

Implementation Plan 2015

Part 1: Introduction

Sometimes it's called aging out of foster care. At Fostering Advocates Arizona (FAAZ), we call it transitioning out because we know that leaving foster care is not simply shutting one door and opening another. There are many important steps along the way. The Initiative is guided by young adults who have experienced foster care firsthand. Together, our goal to make sure all young people who've experienced foster care have the information, resources and support they need to successfully transition to adulthood. FAAZ advocates for policies and practices that help young adults who are:

- Thinking about life after they turn 18
- Exploring programs and services in order to reach their goals
- Preparing to transition out of foster care

FAAZ is integrated within Children's Action Alliance (CAA). Since 1988, CAA has worked as a non-profit, non-partisan research, education and advocacy organization, to influence policies and decisions affecting the lives of Arizona children and their families on issues related to health, child abuse and neglect, early care and education, budget and taxes, juvenile justice, and working families. The need to help youth successfully transition from foster care continues to be demonstrated as the Arizona foster child population continues to increase and as older youth in foster care remain vulnerable to the stresses of an overwhelmed child welfare system.

With funding from Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and a continued commitment for technical assistance from the national Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, CAA will continue to support the collaborative community and advocacy efforts of FAAZ. Our work in 2015 will focus on increasing access to education, employment, family connections, financial capability, health care, housing and social capital. CAA will influence policy and practice aimed to assuring that all young adults who leave foster care can make successful transitions to adulthood.

Part 2: Key Accomplishments 2014

- Established a diverse, Young Adult Leadership Board as the primary voices and critical advisors for the Initiative in Arizona. Convening all 12 young adults for a day and a half retreat on Strategic Story Sharing and Messaging.
- Established a Community Advisory Board to work in collaboration with the Young Adult Leadership Board on Initiative priorities
- Launched the Opportunity Passport™ match-savings program
 - Secured \$25,000 from the Arizona Community Foundation to provide Opportunity Passport™ program participants with a 1:1 match-savings rate and program stipends
 - Vetted organizational proposals for the implementation of Opportunity Passport™ in Maricopa County. Selected International Rescue Committee to conduct the financial literacy trainings, participant coaching, match-savings activities, and data collection associated with the program
 - Participated in more than 30 hours of Opportunity Passport™ train-the-trainer programming and database management. Created facilitation tools and materials needed for implementing the first three training modules; Asset Building, Credit, and Money Management
 - Created a participant application process, enrollment forms, training calendar and marketing collateral for distribution
 - Launched the Opportunity Passport Program™ with more than 60 hours of in-person training on assets, credit and money management. Enrolled 49 young people in the program and completed four asset matches.
- Created and facilitated trainings for more than 80 young adults currently in Arizona foster care on "Inner-Leadership" and "Leading from Your Values" at the July 2013 state-wide Independent Living Conference sponsored by DCS in Rio Rico, Arizona.
- Convened a youth panel to speak at the Maricopa Community College's Education Conference. Three representatives from the Young Adult Leadership Board spoke before 75 community college officials and staff about the challenges associated with turning 18, aging out of foster care and navigating post-secondary education.



- Presented to more than 600 community stakeholders at meetings, trainings, and workshops on the work and priorities of Fostering Advocates Arizona. Additional training topics included Young Adult Transitional Insurance (YATI), educational resources, Tuition Waiver eligibility, youth-adult partnerships, youth leadership, and program supports and services available to young adults transitioning out of foster care.
- Played an instrumental stakeholder advocacy role in the creation of the new Department of Child Safety effective May 29, 2014. With a whole new leadership team at DCS, CAA and FAAZ engaged DCS Executive Team members in discussions surrounding the policies and practices related to youth transitioning out of foster care. Positive developments included the DCS Deputy Director attending the JCYOI Convening in Florida in December as well as practice changes that smoothed the re-entry of foster youth back into care after they left at age 18.
- Contracted with a young adult foster care alumni to create an Initiative outreach and communication plan. Launched FAAZ Face Book page, vetted and contracted with a website designer and content consultant for the creation of a branding campaign, logo, and website launch. Developed content and a site map recommendations for the resource website.
- Collaborated with the national non-profit Foster Care To Success, Arizona's public community college and university staff, and the Department of Child Safety to develop a procedure to administer the Arizona Foster Care Tuition Waiver Pilot Program (SB 1208 Laws of 2013)
 - Contracted with Foster Care To Success to develop an electronic portal system for universities and community colleges to track student eligibility for the Arizona Tuition Waiver and the DCS administered Education and Training Voucher.
 - Co-created data collection criteria that will result in reporting on student participation rates, financial aid award amounts, and trends in program participation.
 - Assisted in the training and facilitation of 13 university and community college staff on accessing and utilizing the on-line portal system.
- Convened AHCCCS, DES, and DCS staff to advocate for better practices and policies that would streamline Young Adult Transitional Insurance (YATI) enrollment (i.e. Medicaid for foster youth up to age 26). Organized a series of discussions where all three agencies communicated about foster youth health insurance coverage via The Affordable Care Act. As a first step, the agencies eliminated steps in the application process that required manual paperwork and also updated the electronic application to improve the system's ability to confirm documentation of foster care status rather than requiring this of the young adult applicants. The agencies also named points of contact staff who will communicate with each other about the lists of foster youth turning 18 and resolve any issues in their transition health insurance enrollment.



- Created and distributed a Health Care Toolkit that included informational brochures and commonly asked questions and answers about YATI coverage so that young adults and the many community agencies who work with them will have the tools to promote enrollment.
- Partnered with Kids Health Link to train community providers and matched agencies that serve transitioning youth with specific community agencies who assist people in health insurance applications so young adults can get direct and personal assistance.

Part 3: Key Challenges 2014

- During 2014, the child welfare system experienced significant crisis'. Starting with the November 2013 revelation that 6,500 reports of child abuse and neglect were not investigated. This began a fire-storm of activity including the Governor's announced intent to separate the child welfare system from the Department of Economic Security (DES). Much of the DES child welfare leadership team was fired during this time period (November 2013 to May 2014), and new leaders took over in the interim. The Department of Child Safety (DCS) was established on May 29, 2014. During 2014, attention was not focused on children in foster care or those youth who were transitioning from foster care; the other issues and concerns took priority. CAA ,FAAZ and our state and community partners continued its work to improve outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care. Progress was being made on a number of fronts as 2015 began; however, the elections brought a new Governor, a new Attorney General and a good number of new legislators. Leadership changes could bring new opportunities or challenges ahead.
- In an effort to create a central information hub for young adults who've aged out of foster care and their adult allies, FAAZ broadened the scope of its original website intent. This required working in partnership with a young adult consultant, the Young Adult Leadership Board, Community Advisory Board, as well as a number of community stakeholders to gather input on content and design. The collaborative process has taken longer than anticipated and the website launch has been delayed by two months.
- The Opportunity Passport™ program launched in 2014 and exceeded the initial enrollment goal by 28%. The increased demand resulted in an even greater need to focus on securing funds for future program implementation. In order to enroll more participants, the program must insure match funds will be available in the event a young person purchases an asset. Funding must also be secured to support enrollment stipends and bi-annual survey stipends

Part 4: Major Goals 2015

- Youth voice and participation will increase at all levels of policy and program decision-making led by the FAAZ Young Adult Leadership Board that was formed in 2014.
- Traditional stakeholders and non-traditional partners will be involved through the FAAZ Community Partnership Board to understand and help guide access to supports for youth transitioning from foster care. This includes, but is not limited to, access to job training and employment, access to more housing opportunities, and increased financial capability for transitioning youth.
- Youth and providers (i.e. foster families, relatives, congregate facilities, independent living program staff, etc) will have critical information on transitioning services available to help young adults achieve their goals through the launch of a FAAZ resource website combined with marketing outreach for the website.
- More transitioning youth will have access to savings accounts, match-savings funds and financial management training to help manage their personal budgets and achieve their financial goals.
- More transitioning youth will be knowledgeable about scholarships, education training vouchers and tuition waivers available for post-secondary education.
- Arizona Board of Regents, universities and community colleges will work with transitioning youth, Department of Child Safety (DCS), CAA and other stakeholders to strengthen the support services needed for foster youth to be successful in post-secondary education.
- Working with Foster Care To Success, outcome data will be collected and available to evaluate the implementation of SB 1208 (Laws of 2013) – Tuition Waivers for Foster Youth.
- More transitioning youth from ages 18-26 will have enrollment assistance and will maintain available health insurance coverage through AHCCCS, Arizona's Medicaid program.



- With technical assistance from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and Mainspring Consulting, partner with DCS to conduct a fiscal analysis on drawing down Title VI E funds to support young adults transitioning out of foster care.
- Partnering with Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, host a two day, Youth-Adult Partnership training for the Community Advisory Board and Young Adult Leadership Board.
- More youth will be supported by extended care programs and services such as the Independent Living Program, Transitional Independent Living Supports and the Independent Living Subsidy Program.

Implementation Work Plan 2015

Core Strategies Rubric	Strategy	Goal	Action Steps	Lead	Technical Assistance	Target Start Date	Target Completion Date	Outcome Area
Youth Engagement	Activity 1: Youth Leadership Boards	1. Maintain on-going funds to provide management and distribution of stipends, transportation and other logistical supports for board members	1. Funding secured and allocated for budget year 2015	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 9-30-14	1. 3-1-15 and ongoing for the following year	Social Capital
Youth Engagement	Activity 1: Youth Leadership Boards	2. Retain 7-12 young adults for the Young Adult Leadership Board	1. A culturally diverse group of young people from across Maricopa County represent the Youth Partnership Board members 2. Focus on gender diversity as young adults transition off the board and new spots open	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 3-1-15	1. 2-28-16	Social Capital

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Youth Engagement	Activity 1: Youth Leadership Boards	3. Train and assist youth in developing guidelines for recruitment, participation, organizational structure, agenda development, benchmarks, etc.	1. Identify a young adult to chair the Board. This includes support in planning meeting agendas, co-facilitation, and identifying key ways to continuously engage participants 2. Calendar of monthly Youth Partnership Board meetings, including the incorporation of social activities	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 3-1-15 1. 3-1-15	On-going 4-30-15	Social Capital
Youth Engagement	Activity 2: Young People As Effective Self Advocates	1. Provide education, training, and support to young people to build their skills as effective advocates	1. Work with the Young Adult Leadership Board to attend and participate in the Youth-Adult Partnership Training 2. Provide How A Bill Becomes A Law Training for Young Adult Leadership Board	Jim Casey and CAA Staff	1. Jim Casey Youth-Adult Partnership Training Retreat. 2. Beth Rosenberg, Director of Child Welfare	1. 3-1-15 2. 8-1-15	1. 7-30-15 2. 2-28-16	Social Capital
Partnerships and Resources	Activity 1: Community Advisory Board	1. Ongoing staffing of the 15-25 person Community Advisory Board 2. Collaboration	1. Recruitment and retention of members that reflect a diverse cross-section of community	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 3-1-15 2. 3-1-15	1. On-going 2. On-going	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing

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		with Board Chair on agenda items, facilitation, and on-going Board engagement	including at least one young adult representative					Health Social Capital
			2. Ensure Board is comprised of members that can help garner both private and public resources. Recruit one-two additional business community members			1. 3-1-15	1. 2-28-16	
Partnerships and Resources	Activity 1: Community Advisory Board	3. Develop and Implement a Work Plan	1. CAA and Advisory Board approved plan for 2015	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 1-1-15	1. 4-30-15	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital
Partnerships and Resources	Activity 1: Community Advisory Board/Engaging Young People as Partners	4. Collaborate With Young Adult Partnership Board	1. Work with staff and Advisory Board to identify 12 individuals to attend the Youth-Adult Partnership Training	CAA Staff	Jim Casey Youth-Adult Partnership Training for Community Advisory Board Members and Young Adult Leadership Board	1. 3-1-15	1. 7-30-15	Social Capital

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Partnerships and Resources	Activity 2: Resource Development	1. Secure funding for the Opportunity Passport Program staff	1. Secure funding for a full time staff position to manage the day to day operations of Opportunity Passport	CAA Staff	N/A	1. 9-30-14	1. 3-1-15 and ongoing for the following year	Financial Capability
Partnerships and Resources	Activity 2: Resource Development	2. Secure funding for the Opportunity Passport Program participants incentives and match dollars for current enrollees and 75 new participants	1. Secure funding for asset matches (1:1 match, up to lifetime max of \$3000 per participant) 2. Secure funding for enrollment stipend of \$140 per participant 3. Secure funding for \$80, bi-annual participant survey stipend	CAA Staff	Contract grant writer	1. 1-1-2015 2. 1-1-2015 3. 1-1-2015	1. 5-30-15 and ongoing in 2015 2. 5-30-15 and ongoing in 2015 2. 5-30-15 and ongoing in 2015	Financial Capacity
Partnerships and Resources	Activity 2: Resource Development	3. Secure funding to support future implementation strategies and growth	1. Develop and implement a sustainability plan	CAA, Community Advisory Board	Jim Casey Staff and Mainspring Consulting will meet with staff and key partners to discuss and map out a sustainability plan for future work	1. TBD	1. 12-31-2015	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital

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Partnerships and Resources	Activity 2: Resource Development	4. Implementation of the Foster Care Tuition Waiver Program for Arizona young adults	<p>1. Collaborate with FC2S to collect and communicate about data collected from the Tuition Waiver Portal with universities and community colleges</p> <p>2. Collaborate with FC2S on on-going data and trends in the program.</p> <p>3. Work to clarify legislative language related to age of eligibility and volunteer hour collection and timing of the portal opening</p> <p>3. Communicate with multiple audiences to promote the Tuition Waiver Program (Including serving on the Bridging Success Advisory Board)</p>	CAA, Foster Care To Success, Youth Board	Foster Care To Success	1. 3-1-2015	1. Ongoing in 2015	Education

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Partnerships and Resources	Activity 2: Resources Development	5. Create outreach strategies, collaborations, and tools for communicating the expansion of Medicaid to 26 for former foster youth	<p>1. Work with Kids Health Link Navigators to refer young adults who need assistance enrolling in a health plan</p> <p>2. Collaborate and coordinate with DCS, DES, and AHCCCS to track YATI enrollment and ensure enrollment and renewal are as stream-lined as possible</p> <p>3. Promote YATI through printed publications and on the FAAZ website and Facebook page.</p> <p>4. Research the possibility of creating a publication for young adults regarding best practices and tips for using and accessing health insurance</p>	CAA Staff		1. 3-1-15	Ongoing in 2015	Health

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Research, Evaluations and Communications	Activity 1: Self-Evaluation Team	1. Develop a Self-Evaluation Team 2. Develop a self-evaluation plan	1. Recruit, train, and support youth and adults to be on the Self-Evaluation Team 2. Use environmental scan data and establish practices for data collection to include in the evaluation plan	CAA Staff	Jim Casey technical assistance provided Self-Evaluation Training	1. TBD	1. 2-28-16	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital
Research, Evaluations and Communications	Activity 2: Communication with Multiple Audiences	1. Develop a resource and advocacy website to communicate programs and services available to young adults transitioning out of foster care in Arizona.	1. Work in partnership with the Young Adult Board on design and content 2. Vet and hire a website designer and content consultant to work in partnership with staff and young adults on website vision 3. Provide content consultant with website text, language, resources, programs and links	CAA Staff	Consultants, Advisory Board, Young Adult Board, CAA Staff	1. 2-1-14	1. 3-31-15	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital

Core Strategies Rubric	Strategy	Goal	Action Steps	Lead	Technical Assistance	Target Start Date	Target Completion Date	Outcome Area
			4. Create a website subcommittee to provide feedback on design and content 5. Launch website 6. Utilize website, social media videos, events, partners, etc. geared to increase participation in programs that support transitioning youth through education and outreach					

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Research, Evaluations and Communications	Activity 3. Young People as Evaluators and Communicators	1. Youth have meaningful roles in self-evaluation and communications	1. Recruit, train, and support young people as evaluators and communicators 2. Young Adult Leadership Board will review annual plan for youth involvement in self-evaluation	Youth Board, Community Advisory Board, CAA Staff	Jim Casey technical assistance provided on self-evaluation	1. TBD	1. 2-28-15	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital

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Public Will and Policy	Activity 1. Agenda and Approach for Improving Policies and Systems	1. Site develops baseline data in key policy areas (as identified in the environmental scan)	1. Develop a policy matrix 2. Engage strategic partners in policy development 3. Update Implementation Plan 4. Update Environmental Scan	CAA Staff, Young Adult Board, Community Advisory Board	Jim Casey technical assistance on policy matrix	1. TBD 2. TBD 3. 1-15-15 4. 1-1-15	1. 2-28-16 2. 12-30-14 3. 3-1-15 4. 3-31-15	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital

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Public Will and Policy	Activity 2. Young People As Advocates For Improved Systems	1. Initiative solicits early and consistent input from young people in developing an advocacy agenda	1 Build advocacy strategies that utilize youth-adult partnerships	CAA Staff, Young Adult Board, Community Advisory Board	Jim Casey technical assistance on Adult/Youth partnership Training	1. 3-1-15 and ongoing	1. 6-30-15	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital
			2. Recruit, train, and support young people as advocates			2. 3-1-15	Ongoing	
			3. Young people as presenters in the community regarding services and supports needed for success			3. 5-1-15	Ongoing	
			4. Development and publication of a Young Adult Leadership Board Advocacy Agenda			4. 3-1-15	12-31-15	
			4. Host a Youth Day at the Capitol			5. 9-1-15	4-1-16	

Core Strategies Rubric	Strategy	Goal	Action Steps	Lead	Technical Assistance	Target Start Date	Target Completion Date	Outcome Area
Increased Opportunities	Activity 1. Support the ongoing work of Opportunity Passport	1. Young Adult Board, Advisory Board and Opportunity Participant feedback informs the areas in which door openers will be created	1. Collaboratively create door openers	CAA Staff, Youth Board, Community Advisory Board, IRC		1. 3-1-2015 and ongoing	On-going	Permanence Education Employment Financial Capability Housing Health Social Capital
		2. An infrastructure is created to communicate to young people about door openers	2. Work with Opportunity Passport contractor and website developer to promote and connect young people to door openers			2. 3-1-2015	On-going	
		3. On-going fundraising and capacity for Opportunity Passport	3. Work with community partners and funders to identify possible funding sources			3. 1-1-15	On-going	