

Improving Access to College and Employment



The Common Cents Tour: Teaching Money and Credit Skills

High school is the final transition from adolescence to adulthood for many students. It's a time of evaluation of individual strengths, interests and future goals. During their high school years, students begin to separate from their parents and explore independence for the first time. Exploring independence and taking on more responsibility, while exciting, can lead to frustration. For many students, issues like federal student aid, budgeting and planning for the future are complex and confusing. Students need guidance when addressing these issues. IL and transition counselors play a key role helping students plan for their future. American Educational Services/PHEAA has developed "The Common Cents Tour," an interactive program designed to educate high school seniors and first- year college students on a variety of smart money topics. The "Common Cents Tour" features:

- Advice and tips on effective budgeting, saving money, understanding credit and student loans, time management, and career planning.
- Interactive personal finance calculators and worksheets.

We encourage you to kick off "The Common Cents Tour" by visiting YouCanDealWithIt.com today. Your students and you can download "The Common Cents Tour" at no charge, as a public service of AES/PHEAA. Your students can take the quiz at: <http://www.educationplanner.org>

Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this fall should complete the Chafee ETG application in addition to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) worksheet. Chafee ETG applications for the 2008-2009 academic year are still available at www.pheaa.org. If your youth or you have questions about current Chafee applications or a youth's status, please contact **Tina Blair** at PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797. If you have Aftercare youth who plan to move to another state and enroll in a college or university there, they can find information on the ETG programs in other states at: www.statevoucher.org



Financing Education Supports For Youth Transitioning Out Of Foster Care

This Finance Project brief presents five financing strategies that can support education success programs and services for youth currently in or transitioning out of the foster care system. For each, the brief highlights relevant funding sources to consider, the range of partners to engage, considerations for implementation and examples of the strategy in practice. To look at the report or to download the PDF version, go to www.financeproject.org/publications/Education_SB.pdf

Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care

College is a means for young people to secure good jobs, advance in their careers, achieve economic independence, and build social networks. For youth from foster care, college can mean freedom from their past and the ability to choose a future rich with possibilities. Access to higher education for youth from foster care remains limited. According to figures from a Casey Family Programs study, few students from foster care ever gain access to higher education programs, let alone graduate from college. Only 7 to 13 percent of students from foster care enroll in higher education. About 2 percent obtain bachelor's degrees, in contrast to 24 percent of adults in the general population. Youth in foster care often report that few people in their lives ever expected them to attend and succeed in college. These students seldom receive the kind of guidance and stable supports needed to prepare for higher education. Too often, unemployment, underemployment, and homelessness face young adults after they age out of foster care.

Casey Family Programs' framework—*Supporting Success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care*—provides program development tools for college counselors, administrators, professors, and staff. It helps education professionals define a plan for improving their institution's support for students from foster care.

www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/HigherEdFramework.htm

Transitions to Permanency

Making the Case for Ongoing Connections Between Youth and Those Who Matter to Them - Before Permanency and Beyond

This Guide from the Family Connections Project in Illinois is a manual that presents audience-specific education to legal and court personnel about the benefits of open permanency arrangements that are based on a parenting curriculum provided by Adoptions Unlimited, Inc. (AUI) for use in the project. It is just one of the resources developed by Adoption Opportunity Grantees. <http://www.nrcadoption.org/youthpermanencycluster/resource.html>

The Role of the Dependency Court in Achieving Timely Permanency

Articles in the July 2008 issue of The Judges' Page from National CASA address the roles and perspectives of those involved in the court process and feature court-based programs that exhibit innovative practices to expedite permanency. www.nationalcasa.org/JudgesPage/index-new.htm

Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Background, Federal Programs, and Issues for Congress

This Congressional Research Service report begins with a discussion of the characteristics of older foster youth in care and the types of outcomes experienced by youth who have recently emancipated. It provides an overview of the federal foster care system, including the Chafee Foster Care Independence program, and provisions in federal foster care law that are intended to help prepare youth for adulthood. It discusses other federal support for youth aging out of care in the areas of education, health care, employment, and housing; examines how states vary in their approaches to serving older youth in care and those who are recently emancipated. Appendices include a summary of outcome statistics for youth who were in foster care, compared to youth in the general population and a summary of state policies regarding youth remaining in care beyond age 18. http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34499_20080521.pdf



Reconnecting Youth

Drop-Out Prevention and Re-Engagement: An expanded list of the “Rs” for Education.

Karen Pittman of Connect for Kids recently interviewed a number of youth who had dropped out of school and then returned; they had recommendations for what schools and caseworkers should do. More information is available at www.connectforkids.org. The “Rs” that youth suggest are strategies that we all could employ:

- **Relationships.** They left because of bad or absent relationships and returned because of good ones. All felt that it was easier to fit in and feel known in smaller schools. They also felt that both the teachers and students in these schools tried harder to build a community there.
- **Respect.** One student’s story of leaving school because she was so upset about being repeatedly ignored by a teacher led to a lengthy discussion about the level of disrespect that is tolerated in schools: Teachers disrespecting students, students disrespecting teachers and students disrespecting each other.
- **Relevance.** The youths reiterated the commonly cited need to connect learning to life. Two of them talked of the value of learning about how to write résumés and conduct themselves in job interviews. A third made it clear that what he liked about his new school was that the teachers made history material relevant by using better teaching methods – asking students not just to read the textbook, but to pick topics, do Web research, make comparisons to their lives. “The work is actually harder, but I like it better and learn more,” he said. “They let us explore for ourselves.”

- **Reality.** Each of the seven youths worked. One lived in a homeless shelter. Some had long commutes. One had assumed guardianship for a sibling. They were adamant that they aren't looking for sympathy, but find it challenging when teachers assume that school is the only thing going on in their lives and refuse to make exceptions.
- **Rules.** Attendance and suspension policies got the most air time. They all agreed that flexible hours and attendance policies would be enormously helpful and could reduce dropout rates. "Sometimes I'm late for school because I don't get home from work until 2 a.m. I oversleep," said one youth. "If I'm late too much I get detention. But I can't stay afterschool because I'll be late for work.... At some point you start to ask 'why bother?'"
- **Resources.** Every one of the youths told a story about teachers or youth workers who made the effort to help them or others get what they needed. The most powerful stories reflected the culture of the school. "They call if you don't come," one said. "They sent a cab to pick me up."
- **Roles.** One of the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) participants talked about the importance of not just getting but giving help: "As a JAG project, we opened a store inside the school so kids could get clothes and supplies that were donated. I started staying at school in the afternoon because I wanted to work in the store. It felt good to help."
- **Rigor.** A few needed extra help, but all understood the value of being prepared for work or college. One talked about the dual enrollment courses he was taking and how great they were. Two didn't know about the dual enrollment program and thought everyone should know that they could be taking college classes in high school.

Preventing Youth Disconnectedness

A white paper by the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy takes a new perspective on youth disconnectedness by focusing on ways to prevent disconnection in the first place and engage youth before it is too late. The study examined youth in New York State about to age out of the child welfare or mental health systems and at risk of becoming disconnected or disengaged from society. In 2005, 8 percent of New York's 16-19 year olds were not working and not in school.

To address these daunting challenges, the Schuyler Center convened two workgroups with key stakeholders that included agency representatives, advocates, and city youth. The workgroups formulated a series of principles for preventing youth disconnectedness, including:

- Adequate family-centered systems of care
- Youth empowerment through the development of problem-solving skills
- Care coordination among all agencies that come into contact with children and youth
- Concurrent planning between systems
- Constancy of relationships between service providers and youth
- Integration of mental health services in school settings
- Early and effective intervention

The workgroups also made 18 recommendations to promote cross-system collaboration, including the establishment of a central coordination point, more training for human services workers, and empowerment of youth. To read *Disconnected Youth: An Answer to Preventing Disengagement*, by Jenn O'Connor, visit:

www.scaany.org/documents/disconnected_youth_whitepaper_000.pdf

Assessment and Intervention Strategies

Mental Health Services Resources for Professionals

Child Welfare Information Gateway has expanded the Mental Health Services section of its website. This web section focuses on mental health as it relates to children and youth involved in the child welfare system, who may be at greater risk for mental health issues than children in the general population. The section is designed to provide information of interest to administrators involved with developing and funding mental health programs and to supervisors, caseworkers, and other related professionals who secure, provide, or monitor mental health treatment for children and families. http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/service_array/mentalhealth/

Funding Opportunities and Sustainability

Funds for Youth Workforce Development

This month's Finance Project funding tip is on how to maximize federal funds to support workforce development services for youth. Get the scoop on sources and examples of how programs are using them! www.financeproject.org/special/lrc/monthlyfundingtips.cfm

Tool Find: Outcomes Evaluation Resources

Tool Find is a free directory from the United Way that connects professionals in youth-serving programs with measurement tools for up to 11 youth outcome areas. www.toolfind.org

Resource Center: Tools and Training for Volunteer and Service Programs

Looking for a "one-stop shop" for tools to strengthen volunteer and service programs? Look no further than this site from the Corporation for National and Community Service. It offers more than 2,500 free downloadable tools, e-courses, and other resources and materials on hundreds of topics. There are also areas for social networking and interaction. www.nationalserviceresources.org

Grant: A Little HOPE – For bereavement support services and grief counseling to children and teens who have experienced the loss of a parent or loved one, regardless of the circumstances of the death.

Funder: A Little HOPE.

Eligibility: Nonprofits.

Deadline: Aug. 31.

Amount: Not specified.

Contact: www.alittlehope.org/show.aspx?page=3.

Grant: Education and literacy – For children's education and/or financial literacy for K-12 children and/or their immediate families.

Funder: ING Foundation.

Eligibility: Nonprofits.

Deadline: Applications are reviewed quarterly.

Amount: \$2,500 or above.

Contact: www.ing-usafoundation.com

Grant: Projects led by and benefiting women and girls.

Funder: Open Meadows Foundation.

Eligibility: Organizations whose budgets do not exceed \$150,000.

Deadline: Aug. 15.

Amount: Up to \$2,000 each.

Contact: www.openmeadows.org.

Grant: Gannett grants – For education and neighborhood improvement, economic development, youth development, community problem-solving, assistance to the disadvantaged, environmental conservation and cultural enrichment.

Funder: Gannett Foundation.

Eligibility: Nonprofits in communities where Gannett owns a daily newspaper or television station.

Deadline: Aug. 15.

Amount: Last year, 16 percent of roughly \$10 million in grants and matching gifts were for youth-related services.

Contact: www.gannettfoundation.org/index.htm.

Grant: BJ's grants – To enhance and enrich community programs that primarily benefit children and families.

Funder: BJ's Charitable Foundation.

Eligibility: Nonprofits in store communities.

Deadline: Aug. 8 and Oct. 6.

Amount: In 2007, BJ's Charitable Foundation donated \$1.69 million.

Contact: www.bjs.com/about/community/charity.shtml.

Bank of America Philanthropic Management Site

This new site offers detailed information about the grant-making focus of about 70 foundations. The site is currently in an introductory phase; it plans to expand to more states and foundations. www.bankofamerica.com/philanthropic/fn_search.action

Beat The Odds: Communities Investing in Their Youth (Colleague-shared resource)

Bonnie Christian-Marsh from Beaver County Children and Youth Services shared information about this program: "I learned about the program from a judge in Virginia. The local bar association and the court introduced the program to the community and it took off from there. The bar association or bar foundation, if there is one, is the primary fund raiser. I help behind the scenes with logistics. It is another way that a collaborative team can impact the lives of children who have had some difficult times in their early years. The Beat the Odds program is basically a scholarship program for college, junior college, or technical training. I have also seen programs fund the purchase of tools for youth going off to a job such as an electrician or plumber. Eligible children are those who have had some contact with the court, CYS, mental health, school system, etc. They are recommended by teachers, case workers, probation officers, etc. At the end of the year there is an award event, which is a powerful statement of what the community thinks of its children. We have been able to raise about \$20,000 a year from service groups, lawyers, foundations, etc. without a great deal of difficulty.

Positive Youth Development

How Young People Can Make a Difference for Kids in Foster Care

The Band Together campaign mobilizes and motivates young people, both in and out of foster care, to help raise public awareness in their own communities to benefit foster children and to fight child abuse and neglect. Band Together encourages all youth to show their commitment to the cause by wearing blue tape (drummer's grip tape or painter's blue tape) on their fingers.

<http://bandtogether.org/>

Service Learning: What Works and What You Need to Know

Not sure how "service learning" differs from community service or volunteer work? This article from the National Association of Secondary School Principals gives a great overview of service learning and what works. www.priincipals.org/s_nassp/sec.asp

The Impact and Future of AmeriCorps

This Brookings Institution and the Corporation for National and Community Service forum examined a recent study of AmeriCorps' long-term impact on members. The results: AmeriCorps is "a pipeline to careers in public service and creates civic leaders who continue to serve in their communities long after their service has been completed."

www.brookings.edu/events/2008/0513_anicorps.aspx

Awards and Recognition

Cindy Barr was honored with the Independent Living Professional award at this year's Permanency Conference. Cindy is the IL supervisor in Somerset County and the IL program is celebrating its 20th anniversary. **Congratulations, Cindy!**

A Woman's Purse was also honored at this year's Permanency Conference for its work on behalf of the IL program in Adams County. The community program collaborates with the IL program and raises funds for older teens in the county who are making the transition from substitute care. One of its most popular fund-raisers is a purse auction. **Congratulations!**

Professional Development Opportunities

IL/SWAN Fall Quarterly Meetings:

Mark your calendars to reserve the following dates; more information soon!

- Thursday, October 2 – Best Western East Mountain Inn, Wilkes-Barre
- Wednesday, October 15 – Holiday Inn, Clarion
- Thursday, October 16 – Radisson Hotel, Monroeville
- Monday, October 20 – Harrisburg Holiday Inn, New Cumberland
- Tuesday, October 28 – The Desmond Great Valley, Malvern
- Wednesday, October 29, Embassy Suites Philadelphia Airport

IL/SWAN Winter Statewide Meeting

Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, State College, January 28-29, 2009

IL/SWAN Summer Statewide Meeting

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 23-24, 2009

17th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

Lancaster Host Resort and Conference Center, Lancaster, June 24-26, 2009

People in Transition –

Todd Lloyd, the unit lead for the University of Pittsburgh's IL Project is moving on to a position at PA Partnerships. His last day at the CWTP is August 11th. **Best wishes, Todd!**

Brian Hills, Monica Wever and Vanessa Smylie have joined the IL casework staff at Family Services of Northwestern Pennsylvania, Erie County's Chafee IL provider. **Welcome!**

Contact Information:

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH IL PROJECT

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program
403 East Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
717.795.9048

TODD LLOYD, IL Unit Lead
STEPHEN EIDSON, IL Specialist
CINDY GORE, IL Specialist
JUSTIN LEE, IL Specialist

Ext. 207 E-mail: tel11@pitt.edu
814.598.2747 E-mail: see13@pitt.edu
Ext. 203 E-mail: lcg7@pitt.edu
484.553.6343 E-mail: jml75@pitt.edu

CHRISTINE TIRENDI

IL Grant Coordinator
Division of Program Development
OCYF/DPW
4th Floor, Bertolino Building
Harrisburg, PA 17102
717.772.7012
ctirendi@state.pa.us