

Adoption  
Alliance of Community Assistance  
Ministries of Greater Houston (ACAM)  
Alliance Adolescent & Children's  
Services  
Arrow Child and Family Ministries  
Bering Omega Community Services  
Care for Elders  
Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of  
Galveston-Houston  
ChildBuilders  
CHILDREN AT RISK  
Children's Defense Fund  
Coalition for Behavioral Health Services  
Coalition for the Homeless of  
Houston/Harris Co., Inc.  
Collaborative for Children  
Communities In Schools  
Community Family Centers  
Covenant House of Texas  
DePelchin Children's Center  
Family Services of Greater Houston  
Fort Bend Regional Council on  
Substance Abuse, Inc.  
Gateway to Care  
Good Neighbor Healthcare Center  
Gulf Coast CHIP Coalition  
Harris County Child Abuse Task Force  
Harris County Healthcare Alliance  
Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston  
Houston Area Association for the  
Education of Young Children  
Houston Area Women's Center  
Houston Food Bank  
Houston Area Immunization Registry  
IntraCare Hospitals  
Jewish Family Service  
Jewish Federation of Greater Houston  
Justice for Children  
League of Women Voters Houston  
Legacy Community Health  
Services, Inc.  
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System  
Mental Health America  
of Greater Houston  
NAMI Metropolitan Houston  
NAMI West Houston, Inc.  
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.  
Neuhaus Education Center  
Northwest Assistance Ministries  
Planned Parenthood of Houston  
and Southeast Texas, Inc.  
Prepared 4 Life  
San Jose Clinic  
SEARCH  
South County Community Clinic,  
DBA The Community Clinic  
Spaulding for Children  
St. Luke's Episcopal Health System  
Systems of Hope  
Texans Together Education Fund  
Texas Children's Hospital  
The Arc of Greater Houston  
The Methodist Hospital System  
The Network of Behavioral  
Health Providers  
United Way of Greater Houston  
Wesley Community Center  
YMCA of Greater Houston  
YWCA of Greater Houston

## Child Welfare: Aging Out of Foster Care

**Position Statement approved by One Voice: November 14, 2008**

**Issue/Concern:** Youth aging out of foster care are not prepared to live as adults at age 18. They need a comprehensive program and support network to help them successfully transition to adulthood.

### Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- ★ Adopt appropriate legislation and funding to support development and implementation of a comprehensive program in DFPS Region 6 to aid aging/aged out foster youth to transition to successful adult living, which can be replicated in other parts of Texas.
- ★ Provide adequate funding in the state budget to sustain existing transition centers, including funding for case managers and services for youth and for satellite facilities, prior to adding new centers.
- ★ Fund expansion of Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) services to youth ages 14 and 15.

**How does this issue/recommendation relate to prevention and early intervention or maximizing federal funds for health and human services?** Houston Alumni and Youth (HAY) Center is a transition center in Harris County serving youth aging out of foster care and foster care alumni through age 25. In the first year of operation, it was funded through a competitive 3-year grant from the U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL), with matching funds from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) & DFPS. In spring 2007, DOL unexpectedly eliminated funding for the HAY Center and four similar centers in the U.S. The HAY Center has continued operations through a short-term commitment from Casey Family Programs Foundation (Casey) and funds from TWC. If this model proves successful in supporting foster care alumni in attaining employment, post-secondary and vocational education, and affordable housing, TWC representatives have expressed interest in expanding and creating further collaborations between state employment centers & child welfare agencies. CPS Region 6 data shows that for the youth served, transition centers prevent criminal activity, reduce recidivism, lessen the need for welfare supports, and help develop more stable family relationships. Satellite offices are needed because transportation is becoming more and more difficult for the youth served. Additionally, these centers could be more effective if they could develop community collaboratives and networks to help youth obtain other services they need, such as supportive housing, educational assistance, and mentoring.

### Supporting Facts/Research/Resources:

The PAL program helps youth aging out of foster care prepare for successful adult living. The HAY Center provides a one-stop program where young people receive information and services to help them develop as independent adults, but it is unable to provide all the needed services, such as supportive housing, assistance with higher education, and long-term mentoring. The HAY Center & other centers in Texas are struggling to keep their centers in operation when the current funding from Casey & TWC ends in 2009. One Voice is working with the HAY Center and community providers to develop a more comprehensive program that will manage and expand needed services throughout the Houston region. SB 6 mandates that TWC and local workforce boards enter cooperative agreements with DFPS to further the goals of the PAL program.

The boards are instructed to ensure that (a) services are prioritized and targeted to meet the needs of current and former foster children; and (b) such services include, where feasible, referrals for short-term stays for youth needing housing.

The following HAY Center goals have been achieved from June 2005 to January 31, 2008:

- ★ 746 unduplicated youths served. Since their enrollment in the program:
- ★ 69.30 percent of enrollees who were not employed or full-time students received employment/military/apprenticeship/educational placements, and 88.59 percent retained their employment/military/apprenticeship/educational placements; and
- ★ Of those who had not yet graduated from high school or received GEDs, 62.04 percent attained high school diplomas/GEDs.

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