

NYC Children

**INTERAGENCY
FOSTER CARE TASK FORCE
Final Report**

March 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and Council Member Levin,

As Chair of the Interagency Foster Care Task Force, I am very pleased to submit this final report summarizing the results achieved in response to the Task Force's recommendations.

The Task Force's initial report, released in March 2018, included sixteen recommendations to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. All Task Force recommendations were incorporated into the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint. During the past two years, ACS, in partnership with its sister agencies in City government, parents, youth, advocates and provider agencies, has worked aggressively to implement the recommendations.

The Task Force members have not only contributed their expertise, but have also worked collaboratively to advance the critical objective of improving outcomes for children in foster care. This report reflects the collective accomplishments of this citywide partnership.

As we celebrate the numerous concrete improvements achieved in the past two years, ACS also looks forward to continuing our work with stakeholders citywide to further strengthen results for youth and families.

As the Task Force concludes its work, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of its members for their roles in this important collaboration to ensure that all children and youth in foster care have what they need to thrive.

David A. Hansell,

Commissioner, *NYC Administration for Children's Services*
Chair, Interagency Foster Care Task Force

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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BACKGROUND

The Interagency Foster Care Task Force (the Task Force) was created following the enactment of Local Law 144 of 2016, signed by Mayor Bill de Blasio on November 16, 2016. The legislation, which was introduced by City Council Member and Chair of the General Welfare Committee Stephen Levin, charged the Task Force with issuing recommendations to improve services and outcomes for youth in and aging out of foster care. In addition to issuing a report on the recommendations, the Task Force was required to produce two follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations. The one-year progress report was released in March 2019. This two-year progress report is the final report pursuant to the local law.

The law established the composition of the Task Force to include a range of perspectives, experience and expertise. The Task Force is chaired by the Commissioner of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS). Its designated members include youth currently and previously in foster care; parents; advocates; representatives from foster care agencies; the Public Advocate; the Speaker of the City Council; the Chair of the City Council General Welfare Committee; the Commissioners of the City Departments of Social Services (DSS), Youth and Community Development (DYCD), and Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH); the Chancellor of the Department of Education (DOE) and the Chair of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA).

The full Task Force met seven times since the Task Force was established. The Task Force created five workgroups in the areas of Permanency, Education, Employment, Health and Housing that met separately in addition to the full Task Force meetings. The Task Force issued a report with 16 recommendations in March 2018. These recommendations were incorporated into the ACS Five Year Foster Care Strategic Blueprint issued in May 2018. The Task Force's recommendations are organized in three categories:

IMPROVING PERMANENCY OUTCOMES

Three recommendations (#1 - #3) are designed to reduce the time that children spend in foster care by increasing Family Time (aka visiting) with parents, placing more children with relatives and empowering parents with information so they can fully exercise their rights when their children are placed in care.

IMPROVING HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Seven recommendations (#4 - #8, #10 and #11) are designed to improve the well-being and educational attainment of children while in foster care. Dedicated guidance counselors, tutoring in middle schools and focused oversight and service coordination of the educational needs of children in foster care will increase attendance and graduation rates. Three recommendations focus on strengthening mental and behavioral health services for children in foster care. One recommendation is designed to increase the connection of pregnant and parenting teens in foster care to available home visiting services, to improve the quality of care received by the youth and their young children.

IMPROVING PROSPECTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS LEAVING FOSTER CARE

Six recommendations (#9 and #12 - #16) target the needs of young adults leaving foster care. One recommendation is for New York State to ensure that youth with serious and complex physical and mental health needs are able to access Medicaid coverage for the services they need after foster care. Four recommendations focus on increasing housing options and improving access to housing for young people leaving care. Finally, one recommendation is to establish a comprehensive education, employment and housing support service for all youth ages 16 to 25 that are in or have recently been discharged from foster care.

Since the Task Force report was released in March 2018, ACS and its partners have worked diligently to implement the recommendations. As reflected in the One-Year Progress Report issued in March 2019, and in this final report, several recommendations have been completed and measurable progress has been made in all areas. Highlights include the following:

Improving Permanency Outcomes

- Through the efforts of the Task Force, 10 positions were established at ACS as dedicated kinship specialists and an additional **\$3.6 million** over two years has been invested in critical work to **increase kinship care (relatives and close family friends) and strengthen family time** (a.k.a. visiting practice).
- **Increasing Kinship Care:** Through the work of ACS and its foster care provider agencies, the **proportion of New York City children in foster care who are placed with kin has increased from the baseline of 31% to 39%** as of November 2019.
- **Improving Family Time:** ACS is implementing two tools to help foster care provider agencies assess families' readiness to move from supervised to unsupervised Family Time and to make visiting spaces more family-friendly. Foster care agencies are implementing strategies such as hiring case aides to help facilitate and support high quality family time. ACS is also working with parent advocacy organization Rise, which has established a collaboration with multiple foster care providers and developed reference tools and resources to support high quality Family Time practice.
- **Increasing Parent Voice:** ACS has established a **Parent Advisory Council to the Commissioner and a new Parent Engagement Specialist position** to increase parent voice in ACS programs, planning and policy. To support Family to Family practices—strengthening relationships between parents and foster parents—ACS and Rise have collaborated to deliver Rise's 'Building Bridges' curriculum to foster care provider agencies. The 'Building Bridges' training is now available to all providers through the ACS Workforce Institute.

Improving Health, Mental Health and Education Services for Children in Foster Care

- **Fair Futures Investment to Improve Education and Employment Outcomes for Youth:** Through a collaboration with the Fair Futures Coalition¹ and strong support from Council Member Stephen Levin,

¹ Fair Futures is a coalition of child welfare and other nonprofit agencies, foundations, advocates, and young people.

New York City has invested \$10 million, and foundation partners² are contributing an additional \$2 million, to improve education and employment outcomes for youth in foster care ages 11-21. This funding is supporting coaches, tutors, education, employment and housing specialists and other resources. New York City is the first jurisdiction in the nation to implement an education and employment initiative for youth in foster care of this breadth and scale.

- **DOE Guidance and Resource Hub to Improve Service Coordination for Students in Care:** The DOE has released comprehensive guidance on the rights of students in foster care and added a webpage on foster care to its online resource hub. DOE, with support from ACS, has developed a training for staff on the guidance and began delivering the training in December 2019.
- **Advancement in Academic Enrichment:** ACS and DYCD implemented a regular data match to identify middle school youth in foster care who are not enrolled in DYCD afterschool and enrichment programs, and to ensure that they are given an opportunity to enroll. The proportion of 5th to 8th grade students in foster care enrolled in DYCD programs has increased from 14% to 20% since the matching began in 2018.
- **Gaining Access to Mental Health Services Data:** The New York State Office of Mental Health has agreed to provide an ACS Access View to the PSYCKES database, which includes information on diagnosis, medications and mental health services for children in foster care. PSYCKES is designed to support quality improvement, care planning, and clinical decision making. ACS anticipates receiving this data in Spring 2020.

Improving Prospects for Young Adults Leaving Foster Care:

- **NYCHA Priority for Youth Leaving Foster Care:** NYCHA now grants its highest, N-zero, priority to eligible youth referred to NYCHA from ACS who are in the legal care and custody of the ACS Commissioner regardless of their foster care placement address. This resolved a challenge where youth in residential programs located outside of the five boroughs had not consistently received this priority in the past.
- **New State Law to Ensure Child Welfare Housing Subsidy Recipients Can Have Roommates:** In December 2019, Governor Cuomo signed into law a statute that clarifies that youth (and families) receiving the ACS Child Welfare Housing Subsidy can have roommates. This will benefit youth leaving foster care who, like many young adults, want to share an apartment with another person.

The remainder of this report details the progress made on the implementation of each of the 16 Foster Care Task Force recommendations since March 2018. ACS is grateful to all Task Force members for their collaboration to advance these recommendations. In addition to the many accomplishments outlined here, the partnerships developed and expanded through this process will continue. Even as the Task Force concludes, ACS looks forward to working with these vital partners in our collective efforts to improve outcomes for New York City's children and families.

² Foundation partners include the New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Tiger Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Doris Duke Charitable Trust, Booth Ferris Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

PERMANENCY

Task Force Recommendation

Status Update as of March 2020

1. Identify strategies to increase placement of children in foster care with kin.

- **Increase in Kin Placements:** During the last two years, ACS has increased the proportion of children placed with kin from 31 to 39 percent. National research shows that children in foster care fare best when placed with kin, including relatives and family friends. Kinship placement can help reduce trauma, preserve community connections, increase placement stability and improve emotional well-being. It also increases the overall likelihood of achieving permanency and reduces the risk of re-entry to foster care after exiting. In March 2018, ACS announced a goal to increase the proportion of children placed with kin from the baseline of 31% to 46% by the end of 2020. We have made significant progress. As of November 30, 2019, the proportion of children in foster care placed with kin had reached 39%. ACS, along with many partners, continues to implement the following strategies to further increase kin placements.
- **Kinship Specialist Role:** In Spring 2018, ACS created 10 new kinship specialist positions in the Division of Child Protection (DCP). These staff focus full-time on finding and engaging kin caregivers for children entering foster care. Through the efforts of the Kinship Specialists and all of their DCP colleagues, the rate of initial kinship placements has increased in all five boroughs.
- **ACS Staff Education:** The “Find Family and Friends First” campaign continues in ACS’s Division of Child Protection. All existing and new Child Protective Specialists receive training and education materials, and there are posters that are prominently displayed in the ACS offices across the City.
- **Public/Private Partnership for Kinship and Foster Home Recruitment:** ACS’s Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative has been highly successful in increasing foster home recruitment while simultaneously improving kinship placement and support for caregivers. This citywide effort emphasizes effective recruitment practices and strong customer service to support kinship and foster families so that children are safe and receive the highest quality of care. In addition to significant ACS resources, this initiative has received major support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation as well as Casey Family Programs and a collaborative of five foundations -- New York Community Trust, Redlich Horwitz Foundation, Ira W. DeCamp Foundation, Joseph Leroy & Ann C. Warner Fund and Tiger Foundation.
- **Technical Assistance and Innovation at Foster Care Agencies:** ACS, in partnership with national expert Action Research, continues to provide intensive technical assistance on kinship placement to foster care agencies through ACS’ HAFH

Task Force Recommendation	Status Update as of March 2020
	<p>initiative. This work includes analyzing data, assessing kinship business processes and implementing best practices to improve kinship placement and support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kin Pilot: In addition to the kinship work happening across the system, ACS launched Kin Pilots with two foster care agencies in Fall 2018, and expanded it to four agencies in Fall 2019, awarding a total of \$1,162,230 over two years. These foster care agencies are receiving additional funds to implement kin placement strategies such as dedicating staff to search for kin, engaging experienced kinship foster parents as peer advocates and enhancing assistance for kin caregivers in the home study process. • ACS is investing to support caregivers through the foster home certification process. ACS plans to procure a two-year software license to bring the certification process online, making it more user-friendly and reducing paperwork for caregivers. This effort will particularly support kin, who must complete the process in a limited time while also caring for the child in their home. ACS also provides flexible funding to help prospective foster parents defray the cost of items needed for foster home certification (for example, radiator covers, beds, smoke detectors) that could otherwise pose a financial barrier and delay the certification process.
<p>2. Identify strategies to increase and improve the quality of Family Time (aka family visiting).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Time: Increasing and improving the quality of Family Time (aka family visiting) is a key priority in the ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint as Family Time is a major predictor of successful reunification. • Family Time Pilot: ACS launched a Family Time Pilot with two foster care agencies in Fall 2018, and expanded it to four agencies in Fall 2019, awarding a total of \$1,369,770 over two years. Each agency is receiving funds to implement strategies to improve the quality of Family Time practice. Strategies being implemented include visit coaching, case aides accompanying families on visits outside the agency, identifying offsite visiting spaces and providing kits with supplies to encourage positive family interactions. • Tools for Foster Care Agencies: ACS has implemented two Family Time tools with foster care agencies to help improve Family Time practice, the safety of children and reunification outcomes. One tool is designed to help foster care agency staff assess families’ readiness to move from supervised to unsupervised Family Time according to ACS’ visiting policy. The other is a Family Time space assessment

tool to help agencies evaluate and improve the quality of their visiting areas to encourage positive family experiences. ACS has provided technical assistance to 15 foster care provider agencies to support implementation of the tools. A condensed version of the supervision tool was developed to help agency staff more effectively describe families' family time progress in permanency hearing reports. In addition, ACS plans to purchase an evidence-based assessment tool proven to be effective in supporting and preparing families for reunification.

- **Parent Advocacy: ACS has hired a Parent Engagement Specialist, established a Parent Advisory Council to the Commissioner and significantly expanded our partnership and work with parent advocacy organization Rise.**
 - In FY 2019, ACS created a new Parent Engagement Specialist position to coordinate and expand ACS' work with parents to further strengthen parents' voices and engagement in ACS' programs, planning and policy development.
 - ACS established the Commissioner's Parent Advisory Council (PAC), which is led by the ACS Parent Engagement Specialist and includes parent advocates from across the child welfare continuum. The PAC is meeting regularly with the Commissioner and is working on several key practice areas in collaboration with ACS leadership.
 - Rise has provided training and technical assistance to foster care agency staff to enhance Family Time practice. Rise developed "tip sheets" and a video for parents and staff that have been widely disseminated and incorporated into trainings with foster care agencies. ACS has incorporated Rise's TIPS and Family Time video for caseworkers into its Family Time and Visit Coaching trainings. Rise and the ACS Family Visiting Unit (FVU) have developed an integrated training that is being provided to foster care agency staff.
 - Rise has launched "the Reunification Collaborative," an initiative with foster care agencies to identify key frontline practices for improvement to strengthen early parent engagement and accelerate safe reunification.
- **ACS expanded its visiting program at Rikers Island and released a video to promote Family Time for Children with Incarcerated Parents:**
 - In June 2018, ACS' Children of Incarcerated Parents Program (CHIPP) expanded its visiting program for children with mothers incarcerated at Rikers Island to include Saturdays in addition to weekdays. This program is ongoing.

Task Force Recommendation

Status Update as of March 2020

- In December 2018, ACS released a short film and two desk aides developed in collaboration with The Osborne Association about the importance of visits for children with incarcerated parents. The film is geared to caseworkers, featuring clips of workers as well as family members affected by incarceration. These materials were incorporated into a refreshed CHIPP training launched in 2019.
- **Alternative Family Time Locations for Parents Living in Shelters:** In May 2018, ACS issued and implemented guidance to foster care provider agencies regarding appropriate visiting locations, with instructions for requesting ACS approval and payment for alternative visiting locations when parents lack appropriate housing. This program is ongoing and had served 222 families as of November 2019.
- **Family to Family: ACS is implementing a multi-faceted approach to support positive relationships between parents and foster parents in order to improve outcomes for children and families** (commonly known as the Family to Family approach):
- ACS has partnered with Rise to deliver its ‘Building Bridges: Parents & Foster Parents’ curriculum to foster care agencies. This curriculum recognizes that helping to create positive relationships between parents with children in foster care and the foster parents taking care of their children can be transformational in reducing stress on children and supporting parents in achieving reunification. After offering several presentations to foster care agency staff, Rise has now trained ACS to deliver future trainings. ACS’ Parent Engagement Specialist is one of the ‘Building Bridges’ trainers.
- ACS’ new Parent Engagement Specialist and Parent Advisory Council (described above) will help advance Family to Family practice.

3. Enhance materials for parents about the child welfare system and their rights.

- **New Materials to Support Parents: With input from parents, parent advocates, legal advocates and other key stakeholders, ACS is currently updating two documents--** the “Parent’s Guide to Child Protective Services” and the “Handbook for Parents with Children in Foster Care.” These documents will be reissued in 2020 and provided to all parents with investigations and/or children placed in foster care.

EDUCATION

Task Force Recommendation	Status Update as of March 2020
<p>4. Explore feasibility of establishing dedicated guidance counselors for children in foster care.</p>	<p>Specialized Supports for Youth in Foster Care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The NYC Department of Education (DOE) has hired approximately 100 school-based Community Coordinators to connect highly mobile youth, including students in foster care, to a range of supportive services (Summer 2019). In December 2019, ACS provided training to this staff on the academic and social service needs of child welfare-involved youth, and the agencies will continue to collaborate on trainings as necessary.• Through the Community Schools initiative, the DOE is piloting efforts to link foster care youth to Success Mentors, caring adults who identify the underlying causes of chronic student absenteeism and address barriers to attendance to ensure that students reach their academic potential. To date, Success Mentors have worked with 81 students who are in foster care.
<p>5. Identify strategies to provide academic enrichment services, tutoring and social-emotional supports for middle school students in foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Afterschool and Enrichment Programs (ACS/DYCD MOU): The proportion of middle school students in foster care enrolled in DYCD programs has increased from 14% to 20% since ACS and DYCD signed a data-sharing MOU in March 2018. The goal of the MOU is to increase access for children in foster care to DYCD afterschool and enrichment programs. As a result of the MOU, ACS and DYCD conduct a semiannual data match to determine participation levels and connect youth in foster care to available DYCD-funded programs.• Academic Support (ACS and DOE Partnership): In the 2018-19 school year, all DOE 7th graders, including those in foster care, participated in Middle School College Access for All, which supports their post-secondary planning trajectory through college visits, student workshops, caregiver events, and staff professional development. This initiative continues to provide college access opportunities for 7th graders across NYC.

HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH

Task Force Recommendation	Status Update as of March 2020
<p>6. Identify strategies to improve service coordination and regulatory oversight to support DOE students in foster care.</p>	<p>DOE Enhances Service Coordination and Oversight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DOE has released comprehensive guidance on the rights of students in foster care and has begun to train borough and school-based staff on its contents.• The DOE Office of Safety and Youth Development has added a webpage on foster care to the online resource hub and has begun to incorporate foster care information in training for Borough Office staff and school-based Designated Liaisons.
<p>7. Explore opportunities to expand intensive, trauma-informed psychosocial and behavioral supports for youth in family foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Strategies to Support Foster Parents: During the past two years, ACS increased new foster home recruitment by 50% under the Home Away from Home (HAFH) initiative. This turned around a prior six-year decline in the number of new homes recruited. Foster care agencies are developing and implementing a range of strategies to increase support for foster parents. These strategies include leveraging experienced and skilled foster parents in support and recruitment roles; increasing recruitment and support specifically for foster parents of older youth; piloting peer support models; providing specialized training to staff regarding supporting foster parents; resourcing round-the-clock on-call supports for foster parents; and investing in skilled staff who provide in-home individualized coaching, respite and crisis management.• Medicaid Redesign: ACS is working with its foster care provider agencies to maximize use of the redesigned Medicaid services to support youth in foster care. The NY State Plan Amendment (SPA) has been renamed Children and Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS). In January 2019, three CFTSS services became available for all children with Medicaid who meet Medical Necessity. These services are: Other Licensed Practitioner (OLP); Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR); and Community Psychiatric Supports and Treatment (CPST). Family Peer Support Services became available in July 2019. The two remaining CFTSS services, Crisis Intervention and Youth Peer Advocacy and Training became effective in January 2020.

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<p>8. Explore feasibility of implementing wraparound model for youth in foster care with significant mental health needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Fidelity Wraparound (HFW) Pilot offers services for youth with significant social, emotional or behavioral needs: Since September 2018, DOHMH has partnered with City and State stakeholders to implement a HFW demonstration project in the Bronx and Brooklyn for NYC children and youth with serious social, emotional, or behavioral concerns who are involved in multiple child service systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, special education). HFW is an evidence-based model of care coordination that uses a highly structured, team-based, family/child centered management approach. HFW involves intensive, individualized planning for children and youth, with the goals of empowering youth and families to develop family driven plans, connecting youth and families to community-based services and improving mental health outcomes. Referral of youth in foster care began in 2019.
<p>9. Advocate to NYS DOH to ensure that youth leaving foster care are eligible for Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBS).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services for Youth Aging Out: ACS and State partners (DOH, OMH and OCFS) have been working closely to ensure that youth in foster who are eligible for HCBS are referred for services when preparing to leave foster care. This cohort includes youth in foster care who received Bridges to Health (B2H) services or consolidated Children’s Waiver services. B2H and HCBS were designed for people with significant physical or mental health care needs or developmental disabilities to help them live in home or community-based settings. In 2019, OMH adjusted the HCBS eligibility data process to include anyone who had previously been enrolled in B2H or Children’s Waiver services, thus giving them access to HCBS in the adult system. ACS and State partners will continue to collaborate so that all transitioning youth who should qualify for HCBS have access to these services.
<p>10. Advocate to NYS OMH to provide ACS with access to PSYCKES (Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Support (OMH and ACS Partnership): OMH has agreed to grant ACS access to PSYCKES, a web-based application designed to support quality improvement, care planning, and clinical decision making for the Medicaid Behavioral Health population. PSYCKES includes information such as diagnosis, medications, medical and behavioral health outpatient and inpatient services and health home care coordination for children on Medicaid, including children in foster care. The data exchange process between OMH and ACS has been approved by the state Office of Children and Family Services and is scheduled to begin in Spring 2020.

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<p>11. Facilitate access to home visiting services for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care.</p>	<p>DOHMH and ACS have collaborated to facilitate access to the Nurse-Family Partnership and New Family Home Visits: DOHMH and ACS are implementing strategies to increase the utilization of the Nurse-Family Partnership and New Family Home Visits Programs by children and families involved in the child welfare system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering to conduct outreach and provide marketing materials to all ACS Divisions, Foster Care and Preventive agencies to increase awareness of the Nurse-Family Partnership. • Sharing data to track youth in foster care being referred and enrolled with Nurse-Family Partnership. • Ongoing meetings to identify trends and opportunities for additional outreach. • Working collaboratively to implement the expansion of the New Family Home Visits Program. This initiative will include a Coordinated Intake and Referral System, which will accept, screen and match all first-time parents—including young people in care—to the home visiting program that best meets their needs.
<p>HOUSING</p>	
<p>12. Ensure that eligible ACS-referred foster youth aging out of care receive the NYCHA N-zero priority, if they are legally in the care and custody of ACS, regardless of the location of their foster placement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYCHA Priority for Youth in Foster Care: Effective June 2018, NYCHA implemented this recommendation and is granting N-zero priority to eligible ACS-referred youth who are in the legal care and custody of the ACS Commissioner regardless of their foster care placement address.
<p>13. Advocate to increase State-set housing rental assistance for youth and families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Passed NYS Legislation Allows Child Welfare Housing Subsidy Use in Situations with Roommates: ACS has been exploring advocacy options to strengthen state-set housing assistance options for youth and families. This past December, legislation ACS supported and advocated for was signed into law. This legislation makes it clear that the state’s child welfare housing subsidy can be used in situations where there are roommates. ACS will continue to advocate to increase state options in the upcoming session.

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<p>14. Explore expansion of transitional housing for youth leaving foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing Housing Access through ACS/HPD Partnership: ACS partnered with NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to submit a joint application to the Federal Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in order to obtain Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) through the Family Unification Program (FUP). This was successful with 57 vouchers awarded. • New York City 15/15 Supportive Housing Initiative: In November 2015, Mayor de Blasio announced New York City’s commitment to developing 15,000 units of supportive housing over the next 15 years. ACS is currently successfully referring and discharging single youth and pregnant/parenting young adults to 15/15 supportive housing.
<p>15. Provide integrated, accessible information on housing resources for youth leaving foster care.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACS Launched New Resources Website: In 2019, ACS launched a mobile-enabled resource website, ACS ConnectME, that features resources for families, older youth in foster care, foster parents and child welfare professionals. The website is a key resource to older youth who are preparing for adulthood and are seeking housing, educational, employment, health and other resources in the community.
<p>EMPLOYMENT & POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION</p>	
<p>16. Explore strategies to provide supportive services to youth ages 16-25—both during and after foster care—to achieve career, educational and housing goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Futures Initiative Launched: In December 2019, ACS launched the Fair Futures Initiative, aimed at enhancing and improving outcomes for foster care youth ages 11-21 in the areas of education, employment, housing, and permanency. Fair Futures is the result of a partnership among the Mayor’s Office, City Council, ACS, the City’s 26 contracted foster care agencies, and the Fair Futures Coalition (a consortium of foster care agencies, foundations, advocates, and others). As part of the \$12 million citywide effort (including \$2 million contributed by foundation partners), coaches are being hired to provide youth in care with social and emotional support to build life skills, set academic and career goals, and plan for successful transitions from foster care. Foster care agencies are likewise expanding programs and hiring additional staff to support successful transitions to adulthood for their clients, including education, housing, and employment specialists, as well as tutors and case aides.

- LifeSet³ Program Launched:** In April 2018, New Yorkers for Children, in partnership with ACS and Youth Villages, launched the LifeSet program in NYC, a promising model that is being implemented in sites across the country. The program will serve 350 young people over three years with the goals of improving education, employment and housing outcomes. To date, 126 youth have been served in collaboration with Children’s Aid and The New York Foundling. In addition, SCO Family of Services recently signed on to offer LifeSet to their youth in foster care as part of Fair Futures.
- City Council Initiative Provides Wraparound Services for Youth:** The City Council, in partnership with ACS and foster care provider agencies, has invested \$2.5M in wraparound services for transition aged youth over the past two years. This initiative supports education, employment and supportive services for older youth and youth aging out of foster care. Children’s Aid Society, City Living, Forestdale, Graham Windham, JCCA, JBFC, SCO and Sheltering Arms have all received funding to provide these services.
- YA WORC Program Supports Career Development:** ACS is continuing our partnership with The Workplace Center at Columbia University to train foster care agencies to implement the Young Adult Work Opportunities for Rewarding Careers (YA WORC) curriculum. In 2019, 20 additional foster care agency staff were trained in the YA WORC curriculum, bringing the total to 68 foster staff across 12 foster care agencies and programs. An additional 41 youth were engaged in the Career Club in 2019, bringing the total number of youth engaged to over 200.
- More than 200 Youth Have Completed Mentored Internship Program (MIP):** To build the capacity of the City’s foster care agencies to better prepare youth in care for employment, ACS, the CUNY School of Professional Studies, The Pinkerton Foundation, and the Center for Youth Employment (CYE) collaborated to pilot a paid internship program with a mentoring component. Now in its second year, MIP has been expanded to include four additional foster care agencies, bringing the total to 12. The participating agencies are: Catholic Guardian Services; Children’s Aid Society; The Children’s Village; Forestdale; Good Shepherd Services; Graham Windham; HeartShare; JCCA;

³ LifeSet was formally known as YVLifeSet.

New York Foundling; Rising Ground; SCO; and Sheltering Arms. ACS has also partnered with Workforce Professional Training Institute (WPTI) to provide technical assistance and learning through a learning community platform. In 2018, 155 youth completed the MIP program, and an additional 66 youth were served in 2019.

- **DYCD Revamped Paid Internship Program for Young Adults:** The Advance & Earn Plus program is a new career pathway approach to delivering education and workforce services to foster care opportunity youth. The program will offer young adults ages 16-24 who are not in school and not working a continuum of education and employment services from literacy instruction through advanced training and job placement or college enrollment supported by comprehensive trauma-informed support services tailored to individual needs. Advance & Earn Plus benefits from the best practices of Young Adult Internship Program Plus (YAIP+), a paid internship program designed by DYCD in partnership with ACS to help reengage foster care youth who might have fallen off track in their education and vocational goals. For the past three years, YAIP+ has provided internship opportunities to youth with child welfare history who are not currently working or enrolled in school. Through an innovative career pathways approach, Advance & Earn Plus aims to accommodate opportunity youth at different stages of skill development and provide them with positive short-term outcomes as well as the skills and tools necessary to achieve long-term career success. The new program model will offer a continuum of services including literacy and math instruction, HSE test preparation, work readiness training, college and career exploration, paid work experience, advanced occupational training and industry credential attainment supported by case management and wrap-around services. The program launched in February 2020 and will serve 60 youth in foster care.
- **ACS Expanded College Programming:** ACS expanded the Fostering College Success Initiative (FCSI, also known as the “Dorm Project”) from 50 students in FY17 to over 120 students in FY19. Launched in 2016, the Dorm Project is a partnership among ACS, the City University of New York (CUNY) and

Task Force Recommendation**Status Update as of March 2020**

New York Foundling. FCSI participants receive full tuition, room, and board, including year-round housing at dorm sites affiliated with Queens College, City College, and John Jay College. Students also receive dorm-based support services at each of these locations, including support from academic tutors and full-time college success coaches.

NYC Children