

County of Santa Clara
Social Services Agency
Department of Family and Children's Services




CSFC SSA02 081705

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DATE: August 17, 2005

TO: Supervisor James T. Beall, Jr., Chairperson
Supervisor Don Gage, Vice-Chairperson
Children, Seniors & Families Committee

FROM: 
Will Lightbourne
Agency Director, Social Services Agency

SUBJECT: Foster Youth Transition Initiative Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Accept Foster Youth Transition Initiative Update.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no fiscal implications associated with the recommended action.

CONTRACT HISTORY

Not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

On May 3, 2005, the Board of Supervisors approved delegation of authority to the Social Services Agency (SSA) to apply for funds from the Foster Youth Transition Project (FTYP). The Project is supported by Walter S. Johnson Foundation, in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey and the Stuart Foundation, to plan and implement strategies to create a comprehensive continuum of services for emancipating and emancipated foster youth in Santa Clara County (ages 14–24 years). Santa Clara County, along with Fresno, San Francisco and Stanislaus Counties, make up a small cohort of California counties involved in the Project.

A grant of up to \$100,000 per year is available to the Department of Family and Children's Services. DFCS is also considering to apply for \$10,000 per year for Individual Development Accounts (IDA) for transitional youth, as offered under FTYP. The County must match the IDA supplemental grant dollar-for-dollar. These grants are renewable for up to three years.

The grant proposal is due to the Walter S. Johnson Foundation by September 28, 2005. SSA is meeting with community stakeholders with technical assistance provided by FYTP to develop our County's grant proposal. The proposal will focus on 3 areas:

1. Employment/Job Training/Post–Secondary Education

Goal: Emancipating foster youth (beginning at age 14) and emancipated foster youth (through age 24) will have access to, participate in, and be supported in a broad array of youth and family focused employment, training and post–secondary education programs that lead to meaningful employment and/or post–secondary education.

DFCS and its community partners are looking at strategies to build an educational bridge and training programs that will lead to meaningful employment for foster youth and former foster youth.

2. Housing

Goal: Every foster youth who emancipates from the child welfare system will have access to a variety of housing options that are supportive and flexible to meet the developmental needs of youth people.

3. K-12 Education

Goal: K-12 education is a shared responsibility between CWS and the School District to provide foster youth with a stable, continuous, uninterrupted, appropriate high quality education that supports and encourages their academic success regardless of whether they are enrolled in a public, private or non-public school.

Participants in the planning process include: Technical assistance staff from FYTP and the Gateway Project; representatives from the Department of Employment and Benefits Services; ILP service providers (Bill Wilson Center and Unity Care); West Valley College; NOVA; Workforce Investment Board; Vision Literacy; Project READ; Libraries; EHC Lifebuilders; Corporation for Supportive Housing; DFCS administration and management; DFCS Independent Living Program staff; and DFCS Educational Right Project.

Development of the grant proposal will address these key issues posed by the Project:

1. How are we partnering with local workforce investment boards, businesses, community college, institutions of higher education, and community partners to create sector specific training and career pathways that link older foster youth with jobs in growing industries?
2. What partnership have we formed with public and private housing providers to expand supportive housing options for foster youth?
3. How are we working with the local school districts to improve educational outcomes for foster youth?
4. How are we partnering with public agency and community-based organizations to build personal and social assets for foster youth that support positive physical, psychological, emotional and social development?
5. How are we developing lifelong relationships between foster youth and caring, committed, loving adults?
6. How do we provide young people with successful financial literacy skills?

7. How do our core training programs empower families, youth, foster parents, group homes, foster family agencies, kinship families, guardians and agency staff to meet the needs of emancipating foster youth?

8. How is the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) integrated within all levels of the agency? Are ILSP services accessible to foster youth?

DFCS will be requesting authorization to create an unclassified Program Manager II position to perform management level overview, planning, supervision and coordination of all aspects of implementing of the FYTI.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

Negative action would result in the Children, Seniors and Families Committee not accepting this update on the Foster Youth Transition Initiative.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Clerk of the Board will follow the usual procedures for a report of this type.