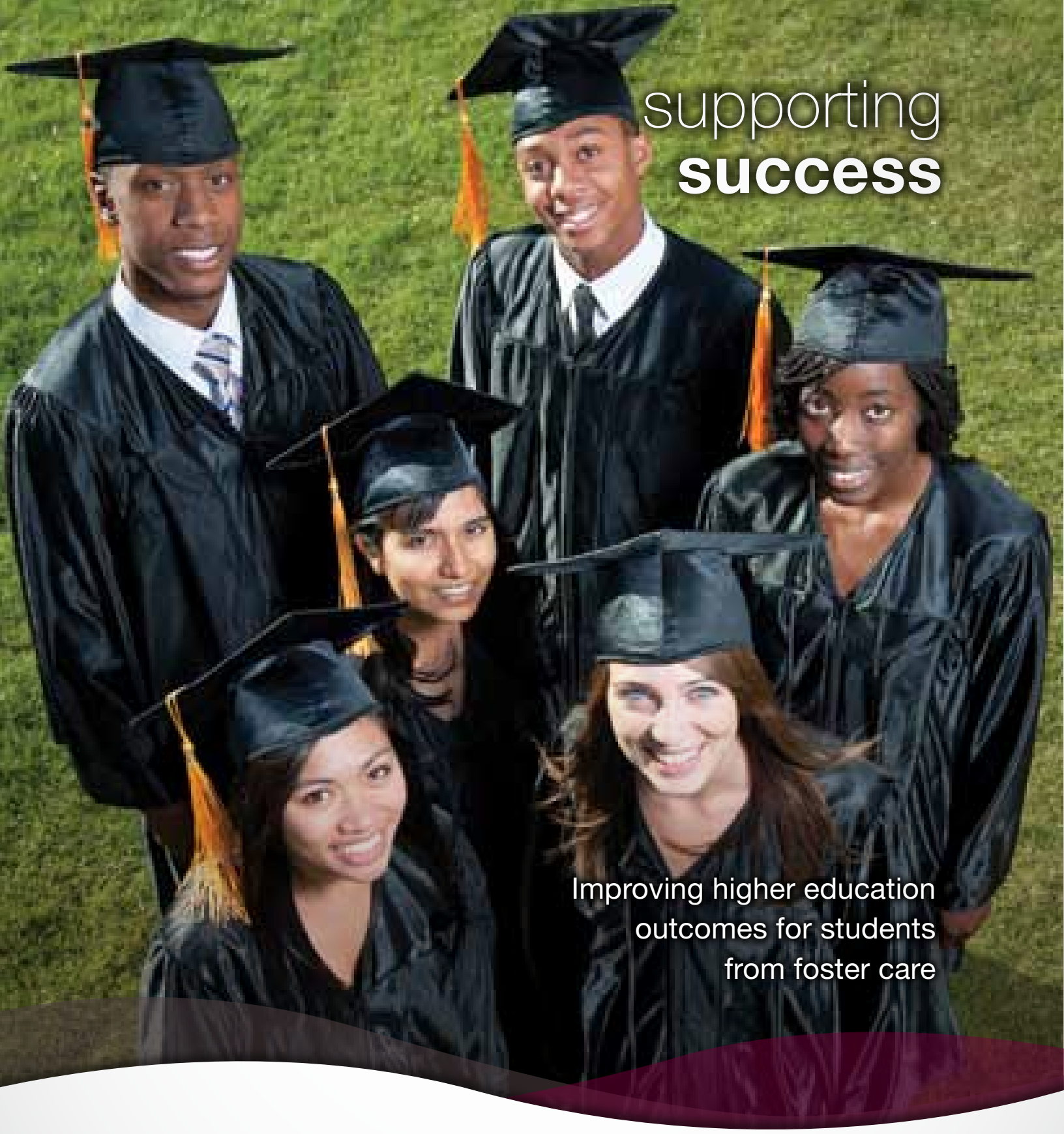

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1—Introduction....7
- Who Are the Children and Youth in Foster Care?....8
- Call to Action....8
- Current Status of Programs to Support College Students from Foster Care....9
- What Effective Support Approaches Look Like....11
- About This Framework....11
- Core Elements at a Glance....13
- How to Get Started Using This Framework....14

Chapter 2—Core Elements Necessary for Program Development....17
- Core Element #1: Designated Leadership....17
- Core Element #2: Internal and External Champions....20
- Core Element #3: Collaborations with Community Agencies....21
- Core Element #4: Data-Driven Decision Making....23
- Core Element #5: Staff Peer Support and Professional Development....26
- Core Element #6: Sustainability Planning....27

Chapter 3—Three Elements To Provide Direct Student Support....29
- Core Element #7: Year-Round Housing and Other Basic Needs....29
- Core Element #8: Financial Aid....32
- Core Element #9: Academic Advising and Career Counseling and Supplemental Support....34

Chapter 4—Three Additional Elements to Provide Direct Student Support....37
- Core Element #10: Personal Guidance, Counseling, and Supplemental Support....37
- Core Element #11: Opportunities for Student Community Engagement and Leadership....38
- Core Element #12: Planned Transition to College, between Colleges, and to Employment....39

Chapter 5—State and Institutional Program Examples....43
- Community Colleges....44
  - California Community College....44
  - Austin Community College....45
  - City College of San Francisco....47
  - Housatonic Community College....49
- Four-Year Colleges....51
  - California State University, Fullerton....51
  - California Polytechnic University, Pomona....52
  - Sam Houston State University....54
  - San Jose State University....56
  - Western Michigan University....57

Endnotes....61

Appendices....65
- Appendix A—The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) and Students in or from Foster Care....65
- Appendix B—Program Development Indicators....69
- Appendix C—Program Planning and Improvement Guide....79
- Appendix D—Selected Reading and Resources....93

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Chapter One | Introduction

Children and youth who are in foster care want to go to college just like many other young adults. Surveys report that at least 70 percent of these youth desire a college experience.[1] Our society rightly perceives going to college as a means to good jobs, career advancement, economic independence, and the establishment of important social and professional networks. It is part of the American dream, a dream to which youth in foster care should aspire; and indeed young people in foster care often see higher education as a pathway to a better life than the difficult one they have experienced.

Few students from foster care ever gain access to higher education programs, let alone graduate from college, (a term we use in this framework for all postsecondary education and training options). This includes four-year and community colleges (public and private), and vocational/technical or other post-high school training opportunities. Too many of these youth and their caregivers lack basic information about college that specifically addresses their life circumstances and unique support needs.[2] Their dreams of attaining the lifelong economic, personal, and social benefits that a successful higher education experience can bring are seldom realized. Many of these young adults age out of foster care at an early age (usually 18) and must become financially independent and responsible for themselves almost immediately. It is crucial to quickly gain the skills and knowledge necessary to support themselves.

Youth in foster care often report that few people in their lives ever expected them to attend and succeed in college. These students are seldom provided the kind of guidance and stable supports needed to prepare for and navigate higher education. All too often, unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, and life lived on the fringe face young adults after aging out of foster care. Postsecondary education or training can provide these young adults with a significant opportunity to improve their lives in a way that few other post-foster care engagements can. Indeed, not having well-planned and supported higher education opportunities may relegate these young adults to lives lived on the very margins of their community. The hopeful vision that Marcia has for her future needs to represent the aspirations of many of the other 20,000 youth who emancipate from foster care each year and want to go to college. College can mean freedom from their past and the ability to choose a future that is rich with possibilities.

The 2008 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections) made critically important changes to improve the lives of children, youth, and families affected by the nation's child welfare system.[3] The new law includes policy changes to support older youth and to increase their postsecondary education and training opportunities. This includes federal matching payments for states choosing to continue foster care assistance for older youth to the age of 21 if engaged in school, work, or other constructive activities. In states that have enacted this option, college students over the age of 18 may still be eligible for foster care services to help support them in college. To determine if your state has passed a foster care age extension, see the Fostering Connections Resource Center at www.fosteringconnections.org/.

> I will look back at all the struggles and obstacles I hurdled over and overcame with great satisfaction. I will notice how much I've grown and matured into a strong, well-rounded, and independent young lady at college. It will show how much my hard work, patience, and determination paid off.
>
> — MARCIA
> college student from foster care

> Well, college was a godsend because I could get loans, scholarships, and work 15 hours a week above minimum wage, rather than 40 hours a week of hard labor. My standard of living sky-rocketed in college, especially living in the dorms. I had a nice gym, did not have to clean the bathroom or the kitchen, the laundry room was a building away, there were all these activities, and I worked fun jobs for more money... I still think of college as when I came into my own and starting living.
>
> — ALICE
> college student from foster care

WHO ARE THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE?

More than 500,000 children and youth are in foster care* on any given day in the United States. A disproportionately high number are children of color. Of the total in care, half are over age 10, with more than one-fourth remaining in foster care for three years or longer. Each year some 20,000 youth age 16 and older transition or "age" out of foster care[4] and find themselves on their own with few prospects. Without adequate independent living skills, resources, or safety nets, too many struggle with their early independence. At a time when the majority of their peers are looking forward to a college or employment, with support from their extended family, these young adults are often on their own.

Estimates suggest that only 7 to 13 percent of students from foster care enroll in higher education.[5] Casey Family Programs completed a study that found only about 2 percent of young people from foster care obtained bachelor's degrees, in contrast to 24 percent of adults in the general adult population.[6] Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, the National Association of Student Financial Aid Advisors (NASFAA), and the Institute for Higher Education Policy all report that the rate of college enrollment and completion for students from foster care is substantially below the rate for their peers and suggest that action be taken.[7] Clearly, young adults who age out of foster care are one of the more underrepresented populations in higher education.

CALL TO ACTION

Recently, policymakers, the child welfare community, higher education professional organizations, colleges, and state higher education systems have started to address this issue with calls for policy advances, practice innovations, and influential advocacy. More states are responding with policy initiatives that provide targeted financial aid and system-wide support approaches. The federal Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV) provides all states with funds for vouchers to help fund the cost of attendance for students coming from foster care.[8] The reauthorized Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008) now addresses the need for all colleges to support their students coming from foster care. See Appendix A for a summary of the HEOA sections that address services to students in and from foster care. A growing number of community colleges and four-year colleges have set up innovative support approaches, including the designation of campus-based individuals who coordinate integrated support services for students coming from foster care.

Influential higher education organizations and advocacy organizations have recognized the importance of this issue and are providing information, resources, and suggested strategies to implement effective support services. Articles and position papers on improving higher education opportunities for students from foster care have been published by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), the American Bar Association's Legal Center for Foster Care & Education, and Casey Family Programs.[9] Other

* **Note on terminology used:** The term *foster care* refers to involvement in the foster care system, either currently or formerly, regardless of the type of placement in that system (foster home, kinship home, subsidized guardianship, group home, or other type of placement). We have avoided using the terms *ward of the state, ward of the court, and independent student* because their definitions may vary from state to state.

organizations and publications (e.g., the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education/ NASPA, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition[10]) have addressed the issue in their journals (see Appendix D).

Awareness is growing. Innovative college support approaches have led to increased opportunities for students to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education and training programs. These programs need to spread so students from foster care in every state can benefit. This framework is being used by a growing number of colleges and state higher education/child welfare collaborations for starting, building, and refining approaches to supporting their students from foster care. It also provides a structure from which to answer two important questions:

1. **How are students from foster care doing in our college or higher education system?**
2. **What supports do we have in place that is contributing to their success?**

CURRENT STATUS OF PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT COLLEGE STUDENTS FROM FOSTER CARE

College students coming from foster care require more attention than most other first-generation students because of their background and their early independent status. Many, like Roberta in the sidebar, arrive at college in a survival mode, focused on basic needs such as safe and stable housing (especially during school breaks and summers), food, transportation, healthcare, and adequate financial aid. Over the past few years, a growing number of colleges have pioneered innovative approaches to assist their students coming from foster care. These early efforts have contributed to our understanding of how to best support these students and have set a high standard for support services. Chapter 5 describes several of these programs.

Many colleges, higher education professional organizations, and advocates recognize the need for innovative and effective approaches to support youth from foster care. Several states (California, Washington, Georgia, Vermont, Texas, Connecticut, Ohio, Michigan, North Caroline, Virginia) have formed planning coalitions that include higher education and child welfare system leaders, college and university staff, community agencies, and external advocacy organizations. These states are focusing on comprehensive strategies to address the challenges youth from foster care face in college. Several states now hold annual conferences that bring together college teams, child welfare staff, and community advocates to share effective practices and increase collaboration. Although their support models may differ, they have a common focus on the systematic delivery of institutional and community-based support that recognizes the unique needs of these young adults.

Student support services, designed to improve student persistence, retention, and program completion, play a central role in developing an integrated support approach for students. However, without coordination and staff training, colleges are unlikely to package and deliver these services in a way that will effectively serve students from foster care. Davis, in a report commissioned by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)

> When you have to think about "what am I going to eat and how am I going to survive?" you can't put your full attention on four classes. I was still in survival mode my first year, and astronomy just wasn't a class that was helping me to survive.
>
> — ROBERTA
> college graduate from foster care

Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI)—A State System-Wide Approach

The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) recognized that coordinating existing campus support services and building community partnerships makes an important difference in the lives of students who have come from foster care. In 2007, The CCCCO developed the Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) to create this coordinated effort statewide. This voluntary system-wide program designates a campus staff member, called a FYSI/Foster Youth Liaison, to take lead responsibility for identifying and supporting youth from foster care on all 110 community college campuses.

Through annual regional trainings provided by the CCCCO, these liaisons (or DLs) have become familiar with the unique challenges faced by youth from foster care and are more equipped to assist them in completing college applications and connecting them to needed services. Several states have created similar efforts designating campus liaisons, sponsoring trainings, and identifying student affairs staff to take the lead on their campuses.

For more FYSI information, see chapter 5 and visit www.cccco.edu, enter FYSI in the search box, and click "Go."

and supported by the National Educational Loan Network (Nelnet), stated: "A series of systematic changes need to occur at institutions of higher learning to ensure the needs of undergraduates from foster care are being recognized and fulfilled before and after they are admitted."[11] Davis went on to recommend that colleges designate one person to have lead responsibility for students from foster care. These youth benefit from a single individual on campus who understands how their background and early independence affects their academic success and social integration. They need someone to help them to take full advantage of all campus support resources as well as appropriate community-based support services. Colleges in California, Texas, Washington, Connecticut, and North Carolina have been leaders in developing targeted support for students coming from foster care. Chapter 5 presents profiles of eight exemplary college programs.

In addition to the campus work, state and national policies have been implemented to provide students from foster care with increased financial aid, advocacy, and opportunities to access and succeed in postsecondary education. Examples of these policy initiatives include the following:

- Over 30 states now have policies that provide state-funded scholarships, grants, or tuition waivers to youth in foster care who are making the transition from foster care to higher education.[12]
- Many states have extended Medicaid coverage to age 21 for youth in foster care as allowed under the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This can provide students with important healthcare coverage while they are in college.
- The federally funded and state-administered Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program provides up to $5,000 annually to college students from foster care in every state.[13]
- The 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (PL 110-315) now identifies students from foster care as having distinct support needs requiring specialized services.[14] It calls for TRIO, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, and GEAR UP programs to reach out and support those from foster care. It expands the definition of *independent student* to include those who were in foster care or a ward of the court at any time at age 13 or older (See Appendix A)
- California has enacted the Higher Education Outreach and Assistance Act for Emancipated Foster Youth.[15] The act codifies legislative intent for California State University and the state community colleges to provide outreach and assistance to youth from foster care to encourage their enrollment, assist such youth with housing issues, provide technical assistance to campuses, and track retention rates of youth from care.
- Washington State's Passport to College Program encourages youth from foster care to prepare for, attend, and successfully complete higher education.[16] It provides students with improved educational planning, postsecondary education and training information, institutional support, and direct financial resources. Colleges develop "viable plans" to support students and receive incentive funds as students successfully progress towards program completion.
- Some states have extended eligibility for foster care support services beyond age 18 in order to assist students to gain needed independent living skills and successfully enter and complete college.[17]

WHAT EFFECTIVE SUPPORT APPROACHES LOOK LIKE

The support programs we reviewed vary in many respects. Some enjoy dedicated funding and are well integrated into the institution's student support services, while others attend to student needs on a more modest scale. Behind each program was one or more individuals—a philanthropist, college trustee, college president, financial aid officer, or other staff—who became aware of this underserved group of students and felt compelled to take action. Whatever the program scope or origin, all of them:

- Maximize the use of existing college and community resources
- Employ effective leadership within student support services
- Enjoy a strong backing from their college administration

The effectiveness of these programs is the result of the work of dedicated staff and advocates who have come to understand how the life experience of students formerly in foster care is fundamentally different from that of other students. These staff members understand that not having a home may mean sleeping in a car or a park; not having childcare may mean dropped classes; lack of health insurance means the possibility of chronic illness and unfilled prescriptions; and insufficient money for food means hunger. These insights help them view the college experience from the students' perspective and gauge the appropriate level of support needed.

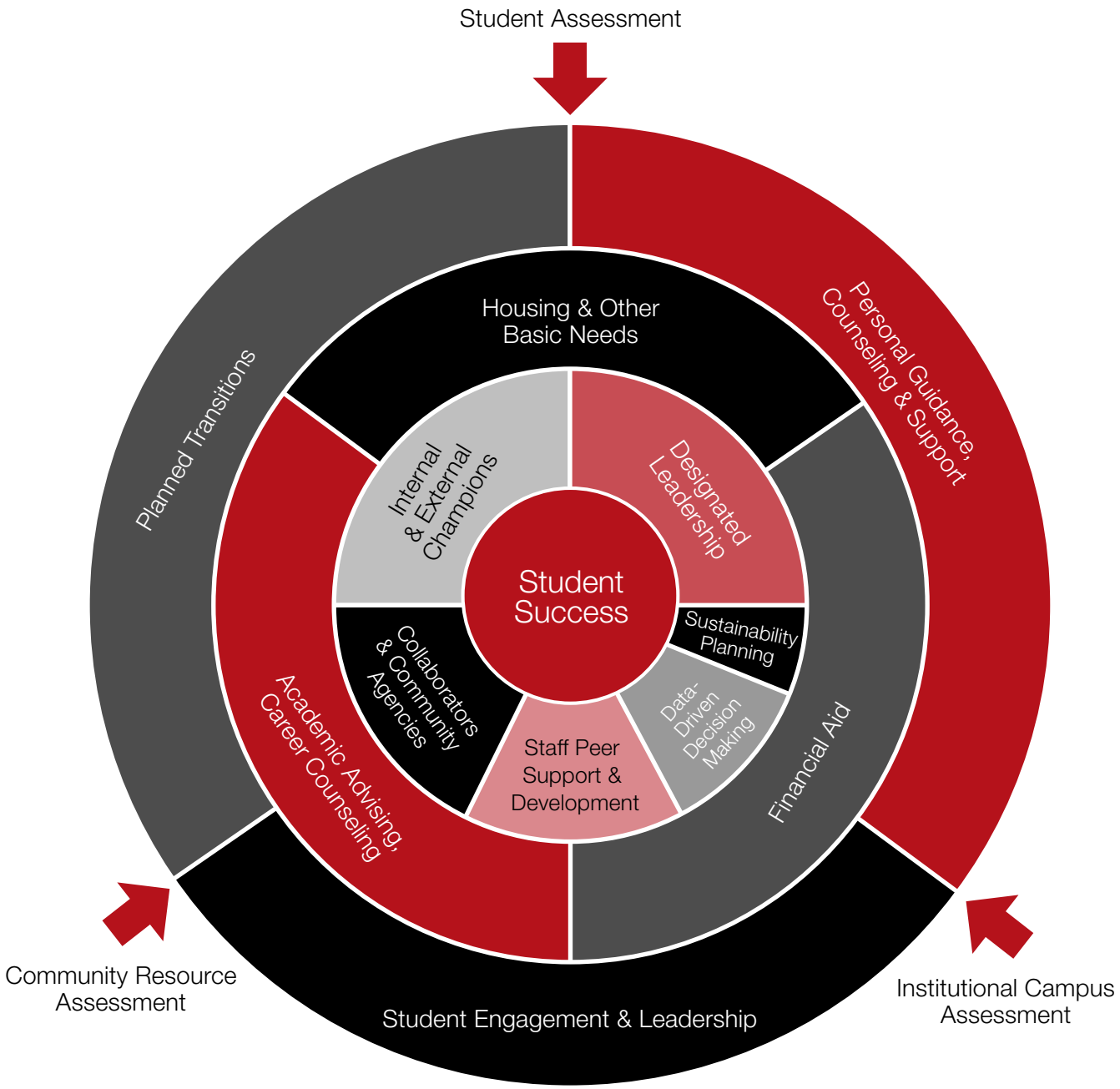
Strong programs have a system for assigning responsibility for support and coordinating the efforts of the staff from various support services. Effective programs typically have a designated individual or office that coordinates support for students coming from foster care. In addition, there is usually one individual in offices such as housing, financial aid, and health services who acts as a specialist on the needs of these students and the resources available to them. These programs also make full use of resources in the community such as child and adult welfare agencies, housing authorities, employment programs, charitable organizations, and foundations devoted to transition issues faced by young adults in foster care.

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework is grounded in the Essential Elements of a Guardian Scholar Program,[18] developed by the San Francisco-based organization Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY), with assistance from the California Youth Connection (CYC). Their efforts to improve postsecondary education and training success for students have been greatly influenced by the Guardian Scholars Program model as developed and refined by Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF). A growing number of colleges and state higher education systems are now implementing support approaches using some variation of this framework's recommended strategies. See Figure 1 on the following page for a conceptual diagram.

> Graduating from college meant that I won. It meant that my father was wrong when he said I was stupid and lazy and a waste of space. Most of all, it meant that I would gain the knowledge to use my experience to help other people. College meant freedom from my past and the ability to choose my future.
>
> —MARIA
> college graduate from foster care

FIGURE 1 | Postsecondary Education and Training Success for Students from Foster Care



Twelve core program elements have been identified by experienced program coordinators, students, and advocates. They are overlapping and need to be integrated into the fabric of the college's student support systems whenever possible. Colleges will determine how each core element is prioritized and developed by engaging a team of stakeholders in a continuous program planning and improvement process (see Appendix B). This process will result in a support system that reflects student needs, institutional priorities, community resources, and funding realities. Students from foster care have seldom found higher education success—it's time every college provides an effective support structure that addresses their unique needs.

Chapter 3 expands on these with three elements that we recommend for inclusion in the first phase of program implementation. These address three basic needs: year-round housing, financial aid, and academic advising. While these elements are indeed essential, we cover them after the core elements for program development because of the need to lay the groundwork for a sustainable program.

Chapter 4 introduces three additional elements that should be added once the basic supports are in place: counseling, engagement in the university community, and assistance with transitions.

We recommend this phased approach based on the experiences of those who have pioneered support approaches. All recommended that programs be built on partnerships within the college and community, that the students' basic needs must be the first step, and that starting small and building the program over time is the only feasible approach. We were told repeatedly that this is hard, necessary, doable—and highly rewarding—work.

CORE ELEMENTS AT A GLANCE

Six Elements Necessary for Program Development

1. Designated leadership	Youth from foster care need a caring, trusted staff person or designated lead (DL) who has primary responsibility for identifying them and consistently providing guidance in navigating higher education.
2. Internal and external champions	Support champions within and outside of the college community provide direct and indirect program support through their influence and advocacy.
3. Collaborations with community agencies	College support programs should have strong connections with local social services agencies, foundations, and the independent living (IL) programs operated by state child welfare systems.
4. Data-driven decision making	Decisions on individual support and program development should be based on data collection and analysis.
5. Staff peer support and professional development	New and established support program staff benefit from belonging to a network of peers in other colleges who support youth from foster care.
6. Sustainability planning	Explicit planning should be undertaken to sustain successful support initiatives.

Three Elements to Provide Direct Student Support | Phase 1

7. Year-round housing and other basic needs	Youth from foster care need to have priority for available campus housing and access to year-round housing. For campuses without dormitories, they need assistance in finding stable, safe, affordable housing, transportation, and food services.
8. Financial aid	Youth from foster care need a financial aid package that maximizes funds to cover the cost of attendance and minimizes or eliminates the need for loans.
9. Academic advising, career counseling, and supplemental support	Youth from foster care benefit from frequent contact with knowledgeable academic and career counselors with whom they develop a trust relationship.

Three Additional Elements to Provide Direct Student Support | Phase 2

10. Personal guidance, counseling, and supplemental support	Personal guidance, mental health counseling, supplemental support, and health insurance are essential for youth coming from care because of their early independence, history of abuse, neglect, or abandonment.
11. Opportunities for student community engagement and leadership	Youth from foster care benefit from inclusion and engagement with campus activities. Some seek out opportunities to be with other youth from foster care while others choose to avoid such association. Colleges should provide opportunities for students to engage in college life including developing a sense of community and developing leadership and advocacy skills.
12. Planned transitions **TO COLLEGE** **BETWEEN COLLEGES** **FROM COLLEGE TO EMPLOYMENT**	Youth from foster care need assistance in planning for college, making application, and beginning their college careers. Once on track to complete an associate of arts degree, many require help transferring to a four-year college. As they near completion of college, most students need help making a successful transition to a career. Each of these three transitions involves letting go of one academic home and adjusting to a new one. This adjustment has a different meaning for youth without family support.

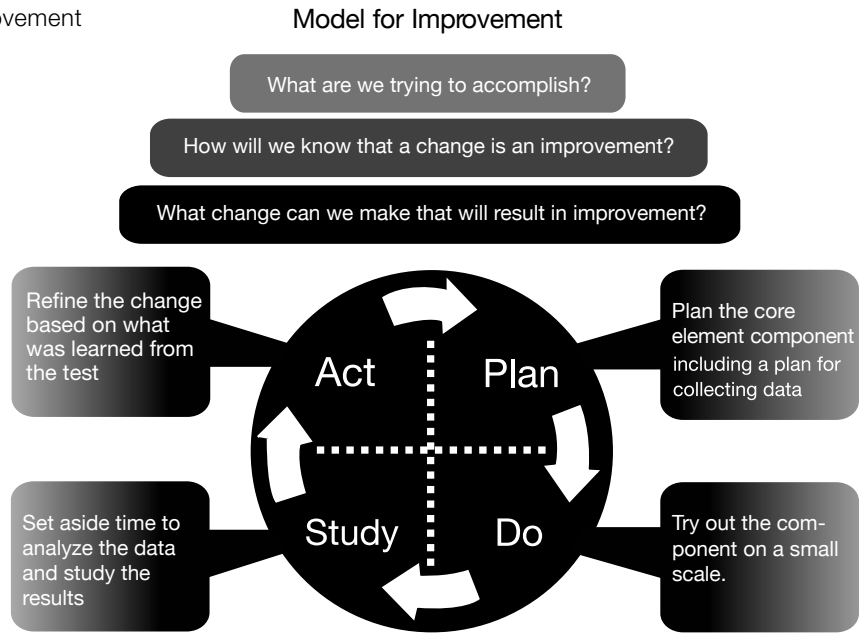
HOW TO GET STARTED USING THIS FRAMEWORK

As with any program development effort, planning is essential to the eventual implementation of a successful program. This planning starts with strong leadership and bringing together the people with the authority, interest, and energy to undertake the task.

Initial Steps

1. **Administrative Support**—Most colleges receive the commitment and coordinating power of the senior student affairs administrator at the earliest stage. In some of the pioneering colleges, this was the individual who first had an awareness of the need. In others, a champion or staff member sought out the support of this administrator. In either case, it is in his or her division of the college where many of key services reside.
2. **Assign a leader to the planning effort**—We found that the leadership in the pioneering colleges came from many different quarters: financial aid officers, deans, philanthropists, community agencies and foundations, and senior student affairs administrators where many of the key services reside. In all cases, these were dynamic, dedicated people who either had the power to bring people together or the support of those who did.
3. **Meet, discuss, and assess**—Bring together representatives of college offices such as housing, financial aid, academic advising, and health services to discuss the unique needs of students coming from foster care, assess what is already being done, and determine what might be done to improve their participation and outcomes. This framework can be used as a guide for this discussion. We recommend that participants have an opportunity to preview both the Core Elements and Indicators for Program Developmental (see Appendix B) and the Program Planning and Improvement Guide (see Appendix C) prior to this meeting. These provide targets for each element in the framework and questions to aid consideration of what has already been done or what needs to be done and what are the highest priorities for action. The Getting Started section for each element gives a few concrete action steps. Exemplary programs are cited along with their websites when possible.
4. **Use a proven process model to develop the support program**—We recommend the *Plan Do Study Act* (PDSA) model promoted by Dr. W. Edwards Deming[19] as a step-by-step means of program development. The model relies on a cyclical process of making plans based on explicit expectations (**Plan**), taking experimental action (**Do**), measuring the outcomes of the action (**Study**), and proceeding on with further action based on what was learned from experimental action (**Act**). The PDSA model as applied to supporting students from foster care (see Figure 2) gives program staff the opportunity to continuously test their good ideas, see what works, and make adjustments.

FIGURE 2 | PDSA Model for Improvement



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Chapter 2 | Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

The Core Elements fall into two categories: those that support students directly and those that the early implementor programs found necessary for development and sustainability. We start this chapter with the latter, since they must be in place before the elements that directly support students. Development and sustainability rely on these core elements:

- **Designated leadership:** Appointing a single individual, referred to here as the designated lead (DL), who can develop a long-term trusting relationship with students and take a leadership role in coordinating support services
- **Internal and external champions:** Cultivating the support of powerful champions within and outside the college
- **Collaborations with community social service agencies:** Collaborating with 1) community support service agencies whose mission is to support youth from foster care and 2) foundations and advocates that can act as a catalyst for support and change
- **Data-driven decision making:** Making student and program decisions based on systematically collected and analyzed demographic, service use, and student performance data
- **Peer support and professional development:** Providing direct service providers with a support network consisting of their peers in other colleges and other opportunities for professional development
- **Sustainability planning:** Developing a plan to sustain the new program through funding and support

Each of these elements is explained in the sections below. Appendix C has a table that provides benchmarks for a program developing over time.

> One of the things that helped me the most in my transition to college was finding a person to be on my side, if you will. As I moved to a different state to attend college, I needed to build a support around me. The way that I started on this goal was to personally go to the financial aid office and admission office and talk to whoever was working with my information.
>
> —AMANDA
> college student
> from foster care

CORE ELEMENT #1: DESIGNATED LEADERSHIP

A staff member should be identified in an existing or newly established office to have responsibility for coordinating services for students from foster care. This individual provides an initial point of contact for students. He or she works with each student to solve problems that they are encountering in college. The staff member also works with a network of liaisons in other college offices and in the community to ensure that youth from foster care are identified and receive the support they need to be successful. This support includes many of the core elements in this chapter and Chapters 3 and 4. For the purpose of this framework, this individual will be called the *designated lead* (DL). Some DLs operate out of a standalone office; the office is more commonly part of an existing student support service administrative structure, however.

Why Designate a Single Individual?

Some DLs we interviewed liken their role to that of a college concierge. They point out that, to be successful, they must have a comprehensive understanding of potentially helpful

college and community resources, be able to facilitate transactions that are unfamiliar or uncomfortable for their students, be trusted, and provide excellent customer service. They see themselves as problem solvers, as trusted guides, and as the primary portal to available support.

Although the concierge analogy is useful, it fails to explain why a college should establish lead responsibility to coordinate support. Youth from foster care often tell of the importance of having a single individual whom they can count on to provide guidance and support, especially when systems seem overwhelming. Many do not have a parent or family members to call. The needs of these independent students involve many overlapping aspects of their lives, including housing, academic support, and counseling. Most colleges provide assistance in each of these areas individually. The combined needs of these youth and the complex requirements of gaining support, both on and off campus, warrant a single individual or office taking lead responsibility, however.

Many students formerly in foster care have had their lives managed by bureaucracies where most major decisions are made by others. In contrast, once they are in college, they must make their own decisions. Because the help they received in the past may have been transitory, inconsistent, and impersonal, many of these youth have difficulty trusting adults who may be in a position to assist them. Establishing stable and trusting relationships with students coming from foster care is especially important to their college success. Having a trusted individual who knows each student's needs and is knowledgeable about campus and community resources is the best way to help students be successful. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) recommends that "institutions should identify a coordinator to be responsible for the successful integration of students from foster care."[20]

Getting Started

The DLs we interviewed in preparing this framework reported that their support programs got started in a variety of ways. Some institutions, such as Seattle University, were approached by an outside donor with a passion to support youth coming from foster care and provide initial funding to hire a program coordinator. In contrast, financial aid administrators and staff voluntarily assumed lead responsibility in the California community colleges when invited to participate in training sponsored by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. All 110 community colleges now have a current staff position who assumes the role of DL (the term they adopted is Foster Youth Liaison). At Austin Community College in Texas, an academic advisor at each of their seven campuses assumes the DL role. In other colleges, such as City College of San Francisco, the impetus came from a single staff member in the financial aid office who wanted to improve the outcomes of youth.

These are the seven recommended steps for establishing an effective DL function:

1. **Designating responsibility**—A mid- to high-level college administrator assigns lead responsibility to a staff member and notifies other key student services offices of the need to form a partnership with the lead office. It is most common that the DL is from financial aid, academic advising, or student support services. If the college president, chancellor, or senior student affairs officer is not yet involved, this is a good time to seek that individual's support.
2. **Identifying youth**—Youth from foster care who are or may become students are identified, primarily through these sources:
    - The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) presents questions in "Section Three (Student)" that determine the dependency status of college students. The question - *At any time since you turned 13, were both of your parents deceased,* ***were you in foster care,***

or were you a dependent/ward of the court?[21] – can help identify students from foster care enrolled in your college. Financial aid offices should query their FAFSA data bases for this information.

- The state office that coordinates the Chafee Education Training Vouchers (ETVs)
- Offices such as TRIO, disability services, minority affairs, or other support offices for underrepresented youth
- The student's current or former social worker or Independent Living staff

Some colleges now include a question about foster care involvement on their applications and student support services program offices. A good strategy is to call the state Chafee ETV coordinator to ask for assistance identifying ETV recipients. Saturating the campus with posters and brochures is reported to be effective, as are word-of-mouth inquiries. Encouraging students to inform others about services now available to students from foster care is recommended.

3. **Developing departmental liaisons**—The DL meets with key college offices, such as financial aid, housing, minority affairs, disability services, TRIO, health services, counseling services, recruiting, academic advising, and career services. Staff discusses potential ways of identifying students, such as adding a question regarding foster care status to office intake forms. In the meetings, a liaison to the DL from each office is designated. Staff also discusses the need for orientation or training and future training options.
4. **Making initial contact with community services**—The DL identifies community-based resources that can provide direct or supplement support to those available on campus. The DL should learn about state, county, or local child welfare offices, independent living (IL) providers, public housing authorities, community health services, low-cost childcare, public transportation agencies, and private foundations or agencies whose missions include supporting youth from foster care. The DL contacts agencies and identifies an individual to work with as the program grows. Developing a community resource guide is helpful and may already be available from child welfare or IL professionals.
5. **Learning of needs directly from students**—In conjunction with these community partners and liaisons, the DL meets with youth from foster care and alumni groups from foster care to better understand their needs and life experience. Focus groups, informal get-togethers, or participation on the advisory committee are also helpful in gaining student input (see core element #4: Data-Driven Decision Making).
6. **Initial meetings**—The DL meets with students to get to know them, their goals, and areas where they need assistance. The DL focuses on building a long-term relationship based on trust, consistency, and compassion. Some programs have students develop and sign individual support agreements (see Guardian Scholars at www.orangewoodfoundation.org/program_scholars.asp).
7. **Attention to youth with special needs**—The DL is alert to the needs of students from foster care that may make them feel isolated on campus. For example, youth of color may benefit from being connected to fellow students and faculty from similar backgrounds; students with disabilities will likely benefit from the support and accommodations available through the office of disability services; students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning may want opportunities to join others in the LGBTQ community on campus. The National Center for the First-Year Experience® publishes a number of monographs with specific suggestions for student groups that may benefit from targeted support.[22]

> In order … to be successful, students from foster care require services that must be a high priority for senior student affairs officers and, consequently, the university. My presence…(on the President's Administrative Board)…as the senior student affairs officer has ensured a broad base of university support for the Guardian Scholars program.
>
> —ROBERT PALMER
> vice president for student affairs at California State University, Fullerton[23]

CORE ELEMENT #2: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHAMPIONS

Interviews with established program staff and advocates identify the help of champions as critically important for developing and sustaining support programs. The origin of many campus efforts to support students formerly in foster care (such as those at Austin Community College, California State University, Fullerton, and Seattle University) can be traced to the advocacy of an individual outside of the college. These individuals, whom we refer to as *champions,* have been touched by the challenges of youth from care and are willing to use their influence (and sometimes personal resources) to help a college support these students. Champions are helpful because of their ability to gain access to and influence high-level college administrators and private donors who may provide essential seed funding. They are often influential energizers and problem solvers. Their commitment is an inspiration to staff and students. Human services providers and advocacy groups may also be champions.

Not all champions come from outside the college system. Identifying an internal champion, one from within the campus system, has effectively advanced program development. The college president, chancellor, dean, or an influential faculty member are important in promoting new programs and sustaining established ones. Some programs have been created in collaboration with a committed faculty member in a related academic department such as social work (San Jose State University) or human services (Austin Community College). These internal champions provide needed resources, perspective, advocacy, and influence on campus. Together, the external and internal champions work to advance program development, advocate for a collaborative approach, and provide influential and often impassioned voices for the support of youth from foster care.

Getting Started

Champions can be identified and advance program goals in the following ways:

1. **Identifying champions**—In colleges that seek an external champion, a high-level administrator and the DL work with the advancement or development office to identify donors who may have expressed interest in youth from foster care or underserved students with similar needs. If they identify such a donor, they can arrange a meeting to discuss the role of champion. Alternatively, a community partner, such as a child welfare foundation, can help identify an individual interested in being a champion.
2. **Champions may enlist high-level college administrators**—Champions meet with high-level college administrators to discuss the needs of students and how they can be supported. Champions can make requests for information as necessary and participate in follow-up action planning discussions.
3. **Involving champions on the advisory committee**—Champions are invited to assist in developing the program through participation in the advisory committee (see **Data-Driven Decision Making,** page 27).
4. **Champions engaging with students**—Champions are invited to assist students directly by providing mentorship, arranging for internships or employment, and participating in social or celebration events.
5. **Champions as advocates with policymakers**—Champions may choose to use their influence to advocate for improved college opportunities for youth from foster care with policymakers or potential donors.

CORE ELEMENT #3: COLLABORATIONS WITH COMMUNITY AGENCIES

In order to reach out to youth currently in care and create a seamless transition them into postsecondary education and training, colleges need to establish working relationships with social service agencies and private organizations. One individual or college office cannot provide all the support needed by students from foster care without drawing upon the resources of other professionals and community-based agencies. In fact, states, counties, and local agencies bear the responsibility for assisting these youth in areas such as transition to adult life (Independent Living programs), housing, transportation, and healthcare (including mental healthcare.) A growing number of states provide access to foster care services for youth until they reach age 21.[24] The DL develops working relationships with area service providers in the state, county, and community. Although the number and names of the service providers and agencies will vary from state to state, the nature of the support is similar. Some of these broad categories are discussed below.

Social Services

State Child Welfare Agencies—Each state has a department that administers child welfare programs, including foster care. As noted above, some states allow an extension of court jurisdiction over youth in foster care beyond age 18. In these states, funding may be available to families or group homes that house these youth. In addition, youth in these states continue to have the support of child welfare caseworkers and IL providers.

Independent Living Providers—Each state receives funds under the John L. Chafee Independent Living Program.[25] IL programs work to develop the life skills of youth age 16 to 21 from foster care. IL programs enable participants to receive education and training including vocational training (additional support for Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) of up to $5,000 annually may be available).[26] IL programs *may* include the following services:

- Training in daily living skills
- Individual and group counseling
- Housing assistance for older youth
- Outreach programs
- Independent living plan development
- Access to Medicaid (in some states[26])

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development provides a state-by-state profile of Independent Living programs (www.nrcyd.ou.edu/State_pages.html) and contacts for the state coordinator and IL providers.

Housing—As noted below, Casey Family Programs' *It's My Life: Housing* (available on www.casey.org) provides a comprehensive resource guide to housing resources and agencies. Public Housing Authorities are a key community resource. The Federal Housing and Urban Development website (www.hud.gov/index.html) provides a state-by-state directory of contacts. State IL coordinators should be able to provide information on local housing resources. This directory may help identify local housing resources.

An Example of Collaboration

The Guardian Scholars Program at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) has a powerful relationship with the Orangewood Children's Foundation (OCF). OCF is the Independent Living contract vendor for Orange County, California, where CSUF is located, and was instrumental in the development and support of the Guardian Scholars Program at CSUF. The principal champion of the program is on the board of directors at OCF. A close relationship with OCF has existed from the beginning of the program.

Although this is not a typical example, it does illustrate what can happen when community-based organizations work together with interested colleges. Current and former youth in foster care in Orange County have the opportunity to take college tours, participate in education workshops, get assistance with FAFSA applications, attend career fairs, and have direct contact with the Guardian Scholars point person at CSUF (and other Orange County colleges). Many Guardian Scholars work as peer counselors for the IL program run by OCF.

An Example of Collaboration

Santa Clara County Foster Youth Services, FYSI Community College Liaisons, San Jose State, and Silicon Valley Children's Fund representatives are great examples of collaboration among key stakeholders who support students from foster care as they make their transition to college. Santa Clara Foster Youth Services has offered meeting space for partners to discuss service coordination and joint event planning. Programming such as FAFSA preparation, Personal Statement Workshops, and Foster Care Provider Training Workshops have been held at the various campuses with participation by partners in materials, food, facilities, and marketing support

The FYSI Liaisons from each of the colleges in Santa Clara County were encouraged to utilize the tools provided by the California Community College Chancellor's Office FYSI manual. This instrument may be used to develop strategies for outreach and for identifying the campus population, developing support on their campus, and assessing their progress toward set objectives.

Health Services—The U.S. Food and Drug Administration maintains a directory of health services by state (www.fda.gov/oca/sthealth.htm). The United States Department of Health and Human Services: National Mental Health Information Center maintains a Mental Health Services Locator by state and territory (http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/). Campus health centers and advisors should have a list of community health services available to students. Child welfare Independent Living (IL) programs will also be helpful.

Other Services—The Portsmouth Group, Inc. provides a comprehensive website named iSafetyNet (www.isafetynet.org/) with links to human services agencies across the country. Some states have developed websites for their youth from foster care to provide information about resources in their communities. For examples, visit the sites for Utah (http://justforyouth.utah.gov), California (www.cacollegepathways.org and www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov), Michigan (www.michigan.gov/fyit), Oregon (www.aspireoregon.org/s_fosteryouth.html), and Washington (www.independence.wa.gov). The Foster Club's FYI3 website (www.fyi3.com) has links to resources nationally as well as social contacts and other opportunities for youth from foster care. Contact your state's IL coordinator and ask if there is a resource website for youth.

Getting Started

The following steps can pave the way to good collaborative relationships:

1. **Identify Independent Living providers**—The DL identifies and contacts IL providers to learn about the nature of the IL program in the area. Potential collaboration is discussed and might include outreach, joint sponsorship of college awareness events, and problem solving.
2. **Learn about other agencies**—The IL provider informs the DL of other relevant agencies, and the DL holds similar discussions with them.
3. **Advisory committee participation**—Agency representatives are invited to participate on the advisory committee (see **Data-Driven Decision Making,** page 27).
4. **Outreach in IL events**—The DL participates in IL-sponsored or other agency-sponsored events such college awareness and financial aid seminars.
5. **Student referral**—The DL refers students, based on need, to IL providers and other relevant agencies. IL organizations for each state can be found at the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/state_pages.html).

CORE ELEMENT #4: DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

Targeted campus support services for youth from foster care are a relatively new phenomenon. Because these programs are varied and still evolving, no standard for program evaluation has been agreed upon. Many programs collect and report demographic, retention, use of support services, and program completion information. Summative and formative data collection and evaluation are critical to program improvement and monitoring student progress for early intervention. Allen and Kazis[27] identified pioneering efforts by community colleges in collecting and using data to improve student outcomes. Colleges can use student information to identify strengths and weaknesses, pinpoint areas of improvement, and assess the impact on students of new programs and innovations. They recommend that colleges conduct specific analyses of how particular student groups are progressing. This information can help in identifying difficulties for students at points along the way to graduation and the refinement of support approaches.

Colleges commonly collect data in the following core areas:

- Housing
- Financial aid and other information collected from the FAFSA
- Participation and access to campus services
- Academic progress (e.g., grades, persistence, retention, and graduation)

Growing and sustaining a program initiative requires reliable data to demonstrate the scope and efficacy of efforts.

Getting Started

The following steps and milestones facilitate data-driven decision making:

Establishing direction—Early in program development, it is important to determine which outcomes the institution values and how they will be measured.

1. **Program mission, goals, outcomes, objectives, and timelines** are established along with a management-by-objectives monitoring and reporting strategy.
2. **Collecting baseline data**—The college develops a strategy to collect baseline data on student enrollment, academic status, and support needs. Some of this information will be available through campus offices (e.g., FAFSA and Chafee ETV eligibility through financial aid services). Offices conducting outreach (such as TRIO, minority affairs, and disability services) may have or could gather data to identify students with foster care in their background. Student health and counseling services can help by asking identifying questions on their intake forms (e.g., *Are you currently or were you formerly in foster care?*). Once current students are identified, the college gathers and analyzes descriptive data of their academic status (grades, academic probation, retention, graduation).
3. **Advisory committee**—An advisory committee is formed. Initially, this group should have representatives from campus offices that have direct involvement. It should also have one or more students from foster care. The committee reviews baseline data and provides advice on program priorities, additional goals and objectives, and evaluation

Data Collection Examples

San Francisco State University conducted research on student outcomes prior to beginning its Guardian Scholars program, which is now integrated into the University's Education Opportunities Program (EOP). The Educational Opportunity Program provides access to opportunities and educational support services to historically underserved students (low-income, first-generation college-bound youth).

Before implementing the Guardian Scholars Program, students from foster care had been served as a part of the EOP student population. No special distinction had been made between them and other students nor had they been receiving additional services (beyond what EOP students typically got).

The Guardian Scholars Program founders wanted to understand how these students were doing. Their study examined key variables retrospectively. Baseline studies tracked first-year retention, grade point average, and graduation rate of students from foster care who participated in the EOP program and compared them to other EOP students not from foster care. (Both share a history of low income and historical disadvantage.)

Retention rates of EOP and non–EOP freshmen were similar (4 year range=73-80%). By way of contrast, retention rates of students from EOP who were formerly in foster care were significantly lower (4 year range=33-68%). Similarly, a comparison of GPAs of students from EOP who were from foster care with EOP students not from foster care revealed significantly lower GPAs for the students from care (1.95 vs. 2.66).

Not surprisingly, the graduation rate for EOP students from foster care was substantially lower when compared to EOP students not from foster care (12.5% vs. 19.3%). This baseline study demonstrated a clear need to augment support for students formerly in foster care.[28]

questions. As the program expands through community partnerships, representatives from these partner organizations should be included on the advisory committee.

4. **Evaluation plan**—Using a logic model (e.g., Guidelines and Framework for Designing Basic Logic Model[29]), the DL develops and implements a support program including an evaluation plan based on the input of the advisory committee, administrative direction, and identified needs of students. Where possible, the college gathers data from existing sources. When data sources are not available, the DL develops systems to acquire the needed information. Note: FERPA regulations and confidentiality requirements must be observed.[30]
5. **Progress monitoring**—The DL uses data such as early alert/warning of low grades, progress toward program completion, declaration of major, and attendance problems to intervene with students as soon as possible.
6. **Assessing student needs**—The DL collects qualitative data from students using focus groups, interviews, or surveys to better understand their needs and priorities.
7. **Using the data**—Data are reviewed, evaluated, and discussed with administrators and the advisory committee. Where appropriate, they are published as part of the college data summary. Based on the interpretation of data, colleges proceed with or amend their program action plan. As appropriate, the data are used to advocate for program funding adjustments and policy initiatives.

Support programs and scholarship providers have identified the data elements in Table 2.1 as being helpful for student and program evaluation.[31]

Table 2.1: Data Elements to Consider When Developing a Support Model for Students from Foster Care

QUANTITATIVE DATA		QUALITATIVE DATA	
Student-Focused	Program Access	Student Perceptions and Opinions	Staff Perceptions and Opinions
Current enrollment status	Referrals to campus support services	Awareness of campus support services	Awareness of campus support services
Units attempted—cumulative	Frequency of student use of campus support services	Likely to use services	Awareness of office liaisons
Units earned	Referral from campus support services to other campus resources (e.g., disability minority affairs or health services)	Quality of services	Likely to refer students
Units attempted—current term	Student use of campus resources based on referral	Perceived value of services	Perceived quality of services
Grade point average—current term	Referral of students to off-campus resources	Trust in service providers	Perceived quality of information provided by campus support services
Grade point average—cumulative	Student use of off-campus resources	Trust in service providers' referrals	Perceived quality of training provided throughcampus support services
Satisfactory academic progress—current term	Attendance at campus or community extracurricular events	Perceived benefit of referrals to support services	
Satisfactory academic progress—cumulative			
Employment status			
Employment hours			
Campus engagement 1—Student activities			
Campus engagement 2—Athletics			
Campus engagement 3—Student government			
Campus engagement 4—Other			
Housing status			
Financial aid status			
Use of campus support services			
Use of non-campus support services			

CORE ELEMENT #5: STAFF PEER SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting youth from foster care is challenging work. In addition to the obvious need to learn about individual students, the DL must become aware of agencies and resources that exist to serve and support them as well as the laws and funding that govern what support can be provided. New programs must find their place on campus and build partnerships within their institution. For these reasons, it is helpful for the DL to have a network of support from colleagues in other colleges who are also supporting these students and developing their programs. This network may take shape informally in discussions among DLs, or it may take a more formal shape through periodic meetings, conferences, electronic mailing lists, and professional development activities. Community partners have proven valuable in bringing professionals together.

State agencies have also taken a lead in this area, as have private foundations dedicated to improving the lives of youth from foster care. The Southern California Council of Colleges is a group of personnel on college campuses who support youth from foster care. They meet quarterly to discuss issues, share resources, and support each other's efforts. Orangewood Children's Foundation created the Council of Colleges concept and hosted the first Southern California meetings. Honoring Emancipated Youth replicated this model by bringing together college personnel in Northern California. The California Community College Chancellor's Office Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) meets with DLs regionally to exchange ideas and discuss how best to support students. We have adopted the term *council of colleges* for use in this publication when referring to similar groups.

Getting Started

Three approaches to developing an external postsecondary education institutional support network are described below: DL–initiated, community organization–initiated, and state agency–initiated.

The campus DL taking the initiative to develop a network

1. **Contacting other colleges** - The DL contacts the student affairs office or other specific student services offices (e.g., minority affairs, TRIO, financial aid, academic advising, and disability services) in neighboring colleges or universities that would likely be providing support to youth from foster care. From these contacts, informal problem-solving networks are formed and the DL learns about any existing networks such as a council of colleges or statewide training.
2. **Developing professional relationships** - The DL begins to develop professional relationships with colleagues in other colleges working to support youth from care.
3. **Meeting to discuss common concerns** - As common needs are identified, DLs agree to meet and discuss issues of concern. For example, DLs from four colleges in the state of Washington now meet quarterly to share information on what's working and their challenges.
4. **Formalizing meetings** - The DLs may choose to formalize these meetings by forming a professional online or in-person network.

The Annual Creating a Blueprint Conference and Higher Education Organizations Support

The Silicon Valley Children's Fund, Orangewood Children's Foundation, and California College Pathways have hosted an annual national conference that brings together college support providers, agency representatives, foundation staff, and college students to discuss college access and success issues for students from foster care.

Higher education professional organizations are increasingly sponsoring sessions on support of former youth from care at their regional and national conferences. These organizations include:

- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)
- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA)
- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
- The College Board
- National Academic Advisors Association (NACADA)
- Council on Opportunity in Education (COE)
- American Indian Graduate Center (AIGC)
- Pathways to College Network

Community organization or foundation taking the initiative to develop a network

Community organizations or foundations dedicated to serving youth in foster care are in an excellent position to take the lead in bringing together DLs in colleges within their community. Orangewood Children's Foundation, which pioneered this approach in Orange County, California, likened its role to that of a "catalyst."[32]

1. **Calling meetings of colleges that the community organization works with**—Once a partner relationship for supporting youth from foster care has been formed in several colleges, periodic meetings are scheduled to discuss challenges, accomplishments, and areas for collaboration (e.g., professional development, research, or training).
2. **Engaging other community partners**—The community partner organization uses its connections to bring other relevant agencies or funders to work with the network.
3. **Electronic mailing list**—The community partner may sponsor and manage an electronic mailing list for the network.
4. **Matching experienced and developing college programs**—The community partner foundation or agency may match an experienced college with a college that wants to develop a program using a technical assistance model. In this approach, key liaison members from within the experienced college are matched with counterparts in the college with an emerging program. Training is followed by action planning, implementation, and follow-up support. Casey Family Programs took this approach in helping Seattle Central Community College develop its program.
5. **Conferences**—The community partner foundation or agency may sponsor state or regional conferences for the purpose of presenting papers, recognizing achievement, and networking.

State agency taking the initiative to develop a network

A state office or agency, such as a higher education coordinating board, may choose to take the lead role in developing a support network within a state. State offices may start by surveying college student support service providers to determine the services currently available and their need for coordination and support. Developing a resource guide that is specific to state laws, practices, and services is likely to be valued, as will be opportunities for initial training. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office took this approach with the FYSI program (see sidebar in Chapter 1) and then expanded their support by:

1. **Creating a network of regional representatives**—Train regional representatives in networking strategies using in-person meetings and teleconferences.
2. **Supporting regional convening meetings**—Regional representatives bring together the support staff and relevant community organizations in various state regions to provide mutual support and address common issues.

CORE ELEMENT #6: SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

Early attention to developing a sustainability plan for a campus support services program is important. The goal of this plan should be to secure beneficial policy decisions and a long-term commitment of funding. Sustaining initial efforts relies on many of the core elements of a successful program. The program must have a clearly defined mission: improving college retention and program completion of youth from foster care. It should also have measureable goals, outcomes, and an evaluation plan that

demonstrate the status of the program's progress toward achieving its mission. A powerful partnership of support is a key factor. Essential partners include a high-level college administrator, a champion with contacts and influence both on campus and in the community, and a committed community agency, foundation, or organization.

A carefully chosen and diverse advisory group can bring fresh perspectives, influential contacts, and resources to sustainability planning (See **Data-Driven Decision Making,** page 27). The program should make maximum use of the resources within the college. The departmental liaison approach to service delivery uses existing resources rather than creating overlapping services. The college development/advancement office should be engaged in early planning to raise funds to support youth from foster care. As an example, California State College, Fullerton has assigned responsibility for finding donors for the Guardian Scholars Program to one of its development staff members. Every college will have program sustainability criteria or program requirements that must be considered.

Programs reviewed in preparation of this framework were funded in a variety of ways using both public and private funds. Examples include:

- Within existing funds where staff time was reallocated
- Development/advancement office identifies donors
- A combination of existing funds and external grant funding
- Foundation support
- Allocation of targeted state funding, e.g., Washington State Passport to College Pilot Program (www.hecb.wa.gov/financialaid/other/Passportprogram.asp)

Getting Started

The following steps and milestones are necessary to the sustainability of a program.

1. **Develop an advisory committee**—Using the advisory committee (see **Data-Driven Decision Making,** page 27), the DL engages community partners, students, and departmental liaisons to guide the program development and continuous improvement efforts.
2. **Administrative involvement**—A high-level campus administrator establishes a clear mission, communicates sustainability criteria and timelines, seeks and responds to external champions, initiates discussions with the advancement office, reviews data on program status and efficacy, advances policy discussions supportive of the program, recognizes the accomplishments of students and staff, and approves line-item funding for staff and facilities as warranted.
3. **Involvement of community partners**—Community partners participate on the advisory committee, solicit funding from private and institutional donors, may provide testimony to legislative committees considering funding or policy issues, may facilitate communication between colleges to promote the flow of ideas for sustainability, and may directly fund the program.
4. **Student involvement and advocacy**—In addition to participation by some students on the advisory committee, students may choose to advocate for program needs by presenting information to administrators, policymakers, staff in the advancement/development office, and potential donors. Students can become a powerful voice for the program and its sustainability.

Chapter 3 | Three Elements to Provide Direct Student Support

Phase 1

This chapter discusses the essential student support services that address the most basic of student needs. For this reason, they should be focused on first, once the program's infrastructure is in place (see Chapter 2). The essential student support services are:

- **Year-round housing and other basic needs**—Providing for 12 months of housing and other basic needs such as meals, transportation, and health insurance
- **Financial aid**—Ensuring full financial aid
- **Academic/career advising**—Providing a well-informed and consistent academic advisor

Each of these elements is explained in the sections below. Appendix A provides benchmarks for a program developing over time.

CORE ELEMENT #7: YEAR-ROUND HOUSING AND OTHER BASIC NEEDS

Housing often presents the first and highest barrier to college success for youth coming from foster care. Having a safe, stable place to live year-round is essential to success in college. Students who have recently aged out of foster care too often have no family home in which to live or return to during school breaks. Most have no family to assist with their rent, co-sign a lease, or explain the details of a rental agreement. If anything goes wrong, they have no safety net of support. They are literally one problem away from becoming homeless.

In fact, many of these college students report periods of homelessness. The National Mental Health Information Center reports that about 27 percent of homeless people have been in foster care.[33] The Pew Center on the States reported that over one-fifth of young adults who leave foster care experience homelessness at sometime after age 18.[34] It is essential for college staff members to recognize the challenge that housing poses and be prepared to help.

Where existing policies that may help support housing for young adults are not fully implemented, college staff have an important advocacy role to play. Postsecondary education and training programs should take the opportunity to work collaboratively with community partners to assess the need for changes in public policy and provide this information to local and state policymakers.

Some resources do exist to assist students formerly in foster care with their housing needs. This remains a challenge for many colleges, however. In addition to college dormitories, federal, state, local, tribal, and private housing may be available. Four-year colleges typically have campus housing. For these colleges, youth from foster care should be a priority when securing dorm rooms. California State University, Fullerton, San Jose State University, San Francisco State University and Western Michigan University give residence hall priority to their students from foster care. In fact, California is at the forefront on this issue. In 2009, California passed the Foster Youth Priority Housing in College bill (AB 1393) that requires

Four Approaches to Housing Challenges

Creativity, collaboration, and advocacy are often necessary to find solutions to the housing difficulties of college students who were formerly in foster care. These four brief examples illustrate the results of this approach.

- California State University, San Marcos is addressing the housing needs of students from foster care by providing on-campus, apartment-style housing 365 days a year, reserving a fixed number of rooms for them and waiving the application and service fees.
- The San Jose State University CME Society (www.sjsu.edu/cmesociety/Collaborations) not only provides priority access to housing for its students but works with nearby community colleges and the Santa Clara County Transitional Housing Program Plus program to provide and fund housing for their current and former youth from care.
- The City College of San Francisco works with Larkin Street Youth Services (www.larkinstreetyouth.org/programs/housing.php) to address the housing needs of their students. Even with state housing programs, the demand for housing continues to exceed the supply and waitlists are common. Therefore, staff at CCSF write grant proposals and look to the successful efforts pioneered at other colleges such as the CME Society at San Jose State University to address students' housing needs.
- San Francisco State University's Guardian Scholars program collaborates with the campus housing office to provide a fixed number of housing units in several housing facilities owned by SFSU. The approach adopted by SFSU is different from many others as it has created residential learning communities for incoming students by grouping current and former foster youth on a single floor. All Guardian Scholars have the choice to live on campus and also have the option of choosing their roommate (Guardian Scholar or not). Older students have access to a variety of living arrangements, but at year 3, most Guardian Scholars have chosen to remain living with other Guardian Scholars as roommates in the GSP theme community.

Resources for Finding Solutions to Housing Problems

Casey Family Programs publishes a guide about housing to help those working with youth in care who are transitioning to adult life. ***It's My Life: Housing*** is available free (in PDF formats) from www.casey.org. *It's My Life: Housing* gives detailed information about housing agencies and financial resources available to help pay for housing.

The Federal Housing and Urban Development's website (www.hud.gov/apps/section8/) provides a means of searching for subsidized housing anywhere in the country.

public postsecondary education systems to give priority for on-campus housing to emancipated youth from foster care. This bill also requires California State University system campuses to keep housing facilities open for youth from foster care during school breaks (www.cacollegepathways.org/legislation.html).

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) now calls for TRIO-supported student support services to "secure temporary housing during breaks in the academic year" for students in or from foster care (see Appendix A).

Because most community colleges do not provide on-campus dorms, the housing needs of students from foster care at these schools can be acute. Support staff can help create housing solutions. This should start with learning about the available financial assistance that is either housing-specific or that may be used for housing. Housing-specific financial assistance includes Section 8 housing vouchers and the Family Unification Program (FUP),[35] targeted at youth emancipating from foster care. Assistance that may be used for housing includes the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Chafee Educational Training Vouchers (ETVs).

Some states have passed legislation that provides housing for students who are in transition from foster care. For example, youth in California should have access to housing through the Transitional Housing Placement Program for Emancipated Foster/Probation Youth, which is commonly referred to as THP+ (www.fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/Housing.html). Colleges can also assist by making small modifications to their existing housing policies. For example, the Guardian Scholars programs at Chapman and Concordia Universities allow students to remain in the dorms for two months following graduation, which allows them time to find jobs and apartments. Including a community-based housing representative in the community college program advisory committee is recommended.

The purpose of housing programs and the regulations that govern them vary by state and local jurisdiction. College support staff can be of great help to students who are trying to find housing assistance and apply for it in a timely way. The DLs and the housing office liaison may find it helpful to work with local Independent Living (IL) program providers. The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development maintains a website with contact information for Independent Living (IL) coordinators in all states: www.nrcyd.ou.edu/state_pages/ilcoords.php.

Getting Started for Colleges with Student Housing

1. **Determining the need for housing**—The DL continuously assesses the year-round housing needs of individual students and refers them to the housing office liaison or community housing resources.
2. **Becoming familiar with local housing resources**—The DL and the housing liaison identify school-related and community housing agencies, their resources, and key staff.
3. **Priority access to existing housing**—The housing office provides priority access to youth from foster care for existing dormitory rooms or other options.
4. **Housing during academic breaks and summer**—The housing office provides dormitory housing and food service during academic breaks (including summer).

5. **Using community housing resources**—The DL and the housing liaison use their knowledge of housing agencies and community resources to find solutions to housing problems faced by students.
6. **Long-term planning**—The housing office conducts an assessment of housing needs for all their students from foster care and uses that information to develop a plan to meet their housing needs in the future.

Getting Started for Colleges without Student Housing

1. **Becoming familiar with local housing resources**—The DL and housing liaison become familiar with community housing resources as well as housing resources and key staff in neighboring colleges.
2. **Independent Living providers**—The DL meets with the local IL program provider to learn about the housing resources that are available locally and discuss the ways that the college and the IL program can collaborate to provide housing.
3. **Contracting for housing**—A high-level college administrator meets with counterparts in nearby colleges to discuss the possibility of contracting for housing.
4. **Determining the need for housing**—The DL meets with individual students to assess their housing needs and facilitates a referral(s) to community housing resources and the local IL program.
5. **Housing during academic breaks and summer**—The DL works with students to identify housing during academic breaks and summers as necessary.
6. **Long-term planning**—The housing office conducts an assessment of housing needs for all students from foster care and uses that information to develop a plan to meet their housing needs in the future.

> I turned 18 a month before I graduated from high school. The day after graduating, I was kicked out of my foster home where I had been living for two years. I was 18, a high school graduate on my way to college in the fall, and I was homeless.
>
> —NICOLE
> college student from foster care

Other Basic Needs

These students too often live very unstable lives with unmet basic needs interfering with their school success. Meals, transportation, and healthcare are additional needs that often pose problems for youth from care. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and Chafee ETV funds may be used to help with unmet needs.

If available, food service in dormitories satisfies the need for meals during the academic year but may be unavailable during breaks. For students not living in college-provided housing, gaining access to meals can be a difficulty hidden from the view of support service staff. After becoming aware of the need, Seattle Central Community College provides meal cards for their students from foster care in need of this support. It may be helpful to know how to obtain food stamps and where to find nutrition resources such as local food banks. Colleges that offer summer bridge or other first-year experience classes may want to cover the topics of nutrition as well as budgeting, planning, shopping, and preparing meals in these courses.

Transportation may or may not be a problem for youth from foster care. Having access to public transportation information will be useful. Helping students access public transportation passes can be an important resource.

> Financing [the college experience] was the most stressful part… Finances make school difficult. … There is very little time when you are working so much.
>
> —BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
> student from foster care

Basic healthcare may be available through campus programs, and private insurance providers funded with Chafee ETV, flexible private scholarships, or Medicaid. Federal policies provide unique opportunities for states to extend Medicaid coverage for youth who have aged out of foster care until age 21. The American Public Human Services Association provides information on these options and a state-by-state description of coverage (www.aphsa.org/home/Doc/Medicaid-Access-for-Youth-Aging-Out-of-Foster-Care-Rpt.pdf). Students' needs in each of these areas should be discussed early and revisited from time to time in order to prevent small problems from becoming real barriers to success in college.

Many students will have other basic needs that require support such as accommodations for disability and childcare. These are discussed under supplemental supports in core element #10, below.

CORE ELEMENT #8: FINANCIAL AID

Students who have recently aged out of foster care are almost always independent and living at or below the poverty level.[36] They need a financial aid package that covers all costs of attendance. Youth from care must live on grants, scholarships, loans, work study, tuition waivers, and employment. There are usually no Expected Family Contribution (EFC) family resources to fall back on. Colleges need to help these students acquire a full financial aid package using all available public and private funding resources, thereby limiting or eliminating the need for student loans. Fortunately, financial aid options for youth from care have increased in the past few years. In some states, students can receive financial aid packages that cover 100% of the costs of attendance without loans. This is especially true for those attending community colleges.

Some states (e.g., Delaware, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Washington) have created need-based scholarship and grant programs and have given youth from foster care priority eligibility. Financial aid may be available for specific purposes, such as housing. Each program has its own eligibility requirements, and the requirements for federal programs often vary from state to state.

Students need the help of sensitive professionals who are knowledgeable about of the issues they face and the resources available to them. Casey Family Programs' Financial Aid Supplement offers comprehensive information on public and private financial aid options. This guide can be downloaded free from the Casey Family Programs website (www.casey.org). Tracy L. Fried and Associates and NASFAA have published **Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: A Key to Higher Education Access and Success.** It can be ordered free at www.casey.org/resources/publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm. This free publication is highly recommended for college financial aid staff.

Special issues related to ensuring a maximized financial aid package for youth from foster care

Early identification and outreach—Due to the time-sensitivity of applying for financial aid, early identification of these youth is critical. The DL and financial aid office liaison work together to reach out to youth from foster care through their high schools, social workers,

caregivers, and IL programs. In addition to asking high school counselors to identify and provide information to youth from foster care, DLs or college recruiters who give presentations to students in general should include information and handouts on sources of assistance specific to these youth.

Determination of student dependency status—Establishing eligibility for maximum financial aid support with a college financial aid liaison is critical. Eligibility for some types of financial aid for youth from foster care depends on establishing the student's independent student status. FAFSA questions in section three (student) determine student dependency status. Students will need assistance in responding accurately to these questions. Every support program and advocateshould use **Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth,** which provides detailed information on how assisting students with FAFSA questions. It is available free at www.casey.org. To be eligible for Chafee ETV funds, youth only need to have been in foster care for one day between their 16th and 19th birthdays or been adopted from foster care after their 16th birthday. To know the status a student had in the child welfare system requires knowledge of how and when the youth entered and left those systems. With this knowledge and an understanding of the eligibility requirements of programs such as Chafee ETVs, the Family Unification Program, housing vouchers, and state grant programs, a financial aid office's designated financial aid liaison is in a position to help. Consulting with the state Chafee ETV coordinator will be very helpful. Another useful resource is the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA)'s *Special Populations FAFSA Tip Sheet* (www.nasfaa.org/publications/2010/anhomeless021810.html). It encourages students to seek assistance first from school liaisons and program directors if they are unsure if they have received a determination of homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless before contacting their school's financial aid office.

Providing ongoing support—Many students will need ongoing support because most financial aid programs designed to assist them have complex requirements and often don't make payments on a timetable that corresponds with college fee payment deadlines. For example, the management of Chafee ETV funds vary from state to state, and the date that funds are dispersed may vary from year to year. If the rent or tuition is due, it matters when the funds are released. Coordinating the various financial aid funding options can be a challenge but can result in a full financial aid package for youth from foster care. The NASFAA offers college financial aid counselors information pertaining to assisting students from foster care. Visit www.NASFAA.org and enter *foster care* in the **Search** box.

Getting Started

1. **Financial aid liaison**—The financial aid office designates a financial aid officer who will assume the role of financial aid liaison to the DL, develop specialized knowledge of foster care and the resources available to these students coming from care, and work directly with these youth. The liaison should establish communication with their state's Chafee ETV coordinator.
2. **Training**—The financial aid liaison and the DL learn about foster care dependency status and the documentation that is required to prove this status to receive Chafee ETV funds and the separate requirements for the FAFSA. For additional information, visit the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators website at www.nasfaa.org/publications/2008/cachafee011708.html.
3. **Outreach brochures and posters**—The financial aid liaison works with the DL to develop brochures and fact sheets targeting students, caregivers, and IL providers. These are widely distributed through schools, foster youth advocacy groups for youth in foster care, and IL providers. The information is also published on the college's website.

4. **Identifying students on intake forms**—The financial aid liaison and DL work with other offices on campus to add a question to their intake forms regarding former foster care status.
5. **Working with youth**—The financial aid liaison works directly with students (or through the DL) to help them understand and apply for all financial aid available to them. The liaison pays special attention to timelines and documentation to verify foster care dependency status.
6. **Troubleshooting**—The financial aid liaison works directly with students (or through the DL) to find solutions to financial aid issues as students' needs change.
7. **Asking sensitive questions**—When working with students, the financial aid liaison and DL should be trained to be sensitive when they ask questions that delve into student financial needs. The **Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care** and **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth** provides detailed suggestions of how to make sensitive inquiries that are necessary to establish independent student status (FAFSA) and Chafee ETV eligibility (pp. 27-33). It can be downloaded or ordered free at www.casey.org/Resources/Publications.

CORE ELEMENT #9: ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAREER COUNSELING AND SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT

Getting off to a good start academically and staying on track to graduation requires proactive academic advising and ongoing support. Tinto[37] emphasized the importance of providing early academic, social, and personal advising and supports to enhance student persistence and retention. This is critical for students coming from foster care. Klefeker[38] states that academic advisors play a key role in helping these students persist and succeed. They can advocate for students, connect them to vital campus and community resources, and follow up to support their successes. Because these students may be prone to distrust and may be reluctant to seek help, it is especially important for them to establish a trusting relationship with their academic advisor and the campus designated lead.

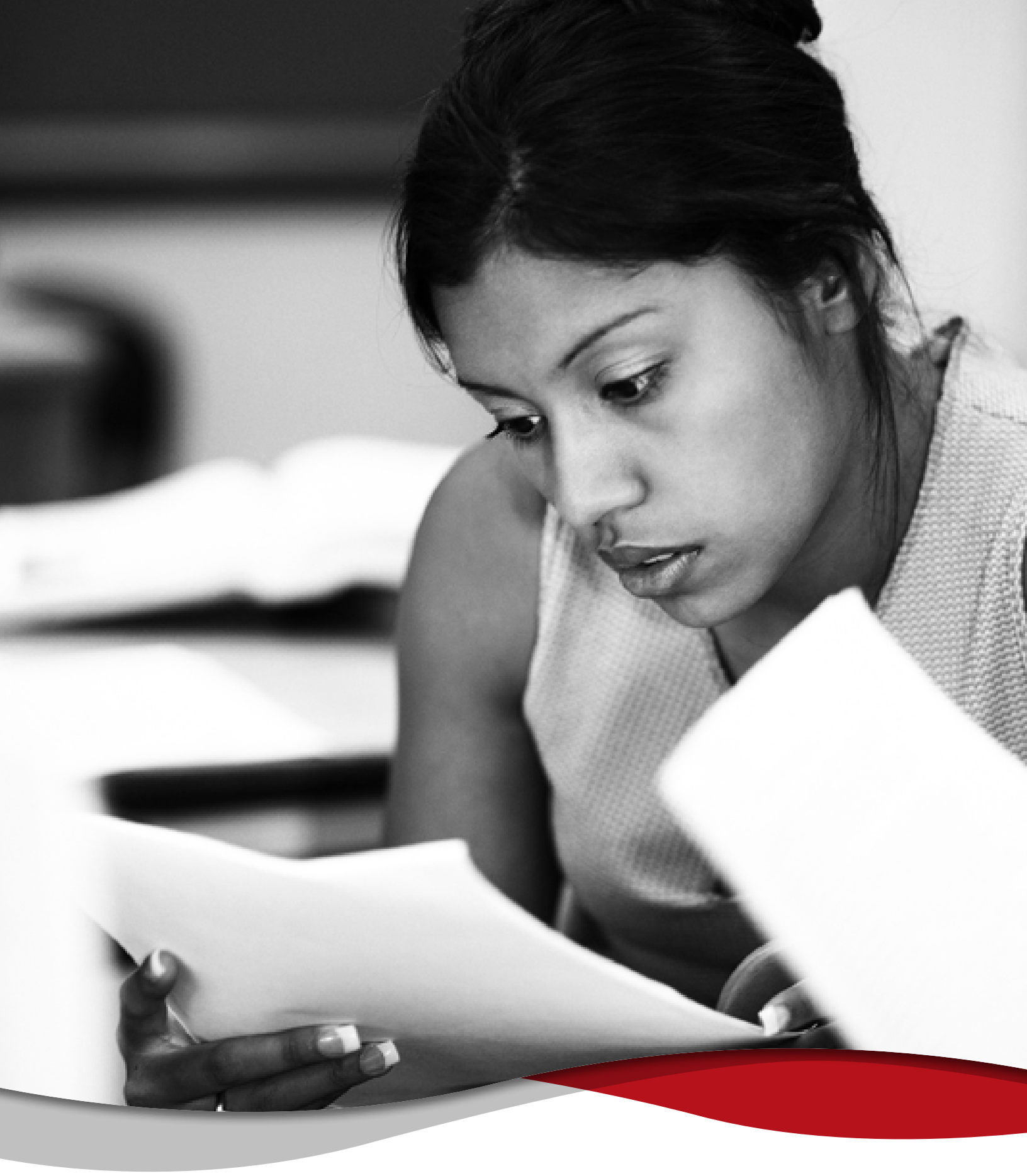
As we've noted, the change from the structures and restrictions of foster care to the independence of college often causes adjustment problems. Staying connected to students through frequently scheduled meetings, periodic emails, perceptive questioning, and attentive listening helps to build a strong relationship. Many colleges use a proactive advising approach[39] where advisors make regular contact and use early warning systems[40] to identify students who are having difficulty. If the academic advisor is someone other than the DL, the advisor should make regular contact with the DL to understand factors such as housing or childcare that may be affecting student performance. This working relationship with the DL is also helpful when considering tutoring or mentorship. Where possible, a single individual in the academic advising office can be designated as the liaison to the DL. The student's written consent must be obtained for interdepartmental communication. Experienced DLs recommend that this consent be obtained at an intake interview between the DL or advisor and the student.

Programs report that some youth from foster care who are approaching graduation may do poorly (either intentionally or subconsciously) in their last classes as a means of continuing in college where they have been well supported. These students, who have experienced repeated loss through separation from family and foster homes, may feel fear or even depression at the loss of connection with their supportive college community once they graduate. The same fears they faced when they aged out of foster care may re-emerge. Engaging students in a well-planned and supported transition from college to employment and independent living is important.

Getting Started

1. **Designating responsibilities for advising**—With the support of mid- to high-level college administrators, the DL meets with the academic advising office to discuss and determine who will take lead responsibility for advising students. Roles and the liaison relationship are established.
2. **Training**—The DL provides or makes arrangements for training academic advisor liaisons and providing ongoing support to advisors. Advisors need to know about effectively communicating with students about sensitive issues related to their former foster care status.
3. **Monitoring student academic performance**—Early academic alert/warning systems are monitored or developed as necessary.
4. **Intrusive or proactive advising**—Students are provided initial advising and frequent follow-up contacts to build a trusting relationship, monitor academic progress, and identify the need for support. The DL and academic advisor pay careful attention to the student's skill level and the requirements of the coursework being taken.
5. **Tutoring**—Tutoring resources are identified and students are referred to tutors as appropriate. Those referred for tutoring will be monitored to ensure their academic needs are met and they are taking advantage of the support. Additional tutoring resources may need to be developed. The DL or academic advisor arranges for tutoring at the earliest indication of difficulty.

> I had a lot of anger and pain to deal with when I started college; all this prevented me from building normal relationships. I didn't trust anybody. I felt ashamed because I came from foster care and moved so much.
>
> —GLORIA
> student formerly in foster care



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Chapter 4 | Three Additional Elements to Provide Direct Student Support

Phase 2

This chapter describes the student support service core elements that most programs focus on as areas for growth after students' most basic needs are met. These elements are:

- **Personal guidance, counseling, and supplemental support**—Providing ongoing guidance, personal counseling, and supplemental support necessary to student success in college
- **Opportunities for student community engagement and leadership**—Providing opportunities for student to engage in college life including developing a sense of community, and leadership and advocacy skills
- **Planned transitions**—Helping youth plan their transition to college, between colleges, and to employment

> The counseling services saved me when I had my major breakdown my first year at college. I've never had health insurance.
>
> —SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
> alumnus of foster care

CORE ELEMENT #10: PERSONAL GUIDANCE, COUNSELING, AND SUPPLEMENTAL SUPPORT

We have described some of the patterns that life in foster care takes. Most of these youth experienced some degree of abuse or neglect (including abandonment) in their childhood. Following this, they were taken from their birth parents or families and often moved from one foster placement to another. Frequent school moves are also common. Most youth who "age out" of foster care have no one to provide personal guidance or support as they try to live independently. Professionals assisting these youth in college report that students may have ongoing mental health issues as a result of abuse and neglect. Therefore, it is not surprising that, as a group, they are more likely than other young adults to need and benefit from personal guidance and counseling.

The increase in mental health issues being faced by college students in general has been recognized as a growing trend,[41] and most colleges have had to increase staff in their mental health support for all students. After identifying students from foster care, postsecondary education and training programs should prioritize and provide the support these students need, recognizing their special risk factors. An individual should be available to connect students to mental health resources already available on campus, as necessary. This individual should also be able to seek out additional community resources, such as mentorship programs. In the absence of support from a trusted source, many youth from care are at high risk of not completing their programs.

Students coming from foster care may also require support for other exceptional needs. Young people formerly in care are more likely to be single parents than others of the same age in the general population.[42] These students will need help with childcare. Various studies have found that youth in foster care received special education at a disproportionately high rate when compared to the general population of school-age children.[43] Once in college, these students will likely need the help of campus disability services. What's more, a recent

The College Success Coaching Program of the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA)

OFA's innovative College Success Coaching Program is the only national virtual mentoring program for college students from foster care. Recognizing the digitally connected world of today's young adults, trained volunteers and college students from foster care communicate via email, text messaging, telephone, and even Facebook. Mentors help students succeed in college, the workplace, and their personal lives by providing the support, encouragement, information, and resources all young people deserve and need to do well in college.

For more information, visit the Orphan Foundation of America website at www.orphan.org.

large-scale study in the Midwest found that 23 percent of the young men from foster care had a substance abuse diagnosis involving drugs or alcohol.[43] Students with substance abuse problems will need to be encouraged to use available counseling support programs.

Getting Started

1. **Identifying available counseling services**—The DL identifies counseling resources that may be available on campus or in the community and maintains a file on the services offered, the qualifications of the clinicians, where they are located, length of commitment, and cost of services. The DL identifies resources such as Chafee ETV funds and Medicare to cover the cost of counseling that exceeds the maximum coverage provided at the college health center.
2. **Identifying human services**—The DL identifies available human service resources on and off campus such as childcare, disability support services, and drug and alcohol counseling.
3. **Identifying mentorship services**—The DL identifies mentorship or college coaching resources that may be available and maintains a file on what they specialize in, length of commitment, and extent of training that mentors have received. The DL discusses mentorship with students and facilitates a referral to such programs when the student is interested and it seems potentially beneficial. These referrals should be done as early as possible in the student's college career. In addition to on-campus mentorship programs, virtual mentoring is another option to consider.
4. **Guidance and referral for professional services**—The DL builds a relationship with each student and becomes aware of personal problems that require guidance or counseling. The DL provides guidance commensurate with his or her training. The DL facilitates the referral of students to professionals and community resources by discussing the nature of these services and personally introducing them to the service providers. The DL works with students and campus health services to identify sources of funding to meet needs beyond those normally provided.

CORE ELEMENT #11: OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The many temporary home placements youth from foster care often grow up in may prevent them from feeling a sense of belonging to a supportive community. Colleges have the opportunity to make their campus a place where students feel connected to trusted advisors, the faculty and staff, and their fellow students. For some, this connection will come through a welcoming staff. Others may find it through their academic major, athletics, campus groups, or a circle of friends at college. To help students feel at home at the college, the DL makes students aware of and creates opportunities for engagement and leadership.

Some colleges have informal clubs for youth from foster care who want to spend time with others with foster care experience. Social connections may grow out of "first-year experience" classes or an electronic bulletin board. It should not be assumed, however, that students will necessarily gravitate to clubs or social activities that are created especially for them. Some youth from foster care report that they have little interest in being identified

as having been in foster care. Others simply have other pressing time constraints such as childcare, work, and commuting (not to mention studying). This is one of the many areas where seeking student preference is critically important. Outreach to high school students in (or from) foster care is one meaningful way to engage students on campus who have experienced foster care. So are tutoring and mentoring younger students. Some college DLs help students advocate for their unmet needs through regional advocacy groups for youth in foster care. Foster Care Alumni of America (FCAA) (www.fostercarealumni.org) may be of interest to students. There are also a number of state organizations created by youth formerly in care that can provide a network of support. Independent Living (IL) providers will know about these organizations.

Getting Started

1. **Identifying opportunities for student engagement**—The DL identifies opportunities for student connection on campus (clubs, athletics, calendar of events, student organization, student government, etc.) and in the community (churches, IL, recreational groups, volunteering, peer mentoring, etc.).
2. **Connecting students to campus activities**—As the DL gets to know individual students, he or she suggests activities that match student interests or personality. If students are forming a strong relationship with one of the liaisons, the DL works with that liaison to suggest activities.
3. **Identifying leadership opportunities**—The DL becomes familiar with IL providers and other potential community partners and discusses opportunities for leadership and advocacy through those organizations or their affiliates. Students are encouraged to become involved and take leadership roles as appropriate such as participating on the advisory committee.
4. **Social events**—With the interest and leadership of students, the DL may organize social and recognition events that are appropriate, appealing, and comfortable. The events at a college where most students live on the campus might be quite different from those at a commuter college. Students with children will need childcare to participate.
5. **Dedicated space**—The DL begins discussions with college administrators about the need for and desirability of a dedicated space where students can study, socialize, use computers, and have a private conversation with peers and staff. Several colleges report that having a dedicated meeting space has greatly influenced student engagement and trust building.

CORE ELEMENT #12: PLANNED TRANSITION TO COLLEGE, BETWEEN COLLEGES, AND TO EMPLOYMENT

Youth from foster care have had to make many planned and unplanned transitions in their lives, as we have noted. It is the fortunate but rare youth who stays with one foster family over many years. Researchers, investigating the transient nature of the lives of youth from foster care, describe these short-term living situations as "unstable placements."[44] Youth with four or more placements during their high school years are considered to have a history

Case Examples of Engaging Students in the Campus Community

Student engagement may look different, depending on the nature of the college, students' life situations, and community resources. These examples illustrate some of the differences.

At **California State University, Fullerton, Guardian Scholars** gather between classes in a comfortable suite of rooms adjacent to the bookstore. The room contains computers, a fax machine, telephone, posters advertising campus events, desks, and comfortable furniture. This is a relaxed place in the center of campus activities where conversation is easy and friendships are obvious. Students and staff joke, and express concern for one another's welfare. Everyone feels clearly connected and at home there.

The **Austin Community College System** has seven campuses spread out over the city. Each campus has an academic advisor champion (ACC's title for DL) for students from foster care. Although students don't have a dedicated gathering place, staff has found ways to get them connected to the campuses through peer-to-peer support. For example, some students speak to groups to explain the needs of emancipated youth and advocate for solutions.

At the **City College of San Francisco**, students may be encouraged to become involved in advocacy groups in the community. Students have provided testimony to the California State Legislature and update other youth from foster care on legislation through the Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance and the California Youth Connection.

Make it Happen! The College Experience—is a statewide summer college program for Washington youth in foster care (www.collegesuccessfoundation.org)

The first of its kind in the nation, Make it Happen! was designed to help youth from foster care develop their own post-secondary education or training plans. High school students in foster care spend time on a college campus and learn how to apply to college, how to obtain financial aid and scholarships, visit support service offices, and much more. They meet successful college students who were in foster care and hear their success stories. Make it Happen! students complete the four-day program with new ideas and hopes for the future, viable plans for higher education success and new friends and advocates to support their dreams.

of unstable placements. Pecora and colleagues reported that children and youth have an average of one to two home placement changes per year while in out-of-home care.[6]

This instability frequently means that these youth:

- Have not lived with a consistent expectation that they will, could, or even should attend college
- Have changed high schools several times, often resulting in being behind in credits, not taking college preparation coursework, and not having a consistent guidance counselor or education advocate
- May be unaware or miss important deadlines for pre-college testing, entrance applications, and financial aid applications

Without a permanent and stable family or education advocate, youth need other sources of encouragement in order to consider postsecondary education or training as an option and expectation. Like all children, they benefit at an early age from conversations with trusted adults who encourage and expect them to consider college as part of their life plan. In high school, they require support in the process of taking college entrance tests, deciding where to apply, and making applications for entrance and financial aid. Once accepted, they benefit from college bridge programs, college success classes, orientation experiences, and a proactive approach to advising. Students transferring from a community college to a four-year institution need support making decisions as to where to transfer and how to get assistance once enrolled. Finally, these youth will require guidance making the transition to employment and independent living once they graduate. This last core element reviews a number of important ways that colleges can support students from foster care through these transitions. As elsewhere, the reader will notice that some of the concepts and strategies have been introduced previously. They are repeated here because this core element covers a lengthy timeframe and because not all users of this framework will have read the entire document.

Outreach to Child Welfare and IL Staff

Child welfare caseworkers, IL program caseworkers, caregivers, educators, mentors, counselors, the courts, and court-appointed special advocates (CASAs) are typically the ones responsible for helping students consider and make the transition to college. By reaching out to these individuals, colleges help them help youth become aware that college is an important option that should be considered. These efforts may be basic, such as publishing and distributing targeted brochures and posters or creating web pages describing campus services. More intensive outreach might include putting on college seminars sponsored by IL program providers, sponsoring an all-day college orientation for high school juniors and seniors in foster care, or creating a summer bridge program or first-year experience classes specifically designed for these students.

Career Advising and Preparation

Youth from care do not have the luxury of going through college without a plan for transitioning from college to a career and independent community living. They must be

career-oriented and need solid career counseling to help them stay goal-oriented. To this end, the resources of the career center (such as interest testing, job shadowing, career fairs, internships and mentorships, and placement services) should be used early and often. If career counselors are available, it is ideal to establish a liaison who will be prepared to take the time necessary to build a trusting relationship with these youth. As with other liaisons on campus, the career counselor assuming this role should develop knowledge of the unique circumstances of youth coming from care and how these affect current and future employment.

Getting Started: Pre-College and a Planned Transition through the First Year of College

1. **Utilizing existing outreach opportunities and resources**—The DL surveys the current outreach efforts sponsored by recruiters as well as other student support offices and arranges to include information about services available to youth from foster care in their materials, as well as how to contact the DL.
2. **Brochures and posters**—The DL develops brochures and posters that describe services and that target potential students, service providers, caregivers, and social workers.
3. **Collaboration with IL providers**—The DL contacts the state or county child welfare office to identify IL providers or other organizations that are currently, or would likely be, providing transition services to youth from foster care or their caregivers. Once identified, the DL makes contacts to discuss opportunities for outreach collaboration.
4. **Outreach to youth from foster care in high school**—The DL, in collaboration with campus recruiters, arranges to make presentations to high school students currently in foster care. High school counselors and social workers can encourage students in foster care to attend with their caregivers. The purpose of these presentations is to encourage them to consider postsecondary education and training and to educate them on the process of applying for financial aid, housing, and other critical resources. As the program grows, these outreach efforts should be extended to include middle school students.
5. **Summer housing**—The DL works with the campus housing office to arrange summer housing for students recently emancipated from care who will be enrolling in classes in the fall. In addition to having a place to live during the summer, students need someone on campus to help them make the transition to campus life. A summer bridge program helps solve this problem. Having the DL check on new students can help them adjust and overcome loneliness.
6. **Hosting IL programs on campus**—The DL considers working with IL program providers to provide IL classes on campus. This provides an excellent opportunity for IL youth to meet college students who were also in foster care.

> The daily challenges and obstacles that young people, raised in the foster care system, must overcome have left a deep impact on my life. Their stories of abandonment, abuse, poverty, and displacement are horrific. To help these young people, I founded the Guardian Scholars Program in 1997 at Cal State Fullerton. The purpose of the program is to "Make Dreams Come True" by giving deserving students a scholarship and personalized life support. The goal of our program is to create a family of support along with the gift of a scholarship.
>
> —RON V. DAVIS, Champion of the Guardian Scholars Program

Transition between Colleges

1. **Collaboration with local colleges**—The DL at a community college convenes a meeting or teleconference with counterparts in four-year colleges where students commonly transfer. At this meeting, they discuss support services offered, requirements to access these supports, peer mentors (ideally other youth from care), and other ways that the DLs can work to assist students transferring between institutions. Although not all colleges have developed a program or assigned an individual with lead responsibility for youth from foster care, fruitful discussions can be initiated with programs designed to assist first-generation college students (e.g., TRIO, financial aid offices, minority affairs, and student affairs administrators).
2. **Direct assistance to transferring students**—The community college's DL shares information about support programs in colleges where the student plans to (or may) attend and helps the student make contact with key individuals and offices.

Transition from College to Employment

1. **Encouraging career planning**—The DL introduces students to the career center as freshmen and assists them in establishing a relationship with the liaison career counselor. The DL guides students to take full advantage of the complete array of services offered through the career center.
2. **Employment assistance**—The liaison career counselor works with students throughout their college career to help them find employment to supplement their income and give them experiences relevant to their interests and career goals. The liaison works with other campus offices to establish a priority status for students from foster care to gain access to on-campus jobs, work study, and internships. Both the DL and the liaison career counselor assist students in finding employment during academic breaks and during the summer.
3. **Career internships or mentorships**—The DL and liaison career counselor work with the campus and business communities to identify career internship or mentorship opportunities. Program champions may be helpful in finding mentors or acting as a mentor.
4. **Career and transition planning**—The DL monitors and supports students during their final year as they plan their transition from college directly to employment and independent living.

Chapter 5 | State and Institutional Program Examples

More and more colleges are initiating support services designed to meet the unique needs of their students coming from foster care. Eight college programs are profiled here: three community colleges and five universities. These colleges are true innovators in this work as they strive to design integrated support systems that impact retention and program completion. Information for an additional 13 programs can be found in *An Overview of Post-Secondary Support Programs for Former Foster Youth* (www.bsu.edu/csh/ssrc/media/pdf/gs_supportguide.pdf). This publication also provides a comprehensive description of the Guardian Scholar model developed at Ball State University and Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana.

The exemplary work of these colleges provides an important knowledge base for others who want to serve students from foster care more efflectively.

State System Approaches

Several states are now employing a higher education/child welfare systems approach to spreading support throughout their state higher education systems. California, Connecticut, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, and Washington hold statewide conferences that bring together representatives from two- and four-year colleges, child welfare, advocates, policy makers, community agencies, foundations, and college students from foster care. The conferences are carefully planned by coalitions with representatives from these groups with support from higher education and child welfare state leadership. Conference goals generally focus on five areas:

- Increasing awareness of the opportunities available in postsecondary education programs and raising awareness of the unique circumstances of youth from foster care in relation to higher educational opportunities
- Establishing effective collaboration between higher education, child welfare, and community agencies
- Learning about practice and policy exemplars that are impacting improved college access and success for students from foster care
- Introduction to a comprehensive framework for supporting college students from foster care – Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care (www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/SupportingSuccess.htm)
- Identification of action planning with an emphasis on the establishment of designated leads (DLs) at all colleges

This systems approach to program spread is providing students with improved services and increased success in higher education. Contact Casey Family Programs Education Unit for additional information.

A State Community College System Approach

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE | Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) (www.cccco.edu/searchresults/tabid/137/default.aspx?search=FYSI)

Over the past 10 years, the number of youth "aging out" or "emancipating" from California's foster care system has steadily increased with an estimated 4,400 youth aging out each year. In 2006, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) Student Financial Assistance Programs recognized that there is a significant deficit regarding youth from foster care attending postsecondary education. Acknowledging this need, they sponsored a concerted effort called the Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) to bring issues affecting these youth to the forefront and to improve their ability to access postsecondary education and benefit from the support services that are available but often unknown to them.

In February 2007, CCCCO launched this statewide outreach and retention effort to better serve current and former youth from care across all California community colleges (CCCs). Key components included:

- *FYSI Manual: A Guide for Financial Aid Administrators* (2007)
- Identified FYSI liaisons for youth from foster care at all 110 California community colleges
- Trained 89 FYSI liaisons at the FYSI statewide kick-off training on *Understanding the Unique Needs of Foster Youth*
- FYSI County-by-County Resource Guide (2007)

Community College Liaisons: Having a designated FYSI liaison (or DL) at every community college is vital in supporting students from foster care attending postsecondary institutions. They assist students in completing the FAFSA and Chafee ETV applications and connect students to other student support services.

In the 2007-08 school year, 6,919 students who are former youth in foster care attended a California community college.

As CCCs strengthen on-campus networks and community partnerships to support students from foster care, the number of college students has increased. In the 2008-2009 school year, 7,815 students from foster care attended a community college.

2008-09 FYSI Highlights

- FYSI regional representatives for all 10 California community college regions were designated.
- 10 regional convenings coordinated with support from CCCCO to build new and strengthen existing campus and community partnerships to support outreach and retention efforts for current and potential students from foster care.
- Over 1200 representatives participated in regional convenings.

2009-10 FYSI Highlights

- Excerpt of FYSI 2007 guide: *Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth* (available free at www.casey.org)
- FYSI outreach toolkit
- Youth-from-foster-care-friendly logo for higher education: developed to symbolize safe, supportive office/person equipped to assist youth in postsecondary education
- Posters, door hangers, lapel pins, and pledge cards with new logo disseminated
- Presentation materials for early outreach and immediate outreach developed
- FYSI brochure for students disseminated
- *FYSI Student Success Orientation Curriculum and Student Success Handbook*
- Three statewide regional trainings for FYSI liaisons and campus partners held

FYSI Challenges

- Severe state higher education budget cuts
- Youth too often underprepared for community college academic requirements
- Community college housing options very limited

Youth in foster care are often underprepared as they transition out of both high school and foster care into college. The gap in their repertoire of academic and social competencies provides an opportunity for the campus community to support them in the attainments of these skills that are critical for higher education success. The California Community Colleges recognized the need to prepare current and former youth from foster care as they begin their postsecondary educational journey. As a result, a FYSI student success orientation class and student handbook were created.

This unfunded, voluntary effort has continued to evolve since its inception in 2007. FYSI liaisons are benefiting from peer information sharing and problem solving. Their colleges remain committed to improving community college success for their stduents from foster care.

Recommended Reading

Bonnel, T. (2007). *Making a difference: California community colleges target problems of foster youth*. Student Aid Transcript, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. *18*(3), 26-31. www.nasfaa.org/publications/2007/antranscript121907.html

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Austin Community College | **Foster Care Alumni Program** (www.austincc.edu/fca)
Austin Community College (ACC) supports youth from care through its Student Services office. The impetus for developing these services came from the highest level of college policymakers and administration.

Program Description: Austin Community College in Austin, TX provides support to students on its eight campuses through an academic advisor or counselor on each campus. These individuals, known as campus champions, are drawn from the existing staff. The program, called the Foster Care Alumni Program, is managed through the college's Office of Student Support and Success Systems. This management structure is well suited to meet the needs of ACC students because it also administers other offices essential to the success of youth from care, such as financial aid, counseling, and academic support. The vice president for student support and success systems, working with the director of community outreach, spearheaded program development, outreach to community-based organizations, communication, and evaluation. A team with representatives from the college, child welfare, and a key community agency developed the Foster Care Alumni Program. The key components of the program are:

- Pre-college outreach through transitional assistance programs in the community
- Early identification of students using Independent Living contracts, word of mouth, posters, a website, and targeted brochures
- Outreach to students by the campus champions with periodic follow-up contact
- Student services staff collaboration and coordination of services
- A four-day college orientation called Jump-start
- Direct referral of students to resources within and outside of the college
- Concerted problem solving on common issues of concern such as housing, transportation, a comprehensive stream of financial support, childcare, and counseling
- Ongoing opportunities for student leadership and advocacy
- Staff training
- Ongoing data collection of student demographics and academic performance
- Local and state advocacy and awareness of alumni from foster care
- Student club for alumni from foster care and friends

Inception and Growth of the Foster Care Alumni Program: The ACC Foster Care Alumni Program traces its origins to the concern of a prominent citizen who made an inquiry of an ACC trustee as to how the college supported youth from care. Not having a ready answer, the trustee made a similar inquiry of the college president, who turned to the chair of the Academic Human Services Department. The chair determined that although the college offered many appropriate support services, there was no system in place to ensure that students would gain access to these services. Moreover, the academic outcomes of the students who had come from foster care turned out to be lower than those of the general ACC student population. There was a need to coordinate these services, systematically identifying students coming from foster care, reaching out to them, and collaborating with local foundations and community-based organizations. The vice president for student support and success systems took the lead to bring together key departmental staff and community organizations. The group analyzed baseline data on student performance and invited students to share their experiences in focus groups. A steering committee of key on- and off-campus leaders helped design the service delivery model that was implemented in a relatively short period of time—only six months.

The Foster Care Alumni Program aims to identify and support all students who are currently or were formerly in foster care. During 2006, its first year, ACC identified 72 students who met this criteria; 76 were identified in 2007; and in the spring of 2008, 89 students were enrolled. The Foster Care Alumni Program has grown in the number of organizations working in partnership to support these students. In the first year and a half, ACC developed working relationships with the various programs within the state child welfare agency, local housing agencies, the Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Casey Family Programs, and independent contractors who provide Independent Living services.

The program has also grown in terms of staff knowledge and their ability to respond to student needs. Campus champions meet regularly to learn from each other and from the program's many community partners. In addition, selected champions attend national conferences to share the FCA program and learn from others. A team from ACC worked as mentors to staff at Seattle Central Community College as they were taking their first steps to develop a support program.

Dr. Kathleen Christensen, Vice President of Student Support and Success Systems at ACC, states, "This work is so important, but not an expensive or difficult program to develop. These students don't want to be set apart. Integrating these targeted services into the college culture and support structure is important. People at the college and in the community will understand its importance and embrace the purpose. They are willing to help make it a success. After five years, our support services program for former foster youth is well known among our college community, including the Board of Trustees and the local community. Most importantly, youth who may not have considered college as an option are now attending ACC and finding success. We are now spreading the word throughout Texas and nationally."

City College of San Francisco | Guardian Scholars Program (www.ccsf.edu)

A multi-campus institution, City College of San Francisco (CCSF) provides support to students who are or have been in foster care through its Guardian Scholars Program. Through the dedicated efforts of frontline staff, the willingness of many local agencies to collaboratively solve problems, and the generous funding of private foundations, CCSF has developed an impressive program of outreach, advocacy, and support services that addresses the basic and academic needs of its students currently or formerly in foster care.

Program Description: The Guardian Scholars Program at City College of San Francisco provides support for 200 students, who attend any of the college's 12 campuses. Unlike some Guardian Scholars programs, the City College of San Francisco does not select from applicants who apply to become a Guardian Scholar (GS)—all students coming from foster care may be part of the program. Students are identified as they enter the college system and make application for financial aid or assistance from Extended Opportunity Program and Services (EOP&S). In cooperation with the San Francisco Unified School District and the San Francisco ILSP programs, the college sponsors the Guardian Scholars Summer Academy. This six-week program is designed to prepare high school juniors and seniors for a smooth transition from high school to college. As a result of these efforts, the CCSF now has the highest

number of Chafee ETV recipients in California. Key components of the Guardian Scholars program at CCSF include:

1. A coordinated program that integrates services from all areas of the college to increase student success
    - A planning committee with representatives from a broad spectrum of campus-based student services guided the initial development of priorities and activities.
    - The college reports through the college's instruction division.
    - An advisory board with key stakeholders, including students, student services representatives, community agencies, private foundations, and college administration, provides direction and advice on the GSP activities.
    - The Guardian Scholars Program takes the lead in identifying and coordinating services. CCSF administration has demonstrated its support by funding one full-time program manager staff to lead the Guardian Scholars effort. A 60%-time academic counselor is funded by a private foundation.
    - Students' progress is followed, and they are provided follow-up support services as these are required.
    - CCSF offers a three-unit college success course to help them make a smooth transition to college.
    - A Guardian Scholars club provides students with opportunities to find mutual support and develop leadership skills.
    - The six-week Guardian Scholars Summer Academy provides prospective and known incoming students with information and learning skills essential to making a smooth transition to college.
2. A formal relationship with local transitional housing providers
    - The Guardian Scholars Program developed a referral relationship with several transitional housing providers, Larkin Street Youth Services, Salvation Army, and 1st Place for Youth. Shared case management review has been initiated with each provider to insure coordinated support for college attendance.
    - The Guardian Scholars Program secured funding from private foundations to provide emergency housing to its students as needed. An average of six students per month use this service.
3. A seamless transition into supportive programs for students transferring to four-year educational institutions
    - CCSF works with four-year colleges in the Bay Area through articulation agreements or memoranda of understanding that include a housing component for youth from care.

Inception and Growth of Program: The GSP at City College of San Francisco began when a financial aid officer took notice of a new form of financial aid designed to benefit youth from care, the Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). The first years of the voucher program left many questions

unanswered. As the financial aid officer learned more about the Chafee ETV funds and began meeting youth from care, he became aware of their needs. His efforts to support these students soon led him to others providing student services on campus as well as those providing support to youth in foster care who are enrolled in the local school district, Independent Living (IL) service providers, and transitional housing authorities. Discussions on how to collaboratively support the students followed.

The early efforts resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of students identified and served. The college identified 56 youth in the 2004–05 academic year. This number grew to 128 by the 2006–07 academic year, and projections predict a continuation of this trend. Although this Guardian Scholars Program started with no additional funding, over time the college recognized that the needs of these students would require a financial commitment in the form of a full-time staff member. The Guardian Scholars program developed at California State University, Fullerton, described below, was the model selected for many of the components necessary to support youth in foster care. The EOP&S program seemed the natural on-campus student service program to enlist as a leading partner for both identifying students and coordinating services. The Walter S. Johnson Foundation provided additional funding to start a full-service program. In the fall of 2007, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation made a second grant to allow this Guardian Scholars Program to expand on its startup efforts. The program now works with multiple foundations to provide book vouchers, food, transportation, and housing assistance services along with college scholarships.

Housatonic Community College | **Supporting Success** (www.hctc.commnet.edu/)

Housatonic Community College (HCC) serves an 11-town area in Southwestern Connecticut centering on the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut's largest city. In collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, high schools, group homes, and foster parents, HCC is committed to providing a smooth transition from high school to college for all students, including those in and from foster care. Housatonic is nationally recognized for its commitment to student success and has been a participating institution since 2005 in the Achieving the Dream student success initiative. Based on the college's development of innovative academic interventions such as Open Entry/Open Exit math courses, technology-based instruction, and intensive student advising and tutoring, in 2009, Housatonic was selected by the Lumina and Gates Foundations to participate in their grant-funded Developmental Education Initiative with the specific goal of improving student success in developmental mathematics. Most recently Housatonic was selected by the Carnegie Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to participate in a collaborative effort to develop a new approach to helping underprepared students succeed in college-level mathematics. Young adults from foster care entering HCC benefit from the college's high level of involvement with these and other success initiatives, all of which are focused on encouraging success, persistence, and completion of college programs.

The Designated Lead (DL) at HCC

Additional encouragement and support for students from foster care is provided by the College through the assignment of a staff member as a designated lead (DL) to address the particular needs of students who experienced foster care. The DL is a central source of academic guidance and advice who assists youth from foster care through the application and registration process, guiding each student from one step to the next. The DL fulfills a critical supportive role that, in part, is often provided by family

members. A network of professionals within each department works with the DL to streamline the enrollment process and to resolve various issues that students from foster care may encounter.

HCC identifies students from foster care and directs these students to the success programs most suited to their needs to facilitate the transition from high school to college. Frequently these programs are scheduled during the summer and serve as academic readiness programs, designed to prepare students to succeed and graduate from college. Informing youth from foster care about access to higher education has engaged the DL in providing outreach services, such as the Bridges success workshops. Guidance counselors encourage students from foster care to participate in these college readiness workshops, developed as part of Achieving the Dream. Information about college and curriculum requirements, placement testing, financial aid and scholarships helps students to navigate the bridge between high school and college.

The Connecticut State Conference

In order to promote improved support services to youth from foster care within all Connecticut higher education institutions, HCC, in concert with the state's Postsecondary Education Committee and Casey Family Services, hosted a statewide conference to identify effective and sustainable support systems for college students from foster care. Cross-system teams were identified to develop support systems for their students at the college level that consisted of Casey Family Services staff, college administrators, faculty, counseling and support staff, Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) department heads, and child welfare/Independent Living (IL) workers.

Core Support Components

Core components of supporting HCC students from foster care are:

- Commitment to identify a designated lead (DL) with primary responsibility to coordinate college support services for students from foster care
- Open communication and information exchange with DCF and associated service providers
- Guidance throughout the admissions process, placement testing, and financial aid assistance
- Assistance with textbook purchases
- Academic advising and schedule building
- Time management and organizational skills instruction
- Academic tracking early in the semester to monitor and remediate lapses in performance
- Personal contact with students via email, social media, and telephone
- Career counseling and employment support services

Administrative Commitment

Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College, has been a champion for the improved success of students from foster care. She stated, "The success of foster youth is directly related to the support they receive before and during their attendance at the Housatonic Community College."

California State University, Fullerton | **Guardian Scholars** (www.fullerton.edu/guardianscholars)
In 1998, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) was approached by a CSUF alumnus and Orangewood Children's Foundation to explore ways to support three students who were formerly in foster care. The Guardian Scholars program emerged from these early efforts. Selective by nature, the program has been highly successful with CSUF students and is widely viewed as the premier model for colleges wishing to implement a comprehensive support program.

Program Description: California State University, Fullerton supports 40 to 50 youth from care at any time through its Guardian Scholars program. Unlike support programs open to all youth from foster care, such as those at Austin Community College and City College of San Francisco, the CSUF program uses criteria to select some youth from foster care who are likely to need and profit from the support and special status of being a Guardian Scholar. The benefits include priority registration for classes and guaranteed housing.

Not all students from foster care who qualify are selected. For example, some may demonstrate during the selection process that they can succeed without the extra support. Consequently, these students are highly motivated, prequalified for admission, verified as independent students for purposes of financial aid, and have at least a 2.5 GPA. Nearly 70 percent of these scholars graduate,[45] a retention rate higher than the general student population at CSUF. The program enjoys the support of influential individuals within the college and community. The college president has consistently been a champion of the program through both his leadership and personal efforts—he even hosts an annual recognition banquet at his home. A successful businessman with ties to both Orangewood Children's Foundation and the university provides critically important inspiration, advocacy, and financial support. Orangewood Children's Foundation acted as a catalyst in the creation of the Guardian Scholars program through its advocacy, scholarships for Orange County youth, ongoing student support, and support for the program's professional staff.

The program's motto is "Making Dreams Come True." It pursues this vision by creating a community of learners who individually have access to the attention and resources that allow them to feel at home on campus and to be successful in their academic endeavors. Two full-time staff members devote their attention to these scholars in a dedicated space located adjacent to the campus bookstore in the heart of campus activities. In addition, liaisons have been identified in each of the critically important student services departments, such as housing, financial aid, and health services.

Guardian Scholars must make a commitment to their own education and to the program. Of the 40 to 50 applicants each year, only 10 to 15 are selected. Once selected, new scholars must commit to a contract with both standard and individualized terms. They must, for example, maintain at least a 2.5 GPA, commit to meet on a prescribed schedule (weekly for new students), and participate in group events.

Orangewood Children's Foundation describes the Guardian Scholars Program as follows:

> The model is designed to provide each student individual attention and access to supportive resources to assist in achieving academic success. No one sector is able to provide the unique ingredients of this program. So, the success of the endeavor is predicated upon a team effort that joins the educational institution, the donors, and mentors. Scholars receive a great deal of individual attention, have access to a variety of educational supports, receive assistance with housing, are linked with a mentor, and are encouraged to become part of a community of learning. Combining

education with life-skill development and loving support differentiates this program from other scholarships.[45]

Orangewood Children's Foundation has identified those key features it believes to be essential for a full-service support program. As noted in Chapter 1, these features form the basis of this framework. The model is also built on the idea that three sectors are essential to the program's success: the educational institution, influential champions outside of the college, and a "catalyst organization." Orangewood's literature describes the role of these sectors.[46]

The educational institution provides:

- A financial aid specialist who helps the student get and maintain a full financial aid package
- Program support in the form of an individual who provides support for each scholar and coordinates extracurricular events
- A guarantee of safe, affordable year-round housing
- Mentors who make a commitment of unconditional support as students navigate the challenges of independence and college life

The champion(s) may provide:

- Engagement with high-level college administration
- Assistance with the program's direction and selection of students
- Financial support
- Advocacy
- Mentorship of one or more scholars
- Interaction and inspiration of staff
- Follow-up support of students once they graduate

The catalyst organization provides:

- Support to staff on issues related to youth from foster care and best practices
- Identification and cultivation of champions
- Expertise in managing difficult situations that may arise
- Networking links with other colleges supporting youth from care
- Assistance with financial resources
- Assistance in recruiting and selecting students

California Polytechnic University, Pomona | **Renaissance Scholars** (dsa.csupomona.edu/rs)
The Renaissance Scholars program at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona) takes a comprehensive approach to supporting youth from foster care. The program falls under the department of Students Support and Equity Programs where the mission is to *make a positive difference in the lives of non-traditional and undecided students through a broad range of high quality*

services that promote access and equity, transition and educational opportunities in support of student learning and success; thus empowering students to become educated and engaged citizens who go on to lead productive and meaningful lives.

The motto of the Renaissance Scholars program is to *empower former foster youth through higher education* in collaboration with the university's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). In addition, through partnerships with various student support offices on campus and community services off-campus, the program has been successful in supporting a select number of youth from foster care through ongoing direct training, monitoring and intervention, community development, and engaging students in proactive decision making.

Program Description and Collaborations: The Renaissance Scholars' stated values of striving for excellence, emphasizing learning, demonstrating resiliency, encouraging and modeling wellness, acting with integrity, exemplifying personal and social responsibility, and cherishing relationships are reflected in how the program designs its support services.

Renaissance Scholars collaborates with multiple constituents, including the Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside County Departments of Children and Family Services, to conduct outreach presentations through programs such as Independent Living (IL) Services. Scholars in the program volunteer their time to reach out to middle and high school students in foster care to help them consider college as an attainable option in their future. The program has a rigorous selection process that includes meeting minimum academic requirements, a written application, attending an in-person information session, and a one-on-one interview with program staff.

As a condition of being a scholar, entering freshman students agree to participate in EOP's Summer Bridge program. In addition all incoming students, including transfers, are expected to participate in the Renaissance Scholars Student Seminar. These seminar sessions are designed to help new students make a smooth transition to college. Students are taught self-management and study skills essential for college success while given opportunities to acclimate themselves as part of the Renaissance Scholars and Cal Poly Pomona communities.

Scholars receive assistance when early signs of difficulty are detected. Through proactive holistic advising, program staff closely monitor students' academic progress, enrollment, and financial and housing needs through mid-quarter progress reports, individual student advising meetings, and data collecting (enrollment, final grades, degree progress, etc.) Students agree in writing to take full advantage of academic advising and tutoring when they enter the program. Scholars also participate in several events during the academic year that help build community and support students' needs. The Fall Kick Off and Annual Retreat are examples of events that combine social networking with an opportunity to renew a sense of academic purpose. These events are filled with workshops on empowerment, team building, trust exercises, and alumni panels on leadership and career development. Lastly, the program sponsors an annual Celebration of Excellence ceremony, which celebrates recent graduates, recognizes current students for exemplary academic and personal accomplishments, and acknowledges campus and community partners.

Inception and Growth of Program: The Renaissance Scholars program was started in 2002 with funding from a private foundation that wanted to replicate and document the successful work of the Guardian Scholars program at California State University, Fullerton. The program staff includes a full-time coordinator and an educational counselor. The program started with 10 students in 2002 and has grown to serve about 50 students.

In 2007 Cal Poly Pomona Renaissance Scholars received the 2007 Blueprint Champion Award at the Creating a Blueprint conference in San Jose, CA. Each year the conference awards committee selects a campus program that serves as a "champion" for moving initiatives forward to benefit youth from foster care on its campus, in the community, or for an educational system. Renaissance Scholars was cited for demonstrating outstanding leadership in coordinating the Southern California Higher Education Foster Youth Consortium for youth-from-foster-care support programs.

Partnerships and the Emergency Fund: Through strong partnerships with on- and off-campus supporters, the Renaissance Scholars program formally developed a group called Friends of Renaissance Scholars. The Friends of Renaissance Scholars are individuals who support Renaissance Scholars by empowering these students through mentoring and supporting educational enrichment activities, providing access to resources such as vision and dental services, and by demonstrating their commitment to the program's mission. Through these amazing partnerships, Renaissance Scholars has created an emergency fund, which plays a critical role in the students' lives in a time of absolute need. The Emergency Fund was created to support basic student needs such as summer housing and food. In addition, Renaissance Scholars has also been able to provide several new scholarship opportunities for students in the program through the generosity of their donors.

Sam Houston State University | Forward Program (www.shsu.edu/forward/)

Program Description: In early 2009, under the direction of its President, Sam Houston State University (SHSU) began to identify and investigate the available support services that were meeting the needs of former youth from foster care, wards of the court, and orphans through researching legislation, state services, and national models. It was found that the largest number of youth in care were in Harris County in Houston just south of SHSU. Shortly thereafter, the Forward Program, a university-wide program, was formed. The Forward Program committee is represented by staff/faculty members from the offices of residence life, orientation, admissions, sponsored programs/grants, sociology and social work, student money management, student activities, counseling, student success initiatives, financial aid, career services, student advising and mentoring, enrollment management, and academic affairs. It is co-chaired by the assistant vice president for academic affairs (Student Success Initiatives) and the vice president for enrollment management.

The mission of Sam Houston State University's Forward Program is to empower former youth from foster care, orphans, and wards of the state by providing a support system necessary to pursue higher education and transition smoothly through college. Forward serves as a resource to help the student build meaningful relationships within and outside the university that are important to successful personal and professional achievements.

Inception and Growth of the Forward Program: One of the first tasks of the program development committee was to identify students and conduct a demographic study. Sixty-nine students were identified using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) data and the State of Texas tuition and fee waiver for youth in foster care, orphans, and wards of the court data (an unfunded state mandate). Of these students, 25 percent transferred to SHSU and 75 percent attended school full time with 40 percent working both on- and off-campus. More than 50 percent of the students were

freshmen. Twenty-eight percent were on probation or suspension after the fall semester. These data support the supposition that student preparation and retention is an issue for this population.

Once the students were identified, they were invited to focus groups and sent online surveys. Several problem areas were identified through this process, one of which was housing for on-campus students over school breaks. Additionally, not all of the students were aware of or receiving all of the financial benefits available to them. The students liked knowing that one office on campus was going to serve as a central point of contact for them. Some were interested in either a peer or faculty/staff mentoring program.

From the feedback, the Forward Program committee developed a safety net program for these students and an action plan. The safety net includes orientation, grants, student success initiatives, counseling, student services, advising, mentoring, money management, Independent Living (IL) services, admissions, residence life, financial aid, scholarships, career services, and community involvement. Although these services are available to all students, SHSU packaged them to address the unique needs of former youth in care, orphans, and wards of the court. A website (www.shsu.edu/forward) for the students was developed, as was a brochure for high school and community college counselors, community agencies, and foster homes.

The office of Student Success Initiatives was chosen as the main contact point, but primary and secondary resource persons were indentified in each of the partner offices. The Forward Program model was built around the idea of forward movement towards graduation. The six program components include:

- ***Thinking Forward*** – How to plan to attend college.
- ***Paying Forward*** – How to apply for financial aid, scholarships, grants, waivers, and other monetary assistance. A scholarship exclusively for students from foster care was established.
- ***Moving Forward*** – How to apply for waivers for year-round on-campus housing during breaks.
- ***Reaching Forward*** – How to find on-campus services.
- ***Working Forward*** – How to find student employment and employment after graduation.
- ***Living Forward*** – How to find community resources.

To continue to learn more about this population of students and their unique needs, the Forward committee members helped to plan and attended Texas Reach: Embracing Higher Education for Foster Youth, a statewide higher education/child welfare convening on the challenges surrounding youth from foster care in postsecondary education and training. There were representatives from community colleges, technical/vocational colleges, four-year universities, Child Protective Services, the legislature, aftercare service providers, and community partners along with several alumni from foster care. As a result of the convening, SHSU was able to network not only statewide, but with representatives from their Department of Family and Child Protective Services region and the adjoining regions in the state. SHSU will continue to expand their network to increase the visibility of the Forward Program so that more youth from foster care will access higher education and be successful.

San José State University | The CME Society (www.sjsu.edu/cmesociety)

San José State University (SJSU) serves those of its students who come from foster care through the Connect, Motivate, Educate (CME) Society. Started in 2005, the Society boasts a membership of 60 youth from care, has recruited 26 mentors, and has assisted over 50 youth in making the transition to college. The CME Society came about as the result of solid social science research, community advocacy, and a commitment at the highest level of the university. A collaborative effort of the many offices in student affairs, the Society has also has had the support of Silicon Valley Children's Fund, a leading Bay Area youth advocacy foundation, and other generous donors.

Program Description: The CME Society is best described by the words chosen for its name: Connect, Motivate, and Educate. CME provides *connections* to essential services for students who were formerly in foster care, with specific attention to obtaining needed financial aid, safe housing, and counseling. To accomplish this, the director of CME has enlisted the enthusiastic support of the department heads in each of the areas of student affairs. For example, the financial aid liaison works closely with students to ensure that they are aware of resources available to them through local, state, and federal resources. The liaison also provides assistance with applications and establishing that students meet eligibility requirements.

Housing is expensive in the Bay Area. The CME society has established priority access to campus housing for its members and coordinates the efforts of the campus housing office with the resources available through the county.

Counseling is available to students on several levels. The director meets frequently with students, provides direct guidance, and (with consent) consults with others on campus such as academic advisors who are also assisting students. Professional counseling services both on- and off-campus are made available to youth as requested and needed.

The Society *motivates* students through its outreach and mentoring programs. CME members reach out to high school students who have interest in and demonstrated ability for a four-year college. The society also recruits professionals in the fields of interest of CME members to provide information and internship opportunities, thus motivating them to pursue their career goals.

The Society *educates* its members in how to secure resources and services necessary for them to be successful in their academic careers. In collaboration with the Silicon Valley Children's Fund, the Society provides educational workshops and materials to youth in high schools on how to prepare for and enter college. More information on the CME Society is available through its website, www.sjsu.edu/cmesociety/about/.

Inception and Growth of the CME Society: Influential, committed champions played a huge role in the development of the Connect, Motivate, Educate Society. Although interest in the development of a program for former youth from care began in 1998, it was through the determination of a Bay Area philanthropist and two SJSU professors who organized a community effort in 2005 that resulted in the university program creation.

The SJSU vice president authorized funding for a part-time position for the program that came to be known as the Connect, Motivate, Educate Society. The dynamic coordinator selected to lead this effort immediately worked to expand this cadre of champions to include campus directors of housing, financial aid, student success services, development, and student academic advising. A grant from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation enabled San José State to expand the program staff to a director and education coordinator.

The CME Society program, in collaboration with many of the student support offices on campus and community services off campus, has been successful in supporting students from foster care through mentoring, ongoing monitoring and intervention, building a social community, engaging students in decision making, and helping students to chart a course toward graduation. CME Society students are a very small percentage of the overall SJSU enrollment, but by participating in this program, they are persisting to graduation at a higher rate (76%) than other student populations.

In Santa Clara County, which surrounds San José State, approximately 200 youth age out of the foster care system each year. Since the creation of the CME Society at San José State University in the spring of 2005, youth enrolled in high education has increased from 12 percent to over 50 percent. The CME Society along with collaborating agencies has played a significant role in facilitating this growth. In the spring of 2009, CME Society saw eight of its members graduate from San José State. The program has had 50 members on average per year.

In the past five years, the CME Society has held several outreach events and reached over 1500 youth in foster care. The CME Society director participates in a community-wide task force for youth in foster care for higher education, which includes the Department of Social Services, the county Office of Education, community colleges, child advocates, and the court.

Part of this outreach has been through the Early Academic Planning Camp each summer. This program has provided youth in foster care going into the 9th grade with an opportunity to stay overnight on a college campus and get a sense of the possibilities for higher education. The highlight of the program has been the participation of CME Society Scholars who share their experiences in foster care and their pathway to college. Camp participants have been from over 17 different California counties. Those students who participated in outreach activities such as the Early Academic Planning Camp and the Luncheon for Higher Education Opportunities reported they valued the opportunity to inspire youth to go to college as the best part of the experience.

The landscape of the campus in both staffing and the management of the San José State have rapidly changed in the past two years. Budget cuts have resulted in layoffs of staff across campus. In spite of this change, the best news for CME Society has been the assumption of funding of the program's director position by Student Affairs. This position has been maintained for the past five years under rollover, grants, and "one time" funds. The decision has provided a more specific target for grant funding and private donor development. The CME Society has remained one of the top priorities for Student Affairs fund-raising by the development office.

Western Michigan University | **Foster Youth and Higher Education Initiative (FYIT)/Seita Scholars Program** (www.wmich.edu/fyit/)

Western Michigan University (WMU) provides comprehensive support to students from foster care through its Foster Youth and HIgher Education Initiative (FYIT). The program is named in honor of Dr. John Seita, who earned his baccalaureate, Master's, and doctorate degrees at WMU. Dr. Seita also is an alumnus of the Michigan foster care system, and he was instrumental in the planning of Seita Scholars Program. The program began in Fall 2008 and has served students from over 23 counties in Michigan, as well as two out-of-state students. Fall 2010 marks the beginning of the program's third year, and a total of 115 new and returning students will be served.

Program Description: The Seita Scholars Program is available to beginning and transfer students. Students must meet WMU's admissibility criteria and qualify for the Educational Training Voucher (ETV) to be eligible for the Seita Scholar. Seita Scholars are required to sign an agreement that stipulates their responsibilities to maintain eligibility in the program. These include meeting regularly with an assigned campus coach, maintaining satisfactory academic performance, residing on campus, paying bills to WMU each semester, accepting work study if granted, refraining from pledging in fraternities or sororities, and refraining from off-campus employment during the freshman year. In addition, freshmen are expected to participate in a meal plan.

The financial support package for Seita Scholars is designed to minimize student loans, and it includes three major components: (1) undergraduate full-tuition Seita scholarship, (2) ETV, and (3) grant-based financial aid. The Seita Scholarship is renewable until the requirements for a baccalaureate degree are completed, which means that the scholarship may continue after Chafee ETV funds have expired.

Comprehensive support is provided to students throughout the college journey, beginning with the transition to WMU, through undergraduate enrollment (with goal being continuous enrollment), and graduation and career transition. A listing of program services is highlighted below:

Transition to College

- Outreach to newly admitted students, including phone contact and face-to-face meetings during orientation with students in the summer prior to starting college. When face-to-face contact does not happen at orientation, campus coaches may visit students in their home communities.
- Gift packages made up of donated items, including welcome packs, exam packs, and special treats on holidays.
- "Customized" programming for tours, Welcome week, and first-year seminar.

Undergraduate Enrollment

- Program events such as Welcome luncheon, holiday dinners, end-of-the-year picnic
- 24-hour support via cell phone 365 days per year
- Campus coach support and advocacy services in seven life domain areas (academics, finances/employment, housing, physical and mental health, social relationships/community connections, cultural and personal identity, life skills)
- Student emergency fund
- Collaboration with academic and student support units on campus, as well as community agencies, to troubleshoot individual challenges and systemic barriers
- Coordination with state agencies including Department of Human Services, Medicaid, Court Systems, Community Mental Health, state agencies supporting foster youth; DHS liaison on-site
- Housing, food, and social activities during semester breaks, as well as moving assistance to designated dorm for the break period. Semester-break housing costs are paid for by the program. Food costs during semester break are supplemented by the program and donation efforts (e.g., home-baked casseroles over winter break closure)

- Midterm academic progress reports
- Services related to learning assessment and understanding learning styles

Graduation and Career Transition

- Career mentoring and peer leadership
- Stopped-out students receive support to aid them in returning to school
- Graduating students receive support to help them transition to employment and finding safe housing in the community

The program is staffed with one full-time program director, an office manager, three campus coaches, and a half-time volunteer coordinator. In addition, a full-time foster care worker is located on-site in the Seita program to provide DHS liaison services. Campus coaches each provide direct service support to approximately 38 students. This ratio of 1 coach to 38 students is possible because of the additional support offered by the DHS liaison and the volunteer coordinator. Without these additional resources, a ratio of 1 coach to 25 students would be considered the maximum.

Data-driven decision making is a program priority, and several data collection methods are used. First, standardized assessments are used to gather information about students, such as the Noel-Levitz College Student Inventory, which measures student readiness for college. Second, institutional data provide information about student demographic and educational background characteristics, as well as student-outcome measures (e.g., GPA, continuous enrollment, major, and work study earnings). Third, using a checklist system of recording, campus coaches note the following information about their interactions with each student: type of contact (i.e., text, phone, face-to-face), duration (number of minutes), and main reason for interaction (i.e.., academics, finances, housing, health, relationships, personal identity, life skills). All data gathered are routinely summarized and reviewed for program planning purposes. For example, assessment reports for new students are summarized and reviewed prior to the start of the school year, campus coach contact summary reports are generated and reviewed monthly, and student outcome measures are examined at the end of each semester.

Inception and Growth of the Seita Scholars Program: The idea to support students from foster care at WMU emerged in April 2007 when the university's director of financial aid and admissions, along with a professor from social work, attended a statewide summit meeting about youth in foster care and higher education issues that was co-sponsored by the Michigan Campus Compact and the Department of Human Services. The purpose of the summit meeting was to share information and begin postsecondary educational planning for youth formerly in foster care in Michigan who have aged out of the system. Following the summit meeting, the director of financial aid committed to creating a need-based scholarship targeting youth in foster care, while the director of admissions set out to make changes in recruiting strategies, including adding a question to the WMU application form that asks if applicants were ever in foster care after the age of 14. In addition, the social work faculty member began the process of engaging campus units to identify services and service gaps for WMU students from foster care. The total planning effort began in the months following the initial summit meeting but accelerated during the fall 2007 semester after the planning team received support from WMU's president, Dr. John Dunn, to move forward with planning efforts.

Program Development Milestones

April 2007	Michigan statewide summit meeting on Foster Youth and Higher Education.
Fall 2007	Social work faculty member met with each student affairs department (e.g., residence life, counseling services, health center) and academic support (e.g., scholarship programs, writing center, advising) on campus to raise awareness of the needs of youth in foster care, and determine availability of existing services to meet those needs.
September 2007	Formalized a planning committee (on- and off-campus partners).
October 2007	WMU hosted a regional meeting that was a follow-up to the April summit.
November 2007	A Student Advisory Group, composed of 8 WMU students from foster care, became involved in program planning and design efforts.
January 2008	Held a campus-wide strategic planning meeting inviting those academic and student support departments visited in Fall 2007.
February 2008	Launched www.wmich.edu/fyit website, publicized scholarship, and named the program in honor of Dr. John Seita.
August 2008	Welcomed the first cohort of Seita Scholars (N=51) to WMU's campus!
November 2008	Formalized director position for the Seita Scholars Program.
Spring 2009	Hired "campus coaches," clinically trained staff providing 24-hour support.
August 2009	Welcomed 29 returning and 47 new Seita Scholars. Total of 76 students.
Fall 2009	Total of over $650,000 received from W. K. Kellogg and other foundations to support program costs; Michigan DHS assigns a foster care worker to be liaison to the Seita Scholars Program. The DHS liaison has an office in the Seita Scholars Program at WMU. Hired an FTE office manager and a ½-time volunteer coordinator.
December 2010	Seita Scholars Program office (1,500 sq. ft) opened on campus.
May 2010	Hired third campus coach; first two Seita Scholars graduate.
August 2010	Expect to welcome 67 returning and 48 new Seita Scholars. Total of 115 students.

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Appendix A

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) and Students in or from Foster Care

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (Public Law 110-315) (HEOA) was enacted on August 14, 2008; it reauthorizes the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (the HEA). The HEOA makes a number of changes to programs authorized under the HEA. It authorizes new programs and makes changes to other laws. One important change recognizes and addresses for the first time the unique needs of students in or from foster care.

There is clear evidence that children and youth who are in foster care are significantly underrepresented in higher education. The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education reports that high school graduation, higher education enrollment, and college completion rates for these youth are significantly lower than their peers. With up to 70 percent of those in foster care desiring to go to college and only about 9 percent completing any postsecondary degree,[1] the HEOA's attention to these young adults promises important advances for their higher education success. With over 500,000 children and youth in foster care on any given day and over 20,000 emancipating/ageing out of care annually, higher education preparation, access, and success has been recognized as a priority.

Four sections of the HEOA call out for both pre-collegiate and postsecondary education services targeting students in or from foster care. These are:

- Section 403 – Federal TRIO Programs
- Section 473 – Definitions
- Section 490 – Early Awareness of Financial Aid Eligibility
- Section 707 – Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)

These sections with the specific wording that addresses students in and from foster care are provided on the following pages. For these students to fully benefit from this policy advance, education and child welfare professionals at all levels need to be knowledgeable of these HEOA changes and translate them into effective practice. Casey Family Programs provides several complimentary publications that will be helpful in serving these students and complying with HEOA. These include:

- *A Road Map for Learning: Improving Educational Outcomes in Foster Care*
- *Casey Life Skills, Education Supplements, Levels I, II, III, and IV*
- *It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training and Financial Aid Excerpt*
- *Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: A Key to Higher Education Access and Success*
- *Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care – A Framework for Program Enhancement*

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Influential higher education professional organizations provide important advocacy for improved higher education success for students from foster care. They provide additional information for serving students from foster care. They include:

- American Association of Community Colleges/AACC (www.aacc.nche.edu/)
- Council for Opportunity in Education/COE (/www.coenet.us/)
- Institute for Higher Education Policy/IHEP (www.ihep.org/)
- National Academic Advising Association/NACADA (www.nacada.ksu.edu/)
- National Association for Student Financial Aid Administrators/NASFAA (www.nasfaa.org)
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education/NASPA (www.naspa.org/)

For further information on serving students in or from foster care, contact:

John Emerson
Postsecondary Education Advisor
Casey Family Programs (www.casey.org)
206.270.4921
jemerson@casey.org

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT (HEOA)

Law No: 110-315 [www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html]

(Enacted on August 14, 2008)

HEOA Sections Pertaining to Students in or from Foster Care

Title IV—Student Assistance
Part A—Grants to Students in Attendance at Institutions of Higher Education
Sec. 403. Federal TRIO Programs.

(D) in paragraph (6), by adding at the end the following new sentence: "The Secretary shall, as appropriate, require each applicant for funds under the programs authorized by this chapter to identify and make available services under such program, including mentoring, tutoring, and other services provided by such program, **to foster care youth (including youth in foster care and youth who have left foster care after reaching age 13)** or to homeless children and youths as defined in section" (p. 3192)

"(3) Notwithstanding this subsection and subsection (h)(4), **individuals who are foster care youth (including youth in foster care and youth who have left foster care after reaching age 13)**, or homeless children and youths as defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, shall be eligible to participate in programs under sections 402B, 402C, 402D, and 402F." (p. 3195)

"TALENT SEARCH.—

"(7) programs and activities as described in subsection (b) or paragraphs (1) through (6) of this subsection that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are

homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students." (p. 3199)

UPWARD BOUND

"(7) programs and activities as described in subsection (b), subsection (c), or paragraphs (1) through (6) of this subsection that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students." (p. 3200)

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

"(3) to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students. (p. 3201)

PERMISSIBLE SERVICES

"(5) securing temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for—"(A) students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)) or were formerly homeless children and youths; and "(B) **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**; and (6) programs and activities as described in subsection (b) or paragraphs (1) through (4) of this subsection that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students." (p. 3202)

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTERS

"(11) programs and activities as described in paragraphs (1) through (10) that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **Students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students." (g) STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES.—Section 402G(b) (20 U.S.C. 1070a–17(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph: "(5) Strategies for recruiting and serving hard to reach populations, including students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths (as such term is defined in section 725 of

the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)), **students who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system**, or other disconnected students." (p. 3204)

PART F—NEED ANALYSIS

Sec. 473. Definitions.

(c) **INDEPENDENT STUDENT.**—Section 480(d)(1) (as amended by Public Law 110–84) (20 U.S.C. 1087vv(d)(1)) is amended— (1) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following: "(B) **is an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court, or was an orphan, in foster care, or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older**;" and (2) by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following: "(C) **is, or was immediately prior to attaining the age of majority, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship as determined by a court of competent jurisdiction in the individual's State of legal residence."** (p. 3270)

PART G—GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Sec. 490. Early awareness of financial aid eligibility.

"(4) PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.—Not later than two years after the date of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Secretary, in coordination with States, institutions of higher education, early intervention and outreach programs under this title, other agencies and organizations involved in college access and student financial aid, secondary schools, organizations that provide services to individuals that are or were homeless, **to individuals in foster care, or to other disconnected individuals**, local educational agencies, public libraries, community centers, businesses, employers, employment services, workforce investment boards, and movie theaters, shall implement a public awareness campaign in order to increase national awareness regarding the availability of financial aid under this title. The public awareness campaign shall disseminate accurate information regarding the availability of financial aid under this title and shall be implemented, to the extent practicable, using a variety of media, including print, television, radio, and the Internet. The Secretary shall design and implement the public awareness campaign based upon relevant independent research and the information and dissemination strategies found most effective in implementing paragraphs (1) through (3)." (p. 3307)

TITLE VII—GRADUATE AND POSTSECONDARY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Sec. 707. Fund for the improvement of postsecondary education (FIPSE).

"...(12) the provision of support and assistance for demonstration projects to provide comprehensive support services to ensure that homeless students, or students who were in foster care or were a ward of the court at any time before the age of 13, enroll and succeed in postsecondary education, including providing housing to such students during periods when housing at the institution of higher education is closed or generally unavailable to other students." (p. 3357)

[i] Fact Sheet: *Educational Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster and Out-of Home Care (2008)*. National Working Group on Foster care and Education. Fact Sheet: Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA, December.

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[iv] Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/

Appendix B | Program Development Indicators

Core Elements and Indicators for Program Development

The student support services staff interviewed in the preparation of this framework agreed on the importance of the 12 core elements. The paths they took in developing their programs varied considerably, however. Their institutions' missions, funding, state policies, local economic conditions, and other factors accounted for this variation. We have structured this framework around the core elements, breaking them into three groups: those elements that provide a foundation for program development, those that address the most fundamental needs of college students coming from foster care (Phase 1), and those that are important but might be seen as second steps (Phase 2).

We asked the early program implementers to describe how their programs evolved. From their responses, we created the following table of indicators of development. There is no absolute order to these indicators and no timeline suggested for completion. They are offered as starting points for developing a plan of action and monitoring program development progress.

Core Elements and Indicators for Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
1. Designated Leadership	Designated lead (DL) assigned. DL familiarizes self with issues and resources related to youth from care. DL develops systems to identify all youth from care. DL meets, develops trusting relationship with, and tracks students who are youth from care. College offices each establish an individual who acts as liaison to DL. Referral system to liaisons is established. DL conducts outreach to youth in care through printed information. DL seeks support from within and outside college for advocacy and program development (see Champions and Collaborations).	DL and office liaisons actively participate in professional development opportunities and peer networking (see Staff Peer Support and Professional Development). DL expands knowledge of campus and community resources (ongoing).	As time and resources allow, DL meets regularly with students, provides guidance, and makes highly informed referrals based on extensive knowledge of each student's needs.

Core Elements and Indicators for Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
2. Internal and External Champions.	Champions make high-level college administrators aware of student challenges (in situations where champion awareness precedes administrative awareness). Internal champions solicit support from within campus community and seek the support of those who might become champions outside the campus community. Internal and external champions use their off-campus contacts to gain support and resources for students. Champions may provide direct support to students.	Internal champions develop new resources. External champions solicit donors. Champions recognize and celebrate student accomplishments. Champions may use contacts to arrange employment or internships. Champions participate on the advisory committee.	Champions use data to advocate for stable funding. External champions may host awareness-raising events with policymakers, with the target outcome being state policies and legislation that address the needs of college students coming from foster care.
3. Collaborations with Community Agencies.	The DL and liaisons identify resources and contacts available within the state and community that support youth from foster care. The DL participates in events sponsored by IL and other service organizations to reach out to potential students and their caseworkers. Community foundations and social service agencies collaborate to share resources and find solutions that will benefit youth from foster care enrolled in college.	Community foundations and social service agencies on advisory committee (see Data-Driven Decision Making). DL collaborates with agencies to identify and recruit students. Community, foundations, social service agencies, and school districts share student data to improve transition to college. Community agencies assist with recruiting other partners.	College, community foundations, and social service agencies may enter into memoranda of agreement that formalize their relationship and the services to be provided. College advocates for policies that increase community-based support services for students.

Core Elements and Indicators for **Program Development**

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
4. Data-Driven Decision Making.	College examines existing data sources for identifying students and their outcomes. Based on desired student and program outcomes, college determines need for additional data. DL establishes a system for tracking data on student outcomes and use of college resources. DL establishes an advisory committee. Advisory committee reviews early data and makes recommendations for program development and evaluation. DL uses early alert data to monitor student progress and intervenes based on need.	College administration and advisory committee review student outcome and student resource use data periodically and make recommendations based on that review. College administration uses data to determine need for program adjustments and resource allocation. Program evaluation provided to campus community.	DL shares participation and outcome data with peer institutions. Champions share data as appropriate with potential donors, existing donors, and policymakers.
5. Staff Peer Support and Professional Development.	DL identifies support providers in neighboring colleges. DL and liaisons hold informal discussions with counterparts in neighboring colleges. DL and liaisons participate in existing networks, mailing lists, or council of colleges if they exist.	DL attends professional conferences relevant to youth from care.	DL and liaisons develops or participates in existing professional mentorship opportunities. If no mailing lists or council of colleges exists, DL works with peers at other colleges, state agencies, or community partners to start one or both.

Core Elements and Indicators for **Program Development**

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
6. Sustainability Planning.	The advisory committee reviews, discusses, and approves a sustainability goal and plan (see Data-Driven Decision Making). DL initiates long-term relationships with community partners (see Collaborating with Community Agencies). DL works to eliminate service delivery redundancies. Data regarding program usage and student outcome are tracked, reported, and discussed with the advisory committee and the college administration.	Student participation data should be increasing; data are collected to determine effective recruitment strategies. Student service providers should demonstrate an increased awareness of students' needs; data are collected to understand extent of awareness. Outcome data are provided to funding sources to demonstrate need for appropriate funding. Outcome data are used to establish a continuous improvement plan. An individual in the advancement/development office is assigned responsibility for soliciting financial support to meet unfunded needs of youth from foster care.	Achievements of students and staff are documented and celebrated. Stable funding from both private and institutional sources is secured.

Phase 1 | Core Elements of Student Support and Phases of Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
7. Year-Round Housing and Other Basic Needs.	DL develops detailed knowledge of college and community housing resources. At colleges with housing, the DL refers youth to the housing office, monitors student housing status, and intervenes to find solutions to problems as needed. At colleges without housing, the DL refers youth to community housing resources, monitors housing status, and intervenes to find solutions to problems as needed. DL and housing office plan to meet unmet housing needs.	DL develops detailed knowledge of college and community housing resources At colleges with housing, the DL refers youth to the housing office, monitors student housing status, and intervenes to find solutions to problems as needed At colleges without housing, the DL refers youth to community housing resources, monitors housing status, and intervenes to find solutions to problems as needed DL and housing office plan to meet unmet housing needs	Colleges without housing contract with nearby colleges with housing to meet unmet housing needs. College advocates for stable housing options for youth.
8. Financial Aid.	College identifies students by querying their school's FAFSA database for positive responses to the dependency status quesions. Liaison in financial aid (FA) is identified. DL and FA liaison assist students with FA forms, conduct follow-up, and troubleshoot problems. DL works with students to resolve system-based problems such as ETV checks issued after payment deadlines. DL and FA liaison train IL caseworks and high school counselors on how to access FA for students. DL and FA liaison create and disseminate brochures and posters on FA.	DL seeks resources and advocates for an emergency fund. DL, FA, and development office identify donors willing to assist students whose financial needs are not met by conventional FA. DL or other student services staff provide training for students in basic personal finance including budgeting, money management, and credit. College identifies students by working with the state Chafee ETV coordinator and adding a question about foster care status to the college's application.	The College has secured private donors willing to ensure that students do not have to take out loans. FA liaison conducts an annual personalized review of the FA status of each student and confers with each student to resolve any shortfalls or anticipated problems.

Phase 1 | Core Elements of Student Support and Phases of Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
9. Academic Advising and Career Counseling and Supplemental Support.	The DL identifies an academic advisor (AA) who will work with each student during the time the student is in college. The AA meets frequently with the student and develops trust. The DL and AA monitor early academic alerts and intervene quickly. The AA refers students to tutoring and follow-up as necessary.	AA assesses the adequacy of early alert systems and augments with additional systems as required. AA or DL use a formal individual education plan that leads directly to a career goal. Students are responsible for monitoring and adjusting their college completion plan.	Colleges establishes priority registration for students coming from foster care. Support services used by students are routinely tracked with additional services added or created as necessary.

Phase 2

Additional Core Elements of Student Support and Phases of Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
10. Personal Guidance, Counseling, and Supplemental Support.	DL gets to know each student and the stressors that affect him or her; the DL provides personal guidance consistent with skill and training. DL identifies existing support programs that provide mentorship; DL helps students find a mentor using existing campus or community support programs. The DL refers students to campus and off-campus resources for childcare, transportation vouchers, food banks, and other human services. DL identifies a liaison in the campus disability services office and refers students with identified disabilities. DL identifies one or more liaisons in the campus counseling center, student health center, or other departments training counselors and therapists; as appropriate, the DL refers students to campus counseling and therapy resources. The DL becomes familiar with community mental health agencies, their costs, and referral procedures. When necessary and working in collaboration with the campus counseling center, DL may assist students to get counseling in a community clinic.	The College develops a collaborative relationship with community-based mental health agencies to fill gaps in resources not available on campus. With student consent, the DL consults with the student's social worker or IL staff to understand the issues and resources available to the student through those agencies or organizations.	DL develops a specialized peer mentorship program using more senior youth as mentors. The College recognizes the time-intensive nature of supporting students from care and budgets an appropriate amount for staff time and appropriate. Students have access to affordable health insurance that includes adequate counseling and medication.

Phase 2

Additional Core Elements of Student Support and Phases of Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
11. Opportunities for Student Community Engagement and Leadership.	With a high level of student involvement, DL may initiate peer support, social, and celebratory events that are valued by students. Examples might include end-of-the quarter pizza parties, group attendance at athletic events, or graduation celebrations. DL helps students take on leadership roles in planning and executing events.	DL encourages students to engage in campus activities and assume leadership roles based on their interests. DL encourages and assists students in advocating for unmet needs by presenting testimony to college and state policymakers. DL encourages and assists students to participate in public speaking and training opportunities based on the student's readiness, availability, and interest.	College provides students with a dedicated space to gather, study, and socialize. As the students' role in program development and growth grow, they take on advisory roles and responsibilities.
12. Planned Transitions To College.	DL works with various campus offices (e.g., recruiting, minority affairs, TRIO, and Gear-up) to coordinate outreach efforts to attract potential students. DL develops and disseminates brochures that target youth, caregivers, and IL program caseworkers. DL provides local schools, child welfare offices, and IL staff with information about postsecondary education and training opportunities and support services.	DL presents information about academics, college life, financial aid, housing, summer bridge programs, etc. to targeted group meetings sponsored by community partners, school districts and IL programs. DL provides a first-year experience class (or collaborates with other offices that offer such classes) to help students develop the personal management and study skills necessary to be successful in college.	In collaboration with local IL programs and community organizations, DL conducts a day or multi-day college awareness program for prospective high school juniors and seniors in foster care. DL participates in college tours for youth from foster care and supports local college orientation experiences.

Phase 2

Additional Core Elements of Student Support and Phases of Program Development

Core Element	Indicators of Early-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Mid-Stage Program Development	Indicators of Advanced Program Development
Planned Transitions between Colleges.	DLs in community and four-year colleges share information about their support programs and discuss issues of common interest. DLs in community colleges share information with students about support in four-year colleges. DLs in community colleges arrange a meeting of students with four-year college DLs.	Four-year colleges provide opportunities for housing to students attending nearby community colleges during the summer and breaks between academic quarters.	DL follows up with students who transfer and inquires about advising issues.
Transitions from College to Employment.	DL meets with the campus career center, identifies and trains a liaison. DL introduces youth from care to the career center liaison early in college career. The Career center liaison works with students from foster care to assist them with on- and off-campus employment during the academic year, holiday breaks, and summer.	The Career liaison helps students develop a post-college career plan during their first and second year of college. DL arranges for career center-sponsored information, résumé development, and practice interview sessions. The Career center liaison and champions use their contacts to assist students to explore careers through internships.	DL helps students to transition to a career by working with them to take full advantage of all school and community career services. DL follows up with exiting students and graduates to assess employment and independent living status. DL refers former students to community or college services as needed.

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Appendix C | Program Planning and Improvement Guide

Directions: This institutional self-assessment and planning tool is offered as a way of structuring a discussion on the topic of what is currently being done and what might be done to assist college students who are currently in or were formerly in foster care. The questions were suggested and reviewed by student support services staff in colleges that have gone through (or are going through) the process of developing support services in their colleges. Some questions are "yes," "needs work," and "no" in nature. Others ask for reflection on how services are or might be provided. Space is provided for prioritizing the need for work, a quick note for the action to be undertaken, dates, and assignment of responsibility. As in any good discussion, more questions should arise that will help focus the planning effort. A Word document is available for downloading at www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/SupportingSuccess.htm and can be customized as needed.

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
1. Designated Leadership	Youth from care need a caring trusted staff person who has primary responsibility to identify them and consistently provide guidance in navigating higher education. Notes:										
1.1 Do we know which (and how many) students are from care?											
1.2 Do we have a program (or programs) with a designated mission specific to coordinating the support needs of these students?											
1.3 If "yes" to number 1.2, is the individual working with these students also working in formal or informal partnership with other offices on campus and in the community?											
1.4 If "yes" to number 1.2, are we conducting outreach to potential students who are have been in foster care?											
1.5 If "yes" to number 1.2, how are we supporting our current students from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
1.6 If "no" to number 1.2, which offices should be directly involved and which is best suited to take the lead in identifying and supporting youth from care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
2. **Internal and External Champions**	Champions provide direct and indirect program support through influence, contacts, advocacy, and sometimes funding. Notes:										
2.1 How could influential individuals assist the college in supporting students currently or formerly in foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
2.2 Have donors approached the college with a special interest in assisting these students or disadvantaged youth in general?											
2.3 If yes to 2.2, would any of these be potential champions?											
2.4 Are there influential faculty members who because of their personal or professional experience have an interest in the unique needs of these students?											

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
3. **Collaborations with Community Agencies**	Support programs should have strong collaborative connections with local social services agencies, foundations, and Independent Living programs. Notes:										
3.1 Who on our campus is already connected with social service agencies and would be in a position to assist in making connections with relevant foster care agencies?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
3.2 Which local, county, and state social service agencies, foundations, and Independent Living providers are we aware of that provide service to youth from care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
3.3 Does our institution already have a contract to provide Independent Living training for caregivers?											
4. **Data-driven decision making**	Decisions on individual support and program development should be based on data. Notes:										
4.1 Have we identified all students on campus who are currently or were formerly in foster care?											

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
4. 2 If yes to 4.1, do we know the outcomes of these students in terms of grades, retention, graduation, engagement in school activities?											
4.3 If yes to 4.1, do we know what they think they need from the college to be successful?											
4.4 Does our student affairs staff know what they need to know to help these students succeed? (e.g.: Who they are? What a typical student's experience might have been? How much trust they might expect? etc.)											
5. **Staff Peer Support and Professional Development**	New and established support program staff benefit from belonging to a network of peers in other colleges who support youth from care. Notes:										
5.1 What other colleges in our region or higher education system provide support to students currently or formerly in foster care? Who takes the lead?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note/ Action**		**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**	
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
5.2 How could we benefit from communication with the designated leaders in those colleges?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
5.3 What agencies and foundations in our area might be interested and knowledgeable in helping us develop professional development and communication networks?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
6. **Sustainability Planning**	Planning should be undertaken to sustain successful support initiatives. Notes:										
6.1 Do we have administrative support to take the initial steps to develop a support program?											
6.2 What outcome data do we need to demonstrate the effect of support efforts?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
6.3 Who in the community or college (e.g., development office) would consider funding our support efforts?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										

Core Elements Necessary for Program Development

Status and Need for Program Development									
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**					
6.4 What can we do to design a support program that is cost-effective?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								

Phase 1 | Core Elements to Support Student Basic Needs—Recommended as High Priority for Discussion and Action

Status and Need for Program Development										
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note /Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**	
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**						
7. **Year-Round Housing and Other Basic Needs**	Youth from foster care need to have priority for available campus housing and access to year-round housing. For campuses without dormitories, they need assistance in finding stable, safe, affordable housing, transportation, and food services. Notes:									
7.1 Does our campus currently provide access to housing and food services to youth from foster care in the summer and during academic breaks?										
7.2 If no to 7.1, what process needs to be followed to gain such access?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:									

Phase 1 | Core Elements to Support Student Basic Needs—Recommended as High Priority for Discussion and Action

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note /Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
7.3 Does our campus currently provide priority access to housing for youth from foster care?											
7.4 If no to 7.3, what can be done to gain priority access?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
7.5 For colleges that do not have housing: Are there other segments of the student body (such as foreign students) for whom we provide or facilitate housing?											
7.6 If yes to 7.5, how can we expand to include youth from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
7.7 Who are the IL providers in our area and what resources do they have available for existing or prospective students?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
7.8 What government or private agencies address the low- or no-income housing issues in our area? How can we collaborate with these agencies?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note /Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**							
8. Financial Aid—Maximize Fnancial Aid Resources	Youth from foster care need a financial aid package that maximizes funds to cover tuition and living expenses and minimizes the need for loans. Notes:										
8. 1 Does one individual in the financial aid or other office specialize in financial aid packaging for students in or from foster care?											
8.2 Have any local philanthropists identified youth from foster care as a target population for support?											
8.3 Does the college have an emergency fund to assist independent students in a financial crisis? If so, how do students access it?											
8.4 How do financial aid officers use data from the independent student question on the FAFSA form?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
8.5 Are our financial aid officers familiar with the difference between establishing youth from foster status for the FAFSA form and eligibility for Chafee ETV funds?											

Phase 1 | Core Elements to Support Student Basic Needs—Recommended as High Priority for Discussion and Action

|----------Status and Need for Program Development----------|								
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note /Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low | Medium | High**					
9. Academic Advising, Career Counseling, and Supplemental Support	Former youth from foster care benefit from frequent contact with knowledgeable and consistent academic and career counselors. Notes:								
9.1 Do our academic advisors know which students are from foster care?									
9.2 If "no" to question 9.1, how might they get that information?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
9.3 If "yes" to question 9.1, how are they using that information?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								

Phase 2 | Additional Core Elements of Secondary Priority to Support Student Need—Recommended for Second Priority and Action

|----------Status and Need for Program Development----------								
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Comp. Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low I Medium I High**					
10 Personal Guidance, Counseling, and Supplemental Support	Personal guidance, mental health counseling, and health insurance are essential for youth coming from care because of their history of abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Notes:								
10.1 What proactive measures are in place to identify students with mental health issues? Could these measures be extended to target youth from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
10.2 What are the sources of mentorship on campus? Are the mentors trained? Could these resources be extended or training added to make them a valuable resource to youth from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
10.3 What mental health services are available at no cost? Can the number of counseling sessions be increased to meet the needs of youth from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
10.4 What financial aid resources are available to youth from foster care to cover the costs of healthcare in general and mental healthcare specifically?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								

Status and Need for Program Development										
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**	**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Comp. Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low I Medium I High**					
11. **Opportunities for Student Community Engagement and Leadership**	Youth from foster care benefit from inclusion and engagement with campus activities. Some seek out opportunities to be with others from foster care while others choose to avoid such association. Notes:								
11.1 What are the typical ways that students engage with campus activities and how is that engagement encouraged?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
11.2 What barriers might exist to make the engagement of youth from foster care difficult?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								
11.3 How might these barriers be broken down?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility								
12. **Planned Trransitions to College, between Colleges, and to Employment**	Youth from foster care need assistance in planning for college, applying, and beginning their college career. Once on track to complete an associate of arts degree, many require help transferring to a four-year college. Most youth need help making a successful transition to a career. Each of these transitions involves letting go of one academic home and adjusting to a new one. This adjustment has a different meaning for youth without family support. Notes:								
12.1 Do our college recruiters currently conduct outreach to youth from foster care?									
12.2 If no to 12.1, what opportunities exist to reach out to youth from foster care?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:								

Phase 2 | Additional Core Elements of Secondary Priority to Support Student Need—Recommended for Second Priority and Action

Status and Need for Program Development											
Core Elements and Key Activities	**Status**			**Priority**			**Note/ Action**	**Target Date**	**Start Date**	**Comp. Date**	**Responsibility**
	Yes	**Need Work**	**No**	**Low I Medium I High**							
12.3 How does our financial aid office use the data from the FAFSA question (question 53 in 2008) to help guide students to support services?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
12.4 Is our college transfer office aware of which students are from foster care?											
12.5 If yes to 12.4, how is that information obtained and how is it used?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
12.6 Does our college career and/or student employment center have a system for giving priority status to some student job seekers?											
12.7 If yes to 12.6, do students from foster care get priority access to jobs? If not, what process is used to gain priority status?	Notes, priority, target dates, and responsibility:										
12.8 Are career mentorship opportunitues available to students? How are they accessed?											

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Appendix D | Selected Readings and Resources

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