Youth Transition Action Teams
Guidebook

Leveraging Community Resources to Ensure Successful Transitions for Foster Youth

Youth Transition Action Teams Initiative
New Ways to Work
November 2006
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Acknowledgements

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative (YTAT), established in September 2004, was designed to assist California’s counties in supporting their Child Welfare Systems Improvement efforts by creating comprehensive local youth transition systems that support youth touched by the foster care system. Building upon the success of the All Youth-One System™ model developed for the California State Youth Council by New Ways to Work, the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative began pilot activities in twelve California counties in 2005. The initiative focuses on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education, social service, philanthropic and Child Welfare Systems to better prepare adolescents who are current or former foster youth to achieve economic, educational, and employment success as they transition into the adult world. The strategy is designed to support counties statewide in meeting their systems improvement objectives.

The Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook is the product of the hard work and dedication of many involved in the creation and implementation of this initiative since 2004, and serves as a guide for systems change in counties across the state of California. This guidebook contains information and guidance intended to help Youth Transition Action Teams in California establish practices to better serve foster youth, and support their successful transition as they move from the foster care system to adult life.

New Ways to Work gratefully appreciates the support provided by the following initiative sponsors, who have allowed for the development, design, and implementation of this initiative throughout California: Casey Family Programs (initiative sponsor), the California Department of Social Services, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, the Jewish Community Foundation, the Foundation Consortium for California's Children and Youth, the Peninsula Community Foundation’s Center for Venture Philanthropy, and the San Francisco Foundation. We would also like to give a special thanks to Miryam Choca of Casey Family Programs and Bonnie Armstrong (formally of the Foundation Consortium for California's Children and Youth) for conceptualizing the scope of this initiative and providing vision, enthusiasm, and direction for Youth Transition Action Teams across the state.

Through a series of design team meetings, beginning in 2004 and conducted throughout 2005, New Ways gathered input and feedback on the Youth Transition Action Teams framework from hundreds of providers, practitioners, staff, and leaders working in youth services including those representing child welfare, social services, workforce boards and agencies, Youth Councils, education, juvenile justice, philanthropy, community-based organizations, and state agencies. The collective input of these individuals guided a formal revision of the All Youth-One System™ core elements framework and informed the development of an additional set of tools that addresses the particular needs of foster youth and the people and agencies that serve them. We wish to thank the key partners and colleagues who participated in the regional design teams who helped structure the goals and frameworks of the Youth Transition Action Team initiative:

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New Ways to Work team members, including Steve Trippe, Chandra Larsen, Erik Butler, Nancy Uber-Kellogg, and Charlene Mouille wrote, edited, and compiled the guidebook.

The Youth Transition Action Team initiative builds upon the success of the California Youth Council Institute (YCI) in building systems of support for all youth, including our most vulnerable young people. YCI works with Youth Councils across the country, providing key strategic support for the development of local, comprehensive youth-serving systems and supporting strong, catalytic Youth Councils under the auspices of the Workforce Investment Act. With funding from the California Workforce Investment Board, New Ways to Work, together with the California Workforce Association, facilitated YCI’s efforts in California from 2001-2005, and laid the groundwork for building the connected systems envisioned through the YTAT initiative. In 2006, YCI expanded to serve a national audience with the support of the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and is now serving Youth Councils across the country as they seek to develop comprehensive, youth-serving systems.

New Ways to Work wishes to thank the pilot counties, the local Youth Transition Action Team Members, the State Inter-Agency Team, and the youth members of the Youth Transition Action Teams themselves for informing the frameworks and tools provided in this guidebook.

November 2006

- Additional copies of The Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook can be downloaded from the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative section on the New Ways to Work website at www.newwaystowork.org/documents/ytatdocuments/YTATGuidebook.pdf.
About The Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook

The Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook has been prepared by New Ways to Work to assist and guide Youth Transition Action Teams across California in pursuing comprehensive, youth transition systems that serve the needs of youth in or emancipating from the foster care system. It is written with a number of audiences in mind: staff and leaders from the Child Welfare System; local Workforce Boards and Youth Councils; local practitioners and educators; policy-makers and institutional leaders at the local, regional, and state levels; and the current and potential partners needed to develop a strong and vibrant system that serves the needs of transitioning foster youth. Individual sections of the Guidebook may be shared with selected audiences as well, or utilized in full as appropriate (see “Recommended Audiences” in each of the section descriptions below.) The Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook brings together the tools, materials, strategies, and approaches across the state through the first year and a half of the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative.

The Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook provides a clear and user-friendly road map for those California counties seeking to implement the broad vision of the Child Welfare Services Redesign Strategic Plan, along with a number of initiatives focused on successful transitions for youth touched by the Child Welfare System. This guidebook is intended to provide clarity and support to Youth Transition Action Teams, practitioners, and policy-makers as they seek to improve services to foster youth as they prepare for the transition to adulthood.

The Guidebook is organized into three primary sections, plus appendices, a summary, and a list of resources:

Section One—
Youth Transition Action Teams (YTAT): Catalyzing a Youth-Transition System

Section One of the guidebook focuses on the range of initiatives and possibilities under the Child Welfare Services Redesign Strategic Plan and most particularly the role of the Youth Transition Action Teams in carrying out this work. This section offers an overview of the State of California Welfare Services Redesign Strategic Plan, and makes a case for pushing the boundaries of statewide and national initiatives to improve support for youth in foster care in order to create a comprehensive system that serves all youth.

In this section, the reader will find:

- An overview of the needs of foster youth in California
- An overview of Statewide Child Welfare Services Redesign Efforts
- An overview of Youth Transition Action Teams and their role in creating local systems that prepare youth for transition
- A review of the responsibilities and options of Youth Transition Action Teams
- A discussion of the importance and benefits of pursuing a strategic vision for a comprehensive youth transition system

Recommended Audiences: All Youth Transition Action Team members, including core leadership and external stakeholders. Information in this section may also be informative to broader community audiences.
Section Two—
Youth Transition Action Team Development—Three Frameworks for Success

Section Two details the characteristics of a comprehensive youth transition system, identifies some of the Youth Transition Action Team practices necessary to build and sustain such a system, and outlines the stages of system development a community must go through in the course of building such a system. This section includes an introduction to the All Youth-One SystemSM frameworks and examines three frameworks for success that have been proven effective through our work with the Youth Transition Action Teams and the Youth Council Institute of California.

In this section, the reader will find three conceptual frameworks that address the following key questions.

• What does a comprehensive local youth-transition system look like? Whom does it serve, and what key elements and service strategies need to be in place to support it?

• What are the functions a local Youth Transition Action Team must perform to help build the local system? What needs to be done by the local Youth Transition Action Team in order to bring together the right people and institutions to craft the system, coordinate services across silos, measure effectiveness and ensure growth and sustainability, improve program practices, and build awareness in the community?

• How might a Youth Transition Action Team and its partners build a local system over time? What are the stages of local system development, and what process must be followed to move from the current state of categorical (and in many cases, disconnected) service strategies to an integrated, sequenced and coordinated, comprehensive system?

Recommended Audiences: All Youth Transition Action Team members, including core leadership and external stakeholders.

Section Three—
How to Use the Youth Transition Action Team Tools

Section Three describes how to employ the tools and activities designed to support the application of the frameworks described in Section Two of this guidebook. This section offers guidance for core leadership - specifically an experienced facilitator, trainer, or project director - who can help the Youth Transition Action Team think about and apply the system elements, Youth Transition Action Team functions, and developmental stages to its work. The Youth Transition Action Team Tools provide a road map for building, improving, and sustaining the work of Youth Transition Action Teams.

Techniques and instructions in the use of the following tools is provided in this section of the Guidebook.

Awareness Tools:

• Quick Map (“No Wrong Door”)
• Foster Youth Transition Reality Map
• Team and Core Partners Identification Bulls Eye

Charts & Graphic Frameworks

• Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System
• Functions of a Youth Transition Action Team in Building the System
• Stages of Building the System
**Self-Assessments**

- Elements of a Youth-Serving System
- Functions of a Youth Transition Action Team in Building the System
- Improving Program Practice

**Work Plan**

- Comprehensive Work Plan

**Recommended Audiences:** Core leadership and facilitators of local Youth Transition Action Teams.

**Appendices**

This *Guidebook* provides a number of appendices that support and further define aspects of local Youth Transition Action Team work. In the appendices the reader will find fact sheets and background information on the Youth Transition Action Team Tools development, information about the Workforce Investment Act, a list of key laws and legislation affecting foster youth, listings of youth-serving organizations and websites, and links to online tools.

We trust that this *Guidebook* will help Youth Transition Action Teams and the people that serve on and support them to move their work forward as they seek to create quality comprehensive systems that serve all of California’s youth.

We will add new or updated material to the YTAT web site as available, so please visit [www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat](http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat).
Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook

Section One—Youth Transition Action Teams: Catalyzing a Youth-Transition System
Section One—Youth Transition Action Teams: Catalyzing a Youth-Transition System

Framing the Issue - Addressing the Needs of Foster Youth

Every year in California, more than 4,000 young adults age out of foster care at the age of eighteen. The experience of transition to the adult world can be overwhelming, as these young people often lack the basic skills, experience, and resources essential for successful adulthood. In many cases they are left to navigate the range of potential support, educational, and career related services and opportunities available to them by themselves as they prepare for life on their own. These young adults leaving foster care can achieve economic success in today's complex world. However, like all young people, they need the kinds of support and preparation for the 21st century that we take as a given for our own children.

Young adults leaving foster care need to be a clear focus of public policy, public and private investment, and civic concern at the state, regional, and local levels. Failing to support this group of at-risk youth as they seek to navigate the difficult transition from foster care to independence results in the enormous cost of unfulfilled lives, disrupted communities, and the taxpayer burden of delinquency and dependence.

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative represents a significant response to that challenge in California. The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative staff worked closely with local child welfare leaders, educators, practitioners, workforce professionals, community based providers, policy-makers, institutional leaders, and foster youth and alumni to design, develop, and field test the strategies, tools, materials, and approaches presented in this guidebook.

Alignment of Statewide Child Welfare Services Redesign Efforts

This initiative integrates and expands a number of youth focused efforts already underway in California. These efforts include the California Child Welfare Systems Improvement activities, the California State Youth Council's Comprehensive Plan and Campaign for California's Youth and the California Child and Family Services Review. It reflects the 2004 – 2005 System Improvements Plan, the work of the Youth Transition Funders Group, California's Mental Health Services Act, Connected by 25, It's My Life, and a selected set of workforce development initiatives focused on foster care populations and other targeted groups that are operational in a number of California communities.

By bringing together the energy and resources of the Department of Social Services, the philanthropic community, and other state and local decision-making bodies to bear on the critical challenges facing the communities engaged in Child Welfare Systems Improvement, the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative will produce powerful results for foster youth and ensure their place in the future.

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1 See Appendix B for an overview of the frameworks reviewed, aligned, and integrated into the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative Frameworks.


The Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group was initiated by Governor Gray Davis in July 2000 and authorized by the California legislature, charged with examining the current child welfare system and making recommendations for improvements.

Over a three-year period, the stakeholders group forged a blueprint for overhauling the system, concluding its work in 2003. Its final report is referred to as the Child Welfare Services Redesign, and state and county efforts have shifted to implementing key elements. Principal efforts are focused on developing a statewide safety assessment system to ensure that all counties use consistent procedures to determine if a child is being abused or neglected, improving the child abuse hotline response system to better enable social workers to screen and refer families for community services, and promoting permanent connections for youth and improved transitions to adulthood.4


When too many of California’s children are without the security of a stable, permanent home; when too many families return time and again to the system with escalating problems before services can be provided; when too many youth are leaving the system without being prepared for adult life—it is time to do something about it. Nationally, there has been no fundamental change in the Child Welfare System in 20 years. The one-size-fits-all approach of the past cannot meet the changing, complex needs of children and families. This holds unintended consequences for their well-being and costly impacts for society. California is no longer willing to accept this reality and is taking action to transform its Child Welfare System into one that benefits all children and families with accountability for results.

The plan is in place, the partners are poised and the vision is clear. California is taking action to change how child welfare services are delivered in California, so that:

Every child in California lives in a safe, stable, permanent home, nurtured by healthy families and strong communities.

The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign (“Redesign”) is the 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. Comprehensive in scope, the plan contains an integrated set of policy shifts; practice improvements; alignment of partners, systems and communities; and new accountability structures to make certain the promise of a safe and stable home is realized for all children. Redesign represents an unprecedented effort to proactively examine what works and what needs improvement about California’s child welfare services system. Too often across the nation, the momentum for public policy change in child welfare stems from tragedy or other negative motivators. Instead, California’s Redesign builds upon the best of child welfare services in the state and reinvents the rest. Fortified by a strong commitment to achieve better outcomes for children and families who are vulnerable to the risks of abuse and neglect, California has charted the course for reaching that goal.

4 See the “Background Information” brief on Improving California’s Child Welfare Services, published by the California Department of Social Services in 2004. Available online at http://www.dss.ca.gov/dfscp/pdf/Backroundinfo.pdf.

While communities are addressing the broader systemic impacts of Child Welfare Services reform, the Youth Transition Action Teams Initiative is specifically focused on supporting Objective Five of the CWS Redesign Objectives, which states the following goal:

**Objective Five: Systematically prepare youth for success in adulthood**

*The Redesign seeks to reduce the number of youth who remain in foster care until age 18, and recognizes the urgent need to assist older youth with the skills required for successful transition to adulthood. A renewed focus on preparation for adulthood illustrates how the intervention efforts of CWS are brought back full circle to prevention. Youth who exit the system positioned for success in their own lives will be much less likely to repeat the pattern of maltreatment with their own children. The following actions will ensure that older youth who remain in foster care will be actively engaged in activities and experiences through which they practice increasing independence, develop needed skills, and create a viable plan for their lives after foster care:*

- Conduct inclusive, flexible and comprehensive case planning that engages youth in planning to achieve permanency while simultaneously preparing for transition to adulthood.
- Expand the focus on strong and enduring ties for every youth to one or more nurturing adults.
- Develop and utilize a 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 who leaves the system at age 18 with a “guaranteed preparation package” that includes:
  - A healthy sense of cultural and personal identity
  - A close, positive and lasting relationship with at least one adult
  - Other supportive relationships and community connections
  - Access to physical and mental health services
  - High school diploma, equivalency certificate, or GED
  - Income sufficient to meet basic needs
  - A safe and stable living situation
  - Basic documents needed for employment, such as social security number, birth certificate, immigration papers

Some of the participating Youth Transition Action Teams are also utilizing the initiative to address the Community Program Planning component of Mental Health Services Act (MHSA)\(^6\). The MHSA, passed by California voters in November 2004, provides an ongoing source of funding for counties to extend and even to reinvent their systems of care for those citizens in need of mental health services. The Act specifically names transition age youth in the foster care system as one of the populations to be served by monies from the bill. It also expressly identifies integrated delivery of services as one of the five criteria that each county plan is to incorporate.

The Youth Transition Action Team initiative has been designed to assist counties across the state in meeting their Systems Improvement Objectives, and to better connect the Child Welfare system to the workforce development and education communities. The intent of the initiative is to leverage a range of local resources from a number of sectors to ensure successful transitions for youth touched by the Child Welfare System.

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\(^6\) See *Everything You Wanted to Know about the MHSA, and Then Some* by the California Alliance of Child and Family Services, published in 2005. Available online at [www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/mhsaeverythingcdfs.pdf](http://www.nww.org/documents/ytatdocuments/transitionsept05/mhsaeverythingcdfs.pdf)
Youth Transition Action Teams: Responsibilities and Options

New opportunities and challenges face individuals working in child welfare, education, workforce development and other systems in their efforts to leverage local resources and programs to provide an integrated continuum of services and opportunities for foster youth that will ensure successful transitions to adulthood. Youth Transition Action Teams have before them the opportunity to engage a cross-section of local leaders and practitioners to leverage and coordinate services and funding to assist youth far beyond what currently exists. Teams accomplish this through the formation of collaborative efforts focused on improving outcomes for youth transitioning from the Child Welfare System. Youth Transition Action Team members are bringing innovation and a renewed sense of purpose to local efforts to create youth-serving systems answerable to a spectrum of community stakeholders.

The formation, membership, and roles of Youth Transition Action Teams across California vary greatly, however all have embraced a broader purpose – that of a planning and policy body seeking to weave together a highly effective web of services and supports especially for foster youth - while at the same time laying the groundwork for addressing the transition supports, opportunities and services for all youth in a given community.

In order to develop a team that is best able to address building a comprehensive youth transition system that addresses the multitude of needs of foster youth, we encourage teams to build membership across systems and agencies in the fields of child welfare and social services, workforce development, education, philanthropy, juvenile justice and other community-based and civic and governmental organizations. Some examples of the types of agencies from which to recruit administrators, managers, and staff representatives include:

- Child Welfare Services
- Mental Health
- Public Health
- Social Services
- K-12 Education (including Special Education, Career Technical Education, ROP, and School-to-Career)
- Workforce Development (including Workforce Boards, One-Stops and Youth Councils)
- Post Secondary Education and Training Organizations
- Local Community-Based Organizations
- Juvenile Justice
- Independent Living Programs
- Housing and Transportation
- Current and Former Foster Youth
- Philanthropy
- Local Civic Leaders
- Caregivers

The functions of Youth Transition Action Teams are straightforward; they are action-orientated bodies that focus on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education, philanthropy, Child Welfare Systems and other public resources to better prepare adolescents who are current or former foster youth to achieve economic, educational, and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

This guidebook focuses on methods and approaches for carrying out the strategic vision for local Youth Transition Action Teams – one that views local teams as the architects of and catalysts for the development of comprehensive youth transition systems. By addressing systemic challenges that affect youth exiting the foster care system and improving systems for all youth transitioning to adulthood, local communities can make sustainable improvements that have an impact on the lives of all of their young people. Youth Transition Action Teams present a tremendous opportunity for local communities dissatisfied with fragmented and/or low-performing programs and services for foster youth.
Youth Transition Action Teams seek to:

- Ensure a full range of services and opportunities are in place for all youth
- Create linkages and connect systems and services among schools, public programs, workforce agencies, and community organizations
- Improve programs and measure the effectiveness of services for youth in foster care
- Convene leadership and promote policies to support change, quality, and continuous improvement
- Build community awareness around issues facing foster youth.

Youth Transition Action Teams are uniquely designed to maximize a community’s ability to address these system improvement measures by working in cross-agency teams and identifying gaps and strengths between and among partners in education, workforce development, social services, other agencies involved with youth, and young people themselves. By working together to address the multi-faceted needs of youth in foster care by examining and reforming systems that affect all youth, Youth Transition Action Teams are positioning themselves for sustainable, long-term, comprehensive changes in their local youth-serving systems to ensure successful outcomes for current and former foster youth.

Why Promote a Broader, Strategic Agenda?

Supporting Professionals in Child Welfare Agencies

For more than 100,000 young people in the United States, the process of “aging out” of foster care is a present or imminent challenge. If roughly 25,000 youth age out each year (Casey Family Services, 2004), then two similar-sized younger cohorts (16 and 17 years old, generally) and at least one older cohort (19 to 21 year-olds) are or ought to be anticipating or preparing for transition or are experiencing the first year of post-care in many states. Conservatively, then, 100,000 young people ought to be involved in transition planning or in experiencing it. This estimate is confirmed by the annual KidsCount published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2004, and by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2005)

The professionals who work with these young people are tasked as a matter of priority to focus on the issues of safety, managing ongoing care, and seeking permanent living arrangements for the young people in their care. In daily practice, so much of their time is spent in the mode of crisis intervention that often they find little time to offer as much organized support for the transition process as they would like. While many supervisors and caseworkers are well-prepared for supporting placement, supervision, and ongoing care, most acknowledge privately that their training and experience have had less of a focus on preparing them to assist youth in their various life transition phases, especially to the aspects of independent living that involve enrolling in and completing college, or finding employment.

Following passage of the Foster Care Independence Act (informally known as the Chafee Act) in 1999, there has been more public policy focus than ever on finding ways to support successful transitions for youth before and after the “magic age” of 18. Notwithstanding examples of good efforts on these matters in many areas, the results for young people remain discouraging. Five years after the passage of Chafee, the post-foster care transition remains a tremendous challenge for significant numbers of young people. Fewer than half of youth formerly in care have graduated from high school by age 22; nearly half have experienced periods of homelessness, and only about one-quarter are self-supporting. Other challenges both accompany and reinforce such poor outcomes, such as disproportionate involvement in both drug use and criminal activity.

7 If roughly 25,000 youth age out each year (Casey Family Services, 2004), then two similar-sized younger cohorts (16 and 17 years old, generally) and at least one older cohort (19 to 21 year-olds) are or ought to be anticipating or preparing for transition or are experiencing the first year of post-care in many states. Conservatively, then, 100,000 young people ought to be involved in transition planning or in experiencing it. This estimate is confirmed by the annual KidsCount published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2004, and by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2005)


9 Helping Youth in Foster Care Make Successful Transitions to Adulthood”, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2005
Youth Transition Action Teams are acutely aware of the issues and challenges facing professionals in the Child Welfare System, especially around systemic changes that support their efforts to connect young people exiting foster care to the opportunities they need to become experienced and prepared for life post-emancipation. What is needed both inside and around our current system is a new framework – a new way of thinking about the role of Child Welfare Services in the context of the broader community, and a new sense of the personal and system supports, opportunities, and experiences young people need to become successful as adults.

Historically, the Child Welfare System has been focused on addressing the generalized issues of permanency through a focus on the family as a whole. There are efforts underway that place youth themselves at the center of the equation, support these youth in the identification of the issues and challenges of “aging out” of care, and identify and deliver the solutions and strategies that will support successful transition to independence. Those in the Child Welfare System are seeking strategies and support to apply the latest and deepest youth development principles and approaches to their work; to focus on nurturing the assets of youth in care; connect youth to the broad range of services, opportunities and supports available in every community; and engage youth themselves in planning and making decisions about their own future.

A Community Responsibility: Connecting to All Systems and Services that Support Youth in Foster Care

It is, however, not solely the responsibility or charge of the Child Welfare System or its workforce to ensure successful transitions for these young people. Our public education, workforce development, social service and community-based support systems as well as the community at large needs to be engaged if foster youth are to successfully transition to adulthood. Currently, the experience and success of the Child Welfare System in understanding the needs of transition aged youth and accessing services and supports both inside and around the system is spotty at best. Clearly professionals who are working in child welfare and other social services need training, support, and direct engagement in first understanding the issues, uncovering and accessing appropriate resources, and then designing strategies and approaches that reflect recent research and practice in the area of youth transition. They also need strategies and support to uncover and work with programs and services provided outside the child welfare and social services systems and to be given tools and strategies that support effective collaboration and cross-system work. Without being fully informed as to the needs of older, transition age, foster youth and the potential supports, opportunities and services available in their community, the Child Welfare System will not have the capacity to work effectively with youth in addressing their transition issues or in creating and supporting transition plans that identify and meet an individual’s needs.

Creating a System that Serves All Youth, Especially Our Most Vulnerable Young People

Narrowly conceived, local organizations, educational institutions, workforce development agencies, and child welfare service providers merely focus on the legal, regulatory, and systemic functions of their organizations and agencies. However, changing times, experience, and research has demonstrated that organizations and communities that choose to define their work and goals narrowly will likely devolve over time and will diminish in both activity and impact.

A casual appraisal of a comprehensive, strategic agenda might yield the comment that, in the face of diminishing dollars from government sources, service providers and local administrators should commit to helping only the poorest and most at-risk youth and let the others maneuver the options on their own. However, a system accessible to all young people sends the message that youth, as a group, are valued stakeholders in the larger community; that they must serve as resources in their own and others’ development; and that their well-being and success are key to the overall advancement of society. There is also strong evidence that, when young people from varied and diverse backgrounds and experiences
are engaged in the same program activities, at-risk youth are provided a wider range of opportunities, have greater access to broad services, and are released from the stigma of being associated with a targeted and deficit-based program.

Summary

There are many reasons why communities and local organizations should take on the challenge of serving as the catalysts and architects of comprehensive local youth transition systems that effectively prepare foster youth for their futures. Communities and collaborating organizations can offer direction and establish the parameters for the development of a system that ensures equity, access, and the provision of quality services, programs, and educational opportunities for all young people, while ensuring that those young people touched by the Child Welfare System have the tools they need to succeed as adults. This goal cannot be achieved without creative thinking, leadership, and community resolve. Communities and organizations can, in a neutral yet proactive environment, bring new participants to the table, break down the walls between categorical services and programs, and build public commitment to a new and better way of serving youth.
Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook

Section Two—Youth Transition Action Team Development: Three Frameworks for Success
Section Two—Youth Transition Action Team Development—Three Frameworks for Success

All Youth-One System: A Comprehensive Systems Framework

For young people to succeed in life, they need to develop competence, confidence, and connections to real-world experiences at each point of their educational, career, and personal development. Our schools cannot do this alone, nor can youth development, social service, or workforce preparation organizations. They need partners. For this reason, over the past decade, relatively new collaborative structures have emerged, designed to bring together a range of local resources to promote young people’s self-confidence about their abilities; increase their connections to adults and opportunities; and foster the personal, academic, and work-related competencies they need to succeed.

This growth of cross-agency decision-making bodies is part of a broad trend within our economy and society toward fluid, networked, and interactive systems for organizing multi-partner communications and collaboration. New opportunities and challenges face these community “teams” as they strive for increasingly efficient, effective, and streamlined ways of developing comprehensive youth-serving systems. National research and local practitioners have been saying the same thing for years - adults and communities must take responsibility for the life-long well-being of all youth, including those who have become disengaged.

Since the mid nineteen nineties, New Ways to Work has gathered the input of researchers, youth service providers, educators, workforce development specialists, social service and child welfare practitioners, private sector partners, and individuals who work with at-risk and vulnerable youth, youth with disabilities, and youth in foster care to develop the All Youth-One System frameworks. As the frameworks have been reviewed, refined, and adopted by numerous state and local initiatives, the collaboration of individuals working across systems has collectively defined the common elements that must be in place if youth are to transition successfully to adulthood. (For a history of the development of the All Youth-One System frameworks, please see Appendix C.)

Youth Transition Action Team Development—Three Frameworks for Success

The previous section offers descriptions of the role of Youth Transition Action Teams as systemic change agents in communities engaged in the Child Welfare Services System Improvement Activities. The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative makes a case for going beyond addressing transition issues for youth exiting the child welfare system in isolation, and by pushing the boundaries of traditional youth-serving models to create a system that leverages services, opportunities and supports designed to serve all youth. Building on the All Youth-One System model, New Ways developed the frameworks for the Youth Transition Action Team initiative. This section details the Elements of such a system, identifies the Youth Transition Action Team Functions necessary to create it, and outlines the Stages of development in implementing a system.

The three conceptual frameworks address the following key questions:

- What does a comprehensive local youth transition system look like? How are the most in need served by a comprehensive system and what core elements and service strategies need to be in place to support it?
- What are the functions a local Youth Transition Action Team must perform to help build the local transition system to support the needs of and ensure positive outcomes for current and former foster
Youth Transition Action Teams support their counties in meeting systems improvement objectives, facilitate inter-agency collaboration at the local and state levels and bring local programs, initiatives, and institutions to a single table to strategize how to eliminate the duplication of services, maximize multiple funding sources, and implement long-range plans to improve transition outcomes for foster youth.

Four core Elements, illustrated in the chart on the following page, must be in place in order to provide a balanced set of services, opportunities and supports to youth and ensure their success as they transition to adulthood. These four content elements are supported by a fifth: a community-wide structure and approach that ensures the coordination of a continuum of services across programs, institutions, and projects and delivers those programs and services with a youth development approach. These elements and descriptions of their respective goals are listed below.

**Academic Achievement**
All Youth are engaged in their learning in the classroom

All youth are engaged in their learning in the classroom and expected and supported to achieve high academic and career technical standards at all levels of the educational system.

**Career Development**
All youth are engaged in their learning in the workplace and community

All youth are provided learning opportunities and experiences in the workplace and community. They are exposed to a range of activities that further their career awareness, help them develop personal career goals and build the skills they need to be successful in the future.

**Community Services and Support**
All youth receive individualized services and community support

All youth experience positive connections to caring adults and peers, and receive services in safe environments. Services and community supports target and address individualized needs.

**Youth Leadership**
Youth are visible and active in leadership roles

Youth are engaged and visibly active in leadership roles in the community and take an active role in designing and determining the activities and opportunities provided to them.

**Comprehensive Youth Development Approach**
A formal network provides the foundation for an equitable and coordinated system

A formal, networked system of institutions, providers, and programs is in place and provides a comprehensive set of services and supports that support successful transitions for youth. Youth development principles are infused throughout the system.
ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE LOCAL YOUTH-SERVING SYSTEM

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

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

CAREER DEVELOPMENT
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
- Community and workplace partners provide work and learning opportunities
- Classroom learning supports career development

ALL YOUTH ARE EXPERIENCED AND READY FOR CAREERS

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

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**Academic Achievement**

In a comprehensive youth transition system, all youth are engaged in their learning in classrooms at all levels of our educational systems. Teachers, faculty and other practitioners hold high expectations for the youth they serve and apply teaching strategies that address the learning styles of each individual student. Curriculum is designed to support standards-based academic achievement while also linking content to contextualized and relevant learning experiences that prepare youth for future educational and technical skills success. Programs and services support high academic standards and workplace and community experiences encourage academic excellence. Educators utilize a variety of strategies to support young people’s educational success, specifically tailoring approaches to address individual learning and developmental needs. When young people complete their education - whether at the high school or college level - they are prepared for success in their career and life, and understand the range of options before them.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the Element of 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

**Outcome:** All Youth are educated and ready to learn

**Career Development**

In a comprehensive youth transition system, all youth are engaged in their learning in the workplace and community. Early and ongoing exposure to career and employment opportunities is provided to young people through their school and community-based programs. Youth participate in quality work-based activities that support what they are learning in the classroom, beginning as early as the middle school level, and continuing throughout their high school and post-secondary experiences. Schools and community-based organizations have strong partnerships with government, local businesses and workplace partners, who provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for young people. These experiences address the individual needs of each young person. Youth are prepared for and understand his or her career options.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the Element of Career Development:

- 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 development

**Outcome:** All Youth are experienced and ready for careers

**Community Services and Support**

In a comprehensive youth transition system, all youth receive individualized services and community support. All youth have safe and stable living arrangements, and receive support from caring adults who see to their physical, developmental, and emotional needs. Youth experience strong and enduring peer relationships and connections to at least one adult who will support them throughout their lives. Young people are prepared for adulthood, having experienced and practiced the life skills necessary to live...
independently and have access to a full range of culturally competent social services and supports to address their needs.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the Element of 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

**Outcome: All Youth are connected to adults, peers, and services**

**Youth Leadership**
In a comprehensive youth transition system, youth are visible and active in leadership roles. They participate in decisions about their lives and play active roles in designing their individual service strategies. They provide the voice that drives policy and decision making. Adults encourage and support youth in leadership roles within their organizations and institutions, and opportunities for youth leadership are leveraged within communities and connected to broader, systemic change. As a result, youth grow up confident and ready for life.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the Element of 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

**Outcome: All Youth are confident and ready for life**

**Comprehensive Youth Development Approach**
In a comprehensive youth transition system, a formal network provides the foundation for an equitable and coordinated system that meets the needs of youth. Institutions and organizations that support young people apply a youth development approach in all their activities and services. Community leadership is engaged in efforts to support the lives of youth and prove to be effective collaborators between and among systems. Activities are intentionally sequenced and coordinated; resources are leveraged; and a connected, operational infrastructure is in place. All activities reflect the principles of youth development.

The following characteristics describe a community that is successfully addressing the Element of a 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

**Outcome: A connected, operational infrastructure supports youth success**
Youth Transition Action Teams—Core Functions

What is the Role of a Youth Transition Action Team in Building a Comprehensive Local Youth Transition System?

Five broad functions describe the roles and actions undertaken by a local Youth Transition Action Team as it builds and supports a comprehensive youth transition system. Each function needs to be addressed if a Youth Transition Action Team is to be successful in its efforts. A functional description – rather than a task or activities list – allows local Youth Transition Action Teams to develop their own plans and conduct those operations that are responsive to local needs and take advantage of unique opportunities. At the same time, Youth Transition Action Teams from diverse communities facing different sets of challenges can, by focusing on the functional aspects of the work, communicate, share practices, and build on each other’s accomplishments.

The five Functions a local Youth Transition Action Team performs to support the development of a comprehensive system are illustrated on the chart on the following page and described in greater detail below.

Convene Leaders and Promote Policy
Youth Transition Action Teams bring together key leaders, practitioners, youth and others across a range of sectors to support systems alignment and develop a policy environment that prioritizes youth issues. These leaders are able to make commitments of behalf of the organizations they represent and often dedicate staff and/or resources to mutually prioritized efforts.

Create Linkages and Connect Systems
Youth Transition Action Teams facilitate the creation of a community network of services and supports to ensure successful transitions for youth emancipating from the child welfare system. They provide the leadership for bringing together a full range of targeted programs, and eventually, all core services provide for young people in the community, including public education at all levels, social services and workforce development.

Measure Effectiveness
Youth Transition Action Teams set goals, establish standards for services, and measure their effectiveness against those goals and standards. They utilize external and internal evaluation and data collection tools to assess progress against defined outcomes, measure effectiveness and to improve program practice.

Build Awareness
Youth Transition Action Teams educate the community about issues affecting current and former foster youth, and build awareness around other issues critical to the lives of youth in transition. They support a community that keeps youth at the center of the public eye, and conduct outreach to families and the community at large.

Improve Program Practice
Youth Transition Action Teams regularly review and assess their program and systems practices, and regularly engage in efforts to align systems and improve services within the programs they operate. They provide the communications link among all parties, effectively engage private sector partners, and promote permanence for the youth they serve.
**Youth Transition Action Teams**

- **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 fellow 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

**FUNCTIONS**
Convene Leaders and Promote Policy
Youth Transition Action Teams bring together key leaders with special interests or expertise in youth policy or direct services in a forum designed to promote change and encourage system building. They ensure broad and diverse representation on the Youth Transition Action Team and engage youth in leadership positions. Key to the success of the Youth Transition Action Team is a membership that represents all aspects of the youth-serving community and one that will be successful in accomplishing locally determined goals and objectives. While there is no mandated size, the typical Youth Transition Action Team might be comprised of 8 to 20 members representing child welfare, education, workforce development, community based organizations, current and emancipated foster youth, juvenile justice, philanthropy, local government, the private sector and other systems.

Youth Transition Action Team leaders are able to make commitments of behalf of their organizations, develop local policies, and are able to adjust regulations and procedures to address system-change activities. Funding follows priorities, and commitments are made public. Youth Transition Action Teams ensure that both current and former foster youth actively participate as members of the team.

To convene leaders and promote policy, Youth Transition Action Teams recruit and support appropriate members. To build a comprehensive youth transition system they:

- 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 and Connect Systems
Youth Transition Action Teams seek to organize a range of programs and services, creating a seamless web of assistance and opportunities designed to serve the needs of the youth of their communities. They involve youth in all facets of systems development, including the assessment of existing services and supports.

To create linkages and connect systems, Youth Transition Action Teams implement an integrated network of services and supports across categorical programs and systems. To build a comprehensive system they:

- 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

Measure Effectiveness
Youth Transition Action Teams set clear and quantifiable goals, establish standards for services and programs, and measure their effectiveness against those goals and standards. They engage youth and partners in measuring results and establish common data points and core outcomes across disciplines and sectors. They set measurable individual and system objectives and use data to guide their work and improve program performance.
To measure effectiveness, Youth Transition Action Teams assess, recommend, evaluate, and establish core outcomes across systems. To build a comprehensive system they:

- 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

Build Awareness: Market and Share Information
Youth Transition Action Teams educate the community about issues affecting youth in and emancipating from foster care, and build awareness around other issues critical in the lives of youth. They engage youth in marketing and advocacy activities, utilizing a strategic communication plan that shares information, research, and practices across disciplines. They publicly celebrate success, publicize and promote their work and conduct outreach to families and the broader community.

To build awareness and market and share information, Youth Transition Action Teams work to build community-wide understanding of the issues surrounding the lives of youth touched by the Child Welfare System. To build a comprehensive system they:

- 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

Improve Program Practice
Youth Transition Action Teams regularly review and assess their program and systems practices, and sustain efforts to align systems and improve services. Efforts driven by system reform support the promotion of and ensure permanence for youth emancipating from foster care through the development of sustained relationships. Teams support staff development activities across disciplines and systems and engage workplace and community partners in supporting their activities and programs. Youth Transition Action Teams also provide the communications link among and between the systems and programs that serve youth.

To improve program practice, Youth Transition Action Teams support cross-system alignment and training to improve programs and services for youth. To build a comprehensive system they:

- Promote and ensure permanence
- Align practices among systems
- Conduct staff development activities
- Engage workplace and community partners
- Provide the communications link
Going Deeper: Improving Program Practice
The following framework is for those Youth Transition Action Teams interested in taking a closer look at the day-to-day functions that need to be addressed to improve program practice within and among components of the system.

**Promote and Ensure Permanence**
All components of the system are focused on ensuring permanence in schools, housing and relationships.
Youth Transition Action Teams:
- Define permanence locally
- Develop a system for facilitating multiple forms of permanence
- Reinforce proven methods
- Develop strategies to maintain birth family knowledge and connections
- Involve youth, birth, and foster families in developing a plan

**Align Practices Among Systems**
All services and supports are seamlessly aligned among systems.
Youth Transition Action Teams:
- Examine organizational structures and address barriers
- Learn from effective practices
- Focus staff and institutional resources on transition
- Develop, expand, blend, braid, stack, and align resources
- Agree on “core” cross-system outcomes

**Conduct Staff Development Activities**
All partner staff have a common understanding of system strategies and goals, and receive high quality training and professional development to support youth transition. Youth Transition Action Teams:
- Form a county-wide staff development team, including line staff, to guide training and professional development activities
- Pool resources and align training across all partners
- Develop and deliver targeted training in a wide range of topics to all partner staff
- Engage youth and families as trainers

**Engage Workplace and Community Partners**
Employers and community partners are engaged in supporting youth transition.
Youth Transition Action Teams:
- Develop an advisory group of employers and community partners
- Understand local economic development trends and align services and career development activities
- Provide services and incentives to facilitate workplace and community partner engagement
- Promote hiring foster youth as a productive and strategic business decision
- Conduct effective and ongoing workplace partner engagement activities

**Provide the Communications Link**
All parties are kept informed of the system progress and individual achievements.
Youth Transition Action Teams:
- Develop communication systems that effectively keep all parties informed
- Include youth in the design and use of communication systems
- Establish a single repository of information on available services and supports
- Design and implement common data systems that track activities and accomplishments as well as youth and system outcomes
Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System

How Do You Build a Comprehensive Local Youth Transition System?

New Ways to Work has developed a model for describing the process of building comprehensive youth-serving systems incrementally over time. The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative has adapted the five-staged model to be reflective of characteristics specific to building a comprehensive youth transition system for current and former foster youth. Based on effective organizational development practice, this systems model is designed to help Youth Transition Action Teams visualize and identify progress, offers a road map for how the system is built over time, and guides a continuous improvement process.

The *Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System* framework guides Youth Transition Action Teams in their efforts to leverage local resources and programs to provide an integrated continuum of services and opportunities for foster youth that will ensure their successful transition to adulthood. The stages are illustrated in the chart on the following page, and described in detail below. This model, which can be applied to many different systems-change processes, incorporates the following five stages:

- **Discovery**
  *Initially forming a local Youth Transition Action Team, and then analyzing the existing conditions and setting priorities for action.*

- **Design**
  *Planning for the implementation of strategies and activities that address established priorities, bringing together core partners, and preparing to conduct the work.*

- **Incubation**
  *Piloting strategies, services, and programs.*

- **Growth**
  *Expanding activities.*

- **Integration**
  *Institutionalizing the activities in a comprehensive youth system.*

These five stages reflect a process of enhancing the capacity to deliver comprehensive and higher quality services over time. They highlight the important role that Youth Transition Action Teams play in bringing potential partners together and facilitating collective work. Youth Transition Action Teams can adapt these ideas in ways that best help them identify priorities and appropriate action steps. Users of the model should think of it in terms of a suggested progression or cycle of activities, rather than a strict set of steps to be followed.

In the *Discovery Stage*, the Youth Transition Action Team convenes community partners to define its mission and purpose, build community awareness, map resources, assess practices and measures, and recruit additional partners. The nuts and bolts of its work builds on the discovery activities and is conducted in the other four stages: *Design, Incubation, Growth, and Integration*. Each strategy or program that the community undertakes and that the Youth Transition Action Team implements or brokers goes through some or all of these stages.
Most Youth Transition Action Team efforts begin in the *Discovery Stage*, then advance sequentially through *Design, Incubation, Growth, and Integration*, but this is not always the case. For example, another organization or agency may ask the Youth Transition Action Team to take a successful pilot program and grow it. Or community stakeholders may pilot and even grow an initiative only to decide that it lacks sufficient impact or support to be continued. Moreover, at any one time several initiatives or program components may be in the design stage, while others are incubated, and yet others grown, even as the process advances towards integration for the most developed and successful efforts. Most importantly, the five stages form a continuous improvement cycle. Even as some activities are integrated into an evolving community system, the Youth Transition Action Team is likely to undertake new activities, applying the knowledge, experience and credibility built up through these earlier efforts. And as strategies and activities move through the five stages of development, they contribute to the ongoing process of building a system of comprehensive youth services that provide young people with the resources they need to succeed in school, career, and life.
SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS
FOR ALL YOUTH

• Develop vision
• Cultivate community support
• Define partners/funcions
• Address gaps & policies and resources
• Specify measurable outcomes and indicators
• Create action plan

DEVELOPMENT

Design

Awareness of inequities
Clearly defined roles among partners
Community discussing foster youth outcomes

EXPERIMENTATION

Incubation

Demonstration of coordinated services
Multiple - partner transition planning
Cross - system staff development
Coordinated evaluation and improvement strategies
Youth actively in leadership roles

ADAPTION

Breakthrough

Core partners agree to roles and actions
Partners agree to expanded actions

EMERGENCE

Growth

Resources leveraged to serve more youth
Clear evidence of youth impacts
Increased number and range of partners
Sequenced and coordinated activities
Empowered working groups includes youth

REFREMENT

Sustainability

Partners agree to integrate initiatives into system
Partners commitment to ongoing work

STAGES OF BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH TRANSITION SYSTEM

Unfair distribution of opportunities
Limited youth involvement in transition planning
Lack of coordination and awareness of transition issues
Disconnected activities driven by regulations

DISCOVERY

Set of core and ready
Partners agree to take action

RESEARCH

Partners agree to integrate initiatives into system
Partners commitment to ongoing work

INTEGRATION

Blended, bridged and stacked resources address needs
Policy and advocacy support systems improvement
A collaborative system is sustainable and responsive
Community is aware of transition issues
Youth are fully engaged, connected, and successful

SUSTAIN

Reiterate the work through proven partners
Leverage additional resources
Refine and document strategies
Report results
Publicly celebrate accomplishments
Implement new policies

IMPROVEMENT

Continuous

Products of excellence
New permanency rates and outcomes
Limited youth involvement in transition planning
Disconnected activities driven by regulations

A comprehensive understanding of transition issues
Limited resources and lack of support

OVERVIEW

• Conduct and assess pilot activities
• Evaluate effectiveness of system and measures
• Train staff across disciplines
• Share results and inform partners
• Execute and influence policies

STAGES
Discovery
In the Discovery stage, the Youth Transition Action Team comes together to identify and build on effective local pockets of excellence, consolidate existing efforts, and move beyond a set of isolated activities in order to create a system.

Characteristics of this stage:
- Uneven distribution of opportunities
- Lack of coordination and awareness of transition issues
- Disconnected activities driven by regulation
- Limited youth involvement in transition planning
- Pockets of excellence
- Low permanency rates and poor outcomes

Activities to move to the next stage:
- Build community awareness
- Recruit partners, youth, and alumni
- Map current programs and gaps
- Assess practices and measures
- Examine existing policies
- Define mission and purpose

Breakthrough Indicator that you're ready to move to the next stage:
- Set of core and ready partners agree to take action

The first suggested Youth Transition Action Team activity in the Discovery stage is to build community awareness, and recruit partners youth and alumni to join the local effort. Teams survey youth-serving organizations and the community-at-large to map existing resources and identify practices that offer insight into work in the Design Stage. Gaps in services are identified, current practices and measurement systems are assessed and current policies affecting foster youth transition are examined. Finally, the team comes together to define a common mission and purpose.

The Discovery Stage is complete when a set of core and ready partners agree to take action. The YTAT members share the same expectations of the issues they will address in the Design stage, and they agree on the common purpose of their work together.

Design
In the Design stage the Youth Transition Action Team begins to define a coordinated infrastructure on which all of its system-building efforts will depend. Priorities identified for action in the Discovery stage are addressed, resources are aligned, and strategies are developed. The coordination of existing programs and the development of common goals begin.

Characteristics of this stage:
- Awareness of inequities
- Partners, youth and alumni are planning together
- Effective approaches are identified
- Clear roles among partners are defined
- The community is discussing foster youth outcomes

Activities to move to the next stage:
- Develop vision
Breakthrough Indicator that you’re ready to move to the next stage:
Core partners agree to roles and actions

The first Youth Transition Action Team actions in the Design stage are to develop a vision for the future and to cultivate community support to address inequities and gaps in policies and resources. They analyze the data collected in the Discovery stage, specify measurable outcomes and indicators, garner commitments from core partners to help achieve the common goals, and develop a plan to address the established priorities. Typically, a small committee made up of Youth Transition Action Team members and core partner representatives work together to design a set of strategies and activities that address the priorities set by the Youth Transition Action Team as a whole. The design incorporates a variety of programs and services, providing a full range of developmental options for foster youth.

The Design Stage is complete for a particular strategy or activity when the Youth Transition Action Team members and community partners agree to specific roles and actions. The YTAT and system partners are clear on their respective roles and functions, and have reached agreement on their mutual responsibilities.

Incubation
In the Incubation stage, the pilot implementation of activities takes place. Strategies, services and programs planned in the Design stage are put into practice on a small scale, and operational systems are tested and refined. Collaborative structures and effective communication systems are put in place, and staff of the partnering organizations and programs participate in common staff training and preparation.

Characteristics of this stage:
- Demonstration of coordinated services
- Multiple-partner transition planning
- Cross-system staff development
- Coordinated evaluation and improvement strategies
- Youth are active in leadership roles

Activities to move to the next stage:
- Conduct and assess pilot activities
- Evaluate effectiveness of system and measures
- Train staff across disciplines
- Share results and inform partners
- Examine and influence policies

Breakthrough Indicator that you’re ready to move to the next stage:
- Partners agree to expand actions

The incubation of new strategies requires a number of actions. First, the Youth Transition Action Team and its partners conduct the pilot, working with a small and manageable group of programs, partners, and youth. The intent of the Incubation stage is to field-test programs and projects in order to refine them and gauge their impact. Operational systems are implemented, assessed and adjusted. All staff receive training and support, with particular attention paid to aligning goals, objectives, and expectations.
across programs and systems. The effectiveness of the design strategies is intentionally measured and the data gathered is used to adjust work plans and improve program performance.

The Incubation Stage is complete for a particular strategy or activity when the Youth Transition Action Team and its partners agree to expand the activities and practices to a broader section of the community. The YTAT members agree to the successful implementation components of the pilot and have a clear strategy and plan for expanding activities to reach a larger number of youth or engage a wider range of programs and organizations in the system.

Growth
In the Growth stage the partners improve and expand their impact by first revisiting and evaluating the initiative’s core operational strategies, assessing their practices and evaluating the effectiveness of their activities. Most often, expansion "downshifts" a community back into elements of the Design stage but at a higher level that builds on the experience of the pilot, engages more partners, and improves or expands services.

Characteristics of this stage:
- Resources are leveraged to serve more youth
- Clear evidence of youth impacts
- Increased number and range of partners
- Sequenced and coordinated activities
- Empowered working group includes youth

Activities to move to the next stage:
- Expand existing activities
- Integrate new partners
- Evaluate effectiveness
- Adjust strategies
- Conduct additional training
- Craft new policies

Breakthrough Indicator that you’re ready to move to the next stage:
- Partners agree to integrate practices into system

Growing operations that have been tested and refined during incubation to a larger scale requires a number of tasks. The first is to refine the strategies tested during the Incubation stage and make the necessary adjustments to broaden scope and engage new partners in the work. Staff members across disciplines are provided additional training as needed and identified by the assessment of outcomes. New policies that support collaborative and sequenced services can now be put in place.

The Growth Stage is complete for a particular strategy or activity when the Youth Transition Action Team and its partners agree to integrate and sustain the practice in the existing system. The YTAT members formally recognize the success and viability of their work in the prior stages, and make commitments to integrate practices into the core systems of their community.
Integration

At the Integration stage, strategies, services, and programs are institutionalized within the operation of the local system. As that happens, the Youth Transition Action Team and core partners turn to the next set of priorities required to continue to improve key elements of the youth transition system. New priorities are set and the Youth Transition Action Team moves on to a new set of challenges and actions.

Characteristics of this stage:
- Blended, braided, and stacked resources address needs
- Policy and advocacy support systems improvement
- A collaborative system is sustainable and responsive
- Community is aware of transition issues
- Youth are fully engaged, connected, and successful

Activities to move to the next stage:
- Leverage additional resources
- Refine and document strategies
- Report results
- Publicly celebrate accomplishments
- Implement new policies
- Sustain the work through proven partners

Breakthrough Indicator that you’re ready to move to the next stage:
- Partners agree to move on to the next priority

The first major activity in the Integration stage is to document the effectiveness of the strategies that have been developed and implemented across the local system. Plans to sustain the work over time are put in place and resources are leveraged to ensure that key initiatives and programs remain active and viable in the local system. New opportunities are discovered and explored that serve to strengthen the work and inform a new set of priorities and policies. Results and achievements are publicly recognized and celebrated.

The Integration Stage is complete for a particular strategy or activity when the Youth Transition Action Team and its partners agree to continue to improve the system and move on to the next priority. The Youth Transition Action Team members recognize that while successful with their initial efforts, new strategies and service plans must be addressed that respond to newly identified priorities.

At this point in the process, the Youth Transition Action Team and its community partners engage in continuous improvement activities and prepare to move through the Stages cycle, to address a new set of priorities. In reality, the community will likely have a number of initiatives and priorities in play at different stages of development at any given time. The work is not linear but cyclic, with the frame of continuous quality improvement guiding the regular work of the Youth Transition Action Team and its partners.
Youth Transition Action Teams
Guidebook

Section Three—
How to Use the Youth Transition Action Team Tools
Section Three: How to Use the Youth Transition Action Team Tools

This previous sections of this Guidebook have presented three frameworks for building and sustaining an effective Youth Transition Action Team that can create a locally-defined, comprehensive youth transition system. This section begins to apply the use of tools specifically designed to support action planning building on those frameworks.

Assuming that the county, through the efforts of the Youth Transition Action Team, has assembled a team to conduct the work, this section of the Guidebook provides guidance for a leader or facilitator – an experienced facilitator, trainer, or director - who can help the team think about and apply the system elements, Youth Transition Action Team functions, and developmental stages to their work. The Youth Transition Action Team, with the help of the group’s leader or identified facilitator, should use and adapt each tool as appropriate to their community, its vision, and its resources. This section introduces tools that have been tested and refined through years of practice and that have proven to be flexible in their application to many local areas. It is written as a “how-to” guide for meeting facilitators.

The Youth Transition Action Team tools provide a road map for building, improving, and sustaining the work of Youth Transition Action Teams. The awareness-building tools, graphic charts, assessments, and work plans provided with this guidebook support the process Youth Transition Action Teams use to catalyze change in their communities and create achievable action plans that will yield positive outcomes for transitioning youth.

Youth Transition Action Team Tools

YTAT provides several tools in different formats to support the team.

- **Awareness tools** and exercises are designed to build a common understanding of the current condition, issues and opportunities, create common vision and purpose, and lay the groundwork for collective action that will ensure successful outcomes for current and former foster youth.

- **Charts** graphically illustrate the processes, activities, characteristics, and functions that a Youth Transition Action Team should take into account as it builds a comprehensive youth transition system.

- **Assessment tools**, drawn from the charts, enable Youth Transition Action Teams to conduct assessments of their progress, prioritize the actions needed for each system element or identify the current capacity of the Youth Transition Action Team.

- **The Workplan** builds from the priorities identified through the self-assessment process to support the priority objectives, and identify the strategies, tactics and the person(s) or organizations responsible. The workplan also captures the desired outcomes for each activity and establishes a timeline for conducting the work.

These tools are all available online (www.newwaystowork.org) and are also included with the companion CD to this guidebook. They are designed as a sequential and integrated set.

- Use the charts to illustrate the need for a comprehensive system, and to describe its components and the role that a Youth Transition Action Team can play in building that system.
- Use the awareness tools to build a common understanding of the need for a comprehensive system and to identify current conditions.
Use the charts to develop a common language and framework for action planning.
Use the assessments to identify progress, determine capacity and select priorities for inclusion in the workplan.
Use the workplan to document specific strategies and tactics you will use to achieve each priority objective.

**Getting Ready to Use the Tools**

The Youth Transition Action Team tools comprise an interconnected set with consistent language and multiple connections that:
- Promote the use and understanding of common language
- Encourage the use of these tools in multiple settings
- Connect the tools in order to encourage concerted, focused, system-building activities
- Create a state-wide continuity of strategies, resources, and language among Youth Transition Action Team Network members and others concerned with supporting successful youth transition.

Most of the exercises and facilitated sessions require the following items, which should be available and ready to use:
- Flip Chart and Flip Chart stand (you may prefer gridded flip chart paper)
- Wall-size charts, posted in the room.
- Individual copies of appropriate charts and/or tools for your session, including self assessment or workplan templates
- Tape that will not harm charts or walls (e.g., Scotch 256 tape, available at art supply shops)
- Post-it note pads
- Colored markers (e.g., Mr. Sketch brand markers, which don’t bleed through paper onto walls)
- A poster-friendly meeting room with lots of good wall space for hanging and working with charts. We recommend that you use wall-size versions of the tools for group reference, with 11” x 17” table-top color versions for each individual to use and take home.

**Using the Tools**

In an overview session, there are several awareness activities and tools you can utilize to provide an introduction to a Youth Transition Action Team’s purpose, goals, objectives and activities. The awareness activities are followed by self-assessment and workplan development tools and exercises, to be conducted with the team at a subsequent gathering. These tools and exercises serve a variety of

**Smart Start Tip: Attention Youth Transition Action Team Leaders and Facilitators!**

Before you bring the Youth Transition Action Team (or a planning group) together to work with these tools, print out a set of the charts. You will want to create large, wall-size versions for your session with the team. Put these charts up in your office and orient yourself to the Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System, the Youth Transition Action Team: Core Functions, the Stages of Building the System and the other resources available as you proceed through this guide.

Perhaps now would be a good time to review the previous section of this guidebook with the charts as a frame of reference. If you do this, it will be much easier to understand these tools and how best to apply them to your work.
purposes including setting the context and highlighting issues to be addressed, identifying core partners and champions to engage in the effort, assessing gaps and challenges, determining your comprehensive strategies and developing achievable workplans to accomplish your goals.

The following tools are reviewed in this section:

- Quick Map - “No Wrong Door”
- Foster Youth Transition Reality Map
- Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System
- Youth Transition Action Team: Core Functions
- Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth-Transition System
- Team and Core Partners Identification Bulls Eye
- Elements Self-Assessment
- Functions Self-Assessment
- Youth Transition Action Team Comprehensive Work Plan

Spend some time with each of these tools or exercises before using them with your Youth Transition Action Team. Using the tools takes a bit of practice, but when you are comfortable with them, they provide a solid grounding for planning and implementing work in your local area. Keep the charts posted in your office. Refer to them when orienting new partners or policymakers to your work. Review your progress against the charts regularly. Use them to frame professional development activities among core partners and staff. Have them handy when conducting the assessments or crafting the workplan as described below.

**Quick Map (“No Wrong Door”)**

The Quick Map tool and the accompanying exercise have three purposes:

- To illustrate current relationships and youth connections to services;
- To help a group of partners or staff discover why a Youth Transition Action Team that coordinates multiple youth services is needed; and
- To provide an initial sense of what a Youth Transition Action Team does to make and manage those connections.

This exercise is best conducted with a group of partners and practitioners who include a number of members of your Youth Transition Action Team. Grounding the members of a team in its current situation often helps clear up any misinformation or lack of information regarding service levels provided to youth. The Quick Map enables the group to talk about where they wish to be and to discuss the need to better coordinate efforts, keeping a focus on the youth as customer and identifying the need to better connect various youth-serving programs, opportunities and systems. This exercise visually depicts the confusion and inefficiencies created by multiple, disconnected and/or competing efforts in a community. It is recommended that this exercise be conducted at the beginning of any overview meetings conducted in support of the Youth Transition Action Team initiative.

At the center of the blank Quick Map is the image of a young person. For the purposes of this exercise, explain that the image portrays a single young seeking support, exploring opportunities, and being influenced or served by a number of different programs or services. Surrounding the page, the buildings represent various youth serving programs, educational institutions, community-based organizations, government agencies and other entities that provide services to or influence young people.

*Note: It is fine to use a stick figure to represent the image of a young person, and circles or squares around the perimeter to represent the organizations, programs and people that serve or influence them.*
How to Use the *Quick Map*

1. Graphically illustrate the current reality

Begin by preparing a flip chart as depicted above and explain the layout as summarized in the prior paragraph (Youth at the center, programs, services, agencies and adults around the perimeter). The goal of the exercise is to quickly and visually describe current relationships and programmatic connections between youth and the youth-service providers, and to display the connections (or lack thereof) among the youth-service programs and agencies. Ask the group to name the agencies, schools, employers, faith-based organizations, and others who currently provide services to or influence youth in your county. Use specific examples from the community to help make the information on the chart concrete. Write the names of these organizations in the buildings or circles around perimeter of the chart.

Next, using a different colored marker, spend a few minutes drawing the current connections and collaborations among the local providers. Ask the group to describe the current relationships among the community’s youth-service providers. Point out that, in the current state, only a few programs and services are intentionally connected, many are wholly isolated, and in the main, a young person is left to navigate this maze of programs, services, opportunities, and adult influence on his or her own.
2. **Discuss the chart with the group.**
Ask the group to share their first reaction to the image. What does it look like? How do they think this situation looks and feels to youth? To youth program partners? To foster and kinship parents? To teachers? To social workers? To educators? To business partners? What did they learn from doing this exercise?

Using the *Quick Map* exercise, groups often characterize their current situation as confusing and disconnected. Explain that this lack of coordination is not just confusing for all parties; it duplicates efforts, wastes money, and fails to serve young people in a comprehensive manner.

Point out that all of the youth-serving organizations have a shared purpose in relationship to these community connections; to provide young people with meaningful developmental and educational opportunities. With a disconnected approach, the system is inefficient, and youth have difficulty accessing the services and opportunities that they need in order to succeed in life. Providers are isolated, confused and sometimes deliver conflicting advice or information. Young people become frustrated, miss opportunities for deeper, more meaningful learning, connections, and are less likely to achieve success as they hop from program to program and experience to experience.

3. **Demonstrate the connected version of the *Quick Map.***

Next, draw a circle through the buildings on the completed chart, symbolically bringing together the multiple programs and opportunities into a single system. Ask the group to imagine a system where all programs and services were connected. Explain that the circle illustrates a system in which youth can access services through any given entry point where there is "no wrong door" and that a young person could enter and receive the information, resources, and support she or he needs.\(^\text{10}\)

Use the completed map to frame a discussion about what a system might look like in your community. What issues need to be addressed? Who should take the lead in facilitating a continuous development process? Who else should the process involve?

The completed circle symbolizes what the Youth Transition Action Team is trying to develop; a coordinated system for serving youth that is effective, easy and efficient for all parties.

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\(^\text{10}\) A common fear among education, child welfare, workforce development, and youth organizations is that they will be asked to give up existing relationships and that they will lose autonomy. The *Quick Map* demonstrates that the Youth Transition Action Team does not replace or displace existing connections or relationships. In fact, it honors existing connections and creates a framework from which these relationships are leveraged as part of one system that serves all youth.
Foster Youth Transition Reality Map
The Foster Youth Transition Reality Map and the accompanying exercise has four purposes:

- To identify and discuss the issues affecting foster youth while in care, and the issues affecting them when they emancipate.
- To discuss the internal and external issues, influences, challenges, and supports affecting foster youth before and after emancipation.
- Build a common understanding about the outcomes for youth exiting foster care in your community.
- To lay a foundation for the issues and opportunities in your community that will be addressed and leveraged by the work of your Youth Transition Action Team.

This exercise is intended to ground participants in thinking about how young people themselves experience and are impacted by the child welfare system. Through the process of thinking about all of the issues surrounding the lives of foster youth, your team and partners can integrate that understanding in the development of a workplan that will have the greatest impact on the lives of these young people. This exercise is best conducted along when foster youth or alumni (ideally who are members of your Youth Transition Action Team) are present.

How to Use the Foster Youth Transition Reality Map
1. Graphically Illustrate the Reality Map
Begin by creating a blank, wall sized version of the Foster Youth Transition Reality Map taped to the wall (Again, you may use butcher paper or tape together a set of flip chart sheets). Explain the purpose of the exercise as described above and state that the goal of the exercise is to ground the group in an understanding of the experiences of foster youth in order to inform the work of your Youth Transition Action Team. This exercise focuses on the experience of the youth within the system as it currently exists.
2. Fill in the External and Internal Influences & Issues

- **External Influences Ages 12-18**: Starting on the top left hand side of the chart, begin by having participants brainstorm the current external issues and influences affecting youth while still in care (ages 12-18). Define “external” as being the outside influences, people and systems affecting or directing them in their lives. Prompt the group by asking what services and supports are available or required. What are the different systems youth at this age are exposed to or required to participate in? What are the mainstream external influences in their lives? Who are the people that they interact with and who have an impact on their lives? Record the responses in the appropriate area.

- **External Influences Ages 18-24**: Next, move right to the next column in the top section and conduct the same process, this time thinking about the external influences affecting youth once they emancipate from care (18-24 years old). What post emancipation services does your community have in place to serve these young people? What opportunities are there for all young people after the age of 18? Who are the people and organizations that support these young adults? Record the responses.

- **Internal Influences Ages 12-18**: Next, move down to the lower left hand column, directly under the 12-18 External Influences section, and ask participants to brainstorm the internal experiences affecting young people. What are their emotions, how do they feel, and how do they experience the world? What are their developmental needs and experiences? What changes are happening to them cognitively and physically? What are their attitudes and approaches to life? Record the responses.

- **Internal Influences Ages 18-24**: Next, move right to the next column, directly under the 18-24 External Influences and repeat the above brainstorm, discussing internal issues and influences affecting young adults. Record the responses.

3. Discuss Outcomes

Now moving to the third column, ask participants to discuss the outcomes young people experience once they emancipate from the foster care system. What do the External and Internal forces produce as results for foster youth?

4. Discuss "Against All Odds"

In the final column, have participants brainstorm and share stories about youth who have succeeded “against all odds.” Ask them to focus on the key aspects of those individual’s experiences or conditions that supported their success.

3. Review and Reflect

Have team members provide feedback on what’s been posted on the wall. Discuss the key elements of the success and discuss how your community can enhance supports and opportunities to support more young people in those ways. What systemic changes need to be addressed in order to provide more opportunities for success for young people? How can the work of your Youth Transition Action Team address both internal and external factors affecting youth in and emancipating from foster care.

Inform participants that the work of the Youth Transition Action Team will be to address these issues, emphasizing that the primary focus will be on these specific issues surrounding youth prior to and after emancipation.
Using the Three Frameworks for Success

To ground the Youth Transition Action Team in the work they are to conduct together, leaders and facilitators should provide an overview using the three frameworks designed to guide their work in building a comprehensive system. The three frameworks describe the **Elements** of such a system, identifies the Youth Transition Action Team **Functions** necessary to create it, and outlines the **Stages** of development in implementing the system. Post wall sized versions of the charts and provide tabletops (11”x17’) for each team member. Begin with an overview of the elements chart, followed by functions and then stages.

Three Frameworks for Success: Overview

Review the three frameworks for success, described in section two of this guide and illustrated on the charts. Walk through each of the charts, referring to the narratives in the guide for more detail.

- **Begin with the Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System**, discuss each of the four content elements first: Academic Achievement, Career Development, Community Services and Supports, and Youth Leadership. Then describe the fifth systems element, Comprehensive Youth Development Approach, as supporting the connections among the other four.

  Discuss a sampling of the indicators listed under each element, and point to the outcome produced in each area.

- **Then move to a description of the Transition Action Team: Core Functions**, first describing the five core functions teams perform as follows.
  - Convene leaders and promote policy
  - Create linkages and connect systems
  - Build awareness: market and share information
  - Measure effectiveness
  - Improve program practice

  Discuss each of the functions in greater detail, pointing to some of the actions taken in each functional area.

- **Then move to the Stages of Development**, pointing to first the five broad stages of Discovery, Design, Incubation, Growth and Integration. Explain that any initiative, program, or systems building effort moves through these five stages. Point out the breakthrough indicators between each stage that indicate agreements, decisions and actions among the partners.

  Discuss the characteristics of each stage and highlight the sample activities designed to support movement from one stage to the next.

The Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System

The *Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System* chart conveys the five elements that collectively need to be in place to ensure successful transitions to adulthood for all youth. The five elements are listed below.

- Academic Achievement
- Career Development
- Community Services and Support
- Youth Leadership
- Comprehensive Youth Development Approach
The *Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System* chart helps Youth Transition Action Teams and local leadership develop a shared vision and language for defining the elements that should be in place to collectively serve the developmental needs of youth over time. The first four elements are content focused, and should be visible across the system and in each program activity, classroom, or training environment. All partners, no matter their particular area of expertise or service delivery, should be aware of and address to some degree each of the four areas through their work with youth. The fifth element, a *Comprehensive Youth Development Approach*, describes the system itself and the connections that must be developed to ensure an effective and collaborative delivery system across programs, institutions, and projects. It also points to the need to apply sound youth development principles within and across all programs and services.

**How to Use the *Elements* Chart**

Walk your Youth Transition Action Team through the *Elements* chart, identifying first the five elements and the bulleted statements below each element title, concluding with *Comprehensive Youth Development Approach*. It is not always helpful to read through the chart word for word, particularly as you get to the sub-bullets below each element; however, make sure the participants understand the different parts of the chart and how the information is organized.

**The chart has five components:**

- A graphic depiction and **title** for each element – *Academic Achievement*, *Career Development*, *Community Services and Supports*, *Youth Leadership*, and *Comprehensive Youth Development Approach*.

- A **descriptive statement** describing the characteristics of each element, which describes what would be visible in the local system if the element is being addressed effectively.

- A listing of **sub-elements** within each element that describe what effective implementation of the element might look like in a community. For example, under the element *Career Development*, the descriptive statement is “All youth are engaged in their learning in the workplace and community.” Within this element, we then see the sub-elements that are manifested as the system is built over time.

- An **outcome statement** which describes what youth success looks like when all of the characteristics are in place within a community.

- The **image** of All Youth-One System with a youth at the center.
As a transition from the *Elements* chart to the *Functions* chart, emphasize that the work of building a comprehensive youth-serving system is an ambitious undertaking, and that no one organization will have full responsibility for the system. As a next step, the group will explore the various functions that a Youth Transition Action Team must perform in building a comprehensive youth transition system.

### Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System

**Session Summary**

- Review the first four “content” elements
- Describe the fifth “system” element
- Review the indicators for each element
- Point out the outcome statements for each element

### The Functions of a Youth Transition Action Team in Building the System

The *Transition Action Team: Core Functions* chart conveys the five functions of a Youth Transition Action Team as follows:

- Convene leaders and promote policy
- Create linkages and connect systems
- Build awareness: market and share information
- Measure effectiveness
- Improve program practice

The *Transition Action Team: Core Functions* chart helps Youth Transition Action Teams develop a shared understanding and common language for defining their Youth Transition Action Team activities in broad functional areas. It helps teams of partners and core staff begin to discuss the *functions* that a Youth Transition Action Team fulfills, rather than the individual *activities* that various partners may perform. This focus on *functions* is important. Activities and strategies shift to address specific needs or take advantage of opportunities over time, but the functions performed remain consistent.

**How to Use the Functions Chart**

Review the *Quick Map* on the wall. Remind participants of your discussions during the *Quick Map* exercise and the conclusions the group has drawn. As you review the Youth Transition Action Team functions, you will go deeper into defining what Youth Transition Action Teams actually do in order to create a connected youth serving system.

**The chart has four components:**

- A graphic depiction and *title* for each function – *Convene leaders and Promote Policy; Create linkages and Connect Systems; Build Awareness; Measure Effectiveness; and Improve Program Practice.*
- A *qualifying statement* describing each function, which sets an expectation of that function as it applies to supporting successful transitions for youth emancipating from the child welfare system, and comprehensively through systemic change for all youth.
• Additional **action statements** that describe the work Youth Transition Action Teams conduct as they seek to build a comprehensive youth transition system.

• The image of a youth at the center, with the four outcomes illustrated in each of the quadrants.

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**Review and Provide Examples of the Youth Transition Action Team Functions**

Discuss each of the functions, beginning with *Convene Leaders and Promote Policy*. Briefly describe the types of activities that relate to this function and provide specific examples. Next, discuss *Create Linkages and Connect Systems, Build Awareness, Measure Effectiveness, and Improve Program Practice*.

You’ll go next to the *Stages* chart. To help with the transition, explain that now that you have developed clarity on the elements of a comprehensive youth serving-system (what we’re trying to build), and the functions of a Youth Transition Action Team in building the system (the job of the Youth Transition Action Team), the group will address the stages of system development (how the work gets done and the process of building the system over time).

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**Functions of a Youth Transition Action Team in Building the System**

**Session Summary**

• Review the Youth Transition Action Team functions.
• Review and provide examples of each function.
• Discuss the additional action statements identified for each function.
The Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System

The Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System chart helps a Youth Transition Action Team visualize and identify its stage of development in the system-building process. It provides a roadmap and guide to the system improvement process and is a powerful tool for self-exploration and raising awareness, effective for both small and large groups.

The chart has five components:

- A graphic depiction and title for each stage - Discovery, Design, Incubation, Growth, Integration
- Characteristics for each stage (in the pentagram beneath the title of each stage);
- Activities typically conducted within each stage (to the side of each stage);
- A breakthrough indicator, shown between the stages, that signals when a community is ready to begin the next stage; and
- The image of a youth at the center, with the four outcomes illustrated in each of the quadrants.

How to Use the Stages Chart

The purpose of the Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System chart is to describe the system-building process of a Youth Transition Action Team's actions, decisions, activities, development, and continuous improvement activities, and how the system (or component of the system) is built over time. It is designed for use by a Youth Transition Action Team that has worked together and whose members are familiar with the partner's activities, local service-delivery strategies, and key stakeholders in the community.

1. Define and point out the five sections of the chart.
Walk the group through the five stages by reviewing the titles of each stage, beginning with Discovery. Next, point to the characteristics of each stage (inside the pentagram), again beginning with Discovery and moving through each stage of the cycle to Integration. Repeat the cycle, and point out the activities and breakthrough indicators for each stage. Don’t go into detail. You are really training the participants in how to read the Stages chart, not to dive deeply into its content at this point.
2. **Review each stage and the characteristics of the stage.**
Walk the group through each stage, emphasizing the continued growth of the system through the process. Focus on the title of each stage (Discovery, Design, Incubation, Growth, and Integration) and its characteristics. Read through the more detailed descriptions in the pentagrams beneath each stage, reviewing what a community looks like at each stage of development. Review each of the breakthrough indicators, explaining that in order to move to the next stage, the breakthrough must be achieved.

3. **Have participants identify your community’s stage of development.**
Give the group about five minutes to examine the chart (up close on the wall or using their own 11” x 17”, table-top version). Ask each person to place a Post-it note on the wall chart on the stage that he or she believes characterizes your community’s stage of system development in building a comprehensive youth transition systems. (Post-it notes should not be placed between stages or on a breakthrough indicator.) To assist each person in placing the Youth Transition Action Team's county in a specific stage, ask people to review and select the set of characteristics (not the activities) that best describe the current condition. Recognize that many activities are well underway and may be at very different stages. Ask the group to focus on your community’s progress in building a successful youth transition system for youth emancipating from foster care.

It is not uncommon for team members to have vastly different perspectives on the current stage for the same community. Remind participants that, for now, each individual is indicating what she or he believes, without discussing his or her choices with one another. After each person makes and posts a choice, ask the team for general feedback. How consistent are the opinions? Did the participants identify clusters of stages, or are the Post-it notes all over the chart?

4. **Reach general agreement.**
Ask the participants to indicate where they placed the community on the chart and why. If the group is small, everyone can answer. If the group is larger than eight, you may want to sample clusters of votes. Have the group members discuss the chart and their opinions, observations, “ah-ha’s,” and understandings about the placement of the notes. Would anyone like to change their vote? If there was a great difference among participants’ initial placement, after discussion, ask the group to vote again, placing Post-it notes where they see the community today. Give them some time to work this out, reminding them that there are no right answers. Being in the Incubation Stage is no better or worse than the Discovery Stage. What is important is that the group comes to general agreement on your community’s current stage in the first session with the Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System chart. To move forward, the team needs to come to general agreement on the starting point – the current stage of development.

### Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System

**Session Summary**

- Explain the purpose of the Stages chart.
- Define and point out the five sections of the chart.
- Review each stage, its characteristics, and breakthrough indicators.
- Have participants identify their community’s stage of development.
- Discuss and reach general agreement.
Ongoing Uses for the Stages Chart

The Stages of Building the System chart, like most of the tools, is designed for multiple purposes. Point out that the communities involved in the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative and hundreds of other communities around the country have used it successfully to help key stakeholders visualize where a community is beginning its work, where it wants to go and how it might get there. New Ways to Work first designed a stages tool in 1997 as a way to visually document the process a community goes through in developing a system to make and manage workplace connections. The chart has evolved since then, incorporating feedback from practitioners around the country.11

Now that participants have completed an overview of the Youth Transition Action Team initiative, goals, and purpose, they can begin to identify who are the potential partners and team members necessary for developing a successful local initiative.

Team and Core Partners Identification Bulls Eye

The Team and Partners Identification Bulls Eye tool and the accompanying exercise has one primary purpose:

- To assist you in identifying the members of your Youth Transition Action Team, stakeholders, and core leadership in your local initiative.

This exercise is best conducted with a group of partners or potential partners, who may or may not ultimately serve a role on the Youth Transition Action Team. It is best conducted following a review of the Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System and the Youth Transition Action Teams: Core Functions frameworks, so that participants are thinking of the variety of people and representatives from organizations who will have an influence and impact on the activities and strategies of your local team. The visual image of the Bulls-eye assists participants in thinking about the level and type of responsibility different individuals and organizations may have in the effort.

The rings of each Bulls Eye are intended to capture individuals and organizations with whom you would like to engage in your community initiative. The center of the Bulls Eye pertains to core leaders who have decision making power and influence in policy and system change who must provide the vision for change, or at a minimum grant permission to integrate program services across disciplines. The next ring represents the Youth Transition Action Team members themselves, and includes individuals who will set the strategic agenda and oversee and implement the activities identified by the team. The final ring includes external stakeholders, individuals and organizations who have a stake in the local system as it is developed, and who should have some input to the process and be informed of decisions and progress.

How to Use the Team and Partners Identification Bulls Eye tool

1. Graphically illustrate the Bulls Eye

Begin by drawing a blank Bulls Eye (as illustrated on the following page) on a piece of butcher paper or a flip chart. Explain the layout as summarized above. The goal is to identify core leaders, Transition Action Team members, and community stakeholders who you feel will have a strategic impact on achieving goals identified by your community team.

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11 The charts result from years of collaboration between Gordon Rudow and the team at Bonfire Communications and the team at New Ways. Joint projects have included community and school-based reinvention projects, citywide institutes, train-the-trainer sessions and the development of sophisticated learning and communication tools for facilitators. The underlying principles behind the mapping and tool-building processes incorporate some centuries-old practices, as well as the latest thinking around organizational development, strategic communications and adult learning.
2. Define the types of partners
The next step is to define the types of individuals and organizations you would like your team to identify through a brainstorming activity. The following individuals and organizations were identified as important to include by the original design team members for this initiative (see section one of this guidebook for a list of potential partners.)

- **Core Leaders**: have decision making power and influence in policy and system change (directors and policy makers).
- **Youth Transition Action Teams**: individuals who will set the strategic agenda, conduct activities, and oversee and implement the activities identified by the team.
- **Stakeholders**: individuals and organizations who have a stake in the process and need to be kept informed of your progress.

3. Populate the Bulls Eye
Then, using different colored markers for each ring, ask participants to begin to call out individuals, and organizations they feel should be included in the rings. To start out, you may want to volunteer by identifying individuals and organizations that you already have in mind for each of the rings, and/or individuals within the room. Use specific names of people and organizations, rather than types of organizations. (Note: you may wish to have team members use post-its for this exercise, allowing the group to sift and sort individuals into each category).

4. Fill gaps and encourage cross-system population
Encourage participants to identify partners from a variety of organizations and systems. Refer to the Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System chart, and ask participants to think about people and organizations in all of the fields that support those elements. For example, if many of the individuals identified are from the Child Welfare Services field, encourage participants to be specific and name potential partners in workforce development and education. Encourage people also to think about who might be the best representative for the Youth Transition Action Team from each identified agency. For
example, identifying "Rosa Hernandez, School-to-Career Coordinator at Santa Rosa High School" is much more specific than "Educators at local high school."

5. Identify next steps
Discuss strategies for engaging the identified potential partners, and set dates for specific meetings and events in which to invite potential partners. For example, Youth Transition Action Team members can be invited to your next community meeting, you may invite core leadership to a special orientation to garner their buy-in, or invite all stakeholders to a larger, community-building event to build awareness about issues affecting youth in foster care.

### Team and Partners Identification Bulls Eye

**Session Summary**
- Graphically illustrate the Bulls Eye.
- Define the types of partners.
- Populate the Bulls Eye.
- Fill in the gaps and encourage cross-system population.
- Identify next steps.

### Summarize the Sessions

As a Youth Transition Action Team works through the *Quick Map*, the *Foster Youth Transition Reality Map*, the *Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System*, the *Youth Transition Action Teams: Core Functions*, the *Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System*, and the *Team and Core Partners Identification Bulls Eye*, there is a natural planning process to take the work to a next level.

At this point, review the work you have conducted so far. Refer to the *Quick Map, Current State Map*, and/or *Foster Youth Transition Reality Map* that describe your current condition. Point out that you’ve identified a picture of where you want to go (pointing to the *Elements* chart), what the job of the Youth Transition Action Team is in helping the community get there (pointing to the *Functions* chart) and how you will progress towards a comprehensive youth transition system over time (pointing to the *Stages* chart). Point out that at the center of each of the charts is the image of a successful young person, and reiterate the ultimate goal of ensuring successful transitions for youth.

In order to take this awareness to a level of strategic planning, a community must move from basic awareness to self-assessment and workplan development. We have created self-assessments to assist Youth Transition Action Teams (or a subset or committee) in assessing their progress in key areas, determining their capacity, establishing priorities, and planning for the future. It is suggested that the self-assessment process take place at a future session of the Youth Transition Action Team or a subgroup charged with defining actions for the team.
Next Step Tools

Self-Assessments
To assist communities in assessing their current state and to lay the foundation for a work plan, New Ways has developed self-assessments that focus on the Elements of a Youth-Serving System and the Youth Transition Action Team: Core Functions. It is recommended that all Youth Transition Action Teams complete the assessments, prior to the development of a workplan to guide its work.

- Use the Elements self-assessment to determine progress, identify gaps, and establish priorities for the community in creating a comprehensive youth-serving system.
- Use the Functions self-assessment to determine progress, assess current capacity and identify new potential partners needed for the Youth Transition Action Team to fulfill its role as a catalyst for local system development.
- Use the Improving Program Practice self-assessment to go deeper with assessing progress, identifying gaps, and establishing priorities in the operational functions within comprehensive system development.

This step formally grounds the group in the progress of building the elements or the functions in the community and in its system-building priorities. When a self-assessment is completed, core leadership and the group as a whole should then use the priorities set through this process to drive the development of a work plan and the evaluation of progress against that plan over time.

Comprehensive Elements Self-Assessment
The Elements Self-Assessment is part of an integrated set of tools designed to help Youth Transition Action Teams determine progress, document success, prioritize activities, and plan for improvements as they implement activities to promote and ensure successful transitions for youth. Teams should review the Elements of a Comprehensive Local Youth-Serving System framework prior to conducting this assessment. The left hand column in this assessment lists indicators or goals that are drawn from the Elements framework. Teams then identify progress in meeting these goals. They then prioritize areas of focus for inclusion in the Comprehensive Work Plan.

The Elements Self-Assessment is designed to help ground the Youth Transition Action Team in its vision for the system it is trying to build to support youth success, and prioritize activities for inclusion in their work plan.
Instructions

1. Explain the use of the self-assessment.

The team first meets as a group to agree on the identified goals or conditions listed within the self-assessment. The items listed are examples to help everyone gain a shared understanding of the desired indicators or outcomes associated with each element. Teams may edit or modify the statements to reflect the work of the Youth Transition Action Team, or add statements as appropriate. To make it easier for participants to agree on the progress and priority of each item, enlarge a blank assessment template, post it on the wall and modify it to reflect the agreed-upon activities. In the progress column for each item, note the four circles. Explain them as follows:

- **Not on our radar screen (blank circle):** Little or no progress
- **Just started (quarter-filled-in):** Aware of the need in this area and have begun or are planning to address the issue
- **Pretty far along in implementation or practice (three-quarters-filled-in):** Moving well along in this area; part of existing work plans and addressed on a regular basis
- **Fully integrated into system (filled-in circle)**

2. Individuals complete the assessment.

Ask each person to complete the progress portion of the assessment. People can do this on their own prior to the meeting or during the first part of a group session. This individual activity should take ten minutes. Make sure they are given permission to skip an item if it is something they don’t understand or one with which they have no relevant experience or opinion.

3. Individuals post and discuss progress.

Ask each person to make a small dot on the large wall chart with a marker to indicate his or her sense of community progress as of today for each item. Discuss the votes. Is there general agreement? If the dots are clustered on two adjacent circles, note that there is general agreement on progress in the area, but don’t discuss those items right now. Are there areas of wide disagreement, with some people feeling an item is fully integrated while others see little progress? Discuss these disagreements and try to bring the group to some common understanding of progress in that area. Once general agreement on level of progress has been made, mark a circle around the selected level.

4. Individuals establish priorities.

After each person has shared his or her sense of progress for each of the items, and you have reached several agreements among the team, the next step is to establish priorities in each area. The bars in the far right column indicate low, medium, and high priorities. Frame the exercise in the context of a time period for which the group will be developing a work plan (e.g., priorities for the coming year or priorities for the Youth Transition Action Team from today through September of next year). Limit the number of “highs” each person can designate (we recommend two highs per element or function) and also set a required minimum number of “lows” (force at least four lows across the entire assessment). Unless forced to make some choices, groups will tend to rank most items as a high priority. A low ranking doesn’t mean an item is not important; it simply means that it is less of a priority in the context of the work plan’s time frame.
Ask each individual to post her or his priorities using a marker to indicate their choice around the priority bars on the wall chart. After individuals post their priorities, examine and discuss the results, focusing on areas where the group does not have a general sense of agreement. Use a similar process to the progress discussion described above. Discuss the areas where all three priority indicators have a few dots as well as those where most people voted “low” or “high.” Once general agreement on level of priority has been made, mark a circle around the selected level.

5. **Discuss the relationship of progress to priority.**

After everyone has posted their choices and the group has reached a general consensus, ask the group to look at the relationship of the priorities to the progress indicators. Discuss any observations group members may offer. Referring to the chart, point out combinations and discuss them as follows:

- **High priority with a low stage of development:** These are critical elements for the work plan to address.
- **High priority with a high stage of development:** The element is important, and the work plan should include it as a maintenance of effort.
- **Low priority and high stage of development:** Consider why the element is an area of focus in the community. Is need driving the work or some other factor? Consider not including it in the work plan.
- **Low priority and low stage of development:** Consider why the element is low focus and priority. Is it because it is really not important at this time, or is it an area that is a bigger challenge and thus is less desirable to take on? Confirm that indeed this is not an important element in the community’s plan for the near future, but commit to revisit it when completing the next assessment.

With the self-assessment conducted and the progress and priority activity completed, the foundation for your strategic planning is complete. Congratulations! This was a lot of hard work, and it will be time well spent. You should feel really good about engaging your community and Youth Transition Action Team in the frameworks. The group probably developed a certain momentum around the tools. Don’t wait too long before a follow-up meeting is scheduled to begin the work planning process.
Core Functions Capacity Assessment

Teams should review the Youth Transition Action Team: Core Functions framework prior to conducting this self-assessment. The left hand column of the assessment lists the effectiveness indicators for each Youth Transition Action Team Core Function. Teams first rank their progress in each area, then analyze their capacity and identify existing partners or resources that can help address each area. Additional partners or resources needed to effectively address the area should also be identified.

This Functions Self Assessment helps define what the Youth Transition Action Team does to support the development of a comprehensive local youth-serving system, and serves as the foundation for determining the strategies and tactics that can be applied to achieve the Youth Transition Action Team’s priority goals in the Comprehensive Workplan.

Instructions

1. **Explain the purpose of the Functions Self-Assessment**

The purpose of the Functions Self-Assessment is to examine the current progress of the Youth Transition Action Team in performing key functions to support the development of a comprehensive system that will ensure successful transitions for youth in your community. The second step of the exercise is designed to have team members discover the capacity of the team as it is currently configured, and to next identify new partners or resources needed to effectively perform an individual function. Explain that team members will each fill out the self-assessment using the following 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
2. **Individuals complete the assessment.**
Ask each person to complete the progress and capacity portions of the self-assessment. Team members can fill in the two columns on their own prior to the meeting or during the first part of a group session. This individual activity should take ten minutes or so. Make sure team members are given permission to skip an item if it is something they don’t understand or one with which they have no relevant experience or opinion.

3. **Individuals post and discuss progress.**
Ask each person to make a small dot or tick mark on the large wall chart with a marker to indicate his or her sense of the Youth Transition Action Team’s progress and current capacity for each functional activity. Discuss the votes. Is there general agreement? If the dots are clustered on two adjacent circles in the progress column, note that there is general agreement in the area, but don’t discuss those items right now. Are there areas of wide disagreement, with some people feeling an item is fully integrated while others see little progress? Discuss these disagreements and try to bring the group to some common understanding of progress in that area. Once general agreement on level of progress and team capacity has been made, mark circles around the selected levels.

4. **Group Discussion on Partners and Resources**
Have the group identify needed partners and/or resources to effectively perform each function and enter it in the last column. You may also use this column to note current members with strengths in each area. For those areas where the group has identified that the current Youth Transition Action Team has limited capacity, identify new potential partners that might help in that area.

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Youth Transition Action Teams - Core Functions Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function: Convene Leaders and Promote Policy</th>
<th>Local leaders, practitioners, and customers are convened across disciplines to support systems alignment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicators / Results</td>
<td>Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Transition Action Team ensures youth participation throughout the system.</td>
<td>o o o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Transition Action Team develops local policies and adjusted regulations and procedures.</td>
<td>o o o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Transition Action Team aligns funding to follow priorities.</td>
<td>o o o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Transition Action Team makes commitments public.</td>
<td>o o o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* The Transition Action Team identifies and enters influential champions.</td>
<td>o o o</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Assessment Legend

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

---

Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook

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www.newwaystowork.org
Comprehensive Workplan
The Comprehensive Workplan assists Youth Transition Action Teams in moving from the assessment and priority setting process to defining measurable implementation steps and outcomes. After you have completed the Elements and/or Functions Self-Assessments, confirm the findings with the group, and discuss going to the next stage of developing a work plan.

The Youth Transition Action Team Comprehensive Workplan integrates the use of all three of the Youth Transition Action Team frameworks: Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System, Youth Transition Action Teams: Core Functions, and Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System. The work plan brings together the priorities established through the Elements Self-Assessment, builds on the capacity of the YTAT itself, and marks progress and defines activities based on the stage of development in each priority area.

Instructions
1. Identify the work plan development team and prepare a template.
Prior to the work plan development session, identify key representatives from the team or core partners who will work together to develop the work plan. Modify the electronic file for the template by entering the priorities identified in the assessment process in the “Priority Objective” column of the work plan. Make sure you customize your work plan template to include any items that have been added, or language that has been changed to reflect local concerns. Create a poster-size version of the modified template for use while working with the group.

2. Complete the work plan.
Developing the work plan means the group must supply certain information and make decisions for each prioritized item. Record the activities and decisions on the wall-size, modified template of the work plan. Ask a person to be the recorder and enter the data in the template, either on a printed document or directly into the file on a computer. Use the following descriptions to guide your process:

- Transfer the Priority Objectives from the Elements Self-Assessment to the heading for each section of the workplan. Indicate the letter code for the Element being addressed and the Stage of Development of the objective in parentheses (see key at the bottom of the workplan page).
- Determine and enter the **Strategies** you will use to accomplish the objective in the first column. Indicate the **Function** being performed in parentheses (from the Core Functions Self-Assessment).
- Enter the **Tactics** (or activities) you will conduct to implement each strategy in the second column.
- Enter the name or initials of the **Person(s)** or organization responsible in the third column.
- Enter the **Expected Outcomes** of the activity in the fourth column.
- Enter the **Timeline** and/or due date for each activity in the fifth column.
- As progress is made in your activities, enter relevant updates and information about progress and any modifications in the **Progress & Adjustments** column.

### Humboldt County Youth Transition Action Team – Comprehensive Work Plan

**Humboldt County YTAT - Workgroup 2: Community Services and Supports**

**DATE:** 11/2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies (Function)</th>
<th>Tactics/Activities</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Progress &amp; Adjustments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Develop more placement resources to support continuum of care | 1) Increase Foster Parent awareness and engage them in helping expand the base of Foster Parents in the county  
   a. Survey Foster parents regarding ideas for recruiting and retention strategies  
   b. Attend Foster Parent Association meeting to obtain information  
   2) Expand awareness and recruit Foster Parents  
   a. Publish results from surveys and meetings  
   b. Engage youth to assist in foster parent recruitment  
   3) Expand placement pool and ensure good matches  
   a. Meet with PPAs to access provider pool and improve ability to make good placement match | Stacy, Peggy | 1. Identify and implementing support strategies  
2. Lesli met with CYC members to develop plans – 7/2006  
3. Team met with PPAs and discussed matching placements |

### 3. Share the work plan with the entire YTAT and garner commitments

Bring the completed workplan back to the full Youth Transition Action Team for comment and to garner specific commitments from individuals and organizations to work on one or more of the workplan activities. You may wish to organize the Youth Transition Action Team in sub-groups to support each of the priority objectives, meeting separately and focusing on completing the necessary actions to address the chosen priority area.

### 4. Use the work plan to guide the work of the YTAT and to gauge progress over time

The completed work plan can now guide the work of the Youth Transition Action Team over the time period covered, and serve as a framework for future report-outs at meetings. It also serves as the basis for evaluation of the Youth Transition Action Team’s effectiveness. Has the team completed its activities in a timely fashion? Have the desired outcomes been realized? What adjustments need to be made to the work plan to support progress in the area?
Youth Transition Action Teams
Guidebook

Appendices
Appendix A: Youth Transition Action Teams Factsheet

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative focuses on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education, and child welfare systems to better prepare adolescents who are current or former foster and kinship youth to achieve economic, educational, and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

The Charge of Transition Action Teams

Transition Action Teams are made up of leaders from the child welfare, education, workforce development, and other local systems, working together to improve transition outcomes for youth touched by the child welfare system. Each team is also charged with assisting its respective county in achieving their child welfare system enhancement goals, particularly in the area of youth permanency.

Teams from across the state are bringing together and leveraging the approaches, strategies, and resources of multiple efforts concerned with the issue of successful youth transition. They are assessing their current capacity to address the needs of foster and kinship youth, developing practical and outcome-based work plans, aligning local resources and programs to meet the needs of foster and kinship youth, and putting those plans into action.

An Eye to Outcomes

Youth Transition Action Team Initiative impacts will be measured by success in improving outcomes for youth aging out of the foster care system in the following areas:

- Educational achievement and aspiration
- Workforce readiness
- Employment
- Support Networks

Incorporating All Youth-One System™ Principles

To address the needs of foster and kinship youth in the context of a comprehensive transition system for all youth, Youth Transition Action Teams are applying the All Youth-One System (AYOS) principles. The AYOS approach integrates a set of services across systems that includes the four core elements of academic excellence, career development, youth development and support, and youth leadership, supported by a comprehensive approach, among local and county agencies, programs, and organizations.

This approach has been adopted by the State Youth Council, numerous Workforce Boards and Local Youth Councils, educational institutions, and youth development practitioners and now guides the Transition Action Teams in their work to build local systems to better serve foster and kinship youth in transition.

Supports Provided to Youth Transition Action Teams

All Transition Action Teams receive the following supports from the initiative:

- On-site coaching and technical assistance with a focus on
  - building effective, cross-system collaborations;
  - developing individual career development and transition plans;
  - implementing strategies for leveraging services and program activities from the education and workforce development communities;
  - identifying and effectively utilizing existing resources across systems;
  - conducting effective workplace partner and employer engagement activities; and
  - utilizing work-based learning as a developmental tool to ensure youth success in the transition to adulthood.

- Assistance in connecting to and building effective partnerships with workforce development, education, community-based, and career-development programs.
• Regular workshops and training in key areas identified by the participating communities.
• Communication and technology supports, including the collection and sharing of promising practices, tools, and ideas; a bi-monthly newsletter to update progress and communicate success to all counties and interested partners; and an interactive web-site.
• Training, support, and regular networking opportunities for identified team leaders in each implementing community.
• Annual Team Institutes designed to deliver critical content, support peer networking, and allow for focused strategic planning time.

Current Partners
• New Ways to Work  
  (Managing Partner, network convener, coach, and technical assistance provider)
• Casey Family Programs (Initiative Sponsor)
• California Department of Social Services
• Walter S. Johnson Foundation
• Jewish Community Foundation
• Foundation Consortium for California’s Children and Youth
• Peninsula Community Foundation
• The San Francisco Foundation

Current Transition Action Team Counties
• Colusa
• Glenn
• Humboldt
• Los Angeles
• Placer
• Sacramento
• San Diego
• San Francisco
• San Luis Obispo
• San Mateo
• Tehama
• Ventura

Pending YTAT Communities
• Alameda
• Orange County
• Santa Cruz

How to Get Involved
The YTAT partners are currently seeking additional resources to expand the initiative to other interested counties. For more information contact Chandra Larsen at New Ways to Work at clarsen@newwaystowork.org.
Appendix B: Statewide Youth Services Frameworks Addressing Foster Youth

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative seeks to bring together and leverage the approaches, strategies, and resources of a number of potentially well-aligned efforts across the state concerned with youth transition. The Youth Transition Action Teams expect to accelerate progress by partnering and providing a coherent and aligned set of strategies and supports for local communities seeking to redefine and improve their practice.

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative addresses the specified outcomes for youth emancipating from care that are incorporated in the California Child and Family Services Review12 and those in the 2004 – 2005 System Improvements Plan13. To address the Child Welfare Services crisis in California, a Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group was formed to provide direction in improving systems and services for youth in the Child Welfare System.

The following frameworks were reviewed and integrated into the final frameworks developed by the Youth Transition Action Team Design committee.

**California Permanency for Youth Project**

"Dedicated to assuring that no youth will leave the child welfare system without a permanent lifelong connection to a caring adult."

Children eleven and older in the foster care system have a poor chance of finding a permanent family. When they do not find permanency before they leave the foster care system at age 18 they leave alone and are often disconnected to any positive supports. This leads to homelessness, unemployment, and other adverse circumstances. The California Permanency for Youth Project is devoted to changing that. It is a vital responsibility of the entire community to make sure that each youth who leaves the foster care system in California has a permanent lifelong connection with a caring adult.

The project is being conducted under a Permanency for Youth Task Force, a statewide group with broad representation, including both public and private agencies and organizations, former foster youth and philanthropic organizations.

**Project Objectives**

- To increase awareness among the child welfare agencies and staff, legislators and judicial officers in the State of the urgent need that older children and youth have for permanency.
- To influence public policy and administrative practices so that they promote permanency.
- To assist four specific counties and the private agencies with which they work to lead the way in implementing adaptable new practices to achieve permanency for older children and youth.
- To spread the Youth Permanency Movement throughout California and beyond.

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California State Youth Council Vision
August, 2002

“The California State Youth Council is committed to facilitating and modeling meaningful youth involvement and creating system-wide solutions, working in a collaborative effort with youth, local youth councils and workforce boards, state and local agencies, educational institutions, workplace and business partners, and communities to improve the quality of life for the youth of California.”

The California State Youth Council and the California Workforce Investment Board have adopted a framework titled The Comprehensive Plan for California’s youth. The Plan calls for coordinated and connected efforts among workforce, education, social service and other youth serving “systems” in the state, to better serve all youth. The CWIB is also supporting related projects, including a five year effort focused on improving transition outcomes for youth with disabilities, and the Governor’s Foster Youth pilots in three communities.

Functions of a Youth Council in Building the System
“All Youth-One System”

- **Convene Local Leadership to Take Action**
  Youth Councils must recruit and support appropriate members.

- **Coordinate Youth Services**
  Youth Councils must ensure effective implementation of WIA’s 10 elements.

- **Promote Policies to Sustain Effective Practices**
  Youth Councils must make formal recommendations to the local WIB.

- **Measure Quality and Impact of Local Efforts**
  Youth Councils must assess, recommend, evaluate and hold providers accountable.

The YCi Guidebook 14
The Youth Council Institute
2003

“Local Youth Councils have the potential to be the “hub of the wheel” in local efforts to build dynamic youth systems that provide young people with the educational foundation, personal support and career development they need to succeed as adults.”

The Youth Council Institute is an active and vibrant peer-learning network which supports all 50 of California’s Youth Councils in their efforts to develop comprehensive systems that serve all youth. Managed by New Ways to Work and the California Workforce Association, YCi is unique and singular in the nation. It is the only external statewide capacity-building initiative focused on supporting broad and visionary objective for Youth Councils in the country. The project’s tools and frameworks (“All Youth-One System”) have been formally adopted by numerous local councils as well as the State Youth Council and the California Workforce Investment Board.

YCi employs the principles of collaboration and innovation, and applies state-of-the-art processes and tools in its work, It embodies a customer- responsive support strategy and has significantly impacted the development of Youth Councils and the delivery of youth services in California.

Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System

“All Youth-One System”

2000 - 2004

- Academic Achievement - All Youth are educated and ready to learn
- Career Development - All Youth are experienced and ready for careers
- Community Services and Support - All Youth are connected to adults, peers, and services
- Youth Leadership - All Youth are confident and ready for life
- Comprehensive Youth Development Approach - A connected, operational infrastructure supports youth success

Child Welfare Services Redesign:
The Future of California’s Child Welfare Services
Final Report
September 2003

“The Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign (“Redesign”) is the long-term strategic plan that sets in motion a series of actions across the state (of California) to bring the new vision of Child Welfare Services to every county.”

The nine redesign objectives set forth in California’s September 2003 Final Report\(^{15}\) calls for sweeping reforms and improvements, both within and around the child welfare system. Objective Five calls out the need to systematically prepare youth for success in adulthood. The objective identifies a set of actions that will ensure that older youth who remain in the child welfare system will engage in activities and experiences that will prepare them for success in the world as young adults.

Prepare Youth for their Transition for Adulthood

- Comprehensive, flexible and integrated case planning
- Strong and enduring adult connections
- Development of a community network of services and supports
- Prepare youth for transition success with a ‘Guaranteed Preparation Package’

Objective 5: Guaranteed Preparation Package

- A healthy sense of cultural and personal identity
- A close, positive and lasting relationship with at least one adult
- Other supportive relationships and community connections
- Access to physical and mental health services
- High school diploma, equivalency certificate, or GED
- Income sufficient to meet basic needs
- A safe and stable living situation

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Final Report
September 2003

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Comprehensive Youth Transition Plan

- Identity Formation
- Supportive Relationships
- Community Connections
- Physical and Mental Health
- Life Skills
- Education
- Employment
- Housing

Connected by 25
A Plan for Investing in Successful Futures for Foster Youth
Youth Transitions Funders Group Foster Care Work Group
2004

“...the Youth Transition Funders Group (members) are committed to achieving a common mission—ensuring that this nation’s young people are successfully connected by age 25 to institutions and support systems that will enable them to succeed throughout adulthood.”

To improve the likelihood that vulnerable youth between the ages of 14 and 24 will become “connected by 25,” the Foster Care Work Group (FCWG) urges new investments to prepare foster youth and those leaving foster care for the future, as well as investments to meet their present needs while they are in the custody of the state. The foundation executives who participate in the Foster Care Work Group recognize and embrace ongoing efforts to strengthen and reform the child welfare system. They also recognize that helping foster youth and those aging out of foster care become successful adults requires that they have a community-wide network of connections and support that can provide pathways to lifelong economic well-being and financial success.

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17 Connected by 25, A Plan for Investing in Successful Futures for Foster Youth, Youth Transitions Funders Group Foster Care Work Group, 2004
A Strategic Approach in Improving the Economic Well-Being and Financial Success of Young Adults Leaving Foster Care

- Advocate and Support Educational Attainment
- Facilitate Access to Workforce Development Opportunities
- Provide Financial Literacy Education
- Encourage Savings and Asset Development
- Create Entrepreneurship Opportunities
- Make Supports and Services More Effective

Family to Family
Tools for Rebuilding Foster Care

“Family to Family is now showing that good foster families can be recruited and supported in the communities from which children are coming into placement.”

With the appropriate reforms in policy, resources, and programs, family foster care can respond to the challenges of out-of-home placement and be a less expensive and more humane choice for children and youth than are institutions or other group settings. Family foster care reform, in and of itself, can yield important benefits for families and children - although such reform is only one part of a larger agenda designed to address the overall well-being of children and families currently in need of child protective services. The Family to Family Initiative provides an opportunity for states and communities to reconceptualize, redesign, and reconstruct their foster care system to achieve system-wide goals.

Four Strategies for Restructuring and Strengthening the Child Welfare System

- Recruitment, Training, and Support of Resource Families (Foster and Relative)
- Building Community Partnerships
- Family Team Decision-Making
- Self-Evaluation

The Outcomes of Family to Family

1. Reduce the number/proportion of children served in institutional and congregate care.
2. Shift resources from congregate and institutional care to family foster care and family-centered services across all child and family-serving systems.
3. Decrease the lengths of stay in out-of-home placement.
4. Increase the number/proportion of planned reunifications.
5. Decrease the number/proportion of re-entries into care.
6. Reduce the number of placement moves experienced by children in care.
7. Increase the number/proportion of siblings placed together.
8. Reduce the total number/rate of children served away from their own families

It's My Life
Summary of a framework for youth transitioning from foster care to successful adulthood
2001

"Young people from foster care often miss out on supports traditionally provided by families. Every year nearly 20,000 young people leave the foster care system with little, if any financial support or adult backup. Developing employability for young people requires early, coordinated, and ongoing efforts to help them learn about themselves, expand their knowledge of options available to them, and set and achieve their employment goals."

In 2001 Casey Family Programs developed a youth-centered framework called It's My Life to guide services for young people as they make the transition from foster care to adulthood. It supports those who want to help these young people acquire the skills, experience, and attitudes they need to be successful, contributing citizens. The first section of this guide, "Preparing Youth for Employment," gives specific strategies and resources to help child welfare professionals work in partnership to prepare them for meaningful work.

Seven Life Domains

- Cultural and personal identity formation
- Supportive relationships and community connections
- Physical and mental health
- Life skills
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
Appendix C: History of the All Youth-One System Frameworks

A Brief History
The All Youth-One System frameworks are the result of input and validation from hundreds of individuals across the country. Over the last seven years, these frameworks have been built upon, reframed, and revised by on-the-ground practitioners and leaders in youth development through several iterations. The following is a brief history of the development and revision of the frameworks.

1999 - The Quality Elements of Communities & Schools for Career Success
In 1999, New Ways worked with educators, youth development and workforce development practitioners, school/community Entrepreneurs, and leadership from the Commonwealth Corporation in Massachusetts to explore developing a framework to guide educators and youth-service providers in their strategies for developing partnerships within communities that linked schools, communities, and the workplace through the Communities and Schools for Career Success initiative. The result was the CS² Quality Elements Framework (available online at http://www.nww.org/mastertools/Frameworks%20and%20Charts/CS2/CS2_Elements1117.pdf.).

2000 – The Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System for YCi – 1st Iteration
Upon experiencing the success and utility of this model, in 2000, New Ways built upon this framework for the Youth Council Institute initiative. Through a series of stakeholder meetings, including participants from local workforce development agencies, Youth Council staff and members, educational leadership, youth development practitioners, and leaders from several national organizations19, the CS² framework was built upon and refined to reflect current understanding of building comprehensive youth-serving systems. With the development of the All Youth-One System model, local Youth Councils were encouraged to broaden their objectives and create comprehensive systems that serve all youth. Stakeholders identified four quality elements that must be in place in order to provide a balanced set of services to youth and develop a structure to support community-wide coordination of those services. Thus, the first iteration of Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System Framework was born.

2002 – The Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System for YCi – 2nd Iteration
In 2002, the Youth Council Institute's Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System framework was formally adopted by the California State Youth Council and was thus used as a model for structuring comprehensive youth-serving systems statewide. Following the two-year incubation of the framework in which local practitioners and Youth Councils utilized the toolset to guide their work, the framework was reviewed and refined with the input of hundreds of Youth Council members and staff, local youth service providers, and leadership from the State Youth Council and California Workforce Investment Board. Following completion of this iteration, New Ways published the YCi Guidebook to further enhance local understanding and utilization of the powerful framework (available online at http://www.nww.org/mastertools/guidebooks%20and%20toolkits/YCi_Guidebook_Final.pdf.).

19 In addition to New Ways to Work and other community partners, original thought partners for the YCi Frameworks included JD Hoye, President of Keep the Change, Inc.; John Niles, Director of Operations for the Center for Youth Development and Education at the Commonwealth Corporation; and Lori Strumpf, President of Strumpf Associates and the Center for Strategic Change.
2006 - The Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System for YCi, YTAT, and Serving Vulnerable Populations - 3rd Iteration

Following four successful years of building comprehensive youth-serving systems statewide, in 2004 two additional statewide initiatives adopted the Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System framework to guide the work of system change for youth with disabilities, and youth in foster care. At the same time, local Youth Councils were charged under new direction from the State Board and the Federal Department of Labor to focus and refine their strategies to engage the most vulnerable youth populations, including out-of-school youth, youth with disabilities, youth in the juvenile justice system, and youth in foster care.

Beginning in 2004 and throughout 2005, New Ways gathered input and feedback from hundreds of providers, practitioners, staff, and leaders working in youth services including: Youth Councils, child welfare, social services, workforce boards and agencies, education, juvenile justice, and other community-based organization and state agencies. The collective input informed a formal revision of the framework and an additional set of tools to reflect responding to the particular needs of the most vulnerable youth. This new framework, adopted by the Youth Transition Action Teams, Improving Transition Options for Youth with Disabilities Project, and the National Youth Council Institute, was released in its most recent iteration in January 2006. This version is now included in the 2006 addition of the YCi Guidebook as well as the Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook, both of which are available online on the New Ways to Work website at www.newwaystowork.org.
Appendix D: The Workforce Investment Act - A Primer

Signed into law on August 7, 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 dramatically reformed the nation’s workforce development system at the local, state, and national levels. The omnibus act – the first comprehensive rewrite of federal job training laws since the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was passed in 1983 – codified new standards of collaboration, accountability, and flexibility for participants, community agencies, and government entities alike. While the legislation also covers adults and dislocated workers, this document will focus on the innovative provisions for youth. Most notably, WIA mandates the establishment of Youth Councils to advise and assist each local Workforce Investment Board in developing employment, educational, and social service programs for young people.

In this appendix we will provide a brief overview on all youth-related aspects of WIA. This primer is organized as follows:

- What’s changed?
- Approach to youth services
- Workforce Investment Boards
- Youth Councils
- Eligibility
- Ten required program service elements
- Performance measures
- Connection to One-Stop Centers

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998: What’s Changed?
For the most part WIA is not so much a reinvention as a reconfiguration of the nation’s workforce development system. Many of the act’s primary themes existed under JTPA, either from its inception or as the result of subsequent amendments. By September 1998, for instance, over 800 One-Stop Centers were already in operation throughout the country, and over 95 percent of the states were in the process of building more. The majority of representatives on local governing boards (Private Industry Councils under JTPA, Workforce Investment Boards under WIA) are required to come from the private sector, with the balance representing labor, state agencies, and community-based organizations. WIA further specifies the composition of local Youth Councils, calling for participation from representatives and former clients of youth programs as well as officials from Job Corps, juvenile justice, and public housing. In a sense, WIA simply represents a culmination of the priority shift in government social services over the last two decades to customer choice, private industry input, devolution of funding authority to states, and increased local control. What propels the legislation is a push toward streamlining and unifying workforce development programs. Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils together function as the engine behind this drive, seeking to eliminate duplication of services, enforce new standards of performance, and establish the system as a close-knit network rather than a collection of discrete, stand-alone programs.

At this writing, the Workforce Investment Act is up for re-authorization by the United States Congress. The administration's proposal calls for major shifts in the youth title, including making Youth Councils (now mandatory in every local area) optional, and focusing WIA youth dollars primarily on highly targeted youth populations. It has not yet been determined which of these and other provisions will be included in the final re-authorization language, and it is difficult to predict their impact on local workforce systems.

The Approach to Youth Services under the Workforce Investment Act
The Workforce Investment Act has affinities with other recent legislation pertaining to
economic development and job readiness. The youth components of WIA were aligned with the framework set forth in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STWOA), which called for improved career development activities for students both in schools and at workplaces, enhanced emphasis on the connections between school-based and work-based learning, and the formation of multiple-stakeholder advisory councils to make policy recommendations at the local level. Local collaborations around funding and service provision are similarly invoked in School-to-Work implementation language. School-to-Work has now expired as a federally funded initiative, but many of the local alliances developed to carry out its work have been important building blocks of WIA. It is important to note that WIA specifically prohibits the use of WIA dollars to support School-to-Work; however, the philosophy and key elements of STWOA at the local level are wholly consistent with the activities and approaches called for through the later measure. States and local areas can build on effective strategies and partnerships refined under School-to-Work and apply them to system-building and program development under WIA.

In its focus on increasing self-sufficiency for low-income youth, WIA also has much in common with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which replaced the federal guarantee of support for families with dependent children with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Funded by federal block grants to states, TANF seeks to move welfare recipients into the labor market and places strict limits on the amount of time a family may spend on public assistance. In numerous communities, TANF funds have been directed toward WIA purposes and TANF services can be accessed through One-Stop Centers. TANF representatives sit on nearly all state Workforce Investment Boards and formal memoranda of understanding between TANF and WIA systems are in effect in many states.

WIA, School-to-Work, and TANF are concerned with workforce development, but it is the Workforce Investment Act’s framework of youth development principles and the broad role of Youth Councils that sets it apart from the other two. It is this set of aims that lays the groundwork for Youth Councils aspiring to create comprehensive local youth-serving systems that have influence and impact beyond the requisites of WIA.

The principles of youth development stress that the community as a whole contributes to each child’s passage to adulthood. Although populations with the greatest need should receive the most attention, the mobilization of stakeholders from all sectors of the local area can create strategies for the betterment of all youth. Certainly these are lofty goals, none more so than the final one. Achieving them will require dedication and effort on the part of all players. But concentrated resources are available, and some of the framework is already in place.

### Youth Development

A youth development approach views each young person globally, as an aggregate of needs to be addressed, assets to be preserved, and potentials to be nourished, rather than as problems to be solved. Moving beyond standards of employability (emphasized under JTPA), youth program planners must also account for young people’s needs for structure, belonging, self-esteem, autonomy, competence, and healthy relationships. Youth development highlights the promotion of positive behavior over the treatment of negative behavior or conditions and the fostering of resilience in the face of difficulties and setbacks; it envisions youth as partners in progress, rather than simply recipients of services. Projects and programs using a youth development approach enable youth to build skills, exercise leadership, meet high expectations, form relationships with concerned adults, and improve their communities.

According to Karen Pittman, leading youth development theorist and executive director of the Washington, DC-based Forum for Youth Investment, “Even for marginalized youth and families, the strategy is not fix then develop, it is fix through development.” Pittman enumerates five sets of competencies key to the attainment of adulthood that youth development must address: physical well being, personal and social, cognitive and creative, vocational, and citizenship.
Let's take a closer look at the parameters of the law itself.

**Workforce Investment Boards**

Appointed by the chief elected official or officials in a local area, the membership of local Workforce Investment Boards must include representatives from business, education, labor, community-based organizations, economic development agencies, and One-Stop partner representatives. Boards develop and submit WIA service plans to the governor, select providers, and conduct oversight on WIA-funded activities. They also gather information pertinent to their decision-making, such as employment statistics and program effectiveness data, cultivate linkages with private sector employers, and may apply for and accept non-federal grants and donations.

**Youth Councils**

Recognizing the unique needs of youth, especially those of the low-income, at-risk population that the act targets most directly, WIA calls for the formation of Youth Councils to serve local Workforce Investment Boards in an advisory capacity in the development of youth policy and the selection of youth service providers. Youth Councils are a unique feature of WIA with the potential to be the convener for the development of local youth-serving systems. The Youth Council, appointed by the WIB, consists of board members with expertise in youth policy as well as representatives from youth service agencies (including juvenile justice and law enforcement), public housing officials, Job Corps, parents of eligible youth, and people with experience relating to youth activities (including organization personnel and former participants). The council creates the portion of the WIA local plan that pertains to youth, recommends eligible youth activity providers, conducts oversight on those providers, and coordinates WIA-authorized youth activities. In its planning, selection, and oversight capacities, the council functions as the youth-focused extension of the greater board, though its actual prerogatives will differ from locality to locality. In many areas, for example, the Youth Council’s responsibility is to develop the Request for Proposals for youth service providers; in others, they are empowered to also select the providers. In their role as coordinator and broker of youth activities covered by WIA, Youth Councils have an opportunity to make decisions that will affect all young people, not just those eligible for WIA programs, by expanding their focus to embrace a vision for the development of a comprehensive youth-serving system.

The institutional placement, composition, and authority granted to Youth Councils vary significantly from locality to locality. This flexibility is a positive and useful characteristic of the law, but it also means that Youth Councils are what local policy makers envision them to be.

Though Youth Councils have a strong role in the development of local youth-serving systems, they are initially charged and required to consider how to best meet the needs of youth eligible for WIA services.

**Eligibility**

Youth programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act are open to young people age 14 to 21 who must submit documentation to prove eligibility. Ninety-five percent of youth served must be low-income\(^{21}\) and face one or more barriers to employment. These may include

- basic literacy skills deficiency;
- school dropout;
- homeless, runaway, or foster child;
- pregnant or a parent;
- an offender\(^{22}\); or

\(^{21}\) The term “low-income” means any youth who receives or is a member of a family that receives public assistance in the form of cash payments; whose income or whose family’s income does not exceed either the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level, whichever is higher; receives or is eligible to receive food stamps; is homeless; is a foster child; or is an individual with a disability who meets either of the first two requirements, even if he or she is a member of a family whose income is higher. [WIA, Title I, Section 101 (25)]

\(^{22}\) An offender means any youth who has been arrested, tried, convicted, or sentenced to prison for a criminal violation of the law.
▪ an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment (may be defined at the state or local level per WIA Final Regulations Section 664.210)\textsuperscript{23}.

Five percent of those enrolled may be non-low-income. At least 30 percent of youth funding must be invested in services for out-of-school youth. Youth are divided into two age-based categories: younger (14–18) and older (19–21). Older youth may enroll concurrently in WIA adult programs. All young people, regardless of economic background, may use core resources for job search and referral services at One-Stop Centers.

**Ten Required Program Service Elements**

Ten elements must be incorporated into every local design of year-round WIA programs and services for youth:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout-prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school services
3. Summer employment linked to academic and occupational learning
4. Paid and unpaid work experience including internships and job shadowing
5. Occupational skills training
6. Leadership development, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring during program participation and at least 12 months subsequently
9. At least a 12-month follow-up upon program completion
10. Guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral.

In addition to these ten program elements, each young person must be given an individual needs assessment, participate in the development of an individual service strategy, receive preparation for post-secondary education and/or employment, and have access to information and referrals.

**Performance Measures**

Seven core performance indicators have been established as measures of individual progress. For younger youth, the measures are basic skills attainment; high school diploma/GED attainment; and retention in postsecondary education, advanced training, apprenticeship, the military or employment. For older youth, the measures are employment, employment retention, earnings change, and credential attainment. For both participants and employers, formal customer satisfaction ratings have been established.

WIA provides that states may earn monetary incentives or be assessed penalties based on performance levels.

\textsuperscript{22} The term “offender” means any youth who is or has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process, for whom services under WIA may be beneficial, or who requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction. [WIA, Title I, Section 101 (27) WIA Section 101(13)]

\textsuperscript{23} WIA Section 101(13)
**Connection to One-Stop Centers**

The One-Stop delivery system required under WIA is intended to maximize convenience and concentrate resources for the benefit of both job seekers and workplace partners. In a single location, WIA job seekers receive assessments, seek guidance and referrals, obtain help with paperwork, and carry out education, training, career, and employment research by phone or computer. Workplace partners receive referrals from pre-qualified job seekers, job fair opportunities, and access to a pool of ready applicants. Each local area has established at least one such center providing all core services, with satellite offices or networks supplementing offerings as necessary. Workforce Investment Boards select the operators of One-Stop sites.

Although the One-Stop system was not designed to provide a full range of services to individuals under the age of 18, some services and activities are available to them. Some localities have established One-Stops especially for youth, often situated near places where young people are likely to congregate; other areas are staffing existing One-Stops in part with youth program personnel. Not all services are located in the physical space of the One-Stop, but all are accessible through that site.

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**Services to Youth through One-Stop Centers around the Nation**

- Gloucester County, New Jersey’s Youth Council has established a Youth One-Stop Center at the Gloucester County Institute of Technology, offering comprehensive services to out-of-school youth and others.

- Marion, Polk & Yamhill Youth Council in Oregon requires that all proposals include a One-Stop center among the partners.

- Kings County Youth Council in California operates five mini One-Stop centers at area high schools.

- The Youth Council of Northern Virginia operates a youth-designed employment resource center named the Job Hut. Located in Manassas Mall, a regional shopping center, the Job Hut operates during hours suggested by youth.

- The Philadelphia Youth Council now partners with the city’s Department of Human Services (DHS) to run three Youth Opportunity Centers. DHS established a strand of education, life skills, and work experience programming to meet the needs of returning young offenders, and the Centers have continued to provide services to out-of-school youth.

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**Summary**

The Workforce Investment Act significantly altered the administration of workforce preparation services for youth at the national level in order to promote the establishment of comprehensive youth-serving systems at the local level. Combining JTPA year-round and summer youth allocations into a single formula-based funding stream, WIA targets services to low income youth ages 14 to 21 who face one or more barriers to employment. Emphasizing youth development principles, WIA prescribes ten service elements that address a broad range of young people’s needs, including mentoring, counseling, and a full year of follow-up tracking. Laying the foundation for greater local control and more informed planning, WIA charges local Workforce Investment Boards to appoint Youth Councils that will guide and oversee all board decisions pertaining to youth programs. Above all, the law encourages practitioners to look beyond their own narrow funding streams to consider developing service systems that respond to all youth in a community, not just the portion of low-income at-risk young people directly targeted by the act.
Appendix E: WIA Reauthorization Overview—Summer 2005

Changes and Opportunities in the Workforce System
This overview was prepared by New Ways to Work for the Youth Council Institute. Originally created as a Power Point presentation, it was used during forums offered during the summer of 2005 to help Youth Councils in California plan for changes to WIA and for adoption of common measures. The last section of this overview presents clarifying questions that were used during the portion of the forums designed to assist Youth Councils with their planning.

US Department of Labor’s (DOL) New Strategic Vision for Delivery of Youth Services under the Workforce Investment Act
The DOL Employment and Training Administration’s (ETA) overarching priority for the entire workforce investment system is to meet the demands of business by providing adults and youth with the necessary educational, occupational, and other skills training and services needed for high demand occupations in the 21st century. The New Strategic Vision is not legislated. The vision statement reads as follows:

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.

The new strategic vision for youth is focused in four areas, known as the four pillars:

♦ Focus on alternative education
♦ Meet the demands of business, especially in high growth industries and occupations
♦ Focus on the neediest youth
♦ Focus on improved performance

Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization
The Workforce Investment Act (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.

Over the past several years, Congress has attempted to reauthorize WIA, but members have not yet reconciled differences in proposed changes to WIA. The following list identifies the areas of WIA where changes have been proposed:

♦ Age of eligibility
♦ Income eligibility (some form of none)
♦ Percentage of in-school vs. out-of-school youth served
♦ New program elements
♦ Replacement of Youth Opportunity Grants with Challenge Grants
♦ Matching grant requirements
♦ Youth Council status (mandatory or optional)

Common Measures
Whatever changes eventually emerge, the ETA is requiring all WIA-funded programs to use a set of common measures developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to evaluate the
effectiveness of similar programs. Common measures are being used to formally integrate performance review with budget decisions, as called for in the President’s Management Agenda.

In many cases, the common measures are similar to the existing performance measures. However, no common measure is calculated exactly like any current performance measure. Beginning in 2005, WIA-funded programs were required to gather data for both the initial WIA performance indicators and for the new common measures. The common measure data were for reporting purposes only in 2005. Once WIA is reauthorized, the common measures will replace the original WIA performance indicators.

The measures for youth employment and education programs cover entry into employment and education, attainment of a degree or certificate, literacy and numeracy gains, and cost. Other changes entail eliminating the distinction between younger and older youth, switching from program registration to program participation, and clarifying the definition of program exit.

**Attainment of degree/certificate.** The following section presents some details about the common measure related to attainment of degree/certificate:

A **diploma** is defined as any credential that a state education agency accepts as equivalent to a high school diploma.

A **certificate** is awarded in recognition of an individual’s attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within and occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers. Recognition of generic pre-employment and/or work readiness skills are not considered certificates.

The common measures recognize the following **awarding institutions**:

- State educational agency
- Institution of higher education
- Professional, industry, or employer organization or a product manufacturer
- Registered apprenticeship program
- Public regulatory agency
- Program approved by the Department of Veteran Affairs
- Office of Job Corps
- Indian Tribe Higher Education Institution
Appendix F: California Foster Care Legislation

Addressing the needs of foster youth through legislation has been an important avenue for advocates working to improve transition outcomes for current and former foster youth. This document presents brief descriptions of bills that have been passed into law and that address specific needs in housing, permanency, education, career development and that articulate foster youths’ rights to participate in their plans and to receive benefits available to other citizens not in foster care. The sources of information for most of the descriptions are end noted. In many cases, these sources provide additional information.

NOTE: Some bills are listed under multiple categories.

Infrastructure
These bills address the need to provide systems of care, either by establishing systems or by clarifying responsibilities, funding sources, or connections among systems.

**SB 14 Public System of Statewide Child Welfare Services (Chapter 978, Statutes of 1982)**

SB 14 requires the state, through the California Department of Social Services and county welfare departments, to establish and support a public system of statewide Child Welfare Services. Each county welfare department is required to maintain four specialized components: Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanent Placement.

**SB 370 Foster Care Group Home Rate Structure (Chapter 1294, Statutes of 1989)**

SB 370 establishes the Foster Care Group Home Rate structure and authorizes the automated Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS).

**AB 948 County Share of Cost for Foster Care (Chapter 91, Statutes of 1991)**

AB 948 increases the county share of cost for foster care and child welfare services to increase fiscal incentives to avoid or limit expensive foster care placements.

**AB 1741 Pilot for Blending of Children’s Services Funds (Chapter 951, Statutes of 1993)**

AB 1741 requires the coordinator to establish a 5-year pilot program for the blending of various children's services funds allocated to designated participating counties. Participating counties are required to transfer all funds provided to counties for specified child welfare services in the county's strategic plan into a county child and family services fund, for use in providing specified child and family services under the pilot program. AB 1741 also authorizes local education agencies, cities, or private nonprofit agencies to transfer funds to the county child and family services fund for services for children and families.

**SB 2030 Evaluation of CDSS Workload and Budgeting (Chapter 785, Statutes of 1998)**

SB 2030 requires the California Department of Social Services to evaluate workload and budgeting methodologies to understand the routine child welfare staff activities, the time needed to complete mandated services, and the estimated time needed for what is considered to be best practice in child welfare.

**SB 163 Pilot Program for Wrap-Around Services (Chapter 795, Statutes of 1998)**

SB 163 allows counties to participate in a pilot program providing intensive wrap-around services to families and children in or at risk of high level group care to reduce the need for placement.

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Infrastructure, continued

AB 333 Confidential Discussions (Chapter 675, Statutes of 2001)³, ⁷
AB 333 requires that monthly visits by probation officer/social worker with children in group homes include private, confidential discussions.

AB 899 Consolidation of Foster Children Rights (Chapter 683, Statutes of 2001)¹, ², ⁷
AB 899 consolidates all of the rights of foster children into a common location in California law. It also requires social workers to inform youth of their rights at least once every six months, and it requires the list of rights to be posted in facilities that care for six or more foster children.

SB 940 Termination of Parental rights (Chapter 830, Statutes of 2001)⁴
SB 940 requires local probation departments to pursue termination of parental rights and adoption in any case in which a child adjudicated as a delinquent has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months.

AB 458 Fair and Equal Treatment (Chapter 331, Statutes of 2003)⁷
AB 458 adds to foster child's rights the right to fair and equal treatment and access to services and freedom from discrimination or harassment regardless of perceived race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.

AB 1413 Delayed Birth Registration: Dependent Children (Chapter 315, Statutes of 2003)³, ⁷
AB 1413 requires expedited processing of delayed birth certificates when the application for the birth certificate is for a child under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court pursuant to WIC 300.

SB 1612 Matching Federal Funds (Chapter 845, Statutes of 2004)⁵
Existing law establishes the Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) program, under which counties provide payments to foster care providers, including foster family homes, on behalf of qualified children in foster care. The program is funded by a combination of federal, state, and county funds, with moneys from the General Fund being continuously appropriated to pay for the state's share of AFDC-FC costs. This bill would require the State Department of Social Services to amend the foster care state plan required under federal law, to authorize counties that elect to subsidize child care for foster parents to use federal foster care matching funds for the purpose of subsidizing that child care. The bill requires counties electing to administer the Foster Parent Child Care Program to follow guidelines developed by the department. The bill also requires the federal funds to match only county funds.

System Improvement

These bills address the need to address problems and shortcomings in current foster care systems in California by establishing entities charged with investigating problems, proposing changes, and assisting county child welfare agencies in meeting required outcomes.

SB 933 State Foster Care Ombudsman (Chapter 311, Statutes of 1998)¹, ²
SB 933 enacts group home reforms and establishes the Foster Care Ombudsman program to provide a way to resolve issues.
System Improvement, continued

AB 1740 Child Welfare Stakeholders Group (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2000)
AB 1740 establishes the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders Group to examine current child welfare programs and propose a redesigned system by June 2003.

AB 636 Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act of 2001 (Chapter 678, Statutes of 2001)
AB 636 establishes a statewide Child and Family Services Review system to review county systems and assist them in meeting outcomes, which are to be consistent with those measured by the federal Child and Family Service Reviews.

AB 2294 Term of Appointment for State Foster Care Ombudsperson (Chapter 1160, Statutes of 2002)
AB 2294 provides that the Office of State Foster Care Ombudsperson for foster care shall be appointed for a term of 4 years, and permits the director of the State Department of Social Services to reappoint the Ombudsperson for consecutive terms.

AB 1633 Foster Children: Social Security Assistance: High School (Chapter 641, Statutes of 2005)
AB 1633 requires the California Department of Social Services to convene a workgroup to develop best practice guidelines for county welfare departments to assist children residing in the state's or a county's custody who are eligible for social security benefits and supplemental security income benefits. AB 1633 also expands existing law to allow 18-year-old foster youth to remain in their foster home until age 19 while they are in the process of completing their high school equivalency certificate.

Information Sharing
This bill addresses the need to share information about individual youth among different systems serving the same youth by establishing protocols.

AB 129 Juvenile Court: Dual Status Children (Chapter 468, Statutes of 2004)
AB 129 allows counties to create a protocol between the county probation department and child welfare services to serve youth who have cases in both locations.

Family Preservation
These bills address the need to support connections among family members by establishing certain rights for children and youth in foster care and by assigning responsibility for upholding those rights.

SB 243 Preservation of the Family (Chapter 1485, Statutes of 1987)
SB 243 makes termination of parental rights and removal from the home dependent on danger to the child, narrows the definition of physical abuse, establishes preservation of the family as the primary system goal, and restates the priority for relative placement over non-relative foster care for children.
Family Preservation, continued

AB 3364 California Family Preservation and Family Support Program (Chapter 961, Statutes of 1994)
AB 3364 establishes the California Family Preservation and Family Support Program consistent with federal requirements.

AB 2196 Post Adoption Contact with Siblings (Chapter 1072, Statutes of 1997)
AB 2196 requires the social worker to include a discussion of sibling visitation and contact in a child’s case plan when a child is going to be adopted. The bill also authorizes the court to include in an adoption order provisions that will facilitate sibling contact as long as the adoptive parents do not object.

AB 2773 California Implementation of Federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (Chapter 1056, Statutes of 1998)
AB 2773 implements the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act in California that includes shortened timeframes for reunification.

AB 1987 Sibling Relationships (Chapter 909, Statutes of 2000)
AB 1987 requires social workers to include in court reports a section on the child’s sibling relationships and the plans for visitation of siblings. It also requires social workers to notify children on their caseload of significant events in the lives of siblings.

AB 705 Sibling Placement (Chapter 747, Statutes of 2001)
AB 705 requires that siblings be placed together and various other changes relative to the procedure for placing siblings.

AB 579 Dependent Children: Notice to Siblings (Chapter 558, Statutes of 2003)
AB 579 requires a social worker/probation officer/court clerk to provide hearing notices to a youth's siblings who are 10 years old or older.

SB 1178 Teen Parents in Foster Care (Chapter 841, Statutes of 2004)
SB 1178 requires child welfare agencies to support whole-family placements for dependent youth and their children.

AB 519 Parental Rights (Chapter 634, Statutes of 2005)
AB 519 allows foster youth to emancipate from the foster care system with the child's legal parentage intact and a connection to a family and therefore reinstates the child's right to inheritance, social security, and other survivor benefits.

SB 436 Foster Care: Transitional Housing (Chapter 629, Statutes of 2005)
SB 436 provides a safety net for pregnant and parenting foster teens and increases the amount of housing available for them.

SB 500 AFDC-FC: Pregnant and Parenting Foster Youth (Chapter 630, Statutes of 2005)
SB 500 keeps teenage mothers in foster care united with their babies by providing placement in a whole family foster home where teen parents develop the skills necessary to provide a safe, stable, and permanent home for their children. SB 500 mandates that full foster care payment be paid for both the teen parent and their child and provides an additional $200 a month in support for the child.
Kinship Support

These bills address the need to support relatives who are caring for children by clarifying legal definitions of kinship care (kincare), establishing support services for kincare, and providing guidelines for monitoring kincare.

**AB 1193 Kinship Support Services Program (Chapter 794, Statutes of 1997)**

AB 1193 establishes the Kinship Support Services Program to provide community-based support for relatives caring for children placed in their homes by the juvenile court or children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or delinquency.

**AB 1544 Concurrent Planning (Chapter 793, Statutes of 1997)**

AB 1544 mandates “concurrent planning” and makes specific changes in the law designed to increase the likelihood that foster children unable to reunify with their birth parents achieve permanency with relatives.

**SB 1901 Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Chapter 1055, Statutes of 1998)**

SB 1901 establishes the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment Program (Kin-GAP) to provide a subsidy for children placed in legal guardianship with a relative.

**AB 1695 Clarification of Evaluation of Foster Care Providers (Chapter 653, Statutes of 2001)**

AB 1695 clarifies that relative and non-relative foster care providers are to be evaluated according to the same standards.

Normalcy

These bills address the need to support normal child and youth development by facilitating participation in age appropriate activities and by assigning responsibility for supporting that participation.

**AB 2691 Driver's Licenses (Chapter 865, Statutes of 1992)**

AB 2691 allows someone other than a youth’s parents or guardians to sign the youth’s application for a driver's license. Probation officers and social workers can sign a driver’s license application without liability for any accidents or tickets the youth may incur. Any other person who signs the application will be jointly liable with the youth for any damages resulting from the negligent or wrongful act of the youth in driving a motor vehicle.

**AB 1261 Increase of Savings Limits (Chapter 686, Statutes of 2001)**

AB 1261 increases the amount of savings that foster youth participating in transitional living services may retain.

**AB 408 Prudent Parent and Check for Important People (Chapter 813, Statutes of 2003)**

AB 408 requires caregivers to use a prudent parent standard to determine whether to grant permission for the child to participate in any particular activity. It mandates that all children in foster care have access to age and developmentally appropriate extra curricular, enrichment, and social activities. In addition, it requires the social worker to ask youth who are older than 10 and have lived in group care for more than six months about people important to the dependent youth. The social study, evaluation, or supplemental report used by the court shall also include a discussion of whether the child has relationships with individuals other than the child’s siblings that are important to the child.
**Permanence**

These bills address the need to support the presence of at least one caring adult in each young person’s life by establishing procedures for gathering information about important relationships with people other than siblings and including that information in reports already required.

**AB 408 Prudent Parent and Check for Important People (Chapter 813, Statutes of 2003)**

AB 408 requires caregivers to use a prudent parent standard to determine whether to grant permission for the child to participate in any particular activity. It mandates that all children in foster care have access to age and developmentally appropriate extra curricular, enrichment, and social activities. In addition, it requires the social worker to ask youth who are older than 10 and have lived in group care for more than six months about people important to the dependent youth. The social study, evaluation, or supplemental report used by the court shall also include a discussion of whether the child has relationships with individuals other than the child’s siblings that are important to the child.

**SB 591 Willingness of Caregiver to provide Legal Permanency (Chapter 812, Statutes of 2003)**

SB 591 requires that the study or evaluation, and the information received in evidence by the court, include the willingness of the caregiver to provide legal permanency for the child if reunification is unsuccessful.

**AB 1412 Permanency for All Foster Youth (Chapter 640, Statutes of 2005)**

AB 1412 expands AB 408 by requiring social workers to ask foster youth in every type of placement about adult relationships that are important to them, take actions to support and maintain those relationships, and explore them as potential permanency options. Additionally, social workers are required to allow youth to be involved in their case plan, particularly their permanency plan, as soon as youth enter foster care. Youth are also to be involved in convening a team of adults that focuses on achieving and maintaining permanence.

**SB 218 Termination of Parental rights: Prospective Adoptive Parents (Chapter 626, Statutes of 2005)**

SB 218 establishes “prospective adoptive parent” designation and prohibits the removal of a child from the home of a foster parent so designated unless properly noticed. The bill creates an exception to an adoption agency’s exclusive care and control of a child for purposes of adoption by allowing the juvenile court to designate a current caretaker as a prospective adoptive parent of a child who is a dependent of the juvenile court.

**Transitional Housing**

These bills address the need to support successful transitions to adulthood by providing housing—and access to other needed supports—during the transition and initial emancipation years.

**AB 1198 Transitional Housing Program (Chapter 799, Statutes of 1993)**

AB 1198 creates the “in-care” transitional housing option for foster youth 17 years of age or older and in their last year of high school. The program is called the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) and further modifications were made to THPP in 2001 (see AB 427, Statutes of 2001, below). Counties can offer THPP as a type of placement for certain youth who meet eligibility requirements. Youth live in apartments or houses with close monitoring and supervision from the county or from a private agency. This affords youth the opportunity to practice living on their own while social worker services are still available to them.
**Transitional Housing, continued**

**AB 427 Transitional Housing for Foster Youth Fund (Chapter 125, Statutes of 2001)**

AB 427 provides funding for housing and services for emancipated foster youth through age 20. AB 427 creates the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP), which allows counties to provide monthly financial support to emancipated foster youth as long as they are attending school or working towards the goals outlined in their Transitional Independent Living Plans. AB 427 also makes changes to the state’s Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) for community care facilities participating in transitional housing programs, and includes those certified facilities within the scope of transitional housing facilities. These changes encourage providers to create or expand housing programs for current and former foster youth.

**AB 1119 Transitional Housing Placement Services (Chapter 639, Statutes of 2001)**

AB 1119 authorizes foster youth in AFDC-FC or Kin-GAP who are emancipated and not expected to complete their educational or training program before their 19th birthday, to continue receiving aid following their 18th birthday and emancipation, as long as s/he resides in foster care or Kin-GAP, remains otherwise eligible for AFDC-FC or Kin-GAP or is working at least 10 hours/week and continues attending an educational, vocational or technical training program.

**AB 824 AFDC-FC benefits: Transitional Housing (Chapter 636, Statutes of 2005)**

AB 824 stabilizes housing needs for youth exiting the foster care program by offering transitional assistance up to age 24.

**SB 436 Foster Care: Transitional Housing (Chapter 629, Statutes of 2005)**

SB 436 provides a safety net for pregnant and parenting foster teens and increases the amount of housing available for them.

**Other Transitional Support Programs**

These bills address the need to improve youth in foster care’s transitions to adulthood by establishing pilot programs to develop new models and by clarifying existing transition programs.

**SB 841 Pilot Project for Early Start to Emancipation (Chapter 694, Statutes of 2001)**

SB 841 provides State funding for an Early Start to Emancipation pilot project to be implemented in 3 counties statewide.

**AB 1979 Improving the Independent Living Program (Chapter 271, Statutes of 2002)**

AB 1979 creates statewide regulations for the Independent Living Program.

**Extension of Support Services**

These bills address the need to support successful transitions to adulthood by providing housing—and access to other needed supports—during the transition and initial emancipation years.

**AB 2877 Medi-Cal Eligibility (Chapter 93, Statutes of 2000)**

AB 2877 makes emancipated foster youth categorically eligible for Medi-Cal. It eliminates the re-application process that emancipated youth previously had to go through in order to get health care. Youth now experience a seamless transition of their Medi-Cal services until they reach 21 years of age.
**Extension of Support Services, continued**

**AB 1633 Foster Children: Social Security Assistance: High School (Chapter 641, Statutes of 2005)**

AB 1633 requires the California Department of Social Services to convene a workgroup to develop best practice guidelines for county welfare departments to assist children residing in the state's or a county's custody who are eligible for social security benefits and supplemental security income benefits. AB 1633 also expands existing law to allow 18-year-old foster youth to remain in their foster home until age 19 while they are in the process of completing their high school equivalency certificate.

**Education**

These bills address the need to ensure that youth in foster care have and adequate support for their education as well as access to educational opportunities by clarifying rights, facilitating record transfers, and establishing support services.

**AB 2463 Postsecondary Education: Outreach & Assistance for Emancipated Foster Youth (Chapter 1129, Statutes of 1996)**

AB 2463 provides outreach, access, and retention services for foster youth interested in attending a California State University or community college.

**SB 464 Invitation to Representative of a Group Home to Individualized Education Program Team Meetings (Chapter 413, Statutes of 2003)**

SB 464 requires a school district, special education local plan area, or county office of education to invite to the individualized education program team meetings a representative of the group home in those cases in which a pupil with exceptional needs has been placed in a group home by a juvenile court, as specified. To the extent local educational agencies would be required to perform additional duties, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

**AB 490 Improving Foster Youth Education (Chapter 862, Statutes of 2003)**

AB 490 improves public school procedures so that foster youth have a better chance to succeed in school by requiring that youth are not forced to change schools unnecessarily, won't lose credits and can immediately enroll and quickly receive records at a new school. The bill also requires designation of a foster youth education liaison in each district.

**AB 1261 Improving Foster Youth Educational Outcomes (Chapter 639, Statutes of 2005)**

AB 1261, which makes technical corrections to 2003 legislation, requires an organized process for school placements and requires that local educational agencies provide explanations regarding placements if they are disputed.

**AB 1858 Quality Non-Public Schools for Foster Youth (Chapter 914, Statutes of 2004)**

AB 1858 sets standards and mandates oversight for group home schools. This bill also requires the State Department of Education to ensure that the California School Information Services' system meets the needs of pupils in foster care and includes disaggregated data on pupils in foster care.
**Education, continued**

SB 1639 Education WORKS! Cal WORKS Recipients: Education and Training (Chapter 668, Statutes of 2004)\(^3\)

SB 1639 supports foster youths' right to access information on higher education. SB 1639 encourages the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California to disseminate information to foster care agencies regarding admissions requirements and financial aid. The bill would also request the Regents of the University of California and the Trustees of the California State University to explore methods of using the admissions-by-exemption category to assist the transition of students in foster care into 4-year public institutions of higher education. SB 1639 also includes intensive English language immersion within the scope of California Community Colleges vocational curricula for CalWORKS! recipients.

**Sources of Selected Listings**


2. California Youth Connection

3. California Bill information accessed through [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov)

4. National Conference of State Legislatures State Legislative Report


7. State of California – Health and Human Services Department of Social Services Foster Care Legislation Implementation Status Report

**Additional Source**

County Welfare Directors Association of California Chaptered and Vetoed Legislation by year between 1999 and 2004 [www.cwda.org/legislation_chaptered.cfm](http://www.cwda.org/legislation_chaptered.cfm)
Appendix G: Website and Organization Resources

A

Academy for Educational Development (AED)
www.aed.org

AED is an independent, nonprofit organization committed to solving critical social problems in the U.S. and throughout the world. Major areas of focus include health, education, youth development and the environment. The AED website provides information about multiple approaches to addressing educational issues. Features include sponsored links to community youth resources mapping and recent publications and studies.

AFL-CIO Working for America Institute
(AFL-CIO WAI)
www.workingforamerica.org

WAI promotes education, training and economic development to advance the interests of working families and their communities. Working in partnership with employers, government and community groups, WAI fosters “high-road” approaches to worker training, technology development and job creation. This website provides information and service strategies for workforce, partnership, and individual capacity building.

Afterschool Alliance
www.afterschoolalliance.org

The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children. It is supported by a group of public, private and nonprofit organizations that share the Alliance’s vision of ensuring that all children have access to afterschool programs by 2010. Their website features a comprehensive resource guide that lists over 30 funding opportunities for afterschool programs.

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
www.aacc.nche.edu

AACC has been a national voice for two-year associate degree granting institutions since its inception in 1920. Located in the National Center for Higher Education in Washington, D.C., AACC works with other higher education associations, the federal government, Congress and other national associations that represent the public and private sectors to promote the goals of community colleges and higher education. Among the resources available on their website are reports on community colleges, including trends and facts; national news and events; legislative updates and alerts; and publications and products.

America's Career Information Network
CareerOneStop (ACINet)
www.acinet.org

ACINet operates as a federal-state partnership under the U.S. Department of Labor’s vision for America’s Labor Market Information System, the CareerOneStop portal. They offer several tools to assist workforce development interest including America’s Job Bank, America’s Career InfoNet and America’s Service Locator. This website can be used to learn about typical wages and employment trends across occupations and industries; check education, knowledge, skills and abilities against requirements for most occupations; search for employer contact information nationwide and find cost of living data; and review state profiles with labor market conditions.

American Society for Training and Development
(ASTD)
www.astd.org/index_IE.html

ASTD’s mission is to provide leadership to individuals, organizations and society to achieve work-related competence, performance and fulfillment. Founded in 1944, ASTD represents more than 70,000 members in the field of workplace learning and performance. Their website includes information on training fundamentals, evaluation, leadership, performance and consulting.

American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)
www.aypf.org

AYPF is a nonpartisan professional development organization that provides learning opportunities for policymakers working on issues related to youth at the local, state and national levels. The AYPF website offers several comprehensive reports and publications on topics related to education, youth development, research and evaluations.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)
www.ascd.org

ASCD is an international, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of professional educators of all grade levels and subject areas. ASCD espouses issues of importance to educators and provides a forum in education issues and professionalism. One of their projects is “First Amendment Schools”. ASCD was initially envisioned to represent curriculum and supervision issues. Over the years, their focus has changed, and they now address all aspects of effective teaching and learning—such as professional development, educational leadership and capacity building. ASCD offers broad, multiple perspectives—across all education professions—in reporting key policies and practices. As representatives of all educators, they are able to focus solely on professional practice within the context of “Is it good for the children?” rather than what is reflective of a specific educator role. In short, ASCD reflects the conscience and content of education. This website if full of valuable resources that are easily accessed through their comprehensive database and search options.
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
www.bls.gov

BLS is a fact-finding agency for the federal government in the field of labor economics and statistics. They collect data relevant to the needs of the social and economic conditions of workers, workplaces and workers’ families. Resources on the website include links to information about inflation and consumer spending; wages, earnings and benefits; productivity; safety and health; occupations; publications and research papers; industries; employment and unemployment and a youth information section.

Business Coalition for Education Reform (BCER)
www.bcер.org

BCER is made up of 13 national business-led organizations and 400 state and local business-education coalitions that coordinate their efforts to increase the academic achievement of all students by promoting business involvement in education at the national, state and local levels. To do so, the partners leverage resources and expertise; build partnerships to help states and communities learn from each other's experiences and provide technical assistance to a growing network of state and local coalitions. Website includes resources for national partners, state and local coalitions and those interested in learning more about their specific areas of focus. BCER is a California-provided School-to-Career resource.

California School-to-Career Clearinghouse
www.stc-clearinghouse.com

The CA School-to-Career Clearinghouse provides resources for educators and youth service providers to support the School-to-Career initiative. Visitors can search their online library for specific resources and may request hard or electronic copies for their personal use. The website features include a STC resource library, outstanding practices library, work-based learning toolkit and resources, newsletter and calendar of events.

California Workforce Association (CWA)
www.calworkforce.org

CWA is a non-profit organization representing the 50 Workforce Investment Boards, over 200 One-Stop Career Centers and other workforce development partners in California. CWA’s mission is to promote, enhance and serve the interests of local workforce development partnerships in California. At the state and federal level, CWA represents the voice of the local system to ensure that policy and administrative decisions are made with full understanding of the implications for implementation. On the local level, CWA works to support and provide access to a peer network of practitioners around the state. The CWA website includes information about the organization’s conferences and workshops, workforce investment area directory, an event calendar and information on membership services, such as advocacy, appropriations and business services. They also have an extensive “members only” section of policy and workforce practice information.

California Workforce Investment Board (CalWIB)
www.calwia.org

CalWIB was established to advise and assist in planning, coordinating and implementing the provisions of California’s workforce development programs and services. The board members represent many facets of workforce development, business, labor, public education, higher education, economic development, youth activities, employment and training. They are charged with developing a comprehensive youth development system that serves all youth, builds on existing programs and networks and works specifically with the State Youth Council. This site provides background on CalWIB, information about their projects and services, calendar of events and recommended resources and reports. All announcements, membership and information about the State Youth Council are located on the CalWIB website.

Casey Family Programs
www.casey.org/Home

Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, the Casey Family Programs are a national operating foundation that has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system. They provide direct services, and promote advances in child-welfare practice and policy. Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, they develop tools, practices, and policies to nurture all youth in care and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care. They also offer publications, online tools, videos, and training events for child welfare professionals.

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
www.clasp.org

CLASP is a national, nonprofit organization that conducts research, policy analysis, technical assistance and advocacy on issues related to economic security for low-income families with children. Among the services and resources CLASP provides are comprehensive reports and policy briefs; CLASP Update, a monthly newsletter on the latest development in family and social policy issues; audio teleconferences on topical policy issues, which reach hundreds of policymakers, program administrators, and advocates around the country; and tracking of federal and state family and social policy affecting low-income families. Use the website to search for publications and to sign up for email updates, which provide information on legislative issues and new publications.
Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook

Center for Workforce Preparation-US Chamber of Commerce (CWP)
www.uschamber.com/cwp

CWP deals with workforce issues and is affiliated with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. They work to establish the U.S. Chamber as a leader in workforce development strategies by working to ensure that the employees of its members are fully equipped to compete in the 21st century economy. They promote and support effective local education and training initiatives concerning workforce excellence, conduct and support research that will develop more effective worker training programs, and initiate and document promising education and workforce preparation programs that can be replicated by chambers of commerce and small businesses at the local level. Their website features information about their membership; government and legal links and issues index; news and events; and resources including business tools, research and statistics, programs and affiliates.

Center for Youth Development and Education (CYDE)
www.cbwl.org/cyde/index.html

The Center for Youth Development and Education (CYDE) expands learning and career development opportunities for youth. CYDE's goal is to enable young people to make successful transitions to adulthood and become vital contributors to their communities. While working on behalf of all youth, CYDE is especially interested in serving those who are at risk of not completing high school, entering post-secondary education or training, or acquiring the skills necessary for success in the demanding, high-skills economy of the twenty-first century.

Center for Youth Development and Policy Research (CYDPR)
cyd.aed.org

CYDPR was established in 1990 at the Academy for Educational Development in response to growing concern about youth. Like many organizations, the Center is dedicated to contributing to better futures for all youth in the United States. CYDPR shares with many the conviction that too many children and youth are at the risk of poor outcomes because opportunities are too few, too fragmented, too problem-focused, and too distant from family and neighborhood. The website features resources and publications related to youth development.

Chapin Hall
www.chapinhall.org

Building knowledge to serve children is the mission of the Chapin Hall Center for Children. Located at the University of Chicago, Chapin Hall is a research and development center that brings the highest standards of scholarship and the intellectual resources of one of the world's great research universities to the real-world challenges of policymakers and service providers struggling to ensure that children grow, thrive, and take their place in a formidable world. Working behind the scenes with lawmakers and government administrators, as well as on the front lines with program providers, Chapin Hall puts rigorous, non-partisan research in the hands of those who shape the programs and policies that affect all children in their daily lives. The website provides access to the numerous Chapin Hall publications.

Child Welfare League of America
http://www.cwla.org/katrina/

CWLA is an association of more than 900 public and private nonprofit agencies that assist more than 3.5 million abused and neglected children and their families each year with a range of services. CWLA is developing a National Framework because they believe comprehensive national strategies implemented at the community level are needed to ensure that each child and youth receives the right level of assistance, at the right time. As CWLA members and other stakeholders articulate the National Framework, CWLA will produce on monograph describing it and a community implementation guide.

Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network (CYFERnet)
www.cyfernet.org

CYFERnet is a national network of Land Grant university faculty and county Extension educators working to support community-based educational programs for children, youth, parents and families. Through CYFERnet, partnering institutions merge resources into a "national network of expertise" working collaboratively to assist communities. CYFERnet provides program, evaluation and technology assistance for children, youth and family community-based programs. CYFERnet is funded as a joint project of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service and the Cooperative Extension System. CYFERnet can: provide tools and information for working with youth, parents, families and communities; share practical research-based tools, curricula and activities with a national audience; help locate experts in the areas of children, youth, and family across the country; involve youth with online activities such as Cyber Camps and virtual 4-H clubs; provide access to the latest research, statistical, and demographic information; locate funding opportunities and grant writing information; provide resources and instruments for program evaluation; and provide information on 3000 community-based State Strengthening programs targeting at-risk audiences.

Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
www.childrensdefense.org

The mission of CDF is to Leave No Child Behind® and to ensure every child a Healthy Start, Head Start, Fair Start, Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. The executive director, Marion Wright Edelman, was the author of the "Act to leave no child behind." CDF provides a voice for all children in the U.S. through policy reform, implementation strategies and efforts. This website provides links for services and legislative policy related to CDF's mission. Information includes access to research on policies affecting children and youth.
Coalition of Essential Schools (CES)
www.essentialschools.org

CES is a national network of over 1,000 schools and 24 regional support centers. It is a decentralized network of regional centers that provides technical assistance and personalized support to schools. CES National supports the work of regional centers that coach schools through systemic changes at the school site. This organizational structure allows CES to maintain both a national vision and a strong commitment to local implementation. This website defines the philosophy behind CES schools and provides information on how to become an affiliate.

Committee for Economic Development (CED)
www.ced.org

CED is an independent, nonpartisan policy research group of business leaders and educators committed to a stronger and more productive economy, a freer global trading system and greater opportunity for all Americans. The trustees of CED – chair, presidents and senior executives of major American corporations and university presidents – dedicate their time and expertise to the research of national economic and social public policy issues and the implementation of their policy recommendations. This website includes information about their organization, projects and free publications to download.

Commonwealth Corporation
www.commcorp.org

Commonwealth Corporation is a quasi-public organization providing a range of services to workers, businesses, youth, educators and the workforce development system. Commonwealth Corporation administers and delivers a wide range of public and privately funded initiatives. These initiatives are designed to meet the labor needs of businesses; improve current and emerging workers’ skills; foster career success through lifelong learning; and retain, sustain, improve and create job-generating businesses. Their website includes detailed information about their projects, programs and services. Each project includes resources and tools specific to the content area of each project.

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD)
www.cnyd.org

CNYD is a nonprofit intermediary organization which works to strengthen the field of youth development in the San Francisco Bay Area. CNYD works at the community level, providing youth-serving agencies with technical assistance, training and resources to strengthen programming and practice; and at the systems level, works with funders and policymakers to align resources to more effectively support community-based youth development efforts.

Connect for Kids (CFK)
www.connectforkids.org

CFK is a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing attention to ways public policies can help strengthen families and improve kids’ lives. CFK carries out its work by employing communications technologies to disseminate information and opinions related to children’s issues. CFK generates a new edition of its homepage each week, maintains a comprehensive website with links to information and research, conducts civic journalism, publishes e-newsletters that cover the news and views of the child advocacy field, and provides community and strategic communications efforts on specific issues.

Developing Educational Standards (DES)
www.edstandards.org

DES has received a new emphasis over the last decade at the national, state, and local levels. DES indexes sources of information about educational standards and curriculum frameworks from all sources (national, state and local). This website lists CA (and other states') educational standards and includes an extensive listing of CA organizations and governmental agencies. Among the features are a list of 18 abstracts and links for associated organizations.

Editorial Projects in Education Inc.
www.edweek.org

Editorial Projects in Education Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., publishes both Education Week and Education Week on the Web. Their mission is to help raise the level of awareness and understanding among professionals and the public of important issues in American education. The website provides information and resources on topics related to education reform, schools and the policies that guide them. They also feature online news and research articles and daily or weekly updates on K–12 education.

Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC)
www.eric.ed.gov

ERIC is a national information system designed to provide users with ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. Their resources, information and resource services are organized under three portals: database search, website clearinghouse and resources. The website provides access to journal articles, research reports, curriculum and teacher guides, books, virtual libraries, directories, subject links, resources for parents, event calendar and an online question-answering service.
Federal Commons
www.cfda.gov/federalcommonsindex.html

The Federal Commons is an internet grants management portal serving the grantee organization community. This portal offers all grantees (state and local governments, universities, small businesses, etc.) full-service grants processing across all functions in the grant life cycle. The Federal Commons provides public information, such as grant programs and funding opportunities, as well as the secure processing of e-grant transactions. Search the website by topic to see listed government departments that focus on particular content areas. The website also links directly with departments for specific grant information and guidelines for their department.

Forum for Youth Investment (The Forum)
www.forumforyouthinvestment.org

The Forum is a national initiative dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement in the U.S. by promoting a “big picture” approach to planning and policy development. The Forum was designed to add value to existing efforts to improve youth outcomes by finding or creating tools, vehicles and opportunities for reaching across fields and systems to bring researchers, policy makers, practitioners, media and philanthropists together to identify common messages and agendas. The Forum has a comprehensive website with resources for educators and youth practitioners, including position papers, public policy information, best practice examples, tools for strategy development and a newsletter.

The Foundation Center (FC)
www.fdncenter.org

The Foundation Center collects, organizes, and communicates information on U.S. philanthropy; conducts research on trends in the field; provides education and training on the grant-seeking process; ensures public access to information and services through the web; provides print and electronic publications; and hosts five library/learning centers and a national network of cooperating collections. Their website features a comprehensive search engine for easy access to specific information. They also post a list of trainings, conferences and events for people involved in philanthropy and nonprofits.

Give Kids Good Schools
www.givekidsgoodschools.com

GiveKidsGoodSchools.com is a project of Public Education Network (see listing), which seeks to build public demand and mobilize resources to provide quality public education for all children. GiveKidsGoodSchools.com features monthly news/policy briefs, including information about important issues related to educational policy and how to take action if you wish to do so.

GPO Access
www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html

GPO Access disseminates official information from all three branches of the federal government. The information includes listings of federal resources, publications available at local libraries and an online government bookstore. This website features an option to select any of the branches of government to receive a list of resources, including congressional bills, laws and federal regulations. Users are able to obtain copies of legislative bills in both the Senate and House of Representatives by entering the bill number.

Groundhog Job Shadow Day
www.jobshadow.org

Groundhog Job Shadow Day organizes a national initiative to support job shadowing. This organization connects youth to businesses and organizations offering job shadows as well as providing resources to support teachers and workplace partners in developing job shadow day activities. This website features all the resources needed to sign up and implement a job shadow program in businesses or organizations. They also include success stories and best practices.

Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL)
www.iel.org

IEL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in Washington, D.C. that has worked to achieve better results for children and youth. IEL’s mission is to build the capacity of individuals and organizations in education and related fields to work together across policies, programs and sectors. IEL is building and supporting a cadre of diverse leaders, strengthening the capacity of education and related systems and informing the development and implementation of policies. IEL’s projects are focused on youth both inside and outside of education and include technical assistance for the juvenile justice system. Their website features information on all of their programs and includes access to publications and additional information about their initiatives.
The Intermediary Network (INet)
www.intermediarynetwork.org

INet is a national association of leading education and workforce development organizations working in local communities to ensure the success of youth. Network members connect schools, communities and employers to improve education and build a future workforce. Members also convene local organizations doing similar work to maximize resources and effort. New Ways to Work serves as the facilitating partner of INet. The website offers resources for network members, news, events, resources, links and, free publications.

Jobs for the Future (JFF)
www.jff.org

Through partnerships with states and communities, national and local foundations and other organizations, JFF accelerates opportunities for people to advance in education and careers through research, analysis and policy development; practical, on-the-ground projects; and advocacy, communications, and peer learning. JFF seeks to influence the policies and practices driving the nation's educational and workforce development systems. This website provides background information regarding youth development and employment systems and includes a variety of resources, papers and publications related to youth.

Just For The Kids (JFTK)
www.just4kids.org

JFTK aims to raise academic standards and increase student achievement. Their primary functions are to analyze state test data to identify how well individual schools are performing; study the highest-performing schools to find out what works; and develop tools and instruction to help others replicate educational best practice. Their comprehensive website offers detailed information and tools classified by state to assist educators and evaluators in identifying best practices and provides tools for evaluation based on research.

Keep the Change, Inc.
www.keepthechange.org

Keep the Change, Inc. is dedicated to coaching communities and giving them the tools to make system-wide, sustainable changes in workforce development and education reform. J.D. Hoye, president, is the former director of the National School-to-Work Office in Washington, D.C. The website features information about their services including leadership and counseling, events and resources.

The Learning Exchange
www.lx.org

The Learning Exchange is a not-for-profit educational consulting agency providing services and resources to educators, parents and children, as well as businesses and learning organizations. The Learning Exchange is recognized as a leading provider of consulting services in the areas of experiential learning curriculum, strategic planning, coaching, training and staff development. Their website provides information on their services, school-to-career and charter schools.

Leonard Resource Group (LRG)
www.lrginc.org

LRG is focused on community and business development, strategic planning, public policy analysis, program development and implementation, marketing and communications, and training and technical assistance. LRG works with both public and private sector clients. LRG offers services and skill sets in the following resource areas: government relations, communications and marketing, business partnerships and association management. Their website features information on all their areas of content and Youth Council resources. They also produce a monthly newsletter called Youth Works.

Manpower Demonstration and Research Corporation (MDRC)
www.mdrc.org

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of public policies and programs. This website offers publications based on comprehensive research of issues related to workforce development.

National Alliance of Business
www.nab.com

NAB heads the corporate community's efforts to increase achievement at all levels of learning. NAB partners with policymakers and educators to raise public awareness, inform policy and stimulate action. NAB focuses public attention and discourse on improving education systems, impacting public policy and partnering with educators in communities across the country to stimulate action. NAB is the voice of business in the effort to ensure education is a national priority. As to a membership initiative, the website offers members-only resources, but also provides information about their organization, coalitions and resources.
**National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA)**
www.naswa.org

NASWA is a national organization of state administrators of unemployment insurance, employment and training services and labor market information programs. The mission of NASWA is to strengthen the National Workforce Development Network through information exchange, liaison and advocacy. This website offers information about the WIA system, national legislative news, calendar of events, and a subject resource browser with several workforce development topics.

**National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB)**
www.nawb.org

NAWB represents business-led workforce boards that plan and oversee state and local workforce development and job training programs. Workforce boards consist of public and private sector members who are leading the way in workforce development so that the U.S. can remain competitive in the global marketplace. NAWB supports and promotes the work of its members through a program of advocacy, technical assistance and communications. This website offers information on membership and services, workforce advocacy and briefs, publications, announcements and grants.

**National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP)**
www.nawdp.org

NAWDP is a national voice for workforce development professionals and works to meet the individual professional development needs of the membership. Their website features information about conferences and workshops, a membership newsletter and membership applications and services.

**National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE)**
http://ncrve.berkeley.edu

The NCRVE mission was to strengthen education to prepare all individuals for lasting and rewarding employment and lifelong learning. Although NCRVE closed in 1999, the website maintains an archive of research and reports produced between 1988 and 1999.

**National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE)**
www.ncee.org

NCEE’s work is focused primarily on standards-based reform. NCEE concentrates on helping states and localities build the capacity to design and implement their own education and training systems suited to their history, culture and unique needs. Their website includes information about their areas of focus, including research, policy forums and training opportunities. Specific content areas feature online include school design, school leadership and workforce development. Their online bookstore offers textbooks and curriculum related to their areas of focus.

**National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCWRCYD)**
www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/

The University of Oklahoma National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCWRCYD) increases the capacity and resources of States and Tribes to effectively help youth in care establish permanent connections and achieve successful transitions to adulthood. The Center can help States incorporate youth into all areas of programs and services, implement services that address legislative requirements, prepare for Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) development, and implementation. The Center bases its technical assistance and training around the four core principles of youth development, collaboration, cultural competence, and permanent connections.

**National Clearinghouse for Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship (YDPA)**
www.levitan.org/ydpa

The National Clearinghouse was established by the U.S. Department of Labor to facilitate the development and implementation of YDPA Programs across the nation. The Clearinghouse is dedicated to improving the quality and increasing the quantity of registered YDPA Programs through a variety of means, including information dissemination and marketing, technical assistance and acting as the repository for related instruction curriculum. The website links to resources and program information.

**National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth)**
www.ncwd-youth.info/

The NCWD/Youth website is a source for information about employment and youth with disabilities. NCWD/Youth partners with experts in disability, education, employment, and workforce development to provide high quality, relevant information. NCWD/Youth is funded by a grant administered by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) at the U.S. Department of Labor.

**National Foster Care Coalition**
http://www.natl-fostercare.org/

As a unique coalition of national organizations and foster care alumni, the National Foster Care Coalition is dedicated to raising public awareness, coordinating advocacy efforts and building diverse alliances that strengthen foster care and community supports to ensure children, youth and families reach their full potential.

**National Governor’s Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices**
www.nga.org/center

The NGA Center for Best Practices helps governors and their key policy staff develop and implement innovative solutions to challenges facing their states. Among the areas of best practices they share are the fields of education and employment. The website offers access to a multitude of research papers, reports and other publications on issues related to education and youth.
related to research and evaluations (demonstrating the value organizations. They are currently concentrating on materials development to national and local youth-serving agencies. The website covers hundreds of topics related to worker health and safety. The site index allows search by topic to identify areas of interest and access to papers, publications and resources.

**National League of Cities (NLC) The Institute of Youth, Education and Families**
www.nlc.org

NLC’s Institute of Youth, Education and Families focuses on five core program areas: education, youth development, early childhood development, safety of children and youth, and family economic security. The website offers many comprehensive resources including research papers and publications, tools and additional information about their programs and services.

**The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR)**
www.mentoring.org

MENTOR is an advocate for the expansion of mentoring and a resource for mentors. The website provides information on how to become a mentor, including national sites in need of mentors, contact information and supportive materials for mentorships.

**The National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning (NRCFCPPP)**
www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/about-us.html

The NRCFCPPP focuses on increasing the capacity and resources of State, Tribal, and other publicly supported child welfare agencies to promote family-centered practices that contribute to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while meeting the needs of their families. The NRCFCPPP helps States and Tribes to implement strategies to expand knowledge, increase competencies, and change attitudes of child welfare professionals at all levels, with the goal of infusing family-centered principles and practices in their work with children, youth and families who enter the child welfare system.

**National Youth Development Information Center (NYDIC)**
www.nydic.org

NYDIC is a project of the National Collaboration for Youth. NYDIC provides practice-related information about youth development to national and local youth-serving organizations. They are currently concentrating on materials related to research and evaluations (demonstrating the value and impact of youth development programs); projects and programs (best practices); policies and regulations impacting development of youth; foundation and federal funding opportunities; and career development information. Their website includes information on evaluation, research, federal and state policies, statistics and program development.

**National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC)**
www.nyec.org

NYEC is a national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. Members have access to a range of special benefits, including a newsletter, conference calls, retreats and coalition building. Educators, youth practitioners and the public have access to research, policies, strategies, and system focus and development materials related to youth and youth serving systems. NYEC’s projects and products include PEPNet, and monthly Youth Notes and Advocacy Notes. Extensive information available online includes position papers, strategies for system development and educational and public policy information to assist educators and youth practitioners in their work. The public can access the database to review promising practices in organizations and programs across the country.

**New Ways to Work (New Ways)**
www.newwaystowork.org

New Ways to Work builds community connections that prepare youth for success as adults. New Ways pioneered the All Youth-One System™ approach to help communities build comprehensive youth-serving systems for all youth, including our most vulnerable young people. New Ways helps create powerful partnerships among schools, community organizations, social service agencies, the private sector, government, and community partners to ensure better access to quality educational and career opportunities for youth. For the past 20 years, New Ways has worked across the nation to ensure that public resources targeted to prepare youth for their future are used effectively. New Ways’ website includes information about their projects and includes free tools for building the capacity of programs and initiatives as well as a library of publications related to youth development, supporting vulnerable populations, supporting intermediaries, and developing comprehensive youth-serving systems. Their projects include the Youth Transition Action Teams Initiative, the Youth Council Institute, the Intermediary Network, Diploma Plus – California expansion, Engaging Workplace Partners, Quality Work-Based Learning, and the Sonoma County California Work Ready Certification Program. New Ways also offers customized training and technical assistance.

**NonProfit Pathfinder**
www.independentsector.org/pathfinder/innovations/index.htm

The NonProfit Pathfinder: The Global Gateway to Civil Society Research and Innovation is an online collaboration between Independent Sector and the University of Maryland Civil Society/Community Building Initiative. The goal of the website is to organize research sources on the nonprofit sector and to provide scholars and practitioners with descriptions and links to the best of them.
Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL)
www.nwrel.org

NWREL is one of ten regional education labs across the U.S. that works to improve educational results for youth and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high-quality educational programs. They provide research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business and labor. This website offers resources on educational topics (administration and management, community and family, education reform, teaching and learning), including products, publications and information about programs.

Office of Youth Services (OYS)
www.doleta.gov/youth_services

OYS is a department within the USDOL primarily responsible for coordinating all youth-related workforce activities, providing leadership, policy direction, program administration, technical assistance, guidance, and support activities for the major youth programs authorized by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998: State formula-funded grants, Youth Opportunity Grants, Job Corps, and other discretionary programs. They also publish a bimonthly newsletter, Youth Resource Connection, which provides updates on papers and publications, legislation, funding opportunities and a calendar of events on topics related to youth.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)
www.onetcenter.org

O*NET is an application that was created for the public to provide broad access to a database of occupational information. The O*NET database includes information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with occupations. Information in O*NET is available for over 950 occupations. Each occupational title and code is based on the most current version (2000) of the Standard Occupational Classification system. This website allows the user to search by occupation key words, job families or complete list. They have a survey that matches skills to careers that best suit skill sets.

Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH)
www.bls.gov/oco

OOH is a source of career information designed to provide assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the handbook describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. This website provides information about the handbook as well as links to related information and resources.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov

OSHA adopts and enforces workplace safety and health standards to protect workers from work-related injuries and illnesses. The Compliance Office conducts inspections in response to employee complaints or as part of a targeted inspection program initiated by OSHA to ensure that workers and the public are protected from safety hazards. OSHA also has compliance assistance specialists who can provide general information. This website features information and tools to assist workplaces in meeting compliance, understanding law and regulations and creating safe and healthy environments for workers, including a special link to support teen workers.

Project 540
www.project540.org

Project 540 gives 100,000 students nationwide the opportunity to talk about issues that matter to them and to turn these conversations into real school and community change. This website features interactive dialogue for youth, updates on youth involvement in change, and critical research based on youth report and feedback.

Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet)
www.nyec.org/pepnet

PEPNet is a system and information source for identifying and promoting effective youth employment and development practices. The PEPNet criteria are used to measure the effectiveness of programs in the field. Organizations/initiatives can complete an extensive self-assessment and application for recognition as promising practices. A peer review team recognizes qualifying organizations as PEPNet awardees. The website has a data base with all PEPNet awardee practices. PEPNet is a project of NYEC (see listing).

Promising Practices
www.promising-practices.org

Promising Practices is a research and reference resource for innovative and continuous improvement practices in workforce development. The site features a search engine with topic, population, and state searches. The site contains links to programs and organizations modeling promising practices. Users may register their own promising practices.

Promising Practices in Afterschool
www.afterschool.org

This website provides youth workers with a resource that covers all aspects of creating or improving after-school programs. The site is managed by the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research (see listing) at the Academy for Educational Development (see listing).
Public Education Network (PEN)
www.publiceducation.org

PEN’s mission is to create systems of public education that result in high achievement for every child. PEN is a national association of local education funds (LEFs) advancing school reform in low-income communities across the country. The network advocates for changes in school system funding, curriculum and assessment practice reform, school-level authority and decision making, ongoing professional development for teachers, and public engagement in building relationships among citizens, schools, and communities. PEN’s website provides information about LEFs and reports proven strategies for improving student achievement in U.S. public schools.

School and Beyond
www.schoolandbeyond.org

School and Beyond is a School-to-Career website developed for the California Federation of Teachers (under contract to the state). The goal of this project is to provide professional development for educators, including teachers, counselors, career guidance staff and other youth services staff, in the concepts of “School-to-Career” and “authentic learning”. The website offers a comprehensive and easy to navigate resource guide, toolkit and a great deal of information related to all aspects of school-to-career. Features include tools and resources to assist in integrating rigorous school-to-career pedagogy into curriculum and practice.

School Grants
www.schoolgrants.org

School Grants is an online resource for grants, instructional materials, discussion groups, grant writing aids, newsletters and consulting services. The website features instructional material regarding how to write grants as well as postings of local, state and national grants available for PK-12 and an online listserve that sends updates on grants and funding opportunities.

School Wise Press
www.schoolwisepress.com

School Wise Press provides “consumer reports” on schools and school districts. Designed and operated by parents, their resources are aimed at educating and advocating for active involvement of parents, although their resources are valuable for anyone. This website is full of easy to access information and comparative data of schools in California. Offers comparative data on meeting California University requirements, student enrollment, ethnicity, income, teacher experience levels, key resource levels and much more! Specific detailed profiles of individual schools are available for $6 each.

Search Institute
www.search-institute.org

At the heart of the Search Institute’s work is the framework of 40 Developmental Assets. These assets are positive experiences, relationships, opportunities and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. This website provides information about the institute including the 40 Developmental Assets framework and compatible tools.

Struggling Teens
www.strugglingteens.com

This resource for troubled adolescents and their parents is designed to help them find programs, schools and support for handling behavioral problems. The site includes a listing of specialized education options.

Strumpf Associates and the Center for Strategic Change
www.strumpfassociates.com

The Center for Strategic Change helps human resource organizations improve the quality of their delivery systems and services by ensuring the connection to workplace skills. They provide technical assistance, leadership training, partnership facilitation, creative problem solving and practical research, all designed to improve customer satisfaction. Their website provides information about the Center for Strategic Change and access to their surveys.

U.S. Department of Education
www.ed.gov

The U.S. Department of Education’s mission is to strengthen the federal commitment to assuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual; supplement and complement the efforts of states, the local school systems and other instrumentalities of the states, the private sector, public and private nonprofit educational research institutions, community-based organizations, parents, and students to improve the quality of education; encourage the increased involvement of the public, parents, and students in federal education programs; promote improvements in the quality and usefulness of education through federally supported research, evaluation, and sharing of information; improve the coordination of federal education programs; improve the management of federal education activities and increase the accountability of federal education programs to the President, the Congress, and the public. Their website provides information on topics such as funding opportunities, research, statistics, news, events, programs, services, publications, products and online educational resources.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)
www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/youthdeve.htm

FYSB supports local communities in providing services and opportunities to young people, particularly runaway and homeless youth. FYSB does so by awarding funding that enables communities to offer services to young people and their families and to test new approaches to helping youth. The FYSB website provides resources for developing a positive youth development approach within organizations, policy reform and communities.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
www.dol.gov

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) fosters and promotes the welfare of the job seekers, wage earners and retirees of the United States by improving their working conditions, advancing their opportunities for profitable employment, protecting their retirement and health care benefits, helping employers find workers, strengthening free collective bargaining and tracking changes in employment, prices, and other national economic measurements. In carrying out this mission, DOL administers a variety of federal labor laws, including those that guarantee workers’ rights to safe and healthful working conditions; a minimum hourly wage and overtime pay; freedom from employment discrimination; unemployment insurance; and other income support. The department's website provides information on government and service agencies, laws, regulations, statistics, data, news, programs, services and related sites. Easy navigation by topic or audience to identify specific information related to youth health and safety and federal child labor laws is a feature of this site.

What Kids Can Do (WKCD)
www.whatkidscando.org

WKCD is a national nonprofit organization that documents the value of young people working with teachers and other adults on projects that combine powerful learning with public purpose for an audience of educators and policy makers, journalists, community members and students. Their website offers several great papers and feature stories related to youth organizing, leadership, activism and civic participation.

Young Worker Safety Resource Center (YWSRC)
http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~safejobs/nation/index.html

The National Young Worker Safety Resource Center was established to work with state-level agencies and organizations to share existing training and education resources and help states initiate new activities. The YWSRC provides training, technical assistance, and resource materials to state and community groups throughout the country. The Center is a partnership between the Labor Occupational Health Program at U.C. Berkeley on the west coast and the Education Development Center, Inc. on the east coast.

Youth Development and Research Fund (YDRF)
www.ydrf.com

YDRF was formed in response to the need to reclaim the lost economic fortunes of at-risk young adults by a multicultural group of young professionals with expertise in youth programming, research and policy. YDRF's mission is to improve programs, policies and opportunities for youth through research, training and culture. The YDRF website offers several tools and reports aimed at guiding youth practitioners in increasing youth cultural competence in their organizational structure and framework. Information about training, professional development, curriculum resources and guidance through workshops and events is also available.

Youth on Board
www.youthonboard.org

Youth on Board helps young people and adults think differently about each other so they can work together to change society. Their work is focused on preparing youth to be leaders in their communities and strengthening relationships between youth and adults by providing publications, customized workshops and technical assistance. This website offers information about training and professional development opportunities as well as tools and publications to help organizations launch or enhance youth participation in organizational development and implementation.

Youth Policy Action Center

More than 30 of the country's leading national advocacy organizations have joined forces for improving policies and programs for children and youth. The new Youth Policy Action Center, generously supported by the award-winning technology of Capitol Advantage, will help youth and concerned adults contact elected officials about important programs and initiatives. The Youth Policy Action Center gives young people a platform on which to stand and be counted in national debate and dialogue. It gives national advocates a way to come together and act as one. And it gives all citizens — concerned parents, proud grandparents, dedicated teachers — political power which used to be the exclusive providence of entrenched special interest lobbyists.
Youth Today
www.youthtoday.org

Youth Today is an independent, national newspaper geared to people who work with youth. It includes an extensive calendar of workshops and conferences related to professional development and youth issues, reviews of books and videos for use with staff and youth, grants awarded in the youth field and analysis of legislative issues concerning youth. Youth Today is connected to the Forum for Youth Investment. This website features highlighted abstracts of current issues and subscription information.

The Youth Transition Funders Group (YTFG)
www.ytfg.org/

The Youth Transition Funders Group is a network of grantmakers whose mission is to help vulnerable youth make a successful transition to adulthood by age 25. The YTFG is dedicated to improving the lives of the 3 million young people, between the ages of 14 and 24, in need of extra support. The YTFG has adopted the theme, “Connected by 25,” to describe this mission. They collaborate to change the way that adults work together in order to make sure that every young adult has the education, skills, and supports to be Connected by 25.
Appendix H: Companion CD Contents & Website Links

Youth Transition Action Team Guidebook

- Youth Transition Action Teams Guidebook: Leveraging Community Resources to Ensure Successful Transitions for Foster Youth
  (www.newwaystowork.org/documents/ytatdocuments/YTATGuidebook.pdf)

Youth Transition Action Team Frameworks & Tools

Graphic Framework Charts
- Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System Chart
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Frameworks%20and%20Charts/Foster%20Youth%20Transition%20Action%20Teams/AYOSElementsframework.pdf)
- Youth Transition Action Teams: Core Functions Chart
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Frameworks%20and%20Charts/Foster%20Youth%20Transition%20Action%20Teams/FTATCoreFunctionsChart_11x17_5_23_05.pdf)
- Stages of Building a Comprehensive Youth Transition System Chart
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Frameworks%20and%20Charts/Foster%20Youth%20Transition%20Action%20Teams/FYTATStagesChart_11x17_5_23_05.pdf)

Self Assessments
- Elements of a Comprehensive Youth-Serving System Self-Assessment
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Assessments%20and%20workplans/Foster%20Youth/YTATElementsAssessmentApril2006.pdf)
- Youth Transition Action Teams: Core Functions Self-Assessment
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Assessments%20and%20workplans/Foster%20Youth/YTATCoreFunctionsAssessmentApril2006.pdf)
- Improving Program Practice Self-Assessment
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Assessments%20and%20workplans/Foster%20Youth/YTATProgramPracticeAssessmentMarch2006.pdf)

Work Plan
- Comprehensive Work Plan
  (www.newwaystowork.org/mastertools/Assessments%20and%20workplans/Foster%20Youth/ComprehensiveWorkplanYTATShort.doc)
Youth Transition Action Team On-Line Tools, Resources, and Publications

**New Ways to Work Tools Library**
- **New Ways Main Library Index**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/library.html)
- **Serving Vulnerable Populations: Foster Youth**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentsfour.html)
- **Engaging Workplace Partners**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentstwo.html)
- **Engaging Youth in Planning and Decision-Making**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentsthree.html)
- **Supporting Youth in the Workplace through High Quality Work-Based Learning**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentsseven.html)
- **Working with Students and Schools**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentseight.html)
- **Serving Vulnerable Populations: Youth with Disabilities**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentsfive.html)
- **Supporting Local Intermediaries**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentssix.html)
- **Developing Strong Youth Councils**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/librarycontentsone.html)

**Youth Transition Action Teams Website**
- **Youth Transition Action Teams Homepage**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat.html)
- **Youth Transition Action Teams Newsletter – Transition: Teams in Action**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/newsletter.html)
- **Youth Transition Action Teams Current Happenings**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/current.html)
- **Youth Transition Action Teams Promising Practices for Foster Youth**
  (www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/practices.html)

**Listserve**

Contact Chandra Larsen if you would like to be added to the Youth Transition Action Team or New Ways to Work listserve. Her email address is clarsen@newwaystowork.org or call (707) 824-4000.