Program Snapshot

For more information on any of our programs, please go to www.fosterforward.net.

ASPIRE Initiative

➢ For ages 14-26 (any youth who spent at least one day in a DCYF placement after age 14)
➢ Financial education and assistance with setting goals for saving money
➢ $100 toward the opening of an Individual Development Account (IDA), and a dollar-for-dollar match, up to $1,000 per year, toward the purchase of such items as cars, education expenses, housing expenses, health expenses, and investments

For more information, please contact: Cherai Dimeo at 401.438.3900 ext. 211
cherai.dimeo@fosterforward.net

YESS Aftercare Services (Youth Establishing Self-Sufficiency) and Enhanced Case Management

➢ For ages 18-21, who have been closed to the state’s Family Court and DCYF on or after their 18th birthday
➢ Assistance locating safe and affordable housing, identifying employment, and/or enrolling in an educational program
➢ Limited funds that help pay for housing and other living expenses (participants become increasingly responsible for their own housing expenses over time)

For more information, please contact: Victoria Ferrara at 401.438.3900 ext. 105
victoria.ferrara@fosterforward.net

Real Connections

➢ For ages 8-21, who are most at risk of aging out of foster care without permanent connections.
➢ Help connecting to family or important adults that might have been lost during the young person’s time in care.
➢ Connections to community or personal network mentors and support of that relationship toward permanent connections.

For more information, please contact: Kate Bronner at 401.438.3900 ext. 108
kate.bronner@fosterforward.net

Works Wonders™

➢ For ages 16-21, who are in care or participating in YESS Aftercare Services.
➢ Career development and employment engagement program that provides 8-10 hours of skills based training
➢ $50 completion incentive, potential for 12 weeks of career coaching & paid work-based learning opportunities

For more information, please contact: Bernadette Tavares at 401.438.3900 x 120
bernadette.tavares@fosterforward.net

ASPIRING Young Leaders

➢ For ages 14 to 21 (any youth who spent at least one day in a DCYF placement after age 14)
➢ 3 day training on leadership, communication, advocacy, strategic sharing and relationship building
➢ Candidates should be mature, responsible, respectful and demonstrate leadership potential

For more information, please contact: Victoria Ferrara at 401.438.3900 ext. 105
victoria.ferrara@fosterforward.net

55 South Brown Street, East Providence, RI 02914  •  (401) 438-3900  •  Fax (401) 438-3901  •  www.fosterforward.net
Your Way Home Rapid Re-Housing for Homeless Youth
- For ages 18-24 (any youth who spent at least one day in a DCYF placement after age 14)
- Assistance with housing navigation and short term rental assistance
- Supportive case management services
For more information, please contact: Michelle Lavallee at 401.438.3900 ext. 206
  michelle.lavallee@fosterforward.net

VOCA Counseling
- One-on-one counseling and crisis intervention services on-site
- Group sessions on mindfulness/meditation and staff training opportunities
- Open to all victims of crime served by Foster Forward
For more information, please contact: Ana Lopez at 401.438.3900 ext. 203
  ana.lopez@fosterforward.net

Foster Forward Storefront
- Donation distribution of gently used clothing and supplies to support foster families in the care of foster children and youth
- Donation distribution of gently used household items for older foster youth transitioning to apartments and young adults receiving rapid re-housing services through Your Way Home
- Seasonal donation distribution for prom dresses, Halloween costumes, holiday gifts, etc
- Meeting space for events and activities for foster youth and foster families
For more information, please contact: Cherai Dimeo at 401.438.3900 ext. 211
  cherai.dimeo@fosterforward.net
Key Takeaways and Policy Recommendations

Works Wonders® and Workforce Development

The Works Wonders Model was developed as a five (5) year research study funded by the Children’s Bureau. The model demonstrated a 37% increase in employment during the research study and a 58% increase in employment since among a population of those most disconnected from school and work.

- Prioritize Extension of Care in all states as a key strategy to support education and workforce development for youth in care.
- Develop federal funding opportunities for summative evaluations for Works Wonders® and other promising models that support successful transition for older youth. There is a lack of programs on track for inclusion in the Child Welfare Clearinghouse that target outcomes for older youth and prioritize them for Chafee and Title 4E spending.
- Modify WIOA funding to provide greater flexibility to effectively serve foster youth:
  - Eliminate TABE testing as a means of eligibility
  - Relax guidelines for attendance
  - Allow barrier assistance funding for transportation, child care and housing support
- Support state incentives for employers to partner and prioritize work experiences and paid employment for foster youth (Real Jobs RI tax credit example)

Your Way Home and Housing Support

The Your Way Home Program was developed by Foster Forward and piloted in 2018 with funding from the Rhode Island Foundation to implement a Rapid Rehousing Program for former foster youth who are experiencing homelessness. The Program was included in the state’s 2018 Continuum of Care Collaborative Application under Tier 2 and was received $229,000 in HUD funding to concurrently serve 12 youth, and up to 20 youth annually providing Rapid Rehousing, up to 24 months of rental subsidy and supportive services.

- HUD Fair Market Rent standards help with affordability issues during the subsidy period, but create a challenge for sustainability in Rapid Rehousing
- Finding housing rentals that meet minimum standards for habitability remains a challenge. Federal and state funding to support new housing and rehabilitate existing stock is needed to ensure vouchers are utilized in a timely manner.
- Require public child welfare agencies to be involved with their state’s Continuum of Care to maximize funding opportunities (especially FUP vouchers) and improve the utilization of Coordinated Entry.
- Recognize “couch surfing” as an eligible category for Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing for youth experiencing homelessness.