



## Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board

---

*We exist to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that affect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.*

# Strategic Plan

*January 2012 – January 2014*

### **Education:**

- Expand educational advocacy focus to include middle and high school professionals, including at least one pilot project.
- Advocate for Ohio Attorney General's Office and Ohio Board of Regents to establish a paid Ohio Reach Liaison for the state.
- Collaborate with Ohio Reach regarding ongoing education for child welfare and higher education staff, including continued development of Campus Liaisons.
- Promote and advocate for the implementation of Best Practices in Higher Education, particularly those having to do with retention, resource knowledge and availability of support.
- As ODJFS continues to develop their mentor program, partner with them and encourage them to include a special emphasis on education.

### **Workforce Development:**

- Build upon the success of the 2011 Career and Entrepreneurship Conference for Foster Care Youth and Alumni, by partnering with allies to hold one or more future events that include this focus.
- Meet with ODJFS Director to discuss strategies for further progress of the Aging Out Initiative, including exploring opportunities with the "Dream It, Do It" program.
- As part of MCWIC Rule Review, advocate for a review of agency policies and practices that either help or hinder teenage youth in foster care in attaining and maintaining employment.

### **Finance and Resource Management**

- Work with state and regional partners to design impactful independent living classes, including hands-on activities, to teach finance/budgeting skills.
- Establish an Independent Living Clearinghouse online, posted on PCSAO website in order to reach county directors.
- Connect interested youth/young adults with opportunities to become Getting Ahead trainers, or otherwise involved in the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative.

- Encourage counties to utilize their existing resources, such as TANF-Independent Living funds, YAB funding and WIA funds (including IDAs).
- As part of MCWIC Rule Review, advocate for a review of agency policies and practices that either help or hinder teenage youth in foster care from having a bank account and being able to access their balance.

## **Housing**

- Follow up on 2011 Housing Partnership Forum to strongly advocate for and support implementation and information sharing.
- Seek to build partnerships with CPO Management and county metropolitan housing authorities to establish more housing options for transition-age youth.
- Keep apprised of and promote Best Practices in Youth Housing throughout the state.

## **Advocacy Opportunities**

- Advocate for starting independent living training at a younger age and offering opportunities for emancipated youth to request additional independent living training.
- Advocate for OCWTP Core Curriculum for foster parents and caseworkers to include mandatory Independent Living Preparation.
- Advocate for ODJFS to ensure state compliance with the 2011 Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, HR 2883.
- Seek to enact legislation that will provide tax exemptions to employers who employ current and former foster youth.
- Seek to enact legislation that will provide tax exemptions to landlords/realty companies who rent or lease to current and former foster youth.

## **Youth Voice in Court**

- Participate in videotaping for Ohio Supreme Court judicial teleconference.
- Work with Ohio Supreme Court to develop and pilot a Youth Developed Discharge Plan.
- Work with Ohio CASA to ensure foster care alumni participation in Citizen's Review Panels and Strategic Sharing preparation for court.
- Meet with Ohio Bar Association to discuss legal assistance to former foster youth throughout Ohio.

## **State and County Youth Advisory Board Development**

- Regional outreach to NW, SW, NE, SE and Central Ohio to train youth and adult supporters about creating and maintaining Youth Advisory Boards, including the roles of youth officers and adult supporters.
- Seek partnering organizations who can assist in the continued development of youth advisory board members on a local or state level.