

# **Key Findings: Evaluation of Better Futures for Foster Youth (BFFY) Initiative**

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Prepared by:



In partnership with:



## About Better Futures for Foster Youth + This Report

[Better Futures for Foster Youth \(BFFY\)](#) is a five-year initiative launched by Tipping Point Community in 2019 to improve supportive services and systems for transitional-aged foster youth (TAY) in the Bay Area region. The 4,000+ transition-aged youth living in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties are young people aged 14-24 on the cusp of shifting out of the Child Welfare System and into independence. Support at this age of key milestones—graduating from high school, applying for college, etc.—is important for any young person, but for foster youth, it is essential. Unfortunately, it is during this time that government support and resources for foster youth drop off, and TAY experience significant gaps in services when they most need continuity and consistency. Without guidance through these crucial transitions, many current and former foster youth struggle to find their way, and far more end up experiencing homelessness than graduating from college.

The architecture of the BFFY initiative reflects Tipping Point Community's belief that these transition moments should be looked at as moments of opportunity, not as pitfalls. Investing \$15 million in grants to fourteen organizations working across the levels of policy, cross-county systems, and direct services, BFFY was designed to change policies, systems, and practices to improve foster youth's access to basic needs, educational and employment opportunities, and a range of services to support their well-being and success. BFFY was also built to foster a learning community among its grantee partners. Periodic convenings of the cohort's Policy Work Group provided a dedicated space for partners to dive deep into topics relevant to their work and to learn with and from each other. Tipping Point Program Officers who oversaw the BFFY portfolio also supported partners to identify and build strategic connections with fellow grantees and others in the field who could advance their work.

In Fall 2022, Tipping Point Community (Tipping Point) engaged Learning for Action (LFA) to design and execute an evaluation that engaged a range of relevant constituency groups—including young people with lived experience in the Child Welfare System—to capture learnings about the initiative's successes, challenges, and lessons that can be applied to future grantmaking and field-building initiatives, as well as toward policy and systems change efforts. This report summarizes the evaluation's key findings.

## Key Findings

### Topline Findings: Key Policy and Systems Changes

During the BFFY initiative, grantee partners made tremendous progress on policy and systems changes to increase resources for TAY youth with lived experience in the Child Welfare System. Tipping Point invested \$7.5M in seven organizations with varying approaches to policy and systems change work. Over four annual California and federal budget cycles, the efforts of these grantee partners contributed to the achievement of policy wins that amount to a total of \$1.5 billion in new public funds at the federal, state, and local Bay Area levels dedicated to TAY foster youth.<sup>1</sup> The following findings are organized by efforts at the state, county, and federal levels.

#### State of California

- Efforts led by John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and their partners led to significant changes in policy and resource allocation directly impacting TAY foster youth:
  - TAY foster youth in California now have **access to community college tuition-free**.
  - All community colleges in the state are now funded and mandated to create **Foster Youth Resource Centers** specifically for these young people to ensure they are connected to housing and supportive resources and services.
  - New funding is available for **housing assistance specifically for parenting TAY foster youth**, as are **new resources for sexual and reproductive wellness**.
  - Several new set-asides and carve outs for TAY foster youth within broader pots of **funding for housing** were created.
  - County Offices of Education must now ensure that **high school seniors with an interest in college complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – a change that led to an 18% increase in FAFSA completion among foster youth over the last three years.
  - A **new tax credit specifically for current and foster youth** in California was proposed in 2021. In its first year of implementation, more than 4,700 youth received the California Foster Youth Tax Credit—in total, nearly \$5 million.
- National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) convened partners to advocate for and successfully pass a new policy to require **comprehensive, culturally appropriate mental health education in middle and high schools**. NYCL also successfully advocated to ensure foster youth in California have **equitable access to comprehensive sexuality education** and that an **infant supplement for pregnant youth starts three months prior to birth**.
- Bay Area Transition-Age Youth (BAYTAY) collaborated with the California Workforce Development Board to secure a **waiver for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which means that more funds are now available for younger foster youth**. The BAYTAY team has worked to get local workforce development boards (WDBs) to utilize the waiver,

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix C of this report provides a detailed summary of each policy achievement and the specific funding amounts secured as a result.

developed a Core Practice Model with guidance on strategies to better serve youth, and built a coalition of local WDBs to advocate for the implementation of the model and its evaluation.

### **Bay Area Counties**

- Foster America recruited, placed, and supported four mid-career fellows in county child welfare agencies and offices of education in four Bay Area counties (Alameda, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and San Mateo). Fellows focused on **developing internal infrastructure and relationships** to strengthen collaborative decision-making and strategic planning among system leaders, toward the goal of improving services and outcomes for particularly vulnerable youth.

### **National/Federal-Level**

- The major national legislative win for John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and TAY-serving organizations across the Bay Area came early in the COVID-19 pandemic, when legislation was passed to **keep young people in care regardless of whether they were set to age out**. This win was extended through 2021 after it ran out in September 2020.
- The Youth Law Center (YLC) chaired and coordinated the National Older Youth Coalition of 25 organizations “to build a national network of organizations committed to a national agenda to improve outcomes for transition-aged youth in foster care.” The coalition advocated to secure **\$400M in federal funding for foster youth and protections, to keep youth in care during the pandemic even if they were set to age out**. YLC also partnered with national and state organizations to create what is now the [Journey to Success](#) (JTS) campaign, a partnership to improve opportunities and outcomes for all youth who experience foster care by promoting healing, family connections, and economic security.
- Through a partnership with Institute for the Future (IFTF), YLC also developed a policy campaign to **reimagine extended foster care** (EFC) so that youth in care across the country are supported to thrive in adulthood. IFTF and YLC trained 25 directly impacted youth advocates as “futurists,” and recruited over 80 diverse current and former foster youth to participate in ethnographic interviews. Participants shared their ideas for an ecosystem of support, services, and opportunities that can lead to a better future for youth in EFC.

### **Topline Findings: Direct Services for Youth**

BFFY funding supported seven organizations with a long track record of providing high-quality direct services to TAY youth in the Child Welfare System to continue existing programs and pilot new interventions, with the ultimate vision of supporting work that can inform and shape the larger field of practice. These grantee partners demonstrated success in effectively serving youth, pointing the field to key findings with potential for implementation on a broader scale.

### Youth Reached by the BFFY Initiative

- Over the period of the BFFY initiative (2019-2023), over 5,000 transition age youth were served across direct service organizations (as reported by Beyond Emancipation, County of Santa Clara, First Place for Youth, On the Move/Voices Youth Center and Pivotal).<sup>2</sup>
- The majority of youth served were women and people of color.
- Through engagement with BFFY-supported organizations, youth were able to access support in the following areas: housing, education, economic empowerment/stability, and mental health and well-being.

***BFFY grantees' most effective long-standing programs and new approaches focused on supporting youth to meet basic needs: stable housing, food security, income, safety, and trusting relationships.***

BFFY-supported direct service providers, and the youth receiving their services, know that in order to experience long-term, sustainable change in any area of interest (e.g. education, employment), youth need to both have their basic needs met and develop a sense of security that those needs will continue to be met. Examples of successful grantee approaches designed around this knowledge include:

- Beyond Emancipation (BE) and First Place for Youth both have programs that focus on **providing youth with secure housing**, one of the most widely recognized basic needs for youth with lived experience in the Child Welfare System. BE's housing program provides youth with

**options that best fits their needs**, a Host Housing model where youth live in a family setting with a trusted adult or a Community Housing model with transitional dorm-style living, both of which include wraparound services and coaching. The My First Place program provides **safe housing and case management** to TAY youth, allowing them the space and stability to focus on education and employment goals. Both organizations reported that **the majority of TAY served through their programming in 2023 were able to maintain stable housing**, even after exiting their program.

- The County of Santa Clara's guaranteed basic income for transition-aged youth leaving foster care (TAY GBI) pilot program offered unrestricted cash assistance, providing participants with a **steady income stream** they could count on for the length of the pilot. The County of Santa Clara found that the TAY GBI program benefited older youth in several ways, including helping them to **secure housing, increase their economic stability and financial savings, and build their confidence** to make better long-term decisions.

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<sup>2</sup> LFA invited all six BFFY organizations providing direct services to share youth-level data on an opt-in basis; four of the six had data that was current and ready to share.

***BFFY grantees are actively prioritizing increasing internal and external coordination of services, recognizing that youth are best served when alignment is strong and holistic.***

Direct service organizations and youth themselves understand that providers can offer the highest quality support and care when services are well-coordinated, both within and across organizations. Multiple BFFY grantees centered this approach in their work:

- West Coast Children’s Center (WCCC) believes so deeply in the power of coordinated care that they utilized BFFY resources to develop, pilot, and document how they revamped their program structure, **moving from the typical model of individualized care to a team-based approach**. The Embracing Meaningful Progress and Opportunities While Rising Together (EMPOWR-T) model provides a **single point of entry for youth to access multiple providers that support them in a wide range of areas**. The youth being served is a member of the team, setting the course and driving the agenda for their work together.
- First Place for Youth also employs a team-based approach that provides youth with **individualized support and coaching**. The My First Place team meets regularly with youth enrolled in the program and consists of a housing specialist, education and employment specialist, and a youth advocate that aids in the development of healthy living skills.
- Pivotal applied BFFY resources toward testing and optimizing their **integrated education and employment model**. Rather than working with youth in the separate silos of education and employment, staff are looking at each youth’s education and career journey in a holistic way. In 2020, Pivotal also launched the Pivotal Resource Council - a group of professionals dedicated to helping students enrolled in postsecondary programs find and secure paid internships and grow their networks in Silicon Valley. Through these external partnerships, Pivotal and their partners were able to increase the collective number of youth served and expand the reach of their programs.
- In 2022, Beyond Emancipation (B:E) formed a **collaborative of workforce development organizations** specifically focused on supporting foster youth in Alameda County: The Unity Council, West Oakland Job Resource Center, Civicorps, Youth Employment Partnership, and New Door Ventures. Organizations in the collaborative meet regularly to discuss the

**Directly from Youth: The Need for a Stable Foundation**

During input and data reflection sessions, youth emphasized physical and mental health needs in a few key areas:

- **Safe places to live that they can count on looking into the future**, rather than needing to find a new place year after year
- **Private, neutral places** where they can ground themselves, free of the challenges associated with having a roommate on top of existing challenges
- **Continuous, long-term mental and emotional health support**; relationships with therapists and case managers have been critical to youth’s ability to heal from trauma and develop skills and strategies
- **Continued mental health support as they move into adulthood**

workforce development needs of Alameda County's foster youth and ways to collaboratively increase enrollment and successful program completion.

***Providers need current data at the individual and program level to best serve youth. BFFY grantees considered and acted on the systematic gathering of key data points in a way that minimizes burden on youth.***

BFFY-supported providers know that having real-time data on both their programs and the youth they serve is crucial to ongoing tailoring and improvement of their services; they also know that learning and evaluation are iterative processes and embraced opportunities to balance the value of the data they're collecting with the request for participants' time and energy.

- BFFY funding supported the **launch of the Transition-Age Youth Research & Evaluation Hub (TAY-Hub)**, an initiative of the California Child Welfare Indicators Project that seeks to improve policies and practices affecting TAY by monitoring outcomes and through applied research that is grounded in engagement with members of the child welfare services community, including those with lived experience of foster care. Through BFFY's **investment in its staff, infrastructure, and production of multiple reports and policy briefs targeting the child welfare policy and practice communities**, the TAY-Hub team was able to advance the development of evidenced-based recommendations for improving policy and practice in California.
- The County of Santa Clara **used what they learned from their Universal Basic Income Pilot Cohort 1 participants to inform changes to the design of Cohort 2**, partnering with a dedicated community services navigator and hosting in-person events and learning sessions to add a deeper layer of support for participants. After reflecting on the data collected from Cohort 1, County of Santa Clara made some changes to their data collection methods, opting to make baseline surveys a requirement for participation and increasing survey frequency.
- When West Coast Children's Clinic (WCCC) developed their EMPOWR-T team-based approach to care, an important driver of their model was to reduce the burden on youth to repeat their story and needs to multiple care providers. To better serve youth, WCCC **put the onus on the care team to more closely coordinate and share information about youth internally**, using BFFY funding to develop an evaluation plan toward systematically tracking youth outcomes. In implementation, WCCC ultimately *reduced* their data collection requests in response to youth feedback.
- Beyond Emancipation's BFFY grant supported their data-driven learning efforts related to workforce development. They **performed a needs assessment survey with current and former foster youth**, as well as an **environmental scan of local workforce development organizations to better understand the resources available to foster youth**. The findings from both will inform both BE's new job readiness curriculum and enhancements to future programming.



## Facilitators of Change

### Facilitators of Policy and Systems Changes

The following factors contributed to the success of policy advocacy and systems change efforts undertaken during the BFFY grant period:

- **Engaging youth with lived experience in agenda development and direct legislative advocacy.** Grantees worked with Youth Advisory Boards or Youth Councils to gather input on developing and prioritizing policies, as well as providing testimony in legislative sessions in support of passage.
- **Grounding in data, research, and practice.** BFFY grantees utilized available data and research, through TAY Hub as well as their own analysis (see FPFY [Building Evidence on Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care](#) which highlights their partnership with Mark Courtney as part of the CalYOUTH study).
- **Leveraging the political knowledge and skill of BFFY grantees, including their relationships with legislators.** As one grantee stated, “Youth voice is crucial, as is the political savvy that professional advocates develop as they hone their skills in their career. There is no substitute for professional advocates whose job is to represent constituents and make the case for legislation that will benefit them.”
- **The current administration and legislature in California are knowledgeable and supportive of the needs and aspirations of TAY foster youth** (thanks to the efforts of grantee orgs over the past many years). Political support at the administrative and legislative levels is crucial to building and maintaining the infrastructure needed to support policy changes.
- **Significant and flexible general operating support (GOS) grants** that were outcomes focused supported policy agenda development, youth engagement in the policy process, and overall prioritization of policy efforts focused on the TAY foster youth population.
- BFFY’s Policy Work Group (PWG) was a **useful forum for discussing and sharing efforts and agendas.** However, these meetings petered out when the initiative director at Tipping Point left the Foundation.

### Facilitators of Direct Services-Related Impact

The following key factors contributed to the success of BFFY-funded program interventions:

- **Investing in the development of strong internal staff relationships.** This included regular coordination meetings, trainings, and implementing restorative practices for conflict resolution for staff as they shifted to a new model of service delivery.



- **Serving foster youth holistically.** Grantees recognize that the needs of TAY foster youth often overlap several areas (education, employment, housing, mental health, etc.). A holistic approach means service providers are taking into account the full range of youth needs, connecting them with services, and working directly with other providers to coordinate care.

Additionally, key factors that enhanced grantees' ability to serve TAY foster youth include:

- **Centering youth voice and leadership in the development of programs and services.** Grantees recognize the importance of youth input in informing direct service programs, and that engaging youth leaders requires the time and budget for ongoing data collection and reflection, as well as building trusting relationships between youth and service providers.
- **Being intentional and supportive when selecting and preparing youth to participate in leadership spaces.** Grantees know that in order to set up youth leaders to succeed, they need to invest the time and resources for a focused outreach and selection process that will help identify youth that are a good fit for the opportunity. Youth leaders also need training, support, and ample compensation to set them up for meaningful engagement.
- **Nurturing opportunities for peer-to-peer support.** Youth are eager to learn and support each other when given the time, space and resources to do so. Building in these opportunities through youth leadership councils, program cohorts, and other mentoring opportunities allow youth to support one another and share knowledge about how to navigate the system and access resources.
- **Fostering collaboration among service providers supporting TAY and foster youth.** Grantees valued the opportunity to partner on developing BFFY proposals, work together on initiatives, and share learnings that could lead to more coordination between providers.
- **Having sufficient flexibility to respond to youth participants' complex needs.** TAY foster youth are typically navigating multiple complex systems simultaneously with limited support. Providers can help by offering flexibility, for example, rescheduling a 1:1 meeting or providing guidance on prioritizing the multiple demands a youth leader may be juggling.

## Opportunities on the Horizon

BFFY grantees and youth see promising opportunities ahead to both expand and amplify their impact on foster youth:

- **Expanding the policy wins achieved for TAY foster youth related to housing, education, and employment to the broader population of TAY homeless youth.**
- **Engaging in ongoing efforts to implement policies passed across counties** and to scale/expand pilot interventions that are demonstrated to be effective.

- **Addressing needs at the intersection of youth justice and child welfare.** As state youth prisons close and youth return to their counties of origin, advocates have a role in ensuring that local entities are able to provide safe care for TAY foster youth.
- **Prioritizing developing supports and opportunities for foster youth with lived experiences to engage in more policy and advocacy work.** Youth are already serving in a leadership capacity through some organizations, but there is a desire among those participants to be more heavily involved.
- **Guaranteed Basic Income programs (GBI),** like the one piloted by County of Santa Clara, **could amplify their impact with a collaborative, regional approach.** In 2023, Counties for a Guaranteed Income launched as a way for its 20 members to engage in cross-county collaboration and to advocate for GBI programs at the state and federal level.
- In addition, the TAY-Hub, building on Dr. Mark Courtney’s work with CCWIP and in conjunction with Urban Institute, will be **evaluating a Guaranteed Income pilot project** in several counties around California to **determine the benefits of this approach for preventing homelessness** and improving other important outcomes for TAY foster youth. **Advocating for a state mandate, with accompanying funding, to reform data systems and establish sharing practices across agencies.** There may be an opportunity to partner with policy institutes (particularly those with a focus on behavioral health policy) in this work.
- **Individual providers, networks of providers, and systems are also craving even greater access to youth-level data to track outcomes and understand how best to improve programs.** Moreover, this would alleviate the burden on young people having to repeatedly share the same data on their lives, which oftentimes is intimate and re-traumatizing for them each time it has to be shared.
- **New and existing models should prioritize mental health programming,** including proactive promotion of wellness and early intervention. The youth leaders we spoke with as part the evaluation stressed the importance of mental health support in their lives. Service providers also see mental health as a key area for support, while acknowledging that structural issues (e.g., lack of housing) can manifest as “mental health symptoms,” and that these could be prevented or mitigated by increasing access to resources (e.g., housing/stipends).

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Evaluation Methods

The design of this evaluation included questions and methods to learn about the BFFY initiative’s design and approach (implementation evaluation), as well as outcomes of the initiative (outcomes evaluation). The BFFY evaluation includes the following data sources:

- Review of 14 grantee partners’ materials (e.g. original project plans, mid-term and final reports)
- Interviews with 13 grantee partners
- Youth-level data provided on an opt-in basis by four (out of six) grantee partners that provide direct services
- Youth voice session with seven transitional aged foster youth (TAY)

In addition, LFA shared a draft version of this report with stakeholders and invited their reactions, input, and questions, as part of our meaning-making process. This input has been incorporated into this final report. The following stakeholder groups participated in meaning-making: BFFY grantees, field experts (i.e. bellwethers), and youth with lived experience in the foster system (from two youth advocacy groups). The draft report was also shared with Tipping Point, who provided additional input and refinements.

## Appendix B: Overview of Policy-Focused BFFY Grantee Partners

Organization	Goals for their BFFY-Funded Work	Key Process Measures and Outcomes
<b>First Place for Youth</b>	Conduct research to compare the impact of different placement settings, using outcomes from the ongoing CalYOUTH study. The overall goal is to share outcomes data and collectively assess resource gaps to improve housing instability for older foster youth.	Findings, questions, and policy recommendations have been incorporated into a series of briefs intended to advocate for evidence-based, individualized services for young people, and advance policies that promote education and employment outcomes for youth in extended care

<p><b>Foster America</b></p>	<p>Recruit, place, and support a mid-career fellow in the child welfare agency of each of the region's counties, with the fellows tasked with designing and implementing solutions that improve data connectivity at the county agency level.</p>	<p>Four fellows were identified to support work in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties. Their work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Convene a workgroup of 22 child welfare staff and lived experts to envision a better system for supporting commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC)</li> <li>· Develop a case mining tool to identify patterns of challenges and opportunities to improvement youth engagement and resilience</li> <li>· Develop a database to track educational outcomes for foster youth</li> <li>· Support the launch of an educational case management pilot which uses site-based staff to coordinate services for foster youth</li> </ul>
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<p><b>John Burton Advocates for Youth</b></p>	<p>Partner with the TAY Workforce Initiative and provide technical assistance to local workforce development boards (LWDBs) to adopt new funding guideline</p> <p>Expand the foster youth focused Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites into two additional counties</p> <p>Continued management of initiative policy working group, identification of shared policy priorities, and co-sponsoring legislation or budgetary proposals</p> <p>Expand work of Reproductive Health Education Partnership statewide and provide technical assistance to county agencies re: compliance with SB84</p> <p>Increase the effectiveness and accountability of child welfare system to prepare and support foster youth in higher education</p> <p>Increase financial stability of foster youth by enacting a new foster youth tax credit that would expand successful pilot programs statewide</p> <p>Broaden the housing safety net for transitioning foster youth</p>	<p>LWDBs within the region increase funding for foster youth service beyond the current maximum levels allowed</p> <p>Expanded VITA sites serve 75% of eligible foster youth in each county</p> <p>At least two bills are jointly sponsored by JBAY and other members of the policy working group</p> <p>New narrative change resource is developed and distributed among service providers</p> <p>RHEP onboards two new counties in the Bay Area as part of its statewide compliance program</p> <p>Increased number of foster youth utilizing housing choice vouchers under the Family Unification Program</p> <p>Increased funding for campus support programs at UC and CSU campuses</p> <p>Increased earnings for foster youth in extended foster care</p>
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<p><b>National Center for Youth Law</b></p>	<p>Help get legislation drafted, introduced, and passed to increase access to mental health services</p> <p>New policy and/or guidance, such as toolkits, that expands and clarifies services available to address trauma, even if a formal mental health diagnosis is not present</p> <p>Conduct webinars and distribute resources to promote partnerships between schools and mental health providers</p> <p>Help get legislation drafted, introduced, and passed to increase supports and services for parents in foster care. New guidance developed and issued to support implementation of programs for parenting youth.</p> <p>Legislation or budget decisions that increases resources for community based alternatives to the juvenile justice system.</p>	<p>In fall 2021, NCYL brought together a range of partners to advocate for the enactment of Senate Bill 224, to mandate mental health education, which was enacted.</p> <p>In Spring 2023, NCYL developed and co-sponsored California legislation (AB 665) to ensure youth ages 12+ on Medi-Cal can access mental health counseling based on their own consent on par with youth on private insurance. AB 665 was enacted in October 2023.</p> <p>NCYL worked with partners to expand California's ability to reimburse providers for the provision of mental health and wellness services under the State's Medi-Cal program even if a formal mental health diagnosis is not present. The goal of this advocacy is to allow young people to receive mental health supports without the stigma of a diagnosis and label</p> <p>NCYL released a primer on CA's K-12 education system for Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans (MCPs), intended to increase access to school-based and school-linked care for students on Medi-Cal.</p>
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<p><b>Pivotal</b></p>	<p>Advocate for a statewide waiver to decrease the 75% out-of-school requirement to 50%, while requiring workforce boards to use their newly acquired flexibility to service foster, homeless, and justice-involved youth.</p> <p>Develop a Core Practice Model providing workforce boards and providers with a roadmap of effective interventions and strategies to better serve youth.</p> <p>Develop a regional Community of Practice that includes representation from local workforce development boards</p>	<p>The waiver was approved by the federal government on 8/6/21. The BAYTAY team then worked with the California Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop guidance to local workforce development boards on how to opt into the waiver.</p> <p>The draft model covers guidance for the local workforce boards and for a wider audience and was planned for publication in January 2022.</p> <p>Built a coalition of local WDBs to develop a regional Community of Practice to help advocate for the implementation of the Core Practice model, as well as to evaluate the impact of the model.</p>
<p><b>University of California Berkeley, in partnership with University of Chicago (TAY-Hub)</b></p>	<p>Implement cross-system analysis reporting to track outcomes for TAY and other foster children</p> <p>Create structure for applied research and targeted questions (TAY-Hub) to inform policy &amp; practice improvements for TAY and other foster youth</p>	<p>New TAY outcome analyses dashboard developed and integrated into and publicly-available reports on CCWIP website</p> <p>County and state staff able to access all drill down and filtering options via account on CCWIP secure site</p> <p>Advisory Committee of key stakeholders convened at least 2x/year to prioritize research and evaluation topics</p>



<p><b>University of California San Francisco</b></p>	<p>Increase initial access to behavioral health services for systems-involved youth and their families within San Francisco and one other Bay Area county</p> <p>Improve the frequency and quality of communication between multiple agencies serving systems-involved youth</p> <p>Enhance cross-system data gathering and sharing using technology within and across counties</p>	<p>Convened a collaborative of key stakeholders and delivered a Telehealth Capacity Assessment Tool (TCAT), to identify potential areas of overlap and service coordination in behavioral health; increased organizational readiness to adopt new technology.</p> <p>Explored using the Social Networking Analysis Collaboration (SNAC) tool to visually identify and quantify the interaction between systems of care</p>
<p><b>Youth Law Center</b></p>	<p>Gain a deep understanding of where the current system of extended foster care is not adequately supporting foster youth's transition to adulthood</p> <p>Integrate adolescent brain science and development principles to extended foster care policy and practice</p> <p>Advance transformative legislative, budgetary, and regulatory changes to improve extended foster care</p>	<p>Gathered feedback from stakeholders directly impacted by extended foster care, with a special focus on listening to the perspectives of particularly vulnerable groups of youth in foster care</p> <p>Partnered with Institute for the Future and CA Youth Connection on research to understand how to build the ecosystem of support, services and opportunities that will allow young adults exiting foster care to thrive</p> <p>Engaged in immediate opportunities to prime federal and state law for policy reforms and improve supports for transition aged youth in foster care, including coordinating a National Older Youth Coalition to build a national network of organizations committed to a national agenda to improve outcomes for transition aged youth in foster care</p>

## Appendix C: Descriptions and Monetary Values of BFFY-Supported Policy Achievements

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
Financial aid for foster youth	2019	JBAY successfully advocated for SB 150, which improves postsecondary outcomes for foster youth in college by expanding access to the Chafee Education and Training Voucher in two ways. First, it authorizes the California Student Aid Commission to over-award grants and thereby distribute grants earlier in the semester. Second, it replaced the Chafee ETV's existing Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement with more flexible standards and requires each school to offer an appeal process to account for the unique circumstances of foster youth.	N/A
Increased Support for Homeless College Students	2019	JBAY successfully advocated for AB 74, which secures funds to provide housing and supportive services at community colleges (\$9M), campuses of the California State University (\$6.5M) and campuses of the University of California (\$3.5 M). Since passage of the budget, JBAY Education Director Debbie Raucher has helped the Community Colleges Chancellor's office and the CSU Chancellor's Office develop methodologies to distribute the funding to campuses in a timely manner and provided technical assistance to implement the program. The 2022-23 budget included an additional \$10 million for this program.	\$19MM
Improved Services for Runaway and Homeless Youth	2018-19	JBAY successfully advocated for AB 1235, which allows homeless youth to receive services in a Runaway and Homeless Youth shelter for up to 90 days. The previous limit was 21 days. AB 1235 also changes the name of Runaway and Homeless Youth Shelters to Youth Homelessness Prevention Centers and expanded eligibility. There are currently 11 of these centers in California that assist 1,400 homeless minors annually.	N/A
Increased Housing for Former Foster Youth	2018-19	JBAY successfully advocated for an \$8 million annual investment in the state budget for housing for former foster youth. This will enable an additional 300 former foster youth and their 75 children to participate in a state-funded program that provides safe, affordable and supported housing annually (Transitional Housing Program).	\$8MM
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2018-19	JBAY successfully advocated for an 8% youth set-aside secured in a newly created state homelessness program: the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program. This new program was funded one-time at \$650 million in the 2019-20 state budget. The 8% set-aside will result in a minimum of \$52 million going towards homeless youth in California.	\$52MM

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
		Since passage of the budget, JBAY has provided technical assistance and training to assist homeless youth and foster care providers to apply for the funding. Moving forward, this assistance will include using a portion of the Tipping Point funding to hire a consultant to assist homeless youth providers to apply for the funding.	
Increased support for FAFSA completion	2020	JBAY successfully advocated for SB 860, which requires County Offices of Education to ensure the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is completed for the 4,000 foster youth statewide who are high school seniors and would like to attend post-secondary education. SB 860 also requires counties to report the number and percentage of pupils in foster care who successfully complete a FAFSA while in grade 12. SB 860 was based on the California Foster Youth FAFSA Challenge, a project JBAY conducted that has led to an increase in the rate of FAFSA completion among foster youth from 45% to 65%.	N/A
Support for homeless college students	2020	JBAY successfully advocated for AB 2416, which requires that colleges consider homelessness as an extenuating circumstance when evaluating appeals for the loss of financial aid due to not making satisfactory academic progress.	N/A
Moratorium on Discharge from Foster Care During COVID-19	2020	JBAY successfully advocated for a CA state investment allowing youth to remain in foster care after age 21, until June 30, 2021. This provided safe, affordable housing and services to an estimated 5,000 youth in California. This moratorium was later replicated by the federal government, allowing states to claim Title IV-E funds to authorize young adults to remain in foster care after age 21. In California, the moratorium was later extended to December 31, 2021.	\$32MM
Housing protections for former foster youth	2020	JBAY successfully advocated for a policy to authorize youth to continue to participate in the supportive housing program for former foster youth (THP-Plus), regardless of their age or program duration until June 30, 2021. This policy was a companion to the federal moratorium on youth aging out of foster care during the pandemic.	N/A
Higher foster care rates in high-cost counties	2019-20	JBAY successfully advocated for a \$4 million annual investment in California's transitional housing placement for 18 to 21-year-olds (THP-NMD). This change will allow the monthly foster care rate to vary based on the cost of housing in each county (instead of a flat statewide rate), as specified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Market Rent. It also provides a higher monthly rate on behalf of	\$4MM annually

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
		parenting youth to allow for larger housing accommodations.	
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2019-20	JBAY successfully advocated for a second one-time investment in preventing and reducing youth homelessness through the Homeless, Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program. HHAP's 8% youth set-aside results in \$24 million of the \$300 million investment of homelessness funding being directed toward youth and young adults, aged 24 and younger. This funding is essential for youth who exit foster care prior to age 18 and are not eligible for extended foster care. It is also important for youth who participate in extended foster care, yet later experience an episode of homelessness.	\$24MM
Provide Safe, Stable Housing for Former Foster Youth	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated to make the \$8 million Transitional Housing Program an annual allocation instead of sunsetting. This funding is commonly combined with local THP-Plus funding to provide safe, stable housing for former foster youth in California. This annual funding comes at a critical time: a May 2021 survey of foster youth in California found that 1 in 5 had experienced homelessness since the start of the pandemic. This additional investment will assist an estimated 1,295 youth annually.	\$8MM
Help Foster Youth Locate and Secure Housing	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated for a \$5 million annually to provide intensive, specialized housing search assistance for youth in foster care through the Housing Navigators Program (HNP). This program was previously a one-time investment; with the passage of the state budget, HNP will be an ongoing program, helping an estimated 1,225 young people in foster care locate and secure housing annually.	\$5MM
Strengthen the Safety Net for Foster Youth in High-Cost Counties	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated for an annual \$9 million to maintain housing in high-cost parts of California by establishing a supplementary payment to the state's transitional housing program for former foster youth (THP-Plus). In California, the cost of housing has significantly outpaced the amount of funding for THP-Plus, resulting in longer waiting lists, increased homelessness, fewer supportive services and the displacement of youth from their community. With this \$9 million annual investment, counties in high-cost parts of the state will receive a supplementary payment to better equip them to provide a high enough monthly payment to their providers to cover the cost of providing housing and supportive services. This funding will likely reach 759 youth annually.	\$9MM

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated for a third one-time allocation in preventing and reducing youth homelessness through the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program, this year with an increased percentage of the funding being set aside for youth. Up from 8%, HHAP's 10% youth set-aside results in \$100 million of the \$1 billion investment of homelessness funding in the 2021-22 state budget being directed toward youth and young adults, aged 24 and younger. This funding is essential for youth who exit foster care prior to age 18 and are not eligible for extended foster care. It is also important for youth who participate in extended foster care, yet later experience an episode of homelessness. This proposal was co-sponsored by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, Housing California and a statewide coalition.	\$100MM
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated for capital development funding to create new housing for homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and current and former foster youth, as part Homekey, a state-funded housing program that funds the purchase, rehabilitation, and construction of interim and permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In the first round of Homekey, nearly no youth housing was built. In rounds two and three (funded in the 2021-22 state budget) JBAY advocated for a policy requiring at least 8% (\$220 million) of Homekey's two-year \$2.75 billion budget to be reserved for development projects creating housing for youth.	\$220 million
Assist College Students Facing Homelessness and Food Insecurity	2021	JBAY successfully advocated through AB 132 for \$30 million annually to establish a Basic Needs Center and Basic Needs Coordinator at each of California's 115 community colleges. This proposal was co-sponsored by the Student Senate for California Community Colleges and Young Invincibles. This is highly relevant for transition-age foster youth, who disproportionately experience food and housing insecurity. An additional \$20 million was subsequently added to the budget allocation for this program in 2022-23.	\$30MM
Address Learning Loss Among Foster Youth	2021	JBAY & NCYL successfully advocated for a one-time \$30 million investment to address learning loss experienced by foster youth during the pandemic. Funding was provided to county offices of education to provide tutoring, educational case management, post-secondary preparation or career exploration and learning recovery.	\$30MM

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
Campus Support for Foster Youth	2021	JBAY successfully advocated for SB 512, which expanded eligibility for the NextUp program for foster youth at community colleges to include youth in care after 13 and remove other barriers to entry.	NA
Improve Birth Outcomes Among Young Parents in Foster Care	2020-21	JBAY + NCYL successfully advocated AB 153 for \$1.8 million annually to establish an Expectant Parent Payment, provided to young people in foster care three months before the birth of their child. This new public benefit will ensure expectant youth in foster care are well prepared for the birth of their child. This proposal was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Children's Rights, Black Women for Wellness, Children's Law Center of California and National Center for Youth Law.	\$1.8MM
Train Social Workers and Probation Officers on Housing	2020-21	JBAY successfully advocated for \$200,000 to train child welfare workers and probation officers on housing and the homelessness response system. This requirement will ensure child welfare workers and probation officers are equipped to assist current foster youth with achieving stable housing while in care and as they transition out of care, including how to help youth identify shared living settings, rental units, services available through the local Coordinated Entry System and homeless Continuum of Care, Permanent Affordable Housing and specialized Housing Choice Vouchers.	\$200,000
Improved Sexual and Reproductive Health for Foster Youth	2020-21	JBAY & NCYL successfully advocated for AB 172, a requirement that county social workers include in their reports to the juvenile court whether youth or nonminor dependents in the foster system have received comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education pursuant to the California Healthy Youth Act. It also requires the Department of Social Services to report disaggregated outcome and performance data on reproductive and sexual health outcomes and implementation of training.	N/A
Increased Access to Post-Secondary Ed for Foster Youth	2020-21	2. JBAY successfully advocated for a requirement that county social workers include in their reports to juvenile courts whether youth or nonminor dependents in the foster system have received assistance in applying for college, including financial aid, as required by Senate Bill 12 (2016).	N/A
Required mental health education in	2021	SB 224 requires the following 1) Middle and high school health courses include instruction in mental health; 2) The instruction include, among other things, reasonably designed instruction on the overarching themes and core principles of mental health and	N/A



Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
		promotion of wellness and protective factors; 3) The instruction and related materials, among other things, be appropriate for use with students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English learners; and 4) By January 1, 2024, the California Department of Education develop a plan to expand mental health education in California public schools.	
Increased College Enrollment and Degree Attainment Among Foster Youth	2022	JBAY successfully advocated for \$48 million annually to support foster youth campus support programs, which provide intensive academic, financial, and social support for foster youth enrolled in college. AB 183 included \$30 million for community colleges, \$12 million for 22 California State University campuses and \$6 million for 9 UC campuses. Together, these programs will help 6,000 foster youth enrolled in college each year. This funding was on top of \$20 million previously advocated for and obtained by JBAY for community college foster youth programs.	\$48MM
Reduced Poverty through the Foster Youth Tax Credit Proposal	2021-22	JBAY successfully advocated for the creation of the California Foster Youth Tax Credit, providing up to \$1,083 per eligible current and former foster youth who file their taxes. An estimated ~55,000 current and former foster youth are eligible for the Foster Youth Tax Credit. JBAY will focus on implementation of the new tax credit over the next three years, training tax volunteers about the new state credit, establishing several free tax filing sites for foster youth, developing resources to assist youth with self-filing, and conducting a broad-scale public information campaign to inform youth, county child welfare social workers, dependency attorneys and other stakeholders.	\$21MM
Safe, Stable Housing for Former Foster Youth	2021-22	JBAY successfully advocated for an increase in the program duration of the THP-Plus program for former foster youth, from 24 months of housing and supportive services to 36 months. The upper age limit also increased so that youth can access the program until they turn 25 instead of 24. This policy change was accompanied by a \$25.3 million increase in the annual budget for the Transitional Housing Program, serving an additional 800 youth, and funding the new third year of program.	\$25.3 MM
Help Foster Youth Locate and Secure Housing	2021-22	JBAY successfully advocated for an \$8.7 million annual increase to the Housing Navigators Program (HNP), which prioritizes foster youth aged 18-21. With this funding increase came an expansion of the priority population to include former foster youth, an increase	\$8.7 MM



Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
		in the upper age limit to 24, and a name change to the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP). Last year, JBAY worked to make this one-time program permanent. With this additional funding, HNMP will help over 1,000 additional youth locate and secure housing. The reason for these changes are to ensure there is funding to serve former foster youth with specialized federal Housing Choice Vouchers, which are underutilized in part due to the challenges of identifying and securing housing and a lack of dedicated funding for this purpose.	
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2021-22	JBAY successfully advocated for a fourth one-time investment in preventing and reducing youth homelessness through the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program. In the 2022-23 state budget, HHAP's 10% youth set-aside results in \$100 million of the \$1 billion investment of homelessness funding being directed toward youth and young adults, aged 24 and younger. This funding is essential for youth who exit foster care prior to age 18 and are not eligible for extended foster care. It is also important for youth who participate in extended foster care, yet later experience an episode of homelessness. To achieve this, JBAY worked closely with the Big City Mayors and the Bring California Home Coalition.	\$100MM
Build Housing for Homeless Youth	2021-22	In the 2022-23 state budget, an additional \$150 million was included for Homekey, bringing the statewide investment over two years (21-22 and 22-23) to \$2.75 billion. This additional \$150 million results in at least an additional \$12 million reserved for development projects creating housing for youth. While the statutory minimum is 8%, the state department administering Homekey opted to reserve 10% for youth in the third round of Homekey, as a result of the success of the youth set-aside in round 2.	\$12MM
National Older Youth Coalition	2021	YLC chaired and coordinated a National Older Youth Coalition to build a national network of organizations committed to a national agenda to improve outcomes for transition aged youth in foster care. YLC led the coalition in advocating for \$400 million in federal funding for foster youth and protections passed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2021, implementation of the CAA and working to extend the provision of the CAA when many of them expired in September of 2021; developing a transition memo for the incoming Biden Administration and Congress focusing on transition aged youth priorities; and creating the Chafee Redesign Campaign, which has since been renamed the Journey to Success	\$400MM

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
		Campaign. In addition to working on policy advocacy, the coalition has provided an opportunity to share information, develop needed resources, and host speakers on topics important to TAY.	
California Chafee Advocacy	2021-22	YLC co-led advocacy with CYC to ensure that California expedited disbursing \$41 million of federal Chafee funding directly to youth in foster care, in the form of direct cash assistance. This work included YLC's involvement in the national Check for Us campaign aiming to inform thousands of young people across the country that they were eligible for financial assistance and other supports through the older youth provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Act. In addition to creating a moratorium on aging out, this law provided \$400 million to states to meet the needs of youth in and with experience in foster care during the pandemic and recovery. JBAY worked closely with the California Department of Social Services and other entities to assist youth with accessing their cash assistance through development of materials, webinars and direct technical assistance.	\$41MM
Higher Monthly Payments for Foster Youth in the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)	2022-23	JBAY successfully advocated for the establishment of a "Housing Supplement" for foster youth placed in Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs). This provides a higher monthly payment for youth placed in SILPs, to assist them with affording monthly rent. The additional funding provided is based on the cost of housing in each county. The 2023-24 California state budget includes \$1 million in 2023-24 and starting in 2025-26, a total of \$18.8 million in ongoing funding for the SILP Housing Supplement, championed by Assemblymember Phil Ting and Senator María Elena Durazo.	\$18.8MM
Reduce Youth Homelessness	2022-23	JBAY successfully advocated for a fifth one-time investment in preventing and reducing youth homelessness through the Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) program. In the 2023-24 state budget, HHAP's 10% youth set-aside results in \$100 million of the \$1 billion investment of homelessness funding being directed toward youth and young adults, aged 24 and younger. This funding is essential for youth who exit foster care prior to age 18 and are not eligible for extended foster care. It is also important for youth who participate in extended foster care, yet later experience an episode of homelessness. To achieve this, JBAY worked closely with the Bring California Home Coalition.	\$100MM

Policy Achievement	Date	Description	Monetary value
Increased Financial Aid for Foster Youth	2023	JBAY successfully advocated for the 2023/2024 state budget bill to include increased funding for financial aid for foster youth across all three public postsecondary systems. Language governing this funding was included in SB 117, the higher education budget trailer bill. SB 117 increased the grant amount available under the Student Success Completion Grant program for current and former foster youth enrolled in 12 or more units at community college to \$5,250 per semester, or quarterly equivalent. SB 117 also expanded the Middle Class Scholarship program for university students to provide roughly three times the previous award amount.	\$19.2 million
Increased access to mental health counseling	2023	NCYL developed and co-sponsored AB 665 to ensure youth ages 12+ on Medi-Cal can access mental health counseling based on their own consent on par with youth on private insurance.	N/A

**Appendix D: Overview of Grantee Partners' Direct Services Approaches and Outcomes**

Organization	Practice Areas	About their BFFY approach	Key Process Measures and Outcomes
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<p><b>Beyond Emancipation</b></p>	<p>Workforce development; housing supports</p>	<p>Enhance and expand workforce development programming to support young people with experience in foster care in achieving positive outcomes as they transition to adulthood</p>	<p>Completed a needs assessment (survey of 50 TAY; focus group of 3 TAY) to determine youth career support needs</p> <p>Conducted environmental scan of the available local workforce development supports for TAY; used these data to develop and pilot new workforce development programming</p> <p>Trained staff to administer new life skills assessment and goal tracking system</p> <p>Provided 104 youth with employment support through 1:1 coaching sessions (as of January 2023)</p> <p>Worked with the Oakland Housing Authority to help youth obtain section 8 vouchers and provided support to youth navigating the process of securing housing</p>
<p><b>California Youth Connection</b></p>	<p>Communications system</p>	<p>Design a rapid response system to connect older foster youth to critical resources during unanticipated community-wide events or emergencies</p>	<p>Led a collective visioning process for rapid response system with key stakeholders and community members</p> <p>Launched a rapid response system, and built out their communications system; emergencies facing foster youth are elevated to state and local partners in real time</p>

<p><b>County of Santa Clara</b></p>	<p>Economic support</p>	<p>Pilot a guaranteed basic income program for TAY youth leaving foster care (TAY GBI)</p>	<p>In Cohort 1, 72 TAY youth received cash assistance (\$1,000/month) for two years</p> <p>In Cohort 2 (ongoing), 100 TAY youth will participate with 50 participants receiving cash assistance (increased to \$1,200/month) for two years, and 50 participants in a comparison group.</p> <p>Participants enrolled in school full-time increased from 13% to 33%</p>
<p><b>First Place for Youth</b></p>	<p>Housing supports; education; employment</p>	<p>Support TAY youth by providing housing and case management</p>	<p>Housed and provided support services to 524 youth through the My First Place program in six California counties from May 2022 – April 2023</p> <p>Positive outcomes for youth included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 84% receiving or actively pursuing their high school diploma or GED certificate</li> <li>· 82% obtaining employment</li> <li>· 88% (who exited First Place after 12+ months in the program) maintaining safe, stable housing</li> </ul>

<p><b>On the Move</b></p>	<p>Housing supports</p>	<p>Piloted Youth Crisis Teams program (later referred to as the Spark Initiative) to recruit and train Peer Advocates who will work in coordination with civil legal advocates and clinical social workers to locate, engage, and stabilize foster youth experiencing homelessness</p>	<p>From 2018 to 2021, the SPARK Team built relationships with 132 partner agencies and programs, including 27 in Alameda County, 40 in Contra Costa County and 65 in San Francisco and provided services to 1,725 youth, such as support with completing public benefit applications, locating housing and maintaining their housing.</p>
<p><b>Pivotal</b></p>	<p>Education; employment</p>	<p>Build the capacity of Pivotal programs and systems reform work</p>	<p>Tested and optimized integrated education and employment model, working to improve their recruitment, referral, and enrollment processes</p> <p>Served 603 high school aged youth from 2018-2021, with a focus on transition from HS to college</p> <p>Exceeded goal of a 75% college matriculation rate among high school graduates</p> <p>Met or exceeded goal of 70% employment retention (3 months post hire) for post-secondary program participants</p>

<p><b>West Coast Children's Clinic</b></p>	<p>Behavioral health</p>	<p>Build necessary infrastructure to launch and scale team-based model of care</p>	<p>Developed and documented their team-based model of care, EMPOWR-T (Embracing Meaningful Progress and Opportunities While Rising Together), in consultation with 11 providers with existing team-based models. The model provides a single point of entry for youth to access multiple providers, and a single team that supports them in a wide range of areas.</p>
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