



NRC-FAHE: National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education

WELCOME!

The National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education (NRC-FAHE) is a network of researchers and practitioners whose aim is to improve practice and influence policy related to foster care youth/alumni and higher education by creating and advancing a clear research agenda and facilitating communication and collaboration among interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners to promote postsecondary access and retention of youth in care and foster care alumni. The NRC-FAHE promotes innovative ways to use research and best practices to inform and influence policy making and values practice-informed research and the voice of youth in care and foster care alumni in improving access and outcomes in higher education.

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Introduction and Welcome

ANGELIQUE DAY, PH.D., MSW



Angelique Day, PhD, MSW, is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington-Seattle. Much of her research focuses on foster care youth, including examining the differences in college retention rates between foster care youth and other low-income first-generation college students, and examining "youth voice" and its impact on child welfare, [education](#) and health policy reform. Dr. Day leads the Policy Review team for the NRC-FAHE. Questions about the policy section of this newsletter can be directed to her, dayangel@uw.edu

We are all either just finishing or amid planning for graduation season. In the spirit of graduation and celebrating the accomplishments of your foster care alumni on your college campuses, I am pleased to share with you our 15th edition of the NRC FAHE newsletter. In this edition we begin with celebrating the release of our first special edition Journal in partnership with the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* where many of our members have found voice in sharing the best and most current research available in the foster care alumni and higher education space. We appreciate the time and attention that our volunteer editorial team took to bringing that issue together, Royal Johnson, Jennifer Geiger, and Lisa Schelbe. Each author who contributed to this special issue is identified in the Announcements section of this newsletter.

Thanks to the FAAN Network we have had an overpouring interest in campus support programs that would like to have voice and space to share the unique features of their programs and to have the chance to connect with researchers in our network for evaluation support. We are excited to provide this service for our members and ask for your patience as we work down our list to complete each of these feature stories in future editions of this newsletter. In the current issue, we share the great work of the FACES program at Texas State University.

Our article highlight for this current issue comes from Dr. Nathanael Okpych which was recently published in the Journal of Public Child Welfare and focuses on a secondary data analysis of the NYTD to predict national college enrollment rates of foster care alumni.

The 118th Congress came in like a lion, and several bills have been reintroduced in congress that would support the educational well-being of foster youth

and alumni. These are highlighted in the Policy Updates of this newsletter. In April 2023 we joined the Congressional Research Institute on Social Work Policy, the National Foster Youth Institute, and the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth to host a congressional briefing on setting the policy agenda in congress.

<https://crispinc.org/elementor-7458/> One specific bill being discussed is the alternative mental health treatments of foster care youth. Two national associations have begun collecting national data from their members to understand the level of participation their members have played in supporting foster youth in their respective states, The Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association and the International Association of Yoga Therapists to support these policy advocacy efforts. Please reach out to us if you have time and interest in being a part of these important research efforts. We will be convening on Washington DC again on May 24, 2023, in partnership with Embrace Families, the implementer of the innovative Florida Keys to Independence program, to lend our support for the Foster Youth Driving Act to ensure that foster care youth can continue to benefit from transportation assistance to support their college going and employment goals. In addition to these efforts are the congressional level, the executive branch has also been hard at work on developing new guidance for states on housing and other supports relevant for as it college going foster youth. These updates are also highlighted in the Policy updates section of the current newsletter.

We will be taking a break from webinars over the summer semester/quarter and will be resuming our programing again in the fall. Enjoy your summer everyone, and I look forward to reconnecting in the fall.

Higher Education Highlight: On Foster Care Awareness, Carcerality, and Higher Education

COLUMN AUTHOR



Dr. Royel M. Johnson is Associate Professor of Education and Social Work at the University of Southern California (USC), where he is also Director of Student Engagement at the USC Race and Equity Center. Dr. Johnson is a nationally recognized scholar, whose interdisciplinary research addresses issues of educational access, racial equity, and student success. His work has an unapologetic focus on racially/ethnically minoritized and other institutionally marginalized populations including young people with foster care experience and justice-involved youth. Dr. Johnson maintains a highly active program of research with over 40 academic publications, in addition to three forthcoming books/monographs. Moreover, he is principal investigator (PI), or Co-PI, on grants and contracts exceeding \$5.1 million. He has delivered over 100 talks, lectures, and workshops for various stakeholders, instantiating his commitment to connecting research to policy and practice to improve the material conditions of underserved populations. He holds a B.A. in Political Science and Ed.M. in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Ph.D. in Higher Education and Student Affairs, with a cognate in Race and Social Policy from Ohio State.

May is National Foster Care Awareness month—a time in the year in which we pause to recognize the wide cast of folks who play an important role in supporting children and youth impacted by the foster care system. It is also a time to raise awareness about the persistent and systemic issues that exacerbate precarity for young people and relegate them to the margins.

I won't bemoan you with the national statistics that highlight concerning disparities along various dimensions of identity like race, gender, and sexual orientation. Such data are all too familiar for this community. What I will underscore is that the foster care system is not the benevolent actor it purports to be.

Troubling stories about young people's experience in the foster care system, which exacerbate trauma, abound. As I have written about [elsewhere](#), the foster care system often acts as a carceral institution by employing criminalizing logics of surveillance, punishment, and labeling. The negative consequences of which reverberate throughout one's educational and broader life experiences.

In a new [special issue](#) I co-edited with Dr. Jennifer Geiger (University of Illinois at Chicago), titled, "Expanding our Understanding of Student Experiences and the Supports and Programs for College Students with Foster Care Experience," Professor Kenyon Lee Whitman (2023) wrote a provocative essay. Reframing the foster care system as the "family regulation system" (in alignment with other critical scholars), he argues that higher education professionals must fully understand what students are up against if we are to be effective in supporting them.

Whitman adds, "Student affairs professionals and other personnel who work with...families impacted by the system, must create alternative systems of support to resist and subvert the varied consequences of this carceral institution [referring to the foster care system]."

As we reflect this month (and hopefully every month forward) about our individual (and institutional) role and responsibility in improving the material conditions of young people in foster care, particularly those at the postsecondary education level, it is important that we have contextualized understandings of the problem(s).

The foster care system is part of the problem. Indeed, what happens in foster care effects how students who up to our class. It effects their consideration, or lack thereof, of resource utilization on campus. And it effects the nature of their relationships with peers, faculty, and staff.

Heeding Whitman's call, I invite readers to consider the following literature that hopefully expand your understanding of "what students are up against" and that subsequently inform the development and refinement of your proverbial toolkit to support students within your spheres of influence:

- Harvey, B., Gupta-Kagan, J., & Church, C. (2021). Reimagining schools' role outside the family regulation system. *Columbia Journal of Race and Law*, 11(3), 575–610. <https://doi.org/10.52214/cjrl.v11i3.8745>
- Johnson, R. (2021b). Black youth in foster care and the school-prison nexus. *Office of Community College Research and Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16430.43843/2>
- Johnson, R. M., & Dizon, J. P. M. (2021). Toward a conceptualization of the college-prison nexus. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 96(5), 508–526.
- Roberts, D. E. (2001). *Shattered bonds: The color of child welfare*. Basic Books
- Roberts, D. E. (2022). *Torn apart: How the child welfare system destroys Black families—and how abolition can build a safer world*. Basic Books
- Whitman, K.L. Resisting a Carceral Institution: Towards Supporting Students with Involvement in the Family Regulation System. *Child Adolesc Soc Work J* 40, 295–297 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00915>

Johnson, R. M. (2021). The state of research on undergraduate youth formerly in foster care: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 14(1), 147.

Practice Highlight: Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success (FACES) at Texas State*

COLUMN AUTHORS



Dr. Christine Lynn Norton received her Ph.D. in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago. She has a Master of Arts in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago and a Master of Science in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Board Approved Supervisor in the State of Texas. She is a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional, Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist, and a Certified Experiential Therapist. She has over 25 years of experience working with youth and young adults in a variety of settings including therapeutic wilderness programs, juvenile justice, schools, mentoring and campus support programs. Her areas of practice and research interest and expertise are in positive youth development; innovative interventions in child and adolescent mental health; adventure therapy; outdoor behavioral healthcare; nature and wellbeing; experiential education; foster care support in higher education; and international social work. Dr. Norton is a Research Scientist with the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare [Center](#) and she helped launch Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success (FACES) at Texas State. She is the Foster Care Liaison Officer to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and is the founder of the Foster Care Adventure Therapy Network, an international group of programs and practitioners who utilize adventure therapy with current and former foster care youth and young adults. Dr. Norton has over 60 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, has edited three books, and is a leading social work scholar who has presented her research nationally and internationally. Dr. Norton is active in international education and is also a Fulbright Scholar, having taught adventure therapy in the Department of Civic Education and Leadership at National Taiwan Normal University.

Can you give us some background on your program and how it got started?

Dr. Norton: FACES started in 2011 as a collaboration between faculty, staff, and students. It came out of initial efforts to start a mentoring program for college students with lived experience in foster care. They brought in Casey Family Programs and created a special mentoring training. As part of this they sent out a call asking for mentors.

While I was serving as a mentor I met Dr. Tony Watt, who is a sociology professor and researcher here at Texas State. She was also a mentor. She and I began working with some student affairs professionals asking some harder questions like, "Is this mentoring program making a difference? If so, how, if not, why?" We then wrote a research grant to evaluate the impact of the mentoring program.

We found that for students who reported a positive relationship with their mentor, the program was making a positive impact. But only 38% of students reported having a positive relationship with their mentor. It wasn't that the mentoring wasn't working, the students were saying that they needed more than just a mentor. Students needed a campus wide network of support to navigate the complex bureaucracy of higher education. From that initial pilot study evaluating the mentoring program, Dr. Watt and I then wrote an external grant through a private foundation, and with the input of students launched the FACES (Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success) Initiative in 2011.

How is the program funded?

Dr. Norton: In its origin FACES was funded through external grants both private and federal. The first private foundation grant was from the TG Public Benefit Foundation and provided \$90,000 in grant funding over two years. We've also had external

donations and donors to foundations and private alumni.

When those grants ran out, we were able to write in on a Title V grant, which is a Department of Education, Hispanic Serving Institution grant to do some institution strengthening, for our FACES students. From that funding we started our textbook lending library, which is now a textbook grant program. That federal grant also funded an MSW intern.

Most of that funding is gone. The FACES initiative is housed in the Dean of Students office through the CARE (compassion, advocacy, resources, and education) Center. One of the things I've been trying to do for the last 12 years is build institutional support for this population, so the university really takes ownership. Right now, some of our programming, which is very minimal, is funded through student fees.

What is your role in the FACES program?

Dr. Norton: The State of Texas created legislation mandating that every two-year and four-year, college or university have a foster care liaison. Since I was already doing that work, our provost said, "Great, you'll be our foster care liaison." It's not a funded position; there's no time allotted for it, which you'll find on a lot of campuses. It's an add on to most people's existing university position, which is something we hope we can change.

So, I'm the foster care liaison, which means when case workers, CASA, DCPS, professional students, foster parents, et, have a question, I'm the point of contact on the campus for those folks. I also am the faculty advisor for the FACES student organization, which is a registered student organization. That's part of our overall campus support program. I'm also the chair of the Foster Care Advisor Council and a full-time professor of social work.

Who does your program serve?

Dr. Norton: We primarily identify students through the list of students who qualify for the tuition waiver. We know there are some who qualify but aren't using it. We try to do a lot of outreach. Self-identification is another way that we come across students. In the State of Texas we were able to get a box on the apply Texas application, which is like a statewide common app. On the application students can check if they were in foster care, and that list ends up yielding even more students than just those that we're using the waiver. Any given semester we have identified between 200 and 250 students that qualify for some degree of support. About a third of that number participate in FACES. We have a really thriving FACES student organization. We have 88 active members in our GroupMe. GroupMe has been a really effective way of engaging students, its right on their phones.

Which components of your program do you feel are especially unique or impactful?

Dr. Norton: Honestly, for the last 7 years or so the textbook grant program has been a huge way of engaging students. We put out there, "hey, if you want free textbooks email and give us your contact information." Then we use that as a mechanism to reach out and see what other supports needed.

What impact has the program had on the students?

Dr. Norton: We are one of the first campus support programs to publish our outcomes. Dr. Watt and I published an article a while back looking at our retention, graduation rates, and GPA. We have made a big impact in terms of getting our student retention and graduation rates almost on par with the traditional student body.

We have been less successful around GPA. We find our traditional freshmen, the students coming right out of care and coming right to the four-year University as an 18-year-old, are the students that struggle the most freshman year. We've continued to struggle with and figuring out how to support those students.

We've had a lot of success with students who start off at a two-year, college and university, and then transfer in.

What changes to laws or policy would you like to see?

Dr. Norton: Funding for campus support programs. Right now, there's zero funding, even the tuition and fee waiver is an unfunded mandate. Universities in Texas just eat the cost of the students' tuition and fees. It makes it an uphill battle for those of us serving this population when we go ask administrators for more resources – they're like, "oh, this is a group of students that doesn't pay tuition right?"

I would like to see the foster care liaison position be a full time funded position on college campuses. With that support these students will do just as well, if not better in some ways than the traditional student population. And I say, if not better, simply because this is a group of students whose motivation is incredible. Their resilience is incredible, their commitment to, pay it forward, or right the wrongs they experienced, and really take advantage of this opportunity... those commitments run so deep.

I also would love it if every State had some kind of tuition, fee, waiver, benefit. and I would really love it if there was interstate reciprocity. It's a frustration for students, because sometimes maybe they want to study a specialization, just like any kid would, that Texas schools don't offer. Sometimes they've even said, "It's really hard for us, having to stay in the same place where our trauma happened."

What future goals do you have for the faces program?

Dr. Norton: Bringing supervised independent living on campus. We know that it's best if our students get connected right away with university life, and so we've been trying to figure out how to work with housing and residence life to reach that traditional freshman population a bit sooner. In the State of Texas there's a movement to bring supervised, independent living onto college campuses, and our university is a little bit behind in that area. We do have a partnership with Upbrings: Be Real

program, which is a supervised independent living program. But we prefer the units to be on campus, and that's what we're trying to move to at Texas State. Currently, our units are private apartment complexes in the community. Based on retention research this is not as efficacious for connecting and retaining students.

Also being able to hand off my role as foster care liaison to a full-time employee who, ideally is an MSW with lived experience in foster care, and experience with student affairs and higher education. That and secure an amazing alumni donor that wanted to start a huge endowment. That would be amazing.

Do you have any advice for other campus-based support programs?

Dr. Norton: Employing a radical strength perspective and having consistency of staff is key. Embedding the program in an institutional department where there will be that longevity. For us it's student affairs with support from social work and sociology. But the program really needs to be housed and supported by the university. Another thing, we always say points of contact. Our students need faces, that's kind of why I love the name of our program. They need to know who we are, and they need to be able to contact us easily. Rapid response is important for this population of students. because they don't have the traditional support that other students have. Community partnerships is another important thing. Making sure that you've created a network of support for yourself, as a practitioner as well as a network of support for the students.

Final Thoughts?

Dr. Norton: I would love to write up and look empirically at students sticking around for grad school. Anecdotally, I see our students stick around and go to grad school. It's incredible and really fulfilling, and there's not a lot of research or data about graduate students with lived experience in foster care. Here at Texas State, I've had students who have left to go to grad school at other places, and then come back because they miss FACES. So even as grad students they're accessing that support.

Student Highlight: Foster Care Alumni Creating Educational Success (FACES) at Texas State*

COLUMN AUTHORS



Brenda Bradford is a senior at Texas State. Brenda will graduate with a BSW in Spring 2023.

How did you get connected with the FACES program?

Brenda: I originally got an email, but I was apprehensive to join because there's a lot of shame attached to being a former foster kid. At least that's how it was originally. Then a student who was in FACES reached out to me. Her adoptive mom connected with my adoptive dad through a Facebook group. So this student reached out to me and encouraged me to come to FACES. That's how I got introduced.

Most students hear about FACES via email, student affairs, or at a student organization fair. As president, I've been trying to create a more approachable and less vulnerable environment when it comes to learning about FACES. Currently we attend student organization fairs, and everybody can see us, and I have friends who come up to me and I have to tell them, "Oh yeah, I was in foster care..." We are still trying to figure out more innovative ways, where we can reach out to more students, but not put ourselves at risk. Its vulnerable to put yourself out there like that.

How has your experience with FACES been?

Brenda: It's been good and really eye opening for me. It created hope within myself. Two years in, my sophomore year, I considered dropping out because I was so used to the cycle of moving every couple of years. We had this cookout at the park, and someone said, "hopefully we will see you next semester." I then felt comfortable enough to say, "I don't think I will be back." Everyone was really understanding, but also pushed me out of my comfort zone. Throughout my four years I have been in and out of engagement with FACES. Not because of the program, but because of the way I viewed myself, and the way I choose to identify. But I always knew I could go back to it and be welcomed.

What aspect of the program do you feel was most impactful for you?

Brenda: I would say the retreats. Most semesters we have a retreat where we go to university camp. We spend a weekend by the river and get to be with one another. That's where I was first introduced to the outdoors. This is different for everyone, but most of us had never kayaked before, or been around a campfire, or done anything outdoors besides going to the park. That was one of the most impactful things for me, because it showed me, we were deserving of those experiences. It allowed me to venture out and start doing things that I once considered to only be for a certain demographic. For example, for a long time I wanted to try climbing and never did. Having these retreats allowed me to have more confidence. I finally went climbing and now I'm obsessed with it.

What program elements would you like to see expanded or replicated at other universities?

Brenda: The retreats are something I think should be implemented with other schools. Having a space where you can connect with

others away from the classroom that provides fun and community. And goes beyond being focused only on our shared experiences.

What recommendations do you have for researchers, practitioners and policymakers and practitioners?

Brenda: I want more research focused on understanding why and how some pursue higher education or other post-secondary education. There is a lot of stigma around what foster youth are capable of. We often hear the statistics, 3-4% go to college, and it can be really discouraging. It would be good to have more research on the attributes of those statistics, and what supports or systems that 3 to 4 % have and can they be expanded.

I also think there needs to be a culture shift when it comes to talking about what comes after foster care. People didn't start talking to me about college until I was 16. For a long time, I was planning to just age out and not use the tuition and fee waiver and be ok with that. There was this part of me that didn't feel confident enough to go to college. There needs to be more of a process within the foster care system that promotes conversations about post-secondary opportunities at younger ages and throughout care. This does exist, but it isn't consistent. There should be more training for group home staff, foster parents, and caseworkers around these conversations. I understand people get burnt out, but currently being exposed to these conversations really depends on if you have a good placement or not. Conversations about higher education should be something all youth have access to regardless of their placements.

*This Practice and Student Highlight was made possible through our partnership with the [Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide \(FAAN\)](#)

Article Highlight: Estimating a national college enrollment rate for youth with foster care histories using the National Youth in Transition Database

PAPER AUTHORS



Nathanael J. Okpych is an Assistant Professor at the University of Connecticut's School of Social Work. He studies the transition to adulthood for youth with foster care backgrounds, focusing on factors, policies, and programs aimed at increasing college access and success.

Study Summary

The launch of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) in 2011 was a watershed moment in the history of studying older youth in foster care. For the first time, there was the prospect of generating national estimates of key policy relevant outcomes, such as the rate youth enroll in postsecondary education (PSE). However, flaws in NYTD's PSE survey items limit its usefulness. The main flaw is that NYTD questions only capture current PSE enrollment (at time of the NYTD interview) and whether youth earned a PSE degree or certificate. The questions miss the youth who enrolled in PSE between NYTD interview waves, which will cause the PSE enrollment rates to be underestimated. The main objective of this study was to compare NYTD data in California ($n = 2,460$) with data collected around the same time by the CalYOUTH Study ($n = 727$), which does not suffer from the same survey item flaws as

NYTD. Comparing findings between NYTD and CalYOUTH will help to gauge how much NYTD undercounts PSE enrollment, and if different conclusions are reached when assessing PSE disparities by race and gender.

Key findings

NYTD tells us that about 22% of youth in U.S. foster care are currently enrolled in PSE at age 21, which is less than half of the rate of current PSE enrollment in the general population (53%). In California, NYTD indicates that 29.0% of youth are currently enrolled, which is similar to the current enrollment rate in the CalYOUTH Study (25.5%). However, CalYOUTH data indicates that there were an additional 31.7% of youth who had enrolled in PSE since their last CalYOUTH interview, for a total of 57.2% (currently or recently enrolled). Thus, at age 21, NYTD fails to capture more than half of the youth who had enrolled in PSE.

When analyzing CalYOUTH data to assess gender disparities, we use a measure of current/recent PSE enrollment we find that females are more likely than males to have enrolled in PSE (61% vs. 51%), and this difference is statistically significant (i.e., we have a high degree of confidence that this is not a chance finding). However, when we look at whether the youth is currently enrolled in PSE at the time of their age 21 interview, the differences between females and males (28% vs. 21%) are smaller and not statistically significant. In other words, if we only had current enrollment data to work with (like what's available in NYTD), we would erroneously conclude that there are no gender differences in PSE enrollment. The opposite problem was found to happen when assessing differences by race. In the CalYOUTH data, we did not find differences by race when we considered current and recent PSE enrollment, but significant differences were found if we only looked narrowly at whether a youth was currently

enrolled at the time of their age 21 interview.

Implications

This study exposes a major limitation of the NYTD education survey items – that it only captures current enrollment – which can lead to an undercount of PSE enrollment and misguided conclusions about disparities by gender and race. The problems found when analyzing outcomes in California may very likely occur elsewhere to a greater or lesser extent. Estimates of policy impacts on PSE enrollment may also lead to inaccurate or misguided conclusions. For example, if we only had current enrollment data to work with, we may underestimate the true impact that policies such as extended foster care or state tuition waivers have on getting youth with care histories into PSE. The limitations of the NYTD PSE measure is significant because at the time this manuscript was written, there were nearly 50 manuscripts published in the past decade analyzing NYTD data, not counting theses and dissertations. What we really need in NYTD are questions that do a better job of capturing PSE enrollment, both past and present. This will enable researchers, policymakers, advocates, and child welfare administrators to accurately gauge enrollment rates, disparities, and policy impacts. In the full manuscript I provide simple, feasible recommendations for improving the NYTD education questions. I also call for a broader overhaul of the NYTD survey instrument because similar limitations are likely present for other outcomes. Millions of dollars and tens of thousands of hours are spent each year collecting NYTD data. The time has come to revise NYTD so that it collects data that are more useful to child welfare policy and practice.

Okpych, N. J. (2023). Estimating a national college enrollment rate for youth with foster care histories using the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD): Limitations of NYTD and a call to revise and relaunch. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2022.2153961>

Policy Updates

118th Congressional Session

Many of the bills related to foster youth and higher education have been reintroduced, meaning they were not passed into law in the previous session likely due to a lack of support.

The [Transition-to-Success Mentoring Act \(S. 182\)](#) reintroduced in January of 2023 would authorize discretionary grants to establish, expand, or support school-based mentoring programs specifically for the transition between middle and high school. Priority for funding will be given to programs that provide students with post-secondary education preparation, such as shadowing opportunities, resume writing, interview preparation, visits to higher education institutions, career exploration, and more.

[S.65 Mentoring to Succeed Act of 2023](#) was reintroduced in January of 2023 and would require the Department of Education to award competitive grants to high-need local educational agencies and local governments to establish, expand, or support school-based mentoring programs that assist at-risk students. The mentoring programs would promote social emotional learning to prepare youth for high school, postsecondary opportunities, and employment. This bill also requires the Institute of Education Sciences to conduct a study to identify school-based mentoring programs and evaluate the effectiveness of programs funded through this bill.

In March of 2023 The [Foster Youth and Driving Act \(S. 699\)](#) was reintroduced. This bill would help foster youth with driving and financial support related to driving preparation. It would create a new program and allocate \$36 million in Chafee funds. This would include education to support obtaining vehicle insurance, vehicle purchasing, drivers' education, and obtaining a license. The bill would also require case planning to include information about the youth learning and preparing to drive; and

foster parents would be required to receive a training to better support youth with obtaining a drivers license.

President's Budget for FY 2024

On March 9, 2023 President Biden released a budget outlining his vision for funding for the next fiscal year. The budget contains estimates of federal income, spending, and funding recommendations.

The presidential budget proposed an increase of \$100 million for the John Chafee Independent Living Program. This program is for youth who are aging out of foster care. It provides a wide range of services including Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs), job placement, health services, substance use prevention, and more. The Administration is asking for \$48 million for ETVs in FY 2024 and more flexibility in the grant. There is currently an age limit of 21 in most states, they are asking to expand this until the age of 27. This proposal also expands the eligibility criteria to serve youth who achieved permanency, adoption, or guardianship starting at the age 14 opposed to age 16. The change in eligibility will incentivize states to seek and prioritize permanency for older youth in care and reduce the number of young people that leave foster care without a permanent family.

[Foster Youth to Independence](#) (FYI), is a program that provides Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to youth between 18 and 25 who left or will leave the foster system. The FY 2024 budget requests \$9 billion to establish a housing voucher program for the 20,000 youth who age out of foster care each year. This increase would allow eligible youth to access a voucher and would eliminate the huge wait lists that many youth face in accessing housing support.

The budget and the federal legislation referenced here will need to be passed by both the House and Senate before it can be enacted. To find contact information for your elected officials, visit this [website](#).

FASFA Guidance for Homeless Youth

In April 2023 the U.S. Department of Education released [new guidance](#) on the 2024-2025 FASFA regarding self-supporting

youth and those at risk of homelessness. The purpose of this guidance is to clarify and update both applicant and institution roles and responsibilities related to dependency determinations as provided by the [FAFSA Simplification Act](#). SchoolHouse Connection has developed an [email template](#) for liaisons, service providers, and administrators to use to inform Students about FAFSA.

State Policy Updates

In Virginia [HB 1403](#) was approved by the Governor in March of 2023 and requires public institutions of higher education to provide no cost university housing to foster care alumni during scheduled breaks. Students would need to be registered for the following academic term and meet the definitions and conditions outlined by the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#).

Unspent Chafee Fund Requests

Children's Bureau redistributes Chafee funds that states do not spend. This year that is \$400 million, states can submit their [applications for unspent funds](#) now. Requests should be made as soon as possible and no later than June 20, 2023.

Upcoming opportunities

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education [announced a collaborative reengagement](#) to support the educational aspirations of disconnected youth. Upcoming partnership opportunities should be announced in the summer of 2023.

We know that there may be legislation in your state that we have not listed here. If you know of a specific effort in your state that you would like us to mention in the next newsletter, please email Angelique Day at dayangel@uw.edu.

Announcements

NEW ETV REPORT

The Urban Institute recently released a [new page](#) and report from the perspectives of those who participate in Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). The report looks at data from ten states and found that about 37% of eligible young adults use ETV. The report also found Black young adults and women were more likely to enroll in college and utilize ETV. Additionally, youth who received an ETV tended to have higher graduation rates. Find the [full report here](#).

The Urban Institute also published a list of [ETV policy recommendations](#):

1. Increase ETV amount.
2. Increase overall ETV program funding
3. Increase early ETV outreach
4. Reduce administrative barriers to ETV use.

CALL TO ACTION

We would greatly appreciate your participation in a [survey](#) that assesses the use of the [7 Life Domains](#) framework (originally created by Casey Family Programs) to understand how it is used to research and support students with foster care experiences and other stigmatizing traumas. In addition, for respondents who have engaged with the [National Conference for Hidden Student Populations \(NCHP\)](#), we are also collecting information about its impacts. The [NCHP](#) is a translational research space created to bring to light the strengths and challenges of [hidden college student populations](#), and how we can better support them in higher education. It will take you 10 mins to complete the [survey](#).

We ask that you carefully consider each question and what you may have to share. If you have questions, please email us at nchp@okstate.edu (<https://nchp.okstate.edu>). Thank you so much for your time and effort! [Take the survey](#).

NEW PARTNERSHIP

Our Practice and Student Highlight was made possible through partnership with the [Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide \(FAAN\)](#) Network. FAAN is focused on bringing together a network of leaders from statewide foster care and higher education organizations to create pathways and remove barriers for students in foster care.



PUBLICATIONS

Early in 2023, the *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal* published the special issue **“Advancing Interdisciplinary Research on Foster Care and Higher Education.”** It was guest edited by Drs. Jennifer Geiger and Royel Johnson. This issue is from NRC-FAHE and features the scholarship of many members. See the list below the articles in the issue. The bolded hyperlinks are where the articles can be read for free online. Please share the articles widely with others (and social media).

Geiger, J. M. & Johnson, R. M. (2023). Expanding our Understanding of Student Experiences and the Supports and Programs for College Students with Foster Care Experience: An Introduction to the Special Issue on Foster Care and Higher Education. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-023-00914-3> <https://rdcu.be/cguQ1>

Hanson, D.A., Pergamit, M., Tucker, L.P., Thomas, K.A., & Gedo, S. (2023) Do Education and Training Vouchers Make a Difference for Youth in Foster Care? *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00896-8> <https://rdcu.be/c4ouZ>

Devost, A. (2023) Racial Identity Development on the Intersections: The Narratives of Black Women College Students with Experiences in the Foster Care System. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00883-z> <https://rdcu.be/c4ovM>

McCormick, M., Anthony, J., & Townsend, E.T. (2023) Fostering Safer Spaces: Retaining and Empowering SGM Students with Loved History of Foster Care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work*

Journal. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00889-7> <https://rdcu.be/c4ove>

Lietz, C.A., & Cheung, J.R. (2023) Meeting the Mental Health Needs of College Students with a Background in Foster Care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00905-w> <https://rdcu.be/c4ovO>

Bustillos, S., Norton, C. L., & Tamplin, E. (2023) Foster Care Liaisons in Higher Education: A Conceptual Framework for Supporting Post-Secondary Success among College Students with Experience in Foster Care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00903-y> <https://rdcu.be/c4ovJ>

Mountz, S., Pan, S., Dyett, J., Kartikawaningsih, D., & Sevillano, L. (2023) Fostering Leaders of our World: Facilitators and Barriers to Educational success among a cohort of Foster Scholars in College. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00904-x> <https://rdcu.be/c4ou6>

Gowdy, G., Hogan, S., Roosevelt, K., Saastamoinen, M., Levine, S. (2023) Informal Mentoring for Foster Youth Students Core and Capital Mentors over Time. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00899-5> <https://rdcu.be/c4ovH>

Gross, J.P., Geiger, J.M., Uhls, E., & King, G. (2023) The relationship between financial aid and postsecondary completion among youth formerly in foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-022-00884-y> <https://rdcu.be/c4ovG>

Day, M. (2023) Beyond the 3%: Educational success for all, not the privileged few. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-023-00916-1> <https://rdcu.be/cguQ2>

Whitman, K. (2023) Resisting a carceral institution: Towards supporting students with involvement in the family regulation system. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-023-00915-2> <https://rdcu.be/cguQ3>

NRC-FAHE conducts regular literature searches and we have curated a reference list for the topic area of higher education and foster care. All the articles listed and more can be accessed on our website at: <https://www.nrc-fahe.org/library>