



# Ohio Fostering Connections

## Supporting Ohio Foster Youth Through Age 21

### Recommendations for State Implementation of Ohio House Bill 50 October 7, 2016

#### INTRODUCTION

Between April and September 2016, the Ohio Fostering Connections coalition convened a planning process to develop recommendations for the implementation of Ohio House Bill 50. House Bill 50 extended IV-E eligibility under the federal Fostering Connections and Increasing Adoptions Act, allowing young people who reach age 18 in foster care to continue to receive placement and case management supports until age 21. House Bill 50 established that extended foster care supports would be administered and funded by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The planning process brought together a broad group of stakeholders to develop recommendations to inform the implementation of extended supports by ODJFS. Planning was facilitated by Mainspring Consulting, with support from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. A steering committee, including representatives from the following organizations, designed and led the planning process:



The planning kicked off with an initial meeting in April 2016 to provide introductory information, frame key questions and establish workgroups to draft initial recommendations. Voices for Ohio's Children staff and consultants facilitated the workgroups between May and August that focused on developing recommendations related to:

- Eligibility
- Placement
- Administration
- Case Review
- Case Management
- Data

Mainspring consultants synthesized recommendations from the workgroups and facilitated a second stakeholder meeting in August 2016 to finalize recommendations. This document presents final recommendations from the process. Throughout the document the term "fostering connections providers" is used to refer to the entities that ODJFS will contract with to deliver extended supports and services (recommendations regarding contracting for services is included in the Administration section).

## OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

ODJFS and their partners throughout Ohio should develop an extended care program under Fostering Connections that is developmentally appropriate for young adults.

- Young people in the Fostering Connections program should be allowed increased freedom and independence than was available in traditional foster care, including the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Young people should be given clear information on the resources available to them through the program, including the option to exit and re-enter care. The process for reentry into care should be easy to access for young people.
- Young people should be an integral part of the planning process, beginning with the decisions about entry and placement in the voluntary program. Young people should be encouraged and supported in setting their own goals for their life, making plans to reach those goals and taking steps toward those goals
- A strong focus of case managers in the Fostering Connections program should be to help young people identify and connect to a support network, including their peers, older youth who can share lessons learned, supportive friends and family, and individuals in the community who can help young people reach their goals.

## ELIGIBILITY WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### Relevant Language from HB 50

The director of Job and Family Services shall submit an amendment to the state plan to the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services to make federal payments for foster care under Title IV-E directly to, or on behalf of, any person who meets the following requirements:

- The person has attained the age of eighteen but not attained the age of twenty-one.
- The person was in the custody of a public children services agency upon attaining the age of eighteen.
- The person signs a voluntary participation agreement.
- The person meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - Is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
  - Is enrolled in an institution that provides post-secondary or vocational education;
  - Is participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment;
  - Is employed for at least eighty hours per month;
  - Is incapable of doing any of the activities described above due to a medical condition, which incapacity is supported by regularly updated information in the person's case record or plan.

Any person who meets the requirements listed may apply for foster care payments and make the appropriate application at any time.

Any person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received may refuse the payments at any time. If the person or parent refuses payments and seeks payments at a later date, the person or parent must reapply for the payments.

Without the approval of a court, a child who receives payments or on whose behalf payments are received may enter into a voluntary participation agreement with the Department of Job and Family Services or its designee for the child's care and placement. The agreement shall expire within one hundred eighty days and may not be renewed without court approval. Prior to the agreement's expiration, the department or its designee shall seek approval from the court that the child's best interest is served by extending the care and placement with the department or its designee.

A person who is directly receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received maintains eligibility while transitioning into or out of qualified employment or educational activities.

A thirty-day notice of termination must be given by the department to a person who is receiving foster care payments, or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received who is determined to be ineligible for payments.

### **Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations**

#### **1. Who will determine whether young people are eligible for extended care?**

- Fostering Connections providers will screen young people and seek to enroll them in the program through the Voluntary Participation Agreement process.
- Public children service agencies (PCSAs) should be active partners in preparing young people to enroll in extended care and referring young people to Fostering Connections providers to be enrolled. They can help to ensure that young people meet eligibility criteria by the time they reach age 18. If young people exit care at 18 or a later age, PCSAs can help them to meet eligibility criteria through independent living services and refer them for reentry.
- Juvenile courts will review and approve the VPA and formally enter young people into the Fostering Connections program.
- At the last hearing prior to the young adult's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the court should affirm that the young adult has been notified about the option to enter into Fostering Connections, similar to the DeKalb County, Georgia model.

#### **2. How will young people throughout the state be made aware of new program requirements and benefits?**

- ODJFS should create policy that describes when and how youth will receive notice about the availability of the Fostering Connections Program. The policy

should include written notice to young people regarding the program as well as discussion about the program and eligibility requirements as part of transition planning by PCSAs and private foster care agencies prior to youth reaching age 18.

- PCSAs and private foster care agencies should begin conversations regarding extended care with 14- and 15-year olds currently in custody immediately.
  - Conversations should focus on the benefits of extending care
- PCSAs and private foster care agencies should be encouraged to educate key people in young people's lives regarding the requirements and benefits of extended care, so that they can directly encourage the young people to participate. Key people may include:
  - Foster parents
  - Caseworkers
  - Group home employees
  - Biological parents
- During the PCSA transition planning process, young people should be made explicitly aware of the benefits of extended care.
- Agencies involved in a foster teen's life should be encouraged to use technology such as electronic health records, text messaging and/or apps to engage and educate youth about the benefits of extended care.
- PCSA caseworkers should utilize every chance to speak with young people about extended care such as during:
  - Case management sessions
  - Semi-annual review meetings
  - Transitional planning appointments
  - Emancipation classes
- Young adults require a clear path to re-enter care. ODJFS should create a centralized hotline that young people can call to re-enter care.

### **3. What communication strategies are needed to effectively market this program to young people?**

- ODJFS should employ a variety of communication strategies and work with community partners and Fostering Connections providers for shared support and communication. ODJFS, members of the ODJFS HB 50 workgroup and others may want to approach service providers and youth for ideas about the best strategies for connecting with hard to reach youth. PCSAs can communicate about the program to youth receiving benefits. Suggested communication strategies include:
  - Advertise in schools and through school faculty and personnel
  - Use social media
  - Develop an app
  - Create a dedicated website
  - Feature YouTube PSAs
  - Encourage word-of-mouth
  - Provide incentives, such as cell phone minutes or gift cards to encourage young people to enroll or attend informational sessions

**4. Who will be responsible for administering the voluntary participation agreement?**

- ODJFS should oversee the entire program and process but Fostering Connections case managers should be responsible for reviewing and completing the forms with clients.
- ODJFS should consider using technology as a way of helping youth access and understand the agreement. Perhaps through an “opt-in” text messaging system.

**5. Will the county, state agency and/or private community provider be responsible for terminating a young person who is no longer eligible for extended care?**

- The Fostering Connections providers will be the people who are in regular contact with young people, and should document if youth are no longer meeting eligibility requirements and recommend whether they be terminated from the program.
- Under HB 50, ODJFS is responsible for notifying the young person that they will be terminated from the program at least 30 days in advance of their termination. ODJFS should consider how the frame this notice in way that does not feel threatening, but rather encourages young people to reach out to their worker to address eligibility issues or to create a plan for transitioning out of the program. This notice should also make clear that young people terminated from the program can reenter the program if they want to and meet eligibility requirements.
- The court should review and approve any non-voluntary discharge from the program.
- Young adults who are involuntarily terminated from the program automatically have a right to appeal internally through the Department (119 appeal rights).
- ODJFS should review the detail of other states policies and get input from young people as they formulate policy defining specific eligibility criteria within each of the categories of eligibility under Fostering Connections.
- ODJFS should consider using a 6-month “trial discharge” period for young adults who no longer meet eligibility requirements or who opt to exit Fostering Connections. Similar to a trial home visit, a trial discharge would allow young adults to continue receiving case management services, but not foster care maintenance payments, for up to six months as they practice living independently.

**6. How much transition time should be allowed for young people transitioning into or out of qualified employment or educational activities?**

- Youth should have a grace period of at least 60 days when transitioning into or out of qualified employment or education. The grace period will allow for recovery at times of lost stability. Young people considered AWOL should also be eligible for grace periods.

**7. What independent living services will be available to young people who are not eligible and/or enrolled in extended care?**

- PCSAs should continue to be required to offer aftercare services to youth who aged out of foster care if they are not enrolled in the Fostering Connections programs. Aftercare services should address housing, health, permanency, relationship skills and appropriate boundaries, life skills, education and employment and should connect young people to their peers for support.

- ODJFS should actively educate counties that some young people may not qualify for Fostering Connections or may not choose to take advantage of the program. Those young people should continue to have access to Chaffee-funded county independent living services. In addition, counties should be encouraged to begin planning how they will invest their Chaffee dollars and/or levy dollars moving forward, given that the state will now fund young adults that opt in to Fostering Connections.

**8. What is the overlap between young people for whom Ohio would traditionally extend foster care jurisdiction (young adults with significant developmental disabilities) and eligibility for extended care? How will the cases of those young adults be handled under the new extended care program?**

- Cases of young adults with developmental disabilities should be handled like cases of any other youth/young person. They will require assistance on details with their transition plans as well as navigating the extended care eligibility requirements.
- Ohio should consider involving an expert and consulting with the Department of Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Ohio, and other states to determine how to best serve youth with developmental disabilities in partnership with the adult system for individuals with developmental disabilities, and develop policy regarding responsibilities and how transitions between systems will occur.
- “Incapable of doing any of the activities described above due to a medical condition” should be defined in regulations such that young adults with significant mental health diagnoses who may not be able to work or attend school can take advantage of Fostering Connections.

**9. How will moves within the state be handled?**

- While the transition of services from a PCSA to a Fostering Connections provider, and between Fostering Connections providers, may vary from county to county, the state should have as its goal to ensure every transition is seamless and uninterrupted for the young person. The state could consider reviewing the foster home transfer rules which outline required exchange of information between foster care agencies when a foster parent transfers as an example of a policy that aims to ensure seamless transfers for children and youth in foster care.

**PLACEMENT WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Relevant Language from HB 50**

A person who is directly receiving foster care payments or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received may be eligible to reside in a supervised independent living setting, including apartment living, room and board arrangements, college or university dormitories, host homes, and shared roommate settings.

## Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations

**1. What data is available to provide insight into the placement array and the number of placement “slots” that should be available to young adults in extended care? What additional data is required to accurately project the required placement array?**

- ODJFS should review the range of data they have available and identify key data points to inform the development of a placement array that meets the needs of young people in Ohio. NYTD (The National Youth in Transition Database) is one data source that will be helpful in the process.

**2. What placement settings should be available to young adults in the Fostering Connections program?**

- ODJFS should make all of the allowable placement settings under the Fostering Connections law available to young people. Particular attention should be paid to developing an array of supervised independent living placements that meet the needs of young people for varying levels of independence and support. This should include direct stipends for young people who are ready to and would like to live independently.
- ODJFS should review data on the needs of young people in care and develop specialized placement settings targeted to the needs of young people. These should include specialized placements and supports for:
  - Youth in postsecondary education that would include college dorms as placement settings
  - Pregnant and/or Parenting youth. This might include an enhanced rate to support placement of parents with their children in host homes or supportive housing arrangements
  - LGBTQ youth
  - Young adults with substance abuse issues or other mental health needs
- ODJFS should encourage providers to take a “housing first” philosophy, and avoid overly restrictive expectations for young adults in extended foster care placements. ODJFS should review the expectations providers put in place for placements and the consequences of not meeting those expectations, to ensure they allow a level of freedom appropriate for young adults. Young adults should receive clear information about expectations and consequences when they are making placement decisions.
- ODJFS should allow young adults to reside with their kin, fictive kin, and biological parents in “host home” arrangements.

**3. How will direct subsidies be administered to young people?**

- Education and support with young people focused on stipends and money management must occur as early as possible at 14- 15 years of age. By 17- 18 years of age, young people should be allowed more discretion to take care of themselves and their immediate financial matters. ODJFS should review how other states handle the administration of direct subsidies and other direct payments to young people. Practices to consider include:
  - A team decision (including the young person) is made on how the direct stipend or funds are spent.

- Allowance for emergency funds at approximately \$500-\$600 a year for unforeseen needs or circumstances.
- Youth participate and “graduate” from a financial management course to prove readiness for more discretion.
- ODJFS should put in place systems and procedures to ensure that youth receive direct stipends in a timely way upon their entrance to extended care and then on a monthly basis. This will ensure that youth do not have disruptions in their ability to pay rent or meet other basic needs as a result of administrative barriers.
- The amount of stipend should not vary based on the criteria by which the young adult entered Fostering Connections (e.g. education versus employment).

#### **4. Are emergency placement(s) needed?**

- Emergency placement options may be needed as a very short-term safety net option for young people who have exited care and are reentering or who are in extended care and have unexpected disruptions in their living arrangements. However, they should be utilized only in exceptional cases and for very short timeframes until a longer-term placement option is in place. Shelters should not be used as emergency placement options. Rather Fostering Connections providers should include emergency options designed for young adults in extended care as part of the placement array. ODJFS should adopt a policy that prohibits discharge from care or extended care to homelessness.
- ODJFS should consider creating a systems gatekeeper or an entity prepared to handle emergency situations for youth. Some states offer a direct call-in line in which the agency immediately connects with a placement setting. These direct call-in lines are accessible for youth up to the age 21.

#### **5. Who will oversee recruitment and training for kin, foster parents and other caregivers for young adults in extended care?**

- Fostering Connections providers should provide training to foster parents, host home parents, kin and other caregivers involved in their clients’ lives. The training should include contemporary issues facing youth of today, such as human trafficking and identify theft, as well as culturally sensitive issues such as LBGTQ, race, and more. The training should be on-going to address emerging issues.
- An important factor in successfully recruiting individuals to act as “host homes” for young people in extended care will be to provide less bureaucracy and hoops for kin/family to host youth, particularly since many young people go back to their familial environments.

#### **6. How will placement decisions be made for young adults in the voluntary program?**

- Before reaching age 18 and entering the Fostering Connections program, young people should lead a team of caring and involved individuals in selecting the most appropriate extended care placement. These teams require culturally competent individuals who provide guidance, emotional support and a real passion for helping young people. Young people need to have options and choices. They need opportunities to interview, review and determine good placement options. Caseworkers can work with youth and matches to explore host homes. One



example to consider is California, where the state offers a shared-family agreement that is inclusive of the entire unit in the young person's life.

- Young people should receive good customer service from caseworkers and providers and have good information available to them about placement options. This would include brochures that list placement options, the kind of services they provide, and information about the community and local amenities. This will help young people make informed decisions about what the best placement option is.
- For youth who already have emancipated or have exited foster care and want to reenter, they should still drive the decision-making process in partnership with Fostering Connections providers and their county PCSA emancipation worker.

## Administration Workgroup Recommendations

### Relevant Language from HB 50

The department shall have, exercise, and perform all new duties required under the plan as amended. In doing so, the department may contract with another person to carry out those new duties to the extent permitted under Title IV-E.

The Department of Job and Family Services shall pay the full nonfederal share of payments made. No public children services agency shall be responsible for the cost of any payments made pursuant to the revised code.

### Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations

#### 1. What role should ODJFS have in licensing or approving agencies to offer services?

- ODJFS should have certification or approval authority over Fostering Connections providers. There are a variety of options for how ODJFS could structure approval of and, if necessary, contracting with agencies for case management, placement and supportive services. It is critical that the approach taken ensures that there are enough agencies throughout the state with the capacity to offer needed case management, placements and services for young people aged 18 – 21. Options include:
  - Utilizing regional RFPs to identify agencies (or consortia of agencies) that can administer the program and offer all needed services, including case management, placement, and supportive services, to serve all eligible youth in their region.
  - Utilizing regional RFPs to identify agencies (or consortia of agencies) that can provide administration and case work, including placement decision-making responsibility, with ODJFS directly administering payments to licensed/approved placement options. This approach would be similar to the Franklin County Children Services Managed Care contract.

#### 2. What are the critical outcomes for young adults that should be included in an RFP?

- Reduction of teen pregnancy, steady employment, stable housing, completion of education, avoiding incarceration.

- The RFP should also include a requirement to demonstrate capacity to provide a variety of placements to meet the needs of youth such as stipends, scattered sites apartments, and placements for youth with developmental disabilities.

**3. What role should ODJFS have in ensuring sufficient, quality providers exist to serve all 18-20 year olds in Ohio, including in rural areas?**

- ODJFS should be engaged in the RFP process and selection to ensure all areas of the state are served with a sufficient network of Fostering Connections providers, especially rural areas.

**4. Are there other funding streams that could be blended or braided to support extended care, such as HUD funds?**

- The state should consider this approach in the future, but not at the onset of launching the program. However, at the onset, there should be a focus on ensuring partnerships are in place between Fostering Connections providers and other community agencies (such as PCSAs, Medicaid managed care plans, and public housing authorities) for referral and coordination of services.
  - ODJFS should partner with ODSA around housing options for young adults.
  - ODJFS should align the rollout of Fostering Connections with the Ohio's mental health redesign, so that young adults have streamlined access to mental health services.
  - ODJFS should partner with the Ohio Benefit Bank, especially around the Youth Development Discharge Plan that they have designed.

**6. What partnerships are critical to contracted agencies? Should any partners be required to be part of applications to administer the extended care program?**

- Fostering Connections providers should be able to demonstrate partnerships with a variety of public and private agencies serving young adults. It will be critical for contracted agencies to be able to partner effectively with the courts in each county.

**CASE REVIEW WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Relevant Language from HB 50**

Without the approval of a court, a child who receives payments or on whose behalf payments are received may enter into a voluntary participation agreement with the Department of Job and Family Services or its designee for the child's care and placement. The agreement shall expire within one hundred eighty days and may not be renewed without court approval. Prior to the agreement's expiration, the department or its designee shall seek approval from the court that the child's best interest is served by extending the care and placement with the department or its designee.

The court shall retain jurisdiction over a person who meets the requirements described in the Revised Code and who is subject to a voluntary participation agreement that is in effect.

## Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations

**1. Who will be responsible for holding periodic reviews? Courts? Foster Care Review Boards? State staff? Others?**

Annual case review should continue with court oversight. While courts should be responsible for ensuring the annual review occurs, they should be encouraged to utilize more informal proceedings that are off the record. This approach would be more accessible to young people, as well as helping courts that may already have full dockets. At the county level, courts will decide how they will structure those reviews based on existing practice and resources available. Periodic reviews will be handled administratively according to guidance provided by ODJFS.

**2. What guidelines should be in place to ensure the timeliness of reviews?**

ODJFS and the courts should work together to set specific timelines (in number of days) for finalizing the VPA and holding annual reviews so that youth do not experience a delay in getting service and no disruption in service.

**3. What key questions that will guide case reviews?**

The key questions that guide case review should be questions regarding the progress toward achieving goals in the transition plan. ODJFS should provide standardized forms for case workers to report to the court on progress toward transition plan goals. These forms should be completed in partnership with young people, as a means of helping to prepare them to participate meaningfully in reviews. Key domains to include on the form are:

- Education & Training
- Financial Capacity
- Housing
- Employment
- Mental and Physical Health
- Legal Documents & Issues
- Social Connections/Relationships

**4. How will reviews be structured to ensure young people are full partners in the process?**

Case managers and court staff should be required to actively seek the participation and input of young adults in their reviews. Effort should be made to schedule reviews to accommodate young adults' schedules. If the young adult is unable to attend, they should be provided the option of providing written input on their goals, progress toward them, concerns and needs for support. Case Workers and legal advocates should be responsible for helping to prepare the young person for meaningful participation in the review. Preparation should include review of the goals of the transition plan near in time to the review.

**5. What training is needed for stakeholders involved in periodic reviews?**

The training developed for case managers should include content on case review process and preparation, including how to support meaningful participation by young people. ODJFS should work in consultation with the Ohio Supreme Court, the Ohio State Bar Association, and the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges to develop

training for judges, attorneys and youth advocates that could be delivered at relevant statewide conferences or local conferences and trainings.

**6. Should young people be entitled to free, legal representation? Advocates?**

Young people in extended foster care should continue to be entitled to free, legal representation in alignment with current county practice and resources. Legal representation for young adults should be client-directed.

## CASE MANAGEMENT WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### Relevant Language from HB 50

The Department of Job and Family Services must establish the scope of practice and training necessary for foster care workers and foster care worker supervisors who care for persons who are receiving foster care payments or on whose behalf such foster care payments are received.

### Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations

**1. Who should serve as caseworkers for young adults? Fostering Connections provider(s)? County children services agencies? ODJFS employees?**

Casework would be performed by local Fostering Connections provider who should have authority to access the young person's comprehensive SACWIS record.

- Case managers for young adults should have a consistent title statewide

**2. What are critical elements of the practice model for case management of young adults?**

This voluntary program should offer more opportunity for young people to guide the case management process. It should incorporate assessment and intervention tools in-line with best practice that recognize the unique needs and developmental stage of this special population. ODJFS should review the following practice models:

- Daniel Memorial
- Foster Club Transition packet
- Ansell Casey
- Ohio Benefits Bank

**3. What will the requirements be for providing case management for youth age 18 – 21?**

The program's case managers should be dedicated to this unique population. They should be child welfare professionals who undergo population- and program-specific training that is administered at the local, not state, level (with OCWTP-created curriculum as required). We recommend ODJFS establish education and/or training requirements for these case managers that ensure professionalism and adherence to ethical standards.

**4. What input should young adults have in selecting/changing their caseworker or case manager?**

The program should include regular opportunities for the youth and caseworker to review and evaluate the relationship with the option for the youth to request a new worker. The initial assessment process should include an evaluation to determine personality and learning style fit. We recommend the first review occur after one month followed by recurring 90-day reviews with quality assurance calls monitored by worker's supervisor as needed.

**5. What should the young adult caseworker/ case manager title be?**

Recommend ODJFS uses a consistent title to describe these professionals,. A consistent name statewide will distinguish workers in the extended foster care program from other child welfare workers and allow for easy identification by youth, families, courts, GALs, and other service providers.

**6. How will workers be trained and equipped to address the needs of young adults?**

Young adults with lived experience transitioning from foster care should be part of the training delivery team. We recommend the following be addressed in training:

- Professional ethics including content on boundaries and social media restrictions
- The developmental stage of young adulthood and associated needs and challenges
- Local community resources including employment opportunities/program
- Education opportunities including both post-secondary and vocational options as well as tools for identifying and evaluating quality educational programs
- Teaching basic life skills including housing, financial management, healthcare, and professional etiquette
- Trauma and brain development
- Transition to Independence Program (TIP)
- DYS Housing Transition Program
- Youth development and effective youth engagement strategies
- Legal issues, including credit, custody, paternity, child support, eviction, expungement of juvenile records, power of attorney, etc.
- Supporting young people in establishing permanent adult connections

## DATA WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

### Key Implementation Questions and Recommendations

**1. What data should be monitored to measure the critical outcomes regarding young adults in extended care?**

- Youth satisfaction and feedback is one critical data point to gather to review the effectiveness of the program. If there is an ongoing ODJFS stakeholder committee for the extended care program, that would be a good group to reflect on the results and make recommendations for any changes or modifications to the program.
- National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data, which Ohio already collects, will be a useful set of data to review to see determine what types of placements and

supportive services are most important to include and to monitor whether services are contributing to improved outcomes for young people.

- Collecting and regularly reporting key process measures will be important to monitor the needs for services and whether contracted services are meeting needs. Following are items to measure. ODJFS should consider disaggregating this data for each region served by a contracted provider, as well as by race, ethnicity and gender. Key measures include:
  - Number of youth reaching age eighteen in care
  - Number of youth applying to receive extended services
  - Number of youth who enter into a voluntary placement agreement and receive extended services
  - The number of youth eligible under each category of Fostering Connections Eligibility
  - Length of time young people receive services
  - Number of youth terminated from the program annually and for what reasons
  - Number of judicial hearings held and whether youth attend them
  - Number of administrative reviews held and whether youth attend them
  - Number of case managers serving youth 18 – 21
  - # of placement slots available to youth 18 – 21
  - # of youth in each different type of placement setting
- ODJFS should define critical outcome measures to assess pre- and post-implementation of Fostering Connections. A few models of creative ways to collect outcome data include:
  - Cuyahoga County. The county is currently collecting data quarterly from young people who have aged out of foster care and their data collection tool may serve as a model.
  - North Carolina. Through a partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina collects data from young adults through a website that sends automatic reminders, provides monetary incentives for participation, etc.
- To support continuous quality improvement, ODJFS should plan to collect longitudinal data even after young adults have left extended foster care (through age 26) to determine how extending foster care has affected long-term outcomes for young people.
- Data needs to be transparent and accessible to private agencies, young adults, legislators, the media, etc. Contracted agencies will require access to NYTD and SACWIS to enter data on young adults in their care.