

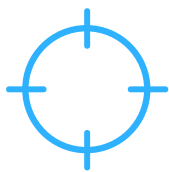
Improving Education and Workforce Outcomes of Systems-Involved Youth:

BUILDING CONSENSUS AROUND KEY AREAS OF INFLUENCE FOR POLICY

On July 26, 2018, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) convened a day-long discussion group of thought leaders across research, practice, and policy focused on building postsecondary education and workforce pathways for youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

New federal funding streams are opening up for systems-involved youth, most notably through the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA). The Administration continues to emphasize the importance of workforce development and 21st-century skills. There are 36 governors up for reelection that could have a significant impact on state-level policies related to foster care and juvenile justice. This could be an opportunity to emphasize the importance of including systems-involved youth and describing their barriers to completing higher education and workforce development programs. Taking this into account, the discussion highlighted key next-steps to take in developing policies to serve these populations.

INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT



Participants frequently cited that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to helping systems-involved youth achieve success. Each case brings a unique experience that needs to be treated in an individual way. No matter what, youth should remain at the center of all transition plans as they work towards the next steps in their education and workforce development. Whatever form this takes, participants agreed that youth should be supported throughout the process with consistent adult support and navigation.

DATA COLLECTION AND INPUT MEASUREMENT



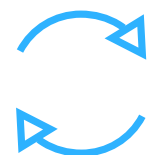
Discussants repeatedly mentioned significant limitations on reliable data available about systems-involved youth. This was cited as an issue regarding outcomes data, as well as information surrounding the inputs going into treatment. This presents an issue for accountability, as well as in light of the heavy emphasis that new legislation places on evidence-based programming.

INCREASED AWARENESS



Whether within a specific program or within larger societal systems, participants repeatedly called for training those who interact with systems-involved youth. Within specific programs, staff should be aware of the challenges facing their clients so they are equipped to provide the best possible support. For other stakeholders, such as employers and policymakers, it is important to highlight what youth face in their daily lives to make their situations and behaviors understandable.

WORKING AROUND A FLAWED SYSTEM



Discussants raised concerns about funding for juvenile justice and foster care programs. As the field moves to "pay for success," private-public partnership models and evidence-based interventions, less than 10 percent of interventions for these populations would qualify under new policies. There was also an acknowledgment that these systems take significant time, funding, and leadership to change. The discussion highlighted multiple ways in which states and organizations have worked within the existing system to produce results, which can serve as starting points for further innovation.