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Administration for Children's Services

The New York City Council,
Committee on General Welfare
June 16, 2014

"Oversight: Youth Aging Out of Foster Care"
Testimony by
New York City Administration for Children's Services
Benita Miller, Deputy Commissioner
Division of Family Permanency

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Introduction

Good morning, Chair Levin and members of the General Welfare Committee. I am
Benita Miller, Deputy Commissioner for Family Permanency Services (FPS). With me this
morning is Sabine Cherry, Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Youth Development, as
well as Peter Nabozny from our Office of Policy, Planning and Measurement.

Thank you for opportunity to brief you on the programs and services we offer to young
people in foster care. As a system and as a City, we are committed to doing everything we can to
ensure that young people transitioning out of our care and custody have developed the skills and
connections they need to become successful adults. I am pleased to be here today to share with
you the work we have been doing. We are eager to work with the Council and with the Public
Advocate's Office to figure out how ACS can legally, accurately and transparently collect and
present aggregated data about the young people in our care.

The New York City foster care census is at a historically low number: currently, 11,554
children are in care. While we are happy to report that this reflects a continued downward trend,
the teenagers and young adults that come to our attention have particularly complex needs,
including mental health and behavioral challenges. As such, connecting older foster youth with
caring adults who are willing to be a long-term resource is a challenge and a number of young
adults leave foster care without a permanent resource.

The bills pending before the City Council seek information about how ACS and our
foster care provider agencies help prepare young people who are not being adopted and where
reunification with families is not possible, transition to independent adulthood. Namely, the bills
seek to address the issues of whether these young people are educated; whether they are able to
meet their financial needs through sustained employment; and whether they are able to secure
stable, affordable housing. Given that the young people who come into our care are, in many
cases, already at a significant disadvantage before they came to our attention, ACS is working

very hard to address their needs. While we do have some legal, technical and philosophical questions about some of the specific data requests, I am pleased that we have already begun to discuss some of our challenges and some potential solutions together. I want to be very clear that ACS is committed to both improved outcomes and to transparency in our process for improving them.

Programs and Services

ACS cannot control the circumstances that bring young people into foster care. However, we know that if a youth are in foster care, they have endured some level of trauma. While they are in our care, we have an opportunity to help them address and overcome the challenges that brought them into care and work with them to successfully transition into adulthood.

One initiative ACS has designed to assist young people in foster care successfully transition into adulthood is called Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA). PYA seeks to strengthen both our foster care providers' and our efforts to achieve positive outcomes for youth exiting foster care at ages 17, 18, 19 and 20, regardless of their permanency plans. PYA involves coordination among provider agency partners, community-based organizations, as well as other government agencies—both local and State—to take advantage of the expertise of each link so that our youth can be connected to services and supports. PYA seeks to promote mental, physical, and emotional well-being of young people by setting developmentally-appropriate goals designed to encourage healthy interpersonal relationships, educational and/or vocational achievement, and development of the skills they will require to meet their needs for housing, food, clothing, health and safety as they mature into adulthood.

ACS' Office of Older Youth Services & Residential Care Monitoring (OYS) is responsible for permanency planning and promoting shorter lengths of stay in residential placements for youth in foster care. OYS provides a number of programs and services designed to meet the unique needs of our older youth, including:

- **Residential Care and Monitoring** is a unit responsible for reducing the length of stay at the residential care facilities for youth who are older than 17. The unit currently serves 690 young people, monitors the permanency needs and goals of

3

those transitioning from residential care facilities and assists with referrals for employment, housing and mental health services.

- **ACS' Teen Specialist Unit (TSU)** supports pregnant and/or parenting youth in foster care. TSU partners with external experts, professionals and internal cross-divisional partners to develop and enhance parenting skills. TSU also trains our foster care and preventive providers to develop their expertise in this area and provides information about community-based resources for pregnant and parenting youth. Currently, TSU is working with 114 pregnant/parenting youth in residential mother/child blended programs.

- **TSU's Fatherhood Initiative** offers support to expectant and parenting fathers. One such program is offered through the Claremont Neighborhood-Based Services. Through this program, young fathers develop an appreciation for their role in the lives of their children and receive support with navigating the complexities of co-parenting. ACS recently hired a Community Liaison in this unit – a former foster care youth and a young father who knows about some of the parenting challenges first hand–to provide forums for young parents to learn about child welfare practices, empower other young fathers to be engaged and facilitate conversations between young parents in foster care and members of the child welfare community. Our liaison has become an important resource in improving the outcomes for young parents in foster care.

- **The Young Parents Speakers Bureau** (YPSB), engages young parents by providing a forum for them to continue having conversations with the child welfare community about their experiences and providing guidance on becoming engaged fathers. Information learned from those forums is used to inform our practices, polices and delivery of services to young parents.

- Our **Youth Justice** group assists and monitors "crossover youth," those who are involved in both the foster care and juvenile/criminal justice systems, to ensure that a permanency plan is in place and that our crossover youth are visited in detention, placement or incarceration.

- The **Missing Children's Outreach Unit (MCOU)** provides guidance to staff at the residential and foster boarding agencies on conducting diligent searches for young people who leave care without permission.

- **Residential Care Reduction and IPAS-CW (Intensive Preventive Aftercare Services for Child Welfare)** provides Intensive Preventive Aftercare Services (IPAS) in all residential care facilities through the use of Functional Family Therapy, an evidence-based model that helps support youth ages 9-17 years old who have returned to their permanent adult connection on a trial discharge. Additionally, IPAS-CW monitors the permanency of all youth in residential care settings as well as lengths of stay for youth placed in residential care settings.

Collaborations

In addition to our programs and our work with providers, ACS is also working with other city agencies and external partners to improve outcomes for young people in care. In October 2013, ACS and the DOE initiated Project School Success, a collaboration designed to ensure educational stability and academic success for children in foster care. Project School Success has three major components: data sharing, training and support and development of curricula for provider agency staff with a focus of improving youth education outcomes.

Among our nonprofit partners is FEDCAP, an organization that helps people overcome barriers and work toward economic independence. FEDCAP developed a program called offer PrepNOW!™, a web-based curriculum and interactive learning tool designed to enhance the capacity and motivation of foster parents to prepare those in their care for college. Currently, 200 of our foster parents use PrepNOW! which includes interactive primers on FAFSA, SAT, personal essays, college visits and academic advocacy.

New York City Children's Cabinet

ACS and the de Blasio Administration share the City Council's goal of improving outcomes for former foster care youth. We are committed to finding ways to improve the services we provide to our young people and look forward to working with the Council and the Public Advocate's staff to develop and implement a methodology that will lead to accurate, valuable data about these outcomes. In addition, we expect that ACS' ongoing participation in

the New York City's Children's Cabinet will continue to generate meaningful dialogue, foster important relationships and cultivate vital resources that will further strengthen our mission. In particular, data-sharing among City agencies is a goal that the Cabinet is already addressing and will help inform ACS' approach to these issues.

Conclusion

I hope my testimony, helps illustrate ACS' commitment and work towards providing our young people in foster care with the opportunities and skills they need to become successful adults. There is still much work to be done and we are looking forward to building on our efforts. Thank you for inviting us to discuss these important items with you today. We welcome your questions.

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Oversight- Youth aging out of Foster Care
Q & A

1. **Q. At the Preliminary Budget hearing we asked if ACS is working closer with other City agencies (like DHS) to track youth and assist with their permanency outcomes. Where are we now and has there been any movement to larger interagency conversations? Also, any other interagency collaboration with other city agencies?**

   A: As we testified, ACS created the Housing Academy Collaborative (HAC) to better prepare youth to maintain long-term possession of NYCHA and supportive housing when they transition from foster care. The goal of the program is to help young people get and keep housing through enhanced training; and our collaboration with NYCHA and HRA helps us focus on how to streamline the application process for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and New York/New York III supportive housing.
   The HAC is offered to youth age 16 to 21 in a series of five sessions, with two additional modules for pregnant and parenting youth with focus on child safety, well-being and child care. The subject matter covered by the training sessions includes:
   - Information about NYCHA, supportive housing and low/moderate income apartments
   - Lottery apartments, landlord and tenant rights, accessing eviction assistance
   - Resume and career building
   - Applying for available ACS assistance such as obtaining one shot housing subsidy grants and ensuring Medicaid coverage upon discharge
   - Employment and career planning
   - Education goal setting and planning
   - Financial literacy
   - Entitlement versus empowerment
   - Childproofing the home and obtaining child care

   108 young people have completed the Academy thus far. (for context: 9% of the 11,554 (or, 1,040) children currently in care are older than 18.)

2. **Q. How does ACS market the Housing Academy Collaborative to young people? Are there any incentives to participate?**
   A. ACS sends out HAC flyers to foster care agency case planners and housing liaisons. We also have quarterly meetings with the planners, liaisons and directors where we provide information on scheduled classes. Additionally, flyers extending invitation to training sessions are distributed at agency Preparing Youth for Adulthood sessions and at staff site visits to agencies. The sessions are intended to be motivational, inspirational and informative. There is also a takeaway component which is designed to connect the young adults to a paid internship or vocational program, as well as educational scholarships and

employment. Partnerships with organizations such as Year Up, FEGS and New Yorkers for Children help to facilitate takeaway outcomes for youth.

3. **Q. What other initiatives has ACS implemented to engage youth aging out?**
   A:

   - Our **Teen Specialist Unit (TSU)** is working with 114 pregnant/parenting youth in residential mother/child blended programs.
   - **TSU's Fatherhood Initiative**, offers support to expectant and parenting fathers.
     - One such program is offered through the **Claremont Neighborhood Based Services** which targets fathers between the ages of 16-21 who are in foster care or transitioning out of foster care. Through this program young fathers develop an appreciation for their role in the lives of their children and receive support with navigating the complexities of co-parenting.
   - Another initiative to engage young parents is the **Young Parents Speakers Bureau (YPSB)**. YPSB provides a forum for young parents to continue having conversations with the child welfare community about their experiences and provide guidance regarding best ways to engage fathers that will inform our practices, polices and delivery of services.

4. **Q. What is Project School Success?**
   A: Project School Success is an Inter-agency collaboration between ACS and the Department of Education (DOE) designed to ensure school stability and academic success for children in foster care. Project School Success has three major components:

   - The first is a data-sharing component which facilitates the exchange of data between the Department of Education and ACS all of its provider agencies. The data included are attendance, academic performance and specialized service eligibility.
   - The second component is capacity-building. Dedicated data analysts provide high-level technical support and develop tools and expand professional development to ensure systematic and consistent data protocols by provider agencies.
   - The final component of Project School Success is the development and delivery of curriculum and training for provider agencies. The focus of this is to show the provider agencies how to leverage the data to improve educational outcomes and educational stability.

5. **Q. What other city agencies does ACS work with to provide services to youth aging out of foster care? If so, what services does these other agencies provide?**
   A:
   <u>HRA</u> - ACS works directly with HRA to garner approval of NY/NYIII supportive housing for our population. We work with HRA to ensure Medicaid is provided to youth upon leaving care and that it continues until the age of 26.

DOHMH – ACS and provider agencies work with DOHMH to get young people birth certificates.

NYCHA – young people leaving foster care receive the highest priority for NYCHA housing.

HRA – facilitates NY/NYIII housing applications

6. **Q. What is the process/procedure to assist youth to obtain government identification (i.e. social security cards, birth certificates, state ID)?**

A. ACS permanency policy requires foster care agencies to assist youth in obtaining social security cards, birth certificates and state identification.

In addition, every foster care agency is required to fill out a document called "PYA – Preparing Youth for Adulthood" checklist for every young person in care between the ages of 17-21. The PYA form contains a section dedicated to "vital records" and asks whether a young person has a 1) birth certificate 2) Social Security card 3) state issued id 4) passport and 5) whether the youth has registered for the Selective Service. The final question in the section asks whether, if vital records have not been secured, what is being done by whom?

ACS evaluates the performance of our provider agencies by using a tool called the Provider Agency Measurement System (PAMS) review, which is a comprehensive view of case specific practice in every foster care program. PAMS reviews include extensive evaluations of approximately 2,000 case records. We are in the process of adding a question to the PAMS review that will evaluate provider performance in the specific area of obtaining vital records.

Also, ACS has a Vital Records/ Child Care request unit dedicated to assisting the agencies with obtaining those vital documents for the youth. The unit is comprised of 5 staff members as well as a supervisor for the unit.

7. **Q. Does ACS track graduation rates for youth in care? If so, what are the outcomes? Does ACS provide resources to assist youth struggling to meet educational achievement?**

A: Yes, ACS collects information about how educational achievement of students in foster care—which includes graduation, discharge to another educational placement, non-attendance after the school year in which they turn 17, etc. The outcomes vary tremendously depending on what level of educational attainment the young person had reached prior to coming in to foster care, the reasons that the young person came into care and a myriad of other factors. We collect this data to ascertain when students in foster care leave DOE schools and why. This information is only available for students in NYC DOE schools—it is not available yet for students in Westchester or Long Island.

ACS provides support services to providers through its Office of Education Support and Policy Planning. Those supports include professional development, inter-agency relationship building, and specialized education-focused events that target improving the educational outcomes of youth in foster care. Any additional education support to youth

in care comes from the provider agencies and is usually the result of private funding sources that may or may not be renewable.

8. Q. Does ACS collect data on youth aging out? If so, what is the data?

A: ACS has many ways to identify youth that are aging out. Our systems of record, CCRS and CONNECTIONS, capture discharge destination, goal and age at time of discharge. Also, internally we can capture data of youth aging out through tracking systems that track:

- Youth that applied for NYCHA/Supportive Housing;
- Youth that applied for housing subsidy grants;
- Youth that attended and/or graduated for HAC
- Youth that have an ETP in place;
- Youth are receiving (ETV) college room and board assistance.

9. Q. What age can youth sign out of foster care and are they provided assistance during their independence? Under what circumstances can youth come back into care?

A: Although New York is one of the few states that allow youth to remain in care until age twenty-one, a youth may sign out of care at eighteen. Young adults 18 – 20 who have failed to consent to continuation of their foster care placement (final discharge) have the right to request to re-enter foster care within 24 months after discharge or before the young person's 21st birthday. At eighteen, a young adult qualifies for the NYCHA housing priority, NY/NYIII supportive housing, access to low income apartments, and if employed, access to ongoing monthly housing subsidy of up to three hundred dollars. The young person will also be provided with two special grant subsidies in the amount of eighteen hundred dollars each to assist with security deposit, furniture and rent arrears on an identified apartment. **Every youth** being discharged to self between the ages of 18 to 21 ½ , is able to receive the grants when they identify and lease an apartment. The money is paid directly to the vendor based on receipts and the landlord based on a signed lease agreement.

Our provider agencies are required by law to monitor the youth who has left care between the ages of 18 and 21 to assist in accessing needed services.

A youth who has signed himself/herself out of foster care and is less than 20 ½ years old can request to be replaced back into care. A conference would be held to determine if the youth has other resources that could help them remain in the community or if referrals can be made for services that will allow the youth to remain in the community. Before returning to a placement the youth would have to agree to follow a service plan that included attending educational or vocation preparatory services as well as other services that could assist in a discharge from care.

10. Q. Has ACS noticed which age group tends to self-discharge more (18, 19, and 20)? Also, what is the number of youth that request to be placed back in Foster Care?

Youth 18+ discharged to self:

Age	CY12	CY13
18	151	165
19	82	86
20	150	141
21	465	451
Totals	848	843

FY 08-13
Youth 18+ discharged from foster care

2008	1251
2009	1222
2010	1273
2011	1226
2012	1160
2013	1078
Av.	1202

Re-entry data:

CY 2013:   Received: 108 requests
                      Approved: 78 approved (72%)

CY 2014:   Received: 33 requests
                      Approved: 19 approved (58%)

11. Q. Which providers if any are providing better programs/resources to assist youth aging out? (This is not to put the provider on the spot but an opportunity to share this model with other providers).

A: We find that the providers who offer concrete skill-building programs to young people in care submit fewer requests for exceptions to the policy that a young person

leaves care at the age of 21. Exceptions to Policy, upon approval, are given to foster youth transitioning into adulthood but don't have stable housing, employment or both. Once approved youth are given a 90-day extension to stay in care due to delays in successfully completing their respective discharge plans.

Some examples of resources for youth transitioning include Graham Windham, which has a culinary arts program and the Children's Aid Society's Next Gen program:

- **Graham Windham**- Youth have an opportunity to participate in their Catering and Culinary Arts program, which is structured through ServSafe, a food certification and management program accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)-Conference for Food Protection (CFP). With this program a youth is taught how to appropriately prepare and design meals for catered events. ACS, National Adoption month event last year: had the opportunity to have youth from their culinary program cater.

- **Children's Aid Society (CAS)** - The Next Generation Center (NGC) is a one-stop center designed to support young people, ages 14-24, as they prepare for and transition to adulthood and independence. The mission of NGC is to help high-risk young people change the trajectories of their lives through transformational relationships, stage-based employment programming and strong partnerships with other youth-serving institutions.

  NGC is a community-based center in the Morrisania section of the Bronx with a service delivery and program approach designed to support the needs of youth in foster care and those who have aged out of foster care as well as those involved in the Juvenile Justice System.

  The center's program strategy, case management approach and organizational culture are informed and shaped by our CAS values are Safety, Care, Connection, Leadership and Growth. CAS offers job readiness training and subsidized internships, educational guidance and advocacy, legal counseling, housing assistance, and life skills, creative and visual arts, multimedia, fitness and recreational programming.

  Members of the NGC also have access to medical and dental services at the nearby Children's Aid Society Bronx Family Center.

- **Catholic Guardian Society (CGS)** – Their Youth Development Department (YDD) employs a multidisciplinary team of specialists which includes experienced Administrators, Youth Development Specialists, and Education Specialists with strong backgrounds; this allows the department to make a comprehensive assessment of each youth. The YDD maintain a strong emphasis on educational progress and vocational readiness, social competence, economic viability, character strengths and limitations, and potential risk factors/behaviors.

6

The YDD's goal is to prepare youth under its care to become physically and emotionally healthy, socially and economically self-reliant as well as educationally and vocationally prepared by the time of their discharge from foster care.

The YDD ensures that all school age children in care receive an appropriate education by monitoring social and intellectual development. Providing assistance with academic achievement and provide motivation, strategy building, and addressing the needs of each child through supportive services in:

- Tutorial Services Referral
- Special Education Referral
- Vocational Training
- GED Referral
- Pre and Post College Admissions
- Career Development

12. Q. The Council is really concerned about youth aging out and going into shelters. What steps is ACS taking to address these concerns?

A. ACS does not support discharging young people foster care to a homeless shelter as an appropriate discharge plan. We have granted Exceptions to policy to allow youth to remain in care for extended periods of time (90-day intervals) so that their provider agency can continue to assist them in securing safe and stable housing. ACS also requires that our contracted foster care agencies provide on-going supervision to youth with a goal of APPLA who leave care between the ages of 18-21. The planning agency directly working with the youth at the time of discharge must supervise the youth until their 21st birthday.

- Monthly contact with the youth is required for the first six months of required supervision.
- Two of the 6 contacts must be face-to-face
- Should youth maintain adequate housing and income continuously for six months, then quarterly contact is required.
- These contacts can be made face to face or via telephone
- For youth living 50 miles outside of New York City face to face contact is not required, youth should be contacted via telephone.
- Additionally, youth who have been final discharged within the last 24 months from foster care, as a result of not consenting to stay in foster care, have no reasonable alternative to foster care, meet other specific criteria are eligible to request to voluntarily-enter foster care.

ACS works with youth to apply for Supportive Housing through New York/New York III. NY/NY III is an affordable housing program that assists individuals gain independence and address mental health issues, health conditions, domestic violence, employment, etc. The supportive housing units are maintained by non-profit organizations and are provided to certain qualifying populations such as youth who are

leaving or left foster care as well as vulnerable adults. Each population is allocated a certain number of slots. Various city agencies are responsible for filling these supportive housing slots, such as ACS, HRA's HASA unit, and DHS. ACS is responsible for filling the slots dedicated to youth.

Unfortunately, ACS has a limited number of slots. In order to have access to slots reserved for other populations, foster youth need to meet the federal definition of "homeless." This definition is restrictive and requires youth to have moved two more times in the 60 days prior to applying for assistance and apparently only applies to youth who are awaiting a foster care placement.

We are currently evaluating ways to address these restrictive federal statutes and regulations as well as working with housing advocates and providers to identify ways to place our young people in supportive housing.

13. Q. Does ACS contract with Community Based-Organizations to provide services to youth aging out?

A: ACS and our provider partners work with many CBO's to refer youth for additional resources and guidance. These organizations include:
- The Door
- Job Corps
- Coop Tech
- FEGS
- FedCap
- DYCD: Youth Adult Internship Program • Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

14. Q. What services are provided for special needs youth who age out of foster care?

A. Youth with special needs can apply for NY/NYIII housing, Community residents and OMH housing. Our provider agencies make referrals for such housing as part of the discharge permanency planning for special needs youth. Category C, of the NY/NY III agreement is designated to youth coming out of a residential or state mental health facility or youth who present with a more robust psychiatric history. Many of the youth from our specialized care unit, for example, fall into that category. Upon approval by HRA, driven by the appropriate clinical assessments, housing referrals are made through Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS). It should also be noted a few months ago, a congregate facility opened in Brooklyn (Name of facility) to accommodate the more psychiatrically challenged youth, in question.

Community resident refers to a congregate facility, where social work, as well as mental health services is provided. The new category C facility in Brooklyn provides twenty-four psychiatric care and supervision.

Requirements for placement in Office of Mental Health housing (OMH) include in addition to having an AXIS 1 Diagnosis (i.e. Mood Disorder, Major Depression, Schizophrenia) an I.Q. of 71 or above is required as the person should be able to understand and be able to participate in the therapeutic treatment.

15. Q. Do we track how many youth who age out of foster care are involved with the criminal justice system?

A: ACS is not permitted to share personally identifying data of young people in foster care with any other city agency that is not considered part of the Local Social Service District (In NYC that is ACS, HRA and DHS). In order to track this information, DOC would need to send ACS a list of names and DOBs of every young person in their custody and ACS would need to run that information through our records to know if the young person ever spent time in foster care. At the moment, no such process in place because an MOU would need to be developed. As we testified, the New York City Children's cabinet has set interagency collaboration and data sharing as one of its main priorities. A number of agencies, including the Mayor's Office of operation, the Center for Data Intelligence, HHS connect and ACS are meeting to understand the legal and technological questions that need to be addressed in order to share data among agencies.

We do track this information as it relates to young people currently in care. Approximately **42** young people from foster care are currently in the adult correction system and **11** young people in foster care are in detention juvenile justice system and **29** young people in foster care who are close to home placement

16. Q. What if any housing subsidies are youth who age out of foster care entitled to?

A: Youth being discharged from care qualify for the two special grant housing subsidies in the amount of one thousand eight hundred dollars each. One of the subsidy grants can be used for security deposit or furniture. The other grant is designated for rent arrears. Youth may access those funds up to age twenty-one and a half. ACS also funds recurring monthly subsidy of up to three hundred dollars for youth eighteen to twenty-one. The total value of the recurring monthly subsidy is $10,800, and it typically lasts for a period of three years.

Currently, there is legislation proposed to increase the rent subsidy for foster youth living independently from $300 to $600. The bill sponsor is Assemblyman Karim Camara.

17. Q. How difficult is it for Foster Care Youth with criminal records to find housing? What alternatives are offered to them?

A: While NYCHA public housing disqualifies youth with felonies from renting, New York/New York III supportive housing does not have such a restriction. The supportive housing protocol requires the documentation of acts related to fire setting or sexual assault in an applicant's psychosocial evaluation to ensure appropriate placement and

treatment. Low to moderate income housing options ($400-$600 per month), such as Harlem Congregation for Community for Improvement (HCCI), Community League of the Heights (CLOTH) and Local Initiative Cooperation (LISC) do not conduct criminal background checks as a stipulated requirement.

18. Q. Are there any challenges to obtain housing for youth who age out with families of their own?

A: While NYCHA allows a youth who is the primary custodian of a child to be added to the ACS priority access to public housing, there are no designated apartments available for pregnant and parenting youth aging out of foster care under the current NY/NYIII supportive housing agreement. In addition, community based programs such as Women In Need (WIN) often conduct rigorous credit checks and work history checks, making it difficult for most youth in foster care to access.

19. Q. How much of the Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program was allocated to NY in 2013?

According to our oversight agency, the New York State Office of Children and Families, NYS was allocated $11,231,104 for FFY 2013-2014 for the Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program (CFCIP). NYS allocated this money statewide to each of the local department of social services (including ACS) to be used for youth eligible for CFCIP for the following: academic support services, vocational training, independent living skills, and aftercare services.

How does ACS use the CFCIP funding?

Allocated to the provider agencies to cover the costs of PYA that include stipends, programs/IL workshops.

20. Q. NYC Human Resources Administration has a procedure, to be implemented within ninety days of the effective date of the local law that added this section, to determine how many youth who were discharged from foster care with a goal of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) received cash assistance, food stamps, and/or community Medicaid. Do we know if this is working?

A: This question is referring to the legislation proposal from the Public Advocate. ACS currently does not do any data sharing with HRA and should this legislation pass acquiring this data would create some administrative challenges. However, we are working closely with our general counsel's office and with HRA to determine what kind of data match is possible without violating confidentiality statutes.

21. Q. How many youths who are or have aged out of foster care are parents and are the subject of a child welfare investigation? What services are available to them?

A: ACS collects data on all child welfare investigations but we have not calculated the number of parents who are currently subjects of an allegation who were previously subject children in an investigation. ACS is mandated to investigate cases of young people who have aged out of foster care and are now parents as we would any other case and they have access to the same services others do. If it is a youth currently in foster care that has a baby in foster care and gets a case called in on them, we also are mandated to investigate like any other case but the foster care agencies should be providing support to the youth and foster parent.

22. Q. What are the number of NYCHA applications submitted and the number of applications denied? What are the procedures for caseworkers to apply for NYCHA and NYNY3? Are caseworkers applying for NYCHA and NYNY3 uniformly?

A: Between January 2014 to May 2014, ACS submitted 207 NYCHA applications. Over the course of that same period, 74 young adults were housed in NYCHA. The agency case planner is required to accompany the young adult to apply for NYCHA housing. The planner is required to bring the signed letter of attestation by the agency's executive director, affirming that youth's foster care status. An employment referral form signed by the planner, along with a permanency goal form, also signed by the planner, are required. The ACS housing specialist then completes a Point System Questionnaire—a series of question related to employment, education, outstanding criminal disposition, previous training, relative to landlord and tenant issues, as well as mental health diagnosis are asked. With the exception of the mental health question, the PSQ questions are assigned points totaling one hundred. The results are used to make referrals to the Housing Academy Collaborative to enhance a youth's preparedness. A check of the ACS Welfare Management System (WMS) and Child Welfare Review System (CCRS) and Connection database system, along with a public assistance check are conducted, as part of the process by the ACS staff. A low score on the questionnaire highlights the issue of the youth needing to be better prepared for tenancy which leads to HAC referrals. Additionally, we give all youth the opportunity to go through the HAC training and we encourage all youth to do so.

Foster care agencies are responsible for completing the electronic 2010e online application for youth in care for NY/NY III. A psychosocial evaluation, a Purified Protein Derivative (PPD) test and HIPPA consent are required. A psychiatric evaluation is required for youth with a mental health diagnosis. Applications are transmitted to HRA for approval. Approval usually comes within three business days from submission. The HRA designated ACS administrator then makes electronic referrals to available housing providers. Authors of the application receive a letter of determination from HRA, instructing them to contact the administrator for referrals, in question.

Youth 18-25, who are not currently in foster care, but who qualify for NY/NY III supportive housing, and have spent a least one year after his or her sixteenth birthday in foster care, complete their applications at ACS. Referrals are provided to those with mental health history by ACS staff to conduct psychiatric evaluations. A youth may apply for NY/NY III and NYCHA housing at the same time. However, there is no requirement

that they must complete both. Our caseworkers apply for NYCHA and NYNY3 concurrently.

23. Is there any assistance to help former foster care youth after they leave foster care?

A: For youth who were adopted after the age of 16 or aged out, ACS provides an Education and Training Voucher (ETV). ETV is an annual federal grant provided to states to assist with college, university and vocational training programs. Students may receive up to $5,000 a year based on their cost of attendance. In order to qualify the student's initial enrollment must occur before their 21st birthday, the student must be accepted a qualifying program and may reapply for subsequent vouchers until age 23. Funds may be used for tuition, dorm fees, books, student loan repayments and qualified living expenses.

24. Q. How has the Improved Outcomes for Children (IOC) reform been working?

A: Since 2007, IOC was undertaken to capitalize on the position of provider agencies in relation to the children and families we serve. The goals underlying IOC were to promote a timelier, more informed, and more flexible decision-making process through the use of family team conferencing, that would positively impact the children and families who have come to our attention. And, concurrent with our delegation of authority and responsibility to our provider agencies ACS expanded its role to provide technical assistance, an evaluation process and feedback on best practices that would further strengthen the work of our provider agencies. We believe that the IOC model is sound and that its implementation could be strengthened to address the many complexities of the children and families we serve.

Additionally, we continue to review our provider agencies, particularly those involved in any of the recent fatalities. We have also modified guidelines to require that foster care agency court reports be countersigned by the case planner's supervisor to ensure that any issues detailed within the court report have been discussed and brought to the attention of agency supervisory staff. Like our FSUs, we are also requiring that our foster care agencies begin reducing caseloads, and we are supporting that effort through a federal waiver.

25. Q. How many young people in from foster care are AWOL? And how many of those over the age of 17 are AWOL?

A: As of 6/13/14, 438 youth are currently on AWOL status as per CCRS today and 186 (42%) are older than 17.

FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

TESTIMONY

Oversight Hearing:
Int. No. 104; Int. No. 137; Int. No. 187 - "Aging out of Foster Care"

Presented to

The Council of the City of New York
Committee on General Welfare
Hon. Stephen Levin, Chair

Monday, June 16, 2014

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Good morning, Chairman Stephen Levin, and the distinguished members of the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare. On behalf of Jennifer Jones Austin, Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), we want to thank you for this opportunity to testify on Int. 104, Int. 137, and Int. 187. FPWA also recognizes Chairman Levin's leadership in addressing a variety of issues related to the safety and well-being of children in New York City. FPWA is pleased to testify today in support of the proposed bills that relate to collecting and reporting data concerning youth aging out of foster care.

Why FPWA is an Important Voice on this Issue

FPWA is an anti-poverty policy advocacy organization. We advocate on behalf of vulnerable New Yorkers to ensure that they have the economic means to support themselves and their families. FPWA's network of human service organizations and churches operate over 1,200 programs throughout the New York City metro area. Together, we serve over 1.5 million low-income New Yorkers of all ages, ethnicities and denominations each year.

FPWA represents 23 child welfare agencies dedicated to promoting the well-being of children by ensuring safety, achieving permanency, and strengthening families to successfully care for their children. Our member agencies provide a variety of services such as preventive services, foster care services, and residential care services for children in need of specialized care and attention. We believe that every child has the right to a permanent home and a stable environment, and that supporting and protecting the family structure is critical to ensuring that this right is preserved. Therefore, FPWA has been increasingly concerned with the challenges youth face in obtaining proper housing, employment, and education after aging out of foster care; specifically, FPWA is concerned with the concentration of youth who end up homeless after aging out.

Of the 6,712 youths discharged from foster care in New York City in 2011, 13.2% were between 18 and 21 years old and had aged out of care. This means that approximately 900 youth were left on their own, without a safety net of family or aftercare services to fall back on when they needed help. It is estimated that in 2013 between 18-26% of youth who aged out became homeless and on any night, many former youth in foster care could be found couch-surfing, sleeping on the streets, or in shelters.

Earlier this year, FPWA examined statistics such as these in a report concerning the crises facing youth aging out of care in our city (*"Keeping Foster Youth off the Streets: Improving Housing Outcomes for Youth that Age Out of Foster Care in New York City"*). While FPWA was able to uncover some estimates and approximations related to youth aging out of care, it was often

extremely difficult considering that a lot of significant data is not regularly reported, such as the number of former foster youth involved with the city homeless shelter system, especially in the years following their discharge.

Today, in many instances, it is far from certain that young people aging out of foster care will do so with a place to live, a job and/or ongoing education, income security, and health insurance. State law makes it abundantly clear that it is the responsibility of New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to help these kids obtain the skills necessary to live on their own and make sure they have a plan to do so, but we are concerned that it is not being fulfilled for a significant number of these young people. Tracking and obtaining data on the outcomes of youth who age out of care is the first step in examining how the city can better address the needs of these vulnerable youth and help them succeed.

The proposed two bills will assist the City Council in evaluating how successful ACS is in preparing youth who age out of foster care and in evaluating the need for policy changes. Int. 104 aims to obtain comprehensive data on the outcomes of foster youth in New York City. Int. 137 requires the ACS to report annually to the City Council the number of youth in the foster care system with a form of government-issued identification. Int. 187 requires the ACS to report to the City Council at the start of each school year (by October 1st) the number of youth in the foster care system that graduated from high school the previous school year. This legislation would provide valuable information on the outcomes of foster care youth which could be utilized to increase and improve housing options and aftercare services for these youth. For that reason, we strongly support the proposed legislation.

For this testimony, we will now examine problems facing youth aging out of care; review the role and challenges of ACS on the foster care system; assess in more detail the proposed bills; and review their merits and potential amendments to strengthen the legislation.

Problems facing youth aging out of care

Recent research on youth aging out of care in New York City reveal the city's shortcomings in providing adequate housing options and aftercare services, and illustrate the need for reforms. Youth that age out today frequently receive ineffective preparations for aging out of care in spite of the detailed state regulations, a well-organized city plan, a complex reporting system for providers, specialized housing services and targeted permanency programs, overseen and administered by the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). ACS aims to prepare foster youth for adulthood and to help them transition into independent living if they are not adopted or reunited with their parents; ACS policies include assistance in accessing

3

housing and provision of skills conducive to independent living and self-support. While ACS and many foster care providers have created innovative programs to work with youth, the system as a whole has not yet managed to achieve the best outcomes for these youth.

An issue that compounds youths' housing troubles is the failure to secure permanency and family connections prior to aging out. While ACS has clearly made permanency a priority in policies and services, youth frequently report that they do not have family or adult figures that they can depend on when they age out of care. Moreover, those unable to get placement in public or supportive housing may have to go back to living with family from whom they were removed as a result of abuse and neglect, or resort to sleeping on a couch or staying with friends temporarily. These issues are exacerbated by the city bureaucracy and funding limitations, which do not make for a smooth aging-out process: a lack of coordination between the ACS and the public housing system, and excessive wait times are examples of the obstacles that youth face. Accessing housing is especially difficult for pregnant and parenting teens.

Furthermore, there is no system of aftercare services or network of agencies that brings together city government resources. Except for the availability of short-term trial discharge, youth leaving foster care with no permanent home are provided no real safety net, as the city's child welfare system does not provide for easily accessible aftercare services. The lack of aftercare services is felt especially acutely because many of the foster care youth lack education as they age out of care. Many who have aged out of foster care are unable to secure or maintain employment, with some lacking the necessary skills and education, and this, in turn, affects their housing stability. With no back-up plan or family to catch them when they fall, and not much of an aftercare service network to provide additional cushioning, youth end up not only unemployed, but homeless. Furthermore, psychological and medical issues affect former foster youth's ability to procure housing, a job, and to maintain relationships.

Need for Reporting Data

As young adults age out of care, it is crucial that they receive adequate services before, during, and after their transition, to ensure that they can move on to productive, independent adulthood. The lack of concrete data available about the outcomes for youth aging out of care restricts our ability to assess the greatest needs and demand for services of these youth. While we utilized months of time and energy to research the struggles facing this population for our report, we were often struck by the lack of concrete data available about the outcomes for this extremely vulnerable group. Previously, the city said it would collect data to track foster youth outcomes after discharge. It is not clear, however, whether the city has set up a system to

4

measure homeless shelter use by former foster youth or the status of its research. In addition, ACS officials acknowledge that they do not collect the most important information of all: data on foster care youth outcomes in adulthood. Additionally, there exists no data on other imperative outcomes, such as mental and physical health, income stability, employment status, educational attainment, and criminal involvement of these youth.

The city should consider California's system, which leverages data on youth in foster care at the point of discharge far more effectively than New York City does. For example, California posts the educational attainment of its youth in foster care on a quarterly basis. As things stand, the proposed two bills offer a solid foundation to fulfill the current lapse in data on foster youth.

Int. 137 and Int. 187

Now that we have examined the problems facing youth who age out of care in New York City and the necessity for more effective coordination of services, we can better understand the need for the proposed bills concerning data reporting and why FPWA supports this legislation. Int. 137 would require the ACS to report to the City Council the number of foster-care youth with government identification. Int. 187 would require the ACS to report to the City Council the number of foster care youth that graduated from high school in the school year prior to the one in which each annual report is issued.

It is important to know the status of whether foster youth have government-provided identification because foster youth are particularly vulnerable to identity theft, since they experience much uprooting. Foster youth often come into contact with numerous foster homes, schools, and relatives, which can create significant opportunities for identity theft. In addition, data on educational outcomes is crucial because foster youth are much less likely to complete high school than non-foster youth due to factors such as coming from families with a comparatively low socioeconomic status, comparatively high rates of school displacement, disproportionate attendance at lower-ranking schools, and higher rates of emotional and mental health problems. While these bills would play an important role in increasing the data collected regarding youth in the foster care system and would thus better inform policy decisions, we also urge that the Council enact Int. 104 introduced by New York City Public Advocate Letitia James.

Int. 104

Primarily, a major strength of Int. 104 is the collection of data both on the aging out population as well as under 18 cohorts of youth who have not yet aged out but may still be at risk for homelessness or being absent without leave (AWOL). Additionally, tracking data on the

Bridges to Health Medicaid Waiver Program and trial discharge will be crucial to understanding sub-populations by mental health/health status as well as foster care status.

In relation to the collection and reporting of data on youth aging out of care, we have reached out to numerous national experts on youth aging out of care to look at the Int. 104, and provide feedback. We received responses from 7 individuals: Amy Dworski (Chapin Hall), Gina Samuels (University of Chicago), Mike Stein (University of York Social Policy Research Unit), Clark Peters (University of Missouri), Lynn Tiede (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative), Antonio Garcia (School of Social Policy & Practice, University of Pennsylvania), and Sarah Hurley (Youth Villages).

After carefully reviewing the proposed legislation and consulting with experts in the field, we suggest several additional amendments to Int. 104 that would strengthen the monitoring and tracking of some supplementary areas of data to obtain a more comprehensive view of the outcomes of youth aging out of care.

- **Firstly, while most of the legal provisions concern education, employment and housing outcomes, we should also be concerned with physical and mental health, as these are an important landmark on the journey to adulthood. Therefore, we suggest including requirements for collecting data on physical and mental health outcomes, such as any chronic medical conditions or diagnosed psychological disorders prevalent in youth aging out of care.**

- **Secondly, many innovative services and "evidence-based" practices, which use systematic research and evidence to inform clinical practice and care, are being implemented to address the needs of these youth. We propose that longitudinal data be gathered to examine the impact of these services and practices on youth outcomes over time, including the extent to which these services prevent homelessness and other public health concerns. Such data should include dosage, completion of treatment or services, and perceived effectiveness and satisfaction of services from youth placed in out-of-home care and youth that age out of foster care.**

- **Furthermore, since research has shown that there are significant differences regarding the extent to which certain groups receive services, youth outcomes should also be tracked by gender, race/ethnicity, and immigration status. This**

6

would help give a clear understanding of whether provided services such as being involved with child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice/criminal justice, stable housing, and/or special education services contributes to improved developmental outcomes in mental health, educational attainment, housing stability, and lack of criminal involvement.

- Collecting such data would involve developing an integrated/shared data system, which if not available from the beginning of the data collection efforts, may pose significant barriers to tracking such outcomes. The biggest challenge we anticipate with data collection is maintaining contact, given that youth transition from one place to another often. We are curious as to how the city will navigate the collection of data from youth who become difficult to track, like those that end up on the streets, on friend's couches, or move out of the city. On a similar note, the city may potentially keep track of employment records using wage data from the state agency that collects quarterly wage records for unemployment purposes.

- Int. 104 should also require measures to be taken to address variations in availability of services by neighborhoods or boroughs with more resources that might influence outcomes, service delivery, and access to and use of benefits. Therefore, the legislation should include requirements for data on where the youth live and receive services.

- Additionally, there should be reporting requirements around tracking information regarding the "Adult Permanency Resource." Having these persons, or having a quality person in this role, could be instrumental in preventing, or intervening at the point of homelessness or AWOL. The city should be required to report, at a minimum, who these people are, their age, gender, race/ethnicity, employment status, their relationship to the youth, the length of time known to youth, and if the permanent resource person changes over time and if so, the number of times it has changed. Furthermore, any data kept related to successful or failed work, such as attempts/successes in finding and connecting youth to biological family members or former foster parents as resources should be required to be reported as well.

- Our final suggestion to strengthen the legislation is to monitor youth ages 21-24 years of age as well. While most of the outcomes in Int. 104 are being monitored up

to age 18 or 21, for most young people the journey to adulthood takes place over time. We should not only monitor "aging out of care" transitions but the transition "from care to adulthood" which would require monitoring youth ages 21-24 as well.

- Lastly, in the past, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) used to issue federally funded Section 8 subsidy vouchers for youth aging out of care, which allowed recipients to pay for housing in rental apartments across the city. Unfortunately, the vouchers were frozen in 2009, so any reference to data collection on youth receiving Section 8 vouchers should be removed from the bill.

Res No. 257- Prohibiting Work Experience Programs in New York

Lastly, FPWA has signed on as a supporter of A7119a/S5120a, which aims to improve employment opportunities for recipients of public assistance by eliminating the use of the Work Experience Program (WEP). WEP has been shown to be ineffective in connecting public assistance recipients with meaningful, long-term employment. Additionally, WEP participants do not earn a wage and are exempt from receiving critical anti-poverty and employment supports such as Social Security credit, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and sick or personal days. Instead, we encourage the adoption of more successful programs that satisfy work requirements through engagement in education, training and subsidized employment programs. One example of this would be to expand the city's transitional jobs programs, which not only provide a more livable wage, but access to skill development and support services that assist participants in long-term employment success.

Conclusion

In conclusion, FPWA is committed to working with the City Council in facing the challenges ahead to address youth aging out of Foster Care in a comprehensive and cumulative way. FPWA supports Int. 104, Int. 137, and Int. 187 because we believe that such comprehensive data on youth aging out of care can help the city to better address the barriers these youth face.

If we can create a pipeline to success rather than a series of obstacles, we can be confident that these young people will respond well. Overwhelmingly, these youth have aspirations and do see themselves in the future as successful. It is critical to shift practice and expectations in order to appreciate and realize the potential of each youth in foster care. There is hope for change for this vulnerable and high-risk population.

Community Service Society

Fighting Poverty
Strengthening
New York

Testimony by

Apurva Mehrotra, Policy Analyst
Community Service Society of New York

Before the New York City Council Committee on General Welfare

June 16, 2014 Hearing on
Collecting and Reporting Data on Youth Aging out of Foster Care

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the issue of data collection and reporting on youth in and aging out of foster care. My name is Apurva Mehrotra and I am a Policy Analyst at the Community Service Society of New York (CSS), a 170 year-old organization that works to advance upward mobility for low-income New Yorkers. CSS is a member of the Steering Committee of the statewide Youth in Care Coalition, an effort spearheaded by the Children's Aid Society that seeks to improve the outcomes of foster youth in New York.

Youth in the foster care system face unique challenges in navigating childhood, adolescence, and the transition to adulthood. These challenges exist for this population almost by definition. And several studies done across the country confirm what our intuition would suggest – that these challenges are often too much to overcome. Many youth in the foster care system are unable to successfully transition to independent adulthood, lacking the education, skills, experience, and on-going parental support necessary to find gainful employment. This is especially the case for young people who age out of the foster care system, exiting the care of the State as independent adults, still at a relatively young age and with little to no support to rely on. As a result, many young people who exit the foster care system continue to rely on the State through their adult years.

In New York City, we are aware of the challenges foster youth face, but cannot speak with certainty about their outcomes. This is because there is a lack of central tracking and reporting of meaningful data that would reveal outcomes for the city's foster youth. However, recent studies that have aimed to shed light on the situation of these young people paint a grim picture, in line with numbers produced by other regional studies. A recent CSS report, commissioned by the Youth in Care Coalition, estimated that fewer than 1 in 4 foster youth in the State attends college. A 2011 report from the Center for an Urban Future estimated that no more than half of

youth who leave the foster care system in New York City are able to find employment. Both of these reports relied on national studies, interviews and focus groups with practitioners and those in the foster care system, and data from other sources to produce estimates.

It is shameful that these estimates are the best we can do – that as a researcher I am unable to easily access information on something as basic as the high school graduation rate for the city's foster youth. I am able to go to the DOE website and easily pull up graduation rates by race/ethnicity, gender, and for English Language Learners and students with disabilities. I have previously been able to request and receive from the DOE data on high school graduation rates for every student across multiple cohorts, with a wide range of student characteristics. However, in seeking to learn the graduation rate for those in the foster care system, multiple conversations with the DOE, ACS, and CIDI yielded little in the way of meaningful data. Comparable data for youth in foster care – such as high school graduation rate by race and gender – is needed. We should also be aiming to track outcomes for foster youth related to college enrollment, employment, and earnings.

To be clear, it is not that these agencies did not want to provide the information. In fact, many individuals we worked with went above and beyond in attempts to get the data we were requesting. At the end of the day, with no centralized reporting mechanism, the task proved to be fruitless.

The ability to access data on outcomes for foster youth is not just important for researchers attempting to write reports. Without regularly reported data, how is the City able to gauge the nature and scope of issues that foster youth face and prioritize policies and funding accordingly? How are ACS and the City Council supposed to gauge the effectiveness of programs designed to aid young people in the foster care system? And how is the public to understand the magnitude of the issues facing foster youth?

There was a point in time when the foster care system in New York City was so overburdened that simply managing the enormous number of cases and averting disaster could be considered a success. However, today, with the number of cases significantly reduced, we should have loftier goals for foster youth in New York City. And through conversations we have had with ACS, we know that they take their mission of preparing foster youth for adulthood seriously. But without a standard reporting mechanism, it is impossible to determine how far we have come and what needs to be done to reach those goals.

CCC

CITIZENS' COMMITTEE for CHILDREN
O F N E W Y O R K I N C

Testimony of

Stephanie Gendell
Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations
Citizens' Committee for Children

Before the
New York City Council
General Welfare Committee

June 16, 2014
Oversight: Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
Int. 0104-2014
Int. 0137-2014
Int. 0187-2014

Good afternoon. My name is Stephanie Gendell, and I am the Associate Executive Director for Policy and Government Relations at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc. (CCC). CCC is a 70- year old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every child in New York is healthy, housed, educated and safe.

I would like to thank Council Member Levin and the members of the General Welfare Committee for holding today's oversight hearing on youth aging out of foster care, as well as the introduction of three local laws that would require the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to report to the City Council on a variety of key indicators related to youth, the services and assistance ACS provides to them, and on the ability of the young people to succeed once leaving the foster care system.

Nationally, while the number of youth in foster care has decreased, the percentage of youth aging out without a family has increased. In addition, various national studies have documented poor outcomes for these youth. Both nationally and in New York, outcomes for youth who age out of foster care are generally bleak and too often include homelessness, reliance on public assistance, school failure, and jail sentences. These young people need to fend for themselves to secure housing, employment, health care and an education, often without the support of a family and with the added stressors associated with having been abused, neglected and in the foster care system.

For example, national studies have found the following about youth who have aged out of foster care: 12-30% struggle with homelessness; 40-63% did not complete high school; 31-42% were incarcerated; and 32-40% relied on public assistance.[1] Our country, our state and this City must do better by these youth—the children and youth for whom the state and localities stepped in to protect from their own parents.

In New York City alone, approximately 1,000 youth ages 18-21 age out of the system each year. When children and youth enter foster care, the goals are to promote their safety, permanency and well-being. Finding permanent families for youth, be it their own family of origin or with another family member or an adoptive family, having a family is critically important to their success in almost every domain. And thus, for those youth for whom the system did not succeed in finding a family, the system must be responsible for helping the young person become a successful adult. Key components include housing, education, employment, health and mental health care, as well as the skills to develop healthy relationships.

In preparation for this hearing, I reviewed the testimony I gave on behalf of CCC at a February 2008 City Council Hearing, also on youth aging out of foster care. Sadly, I will be repeating almost the same exact recommendations here today. While we are grateful for Commissioner Carrion's commitment to enhancing well-being, there is clearly a long way to go to do better for the youth in foster care and the issues facing these young people are not new. We must take steps now to address the needs of youth in foster care

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[1] Children's Rights Inc. www.childrenrights.org/issues-resources/fostercare/facts-about-aging-out/. Accessed June 8, 2014.

because I am certain that I do not want to be making the same recommendations again six years from now.

CCC appreciates the City Council and the Public Advocate for their role in introducing the 3 Council bills being discussed today, which are all aimed at enhancing the Council's oversight over youth aging out of foster care through the collection of data.
The three proposed local laws are:

- Int. 0104-2014: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York in relation to collecting and reporting data related to youth aging out of foster care. This Local Law would require quarterly reports on various indicators including on both youth in care with a goal of APPLA and those leaving care with a goal of APPLA including: number of youth in care/leaving care with a goal of APPLA (by age cohort); number of youth receiving independent living skills training (by age cohort); number of youth receiving vocational training (by age cohort); number of children and youth eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), number of children and youth who have obtained the Special Findings Order, and the number of children and youth who have SIJS applications pending (by age cohort starting with children 0-3); number of youth who have applied for housing assistance (disaggregated by type of housing assistance such as ACS housing subsidy, Section 8, etc.), the number of youth found eligible for housing assistance (disaggregated by type) and the number of youth found ineligible for housing assistance (disaggregated by type); and the number of youth enrolled in high school, a GED program[2], and accredited college (by age). In addition, the law requires ACS to work with DHS to establish a system to determine the number of youth discharged from care with an APPLA goal who enter the homeless-shelter system within 30 days, 90 days, 180 days, and 3 years from their discharge from foster care. In addition, the Local Law would require ACS to work with ACS to determine the number of youth discharged from foster care with an APPLA goal who receive cash assistance, SNAP benefits and community Medicaid[3] within 30 days, 60 days and 180 days from their date of discharge from foster care. Finally, the local law requires ACS to work with the Department of Corrections and NYPD to determine how many youth who leave foster care with an APPLA goal are arrested within 30 days, 60 days and 180 days from being discharged from foster care.

- Int. 0137-2014: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring ACS to report on their success in obtaining government-issued personal identification for youth in foster care. This local law would require annual reports of the number of children in foster care who have a form of government-issued personal identification disaggregated by type (birth certificate, social security card, state-issued driver's license or non-driver

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[2] Note: The proposed legislation refers to the GED; however, it should be noted that New York has replaced the GED high school equivalency test with what is now called TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion).

[3] Note: Under the Affordable Care Act, youth who age out of foster care are eligible for Medicaid until their 26th birthday. Thus all children who leave foster care with an APPLA goal should have Medicaid benefits until age 26.

identification care, US permanent resident card, individual taxpayer ID, municipal identification card, consular identification care or passport), the number who did not have the identification when they entered care, the number ACS assisted to obtain the identification, and the average number of days it took ACS to procure such identification. The report is also to include a description of actions ACS takes to ensure all children in foster care obtain government-issued personal identification.

- Int. 0187-2014: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring ACS to provide information regarding high school graduation rates of youth in foster care. This local law would require annual reports regarding the number of youth in foster care, graduating high school and enrolled in high school disaggregated by age (under 16; 16-18 and over 18).

CCC appreciates the City Council and Public Advocate's interest in providing more oversight with regard to the outcomes for youth aging out of foster care and the assistance ACS provides to attempt to produce good outcomes.

CCC respectfully submits the following recommendations with regard to the three proposed local laws and improving outcomes for youth in foster care.

1) The Three Local Laws
CCC agrees with the City Council that it is critical for the Council (and the public) to be aware of the outcomes for youth in foster care. This will enable us to know where we need to target resources, where we need new policies, etc.

While CCC is so grateful to the Council and Public Advocate for wanting to learn more about these young people, their outcomes and well-being, we are concerned that the proposed reporting requirements will be overly burdensome for ACS. We suggest that the City Council, Public Advocate, ACS and perhaps the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and the Children's Cabinet work together to develop a list of indicators regarding youth in foster care that ACS would be required to regularly submit to the Council and Public Advocate. Our hope is that this can be based on data the City already collects and in a format that is not overly burdensome to the agency. Finally, we urge the City Council and the Administration to then make this data available to the general public.

In addition, the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is required to submit data to the federal government on youth in care and conduct a youth survey. On a youth's 17th birthday, they become eligible to participate in the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The state then reaches out to participating youth on their 19th and 21st birthdays. The survey includes questions about employment, education, relationships with adults, and sources of income. For the 2010-2011 baseline survey, OCFS tried to reach 1100 17-year olds, but only 286 youth from throughout the state took the survey. CCC suggests that any data already collected by ACS and OCFS be shared with the Council and Public Advocate in the form in which it is already collected,

including any survey results (now or in the future) from the NYTD. Furthermore, CCC is interested in how ACS, CCC, the City Council and others can be helpful in encouraging more youth to participate in the survey.

2) Preventive Services

The best way to prevent young people from aging out of the foster care system is to prevent children and youth from ever coming into foster care in the first place. More families should be strengthened and supported with community-based preventive services that reduce the number of children inflicted with the trauma and disruption caused by removal and foster care. In addition, preventive service programs need the resources and tools to meet the needs of youth.

The City must maintain its commitment to preventive services through continuing to increase the numbers of families being served; eliminating the 12-month length of service incentive aimed at reducing the he length of service provision; and assessing the effectiveness of the evidenced-based programs, particularly those aimed at teenagers.

3) Foster Care Services and Permanency

For those children who cannot remain safely in their homes and for whom foster care is the appropriate measure, the best way to prevent young people from aging out of foster care is to strengthen the foster care system's ability to expedite permanency, find families for all children and youth in care, and promote the well-being of all children, youth and families touched by the child welfare system.

If New York's child welfare system were perfect, no child would age out of the system because every child would either be able to return home to his/her family and when this was not possible, be adopted by another caring and loving family or their relative would obtain subsidized kinship guardianship (KinGAP). We must hold ACS and its agencies accountable for getting as close to this ideal as possible.

Foster children and their families need high quality, effective services in place as quickly as possible so that the children can return home or be adopted expeditiously, rather than spending many years in care and then aging out of the system. In addition, while children and youth are in foster care, their multitude of needs, ranging from mental health to education to employment assistance to family planning, must be met.

Furthermore, it is critical that the State expeditiously pass legislation to increase the number of Family Court Judges. This would reduce the length of time cases are pending in Family Court, decrease the amount of stress and instability, and lead to better permanency outcomes.

4) Education

Education is critical to successful outcomes for all children. For children and youth in foster care, who have suffered trauma and often-times multiple moves and school changes, it can be much more challenging than for other students.

4

There needs to be much more work done when children and youth first enter foster care, to prevent disruptions to their education by ensuring education stability for as much foster children as possible. Whenever it is safe and in the child's best interest, youth should be able to continue their education in the same school. Similarly, if a young person's foster care placement is going to change, educational stability should be a high priority. Research has shown that when a child changes schools, they lose about 4-6 months of progress.

Furthermore, children and youth in foster care are often academically behind their peers. There are numerous reasons for this, such as chronic absenteeism prior to entering foster care, placement and school changes, struggling with trauma, mental health and family issues, etc. Thus it is critical that the foster care system provide additional educational supports to foster children to ensure school success, high school graduation and college.

5) Homeless Prevention

Unfortunately for the youth who do age out of foster care without a stable and supportive family to live with, the shortage of affordable and supportive housing in New York City, and the limited income an 18-21 year old can earn under the best of circumstances, securing and maintaining housing is extremely difficult.

In 2005, CCC surveyed homeless youth and in 2006 published its results in *Young and Homeless: A Look at Homeless Youth in New York City*. CCC surveyed 88 homeless youth and found that 30% of the young people reported having foster care history. Of these young people, 77% reported being in foster care for two or more years.

It would be virtually impossible for any 21 year old in New York City to be able to continue his/her education, while at the same time securing enough income to pay for food, clothing and rent. For foster youth these challenges are often compounded by the instability of their family situation, their lack of connection to a community, and their unmet mental health needs.

While ACS and other city and state agencies have taken steps to collaborate and engage in ventures to support these youth and prevent homelessness, there is still a long way to go. The up to $300 per month housing subsidy is insufficient to sufficiently stabilize a person's ability to pay the rent. In addition, housing subsidy ends when a young person turns 21.

CCC is pleased that Assemblymember Camara has introduced a bill that would implement one of CCC's long-standing advocacy requests- to raise the housing subsidy from $300 to $600 a month. We are also pleased that ACS is interested in this idea. In addition, we feel that the ACS housing subsidy should be indexed to inflation and extend beyond age 21 (perhaps to age 25.)

As the City addresses homelessness, affordable housing and supportive housing, it is critical that youth who have been in the foster care system be given priority for assistance. In addition, whenever programs are created for these young people, we think

that it is important for youth to be able to participate in the program and have a roommate. Most 18-21 year olds living on their own in NYC have roommates. Unfortunately, many housing programs preclude participation for those who are not leaseholders but we believe it would be good public policy to ensure youth can have roommates.

6) **Provide free tuition and room and board at SUNY and CUNY as well as college assistance**

New York State, in coordination with New York City, should develop a program where all current and former foster children can attend state and city colleges free of charge. Nothing could help former foster children more than furthering their education. Removing barriers to post-secondary education for children in the custody of the state and city is an investment that can improve their lives forever. In addition, since youth who age of foster care do not have family members to rely on during this often difficult transition for youth, this program should also provide college assistance.

7) **Ensure foster youth have the opportunity to participate in other activities that allow them to interact with other youth and develop social relationships**

Adolescence is not easy for any young person, let alone a young person in foster care. We believe that we need to ensure that youth in foster care have the opportunity to participate in as many programs and activities with their peers as possible. This includes after-school programs, the Summer Youth Employment Program, sports and athletics, school clubs, music lessons, the prom, etc.

While many of these youth also need services, we think it is just as important that we let young people be young people. We are grateful that the City has reserved some SYEP slots for "vulnerable youth" including foster children. We support reserving slots for foster youth and thus giving them a priority, but believe that these young people should be able to participate in the regular SYEP program (with a priority). In addition, we believe the City and foster care agencies must do more to ensure foster youth can participate in other activities with youth, which will in some instances require the City to fund entrance fees, uniforms, etc.

There is much work to be done to strengthen the child welfare system, as well as the way youth transition out of the system. CCC remains hopeful that the new administration and the City Council will be able to work together to make great strides to improve the outcomes for all children and youth who touch the child welfare system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY OF LAWYERS FOR CHILDREN

The Council of the City of New York
Committee on General Welfare
Stephen T. Levin, Chair

Oversight: Aging Out Of Foster Care
June 16, 2014

Submitted by:
Karen Freedman, Executive Director
Betsy Kramer, Policy Project Director
Priti Kataria, ACT Project Director
Krista Gundersen, ACT Project Housing Specialist
Silvie Senauke, Policy Associate

Lawyers For Children (LFC) thanks the Committee on General Welfare for providing us with an opportunity to submit this testimony regarding the proposed legislation requiring that data pertaining to youth in foster care be collected and reported to the City Council

Lawyers For Children is a not-for-profit legal corporation dedicated to protecting the rights of individual children in foster care and compelling system-wide child welfare reform in New York City. Since 1984, LFC has provided free legal and social work services to children in cases involving foster care, abuse, neglect, termination of parental rights, adoption, guardianship, custody and visitation. Currently, we represent children and youth in more than 6,000 judicial proceedings in New York City's Family Courts each year. LFC's Adolescents Confronting Transition project is comprised of attorneys, social workers and youth advocates who focus exclusively on the needs and challenges of youth aging out of foster care. This testimony is based on 30 years experience representing thousands of children and youth in -- and aging out of -- foster care.

We support these three bills, which require that information be reported to the City Council regarding (1) the success of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in obtaining government-issued personal identification for youth in foster care (Int. No. 137), (2) the high school graduation rates of youth in foster care (Int. No. 187), and (3) data relating to youth aging out of foster care (Int. No. 104). However, as to each bill we strongly recommend certain amendments, designed to strengthen the City Council's oversight over the reporting agencies.

Int. No. 137: In relation to requiring the administration for children's services to report on their success in obtaining government-issued personal identification for youth in foster care

We agree that it would be valuable to require that ACS report to the City Council regarding the number of children in foster care who have vital documents. Some of the problems we have seen because ACS does not obtain vital documents for children in foster care in a timely manner, include the following:

2

- children lingering in foster care for many months longer than necessary because birth certificates needed to begin an adoption process have not been obtained;
- youth unable to apply for summer employment programs because their social security cards are not obtained in a timely manner;
- older youth who are otherwise ready to begin applying for housing are prevented from accessing programs because they do not have proper identification.

Obtaining information regarding the extent to which ACS obtains vital documents for youth in a timely manner is crucial to understanding whether ACS is meeting its obligations in assisting youth in accessing services and achieving permanency.

We would strong recommend that the bill be amended to require the New York City Department of Health, Office of Vital Records (DOH) to also report to the Council regarding the issuance of birth certificates for children in foster care. DOH should be required to report the following information:
- the number of birth certificates requested by ACS;
- the average number of days elapsed between the time the request for a birth certificate was requested and the time that the birth certificate was issued; and,
- the reason that birth certificates issued in response to a request from ACS are sometimes marked "Not For Official Use."

Recently, we have seen that it takes 3-6 months for DOH to respond to a birth certificate request from ACS. For reasons that are entirely unclear, the documents sent in response are marked "not for official use," and, as such can't be used for many of the purposes for which they are needed.

This additional information can help to understand whether the failures in obtaining vital documents may be attributed to ACS or to DOH or to some combination of the two.

We would further recommend that the proposed legislation be amended to require that the information provided be disaggregated by age. For example, it is important to know the total number of children in foster care who have state-issued driver's licenses or non-driver's ID cards, and it is also important to have this same information reported for youth between the ages of 16 and 18, as well as for youth between the ages of 18 and 21.

Finally, we recommend that the proposed legislation be amended to clarify what is meant by the requirement that the report include "the number of days it took ACS to procure such identification." Does this refer to the number of days after the child came into foster care, the number of days after a request was made, or the number of days after which the child/youth became eligible to obtain the particular type of identification? This should be clarified for each type of document because, for example, it is more important to understand how long it takes after children come into foster care to obtain a birth certificate, while the important figure for a driver's license would be how long after the child became eligible – regardless of how long the child had been in foster care.

Int. No. 187: In relation to requiring the administration for children's services to provide information regarding high school graduation rates of youth in foster care

It is a well-documented fact that youth in foster care are under-educated and under-employed compared to their peers. Requiring ACS to report on educational outcomes is an important first step toward understanding where ACS is falling short in ensuring that youth in foster care obtain an appropriate education. An annual report from ACS would be an indispensable tool for identifying problem patterns and enacting meaningful interventions.

This bill should be amended to require that ACS report additional information regarding the type of high school program that youth are enrolled in. That information should include the following:

- the number of youth in foster care, disaggregated by age, who are enrolled in special education programs which award an IEP diploma (because these diplomas can not be used to apply for college, qualify for certain jobs, or enroll in certain licensing programs);
- the number of youth in foster care, disaggregated by age, who are enrolled in GED programs and the number who successfully complete these programs (because it appears that many youth are referred to such programs with little success);

4

- the number of youth who graduate from high school who enroll in college (because employment outcomes are vastly improved for college graduates, and it appears that ACS may not be doing enough to ensure that its high school graduates are continuing their education);
- the number of youth who are enrolled in vocational training programs (because it appears that such programs are vastly underused by youth in foster care, though they may be very valuable for youth who are not successful or comfortable in other school programs); and,
- the number of youth, disaggregated by age, who are not enrolled in any educational or vocational training program.

Because ACS may not be able to readily aggregate data regarding school enrollment, we would recommend that the City Council consider whether this information might be more easily and accurately obtained from the New York City Department of Education. That agency is equally responsible for ensuring that youth in foster care receive an appropriate education, and the DOE's role in serving foster youth should not escape City Council oversight.

Int. No. 104: In relation to collecting and reporting data related to youth aging out of foster care

We strongly support the reporting that this bill requires, but recommend that additional information be gathered in order to obtain a clearer picture of the outcomes for youth aging out of foster care.

Based on the experience of our clients, it appears that most youth who age out of foster care to their own housing reside in NYCHA apartments; yet, ACS tells us that unacceptable numbers of those youth are evicted shortly after they move in. In order to have a better understanding of the outcomes for former foster youth in NYCHA apartments, and to begin taking steps to ensure that youth maintain stable housing after leaving foster care, legislation should require NYCHA to report on the following information:

- the number of youth who obtained NYCHA housing through the ACS priority code, but were evicted or threatened with eviction during the reporting period. That information should be disaggregated by:
  - the reason for threatened eviction (*i.e.* nonpayment of rent or violation of lease terms); and,
  - the length of time the tenants held the apartments (1-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-12 months, more than 12 months)
- the number of eviction proceedings begun for youth who obtained NYCHA housing through the ACS priority code, disaggregated by:
  - the number of proceedings resolved with the tenant remaining in the apartment;
  - the number of proceedings that resulted in a formal eviction; and,
  - the number of proceedings that resulted in the tenant voluntarily vacating the apartment.

Finally, the legislation should require that DYCD and DHS disaggregate, by age, information regarding former foster youth who enter the shelter system. This information would help to understand whether ACS is appropriately discharging its responsibilities in two respects: (1) its obligation to supervise former foster youth until age 21, and (2) the effectiveness of the statute allowing former foster youth to return to foster care in certain circumstances prior to turning 21. Knowing how many former foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 seek to enter the shelter system at any point after leaving foster care is an important first step toward ensuring that ACS appropriately assists those youth. Although no youth should be discharged from foster care to the shelter system, it appears that a number of youth enter the shelter system within a short time after being discharged to "permanent" housing. Oversight of ACS practice with respect to youth aging out of foster care must include an examination of the extent to which youth are discharged to living situations that do not remain stable for an extended period of time.

While ACS bears the brunt of the burden for ensuring that children in foster care achieve positive outcomes, ACS must work together with several other City agencies in order to

discharge its responsibilities. The City Council should use its oversight power to ensure that those agencies are effectively working with ACS to assist all children in foster care.

We are available to assist in any way possible to improve the services and quality of care for children who are in need.

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TESTIMONY OF THOMAS J. HILLIARD, CENTER FOR AN URBAN FUTURE

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

OVERSIGHT HEARING: "AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE"

MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2014

I'm Thomas Hilliard, Senior Fellow at the Center for an Urban Future, a Manhattan-based non-partisan public policy think tank that conducts research on important issues concerning economic development, workforce development and social policy for New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the City Council's proposed legislation to expand reporting of foster youth data.

In New York City, roughly 900 foster youth leave the child welfare system each year on their own. The few data points we have on the adult outcomes of foster youth hint at an ongoing human tragedy:

- Roughly half of former foster youth are not working at any given time;[1]
- One in five former foster youth enter a New York City homeless shelter within three years of leaving care;[2]
- In Los Angeles County, one in four former foster youth spent time in jail, one in three received food stamps and one in five received cash assistance, and just over half had no earnings in the four years after leaving care.[3]

What makes the tragedy of foster youth so poignant is that they are wards of the state. That is, the City of New York is essentially their mother and father. We are almost literally failing our children.

The Center for an Urban Future has been deeply involved with the plight of foster youth at a policy level since 2011, when we published a report called *Fostering Careers*. This report revealed that many young people aging out of the foster care system are failing to obtain jobs and launch careers, and that much of the problem is a fragmented system that has never properly adjusted to the needs of youth

in care as distinct from children in care. We followed up *Fostering Careers* with a policy brief

proposing six achievable and low-cost strategies to support foster youth; a conference to spark a broader

discussion among policymakers, advocates and providers about responding to the challenges of foster

youth; and a stakeholder meeting in which selected leaders in the field explored opportunities to serve

foster youth through closer collaboration.[4]

In researching the *Fostering Careers* report, I found data on foster youth difficult to obtain,

fragmentary, and altogether missing in some crucial areas. These informational gaps are symptomatic of

a larger problem: lack of a clear citywide governing focus on foster youth. The child welfare system was

built to protect the safety of young children and return them to permanent care settings as rapidly as

possible. Over the past two decades, the sharp decline in the number of young children in care has made

the system increasingly the surrogate parent of teens and young adults; but the city government has not

yet adjusted to its emerging role. The fact that the city publishes so little data on foster youth reflects

that larger shortcoming.

The City Council's legislation represents an important step forward, especially Int. No. 104,

which would mandate reporting of post-discharge outcomes. This is a tremendously important step

forward, an achievable step, and I believe New York City would be the first locality in the nation to do

it.

Policymakers need solid data on foster youth for at least three purposes: to establish policies and

allocate funding based on evidence rather than anecdote; to test policies and programs for effectiveness

and make them more effective; and to hold agencies accountable for managing the system. Using data to

create an evidence base will take time and resources. But it is the right thing to do.

The bills before us today explore most of the key areas that the city needs to learn more about.

My recommendations today pertain mainly to the nature of the data reporting to be mandated. For data

to be actionable, it should be reported in a form that enables comparison between groups and over time. Rates and percentages are good, and best of all is longitudinal trend data. However, the three bills primarily request raw numbers from the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) and other agencies. While it may be possible in some cases to calculate, say, the proportion of foster youth of a certain age who receive vocational training services as a share of all foster youth in that age group, it is not necessarily easy to do so. In some cases it will not be possible at all.

As an illustration, consider Int. No. 187, which would require ACS "to provide information regarding high school graduation rates of youth in foster care." But the language of the bill does not require ACS to report a high school graduation rate. Instead, ACS would only be required to report the number of foster youth who graduated from high school in the previous year disaggregated by age group. The legislation also specifies that ACS will provide the total number of foster youth in each age group and the number remaining enrolled in school, which would enable the Council to calculate the proportion of foster youth who graduate each year. But each year's population may be very different from the previous year's population, making comparisons between them invalid. The federal government made this mistake in designing the 2003 No Child Left Behind Act's "Average Yearly Progress" indicators, rendering their national performance management system useless. New York City should not replicate that mistake.

If the Council wants to learn the high school graduation rate of foster youth, it should write into statute the definition used by the New York City Department of Education:

> The cohort consists of all students who first entered ninth grade in a given school year (e.g., the Class of 2009 entered ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year), excluding certain disabled students (students in self-contained classrooms and District 75 students). Graduates are defined as those students earning either a Local or Regents diploma, a special education (IEP) diploma, or GED. August graduates are included.[5]

Adopting a cohort definition of the high school graduation rate will introduce new complexities. For example, the foster youth population is transient, with many 9th grade foster youth leaving care

before discharge and many more entering the system after 9th grade. But dealing with complexity is the price of admission to evidence-based policy.

Int. No. 187 and Int. No. 104 overlap in their education reporting standards, and Councilmembers should consider what educational data might be policy-relevant and actionable. Because the child welfare system is developmental in nature, the Council should request data on foster youth that are predictive of graduation, dropout and collegegoing success. The NYC Department of Education is the best possible resource on this issue. But possible metrics might include 1) Number of school changes in grades 6-12, a chronic problem for foster youth; 2) ELA/Math scores in 8th grade; 3) grades and credits earned by the end of 9th grade; 4) and modified promotional criteria status.

Int. No. 104 mandates reporting of specific enumerated educational credentials at discharge (2.b.(iv)(h-k)). I would recommend simply requesting that ACS report educational status at discharge by category, as a share of all foster youth at discharge. This would provide a format by which ACS can report on foster youth who are enrolled in an educational setting, even if a credential has not yet been obtained. In addition, it would better suit the complexity of reporting on educational outcomes. For example, when I requested information from ACS regarding high school educational outcomes, they responded with a spreadsheet reporting 12 separate outcomes (see Attachment A).

Int. No. 104 would mandate reporting of the "number of youth who receive vocational training..." (2.a.(iii)). This is a very important area for reporting, since vocational training could be decisive in whether foster youth are prepared to enter the labor market after emancipation. However, it is also a broad and heterogeneous category. Some components, notably employer-sponsored training of incumbent workers, do not involve the public sector. I would suggest that the Council mandate reporting of foster youth enrollment in publicly funded programs operated by the Department of Youth and Community Development, the Department of Small Business Services and the Human Resources

Administration. By learning the extent to which the City's own youth development programs reach foster youth, we can lay the foundation for a more coherent system to support their needs.

Sections 2.c, 2.d. and 2.e. deserve special praise. These sections would pull aside the curtain that shrouds the lives of foster youth after leaving care and provide important information on their adult outcomes. Since the ultimate goal of foster care is to prepare youth for adulthood, the true test of whether that system works is whether the clients it serves end up in homeless shelters and prisons. Until now, this vital information has only been glimpsed through initiatives of top researchers in the field, notably Dennis Culhane and Chapin Hall's Midwest Study. But these projects are only one-offs, mostly conducted outside New York City. Reporting post-discharge outcome data on a regular schedule will establish a benchmark to test the effectiveness of future interventions and funding allocations.

I would make three suggestions regarding post-discharge reporting. First, policymakers need to know the demographic characteristics of former foster youth who utilize the services described in sections 2.c.-e., such as gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment and family status. It is not necessarily essential to specify these characteristics in statute, but reporting should include some demographic information. Second, policymakers should seek longitudinal and multiple-condition data on these former foster youth, so that we can connect the services they receive in care to their adult outcomes and identify subpopulations who are utilizing multiple city services. Third, the Council should mandate post-discharge reporting on positive outcomes, not just negative ones. Postsecondary completion data should be available from CUNY and in the coming months from the New York State Education Department's student unit record system. Employment data is becoming available from the New York State Department of Labor's Wage Reporting System. Either in this bill or in a subsequent bill, the Council should add educational and employment outcomes to the set of post-discharge outcomes to be reported.

Some minor comments on Int. No. 104:

- Age groups are not comparable between clauses of section 2. One clause specifies ages 12-13 and 14-15, another ages 12-14 and 15-18, and still another ages 10-12, 13-15 and 16-18. These incompatible age groups will make comparisons impossible. The Council should review age groups, require rates or percentages where appropriate, and require ACS to post the underlying data for each age-year, so that end-users can make their own aggregation choices.

- Annual reporting may be preferable to quarterly reporting for most measures because it is less burdensome and administratively complex. But there should be explicit reporting deadlines so that the agencies do not fall further and further behind. ACS already publishes annual data on its website, but that data lags four years behind a calendar-year reporting schedule.

- References to the General Education Development (GED) test should be replaced with references to the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) test.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the Center for an Urban Future's general support for the

proposed legislation before us today. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify.

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[1] Dennis Culhane et al, *Young Adult Outcomes of Youth Exiting Dependent or Delinquent Care in Los Angeles County* (Cueras Hills, CA: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, 2011).
[2] Thomas Hilliard, *Fostering Careers* (New York, NY: Center for an Urban Future, 2011),
http://nycfuture.org/research/publications/fostering-careers.
[3] Culhane, *Young Adult Outcomes*.
[4] Thomas Hilliard, Foster *Youth and the Workforce: Next Steps* (New York, NY: Center for an Urban Future, 2012),
http://nycfuture.org/research/publications/foster-youth-and-the-workforce-next-steps.
[5] New York City Department of Education,
http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/GraduationDropoutReports/NYCTraditionalCalc.htm.

APPENDIX A

Discharge reasons	2008	2009	2010
	# of children		
Received Local Diploma (Special Education Only)	2	3	2
Received High School IEP Diploma (Special Education Only)	48	47	36
Proof of receipt of High school Diploma	2	0	2
Received Local High School Diploma	209	188	196
Received High School Regents Endorsed Diploma	138	172	196
Received High School Regents Endorsed Diploma with Honors	3	6	6
Received at an Earlier Date a Local Diploma, IEP Diploma of High School Equivalency Diploma	3	2	3
Received High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)	107	111	95
Received High School Regents Diploma with Career and Technical Education Endorsement	4	4	6
Received High School Advanced Regents Diploma	10	11	15
Received High School Advanced regents Diploma with Career and Technical Education Endorsement	1	2	1
Received Local High School diploma with Career and Technical Education Endorsement	7	5	2
Total	534	551	560

Data Source: DOE data from 6/08, 06/09, 06/10

The Children's Aid Society
www.childrensaidsociety.org

YiCC
YOUTH IN CARE COALITION

Testimony of Jessica Maxwell, Youth in Care Coalition Coordinator
The Children's Aid Society
Prepared for the Oversight Hearing: Aging Out of Foster Care
General Welfare Committee, New York City Council
June 16, 2014

Good Morning, my name is Jessica Maxwell and I am the coordinator of the statewide Youth in Care Coalition. I would like to thank Chair Stephen Levin, the honorable members of the General Welfare Committee, and the Public Advocate, Letitia James for the opportunity to testify today about issues facing young people who are Aging Out of Foster Care and the introduced bills No. 104, No. 137, and No. 187.

The mission of the Youth in Care Coalition is to improve the socioeconomic, health and mental health, housing, and educational outcomes and foster a successful transition to independence for youth in care and aging out of foster care in New York State through collaborative efforts, effective advocacy strategies, and youth empowerment. The Coalition is comprised of concerned providers, advocates, and youth who committed to advocating for policy changes, programs and services for youth in care and youth aging out of care in New York. The statewide Youth in Care Coalition is housed at and managed by The Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the research partner for the coalition is the Community Service Society of New York.

The Youth in Care Coalition is the first group of its kind in the state, specifically dedicated to examining the outcomes and improving the policies of this system and was formed in response to recommendations from stakeholders that a unified advocacy voice was needed to address the policy concerns of older youth in care, at a national summit held in December 2011 entitled, "Whatever It Takes: Strategies for Preventing and Addressing Youth Disconnection". The event, co-convened by CAS and the Community Service Society as well as other partners, highlighted the challenges faced by young people in New York's child welfare system and those issues and recommendations were summarized in the report released in April 2013 entitled, "Foster Care and Disconnected Youth: A Way Forward".

The first goal of the Youth in Care Coalition is a campaign advocating for the establishment of a statewide **FOSTER COLLEGE SUCCESS** initiative that would include the financial and supportive services necessary to help young people who have aged out of care to enroll in and graduate from college.

As one of the nation's largest and oldest anti-poverty and multiservice community-based organizations, The Children's Aid Society (CAS) helps children in poverty to succeed and thrive. We do this by providing comprehensive supports from cradle through college to children and their families in targeted high-needs New York City neighborhoods. Today, CAS touches the lives of more than 70,000 children and families each year. Our network of community centers, community schools, and health clinics is organized into service hubs concentrated in the South Bronx, Harlem, Washington Heights and Northern

Staten Island. Citywide we offer more than 100 programs in 45 sites including education and youth development services, expanded learning opportunities (after-school, weekend and summer enrichment), early childhood education programs, teen pregnancy prevention, comprehensive health services (including medical, mental health and dental), and programs for disconnected youth among other services. Additionally, we provide family, therapeutic and medical foster care, and adoption services. In 2013, we served about 700 children and youth in family-based foster homes and completed 90 adoptions.

Aging Out of Foster Care in New York City
The term "aging out" refers to a youth that is discharged from care without family reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with a relative or other caring adult, and therefore is emancipated. Each year nearly approximately 20,000 young people age out of the foster care system nationally[1], and in 2013, about 1078 youth aged out of the foster care system in New York City.

Already burdened by their experiences of abuse, neglect or abandonment, young people that emancipate out of the foster care system due so without adequate skills to transition to adulthood, and with limited support or inadequate plans to achieve economic self-sufficiency and live independently. Additionally, these youth who age out of the foster care system, often do so without family support or a permanent meaningful connection to positive adults.

Youth aging out of care are often unequipped with the skills to find gainful employment, often suffer from mental illness or untreated trauma and do not have stable housing options . Therefore, these youth are likely to be homeless, unemployed, have unplanned pregnancies, or get into trouble with the law. Additionally, they are less likely to have a high school diploma or GED, and those that have completed high school are less likely than their peers to attend a post-secondary institution or vocational training program. Youth in foster care often experience some disruption in their education; over a third of young adults who aged out of foster care reported having had five or more school changes.[2] While exact data is not available, estimations indicate that only 18 to 24 percent of foster youth enroll in post-secondary education after high school as compared with 60% of the general population.[3]

Even those young people that are able to secure housing upon discharge are at a great risk of becoming homeless, most often within the first three months of discharge. Many youth simply do not possess the necessary skills to maintain housing. Often they have not had experience in maintaining monthly payment plans and budgets or have seen others manage these responsibilities successfully.

Additionally, many youth leave care without any form of safety net, when barriers or obstacles emerge, many don't have savings, relatives or friends to rely on in case of emergency. When discharged, youth are expected to learn how to be an adult through trial and error. When presented with obstacles youth are left to navigate the complexities of the adult public safety net and benefits systems.

These are all crucial issues the coalition seeks to address and having adequate reporting of data on youth aging out of foster care and ensuring that young people aging of care have proper documents are

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[1] US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Children's Bureau, 2013.
[2] Fostering Success in Education, Research Highlights: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care. National Workgroup on Education and Foster Care. January 2014
[3] Fostering Independence: The Need for a Statewide Foster Youth College Success Initiative. Treschan, L. & Mehrotra, A. 2014.

extremely important which is why the statewide Youth in Care Coalition fully supports the goals of all proposed legislation.

The Need for data to track the outcomes for youth aging out of the foster care system
Int. No. 104 - In relation to collecting and reporting data related to youth aging out of foster care. Without a solid understanding of the outcomes youth face when transitioning out of the foster care system, the City cannot fully address their needs. Int. No. 104 is the first step in beginning the necessary collection of information needed to accurately evaluate the problems to improve services. While trying to obtain data on educational outcomes for our report, "Fostering Independence: The Need for a Statewide Foster Youth College Success Initiative", and our **FOSTER COLLEGE SUCCESS** campaign launched in May of this year, the coalition experienced firsthand the difficulty in securing data on youth aging out of care. We were not able to obtain conclusive data regarding the number of young people in care currently attending college within New York State and when working with legislators having this information is extremely important.

While the intent to collect data and evaluate outcomes to improve service implementation is commendable, we are interested in learning more how this data, and overlap in services by ACS, DHS and DYCD will be collected and shared between the government agencies and made publicly available to community based organizations who also work with and advocate on behalf of this vulnerable population. While we are also excited about this legislation allowing for more data to be collected on this transient population we are also concerned that the agencies will be mandated to do this without being provided the adequate resources. Creating the infrastructure and hiring the staff to maintain the systems is costly and we hope that the city will ensure that the legislation comes with the necessary resources to put these systems in place.

Int. No. 187 - In relation to requiring the Administration for Children's Services to provide information regarding high school graduation rates of youth in foster care. Int. 187 would require ACS to report to the City Council the graduation rates of youth in foster care, including the total number enrolled in high school disaggregated by age. Furthermore, the legislation proposed should include reporting on the number of youth enrolled in a high school equivalency diploma program or other alternative programs, the number of youth on track to graduate, and the age at which they graduate. This will provide the city with a more comprehensive understanding of the current status of the educational outcomes for youth in foster care.

Int. No. 137 would require ACS to report their success in obtaining government –issued personal identification for youth in foster care. Youth aging out of the foster care system in particular, need access to a baseline of personal identification in order to make a successful transition to adulthood. Often times for employment, opening up a bank account, education or public benefits, applicants are required to provide at least two pieces of identification, many times a birth certificate and social security card, in addition to photo identification. Therefore, it is extremely important that the City work to ensure that every young person aging out of the foster care system has a birth certificate, social security card and a New York State non driver's identification card.

Conclusion
The current data available for youth aging out of the foster care system presents a bleak outlook: homelessness, unemployment, reliance on public benefits and the possibility of incarceration, is unfortunately the sad reality for many young people transitioning out of the system. The Youth in Care Coalition fully supports the introduction of bills (No. 104, No. 137, and No. 187), and is hopeful that the

3

data collected will help the City, advocates and providers to become better equipped to implement programs and services to eradicate these poor outcomes.

We know that if provided opportunities to develop skills and access to resources these young people can become more resilient and succeed. We commend the City Council for putting us on track to better support the City's most vulnerable, young people aging out of the foster care system and we look forward to working with the City Council and the Administration in addressing these challenges.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and I welcome your questions.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

The Need for a Statewide Foster Youth College Success Initiative

Community Service Society | Fighting Poverty Strengthening New York

Report Commissioned by

YiCC
YOUTH IN CARE COALITION

May 2014

Table of Contents

Community Service Society

Fighting Poverty
Strengthening
New York

The Community Service Society of
New York (CSS) is an informed,
independent, and unwavering voice for
positive action on behalf of more than
3 million low-income New Yorkers.
CSS draws on a 170-year history of
excellence in addressing the root causes
of economic disparity. We respond
to urgent, contemporary challenges
through applied research, advocacy,
litigation, and innovative program
models that strengthen and benefit all
New Yorkers.

www.cssny.org

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he has a Masters in Public Policy from
Harvard University.

> "A lot of foster youth don't know what is available to them until it is too late."

Aretha is well aware of how foster youth can go from a college dorm to a homeless shelter in the blink of an eye. She has traveled that road herself.

Aretha was excited for her first year in college—living on campus and willing to put in the work. However, she couldn't afford to pay for books, and with no assistance from her adoptive mother, Aretha did not know where to turn. So she struggled through two semesters with no textbooks, often heeding the directive of professors who told students without books to not bother showing up.

Feeling that it was pointless to continue, Aretha withdrew from college. Soon after, she faced the prospect of turning 21 years old and, no longer welcome to stay with her adoptive mother, having no place to go. For one and a half years, Aretha was homeless, going from one women's shelter to the next.

Aretha now has her own apartment and is a participant in the Year Up program, which provides her with the opportunity to develop job skills and be placed in an internship. However, the disappointment over the lost opportunity to attend college stays with her.

Aretha feels that young people in foster care simply do not have the right information about college made available to them. "It's there, but it's like a secret," she says.

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

The Need for a Statewide Foster Youth College Success Initiative

The Problem

▶ **Low college success among foster youth**

New York State is home to approximately 20,000 young people living in foster care. In 2012, just over 4,000 college-age youth either remained in care or exited the foster care system.

When compared to young people in the general population, individuals who have been in foster care have lower levels of employment and earnings, and are more likely to rely on public assistance, be incarcerated, and suffer from mental health problems.

The best way to ensure a successful, independent adulthood is a college education: New Yorkers with a Bachelor's degree are half as likely to be unemployed, and earn more than twice as much as those with just a high school diploma.

But very few young people who have been in foster care enroll and graduate from college. **We estimate that just 18 to 24 percent of college-aged foster youth are enrolled in college in New York, compared to 60 percent of students overall statewide.**

▶ **What keeps foster youth from enrolling, staying, and succeeding in college?**

Foster youth have difficulty accessing and navigating complex or conflicting information on financial aid. Even when receiving the major forms of public financial aid available to them, a significant gap between total expenses and total assistance remains for most foster youth in college.

There is a lack of on-campus support for foster youth. Programs that seek to improve outcomes for disadvantaged youth in college exist; however, the extent to which foster youth are aware of and participating in these programs is too often contingent on the quality of their agency and caseworker.

The Solution

▶ **A coherent, cohesive college success program for foster youth**

Foster youth should be eligible for a comprehensive financial aid package, including full funding to post-secondary institutions in New York. We recommend that the state create a simple, straightforward process for foster youth to learn about, apply for, and receive this aid.

New York should incorporate elements of promising programs from around the country and develop a targeted support program that helps foster youth apply, enroll, and be successful while in college.

▶ **What this would mean for New York State**

Success in college would offer a real pathway to independence to young people who are in the state's care.

The increases in employment and earnings that come with a college degree will reduce the likelihood that foster youth will be dependent on public systems once they age out of care.

Due to the relatively low numbers of youth in care, this initiative would require minimal investment to make a full-scale impact.

Our Call To Action

▷ **The Youth in Care Coalition** is statewide group of organizations that serve, advocate for, and represent foster youth. The mission of the coalition is to improve the socioeconomic, health, housing, and educational outcomes for youth in care and aging out of care in New York State by collaboratively advocating for effective policies. Our first effort is to advocate for the establishment of a statewide college success initiative, so that foster youth who have worked hard and prepared themselves to attend college are supported both in enrolling and succeeding once they arrive on campus.

In New York State, 60% of public school students attend college after graduating high school. For foster youth, we estimate that only 18-24% will ever attend college. Those who do enroll often have trouble graduating. National studies find that just 2-7% of foster youth complete a two- or four-year degree. The current college success of foster youth in New York depends largely on good fortune—finding the right support in navigating an exceedingly complex financial aid system and making the transition to college. The time has arrived for all young people in the state's care to be offered an equal opportunity to put themselves on the most promising pathway to independent adulthood.

YiCC
YOUTH IN CARE COALITION

Youth in Care Coalition Steering Committee

Care Management Coalition of Western NY

Children's Aid Society

COFCCA

Community Service Society of New York

Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

FEGS

Good Shepherd Services

Hillside Family Agencies

Hope for Youth

New Yorkers for Children

Schuyler Center for Policy and Analysis

Youth In Progress

Youth Power

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE

The Need for a Statewide Foster Youth College Success Initiative

New York State is home to approximately 20,000 young people living in foster care. In 2012, about 4,000 youth between the ages of 18 and 21 were either still in care or exited the system. While the educational outcomes for these college-age youth are not tracked closely, our best estimates suggest that their rate of completing college is far lower than for public high school graduates in the state overall, and considerably lower than for low-income youth who have not been in foster care. As a result, they are likely to face significant challenges over their lifetimes in obtaining good-paying jobs and escaping lives of poverty and dependency.

If New York is committed to preparing youth in its care to be successful, independent adults, it must provide them with the opportunity to take the most recognized step toward self-sufficiency: obtaining a college degree. Some resources are available to help foster care youth attend college, but a lack of information, fragmented service system, and insufficient and complex financial aid combine to prevent many foster youth from getting the higher education they will need to succeed.

This document presents the need for New York to develop and implement a comprehensive, statewide college success initiative for youth in and aging out of foster care. Such an effort would support youth who have been in care to reach and succeed in college, putting them firmly on the path to becoming self-sustaining adults. This report is organized as follows:

1. The Need for This Work: the challenges facing youth aging out of foster care and the crucial importance of college.

2. Why So Few Foster Youth Attend College: the barriers to college success for youth in care.

3. What New York Can Learn from Other States: promising financial aid and supportive programming models from around the nation.

4. What New York's Foster Youth Need: Universal, Consistent Support: why New York should create a college success initiative for its youth in care.

"The most difficult thing about being in care was that my caseworkers had no idea what was available."

Sanaa's road to completing her degree was incredibly challenging. Her guidance counselor and caseworker were not very supportive of her college goals and did not inform her of her options and opportunities. "The most difficult thing about being in care was that my caseworkers had no idea what was available," she says. "I was the first one to go to college from that agency. They didn't know anything. They gave mixed information."

To make things more complicated, Sanaa was also moving between foster homes her senior year in high school, which made her doubt whether she should attend college at all. She chose her college based on the housing options and the affordable tuition. And though the money she received from Pell Grants, TAP, and academic scholarships covered her tuition, she still had to work multiple jobs to pay for other expenses. "At the time, Pell and TAP paid tuition and gave some money back. I was working two, three jobs at a time," she says. "Going to school full time, going to work at night, home at midnight, going to school in the morning. It was very challenging. I can't imagine having family to deal with. [Financial aid] is not enough in general."

Sanaa's path was much more difficult than it should have been. While she was in college, her caseworker visited once a semester, and there was no structured preparation for aging out. Now 23 years old, she was able to complete her Bachelor's degree and has begun graduate studies. Her achievements are a testament to her resourcefulness, as she was given limited support in overcoming significant barriers.

In many cases, young people enter the foster care system at an early age and are reunited with their parents or adopted after a relatively brief period of time. However, other young people remain in the state's care until they turn 18—usually living with foster parents, relatives, or at group residences—at which point they "age out," discharged from the system as independent adults. Several states, including New York, allow individuals to remain in foster care until they are 21 years old if they choose to do so.

Youth who age out of the foster care system must often make the transition to adulthood without the family support and security that others are able to rely on.[1] Several studies across the nation have examined the outcomes of youth who have aged out of the foster care system, all of which reveal poor outcomes. When compared to young people in the general population, individuals who age out of foster care have been found to be less likely to graduate from high school, have lower levels of employment and earnings, and are more likely to rely on public assistance, be incarcerated, and suffer from mental health problems.[2]

Aging out of Foster Care in New York: An Uncertain Future

Nearly two-thirds of youth who leave the foster care system in New York State return home and another 20 percent are adopted.[3] This is especially the case for younger foster children. However, in 2012 there were 1,827 young people ages 18 and over who exited the foster care system, nearly three-quarters of whom were discharged to independent living. There were additionally 2,243 young people ages 18 or older who remained in care at the end of 2012, nearly two-thirds of whom had been in care for over three years. It is these subgroups of foster care youth who are at the greatest of risk of experiencing significant difficulties transitioning to adulthood. These older youth face an uncertain future, with limited support along a difficult path to economic self-sustainability.

Leading up to the day a young person ages out of care, agencies and foster youth come up with a plan for how that young person will transition to living independently. However, many of the young people we spoke with said they still felt extremely unprepared for the day they aged out of the foster care system. Suddenly lacking housing and support from foster parents or agency staff, young people who age out of care are forced to navigate life situations and figure their future out by themselves, at a relatively young age when many young people still rely on their parents for assistance.

New York Foster Youth 18+ Years Old by Time in Care

| Time in Care	18+ years old discharged in 2012	18+ years old in care at end of 2012	Total
<1 year	157	168	325
1-2 years	194	249	443
2-3 years	194	357	551
>3 years	1,282	1,469	2,751
Total	1,827	2,243	4,070

The Best Pathway to Independence: Postsecondary Education

Higher education is the most proven pathway out of poverty and hardships and should be a goal for most foster children. However, according to the young people we spoke to, many foster youth are more focused on preparing to exit foster care by getting a job, saving money, and learning to live independently. For some, the idea of going to college seems overwhelming and beyond their reach.

THE VALUE OF AN EDUCATION

New Yorkers with only a high school degree are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than those with a Bachelor's degree or higher. And on average, those with a Bachelor's degree or higher earn more than double than those with just a high school diploma.

Chart 1: Unemployment Rate in New York State by Educational Attainment
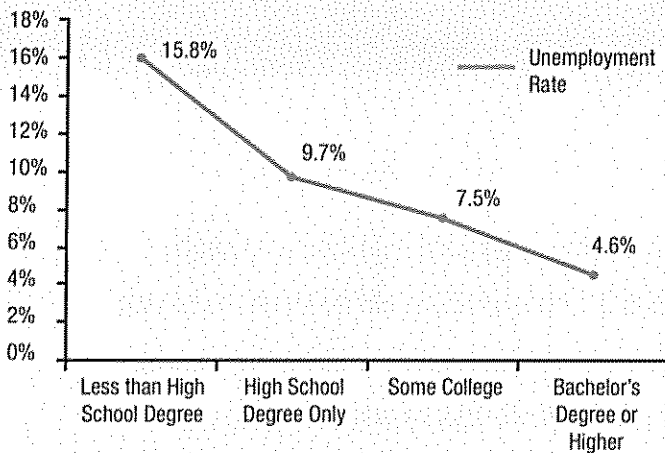
Chart 2: Average Weekly Earnings in New York State by Educational Attainment
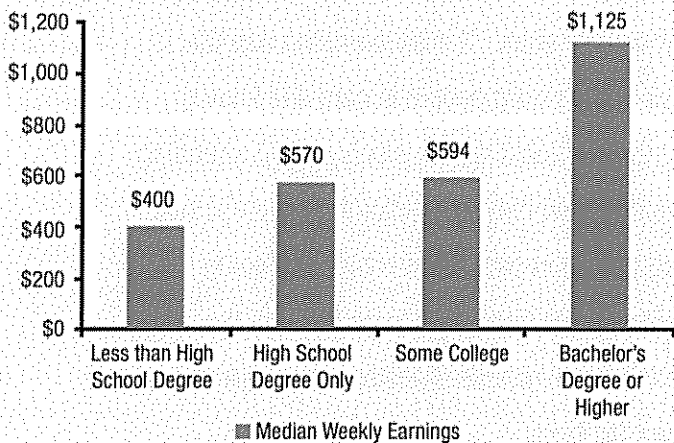
(Source: 2013 Current Population Survey)

The value of obtaining a college degree continues to grow for all young people, as at least some post-secondary credential is usually required to compete for jobs that pay family sustaining wages. Experts project that by 2018, nearly two-thirds of all jobs in New York State will require at least some post-secondary training.[4] Charts 1 and 2 show the value of increased levels of education related to employment and earnings.

The Low Levels of College Participation among Foster Youth

There is limited data available or collected by public agencies on post-secondary educational participation and outcomes for youth in or formerly in care in New York. Using data collected from various sources, we find that a very small share of foster youth in New York attend college (See Appendix A for methodology). We estimate that there are between 1,017 and 1,323 young people in or formerly in care in New York that are attending a post-secondary educational or training institution. If we define foster youth as those who were still in care at age 18 or older, and those who left care after their 16th birthday, then we estimate that between 18 and 24 percent of foster youth in New York are enrolled in college or a vocational training program. At public schools statewide, nearly 60 percent of all students enroll in post-secondary education the fall after they graduate.[5]

It is difficult to estimate rates of retention and graduation for New York foster youth who go to college; however, national estimates suggest that foster youth who enroll in college face difficulties completing their degree.[6] The low levels of college enrollment, retention, and graduation among foster youth are troubling given the challenges they have faced early in their lives and the poor outcomes detailed in national studies. If outcomes for youth who age out of care are to improve, greater participation in post-secondary education is essential.

"I wish everyone had the experience—the family, the caseworker—I had."

Katie finished her Associate's Degree and was all set to attend a four-year college in Albany to get her Bachelor's Degree. There was just one problem. After turning 21, her agency would no longer be paying for her living expenses, meaning she would be $11,000 dollars short of being able to cover her housing costs. Even though she received the full TAP, Pell, and ETV awards, there was no way she could pay for room and board. So she moved back to Syracuse, found a job, and bounced around between her foster parents, grandmother, and boyfriend. All the while, she took online courses, completing her Bachelor's degree in 2013.

Despite the challenges she faced, Katie says she is one of the lucky ones. "I wish everyone had the experience—the family, the caseworker—I had." Katie says many young people in care she knows have faced even more barriers than she has. She thinks the biggest obstacle to young people attending college is the cost, and the concern over where they will live and how they will make money once they age out of care. She also acknowledges that for many young people in care, the very idea of going to college seems far-fetched, and that they don't have the knowledge necessary to go through the application and enrollment process. Katie now spends time talking to groups of foster care children trying to encourage them to abandon the mindset that college is not for them.

2 Why So Few Foster Youth Attend College:
The barriers to college success for youth in care.

Our interviews with young people in care confirmed that the unique barriers to college for foster youth revolve around the daunting financial aid process, as well as a lack of consistent information and support in applying to and enrolling in college. While these issues may make college difficult for many young people, foster youth experience these challenges even more acutely.

The Cost of College: High and Rising

The rising cost of college—including at public universities—is a growing problem for even middle-class kids whose parents can provide substantial financial support. For children who have been in foster care, who lack savings and are often unaware of financial aid options, the cost can prevent them from even considering going to college. Many of the youth in care we spoke with said that the cost of college has been an enormous obstacle, one they continually have to overcome by working extra jobs and receiving assistance from nonprofit organizations. At the state's public universities—the City University of New York (CUNY) and the State University of New York (SUNY)—the cost of full time attendance ranges from nearly $18,000 to over $26,000 annually depending on the school and type of program. Since 2008, the cost of tuition at a CUNY senior college for a full-time student has increased 43 percent. At SUNY, tuition for a full-time student at a senior college has increased 35 percent. At the same time, the award amount granted by the state's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) has remained relatively stagnant—the maximum award had been unchanged at $5,000 since 2000,[7] until April 2014, when the Governor's new budget included a $165 increase to the maximum TAP award.

Financial Aid for Youth in Care: A Complex Maze

Youth in or formerly in care are eligible for various forms of financial aid; however they comprise a complex set of resources that can be difficult to piece together, and do not always add up to the costs young people face. The main forms of aid that foster care youth can use to help pay for college are Educational and Training Vouchers, a federal program administered by the State specifically for foster youth; Pell Grants, a federal program for low-income students; and the Tuition Assistance Program, a state program primarily for low-income students. For a detailed description of these programs, and policies regarding room and board payment for foster youth in college, see Appendix B.

> People in care are trying to find a place to go. You're turning 21, you only have a few months to find an apartment. You're not worried about college. You're worried about getting a job.
>
> Malik, 18
> High School Senior

WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

Financial aid programs can provide opportunities for low-income youth, both in and out of care, to access higher education while reducing some of the burden of taking out loans they will have to repay. However, these programs in most cases do not cover the entire expense of college. Youth in care, many of whom have no family support, are faced with tremendous challenges affording college even when exhausting the aid that is available to them.

Table 1:
Annual Cost of Attending SUNY/CUNY and Sources of Funding for Youth Still in Care

	SUNY – BA	SUNY - AA	CUNY – BA	CUNY - AA
Tuition	$5,870	$3,960	$6,030	$4,500
Fees	$1,350	$550	$240	$215
Housing	$11,770	$9,730	$10,386	$10,386
Books and Supplies	$1,270	$1,310	$1,304	$1,304
Transportation	$990	$1,280	$1,020	$1,020
Food	Included	Included	$3,168	$3,168
Personal Expenses	$1,450	$1,110	$4,106	$4,106
Total	**$22,700**	**$17,940**	**$26,254**	**$24,699**
Average ETV + TAP + Pell	$10,715	$8,781	$11,004	$9,091
Maximum State Room and Board Assistance	$6,255	$6,255	$6,714	$6,714
Total Assistance	$16,970	$15,036	$17,718	$15,805
THE GAP FACING FOSTER YOUTH	$5,730	$2,904	$8,536	$8,894

As Table 1 shows, the average student receives enough ETV, Pell, and TAP money to cover tuition and a portion of their other expenses at a CUNY or SUNY college; however, this still leaves a large gap in meeting the total cost of attendance. Even when assuming the maximum amount of state contribution toward room and board, a significant gap between total expenses and total assistance remains. The cost of attending independent, private universities in the state varies, but many are significantly more expensive than public universities.

OCFS policy allowing agencies to pay for college room and board are helpful, but leave out those who have aged out of the foster care system. Additionally, the policy itself is complex, requiring an agency and college to work together to sort out payments and, in some cases, find appropriate living arrangements. The chart also assumes the maximum amount the state will pay toward room and board; however, local social service districts set their own rates, which are in some cases significantly lower than the state's maximum. (See Appendix B for a more detailed description of state policy on paying for college room and board.)

In some cases—particularly when receiving the maximum grant awards—it is possible for a foster youth to access enough financial aid from existing public resources to pay for college. But to do so requires navigating an extremely complex system. Young people we spoke with also expressed concerns over where they would stay during breaks in school, and receiving grant payments too late to make tuition and other payments on time. And perhaps most importantly, the degree to which young people are aware of their financial aid options, including payments for room and board, are often contingent on the quality of their agency and caseworker, which can vary drastically. Given the stakes, there should be consistent access to the information and resources available to all foster youth.

Programmatic Supports: Inconsistent Access

In addition to the issue of paying for college, foster youth face additional challenges in attending and succeeding in college associated with not having adequate family support. Parents can often be an invaluable resource for young people attending college, from helping navigate the application process to providing needed emotional and financial support once young people are enrolled.

The Unique Challenges of Foster Youth in College

Even the most well prepared individuals can have difficulty with the transition to college. For foster youth, who often don't have the support of a family to guide them through the transition, there are unique challenges that they must overcome.

◆ Lack of parental support in the application process and decision making

◆ Lack of financial support for application fees, books, and daily expenses

◆ Lack of a place to go during school breaks

◆ Lack of emotional support from parents

◆ Lack of housing or financial "safety net"

◆ Lack of assistance paying back loans if necessary

New York is home to a limited set of programs that show what kind of impact supportive services can have on youth who are at risk of not completing college. One program that has been showing great success is the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) at CUNY community colleges in New York City. ASAP—which serves all students, not just foster youth—provides community college students with educational, social and financial support so that students can complete their degree in a timely manner. Key components of ASAP include block scheduling, small class sizes, required full-time study, and comprehensive advisement. Results of both internal and external evaluations have shown that ASAP has improved retention and graduation rates. The ASAP graduation rate is more than three times the national three-year graduation rate for urban community colleges, and ASAP students outperform non-ASAP comparison students by wide margins.

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at public universities and the Higher Educational Opportunity Program (HEOP) at private universities across New York offer supportive services and financial aid to students who would not have been accepted under normal admissions standards. Students receive financial assistance, counseling, and academic support to help them complete their degree. As with ASAP, HEOP and EOP do not target foster youth, nor is there data that shows the extent to which foster youth utilize these programs.

For foster youth specifically, the Guardian Scholars program run by the nonprofit New Yorkers for Children in New York City has had tremendous success in helping foster youth in college. The program offers financial and academic support to help young people succeed in college and transition to adulthood. Nearly 80 percent of the youth they serve are on track to graduate on time.

There are several other programs across the state that can be beneficial to foster students who aspire to get a college degree. However, there is no centralized system by which all foster youth are made aware of the resources available to them and directed to services that would be most beneficial for them. Foster care agencies do have educational specialists on staff, but the extent to which these workers are engaged and knowledgeable enough to direct foster youth to the right programs varies dramatically. And for youth who have left the foster care system, their ability to access beneficial programs is even more limited.
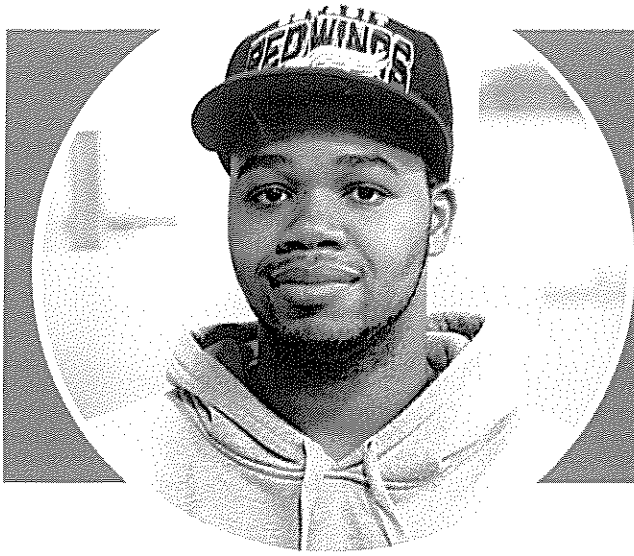
> "My program was crucial—it helped throughout college."

Anthony is a 21-year-old student at a community college in Manhattan who will be transferring to a four-year college in Fall 2014.

For Anthony, a program he found outside his foster care agency played a large role in helping him navigate the college going process. He worked at a youth communication magazine where he learned about a non-profit organization that helps youth apply for college. The program provides one-to-one counseling guiding young people through the steps of applying to and enrolling in college. "It was a pain," he says. "After handing in a document, I would have to bring something else in. Proof of residency, transcript, figuring out how much financial aid was coming in. I knew of a place that helps to transition youth to college. They helped with the FAFSA. I had a counselor. My program was crucial—it helped throughout college."

Anthony is aware that there are several organizations that provide helpful services for youth in care, but many young people simply do not know about them. He believes there should be more supportive programming specifically geared toward youth in and aging out of care.

Several states across the country have acknowledged that the available resources for young people in care are not sufficient. Twenty-one states have policies ensuring that foster youth do not have to pay any tuition, and several others have allocated state funds to help foster youth pay for college.

Financial aid programs specifically for foster youth seeking to attend college are beneficial in a variety of ways. The extra source of funding can fill in the gap between what a young person receives in other forms of aid and the amount owed in tuition, fees, and in some cases, other expenses. Secondly, in certain states, where tuition and fees are waived by presenting the appropriate forms to the financial aid office, students are not forced to cobble together different forms of financial aid to meet tuition costs, and can use other forms of aid to pay for school-related expenses. As importantly, centralized scholarship programs for foster youth make the process of financial aid seem less daunting. With all of the other challenges they face, foster youth may feel more optimistic about their chances of attending college if they have a clearer knowledge that they won't be responsible for paying tuition or having to go through an uncertain and complex financial aid process.

Educational Support Models around the Country

According to John Emerson of Casey Family Programs, seven states are leading the way in addressing the college enrollment and success of foster youth: California, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.[8] These states have all cultivated collaborative relationships between higher education and the child welfare system to improve post-secondary outcomes for foster care youth.

If New York is to join the list of states recognized as leaders in the area of improving educational outcomes for foster youth, it should consider institutionalizing and expanding the reach of existing programs to serve youth in care. A statewide initiative in which supportive programs are available to foster youth at colleges across the state will ensure that more of these young people are benefiting from the financial and academic supports they clearly need.

No, [the financial aid] is not enough. I started working at school. I have my own apartment and bills. Tap and Pell are not enough to cover living expenses.

Shaqueana, 24
Community College Freshman

Youth in care are dealing with more personal challenges—instability, worrying about where to live, communication with a broken family. These stressors are hard to deal with alone, in addition to education and a job.

Sanaa, 23
Graduate Student

Many states and university systems are making sure every foster youth attending college is able to access beneficial services on campus. Below is a list of some of the key attributes of successful state and university policies and programs for foster youth.

- Pre-college preparation

- Additional funding/scholarships for youth in care

- Mentoring and counseling programs

- Increased coordination between child welfare agencies and university systems

- Internships and career coaching

- Academic tutoring

- Dedicated foster care liaisons on campus

- Help finding housing over breaks

- Websites with information on colleges/resources for foster youth

COLLEGE SUPPORT PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Across the country, states are taking proactive measures so that foster youth are given the opportunity to succeed in college. Twenty-one states ensure that foster youth will not have to pay tuition, with several others allocating state funds to help foster youth pay for college.

The examples of Texas and Florida are particularly useful in that they make the financial aid process simple, with funding that is not meant to supplement other forms of aid solely to cover tuition. This means that students can use other forms of aid for other college related expenses. Our conversations with youth support the idea that having aid for other expenses—aside from tuition—is the critical, missing piece in the financial aid packages they receive.

Financial Aid: Promising Models

In **Texas**, students who were in the foster care system after their 14th birthday qualify for a tuition and fee waiver at any public college or vocational school. Tuition and fees are waived by presenting the appropriate forms to the financial aid office, so students are not forced to cobble together different forms of financial aid to meet tuition costs, and can use other forms of aid to pay for school related expenses.
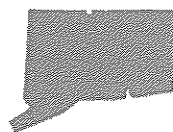
In **Connecticut**, youth who were adopted after December 31, 2004 or were still in care at age 18 are eligible to have their post-secondary education expenses covered. The state will pay for expenses equal to the cost of tuition, fees, and room and board at the University of Connecticut, though the student can attend the school of their choice and also use funds for books or health care as long as the total does not exceed the cost of attending the University of Connecticut.

In **Florida**, foster youth are exempt from paying tuition and fees at state universities and community colleges. Young people only need to obtain an exemption letter from their caseworker and provide it to the financial aid office at their school. Foster youth attending college are also eligible for the state's Road to Independence program, in which they are awarded a stipend, in addition to any other forms of financial aid they may be receiving.

In **New Jersey**, the NJFC Scholars Program provides funding for youth who have experienced out-of-home placements, independent living arrangements, or homelessness. If the student is eligible for the ETV, then the state waiver can be combined with the ETV to pay for tuition, fees, room and board, books, and other expenses. Youth must have resided in an out-of-home placement for 9 months after their 16th birthday.

States are also providing essential program supports to youth seeking to attend college. In addition to programs specifically for foster youth, these efforts aim to ensure that all foster youth in college are aware of campus resources that can help them succeed.

The data on how supportive programs are helping foster youth succeed in college is limited. Arizona, which recently implemented a financial support program for foster youth in college, will be conducting an evaluation of the program over the five-year pilot period.

Supportive Programming: Promising Models

After implementing a number of programs expanding educational supports for foster youth, researchers in **Washington** found that college enrollment during the first year after expected high school graduation among youth in foster care rose from 16 percent to 20 percent from 2006 to 2009. The state's Passport to College Promise Program was created to encourage foster youth to attend and succeed in college. Eligible applicants may qualify for scholarships, guidance from academic and financial aid counselors, and support finding housing over breaks. An evaluation of the program found that participants had retention and completion rates similar to non-foster students.

In **California**, the Guardian Scholars program was started in the late 1990s and has spread throughout the state. The model has been replicated throughout the nation. The program provides individual mentoring and referrals to campus resources for youth in care. In addition to the growing number of schools participating in the Guardian Scholars program, all of the state's 112 community and technical colleges have a dedicated foster care liaison as part of the California Community College Chancellor's Office Foster Youth Success Initiative. Foster youth scholars in California campus support programs are three times more likely to persist in college than foster youth nationwide.

In **North Carolina**, the North Carolina Reach program was developed in partnership with Foster Care to Success—the state's ETV administrator—to provide students from foster care with funding for college, mentorships, internships, care packages, and access to helpful information and resources. Individuals who aged out of the foster care system or those who were adopted after they were 12 years old are eligible for the NC Reach Scholarship Program.

In **Ohio**, the Reach program has received substantial funding from the State to promote and expand support services to foster youth in college. There is a focus on collaboration and networking between colleges and social service providers, and the website includes a list of campus liaisons at many Ohio colleges and universities.

> **"I tried to reach out to people on campus for help, but no one understood my situation of being in foster care."**

Alexis looks back and thinks that if she had the right supports, she would have graduated by now. As a foster youth at a community college near her hometown of Syracuse, she struggled to adjust and didn't feel she had the resources to help her succeed. "I tried to reach out to people on campus for help," Alexis says, "but no one understood my situation of being in foster care."

She withdrew from the college after two semesters and now, at age 21, is making the tough adjustment to independent living.

Alexis also says things could have been better had she been able to attend college outside her hometown, because she had too many distractions and too much turmoil to deal with. She feels if she could have attended a school where she could live on campus, she would have been able to focus better.

But without a guarantee of where she could stay during school breaks, and not enough financial aid to cover on-campus housing costs, she felt her only option was her local community college. She is now working toward her Associate's Degree at an online university and hopes to work in criminal justice or with kids in the foster care system.

Young people who grow up and age out of the foster care system face tremendous challenges as they transition to life as independent young adults. Without a supportive family structure to rely on, or school and community networks to lead them in a positive direction, many young people who age out of care are not able to successfully make that transition. Instead, they wind up shifting from one public agency to the next. The data is clear that young people who attain a college degree will fare far better in employment and earnings outcomes than those who do not. However, with inadequate financial, social, and educational supports, the State of New York is not ensuring that its foster youth are being given the opportunity to succeed in college.

The current financial aid programs for foster care youth are usually not enough to cover their college related expenses. And even when they do, young people have to navigate high levels of administrative complexity. Streamlining the financial aid system and providing additional supports could go a long way toward helping foster youth succeed in college. These supports can take on various forms: mentorships, tutoring, advisement on classes and majors, career coaching, assistance with transportation and housing needs. And even before students enroll in college, prospective students should be provided with support ranging from test-preparation, application assistance, fee waivers, and college visits.

Speaking with young people who have been in foster care provides anecdotal evidence that given sufficient financial aid and the right guidance and support, young people aging out of the system can succeed in college. These success stories are examples of tremendously resourceful individuals who found a way to overcome obstacles in obtaining a college education. But we also heard that many youth in care aren't aware of the resources available to them or are simply facing too much stress dealing with becoming independent adults with no family and financial support to rely on to think about college. Many simply find the proposition unrealistic. It is up to the state to correct this perception, by creating a college success initiative that makes college a realistic option that foster youth can aspire to and gives them the tools to succeed: early guidance starting in middle and high school, help navigating the college application process, financial aid to cover tuition and living costs, and on-going academic and social support. If we are to make better outcomes for youth in care a goal, then the system of supports and resources must be universal across the state and easily accessible to all of those who can benefit from them.

The time is now for a systematic, statewide initiative to support the college success of our foster youth. It is the goal of the Youth in Care Coalition to use this document in partnership with public and private sector stakeholders to create a foster youth college success initiative that is right for New York State.

In order to estimate the number of foster youth in a post-secondary education and training program in New York, we utilized three pieces of information:

1. The number of Educational and Training Voucher recipients in the state.
2. The number of Back to School Program recipients in the state.
3. A nationally recognized study on the outcomes of foster youth conducted by the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

Educational and Training Vouchers

The Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program is a federal program that provides financial support of up to $5,000 per year for post-secondary education or training to young adults in or formerly in the foster care system. Financial assistance through the ETV is available in New York to foster youth and youth who left care after they were 16 years old. In New York (and eight other states), the nonprofit organization Foster Care to Success administers the ETV program. We were able to collect data from Foster Care to Success on the number of ETV recipients in New York State.

Over the last five years (2009/10 thru 2013/14), an average of 848 students were awarded ETV funding in New York. This includes an average of 375 new recipients and 473 returning students. Seventy percent of these students were awarded funds to attend a CUNY or SUNY school.

According to Eileen McCaffrey, the Executive Director of Foster Care to Success, and other experts in the field, only about two-thirds of eligible recipients apply to and receive ETV funding. If we assume that the average of 848 students who received funding over the last five years is only two-thirds of the students eligible, we would assume that each year there are 1,298 students in post-secondary education or training in the state of New York who are eligible for ETV funding.

Back to School Program Data

In New York City, New Yorkers for Children (NYFC) is a nonprofit organization that serves as a partner to New York City's Administration for Children's Services, the city agency that runs the foster care system. NYFC administers a range of programming supporting youth in and aging and out of care, several of which are aimed at helping young people attend and succeed in college. One such program is the Back to School Program, which provides college students with necessities such as backpacks, linens, school supplies, computers, and other items.

We were able to obtain data from NYFC on the number of back to school kits they send out each semester. NYFC collects the name of every foster child in NYC who is attending college from the education coordinators at the agencies working with foster children in New York City. While there is no way of ensuring that the list they receive includes every young person, they feel it does capture a high percentage of young people in care in New York City who are going to college.

The last four semesters (Fall 2012-Fall 2013), NYFC has sent out an average of 408 back to school kits, which suggests that there are on average 408 young people from the New York City foster care system who are enrolled in post-secondary education or training. However, NYFC does not send kits to those who have aged out of the foster care system. The 408 kits they send out represents nearly 24 percent of foster youth age 18 or over in New York City who are still in the foster care system. If 24 percent of youth who were discharged at age 18 or older in New York City are also in college—but did not receive back to school kits—that would be an additional 304 students for a total of 712 New York City students in or aged out of foster care attending a post-secondary institution. New York City represents 70 percent of the youth who either left care at 18 years of age or older or who remained in care at age 18 or older. If we assume that New York City also has 70 percent of the youth in care who are in college, then the total number of youth in college in the state is 1,017.

National Estimates

We can also use national figures to estimate the number of foster youth in post-secondary institutions in New York. A 2005 Chapin Hall study that is widely cited for its data on the outcomes of foster youth found that 32.5 percent of 19 year olds who were in or formerly in foster care reported being enrolled at a post-secondary educational or training program. If we assume that 32.5 percent of the 4,070 youth 18 years of age or older who are in care or left care after they turned 18 are in college or a training program, then we would assume that 1,323 young people in New York are in care and in a post-secondary institution.

Final Calculations

According to our calculations, there are between 1,017and 1,323 young people in or formerly in care in New York that are attending a post-secondary educational or training institution. In addition to the 4,070 young people age 18 or older who were either in care or left care in 2012, we also want to include those who left care at age 16 or older to determine the percentage of in care and formerly in care youth who are in college. (This is because the ETV and most state-level programs around the country make awards available to those who left foster care at age 16 or later).

In 2012, 2,910 young people age 14-17 left care. If we assume that half of these young people were 16 or 17 years of age, then there are an additional 1,455 young people we want to include in our calculation. If we include the assumed 1,455 young people who left foster care at age 16 or 17 (half of 14-17 year old discharges), and the 4,070 who either left care or remained in care at age 18 or older (for a total of 5,525 young people), then we estimate that between 18 and 24 percent of foster youth in New York are enrolled in college or a vocational training program.

Appendix B: Sources of Funding for Foster Youth in College

The three major sources of funding for foster youth to attend post-secondary education or training are Education and Training Vouchers (ETV), Pell Grants and The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). ETVs are specifically for foster youth; Pell Grants and TAP funding are accessible to all students.

In order to calculate the average amount of funding foster youth currently receive, and the subsequent gap between that funding and the cost of attendance, we combined the averages for these sources of funding. For TAP and ETV funding, we were able to calculate average award by the institution and type of programming. For Pell Grants, we were only able to calculate average awards for all schools and programs in the State.

Education and Training Vouchers

The Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) program is a federal program that provides financial support of up to $5,000 per year for post-secondary education or training to young adults in or formerly in the foster care system. Financial assistance through the ETV is available in New York to foster youth and youth who left care after they were 16 years old.

In 2012–2013, the average amount of ETV funding in New York was $3,358.36 per student.

The average award for CUNY/SUNY schools by type of program is as follows:

SUNY 4 year: $4,198
SUNY 2 year: $2,719
CUNY 4 year: $3,546
CUNY 2 year: $2,505

Federal Pell Grants

The federal Pell Grant program provides need-based grants to low-income students. Award amounts are determined by the student's expected family contribution (which is calculated using income, family size, and other factors), cost of attendance, and enrollment status (full or part time). The maximum Pell Grant amount in 2012–2013 was $5,550.

The average Pell Grant award in New York in 2012–2013 was $3,743. While this is the number we use for the purposes of our calculations, a 2006 report by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators found that nationally, foster youth receive, on average, about 10 percent less in Pell Grants than non-foster youth.

Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is a New York State run program that offers financial assistance for youth attending college in the state. Effective 2014-2015, the maximum TAP award will be $5,165.

In 2012–2013, the average TAP award was $2,966 per full-time equivalent student across all colleges in the state, and $2,873 at the CUNY/SUNY colleges. The average award for CUNY/SUNY schools by type of program is as follows:

SUNY 4 year: $2,774
SUNY 2 year: $2,319
CUNY 4 year: $3,715
CUNY 2 year: $2,843

OCFS Policy on Room and Board

According to policy of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), youth in care who are in college may have their room and board paid for, as long as the cost does not exceed the amount that would be paid to a family if the young person were living in a family boarding home. They can also pay for off-campus housing if a student chooses to live off campus. In those cases, the college would assist the young person in finding a living arrangement and be responsible for transferring funds from the agency to the individual providing the room. Agencies are not allowed to provide payment directly to the student or the person providing room and board, unless it is certified for foster boarding home care.

In 2012–2013, the maximum foster boarding home payment was $746 per month in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester (metro areas) and $695 in the rest of the state (upstate). For our estimates, we use this maximum payment for nine months to calculate OCFS payment toward room and board for a young person in college. This amounts to $6,714 in metro areas and $6,255 upstate. It should be noted that our chart assumes the state's maximum foster boarding rate; however, local social service districts set their own rates, which are in some cases significantly lower than the state's maximum.

We assume that students attending a CUNY school are eligible for the metro rate and that students attending a SUNY school are eligible for the upstate rate. This may not always be the case. Also, foster boarding rates for group homes vary widely. Since a majority of young people in care are in foster homes or with relatives, as opposed to in group residences, we use the rates for foster parents in our chart.

OCFS policies on room and board do not provide for youth who have left or aged out of foster care. In localities across the state, foster care agencies are providing money to help with housing for college students who have aged out of care. Typically, after a young person turns 21 years old, their foster parent or group home will no longer receive payments for housing. Increasingly, exceptions to this policy have been granted, allowing payments to continue even after a young person turns 21 years old. In New York City, the Administration for Children's Services allocates funding each year to cover housing expenses for college students up until they are 23 years old.

Funding for housing for youth who have aged out of care vary greatly from county to county and are not considered a part of typical funding for in care or formerly in care youth in college.

Endnotes

1. Casey Family Programs. "Improving Outcomes for Older Youth in Foster Care." 2008.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Data on the number of youth in care in New York State and their discharge type come from the 2012 Monitoring and Analysis Profiles (MAPS) produced by the Office of Children and Family Services.

4. Carnevale, A.P., Smith, N., and Strohl, J. "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018." June 2010. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

5. CSS analysis of State Education Department data.

6. According to a 2010 Chapin Hall study, while 37.4 percent of the studies participants completed one year of college by age 23 or 24, only 6.2 percent attained an Associate's or Bachelor's degree. Other national statistics suggest only 2 percent of foster youth complete a Bachelor's degree. And ETV data in New York suggests low rates of retention, as the number of returning ETV recipients is far lower than the number who obtained ETV funding the previous year.

7. The State University of New York. "An Analysis of the Tuition Assistance Program."

8. Gonzalves, L. "Unleashing College Success for Youth from Foster Care, Nationwide Advances." August 2013. The Chronicle of Social Change.

CURRENT & FORMER FOSTER YOUTH:

Do you have QUESTIONS about college?
Wondering if you can afford it? Or if you even want to go?

Do you have EXPERIENCE applying or going to college?
What can you tell other youth who are thinking about it now?

Do you have OPINIONS about foster youth and college?
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☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

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Address: 309 West 104th St #4D NY NY 10025

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Legal Aid Society - Kathleen Kelleher

Address: 199 Water St NY NY 10038

I represent: Legal Aid Society

Address: _____

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Name: Susan Rivers

Address: Brooklyn

I represent: Community Voices Heard

Address: _____

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Name: Bill Busk

Address: Bronx

I represent: Community Voices Heard

Address: _____

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Name: Milinda Nimmons

Address: Brooklyn

I represent: Community Voices Heard

Address: _____

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Name: Noah Franklin

Address: 480 7th Ave #3, Bklyn NY

I represent: FPWA

Address: 281 Park Ave South, NY, NY 10010

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Date: 6/16/14

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Name: Stephanie Gendell

Address: _____

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children

Address: _____

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

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Name: Emicia Parker

Address: 345 Classon Avenue #7B

I represent: Miss Plus America & Foster Children

Address: _____

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Date: 6/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LaTanya Smitherman

Address: 1085 Nelson Avenue 6A BX NY

I represent: Graham Windham / alumni of foster care

Address: _____

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Name: Donald Fields

Address: 2034 eighth Ave Apt 2C

I represent: myself and former foster

Address: youth

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 187, 137, 104 Res. No. _____

☑ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Krista Gundersen

Address: _____

I represent: Lawyers For Children

Address: 110 Lafayette St NY, NY 10013

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Appearance Card

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jessica Maxwell

Address: 102 East 22nd Street

I represent: The Youth in care Coalition / Children's Aid Society

Address: _____

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☒ in favor   ☐ in opposition

Date: _June 16, 2014_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _PRITI P. KATARIA, Esq._

Address: _110 Lafayette Street, 8th Fl, New York NY 10013_

I represent: _Lawyers for Children_

Address: _____

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Name: _Gary Parker_

Address: _____

I represent: _NYU McSilver Institute_

Address: _41 E 11th St NY, NY 10003_

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Name: _Sabine Chery_

Address: _ACS_

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Name: Pete Naborny

Address: _____

I represent: ACS

Address: _____

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Name: Benita R. Miller

Address: _____

I represent: ACS

Address: _____

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Name: Jacqueline Roth

Address: ACS

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _6-16-14_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _Apurva Mehrotra_

Address: _____

I represent: _Community Service Society_

Address: _105 E 22nd_

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☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: _Thomas Hilliard_

Address: _120 Wall St_

I represent: _Center for an Urban Future_

Address: _____

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