

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Initiative partners with organizations that provide services, connections, skills and supports that enable youth in Los Angeles and New York City who are transitioning out of foster care to lead healthy, meaningful and self-sufficient lives. The ultimate aim of this work is to erase any disparities in education, employment and well-being that affect transition age foster youth. The Hilton Foundation focuses on investing in direct services for foster youth and their caregivers, in systems change efforts, in building the field, and in research and evaluation. As part of the Foundation's new five-year strategy, this work will expand to include a third U.S. metropolitan area, with consideration of racial inequities being a key criterion in the selection process.

## Ideal state

All transition age foster youth, including the most vulnerable transition age foster youth, have the ability to lead healthy, meaningful, and self-sufficient lives through pathways that provide them the connections, support, stability, and skills

to pursue educational and career opportunities. Disparities in education, employment, and well-being outcomes between transition age foster youth and their peers no longer exist.

## History and Background

The Board identified foster youth as a program area in 2008 based on Conrad N. Hilton's wish to support youth whose circumstances put them at a disadvantage. Phase I of the Foster Youth Initiative was approved in 2012. It focused on foster youth ages 16-24, also known as transition age youth, through advancing innovative programs, strengthening systems, and sharing knowledge with the field. Phase I supported three landmark studies that led to direct improvements in local and national foster youth policies, as well as comprehensive system reform efforts in Los Angeles County and New York City. This included the California's Continuum of Care Reform, a statewide effort to reduce the number of older youth placed in group homes and increase the availability of long-term family care. In New York City, Foundation investments helped seed the Home Away from Home Initiative, a comprehensive citywide effort to develop state-of-the-art recruitment of caregivers

for older youth and improve how foster and adoptive parents are licensed, supported and retained. In 2017, the Board approved Phase II to continue to prioritize career and college readiness. It also deepened focus on strengthening data coordination and system and policy change implementation. The Hilton Foundation has helped set the agenda for improvements for older youth, catalyze sustained public investments, provide bridge funding to fill agency gaps, and leverage support from other funders. This contributed to the improvement of educational and employment outcomes by supporting more than 12,000 transition age youth in foster care with education, career readiness and employment services, including case management, mentoring and coaching, legal advocacy, and connections to other material resources.

Strategy25 builds off these successes, as described in this brief.

## 5-year goals

**75% of foster transition-age youth and 60% of key subgroups graduate high school in five years**

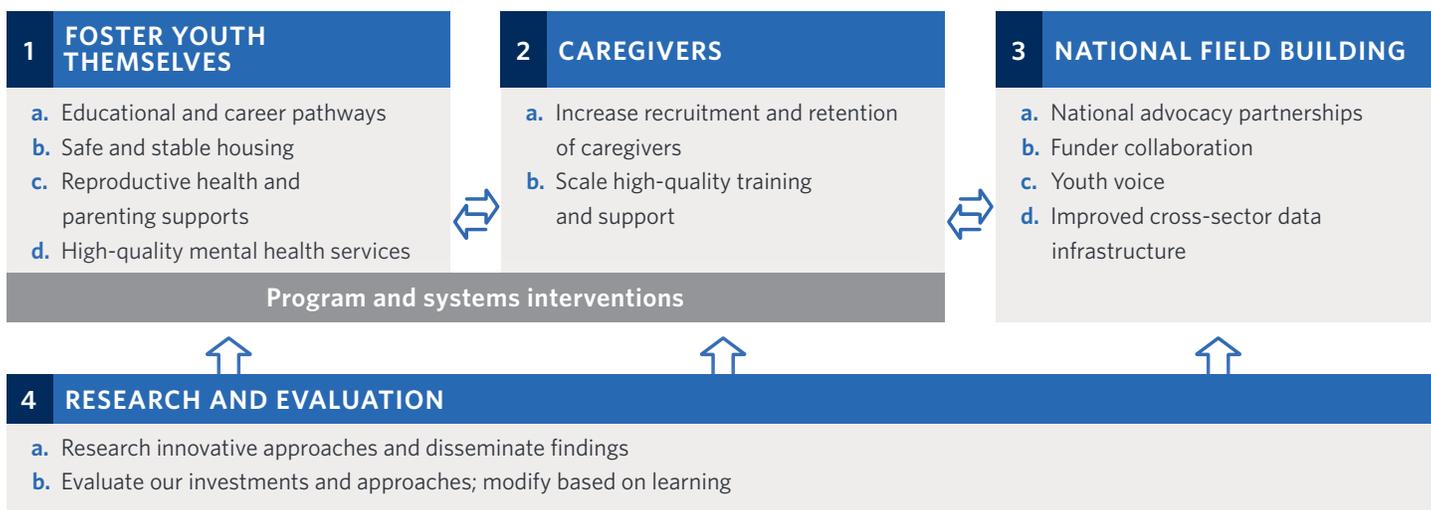
**55% of foster transition-age youth high school graduates and 40% of focal subgroups are enrolled in post-secondary pathways within a year**

**75% of foster transition-age youth ages 14-17 are in family-based placements**

**65% decrease in the gap in high school graduation rates between foster and non-foster youth**

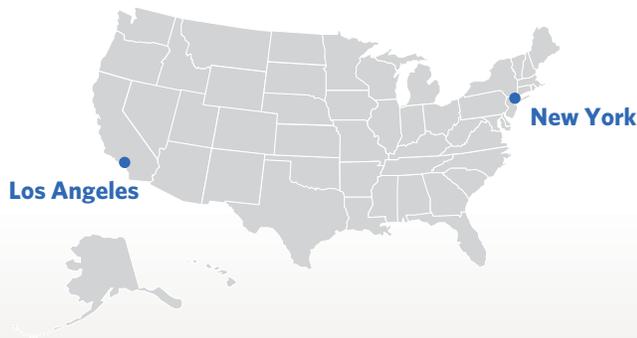
**5 other major U.S. jurisdictions are replicating initiative-tested approaches**

## Strategy architecture



## WHERE WE WORK

- The Foster Youth Initiative will select one additional domestic geography for Strategy25



## EQUITY FOCUS

- Youth of color
- Youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation
- Expectant and parenting youth
- Build the capacity of local organizations to serve their communities, and organizations led by people with lived experience and people of color

## OTHER KEY METRICS

- New York City maximum caregiver reimbursement rates for foster youth ages 12 and older increase by 20 percent
- Reimbursements for high-quality mental health services in Los Angeles county increase from \$5.4 million to \$12 million
- The Transition Housing Program-Plus is expanded to allow foster youth ages 13 and over to participate

### PROGRAM COSTS



#### Phase I (2012-2016):

\$53,190,000

#### Phase II (2016-2020):

\$41,313,500

#### Strategy25 (2021-2025):

Est. \$100,000,000

### CHALLENGES



- Multiple public systems that serve transition-age foster youth do not share and coordinate data
- Frequent placement and school changes continue to harm educational outcomes
- Uncertain and fluctuating education budgets require continued education of policymakers about the key supports for transition-age foster youth (e.g. multi-tiered systems of educational support) such that these priorities remain on the policy agenda

### OPPORTUNITIES



- Capitalize on the momentum behind Fair Futures to advance a comprehensive educational pathway for all foster youth from middle school until age 26. Fair Futures is a coalition of New York City providers, funders, public officials, and youth
- Adding a new mid-sized city will round out the Foundation's portfolio and help build a stronger national field

| ILLUSTRATIVE PARTNERS*                | DESCRIPTION  | AMOUNT AWARDED (2012-2020) |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <b>National Center for Youth Law</b>  | Increasing access to reproductive and sexual health care and information to significantly reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies among foster youth in Los Angeles County | \$6.7 million              |
| <b>Alliance for Children's Rights</b> | Supporting critical services and advocacy for foster youth in Los Angeles with the goals of increasing graduation rates, college readiness, and employment                   | \$4.6 million              |
| <b>The New York Foundling</b>         | Offering intensive academic tutoring for foster youth and support through college  | \$4.1 million              |
| <b>Graham Windham</b>                 | Providing comprehensive resources, coaching, dedicated staff, and family and peer supports to improve college and career pathways for foster youth in New York City.         | \$2.6 million              |

*\*This list is not exhaustive of the Illustrative Partners.*