**Washington State
Institute for
Public Policy**

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FOSTER YOUTH TRANSITIONS TO INDEPENDENCE:
OPTIONS TO IMPROVE PROGRAM EFFICIENCIES

For most young adults, the transition towards independence and self-sufficiency occurs gradually and may take place over the course of many years. After reaching age 18, youth continue to receive assistance from parents and may seek guidance from trusted adults. A substantial number of youth also have the security of knowing that they can remain in or return to the family home during early adulthood. According to the 2000 Census, 42 percent of males and 33 percent of females aged 19 to 24 continued to live at home with their parents.[1] In addition, 34 percent of adults aged 18 to 34 received financial assistance with food, housing, or education from their parents, averaging $2,200 per year.[2]

Youth placed in the child welfare system, however, are far less likely to have this level of family support during adolescence or early adulthood. Increasingly, the federal and state governments have attempted to fill this gap through various programs and policies.

The 2009 Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to:

> *"evaluate the adequacy of and access to financial aid and independent living programs for youth in foster care. The examination shall include opportunities to improve efficiencies within these programs."*[3]

In Washington State, over 550 foster youth transitioned out of care in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.[4]

SUMMARY

The 2009 Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to "evaluate the adequacy of and access to financial aid and independent living programs for youth in foster care. The examination shall include opportunities to improve efficiencies within these programs."

- In FY 2009, an estimated 5,907 youth were eligible for Independent Living/Transitional Living services (a "snapshot" estimate; see page 3). We estimate that 3,365 youth accessed one or more programs for youth transitioning from foster care (nearly 60 percent of those eligible).

- Over $11 million was spent on programs and services during this year; this amount was a combination of federal, state, and private funds. The state spent close to $5 million. We estimate that on average approximately $3,300 was spent on youth transitioning from foster care.

- In terms of education, 5 percent of state funding was directed toward youth in K–12, whereas 28 percent was focused on pre-college and college financial aid.

- In the past decade, the number of programs focused on Washington foster youth transitioning to adulthood has grown significantly, from three to 15. The 2009 legislation directing performance contracts for child welfare services offers an opportunity to consolidate services into the smallest number of contracts and emphasize key outcome measures.

- The Independent Youth Housing Program should be transferred from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Social and Health Services so it can be incorporated into these consolidated contracts.

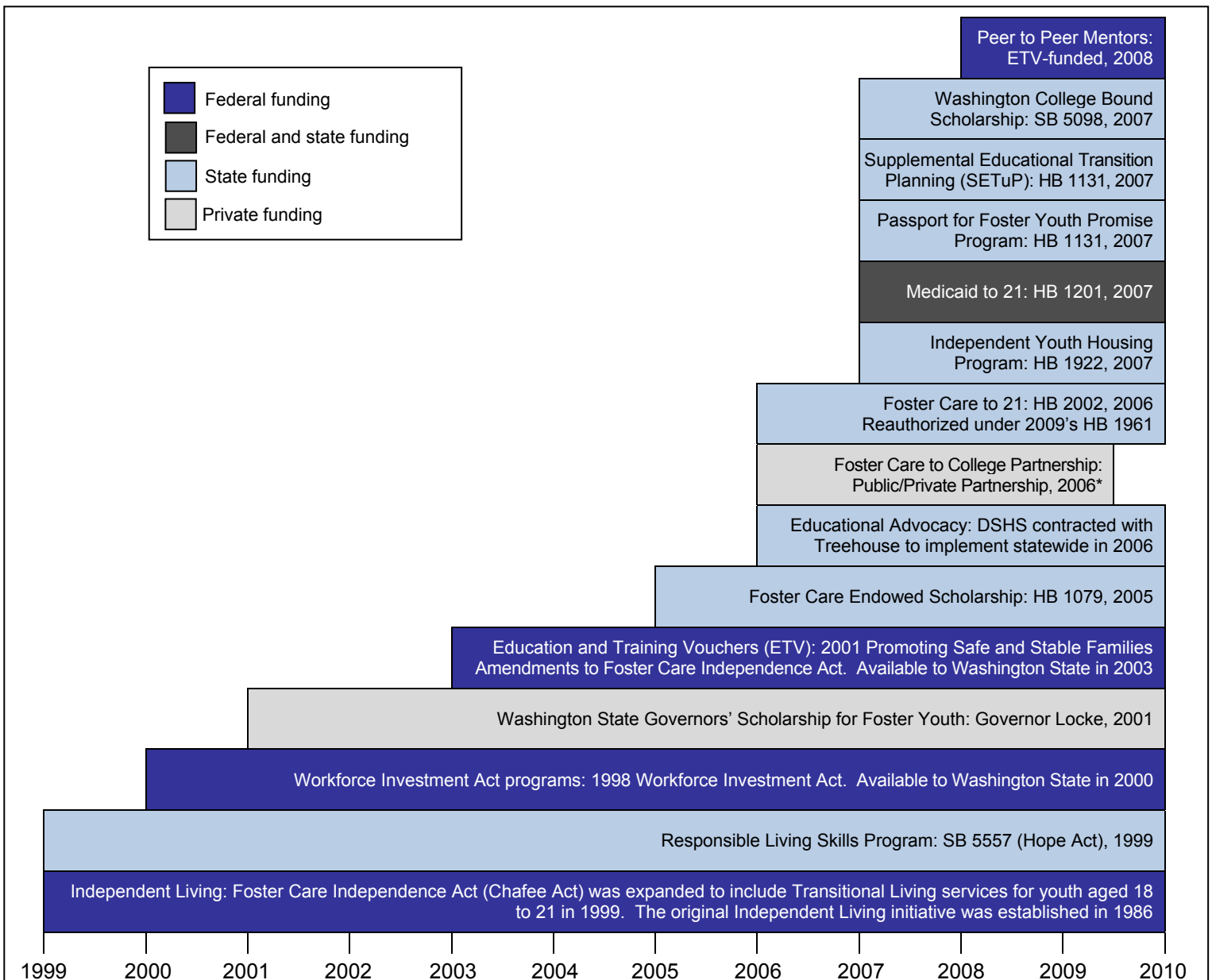This report covers the following topics: page

This report summarizes the services available to foster youth transitioning to independence in Washington State, discusses federal and state policy developments that could impact these services, reviews research evidence, and examines options for improving program efficiencies.

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[1] J. Matsudaira (2008). The price of independence: The economics of early adulthood. In S. Danziger & C. Rouse (Eds.), *Journal of Economic Literature, 46*(4), 1022.
[2] R. Schoeni & K. Ross (2005). Material assistance received from families during the transition to adulthood. In R. Settersten, F. Furstenberg, Jr., & R. Rumbaut (Eds.), *On the frontier of adulthood: Theory, research, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
[3] ESHB 1244, Chapter 564, § 610 (10), Laws of 2009
[4] A total of 551 youth exited state care through emancipation in FY 2008, per January 2009 CAMIS Placement Files; provided by Jim Pritchard, Children's Administration, October 7, 2009.

SECTION I: PROGRAMS AND FUNDING FOR TRANSITIONING FOSTER YOUTH IN WASHINGTON STATE

In the past decade, the number of federal, state, and privately funded programs available to Washington State foster youth who are transitioning into adulthood has grown, from three to 15 programs. Exhibit 1 illustrates this expansion of services. Each bar in the exhibit begins in the year the program was created; the shading indicates the primary funding source.

Two of the programs were established before 2000; another four between 2000 and 2005; and nine have been created since 2006. All but one of these programs is still available to foster youth; the Foster Care to College Partnership has been discontinued.

Exhibit 1
Statewide Programs for Transition-Age Foster Youth:
Year of Enactment and Primary Funding Source

Legend:
- Federal funding
- Federal and state funding
- State funding
- Private funding

Peer to Peer Mentors: ETV-funded, 2008

Washington College Bound Scholarship: SB 5098, 2007

Supplemental Educational Transition Planning (SETuP): HB 1131, 2007

Passport for Foster Youth Promise Program: HB 1131, 2007

Medicaid to 21: HB 1201, 2007

Independent Youth Housing Program: HB 1922, 2007

Foster Care to 21: HB 2002, 2006 Reauthorized under 2009's HB 1961

Foster Care to College Partnership: Public/Private Partnership, 2006*

Educational Advocacy: DSHS contracted with Treehouse to implement statewide in 2006

Foster Care Endowed Scholarship: HB 1079, 2005

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV): 2001 Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments to Foster Care Independence Act. Available to Washington State in 2003

Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth: Governor Locke, 2001

Workforce Investment Act programs: 1998 Workforce Investment Act. Available to Washington State in 2000

Responsible Living Skills Program: SB 5557 (Hope Act), 1999

Independent Living: Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act) was expanded to include Transitional Living services for youth aged 18 to 21 in 1999. The original Independent Living initiative was established in 1986

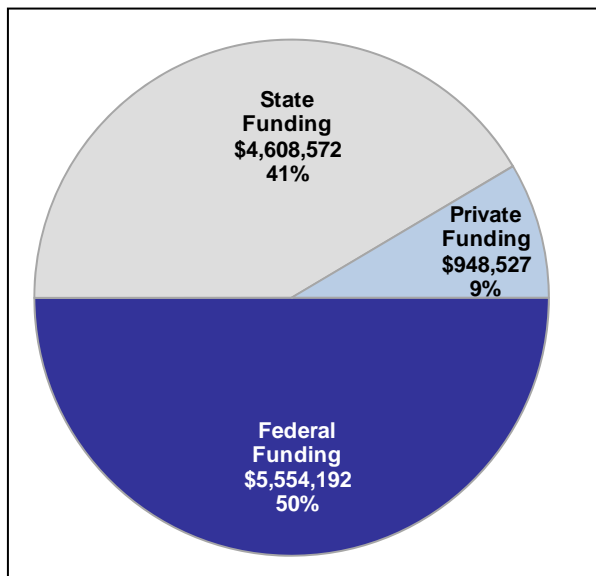1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010

* The Foster Care to College Partnership ended in 2009, though its mentoring component continues (through other state or private funding sources) in the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services' Regions 1 and 3. SETuP contracts also allow for the use of mentors.

Youth Served. In FY 2009, these programs served an estimated 3,365 foster youth transitioning into adulthood.[5] The number of youth eligible for the Independent Living/Transitional Living program provides an approximation of the number of foster youth who might be eligible for one or more of the programs included in this report; this program has the broadest eligibility criteria.[6]

In FY 2009, an estimated 5,907 youth were eligible for Independent Living/Transitional Living.[7] The 3,365 individuals who accessed one or more of the 15 programs represent 57 percent of those eligible for Independent Living/Transitional Living.

Total Funding. In FY 2009, the total investment in foster youth transition programs in Washington was over $11 million, including federal, state, and private funding sources. Federal funding made up 50 percent of this total, state 41 percent, and private 9 percent. The largest single source of dollars was federal funding for independent living skills (over $2.7 million), followed by state-funded housing supports (around $2.2 million).

Exhibit 2
Distribution of Funding Sources

State Funding $4,608,572 41%

Private Funding $948,527 9%

Federal Funding $5,554,192 50%

WSIPP, 2010

Per Youth Expenditures. Exhibit 3 on the next page summarizes the total program funding,[8] including the average expenditure per youth. Expenditures per program range from $207 to $29,724 per youth. As noted, many youth participate in more than one program. Taking this into account, we estimate that the average expenditure per youth (rather than per program) is about $3,300.[9]

The exhibit organizes programs by their primary area of service emphasis, including K–12 educational support, pre-college support, student financial aid,[10] independent living skills, housing and support services, health insurance, and workforce training. We categorize programs into these areas based on the activity within each program that accounts for most of the expenditures. For example, the Responsible Living Skills Program provides residential placement and life skills training, but, because most of the expenditures are for housing youth, we categorized it as a housing support program.

Nine of the 15 programs are education-related, with the goals of helping youth stay in high school and attend college. These programs make up approximately 30 percent of the total funding.

The remaining 70 percent of total funding is spread among the six programs under independent living skills, housing, health insurance, and workforce training.

The specific programs listed in Exhibit 3 are described in detail starting on page 6.

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[5] Appendix B shows the calculations for these estimates of youth served.
[6] In brief, eligible youth include those aged 15 to 21 who had been in foster care for 30 days or more and who are dependent.
[7] This estimate is based on reports from providers and CAMIS/FamLink data. Numbers of foster youth change frequently, so this eligibility figure should be interpreted as a "snapshot."

[8] In this report, we do not include programs limited to specific geographic areas, or scholarships exclusive to individual postsecondary institutions.
[9] The average expenditure on youth per program is approximately $2,080, a figure which does not account for youth participating in multiple programs.
[10] In this report, "student financial aid" includes financial assistance for college, vocational training, and Running Start (federal dollars provided to foster youth in Running Start), and excludes federal Pell grant, State Need Grant, and other grant and scholarship dollars that are not explicitly targeted to foster youth.

Exhibit 3
Statewide Foster Youth Transition Programs:
Expenditures, Youth Served, and Average Dollars Per Youth, FY 2009

Program Name	Funding Source	Expenditures	Youth Served	Avg. Dollars Per Youth
K-12 Educational Support				
Educational Advocacy [a]	State	$207,980	444	$468
Pre-college Support				
Peer to Peer Mentors	Federal	$66,880	232	$284
Supplemental Educational Transition Planning	State	$430,000	359	$1,198
Foster Care to College Partnership—Mentors [b]	Private	$440,000	245	$1,796
Foster Care to College Partnership—Make It Happen! [c]	Private	$130,000	126	$1,032
Foster Care to College Partnership—Seminars [d]	Private	$48,000	232	$207
Total pre-college support		$1,114,880	1,194	$934
Student Financial Aid				
Education and Training Vouchers	Federal	$847,453	283	$2,995
Passport for Foster Youth Promise	State	$886,000	157	$5,643
Washington College Bound Scholarship [e]	State	$0 [e]	0 [e]	NA [e]
Foster Care Endowed Scholarship [e]	State & Private	$0 [e]	0 [e]	NA [e]
Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth	Private	$330,527	98	$3,373
Total student financial aid		$2,063,980	538	$3,836
Independent Living Skills				
Independent Living/Transitional Living Services [f]	Federal	$2,714,388	2,201	$1,233
Housing Supports				
Responsible Living Skills Program [g]	State	$951,162	32	$29,724
Foster Care to 21 [h]	State	$742,500	99	$7,500
Independent Youth Housing Program	State	$512,381	63	$8,133
Total housing supports		$2,206,043	194	$11,371
Health Insurance				
Medicaid to 21 Program	State & Federal	$2,196,373	645	$3,405
Workforce Training				
Workforce Investment Act	Federal	$607,647	126	$4,823
Total dollars, unduplicated count and amount [i]		$11,111,291	3,365 [i]	$3,302 [i]

Note: For a detailed description of sources for expenditures and youth served figures, see Appendix C.

[a] Expenditures and youth served are calculated for high school-age or older youth.

[b] August 2008–July 2009

[c] Calendar year 2009

[d] Calendar year 2008

[e] Did not pay awards in FY 2009.

[f] October 2008–September 2009

[g] Youth served figure reflects the number of contracted beds.

[h] As of November 30, 2009

[i] Summing the youth program participation counts equals 5,342, which provides an average expenditure per youth per program of $2,080. Many youth participated in multiple programs; to minimize counting a youth more than once, we used available information about how many youth participated in other programs at one point in time. The 3,365 figure is an estimate of the number of *individuals* served, and the $3,302 figure estimates the average expenditure on youth across programs. These unduplicated estimates more accurately reflect the average expenditure per participating youth in total. See Appendix B for more detail.

Funding by Area of Service Emphasis. Exhibit 4 displays the distribution of total funding by area of primary service emphasis. In 2008–09, the independent living skills program accounted for nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of total funding for transitioning foster youth in Washington State. Programs that provide housing and support services made up one-fifth of total funding, and health insurance, another fifth. Nineteen percent of the total funding was provided as student financial aid for postsecondary education and training, and 10 percent was for pre-college support services. Five percent of total funding was provided for workforce training, and 2 percent was for K–12 educational support.

To examine the state-funded portion of programs, Exhibit 5 displays the distribution by area of primary emphasis.

Exhibit 4
Total Dollars for Foster Youth Transition Services in 2008–09, by Area of Primary Emphasis
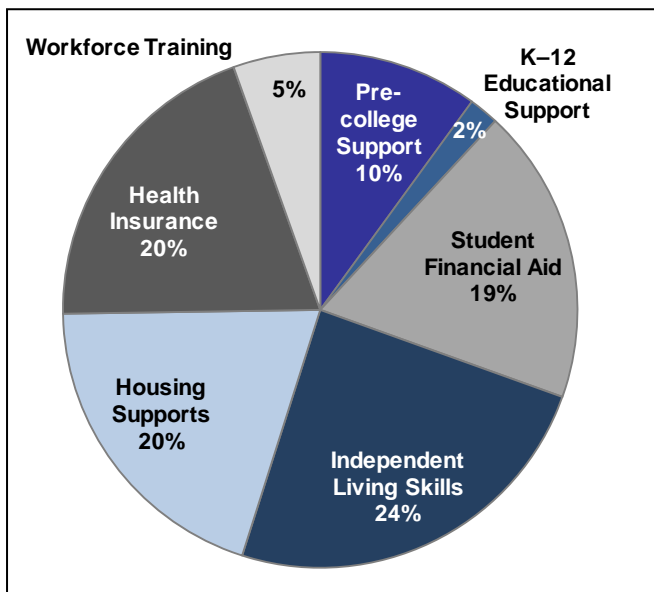
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State Funding by Area of Service Emphasis.
State funding accounted for 41 percent of total funding for foster youth transition programs in FY 2009. Housing supports were the largest category of this state investment, accounting for 48 percent of the state-funded programs. The remaining state funding was for health insurance (state-funded Medicaid, 19 percent), student financial aid (19 percent), and pre-college support services and K–12 educational support (9 and 5 percent, respectively).

Exhibit 5
State Dollars for Foster Youth Transition Services in 2008–09, by Area of Primary Emphasis

WSIPP, 2010

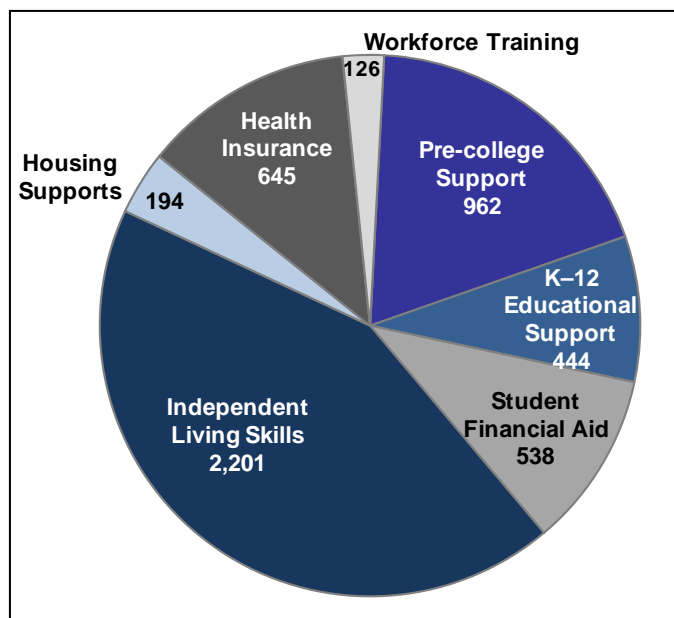|	State Total
K–12 Educational Support	$207,980
Pre-college Support	$430,000
Student Financial Aid	$886,000
Housing Supports	$2,206,043
Health Insurance	$878,549
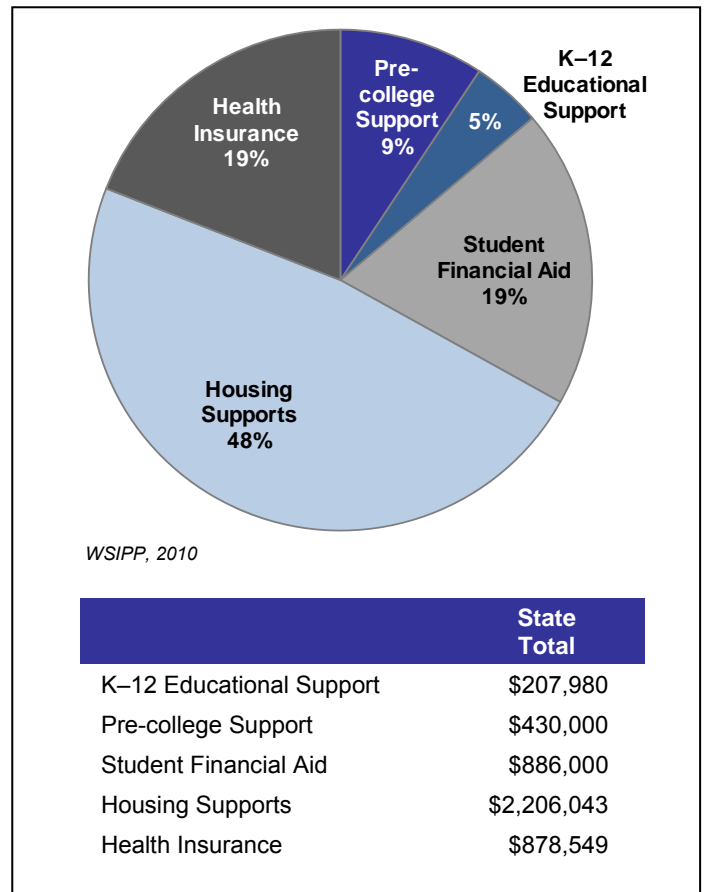
Youth Participation by Area of Service Emphasis.
Exhibit 6 displays the number of youth who access services in each topic area. More than twice as many youth (2,201) received independent living services as any other service. Youth accessed the next three categories of services—pre-college support (962), health insurance (645), and student financial aid (538)—about as often (2,145) as they did independent living services. These figures do not account for youth participating in multiple programs or receiving services in multiple areas.

K–12 educational support was received by 444 youth, housing supports by 194, and workforce training by 126. Nearly half (48 percent) of state funding for foster youth transition programs went toward providing housing supports for these 194 individuals. It is unlikely that youth would participate in more than one housing program in a given year.[11]

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[11] The Responsible Living Skills Program is for youth aged 14 to 18; Foster Care to 21 and Independent Youth Housing are for youth 18 and older (and participation is mutually exclusive).

Workforce Training 126
Health Insurance 645
Housing Supports 194
Pre-college Support 962
K–12 Educational Support 444
Independent Living Skills 2,201
Student Financial Aid 538

WSIPP, 2010

PROGRAM DETAILS

This section provides details on the programs available to transition-age foster youth in Washington, organized by primary area of service emphasis:

- K–12 educational support
- Pre-college support
- Student financial aid
- Independent living skills
- Housing and support services
- Health insurance
- Workforce training

K–12 Educational Support

Educational Advocacy Program. The state legislature has funded educational advocates for foster youth since 2006.[12] The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) contracts with the Seattle-based nonprofit Treehouse, which employs advocate coordinators in all six DSHS regions. The Educational Advocacy program currently employs about 20 coordinators statewide (Exhibit 7 provides their locations).

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[12] ESSB 6090, § 202 (7), Chapter 518, Laws of 2005

Exhibit 7
Locations of Educational Advocacy Coordinators

Region 1	Region 4
Spokane	East King
Spokane	Seattle
Wenatchee	Seattle/Highline
	South King
Region 2	South King
Richland	
Sunnyside	**Region 5**
Toppenish/Yakima	East Pierce
	West Pierce
Region 3	Kitsap Peninsula
Bellingham	
Everett	**Region 6**
Mt. Vernon	Tumwater
	Vancouver

Children's Administration (CA) social workers refer foster youth to the program when education concerns are identified and cannot be resolved.[13] Coordinators' interventions involve one or more of the following:

- mediating disciplinary or enrollment issues that would force students to miss school,
- expediting access to special education and support services, and
- working to prevent youth from changing schools, when possible.

Coordinators also work with high school youth who need to retrieve credits to finish high school.

The Educational Advocacy program served 1,386 foster students across all grade levels in FY 2009. This number is a decline from the previous year, when the program served 2,574 youth. Program staff attributed the decline to a more narrow definition of youth served—revised for improved tracking of intervention results—as well as a more challenging caseload.[14] In FY 2009, cases remained open longer than in past years and the waitlist was longer, with an average of 37 youth on the waitlist; each waited

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[13] DSHS Children's Administration (n.d.). *Practices and procedures guide*, Chapter 4. Olympia: Author. Retrieved from http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/mnl_pnpg/chapter4_4300.asp. Workers who prepare the Child Health and Education Track (CHET) documents may also refer youth.
[14] Program data for 2008–09 are from: Treehouse (2009). *Treehouse educational advocacy program year-end report 2008–2009.* Seattle: Author.

approximately 36 days.[15] The majority of youth (68 percent) received advocacy services lasting six months or longer in FY 2009.

In 2008–09, youth served were in the grade levels shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8
Grade Levels of Youth Served

Grade Level	Percentage
Pre–K	5%
Elementary school	36%
Middle school	25%
High school	30%
GED/postsecondary	2%
Unknown	2%

Education coordinators evaluate a youth's needs and circumstances at intake and assign each case one of three service levels:

- *Direct Advocacy* (22 percent of youth served in 2008–09): intensive intervention on student's behalf to find ways to keep youth connected to school through solutions to disciplinary problems, resolving credit deficiencies, and connecting youth to appropriate services.

- *Consultation Advocacy* (50 percent of youth served in 2008–09): working with social workers and caregivers to advocate with the school on the youth's behalf. These consultations may involve informing the parties about how state and federal law might apply in the youth's situation.

- *Information and Referral* (28 percent of youth served in 2008–09): youth-specific information and strategies provided for caregivers and social workers to oversee their advocacy steps.[16]

The program has established the following outcome objectives:

- Youth will have an increased likelihood of accessing improved school-based services and supports for which they qualify,

- Youth will experience enrollment continuity and stability,

- Youth will experience a decrease in inappropriate use of suspensions and expulsions, and

- Youth will advance to the next grade and will have the appropriate credits to be on track for high school graduation.[17]

The following outcomes for 2008–09 were self-reported by the program:

- 76 percent of students received improvements and refinements to their Special Education or 504 plans;

- 30 percent maintained enrollment in their same school after moving and, of those who transferred, 63 percent were able to enroll in their new school, missing no more than three days from school between transfers;

- 56 percent of disciplinary actions were reduced in severity (i.e., number of suspended days decreased, or school expulsion reduced to a suspension); and

- 72 percent of youth with the goal of retrieving high school credits retrieved them (37 percent), or credit retrieval was in process (35 percent).

The Educational Advocacy program's FY 2009 expenditures were nearly $650,000.[18] In FY 2009, the program served 444 students who were high school-aged or older (32 percent of all youth served). We calculate the program's expenditures for this age group were approximately $208,000, representing an average expenditure of $470 per youth.

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[15] The program provided information on the highest number of youth on the waitlist within each month, over 12 months. We took the 12 months of data and calculated an average. See Treehouse, 2009, p. 5.

[16] The Educational Advocacy program includes youth-specific information and referral cases only in its count of total youth served. The program reported an additional 634 "general knowledge" information and referral cases, which are not included in the 1,386 youth served for FY 2009.

[17] Outcome objectives and results reported in Treehouse, 2009, pp. 7–15.

[18] The Educational Advocacy program's FY 2010 budget is $994,543; the legislature appropriated additional funds for the program in the 2009–11 biennial budget. ESHB 1244 § 202(14), Chapter 564, Laws of 2009.

Pre-College Support

Pre-college supports include:

- Peer to Peer Mentoring
- Supplemental Educational Transition Planning (SETuP)
- Foster Care to College Partnership

Peer to Peer Mentor Program. Peer to Peer Mentoring has been federally funded through the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program since 2008.[19] The program has been available in each of the six DSHS regions since 2008. Each regional provider employs up to two part-time foster care alumni mentors. The mentors perform outreach in their regions to encourage foster youth (primarily 17- to 21-year-olds) to plan for postsecondary education or training.

Peer mentors help youth apply for student financial assistance and state transition programs, such as the ETV program, Independent Living/Transitional Living, and college support services.

Peer mentors must be at least 18, have been in postsecondary education, and receive annual training.

Since the program began, peer mentors have worked with 232 youth. Nearly $67,000 in federal dollars was allocated for peer mentors during the 2008–09 academic year; this amount represents approximately $290 per youth.

Supplemental Educational Transition Planning. The state Supplemental Educational Transition Planning program (SETuP) was established in 2007 as part of the Passport for Foster Youth Promise program. SETuP provides high school-age foster youth with information and support regarding postsecondary opportunities.

CA contracts with six providers statewide to help youth access sources of financial aid, learn how and when to apply to college or training programs, and take courses and pre-college tests consistent with the youth's educational transition plan.[20]

Youth are eligible for SETuP services if they are 14 to 18 years old, enrolled in high school or a GED program, and currently in foster care in Washington State.[21]

During the first year of the program (FY 2008), DSHS contracted with providers in two regions—Region 3 and Region 4. CA received additional dollars in the 2008 supplemental budget to expand SETuP to all six regions.[22] In the first full year of the program (FY 2009), SETuP provider staff served 359 youth.

Program providers report that 90 percent of these youth advanced to the next grade level, graduated from high school, or completed their GED program.[23] Ninety-two percent of 18-year-old students completed financial aid applications,[24] and all 359 youth developed an educational transition plan in FY 2009.[25]

CA requires SETuP providers to offer an array of services,[26] including (but not limited to):

- informing youth about sources of financial aid, characteristics of postsecondary institutions, and logistical considerations;
- providing assistance in completing financial aid and scholarship applications; and
- researching academic and vocational program requirements related to the youth's career goals.

The program's FY 2009 expenditures, including administrative costs, were $430,000. This represents approximately $1,200 per youth.

Foster Care to College Partnership. In 2006, the Foster Care to College Partnership[27] (FCTCP) was launched in Washington State by several nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies. The

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[19] See page 10 for more information about Education and Training Vouchers.

[20] The six current SETuP providers are also contractors for the Independent Living/Transitional Living program, discussed later in this report.

[21] Youth from tribal out-of-home care are not eligible for the program.

[22] ESHB 2687, Ch. 329, § 202 (18), Laws of 2008

[23] DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *SETuP end of fy 2009 program report: All regions*. Olympia: Author. Provided by SETuP program manager Jim Pritchard, September 9, 2009.

[24] Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) (2009). *Passport to College Promise scholarship program: December 2009*. Olympia: Author.

[25] Eight students had educational plans in place before they enrolled in SETuP, and 62 youth refused services and were not counted in the number served, per personal communication with Jim Pritchard, SETuP program manager, September 9, 2009.

[26] SETuP providers may also include mentors among their services.

[27] For more information on the partnership, see M. Burley (2009). *Foster care to college partnership: Evaluation of education outcomes for foster youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-12-3901.

private funding for this three-year pilot program ended in July 2009,[28] though some components of FCTCP (e.g., mentoring and training materials) remain in practice.[29]

Six agencies oversaw implementation of FCTCP activities:

- DSHS Children's Administration
- Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Casey Family Programs
- College Success Foundation
- Treehouse

The partnership funded three major initiatives that directly served foster youth:

- Foster Care to College Mentoring
- Make It Happen!—the residential college preparation program
- College preparation informational seminars

Foster Care to College Mentors. The Foster Care to College (FCTC) Mentoring program provided mentor matches and educational services for current or former foster youth between ages 14 and 21. The program's goal was to encourage youth to enroll and complete college or postsecondary training programs. FCTC Mentoring was based on Treehouse's Coaching to College program, in operation since 2001. Since Coaching to College was already serving King County (Region 4), CA contracted with providers in the other five regions beginning October 2006.[30]

Social workers and contracted providers referred youth to the program, and also recruited local adult mentors. Between 2007 and 2009, about 450 foster youth were matched with a volunteer mentor.

In 2008–09, the Mentoring program reported 76 percent of its 12th graders graduated from high school,[31] and mentors reported 90 percent of those who graduated enrolled in postsecondary programs. FCTC Mentoring was actively serving 245 youth almost statewide by the end of the program (July 2009).

In 2008–09, foundation funding totaled $440,000, which represents nearly $1,800 per youth.

Make It Happen! The College Success Foundation (CSF; formerly the Washington Education Foundation) created and ran Make It Happen!, a four-day residential college preparation program held on a college campus each summer for foster students in grades 10–12. Make It Happen! conducted activities and informational sessions to educate youth about Washington's higher education system, sources of financial aid, career planning, and work study opportunities.

In 2009, 126 foster youth attended the summer program.[32] An estimated $130,000 was spent on Make It Happen! in 2009, including costs related to planning, hosting, and transportation. Dollars per youth in 2009 averaged $1,032.

College Preparation Informational Seminars. Between 2006 and 2008, CA contracted with one provider of foster youth services in each of the six regions to plan and hold college preparation seminars around the state. The seminars were based on the GEAR UP curriculum, a federal program aimed at helping low-income students graduate from high school and attend college. Seminars were presented in different formats to middle school (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12) foster students and their caregivers.

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[28] FCTCP activities were funded by grants from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Stuart Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and The Norcliffe Foundation.

[29] In addition to the college information seminars, education training "summits" and direct mail campaigns were held over the grant's three years. In 2009, CA developed for caregivers of foster youth a DVD presenting educational topics the various training efforts had covered (e.g., educational advocacy, postsecondary preparation). The website developed for this effort, www.independence.wa.gov, remains active and contains links to all the statewide programs for youth transitioning from foster care, as well as job preparation and money management tools. CA currently maintains the independence.wa.gov website through federal funding for Independent Living/Transitional Living and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) programs; per personal communication with Juliette Knight, ETV program manager, December 11, 2009.

[30] For additional program background, implementation challenges, and numbers and descriptions of mentees matched with mentors though early 2008, see L. Schrager

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(2008). *Foster care to college mentoring program*: *Preliminary report.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 08-07-3903.

[31] Includes youth self-reports of high school graduation. A recent Institute evaluation of the program found that 48 percent of FCTC mentored youth graduated from high school on-time; see M. Burley (2009). *Foster care to college partnership: Evaluation of education outcomes for foster youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-12-3901.

[32] Funding through FCTCP ended with the summer 2009 Make It Happen! program. CSF is exploring program and funding options to hold future events; personal communication with CSF's Alexia Everett, December 14, 2009.

A total of 232 foster youth attended these seminars in 2008; grant dollars for the year totaled $48,000 (or $207 per youth).[33]

Student Financial Aid

We describe the following student financial aid programs for foster youth in Washington State:

- Education and Training Vouchers
- Passport for Foster Youth Promise scholarship
- Washington College Bound Scholarship
- Foster Care Endowed Scholarship
- Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth

Education and Training Vouchers. In 2001, the Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act) was amended to create the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program. In 2003, $42 million in federal dollars was allocated to states to administer ETV awards for foster youth; a 20 percent state match is required.[34]

ETVs are awarded after all other sources of federal and state financial assistance have been exhausted. The vouchers can be used to pay for tuition, books, housing, and living expenses. According to federal guidelines, dollars awarded cannot exceed a student's calculated cost of attendance, and the state administering agency "shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal and Federally supported programs."[35]

Foster youth aged 16 to 21 may receive up to $5,000 a year for tuition or educational expenses at an approved college, university, or vocational training program.[36] Tribal youth from out-of-home care are eligible to receive ETVs, and vouchers can be used nationwide. Youth may apply for ETVs each year until they turn 21 and are eligible to receive vouchers until age 23 if they received an ETV prior to turning 21.

To continue to receive ETVs, students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA, submit grade transcripts after each term, and reapply each academic year. Washington State's program currently has the capacity to track a youth's enrollment, GPA, and program enrollment status.[37]

Since the 2007–08 academic year, the number of Washington State youth applying to the program has increased from 276 to over 500 in the 2009–10 academic year.[38] Exhibit 9 shows the number of youth who applied for an ETV, the number of ETVs awarded, and the number of ETVs accessed (where payments were actually made) during the past two academic years.

Exhibit 9
Education and Training Vouchers:
Number of Youth Applying, Awarded, and Paid

2007–08	2008–09
276 youth applied for ETVs	**432 youth** applied for ETVs
195 youth were awarded ETVs	**319 youth** were awarded ETVs
163 youth accessed ETVs	**283 youth** accessed ETVs
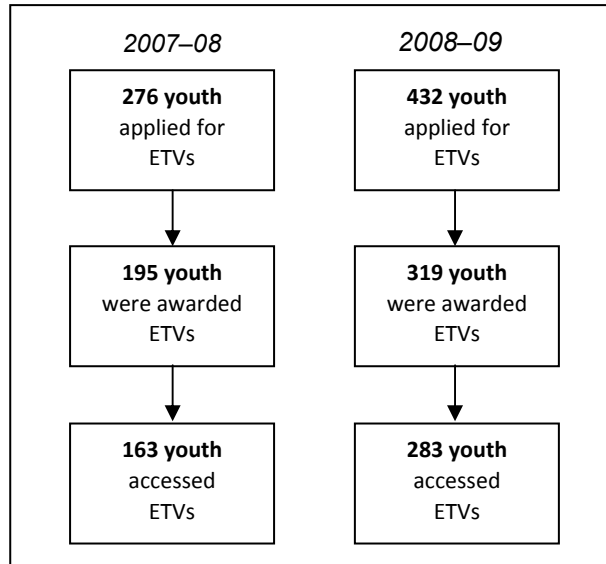
WSIPP, 2010

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[33] DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Year three final report to College Success Foundation: Casey Family Programs—Seminar program final report, January 15, 2009,* provided by CSF's Alexia Everett, November 18, 2009.
[34] The 20 percent Washington State match for ETV comes through the state's subsidy to public institutions.
[35] National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (n.d.). *Education and Training Voucher Program,* retrieved November 24, 2009 from <http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/programs/etv.html>; Section 427 of the Higher Education Act contains "cost of attendance" guidelines.
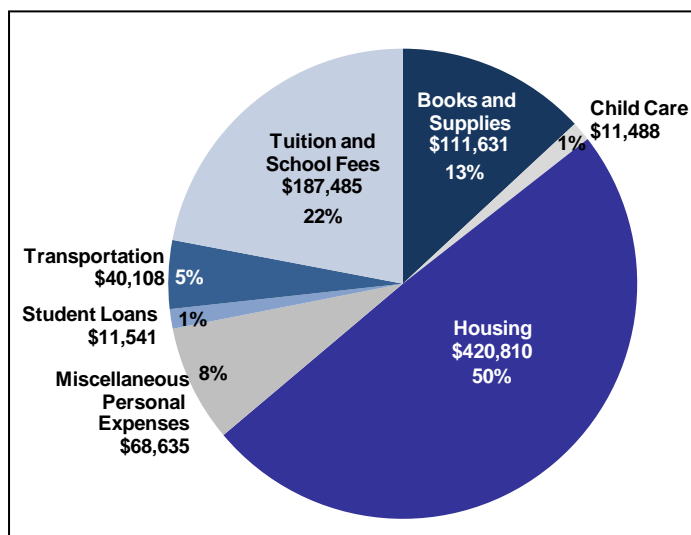
[36] Sections 101 and 102 of the federal Higher Education Act determine the eligibility of institutions—typically two- and four-year colleges and universities that offer students federal financial aid.
[37] The ETV program and the HECB have had preliminary discussions about tracking students who receive both Passport and ETV funds; personal communication with Juliette Knight, ETV program manager, December 10, 2009.
[38] ETV program and award data provided by Juliette Knight, program manager, October 23, 2009.

Housing costs accounted for almost half of the expenditures. Education costs (e.g., tuition, fees, and books) were next at more than a third of student expenditures. Direct expenditures to ETV recipients totaled $851,700[39] and funded the categories of expenses shown in Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10
2008–09 Education and Training Voucher Direct Expenditures to Students

Tuition and School Fees $187,485 22%
Books and Supplies $111,631 13%
Child Care $11,488 1%
Transportation $40,108 5%
Student Loans $11,541 1%
Miscellaneous Personal Expenses $68,635 8%
Housing $420,810 50%

WSIPP, 2010

In Washington State, contracted providers of foster youth services in the six DSHS regions distributed the ETVs initially. DSHS centralized administration of ETVs at CA headquarters in 2006 and the program experienced an under-utilization of federal funds that year; funds have been fully expended in subsequent years.[40]

The total federal allocation for the program in the 2008–09 academic year was $847,453, which represents $2,995 per youth for the 283 who received a voucher (both figures include program administration but exclude funding for Peer to Peer mentors). Actual awards averaged $3,805 for the year.

Passport for Foster Youth Promise. In 2007, the Legislature created the Passport for Foster Youth Promise scholarship.[41] The six-year pilot program:

- includes a financial aid award helping foster youth with the cost of attendance at participating colleges and universities,

- provides pre-college outreach and planning through the SETuP program (see page 8 for description), and

- supports scholarship recipients on campus through targeted student support services.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) administers the program's financial aid award and institutional support grants. Youth are eligible to receive Passport scholarships if they were dependents in state care on their 18th birthday—on or after January 1, 2007—and have spent at least one year in foster care after their 16th birthday. Youth must also have Washington residency, not yet have a bachelor's degree, and not be pursuing a degree in Theology. Passport students must enroll in college or training programs at least half-time by age 21 and, if enrolled by 21, can continue to receive awards through their 26th birthday.[42]

Students enrolling on Passport scholarships can access dollars each year up to the rate of tuition at the most expensive public research university in the state. For the 2008–09 academic year, the maximum award was $6,793.[43]

In 2008, DSHS identified 460 youth eligible for the program's first cohort by verifying that youth who had indicated their foster status on the Passport scholarship application's consent form or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) met the program's foster care status eligibility requirements. Of the 460 identified as eligible, 157 (34 percent) enrolled in the first year of Passport.[44]

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[39] The dollar figure representing direct student expenditures is larger ($851,700) than the total Education and Training Voucher program expenditures ($847,453) because some of the direct expenditures cross two academic years; personal communication with Juliette Knight, program manager, October 26, 2009.
[40] DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Educational and Training Voucher program description.* Olympia: Author. Distributed at Adolescent Workgroup meeting, May 14, 2009.

[41] ESHB 1131, Chapter 314, Laws of 2007. The original name of the program was the Passport to College Promise.
[42] Youth from tribal out-of-home care are not eligible for the Passport program.
[43] HECB, 2009.
[44] An additional three students enrolled at non-eligible institutions and six students attended college out-of-state. These students are not considered Passport participants but maintain their eligibility if they transfer to an eligible school.

Of these 157 students:

- 118 (75 percent) enrolled in community and technical colleges,

- 23 (15 percent) enrolled in four-year public institutions,

- 10 (6 percent) attended four-year private institutions, and

- 6 (4 percent) attended private career colleges.

Among Passport recipients, 75 percent stayed in college for the entire year[45] and 49 percent (77 out of 157) enrolled in their second year of college.[46] Exhibit 11 displays second-year retention rates by type of institution and for all Passport recipients.

Exhibit 11
2008–09 Passport Student Persistence Rates, by Institution Type

Sector	Enrolled in 2008–09	Enrolled in Second Year	Percentage Re-enrolled Second Year
Two-Year	124	49	40%
Four-Year	33	24	73%
Overall	157	77	49%

In 2008–09, Passport youth received:

- 143 scholarships totaling $536,627.

- An average award of $3,866, including additional private and governmental dollars.[47]

Passport youth received other sources of financial aid in 2008–09:

- 75 percent of Passport students were eligible to receive ETVs; of these, over half received ETV funds in 2008–09;[48]

- 22 percent received the Governors' Scholarship;[49]

- 87 percent received the State Need Grant;

- All but one received a federal Pell grant; and

- 10 percent received federal student loans.

College financial aid personnel apply distinct sources of aid in a specific order. When awarded, federal Pell Grants are applied first, followed by Governors' Scholarships, State Need Grants, Passport, and ETVs—in this sequence. In some cases, financial assistance in aid packages covers a student's need in full before scholarships like Passport can be awarded. Fourteen Passport students received zero dollars for their scholarship, since their financial need was fully met by other sources of aid.[50] These students remain eligible for future awards should their financial needs change. (See Exhibit 12 for examples of financial aid award dollars available to youth attending two- and four-year colleges.)

The Passport program did not award as many scholarships as projected in 2008–09. The HECB returned $1.6 million in unused scholarship dollars to the state general fund.[51]

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[45] HECB, 2009.
[46] Final end of 2008–09 re-enrollment data provided by Rachelle Sharpe, HECB, November 30, 2009.
[47] Award figures and other sources of aid awarded in 2008–09 are from HECB, 2009.

[48] The funding of ETVs in financial aid packages comes after the funding of Passport scholarships, so some of these students may have applied for ETVs but not received funds since their financial need was already met. Some experts have suggested that the direct-pay system in ETV poses a challenge to financial aid administrators in determining the amount of aid to provide students, and that its reimbursement structure might discourage some youth from applying.
[49] In contrast, 40 percent of Governors' scholars enrolled in 2008–09 were eligible for Passport.
[50] Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB). (2009, October). Passport to College Pilot Program: Higher Education Coordinating Board, October 27, 2009. In *2009 meeting materials October 27, 2009 complete packet*. http://www.hecb.wa.gov/boardmtgs/documents/ CompletePacketBinder-10-26.pdf. Olympia: Author, p. 45.
[51] Personal communication with Marc Webster, Office of Financial Management, December 18, 2009. The HECB's 2007 fiscal note for ESHB 1131, assuming broader eligibility requirements, projected 958 students would enroll the first year.

Exhibit 12
Financial Aid Dollars Available to Foster Youth Attending Washington State Two- and Four-Year Colleges in 2008–09

	Community/ Technical College	Public Research University
Avg. Tuition/Fees	$2,730	$6,647
Cost of Attendance	$14,745	$18,662
Source of Aid		
Pell Grant	$4,731	$4,731
Federal SEOG*	$500	$334
Gov. Scholarship	$2,000	$3,000
State Need Grant	$1,667	$4,286
Passport	$2,730	$6,645
ETV	$5,000	$5,000
Total Aid Available (not including work study dollars)		
	$16,628	$23,996

* SEOG=Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant.

Notes: Federal SEOG awards and federal and state work study programs are available at most institutions in the state; work study slots are limited to open positions on campus. According to the Higher Education Coordinating Board, federal work study grants average approximately $2,000 per year and state work study grants average between $3,000 and $4,000 per year. Eleven percent of 2008–09 Passport students participated in work study programs and 22 percent received a Governors' Scholarship in 2008–09. Note that Passport and Education and Training Voucher award amounts depend on financial need remaining after other sources of aid are awarded. Availability of aid depends on timely filing of the FAFSA, college enrollment forms, and foster care verification documents.

Sources: Higher Education Coordinating Board for Cost of Attendance, State Need Grant (average award by sector for Passport recipients in 2008–09), Passport (average maximum award by sector in 2008–09), Federal SEOG (average award by sector for all students on Unit Record in 2008–09); and National Association of Student Financial Administrators for Pell Grant (maximum for 2008–09).

Institutions can receive $500 per student each quarter (or $750 per student each semester) by agreeing to create a "viable plan" to support Passport students on campus. Each institution's viable plan must accomplish the following:

- Designate one or more staff to be responsible for supporting Passport students on campus;

- Review Passport student budgets on a case-by-case basis to maximize all financial aid resources;

- Demonstrate institutional commitment through designating an administrator in college leadership to advocate for the Passport student population; and

- Collaborate with social services providers to ensure current and former youth have access to a full range of support services, and promote college preparation messages to current foster youth and their caregivers.

In 2008–09, 48 out of 68 eligible institutions in the state agreed to develop a viable plan to participate in the program.[52] Institutions can use the grant funds for a number of student needs, including (but not limited to) "college and career advising, counseling, tutoring, costs incurred for students while school is not in session, personal expenses, health insurance, and emergency services."[53]

Payments are made to institutions after the student has completed a term and maintained satisfactory academic progress. In the 2008–09 academic year, student support grants to institutions were approximately $192,800, or $1,230 per student.[54] Overall program expenditures, including scholarships, administration, and grants to institutions, represented $5,643 per youth.

The 2009 Legislature directed the HECB to "contract with a college scholarship organization with expertise in managing scholarships for low-income, high-potential students and foster care children and young adults to administer the program."[55] The College Success Foundation (CSF) was selected for the contract.[56] Among the services CSF has performed since the beginning of the 2009–10 academic year include:

- Evaluating reasons that Passport-eligible students did not enroll in postsecondary education;

- Monitoring current Passport students' progress, intervening, and providing emergency financial support when needed; and

- Convening stakeholder meetings to discuss strategies for improving services, including hosting annual Passport conferences on both sides of the state.

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[52] HECB, 2009.
[53] ESHB 1128 § 611 (7), Chapter 522, Laws of 2007
[54] Personal communication with Dawn Cypriano-McAferty, Passport program manager, September 22, 2009.
[55] ESHB 1244 § 202 (14), Chapter 564, Laws of 2009
[56] HECB, 2009.

The contract sets forth the following performance measures:

- Contact at least 50 percent of the Passport-eligible students who did not enroll and refer them to appropriate services;

- Increase the year-to-year retention rate by 10 percent after a baseline is set;

- Provide personal intervention to at least 150 enrolled Passport students; and

- Engage at least half the participating institutions in improving support services related to the viable plan.

At the end of November 2009, 129 new students had enrolled with Passport scholarships for the 2009–10 academic year. Including the 77 returning students, there are currently 206 students in the Passport program.[57]

Washington College Bound Scholarship. The Washington College Bound Scholarship was established in 2007 to help low-income students in Washington prepare and pay for college.[58] The legislation gave the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) authority to design and implement the program. Students are eligible if they qualify for free or reduced-price meals[59] and foster youth qualify regardless of family income.

In 7th or 8th grade, eligible students complete an application that includes a pledge to maintain a 2.0 GPA, graduate from high school, and not be convicted of a felony. The HECB receives and maintains the applications. If the student meets the terms of the pledge and the student's family income does not exceed 65 percent of the state median family income at the time of high school graduation, the student can receive scholarship awards at eligible two- and four-year institutions in Washington.[60] Scholarships also include a book stipend of $500 per term.

The 2007–09 biennial budget appropriated $7.4 million for College Bound,[61] which will award scholarships beginning in 2012. An estimated 5,300 new students are projected to receive scholarships each year, and 13,300 students overall are projected beginning in the fourth year.[62]

The HECB has made no estimates regarding the number of foster students who would receive awards. There were approximately 1,700 foster youth in the target age range of 12 to 13 in 2007. In the first two years of the program, 2007–09, about 1,000 students indicated they were foster youth on their College Bound applications.[63] These students are projected to enroll in college in 2012 and 2013.

Foster Care Endowed Scholarship. The 2005 Washington State Legislature established the Foster Care Endowed Scholarship[64] for current and former foster youth. Scholarships are for youth between the ages of 16 and 23 with financial need who had been in foster care for at least six months since turning 14. The Higher Education Coordinating Board administers this scholarship. Donations to the scholarship are made through the Combined Fund Drive of the Washington State Department of Personnel. This scholarship has yet to pay awards.

Washington State Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth. The privately funded Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth was created in 2001 by Governor Locke to help former foster youth enroll in and complete college with a degree or certificate in the state.[65] The Governor chose the College Success Foundation to manage this privately funded scholarship, with awards ranging from $2,000 to $4,000 per year, per recipient.[66] The funds raised through the annual Governors' Cup Golf Tournament, and other private donations, determine how many scholarships are available in a given year.[67]

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[57] Both the number of new students in Passport's second year and the number of returning students from Passport's first year could increase as awards were still being added, per personal communication with the Board's Rachelle Sharpe, November 30, 2009.
[58] E2SSB 5098, Chapter 405, Laws of 2007
[59] The National School Lunch Program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sets family income levels for free or reduced-price meal eligibility. Per USDA guidelines, foster children automatically qualify.
[60] Maximum award amounts will be tied to tuition at the state's highest price public four-year institution at the time awards are disbursed.

[61] ESHB 1128, Chapter 522, Laws of 2007
[62] 2007 Fiscal Note for E2SSB 5098
[63] Applicant numbers provided by Rachelle Sharpe, HECB, September 16, 2009.
[64] E2SHB 1050, Chapter 215, Laws of 2005
[65] http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/gs/index.htm
[66] Beginning in the 2007–08 high school graduation year, annual award amounts changed from $1,000–$5,000 to $2,000–$4,000 ($2,000 for two-year public colleges, $3,000 for four-year public colleges, and $4,000 for independent colleges). Personal communication with CSF's Steve Thorndill, December 10, 2009.
[67] http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/gs/index.htm

Youth are eligible for the scholarship if they have been in state, tribal, or kinship care in the state of Washington. High school seniors must be on track to graduate from high school during the year they apply, have a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA, and have lived in the state at least three years prior to high school graduation. Applicants must submit two essays, a letter of recommendation, high school transcript, and court documents verifying their foster care status.

Award recipients may attend any eligible two- or four-year college or university in the state. Scholarships can be used through the completion of a bachelor's degree or up to five years, whichever comes first. Scholars have enrolled initially in two-year colleges as often as they have in four-year institutions.[68]

From the scholarship's inception through summer 2009, 215 scholars have received awards of almost $1,660,000. Nearly two-thirds (105) of the 161 students who enrolled the first fall term after being selected as a Governors' Scholar enrolled the subsequent fall term.[69] Exhibit 13 displays second-year retention rates by institution type.

Exhibit 13
Persistence Rates of Governors' Scholars, 2002–2008 Cohorts

Institution Type	Enrolled First Fall Term	Enrolled Second Fall Term	Percentage Retained in Second Year
Two-Year	81	46	57%
Four-Year	80	59	74%
Overall	161	105	65%

To examine the graduation rates of Governors' scholars, we can look at the program's first four cohorts (2002 through 2005), allowing for a time-to-degree minimum of four years. As of 2009, 22 of the 78 students (or 28 percent) who began college between 2002 and 2005 have attained a degree.[70]

In the 2008–09 academic year, the program awarded $326,000 on behalf of 98 actively enrolled Governors' Scholars—about $3,330 per student.[71]

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[68] Governors' Scholarship college enrollment and award data, provided by CSF's Steve Thorndill, October 2, 2009.
[69] Retention and graduation data provided by CSF's Steve Thorndill, November 16, 2009.
[70] Taking just the first two cohorts (2002–2003) of Governors' Scholars provides a six-year graduation rate of 39 percent; per CSF's Steve Thorndill, December 10, 2009.
[71] Governors' Scholarship college enrollment and award data.

Independent Living and Transitional Living

To provide foster youth with the skills necessary to live independently, the federal government created the Title IV-E Independent Living Initiative in 1986.[72] The Initiative provides federal dollars for states to offer life skills classes and training for foster youth aged 16 and older. In 1999, the Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act) doubled grant funding to states for Independent Living programs from $70 million to $140 million.[73] The Act's legislative intent was to help youth:

- transition to self-sufficiency through assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, job training and placement;

- receive training in daily life skills, budgeting, and financial management;

- prepare for and enter postsecondary education; and

- receive personal and emotional support through mentors and relationships with supportive adults.

Federal guidelines require states to provide a 20 percent match to receive Chafee funds. Matching funds in Washington State are currently dedicated to the Responsible Living Skills Program for hard-to-place foster youth (see page 17). States may also use up to 30 percent of their total allocation to provide room and board for youth who age out of care on their 18th birthday.

In Washington State, the Independent Living and Transitional Living program provides a continuum of services to youth aged 15 to 21. Youth are eligible for Independent Living services if they are aged 15 to 17 and:

- are currently a dependent of DSHS and have been for at least 30 days, or

- have been in tribal out-of-home care for at least 30 days, or

- were adopted from state or tribal custody on or after their 16th birthday, or

- are in a kinship guardianship in which the guardianship was established after the youth was in state or tribal care for at least 30 days.[74]

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[72] P.L. 99-272.
[73] P.L. 106-169.
[74] Youth who participated in Independent Living services and then returned to parent's home, but remained a dependent of the state, continue to be eligible. See DSHS Children's Administration, n.d.

Youth are eligible for Transitional Living services if they are aged 18 to 21 and:

- are currently in care and custody of DSHS or tribal out-of-home care; or

- were eligible for Independent Living services[75] (see above); or

- have aged out of foster care or tribal out-of-home care on their 18th birthday.

CA administers the Independent Living and Transitional Living program through contracts with 11 local service providers in all six DSHS regions of the state. A CA staff person is designated in each region as an Independent Living coordinator.

Independent Living is a voluntary program that generally requires a social worker's referral.[76] If the youth and social worker agree that the services of a contracted provider would help the youth, the social worker refers the youth to the program. In the last five years, the number of youth enrolling in Independent Living/Transitional Living has more than doubled. CA estimates that between 28 and 40 percent of eligible youth[77] have enrolled in the program in the last three years (see Exhibit 14).

Exhibit 14
Washington State Independent Living/Transitional Living Enrollment, 2005–2009

Year	Youth Enrolled	Estimated Eligible	Percentage of Est. Eligible Enrolled
2005	874	Not available	—
2006	1,342	Not available	—
2007	1,601	5,812	28%
2008	1,998	5,045	40%
2009	2,201	5,907	37%

Source: DSHS CAMIS/FamLink data and reports from service providers.

Youth may access funds from Independent Living regional coordinators of up to $500 a year to help with school or GED fees, work attire, and transportation costs while receiving Independent Living services. Youth aged 18 and older participating in Transitional Living services may access up to $1,500 annually for the above expenses; also for rent, utilities, furniture, and household goods.[78]

Youth in Independent Living take the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA),[79] the results of which form the basis of the youth's Ansell Casey Life Skills Learning Plan.[80] CA policies require the youth's social worker to help develop this plan and update it annually. Contracted Independent Living providers are also required to work with youth on the ACLSA and Learning Plan, and provide copies of quarterly progress reports to the youth's social worker until the youth's exit from care. Youth can designate three additional adults (e.g., mentors, other service providers) to take the ACLSA on behalf of the youth and receive these reports.

Independent Living contracts require providers to assist caregivers, social workers, and youth in developing the federally mandated transitional plan by age 17 ½. This plan addresses post-care employment, education, housing, health insurance, and sources of future support. A shared planning staffing is held at this time in the youth's life; the goal of this meeting is to finalize the transition plan.[81]

CA has established outcome objectives for contracted providers serving Independent Living/Transitional Living youth. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009, providers tracked outcomes and self-reported the percentage of youth meeting objectives. Many objectives identified in the specific contracts fall into the category of process, rather than outcome, objectives.

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[75] Youth not eligible for Independent Living services at the time of transition from care could still be eligible for Transitional Living services if there was an open case at the time of transition and they had been in out-of-home care for the previous six months prior to transition, or were dependent and returned home within a year of reaching age 18. See DSHS Children's Administration, n.d.

[76] DSHS Children's Administration, n.d. Youth may also self-refer, per personal communication with Rick Butt, Independent Living/Transitional Living program manager, December 1, 2009.

[77] Estimates of eligible youth are based on reports from providers and CAMIS/FamLink data. Numbers of foster youth change frequently, so these estimates should be interpreted as "snapshots."

[78] Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, August 13, 2009. For a review of Transitional Living housing supports, see M. Miller (2009). *Independent and transitional living programs for current and former foster youth.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-04-3901.

[79] http://www.caseylifeskills.org

[80] DSHS Children's Administration, n.d.

[81] DSHS Children's Administration (2008, June 30). *Annual progress and services report fy 2008 – fy 2009, Section B: Program information.* Olympia: Author, p. 3..

For Independent Living services, the objectives in contracts with providers are listed below, followed by the percentage of youth reported by providers as meeting these objectives in FFY 2009.[82]

- 70 percent of youth referred to Independent Living will enroll (70 percent enrolled);

- 70 percent will enroll in school, be employed, or actively participate in a job training program (results not reported consistently);

- 100 percent of those 17 and older will receive information about college or career training (99 percent received information);

- 100 percent of those 17 and older will be encouraged or informed in how to participate in Workforce Investment Act youth programs (or register with the Employment Security One Stop Career Centers) when available (99 percent were informed);

- 80 percent receiving direct services will complete the minimum requirements in their ACLSA Learning Plan (63 percent completed the minimum requirements); and

- 70 percent receiving services will increase their initial raw ACLSA score five to ten percent yearly (74 percent increased their score).

CA has also established contract objectives for Transitional Living service providers. These objectives follow, and include the percentage of youth reported by providers as meeting these objectives in FFY 2009:[83]

- 80 percent of participants will be provided emergency housing, employment, and/or educational assistance (100 percent were provided services);

- 70 percent will maintain housing for one year after exiting care (73 percent maintained housing);

- 70 percent will have verifiable income or employment for at least nine of the 12 months after exiting care (33 percent were employed for at least nine months); and

- 80 percent who attend a postsecondary institution will remain in good academic standing (results not reported consistently; 40 percent of Transitional Living youth were enrolled in postsecondary institutions).

In FFY 2009, the federal allocation for Washington State Independent Living/Transitional Living services was approximately $2,714,000,[84] which averaged $1,230 per youth.[85] Service providers reported 163 youth were on the waitlist for the program (115 for Independent Living services and 48 for Transitional Living services) during FFY 2009.[86]

Housing and Support Services for Foster Youth in Transition

Programs that emphasize housing include:

- Responsible Living Skills Program

- Foster Care to 21

- Independent Youth Housing Program

Responsible Living Skills Program. The Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP) was created in 1999 as one component of the HOPE Act.[87] The state-funded RLSP program serves as the state match for the federal Independent Living program. CA administers the program, which provides residential placements for state-dependent youth aged 16 to 18 who have not been successful in other placements.[88] The program also helps youth develop skills in education,

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[82] Statement of work in contract for providers of Independent Living and Transitional Living services. Figures for Independent Living/Transitional Living outcome measures are preliminary, per personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, November 30, 2009.
[83] Ibid.

[84] Federal allocations to states for independent living services are calculated based on the number of youth in foster care placements according to each state's Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data reports.
[85] This figure overestimates direct service dollars per youth, as 10 percent of the total federal allocation is set aside for contracts with Tribes to provide Independent Living services. The Independent Living program also funds the Passion to Action alumni-of-care youth organization and several foster youth initiatives.
[86] Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, December 14, 2009. The SETuP program served some of youth on the waitlist.
[87] E2SSB 5557, Laws of 1999. For background on the program, see R. Lieb, M. Burley, & D. Fabritius (2002). *Evaluation of the HOPE Act: Services for street youth.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 02-12-3901.
[88] Youth usually have to meet the definition of "street youth." RLSP is open to state-dependent youth as young as 14 under exceptional circumstances.

employment, parenting, money management, health care, and daily living.

CA contracted for 32 beds with six providers in five of the six DSHS regions[89] and had expenditures of $951,162 in FY 2009—an estimated $29,724 per contracted bed. The contracted monthly fee for a youth to stay in an RLSP bed was $3,171 in FY 2009.[90] Providers do not receive payments if beds are unfilled.[91]

Foster Care to 21. Starting in 2006, Washington State provided funding for up to 50 youth per year to stay in a foster care placement until age 21.[92] Under the Foster Care to 21 program, youth can receive continued foster care services if they agree to be voluntarily placed with a caregiver. To participate in the program, youth must enroll in postsecondary education or training, and, once enrolled, maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Youth may enter the program up to six months after emancipating from care.[93] DSHS social workers most commonly refer youth to Foster Care to 21, but referrals also come from Independent Living/ Transitional Living providers, youths' caregivers, and youth themselves. Caregivers for youth in the program are paid the basic foster care rate.

The 2006 legislation permitted CA to serve up to 150 foster youth by the year 2008. Seventy-three youth were in the program by the end of 2008. In 2009, the Legislature clarified the authority of DSHS to continue to provide foster care placement services for youth under voluntary agreements through age 21.[94] State appropriations for the program in the 2009–11 biennium were reduced by $1.55 million.[95]

The new legislation authorizes DSHS to provide foster care placement services for youth aging out of foster care who are engaged in qualified activities consistent with the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions

Act of 2008, subject to available funding. The legislation also permits subsidies for qualified guardians consistent with federal rules for Fostering Connections. (See page 20 for additional information on Fostering Connections.)

As of November 2009, 99 youth were enrolled in Foster Care to 21. Exhibit 15 displays enrollment history. CA estimates that it costs on average $7,500 annually for a youth to participate in the program.[96] The Institute will publish a cost-benefit analysis of Foster Care to 21 in January 2010.[97]

Exhibit 15
Foster Care to 21 Participation Numbers, by Year First Enrolled[98]

	2006	2007	2008	2009*	Total
Youth who enrolled in Foster Care to 21 during year	27	65	73	58	223
Enrolled youth who left Foster Care to 21	24	40	24	27	115

* Through September 18, 2009.
Source: DSHS CAMIS data files as of September 18, 2009

Independent Youth Housing Program. The 2007 Washington State Legislature created the Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) to:

- help youth leaving foster care access a safe and affordable home by providing rent subsidies,

- reduce the incidence of homelessness among these youth, and

- reduce the percentage eligible for state assistance among these youth.[99]

The Department of Commerce (formerly the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, or CTED) administers the program, which provides subsidized housing assistance and case management services to youth who have aged out of state care. Youth are referred to the program by DSHS or by local contracted providers of foster

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[89] In November 2009, CA was seeking a Region 4 provider. Personal communication with Rick Butt, RLSP program manager, November 20, 2009.
[90] Effective October 1, 2009, RLSP's monthly bed fee was $3,098.
[91] Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, October 20, 2009.
[92] E2SHB 2002, Chapter 266, Laws of 2006
[93] DSHS Children's Administration, n.d. If the youth leaves foster care after turning 18, the youth must submit to a background check before being accepted into the program.
[94] E2SHB 1961, Chapter 235, Laws of 2009
[95] Legislative Budget Notes for 2009–11 biennium. http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/index_lbns.asp

[96] Personal communication with Barb Putnam, CA, October 23, 2009.
[97] M. Burley & S. Lee (2010). *Foster Care to 21: Evaluation of program outcomes.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 10-01-3902.
[98] Foster Care to 21 enrollment data provided by Jim Pritchard, Foster Care to 21 program manager, September 18, 2009.
[99] E2SHB 1922, Chapter 316, Laws of 2007

youth services. The Department of Commerce currently has contracts with housing providers in all DSHS regions except Region 3.

Youth are eligible if, on or after September 1, 2006, they were a state dependent at any time during the four-month period prior to turning 18, and their income does not exceed 50 percent of their local area median income. Youth between the ages of 18 and 23 can enroll in the program. Youth must comply with the rules established by the contracting agency, develop or update their independent living plan, and dedicate a portion of their income to rent.[100] Youth are also encouraged to create an individual development account or acquire similar financial literacy skills.

Youth are not eligible for the program if they are in a Foster Care to 21 placement. Youth who leave the program are permitted to re-enroll until age 23.

The program enrolled 32 youth[101] in FY 2008 and served 63 youth in FY 2009, the first full year of the program. There were 33 youth on the waitlist in FY 2009.[102] Including administration, FY 2009 program expenditures were $512,400. This figure represents $8,130 per youth.

The Department of Commerce is in the process of examining suitable outcome targets for the program.[103]

Health Insurance

Medicaid to 21. In 2007, the Washington State Legislature extended Medicaid to youth aging out of care when it established the Medicaid to 21 program.[104] Youth are eligible if they are between the ages of 18 and 21, were in foster care or tribal out-of-home care on or after July 22, 2007, and were in care on their 18th birthday.

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[100] The subsidy is the difference between the youth's share of housing costs, not to exceed 30 percent of the youth's adjusted monthly income, and the approved gross rent for the unit. The youth's share of costs increases with time in the program.
http://www.commerce.wa.gov/site/1062/default.aspx
[101] Department of Commerce (2008). *Report on the independent youth housing program*. Olympia: Author; provided by Cheryl Bayle, IYHP program manager, September 17, 2009.
[102] Personal communication with Cheryl Bayle, program manager, December 21, 2009. It was not known if or how many of these youth subsequently enrolled.
[103] Personal communication with Cheryl Bayle, program manager, December 7, 2009. The Institute will conduct an evaluation of IYHP, to be completed by December 2010.
[104] E2SHB 1201, Chapter 315, Laws of 2007

Before the program was created, former foster youth may have qualified for Medicaid coverage based on income, but this law expedites coverage and access for emancipating youth, whether or not they remain in an eligible foster care placement beyond age 18. Social workers enroll youth in the program before youth exit care by providing a mailing address to the medical benefits team at DSHS's Health and Recovery Services Administration (HRSA), which oversees Medicaid to 21. Youth who move must provide HRSA with a current mailing address to remain in the program.

Program enrollment is tracked through submitted medical claims. In FY 2009, claims of over $2,196,000 were submitted on behalf of 645 youth—about $3,400 per youth.[105] In FY 2008, the federal government reimbursed the state 51.5 percent for Medicaid expenditures. The addition of federal stimulus funding in October 2008 led to a 60 percent federal reimbursement rate on Medicaid expenditures in FY 2009.

Workforce Training

The federal government funds services to youth aged 14 through 21 as part of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).[106] Implemented in 2000, these federal funds are allocated to the state, and then distributed to 12 local areas based on employment levels and demographics. For the period of FY 2009, over $15.5 million was allocated to Washington for youth programs.

According to the Employment Security website, the services offered to youth are broad-ranging and focus on employment opportunities, skill improvement, and career planning.

Washington's eligibility requirements, in addition to age, target youth considered to be most in need of services. WIA Youth Eligibility Policy No. 3638 defines these criteria to include homeless, runaway, or foster children. In FY 2009, 126 foster youth were enrolled in WIA programs.[107] This equates to 4 percent of all youth served during the year. We estimate FY 2009 program expenditures on foster youth were $607,647, which is 4 percent of the total allocation for youth programs. This figure represents $4,823 per foster youth.

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[105] Medicaid claims data provided by HRSA, November 19, 2009.
[106] Workforce Investment Act of 1998, P.L. 105-220
[107] Personal communication with Phil Degon, Employment Security Department, January 13, 2010.

RECENT FEDERAL AND STATE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Recent changes to federal and state laws could substantially impact the delivery of services for current and former foster youth.

Federal Changes

Two recent federal initiatives have made important changes to the policies regarding transitioning youth: Fostering Connections and the National Youth in Transition Database.

Fostering Connections. In 2008, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act authorized states to submit reimbursement under Title IV-E for foster care, adoption, or guardianship assistance for youth through age 21; to remain eligible, a youth must be:

- completing high school or a GED; or
- enrolled in a postsecondary or vocational program; or
- participating in a program or activity designed to promote, or remove barriers to, employment; or
- employed a minimum of 80 hours per month; or
- incapable of engaging in these activities due to a medical condition.[108]

The law goes into effect in October 2010. DSHS is convening a statewide workgroup to plan for implementation of the law.

National Youth in Transition Database. The 1999 Chafee Act required the federal Administration for Children and Families to create a National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), which will track states' independent living services for foster youth and assess each state's performance in foster youth outcomes. Beginning October 1, 2010, states will be required to collect outcome data from 22 mandatory survey questions.[109] All foster youth will be surveyed at age 17, and states have the option to survey a random sample of youth at ages 19 and 21, regardless of whether these youth remain in state care.

States must report to the federal government on the following six outcome areas for surveyed youth:

- financial self-sufficiency
- educational attainment
- positive connections with adults
- homelessness and housing stability
- high-risk behavior (e.g., substance abuse, involvement with the criminal justice system)
- access to health insurance

Carrying out the required data collection, administering the survey, and reporting youth outcomes will require planning, preparation, and expense of federal funds. The Administration for Children and Families did not set aside additional dollars for NYTD implementation, though states can use federal funds to provide incentives for youth to participate.[110]

The American Public Human Services Association recently published an implementation guidebook including an expanded set of questions—called NYTD Plus—further measuring the youth's educational attainment, health care, and relationships with supportive adults.[111] With data on foster youth at ages 17, 19, and 21 on key factors, Washington may be able to identify the areas of greatest need for foster youth and, thus, design services accordingly.

CA is considering including these additional questions to assess in greater detail how current and former Washington State foster youth are faring. This expanded set of questions has the potential to greatly assist state policymakers and program staff in assessing the relative effectiveness of programs and policies for transitioning youth.

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[108] P.L. 110-351, Sec. 201.
[109] NTYD includes 58 required questions—36 are data elements and 22 outcome measures.
http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/nytd/pdf/finalrule.pdf

[110] http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/questions.htm
[111] A. Dworsky & C. Crayton (2009). *National youth in transition database: Instructional guidebook and architectural blueprint.* Washington, DC: American Public Human Services Association, and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago Center for State Foster Care and Adoption Data.

RECENT LEGISLATION FROM OTHER STATES TO AID FOSTER CARE TRANSITION

Several states, along with Washington, have passed legislation in recent years intended to improve the transition of foster youth from foster care. This legislation has focused on many approaches and strategies, including:

- Extending foster care beyond age 18;

- Connecting youth to employment and career opportunities;

- Assisting with access to health care;

- Promoting educational attainment;

- Helping build life skills, including employment-related; and

- Promoting stable permanent connections to caring adults.[112]

In three states, policy attention has also been focused on allowing youth to reenter care. In most states, including Washington, youth must decide at 18 whether to extend their time in care; frequently, this extension is allowed if the youth takes part in approved activities, such as education. Many experts in the child welfare field have noted that 18-year-olds are ill-equipped to make such a profound decision at this age and cannot anticipate the full consequences of a decision to exit care. In particular, if a youth's experience in care has been negative, the youth may have a strong desire to exit the system, without a nuanced understanding of what will be faced when all financial supports end. For these reasons, some states have adopted policies that make the decision to leave care less permanent.

Illinois' recent legislation on this matter allows the court to grant a supplemental petition to reinstate the child's "wardship" status for those youth who left foster care before their 21st birthday (this takes effect in January 2010). Additionally, youth in this category can access services and supports without reentering.[113] In New York, the discharge from care is considered a trial discharge for six months. If the youth experiences a hardship and chooses to return to foster care, the youth's case is removed

from the suspended status and the youth is eligible to have all resources reinstated. The extension can be repeatedly applied.[114]

Another focus of state policy has been addressing the high birthrates of female teenagers in and after foster care. Eight states were chosen by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy to develop action plans for reducing teenage pregnancy among youth in foster care.[115]

WASHINGTON'S 2009 LAW: CHILD WELFARE TRANSFORMATION DESIGN COMMITTEE

The 2009 Legislature passed significant legislation concerning child welfare services, including services for youth transitioning from foster care.[116] By January 2011, DSHS must consolidate and convert its contracts for child welfare services into performance-based contracts; the number of contracts must also be reduced. Performance by the contractors must be linked to the level and timing of reimbursement. The relevant language follows:

> *"Performance-based contracting" means the structuring of all aspects of the procurement of services around the purpose of the work to be performed and the desired results with the contract requirements set forth in clear, specific, and objective terms with measurable outcomes. Contracts shall also include provisions that link the performance of the contractor to the level and timing of reimbursement.*

> *"In accomplishing this transition (to performance-based contracting), the department shall decrease the total number of contracts it uses to purchase service from providers."[117]*

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[112] L. Eyster & S. Looney Oldmixon (2007). *State policies to help youth transition out of foster care* (Issue Brief). Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices.

[113] M. Collins & C. Clay (2009). Influencing policy for youth transitioning from care: Defining problems, crafting solutions, and assessing politics. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*, 743–751.

[114] Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago (2009). *New Illinois law allows foster youth to reenter care; Chapin Hall research informs legislation.* Retrieved from: http://www.chapinhall.org/news/spotlight/new-illinois-law-allows-foster-youth-reenter-care-chapin-hall-research-informs-legisl

[115] http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/fostercare/casey_project.aspx

[116] E2SHB 2106, Chapter 520, Laws of 2009

[117] E2SHB 2106

In addition to the switch to performance-based contracting, two demonstration sites in the state will be established where DSHS will contract for all child welfare services, including case management functions. A Child Welfare Transformation Design Committee was established by the bill, with the committee operating until July 2015.

The Design Committee, along with its various subcommittees, is working on tasks assigned by the legislation. The Children's Administration update on the law's implementation, presented to the committee on December 14, 2009, discussed the agency's plans for the changes to contracted services. The Assistant Secretary indicated that the agency's current plans are to implement a coordinated care model that will rely on "master contracts." Master contract agencies will be responsible for direct services, quality control, fiscal management, and problem solving. One of the four identified areas was services and advocacy for youth to assist their transition to adulthood.[118]

This reform effort offers a significant opportunity for the state to redesign services for foster youth transitioning from care.

The next section reviews the research evidence regarding foster care transition services. We follow with a section discussing options for improving program efficiencies and effectiveness that take account of the opportunity created by this legislation.

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[118] Children's Administration, update on implementation of E2SHB 2106, December 14, 2009.

SECTION II: Research Evidence on Youth Profiles and Services

YOUTH PROFILES

As discussed earlier, numerous laws and programs have emerged to assist foster youth with the transition to adulthood. A recent longitudinal study of foster care youth in the Midwest provides valuable insight into ways to subdivide the population and move away from a "one size fits all" approach. As Keller, Cusick, and Courtney (2007) noted,

> *"On a practical level, it is not realistic to implement a one-size-fits-all approach to child welfare policy and practice. Identifying distinctive subpopulations characterized by particular combinations of strengths and challenges provides a basis for tailoring programs and services to the needs of different types of youth. In addition, knowledge of the relative size of each subpopulation facilitates a strategic allocation of resources."*[119]

While no method of classification will capture all important differences among foster youth, this analysis outlined several distinct groups that could inform the structure and focus of resources for assistance. The researchers identified the following four profiles of youth:

- *Distressed and Disconnected*—nearly half (43 percent) of the sample were more likely to have multiple placements, more episodes of running away and delinquency, higher rates of special education enrollment, and fewer social connections. This group has the highest need for service, but is most likely to resist help. Youth at risk of becoming disconnected can benefit most from early interventions and assistance.

- *Competent and Connected*—about a third of the study group (37 percent) had relatively stable and consistent placements, lower rates of grade retention, and fewer problem behaviors. These youth still require supports, but may be most likely to benefit from assistance with education or training.

- *Struggling but Staying*—a smaller segment of these youth (14 percent) exhibited many challenges during adolescence, including higher grade retention and special education placements. This group, however, reported more consistent and stable placements, and had a higher satisfaction level with the child welfare system. These youth may take longer to achieve a level of self-sufficiency, but may be more likely to engage in independent living services.

- *Hindered and Homebound*—the final category, representing only 5 percent of the sample, was characterized by youth in their first foster care placement, usually with a relative. These youth were likely to have high grade retention, lower test scores, and a higher likelihood of becoming a teenage parent. Although less common, this group will likely rely on extended family and have difficulty making an independent transition to adulthood.

At present, data are not available to precisely determine the proportion of Washington State foster youth in each of these categories. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the distribution in this state is similar. Former foster youth involved with the Mockingbird Program in Seattle responded to questions about their transition experience (see Appendix A). Their responses highlight the range of transition experiences and reinforce the value of individualized planning for the state's foster youth population.

As the state moves forward with implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database (see page 20), the survey responses can be used to inform policies related to transition services.

Foster care youth in Washington have entered and exited care at various points in their life. Appendix E details the age of entry for youth who aged out of care in calendar year 2007. The variation in age of entry requires that interventions aimed at improving life trajectories must be focused on all age groups.

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[119] T.E. Keller, G.R. Cusick, & M.E. Courtney (2007). Approaching the transition to adulthood: Distinctive profiles of adolescents aging out of the child welfare system. *The Social Service Review, 81*(3), 453.

RESEARCH ON SERVICES

The federal government does not mandate the specific services that are provided by Independent Living programs, so they cover a wide range of domains, from home and money management to employment skills training. Rigorous research evidence on these programs is sparse. In 1999, the United States General Accounting Office reviewed existing research literature as well as state data on independent living services, and concluded that the effectiveness of these programs was "unknown."[120]

Evaluating services for youth preparing for the transition out of foster care is difficult for several reasons: small samples, reluctance or inability to assign youth to program or comparison groups, and the difficulty of isolating effective components of multi-faceted programs.

When faced with a body of research evidence in a policy area, the Institute frequently interprets the research as a whole using a statistical tool called "meta-analysis." In the area of independent living services for foster youth, however, there is too much variation in the research for this type of rigorous analysis. First, there are very few comparison group studies that might allow us to draw causal inferences about program effectiveness. Second, the programs that were evaluated were very different from one another, making it unrealistic to draw overall conclusions. As Mark Courtney, from the University of Washington's Partners for Our Children, noted: "Because of the paucity of studies that evaluate the effectiveness of Independent Living programs and the numerous methodological limitations of nearly all that exist, no definitive statement can be made about program effectiveness."[121]

The following material reviews the existing research on Independent Living programs and discusses the study limitations in detail. Two major categories of study design—retrospective and random assignment—are reviewed with descriptions of the relevant studies related to independent living services.

Retrospective Research Designs. These kinds of studies use existing data to look back at groups of foster youth who may or may not have received some kind of independent living services. These designs have several methodological flaws; namely, there is no way to determine why some youth received services and others did not—the factors that determined participation (e.g., social worker referrals, motivation of the youth, geographical location) may in fact be responsible for some of the differences in outcomes. Therefore, these studies may provide some guidance, but findings should not be considered conclusive.

1) One of the most-cited studies in the independent living literature was a national evaluation of the Independent Living Initiatives conducted by Westat.[122] This evaluation collected survey data from 810 youth who had been discharged from foster care several years prior. The study compared outcomes for youth who participated in Independent Living programs with outcomes for youth who had not participated. The evaluation found that youth who participated in Independent Living programs had significantly better outcomes in terms of employment, access to health care, public assistance, high school completion, social network, and life satisfaction.

However, these outcomes depended on how Independent Living programs were defined. For example, when comparing those who had received some kind of skills training with those who had not, there was no significant effect of skills training on any of the outcomes. After breaking down skills training into 12 specific types, researchers found that specific kinds of skills training affected specific outcomes. For example, health skills training impacted access to health care, and employment training impacted receipt of public assistance. The evaluation found that the largest impact on outcomes came from a combination of five specific skill trainings: budgeting, credit, consumer skills, employment skills, and education. Youth who received all five had significantly better outcomes in terms of employment, access to health care, public assistance, and life satisfaction.

Another finding of this study was that youth who had completed high school at the time they left

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[120] US General Accounting Office (1999). *Foster care: Effectiveness of independent living services unknown*. Washington, DC: GAO/HEHS-00-13.
http://www.gao.gov/new.items/he00013.pdf
[121] M.E. Courtney & N. Bost (2002). *Review of literature on the effectiveness of independent living services*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, p. 24.

[122] R. Cook, E. Fleishman, & V. Grimes (1991). *A national evaluation of Title IV-E foster care independent living programs for youth, phase 2 (Final report)*. Rockville, MD: Westat.

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foster care had significantly better life outcomes than those who had not, regardless of their participation in Independent Living programs. In the context of other research with foster youth, this finding lends some support to the notion that educational attainment is a primary driver for positive life outcomes. Alternatively, it could be that the factors which motivate a foster youth to complete his or her secondary education are also those responsible for helping determine life outcomes.

2) A retrospective evaluation of Independent Living that may provide some insight into comprehensive independent living services was the Baltimore County Independent Living Program (ILP) evaluation.[123] This program was offered to foster youth and community youth aged 16 to 21 living apart from their families. Services included increased one-on-one time with social workers, home visits, individual independent living planning (with an assessment), counseling, advocacy, referrals, and life skills instruction and practice. Skills training was conducted in a group setting, which also acted as a support group for the youth. The evaluation found that ILP participants were more likely than non-participants to graduate from high school, have a history of employment at the time of follow-up, and to be living on one's own, self-supporting, and employed at the time of case closure.

The authors acknowledge that the evaluation was "unable to show the relationship between the specific ILP variables and outcomes."[124] In addition, although the program group and the comparison group look similar demographically, the program group was composed of youth who chose to attend the program. These youth may have been more motivated at the outset of the program to achieve better outcomes. Thus, the results of this evaluation may be considered promising, but not conclusive.

Random Assignment Research Designs. The last two evaluations are prospective, random assignment designs, which provide the most reliable findings in this field to date.

In an effort to learn about specific effective services, the federal Administration for Children and Families funded a multi-site evaluation to study four

interventions in three locations and assess their impact on outcomes identified in the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999. Two of the evaluations have been completed: the classroom-based Life Skills Training program[125] and the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation—Tutoring Program,[126] both located in Los Angeles County. Two other evaluations, one of an employment services program in Kern County, California, the other a one-on-one intensive, individualized life skills program in Massachusetts, have not yet been completed.

3) The Life Skills Training (LST) program of the Community College Foundation in Los Angeles provides 30 hours of classroom-based life skills training, staffed by outreach advisers, workshop trainers, and peer counselors (who are former foster youth). The curriculum covers education, employment, daily living skills, interpersonal skills, choices and consequences, survival skills, and social skills. The evaluation failed to detect an impact (positive or negative) on the outcomes associated with a successful transition to adulthood, including graduation from high school, employment at the time of follow-up, college attendance, earnings, net worth, public assistance, homelessness, delinquency, and pregnancy. That is, youth who were randomly assigned to participate in this program had outcomes that were no different from youth who did not participate in the program.

What can be learned from this evaluation? The Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation of the Administration for Children and Families addressed this question in their final evaluation report.[127]

Their conclusions include the following:

a) This research was based on a field experiment where the researchers could not control all conditions. For example, a large proportion (26 percent) of youth randomly assigned to not receive the LST program did in fact participate in one or more LST classes. In addition, it is not possible to assess the individual contribution of components of the program.

[123] M. Scannapieco, J. Schagrin, & T. Scannapieco (1995). Independent living programs: Do they make a difference? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 12*(5), 381–389.
[124] Ibid, p. 387.

[125] M. Courtney & A. Zinn (2008a). *Evaluation of the life skills training program, Los Angeles County, California: Final report*. Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services.
[126] M. Courtney & A. Zinn (2008b). *Evaluation of the early start to emancipation preparation tutoring program, Los Angeles County, California: Final report.* Washington, DC: Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services.
[127] M. Courtney & A. Zinn, 2008a.

b) The evaluation does not justify removing life skills training from the "toolbox" of service providers, nor should the results be dismissed. It does "call into question" whether classroom-based services add much to what foster youth are already receiving from other sources. Youth receive independent living assistance from a variety of sources; 40 percent of those who did not participate in the program received assistance from biological parents, other original family members, teachers, and schools.

c) Finally, "it may be unreasonable to expect that a 10-week, 30-hour classroom-based intervention is going to significantly alter the trajectory of foster youth."[128] The question needs to be asked: from whom should foster youth learn life skills, and what are the best methods for providing such skills?[129]

4) Similarly, the evaluation of the Early Start to Emancipation Preparation (ESTEP)-Tutoring program found no significant impacts on target outcomes, namely performance on standardized educational measures. This program provides foster youth who are one to three grade levels behind in math or reading with a one-on-one undergraduate student tutor as well as access to other independent living services. The tutoring model was based on addressing specific reading and math skill deficits of assessed youth, not helping youth with their classroom tasks. Tutors were expected to form a mentor-like relationship with their students. On average, foster youth assigned to the ESTEP-Tutoring program in this evaluation received 35 hours of tutoring. Youth in the comparison group were just as likely as the ESTEP-Tutoring group to receive some kind of tutoring services; the majority of tutoring in the comparison group came from school-based sources.

The authors included the following conclusions in the final evaluation report:[130]

a) This research was situated in an environment (Los Angeles County) which offered over 40 alternative tutoring programs, many of which foster youth could and did participate in. Most youth (about 60 percent) in both groups (ESTEP-Tutoring and the comparison group) reported accessing some kind of tutoring services, whether home-based or school-based, during the evaluation period.

b) The evaluation does not indicate that tutoring in general is ineffective, but that perhaps addressing specific skill deficits through tutoring may not be effective for one reason or another. For example, youth may not be motivated to engage with tutors on basic skills training that does not directly mirror tasks assigned in the classroom.

c) Finally, "relatively few tutoring relationships evolved into longer-term mentoring relationships."[131] Therefore, the model of giving students a strong adult connection through their tutor was not realized in this instance.

FOSTER YOUTH OUTCOMES: WASHINGTON STATE YOUTH

The inconclusive findings on Independent Living programs' effectiveness may be heavily influenced by their comparatively late start in a youth's life course. One group of researchers in Oregon who conduct extensive research related to youth in foster care recently published a review study[132] that recommends strategies for improving outcomes for foster youth. Notably, none of their recommendations concern programs focused on independent living or transition services. Instead, the researchers advocate a set of evidence-based and promising approaches to increase the likelihood of positive outcomes across the life course (e.g., increased rates of permanent placement, less placement disruption, more persistence in education, less criminal involvement, better health and mental health).

These approaches range from low to high intensity and take the form of improved screening and referrals within the child welfare system, enhanced foster care for children who need additional support, targeted interventions to address specific needs (such as school readiness or behavior problems), or Treatment Foster Care for youth with severe behavioral and emotional problems. In Washington, the logic of these approaches would lead to intervening early in foster youths' lives and emphasizing key skill areas (e.g., education, employment) experienced by older foster youth, rather than waiting until a youth reaches adolescence to try to improve life outcomes.

[128] Ibid, p. 71.
[129] Ibid, p. vi.
[130] M. Courtney & A. Zinn, 2008b.
[131] Ibid, p. vi.
[132] P. Fisher, P. Chamberlain, & L. Leve (2009). Improving the lives of foster children through evidenced-based interventions. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies, 4*(2), 122-127.

The poor educational outcomes are often influenced by factors present prior to entry in foster care, including higher rates of emotional/behavioral disorders, poverty, and neglect. Foster youth also have higher rates of school mobility and are more likely to repeat a grade. About 40 percent of foster youth experience negative outcomes (e.g., homelessness, incarceration, physical victimization, sexual assault) in the 12 to 18 months after exiting foster care.[133] Poor employment outcomes and inability to rely on family members contribute to housing instability among youth exiting foster care.

Despite growing research on the status of foster youth as they transition to adulthood, the knowledge base to guide interventions remains limited. Information is particularly needed in the following areas:

- Only about 10 percent of foster youth from a given age cohort will go on to enroll in two years of college right after high school. New programs in Washington State have been implemented to provide guidance and support to former foster youth in college. More information about the relationship between financial resources and other "wraparound" supports is needed to assess which strategies are effective in improving the college retention of foster youth.

- Among older foster youth, about 20 percent will enroll in college in the year after high school (compared with 40 to 50 percent of all students). More research is needed to determine reasons why foster youth who graduate do not attend college. Beginning in October 2010, survey information from foster youth leaving care will provide more information about reported obstacles of foster youth in pursuing postsecondary training or education (see page 21).

- A large percentage of older foster youth (30 to 40 percent) are eligible for special education services. However, the level and severity of diagnosed learning and

behavioral disorders among foster youth is not as clear. And, we know less about the services and supports that foster youth with such needs may require as they transition to adulthood.

- In a study of foster youth in Washington State, 28 percent of females reported at least one pregnancy prior to age 18 (compared with a rate of 4 percent for all females aged 17 and under).[134] Data from DSHS' database associated with the First Steps program for 2003 confirmed this finding. Females aged 15 to 17 who were in foster care had birth rates twice those of the state population.[135] There is no requirement that Independent Living programs provide pregnancy prevention programming, and little information about which approaches may be most effective at reducing teenage pregnancies among foster youth.

As discussed earlier in the report, Independent Living/Transitional Living and the Educational Advocacy programs have established outcome objectives, and their service providers report outcomes to Children's Administration. Without data to compare reported outcomes with the experiences of youth not receiving services, however, we cannot draw conclusions about these programs' effectiveness.

[133] M.E. Courtney & D.H. Heuring (2005). The transition to adulthood for youth "aging out" of the foster care system. In D.W. Osgood, E.M. Foster, C. Flanagan, & G.R. Ruth (Eds.) (2005). *On your own without a net: The transition to adulthood for vulnerable populations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 43; and C. Brandford (2002). *Foster youth transition to independence study*. Seattle: Office of Children's Administration Research. See: http://www.tndev.net/mbs/docs/reference/Transitioning_Youth/FYTRpt_1.pdf

[134] Office of Children's Administration Research (2004). *Foster youth transition to independence study: Second annual report.* Seattle: Author.
[135] Personal communication with Laurie Cawthon, MD MPH, DSHS, Research and Data Analysis Division.

SECTION III: Options to Improve Program Efficiencies

As required by the legislative direction for this study, we identify options to improve efficiencies:

1) Reallocate funding to help more foster youth graduate from high school

While 40 percent of students in Washington State attend college after high school graduation, fewer than 20 percent of youth in foster care currently enroll in college. In contrast, the majority of youth in foster care at the start of high school will not graduate at the end of four years. A recent report by the Institute found that among students enrolled in a Washington State high school in the 9th grade, the on-time graduation rate was 34 percent for foster youth, compared with 71 percent for non-foster youth.[136]

Currently, state dollars directed to supporting foster youth with the transition to adulthood primarily benefit those youth who may be college bound. According to our estimates, the main program aimed at helping foster youth graduate and stay in school accounts for 5 percent of all state support in this area, while pre-college support and financial aid accounts for 28 percent. Redirecting some of these funds to successful efforts at improving the high school graduation rate among foster youth provides significant benefits to the youth and state.

Without improving the rate of high school completion among foster youth, it will be difficult to significantly increase college enrollment and persistence rates among this population. Obtaining a high school diploma substantially improves the financial picture for youth. According to the 2003 Current Population Survey (US Census Bureau), average annual earnings for non-graduates were $18,800, compared with $27,300 for high school graduates. Individuals with some college, or an associate's degree earned $31,000, on average.

High school dropouts also pose a significant cost to society. According to a recent study, "the average high school dropout will cost taxpayers over $292,000 in lower tax revenues, higher cash and in-kind transfer costs, and imposed incarceration costs relative to an average high school graduate."[137]

More research is needed to understand the relative effectiveness of interventions to help youth stay in school. The Institute recently completed a report which found that foster youth with adult volunteer mentors were significantly more likely to graduate from high school and attend college compared to similar youth.[138] While the analysis presented in this report could not account for all of the differences between mentored and comparison youth, based on measurable factors, mentoring appears to be a promising approach to boost the graduation prospects for foster youth. In addition, research indicates that programs and policies that improve placement stability, reduce grade retention, and provide early assistance with educational and career planning are important steps for improving the educational trajectory of foster youth.[139]

2) Convene a workgroup of financial aid administrators, the College Success Foundation, HECB and CA staff to streamline the process of awarding financial aid to former foster youth

Most foster youth who enroll in college will attend two-year community and technical colleges. Annual tuition and fees for residents in Washington's two-year colleges were approximately $3,000 in 2009. For typical students, the 2009 overall cost of attendance ranged between $16,000 and $18,000.[140]

In 2009–10, eligible college-bound foster youth can receive a maximum $5,350 Pell grant, $5,000 in Education and Training Vouchers, and between $2,700 and $6,700 in State Need Grants. In addition to these awards, foster youth may also receive private scholarships (such as the Governors' Scholarship), or the state Passport for Foster Youth Promise.

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[136] M. Burley (2009). *Graduation and dropout outcomes for children in state care (2005–2008)*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-11-3901.
[137] A. Sum, I. Khatiwada, J. McLaughlin, & S. Palma (2009). *The consequences of dropping out of high school: Joblessness and jailing for high school dropouts and the high cost for taxpayers*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University, Center for Labor Market Studies, p. 15. <http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/The_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School.pdf>
[138] M. Burley (2009). *Foster care to college partnership: Evaluation of education outcomes for foster youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 09-12-3901.
[139] For a review of studies discussing strategies for improving educational outcomes for foster youth, see http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/teleconferences/educational-collaboration.pdf.
[140] www.hecb.wa.gov/keyfacts/documents/KeyFacts-Chapter4.pdf, p. 62.

Individuals interviewed for this study generally believed that the existing award opportunities were adequate to cover the costs of attending college. Two recommendations surfaced regarding the disbursement process:

a) Improve the verification process for financial aid

In most cases, a student's financial aid package is put together by staff in the selected college's financial aid office. The financial aid awards are based on student need, which is determined from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For most students, completing the FAFSA is the first stage in the financial aid process. Following this step, foster students may apply for and receive any of the grants or scholarships discussed previously. Or, if students are identified as foster youth, college officials may help the youth apply for available scholarships and aid.

This process, however, often requires the financial aid administrator to connect with multiple organizations or agencies to verify the foster youth's dependency and eligibility status for each award. While state agencies such as the Children's Administration and the Higher Education Coordinating Board have developed a common application for state-administered foster student aid programs, more can be done to harmonize the various efforts aimed at assisting foster youth.

The following changes were recommended by experts consulted for this study:

- The current online application only includes information needed for the Passport for Foster Youth Promise scholarship and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). State agencies should work in partnership with organizations that offer private scholarships for foster youth (e.g., Governors' scholarships, Treehouse Coaching to College scholarships) to create a single application and eligibility process for youth seeking college assistance.

- Currently, the online application simply reproduces the questions asked on the paper application. A more instructive online tool is needed. An online "wizard" could be developed to help potentially eligible foster

youth move through questions (with skip logic) and identify all assistance for which they qualify.[141] High school counselors, case workers, mentors, and Independent Living staff could also use such a tool to assist youth in planning for college. After completing the application, students, financial aid administrators, and other approved persons should also be able to log into such a website to view the student's application and award status.

b) Develop a system for leveraging federal award dollars to the greatest extent possible

Financial aid administrators follow granting agencies' rules to assemble a student's financial aid package. Some awards, like the federal Pell Grant, are "first-in" awards that form the foundation for the student's total aid. Other awards, like the State Need Grant, are determined after FAFSA awards are set. Some awards must be used for tuition or fees and other awards can be used toward the overall cost of attendance.

Without a closer investigation of individual student award packages, it is difficult to tell if state-funded awards could be disbursed more efficiently. The Higher Education Coordinating Board's 2009 report on the Passport scholarship's first year found that "75 percent [of Passport recipients] were eligible for the federal Educational Training Voucher (ETV), administered through DSHS, and over half received ETV funds."[142] The workgroup should discuss options for developing a system that maximizes federal ETV funds in order to preserve state scholarship dollars. To meet this objective, CA and HECB should consider:

- granting financial aid administrators access to electronic data to verify if students are eligible for Passport and ETV concurrently; and

- providing guidance to college financial aid administrators on allocating Passport and ETV awards.

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[141] In January 2010, the Iowa Student Aid Commission will launch a website which consolidates the application process for six different scholarships and grants for foster youth (See http://iowacollegeaid.gov/). On this website, a "wizard" guides the applicant through a series of questions—using skip logic—and determines the scholarships and grants for which the student qualifies. This online application may serve as a model for replication to streamline the application process in Washington State.
[142] HECB, 2009, p. 8.

3) Consolidate services for transitioning foster youth into the smallest number of performance-based contracts

Section I described the evolution of policies and services for foster youth in Washington State transitioning from care. In the course of the last decade, these services for this population have grown significantly. Because most programs have been added as discrete entities, the services and policies are not streamlined; each program has its own set of policies and requirements. The result is a "landscape" of services that is fragmented and difficult for youth and their caregivers to navigate. Exhibit 16 displays the current service landscape for two groups of youth: those likely to attend college or training programs and those who are not likely to do so.

The graphic illuminates the potential difficulties and confusions created by multiple, single-focus programs. With this many programs, each with their own eligibility rules and protocols, the distribution of services is highly likely to be haphazard. Older foster youth are not assessed systematically to determine which programs are likely to assist in their transition.

Having individual programs for each issue area in a foster youth's life creates a significant hurdle for youth and their caregivers in terms of identifying possible programs, investigating eligibility, and finally, applying and following through. To improve program effectiveness and ease foster youth's access to services, we recommend that the Children's Administration "bundle" services for youth in transition into the smallest possible number of contracts.

This approach has been recommended by a statewide workgroup organized by CA that includes community partners and representatives from the Higher Education Coordinating Board, Department of Commerce, and Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

The workgroup, known as the Adolescent Blueprint and Program Integration workgroup, decided unanimously at a November 2009 meeting to recommend a single, integrated program of transition services with one point-person to guide youth.[143]

Exhibit 16
**Transition-Age Foster Youth:
Potential Service Providers**

Youth Likely to Attend College

Youth Not Likely to Attend College
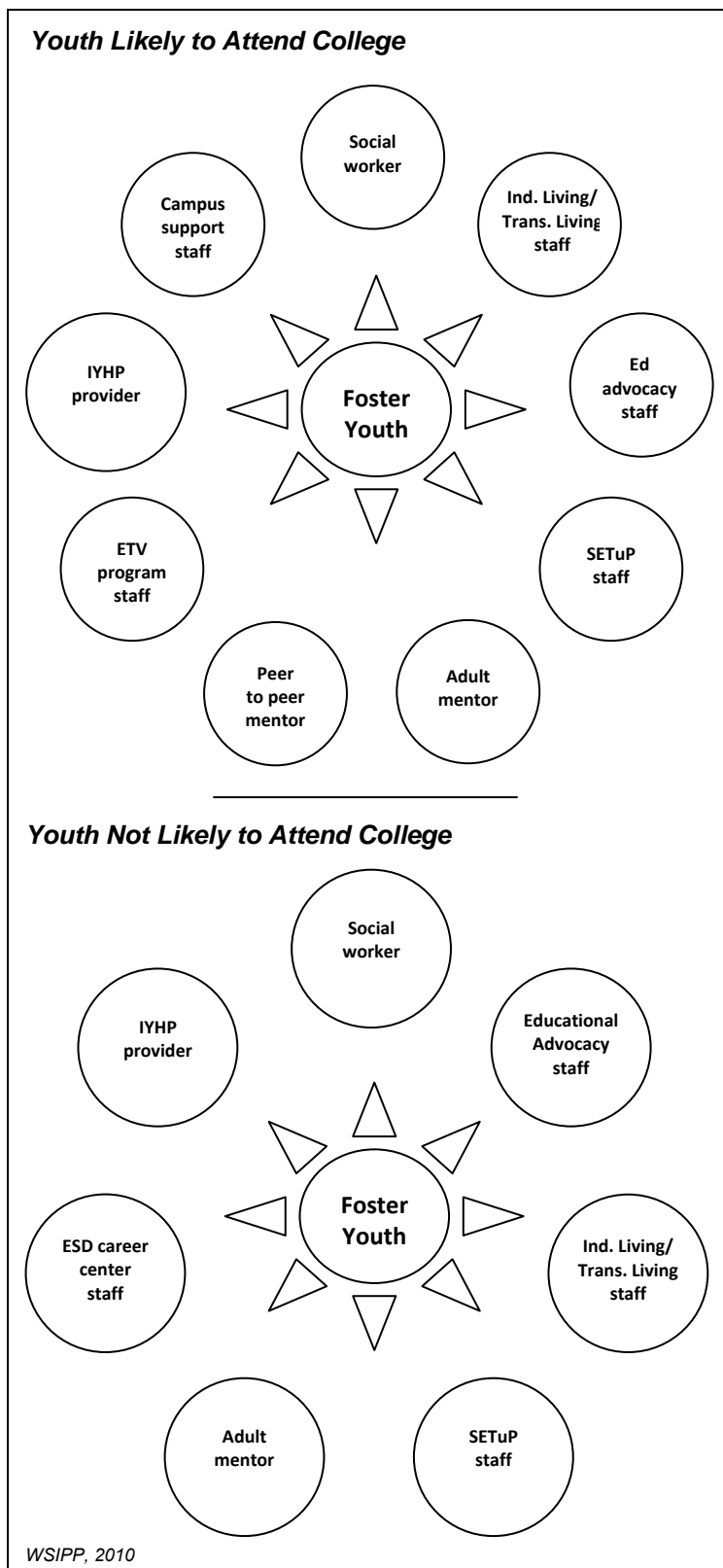
WSIPP, 2010

Notes: ESD=Employment Security Department, ETV=Education and Training Voucher, IYHP=Independent Youth Housing Program, and SETuP=Supplemental Educational Transition Planning. Service providers may not be available or relevant for all youth transitioning from foster care.

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[143] Minutes from the November 16, 2009 Adolescent Blueprint and Program Integration Workgroup meeting.

Several strong advantages to program integration and contract consolidation were identified in January 2009 recommendations to the Washington State House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee (see Appendix D for the full proposal):[144]

- decrease the number of individual contracts and accompanying administrative costs in each region;

- allow that funding be allocated for direct service to youth in our foster care system, program data tracking, evaluation, and staff development;

- eliminate overlaps and gaps in services that currently exist in the multiple programs and contracts;

- allow for stronger accountability with a single program/contract to ensure that critical goals are met by each foster youth and foster alumni;

- move the program/contract toward a performance-based model; and

- allow youth in our foster care system and alumni to complete a single, comprehensive intake process, in order to be respectful of having to divulge information about their history and current circumstances and to decrease the number of times they have to establish rapport with numerous service agencies.

In constructing the performance agreements for foster youth in transition, there are strong advantages to mirroring the youth outcomes contained in the National Youth in Transition Database. These outcome measures are as follows:

- Financial self-sufficiency

- Experience with homelessness

- Educational attainment

- Positive connections with adults

- High-risk behavior

- Access to health insurance

By using the same outcome measures, the state will be able to make connections between contractors' performance and youth outcomes. Additionally, the state can compare youth outcomes with those of youth in other states. To the extent other states show significant improvements in outcomes, beyond those achieved in Washington, state staff can inquire about program strategies. One of the consultants to the Child Welfare Transformation Design committee, Fred Wulczyn, has particular expertise in constructing performance measures in child welfare. We recommend that the Children's Administration consult with Mr. Wulczyn in determining performance measures for contracts.

4) Move the Independent Youth Housing Program from the Department of Commerce to Children's Administration

Having this program outside the Children's Administration restricts the option of consolidating the program into a master contract for youth transition services. The Department of Commerce contracts for the program's services, and it will be more efficient for this program to be bundled with similar services for older foster care youth. The Governor has recommended the transfer of this program to DSHS.[145]

5) Begin transitional planning at age 16

At present, the shared planning meeting for youth transitioning from foster care occurs when the youth is 17 ½. This time period meshes with the federal requirement for youth to develop a transition plan in order to access Chafee-funded services. Although there are good reasons to schedule such a meeting at this point, it is clearly not ideal as the starting point for transition planning. The formal process needs to begin earlier in the youth's life. At age 16, there would be two full years for the transition planning process.

6) Implement an expanded version of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD Plus)

Implementing the federally required National Youth in Transition Database with an expanded set of questions—NYTD Plus—would give policymakers and practitioners a more complete picture of how foster youth are faring in their transition to adulthood. The additional information can be used to more effectively target and improve services.

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[144] Summarized from materials distributed by the College Success Foundation's Alexia Everett at the January 15, 2009, work session of the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee.

[145] Department of Commerce. *Commerce reorganization: Programs transferring out.* Available from http://www.governor. wa.gov/news/CommerceReorganization.pdf

APPENDIX A: Perspectives of Foster Youth

Institute staff prepared a list of questions for foster youth about their experience transitioning from foster care. These questions were provided to The Mockingbird Society, an advocacy organization for foster youth, which obtained responses from foster youth around the state. The following is a sample of the viewpoints of foster youth about their transition experience:

"My transition is going very good. I am in college and EVERYTHING is paid for. I also love their Foster Care to College peer mentor program because my mentor helped me pick out my books she is available here on campus and she has been a life saver for me! I am very glad that I am going to college. If it was not for the transition programs I would NOT have been able to go to college!"

"The transition was so sudden. Why can't it be a slower, more natural pace, where youth can go back to the foster home for a little while if things aren't working? Or have them try to move out early if they can find a place in advance. How many kids in their birth homes are just ready to move out on THE DAY OF their 18th birthday? Give us some time to make it a reasonable transition so it isn't a crisis situation."

"The reason that I was able to achieve the modest success that I have is because I have constantly been supported by intelligent, compassionate, and all-around amazing people who have continually supported me in my efforts to become an independent adult. If your entire staff is turning over every year and a half, you're doing it wrong. Give your staff what they need so that they can do the jobs that they do, and outcomes for youth will skyrocket—guaranteed."

"The biggest problem I had was sort of a 'metaproblem'; it wasn't any one specific thing. What really hurt me, in the end, was that I didn't have any clue what adulthood was, or how an adult acts. I didn't grasp that I was the one responsible for my life from that point forward; I didn't know how to take responsibility for myself. So I made a lot of mistakes, and threw away a lot of opportunities."

"Emphasize personal responsibility, dignity, and self-respect. These three qualities are actively undermined in the group homes in which I lived, and it's really a shame, because they are the three key qualities of responsible adulthood. If you have them, than everything else will follow, and nothing else matters. If you don't have them, you have no foundation upon which to build other life skills, and nothing else matters. If you can figure out a way to effectively build and reinforce these values in youth before they age out, it will save tremendous amounts of suffering and failure after they age out."

APPENDIX B: Estimated Number of Youth Participating in Multiple Programs

Many foster youth participate in multiple transition programs. Data are not available at the individual level, so we could not link individuals across programs to determine the unduplicated count of those served statewide. To estimate the unduplicated count, we used available information about how many youth participated in other programs at one point in time. Exhibit B.1 describes these estimates. The actual number of individual foster youth served may be lower.

Exhibit B.1
Estimates of Youth Participation in Multiple Transition Programs, FY 2009

Program Name	Youth Served	Number of Youth Counted in Other Transition Programs	Estimated Unduplicated Count	Notes
Educational Advocacy	444		444	
Peer to Peer Mentoring	232		232	
Supplemental Transitional Education Planning	359	94	265	According to SETuP FY 2009 report, 94 of these youth were age 18 and assumed eligible for Medicaid to 21, so we subtract 94 from 359.
Foster Care to College—Mentors	245	154	91	63 percent of these youth were referred from Independent Living/Transitional Living programs between October 2006 and March 2008,[146] so we subtract 63 percent (154 individuals) from 245.
Foster Care to College—Make It Happen!	126	30	96	24 percent of Make It Happen! participants in 2005 and 2006 were Governors' Scholars,[147] so we subtract 24 percent (30 individuals) from 126.
Foster Care to College—Seminars	232		232	
Education and Training Vouchers	283	123	160	102 individuals who received ETVs also participated in Peer to Peer Mentoring and 21 percent of Foster Care to 21 youth in fall 2008 received ETVs,[148] so we subtract 21 percent (21 individuals) from the 99 youth enrolled in Foster Care to 21 as of November 2009, and 102 Peer to Peer Mentoring participants—a total of 123 individuals—from 283.
Passport for Foster Youth Promise	157	113	44	In the 2008–09 school year, half of Passport youth (78 individuals) received ETVs and 35 had a Governors' Scholarship, so we subtract 78 and 35—a total of 113 individuals—from 157. This estimate assumes that no individual received both. Data source: HECB, 2009.
Washington College Bound Scholarship	0		0	
Foster Care Endowed Scholarship	0		0	
Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth	98	21	77	In fall 2008, 21 percent of Foster Care to 21 youth had a Governors' Scholarship,[149] so we subtract 21 percent (21 individuals) from 98.
Independent Living/Transitional Living Services	2,201	1,101	1,100	We assume that approximately half of individuals who participated in Independent Living/Transitional Living also received services from another transition program, so we subtract 1,101 from 2,201.
Responsible Living Skills Program	32		32	
Foster Care to 21	99	99	0	All Foster Care to 21 youth are automatically enrolled in Medicaid to 21, so we subtract all 99 individuals.
Independent Youth Housing Program	63	48	15	All youth in the IYHP are referred to Medicaid to 21 and are enrolled if they are under age 21. Institute analysis of IYHP data estimates that 48 youth were under age 21 in FY 2009, so we subtract 48 from 63.
Medicaid to 21 Program	645	157	488	All Passport youth are assumed eligible for Medicaid to 21, so we subtract 157 from 645.
Workforce Investment Act	126	37	89	According to WIA FY 2009 data, 37 of these youth were 18 or older and assumed eligible for Medicaid to 21, so we subtract 37 from 126.
Total	**5,342**	**1,977**	**3,365**	

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[146] L. Schrager (2008). *Foster Care to College mentoring program: Preliminary report.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 08-07-3903.
[147] L. Schrager & C. Nunlist (2008). *Make It Happen!: Preliminary report on college summer program for youth in foster care.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 08-01-3902.
[148] L. Schrager (2008). *Foster Care to 21: Enrollment trends after two years.* Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Document No. 08-12-3901.
[149] Ibid.

APPENDIX C: Sources for Expenditure and Youth Served Figures

Exhibit C.1
Sources for Program Expenditures and Numbers of Youth Served

Program Name	Source for Expenditures	Source for Youth Served
Educational Advocacy	Personal communication with Phoebe Anderson, program manager, October 12, 2009	Treehouse (2009). *Treehouse educational advocacy program year-end report 2008–2009.* Seattle: Author.
Peer to Peer Mentors	Personal communication with Juliette Knight, program manager, November 10, 2009	Personal communication with Barb Putnam, Children's Administration, October 23, 2009
Supplemental Transitional Education Planning	Personal communication with Barb Putnam, Children's Administration, October 23, 2009	DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *SETuP end of fy 2009 program report: All regions.* Olympia: Author. Provided by SETuP program manager Jim Pritchard, September 9, 2009.
Foster Care to College—Mentors	DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Year three grant report to the College Success Foundation.* Provided by Jim Pritchard, Children's Administration, September 18, 2009.	DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Year three grant report to the College Success Foundation.* Provided by Jim Pritchard, Children's Administration, September 18, 2009.
Foster Care to College—Make It Happen!	Personal communication with Abigail Taitano, College Success Foundation, December 14, 2009.	Personal communication with Abigail Taitano, College Success Foundation, October 23, 2009.
Foster Care to College—Seminars	DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Year three final report to College Success Foundation: Casey Family Programs—Seminar program final report, January 15, 2009.* Provided by Alexia Everett, College Success Foundation, November 18, 2009.	DSHS Children's Administration (2009). *Year three final report to College Success Foundation: Casey Family Programs—Seminar program final report, January 15, 2009.* Provided by Alexia Everett, College Success Foundation, November 18, 2009.
Education and Training Vouchers	Personal communication with Barb Putnam, Children's Administration, October 23, 2009	Personal communication with Barb Putnam, Children's Administration, October 23, 2009
Passport for Foster Youth Promise	Personal communication with Dawn Cypriano-McAferty, program manager, October 13, 2009	Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) (2009). *Passport to College Promise scholarship program: December 2009.* Olympia: Author.
Washington College Bound Scholarship	N/A	N/A
Foster Care Endowed Scholarship	N/A	N/A
Governors' Scholarship for Foster Youth	Analysis of Governors' Scholarship college enrollment and award data. Provided by College Success Foundation's Steve Thorndill, October 2, 2009.	Analysis of Governors' Scholarship college enrollment and award data. Provided by College Success Foundation's Steve Thorndill, October 2, 2009.
Independent Living/Transitional Living Services	Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, September 25, 2009	Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, November 30, 2009
Responsible Living Skills Program	Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, September 28, 2009	Personal communication with Rick Butt, program manager, November 12, 2009
Foster Care to 21	Personal communication with Barb Putnam, Children's Administration, October 23, 2009	Personal communication with Jim Pritchard, program manager, November 20, 2009
Independent Youth Housing Program	Personal communication with Cheryl Bayle, program manager, October 28, 2009	Personal communication with Cheryl Bayle, program manager, October 28, 2009
Medicaid to 21 Program	Analysis of Medicaid to 21 claims data. Provided by Dia Tornatore, Health and Recovery Services Administration, November 19, 2009	Analysis of Medicaid to 21 claims data. Provided by Dia Tornatore, Health and Recovery Services Administration, November 19, 2009
Workforce Investment Act	Analysis of WIA allocation data. Provided by Tami Gillespie, Employment Security Department, January 5, 2010	WIA program data provided by Phil Degon, Employment Security Department, January 13, 2010

APPENDIX D: Proposal to Streamline Services

Proposal for Streamlining Services for Youth in Washington State's Foster Care System and Alumni [150]

Proposal Goal

To develop a comprehensive continuum of services offered through Children's Administration (CA) that prepares youth in our foster care system and alumni for a successful transition into adulthood

Objectives

1) To create a single set of eligibility criteria to allow alumni of care and all youth in our foster care system 14 years of age and older to have access to the complete spectrum of services and provide a consistent message of goals and service availability to the community

2) To have Children's Administration be the primary governmental department responsible for services relating to youth in our foster care system and alumni

3) To realign current services offered to youth in our foster care system and alumni in Washington State by consolidating/centralizing the numerous programs/contracts into one program/contract, which will:

   - decrease the number of individual contracts in each region and accompanying administrative costs

   - allow for funding to be allocated for direct service to youth in our foster care system, program data tracking, evaluation, and staff development

   - eliminate overlaps and gaps in services that currently exist in the multiple programs/contracts

   - allow for stronger accountability with a single program/contract to ensure that each youth in our foster care system and alumni is reaching critical goals

   - move the program/contract toward a performance-based model

   - allow youth in our foster care system and alumni to complete a single, comprehensive intake process, in order to be respectful of having to divulge information about their history and current circumstances and to decrease the number of times they have to establish rapport with numerous service agencies

4) To update CA's youth in care and alumni service goal, objectives, and delivery method broadening the capacity of the program/ contract

Proposed Eligibility

   - Youth is at least 14 years of age and has been in an out-of-home placement through Children's Administration or Washington State tribes for at least 30 days

   - Youth is adopted or placed in kinship guardianship from State or tribal custody on or after his/her 14th birthday

This language was chosen to now include kinship guardianship, Voluntary Placement Agreements (VPA), and Children In Need of Services (CHINS) petition. We chose the age of 14 to begin the continuum because 9th graders have the highest dropout rates. Services for youth age 14 will focus on educational stability, advocacy, and achievement. Then at age 15, Braam requires that each youth complete an annual ACLS assessment and plan. This eligibility also meets the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program federal requirement that by age 16 youth must have an Independent Living (IL) plan.

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[150] Proposal presented by Alexia Everett, College Success Foundation, to the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee, January 15, 2009

Proposed Program Design Plan

The Statements of Work for all youth in care and alumni service contracts through CA, CTED, HECB, etc. will be reviewed and incorporated into one comprehensive program/contract.

The federal intent of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program will be the foundation for the new program design. Benefits of aligning this proposed program with the federal intent include:

- generating of over two million dollars each year to Washington State

- the grant correlates with Casey Family Programs: It's My Life: A Framework for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care to Successful Adulthood based on the expertise and insights of youth in care, alumni of care, social workers, researchers, and education specialists

- the grant correlates with CA's goal for Adolescent Services and is in line with upcoming federal legislation

Children's Administration will consult with youth in our foster care system and alumni, community stakeholders and foster care experts, appropriate legislators, and other governmental departments in developing and implementing this new program. Current barriers to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- development of a statewide data tracking system that monitors service performance and participant outcomes

- development of an outcome based performance evaluation that provides an accurate depiction of the effectiveness of the program, as well as adheres to the National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD) federal requirement for Washington State

- identify and implement effective program delivery ideas in efforts to reach all eligible youth in Washington State, including eliminating geographical and service delivery barriers

- create new and/or utilize existing tools that identify developmental milestones for youth in our foster care system and alumni in their transition to successful adulthood – prescribed yearly between ages 14 through 21

Proposed Reporting

- An annual report is submitted to the federal government to address how the funds are utilized and how Washington State meets the intent of service each year

- A report based on the outcomes of the performance evaluation will be submitted annually to the Early Learning and Children's Services Committee.

Proposed Timeline

Implementation of this new program would take effect September 1st, 2009. This would allow existing contracts to terminate and a new comprehensive contract to be developed and implemented.

APPENDIX E: Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in 2007

Exhibit E.1
Numbers of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Calendar Year 2007

Age at First Placement	Number of Youth				Percentage					
	All Youth	Youth in Guardian-ships	Youth Not in Guardian-ships		All Youth	Cumula-tive	Youth in Guardian-ships	Cumula-tive	Youth Not in Guardian-ships	Cumula-tive
0	45	33	12		6%	6%	14%	14%	2%	2%
1	22	14	8		3%	9%	6%	20%	1%	4%
2	17	9	8		2%	11%	4%	24%	1%	5%
3	31	9	22		4%	15%	4%	28%	4%	9%
4	43	16	27		5%	20%	7%	35%	5%	14%
5	45	19	26		6%	26%	8%	43%	5%	19%
6	39	18	21		5%	31%	8%	51%	4%	23%
7	33	9	24		4%	35%	4%	55%	4%	27%
8	58	21	37		7%	43%	9%	64%	7%	34%
9	54	24	30		7%	49%	10%	74%	5%	39%
10	36	16	20		5%	54%	7%	81%	4%	43%
11	51	18	33		7%	61%	8%	88%	6%	49%
12	52	12	40		7%	67%	5%	94%	7%	56%
13	48	6	42		6%	73%	3%	96%	8%	64%
14	55	7	48		7%	80%	3%	99%	9%	72%
15	56	2	54		7%	88%	1%	100%	10%	82%
16	52	0	52		7%	94%	0%	100%	9%	92%
17	45	0	45		6%	100%	0%	100%	8%	100%
All	782	233	549							

Source: WSIPP analysis of CAMIS data

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Washington State
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The Washington State Legislature created the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in 1983. A Board of Directors—representing the legislature, the governor, and public universities—governs the Institute and guides the development of all activities. The Institute's mission is to carry out practical research, at legislative direction, on issues of importance to Washington State.