

Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Services Program (CFCIP)

Accomplishments achieved and planned activities for each of the first five purposes of CFCIP:

1. Assist youth to transition from dependency to self-sufficiency:

The CD has used the CFCIP funds to staff one state level coordinator. The state level coordinator position is responsible for program development and coordination, implementation, resource development, training, administrative oversight, technical assistance, and policy development. For SFY 2008 the position and responsibilities of the state level coordinator will remain the same with the additional responsibility of contract management and oversight.

The CD currently uses CFCIP funds to staff seven Older Youth Transition Specialist positions located throughout the state. The Specialists work directly and collaboratively with the case managers, contracted providers, and youth. They are responsible for local program coordination, service delivery, community resource development, contractor compliance, on-going consultation and education to agency staff, and other providers. They provide direct services to youth in skill assessments and training on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. Referrals for CFCIP services are commonly made to the Older Youth Transition Specialist from youth's case manager, foster care providers, other agencies or by self-referral.

In SFY 2008 most of the duties of the Older Youth Transition Specialists will be dispersed to contracted providers and to case managers. The duties the Older Youth Transition Specialists are responsible for, such as local program coordination, service delivery, community resource development, etc, will continue to be performed in a more team oriented manner, versus a specialized concept. As mentioned, some of these duties, such as direct service delivery to youth, will be performed by contracted providers. Other duties, such as training, will be performed by CD employees. The seven Older Youth Transition Specialists will be largely responsible for contract monitoring and compliance but may also help with program coordination. Case managers will become more knowledgeable and responsible for ensuring the older youth they work with have their needs met. Adolescent case managers, which are utilized in the northern region, and specifically trained on CFCIP and services available to older youth in foster care, will also play an essential role in the effort to educate staff and meet the needs of older youth.

The CD has revamped its Independent Living Program (ILP) to encompass all the services and programs that are offered to foster and former foster youth to achieve positive outcomes in their transition to self-sufficiency. The new program is called the Older Youth Program, in which CD is still providing independent living/Chafee services to youth ages 14-21; however this program also includes the Transitional Living Program, Education & Training Voucher Program and Independent Living

Arrangements. From the recommendations made by the workgroup on older youth issues in FY 2006, the CD has been developing their recommendations into tools, policy and training in FY 2007 and will begin implementation in late SFY 2007 and into SFY 2008. These recommendations include a change in practice, with the development of Older Youth Transition Action Teams; a change in policy, with the incorporation of a chapter in the Child Welfare Manual designated entirely to working with older youth in foster care; and a comprehensive tool, the Adolescent Family Support Team Guide and Individualized Action Plan, to aid in transition planning for older youth.

In the fall of SFY 2007, the CD created an Older Youth Program test project with three project sites, a metro site – St. Louis City, and one site in north Missouri – 15th Circuit (Saline and Lafayette counties) , and one site in south Missouri – 25th Circuit (Phelps, Pulaski, Maries and Texas counties). The CD staff that were the test project participants received training in Positive Youth Development, older youth specific permanency needs, Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessments (ACLSA), and the new CD Adolescent Family Support Team Guide & Individualized Action Plan. The participants were asked to complete the ACLSA and Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan with youth 14-21 on their caseloads. They were also asked to engage the community in the development and implementation of the Older Youth Transition Action Teams.

In April 2007, the CD held an evaluation meeting with the test site participants. Test site participants gave generally positive feedback about the training that they had received and usage of the ACLSA and Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan. Staff voiced concern about the viability of the Older Youth Transition Action Teams, some staff liked the philosophy behind the Older Youth Transition Action Teams, however many stated that there were too many practical barriers at this time to implement the concept.

From the information learned from the Older Youth Program test project, the CD plans to implement training, continue to use the ACLSA, and begin to use the Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan in SFY 2007 and SFY 2008. The CD does not plan to implement the use of Older Youth Transition Action Teams until further development of relationships within the local community and staff support is generated.

Youth are currently provided information about available Chafee services by the Older Youth Transition Specialists and case managers. Services are to be used to assist youth in complementing their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure they recognize and accept personal responsibility in preparation for and the successful transition from adolescence to adulthood. Currently, all youth ages 16 and over are required to have an independent living case plan regardless of their permanency goal. They shall be involved in their case planning to address the development of skills and resources needed to facilitate their transition to self-sufficiency. In SFY 2007 into SFY 2008, the Adolescent Family Support Team Guide and Individualized Action Plan will be introduced to case managers to utilize for development and documentation of the youth's transition plan, for youth ages 14 to 21.

Chafee funds will also be utilized to continue supporting Missouri's Aftercare program for youth who have exited state custody at 17.5 and older, but have not yet reached age 21. Additionally, funds will be used for administration and facilitation of the foster youth advisory boards.

Life skills training is available in all regions of the state. A state core curriculum is used and modules are added to meet needs of youth in different geographical areas. In SFY 2007, life skills training has been provided through seminar classes, community service projects, and referrals to community resource that are offering the same type of skills training through their program. Youth receive a small stipend and other incentives for attending each training session and completing homework.

In late SFY 2007 through SFY 2008 the life skills training is expected to be provided by contracted providers, including contracted transitional living programs. The CD will no longer require a six to nine month course but will recommend providers develop competency based training modules for each set of life skills taught. The state life skills core curriculum will continue to be a recommended foundation for each provider to teach from, however, the state will not dictate how these core life skills are taught or how the curriculum must be utilized.

Policy at the CD currently requires all staff to begin exit planning for all youth ages 17 and older and for those who will be leaving foster care after age 18. The purpose of conducting an exit planning interview is to identify anticipated service needs and arrange those for older youth who will soon be exiting foster care. An exit interview must take place at least 6 months prior to the youth leaving custody; for all youth at ages 17 or older; and annually, for all youth over the age of 18 who remain in care and custody. In SFY 2007 the Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan will be replacing the current exit planning and independent living plan form and policy. To increase and strengthen this planning the Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan was developed and is intended to be a proactive, youth driven case planning tool. This tool should be discussed and utilized at least every six months at the Family Support Team Meeting with youth ages 14-21.

2. Help youth receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment:

CD staff, including case managers and Older Youth Transition Specialists, referred youth to Job Corps, Americorps, and all branches of the military.

Missouri's Workforce Development also offers five Job Corps centers that Missouri youth can attend. Three are located in Missouri. Job Corps is a residential education and employment training program. It provides vocational and academic skills to young adults between the ages of 16 and 24. The program provides youth accepted into the program with room, board, and spending money while they learn. Job Corps is

committed to providing a safe environment for its students to ensure they acquire the skills and preparation they need to succeed in the workplace.

The Missouri Mentoring Partnership (MMP) provides funding to nine community partnerships to implement structured work site and community-based mentoring. When youth are referred they must complete 20-30 hours (based on the youth's learning capacity) of job readiness training. The curriculum focuses on "soft skills" training, resume preparation and mock interviewing. Once the youth passes the job readiness training, they can begin their job search and then a job mentor is assigned.

In SFY 2007, the CD has continued to participate in the development and utilization of the "Shared Youth Vision" collaborative effort. The Division of Labor, the CD, the Division of Youth Services, the Department of Secondary Education and the Department of Justice have come together to discuss how this collaboration can be an effective strategy to meeting the needs of youth in their agency. It is the continued goal of the CD to utilize this collaborative effort to better meet the needs of our youth in care.

3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions:

Early and on-going support for education is extremely important in preparing youth for self-sufficiency. Education is being approached in a comprehensive and integrated manner in the early years. Setting and monitoring educational goals will assist youth in understanding the importance of having a vision of educational success. The CD believes the utilization of the new Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan will increase the support for positive educational outcomes and guide the CD case manager to provide that support and assistance to the older youth in foster care.

The State of Missouri is committed to ensuring youth have the opportunity and support to access post-secondary education or training. Educational services and supports are also available to any foster youth to assist them in achieving their educational goals. Services are provided based on the youth's educational needs. Educational supports can include an education advocate, tutoring, individualized plans, and other needs necessary for the youth to be educationally successful.

With the passage of the Stable and Safe Families Act, Missouri now offers Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program. Missouri uses ETV funding to expand and strengthen its post secondary educational assistance to eligible youth.

The purpose of the ETV program is to provide resources to eligible young adults to apply toward the cost of attendance at post-secondary vocational/educational institutions. Eligible ETV program participants are youth who are eligible for services under Missouri's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and youth who were adopted or achieve legal guardianship after the youth 16th birthday. Young adults who are receiving financial assistance through ETV on their 21st birthday may continue to receive ETV services up until their 23rd birthday, provided they are enrolled in a post-

secondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Youth applicants must be graduating high school seniors, have their high school diploma, be completing their G.E.D. or have a G.E.D. certificate. Youth must be preparing for enrollment in post-secondary education, have been accepted for enrollment or are presently continuing their education at an institution of higher learning including a vocation/technical school. Youth must be making satisfactory progress (minimum GPA of 2.0 or otherwise agreed upon) and provide a copy of a transcript verifying their GPA in order to receive continuing assistance. If youth are attending a program which does not use grades to document progress, the youth must provide a letter from the program verifying the youth is making satisfactory progress. Funds provided under the ETV program may be used for expenses related to the cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.

Missouri offers different types of post-secondary institutions, which provides education and/or training beyond the high school level. There are regionally accredited institutions of higher education in Missouri which includes two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities and state colleges. There are accredited independent nonprofit two-year colleges, four-year colleges and universities, technical and professional institutions, theological schools, and seminaries. There is also a long list of proprietary institutions that may be accredited and unaccredited but are certified to operate by Missouri Department of Higher Education that generally offers education and training designed to prepare graduates for direct entry into specific occupations or professions.

4. Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults:

The ability of young people transitioning out of or who have exited foster care to develop a support network, and the influence of informal role models to serve as mentors in a support network is critical. Missouri currently offers personal and emotional support to young people through job placement, formal and informal mentors. Committed and caring adults are essential in guiding young people and helping them maneuver in their community.

It is because of this belief that the Older Youth Transition Action Team and the Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan were developed. Although the Older Youth Transition Action Team will not be utilized in SFY 2008, it is the intent that CD staff will cultivate this community network to develop permanency connections for youth in care. It is the expectation that the new tool, the Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan, will be a guide for case managers to use and to help the case manager and Family Support Team become fully aware that adult supports for the youth and that the youth identify should be involved in the process. This tool specifically requires that up to three adult supports for the youth be identified.

The MMP provides resource coordination for youth and volunteer mentors recruited from the community. These mentors provide positive role modeling, friendship and guidance around employment and parenting issues to youth who are entering the workplace or have become parents.

Community service or volunteering is a critical component in our life skills training program. We find that youth who volunteer in community service programs have an opportunity to meet and develop relationships with adults and other youth who are involved in the same projects as well as develop work skills.

The Missouri CD promotes interaction between youth and dedicated adults through the Transitional Living Advocate program. Through this program youth are connected with adults who become their advocate or mentor. These adults receive 18 hours of training from CD staff on adolescent issues, including three hours each in cultural/race sensitivity, ILP life skills training overview, adolescent development with an emphasis on what to expect from adolescent behavior, emotional obstacles out-of-home care youth must overcome, adolescent sexuality and behavior management via natural consequences. These adult advocates provide the youth a safe place to stay, continued life skills training, encouragement and guidance in regard to employment, education and/or training, and preparation for successful transition from CD custody.

The Casey Family Programs "Ready, Set, Fly" curriculum for in-service training of foster parents was available in February of 2004. This training provided as a supportive tool foster parents can use with youth working in the independent life skills classes to help them practice their skills learned in the home.

In SFY 2007, the State Youth Advisory Board (SYAB) set as their task to reorganize the peer mentors program that they felt was a beneficial program. The SYAB would like to initiate peer mentoring through organizing foster youth support groups at local schools. This will continue to be an on-going project in the FY 2008 year. The SYAB would also like to incorporate this idea with linkage to foster care alumni. The SYAB has already had several contacts with foster care alumni and will be formalizing a plan on how to best utilize this resource in SFY 2008.

5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age:

Missouri continues to provide services and support for youth in foster care or former foster care youth between 18 and 21 years of age. While in foster care, these older youth are provided with the same services as the younger youth. In addition, older foster youth also receive education, training, and other services necessary to obtain employment, prepare for and enter post-secondary education and training.

Chafee services are available for foster youth ages 14-21. Youth who exit foster care on their 17.5 birthday and have not yet reached age 21 are eligible to receive Chafee

Aftercare services. Youth may access Chafee services as needed while in the Division's care and custody or as a former foster youth.

Aftercare services are flexible, short term and used as a safety net to meet the needs of the youth after they have exited CD custody. The needs and array of services vary depending on the need of the former foster youth. Chafee funds may be expended for a variety of reasons and should be used as a support for the young adult, not an on-going supplemental funding source. Aftercare services may include emergency/crisis intervention services, housing/room and board, educational/job training/employment assistance, and other support services.

Room and board services are only available to youth who exited custody at age 18 or after, but they have not yet reached age 21. Room and board may include security and utility deposits, rent, utilities, food, start-up kits, basic necessities, and basic furniture.

Support services provided include life skills training, transportation, child care, clothing, and other expenses as needed. Youth may receive up to a lifetime maximum of \$3,500.00 for any one or a combination of all these categorical services during their eligibility period, excluding post-secondary educational and training assistance.

In late SFY 2007 through SFY 2008, it is the intent of the CD to offer these aftercare services to former foster care youth through a contracted provider. Although the same types of services, housing, emergency services, employment assistance, etc., shall be offered, there may no longer be the need for lifetime maximum categorical expenses or these maximums may look different depending on the Chafee contracted provider.

Collaboration activities achieved and planned with other Federal and State programs for youth, also including collaboration with shareholders and the courts:

The Missouri state level coordinator for the CFCIP sits on the Council for Adolescent and School Health (CASH). This council is administered by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) and consists of various state and county agencies. Its goal is to support adolescent and school health and to facilitate collaboration to promote a coordinated, family, community, and school approach to achieve healthy adolescent development.

It is through this council, the CD has partnered with DHSS, and Children's Mercy Hospital and Clinics to sponsor three regional Mental Health Issues in Adolescence workshops in the fall of 2006. These workshops were designed to target foster parents and youth workers to help them to understand adolescent growth and development, substance abuse issues, sexually transmitted diseases, eating disorders and obesity in teens and to learn about treatment and interventions. It is the intent of the CD, the CHSS, Children's Mercy Hospital and Clinics to again offer this type of training to foster parents and youth workers in the fall of 2007. Title IV-E funding will be utilized for payment of hours worked by case managers attending this training.

The CD has made revisions to the Transitional Living Program. During this revision of policy and contract, CD has requested assistance and input from various transitional living providers, including Runaway and Homeless Youth grantees, youth in foster care, and the National Resource Center on Youth Development. The CD has issued a new contract in SFY 2007. The new contract allows for more flexibility with service delivery to youth in the program, including training of independent living skills. Policy will be designed to prompt youth to transition from more restrictive setting to least restrictive setting by the time they reach the age of 20, so that they are better prepared for court release of jurisdiction at 21 years old.

The CD, in SFY 2007, attended the National Governor's Association "Strengthening Youth Policy in States". This Policy Institute helped the CD network with Department of Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and the state legislator to discuss issues of relevance for youth in foster care. At this Institute suggestions and thoughts were discussed about how to align state programs, policies and initiatives around a clear vision, reducing confusion due to fragmented administrative structures, and to make the delivery of services to youth more cost effective. Ideas were suggested to utilize that Children's Services Commission for a mechanism to coordinate state agency policies for all youth.

Youth in foster care have been participating in the Department of Mental Health (DMH) stakeholder meeting in SFY 2007. Youth are able to give their perspective and input on DMH policy and procedures as it effects and relates to foster care youth. It is planned that this participation will continue in SFY 2008.

The Missouri Treasurer's office has established a college savings and investment program for Missourians to contribute to a 529 college savings account for foster children of Missouri. The program, known as BELIEVE was established in December 2005. The CD assists the Treasurer's office in identifying youth in foster care that are college bound.

An Older Youth Transition Specialist and the state level coordinator participate in the Older Homeless Adolescent Taskforce. This is a coalition of multiple agencies and organizations within the St. Louis community, coordinated by the Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, that meet quarterly to learn about each other, discuss and develop solutions, and provide community services to prevent and decrease homeless teens in their area.

The St. Louis Aging Out Initiative is a project that Epworth Children and Family Services, a residential and transitional living program in St. Louis is administrating. This initiative targets youth in the foster care that are 16 years old in a residential or transitional living program in the St. Louis area. This project focuses on linking youth to current service providers and creating support networks with area agencies. Online workstations and a 24 hour helpline are going to be available for youth to utilize. Also a peer advisor will be working directly with the youth. The intended outcomes of the

project are to teach youth self-advocacy behaviors, such as speaking in court hearing and leading their own Family Support Team meeting; to have sixty percent of youth participants earn their high school diploma or GED; and to have one hundred percent of youth participants that exit the program to have their personal documents, such as their social security card, birth certificate, immunization record, etc.

The CD and the Office of State Court Administrator are currently collaborating with the National Resource Center for Youth Development and the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law on an effort to provide training to Missouri court personnel, judges, juvenile officers and guardian ad litem, on permanency issues of older youth in foster care, positive youth development and Chafee services. This training will offered in early SFY 2008.

Training conducted in FY 2007 and planned for FY 2008:

The CD promotes interaction between youth and dedicated adults through the Transitional Living Advocate program. Through this program youth are connected with adults who become their advocate or mentor. These adults receive 18 hours of training from ILP Specialists on adolescent issues, including three hours each in cultural/race sensitivity, ILP life skills training overview, adolescent development with an emphasis on what to expect from adolescent behavior, emotional obstacles out-of-home care youth must overcome, adolescent sexuality and behavior management via natural consequences. These adult advocates provide the youth a safe place to stay, continued life skills training, encouragement and guidance in regard to employment, education and/or training, and preparation for successful transition from CD custody. During SFY 2007 through SFY 2008, Transitional Living Training will be facilitated by local staff.

The Casey Family Programs “Ready, Set, Fly” curriculum for in-service training of foster parents is provided as a supportive tool foster parents can use with youth working in the independent life skills classes to help them practice their skills learned in the home. In SFY 2007 foster parents that are licensed for older youth receive the training through local training staff.

The Older Youth Program Training, which includes training on the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment, Adolescent FST Guide and Individualized Action Plan, positive youth development, permanency issues specific to older youth, cultural competency, and community collaboration will be offered in FY 2007 through FY 2008 by the state level coordinator, State Youth Advisory Board members and designated trainers throughout the state to the Children’s Division staff and contracted providers.

Service design and delivery of the trust fund program:

Missouri has not established a trust fund program for youth receiving independent living services or transition assistance.

Activities undertaken to involve youth in State agency efforts, such as the CFSR/PIP process:

The CD recognizes the importance of and remains committed to youth involvement and development. When possible, youth are asked to assist in foster parent STARS pre-service and in-service trainings. Other trainings include Transitional Living Advocate and Court Appointed Special Advocates. Youth are often invited to participate and speak on youth panels, facilitate and lead workshops. The CD provides SYAB members with a \$25 per day stipend for attending speaking engagements or participating in requested events, such as a program workgroup. The SYAB members also receive mileage reimbursement for their travel to any such event. Youth on the SYAB host and design the entire annual state youth conference. Workshops and conference activities are generally led by the youth. Although no youth conference was offered in SFY 2007 it is the intent of the SYAB to host a youth conference in SFY 2008.

Through the SYAB and Area Youth Advisory Boards (AYAB), youth have an opportunity to give policy and procedural input to CD staff, provide meaningful leadership training and experiences for board members, and empower board members who, in turn can empower other youth in out-of-home care.

SYAB and AYAB members have been involved in panel presentations and various state/area conferences regarding what the CFCIP has meant to them and how it can make a difference. Other involvement includes:

- Meeting with legislators during the Annual Child Advocacy Day to provide information and advocate for foster care and independent living services.
- Speaking at community meetings to provide information about foster care and adoption issues.
- Participating in agency meetings and committees, such as the PIP Advisory Committee and CQI state level meeting, Federal Regional meetings.
- Providing CFCIP and ETV Program information to foster parents, youth and community members.
- Participating in other community youth boards or councils, such as FosterClub All-Stars and Department of Mental Health Advisory Council.

The CD has invested in the FosterClub All-Star Program to be able to send a youth to leadership training and participation in national leadership events. It is the philosophy of the agency that by providing this type of leadership training and national exposure that this one youth will be able to directly impact the lives of many youth within the state of Missouri. This youth will also be a trained leader in which he/she can better advocate within the system on behalf of youth in foster care. In SFY 06 and SFY 07, Missouri has an All-Star participant. Each of these youth has and will be expected to participate in CD workgroups, state agency advisory boards and various speaking engagements.

In SFY 2007 through SFY 2008 SYAB will also help train staff on the Older Youth Program sharing their perspective on why this new philosophy and tools will help youth transition successfully from foster care.

Describe if and how the state has utilized the option to expand Medicaid:

Missouri has not utilized the Medicaid Option to provide medical services to former foster youth who left care at age 18 or older and have not yet reached age 21.

Explain the results of Indian Tribe consultation:

Missouri does not have federally recognized Indian tribes in the state. However, there are two centers, the Heart of America Indian Center and the Southwest Missouri Indian Center, that are active in the state.

Despite best efforts to seek out and recruit Indian youth interested in participating on AYABs and the SYAB, the division was not successful. During the upcoming year, it is the intent of the CD to continue to have dialogue with the Indian Centers about how to best engage Indian youth within the Chafee program and youth boards. It is the intent of the CD to share with the future Chafee contracted providers the names and contact information of the Indian Centers so as to have the contracted providers also engage in communication and possible resource sharing with the Indian Centers.

All benefits and services under the programs are made available to Indian youth in the state on the same basis as other youth. All youth, ages 14 and older, regardless of descent, per policy, are to be referred to the Older Youth Transition Specialists for Chafee/ILP support and services.