ABSTRACT

COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS PROGRAM FOR EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH: A GRANT THESIS PROJECT

By

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The purpose of this project was to design a comprehensive program for emancipated foster youth, identify potential funding sources and write a grant application for United Friends of the Children (UFC) located in Los Angeles, California. An analysis of the literature revealed emancipated foster youth display high rates of low educational attainment, poor employment outcomes, homelessness, and mental health disorders when compared to the general population. The program goals are to improve emancipated foster youth's educational, employment, income, housing, and mental health outcomes. The Stuart Foundation was selected as the possible funding agency for the proposed program. Actual submission and/or funding of the grant was not a requirement for completion of this project. Implications for social work practice are discussed.

COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS PROGRAM FOR EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH: A GRANT THE0SIS PROJECT

A THESIS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

From 2010 to 2013 the United States has averaged 25,845 foster youth aging out (youth who attained the age 18 or 19, or youth under 18 who were legally emancipated from foster care) of the foster care system (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2013). In 2013, California alone had 1,963 emancipated foster youth, making it one of the highest rates (7.6%; California Child Welfare Indicators Project [CCWIP], 2014). Youth of color continue to be over-represented in the foster care system (White et al., 2008); in 2013 70.3% of emancipated foster youth in California were of ethnic descent (CCWIP, 2014). In Los Angeles County, this ethnic disparity is more evident as 88.8% of emancipated foster youth were of ethnic descent (CCWIP, 2014).

Research studies have shown that emancipated foster are at high risk for an array of issues such as low levels of educational attainment (Courtney et al., 2011; Pecora, 2012) , poor employment outcomes (Kashiwagi, 2014; Stewart, Kum, Barth, & Duncan, 2014), homelessness (Brown &Wilderson, 2010; Dworsky, Napolitano,& Courtney, 2013; Fowler, Toro, & Miles, 2009; Perlman, Willard, Herbers, Cutuli, &Garg, 2014), mental health disorders (Perlman et al., 2014), substance abuse (Stott, 2012), risky sexual behaviors (Ahrens, Katon, McCarty,Richardson,& Courtney, 2012; Stott, 2012), and engaging in transactional sex (Ahrens et al., 2012; Hudson &Nandy, 2012).

In 2013, 55% of emancipated foster youth completed high school or equivalency and 20% obtained employment (Kashiwagi, 2014). This data is consistent with previous studies which have found emancipated foster youth to have low high school completion rates and low income levels compared to young adults ages 18-25 (Batsche et al., 2014; Kimberlin& Lemley, 2010). Subsequently, emancipated foster youth heavily rely on public welfare programs (Byrne et al., 2014; Culhane et al., 2011). Culhane and colleagues (2011) found more than 1 in 10 emancipated youth in Los Angeles received general assistance and 1 in 5 received cash assistance in the initial four years following their exit out of foster care.

A study conducted by Dworsky and colleagues (2013) found between 31% and 46% of former foster youth had been homeless at least once by the age of 26. Homeless rates were even higher for former foster youth who displayed symptoms of mental health disorders, experienced physical abuse, and engaged in delinquent behaviors (Perlman et al., 2014). Emancipated foster youth also display a higher rate of risky sexual behaviors such as unplanned pregnancies, younger age of sexual debut, and used contraceptives less frequently when compared to young adults in the general population (Stott, 2012). A study conducted by Stott (2012) found 22.2% of female emancipated foster youth to be pregnant, while the national average was 6.6%. Finally, emancipated foster youth are 2 times more likely to engage in transactional sex when compared to non-foster youth (Hudson &Nandy, 2012)

Emancipated foster youth are significantly disadvantaged because they lack the financial and emotional support from their families to adequately transition into adulthood and as a result are susceptible to the aforementioned risk factors.

Brief Literature Review

Emancipated foster youth are susceptible to a number of issues such as low educational attainment, poor employment outcomes, mental health disorders and homelessness (Ahrens et al., 2012; Courtney et al., 2011; Hudson &Nandy, 2012; Kashiwagi, 2014; Perlman et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2014; Stott, 2012). In 2013, about half of emancipated foster youth ages 17-18 completed high school or equivalency and 20% attended college (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). Of those who attend college, less than 10% were able to complete a bachelor's degree (National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2014).

Studies have shown that emancipated foster youth are at risk for poor employment outcomes such as unemployment and low annual wages (Courtney et al, 2011; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Naccarrato, Brophy, & Courtney, 2010; Stewart et al., 2014; Urban Institute, 2008). A longitudinal study conducted by Stewart and colleagues (2014) found emancipated foster youth from California, Minnesota, and South Carolina to display 27% to 31% lower employment rates than the national comparison group. Former foster youth with a high school diploma had earnings 300% higher than participants with no high school diploma (Okpych& Courtney, 2014). When comparing participants with 2 year degrees and those with no high school, the income difference is 500% (Okpych& Courtney, 2014).

Former foster youth also display high rates of mental health concerns (Ahrens et al., 2012; Courtney, Charles, Okpych, & Halsted, 2014; Courtney et al., 2011; Narendorf& McMillen, 2010; Perlman et al., 2014; Shook et al., 2011; Stott, 2012). A 2014 survey conducted by Courtney and colleagues (2014) showed one third of

transitional age foster youth to have a mental health diagnosis. A study of 267 California foster youth conducted by White, Havalchak, Jackson, O'Brien, and Pecora (2007) found 63.3% to have a lifetime mental health diagnosis and 22.8% to have three or more lifetime diagnoses. The Northwest Alumni Study (Northwest Study) found higher rates of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among former foster youth (30.0%) than the general population (7.6%; Pecora et al., 2005).

Homelessness is another topic of concern for emancipated foster youth (Brown &Wilderson, 2010; Courtney et al., 2011; Dworsky& Courtney, 2010; Dworsky et al., 2013; Edidin, Ganim, Hunter, &Karnik, 2012; Havalchak, White, & O'Brien, 2008; Hudson &Nandy, 2012; Pecora et al., 2005; Perlman et. al, 2014). Havalchak and colleagues (2008) have found 19.8% of former foster youth experienced homelessness. Approximately 40% reported being homeless for 1 to 3 months and 37.7% reported being homeless for more than 3 months. The Northwest Study found approximately 1 in 4 participants to be homeless for at least one night after leaving the foster care system (Pecora et al., 2005). Other studies have found between 11% and 36% of emancipated youth experienced homelessness when transitioning out of the foster care system (Dworsky& Courtney, 2010; Dworsky et al., 2013).

Effective Programs

The Casey Foundation appears to have successfully implemented a comprehensive program which has improved the outcomes of emancipated foster youth (Harris, Jackson, O'Brien,&Pecora, 2009). Services offered include job preparation workshops, life skills, and other services such as transportation, child care, education support services and counseling (Harris et al., 2009). Over 80% of Casey Foundation

foster youth reported to complete a high school diploma versus 50% of non Casey Foundation foster youth (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014; Harris et al., 2009). Additionally, approximately 75% of Casey Foundation participants had household incomes that were at or above the poverty line compared to 25% of participants from the Midwest Study (Courtney et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2009). In light of Casey Foundation's success, the proposed program will incorporate several interventions from the Casey Foundation's foster youth program.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to design a program, identify potential funding sources and write a grant to fund a comprehensive skills program for emancipated foster youth to improve their educational, employment, income, housing, and mental health outcomes. The program intends to serve youth residing in the city of Los Angeles.

Definitions

Foster care—Foster care is defined as the 24-hour out-of-home care provided to children inneed of temporary or long-term substitute parenting because their own families are unable or unwilling to care for them. The purpose of foster care is to keep children safe while child welfare services are provided so that they can be reunited with their families (California Department of Social Services, 2014, p. 92).

Foster youth—Any child who has been removed from the custody of their parent(s) or guardian(s) by the juvenile court, and placed in a group home or foster home (Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, 2014).

Aged-out foster youth—Foster youth who has been discharged from the foster care system when they attain a certain age (USDHHS, 2013).

Emancipated foster youth—Foster youth who has either "aged-out" of foster care or has legally discharged self from the foster care system (USDHHS, 2013).

Transition-aged foster youth—Foster youth ages 14 to 24 (The Walter S. Johnson Foundation, 2014).

Low educational attainment—Represents the lack of completion of a High School diploma or General Educational Development certificate.

Poor employment outcomes—Includes unemployment and low annual earnings (Naccarato et al., 2010).

THP-Plus—The Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) Program started in 2006 to provide affordable housing and support services to former foster and probation youth ages 18-24 (The John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, 2013) .

Child welfare—Includes all services administered by child welfare agencies: services for children and families to prevent abuse and neglect; child protective services (intake, family assessment, investigation, and case management); in-home services; out-of-home placements; and adoption services (Casey Family Programs, 2014b).

Agency Description and Contribution

The proposed comprehensive skills program will be implemented at the non-profit organization, United Friends of the Children (UFC). The mission and vision of UFC is to "empower current and former foster youth on their journey to self-sufficiency through service-enriched education and housing programs, advocacy, and consistent relationships

with a community of people who care" (UFC, 2014, as in mission + vision). Currently, UFC operates a Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) programs in the city of Los Angeles by the name of Pathways. The Pathways program provides housing and other supplemental services to *eligible* emancipated foster youth. Emancipated youth must submit an application and interview with Pathways staff to qualify for the program (UFC, 2014). Individuals who do not qualify are referred to different supportive programs in their community. The proposed comprehensive skills program is consistent with UFC's mission and is intended to serve the needs of participants that are not eligible for the Pathways Program or any other THP-Plus program.

Multicultural Relevance

Youth of color are over-represented when comparing the ethnic breakdown of emancipated foster youth to the general population in the city of Los Angeles. According to the 2010 U.S. Census the ethnic composition of Los Angeles city consisted of 49.8% White, 27.8% Latino, 9.6% African American, 11.3% Asian, and 0.4% American Indian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The CCWIP (2014) documented the ethnic breakdown of emancipated foster youth in Los Angeles city as52% Latino, 37% African American, 11% White, 1% Asian, and 0.5% Native American. Those of particular concern are Latinos (52% vs. 27.8%), African American (11% vs. 9.6%) and Native American (0.5% vs. 0.4%). In light of this over-representation, it is important to implement culturally competent programs and training for staff (Casey Family Program, 2014; Harris et al., 2009). Additionally, program managers should make a concerted effort to hire culturally diverse staff that reflects the ethnic composition of emancipated foster youth.

Social Work Relevance

It is important for social workers to become involved in improving the complex and nuanced issues that affect emancipated foster youth today. Social workers utilize the ecological perspective and systems theory to gain a comprehensive understanding of the barriers which emancipated foster youth face. Additionally, social workers adhere to the National Association of Social Work (NASW) code of ethics (2006), which can be conducive to promoting positive change among underserved youth. According to the NASW code of ethics value Social Justice, social workers can challenge the injustices that emancipated foster youth face through advocacy services (NASW, 2006). Due to the severity of problems that impact emancipated foster youth, social workers are the best practitioners to serve this population.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emancipated foster youth are at high risk for a number of issues such as low educational attainment, poor employment outcomes, mental health disorders and homelessness (Ahrens et al., 2012; Courtney et al., 2011; Hudson &Nandy, 2012; Kashiwagi, 2014; Perlman et al., 2014; Stewart et al., 2014; Stott, 2012). These factors interrelate in various ways; however, for the purpose of this literature review, each one will be presented separately. This will be followed by an examination of an effective program that provides supportive services to emancipated foster youth.

Low Educational Attainment

Research has documented emancipated foster youth to have low educational attainment when compared to the general population (National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2014; Okpych& Courtney, 2014; Pecora, 2012). In 2014, The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education (2014) found about half of emancipated foster youth ages 17-18 completed high school or equivalency and 20% attended college. Of those who attended college, less than 10% were able to complete a bachelor's degree nationwide (National Working Group on Foster Care and Education, 2014). A study conducted by Pecora, Kessler, O'Brien, White, Williams, Hiripi, and Herrick (2006) which studied 659 emancipated foster youth from Washington and Oregon (also known as the Northwest Study), similarly found low educational outcomes. One out of 5 participants were found to attain some form of degree or

certificate beyond high school and only 1 out of 50 managed to obtain a bachelor's degree (Pecora et al., 2006).

The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (also known as the Midwest Study), one of the most comprehensive longitudinal analysis of former foster youth also found poor educational outcomes among participants (Courtney et al., 2011). One fifth of former foster youth ages 25 to 26 did not have a GED or high school diploma. Additionally, although over 30% completed 1 year of college, only 7% completed a 2 or 4 year college degree. In a gender comparison, men were least likely to have a high school diploma or obtain a college degree than women. Women were also found to be twice as likely to have a 2 or 4 year degree compared to men (Courtney et al., 2011). When comparing the educational outcomes of emancipated foster youth to the general population, Courtney and colleagues (2011) found former foster youth to be 3 times less likely to have a high school diploma or GED. Additionally, emancipated youth were almost 6 times less likely to have a college degree and 9 times less likely to have a 4 year degree (Courtney et al., 2011).

Former foster youth with a history of criminal delinquency, also known as crossover youth, are further at risk of having low educational attainment (Culhane et al., 2011). A study conducted by Culhane and colleagues (2011) found crossover youth to be 91% less likely than the general population to complete a 2 or 4 year degree or be enrolled in a 4 year university. The study also found a very small amount of crossover youth (approximately 2%) to receive an associate's degree from Los Angeles County community colleges. Additionally, slightly less than 1% of this population enrolled in a four year university. When looking more closely at those who attended a 4 year

university, less than 14% received a B.A. degree and only 6% received a graduate or professional degree (Culhane et al., 2011).

Variables such as placement change and school instability were found to negatively affect the educational attainment of emancipated foster youth (Frerer, Sosenko, Pellegrin, Manchik& Horowitz, 2013; Hyde &Kammerer, 2009; National Working Group for Education and Foster Care, 2014;Pecora, 2012). A study conducted by Hyde and Kammerer (2009) revealed participants experienced 2 to 19 placement changes with 90% of participants reporting at least 4 placement changes. As foster youth experience placement changes, they are often transferred to different schools due to residing in new school districts. The National Working Group on Foster Care and Education (2014) found 34% of foster youth ages 17-18 have experienced five or more school changes and were twice as likely to be absent from school when compared to non foster care youth. A different study found approximately 95% of foster youth experienced a school change when compared to 37%-38% of non-foster youth peers (Frerer et al., 2013).

Frequent school changes also significantly impact a child's ability to succeed academically. Foster youth must adapt to new teaching styles, become familiar with class curriculum, and develop new peer support groups (Allen & Vacca, 2010; Hyde & Kammerer, 2009). Foster youth who experienced at least one school change were found to be 18% less likely to score at a basic level and 22% less likely to be in the proficient group compared to foster youth that did not experience a school change (Frerer et al., 2013). Problems also arise due to different graduation requirements between schools (Allen & Vacca, 2010). New school districts require students to take additional courses

to graduate, and past courses frequently do not transfer over to a child's new graduation requirement (Allen & Vacca, 2010). Many are unable to cope with such instability and are unable to complete high school (Allen & Vacca, 2010; Hyde & Kammerer, 2009; National Working Group for Education and Foster Care, 2014; Pecora, 2012).

Studies have also found poor coordination among schools and child protective service (CPS) case workers to be additional factors that contribute to foster youths' poor educational outcomes (National Working Group for Education and Foster Care, 2014; Vacca, 2007; Weinberg, Zetlin,& Shea, 2009). Weinberg and colleagues (2009) found many CPS agencies to not have a structured system to share information when children have experienced placement changes. This poor coordination also impacted the CPS workers' ability to provide supplemental educational and mental health services to improve the foster youth's educational outcomes (Weinberg et al., 2009). Another study found CPS workers did not have school outcome information such as grade point averages, school credits, and state test scores and as a result were unable to track the academic progress of these children (National Working Group for Education and Foster Care, 2014; Vacca, 2007). Many foster youth do not have a primary adult that is knowledgeable about their educational developmental history and therefore foster youth are left to advocate on their own behalf (National Working Group for Education and Foster Care, 2014)

The Midwest study conducted by Courtney and colleagues (2011) also found that being unable to pay for school and having to work full time are two significant barriers preventing emancipated male foster youth from either attaining their high school diploma or attending college. For women, taking care of their children was also a seen as a

significant barrier which prevented them from attaining their high school diploma or attending college. Foster youth do not have the financial resources to hire daycare services nor the family support to help take care of their children (Courtney et al., 2011). Combined, these barriers pose a difficult challenge for emancipated foster youth to successfully advance their educational attainment.

Poor Employment Outcomes

Research has shown that emancipated foster youth are at risk for poor employment outcomes such as unemployment and low annual wages (Courtney et al, 2011; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Naccarrato et al., 2010; Stewart et al., 2014; Urban Institute, 2008). Factors that contribute to poor employment outcomes include low educational attainment, history of criminal activity, race, and history of mental illness (Courtney et al., 2011; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Naccarrato et al., 2010; Urban Institute, 2008).

A longitudinal study conducted by Stewart and colleagues (2014) found emancipated foster youth from California, Minnesota, and South Carolina to display 27% to 31% lower employment rates than a national comparison group. The Northwest Study conducted by Pecora and colleagues (2006) found 80% of former foster youth ages 20 to 34 to be employed while the national average was 95%. In addition, approximately one third of former foster youth reported income that was at or below the poverty line compared to an estimated 10% of the national population (Pecora et al., 2006).

Nacarrato and colleagues (2010) found 75% of Midwest Study participants to earn less than $15,600. When comparing to non-foster care peers who faced similar economic, historic, and educational conditions, Midwest Study participants earned about

50% of their earnings ($28,106 vs. $9,969) and were employed at lower rates (Okpych & Courtney, 2014). Findings from the Urban Institute (2008) revealed rates of employment decreased drastically for emancipated foster youth after the age of 19 while employment remained relatively steady for the general population. Approximately 70%-80% of emancipated foster youth were employed at age 19 and significantly decreased to about 60% at age 24. The results were more favorable for the national population as rates of employment increased to a high of 99% at age 20 and taper out between 91% and 93% through age 24. A significant income disparity also existed between employed emancipated foster youth and other working youth. At age 24 former foster youth earned less than $700 a month while the national average for 24 year olds was more than double at $1,535 (Urban Institute, 2008).

Studies of emancipated foster youth have consistently shown that low educational attainment is correlated to low employment outcomes (Culhane et al., 2011; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Okpych & Courtney, 2014). Former foster youth with a high school diploma or GED were found to have 200%-300% higher earnings than participants with no high school diploma (Hook & Courtney, 2011; Okpych & Courtney, 2014). Emancipated youth with some college attendance were found to be approximately four times more likely to find employment (Hook & Courtney, 2011). Former foster youth with some college experience earned nearly 150% higher annual earnings than those with a high school diploma and youth with 2-year degrees earn over 200% of the earnings of participants with a high school diploma. When comparing emancipated youth with 2 year degrees and those with no high school, the income difference is 500% (Okpych & Courtney, 2014). Additionally, Culhane and colleagues (2011) found former foster

youth who earned more college credits had higher monetary earnings and were more likely to be consistently employed.

Additional studies have found foster youth with a history of criminal activity (known as crossover youth) are especially vulnerable to poor employment outcomes (Culhane et al., 2011; Shook et al., 2011). A study conducted by Shook and colleagues (2011) revealed crossover youth accessed employment and training services (20%) at higher rates than foster youth with no criminal history (12%). Culhane and colleagues (2011) also found the average cumulative income of emancipated foster youth was $15,000 higher than crossover youth ($29,350 vs. $13,443). Additional findings showed that emancipated foster youth without a history of criminal activity are twice as likely to be consistently employed as crossover youth. Both crossover and non-delinquent emancipated foster youth experience a 50% to 100% increase in annual earnings however, when obtaining consistent employment 5 to 8 years after exiting foster care. These findings suggest that consistent employment is vital for *all* emancipated foster youth regardless of criminal history, to ultimately become economically self-sufficient (Culhane et al., 2011).

Studies have consistently found racial background to significantly impact the earnings and employment outcomes of emancipated foster youth (Harris et al., 2009; Hook & Courtney, 2011; Nacarrato et al., 2010; Urban Institute, 2008). Non-Hispanic White emancipated foster youth have displayed higher annual earnings and employment stability when compared to other ethnic groups (Urban Institute, 2008). Emancipated foster youth who identified as Black or African American were estimated to earn $7547.83 less annually than youth that identified themselves as White (Naccarrato et al.,

2010). Harris and colleagues (2009) found fewer African Americans (67.1%) to earn income at or above the poverty line compared to the White demographic (80.5%). Only 19.1% of African Americans earned household incomes at 3 times the poverty line, while 33.6% of Whites met this criterion (Harris et al., 2009). Similar disparities were found in a study conducted by Hook and Courtney (2011) which predominantly consisted of African American participants (57.3%), followed by White (31.0%), mixed race (9.8%), American Indian or Native American (1.4%), and Asian or Pacific Islander (0.5%). Although the sample was composed of several races, the study focused on two groups: 1) African American and 2) non-African American emancipated foster youth (includes White, mixed race, American Indian or Native American, and Asian or Pacifica Islander). Approximately 36% to 42% of African Americans were employed compared to approximately 60% of non-African American foster youth. Moreover, 39% to 43% of African Americans have looked for employment in the past month while only 16% of non –African American youth engaged in this activity.

In light of poor employment outcomes, emancipated foster youth often utilize public assistance benefits in order to financially sustain themselves and their families (Courtney et al., 2011; Culhane et al., 2011; Pecora et al., 2006; Stewart et al., 2014). Results from the Northwest study (2006) revealed former foster youth received government relief benefits (16.8%) at a rate five times higher than the national average (3%) of similar age range. Courtney and colleagues (2011) found over half of age out foster youth to receive food stamps and three fourths received cash assistance from programs such as TANF, SSI, WIC, or housing assistance. Results from a study by Culhane and colleagues (2011) revealed more than 10% of former foster youth received

cash assistance and over 30% received assistance in the form of food stamps. Findings were more dramatic for crossover youth where over half utilized government assistance (CalWorks, GR program, or CalFresh) due to experiencing an episode of extreme poverty (Culhane et al., 2011).

Mental Health Concerns

It is well documented that mental health concerns are prevalent among current and former foster youth (Ahrens et al., 2012; Courtney et al., 2014; Courtney et al, 2011; Narendorf & McMillen, 2010; Perlman et al., 2014; Shook et al., 2011; Stott, 2012). Baumrucker and colleagues (2012) found approximately 50% to 75% of foster youth displayed behavioral or social problems. A 2014 survey conducted by Courtney and colleagues (2014) showed one third of transitional age foster youth to have a mental health diagnosis. Depressive disorder (32.2%) was the highest reported diagnosis followed by anxiety disorders at 9.6% (Courtney et al., 2014).

A study of 267 California foster youth conducted by White and colleagues (2007) found 63.3% to have a lifetime mental health diagnosis and 22.8% to have three or more lifetime diagnoses. The top six mental health diagnoses of foster youth were found to be oppositional defiant disorder (29.3%), major depressive disorder (29.3%), conduct disorder (20.7%), major depressive episode (19.0%), panic attack (18.9%) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (15.1%).

Similar findings were also found in the Northwest Alumni Study (Northwest Study) which compared the mental health functioning of emancipated foster youth to the general population (Pecora et al., 2005). Northwest Study participants were found to display a higher prevalence of lifetime mental health diagnosis when compared to the

general population. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was much higher for former foster youth (30.0%) than the general population (7.6%) and were in fact, comparable to Vietnam War veterans (30.9% for males and 26.9% for females). Major depression disorder was also much higher for emancipated foster youth (41.1%) than the general population (21.0%).

Participants of the Midwest Study (as discussed previously) also exhibited various mental health disorder symptoms. Participants were asked a series of questions from the World Health Organization's (1998) 12-month version of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview to determine if participants displayed symptoms related to social phobia, depression, PTSD, alcohol use, and substance use disorder (Courtney et al., 2010). Results found over 30% of participants reported symptoms suggestive of social phobia disorder. Close to one fourth of participants displayed depressive symptoms and roughly 6% reported to have thoughts of suicide with 2% engaging in a suicidal attempt. More than 60% of participants reported symptoms of PTSD. Over half of individuals displayed behaviors that are characteristic of alcohol use disorder and 25% reported behaviors suggestive of substance use disorder (SUD). Furthermore, a study conducted by Narendorf and McMillen (2010) found emancipated foster youth to increase their substance use every year with 15% meeting criteria for SUD at age 19.

In an effort to understand why high rates of mental health disorders exist among former foster youth, researchers have also placed much attention to the childhood experiences of this population. During the fiscal year 2012, approximately 3.8 million youth were suspected of being victims of abuse and/or neglect and an estimated 686,000 children were confirmed victims of maltreatment (USDHHS, 2012). Child abuse and

neglect significantly impact a child's physical growth and neurological development and subsequently manifests itself in emotional, mental, and psychological problems (Bruskas, 2008; National Research Council, 2009). Additionally, many foster care youth have unstable family environments and experience traumatic life events that frequently result in emotional and behavioral disorders (Pecora et al., 2009).

When looking at rates of mental health services, Shook and colleagues (2011) showed 84% of aged out foster youth received mental health services in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Moreover, 41% of participants reported receiving drug and alcohol rehabilitation services suggesting the possibility of having a substance use disorder. While studies have shown a high rate of foster youth receiving mental health services during placement in the foster care system (Courtney et al., 2007; McMillen et al., 2004), only 25% of emancipated foster youth from the Allegheny County study continued to receive mental health services upon exiting the foster care system (Shook et al., 2011). Courtney and colleagues (2007) found the two most common reasons preventing emancipated foster youth from continuing mental health services to be: not having medical insurance and treatment being too expensive.

Homelessness

Over the last decade, homelessness has become a significant topic of concern for the emancipated foster youth population (Brown & Wilderson, 2010; Courtney et al., 2011; Courtney, 2010; Dworsky & Dworsky et al., 2013; Edidin, et al., 2012; Havalchak et al., 2008; Hudson & Nandy, 2012; Pecora et al., 2005; Perlman et al., 2014). Studies have found between 11% and 36% of emancipated youth experienced at least 1 homeless episode when transitioning out of the foster care system (Dworsky et al., 2013; Dworsky

& Courtney, 2010; Havalchak et al., 2008). A post-survey of former foster youth that received services from Casey Family Programs (Casey) found approximately 40% reported being homeless for 1 to 3 months and 37.7% reported being homeless for more than 3 months (Havalchak et al., 2008). The Northwest Study found approximately 1 in 5 participants to be homeless for at least 1 night after leaving the foster care system (Pecora et al., 2005).

Youth that become homeless are at risk of developing cognitive and behavioral concerns (Edidin et al., 2012; Perlman et al., 2014). Foster youth who experience homelessness are 2 times more likely to display depressive symptoms and about half as likely to exhibit suicidal ideations when compared to their housed peers (Edidin et al., 2012). Moreover, homeless foster youth are 5 times more likely to intentionally harm themselves (Perlman et al., 2014). A study conducted by Brown and Wilderson (2010) in San Francisco, California found significant differences among foster youth who have experienced homelessness and those who have not. Over half of foster youth who have experienced homelessness experienced serious depression (56%) and anxiety (51%) while only one fourth of foster youth who have not experienced homelessness reported experiencing depression (28%) and anxiety (25%). Additionally, homeless foster youth reported to have higher levels of substance use than foster youth who were in homeless prevention programs.

Homelessness appears to also impact academic achievement and attendance. Brown and Wilderson (2010) found homeless foster youth to be 2 times less likely to complete high school when compared to non-homeless foster youth. Moreover, only 27% of homeless foster youth reported to be enrolled in school compared to 48% of non-

homeless foster youth (Brown & Wilderson, 2010). Once foster youth are homeless, they are also more likely to experience additional episodes of homelessness (Courtney et al., 2011; Dworsky et al., 2013; Edidin et al., 2012).

Although homelessness negatively affects all populations, a study conducted by Hudson and Nandy (2012) found homeless individuals with a history of foster care to engage in higher rates of risky behaviors. Former foster youth were found to engage in higher rates of transactional sex (18% and 25%) compared to 11% to 13% of non-foster care homeless peers. Approximately two thirds of homeless foster care youth reported to use methamphetamine compared to one third of non-foster care homeless youth. About 43% of foster care youth documented using heroin while only 27% of non-foster care homeless individuals reported using (Hudson & Nandy, 2012).

Effective Programs

The Casey Foundation appears to have successfully implemented a comprehensive program which has improved the outcomes of former Casey foster youth (will be referred as Casey alumni). The Casey Family Program (CFP) offers job preparation workshops, life skills, and other services such as transportation, child care, education support services and counseling (Harris et al., 2009). CFP also offers case management services and scholarships, which help foster youth pursue post-secondary education and vocational programs (Harris et al., 2009). Salazar (2011) found recipients of the Casey Family Scholarships Program reported V-mentors (adults that provide mentoring via telephone or internet) to be very helpful in their ability to succeed at the collegiate level.

A study conducted by Plotnick and colleagues (2009) found Casey alumni to fare better in annual earnings and educational attainment than child welfare program alumni. When comparing annual income, Casey alumni earned an average of $7,029 more than state program alumni. Results also showed Casey alumni were over 3 times more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree and 18 times more likely to attain post-bachelor education. A study conducted by Kessler, Pecora, Williams, Hiripi, O'Brien, English, and Sampson (2008) found lower rates of mental health disorders among Casey alumni. Casey alumni displayed lesser rates of major depression (11% vs. 24%), anxiety disorders (29% vs. 43%) and substance use disorders (5% vs. 11%) when compared to child welfare program alumni.

In order to implement this service model, Kessler and colleagues (2008) calculated the Casey Family Program has approximately 60% higher costs compared to state programs in Washington and Oregon. This higher cost also covers the expense of hiring caseworkers with higher levels of education than state child welfare workers (98% with masters' degrees vs. 36%-42%), lower caseloads (15-17 vs. 25-31 cases), higher salaries, and greater access to an array of additional supportive services. Additionally, the program provides a monthly stipend of $100 for Casey youth that are enrolled in an educational setting.

In light of the higher costs, a cost-benefit analysis conducted by Plotnick and colleagues (2009)found the Casey program performed far better than Washington and Oregon's foster care system. The estimated present savings from exhibiting lower mental and physical disorders combined with higher annual incomes over a 40 year period amounted to a net aggregate benefit of $234,921 per youth. When looking at the

differences in costs per youth, the state foster system spent approximately $141,304 less than the Casey program. A cost-benefit analysis revealed a net profit value of $93,617 in favor of the Casey program (Plotnick et al., 2009).

A study conducted by Barnow and colleagues (2015) concluded that job preparation, college preparatory services, income support services, and duration of program involvement were found to positively influence outcomes for current and emancipated foster youth. Job preparation services were found to have a statistically significant positive impact on a foster youth's employment outcome. Over 35% of participants obtained employment when receiving job preparation services. College preparatory services were also seen to positively impact an individual's ability to enroll in post-secondary educational programs. Over 17% of participants that received college preparatory services were able to enroll in post-secondary education. Participants involved in services for a longer period of time were found to significantly improve their ability to obtain employment, a GED/diploma, and post-secondary education. Individuals receiving services for over one year were found to have higher outcomes compared to those with less than one year of service assistance. Lastly, income supportive services such as TANF and food stamps were also found to improve the outcomes for participants. By providing the assistance necessary to obtain basic living necessities such as food and housing, individuals are more capable of fully immersing themselves in programs that promote educational development and employment assistance (Barnow et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Emancipated foster youth are one of the most vulnerable populations that exist. The literature review has provided extensive evidence suggesting that emancipated foster youth are susceptible to higher rates of homelessness, mental health disorders, poor employment outcomes, and low educational attainment. Many aged out foster youth do not have the financial, emotional, and mentoring support from family or other formal support networks and must attempt to successfully transition into adulthood on their own. Additional efforts must be made to help aged out foster youth become self-sufficient adults. It is imperative for social workers to write grants and develop successful program models that improve the outcomes of emancipated foster youth.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Identification of Potential Funding Source

The grant writer researched various funding streams at the federal, state and foundation levels. An Internet Google search was used to look for specific federal and state funding sources. Additional grant websites included Grants.gov, Child Welfare Services Grants, The Casey Family Program, and the California Health and Human Services Agency. The grant writer also visited the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research located on 6120 S. Vermont, Los Angeles, California 90044 to access the Foundation Center online database. This database generated a list of both private and public agencies that fund programs for specific topics and geographic locations. Key terms used included: "emancipated foster youth", "age-out foster youth", "transitional age foster youth", and "aftercare services for foster youth." The goal of this search was to identify the mission, vision, and target population of each funder and assess whether their goals and objectives matched with the proposed intervention. The grant writer identified 5 potential funding sources: (1) The Chase Foundation, (2) The Morris Stulsaft Foundation, (3) The Casey Foundation, (4) The California Community Foundation, and (5) The Stuart Foundation. The last funding source was the grant writer's chosen funding source.

The Chase Foundation

The Chase Foundation mission is to support programs designed to promote affordable housing, economic growth, and workforce readiness programs for low and moderate income people. The foundation accepts applications throughout the year and clear guidelines were found on the foundation's website (JP Morgan Chase & Co., 2015). A close examination of previous grant awardees revealed few non-profit organizations funded on the U.S. west coast. Upon contacting a representative from the Chase Foundation the grant writer was informed that special emphasis is directed toward neighborhoods located in areas of JP Morgan Chase's major operations. This limitation posed a problem for the grant writer. Additionally, the foundation's mission targets a wide audience of low and moderate income individuals. This is starkly different from the grant writer's mission which is to improve the outcomes of emancipated foster youth *regardless of income levels.* This may pose a barrier because the funding provider may not be willing to fund the grant writer's comprehensive program specifically targeting emancipated foster youth. As a result of these limitations, the grant writer conducted an additional search to find alternative funding sources.

The Morris Stulsaft Foundation

The Morris Stulsaft Foundation mission is to provide funding to programs that are dedicated to the well-being of children and youth ages 0 to 22. This foundation has a history of providing financial support to nonprofit organizations serving foster and homeless youth. More specifically, the foundation awards grants to programs preparing youth for independent futures (Morris Stulsaft Foundation, 2015). Although the Morris Stulsaft Foundation's mission aligns with the grant writer's program goal of improving

the well-being of emancipated foster youth, several limitations existed. First, the foundation claims to provide funding to nonprofits throughout California, however, an examination of the 2010-2013 grants list awards revealed over 95% of programs were in northern California. Based on this track record, it did not seem likely that the foundation would fund a program based in Los Angeles. Additionally, the foundation appears to fund several small grants of the range $1,000 to $25,000. This was not sufficient to fund the grant writer's proposed expenses of $100,000 to $150,000. As a result of these limitations the grant writer conducted an additional search to find alternative funding sources.

The California Community Foundation

The California Community Foundation's overall mission is to strengthen Los Angeles communities. This foundation restricts their funds to organizations pertaining to Los Angeles County, California. The organization has also committed to allocating the majority of its funding to marginalized communities and awards multi-year grants in the areas of arts, education, health care, housing and neighborhoods, transition aged youth and civic youth. Funding awards ranged from $25,000 to $600,000 in the fiscal year 2012-2013. Although The California Community Foundation awards over $150 million and shares a similar mission with the grant writer's program, limitations exist. The foundation supports programs that target transition aged youth, however they do not specifically target transition aged *foster* youth. This posed a barrier to the grant writer because the funding provider may not be willing to fund a comprehensive program that specifically targets emancipated foster youth. As a result of this limitation, the grant writer conducted an additional search to find alternative funding sources.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The primary mission of the Annie E. Casey Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. This foundation funds programs within several U.S. states, including California. For the fiscal year 2012-2013 the foundation awarded 996 grants totaling to approximately $100 million with awards ranging from $550 to $6 million. Although the foundation clearly fulfills the grant writer's proposed budget of $100,000 to $150,000 the foundation does not appear to fund programs which provide direct services to foster youth. Additionally, upon contacting a representative from the foundation, the grant writer was informed that funding is provided on an "invitation-only basis". As a result, the grant writer is ineligible to apply for the foundation's grant.

Description of the Identified Funding Source

The Stuart Foundation's mission is to support the development of children in California so they may be self-sustaining, responsible, and contributing members of their communities. The foundation's mission aligns with the grant writer's long term goal of improving the outcomes of emancipated foster youth. The foundation partners with agencies that have similar missions/ideals and helps gather resources to create sustainable change. More specifically, the Stuart Foundation partners with public and private child welfare agencies that help foster youth attain positive long-term outcomes. The foundation awards grants ranging from $100 to $425,000 and as a result is capable of funding the grant writer's proposed budget of $130,000 to $175,000. In light of this

information, the grant writer chose the Stuart Foundation as the funding source for this project.

Target Population

The target population for this program was emancipated foster youth ages 16 to 25 that reside in the Los Angeles city. In 2013, 643 youth emancipated from the foster care system in Los Angeles County. Of those, 52% were Latino 37% were African American, 11% were White, 1% were Asian, and 0.5% were Native American (CCWP, 2014).

Resources of the Grant Problem Statement

Quantitative information was obtained from the UC Berkeley's Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) website which hosts the California Child Welfare Indicators Project. Additional statistics were gathered from the USDHHS Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), U.S. Census Database, and Casey Family Programs. Lastly, a vast amount of scholarly articles were examined to gain insight into the risk factors and needs of emancipated foster youth. Due to the multi-faceted needs of this population, a comprehensive approach was taken to adequately serve emancipated foster youth. Frequent dialogue was initiated with caseworkers, program managers, and the development director of the United Friends of the Children in order to understand the needs of their population and programs.

CHAPTER 4

GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The purpose of this project was to design a program, identify potential funding sources and write a grant to fund a comprehensive skills program for emancipated foster youth at the United Friends of the Children (UFC) located in Los Angeles, CA. The program goals are to improve emancipated foster youth's educational, employment, income, housing, and mental health outcomes.

Problem Statement

The United States has averaged 26,000 youth emancipating from the foster care system in last three years (USDHHS, 2013). In 2013, California had one of the highest foster care emancipation rates (7.6%) among other U.S. states (California Child Welfare Indicators Project, 2014). Ethnic minorities continue to be over-represented in the foster care system (White et al., 2008); in 2013 70.3% of emancipated foster youth in California were of ethnic descent This ethnic disparity is more evident in Los Angeles County, as 88.8% of emancipated foster youth were of ethnic descent (CCWIP, 2014).

Many emancipated foster have low levels of educational attainment (Courtney, et al., 2011; Pecora, 2012) and poor employment outcomes (Kashiwagi, 2014; Stewart et al., 2014). Additionally, numerous emancipated foster youth experience homelessness (Brown & Wilderson, 2010; Dworsky & Courtney, 2013; Fowler et al., 2009; Perlman et

al., 2014) and are at high risk of developing mental health disorders (Perlman et al., 2014).

In 2013 60% of emancipated foster youth completed high school or equivalency and 27% obtained employment in Los Angeles County (Kashiwagi, 2014). In light of low educational and employment outcomes, emancipated foster youth heavily rely on public welfare programs (Byrne et al., 2014; Culhane et al., 2011). Culhane and colleagues (2011) found more than 1 in 10 emancipated youth in Los Angeles received general assistance and 1 in 5 received cash assistance in the initial 4 years following their exit out of foster care. Dworsky and Courtney (2013) found between 31% and 46% of former foster youth had been homeless at least once by the age of 26. Homeless rates were even higher for former foster youth who displayed mental health disorder symptoms, experienced physical abuse, and engaged in delinquent behaviors (Perlman et al., 2014).

According to the CCWIP (2014) there is a high need of supportive services for emancipated foster youth in Los Angeles County. From 2010 to 2013, approximately one quarter (23.8%) of California's emancipated foster youth reside in Los Angeles County. Over the last three years 1,942 youth have emancipated from the Los Angeles County foster care system (CCWIP, 2014).

Host Agency

The proposed comprehensive skills program will be implemented at the non-profit organization, United Friends of the Children (UFC). Currently, UFC operates a Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) programs in the city of Los Angeles by the name of Pathways. The Pathways Program provides housing and other supplemental

services to *eligible* emancipated foster youth. Emancipated youth must submit an application and interview with Pathways staff to qualify for the program (UFC, 2014). Individuals who do not qualify are referred to different supportive programs in their community. The proposed comprehensive skills program is intended to serve the needs of participants who are not eligible for the Pathways Program or any other THP-Plus program. Program participants must be between the ages of 18-24, emancipated from foster care, and reside in Los Angeles.

Detailed Description of the Program

The goal of the comprehensive skills program is to promote the self-sufficiency of emancipated foster youth through obtaining employment, improving their educational attainment, stable housing, and fulfilling mental health needs. Program services include the intake assessment, college and employment workshops, individual sessions, and case management services.

Program Objectives

Objective 1: *By the end of the 1st fiscal year, 30% of youth will have attended 12 employment or college workshop sessions as evidenced by a program completion certificate.*

Activities: Employment workshops will be divided into two sections. Weeks 1-6 will cover topics that help youth obtain employment and weeks 7-12 will cover topics to help youth remain employed. Weeks 1-6 will include topics such as resume building, creating cover letters, interviewing tips, developing an "elevator pitch," and creating post-interview "thank you letters." Weeks 7-12 will include role playing activities and guest speakers from various employment sectors. These activities will help youth learn

how to properly interact among co-workers, supervisors, and clients in a work setting. The 12-month employment workshop will continuously repeat for 12 cycles throughout the fiscal year.

College workshops will teach youth the differences between community college, state college, university, private college/university, and on-line college/university. Youth will become familiar with local colleges and universities in Los Angeles County. Youth will also learn about different types of school financial aid including scholarships, federal/state grants, work-study programs, federal loans, and private loans. Youth will learn how to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by creating an online dummy FAFSA account, gathering necessary documentation to complete FAFSA, and reviewing frequently asked questions about FAFSA. Youth will also be exposed to different scholarship sources such as school-specific scholarships, private company scholarships, and on-line scholarship search engines such as fastweb.com and scholarships.com. Youth will be asked to share a scholarship application to each group meeting. Lastly, emancipated foster youth college students will be invited as guest speakers to share their experiences applying for college and as college students.

Objective 2: *By the end of the 1st fiscal year, 30% of youth will have a stable income (ie. employment, work study, government assistance program) as evidenced by program obtainment documentation.*

Activities: The Program Counselor (PC) will assist youth in researching job positions, internships, apprenticeships and fellowships that align with the youth's interests. Additionally, the PC will assist the youth in applying for government assistance

programs (TANF, SSI, etc), work study positions, and employment applications. Lastly, the PC will help leverage the youth's strengths into his or her resume and cover letters.

Objective 3: *By the end of the 1st fiscal year, 30% of youth will be enrolled in a high school/GED obtainment program as evidenced by PC confirmation letter.*

Activities: The PC will help youth look for free or low-cost GED classes that are local to their community. Additionally, the PC will assist youth filling applications to enroll in these classes.

Objective 4: *By the end of the 1st fiscal year, 30% of youth will obtain secure housing as evidenced by an apartment, THP-plus program, or subsidized housing documentation.*

Activities: The PC will help youth fill housing assistance applications and find temporary shelters. The PC will also help youth research low-cost housing through community transaction websites such as craigslist, Ebay classifieds, Pawngo, Recycler, Oodle, U-Exchange, and Adoos.

Research Method/Evaluation

An outside evaluator will be hired to assess for the program's effectiveness. Program data will be obtained from pre and post surveys and program statistics. The surveys will measure youth satisfaction of program services, satisfaction with program counselor and suggestions for program improvements. The program director will contact local universities and college professors to obtain assistance with the survey development. Additional program statistics such as program attendance, demographics, workshop certificates, employment/housing obtainment, and case management referrals will be obtained from program documentation. This information will be useful in

improving program deficits and continuing program strengths so that future emancipated foster youth can obtain high-quality services.

Communications

The program director will be responsible for maintaining communication with Pathways staff and other Los Angeles THP-plus providers in order to secure a consistent stream of referrals. The program director will also attend child welfare community resource forums and events in order to advertise program services through the distribution of flyers and presentations. Additionally, the program director will work to establish new internship, fellowship, and apprenticeship partnerships with local community agencies and companies. Collaborations will be made with colleges and universities within Los Angeles County to gain information regarding campus tours, school requirements, financial aid, student organizations, and other resources that can benefit program youth. It is also important for the program director to network and collaborate with other agencies that provide similar services in order to increase program referrals and improve service delivery.

Staff Positions

Personnel

Program Director: This position will be responsible for managing the entire program. The program director will develop and maintain relationships with relevant child welfare organizations, employers, and college/universities to promote program success. The program director will also develop the youth training and workshops for both Group A and B. This person will also oversee and provide supervision to 4 MSW interns and the full time Program Counselor The Program Director will also organize

staff trainings and facilitate monthly staff meetings. Lastly, the program director will manage the budget, timesheets, and mileage of all program employee expenses. Individuals eligible for this position must have a MSW degree, be licensed in California, have at least 2 years of supervision experience, and 5 years working with children, youth and families from underserved communities.

*Program Counselor (PC):*The PC will carry a caseload of 25 clients. This person will facilitate program workshops, provide case management services, and conduct weekly individual meetings with program youth. Individuals eligible for this position must have a Bachelors of Art in a human-services related field and have 2yearsof work/volunteer experience working with children, youth and families from underserved communities.

MSW Social Work Intern: Interns will have a caseload of 7 youth. They will be responsible for facilitating the workshops and providing case management support. Individuals eligible for this position must by MSW students and have one year experience working with children, youth, and families from underserved communities.

Timeline

Month 1:

1. Program director and program counselor will be hired.
2. Supplies of the program are ordered and office space is organized.
3. Foursocial work interns will be recruited.
4. Program director develops workshops for group 1 and 2.
5. Program director begins networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.

6. Program director begins networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.

Month 2:

1. Social Work Interns are screened and trained.
2. Program director, program counselor, and interns begin outreaching efforts.
3. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.
4. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.
5. Staff begins accepting program applications.
6. Staff conducts program intakes and pre assessments.
7. Staff begins facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth

Month 3-6:

1. Monthly staff meetings will be conducted.
2. Activities will be planned for the following month.
3. Program director, counselor, and interns continue outreaching efforts
4. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies
5. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities
6. Staff continue accepting program applications
7. Staff continue conducting program intakes and pre assessments
8. Staff continue facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth

Month 7:

1. Monthly staff meetings will be conducted.
2. Activities will be planned for the following month.
3. Program director, assistant, and interns continue outreaching efforts.
4. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.
5. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.
6. Staff continues accepting program applications.
7. Staff continues conducting program intakes and pre assessments.
8. Staff continues facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth.
9. Interns continue facilitating weekly program workshops for group 1 and 2.
10. Program Director begins looking for additional funding sources for the following year
11. Program director orders supplies as necessary.

Month 8-10

1. Monthly staff meetings will be conducted.
2. Activities will be planned for the following month.
3. Program director, assistant, and interns continue outreaching efforts.
4. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.
5. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.

6. Staff continues accepting program applications.
7. Staff continues conducting program intakes and pre assessments.
8. Staff continues facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth.
9. Interns continue facilitating weekly program workshops for group 1 and 2.
10. Program Director continues looking for additional funding sources for the following year
11. Program director continues to order supplies as necessary.

Month 11:

1. Monthly staff meetings will be conducted.
2. Activities will be planned for the following month.
3. Program director, assistant, and interns continue outreaching efforts.
4. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.
5. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.
6. Staff continues accepting program applications.
7. Staff continues conducting program intakes and pre assessments.
8. Staff continues facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth.
9. Staff continues facilitating weekly program workshops for group 1 and 2.
10. Program Director continues looking for additional funding sources for the following year
11. Program director continues to order supplies as necessary.
12. Program Evaluator begins gathering data

Month 12:

1. Monthly staff meetings will be conducted.
2. Activities will be planned for the following month.
3. Program director, assistant, and interns continue outreaching efforts.
4. Program director continues networking with Pathways, THP-plus providers, and child welfare agencies.
5. Program director continues networking with public and private companies for internship, fellowship, and volunteer opportunities.
6. Staff continues accepting program applications.
7. Staff continues conducting program intakes and pre assessments.
8. Staff continues facilitating weekly individual meetings with youth.
9. Staff continues facilitating weekly program workshops for group 1 and 2.
10. Program Director continues looking for additional funding sources for the following year
11. Program director continues to order supplies as necessary.
12. Program Evaluator present results of study. Program evaluation outcomes will be analyzed by the program director to determine appropriate program changes to improve future outcomes.

Program Budget Narrative

Program Staff

Program Director: Individuals eligible for this position must have a MSW degree, be licensed in California, have at least 2 years of supervision experience, and 5 years working with children, youth and families from underserved communities. The

salary for the position will be 65,000 annually. Benefits were calculated at 26% of the max salary totaling to $16,900.

Program Counselor: The program counselor position will be full-time (40 hours per week) with benefits. Individuals eligible for this position must have at least a B.A. in a human-service field and have 2yearsof work/volunteer experience working with children, youth and families from underserved communities. The salary will be $38,000 annually with benefits. Benefits were calculated at 26% of the salary totaling to $9,880.

MSW Interns: The program will have 4 MSW interns. Interns are scheduled to work 16 hours per week and will be given a per diem stipend of $20 per day. The annual per diem cost of 4 interns will total $5,120 (4 MSW intern @ $20/day X 2 day/wk X 32 weeks). Interns will not be provided benefits.

Direct Costs

Strong Interest Inventory Assessment: The program intake will include youth filling out the Strong Interest Inventory Assessment. The cost of 1 Strong Assessment is $15. The program is estimated to serve 75 youth therefore the total cost of 75 Strong Assessment is calculated at $1125.00.

Office Supplies: The program estimates spending $500 of office supplies for the year. This includes supplies such as paper, notepads, staples, post its, folders, dry erase markers, white boards, pins, printer ink, etc.

Expendable Equipment: Items that fall under this category include 4 laptop computers, 2 printers, and furniture for the program. The estimated total amount for these items is $6,000.

Mileage: Program staff will be conducting weekly client home visits throughout Los Angeles. The program estimates the annual costs for mileage to be $7,200. .

Food: Meals and snacks will be provided during weekly workshops to help youth maintain focus during the workshops. Staff will also provide youth healthy snacks during individual meetings. It is estimated that $5,000 in food expenses will be utilized for the fiscal year.

Printing and Postage: The estimated cost of postage in printing is $500. This includes flyers, envelopes and stamps for program marketing purposes and program expenses.

Gift Card Incentives: The program will provide $5 Target gift cards as an incentive for youth to attend weekly workshops. The program estimates servicing 50 youth (at full capacity) and have a total of 52 workshops per year. The total estimated expense is $13,000 (50 youth X 52 activities X $5).

Bus Tokens: The program estimates spending $6500 in bus tokens to help youth travel to and from weekly workshops [50 youth X 52 activities X 1.25 (token cost) X 2 (to and from)].

Training: The program estimates spending $5,000 for trainings to help staff improve case management abilities and understand the needs of emancipated foster youth. These trainings will be provided by former foster youth and graduates of the program. Representatives from DPSS and Cover California will conduct trainings for eligibility requirements.

Indirect Cost

Indirect cost for this program includes the evaluation component. The program will spend $5,000 for program evaluation costs.

In-Kind Expenses

In-kind expenses include office rent and utilities provided by the host agency UFC ($30,000).

CHAPTER 5

LESSONS LEARNED

Literature Review

The literature review was simultaneously challenging and rewarding. Emancipated foster youth are an extremely vulnerable population with very diverse backgrounds and varying needs. Although a tremendous amount of research has been conducted on the problems and needs of emancipated youth, it was challenging to narrow down the specific risk factors to a few categories. After a close examination of the literature, the grant writer identified low educational attainment, poor employment outcomes, homelessness, and mental health concerns as recurrent problems among this population. Additionally, the grant writer discovered that these problems were inter-related and could not be analyzed independently. For example, an individual could be susceptible to homelessness due to being unemployed or having a mental health diagnosis. In a sense, one risk factor can significantly influence another.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, the process of writing a literature review provided new opportunities for areas of growth. The grant writer learned how to quickly extract pertinent information from articles and studies by using program functions. The grant writer also became knowledgeable of key words that can be utilized to navigate through journal article databases more effectively. The grant writer became very familiar with academic journals, books, government databases and read countless

scholarly articles. Although extremely tedious and time consuming, this process helped the grant writer learn more about the challenges emancipated foster youth face.

The literature review was vital to the development of the proposed program. Obtaining this information was helpful in determining the immediate needs of emancipated foster youth. As population needs change over time, literature reviews will be crucial to know how to better serve emancipated foster youth in all geographic locations.

Program Design

The literature review provided academic insight into the problems emancipated foster youth experience. The grant writer's experience interning at the Department of Children and Family Services provided more direct insight into the obstacles that emancipated foster youth face in their daily lives. This experience provided opportunities to interact with the population and ask questions related to their needs. Additionally, the grant writer engaged in several conversations with seasoned Children Social Workers (CSW) and supervisors that have directly worked with emancipated youth to gain a greater understanding of services they can benefit from. Obtaining academic knowledge and direct insight from the population and existing service agencies provided the foundation to create a program design to help emancipated foster youth become self-sufficient.

It was determined that the population requires assistance accessing basic needs (housing, food, clothes, employment, high school/GED diploma) in order to begin the road to self-sufficiency. This called for a program centered on case management services and workshops to help youth obtain job development skills. Additionally, the program

incorporated incentives and public transportation assistance in order to encourage youth to attend. Lastly, the program design incorporated weekly home visits where the program counselor can also build rapport and develop relationships with program youth. This relationship can be helpful in motivating and encouraging youth to enroll in services that lead to self-sufficiency.

Identification of Funding Source

Navigating through the Foundation Center online database was exciting but at the same time discouraging. Although initially it seemed there would be a number of funding options to support the proposed program, a closer examination of foundation descriptions revealed a number of criteria and limitations which narrowed the search to 2 to 3 viable funding sources to support the proposed program. Moreover, it was surprising to discover that reputable child welfare organizations with vast funding sources did not have avenues for organizations to apply for grants. Many of these organizations did not solicit funding to general service providers, but rather distributed funds to agencies through *special invitations*. Considering these limitations, the grant writer chose the Stuart Foundation as the most appropriate funding source for the proposed program.

Budgeting

Attending the grant budgeting workshop was extremely helpful in developing the proposed program's budget. Although the grant writer had some experience developing budgets on MS Excel, the workshop provided valuable insight into indirect program expenses (program evaluation, administrative overhead, and liability insurance) that are essential to running a social service program. Additionally, the workshop provided appropriate percent estimations for costs such as employee benefits, evaluation, over-

head costs, and liability insurance that are helpful in creating a budget that is reflective of the future actual expenses. Obtaining this information was crucial in developing an appropriate program budget.

Implications for Social Work

As agents of change and advocates for the underserved, social work professionals should be constantly striving to help those who are in need. Having these goals in mind, it is essential for social workers to learn how to develop grants and innovative programs that better serve the needs of underserved populations. Considering government trends of undercutting social service budgets, it is increasingly imperative for social workers to look for alternative forms of funding such as grant development to continue providing underprivileged communities the services necessary to promote positive change. Although the idea of grant writing may be initially daunting for many (including this grant writer), the process provides avenues of growth and opportunity not only for the communities we serve but for social workers as well. The grant writing process allows the social worker to become a better researcher, program developer, and create necessary professional networks in the social service arena. As social workers continue to refine their skills, they become greater assets to the communities they serve and the social work profession as a whole.

APPENDIX

Program Budget Expenses

Expenses	Amount	
Salaries and Benefits	Cost	In-Kind
1 Program Director (LCSW) @ FTE 100%	$ 65,000.00	
1 Program Assistant (BA) @ FTE 100%	$ 38,000.00	
Benefits @ 26% of FTE	$ 26,780.00	
4 MSW intern daily stipend @ $20/day X 8day/wk X 32 weeks	$ 5,120.00	
Total Salaries with Benefits	$134,900.00	
Direct Expenses		
Strong Interest Inventory Assessment @ $15/youth X 75 youth	$ 1,125.00	
Office Supplies	$ 500.00	
Expendable Equipment: Computers, printers, furniture	$ 6,000.00	
Mileage	$ 7,200.00	
Food	$ 5,000.00	
Printing and Postage	$ 500.00	
$5 Gift Card incentives (50 youth X 52 activities x $5)	$ 13,000.00	
Bus Tokens	$ 6,500.00	
Training	$ 5,000.00	
Total Direct Program Expenses	$ 44,825.00	
Salaries and Direct Program Expenses Combined	$179,725.00	
Indirect Expenses		
Evaluation	$ 5,000.00	
Total Expenses	$179,725.00	
In Kind Donations		
Office Rent/Operation Cost		$30,000.00

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