

## Child Welfare: Foster College Success

It is time for New York to make higher education attainable for foster care youth. By so doing, New York will strengthen its commitment to children in the foster care system and create realistic opportunities for youth in care to obtain a college education.

### Why Foster College Success?

- There are more than 20,000 youth in foster care in NY.<sup>i</sup>
- College attendance is low: Nationwide, only 18-24% of college age foster youth enroll in college after high school, compared to 60% of all student overall<sup>ii</sup>
- Low completion rates: Only 2-7% of foster youth complete a two or four year degree.<sup>iii</sup>
- Improve opportunities for youth: Studies show that individuals who have been in foster care have lower levels of employment and earnings, and are more likely than their peers to rely on public assistance, be incarcerated<sup>iv</sup>, and suffer from mental illness<sup>v</sup>.

### Why Should We Support Foster Youth in College?

The State has a responsibility to its foster youth to assure that they have the resources to attend and succeed in pursuing a 4 or 2 year college degree. These youth need financial support and guidance specific to their unique challenges as youth with experience in foster care, to be successful in college.

Youth who graduate from college have a higher chance of securing and retaining employment in adulthood.<sup>vi</sup> By making college a realistic possibility for youth who are or had been in foster care, the state will help to ensure that more young people are independent, successful, and are more likely to be employed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2015-2016

Fund the program at \$3 million for the first year, and commit to increasing support to \$8.6 million over six years.

Support the recommendations of the Fostering Youth Success Alliance for a comprehensive college success program to support youth pursuing higher-education who either are or had been in foster care after age 12.

- Include comprehensive financial aid.
- Ensure on-campus supports to ensure that youth have the tools they need to succeed.
- Provide year-round housing until the youth graduates.
- A summer transition program to help youth prepare for college.

<sup>i</sup>2012 Kids Count Data Center: <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/6242-children-0-to-17-in-foster-care?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/2/2-52/false/868,867,133,38,35/any/12985,12986>

<sup>ii</sup>Community Service Society, May 2014. *Fostering Independence*. <http://www.childrensaidsociety.org/files/upload-docs/Fostering%20Independence%20Report%20Final.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> From *Fostering Independence*: According to a 2010 Chapin Hall study, only 6.2 percent of study participants attained an Associate's or Bachelor's degree. Other national statistics suggest only 2 percent of foster youth complete a Bachelor's degree.

<sup>iv</sup> [http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest\\_Study\\_ES\\_Age\\_23\\_24.pdf](http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest_Study_ES_Age_23_24.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Read more: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3061347/>

<sup>vi</sup> This is true of all young adults. See National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=77>