



Supporting Foster Youth & Families: Leveraging New Opportunities

PRESENTERS



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AGENDA

- National Policy Council Overview
- Prevention: Current Opportunities & Council Priorities
- Supporting Older Youth & Special Populations: Current Opportunities & Council Priorities
- Engaging Young People
- Q&A

Overview: Council

The National
**FOSTER CARE
YOUTH & ALUMNI**
Policy Council



OUR PRIORITIES

Preventing Unnecessary Entries into FC

Vulnerability

Social Capital

Homelessness

Historic Opportunity:
Prevention

Congregate Care: Reducing Reliance

5 Ideas

Cross Over to Juvenile Justice

Mental Health

Historic Opportunity:
Quality Residential
Services

Aging Out

Higher Education

Implementing the Prevent

Sex Trafficking Act

Well-being

Normalcy

Historic Opportunity:
Older Youth

Historic Opportunity:
Special Populations

Congregate Care: Improving Services

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

- Signed into law December 27, 2020
- The child welfare provisions of this Act addresses the following challenges:
 - Strong interest in supporting the direction of Family First and implementation during a challenging state budget time
 - Providing resources to address challenges amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Funding for prevention services
 - Support for kin and relative caregivers
 - Resources to support courts
- Challenges experienced by older youth in foster care, and those aging out of foster care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Summary of Prevention Provisions

- Under the Family First Prevention Services Act, provides 100% reimbursement for preventive services by waiving state match
 - 100% federal funds for preventive services, administration and training costs is available from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021
 - Any state, jurisdiction or tribe who submits a plan may receive these funds

Current Status of Prevention Plans

Submitted

- **States: 10** (Alaska, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Missouri, Ohio, South Carolina, Virginia)
- **Tribes: 1** (Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, AK)

Approved

- **States: 12** (Arkansas, DC, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington, West Virginia,)
- **Tribes: 1** (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, NC)

Council Priorities on Prevention

- **Substance misuse and mental health crises** are tearing our families apart — treat them with the urgency and resources that they require.
- **Connect our families to services**, even after we have been reunified with our family.
- Don't use our **removal** as a way to punish our parent(s).
- Explore the multitude of reasons why youth are “**aging out**” of **adoptions** and look at how it can be prevented.
- **Engage with us** during the investigation and when developing prevention services for my family.

Connections to Current Opportunities

- Developing state and jurisdictions prevention plans
- Identifying resources to support post-reunification and post-adoption
- Engagement of youth and families in prevention services
- Training for agencies and workers on youth and engagement
- What connections do you see?

Quick Poll

Where does your
state/jurisdiction need
the most support?

Summary of Older Youth Provisions

- Extended Services (Moratorium)
- Re-Entry, including an obligation to notify and develop a public awareness campaign
- Chafee
 - Increase of \$400 million w/\$50 million in ETV
 - Eligibility through age 26
 - Lift 30% cap on room and board (“housing”)

Summary Education & Training Vouchers (ETV)

- Max award from \$5000-\$12,000
- Waives the enrollment requirement
- Waives the requirement to make satisfactory academic progress (SAP)
- Youth are eligible even if they attend at less than full time status
- ETV can fund costs outside of the Cost of Attendance (COA)

Older Youth Implementation Updates

- **March 10, 2021:** Children's Bureau released Program Instruction: Guidance & instruction related to the Supporting Foster Youth & Families through the Pandemic Act (ACYF-CB-PI-21-04)
- **February 22, 2021:** Chafee supplemental allocations reached the states and jurisdictions.
- **January 13, 2021:** Children's Bureau released Information Memorandum: NEW LEGISLATION – Public Law (P.L.) 116-260 (ACYF-CB-IM-21-05)

Council Priorities on Supporting Older Youth

1. We need continuity of health services that support our well-being. Mental health needs to be prioritized as we transition to adulthood.
2. Young people should have access to **high quality legal representation**.
3. Youth should have access to **resources and a realistic transition plan** to ensure they are on track to succeed when they exit foster care and especially if they age out of foster care.
4. Promoting **normalcy** is essential for the youth's well being. In an ideal world, we want a young person to have access to a healthy support system that encourages them to realize their dreams through education, apprenticeship, and support from family and friends.

Council Priorities on Special Populations

1. Train staff, caregivers and youth themselves on how to **protect youth from sex trafficking.**
2. Ensure all **expecting and/or parenting youth** receive access to legal, prevention and independent living services.
3. Youth who have been abused or neglected are not automatically delinquents; **youth who enter dual jurisdiction should maintain support from child welfare.**

Council Priorities on Special Populations, part 2

4. Promote inclusive spaces and mandate training on LGBTQIA2-S so that **youth who identify as LGBTQIA2-S feel comfortable, safe and supported.**

5. When states and jurisdictions are considering Family First Act candidacy for prevention services, **youth with diminished social capital** should not be overlooked as candidates for services.

6. Acknowledge and Implement **Cultural Awareness and Inclusivity.**

Connections to Current Opportunities

- Engaging young people:
 - Planning, Outreach, Peer support, and more
- Prevention services for expectant & parenting young people in foster care
- Direct Financial Assistance
- Transition Planning
 - Permanency & connections
 - Financial
 - Health & well-being
- Housing
- Education

Quick Poll

Do you see other ways
young people can be
engaged?

Successfully Engaging Young People

1. Connect & Communicate the Purpose of Engagement
2. Prepare and Propose
3. Ensure & Empower Constituent Voice & Choice
4. Clear Communication on Compensation for Engagement
5. Deliver, Debrief and Discuss

Questions?





Send questions or
feedback to:

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