for youth involvement for 4 youth x 12 meetings x 2 one hour meetings

**b) Speakers Bureau Quarterly meetings with DHHS staff**

Calculation: 3 youth x \$12 per hour x 2 hours per meeting x 4 meetings = \$288

**c) Service Provider Trainings \$682**

Calculation: 6 youth x \$12/hr x 2 hours x 2 meetings = \$288 + \$75 room rental x 2 meetings = \$150 + 50 food costs x 2 meetings = \$100

**d) Community Partner Meetings \$500 Total**

Calculation: \$75 room rental x 4 meetings per year = \$300 + \$50 food cost per meeting x 4 meetings = \$200

**e) Judges Meetings \$668 Total**

Calculation: 3 youth x \$12/hr x 2 hours x 4 meetings = 288 + \$75 room rental x 4 meetings = \$300 + \$20 food cost x 4 meetings = 80

**Skills Building Workshops: \$384 Total**

Quarterly contractor/provider meetings will be provided by youth and staff to build skills on TLP and IL services.

Calculations: 2 youth @\$12 /hrs x 2 hrs x 4 meetings (TLP) = \$192 + 2 youth @\$12 /hrs 2 hrs x 4 meetings (IL) = \$192

## Overview of Year One Accomplishments

### Summarized Year One Accomplishments By OILP Outcome Area

**Personal and Community Engagement** – OILP Focus Areas within the Personal and Community Engagement domain include: Foster Youth Council, Special Social Events for Foster Youth, Sibling Connections, Foster Parents, Mentors, Community Events, and Community Volunteerism.

The hub of OILP work is a vibrant youth-led community known as the Omaha Foster Youth Council (FYC). Beginning in January 2009, NCFE and other OILP partners recruited current and former state wards between the ages of 14 and 24 residing in the Omaha metro area to participate in the Omaha FYC. During its first year, 150 youth participated in monthly council meetings, 24 task group meetings, three speaking engagements, and two volunteer events.

As of October 28, 2009, NCFE has received over 250 youth applications for Omaha FYC participation in 2010, a testament to youths' enthusiasm for the FYC and the good "word-on-the-street" that current FYC members are sharing with peers about the FYC. Recent foster care data conservatively estimates that more than 1,000 young people could be eligible to participate in the Omaha area, therefore additional recruitment and awareness strategies are planned. Rapid growth of the Omaha FYC in year one (YR1) created the need to formalize the group structure and decision making processes. From 30-50 core members, six Youth Leaders are being democratically elected and formal protocols for council functioning are being defined.

Other YR1 accomplishments in the Personal and Community Engagement domain include:

- Organized a Resource Fair for Foster Youth on November 14, 2009
- Held a December 2009 Holiday Sibling Event
- Expended all Needs Based Funds available and planning expansion of the Fund so that more youth may benefit
- Selected the UNMC Social Work Department – Munroe Meyer Institute as a provider of monthly sibling activities titled "Fun on the Run" for youth ages 8-24; over 100 sibling groups from the Omaha area will benefit
- Soliciting proposals for new Sibling Visit Mini Grants in November 2009
- Two volunteer service activities were completed and a commitment to conducting four service activities per year has been made
- Developed a FYC Speaker's Bureau with formal training provided by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI)
- Implemented the JCYOI Opportunity Passport™ program; 12 youth have completed financial literacy training and opened their Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for matched savings in partnership with the Wells Fargo Bank and Family Housing Advisory Services in Omaha
- Omaha FYC Key Holders expanded to 12 members as of October 15, 2009
- Produced professional quality recruitment materials for the FYC and Opportunity Passport™ program
- Developed and disseminated quarterly youth-written newsletters that are mailed to youth in care and alumni across Nebraska

Engaged in a branding process to create a dynamic and inspired image for the OILP  
Acquired an Internet domain name [www.nebraskafosteryouth.org](http://www.nebraskafosteryouth.org) to facilitate direct access to web page content for the FYC via the NCFE web site; working on plans to build an independent web site for foster youth initiative work.

Established a partnership with 15 Information Technology Capstone students at the University of Nebraska Omaha to develop a youth oriented web site providing improved Internet access to resources for youth as they transition to adulthood.

Produced a video focusing on challenges faced by foster youth exiting state care and the supports needed to overcome them.

KETV, Channel 7, produced a documentary of youth on their Opportunity Passport™ journey; portions of the documentary will be aired on Channel 7 in November 2009

Two Camp Catch-Up events were held in 2009 to reunify siblings separated by different foster care placements. Over 100 youth attended the camps in western and east-central Nebraska.

**Education** – Focus Areas within the Education domain of the OILP include: Former Ward, Educational Incentives, School Records, School Engagement/Representatives, Foster Parents, and Stability. First year accomplishments in these areas were significant and hold promise for continued strengthening of the system of care that surrounds and supports foster youth in their educational achievement.

NCFE staff became “trained trainers” of the *Endless Dreams* curriculum to be implemented in Omaha area schools in early 2010; FYC youth involved in the Speakers Bureau will be trained to deliver the *Endless Dreams* presentations to teachers and administrators in Omaha schools -- this aspect will make Nebraska the only state in the nation to involve youth as actual trainers.

25 youth have completed financial literacy and asset accumulation educational sessions with another 30 youth to be enrolled before the end of 2009

Funding pursued from two private foundations to purchase laptops and tech support for transitioning and former wards to aid in education and employment endeavors

Coordinated OILP efforts with NCFE's Unlocking the Potential for Success (UPS) college prep – visit – mentoring project for state wards and other youth at risk of not pursuing or completing postsecondary education

Coordinated OILP efforts with existing scholarship programs designated for foster youth, such as the Mary Terwilliger Scholarship at the University of Nebraska

Leveraged Chafee funding and Needs Based Funds to help transitioning youth cover all expenses associated with their educational goals including room and board, transportation and parking to attend classes, books/supplies/materials, etc.

Partnership formed with the Bright Futures Foundation to engage 10 youth in care and alumni to participate in the Avenue Scholars program, a college access initiative in its pilot year in Omaha

**Employment** – Focus Areas include Apprenticeships, Incentives, and Job Preparation. YR1 accomplishments in these areas are:

Expanded Key Holder membership to include more business and industry representatives which will create more Door Openers for youth seeking employment

Researched and began plans to implement a *First Jobs Academy* in partnership with the Bright Futures Foundation, Omaha Chamber of Commerce and Goodwill Industries in 2010

**Daily Living and Housing** – Focus areas in this domain include: Housing, Financial, Furniture and Appliances, Transportation, and Other Needs Ensuring Successful Transition. YR1 achievements include:

- A partnership with JCYOI's *Opportunity Passport* program, Wells Fargo bank, and Family Housing Advisory Services in Omaha allowed 25 youth to open matched savings accounts known as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- NCCF entered into a formal agreement with Heartland Family Services in Omaha to employ a Youth Housing Advocate position to help transitioning youth secure affordable and safe housing and to raise awareness among the housing community about the housing needs of youth striving to live independently
- A federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Family Unification Program (FUP) grant was secured in partnership with Nebraska DHHS and the Douglas County Housing Authority that will provide 50 housing vouchers to current and former state wards in need of safe and sanitary housing; this is a perpetual funding stream that will continue as long as the funding remains available at the federal level and the grantee administers the program effectively
- Recommendations were submitted in writing to the Nebraska Housing Assistance Program (within DHHS) to encourage prioritization of foster youth transitioning to independent living as target beneficiaries of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing stimulus dollars; the recommendation was accepted and forwarded to federal HUD as part of the state's HPRH Plan
- 52 youth benefited from Need Based Funds to help in times of financial crisis; a majority used these funds to address transportation and housing needs with an average amount of \$346 paid out to youth
- Omaha Educare will give parenting FYC members priority status on the waiting list for child care services
- The Nebraska Safety Council secured 50% scholarships from State Farm Insurance to help current or former state wards pay for Drivers Education classes; Needs Based Funds or other resources may be used to cover the cost balance
- Plans were developed between youth and community partners for:
  - A continuum of housing services leading to permanent housing
  - Independent Living service expansion for 14-24 year olds
  - Improved access to health care and medical records
  - Pursuit of federal USHHS-ACF-Office of Community Service funding under the Assets for Independence (AFI) grant program to support youth IDAs and asset accumulation efforts

**Physical and Behavioral Health** – Although this service domain did not realize a lot of activity in the first year of OILP implementation, essential steps were taken to build the relationships, resources, and infrastructure necessary to tackle this realm in YR2.

Boys Town offered to provide medical care to youth needing a medical home

A Partnership with Building Bright Futures and Federally Qualified Health Centers to provide medical home has begun.

**Training, Education and Policies** - Focus Areas for this domain include Youth Community Partnership, Community Assessment, Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, Institutional / State Policies, Web Site, Handbook, and Skills Building Workshops / Conferences

Youth and community partners developed a plan for ongoing evaluation of OILP work. Funds are allocated to evaluation work within OILP related contracts and subgrants.

NCCF entered into an agreement with Nebraska DHHS to work with the state's new Out-of-Home-Care Contractors (as part of the Out-of-Home Care Reform)