

Creating Successful Employment Opportunities for Transitioning Foster Youth

Sponsored through a partnership of New Ways to Work; the Child and Family Policy Institute of California; the Foster Youth Employment, Training, and Housing Taskforce; and Casey Family Programs



**Foster Youth Employment
California Regional Forums 2006**

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for Transitioning Foster Youth

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

- All youth are engaged in their learning in the classroom**
- Adults promote high academic and technical success
 - Workplace experiences support classroom learning
 - Multiple educational approaches address individual needs
 - Standards-based alternatives are available at all levels of education
- ALL YOUTH ARE EDUCATED AND READY TO LEARN*

CAREER PREPARATION

- All youth are engaged in their learning in the workplace and community**
- Early employment exposure and experiences are provided
 - Quality work-based learning opportunities are in place
 - Employers and workplace partners provide work and learning opportunities
 - Classroom learning supports career preparation
- ALL YOUTH ARE EXPERIENCED AND READY FOR CAREERS*

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORT

- All youth receive individualized services and community support**
- All youth have safe and stable living arrangements
 - All youth have strong and enduring adult and peer connections
 - All youth receive life skills training and practice
 - A full range of social services is available
- ALL YOUTH ARE CONNECTED TO ADULTS, PEERS, AND SERVICES*

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- Youth are visible and active in leadership roles**
- Youth actively participate in decisions about their lives
 - Youth voice drives policy and decision making
 - Youth are encouraged and supported in leadership roles
 - Youth leadership opportunities are leveraged and connected
- ALL YOUTH ARE CONFIDENT AND READY FOR LIFE*

COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

- A formal network provides the foundation for an equitable and coordinated system**
- All activities embody a youth development approach
 - Individualized, youth-centered plans guide programs and services
 - Engaged community leadership supports collaboration
 - Adequate resources are available and leveraged
 - A quality system is responsive to individual and cultural differences
 - The community publicly supports a focus on youth issues

A CONNECTED, OPERATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS YOUTH SUCCESS



WIA Workforce System at a Glance

- September 2006 Unemployment:
 - Overall 4.6%
 - Teens (16-19) 16.4%
 - Black Teens 32.2%
- 1 in 5 youth age 16-24 out-of-work, out-of-school
- Disparity between number of youth eligible for WIA and those served
- # of Youth Served is Declining



WIA Workforce System cont.

- Primarily an adult system
- Primary mode of delivery are “one-stops”
- Programs are named differently
- Priorities driven by regulation & policy
- New outcome measures (common measures)
 - More stringent outcomes
 - Global exclusions, Planned gap
- Separate youth component:
 - Targets economically disadvantaged youth
 - in school/out of school and older/younger
 - 10 program elements



WIA 10 Elements

1. Activities leading to completion of secondary school
2. Alternative secondary school services
3. Summer employment
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences
5. Occupational skill training
6. Leadership development activities
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring
9. Follow-up services
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling



WIA Workforce Structure and Governance

- 50 local areas
- Federally driven with limited state flexibility
- WIBs and local Youth Councils have governance responsibilities
- Changing federal and statewide program focus
 - customer is defined as employers
 - new vision for youth - 4 pillars
 - performance driven, common measures
- Dollars are formula driven, services delivered through sub-contracts
- 15% Governor's Discretionary
- Youth can be served in both adult and youth system



DOL's New Vision for Youth Vision Statement

Out-of-school youth (and those most at risk of dropping out) are an important part of the new workforce “supply pipeline” needed by businesses to fill job vacancies in the knowledge economy.

WIA-funded youth programs will provide leadership by serving as a catalyst to connect these youth with quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.



What's Driving WIA Youth Programming

- Focus on target populations
- Shift to serve higher percentages of out-of-school youth
- More stringent outcome measures
- Less incentives to work with younger youth



Child Welfare System at a Glance

(as it relates to youth employment)

- **Child Welfare focuses on 0-18 (with few beyond 18)**
 - **Less than 50% are focus of youth employment conversations**
 - 29% of foster youth are 11-15 years old
 - 18% are 16-18 years old
- **Inability to focus solely on youth leads to less than desirable outcomes for foster youth**
- **51% nationally were unemployed**
- **Youth that are part of the system after age 18 fare much better**
- **But upon turning 18 or 19, most foster youth are no longer eligible**
- **We know that as many as half of the nation's aging out foster youth are ill-prepared for the labor market or adulthood**
- **25-50% of newly aged out foster youth experienced homeless and unemployment during the first two years of emancipation**



Child Welfare System cont.

- **Workers in the system are focused on system outcomes vs. individual child outcomes**
- **Counties are required to annually update a three-year “System Improvement Plan (SIP)” based upon review of system-wide data**
 - **May focus on foster youth but may not**
- **No dedicated funding for employment transition services**
 - **Only possible source of funding in Child Welfare is ILP**
- **ILP funding has been increased in several past years (not this year)**
- **Is insufficient to serve all transition-age youth effectively**
 - **Funding is the responsibility of county of origin vs. county of residence**
- **Legislation requires coordination with WIA One-Stops without specific funding or technical assistance to help connect**

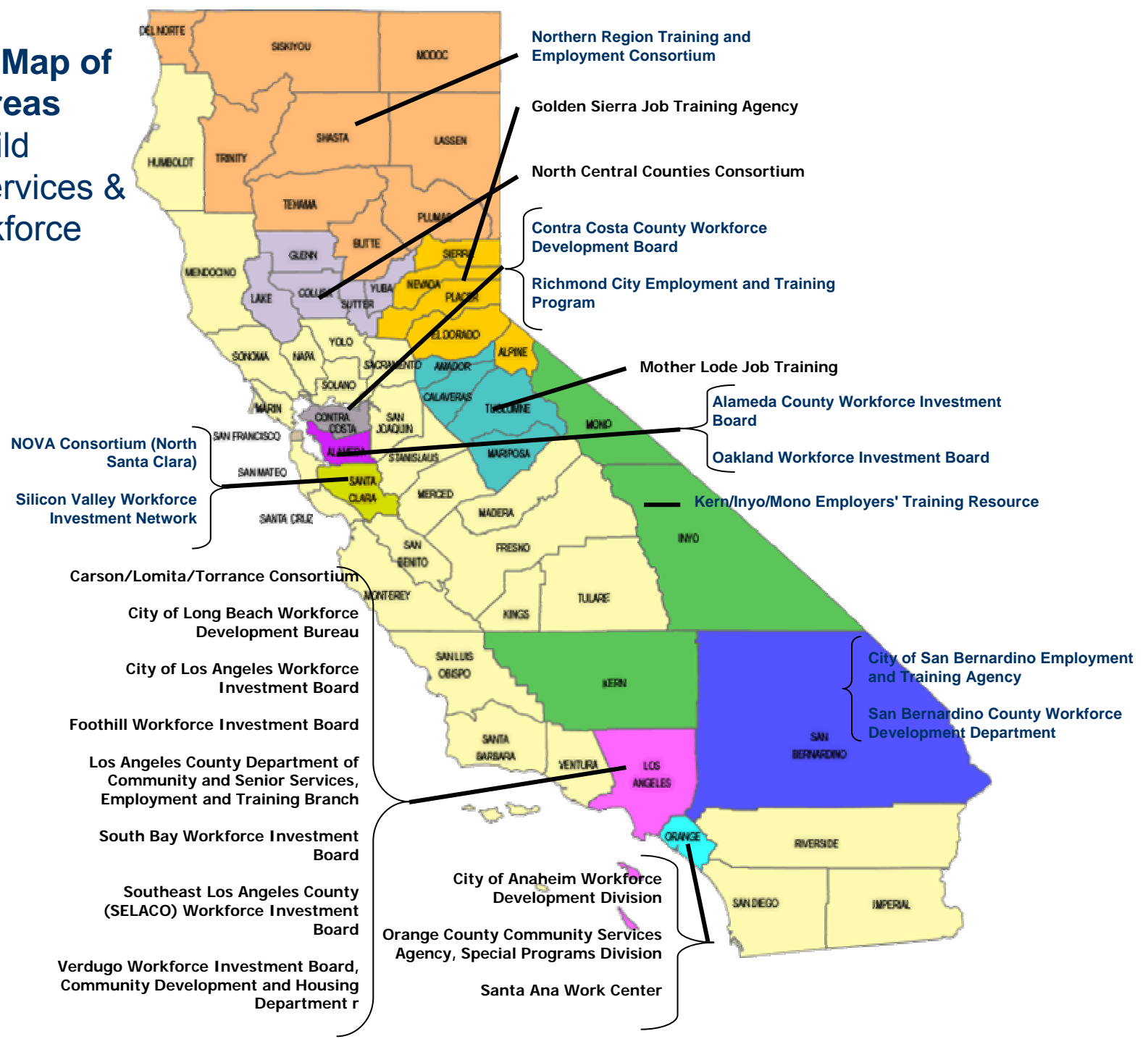


Child Welfare Governance and Structure

- County-based and administered in 58 counties
- County Boards of Supervisors have governance responsibility
- System Priorities from the Federal and State Governments:
 - Safety
 - Permanence
 - Well-being



California Map of Service Areas County Child Welfare Services & Local Workforce Areas



AB 636

- Child Welfare System priorities are measured and guided by the AB 636 Process
- Counties evaluate overall performance and select programmatic strategies to improve performance
- AB 636 Outcomes are:
 - **Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect**
 - **Children are maintained safely in their homes whenever possible and appropriate**
 - **Children have permanency and stability in their living situations without increasing reentry to foster care**
 - **The family relationships and connections of the children served by the CWS will be preserved, as appropriate**



AB 636 Outcomes (cont'd)

- Children receive services adequate to their physical, emotional, and mental health needs
- Children receive services appropriate to their educational needs
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs
- Youth emancipating from foster care are prepared to transition to adulthood



Child Welfare Improvement Activities

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign of 2000 created a long-term strategic plan that sets in motion a series of actions across the state to bring the new vision of child welfare services to every county and to identify programmatic strategies intended to improve Child Welfare performance

These strategies are :

- Statewide safety assessment system
- Improving the child abuse hotline response system (Differential Response)
- Permanency and Youth Transitions



Redesign Objective 5: Systematically prepare youth for success in adulthood

The Redesign...recognizes the urgent need to assist older youth with the skills required for successful transition to adulthood

- Comprehensive case planning focused on supporting transition
- Strong and enduring ties to at least one adult
- Community network of services and supports to enhance youth preparation while in care and continue to assist youth through their transition into adulthood
- Provide every youth a “guaranteed preparation package”

Source: CHHSA - CWS Redesign: *The Future of California's Child Welfare Services*



ILP Overview

- Every county is required to provide ILP Services to foster youth
- State and Federal Funding to provide life skills education and services to foster youth in Child Welfare and Probation
- Mandatory to offer services to youth 16 to 21 in the Foster Care system
 - Optional additional services to youth 12 (14) to 15
- Purpose is to provide program services and activities described in the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) to assist eligible youth to live independently



Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP)

- Completed in collaboration with youth
- Includes:
 - Education
 - Career development
 - Assistance and referrals to promote health (including mental health) and safety skills
 - Referral to available mentors and mentoring programs;
 - Daily living skills, including: financial management
 - Financial resources
 - Housing information



Chaffee Youth in Transition Database

- In July, 2006, the Department of Health and Human Services released the proposed rule for the Chafee National Youth in Transition Database. It is proposed that States will engage in two data collection and reporting activities that relate to:
 - Youth who receive independent living services
 - The outcomes of youth who are aging out of have aged out of foster care



Chaffee Outcomes

- The proposed Outcome measures are:
 - Increase the financial self-sufficiency of youth
 - Improve the educational attainment of youth
 - Increase youth's positive connections with adults
 - Reduce homelessness among youth
 - Improve youth access to health insurance



What's Driving Child Welfare

- Child Welfare Services Redesign/Improvement Activities
- Outcomes and Accountability system (AB636)
- Independent Living Programs (ILP)
- CHAFEE



What Youth Say about WIA Workforce...

- Capped programs, waiting lists
- Lots of paperwork to get enrolled
- Not always connected to broader education or other programs
- Agency competition
- Labels/Stereotyping
- Access: Transportation/ Child Care
- Low expectations
- Eligibility/ Program Criteria

Source: Youth Perspective Session at the 2005 California Workforce Association Conference.



What Youth Say about Child Welfare...

- In group homes, work opportunities based on behavior & used as a reward
- Financial disincentives
- The system is confusing; youth often aren't aware of what is available
- Fewer services provided post-emancipation
- Lack of preparation for a successful transition to adulthood
- Lack of tracking post emancipation
- Unequal educational opportunities
- Lack of higher education guidance
- Lack of permanent living accommodations once entering college

Source: Excerpts from CYC 2005 Annual Policy and Leadership Conference Briefing

What Program Staff Say...

Workforce System

- Harder-to-serve, higher expectations
- High turnover, decreased job security
- Inability to ID foster youth, confidentiality issues
- Isolated in the system
- Hard to find, identify FY
- Data sharing challenges
- Difficult to connect to CWS, system confusing

Child Welfare System

- Cross-staff coordination challenges
- High case loads
- Staff deal with multiple ages, rather than age-focus
- ILP often operates separately from the larger system
- Unsure of workforce processes
- Can't find programs



Expected Outcomes

WIA Workforce

- Placement in employment/education
- Attainment of degree/certification
- Literacy and numeracy gains

Child Welfare

- Safety
- Permanence
- Well-being
- Chaffee Outcomes



Opportunities to Collaborate

- New priorities in both systems support coordinated systems
 - Application of Chaffee vouchers to WIA workforce providers
 - TILP required One-Stop registration
 - WIA Workforce vision for youth focused on neediest youth
- Staff in systems are open to collaboration
- Common goal to prepare vulnerable youth for a successful future in an environment of high stakes testing, etc.



Opportunities to Collaborate (cont.)

- WIA measures better support foster youth engagement
- At 18 foster youth can access adult WIA services
- Both systems contain directives to involve the other
- Model programs have paved the way.



System Collaboration

Barriers

Benefits



Questions or Comments?



Discussion Groups

- How does the WIA workforce system and Child Welfare Services/ILP work in your region?
- How can your region collaborate on a youth, program, and/or system level to create employment opportunities?
- Prepare to share 3 collaboration ideas.





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IMPROVE PROGRAM PRACTICE

Regular and sustained efforts to align systems and improve services are underway

Youth Transition Action Teams

- Promote and ensure permanence
- Align practices among systems
- Conduct staff development activities
- Engage workplace and community partners
- Provide the communications link

CONVENE LEADERS & PROMOTE POLICY

Local leaders, practitioners, and customers are convened across disciplines to support systems alignment

Youth Transition Action Teams

- Ensure youth participation throughout the system
- Develop local policies and adjust regulations and procedures
- Align funding to follow priorities
- Make commitments public
- Identify and enlist influential champions

CREATE LINKAGES & CONNECT SYSTEMS

A comprehensive youth-serving system is created to ensure successful transitions

Youth Transition Action Teams

- Involve youth in all facets of systems development
- Assess all existing services, opportunities, and supports
- Address barriers and gaps
- Implement an integrated network that builds on existing practices
- Build linkages across systems and organizations

BUILD AWARENESS

The community is aware of youth issues and demands a system that keeps youth at the center

Youth Transition Action Teams

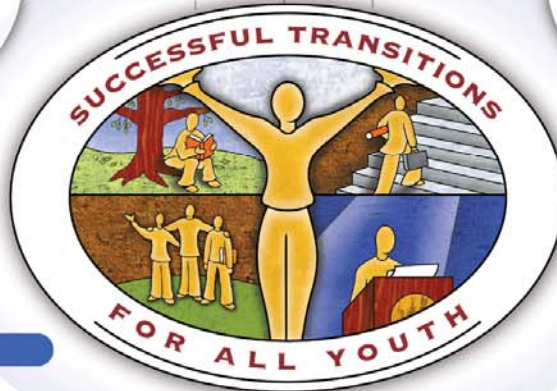
- Engage youth in marketing and advocacy activities
- Implement a strategic communication plan
- Publicize and promote efforts and results
- Share information, research, and practices across disciplines
- Conduct outreach to families and community

MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS

Outcome indicators are used to measure effectiveness and examine issues of disproportionate participation and disparate outcomes

Youth Transition Action Teams

- Engage youth and partners in measuring results
- Establish core outcomes across disciplines
- Set measurable individual and system objectives
- Create common data and evaluation measures
- Use data to measure effectiveness and improve program performance





Youth Transition Action Teams - Core Functions Self-Assessment

Function: Create Linkages and Connect Systems <i>A comprehensive youth-serving system is created to ensure successful transitions.</i>			
Indicators / Results	Progress	Team Capacity	Partners/Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Action Team involves youth in all facets of systems development. 	○ ◎ ● ●	? + !	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Action Team has assessed all existing services, opportunities, and supports. 	○ ◎ ● ●	? + !	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Action Team addresses barriers and gaps. 	○ ◎ ● ●	? + !	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Action Team has implemented an integrated network that builds on existing practices. 	○ ◎ ● ●	? + !	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transition Action Team has built linkages across systems and organizations. 	○ ◎ ● ●	? + !	

Self-Assessment Legend

Progress: ○=Not on our radar screen ◎=Just started ●=Pretty far along in implementation or practice ●=Fully integrated into system
Capacity: ? = Limited or no Capacity + = Sufficient Capacity ! = Significant Capacity



Youth Transition Action Teams – Work Plan

TEAM NAME

DATE

Modify and copy sections of the table as best serves your needs. Copy and paste the below table onto additional sheets if necessary to add more space.

Priority Objective:					
Strategies (Function)	Tactics/Activities	Who?	Expected Outcomes	Due Date	Progress & Adjustments

Leverage Opportunities

- Workforce
 - Re-Alignment of One-Stop Services (Youth)
 - Youth Employment Opportunities Program (YEOP)
 - Industry Cluster Alignment
 - Potential State Workforce/Education Pilots
 - Apprenticeship Programs
- Education
 - CAHSEE Supplemental Support
 - ROP/Academies/CTE
 - Small Schools, Middle College/Early College
 - Community College Career Technical Initiatives



Leverage Opportunities

- Other
 - MHSA TAY Implementation (Prop 63)
 - Foster Youth Transition Initiatives
 - Independent Living Skills Programs
 - After School Expansion (Prop 49 Implementation)
 - Disconnected Youth Initiatives
 - Perkins
 - Alternative Education Opportunities
 - Co-Enrollment Opportunities





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California 2-Year Plan Governor's Vision

The State's broad system of public workforce programs prepare future and current workers for the new economy in order to create stable, reliable, higher-wage jobs that will assist in improving the quality of life for all Californians and their communities.



DOL's New Vision for Youth Four Pillars

- Focus on Alternative Education
- Meeting the Demands of Business, Especially in High-Growth Industries and Occupations
- Focus on the Neediest Youth
- Focus on Improved Performance



California 2-Year Plan Governor's Priorities

- Understanding and meeting the workforce needs of business and industry in order to prepare workers for 21st century jobs.
- Targeting limited resources to areas where they can have the greatest economic impact.
- Collaborating to improve California's educational system and recommend shifts to new target areas as circumstances warrant.
- Ensuring the accountability of public and private workforce investments.



WIA Reauthorization Context

- The WIA formula-funded youth program serves eligible low-income youth, ages 14-21, who have barriers to employment.
- Service strategies prepare youth for employment and/or postsecondary education through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning.
- Currently in process of being reauthorized



WIA Reauthorization Proposed Changes

- Age of eligibility
- Income eligibility (some form of none)
- Percentage of in-school vs. out-of-school served
- Adds new program elements
- Some proposed matching grant requirements
- Youth Council status



Child Welfare Reform Efforts

- Governor Davis Introduced 3 Year Stakeholders Redesign Process in 2000
 - Now known as Child Welfare Improvement Activities
- AB 636 Passed in 2001 Established Outcomes and Accountability System for Child Welfare Services as a whole

