



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

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.*

