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Building Futures Work Readiness Program for Young Adults in Care

Pilot program calling on businesses across state to join in on the effort to provide employment services to young adults.

(SPRINGFIELD, Ill) – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) today unveiled the Illinois Building Futures program, a pilot program aimed at expanding work and career readiness resources outside of Cook County for youth in care and young adults. More than 100 young adults in foster care will receive employment opportunities because of this unique partnership between the public and private sectors.

“The Building Futures program is a tremendous opportunity for children who have been too often cast in the shadows,” said Governor Bruce Rauner. “This program will help them gain skills and develop their leadership abilities that will translate throughout their entire lives. Furthermore, businesses have the distinct chance to employ dedicated and resolute young people who will be great additions to their firms.”

“I want to urge the businesses of Illinois to give special attention to hiring young people who are and have been in foster care. They are overcoming challenges that most of us never have to experience,” said DCFS Director George H. Sheldon. “I want the business community to learn what we already know, our children in care are remarkable people with valuable skill sets and they are like any other children, just looking for an opportunity to grow, to learn, to achieve.”

Youth and young adults who participate in the Building Futures program will have access to approved training programs and employment services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In addition, DCFS and the Department of Commerce have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate referrals and expand employment resources for youth in care and young adults transitioning from foster care.

“Building Futures will give youth in care the chance to gain experience and develop skills that will prepare them for careers in high demand occupations,” Department of Commerce Acting Director Sean McCarthy said. “The Department of Commerce is proud to partner with DCFS to ensure we are supporting our young adults with the resources and opportunities to be successful and to build a better future for themselves.”

The Building Futures initiative is an expansion of current programs in Cook County (Kaleidoscope’s Find Your Future, Lawrence Hall’s MY TIME and Alternative Schools Network’s Added Chance). Building Futures will launch in July 2016 in the following communities: Marion-Mt. Vernon, Champaign, Peoria and Rockford.

For more information about Building Futures, please visit: <http://www.illinoisworknet.com/BuildingFutures>

Media Contact: Alissandra Calderon
Assoc. Deputy Dir. of Communications
779-537-3744 (cell)

Veronica Resa
Deputy Dir. of Communications
312-814-8436

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DCFS receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child.