**INCORPORATING FOSTER YOUTH INTO**

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE EQUITY PLANS**

**Introduction**

The intent of the student equity planning process is for colleges to conduct a self-evaluation of their own success or lack thereof in improving successful outcomes for all students. Statute and regulations require that the plan must address increasing access, course completion, English as a Second Language (ESL) and basic skills completion, degrees, certificates and transfer for, at a minimum student groups who may be disproportionately impacted by college practices, programs or services including ethnic and gender subpopulations, veterans, low-income students, students with disabilities and foster youth.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The 2014-2015 budget bill (Senate Bill 852) includes new funding as part of the Student Success and Support Program that is contingent upon the development of student equity plans by community college districts. Senate Bill 860 (2014), the budget trailer bill that details equity planning requirements, specifies foster youth as a subpopulation that must be addressed in equity plans alongside various ethnic groups, students with disabilities, veterans and low-income students. The budget allocates $70 million for implementation of these plans across the state. In order to access funds, each district must complete research that includes a disproportionate impact study for each subpopulation, including foster youth, and determine specific goals related to access to, and completion of, basic skills, career technical education, and transfer courses.

While the foster care population often goes unnoticed, in California over 50,000 children and youth are in out of home placements. It is estimated that there are at least 12,000 current and former foster youth enrolled in California’s community college system. Sadly, educational outcomes for foster youth are extremely poor, even when compared to other economically disadvantaged students. The inclusion of foster youth as an identified target population in equity planning creates an opportunity to change these outcomes in a meaningful way by directing resources towards proven strategies to support these vulnerable students to succeed.

Children enter the foster care system as a result of extreme abuse or neglect inflicted upon them by their biological family. In California, only about one third of the cases where there is a substantiated report of abuse or neglect result in removal from the home, meaning that these are the most severe and difficult cases of maltreatment and neglect. This can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, extreme neglect by parents, abandonment or if the parents are incarcerated and there are no family or friends available to care for the child.

This experience is then often compounded by the circumstances these children face upon entry into the foster care system. They may experience separation from siblings, a loss of pets or possessions, and the trauma of being thrust into a new living environment with total strangers. Once in the system, many experience multiple placements that require frequent moves from home to home and may also result in multiple forced school changes and consequent social and academic challenges. By age 24, foster youth experience significantly poorer outcomes than the general population as demonstrated in the chart below.

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| ***Table 1: Foster Youth Outcomes at Age 24[[2]](#footnote-2)*** |
|  | **Foster Youth** | **Comparison** |
| Ever homeless | 24% | NA |
| Currently employed | 48% | 74% |
| Women ever pregnant | 75% | 40% |
| Median income | $8,000 | $18,300 |
| Men convicted of crime | 59% | 10% |
| Women convicted of crime | 28% | 2% |

A recent study of high school foster youth demonstrated large disparities not only between foster youth and the general student population but between foster youth and other economically disadvantaged students as well.

***Table 2: Percent of students who scored at each of five proficiency levels at the California Standards Test in English Language Arts[[3]](#footnote-3)***

Foster youth have typically suffered from experiences far outside the norm of a typical childhood, and even outside the norm for other low-income, minority or first generation students. For this reason, the John Burton Foundation has prepared this document to assist colleges to identify strategies to include in equity plans regarding foster youth.

The instructions provided by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office highlight five specific student success indicators and specify that equity plans should thoroughly describe the implementation of each student success indicator (metric) being addressed. Additionally, the plan should describe policies, activities and procedures as they relate to student equity at the college. The plans should describe the college’s student equity strategies to address the way students are affected by the various activities/ programs implemented to provide equal opportunity for each student population group. The goals and activities described should be directly linked to addressing disproportionate impact.

**Obtaining Foster Youth Data**

Equity planning is designed to be a data driven process and the first step to including foster youth in this process is to obtain data about your college’s foster youth population. Although there is no single standard definition of a “foster youth” generally in order to be eligible for programs designated for foster youth, an individual must have been removed by a court from the home of his/her biological family for abuse and/or neglect and placed into a court-ordered out-of-home placement. While there are various standards that define eligibility for specific programs based on age and time in care, for the purposes of data collection, it is recommended that foster youth be defined broadly. **Additional detail regarding the various definitions of foster youth currently in use and strategies for improving the accuracy of foster youth identification can be found in Appendix A at the end of this document.**

In 2012 a flag was added to the CCCCO MIS in order to track foster youth status and this flag can be utilized by districts to generate a variety of data reports based on foster youth status. In addition, the John Burton Foundation, through the California College Pathways initiative and funding from the Stuart and Walter S. Johnson Foundations, has partnered with Ed Results in order to make foster youth data more readily available to campuses through the CalPASS Plus System. CalPASS Plus, created through leadership and funding by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, is managed by Ed Results and offers various mechanisms for accessing campus level data. Each community college district uploads data into the MIS which is in turn uploaded into CalPASS Plus. In addition to obtaining data from community colleges, CalPASS Plus obtains data from K-12 school districts and 4-year universities, offering an opportunity to provide more robust tracking and analysis than any one system could provide independently.

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| ***The CalPASS Plus system contains a readymade report that can provide foster youth data specific to your campus. See Appendix B for instructions for generating the report.*** |

**Foster Youth Metrics**

In order to integrate foster youth into the equity planning process it is necessary to conduct basic research to determine the extent of equity disparities in the five student success areas. The research should be used to (a) develop shared understandings of the meaning of the data, (b) develop action plans to mitigate the impact of disparities in student equity wherever possible, (c) integrate student equity into other institutional planning processes and program review, and (d) improve data collection and analysis relevant to the groups of students. Described below are recommendations for obtaining foster youth data in each of the five student success areas.

##### A. Access: The percentage of each population group that is enrolled compared to that group’s representation in the adult population within the community served.

Although this data may not be readily available for your specific community, statewide data is illustrative of the disparity between foster youth and the general population in relation to factors that impact college access. **One recent study of California’s foster youth reported a 43% enrollment rate as compared to a 59% enrollment rate within the general population.**[[4]](#footnote-4)

A potential source of information regarding this indicator may be your local child welfare agency. Through collaboration with the county child welfare agency, it may be possible to obtain data regarding the number of foster youth within your service area.

##### B. Course Completion: The ratio of the number of credit courses that students, by population group, complete compared to the number of courses in which students in that group are enrolled on the census day of the term.

This data indicator can be generated by your local Institutional Research Department and is also available on the CalPASS Plus Foster Youth report. The CalPASS Plus Foster Youth report also provides data regarding the percent of foster youth who make Satisfactory Academic Progress and the percent who obtain a 3.0 GPA as compared to the general student population.

##### C. ESL and Basic Skills Completion: The ratio of the number of students by population group who complete a degree-applicable course after having completed the final ESL or basic skills course compared to the number of those students who complete such a final ESL or basic skills course.

This data indicator can be generated by your local Institutional Research Department. The CalPASS Plus Foster Youth report provides information about the percentage of foster youth who must take basic skills courses as compared to the general population.

##### D. Degree and Certificate Completion: The ratio of the number of students by population group who receive a degree or certificate to the number of students in that group with the same informed matriculation goal as documented in the student educational plan developed with a counselor/advisor.

This data indicator may be accessible through your local Institutional Research Department. The CalPASS Plus Foster Youth report provides general information about degree and certificate completion as compared to the general student population although it does not provide details regarding which students had the same informed matriculation goal as documented in the student educational plan developed with a counselor/advisor.

##### E. Transfer: The ratio of the number of students by population group who complete a minimum of 12 units and have attempted a transfer level course in mathematics or English, to the number of students in that group who actually transfer after one or more (up to six) years.

This indicator is not currently available through the CalPASS Plus Foster Youth report. In order to obtain this information for foster youth campuses should work with their Institutional Research Departments.

**Planning Committee Crosswalk Guide**

The equity planning instructions provided by the CCCCO include a “Planning Committee Crosswalk Guide (Appendix B)” which articulates guiding questions that committees are encouraged to consider when formulating their campus equity plan. The chart below can be used as a supplement to the Crosswalk Guide for foster youth equity planning.

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|  | **Instructional Prompts** | **Student Services Prompts** |
| Access | * Is outreach conducted that targets foster youth (such as to child welfare agencies and Independent Living Programs) in order to support college access for foster youth?
* Is there a linkage between the college and the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Program?
* Are foster youth disproportionally represented in basic skills English, math or reading?
 | * Are foster youth more likely to apply for admission after the application deadline?
* Are eligible foster youth able to successfully access priority enrollment?
* What can be done to improve foster youths’ abilities to access education planning and counseling services?
 |
| Course Completion | * Does the college have a foster youth advisory committee that engages faculty around foster youth student success?
* Are foster youth accumulating credits at an appropriate rate or are a disproportionate number being lost?
 | * Are foster youth less likely to succeed at courses that the general student population?
* Are foster youth more likely to end up on academic probation? What actions can be taken to decrease this likelihood?
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| ESL and Basic Skills Completion | * Are foster youth progressing through and succeeding in remedial math and English at the same rates as the general student population? If not, what can be done to improve their success rates?
 | * Are foster youth who place into basic skills courses less likely to be retained in the subsequent term at the college?
* Among students who place into basic skills English, reading, math and ESL courses, are foster youth less likely to enroll in and complete the next course in the sequence?
* Among students who place into basic skills English, math or reading, are foster youth less likely to progress to transfer-level English or math?
* What strategies and approaches have colleges successfully implemented to mitigate disproportionate impact on foster youth in the assessment and placement process?
 |
| Degree and Certificate Completion | * Are foster youth achieving degrees and certificates in similar ratios to the general student population?
 | * Are foster youth disproportionately less likely to access counseling/advising services in a timely manner?
* Do foster youth respond to early alerts by accessing services? If not, how can these early alerts result in a higher response rate?
 |
| Transfer | * Are foster youth transferring in similar ratios to the general student population? If not, what can be done to improve transfer rates for foster youth?
 | * Are college support staff linking foster youth to support staff at 4-year universities in order to support a successful transition?
* Are any programs in place that support the transfer pipeline for foster youth?
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**Incorporating Foster Youth into Equity Planning**

**Goals and Activities**

The Equity Plan template requests that campuses identify specific goals, activities and anticipated outcomes for each of the five success indicator categories. It is recommended that at least one goal and associated activity be incorporated into each category that is specific to foster youth. According to guidance from the CCCCO, the plan should include performance measures for determining progress toward achieving the desired outcomes. The measures should identify the baseline data finding/s from the basic research that forms the basis for noting an equity issue, as well as the amount of progress to be achieved. Plans should establish target dates for achieving expected outcomes and list the staff person (position) involved in its completion. Plans should also describe implementation actions to address student equity goals to include, but not limited to, existing student equity related programs on your campus.

Below are some samples of goals and activities that could be included in a campus equity plan related to addressing inequity between the general campus population and foster youth. These are intended for reference only. The exact goals and activities will vary based on the needs of each individual campus. When defining specific campus goals and activities it is recommended that the campus specify who will be responsible for implementing each activity to ensure accountability.

### A. STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATOR FOR ACCESS

*“Compare the percentage of each population group that is enrolled to the percentage of each group in the adult population within the community served”*

### GOAL A.

Improve access for foster youth.

### ACTIVITIES

*Sample activity A1*: Campus staff will conduct annual trainings with county child welfare social workers, ILP staff, foster care providers and others who work directly with foster youth to educate them about enrollment and matriculation requirements, financial aid, support services and provide other relevant information that will support student access.

*Sample activity A2:* The college will collaborate with the county Child Welfare agency, the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services program and community partners to sponsor an annual “foster youth college day” during which high school aged foster youth will have an opportunity to visit the college and gain exposure to campus life.

*Sample activity A3*: Counseling staff will work in coordination with feeder K-12 school districts and counseling staff to conduct visits to local high schools each fall to meet individually or in small groups with foster youth identified by the district in order to provide guidance and assistance with the matriculation process.

*Sample activity A4*: The financial aid department will sponsor a financial aid night specifically for foster youth in collaboration with the local County Independent Living Program.

*Sample activity A5*: Foster youth will be given priority access to the college’s summer bridge program for incoming students. Specific outreach will be conducted to recruit foster youth to participate in the summer bridge program.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

*Sample outcome A1*: By 2020 foster youth will enroll at the college at rates equal to the general population.

*Sample outcome A2*: The number of foster youth enrolled at the college will increase by 10% per year over the next 5 years.

*Sample outcome A3*: The number of foster youth enrolled at the college will increase from 126 in 2013/14 to 200 by 2017/18

### B. STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATOR FOR COURSE COMPLETION

“Ratio of the number of credit courses that students by population group actually complete by the end of the term compared to the number of courses in which students in that group are enrolled on the census day of the term”

### GOAL B.

Foster youth will successfully complete coursework and remain enrolled in college.

### ACTIVITIES

*Sample Activity B1:* Entering foster youth will be given priority access to assessment, orientation and ed planning services in order to ensure that all matriculation requirements are completed in time to access priority enrollment.

*Sample Activity B2:* Ten percent of slots within the EOPS program will be designated for foster youth. Foster youth will have flexibility around EOPS application deadlines in order to improve access to EOPS and will be prioritized for a waiver of the full-time requirement based on the campuses ability to allow up to 10% of students to enter EOPS at 9-11 units rather than full time.

*Sample Activity B3:* The college will dedicate funding to developing a foster youth one-stop shop on campus that includes access to academic counseling, referrals to on-campus and off-campus services and other supports.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

*Sample outcome B1:* 100% of foster youth will have a comprehensive education plan in place by the end of their first term.

*Sample outcome B2:* The number of foster youth participating in EOPS will increase from 25 students in 2013/14 to 50 students by 2016/17.

*Sample outcome B3:* 80% of foster youth who meet the eligibility requirements for priority enrollment will utilize it each term beginning in 2015/16.

*Sample outcome B4:* The percent of successful course completion for foster youth will increase from 55% in 2013/14 to 65% by 2018/19.

*Sample outcome B5:* By 2018 the number of foster youth who successfully complete 3 consecutive terms will be at or above the rate of the general student population.

### C. STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATOR FOR ESL AND BASIC SKILLS COMPLETION

*“Ratio of the number of students by population group who complete a degree-applicable course after having completed the final ESL or basic skills course to the number of those students who complete such a final course”*

### GOAL C.

Foster youth who are required to take basic skills courses will successfully complete all basic skills coursework and go on to complete a degree applicable course.

### ACTIVITIES

*Sample Activity C1:* The college will fund tutors to be available through the campus foster youth support program who can facilitate the development of study skills and provide assistance with specific course-related concepts and problems.

*Sample Activity C2:* The college will offer a Student Success course during each fall and spring term specifically for foster youth that is designed to help students form goals for college and careers, develop good study habits, and learn about campus resources.

*Sample Activity C3:* The college will conduct training with all faculty and staff involved in the delivery of basic skills courses regarding the specialized needs of foster youth and strategies for supporting their success.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

*Sample Outcome C1*: The percentage of first-time, credit foster youth students who started below transfer level in English, mathematics, and/or ESL in 2012-13 and completed a college-level course in the same discipline within six years (through 2017-18) will be at or above the rate of the general student population.

*Sample Outcome C2*: The percentage of first-time, credit foster youth students who started 3 below transfer level in English, mathematics, and/or ESL in 2012-13 and completed a college-level course in the same discipline within six years (through 2017-18) will increase by 10 percentage points.

### D. STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATOR FOR DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE COMPLETION

*“Ratio of the number of students by population group who receive a degree or certificate to the number of students in that group with the same informed matriculation goal”*

### GOAL D.

Foster youth will successfully receive a degree or certificate that aligns with their informed matriculation goal.

### ACTIVITY D.1

*Sample Activity D1:* 100% of foster youth who are at risk of not making Satisfactory Academic Progress will be outreached to a minimum of three times and outreach will include at least two different forms of contact (e.g. e-mail and phone call).

*Sample Activity D2:* The college will consistently maintain a designated Foster Youth Success Initiative liaison in the financial aid department. This individual will have a reduced general population caseload in order to dedicate additional time to ensuring that foster youth are accessing all the financial aid for which they are eligible and that they are able to maintain financial aid through degree or certificate completion.

*Sample Activity D3:* An academic counselor will be funded by the campus who will be available through the campus foster youth support program to meet with each foster youth at least once per term to determine if they are on track for completion of their degree or certificate goals.

*Sample Activity D4:* The college will conduct a pre-registration event to ensure that foster youth are aware of priority registration dates and prepared to register.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

*Sample Outcome D1*: The percentage of foster youth who receive a degree or certificate within 6 years will be at or above the rate of the general student population.

*Sample Outcome D2*: The percentage of foster youth who receive a degree or certificate within 6 years will increase by 10 percentage points from 2013/14 baseline numbers by 2017/18.

### E. STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATOR FOR TRANSFER

*“Ratio of the number of students by population group who complete a minimum of 12 units and have attempted a transfer level course in mathematics or English to the number of students in that group who actually transfer after one or more (up to six) years”*

### GOAL E.

Foster youth will successfully transfer to 4-year universities.

### ACTIVITIES

*Sample Activity E1:* A “Foster Youth Transition Day” will be sponsored by the college each year during which students who are current and former foster youth participate in a campus visit to local 4-year universities to learn about career options available with a 4-year degree, meet foster youth contacts at the 4-year campuses, hear from successful foster youth students and gain exposure to the university campus environment.

*Sample Activity E2:* A staff member within the Career and Transfer Center will be designated as a foster youth point person. Foster youth will have increased access to services through this individual and this person will have training to understand the specialized needs of foster youth.

*Sample Activity E3:* The college will organize career shadow days and job skills workshops for foster youth.

*Sample Activity E4:* Foster youth will be prioritized for available work-study positions.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME E.1.1

*Sample Outcome E1*: The percentage of foster youth who complete a minimum of 12 units and have attempted a transfer level course in mathematics or English and successfully transfer within 6 years will be at or above the rate of the general student population.

*Sample Outcome E2*: The percentage of foster youth who complete a minimum of 12 units and have attempted a transfer level course in mathematics or English and successfully transfer within 6 years will increase by 10 percentage points by 2017/18.

**Appendix A – Defining Foster Youth**

Equity planning is designed to be a data driven process and the first step to including foster youth in this process is to obtain data about your college’s foster youth population. The John Burton Foundation, through the California College Pathways initiative and funding from the Stuart and Walter S. Johnson Foundations, has partnered with Ed Results in order to make foster youth data more readily available to campus practitioners through the CalPASS Plus System. CalPASS Plus, created through leadership and funding by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, is managed by Ed Results and offers various mechanisms for accessing campus level data. Each community college district uploads data into the central CCCCO MIS system and the CCCCO in turn uploads the information into CalPASS Plus. In addition to obtaining data from community colleges, CalPASS Plus obtains data from K-12 school districts and 4-year universities, offering an opportunity to provide more robust tracking and analysis than any one system could provide independently.

**Current Foster Youth Definitions**

In order to gather data regarding foster youth, the first step is to ensure that your campus is accurately identifying who the foster youth on your campus are. This is complicated by the fact that there is no single standard definition of a “foster youth.” Generally in order to be eligible for programs designated for foster youth, an individual must have been removed by a court from the home of his/her biological family for abuse and/or neglect and placed into a court-ordered out-of-home placement. Placements can include living with relatives, in a foster home or in a group home. Additional eligibility criteria are typically based on the amount of time an individual spent in foster care, the age at which they exited care, and their age currently. Some current foster youth definitions that relate to higher education include:

* **FAFSA Independent status** – Question #53 on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) asks the following in order to determine if a student qualifies as “independent” based on foster care experience: “At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?”
* **Chafee grants** – In order to be eligible for a Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) grant, a student must have been in foster care on or after their 16th birthday and the student may not have reached their 22nd birthday as of July 1 of the award year.
* **Priority registration** – Statute establishes priority enrollment for students currently in foster care or emancipated from foster care (i.e. exited foster care on or after the 18th birthday or as an emancipated minor) and under age 24. Regulations allow campuses to adopt broader definitions by campus or district and some have chosen to do so.
* **CCC Apply** – When submitting a community college application, applicants are asked about their foster care status. They are offered a variety of choices (see table 4), which combined capture any person who was in foster care at any age.
* **Foster Youth Campus Support Program eligibility (e.g. Guardian Scholars)** – Many campuses have targeted campus-based support for foster youth and each program defines its own eligibility criteria. Some may employ restrictions such as age limitations and other are more broad and may even allow for students who were in guardianships or homeless to participate. The breadth of each definition often depends on the availability of program resources and some programs have tiered definitions with different types of services being available for different subsets of foster youth**.** In addition, some definitions are linked to funding sources (e.g. programs funded through YESS ILP grants are limited to serving youth who meet the qualifications for county Independent Living Programs.)

A summary of the various definitions described above is provided in Table 3 below:

***Table 3: Foster youth definition summary***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Benefit type** | **Age in foster care** | **Current Age** |
| FAFSA  | 13 and up | Any |
| Chafee ETV Vouchers | 16 and up | Under 23 |
| Priority registration[[5]](#footnote-5) | 18 and up | Under 24 |
| CCC apply | Any age | Any |

The definitions included in the CCC Apply application are described in Table 4 below.

***Table 4: CCC Apply Options***

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| --- |
| **Have you ever been in court ordered foster care?[[6]](#footnote-6)** |
| * I have never been in Foster Care.
 |
| * I am currently in Foster Care in California.
 |
| * I was previously in Foster Care in California, and aged out[[7]](#footnote-7) or emancipated[[8]](#footnote-8) from the system.
 |
| * I am currently in Foster Care in a system outside California.
 |
| * I was previously in Foster Care in a system outside California, and aged out or emancipated from the system.
 |
| * I was temporarily in Foster Care, but did not age out or emancipate from the system.
 |

**Tracking Foster Youth Status**

Student data within the California Community College system is tracked through a centralized database known as the Management Information System (MIS). Each community college district is required to upload student level data into this system so that aggregate data can be tracked. This data is then made available to the general public online through the Student Success Scorecard[[9]](#footnote-9) and Datamart System.[[10]](#footnote-10) In 2012 a flag was added to the MIS in order to track foster youth status. This was a significant development in the effort to promote foster youth post-secondary educational success as it allows for the tracking of outcomes for this population in order to determine if current interventions are effective and creates an opportunity to spotlight promising practices and hone in on where to direct resources in order to be most impactful.

The way in which this flag is currently used varies significantly by campus. Although the vast majority of campuses are reporting this data to the MIS (90% report rate as of the fall of 2013), it is believed that the flag does not accurately capture all of the foster youth on campus and may in some cases include students who are not foster youth.

In some cases, campuses are tracking their foster youth but are not using the flag that populates the MIS foster youth data field. For community colleges, it is essential that the foster youth flag that populates the foster youth data field within MIS be used to track foster youth rather than an alternative data element within the local system. When a campus uses a priority registration flag to track foster youth or tracks them manually outside of the campus data system the information is not appropriately included in the upload of local campus data to MIS. This then does not allow the campus to use the CalPASS Plus system to access reports regarding foster youth outcome measures nor does it allow for an eventual inclusion of foster youth data on online portals such as the Datamart.

**Verification of Foster Youth Status**

The only formalized mechanism currently in place to verify foster youth status system-wide is that used by the California State Aid Commission (CSAC) for the purposes of determining eligibility for Chafee grants. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is able to conduct a data match in order to verify eligibility of students who submit applications to CSAC for a Chafee grant across all three public college and university systems. The degree to which foster care status is verified for other benefits such as independent FAFSA status, priority registration or program eligibility varies significantly by campus. In a handful of locations, a college has a relationship with the local Independent Living Program provider or Child Welfare agency that allows a staff person with a release of information from the student to verify foster care status directly by telephone or e-mail. In most cases however, if a campus opts to verify foster youth status, the student is required to bring written verification to the college such as a letter from the child welfare agency or a copy of a court order that verifies their status as a current or former foster youth.

**Using the Foster Youth Data Element**

Until a data verification system is created that allows for communication between CDSS and college data systems is put in place, the responsibility of tracking foster youth will fall to each individual campus. The addition of a foster youth flag to the community college MIS makes this job easier but some legwork is still required by campus personnel in order to ensure that the campus is capturing accurate data.

In order to get the most accurate data possible regarding a campuses foster youth population, it is recommended that each campus use a variety of sources to identify foster youth on campus and then populate the foster youth flag based on this information. Many campuses currently populate this field solely based on the information included in the student’s admission application. While this is a good starting place, some foster youth choose to not self-identify on the application due to a fear of being stigmatized and others may mistakenly identify themselves as foster youth when they do not in fact qualify. Strong collaboration across campus departments is key to accessing all necessary information to identify eligible youth. This generally requires cooperation between admissions & records, financial aid, institutional research and student services.

The recommended practice for populating the foster youth flag is as follows:

1. First identify the population of students who have been identified as a foster youth from any of the following sources:
* Admissions application/CCC Apply: Community colleges should include all students who answered yes to any of the five foster youth categories.
* FAFSA – Identify any student who responded “yes” to question #53 on the FAFSA
* Chafee grant applications – Identify any students who were determined through financial aid to be eligible for a Chafee grant. Make sure to use the list of *eligible* students and not just those who actually received a grant.
* Priority registration – Determine who is flagged as eligible for priority registration based on foster care status.
* EOPS – Many campus support programs ask about foster youth status on their application or intake materials.
* Self-identification – Campuses that operate a separate campus support program for foster youth such as a Guardian Scholars program may know of students who did not identify as a foster youth on the application or through financial aid but did self-identify to the program staff.
* External partners – In some counties the Foster Youth Services program housed within the County Office of Education or the County Independent Living Program or county child welfare office may track which foster youth have enrolled at your college and be able to provide you with that information.
1. Determine which of these youth have already had their foster youth status verified either through a Chafee grant application, financial aid, EOPS, a campus support program, admissions and records or through an external partner. All verified students from any source should be flagged as foster youth.
2. If resources allow you to conduct follow up with those who have not verified their foster youth status, request verification through multiple means (e.g. e-mails followed up by personal phone calls). Flag all foster youth for whom you receive verification. Only after multiple attempts to contact a student without response should a determination be made to not flag the student as a foster youth.
3. If resources do not allow for follow up, it is recommended that you overcount rather than undercount for the purposes of data collection.[[11]](#footnote-11) What this means is that you would flag all students who indicated foster youth status from any source regardless of whether the status was verified or based only on self-report.
4. The verification process should impose as little burden on the student as possible. Students who have verified foster care status for one department should not be required to verify status independently for other departments, but rather systems should be in place that allow verification status to be communicated directly between departments. When foster youth are required to bring in verification, multiple forms should be accepted such as a letter from a social worker or ILP program, copy of court a order, verification card supplied by the county child welfare agency, etc. as different counties may provide verification to students in different formats.

**Appendix B – Accessing Data Through CalPASS Plus**

There are two options for accessing foster youth data. The first is to request a customized report from your Institutional Research Department that provides the metrics needed for equity planning based on those who are identified as foster youth within the campus system. The second is to access foster data through a specialized foster youth report available through CalPASS Plus. The steps to obtain the CalPASS Plus report are described below.

1. Your Institutional Research department will already have an existing account access and may enable you skip this first step. If another person at your institution wishes to make the data request and does not have a unique log on, they will need to request access on behalf of the institution. To request access on behalf of your institution, visit www.calpassplus.org and select “Log-in” in the upper right corner of the web page. Complete the “New Users” request by providing your name, email, phone, organization, and title. **Make sure to add a comment in the box called “Special Request” that says “Requesting Foster Youth Report.” This will alert Cal-PASS Plus that you want to see that data specifically.** To expedite verification, use your institution email and contact phone number to complete this form.
2. Go to [www.calpassplus.org](http://www.calpassplus.org/), log in, and then select the “**Community Colleges**” tab in the center of the web page.
3. Then select “**Reports, Queries, and Research**” from the drop down menu.
4. From here, you will be able to select the related **“Foster Youth”** report.
5. This will run a report on the foster youth population at your institution that will populate with the data your Institutional Research department has uploaded into the MIS.
6. You may then download this report for internal use, or to share with partners.
1. See SB 860 (2014), SB 852 (2014), Education Code §66010.2c and Title 5, §55100 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mark Courtney, et al, *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 23 and 24***,** Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College*, March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College, March 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is the requirement specified in statute however some campuses have chosen to adopt a broader definition as allowed by regulation. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Per CCC Apply: “You have been in Foster Care if, by order of a court, you have been placed in a family or group home within a foster care system. Foster Care includes, but is not limited to, placement in care under the supervision of the Juvenile Court Delinquency Division. As long as you were placed within the foster care system by order of a court, you were in Foster Care. Having a legal guardian does not necessarily mean that you have been in Foster Care.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Per CCC Apply: “You were aged out if, you were in Foster Care when you turned 18.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Per CCC Apply: “You were emancipated if, while you were in Foster Care and under 18 years old, a court granted your independence as an ‘emancipated minor’.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Available at <http://scorecard.cccco.edu/scorecard.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Available at <http://datamart.cccco.edu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Campuses may continue to require verification for access to benefits such as priority registration or FAFSA independent status, however verification requirements for data collection purposes can be more flexible than those in place for benefit access. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)