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**NYC ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP WITH WORKPLACE CENTER AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY TO PREPARE YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE FOR CAREERS**

*Nationally, Youth Aging Out of Foster Care Face High Rates of Unemployment as Adults*

*Under Expanded Partnership, Dozens of Youth in Care Will Gain Work Experience and On-going Employment Support; Initiative is Part of Foster Care Task Force Recommendations to Help Youth Achieve Career Goals*

NEW YORK, NY - In an effort to provide New York City youth in foster care with greater career readiness, the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today announced that it has expanded its partnership with the Workplace Center at Columbia University to provide real work experiences and career readiness preparation for youth in foster care. Under the expanded partnership, approximately 200 young people in care will have access to career resources and employment opportunities. The announcement is part of the just-released NYC Foster Care Interagency Task Force one-year progress report.

The model, known as "Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers" (YA WORC) is an evidence-informed career readiness preparation program for young people ages 13 – 24 who face challenging life circumstances such as foster care, court involvement or mental health issues. The program aims to connect youth to meaningful careers and prepare them for economic independence by helping them identify a career goal, plan a career path, and gain the skills and knowledge to move along that path.

Nationally, youth aging out of foster care have poorer educational outcomes than their peers and face high rates of unemployment as adults. As part of the model, staff at foster care agencies are provided with technical assistance and training to: administer comprehensive vocational assessments; guide young people through a career exploration process to find the right career for them; help young people complete career/education plans and activate the plans; facilitate a Career Club; and coordinate the internal and external systems that affect academic and employment outcomes.

"In New York City, we're doing everything we can to make sure more doors of opportunity are opened for youth in foster care. ACS thanks the Workplace Center at Columbia University for its partnership and commitment to helping every youth in foster care succeed in adulthood. I am confident that, through the YA WORC model, more and more NYC youth in foster care will have the tools they need to succeed," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.**

"Ensuring youth in foster care have networks and programs to support their journey to meaningful career opportunities is key in their path to prosperity," **said Dr. Irwin Garfinkel,**

**Interim Dean of the Columbia School of Social Work.** “We have seen the success of evidence-informed and developmentally appropriate models from the Workplace Center's involvement in Works Wonders in Rhode Island, and I look forward to seeing the opportunities generated here in New York City by this partnership between the Workplace Center at the Columbia School of Social Work and ACS. The YA WORC program will positively impact the trajectory of youth from vulnerable backgrounds and help create more equitable outcomes.”

Ten foster care agencies in New York City received YA WORC training from the Workplace Center, Columbia University. The partnership stems from an initiative recommended by the Foster Care Task Force aimed at helping youth achieve career goals.

Six foster care agencies (Children’s Aid, Forestdale, Heartshare St. Vincent’s, JCCA, Rising Ground & The Children’s Village) have successfully completed at least one round of career/education planning and Career Club programming at their sites with intensive training and support from the Workplace Center at Columbia University. During FY 2018, the agencies enrolled 154 youth into the program. Four additional agencies (SCO, Catholic Guardian, Sheltering Arms, and Cardinal McCloskey) have completed the YA WORC training and have enrolled youth into their Career Clubs for FY 2019.

According to the Workplace Center at Columbia University, because of the unique needs of youth in foster care, it’s important that foster care agencies ensure the career development needs of youth in care are well served and, once employed, to help youth negotiate housing, and problem solve around the issues of balancing personal lives with work or school.

The impact of YA WORC components has already been evaluated in New York, California and Rhode Island and data show that the program is effective. For instance, employment, career readiness and confidence in finding a job that will meet career interests increased significantly for young people in New York City from six foster care agencies who participated in YA WORC in 2018. After participation, 87.2% of young people were using the skills and knowledge gained through the program, and 42.6% were working. Sixty percent of the young adults who were working at enrollment were still working at follow-up and 34 percent of the young adults who were not working at enrollment were working at follow-up.

Improving education and employment outcomes for youth in foster care is a key priority in the [ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#). In addition to implementing the YA WORC model, ACS has worked to improve education and employment outcomes among youth in foster care in several ways. For instance, ACS established a new Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives dedicated to improving employment outcomes for youth in the foster care and justice systems; launched the ACS/CUNY dorm program; and implemented new programs in partnership with DYCD, Columbia University Workplace Center and FirstStar. In April 2018, New Yorkers for Children, in partnership with ACS and Youth Villages launched the YV LifeSet program in NYC, a promising model that is being implemented in sites across the country.

To read the entire Foster Care Task Force one-year progress report, [click here](#):

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