

### Goal for Program Area

Support the well-being and development of children and youth in foster care.

### Introduction and Background

Local foster care data<sup>i</sup> indicate that in 2011, 2,813 children spent at least one day in some kind of foster care. Approximately 37% of the youth in foster care were aged 13 and older, 35% were 5 and younger and 28% were 6-12 years old. 776 children exited foster care, with a median length of time in care of 20.4 months. 137 youth aged out of foster care during the year. Data reveal that Native American and African American children are overrepresented in foster care as compared to their proportions in the general population.

Research indicates that children in foster care are more likely than other children to exhibit high levels of behavioral and emotional problems. They are also more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, and to exhibit low levels of school engagement and involvement with extracurricular activities. Children in foster care are also more likely to have a limiting physical, learning, or mental health condition, or to be in poor or fair health.<sup>ii</sup>

Youth who age out of foster care instead of returning home face challenges to making a successful transition to adulthood. They are less likely than their peers in the general population to achieve academic milestones, including high school graduation and postsecondary education. These youth are less likely to be employed and, even when they are employed, are more likely to be in jobs that do not pay a living wage. They are more likely to experience violence, homelessness, mental illness, and other poor health outcomes. They are more likely to be incarcerated, to abuse substances and to experience early parenthood out-of-wedlock.<sup>iii</sup>

In addition, **public input in this program area** indicated the following priorities<sup>iv</sup>:

- Invest in programs that provide intensive and continuous support for youth in foster care and those aging out of foster care; programs that recruit, train and support foster parents; provide educational supports for children in foster care (early childhood through college); and provide services that lead to permanency.
- Focus services on African American and Native American children in foster care and the highest risk populations of children in foster care, including those with APPLA (another planned permanent living arrangement), teen parents in foster care, and LGBTQ youth.
- Assure that all foster care programs are either culturally responsive or culturally specific, and assure that children and youth in foster care are supported and empowered.
- Set expectations around trauma-informed care and provide technical assistance to foster care programs to assist with implementation.

The Allocation Committee adopted the following strategies and priorities for the Foster Care program area.

| <b>Strategy 1. Academic Support (early childhood – college)</b> |  |
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| Investment Goal   | Up to \$1,578,292 (40% of the funding in this program area)  |
| Services  | Programs that provide intensive academic support and educational advocacy for children and youth in foster care  |
| Eligible Population   | Children and youth in foster care, or have aged out of foster care, aged 0-24  |
| Priorities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highest risk populations of children in foster care, including but not limited to, children with APPLAs (another planned permanent living arrangement), teen parents and LGBTQ youth</li> <li>• African American and Native American children because of their overrepresentation in foster care</li> <li>• Programs that include the involvement and training of foster parents</li> </ul>   |
| Definitions   | <p><u>Academic Support</u>: services designed to help prepare children for school, accelerate their learning progress, meet learning standards, or generally succeed in school through focused supports such as tutoring, coaching, homework support, and/or supplemental academic classes. Program staff personally and regularly connect with, as applicable, school staff (including teachers), DHS caseworkers, and parents (foster or birth) regarding academic issues and progress.</p> <p><u>Aged out</u>: youth who leave foster care because they are too old to remain in care, not because they were reunified with their families or adopted.</p> <p><u>Educational Advocacy</u>: services designed to monitor a child’s educational progress and communicate to ensure he or she receives needed educational supports and accommodations to which he or she is entitled.</p> <p><u>Intensive</u>: is not defined for this strategy because of the wide range of academic support services that may be proposed. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that the level of service intensity proposed is appropriate for the population to be served.</p> <p><u>Overrepresentation</u>: the percentages of children of a certain racial or ethnic group in the child welfare system are greater than the percentage of that same group in the general population. African American and Native American children are overrepresented in Oregon’s child welfare system.</p> |

| <b>Strategy 2. Support for Youth in the Transition to Adulthood</b> |   |
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| Investment Goal   | Up to \$1,183,719 (30% of the funding in this program area)   |
| Services  | Programs that work in partnership with youth to develop a plan for the future, prepare them for independent living and support them in reaching their goals   |
| Eligible Population   | Youth in foster care, or youth who have “aged out” of foster care, aged 14-24   |
| Priorities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services for youth in foster care who are at the highest risk for homelessness and other negative outcomes (e.g. youth with Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement)</li> <li>• Programs that include the involvement and training of foster parents</li> </ul> |

| Strategy 3. Permanency for Youth |   |
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| Investment Goal                  | Up to \$1,183,719 (30% of the funding in this program area)   |
| Services                         | Programs that work in partnership with youth to establish permanent connections. Permanency can be achieved through reunification with birth parents, adoption, guardianship or relationships with kin or other caring, committed adults  |
| Eligible Population              | Children and youth in foster care, or have aged out of foster care, aged 0-24   |
| Priorities                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth at-risk of not establishing permanency (e.g. older youth, youth with disabilities)</li> <li>African American and Native American children in foster care because of their overrepresentation in foster care</li> <li>Latino children in foster care because of their growing presence in foster care</li> <li>Programs that include the involvement and training of foster parents</li> </ul>  |
| Definitions                      | <p><u>Overrepresentation</u>: the percentages of children of a certain racial or ethnic group in the child welfare system are greater than the percentage of that same group in the general population. African American and Native American children are overrepresented in Oregon’s child welfare system.</p> <p><u>Permanency</u>: is about supporting lifelong family connections. There are three types of permanency<sup>v</sup>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal – a legally established relationship such as reuniting with birth parents, adoption, or legal guardianship;</li> <li>Physical - having a home or place to be;</li> <li>Relational - an emotional attachment between youth, caregivers and other family and kin</li> </ul> <p>Permanency for children in foster care ideally includes all three types of permanency. However, when legal permanency is not likely, youth need to be supported in developing physical and relational permanence.</p> |

<sup>i</sup> Portland’s Children: Overview of Key Local Data, [Portlandchildrenslevy.org](http://portlandchildrenslevy.org).

<sup>ii</sup> Child Trends Databank, <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=foster-care>

<sup>iii</sup> Improving Outcomes for Older Youth in Foster Care, Casey Family Programs, [http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/WhitePaper\\_ImprovingOutcomesOlderYouth\\_FR.pdf](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/WhitePaper_ImprovingOutcomesOlderYouth_FR.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> See full Community Input Report, [Portlandchildrenslevy.org](http://portlandchildrenslevy.org).

<sup>v</sup> Definition from Enhancing Permanency for Youth in Out-of-Home Care, Child Welfare Information Gateway, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/enhancing/enhancing.pdf>