

Foster care & financial aid

Zoë Blumberg Corwin

213-740-2881

zcorwin@usc.edu

Foster care in the United States

- There are over 600,000 children in foster care in the U.S.
- More children enter each year than leave
- Average stay = 21 months
- Most children experience multiple placements
- The number of children entering the system is increasing by 10% a year

Foster care & education

- Approximately 75% of children in foster care work below grade level
- Approximately 50% complete high school
- Of those, approximately 15% attend college
- Of those, approximately 1% attend graduate school

(Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, 2004)

Within two-four years post emancipation:

- 51% are unemployed
- 40% are on public assistance
- 25% become homeless
- 20% are incarcerated at least once

(Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, 2004)

Financial aid paradox for foster youth:

- Financial aid exists
- Students can not/do not access aid

Financial aid available to foster youth

- Federal
 - FAFSA
 - Chafee grants
- State
 - Fee waivers
 - BOG (CA)
 - ILP monies
- Local
 - Scholarships
 - University sponsored programs
 - Renaissance & Guardian Scholars

Challenges to obtaining financial aid for college

- Low rates of high school graduation
- Lack of information
- Misinformation
- Different financial aid needs
 - Unmet need
 - Housing

Addressing the problem

- Education Coordination Council
 - Citywide effort to enhance communication between various agencies providing services to foster care and probation youth (education, mental health, DCFS, probation)
- United Friends of the Children
 - College counselor dedicated to foster youth
 - Citywide event with breakout sessions for foster youth
 - Brochures and flyers for dissemination