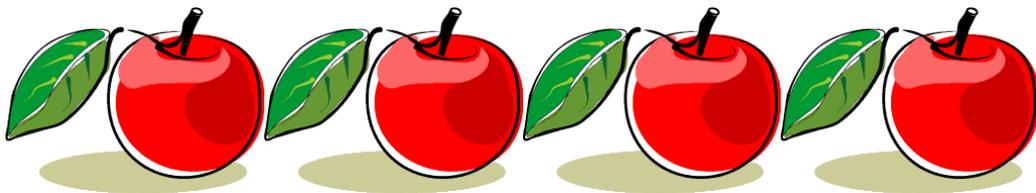


Section B: Program Information

**(4) Chafee Foster Care
Independence Program (CFCIP) and
Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

**Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services**



**Annual Progress and Services Report FY 2008 - FY 2009
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)
and Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

In Washington State, the Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration (CA) administers, supervises and oversees the Title IV-E program and the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). CA has continued efforts to maintain and improve the Chafee Independent Living Program. Community collaboration continues to be a guiding force in our work with adolescents, their caregivers and community stakeholders. Contact information for the IL/TL CA Program Manager is as follows:

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Children's Administration (CA) continues to improve its infrastructure for services and making social workers, youth, and community stakeholders aware of the resources available to youth transitioning from state foster care. CA continues to work diligently to limit the gap in services delivery and to make Independent Living programs available to all eligible youth across the state. Services are currently provided to youth and young adults age 15 through 21 for Independent Living and Transitional Living Services and up to age 23 for the Education and Training Voucher program. CA has made promising inroads with systems integration to improve educational, housing, and employment outcomes for young adults as they transition out of foster care.

Children's Administration is currently serving approximately 1600 youth/young adults (not including Tribal youth).

Eligibility for the Chafee Program

I. Independent Living Services (ILS)

The following individuals are eligible for any contracted independent living skills program.

- 1) Youth who are at least age 15, and have not yet reached his/her 18th birthday, and are currently in Tribal out-of-home care or a dependent in the legal custody and care of DSHS;
- 2) Youth who are adopted from State or Tribal custody on or after his/her 16th birthday.

II. Transitional Living Program (TLP)

Youth are eligible for contracted transitional living programs if:

- 1) Youth has aged out of foster care or Tribal out of home care, is age 18 or older but has not yet reached age 21;
- 2) Youth who were not eligible for ILS services at time of transition may still be eligible for TL if they meet the following criteria:
 - Youth has or had an open DCFS case at time of transition from care; **and**
 - Youth had been in out-of-home care for the previous six months prior to transition from care; **OR**
 - Youth was dependent and returned home within a year of reaching the age of majority (18).

III. Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

Youth must meet eligibility criteria for either Independent Living Services or Transitional Living Services, as well as, meet the following criteria in order to be eligible for Education and Training Voucher services:

- 1) Youth must be eligible for post-secondary education;
- 2) Youth must either:
 - be enrolled at least half-time in a post-secondary degree or certificate program; or
 - be accepted for the next term.
- 3) Students who have been receiving vouchers on their 21st birthday who are making acceptable progress towards graduation may continue to receive vouchers up to age 23.

Assist youth in transition from dependency to self-sufficiency

The Washington State legislature established statutory authority to serve former foster youth ages 18 through 21 in June 2001. Services to current and former foster care youth age 18 through 21 are delivered via a Transitional Living Contract with community service providers.

To achieve consistency in the assessment and case planning for young people transitioning from care, the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Tools are being used by all Independent Living/Transitional Living contractors in Washington State. The Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) is a nationally recognized web-based tool that helps youth in out of home care prepare for adulthood. The ACLSA consists of developmentally based youth and caregiver assessments. Score reports pop up immediately after the assessment, showing areas of greatest strength and challenge, and can be used to create a learning plan to aid in their transition into adulthood. This tool enables CA to collect aggregate data indicating areas for program focus and to document pre and post outcomes for youth.

In 2006, Washington State in collaboration with Casey Family programs developed ACLSA training specifically for caregivers to inform them of the tool and to identify ways they can assist the youth in their development of the learning plans. This training is offered to caregivers on a regular basis.

In addition to providing independent living and transitional living services to youth in foster care, Washington State also has the Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP). This program was developed when the legislature passed the Homeless Prevention, Protection and Engagement Act

(HOPE) in 1999. RLS programs are for youth, ages 16 to 18 in the custody of the State or Tribe. The RLS programs provide long-term housing, assessment, and life skills training to youth who are state-dependent, who are not returning to their families, and who have been unsuccessful in traditional foster care. In 2008 the RLSP program was expanded to 42 beds.

Children's Administration recognizes that transition planning is important to youth. Two such efforts to assist youth in their transition into adulthood are:

- Shared planning meetings for youth 17.5 years of age to create a transition plan with them as they exit foster care. Social workers utilize the checklist for youth exiting care as a guide in these meetings.
- Contracted Independent Living Programs also report on transition living planning in their quarterly progress reports of youth.

Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment

Foster youth need assistance in receiving the necessary education, training and skills in order to find and maintain employment. Youth are provided this service through the contracted IL and TL programs, which incorporate employment services into employment modules and workshops or link and/or refer to existing community resources. Employment services shall be provided at all times of the year and shall coincide with the summer and holiday hiring, school breaks, and near the end of the school year. Youth are provided with the following:

- Coaching on activities related to employment readiness, interviewing, resume writing and appropriate dress.
- Assistance in gaining and retaining employment.
- Assistance in obtaining or securing items needed in order to gain or maintain employment, such as a social security card, dress attire and transportation (if possible).
- Assistance in utilizing community employment resources to assist in gaining employment.
- Information on how to enroll in any of the available Workforce Investment Act youth programs or register with the Employment Security One Stop Career Centers (if available).

Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions

Educational stability and achievement for children in foster care is a critical aspect of ensuring a successful transition to self-sufficiency. Under the direction of 2003 legislation, Substitute House Bill 1058 "an act relating to the educational attainment of children in foster care" CA has partnered with OSPI to improve the educational stability and achievement of children and youth in foster care:

- Regional development of protocol agreements with 138 school districts outlining strategies for school stability and collaboration
- Trainings and presentations for educators, social workers, caregivers and community partners regarding the education needs of foster children and youth including:
- Provided training to 1100 educators, social workers, caregivers and community partners at Education Summits in each region to address complex trauma and helping traumatized children learn. These summits strengthened the local partnerships between CA, school districts, caregivers and community partners to provide consistent support for educational success of foster youth.
- Provided training to 200 representatives from colleges and universities about the educational programs available for post-secondary education for youth in foster care. This workshop appointed a contact person for foster youth at each college and university in order to increase the chances for foster youth to persist in higher education.
- Provided pre-conference workshops on educational advocacy at the Caregivers Conference including General Educational Advocacy and Post-Secondary information to support educational success for foster youth.

- Developed an on-line educational advocacy program for caregivers through Pierce College.
- Provided 14 training sessions on General Education Advocacy across the state for caregivers and social workers.
- Provided 8 training sessions on Post-Secondary information across the state for caregivers and social workers.

CA continues to offer a comprehensive Education Advocacy Training to social workers. This four hour training which is built into the training for new social workers at the Social Workers Academy, provides CA social workers with the information necessary to engage in education planning and advocacy for the children and youth on their case loads (birth through post secondary). It also provides a foundation to a holistic approach involving foster parents, relative caregivers, parents, children and other individuals in education planning and advocacy. Social worker and caregiver education guides are also distributed during this training and are available online.

CA has developed a train-the-trainer program to implement three modules of training across the state. Participants in this program will be trained in Early Learning, General Education Advocacy including Special Education and Discipline issues, and Post-Secondary preparation and planning. Trainers are provided with curricula and materials to return to their regions and train other social workers, caregivers, educators and others.

There are many other efforts happening in Washington State to improve educational outcomes for youth in care. The contracted IL providers continue to prepare and mentor foster youth ages 15 to 18 to complete high school or a GED program, and enter post-secondary education programs. Formal tutoring, educational advocacy, and homework assistance programs occur in many regions.

CA is a member of the Foster Care to College (FCTC) partnership, whose primary intent is to help foster youth successfully graduate high school and pursue post-secondary education goals. The partnership through Foundation funding has implemented two programs in 2006-07: the "How to Go to College" seminars and a mentor program component. The seminars are offered in all six regions to both 6th to 9th graders and 10th to 12th graders with a focus on how to graduate and get into a post secondary education program. The mentorship program is also available in five regions. This program matches youth with mentors who share a similar academic/vocational interest.

CA in collaboration with the members of the Foster Care to College Partnership did a mass mailing in January 2008 where an information packet that included all the various services available to foster youth was sent to youth age 15-18, caregivers, tribes, CA staff working with adolescents and community partners.

The 2007 state Legislative session passed a bill which created the Passport to College Promise program, a six year pilot program. This program has two components:

- A program of supplemental educational transition planning for foster youth beginning at age 14 and every 6 months thereafter. This program is now available in 2 regions with plans to expand to all 6 regions within WA State in the summer of 2008.
- Beginning in fall 2008 the Passport to College Promise Program will offer scholarships up to \$6900 to former foster youth who are entering post secondary educational programs.

The Governors' Scholarship continues to be offered. This scholarship program was instituted in 2001 by former Governor Gary Locke who established a golf tournament to raise funds for scholarships for foster youth to attend higher education institutions. This program is administered by the College Success Foundation. Governors' Scholarships were awarded to 35 foster youth this year. This program continues to work in concert with Washington State's Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program to identify youth bound for post-secondary education and help them with mentoring and financial assistance.

There are several other scholarship opportunities available to foster youth to help promote post secondary attendance. They include: Treehouse Coaching to College, YMCA Transitions and Seattle University Fostering Scholars.

Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults

Contracted IL providers, foster parents and community service providers continue to link youth with dedicated adults as the youth transitions out of care. The Foster Care to College partnership supports this effort by providing a mentoring program to youth who identify themselves as college bound providing this service from high school into college.

Youth centered personal and emotional support is facilitated through the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) which was implemented in 2004. The assessment of IL needs and completion of the IL plan for all foster youth ages 15 to 18 is a requirement. In completing the plan for each youth they have to identify persons to help them achieve their goals.

Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age.

The Washington State legislature established statutory authority to serve former foster youth ages 18 to 21 in June 2001. Services to former foster care youth are delivered via a contract amendment to the Independent Living contract. These contracted programs are known as **Transitional Living Programs (TLPs)**. CA has TLP programs in every region of Washington State. Service delivery to current and former foster care youth between the ages of 18 and 21 continues to substantially increase since the establishment of the programs in 2001. These programs assist eligible youth in securing housing, employment and employment-related training and education, and maintaining self-sufficiency.

Thirty percent of the program funds can be utilized for Room and Board. Funding is made available to eligible youth ages 18 to 21 on an individual basis. "Room and Board" is defined as assistance provided to a former foster care youth from age 18 up to 21 in the form of payment for rent, utilities, deposits and housing costs. Room and board or housing costs are budgeted and tracked separately by CA to ensure that not more than 30 percent of the state's Chafee Independent Living funds are used for housing expenses. Transitional Living case managers work with each youth to locate affordable housing, negotiate leases and make rent and utility payments. Rent subsidies are available as long as the youth is employed or seeking employment, or enrolled in an educational or vocational program.

Services to current and former foster youth are delivered by contracted Transitional Living service providers. If contracted service agencies are not available, youth may still apply for transition funds through a local Children's Administration (CA) office. Contracted private agencies continue to develop partnerships with housing and employment agencies and help young people stay connected to supportive adults and peers. Contracted Transitional Living Programs provide the following services:

- Educational services, including basic literacy and computational skills training, either in local alternative public high schools or in a high school equivalency program that leads to obtaining a high school equivalency degree;
- Assistance in securing and maintaining safe and stable housing;
- Assistance and counseling related to obtaining vocational training or higher education, job readiness, job research assistance, and job placement programs;
- Counseling and instruction in life skills such as money management, home management, consumer skills, parenting, healthy marriages, health care, access to community resources, and transportation and housing options;
- Individual and group counseling;

- Networking with federal agencies and state and local organizations such as the United States Department of Labor, employment and training administration programs including the Workforce Investment Act which administers Workforce Development Councils, the Job Corps, Vocational rehabilitation, volunteer programs, and housing authorities. Transitional Living programs are currently offered in every CA region.

Washington State's 2006 legislation passed HB 2002 – foster care to 21. This 3 year pilot permits DSHS to continue foster care and support services to age 21 for 50 young adults per year for a total of 150 in 2008 while these young adults attend a post-secondary institution.

Children's Administration implemented this legislation and the program began in September 2006. Children's Administration is currently working on filling the 150 available slots for fiscal year 2008.

Washington State's 2007 legislation passed HB 1922 which created an Independent Youth Housing program which provides housing vouchers to youth exiting foster care. This program is administered through the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED). This pilot program is available in three areas of WA State. Youth may receive assistance with:

- Monthly rent
- Utility payments (gas and electricity)
- Move in costs (such as first and last month's rent, security deposits)
- Cost for credit checks
- Cost for parking (if not included in rent and one is needed)
- Case management services

Education and Training Voucher Program

In an effort to maximize funds and coordinate efforts, the Education and Training Voucher program was centralized in August of 2006 and is administered by CA headquarters. Services to former foster care youth include:

- Outreach, identification, eligibility determination of ETV recipients
- Helping youth fill out the ETV application, FAFSA application, and other financial aid applications
- Mentoring recipients of ETV, include:
 - Working with other agencies such as the College Success Foundation, the Orphan Foundation of America, the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, and post-secondary institutions to identify additional resources for youth
 - Helping youth to develop education and career plans
 - Providing support for youth through their post-secondary education
- Tracking youth progress in their post-secondary program
 - Submitting quarterly reports detailing demographic information, information about the use of ETV funds, and other program tracking information to help better the ETV program

The current staffing for the program includes a Program Manager, Program Coordinator and a Customer Service Specialist 2 that responds to inquiries and day to day needs of the youth served. An ETV program coordinator has been hired to temporarily assist the team, effective April 2008.

CA provides tribal youth from the 29 federally recognized Tribes with the opportunity to receive ETV by allocating 10% of the total ETV funds to be used for tribal youth.

In FY07 CA served 250 youth through the ETV program. It is anticipated that the ETV program will show a 5% increase in youth served in FY08, serving a total of 265 students, as the centralized system continues to communicate the availability of the program to CA staff and contractors.

CA continues to coordinate with the College Success Foundation, the Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, and other agencies in an effort to maximize former foster care youth access to financial aid assistance (e.g., federal student financial aid programs, grants, scholarships, and ETV services).

Collaborations

Community collaboration continues to be a vital part of Children's Administration's (CA) efforts to strengthen its delivery of services to foster youth, former foster youth, and the community as a whole. Some of these efforts are:

- The Foster Care to College (FCTC) Partnership, a partnership between Children's Administration, the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, College Success Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and Treehouse. The FCTC partnership intent is to increase foster youth high school graduation & educate youth on how to access and attend post-secondary education and training programs.
- Children's Administration in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, Mockingbird Society and Washington Education Foundation continues to support a Statewide Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action" which consists of current and former recipients of CA services. This Board has been in operation for over 3 years and has been a vital part of helping shape change in our child welfare system. The Board serves in an advisory function to provide input to CA on its policies and practices in efforts to provide better services to youth in care. This Board has participated in a variety of different functions (speaker panels, meetings, workgroups, and committees) to ensure the youth voice is represented. Children's Administration utilizes this Board in many of its workgroups and relies on them for feedback in its planning and when making changes to the foster care system.
- Treehouse, a private non-profit agency that serves foster youth in Region 4 by providing clothing and school supplies, funding for enrichment activities and summer camp, and in-school tutoring. It also offers an outreach program to foster youth in middle school and a coaching to college mentoring program to youth who are college bound.
- LIFTS (Living Interdependently for Tomorrow's Success) in Region 2, provides funding to supplement IL program services to add a GED-prep program in the Tri-Cities, increase group and individual ACLSA Plan assistance for youth, and expand links to community services and resources.
- The Region 2 Transitions Collaboration Network meets quarterly to work on developing and increasing resources for youth who transition out of foster care. Members include: Casey Family Program (Yakima field office), DCFS, Catholic Family & Child Service, Southeast WA Workforce Development Council, and Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington. A youth pizza lunch party was held during the December holiday school break. The Network will work closely with Mockingbird Society to develop regional and local youth/alumni groups.
- YMCA Young Adult Services in Region 4 continues to operate the young adult community resource center (The Center) which opened in February 2007. The Center is the gateway to YMCA services for foster youth, foster alumni and other transitioning youth ages 15-25. The YMCA provides supportive housing, case management and referral services

through its three core programs: Independent Living Program, Transitions and Young Adults in Transition.

- Ready to Rent is a program of United Way's Out of the Rain Homeless Initiative in partnership with Mutual Interest and the Rental Association of Puget Sound.
- Homeless Youth and Young Adult Committee in Region 4 is a subcommittee of King County's Ten Year Plan to end Homelessness. This committee is looking at the reasons for homelessness, resources currently available (permanent housing, transitional housing) and the gaps in services, etc.
- The Washington State Independent Living Coordinator and other CA staff are closely aligned with Casey Family Programs, the private foundation whose headquarters is in Seattle, Washington. Collaborative efforts between CA and Casey Family Programs occur at both the direct service level and the systems improvement level to help adolescents in foster care achieve self-sufficiency.
- The Greater Pierce County Community Network is helping identify and provide better services to foster youth in Region 5.
- Treehouse, United Way of King County and the YMCA Independent Living Program collaborate together and provide Individual Development Accounts to 50 youth in King County.
- The Transition Collaboration in Region 4 consists of both public and private agencies who meet monthly to do resource sharing and identify gaps in service to youth transitioning out of care.

Medicaid

In 2007 legislation extended Medicaid coverage to individuals who:

- On or after July were under 21 years of age;
- On or after July 22, 2007 were in foster care under the legal responsibility of DSHS or a federally recognized tribe located within the state; and
- On their 18th birthday, were in foster care under the legal responsibility of DSHS or a federally recognized tribe located within the state.

The legislation does not apply retroactively to youth aging out of foster care prior to July 22, 2007.

Tribal participation

Tribal youth are assured access and availability of Independent Living services across the state. Tribal youth may choose Tribal IL contracted services or non-tribal providers, assuming space availability. Once the Tribal youth ages out of foster care (18), s/he is eligible for Transitional Living Services (TLS) across the state.

Agreements with the Tribes regarding allocation of the Chafee Independent Living funds were reached in the year 2000. A solicitation process occurs each year where all federally recognized Tribes in Washington State are given an opportunity to apply for Chafee funding. Letters were sent to each Tribe offering an IL contract for this fiscal year. To date, every Tribe that has requested Chafee funds for their own IL program has been approved for funding. This year CA has contracts with 25 tribes. Ten percent of the total IL allocation is designated for Tribal contracts.

Outreach with the Tribes regarding IL/TL/ETV programs continues on a regular basis. The IL Program Manager and ETV Program Manager attend various Tribal meetings to educate members

about IL and ETV services. Several IL Coordinators in each of the regions also meet regularly with the Tribes and discuss IL issues and collaboration.

Trust Funds

Washington State does not have established trust funds for youth receiving independent living or transition assistance.

Accomplishments for CFCIP in FY2008

- Children's Administration continued its statewide youth advisory board "Passion to Action" and had youth present in many of its committees and workgroups. This Board has been in operation for over three years.
- Children's Administration published a poster that provides overview of the Chafee programs and distributed it to the local community colleges and universities.
- Children's Administration updated its multi-disciplinary checklist that serves as a reminder of documentation and services CA provides to youth exiting care.
- A timeline of the various services available to adolescents in foster care was developed and made available to social workers.
- In October 2007 Washington State hosted a foster youth and alumni leadership summit where foster youth and alumni from around the state came together to begin development of local action groups. Regional action groups are established in each of the 6 regions in Washington State.
- The Foster Care to College partnership provided "How to go to College" seminars to youth from 6th to 12th grade, as well as, a mentoring program to 5 of the regions in Washington State.
- The Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) tool training continues to be made available to foster parents.
- A mass promotion of services available to adolescents in foster care was conducted in January 2008. Packets including posters and brochures were sent to all youth age 15-18 in the foster care system, caregivers, tribes and community partners.
- Contracted educational advocates are available in each of the 6 regions of Washington State to assist foster youth to improve educational outcomes.
- A common application process is available to foster youth and alumni which incorporate the Education and Training Voucher program, Governor's Scholarship and other local scholarship opportunities for foster youth.
- The online group called "ILPWA" continues to be available so that IL providers and others working with youth in and out of foster care from around Washington State can share ideas and communicate with each other.
- Region 1 hosted an Independent Living conference to foster youth age 15-18 to provide them with trainings and information on resources needed to help promote self-sufficiency.
- One member of the Passion to Action Statewide youth advisory board was selected as a Foster Club all-star level two.
- Education summits were conducted in each of the regions in Washington State which focused on building collaborative relationships between caregivers, social workers and the public schools.
- Outreach was conducted through training, presentations and mailings to the local tribes, community colleges and universities, adoptive parents and social workers on the array of services available to foster youth.
- A statewide IL provider meeting was held in April 2008.
- The Independent Living Policy was updated to lower eligibility to age 15.
- Graduation celebrations were held around the state to celebrate foster youth graduating from high school or receiving their GED
- The GET Set Summer Program provided six 4-week sessions in 4 Region 2 communities. Activities included classroom skills-building, resume preparation, social and life-skills development, and paid work experience. Over 120 youth participated in the 6 sessions. GET

Set 2008 planning is underway for eight 4-week sessions in Yakima, Toppenish, Tri-Cities, and Walla Walla.

- Region 5 IL/TL Program in Bremerton conducts monthly group trainings that all program youth, social workers and caregivers are invited to attend. They also conduct meetings that are specific to populations with special needs such as DDD youth and parenting teens.
- Children's Administration began its planning of youth involvement in the CFSR process.

Accomplishments of the ETV program in FY 2008:

- Children's Administration expanded its ETV program by hiring a temporary program Coordinator to assist the program manager in providing a more consistent program to participating youth. It is anticipated that a second temporary position will be filled in June 2008.
- The "Washington State Education and Training Voucher Program Guidelines" that explains the program to social workers, Independent and Transitional Living contractors and CA coordinators was distributed throughout FY2007.
- A 10 page publication that describes the ETV program to Youth was made available and is intended to be given to youth interested in participating in the program.
- A database for tracking recipients of the ETV program was developed.
- Revision of the "Common Application" that youth may utilize to apply for ETV and other funding that provides scholarships and support in their pursuit of post secondary education.
- Maintenance of an email account that all youth may use to communicate with the program: etvwash@dshs.wa.gov
- Maintenance of a Toll-free number for ease of communication: 1-877-433-8388.

Planned Activities for FY 2009 for the Chafee program

- The development and launching of phase two of the web site www.independence.wa.gov that provides access to information about the Chafee programs, resources available, and other topics of interest to adolescents aging out of care.
- Implementation of a Peer to Peer mentoring program employing former foster youth who will work with youth to access and apply to the array of available services
- The Youth leadership convening that will be held in October 2008 with a focus of strengthening existing youth councils and establishing new ones.
- Statewide IL provider meetings that will be held to discuss program design and collaboration.
- Expand the Supplemental Educational Transition Planning program to all regions of WA State.
- Region 2 will host a "Better Together" training in fall, 2008. This is a Casey Family Program curriculum that facilitates building partnerships. It includes hands-on/interactive lessons on how to add alumni voices to practice & policy development; move forward on state PIP requirements; develop alumni skills in strategically sharing expertise on target issues.
- Region 1 will host a "real world" event where youth age 15 and older come together and get exposure to real life experiences such as banking, budgeting, finding housing, voting, shopping, and civic responsibilities.
- Region 6 will host an "Independent City" event. Youth ages 15 and older will participate in a mock city and get to experience what life is like living on their own.
- Foster youth and alumni leadership summit will be held in October 2008.
- Development and distribution of "Get Educated" posters for high schools, colleges and universities statewide.
- Continuing the Education Summits in each region. This will build on the momentum of previous two years in the support of educational attainment for foster youth.
- Enhancement of local partnerships in the Compassionate Schools initiative through OSPI.
- Developing an on-line application process for youth applying for scholarships