

# College Access and Success for Youth with Experience in Foster Care

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*Karie Ward, MSW*

*Brina Williams, BSW*



# Results

- Increased understanding of the obstacles related to postsecondary access and success for youth with experience in foster care.
- Best practices in supporting students on campus and in the community.
- Increased knowledge of resources available to youth who have experienced foster care.

# AGENDA

Outcomes of Child Welfare and Education

Michigan's Story: An Overview of Fostering Success Michigan (FSM)

Illinois Resources

Tips for Increasing Student Success

Next Steps/Q & A

Person  
First  
Language

“Student with experience in foster care” vs. foster youth

Our young people provide expertise on the lived experience of foster care.

# What is Foster Care?

Foster care is a state-run program that provides out-of-home placement and supervision of children after an alleged and then substantiated case of abuse and/or neglect that has been investigated by Children's Protective Services (DCFS in IL).

Children are placed in foster care because it has been determined that there is an immediate risk for further harm if staying in that family home. They are placed with a court order and under the care of Department of Children and Families and may be placed in a:

- Foster home
- With a relative or fictive kin
- In a residential facility
- Independent living placement.

All children/youth who enter foster care are assigned a permanency goal. This goal is reviewed on a regular basis and may change over time, depending on the success of the family as they work on their treatment plan and goals. Permanency goals included reunification, adoption, guardianship, permanent placement with a relative, or emancipation.

# Aging Out of Foster Care

Young person who reaches the age of adulthood while still in the foster care system.

Extended foster care until the age of 21 in Illinois: Continued financial support while residing in a foster home, group care, or independent living setting.

Required to be working toward a high school completion, a postsecondary degree, or is employed.

# Education Outcomes

## **High School Outcomes**

Illinois High School  
Graduation Rate: 50% of  
those in care compared to  
over 80% of general  
population.

Illinois State Board of  
Education, 2023

## **Postsecondary Outcomes**

College Access and  
Success: 84% aspire to  
go to college, 20%  
attend, 3-11% graduate  
with a degree without  
support.

Wolanin, 2005

- The child welfare system is focused on health, safety and permanence, **NOT** on education.
- Children in foster care have frequent moves, which lead to high education mobility. This leads to:
  - Falling academically behind
  - Loss of credits
  - Delayed graduation
  - Delayed eligibility for special education programming and services
- Residual effects of trauma and experiencing time in foster care.
- Unseen population.
  - Student identification is sometimes delayed
- Our traditional postsecondary system is not set up to meet the needs of students from foster care.
- Often lack supportive adults to help them navigate college access.

# The Foster Care Experience



**Challenges and  
Obstacles to  
Postsecondary  
Access and  
Success**

Homelessness  
Food Insecurity  
Mental Health  
Underemployment  
Lack of social/network connections  
Transportation  
Trauma  
Life Skills Gaps

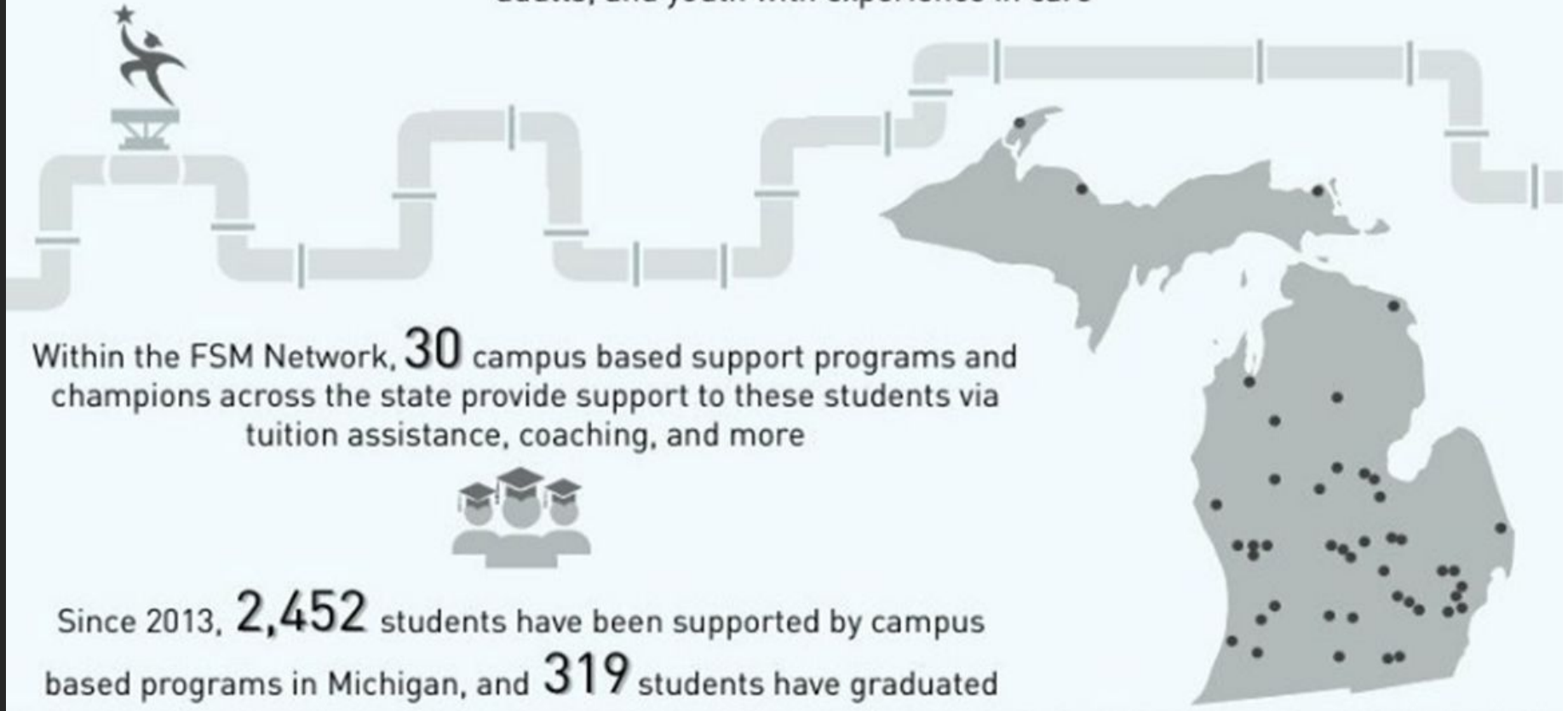


**FOSTERING  
SUCCESS  
MICHIGAN**

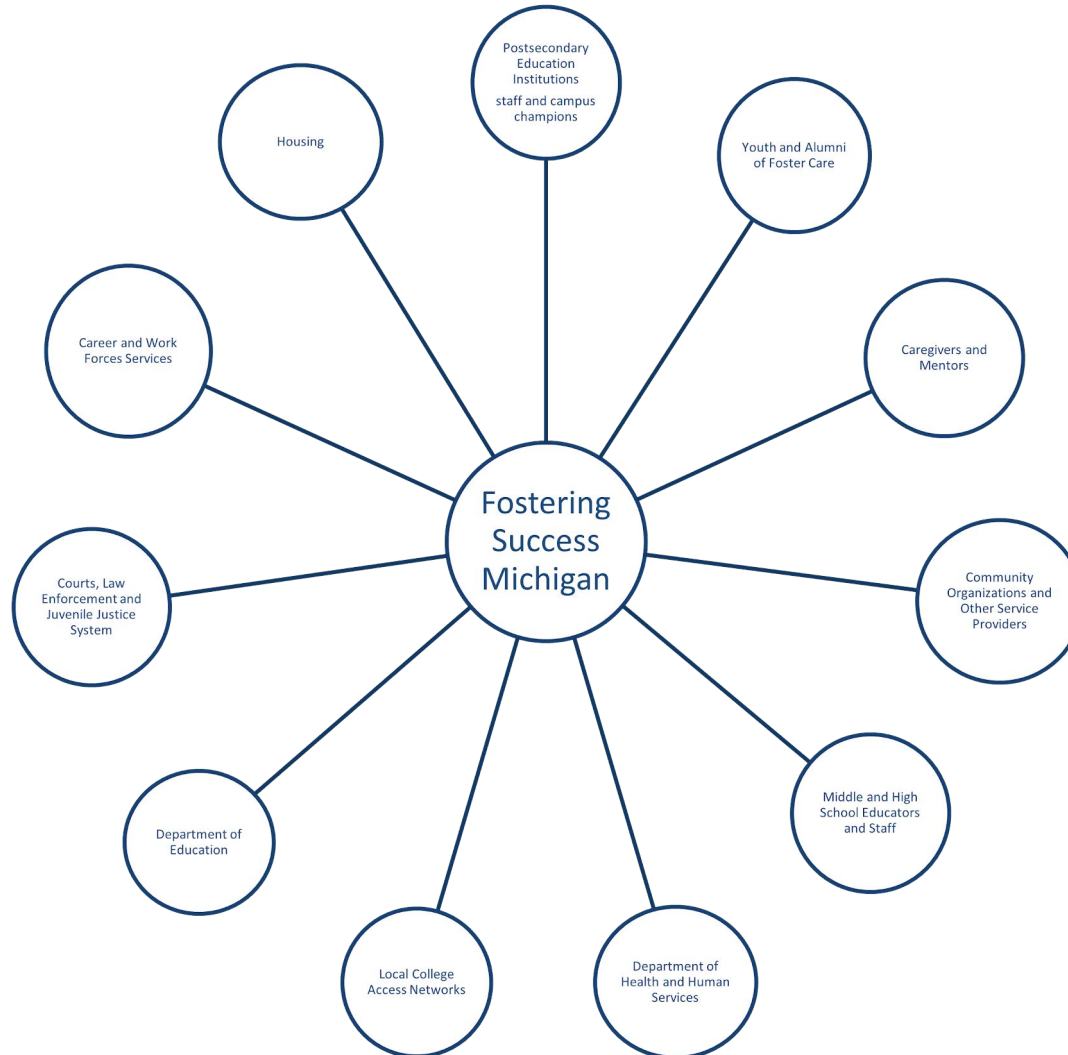
An initiative of Educate Tomorrow

## In 2012, Fostering Success Michigan (FSM) was established to increase access and success in the education to career pipeline for Michigan students from foster care

FSM provides resources, support, and networking opportunities for professionals, supportive adults, and youth with experience in care



# THE FSM NETWORK



# Building Postsecondary Support



30 Campus Support Programs & Champions

## Campus Support

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Campus based support programs offer on site services such as coaching support, food and housing assistance, scholarships, and more to students who have experience in foster care.



Designated coach providing 24/7 life skills coaching



Mentorship opportunities



Peer community building



Connection to campus champions



Advocacy for students on campus and in the community



Pre-college outreach and recruitment



Financial resources\*

# Building College Support

## **Financial Aid Champions**

Points of contact in Financial Aid offices who are award of the financial resources available to students who have experienced foster care.

Can help students navigate systems and access resources.

## **Designated Campus Champions**

Agrees to act as a point person for students with experience in foster care on campus to connect students with resources.

May not know the answer, but agrees to find out!

# FosteringSuccessMichigan.com



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Fostering Success Michigan provides resources and inspiration for youth and alumni of foster care. Get started by searching our library and network below.

What are you looking for? **GO >**

Middle School High School College Post-College and Career Supportive Adults Professional


Education Housing Health Relationships Identity Life Skills Finance & Employment



**Campus Support Programs**

There are many campus-based support programs across the state of Michigan with support and resources for students from foster care.


[View](#)



**Financial Aid Toolkit**

Wondering how to pay for college? FSM's Financial Aid Toolkit walks you, step-by-step through the financial aid process.


[View](#)



**College Application Toolkit**

This toolkit will walk you through everything you need to know about the college application process.

[View](#)



**Child Welfare for Educators Toolkit**

Educators and Educational staff can use this toolkit to learn about child welfare and what they can do for the children they work with.

[View](#)



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### Coach Resource: Coaching Students Through Mandatory Vaccines on Campuses

Join us to learn more about how to 'coach' students through mandatory vaccination...

[Read](#) 1

### 2021 Michigan Teen Conference Resources for Life Toolkit

This easy to use toolkit contains links to resources in Michigan for youth with experience...

[Read](#) 1

### FSM Podcast: National Foster Care Month 2021

National Foster Care Month 2021: Reflections from the FSM Ambassadors

## Featured [View All](#)

### Child Welfare for Educators Toolkit

Students with experience in foster care have unique needs and challenges, and no two people...

[Read](#) 1

### What FSM Region am I in?

This document will help you figure out what FSM Region you are located in!

[Read](#) 1

### CFS Webinar: Uncharted Territory: Foster Youth Navigating Mental Health Services

CFS Webinar: Uncharted Territory: Foster Youth Navigating Mental Health Services as They...



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## College Application Toolkit

 Like 0

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Do you have all the information you need for the college application process?

If not, we have much of the information you need right here. Many college applications are due in the month of November. This toolkit aims to provide students with much of the information that they need to be successful during this process. Here are some things to consider.

- A list of what students need when applying to college (See document to the right)
- Financial Aid (Check out the document linked at the right of the page)
- Available Higher Education Resources (Click on the document at the right of the page to learn more)



**Fostering Success Michigan**

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1903 W Michigan Ave  
Kalamazoo, MI 49008  
[View on Map](#)

[Visit Website](#)

269-387-2004  
[fostering-info@wmich.edu](mailto:fostering-info@wmich.edu)

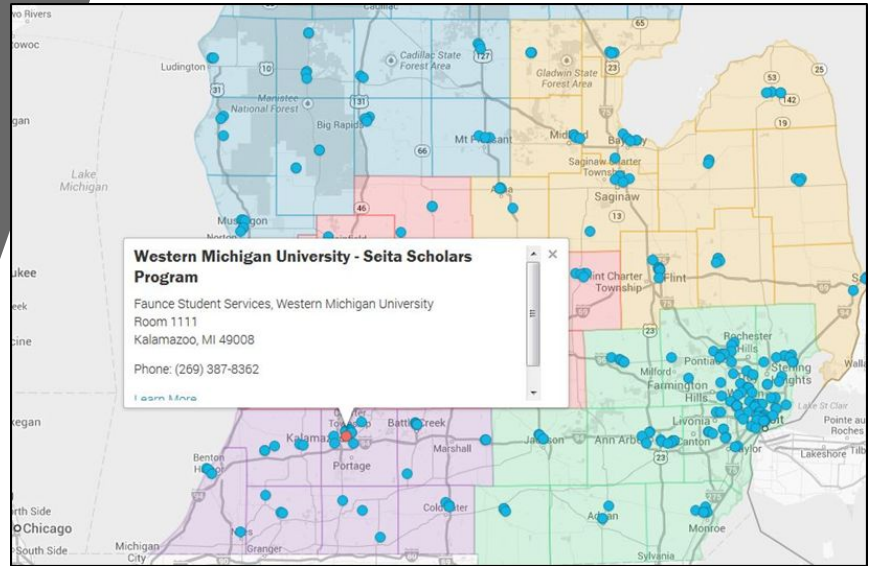
**Created:** 2014/10/16

**Updated:** 2015/02/06

**Life Domains:** [Education](#)

**Audience:** [High School](#), [High School Senior](#), [Supportive Adults](#), [Professional](#)

# Creating a Statewide Network



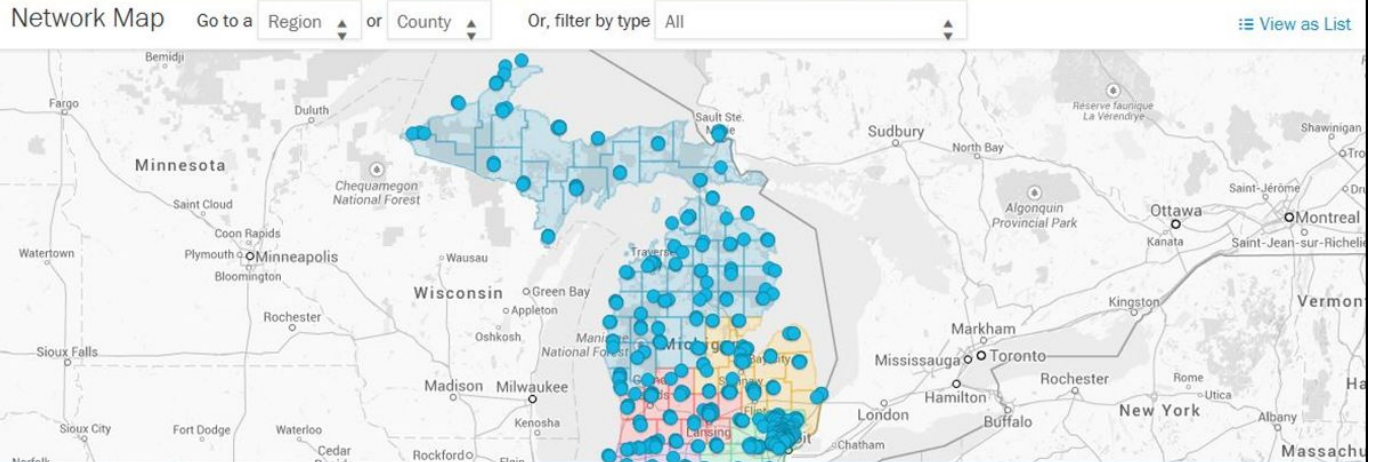
## Network

The places and people within our Network are resources for you. Use the map below to find organizations and professionals within your area.

**Join the ever growing network of resource and service providers.**

Are you a community organization that offers support for youth and alumni of foster care? Become a part of the Fostering Success Michigan Network and make your organization accessible to thousands of youth across the state of Michigan.

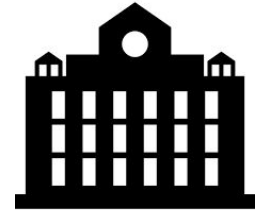
[Join Our Network](#)



# 3 Areas of Engagement/Support Systems

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Includes all of the financial resources that help youth pay for and stay in college.

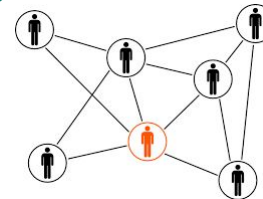


## ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

On campus points of contact and a culture of support through campus systems.

## HOLISTIC NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Includes all of the professionals and systems that are involved in the lives of youth in your community.



# HOLISTIC NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Includes all of the professionals and systems that are involved in the lives of youth with experience in foster care in your community. Identify resources in your community for basic needs support:

- Housing
- Food
- Transportation

Resource Highlight:

[Brighter Futures—Illinois Department of Children and Family Services](#): The Service Provider IDentification and Exploration Resource (SPIDER) is a free, comprehensive service resource database that connects you to nearby organizations offering services and supports to youth. Search your area via the [SPIDER database](#) to find community resources for your students.

# ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

Identify points of contact (Champions) in the following departments:

- 1) Financial Aid
- 2) Admissions
- 3) Student Success/TRIO
- 4) Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Train Champions on barriers students face and resources available to them.

\*They do not have to be “experts,” they just need to be committed to assisting students with the extra help they need!

Resource Highlight:

[Postsecondary Pathways for Former Foster Care Youth](#): Website for the Office of Community College Research & Leadership, College of Education, University of Illinois

# FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Learn about the financial aid resources available to students in Illinois (and prepare to be confused):

- FAFSA Q53: The key to identifying students on your campus.
  - Students who were in foster care on or after their 13th birthday will be Pell eligible and able to qualify as Independent.
  - Illinois Monetary Award Program (MAP): [Program Information with Links](#) (Tied to the FAFSA and available at specific campuses)
- Chafee/Education Training Voucher (ETV)
  - \$5000 per year from 18-26, but no more than 5 years for tuition, fees, supplies, books, etc.
  - Youth in College Placement: \$1506/month payment toward room and board for students attending college or vocational school full time. [Tip Sheet](#)
- Youth In Scholarship Illinois Tuition Waiver: Tuition waiver for youth (Public, In State College or University—does not include room and board) [Tip Sheet](#)

Resource Highlight:

[Foster Progress Financial Aid Guide](#): Illinois program that provides assistance to youth with experience in foster care and tech support to professionals working with them.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



- 1) Student Identification: Q53, ETV, Tuition Waiver (partner with Financial Aid Office).
- 2) Have a clear idea of the supports available to students before you reach out to them.
- 3) Understand that they have been let down by multiple systems and professionals and may not respond positively to your support
- 4) DO WITH, NOT FOR
- 5) Consider your role carefully! In Michigan we use a coaching framework and model to support students.

Resource Highlight: [Fostering Success Coaching Institute](#)/Coach Model Training

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



- Share your knowledge of the challenges of these students with your school/campus administration. Challenge administration to address this at your school.
- Identify basic need resources in your community and establish partnerships with them to address student needs, ESPECIALLY HOUSING!
- Find someone on your campus to be a CHAMPION for youth with experience in foster care. This person is willing to learn about the financial resources available to youth and help youth navigate access to them.
- Reach out to students to check in with them, provide guidance, link them to resources and advocate for them according to their specific needs.(Q53 of the FAFSA)





**Karie Ward, Director**  
**Fostering Success Michigan**  
**Educate Tomorrow**  
[karie@educatetomorrow.org](mailto:karie@educatetomorrow.org)

**Brina Williams, BSW & FSM Intern**  
**Fostering Success Michigan**  
**Educate Tomorrow**  
[fsm@fosteringsuccessmichigan.com](mailto:fsm@fosteringsuccessmichigan.com)