

FIRST STAR INSTITUTE

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE

Policy to progress



FOSTER YOUTH
SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

Initial Report

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Forward

Society largely fails its foster youth. How children who experience foster care fare is a devastating indictment of all of us:

- *High school dropout rates are 3 times higher for foster youth than other low-income children. Only about 50% graduate from high school.*
- *Children in foster care change homes multiple times and despite laws aimed at educational stability, they are far more likely to change schools during the school year and to fail to receive passing grades than children in the general population.*
- *A recent study in California indicated that foster youth had the highest dropout rates and the lowest graduation rates of all groups that were studied.*
- *Even for those that make it through high school and on to college, remaining in and graduating from college is fraught with challenge. Only 3-8% graduate from college by age 25.*
- *16% of foster youth become homeless within 3 years.*
- *Over 60% are unemployed a year after aging out.*
- *54% are unemployed five years after aging out.*
- *32% (females) and 64% (males) experience incarceration*

Through assistance and links to sources of financial aid, college-advocacy, mentoring, health and other services, some college-based programs report high success rates for the youth in their programs.

Some college support programs generously shared what information was known about existing programs nationally. However, no study or organized process for determining the extent to which college-based programs were developing throughout the country had been done. As a result, this project's survey doubling the number of college-based programs previously identified nationally documents the trend towards supporting these youth in this way.

The Initial Report also underscores that the funding needs of foster youth and former foster youth attending college are largely unmet throughout the country.

We can do better for these young adults, all of our children.

Noy Davis

Table of Contents

1.0 Executive Summary	7
1.1 Introduction	7
1.2 The First Star Institute Success In College Project—Building on Existing Literature	8
1.3 Highlights of the Initial Survey of 4-year Public Colleges	9
2.0 Literature Review: Setting the Stage for the Project	11
2.1 Financial Aid Generally	12
2.2 Issues with Housing and Food Resources	15
2.3 Independent Living Skills and Social Support	16
2.4 Physical and Mental Health	18
2.5 Academic Preparedness	19
2.6 Institutional Support	20
2.7 Degree Attainment: Persistence and Graduation	20
2.8 Statewide Initiatives to Develop College-Based Foster Care Alumni Programs .21	
2.9 Recommendations from the Literature	22
3.0 Survey of 4-Year Public Colleges	22
3.1 Survey and Process	23
3.2 Survey Responses	24
3.3 Public 4-Year College Programs - Geographic Reach and Number	36
3.4 Findings	38
4.0 Attachments	47
4.1 References	41
4.2 Resources	47
4.3 Selected Policy Recommendations from the Literature	55
4.4 Public 4-Year College Survey Questions	60

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

We as a society largely fail the children who come into our care.

Children and youth who experience foster care in the United States have not been well-poised to transition into secure, productive lives: 16% experience homelessness within three years of aging out, 24% experience housing instability in that time period; a majority face unemployment, underemployment, and/or have yearly earnings below the poverty line; and a significant number of Foster Care Alumni become incarcerated or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system.¹⁻³

These are unacceptable outcomes for children that society has stepped in to raise.

These victims of child abuse and neglect experienced traumas so severe that the state determined it was necessary to intervene. They are from rural and urban environments and are from families of varying religious backgrounds.

In 2015, there were more than 680,000 abused and neglected children, ranging in age from infants to those becoming young adults. Almost 150,000 of these children were in foster care. They are from rural and urban environments and are from families of varying religious backgrounds. Most are Caucasian but reflect varied racial and ethnic backgrounds. The underlying contributing factors and causes of child abuse and neglect are diverse; parental drug abuse has consistently played a role, becoming more important in recent years.⁴

More than 20,000 youth age out of foster care each year, and many more exit care in the last few years before they leave high school.⁵ Despite their traumatic life experiences, 70% to 84% of youth who age out of care want to attend college. Only 20% attend college, with just 2-8% completing at least a bachelor's degree.⁶⁻⁸ This is significantly lower than the more than 30% of the U.S. population aged 25 and older that have completed a bachelor's degree or more.⁹ In some areas, foster care agencies are successful in getting foster care youth to college, but find that the youth do not remain in college through graduation.

College-based programs that support the needs of these youth, sometimes as part of broader state efforts, are changing this paradigm in some parts of the country. Programs in Washington State and California, for example, are associated with increased college retention and graduation rates of foster care youth and former foster care youth ("Foster Care Alumni"). The resiliency of these youth and young adults, given the right supports, is well documented.

Why is this a crisis? The legal and moral responsibility is clear. As the state legally sets aside abusive and neglectful parents, we, as citizens – through the states – accept responsibility for the care, health, and welfare of these children. Preparing these youths for adulthood and supporting them in the transition is the least of the assumed set of parental obligations, legal and moral, that we have undertaken, and yields significant benefits to us all.

In addition to meeting our legal and moral obligations, the financial benefits to society associated with raising these children to become productive adults are huge. The estimates are jarring: a 2012 study estimated the total annual cost of child abuse and neglect for one year is over \$80 billion, and the CDC estimates \$124 billion annually in “total lifetime estimated financial costs associated with just one year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment.”^{10,11} Within these estimates are productivity losses – an estimated \$144,360 per victim over their lifetime – and significant increased costs associated with homelessness, health care, and incarceration.¹¹ Societal costs begin immediately in not having adequately prepared aging out foster care youth for adulthood, and they average \$300,000 per young person who ages out.¹²

1.2 The First Star Institute Success in College Project—Building on Existing Literature

The First Star Institute Foster Youth Success in College Project is a multi-survey research project that highlights U.S. college and university approaches to supporting Foster Care Alumni (used here to encompass foster youth and former foster youth), and to describe existing college and university programs. The Project will provide a picture of the programs across the country that support Foster Care Alumni in college. The Project builds on an initial review of the literature, with a macro survey to over 600 public, 4-year colleges inquiring about college programs for Foster Care Alumni. In addition, the Project contemplates a more detailed follow-up survey to selected college-based programs, as well as a survey of social service agencies. The goal is to provide a more detailed current look at what these programs look like, how extensive they are throughout the country, and to detail best practices in place in different parts of the country.

This Initial Report sets forth the results of the review of literature as well as the results of a survey of all public four-year colleges inquiring about programs for Foster Care Alumni attending college.

The existing literature indicated that in some states, and in certain areas of the country, several types of college-based programs have developed. The approaches commonly provide very specific supports to Foster Care Alumni attending college, including: education advocacy, single point of contact within the university, mentorship, tuition and fees, housing, board and other economic supports, and physical and mental health services. These approaches are part of a developing arsenal of state programs assisting foster youth

transitioning into adulthood. Workforce development programs in some states focus on vocational and or community college transitions as a first step.

Almost half of the states provide tuition waivers or vouchers as part of mechanisms for Foster Care Alumni to attend community colleges and/or public 4-year colleges. A few states have Foster Care Alumni college support initiatives that are not necessarily college-based, but look to organizations to coordinate academic, financial or other support efforts. These efforts build on state social service agency efforts and independent living program initiatives. Other initiatives, including Student Support Services – one of the federal cluster of programs known as TRIO – have focused on low-income disadvantaged or first-generation youth, although since 2010 allows homeless youth or those who have experienced foster care to be provided certain services. The statistics on Foster Care Alumni homelessness (16% in the first 3 years of transitioning into adulthood) clearly demonstrate overlap between categories.

The literature did not reflect universal national adoption of college-based programs supporting foster youth. This project provides needed data on the increasing number of states interested in college-based programs to support their Foster Care Alumni.

1.3 Highlights of the Initial Survey of 4-Year Public Colleges

This Initial Report identifies existing programs at public, 4-year college programs (section 3.3). We hope it will assist Foster Care Alumni, social service agencies, and others by underscoring supports that may benefit Foster Care Alumni in persisting and graduating from college. In almost doubling the number of previously identified public 4-year college programs, this increase underscores the trend discussed in the literature. Survey responses indicated college-based support from 4-year public colleges in 33 states. The trend is definitely taking place in a majority of states.

Survey questions also addressed financial supports received by Foster Care Alumni in the programs. Information provided by the responding colleges and universities underscored the financial constraints Foster Care Alumni face. *Foster Care Alumni continue to not have basic financial needs met – for tuition and fees, housing, food, books.* At the same time, the breadth of services provided by few staff, considerable numbers of volunteers, and additional scholarship awards for these students demonstrates a commitment to foster youth throughout the country and an increased understanding of, and interest in meeting, the complexities involved in supporting the collegiate success of this unique population. These programs can provide an underlying framework that supports a sense of belonging within the college or university setting by meeting a set of real needs.

While the initial survey and this report are primarily descriptive in nature and document the extent to which college-based programs are national, two issues needing clarification presented themselves. (1) Some colleges view their federal financial aid form (FAFSA)

confidentiality restrictions as foreclosing their ability to share information within the college for the limited purpose of permitting college programs for Foster Care Alumni to confidentially communicate with students who have self-identified through FAFSA as foster youth. (2) College-based support through TRIO SSS programs that can serve foster youth do not track these youth, and many do not appear to engage in outreach to this population. Moreover, ensuring the adequacy of the financial supports for these students to complete college remains an essential step in changing the dismal statistics that mark our failure to support our Foster Care Alumni in college.

Knowing the scope of the resources actually out there is an essential first step to making sure that these programs are expanded and improved; and this report begins that process on a national scale.

The project continues with surveys to social service agencies and select programs.

2.0 Literature Review: Setting the Stage for the Project – General Context and Specific Practices That Help Foster Care Alumni Attending College

The literature reviewed indicates national interest in supporting Foster Care Alumni attending college. While there is no current comprehensive national picture of programs that support foster youth retention in – and graduation from – college, in parts of the country there has been considerable interest and experience in developing these programs and in sharing information. Most studies, descriptive or otherwise, have been statewide or regional, varying in sample size, scope and focus, and length of time. Nevertheless, there are trends in the ways the literature discusses foster youth retention in college persistence and degree attainment. The literature suggests that college-based programs that help foster youth and alumni succeed in college provide a range of specific supports. Each of these supports – educational advocacy, single point of contact, as well as more concrete resources such as finances, housing, food - are discussed in this section, and a listing of useful program resources is included as part of Attachment 4.2.

Before proceeding with the details of the specific supports, it is important to note that work in child welfare has progressed considerably in the last 20 years. Resiliency studies not only describe healthy attributes but posit ways to increase resiliency in youth.¹⁴ Trauma-informed care has provided frameworks for better understanding how to work with foster children and youth, and science and study have yielded more information about children, youth, the effects of trauma and stress, and the adolescent brain. At the same time there has been an increased interest in evidence-based approaches, some of which are discussed below.ⁱ In short, we know much more now about how to support youth who have experienced trauma, and we are increasingly developing the data to support effective approaches.

The literature reviewed for this project expanded from initial searches focused more specifically on four-year college-based programs supporting Foster Care Alumni. Information about these programs, as the holistic approach supported by Casey suggests, encompasses an understanding of the bigger picture of who these youths are, what they need for success and how best to support them. The review below is organized by topic as it relates to student college needs and concludes with recommendations for policy reform from the literature.

Overall, the literature indicates a growing awareness of the importance of resources for foster youth as they transition to adulthood. A majority of states have raised the age of exiting the foster care system from 18 to 21 because research has shown that having specific resources for foster youth as they transitioned out of care was predictive of more successful outcomes (The Casey Family Foundation (2008); Michelle Perfect, Analysis of State Laws, 2013). Several states have implemented more cohesive forms of support for

foster youth. California is a much-cited example, with a system that uses an opt-out, rather than an opt-in approach. According to a 2017 national survey, there is a lot of goodwill and effort going into supporting students during their transition to adulthood, though there is still much room for growth specifically with improving housing supports, as well as other service categories and programs.¹⁵

The literature has also noted the enrollment and academic characteristics of Foster Youth Alumni in postsecondary education, with recommendations that included inventorying campus-based support for foster youth.^{16,17}

2.1 Financial Aid Generally

It is well-documented that in the general population, the transition to adulthood is taking place later for young people today than it did in earlier generations: the traditional signs of adulthood, such as living independently, becoming educated, starting a family, and being financially self-sufficient, are reached later by today's young people than they were in previous generations.^{18,19} Arnett has coined the term "emerging adulthood" to describe the relatively recent emergence of a transition period during which young people ranging in age from late teens to late twenties explore different possible ways of living before "making the commitments that structure adult life: marriage (or a long-term partnership), parenthood, and a long-term job."²⁰

In terms of college and tuition costs, about 66% of youth from high-income families receive tuition assistance from their parents, only 11% of youth from low-income families do. The statistics for foster youth are even lower—less than 5% of foster youth have that same support.²¹

Transitioning youth who age out of care are often viewed as independent as soon as they age out of foster care at age 18, 21, or later, depending on the state. In some states, it is the foster care system itself which further ensures financial hardship: states take youths' social security benefits as payment for costs of their care, so when they age out of the system, they are not only immediately thrust into financial self-responsibility, they are left without any inherited benefits to ease the transition.^{22,23} The lack of financial ability, despite becoming "of age" for foster youth is clear: according to one study, 45% percent experienced at least one form of material hardship during the past year vs. less than a fifth of young people in the general population.^{24,25}

With college costs in a steady rise and financial need associated with most foster youth, financial support is essential for Foster Care Alumni attending college. The myriad of costs that will need to be covered includes tuition and fees, books, room and board (including during non-academic season times), health insurance and costs, clothing, transportation, and incidentals. A number of states have authorized tuition waivers for their foster youth and/or former foster youth. The website for Transition to Independence has a listing of

these states. <https://www.tipwayne.state.org/interactive-tuition-waiver-map.html> as does Fostering Success <http://fosteringsuccessmichigan.com/campus-support>.

Given their financial need, many foster youth seek or have employment. Numerous studies indicate that working outside of school is one of the major reasons students give for dropping out.^{24,26} In her study of the postsecondary experiences of Foster Care Alumni, which included youth who had completed degree programs as well as youth who did not complete degree programs, Salazar found that an increased number of hours worked was associated with a higher likelihood of not completing a degree program.²⁷ While working a part-time job on campus was associated with college retention, campus-based employment opportunities are often limited. Women also cited childcare needs as a barrier to pursuing their education.^{24,28,29}

Moreover, as set forth in Davis 2006 College Access report “[M]any youth in foster care perceive the cost of college as unaffordable, and they often are unaware of the different forms of financial aid such as Federal Pell Grants that are available to them.”^{30,31}

Studies indicate that foster youth who do attend college largely rely on scholarships and loans to finance their education. According to the Midwest Study, 74% of the interviewees currently enrolled in college and 68% formerly enrolled had a scholarship; 68% of those currently enrolled and 46% of those currently enrolled had loans.²⁴ A recent federal legislative proposal, not limited to foster youth, would provide for increased transparency with regard to college loan investments, including outcomes (proposed federal College Transparency Act of 2017).

According to the research, financial aid correlates to increased college entrance and retention. Research from the Public Policy Institute of California indicates that students in California who received financial aid were more likely to graduate from college, even after controlling for other factors like GPA and family income.³²

Some federal initiatives are aimed at supporting states in advancing higher education access and retention rates for young people who have been in foster care. The Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program, established in 2001, provides youth with up to \$5,000 per year they can put towards cost of college attendance.^{33,34} While young people under the age of 24 are generally seen as “dependent students” and are therefore required to note parents’ income when applying for federal financial aid for college, the College Cost Reductions Act of 2007 allows Foster Care Alumni to apply as “independent students” so that they don’t have to declare parents’ income.³⁵ The College Opportunity and Affordability Act/Higher Education Act (HEA) made students in foster care eligible for additional TRIO programs—federal programs designed to identify and provide services for disadvantaged kids and young people.³³ The Fostering Connections Act and more recent

federal legislation allow states to extend foster care to age 21 and use federal Title IV-E funds beyond the age of 18 to support education and employment opportunities.

The Family First Prevention Services Act, adopted as part of this year's appropriations legislation, extended the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program to allow assistance to former foster youth up to age 23 (previously for youth ages 18-21) and extended eligibility for education and training vouchers for these youth to age 26 (previously only available to youth up to age 23).

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/data/ffpsa-implementation.pdf>

The TRIO website (of the Department of Education, which oversees the program), indicates that SSS funds “are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education . . . The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.”

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/triostudsupp/index.html> While the website provides that certain services *may* be provided to foster youth or those who are aging out of the foster care system, an FAQ answer on the website states that “the purpose of the SSS program is to increase the number of disadvantaged low-income college students, first-generation college students, and college students with disabilities in the United States who successfully complete a program of study at the postsecondary level.” Foster Care Alumni thus do not appear to be targeted in the first instance for inclusion into the TRIO SSS programs, although given the literature's conclusions on Foster Care Alumni income levels, homelessness, and first-generation status, as well as determinations as to youth with foster care experience having financial aid eligibility under FAFSA suggest that many may well meet the TRIO eligibility requirements.

Foster Care Alumni students' financial needs have been underscored in the literature. The most commonly cited reason Foster Care Alumni give for not attending or dropping out of college is not having enough money to pay for school.²⁴ As noted above, colleges are expensive, and these students often have multiple application processes, with differing documentation requirements and timelines to finance their education. In Oregon, for example, one study noted that Foster Care Alumni could get the “Oregon tuition waver” to cover tuition and required fees that remain after funds from the Pell Grant, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and other forms of institutional aid. There are also strict academic and financial eligibility requirements as well as 30 hours of community service every year. The combined processes result in very few Foster Care Alumni applying for and receiving the Oregon tuition waver each year.³⁶

2.2 Issues with Housing and Food Resources

Housing

Foster youth's levels of housing instability have been well documented in studies over the course of decades.³⁷⁻⁴² Data from early 2000 indicated that foster youth have an average of 2.8 foster homes and five school switches. Smithgall et al 2004. More recently, in 2016, the median time in care was 13.9 months, with 28 percent in care for 12 to 23 months, 15 percent in care for 24 to 35 months, 13 percent in care for 3 or more years. They are also at increased risk for homelessness as they age out of the system.⁴³⁻⁴⁷ According to the Midwest study, by age 23 or 24 (the 4th wave interview), 37% percent of interviewees reported they had been homeless or had couch surfed since exiting foster care, often more than once.¹⁸ Compared with the general population, foster youth are disproportionately concerned with housing and other basic resources, which act as significant barriers to post-secondary education.^{37,48}

Access to stable resources is linked to foster youth success in college. However, despite awareness of the importance of housing resources, foster youth do not always have access to the resources they need to succeed. In a 2014 study, 31 states reported finding appropriate housing for foster youth as they transition out of care to be a major challenge.⁴⁹ This included states that had extended foster care past age 18, and interviews also noted several reasons that make finding and funding housing problematic, including the fact that many of these youth may exit and reenter care.

For foster youth in college, in addition to funding housing during the academic year, housing during summer, spring and winter breaks can be a major issue. In a study of the Ball State University/Ivy Tech Community College Guardian Scholars program and 15 other college-based programs for Foster Care Alumni, housing was identified as an ongoing challenge. Finding affordable spaces is difficult and students often live in group homes, which numerous studies have link to a decreased likelihood of success.⁵⁰

California has a variety of living options such as Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP) including apartment living and dorms, and THP-Plus Foster Care, which provides semi-supervised housing and support services.³³

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development commissioned a six-part study on housing for youth aging out of foster care and issued an extensive report in May 2014. The report reviewed the data documenting the link between aging out of foster care and homelessness, outlined the housing options and federal and state programs for youth aging out of care. The report documented the continuing unmet housing needs of this group and noted that "Communities often combine the various federal funding streams with state, local and private dollars to develop suitable housing programs for transition-age youth at risk of homelessness." A research brief from the study described methods for evaluating

housing options for effectiveness in preventing homelessness. The HUD report noted that the developing National Youth in Transition database will follow the housing status of former foster youth across the transition to adulthood and will provide more current information on these individual's homelessness.

Food Pantries

A suggestion in the literature on Foster Care Alumni programs is the creation of food pantries that these students can access to supplement food needs. This recommendation is supported by general statistics on food scarcity. Recent studies and reports document widespread food scarcity among college students, not limited to particular US states or regions.⁵¹ Causes discussed include rising tuition and housing costs, requiring students to attempt to make up the shortfall by spending much less on food.

2.3 Independent Living Skills and Social Support

For all children growing into adulthood, developing independent living skills and having a social support system are important. To become independent adults, youth must learn how to budget, handle money, food, bank accounts, work, housing issues and numerous other independent living skills.

As noted earlier, foster youth are often expected to transition immediately into adulthood, upon aging out. According to the Midwest study, only a quarter of the foster youth interviewed felt very prepared to be self-sufficient at the time they exited foster care, usually between the age of 18-21. Only 42-63% reported they had enough people to whom they could turn for help to meet needs.²⁴ This lack of social support has an impact; the research suggests that there is clear link between having social support and foster youth success in college.^{27,52,53} And these studies show that barriers to foster youth success include not just lack of resources but also lack of help finding and attaining these resources.

The research indicates that foster youth's support system frequently includes their biological families.^{39-41,46,54} Given their complicated histories, relationships with birth parents are not necessarily a dependable support for foster youth. The research suggests that while foster youth may feel close to their family, they may also have ongoing issues trying to manage those relationships, which sometimes involves parents depending on them for emotional and material support.^{18,55} The Guardian Scholars Program Report (2007) notes that ongoing strain with their families sometimes limited students' academic success. Mark Courtney's (2009) analysis is that while biological families act as support systems, foster youth are comparatively less likely to be able to rely on this support and "they also must often weigh the benefits of family contact against the risks".¹⁸⁵⁵³¹

Foster youth's other potential sources of support generally include foster parents, social workers, or group home staff. However, those adults are not usually adequate sources of information on the complicated and time sensitive college and financial aid application

processes.⁵⁶ This time of transition for foster youth is also rife with misunderstanding that has unfortunate repercussions for foster youth success. Foster youth often think they will be able to stay in their foster families after turning 18, foster parents think the kids will go back to the state, and the state sometimes has conflicting goals.

Given the complexity of foster youth's social supports, institutional, college-based support, can be very important, Numerous studies have noted the correlation between students being involved in the college and feeling supported by their institution to be a good predictor of retention rates.^{57,58}

Perhaps as part of this institutional support, the literature also shows that mentorship, on both the peer and formal level, can provide a vital support for the educational success of Foster Care Alumni. While foster youth sometimes receive mentoring before attending college, mentorship can begin at any point in foster youth's education.

In one study focused on postsecondary retention, former foster youth who graduated college and participated in independent living programs reported a sense of belonging and friendship significantly impacting their success. The report offered multiple suggestions for other higher education programs such as prioritizing the development of belonging, friendship, networking, community, and alumni connections through mentoring. A number of programs incorporate direct mentorship in building a sense of belonging at the university while providing role models in problem solving or specific skills.

In the digital age, mentoring can go beyond formality and direct contact. One study suggests programs that encourage digital literacy could provide several new opportunities for mentorship of foster youth. The researchers used a scale for Personal Youth Development (PYD) by measuring competence, confidence, community, compassion and social consciousness. The web provides transparency for foster youth regarding financial aid bureaucracy and allows foster youth to connect with mentors and other individuals to work through their struggles and develop relationship. Not only does the web offer accessibility to information, it provides an avenue for youth to make connections with others transitioning from home to home. Therefore, the web represents an informal and accessible avenue for foster youth to receive mentoring and develop personal character.

While many colleges offer a variety of programs for former foster youth, the accessibility of those programs is critical in determining student's usage of services. Many studies have focused on what broad programs students need most and who provides the most effective services. As previously mentioned, financial aid support has consistently been identified as the most or one of the most needed services. However, the mere existence of a financial aid support is only a precursor to, not the producer of, full use of the service. Formal support, such as teachers, college staff and social service agents, and informal support, such as peer mentors, are critical in ensuring the services are fully utilized. Formal support is often

helpful for mentoring foster youth through financial support and document or policy-based issues. On the other hand, foster youth were more likely to engage in emotional and social support programs if informal mentors led the service.

While the idea of mentoring is promising, the research also suggests that such programs should be implemented carefully. Given the complex nature of foster youths' backgrounds, these children have been underserved by a number of adults in their lives already. Their connections to other people may be more strained, and their trust of adults in positions of power already lessened. While an ample amount of research on bettering the lives of foster youth exists, there is not a ton of research on the effectiveness of such programs and as such, programs run the risk of leaving foster youth with yet another broken connection.

Developing effective mentoring models and practices has been a focus of the literature. Recently a data-developing and data-developed model to support postsecondary access and retention of former foster youth has been proposed. The proposal includes three main interventions, including one on mentoring.⁵⁹

2.4 Physical and Mental Health

Complicating the issue of foster youth success in college is the prevalence of mental health issues among former foster youth. Compared with the general population, former foster youth have more mental health challenges.^{39,41,42} One study found that among young adults who had recently exited foster care, 54% had diagnosed mental health problems, 25% percent were experiencing PTSD and 20% were experiencing depression.^{42,60} The Midwest study found that 60% of the interviewees had PTSD, 33% had social anxiety and 25% were depressed. According to several studies, young adults who have been in out-of-home care or who were making the transition to adulthood from foster care were over twice as likely as their peers to have a current mental health problem or receive help from a mental health professional.^{41,42}

The frequency of mental health challenges is often connected to foster youth's disproportionate exposure to trauma. At the very least, foster youth experience two traumas in their lives: the abuse or neglect that required removal from family care, and said removal from family care.³¹ The research suggests that young people who have left foster care also have increased difficulty obtaining affordable medical coverage, which may also impact the ability to treat both their mental and physical health.^{41,61}

The difficulty of addressing this issue is multifold. Colleges often do not have the resources or understanding of the specificity of foster youth backgrounds to provide the kind of mental health support necessary for foster youth success. In a written guide about the Guardian Scholars program, program directors overwhelmingly recognized mental health care as a significant challenge. Young people with severe mental health challenges may also

be less inclined to disclose their mental health challenges out of fear of being stigmatized, singled out or discriminated against.⁶²

Mental health challenges are strongly associated with college retention difficulties. One study found that having a history of severe maltreatment, as well as being diagnosed with PTSD, had a high correlation with disengagement with school (Salazar, 2012). Interestingly, the only comparison study of services for foster youth with various disabilities indicated that young people with emotional disabilities were less likely to receive services, including college application help, than foster youth with other types of disabilities (Westat, 1991).

There is the research, however, to show that foster youth with mental health challenges are underserved, and that, with support, they can achieve health and success. One study analyzing the efficacy of the “Better Futures” intervention model, in which foster youth participate in a Summer Institute, individual peer coaching, and mentoring workshops, found that youth involved in the program had twice the level of post-secondary participation as compared with the control group.⁶³ The program was specific in the way it integrated mental health throughout the model, acknowledging and normalizing their mental health challenges in the context of their experiences, and affirming their strengths and resilience as foster youth.⁶³ Other studies on mental health and college affirm this finding: one study found that the degree to which colleges meet foster youth’s mental health needs is associated with college retention.

2.5 Academic Preparedness

Academic preparedness is often mentioned or noted as a challenge to foster youth success. Foster youth have an average of 2.8 foster homes, and switch schools an average of five times. They are often concentrated in underperforming schools.⁶⁴⁶⁵ Despite having above average motivation and desire to attend college, foster youth are generally less academically prepared, have lower high school and college GPAs than other college students.⁸

However, one survey of Foster Care Alumni scholarship recipients found that high school GPA did not statistically correlate to graduation rates for foster youth, though supports developing academic skills while in college did correlate with better foster youth retention rates.⁵⁷ In another study, students did not report academic problems as being a reason for dropping out.²⁶ They have focused instead on financial support, satisfaction with college, increased participation in college events, mental health issues and lack of mental health support, as the primary reasons why youth stay in school.²⁷ In one survey, the majority of youth stressed “the importance of resources, social support, and personal habits and skills as they prepare for the transition out of foster care.”⁵²

Whether for reasons of inadequate academic preparedness, funding issues, social or familial problems, foster youth do tend to take longer to graduate. The literature often

indicates that they may take 5 or 6 years to graduate. To assist with a smooth college transition, including academic preparation, some colleges offer pre-college entry sessions during the summer preceding college entrance.

2.6 Institutional Support – Educational Advocacy, Single Point of Contact

As noted above, the literature underscores the value and successes of college-based programs supporting Foster Care Alumni. Many sources discuss the importance of educational advocacy and/or a single point of contact at the school as critical to student success both in terms of supporting students' sense of belonging at the school, but also in solving concrete issues as they arise (with academics, finances, or other areas) and developing and supporting student self-advocacy.⁵⁹ Educational advocacy includes a broad range of education-focused problem-solving, and some model practices have been proposed or are in use. Salazar, Haggerty and Roe have proposed a model as one of a 3-part recommendation aimed at improving postsecondary access and retention for youth with foster care experience.⁵⁹

2.7 Degree Attainment: Persistence and Graduation

As noted above, studies in the literature have looked at persistence and graduation rates of Foster Care Alumni, setting forth a range of dismal figures: **2 percent** of Foster Care Alumni completed a baccalaureate degree or higher;⁶⁶⁴² between **5 and 10%** of Foster Care Alumni earn degrees at postsecondary educational institutions;⁶⁷⁶⁸ **2.5%** of young adults who aged of foster care completed a 4-year degree by age 26.²⁴

On a larger scale, the GAO in 2016 analyzed the Department of Education's Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS) data, and concluded that:

A smaller percentage of foster youth who began college for the first time in 2003-2004 school year (an estimated 14 percent) graduated with a bachelor's degree as of June 2009 . . . than all other students (31 percent). Further BPS data indicate that a high percentage of foster youth who enroll in college do not earn a degree compared to other low-income students. Specifically, 72 percent of foster youth had no degree or certificate within 6 years of first enrolling in college – far greater percentage than for low-income students (57%) as well as for all other students (49%).¹⁶

College-based programs for Foster Youth Alumni have sought to change the paradigm and are developing data to support the effectiveness and successes of their programs. Some programs report their program's retention and graduation rate data. UC San Marcos, for example, reports rates of 86%. The literature, however, cautions that student self-selection and other factors may impact program persistence and graduation rates.

Beyond specific programs, state-wide programs in California and Washington state have reported persistence and graduation data. Initial reports show promising persistence and

graduation rates. (Washington State Pathways to Success, An Initial Report; California, A First Look)⁶⁴

The Department of Education reports persistence and completion rates in postsecondary education of participants in the TRIO Student Support Services Program. The federal Student Support Services program was created to close gaps between students from disadvantaged populations (low income families, students demonstrating academic need, first-generation college students, students with disabilities, and more recently encompassing foster youth). For SSS students enrolled as freshmen in four-year institutions in 2007-8, 93 percent were enrolled the following semester, 79% presented the following fall, and 40% received a bachelor's degree by the end of the 6th year.

2.8 Statewide Initiatives to Develop College-Based Foster Care Alumni Support Programs

Some states have initiated state-wide initiatives to develop college-based programs, providing significant leadership on practices and information about their programs, how to develop programs, and youth access to aid and other resources. Fostering Success Michigan, California Pathways to Success, Washington's Passport to College and the REACH programs of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Ohio and Texas are among the state-wide initiatives discussed in the literature or maintaining an online presence. Some of these programs have significant resources available for those seeking to start or run a program for foster youth, and for foster youth. See, e.g., <http://www.student.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/> These programs are included within the Resources at Attachment 4.2.

Other states have developed programs that may not be college-based, but which are aimed at supporting college retention and graduation of Foster Care Alumni in their states. The Missouri and North Carolina REACH programs are examples. Further, state initiatives support access of Foster Care Alumni to community colleges in their states, either through waivers, independent living programs or otherwise. Given the research indicating that most foster youth who attend college do so at the community college level, the extent to which programs are available supporting foster youth at that level is important.^{16,69} Lastly, one state will be opening the first college solely for foster youth. The Riverbend Center for Higher Education, at its Montgomery, West Virginia, campus will be working with KVC Health Systems staff this fall to prepare for its first wave of former foster youth to begin classes in the spring. Riverbend will operate in partnership with Bridge Valley Community and Technical College, a community college and is expected to be free for former foster youth and is reportedly funded through state and federal monies.

2.9 Recommendations from the Literature

The literature emphasizes the unique role that foster youth occupy in our society, and society's singular responsibility for their care. With respect to college-based programs, from a Foster Youth Alumni focus, the recommendations in the literature include:

- ✓ support for the full range of necessary costs - tuition and fees, housing (including during summer and other break periods), board, physical and mental health services, transportation and other incidentals, specific financial aid reforms to increase Foster Care Alumni understanding of, and access to financial aid, and increased work-study opportunities on campus that serve to both
- ✓ educational advocacy, a single point of contact at the college or university (including those with data-supported protocols)
- ✓ mentoring (using data-supported effective measures), tutoring and academic support
- ✓ outreach efforts such as inviting Foster Care Alumni to participate in summer bridge programs, using student financial aid information to identify incoming Foster Care Alumni students for confidential outreach by college programs supporting these students.
- ✓ institutional tracking of college access and success of Foster Care Alumni
- ✓ access to health care, and coordination with social service agencies for a variety of supports, including to ensure addressing health issues prior to the start of academic programs

State or federal policy recommendations supporting these and other programmatic components abound. Recommendations are from a variety of sources, including program personnel, state program initiatives, the National Conference of State Legislators, researchers, and agencies. Selected recommendation excerpts are included at section 4.3 and will be revisited as the project progresses.

3.0 Survey of 4-Year Public Colleges

FSI conducted a survey of 4-year public collegesⁱ aimed at: (1) identifying college-based programs supporting Foster Care Alumni retention and graduation, augmenting information available from multiple sources, and providing a current national snapshot of college-based programs serving Foster Care Alumni youth; and, (2) eliciting information about specific practices that support Foster Care Alumni in college. Best practices can be highlighted and further explored in a follow-up survey to a subset of programs identified

ⁱ The universe of 4-year public colleges was determined using the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) latest institutional survey results for 2014-15. Colleges were selected which had a value of 2, "Public, 4-year or above" for the variable SECTOR in the table HD2014.

from this survey and the literature review. FSI is in the initial stages of developing the follow-up survey to 4-year colleges identified from responses to this initial survey. This survey will further explore and detail demographics, funding sources, effective practices, and challenges. The social service agency survey is also in its initial planning and survey development stage. This survey will provide more complete information on agency approaches to transitioning foster youth from care and monitoring, supporting and tracking Foster Care Alumni as they transition out of care to postsecondary education and other pursuits.

3.1 Survey and Process

The Survey Instrument

To maximize the usefulness of the FSI 4-year college survey, we sent a survey with questions about both college identification of foster youth and specific program information. A copy of the survey is included as an attachment in section 4.3 of this report.

The first section of the survey inquired about college identification of Foster Care Alumni, low income youth and other disadvantaged youth attending the school. We were interested in the extent to which colleges consider this aspect of the federal financial aid (FAFSA) form in identifying or providing outreach to Foster Care Alumni attending the college or university. We were also interested in whether the schools identified other groups of at risk or disadvantaged youth, such as low income, homeless or first-generation students, and whether foster youth were identified at the same rates as these other groups.

A few survey questions focused on student eligibility for the program, with options aimed at examining how the programs encompassed services to foster youth in care upon university application, registration or enrollment, or encompassed those with foster care experience going back to age 13. Eligibility questions also encompassed whether minimum college credits were required for program acceptance. Information about numbers of youth served by the program in each of the last four years, as well as numbers of staff and volunteers was sought.

The survey also inquired about specific supports received by or provided to Foster Care Alumni in the program - financial aid for basic college costs (tuition and fees, books, housing, board/food) and whether a number of services were provided - financial advising, educational advocacy, mentoring, etc. For most sets of questions, recipients were invited to provide write in responses as well.

The survey was conducted by email, through a link to an online form, with reminders by email and telephone. In limited instances, recipients requested that they not complete the survey online, and responses were taken by phone.

Survey Recipients

Surveys were sent to four-year public colleges and universities in the U.S. The more than 600 4-year public colleges receiving the survey were identified through filters applied to the database of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). IPEDS annually gathers information from more than 7,500 colleges, universities, and technical and vocational institutions that participate in the federal student aid programs. Surveys from this project were sent to a subset of these institutions filtered to reflect 4-year public colleges and universities. Surveys were emailed to offices of student affairs, chancellors or presidents, and any identified programs from our literature review and internet search

3.2 Survey Responses

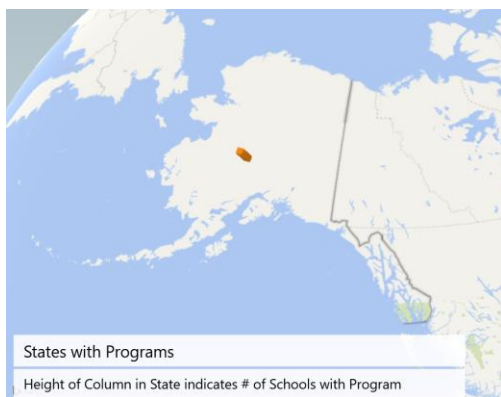
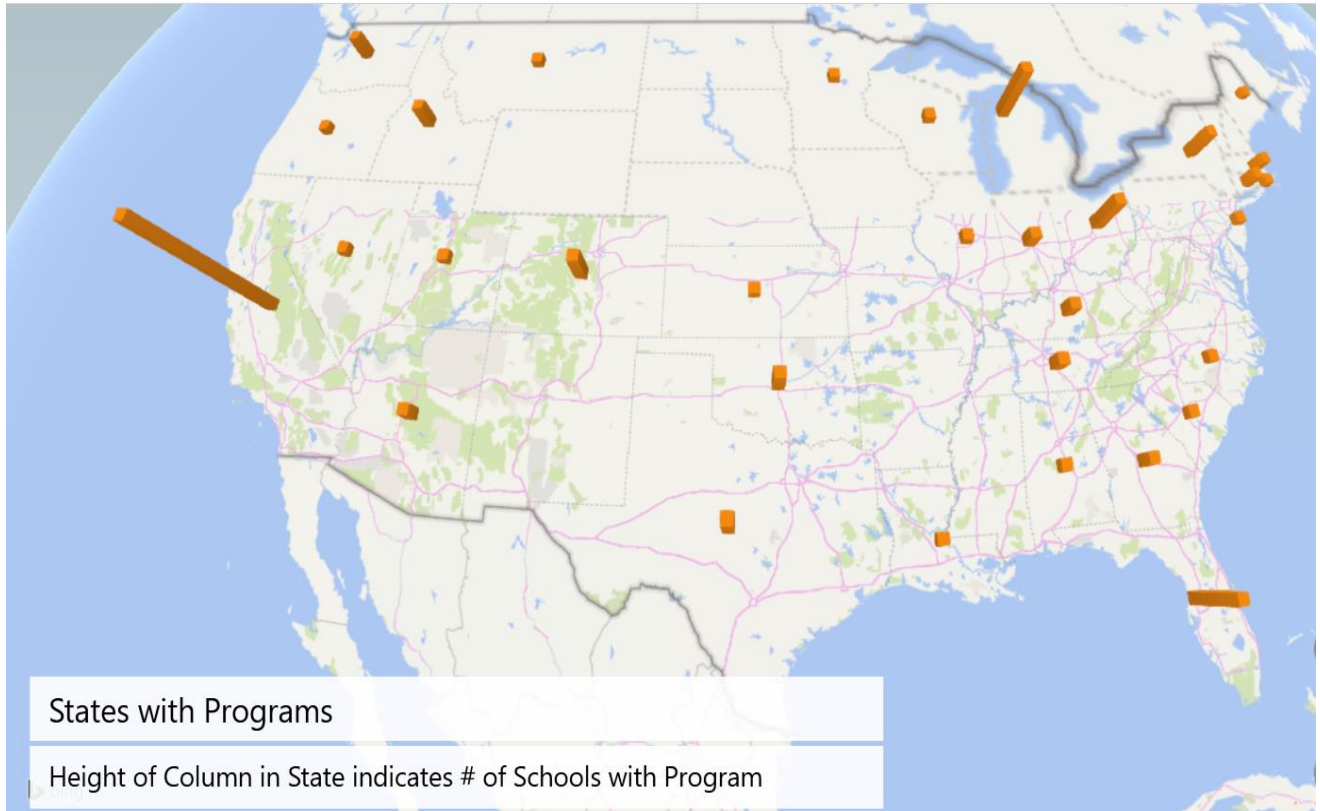
Respondents

212 responsesⁱⁱ were received from the survey to 4-year public colleges and universities. At least one response was received from a school in each of the fifty states. While over 80% of the respondents completed the survey, not all respondents completed all questions.

Approximately half (109, or 51% of valid responses) of those who responded had a program that supported foster youth alumni in college. For analysis purposes, duplicate responses were combined into the most complete response for that college, bringing the number of colleges with programs that support foster alumni to an even 100. The colleges responding to the survey are summarized by state in the map below. The size of the column in the map reflects the number of colleges responding that they had a program for Foster Care Alumni in that state – the larger the column, the greater the number of programs in that state that responded to our survey.

ⁱⁱ 219 total responses but 7 of those responses did not provide a valid response to the question of whether their school had a program for Foster Care Alumni.

Map showing states with responding 4-year public colleges and universities in the continental US, and in Alaska, shown below.



As part of the survey, we advised recipients that while we would share the program as a current program serving Foster Youth Alumni, we would not be ranking the programs. Response information is presented in the aggregate, nationally or by state.

Identification of Foster Youth and Other Disadvantaged Youth

One of the issues identified in the literature is ensuring that Foster Care Alumni are aware of supports that may assist them in succeeding in college. Referrals within the college or university to the college-based program for confidential outreach making prospective Foster Care Alumni students aware of programs for their support is identified as an important outreach method. The financial aid office is likely to have information through student self-disclosure as to foster youth experience on the federal financial aid (FAFSA) form. Specifically, the FAFSA includes a question as to whether an applicant has been in foster care (Q53: At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court? The FAFSA instructions for this question instruct the applicant to answer yes to this question ‘if at any time since you turned age 13:

- You had no living parent, even if you are now adopted; or
- You were in foster care, even if you are no longer in foster care today; or
- You were a dependent or ward of the court, even if you are no longer a dependent or ward of the court today.”

The survey tracked some of these categories, as well as those from the TRIO inclusion of services to first generation and homeless youth. Survey recipients were asked whether and how the schools identified foster, low income, disadvantaged and first-generation youth. Responses from all responding colleges (those that do and those that do not have programs) are set forth below. More respondents identified first generation youth than foster youth, with a greater percentage not identifying foster youth than low income or disadvantaged youth.

All Responding Colleges				
Don't Identify Disadvantaged Youth	Don't Identify Low Income Youth	Don't Identify Foster Youth	Identify Foster Youth through FAFSA	Identify First Generation Youth
20%	17%	24%	51%	63%

When looking at those responding colleges and universities with programs for Foster Youth Alumni, 12% of the respondents did not identify foster youth, and 61% of the respondents reported using the FAFSA form, to identify these youth. An additional 27% used some other method or combination of methods including self-identification on application, and FAFSA plus self-identification as shown below.

Method used to Identify Foster Care Alumni when they enter School	% of Schools (with a Program)
Through FAFSA	61

Do not Identify	12
Some other Method (Including self-identification on application)	27
Total	100

From our data, 88% of the respondents with programs (61%+27%) used a mix of identification methods including program or university application, outreach events, self-identification (other than through the FAFSA), tuition and fee waiver or voucher, social service agency or non-profit or high school program referral.

Some school financial aid offices do not allow college-based programs serving Foster Care Alumni to provide college program outreach based on the student's self-identification on the FAFSA form.

Comments from some programs responding to the survey indicated that some school's financial aid offices do not share information on the FAFSA form with the college-based programs for outreach to Foster Care Alumni. Other schools indicated they received this referral information from the Financial Aid office for outreach purposes. Others described the confidential outreach they made to students after a referral from the student business service office – outreach is done by confidential email or phone call to the student explaining the program, the program's respect for the confidentiality of their information, and providing for opt-out, should that be the student's preference.

Program Information from Respondents

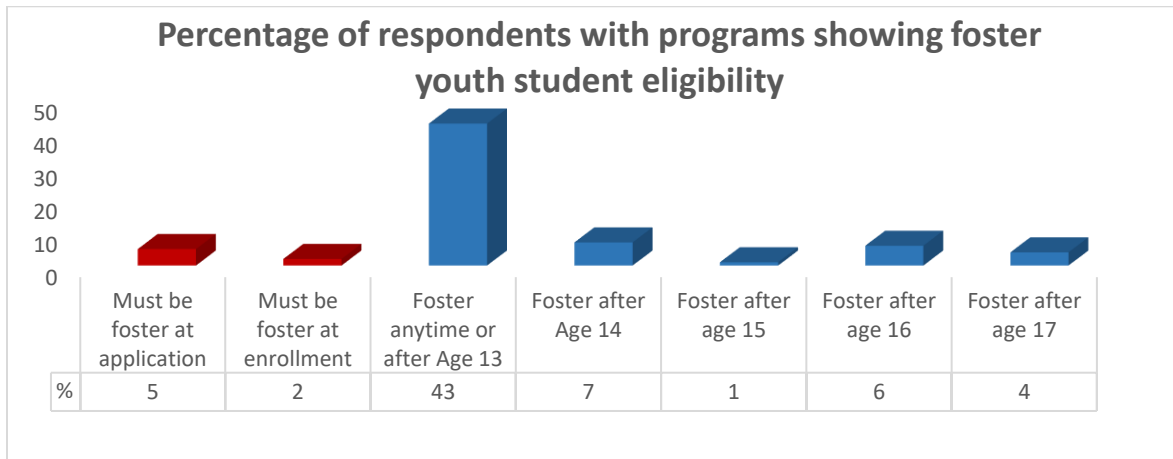
The survey gathered basic information about the programs: the types of students eligible for the program, the types of services provided and to the extent known, the extent to which the students in the program receive financial aid.

Student Eligibility for the Program

Responding programs provided a variety of basic information about their programs, including student eligibility for the program. One of the issues identified in the literature is the impact that foster care has on youth, even beyond the time that they are in care. The statistics on former foster youth homelessness underscore this concern. Some recommendations have been to extend eligibility to any prospective student who was in foster care at any time, or at any time after a specified age (e.g., 13 years).

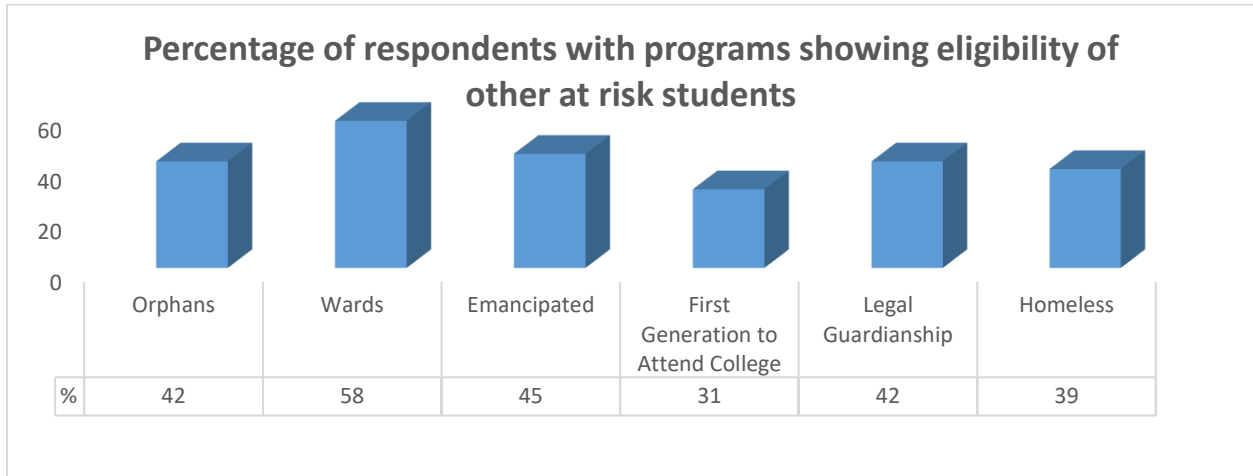
Consequently, we asked whether students who had been in foster care on or after certain ages (13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 years) were eligible. We also asked whether students must be in foster care at the time of university enrollment or upon application to the university. We asked about other types of student eligibility for the program, including orphans, wards, emancipated youth, first generation to attend college, and those who were homeless.

The charts below summarize the results.



Notably, a few programs in several states reported requiring foster care status at the time of university or college application or enrollment. Some respondents indicated that their programs extend eligibility to any student who has ever been in care.

A number of programs that provide services to foster youth reported providing services to other at-risk youth, as summarized below.



Numbers of Foster Care Alumni in Responding Programs

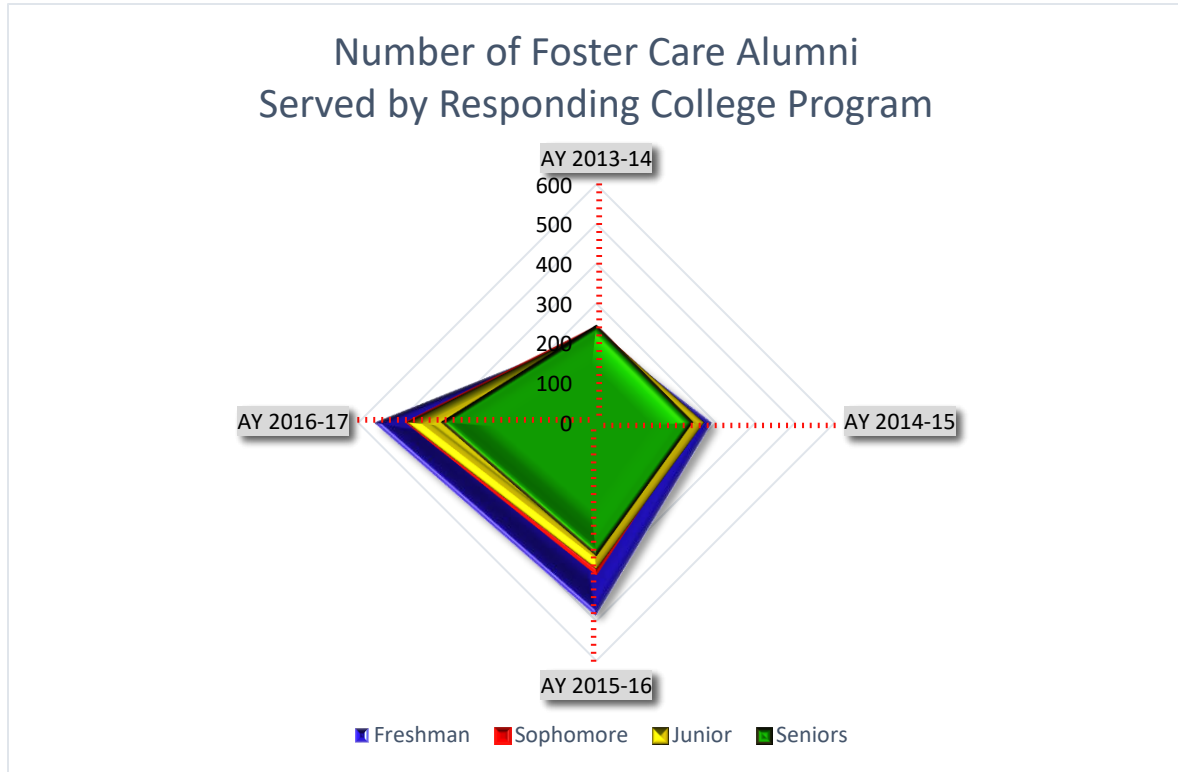
Survey recipients were asked about the numbers of Foster Care Alumni students they served in each of the academic years from Fall 2013 through 2017. We also asked about the breakdown of these youth in the usual college year categories (freshmen to seniors), although we recognize these categories may overlap with some Foster Care Alumni. The following tables show aggregate and average numbers of the foster youth served by responding programs.

Numbers of Foster Care Alumni served by Academic Year:

College Year	AY 2013-14	AY 2014-15	AY 2015-16	AY 2016-17
Freshman	222	292	486	559
Sophomore	237	250	379	473
Junior	233	265	363	468
Seniors	239	238	331	384
-- Total	1325	1567	2020	2676
Average ⁱⁱⁱ	21.7	24.9	32.6	38.2

*This does not reflect information from all programs responding to the survey as not all programs were comfortable sharing this information.

ⁱⁱⁱ Average number of students per college program.



The increases in the number of Foster Care Alumni served each year, suggests that the programs overall are growing. However, the number of school programs providing this information is limited – about half of the schools with programs provided numbers. In addition, some programs had only a few foster youth served in any given class, and some of the TRIO programs that responded indicated that any numbers they would provide would be estimates as they do not track foster youth served.

Minimum Credit Requirements

The literature indicates that Foster Care Alumni may take five or six years to complete school. Minimum requirements to continue in the program, or the university may be at odds with this phenomenon. A quarter of respondents indicated that there was a 12 credit per semester minimum. Half of the respondents with programs indicated that they did not require a minimum number of credits, but respondents noted that students may be subject to university, tuition award, scholarship or loan requirements. Flushing this out will be important as the literature indicates that Foster Care Alumni may start college later, or take more time.

Following Foster Alumni Program Students Through College Experience

Respondents were asked whether their programs tracked students in the program from entry to graduation. 75% of the programs who responded to this question indicated that

they did track the information. A quarter of the respondents with programs did not respond to this question.

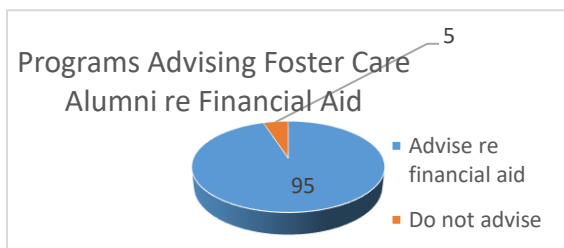
While the information provided – four years of Foster Care Alumni in each program, plus college class (freshman, sophomore, junior and senior) – might ordinarily give rise to persistence rates, we did not calculate them as the literature indicates that Foster Care Alumni join the programs at different times in their college careers, and may take more time to graduate.

We did not ask respondents to disclose persistence rates. We will be addressing persistence and graduation rates in the larger context of follow-up with selected programs. The literature has noted various considerations that affect retention and graduation rates, including self-selection at schools, and we felt it prudent to address this question in the larger context where we might be able to consider school population restrictions, development of supports for Foster Care Alumni and other factors.

Some schools elected to provide this information in comments and have made their persistence and graduation numbers publicly available as noted above in the literature review.

Financial Aid: Advising and Basic Cost Coverage

Respondents were asked both about program personnel advising students about financial aid, and about receipt, by Foster Care Alumni, of financial aid for various specifics (tuition and fees, housing, books, food costs).



Almost all the programs - 95% - reported advising students about financial aid, with many underscoring in comments that financial aid advising is primarily done through the university's financial aid office or elsewhere.

The extent to which financial aid advising results in students timely applying for and receiving aid (including loans) to cover their college costs requires a look at other indicators. Toward this end, the survey asked respondents about student receipt of aid to cover specific needs, including full or partial tuition and fees, housing, food and book costs.

Overall, 41% of the programs reported Foster Care Alumni students received full tuition and fees. This broke down to 20% reporting only that the students receiving full tuition and fees with another 21% reporting those students received either full or partial tuition and fee. Another 13% reported only receipt of partial tuition and fees.

With respect to book costs, most of the respondents (53%) reported that no support was provided for book costs. Some respondents indicated that books were rented, and were included, although no costs as costs were required for books.

For combined tuition and fees, books, housing and food costs, only 22% of responding programs reported that students received financial aid covering full tuition and fees, housing, book and food costs. The table below summarizes this information.

Percentage of Respondent Programs Reporting Foster Youth Alumni Receiving Full Tuition and Fees, Book, Housing and Food Costs

Full Tuition and Fees, book, housing and food costs	Full tuition and fees	Full book costs	Full housing costs	Full food costs
22	41	27	26	22

In addition to direct questions about whether students received tuition and fees, book, housing and food costs, we also asked whether housing during school break periods was provided. The table below shows percentages of respondents who indicated that they provided housing during the breaks (denoted in the table as the Full Year Housing is Provided column).

Reported Level of Financial Support for Housing Costs	% of Colleges Providing	
	Full Year Housing is Provided	Not Full Year
Full Housing Costs	5	6
Partial Housing Costs Only	20	12
Full and/or Partial Housing Costs	27	18

This indicates, as did comments provided along with the responses, that responses reporting “full support for housing costs” did not always include housing during breaks. Only 5% of the respondents that indicated that full support for housing was provided also responded that housing was provided during all of the academic year breaks.

Food Costs

Survey respondents were asked about Foster Care Alumni students’ access to a no cost food pantry. No cost food pantries have been a component outlined in the literature of many college-based programs. These food pantries were developed in response to perceptions of food scarcity by Foster Care Alumni. The table below shows that almost 30% of the schools that do not report Foster Care Alumni receiving full or partial support for food costs do provide access to food pantries, while 38% reported not providing this

access. Moreover, even for those that report providing full food costs, 8% continue to provide access to a food pantry.

Reported Level of Support for Food Costs	% of Colleges Providing	
	Access to food pantry	No access to food pantry
No Support for Food Costs	29	38
Full Food Costs	8	1
Partial Food Costs Only	9	3
Full and/or Partial Food Costs	6	6

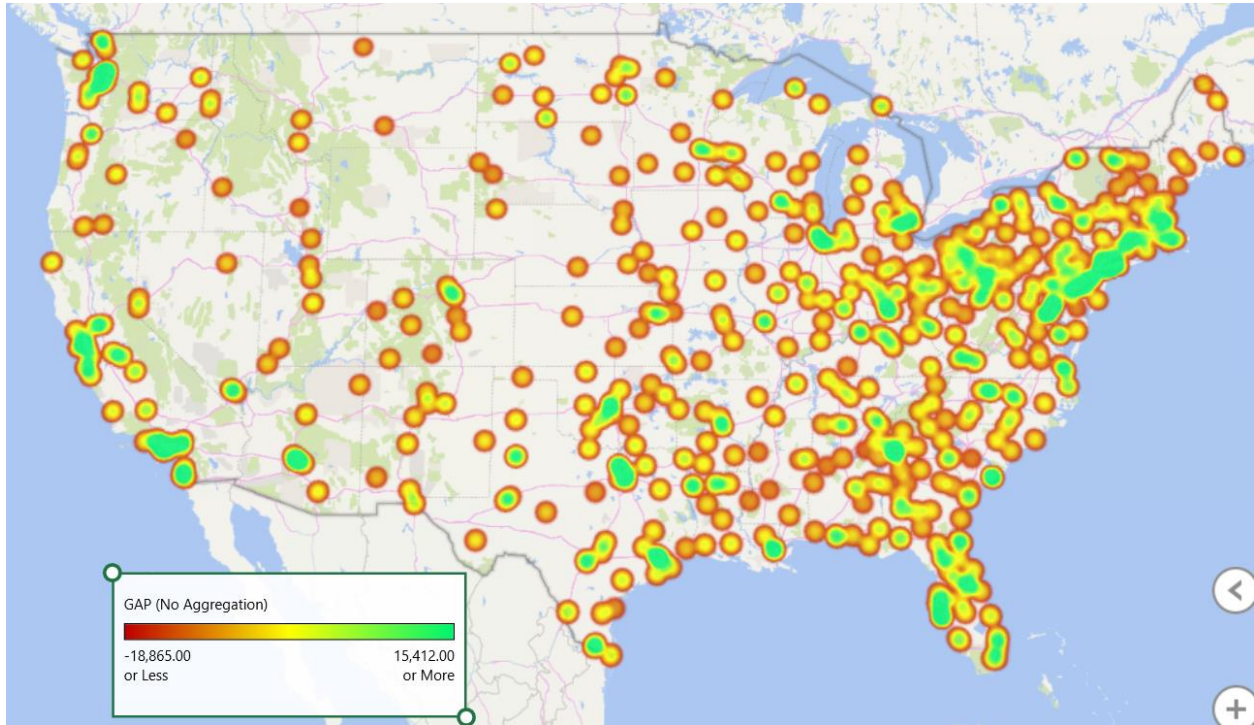
A number of programs provided comments about additional costs that the programs try to cover or refer for coverage including emergency funds, school supplies, personal hygiene, bus passes, and other transportation costs. Other comments stressed that financial aid covering specifics like housing may be based on averages or standard costs and may not cover actual costs. Still others reported on the availability of specific scholarships facilitated through the program.

Overall, the combination of responses indicates that there is a disconnect between aid (including loans) for even the basic costs of tuition and fees, books, housing and food. This is surprising, perhaps, given that the survey respondents were programs providing support to Foster Youth Alumni already in public 4-year colleges and universities. The indications of full aid (including loans) received for these items is far from uniformly reported.

The survey data suggesting an absence of sufficient funding for basic costs of Foster Care Alumni in college is consistent with national statistical information collected by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). NCES maintains the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) - a system of interrelated surveys conducted annually. IPEDS annually gathers information from more than 7,500 colleges, universities, and technical and vocational institutions that participate in the federal student aid programs.

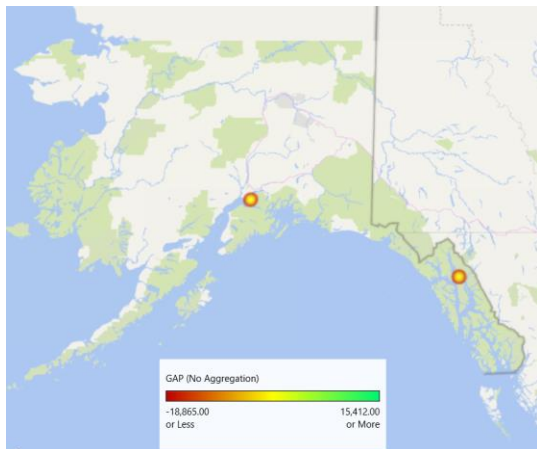
In this database, looking at public 4-year institutions, we found that shortfalls exist throughout the country’s public 4-year universities for low income students. The map below shows the shortfall, based on this IPEDS data.

Continental US:



Tuition – Grant/Scholarship Gap - Based on IPEDS data (IC2014 Table - PUPPRIME - Primary Public Control - Value 1 is Public 4-year). Gap is calculated from “SFA1314_P2 Table - NPIS412 - Avg Net Price for income of 0-30,000 receiving Title IV Fed Funds – 13-14” – “SFA1314_P2 Table - GIS4A12 - Avg amount of grant and scholarship aid for income of 0-30,000 - 13-14.”

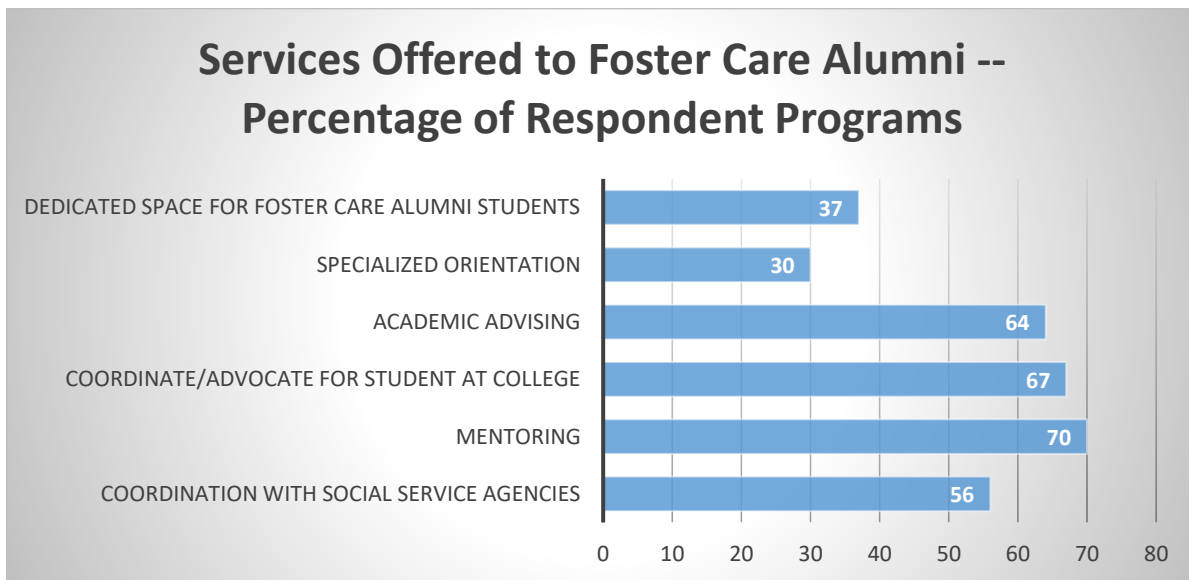
Alaska:

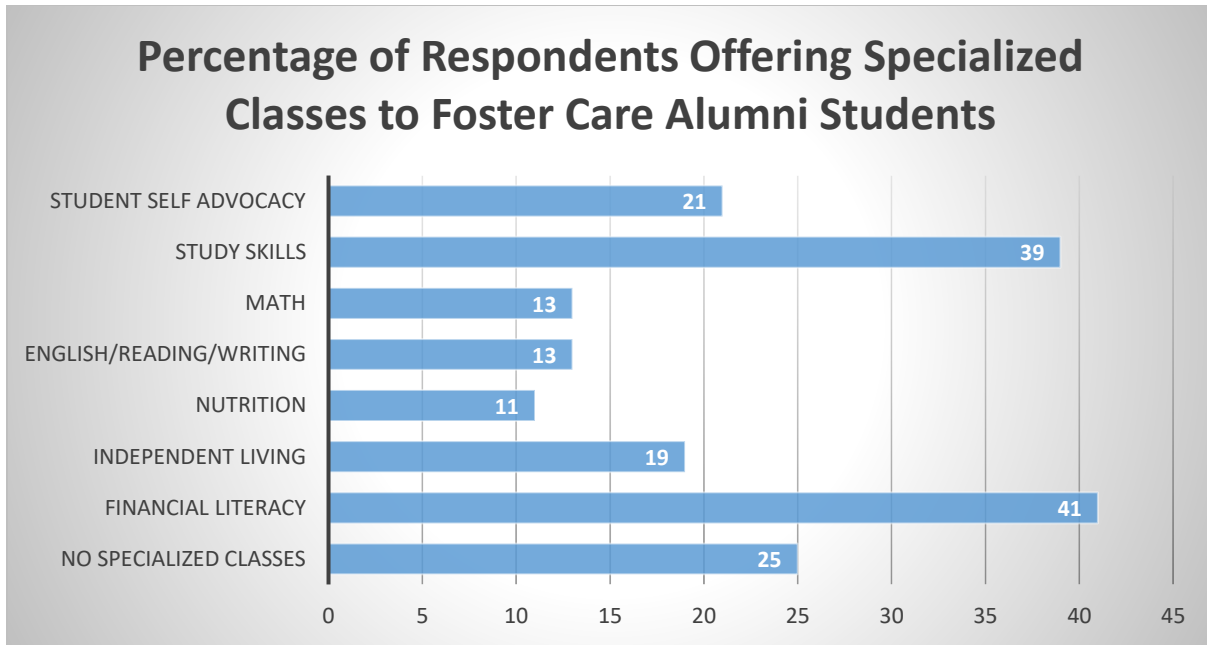


Other Supports

Survey respondents were also asked about mentoring, orientation, coordination and advocacy on behalf of students with other departments of the school, dedicated spaces for the Foster Care Alumni, coordination with social service agencies and specialized classes. This research suggested that these services would benefit Foster Care Alumni in college.

The table below shows the percentages of respondents offering the specific services to Foster Care Alumni students in their programs. Mentoring, coordinating and advocating for students within the college, and academic advising, are all reported widely as being provided (more than 64% of programs reported providing all of these services). Coordination with social service agencies is also highly reported (over 56%).





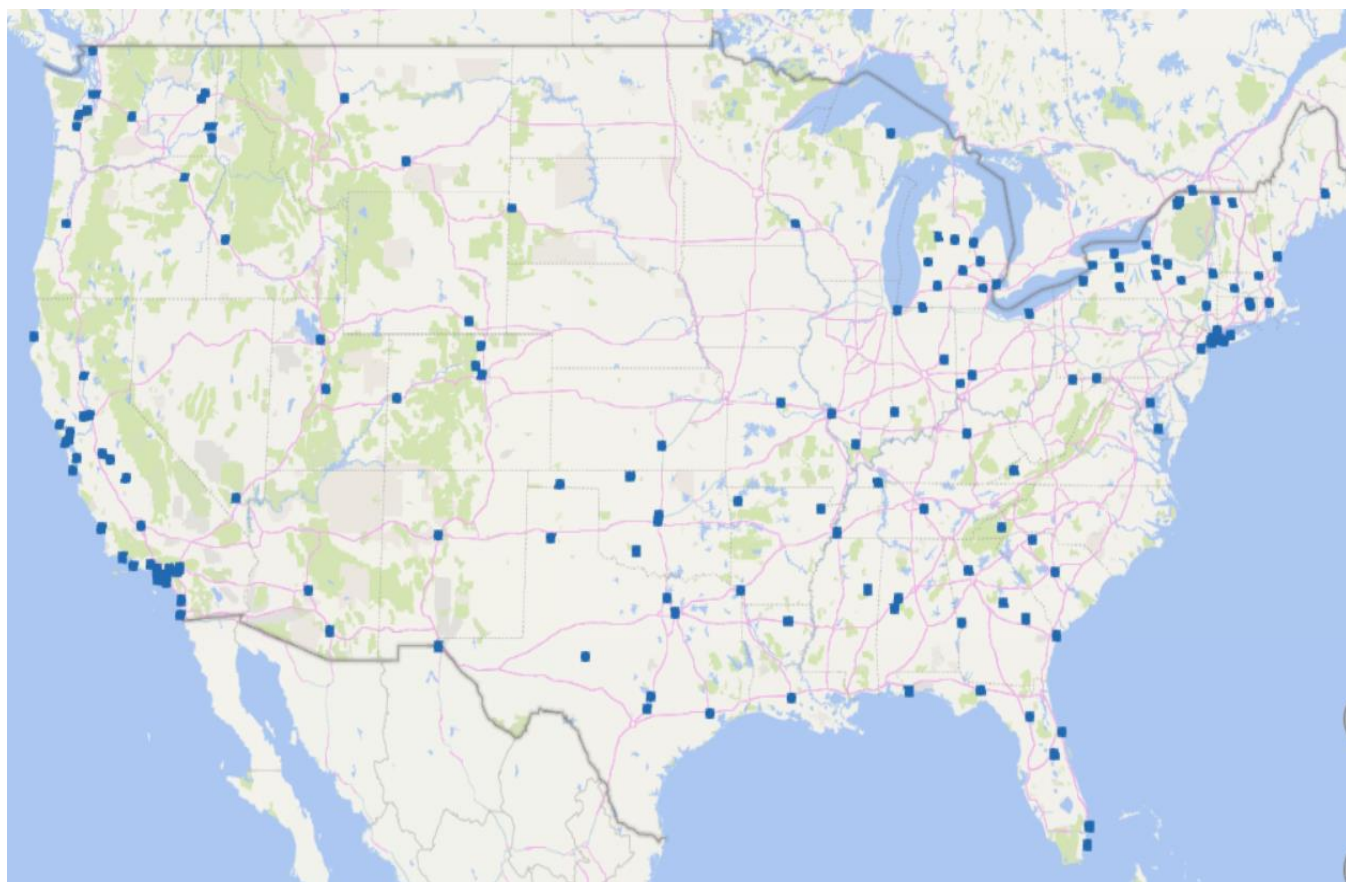
The table above shows the percentage of respondents that reported providing certain types of classes to Foster Care Alumni students. Financial literacy and study skills were the most frequently provided classes, followed by self-advocacy and independent living. In comments, some (5%) reported that while they didn't provide separate classes on these topics, they provided freshman-level or entry workshops or seminars that covered these topics. Others indicated that while they did not provide these classes, they were provided as part of general student support.

Staffing

The survey asked about program staffing: how many full and part-time staff and how many full and part-time volunteers supported the program. The programs averaged 2 full-time with two part-time staff, with the largest programs having 12 program staff, with most having 1-3 staff members. Programs utilized volunteers, some to a significant degree. The average number of volunteers per program was 11, which were part-time. Some programs utilized as many as 80 to 100 volunteers.

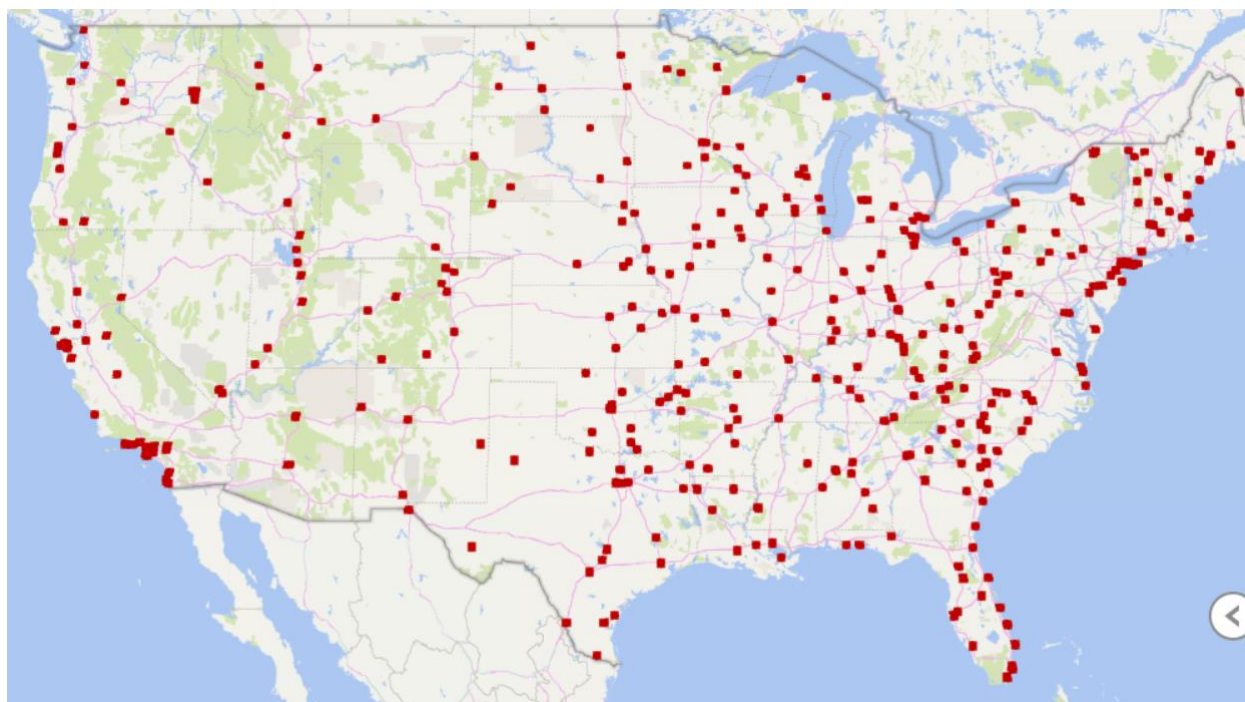
3.3 Public 4-Year College Programs – Geographic Reach and Number

Data collected in the first phase of this project, through the literature review, internet searches and the survey revealed 180 programs at public 4-year colleges and universities. The map below shows where these programs exist, and a listing of the programs will be included as an attachment.



This information will be updated during the project; if there are corrections or additions, please email noy@firststarinstitute.org or call 202.800.8411.

A number of these programs are identified, either in response to the survey, or on their websites, as TRIO or Student Support Services programs. As noted above, Department of Education TRIO information indicates TRIO programs may include certain services to foster youth, and that SSS programs are aimed at low income disadvantaged youth and first-generation youth and the disabled. Some of the TRIO programs that responded to the survey elected not to identify as supporting foster youth as they did not track that information, and they were focused on the at risk populations historically targeted by TRIO SSS programs. Indeed, when we reviewed the websites of the TRIO programs that responded to the survey, we found that very few specified that they served foster youth. Below is a map of TRIO SSS programs at public 4-year colleges, provided as indicating current college-based programs that potentially could serve Foster Youth Alumni, although they do not generally seem to provide outreach to nor tracking of these youth. The reach and spread of SSS programs is far greater than the programs thus far identified as serving Foster Youth Alumni.



Map showing public, 4-year colleges and universities having TRIO SSS programs.

3.4 Findings

Findings from the public, 4-year college survey are as follows.

- 1. The survey reveals adoption of college-based programs at public, 4-year colleges in about half of the states, in all regions of the country, documenting the trend towards utilizing these programs to support Foster Care Alumni identified in the literature. The almost 200 programs identified excludes those at community or private colleges, so the extent to which college-based programs have been developed may be more widespread. The numbers of students served by responding programs was increasing, also confirming the upward trend.*
- 2. The survey indicates that these programs often make extensive use of volunteers but have relatively few staff.*
- 3. Financial support is primarily through generally available financial aid support, supplemented by some programs with referrals for more local or regional scholarships or awards.*
- 4. College identification of foster youth continues to be problematic and at some schools, leading to unnecessarily limited outreach even where colleges have programs specifically for foster youth. Misunderstandings about the confidentiality of FAFSA information limits confidential outreach by campus-based programs to Foster Care Alumni.*

5. *College-based programs for Foster Care Alumni do not always serve former foster youth.* There is significant variation in the youth to whom the programs will provide support. College-based programs supporting foster youth attending college, are available, in some states to students who have been in foster care at any age. Other college programs have varying cut-off points for when the student must have been in care, with others requiring that the student be in care or a ward of the state, at the time of attendance
6. *Basic needs – financial, aid covering tuition and fees, books, housing and food -- continue to be unmet for many foster youth.* Responses from programs indicated that their Foster Care Alumni do not generally receive full financial aid covering these basic costs. Some programs highlighted the need to look for additional aid to supplement these costs as well as emergency, transportation or other incidental costs.
7. *Most college-based programs supporting Foster Care Alumni provide a combination of programmatic supports: academic advising, mentoring, coordinating, and advocating within the college and with social service agencies.* Over 80% of the programs provided educational advocacy - coordinated on behalf of the student with other departments within the university and mentoring.

Many policy recommendations at federal, state and programmatic levels have been proposed, some of which have been excerpted and included at an attachment. Recommendations from the Project will be presented at a later stage of the Project. In the interim, two clarifications to existing laws operate more effectively to support Foster Care Alumni in college.

1. *Clarify that limited sharing of FAFSA self- identification information with College Based Programs Supporting Foster Care Alumni for Confidential Outreach is Consistent with FAFSA Confidentiality*
2. *Clarify that federal TRIO programs on college campuses should provide outreach and tracking to Foster Care Alumni.*

Ensuring the adequacy of the financial supports for these students to complete college remains an essential step in changing the dismal statistics that mark our failure to support our Foster Care Alumni in college.

Knowing the scope of the resources actually out there is an essential first step to making sure that these programs are expanded and improved; and this report contributes to that process with a current national look.

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Attachment 4.2 Resources

The following table lists public 4-year colleges and universities with programs for foster youth. This list and all resources will be updated as the Project progresses. Please send any corrections or additional program information to noy@firststarinstitute.org or call 202.800-8411.

Many of the programs listed have materials to assist Foster Care Alumni and other programs or foster youth, and some are campus support programs.

Some states have statewide efforts aimed at supporting the development of college-based programs for foster youth and share information that may be helpful to establishing programs.

Fostering Success Michigan provides an extensive array of resources for foster youth attending college as well as program staff and other professionals working with these youth <http://fosteringsuccessmichigan.com/>

California College Pathways <http://www.student.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/>

Foster Care to Success <http://www.fc2success.org/our-programs/>

Alabama REACH <https://reach.ua.edu/>

Florida REACH

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/independent-living/reach/about>

REACH Georgia <https://reachga.org/about-reach/>

Ohio REACH <http://ohioreach.com/>

Education REACH for Texans <http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/>

Washington Passport <https://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/wa/home>

Public 4-Year Colleges with Programs

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
University of Alaska – Anchorage	Child Welfare Academy-Education and Training Voucher Program	Anchorage	AK
University of Alaska – Fairbanks	TRIO	Fairbanks	AK
University of Alaska – Southeast	Child Welfare Academy-Education and Training Voucher Program	Southeast	AK
University of Alabama	Alabama REACH	Akron	AL
University of Alabama	Fostering Success	Tuscaloosa	AL
University of Arkansas	Fostering Success	Fayetteville	AR
Arkansas State University	TRIO SSS	Jonesboro	AR
Arizona State University -Tempe	Nina Scholarship Program	Tempe	AZ
University of Arizona	Fostering Success	Tucson	AZ
Arizona State University	Bridging Success	Tempe	AZ
Northern Arizona University	Blavin Scholars	Flagstaff	AZ
California State University - Channel Islands	PATH Program	Channel Islands	CA
California State University - East Bay	Renaissance Scholars	East Bay	CA
California State University - Fresno	Renaissance Scholars	Fresno	CA
California State University - Fullerton	Guardian Scholars	Fullerton	CA
California State University - Maritime	EOP	Los Angeles	CA
California State University - Monterey Bay	Guardian Scholars	Monterey Bay	CA
California State University - San Bernardino	Renaissance Scholars	San Bernardino	CA
California State University - San Marcos	Ace Scholars	San Marcos	CA
San Diego State University	Guardian Scholars	San Diego	CA
San Francisco State University	Guardian Scholars	San Francisco	CA
San Jose State University	Guardian Scholars	San Jose	CA
University of California – Berkeley	HOPE Scholars	Berkeley	CA
University of California – Davis	Guardian Scholars	Davis	CA
University of California – Riverside	Guardian Scholars	Riverside	CA
University of California - San Diego	Hope Scholars	San Diego	CA
University of California - Santa Barbara	Guardian Scholars	Santa Barbara	CA

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
University of California - Santa Cruz	Smith Renaissance Society	Santa Cruz	CA
University of California - Los Angeles	Guardian Scholars	Los Angeles	CA
California Maritime Academy	YES Program	Vallejo	CA
California Polytechnic State University, Pomona	Renaissance Scholars	Pomona	CA
California Polytechnic State University	Ace Scholars	San Luis Obispo	CA
California State University - Bakersfield	EOP, Guardian Scholars	Bakersfield	CA
California State University - Chico	Path Scholars	Chico	CA
California State University - Dominguez Hills	TORO Guardian Scholars	Dominguez Hills	CA
California State University - Long Beach	Guardian Scholars	Long Beach	CA
California State University - Los Angeles	EOP	Los Angeles	CA
California State University - Northridge	EOP Resilient Scholars	Northridge	CA
California State University - Sonoma	Seawolf Scholars	Rohnert Park	CA
California State University - Stanislaus	Promise Scholars	Turlock	CA
California State University - University	Guardian Scholars	Sacramento	CA
Humboldt State University	Elite Scholars	Arcata	CA
Sonoma State University	Seawolf Scholars	Rohnert Park	CA
University of California – Irvine	Guardian Scholars	Irvine	CA
University of California – Merced	Guardian Scholars	Merced	CA
Colorado Mesa University	Fostering Success	Grand Junction	CO
Colorado State University	Fostering Success	Fort Collins	CO
Metropolitan State University of Denver	Fostering Success	Denver	CO
University of Colorado Boulder	TRIO SSS Guardian Scholars	Boulder	CO
Eastern Connecticut State University	STEP/CAP & SPOA	Willimantic	CT
University of Connecticut	Student Support Services	Storrs	CT
Daytona State College	TRIO Student Support Services	Daytona Beach	FL
Florida Atlantic University	Educate Tomorrow	Boca Raton	FL
Florida International Univ	Fostering Panther Pride	Miami	FL
Florida State University	Unconquered Scholars Program	Tallahassee	FL

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
Miami Dade College	Educate Tomorrow	Miami	FL
Pensacola State College	TRIO SSS and EOC	Pensacola	FL
University of Central Florida	Knight Alliance Network	Orlando	FL
University of Florida Gainesville	Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars Program	Gainesville	FL
Kennesaw State University	CARE Services	Kennesaw	GA
Savannah State University	Students that are Rising	Savannah	GA
Columbus State University	Embark Georgia	Columbus	GA
East Georgia State College	Embark Georgia	Swainsboro	GA
Georgia College & State University	Bridge Scholars Program	Milledgeville	GA
University of Northern Iowa	Academic Achievement & Retention Services	Great Falls	IA
Boise State University	Impact Scholars	Boise	ID
Lewis Clark State College	Impact Scholars	Lewiston	ID
University of Idaho	Impact Scholars	Moscow	ID
Southern Illinois University	TRIO SSS	Carbondale	IL
Ball State University	Guardian Scholars	Muncie	IN
Vincennes University	COPE SSS	Vincennes	IN
Indiana University NW	ACES & 21st Century Scholars	Gary	IN
Indiana University Southbend	Titan Quest for Success, ACE	South Bend	IN
Wichita State University	Student Support Services	Wichita	KS
University of Kansas	Fostering Jayhawk Success	Lawrence	KS
Murray State University	Training Resource Center	Murray	KY
University of Kentucky	Student Support Services	Lexington	KY
University of Louisiana Monroe	TRIO SSS	Monroe	LA
University of Louisiana Lafayette	TRIO SSS	Lafayette	LA
Fitchburg State University	Expanding Horizons Program	Fitchburg	MA
Massachusetts College of Art and Design	Compass program	Huntington	MA
Bowie State University	Rising for Success	Bowie	MD
Frostburg State	TRIO SSS	Frostburg	MD

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
St Mary's College of MD	DeSousa Brent Scholars Program	St Mary's City	MD
Central Michigan University	Fostering Success	Mt Pleasant	MI
Ferris State University	Ferris Youth Initiative	Big Rapids	MI
Michigan State University	FAME	East Lansing	MI
Saginaw Valley State University	FAST Program	University Center	MI
Wayne State University	TIP	Detroit	MI
Western Michigan University	Seita Scholars Program	Kalamazoo	MI
Eastern Michigan University	Magic program	Ypsilanti	MI
Grand Valley State University	Fostering Laker Success	Allendale	MI
Northern Michigan University	Fostering Success	Marquette	MI
University of Michigan Flint	Mpowering My Success	Flint	MI
University of Michigan Ann Arbor	Blavin Scholars Program	Ann Arbor	MI
Winona State University	TRIO	Winona	MN
University of Missouri Columbia	A2S Access to Success	Columbia	MO
University of Missouri St Louis		St Louis	MO
Mississippi State University	ACCESS Program	Starkville	MS
Montana State University Billings	Student Support Services TRIO	Billings	MT
Western Carolina University	RISA (Resilient Independent Student Association)	Cullowhee	NC
University of New Hampshire		Durham	NH
Rutgers School of Social Work	Project Myself	New Brunswick	NJ
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey	CARE Program	Olympia	NJ
University of New Mexico	CEP, Building Futures & Foundations	Albuquerque	NM
University of Nevada, Reno	TRIO SSS	Lincoln	NV
University of Nevada Las Vegas	HOPE Scholars	Las Vegas	NV
Medgar Evers College	SEEK	Brooklyn	NY
New York City College of Technology	SEEK	Brooklyn	NY
Queens College CUNY	CUNY Start-ASAP Foster Care Initiative	Westville	NY

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
SUNY Farmingdale	EOP	Farmingdale	NY
Alfred State	EOP	Alfred	NY
Buffalo State University	EOP	Buffalo	NY
FIT SUNY	EOP	New York City	NY
Morrisville State College	EOP	Morrisville	NY
SUNY Albany	EOP	Albany	NY
SUNY Brockport	EOP	Brockport	NY
SUNY Buffalo	EOP	Buffalo	NY
SUNY Canton	EOP	Canton	NY
SUNY Cobleskill	EOP	Cobleskill	NY
SUNY College of Environ Science	EOP	Syracuse	NY
SUNY Cortland	EOP	Cortland	NY
SUNY Delhi	EOP	Delhi	NY
SUNY Fredonia	EOP	Fredonia	NY
SUNY Geneseo	EOP	Geneseo	NY
SUNY Maritime	EOP	Bronx	NY
SUNY New Paltz	EOP	New Paltz	NY
SUNY Old Westbury	EOP	Old Westbury	NY
SUNY Oneonta	EOP	Oneonta	NY
SUNY Oswego	EOP	Oswego	NY
SUNY Plattsburgh	EOP	Plattsburgh	NY
SUNY Poly Institute of Tech	EOP	Albany	NY
SUNY Potsdam	EOP	Potsdam	NY
SUNY Purchase	EOP	Purchase	NY
SUNY Stony Brook	EOP	Stony Brook	NY
Cleveland State University	The Sullivan Deckard Opportunity Scholarship Program	Cleveland	OH
Kent State University	TRIO SSS	Kennesaw	OH
Ohio University	Ohio REACH Scholars Program	Athens	OH
University of Cincinnati	Learning Commons	Edmond	OH

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
Wright State University	Independent Scholars	Dayton	OH
Miami University Hamilton, Middleton	Foster Alumni Liaisons	Hamilton	OH
Miami University Ohio Regionals	Student Success Center Foster Alumni Liaisons (REACH)	Oxford	OH
Cameron University	Ris4Thursday	Lawton	OK
Northwestern Oklahoma State University	Student Support Services	Alva	OK
Oklahoma Panhandle State University	Panhandle Connection	Goodwell	OK
Eastern Oregon University	TRIO SSS	La Grande	OR
Portland State University	FUTURES PROGRAM	Portland	OR
Rhode Island College	Learning for Life	Providence	RI
University of South Carolina Upstate	TRIO SSS	Spartanburg	SC
University of South Carolina	Foster Youth Action Committee	Columbia	SC
Black Hills State University	TRIO SSS	Spearfish	SD
Middle Tennessee State University	Next Step	Murfreesboro	TN
University of Memphis	TRIO SSS	Memphis	TN
Angelo State University	Foster Youth Liaison	San Angelo	TX
Texas A&M University Central Texas	Office of Student Success	Texarkana	TX
Texas State University	FACES-Foster Care Alumni Educational Success	San Marcos	TX
Texas Womens University	Frontiers Program	Denton/Lubbock	TX
University of North Texas	PUSH Initiative Program	Denton	TX
University of Texas at Austin	Horns Helping Horns	Austin	TX
University of Texas, El Paso	FHAR- Foster Homeless Adopted Resources	El Paso	TX
University of Houston	Challenger Program	Houston	TX
University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley	Student Success Center	Dallas	TX
West Texas A&M University	Buff Connections	Canyon	TX
Stephen F. Austin State University	Student Success	Nacogdoches	TX
Sam Houston State University	Forward Program	Huntsville	TX
Snow College	TRIO Student Support Services	Ephraim	UT

FOSTER YOUTH SUCCESS IN COLLEGE PROJECT

UNIVERSITY NAME	PROGRAM NAME	CITY	STATE
University of Utah	Homeless Students Resources	Salt Lake City	UT
University of Virginia - College at Wise	TRIO SSS	Wise	VA
Johnson State College	TRIO SSS	Johnson	VT
Bellevue College	TRIO SSS	Bellevue	WA
Wash State University Pullman	College Success Scholars	Pullman	WA
Western Wash University	Passport Scholars	Bellingham	WA
Central Washington University	College Success Found	Ellensburg	WA
Centralia College	Passport to College	Centralia	WA
Clover Park Tech College	Solid Start Youth Club for foster Youth	Lakewood	WA
Eastern Wash University	College Success Found	Cheney	WA
Seattle Central College	College Success Program under TRIO	Seattle	WA
University of Washington Seattle	Champions Program	Seattle	WA
Washington State University Spokane	Passport to College	Spokane	WA
University of Wisconsin Stout	Fostering Success	Stout	WI
West Virginia University Center for Excellence in Disabilities	MODIFY-Mentoring with Oversight to Develop Independence with Foster Youth	Morgantown	WV
University of Wyoming	TRIO SSS	Laramie	WY

Attachment 4.3. Selected Policy Recommendations from the Literature

Selected National and State Policy Recommendations

No Time to Lose: Agenda to Support College Success for Foster Youth California College Pathways, John Burton Foundation 2015

Recommendations

- 1 Ensure that Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) implementation includes adequate accountability mechanisms for foster youth outcomes.
- 2 Expand support while in grades K-12 by aligning the Foster Youth Services (FYS) definition of foster youth to the LCFF and leveraging federal Title IV-E funds for FYS.
- 3 Clearly delineate expectations that post-secondary preparation and transition be included within the mandates of FYS programs.
- 4 Require caregivers to be trained on post-secondary education, including financial aid, admission and matriculation requirements.
- 5 Fund and enforce existing mandates in state law for colleges, universities, CDSS and CSAC to conduct college outreach to foster youth.
- 6 Require county social workers to screen age-appropriate youth for financial aid eligibility.
- 7 Expand both federal and state contribution of funds to the Chafee grant program by \$50 million.
- 8 Increase the effectiveness of existing Chafee program to increase its reach and improve the timeliness of distribution of funds.
- 9 Use CalSAVE options to create college savings accounts for foster youth.
- 10 Create a centralized verification system that allows current and former foster youth to easily obtain evidence of foster youth status.

Outline to Improve the Postsecondary Educational Outcomes of Students in Foster Care, Marie Garin Jones

In recent years, the issues confronting young people transitioning out of foster care have been at the forefront of policy, program and practice improvements. There has been significant movement in the fields of child welfare and education to acknowledge the unique challenges encountered by this population, as well as to develop strategies for improving their educational and life outcomes. However, despite increased focus on the realities facing foster youth, efforts to implement change at the national, state, and local levels have been sporadic, inconsistent, limited and underfunded. Access to information, resources, and developmentally appropriate services remains largely dependent upon the jurisdiction in which the young person was in care as well as on the ability of that young person to successfully navigate complex systems in order to utilize all available resources. The time for action is now. Young people from foster care have the same hopes, fears, and desires for a happy and productive adulthood as their non-system involved peers.

However, their ability to achieve the future they envision for themselves is limited by the inadequacy of the preparation they have received, and constrained by the siloed efforts of large bureaucratic systems to promote self-sufficiency by addressing specific problem areas in isolation from each other. As advocates, higher education and child welfare professionals, caregivers, and volunteers, we need to ask ourselves what do our young people need to thrive in postsecondary education and training programs and leave ready to enter the workforce?

Simply put, they need: Cross-systems collaboration between child welfare and education that facilitates information and data-sharing and open communication, and promotes positive experiences across the education continuum; n Participation in programs that provide evidence-based interventions to help them explore their options, build skills and competencies, and access resources that support academic, personal, social, and emotional development; and Connections to caring adults who will value their unique strengths and talents, meaningfully engage them in planning for their futures, and provide them with the strategic, motivational, and emotional support and resources needed for productive adulthood.

Considering the wealth of knowledge about what youth need to be successful in postsecondary education, as well as the considerable interest and synergy in the fields of child welfare and higher education, large scale, systemic change is possible. Together, we can change the life trajectories of youth from foster care by making postsecondary success an achievable reality.

The following recommendations for the fields of child welfare and higher education reflect the input of attendees at the National Convening on Foster Youth and Higher Education in October of 2013 (Foster Care to Success, 2014).

Recommendation One: Establish a national coalition focused solely on higher education and foster youth.

A review of the literature found multiple reports and initiatives that identify a series of recommendations and action steps for improving the educational success of children and youth in foster care. Of particular note for their comprehensive coverage of the issues and the identification of strategies to promote achievement are the Blueprint for Change (Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, 2008) and Research Highlights on Education and Foster Care (2014) compiled by the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education. Practice, program, and policy recommendations specific to postsecondary education are also well articulated in multiple publications including It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training (Casey Family Programs, 2006), College Access, Financial Aid, and College Success for Undergraduates from Foster Care (Davis, 2006) and Higher Education Opportunities for Foster Youth: A Primer for Policymakers (Wolanin, 2005). The issue is not a dearth of knowledge about what needs to change in order to improve outcomes; strategies and plans have been discussed and agreed upon for years. The issue, instead, is that we must create a vehicle that will facilitate transformational, systemic change by engaging a diverse group of partners driving such change across systems. The formation of a national coalition focused on the postsecondary outcomes of youth in foster care must represent organizations from the fields of child welfare and education coming together in

agreement about the problems, and working together to solve them systematically on the local, state, and national levels.

Recommendation Two:

Articulate a shared agenda for advancing a national and coordinated strategy to improve the educational outcomes of foster youth.

A national agenda would define a shared vision, goals and strategy for addressing the problem of improving educational attainment and increasing successful entry into the workforce among youth and alumni from foster care. There has been significant interest and commitment at the federal, state, and local levels in recent years to support educational success for students from foster care. In May of 2014, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance on the implementation of the Uninterrupted

Scholars Act (P.L. 112-278), which permits the sharing of personally identifiable information on foster youth if they need to change schools at the primary or secondary level, enabling a smooth transition, and reaffirmed its commitment to interagency collaboration to ensure access to services for children in foster care. The passage of tuition waiver legislation in 21 states also suggests acknowledgement of the unique needs of and financial barriers encountered by this population as they access higher education.

Noteworthy efforts at the state level in California, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia and

Washington promote collaboration and intervention across the educational continuum to ensure that children and youth in foster care gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to succeed in K-12, enroll, persist and graduate from postsecondary programs, and join the workforce. Efforts are emerging in a number of other states, including New York's College Success Initiative, Dade County, Florida's Educate Tomorrow Program, and Georgia Embark, a campus-based program for foster and homeless youth.

All of these policies, initiatives, and programs showcase the commitment of policymakers and state legislatures to support the educational aspirations of foster youth; however each one exists in a vacuum in the absence of a mutually agreed upon understanding of the issues, scope of the problem and shared vision for success. The development of a shared agenda, in concert with the formation of a national coalition, would advance the implementation of a coordinated set of strategies, interventions, and reforms with the potential to dramatically improve the educational outcomes of foster youth.

Recommendation Three:

Build capacity for the consistent and uniform collection of data and the sharing of student-specific information across the child welfare and education systems.

Currently, there is no national standard for the tracking of educational outcomes for foster youth.

Neither child welfare nor higher education are able to consistently collect, monitor,

measure, analyze or report on student progress or the impact of program interventions, nor is there sharing across systems about what data is collected. The Fostering Connection to Success and Increasing Adoptions

Act (P.L. 110-351) and the Uninterrupted Scholars Act mandated collaboration between child welfare and education on the primary and secondary levels; however, the postsecondary realm is only starting to follow suit.

The development of a national strategy around data would promote the consistent collection, monitoring and comparison of program and outcome information. Cross system partnerships that result in the sharing of datasets between departments of social services and education will facilitate substantive communication about student experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, this data can be used to inform decisions regarding programming, practice, and policy, as well as future investments in child welfare and education.

Recommendation Four:

[Develop national standards for the provision of services promoting successful educational attainment for foster youth.](#)

The development of national standards for the provision of educational supports and opportunities must be directly informed by data collection efforts. Best practice guidelines can define success beyond the bare minimum, capture evidence-based interventions, and articulate outcomes that capture educational achievement leading to career pathways. National standards will “raise the bar” on expectations for this population and include goals that are both measurable and time-bound. These standards must articulate the full range of options available to foster youth as well as the need for assessment of strengths, aptitude and interests to help youth make informed decisions about postsecondary education. High school and postsecondary students must be provided the developmentally appropriate support that will enable them to safely reach for independence, grow as individuals and citizens, successfully enter the workforce, and thrive as adults.

The four recommendations listed here—establishing a national coalition of stakeholders, creating an agenda for change, building capacity for the collection and sharing of data, and developing national standards for the provision of services promoting educational attainment—will further the common goal of helping foster youth achieve successful adulthood.

Supporting Youth in Foster Care: Research-Based Policy Recommendations for Executive and Legislative Officials in 2017

We offer the following recommendations to policymakers interested in supporting the healthy growth and lives of children and youth in foster care:

1. At the very least, stop the downward trend in federal child welfare spending; at best, create a stable and sufficient source of funding to provide quality services and supports for families involved with the child welfare system. Reductions in federal spending for child

welfare services have increased the burden on states and counties. States have used flexible funding sources such as the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to supplement declining Title IV-E funds, but these are not dedicated funding sources for children in or at risk of foster care; competing demands for SSBG and TANF funds create ongoing uncertainty for state child welfare agencies. Families in crisis and children in or at risk of foster care need a reliable source of funding to prevent the need for foster care and to provide quality services and support to children and youth who are in care.

2. Maintain access to health care for young people who are aging out of foster care, up to age 26. We recommend that Medicaid continue to provide affordable access to health insurance for youth who age out of foster care. Their heightened physical and mental health needs, combined with lack of a permanent family or support network, make them particularly vulnerable to poor health outcomes.

3. Monitor the educational stability and improve outcomes for students in foster care through states' implementation of ESSA. As state education agencies begin to more fully implement the ESSA, collect and disseminate data to assess the percentage of students in foster care who remain in their home schools, and track the educational outcomes of children and youth who have experienced foster care.

Attachment 4.4 Public 4-Year College Survey Questions



Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Welcome and Introduction

First Star Institute, a national non-profit organization, invites you to complete a survey on programs supporting foster youth in college. Your input is very important. The survey will be used to identify and develop best practices that help foster youth remain in and graduate from college. The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Please answer to the best of your knowledge. Please respond even if your school does not have a program, as that information is helpful. If you are interrupted in completing the survey, information entered on previous pages is stored so you will not need to reenter that information.

More information about First Star Institute is available at www.firststarinstitute.org/. Should you have questions, please email us at edsurvey1@firststarinstitute.org.

On behalf of foster youth, thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.

1. How do you identify foster youth or former foster youth when they enter your school? Please mark all that apply

- n/a - don't identify
- through FAFSA
- Other (please specify)

2. How does your school identify low income youth?

- n/a - don't identify
- family income of less than \$40,000 annually
- family income that is less than 200% of the poverty line
- Other (please specify)

3. How does your school identify disadvantaged youth?

- n/a - don't identify
- first generation college student -- youth whose parent(s) did not attend college
- Other (please specify)

4. Do you have a program that provides services that support foster youth or former foster youth attending your school?

- No, we do not have a program. (After pressing next, you will finish the shortened survey and be able to provide comments.)
- Yes, we have a program. (Please provide program name and contact information at the end of the survey.)

Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Your School's Program -- Youth Eligibility

5. Questions 5-17 pertain to your college's program for foster youth or former foster youth. Please indicate which of the following youth are eligible for your program. Please mark all that apply.

- Youth must be in foster care at time of program application
- Youth must be in foster care at time of college registration or enrollment
- Youth eligible for program if in foster care on or after age 13
- Youth eligible for program if in foster care on or after age 14
- Youth eligible for program if in foster care on or after age 15
- Youth eligible for program if in foster care on or after age 16
- Youth eligible for program if in foster care on or after age 17
- Homeless youth
- Youth in legal guardianship
- Youth who are wards of the state
- Youth who are orphans
- Emancipated youth
- First generation college students
- Other (please specify)

6. Are youth in the program required to maintain a minimum number of credits each term?

- No
- Yes, a minimum of 9 credits
- Yes, a minimum of 10-11 credits per term
- Yes, a minimum of 12 credits each term
- Other (please specify)



Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Academic Years 2016-17 and 2015-16 -- number of foster youth and former foster youth in program

7. To the best of your knowledge, please provide the approximate number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program in academic year 2016-17

Number of Freshman

Number of Sophomores

Number of Juniors

Number of Seniors

Total number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program

8. To the best of your knowledge, please provide the approximate number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program in academic year 2015-16.

Number of freshman

Number of sophomores

Number of juniors

Number of seniors

Total number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program



Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Academic years 2014-15 and 2013-14 - number of foster youth and former foster youth in program

9. To the best of your knowledge, please provide the approximate number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program in academic year 2014-15.

Number of freshman

Number of sophomores

Number of juniors

Number of seniors

Total number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program

10. To the best of your knowledge, please provide the approximate number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program in academic year 2013-14

Number of freshman

Number of sophomores

Number of juniors

Number of seniors

Total number of foster youth and former foster youth served by the program

Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Financial Aid

11. To the best of your knowledge, does your school's program for foster youth (or former foster youth) advise youth about financial aid?

Yes

No

Comments (not required)

12. To the best of your knowledge, do youth in your school's program for foster youth (or former foster youth) receive financial aid (from any source) for any of the following? Please mark all that apply.

full tuition and fees

partial tuition and fees

full housing costs

partial housing costs

full book costs

partial book costs

full food costs

partial food costs

Other (please specify)

Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Program Assistance

13. Which of the following are provided to the youth as part of your school's program (for foster youth or former foster youth). Please mark all that apply.

- specialized orientation for foster youth
- academic advising
- coordinate/advocacy on behalf of student with other departments within the college or university.
- housing during winter break
- housing during spring break
- housing during summer
- housing during Thanksgiving break
- dedicated space for youth in the program to meet, relax, or congregate regularly
- access to no cost food pantry
- mentoring
- program staff regularly coordinate with social service agencies regarding foster youth
- Other (please specify)

14. Are specialized classes offered to youth in your school's program (for foster youth or former foster youth)? Please mark all that apply.

no specialized classes provided

financial literacy

independent living

nutrition

English/reading/writing

math

study skills

student self advocacy

Other (please specify)



Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

Staffing and Tracking

15. Approximately how many staff are employed by your school's program (for foster youth or former foster youth)?

total number of program staff

number of full time staff

number of part-time staff

16. How many volunteers assist in your school's program (for foster youth and former foster youth)?

total number of volunteers

number of full-time volunteers

number of part-time volunteers

17. Does your program track the number of foster youth and former foster youth who enter and remain in the program to graduation?

No, the program does not maintain this information

Yes, our program has this information

Other (please specify)



Copy of Foster Youth College Programs

End of Survey

18. Please indicate the office completing this survey:

- Office of the President or Chancellor
- Office of the VP of Student Affairs
- Other (please specify)

19. To be able to develop best practices, we may need to follow-up with promising programs and would appreciate program contact information. In addition, if you would like to be on our email list for survey result information, please provide an email below.

Program name

Program Contact
information (email, phone,
etc.)

Email for Survey Results

20. Please provide any comments on this survey below. We value and appreciate feedback.