

# **Extending Foster Care in Louisiana: Launching Young People into Successful Adulthood**

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Mainspring Consulting  
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# Why Extend Foster Care?

- Young people who remain in care are
  - significantly more likely to attend college
  - have increased lifetime earnings
  - less likely to become pregnant as teens
  - more likely to receive independent living and health services that support their transition to adulthood
- Financial benefits of extending foster care outweigh costs to government by a factor of approximately 2 to 1
- States that invest in extending foster care can expect to see a decrease in the use of public assistance, homelessness services, and incarceration

# Doing It Right

- Developmentally appropriate
- Geared toward permanency
- Client-directed
- Informed by brain development research

*This is a new system for young adults, not just an extension of foster care. This is a paradigm shift.*

California county child welfare agency administrator

# Maximizing Federal Funding Options

- Ages 18-21
- In the custody of the child welfare agency at age 18
- Meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - Completing **secondary education**
  - Enrolled in **post-secondary or vocational education**;
  - Participating in a program to **promote employment**;
  - **Is employed for at least eighty hours per month**;
  - Is incapable of doing so due to a **medical condition**
- Automatically continue custody after age 18 *or* a young person voluntarily agree to remain in foster care
- Unlimited re-entry

# State Designs: Eligibility

- The majority of states that have extended IV-E eligibility extended foster care to 21
- Most states have opted to extend care to young adults meeting any of the five criteria



# Considerations for Implementation: Case Management

- Public (specialized teams or mixed caseloads)
- Private
- Hybrid



# Considerations for Implementation: Placement

- Most states offer full placement array
  - Majority of young adults are in family-based settings
- Most states use supervised independent living settings
  - Host homes, supervised apartments, dorms
  - Direct stipends
- Capacity to partner with providers and other agencies to meet young adults' needs is critical



# Considerations for Implementation

- Case Review
  - Biannual case reviews by either the court or an administrative panel are required
  - Most states continue to provide – or give young adults the option to request – legal representation





# Considerations for Implementation: Supportive Services

- Education
- Employment
- Pregnant and Parenting Young Adults
- Physical and Mental Health Care
- Life Skills

# Reflections on the Collaborative Planning Process in CA

- *Everyone kept their eye on developing a new system that is appropriate for young adults, not just an extension of foster care.* Legal advocate for foster youth.
- *Giving ourselves a year to prepare delayed the start date...it created a very collegial environment for the stakeholders to sit down and talk out issues, think through the process, and do a better job of planning.* County child welfare agency representative
- *Being at the same table with folks that we typically struggle with gave us lots of respect for them. I now understand the resource constraints that they are under and know that their hearts are in the right place.* Legal advocate for youth in foster care.

The only way to get what you want  
**IN THIS WORLD**  
— is through —  
**HARD WORK.**

— Tiana, *The Princess and the Frog*



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