

EMANCIPATION RESEARCH PROJECT – YEAR 3 UPDATE

September 27, 2010

Summary of HEY's Emancipation Research Project

Year 1 and Year 2 (2007-2009):

Though the Emancipation Research Project (ERP) changed in its scope and purpose since its beginning in 2007, it has maintained its overall goal to explore the experiences of foster youth who age out of care in the Bay Area.

The first two years of the project were funded by the Zellerbach Family Foundation. This was a 2-year grant and the initial proposal was in partnership with Alameda County Foster Youth Alliance (FYA) and was designed as the Extended Eligibility Demonstration Project, intended to show the benefits of extending foster care eligibility to age 21, and ultimately inform practice and policy regarding emancipation. As the project became more refined, however, the ERP's focus became less on policy implementation and a more personal level of observed practice in the transition process from foster care to independence in San Francisco County. While HEY changed its scope, FYA also refined theirs to focus on mental health services during the emancipation process.

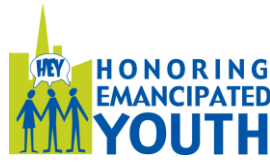
To this end, Year 1 and Year 2 of the ERP consisted of formal, in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and group discussions with professionals and youth involved in the county's dependency system and the emancipation process. Topics discussed included personal emancipation experiences, official transition planning, and perceptions of stakeholders' roles. The ERP has inspired and engaged important discussions on the role of and misconceptions between the stakeholders and interagency procedures. Its catalogue system may also serve as a model for Transitional Age Youth Initiative (TAYSF) for their future research project as a low cost way to catalog data online. TAYSF is HEY's in-house partner after the two organizations formally merged in 2010.

Once the interviews were complete and initial findings were compiled in a formal report (see *Emancipation Research Project Year 1-2 Compilation Report*), the Emancipation Research Project still held a great deal of usable observational data, but no policy recommendations were put forth. A further analysis of the ERP's findings and exploration of potential policy impact was needed and so HEY applied for a new grant (Year 3) so to explore opportunities for policy impact.

Year 3 (2009-2010):

After discussions and deliberation with selected partners who focused on policy HEY drafted a proposal and was granted more funding to continue educating partners about the ERP and to eventually transfer the valuable data and findings to a partner agency involved specifically in policy who could make a policy impact based on the ERP's findings. Our intention for Year 3 was not for HEY to develop policy proposals, or draft language for Request For Proposals off of the primary observations, but for our selected partner agency to utilize the ERP via the resources that we have to offer to make some impact. HEY's role is to provide:

- primary data directly from the ERP interviews
- secondary data compiled regarding best practices for transition services for foster youth



- staff with experience gathering relevant research and thinking on best practices for reforming ILSP services and outcomes for transitional age foster youth
- an AmeriCorps VISTA to help provide any necessary research assistance

We selected TAYSF because they have the staff experience and local presence to impact transitional age youth needs. TAYSF has experience drafting RFP's and a network of local department heads through their work with the recent 2009-2010 Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DYCF) and Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) funding which directed over \$3 million to services for transitional age youth (ages 16-24) in San Francisco.

Therefore in addition to the above services with the addition of the TAYSF team, the combined HEY/TAYSF team can provide:

- primary data directly from the ERP interviews
- secondary data compiled regarding best practices for transition services for foster youth
- staff with experience gathering relevant research and thinking on best practices for reforming ILSP services and outcomes for transitional age foster youth
- an AmeriCorps VISTA to help provide any necessary research assistance
- expert review and support of Request for Proposal community engagement and drafting
- experience convening review panel and readers representative of the consumers including trained young adults and other youth advocates

Opportunities for Next Steps:

Over the last year HEY has explored various opportunities and at present recognizes two opportunities for TAYSF to impact policy through the resources discussed above:

1. Support of the forthcoming RFP process for San Francisco ILSP including considerations for how to implement planning for AB12, and incorporate best practices for Education, Employment, Permanency, Housing, Transition to Adult Services, and Life Skills services for youth
2. Interagency review of Transition Planning based off of the TILP, with a focus on San Francisco's GOALS meetings, as they relate to SFCANDO and other client focused planning

Given TAYSF's position as a city wide initiative with access to various departments serving transitional age youth (including current and former foster youth ages 16-24), TAYSF is well positioned for both opportunities, however, given its capacity it is best served to focus on one.

If interested in supporting TAYSF in these opportunities, please contact Rachel Antrobus, TAYSF Director, at 415-701-562 or rachel.antrobus@sfgov.org