



Transforming Systems Strengthening Lives

California Connected by 25 Initiative

May 2007 Update

Fresno County: Strong collaborative spirit

- ◆ Fresno's Educational Liaison and school-based ILP workers are at the head of the K-12 Class! Instrumental in bridging the gaps between systems and advocating for foster youth, a 17 year old under their watch whose transcript reflected 45 credits was determined through their advocacy to have actually completed 150 credits.
- ◆ Pathways to Education and Careers was implemented by Fresno's Workforce Investment Board, City College and CWS for 40 youth this past year. Early recruitment and case management to address basic needs supports retention/success in this learning community for remedial English, math, college credit and career preparation. Opportunities will expand with a CSU Fresno Guardian Scholar's program which is in the planning stages.
- ◆ Resource Family Transitional Housing Plus is being implemented this month. Scattered site THP+ is being planned, housing partners engaged and additional opportunities to build a FY housing continuum identified.
- ◆ By Design will assist Fresno to open 20 Individual Development Accounts (IDA's) this summer. Youth Advisors are assisting with planning and implementation, and the local Chamber of Commerce will help the program establish a Community Partnership Board to create door opener opportunities for transitioning youth.
- ◆ Finding Permanency for Youth Resource Handbook assists staff and partners, a permanency specialist ensures family finding is prioritized for youth in group home care, and "Wednesday's Child" airs on television to educate the community and highlight older youth seeking permanent families. Collaboration with Mental Health has established TNT—a Transition Network Team support group for transition-aged youth, and Fresno City College has implemented the AmeriCorp Mentoring Program for foster youth. Plans are being developed for implementing Model Standard best practices in Fresno for LGBTQ foster and probation youth.

City and County of San Francisco: Focused on the future

- ◆ City, County and Community are working together to meet the needs of an expanding transitioning foster youth population. Twenty-seven more housing units for former foster youth have been established and Friends of SF ILSP organized as a non-profit in 2006 and has raised over \$20,000 in private funds for housing needs of former foster youth attending college.
- ◆ Six former foster youth in San Francisco have full time paid employment with Skywest who is eager to hire additional youth. An Employment Specialist is linking youth to employment and one-stop services that are becoming more youth-friendly. Employment services will continue to expand with a subsidized foster youth employment program being implemented by SF's ILP provider.
- ◆ Through a partnership with SF Earn, an IDA savings and asset purchase program with a 2:1 match will be implemented this year for 40 youth, with youth and community partner boards identified who will develop door openers and other needed resources and opportunities for foster youth.
- ◆ A notification process was developed for schools regarding enrollments or moves of foster youth, a DHS representative is now present at all SARB hearings, and a CWS Educational Liaison continues to provide information and advocacy regarding foster youth educational issues.
- ◆ Active Self-Evaluation Team has assisted SF to target their CC25I efforts by surveying a random sample of emancipated FY and by securing and analyzing post-emancipation earnings for former foster youth.
- ◆ A Youth Permanency Guide has been developed, a permanency newsletter initiated, 25 youth have received permanency search with 77 connections identified, and permanency policies and procedures are being integrated into TDM's, Joint Adoptability Assessments, and other current practices. Through coordinated efforts, 84 youth were identified and matched with 84 mentors through various mentoring programs in SF and other counties that SF foster youth reside in.

Santa Clara: A community on a mission

- ◆ Santa Clara's CC25I Initiative is worth far more than their grant funding and leveraged funding and resources. Their marketing of CC25I to change the landscape in their community, and their strong weave of youth, community partners and agency staff working together brings priceless value to their efforts. Partnerships with workforce development and higher education served 40 youth in two new Career Pathway programs and provided housing in SJ State University dorms and other shared housing plans. Host family THP+ is in the planning stages and will increase THP+ capacity to 80 slots next year.
- ◆ Employment services counselors bring employment expertise to Child and Family Services and transitioning foster youth. A streamlined Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) Employment Program allows application for 21 eligible job classifications through one on-line application. Five former foster youth hired with benefits!
- ◆ Inspired by Fresno's K-12 efforts, 45 low-achieving 9th and 10th graders in Eastside Union HS District will receive education monitoring and advocacy by Child Advocates of Silicon Valley. The Judicial Education Taskforce's Training and Communication Subcommittee will join the county's CC25I K-12 efforts. Coordination is in place with San Jose State University's "Connect Motivate Educate" program for former foster youth.
- ◆ Their new Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is credited with getting Santa Clara's IDA program on the right track! As equal partners with adults in planning/implementing programs, youth helped to make the curriculum interesting, relevant and more easily accessible. Youth co-trainers share transition experiences and inspire youth understanding of the value of financial literacy education, savings and asset-building, and help youth to successfully complete training and program enrollment. (*Many thanks to the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to guide CC25I counties in this work!*)
- ◆ Family finding searches in progress for 40 youth, family finding social workers go to initial court hearings to gather info from families for entry into child's case in state database, and policies and procedures for Santa Clara's durable connections model are being developed.

Stanislaus County: Pairing innovation and results

- ◆ Dissatisfied with the status quo, Stanislaus County launched MY HOME THP+ during 2006. Youth live with "lifelong connections" and receive an integrated model of transitional housing, employment, and permanency services case-managed by an ILP/Aftercare social worker in coordination with the youth and lifelong connection.
- ◆ Through partnerships with Foster Youth Services, Workforce Investment, employers and others, youth are receiving higher education, vocational training, and access to employment/careers that can sustain them.
- ◆ A 1:1 matched savings IDA program is being implemented for 20 former foster youth this summer. The program is being coordinated with Cal Learn in order to offer IDA accounts to pregnant and parenting teens receiving coordinated services through Cal-WORKS and the Adolescent Family Life Program.
- ◆ Through a rich combination of training, advocacy, assessment, case management and support, an educational liaison in partnership with Foster Youth Services is helping CWS to meet foster youth educational needs.
- ◆ Two ILP youth interviewers were hired full-time and are administering Ansell Casey assessments, developing Independent Living Plans with youth, and engaging youth in ILP activities and services.
- ◆ Through continuing permanency and search efforts, more than 50 foster youth have identified a lifelong connection during the past year. Front-end family finding efforts continue and are integrated with Team Decision Making processes, and a lifelong connections database, which tracks searches, connections and due diligence efforts, is in use and being shared with other counties and programs who want to use it.

Alameda County: Thoughtful sustained action

- ◆ Alameda is hard at work during their first year of CC25I. They are partnering and coordinating with the Oakland and Alameda Workforce Investment Boards, engaging their one-stop system to become more youth friendly, providing vocational training to ILP youth, and linking youth to post-secondary education, financial aid, EOPS, and guardian scholar programs.
- ◆ The Beyond Emancipation aftercare program is building capacity to serve the housing and supportive service needs of youth and various models of transitional housing have been started up or are in development.
- ◆ A youth engagement strategy developed with youth input and community partners has resulted in establishment of a Youth Advisory Board that will provide program recommendations, community presentations and other outreach.
- ◆ Extensive permanency efforts are continuing through Alameda's Dumisha Jama program. Permanent lifelong connections are being identified and sustained for older foster youth, a group home family preservation program continues, and Beyond Emancipation is being trained on and implementing permanency practices for aftercare youth.

New County Partners Joining CC25I

Orange County brings strong state leadership and transition-aged youth partnerships and practices to their developing CC25I work plan. Having completed a thoughtful assessment of their transition system and its strengths, needs, opportunities and resources, they are developing their CC25I strategies and work plan in order to join the Initiative summer 2007.

Humboldt County brings an integrated social service agency with strong probation partnerships involved in implementation of Family to Family TDM's. With their small size and unique blend of partnerships and practices they are "ready to roll" and will complete their self assessment and CC25I strategies/work plan in order to join the initiative in late fall 2007 or early 2008.

CC25I ETO: Data Tools & Self-Evaluation Strategies

April was the month for implementation of CC25I ETO. This data system will enable tracking of transition-aged youth outcomes and ILP service delivery in order to provide state reports, evaluate trends, and make decisions regarding programming and system improvement. Alameda and Santa Clara have uploaded Aftercare Youth up to age 24 into ETO and made a user ID that can access only a part of the system in order to allow youth to directly fill out assessments on-line. Santa Clara is adding programs for THPP and THP+ into ETO and the CC25I evaluation team is creating a structure for use with IDA programs. Use of ETO for tracking data for various Family to Family strategies, and possibly for THP+, will make ETO available to other counties in California, and the CC25I outcomes framework and ETO build-out will be shared with all counties interested in adopting it.

Twice-Yearly Convenings

In a January 2007 convening focused on self-evaluation, CC25I counties shared inspiration and creative ideas for custom modifications and implementation of CC25I ETO. In April 2007 counties and their partners continued to network, share generously and steal shamelessly during a CC25I convening focused on Building a Comprehensive Continuum. Sam Cobbs of First Place for Youth offered new thoughts on how to meet the real needs of transitioning youth, important conversations were started regarding THP+, probation partnerships, and municipal leadership, and Isabel Morales of The Casey Center for Effective Child Welfare Practice shared a framework for integrating permanency, transition, and engaging caregivers in a "Model/Assist/Practice" strategy for the many teachable moments in the daily lives of foster youth. Youth presenters from Santa Clara's Youth Advisory Board and EFY Employment Program were insightful and reminded us of the importance and effectiveness of youth leading the way!

For more information about CC25I, visit: <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/California25.htm>

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