

Bureau of Adolescent and Transitional Services Program

Black Greek Alliance: BGA is a group of DCF employees who are members of Black fraternities and sororities. The employees seek to enhance youth engagement practices and to provide advocacy towards educational achievement, job readiness/vocational skills and social stability. This work targets youth of African American heritage in an attempt to impact culturally relevant services including the disproportionate number of African American youth in the child welfare system.

- Historic Black College and University Tour.
- General College and Trade School Tour.
- Information Technology Training.
- Cultural Affirmation events.
- Rites of Passage for African origin youth.

Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP): CHAP is a semi-supervised, subsidized, housing component for youth ready for less supervision and more independence. The goal of this program is to increase competence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency as youth transition into the least restricted out of home placement within the agency.

- **CHAP Employment Pilot Program:** The Department shall offer a pilot program to provide financial and case management services to youth 18 years of age or older who have graduated from high school or obtained a GED and completed a DCF approved Life Skills Program and have been approved to pursue a career goal. Youth approved for this pilot will be required to demonstrate their ability to devote 40 hours a week to the pursuit of an approved career.

Youth approved for this one year program will be required to abide by a CHAP contract and meet monthly with their DCF social worker

Connecticut Youth Opportunities Strategy: This program is designed to insure that youth aging out of foster care have increased opportunities for a successful transition to adulthood in the following areas: youth leadership, youth engagement, employment, housing and physical and mental health.

- **Family Services of Woodfield:** Youth work along with technical experts and role models in a youth-centered small business. They develop transferable skills, identify goals and reinforce the personal skills needed for successful employment.
- **New Haven Work/Learn:** All program youth are enrolled in the Jim Casey initiative, taking part in financial literacy, life skills, educational, vocational, and employment programming. This program involves unprecedented collaboration with multiple state and local agencies. This program incorporates physical and mental health, community engagement, and permanent personal connections as goals into individual service planning. The program is funded by DCF in conjunction with the Workforce Alliance (DOL) in New Haven.
- **Our Piece of the Pie (OPP) Program:** OPP is a comprehensive work/learn model that helps youth to access and attain a mix of educational, employment and personal development opportunities that lead to their success.

Department of Labor: The Department works in collaboration with the office of Workforce Competitiveness and the Workforce Investment Boards, which assist youth and community stakeholders in the planning and creating of employment opportunities for youth across Connecticut. DCF Adolescent Services has recently become a strong partner with the Department of Labor.

Driver Education Program: DCF youth must successfully complete a certified driver's education program in order to obtain a driver's permit or license. The Department will pay fifty percent of the cost of the driver's education program.

Job Corps Program: A no cost educational and vocational training program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps youth ages sixteen through twenty-three by providing comprehensive job training and job placement. The Department presently has twenty-five slots between the two Connecticut sites (Hartford and New Haven) for DCF involved youth. There are other locations in the New England area that can be accessed for youth who are interested in training which is not offered at the Connecticut sites.

Life Skills Program: The Department offers community based life skills education and training programs for youth in foster care and community settings. There are thirteen contracted Life Skills Programs across Connecticut.

Medicaid: Youth are eligible to obtain Medicaid up until the age of twenty-one in Connecticut. Medicaid eligibility entitles young people to the full Medicaid benefits package. This includes a broad array of health care screening, diagnosis and treatment services.

Mentoring: Mentoring provides youth with a contact to their community other than the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Social Worker. Mentors and youth work together on a one-to-one basis to resolve issues identified by the youth. There are currently eight federally funded, mentoring programs. The agency is in the process of centralizing all foster care mentoring services.

Parenthood Program: The Department is developing an initiative to work with young mothers and fathers to improve the well being of their children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible and committed mothers and fathers. Focus groups are the primary driving force behind identifying and addressing gaps in services. This information will later serve as a blue print for developing a comprehensive service system for youth parents including: independent living skills, academic and vocational interventions, service system, resources and support to increase parenting skills.

- **Fatherhood Program:** The Department is developing an initiative to work with young fathers to improve the well being of their children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible and committed fathers.
- **Maternity Programs:** DCF currently has two maternity group homes and one maternity SWET program. Additional information will be posted in the near future.

Post Secondary Education: DCF offers all our youth turning 18 the opportunity to continue with services on a voluntary basis. This allows for youth to participate in educational and training programs (e.g. college, vocational/trade schools, Job Corps, AmeriCorps) and receive continued support from DCF.

- **Post Secondary Educational Support Program:** DCF has recently hired two Pupil Services Specialists to work within the Bureau to provide support to all DCF youth participating in the Post Secondary Educational Program outlined in item 9. Positions will support our youth and assist in maximizing their outcomes toward becoming successful adults.

Preparing Adolescent for Self Sufficiency (PASS): Group Homes provide an environment that fosters the maximization of individual outcomes in areas of education, vocation, employability, independent living skills, health, mental health, community connections and permanent connections.

Re-Entry Program: A youth who is between the ages of eighteen and twenty one and who has left the care of the Department may be eligible to re-enter the Adolescent Services Program on a case-by-case basis in order to continue their education.

Safe Harbor Project: A collaboration between the DCF, the Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents (CAFAP) and True Colors, Inc. The program was created in 2001 to provide culturally competent, affirming service training for foster parents, adoptive parents and providers on issues regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQI) youth. This program also provides continued support to foster homes that provide care for LGBTQI youth.

Sibling Connections: This initiative works with DCF committed youth, ages 14-21, who are in different out of home placement locations from their siblings for clinical and/or non-clinical reasons. The program will develop services to increase contact between siblings in an effort to support permanent family connection(s).

Supportive Work, Education and Transition Program (SWET): The Department provides a Supportive Work, Education and Transition Program. Youth in this program, focus primarily on the development issues associated with the acquisition of independent living skills, including but not limited to: interpersonal awareness, community awareness and engagement, as well as maximization of educational, vocational and pre-employment, and job placement opportunities.

The DCF Latino Youth Coalition Quinceañera Committee

- **The Quinceañera Committee:** DCF employees that collaborate with the Bureau to develop annual rites of passage programs for Latina youth in DCF care. These programs are designed to teach Latina youth about their rich cultural heritage while building individual skills and improving long term outcomes.
- Tours to HACU Colleges and Universities.
- Latino boys Rites of Passage.
- Cultural Affirmation events.

Wilderness School: The Wilderness School offers high impact wilderness programs in order to foster positive youth development. The school is designed as a journey experience, which is based on experiential and therapeutic learning models.

Youth Advisory Boards: Every area office has a Youth Advisory Board that is comprised of youth in out-of-home care. The Youth Advisory Boards will address Department policies and procedures involving youth issues and the unique problems of youth transitioning from out-of-home care.