



## **OHIO Youth Advisory Board 2015 Strategic Plan**

*The Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio (OHIO) Youth Advisory Board exists to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.*

### **I. OUTREACH AND POLICY**

1. Develop and share OHIO YAB outreach materials so that youth advisory board involvement can be promoted throughout the state.
2. Continue to ensure that youth voice is included in statewide discussions of policy and practice.
3. Focus on outreach, in order to promote the establishment and ongoing development of local and county youth advisory boards.

### **II. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING**

1. Work with local and statewide partners to create the housing tools requested by youth in 2014.
2. Support the establishment of new transitional housing options, and promote youth awareness of existing resources.
3. Recommend that ODJFS develop a transition form that is specifically for housing, and that includes a Plan B, in case the first option falls through.
4. Continue to inform and educate regarding eligibility barriers for foster youth who need housing assistance.
5. Raise awareness that foster care youth who emancipate from foster care without a savings account are likely to age out directly into homelessness.

### **III. EDUCATION**

1. Identify and develop a pool of foster care alumni to serve as spokespeople to encourage today's teens to consider post-secondary education, and create a list of panel questions that can be used in conferences.
2. Meet with the Ohio Department of Education to develop a vision for foster youth to graduate high school and go to college.
3. Work with partners to follow up on youth recommendations to improve educational outcomes.
4. Promote Best Practices for custodial agencies to support foster care youth and alumni's educational success.
5. Expand educational advocacy focus to include middle and high school professionals, including at least one pilot project.



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### **IV. YOUTH VOICE IN COURT**

1. Partner with Ohio CASA to develop and promote tools to support youth voice in court.
2. Explore ways to better inform and empower youth to understand and navigate the court system.

### **V. INDEPENDENT LIVING**

1. Ensure youth voice on the development of a future statewide independent living curriculum to ensure that it (a.) includes hands-on activities, (b.) begins with a pilot, (c.) includes youth feedback throughout the process, including youth evaluation forms, (d.) allows public and private agencies to customize the order in which the material is provided according to the immediate needs of their youth.
2. Advocate for youth to be allowed to begin independent living preparation as early as age 13, and for emancipated youth to be allowed to return for refresher courses.
3. Seek partners to assist in the creation of an online Independent Living Clearinghouse to share resources to help foster care youth during their transition into young adulthood.
4. Advocate for a review of how training related to independent living is delivered to foster parents and caseworkers, and experienced by youth.

### **VI. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

1. Explore the possibility of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) as a resource for emancipating foster youth.
2. Seek to overcome barriers for teens in foster care in establishing a savings account.

### **VII. OHIO YAB INITIATIVES**

1. Continue to develop and seek to pilot the three-tiered mentoring model.
2. Seek partners to continue to develop the Ohio Pride initiative.