

CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM and EDUCATION and TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM

Agency Administering the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
(section 477(b)(2)of the Act)

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families is the agency that administers the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The grant funds provided through the CFCIP support a variety of services with the objectives of preparing youth and young adults ages 14-21 for successful transitions to adulthood while assisting them develop permanent connections to caring and committed adults. The Chafee funded programs have been based on the principles of positive youth development and address each of the five purpose areas of the legislation:

- Help youth transition from dependency to self-sufficiency.
- Help youth receive education, training and services necessary to obtain employment.
- Help youth prepare for, enter and succeed in post-secondary training and educational institutions.
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support services to former foster care youth ages 18-21.

In our programming we have focused on assisting youth and young adults build strong foundations for success. We address their needs for permanency, safety and the many facets of well being. Educational achievement and life skill mastery with permanent connections to family and/or other caring enduring relationships with adults are the goals for our youth. During the next five years, these goals will be maintained.

Description of Program Design and Delivery

The Department has designed programming to address the varied service needs of the youth and young adults in the agency's care and/or custody.

Adolescent Outreach Program

Since its implementation more than fifteen years ago, the Adolescent Outreach Program has utilized a strength-based approach, providing intensive, individualized life skill assessment and training services to current foster youth and young adults ages 14-21 from across the state to assist them in developing necessary skills and supports to achieve their potential. Per grant guidelines, program services are also available to

youth who were guardianshiped or adopted from DCF after attaining age 16 and to former foster youth who discharged from DCF between ages 18-21 and in some instances youth who discharged from agency care at age 17 and request services. This extension has provided a safety net for those young adults who are in need of additional transitional services. This extension will continue as program funds allow.

Outreach services seek to address each of the purpose areas of the Chafee legislation assisting youth with life skill development, access to education, training and other services necessary to obtain employment, support through mentors and connections to family, including siblings and life long supports. The Outreach staff also assist youth with planning for and succeeding in post-secondary educational settings as well as vocational training programming.

Strength-Based Approach

The Department believes that the relationship model that the Outreach program utilizes is a significant factor in the program's success. Since its development in the late 90's, the program's strength-based approach and focus on youth engagement with a youth development base has inspired the mentoring and employment program, internship program, our ETV support model, etc. We hold true to the principle that youth and young adults are essential partners in their own goal setting, service planning, and life skill training, a key factor which facilitates their successful transitions into the community. Youth and young adults are encouraged to practice newly acquired skills and utilize problem-solving techniques effectively - within a safety net of adult supervision and support. Youth are continually empowered to establish goals, make decisions and practice newly acquired skills. Youth are also supported in handling mistakes, disappointments and failures. The ultimate goal is to equip youth to live interdependently within the community, become self-supportive and able to advocate for themselves, as necessary. Through focused discussions around decision-making/problem solving, community-based activities and goal-focused skill building tasks, youth develop the skills necessary to cope with the challenges of adulthood and live self-sufficiently in their communities. The staff work closely with the DCF primary case managing social workers, foster parents, congregate care providers, community service providers and adults important to the youth to offer opportunities for youth and young adults to learn life skills through practical activities and achievements in their communities. Assisting youth identify their educational/vocational goals and develop strategies to realize their potential are critical tasks for program staff.

The Department's revisions to the Permanency Planning Policy align with the Fostering Connections law supporting permanency, sibling connections, extended voluntary care for transition age youth to support optimal goal achievement. Following the extensive trainings on the policy that took place this year, the staff of the Adolescent Support Services Unit have provided focused trainings and technical assistance to agency staff, providers and foster parents to strengthen understanding and practice of the policy as it addresses youth and transition age young adults. These opportunities for training and technical assistance will continue into the coming years. The Adolescent Support Services staff also have modified the PAYA (Preparing Adolescents for Young

Adulthood) Life Skills training and adolescent pre-service training for new agency staff to reflect the revised policy.

Involvement of Youth and Young Adults in CFCIP Planning

The Department seeks input in planning for CFCIP services from the members of the Regional Youth Advisory Boards and the Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni.

- The Massachusetts Network of Foster Care Alumni, initiated and funded through DCF, has continued to grow this past year. Its purpose is to illuminate the diverse needs of alumni of foster care in the state by advocating for appropriate services and supports, by promoting a healthy peer community, and by developing opportunities for service and leadership. The Network's Advisory Board has strong representation of foster care alumni. The Board is in process of obtaining its 501c3 certification. This past November the third annual Thanksgiving Dinner was held to provide members and interested young adults the opportunity to network with one another and learn more about the opportunities the MA NFCA offers.
- The Department's Youth Advisory Board has been active for more than 14 years. Presently, there are 32 members of the Regional Youth Advisory Boards who are committed to promoting change for future foster youth through their voice, advocacy, and action. They provide recommendations to the Department on services, policy and practice. Additionally they want to ensure that foster youth are known for their strengths, achievements, goals and not labeled as likely failures. The Regional Youth Advisory Boards generally meet monthly, providing a medium for youth in out-of-home placement to voice their concerns and offer suggestions to the agency on issues facing youth in care. Delegates from each Regional Board sit on the Central Office Advisory Board; they are statewide representatives for their peers' interests, concerns, and questions. The agenda topics for each meeting are jointly developed by the Board members based upon their own ideas/concerns or those of the youth they represent and by DCF administration – often seeking youth input on policy, programming, etc.

The most recent meeting of the statewide Youth Advisory Board was held on April 9th in Worcester. The agenda focused on the following:

Recommendations for the five year plan for the Chafee and ETV programming

- The members stressed the importance of the Adolescent Outreach Program services, Outreach workers, in particular. They stated that the program has made powerful positive changes to their lives and to the lives of other foster youth who have benefitted from the services. They recommended expansion of the Adolescent Outreach Program to include one Outreach worker assigned to each area office –not shared

coverage so that more youth can receive services for longer periods of time. The Department's planned hiring of two social workers to focus on the credit reporting requirement and NYTD should reduce some of the administrative work that the Outreach staff are presently managing. The Department is also considering increasing the FTE's for the Outreach Program.

- The Department plans to continue to expand the Internship Program – DCF plans to increase the opportunities for internships for foster youth to build work readiness skills and to explore potential careers. Program description presented on page 12 of this document. The youth strongly supported this plan.

Other recommendations from the Board members relate to changes in the Chafee and ETV guidelines. They recommend:

- Extension of the age eligibility for Chafee services from 21 to 24 – as many young adults are remaining in agency care beyond age 20 in Massachusetts, the youth/young adults recommended that the Outreach services be available to continue to support goal achievement.
- Expansion of funding for the Education and Training Voucher Program – to support youth to age 24 and, ideally, allow support of graduate school.

The Board members understood that the Department is not able to implement their recommendations without changes to the Chafee and ETV Program guidelines, but they requested that their recommendations be shared with the Children's Bureau.

Continuing Support of Youth/Young Adult

The Department's efforts toward furthering leadership and empowerment opportunities for agency served youth will be ongoing. Youth will continue to have available to them many youth leadership opportunities focusing on peer support, program development, service delivery evaluations, etc. Through such activities, youth enjoy opportunities to learn from one another, function as role models for their peers, and address issues related to their "in care" status. Youth report that involvement in leadership activities helps them recognize their own strengths, increase their self-esteem and provides them with a very satisfying sense of accomplishment. Board members also received training on public speaking and inter-personal communication this year.

NYTD

The Department has shared the NYTD outcomes with the agency's statewide managers with discussions that have informed planning for adolescent services and reaffirmed the Department's focus on supporting permanency for all foster youth. DCF has shared the NYTD data with the Massachusetts Alliance for Families (MAFF), an advocacy association that is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for foster children and foster families and with contracted providers of intensive foster care. The identified strengths and needs will continue to help the agency focus its work with youth and providers.

Input from the members of the Youth Advisory Board has been solicited since the implementation of the NYTD – seeking strategies for engaging youth to complete the surveys to helping staff determine which survey questions needed more explanation. Subsequently, DCF has shared the NYTD data with members of the Youth Advisory Boards for feedback and insight into the service needs and best practice approaches/strategies.

The Department plans to continue to share future NYTD data with the Youth Advisory Boards, providers, foster parents and other stakeholders to gather feedback and plan strategies to improve service delivery wherever needed. The Department has been successful in collecting the NYTD data since the implementation of the requirements. Information is gathered via a number of sources including:

- the Family Net –client information system including service referrals;
 - the NYTD window on Family Net which stores information on services provided to youth/young adults;
 - the Adolescent Outreach staff who coordinate the completion of the NYTD surveys with the youth; and
 - the Judge Baker Children's Service staff who collaborate with the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni to administer the NYTD birthday card notice and incentive to the youths.
- These systems will continue in place to support the Department's compliance with data collection.
 - The Department plans a more robust review of the NYTD data during the next five years and plans to use it to inform service planning and delivery. The Department's Family Net system has a window for staff to document independent living type services delivered to youth. Outreach staff have been using this window since its creation 2 years ago. Plans are for field staff to use this window for documentation as well. This will provide much more robust data on service delivery of independent living services during the next few years.
 - Two additional staff will be hired to focus on the NYTD survey completion as well as the credit reporting requirements for youth in care age 16 and older.

A summary of the NYTD Baseline (survey) Population follows:

- 924 DCF youth reached their 17th birthday in FFY 2011 while in foster care
 - 100 of these 924 were excluded from the Baseline Population
 - 64 youth declined to participate
 - 32 had an incapacitating mental/physical condition
 - 4 were incarcerated
- 85% (698 of 824) of the eligible Baseline Population completed the NYTD survey between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011
Target = 80%

Survey Findings:

- 94% reported having at least one adult in their lives, other than their caseworker, who they can go to for advice or emotional support;
- 91% reported enrollment in and attending high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training or college;
- 96% reported receiving Mass Health coverage; 14% report having health insurance other than or in addition to Mass Health;
- 17% reported experiencing homelessness at some time in their lives;
- 17% reported being referred for alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling;
- 31% reported being “confined in a juvenile or community detention facility, jail, prison, or correctional facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime;” and
- 4% reported giving birth or fathering a child that was “born.” Of these 30 youth, 97% reported that they were married to the child’s other parent at the time the child was born.

Serving Youth across the State

The services funded with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Grant funds are available to eligible youth and young adults across the state – life skills training, internships, discharge support, etc. In the area offices where there is not an Adolescent Outreach worker assigned, the regional Outreach Program Supervisor will provide the access to Chafee funded services and supports.

The Chafee funded services are the same in each of the 4 regions of the state. The particular focus of the services is based on the individual youth/young adult’s needs. The state funded services are comparable across the state – again with the focus on the unique needs of the individual youth to be served in each area/region. Former foster youth ages 18-21 are offered the same Chafee services as foster youth under age 18. Former foster youth who leave DCF care after attaining age 18 may access Outreach services and other Chafee Program funded services, i.e. internships, discharge support, assistance with educational services.

Serving Youth of Various Ages and States of Achieving Independence Practice and Tools

The DCF life skill curriculum, Preparing Youth for Young Adulthood (PAYA), is the standard tool used to guide the life skill development of youth ages 14 and older. The delivery of life skills training using the PAYA curriculum is mandated by all youth ages 14 and older in residential and group care settings, independent living programs, and youth in contracted or intensive foster care. Foster parents, providers, and staff are encouraged to integrate the information and activities suggested in the modules into the daily learning opportunities for youth in their care. The PAYA incentive program is also available to these youth.

The Department's revised Permanency Planning Policy (effective July 1, 2013) requires all Intensive Foster Care (IFC) contracted providers and congregate care providers to complete the Youth Readiness Assessment Tool for the same population of youth and young adults specified above. The Adolescent Outreach workers field testing this document for more than a year and modifications based on their feedback and the feedback from youth and young adults was incorporated.

For youth under age 16, PAYA is the most common method of life skill preparation utilized although it is available to all youth.

For youth ages 16 -21, who are open consumers with DCF or who closed at age 18, the Adolescent Outreach Program is a resource offered – intensive life skills training, support with securing permanency with family and caring adults, assistance with educational achievement, job readiness, placement and maintenance, informed decision making, money management, etc. are some of the targeted services. Additionally, DCF makes every effort to serve youth with life skills groups, contracted or provided by Outreach staff, Outreach supervisor support, and/or ETV staff support.

Youth who, after attaining age 16, left foster care for adoption or guardianship are eligible for the Chafee services. The Life Skills Support Program is also available to youth ages 14 and older (depending on funding limitations); it provides funding for life skill related items and activities.

Youth Served

From July 2013 to May 2014, the Outreach staff served 1430 youth and young adults. Of these, 439 youth and young adults received or are presently receiving intensive, weekly individualized life skill assessment to identify their strengths, life skills training to address their needs, as well as assistance for youth in developing and strengthening life long connections to caring adults. These services support the youth in mastering the skills they will need to live successfully in the community upon discharge from agency care. During this same time period, 991 additional youth received assistance from Outreach staff to assist with job search, education, financial aid/college applications, housing support, Mass Health applications, and

referral/resource information. The outcome statistics are derived from the 439 youth/young adults served in the program this past year. Additionally, another 16 youth/young adults have begun working with an Outreach worker this May 2014; however, as their participation is so recent, their progress is not calculated in the outcomes.

The Outreach Program focuses its work with youth/young adults in Departmental foster care, kinship care and those who are receiving Young Adult Support Payments. It is expected via contract requirements that youth/young adults in Intensive Foster Care or group/residential care are provided similar life skill preparatory services in their placements. To avoid duplication of services, the Outreach workers generally do not work intensively with youth while they are in these placements. Also, youth/young adults who received Outreach services in a previous year may return for services – intensive or short-term focused at any time prior to age 21.

Youth/young adults are referred to the Outreach Program by the case managing social worker. Outreach workers also identify prospective clients by reviewing the report of youth in placement. Current programming/staffing focuses on youth/young adults ages 16 and older for two reasons: youth younger than age 16 have in the past not demonstrated sustained engagement for weekly life skills meetings and present staffing levels would not support the expansion of services to youth ages 14 and 15. The PAYA life skills curriculum is available to all youth in DCF placements.

As in previous years, the majority of youth served in the program are age 17 and older. The vast majority, 99% of the youth on the active caseload as of May 2014, were open for case management services with DCF; 7% (10 youth) of these youth are age 18 or older and had discharged from DCF and later returned to placement. These young adults include self-referrals and those referred to the program by community service agencies, homeless shelters, former foster parents, DCF social workers, etc. Given the updated Permanency Planning Policy, we expect to see a continuation in the high numbers of youth who choose to sign a voluntary placement agreement with DCF when they reach age 18. One percent of the active Outreach cases were closed with DCF –no longer in DCF placement (3 cases.) At the time of the case review, no youth/young adults in the active caseload were youth who left care after age 16 for guardianship or adoption. However, five youth/young adults in the tracking/closed caseload had left foster after age 16 for guardianship.

There are no differences in how youth/young adults would be served whether they are open with DCF for placement, former foster youth who left DCF after attaining age 18 or left DCF placement after age 16 for guardianship or adoption. The referrals to the Outreach Program for the youth in guardianship or adoptions are less frequent.

Staffing and Service Overview

The program is presently staffed by 19 Outreach workers and 4 Supervisors. Overall program management is provided by the Director of Adolescent Support Services. The Outreach workers are assigned to an area office. In some instances of smaller offices, the Outreach worker covers 2 offices. The Outreach supervisors cover the assigned region.

The Outreach staff provide weekly service to the youth and young adults on their Active Caseload and contact with the youth who have moved from the Active Caseload to Tracking for 6 months – to provide any additional support needed. Outreach workers also provide resource information to youth, staff, providers and foster parents. Often Outreach workers will provide short term services to youth around education, housing, and life skills or any number of other issues that may arise. In the past, the program has categorized this work as contact services and does not include these youth in the active or closed caseload count. However, given the extent of the services provided during these contacts – sometimes as much as weekly meetings that continue for many weeks, we are considering reporting these services differently in the next few years to capture the full extent of support provided.

This past year staff provided 991 youth with such support. This number is most likely under reported as the Outreach staff have assisted many youth with completing the NYTD survey this year and in the process have connected them to DCF support services, educational programs, etc.

Outcomes

Permanency and self-sufficiency for current and former foster youth are two of the principal objectives Outreach staff work toward. This program enhances the agency's capacity to better prepare youth, age 14-21 for moving from agency care to permanence and strengthens their chances of leading productive lives within the community after discharge. This relational model of programming provides a highly individualized approach and accommodates youth with a variety of clinical issues and cognitive functions.

Since its implementation, the Adolescent Outreach Program has continued to assist youth reach their life skill goals. Highlights of the most recent statistical review in May 2014 are presented below. The percentages are based on a total of 223 youth/young adults ages 16-21 who had received program services this year, but have been discharged from the program. Most of these youth (74%) are open with DCF; of these youth 4.5% had left agency care at 18 and returned for services. Twenty six percent (26%) were closed cases. The achievements over the last few years have been fairly consistent. Minor differences in some categories. Some are noted below. The youth/young adults who engage in Outreach services are generally successful in reaching their educational and employment goals as well as attaining permanency connections with family and community.

Education

- 74% attained a high school diploma (*69% in 2013*); (*67% in 2012*)
- 15% attained a GED certificate (*6% in 2013*); (*10% in 2012*)

- 6% were still enrolled in high school
- 3% were enrolled in a HiSET program
- <1% enrolled at Job Corps
- 2% of youth dropped out of high school with no other educational services in place

Among these 200 youth who completed high school or a GED ----

- 40% were enrolled in a 2 year college;
- 13% were enrolled in a 4 year college;
- 6% were enrolled in a post-secondary vocational training program
- 5% had completed a post-secondary vocational training program
- 5% have been accepted to a 2 year college to begin in the fall;
- 4% have been accepted to a 4 year college to begin in the fall;

Employment

- 18% of the youth were employed full-time (16% in 2013); (19% in 2012)
- 49% part-time (40% in 2013); (40% in 2012)
- 10% were working part-time during school year and full time in the summer
- 5% were not working due to placement issues
- 4% were not working due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities
- 3% have secured jobs for the summer
- 2% were in internships or volunteer work
- 1% were at Job Corps
- 1% were in the military
- <1% were not working due to educational commitments
- <1% were not working due to documented disability
- 7% unknown

Additional Information

- 1% were participating in an internship or volunteer position in addition to employment
- 32% were enrolled with a Career Center
- 4% had applied to WIA for employment assistance

**The employment statistics reflect the fact that 70% of these youth were still attending high school, GED classes, college or vocational training at the time of reporting.*

Other Source of Income

- 3% were receiving Social Security disability benefits
- 50% were receiving state funded Young Adult Support payments
- 5% were receiving TANF

- 25% were receiving SNAP benefits
- 43% received ETV payments this year
- 38% used the MA Tuition and Fee Waiver
- 23% received state Foster Child Grant funds for full time post-secondary education
- 2% had utilized a Family Unification Voucher through the Outreach Program

Placement

- 25% were living in their own apartments with or without roommates
- 21% had returned to live with their immediate or extended family
- 9% were living in DCF foster homes
- 9% were living with friends & paying rent
- 8% were in living in college dorms
- 5% were living in a kinship foster home
- 4% were renting a room
- 3% were living in a contracted Intensive Foster care placement
- 3% were living in an independent living program or group care
- 2% were living with former foster parent – paying rent
- 2% were living with friends-not paying rent
- 1% were living with former foster parent- not paying ren
- 1% were at Job Corps
- 1% were in the military
- 1% were in a substance abuse rehabilitation program
- <1% were living in a Young Parents Program
- <1% were living in a shelter
- 4% were unknown

Other Services

- 13% of the youth were taking psychotropic medications as prescribed (6% in 2013); (9% in 2012)
- 4% were prescribed psychotropic medications but were not taking them (3% in 2013); (3% in 2012)
- 7% were receiving services from the MA Rehabilitation Commission
- 2% were on probation through the courts
- 2% were receiving substance abuse services
- 0% of youth were receiving services from the Dept. of Mental Health
- 0% of youth were receiving services from the Dept. of Developmental Disabilities

Additional Outcomes

- 84% had a connection their birth parent(s)

- ❖ *17% were in touch via telephone/social media only*
- ❖ *67% were visiting with parents*

- 98% of youth have a community support system
- 99% of youth have an identified life long connection

- 96% of the youth who had siblings were connected with them; of these youth:
 - ❖ *16% through phone calls only*
 - ❖ *80% were visiting or living with their siblings*

- 89% of the youth have a connection with their extended birth family;
 - of these youth:
 - ❖ *9% through phone calls only*
 - ❖ *80% are visiting with extended family*

The full reports for the Closed/Tracking Caseload Statistics, May 2014, and the Active Caseload Statistics, May 2014 are available.

Life Skill Curriculum

The Department's own life skill curriculum, Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA) has been successfully used by the foster parents, residential and group care programs and intensive contracted foster care agencies for more than 20 years to help ensure continuity in the life skills training for youth in out-of-home placement. The components of the PAY A curriculum include five (5) life skills modules, each of which incorporates a number of related skill areas as described below:

- Module 1: Money, Home and Food Management
- Module 2: Personal Care, Health, Safety and Decision-Making
- Module 3: Education, Job Seeking and Job Maintenance
- Module 4: Housing, Transportation, Community Resources, Laws and Recreation
- Module 5: Young Parents Guide – Sexuality, Reproduction, Decision-Making, Pre-Natal Care, Pregnancy, Child Development, Child Safety, Physical Care, Education and Career Planning and Housing

Monthly training across the state are provided to staff, foster parents, providers and community partners on the use of the curriculum and the implementation of the program services. The training presents strategies for working with adolescents around readiness for community living and teaching specific life skills. Preparation for agency discharge and the after-care needs of youth are also addressed.

With the release of the revised Permanency Planning Policy this year, the PAYA trainings have also included a review of the policy as it applies to adolescents and transition age youth – with specific focus on the new Youth Readiness Assessment Tool.

PAYA Life Skill Groups

Boston Region

FY14 Dimock/Hyde Park PAYA Groups

A “Healthy Lifestyle” PAYA group was held in the Dimock office for four weeks. The group included 7 participants during the 4 week group.

Topics that were covered included, nutrition and healthy cooking, food management and grocery shopping, exercise and recreation, and sexual health.

Participants completed a variety of hands on and group activities. All of the participants were engaged in the group and enjoyed learning from the leaders and each other.

Southern Region

The Southern Region Outreach staff also facilitated a life skills group using the PAYA curriculum. Youth learned about decision making, money management, drug abuse, nutrition, and the importance of physical exercise. Guest speakers were brought in to address the youth including a local bank, members of Alcoholics Anonymous, a yoga teacher, and inmates from the Dartmouth House of Corrections Choices Program. The group also discussed the DCF voluntary placement agreement, health care proxy and DCF educational programs that are available to assist them reach their educational/vocational goals. Fifteen youth participated in this group.

PAYA Incentive Program

Since the implementation of the PAYA Program more than 20 years ago, the Department has utilized incentives to reward adolescents for their successful completion of a skill module, encourage their development of self-esteem, and empower them to continue their efforts of enhancing their life skills. The youth also learn to set goals for themselves and work toward their achievement – as well as the tangible reward. In order to qualify for an incentive, a youth must master the skills addressed in the individual life skill module. Youth may request \$50 for a life skill related item or a one time payment of \$300 toward driver education training. From July 2013 to May 2014 (to date), 363 youth were awarded at least one PAYA incentives for a total cost of \$53,900. Some youth completed more than one module and received more than one incentive. There were 323 \$50 incentives awarded and 119 driver education incentives awarded.

Independent Living Support Program

This program provides Chafee funds for youth ages 14 -21 in placement or those youth who discharged from placement at or after age 18 to support their life skill development

and transition needs, such as bus passes, SAT fees, senior class expenses, athletic uniforms, sports fees, tutoring, furniture, computers, etc. Between July 2013 and May 2014, 820 youth – unduplicated count (total of \$524,040) received funding from this program.

DCF Internship Program

Again this year, the Department has provided valuable opportunities for foster youth to explore career interests and gain work experience within a supportive environment. Our continuing partnership with private businesses and community-based organizations provides internship opportunities for DCF youth with the goal of assisting youth gain valuable work experience and exposure to careers in which they have expressed an interest. Utilizing the support of the Outreach staff who provide on-going supervision, the program matches youth with employers in their communities in career orientated internship placements. Outreach workers who meet with youth on a weekly basis work with them to identify their areas of interest and help seek out an internship opportunity to explore their field of choice. Outreach workers assess the youth's current employment skills and provide support around job readiness in areas such as appropriate dress, workplace ethics, time management and transportation. Outreach workers can also support the internship supervisors to address any needs or concerns that may arise during the placement. Staff use the PAYA Life Skill Curriculum Module 3 to assist youth with employment readiness skills.

These internships give the youth a chance to explore potential career opportunities and encourage youth to set educational and vocational goals, form natural mentor connections with employers and employees in a career/field they are interested in and gain experience in a professional work setting.

DCF youth are paid a stipend by the Department for their participation in this program. The average youth initially works 40 hours with an opportunity for a 40 hour extension. The youth receives a \$7 an hour stipend. The stipend payment is managed by the Outreach Worker and given to the youth when the employer verifies that the hours have been completed. Some youth go on to be hired by the employer and/ or form lasting mentoring relationships. The internship program has been a great way to introduce youth to a vocational or professional work setting and motivate them to continue with their educational goals.

In FY 14, 91 youth were matched with internship placements. Of these, 46 youth have completed their internships and 45 youth have ongoing internships.

Of the 46 completed internships, 15 youth have reported continued mentor relationships with their employer (33%), 7 youth were hired by the employer (15%), and 5 (11%) continue to volunteer at their internship placement.

Some of the internships this year included:

- Alliance Health Care

- Animal Hospital
- Boys and Girls Club
- Family Yoga
- Hair Salon
- Little Oasis Daycare
- Lowell Textile Museum
- Marland Farm
- Milford Police
- MSPCA
- Phoenix Academy
- Quincy Garage
- Southcoast Surgery Center
- St Luke's Hospital
- Swansea Council on Aging
- The Wish Project
- West End Gym
- YMCA

DCF Mentoring Program

The DCF Adolescent Support Services Unit continues to support a small traditional mentoring program. Youth who participate in this program are in an out-of-home placement, over the age of 14. Youth participation in this program is voluntary. The mentoring relationship is geared towards the needs of the youth. Mentors are volunteers from the community who are able to support participants in goal setting, building life skills, and providing a support system. We ask that the commitment to the program be at least one year. Mentors and youth meet at least once a month with additional contact such as email and phone calls between each visit. Matches are encouraged to meet more than once a month if both parties are agreeable.

Recruitment tools include our agency website, collaboration with the Adoption/Foster Care Recruitment Unit and outreach to community and business resources. We also partner with our area office family resource units to offer a mentoring alternative to those individuals who are just "thinking about" becoming foster parents to introduce them to the youth the agency serves.

In FY 2014, 25 mentor applications were mailed to interested applicants. Nine individuals returned applications to DCF and 8 were approved to be matched. One person did not complete the entire application process. There were 4 matches made over the last year and 4 awaiting a match.

As the success of the Mentoring Program has been less than hoped, the Youth Advisory Board members, youth referred for a mentoring match and other youth served by the Adolescent Outreach Program were asked for their feedback and recommendations for improving the program. Following are their recommendations:

- Expand the Internship Program to connect youth with mentors based on a shared interest. Many discussed how difficult it is to establish a relationship with a mentor without a common basis.
- Extend the time period of the internship to allow sufficient time to establish connections that could build into a mentoring relationship.

DCF will incorporate these recommendations into the programming over the next five years.

Employment Efforts

- Assisting our youth develop employment skills - including readiness, search and maintenance - is one of the fundamental goals of the Outreach Program. As of May 2014, 322 youth or 73% of the 439 youth who are receiving or had received Outreach services during this fiscal year were known to be employed at this writing. An additional 25 youth (6%) had secured summer jobs and are scheduled to begin summer employment soon. There were also 27 youth (6%) were participating in an internship or were volunteering. The Outreach staff will continue to assist youth develop work readiness skills and facilitate access to placement services.
- The relationships that Adolescent Support Services/Outreach staff continue to develop with the local career centers is directly benefiting the youth they serve with improved access to job training programs and funding for vocational training programs. This access to WIA funding of vocational training programs is particularly beneficial to youth who attend a post-secondary school that is was not Title IV eligible, and, therefore, not covered by the federal Education and Training Voucher or the MA State Foster Child Grant Program. As of May 2014, 131 youth (30%) of the youth who are presently being served or were served by the Outreach Program in FY 14 were also receiving services or funding from the Career Center; this percentage is 5% higher than last year. An additional 27 youth (6%) applied for summer employment through WIA. As youth and the area office staff become more familiar with the Career Centers and the services they offer, we anticipate the numbers of youth served will grow. The letter of verification that foster youth can use to verify their eligibility for WIA services – saving time with locating multiple documents may also have supported this increase. DCF and Commonwealth Corporation developed this letter to facilitate the verification of the eligibility process to access WIA funded services and/or the career center services. In the past, the paperwork requirement has delayed enrollment as the social workers and youth sought to secure the required documents.

Housing Support & Room and Board Assistance

Massachusetts uses less than 30% of its allotment of the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program for room and board payments. As many of the youth sign Voluntary Placement Agreements with DCF upon turning age 18, and the state provides the funding for placements for youth/young adults ages 18 and older – from foster care, to Intensive Foster Care (contracted) to independent living programs. In addition, the DCF utilizes the state funded Youth Adult Support Payments to directly provide room and board payments to young adults who are determined to be responsible and able to safely manage these funds.

The Chafee Program funds cannot be used to support the room and board costs for foster youth in agency custody/care. The Department uses the Chafee funds for the Discharge Support Program:

- The Discharge Support Program is managed by the Adolescent Support Services Unit of DCF using Chafee grant funds. The program supports start-up costs (i.e. first month's rent, security deposit, essential furniture, household items, bedding, etc.) for young adults who have left agency care and are in need of such support. These are the expenses that DCF considers room and board payments for former foster youth. Transportation expenses are also included in the discharge support category. This past year from July 2014 to June 2014 (to date) – 62 young adults received discharge payments for housing and related expenses totaling \$60,150. Funds may be paid directly to the young adult or to the landlord. If necessary, the checks may be written to the young adult and mailed to the DCF area office so that the Outreach worker or social worker can assist the young adult in paying the rent and other living expenses. If the young adult's behaviors are such that providing money without his/her willingness to work with Outreach staff as described above would likely jeopardize safety, then the young adult is informed of the program and given contact information so that he/she may call at any time and request assistance. Youth discharging from care at or after age 18 without a return home remain a priority for this funding. However, as we are seeing a growing number of youth returning home prior to age 18 or after attaining age 18. The case closing reason may or may not reflect the return home. To support reunification, we will consider these youth for discharge support as funding is available.

With the updated Permanency Planning Policy and the continuation of the Foster Care Reviews for youth age 18 and older in DCF voluntary care, there are additional opportunities for the youth to be informed of this resource. Further efforts to inform youth, staff and providers of this transition benefit include training of staff in the area offices and at the pre-service/CORE training for all new staff; training of providers at PAYA trainings and technical assistance meetings. Outreach workers review the agency's monthly report of youth in placement to identify youth ages 17 and older who may be discharging from care. Outreach workers regularly inform youth at Youth Advisory Board meetings of the resources and request that they share the information with other foster youth. As of March 2014 there were 1872 young adults age 18 and older in voluntary care with DCF. This number represents an increase of approximately 6 % over last year at this same time when there were 1760 young adults ages 18 and older in care. As the eligibility for the Chafee Discharge Support funds end when a young adult turns 21, there is an increasing number of young adults who

do not qualify for this resource as they remain in DCF voluntary care to age 21. An increase in the age for eligibility for Chafee funds would be beneficial to these young adults as they transition into the community.

Below is a summary of the housing supports offered through state and federal housing funds, DCF, as well as donated supports. .

- **VOLUNTARY PLACEMENT AGREEMENT AND OPTIONS** - DCF encourages youth who attain age 18 in custody or care to request continued care with the Department to pursue their educational and/vocational training and access the services they need to reach their potential as participating citizens. The Voluntary Placement Agreement (VPA) that both the youth and the agency staff must sign has been modified to allow for agreements between the young adult and DCF and to specify the expectations of continued care. The service plan details the goals that the youth and the agency have agreed upon as well as the tasks for all parties who will assist the youth achieve the identified goals. This new form also includes reference to the Health Care Proxy.

As of March 2014, there were 1872 young adults age 18 and older in DCF placement settings. In addition to foster care and group care placements for youth ages 18 and older, the Department provides Young Adult Support Payments directly to young adults that DCF staff believe are responsible and able to live in an approved placement (i.e. college dormitory, apartment with or without roommates). Via this provision, young adults receive a stipend to fund their living costs and daily expenses. These youth are most often either attending an educational program or are training for a job/career. DCF social workers provide case management services. The area office Adolescent Outreach Worker may assist with supervision and support. As of March 2014, there were 860 young adults statewide who were receiving Young Adult Support Payments.

The supports available for post-secondary education and vocational training from both the federal government and the state are certainly an incentive for youth to pursue their educational goals. Youth are encouraged to stay in school to achieve their diplomas, GED certificates or to pursue post-secondary education or vocational training. This year DCF celebrated the 45 young adults who achieved their Bachelor's Degrees; 19 students with Associates Degrees and 37 young adults who were awarded post-secondary vocational training certificates. At this same time, the agency has been working to re-connect youth to their families when safe and appropriate to do so and to ensure that youth have identified enduring relationships with caring and responsible adults prior to their discharge. Eighty-four percent of the youth served and discharged from in the Outreach Program this year have connections with their birth parents and 89% were connected with their extended families. Their connections with siblings was even higher at 96%. More details of this contact is available on page 10 of this report.

- DCF has continued its partnership with the Sisters of Charity for more than 10 years to provide housing accommodations for female students age 18 and older who are currently or formerly in the care of DCF and are now pursuing post-secondary studies.

The Bachand Residence for Girls is an ideal example of collaboration and the valuable support that caring members of the community can offer to young adults preparing to transition to adulthood. The Sisters are responding to the community need for safe, stable housing for DCF post-secondary students who are attending community college or vocational training programs which do not offer housing accommodations. The Sisters of Charity rent DCF students private rooms in a previously vacant wing of their building. In addition to their own rooms, the young women have a kitchen and dining area, a lounge, computer room, laundry and storage area. The Department provides a monthly stipend to these students to assist with their rent and living expenses.

Outreach Program staff working closely with the residents, the Resident Assistant (a former DCF youth) and with the Sisters as the program changes/adapts to fit the needs of these adolescents. This past year, 15 young women have been residents at Bachand Hall. The students are only accepted as referrals from the DCF. Presently, 9 young women are residing there.

- DCF has also collaborated with community housing advocates and a developer to create a housing program for young men in the Lowell area, Paige Street Apartments. The program includes 10 one bedroom apartments. Nine of the apartments are reserved for DCF young adults and one is for the Resident Advisor (RA). The apartments are very affordable as the group was able to secure project based Section 8 vouchers for the units. The young adults pay 30% of their income for rent. They are responsible for their own use of electricity and cable. The building also has a common area in the basement for the residents to gather and a space for the young adults to meet with their social workers. Initially, the program will serve young adults ages 18-23 who are in the voluntary care of DCF and receiving Young Adult Support Payments. The expectation is that the residents will attend college or a vocational training program.
- Since 2009, DCF and the MA Dept. of Housing and Community Development have jointly applied to HUD for Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers– a portion of which have been assigned for “transition age” youth. These vouchers are limited to an 18 month period, unlike the standard FUP vouchers. As the young adults awarded the 18 month FUP vouchers are required to work with an Adolescent Outreach worker, the program is referred to as the FUP-AOP. Since 2009, we have maintained 28 vouchers for the transition age youth. Outreach staff are assigned to work with each recipient to support them with educational pursuits, money management, employment, housing and other needs that may arise. The young adults do not have to be in the voluntary care of DCF to be eligible for the FUP vouchers, just Chafee eligible. Below is an overview of the details for the young adults with FUP vouchers as of May 2014:

FUP Program Summary – 2014

This year the program has served 32 young adults. Presently 22 young adults are in their apartments using their vouchers, and five additional young adults are in the process of securing housing.

Ten young adults completed their time with the FUP Program; five of these young adults moved on to participate in the Youth Transitioning to Success Housing Program. Presently, one FUP voucher is in the approval process at the regional housing agency.

FUP Participants

(22 current + 5 approved and 1 in process)

Employment

3 not working

24 working part-time

Education

1 GED

22 College

1 Vocational Training

1 CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant)Program

2 not in school (working)

- After successfully completing their 18 month FUP voucher, five young adults have moved from the FUP-AOP into the newly developed Youth Transitions to Success Program - described on the following page.

Youth Transitioning to Success Program (YTTSP)

The Youth Transitioning to Success Program (YTTSP) was developed through a collaboration between the state Department of Housing and Community Development and DCF. This is a relatively new program designed to assist youth who have been successful with their FUP voucher; it includes many of the principles of the Moving to Work Program. Some of the features are subsidized rent, a special needs account for approved emergency expenses as well as an escrow account to assist youth to save for the future. The participants are required to be enrolled in a post-secondary degree program/vocational training program and to work at least 12 hours weekly. This YTTSP Program also includes assigned Outreach workers to assist the young adults with managing the responsibilities of money management, education, employment and housing.

Presently, 5 young adults are participating in the YTTSP Program and an additional 3 young adults will transition to the program once their FUP vouchers end within the next two months.

An additional five participants transitioned from the YTTSP in FY 14, two young adults graduated from college with Bachelor Degrees; one participant continues in college and works but has reached the age limit of 23, and two chose to withdraw from school to work ending their program involvement.

The collaboration between DCF and DHCD has been very successful. Whenever questions/challenges arise, both agencies discuss alternatives, and resolutions are readily agreed upon.

The Department of Housing and Community Development and DCF are planning a focus group with current and former YTTSP participants this spring to gather feedback and recommendations to improve programming. Current programs and partnerships will continue into next year, and DCF will continue its efforts to identify additional transitional living resources for our youth.

Extension of IV-E Foster Care Assistance to Young Adults 18-21

- MA has a long history of extending voluntary care to young adults ages 18 and older. However, with the and the recent revisions to the agency's Permanency Planning Policy and the approval of the federal Title IV-E Foster Care Assistance which allows the agency to claim federal reimbursement for a portion of the state funds used to pay for foster care costs for youth ages 18-21, we anticipate continued growth in the numbers of young adults who sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement with DCF at age 18 to continue in the agency care with DCF supporting their placement needs. As the young adults remain in care to pursue their education/vocational training, many to age 21 or older, their eligibility for the Chafee funded Discharge Support Program funds that DCF offers may end prior to their transition from agency care. As the need for Discharge Support funds is reduced, the Department plans to continue its focus on preparing the young adults for their successful transition to the community with Outreach workers support – teaching life skills, work readiness competencies, supporting permanency connections, etc. Plans to expand the Internship/Employment Readiness Program are in process.
- As of March 31, 2014, there were 1872 youth age 18 and older in the voluntary care of the DCF. The conditions under which they can remain in DCF care after age 18 mirror the recommended conditions for extended care under the Fostering Connections Law.
- The placement settings available to youth and young adults in the agency's care after age 18 are the same settings that are available for youth under age 18 with the exception of the Young Adult Support Payments which are available to youth age 18 and older who have demonstrated their ability to manage their money. These young adults may reside in a college dormitory or an apartment.
- The Department's Adolescent Outreach Program (supported with Chafee grant funds) provides individualized support to youth and young adults seeking or maintaining employment. Employment readiness services including practice with job applications, resumes, interview prep and practice, and job search as well as employment support on the young adult secures a job. Additionally, the Internship Program provides placements for youth/young adults in employment settings of interest to them. Young adults are also referred to the Career Centers across Massachusetts for career interest counseling, resume writing and job search.

- The Department provides specialized services to youth and young adults with special service needs. DCF contracts for teen living programs for teen mothers and their children to receive parenting skills training and life skills training. These services are available with a housing component or as stand alone services.
- DCF also works closely with the state Department of Transitional Assistance to provide referrals for similar programs for young mothers who are not in the custody/care of DCF.
- DCF works collaboratively with the state Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Public Health to facilitate access to services for youth and young adults with mental health and/or substance abuse histories. This collaborative working relationships are in addition to the services that DCF provides directly to foster youth through treatment programs (residential or community based). DCF issued joint RFR's for placement and unbundled services with DMH and is working on an RFR for intensive foster care with the Department of Youth Services.
- DCF contracts with My Life My Choice, a program that works with at risk youth and youth who have experienced trafficking. The program provides mentors to work individually with the victims. DCF also participates in a task force with the Attorney General's office on trafficking.
- Young adults who leave DCF care after age 18 but prior to age 21 are eligible for the Chafee funded services and the Education and Training Vouchers described throughout this report. The vast majority are also eligible for the state funded Tuition and Fee Waivers. The Adolescent Outreach workers are key in assisting these youth adults access the needed services including those to address their educational/vocational needs.
- With the revised DCF Permanency Planning Policy, the agency assumes that youth turning 18 will sign a Voluntary Placement Agreement to continue in care – unless they are returning home, adopted or unwilling to work collaboratively with DCF toward their service plan goals. Youth who choose not to participate in the treatment services that DCF assesses to be necessary for them may leave care to avoid these supports. Young adults who leave DCF care before reaching age 21 most often do so to return to family – especially the youth who are age 18. The older the young adult is the more likely they will transition from DCF care after having completed an educational/vocational program. A significant benefit for DCF young adults is the agency's policy that they may return to request voluntary services after discharging at age 18 or older. Planning for discharge is a fundamental part of service delivery. DCF provides a Discharge Support Program with Chafee funds. The program supports start-up costs (i.e. first month's rent, security deposit, essential furniture, household items, bedding, etc.) for young adults who have left agency care and are in need of such support. These are the expenses that DCF considers room and board payments for former foster youth. Transportation expenses are also included in the discharge support category. (More detail on page 16.)

- In addition to the federal Education and Training Voucher Program, the state provides two post-secondary educational support programs for foster youth and former foster youth: the Tuition and Fee Waiver Program and the Foster Child Grant Program. A summary of these programs follows in the education section.

Collaboration with Other Private and Public Agencies

- DCF Adolescent Services staff have continued to work collaboratively with staff at the Board of Higher Education, the state universities, the 2- year public colleges as well as the staff of the campuses of the University of MA. These collaborations have been very helpful in resolving issues on behalf of our shared students. DCF Adolescent Support Service staff have continued their presence on campuses and work in partnership with higher education (in the areas of support services, financial aid, registrar, etc.) to enhance the availability of and access to needed resources for our students. Outreach to the private colleges and post-secondary vocational training programs our youth attend has been ongoing.
- DCF has been collaborating with the state Department of Housing and Community Development for the last few years to manage the Family Unification Program Vouchers (FUP) for housing for transition age youth and the newer program, the Youth Transitioning to Success (YTTSP). (Fuller descriptions can be found under the housing section.) To date we have served or are presently serving 75 young adults with FUP housing vouchers and 20 young adults in the YTTSP.
- DCF Outreach social workers are continuing their communications with local shelters in an effort to identify any young adults who may qualify for DCF and/or Chafee services. Outreach workers reach out to local shelter programs to ask staff to call them if they identify a young adult who identifies as a former foster youth. Our goal is to connect with the young adult to offer Outreach services and other services as appropriate.
- The state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has continued its data sharing with DCF providing a range of demographic and educational information (SIMs data) which is visible for workers on iFamilyNet, including the SASID (State Assigned Student Identification Numbers), language, country of origin, enrollment information, truancy days, grade, school attending, special education status. The agencies continue to work to improve the timeliness of the data. DCF also receives the MCAS scores on students who were in agency custody when they took the exam. All this educational data is essential to social workers as they support youth in reaching their educational potential.
- DCF's 29 Education Coordinators are affiliated with each of our geographical area offices to provide assistance, training and support to workers and families for all education and special education related concerns that impact our children and youth. Their focus includes school enrollment, school engagement and supporting

transitions for youth who are hospitalized or returning from congregate care placements. They fulfill a critical role in fostering educational stability and progress for our youth.

- DCF youth have continued their involvement with the New England Youth Collaborative this year and have shared the progress that Massachusetts has made with growing the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni. Plans are underway for the annual youth conference in July this year.
- DCF Outreach Program staff have continued their efforts to strengthen connections with WIA funded agencies and career centers with the goal of accessing services and supports for our foster youth. This year 27% of the youth on the Active Outreach caseload and 32% of the youth on the Tracking/Closed Outreach caseloads were enrolled at a Career Center as of May 2014. Last year the percentages were 28% of the Active cases were enrolled with the Career Centers and 22% of the Tracking/Closed caseloads.
- The Department of Children and Families' partnership with Jordan's Furniture has grown significantly over the last few years. One of the programs assists youth who are transitioning into their first apartments. In an effort to support these youth, Jordan's Furniture provides stipends in the form of gift cards for needed furniture. Eligible youth are between the ages of 17-23 who are leaving placement or who will move into unfurnished housing in order to pursue an educational or vocational goal. Referrals are made to the Outreach Program by DCF outreach workers or social workers. Youth must write a letter stating their needs and goals in support of the request. In FY 14, Jordan's Furniture assisted 27 youth each with \$800 in gift cards for a total donation of \$21,600. Youth were then able to go to Jordan's Furniture store with their outreach worker or social worker to buy new furniture. With the assistance of the outreach worker or social worker the youth were able to comparison shop to make the most of their gift card. Youth were excited to purchase items such as a bedroom set, dining table or living room furniture of their very own to make their new apartment a comfortable home.
- On May 4th the huge movie theater at Jordan's Furniture Store in Reading, MA was once again crowded with happy graduates and their proud guests all celebrating their educational achievements. DCF again partnered with Jordan's Furniture Store to present the annual statewide Youth Achievement Celebration honoring youth who graduated from high school, college, a vocational training program or received a GED during the year. This year more 573 youth were invited to the celebration to share food, activities and a movie. The graduates were also given a certificate of achievement and gifts to commemorate their accomplishments. Regions will also celebrate their graduates this June at local events.
- BNY Mellon generously sponsored the Department's Youth Leadership Summit and Youth Leadership Academy this past year and will do the same again this July. Staff from BNY Mellon presented a workshop at the Summit on money management strategies which was well received by the youth. More than 200

participated in the 2-day event with workshops ranging from cyber-safety, credit management, skills for apartment living, safe relationships, post-secondary education options/careers, to finding positive outlets for energy. This July 30th and 31st DCF will present another Youth Summit preceded by a Youth Leadership Event. These events will also be sponsored by BNY Mellon.

- DCF staff have been working with staff of the Department of Youth Services (juvenile justice) to identify transitioning youth who are eligible for Chafee and/or state funded resources, such as Discharge Support funds, Tuition and Fee Waivers, Education and Training Vouchers, etc.
- DCF recruitment strategies for adolescent foster and adoptive parents included recommendations from the Youth Advisory Boards. Updated recruitment material has been produced.
- The MA Network of Foster Care Alumni has continued its development of members and held the third annual Thanksgiving Dinner Celebration on November 14, 2013 in Marlboro, MA. More than 100 alumni of foster care, ranging in age from 18 to 80, gathered to share a turkey dinner with all the trimmings. They enjoyed connecting with old friends and making new ones. Also in attendance were foster parents, state legislators, and DCF personnel, all members of MASS NFCA as allies of young adults in foster care. The Network provides a valuable resource to adults age 18 and older who have experienced foster care, adoption or guardianship. Its goals are to illuminate the diverse needs of alumni of foster care in Massachusetts by advocating for appropriate services and support, by promoting a healthy peer community, and by developing opportunities for service and leadership. The Network established an Advisory Board with strong representation of foster care alumni. The DCF Youth Advisory Boards have been natural sources for new memberships. Additional joint gatherings with the Boards and the Alumni Association are planned. DCF supports the Network via a contract with Judge Baker Children's Services.
- On April 22 DCF held the annual statewide College Fair for foster youth, providers, parents and staff to learn about the opportunities of post-secondary education as well as the state and federal financial support available. More than 30 colleges and post-secondary educational programs attended along with a representative from MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority). More than 100 attended this event.

Mass Health – Affordable Care Act

The partnership between the Department of Children and Families and the MA Department of Medical Assistance has continued to support Massachusetts' utilization of the federal Chafee Provision allowing states to provide Mass Health coverage for youth who discharge from placement at or after age 18. This benefit is provided up until their 21st birthday and, here in MA does not require youth/young adults to re-apply each year. This is a collaborative effort among federal and state government with DCF, the Department of Medical Assistance (DMA), the Executive Office of Health and Human

Services and the state legislature working to improve health care access for these young adults. Youth who remain in DCF care under a Voluntary Placement Agreement after age 18 will continue to receive the same Mass Health coverage as before through DCF. An informational sheet which explains the benefit in English and in Spanish has been shared with youth, DCF staff and providers.

With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, DCF and the Department of Medical Assistance have been working to facilitate the continuation of Mass Health - Medicaid to eligible young adults so that they do not experience a gap in coverage from “in placement” Mass Health to the new FFC eligibility coverage. Additionally, DCF and Mass Health staff work closely to facilitate access to FFC Mass Health for former foster youth over age 21 who lost coverage after attaining age 22. DCF will share the CIP Youth website: <http://www.masscip.org/content/chapter-nine> with staff, providers, youth, and others who may inform former foster youth. DCF has provided and will continue to provide outreach and education to foster parents, young adults, staff, providers regarding this benefit to identify young adults who are eligible but no longer in agency care. DCF has provided information about the FFC eligibility in its Youth Newsletter, Educational Newsletter, and foster parent newsletter. Outreach staff also share this information with young adults as they administer the NYTD survey. As these individuals are identified, DCF Outreach staff shepherd their applications through the approval process. The Department of Medical Assistance has identified two staff to facilitate processing of these applications and address any problems that arise. Massachusetts has selected the option to cover former foster youth from other states, as well.

Human Trafficking

DCF contracts with My Life My Choice, a program that works with at risk youth and youth who have experienced trafficking. The program provides mentors to work individually with the victims. DCF also participates in a task force with the Attorney General’s office on trafficking.

The Department’s PAYA Life Skills curriculum addresses the dangers of the domestic violence, dating violence, victimization and human trafficking. The focus on self esteem building, self care and personal goal setting is also the approach that the Adolescent Outreach staff use with their youth.

Determining Eligibility for Benefits and Services (section 477 (b) (2) (E) of the Act)

Massachusetts DCF uses the Chafee Program guidelines and criteria for program participation to determine which youth and young adults are eligible for services. The Permanency Planning Policy addresses the Outreach Program guidelines – page 54. DCF also provides Chafee services for eligible youth/young adults for other states who are temporarily living in Massachusetts or attending college here as well as those who have moved to MA after discharging from another state at or after age 18.

Cooperation in National Evaluations

Massachusetts has participated in the federally sponsored evaluation of the Chafee Program in the past and would cooperate in a national evaluation of the effects of the program in achieving the purposes of CFCIP with the approval of the agency's Internal Review Board.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program

Education

- Massachusetts awarded 516 Education and Training Vouchers in academic year 2013-2014. (A more detailed report on the ETV Program follows in a separate section.)
- Each year the Department hosts Statewide and Regional Youth Recognition Dinners to acknowledge the achievements of foster youth who graduated from high school, college, a vocational training program or received a GED. This June the academic/vocational achievements of 573 youth were recognized (428 graduating from high school, 44 youth achieving their GED, 37 youth receiving a post-secondary vocational certification, 45 youth graduating with a Bachelor's degree and 19 with an Associates Degree. The Jordan's Furniture Store is a primary sponsor providing the space for the largest recognition event – statewide - with gifts for all the youth and a free movie in the IMAX Theater. The TJX Corporation and private donors also donate gift certificates for the youth.
- As of May 2014, the Department has issued 4417 State College Tuition and Fee Waivers to current or former DCF foster youth – 324 waivers in the last 12 months. In June 2008 the MA legislature expanded the waiver program to cover fees in addition to tuition. The eligibility for the waiver was also expanded in 2008 so that DCF foster youth who are or were in agency custody and were not able to return home by age 18 are eligible for this benefit at the MA state two and four year colleges and the University of Massachusetts. Youth who were adopted or placed in a guardianship home through the Dept. of Children and Families are also eligible for the same waiver of tuition and fees.
- Adolescent Support Services Unit staff again presented 29 Educational/Vocational Fairs in each area office for youth, foster parents, group care providers, and DCF staff. Outreach staff presented information on financial aid – state and federal grant programs, assisted youth in completing their FAFSA applications and discussed the many options of college/vocational training opportunities available to foster youth. Foster youth who were currently attending college were also present to answer youths'

questions. This resource has been provided for the last ten years and will continue through 2019.

- In academic year 2013-2014, DCF referred 525 youth to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education for consideration of the Foster Child Grant Program to assist financially with their college/vocational training needs. The Board makes the final determination of eligibility. Awards are based on financial need and student status, including full-time attendance, MA residency, and eligible educational program.
- The 2014 DCF Scholarship Guide was produced again this spring including information and applications for numerous scholarships most relevant to DCF youth. The Guide is revised annually to ensure current information, applications, and web sites. This guide is available to youth, agency staff, foster parents, program staff, and others interested in assisting youth identify financial support for post-secondary education and training. The Guide will continue to be produced during the next five years.
- The DCF website, www.mass.gov/dcf , provides an online resource for students and foster parents to access up to date post-secondary and higher education financial benefits and support programs. The information is found under the Adolescent Support Services tab. ETV staff update and maintain the education information provided via the website.

Education and Training Voucher Program

Accomplishments

- Massachusetts awarded 516 Education and Training Vouchers in academic year 2013-2014. This reflects a decrease of 1% from the 521 recipients in academic year 2012 - 2013. However, fifty five students who applied for ETV awards had to be denied as they were age 23. There were 223 new vouchers and 293 ongoing vouchers this year; 57% of the vouchers awarded this year were for returning students. DCF staff continue to support students in persisting with their education. Last year 51% of the ETV awards were issued to returning students.
(A chart is presented on the next page with these same numbers.)
- The students who received an ETV award this year attended 106 different colleges, universities and vocational programs in 17 states. Of the 516 recipients, 444 (86%) students were enrolled full-time, and 72 students (14%) were enrolled part-time.

The ETV Program funding is particularly helpful to the DCF foster youth who were not in protective custody (as they are not presently eligible for the state-funded Foster Child Grant) and to those youth who were adopted from foster care or who were guardianed with kin after attaining age 16. The Education and Training Voucher Program has

provided significant post-secondary assistance to eligible foster and adopted youth and has assisted them with making more manageable and safer transitions to adult living.

The ETV Program goals for 2015-2019 include:

- Increasing the number of foster youth persisting in post-secondary education;
- Providing academic and personal support to foster youth pursuing post-secondary education;
- Maximizing all state and federal academic and financial resources available to students involved with DCF;
- Incorporating initiatives to connect youth with adult and peer mentors at academic institutions and with support staff on campus and at DCF;
- Educating DCF social workers and partners that serve adolescents on the importance of adequate college planning and preparation as well as the need for intensive support while youth are attending post-secondary educational programs;
- Increasing education of college staff who work in student support services about the needs of foster youth;
- Encouraging participants of the ETV Program to join the DCF Youth Advisory Board and the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni;
- Continuing focus groups of ETV recipients to obtain feedback on program services and recommendations for improvements, and
- Developing a Youth Advisory Board specific to the ETV program, made up of college students from foster care.

The Department’s progress with the ETV goals will be evaluated both qualitatively and quantitatively. DCF will track its progress with these goals by holding focus groups with post-secondary students in agency care; by measuring the number of youth who continue in post-secondary education who are receiving ETV awards; by continuing to pursue new collaborations with the staff of the colleges our youth attend and developing stronger connections where collaborations already exist.

2013-2014 ETV Program Information	
Total Recipients for 2013-2014	51 6
Breakdown of Total Recipients for 2013-2014	
Show New Recipients and Ongoing Recipients	51 6
2014 (NEW)	22 3
2013, 2014	12

	3
2012, 2014	20
2011, 2014	4
2010, 2014	2
2012, 2013, 2014	65
2011, 2013, 2014	3
2010, 2013, 2014	1
2011, 2012, 2014	7
2010, 2011, 2014	1
2010, 2012, 2014	1
2011, 2012, 2013, 2014	42
2010, 2012, 2013, 2014	1
2010, 2011, 2013, 2014	3
2010, 2011, 2012, 2014	2
2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014	14
2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014	4
Total	51
	6
Number of Universities/Colleges/Vocational attended	
	10
by 510 ETV Recipients	6
Number of States	17
Enrollment Status of 521 ETV Recipients	
	44
Full-Time	4
Part-Time	72
	14
4 Year Public	3
	25
2 Year Public	8
4 Year Private	68
2 Year Private	11
Vocational Training	36
Students enrolled not awarded ETV @ age 23	55

Direct Service/Mentoring

- ETV staff continued their relationship with The University of Massachusetts at Lowell to support the “Student Navigators Club”. Again this year ETV staff presented post-secondary resource information at the UMass Lowell Foster Care

Awareness Day. The event was attended by UMass Lowell students from foster care and other students studying child welfare as well as local legislators and stakeholders.

- Twenty-three College Advising events were held on 20 campuses this past academic year. Over 150 foster youth were served through these events via either direct meetings with ETV staff or through advocacy on their behalf to college financial aid or student support personnel. Students were assisted with financial planning, housing, academic progress and social/emotional needs. These events also provided an opportunity for interested students to meet peer mentors who are also in the DCF system and attend the same academic institutions.
- The Department hosted its 8th annual statewide College Fair on April 22, 2014. The event was attended by over 200 participants including foster youth, foster parents, agency and group care program staff. Representatives from more than 30 colleges/universities, the MA Educational Finance Authority (MEFA) as well as a select group of private colleges and vocational training schools that have committed to providing supportive services to foster youth were present. Colleges and programs were able to highlight courses of study as well as support programs available to foster youth.
- During the next two years, ETV staff will expand the Department's direct marketing of post-secondary supports to students by way of providing online orientation and training regarding the ETV Program and services. The online training will assist students with navigating the post-secondary education system college enrollment process, financial aid supports as well as helpful information regarding college life. Guidance from the Youth Advisory Board members and DCF college students will be solicited to ensure the training is relevant to the needs of the students and engaging and effective technology.

Collaboration

- ETV staff presented at the 2014 Massachusetts Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The workshop focused on how financial aid administrators can support foster youth through their offices.
- DCF has maintained and will continue its membership on the Massachusetts Department of Education's Financial Aid Advisory Board to ensure that foster care youth are represented when financial aid policy and practice is developed at Massachusetts colleges.
- ETV staff met on campus with financial aid staff of 23 Massachusetts public colleges for the purposes of programmatic planning as well as review of current financial aid packaging for enrolled foster youth.

- The two ETV staff have developed and maintained partnerships with state community colleges to identify housing and educational support resources and have presented at numerous informational meetings for DCF staff and providers to share information on these resources. The ETV staff have also informed community service providers, high schools, GED programs, transitional living programs, and other state agencies which may be serving former foster youth of the resources available to them. The staff has strengthened relationships with the Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Programs for out-of-school youth, the WIA Career Centers, and other vocational training programs. This year the staff continued to maintain a college specific roommate matching program and a list of summer and holiday housing resources for youth who may need housing between semesters or on holiday breaks when dorms close.
- This year ETV staff partnered with TRIO staff in two regions of the Commonwealth, Middlesex Community College and Northern Essex Community College, to develop processes to increase referral and collaboration between the DCF Adolescent Outreach and TRIO programs.
- ETV staff continued to provide significant support to the University of Massachusetts Boston newly created UAccess Program. This office is designed to provide support and referral for students who are facing social, emotional, and financial challenges at UMass – Boston.
- ETV staff are advisory board members on the UMASS/UAccess, Statewide Workgroup on Homeless College Students and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Financial Aid Advisory Board. On these Boards ETV staff ensure that current state programming and resources are inclusive of the needs of foster youth.
- ETV staff also presented at six Guidance Counselor trainings throughout the Commonwealth sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Financing Authority (MEFA).
- DCF ETV social workers and the Dean of Enrollment Management at Fitchburg State University collaborated on a Summer Housing and Employment Pilot Program which will begin this summer. Five current students at Fitchburg State University (4 foster youth and one youth in a guardianship) were identified for participation. Each student will live on campus and take summer session classes. They will also work part-time on campus. This program will provide the students with the opportunity to gain class credits toward their degrees. A combination of funding from the state Tuition and Fee Waivers, ETV awards, DCF Young Adult Support Payments will be used.
- DCF hopes to replicate this model and has applied to present at this year's MASFAA Conference (Mass Association of Financial Aid Administrators) – a conference that MA state university administrators attend.

Training and Technical Assistance

- ETV staff again assisted in the production of a video highlighting the accomplishments of youth graduating from high school and college. These youth gave advice to other youth on how to be successful in school and identified critical adult partners. The video is utilized by Adolescent Outreach Workers as well as recruitment and training staff of the Department.
- DCF staff continued to assist in financial aid coordination for The Home for Little Wanderers ASCL (Academic Support for College and Life) Program. This residential program is located on campus at Bridgewater State University and serves youth with life skills training while they are earning college credits.
- The ETV and Outreach staff provided technical assistance this year statewide to the Department's contracted foster care agencies, group homes and independent living programs in order to increase competency of care providers in assisting youth plan for, pursue and persist in post-secondary education.
- On a regular basis, Adolescent Services staff provided life skills and youth development trainings statewide. There were eight PAYA certification trainings across the state this year. All DCF staff, contracted and state agencies, community partners, and foster parents are invited to attend these trainings.
- Again this year two e-newsletters were distributed from the Massachusetts ETV Program. The first was a publication of training dates and resource and referral information for professionals supporting youth in post-secondary education. The second was for the students themselves and provided dates when ETV staff would be on campus advising, happenings at the DCF that would be of interest and support to students as well as tips and advice for financial planning and college success.
- ETV staff is collaborating with Lutheran Social Services to assist DCF youth who have immigration/refugee status with post secondary education needs.

Determining and Maintaining Program Eligibility

All potentially eligible youth are asked to complete the Educational/Vocational Training Voucher (ETV) Program application, and attach a copy of their financial aid award letter and statement of account so that DCF staff may determine the cost of attendance as well as the total amount of financial aid from all sources prior to ETV funding. Students are also asked to attach their most recent college transcript that includes course credits and grades. Students also supply information on housing and employment status as well as case status with the Department. In addition to this information students sign consents to

release information for the school or the Department for the purposes of financial or academic planning.

Students must maintain satisfactory performance status in accordance with their school and the federal financial aid guidelines. Toward this goal, DCF makes every effort to connect our students to the academic and personal support resources on campus. The ETV and/or Outreach staff will try to maintain contact with the students to provide ongoing support. These services may range in intensity from weekly Outreach worker services to occasional assistance with the completion of the FASFA and review of the ETV application re-determining eligibility and identifying any additional support needs. This support is essential to a student's success. Each student receiving ETV funds will also receive a listing of the support resources at his/her college along with the name and contact information for the ETV worker.

Youth Served

MA follows the ETV Program guidelines under Section 477 (i) for identifying eligible young adults:

- 1) youth otherwise eligible for services under the Massachusetts CFCIP program;
- 2) youth adopted through DCF from foster care after attaining age 16;
- 3) youth placed with a kinship guardian through DCF after attaining age 16, and
- 4) youth participating in the voucher program on their 21st birthday, until they turn 23 years old, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program and making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Youth otherwise eligible for CFCIP services are those youth eligible for services under the MA program.

DCF staff have maintained a strong collaborative relationship with the Department of Higher Education that manages the state supported Foster Child Grant Program and the Tuition and Fee Waivers. Regular meetings ensure any issues/questions regarding eligibility and benefits are resolved quickly. DCF is partnering with Office of Student Financial Assistance to use updated and more efficient technology to exchange information needed in order to administer financial aid packages.

The DCF Adolescent Outreach staff and the Education and Training social workers are in ongoing communication with the ETV recipients and gather feedback from them at meetings held on the college campuses. The DCF Youth Advisory Board members also provide input on services and program recommendations. Feedback has been focused on the need for additional ETV funds for post-secondary vocational training programs in addition to the private, more expensive colleges. Another continuing recommendation is funding for graduate school.

DCF measures the success of the program in a number of ways including number of vouchers issued, persistence in school, achievement of degrees or certifications as well as participation in on campus advising days, etc.

Program Adjustments

Given the high number of eligible youth accessing vouchers and the rising cost of higher education, DCF will continue to provide a maximum award of \$4000 for full-time college students unless extenuating circumstances call for \$5000 which will be awarded only with the approval of the Director of Adolescent Support Services. DCF will continue to award a maximum of \$2000 for vocational training schools unless youth can demonstrate that they cannot afford their chosen educational path without additional funding. We have found that youth who are able to take advantage of the MA Tuition and Fee Waiver for Foster Children, MA Foster Child Grant as well as ETV were able to attend school at the state and community college level with no loan nor cash balance, and four year Bachelor programs with a nominal loan balance and generally no cash balance. Youth who were able to take advantage of both the MA Foster Child Grant and ETV and attended vocational training schools generally carried no cash balances and nominal loan balances. Students are assessed on their individual needs and circumstances.

Massachusetts State Financial Aid Programs for Foster Youth

DCF coordinates the ETV Program with other Massachusetts state-funded education and training programs currently offering financial assistance to eligible foster and adopted youth including the State College Tuition and Fee Waiver Program, the Foster Child Grant Program and the William Warren Scholarship Program.

The ETV staff work with the MA Board of Higher Education – Office of Student Financial Assistance around the Foster Child Grant. ETV staff review all ETV applications, Foster Child Grant Applications, William Warren Scholarship applications and financial aid award statements in an effort to prevent duplication of benefits and determine that the amount of assistance from any Federal sources combined with ETV funds does not exceed the “cost of attendance” as outlined in 477 (b) (3) (J).

Foster Child Tuition and Fee Waiver Program

The Foster Child Tuition and Fee Waiver Program provides waivers for undergraduate tuition and fees for state-supported classes at the in-state rate to foster children at any one of Massachusetts' 29 state universities and community colleges. Initially approved by the Board of Higher Education in June of 2000 for tuition waivers, this program was expanded to include fees in July of 2008. Youth eligible for the state college undergraduate or certificate tuition and fee waivers include:

- A current or former foster child who was placed in the custody of the Department of Children and Families and remained in custody through age 18 without subsequently being returned home. The youth must have been in custody for at least six months immediately prior to age 18;
- Youth adopted through the Department of Children and Families; and
- Youth who have been in the custody of the Department of Children and Families and whose guardianship was sponsored by the Department of Children and Families through age 18.

To date, the Department has issued 4417 State College Tuition and Fee Waivers to current and former foster and guardian DCF youth, 324 waivers in the last 12 months. DCF also grants state college tuition and fee waivers to children and youth who were adopted through the agency.

MA Foster Child Grant Program

The Foster Child Grant Program was developed in January 2001 and provides up to \$6000 of financial aid for current and former DCF youth (in custody via a C&P) who have left care at age 18 or older without returning home. This aid may be used at any IV- E eligible public or private college. The MA Board of Higher Education manages these grants, determining the level of funding per student.

William Warren Scholarship Program

- The Department issued 3 William Warren Scholarships this year to youth served by the agency who were attending four year colleges and who demonstrated need beyond financial support programs available at the state and federal level. These scholarships were financed with donated funds. Many of the youth who apply for the program are also eligible for the Massachusetts Tuition and Fee Waiver and other higher education support programs such as ETV. Applicants who qualify for other forms of student aid are supported by ETV workers to access such aid.

Hope Worldwide Dr. Martin Luther King Essay Contest

- The Department has continued its partnership with Hope Worldwide and the Boston Church of Christ who sponsor an essay contest each year to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King. College students from foster care are invited to compete against one another in an essay contest where they reflect on Dr. King's "Drum Major Speech" about public service. This year over \$3500 in scholarships were awarded to college students from DCF. The winners were honored at a service dedicated to Dr. King.

Consultation with Tribes (section 477(b)(3)(G))

Representatives from the Adolescent Outreach Program, including the Director of the Adolescent Support Services Unit at DCF, Maureen Messeder, met with Bonnie Chalifoux, Director of Human Services of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe on September 17, 2013. Outreach staff have been in contact with Ms. Chalifoux throughout the year, and she has been made aware of Outreach services available to Tribal youth who are eligible for Chafee or ETV program services. She has also been informed of post-secondary educational funding available to Tribal youth through the Chafee Grant and the State of Massachusetts. In our discussion to identify Tribal youth eligible for Chafee services, Ms. Chalifoux stated that at this time the Aquinnah Tribe has no youth age 14-21 in placement. She did report, however, that the Tribal youth who worked with Outreach and graduated from Northeastern University is currently employed by the Tribe working with their youth at their facility in Aquinnah.

A representative of the Outreach Program participated in a Massachusetts Approach to Partnership Parenting (MAPP) training for new foster parents from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe on March 31, 2014. In attendance at the training was Kassie Lee, ICWA Support Specialist and Catherine Hendricks, ICWA Director for the Tribe. Services and funding available through the Chafee Grant to Tribal youth in placement were reviewed and applications to access funds and services were provided. Utilization of the Youth Readiness Planning Tool was reviewed and the importance of permanency for children and youth in foster care was discussed.

The Outreach Program will continue to work with Tribal officials to identify older Tribal youth in placement and will assist any youth in accessing services as well as any State and Federal education funds available to them. At this time, the only Mashpee Tribal youth eligible for services is a twenty year old female who attends the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She works with an Outreach Worker and receives all services and educational funding available.

CFCIP Program Improvement Efforts

The following DCF Strategic Plan Goal Objective is related to the CFCIP Program Improvements:

Goal 2.0: Strengthen Case Practices and Processes

Strategic Initiative 2.1: Strengthen Core Functions and Innovations in Case Practice

Objective 2.1.6: Strengthen Engagement with Youth Adults

- Foster Care Review (FCR) Policy/strengthen our FCR process with youth ≥ 18 years old
- Permanency Hearings for youth ≥ 18 years old
- Youth Panels in each area office to address any concerns with youth ≥ 18 continuing in agency care
- Support the MA Network of Foster Care Alumni to become self-sustaining
- Develop placement supports for youth ≥ 18 years and older
- Develop additional educational supports
- Continue to strengthen the NYTD program.

Youth Development and Participation in Agency Improvements

- The youth leadership achievements this year and future planned activities are described below:
 1. Board members assisted in the planning for the Youth Leadership Institute last July and are working now on this year's Youth Leadership Academy and Youth Summit to be held on July 30 and 31st. BNY Mellon sponsored the Leadership Summit last year and will do so again this year.
 2. DCF maintains its participation in the New England Youth Collaborative – a regional youth group dedicated to improving the services/resources and outcomes for foster youth. Each New England state has 3-4 youth representatives. This year the group has been working on a normalcy survey for youth in congregate care and planning a Youth Conference for again this July.
 3. DCF Youth Advisory Board members participated in the production of the annual graduation video that was presented at the Jordan's Furniture Youth Achievement Celebration this May 4th, 2014. The video is also used for training new social work staff, foster parents and as a recruitment tool for adoptive and foster parents.
 4. Members of all the regional Boards continue to participate in MAPP trainings and regional recruitment events, sharing their experiences to help train and recruit Foster and Adoptive families. Board members also participated in the DCF Adoption Option event on September 29, 2014 to assist in recruiting foster/adoptive homes as well as mentors for transition age youth.
 5. Members presented at Area office legislative breakfasts to present the youths' perspective on foster care.
 6. The Youth Advisory Boards are often asked to offer feedback on a number of issues relevant to the Department. This year they were asked to review the LGBTQ Tool Kit. The Board's feedback was that the toolkit would be helpful for social workers or foster parents in starting a dialog with youth about their sexual orientation. It would also be helpful to GBLTQ youth to know their rights and also to know the resources available to them.

7. The Board was also asked for feedback regarding implementation of the new Children Requiring Assistance (CRA) law and the family resource centers that will offer community based services. The youth had positive feedback regarding the law and offered valuable suggestions for the centers.
8. Board members are working with the DCF area office staff to implement the Youth Panels as part of the revised Permanency Planning Policy.
9. Members met with staff of the Foster Care Review Unit regarding the specific needs of adolescent foster youth.
10. Members assisted with the Education Open Houses at the area offices for younger foster youth interested in post-secondary education.
11. Many DCF area offices have included youth voice on the Area offices' Community Boards.
12. Again this year members participated in the Commissioner's regional DCF community forums to share their perspectives with the Commissioner and the statewide managers on service needs, effective resources and recommendations for improvements.
13. Youth continue to participate in trainings, including CORE training, for social workers and supervisors to talk about the needs of youth in DCF care/custody.
14. Again this year, Board members have given back to their communities by volunteering at a homeless shelter.
15. Board members have been very helpful in assisting DCF with strategies for reaching out to foster youth regarding the NYTD surveys.
16. The members planned activities with a local nursing home - craft projects with the elderly residents around the Halloween, Christmas, and Easter holidays. This intergenerational project was a rewarding experience for both the youth and the residents, and the youth look forward to continuing similar projects in the future.
17. The Department's teen newsletter, *The Wave*, has continued to provide a voice for youth in care and is an effective means of informing youth of the opportunities/services available to them both in the agency and the community. THE WAVE is available on the DCF Intranet.
18. Youth Advisory Board members will be available to assist with the CFSR.

CFCIP (Chafee Foster Care Independence Program) Training

Training Provided

- The Adolescent Support Services Unit presented 8 PAYA Certification Trainings this year to ensure that staff, foster parents and providers understand the PAYA life skill curriculum and strategies to help youth develop and practice needed life skills.

- Adolescent Support Services staff presented on adolescent services at all the Department's Pre-Service/CORE trainings for newly hired DCF Social Workers this year and will continue for the next five years.
- The Adolescent Services Unit staff also continued to provide technical assistance to congregate care programs and contracted intensive foster care agencies to assist their staff with utilization of the PAYA (Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood) life skill curriculum and transition planning for foster youth. With the release of the Department's updated Permanency Planning Policy, including the Youth Readiness Assessment Tool, which addresses changes relative to transition age youth, there will continue to be local and regional trainings to familiarize program staff and foster parents with the policy and technical assistance to address any implementation issues that arise.
- Outreach staff have provided resource information and technical assistance to all 29 DCF area offices, many group care and independent living programs, foster parent support groups and youth advocacy agencies, including a review of all the available adolescent resources and youth development activities such as the expansion of Mass Health coverage for youth discharging from DCF after age 18 to age 26 through the Affordable Care Act, the Independent Living Support Program, Discharge Support Program, state college tuition waivers, transitional living options, Peer Leadership trainings, Regional Youth Recognition Dinners, etc.

* All of the above trainings will continue annually for the next five years.

Attachment A

JOHN H. CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM

(1) **RESPONSIBLE STATE AGENCY**

The Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency responsible for administering the Title IV-E program; DCF will also administer the Independent Living Program under section 477 (section 477 (b) (2)). DCF will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs implemented to achieve its purposes.

CFCIP FUNDS REQUESTED

Federal Funds Requested	\$2,928,643	
State Match Amount	\$732,161	Source: Account 4800-0041 RESG02 Independent Living Programs

Amount of Federal Funds to be Used for Room and Board: \$150,000

Education and Training Voucher Program Funds Requested: \$976,532

Attachment E

**Annual Reporting of State Education and Training
Vouchers Awarded**

Name of State: Massachusetts

<u>Final Number:</u>	Total ETVs Awarded	Number of New ETVs
2011-2012 School Year (July 2011 to June 2012)	508	243
2012-2013 School Year (July 2012 to June 2013)	521	256
2013 -2014 School Year (July 2013 to June 2014)	516*	223

* This year there were 55 additional students who were enrolled in post-secondary education and applied for ETV awards but had to be denied as they were age 23.