Bridging the Gap

Partnering with young adults, creating pathways to independent living
Bridging the Gap

Connects young adults transitioning out of the child welfare system with programs, services and opportunities to discover their individual strengths and interests and to explore pathways to education and employment.
Participant Demographics

Gender

- Male: 41%
- Female: 59%

Pregnant or Parenting

- No: 50%
- Yes: 50%
Employment at Start of Program:
- Full Time: 1% 
- Part Time: 10% 
- Job Placement: 38% 
- Not Employed: 51%

Education at Start of Program:
- Less than 7th Grade: 4% 
- 8-11th Grade: 10% 
- 12th Grade/No Diploma: 13% 
- High School Diploma: 24% 
- GED: 36% 
- Some College: 12% 
- Certificate: 1%
Evidence Informed Practice

• Transition to Independence Process Model (TIP)
• High Fidelity Wrap Around
• Focus Groups – Urban Peak, FCC, Casa Advocates
• Literature
  – Mentoring Literature
  – The Transition to Adulthood: How States Can Support Older Youth in Foster Care
  – Connected by 25 – Jim Casey Initiative
  – Authentic Youth Engagement – Jim Casey Initiative
  – Ready by 21
  – Positive Youth Development
## Expert Model vs. Coaching Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expert Model</th>
<th>Coaching Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expert / Problem Focused</td>
<td>Client / Strengths Focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain, Relieve Symptoms</td>
<td>Fulfill Intentions, Attain Goals,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fix problems / Give answers</td>
<td>Client discovers own answers</td>
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<tr>
<td>History, Past, Looking back</td>
<td>Present, Future, Moving Forward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Person wants to move away from pain</td>
<td>Person wants to move toward goals,</td>
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<tr>
<td>focuses on what they do not want</td>
<td>focuses on what they do want</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issues, Problems, Labeling, Diagnosing</td>
<td>Desirable Goals, Life Transitions, Self Efficacy,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Personal Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm of Problem, Lack, Pathology</td>
<td>Paradigm of Possibility, Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Dr. Patrick Williams, MCC, Institute of Life Coaching
Youth Centered Practice
FUP Vouchers

Federal Model

- The Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) is responsible for identifying the youth and determining FUP eligibility.

- Public Housing Authority (PHA) verifies that the youth meets qualifications (background check, income).

- Requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PCWA and PHA for understanding of case management and housing support.
Housing: What we do

- Administer 142 FUP vouchers and 25 housing choice vouchers
- One-one assistance with computer search and phone calls (model behavior)
- Drive youth to apartments 2-3 times in order to find a place
- Bus passes
- Connect youth with Chafee
- Provide referrals for basic needs
- Assist or direct youth towards financial resources for application fees, deposit, and moving costs
- Weekly emails and phone calls
- Review lease up procedure and coordinate lease up
- Provide a resume template
Housing

Goal: Youth maintain 18 months of safe and stable housing.
Employment

Goal: Increase career exploration through multiple sources including job shadowing, work-study, volunteer work and internships. Youth will have the resources and skills necessary to gain employment.
Education

Goal: Youth have the education and/or vocational training they need to succeed in the job market and to remain independent.
Financial Health

Goal: To have prospects for a financially successful future, youth exiting foster care must be equipped with:

* skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about their finances,
* to figure out how their finances fit into their transition and life plans, and
* to develop the savings habits and behaviors needed to accumulate assets.
Physical and Mental Health

Goal: All youth are connected to Medicaid or other health insurance.

Goal: All BTG staff view’s youth and youth experiences through a trauma informed lens.
Social and Civic Engagement

Goal: Young people are actively engaged in developing and advocating for opportunities and system reforms.
Healthy Connections

Goal: Youth have established connections to informal support systems such as schools, recreation, organizations and cultural communities to increase access to community resources and community.
Celebrations

Holiday Party

Thanksgiving Dinner

Parent’s Day
Challenges

- Being a good neighbor, couch surfers, not paying bills
- No high school diploma or GED, many need remedial classes, difficult to focus on school while trying to meet basic needs
- Limited work ethic, minimum wage, difficult to save when in crisis
- Resistance to mental health services
- Young parents, child care, cycle of child protection involvement and poverty
Data and Evaluation

July 2013-June 2014
- 168 total youth served
- 163 maintained stable housing
- 26 enrolled in an educational program
- 11 scholarships granted
- 32 started a new job
- 6 participated in a job shadow
- 14 participated in workplace mentorships
- Currently 201 open IDA accounts
Questions? Comments?

Minna Castillo Cohen  M.Ed.
Mile High United Way
711 Park Avenue West
Denver, CO 80205
Minna.CastilloCohen@unitedwaydenver.org

http://www.unitedwaydenver.org/bridging-the-gap
2000
Congress added youth as eligible population for FUP

2001
Colorado was awarded 90 vouchers

2005
Launch of Bridging the Gap (BTG)
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

2009
MHUW’s BTG was awarded 77 additional vouchers

2011
Jim Casey grant ended Evaluation of program needs

2012
Addition of Independent Living Coaches and Program Manager

2014
142 FUP Vouchers +25 NFP /DRH Pilot all administered by MHUW, FUP eligible definition expanded

2015
Program model revised, initial process evaluation complete. Waitlist begins

2001 – 2009 Vouchers were administered by several community organizations in the community