

# National CASA Fostering Futures Program

## Successful Transitions to Lives Fulfilled



### Program Summary

Through the generous support of the Walmart Foundation, National CASA is launching the Fostering Futures Program (FFP). The program will expand our work with older youth, who are aging out or at risk of aging out of the system. Though FFP will not be limited to serving African-American and American Indian youth, there will be a strong emphasis on supporting African-American and American Indian older youth—who are overrepresented in both foster care and aging-out populations.

FFP will provide specialized training and curriculum to engage current and new CASA/GAL volunteers as advocates and advisors to support the educational, workforce, and life skills development of youth, ages 16–21. Each FFP volunteer, in addition to undergoing their required 30 hours of National CASA volunteer training, will receive supplementary training in working with older youth by helping develop specific transition plans and building positive adult connections.

The ultimate goal for FFP is to become a national and sustainable model for volunteer engagement and collaborative partnerships that results in increasing the number of older youth who successfully meet or exceed their goals for personal and professional achievement beyond foster care.

### The Fostering Futures Program Approach

The Fostering Futures Program will pilot in 15 program sites around the country. Program sites will be selected from throughout the CASA network, based on their ability to effectively recruit, match and engage CASA/GAL volunteers with older youth. Program sites may include both new and existing programs, but existing programs will be expected to inform the development of FFP curriculum, use FFP curriculum and evaluation tools, share best practices and fully meet all FFP requirements as outlined in FFP site agreements. Additionally, FFP pilot sites may be assigned “peer” program groups to increase the sharing of resources, knowledge and communication that will be used to enhance programmatic implementation and expansion.

National CASA will convene a culturally diverse group of adult and youth to serve as the FFP Advisory Committee. Committee members will be selected from a pool of CASA volunteers, former foster youth, CASA staff and other participating CASA programs. Each committee member will bring a wealth of expertise, experience and dedication to older youth. Additionally, committee members will actively participate in the design of curriculum, training and resources to support the successful launch of the FFP.

## National CASA Fostering Futures Program Successful Transitions to Lives Fulfilled



### **Fostering Futures Program Site-Selection Process**

Although the FFP Advisory Committee will work to create a rubric for the final selection process, successful FFP pilot sites should be able to demonstrate current or planned programming that addresses the needs of older youth, with a particular emphasis on African-American and Native American youth, while engaging a strong cadre of CASA/GAL volunteers that represent or are aware of the needs of culturally diverse older youth.

Additionally National CASA is committed to engaging program sites that represent the varying models of programs and communities throughout the network, ranging from GAL to friends of the court models and including state and local programs. Further, we will seek programs in urban, rural and tribal communities and ensure that all sites have a strong capacity to address the needs of older youth residing in these communities and the bandwidth to match these older youth with volunteers who represent and/or reside in the same communities. Programs must be currently stable and well managed, with strong governance, management, fiduciary and programmatic capacities.

Program sites should include, but may not be limited to:

- A state or local program with a diverse group of CASA/GAL volunteers currently working with diverse, older youth as volunteer advocates, supporting aging out youth with the successful transitions to adulthood
- A state or local program yet to begin an older youth initiative, but that has a clearly defined recruitment and matching process for CASA/GAL volunteers working with older youth and a plan for training and advocacy on their behalf

### **Building Partnerships**

National CASA recognizes that there are number of programs and organizations around the country currently addressing the needs of older youth. To this end, the FFP Advisory Committee will seek to partner with existing CASA/GAL programs and other organizations to identify additional best practices to assist older youth. Further, the FFP Advisory Committee will examine existing core curriculum designed to support volunteer advocates and explore existing evaluation tools to inform the evaluation needs and/or processes for year one of the program.