

California Connected by 25

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INITIATIVE



October 1, 2007

Prepared by the CC25I Systems Change Assessment Team for:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
The Walter S. Johnson Foundation
The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation
The Stuart Foundation

The CC25I Systems Change Assessment Team at UC Berkeley's Center for Child and Youth Policy is coordinated by Lead Investigator Heidi Sommer, M.P.P. (h_som@berkeley.edu), a doctoral student in UC Berkeley's School of Public Policy, and supervised by Principal Investigator Jane Mauldon, Ph.D. (jmauldon@berkeley.edu), an Associate Professor of UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of CC25I Project Manager Crystal Luffberry and the research assistance of Betsy Baum, Tiffany Chung and Adam Nguyen in completing this report.

CONTENTS

I. Executive Summary	3
II. Introduction	5
III. Initiative Background	7
IV. CC25 Initiative Overview	9
CC25I Resources	
CC25I Key Focus Area Goals	
CC25I Self-Evaluation and Systems Change Assessment	
V. Profile of Early Implementing CC25I Counties	18
Counties at a Glance	
Independent Living Skills Program Structure	
County Priorities for CC25I	
VI. Environmental Landscape	25
Child Welfare Systems Reform & Accountability Efforts	
California Legislative Landscape	
Private Foundation Initiatives	
VII. Future Reports	34

I. Executive Summary

Each year over 20,000 youth “emancipate” from or age out of foster care nationwide, over 4,000 in California alone. Research has consistently shown poor outcomes among these young adults in measures related to education, housing, and employment, to name a few. In response, an increasing number of private and public initiatives have been launched to ensure that former foster youth have access to a true continuum of supports during these transitional years and emerge as successful adults meaningfully engaged in their communities.

The California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) is a collaborative effort between private foundations, public child welfare agencies and their communities to better serve foster care youth during this critical transition. Through positive youth development and integrated systems of supports and services, transitioning foster youth are connected by age 25 to the opportunities, experiences, and supports that will enable them to succeed throughout adulthood. CC25I is an expansion of the Family to Family (F2F) child welfare reform initiative in California and includes the following five foundation partners: Annie E. Casey Foundation; Walter S. Johnson Foundation; Stuart Foundation; William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; and Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. CC25I is also part of the national Connected by 25 Initiative, a project of the Youth Transition Funders Group, with additional demonstration sites in Tampa, Florida and Indianapolis, Indiana.

The five early implementing CC25I Counties are Stanislaus, San Francisco, Fresno, Santa Clara and Alameda. At any given point in time, these five counties serve over 4,000 youth in child welfare and probation supervised out-of-home placements from age 14 through the age of emancipation. Including former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 24, many of whom could still benefit from aftercare transitional support, more than doubles the number of youth targeted by CC25I strategies in these counties. The five counties vary significantly in terms of their geographic and demographic profiles, the size of the youth population served by child welfare agencies, and how independent living skills programs are currently delivered to transition age foster care youth.

Through comprehensive assessment, planning, and program innovation carried out in conjunction with youth, caregivers, and other community partners, these counties are implementing strategies that can be replicated statewide to improve the adult transition experience of all of California’s foster care youth. Leveraging local, state and national funding with foundation-provided grant assistance, early implementing CC25I counties are designing and implementing strategies to achieve the following goals in seven program focus areas:

K-12 Education - Achieve shared responsibility between the child welfare system and local school districts in order to provide foster youth with a stable, uninterrupted, needs-appropriate, high quality education that supports and encourages their academic success.

Employment, Job Training and Post-Secondary Education - Provide emancipating and emancipated foster youth access to and support in a broad array of youth-focused employment, training and post-secondary education programs that lead to meaningful, living-wage employment and careers.

Financial Literacy and Competency - Make available to youth a broad array of instructional support, practical experience, and opportunities that lead to financial management skills, asset building behavior and the accumulation of assets such as savings accounts, cars, homes, etc.

Housing - Ensure that every foster youth who emancipates from the child welfare system has access to a variety of housing options that are supportive and flexible enough to meet the developmental needs of young adults.

Independent Living Skills Program - Integrate efforts to serve transitioning foster care youth with those of the child welfare and probation systems and to ensure that ILSP provides a comprehensive continuum of accessible transition services in community locations where youth feel safe, connected to peers, supported by caregivers and significant connections, and encouraged to excel.

Permanency - Ensure that all youth leave the foster care system with at least one lifelong connection to a caring, committed, loving adult, feeling both resilient and empowered to reach their full potential.

Personal & Social Asset Development - Create and implement a continuum of specialized services to support emancipating and emancipated foster youth with special needs and assist them in identifying, utilizing and maintaining a network of supports and services throughout the transition period.

With the four core F2F strategies as a foundation, counties are pursuing these focus area goals and promoting systems change in a variety of ways. They are building community leadership and partnerships to develop and sustain integrated service delivery systems; engaging youth and caregivers in program design, implementation and evaluation; utilizing technical assistance and cross-county sharing to improve programs and services; involving transitional youth and their caregivers in transition planning and skills development; and implementing “Efforts to Outcomes” database tracking of key outcomes in order to improve local programs through self-evaluation.

CC25I early implementing counties receive grants of approximately \$150,000 annually for a three year period. These grant funds are being used by public child welfare agencies to leverage and maximize other federal, state and local funding and resources to support both implementation and sustainability of the Initiative. Counties have flexibility in directing their CC25I grants to build program areas where they have identified the greatest need, though they must demonstrate how they are further developing a continuum of support for transitioning foster care youth across all seven focus areas. A full-time project manager provides orientation and support of each county as they progress through CC25I self-assessment, planning, implementation and self-evaluation.

CC25I strategies are also supported by a variety of technical assistance accessible to counties as participants in the Initiative – such as expert led workshops, specialized trainings and all-county convenings. The counties also receive technical assistance and support as participants in other initiatives – such as F2F, the California Permanency for Youth Project, Guardian Scholars, and Gateway. Counties are implementing CC25I amidst a landscape of dynamic change and expanding resources for transitional youth programs. Related initiatives, policy reform, system improvement activities and legislative action on current and former foster youth issues are abundant within the state. CC25I builds on existing efforts by counties and communities to improve child welfare systems and services for transitional youth, and strengthens participating counties’ ability to enhance and integrate funding, program initiatives and local/state collaborations that exist outside of CC25I.

The impact of CC25I will be assessed locally through ongoing self-evaluation by each county and their partners, utilizing a youth outcomes framework and a customized web-based data collection system developed with the assistance of UC Berkeley’s Center for Social Services Research. The overall work and accomplishments of CC25I counties over the course of the Initiative are also being documented through a systems change assessment being conducted by a second team at UC Berkeley. This report is the first to result from this systems change assessment and provides an introduction to the Initiative, the participating counties, and the environment within which this work is taking place.

II. Introduction

It is generally acknowledged today that the transition from adolescence to adulthood is an extended process during which youth slowly move from complete dependence on their families to economic independence.¹ If the increasing complexity of life choices at this age makes the transition more difficult for young adults in general, we can expect greater challenges for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. A third of those identified as being at risk of making an unsuccessful transition to adulthood are foster care youth.² In 2000, there were approximately 550,000 foster care youth in the United States, 16% (about 80,000) were between the ages of 16 and 18.³ That same year just over 20,000 youth “aged out” or “emancipated” from the foster care system nationwide by turning 18 – about 4,000 of these youth were in California alone. Once emancipated, these young adults are expected to live independently without state-provided support. A recent report from the Pew Charitable Trust demonstrated that the number of youth aging out of foster care each year is increasing, even as the overall foster care population is declining. In 2005, over 24,000 youth (of a total 513,000 in foster care nationwide) were emancipated, a 41% increase since 1998 when 17,300 youth emancipated (of a total of 559,000 in foster care).⁴

Young adult outcomes among former foster care youth are poor and there is significant overlap between foster care youth and other vulnerable populations that don't fare well in the transition to adulthood.² High school drop out rates among some foster care youth are as high as 55 percent.³ Two to four years after leaving the foster care system, only half are regularly employed; nearly half have been arrested; a quarter have experienced homelessness; and more than half of the young women have had a child.⁵ Courtney and Dworsky (2006) found that among current and former foster care youth aged 18 to 20, 31.9% were neither employed nor in school (compared with 12.3% of 19 year olds in the general population), and 37% of females (11% of males) were receiving one or more government benefits.⁶ Many foster care youth are emancipated on their eighteenth birthday despite the fact that they are without a place to live, have limited employment prospects, and are without the safety net or support of family or other committed adults. Ensuring that these youth have the opportunity to become successful adults meaningfully engaged in their communities will require significant new

¹ Arnett, J.J. 2000. Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties. *American Psychologist* 55:469-480; Furstenberg, Frank Jr., Ruben Rumbaut, and Richard Settersten Jr. 2005. On the Frontier of Adulthood: Emerging Themes and New Directions in *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research and Public Policy*, edited by Richard Settersten Jr., Frank F. Furstenberg Jr., and Ruben G. Rumbaut. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press; Goldscheider, Frances and Calvin Goldscheider. 1999. *The Changing Transition to Adulthood: Leaving and Returning Home*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications; and Osgood, D. Wayne, E. Michael Foster, Constance Flanagan, and Gretchen R. Ruth. 2005. Introduction: Why Focus on the Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Populations? In *On Your Own without a Safety Net: The Transition to Adulthood for Vulnerable Population*, edited by D. Wayne Osgood, E. Michael Foster, Constance Flanagan, and Gretchen Ruth. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

² Wald, Michael and Tia Martinez. 2003. *Connected by 25: Improving the Life Chances of the Country's Most Vulnerable 14–24 Year Olds*, Working Paper for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

³ DiLorenzo, P. 2003. A Review of the *Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 within Selected States*, prepared for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.

⁴ Pew Charitable Trust and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. 2007. *Time for Reform: Aging Out and On Their Own*. Report available at: http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_ektid26082.aspx.

⁵ Wertheimer, Richard. 2002. *Youth Who "Age Out" of Foster Care: Troubled Lives, Troubling Prospects*. Child Trends Research Brief, 12/2002.

⁶ Courtney, Mark E. and Amy Dworsky. 2006. Early Outcomes for Young Adults Transitioning from Out-of-Home Care in the USA in *Child and Family Social Work*, Volume 11, pp. 209-219.

program investments, collaborative partnerships and innovative approaches to creating a true continuum of services to support them during this transition.

The California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) is one example of this type of collaborative effort that is assisting public child welfare agencies and their communities to better serve foster care youth during this critical transition to adulthood. CC25I is expanding the efforts to improve services for foster care youth already begun under the existing child welfare reform initiative known as California's Family to Family Initiative (F2F). The stated goal of CC25I is: Through positive youth development and integrated systems of supports and services, transitioning foster youth are connected by age 25 to the opportunities, experiences, and supports that will enable them to succeed throughout adulthood. CC25I includes the following five foundation partners:

- Annie E. Casey Foundation F2F Initiative (www.aecf.org)
- Walter S. Johnson Foundation (www.wsjf.org)
- Stuart Foundation (www.stuartfoundation.org)
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (www.hewlett.org)
- Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation (www.schwabfoundation.org)

There are five early implementing CC25I counties in California – Stanislaus, San Francisco, Fresno, Santa Clara and Alameda.⁷ Combined, these counties served nearly 9,800 foster youth in child-welfare-supervised out-of-home care in July 2006, of whom 37% were nearing or at the age of emancipation, 14 to 19 years old.⁸ In addition, counties continue to provide some assistance to youth through local Independent Living Skills Programs till they reach age 21. For example, there are over 2,100 youth who emancipated from child welfare-supervised foster care in the five CC25I counties between 2003 and 2005, many of whom were still eligible for Independent Living Skills Program aftercare services in 2006. Another 1,800 emancipated between 2000 and 2002, and while no longer eligible for services after age 21, many are still likely to be in need of transitional support through age 24. In addition, there are a number of youth in out-of-home care but supervised by county probation departments who will also struggle with this transition to adulthood. In January 2007 there were 740 foster youth between the ages of 14 and 20 supervised by probation departments in CC25I counties⁹ (See **Figure 3** below for breakdowns of these youth populations by county).

⁷ After its first full year as part of CC25I, Alameda County transitioned out of the Initiative, allowing them to focus more strongly on local needs and priorities.

⁸ These are point-in-time counts on July 1, 2006. Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Smith, J., Dunn, A., Frerer, K., Putnam Hornstein, E., Ataie, Y., Atkinson, L., & Lee, S.H. (2007). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved 03/14/07, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/>.

⁹ Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Smith, J., Dunn, A., Frerer, K., Putnam Hornstein, E., Ataie, Y., Atkinson, L., & Lee, S.H. (2007). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/betaSystem>

III. Initiative Background

In 2003, Michael Wald and Tia Martinez reviewed the poor outcomes of transitional youth populations and identified insufficient support systems as contributing to this failure in “Connected by 25: Improving the Life Chances of the Country’s Most Vulnerable 14-24 Year Olds”.¹⁰ The paper highlights program areas in which transition age youth required additional resources and supports – such as housing, education, and employment. Based on this work, the Youth Transitions Funders Group¹¹ Foster Care Work Group (FCWG) launched the Connected by 25 Initiative – identifying three national demonstration sites (Oakland, California; Tampa, Florida; and Indianapolis, Indiana) – to address the issues impeding the successful transition of foster care youth. In 2004, the FCWG with the Finance Project published “Connected by 25: A Plan for Investing in Successful Futures for Foster Youth” which, like the Wald and Martinez paper, highlighted the historically poor outcomes of transitioning foster care youth as well as the challenges facing the child welfare systems intended to serve them. It also outlined an agenda for investment in key service areas such as educational attainment; workforce development; financial literacy; and savings and asset development, as well as an agenda for strategic investment to improve child welfare systems and the transitional services they provide.

Independent of these efforts, representatives of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation and Stuart Foundation came together in the Spring of 2004 to explore the creation of a new youth-focused initiative – one that would build a continuum of care for emancipating foster care youth in California. Each of these foundations brought to the effort a history of philanthropic investment in a variety of agencies and programs to improve youth development and young adult outcomes. Since 1992 the Annie E. Casey Foundation has been implementing Family to Family (F2F), a national initiative to reform child welfare and foster care programs. F2F currently involves child welfare agencies in 18 states, including 25 of 58 counties in California who represent 90% of the state’s foster care population. Participating agencies are implementing the F2F four core strategies to improve child welfare foster care systems, services and outcomes for children and families.

The Walter S. Johnson Foundation funds programs and initiatives that assist underserved or educationally disconnected youth in making successful transitions to adulthood. The Stuart Foundation’s funding priorities include support of youth development through a whole-community approach and improved child welfare systems. Both located in the San Francisco Bay area, the Walter S. Johnson and Stuart Foundations had already been funding employment training, post-secondary education, permanency and educational advocacy programs for foster care youth and other disadvantaged young adults in nearby counties. The Stuart Foundation was also an investor in California’s F2F sites and had a strong interest in seeing that initiative move forward.

Together these foundations developed the concept of creating an additional F2F strategy in California – one that would expand child welfare supports for foster care youth nearing the transition to adulthood – and initially named it the Foster Youth Transitions Initiative (FYTI). The vision was to build on existing F2F efforts of

¹⁰ An unpublished working paper written for the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

¹¹ The Youth Transitions Funders Group is a collaboration of philanthropic interests that invest significantly in programs and services for transition aged youth in three vulnerable populations – youth involved with the juvenile justice system, foster care youth, and youth who were educationally disconnected - across the United States.

counties to create a true continuum of support capable of responding to the diverse needs of this population. During an intense three-month assessment period in 2004, the Annie E. Casey, Walter S. Johnson and Stuart Foundations consulted with practitioners in various program areas, surveyed services currently available and identified experts who could serve as technical assistance providers. They also met with county child welfare agencies to gauge interest in joining this new initiative. By the end of 2004, Fresno, San Francisco and Stanislaus Counties began the self-assessment and application process.

Over the course of 2005 a partnership developed between the FYTI in California and the FCWG which was co-chaired by representatives of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation. A decision was made to align the goals and activities of FYTI with those of the national Connected by 25 demonstration project and FYTI was renamed the California Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I). The Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation, originally planning to fund the Oakland, California site of the Connected by 25 national demonstration project, agreed to fund a broader Alameda County effort under the CC25I umbrella. In June 2005, Santa Clara also agreed to join CC25I, bringing the number of counties participating in California to five.

Among the initial foundations moving CC25I forward, the Walter S. Johnson and Stuart Foundations committed to provide county base grants for three years as well as technical assistance and program support. The CC25I base grants, and the local investments they leverage, assist the counties in carrying out their CC25I objectives and activities, including program/service development, workforce training and development, and implementation of data/outcome tracking and evaluation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation agreed to assist with initiative planning and supervision and offered in-kind technical assistance and guidance regarding integration of CC25I with F2F. When the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation joined the effort, it committed to provide the three year base grant for Alameda County. As a result of the collaboration developed with the FCWG, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative agreed to provide technical assistance and support to CC25I around the issues of financial literacy, individual development accounts and youth leadership/community partnership boards. In October 2005, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation granted additional funding for service and program enhancements to align the five CC25I counties with the national Connected by 25 demonstration sites in Tampa and Indianapolis, as well as to conduct a systems change assessment over the duration of the initiative. Counties agreed to leverage this funding with a combination of government, private and nonprofit dollars necessary to carry out their CC25I work and sustain it over time.

Between late 2005 and the start of 2007, the five counties finalized their plans and made significant progress in implementing their CC25I strategies. The counties have shared their early planning and implementation experiences and the lessons learned thus far at all-county technical assistance convenings in December 2005 (General Convening), June 2006 (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative), January 2007 (Efforts to Outcomes Data Base Implementation) and April 2007 (General Convening). As of Spring 2007, most of the CC25I counties have been implementing the initiative for at least a full year, and some counties are approaching completion of year two. It is expected that two to three additional counties will join CC25I by 2008.

IV. CC25 Initiative Overview

Through comprehensive assessment, planning, and program innovation carried out in conjunction with youth, caregivers, and community partners, CC25I counties are implementing replicable strategies to improve the adult transition experience of all of California's foster care youth. Counties that join CC25I build on their local Family to Family (F2F) work and pursue a common goal: Through positive youth development and integrated systems of supports and services, transitioning foster youth are connected by age 25 to the opportunities, experiences, and supports that will enable them to succeed throughout adulthood. To assist them in reaching that goal, grant funding and technical assistance is being provided to the public child welfare agencies in CC25I counties over three years to implement locally-designed strategies across the seven key focus areas: K-12 Education; Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education; Financial Competency and Asset Development; Housing; Independent Living Skills Programs; Personal/Social Asset Development; and Permanency. These focus areas are the foundation of the CC25I logic model as they provide a broad, comprehensive framework for addressing the developmental needs and milestones of foster youth transitioning to adulthood.

While counties are given the flexibility to direct their CC25I resources to where they are most needed (perhaps prioritizing activities in three or four focus areas), they must demonstrate how their current service system and planned activities address all seven focus areas. Counties first engage in a comprehensive self-assessment process – examining available data and information on the needs and outcomes of the county's transition age foster youth and identifying gaps in the local systems and programs available to assist them. The process is most effective when counties convene a broad group of stakeholders, including youth, caregivers and community partners, gather data reports from all available sources in advance to be discussed during the self-assessment meetings, and identify probation or community partners to co-lead the assessment process with the child welfare agency. A comprehensive CC25I self-assessment document, which includes data and systems questions in each focus area, directs the process and provides a roadmap for integrating all focus area information to guide county planning. It is through this process that counties are able to prioritize program focus areas and develop CC25I strategies to create a true continuum of care and support.

This self assessment work, as well as efforts to implement the resulting CC25I strategies, requires child welfare leaders to work collaboratively with many agencies, communities and individuals, starting with their Independent Living Skills Programs but extending to other non-profit and government agencies, including school districts, workforce investment boards, juvenile courts, health care providers, mental health services, transitional and supportive housing providers, as well as families, caregivers, and foster youth themselves. Philanthropic interests, local corporations and other interested community members may also play important roles. By working together, community partners identify overlapping interests, leverage available resources and contribute to shared outcomes, while trying to avoid the duplication of efforts that often results when working separately.

With the four core F2F strategies as a foundation, counties are promoting systems change in a variety of ways such as: building community leadership and partnerships to develop and sustain integrated service delivery systems; youth and caregiver engagement in program design, implementation and evaluation; utilization of technical assistance, convenings and cross-county sharing to improve programs and services; increased

involvement of transitional youth and their caregivers in transition planning and skills development; and the use of a data system and outcomes tracking for self-evaluation to improve local programs.

CC25I Resources

The first column of the CC25I Initiative Overview and logic model (**Figures 1A & 1B**) outlines the inputs or resources that are supporting early CC25I work. Each of the early implementing five CC25I counties have applied for a base grant of \$100,000 a year for three years¹², as well as an additional \$50,000 a year for three years¹³ to support program enhancements that align their work with the national Connected by 25 sites. These funds are being used by public child welfare agencies to leverage and maximize federal, state and local funding and resources to support both implementation and sustainability of the Initiative. Four of the five counties (all but Alameda) are also receiving and have agreed to match an optional \$10,000 a year for three years to establish Individual Development Accounts to assist youth to learn savings behaviors and build financial assets.

CC25I counties also utilize a great deal of technical assistance which is provided in a number of ways. As F2F counties, all CC25I counties can access available F2F technical assistance. Counties may also access a technical assistance pool funded by CC25I and overseen by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) at UC Berkeley.¹⁴ The CC25I technical assistance pool funds expert-guided workshops and convenings that respond to the particular challenges identified by the counties in any of the seven focus areas as well as systems improvement efforts. Additional technical assistance is also provided through in-kind foundation support such as coordinated technical assistance with the Youth Transition Action Team Initiative or the convening presentations offered by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative in June of 2006 to share with CC25I counties strategies to promote financial literacy, financial asset development, and youth and community partnership boards. Many of the counties were also part of or recently joined other initiatives – such as the California Permanency for Youth Project, Guardian Scholars, and Gateway – and as part of those initiatives they receive technical assistance that also contributes to their CC25I activities. Other initiatives are discussed in greater detail in Section VI (Environmental Landscape).

Working closely with CC25I funders and county leads, CC25I Project Manager Crystal Luffberry coordinates and oversees the Initiative as a whole¹⁵. This includes orientation and support of each site as they progress through CC25I self-assessment, planning, implementation and self-evaluation; coordination of county technical assistance and twice-yearly convenings; participation in state policy workgroups and the YTFG Foster Care Work Group to move the CC25I agenda forward and coordinate with other efforts and initiatives; as well as outreach, information-sharing and presentations to build awareness of CC25I and its tools, resources and strategies for improving transition outcomes of foster youth ages 14 through 24. In addition, two teams from UC Berkeley oversee the development of self-evaluation capacity and the review and synthesis of the systems change efforts of the Initiative.

¹² The Walter S. Johnson Foundation provides base grant funding for Fresno and Santa Clara Counties, the Stuart Foundation for San Francisco and Stanislaus Counties, and the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation for Alameda County.

¹³ National merger enhancement grants are provided by the William and Flora and Hewlett Foundation.

¹⁴ The CC25I technical assistance pool was initially provided through the UC Davis Resource Center.

¹⁵ CC25I project management was initially overseen by Karen Strickland of Golden Bear Associates.

UC Berkeley's Center for Social Services Research (CSSR), in partnership with the CC25I counties, has developed the overall youth outcomes framework for CC25I and the UC Berkeley F2F Self-Evaluation Team is overseeing all CC25I data collection efforts (via Social Solution's web-based database platform Efforts to Outcomes). Barbara Needell serves as Principal Investigator over this work, Amy D'Andrade (now at San Jose State University) developed the initial outcomes framework and database template, and Tara Lain currently serves as the primary CSSR lead for all outcomes and data tracking efforts being undertaken by CC25I counties. This data system will enable counties to conduct self-evaluation of program impact over time and plan for program improvement.

A second team at UC Berkeley, led by Heidi Sommer and Professor Jane Mauldon of the Goldman School of Public Policy, is documenting the activities and achievements of the five CC25I counties over the course of their first three years. This work will result in a series of descriptive reports and conclude with a set of best practices for implementing effective services and programs for transition age foster care youth. This work will also provide the foundation for the CC25I Project Manager to further develop and refine the CC25I F2F strategy and framework for dissemination to other F2F counties in California.

CC25I Key Focus Area Goals

Figures 1A & 1B of the CC25I Initiative Overview describe the linked goals, activities and anticipated outcomes related to each of the seven focus areas. Though each county's proposal highlights outcomes that speak to the needs of their particular service population, the logic model presented in Figures 1A & 1B attempts to identify the common themes and objectives behind the individual county plans. Providing services to youth early in the transition period and extending services for several years into early adulthood are pivotal to the logic model. Up to now, transitional services have generally been made available close to the time of emancipation, and many programs either end once youth leave care or their scope and availability are significantly decreased. Now, however, CC25I counties are working toward integrated systems that address educational needs and positive youth development early on, provide needs assessment, transition planning and independent living skills development as early as age 14 and continue those services through the age of 24.

The CC25I goal related to *K-12 Education* is to achieve shared responsibility between the child welfare system and local school districts in order to provide foster youth with a stable, uninterrupted, needs-appropriate, high quality education that supports and encourages their academic success. Strategies include further developing the CWS-based foster care educational liaison position¹⁶ to assess the educational needs of youth, increase access to the services that can assist youth in achieving educational goals, and improve data-sharing across agencies so social workers and school faculty can share this work. Partnerships with caregivers and other community providers are aiding in this effort to increase awareness of and advocacy for foster youth educational rights, access to educational opportunities and the availability of tutoring and other supports necessary to improve academic skill levels. Through their work in this area, counties expect to see improved educational

¹⁶ Created through California Assembly Bill 490.

outcomes for foster youth – improved exit exam results and graduation rates as well as higher percentages of youth intending to pursue higher education and taking college prep courses.

The overarching goal of the *Employment, Job Training and Post-secondary Education* focus area is to provide emancipating and emancipated foster youth access to and support in a broad array of youth-focused employment, training and post-secondary education programs that lead to meaningful, living-wage employment and careers. Strategies include the creation of specialized employment programs to link foster youth to employment services and opportunities in high-wage, high growth job sectors, the implementation of subsidized and other work experience programs, and the development of programs that create clear pathways to college and careers along with the supports needed to retain youth in those programs. These strategies - carried out through child welfare partnerships with local workforce investment boards, businesses, institutions of higher education, and other community members - are intended to increase the percent of youth participating in and completing college education or vocational training as well as the percent of youth with work experience and paid employment prior to and/or after leaving foster care.

The goal of *Financial Literacy and Competency* is to make available to youth a broad array of instructional support, practical experience, and opportunities that lead to financial management skills, asset building behavior and the accumulation of assets such as savings accounts, cars, homes, etc. Community partnerships among child welfare agencies, local financial institutions and businesses, and financial literacy training programs are developing services and systems that promote financial literacy and youth saving behavior. Key strategies include the integration of financial literacy training into existing Independent Living Skills Program curriculum and the development of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), matched savings accounts geared to the specific needs of foster care youth that maximize their ability to save money. Strategies also include the creation of local “Door Openers” – specialized support contacts that provide needed opportunities and help youth access resources and utilize assets to their greatest advantage. For example, a foster youth planning to purchase a car is referred to a local mechanic who ensures the car is not a lemon, or a youth hoping to start his/her own business is linked with a professional with an entrepreneurial background.

In the area of *Housing*, the goal is to ensure that every foster youth who emancipates from the child welfare system has access to a variety of housing options that are supportive and flexible enough to meet the developmental needs of young adults. Through partnership with foster youth, resource families and other housing initiatives/community programs, as well as full utilization of available funding streams such as the Transitional Housing Placement Program¹⁷ for former foster care/probation youth through the age of 24, counties aim to increase local transitional housing capacity and provide the necessary supports for youth to gain experience in and sustain independent living. Strategies include the use of new housing models, such as host family transitional housing in which emancipated youth reside with lifelong connections and other caring adults, and partnerships with local businesses, developers and others to increase transitional and supportive housing for foster youth in the community. This work is designed to improve housing outcomes among former foster care youth such as increased likelihood of securing safe and long-term housing during early adulthood.

¹⁷ The California Department of Social Services Transitional Housing Placement Program allocates funding to counties to provide transitional housing opportunities to transitioning foster care youth ages 16 to 18 (THPP) and emancipated youth ages 18 to 24 (THP-Plus).

Figure 1A: California Connected by 25 Initiative Overview

A partnership of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family Initiative * William and Flora Hewlett Foundation * Walter S. Johnson Foundation * Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation * Stuart Foundation

Focus	Inputs	Goals
<u>CC25i Systems Change/ Overall Funding</u>	<p><i>Includes funding grants to Alameda, Fresno, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus Counties.</i></p> <p>CC25i Base Grant \$1.5M CC25i Addendum Grant, National Merger Service Enhancements \$750k Federal, State and Local Match \$7.1M</p> <p>UC Davis Resource Ctr. Technical Assistance Pool \$125k CalSWEC Technical Assistance Pool \$ 75k System Change Review - UC Berkeley \$286k</p>	<p><i>Build a local, integrated system of transition supports and services for emancipating and emancipated foster youth ages 14 to 24.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through community partnership, collaboration and leveraging of resources, develop and sustain an integrated system that successfully helps youth transition to adulthood. • Increase youth, caregiver and community involvement in the design, implementation and evaluation of transition services and policies.
<u>Employment/ Job Training/ Post-secondary Education</u>	<p>Annie E. Casey Technical Assistance Youth Employment Partnership \$40k</p> <p><i>Other (non CC25i) Funding Inputs</i> Gateway Project Grants \$476k Gateway Technical Assistance \$256k Guardian Scholars \$519K</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase foster youth awareness of and preparation for college and career pathways. • Provide access to employment preparation, occupational training and work experience. • Emancipated foster youth have the supports and services needed to successfully complete college.
<u>Financial Literacy/ Competency</u>	<p>CC25i IDA Grants \$120k Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Technical Assistance \$50k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase youth saving and asset building behaviors. • Improve financial competency of youth emancipating from foster care. • Provide opportunities and experiences that lead toward economic success.
<u>Housing</u>	<p><i>Other (non CC25i) Funding Inputs:</i> First Place For Youth \$625k Foster Youth Housing Initiative \$1.4M</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a continuum of housing supports and services and link youth to the services that best meet their needs. • Expand housing and transitional housing resources. • Incorporate permanency and lifelong connections concepts into transitional housing models.
<u>Independent Living Skills Program</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand independent living services and aftercare supports among youth ages 14 to 24. • Increase youth, caregiver and community involvement/ engagement in transition planning and services. • Integrate child welfare and independent living services.
<u>K-12 Education</u>	<p>Technical Assistance Foster Youth Education Initiative: Mental Health Advocacy Services \$150k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of foster youth educational rights and access to educational opportunities. • Partner with caregivers, schools and other partners to improve educational outcomes of foster youth.
<u>Permanency/ Personal & Social Asset Development</u>	<p>Technical Assistance California Permanency for Youth Project \$325k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish lifelong, committed adult connections for foster youth. • Assist emancipating youth in identifying and maintaining a network of supports and services.
<u>Data System/ Outcomes/ Accountability</u>	<p>CC25i Self-Evaluation Tools: UC Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research \$300k</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a database and outcomes framework. • Track important basic outcomes for transition aged youth. • Establish program improvement process based on review of outcome data.
<u>CC25i Project Management</u>	<p>1FTE Project Manager \$345k CC25 R&D Phase \$ 26k Project Mgmt Expenses/Support \$ 80.4k .25 FT F2F Supervisor \$120k SF Foundation, Hewlett Fiscal Agent \$37.5k</p>	

Figure 1B: California Connected by 25 Initiative Overview

A partnership of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family Initiative * William and Flora Hewlett Foundation * Walter S. Johnson Foundation * Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation * Stuart Foundation

Focus	Activities	Anticipated Outcomes
<p><u>CC25i Systems Change/Overall Funding</u></p>	<p><i>Community partnership, program and policy development, system integration, and other locally-developed activities to improve transition outcomes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen partnerships with youth, caregivers, the community, as well as key systems serving transition-aged youth, such as workforce development, housing, banking, etc. • Implement community outreach and marketing strategies that share information and motivate financial investment for transition age services. • Develop youth leadership board & community partnership board. 	<p><i>Foster youth successfully transition to adulthood and are connected by age 25 to housing, employment, support systems, etc.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model service delivery partnerships promote systems integration • Increased community involvement in strategies that promote youth success • Increased public, private and community investment in transition age foster youth
<p><u>Employment/Job Training/Post-secondary</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement liaisons, employment specialists, and other strategies improving linkage of foster youth to One Stop and WIA services. • Implement wage subsidy, work experience/OJT, and/or Career programs for foster youth. • Develop college support programs such as Guardian Scholars. • Implement college/career pathway programs such as Gateway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth accepted to, enrolled in, and completed college • Increase % youth enrolled in/completed vocational training or internship • Increase % of youth with paid employment • Increase % of youth with paid or unpaid work experience
<p><u>Financial Literacy/Competency</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial literacy and/or entrepreneurial training. • Implement matched savings account program (IDAs). • Through youth, agency and community partnership boards, develop door opener opportunities for youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth with savings accounts • Increase % of youth with checking accounts • Increase average savings, deposits and assets among youth who become IDA holders
<p><u>Housing</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with other initiatives & organizations to develop a continuum of local housing resources to meet the needs of transitioning youth. • Utilize THP+ funding to increase transitional housing capacity. • Develop lifelong connections host family transitional housing models, as well as traditional single and scattered site housing options where possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth with housing • Increase % of youth who feel their housing situation is safe • Increase % of youth in long-term housing.
<p><u>Independent Living Skills Program</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach and provide ILP services to youth beginning at age 14. • Integrate Ansell Casey Assessment, Transition Conferences and/or permanency planning with transitional independent living planning. • Partner and leverage resources to increase community capacity to serve emancipating/emancipated foster youth. • Provide trainings for caregivers, staff, etc. on transition needs of youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth receiving any ILP services • Increase % of youth reporting participation in transition planning • Increase% youth reporting satisfaction with ILP services
<p><u>K-12 Education</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train youth, caregivers and staff regarding foster youth educational rights, responsibilities and resources. • Develop educational liaison to assess educational needs of youth and link to services that can assist them in achieving educational goals. • Provide advocacy, tutoring or develop other strategies to increase reading, math and language skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth passing CHSEE • Increase % of youth graduating from high school • Increase % of youth who have college as an educational goal • Increase % of youth taking college prep classes
<p><u>Permanency/Personal & Social Asset Development</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet search and other family finding techniques implemented. • Youth and agency work together to identify, develop or maintain significant adult lifelong connections. • Mental health clinician, youth advocates/supporters, etc. participate regularly in emancipation conferences and transition planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase % of youth with permanent connections [a stable relationship with a safe adult who has made a commitment to provide life-long support] • Increase % of youth reporting mental health needs are being met
<p><u>Data System/Outcomes/Accountability</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a data system for gathering data and begin entering relevant data. • Establish baseline for outcome measures. • Identify Self Evaluation Team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data availability • CWS and partners evaluate data at least quarterly • Program improvement informed by outcome data 

Critical to all of this work are county efforts to fully integrate their *Independent Living Skills Programs* (ILSPs) with the child welfare and probation systems and ensure that ILSPs provide a comprehensive continuum of accessible transition services in community locations where youth feel safe, connected to peers, supported by caregivers and significant connections, and encouraged to excel. Ideally ILSP services will be accessible to foster youth in their schools, communities and placements and ILSPs will integrate the resources and opportunities available across systems. Counties are reaching out to youth as young as 14 to raise awareness and utilization of ILSP services and are developing strategies to expand aftercare programs and supportive services through the age of 24. Counties are working with community partners and providers of transitional services to leverage the resources available and to address existing gaps in the continuum of supports. Within ILSP, child welfare agencies and/or probation systems, strategies include providing trainings for staff and caregivers, updating assessment procedures including integrating the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, and developing engagement and practice strategies to include youth and caregivers in transitional and permanency planning and activities. Overall, these strategies will help expand and improve access to ILSP services among foster care youth, as well as increase their involvement in their own transition planning and their satisfaction with the ILSP services they have received.

The goal of *Permanency* is to ensure that all youth leave the foster care system with at least one lifelong connection to a caring, committed, loving adult, feeling both resilient and empowered to reach their full potential. Permanency strategies include family finding techniques such as Internet search as well as youth, caregiver and cross agency collaborations that identify, develop and support significant relationships. Permanency efforts will result in more youth leaving care with strong relationships and on-going support from safe and caring adults and family members.

Personal & Social Asset Development efforts aim to create and implement a continuum of specialized services to support emancipating and emancipated foster youth with special needs and assist them in identifying, utilizing and maintaining a network of supports and services throughout the transition period. To that end counties are engaging mental health clinicians, youth advocates and other service providers and youth supporters in transition planning and emancipation conferences. Community partnerships are instrumental in providing a full range of services that meet individual needs and build personal/social assets.

CC25I Self-Evaluation and Systems Change Assessment

As CC25I counties work across the seven focus areas to build a comprehensive continuum of programs and supports, they weave in other F2F values and system reform strategies such as youth and caregiver engagement, building and enhancing community partnerships, and self-evaluation, in order to integrate systems and improve the lives of transitioning foster youth. To ensure that systems change occurs and to document the impact of this change, counties must commit to implementation of a CC25I data system to track youth outcomes and maintain accountability through ongoing self-evaluation. CC25I counties agree to utilize Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), a web-based data collection system developed by Social Solutions, the licensing of which was funded by CC25I partnering foundations through the Child and Family Policy Institute of California. After initial development of the CC25I ETO template by the CC25I Self-Evaluation team at UC Berkeley's Center for Social Science Research, individual ETO sites were customized for each county's needs. ETO will enable counties to

track data for eligible foster care youth (both in care and emancipated), their use of ILSP and other transitional services, and their CC25I outcomes achieved over time in the seven focus areas of the Initiative. The system also allows for the generation of mandatory state and federal reports as well as statistical inquiries that will allow counties to determine the impact CC25I efforts are having on youth and young adult outcomes, and to identify areas for continued program improvement.

Implementation of ETO by CC25I counties began in 2007. Using the Assessment area of ETO, all CC25I counties are currently tracking outcome data for baseline measures across the seven key focus areas for youth at the point of emancipation. The Emancipation Assessment is completed only once and timed as close as possible to the point of exit from the system. Several counties are already phasing in the In-care Assessment which is to be done every six months for those foster youth aged 16 to 19. The final CC25I assessment to be phased in is the Aftercare Assessment, which is to be completed yearly with all aftercare youth being served as well as through outreach efforts to a random sample of aftercare youth up to the age of 21. A detailed list of the outcomes tracked through the ETO data system can be found in **Appendix A**.

In addition to outcomes tracking and self-evaluation, CC25I counties are striving to improve their child welfare systems by building on two additional F2F strategies – Team Decision Making and Building Community Partnerships. Through F2F's Team Decision Making counties increase the presence of community in a foster youth's life by ensuring that families, caregivers, youth, service providers, agency staff and other important community members participate in conferences and meetings that assess a youth's needs, affect placement decisions and determine service provision. F2F's Building Community Partnerships strategy makes child welfare agencies and their work more visible and accessible locally by involving community members in networks and meetings that build on neighborhood strengths and enhance agency programs in culturally appropriate ways. Further expanding on these principles and strategies, CC25I counties are engaging in a variety of systems change activities, some of which are outlined below.

- Agency Leadership for Change – CC25I county agencies are implementing strategies to promote policy reform, cross-training and coordinated leadership among Child Welfare, Independent Living Skills Programs, Probation, Mental Health, and other partners.
- Community Partnership – Community outreach and partnership strategies are promoting awareness of the challenges facing transitioning foster care youth and aiding in the development of a continuum of care (through identification of service gaps, networking and program collaboration/integration, and avoidance of service duplication). In addition, partnerships and cross sector collaborations are working to garner support for local service delivery systems by leveraging existing resources with new community funding to sustain programs in the future.

- Youth and Family Engagement – Outreach to youth, birth families and caregivers and inclusion of their voice in trainings, policy and practice development, and other forums build partnership and provide an important perspective to include in the design, implementation and evaluation of transitional youth services.

These systems change strategies cut across each of the seven CC25I focus areas and are important in achieving CC25I goals. Strong systems change strategies that are fully integrated into the county's ongoing CC25I work are likely to have a marked and sustainable impact on transitional youth outcomes among former foster care youth.

A Systems Change Assessment team, housed at UC Berkeley's Center for Child and Youth Policy is working with the CC25I Project Manager, county child welfare staff and community participants in each CC25I county to identify, gather, and synthesize data and information related to the system changes taking place. A series of reports will link systems changes to CC25I accomplishments in each of the seven focus areas, as discussed briefly in the concluding section of this report. CC25I best practices will be highlighted in a final report that can serve as a guide to localities attempting to implement similar initiatives in the future.

V. Profile of Early Implementing CC25I Counties

The five early implementing CC25I counties vary considerably in their geographic, demographic and child welfare statistical profiles. After an overview of key economic and demographic characteristics in each CC25I county, this section explains how the local Independent Living Skills Programs are structured, and presents an early overview of some of the focus areas the counties are emphasizing in their CC25I work.

Counties at a Glance

Figure 2 presents a demographic profile of the five CC25I counties. Santa Clara, San Francisco and Alameda are urban counties located in the densely populated San Francisco Bay area. Fresno and Stanislaus are rural counties located in central California where agriculture plays a more dominant role in revenue generation and employment. In the two most populous counties – Alameda and Santa Clara – youth aged 16 to 24 years comprise roughly 12% of the population. Young people in this age range make up a slightly larger share of the population in Fresno and Stanislaus and a smaller share in San Francisco.

Figure 2: General Demographics by CC25I County

	Alameda	Fresno	San Francisco	Santa Clara	Stanislaus
Size (population in 2000) ¹⁸	1,466,900	816,400	787,500	1,709,500	454,600
% of State Population	4.3%	2.4%	2.3%	5.0%	1.3%
Land Area (acres) ¹⁶	472,060	3,816,130	29,890	826,050	956,030
Industry Revenue: (in millions) ¹⁶					
Agriculture (2000)	\$32	\$3,419	\$2	\$301	\$1,197
Manufacturing (1997)	\$10,363	\$2,348	\$1,998	\$44,011	\$3,081
Youth 16-24 (% of population) ¹⁶	12%	15%	10%	12%	13%
Ethnicity ¹⁹					
White	39%	37%	45%	43%	52%
Black	13%	5%	7%	3%	2%
Asian/Pacific	23%	9%	32%	27%	5%
Hispanic	21%	47%	14%	25%	38%
Other or Multiple Races	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Language Spoken at Home ²⁰					
English Only	64%	59%	55%	55%	69%
Spanish	14%	32%	12%	18%	24%
Indo-European	6%	3%	7%	7%	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	6%	26%	20%	3%

All five counties are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity and primary language spoken at home. Fresno and Stanislaus have populations with the highest percentage of Hispanics and those who speak Spanish at home. In Santa Clara, San Francisco and Alameda Counties, Asian/Pacific Islander residents make up a larger share of the population than Hispanics, and they represent a broad array of ethnic origins and languages that these general statistics cannot adequately describe.

¹⁸ California Department of Finance, County Profiles http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/FS_DATA/profiles/pf_home.asp, accessed June 1, 2006.

¹⁹ State of California, Department of Finance, *California County Race/Ethnic Population Estimates and Components of Change by Year, July 1, 2000–2004*. Sacramento, California, March 2006. http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/ReportsPapers/Estimates/E3/E3-00-04/E-3_2000-04.asp

²⁰ U.S Census, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics, 2000.

Figure 3 provides a sense of how large the CC25I target population is in each of the participating counties. Looking first at the in-care population of youth supervised by both the Child Welfare and Probation agencies, Alameda serves approximately 1,400 youth between the ages of 14 and emancipation at any given time; Fresno 900 youth; San Francisco 850 youth; Santa Clara 800 youth; and Stanislaus 250 youth.

Figure 3: Child Welfare Transition Age Youth Statistical Profile by CC25I County

	Alameda	Fresno	San Francisco	Santa Clara	Stanislaus
Child Welfare Caseload (1/1/2007 point-in-time) ²¹					
Ages 14-15	443	355	298	312	98
Ages 16-20	649	409	479	363	96
Probation Caseload (1/1/2007 point-in-time) ²⁰					
Ages 14-15	62	50	9	25	14
Ages 16-20	261	98	72	109	40
Number of Youth Who Exited to Emancipation From Child Welfare Supervised Placements (of 5+ days) ²²					
Between 1/1/2000 and 12/31/2002	527	425	352	372	88
Between 1/1/2003 and 12/31/2005	830	418	396	362	108

The number of transition-aged youth targeted by CC25I in each county is actually much higher when one includes the hundreds of emancipated youth 18 to 21 who are eligible for aftercare services as well as emancipated youth ages 21 through 24, many of whom would benefit from continued transitional assistance and support. Point in time estimates of youth already emancipated from the system or other youth aged 18 to 24 who are eligible for aftercare services are not available from the CWS/CMS database, the original source of Figure 3 data, but we can get a rough measure of this population by looking at the number of youth who emancipated in previous years. For example, in San Francisco County there would be at least 396 emancipated youth (approximately ages 18 to 21) still eligible for aftercare services, and an additional 352 emancipated youth (approximately ages 21 to 24) possibly in need of continuing transitional support, in addition to the in-care population (ages 14 to emancipation) being served by the County in 2006 and 2007. Since the exit to emancipation figures in Figure 3 are for child welfare supervised cases only, the aftercare service population is actually larger when you include cases supervised by local probation departments.²³

Figure 3 shows that in addition to Child Welfare and Probation Supervised in-care youth in the 14 to emancipation age range (the first four rows of the table), CC25I efforts could be serving at least an additional 1,357 previously emancipated young adults (from child welfare supervised placements) in Alameda County, 843

²¹ Point-in-time estimates on January 1, 2007. Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Smith, J., Dunn, A., Frerer, K., Putnam Hornstein, E., Ataie, Y., Atkinson, L., & Lee, S.H. (2007). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved June 18, 2007, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/betaSystem>>

²² Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Smith, J., Dunn, A., Frerer, K., Putnam Hornstein, E., & Ataie, Y. (2006). *Child Welfare Services Reports for California*. Retrieved [July 16, 2007], from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/>>

²³ Exit data was not available for probation-supervised cases at the time the CSSR website was accessed.

in Fresno County, 748 in San Francisco County, 734 in Santa Clara County and 196 in Stanislaus County (fifth and sixth rows of the table).

Not all in-care youth supervised by the child welfare agency can find placements within their county of origin, and counties often provide homes for youth from other counties (**Figure 4**). Fresno and Stanislaus place within county the vast majority of their child welfare supervised youth under their jurisdiction – 86% and 81% respectively in 2006 – whereas Santa Clara places 68% in county, Alameda 58%, and San Francisco 50%. While all five counties serve some youth under the jurisdiction of other counties, nearly half of all youth placed in Stanislaus County are the responsibility of other counties of origin. County jurisdiction and placement are relevant factors when youth are in need of services from the local ILSP. The county of placement is responsible for delivering ILSP services and the county of jurisdiction is responsible for reimbursing the cost of these services. Because youth are served in this way by multiple counties, data reports to the state, such as the SOC 405, often include duplicative counts of the same youth.

Figure 4: Transition Age Youth Placement and ILSP Profile by CC25I County

	Alameda	Fresno	San Francisco	Santa Clara	Stanislaus
In and Out of County Placement – Child Welfare Supervised Youth 16 to 20 (1/1/2006 point-in-time) ²⁴					
% of youth placed in their county of origin	58%	86%	50%	68%	81%
% of youth served in county from other county of origin	21%	19%	9%	15%	49%
Reported Independent Living Skills Program Service Statistics (October 2005 - September 2006) ²⁵					
Youth offered services	1,780	2,132	1,775	583	352
% of youth offered services that received them	79%	100%	100%	80%	66%
Youth (aged 18-20) who received services, not in care	578	372	264	187	82

While foster care youth are state-eligible for services from their local ILSP if in care at age 16 or older, some counties have developed ILSP components that engage youth as early as age 14. In Alameda County, referrals can be made for youth age 15 ½ and older; Fresno and San Francisco Counties at age 14; and Santa Clara and Stanislaus Counties at age 16. **Figure 4** reflects the ILSP service utilization numbers reported by each county for the 2005-2006 program year. Though the counties report varying take up rates of ILSP services – ranging from 66% to 100% – cross-county comparisons should be avoided given the inconsistent data tracking systems employed by ILSPs and utilized for state reporting. The counties also provide an estimate of the number of young adults (age 18 to 20) who are receiving aftercare services from the local ILSP. As would be expected given the exits to emancipation numbers listed above, Fresno and Alameda Counties serve the largest number of youth in this age range.

²⁴ Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Shaw, T., Dawson, W., Piccus, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Smith, J., Dunn, A., Frerer, K., Putnam Hornstein, E., Ataie, Y., Atkinson, L., & Lee, S.H. (2007). Child Welfare Services Reports for California. Retrieved June 19, 2007, from University of California at Berkeley Center for Social Services Research website. URL: <http://cssr.berkeley.edu/CWSCMSreports/>.

²⁵ California Department of Social Services SOC 405 reports online at http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research/SOC405A-In_415.htm.

Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) Structure

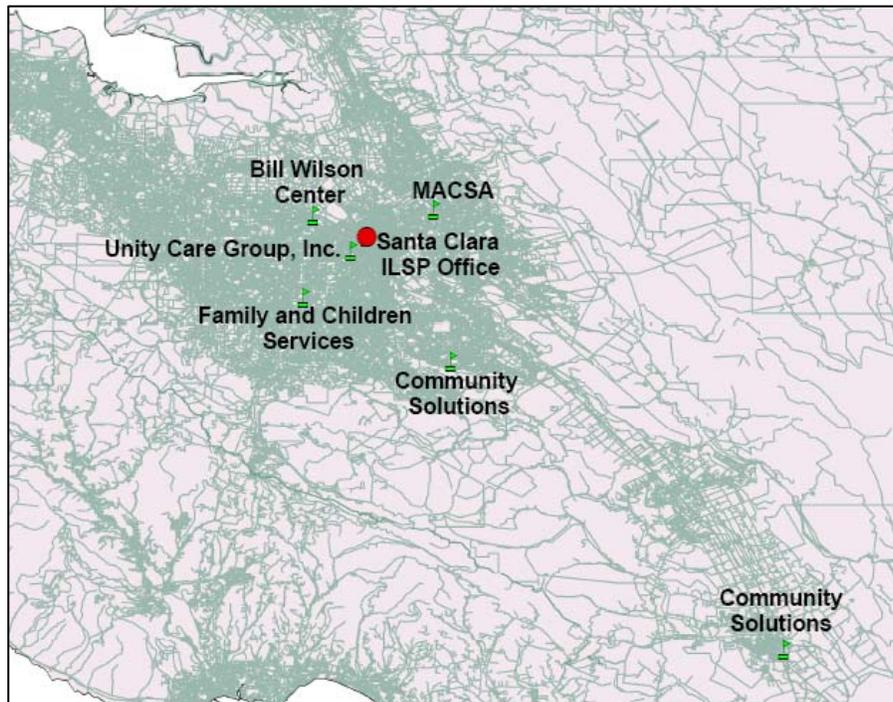
In most counties key providers of services for transitioning foster care youth in California are the Independent Living Skills Programs (ILSPs) established by county child welfare systems as well as through State contract with the Foundation for California Community Colleges. ILSPs receive limited funding to provide support services for transition-age foster care youth and therefore county work to move CC25I forward generally involves close collaboration with their ILSPs. Within the guidelines of state-mandated core ILSP services, counties have flexibility in designing their ILSP programs. Therefore the counties vary considerably in terms of how their ILSPs are structured and the degree to which their activities are integrated with efforts of the larger child welfare and probation systems and other community service providers. In many counties, the ILSPs draw heavily on resources and programs provided by a wide range of local nonprofit agencies. In both Fresno and Stanislaus Counties, ILSP services are provided in-house, are co-located with their child welfare agencies and include an array of life skills, educational assistance, employment training/placement, housing and other support services. The Foundation for California Community Colleges is also active in both Fresno and Stanislaus Counties by contributing to the provision of life skills, educational assistance, and college/employment services and supports.

In both San Francisco and Alameda Counties, ILSP services are provided by contracted service providers that share an ILSP office located separately from the child welfare agency. In San Francisco County, the ILSP site is directly supervised and its programs coordinated by contracted employees, and programs are provided through two primary contract service providers. The Foundation for California Community Colleges provides the core life skills programs, vocational training, computer/educational programs, mentoring, case management and referrals. The Japanese Community Youth Council provides Early ILSP services (for youth ages 14 to 15) as well as transitional and aftercare services. The Alameda County ILSP offers services from two sites, one in Oakland and another further south in the County at Chabot College. The Alameda ILSP sites are directly supervised by a county employee and services are provided both by the ILSP staff (general independent living skills, educational programs and referrals) and by other youth-serving agencies: Pivotal Point Youth Services (vocational/job assistance and training); Beyond Emancipation (aftercare services); First Place for Youth (housing) and Project Independence (housing). In addition, some child welfare staff also operates from the main Alameda ILSP location providing transition planning and case management.

Santa Clara County utilizes five contracted community service organizations to provide the same broad array of ILSP services to eligible youth and these programs operate from their own agency sites throughout the county. The efforts of these agencies – the Bill Wilson Center, Family & Children Services, the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA), Community Solutions (operating from two sites) and the Unity Care Group – are coordinated and supervised by county employees located at the Santa Clara child welfare agency.

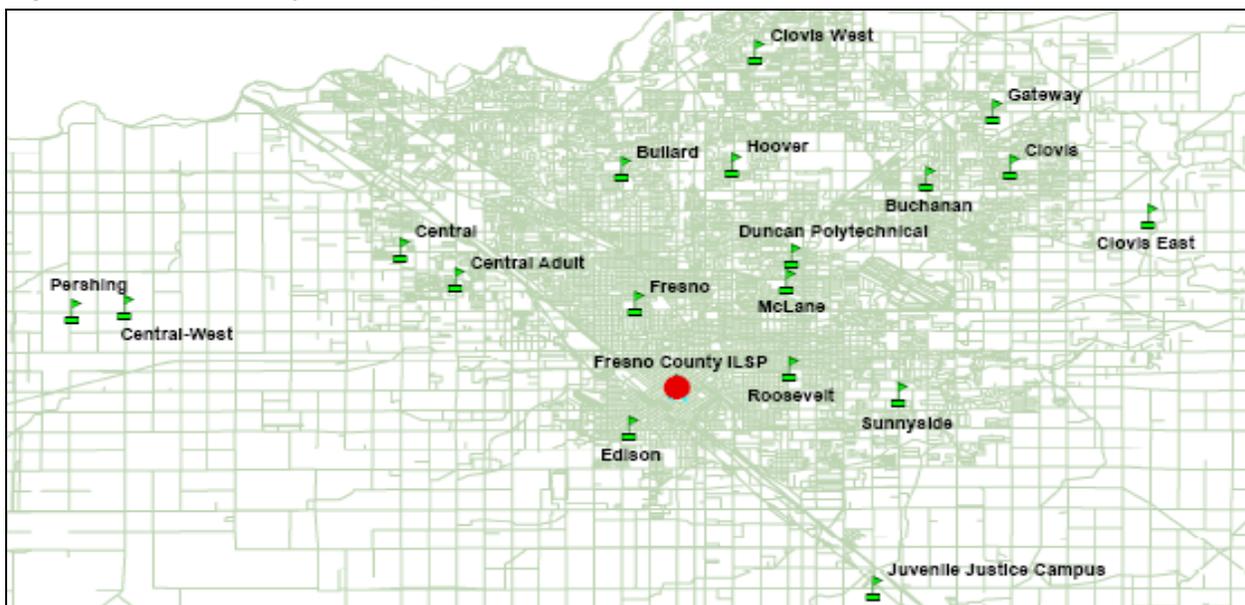
In more geographically dispersed counties, centralized ILSP sites can result in limited access to services among eligible youth living in outlying areas. One advantage to using multiple service providers in the case of Santa Clara County (Figure 5) is that access to ILSP services is increased, especially among youth in the southernmost part of the county. The community agencies contracted to provide ILSP services are located in the most densely populated areas of Santa Clara County.

Figure 5: Santa Clara County Contracted ILSP Service Sites



In Fresno County, innovative use of ILSP staff members accomplishes the same goal by bringing services directly to the high school campuses in the three school districts with the largest concentrations of transition-age foster youth (Figure 6). Currently five ILSP social workers visit eighteen high school campuses and the new Juvenile Justice Campus to provide case management and ILSP services to approximately 700 youth.

Figure 6: Fresno County ILSP Campus Site Visits



County Priorities for CC25I

While each county participating in CC25I must demonstrate how they are creating or further expanding a continuum of support for transitioning foster care youth across all seven focus areas (K-12 Education; Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education; Financial Competency and Asset Development; Housing; Independent Living Skills Programs; Personal/Social Asset Development; and Permanency), they have flexibility in directing their CC25I grants to most effectively leverage other funding and/or to build program areas where local needs assessment has identified the greatest need. This section briefly reviews some of the priority program/service areas each county is addressing through the Initiative.

Stanislaus County – Through local systems analysis with a broad group of community partners, the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency (CSA) identified the following focus areas as being key in their CC25I work: K-12 Education; Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education; Housing; and Financial Competency and Asset Development. Program development is focusing on expanding educational advocacy and tutoring services at the secondary educational level, to set youth on a course to high school graduation and post-secondary success, and developing a lifelong connections model of THP-Plus to promote permanency and build a continuum of housing options for transitioning foster youth. CSA and community partners also committed to building a “bridge” program and other opportunities for transitioning youth in post-secondary education, employment, training and career exploration. Finally, CSA and local community organizations and banking partners are eager to implement strategies to provide financial literacy programming and other sources of support that emancipated youth need to actively accrue personal assets.

San Francisco County – The San Francisco Human Services Agency (HSA) has been involved in strategic planning for several years to identify service gaps and expand the continuum of supports for emancipating foster care youth, with the County’s ILSP and its programming at the core of these efforts. Top priority in San Francisco County was given to expanding the array of employment and training opportunities for youth in high wage sectors and increasing communication and coordination among local service providers, including the integration of transitioning foster care youth into the current One-Stop System. Focus groups were also held with various stakeholders, including youth, to gauge opinions on how CC25I dollars could best be utilized. Youth participants from the Juvenile Probation Department, ILSP and the Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) youth advisory board identified assistance with finding and keeping jobs, accumulating and accessing assets, transportation to services (especially for youth placed out-of-county) better coordination between San Francisco ILSP and other ILSPs in the Bay area, and improved oversight of group homes and youth by assigned social workers. HSA staff also emphasized the need for on-going trainings on services available to transitioning youth, readiness assessments of youth so support service referrals could be improved, guidance in serving youth placed out-of-county and expanded employment and training opportunities for youth. The county will pursue these objectives through collaboration with the workforce development division of HSA and San Francisco ILSP.

Fresno County – Together with public and private local services providers, Fresno County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and ILSP conducted a community needs assessment over several weeks to identify gaps in service provision to transitional youth. Stakeholders, including former foster youth and foster

parents, identified post-secondary education/employment/job training, housing and ILSP services as the highest priority program areas in need of improvement and expansion. In the area of post-secondary education, employment and job training, Fresno County is pursuing a variety of “bridge” type programs to facilitate the pathway from high school to work and higher education, and developing other post-high-school support services to promote retention and success. To expand local housing capacity for emancipated youth, Fresno County DCFS has applied for THP-Plus state funding to support host-family and scattered site housing models in the coming years. As the central provider of support services for transitioning foster care youth, the Fresno County ILSP is working to expand its outreach, ensure services are culturally appropriate for all segments of the target population and increase the ability of youth and foster parents to access programs. The use of social workers to bring ILSP services directly to school campuses, as discussed above, is an important part of this effort.

Santa Clara County – After a review of the existing gaps in services for emancipating and emancipated youth, the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services (DFCS) highlighted two particular program areas for improvement through their CC25I efforts. First, DFCS felt there was a lack of employment and training programs that link youth to high wage careers. This gap would be addressed by increasing coordination and partnerships between DFCS and local employment/training service providers as well as by linking transitioning foster care youth more effectively to existing One-Stop Centers in the County. Second, an inadequate supply of transitional housing would be addressed by accessing THP-Plus dollars to implement a local host-family model and by working with San Jose State University to utilize dormitory rooms as another housing option for emancipated youth participating in college/career training. Integrating CC25I with their existing F2F efforts, DFCS adapted existing workgroups and created new ones (eight in total) charged with implementing strategies in each of the seven CC25I focus areas. Each workgroup is co-chaired by an agency staff member and a community partner. The County is also working to better coordinate the efforts of the five community agencies contracted to provide independent living skills programs and integrate them within the larger work of DFCS.

Alameda County – Prior to joining CC25I, the Alameda County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) participated in “Forging the Links,” an effort spearheaded by Casey Family Programs to conduct a community-collaborative gap analysis of the services available to transitioning foster care youth. While implementation of that effort’s resulting recommendations is currently under way, the most pressing area for improvement in services for transitioning youth identified by the Alameda County CC25I proposal was the aftercare component of the local Independent Living Skills Program. A nonprofit organization – Beyond Emancipation (formerly the ILSP Auxiliary) – was established in 1995 to raise funds and provide programming to support youth already out of the foster care system as they transitioned to independent living. With the largest number of youth emancipating annually among the five CC25I counties, the County perceived a clear need to bolster Beyond Emancipation’s capacity to case manage former foster care youth and develop an easy to access continuum of care for these youth as they seek support with housing, post-secondary education, and employment. These efforts are building on existing collaboration between Alameda County DCFS and local service providers to strengthen community networking and develop strategies for working together to link transitioning youth to the services they need.

VI. Environmental Landscape

County efforts to implement CC25I benefit greatly from an abundance of child welfare agency reform, legislative action and philanthropic investment taking place on the federal, state and local levels. Particularly in California, the current landscape against which transitional foster youth programs are taking shape is one of dynamic change and expanding resources. It is important to acknowledge this environmental landscape as CC25I builds on existing efforts by counties and communities to improve child welfare systems and services for transitional youth, and strengthens participating counties' ability to enhance and integrate funding, program initiatives and local/state collaborations that exist outside of CC25I. This section provides a brief overview of some of the other work being done in the area of child welfare programs and transitional foster care youth services.

Child Welfare Systems Reform & Accountability Efforts

Since at least 2000, a variety of public and private initiatives have aimed to improve child welfare systems and transitional youth outcomes, many with overlapping objectives and strategies. As mentioned previously, CC25I is an additional strategy of the California Family to Family (F2F) Initiative, a public-private partnership between national and state foundations²⁶ and the State of California Department of Social Services. F2F assists child welfare agencies in 25 California counties (and 17 other states) to achieve better outcomes for children and families through its four core strategies²⁷:

- Recruitment, Development and Support of Resource Families (Foster and Relative) - Finding and maintaining local resources to support children and families in their own neighborhoods by recruiting, developing through training and other efforts and supporting foster parents and relative caregivers;
- Building Community Partnerships - Partnering with a wide range of community organizations beyond public and private agencies, in neighborhoods which are the source of high referral rates, to work together toward creating an environment that supports families involved in the child welfare system and thereby helps to build stronger neighborhoods and stronger families;
- Family Team Decision-Making - Involving not just foster parents and caseworkers, but also birth families and community members in all placement decisions to ensure better informed decisions are made and that a network of support is developed for the child and the adults who care for them; and
- Self-Evaluation - Using hard data linked to child and family outcomes to drive decision-making, and to show where change is needed and where progress has been made.

Among CC25I counties, Santa Clara has been a part of F2F since 2000, San Francisco and Stanislaus since 2001, and Alameda and Fresno since 2003.

California counties were joining F2F at a time when the State itself entered a period of child welfare agency redesign. Growing concerns about the functioning and outcomes performance of the State's child welfare agencies prompted the California legislature to establish the Child Welfare Services (CWS) Stakeholders Group in 2000. The CWS Stakeholders Group was charged by Governor Davis to review and suggest strategies to improve agency performance, and what resulted was a conceptual framework for CWS redesign. Assembly Bill

²⁶ Foundations include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Stuart Foundation and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation.

²⁷ For the source of this text and more information on F2F, please see: <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/>.

636 (AB 636), the Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act, was passed by the California Legislature in 2001 and established a system for ongoing review of CWS performance in California.²⁸ The overall goal of outcomes monitoring in all 58 counties was to ensure California would be prepared for the Federal Child and Family Services Review that took place in 2002 and is next scheduled for 2007. The goal of AB 636 is to improve youth outcomes by:

- Creating data systems to track and measure outcomes and county performance;
- Encouraging coordination and shared responsibility for youth outcomes among stakeholders;
- Requiring specific Self-Improvement Plans (SIPs);
- Requiring counties to share results publicly; and
- Identifying and replicating best practices.

The resulting CWS Outcomes and Accountability System was implemented in January 2004 and provides ongoing review of all 58 counties' SIPs and performance on outcomes including:

- Rates of abuse, neglect and foster care placements/reentries;
- Maintenance of youth in their homes whenever possible and appropriate;
- Permanence (preservation of family/community connections) and stability (number of placements and length of time till reunification/adoption);
- Enhanced capacity of families to provide for their children's needs;
- Development of appropriate services to meet physical and mental health needs;
- Improved educational supports and outcomes; and
- Self-sufficiency among emancipating youth.

Quarterly Outcome and Accountability County Data Reports are used by counties for continuous self-evaluation of performance on these indicators as well as to update their SIP strategies and goals. Monitored outcomes consist not only of those included in the Federal Child and Family Services Review but also additional performance indicators of interest to the State.

The CWS Stakeholders Group established a work plan, outcome indicators, compliance thresholds for each indicator, timelines for implementation, review cycles, procedures, and funding and staffing requirements. The CWS Stakeholders Group's final report proposed a Redesign Plan and in 2003 strategic planning began for a multi-year, eleven-county pilot project.²⁹ Redesign counties would receive funding and technical assistance to implement systems improvements focused on the three key areas of standardized safety assessment, differential response, and permanency and youth transitions. Stanislaus is the only CC25I County among the eleven pilot sites, all of which were actively engaged in system improvement efforts by July 2005.

²⁸ Needell, B. & Patterson, K. (2004). The Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act (AB 636): Improving Results for Children and Youth in California.

²⁹ Child Welfare Services System Improvements Eleven County Pilot Implementation Evaluation: Initial Assessment Phase, July 2003 to June 2006. Child and Family Policy Institute of California for the California Department of Social Services, Children and Family Services Division.

In addition, the County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA)³⁰ has created various committees and workgroups over the years to identify and analyze program issues, develop program and policy recommendations, and work with state agencies to develop and implement program services. There is a CWDA subcommittee which focuses on issues related to the Independent Living Skills Programs operating in California and a CWDA workgroup that has been developing an improved Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP), the document used by child welfare agencies to document individualized transition services and activities in which a youth nearing emancipation will engage. The streamlined TILP document created by the CWDA TILP Workgroup will support youth and caregiver engagement in transition planning and services and allow integration of the plan within the child's CWS or Probation case plan. A separate data collection process, at the point of each youth's emancipation, has been developed in order to collect and aggregate data regarding youth outcomes within each county and across counties for reporting and analysis purposes.

In addition to these efforts at improving child welfare systems and outcomes performance which were already a part of the pre-CC25I environmental landscape, other initiatives have evolved simultaneously with CC25I, allowing for more direct collaboration and alignment of strategies and objectives among the various projects (including CC25I) aiming to enhance services and supports for transition-age foster care youth. In 2006, California was one of six states chosen to participate in a National Governor's Association (NGA) Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning out of Foster Care. The Academy, which runs from June 2006 through December 2007, is providing a unique opportunity for teams of state leaders to work with state and national experts to help improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. California's NGA team, under the leadership of California Department of Social Services' Deputy Director Mary Ault, brings together a broad representation of state leadership, community partners and advocacy organizations including Employment Development, California Workforce Investment Board, Education/Foster Youth Services, Mental Health, Community Colleges, County Welfare Director's Association, Child and Family Policy Institute of California, California Youth Connection, Casey Family Programs, California Permanency for Youth Project, New Ways to Work, California Connected by 25, CASA, First 5, and others. Through an inclusive inter-disciplinary process focused on addressing the challenges faced by transition aged foster youth, the California NGA Policy Academy team is assessing current efforts in our state, making recommendations, and implementing strategic change to systematically address key challenges and improve transition outcomes.

In 2006, Policy Academy participants attended two convenings to learn from national experts on the issue, share best practice models, and develop and refine state strategic plans. Building on existing strengths, state teams worked to identify gaps in the provision of transitional services, clarify desired outcomes, develop strategies for achieving those outcomes, and establish action steps and timelines. Through these NGA efforts the California team identified three fundamental goals for all transitioning foster youth:

Permanence – Every youth has lifelong connections with family and supportive adults;

³⁰ The County Welfare Directors Association of California (CWDA) is a non profit association representing the human service directors from each of California's 58 counties. For more info see: <http://www.cwda.org/>.

Education – Every youth receives a quality education, high school diploma, and support in pursuing postsecondary opportunities; and

Employment – Every youth has work experience and training opportunities that prepare them for and place them in living wage employment and careers.

In addition, a new vision for California's Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) has been emerging from California's NGA work. The vision for California's ILSP Redesign is to move from a largely referral and classroom-based program to a performance-based cross-system service delivery continuum able to meet the individual needs of each youth and achieve the three fundamental goals listed above. In the re-designed ILSP, transition support and opportunities are no longer based on a personal choice by youth to participate, but rather shift to a system responsibility to provide transition services integrated into day-to-day case management, care-giving, education, and other community-based activities, services, and supports for every foster youth. As a member of the California state team, the CC25I Project Manager contributes the lessons learned and best practices occurring in CC25I counties to this state effort to improve the continuum of supports needed by youth transitioning out of the foster care system.

Also in 2006, the long awaited draft guidelines for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) were released.³¹ The database will fulfill the mandated data collection requirements of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-169) and is to be administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. For the first time, states will be required to track outcomes and services for both youth receiving ILSP services, as well as random samples of emancipated/former foster care youth (through the age of 21) regardless of whether they received ILSP services or not. Final rules for the NYTD are anticipated in 2007, with implementation of the database approximately a year later. Data will not be available until approximately 2009 or later. The youth outcomes for which states must provide data to NYTD have been incorporated into the CC25I outcomes being tracked through each county's ETO database, facilitating CC25I counties' data collection and self-evaluation regarding these Federal measures.

It is important to note that as the State and counties have worked over the years to improve and expand services and programs, they have struggled continuously with the issues of staff workload and agency funding levels. In 1998, SB 2030 directed the California Department of Social Services to commission the Child Welfare Workload Study to examine the workload standards of child welfare staff and how workload was impacting the agencies' ability to meet federal and state mandates in serving families involved with the system.³² The study confirmed that workload levels were roughly double those recommended to achieve a minimal improvement and even further from the optimal levels necessary to implement best practices. Efforts since that time to implement

³¹ Memorandum: Notice of Proposed Rule Making To Implement the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act Database. Congressional Research Service, August 28, 2006.

³² Memorandum from Frank Mecca, CWDA Executive Director to Senata Budget Subcommittee Chairwoman Denise Ducheny, Regarding: "Child Welfare Workload Standards and Funding Analysis (SB 2030) – Concerns", dated April 6, 2005.

workload standards and achieve even the study's recommended minimal level of workload reduction have been hindered by continuing budget constraints, despite augmentation funding to partially alleviate workload burdens.

Efforts to improve services for transitional youth are also greatly impacted by the amount of federal and state funding available for such services. Reports repeatedly point to decreasing public funding for ILSPs, despite a near doubling of the youth population served.³³ The California CWDA indicates that while the number of youth served has increased from 19,487 in fiscal year 2000-2001 to 34,618 in 2006-2007, funding for the Independent Living Skills Program and Extended Independent Living Program in California has decreased from \$41.2 million (2000-2001) to \$38.6 million (2006-2007).³⁴ These issues will continue to be a challenge impacting all efforts to improve child welfare and ILSP programs and outcomes described in this section, particularly when reform mandates and initiatives are not accompanied by new funding to support necessary staff and workload increase.

California Legislative Landscape

Policymakers and youth advocacy organizations in California have been extremely busy over the past decade passing legislation and expanding resources in support of efforts to improve the child welfare system and outcomes of current and former foster care youth. Though too numerous to discuss in their entirety, this section reviews a few of the most important legislative acts - focused on both systems improvement and service provision - that are assisting counties throughout California to improve outcomes among transitional or emancipated foster care youth. The dynamic legislative landscape in California also facilitates outreach efforts to raise awareness of the needs of foster care youth and increase community support for expanded programs and supports that respond to those needs.

Figure 7 demonstrates that the majority of legislation related to child welfare pertains to foster care youth in general, not just transitional age youth. Some state bills, like AB 636 discussed above, work to improve systems, strengthen programmatic and legal infrastructure and advance increased accountability. Others focus on supporting kinship caregiving, maintaining sibling and family relationships, and facilitating whole family placements for foster care teens who are themselves parents. But legislation has also addressed many of the CC25I focus areas.

In the area of K-12 education, AB 490 (and updates in AB 1261) promotes school stability, improved academic supports, and expedited enrollment and academic records transfer through interagency collaboration. AB 490 also mandates the designation of a foster youth education liaison in each county. AB 2463 requires California state universities and community colleges to improve programs to recruit, support and retain foster care youth in post-secondary education. Most California counties also apply for and receive state funding for Foster Youth Services (FYS) programs operated by local offices of education. FYS, created by the California Legislature and most recently expanded by AB 1808 in 2006, provides academic supports to improve K-12 educational outcomes of foster care youth residing in a licensed foster home or county-operated juvenile detention facility.

³³ Two examples are the document "*Supporting California Foster Youth Transitions: Background Information*," developed by the California Department of Social Services, the County Welfare Directors Association of California and private philanthropy and an Op-Ed piece "Helping foster youth make the transition to adulthood" by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 12, 2006.

³⁴ "History of Independent Living Program Funding" provided by the County Welfare Directors Association of California (<http://www.cwda.org/>).

Figure 7: Timeline for California Foster Care Legislation
Initiatives with an impact on emancipating foster youth in bold.

V0.3, Updated 3/1/07

	1980's and 1990's	2000-2001	2002-2003	2004-2006
Program/Legal Infrastructure	SB 14 ('82): Public, Statewide Child Welfare System SB370 ('89): FC Group Home Rate Structure AB948 ('91): County Share of Cost AB1741 ('93): Blending, Children's Service Funds pilot SB2030 ('98): Evaluation of workload SB 163 ('98): Wrap-Around pilot SB933 ('98): Ombudsman	AB899: Foster Youth Rights (Legal Consolidation) SB 940: Termination of Parental Rights AB333: Confidential Discussions	AB458: Fair & Equal Treatment AB1413: Delayed Birth Registration	SB1612: Matching Federal Funds SB 1641: Community Care Licensing Foster Care Regulations AB 2195: Relative Assessment When Placement Changes Occur AB 2480: Appellate Lawyers for Foster Children/Invoking Privilege AB1979: Criminal Record Check Fee Waiver for Foster Youth Mentors AB 2985: Foster Youth Identity Theft AB129: Dual Status Children
Systems Improvements		AB1740 ('00): Stakeholders AB636: Improvements/Account. Act	AB2294 ('02): Ombudsperson Term of Appointment	AB1633: Social Security Assistance AB 2216: California Child Welfare Council
Family & Sibling Connections	SB243 ('87): Preservation AB3364 ('94): Preservation/ Family Support AB2196 ('97): Post Adoption Contact w/ Siblings AB2773 ('98): Federal Adoption & Safe Families Act	AB1987 ('00): Sibling Relationship AB705: Sibling Placement	AB579: Dependent Children Notice to Siblings	SB1178: Teen Parents in Foster Care AB519: Parental Rights SB 500: Pregnant/Parenting Foster Youth (Whole Family Placements) AB 2488: Sibling Contact
Kinship	AB1193 ('97): Kinship Support Services AB1544 ('97): Concurrent Planning SB1901 ('98): Kin-GAP payments	AB1695: Clarification of Evaluation of Foster Care Providers		SB 1667: Foster and Kinship Caregiver Input for Juvenile Court Hearings
Quality of Life & Permanency	AB2691 ('92) Driver's Licenses	AB1261: Increase Savings Limits	AB408: Prudent Parent & Check – Important People SB591: Caregiver & Permanency AB1979 ('02): Improve ILP	AB1412: Permanency for all (expansion of AB408) SB 218: Termination of parental rights
Housing	AB1198 ('93): THPP	AB427: THPP/STEP AB 1119: THPP aid after 19		AB824: THP+ Eligibility extended to 24 SB436: Pregnant & Parenting Foster Youth Housing
Health		AB2877 ('00): Extension of Medi-Cal Benefits to Age 21		
Education	AB2463 ('96) Postsecondary Education Assistance and Outreach		AB490: Improve Foster Youth Education AB474: Invite Group Home to Individ. Educ. Program Meetings.	AB1858: Group Home Non-Public School Standards & Oversight AB1261: Improve FY Education Outcomes (revisions to AB490) SB1639: Education WORKS! AB 1808: Provision to increase youth eligible for Foster Youth Services

This table cites information from New Ways to Work YTAT California Foster Care Legislation Highlights, and California Youth Connections legislative summaries.

Legislation related to housing (AB 1198, AB 427, AB 1119, and AB 824) created the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP/THP-Plus) and expanded it over time to fund counties' efforts to house teens and young adults (now through age 24) transitioning from foster care to independent living. Prior to CC25I, only Alameda and San Francisco Counties were accessing THP-Plus for after care housing options. CC25I provided technical assistance which enabled Fresno, Santa Clara and Stanislaus to also submit proposals to the California Department of Social Services to begin accessing THP-Plus funding, and when the county match requirement was dropped in 2006 these counties began to plan expansion of their programs to serve more youth. Achieving permanency for children placed in foster care was advanced through bills such as SB 591, AB 408 and AB 1412 which direct counties to keep youth central in the permanency process and identify/support legal and permanent relationships with individuals important to them.

It should be noted that California Youth Connection (CYC), an advocacy group that is guided, focused and driven by current and former foster youth, has played a critical role in developing and getting passed several state bills that impact supports for foster youth. Just a few of the bills in which CYC played an instrumental role are: AB 1858 (education from group home non-public schools, 2004), AB 899 (foster youth rights, 2001), AB 2877 (extension of Medi-Cal eligibility for former foster youth through age 21, 2000), SB 933 (establishment of the state foster care Ombudsman), and AB 1987 (maintenance of sibling relationships, 2000).³⁵

Private Foundation Initiatives

Participating counties are working to integrate their CC25I work not only with existing child welfare reform efforts and legislative directives, but also with other privately funded initiatives developed prior to or during the life of the CC25 Initiative. Some of the initiatives that are central to CC25I strategies are briefly outlined here, and will be covered in greater detail in future reports on each of the CC25I focus areas.

California Permanency for Youth Project (CPYP) – (www.cyp.org) Initiated by Pat Reynolds Harris in partnership with the Public Health Institute in January 2003, and with the support of a five year grant from the Stuart Foundation, CPYP works to assure that no child leaves the California child welfare system without a permanent, lifelong connection to a caring adult. Now extended through 2009 with the support of additional funders such as the Walter S. Johnson and Zellerbach Family Foundations, CPYP is involved in ongoing efforts including the Permanency for Youth Taskforce; Technical Assistance for California counties; the Emancipated Youth Connections Project; and various trainings and national convenings. Four of five CC25I counties – Alameda, Fresno, San Francisco and Stanislaus – are utilizing CPYP technical assistance which begins with the development of a permanency plan to guide the creation and implementation of permanency practices within their child welfare systems. Participating counties receive ongoing technical assistance sessions to assist them in overcoming challenges in piloting the work and then bringing the practices to scale. Alameda and Stanislaus were two of the four pioneer CPYP counties and were finishing their CPYP plans when they joined CC25I. Fresno and San Francisco were beginning implementation of their CPYP work plans at the time they joined CC25I.

³⁵ California Youth Connection Website, <http://www.calyouthconn.org>.

California Gateway Project (www.careerladdersproject.epcservices.com/projects/gateway.php) – Four of five CC25I counties (Alameda, Fresno, Santa Clara and Stanislaus) are participating in the California Gateway Project. Sponsored by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Gateway is a project of the Career Ladders Project which works closely with California community colleges to improve post-secondary career pathway access and completion for underserved populations. Gateway brings local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) into collaborations with colleges and social welfare agencies to connect disadvantaged youth, including transitioning foster care youth, to post-secondary education and careers in high wage, high growth sectors. County WIBs apply for and receive grant support from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and the Career Ladders Project provides the necessary technical assistance to plan and implement local Gateway programs. Initial Gateway projects last two to three years and local WIBs agree to match the Walter S. Johnson grant by funding an equal number of student cohorts as covered by the grant in each county. Alameda County was already a Gateway participant when they joined CC25I and the remaining counties were encouraged to apply for Gateway grants after becoming part of CC25I.

Guardian Scholars (www.orangewoodfoundation.org/programs_scholars.asp) – The Guardian Scholars program was initially launched at California State University at Fullerton in 1998, funded by the Orangewood Children's Foundation. Since then programs have emerged on over twenty college campuses in California and nationwide. Guardian Scholars is a comprehensive program of financial aid, life coaching, mentoring, housing and personalized attention which facilitates the engagement in and completion of a college education among former foster youth. The Walter S. Johnson and Stuart Foundations have both provided numerous planning and implementation grants for new Guardian Scholars programs for CC25I and other California Counties. Four CC25I counties are currently developing or have already implemented Guardian Scholars programs on the campuses of CSU East Bay; CSU Fresno; City College of San Francisco; San Francisco State University, and San Jose State University. CSU Stanislaus is considering implementation of this or a similar program.

Foster Youth Education Project (<http://www.mhas-la.org/about.html#projects>) – Through their participation in the F2F Initiative, all CC25I counties are working with Mental Health Advocacy Services to improve K-12 educational outcomes for foster care youth. Funded by the Stuart Foundation, Mental Health Advocacy Services originally piloted a three-year pilot education initiative with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services that provided additional educational supports for foster youth receiving educational liaison services through the agency. Subsequently, Mental Health Advocacy received additional funding from the Stuart and Annie E. Casey Foundations to bring technical assistance to all California counties participating in F2F. In collaboration with local school districts, participating counties have conducted initial and ongoing assessments of educational outcomes among foster care youth and have created systematic plans of action for improvement of those outcomes, including improved collection and analysis of educational data.

Foster Youth Housing Initiative – A collaboration of the William and Flora Hewlett, the James Irvine, the Charles and Helen Schwab and the Sobrato Family Foundations, the Foster Youth Housing Initiative aims to

fill the current housing gap that exists for former foster care youth. The Initiative will fund improved service provision, develop additional housing units and create a long-term regional plan for ending homelessness among former foster youth. Direct services will be funded through select nonprofit organizations (such as First Place for Youth, Larkin Street Youth Center and the Bill Wilson Center) and the Corporation for Supportive Housing will distribute capacity building grants to organizations to facilitate the development of new housing units. Long-term strategies will address policy priorities and systems change necessary to identify and remove the systemic barriers to meeting the needs of former foster care youth. The CC25I counties directly benefiting from this Initiative are Alameda, San Francisco and Santa Clara.

It is clear that involvement in other public and private initiatives, as well as responses to ongoing state policy and budget action, have provided a firmer foundation of awareness and support for counties' current CC25I efforts. Many of their CC25I objectives and desired outcomes are directly linked to or build on these other reform and accountability efforts. Other initiatives are also incorporating elements of the CC25I logic model and strategies. For example, programs such as THP-Plus and Guardian Scholars are interested in utilizing the same Efforts to Outcomes data tracking software that CC25I counties will employ to track youth outcomes and transitional services provided, and are considering aligning data tracking as much as possible to relevant areas of the CC25I outcomes framework. Based on early work done by CC25I counties on new host-family models of transitional housing, the THP-Plus Implementation Project adapted various CC25I county-developed forms and processes and included this information in their TA assistance and resource tools and guides. Future reports on each of the seven focus areas will provide greater detail on other initiatives, recent legislative action and grant programs that are facilitating county efforts to carry out CC25I strategies. Quarterly newsletters with CC25I updates will also be available on the Initiative's website at: <http://www.f2f.ca.gov/California25.htm>.

VII. Future Reports

As of July 2007, Fresno, San Francisco and Stanislaus Counties had finished their second year as part of the CC25 Initiative and Santa Clara County had been implementing the Initiative for eighteen months. As Alameda County was completing its first full year with the Initiative, a joint decision was made by the County and their funder to transition out of the Initiative, however they continue their excellent work and commitment to building a comprehensive continuum for transition-aged foster youth. At the same time, new counties were in the process of joining the Initiative, including Orange County and Humboldt County.

Future reports from the Systems Change Assessment team will provide a more in-depth look at each of the seven CC25I focus areas – K-12 Education; Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education; Financial Competency and Asset Development; Housing; Independent Living Skills Programs; Permanency; and Personal/Social Asset Development – and document what the counties have accomplished in each thus far. Since this is a national initiative, each focus area report will look at what is being done throughout the field in terms of effective models and best practices; describe how CC25I technical assistance and county-sharing/cross-learning are spreading these best practices and helping counties to achieve their CC25 objectives; and discuss what counties have achieved and learned from the Initiative to date.

The ultimate goal for the CC25I Systems Change Assessment is the development of best practices in establishing and maintaining a true continuum of support services for foster care youth transitioning to adulthood through age 24. Therefore future reports will look closely at effective and sustainable county efforts to implement improved data tracking and self-evaluation methodologies; involve foster care youth and caregivers in program design and implementation; and increase awareness, communication and supportive collaboration among all community partners including the child welfare agency, other public agencies (i.e. ILSP, Probation, K-12 Education, and Mental Health), community-based organizations, advocacy groups and neighborhood representatives. In the process, the interaction between CC25I and the environmental landscape (including state reform efforts, relevant legislation and other privately funded initiatives) in which it is playing out will be further explored. It is the hope of the Systems Change Assessment team, as well as those both funding and leading the Initiative, that this work will result in a defined package of guidelines, resources and strategies that can assist other counties in building a comprehensive continuum of support for transitioning youth and in improving transition outcomes locally. Future reports will contribute by documenting the activity of counties over the life of the Initiative, identifying critical resources and best practices/strategies, and highlighting true systems change achievements.

Appendix A: CC25I OUTCOMES FOR TRANSITIONING YOUTH

V.14 04/10/07

This table details the outcomes that may be tracked in the Efforts to Outcomes software developed for CC25I counties. (**Priority Outcomes in Bold Must be Tracked**; those not in bold are Optional). The CC25I Self-Evaluation team, housed at UC Berkeley’s Center for Social Services Research, has worked closely with county leadership in selection and definition of these outcomes, and in determination of at what age and with what frequency these outcomes are to be collected. Where possible, these outcomes are consistent with the data collection being proposed or currently conducted by other public and private initiatives that serve transitioning foster care youth.

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
K-12 Education				
INCREASING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE				
▪ % youth passed CAHSEE (Math, English Language Arts)	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth receiving scores indicating proficiency or better on CST (Math, Reading)	X	X	X	
▪ % of youth who have repeated a grade	X	X	X	
▪ % youth completing grade-appropriate number of units	X	X	X	
▪ Average GPA	X	X	X	
▪ % of youth who completed high school			X	X
▪ % of youth who graduated high school (HS Diploma, GED, Other HS equiv. Test)			X	X
Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education				
INCREASING COLLEGE ATTENDANCE RATE				
▪ % of youth who have college as an educational goal	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have taken the SAT/ACT		X		
▪ % of youth who are taking A-G college pre-requisites	X	X		
▪ % of youth who have completed A-G college pre-requisites			X	
▪ % of youth who have submitted college applications – 2 year, 4 year		X	X	X
▪ % of youth who were accepted in college – 2 year/4 year			X	X

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education (continued)				
INCREASING COLLEGE ATTENDANCE RATE (CONTINUED)				
▪ % of youth who were enrolled in college 2 year 4 year			X	X
▪ % of youth completed at least one year of college				X
▪ % of youth who completed college 2 year 4 year				X
INCREASING EMPLOYMENT RATE				
▪ % of youth with paid or unpaid work experience [Youth currently have or have had paid employment (legally earned income reported by employer for tax purposes) or who do perform or have performed some or all the duties of a job or vocation in a supported environment to learn employment skills]		X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have paid employment (Legally earned income reported by employer for tax purposes) FT (At least 35 hours/week) PT (1-34 hours/week)		X	X	X
▪ % of youth enrolled/participating in vocational training or internships (A knowledge and skill-building program preparing people for a particular wage-earning job, occupation or self-employment activity)		X	X	X
▪ % of youth completed vocational training program and earned certificate			X	X
FACILITATING FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE				
▪ Average hourly salary			X	X
▪ % of youth receiving public assistance FS GA TANF Section 8 / Subsidized housing Unemployment Insurance Subsidized child care SSI			X	X

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
Employment/Job Training/Post-Secondary Education (continued)				
IMPROVING SCHOOL AND WORK SKILLS				
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Communication Skills"	X			
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Work and Study Skills"	X			
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Career Planning Skills"		X	X	
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Work Skills"		X	X	
Housing				
INCREASING SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING RATE				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of youth with housing plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying at current placement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With parents Transitional housing Relative caregiver Non-relative caregiver Moving to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own home/apartment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With family member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Sibling Aunt/Uncle Other extended family Transitional housing (A time-limited program of housing and supportive services designed to build skills which will assist participants to establish and maintain permanent housing in the future) College dorm Previous (non-relative) foster caregiver With (non-relative) friends Residential training program Military housing Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter (A temporary refuge or residence for the homeless) Street/Car 	X	X		
<i>Unknown or not yet determined</i>				

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
Housing (continued)				
INCREASING SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING RATE				
▪ % of youth who have housing (Same categories as above)			X	X
▪ % of youth who feel their housing situation is safe (1 or 2 of 5 point range)			X	X
▪ % of youth in long term housing Housing expected to last over 1 year Housing under 3 months but youth is moving to long term (Expected to last over 1 year) housing within 3 months			X	X
▪ Average number of living situations experienced during past year				X
▪ % of youth experiencing period of homelessness during past year (No place of his or her own to live for at least one night. Examples include living in a car or on the street, staying temporarily with a friend, or staying in a shelter).				X
ILP				
INCREASING PARTICIPATION RATE				
▪ % of youth receiving any county-sponsored Independent Living Program (ILP) activities, classes or services, beyond the creation of a TILP	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth reporting involvement with transition planning (1 or 2 of 5 point range)	X	X	X	X
INCREASING SATISFACTION RATE				
▪ % of youth reporting satisfaction with transition services (1 or 2 of 5 point range)	X	X	X	X
Financial Literacy, Competency and Asset Development				
IMPROVING FINANCIAL LITERACY				
▪ % of youth with checking accounts		X	X	X
▪ % of youth with Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) or other savings accounts IDAs Other savings type		X	X	X
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Housing and Money Management Skills"	X	X	X	

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
Financial Literacy, Competency and Asset Development (continued)				
INCREASING ASSETS				
▪ Average number of deposits quarterly		X	X	X
▪ Average value of monthly deposits		X	X	X
▪ Average value of savings		X	X	X
▪ Average value of assets accumulated Car Housing Costs Educational Expense Other assets		X	X	X
Permanency/Personal & Social Assets Development				
FACILITATING PERMANENCY				
▪ % of youth whom agency assesses as having permanent connections (a stable relationship with a safe adult who has made a commitment to provide life-long support)	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth with written commitments from permanent connections	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth living with permanent connections	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who report having permanent connections	X	X	X	X
IMPROVING SOCIAL AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS				
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Self care and Social Relationships"	X	X	X	
▪ Average score on ACSLA "Daily living skills"	X	X	X	
▪ % of youth with transportation own vehicle understanding of and access to public transit		X	X	X
▪ % of youth who possess necessary records California ID/Driver's License, Social Security Card, Birth Certificate, Medical Records, Educational Records			X	X

Focus Areas OUTCOMES ▪ Indicators	Youth in Care 14 to 15.5	Youth in Care 16-19	Youth At Emancipation	Post- Emancipation
Permanency/Personal & Social Assets Development (continued)				
IMPROVING HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES				
▪ % of youth with special needs (educational, mental and/or physical) that constitute a significant impediment to transitional planning	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth with health insurance in place Medi-Cal Employer provided Other			X	X
▪ % of youth with dental insurance other than Medi-Cal			X	X
▪ % of youth who report mental health needs are being met			X	X
▪ % of youth with substance abuse issues who are receiving treatment	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth with psychiatric hospitalizations	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have given birth to, or fathered any children that were born 1 2 3+	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have a child who are not married to the other parent of the child	X	X	X	X
DECREASING INVOLVEMENT WITH JUVENILE / CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS				
▪ % of youth who have been suspended or expelled from school in past year	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have been arrested in past year	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have been convicted/ pet sustained in past year	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have been incarcerated/detained in past year	X	X	X	X
▪ % of youth who have been a victim of crime in past year	X	X	X	X