



Unlocking Proven Solutions for Colorado's Child Welfare Involved Youth: The *Fostering Opportunities* Program

Colorado has a proven solution to help foster youth graduate high school and set them on a path for success in life. Three districts have implemented the program with fidelity and showed it works. Now is the time to prepare more districts to deliver *Fostering Opportunities* so Colorado can close the graduation gap for all youth in foster care.

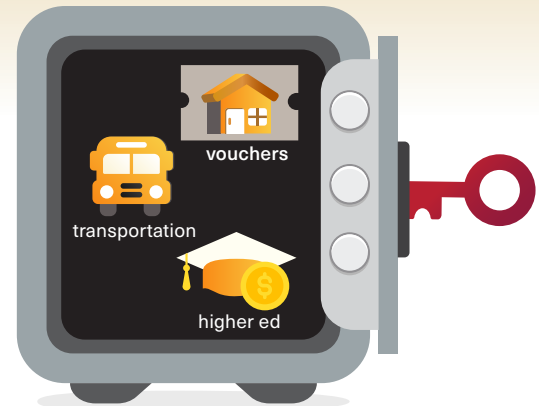
The Problem

- Graduating high school unlocks a lifetime of opportunity – higher earnings, more job options, stable housing, and more.
- Yet Colorado's foster youth graduate at a fraction of the rate:



Only 45% of Colorado's high schoolers who have experienced foster care graduate on time, compared to **86%** of all students.

- Colorado has invested heavily in supporting foster youth – but without a diploma, that investment doesn't pay off.



Fostering Opportunities unlocks access to policy investments created for Colorado Foster Youth



Colorado has a proven solution: *Fostering Opportunities*

The Solution

Fostering Opportunities is Colorado's only evidence-based program proven to improve educational outcomes for middle and high school students who experience foster care.



On track to graduate high school: +12 percentage point improvement in one year



Attendance, behavior, and course pass rates are better for students that have access to the program compared to those that don't



Fostering opportunities holds attendance and course pass rates steady above 75% — even through unpredictable living situations and school changes

Fostering Opportunities helps local child welfare and local education agencies work together while trusted specialists provide continuous support for students even through school moves, foster care placement changes, and beyond child welfare case closure. *Fostering Opportunities* builds protective factors that students need to succeed and strengthens Colorado's broader prevention efforts.



The Action

The evidence is clear. Colorado should:



1. Sustain Fostering Opportunities in Current Districts. There is **gold-standard causal evidence** that shows *Fostering Opportunities* works to unlock high school graduation toward lifelong opportunities for youth aging out of foster care. Sustain current investments in Jefferson County, Denver Public Schools, and Adams 27J.



2. Ready New Districts to Scale. Program expansion shows that *Fostering Opportunities* can be delivered with fidelity in new districts, but the information sharing and coordination between local child welfare and education agencies take a year or more to establish. Focus on these low-cost activities to prepare additional districts to launch the program as new funds become available.



3. Evaluate With a Comparison Group. Longer term follow up across multiple districts will strengthen confidence in results at scale and inform effectiveness of the program in new contexts.

Read more
about the
evidence behind
*Fostering
Opportunities*



Scan Code

By pairing state general funds with federal reimbursement streams like Family First, Colorado can help foster youth thrive while spending limited dollars responsibly. Once *Fostering Opportunities* is rated by the Title IV-E Clearinghouse and approved on Colorado's Prevention Plan, state dollars invested will be maximized through a 50% federal match. A portion of *Fostering Opportunities* may also be claimable sooner through Motivational Interviewing and community pathways.

The Stories of Youth



At the beginning of the school year, Rachel lost one of her grandparents who was also one of her primary caregivers. This experience likely intensified other loss and trauma in her life and it became increasingly difficult for her to follow behavior expectations at school. The school administration had many different reasons why they thought Rachel should consider a different school environment. The *Fostering Opportunities* Specialist organized a meeting with the Program Coordinator and school administrators to determine what could be done to provide wraparound support so Rachel could be successful at her current school. When the school team argued that her home address was in a different district so she should transfer to her neighborhood school, the *Fostering Opportunities* team reminded them of her peer connections, that she grew up in this community, and that it was her legal right to attend her school of origin despite the address of her kinship placement. With the help of the strong advocacy skills of the *Fostering Opportunities* team, Rachel was able to remain at the school and benefit from the support of a behavior plan and a schedule that accommodated her needs for a condensed school day. Rachel is currently doing well and is hopeful to finish the semester strong!



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