



Program Evaluation of the U.S. Department of Labor Foster Youth Demonstration Project: Report of Site Visits

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Executive Summary

In the United States, between 18,000 and 20,000 youth ages 16 and older transition from the foster care system each year.¹ About half of these youth have spent more than a year in care, 19 percent had been there for three years or more years in care, with disproportionate numbers of young people of color, especially males, remaining in foster care for longer periods of time.² There are many success stories emerging about the value of foster care. However, the research shows that youth who have left foster care are more likely than those in the general population to not finish high school, be unemployed, and be dependent on public assistance. Other negative outcomes associated with these youth include higher than average mental health problems, drug usage, and involvement with the criminal justice system.³

In September 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) awarded grants to five states—California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Texas—to design and implement programs to improve outcomes for youth exiting from foster care. ETA's solicitation required states to target the city or county with the largest number of foster care youth. These areas are Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, New York City, and Houston.

These grants were initially funded for one year with the possibility of continued funding for up to three years. The foster youth demonstration grants each received \$400,000 in DOL funding with a requirement for 100 percent matched funding by the state. Overall, the sites have provided the matching funds mostly from state and but also from some local sources. All of the sites have received no-cost grant extensions to June 30, 2006.

According to ETA the purpose of these grants is “to develop a set of comprehensive programs to help youth aging out of foster care become employed and self-sufficient. The goal is to then use this set of programs as models for the rest of the WIA (Workforce Investment Act)

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2005). *The AFCARS report: Preliminary FY 2003 estimates as of August 2005*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Downloaded August 15, 2005 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/afcars/report10.htm>

² Derezotes, D., Poertner, J. and Testa, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Race matters in child welfare. The overrepresentation of African American children in the system*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

³ See: Courtney, M.E., Terao, S. and Bost, N. (2004a). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Conditions of youth preparing to leave state care*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. and Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. K., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A. C., English, D., White, C.R., Hiripi, E., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). *Improving family foster care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. www.casey.org

system for serving youth in foster care.” In May 2005, ETA entered into an agreement with Casey Family Programs to collaborate in an evaluation of the five foster care youth employment projects. In September 2005, Casey Family Programs selected the Institute for Educational Leadership along with its partners, Johns Hopkins University, and two foster care experts to conduct the evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the five demonstration sites in implementing comprehensive services for youth in foster care and, by doing so, improving education, employment, and independent living outcomes for these youths. The evaluation is also designed to identify and capture practices that can be disseminated to policy-makers and practitioners throughout the workforce development and child welfare systems.

This report contains the findings of the first round of site visits that were conducted during the period from late October through early December. It also incorporates the participant characteristics, activities, and outcomes data that were reported to ETA by the sites through the period ending September 2005. This report is intended to establish a baseline from which progress can be measured and summarized in a later report.

Program Background

The five demonstration sites all have large foster care populations. As reported by the sites, foster youth in these counties and metro areas are disproportionately minority (mainly African American), are more often teen parents, are more likely than their peers to have a disability, and are often high school dropouts. These characteristics are consistent with findings from other current foster care research.

Grantees have taken varied approaches to designing and implementing their programs. All sites, except Chicago, have designated centers where the enrolled foster youth receive services and referrals. Chicago operates their program out of 15 alternative high schools that are part of their network of alternative schools. The concept of having a one-stop center for foster youth was incorporated in most of the program designs. In Houston, Detroit, and Los Angeles, the centers are co-located with other service agencies. Houston’s model embraces the idea of co-location; and the building where the H.A.Y. Center is located has employment, education, housing, vocational, life skills training, mentoring, and case management services. It is the one site where an entirely new center was opened. In New York City, The Door will house all of the

services offered to program participants except for employment services, which will be handled by Arbor.

Grantees are at varying points of implementation. The sites varied as to when they began enrolling youth and providing services. The Chicago site began first, in February 2005. The other sites generally began operations during the April-June 2005 time period. In New York City, the Department of Children and Family Services has been providing some services pending their selection of a local service provider. The local service provider was authorized to begin operations effective September 1, 2005.

Once the local provider was selected, the sites were generally able to implement quickly, which is likely the result of two factors. One is that the local providers had to conduct significant planning to develop the proposals for funding. Second, all the local providers built their programs from a base of experience, whether it was in delivering education and workforce preparation program services to at-risk and disadvantaged youth or in assisting foster care youth in transitioning from foster care to independent living. For example, in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Detroit, the service providers for this project are also youth service providers under WIA. In Texas, the county agency that provides transition program services is the local provider. In Chicago, the foster care youth targeted for this project are already enrolled in one of 15 alternative schools that provide services to this population.

About the Participants and Program Services

Sites differ somewhat in the target population they serve. The Houston, New York City, and Chicago sites admit current and former foster youth ages 16-21 in their area. At the Detroit site, current and former foster youth who are ages 17-21 are eligible to enter the program. Los Angeles requires that foster youth (ages 17-21) be eligible for IV-E Chafee dollars to participate. As this requirement may be a barrier to enrollment, the Los Angeles sites help foster youth who are not be eligible for the program by referring them to other services within their respective organizations.

As part of their grant agreements, the sites have committed to enrolling a specific number of youth, generally between 100-150 youth at each site. While there have been challenges in recruiting and enrolling youth in several of the sites, it appears that all will be able to meet their

enrollment goals and, in some sites, exceed these goals. For example, as of September 30, 2005, the sites had collectively enrolled 321 youth, or 51 percent of their goal.

Youth participants are more likely to be female, African-American, and age 18 and older. Nineteen percent are out-of-school youth, with the rest either in school or have their high school diploma. Only 56 percent have stable housing arrangements, implying that the remaining youth have difficulty in finding adequate living arrangements, and this may impede their progress in the program. The youth enrolled are also likely to still be in the foster care system. Fewer than 17 percent were ever adjudicated or incarcerated and approximately 23 percent were parents (they had borne or fathered a child). Most of these youth (84 percent) have some form of health insurance, and 41 percent receive some form of income support. Six percent of the youth reported having a disability, but the site visit interviews suggest that many more of the youth enrolled have special needs, a large portion of which are mental health related. Sites refer these youth to other service providers within their respective organizations or within the greater community, including mental health clinics, medical providers, and vocational rehabilitation agencies.

All sites use a combination of assessment tools to develop service plans for youth once they are enrolled. Detroit, New York City, Houston, and Los Angeles use the Ansell-Casey Assessment tool.⁴ These sites also use a combination of tests, including TABE testing for educational achievement, various career interest and job readiness assessments, and self-assessments to look at the service needs of enrolled youth.

All sites are implementing a set of services that provides youth with academic instruction and support, preparation for and exposure to the work place, support in developing skills for self-sufficiency, and the supportive services youth need to succeed academically and in the work place. All sites offer more intensive case management services to the enrolled foster youth than they would typically receive. But the sites differ as to the specific services and activities that are offered and whether they provide these services directly or through referrals to other agencies or by partnering agencies with which they have agreements. The sites also differ in how they customize services for the participating youth and whether the program's emphasis is on post-secondary education (Los Angeles Community Build and Chicago) or on employment (Los Angeles' Pasadena WIB, Detroit, and New York City).

⁴ See www.caseylifeskills.org for more information about the ACLSA and free curriculum.

As of the second quarterly report in September 2005, the sites were engaging youth in a range of project activities, and participation has increased over the first two quarters for which data was reported. For example, across sites, in April 2005, 48 youth participated in job preparation activities. The number increased to 108 in September 2005. In addition, the sites are engaging youth in educational activities, with nearly 50 youth obtaining a high school diploma or GED and 56 youth participating in full-time post-secondary school. Across all activities, participation increased from 85 youth in April 2005 to 183 youth in September. Likewise, all sites were also providing support services to enrolled youth.

The sites were also making progress in meeting performance goals set by ETA. Based on discussion during the site visits, it was expected that the December 2005 quarterly report will show great improvement in meeting these goals. As of September 2005, only two participants have completed the program. None of the sites reported any youth who dropped out of the program other than one individual who moved from the target area. There are no data yet on youth outcomes. It is important to note that program completion or exit is not clearly defined by several of the sites. In Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York, interviewees said that there was no “end point,” “graduation,” or other marker of completion, but they hoped to keep serving these youth over the long-term.

Early Observations and Lessons

Service Integration. Fundamental to these projects is the connection between the workforce development system and the child welfare system. In four of the five sites, the local provider represents one of the systems and must then connect with the other system to meet the goals of the grant. Chicago, the exception, is a school-based program that works with local child welfare services but has not connected with any workforce development partners yet. Early success in accomplishing this so far is mixed across the sites. Two sites, Houston and Los Angeles, have strong partnerships that produce the provision of services to the target population by both systems.

With respect to other collaborations, the list of organizations and agencies is extensive. Across the sites, juvenile justice, the courts, mental health, and substance abuse agencies as well as community colleges and other post-secondary institutions are the most commonly mentioned partners. Businesses are also being brought to the table to provide work experience, internships, and job placements. At least several of the sites, notably Chicago and Los Angeles, had existing

partnerships that supported other program activities that could be tapped into for this project. Most of the sites were in the early stages of formalizing these arrangements at the time of our visits. Houston is perhaps the furthest along in terms of finalizing new memorandums of agreement (MOUs) with agencies and organizations that have resulted in provision of services to the enrolled youth.

One key partner in service integration and partnerships is the foster youth being served. While it appears that most of the sites take the needs and desires of the youth into account for their own service plans, there is little in the way of a formalized feedback mechanism to develop and improve the program. The exception is the Detroit site, which actively engaged the Youth Advisory Board in designing the program and in improving it. In addition, the sites have not actively engaged the caregivers of the youth participants.

The sites vary in how they are leveraging resources. In Chicago, the local service provider used the grant funding to increase the number of slots for foster youth at the alternative schools it operates and intensify case management services for those youth. Houston has made considerable progress in leveraging resources—their entire approach is based on providing space to organizations in return for services. In Los Angeles, the Pasadena WIB has connected with the Casey Family Programs field office to add financial literacy among other social services and recreational activities to its programming, and Detroit has collaborated with outside mentoring programs. In New York City, the Administration for Children’s Services has a strong relationship with a local funder that provides education and employment “kits” for youth, and The Door has partnered with agencies that provide legal and housing services. It remains to be seen if the centers where co-location of other services occur are true examples of leveraged and connected resources rather than just a “landlord” situation.

Program Staffing. The state and local agencies with overall responsibility for the grant have selected service providers with previous experience in serving youth or in providing employment services – and sometime both. These service providers built on their previous experience to identify staff needs and to hire staff. Detroit, for example, took extra care to find Transition Specialists who had experience in both child welfare and workforce development services. In addition, the site also hired a former foster youth as the intake specialist, the first person a youth encounters when enrolling in the program.

Sites such as New York and Los Angeles are not as far along in their staff configurations. New York’s contracting situation has created some limbo in the hiring of life coaches from ACS by The Door. In Los Angeles, both sites have vacant staff positions such as an academic coordinator.

Lessons Learned. During the sites visits, the grantees provided some early lessons learned, especially on the program design and implementation process:

- Previous experience in the area with at-risk youth and in employment services is an important factor in program success.
- Frequent and structured opportunities for ongoing communication among lead agencies, community partners, and youth is critical to creating an effective program.
- To retain youth in the program, they must be immediately and consistently engaged in activities that move them closer toward meeting their personal goals.
- Youth involvement as advisors and staff helps to create a youth-friendly program that participants can be proud of.
- It is important to understand the community the program operates in to anticipate potential challenges and issues that may hinder a youth’s progress in the program such as loss of housing, child care, or transportation.
- It is necessary to recognize the unique needs of current and former foster youth in designing a program that meets their complex needs.
- Garnering community involvement and business employment opportunities for the youth now will help sustain the program in the future.

A major challenge that all sites were confronted with is related to the difficult and complex nature of the participants’ lives, as well as the child welfare system in which they have lived.

How successful the sites will be in overcoming these challenges remains to be seen as the sites mature and as they work with the participants over a longer period of time.

Program Sustainability. It is too early and there are too many unknowns to predict which sites will sustain their programs. The potential for sustainability is greater if ETA decides to continue these grants for at least another year. This would give local sites time to become grounded in terms of fully implementing their programs, bring contributing partners to the table, and be able to demonstrate positive outcomes for the youth that they serve. These projects have the potential to inform how both child welfare service providers and workforce development providers, including one-stop centers, can better serve youth aging out of foster care. It may be that as a result of these projects more youth in foster care will be served through the WIA system. We may also see that the two systems continue to align or braid services for this population of youth.

Introduction

In the United States, between 18,000 and 20,000 youth aged 16 and older transition from the foster care system each year.⁵ About half of these youth have spent more than a year in care, 19 percent had been there for three years or more years in care, with disproportionate numbers of young people of color, especially males, remaining in foster care for longer periods of time.⁶ There are many success stories emerging about the value of foster care. However, the research shows that youth who have left foster care are more likely than those in the general population to not finish high school, be unemployed, and be dependent on public assistance. Other negative outcomes associated with these youth include higher than average mental health problems, drug usage, and involvement with the criminal justice system.⁷

The U.S. Department of Labor's foster care demonstration projects are working to address many of these challenges faced by youth transitioning from foster care. Through community-wide collaborations, they are developing model programs for comprehensive services that are designed to improve employment outcomes for foster youth.

Overview of Program Evaluation

In September 2004, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) awarded one-year grants to five states—California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Texas—to design and implement programs to improve outcomes for youth exiting from foster care. ETA's solicitation required states to target the city or county with the largest number of foster care youth—Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, New York City, and Houston.

The local organizations and agencies were selected through a competitive process to provide services to the youth participants in all the sites with the exception of Chicago. In Chicago, the local provider, Alternative Schools Network, was identified in the State of Illinois' grant application as the local provider. The process of identifying providers resulted in variation among the type organizations that became service providers and the timing of when the projects started. The mix of providers represent the workforce development system (and its providers),

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2005).

⁶ Derezotes, D., Poertner, J. and Testa, M. (Eds.) (2005).

⁷ See: Courtney, M.E., Terao, S. and Bost, N. (2004) and Pecora, P. J. et al. (2005).

alternative schools, youth service agencies, and the local child welfare transition program provider.

According to ETA the purpose of these grants is “to develop a set of comprehensive programs to help youth aging out of foster care become employed and self-sufficient. The goal is to then use this set of programs as models for the rest of the WIA (Workforce Investment Act) system for serving youth in foster care.”

In May 2005, ETA entered into an agreement with Casey Family Programs to collaborate in an evaluation of the five foster care youth employment projects. In September 2005, Casey Family Programs selected the Institute for Educational Leadership along with its partners, Johns Hopkins University, and foster care experts, Paul DiLorenzo and Sue Badeau, to conduct the evaluation. The National Youth Employment Coalition, another partner, is tasked with providing technical assistance to the grantees through quarterly conference calls and two annual grantee meetings.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the five demonstration sites in implementing comprehensive services for youth and, by doing so, improving education, employment, and independent living outcomes for these youths. The evaluation is also designed to identify and capture practices that can be disseminated to policy-makers and practitioners throughout the workforce development and child welfare systems. The evaluation, conducted over a two-year period, uses information obtained from documents and reports that come from the sites, the sites’ management information systems, and from in-person site visits. Key areas that this evaluation addresses are:

- Preparation and planning for the projects;
- Systems building (i.e. linkages across programs and partnership development);
- Targeting, recruitment, and participation of youth;
- Assessment of youth referrals to other services and services provided to youth;
- Program outcomes, including education and employment; and
- Challenges and approaches to overcoming them.

Evaluation Design and Data Collection Schedule

IEL and its partners developed a detailed evaluation design with the input of Casey Family Programs. IEL plans to conduct two rounds of site visits in Year 1 and Year 2 of the evaluation to look at the five sites in their formative stages and again when they are fully operational and closer to meeting their performance goals. Telephone interviews are planned with ETA staff, technical coaches, and state staff who are not available during the site visits. Through these site visits and interviews, IEL will gather quantitative and qualitative data on the following major program evaluation areas:

- Program context
- Program design and goals
- Program implementation
- Outreach, intake, and assessment
- Client characteristics
- Program services and components
- Service integration
- Program budget and costs
- Program staffing
- Program outcomes

The first round of visits to each of the five sites took place October-December 2005. IEL anticipates that the second round of site visits and interviews will be conducted in the fall of 2006.

IEL and its partners will develop three reports from these data collection activities. The first, this report, details observations from the first round of site visits and telephone interviews conducted in late summer/early fall 2005. The second report, to be issued in late spring/early summer 2006, will summarize four quarters of data to examine the progress of the sites since the first site visits. After the second round of site visits, a third and final report will be issued in December 2006. This report will evaluate the effectiveness of these programs as well as provide observations on site sustainability and replicability and offer lessons learned.

Overview of the First Round of Site Visits

The first round of in-person site visits began in mid-October 2005 and concluded in early December. It was hoped that these visits would be conducted when the sites were still at the early stages of implementing their programs. The thinking was that these initial visits would serve as a baseline from which the sites' progress could be assessed in a subsequent visit planned for 2006. It was also hoped that these visits would identify early challenges and noteworthy practices.

A matrix of research questions and corresponding sources of information was developed. Individual audience interview guides were developed based on the matrix. These guides covered State and local agencies and providers as well as federal staff and technical assistance providers. In addition, interview guides were developed for the planned focus groups with youth, staff, and foster care home providers. The intent was to conduct as many interviews as possible in person while on site, with the remaining being conducted by telephone.

A team of at least two reviewers went to each site. At least one member of the team had expertise in the public child welfare system and one had expertise in the workforce development system. This combination of expertise was needed to insure that these visits addressed all relevant aspects of the project and that the information that was gathered was understood by the team. Table 1 shows the schedule and team composition for the visits:

Table 1. Site Visit Schedule and Teams

Site	Date	Team
California (Los Angeles)	Oct 26 – 28	Sue Badeau and Burt Barnow
Illinois (Chicago)	Oct 24 - 26	Paul DiLorenzo, Barbara Kaufmann, and Irene Lynn
Michigan (Detroit)	Nov 2- 4	Sue Badeau, Kate O'Sullivan, and Irene Lynn
New York (New York)	Nov 16 – 18	Sue Badeau and Demetra Nightingale
Texas (Houston)	Nov 29 – Dec 1	Paul DiLorenzo and Irene Lynn

This evaluation report is the first of three that detail the experiences of the grant sites and provide policy-makers, program developers, and practitioners with practices and lessons that can be translated to foster youth programs across the country. This first report includes observations across sites, individual site reports, and program data through September 2005. The section of this report entitled, *Individual Site Visit Reports*, contains detailed accounts of the information gathered during the site visits for each state.

Summary Observations across Sites

To organize these initial summary observations of the grant sites, we use the major program evaluation areas detailed in the evaluation design and used to guide the interviews we conducted.⁸ These evaluation areas cover the major areas of inquiry for the Year 1 and 2 site visits. As the grants at the time of the Year 1 site visits were just becoming fully operational, these are initial observations and will guide the focus of Year 2 inquiries.

Program Context

All of the sites operate programs in cities that are among the largest in the nation. But, that is where, for the most part, the similarity ends. These sites share few characteristics in common when it comes to economic conditions. Each grant program site has its unique set of advantages and disadvantages in attaining the goal of the demonstration program.

Based on 2000 Census data, housing costs are lowest in Houston (\$590 median gross rent) and Detroit (\$530) and highest in New York (\$796) and Los Angeles (\$704). Unemployment is lowest in Los Angeles with a rate of 4.3 percent for the metro area. The growth industries in each city are different, resulting in program operators with varying career development efforts for the youth.

Among the five grantees, Detroit is experiencing the worst economic conditions. It has a declining auto industry with traditionally high-wage, low-skill jobs disappearing and being replaced with high-wage, high-skill employment opportunities in business services, health care and engineering. Detroit also has the highest unemployment rate at 7.9 percent in September 2005 (28 percent in the neighborhood where the grant operates). Of the grantees, Detroit may have the most difficulty achieving employment and self-sufficiency goals due to local economic conditions.

As required by ETA, the five grants are operating in large urban areas where the population of foster care youth is among the largest in the United States. Los Angeles County has the largest population of children in foster care, with over 20,000 children in care. Los Angeles County cares for over 14,000 foster youth who are ages 11 and older. New York City, with under 18,000 children in foster care, is responsible for over 6,500 foster youth ages 14 and

⁸ See the list of major program evaluation areas in the Introduction. In addition, the evaluation design, interview guides, and focus group protocol are available online at www.iel.org.

over. Cook (Chicago), Harris (Houston), and Wayne (Detroit) counties have a much smaller population of older foster youth, with less than half the number of foster youth present in Los Angeles and New York.

Even though data are not collected consistently across the counties, there are several observations about the characteristics of these foster youth. As reported by the sites, foster youth in these counties and metro areas are disproportionately minority (mainly African American), are more often teen parents, are more likely than their peers to have a disability, and are often high school dropouts. These characteristics are consistent with current research on foster youth, which show similar statistics.

Program Design and Goals

As was required by ETA, one of the main goals of these grants is to prepare current and former foster youth for successful careers and self-sufficiency in adulthood. Grantees are pursuing this overarching goal but by different methods (discussed under Program Services). Program goals have not changed for the grantees, and progress toward meeting these goals was observed. However, the programs have not been operational long enough for grantees to have met these goals. This will be an area for detailed inquiry in Year 2 site visits.

The grantees kept their program designs very close to what was originally proposed to ETA. As state grantees submitted often the original proposal in consultation with the local areas, much of the early coordination for the program design was conducted with many voices at the table. For example, in Chicago, as the Alternative Schools Network developed the original proposal, the design reflected its current program structure and the needs of foster youth once they finish high school. If anything, some grantees have expanded their original designs to provide more comprehensive services and continue to grow their sphere of partner agencies and community organizations to better connect youth to needed services. For instance, the Los Angeles site has added financial literacy as a key component to their program.

All sites, except Chicago, have designated centers where the enrolled foster youth receive services and referrals. The concept of having a one-stop center for foster youth was incorporated in most of the program designs. In Houston, Detroit, and Los Angeles, the centers are co-located with other service agencies. Houston's model embraces the idea of co-location and the building where the H.A.Y. Center is located has employment, education, housing, vocational, life skills

training, mentoring, and case management services. It is the one site where an entirely new center was opened. The Alternative Schools Network in Chicago has a different approach for the enrolled foster youth, as services are coordinated out of the schools where the youth are also enrolled. Each school has a case manager assigned to youth enrolled in the program. In New York, The Door will house all of the services offered to program participants except for employment services, which will be handled by Arbor.

Program Implementation

Grantees are at varying points of implementation. In general, it seems that sites were able to gear up quickly in terms of hiring staff, enrolling youth, and making available at least some services. The sites varied as to when they began enrolling youth and providing services. Chicago began the soonest, in February 2005. The other sites generally began operations during the April-June 2005 time period. In New York City, the Department of Children and Family Services has been providing some services pending their selection of a local service provider. The local service provider was authorized to begin operations effective September 1, 2005.

The sites' ability to implement quickly is likely the result of two factors. One is that the local providers had to conduct significant planning to develop the proposals for funding. In the case of Chicago, this task was completed as part of the initial grant application; while in other sites, it was done in response to a solicitation. In all cases, though, this early planning meant that the conceptualization or vision for the project and the key components of the program were designed before the local site providers were selected.

Secondly, all of the local providers built their programs from a base of experience, whether it is in delivering education and workforce preparation program services to at-risk and disadvantaged youth or in assisting foster care youth in transitioning from foster care to independent living. For example, in Chicago, Los Angeles, and in Detroit, the service providers for this project are also youth service providers under the Workforce Investment Act. This meant that they had experience in delivering the comprehensive youth services that are required under WIA. In Texas, the county agency that provides transition program services is the local provider. In Chicago, the foster care youth targeted for this project are already enrolled in one of 15 alternative schools that provide services to this population were targeted.

The variance in grantees' progress in implementation depends on several factors, most often the state and local agencies' ability to work through their bureaucracy in the contracting process and designating and moving the matching funding to the program operators. As mentioned earlier, New York has a lengthy procurement process that hindered a quick start-up of the program but key players and cooperative service providers have helped to overcome this challenge. In Los Angeles and Detroit, transfer of the Chafee funding to the designated local agency then to the service provider caused delay in finalizing contractual arrangements but, for the most part, did not significantly delay enrollment and service provision. Overall, it does not seem that these initial implementation issues will affect the outcomes for the youth participants or the local system serving foster youth.

Outreach, Intake, and Assessment

The sites used different approaches to recruit, intake and assess foster youth. For example, in Los Angeles, the Pasadena WIB held a kick-off event with many partners that serve youth, and the Community Build program conducted a "media blitz." Detroit has worked with the juvenile courts for referrals. In Houston, program operators are beginning to see more word-of-mouth activities and walk-ins as a part of recruitment. The Chicago site has a unique situation, where there is a readily available pool of eligible participants from the students enrolled in the Alternative Schools Network.

All of the sites worked to some degree with the local child welfare agency to obtain referrals to the program, but some received greater cooperation than others. Community Build, for example, found that approximately 80 percent of their enrollees came from referrals from the child welfare agency. However, Detroit, which expected referrals from the local child welfare agency, instead worked with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the juvenile court system, and other community organizations to find eligible youth.

Sites differ somewhat in the target population of youth that they serve. The Houston, New York and Chicago sites admit current and former foster youth ages 16-21 in their area. At the Detroit site, current and former foster youth who are ages 17-21 are eligible to enter the program. Los Angeles requires that foster youth (ages 17-21) be eligible for IV-E Chafee dollars to participate. As this requirement may be a barrier to enrollment, the Los Angeles sites help

foster youth who are not be eligible for the program by referring them to other services within their respective organizations.

Each site uses a slightly different procedure to enroll youth. However, youth generally meet with a caseworker, fill out forms for enrollment, and receive an orientation to the program. Two unique intake procedures by the sites are important to note. In Detroit, the Peer Facilitator, a former foster youth, talks to the youth about the program and completes the initial enrollment form. Successful enrollment rates are attributed to her enthusiasm and empathy shown in talking to potential participants. The Chicago site identifies students in their junior year of high school and then enrolls them as seniors in the program.

All sites use a combination of assessment tools to develop service plans for youth once they are enrolled. Detroit, New York, Houston, and Los Angeles use the Ansell-Casey Assessment tool. These sites also use a combination of TABE testing for educational achievement, various career interest and job readiness assessments, and self-assessments to look at the service needs of enrolled youth. To manage the paper trail created for each enrolled youth and track performance goals, the sites have case management folders for each youth and have developed basic management information systems. Detroit's case management and system is sophisticated and uses software that maintains individual case management data as well as basic service activity and outcome data.

Program Services

ETA's solicitation indicated that the purpose of these grants was "to develop a set of comprehensive programs to help aging out of foster care become employed and self-sufficient." The solicitation provided additional guidance around ETA's expectations for comprehensive programming under the section on the allowable uses of funds, as follows:

This model program will take a comprehensive approach to serving foster youth, including providing basic skills remediation, help in staying in school or returning to school, employment opportunities, internships, help in attaining a high school diploma or GED, teaching independent living skills to help youth achieve self-sufficiency, providing case managers to work with youth, and assistance in entering apprenticeships, community colleges, and four-year colleges. In particular, each project should include a component providing a mentor for each youth served,....

This guidance provides the framework for sites to implement a set of services that provide youth with academic instruction and support, preparation for and exposure to the work place, support in developing skills for self-sufficiency, and the supportive services youth need to succeed academically and in the work place. The sites have implemented a range of services that address each of the key developmental areas, including the support services. Sites differ as to the specific services and activities that are offered and whether they provide these services directly or through referrals to other agencies or by partnering agencies with which they have agreements. Sites also differ in how they customize services for the participating youth and whether the program's emphasis is on post-secondary education (Los Angeles Community Build and Chicago) or on employment (Los Angeles' Pasadena WIB and Detroit and I would add NYC here).

Types of Services Provided to Participants

As of the second quarterly report in September 2005, the sites are engaging youth in project activities as shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Participation in Project Activities by Total Enrolled Youth

Project Activities	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	5	5	0	62	35	1
Unsubsidized Work Experience	16	15	7	39	41	35
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	48	42	81	102	112	108
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	1	1	1	0	0	0
College Prep	78	78	76	53	51	59
GED Preparation	0	0	1	13	19	24
Basic and Remedial Education	10	11	4	2	3	8
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	85	85	88	96	98	101
Parenting Classes	1	1	1	0	0	0
Life Skills	85	85	92	98	101	102
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	85	85	103	187	152	183

All sites are also providing support services to enrolled youth as shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Support Services Provided to Enrolled Youth

Additional Project Activities	17 & Under	18 & Over	All Youth
Students Remaining In School	17	39	56
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	1	22	23
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	0	0
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	2	2
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	17	67	84

The quarterly data show that Chicago, Detroit, and Houston are serving the bulk of the enrolled participants. Note that the site visits were conducted after this quarter of data, in October and November. Information gathered from the sites suggests that the grantees were enrolling and serving more foster youth than shown in the September report. Therefore, we expect the December quarterly report to show increased numbers in project activities.

A key component (and design feature mentioned above) of the sites' service provision is easy access for participating foster youth. In Detroit, Houston, and Los Angeles, services are provided in a place that could be characterized as a one-stop youth center. In Detroit the facilities are cramped and the local provider is looking to move to better space. Nonetheless, in the youth focus groups for these three sites, it was apparent that the youth valued having a dedicated space to attend classes, work on the computer and to "hang-out" with each other. In Chicago, the project is structured somewhat differently in that it involves youth in 15 alternative schools. Each school houses the mentor and coordinator for students enrolled in the program as well as computer centers where they receive education and career preparation services. Once the contract arrangement is finalized, New York plans to accommodate the program at The Door with employment services provided at Arbor.

All sites provide services that support academic achievement and entry to post-secondary education. Education assessments are part of the intake process, and sites have different approaches for addressing deficiencies. For example, in Chicago, the foster youth target population is youth that are enrolled in one of 15 alternative schools that serve foster care youth. These youth are provided the academic support they need to complete high school as part of their enrollment in the alternative school. In Houston, an education specialist provides tutoring to

youth who are skill deficient and conducts classes to prepare youth to take the G.E.D and two of their partner agencies, Gulf Coast Trade Center and Education Training Center, are alternative education providers. In Detroit, an education specialist also provides tutoring and preparation for G.E.D. In Los Angeles, a Community Build staff person is co-located several days a week at a neighborhood high school. Post-secondary education is also a focus across the sites. In fact, in Chicago a primary purpose of the project is to assist youth in transitioning to post-secondary and providing the support they need to stay in school.

Workforce preparation activities vary across the sites. Work experience and internships are a key component of the Los Angeles programs. Detroit had yet to fully implement their work experience program, but it is part of their plan of service. Job readiness preparation—including resume writing, interviewing skills, and basic work behaviors—take different forms across the sites. Those sites that did not originally focus on developing these skills are seeing the importance of preparing youth for the work place and are implementing classes and workshops that address the workplace basics.

Across the sites, program operators have recognized the importance of safe, stable, and affordable housing for youth aging out of foster care and the difficulty youth face in finding and maintaining such living arrangements. For example, in Detroit, the initial priority of the service provider is to stabilize income and living situations of youth who enroll in the program. The transition specialists work to find stable and safe housing and provide an interim source of income for youth prior to entering youth in education and employment services. Those interviewed at the Detroit site felt that providing supportive services first to stabilize the lives of youth then allowed them to concentrate on services to help them find and participate in educational and employment opportunities. In the H.A.Y. Center in Houston, an apartment finder service is located in the same building as the center and works often with enrolled youth. However, shortages of safe, stable, and affordable housing in all sites are prevalent, and site operators recognize this issue as a service that needs improvement.

The sites were having mixed success in establishing mentoring programs. However, this is not to say that mentoring is not occurring. Across the sites, the youth workers or case managers as well as other key staff are filling this role. It is clear from the youth focus groups that the youth value the relationship and support provided by their case manager. In Chicago, the Alternative Schools Network has mentors on staff who are always available by phone and meet

with youth at least once a week. The Detroit site has connected with several local programs for mentoring of the participants and continues to grow this service area. Houston has two foster care alumni on staff who mentor participants.

Case Management of Participants

All of the sites offer more intensive case management services to the enrolled foster youth than they would normally receive. However, the sites provide different types of case management structure for the foster youth. The following summarizes each of these approaches:

- In both Los Angeles sites, each youth is assigned a case manager who assists in the development of the individualized plans and follows through with its implementation. The program also employs peer advocates, former foster youth, who relate to the young people and help to keep them motivated and engaged in the program.
- Chicago provides youth with a mentor and a case manager funded by other sources that is housed in the school that the youth attends. The mentor is always available by phone and meets with the youth once a week while the youth is in school. In addition, a service coordinator, housed at ASN, provides support and guidance to the youth after they leave school. The staff members assigned to the youth develop and monitor their transition plans.
- Detroit has two Transition Specialists on staff who provide most of the case management services. They help the youth develop a “Plan of Action” that describes their goals and what steps they will take to reach these goals. The Transition Specialists coordinate youth’s participation in activities and arrange for support services when needed. An important qualification for these specialists is that they have experience in both child welfare and workforce development services for at-risk youth.
- New York participants are assigned to one of five Life Coaches. The case management component is intended to be youth-driven and more intensive than a foster youth would normally receive.
- Houston provides enrolled youth with PAL Aftercare Specialists as their case manager. Youth are then referred to education and employment specialists on staff for more in-depth service planning.

Youth who are still under the custody of the state still have formal case management under that system. As yet, it is unclear whether this additional layer of case management causes any overlap or complications for the youth participants.

Referrals to Outside Services

While the sites seem dedicated to housing as many services as possible in their location, some of the sites have begun to refer enrolled youth to necessary outside services. These referrals are made most often by their program case manager. In Houston, Detroit, and Los Angeles, many of these service referrals are easy transitions for youth as the service providers are located in the same building or just down the street. In Houston, referrals are most often made to an apartment locator, to G.E.D. classes, and to the WorkSource Center, the local One-Stop Career Center. Detroit also has the local Vocational Rehabilitation office located in the same building for referral for youth with disabilities. As youth are enrolled in higher numbers and their comprehensive needs are determined, it will become clearer as to the extent the sites use outside services to assist their participants and how smoothly these referrals are made.

Post-Placement Services

The sites are only beginning to coordinate post-placement services such as job retention and support for those in post-secondary education. This is an area where the sites may need to focus efforts as one of the performance measures is retention in job or education placement.

Program Completion

As of September 2005, only two participants have completed the program. None of the sites reported any youth who dropped out of the program other than one individual who moved from the target area. There are no data yet on their outcomes.

It is important to note that program completion or exit is not clearly defined by several of the sites. In Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York, interviewees said that there was no “end point,” “graduation,” or other marker of completion, but they hoped to keep serving these youth over the long-term.

Participant Characteristics

As part of their grant agreements, the sites have committed to enrolling a specific number of youth, generally between 100-150 youth at each site. While there have been challenges in recruiting and enrolling youth in several of the sites, it appears that all will be able to meet their enrollment goals and in some sites, exceed these goals. For example, as of September 30, 2005, with two quarters of data collected and three quarters remaining, the sites had collectively enrolled 321 youth, or 51 percent of their goal. Table 4 details the demographic breakdown of those enrolled across all five sites.

As shown in the table, the youth participants are more likely to be female, African-American, and age 18 and older. Nineteen percent are out-of-school youth, with the rest either in school or have their diploma/GED. Only 56 percent have stable housing arrangements, implying that the remaining youth have difficulty in finding adequate living arrangements which may impede their progress in the program. The youth enrolled are also likely to still be in the foster care system. Fewer than 17 percent were ever adjudicated or incarcerated, and approximately 23 percent are parents. Most of these youth (84 percent) have some form of health insurance, and 41 percent receive some form of income support. Six percent of the youth report having a disability, but the site visit interviews suggest that many of the youth enrolled have special needs such as mental health care.

Table 4. Cumulative Enrollment and Demographic Data (as of September 2005)

Enrollment Data	Ages 15-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth	% of Total Enrolled
Enrollment Target/Plan	75.5	204.5	280	
Enrolled (Total)	62	259	321	
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	29	114	143	44.5%
Female	33	145	178	55.5%
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>				
White	8	16	24	7.5%
Black	42	202	244	76.0%
Hispanic	9	25	34	10.6%
Native American	0	1	1	0.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	1	1	0.3%
Multiracial	3	12	15	4.7%
Other	1	1	2	0.6%
<i>School Status</i>				
In School	40	90	130	40.5%
Out of School/HS Dropout	12	49	61	19.0%
Out of School/Grad or GED	9	121	130	40.5%
<i>Housing Status</i>				
Stable Housing Arrangements	48	133	181	56.4%
Independent Living	4	88	92	28.7%
Temporary Housing/Homeless	10	38	48	15.0%
<i>Foster Care Status</i>				
In Foster Care System	59	141	200	62.3%
Out of Foster Care System	3	118	121	37.7%
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>				
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	9	44	53	16.5%
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	53	215	268	83.5%
<i>Parenting Status</i>				
Custodial parent	3	45	48	15.0%
Non-custodial parent	15	10	25	7.8%
<i>Other</i>				
Receives some form of health insurance	56	213	269	83.8%
Receives Income Supports (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, other)	23	109	132	41.1%
With disability(s)	4	17	21	6.5%

Service Integration

Fundamental to these projects is the connection between the workforce development system and the child welfare system. In four of the five sites, the local provider represents either one of the systems and must then connect with the other system to meet the goals of the grant. Chicago, the exception, is a school-based program that works with local child welfare services but has not connected with any workforce development partners yet. Early success in accomplishing this so far is mixed across the sites. Two of the sites, Houston and Los Angeles, have strong partnerships that produce the provision of services to the target population by both systems. In Chicago, 15 of the alternative schools receive targeted State funds from the public welfare system to support foster care youth enrolled in the schools. In Detroit, the local provider has established relationships with several of the local judges that work with foster care youth and with the Guardian Ad Litem that work with the courts. However, they have been less successful in establishing relationships with the providers of Chafee-funded transition services although they are working on those relationships. In the case of New York, the local child welfare agency is the entity that is contracting with the local employment and training provider, Arbor. The transition has been challenging, but once settled, there is a foundation for collaboration between the two providers.

With respect to other collaborations, the list of organizations and agencies is extensive. Across the sites, juvenile justice, the courts, mental health, and substance abuse agencies as well as community colleges and other post-secondary institutions are the most commonly mentioned partners. Businesses are also being brought to the table to provide work experience, internships, and job placement. At least several of the sites, notably Chicago and Los Angeles, had existing partnerships that support other program activities that could be tapped into for this project. Most of the sites were in the early stages of formalizing these arrangements at the time of our visits. Houston is perhaps the furthest along in terms of finalizing new MOUs with agencies and organizations that have resulted in provision of services to the enrolled youth. Houston, like all other sites, reports that there are a number of additional partnerships that they are pursuing. As forming new partnerships takes time, we see this as an area where the evaluation effort will glean more detail from the Year 2 site visits.

One key partner in service integration and partnerships is the foster youth being served. While it appears that most of the sites take the needs and desires of the youth into account for

their own service plans, there is little in the way of a formalized feedback mechanism to develop and improve the program. The one exception is the Detroit site, which actively engaged the Youth Advisory Board in designing the program and in improving it. In addition, the sites have not actively engaged the caregivers of the youth participants.

The sites vary in their progress made in leveraging resources. Chicago leverages the resources provided to the schools under the \$2.1 million from Chafee funds to pay for education slots in alternative schools. Houston has made considerable progress in leveraging resources – their entire approach is based on providing space to organizations in return for services. In Los Angeles, the Pasadena WIB has connected with the Casey Family Programs site to add a financial literacy among other social services and recreational activities to its programming, and Detroit has collaborated with outside mentoring programs. In New York, ACS has a strong relationship with a local funder that provides education and employment “kits” for youth, and The Door has partnered with agencies that provide legal and housing services. It remains to be seen if centers where co-location of other services occur are true examples of leveraged and connected resources rather than just a “landlord” situation.

It is too early to tell whether the initial efforts at service integration for foster youth are having an effect on access and improvement of services as well as resource sharing.

Program Staffing

Overall, grantees have taken measured steps to ensure that they have the right staff in place to oversee and run the foster youth demonstration programs. Each site seems to have a “champion” that has overseen and taken the well-being and progress of the program to heart. As in many other innovative programs that serve youth, it is necessary to have a leader that serves as the program’s champion to see it become successful and become a sustainable program in the community. New York is losing its program leader and will need to fill the void to overcome the delayed start.

The state and local agencies with overall responsibility for the grant have selected service providers with previous experience in serving youth or in providing employment services – and sometime both. These service providers built on their previous experience to identify staff needs and to hire staff. Detroit, for example, took extra care to find Transition Specialists who had experience in both child welfare and workforce development services. In addition, the site also

hired a former foster youth as the intake specialist, the first person a youth encounters when enrolling in the program.

Sites such as New York and Los Angeles are not as far along in their staff configurations. New York's contracting situation has created some limbo in the hiring of life coaches from ACS by The Door. In Los Angeles, both sites have vacant staff positions such as an academic coordinator, a mentor coordinator, and two peer advocates, pending the receipt of Chafee funding. It is unclear whether the sites have a designated staff person to build partnerships and engage employers in meeting the goals of the program.

Some staff development activities were conducted to train these site staff. Houston is conducting cross-agency training activities and standardizing functions across the site staff and connected agency staff. In Detroit, staff development is ongoing and the service provider, EDTI, sends staff to national and local training events and supports their pursuit of certification in related service areas.

Program Budgets and Resources

The foster youth demonstration grants each received \$400,000 in ETA funding with a requirement for 100 percent matched funding by the state. Overall, the sites have provided the matching funds from mostly state but some local sources. Most often, the main source of matching funds is state Chafee funds. Among other funding sources are Wagner-Peyser, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), local general funds, and in-kind contributions. It is unclear whether the matching funds currently committed to the grants will continue once the DOL grant funding ceases. Table 5 shows the breakdown of funding sources for the grant sites.

Table 5. Year 1 Funding for Foster Youth Demonstration Grants by Site

	Total Year 1 Budget	ETA Funds	States Funds and Sources	Local Funds and Sources
California (Los Angeles)	\$974,219	\$400,000	\$200,000 (Wagner-Peyser Funds) \$200,000 (Chafee Funds)	\$174,219 (In-kind contributions)
Illinois (Chicago)	\$800,000	\$400,000	\$200,000 (IL Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity) \$200,000 (IL Dept. of Children and Family Services)	None
Michigan (Detroit)*	\$1,050,400	\$400,000	\$400,000 (Chafee Funds)	\$250,400 (Match/in-kind contributions from Detroit community organizations)
New York (New York)	\$800,000	\$400,000	\$260,000 (Chafee Funds)	\$140,000 (NYC Administration for Children's Services)
Texas (Houston)*	\$800,000	\$400,000	\$300,000 (TANF Funds) \$100,000 (Chafee Funds)	None

* Note that the funding amounts available to the local sites in Michigan and Texas are less than the amount shown as these states used a small percentage of funds for their activities.

The sites have developed detailed budgets for the grants. In general, sites have designated large portions of their budgets to personnel. New York, for example, has allocated \$585,900 to personnel with the remaining funds going to operational costs. Detroit provided more budget detail on the service costs—\$94,500 for paid work experience, \$50,000 for educational services, and \$50,000 for support services. As the programs only started enrolling last fall, it is difficult to determine whether these allocations will be appropriate and adequate in meeting the goals of the program.

Early Program Outcomes

Based on the interviews with the sites, it is too early to provide any definitive outcomes on both participants and the local systems attributable to the grants. Early observations show increased awareness of the program among the eligible foster youth population, service providers, employers, and others in the community; improved access to services; and the start of meeting this population's needs. However, the sites are continuing with their efforts to improve in these initial successes.

Initial Participant Outcomes

It is clear from the data that the sites are beginning to engage participants in first-time unsubsidized employment. In addition, the sites are engaging youth in achieving educational activities with nearly 50 youth obtaining a high school degree or GED and 56 youth participating in full-time post-secondary school. It is important to note that the outcomes we see can be mainly attributed to the Chicago site as it is has been enrolling youth the longest. Juvenile justice and housing outcomes are not informative at this point because only two participants have completed the program and one has moved from the target area.

As shown in Table 6, the sites have collectively shown the following outcomes as of the September 2005 quarterly report:

Table 6. Outcomes for Participants by Site (as of September 2005)

Outcome Information	Ages 15-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	2	46	48
Entered the Military	0	2	2
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	2	8	10
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	0	2	2
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	6	50	56
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	1	8	9
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained			16
Obtained a High School Degree	2	41	43
Obtained a GED	1	5	6
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	2	2
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	1	1
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	2	2
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	1	1
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	2	2
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	1	1
Remain Active In Project	62	256	318

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Goals

To help measure the effectiveness of the programs, ETA requires that the sites report their progress in meeting five performance goals every quarter during the period of performance. These goals are:⁹

- *Enrollment Rate (100 percent of the negotiated target enrollment).* This goal represents the sites' success in meeting enrollment targets set by each site.
- *Recidivism Rate (10 percent ± 5 percent below the state or locally accepted youth recidivism rate).* This goal is the percentage of youth offenders that have been

⁹ U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. "Youth Foster Care Grants Performance Goals." 2005.

adjudicated, incarcerated, or had probation/parole revoked due to a violation after entering the program.

- *Placement Rate (60 percent ± 5 percent of participants ages 18 and older placed in defined long-term outcomes).* This goal is the percentage of older youth placed in a long-term outcome such as: full-time unsubsidized employment, military, apprenticeship, full-time post-secondary education, or part-time employment while in part-time post-secondary education.
- *Retention Rate (80 percent ± 5 percent of all participants).* This goal is the percentage of all youth (ages 15 and older) who are placed in one of the five long-term outcomes and remain in the outcome through the last month of the quarter.
- *Diploma/GED Attainment Rate (50 percent ± 5 percent of participants).* This goal is the percentage of youth who achieved a high school diploma or a GED who entered the program without either attainment.

Overall, the sites are also making progress in meeting performance goals set by ETA. As expected, the Chicago site is on its way to meeting the performance goals for enrollment, placement, retention, and diploma/GED attainment. One blip on Chicago’s record is the 14 percent recidivism rate, but this represents one youth offender out of seven who re-offended. The other sites, with the exception of New York at the time of the quarterly report, are on their way to meeting enrollment goals for the grant. Based on progress reports during the site visits, it is expected that the December 2005 quarterly report will show great improvement in meeting these goals.

Table 7 shows the progress of the sites in meeting these performance goals:

Table 7. Achievement in Meeting Performance Goals by Site (as of September 2005)

	ETA Performance Goals	California (Los Angeles)	Illinois (Chicago)	Michigan (Detroit)	New York (New York)	Texas (Houston)
Enrollment Rate	100%	70%	79%	58%	21%	42%
Recidivism Rate		0%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Placement Rate	60%	35%	71%	26%	50%	34%
Retention Rate	80%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	50%	7%	83%	0%	20%	17%

Early Lessons Learned

During the sites visits, the grantees provided some early lessons learned, especially on the program design and implementation process. These lessons learned include:

- Previous experience in the area with at-risk youth and in employment services is an important factor in program success.
- Frequent and structured opportunities for ongoing communication among lead agencies, community partners, and youth is critical to creating an effective program.
- To retain youth in the program, they must be immediately and consistently engaged in activities that move them closer toward meeting their personal goals.
- Youth involvement as advisors and staff helps to create a youth-friendly program that participants can be proud of.
- It is important to understand the community the program operates in to anticipate potential challenges and issues that may hinder a youth's progress in the program such as loss of housing, child care, or transportation.
- It is necessary to recognize the unique needs of current and former foster youth in designing a program that meets their complex needs.
- Garnering community involvement now will help sustain the program in the future.

These site visits reinforced much of what is known about this population of youth. A major challenge that all sites are confronted with is related to the difficult and complex nature of the participants' lives, as well as the child welfare system in which they have lived. How successful the sites will be in overcoming these challenges remains to be seen as the sites mature and as they work with the participants over a longer period of time.

Program Sustainability and Replicability

It is too early and there are too many unknowns to predict which sites will sustain their programs. The potential for sustainability is greater if ETA decides to continue these grants for at least another year. This would give local sites time to become grounded in terms of fully implementing their programs, bring contributing partners to the table, and be able to demonstrate

positive outcomes for the youth that they serve. These are fundamentals that sites need to have in place in order to secure the funding needed to continue their programs.

Even though it is the first year of these projects, the sites are beginning to look at how they might sustain their efforts. In Houston, the State legislation, S.B. 6, which mandates connections between the child welfare and workforce system, should enhance their potential for continuing their foster care youth one-stop model after federal funds have ended. The Houston site has already formed a committee to explore sustainable funding sources. Even though New York is just starting to enroll participants, it is already working on developing continuing funding. The Door, New York's service provider, recently received a grant from the United Way and has established relationships with the New York Department of Education and the Gates Foundation. Staff in both Los Angeles locations have agreed to pursue funding through other public and private sources and are actively looking for such opportunities.

All of the key players interviewed during the site visits indicated that many aspects of their programs were replicable. Sites such as Los Angeles and Houston based their program models on other at-risk youth programming so they have replicated, with enhancements, (or with modifications designed to specifically meet the unique needs of foster youth) earlier programs. Other sites such as Chicago and New York used existing programs to augment and intensify services to foster youth. The sites identified several key program components as replicable, including: youth involvement in program design and improvement, early involvement of multiple partners, the one-stop center approach, intensive case management, youth-driven service plans, former foster youth on staff, and leveraging multiple community and government resources. Visits conducted in Year 2 of the evaluation will further investigate these replicability issues.

There is also the potential that these projects, whether or not they are sustained, will inform how both child welfare service providers and workforce development providers, including one-stop centers, serve youth aging out of foster care. It may be that as a result of these projects more foster youth will be served through the WIA system. It may be that the two systems will continue to align or braid services for this population of youth. It is too early to tell from these first site visits and interviews. However, we can say that the connections between the two systems may potentially provide a lasting legacy in each of the five local sites.

Individual Site Visit Reports

The following section provides a summary report from each of the site visits conducted in October and November 2005. These reports offer an initial look at the sites as they have planned and begun early implementation of the foster youth projects. Further investigation of many of the issues referenced in these site reports will occur during Year 2 site visits.

California – Los Angeles Site

<i>Program Name</i>	Youth Self-Sufficiency Program
<i>Lead State Grantee</i>	Employment Development Department, State of California
<i>Lead Local Agencies and Service Providers</i>	Foothill Workforce Investment Board (Pasadena) and Community Build (South Central Los Angeles)
<i>Budget</i>	\$964,219
<i>Main Contact</i>	Norma McKay Sr. Project Management Unit, Workforce Investment Division Employment Development Department (EDD) State of California 916-654-6873 nmckay@edd.ca.gov

Site Visit Background

The site visit to Los Angeles took place on October 26-28, 2005. The team members for the visit were Burt Barnow and Sue Badeau. October 26 and 28 were spent in Pasadena, divided between the Foothill Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the Jackie Robinson Center, and the Casey Family Programs office, and October 27 was spent in South Central Los Angeles at the Community Build offices. Focus groups with youth were held in both locations. The list of organizations where we interviewed staff and/or held focus groups is as follows:

- Workforce Investment Division, Employment Development Department (EDD) State of California
- Foothill Workforce Investment Board (staff interviews and youth, adult caregiver, and employer focus groups)
- Los Angeles Department of Social Services
- Community Build (staff interviews and youth focus groups)
- Casey Family Programs

Project Overview

The Foothill WIB in Pasadena teamed with Community Build, a non-profit community-based organization in South Central Los Angeles to bid on and win the state's competition for the project. The project is unique in that while it is one project, with one service delivery model and one set of goals and objectives, it is located in two distinct and diverse settings with unique strengths and challenges. It is important to note that the two local subgrantees, for the most part, operate their programs separately.

The Youth Self-Sufficiency Program is designed to provide a range of services within a specific model framework (described below) to 100 transition-age foster youth between the ages of 17-21 with a goal of promoting self-sufficiency and to help foster youth connect with their communities in meaningful ways.

The Pasadena site operates the program out of the Jackie Robinson Center, a nearby community center, to provide the program with better facilities. The youth in the project and the other groups (mostly older

populations) that use the center adapted well to each other. The youth liked the spaciousness of the facilities, and after a while they began to interact well with the older individuals who also make use of the center. Community Build operates out of its own offices.

While the Foothill WIB had experience working tangentially with foster youth through various workforce programs, it had not previously focused on this population. Staff at the WIB saw the Request for Proposal for this project and viewed it as an opportunity to focus and build upon the work they were already doing with this population. Community Build had been providing a range of services to at-risk youth populations, including those exiting foster care, for several years, but staff felt they could benefit from a program specifically designed to focus attention on foster youth. In addition, while the partners had developed many relationships with

Los Angeles Snapshot

Los Angeles Metro Area Economic Conditions

- ▶ 4.3% unemployment rate (September 2005)
- ▶ \$14.92 median hourly wages (November 2004)
- ▶ Growth industries: international trade, tourism, entertainment, construction, retail, administrative services, and county government
- ▶ 157.3 on the composite cost of living index (3rd quarter 2005)
- ▶ \$704 median gross rent (2000 Census)

Los Angeles County Foster Care Statistics (as of July 2005)

- ▶ 29,088 children in supervised care
- ▶ 9,089 are ages 11-15
- ▶ 4,932 are ages 16-18

employers in the past, this project afforded them an opportunity to take job readiness and other employment services to a new level.

Status of Implementation

Who is involved in the project, including the role of the state?

As noted above, the project is a joint effort between agencies in Pasadena and Los Angeles. In both the child welfare and the workforce systems, it appears that the role of the state agencies has been primarily to encourage and support the initial application for the funding and to oversee youth eligibility and budget management. The Foothill WIB and Community Build manage the project's implementation and day-to-day operations.

The Foothill WIB is the lead agency, in cooperation with Community Build in South Central Los Angeles. These two organizations met on a frequent basis (weekly or more) in the early stages of the development of the Request for Proposal and project design and early implementation. As the project has moved forward with ongoing implementation, these meetings have been less frequent, although lead staff in both locations expressed a desire to reinvestigate these regular meetings for the purposes of communication, idea-sharing, case management, and consistent implementation in both settings.

Also involved are the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the local Probation Office. The Casey Family Programs Los Angeles field office also plays an instrumental role, which is further described under "Key Partners" below.

Whom are the youth being served/how are they recruited?

The project is designed to serve youth ages 17-21. All youth enrolled in the project at both locations must be eligible for the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, so the first step after outreach is to verify eligibility. This task is handled by completion of an intake form which is then faxed to the child welfare agency office for eligibility confirmation.

While both organizations used a similar approach to recruiting youth for the project, one of the most interesting features of this project is the difference in the youth profile of those served in Pasadena and those served in Los Angeles.

In Pasadena, a kickoff meeting in was held in June to announce the program to the community. Twenty-seven organizations including DCFS, probation, group homes, employers, school districts, Casey Family Programs, and some youth attended this event. The Foothill WIB gave away many flyers about the project as well as engaging in direct conversations with youth and many providers who serve youth. No media outreach was conducted in Pasadena, although it is being considered to recruit additional youth for the program.

Community Build came to the Pasadena kickoff and had its own similar kickoff event later in June. Community Build used radio spots timed to coincide with their kickoff event to promote the program and recruit youth.

The Foothill WIB also has a 37' RV mobile training unit that is colorful and eye-catching that was used to recruit at foster youth events. Both sites have discovered that they are beginning to get most of their newer recruits from word-of-mouth peer referrals. Most of the youth in Pasadena indicated that they had heard about the program from the group home staff, whereas the youth served at Community Build reported learning about the program from their Independent Living (IL) caseworkers. Community Build has found that approximately 80 percent of their enrolled youth have been directly referred by their IL caseworker at the Department of Children and Family Services.

Of the 70 youth served, slightly more are male than female (56 percent are male). Eighty percent are African American and 13 percent are Hispanic. Forty-nine percent of the youth participants are considered in school while 51 percent are considered out-of-school.¹⁰ Seventy percent are living in some type of housing characterized as “stable” While 14 percent are homeless, and 15 percent are living in less stable independent living situations.

The primary differences noted in the populations served between the two locations relate to the youth's foster care history and experiences. Most of those served in Pasadena are not originally from Pasadena but rather have been placed there as a result of entry in foster care. Most of these youth reside in group homes. On the other hand, most of the Los Angeles youth served by the Community Build program, grew up in the vicinity. Their foster care experience was less likely to involve group residential placements and more likely to involve placement in a foster family home or a kinship care setting (placement with a relative upon removal from parents) or other foster care arrangement in an individual home.

¹⁰ The quarterly roll-up data does not reflect this number.

This critical difference in their backgrounds was evident in the level of social skills and employment-readiness observed in the two populations. Based on initial assessments, the Pasadena youth clearly needed more attention to basic social skills development and foundational job readiness, whereas the Los Angeles youth were starting with many of these skills but needed other wrap-around services to support their ability to maintain stability and self-sufficiency in the less-structured environments in which they live.

In both locations, retention of the youth in the program has been quite good. There have been three dropouts that had actually enrolled in the program. Two of these youth have significant challenges with substance abuse that prevented their successful completion of the program. Approximately 15 young people made inquiry about the program but did not enroll. Both sites agreed that the primary difference between those that enroll and are retained and those that are not relates to the youth's own motivation level. In both sites, the youth acknowledge that the financial incentives (money for completing specific program module components such as workshops, resume completion, etc) were key factors in staying in the program. They also noted the high degree of personal support they received as a retention factor, and all youth interviewed felt they had developed strong relational ties with program staff.

Has the program model shown clarity and specificity?

The program model for the Youth Self-Sufficiency Program shows clarity and specificity in the application of the five modules between the two sites. The program design is called "The California Model," and it consists of five modules, stemming from the theory that self-sufficiency requires more than just a job and that a youth development approach to developing the assets and human capital of the youth must be implemented. The project design was developed from a model used within the probation and parole arena over a period of several years. The "California Model," as it is called, is based on both the "Human Capital Theory" as well as a philosophy built on the theme of "Youth Asset Development." From the interviews, the staff use the modules in developing Individual Service Plans for each youth to guide their progress through the program in measuring milestones.

What services are being provided to participants?

Each service module for the Youth Self-Sufficiency Program includes several components and strategies. The five modules include:

- Intake/Eligibility
- Employment
- Academic/Educational
- Training
- Retention

During the first module, youth are assessed and eligibility determinations are made. The second module includes job readiness training, internships, and job placement. Module Three provides academic support, GED classes, college preparation and support, and other academic services. The fourth module offers higher level vocational skills, career services training and placement. In this fourth module, paid work experience (PWE) and internship opportunities. The youth are paid \$7.50 per hour for PWE. Module Five provides a variety of supports and services designed to support retention in employment and/or college.

Some of the strategies and service components used in each of the modules are the One-Stop employment services, a “safe haven” home base for youth to operate from, mentoring, access to computers and email, leadership opportunities, group counseling, and individualized counseling/planning and support.

At the Pasadena location, all youth in the project are also co-enrolled in Casey Family Programs where they receive a range of transition services. Casey uses the Ansell-Casey assessment as a starting point to develop a plan for each youth to be served. The assessment is conducted as part of Module One at the Foothill WIB. The Community Build staff prefer to use a mix of assessment tools, which include literacy and career exploration, that meets the needs of their population. Both locations develop Individual Service Plans (ISP) with the youth as a result of the assessment outcomes.

Although the model and modules are used in both locations, there is a greater emphasis on the employment module in Pasadena, and a greater emphasis on education in Los Angeles. Nearly all of the Los Angeles youth spoke of their goal and intention of going to college, and

some are currently enrolled in college. The Pasadena youth were more focused on getting or keeping a job that they liked. The immediate availability of summer jobs after the June kick-off events was a particular draw for the Pasadena youth.

How consistent are the services provided (program fidelity)?

The Pasadena and Los Angeles sites both make use of the same model with the five modules, but there is variation in how the model is implemented between the two locations. Program staff noted that all youth do not receive all modules and that the modules are not provided in the sequence listed with the exception of the intake module. However, both the Foothill WIB and Community Build seem dedicated to adhering to the basic model and tailoring it to the youth participants' needs. It remains to be seen whether this varied approach will yield similar outcomes across participants.

Who are the key partners such as funders, facilitators, service delivery partners, major youth employers, and consumer groups?

In addition to the lead organizations, a number of partnerships have emerged. The partners fall into three categories—employers, schools, and foster care agencies (mostly group home providers in Pasadena). Some of the employers include the City of Pasadena, Monrovia Recreation Department, Target, Home Depot, the Pasadena Courthouse, and the National Guard. Marriott Hotels and Goodwill Industries are also resources in Los Angeles for employment opportunities for youth with disabilities.

Local school districts—including Monrovia, Pasadena, Los Angeles public schools, and area alternative schools—have expressed interest in the program and provided venues for presentations. Monrovia has also offered teaching staff and classroom space from their schools to provide classes for the youth in the program. Community Build has a staff member who is located at the high schools three days a week to provide outreach related to all Community Build programs, including this one.

Casey Family Programs is the most significant social service provider that has partnered with the project, especially for the Foothill WIB. As a workforce development agency, the WIB recognized that it needed a social services partner in this effort. (Community Build is a social service agency for youth, so it has not seen a need to have youth co-enrolled at Casey Family

Programs.) The WIB and Casey have nearly completed a Memorandum of Understanding that details services, such as case management, financial literacy workshops, recreation, and counseling, that Casey will provide to the Pasadena youth. The two organizations have a history of working together and expect to build upon this history as they serve the youth in this project. In Pasadena, three group home agencies—Five Acres, Hillside, and Journey House—have developed ongoing partnerships with the project. These agencies are not only a referral source for the program but also provide mentoring, assist with the assessments of the youth, and communicate with a youth’s workplace to correct any on-the-job problems (e.g., youth comes to work dressed inappropriately).

Community Build has a long history of providing services in the Los Angeles community. Many other providers (e.g., a health clinic, transitional living services, mental health providers, child care, and educational and tutoring providers) are co-located in the same building. All of these pre-existing partner organizations have been made aware of this project, and their services are available to the youth in this project.

What are the funding sources and percentage estimates?

This project is funded with a combination of DOL demonstration grant funds, Wagner-Peyser funds, Chafee funds, and in-kind contributions. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
DOL Grant Funds	\$400,000	38%
Wagner-Peyser Funds	\$200,000	19%
Chafee Funds	\$200,000	19%
In-kind match	\$174,219	17%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$964,219</i>	

What are the plans for continued implementation/operation?

Staff in both locations would very much like to see the program continue after funding through the grant ends. Both programs have expressed a verbal commitment to ensure that services to foster youth will become integrated into their on-going work. The extent to which

they will be able to offer the full array of the program components will depend on the availability of funding. Staff in both locations have agreed to pursue funding through other public and private sources.

Noteworthy Successes and Challenges for the Site

What changes have been made in the project design and why?

The program is being operated almost exactly as proposed with two exceptions. First, modules are sometimes provided out of order. Second, financial literacy has been added to the life skills training received by the youth. In Pasadena, this training is provided by Casey Family Programs.

Are there some partners missing from the table and why?

Staff and youth identified housing as the biggest unmet need for youth as they age out of foster care. Although efforts have been made to involve housing providers, they seem to be the primary missing partner. In addition, the Los Angeles staff indicated that they see a great need for increased targeted services for pregnant or parenting teens and a richer array of substance abuse prevention and treatment options for youth. They believe that youth with these complex challenges cannot fully benefit from a program focused on employment if they are not receiving the concurrent services they need to remain sober and drug-free. Staff in both locations also acknowledged that the youth with special needs that they see would benefit from inclusion of more partners with expertise in serving individuals with disabilities.

What is going well? What would the site like to highlight?

As previously noted, the success at both recruiting and more importantly retaining youth is a strength of this project. Youth feel comfortable, safe, and well-served by this project. Another highlight put forward by staff at both locations is the success of the new partnerships developed for this project. Foothill WIB staff believes their programs will be permanently strengthened as a result of the partnerships they have forged with social service agencies, schools, and community providers. Likewise, Community Build believes that the partnerships

they are developing within the workforce system will enhance and strengthen all of their programs and efforts.

What are the key challenges and how are they being addressed?

In the initial stages of the grant, staff noted that there were concerns with DOL with Community Build's staffing pattern. This issue was addressed through numerous in-person and telephone meetings both internally within the program and with the state and federal agencies.

A secondary and related challenge has been what staff at both locations perceive as a need for more frequent conversations and meetings between them. They indicated that they felt a little "burned out on meetings" after the initial planning and implementation, and thus took a bit of a break from their regular staff meetings. This has created a challenge of ensuring that the entire project is truly one program with two locations rather than two separate programs. This issue will be addressed going forward by the re-establishment of the frequent staff meetings involving staff from both locations.

What are the outcomes the site is seeing?

While it is still too early in the grant to demonstrate genuine outcomes, the high retention rate is a strong indicator that youth are benefiting from the services provided. All of the youth interviewed in both locations believed the program was valuable to them and believed it would help them with their long term goals. All youth in the program, at both locations, are in full time activities involving education and/or employment.

The employers interviewed at the Pasadena location were effusive in their praise of the youth they employed as a result of this project. One employer said he "felt blessed to be given 3 kids (from this project) to work for him." When asked why, he said that the youth who were sent to him were a good match for his needs, he appreciated the pre-screening the program staff did to help make a good fit. As a result he has seen no incidents of tardiness, absenteeism, inappropriate dress, or other behavior non-conducive to success in the workplace.

Noteworthy Practices

Three noteworthy practices bear mention here. The first is the model design itself. The use of the five modules ensures a wide array of services. There is a clear recognition that youth

transitioning from foster care need more than a job to create self-sufficiency. The comprehensive approach afforded by the use of the modules ensures that each youth receives a package of services that build upon their strengths (assets) and fill in the gaps so that when they complete the program they are more likely to achieve true self-sufficiency and success.

The second example of a noteworthy practice is the strong relationship forged between the project and the foster care provider agencies, particularly the Pasadena-area group homes. Frequent, regular communication between project staff and group home staff has led to a shared vision, goals, and expectations for the youth served. Thus, the messages the youth receive in the workshops and other components of the project are reinforced when they go home at the end of the day to their day.

Finally, the one-stop nature of services provided, by locating at community organizations such as the Jackie Robinson Center and Community Build creates an impression (and reality) of stability, safety, and comfort for the youth served. In both instances they like and enjoy coming to the center, and they feel genuinely cared about by the staff.

Site Data

The data provided in the following tables were drawn from the roll-up quarterly reports dated September 30, 2005.

Enrollment Data for Los Angeles Site	Age 17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Enrollment Target/Plan	27.5	27.5	55
Enrolled (Total)	30	40	70
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	16	23	39
Female	14	17	31
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>			
White	0	3	3
Black	25	31	56
Hispanic	5	4	9
Native American	0	1	1
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	1	1
Multiracial	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<i>School Status</i>			
In School	22	12	34
Out of School/HS Dropout	1	7	8
Out of School/Grad or GED	7	21	28
<i>Housing Status</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	28	21	49
Independent Living	2	9	11
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	10	10
<i>Foster Care Status</i>			
In Foster Care System	30	19	49
Out of Foster Care System	0	21	21
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>			
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	5	14	19
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	25	26	51
<i>Parenting Status</i>			
Custodial parent	1	1	2
Non-custodial parent	13	1	14
<i>Other</i>			
Receives some form of health insurance	21	33	54
Receives Income Supports (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, other)	11	28	39
With disability(s)	1	1	2

Project Activities Data for Los Angeles Site	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	0	0	0	30	3	0
Unsubsidized Work Experience	0	0	0	1	2	3
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	0	0	26	11	13	5
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	0	0	0	0	0	0
College Prep	0	0	0	0	0	0
GED Preparation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Basic and Remedial Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parenting Classes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Life Skills	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	0	0	0	64	0	0

Additional Project Activities	Age 17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Students Remaining In School ¹¹	0	0	0
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	0	0	0
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	0	0
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	0	0
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	18	34	52

¹¹ Please note the discrepancy in the number reported by the site during the interview and the quarterly data.

Outcome Data for Los Angeles Site	Age 17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes *</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	1	2	3
Entered the Military	0	0	0
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	0	0
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	0	0	0
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	0	0
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	4	10	14
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	0	2	2
Obtained a High School Degree			0
Obtained a GED	1	2	3
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	0	0
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	0	0
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	0	0
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	0	0
Remain Active In Project	30	40	70

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations for Los Angeles Site*	Actual	Goal
Enrollment Rate	70%	100%
Recidivism Rate	0%	
Placement Rate	35%	60%
Retention Rate	0%	80%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	7%	50%

* See page 23 for performance goal definitions.

Illinois – Chicago Site

<i>Program Name</i>	Project New Futures
<i>Lead State Grantee</i>	Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
<i>Lead Local Agency and Service Provider</i>	Alternative Schools Network
<i>Budget</i>	\$800,000
<i>Main Contact</i>	Jack Wuest Executive Director Alternative Schools Network 312-259-2360 jwuest@asnchicago.org

Site Visit Background

The site visit to Chicago took place from October 24-26, 2005. The evaluation team included Paul DiLorenzo, Barbara Kaufmann, and Irene Lynn. The visit consisted of in-person interviews, focus groups with youth participants, and follow-up phone calls with individuals who were not available during the scheduled period. Most of the in-person interviews were conducted at their individual schools and organizations, which are participating in the project.

Alternative Schools Network (ASN) is managing the grant project. However, the project is being implemented in a variety of locations throughout the city of Chicago. The site team visited several schools, the Office of the Public Guardian and the Mayor's Office for Workforce Development. Focus groups with young people took place in a school setting and at the main office of Alternate Schools Network.

The list of organizations where we interviewed staff and conducted focus groups is as follows:

- Alternative Schools Network (staff interviews and youth focus groups)
- Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- Mayor's Office of Workforce Development
- Office of the Public Guardian

- Pantoja School
- Olive-Harvey Middle College
- Sullivan Alternative High School
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Project Overview

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) selected the Alternative Schools Network (ASN) as the main service provider for the foster youth demonstration project. ASN of Chicago is the largest and oldest association of non-public, community-based alternative schools in the country. In 1998, ASN, with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services developed the Youth Skills Development and Training Program (YSDTP). YSDTP collaborates with 15 community-based alternative high schools in the Chicago area to serve older foster youth, ages 16-21, who are out of school and have not obtained a diploma or a GED.

Schools belonging to ASN offer programs that provide educational, social, and work-related services to enhance the necessary

skills that formerly out-of-school youth and youth at-risk of dropping out, will need to earn a high school diploma and transition to employment, college, or further skills training. Foster youth attending one of the 15 schools that are funded under YSDTP participate in the same programming as other youth enrolled at these schools, with one exception. These youth have a case worker housed at the school who serve as a mentor and help youth navigate various systems they are connected to.

The federal demonstration project grant allows ASN of Chicago to expand these existing services and enroll 110 eligible current and former foster youth in the first year. This effort is

Chicago (Cook County) Snapshot	
<i>Chicago Metro Area Economic Conditions</i>	
▶	5.8% unemployment rate (September 2005)
▶	\$15.34 median hourly wages (November 2004)
▶	Growth industries: distribution & warehousing, food, high tech, info tech, bio tech, machinery, plastics, packaging, printing & publishing
▶	128.6 on the composite cost of living index (1 st quarter 2005)
▶	\$669 median gross rent (2000 Census)
<i>Cook County Foster Care Statistics</i> (as of November 2005)	
▶	9,487 children in substitute care
▶	2,715 are ages 13-17
▶	1,025 are ages 18+

referred to as Project New Futures. This desire to expand the service is based on the evidence that many youth after leaving secondary school spiral into a myriad of poor outcomes unless they receive intensive outreach.

Project New Futures provides assistance to youth who already are attending one of the ASN schools or have completed high school. The ASN has a number of existing community partnerships. Through Project New Futures, ASN plans to continue building on those relationships for transitioning foster youth in the expanded project.

The project's geographic reach into a variety of school settings adds to the richness of the approach. The young people and the professional staff noted their strong approval of this diversity. The schools that the team visited appeared to be in locations that were easily accessible for youth. All of the professional staff were friendly, competent, skilled at relating to the youth, and able to work across educational and child welfare bureaucracies when necessary. The buildings were clean and student-friendly. Each school has a unique approach to providing education and workforce preparation services.

Status of Implementation

Who is involved in the project, including the role of the state?

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is the lead grantee for the federally-funded project. DCEO chose ASN as the main service provider for the youth demonstration project and worked with them to develop the grant application. Specifically, the project is an enhancement to ASN's Youth Skills Development and Training Program (YSDTP).

DCFS, through YSDTP, supports 15 community-based alternative schools in the Chicago area to serve foster youth, ages 16-21, in completing their secondary education. Under YSDTP, foster youth attending one of these alternative schools are provided educational, social, and work-related services. The New Futures Project has an additional component, which supports foster youth after they complete high school and are moving on to the next stage of transition. DCFS is also involved as a funder and a referral source for youth.

Other local partners offer support to the grant. The Youth Connections Public School Charter School provides support services. An agency called Introspect participates as a provider

of pre- and post-college placement services. The EXTRA College Support Program is involved as a provider of online services, and the Chicago Public Schools Office of Post Secondary Education is supplying pre and post-exit services to youth.

What youth are being served and how are they recruited?

According to the project managers, the youth who are enrolled in Project New Futures are those who have dropped out of school ages 16 to 21 years. The average age of participants is 18 years. Many have been out of school for 9 to 10 months before entering the school. Their reading level is low, often six years below grade level. The same is true of their math level, which is on average, five years below grade level.

About 38 percent of the students are teen parents, though the percentage of teen parents who were available for the site visit was higher. More of the participants are female—nearly 70 percent. Approximately 88 percent of the students are African-American, 7 percent are Hispanic, and 5 percent are white or other. Though the project indicates that 26 percent of the youth are considered “special needs” or “special education,” the staff noted that the number might be higher. Regardless of the actual number, the staff acknowledged the fact that more youth with challenges are entering the project. About one third live in foster homes, one third in group homes, and one third in independent living programs. Most of the foster youth who were interviewed during the site visit have marginal or no contact with their families of origin, and only one had been adopted.

Foster youth are recruited in a variety of ways. Many young people are already in the network of schools and the referral process appears to be a natural extension of their current enrollment. They also are referred from DCFS, private provider agencies, the ASN students, and other community-based agencies that have a cooperative relationship with ASN.

While ASN is in the early stages of implementation, it has already enrolled 87 participants as of September 2005. Referrals to the program have been steady. ASN’s long and respected history in the Chicago community seems to have facilitated the referral process.

The project has also used media and other communications efforts to advertise Project New Futures and recruit additional youth. ASN has garnered coverage through several editorials and newspaper articles about the project that in turn generated responses. In addition, the Executive Director is adept at staging public events with the youth in order to call attention to the

challenges facing youth in transition. This effort has helped to bring a spotlight on ASN as a strong resource for young people in need of services.

It is apparent from those interviewed that DCFS is unable to carry out the intensive follow-up with the youth, which is characteristic of ASN's approach. Thus, DCFS has been providing information to its regional offices, and to its purchases of service (POS) partners regarding the ASN project. There was a consensus among the interviewees that DCFS is coming to rely on ASN to:

- Support the youth as they leave the formal child welfare system;
- Provide intensive advocacy, mentoring and navigation services for youth; and
- Guide the young person into post-secondary education, employment or both, depending upon what the youth chooses.

If the referral process and clarification of roles can be refined, this might prove to be the most promising approach for the partners.

Has the program model shown clarity and specificity?

The model for Project New Futures is fairly clear and specific in how it is structured. Its purpose is to provide foster care youth who will be graduating from one of the 15 alternative schools that service this population with additional transition planning services and post-school supports so that they make a successful transition to post-secondary education or employment. The program model was based on the ASN Executive Director's observation that so many of the foster youth in ASN schools "fall-off the cliff" once they leave school. Under this project model intensive case management services help foster youth develop a post-secondary school plan and provide the support that is needed to implement the plan.

What services are being provided?

Services support foster youth staying and completing secondary education and planning for post-secondary activities. Project New Futures uses considerable amounts of its grant budget for staff. The basic staffing configuration consists of 15 half-time transition/college staff, one at each of the participating schools, with three full-time staff at the ASN main office. The case

managers stationed at the schools serve as navigators and mentors to the youth and are available to youth at any time. The three main office staff members coordinate the in-school staff and also work directly with youth, generally those who have graduated from one of the participating schools. They provide post-secondary support and assistance.

In addition to the intensive case management, many services are provided directly by ASN or coordinated through partner agencies. These services are:

- College searching
- Study/testing skills training
- Student employment support
- Financial aid assistance
- Stress and time management
- Resume development
- Career counseling
- Employment information and job development
- Life skills (daily living tasks, self care, social development and relationships)
- Leadership development
- Budget and financial management
- Housing information
- Parenting information
- Health and education information
- Monthly mailings
- Monthly outings
- Monthly one-one visits
- Quarterly all youth outings
- Mentoring services at each of the participating schools

How consistent are the services provided (program fidelity)?

Each youth has access to a staff member located in the school they attend or have ready access to a staff member at the ASN main office if they have graduated. Therefore, case management services seem to be consistently provided to all participants. In addition, as each of

the schools have similar service models in place and partner agencies are available to all these youth, the services appear to be offered consistently to participants but this will need to be monitored at subsequent site visits.

Who are the key partners such as funders, facilitators, service delivery partners, major youth employers, and consumer groups?

The primary partners in this project are ASN, DCFS, DCEO, and educational institutions, including community colleges and universities. Both DCFS and DCEO provided \$200,000 in match dollars so that the state could secure the federal grant. DCEO has worked more closely with the site to assure the sustainability of the model. In addition, ASN and the schools have a number of existing partners which include regional employers, business and industry associations, One-Stop operators, and economic development organizations. The Guardian Ad Litem office is supportive of the project and encourage of the youth to participate. However, it might be fair to say that the strongest partners are the schools that make up the network. Each of the schools is a unique design but share a capacity to work with young people. The staff at each of the sites has strong connections to community partners and to DCFS. In that sense, there are concentric circles of partners that emerge from the structure of the network.

The proposal for the project, mostly written by ASN, did not include specific plans to develop multiple collaborations necessary to address the needs youth who age out of foster care. As a result, the formal partnerships are still emerging. At the time of the site visit, there were no Memorandums of Understanding with the significant partners. Project staff indicated that those agreements were forthcoming.

What are the funding sources and percentage estimates?

This project is funded with a combination of DOL grant funds, State WIA funds, and State Chafee funds. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
DOL Grant	\$400,000	50%
State WIA 15% funds	\$200,000	25%
State Chafee funds	\$200,000	25%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$800,000</i>	

Salaries and fringe benefits for staff (in school half-time mentors and the three staff located at ASN) comprise approximately 50 percent of the budget for the project. Other uses of the funds include travel, supplies and computers, training, student stipends, and housing. These funds align with significant resources that came from ASN and the participating alternative schools. For example, this year DCFS provided \$2.1 million in funds for the YSDTP program.

What are the plans for continued implementation/operation?

ASN has an established relationship with DCFS as a part of their existing program for transitioning youth. The financial support for the core of the transition support work has remained consistent in the amount of approximately \$2.1 million. Project New Futures represents an enhancement to that program. The management and staff of ASN, as well as the partners acknowledge that the enhancement is “high touch” and expensive to operate. According to those interviewed, there is no formal sustainability plan for maintaining this component of the program at this stage.

Noteworthy Successes and Challenges for the Site

What changes have been made in the project design and why?

Based on the interviews conducted at the site visit, as well as follow-up calls to the state partners, it does not appear that any significant changes have been made in the project design. ASN continues to explore ways to improve their current service delivery strategy.

Are some partners missing from the table and if so why?

At the time of the site visit, there appeared to be two primary partners whose participation was somewhat inconsistent—DCFS and the Mayor’s Workforce Development Office. As a funder, DCFS has been generous. However, at both the direct service level and the policy level, most of those interviewed acknowledged that there is a disconnect between the DCFS and the project. Frontline practice within the DCFS appears to be rigid and inconsistent, according to those who were interviewed. At the state level, DCFS has made a financial commitment to the project but it is unclear how the work of ASN fits into the greater scheme of services to youth in transition. It is not clear if this is the result of the original planning process, the organizational structure of DCFS, the timing of the project’s implementation, or a combination of all of these factors.

The Mayor’s Workforce Development Office in Chicago is also missing from the table. This gap was identified by a number of people during the site visit. There is a lack of any apparent relationship between the ASN project and the Mayor’s Workforce Development Office. The origin of this disconnect is related to the application and grant award process. Instead of the traditional pass through of dollars from the state through the city, this grant was awarded to ASN directly, thus eliminating the city staff from the planning process and creating some mixed feelings about a specific “carve out” for ASN. It is unclear what impact this will have over time, especially as it relates to the sustainability of the project. For now, it has led to a lack of support from the city agency and confusion about the use of WIA dollars for foster youth in the ASN project.

What is going well? What would the site like to highlight?

Youth Feedback. The project received positive comments from the young people who were interviewed by the site visit team. Their comments emerged from the two foster youth focus groups that were held as a part of the site visit. In all, 13 youth participated. The young people reported that the ASN project staff has become a lifeline for them. The positive connection between the project participants and the staff can be summarized in a few words: size, structure, mentoring, motivation, and accessibility.

The youth participants noted the small and individualized caseloads of the staff, which allowed them to get the close attention they needed. This is remarkably different from their

experience in the child welfare system. They mentioned that ASN staff took the time to know them, to advocate with them for priorities the youth identified and to help navigate through difficult systems. The professional, knowledgeable staff has the time to become familiar with the youth. The project provides structure through the routines and expectations of the staff. The youth appreciate this, even though they sometimes perceive it as “nagging.” They welcome that someone cares enough to “stay on them.” In addition, each of the schools in the network has a degree of rigor that forces the young person to push him or herself to the next level of accomplishment. This also describes the quasi-mentoring role that the staff plays with the young people. They demonstrate model behavior for the young people, provide unconditional support, and maintain high expectations for them. The young people similarly describe the staff as “motivating” them to push themselves harder than they have in the past as well as providing hope for the future. They also draw strength from their peers, whom they frequently see at school or other project sites. Mostly, the young people were unanimous in their assessment of the staff’s accessibility. They noted that staff often called them in the morning to get them out of bed, and during the day and evening to follow up with ongoing concerns the youth might have. The staff members are also likely to work non-traditional hours with the young people, and in the words of one youth, “...do whatever it takes...” to support the participants in the project.

The most interesting observations made about staff, who interact with foster youth, emerged because of the interviewer’s questions about their experiences in therapy. Though this was not a planned question, it came up in both youth focus groups. Almost all of the participants had been in or are currently in therapy. Each youth in the group indicated that the experience was without merit. They found little or no value in discussing the “same problems over and over.” Instead, the young people indicated that their relationships with staff were far more practical, supportive, and healing since the youth perceive the staff as problem solvers, or advocates who operate in the “real world.” The young people praised the value of the “normal” atmosphere of the ASN program versus what they described as the contrived atmosphere of therapy.

Interviews with the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) revealed the unique challenges and opportunities inherent in this project. The lawyers for the children described the project as a “lifesaver” for participants. Project New Futures fills a major gap in meeting the needs of youth transitioning out of foster care. They noted that DCFS and the Purchase of Service (POS)

agencies rarely meet the needs of their consumers with agency caseloads are high and rules being too inflexible. Additionally, because they are so busy, the caseworkers are not very familiar with community resources. The GAL staff is impressed with what ASN is able to do, especially with the youth who cannot navigate the traditional school settings. Nonetheless, they did express concern that there were systemic issues within DCFS and the POS agencies that remained challenging, thus making the youth more dependent upon the intensive casework approach applied by ASN.

Areas of Success. ASN and others point to early indicators of success. They note the high attendance rates among the participants, gains in course credits per semester, well over 50-percent completion rates of high school diplomas, and entrance into college, training, or work settings.

Objectively speaking, the project continues to place young people in private sector jobs, and assist them with securing their degrees and GEDs. Though it is too early to know for sure if the project approach is sustainable, ASN has remained consistent in its efforts to support asset-building activities for transitioning youth. Many of the youth who were interviewed at the site praised ASN's efforts to prepare them for employment.

What are the key challenges and how are they being addressed?

Project managers, staff, and partners commented on the difficult personal challenges facing the participants. It was remarkable how many of the participants in the focus groups had been in state custody for extended periods of time, some since infancy. Many of the youth had multiple placements, one as many as 32, and almost all had more than 10 public agency caseworkers. Even more disturbing, was the number of young people who had not seen, or had contact, with their birth families since their earlier childhood years. The conversations among these youth, within the context of the focus group, also highlighted the very difficult task that lies ahead for the federally funded project. The staff indicated that it would be especially challenging for many of these young people to find their way into career or post-secondary education settings and to sustain their participation. Many of the adult professionals commented on the transient nature of the youth, their lack of stable living arrangements, and the near-impossible task of keeping in contact with young people who leave the system.

The extent of early childhood trauma, multiple placements, and the lack of continuity in a family setting have undoubtedly taken their toll. That is not to say that these youth will be incapable of success. Still, significant challenges arise for them everyday, and it is clear that their connection to the ASN project is their primary source of support. The youth noted the maintenance of adequate living arrangements, childcare, financial burdens, and difficulty with school assignments as their most significant concerns. They are in some ways dependent upon ASN as their sole pillar of support.

ASN staff noted the lack of adequate records and materials for young people, many of whom have had multiple living arrangements. This presents the youth and the professional helpers with issues of continuity and consistency of care.

In conversations with ASN staff and the adult professionals at the schools, there appeared to be a near unanimity regarding the purpose of the project. Their collective responses indicated a desire to prepare transitioning youth for school and to support them to the fullest extent possible so that they can be successful once they enroll. However, none of the respondents was able to clarify what they would need to build a sustainable network for transitioning youth that could accomplish these goals. As one respondent noted, the federal project has helped ASN to “kick their work up a few notches.” However, it is not clear how the project is creating the environment for measurable collaboration between and among the youth serving systems. The lack of an organized, articulated strategy is currently not obvious, in large part because the ASN staff is so multi-dimensional and because they cover so much ground on their own. It was not clear from the interviews that the implementation methodology can be sustained over time or be taken to scale until there is a greater level of collaboration.

Several people indicated that DCFS is still refining its specific priorities related to transitioning youth, even though they have indicated publicly a strong level of support for this population. There appears to be a commitment to youth in transition on the part of DCFS. Still, those interviewed noted that the most significant challenges facing DCFS, and in turn the project, are:

- A turnover in direct service staff in the public and private agencies, which creates gaps in information about the community resources, including this project
- A rigid bureaucracy that inhibits the ability of staff to work with a population of young people that requires a good deal of flexibility and availability
- An inability to follow youth after they have left the formal system
- An inability of youth to meet transportation and housing needs

On the other hand, most people agreed that DCFS staff and the ASN staff connected directly to this project are attempting to develop a seamless referral and service delivery process. Their ability to do this informally is predicated on the acceptance of their respective roles in the lives of youth. Given its inflexible and less timely organizational structure and response, DCFS is trying to refine its referral role, while ASN engages in direct service, advocacy, and mentoring activities with the youth. ASN also helps the young people to stabilize a crisis in an expedient manner.

Those who were interviewed indicated that the relationship between DCFS and the ASN project is still evolving. Since the initial planning process did not include DCFS, there was no opportunity to come to an agreement on the logistics of implementing the project or on a common set of desired outcomes. At the time of this visit, it was not clear what it would take for the two organizations to come to a greater degree of consensus on policies, procedures, and performance measures. One of the interviewees noted that the focus within ASN has been on a long-term funding strategy, as well as securing additional money from DCFS for the approach. There has been a lesser degree of attention paid to creating institutional change. This person also noted that if the ASN services prove to be effective over time, they must become a part of the systemic process for supporting transition from foster care. For purposes of this site visit, there were four calls to the DCFS director of transition services regarding the project; all were unanswered. A representative from DCFS was present during the visit to the Guardian Ad Litem's office. However, he did indicate that he was not in a policy-making or decision-making role within DCFS.

The participants in the project are a mobile group, whose lives are in constant flux. This presents an enormous challenge for the professional staff that tries to infuse stability and consistency for the young person. Moreover, many of the youth do not always have the right

paperwork or records that can help them access the needed services or educational support. Special education records are generally outdated or non-existent. In spite of that, the ASN professional staff manages to guide a high proportion of the young people to jobs and to school settings that provide a significant degree of structure. The youth and the staff agree that keeping the focus on the future is difficult for the participants. The success in this domain is directly attributable to the high touch approach of the project. There was a strong consensus that unless notified, the DCFS caseworkers were probably not going to be involved at this level. Still, the DCFS system has control over certain issues, such as housing, which remain a major obstacle for youth.

What are the outcomes the site is seeing?

As of September 2005, ASN was at 79 percent of their enrollment goal with 87 participants. ASN reported a 100 percent retention rate for the youth who were participating. The rate of youth receiving their diplomas or GED was 83 percent versus the original goal of 50 percent. Some youth are enrolling in classes to complete their diplomas or their GED. The participants are exposed to an intensive case management process that is pushing them to achieve a higher level of success. In turn, the staff are developing an advanced set of skills through training in such things as the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment tool (ACLSA).

Many of those interviewed noted the impressive effort to help the foster youth earn their high school diploma and go on to college. Some observers noted the need to supplement the support the young people receive with tutoring, as well as after school activities. Others noted that there should be additional emphasis on career exploration and job opportunities for those young people who are not up for the challenge of college. The latest quarterly reports from the site indicate that the youth are participating in a variety of employment settings and are performing well in school. Many youth are finding jobs because of their participation in the project. Still, respondents noted the need for an even more integrated relationships with other youth employment services in the city.

Noteworthy Practices

Project New Futures identifies a specific subset of young people in transition, whose outcomes are especially poor. The project is primarily concerned about young people who leave

the system without a formal source of support. In response, ASN and its partners have developed an intensive case management process, which emphasizes a one on one relationship with the young person, and provides academic, vocational and social services. The project utilizes a set of long standing relationships built through the Alternative Schools Network. This in turn provides vulnerable youth with a variety of geographic and academic options. The diversity of school settings and educational approaches available through the ASN is a valuable asset for the youth. The “high touch” approach taken at each of the school settings is especially popular with the young people. Yet, ASN has been working hard to maintain a standardized approach to delivering these additional services. As a result, the young people who are participating appear to be achieving an impressive set out of outcomes related to their education, living arrangements, and employment.

From a systemic perspective, the ASN built this project on the foundation of its existing high school network. They have managed to leverage other funds, and the variety of school settings, in a way that extends services to this population of youth. Also, because of their strong standing in the Chicago community, ASN is able to make use of its relationships with community partners who are located in all parts of the city.

Site Data

The data provided in the following tables were drawn from the roll-up quarterly reports dated September 30, 2005.

Enrollment Data for Chicago Site	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Enrollment Target/Plan	3	84	87
Enrolled (Total)	3	84	87
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	1	28	29
Female	2	56	58
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>			
White	0	1	1
Black	2	74	76
Hispanic	0	7	7
Native American	0	0	0
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Multiracial	1	1	2
Other	0	1	1
<i>School Status</i>			
In School	3	68	71
Out of School/HS Dropout	0	1	1
Out of School/Grad or GED	0	15	15
<i>Housing Status</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	1	46	47
Independent Living	1	33	34
Temporary Housing/Homeless	1	5	6
<i>Foster Care Status</i>			
In Foster Care System	3	73	76
Out of Foster Care System	0	11	11
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>			
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	0	7	7
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	3	77	80
<i>Parenting Status</i>			
Custodial parent	1	26	27
Non-custodial parent	0	6	6
<i>Other</i>			
Receives some form of health insurance	3	81	84
Receives Income Supports (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, other)	1	45	46
With disability(s)	0	1	1

Project Activities Data for Chicago Site	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	0	0	0	31	31	0
Unsubsidized Work Experience	8	7	7	32	31	25
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	24	18	37	58	38	15
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	1	1	1	0	0	0
College Prep	71	71	71	46	41	38
GED Preparation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Basic and Remedial Education	3	3	3	1	0	6
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	85	85	85	86	86	86
Parenting Classes	1	1	1	0	0	0
Life Skills	85	85	85	86	86	86
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	85	85	85	86	86	86

Additional Project Activities	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Students Remaining In School	2	17	19
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	1	46	47
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	24	24
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	4	4
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	3	113	116

Outcome Data for Chicago Site	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	0	25	25
Entered the Military	0	0	0
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	1	1
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	0	8	8
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	2	2
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	1	22	23
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	0	2	2
Obtained a High School Degree			16
Obtained a GED	1	38	39
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	5	5
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	1	1
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	0	0
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	0	0
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	1	1
Remain Active In Project	3	83	86

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations for Chicago Site*	Actual	Goal
Enrollment Rate	79%	100%
Recidivism Rate	14%	
Placement Rate	71%	60%
Retention Rate	100%	80%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	83%	50%

* See page 23 for performance goal definitions.

Michigan – Detroit Site

<i>Program Name</i>	“CIAO” Creating Independence and Outcomes (formerly the Foster Youth Demonstration Project)
<i>Lead State Grantees</i>	Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth and the Michigan Department of Human Services
<i>Lead Local Agencies</i>	Detroit Workforce Development Department and the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance
<i>Service Provider</i>	Employment and Training Designs, Incorporated
<i>Budget</i>	\$971,845
<i>Main Contact</i>	Julia Cokley Consultant, Program Development and Special Projects Section Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (313) 456-3168 CokleyJ@Michigan.gov

Site Visit Background

The site visit took place on November 2-4, 2005 in Detroit. The team members for the visit were Irene Lynn, Kate O’Sullivan, and Sue Badeau. The first half of November 2 was spent at the Detroit Workforce Development Department; the remainder of the visit was spent at the Employment & Training Designs, Inc. (ETDI) office. The list of those interviewed is as follows:

- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG)
- Workforce Development SEMCA
- Detroit Employment and Training Office
- Detroit Workforce Development Agency
- Employment and Training Designed, Inc. (ETDI) (staff interviews and youth and staff focus groups)
- Juvenile Section, Family Division, Third Judicial Circuit Court

- Detroit Bar Association
- Detroit Department of Transportation
- Café Detroit (employer)
- Youthville Detroit
- Oakland Community College
- ChildHelp USA
- Lutheran Social Service Ministries
- DHS Youth in Transition
- Michigan Supreme Court Children’s Support Network
- Michigan Supreme Court

Project Overview

Michigan chose to locate the Foster Youth Demonstration Project in Detroit, which not only has a large foster care population but also the highest poverty rate in the country. There is recognition that youth aging out of foster care in the greater Detroit metro area, particularly Highland Park where the project is physically located, face multiple challenges, including:

- A high unemployment rate (28% unemployment in Highland Park alone)
- A community that is bankrupt and has no police or fire department of its own
- An environment in which many businesses have moved out
- Severe housing shortage
- Nearly non-existent transportation system
- A variety of services which are fragmented and not coordinated

Detroit (Wayne County) Snapshot	
<i>Detroit Metro Area Economic Conditions</i>	
▶	6.4% unemployment rate (September 2005)
▶	\$16.97 median hourly wages (November 2004)
▶	Growth industries: business services, health care, engineering
▶	106.6 on the composite cost of living index (1 st quarter 2005)
▶	\$583 median gross rent (2000 Census)
<i>Wayne County Foster Care Statistics (from New Detroit)</i>	
▶	7,693 children in foster care
▶	2,310 are over age 14

Within this context, the project goal is to help youth leaving the foster care system and entering adulthood to develop the skills, tools, and resources necessary to live a successful and independent life. The project includes orientation

and assessment, which are then used to create an individualized package of services for each youth. The focus is on stabilization through immediate employment, while also working towards career development, long-term goals, and life skills. A goal of the project is to “fully prepare” youth leaving foster care for successful lives after foster care including the development of realistic life goals and concrete plans towards achieving these goals.

Hallmarks of the program, further described below, are the utilization of former foster youth in critical staff positions, creating a “youth-friendly” atmosphere, and effectively blending social services and employment services in one location.

Known as the “Foster Youth Demonstration Project,” this initiative is undergoing a name change, directed by the youth themselves. The new name will be “CIAO,” chosen both for its meaning as a word (“welcome” and “goodbye”) and as an acronym for “Creating Independence and Outcomes.”

Status of Implementation

Who is involved in the project, including the role of the state?

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) and the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) partnered at the state level to bring this project to Michigan. The state role has been primarily to administer the procurement process, broker contracts, oversee overall project management, ensure accountability to the federal government, and provide consultation and technical assistance.

The grant was awarded to the collaborative partnership of the Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) and the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA). This is a historic project as these two agencies have never collaborated in this manner on any prior project. SEMCA serves the fiscal agent, and DWDD provides program monitoring and oversight. DHS has involved its local Youth in Transition (YIT) office as a referral source.

Employment and Training Designs, Incorporated (ETDI), a Wayne, Michigan for-profit organization that has provided services to youth since 1986, was selected as the service provider. ETDI, located in Highland Park, a small community separate from, but surrounded on all sides

by Detroit, has collaborated in the past with SEMCA, but this is its first time partnering with DWDD.

These three partner organizations have developed a number of other collaborative agreements within the community for the purposes of both referrals of youth and service provision. These partnerships will be described in a separate section below.

Whom are the youth being served/how are they recruited?

Eligible youth are all those between the ages of 17 and 21 who are in the process of or have already transitioned out of foster care or the juvenile justice system into independence. With 103 youth referred to the project as of the date of the site visit, 80 have been enrolled. While the original contract required that the referrals come from the Youth in Transition (YIT) office of DHS, Juvenile Justice or the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative program, referrals were not coming quickly enough to rely on these three sources alone.

Jim Casey provided a database of all of their eligible youth, and ETDI has followed up with each of these youth. YIT at the state level has yet to provide a similar database. However, individual YIT specialists have developed relationships with the project staff and have begun making case-by-case referrals. Several of the youth interviewed indicated that they originally heard about the project through their YIT specialist.

In addition, while it has been difficult to get full referrals (including contact information) from the juvenile justice department, ETDI has had significant success developing relationships with specific referees and is now finding that the bulk of its new referrals are coming from these referees. The judicial referees are staunch supporters of the project, one stating, “This organization has been a godsend for the kids on my docket,” with participation in the program a part of her court orders to youth. The fact that the program provides financial incentives is a motivator for participation.

Beyond these sources, staff go out to community organizations, group homes, foster care agencies, and youth shelters to present information about the project. As more youth enroll, they are finding that they are starting to get many “word of mouth” recruits as well.

Demographically, they have enrolled nearly the same number of male as female youth, nearly all of whom are African American and with a small number of Caucasian youth. About 15 percent have identifiable disabilities, although many more have special needs related either to

health, mental health, or education. Youth with special needs are able to receive services through Michigan's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which is co-located with ETDI. The vast majority of those enrolled are out-of-school youth, with more than half being high school dropouts.

Has the program model shown clarity and specificity?

The model has a clear mission to provide youth with services in a user-friendly and supportive environment. This is occurring for the most part but the site is grappling with finding a larger facility to ensure that this environment is maintained. The referral component of the model also has had its glitches but seems to be close to resolution. Finally, better-defined partnerships and coordinated activities are needed to ensure the full implementation of the model. While the many components of the program model are clear and specific, the client flow, from one activity to another is less clear.

What services are being provided?

The first step for a young person is a one-on-one intake interview with Jessica Lindsey, the Peer Group Coordinator. This staff person, a former foster youth herself, describes the project to interested young people and walks them through the intake and orientation process. The Peer Group Coordinator works to motivate the youth to enroll and participate through her own enthusiasm, and she is able to empathize with the youth and their circumstances. This first step has been described as a cornerstone of the successful enrollment rate for this project.

After completing intake with the Peer Group Coordinator, youth participate in a comprehensive assessment process, which includes life skills, employment readiness, and academic assessments. Each youth then has opportunities to meet individually with the Education Specialist and the Employment Specialist to develop personal service plans. Often, there is an immediate need for income, and ETDI prioritizes youth's stability before proceeding with career and educational development. Once stable, youth are then more likely to engage in and benefit from the host of other services provided at the center.

ETDI offers a calendar of workshops offered every month, a central component of the service provision. The calendar is mailed to every participant and posted prominently in the center, and youth are personally invited to attend those most relevant to their needs. The

calendar demonstrates a mix of workshops related to their social and interpersonal needs and their employment readiness needs. For example, some topics of recent workshops have included:

- Completing Job Applications
- Life Skills for Employment
- Advanced Job Search
- Coping with Stress
- Interview Skills
- Anger Management

As a financial incentive to attend, youth who attend workshops are given a token, which can be redeemed for prizes such as clothing and household supplies. In addition to the workshops, ETDI is working on creating mentorships for all of the enrolled youth and is beginning to make Paid Work Experience (PWE) available.

The Michigan Works one-stop employment center is also located in the same building as the Foster Youth Demonstration project, so participants have full access to all of its resources, including a comprehensive online database of employment opportunities. A child care referral agency and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation are also located in the building.

How consistent are the services provided (program fidelity)?

All of the youth served appear to have access to a consistent package of program services. Intake, assessment, and development of individualized plans are provided consistently to each young person. After the individual service plan is developed, each youth may then receive a slightly different package of services depending on their individual immediate and long term goals and needs.

Who are the key partners such as funders, facilitators, service delivery partners, major youth employers, and consumer groups?

The key partners and funders of the Foster Youth Demonstration Project are Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG) and the Michigan Department of Human

Services (DHS) at the state level and the Detroit Workforce Development Department (DWDD) and the Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) at the local level. ETDI is the contracted service provider and is working to leverage additional resources. To do this, the funders and ETDI have developed partnerships with the following organizations:

- Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative (refers youth and provides services including savings accounts through their Opportunity Passport Program)
- Juvenile Justice (referrals)
- Youthville, Detroit (allows participants access to its comprehensive youth development center)
- Local mentoring programs
- Foster Youth Service Providers
 - St. Peters Home for Boys
 - Federation of Youth Services
 - Don Bosco Hall
 - Icon of Youth and Family Service
 - Methodist Children's Services
 - Ruth Ellis Center (LGTQ youth shelter)
 - Starfish Family Services
- Employers
 - Café Detroit
 - Detroit Department of Transportation
 - Bing Steel
 - Budco

Prior to implementation of the project, DLEG pulled together a working committee to advise the design and development of the project. This group continues to meet on occasion in an advisory capacity to the project. It includes most of the partners already mentioned, as well as the state juvenile justice agency, the Wayne County Juvenile Justice Agency, the state and Wayne County Alternative Education agencies, and youth representatives.

What are the funding sources and percentage estimates?

This project is funded with a combination of DOL grant funds, Michigan’s Chafee funds and various matching and in-kind contributions. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
DOL Grant Funds	\$329,133	32%
Chafee funds	\$392,312	38%
Match/In Kind	\$250,400	24%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$971,845</i>	

This project has begun to leverage services from their partnering organizations but a tally of those services and their associated costs have not been compiled yet.

What are the plans for continued implementation/operation?

The staff at ETDI have a great passion for this work and are enthusiastic about its continuation beyond the life of the grant funds. However, no new sources of funding have been identified, so continued implementation is not guaranteed at this stage.

Noteworthy Successes and Challenges

What changes have been made in the project design and why?

The project is closely following the design put forward in the project proposal with no major or significant changes.

Are there some partners missing from the table and why?

Across the board, each partner agency and the project participants identified housing providers as the most critical missing partner. In addition, while ETDI has begun to establish relationships with employers, there is clearly more work to be done in this area.

Issues with transportation were consistently identified as one of the major barriers for youth to fully engage in the project as well as benefit from potential educational and/or employment opportunities. Thus, a more robust partnership with the transportation agency or other community providers that can offer transportation solutions would be beneficial.

Finally, it was noted that there is little to no involvement of foster families or other adults with whom the youth have pre-existing relationships. This may be an area to explore as part of the recruitment, stabilization, and retention for youth.

What is going well? What would the site like to highlight?

The emergence of many potential community partners and their enthusiasm for this project is positive. The project leaders held a roundtable discussion during the site visit with many community partners in attendance, an encouraging sign. These leaders hope that these partners and potential partners will remain engaged, further clarify their roles, and become significant resources for the youth enrolled in the project.

In spite of the referral challenges noted above, the project has been successful in recruiting and enrolling youth for the project, at a higher rate than anticipated.

Perhaps the single most impressive feature of this project that the site would highlight—and certainly this was reiterated by the youth themselves—is the warm, “youth-friendly” atmosphere they have created. Youth that come, stay. Several youth indicated that they would stay all day, everyday if possible. The youth say that the staff provide support and motivation, as well as step-by-step help on their path towards independence, including small details such as help with clothing for interviews.

Although finding the right staff was noted as a challenge, this is an area in which the project has clearly succeeded. ETDI management and the state DLEG staff all indicated their high degree of respect for the project staff team as assembled. The staff’s unique blend of foster care and workforce development experience, as well as their very obvious passion and enthusiasm for their work, is definitely a highlight of this site.

What are the key challenges and how are they being addressed?

The shortage of viable housing, employment, and transportation for the youth, as noted above, are the two greatest challenges plaguing the youth engaged in this project. In addition,

project staff noted that many youth reaching the end of their time in foster care have simply had “enough” with systems and are reluctant to try one more project. Helping these youth to move beyond this resistance and to see the benefits they can reap through this project are ongoing challenges. The role of the Peer Group Coordinator in her critical staff position is one of the key approaches to overcoming this challenge.

Systemically, there have been a number of challenges getting all of the necessary systems and partners working smoothly together. While the proposal made sense to everyone “on paper,” moving it from paper to reality has been identified as challenging. As one person put it, “Marrying two systems is difficult—the honeymoon has been good but there will be an ongoing challenge in long-term.”

Some of these challenges were contractual, and it is noted that the DLEG had been working with DHS on the completion of the interagency agreement (IA) for the project so that the Chafee funds can be released. This IA was not signed until the end of September 2005. The project’s technical coach played an active role in these negotiations.

Sorting out roles and responsibilities between the multiple partners has proven challenging. For example, some micromanaging occurred but oversight was fragmented. SEMCA seems clear in its role as the fiscal agent, but DWDD has yet to “find their legs” within this project.

Several staff at each of the partner organizations also raised concerns about the role of the U.S. Department of Labor and the communication challenges between federal, state, and local partners. All agree that ongoing communication is the key and that these issues, while challenging, represent typical growing pains for an initiative. Mid-course personnel changes at the state level have received a favorable response, and it would seem as though the corner has been turned in resolving some of these issues.

Another challenge noted by ETDI was the increase in the number of youth it was expected to serve. It initially designed the program to serve 80, and now with the addition of 40 more youth, staff are concerned that the case manager-to-youth ratio will become unmanageably difficult. Nevertheless, ETDI is continuing to enroll new youth almost daily, and the youth themselves say they feel well served.

Finding just the right staff for the project’s quick implementation, with the need to blend workforce and foster care expertise in the staff, was also a challenge for the sites. ETDI was

seeking staff that could be flexible and creative, and take a team approach to their work. The project manager sees himself as a team facilitator, not as a “boss” in the traditional sense.

Currently, the facility the project is in has proven too small and the numbers of actively engaged youth is growing. ETDI is looking at other potential spaces, including co-locating at Youthville or using the space formerly occupied by the YO! (Youth Opportunities) project.

Finally, the flow of youth referrals has been problematic. ETDI and DLEG continue to work with DHS to secure the necessary referrals for the project. At the state level, DLEG scheduled a second meeting in October with DHS to encourage more identification of youth who are still in the foster care system and those going through the process of aging out of foster care. As DHS staff, particularly YIT specialists, begin to develop relationships with the ETDI project staff, this challenge is expected to be resolved.

What are the outcomes the site is seeing?

The most notable participant outcomes are the enrollment and subsequent retention of youth in the program. To date, the project has been successful in enrolling more youth than anticipated at this stage of the project (80 as opposed to 55 projected). The Foster Youth Demonstration Project has created partnerships within the foster care, juvenile justice and workforce development communities that are anticipated to be sustained past the life of the DOL grant. It is too early to draw implications from the first two quarters of data and it is expected that additional progress has been made since the site visit.

Noteworthy Practices

The Detroit project has several noteworthy practices that help participants achieve their goals and hold promise for replication. The project staff has developed a unique approach to creating youth portfolio notebooks. These notebooks, organized and decorated by the youth, include everything from important documents (birth certificates, school records, etc.), to notes from the workshops they participate in. The notebooks are readily accessible to the youth at the center and the updating and maintenance is the youth responsibility. Youth interviewed during this visit clearly took a great deal of pride in their portfolios.

Project staff have also organized bus trips into the Detroit community, to a local mall and other locations, and gave the youth assignments to find several potential employers and other

resources they could tap along the route of the trip. They then used their time at the mall to practice requesting job applications and other skills learned during the workshops.

Youth engagement as a critical and pervasive component of the program is also noteworthy. In addition to employing a former foster youth as the first person a potential participant encounters, the project has created a Youth Advisory Board so youth can have an active role in developing upcoming activities, events, workshops, policies and practices for the project. This board also participates in the larger advisory committee for the project.

Site Data

The data provided in the following tables were drawn from the roll-up quarterly reports dated September 30, 2005.

Enrollment Data for Detroit Site	Age 17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Enrollment Target/Plan	8	55	63
Enrolled (Total)	13	57	70
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	5	23	28
Female	8	34	42
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>			
White	1	6	7
Black	12	48	60
Hispanic	0	0	0
Native American	0	0	0
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	3	3
Other	0	0	0
<i>School Status</i>			
In School	6	5	11
Out of School/HS Dropout	7	26	33
Out of School/Grad or GED	0	26	26
<i>Housing Status</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	12	38	50
Independent Living	1	4	5
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	15	15
<i>Foster Care Status</i>			
In Foster Care System	10	25	35
Out of Foster Care System	3	32	35
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>			
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	2	14	16
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	11	43	54
<i>Parenting Status</i>			
Custodial parent	1	12	13
Non-custodial parent	0	1	1
<i>Other</i>			
Receives some form of health insurance	12	38	50
Receives Income Supports (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, other)	9	32	41
With disability(s)	1	7	8

Project Activities Data for Detroit Site	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unsubsidized Work Experience	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	0	0	18	29	52	72
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	0	0	0	0	0	0
College Prep	0	0	5	4	6	6
GED Preparation	0	0	1	7	16	19
Basic and Remedial Education	0	0	1	1	1	1
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	0	0	3	9	11	14
Parenting Classes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Life Skills	0	0	7	12	15	16
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	0	0	18	29	52	70

Additional Project Activities	17 & Under	18 & Over	All Youth
Students Remaining In School	6	5	11
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	0	1	1
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	5	5
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	0	0
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education, Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	15	81	96

Outcome Data for Detroit Site	17 & Under	18 & Over	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	0	10	10
Entered the Military	0	0	0
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	0	0
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	1	0	1
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	0	0
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	0	4	4
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	0	1	1
Obtained a High School Degree			0
Obtained a GED	0	0	0
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	0	0
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	0	0
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	0	0
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	0	0
Remain Active In Project	13	57	70

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations for Detroit Site*	Actual	Goal
Enrollment Rate	58%	100%
Recidivism Rate	0%	
Placement Rate	26%	60%
Retention Rate	0%	80%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	0%	50%

* See page 23 for performance goal definitions.

New York – New York City Site

<i>Program Name</i>	Passport to Success
<i>Lead State Grantee</i>	New York State Office of Children and Family Services
<i>Lead Local Agency</i>	New York City Administration for Children’s Services
<i>Service Provider</i>	Arbor Employment and Training (subcontractor – The Door)
<i>Budget</i>	\$800,000
<i>Main Contact</i>	Sherry Clarke-Joseph Asst. Director for Employment Initiatives Office of Youth Development NYC Administration for Children’s Services 212-487-8555 sherry.clarkjoseph@dfa.state.ny.us

Site Visit Background

The site visit took place on November 16-18, 2005. The team members for the visit were Demetra Nightingale and Sue Badeau. November 16 and 17 were spent at the Office of Youth Development New York City Administration for Children’s Services (NYC ACS) office at 2 Washington Street, New York, NY. In the evening of October 17, the team attended an event hosted by the project at the John Jay College and conducted focus groups with youth and foster parents. November 18 was divided between Arbor and The Door. The list of organizations where we interviewed staff and conducted focus groups is as follows:

- Office of Youth Development, NYC ACS
- Direct Congregate Care Services, NYC ACS
- Foster Care Services, NYC ACS
- Arbor Career Center
- The Door (staff interviews and caregiver and youth focus groups)

Project Overview

Passport to Success is the name of the foster youth demonstration program funded by the U.S. Department of Labor in New York City under the direction of the Administration for Children Services (NYC ACS), Office of Youth Development, and the local child welfare agency. The grantee, New York State’s Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)—the state child welfare agency—chose to locate this project in New York City, the region of the state with the largest foster care population. NYC ACS has contracted with Arbor Employment and Training as the “managing partner.” Arbor is a nationally recognized for-profit company which operates employment programs in many states, including a model program serving youth aging out of foster care in Philadelphia known as the “Achieving Independence Center.” Arbor, in turn, has subcontracted with The Door, a non-profit youth-service organization in New York City, which operates a youth center. The center provides a range of programs and services to over 7,000 youth per year, approximately 25 percent of whom have a foster care background.

The project was a logical “next step” as part of a larger vision within NYC ACS for better serving older youth in foster care. In the past decade, the city has succeeded in reducing its foster care population by nearly two-thirds, (from over 45,000 foster care children to under 18,000) in large part by providing a more comprehensive network of community-based services designed to help keep children safely in their own homes. But as the foster care population was reduced, older youth were in some respects “left behind” and thus form a larger percentage of the remaining foster care population.

NYC ACS has been developing a youth development approach to meet the needs of this population for the past two to three years. The city has begun to develop a range of initiatives designed to service these youth, but an infrastructure was lacking to ensure the seamless

New York Snapshot

New York Metro Area Economic Conditions

- ▶ 5.0% unemployment rate (September 2005)
- ▶ \$18.39 median hourly wages (November 2004)
- ▶ Growth industries: bioscience, media & entertainment, finance, insurance, real estate, professional services
- ▶ 150.7 on the composite cost of living index (3rd quarter 2005)
- ▶ \$715 median gross rent (2000 Census)

New York County Foster Care Statistics (as of October 2005)

- ▶ Fewer than 18,000 children in foster care
- ▶ 6,597 are ages 14+

coordination of these services. The DOL demonstration was an opportunity to “connect the dots.”

Born out of a vision to “lead youth on the path to gainful employment and self-sufficiency,” NYC ACS became interested in the model developed by Arbor and implemented in Philadelphia at the Achieving Independence Center (AIC). In particular, it hoped to replicate the core elements of the AIC model, which included:

- A seamless system for delivery of employment, education and support services within a youth development framework,
- Individualized “life coaching” for each participant
- A strong assessment component that includes the Ansell-Casey Life Skills assessment, academic assessment (TABE), Career-Zone career exploration assessment, and a self-assessment, which occurs at orientation
- Individualized package of services based on the assessment

The plan was for NYC ACS to provide referrals of youth to the project, Arbor to manage the project and provide specific employment services, and the Door to provide an array of wrap-around supports modeled after its existing “Pathways” initiative. Contracting and other challenges during the start-up phase (as described under “Challenges” below) resulted in delays and changes to this plan, and currently, NYC ACS is taking a more active role in direct services to the youth than originally expected.

Status of Implementation

Who is involved in the project, including the role of the state?

The New York Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is the lead state grantee. The role of the state has been limited in involvement to designating NYC ACS as the supervising agency for the grant and in assisting with contract negotiations. The state agency is confident that the local agency is best positioned to understand and respond to the needs of the youth population in the metro New York area.

NYC ACS is the lead local agency and responsible for contracting with a service provider. They organized a series of planning meetings, pulled together an advisory group, sought and obtained the input of youth, and, in the several months it has taken to finalize a contract with the managing partner, NYC ACS began project implementation by hiring five Life Coaches (three of whom will eventually be placed at The Door). In addition, NYC ACS began a series of outreach and recruitment activities as described below.

The managing partner of this program is Arbor Employment and Training. Once the contract (and MOU) is fully implemented, Arbor will be the recipient of the full \$800,000 budget that ACS received for the project. Arbor's responsibilities include overall project management, job development for youth, administrative services, and subcontracts with other vendors, primarily The Door. It is Arbor's responsibility to ensure that each youth involved in the project receives a comprehensive array of services, including but not limited to:

- Employment
- Education
- Supports (from mental and physical health to housing)
- Mentoring
- Life skills

With the exception of most of the employment services (which are provided by Arbor staff), most of these services will be provided by The Door. The Door has been providing services to over 7,000 youth per year since 1972. While it has always had a significant number of foster youth in their programs, The Door's participation in this demonstration is providing an opportunity to develop a targeted program specifically designed to meet the unique needs of this population within its larger overall programs. Foster youth enrolled in the Passport to Success demonstration will have access to The Door's health care clinic, mental health services, GED and ESL classes, tutoring, college preparation and other educational services, meals, art, music and recreation, and legal services in a "one-stop" setting in Manhattan.

Whom are the youth being served/how are they recruited?

The project goal is to register, and serve 150 youth, although Arbor has begun negotiations with DOL to reduce this number. Eligible youth include those currently or formerly in foster care and still in need of assistance, those returning home, leaving correctional facilities, on probation, with special needs, living in kinship placements, receiving ACS preventative services, or recently adopted. All youth enrolled must be between the ages of 16-21.

NYC ACS has created a “Passport to Success” brochure and initiated a series of outreach and recruitment activities including:

- A Youth Employment Day, attended by 100 youth, at the Queens Adult One-Stop Center
- A Pre-Employment Expo sponsored by the Office of Youth Development
- The Office of Youth Development annual conference for youth aging out of foster care, attended by 350 youth (at which 142 “pre-enrolled” for the Passport to Success project)
- Presentations at several provider agencies and the agency youth advisory council

As a result of these efforts as well as “walk-ins,” NYC ACS has identified 480 youth who have indicated an interest in and were “pre-enrolled” in the Passport to Success project. Of these 480 youth, 48 are receiving some level of services at NYC ACS through the Life Coaches, and 30 of these were considered “enrolled” as of the first reporting period.

During the site visit, Arbor reported that it is currently serving 12 youth. NYC ACS is providing Life Coaching to 48 youth, which includes some of the 12 youth being served at Arbor.¹²

Of the 31 youth being served, 52 percent are male. Sixty-one percent of the youth are African American, 23 percent are Hispanic, 13 percent are identified as multi-racial, and 3 percent are Caucasian.

Approximately two thirds of the youth are in school, and one third have completed or left high school, although some of these youth are continuing to pursue GED or post-secondary educational opportunities.

¹² The enrollment number provided during the site visit is different from the official number of enrolled youth in the quarterly data.

Seven of these youth are identified as youth with disabilities. However, project staff noted, with youth participants self-identifying, that a much higher percentage have some level of special needs ranging from mental health challenges to developmental and educational lags and gaps.

Has the program model shown clarity and specificity?

As the program model has not been fully implemented due to contracting delays, it is too early to tell whether the Passport to Success program has demonstrated clarity and specificity.

What services are being provided?

The program model is designed to include three components: education, employment, and personal development, with the primary focus on employment. Employment services include pre-employment training, job placement and retention, internships and service learning opportunities. Education services include GED, ESL, and ABE courses, college preparation, and tutoring. Personal development includes financial literacy, social and interpersonal skills, advocacy, parenting skills, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. All components are enriched by the inclusion of support services such as mental health and substance abuse counseling, mentoring, and assistance with housing.

Upon referral to NYC ACS for the Passport to Success project, the intention is for ACS to immediately connect the young person with The Door where he or she becomes a member. The youth is then assigned a Life Coach and move on to the next steps in the program. In reality, due to the contractual challenges, NYC ACS began referring the youth to its own internal Life Coaches for service, with the intention of transferring these youth to The Door once all contracts and MOUs are in place.

Once the youth are assigned to a Life Coach, whether at ACS or the Door, they are provided an orientation to the program. The orientation may be in a group or individual setting. Next, each youth completes an assessment process, which includes the Ansell-Casey Life Skills assessment, academic assessment (TABE), Career-Zone career exploration assessment, and a self-assessment.

Arbor's job developer for the project begins to focus on the details of the job search as quickly as possible, meeting with participants individually either at Arbor or the Door, while the

youth are also engaged in a series of eight workshops held at the Arbor offices. Upon completion of all workshops, each youth receives a certificate and the first payment milestone. The opportunity to receive these payments, or stipends, is an important incentive noted by several youth. As one young person expressed it, “I liked that you get paid for everything, if you go to training, do a resume—you get paid. So the financial rewards are great.”

Concurrent with the employment-related activities, each participant works with a Life Coach to create an Individualized Member Plan with financial incentives for meeting milestones and opportunities to participate in events offered by both NYC ACS such as the Network to Success (an evening spent with adult mentors, role models, etc.) and events offered at The Door. The plan is that the Life Coach will be a Door staff person once the service contracts are in place, but at the time of the site visit, there were ACS Life Coaches and Door Life Coaches, and a few youth indicated having Life Coaches at both places.

The Life Coaches strive to base the individualized plan on what the young person identifies as his or her own goals. The initial assessment focuses on both the immediate needs—obtaining a GED, or child care, for example, as well as on long term goals. The youth in the focus group were all very goal-oriented, with goals ranging from “working at Madison Square Garden,” to “giving back to the community and working with youth,” to going on tour as an R&B singer. Foster parents interviewed identified this goal-orientation as a significant strength of the project.

While working with both the job developer and the Life Coach, the youth will have access to a range of other youth development services and resources. These resources include clothing for job interviews, back-to-school package which includes a laptop, and computer training.

How consistent are the services provided (program fidelity)?

At the point of the site visit, it was difficult to judge the consistency of services as few youth are fully enrolled in the Passport to Success program. The model seems to help ensure that the services provided to participants are consistent as they are provided within two established programs at Arbor and The Door. However, with some Life Coaches employed at NYC ACS and others at The Door, consistency in service provision may become an issue. This challenge is already becoming evident, as we learned at the youth focus group. Several of the youth indicated

that they had “Life Coaches” at both The Door and ACS and they seemed unclear about what the differences were between the two programs. These youth viewed ACS and the Door as providing two different, complementary programs, and they did not truly understand “Passport to Success” as one unified program.

Who are the key partners such as funders, facilitators, service delivery partners, major youth employers, and consumer groups?

In addition to Arbor and The Door, NYC ACS has identified a number of other potential partners for this project. Most of these partners participated in early meetings and conference calls to assist with the project design. The level of on-going participation by these partners is still to be determined.

The secondary partner identified is the City University of New York (CUNY). NYC ACS is separately engaged in a partnership with CUNY to prepare youth for college, pursue a GED, or high school diploma. The youth are then able to simultaneously earn CUNY credits. CUNY has 120 slots per year and has set aside 40 of these slots for youth in the Passport to Success program.

NYC ACS is also negotiating a partnership with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) in which 150 studio apartments will be designated for youth aging out of foster care. It is anticipated that Passport to Success participants will have access to these housing units when they become available.

The Youth Advocacy Center has been engaged to provide training to Passport to Success staff related to helping youth develop self-advocacy skills.

Other agencies with longstanding partnering relationships with NYC ACS who may be able to provide some level of support or services to Passport to Success youth include:

- NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
- NYC Human Resources Administration
- NYC Department of Education
- NYC Department of Small Business Services
- Agenda for Children Tomorrow
- Annie E. Casey School to Career Partnership

- New Yorkers for Children
- United Way of New York City
- Legal Aid Society, Juvenile Rights Division
- ACS Contract Provider agencies
- Mentoring Partnership of New York
- Mentoring USA
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York
- FutureKids NYC
- Common Ground and Good Shepherd Services
- The Lantern Group (housing advocates)
- The Institute for Worker Education

Arbor has relationships with a large number of employers in New York, and while none have been formally identified as “partners” for this project, they expect to tap these relationships for employment opportunities for project youth. How engaged these partners are remains to be seen in future interviews.

What are the funding sources and percentage estimates?

This project is funded with a combination of DOL grant funds, state, and local funds. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
DOL Grant Funds	\$400,000	50.0%
State Funds (includes Chafee)	\$260,000	32.5%
Local (NYC ACS) funds	\$140,000	17.5%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$800,000</i>	

In addition, program participants have access to a rich array of youth development services, employment and training services, and wrap-around support services, provided by NYC ACS, Arbor, and The Door (respectively) and funded out of their ongoing operational budgets.

What are the plans for continued implementation/operation?

There are some concerns about continued implementation and operation of the project. On the NYC ACS side, the primary visionary behind the development of the project, the Associate Commissioner, has recently left the agency and her successor has not been identified. In addition, in order to move the contract and procurement process forward, NYC ACS used a “demonstration” protocol, which is intended for only one year. Howard Knoll of Arbor expressed concern that they may not be able to continue as Managing Partner after one year due to these unique contract restrictions.

In spite of these challenges, The Door hopes to continue to implement this project, with its targeted focus on the needs of youth in foster care, beyond the duration of the DOL grant. It is seeking other sources of funding, and recently received a grant from United Way via the city council to continue to provide services to the foster care youth population. The Door also noted that it has partnered with Arbor prior to this project and plan to continue the arrangement. Other potential funding sources which would allow The Door to continue this work include the New York City Department of Education, Gates Foundation, and workforce development agencies.

Noteworthy Successes and Challenges for the Site

What changes have been made in the project design and why?

The most significant change that has been made since the project was designed is that NYC ACS has begun to provide some of the direct life coaching services to youth. The project design did not call for NYC ACS to provide such direct services, but rather to provide the general monitoring and oversight, outreach, and referral of youth. Due to the slow nature of the NYC procurement process, NYC ACS decided to begin providing direct services. It is still unclear what the impact of this change will be once the program is fully operational at Arbor and The Door.

Are there some partners missing from the table and why?

Due to the comprehensive nature of the services available at The Door, as well as the longstanding relationships both NYC ACS and Arbor have with other service providers and employers, there are not many missing partners.

However, while ACS has identified a partnership-in-progress with the NYC Housing Authority and some transitional housing agencies, all parties, from staff, to youth, to foster parents, identified housing as a critical component that is not sufficiently addressed by the existing partnerships.

In addition, several of those interviewed felt that stronger partnerships with mental health and substance abuse providers are needed to fully shore up these areas of need for many of the foster youth to be served.

NYC ACS staff noted that legal services and the courts have not yet become active partners in referring young people to these services. The Door, however, has an active legal services project underway, and it is hopeful that many of the youth in the Passport to Success project will be able to benefit from this initiative.

There are no direct linkages with the One-Stop Career Centers in New York City, although Arbor is the operator of the Staten Island One-Stop and presumably the midtown Arbor office staff working on the Pathways project will access services for Pathways participants as appropriate.

What is going well? What would the site like to highlight?

Two major areas were emphasized as the strengths, to date, of this project. The first is related to the youth empowerment approach. The Life Coaches, youth, and foster parents all acknowledged that this project is different because it helps youth create a vision for their own lives and begin to take charge of making that vision a reality. One youth noted, “Foster kids get stuck and dependent on the system— all these years they give us food, metro cards, clothes. When it is time to grow up, we don’t know how to handle it. They don’t teach us how to be independent. With foster care, it’s just suddenly we have to leave after they have taken full care of us for years. Some go direct to jail, more than to apartments. It’s like they breastfeed us for years, then just throw us out.” The youth added, to the agreement of the other youth in the group, that this project was different in its approach to helping them learn both immediate skills and setting long-term goals. A foster parent had similar insights, stating, “It’s so good to have a program specifically for foster kids to help them set goals. My niece now speaks up, she is very involved, even has a part-time job at ACS. She’s developed confidence. The program helps them see beyond the job for a career and how to relate to adults and employers and businesses.”

The second significant strength was identified by a senior staff member at Arbor. He reported that the program is truly an employment-based project, designed to help youth succeed in the long-term future. “The way we work is that we are forward-looking, their past isn’t relevant to jobs—employers don’t care about their past and whether they were in foster care—they just do their hiring tests and drug screening.” Staff at all the partners as well as the youth themselves believe that this approach is very empowering to the youth.

In addition, since the grantee for this demonstration is the state child welfare agency and the local administrative entity is the local child welfare agency, there is real potential for this effort to result in improved child welfare/employment services, communication, and understanding. The collaboration among ACS and its service providers, management and technical support from Arbor, and the youth-focused services located at The Door provides a promising model for serving youth as they transition out of foster care. Although the local WIA agency is not involved, the fact that Arbor has separate responsibility for one of the several One-Stop Centers in the city may help improve cross-agency interaction, if the One-Stop services and resources are integrated into the program.

What are the key challenges and how are they being addressed?

The biggest challenge to date relates to the contract procurement process in New York City. It is not unusual for this process to take more than 18 months in New York, thus setting back the start-up of any new project. At the time of our site visit (November 2005), this process was nearing completion, but all signatures were not yet in place. All parties were hopeful that the end was in sight and that full implementation would begin very shortly. In the interim, NYC ACS had to use city funds to begin services, and Arbor had to subsidize their services out of their general operating budget. ACS had initiated a range of outreach and community information activities and felt it was important to begin serving youth to keep the momentum going. As the ink on the contract dries, the new challenge will be to fully transition the youth that began receiving services directly at ACS over to Arbor and The Door.

A few additional challenges have been noted. For example, New York is one of the few states that have specific regulations related to the provision of Independent Living services for youth. Contract agencies need to be able to track and document the provision of particular services in order to meet their contractual obligations with the city. Therefore, when they refer

youth to this project, they need to receive regular data reports about the youth participation. These reporting requirements have created special challenges between Arbor and NYC ACS. The current plan is for NYC ACS to provide some additional administrative support for data collection and reporting to Arbor.

Arbor expressed a concern about the referral of a sufficient number of eligible youth for the project. In early stages, they saw referrals of youth who were too young to be served, were already receiving employment services elsewhere, or were otherwise not eligible for the project. While many youth (480) have expressed interest in the project, the slow start-up may have discouraged some. It is also not entirely clear how many of these youth are truly eligible for service. The Door staff also expressed concern about this issue. Both Arbor and The Door felt that if they get sufficient referrals, they have the program and services in place to competently service them.

Key individuals noted that the employment provider system has not had a history in New York of working with the child welfare system. This creates both a challenge and opportunity. All are hopeful that this project may lead to longer term connections between the two systems, yet they are also concerned that this goal will not be realized in the short timeframe available.

All parties—NYC ACS, Arbor and The Door—identified communication, coordination, and role clarity between the three entities as the primary challenge and acknowledge that this will require ongoing work throughout the life of the project. They all agree that the goal is to create an integrated, seamless system of services and that this will require improved communication and greater role clarity.

What are the outcomes the site is seeing?

Due to the slow start-up process related to the procurement difficulties, it is too soon to note outcomes. While a few youth have completed some of the workshops and a couple have obtained employment, a discussion of outcomes will have to be reserved for a later date.

Noteworthy Practices

The most noteworthy practice, to date, in addition to the forward-looking employment focus as described above, is the role of the Life Coaches in the lives of these young people. One Life Coach described his role this way, “My main role is helping them pinpoint their goals and

next steps, and to help them be realistic. Many caseworkers have protocol to contact kids once a month, but we are able to see or contact them much more often, and we are able to be less rigid than caseworkers. What's unique with Passport is it gives me an opportunity to get a truer view of the youth in every area of their lives not just employment as I did in the past—now I can talk with them about all of their needs and goals including education, housing, career, and relationships.” The Life Coaches view the comprehensive assessment process as key to their work. This is how they get to know the youth and provides a forum to discuss all of their needs with them, as well as their goals for the future in a comprehensive manner, including education, housing, social-emotional, and career-oriented goals.

Site Data

The data provided in the following tables were drawn from the roll-up quarterly reports dated September 30, 2005.

Enrollment Data for New York Site	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Enrollment Target/Plan	0	0	0
Enrolled (Total)	5	26	31
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	1	15	16
Female	4	11	15
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>			
White	1	0	1
Black	1	18	19
Hispanic	4	3	7
Native American	0	0	0
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	4	4
Other	0	0	0
<i>School Status</i>			
In School	3	1	4
Out of School/HS Dropout	0	8	8
Out of School/Grad or GED	1	18	19
<i>Housing Status</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	5	21	26
Independent Living	0	4	4
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	1	1
<i>Foster Care Status</i>			
In Foster Care System	5	23	28
Out of Foster Care System	0	3	3
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>			
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	0	2	2
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	5	24	29
<i>Parenting Status</i>			
Custodial parent	0	0	0
Non-custodial parent	0	1	1
<i>Other</i>			
Receives some form of health insurance	9	22	31
Receives Income Supports (TANF, SSI, other)	0	0	0
With disability(s)	0	0	0

Project Activities Data for New York Site	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	5	5	0	1	1	0
Unsubsidized Work Experience	8	8	0	6	8	6
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	24	24	0	0	0	0
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	0	0	0	0	0	0
College Prep	7	7	0	2	2	2
GED Preparation	0	0	0	2	0	0
Basic and Remedial Education	7	8	0	0	0	0
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	0	0	0	1	1	1
Parenting Classes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Life Skills	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Additional Project Activities	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Students Remaining In School	5	0	7
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	1	1	6
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	0	1
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	0	0
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	0	0	0

Outcome Data for New York Site	Ages 16-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	1	9	10
Entered the Military	0	1	1
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	0	0
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	0	0	0
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	0	0
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	1	0	1
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	1	3	4
Obtained a High School Degree			0
Obtained a GED	0	1	1
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	0	0
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	2	2
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	1	1
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	2	2
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	0	0
Remain Active In Project	5	24	29

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations for New York Site*	Actual	Goal
Enrollment Rate	21%	100%
Recidivism Rate	0%	
Placement Rate	50%	60%
Retention Rate	0%	80%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	20%	50%

* See page 23 for performance goal definitions.

Texas – Houston Site

<i>Program Name</i>	Houston Alumni and Youth Transition (H.A.Y.) Center
<i>Lead State Grantee</i>	Texas Workforce Commission
<i>Lead Local Agency and Service Provider</i>	Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults
<i>Budget</i>	\$788,572
<i>Main Contact</i>	Pam Walker Assistant Director for the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program in Region VI Texas Department of Families and Protective Services, Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults 713-394-4103 pam.walker@dfps.state.tx.us

Site Visit Background

The site visit took place on November 29, 30 and December 1, 2005 in Houston. The team members for the visit were Paul DiLorenzo and Irene Lynn. The list of organizations where we interviewed staff and conducted focus groups is as follows:

- H.A.Y. Center (staff and foster parent interviews and staff and youth focus groups)
- Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) Program in Region VI
- Gulf Coast Trade Center
- Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults
- GO Center
- WorkSource Center
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Apartment Locators
- Urban Experience

Project Overview

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) selected Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults, encompassing the city of Houston, as the local site provider for this foster care demonstration project. The goals of the project are to address critical developmental barriers to the under-served foster youth population, to address employment and training needs and to provide easy access to appropriate services through a comprehensive “one-stop shopping” service system. These services are provided through the establishment of a comprehensive Houston Alumni and Youth Transition Center (H.A.Y. Center) in inner-city Houston.

Harris County Protective Services is the current provider of the state-supported Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) services for a 13-county region. PAL is the primary support service program for young people transitioning out of the state foster care and group home system.

This project realizes the “vision” of one of the principals from Harris County Protective Services. For the agency, the DOL grant occurred at an opportune time. Staff from Harris County had visited similar centers in San Antonio and Dallas to glean ideas for the Center design. TWC staff consulted with different entities, such as Casey Family Programs in San Antonio, foster care alumni, and Harris County juvenile, educational, housing and child welfare agencies in developing the grant application. Other potential partners were brought together to assist with the planning.

The Houston project model and design, a one-stop center that offers services to foster youth both in-house and from co-located

partners, remain close to what was described in the original proposal. Based on conversations with those interviewed, the current operation of the Center remains focused on building a youth-friendly, but business-like atmosphere, which encourages peer support.

Houston (Harris County) Snapshot

Houston Metro Area Economic Conditions

- ▶ 5.9% unemployment rate (September 2005)
- ▶ \$14.19 median hourly wages (November 2004)
- ▶ Growth industries: natural resources & mining, education, professional/business services, health care & social assistance, hospitality services
- ▶ 87.5 on the composite cost of living index (3rd quarter 2005)
- ▶ \$592 median gross rent (2000 Census)

Harris County Foster Care Statistics (as of 2004)

Status of Implementation

Who is involved in the project, including the role of the state?

There are a number of partners who participate in this project. These partners are identified in a later section. As noted above, Harris County Protective Services is the lead agency at the local level, which has brought together the partners to implement this project. The state agency that operates the project is the Texas Workforce Commission, in collaboration with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission. Each agency is supportive of the project and committed to its success and its continuation. These state agencies are working together in building system linkages between the workforce development system, the child welfare system and the juvenile justice system.

The constellation of core members is constant. According to those who were interviewed during the site visit, or in subsequent phone calls, the project is jointly directed by:

- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- The GO Center, a college preparation assistance program, supported by the Texas Department of Education
- Local businesses
- Harris County Protective Services for Children and Families
- Chimney Rock Center, a residential center for foster care youth
- The Workforce Resource Center
- Foster and alumni youth

TWC and DFPS, along with Harris County Protective Services, developed the infrastructure for the current implementation process. TWC and DFPS provide matching funds and Harris County has relocated staff to the Center and provides senior staff leadership. At these meetings, the state and local agencies give feedback to partners on the project—what is working and what could be improved—and gives partners the opportunity to give input into the operation of the Center.

In addition, the interviews revealed strong efforts among the organizations to change state policy with regard to the foster youth population. While the state agency staff do not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the Center, they are highly supportive of the project. The TWC representative is focused on how the state can continue to support this project, regardless of whether DOL continues the grant. The H.A.Y. Center appears to be an emerging prototype for the state partners as they consider bringing the “one-stop” model to scale.

Whom are the youth being served/how are they recruited?

The project serves all foster youth and foster alumni, ages 16 to 21 years, who currently reside in any of the 13 counties within the Houston region. While the center is located within the City of Houston, youth in more rural areas of the region may access services available at and through the center. At the point of the site visit, 86 youth are enrolled, with 150 youth as the target enrollment for the project. Approximately 1,000 youth are eligible to receive the services.

Although not reflected in the quarterly data, the staff noted that one-third to one-half of the enrolled have identified developmental disabilities or mental health conditions, primarily mental health, post-traumatic stress, conduct or adjustment disorders or learning disabilities. Though most are from the city of Houston, some of the youth live in areas that are more rural. The staff indicated that these young people are less likely to access the services offered by the Center.

To date, the participants are evenly divided by gender. Over 50 percent are African-American, with smaller numbers of Native American, Latino and Caucasian youth. About 50 percent are in school, either high school or college. Of the almost 50 percent not in school, 34 percent are high school graduates (including GEDs) and 17 percent are high school dropouts. Almost half the youth are age 17 and younger while the other half are 18 and older.

Staff reports that “word of mouth” is now starting to bring youth in to the Center. Since many youth have not had contact with their caseworkers for several years, they are receiving information from other young people about the H.A.Y. Center. Some estimate that as many as 60 percent of the youth come from “word of mouth” contacts.

PAL case workers refer youth ages 15½ years and older for services. Staff at H.A.Y. have also recruited youth in the community. Covenant House, which has a local presence in Houston, has made referrals to the Center.

The staff at the Center will soon have materials available to use for recruitment and outreach. A video is planned, along with brochures and public service announcements. This is part of an integrated communication strategy that will be developed by a consultant.

Has the program model shown clarity and specificity?

The vision for this program has always been as a one-stop center for serving foster care youth and former foster care youth. Visits to other Texas centers for foster youth that offer a “one-stop” approach to service provision helped in the design of the H.A.Y. Center. At its core, this approach recognizes the multiple and diverse needs of foster youth. The H.A.Y. Center operators have followed this model by co-locating and developing formal partnerships with various service agencies. While there are a myriad of individual and organizational providers and partners involved in supplying these services and supports for young people, there still appears to be little confusion about how they fit together. In addition, within each service domain, the providers have extended the spirit of collaboration, often reaching out to other services and volunteers within the broader Houston community.

What services are being provided to participants?

There is a wide range of services provided at the H.A.Y. Center. The original proposal called for a comprehensive, one-stop approach to serving transitioning youth. The project managers maintain an atmosphere at the Center that encourages the participation of individual service providers. As a result, the scope and depth of the services appears to be growing.

Upon arrival at the Center, all youth complete an initial survey and consult with a youth worker who helps the young person identify their greatest needs. The Center uses the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, the “Discovery” Career Interest/Job Readiness Inventory, and the TABE test for educational attainment. All youth have a service plan.

The project primarily provides the following services at the H.A.Y. Center:

- Case management services and financial supports through the PAL Program
- Educational support, such as tutoring, assistance in obtaining high school diplomas or GEDs, college preparation and information, and mentoring

- Vocational services, such as pre-vocational classes, vocational training, job placements, apprenticeships, and other related services
- Life skills classes
- Housing assistance, including information and direct referrals to available apartments
- Mentoring, which is a small but growing effort with volunteers who receive clearance and training to work with the youth

The technical advisor for the project has been working with Center staff to implement a work preparation program that they have named “The Blueprint.” It is a series of workshops and classes that assist the youth in such areas as resume writing and interviewing skills, as well as self-esteem and self-confidence. A number of the Center staff, as well as partnering agencies, such as the WorkSource Center staff, assist with the training. One person said the Blueprint helps the youth with “soft skills, as well as the hard skill,” which is necessary for successful employment.

The youth participants report moving seamlessly among the services. All of the youth can have access to the numerous computers that are in the building. They can have their own mailbox to receive mail, in the event that they do not have a permanent address, and voice mail service as well. In the group interviews, all of the young people had an anecdote about how the H.A.Y. Center staff provided them with multiple services. They were especially grateful for assistance on education, employment and housing concerns. In addition, some of the participants pointed to the case management support they received concerning family issues.

Two group home operators/parents also commented on their positive experience with the Center’s comprehensive services to youth. More important, in their minds was the atmosphere in which those services are delivered. They both indicated that the H.A.Y. Center had a “...personal touch with the kids...” Both women encouraged a stronger relationship between the Center and other foster parents as a way to improve the outreach to youth.

There is already some discussion about adding mental health and substance abuse services at the Center. The staff is making an assessment about how best to insert these types of programs, while respecting the concerns that the youth have about traditional “therapy” approaches. There is also discussion about how to supplement the housing service for youth, perhaps adding a role for Habitat for Humanity. Finally, some of the partners noted the

importance of supplementing the educational resources for youth. This might be done through a stronger collaboration with the University of Houston's Urban Experience program. The director of this program was one of the original planners of the H.A.Y. Center but has not been as engaged in the implementation phase of the work.

How consistent are the services provided (program fidelity)?

Services are individualized based on youth's needs but the program is structured to cover the essential domains – supportive services, academic skills and post-secondary education, and workforce preparation. All these services are available at the H.A.Y Center. In addition to their case manager, the youth meet with the education specialist and the job developer. All of these staff assess the youth's needs and develop a plan that provides services that reflect the youth's needs. In terms of the fidelity and integrity of the model, the Center has insured that the array of services reflects the input of the young people, received both formally through the youth leadership group and informally through one-on-one meetings between youth with staff. Equally as important, the project managers maintain an inventory of services that will meet the documented needs of transitioning youth in the Houston area. Like a successful business, they have been careful to listen to their "customers." They are also refining the prototype and developing more clarity about their "product" as they receive more information.

It is likely that more services will evolve in time and that existing services will be fine-tuned to meet the needs of the population. Nonetheless, the basic service design is remaining true to the vision for this Center.

Who are the key partners such as funders, facilitators, service delivery partners, major youth employers, and consumer groups?

Multiple formal and informal partners are a part of this project. It is fair to count the young people—current and alumni—among the informal partners, given their active role in advancing the role of the Center. In addition, there is an emerging group of foster parents and group home parents connected to the work of the Center.

The project leadership developed a number of strong partnerships with several key organizations. Among the formal partners of the Center are:

- Accelerated Learning and Transition Partners
- Arrow Project
- Better Business Bureau Education Foundation
- CASA Voices for Children
- Catholic Charities
- Daystar Residential, Inc.
- Depelchin Children's Center
- Employment and Training Centers
- Fort Bend Foster Parent Association
- Gulf Coast Trade Center
- Gulf Coast Workforce Board and its Work Resource (One-Stop) Career Centers
- Harris County Attorney's Office
- Harris County Community Youth Services (Juvenile Justice Services)
- Harris County Protective Services
- Harris County Public Health
- HCPS Community Youth Services
- Houston SRO Housing Corporation
- Lutheran Social Services of the South, Inc.
- Phi Beta Zeta GO Center
- San Jacinto College North
- Sheltering Harbor
- Sir John Apartments
- Texas Apartment Locator
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Workforce Commission
- The Children's Center, Inc.
- The Council on Alcohol and Drugs
- University of Houston, Urban Experience Program
- Volunteer Houston

In addition, they are in the process of conducting outreach and are in negotiations with a number of other organizations to develop MOUs to provide services at the H.A.Y. Center. With respect to the list of partners, these are truly partners in the full sense of the word. Only Employment and Training Centers and Gulf Coast Trade Center receive funds from this grant. The Employment and Training Centers (a private for-profit provider) is the original leaseholder on the building. They are being paid \$271,000 to cover their costs for the lease on the building. The Gulf Coast Trade Center receives funding for one employment development specialist who is stationed at the H.A.Y. Center and tasked with providing employment placement services. The remaining partners provide services in exchange for space at the Center that is mostly used to deliver services to the foster care youth enrolled in the program. However, the space may also be used for other services that the partner agency provides. For example, the community college conducts classes at the H.A.Y. Center that are open to the community.

A few employers are cooperating with the employment professionals at the Center. However, it is not clear that they are "partners" at this stage.

What are the funding sources and percentage estimates?

This project is funded with a combination of DOL grant funds, State Chafee funds, and State TANF funds. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percent</u>
DOL Grant Funds	\$388,572	49.0%
TANF State Funds	\$300,000	38.0%
Chafee Federal Funds	\$80,000	10.0%
Chafee State Match	\$20,000	3.9%
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$788,572</i>	

This project has leveraged significant services from their partnering organizations. In addition, Harris County Protective Services brings to the table the resources of the PAL program.

What are the plans for continued implementation/operation?

The Houston site has convened a formal Sustainability Committee, chaired by the project manager. The committee meets regularly with several of the key partners participating. The continued operation appears to be dependent upon the remarkable level of leveraged resources that are all part of the project. Undoubtedly, the federal grant is covering several substantial cost centers for the project. Still, the notable quality of the project is the number of organizations and individuals who have redirected their existing resources to accommodate the needs of young people who visit the center. These redirections have helped to expand and stabilize the level of services at the Center. More importantly, these services can continue beyond the term of the grant, and set the stage for future collaborations.

There are also encouraging signs of sustainability at the state level. With the passage of what people refer to as “Senate Bill or (SB) 6,” TWC and the local workforce boards plan to enter into cooperative agreements with DFPS to further the goals of the PAL program. (TWC is in the process of issuing formal guidance to the Boards on the requirements of SB6.) The boards will now prioritize and target this population of young people and help them with short-term housing referrals. In addition, DFPS is now mandated to expand transition services, which means that there will be a push to expand the one-stop model. The lead person at TWC, at the state level, is serving on the DFPS Transitional Living Services workgroup. Participation in this workgroup includes the expansion of transition centers in Texas and assisting in the development of the PAL curriculum related to employment and career development. In a joint interview, they noted their strong commitment to the scale of the project across the state. In addition, lead state staff would like for Casey Family Programs to assist or to become involved in the sustainability of the H.A.Y. Center.

One factor in sustaining the Center is the move by the state to privatize the majority of child welfare services. With the exception of protective services and child placement, all of the services traditionally provided by the public sector will be procured from the private sector. None of those interviewed could provide insight into how contracting might change the nature of services to youth in transition or the resources available to serve them.

Noteworthy Successes and Challenges for the Site

What changes have been made in the project design and why?

There are no major changes emerging in this early implementation phase compared to the original project description and plan. The legislatively mandated collaboration between the state's child welfare and youth employment services has enhanced the intensity of the work at the state and local levels. Otherwise, the partners have remained on point with the plan to function in a one-stop environment.

Are some partners missing from the table and, if so, why?

The list of participants in this project is impressive. Many of the services that young people need to make a successful transition are in place. There has been great attention paid to meeting the goals of the original proposal emphasizing a comprehensive and accessible model for youth. However, staff did indicate that there were still some missing elements. Those included mental health and substance abuse services for young people. This will be a delicate task. The youth have strong negative feelings about traditional therapy and counseling services. It might be helpful to involve the project participants in planning this effort. It was also not clear from the interviews if the project was collaborating with non-traditional partners. Examples of this would include faith communities and employers. This might be more a function of the fact that the project is still new. Given the ambitious leadership at the site, and the needs of the youth, this is likely to happen within the next year.

Staff noted that two domains of service were still not participating fully at the Center. Those included juvenile justice and juvenile probation, as well as behavioral health and mental retardation services. There is a plan to bring these partners to the table in this coming year.

Currently, there is limited foster parent and group home parent participation. Some staff and foster parents who were interviewed indicated the need for a more substantial role for these individuals. This project could involve foster parents in more independent living skill building activities that will assist the youth. In addition, whenever possible, substitute caregivers should be viewed as a source of referrals to the project.

What is going well? What would the site like to highlight?

The H.A.Y. Center has much to be proud of, even at this early stage of the implementation. The project is close to its enrollment goals, and the youth appear to be finding their way into educational and employment settings. The staff are quick to point out that these are not “easy cases.” These young people have had their share of significant challenges, and in some cases, other programs have rejected them. Though it is still too early to tell from the data, it appears that young people are coming to the Center in greater numbers and remaining involved once they are “enrolled.” This early level of success is largely the result of the thoughtful and well-planned collaboration that occurred before the partners secured the grant. The success is reinforced through the Center’s leadership and through the partners who have a shared vision and purpose. Everyone agreed that this atmosphere sets the tone for the development of future projects among the partners.

The sharing and redirecting of resources is impressive and will be the key to the project’s sustainability. These activities are part of another promising approach. The state program offices in child welfare and youth employment are working together to advance the model, examining how it can be taken to scale across the state. In turn, this support at the state level is providing the incentive to advance the Houston project’s inclination to try new and innovative practices and to anticipate other youth-friendly projects. This type of thinking and activity is supported by the project’s Sustainability Committee, which is a unique structure for a relatively new project.

The youth and the partners all agree that the space is youth-friendly, but still businesslike in tone. Participants are engaged in a variety of activities at the Center and the informal, positive peer support is obvious in every part of the building. The youth helped in the design and took a lead in setting the house rules. No one comes simply to “hang out.” Still, there is a comfortable atmosphere in the building, especially in those places designated for the youth.

During this visit, the interviewers spoke to participants, who spoke very highly of the project and the staff. In particular, they indicated that the project took them to another level of competence and independence. The PAL project was helpful but the activities at the H.A.Y. Center are described by the youth as more “real life.” They described the staff as “mentors,” who provide consistency and competent assistance with employment, education, housing and family issues. They all agreed that the H.A.Y. Center was created for youth and the staff are

always willing to go beyond their job descriptions to assist the project participants. Several of the youth noted that the Center has a healing environment, which is more effective than experiences in traditional therapy. All of the young people indicated that they would refer siblings and friends to the H.A.Y. Center. All of these positive comments are significant for a number of reasons. This type of feedback indicates that the partners have been successful, at least thus far, in developing an approach that is youth-friendly and businesslike. Moreover, the Center calls on the youth to take responsibility for their future, providing them with the tools, but not doing things for them. The Center is trying to achieve the delicate balance between rigor for the youth and a respect of where they have been in their short lives.

What are the key challenges and how are they being addressed?

The project is facing a number of normal developmental challenges, but each appears to be manageable. The project was slow to get started, in part because of the state process and in part because the tasks related to Hurricane Katrina consumed state and local government. One result of these delays was the low numbers of enrollees. However, the project is now on a faster track of implementation.

There has been concern about the need for enhanced and compatible state and local MIS systems that will reflect the project design. The leadership has taken this on as a task for this coming year.

Everyone agreed that the partners are still clarifying the logistics of “working together.” Being in the same building does not always assure that there is a synchronicity to the case management process, nor does it guarantee that the young person will have one organized plan or strategy for success. As a result, the administration has instituted a more structured approach to the case review process, meeting regularly to review all cases, with special attention to those participants with difficult circumstances. Those interviewed agreed that this collaborative effort has helped to improve the planning process and to enhance the working relationship among the staff and the partners.

The cost of maintaining the facility was also identified as a challenge. Most people agreed that it is a good location given the geography of the city. Still, they did note that it is an expensive facility to maintain and will be a costly operation once the federal grant has expired.

For the young people, transportation and affordable housing remain significant issues. Houston is a sprawling city. There is no real “central” location that will be accessible for all young people. Transportation is also an issue for the young people as it relates to their employment and educational settings. Some recommended the need for the Center to have its own transportation, but that does not appear to be a practical alternative. Obviously, there is no easy or early solution to this challenge for the site. Housing, though not over-priced, is still an issue for the youth. Many of the participants in the project are homeless or live with other people. The site has an individual who has a business as an apartment locator. She has been somewhat successful in finding young people housing near employment opportunities. However, she noted that the competition for affordable apartments had stepped up a notch because of people settling in Houston after the Hurricane Katrina migration into Houston. Many of those people appear to be staying, which has limited the number of available units. The city has assured a certain percentage of apartments must remain open to Houston residents. Still, the demand continues to drive up the costs of rents.

The leadership, the staff and the partners, as well as the youth who were interviewed, all noted that among the challenges for youth are the issues related to their family problems. Many of the young people were separated from their families at an early age, with little or no attention paid to permanency alternatives. A number of the youth have social-emotion challenges resulting from childhood trauma, multiple placements, and a general sense of inconsistency. Special education problems remain a problem for a significant portion of the young people, thus making it difficult for them, even when they make it into a four-year college, a community college, or a training program. Not surprisingly, the H.A.Y. Center is sometimes unable to remediate all of the issues from the young person’s history. The youth and the staff agreed that whenever possible, the Center will continue supporting the participants way beyond the capacity of the traditional child welfare system. Still, there were several suggestions that many of these young people will likely need some support until the age of 24 years.

Finally, the Center is having some difficulty keeping young people engaged consistently in the planning and implementation process related to the Center. This is largely because the young people are so busy with other priorities in their lives. Like all successful projects for young people in transition, once the youth has secured a job and a place in school, it becomes

more difficult to give time to other outside projects. Still, the atmosphere remains welcoming and the possibilities are always there for youth to be partners in the project.

What are the outcomes (including small youth milestones) that the site is seeing?

The H.A.Y. Center has made progress in accomplishing its original project requirements. They have developed an intake process, an assessment process, and a common data collection system. The furniture and computers are in place, though the Center has had some difficulties with the computer lab. The facility is well-organized, and the participants have developed a set of “house rules.”

Among the most impressive results thus far, the Center has developed a significant number of MOUs with community-based and public agencies. This has helped to formalize the relationships among the partners. It is also being used as a mechanism for redirecting existing services that the partners would normally provide. The education and employment components of the project are continuing to grow with multiple partnerships emerging around job readiness and college preparation.

There were 86 youth enrolled at the time of the visit, with the target for the year being 150. No youth who had prior experience with juvenile justice system have recidivated. Almost 100 percent of the youth who began in the project have remained attached to the Center. Though it is still too early to tell what will happen, many of the young people have found jobs, completed courses, and/or have enrolled in college.

Though certainly not a measurable component of progress, the partners have made slow but steady progress as it relates to engaging other community partners, as well as youth. The growth of the Center does not come solely as a result of its early implementation phase. Instead, service providers, volunteers, and youth who were interviewed noted the quality and the urgency of the work being done at the H.A.Y. Center. This has help to build credibility in the community and create a strong reputation as the “go to” resource for transitioning youth.

Noteworthy Practices

The driving issue for bringing the original partners together was a frustration with the traditional PAL and independent living approaches offered through the state. The H.A.Y Center has increased the quality and depth of service in the Houston region. The Center has taken a

comprehensive approach to implementing this project, bringing together a wide range of community partners to participate in the planning and in the delivery of services.

Youth are active partners in this project. Their input was sought in the design of the project. In addition, they are consulted regarding the additional services that they would like to see at the Center. It is truly their Center; they make the rules and enforce them.

Other noteworthy practices include:

- Use of former foster care youth as staff who are serving in staff positions
- The design of the Center that has both the “business” look and the recreation
- The leveraging of services – bring together both public agencies and businesses, such as the Apartment Locator to provide services without charge
- The mailbox/voice mail service
- Supplying services to young people who have “dropped out of the system”
- Having the grant manager in the role of neutral convener of the partners
- Case review to all clients with the youth present on a regular basis
- Twice a month, three-hour staff retreats
- The Blueprint class for youth (noted above)
- The intensive employment support for youth

Site Data

The data provided in the following tables were drawn from the roll-up quarterly reports dated September 30, 2005.

Enrollment Data for Houston Site	Ages 15-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Enrollment Target/Plan	37	38	75
Enrolled (Total)	11	52	63
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	6	25	31
Female	5	27	32
<i>Race & Ethnicity</i>			
White	6	6	12
Black	2	31	33
Hispanic	0	11	11
Native American	0	0	0
Asian and Pacific Islander	0	0	0
Multiracial	2	4	6
Other	1	0	1
<i>School Status</i>			
In School	6	4	10
Out of School/HS Dropout	4	7	11
Out of School/Grad or GED	1	41	42
<i>Housing Status</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	2	7	9
Independent Living	0	38	38
Temporary Housing/Homeless	9	7	16
<i>Foster Care Status</i>			
In Foster Care System	11	1	12
Out of Foster Care System	0	51	51
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>			
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	2	7	9
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	9	45	54
<i>Parenting Status</i>			
Custodial parent	0	6	6
Non-custodial parent	2	1	3
<i>Other</i>			
Receives some form of health insurance	11	39	50
Receives Income Supports (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, other)	2	4	6
With disability(s)	2	8	10

Project Activities Data for Houston Site	Quarter 1			Quarter 2		
	April 2005	May 2005	June 2005	July 2005	August 2005	September 2005
<i>Participation Activities</i>						
Subsidized Work Experience/Internships	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unsubsidized Work Experience	8	7	7	0	0	1
Other Job Preparation Class/Activity	24	18	37	4	9	16
Dropouts Returning To Secondary School	1	1	1	0	0	0
College Prep	71	71	71	1	2	13
GED Preparation	0	0	0	4	3	5
Basic and Remedial Education	3	3	3	0	2	1
English as a Second Language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring	85	85	85	0	0	0
Parenting Classes	1	1	1	0	0	0
Life Skills	85	85	85	0	0	0
<i>Unduplicated Count of Youth in Activities</i>	85	85	85	8	14	27

Additional Project Activities	Ages 15-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
Students Remaining In School	6	4	10
<i>Other Support Services/Activities</i>			
Income Support (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Chafee, Pell Grant, etc.)	2	3	5
Health Services (medical, mental health, prescription drugs)	0	0	0
Substance Abuse Counseling	0	0	0
Other (such as Transportation, Child Care, Education Support Services, Counseling, etc.)	8	13	21

Outcome Data for Houston Site	Ages 15-17	Ages 18-21	All Youth
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>			
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	0	0	0
Entered the Military	0	0	0
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	1	1
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	1	0	1
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	0	0
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	0	14	14
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	0	0	0
Obtained a High School Degree			0
Obtained a GED	0	0	0
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	1	0	1
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>			
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	0	0
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>			
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	0	0
Independent Living	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	0	0
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	0	0
Remain Active In Project	11	52	63

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations for Houston Site*	Actual	Goal
Enrollment Rate	42%	100%
Recidivism Rate	0%	
Placement Rate	34%	60%
Retention Rate	0%	80%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	17%	50%

* See page 23 for performance goal definitions.

Compilation of Data across Sites

The following data were drawn from the roll-up report for the second quarter ending September 30, 2005. These tables provide a side-by-side comparison of sites in their progress in enrolling youth and what characteristics these youth have, outcomes achieved by the youth, and performance goals and how close the sites are to meeting them.

Enrollment Data across Sites	Los Angeles	Chicago	Detroit	New York	Houston
Enrollment Target/Plan	100	110	120	150	150
Currently Enrolled	70	87	70	31	63
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	39	29	28	16	31
Female	31	58	42	15	32
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>					
White	3	1	7	1	12
Black	56	76	60	19	33
Hispanic	9	7	0	7	11
Native American	1	0	0	0	0
Asian and Pacific Islander	1	0	0	0	0
Multiracial	0	2	3	4	6
Other	0	1	0	0	1
<i>School Status</i>					
In School	34	71	11	4	10
Out of School/HS Dropout	8	1	33	8	11
Out of School/Grad or GED	28	15	26	19	42
<i>Housing Status</i>					
Stable Housing Arrangements	49	47	50	26	9
Independent Living	11	34	5	4	38
Temporary Housing/Homeless	10	6	15	1	16
<i>Foster Care Status</i>					
In Foster Care System	49	76	35	28	12
Out of Foster Care System	21	11	35	3	51
<i>Criminal Justice Status</i>					
Currently or Previously Adjudicated/Incarcerated	19	7	16	2	9
Never Adjudicated/Incarcerated	51	80	54	29	54
<i>Parenting Status</i>					
Custodial parent	2	27	13	0	6
Non-custodial parent	14	6	1	1	3
<i>Other</i>					
Receives some form of health insurance	54	84	50	31	50
Receives Income Supports (TANF, SSI, other)	39	46	41	0	6
With disability(s)	2	1	8	0	10

Outcome Data across Sites	Los Angeles	Chicago	Detroit	New York	Houston
<i>Workforce / Education Outcomes*</i>					
First Time Unsubsidized Employment	3	25	10	10	0
Entered the Military	0	0	0	1	0
Entered Long Term Occupational Training	0	1	0	0	1
1. Completed Long Term Occupational Training	0	8	1	0	1
Entered Full-Time Post Secondary School	0	2	0	0	0
Entered Part-time Unsubsidized Employment & Part-time Post Secondary Education	14	23	4	1	14
Youth Placed in One of Above & Still Retained	2	2	1	4	0
Obtained a High School Degree	0	16	0	0	0
Obtained a GED	3	39	0	1	0
Obtained a Certificate in a Training Program	0	5	0	0	1
<i>Juvenile Justice Outcomes</i>					
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Not Previously an Offender)	0	0	0	0	0
Adjudicated or Convicted of a Crime Committed After Entering Project (Previously an Offender)	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Housing Situation at Completion</i>					
Stable Housing Arrangements	0	0	0	2	0
Independent Living	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary Housing/Homeless	0	0	0	1	0
Completed or No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0	2	0
1. No Longer Enrolled	0	0	0	0	0
Moved From Target Area	0	1	0	0	0
Remain Active In Project	70	83	70	29	63

* While actively enrolled in the program

Performance Calculations across Sites*	Program Goal	Los Angeles (Actual)	Chicago (Actual)	Detroit (Actual)	New York (Actual)	Houston (Actual)
Enrollment Rate	100%	70%	79%	58%	21%	42%
Recidivism Rate		0%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Placement Rate	60%	35%	71%	26%	50%	34%
Retention Rate	80%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Diploma/GED Attainment Rate	50%	7%	83%	0%	20%	17%

*See page 23 for performance goal definitions.