



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM



Each year, approximately 4,000 of California's foster youth turn 18 and become independent, many without the necessary skills to support themselves. Studies show that as many as 50 percent of emancipated foster youth become homeless, have serious money problems, or are incarcerated after leaving care. To better prepare foster youth for independence, Youth Empowerment Strategies for Success—Independent Living Program (YESS—ILP) was developed by the Foundation for California Community Colleges in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services. YESS—ILP assists current and former foster youth in transitioning successfully into self-sufficiency and adulthood.

Local Connections

YESS—ILP brings together Community College campus and community resources to provide services that assist foster and probation youth in overcoming the challenges they face to become independent. YESS—ILP also works with the Foundation's

YESS—VISTA program, which recruits volunteers to serve as mentors, tutors, and community resource volunteers. The YESS—VISTA program is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, which provides monthly stipends to program volunteers.

Personalized Service

Youth are introduced to YESS—ILP through campus outreach and referrals from county agencies and other local partners. Participants receive individual attention from program staff, mentors, and tutors, and are connected to campus and community resources and opportunities.

Participants engage in workshops and hands-on life skills training activities in subjects such as education, financial literacy, employment, and daily living skills. YESS—ILP staff and community partners are dedicated to helping participants become self-sufficient through earning a high school diploma, GED, college degree, or career/technical certificate and obtaining gainful employment.

The Empowerment Message

YESS—ILP is designed to communicate a positive message that says: "YESS, together we can empower youth to understand the impact of their choices, access post secondary education, build permanent relationships with caring adults, and obtain the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to succeed."

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Highlights

- YESS—ILP is offered on 25 college campuses throughout the state.
- 1,588 participants were served during the 2010-11 program year.
- 1,333 hours of training were provided to students during the 2010-11 program year.

Partner Organizations

- California College Pathways
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Foster and Kinship Care Education
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Foster Youth Success Initiative
- California Department of Social Services
- Corporation for National and Community Service

The Foundation for California Community Colleges is the official foundation to the California Community Colleges' Board of Governors and Chancellor's Office. The Foundation's mission is to benefit, support, and enhance the missions of the California Community College system, the largest higher education system in the nation. Incorporated in 1998, the Foundation works with Community Colleges and partner organizations to manage donations, grants, programs, and services that drive excellence in education. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporation and receives no direct state or public support.

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