by Katherine Gaughen

An Assessment of Resources
to Support Transitioning Youth

RESOURCES

During the last decade, policymakers, program developers, advocates, researchers and funders have placed new focus on the challenges faced by young people transitioning from foster care.

Recognizing the poor outcomes that many young adults leaving foster care experience, lawmakers passed the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, which includes specific provisions to promote permanency and improve wellbeing of older youth in foster care. These include a new requirement that personal transition plans for youth aging out are developed within 90 days prior to youth exiting foster care.

In order to develop a sound transition plan to effectively assist young people leaving foster care, state and community leaders need a clear understanding of the full breadth of resources that young people require as they transition to adulthood. This assessment tool seeks to help states and communities determine areas of strength in which there are adequate resources to support transitioning youth and areas in which additional services and supports need to be developed to meet the needs of young people.

The Finance Project's Guide to Mapping Community Resources for Transitioning Youth is designed to be used as a companion to this assessment, although each tool can be used on its own. The Guide to Mapping Community Resources for Transitioning Youth seeks to help state and community leaders systematically map the supports and services available to young people transitioning from foster care, so that young people, case workers, advocates, and other supportive adults will be able to effectively take advantage of all of the resources available to them.

This assessment tool guide was developed in collaboration with FosterClub, a national network for youth in foster care, who has developed a planning toolkit to help states implement the youth-directed transition plan mandated by Fostering Connections.

FosterClub's Transition Toolkit

FosterClub's Transition Toolkit was developed in collaboration with young people in and transitioning from foster care. The toolkit is an open source document available for free download from FosterClub's website, www.fosterclub.org.

The toolkit's design plays off a city metro/subway system, helping a young people to think about transition planning in the way that they could use a map to navigate a city. Each "subway line" of the map correlates to a domain that should be planned for as the young person prepares for transition to adulthood:

- Housing
- Self Care & Health
- Education
- Life Skills
- Transportation
- Identity
- Permanence
- Community, Culture & Social Life
- Job & Career

For every domain, the Toolkit contains youth-friendly instructions and worksheets. Youth are prompted to work with a Transition Team (a group of supporters of their choosing) to complete the Toolkit.
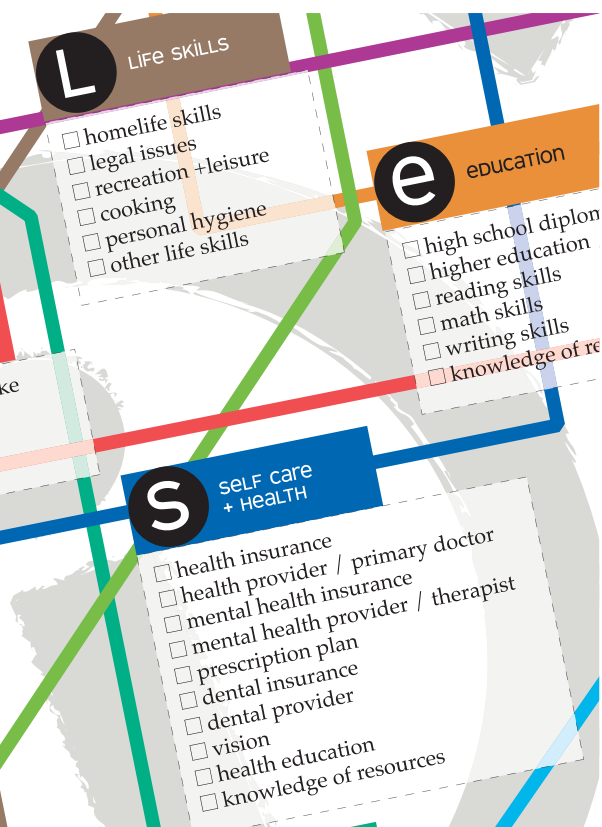
Young people may choose to tackle all of the domains or select those they most feel like they need to work on. Upon completion of all the worksheets, a young person will possess a comprehensive transition plan consisting of:

■ An inventory of current assets (including hard assets, skills, and knowledge) that they currently possess that will aid in transition,

■ Resources they can be accessed (a perfect spot to place resources identified in *Mapping Community Assets for Transitioning Youth*), and

■ A plan for preparing themselves.

Each worksheet has a readiness scale that will help young people and their team assess current areas of strength and highlight areas where more work needs to be done before the young person transitions to independence.

The worksheets are customizable to meet a state or community's needs. Most importantly – it is youth-powered and youth-friendly.

This *Assessment of Resources to Support Transitioning Youth* will help you identify where you have adequate resources to support young people as they transition to independence and areas in which it is necessary to strengthen supports and services.

Consistent with FosterClub's Transition Toolkit, the assessment tool is organized around the ten critical domains in which young people leaving foster care require support:

Ten Critical Domains

Finances and Money

including information regarding banking; sources of government support, budgeting, credit checks, financial education and Individual Development Accounts.

Job and Career

including information regarding career assessments, job search and placement services, resume preparation, interview skills, and job retention.

Life Skills

including information regarding safety, legal issues, etiquette, recreation/leisure, grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene, and positive communication.

Identity

including information regarding how to obtain a birth certificate, state-issued picture identification, social security card, and citizen/immigration documents.

Permanence

including information regarding understanding and establishing permanence and resources to identify kinship and sibling connections, to connect to supportive adults, and to support permanency, such as support groups.

Education

including information regarding obtaining school records, secondary education supports and post-secondary enrollment and retention supports.

Self Care & Health

including information regarding health, mental health, dental, vision and prescription insurance coverage and providers; and health education resources, such as substance abuse, coping with stress, nutrition, healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention and sexual health, fitness, first aid, and health self-advocacy.

Housing

including information regarding transitional housing options, housing assistance, tenants' rights, purchasing a home, and emergency shelters.

Transportation

including information regarding public transportation resources, accessing driver's education, obtaining a driver's license, and education regarding car ownership and insurance.

Community, Culture, Social Life

including information regarding spiritual supports, peer supports, voter registration, selective Service registration, and ethnic affinity groups.

Ideally, states and communities will complete this assessment tool after conducting a thorough resource mapping process. If possible, it is best to have a broad range of stakeholders – including young adults, child welfare staff members, and advocates – complete the assessment, so that the results reflect the wide range of perspectives on the availability of resources for transitioning youth. Consider using an electronic survey format, which will ease the burden of tallying multiple responses.

Moving from Assessment to Action

Once you have completed an analysis of responses to the assessment tool, convene your stakeholders and share the results. Engage in a conversation about the significant strengths and weaknesses of the resources available to support young people as they transition to adulthood.

When you have determined where significant gaps in service exist, spend time prioritizing the development of additional resources to support positive transitions to adulthood. Depending on whether you are utilizing an existing stakeholder group that has a standing mandate to support transitioning youth or have brought together a group of stakeholders specifically to complete the assessment, discuss whether participants would like to continue meeting in order to create a workplan and actively develop resources to fill those gaps. Alternatively, you may want to bring the results of the resource assessment to administrators at the public child welfare agency or another standing collaborative stakeholder group to discuss the next steps for ensuring that young people have the resources that they require to successfully transition to adulthood.

Finally, it is critical to create a plan to complete the assessment tool annually. Regularly conducting an assessment of resources for transitioning youth will help benchmark your state or community's progress in serving young people leaving foster care. It will also help ensure that leaders remain focused on areas that continue to need improvement.

Assessment of Resources to Support Young People Transitioning from Foster Care

To complete the assessment, rank the availability of each resource in your state/community according to the following four-point scale:

    1 = This resource does not exist in the state/community and is not under development
    2 = This resource does not currently exist in the state/community, but is in development
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The state/community has resources in place to young people transitioning from foster care in making positive financial decisions.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place in help young people open checking and savings accounts with banking institutions.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to help young people access income supports (beyond their job), such as social security, disability, etc.					
C. The state has resources in place to help young people develop a monthly budget.					
D. The state/community has resources in place to help young people monitor their credit score.					
E. The state/community has resources in place to provide financial education, including: • Taxes • Banking • Saving and investing • Budgeting • Lending and borrowing					
F. The state/community has resources in place in help young people amass assets, such as Individual Development Accounts.					

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The state/community has adequate, supportive housing for young people transitioning from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has an array of supportive housing arrangements for young people transitioning from foster care.					
B. The state/community has resources that young people transitioning from foster care can access to help locate and secure affordable housing.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to help young people furnish their living space.					
D. The state/community has an organization that advocates for tenants' rights.					
E. The state/community has resources in place to help educate young people regarding home ownership.					
F. The state/community has safe and appropriate emergency shelters available for young people transitioning from foster care.					

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The state/community has health and self care resources for young people transitioning from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to ensure health insurance coverage for young people transitioning from foster care.					
B. The state/community has a network of providers to provide health care to young people transitioning from foster care.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to ensure mental health insurance coverage for young people transitioning from foster care.					
D. The state/community has a network of mental health providers to serve young people transitioning from foster care.					
E. The state/community has resources in place to ensure dental health insurance coverage for young people transitioning from foster care.					
F. The state/community has a network of dental providers to serve young people transitioning from foster care.					
G. The state/community has resources in place to ensure vision insurance coverage for young people transitioning from foster care.					
H. The state/community has a network of vision providers to serve young people transitioning from foster care.					
I. The state/community has resources in place to ensure prescription coverage for young people transitioning from foster care.					
J. The state/community has resources in place to help young people complete critical health documents, such as the health care power of attorney.					
K. The state/community has a process in place to help young people access their medical and vaccination records.					
L. The state/community has health education resources in place to ensure that young people are well-informed regarding: • Substance abuse • Coping with stress • Nutrition • Healthy relationships • Sexual health and pregnancy prevention • Fitness • First aid • Health self-advocacy					

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The state/community has adequate educational resources for young people transitioning from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has an adequate array of services to support young people in graduating from high school.					
B. The state/community has resources to help young people obtain a GED or high school equivalency degree.					
C. The state/community has a process in place to help young people access their educational records, including their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).					
D. The state/community has resources in place to help young people identify, prepare for, and complete the required standardized tests for admission to post-secondary education.					
E. The state/community has resources to help young people apply to post-secondary education.					
F. The state/community has resources to help young people apply for financial support, so that they can attend post-secondary institutions.					
G. The state/community has resources in place to support young people in graduating from post-secondary education.					
H. The state/community has resources in place to help young people in post-secondary education access year-round housing.					

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The state/community has adequate resources to help young people acquire life skills as they transition from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has a process in place to assess young people's lifeskills knowledge, such as regular use of the Ansell Casey Life Skills assessment.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to assist young people in obtaining basic life skills, including: • Grocery shopping • Cooking • Cleaning • Laundry • Safety • Personal hygiene					
C. The state/community has resources in place to support young people in addressing any legal issues they confront.					
D. The state/community has adequate resources in place to provide young people with healthy recreational and leisure activities.					
E. The state/community has adequate resources in place to prepare young people to communicate effectively, including as self-advocates.					

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The state/community has adequate resources in place to assist young people in obtaining adequate transportation.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to help young people navigate public transportation.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to help young people attend driver's education.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to help young people obtain their driver's license.					
D. The state/community has resources in place to educate young people regarding car ownership, including information on auto insurance and financing.					

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The state/community has resources in place to assist young people transitioning from foster care in securing critical documents.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to help young people obtain their birth certificate.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to help young people obtain a state-issued picture identification.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to help young people obtain their social security card.					
D. The state/community has resources in place to help young people obtain citizenship/immigration documents.					
E. The state/community has a process in place to provide young people documentation that they were in foster care.					

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The state/community has resources in place to support lifelong connections for young people transitioning from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to help young people understand the importance of permanence and how they might go about achieving permanence.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to ensure the young person is involved in developing their permanency plan and has a copy of it.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to identify supportive adults and develop healthy, lifelong connections for every young person.					
D. The state/community has resources in place in help young people identify sibling and kinship connections.					
E. The state/community has resources in place to support young people's relationships with their biological family.					

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The state/community has adequate resources to help young people connect to the community.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to support the spiritual development of young people.					
B. The state/community has resources in place to support the cultural development of young people and to support connections with their cultural heritage.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to help young people transitioning from foster care to connect with one another and offer peer support.					
D. The state/community has adequate resources in place to ensure young people are registered voters.					
E. The state/community has adequate resources in place to ensure young people register with the selective service.					

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The state/community has adequate employment supports for young people transitioning from foster care.

	1	2	3	4	Comments
A. The state/community has resources in place to assist young people in finding and securing meaningful employment, including resume preparation and interview skills.					
B. The state/community has resources in place that allow young people transitioning from foster care to explore different career paths.					
C. The state/community has resources in place to help young people retain employment.					

Resources

The following list of resources will help you identify best practices to develop additional resources to assist young people transitioning from foster care.

Finances and Money Management

- American Savings Education Council
  http://www.asec.org
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
  http://www.aecf.org
- Center for Social Development
  http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/about/index.htm
- Corporation for Enterprise Development
  http://www.cfed.org
- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
  www.jimcaseyyouth.org
- Jump$tart Coalition
  http://www.jumpstart.org
- National Community Reinvestment Coalition
  http://www.ncrc.org/
- National Council on Economic Education
  http://www.nationalcouncil.org
- National Endowment for Financial Education
  http://www.nefe.org/
- New America Foundation
  http://www.newamerica.net
- The Assets Alliance
  http://www.assetsalliance.org/pages/home.php
- The Woodstock Institute
  http://www.woodstockinst.org/
- U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission
  http://www.Mymoney.gov

Housing

- Child Welfare League of America
  www.cwla.org
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
  www.csh.org
- The Enterprise Foundation
  www.enterprisefoundation.org
- Federal Home Loan Bank
  www.fhlbanks.com/html/programs.html
- Federal Housing Finance Board

www.fhfb.gov
- John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes
  www.johnburtonfoundation.org
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
  http://www.lisc.org/section/aboutus/
- National Alliance to End Homelessness
  www.endhomelessness.org/youth
- National Center on Housing and Child Welfare
  http://www.nchcw.org/
- National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development
  http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/yd/
- National Council of State Housing Agencies
  www.ncsha.org
- National Low Income Housing Coalition
  www.nlihc.org
- National Network for Youth
  www.nn4youth.org
- Orphan Foundation of America
  www.orphan.org
- State Housing Agencies
  www.ncsha.org
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
  www.hud.gov

Self Care & Health

- The American Academy of Pediatrics – Healthy Foster Care America
  www.aap.org/healthtopics/fostercare.cfm
- The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
  http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/fostercare/default.aspx

Education

- American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)
  http://www.aacc.nche.edu/
- Casey Family Programs
  www.casey.org
- Council for Opportunity in Education (COE/TRIO)
  www.trioprograms.org
- Department of Education, Portal for Student Aid
  www.ed.gov/students
- Federal Financial Aid
  www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Lumina Foundation for Education
  http://www.luminafoundation.org/

- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
  www.nasfaa.org
- National Scholarship Providers Association (NSPA)
  www.scholarshipproviders.org
- The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
  http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/nd/about.asp
- National Center for Homeless Education
  http://center.serve.org/nche/index.php
- Orangewood Children's Foundation
  www.orangewoodfoundation.org
- Orphan Foundation of America (OFA)
  www.orphan.org
- Smart Student's Guide to Financial Aid
  www.finaid.org
- Stuart Foundation
  http://www.stuartfoundation.org/
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)
  www.naspa.org
- TeamChild
  www.teamchild.org

Life Skills

- National Resource Center for Youth Development
  http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/state_pages.html
- Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment
  www.caseylifeskills.org

Transportation

- American Public Transportation Association
  www.publictransportation.org

Identity

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Vital Records
  http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm
- Social Security
  http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
  http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis

Permanence

- Families for Life
  www.youthpermanence.org
- Annie E. Casey Foundation
  www.aecf.org
- Casey Family Services
  www.caseyfamilyservices.org
- Chapin Hall Center for Children at University of Chicago
  www.chapinhall.org
- Child Trends, Inc.
  www.childtrends.org
- Foster Care Alumni of America
  www.fostercarealumni.org
- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
  www.jimcaseyyouth.org
- FosterClub
  www.fosterclub.org

Community, Cultural & Social Life

- FosterClub
  www.fosterclub.org
- Lamda Legal
  www.lamdalegal.org
- United States Election Assistance Commission
  http://www.eac.gov/voter/how-to-contact-your-state-election-office
- Selective Service System
  http://www.sss.gov/

Job & Career

- Access, Inc.
  www.access2jobs.org
- Arbor Education and Technology, Inc.
  www.arboret.org
- Casey Family Programs
  www.casey.org
- The Center for Law and Social Policy
  www.clasp.org
- Corporate Voices for Working Families
  www.cvworkingfamilies.org
- Enterprise Community Partners
  www.enterprisecommunity.org
- The Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

www.jimcaseyyouth.org
- Jobs for the Future
  www.jff.org
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
  www.lisc.org
- The National Youth Employment Coalition
  www.nyec.org
- New Ways to Work
  www.nww.org
- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills
  www.21stcenturyskills.org
- Philadelphia Youth Network
  www.pyninc.org
- Walter S. Johnson Foundation
  www.wsjf.org
- Workforce Alliance
  www.workforcealliance.org
- Workforce Strategy Center
  www.workforcestrategy.org/
- Youth Alternatives, Inc.
  www.youthalternatives.org/
- The Youth Employment Partnership, Inc.
  www.yep.org/

The Fostering Connections Resource Center

The Fostering Connections Resource Center provides information, training and tools related to furthering the implementation of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act. The Older Youth Network coordinates support for and the dissemination of resources related to the older youth provisions of the law. The Older Youth Network is led by The Finance Project in partnership with the National Foster Care Coalition. The Fostering Connections Resource Center is supported through the generous contributions of the Annie E Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Dave Thomas Foundation on Adoption, Duke Endowment, Eckerd Family Foundation, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, Sierra Health Foundation, Stuart Foundation and Walter S. Johnson Foundation.

For more information about the Fostering Connections Resource Center, visit www.fosteringconnections.org

The Foster Care Work Group

The Foster Care Work Group (FCWG) is one of three work groups of YTFG. The mission of FCWG is to ensure that all youth transitioning from foster care have lifelong family, personal, and community connections and the opportunities and tools to achieve economic success and well being. FCWG members work to coordinate and leverage investments that: help to build the capacity of communities to effectively support young people transitioning from foster care; strengthen federal and state policies for youth leaving care; and raise public awareness of the needs of youth currently in or transitioning from foster care. Together, members of FCWG are building a national movement of funders, community leaders, young people, policymakers, practitioners and researchers with a shared focus on supporting successful futures for foster youth.

For more information about FCWG, visit www.financeproject.org/special/practice/fcwg.cfm.

The Finance Project

The Finance Project (TFP) is a specialized non-profit research, technical assistance and training firm for public and private sector leaders nationwide. TFP helps leaders make smart investment decisions, develop sound financing strategies, and build solid partnerships that benefit children, families and communities. TFP supports policymakers, program developers, and community leaders by providing: creative new ideas for policies, programs, and system reforms; comprehensive tools for identifying, refining, and expanding the use of promising practices, and effective policy and program tools to help clients identify needs and achieve goals. TFP provides staff support to FCWG.

For more information, visit www.financeproject.org.

fostering connections
RESOURCE CENTER

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The FINANCE PROJECT