

2016 MICHIGAN YOUNG LEADER ADVOCACY SUMMIT

Friday, August 5th, 2016 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Lansing Community College Conference Center—West Campus

Young Leader Participant Overview

Welcome to the 2016 Michigan Young Leader Advocacy Summit! As a young leader you are in a unique and powerful position. You have the ability to help share your insights, experience and knowledge with policy leaders and other young leaders from across the state to help better understand, engage and discuss ways to improve the foster care system!

At this summit you will develop your advocacy skills, learn how to strategically share your story to make an impact, engage with other young leaders and policymakers, and discuss tangible ways to improve the foster care system. The 2016 Michigan Young Leaders Advocacy Summit is looking at three specific policy areas:

1. **Extension of Foster Care to 21:** Extending resources and support to young adults from foster care until age 21
2. **Transition planning:** Ensuring every young adult has a plan for success when they leave foster care
3. **School Stability:** Helping young adults in foster care access educational support and services when they move placements

Your role as a Young Leader:

- Stay engaged and contribute your thoughts, experiences and insights to the discussion
- Learn how your experiences can be used to improve the foster care system
- Actively listen and be open to hearing and learning other perspectives
- Think about the present and the future, you may be in foster care or have been in foster care in the past, but you are a young leader today!

Questions to discuss:

For each policy area listed below, please keep these questions in mind:

1. If you had experience with this policy issue: What positive experiences did you have? How did it help you reach your goals? What could have been improved to make this experience better?
2. If you DID NOT have experience with this policy issue: What do you think the ideal services and supports would look like?
3. If you had a magic wand that could make anything possible, what types of services and supports would you want to see implemented to help youth in foster care succeed?

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Policy focus areas:

Extension of Foster Care to 21

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (PL 110-351) allows an option for states to match Title IV-E funding to extend foster care maintenance payments to age 21. A youth must either be enrolled in school full-time, employed full-time, a combination of both, or unable to do either due to a documented medical condition. Youth who leave care after the 18th birthday are allowed the option of re-entering if they decide.
- State legislation, the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act (MCL 400.641 – 400.671), passed in 2011. Allows for youth in Michigan foster care at the age of 18 to stay in an approved placement until the age of 21. Approved placements include foster homes, relatives, independent living host homes, college dormitories, or a youth's own apartment. Policy and procedure was developed for Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care (YAVFC) in 2012.

Transition planning

- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires all youth in care have a discharge meeting during the 90-day period prior to case closing. DHHS implemented this into Family Team Meeting policy and provides a document to be filled out by the facilitator at the meeting that addresses the following areas: housing, supportive relationships, independent living skills, education, employment, transportation, financial management skills, review of the youth's credit report, emotional/mental/physical health, and substance use/abuse.
- In 2011, DHHS updated policy to require an Annual Transition meeting starting at age 16. A form similar to the one used for the 90-Day Discharge meeting was developed, and is to be used as the youth's transition plan from age 16 to the time of case closure. DHHS policy was updated in 2013 to change this to a Semi-Annual meeting.

School Stability

- Michigan Revised School Code, 1976 PA 451 (MCL 380.1148): For any child/youth who is placed in Michigan foster care, a school district must allow him/her to enroll in and attend the appropriate grade in the school selected by the Department of Health and Human Services or a child placing agency, even if it is no longer the school of residence.
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 included education provisions that include keeping a child/youth in the school of origin whenever possible. It requires child welfare staff to collaborate with education staff to ensure that best interest of school placement are considered, and if a school move is required, that the student is enrolled immediately. This has been in DHHS policy since 2009.
- MCL 380.1135(4). When a child/youth in foster care does move school placements, the receiving school must request in writing the school record from the previously attended school.