**Re**: Request to Partner and Assist the Agency in Successful Implementation of the Older Youth Provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021

Dear [Child Welfare Agency Director and IL Director]:

We write today as advocates working with and on behalf of young people with experience in the foster care system. We are requesting a meeting with agency leadership at which we would like to share ideas for how our network would like to partner and engage with the agency in the implementation of the older youth provisions of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021](https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr133/BILLS-116hr133enr.pdf). Division X of the Act, which became effective on December 27, 2020, contains provisions that will provide vital relief to young people in and leaving foster care. Specifically, the law:

* Requires that state continue to provide placement and services to young people even if they age out under state law.
* Requires that states provide reentry into foster care to young people who aged out during the pandemic and are under age 22.
* Provides $400 in Chafee funds to provide financial assistance, services, and supports to young people, at least $50 million to be used for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).
* Increases the individual ETV maximum award to $12,000 per youth.
* Extends Chafee eligibility through a young person’s 26 year.

At this meeting, we would like to learn about the State’s plan for implementation and share our ideas for how we’d like to be involved in implementation in order to ensure that young people in need are connected as soon as possible to the new federal resources. Because the law is effective immediately and young people have pressing needs with regard to safe housing, food, services and basic necessities, we are ready and able to meet at your earliest convenience.

[We have attached our recommendations for implementation. Our recommendations are based on extensive data that has been collected during the pandemic about the needs of young people and based on the voices of young people in our state.]

In recent years, the Children’s Bureau within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has communicated a number of times about the vital importance of agencies partnering with youth and young adults with lived experience for the purpose of improving programming. We believe that implementation of pandemic assistance is an important opportunity on which to build and/or expand such a partnership.

We look forward to hearing your plans for implementation and working collaboratively to serve young people during the pandemic and recovery.

Sincerely,