

**Advancement Through Opportunity and Knowledge/  
Children Youth and Family Collaborative**

*Education Pilot Project*

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## **COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES**

### **Competitive Priority 6—Innovations That Support College Access**

The Educational Pilot Program (EPP) has shown promising results in helping foster youth reach college. In the 2008-9 school year, 83% of participating graduates enrolled in two- or four-year colleges, compared to 20% of foster youth nationally. **In every year that its academic intervention and support program has been in operation, over 90% of high school seniors who attended the program three or more days per week received their high school diploma and between 87% and 98% of participating high school seniors have been accepted into post-secondary institutions.** EPP includes a college access program, Level Up, a college enrollment promotion that includes weekly sessions sharing college knowledge, guidance for applications and financial aid. Through EPP's multidisciplinary Care Team, students nearing emancipation are engaged in early planning to address potential barriers to completing college.

### **Competitive Priority 7—Innovations to Address the Unique Learning Needs**

The CYFC academic tutoring and remediation program is built around the premise that intervention needs to be tailored to students' unique need and learning styles. EPP provides: bilingual tutors and program materials; multiple opportunities for oral language practices; and lessons incorporating multiple modalities in instruction. Over 1/3rd of foster youth in the participating districts are classified as English Language Learners (EL) and in one of the participating districts, 20% of foster youth are enrolled in special education. The preliminary findings of the pilot on which EPP is based showed that EL students showed greater gains in grades for all subjects combined as their time in the program increased. 100% of current program participants, including ELLs, have passed the California High School Exit Exam and will be receiving their diplomas.

## **A. Need for the Project and Quality of the Project Design**

**(1) Exceptional Approach to Meet Identified Priorities.** The Education Pilot Project (EPP) is a collaborative of educators, social workers, community based organizations, public and private entities dedicated to improving the academic performance and educational opportunities for foster youth by sharing data across agencies, using assessments and documented evidence to develop individual education plans tailored to students' specific needs, and providing academic remediation based on those needs. EPP is the outgrowth of a project spearheaded by 1st Supervisorial District Supervisor Gloria Molina of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the County's governing body, which oversees the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), responsible for all foster youth in LA County.

In response to the dismal educational outcomes of foster youth, Supervisor Molina launched an investigation to identify best practices for improving their academic achievement. Based on that study, her office brokered a partnership between DCFS, two school districts (Montebello Unified School District (MUSD) and Pomona Unified School District (PUSD)) with large populations of foster youth, the County Chief Executive Office, the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC) and Casey Family Programs and Advancement Through Opportunity and Knowledge, dba the Children Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC).

The partnering agencies that founded EPP are proposing to expand its successful service model by: launching a district-wide expansion project in MUSD and PUSD that will serve an additional 400 foster students in 13 elementary, middle and high schools and set the stage for statewide application after the four-year Innovation grant project period. Because cross-sector data sharing is the cornerstone of EPP, the project falls under Absolute Priority 2a. CYFC, a 501

(c) (3) organization serves as EPP’s academic intervention services provider, and is the lead agency for the proposed project, coordinating district-wide expansion, developing the training and technical assistance model and outreaching to districts for post period replication.

Given the volume of data demonstrating that children in foster care have significantly lower educational attainment than their peers, it is not surprising that L.A. County foster youth are not faring well. Nationally, between 35-50% of these youth perform below grade level, nearly half will fail to complete high school, and only 2% ever earn a bachelor’s degree. Additional statistics document the achievement of foster youth, including: a) Nationally, the overall achievement gap for foster youth averages one year;<sup>i</sup> b) Foster youth are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school (37% vs. 16%)—35% of these are lost in the ninth grade;<sup>ii</sup> c) Approximately 15% of California’s foster youth enroll in college, but just 1.8% complete a bachelor’s degree compared to the general population rate of 24%<sup>iii</sup>; and d) A Washington State study found that foster youth scored 16 to 20 percentile points below non-foster youth in standardized test scores.<sup>iv</sup>

Los Angeles has one of the nation’s largest county foster care systems with 32,182 children under its jurisdiction -19,086 of whom are in out-of-home placements.<sup>v</sup> Studies show that once youth leave the dependency system at age 18, 50% are unemployed, 30% are dependent on public assistance, 25% are incarcerated and over 20% are homeless. In L.A. County, almost 1/3 of foster youth receive special education services. A significant academic achievement gap exists between the County’s foster youth and other youth – even other high-risk youth.

Data analyses<sup>vi</sup> conducted by ECC found that MUSD and PUSD had over 600 foster youth enrolled in their districts. In MUSD, 95.9% of foster youth were Latino, with Latinos representing 75% of the PUSD foster youth. Over one-third of foster youth in both districts were classified as English Language Learners and foster youth were overrepresented in Special

Education and underrepresented in Gifted and Talented Education. Achievement indicators for foster youth in the two districts were abysmal: a) The average Grade Point Average for foster youth was 1.39; b) The percentage of foster youth scoring at or above *proficient* on the California Standards Test in English-Language Arts and Math was lower than district-wide averages at the elementary, middle and high school levels. In most cases, the differences were substantial. For example, 17% of MUSD middle school foster youth scored at or above *proficient* in ELA, compared to a district-wide average of 29.8% for middle school students, and 4% of PUSD high school foster youth reached proficiency on the Math CST, compared to 14% district-wide; and c) A significant percent of foster youth were unable to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). For example, only 40% of 10th graders passed the ELA portion of the exam, compared with 75% of 10th graders district-wide.

In addition to the large numbers of high-need foster youth enrolled, the initial three high schools selected for the project were chosen based on the schools' receptivity to test innovative approaches and collect and share data to track students' performance and progress. In a County of almost 10,000,000 residents renowned for its vast network of bureaucracies typically operating in isolation from one another, this multi-systemic collaborative effort that melds disparate policies, protocols and priorities to come together to improve the educational trajectory for foster youth is unprecedented and critically needed. With over 1.6 million students enrolled in public schools throughout the County and over 32,000 children in the DCFS system, it is clear that our youth will continue to fall through the cracks unnoticed without cross-sector collaboration and targeted assistance such as EPP provides.

Those responsible for the care and development of foster youth have not worked together effectively to address the complex administrative and educational obstacles these youth face on

their path to adulthood— frequent placement changes, delays in transfers between schools, lost or misplaced records, lack of connection to available resources, and difficulties enrolling in the classes required for graduation (*ECC-- Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*, L.A. County Board of Supervisors, 2006). DCFS Social Workers' efforts to address youths' educational needs are hampered by a lack of timely and comprehensive information on each youth's achievement gaps and adequate training in the education law that affects foster youth. In addition, school districts are not always aware of the identities of foster youth enrolled, and therefore are not well positioned to effectively address their needs. School districts and child welfare agencies have historically not shared the responsibility of educating foster youth, which has contributed to their poor educational outcomes.

To address these historical deficiencies in educating foster youth, the EPP utilizes and shares data across sectors in an integrated service model which provides: a district-based DCFS Social Worker focused on the youth's education-related needs; a comprehensive intake assessment; development of an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP); intensive tutoring and remediation services; and pre-emancipation planning. Service provision and student progress is monitored by a multidisciplinary “Care Team” in each district that meets bi-weekly to coordinate educational services for participants. Given the many in and out-of-school challenges faced by foster youth, a comprehensive approach must be employed to ensure that they will succeed academically, graduate from high school and acquire the skills that will enable them to successfully transition into independent adulthood. Youth in foster care require a multi-pronged approach, supported by the collective efforts of *all* of the agencies with which they interface. And since no one agency can meet the multiple needs of foster youth, collaboration between systems is essential.

In its report, “A Road Map for Learning” Casey Family Programs provides a framework for education practice with foster youth that is based on five principles: 1) *Youth in out-of-home care must be the primary voice in education decisions*; 2) *School success requires addressing a mix of variables*; 3) *Education planning must incorporate practices that are predictors of educational success*; 4) *Youth need education services and supports that build skills for economic self-reliance*; and 5) *Education systems must partner with as many individuals agencies as possible on behalf of youth in out of home care*. (Casey Family Programs (CFP), 2004.)

EPP is exceptional in its approach because it was intentionally designed, in collaboration with Casey, to fulfill all five education practice principles. The program’s innovations include:

a) **Effective inter-agency collaboration**—EPP’s greatest innovation is its ability to collaborate across agencies to develop and implement meaningful educational plans for foster youth. Each district has a Care Team of professionals focusing on the education-related needs of participants. The Care Team consists of the district-based Child Social Worker from DCFS, the CYFC Project Coordinator and Site Coordinator, the District Director of Pupil and Community Services, the co-leads from the Education Coordinating Council and the L.A. County CEO’s staff and other Emancipation Services staff from DCFS. The team meets every two weeks to share data, address challenges and identify best practices to meet the needs of every single program participant. Student progress is monitored by the Care Team using evaluation tools and a client management database specially developed to support EPP (See Appendix H: EPP Educational Assessment; EPP Academic Assessment and EPP ILP-used to identify the standards based skills in which students are deficient). (CFP Principles 2 and 5)

b) **Comprehensive intake assessment and individualized learning plan**—Upon entering the program, the academic and socio-emotional needs of foster youth are assessed formally and

informally. Understanding that improvement in academic achievement for foster youth requires a broad understanding of a student's strengths, needs and life circumstances, the Care Team works together, in conjunction with the student, to create a comprehensive profile of each student. An ILP is developed from information gathered from interviews with the student, district data, DCFS case files, reviews of academic and behavioral records and feedback from teachers coupled with criterion-referenced Math and ELA assessments that are directly correlated to California Standards. The ILP guides the individualized academic and socio-emotional intervention approach implemented with students. The ILP is an evolving document that includes multiple formative and summative measurements of students' academic needs and documented deficiencies. Students take an active role in their case through participation in Team meetings. (CFP Principles 1, 2, 3, 5)

c) **Intensive, individualized tutoring**—CYFC has spent 10 years developing a tutoring model that is proven effective with foster and at-risk youth. The system has a case management “whole student” approach and is structured so that students receive tutoring and support in identified deficiencies that are resulting in poor progress and failure. CYFC places trained tutors on-site to provide academic interventions during the day and after school, using the ILP to target specific areas of need and data from weekly formative assessments to measure and ensure continuous progress. Having dedicated space in the school and being in contact with students and teachers enables tutors to respond to changing needs, address deficiencies and make progress towards meeting individualized goals. Additionally, the tutors build positive relationships with youth in the program and facilitate their participation in additional CYFC programming after school—including additional academic support and enrichment opportunities. (CFP Principle 3)

d) **Pre-Emancipation Planning**—Since foster youth are emancipated upon their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday,

it is essential to engage them in a planning process early so they can address housing, employment and transportation issues that could prevent them from completing college. Planning and accessing resources can diminish barriers to college education. (CFP Principle 4)

EPP and its partners have a track record of working synergistically to improve the academic performance of foster youth, including English Language Learners and youth with special needs.

*As the 2009-2010 school year comes to an end, a full 100% of current program participants have passed the California High School Exit Exam and will be receiving their diploma—results unheard of for Latino and ELL foster youth.* The team approach, coupled with a proven academic intervention system, has yielded very promising results that if replicated could virtually eliminate the achievement gap for foster youth throughout California and beyond.

**(2) Goals and Strategy**—The ultimate goal for the pilot project is to demonstrate that school districts, County governments, child protective services and community stakeholders can effectively collaborate to prioritize education for foster youth and in doing so eliminate the achievement gap and significantly improve the educational outcomes of foster youth.

***GOAL #1: EXPAND THE EPP AT A DISTRICT-WIDE LEVEL***

- **Objectives:** Establish partnerships with additional schools in each of the participating districts; Facilitate data-sharing between districts, schools, DCFS and CYFC; Train school staff and hire tutoring staff to provide academic intervention component at each site.
- **Outcomes:** The EPP will be fully operational at 13 schools in the MUSD and PUSD by the end of Year 1; 400 foster youth will participate each year; rigorous data collection and evaluation will validate program efficacy and guide program and curriculum development.

***GOAL #2: IMPROVE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR FOSTER YOUTH***

- **Objectives:** Serve 400 foster youth per year; Expand to 13 schools in PUSD and MUSD by end of Year 1; students participate a minimum of 4 hours/week of academic tutoring and remediation; students meet with Care Team and/or its members for at least 2 hours/week; students are linked to school and community resources based on individual needs.
- **Outcomes:** a) Foster youth participants who complete a minimum of 4 hours/week (200 hours/year) of academic tutoring and remediation services (recommended minimum dosage) will show greater improvement in their grade point averages than foster youth in the comparison group; b) A higher percentage of foster youth participants who complete a minimum of 4 hours/week of academic tutoring and remediation services will move up one level in Math and English Language Arts on the California Standards Test (e.g. from Basic to Proficient) than foster youth in the matched comparison group that move up one level; c) Foster youth participants who meet with Care Team and/or individual team members for a minimum of 2 hours/week and complete 4 hours/week of tutoring will show greater improvement in school attendance than foster youth in the matched comparison sample; and d) A higher percentage of foster youth participants who complete four hours per week of academic tutoring and remediation services will exceed their expected growth on the CST Math and ELA than the foster youth in the matched comparison sample; e) Foster youth completing 20 hours of EPP's California High School Exit Exam preparation program will pass the Math and Language Arts sections of the CAHSEE at higher rates than the foster youth in the matched comparison sample; f) A higher percentage of foster youth seniors who complete at least four hours per week of academic tutoring and remediation services will receive their high school diploma than foster youth in the matched comparison sample; g) A higher percentage of foster youth high school graduates who completed at least four hours

per week of academic tutoring and remediation services and met with the Care Team and/or individual team members for a minimum of 2 hours/week will enroll in post-secondary education than the foster youth in the matched comparison sample.

***GOAL #3: DEVELOP A TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODEL (YRS 3, 4)***

- **Objectives:** Revise training program for replication using program materials already in existence, including: program manuals, partner responsibilities, training DVD's, etc.; Outreach to school districts throughout the state.
- **Outcomes:** EPP model is fully codified, training materials are developed; Outreach and identify 10 school districts desiring for replication; Develop a three-year replication strategy.

**B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect and Magnitude of Effect**

**(1) Research-based findings**—To date, there is no single proven approach to closing the achievement gap for foster youth. EPP's design incorporates lessons learned from CYFC's experience with foster youth and research that supports its design as a promising practice. The model incorporates each of the five core principles identified by Casey Family Programs that constitute an effective education framework to meet the unique needs of foster youth. In addition to the framework, the EPP model of cross-sector collaboration and intensive academic remediation is supported by a plethora of research, such as:

- The Harvard Family Research Project's evaluation of The Atlantic Philanthropies Disadvantaged Children and Youth Integrated Learning Cluster found that youth served by integrated service models such as EPP benefit from: improved social and academic outcomes; a continuation of services across the day, year and developmental cycle; more diverse and comprehensive learning opportunities and access to additional resources.

- In its report on high achieving charter high schools, the U.S. Department of Education cited the use of tutors during the school day and after school as an innovation that was helping to close the achievement gap (US DOE 2006).
- The Harvard Family Research Project, in its March 2010 publication *Partnerships for Learning: Promising Practices in Integrating School and Out-of-School Time Program Supports* cited "regular and reciprocal collection and sharing of information about student progress," a cornerstone of EPP, as one of 5 core strategies for transformative, sustainable school-OST partnerships, helping to identify and address student needs across learning settings and to assess quality and improve partnership efforts.

**(2) Extent To Which Project Has Been Attempted Previously with Promising Results.** The proposed project is based on a pilot that served 63 DCFS youth at two high schools in MUSD and one in PUSD. An evaluation conducted by Casey Family Programs shows that the initial pilot phase succeeded in creating a network of individuals and institutions who work *in concert* to promote foster youth's academic achievement, as indicated by strong working relationships between partners (Evaluation Brief, Los Angeles County First Supervisorial District Education Pilot Project, Preliminary Findings, Lyscha Marcynyszyn and Erin J. Maher, November 2009).

The results of the pilot are extremely exciting, far exceeding initial expectations and demonstrating the value of EPP's design. Preliminary results calculated at the end of the 2008-2009 school year showed that: **a) 67% of the June 2009 graduates would not have been on track to graduate without the pilot project's intervention; b) 83% of participating graduates enrolled in two- or four-year colleges, compared to 20% of foster youth nationally; c) students identified as English Language Learners showed greater gains in all subjects combined from the first to second semester as their time in the program increased; d) time in program was**

**significantly and positively associated with gains in grades between semester 1 and 2 for all subjects combined; and e) a trend toward greater gains in Math grades for pilot students.**

**(3) Likely Positive Impact.** As established outcomes indicate, we fully expect that EPP will have a positive impact on myriad educational outcomes for foster youth, including: high school graduation rates; college enrollment rates; drop-out rates; grade point averages; California Standards Test ELA and Math scores; and passage rates on the California High School Exit Exam. Less tangible, but critically important, is the program's impact on the youth's perception of themselves and their futures. By enveloping youth who have all too often had the adults in their lives fail them in a culture of caring, high expectations and consistent support, coupled with intensive academic remediation, EPP has the power to change their educational and life trajectory. As one student remarked, “Before I felt like nobody really cared about whether I would graduate or not but then, because someone was checking up on me, I felt like I had to do my best.”

### **C. Experience of the Eligible Applicant**

**(1) Past Performance in Implementing projects of the Proposed Size and Scope.** For the past 11 years, CYFC has partnered with school districts, DCFS, service providers, colleges and universities and faith-based communities to develop and implement school-based services to improve the outcomes of the most at-risk students. The agency launched its academic remediation and tutoring program in 1999 to prevent foster youth from experiencing the negative outcomes associated with emancipation and with low academic achievement. Since its inception, the organization has proven itself to be a collaborative, creative and well-respected leader in the effort to reform and transform urban education in Los Angeles.

Founded with just one staff member who served 25 foster youth, today the agency provides an array of student-centered academic and enrichment programs on the campuses of 25 elementary, middle and secondary schools in underserved, urban areas, including one high

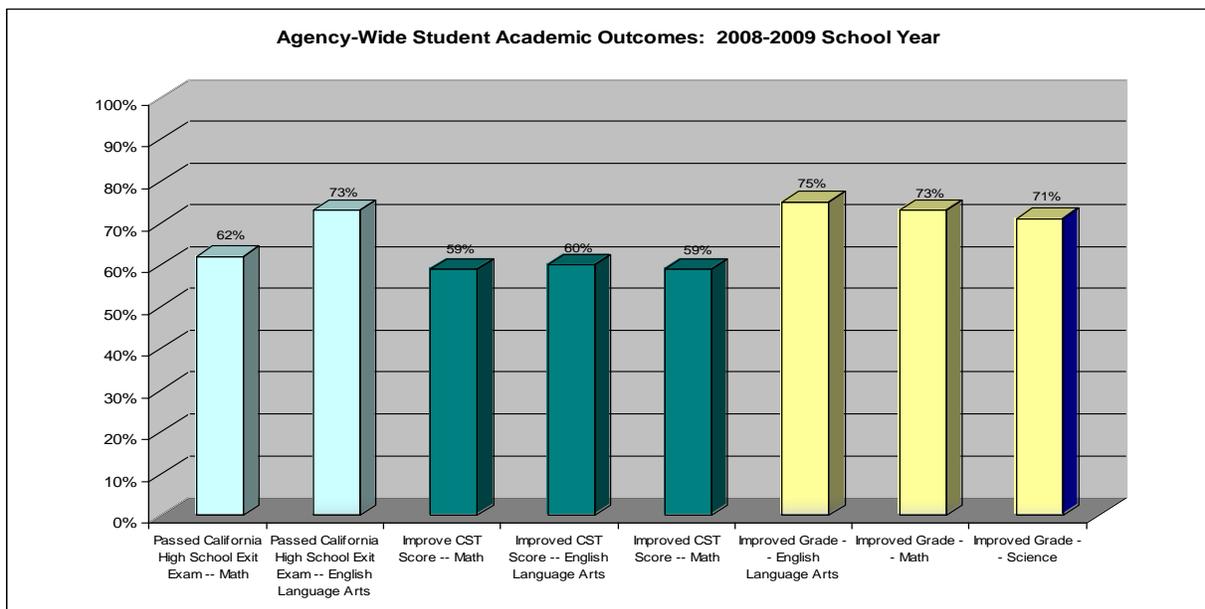
school for pregnant girls. With a staff of over 250, these programs serve approximately 4,000 foster youth and at-risk youth and English Language Learners, almost all of whom are African American and Latino, attending some of the poorest performing schools in L.A. County.

CYFC has developed, tested and implemented 10 programs addressing critical needs. These programs are aimed at helping children to learn, lead enriched lives and feel supported so they stay in school, graduate and go onto college or post-secondary institutions. Programs include: **Boys Uplifted** envelops at-risk boys, grades 1-12, in targeted teaching strategies, academic support, incentives, family support and male role models. Serves 225 students per year; **Project Advance** is an intensive tutoring program targeting the academic improvement and success of foster care and at-risk youth. Serves 4,000 students per year; **Skills Academy** provides intensive support to youth who need to develop basic English and Mathematics concepts and test-taking skills. Serves 600 students per year; **Level Up** college enrollment promotion that includes weekly sessions sharing college knowledge, guidance for applications and financial aid. Serves 425 students per year; **Pre-Post Emancipation Support Program** provides wraparound support to foster youth during their transition from foster care.

CYFC has managed and leveraged over \$35 million in federal, state and foundation funds. Currently, CYFC has 21<sup>st</sup> Century grants, 2 contracts with LAUSD--one for \$1 million dollars, and has multiple grants from many large foundations in California. CYFC was one of 16 organizations out of 1,152 applicants nationwide selected to receive a Next Generation grant from the Corporation for National Community Services for its innovative model integrating college service learners to tutor foster youth. The common denominator across all these projects is the academic intervention and remediation model that will continue to be implemented through EPP. Through government grants, as well as an array of private foundation support,

CYFC has had the opportunity to create, refine and continuously improve a model of academic intervention for high-risk youth that has met with tremendous success.

**(2) Data Demonstrating Significant Achievement**—CYFC has an outstanding record of achievement in improving the outcomes of underperforming students. In every year that its academic intervention and support program has been in operation, over 90% of high school seniors who attended the program three or more days per week received their high school diploma and between 87% and 98% of participating high school seniors have been accepted into post-secondary institutions. These rates are significantly higher than graduation and college acceptance rates for the schools in which the program operates, where just 40% to 60% of students successfully complete high school. CYFC was recognized by L.A. County Board of Supervisors in July 2009 for improving the academic performance of over 90% of its program participants and for helping 95% of its foster youth participants to graduate. The chart below provides an overview of educational outcomes for youth participating in CYFC's academic remediation and tutoring programs across sites. The agency's track record in working with the foster youth population is the primary reason that CYFC was brought into the EPP collaborative.



Data from the LAUSD Independent Evaluation of CYFC show that the CYFC academic intervention and remediation program is producing positive results. Results for 2008-2009 include the following: a) A value-added analysis conducted by a contracted evaluation team found that students meeting the threshold for high dosage had Math and English Language Arts scores that exceeded their predicted gains. The results were most impressive for 3rd grade students, who had an average gain of 13 scale score points compared to a predicted gain of -8 in English Language Arts and a gain of 37 points in Math compared to a predicted gain of -13; b) The percentages of CYFC participants passing the ELA and Math portions of the California High School Exit Exam exceeded pass rates for the school as a whole. 73% of 10th grade and 73% of 11th grade participants passed the ELA portion, compared with school-wide rates of 59% and 42%, respectively. Math pass rates also were impressive, with 62% of 10th grade program participants passing, compared to 48% school-wide, and 51% of 11th grade participants receiving a passing score, compared to 42% school-wide; c) The percentage of program participants scoring at the *proficient* or *advanced* level in ELA and Math on the California Standards Test was higher for program participants than for their grade-level peers.

#### **D. Quality of the Project Evaluation**

**1. Methods of Evaluation**—Casey Family Programs, an EPP project partner, conducted the evaluation of the initial pilot. For EPP expansion, Casey will oversee the contract with Harder + Company Community Research (Harder+Company) to conduct an independent evaluation of the EPP using a rigorous quasi-experimental design to assess the effect of the program on a range of intended outcomes. Founded in 1986, Harder+Company brings extensive experience evaluating projects of the size and scope of EPP. The company's clients include nonprofit community-based organizations, state and local government, and philanthropy. They have extensive experience with school-linked programs serving foster youth in L.A. County. Outcomes will include

educational variables measuring student progress and student achievement, as well as growth and achievement as perceived by important constituents such as staff and students themselves. Two primary methodologies will be used to assess educational outcomes: **a) Comparison Groups.** The outcome study design will create a comparison group of foster youth carefully matched with the study group on a series of known, relevant and measured social and demographic variables. Match variables are likely to include gender, ethnicity, grade level, language classification (English Learner, English Only, Fluent English Proficient), special education status, and Gifted and Talented Education Status (GATE), as well as academic indicators such as CST scores and credits earned. The quality of the comparison group design is assured by the large foster youth student database that is available, permitting the matching of study and comparison youth on multiple factors simultaneously, as well as the availability of key indicators over time. The impact of the EPP program will be assessed through analyses that compare the outcomes of the study group to the matched comparison group; **b. Value-added Analyses.** The analytic design will include a multiple regression procedure called “value-added” analyses that has been pioneered in L.A. County and applied with positive results to other CYFC programs. Value-added assessment measures the difference between each student's expected performance, based on their own past performance, and their current performance. With this type of analysis, EPP will glean valuable insights into the project's impact on participants' educational performance by looking at their progress relative to an anticipated growth trajectory.

Measuring achievement against a standard and at a single point in time (e.g., percent proficient in Math on the 2010 CST) and academic progress will give EPP a comprehensive picture of the project's impact. Because we will be working with a population that is notably underperforming, growth measures are particularly important. If EPP were to look solely at

proficiency rates on standards tests, we would be able to ascertain how participants fared relative to the comparison group, which is critical information, but we would not have a true picture of their growth. Given that we expect the majority of participants to perform below proficient<sup>vii</sup> on the CST, an understanding of the growth patterns of those students who remain below proficient is critical to the overall assessment of the project's efficacy and replicability.

**2. Implementation Data, Performance Feedback, etc.**—The same evaluation enterprise will incorporate a study of program implementation measuring the occurrence and dosage of program interventions and provide the program with at least semi-annual assessments of performance and progress toward outcomes. At least quarterly feedback on implementation will be both gathered from and shared with the program’s Executive Committee and project team. Those two groups, as well as a sampling of the students’ primary Social Workers are candidates for formal focus group input, which will occur at least annually.

Semi-annual interviews will occur with a key informant cohort comprised of the CYFC Project Coordinator, 4 DCFS social workers, a DCFS Administrator, a liaison from the two school districts and one from the ECC. Quarterly, selected sources, including the 19 full- and part-time CYFC tutors and the 4 DCFS social workers, will be asked to fill in electronic surveys with feedback about implementation progress. Records related to program attendance, student contacts and other measures of dosage will be collected monthly. Regular assessment will also be made of the scope and effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration, an innovative bedrock of the EPP. The quality of systems for intake, learning plans, tutoring and pre-emancipation planning also will be examined, as will the critical data-sharing element.

**3. Key Elements and Approach To Facilitate Further Development, Replication**—As discussed previously, the EPP expansion has a dual purpose: a) to reach more foster youth via a

program that has shown promising results in its early stages; and b) to set the stage for replication throughout the state by refining systems and strategies, further documenting practices and procedures and engaging in more rigorous evaluation with a larger sample over a longer time period. With that dual focus in mind, the evaluation will answer key questions that will facilitate decision-making regarding further development, replication or testing: a) Which educational outcomes did EPP improve and how significant were those improvements? b) What do the data tell us about the dosage needed to see significant improvements in educational outcomes and how does that vary by grade level or other demographic variables? c) Are specific demographic variables (e.g., gender, grade level, language) associated with greater program gains? d) What mix of community and school-based services, activities, and supports were recommended to program students at their core team meetings and how does the mix of services impact outcomes? e) What policies and procedures are most critical to successful implementation and what lessons were learned about strategies and practices that are and are not effective?

The answers to these questions will help to determine the extent to which the model improves the academic performance of foster youth and, if so, what factors helped to contribute to that change. Annual reports for years 3 and 4 will contain evidence-based recommendations for program expansion based on a thorough examination of the project's protocols and procedures, services and implementation strategies. Lessons learned from the pilot phase will indicate best practices contributing to success and therefore what determinants need to be in place to achieve successful results. With this expansion to middle school, it is of interest to see if the model will easily translate to the lower grades or will program modifications be necessary.

**4. Sufficient Resources to Carry Out the Evaluation.** As our budget indicates, CYFC has allotted \$200,000 over the four-year project period for the services of the external evaluation

team. \$60,000 has been allocated for the first and last project years, reflecting the need to develop systems in Year 1 and to do summative analyses in Year 4, with \$40,000 set aside in Years 2 and 3. In addition, CYFC has set aside funds to hire a full-time Data Coordinator to serve as the liaison to the evaluation team and to work with the project partners to collect participation and outcome data. All data will be entered in CYFC's existing agency-wide database and provided to the evaluator in electronic format.

The CYFC evaluation and its independent contractor will comply with all requirements of the DOE, including cooperating with technical assistance to ensure quality and commonality across funded projects. Annual and interim evaluation reports will be made available to the DOE.

## **E. Strategy and Capacity to Further Develop and Bring to Scale**

### **(1) Number of Students Proposed To Be Reached and Capacity to Reach Proposed**

**Number--**The proposed EPP expansion project will reach the following numbers of students: Year 1—400; Year 2—400; Year 3—400; Year 4—400 hundred (700 unduplicated). The pilot project is serving 183 students. Expansion efforts will bring the program to 13 additional schools. Since there are over 1,000 foster youth in both districts, outreaching to and enrolling the additional students will not be difficult. In each year of the project, we anticipate that students will be recruited through collaborative efforts by DCFS and school personnel to replace those who have graduated, transferred to another district, or are no longer part of DCFS.

**(2) Capacity To Bring Program To Scale—**EPP is designed to be a model program suitable for replication in any region in which school districts, child protective services and community stakeholders are willing to partner to improve the outcomes of foster youth. The proposed project will expand the EPP program to additional schools and bring the program to scale at a district-wide level. CYFC has successfully replicated its academic remediation and tutoring model in three school districts with high populations of foster youth. CYFC and its partners have

documented the EPP service model with: a compendium; desk protocols; position manuals and job descriptions; implementation and program manuals; training DVD's; and Memorandum of Understanding delineating the roles and responsibilities of each partner. In addition, CYFC has developed a sophisticated student-management database that maintains voluminous data on each participant for program and evaluation purposes.

With implementation and operation supports in place, CYFC and its partners are prepared for the planned expansion. EPP's working relationships are operational within both school districts and CYFC has the supervisory, payroll, data collection and service provision systems in place to effectively manage the new sites. Existing supports and resources support the program (e.g., program space, data sharing, teacher participation and representation on the Care Team).

**(3) Feasibility of Project Replication**—Although EPP has a specific focus on foster youth, the project structure has been used with other at-risk students. The combination of intensive academic intervention and supports, coupled with cross-sector collaboration and data sharing, has been proven to benefit a variety of student populations. The model has been used with parenting teens, at-risk boys non-foster ELL's and low-income students.

**(4) Estimated Cost of the Project.** In each year of the proposed project, 400 students will be served with a cost per student projected to be \$18,502. At a full scale-up of 500 foster children per district, the cost comes down to \$15,000 per student. While this may seem expensive, consider that the much higher costs of incarceration, Medicare, food stamps and other economic losses are estimated to cost \$260,000 over a lifetime for each drop-out.<sup>viii</sup> The cost to incarcerate one individual in California is \$47,102 per year; the cost for one juvenile is \$175,616.<sup>ix</sup>

As the service model is scaled up for expansion, the work of the lead agency will evolve from direct service provision to training and technical assistance for collaborative partnerships

implementing the model in their communities. The cost of the program could vary greatly based on pay scales, number of students served and the potential to train volunteers for tutoring. The more students served, the more cost-effective the program. The projected cost to bring the program to 100,000 foster youth is \$150,000,000; to reach 250,000 the cost is \$375,000,000; and to reach 500,000 youth the cost is \$750,000,000. At 500,000 foster youth, we could completely eradicate the underachievement of the nation's entire population of foster youth.

**(5) Dissemination Mechanisms**—CYFC and its partners will employ a variety of strategies to disseminate program information, evaluation findings and best practices. Strategies will include presentations at local and national child welfare and education conferences and to the philanthropic community, relationships with the Annenberg and other foundations, and meeting with elected officials, through our partnership with Supervisor Molina's office and the ECC.

EPP is also extremely fortunate to have Casey Family Programs, the nation's largest operating foundation focused on foster care, as a partner. Their work entails publishing documents, available on their web site, on foster care-related issues impacting policy and practices. These include white papers, fact sheets, policy briefs, documents on best practices, etc.

## **F. Sustainability**

**(1) Resources and Support to Operate Beyond the Grant**—CYFC has a strong track record of sustaining programs. Since the agency's inception, we have never had to discontinue a program due to lack of funding. As detailed in Section C, we have been very successful in garnering support from a wide range of public and private sector funders. Project partners contributed significant resources to the pilot and have committed significant resources to the expansion. We fully expect that these commitments will be sustained after the Innovation grant funding period. For example, DCFS has committed \$495,000 per year to cover three of the four district-level Social Worker positions and the DCFS administrator assigned to the project. Annenberg

Foundation is committed to galvanizing the philanthropic community to support EPP. Not only will their support help CYFC meet the 20% private sector matching funds requirement, but through their efforts EPP's exposure will be magnified. We have also registered with the i3 Foundation Registry and will make our application available through that avenue.

**(2) Incorporation of Project Into Ongoing Work**—Beyond monetary commitments to sustainability, EPP is a systems-change strategy. The cross-sector relationships developed, operations and procedures manuals produced, the data sharing protocols established, and other key project strategies have each been created and will continue to be refined with the intent of incorporating the project into the ongoing work of all partners. After building such a powerful cross-sector partnership, it would be a great loss to return to isolated partners focusing on their own piece of the puzzle. Our goal to continue the EPP partnership and to serve as a training and technical assistance provider for other school districts in California and across the country.

## **G. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel**

**1) Adequacy of Management Plan**—EPP is overseen by an Executive Team comprised of high-level representatives from the County Chief Executive Office, the 1st Supervisorial District, DCFS, Casey Family Programs and CYFC. The Executive Team provides direction to EPP expansion, including approving budgeting and auditing procedures, ongoing quality assurance and monitoring the independent evaluation. There is also an Operations Team that includes representatives from all partner organizations and schools that oversees direct services, including data collection, information sharing, program implementation, and oversight of the Care Team and tutoring program. The **Management Plan** for implementation is as follows:

- **Year One Tasks:** District-wide expansion ramped up to 13 schools. **Milestones:** 400 students recruited and enrolled at the participating sites; Academic tutoring and remediation services offered at 13 sites by September 2011; 2 District Care Teams operating, meeting bi-weekly;

Matched comparison sample for evaluation study selected, baseline data obtained for program participants; Interim and end-year evaluation reports produced. *Persons Responsible*: All partners and evaluation firm.

- **Year Two Tasks: Program Development and evaluation continues district-wide in two expansion districts. Milestones:** ~ 100 new students recruited and enrolled at 13 participating schools to replace graduates and those lost due to attrition; Academic tutoring and remediation services continue; 2 District Care Teams operating, meeting bi-weekly; Baseline data collected on new participants; interim and end-year evaluation reports produced. *Persons responsible*: Operations Team, Evaluation Firm, Lead Agency Project Director and CFO.
- **Year Three Tasks: Program Development and Evaluation, Model Preparation and Capacity Building for Post-Project Period Statewide Replication Begins. Milestones:** All Year 2 milestones applicable; Training materials codified, published; Potential replication sites and funders identified; Post-project replication 3-year strategic plan developed; Evaluation results shared with funders, stakeholders, and potential replication districts. *Persons responsible*: Executive Team, Project Director, project leadership staff and partners.
- **Year Four Tasks: Model Preparation and Capacity Building for Statewide Replication Completed** All Year 2 milestones applicable; Summative evaluation report produced for 4-year project period; 10 viable replication districts identified; Grant Applications for technical assistance and training for replication sites submitted; Project findings and replication information disseminated nationally; Post-project replication 3-year strategic plan finalized and approved for implementation; and Training Staff hired and trained. *Persons Responsible*: Project Director, Evaluation Firm, Executive Team, Training Team.

## (2) Qualifications of Project Director and Key Personnel.

**Lydia Templeton, Project Director.** Ms. Templeton, CYFC President and CEO, will serve as Project Director. Ms. Templeton is an attorney with extensive experience in program development and community organizing. Ms. Templeton served in Goma, Zaire as the Country Manager coordinating the United Methodist Church's humanitarian response to the Hutu-Tutsi Conflict in Rwanda where she founded and operated orphanages and refugee centers. She also worked as a children's rights attorney for one of the largest pro bono law firms in the country. Her extensive legal, fundraising and government grant management experience provides EPP with proven management and contract administration skills.

**Nora Gutierrez, CYFC Project Coordinator.** In her role as Project Coordinator, Ms. Gutierrez will oversee academic tutoring and remediation services at each of the sites, participate on the Care Teams, and serve as primary liaison to the other project partners. Ms. Gutierrez, who holds an M.A. degree in Education and Human Development from George Washington University, has over 20 years experience in the education field, including positions as a teacher, director of curriculum and instruction and technical assistance provider. She is the lead author of the *After-School Toolkit: Tips, Techniques and Templates for Improving Quality*, published by the James Irvine Foundation.

**Angel Rodriguez, DCFS Project Coordinator.** Ms. Rodriguez has overseen all aspects of DCFS' involvement in EPP since the project's inception, and will continue in that role. She will supervise the district-based Social Workers, facilitate Care Team meetings, contribute to the development of all procedural and training materials developed and serve as the primary DCFS liaison to the other project partners. Ms. Rodriguez possesses a Master's of Science in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University and has over ten years experience as a Children's Social Worker in Los Angeles County.

**Carrie Miller, Ph.D., Education Coordinating Council Liaison.** Dr. Miller, the ECC Director, helped spearhead the development and initial implementation of EPP and will continue to play a lead role in the project's expansion. She will help coordinate data sharing across sectors, refine policies and procedures, disseminate project information and keep County elected officials apprised of the project's progress. Dr. Miller has 10 years experience developing programs and policies related to foster youth and education. She holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Howard University.

**Jenny Serrano, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office Liaison.** Ms. Serrano will continue to serve as the Chief Executive Office EPP lead. She has over 10 years experience in direct service and policy, with an emphasis on foster youth programs. Ms. Serrano holds a M.S. in Public Administration and is a former foster youth.

**Michael Cobarrubias, Montebello Unified School District Liaison.** Mr. Cobarrubias currently serves as the Director of Pupil and Community Services for MUSD. He is responsible for ensuring smooth coordination between MUSD and other project partners and for providing the student-level data needed for program planning and evaluation.

**Fernando Meza, Pomona Unified School District Liaison.** Mr. Meza will serve in the same capacity as Mr. Cobarrubias. A career educator, he currently holds the position of Assistant Superintendent in PUSD.

**Sterling Cincore, Fiscal Officer.** Mr. Cincore has over 20 years experience in accounting at Warner Brothers and Spilo. He has served in the CFO capacity for CYFC for over 5 years, during which time he successfully managed fiscal management and reporting requirements for federal, state and foundation grants and consistently received superior ratings on his reporting. Mr. Cincore has also developed payroll systems and workflows for the 250+ CYFC employees.

<sup>i</sup> Smithgall, C., Gladden, R. M. Howard, E. Goerge, R., Courtney, M. (2004). Educational experiences of children in out-of-home care. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

<sup>ii</sup> Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2006, June). “Diplomas Count: An Essential Guide to Graduation Policy and Rates.” *Education Week*.

<sup>iii</sup> Pecora, P., Kessler, R., Williams, J., O’Brien, K., Downs, C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T. & Holmes, K. (2005). Improving family foster care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs.

<sup>iv</sup> Burley, M. & Halpern, M. (2001). Educational attainment of foster youth: Achievement and graduation outcomes for children in state care. Olympia, WA: Wash. State Inst. for Public Policy.

<sup>v</sup> Department of Children and Family Services, Monthly Fact Sheet, March, 2010.

<sup>vi</sup> Data represent 2007-2008 school year

<sup>vii</sup> The CST has five categories: Far Below Basic, Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced.

<sup>viii</sup> Rouse, C. E. (2005). “Labor market consequences of an inadequate education.” Paper prepared for the symposium on the Social Costs of Inadequate Education, Teachers College Columbia University, October 2005.

<sup>ix</sup> California Legislative Analyst’s Office Map, California’s Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor, *Criminal Justice and Judiciary: How Much Does It Cost To Incarcerate an Inmate*, 2008-09.