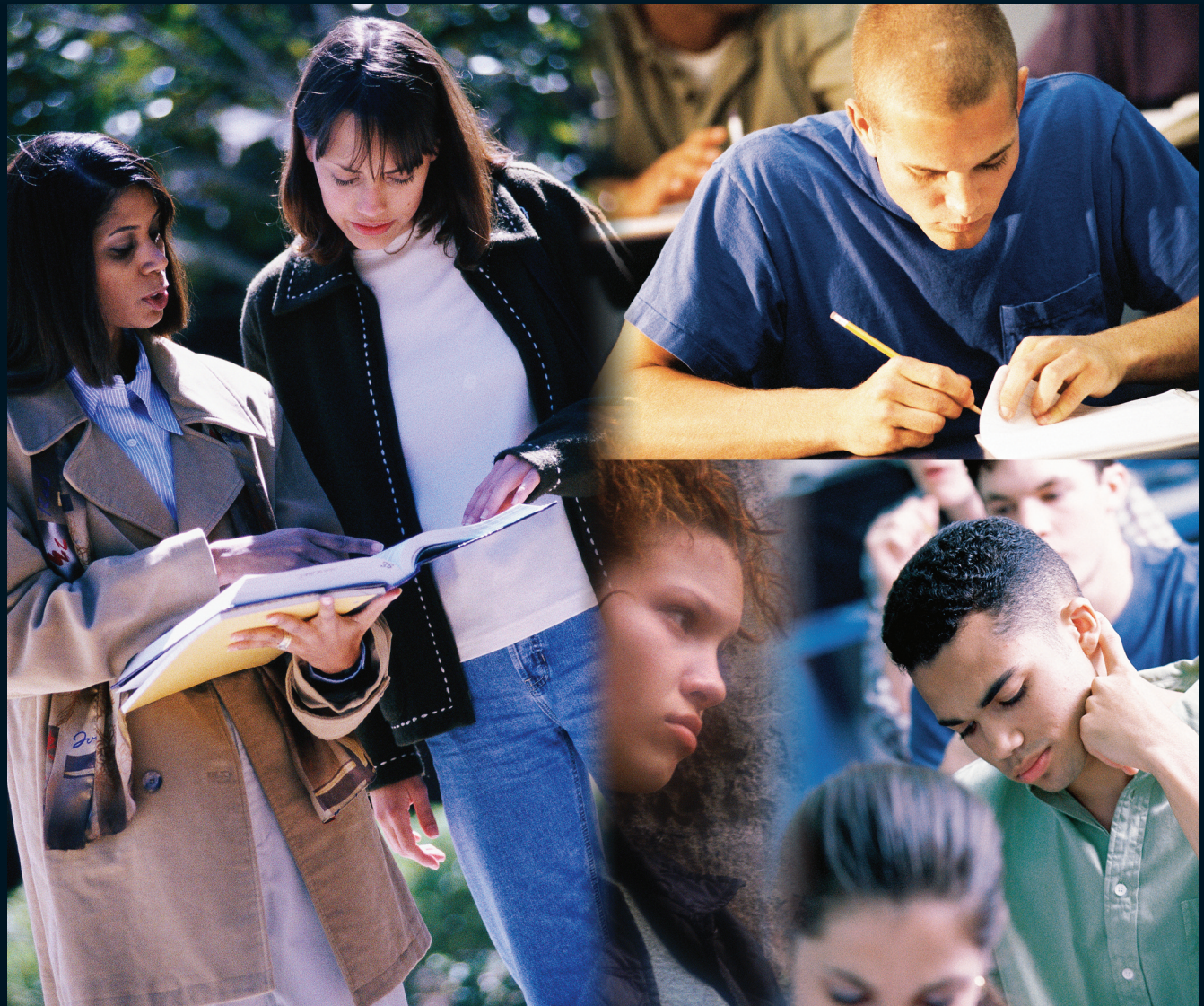


# Successful Transitions Initiative Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative

**FINAL REPORT**  
**September 2011**



prepared by



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serving the public good, shaping tomorrow's leaders

**Institute for Public Administration**  
**School of Public Policy & Administration**  
**College of Arts & Sciences**  
**University of Delaware**

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**James Flynn, Gauhar Ospanova, and Lisa Moreland**

project manager

**James Flynn**

funded by the

**Policy Consensus Initiative**

# **Successful Transitions Initiative Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative**

**Final Report  
September 2011**

Authors  
**Lisa Moreland  
Gauhar Ospanova**

Project Manager  
**James Flynn**

*Prepared by*  
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# PREFACE

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As the director of the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware, I am pleased to provide this summary report on the Successful Transitions Initiative (STI)/Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI).

In September 2011, former Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner and the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI)—a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working with leaders to create collaborative processes and harness resources from public, private, and civic centers—contracted with IPA to facilitate and provide coordinating services for their Successful Transitions Initiative (STI).

STI was spearheaded earlier that same year by Governor Minner, co-chair of PCI along with former Wyoming Governor James Edward “Jim” Geringer, to address the needs of youth aging out of foster care through a collaborative, agreement-seeking process in which the major public agencies serving youth, elected leaders, nonprofit service providers, housing agencies and developers, educational institutions, philanthropies, faith organizations, and civic activists would come together to create a seamless set of services designed to assist young people aging out of the foster-care system to successfully transition to adulthood.

The ultimate goal of STI was to obtain commitments from public, private, and civic sources to ensure that every young person aging out of foster care who needs transitional services will have adequate housing, educational opportunities, transportation, life-skills support, and job training. It was anticipated that STI would be a national model for other states facing similar problems as their youth age out of foster care.

IPA’s project team was responsible for facilitating the STI meetings, keeping the process moving and the partners focused on outcomes. IPA staff kept meeting notes and posted them on the project website ([www.ipa.udel.edu/pci](http://www.ipa.udel.edu/pci)) in a timely manner. IPA’s project team also provided staff support to STI’s workgroups on an as-needed basis.

This report documents the key phases of STI’s development to date: from its inception, initiated and funded by PCI and Governor Minner, to its merging with other concurrent activities and subsequent transformation as a true collaboration among partners working toward a statewide comprehensive implementation plan that addresses the needs of and improves the outcomes for Delaware’s transitioning youth.

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute for Public Administration

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This report was prepared by the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration (IPA), a unit within the College of Arts & Sciences’ School of Public Policy & Administration. IPA links the research and resources of the University of Delaware with the management and information needs of local, state, and regional governments in the Delaware Valley. IPA provides assistance to agencies and local governments through direct staff assistance and research projects as well as training programs and policy forums. IPA addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow’s leaders.

Special thanks to **former Governor Ruth Ann Minner**, who started and brought momentum to the Initiative, and to **Governor Jack Markell** for his commitment to strengthening Delaware’s services and programs for the state’s foster-care youth.

The help of **Secretary Vivian Rapposelli**, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and, Their Families, and **Nancy Wagner**, Delaware State University, have been invaluable for the development of the Initiative.

IPA is also grateful to PCI staff members **Wendy Willis**, Interim Director, and **Roslyn Owen**, Program Representative, for their expertise and support.

IPA’s STI project team, which was led by **Dr. James Flynn** (project manager) and included **Fran Fletcher, Julia O’Hanlon, Lisa Moreland, Gauhar Ospanova, and Amy Clark**, should be recognized for successfully steering the Successful Transitions Initiative, which involved many stakeholders, throughout its transformations as well as coordinating the publication of the DYOI’s Environmental Scan, which will serve as the foundation for the state’s comprehensive implementation plan.

IPA acknowledges the hard work and dedication of **Janet Leban**, Delaware Center for Justice, and **Carl Schnee**, Delaware Children’s Campaign, as well as all of its partners in the Successful Transitions Initiative/Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative. Their contributions made this important project a resounding success.

IPA staff member **Lisa Moreland** served as the author and editor of the report. **Gauhar Ospanova**, an IPA graduate research assistant, also contributed to the writing of the report. **Dr. James Flynn** and **Lauren Corcoran**, and IPA undergraduate research assistant, contributed to the editing of the report. IPA staff member **Mark Deshon** designed the report cover and oversaw its publication.



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# INTRODUCTION

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Every year, between 60 and 75 children turn 18 and age out of foster care in the state of Delaware. Of those youth, only 28 percent will have obtained or will be on track to obtain a high school diploma or GED; 70 percent of the women will be pregnant by age of 21; and 25 percent will be incarcerated within two years after leaving foster care.

Former Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner pointed to these statistics as the driving force behind her launch of the Successful Transitions Initiative (STI) with former Wyoming Governor James Edward “Jim” Geringer, chair of the Oregon-based Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI)—a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working with leaders to create collaborative processes and harness resources from public, private, and civic centers. Early in summer 2010, with the support of PCI and its Deputy Director Wendy Willis, Governor Minner sought to bring together partners from the public, nonprofit, and business sectors to address the needs of youth aging out of foster care through a collaborative and solutions-based process.

## SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS INITIATIVE

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“All young people deserve a safe, stable, and affordable place to live, access to health care (including mental health care), a stable education, and opportunities to achieve economic success and independence. Moreover,” continued former Governor Minner, “they should have opportunities to be engaged in directing their own lives and in the community surrounding them. They deserve to be heard, informed, and respected.”

During her two terms in office (2000-2008), Governor Minner, brought issues related to youth aging out of foster care to the forefront of her administration’s policy recommendations and initiatives. In January of 2001, Governor Minner commissioned an eight-member task force to review the strengths and weaknesses of Delaware’s foster care system and make recommendations on how to improve it. Members of the Foster Care Task Force included grassroots organizations and citizens, legislators, the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families staff, and nonprofit organizations. Task force members agreed that adequate physical and mental health treatment was not consistently available for the state’s youth aging out of foster care, while housing, education, and job training were routinely lacking for those leaving the foster care system as well. The task force made more than ten funding recommendations that overwhelmingly endorsed the creation of a community model for foster care. Additionally, in 2001 Governor Minner allocated \$550,000 from the Fiscal Year 2002 General Fund to be committed toward implementing several recommendations from the Governor’s Foster Care Task Force.

Since leaving office, Governor Minner has remained dedicated to creating a comprehensive and community-based model of service delivery for Delaware’s aging out youth. STI was designed to realize that vision by leveraging resources from those involved in the support, education, and training of the transitioning youth. The partners included elected and appointed officials, state agencies serving youth, nonprofit service providers, housing agencies and developers, educational institutions, philanthropies, faith organizations, and civic activists. To facilitate and coordinate the

effort, Governor Minner and PCI engaged the Institute for Public Administration (IPA) at the University of Delaware. Together, STI partners would follow an agreement-seeking process or “Public Solutions System,” designed by PCI, to improve the outcomes for the state’s transitioning youth.

PCI anticipated that through the Public Solutions System some of the needs of transitioning youth could be addressed through improved interagency communication and coordination with service providers. Others would require commitments from businesses and institutions of higher education. More still would require volunteerism and support from the community. According to PCI, these commitments would contribute to a comprehensive suite of services for young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood. The ultimate goal of STI was to formulate a signed “Declaration of Cooperation,” outlining the commitments from all of the parties by spring 2011. PCI projected that sufficient commitments would be garnered to cover the housing, transportation, job skills, and educational needs of every child aging out of foster care in Delaware who needs additional support.

## FIRST MEETING OF STI

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Former Governor Minner chaired the first STI meeting, which was held on Monday, September 20, 2010, in the Delaware Community Service Building in Wilmington, Delaware. Partners representing the public, nonprofit, and business sectors were in attendance (see STI Meeting Notes, Appendix C). During the introduction portion of the meeting, partners were asked to provide their fondest hopes related to the effort. Some of the responses included:

- Exploring collaborative approaches to supporting kids in foster care.
- Taking a collective look at the current challenges.
- Creating a vision for youth who are aging out.
- Implementing a plan that can serve as a model for other states.
- Ensuring seamless coordination of services.
- Reviewing past successes and working from our strength base.
- Continuing the equitable distribution of services throughout the state.
- Harnessing public will and support.
- Facilitating the transition to adult readiness.
- Stabilizing and strengthening families.
- Increasing preventative services.
- Creating community-centered opportunities for services and additional resources.

PCI Deputy Director Wendy Willis presented an “Overview of Process & Introduction to Tools” that introduced PCI’s Community Governance System and offered a framework and set of tools that would allow the group to establish a culture that can be passed on to new partners. She expressed her hope that the group would achieve its goals in a meaningful and holistic way so as to be a model for other states. She credited Delaware’s leaders for taking the leadership to work through planning and decision-making processes to collectively move toward implementation. She added that the group was created to be magnetic; members could be added at any time to realize the shared vision. She reminded the group that a Declaration of Cooperation will be the end result of the process, a signed promise to one another and to the kids.

Secretary Vivian Rapposelli, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF), provided background information and updates on recent statewide initiatives aimed at supporting Delaware youth in successfully aging out of foster care.

Exemplary models and frameworks for working with transitioning populations were discussed and examples, such as the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) and the Individual Assessment, Discharge And Planning Team (I-ADAPT) would be presented at future STI meetings. JCYOI supports community-based efforts that create opportunities and build assets for youth leaving foster care by bringing together people and resources to help them make the connections they need for permanence, education, employment, housing, health care, and supportive personal and community relationships. I-ADAPT is a comprehensive plan to reduce recidivism of offenders who are released back into society by coordinating efforts among state agencies and community organizations to increase the availability and access to services within five identified re-entry pillars (housing, employment, human services, education, and community integration) through streamlining current processes and utilizing existing resources.

In closing, Governor Minner strongly encouraged STI partners to nominate and/or invite additional individuals and organizations to join the effort. There was a consensus among the group to include individuals who had served as foster parents.

Subsequent to the initial launch of STI, regular meetings were held to report on progress and document further commitments by partners (see STI Meeting Notes, Appendix C).

## CONCURRENT ACTIVITIES

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Following the start of STI, parallel efforts by state agencies and community groups addressing these same needs of transitioning youth came to light. This work, spearheaded by the administration of Governor Jack Markell, included important and recent developments in the sphere of foster youth services.

In February 2010, the state launched the Delaware Youth Advisory Council Pilot Program aimed at identifying issues related to aging out of foster care through the voices of foster care youth. This program provides the opportunity for youth to directly voice their needs, concerns, and issues related to transitioning from the foster care system to adulthood. Areas of focus related to the pilot program include housing, job creation, college readiness, and teen parenting.

In July 2010, the Division of Child Mental Health and the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention (both part of the DSCYF) blended to become the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS). DPBHS provides a statewide continuum of prevention and early intervention services, as well as mental health and substance abuse (behavioral health) treatment programs for children and youth.

Another major development was adoption of Senate Bill 113, which extends Family Court jurisdiction and involvement with former foster care youth. Signed into law by Governor Jack Markell on July 15,



2010, the bill permits Family Court involvement with and supervision of independent services to youth who have aged out of foster care until they turn 21 years old.

On August 4, 2010, six state agencies (DSCYF; Health and Social Services Department; Department of Education; Department of Labor; Delaware State Housing Authority; and Department of Correction) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that was developed to better coordinate efforts and resources to address the comprehensive needs of youth aging out of foster care. The primary purpose is to more effectively utilize existing programs and resources offered through the agencies to address the various needs and issues of the target population.

## **PREPARATION MEETS OPPORTUNITY**

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The major developments that were occurring contributed both momentum as well as an increased sense of urgency to improve the outcomes of transitioning youth. When the STI partners convened for their second meeting on October 26, 2010, they were introduced to two exemplary models for transitioning populations—the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) and I-ADAPT. Following the presentations, representatives from the Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) and the Delaware Children’s Campaign shared their plans about a possible collaboration with JCYOI in Delaware. The STI partners agreed to lend support to the Initiative.

## **JIM CASEY YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE**

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In summer 2010, DSCYF and DCJ met with JCYOI, which successfully operates in 12 states, to discuss potential expansion to Delaware. The JCYOI co-investment model covers significant on- and off-site technical assistance, various trainings for trainers, evaluation tools, access to peer network, and development of youth leadership board.

By November 2010, DCJ was involved in partnership negotiations with JCYOI to work toward Delaware becoming a co-investment site and introduced the model at STI’s third meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2010. DCJ had been funded for the JCYOI by the Eckerd Family Foundation with the first year of an expected two-year grant. Joining the JCYOI required that a Youth Advisory Board and Community Partners Board be formed in the state to help train youth to work with agencies, providers, community groups, and businesses. There are five system change strategies for youth aging out that are core to the initiative:

- Youth Engagement
- Public Will and Policy
- Increased Opportunities for Economic Success
- Partnerships and Resources
- Research, Evaluation, and Communications

To implement this plan, DCJ hired one part-time staff member to coordinate the Youth Advisory Board and one full-time staff member as an Implementation Plan Coordinator. Another step to the state becoming a co-investment site was the development of an environmental scan by a neutral organization.

At this time, STI was well positioned to respond to DCJ's request for assistance to collaborate with JCYOI. The STI partners and DCJ agreed that developing an environmental scan, or strategic planning process, was critical to moving forward. According to JCYOI, environmental scans:

- Give sites greater understanding of this complex multi-strategy initiative.
- Identify what strengths and gaps exist, and steps that must be taken before beginning the planning process and start receiving structured technical assistance.
- Assist sites with their planning.

In short, the environmental scan would serve to identify best practices and assess current policies, partners, and support in Delaware.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

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In January 2011, DCJ contracted with IPA, which had been providing technical assistance to STI, to coordinate and develop the environmental scan. IPA worked on the environmental scan in collaboration with DCJ, DSCYF, Delaware State University (DSU), and other agencies and community stakeholder groups involved in the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI).

In partnership with DCJ and DSU, IPA and the DYOI group collaborated in creating a comprehensive environmental scan detailing the state's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges facing the state's transitioning youth. The ultimate goal of DYOI is to build advocacy important to leveraging state and local resources, strengthening partnerships, and expanding legislation related to improving the quality of services for youth aging out of foster care in Delaware.

The scan was completed in June 2011 and will serve as the foundation for a comprehensive implementation plan to be completed by the Community Partnership Board, which will be chaired by Delaware's Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn. The Board will include members of the community, public and private sectors, and state agency staff, and may be used as a resource in providing information on the specific needs of and factors related to the state's transitioning youth.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

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The Community Partnership Board is charged with formulating strategies to strengthen and expand services for Delaware youth aging out of foster care. It will comprise an oversight committee, which will guide the process and advise smaller working groups that are focused on key areas such as education, employment, housing, transportation, financial literacy, physical and mental health, permanence, and personal and community engagement.

## PUBLIC WILL AND SUPPORT FOR TRANSITIONING YOUTH

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Delaware's overall size and composition provide natural advantages to creating and maintaining partnerships and coordinated efforts necessary for a systematic approach to serving the state's transitioning youth. With only three counties, a general population of fewer than one million, and about 670 youth currently in foster care (a decrease of about 200 from 2008), the state is well-positioned to make strong efforts toward addressing the target population's needs and interests and making a real difference in the quality of their adult lives. The number of individuals projected to age out of foster care in 2011 is estimated at 106—a manageable number of young adults, considering the range of services and programs that already exist and are designed to help the state's aging out youth become successful and happy adults.

Indeed over the last several years, Delaware has made significant strides toward addressing many of the issues and challenges related to appropriate supports and resources available to the state's aging out youth. Collaborative efforts around the state have included a large number of agencies and organizations working on a variety of issues including education, financial literacy, housing, and job readiness and retention.

While policy foci and initiatives sometimes change dramatically with the election of a new governor, this has not been the case in Delaware with regard to services available to the state's foster care. Following the election of Governor Jack Markell in 2010, a pledge was made to continue the work of the preceding Minner administration in regards to addressing the needs of young adults aging out of foster care.

To assist with administrative transition, a July 2009 letter to Governor Markell from the Delaware Children's Campaign identified recommendations for addressing sub-areas related to aging out of foster care in Delaware. These areas included housing, education, employment, healthcare, transportation, teen parenting, and inter-agency/departmental coordination. With these recommendations in mind, Governor Jack Markell and his administration have continued to work on statewide initiatives aimed at supporting Delaware youth in successfully aging out of foster care.

Significant and noteworthy outcomes of such efforts have included the aforementioned legislation that allows Family Court to stay involved with former foster care youth until age 21, a Memorandum of Understanding among six state agencies to better coordinate efforts and resources to address the complex and comprehensive needs of foster care youth, the development of the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative, and the development of the Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative. Key leaders and policymakers involved in such efforts include current Governor Jack Markell; former Governor Ruth Ann Minner; Secretary Vivian Rapposelli, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families; Family Court judges; legislators; and other cabinet-level administrators.

Current and potential partnerships, programs, and services related to for the state's aging out youth—in addition to existing opportunities for young people to directly participate in their own case management—have provided a strong platform for Delaware's long-term process and strategies. Areas of particular relevancy and strength include:

- Youth involvement/participation (Youth Advisory Council, key officials, and high-ranking state officials regularly attend meetings).
- Legal permanence (extension of Family Court jurisdiction until age 21, GAL/CASA).
- Lead agency influence: Delaware Center for Justice (nonprofit focused on state's youth and already involved in a number of programs dedicated to helping at-risk youth through the child welfare and justice systems has the ability to leverage resources from a variety of partners, both public and private).
- Interdisciplinary, statewide community partnerships that include state agencies, nonprofits, the business community, and higher-education institutions, including the University of Delaware and Delaware State University.
- Interagency coordination and agreements.
- Housing options (state agency and nonprofit efforts and opportunities).
- Data collection efforts [coordinated by the Division of Family Services (DFS)].
- Financial literacy programs and workforce development opportunities.

Collaboration between the current and previous administrations, coupled with the two years that remain of Governor Markell's first term in office, provide evidence and hope that the issues relating to appropriate supports and service to Delaware's young adults aging out of foster care will continue to be an ongoing priority for the state. In addition, DFS perceives the political climate to be stable at this time. It is not believed that any significant transitions in political leadership will occur in the near future that will impact transitioning youth.

Indeed, JCYOI praised the "long-standing commitment of both the current Governor Jack Markell and his predecessor Governor Ruth Ann Minner of creating a better future for young people in foster care through system improvement and coordination" in its Environmental Scan Feedback to the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (August 2011).



## **APPENDICES**

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- A. List of STI/DYOI Team Members**
- B. STI Timeline and Accomplishments**
- C. STI Meeting Notes**
- D. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Presentation**
- E. Environmental Scan**
- F. Environmental Scan Feedback**

## **Appendix A. List of STI/DYOI Team Members**

### **Convener:**

Former Governor Ruth Ann Minner

### **Members:**

Kate Bailey, Deputy Principal Assistant to the Commissioner  
Department of Correction

Patricia Blevins, Senator  
Delaware General Assembly

Rodney Brittingham, Deputy Director  
Division of Family Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Theresa Broome, Senior Program Manager  
Children & Families First

Paul Calistro, Executive Director  
West End Neighborhood House

Amy Clark, Graduate Research Assistant  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Dorinda “Dori” Connor, Senator  
Delaware General Assembly

Cheryl Cooper, Foster Parent

Bonnie Egan Copeland, Law Clerk  
Delaware Family Court

Gladys Coto, Foster Parent

Suzan Dougherty, Independent Living Program Director  
NorthEast Treatment Centers, Wilmington, Delaware

Thère du Pont, President  
Longwood Foundation, Inc.

Fran Fletcher, Assistant Policy Scientist  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

James Flynn, Director of MPA Program  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Chiara Fox, Administrator  
Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services  
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Orlando “Lonnie” George, President  
Delaware Technical & Community College

Vincent Giampeitro, Program Director  
Children & Families First

Rachel Gold, Officer  
Division of Employment and Training, Department of Labor

Martha Gregor, Director of Prevention and Substance Abuse Services  
Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services  
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Margaret Rose Henry, Senator  
Delaware General Assembly

Dana Holtz, Ph.D. Candidate  
School of Public Policy & Administration, University of Delaware

Mike Houghton, Partner  
Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP

Christina Jones-Bey, Site Supervisor  
People’s Place

Helene Keeley, Representative  
Delaware General Assembly

Felicia Kellum, Manager of Independent Living Program  
Division of Family Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Chandlee Johnson Kuhn, Chief Judge  
Delaware Family Court

Janet Leban, Executive Director  
Delaware Center for Justice

Jerome Lewis, Director  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Jay Lynch, Deputy Principal Assistant to the Secretary  
Delaware Health and Social Services

Harris McDowell, Senator  
Delaware General Assembly

Mary Kate McLaughlin, Deputy Principal Assistant to the Secretary  
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Laura Miles, Deputy Director, FACTS II Project Manager  
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Julie Miller, Program Coordinator  
Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative  
Delaware Center for Justice

Andrea Mills, Director of Special Court Services  
Delaware Family Court

Lisa Moreland, Associate Policy Scientist  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Peter Morrow, President  
Welfare Foundation, Inc.

Julia O'Hanlon, Assistant Policy Scientist  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Gauhar Ospanova, Graduate Research Assistant  
Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware

Roslyn Owen, Program Representative  
Policy Consensus Initiative

Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary  
Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families

Joanne Reilly, Executive Assistant  
Longwood Foundation



Dennis Rozumalski, Education Associate  
Student Services and Special Populations  
Delaware Department of Education

Carl Schnee, Chairman  
Delaware Children's Campaign

Teresa Schooley, Representative  
Delaware General Assembly

Fred Sears, President and CEO  
Delaware Community Foundation

Joni Silverstein, Director  
Delaware Girls Initiative

Al Snyder, Treasurer  
Delaware Children's Campaign

Shawn Stevens, Director of Community Impact  
United Way of Delaware

Robert Strong, Deputy Principal Assistant  
Department of Labor

William J. Walls, Judge  
Delaware Family Court

Wendy Willis, Interim Director  
Policy Consensus Initiative

## Appendix B. STI Timeline and Accomplishments

**Winter 2010** – Former Governor Ruth Ann Minner partners with the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI) to design the Successful Transitions Initiative (STI), an agreement-seeking process for creating a coordinated set of services for youth aging out of foster care in Delaware.

**February 2010** – The Delaware Youth Advisory Council Pilot Program is launched.

**July 2010** – The Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS) is created.

**July 15, 2010** – Governor Markell signs Senate Bill 113, which allows the Family Court, Office of Child Advocate, and Court Appointed Special Advocate Program to continue supervising the provision of services to foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21.

**July 27, 2010** – Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) representatives meet with Secretary Vivian Rapposelli, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF), and Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) staff to discuss potential expansion to Delaware.

**August 4, 2010** – A Memorandum of Understanding is signed by the Delaware State Housing Authority, the Department of Correction, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the DSCYF.

**September 2010** – The University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration (IPA) is contracted by PCI to facilitate regular meetings of and provide coordinating services for STI.

**September 20, 2010** – Governor Minner chairs the first meeting of STI, which is facilitated by Dr. James Flynn (IPA). Partners, representing the public, nonprofit, and business sectors, review the challenges facing transitioning youth, and ground rules are set. Governor Minner and Secretary Rapposelli are identified as STI’s spokespeople. The partners agree to review JCYOI and I-ADAPT as appropriate models for consideration in Delaware.

**October 26, 2010** – Governor Minner convenes the second meeting of STI partners. Exemplary models for working successfully with transitioning populations, including JCYOI and I-ADAPT, are presented. Staff from DCJ and Delaware Children’s Campaign share plans about their upcoming partnership with JCYOI. The STI partners express interest in a potential collaboration with JCYOI. A foster parent shares her personal perspective of the challenges facing youth aging out of foster care. The partners concur that the foster youth voice needs to be part of the initiative. Governor Minner reports that Dr. Orlando “Lonnie” J. George, Jr., President of Delaware Technical & Community College, has proposed financial aid for youth aging out of foster care to take courses. State Senator Dorinda “Dori” Connor has agreed to bring the issue of youth aging out of foster care to the Kids Caucus leadership for consideration when the legislature convenes in January 2011.

**November 3, 2010** – Through the Delaware Girls Initiative (DGI), the DCJ was funded for JCYOI by the Eckerd Family Foundation with the first year of an expected two-year grant. DSCYF commits to partnering on the effort.

**November 15-17, 2010** – The JCYOI Fall Convening is held in Clearwater, Florida, for all current co-investment sites. Several DSCYF, DCJ, and DGI staff members attend the convening, which provides framework models and strategies for moving forward as a co-investment site.

**December 7, 2010** – STI partners met for their third meeting, which was chaired by Governor Minner. Discussion focused on what needed to be done for Delaware to become a co-investment site of JCYOI. The first action item identified was to develop an environmental scan, which would pull together appropriate and available data and resources in an organized and meaningful framework. IPA was invited to lead the development and coordination of the environmental scan with support from JCYOI and DCJ staff. Dr. Flynn and IPA's project team agree to review materials created for Hawaii's environmental scan and the JCYOI response to the scan as they consider the feasibility of taking on Delaware's environmental scan.

The need to include a strong and present voice from foster kids was identified as an important goal of the JCYOI model and critical to a comprehensive service delivery system in Delaware. The ultimate goal of the implementation plan is to build advocacy and support, and the group concurred that Delaware could have one of the best systems nationally. Secretary Rapposelli encouraged the group to continue outreach to organizations that have been involved with related issues, including independent living providers, insurance providers and agencies, the banking industry, and education partners. Secretary Rapposelli also noted that the establishment of an advisory group and manageable committee structure was a key step. The partners agreed that it was not necessary to meet as a whole until after the environmental scan was completed. STI's working groups were encouraged to continue work already underway.

Judge William J. Walls, Jr. indicates that Family Court will continue to provide advice and feedback on internal issues as they arise, and Mary Kate McLaughlin adds that she can serve as a liaison through the Court Improvement Project (CIP).

**January 2011** – DCJ contracted IPA to coordinate and develop the environmental scan related to Delaware becoming a JCYOI co-investment site. Delaware State University (DSU) also serves as a primary project partner. The scan is endorsed by DSCYF and other agencies and community stakeholder groups involved in the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI).

**February 11, 2011** – An STI working group comprising staff from IPA, DCJ, DSCYF, and DSU met with Christine Johnson (JCYOI) to discuss the environmental scan. Julia O'Hanlon (IPA) and Julie Miller (DCJ) reported on the work conducted for the scan's first phase.

**March 1, 2011** – Governor Minner called to order the fourth meeting of STI partners by thanking them for their time and continued work. Dr. Flynn (IPA) provided the group with information on the progress that had been made on the environmental scan of the DYOI. Janet Leban (DCJ) shared news that two individuals, Julie Miller and Nicole Byers, were hired and that they would both work on the environmental scan. The partners discussed the outline of the environmental scan, identifying the timeline for the scan completion.

Dr. Flynn then introduced Gladys Coto, a current foster parent. Ms. Coto has been a foster parent for five years and has had 34 foster children in her house, four of whom have aged out of the system. Ms. Coto offered to provide help and insight into the work being done by the group.

Ms. O'Hanlon led the partners through the process for the two-phase scan and solicited feedback from the group. The partners asked questions for clarification, shared information about programs that could be included, and offered suggestions for additional resources and data. It was noted in the discussion that members of DSCYF's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) would be interviewed as part of the process. Following group discussion, Ms. O'Hanlon and Ms. Miller presented a brief overview of the path forward and timeline for completing the environmental scan.

**May 2011** – The STI partners meet again, with Governor Minner as chair. With the environmental scan complete, the group discusses the path forward, including a commitment to serve, as required, on the formation and functioning of the Community Partnership Board.

**July 18, 2011** – A working group meeting was held to signify the completion of the environmental scan.

**August 5, 2011** – The scan and its authors receive the following feedback in a written report from JCYOI:

“The environmental scan submitted by the Delaware team exemplifies a high level of dedication to improving outcomes for youth in and formerly in foster care in Delaware. It demonstrates the long-standing commitment of both the current Governor Jack Markell and his predecessor Governor Ruth Ann Minner of creating a better future for young people in foster care through system improvement and coordination. It also highlights the various ways the DSCYF has responded to the needs of young people to improve access to services and a focus on improving the child welfare system for young people in and aging out of foster care. Additionally, area-wide service providers and young people who were interviewed were extremely forthcoming in their observations which contributed to the high quality and thoroughness of the scan.”

The scan was praised as an important data tool for the state to use in the DYOI's Readiness and Needs and the Implementation Planning Phases. STI was named as one of the successful examples of interagency coordination and collaboration in Delaware. Indeed, JCYOI singles out STI in its feedback report, “... the full support offered by the Successful Transitions Initiative through their involvement in the scan and support of plans for implementation is another important indication of public will. It is evident that the work already underway in Delaware aligns with the Jim Casey model in important ways.”

In addition, IPA was recognized as the lead organization in data collection and analysis for the Environmental Scan. In the report JCYOI stated, “[T]he University of Delaware has demonstrated an ability to conduct effective data collection and evaluation. This resource may be again called upon to handle these aspects of the ongoing planning and implementation.”

According to JCYOI, “sites should update the environmental scan annually in order to assess changes in the factors and circumstances. Furthermore, initial planning for the Community Partnership Board indicates an approach that will involve many members of the community, public and private sectors, and state agency staff... There are many recent successes the DYOI can build upon, including Lt. Gov. Matt Denn taking on the role of chairing the Community Partnership Board and the interest of local providers, the business community, local universities, and potential funders in this Initiative.”



**September 2011** – The Division of Family Services requested assistance from IPA for planning and further exploration of data on children aging out of foster care to improve their safety, stability, and well-being. As Delaware moves forward in becoming a JCYOI co-investment site, IPA will provide technical assistance related to the self-evaluation and communications components. It is expected that the actions taken and policies set forth by the Community Partnership Board will also inform the work conducted by IPA's project team.

## **Appendix C. STI Meeting Notes**

Notes follow on next page

## Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative

Meeting on Monday, September 20, 2010, from 1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Delaware Community Service Building (Room 105), Wilmington, Delaware

### In attendance:

- Governor Ruth Ann Minner
- Vincent Giampeitro – Children & Families First
- Theresa Broome – Children & Families First
- Paul Calistro – West End Neighborhood House
- Fred Sears – Delaware Community Foundation
- Dennis Rozumalski – Department of Education
- Shawn Stevens – United Way
- Judge Bill Walls – Family Court
- Senator Dori Connor – Delaware General Assembly
- Al Snyder – Delaware Children's Campaign
- Felicia Kellum – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Martha Gregor – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services
- Rodney Brittingham – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Laura Miles – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Rachel Gold – Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training
- Secretary Vivian Rapposelli – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Mary Kate McLaughlin – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Carl Schnee – Delaware Children's Campaign
- Wendy Willis – Policy Consensus Initiative
- Roslyn Owen – Policy Consensus Initiative
- Jerome Lewis – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Fran Fletcher – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Jim Flynn – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Lisa Moreland – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Julia O'Hanlon – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration

### Invited:

- Orlando "Lonnie" George – Delaware Technical & Community College
- Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn – Family Court
- Senator Patricia Blevins – Delaware General Assembly
- Senator Harris McDowell – Delaware General
- Representative Teresa Schooley – Delaware General Assembly
- Senator Margaret Rose Henry – Delaware General Assembly
- Representative Helene Keeley – Delaware General Assembly
- There du Pont – Longwood Foundation

- Peter Morrow – Welfare Foundation
- Mike Houghton – Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP
- Kate Bailey – Department of Corrections
- Jay Lynch – Delaware Health and Social Services

## **Welcome & Introduction to the Initiative**

*The Hon. Ruth Ann Minner*

## **Introductions – Name, Organization & Fondest Hope for Affected Delaware Youth**

The group's fondest hopes included:

- Exploring collaborative approaches to supporting kids in foster care.
- Taking a collective look at the current challenges.
- Creating a vision for youth who are aging out.
- Implementing a plan that can serve as a model for other states.
- Ensuring seamless coordination of services.
- Reviewing past successes and working from our strength base.
- Continuing the equitable distribution of services throughout the state.
- Harnessing public will and support.
- Facilitating the transition to adult readiness.
- Stabilizing and strengthening families.
- Increasing preventative services.
- Creating community-centered opportunities for services and additional resources.

Wendy Willis added that she hopes the group will achieve the aspirations that are identified in a meaningful and holistic way so as to be a model for other states. She credits Delaware's leaders for taking the leadership to work through planning and decision-making processes to collectively move toward implementation. She adds that the group was created to be magnetic. Members can be added at any time to realize the shared vision. The Declaration of Cooperation will be the end result of this process, a signed promise to one another and to the kids.

## **Update on Recent Developments**

*Secretary Vivian Rapposelli, Secretary, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families (DSCYF)*

Secretary Rapposelli provided background information and updates on recent statewide initiatives aimed at supporting Delaware youth in successfully aging out of foster care. Major developments highlighted during Secretary Rapposelli's presentation include:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated August 4, 2010, among the Delaware State Housing Authority, Department of Correction, Department of Education, Department of Labor, Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families.**
  - With the support and encouragement of Governor Jack Markell, this MOU asserts that these agencies will "work together to better coordinate efforts

and resources to address the comprehensive needs of foster care youth.” The primary purpose is to more effectively utilize existing programs and resources offered through the agencies to address the various needs and issues of the target population.

- **Adoption of Senate Bill 113, which extends Delaware Family Court jurisdiction over and involvement with former foster care youth.**

- Signed into Delaware law by Governor Jack Markell on July 15, 2010, this bill permits Family Court involvement with and supervision of services to those who have aged out of the foster care until they turn age 21.

- **Development of the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS) in July 2010.**

In July 2010, the Division of Child Mental Health and the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention (both part of the DYSCF) blended to become the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS). DPBHS provides a statewide continuum of prevention and early intervention services, as well as mental health and substance abuse (behavioral health) treatment programs for children and youth.

- **Delaware Youth Advisory Council Pilot Program aimed at identifying issues related to aging out of foster care through the voices of foster care youth.**

This program, initiated in February 2010, provides the opportunity for youth currently in the Delaware foster care system to directly voice their needs, concerns, and issues related to transitioning from the foster care system to adulthood. Areas of focus related to the pilot program include housing, job creation, college readiness, and teen parenting.

## **Overview of Process & Introduction to Tools**

*Wendy Willis, Development Director, Policy Consensus Initiative*

Using a framework and tools allows our group to establish a culture that can be passed on to those who are added to the team.

***“Bridges Transition Framework” (PowerPoint Slides)***

***“The Community Governance System (PowerPoint Slides)***

(Presentation Available for Download)

## **Points for Consideration:**

- Is there potential for conflict outside the room?
- What can we do to support our foster parents?
- How can we involve our youth (and create youth buy-in) so that we are empowering, not enabling?
- How do we take a long-term view to minimize disparate points of view and fighting for resources?

- How do we acknowledge different issues across counties?
- How can we be more inclusive? Involve diverse communities?
- How can we involve our foster parents? Front-line workers?
- How can we rally around the kids in a community-based way—where they live, work, and go to school?
- Can we review the provision of housing (e.g., West End Neighborhood House, People's Place, Elizabeth W. Murphy School for Orphan Children) and the availability of wrap-around services?
- Can we find out more about the re-entry program for incarcerated adults that incorporates similar focus areas?
- Can we learn more about the pilot program in Milford for those who are not in specific treatment units?

### **Establishment of Ground Rules**

(Available for Download)

The group addressed #10 on the list of Ground Rules to identify the spokespersons as Governor Minner and Secretary Rapposelli.

### **Findings of Delaware Children's Campaign**

*Carl Schnee and Al Snyder, Delaware Children's Campaign*

(Report Available for Download)

Carl Schnee and Al Snyder provided information on the work and findings of the Delaware Children's Campaign, a grassroots advocacy campaign that was initiated in 2006.

During his presentation, Carl Schnee summarized results of a poll conducted through the auspices of the Delaware Children's Campaign that identified the primary concerns of the Delaware community related to the state's youth. According to Mr. Schnee, the top three identified through the poll—in order of priority:

1. Children Aging out of Foster Care
2. Early Childhood Education
3. Infant Mortality

In a letter to Governor Jack Markell sent in July 2009, the Delaware Children's Campaign identified recommendations for addressing sub-areas related to aging out of foster care in Delaware. Sub-areas included: housing, education, employment, healthcare, transportation, teen parenting, and how agencies and departments could work together to address issues related to these sub-areas.

Al Snyder provided additional information on the recommendations included in the Delaware Children's Campaign letter to Governor Markell and commentary on ways to build off of the campaign's initiatives related to aging out of foster care in Delaware.

Included in his discussion were suggestions on how to best advance the existing work on this issue through a development/community support approach and philosophy. Specific

concerns and issues were raised about how to implement a community-based support system (e.g., how to incorporate into law, how to garner funding to support services outside the traditional service-delivery process, and whether such a system can withstand administrative turnover).

Mr. Schnee responded that some states have detailed plans on how to address aging out of foster care issues. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative was also mentioned as a good resource to review as an appropriate model for consideration in Delaware.

**Comments:**

The group discussed the work of the Children's Campaign and raised the following issues:

- The need to re-examine the decision to close group homes.
- The importance of legislation to create permanent change.
- The importance of community participation to create culture change.
- The need for big picture thinking and coordinated efforts.
- The importance of culturally specific services.
- The need to focus on preventative, upstream activities.

**Possible Opportunities:**

- Participation in the effort to engage the Jim Casey Foundation.
- Coordination with the Kids Caucus.

**Next Steps*****Who else should be at the table?***

- Foster Kids
- Foster Parents (One group member thought there was a group that met in Sussex County.)
- Department of Insurance
- Higher-Education Institutions
  - Delaware College Access Network (DECAN), P20, and Adult Education (maybe Maureen Whalen?)
- Faith-Based Groups
- Delaware Criminal Justice Council (CJC)
- Special Advocates [e.g., Court Appointed Special Advocate Program for Children (CASA)]
- Hispanic Community Leaders (e.g., La Esperanza, La Casa)
- Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC)
- Higher Education
- Delaware Department of Transportation/DART (maybe Stephen Kingsberry?)
- Local Government (maybe the Delaware League of Local Governments?)
- I-ADAPT Representative
- Kent-Sussex Industries, Inc.

The group discussed what legal barriers (e.g., background checks) there might be when working with volunteers.

***What can this group contribute?***

- Review and provide feedback on the MOU (download available on IPA's website) discussed by Secretary Rapposelli.
- It was suggested that this group create a companion document with community partners to sign with state agencies.
- Review other team models here in Delaware [e.g., adult offender reentry programs such as Individual Assessment, Discharge and Planning Teams (I-ADAPT)] and consider how they could be applied to this group's work.
- Research and review models used in other states (e.g., Missouri).
- Research the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative's work related to aging out of foster care.
- Review and provide feedback on seven areas identified by the Delaware Children's Campaign:
  1. Housing
  2. Education
  3. Employment
  4. Health Care
  5. Transportation
  6. Teen Parenting
  7. Departmental Coordination: How can state departments and other agencies work together to develop a comprehensive system of services for the state's youth aging out of foster care?
- Determine whether federal agencies could help support this initiative (e.g., HUD, DOT, EPA, Dept. of Agriculture). Some funds can be given to nonprofits, but not state agencies.
- Consider how should the group organize:
  - Geographically
  - Issues/Topic Areas
    - Are there ways community groups can contribute to the issue areas identified through the Delaware Children's Campaign?

***What should be the focus of our next meeting?***

The group discussed the framework for the next meeting. It was suggested that the group use the next meeting to focus on information gathering. Some agenda items that were mentioned include reviewing the Casey Initiative and I-ADAPT Teams as well as hearing from foster parents and kids. The group will continue to provide names and information as needed and consider how best to organize.

***How should the group set up its meeting schedule?***

The group decided to meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 2010, at the Community Service Building (Room 105) in Wilmington, Delaware.



It was suggested that the subject line for communications about this group should include “PCI-UD – Foster Care” in addition to its title, “Successful Transitions Initiative.”

**Thank You & Adjourn**

# Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative

Meeting on Tuesday, October 26, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Delaware Community Service Building (Room 105), Wilmington, Delaware

## **In attendance:**

- Governor Ruth Ann Minner
- Vincent Giampeitro – Children & Families First
- Theresa Broome – Children & Families First
- Fred Sears – Delaware Community Foundation
- Shawn Stevens – United Way
- Judge Bill Walls – Family Court
- Felicia Kellum – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Martha Gregor – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services
- Rodney Brittingham – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Laura Miles – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Mary Kate McLaughlin – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Carl Schnee – Delaware Children's Campaign
- Bob Strong – Department of Labor
- Chiara Fox – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services
- Bonnie Egan Copeland – Family Court
- Kate Bailey – Department of Corrections
- Jay Lynch – Delaware Health and Social Services
- Cheryl Cooper – Foster Parent
- Suzan Dougherty – Northeast Treatment Centers, Wilmington, Delaware
- Janet Leban – Delaware Center for Justice
- Wendy Willis – Policy Consensus Initiative
- Fran Fletcher – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Dr. James P. Flynn – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Lisa Moreland – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Gauhar Ospanova – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration

## **Invited:**

- Secretary Vivian Rapposelli – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Dr. Orlando "Lonnie" George – Delaware Technical & Community College
- Chief Judge Chandlee Johnson Kuhn – Family Court
- Senator Patricia Blevins – Delaware General Assembly
- Senator Harris McDowell – Delaware General
- Paul Calistro – West End Neighborhood House
- Dennis Rozumalski – Department of Education

- Representative Teresa Schooley – Delaware General Assembly
- Senator Margaret Rose Henry – Delaware General Assembly
- Representative Helene Keeley – Delaware General Assembly
- Senator Dori Connor – Delaware General Assembly
- Rachel Gold – Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training
- Al Snyder – Delaware Children’s Campaign
- There du Pont – Longwood Foundation
- Peter Morrow – Welfare Foundation
- Joanne Reilly – Longwood Foundation
- Mike Houghton – Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP

### **Welcome & Introductions**

The Hon. Ruth Ann Minner

### **Agenda Overview**

Dr. James P. Flynn

### **Summary of Committee Progress to Date**

The Hon. Ruth Ann Minner

- State Senator Dori Connor has agreed to bring the issue of youth aging out of foster care to the Kids Caucus leadership for consideration when the legislature convenes in January 2011.
- Dr. Orlando J. George, Jr., President of Delaware Technical & Community College, has proposed financial aid for youth aging out of foster care to take courses. He also has offered meeting space for this initiative.

### **Organizational Models & Considerations**

*Jim Casey Youth Initiatives* (Presentation Available for Download)

Gauhar Ospanova

Following Ms. Ospanova’s presentation, Carl Schnee and Janet Leban provided information about a meeting that is scheduled for Wednesday, November 3 to establish Delaware as one of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative’s partner communities. Ms. Leban distributed hard copies of PowerPoint slides from a presentation made by representatives from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to Secretary Vivian Rapposelli on July 27, 2010. The presentation describes the Initiative’s theory of change, identifies its initiative sites, outlines policy improvements in initiative states, illustrates various trends and outcomes, and provides details for implementing the Fostering Connections Act, which allows states to extend foster care beyond age 18 and requires youth-directed transition planning 90 days prior to emancipation. It was suggested that our Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative is a valuable partner for including community stakeholders.

*I-ADAPT Program (Presentation Available for Download)*

Bob Strong

Mr. Strong described the Individual Assessment, Discharge and Planning Team (I-ADAPT) Model for assisting offenders who are to be released back into society. The model utilizes a team management approach to individualized transitional planning, which begins six months prior to release and is aligned to specific needs. Teams consist of one or more representatives from the Department of Correction, the Delaware State Housing Authority, the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Social Services, representatives from faith-based and other community organizations, and an ex-offender. When appropriate, the members of I-ADAPT may appoint a representative from the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families to assist in their efforts. The following five teams have been created to focus available resources:

1. Statewide Oversight
2. City of Wilmington
3. New Castle County
4. Kent County
5. Sussex County

This model integrates community into the process and allows for the sharing of protected information. One ongoing project is communicating with DMV on solutions for providing releases with state identification cards.

*Foster Parent/Child Issues and Concerns*

Cheryl Cooper

Ms. Cooper shared two personal stories from her experience as a foster parent in Delaware. The first focused on concerns regarding the 24-hour Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. The second dealt with the conditions youth are required to meet as part of the Division of Family Services (DFS) Board Extension Letter. A suggestion was made to review the mechanisms for communicating concerns and problems to better improve dialogue among state agencies, service providers, and foster parents and youth.

**Path Forward**

Dr. James P. Flynn

The following action steps were raised for consideration:

- Determine which model works best for our state.
- Include foster parents and youth in the conversation. Need youth representation.
  - Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meets monthly.
  - Also, the voice of the 25+ age group can provide valuable insight.
- Identify what is working and what is not.
- Emphasize the involvement of community partners. This initiative is not being run through an agency or university.

- Find out how this group can collaborate with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to create synergy. Make inquiries about what their requirements are of community partners. Review their priorities of community partnership, resource development, and youth engagement.
  - The model appears to be flexible, allowing each state to meet its needs.
- Seek out and include community partners providing good services to youth aging out of foster care.
- Provide more information to and educate youth aging out of foster care about resources and contacts.
- Learn what other states are doing. The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Fall Convening will be held in Clearwater, Florida on November 15-17, 2010.

### **Next Meeting**

A small working group will convene prior to the next general meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2010. The working group will review specific models and report back on recommendations.

### **Thank You & Adjourn**

# Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative

Working Group Meeting on Tuesday, December 7, 2010, from 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.  
Delaware Community Service Building (Conference Room 9), Wilmington, Delaware

## **In attendance:**

- Governor Ruth Ann Minner
- Secretary Vivian Rapposelli – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Vincent Giampeitro – Children & Families First
- Judge Bill Walls – Family Court
- Felicia Kellum – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Rodney Brittingham – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Mary Kate McLaughlin – Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families
- Carl Schnee – Delaware Children's Campaign
- Janet Leban – Delaware Center for Justice
- Joni Silverstein – Delaware Girls Initiative
- Paul Calistro – West End Neighborhood House
- Dr. James P. Flynn – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Julia O'Hanlon – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Gauhar Ospanova – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Dana Holtz – University of Delaware, School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy

## **Agenda Overview**

Dr. James P. Flynn

## **Summary of Casey Foundation Initiative/Grant**

Rodney Brittingham

Carl Schnee

Janet Leban

Secretary Vivian Rapposelli

- Partnership for systems change: Beginning in January 2011, Delaware will become a co-investment state of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (handouts available for download).
- Key policy goals related to the initiative include: All young people should have a permanent family, deserve a stable education, need opportunities to achieve economic success and independence, need a safe, stable, and affordable place to live, need access to health care (including mental health care), should have opportunities to be engaged in directing their own lives and in the community surrounding them, and have opportunities to be heard, informed, and respected. (For additional information about the Casey Opportunities Initiative Policy Goals, visit: [www.jimcaseyyouth.org/jim-casey-youth-opportunities-initiative-working-others-raise-awareness-identify-policy-needs-sugges](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/jim-casey-youth-opportunities-initiative-working-others-raise-awareness-identify-policy-needs-sugges).)

- Through the Delaware Girls Initiative (DGI), the Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ), has been funded for this initiative by the Eckerd Family Foundation with the first year of an expected two-year grant; other Delaware organizations and foundations have expressed interest in supporting longer-term support. (Carl Schnee attended a meeting on 11/3/10.)
- DGI will serve as the lead organization for implementation, but the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) is committed to partnering on the effort.
- Several DSCYF, DJC, and DGI staff members attended a recent meeting/conference in Clearwater, Florida, for all current Casey Youth Opportunities co-investment states; the meeting provided framework models and strategies for moving forward as a co-investment state.
- There are five system change strategies for youth aging out that are core to the Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Youth Engagement, Public Will & Policy, Increased Opportunities for Economic Success, Partnerships & Resources, and Research, Evaluation, & Communications.
- With technical assistance from the Casey Foundation, a Youth Advisory Board and Community Partners Board will be formed in Delaware to help train youth to work with agencies, providers, community groups, and businesses. Before the end of the year, one part-time staff member will be hired to coordinate the Youth Advisory Board and one full-time staff member will be hired as an Implementation Plan Coordinator. DJC and DGI will hire and oversee these staff members. Christine Johnson from the Casey Foundation will provide technical assistance to all involved and serve as a liaison.
- Key to moving forward is an environmental scan, or strategic planning process, that will assess current policies, partners, and support in Delaware, as well as best practices.

### **Environmental Scan Options**

Following the overview of the Casey Foundation Youth Opportunities initiative, Paul Calistro, Janet Leban, and Rodney Brittingham highlighted the significance of the environmental scan as part of Delaware's path forward and the importance of having appropriate and available data and resources pulled together in an organized and meaningful framework.

According to Janet Leban, an appropriate timeframe for completion of the environmental scan is 60-90 days from today's meeting date. Quicker turnaround time would be ideal, but may be a challenge depending on the information and resources required to complete the scan. DSCYF staff stated that the agency has data available, but that a number of other resources and departmental information should also be included (e.g., Department of Labor data, Kids Count data). The University of Delaware (UD) was invited to be the lead in developing/coordinating the environmental scan with support to come from Christine Johnson and the full-time staff person hired to work on the implementation plan. The Hawaiian scan and response (from the Jim Casey Foundation) is available and will be sent to Dr. Flynn and others at UD for review.

Before the end of the week, Dr. Flynn and UD staff will discuss the feasibility of taking on the environmental scan with PCI and other University colleagues.

Paul Calistro suggested that other higher-education institutions in Delaware should be asked to participate or assist in the environmental scan if UD is unable to coordinate the entire project on its own.

### **Other Potential Developments or Actions for Consideration**

In addition to the aforementioned action items, the following were noted as considerations for future development/implementation plan strategies:

- Several individuals mentioned that it is important to have a strong and present voice from foster kids. This is an important goal of the Casey model and critical to a comprehensive service delivery system in Delaware. The ultimate goal of the implementation plan is to build advocacy and support, and it is reasonable to think that Delaware can have one of the best systems nationally.
- Secretary Rapposelli encouraged the group to continue engaging/outreaching to organizations that have been involved with related issues including independent living providers, insurance providers and agencies, the banking industry, and education partners.
- Judge Walls indicated that Family Court will continue to provide advice and feedback on internal issues as they arise; Mary Kate McLaughlin indicated that she can serve as a liaison through the Court Improvement Project (CIP).
- Judge Walls stated that Family Court Judge Kenneth M. Millman (Sussex County) is a good resource as he focuses daily on these issues.
- Establishment of a manageable committee structure and advisory group configuration was another key step that was discussed. Secretary Rapposelli indicated that she would start a draft of what this structure might look like.

### **Next Steps Summary**

- Discussion of the feasibility of taking on the environmental scan by UD– Dr. Flynn
- Draft of a committee/advisory group configuration by DSCYF – Secretary Rapposelli
- Communication with the legislature about the initiative and steps being taken (through Kids Caucus) – Mary Kate McLaughlin and other DSCYF staff
- Outreach to education representatives to determine who else should be involved in the implementation planning process (e.g., technical schools) – Mary Kate McLaughlin or Rodney Brittingham
- Contact with the Delaware Insurance Commissioner’s Office to determine who would be best to represent insurance-related issues and concerns as part of the implementation plan – Jim Flynn and UD/IPA staff



**Next Meeting Date**

The group thought it was not necessary to meet as a whole until after environmental scan is completed. Smaller sub-sets of the group were encouraged to continue work already underway.

**Thank You & Adjourn**

# Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative

Environmental Scan Working Group Meetings

Meeting on Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.

Videoconference Locations: Children & Families First – Georgetown, Dover, Wilmington

## **In Attendance:**

- Governor Ruth Ann Minner
- Judge William Walls – Delaware Family Court
- Julia O'Hanlon – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Amy Clark – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Dennis Rozumalski – Delaware Department of Education
- Christina Jones-Bey – People's Place
- Vince Giampeiro – Children & Families First
- Janet Leban – Delaware Center for Justice
- Julie Miller – Delaware Center for Justice
- Jim Flynn – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Theresa Broome – Children & Families First
- Gauhar Ospanova – University of Delaware, Institute for Public Administration
- Felicia Kellum – Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Carl Schnee – Delaware Center for Justice
- Rodney Brittingham – Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Laura Miles – Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Division of Family Services
- Gladys Coto – Current Foster Parent
- Paul Calistro – West End Neighborhood House
- Andrea Mills – Delaware Family Court

## **Meeting Documents:**

- Meeting Agenda
- Summary of December 7, 2011 Meeting
- Environmental Scan Activities Outline/Work Plan/Meeting Schedule

## **Introduction:**

Governor Minner welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked the group for their time and interest in the issue and especially thanked Vince Giampeiro from Children & Families First for providing the rooms and technology to conduct the videoconference meeting. Jim Flynn, Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware, then provided the group with background information about the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative in Delaware and a sense of the progress that has been made on the environmental scan portion of the project.

The primary objective of the meeting was to gain feedback from the Delaware Successful Transitions group about the activities outline/work plan and request additional resources or partnerships for areas included in the environmental scan.

#### **Update on Recent Developments:**

Janet Leban, Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ), stated that, since December, her organization has been meeting with Casey Foundation staff to learn more about the initiative and how to get it underway in Delaware. The recommended first step of the process is the development of an environmental scan. The primary purpose of conducting the scan is to help determine Delaware's strengths and weaknesses/gaps in policies, resources, and services available to those aging out of foster care. The outcomes of the environmental scan will help determine how Delaware should proceed in developing a formal implementation plan that will list specific strategies for most comprehensively meeting the needs of the state's aging out population. Janet stated that progress on the environmental scan is moving quickly, thanks much in part to the partnership with the University of Delaware and the Governor's initiative. She also mentioned the following recent developments at DCJ:

- Julie Miller was hired at DCJ as the First Coordinator for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative.
- A Youth Advisor was also hired for the initiative. Nicole Byers currently is a junior at the University of Delaware and a former foster care youth. She has brought great insight to the project.

Janet Leban also highlighted the assistance being provided by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. It is offering technical assistance up to \$300,000 per year. She believes this could become long-term support, since many of the other selected sites have been part of the initiative for 9-10 years. Additionally, a Jim Casey representative, Christine Johnson, has been assigned to help Delaware and has been readily available to answer questions and provide feedback on ways to proceed with the initiative. Christine attended a February meeting of the environmental scan project team in Wilmington and most recently accompanied Julie Miller, Delaware Center for Justice, to a Rhode Island site visit.

Jim Flynn then introduced Gladys Coto, a current foster parent. Ms. Coto has been a foster parent for five years and has had 34 foster children in her house, with four who have aged out of the system. She stated that one of her previous foster children is currently attending the University of Miami. Because of her familiarity with the issues related to foster care services and programs, Ms. Coto believed she could provide some help and insight into the work being done by the group.

Julia O'Hanlon, Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware, then suggested that the group walk through the general process for completing the scan and review the activities outline/work plan to provide feedback or suggestions. Julia stated that the outline specifically defines the project scope and outlines the lead organization, primary data resources, and phase of the project in which each action will be completed. The activities outline is divided among seven major categories/sections:

- A. Capacity to Plan
- B. Demographics
- C. Youth Engagement
- D. Partnerships & Resources
- E. Research, Evaluation & Communications
- F. Public Will & Policy
- G. Increased Opportunities

The scan will be completed in two phases. Phase I questions will be completed by April 2011 and the more labor-intensive questions in Phase II will be completed by late May/early June 2011. A final document is scheduled to be completed by the end of June 2011, if not earlier.

### **Group Discussions:**

As Julia walked through the activities outline, the following discussions, comments and/or suggestions occurred for each of the questions listed.

- Questions 1 and 2 will be based on information provided by the Division of Family Services (DFS), and Felicia Kellum has already provided information and a draft for these questions.
- The Demographics section is being addressed primarily by Julie Miller. She is currently waiting for 2010 Census information to update this section.
- Question 9 describes how young people are involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the child welfare system that serves them. Felicia Kellum and DFS staff are providing some information. Nicole Byers, Delaware Center for Justice, is also planning to interview members of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) in the near future to gather additional information. Vince Giampeitro questioned how young kids get involved. Felicia Kellum responded that young people can become involved by voicing their interest to a DFS worker or an independent living provider. Additionally, she stated that the YAC meets every third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. The last meeting had approximately 24-28 youth attendees. Ms. Coto voiced some concern about the meeting times and suggested conducting the meetings at varying locations and times.
- Questions 11 and 12 may be best answered with information from Family Court. Judge Walls stated that Family Court could provide insight and data for this question because all courts were now requiring CIP programs.
- Paul Calistro for West End Neighborhood House offered his help for Question 14.
- Question 15 asks about key employers for those aging out of the foster care system. Jim Flynn asked if the aging out population is being employed by large corporations in Delaware and, if not, what some of the factors are inhibiting their employment. Paul Calistro stated that most are being employed by small businesses and retail organizations. He stated that educational barriers and criminal records are probably the greatest inhibitors. Governor Minner stated that employment also has a correlation with transportation issues. Ms. Coto mentioned that many aging out youth do not have the skills to properly complete applications or the knowledge about dressing appropriately for interviews, etc.

- Questions 17 and 18 address educational resources and available job readiness programs. Dennis Rozumalski, Department of Education (DOE), suggested getting information from DOE regarding the availability of GED programs, GED preparation classes, literacy programs, and skill-based programs offered in Delaware's technical high schools. He also mentioned the importance of including information regarding recent changes in the FAFSA process and recent developments of Student Success Plan program, which monitors student progress, provides support services for failing or at-risk students, and requires a life goals plan for students in grades 8-12. It was also suggested that Julia O'Hanlon contact Hope Murray regarding additional private scholarships available at Delaware Technical & Community College (DTCC).
- Question 19 addresses services available to youth in foster care who are pregnant and/or parenting. Vince Giampeitro stated that Children & Families First is offering two new programs: (1) Nurse Family Partnership, which provides services to first-time mothers at the poverty level; and (2) Resource Mothers Program, which aids mothers with more than one child. Children & Families First also has a pregnancy prevention program and acts as a resource center. It was also suggested that high school wellness centers and churches be noted as community resources for these types of issues.
- Paul Calistro suggested that the Delaware State Housing Authority be listed as a helpful resource for Question 20. The Delaware Real Estate Bloc Program was mentioned, too, as a resource.
- For Question 21, Connections was mentioned as a resource. Vince Giampeitro also stated that DHSS staff provides presentations on the department's available services and that scheduling a presentation may be possible in the near future.
- Question 22 addresses recent community collaboration efforts. Julie Miller stated that she had agendas and summaries from previous Delaware Successful Transitions group meetings, but would appreciate help from the group in answering this question.
- For Question 26, Governor Minner mentioned HUD money for reconstruction of sites and additional banks (e.g., the bank that employs 450 disabled citizens and provides transportation for them).
- For Question 27, United Way was mentioned as a contact.
- Question 32 asks for partners providing technical assistance related to self-evaluation. Julie stated the Casey Foundation is the primary source for this question.
- Question 33 addresses partners providing technical assistance. Julie Miller stated that previous Casey Foundation states have addressed this question by listing media outlets used to publicize available services. Gov. Minner suggested including local newspapers and newsletters (e.g., Cape Gazette, The Beacon, etc.).
- Question 38 addresses recent "hot issues" related to child welfare. Julie Miller stated that the draft answer primarily focuses on the recent Bradley (child sex offense) case. However, it was suggested to also include positive news and issues related to child welfare and that KidsCount and Family Court could be utilized as sources.
- Questions 40 and 41 request information on increased opportunities, specifically related to financial institutions and financial support. Gov. Minner suggested contacting the Delaware Bankers Association because she believes they make presentations in public schools. Northeast Treatment Center, West End Neighborhood House (in particular Barbieri Reed), and the First State Community Loan program staff were also mentioned as possible contacts.

- Vince Giampeitro questioned whether youth involved in residential treatment centers are included in this initiative/scan. Julie Miller responded that the Casey Initiative is very explicit about addressing only those individuals in the foster care system, but that the model could be applied to other populations in the future.

**Next Steps/Goals:**

Both Julie Miller and Julia O'Hanlon gave a brief overview of the path forward and time line for completing the environmental scan. Julie Miller stated that she would be scheduling interviews to address Phase II questions starting next week. Julia O'Hanlon reaffirmed that the Phase I draft would be completed by April and that Phase II would be completed thereafter with a final draft completed by June. She stated that the environmental scan group meets monthly to discuss progress—with the next meeting scheduled for March 18, 2011. It was suggested that a follow-up meeting with the Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative be scheduled after that meeting to provide updates on progress and a copy of the first draft. All members agreed upon scheduling another meeting in the near future (probably sometime in April 2011).

**Closing Statements:**

The group was very grateful to be involved in the scan process and had positive comments about the work already completed.

**Thank You & Adjourn**

## **Appendix D. Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Presentation**

Presentation slides follow on next page

Dare to be first.



## Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI)

Gauhar Ospanova  
Research Assistant  
Institute for Public Administration  
University of Delaware

November 2010

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### What is JCYOI?

- **JCYOI is an effort that was created from a vision that every youth aging out of foster care should have access to the opportunities and supports needed for a successful transition to adulthood.**
  - **Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.**
  - **Supports community-based efforts via grant making, technical assistance, and advocacy.**

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## More about the JCYOI...

- **The Initiative helps youth make the connections for permanence, education, employment, housing, health care, and supportive personal and community relationships.**
- **Currently operating in 11 states: Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.**

## Technical Assistance

- **Data Collection Tools & Self-Evaluation Training**
  - Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (Youth Outcomes Tracking), MIS IDA (Matched Savings Accounts Tracking), Policy Matrix, and Core Strategies Rubric.
- **Youth Engagement**
- **Community Partnerships**
- **Communications**
- **Graduated Engagement Process**

## Policy Improvements in Initiative States

POLICY INFLUENCE	SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT
Medicaid Expanded to age 21	Permanency efforts embedded in legislation and policy
Tuition waivers and expanded supports 18-21	Sibling rights visitations
Court Improvements	

## Rhode Island Foster Parents Association

- **Lead agency coordinating the ASPIRE initiative.**
- **Real Connections, a permanency project promoted and supported by the Initiative.**
- **The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is a partner and supplies office space and staff support.**
- **RIFPA works with Casey Family Services; School of Social Work; youth boards; and foster care agencies.**

## Increased Opportunities for Economic Success

**Opportunity Passport – an activity of the Increased Opportunities strategy.**

- **Has three distinct components:**
  - Financial Literacy
  - Matched Savings Account (IDA) 1:1
  - Personal Bank Account
- **Participants must first complete financial literacy curriculum.**

## More about Increased Opportunities for Economic Success

- **Participants may withdraw their money at any time, but savings is matched only for approved asset purchases.**
- **Participant eligibility: youth 14-24 years old placed in the public child welfare foster care system at or after the age of 14.**
- **Creates door openers.**
- **Engages youth as decision-makers.**

## Rhode Island: Real Connections

- **Began in 2006 with 40 youth.**
- **In 2009 received \$2 million federal grant to expand to 500 children/youth.**
- **State and community agencies unite to identify adult connections for teens who are vulnerable to “aging out” without positive, consistent mentors on which they can rely.**
- **Provide training and constant support for mentors and mentees.**

## Maine: Youth Transition Collaborative

- **Led by the staff of the Youth Development Unit in the Institute for Public Sector Innovation at the Edmund Muskie School of Public Service.**
- **Youth Leadership Advisory Teams (YLAT)**
  - **Six teams that meet monthly.**
  - **Serve eight districts of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).**
  - **Eight staff members of UM; eight youth transition workers from DHHS; six former or current foster youth.**

## Achievements in Maine

- **Youth Transition Collaborative/YLATs:**
  - Assist DHHS, the courts, and service providers in developing a youth-centered system for laws and policies, practice, and resource distribution.
  - Permanency policy.
  - Tuition waiver eligibility legislation.
  - Medicaid coverage expansion efforts.
  - Ten issue-area publications.

## **Appendix E. Environmental Scan**

Complete document follows

# **Delaware Environmental Scan**

## **Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative**

**Co-Investment Site of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative**

**JUNE 2011**

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University of Delaware**

in partnership with

**The Delaware Center for Justice  
and  
Delaware State University**

**PREFACE**

This report was prepared by the Institute for Public Administration (IPA), a unit within the College of Arts & Sciences' School of Public Policy & Administration at the University of Delaware. IPA links the research and resources of the University of Delaware with the management and information needs of local, state, and regional governments in the Delaware Valley. IPA provides assistance to agencies and local governments through direct staff assistance and research projects as well as training programs and policy forums.

In January 2011, the Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) contracted IPA to coordinate and develop an environmental scan related to Delaware becoming a Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative co-investment state. Delaware State University is also a primary project partner. This project is endorsed by the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) and other agencies and community stakeholder groups involved in the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative (DYOI).

In partnership with DCJ and DSU, IPA's key objective for the scan was to identify the state's strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in resources and services currently available for the state's youth aging out of foster care. Ultimately, the scan will provide a better understanding of the issues involved and help create appropriate strategies and action items that address the primary policy goals of the DYOI.

IPA, working with a Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative technical assistance support person/liaison and a DCJ staff person, took the lead in collecting and organizing data and information necessary to develop this environmental scan. DSCYF and other agency resources provided critical information in developing this comprehensive document. While this document reflects recent projects and initiatives related to aging out of foster care in Delaware, continual research and work related to this topic may not be reflected. Ongoing research and progress in the areas presented will supplement this scan and serve to regularly update the contents of the document.

The ultimate goal of the DYOI is to build advocacy important to leveraging state and local resources, strengthening partnerships, and expanding legislation related to improving the quality of services for youth aging out of foster care in Delaware.

This document is divided into seven sections following the Environmental Scan model provided by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: (A) Capacity to Plan, (B) Demographics, (C) Youth Engagement, (D) Partnerships and Resources, (E) Research, Evaluation, and Communications, (F) Public Will and Policy, and (G) Increased Opportunities.

Jerome R. Lewis, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute for Public Administration



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IPA staff member **Julia O'Hanlon** served as the Principal Investigator for the project. IPA graduate research assistants **Amy Clark** and **Gauhar Ospanova** contributed to the data collection and writing of this report. **Julie Miller**, DCJ, was a primary author of the document and served as DCJ's project liaison and coordinator. DCJ project leaders were **Janet Leban** and **Joni Silverstein**. **Nicole Byers**, DCJ Youth Advisor, provided valuable information from youth interviewees and Delaware Youth Advisory Council members. **Nancy Wagner**, Delaware State University (DSU), also served as primary contributor and was responsible for gathering information from current DSU students who were formerly in the foster care system in Delaware. IPA staff members **Dr. James Flynn** and **Lisa Moreland** also contributed to the development of the scan through work with the Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative group. IPA staff members **Lisa Moreland** and **Mark Deshon** edited the report and designed its cover, respectively.

The authors wish to acknowledge other significant contributions provided by the following persons, each of whom has played a key role in providing accurate information and data for the development of this scan:

### **Current and Former Foster Youth Interview Participants**

**Rodney Brittingham**, Division of Family Services

**Felicia Kellum**, Division of Family Services

We also give special thanks to **Janet Leban**, DCJ Executive Director, for providing leadership to the overall initiative in support of strengthening Delaware's services and programs for the state's foster care youth and their families.

**Former Governor Ruth Ann Minner**, through her work with the Policy Consensus Initiative, should be recognized also for her vision and understanding of key issues related to this document. She played a critical role in providing information to and receiving feedback from the Delaware Successful Transitions Group.

The working group would like to thank our partners in the Delaware Environmental Scan/DYOI:

Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families  
Delaware Girls Initiative  
Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative  
Delaware Youth Advisory Council  
Delaware State University  
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

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## INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As described by Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative research and resources, the Environmental Scan is a critical tool for the Delaware Center for Justice (lead agency), and its partnering organizations, to use as part of a self-evaluation process that guides a systematic approach to addressing the long-term needs and interests of Delaware's youth aging out of foster care.

In particular, the Environmental Scan will serve as a baseline for a Community Partnerships Board charged with overseeing the direction, strategies, and outcomes of a formal implementation plan of the DYOI and will address five core areas:

- **Youth Engagement**
- **Partnerships and Resources**
- **Research, Evaluation, and Communications**
- **Public Will and Policy**
- **Increased Opportunities**

Based on the criteria laid out by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the DYOI will measure overall success in these areas by tracking and evaluating improved outcomes in the areas of permanence, education, employment, housing, physical and mental health, and personal and community engagement. The Community Partnerships Board, comprising partners in both public and private organizations and agencies, will drive this process and lead in decision-making, communications, and the documentation of results. As the next step in developing strategies to address the issues presented in the Environmental Scan, the Delaware Center for Justice will take the lead in creating this committee.

Over the last several years, Delaware has made significant strides toward addressing many of the issues and challenges related to appropriate supports and resources available to the state's aging out youth. Collaborative efforts around the state have included a large number of agencies and organizations working on a variety of sub-issues including education, financial literacy, housing, and job readiness and retention.

Significant and noteworthy outcomes of such efforts have included legislation that allows Family Court to stay involved with former foster care youth until age 21, a Memorandum of Understanding among six state agencies to better coordinate efforts and resources to address the complex and comprehensive needs of foster care youth, the development of the DYOI, and the development of the Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative. Key leaders and policymakers involved in such efforts include current Governor Jack Markell; former Governor Ruth Ann Minner; Secretary Vivian Rapposelli, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families; family court judges; legislators; and other cabinet-level administrators.

The Environmental Scan details these and other accomplishments and identifies opportunities for expanding current efforts for the development of the DYOI's multi-

strategy goals. In addition, the scan helps determine gaps in existing efforts and opportunities to improve upon established partnerships, programs, and services to create a more systematic approach to meeting the specific needs of Delaware's aging out youth. Currently, significant strides are being made in the areas presented in the scan. Therefore, ongoing research and progress will serve to regularly update and supplement the document.

Youth participation from Delaware's Youth Advisory Council (YAC) has been (and should continue to be) an important step in identifying interests and concerns, particularly with regard to legal and relational permanence, employment, education, personal and community engagement, housing, and physical and mental health. The Delaware YAC is a statewide council that includes current and former foster youth and supports youth participation by providing a platform to express issues with, experiences in, and thoughts on the current foster care system. The group meets monthly to share issues related to policies and procedures and the transitioning phase of aging out.

### **Delaware's Primary Strengths**

Delaware's overall size and composition provide natural advantages to creating and maintaining partnerships and coordinated efforts necessary for a systematic approach to serving the state's young adults. With only three counties, a general population of fewer than one million, and about 670 youth currently in foster care (a decrease of about 200 from 2008), the state is well-positioned to make stronger efforts toward addressing the target population's needs and interests and making a real difference in the quality of their adult lives. The number of individuals projected to age out of foster care in 2011 is estimated at 106—a manageable number of young adults, considering the number of services and programs that already exist and are designed to help the state's aging out youth become successful and happy adults.

Current and potential partnerships, programs, and services related to the state's aging out youth—in addition to existing opportunities for young people to directly participate in their own case management—provide a strong platform for Delaware's long-term process and strategies. Areas of particular relevancy and strength include:

- Youth involvement/participation (Youth Advisory Council, key officials, and high-ranking state officials regularly attend meetings).
- Legal permanence (extension of Family Court jurisdiction until age 21, GAL/CASA).
- Lead agency influence: Delaware Center for Justice (nonprofit focused on state's youth and already involved in a number of programs dedicated to helping at-risk youth through the child welfare and justice systems has the ability to leverage resources from a variety of partners, both public and private).
- Interdisciplinary, statewide community partnerships that include state agencies, nonprofits, the business community, and higher-education institutions, including the University of Delaware and Delaware State University.
- Interagency coordination and agreements.
- Housing options (state agency and nonprofit efforts and opportunities).

- Data collection efforts (coordinated by the Division of Family Services).
- Financial literacy programs and workforce development opportunities.

Details on each of these areas are found in the Environmental Scan.

### **Delaware's Primary Opportunities for Improvement**

While Delaware is faring well in many areas related to serving its aging out youth, the state and national economic climate may present employment and housing challenges. The Division of Family Services' database systems, such as NYTD and FACTS, will serve as helpful tools in tracking and disseminating this type of information over time. KIDS COUNT in Delaware also could be a valuable resource for ongoing research and data on the target population.

In terms of specific areas of focus related to the state's aging out needs, the Environmental Scan helped identify several gaps or challenges that could be addressed through the multi-strategy approach of the DYOI. Many of these issues were also identified by the youth who were interviewed:

- Overall better linkages among the vast number of identified services, programs, partnerships that already exist.
- More statewide transportation options for getting to and from jobs and other community-based events/activities.
- Employment and job security linkages to housing options (average monthly rate of a two-bedroom apartment is \$949, minus utilities); long-term funding for current voucher programs and other housing options offered through state and nonprofit agencies in Delaware are not guaranteed and should be considered part of an ongoing evaluative process.
- Long-term relational permanence to assist with a variety of issues, including educational opportunities, financial literacy, health insurance options, housing alternatives, parenting resources, and job readiness (e.g., soft skills, transportation to/from work, and establishing a bank account).
- Terminated Parental Rights issues (especially related to potential relationships/placement types with other family members).
- Linking key businesses and philanthropic organizations that have been identified to specific areas of focus (education, housing, transportation, job training, etc.); some are involved already. For those that are not, how do we best get them linked into the system?
- Advocacy and marketing opportunities as part of long-term evaluation of services (broad statewide communication through media, literature, and events).
- Identifying and addressing natural barriers among the foster care population (gender and ethnicity-related issues and challenges).

Considering the strengths and opportunities identified will be important for the Community Partnerships Board with regard to how this information might address the five core elements of an implementation plan (**Youth Engagement, Partnerships and Resources, Research, Evaluation, and Communications, Public Will and Policy Increased Opportunities**). The Environmental Scan will continue to serve as a road map for these areas and will need to be updated regularly based on anticipated long-term outcomes and results achieved.

**A. CAPACITY TO PLAN**

**1. Public Child Welfare Agency Support: A strong partnership with the public child welfare agency is in place to maximize the impact of the core strategies.**

**Describe the extent to which:**

- A. The public child welfare agency engages in effective partnerships and collaborations with the community and key stakeholders.**
- B. Past efforts and future plans by the agency include services and supports to older youth in foster care.**
- C. The agency is committed to participate and champion planning activities for implementation of the core strategies.**
- D. The agency commits resources, financial and/or in-kind, to support implementation of the core strategies.**

The Division of Family Services (DFS) has worked diligently to develop strong partnerships and collaborate with community agencies for many years. Services to youth are most often provided through both internal staff and community agencies. Recognizing the importance of connecting its clientele to the community as a whole, the division has placed a high level of importance in developing partnerships that will benefit the children and families that it serves. Foster care placement and adoption services are contracted through community agencies in Delaware and in other states in addition to foster homes licensed by the state of Delaware. A similar approach is utilized to provide independent living services to youth. Independent living services are coordinated by a Division of Family Services worker for youth aged 14 and 15, while such services are provided through contracts with community partners for youth aged 16-21. Similarly, family services aimed at mitigating the circumstances that warranted DFS intervention are provided through both community agencies and internal staff.

The Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC) was legislated in 1997 to monitor Delaware's child protection system and ensure the health, safety, and well-being of Delaware's abused, neglected, and dependent children [16 Del. C. § 912(b)]. In addition to protecting the state's children, CPAC maintains a focus on the welfare and availability of services to Delaware's youth aging out of foster care.

**2. Interagency Coordination/Collaboration: Multiple public and private systems, working with the lead agency and key stakeholders, take responsibility and are accountable for achieving good outcomes for young people in, and exiting from, foster care.**

**Describe the extent to which:**

- A. Systems of care (e.g., education, mental health, juvenile justice, adult services, and labor) that provide or broker services and supports that affect the well-being of young people in, or exited from, foster care have been identified and engaged.**
- B. Systems of care support the core strategies and recognize the importance of implementing all five strategies in combination for maximum effect.**



Additional efforts to improve collaborations with the community include the composition of the Division of Family Services Advisory and Advocacy Council. This council includes community members who have an interest in improving the child welfare system. Quarterly meetings are held to provide a forum for sharing information. The DFS director presents updates regarding the division's endeavors and receives feedback and suggestions from council members. The creation of this council has helped to bridge a gap between DFS and the community in an effort to holistically serve the needs of children and families.

With a high number of youth having the permanency goal of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA), a community workgroup was assembled to develop resources to improve permanency outcomes for older youth. This workgroup meets bi-monthly and includes both DFS representatives and community partners.

**3. Capacity of Lead Agency for Developing the Implementation Plan: The Lead Agency engages youth and young adults, public and private agencies, and community partners in all planning, implementation, and evaluation of the five core strategies.**

**Describe the extent to which:**

- A. The lead agency's mission statement includes working with youth and families who enter the child welfare system and a history of supporting youth engagement and principles of positive youth development in service delivery.**
- B. The lead agency has a proven ability to convene natural partners including the child welfare agency, private placement agencies, and other systems and community partners to actively engage in creating opportunities for young people in, or exiting from, foster care.**
- C. The lead agency has the support of private and public funding partners.**

The Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) has the ability and capacity to develop an Initiative Implementation Plan. They hired a Coordinator, Julie Miller, to begin the planning process, as well as a Youth Advisor, Nicole Byers, to make sure the youth voice is heard throughout the planning stages. Meetings have already been arranged to include community partners in the planning of the Initiative.

DCJ aims to improve the quality of justice in Delaware by building a safer, more secure Delaware through advocacy, education, research, and direct services. In the past, DCJ has supported the establishment of Family Court and the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families and developed and delivered gender-responsive services for at-risk girls or those involved in the juvenile justice system in Delaware. Currently, the nonprofit offers many programs dedicated to juveniles, including a School Diversion Program, The DELTA Project, which educates at-risk youth about healthy relationships among peers, the Delaware Girls Initiative, and the Gun Violence Prevention Program. These programs demonstrate that DCJ is able to work with partners across the state to promote improvements to juvenile justice and that the programs are funded through both private and public funding partners.

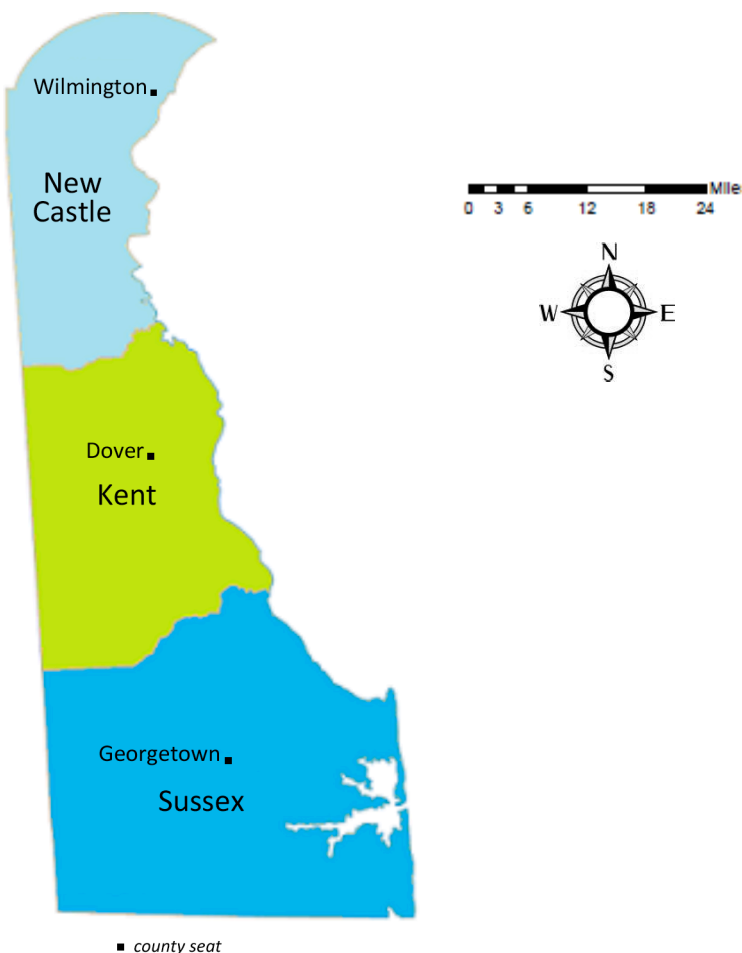
**4. Data Gathering and Analysis: Planning to implement the core strategies is based on data gathering and analysis to inform knowledge of the unique needs, opportunities, and challenges in the community and state. Describe the extent to which:**

- A. The lead agency and its partners have a history of gathering data and the capacity to complete the environmental scan, including an identified contact in the child welfare agency to gather data on system indicators.**
- B. Challenges and opportunities have been identified based on data, such as economic condition of the community and state, number of young people entering and exiting care each year, dependence on congregate care, over-representation of youth and families of color in the child welfare system, and political climate; and partners have been identified who are willing to address the challenges.**

In 1994, the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) developed its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) known as Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS). The FACTS provides case management and client service tracking for all three of the operational arms of DSCYF, including Division of Family Services (DFS), Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS), and the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS). Development of FACTS was possible through a collaboration with, and partial funding from, the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF). By the summer of 2011, Delaware will begin the FACTS II initiative (upgrading the FACTS) with full implementation to be completed by 2014. Using the data collected in the FACTS, Delaware submits data outcome reports to meet several voluntary and mandatory reporting requirements. These include National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Foster Care Contacts outcomes, and Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR). Beginning in May 2011, Delaware will begin submitting National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) to ACF.

**B. DEMOGRAPHICS****5. Define the current target area(s) of the local initiative (geographically and overall population count). Please include a map.**

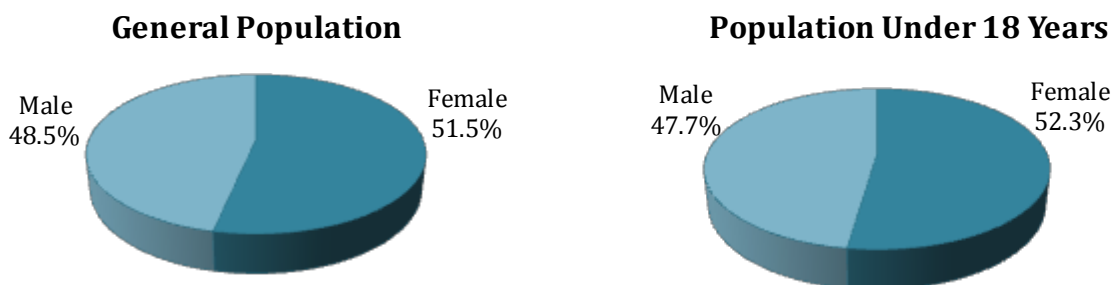
The DYOI will serve the entire state of Delaware. The state is composed of three counties. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 60 percent of the state's population of 897,934 resides in New Castle County, 22 percent in Sussex County, and 18 percent in Kent County.

**6. Describe the population in the current target area(s) and state in items a-m below.**

The population of Delaware is reported below and categorized by age, gender, ethnicity, languages spoken at home, poverty, and income level. In addition to housing information, data on unemployment, educational attainment, health insurance, and homelessness among the state's youth population are also presented.

**a. Population by Age**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Under 5 Years	6.7
5 to 9 Years	6.4
10 to 14 Years	6.5
15 to 19 Years	7.1
20 to 24 Years	6.5
25 to 34 Years	13.0
35 to 44 Years	14.1
45 to 54 Years	14.6
55 to 59 Years	6.0
60 to 64 Years	5.4
65 to 74 Years	7.3
75 to 84 Years	4.7
85+ Years	1.8

**b. Population by Gender****c. Population by Ethnicity**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	68.9
Black or African American	21.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.5
Asian	3.2
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0
Mixed Race	2.6
Some Other Race	3.4
Hispanic (of any Race)	8.1

**d. Population by Languages Spoken at Home**

<b>Language</b>	<b>Percent</b>
English Only	88.4
Language other than English	11.6
Spanish or Spanish Creole	6.0
Other Indo-European Languages	3.2
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	1.6
Other and Unspecified Languages	0.8

**e. Percent of General Population Living Below Poverty Level**

<b>Population Cluster</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Individuals	10.5
Children Under 18	16.0

**f. Population (Families and Households) by Income Level**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Families</b>	
Less than \$10,000	4.2
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.0
\$25,000 to \$34,999	11.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	16.6
\$50,000 to \$64,999	24.0
\$65,000 to \$74,999	17.3
<b>Households</b>	
Less than \$10,000	5.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	4.1
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.6
\$25,000 to \$34,999	9.8
\$35,000 to \$49,999	13.9
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20.0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.0
\$100,000 or More	23.0

<b>Household Units</b>	<b>Median Income</b>
Families	\$55,257
Households	\$56,860

**g. Unemployment Rate of Young People**

Age Group	Unemployment Rate
16-19 Years	N/A
20-24 Years	N/A

**h. Educational Attainment of Young People Between 18-24 Years**

Highest Educational Level	Percent
Less than High School Graduate	N/A
High School Graduate	N/A
Some College or Associate's Degree	N/A
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	N/A

**i. Percent of Uninsured Young People**

Age Group	Percent
0-5 Years	7.2
6-18 Years	9.7
19-24	N/A

**j. Housing Vacancy Rate**

Housing Type	Vacancy Rate
Homeowner	2.6
Rental	13.4

**k. Average Monthly Rate for Two-Bedroom Apartment**

Average Monthly Rate	Dollars
Two-Bedroom Apartment	\$949

**l. Median Home Price**

Type of Home	Median Price
Single-Family Home	\$249,000

**m. Percent of Home-Services Recipients Between 18-24 Years**

Type of Program	Percent
Shelter-Program Recipients	N/A
Outreach-Program Recipients	N/A

**7. Describe the child welfare population in the current target area(s) and state in items a–k below. Please feel free to copy and paste published data or complete the table below. Additional rows may be inserted in the table.**

Delaware's foster care population data are presented below and categorized by age, gender and ethnicity (for older youth), and placement type. Data on the state's youth who are aging out of the foster care system, as well as data on homeless-services-program recipients with histories of foster care, are also reported. The data represents a point in time look at the state welfare system, taken on December 31, 2010.

**a. Number of Children in Foster Care** (numbers taken on December 31 of each year)

Total Number	2008	2009	2010
	875	684	670

**b. Children in Foster Care by Age**

Age Group	Count	Percent
0-5 Years	196	29.0
6-10 Years	127	19.0
11-15 Years	168	25.0
16+ Years	179	27.0

**c. Children in Foster Care by Placement Type**

<b>Placement Type</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Boarding School	4	1.0
Foster Care	320	48.0
Foster Care – 2 CFF	4	1.0
Foster Care – 2 CFF Treatment Family Homes DFS	15	2.0
Foster Care – Approved Relative	2	0.0
Foster Care – DFS Supervision	1	0.0
Foster Care – Emergency	1	0.0
Foster Care – Medical Foster Home	2	0.0
Foster Care – Preadoptive	29	4.0
Foster Care – Specialized Foster Home	41	6.0
Foster Care – Treatment Family Homes DFS	100	15.0
Foster Care Non-Relative Non-Approved	15	2.0
Foster Care Relative Non-Approved	60	9.0
Foster Care Treatment Family – Step Down	14	2.0
Inpatient Hospital	2	0.0
Psychiatric Inpatient - Hospital	1	0.0
Residential Group Care – DFS	45	7.0
Residential Group Care – Substance Abuse	1	0.0
Residential Independent Living	1	0.0
Shelter Services	12	2.0

**d. Gender Breakdown of Young People Between 14-18 Years in Foster Care**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Males	125	45.0
Females	152	55.0

**e. Ethnic Breakdown of Young People Between 14-18 Years in Foster Care**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percent</b>
White	123	44.0
Black or African American	152	55.0
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.0
Asian	2	1.0
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0
Mixed Race	0	0.0



**f. Number of Young People Between 18-21, by Language Spoken\***

Language	Count
English Only	15
Not Reported	7

\*Data not readily available

**g. Number of Young People Aging Out of Foster Care**

Total Number	2010	2011 - Projected
	86	106

**h. Unemployment Rate for Young People Between 18-21 Formerly in Foster Care**

The rate for young people formerly in foster care who are unemployed is 66 percent. This number reflects only those who are currently participating in Delaware's independent living program.

**i. High School Graduation Rate for Young People Between 18-21 Formerly in Foster Care**

The rate for young people formerly in foster care who have graduated high school is 30 percent. This number reflects only those who are currently participating in Delaware's independent living program.

**j. Percent of Homeless-Program-Services Recipients Reporting a History of Foster Care**

The rate for young people formerly in foster care who are homeless is 29 percent. This number reflects only those who are currently participating in Delaware's independent living program.

**8. Is the public child welfare system in your state administered by the state, county, or both?**

The Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) administers the child welfare system in Delaware.

**C. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT****9. Describe how young people are involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the child welfare system that serves them.**

The Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC), through DSCYF, was officially formed in October 2001, with the by-laws of the organization adopted in January 2002 and amended in November 2005. The purpose of the council is to provide a mechanism for youth to directly advocate their needs while in foster care. Key legislators, high-ranking state employees, and staff of DSCYF regularly attend YAC meetings to hear the concerns and ideas of the youth. Foster care youth, aged 14-21, may participate as members, with older youth, 21 and older, participating as advisors. YAC meets on the third Wednesday of each month in Dover, with transportation provided by DSCYF. In addition, foster youth participate in a one-day, statewide Annual Youth Conference. At least 75 youth attend the conference each year. In February 2008, YAC applied for and received a grant from State Farm Insurance in the amount of \$45,191 to implement financial literacy programs for youth in foster care.

The goal of the grant program is to increase financial knowledge by opening and managing a savings account, learning about loans and interest rates, and much more. In addition to receiving financial education, youth who open savings accounts also receive matching funds through the grant. Although the funding is not ongoing, the original grant has been utilized continually since 2008.

Additional usage has included assistance to ten youth toward their car insurance premiums. After submitting applications, including statements regarding how the grant would assist with car insurance expenses, recipients received \$1,000 toward their insurance premiums. Furthermore, the grant supported payments to Instructional Advocates, with the goal of utilizing former foster youth to help younger youth better identify and learn from those who have had similar experiences. Three Instructional Advocates were chosen from a pool of interested candidates. The Instructional Advocates receive a monthly stipend and an incentive for conducting presentations.

**10. Describe the ways in which the community supports youth participation, both in the local initiative and in other community activities (e.g., childcare, transportation, timing, and location of meetings). What are some of the barriers in the community to youth participation?**

The Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC) supports youth participation by providing them with a platform to express their issues with, experiences in, and thoughts on the current foster care system, the policies and procedures, and the transitioning phase of aging out. Due to YAC being a statewide council, its meetings are held each month mid-state in Kent County, allowing easier access to the meetings for attendees. The Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) provides transportation to and from YAC meetings for all attendees.

While transportation is provided by DSCYF to YAC meetings, access and timing of public transportation (e.g., bus routes and schedules) options continue to be a barrier to youth interested in participating in other community activities and obtaining or maintaining a job. Childcare is also a problem for those youth that are parents.

**11. Describe the policies and practices in place that ensure that young people are actively involved in their own case planning and decision making?**

DSCYF actively engaged youth in their case planning. As soon as youth are able, they must sign their case plans throughout their time in child welfare. At the age of 17, they also participate in the Stairways to Encourage Personal Success (STEPS) program. STEPS is a positive program that is designed to allow teens preparing to age out of care to assist in the planning for their transition. This is a youth-driven process wherein each youth identifies the participants he or she feels are needed in the meeting to outline the transition plan. The plan is revisited within three months of the youth's eighteenth birthday. The plan is reviewed again, in cooperation with an independent living provider, once the youth has aged out. Transition plans cover everything from health care, court services, independent living skills, to social services.

Though the state is to review the plan several times before the youth ages out, this does not always happen. This is especially true if the youth is in the juvenile justice system at one of their detention sites during their last year in foster care. Due to the detention, the youth may not have been informed of the STEPS process and where he or she would go following detention.

Over the past few years, Family Court has amended one of its rules to allow for age-appropriate consultation of the Court with the child (Family Court Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 216):

"A hearing, which may be held upon motion by the Department or be regularly scheduled by the Court, regarding the permanent placement of the child shall be held not later than 12 months from the time the child has "entered foster care" as defined by rule 209(d), or within thirty (30) days of a judicial determination that reasonable efforts are not required unless the permanency hearing requirements to finalize a permanency plan have been fulfilled at a prior hearing where the Court has determined reasonable efforts to offer reunification services to the parent or parents are not required. **At such hearing, the Court shall conduct an age appropriate consultation with the child(ren).**"

However, youth are not always present at all hearings, since the timing of hearings may conflict with their school schedules. The Court schedules important hearings (e.g., independent living arrangements, eighteenth birthdays) later in the day so youth will be able to attend.

In January 2009, DFS initiated STEPS meetings for all youth in foster care when they turn 17 years of age.

The purpose of the STEPS meeting is to help youth establish (or re-establish) relationships with individuals who will be able to offer assistance to them and to develop a plan to address their housing, educational, vocational, medical, and transportation needs once they exit the foster care system. The youth determine whom they want to invite to attend the STEPS meetings. Meetings are conducted by a neutral facilitator. The STEPS plans are reviewed by the youth and their caseworkers 90 days before they turn 18.

**12. Describe access of young people in foster care to legal advocacy services and supports, i.e., a court-appointed representative for youth in foster care, such as an attorney, attorney or non-attorney GAL, or CASA representative?**

Any attorney licensed to practice law in the state of Delaware is eligible to represent a child through the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) Guardian ad Litem (GAL) program. Retired and inactive members are also able to volunteer as GALs.

As of June 30, 2008, about 317 attorneys were representing 517 children. Very few of those attorneys are Family Law practitioners, and most practice in the many law fields you will find in Delaware, particularly corporate litigation and corporate in-house counsel. In volunteering to represent the best interests of a child, the GAL is statutorily charged with several duties. Most important is the need to develop a relationship with the client. The GAL meets with all the people important in the child's life and gathers all written documentation regarding the child and his or her parents. The GAL must understand the reasons the child entered foster care and ensure that the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) is doing what is necessary to remedy those issues. The GAL also makes sure that the youth is getting the proper services he or she needs.

During Fiscal Year 2007, OCA received 934 appropriate referrals and was able to make 498 attorney appointments. The vast majority (98 percent) of children appointed to an attorney in FY07 were in the legal custody of DSCYF. At the end of FY07, 754 dependent, neglected, and abused children were actively receiving legal representation through OCA, a 17 percent increase over FY06. OCA Deputy Child Advocates (DCAs) were representing 105 of those children, while volunteer attorneys represented the remaining 649.

During Fiscal Year 2010, OCA had 480 active cases. OCA represented 120 of those cases, while pro bono attorneys handled the 360 other cases, most of which were in New Castle County. Across Delaware, over 200 volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) build close relationships with and serve as one-on-one advocates for children in foster care. There are three CASA programs within the Family Court that recruit and train volunteers from the community, who are then appointed as advocates by a Family Court Judge. The CASA is appointed as the child's GAL, which involves being party to any court agreement or court plan for the child, who is represented by an attorney for legal guidance.

CASA Volunteers are selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated by Program Coordinators from the Family Court staff.

CASA volunteers commit to spending at least one year:

- Establishing a strong, stable connection with assigned child(ren).
- Gathering information and making recommendations to the court about the child's best interest.
- Advocating to ensure the child receives needed services. Too often, a CASA volunteer is the only consistent adult in the life of the child.

The advantages of having CASA volunteers include high-quality advocacy, better service to children, cost effectiveness, and efficiency. Children with a CASA benefit in countless ways. They are more likely to be placed in a safe, permanent home; more likely to receive better services; and more likely to have fewer placement changes.

Through a partnership with the Office of the Child Advocate and Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, new pro bono legal services will be made available to youth. These legal services will include representation to prevent youth from being placed on the child protection registry, assistance with early removal from the child protection registry, and expungement assistance. These services will be helpful, as records of this nature quite often limit accessibility to employment and housing. Future legal services will also include representation regarding immigration, special education, and social security appeals.

**D. PARTNERSHIPS & RESOURCES****13. What is the general economic condition of your community, including the fiscal condition of both your state and current target area(s)?**

Like most states, Delaware has experienced significant state budget constraints that have led to various revenue-enhancing measures (details described in question 14 below). However, according to the Delaware Economic Development Office's (DEDO) *Databook*, Delaware has the strongest economy in the region. As of November 2010, the state's unemployment rate (8.4 percent) was more than 1 percent lower than the national average (9.5 percent). Delaware's approved fiscal year (FY) 2011 general fund operating budget totaled \$3.3 billion. The top revenue source is a personal income tax (\$1,145.10 compared to \$1,061.50 collected in 2010). Investments are flowing in due to favorable business and tax climate. New jobs were generated in 2010 due to the reopening of the oil refinery in Delaware City, an agreement to move Perdue's agribusiness headquarters to Seaford, the state's continued AAA bond rating by Wall Street agencies, and Delaware's success in earning American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) federal funding.

In terms of ARRA funding, Delaware has done well to secure substantial grants and funding for a number of policy initiatives. In 2010 the Department of Education (DOE), with strong support from Governor Markell, succeeded in winning a *Race to the Top* grant of over \$100 million. Delaware was one of two first-round winners of the education reform competition. The purpose of the grant is to encourage the state to continue creating the conditions for education innovation and reform. According to Governor Markell, part of Delaware's reform plans includes linking teacher ratings and performance to student performance. The Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) also received \$10 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Funds for financing assistance to low-income homeowners and other purposes.

However, there are proposed FY 2011 program-area cuts in the fields of public assistance, higher education, transportation, and corrections. Moreover, as of February 2011, the acquisition of Wilmington Trust Corp., one of the state's largest employers, resulted in approximately 700 layoffs.

**14. To what extent do changing economic conditions affect demand for the types of opportunities you are creating and the availability of resources to support your work?**

At the start of Fiscal Year 2010, the state faced an \$800 million budget gap—20 percent of its total operating budget. To address this deficit, several revenue enhancement and budget reduction strategies were implemented. Only two months after Governor Jack Markell was elected, he proposed an 8 percent, across-the-board pay cut for state employees. This proposal was reduced by the legislature to 2.5 percent and included in the budget passed on June 30, 2009. Also included in the budget was a plan to reduce the overall size of state government through attrition.

During this time, no direct service staff positions within the Division of Family Services were affected by attrition or reduction measures. A year later, state employee cuts were restored.

In light of planned cuts in the fields of public assistance, higher education, and transportation, the demand for and threat to opportunities that could benefit aging out youth is even more acute. While the state is faring pretty well in terms of providing housing opportunities (see the Housing Choice Voucher Program details), rental costs continue to increase, and transportation and employment options are strained (see the Demographics section and Cars for Careers program details). Additionally, some individuals have expressed that most housing vouchers support housing opportunities in New Castle County and that more Kent- and Sussex-area vouchers should be considered.

**Aid in Dover, Inc., Eight-O-One Program** – Aid in Dover, Inc. is dedicated to assisting the Kent County community, particularly children, troubled youth, and adults with employment training. Its Eight-O-One Program offers help for youth aged 12-17, who are dependent, neglected, abused, runaway, or homeless. For youth in crisis, the program provides temporary shelter including a 24-hour “awake” supervision, medical and diagnostic screening, counseling and tutoring, and life skills training.

**Cars for Careers Program** – This was a state-administered program that provided used vehicles for steadily employed individuals over the age of 18. Unfortunately, the program was closed as of December 31, 2010, due to state funding constraints.

**DSHA Step Up Voucher Program** – Beginning in 2008, ten housing vouchers were made available to parenting youth who aged out of foster care. Additional vouchers have been added each ensuing year and non-parenting participants are now also served. The total number of vouchers allocated for this population is 34. Youth statewide may use these vouchers for a 2- to 3-year time period in order to have affordable housing while furthering their educational or vocational goals.

**Family Unification Vouchers** – There are 30 Family Unification Vouchers that provide 18-month rental subsidies to youth who have aged out of foster care.

**Fisher Transitional Services (FTS)** – This is a community service organization open to all residents in New Castle County aged 18-25, who exhibit a need in one of the four service areas: financial (money management), residential (transitional housing), vocational (employment services), and educational (support services). Fisher Transitional Services help provide the necessary life skills that a person needs to live independently and also provide shelter for those in need.

**Housing Choice Voucher Program** – Delaware State Housing Authority, Wilmington Housing Authority, Dover Housing Authority, Newark Housing Authority, and New Castle County Community Services offer a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program for approved private rental residency.

These programs offer housing subsidies to eligible low-income individuals and families to rent existing, privately owned dwelling units from participating landlords. Youth may now apply for DSHA Section 8 housing at age 16, which allows them to remain on the waiting list during their last two years in foster care and puts them in a better position to obtain a voucher after aging out at age 18.

**The Elizabeth W. Murphey School** – This is a nonprofit group home facility in Dover, Delaware, that provides services for children who have issues with dependency and/or neglect. They currently house 31 youth on campus and provide Independent living services to approximately 70 young people within the community.

**West End Neighborhood House, Inc.** – This nonprofit organization coordinates the *Life Lines* program, which serves current and former foster care youth aged 16-23. Specifically, the program aims to promote self-sufficiency and assist youth in becoming contributing members of society. It includes educational and training endeavors, financial education, medication management, employment placement assistance, mental health services, and general life skills instruction.

**15. List key employers, both public and private, in your current target area(s).**

- Alfred I. du Pont Hospital for Children
- Allen Family Foods, Inc.
- American International Group (AIG), Inc.
- Amtrak
- Agilent Technologies, Inc.
- AstraZeneca
- Bank of America
- Bayhealth Medical Center
- Beebe Medical Center
- Brandywine School District
- Christiana Care Health System
- Christina School District
- Citigroup Inc.
- City of Wilmington
- Colonial School District
- Comcast Corporation
- Computer Sciences Corporation
- Delaware National Guard
- Delaware Park Racetrack & Slots
- Delaware Technical & Community College
- Delmarva Power/Pepco Holdings, Inc.
- Discover Financial Services
- Dover Air Force Base
- DuPont
- General Motors
- Home Depot, Inc.
- HSBC Holdings
- Indian River School District
- INVISTA/Koch Industries, Inc.
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- Mountaire Farms, Inc.
- Nanticoke Health Services
- New Castle County
- Perdue Farms, Inc.
- PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
- Red Clay Consolidated School District
- Sallie Mae
- Sears Holding Corporation
- Siemens Healthcare Diagnostics



- St. Francis Healthcare Services
- State of Delaware
- Supervalu Inc.
- U.S. Government
- University of Delaware
- Verizon Communications Inc.
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- Walgreen Company
- Wawa, Inc.

**16. Describe the local Workforce Investment Board and their support for youth transitioning from foster care.**

The aim of the Delaware Workforce Investment Board (DWIB) is to ensure that Delawareans are provided with occupational training and employment-service opportunities. The organization also seeks to work with local business partners to provide qualified workers to meet their employment needs. DWIB has a very active Youth Council that oversees programs specifically designed to assist Delaware's at-risk and neediest youth prepare for the workforce.

DWIB recently offered an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act–funded Summer Youth Employment Opportunities Program, which provided summer employment experiences for youth aged 14-21. All projects employing youth were designed for a four-to ten-week period from June to October 2010. The intent of the program was to provide meaningful and productive employment experiences while gaining exposure to the working world and its requirements.

The organization has also had youth awards available and conducted “asset-mapping” for youth aging out of foster care. Additional information from DWIB about these programs has been requested.

**17. List any organizations in your current target area(s) that provide job readiness, job development, and job retention services.**

**The Division of Employment and Training Contract Unit** – This unit of the Delaware Department of Labor maintains over 50 contracts statewide with a variety of agencies and organizations to ensure services are provided to those in need.

The current funding sources in which the division uses to fund agencies are Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Blue Collar Job Development Act (Adult BC), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The Blue Collar Jobs Program provides funds to train economically disadvantaged individuals and others with barriers to employment. Furthermore, the Contract Unit helps monitor the Delaware Department of Labor’s Division of Employment and Training One Stop offices. Each One Stop location offers a variety of services that can be broken out into Labor Exchange Services and Training Unit Services.

**Delaware Department of Labor's State Summer Youth Employment Program –**

Targeting economically disadvantaged households, this program awards grants to qualifying nonprofit agencies and organizations for the hiring of Delaware youth aged 14-21 during the summer months. Work performed by the youth must be meaningful and teach basic career employment prerequisites. All projects are designed for a four- to ten-week period between the months of June and September.

**Elizabeth House Family Life Center, Inc.** – As a faith-based, community-development corporation, this organization serves about 100 individuals annually and offers free workforce development services in two New Castle County locations (a third location is on the horizon). Although the organization emerged from a missionary vision of Elizabeth African Methodist Episcopal Church, it serves individuals and families of all faiths, with a focus on low- to moderate-income households in specific communities of New Castle County.

**Goodwill Industries of Delaware and Delaware County, Inc.** – Through its Career Development Department, this nonprofit offers job training and placement services to individuals who suffer from a disability or disadvantage. It also assists constituents who are transitioning from being unemployed to becoming successful members of their communities. Goodwill's GoodGuides Youth Mentoring Program offers youth aged 12-17 living in high-risk environments access to trusted mentors that can help guide them away from trouble and toward paths to success. All volunteer mentors are screened, fully trained, and supported by the GoodGuides program throughout their one-year commitment. Mentor-mentee matches are made based on mutual interests, availability, and other specific needs identified through the interview and application processes.

**Job Corps** – Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people aged 16-24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Job Corps is committed to offering all students a safe, drug-free environment where they can take advantage of the resources provided. Job Corps' mission is to attract eligible young people, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent, and place them in meaningful jobs or further education. There is one Job Corps site in Delaware, which is located on Vandever Avenue in Wilmington.

**Job for Delaware Graduates (JDG)** – This nonprofit organization, covering Kent and Sussex Counties, offers a free program for youth aged 16-21 to assist in transitioning from school to work. Participants receive job-placement assistance, job-attainment and advancement skills, individual counseling, and mentoring from a JDG Career Placement Advisor. As individual goals are met, participants earn incentives such as gasoline cards and gift certificates.

**NorthEast Treatment Centers** – Through the Fund for Women, NorthEast Treatment Centers were awarded a grant, which allowed ten female participants to receive a stipend while serving in volunteer positions.

A portion of the internships were arranged in the community, based upon the interests of the youth. The remaining youth completed internships at the New Castle County Court of Common Pleas.

**Opportunity Center, Inc. (OCI)** – Located in Wilmington, Delaware, OCI is an affiliate of the ServiceSource Network. OCI is a nonprofit 501 organization with a mission of providing individuals with disabilities an exceptional service delivery experience through innovative and valued employment, training, rehabilitation, and support services. As indicated on the organization’s website, proposed budgets cuts could affect OCI’s Projects with Industry Grant that allows OCI to help youth and young adults with disabilities in Delaware find and maintain employment. The center also conducts trainings on computer and employment skills.

**Superior Court Internship Program** – During the summer of 2010, an internship was established with Superior Court. Six youth participated in this inaugural program. The youth obtained experience in office and customer service skills, were able to sit in on a trial, and received a stipend for their participation. Additional opportunities are slated for the summer of 2011 to include more youth and expand opportunities with Superior and Family Courts. Efforts are underway to have the sites approved as “Summer Youth Employment sites” in order to help secure payment to the youth for their participation.

**The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** – The aim of this division of the Delaware Department of Labor is to assist individuals with physical and mental disabilities obtain or retain employment. Also, an independent living program helps people with disabilities function in the community.

**The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)** – This act funds eight organizations for in- and out-of-school youth programs. Out-of-school programs, such as training program in the Challenge Program based in Wilmington, are available for youth typically from 17-18 to 21, who graduated or dropped out of school. In-school programs, such as Delmarva Clergy based in Ellendale, provide workshops for at-risk seniors and juniors.

**18. List any educational resources in your current target area(s) that are available or could be made available to youth in foster care.**

The Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) has initiated efforts to collaborate with the Department of Education (DOE) in order to better meet the primary education needs of youth in foster care. Monthly data transfers from DSCYF inform DOE about the youth currently in foster care. This information helps ensure that foster care youth are receiving appropriate academic assistance.

Additionally, DOE began implementing the use of Student Success Plans for students in grades 8-12. These plans assist youth in exploring their educational and career options at an early age. Plans can be developed and altered throughout the students’ high school

education in order to guide youth in a positive direction with regard to career development. Parents are key partners in assisting youth with their plans. Through collaborative efforts with DOE, it was recognized that unique circumstances pertaining to the development of the Student Success Plans for youth in foster care must be addressed. Consequently, in August 2010, several social workers, supervisors, and independent living staff were trained on the use of the database on ways to assist youth in developing their plans.

In terms of post-secondary resources, the Delaware Higher Education Office administers 23 state-sponsored financial aid programs and eight private scholarship programs to help Delawareans continue their education after high school. A complete list of the scholarships is located in the appendix. Among the most appropriate for and applicable to youth aging out of foster care are the following awards:

- **Delaware State University** – An MOU, which would extend financial support and housing opportunities annually for two youth, is underway through a partnership between DFS and DSU. Support includes financial assistance, year-round housing, and university life guidance. This program began as a pilot in the fall of 2010 with two students and will expand each year until a maximum of eight students are served annually. DSU also started a new Inspire Scholarship for Delaware high school graduates, which has a budget of \$700,000.
- **Early Bird Program at Delaware State University** – This program is for juniors and seniors attending high school in the state of Delaware who are interested in earning college credits. To qualify for the program, students must be recommended by their high school principal. A cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or better is required. Early Bird applicants may enroll for no more than six credit hours per semester. The cost for this program is consistent with the University's published fees. Students whose cumulative high school grade point averages are 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale are entitled to six hours of free tuition per semester.
- **Education & Training Vouchers (ETV)** – These are federal funds provided to youth aged 18-23 who have aged out of foster care to assist with costs related to post-secondary and vocational training needs and supports. ETV funds can be used by students to cover direct (e.g., tuition, books, campus housing) and indirect (e.g., transportation, child care, off-campus housing) costs. The maximum award is \$5,000.
- **Goodwill Industries of Delaware and Delaware County, Inc.** – Goodwill has embarked upon a three-year, \$1.5 million fundraising campaign to create an educational scholarship fund, known as Goodwill's Family Strengthening Through Education Program. Once fully funded, the program will assist an estimated 40 to 60 people each year with the opportunity to earn their high school diplomas or a two-year associate's degrees in any area of study in which they have an interest.

Goodwill also will work with its established community partners to remove barriers and provide critical support such as providing career counseling and prepayment of fees and tuition, computers, and books or offering flexible scheduling options and transportation assistance.

- **Governor's Education Grant for Working Adults** – This program offers 65 percent tuition and fees (up to \$2,000/year) on the condition that the participant will pay 25 percent while the participating school will absorb the remaining 10 percent. There are eight participating schools, including Polytech Adult Education and DTCC. The same schools participate in the **Governor's Education Grant for Unemployed Workers**, which offers 80percent tuition and fees (up to \$2,000/year).
- **Ivyane D. F. Davis Memorial Scholarship** – This scholarship provides post-secondary support in various amounts to Delaware residents who have been in foster care in the state of Delaware. Students, depending on their eligibility, may receive both an Ivyane Davis Scholarship and ETV funds.
- **Inspire Scholarship** – Modeled after the Student Excellence Equals Degree (SEED) program (see below), which provides scholarships for students to attend Delaware Technical & Community College or the University of Delaware to obtain an associate's degree, the relatively new DSU program (created and signed into law in fall 2010), will provide financial assistance to students in the same amount that SEED scholars receive for six semesters. This scholarship is offered to Delaware high school graduates to attend Delaware State University. Students must be regularly admitted and enroll in the fall semester immediately following graduation from a Delaware public or non-public high school, satisfy admission standards as determined by Delaware State University, and be enrolled in a degree-seeking program, earning a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 or higher, and completing ten hours of community service, as defined by the institution, each semester. The program provides youth aging out of foster care access to the scholarship without the condition that they begin their higher education immediately after high school.
- **Job Corps** – Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people aged 16-24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training. Job Corps is committed to offering all students a safe, drug-free environment where they can take advantage of the resources provided. Job Corps' mission is to attract eligible young people, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent, and place them in meaningful jobs or further education. There is one Job Corps site in Delaware, which is located on Vandever Avenue in Wilmington.
- **SEED Scholarship (SB 41)** – This program provides youth aging out of foster care access to a scholarship, without the condition that they begin their higher education immediately after high school. It also allows them to attend school part-time.

These exceptions are important since youth aging out of foster care often have the unique responsibility of supporting themselves and may not be able to follow a more traditional educational timetable or path. The scholarship applies to Delaware Technical & Community College (DTCC) and the University of Delaware (UD).

The SEED annual budget is \$3 million, which would cover approximately 1,100 students. The program, however, is expected to have a \$615,000 shortfall in the next fiscal year under the governor's proposed plan. According to DTCC representatives, this would impact about 275 eligible students who would miss out on the scholarship.

- **\$tand by Me: Financial Empowerment Partnership** – Provides economically disadvantaged Delawareans with a Financial Coach and a toolkit to navigate the challenges of personal financial security. The United Way of Delaware and the State of Delaware are partnering to organize Financial Empowerment Centers throughout the state to propel families onto the path of economic advancement. The program is designed so that clients are empowered to identify their own goals and move toward their destination of financial stability, supported by a knowledgeable Financial Coach. The first Financial Empowerment Center will be located at the Hudson State Service Center in Newark.

Through funding support by the Fund for Women, \$tand by Me has created an opportunity for girls aging out of foster care to establish a Financial Coach relationship and pursue post-secondary education. In addition, for every \$1.00 of scholarship funding received from the Fund for Women, the United Way of Delaware will match it with \$0.50, so that each beneficiary will receive a scholarship of \$1,500 toward their post-secondary education. This will be available to 15 girls in Delaware who are aging out of foster care.

To help disseminate information about these opportunities, DSCYF recently has produced a scholarship handbook for youth in foster care.

Also, it is important to note that recent changes in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application process may remove some barriers for foster youth and unaccompanied youth wanting to apply for educational financial support. Youth that meet the following criteria are eligible for classification as an independent student:

1. Student is an orphan (both parents deceased) or ward of the court or in foster care at any time after turning age 13, or was a ward of the court until age 18; or
2. Student is/was in legal guardianship; or
3. Student is/was an emancipated minor; or
4. Student was an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless on or after July 1, 2010.

**19. Describe any programs or services in your current target area(s) that are available or could be made available to youth in foster care who are pregnant and/or parenting.**

There are a number of state and nonprofit agencies throughout Delaware that provide programs and services to pregnant and parenting teens. These services could be made available to foster care and transitioning youth, if they are not provided already. Some of the organizations that provide programs and services are:

- **Bayard House** – The Bayard House is the only fully licensed residential program serving homeless or transitional pregnant minors in Delaware. The mission of Bayard House is to provide residential, educational, and referral services to at-risk pregnant teens/women and to young families in need, so that they may become nurturing parents and independent, contributing members of society.
- **CHILD, Inc.** – This nonprofit organization provides creative prevention and treatment programs that meet the changing needs of families, including parent-education classes. Parent-education classes are held in community-based locations throughout the state. A variety of parent-education formats are offered including classes, workshops, trainings, and speakers for schools, churches, community centers, and private organizations.
- **Children & Families First Nurse Family Partnership** – Nurse-Family Partnership is a free program that partners first-time pregnant women with nurses. When an individual enrolls in the program, a specially trained nurse will visit throughout the pregnancy and after delivery until the baby turns two years old. During these visits, the nurse will offer the knowledge and support a parent needs to confidently create a better life for her baby.
- **Children & Families First Resource Mothers Program** – The Resource Mothers Program helps at-risk pregnant mothers receive the appropriate prenatal and pediatric care to ensure healthy babies. Resource Mothers help pregnant women and their families access social services and community resources.

They also provide support and make sure the women have information on parenting, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. Services are offered in Wilmington, Dover, and Georgetown.

- **Delaware Adolescent Program, Inc. (DAPI)** – This nonprofit organization provides a standards-based educational opportunity for pregnant and parenting teens with unique outreach, mentoring, and supportive services promoting empowerment and self-sufficiency.
- **“Just in Time Parenting” through the University of Delaware’s College of Agriculture & Natural Resources Cooperative Extension** – The University’s

Cooperative Extension connects the public with university knowledge, research, and resources to address youth, family, and community needs. Staff helps build skills and confidence through outreach focusing on food, finances, and families. Their monthly newsletter, *Just in Time Parenting*, provides reliable resources appropriate for the age of each parent's child.

- **Mom's House, Inc.** – With locations in Wilmington and Dover, Mom's House provides safe, secure, and totally free childcare to low-income single parents wishing to continue their education, either at secondary or post-secondary levels. Mom's House also provides a variety of services to the parent, including tutoring and assistance with homework when necessary and counseling in life skills, parenting techniques, and nutrition. Each parent will be lovingly guided to set realistic goals and work to achieve them, develop self-control as a parent and a person, and build self-esteem and self-confidence through self-discipline.
- **Planned Parenthood of Delaware** – Works to improve women's health and safety by providing all prenatal needs in its four Delaware locations. Provides approximately one-third of the reproductive health services in the state.
- **Specialized Foster Homes** – The Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families has specialized foster homes for pregnant and parenting teens. The foster parents are trained to teach the youth parenting skills and healthy relationship skills during the pregnancy and after the child is born.
- **State and Federal Programs** – The state and federal governments have many programs that provide aid to young mothers, including the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, Head Start, and the Purchase of Care Program, which is a subsidy that supports early childhood and after-school education and care for more than 15,000 children from birth through age 12 who live within 200% of the Federal Poverty Limits.

**20. List the housing resources that are available or could be made available to youth in foster care in your current target area(s) (e.g., low-income housing, section 8 vouchers, emergency housing or homeless shelters, transitional living housing units). What are some of the barriers to accessing these resources?**

**NorthEast Treatment Centers (NET)** serves about 45 youth that are seeking residential treatment and are housed in group homes. Around 45 more youth are seeking treatment but live in one of (approximately) 20 foster homes. Once a foster youth ages out of the system, NET helps find market-rate or low-income housing. As with the other Independent living providers, some of NET's youth are using state vouchers for housing while they further their education or train for employment.



**People's Place** has many housing options, including a homeless shelter with a capacity of 40, transitional housing, three domestic violence shelters, and a foster care home with a capacity for eight youth. They had two other foster care homes that were closed in the past year due to low referrals. People's Place also has a non-secure detention program in connection with Delaware's Youth Rehabilitative Services, a part of the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF). There are two locations, each with a capacity of ten, for youth who will spend no more than a two-week period at the facility.

**The Elizabeth W. Murphy School, Inc.** provides services for 72 youth in foster care or those who have aged out of foster care. Some live in a group home at the school. The state provides board extensions for those youth who have enough academic credits to graduate by the time they turn 19. For this extension, they must show some progress toward graduation. Additionally, two to four transitional housing slots are available to youth aged 18-21 who have aged out of foster care.

**West End Neighborhood House's Life Lines Program** served 133 youth in 2010, 66 of whom were living in one of four types of housing:

- **Transitional** – Must be 18-21 years of age
- **Permanent** – Must have at least one severe mental health disorder
- **Pregnancy or Parenting** – Must have a young child or about to give birth
- **Scatter Site** – A combination of one of the above requirements

All youth must be referred to the independent living providers by DSCYF in order to receive any housing assistance. They will take self-referrals for youth aged out of the system if the youth has moved out of state and then has returned. To provide services, however, the Independent Living Providers still must verify the youth were previously in foster care with DSCYF. All of the providers have reported that a major barrier to housing is the rising cost associated with renting an apartment. The youth do not realize how much costs, such as utilities, can run in addition to monthly rent. NET noted that a percentage of their staff's day-to-day case management involves helping youth to navigate the different agencies to seek utility and rental assistance.

In addition to housing provided by the independent living providers, Delaware allows those in the foster care system to apply for the Delaware State Housing Authority Section 8 program beginning at age 16. This allows them to be on the waiting list during their time in foster care with the likelihood that they will become eligible for a voucher once they age out. Thirty family unification vouchers are also provided to youth between the ages of 18-21 who have aged out. These statewide vouchers provide income-based rental subsidies. An application was submitted to obtain ten additional housing vouchers in collaboration with the Dover Housing Authority.

A partnership with DSHA will likely yield additional housing vouchers for youth exiting foster care. A new State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) is being developed. Pending state budget approval, 25 new housing vouchers will be made available to youth to help prevent homelessness. These vouchers will incorporate the case management services of the independent living program to assist youth in the transition to living independently in the community.

**21. Describe the accessibility of physical and mental health resources in your current target area(s). What are some of the barriers to accessing these resources?**

Through the age of 21, all youth who have aged out of foster care are eligible to reapply annually for Medicaid. Some youth have indicated that the paperwork required to extend Medicaid after aging out of foster care is complicated and, without assistance, youth often do not realize that they can extend their coverage. Independent living providers are available to help with these issues.

Youth who are eligible for Medicaid at age 18 remain in the Children's Medicaid Program until age 19, which provides them with mental health services and many other benefits. The paperwork involved in this process is extensive. Once the youth reach age 19, they are then placed in the Adult Expansion Program, which may only provide youth with limited benefits.

Delaware has many mental health resources available for those who are considered "at risk," including those who have aged out of the child welfare system. In all three counties, there are Crisis Intervention Services (CIS). CIS staff is available 24 hours a day to assist people, 18 years and older, with severe personal, family, or marital problems. These problems may include depression, major life changes such as unemployment or loss of an important relationship, anxiety, feelings of hopelessness, thoughts of suicide, delusions, paranoia, and substance abuse. The goal of CIS is the prevention of unnecessary or inappropriate hospitalizations of a person with a mental illness or substance-related problems. By providing services in the community, CIS staff can better assess the client's environment, support systems, and current function levels and, thereby, gain a clear understanding of services that will be needed to develop a comprehensive treatment plan.

There are also community mental health clinics and several programs that offer support groups for those with mental health issues. For those who are homeless, "Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness" (PATH) is a federally funded program that provides services to adult individuals with serious mental illness, including those who have co-occurring substance abuse disorders, are homeless, or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless. The main goals of the PATH programs are to identify individuals who are homeless and have a mental illness and assist them in accessing a variety of services, including treatment and support for the individual's mental illness, access to drug and alcohol programs if appropriate, and assistance in obtaining entitlement as well as temporary and permanent housing.

The Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health also offers many preventative services across the state.

The Nemours Foster Care Health Program, which began in 2011, is also dedicated to promoting the health and well-being of children and teens in foster care. Services include initial evaluations, care coordination, preventive care, and provision of a medical home for children with chronic illness, developmental or behavioral challenges, or other health issues. Aimed at addressing acute issues and identifying major needs, the program offers intake screening visits for children and teens entering the foster care system or changing placements. This program is located in Wilmington, with plans to create satellite locations statewide.

Crossroads of Delaware Inc. provides substance abuse treatment services to the community. This agency has built a partnership with independent living providers in New Castle County to assist youth who have aged out of foster care in this area. Assessments, drug screenings, counseling are but a few of the services that have been rendered to youth who have aged out of foster care.

Connections Community Support Programs, Inc. improves the lives of vulnerable and disenfranchised Delaware residents by providing a comprehensive array of affordable and accessible primary medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment, employment, and housing opportunities to help them become accepted and productive members of their communities. Specifically, Connections has provided mental health treatment services, medication management services, payee services, and housing resources to youth who have aged out of foster care.

When youth are dealing with physical and mental health issues, they may face barriers in their transition to adulthood. When youth age out of foster care, they may not be emotionally mature enough to make many of their own health decisions. Often, any mental health treatment they received while in the child welfare system would not translate to the services offered for adults by the state. Additionally, some youth have indicated that mental health is not always mentioned in the transition plans created by the state for them. Since there is a stigma to mental health, many youth will not seek available services even when they have a problem. Health distractions associated with low-income housing environments, including easy access to drugs and alcohol, pose added threats to these youth.

**22. What is the recent history and status of any community collaboration efforts that are relevant to issues faced by youth transitioning out of foster care? What outcomes have they achieved?**

Former Governor Ruth Ann Minner gathered a working group of the major public agencies serving youth, elected leaders, nonprofit service providers, housing agencies and developers, educational institutions, philanthropic and faith-based organizations, and civic activists with the purpose of creating a seamless set of services designed to assist young

people aging out of the foster care system to successfully transition to adulthood. Formed in 2010, the Delaware Successful Transitions Initiative has worked with current Governor Markell's administration to pass policy that affects the foster care population. The Successful Transitions Initiative team and working groups have met over a one-year period and are prepared to assist with the work and progress of the DYOI. Member of the initiative have met with staff from the Delaware Center for Justice and the University of Delaware to help with the Environmental Scan for the DYOI. They have given full support to the Environmental Scan and are interested in providing assistance with the long-term implementation of the DYOI.

Through collaboration among the State Office of Volunteerism, AmeriCorps Vista members, independent living staff, and other partners, the Delaware CHAMP (Creating Hopeful Adults Mentoring Program) Network, was created. This statewide foster youth mentoring program has sparked an interest from approximately 20 individuals. It is anticipated that by the end of 2011, a total of 36 mentors will be trained and matched with mentees. AmeriCorps Vista members will continue to serve as mentor site coordinators through 2012. A partnership with the YMCA will afford each mentor and mentee a one-year full membership to the YMCA. Memberships and access to YMCA programs and facilities will help provide venues and opportunities for mentor/mentee activities.

Other collaborations include:

- **APPLA Workgroup** – Formed with youth, service providers, Family Court representatives, community partners, and advocates, this group has assisted in the state's efforts to increase the permanency outcomes for older youth.
- **Child Protection Accountability Protection (CPAC)** – CPAC was legislated in 1997 to monitor Delaware's child protection system and ensure the health, safety, and well-being of Delaware's abused, neglected, and dependent children [16 Del. C. § 912(b)]. In addition to protecting the state's children, CPAC maintains a focus on the welfare and availability of services to Delaware's youth aging out of foster care.
- **Delaware State University (DSU) and Delaware Division of Family Services (DFS)** – Currently two youth are being supported through a partnership between DFS and DSU. Supports include financial assistance, year-round housing supports, and university life guidance and supports. On February 14, 2011, an MOU was signed between DFS and DSU formalizing the agreement to allow two students per year who age out of the foster care system to matriculate at DSU. Under the partnership, the Division of Family Services (DFS) will identify two eligible foster youths each year that are interested in and academically eligible to attend DSU. DFS will assist them in the application process.
- **Dover's Caring Community Coalition (DC3)** – DC3 is an advocacy program aimed at reducing at-risk behavior among youth.

- **Individual Development Accounts (IDA)** – In 2008, Deutsche Bank committed \$50,000 toward the development of an IDA savings match program. The program is administered by West End Neighborhood House, Inc. and is made available to foster youth aged 16-21 statewide. Additional partners include the First Unitarian Church, which provides incentives to the participants; First State Community Loan Fund, which oversees the accounts; and Artisans' Bank, which allows for the savings accounts to be opened and maintained.
- **State Agency MOU** – On August 4, 2010, an MOU was signed between the DSCYF, DSHA, DHSS, DOC, DOL, and DOE. This agreement signifies a commitment to working collaboratively to better serve youth as they age out of foster care. Through the work of the state's cabinet secretaries, barriers are being overcome and resources have been developed to support these youth.

**23. List the formal and informal community leaders in your current target area(s) (both youth and adult).**

- Business Roundtable Members
- Communications and Media Editors/Staff
- Community-Based and Nonprofit Leaders/Board Members
- Delaware Congressional Delegation
- Faith-Based Representatives (pastors, ministers, youth advisors/groups, etc.)
- Family Court and Criminal Justice Representatives
- Financial Institution Leaders
- Higher Education Leaders
- Key Business and Philanthropic Leaders (see list of organizations for question 24)
- Medical Facility CEOs and Representatives
- Primary and Secondary Education Leaders
- State Agency Directors and Secretaries/Division Directors
- State and Local Chamber of Commerce Board Members
- State and Local Policymakers/Government Officials
- Youth Advisory Council Leaders/Representatives (past and present)

**24. List the key businesses and philanthropic organizations in your current target area(s).**

- Aid in Dover
- Artisans' Bank
- AstraZeneca
- Bank of America
- Barclays Bank
- Bayhealth Medical Center
- Beebe Medical Center
- Boys & Girls Club of Delaware
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Wilmington
- CHILD, Inc.
- Child Welfare League of America
- Children & Families First of Delaware
- Christiana Care Health System
- Citizens Financial Group
- Sussex County Foster Parents Association
- Delaware Guidance Services for Children & Youth, Inc.
- Delaware State University
- Delaware State Chamber of Commerce
- Deutsche Bank
- Discover Financial Services
- Dover Air Force Base
- Dover Downs, Inc.
- Dover Federal Credit Union
- DuPont
- First Unitarian Church of Wilmington, Delaware
- Friendship House
- Goodwill Industries of Delaware and Delaware County, Inc.
- Independent Living for Young Adults (sponsored by the First Unitarian Church)
- ING DIRECT
- Jewish Family Services of Delaware
- Jobs for Delaware Graduates, Inc.
- Johnny Janosik, Inc.
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- Junior League of Wilmington
- Kent-Sussex Industries, Inc.
- KIDS COUNT in Delaware
- Kraft Foods Global, Inc.
- Latin American Community Center, Inc.
- Maryland/Delaware Independent Automobile Dealers Association, Inc.
- Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC
- Mountaire Farms
- Neighborhood House, Inc.
- Orphan Society of America
- Patterson-Schwartz Real Estate
- Perdue Farms, Inc.
- PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
- Prevent Child Abuse Delaware
- Rotary Club of Wilmington
- Twenty-First Century Fund for Delaware's Children, Inc.
- Union Park Auto Group
- United Way of Delaware
- University of Delaware
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- W.L. Gore & Associates
- Wells Fargo & Company (Wachovia Bank)
- West End Neighborhood House, Inc.
- Wilmington Trust Corporation
- Winner Automotive Group
- WSFS Bank
- YMCA of Delaware
- YWCA Delaware

**25. List the other Casey entities operating in your current target area(s) (i.e., Family to Family). How are you engaged with those entities?**

**KIDS COUNT in Delaware (managed by the Center for Community Research and Service at the University of Delaware)** – KIDS COUNT in Delaware is part of a nationwide network funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that raises public awareness and accountability for the condition of kids and families by: (1) measuring and reporting on the status of children, and (2) using that information creatively to inform public debate and strengthen public action on behalf of children and families within the state.

To that end, KIDS COUNT in Delaware grantees engage in a wide variety of public awareness activities including the annual publication of data-driven products that examine the status of children and families in the state.

**Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative** – Located in all three counties of Delaware and on the state level. JDAI, established in 1992, seeks to help youth involved in the juvenile justice system develop into healthy, productive adults through policies and programs that maximize their change for success, reduce their likelihood of incarceration, and minimize the risk they pose to their communities.

**26. List other existing foundation initiatives in your community that might be interested in supporting work relevant to child welfare and children in foster care.**

- Arsht-Cannon Fund
- Chichester duPont Foundation
- Crittenton Foundation, Inc.
- Crystal Trust
- Delaware Community Foundation
- Eckerd Family Foundation
- Jessie Ball duPont Fund
- Laffey-McHugh Foundation
- Longwood Foundation, Inc.
- Marmot Foundation
- Nemours Foundation
- Welfare Foundation, Inc.

**27. List any organizations that can assist with diversity training and technical assistance, particularly related to race (disproportionality), class, culture, and sexual orientation in your current target area(s).**

- African American Fraternities and Sororities
- AIDS Delaware, Inc.
- American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware
- Change Management Associates
- Office of Human Relations, Delaware Department of State
- Delaware Girls Initiative
- Delaware State University
- Adolescent Resource Center at Children & Families First
- J.U.S.T. for Youth Coalition, Inc.
- Latin American Community Center, Inc.
- Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League
- Team Builders Plus
- Professional and Continuing Studies, University of Delaware
- YWCA Delaware

**28. Describe the potential to leverage resources in your current target area(s) (i.e., public agencies, local businesses, community foundations).**

Those interviewed for the completion of the scan generally agreed that, despite the economic climate, the potential to leverage resources is quite high given the nature of the DYOI. All of the state's independent living providers are leveraging resources from other programs within their agencies to provide additional services to youth beyond their contracts with DFS. Additionally, many local businesses and community foundations will be part of the Community Partnership Board. As such, they will support the DYOI with resources.

**29. List the organizations in your current target area(s) that serve similar populations.**

- a) Are these organizations competitors for funding?
- b) Are they potential (or current) partners?
- c) What capacity can these organizations bring to your community and to your collaboration?

There are currently four agencies in the state of Delaware that provide independent living services to youth: Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Inc. (Kent County), NorthEast Treatment Centers (New Castle County), West End Neighborhood House, Inc. (New Castle County), and People's Place (Sussex County).



**NorthEast Treatment Centers (NET)** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing behavioral health and social services along a continuum of care to adults, adolescents, children, and families in the Greater Philadelphia region, Lehigh Valley, and the state of Delaware.

**People's Place** is a nonprofit organization that provides mental health and social services for its residents in Kent, Sussex, and lower New Castle Counties.

**West End Neighborhood House, Inc.** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping individuals achieve self-sufficiency through variety of programs, including the Life Lines program for foster youth. It is an internationally awarded program offering intensive case-management and housing services for youth between the ages of 16-21 who have aged out of Delaware's foster care system.

There also are agencies throughout the state that provide various services to the adolescent population, including Delaware's foster youth. Such agencies include Aid in Dover, Inc.; CHILD, Inc.; Children's Choice, Inc. (services not provided after 18); Children & Families First; Delmarva Clergy United in Social Action; Jobs for Delaware Graduates; K.I.S.H. Homes, Inc.; Independent Living for Young Adults (sponsored by the First Unitarian Church); Opportunity Center, Inc.; Pressley Ridge of Delaware IRT (services not provided after 18); Progressive Life; Sussex County Foster Parent Association; The Challenge Program; and Twenty-First Century Fund for Delaware's Children, Inc. Aid in Dover, Inc. offers temporary shelter to youth aged 12-17 and conducts trainings on computer and employment skills.

**CHILD, Inc.** was founded in 1963 as a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for and serving the needs of Delaware's troubled, dependent, neglected, and abused children and families who have been impacted by domestic violence. CHILD, Inc. administers the only children's shelter and runaway center as well as a hotline for runaway children in the state of Delaware.

**Children's Choice, Inc.** provides specialized community-based, Christian services and support to children in foster care and their families.

**Children & Families First** is a private, nonprofit social services agency that strengthens families and communities by providing a continuum of quality social, education, and mental health services statewide in Delaware. Services are provided out of their eight offices as well as in schools, client homes, and other convenient community locations.

**Delmarva Clergy United in Social Action** is a foundation that provides job training, GED, tutorial, transportation to educational facilities, and childcare services to single adolescent parents and at-risk youth. Griffin Place is a transitional home of the Delmarva Clergy United in Social Action currently under construction for young men exiting the foster care system.

**Jobs for Delaware Graduates** is a private, nonprofit corporation designed to prepare at-risk high school seniors to transition from school to work.

**K.I.S.H. Home, Inc.** is a nonprofit organization that is currently in the process of raising funds to purchase a 24-hour supervised residential home for young women who are presently in, or have aged out of, the foster care system in Delaware. K.I.S.H. Home, Inc. will render services to young women aged 18-23 who are either single with no children or have one child. K.I.S.H. Home, Inc. also offers the Women Destined for Greatness Mentoring Program, which provides group and individual mentoring to young women aged 15-25. This program also provides life skills workshops, seminars, and conferences.

**Independent Living for Young Adults (ILYA)**, run by the First Unitarian Church in Wilmington, provides support and guidance to youth aged out of foster care.

**Opportunity Center, Inc. (OCI)** a leading provider of vocational rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in Delaware and Pennsylvania. Programs include job-placement services, job coaching, supported employment, computer-skills training, center-based programs, and direct employment. Special emphasis is placed on servicing young people transitioning from Delaware's foster care system and the state's Division of Children's Mental Health Services.

**Pressley Ridge of Delaware IRT** is a nonprofit with operations in the United States and abroad that provides an array of services to families and troubled children while helping them remain close to their families and communities.

**Progressive Life Center (PLC)** provides quality mental health and social services targeting individuals, families, organizations, and communities in the United States and Africa. In Delaware, PLC coordinates the Nurturing Independence and Aspirations (NIA) foster care program, which provides comprehensive and intensive child-placement services and clinical and case-management activities. This program serves children from birth to 21 years of age.

**Sussex County Foster Parent Association** is a volunteer-run organization that helps Sussex County foster families and the children in their care. The association provides educational and socialization opportunities, clothing, car seats, teen graduation assistance, and fun activities and events for foster families.

**The Challenge Program** is a private nonprofit in Wilmington, Delaware, offering a Construction Training Program for out-of-school youth aged 18-21. Trainees enrolled in their program complete 700 hours of site-based construction training and educational work.

**The Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Inc.** is a nonprofit group home facility in Dover, Delaware, that provides services for children who have issues with dependency and/or neglect. Currently the School houses 31 youth on campus and provides independent living services to approximately 70 young people within the community.

**Twenty-First Century Fund for Delaware's Children** is a public/private partnership that addresses the special needs of at-risk children in Delaware. The intent of the fund is to provide experiences that help children define their strengths, improve their self-esteem, and build a sense of hope for the future. Examples include sports camps, music lessons, prom tickets, and other opportunities to achieve a child's potential in a particular talent or interest otherwise not affordable or available to them. Children receiving services from state agencies and community programs in Delaware are eligible for funding.

Given the similar clientele served by these agencies and the limited resources available for each, many often compete for funding. However, the majority of the agencies listed are partners of the Division of Family Services. Those that are not current partners have potential to become partners. These organizations generally are well-respected in their particular communities. As such, their partnership and skilled-service delivery is of significant benefit to the youth and our collaboration. Additionally, many of the organizations are skilled in fundraising and grant writing. This is a crucial supplemental resource for the enhancement of resources to the youth. Of greatest significance is the commitment and compassion for youth that is encompassed within each organization. The goal of improving the lives and outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood and independence is the commonality that creates increased capacity and strong collaborations.

**E. RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND COMMUNICATIONS****30. Describe your state's National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data collection efforts.**

The Division of Family Services (DFS) is currently in compliance with the federal requirements to collect information regarding independent living services and Outcome Surveys for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). In 2009, an IL Web Portal was created and designed to capture the data elements required for NYTD. This web portal allows the independent living contracted providers to enter data that directly link to FACTS (SACWIS). IL providers record their contacts with the youth and the service categories chosen to correspond to those of the NYTD IL service areas. Services data are also collected for youth 14 and older who are not receiving IL services from a contracted provider. The data are collected monthly and entered into FACTS by a Division of Family Services (DFS) case manager. The Outcome Survey requirement is completed by both IL contracted providers and DFS case managers. The survey is provided to the youth and the responses are recorded in FACTS. In addition, to meet the requirement to collect surveys for the baseline population, a monthly survey of the same NYTD questions is completed for all youth served by an IL contracted provider. The collection of monthly surveys has occurred since 2009. The information captured has provided useful statistical data to assist in resource development for the youth.

**31. Describe other data collection efforts that may provide comparison data for your own local data collection efforts.**

In 1994, Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF) developed its Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) known as Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS). FACTS provides case management and client service tracking for all three of the operational arms of DSCYF, including Division of Family Services (DFS), Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (DYRS), and the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS).

By the summer of 2011, Delaware will begin the FACTS II initiative (upgrading FACTS), with full implementation to be completed by 2014. Using the data collected in FACTS, Delaware submits data outcome reports to meet several voluntary and mandatory reporting requirements. These include National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), Foster Care Contacts outcomes, and the Annual Progress and Service Report (APSR). Beginning in May 2011, Delaware will begin submitting National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) to The Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Additionally, the Division of Family Services (DFS) is currently in compliance with the federal requirements to collect information regarding independent living services and Outcome Surveys for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).

(Please see responses to question #30 for more information regarding the collection of information for these databases.)

Furthermore, it is believed KIDS COUNT in Delaware can be a reliable source for future data collection. Currently, KIDS COUNT in Delaware is housed in the Center for Community Research and Service (CCRS) at the University of Delaware and led by a board of committed and concerned child and family advocates from the public and private sectors. Its mission is to be the authoritative source of key data about the well-being of children and their families in Delaware and to use the data as a catalyst to form collaborative partnerships with those who can improve the status of children. Working toward this mission over the years, KIDS COUNT has become an indispensable source of information that is critical to the work of Delaware policymakers and those who are active in the effort to improve the lives of children. Since 1995, KIDS COUNT in Delaware has been reporting on the status of children in the state and has received phenomenal support for the community. It is extremely well regarded as a source of accurate and unbiased information.

### **32. List any partners providing technical assistance related to self-evaluation.**

Every independent living provider (West End Neighborhood House, Inc., People's Place, NorthEast Treatment Centers, and the Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Inc.) conducts self-evaluations of their services. Each provides an exit survey for youth who exit the foster care system and have used their services. They also evaluate their professional staff on a quarterly basis. In addition, West End Neighborhood House, Inc. does an outcomes-based survey quarterly and after special events, all tracked within the HMIS system and a fact collecting system. All information is compiled into an annual report shared with the state.

Delaware also requires all independent living providers to use the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment in determining an individualized case plan for all youth needing services. Youth take this assessment at least once a year to determine if there are needed changes in their case plans.

### **33. List any partners providing technical assistance related to communications.**

There are a number of media outlets in Delaware. In rolling out the DYOI, plans are already being made to contact a number of small-town newspapers that focus on special interest stories. In addition, there are a number of public relations and advertising agencies, ranging in size, which may also be approached for assistance in public relations and communications.

These organizations could be essential in the future because the need for continual awareness and advocacy has been identified as a major challenge. By increasing awareness and advocacy, foster care youth and the general population can be educated effectively and involved with many of the issues surrounding aging out of the foster care system.

**F. PUBLIC WILL AND POLICY****34. List any major transitions in political leadership about to take place that could have an impact on transitioning youth.**

The federal government, through the enactment of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, recommends that states provide financial, housing, medical, employment, training, and other appropriate supports to young adults aged 16–21 who are exiting the foster care system to increase their opportunities for successfully transitioning into adulthood.

During her two terms as Governor (2000-2008), Ruth Ann Minner, brought issues related to youth aging out of foster care to the forefront of her administration's policy recommendations and initiatives. In January of 2001, Governor Minner commissioned an eight-member task force to review the strengths and weaknesses of Delaware's foster care system and make recommendations on how to improve it.

Members of the Foster Care Task Force included grassroots organizations and citizens, legislators, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families staff, and nonprofit organizations. Task force members agreed that adequate physical and mental health treatment was not consistently available for the state's youth aging out of foster care, while housing, education, and job training were routinely lacking for those leaving the foster care system as well. The task force made more than ten funding recommendations that overwhelmingly endorsed the creation of a community model for foster care. Additionally, in 2001 Governor Minner allocated \$550,000 from the Fiscal Year 2002 General Fund to be committed toward implementing several recommendations from the Governor's Foster Care Task Force.

Since her time as Governor, Minner has remained dedicated to creating a comprehensive and community-based model of service delivery for Delaware's aging out youth. In July 2010, it was announced that former Governor Ruth Ann Minner and former Wyoming Governor James Edward "Jim" Geringer, chair of the Policy Consensus Initiative (PCI)—a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working with leaders to create collaborative processes and harness resources from public, private, and civic centers—were charged with designing and implementing manage a collaborative process in Delaware to assist young people aging out of foster care. The project planned to convene a team of approximately 25 to 30 partners, representing agencies, organizations, foundations civic and faith-based organizations, and others, all of whom could contribute to the transition.

The Successful Transitions Initiative met over a one-year period to discuss the issues related to aging out of foster care in Delaware. The group was involved in the development of the Environmental Scan and is in full support of the DYOI implementation plan.

Additionally, it is hoped that Delaware might serve as a model for other states facing similar issues as their youth age out of foster care.

While policy foci and initiatives sometimes change dramatically with the election of a new governor, this has not been the case in Delaware with regard to services available to the state's foster care. Following the election of Governor Jack Markell in 2010, a pledge was made to continue the work of the preceding administration in regards to addressing the needs of young adults aging out of foster care.

To assist with administrative transition, a July 2009 letter to Governor Markell from the Delaware Children's Campaign identified recommendations for addressing sub-areas related to aging out of foster care in Delaware. These areas included housing, education, employment, healthcare, transportation, teen parenting, and inter-agency/departmental coordination.

With these recommendations in mind, Governor Jack Markell and his administration have continued to work on statewide initiatives aimed at supporting Delaware youth in successfully aging out of foster care.

Major developments include:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated August 4, 2010, among the Delaware State Housing Authority, Department of Correction, Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families.**
  - With the support and encouragement of Governor Jack Markell, this MOU asserts that these agencies will "work together to better coordinate efforts and resources to address the comprehensive needs of foster care youth." The primary purpose is to more effectively utilize existing programs and resources offered through the agencies to address the various needs and issues of the target population.
- **Adoption of Senate Bill 113, which extends Delaware Family Court jurisdiction over and involvement with former foster care youth.**
  - Signed into Delaware law by Governor Jack Markell on July 15, 2010, this bill permits Family Court involvement with and supervision of independent services to those who have aged out of foster care until they turn 21 years old.
- **Development of the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS) in July 2010.**
  - In July 2010, the Division of Child Mental Health and the Office of Prevention and Early Intervention (both part of the DYSCF) blended to become the Division of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services (DPBHS).

DPBHS provides a statewide continuum of prevention and early intervention services, as well as mental health and substance abuse (behavioral health) treatment programs for children and youth.

- **Delaware Youth Advisory Council Pilot Program aimed at identifying issues related to aging out of foster care through the voices of foster care youth.**
  - This program, initiated in February 2010, provides the opportunity for 31 youth currently or formerly in the Delaware foster care system to be monitored in a manner that utilizes their experiences and needs as a representation of the general foster care population. The information gathered has been used to address concerns and issues related to transitioning from the foster care system to adulthood.

Collaboration between the current and previous administrations, coupled with the two years that remain of Governor Markell's first term in office, provide evidence and hope that the issues relating to appropriate supports and service to Delaware's young adults aging out of foster care will continue to be an ongoing priority for the state. In addition, the Division of Family Services perceives the political climate to be stable at this time. It is not believed that any significant transitions in political leadership will occur in the near future that will impact transitioning youth.

### **35. What are the current needs and priorities identified by young people transitioning from foster care in the following areas?**

Several former foster care youth and current Youth Advisory Council (YAC) representatives/leaders contributed to the content of this section. Additionally, in early May 2011, Nancy Wagner, Delaware State University (DSU), interviewed four youth at the Children & Families First Georgetown location. All four children are currently residing in two Sussex County area foster homes. In one instance, the foster parents were at the interview. The youth ranged in age from 12-16 and were in seventh, ninth, and tenth grades. Two females and two males of both African American and Caucasian races were interviewed.

#### **a. Permanence**

Those interviewed for the scan identified permanence as an important issue among foster care youth. Specific needs and priorities related mostly to the level of stability experienced from their foster homes, foster parents, and schools. Most expressed a higher sense of overall confidence, self-esteem, and genuine engagement when they experienced higher levels of stability during their time in foster care. The youth also identified compatibility, understanding, genuine relationships, and cultural competence between foster child and foster parent as important factors in stability.



Some youth felt that foster homes are often overpopulated and expressed dissatisfaction with not being notified of the number of other children in the foster homes. The ability to communicate with new foster parents before meeting them was also suggested as a means of helping ease the transition of living in a new foster home. Several youth also expressed concern about whether some individuals decide primarily to become foster parents for financial gain. They would like to see more rigorous standards put into place that might help screen potential foster parents and deny individuals the opportunity to foster if they do not seem whole-heartedly committed.

### **b. Employment**

In the area of employment, the highest priority identified by the youth interviewed is the scarcity of jobs. Delaware has an IDA matching program in which youth are encouraged to participate. However, with limited sources of income and job-placement opportunities, foster care youth are not always able to maintain such accounts. When youth obtain employment, transportation to and from job sites may become an issue. Most youth do not have access to vehicles while in care, and only approved volunteers, mentors, and family members may transport them. When asked about public transportation, some of the youth described the bus systems, particularly in the more rural areas of the state, to be unreliable or insufficient. DFS has contracted with some vendors to provide transportation services for the youth. Once youth have acquired employment, it is difficult for many to retain their jobs. Often, youth are not trained in “soft skills” and may not understand the importance of compliance, punctuality, and other basic job skills. Additional training in these areas might help more youth succeed in obtaining and maintaining employment.

### **c. Education**

Youth interviewed for the scan identified motivation and access to information as key factors in obtaining their education. Stability within foster homes was also described as an important factor in overall academic success. As youth change home placements, they also face changes in schools, friends, and academic standards (e.g., school curricula, credit transfer eligibility). These changes may perpetuate misbehavior, depression, removed attitude, loss of interest, and lack of motivation and hope. Being able to talk with peers in similar situations about these issues was identified as an important support mechanism for youth in these circumstances.

Frequent changes in schools also may leave some youth behind academically. This can lead to greater risks of not graduating on time or at all. Some youth may be forced to leave school for financial reasons if they are 18 years old. They may not have a place to stay so they must work to support themselves.

#### **d. Personal and Community Engagement**

Communication was identified as an important factor related to personal and community engagement. Advanced notification of placement changes was noted specifically as a critical part of maintaining open and personal communication.

Some youth feel that they are unable to build and maintain strong friendships, as state regulations do not permit foster children to stay overnight at other homes without cleared background checks of their residents. Therefore, foster care youth often feel limited in their ability to participate in sleepovers and birthday parties, at friends' homes.

Identification and development of personal identification was noted to be difficult for some youth. The following were described as particularly challenging:

- Practicing religion of choice
- Listening to music preferences
- Receiving equal treatment without regard to racial and ethnic backgrounds

Most of the youth interviewed expressed concern about not having a say on issues affecting their lives. While in foster care, most felt as though their caseworkers were the final decision-makers of major issues.

Some of the youth suggested that perhaps a small monthly amount of money (i.e., allowance money) could be extracted from a portion of the foster parents' stipend for foster care children to spend or save in preparation for aging out of the system.

#### **e. Housing**

Among those interviewed, housing was considered a relatively low priority for youth transitioning from the foster care system to adulthood. Delaware has several programs in place to assist youth aging out of foster care with housing. While these programs should be considered strengths of Delaware's foster care system, several DFS staff noted that housing should not be ignored in the ongoing evaluation and strengthening of the system over time. Funding for such programs remains piecemeal and long-term support is not guaranteed.

#### **f. Physical and Mental Health**

During the interviews, few priorities and issues were discussed related to physical and mental health. One of the youth expressed the importance of therapy for all foster youth, as changes (e.g., placements, friends, and feelings) can be very stressful.

In terms of medical insurance, discussion centered on whether placement changes sometimes cause lapses (e.g., in instances when youth are changing from plan to plan).

**36. What evidence is there of increased public awareness and public will in support of young people transitioning from foster care, in your current target area(s) and statewide?**

Delawareans recognize a need for transitional programming and support such initiatives. Recently, this issue was brought to the forefront of the state's policy agenda, when, during his 2011 State of the State, Governor Jack Markell spoke about the need for safe and affordable housing for youth transitioning out of foster care.

In March 2007, the former Delaware Children's Campaign initiated a statewide survey of 600 likely voters on issues relating to children. Ninety-one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "young people who reach age 18 and therefore leave the foster care system should have access to a transition program focused on housing, education, and jobs." Sixty-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that "too many children are short-changed by the foster-care system." These results are consistent with national public support, as indicated by a national survey that reports 93 percent of those polled believe that "providing transitional programs for young people leaving foster care is important."

In addition, several Family Court Judges have worked side-by-side with system partners in various workgroups to help address issues faced by those transitioning from foster care. These judges are also involved with the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Many judges attend various YAC events and meetings, and the Family Court has engaged YAC whenever public sessions or trainings related to children in foster care are conducted. Family Court has had YAC members participate on panels and present and offer inspirational messages at the beginning of trainings and conferences.

As part of YAC's push to increase awareness of foster care issues, the group created a documentary, which is intended to help break down some of the stereotypes of those who have aged out of foster care. The documentary includes interviews of and feedback from four youth who have aged out of Delaware's child welfare system, all of whom are members of YAC. YAC plans to present the documentary at statewide community events and meetings.

**37. What are some recent (within the past year) successes of the child welfare system related to improving supports and services to transitioning youth upon which the five core strategies could build?**

In 2010, Governor Jack Markell tasked cabinet secretaries from the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families, Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Corrections, Department of Health and Social Services, and the Delaware State Housing Authority to work collaboratively to develop an array of services that would

be made available to youth exiting the foster care system. The partnership among the agencies prompted the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which created an agreement and outlined the supported services that would be made available to youth exiting the foster care system. The consistent availability of services related to areas such as housing, employment, education, and medical needs has been an ongoing need for youth transitioning from foster care to independence.

Concurrent to this process, Governor Markell and DSCYF Cabinet Secretary Vivian Rapposelli attended a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) meeting on February 4, 2010, during which they heard candid concerns of youth exiting foster care. This interaction led to the development of a pilot program, which tracked the outcomes of the 30 youth attendees over the next five months. The youth ranged in age from 14-21. Information was collected monthly by the state's Division of Family Services social workers and independent living providers (where applicable) for each youth. Results indicated that further resources were necessary to effectively support the needs of Delaware's foster population. Outcomes from the pilot program were shared with the state cabinet secretaries and helped framed the MOU, which was signed on August 4, 2010, during the Annual Youth Conference. To date, the following accomplishments have been attained as a result of the partnership agreements among the departments:

- Youth may apply for the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA) Section 8 program beginning at age 16. This allows them to be on the waiting list during their time in foster care with the likelihood that they will become eligible for the voucher once they age out.
- Thirty family unification vouchers were provided to youth between the ages of 18-21 who have aged out. These statewide vouchers provide income-based rental subsidies.
- Through a pilot project with Delaware State University, two youth attend the university without cost for the 2010-2011 academic year. Additional resources to these youth include year-round housing and designated supported services to assist with their acclimation to university life. Partners in this effort include Division of Family Services (DFS), DSHA, and the Child Placement Review Board of Delaware.
- Additional funds were added to the independent living program contracts in order to increase contract capacity and provide additional services.
- Extended jurisdiction of Family Court for youth 18-21 who are experiencing difficulties in accessing independent living services.
- Six youth participated in a six-week internship through Superior Court in Kent, New Castle, and Sussex Counties during the summer of 2010. The youth obtained experience in office and customer skills, observed trials, and received a stipend for their participation. The Fund for Women grant was used by NorthEast Treatment Center to assist New Castle County participants with stipends.
- A partnership was developed with The Delaware Money School to provide financial-literacy training to transitioning youth. Initial efforts began at the Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Inc. where workshops are conducted.

- Sixteen Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members participated in a series of financial-literacy workshops, with a culminating event at Junior Achievement Finance Park.
- An act was created to allow children who are leaving foster care to have access to the SEED scholarship without the condition that they begin their higher education immediately after high school, which was required previously.  
The act also allows the youth to attend school on a part-time basis. These exceptions are necessary because children aging out of foster care have the unique responsibility to support themselves and may not be able to follow the same timetable as children with support from more traditional family situations.
- In October 2010, Delaware implemented the requirements of the federal government to track independent living services and outcomes for youth aged 14-21.
- In December 2010, an MOU was signed to develop a partnership with the Dover Housing Authority (DHA). Ten vouchers were requested by DHA to HUD for family unification vouchers to provide housing in Dover for youth exiting foster care.
- In December 2010, the Delaware Food Bank offered outreach in the way of scholarships to youth interested in culinary arts. Efforts to finalize this opportunity and make this resource available will continue in 2011. One youth, who is also part of a youth pilot program, enrolled and began participating in the program on January 5, 2011.
- Beginning in January 2011, Goodwill Industries of Delaware and Delaware County, Inc. will support 12 youth statewide through a pilot project involving GED preparation and testing-support scholarships. To date, one youth has been assisted with GED costs at Delaware Technical & Community College.

Additional resources are forthcoming. Potential resources include:

- Additional housing vouchers from the Delaware State Housing Authority.
- Partnerships with other local colleges and universities to replicate the project at Delaware State University.
- Improved access to services available for the partnering agencies and departments.

### **38. What is the recent (within the past year) history of “hot issues” related to child welfare (child deaths, missing children, special panel appointments, etc.)?**

In 2010, numerous allegations of sexual abuse were made against a pediatrician in Sussex County, Delaware. Dr. Earl B. Bradley was charged with second-degree rape, first-degree unlawful sexual contact, and endangering the welfare of a child. Following the initial charge, additional parents came forward and, within days, 26 new charges were brought. Outraged by how the state could miss such defiance of the law, Governor Markell appointed a special task force to review the Bradley case. Linda L. Ammons, Esq., Dean of the Widener University School of Law, said that the civil process failed several times to catch Dr. Bradley. Ammons's report fills in crucial gaps in information about previous investigations of Bradley and pinpoints a multitude of failures and lack of action dating back to 1994 by individuals who were in positions to stop Bradley.

As a result of Ammons's investigation and report, it was determined that significant improved measures related to child abuse reporting were required in order to help prevent future victimization of this nature. The impact of new legislation related to these incidents is widespread. Examples of the impact related to the Division of Family Services specifically include:

- The requirement to maintain a statewide child abuse reporting hotline for both intra- and extra-familial reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.
- A significant number of increased calls to the hotline.
- An increased number of investigations.
- The potential for more children to come into foster care as a result of an increased awareness and reporting.
- The requirement to maintain a database of individuals who fail to report suspected child abuse and neglect and report such individuals to professional organizations.

In addition the Children's Advocacy Center of Delaware held a mandatory summit, attended by nearly 900 medical providers, to train them in recognizing and reporting child abuse.

Furthermore, there is also a strong movement to modify the state's juvenile sex registry requirements. Currently, Delaware has the harshest laws in the nation for juvenile sex offenders. The state has the youngest registrants in the nation, with children as young as nine years old on its sex offender registry. It is also the only state that automatically places children age 14 and under on the registry. Research shows that most of these youthful offenders do not re-offend. Requiring them to register can seriously hinder their rehabilitation. A bill is currently before the Delaware General Assembly to give discretion to the courts as to which youths should be placed on the registry.

Another fairly recent and high-profile news story involved a 20-month-old girl, who was abandoned in a Newark, Delaware, gas station bathroom in March 2010. She was placed in a Delaware foster home while her father faced charges of murder in the death of the girl's mother in New Jersey. Pending investigation, family members came forward almost a year later to gain custody of the little girl.

**39. List the public policy advocates in your current target area(s) with a track record for addressing child welfare and other children and family well-being issues.**

The individuals interviewed for the completion of this environmental scan all play a significant role in advocating for the well-being of foster youth and, therefore, can be considered public policy advocates themselves. However, other key public policy advocates include:

- **Delaware Kids Caucus** is a bi-partisan group of Senators and Representatives formed in 2003 to promote the health and welfare of Delaware's children. The Caucus is dedicated to improving the lives of the children in Delaware and focuses primarily on issues relating to children's health insurance, children in foster care, and early

childhood education. The Caucus aims at providing children in Delaware a cohesive and coordinated voice to advocate on their behalf and sponsors legislation in doing so. Additionally, as part of their mission and purpose the Kids Caucus seeks to develop partnerships with nonprofit organizations, the business community, government agencies, and other interested parties and groups to work together on children's issues.

- **Delaware's Successful Transition Initiative** – This group was formed by former Governor Ruth Ann Minner in 2010. The Successful Transitions Initiative gathered a working group of the major public agencies serving youth, elected leaders, nonprofit service providers, housing agencies and developers, educational institutions, philanthropic and faith-based organizations, and civic activists with the purpose of creating a seamless set of services designed to assist young people aging out of the foster care system to transition successfully to adulthood. The Successful Transitions Initiative team and working groups have met over a one-year period and are prepared to assist in the implementation of the DYOI.
- **Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** – The purpose of the council is to provide a mechanism for youth to directly advocate their needs while in foster care. It provides them a platform to express their issues with, experiences in, and thoughts on the current foster care system, the policies and procedures, and the transitioning phase of aging out. Key legislators, high-ranking state employees, and DSCYF staff regularly attend YAC meetings to hear the concerns and ideas of the youth. Foster care youth, aged 14-18, may participate as members, with older youth, up to 21 years, participating as advisors. YAC meets on the third Wednesday of each month in Dover, with transportation provided by DSCYF.

**G. INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES****40. Describe the availability of financial institutions in your current target area(s) that are community-oriented, youth-friendly, and that may be willing to alter policies to benefit young people.**

Delaware is in a unique position as many financial institutions across the country call the state their corporate home. Most provide incentives for employees to actively engage in the strong nonprofit community. Through interviews with some of these institutions, strong interest was expressed on how they may get involved with the DYOI.

The Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ) has followed up with the financial institutions to sit on the Community Partnerships Board or participate in a working group for the DYOI. Most are interested in staying informed of how they can be of service to the DYOI.

**41. Describe the potential for securing Individual Development Account (IDA) matched funds.**

The state of Delaware currently has an IDA program in place—Delawareans Save! The program, with support from Deutsche Bank, which donated \$50,000, matches \$2.50 for every dollar deposited (up to \$1,500 deposited). Individuals must save a minimum of \$25 (and up to a maximum of \$250) per month to receive matching dollars in an Artisans' Bank savings account.

The S.A.V.E Program (Successfully Acquiring Valuable Essentials) is another IDA program utilized by West End Neighborhood House, Inc. Individuals over 18 may deposit up to \$200 a month into an Artisans' Bank savings account. The funds will be matched dollar for dollar for asset purchases. Individuals can save a minimum of \$400 (up to a maximum of \$1,250) that will be matched. They may save more in the account that will not be matched, as long as the individual has been saving for at least three months. Both programs are administered by the First State Community Loan Fund. The 50-50 Program works in a similar way for youth aged 14-18. It allows youth to deposit \$200 in total into a savings account to be accessed once they turn 18.

Jan Slattery of the First State Community Loan Fund reports that, in order to maximize participation from youth and those aging out of the foster care system, efforts are being made to merge the programs. Participation among the youth has been a major problem for all the IDA programs (Currently, there are only ten individuals who have aged out that are participating in S.A.V.E.). Before an IDA savings account at Artisans' Bank is opened, individuals are required to participate in mandatory financial literacy classes. These classes, according to Ms. Slattery, are based on Casey materials but need to be enhanced.

There is great potential for securing matching funds for the IDA program. Deutsche Bank is committed to continuing its partnership with the state. ING DIRECT and Discover Card also



have contributed previously to the program and have been approached about providing additional financial support.

**42. Describe the availability of financial literacy training providers, including financial institutions and other community organizations.**

- a) Are any of these organizations or institutions current or potential partners?**
- b) What capacity can these organizations or institutions bring to your community and to your collaboration? To what extent can they provide support to customize the financial literacy curriculum?**

As of February 2011, 13 nonprofits split more than \$500,000 in new grant funding through the Financial Literacy Education Fund (FLEF), which is aimed at improving the financial well-being of Delawareans through financial literacy programs. Grants were awarded in three categories: (1) K-12 Financial Literacy Programs, (2) Adult Financial Literacy Programs, and (3) Targeted Campaigns focused on providing education to those facing decisions on debt, with specific emphasis on reaching out to the military, seniors, and minority communities. The following organizations provide trainings, relevant for foster youth.

**Delaware Financial Literacy Institute** – a nonprofit providing free classes on personal finances to all audiences (this includes the MoneyRules program for high school students). High school juniors participate in a day-long seminar to learn about saving, budgeting, and the high cost and wise use of credit. DFLI also accepts specialized requests for free, tailored training sessions for ten or more individuals.

**First State Community Loan Fund** – an agency that provides financial literacy training and administers accounts. The agency provides several programs for foster youth to assist with financial literacy and manage IDA accounts.

**Junior Achievement of Delaware** – a nonprofit providing personal finance and economics education to school students. In the past, Junior Achievement of Delaware offered a summer program “JA Finance Park” to teens in foster care. An attempt was made to recruit student participants by reaching out to state case workers and foster care agencies. However, very few students actually attended the financial literacy program. The few who did participate were children whose case workers are with Children & Families First, Inc. Junior Achievement of Delaware is open for future collaboration with other statewide agencies and organizations.

**Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League** – a community-based movement devoted to empowering African Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream. Since 2006, the organization has coordinated two programs, which include a financial literacy component: (1) Achievement Matters for middle school students (two schools in Wilmington) and (2) Youth Leadership Council New Lites for high school students, which is located in New Castle County. Both programs are open for all students, including those in foster care.

**West End Neighborhood House, Inc.** – a nonprofit that coordinates the Life Lines program, which serves current and former foster care youth aged 16-23. Specifically, the program aims to promote self-sufficiency and assist youth in becoming contributing members of society. It includes educational and training endeavors and financial education.

**YWCA** – a large multicultural women's organization offering the one-day Money Management Rewards class for anyone interested. The trainings provided at the Newark site are provided once a month at no cost; trainers also can be contracted out by other organizations for fee-based classes.

Other organizations that provide the financial literacy trainings include, but are not limited to:

**The Elizabeth House Family Life Center, Inc.** – a faith-based, community-development organization that serves about 100 individuals annually and offers free economics and financial literacy services in two New Castle County locations.

The Elizabeth W. Murphey School is a non-profit group home facility in Dover, Delaware, that provides services for children who have issues with dependency and/or neglect. The School currently houses 31 youth on campus and provides independent living services to approximately 70 young people within the community.

In addition, some of the organizations listed in the question 24, such as Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, Deutsche Bank, and Discover Financial Services, provide financial literacy trainings.

The need for financial literacy, investment, and microenterprise trainings is less comprehended and sought after by the foster youth, as opposed to the need for medical or housing services, for instance. Therefore, it is important, as an initial step, to reach out to the youth and their families to promote the importance of such education.

**43. List possible partners for the provision of asset-specific training in the following areas: vehicles, education/training, housing, investments, microenterprise and medical/dental care.**

- a) Are any of these organizations or institutions current or potential partners?**
- b) What capacity can these organizations or institutions bring to your community and to your collaboration? To what extent can they provide support to develop customized asset-specific training curricula?**

A majority of the organizations listed previously (see responses to questions 17, 19, 21, 23, 42) serve as current partners or have expressed willingness to be possible partners in the areas of medical, housing, financial, and other services or training-related assistance. The key is reaching out to foster youth, making them aware of such services, and tailoring the services to meet their needs.

Asset-specific trainings should be developed according to real and specific needs of foster youth. The Youth Advisory Council is an important player in identifying these needs and should serve as a liaison for current and future partnerships.

Other factors that influence the ability of a young adult to take advantage of training opportunities include the willingness of family members (or any other related/involved adults) to support their decision, transportation availability, and the location and timing of events.

Medicaid furnishes medical assistance to eligible low-income families and to eligible aged, blind, and/or disabled people whose income is insufficient to meet the cost of necessary medical services. Medicaid pays for doctor visits, hospital care, labs, prescription drugs, transportation, routine shots for children, and mental health and substance abuse services.

The Adolescent Resource Center (ARC) is a comprehensive counseling, educational, and medical service program for youth designed to help reduce risk-taking behaviors, especially related to sexual health. The ARC program helps teenagers and young adults create and sustain healthy, responsible attitudes, behaviors, and choices about their sexuality. ARC provides clinic-based counseling and medical services in New Castle and Kent Counties that are designed to meet the unique needs of teenagers. Parent or partner counseling is also available. Males and females 12-20 years old may receive the following services:

- Counseling
- Birth Control
- STD Testing/Treatment
- HIV Testing
- Emergency Contraception
- Pregnancy Testing and Options Counseling
- Pelvic Examinations

All services are confidential. Fees are determined using a sliding scale based on the income of the teen, but most services are free.

**44. Describe the current availability of opportunities that exist in the community that could be customized or enhanced to create door openers for young people transitioning from care.**

Delaware's array of existing services, programs, and community partner organizations provide numerous opportunities for customized door openers for youth transitioning from the foster care system.

While a number of programs and services have been identified through the scan, a critical component in customizing and enhancing these opportunities involves linking up these resources to create a more systems-based, service-delivery approach. Consideration should be given as to how referrals are made to youth and among already existing programs and

organizations and whether youth and their families or those closest to them are aware of opportunities that exist. Additionally, feedback from youth who are or have been in the system is important to creating openers that are specific to the needs and interests of the target population. The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) should serve as a critical and continual voice in this process. Specific areas of focus might include dental care, mental health services, financial services, educational scholarships, social and recreational activities/events, and discounts on home products and services.

**45. List possible partners for the provision of door openers in all outcomes areas (permanence, education, employment, housing, physical and mental health, and personal and community engagement).**

All key employers, formal and informal community leaders/partners, key businesses, philanthropic organizations, and foundations identified in the scan should be considered as possible partners for the provision of door openers in the major outcome areas. As a starting point, examples of appropriate potential partners for each major area are provided below.

**Permanence** – Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Delaware Youth Advisory Council (YAC), former foster care youth not involved in YAC, GAL program volunteers, independent living program.

**Education** – Delaware State University, Delaware Technical and Community College, University of Delaware.

**Employment** – Department of Labor; Job for Delaware Graduates, Inc.; Opportunity Center, Inc.; Workforce Investment Board.

**Housing** – Aid in Dover, Inc.; People's Place; NorthEast Treatment Centers; The Elizabeth W. Murphey School, Inc.; West End Neighborhood House, Inc.

**Physical and Mental Health** – Children & Families First; Delaware Department of Health & Social Services; Progressive Life Center; J.U.S.T. for Youth Coalition, Inc.

**Personal and Community Engagement** – African American Adult Fraternities and Sororities; Boys & Girls Club of Delaware; Dover Downs, Inc.; Junior League of Wilmington; Latin American Community Center, Inc.; YMCA and YWCA Delaware.

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## **Appendix F. Environmental Scan Feedback**

Feedback follows on next page

**Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative  
Environmental Scan Feedback to the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative  
August 2011**

On July 18, 2011 a meeting was held signifying the completion of the Environmental Scan by the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative. The scan was completed by the University of Delaware Institute for Public Administration in partnership with the Delaware Center for Justice (DCJ), the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) and other key stakeholders.

The environmental scan submitted by the Delaware team exemplifies a high level of dedication to improving outcomes for youth in and formerly in foster care in Delaware. It demonstrates the long-standing commitment of both the current Governor Jack Markell and his predecessor Governor Ruth Ann Minner of creating a better future for young people in foster care through system improvement and coordination. It also highlights the various ways the DSCYF has responded to the needs of young people to improve access to services and a focus on improving the child welfare system for young people in and aging out of foster care. Additionally, area-wide service providers and young people who were interviewed were extremely forthcoming in their observations which contributed to the high quality and thoroughness of the scan.

This Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Environmental Scan feedback document summarizes the areas of readiness and recommendations that the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative should address as they launch implementation planning.

The Jim Casey Environmental Scan is an important data tool for Delaware to use in the Readiness and Needs and the Implementation Planning Phases. Sites should update the Environmental Scan annually in order to assess changes in the factors and circumstances.

This initial assessment helps to assess a site's readiness to plan for implementing the five core strategies. It is intended to:

- Give sites greater understanding of this complex multi-strategy initiative;
- Identify what strengths and gaps exist, and steps that must be taken before beginning the planning process and start receiving structured technical assistance; and
- Assist sites with their planning.

Capacity for Planning

**DSCYF Involvement and Support:** The support from the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families was evident beginning with the initial interest of Secretary Vivian Rapposelli in this initiative to determine whether Delaware would be interested in engaging Jim Casey in this endeavor. DSCYF gave clear indication of their support through the involvement of Rodney Brittingham and Felicia Kellum from the

DSCYF Division of Family Services. Their ability to gather and share data and participate in every phase of the environmental scan is indicative of their commitment.

DSCYF has supported the statewide Youth Advisory Council (YAC) since its inception in 2001. The participation of DSCYF staff, high ranking state employees and legislators in the YAC meetings to learn about the concerns of young people in and leaving foster care is evidence of meaningful youth engagement and an authentic interest in understanding foster care from the young people who live it. DSCYF staff provides transportation of young people to monthly meetings in Dover.

The Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative has committed to fully implementing all core strategies of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative as evidenced by past and current work, including:

- Historical attention to the issues of youth aging out of foster care dating back to 2001 with Governor Ruth Ann Minner's Foster Care Task Force with a goal of creating a comprehensive community-based model of service delivery resulting in 10 recommendations and \$550,000 in FY 2002
- Strong commitment of Governor Jack Markell to continue the work of Governor Minner to address young people in and aging out of foster care
- Memorandum of Understanding signed in August 2010 to ensure agencies "work together to better coordinate efforts and resources to address the comprehensive needs of foster care youth."
- Decrease in the number of youth in foster care from 2008 to 2010 with 205 fewer youth in care based on point in time data taken December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year
- Statewide Annual Youth Conference
- The use of youth driven transition planning called Stairways to Encourage Personal Success (STEPS) at age 17; reviewed 90 days prior to the youth turning 18 and reviewed again with the independent living provider once the young person has aged out
- Monthly data transfers from DSCYF to the Department of Education to inform DOE of youth in foster care to ensure they are receiving appropriate academic assistance
- Access at age 16 to apply for DSHA Section 8 housing
- Implementation of NYTD in 2009

### **Interagency Coordination & Collaboration:**

There are several examples of interagency coordination and collaboration in Delaware, including the Successful Transitions Initiative, APPLA Workgroup, and the State Agency MOU that was signed on August 4, 2010 between DSCYF, DSHA, DHSS, DOC, DOL and DOE with the purpose of "working collaboratively to better serve youth as they age out of foster care."

The small size of Delaware lends itself to a collective work ethic; one that will serve this initiative well because of the need to embed the strategies with the assistance of multiple stakeholders in order to significantly impact outcomes for young people in foster care.

Initial planning for the Community Partnership Board indicates an approach that will involve many members of the community, public and private sectors, and state agency staff. Lt. Governor Matt Denn has agreed to Chair the Community Partnership Board.

### **Capacity of Lead Agency for Developing the Implementation Plan:**

The Delaware Center for Justice is serving as the lead agency in the planning of the Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative, convening partners, and serving as the primary liaison to Jim Casey. The long-standing involvement of DCJ in the community and State exemplify their capacity as the lead agency. DCJ has hired Julie Miller as Program Coordinator and Nicole Byers as Youth Advisor to ensure youth voice. The DYOI has the financial support of the Eckerd Family Foundation for the planning of the initiative in 2011. Fundraising for the first three years of implementation is a necessary priority, one that is currently underway at DCJ.

Several service providers and the University Of Delaware Institute Of Public Administration could serve as a source of potential partnerships in the initiative taking on such tasks as administration of the Matched Savings aspect of the Opportunity Passport™, and administering semi-annual Opportunity Passport™ Participant Surveys and self-evaluation processes.

### **Data Gathering and Analysis**

As the lead organization in data collection and analysis for the Environmental Scan, the University of Delaware has demonstrated an ability to conduct effective data collection and evaluation. This resource may be again called upon to handle these aspects of the ongoing planning and implementation. Additionally, the local KIDS COUNT grantee is a potential partner with data analysis given their mission and its fit with this initiative.

A plan will need to be created to determine which outcomes to address initially based on the data, and what actions will bring about improvement.

### **Demographics**

The area of implementation of the Jim Casey model is the state of Delaware. The largest percentage of the population lives in New Castle (60%) with Wilmington as its largest city, followed by Sussex County with 22% of the population and Kent County with 18%. Several data elements were collected for the scan. Of interest are the following:

- Nearly 69% of the general population is White and 21% is African American, while the percentage of African American young people ages 14-18 in foster care is 55%.
- It appears that information about unemployment rates, educational attainment and the percentage of uninsured for the population of 19-24 year olds who have aged out of foster care have been unknown. This information will likely be available from NYTD in the future and can be used in planning for services and to address gaps.

### Strategies

#### **Youth Engagement:**

Young people in foster care are given voice through the statewide Youth Advisory Council which meets monthly in Dover. Youth are given the opportunity to provide input to DSCYF and other key stakeholders. DSCYF provides support to the youth through transportation.

Young people are meaningfully involved as decision makers in a variety of ways, including Stairways to Encourage Personal Success (STEPS) transition planning beginning at age 17, the use of Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment annually by independent living providers to develop individualized case plans, and in court through age appropriate consultation by the court. Family Court Judges also engage the Youth Advisory Council by attending YAC events and meetings and drawing on the YAC members as presenters at conferences and trainings.

Several young people were interviewed for the environmental scan to identify current needs and priorities of youth. The following highlights their responses:

- Permanence: the level of stability experienced in their foster homes with foster parents and schools
- Employment: scarcity of jobs and transportation to jobs
- Education: motivation and access to information including the stability within their foster homes as a contributing factor to academic success; frequent school changes
- Personal and Community Engagement: communication, feeling like they don't have a say on issues affecting their lives
- Housing: appears to be a low priority area, but one that will need attention as funding streams are not guaranteed
- Physical and Mental Health: few priorities were discussed in this area, but the importance of therapy for youth in foster care was mentioned

#### **Partnerships and Resources:**

There are multiple existing partnerships and available resources across all the Initiative outcome areas in Delaware despite the budget constraints that have occurred here in



addition to the rest of the country. Planned cuts to public assistance, higher education and transportation will likely have an impact on this population therefore coordination of services is key to improving outcomes. It may be helpful to look for ways to build on existing partnerships in order to avoid or reduce duplication. Opportunities may exist within the Workforce Investment Board Youth Council, for example, which could play an important role in identifying business partners and helping the initiative with improving employment outcomes for young people.

As other Casey Foundations begin working in Delaware it will be important for the Casey's to streamline efforts to ensure a collective approach and not an overly burdensome one. The Child Welfare Strategy Group is beginning its work with the DSCYF and there are regularly scheduled calls with Jim Casey staff to assist with avoiding duplication from our end. Communication with all partners will be the key to successful deployment of resources.

### **Research, Evaluation and Communications:**

Delaware implemented NYTD in 2009 and is in compliance with the submission of data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). Their SACWIS system known as FACTS is undergoing an upgrade beginning in 2011 that will be completed by 2014. Another data collection effort that could provide valuable information is a pilot conducted in 2010 with 31 young people currently or formerly in foster care to gain an understanding of their experiences in order to inform officials of existing issues.

There are no partners providing technical assistance related to self-evaluation and communications; however, several local partners have the capacity to help with self-evaluation efforts. The need to increase awareness and advocacy and to educate the population about these issues was identified in the scan as a major challenge. Potential partners in communications planning have been identified.

### **Public Will and Policy:**

The political leadership in Delaware did not change in November 2010 resulting in a stable political climate. In his State of the State address in 2011, Governor Markell mentioned "the need to make sure children aging out of foster care are given the opportunities they need to succeed" and referenced a partnership between the DSCYF and the State Housing Authority that will provide safe and affordable housing for this population. Additionally, the support and leadership of Secretary Vivian Rapposelli is evidence of the strong support from the child welfare system and its partners; a key component of success for this initiative.

Other indications of the strength of public will in Delaware date back to 2009 and the Delaware Children's Campaign with their recommendations addressing several outcome areas for youth aging out of foster care. In addition, the full support offered by the

Successful Transitions Initiative through their involvement in the scan and support of plans for implementation is another important indication of public will. It is evident that the work already underway in Delaware aligns with the Jim Casey model in important ways.

The recent passage of Senate Bill 113 extending Family Court jurisdiction to former youth in foster care up to the age of 21 is a significant measure of support for youth who age out as they navigate services once they leave care. The on-going representation of youth by the Office of the Child Advocate or the CASA program is a fundamental step to ensuring continued legal advocacy. It is likely that as planning and implementation efforts move forward, partners may look to the next step of extending care and custody of young people to age 21 in order to improve outcomes for young people and ensure those in foster care have the best possible chance to become productive, healthy citizens of Delaware.

There are many recent successes the DYOI can build upon, including Lt. Gov. Matt Denn taking on the role of chairing the Community Partnership Board and the interest of local providers, the business community, local universities, and potential funders in this initiative.

### **Increased Opportunities:**

Several banks and financial institutions have expressed their interest in the DYOI and multiple organizations already provide financial literacy training to various populations. Given the expertise in the community from existing IDA programs the ground is fertile for coordination of an IDA aimed at young people in foster care. The historically low participation rates of youth will need to be addressed during implementation. Some additional items to consider will be selecting a banking partner that is youth friendly, how best to coordinate referrals from the community and multiple providers, and securing matched funds for the IDA.

The scan provided several opportunities and resources that exist in the community that could be customized or enhanced to create door openers in all outcome areas. Lastly, the scan recognizes that young people should drive the needs for asset specific training as well as in identifying door openers, including the important role of the YAC in doing so. The inclusion of young people in implementing this strategy is of vital importance.

### **Recommendations**

The Delaware Youth Opportunities Initiative is off to an impressive start in its planning efforts to improve the lives of youth transitioning from foster care. The level of collaboration with multiple partners and commitment to young people from all levels of government, the public and private sector, foundations, banks and the community is commendable. The authentic engagement of young people to gain better understanding of

what their needs are by the DSCYF, the Family Court and others provides a solid foundation on which to build the Jim Casey model.

The environmental scan identifies the following to be addressed during implementation planning:

- Secure additional funding for implementation of the Theory of Change
- Explore the possibility of creating local Youth Advisory Council's in each county to identify and address local concerns, practice, and assist with community connections
- Address child care as a barrier to participation, employment, and education
- Determine how to coordinate with existing IDA programs to reduce overlap and increase effectiveness of programs

Should Delaware choose to plan and implement the Initiative's model, they will become a Co-investment partner who will benefit from the learning and innovative approaches developed and refined during demonstration. The Initiative provides both tangible (dollar valued) and intangible (tools, credibility, access and national associations) benefits to co-investment sites. The Initiative is prepared to provide Delaware:

#### **Consultation**

- Two Site Liaisons technical assistance both on-site and off, including access to peer network and other technical assistance opportunities from national experts, issue-specific substantive contributions (regular trouble-shooting sessions of site issues with input of entire professional staff ) and liaison capacity enhancement (professional development)
- Site Liaisons travel subsidies

#### **Policy Matrix**

#### **Opportunity Passport™ Workshop**

#### **Financial Literacy Training of Trainers**

#### **Self-Evaluation Trainings**

- Self-Evaluation
- MIS-IDA (account tracking)
- OPPS (outcomes survey)

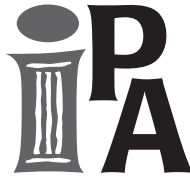
#### **Youth Engagement & Youth Leadership Board Development**

#### **Self-Evaluation Tools and Technical Assistance**

- MIS-IDA system access and maintenance
- Opportunity Passport™ Participant Survey (OPPS) access and maintenance
- Rubric Tool & Policy Matrix

**Access to the Initiative's Annual Convening's**

**Access to Peer Network**



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