

Improving Access to College and Employment



PHEAA Financial Aid Workshops – Register Now for the Fall Workshops

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) offers free workshops each fall for school counselors and those who work with older youth to help them learn about changes to federal and state financial aid programs (grants, loans, scholarships and work-study programs) for the coming year. If you'd like to see the changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and get an update about the financial aid process for 2009-2010, you can register at www.pheaa.org. Once you are on the home page for PHEAA, click on the K-12 counselors' link, then on training for counselors to register for a session in your area. .

Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

Youth planning to enroll in college this fall or spring 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 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

What Works: Educational Interventions for Successful Transitions

Too many students leave high school unprepared for college, work and life -- but there are promising models that help students prepare for life after high school. A new set of briefs from the National High School Center and MDRC examines these effective educational interventions. The titles so far are:

- Preparing High School Students for Successful Transitions to Postsecondary Education and Employment
- Striking the Balance: Career Academies Combine Academic Rigor and Workplace Relevance
- Evaluating the Impact of Interventions That Promote Successful Transitions from High School

To learn more, go to: www.mdrc.org/publications/

The College Opportunity and Affordability Act is signed into law

On July 31, 2008, before its summer recess, Congress passed the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008 (H.R. 4137: H. Rept. 110-803). This marked the end of a ten-year effort to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. Several changes in the law affect youth in foster care and students earning their degrees in social work. The law makes it easier for youth in foster care to access federal programs such as TRIO and Gear Up, which help youth from disadvantaged backgrounds enter and succeed in college. It also expands programs to provide more targeted services for these youth. The reauthorization also:

- Provides new housing services for students who are (or were) homeless and those who are in (or are aging out of) foster care
- Makes it easier for youth formerly in foster care (and who exit through guardianship, adoption or because they age out) to access federal financial aid by amending and clarifying the definition of independent student
- Creates a new program that allows loan forgiveness for social workers who work for public or private child welfare agencies

President Bush signed the bill into law on August 15, 2008. Next, the Department of Education will create regulations for implementation. In addition, the new loan forgiveness program must be funded as part of the annual appropriations process.

Report Card on the Education of Foster Children

This policy brief from the Center for Public Policy Priorities looks at the education of foster children. Although it is focused on Texas, it contains both policy and practice recommendations for improving educational outcomes for children in foster care.

<http://www.cppp.org/files/4/CPPP%20Foster%20Care%20Education%20Policy%20Page.pdf>

Coming of Age: Employment Outcomes for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care Through Their Middle Twenties

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) requested this study to examine employment and earnings outcomes for youth, through their mid-twenties, who age out of foster care. The key question and focus of the study is whether foster youth catch up or continue to experience less employment and significantly lower earnings than their peers even into their mid-twenties.

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/fosteremp/>

SAT Fee Waivers are available from the IL Project

You can obtain SAT fee waivers for juniors and SAT fee waivers/college application fee waivers for seniors entered into PILOTS from Janice Coplin at jtc30@pitt.edu or 717.795.9048, ext. 231.

Transitions to Permanency

Family Unification Program Vouchers

Across the state, many of you face on a daily basis the challenge of helping youth aging out of the foster care system find housing that is adequate and affordable. Family Unification Vouchers (FUP) are a type of Section 8 (now known as Housing Choice Vouchers) that can be used for youth aging out of the foster care system who are homeless as well as for families involved in the child welfare system whose main barrier to reunification is housing.

It has been *many* years since the federal government has made FUP vouchers available. HUD is about to release a Notice of Funding Availability that will allow child welfare agencies in collaboration with their local housing authorities to apply for these vouchers. This is a rare and incredible opportunity to bring housing resources to aging out youth and families involved in the child welfare system that may not come around again for many years.

Check out the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare website at www.nchcw.org for more details.

Data Tools Calculate Basic Needs Budget and Resources

Data tools developed by the National Center for Children in Poverty assist with calculating family budgets and resources. The Basic Needs Budget Calculator shows how much a family needs to meet their basic needs taking into account number of parents, number/age of children, and state/city (for 70 localities in 11 states). The Family Resource Simulator shows the impact of federal and state "work support benefits" on budget. <http://nccp.org/tools/>

Housing for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care

More than half of the youth who age out of foster care are soon homeless or experience housing instability. A recent article in *Child Law Practice* explains the different types of Federal programs and other resources that may offer housing or funding for housing to these young adults. These include:

- Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program expectations
- The Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth
- Section 8 vouchers
- Public housing (some jurisdictions create a preference for aged-out youth)
- Specialized housing for those with substance abuse or mental disabilities

The information provided about these programs, including population served and eligibility criteria may help these youth and youth advocates plan in advance to meet housing needs.

"Seeking Shelter in Tough Times: Securing Housing for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care," by Dale Margolin, appeared in *Child Law Practice*, Volume 27(5), and is available online at: www.abanet.org/child/clp/

Foster Care Central

This new social networking site is geared "for foster agencies, foster parents, social workers, and volunteers dedicated to improving the lives of foster and adopted youth." If blogs, forums, and online groups are of interest, you have an opportunity to make this site work for you. <http://www.fostercarecentral.org/>

Child Well-Being as Human Capital

This paper from Chapin Hall explores how the general principles of child development intersect with the emerging interest in child well-being as an outcome for children who come in contact with the child welfare system. Well-being is similar to the idea of human capital in that it embeds multiple dimensions, such as education, physical health, and behavioral health, into a single construct. http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1468

A Look at Child Welfare from a Homeless Education Perspective

This publication from the National Center for Homeless Education developed this examination of the child welfare system in hopes that a better understanding would lead educators and child welfare workers to establish better working relationships, simplify the process of working together, and ultimately provide more appropriate services for children and youth. http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/ch_welfare.pdf

Reconnecting Youth

Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children

This report from the U.S. Department of Justice presents data from the 2004 Survey of Inmates in State and Federal Correctional Facilities about inmates who were parents and their minor children. It includes information on the children's daily care, financial support, current caregivers, and frequency and type of contact with incarcerated parents. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf>

Archived Teleconference: Rural Issues in Child Welfare

On May 21 the NRCFCPPP hosted this teleconference for state program managers in foster care and adoption. Audio files of that teleconference, along with handouts, are now available for download on our website. <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/teleconferences/index.html#rural>

Archived Webcast: The Intersection of Migration and Child Welfare

Access our April 30 webcast on Immigrants and Refugees, as well as our complete archive of other webcasts. Subscribe to free podcasts of all our webcasts and teleconferences at <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/podcasts.htm>

Assessment and Intervention Strategies



The Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth

An important new Youth Build USA study shows that investments in prevention and treatment for young people at high risk for criminal activity (including young offenders) can yield big returns -- not only for young people, but for society. This report looks at the specific savings that result from up-front investments. www.youthbuild.org

Assessing What Kids Think about Themselves: A Guide to Adolescent Self-Concept for Out-of-School Time Program Practitioners

This brief from Child Trends, which provides information assessment, also suggests specific strategies to improve an adolescent's self-concept and includes tools for measuring adolescent self-concept. http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2008_08_20_RB_SelfConcept.pdf

Early Onset of Alcohol Consumption Related to Other Drug Use

According to the National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiological Survey (NLAES), the earlier persons began drinking alcohol, the more likely they were to have used other drugs illicitly. According to the survey, approximately half the persons who began drinking at age 14 or younger had also used other drugs illicitly, compared to about 10 percent of those who started drinking when 20 years old or older. Persons who began drinking before age 14 were nearly three times more likely to have been drug dependent than those who began after age 20. For more information, visit <http://www.cesar.umd.edu/cesar/cesarfax/vol17/17-26.pdf>

Continuing in Foster Care Beyond Age 18: How Courts Can Help

Strong advocacy within the juvenile court on behalf of foster youth plays a primary role in keeping youth in care after age 18, according to this Chapin Hall study. The study examines foster youth in Illinois, one of the few states that as regular policy extends care up to age 21. Researchers found that a higher degree of court advocacy is associated with a greater availability of placements and services for older foster youth, more involvement by caseworkers and other adults, more positive attitudes about remaining in care beyond 18, and a greater awareness that, by law, youth may remain in care beyond 18. www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1472

Two New Resource Websites for Pennsylvania:

Parecovery.org - list initiatives of the Department of Public Welfare and OMHSAS, for example (ACT) Alternatives to Coercive Techniques, Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH), trauma informed care, youth and family training institute. The site also lists all CASSP coordinators; lists resources, newsletters (OMHSAS ALERT) and publications (mental health related); will be linked to Network of Care which is a new interactive website of local resources.

Payspi.org is the new suicide prevention website of the Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative.

Funding Opportunities and Sustainability

Network for Good Learning Center

What's a fundraiser to do during difficult economic times? It's time to don the cape, mask and utility belt and become a fundraising superhero with the help of the Network for Good Learning Center and Nonprofit 911-- free services and articles for nonprofit staff and volunteers.

www.fundraising123.org

Understanding the State of Knowledge of Youth Engagement Financing and Sustainability

Published by The Finance Project with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, this report provides critical research and analysis to build the knowledge base on the variety and effectiveness of existing youth engagement approaches and puts forth what is known about the costs, financing, and sustainability of these approaches. This report also profiles several youth engagement programs that have implemented a variety of strategies to finance and sustain their work. <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid=%7BDD7B115E-99AC-485B-BFC8-4909FE16491A%7D>

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation partners with organizations across the United States that serve young people from low-income families ranging in age from 9 to 24. The foundation focuses on those organizations that help youth improve educational skills, prepare for employment and self-sufficiency, and avoid high-risk behaviors. While the foundation does not accept proposals, interested organizations can complete a web-based Youth Organization Survey Form about their organization and goals for the foundation to consider.

To read more about the foundation and to access the survey form (listed under Grantee Portfolio), visit the website: www.emcf.org/

Grant: Sparkplug Foundation – For start-up projects and innovations in music, education and community organizing.

Funder: Sparkplug Foundation.

Eligibility: 501(c)3 organizations, projects with 501(c)3 sponsorship and individuals working on new nonprofit projects.

Deadline: Oct. 31.

Amount: Amounts vary from less than \$3,000 to up to \$10,000 each.

Contact: <http://sparkplugfoundation.org>.

Grant: State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grant – For youth-led community improvement projects in the United States and Canada.

Funder: State Farm Companies Foundation and Youth Service America.

Eligibility: Teachers and service-learning coordinators engaging students from age 5 to 25.

Deadline: Oct. 15.

Amount: Up to \$1,000 each.

Contact: <http://ysa.org/AwardsGrants/tabid/58/Default.aspx>.

Positive Youth Development

Building Assets, Building Stronger Families

The Office of Community Services would like to share with you Building Assets - Building Stronger Families, a curriculum highlighting the strong connection between asset-building strategies, financial stability, and strong families. Acknowledging financial assets as the foundation to financial stability and long-term wealth accumulation, the Assets for Independence demonstration program targets the needs of low-income individuals and families for advancement through financial education and matched savings accounts. Building Assets - Building Stronger Families extends these principles by providing tools and strategies to integrate asset-building and family stability within ACF-supported programs. This manual presents an overview of asset-building and a series of 50 training modules for family-focused programs to showcase the profound connection between economic security and strong families. ACF programs can use this resource to promote family-strengthening activities as appropriate within their respective projects. Building Assets - Building Stronger Families is available at

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/afi/buildingassets/babsf_narr1.htm

NRCFCPPP Information Packets

Use our "Hot Topics" list to find the latest information on over 60 topics. Our most recent additions are Information Packets on:

- **Sibling Placement** (Hot Topic "Siblings");
- **Parent-Child Visiting** and **Visiting with Family in Foster Care** (Hot Topic "Family/Child Visiting");
- **Birth Parent Needs and Services** (Hot Topic "Birth Family Issues"); and
- **Educational Needs of Youth in Foster Care** (Hot Topic "Education and Foster Care").

The packets are available at:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/information.html#hottopics>

Youth with Disabilities in the Foster Care System: Barriers to Success and Policy Solutions.

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) conducted the research for this report that examines this uniquely situated population in terms of the issues that affect them and the policy solutions that can be implemented to improve their outcomes.

www.aypf.org/publications/documents/ncd96_FosterYouth_w_cover.p

Professional Development Opportunities

IL/SWAN Fall Quarterly Meetings:

Register now at www.diakon-swan.org for a session near you!

- 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. More information is coming your way soon. **Carlos Ojeda**, a former foster youth and now an educator at Kutztown University is confirmed as the opening keynote speaker.

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 –

Kathleen Hood has resigned as the IL coordinator for Warren County to take a position in a school setting in nearby western New York State. Good luck, Kathleen!

Tricia Taylor is resigning from her position as the IL coordinator in Butler County to spend more time with her newborn son. Best wishes, Tricia!

Laurie Kubli is the new IL coordinator at Butler County CYS. Welcome, Laurie!

April Seely is currently on maternity leave from her position as the IL supervisor in Bradford County! Congratulations, April!

Keith Simon is the new IL coordinator for Pike County CYS. Congratulations, Keith!

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