

The State of Foster Care in Los Angeles: A Study Of Government and
Organizations' Efforts to Aid Transitioning Foster Youth in Attaining Steady,
Useful, Employment

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction 4

Literature Review 6

 Legislative History 6

 Debate Surrounding Best Strategies For Child Welfare 9

 School Struggles 10

 Housing 12

 Joblessness 13

Methodology 15

Findings/Analysis 20

 Analysis of Organization 21

 Tender Greens 21

 iFoster Training Program 22

 Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles 23

 Hathaway Sycamores 24

 American Job Centers of California 24

Trends Across All Data Collected 25

 Housing A Crucial Factor 25

 Youth Need Peer and Adult Mentors To Find Work 26

 Lack of Access To Job Programs 28

 AB 12 Is Good But More Needs To Be Done 30

Discussion and Recommendations 31

 Recommendations 32

Conclusion 34

References 35

Appendices

Introduction

Literature Review

designed “to improve outcomes for foster youth by improving the following key areas: access to student and academic support services and resources; term-to-term retention rates; academic performance; completion of certificate and degree programs; transfer rates to baccalaureate” (Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI)).

Given that AB 12 gives money to youth or families housing youth who stay in extended foster care, this serves as motivation for youth to continue to pursue their education. However, more emphasis needs to be put on educational support services for foster youth as they are growing up in the system. Still only 58% of foster youth graduate from high school and only 9% from college (Alliance for Children’s Rights). So it seems that by the time these foster youth turn 18

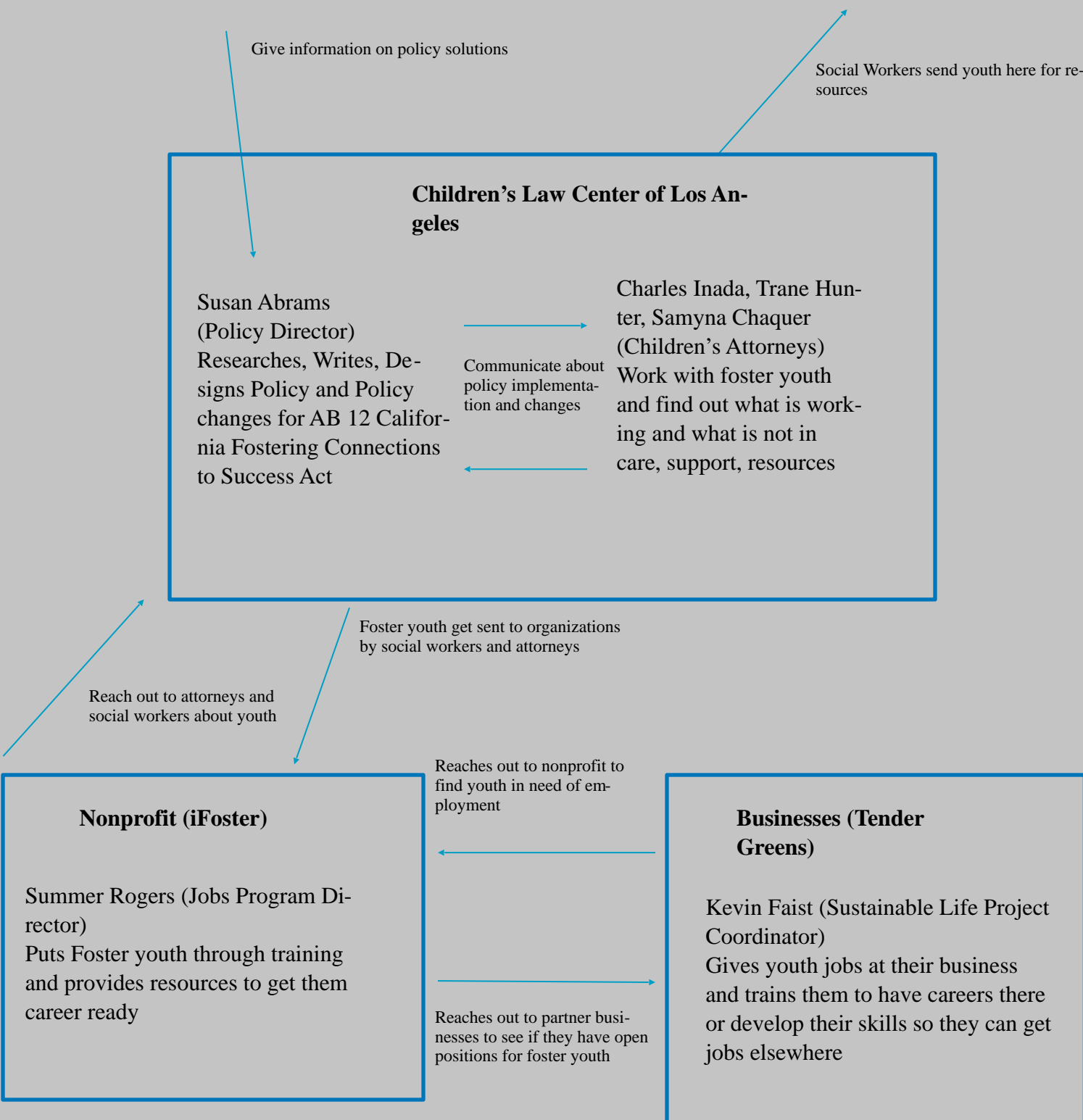
and are still struggling with schooling, it is hard to recover, leading to homelessness and joblessness.

The drastic nature of the housing crisis in the Los Angeles area is demonstrated by <http://www.laalmanac.com/social/so14.php> the Los Angeles Almanac statistics on homelessness in Los Angeles County (see attached excerpt) provide a graphic depiction of the homelessness prevalent in the general population. Since young people who have been raised in the foster care system are characteristically less quali

to see what AB 12 was doing to help them succeed or not.

When it came to employment he found that these youth's employment stability, wage, and outcomes did not get any better and stayed pretty steady as they got older and stayed in foster care. Additionally, he compared his study to the Ad Health study of 1995 showing that youth today in foster care are less likely to have a job than youth in 1995 involved in a similar study.

Methodology



Most of the organizations that I interfaced with and included in my study work together in some way. The Children's Law Center encompasses policy writers, children's attorneys and social workers. They all inform each other's work. The policy director, Susan Abrams, trains attorneys and social workers on the implementation of new legislation, and the attorneys and social workers are able to inform policy with hands-on work with youth. The attorneys I spoke with were Charles Inada, Trane Hunter, and Samyna Chequer.

The attorneys and social workers refer foster youth to nonprofit organizations for resources such as housing, employment training, and other benefits. The nonprofit I focused on was iFoster because they are a national organization and have a substantial jobs program for transition aged youth. There I spoke with the jobs program coordinator, Summer Rogers, and she explained the process by which youth go through training and are then referred to partner businesses for employment.

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Having a mentor they can relate to is essential for foster youth to have a successful transition out of foster care, given that many of their familial ties are severed. A peer who

Recommendations

First: Mentorship – Each transitioning youth between 17 and 20 will be matched with a prior foster youth age 21+ to serve as a mentor.

Conclusions

References

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your position in the organization?
2. What got you into this field of work?
3. What is the biggest obstacle you have dealt with in helping foster youth?
4. How have you dealt with this obstacle?
5. What trends do you see in the way of transitioning foster youth acquiring jobs?
6. How easy is this process for youth to get steady jobs from 18-21 and after?
7. Do you maintain relationships with youth after they age out and in what way?
8. What is your opinion on government legislation pertaining to foster care, specifically but not limited to AB 12?
9. What do you think benefits youth more, government input or organizations actions?
10. What do you personally think is the biggest obstacle preventing foster youth from succeeding in life after foster care?

Appendix C: Recommendations, Sample Housing Facility

