

Wednesday, November 2, 2016

Contact: pressoffice@acs.nyc.gov, (212)341-0886

ACS and CUNY Announce Pioneer College Support Initiative for Foster Care Youth

51 youth in care are attending ten CUNY Colleges and living in campus dorms this fall through a \$1.7 million investment from the City.

New York, NY – The NYC Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and the City University of New York (CUNY) are pleased to announce a joint initiative that will support 51 foster care youth attending CUNY colleges this fall with academic and financial support.

The new program, which is part of the Fostering College Success initiative, began this summer with The New York Foundling providing tutoring and other supportive services to 40 foster care youth. The youth are now enrolled in academic programs at ten CUNY colleges across the city and are living on campus in the Queens College dormitory. An additional 11 students have enrolled at the College of Staten Island and are residing on that campus.

“This is certainly one of the most complete college-support programs for foster care youth in the nation,” said **ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión**. “I am proud to partner with CUNY in ensuring that foster youth are provided all-around support so their transition to college is successful.”

“As an institution with a distinguished history of public service, Queens College is delighted to provide a quality residential experience to deserving young adults who need stability to complete their college education,” said **Queens College President Félix V. Matos Rodríguez**.

“The College of Staten Island has embraced the motto of Opportunity and Challenge since 1956. Today, we are humbled and honored to be a lead college with CUNY and the New York City’s Administration for Children’s services in providing opportunities to this important and valued group of tomorrow’s leaders,” said **President of the College of Staten Island William J. Fritz**.

“Among our many obligations to these young people, perhaps none is greater or more important for their long term wellbeing and happiness than providing them with an opportunity and the necessary supports for achieving a college degree,” said **President & CEO Bill Baccaglini**, The New York Foundling. “The Foundling is honored to be a part of this transformational undertaking.”

ACS and CUNY’s colleges are committed to ensuring that youth in foster care are properly supported so that they can have a successful college experience. The foster care youth are attending CUNY colleges citywide and living on campus dorms this fall through a City investment of \$1.7 million included in the 2016-2017 City’s fiscal budget. This group of 51 students represents the kickoff of this important program which provides 200 dorm beds over four years. The goal is to increase post-secondary enrollment and graduation rates for youth in foster care. Today, less than 5 percent of youth leaving foster care get four-year college degrees.

This new program will provide financial assistance in the form of free housing; daily stipend for essentials like personal items, phone payments, transportation, clothing, food and books that are not covered with financial aid/scholarship funding; and tuition supports to ensure that the youth living in foster care can complete a post-secondary education. Furthermore, youth will also have access to tutors and counselors throughout the year.

The new program takes advantage of existing highly regarded CUNY services and programs including the nationally renowned ASAP, which increases timely graduation rates; CUNY Start, a pre-enrollment remediation immersion program; and SEEK and College Discovery, designed to offer tutoring and counseling for economically and educationally disadvantaged students.

In New York State, only 18-24 percent of students in foster care enter a post-secondary program prior to their discharge from foster care. The majority of students in foster care in New York State reside in New York City. Students who have entered college struggle with retention, as evidenced through an evaluation of those students who requested the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding and then did not return to school the following year(s).

Additionally, of the approximately 275-300 youth in foster care enrolled in post-secondary education, only about a third live in dormitories. Students receive a maximum of \$10,949 per year in Federal and TAP financial aid, making most college housing in NYC unaffordable without student loans or private financial support. This innovative program will allow foster care youth to get the full college experience without the financial burden.

CUNY colleges participating in this pioneer college support initiative are Queens College; Queensborough Community College; John Jay College of Criminal Justice; LaGuardia Community College; New York City College of Technology; Medgar Evers College; Borough of Manhattan Community College; Hunter College; Baruch College; and College of Staten Island. The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care.