STEPPING UP FOR FOSTER YOUTH

A POLICY PLAYBOOK FOR CALIFORNIA'S FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES

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CALIFORNIA ★
COLLEGE
PATHWAYS

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ABOUT CALIFORNIA COLLEGE PATHWAYS

The California College Pathways (CCP) initiative provides resources and leadership to campuses and community organizations to help foster youth succeed at community colleges, career and technical education (CTE) programs, and four-year universities. California College Pathways is a project of John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and receives support from the Stuart Foundation, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Pritzker Foster Care Initiative, California Wellness Foundation, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Angell Foundation, May and Stanley Smith Charitable Trust, Tipping Point Community and the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.

The work of California College Pathways focuses on supporting foster youth in four important areas on their path to success in higher education:

- **ENROLL** in a college or training program
- **EQUIP** with essential resources
- **EARN** a college degree or certificate
- **EMBARK** on a career path

ENROLL	EQUIP	EARN	EMBARK
IN COLLEGE OR TRAINING PROGRAM	WITH ESSENTIAL RESOURCES	A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE	ON A CAREER

INTRODUCTION

Given our changing economy, it is crucial that foster youth obtain a postsecondary credential in order to secure stable and sustainable employment. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that individuals with just a high school diploma earn $20,000 less per year than individuals with a bachelor's degree and are twice as likely to experience unemployment.

While 93% of foster youth state they want to attend college,[i] just 4% of former foster youth obtain a bachelor's degree by age 26, as compared to 50% of the same-age non-foster youth population.[ii] For those from foster care fortunate enough to attend college, there are many challenges that make earning a degree very difficult. Most of these students lack financial resources, have little to no family support, are academically underprepared, struggle with mental health issues, and often lack the emotional support of a caring adult.

While the majority of foster youth who enroll in higher education do so at a community college, a significant number attend four-year universities, entering either as freshman or transferring from a community college. Within California, there are two four-year systems of public postsecondary education: the California State University (referred to as CSU or State) and University of California (UC). In both, the individual campuses have a great deal of autonomy regarding the institution of campus-level policies related to student support. As a result, there is much variation as to what policies and practices are in place to assist foster youth in enrolling and succeeding in college.

To help understand the conditions that foster youth face at four-year universities, track whether state-mandated policies have been implemented, and identify promising practices that can be shared and emulated, JBAY conducted a survey in late 2016 and early 2017 of the foster youth programs within the CSU and UC systems, asking a range of questions regarding their policies. In total, 22 campuses within the CSU system were surveyed, (the California Maritime Academy was excluded for the purposes of this report) and 21 campuses responded. Nine out of the nine UC campuses participated in the survey.

This report summarizes the results of that survey, focusing on institutional rather than program-level policies. The report begins with a summary of recommended policies that campuses can institute to improve foster youth outcomes in the successful completion of postsecondary degrees. This is followed by a detailed explanation of each issue area, within which are "spotlights" on examples of successful local policy initiatives that can serve as models for individual universities to replicate.

While the total number of foster youth students is small relative to the entire student body, the State of California has a unique relationship to foster youth because the child welfare system made the determination to remove these children from the care and custody of their parents and assume full legal responsibility for them. Given this unique relationship, the exceptional disadvantages that foster youth face, and the fact that the small numbers make providing special accommodations eminently feasible, it is reasonable to adopt policies that provide a high level of individual accommodation.

It should be noted that both the CSU and UC systems have developed a variety of initiatives designed to increase equity in education and ensure timely degree completion system-wide and in particular among previously underserved groups, including first-generation college students and economically and educationally disadvantaged students. This study does not address these broader system-wide initiatives, but rather focuses on policies and practices that specifically address the unique challenges confronting current and former foster youth enrolled within these systems.

The campuses highlighted throughout this document offer positive examples of practices that provide excellent support for students, however, these samples do not represent the totality of exceptional practices. Specific campus policies are provided as examples within each policy area and are not meant to provide an exhaustive list of such policies.
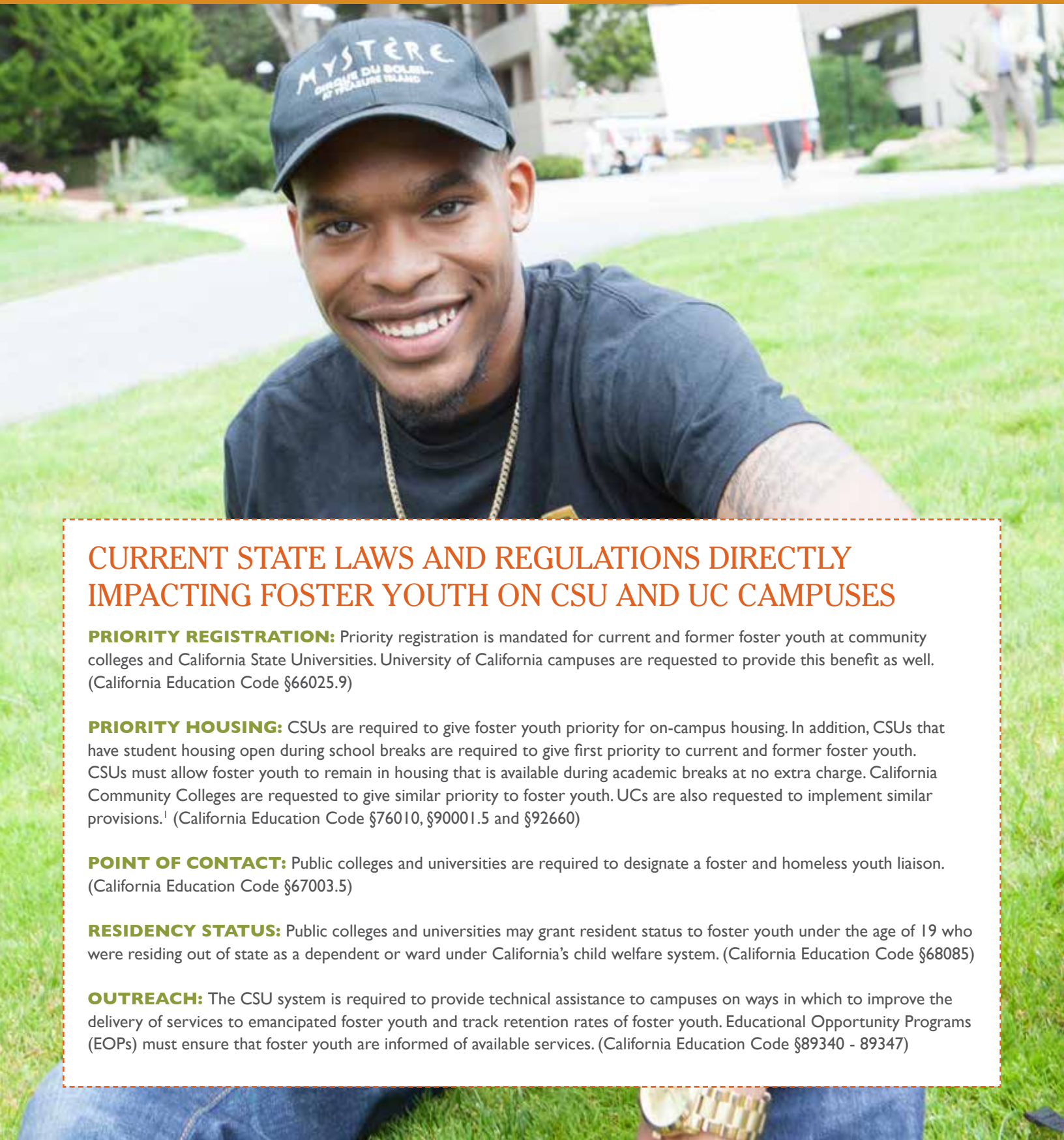
CURRENT STATE LAWS AND REGULATIONS DIRECTLY IMPACTING FOSTER YOUTH ON CSU AND UC CAMPUSES

PRIORITY REGISTRATION: Priority registration is mandated for current and former foster youth at community colleges and California State Universities. University of California campuses are requested to provide this benefit as well. (California Education Code §66025.9)

PRIORITY HOUSING: CSUs are required to give foster youth priority for on-campus housing. In addition, CSUs that have student housing open during school breaks are required to give first priority to current and former foster youth. CSUs must allow foster youth to remain in housing that is available during academic breaks at no extra charge. California Community Colleges are requested to give similar priority to foster youth. UCs are also requested to implement similar provisions.[1] (California Education Code §76010, §90001.5 and §92660)

POINT OF CONTACT: Public colleges and universities are required to designate a foster and homeless youth liaison. (California Education Code §67003.5)

RESIDENCY STATUS: Public colleges and universities may grant resident status to foster youth under the age of 19 who were residing out of state as a dependent or ward under California's child welfare system. (California Education Code §68085)

OUTREACH: The CSU system is required to provide technical assistance to campuses on ways in which to improve the delivery of services to emancipated foster youth and track retention rates of foster youth. Educational Opportunity Programs (EOPs) must ensure that foster youth are informed of available services. (California Education Code §89340 - 89347)

[1] Because the UC system cannot be mandated to comply with most state laws, a similar provision would need to be enacted by the UC Board of Regents in order for this to be a binding mandate.

CAMPUS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a summary of recommended policies that campuses can institute to increase the number of foster youth who successfully **ENROLL** in college, and **EQUIP** them with adequate resources to **EARN** a degree and **EMBARK** upon a career. At least one CSU or UC campus has implemented each of the policies described below and in many cases, the policies have been adopted by several institutions. Specific examples of universities that employ each individual policy can be found in the body of this report.

ENROLL

ADMISSIONS

- **Offer guaranteed admission to foster youth at CSUs when a student meets minimum eligibility requirements and/or provide foster youth with the same admissions preference as students coming from the region served by that CSU campus.** Guaranteeing admission for students coming out of the foster care system who meet the CSU threshold requirements can function as a powerful motivator for foster youth in high school to take the courses and obtain the grades needed to qualify them for admission.

- **Guarantee late admission to Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) to foster youth identified after they enroll.** While EOP functions in part as an admissions program, it is also the primary support services program available on CSU campuses. Foster youth often do not have access to information regarding EOP at the time of application, causing them to lose this opportunity. Once foster youth have been admitted to the university, providing, rather than limiting access to EOP and the associated foster youth programs will support these youth to be successful.

- **Designate a point person within the admissions office for foster youth.** Having a dedicated staff member with an understanding of the unique needs of foster youth and to whom foster youth can be directed for assistance with the admissions process makes it easier for these youth to get the support that they need to successfully navigate the process.

ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

- **Make verification a one-time event for the student with a universal flag in the campus' data system.** At most campuses, foster youth must present verification multiple times in multiple offices to access the various benefits available to them. Creating a foster youth flag that all appropriate staff have access to streamlines the process of verifying these youth for services and benefits.

WAIVING AND DEFERRING DEPOSITS

- **Automatically waive intent to enroll fees.** The need to pay hundreds of dollars up front for enrollment can be a major barrier to foster youth's ability to access college. Waiving these fees for foster youth removes a significant obstacle.

- **Automatically defer housing deposits until financial aid is awarded.** Deadlines for payment of housing deposits often come before many foster youth have received financial aid. Missing payment deadlines can impact enrollment, result in the loss of priority status for housing, or even the loss of a housing unit entirely. Adoption of a policy that allows foster youth to temporarily delay payment of housing deposits until financial aid is received can resolve this barrier.

EQUIP

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- **Designate a foster youth advisor in financial aid.** University financial aid offices should designate a technician to work with foster youth who both understands the specific benefits available to foster youth and who can spend additional time with these students to address application errors and ensure timely processing. It is recommended that the designated technician be given a somewhat smaller general caseload in order to allow them to devote additional attention to the foster youth on their caseload.

HOUSING

- **Fully implement policy allowing foster youth to remain in housing during academic breaks at no extra charge.** Assembly Bill 1228 requires CSUs and requests UCs to provide housing to foster youth during breaks at no charge. While most CSUs and about half of the UCs have implemented the requirement, not all campuses have done so. Those that have not should fully implement this provision.

- **Partner with THP-Plus and THP+FC housing on campus.** Transitional housing programs for foster youth known as THP-Plus and THP+FC can provide students

with an extra layer of support while they are in school. By partnering with these programs to make dorm units available to program participants, eligible foster youth can have the experience of on-campus living along with the financial and personal support that accompanies participation in the THP-Plus or THP+FC program.

- **Donate summer housing.** Securing housing during the summer can be extremely challenging for foster youth who do not have family to return to when campus housing is unavailable. Where campus housing is available, it is often prohibitively expensive. Campuses can make a limited number of units available at no charge or for a reduced rate during the summer in order to alleviate the financial burden on these students during this transitional time.

- **Where family housing is available, provide housing options for students with children and/or partners.** Attending school as a parent brings with it an additional set of challenges. Where campuses have housing options available for students with children, these should be prioritized for foster youth. Exceptions to standard policies should also be considered such as making housing that is typically reserved for graduate students with families available for foster youth undergraduate students with families.

- **Develop short-term emergency housing resources.** Having short-term emergency housing available can help foster youth students to weather temporary crises. Access to emergency housing provides foster youth with time to identify long-term housing solutions when faced with imminent homelessness that could otherwise derail their academic career.

FOOD SECURITY
- **Ensure student access to CalFresh.** CalFresh provides a monthly food subsidy to low income individuals and families. The implementation of outreach and enrollment programs to increase participation in CalFresh can help address food insecurity. Staff engaged in such outreach should be fully trained regarding how receipt of certain forms of financial aid, and participation in campus support programs and extended foster care, allow for the waiver of work requirements typically in place for college students.

- **Place students into housing with kitchen facilities or provide access to kitchen facilities during term breaks.** The problem of food insecurity is especially acute during term breaks and summer because even where housing is available, food services usually close or greatly restrict service. Some campuses have met food needs by placing foster youth students in apartment-style housing to ensure they have kitchen facilities to prepare meals or by giving special access to a kitchen to foster youth students on campus during breaks when food services are closed.

- **Provide access to emergency food resources.** Food pantries can provide emergency access to food for foster youth who do not have the resources to obtain food. Other unique approaches include a mobile phone application that alerts students to food leftover from campus-catered events and meetings.

EARN

- **Provide ongoing institutional financial support for campus foster youth programs.** Foster youth typically need substantially more support than other students to successfully earn a degree. It is recommended that programs be funded to include at a minimum, one full-time staff person and ideally, funding would allow for two staff members (a program manager and counselor) along with ancillary funds for program activities and direct support to students.

- **If enrollment in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) is required for participation in the foster youth program, allow entrance to EOP at any time for foster youth.** Many students are not informed about EOP, its value and benefits, as well as the fact that they must apply for it at the same time they apply to the university. Missing the EOP deadline should not exclude foster youth from accessing needed support.

- **Provide sufficient space on campus for foster youth programs.** Foster care alumnae regularly describe the importance of having a place to go on campus—to get help, to learn, or just to socialize with people who can relate to their experience. Ideally, foster youth program spaces should include a confidential meeting place for counseling, an area for computer access and printing, and a gathering space for workshops and social events. Program space should also be located in an easily accessible location that is integrated into the larger campus milieu.

EMBARK

- **Dedicate resources to supporting students' transition to career and graduate school.** In order to ensure a successful transition after graduation, universities can dedicate funds to develop robust programming to support students as they prepare to exit college and move into the world of work or continue their professional education.

ENROLL
IN COLLEGE
OR TRAINING
PROGRAM

PART I: ENROLL

The first step toward college success is enrollment. CSU and UC campuses enroll foster youth both as freshman admissions and as transfer students from community colleges.

Table 1 provides an estimate of the number of foster youth enrolled within each system based on students' self-reported status. The CSU application inquires as to whether a student was in foster care after the age of 13 and these figures therefore include a wide range of individuals, from those who exited foster care at age 13 to those who remained in foster care until the maximum age of 21.

TABLE 1: FOSTER YOUTH ANNUAL ENROLLMENT 2015/2016 ACADEMIC YEAR

CSU	UC
2,832	1,587

In total, there are 478,000 students enrolled in the CSU system and 210,000 enrolled in the UC system. While the total number of foster youth students is small relative to the entire student body, the State of California has a unique relationship to foster youth because the child welfare system made the determination to remove these children from the care and custody of their parents and assume full legal responsibility for them.

Given this unique relationship, the exceptional disadvantages that foster youth face, and the fact that the small numbers make providing special accommodations eminently feasible, the vast majority of CSU and UC campuses have developed specialized support programs for foster youth. Twenty-one of the 22 CSU campuses and 100% of the nine UC campuses have a foster youth support program in place. A total of 1,690 students were served during the 2015/2016 academic year by the 31 support programs that provided service numbers in their survey responses.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS

CSU	UC
1,086	604

CSU and UC campuses have adopted a number of policies designed to ease the enrollment process for foster youth and support them in enrolling in greater numbers. While some policies, such as priority registration, are the result of state mandates, others are local procedures established by individual institutions. These policies, described in detail below, include priority registration, special admissions consideration, sharing of status verification, and rules for delayed deposits.

A. PRIORITY REGISTRATION
High demand for core courses at most universities means that students may encounter difficulty securing the classes that they need in order to graduate. The ability to complete required coursework in a timely manner is crucial for foster youth, as they may lose access to federal financial aid, only available for a maximum of six years, before completing their degree. In order to make completion of a degree more attainable, Assembly Bill 194, enacted in 2011 and modified by Senate Bill 906 in 2016, provided for priority registration for foster youth along with other designated populations including Veterans and homeless students at community colleges and CSUs. (UCs are not required to provide this benefit, but have been requested to comply.) Ultimately, this priority for registering for classes can reduce the disparity between the percentage of foster and non-foster youth succeeding at higher education institutions.

TABLE 3: ACCESS TO PRIORITY REGISTRATION

	CSU	UC
Priority registration provided per statute	95%	78%
Limited to students enrolled in campus foster youth program	N/A	22%
Unknown	5%	N/A

While all CSUs for which information was made available provide this benefit, UCs are not subject to the state mandate regarding priority registration and therefore have the option of restricting access. Two UC campuses limit priority registration to those enrolled in the university foster youth support program. This approach is not recommended as it denies a crucial benefit to foster youth who are either unable or not interested in participating in the support program.

B. SPECIAL ADMISSIONS CONSIDERATION

Special admissions consideration is an important way to increase access to higher education for foster youth who have demonstrated the motivation and potential to succeed but who might not meet all the university entrance requirements due to economic or educational backgrounds. It is an important way to redress historical inequities and personal disadvantageous circumstances such as those experienced by foster youth.

At the CSU campuses, the Extended Opportunity Program (EOP) was created to afford special admissions consideration and provide unique supports for those students who come from low-income and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Many foster youth will qualify for EOP admission but importantly must complete a supplemental EOP application at the time that they apply to the university.

Each UC campus also offers an EOP or similar student services program, however these programs are not designed as special admissions programs in the same way as the CSU's EOP.

Survey respondents were asked if any special admissions considerations or exceptions are offered to foster youth. Table 4 shows that just under half of CSU campuses report going beyond the standard EOP admission policy to increase access for foster youth and one third of UC campuses report some form of special admissions consideration for foster youth.

TABLE 4: SPECIAL ADMISSIONS EXCEPTIONS OR CONSIDERATION FOR FOSTER YOUTH

	CSU	UC
Yes	45%	33%
No	50%	66%
Unknown	5%	N/A

Campuses have taken various approaches to giving special consideration to foster youth in the admissions process. The examples spotlighted on this page represent some of the different mechanisms utilized.

SPOTLIGHT

- *Chico State* offers priority admission to foster youth, according them the same admissions preference as students in their local service area. [2]

- *San Francisco State* reserves some of their EOP special admissions slots for foster youth.

- *CSU Bakersfield* offers special admission to students personally interviewed during visits to regional high schools.

- *CSU Stanislaus, CSU Fullerton, Sacramento State, CSU Monterey Bay* and *CSU San Bernardino* foster youth support programs can advocate for special admissions consideration on a case-by-case basis.

- *Cal State Los Angeles* gives priority to foster youth in the admissions review process and will conduct an individual review of transcripts and an in-person interview to assess a student who does not meet regular admission guidelines.

- *CSU San Marcos* has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with San Diego and Riverside counties that guarantees admission to first-year students coming out of the foster care system who meet the minimum CSU standards. In addition, they offer exemptions to qualified transfer students who may not have the required transferable 60 units or the required general education "golden four" classes.

- *UC Santa Barbara* and *UC Santa Cruz* report that foster youth experience is taken into account or awarded extra points in their holistic review for admission.

- *Sonoma State* has an MOU with *Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC)* which commits them to assigning a single point person for foster youth admissions, considering transfer appeals by foster youth and permitting SRJC foster youth transfer applicants to choose a second major option if not admitted by the major department.

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[2] "Local service area" refers to the CSU admissions policy that gives admission guarantee to CSU-eligible first-time freshmen and local upper division transfer students who come from specifically identified high-schools and community colleges in the region served by that CSU campus.

C. SHARING STATUS VERIFICATION

Once foster youth students are admitted to the university, multiple departments are involved in providing them with the targeted services for which they are eligible. To be eligible, their foster youth status must be verified. Examples of departments requiring this verification include: the admissions and records department for priority registration; the financial aid office for federal grants; the housing division for priority placement; and/or the foster youth support program for participation in the program. How status verification is shared between departments varies from campus to campus, with differing implications for the student. When there is no mechanism for sharing status verification, the student must continually provide proof of foster care experience with official documentation. This can be onerous and often acts as a barrier to accessing services.

Reducing administrative hurdles is an important piece in helping foster youth access higher education. Ideally, a standard institutional mechanism for confirming foster youth status and providing verification to appropriate staff members in all relevant departments would relieve these students of a significant burden.

TABLE 5: UNIVERSITIES WITH MECHANISMS FOR SHARING FOSTER YOUTH STATUS VERIFICATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENTS

	CSU	UC
Yes	40%	44%
No	55%	56%
Unknown	5%	N/A

Most commonly, once students are verified and enrolled in the foster youth support program, the program coordinator serves as the liaison with all departments, notifying them of foster youth status, alerting them to student needs, and responding to concerns whenever any questions arise. This approach, however, can be very time intensive and is often overly dependent on personal relationships rather than institutionalized policies, resulting in breakdowns when staff members in these departments change.

In order to streamline access to services and remove bureaucratic obstacles, many foster youth programs have identified liaisons in each department, often holding monthly meetings to identify barriers and develop campus-wide coherent solutions to address the special needs of foster youth.

SPOTLIGHT

- *Humboldt State* has identified a foster youth liaison in various departments including EOP, financial aid, housing, and counseling so that there is a single, known point of contact to whom foster youth can turn for specialized assistance.

- *UC Riverside* holds monthly meetings of the Guardian Scholars steering committee, which consists of dedicated point persons from various departments. This makes individual interventions easier to accomplish, such as expediting support with financial aid applications, obtaining housing deposit deferrals, and prioritizing access to housing.

Some campuses have developed automated ways to flag and share foster youth status verification, coding student records with a special designation in the university information system, allowing various departments to easily confirm status.

SPOTLIGHT

- At *Chico State* the PATH Scholars program receives the list of students identified as foster youth on their CSU application. The program verifies each student's status and notifies the admissions department who in turn flags the student's record with a special designation. All departments can then easily verify status for benefits through the information system.

- ***CSU Fresno's*** Student Information System provides two separate flags—one which designates participants in the university's foster youth support program, known as Renaissance Scholars, and a separate flag to denote students who qualify as foster youth but who do not meet the eligibility for the Renaissance Scholars program. This ensures that foster youth who cannot or choose not to participate in the support program are still able to access benefits, such as priority registration.

D. DELAYING DEPOSITS PAYMENT

The need to pay hundreds of dollars up front for enrollment and housing deposits can be a major barrier to foster youth. Enrollment deposits are typically about $100 to $150 and housing deposits typically range from $250 to $350. The deadlines for deposits tend to fall before financial aid is awarded and foster youth frequently do not have the resources to pay these costs. Missing payment deadlines can impact enrollment, result in the loss of priority status for housing, or even the loss of a housing unit entirely. Some foster youth give up on the enrollment process when faced with fees that they cannot pay. One potential solution to this dilemma is adopting a policy that allows foster youth to temporarily delay payment of enrollment and/or housing deposits until financial aid is received. Table 6 shows the proportion of campuses that have adopted such a policy.

TABLE 6: UNIVERSITIES THAT ALLOW FOSTER YOUTH TO TEMPORARILY DELAY PAYMENT OF ENROLLMENT AND/OR HOUSING DEPOSITS UNTIL FINANCIAL AID IS RECEIVED

	CSU	UC
Yes	82%	62%
No	13%	38%
Unknown	5%	N/A

A few universities that do not have an automatic provision for delaying housing deposits do allow for case-by-case arrangements, however, this requires extensive staff time and students in need of a deferral may get missed.

SPOTLIGHT

- ***CSU Bernardino*** Renaissance Scholars can request a waiver of the $100 confirmation to enroll deposit on an as-needed basis.

- ***Chico State, Humboldt State, Sacramento State*** and ***CSU Fresno*** automatically defer housing deposits for all students who are verified as foster youth until financial aid is received. ***CSU East Bay*** automatically defers housing deposits until financial aid is received for all Chafee grant recipients.

- ***Cal State Channel Islands*** will waive the deposit requirement for any student who has been approved for financial aid as long as the student is in compliance with other deadlines related to enrollment and housing and has provided all necessary paperwork.

- ***UC Davis*** and ***UC Riverside*** defer housing deposits until financial aid is received upon request from the Guardian Scholars program manager. While this has to be handled on a case-by-case basis, it provides critical support to those students for whom advance payment is simply not possible.

Students on campuses that do not provide deferment of enrollment and housing deposits often turn to foster youth support programs for assistance with these fees. Deferments free up programs to use resources for other direct student needs instead.

PART II: EQUIP

After enrollment, the next step in foster youth's pathway to achievement in higher education lies in making sure they are equipped with the resources they need to persist and succeed. There are three crucial elements to this equipment: financial, housing and food security.

A. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

One of the single most effective interventions in the life of a low-income student is ensuring access to adequate financial aid. According to research from the Public Policy Institute of California, students who receive grants and scholarships are more likely to earn a bachelor's degree than otherwise similar students. These findings hold even after controlling for institutional and student characteristics, including high school grade point average and family income. Financial assistance enables and encourages students to focus on their coursework, rather than splitting their time and attention between school and work, a practice common among foster youth.[iii]

The process of applying for and securing financial aid can be both complicated and time-consuming. Most foster youth do not have a parent or other adult to help them navigate this complex and exacting process. Errors made on the application can both delay access to aid and dramatically impact the amount of the financial aid award. For example, if a student residing with a foster parent incorrectly indicates that they reside with a parent, the amount of aid offered is likely to be significantly less. One Guardian Scholars program director interviewed, who reviews the financial aid applications for all program participants, estimated that 30 to 40% of the applications have substantive errors.

While all four-year universities have a financial aid office whose role is to provide assistance with financial aid access, the degree to which staff have the knowledge and capacity to address the specific issues facing foster youth varies tremendously from campus to campus. Most program staff spend considerable time working to develop relationships with financial aid technicians in order to ensure that foster youth have the support that they need to navigate the financial aid process.

This can be more or less successful, depending on the personnel and the commitment of the leadership in the financial aid department to offering more intensive hands-on assistance to foster youth. As the aid process can be somewhat idiosyncratic and subject to technicians' experience, personal relationships make a difference in helping staff secure the best possible financial aid packages for their students. Sympathetic financial aid offices can more easily assist students in maximizing grants and minimizing loans.

Where financial aid technicians do not have sensitivities to the hardships foster youth face, students are less likely to end up with a financial aid package that maximizes grants and minimizes loans. The increasing cost of postsecondary education and the problem of college debt is widely discussed these days and is certainly not unique to foster youth. What is unique to foster youth is their lack of social networks to help them best avoid and manage debt. Student loan debt is increasing because government grants and support for postsecondary education, as well as family savings, have failed to keep pace with rapidly rising college costs. This has shifted much of the burden of paying for college from federal and state government assistance to families. For foster youth with little to no family support, the burden is on them alone.

While incurring some amount of student debt is inevitable for many students, in order for foster youth to embark upon successful lives after college, exiting school with as little debt as possible is key. Financial aid packages often include large loans but do not always provide sufficient personalized counseling on the risks associated with taking on such large debt. In many cases, foster youth do not have the resources or support needed to make educated decisions and ensure that the amount of loans taken are as low as possible.

Ideally, university financial aid offices should designate a technician to work with foster youth who both understands the relevant rules and regulations and who can spend additional time with these students to address application errors and ensure timely processing. It is recommended that the designated technician be given a somewhat smaller general caseload in order devote additional attention to the foster youth on their caseload.

SPOTLIGHT

San Francisco State University has identified point persons in the financial aid office designated to serve foster youth. The Guardian Scholars coordinator meets with these individuals regularly to troubleshoot any issues that may arise with foster youths' financial aid and review applications for completeness and accuracy. These financial aid officers are trained regarding the specific needs of foster youth and devote time to ensuring that foster youth are not over-awarded and that grants are prioritized over loans whenever possible. They also speak at the Guardian Scholars program orientation so that the students can connect a face to the name and students are given priority access to meet with the liaisons in the financial aid office.

B. HOUSING SECURITY

While affordable housing is a major challenge for many university students, housing instability is especially acute for former foster youth who don't have family with whom they can live. In a survey of foster youth attending colleges in California and Washington, 97% who received some form of housing assistance said that it was "important" or "very important" to their college success.[iv] In the California Central Valley, 79% of university foster youth support programs surveyed identified a lack of adequate housing and financial difficulty as the most significant barriers to postsecondary educational success for transition-age foster youth.[v]

While new laws have improved access to on-campus housing, housing instability continues to present a significant obstacle to a successful college career. The situation is especially challenging for students who have children or are married or living with a partner, since many campuses offer limited or no family housing or restrict it to graduate students. In these cases, foster youth may be left to fend for themselves on the private market.

1. PRIORITY STATUS FOR ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

To address the need for housing security, Assembly Bill 1393 was passed in 2009 requiring CSUs to give foster youth priority for on-campus housing. In addition, CSUs with student housing that remains open during school breaks or on a year-round basis are required to give first priority to current and former foster youth. The law was modified in 2015 by Assembly Bill 1228, which added a requirement that foster youth be allowed to remain in housing that is available during academic breaks at no extra charge. The legislature requested that the UC system implement similar provisions.[3]

TABLE 7: UNIVERSITIES PROVIDING FOSTER YOUTH PRIORITY ACCESS TO ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

	CSU	UC
Yes	95%	100%
No	- 0 -	- 0 -
Unknown	5%	N/A

Of the survey respondents, all CSUs and UCs provide priority status for on-campus housing. Thus, foster youth who otherwise meet the requirements for campus housing, including compliance with application deadlines, are moved to the front of the assignment list.

SPOTLIGHT

- *CSU San Marcos* has partnered with the YMCA San Diego to operate dorm units as a THP+FC program. This means that the students who are participating in extended foster care can live in a dorm setting with other students and also receive supportive services connected to participation in extended foster care and THP+FC.

- Since 2006, University Housing Services at *San Jose State* has contracted with the Bill Wilson Center in San Jose to provide THP-Plus housing for foster youth who attend the university and want to live in the residence hall. The MOU provides for a double room and 7-day meal plan that is billed directly to the Bill Wilson Center. This is year-round housing and is available to any student who qualifies under the THP-Plus program through the Bill Wilson Center.

- *UC Irvine* guarantees housing for all students in their FYRE foster youth program for the academic year during their entire tenure at UC Irvine. The program manager notifies the housing department of all qualified students and they receive priority placement. The student can choose to stay in the same residence hall or move to a new location on campus each year as they prefer. To help with costs, the FYRE program works with the financial aid advisor to ensure that the student's financial aid award covers their housing costs and that students receive appropriate guidance regarding any necessary loans.

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[3] Because the UC system cannot be mandated to comply with most state laws, legislation is typically limited to "requesting" that the UC system implement the provisions of the law. In order to be a binding mandate, a similar provision would need to be enacted by the UC Board of Regents.

For students who are participating in extended foster care in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), dorms or other on-campus housing are considered an eligible placement type. Typically, however, the monthly SILP payment amount of $923 does not provide enough funding to pay for both housing and other living costs. The combined costs for campus housing and meal plans vary by campus but typically fall between $1,200 and $1,900 per month, well above the SILP monthly rate. As such, many foster youth will seek less expensive off-campus housing, thereby not receiving the benefit of priority access to on-campus housing. Campuses have found that when students are residing in on-campus housing as a SILP, coordination with the child welfare agency to ensure that the housing is approved in a timely manner is key.

SPOTLIGHT

At *Cal State Fullerton*, when the Guardian Scholars program determines that a student will reside in on-campus housing and is eligible for SILP payments, they work directly with the student's child welfare social worker to help the student with the process of receiving their payments. Developing a close relationship with the local child welfare agency has been key to creating a successful process. With student consent, social workers are invited to join meetings with students to ensure that students are accessing all resources available through extended foster care. The program in turn supports social workers by providing them, with student consent, the information they need to process SILP payments or offer other services.

a) TIMING

Although all campuses have priority housing policies in place, significant procedural challenges exist that can still impede placement. The biggest obstacle lies in the timing of deadlines for students to request on-campus housing as well as pay deposits. Often, these deadlines occur between March and May, before students are awarded financial aid in June. This means foster youth do not yet know whether adequate resources will be available to them, so they cannot make an informed decision about housing options. As noted previously, many foster youth also do not have the resources available to pay for nonrefundable housing application fees and deposits.

SPOTLIGHT

At *CSU Dominguez Hills*, the housing department works closely with the Guardian Scholars Program. An email from the program that identifies the students needing a deadline extension is sufficient to extend housing deposit deadlines to accommodate financial aid disbursements.

Furthermore, the timing of identifying and verifying foster youth status collides against these deadlines. Foster youth support program staff may not have had an opportunity to identify incoming foster youth before these deadlines, which leaves students either unaware of their options or without the counseling they need to make informed choices. When campuses rely solely on the foster youth program to identify foster youth who qualify for priority housing, some eligible students may not get the priority placement benefit because the student is not known to the program prior to housing deadlines.

All of this means that meeting housing needs for foster youth requires additional mechanisms beyond just priority access. This is especially true for students who need year-round housing or who have children.

SPOTLIGHT

The *CSU Fresno* Housing Department sets aside reserved beds for foster youth until July. This allows students to delay housing decisions until they have full information about their financial aid, and gives the program staff time to work with the students to help them take advantage of their best options. This accommodation is based on a similar model used for student athletes, and is easiest to implement on a campus where on-campus housing is not over-subscribed.

b) IDENTIFICATION

Foster youth cannot take advantage of priority housing access if they are not identified by the institution and offered this benefit. The ideal practice is for institutions to create an automated system that connects foster youth to priority housing if they identify as a foster youth on the university application, financial aid application, or through another means.

Many campuses instead continue to rely on foster youth support programs to recognize eligible students, which is problematic when the program staff have not yet identified all eligible youth. Program coordinators describe meeting students in their

second and third years on campus who just learned about their program. Some foster youth opt not to participate in the program so if they are not otherwise identified by the university system, they will not receive their priority housing benefit. In addition, this can create a time-consuming burden on program staff, who must gather and sync multiple lists from various departments.

Reducing reliance on support programs to identify foster youth to the housing department will enable more students to be classified in a timely manner and therefore increase access to this benefit.
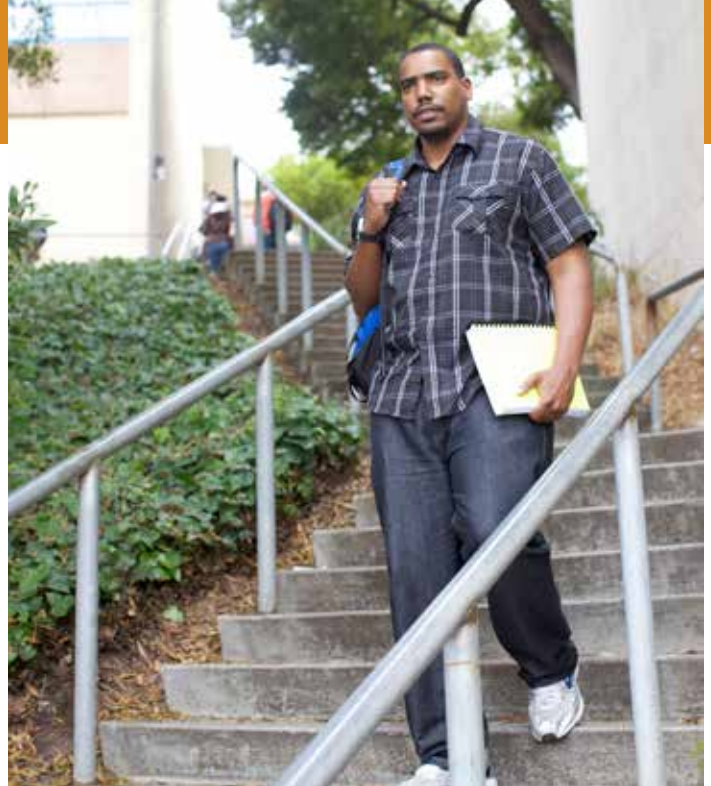
SPOTLIGHT

Cal State East Bay automatically provides priority housing placement for Chafee grant recipients and all students who indicated foster youth, orphan, or ward-of-the-court status on the CSU application. The Renaissance Scholars program coordinator generates a list of students from the university application and the list of Chafee grant recipients. The housing department ensures that these students are given priority for housing placement. Student housing for first-year students comes equipped with kitchenettes, and housing for students in subsequent years have full kitchens, enabling students to provide for their food needs during breaks when campus food services are closed.

2. CONTINUOUS HOUSING: TERM BREAKS

Even in cases where a student is housed in a residence hall for the academic year, semester and/or quarter term breaks present distinct challenges for youth who have no positive family home to which to return. While some foster youth want to leave campus to stay with family members or friends during breaks, those who do not have that option (estimated to be 10% to 15%) desperately need accessible and affordable housing for these interims.

To address this need, Assembly Bill 1393 included a requirement that CSU campuses with housing available during semester breaks must offer priority placement for foster youth. Only one CSU campus reported no housing available during breaks. All campuses with housing available during breaks have implemented priority placement for foster youth. Of the UC campuses, 100% provide priority to foster youth in campus housing during breaks.

SPOTLIGHT

- *UC Berkeley* Hope Scholars identifies students who need year-round housing at the beginning of the year and program staff then work with the housing department to ensure that these students are placed in housing that remains open during breaks.

- The *UC Merced* Guardian Scholars program manager works with the housing department to ensure that each student gets a placement that includes breaks when needed. While there is no formal policy to provide continuous housing to each student, this newest of the UC campuses has shown its commitment to foster youth by finding the funds to pay for housing on a case-by-case basis, even off-campus, during campus closure, for individual students who have no other option.

Foster youth programs are typically tasked with identifying students who will require housing during breaks and ensuring that appropriate arrangements are made. Often, however, these provisions are not institutionalized. Instead they rely on goodwill, relationships between program staff and the housing department, and ad-hoc procedures, and as such these arrangements are vulnerable to changes in personnel. While individual student circumstances often require a case-by-case approach, procedures that ensure housing access should be institutionalized so that foster youth are not dependent on individual willingness or personal relationships.

TABLE 8A: CAMPUSES THAT PROVIDE HOUSING THAT IS OPEN DURING BREAKS

	CSU	UC
Yes	90%	100%
No	5%	N/A
Unknown	5%	N/A

TABLE 8B: IF HOUSING OPEN DURING BREAKS, CAMPUSES THAT GIVE FOSTER YOUTH PRIORITY

	CSU	UC
Yes	95%	100%
No	N/A	N/A
Unknown	5%	N/A

Four CSU campuses report having not yet implemented the policy called for in AB 1228 to allow foster youth students to stay in housing during breaks at no charge. This requirement has been in place since January 1, 2016. One campus did not respond to the survey so it is unknown whether they have implemented the requirement.

Though not required by statute, half of UC campuses with housing that is available during breaks have implemented policies providing housing during breaks at no charge. One campus reported not having any housing that remains open during breaks.

TABLE 9: UNIVERSITIES THAT HAVE IMPLEMENTED AB 1228 REQUIREMENT FOR FOSTER YOUTH TO STAY IN HOUSING DURING TERM BREAKS AT NO EXTRA CHARGE

	CSU	UC
Yes	76%	44%
No	19%	44%
Unknown	5%	N/A
Not applicable	N/A	12%

Standardized options enable students to avoid the time-consuming search for, and costly expense of, interim housing. Where housing is not available during breaks, it presents a serious challenge for some students to locate and pay for temporary housing.

SPOTLIGHT

San Diego State University and the San Diego Housing Commission (under their "Moving to Work" designation[4]) have created a unique program to provide housing for foster youth students. Funds from the university, the housing commission, and a local donor allow the university to provide housing or vouchers to 100 foster youth. Students can choose between year-round, on-campus housing, fully paid, or off-campus apartments with a tiered subsidy system. For those who opt to live off campus, students are assisted to identify housing through established university relationships with landlords. The program promotes independence by mentoring students through handling their own communications with the landlord and negotiating their leasing. The Guardian Scholars program builds financial literacy training into the process so that students are learning to save and manage their money and avoid financial crises.

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[4] Moving to Work (MTW) is a demonstration program for public housing authorities (PHAs) that provides them the opportunity to design and test innovative, locally-designed strategies. MTW gives PHAs exemptions from many existing public housing and voucher rules and more flexibility with how they use their Federal funds. In California, the San Diego Housing Commission, San Bernardino County Housing Authority, Housing Authority of the County of San Mateo, Santa Clara/San Jose Housing Authorities, Oakland Housing Authority, and the Housing Authority of the County of Tulare are MTW sites. PHAs that are not MTW sites, however, may have other strategies available to them that allow them to prioritize this population.

3. CONTINUOUS HOUSING: SUMMER

Summer housing presents a special challenge. Many campus-run housing units close for all or some of the summer, leaving gaps in availability. Even where residence halls are open during the summer, the academic year contract does not include these months and students must pay additional fees to remain in on-campus housing during this time.

Exacerbating this situation has been the lack of financial aid availability. From 2011 through 2016, federal Pell grants were not available during the summer term. The federal budget adopted in May 2017 reinstated the summer Pell grant moving forward, which will lessen the financial burden for those foster youth who choose to enroll in summer classes. Many students, however, do not enroll during summer session because they need to work or may want to take advantage of internship opportunities.

All of the universities that reported campus housing available during the summer describe it as cost prohibitive for foster youth. As such, staying in campus housing often means having to take out substantial student loans.

The situation is most acute for freshman admits during their first two years, particularly during the summer between high school and college, as youth manage the uncertainties of this major life transition, without the time, money, or local connections needed to locate off-campus housing.

SPOTLIGHT

- Since 2013, *San Francisco State University* has reserved 10 fully furnished campus-owned apartments to house up to 40 foster youth. These units are available to students during holidays and summers for no cost, and also include a full meal plan for the entire year. Currently, the apartments house mostly freshmen students who typically need the most housing support.

- *Chico State* created themed housing in 2017 which includes a residence hall unit for foster youth with 19 beds and kitchen facilities. It is much more affordable than other on-campus residence halls and will be available year-round, including summer, in 2018.

- *CSU San Bernardino* Renaissance Scholars has an MOU with the campus housing department to ensure that summer housing is made available to any foster youth student who is at risk of displacement. Housing costs that exceed the amount covered by

the student's financial aid package are paid by the EOP department using unrestricted grant money raised through the university advancement office.

4. FAMILY HOUSING

Students with children or partners face significant challenges in a housing system set up for single, childless students. While the number of students in this circumstance is relatively small, for those students who do have families, access to appropriate housing is key to their ability to attend college. Where family housing is available, the university should prioritize foster youth for placement into that housing. Exceptions to standard policies should also be considered such as making housing that is typically reserved for graduate students with families available for foster youth undergraduate students with families.

On campuses without family housing, priority access to on-campus housing is of no use and support programs must help students to find housing in the community. These families often have few resources and programs must provide cash assistance for deposits and first month's rent in order for the family to gain access to housing.

SPOTLIGHT

UC San Diego and *UC Irvine* place students with children into university family housing that stays open during the summer. The foster youth programs work on a case-by-case basis with the housing department to access these units and to date, all students with such needs have been accommodated.

5. EMERGENCY HOUSING

Some campuses have developed programs designed to meet the emergency housing needs of students who are homeless, in order to offer them a stable living situation on a temporary basis while a more permanent solution is found. Having short-term emergency housing available can help foster youth students weather a crisis and give them time to identify long-term housing solutions when faced with imminent homelessness that could otherwise derail their academic career.

To fill the gaps, foster youth programs use a range of approaches including raising philanthropic funds to subsidize the cost of summer housing and cobbling together various community resources. Spotlighted on this page are examples of how campus programs are solving this problem in the absence of institutionally based solutions.

SPOTLIGHT

- At **UC Santa Cruz**, where the campus closes for winter break, the program coordinator arranges for mentors or other community members to offer students their spare bedrooms for the holidays.

- At **Chico State** the housing department sets aside housing units over the summer for foster youth participating in the PATH Scholars program.

- The Guardian Scholars program at **UCLA** has arranged for students to live in campus housing during the summer if they work for the housing department. Their paycheck is used to pay for their room.

- **CSU San Marcos**' ACE program pays the cost of housing between their Summer Bridge program and the fall semester when needed. This is paid for through philanthropic donations.

- **CSU Stanislaus** Promise Scholars foster youth program covers the cost of summer housing for students through external fundraising.

- **Cal Poly Pomona** Renaissance Scholars program offers assistance funds from philanthropically raised donations to help cover housing costs, both on and off campus, during the summer.

- Continuing Guardian Scholars at **CSU Bakersfield** receive assistance with housing costs and meals during the summer commensurate with their levels of prior participation in mandatory Guardian Scholars activities. They apply online and have deposits and application fees deferred. Incoming freshmen are invited to participate in Summer Bridge, an academic preparation program in EOP, which provides summer housing. Those incoming students who are unable to participate in the Summer Bridge program may also opt to reside on campus during the summer prior to the start of the semester. Any summer housing fees incurred are paid for by the Guardian Scholars program.

SPOTLIGHT

Cal State Channel Islands has developed an emergency housing response program whereby units in residence halls are set aside and made available on an emergency basis for homeless students for up to 10 days. The foster youth support program has been able to refer students in crisis into this housing in order to temporarily stabilize them while a long-term solution is identified. The university is in the process of hiring a case manager who can work with students experiencing a housing crisis. The case manager will also provide support to students accessing the campus' newly instituted emergency fund program and food pantry.

6. HOUSING WORK-AROUNDS

In the absence of campus policies to provide sufficient housing, foster youth program staff spend considerable time and expense locating adequate lodging for the students who have nowhere else to go. How this is achieved is campus and program specific. Summer and term break housing needs are addressed on a case-by-case basis through personal advocacy by program staff, working with the housing department to identify needed accommodations.

While these program efforts are laudable, the indispensable role of the foster youth program suggests that students who are not participating in the program may not have access to sustainable housing. In addition, the reliance on both personal relationships and external fundraising makes the availability of this support precarious. If university staff change or funders cease to provide resources, summer and academic break housing programs may cease to exist.

C. FOOD SECURITY

Hunger on college campuses has become a widespread problem. Recent research indicates that nearly 25% of CSU students, 20% of UC students and half of community college students do not have access to adequate food or nutrition.[vi] Within the statistics are many foster youth who are the most vulnerable to homelessness and hunger.

Because hunger on campus is not solely a problem for foster youth, many of the campus-based initiatives to address the issue are for all students who are experiencing hunger. The problem is understood to be so severe within the CSU system that the Chancellor's Office has created the Basic Needs Initiative to encourage solutions. Foster youth programs have often been at the forefront of addressing this difficulty and provide specialized support for their students, which includes food pantries and emergency food vouchers.

SPOTLIGHT

At **CSU Dominguez Hills**, the foster youth program manager is a CalFresh coordinator, specially trained to assist students with obtaining CalFresh benefits. Single students can obtain up to $194 monthly in CalFresh benefits and households with children are eligible for additional benefits based on household size.

The problem facing foster youth is especially acute during term breaks and summer because even where housing is available, food services usually close or greatly restrict service.

SPOTLIGHT

- **Chico State, San Francisco State** and **CSU Fullerton** have addressed food insecurity by placing foster youth students in apartment-style housing to ensure they have kitchen facilities to prepare meals.

- At **CSU Northridge**, students on campus during breaks when campus food services are unavailable are given special access to a kitchen until the cafeteria is open again.

Where campus policies are insufficient, support programs have addressed food needs by raising money from philanthropic sources. For example, San Francisco State provides a full summer meal plan from outside funding. Cal State East Bay, Fresno and San Bernardino each offer grocery gift cards to students during semester breaks. At CSU Dominguez Hills, the Office of Student Life raises money to provide meal cards and a food pantry.

SPOTLIGHT

Cal State Long Beach has developed an innovative approach to addressing hunger on campus. A broad coalition of campus partners has established The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program that includes food pantries and personalized assistance in accessing CalFresh. The program includes the following:

- The Beach Bites mobile food app alerts students to available food after on-campus catered events and meetings. Instead of letting the food go to waste, an alert from the administrator of the event goes out to students announcing the quantity and type of food, start and end time for when it's available, and the location. When the food is gone, another notice goes out.

- The Feed-A-Need program invites any student to donate a meal during the third week of the semester. They complete a card with their name, ID # and signature, then one meal is transferred from the donor's meal card to a recipient card. The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program can then offer these meal cards to students in need. Faculty and staff can donate cash by rounding up on their meal charge, giving a dollar or donating online. Cash donated at food service locations and restaurants on campus goes to the campus-based food pantry.

- Dining services provides a market that accepts CalFresh benefits as payment.

EARN 19

PART III: EARN

Earning a four-year bachelor's degree takes substantial financial resources and adequate academic and social support. The investment in foster youth at this stage of life pays substantial dividends down the road. The impact of degree completion on income is stark: an individual without a high-school diploma earns an average of $504 per week compared to those with a bachelor's degree who earn an average of $1,156 per week—an income disparity of over $30,000 per year. [vii] Foster youth who have earned postsecondary degrees have a better chance of becoming self-supporting, reducing the costs spent on social welfare programs and incarceration, as well as increasing state tax revenues—benefits for all Californians, including the youth themselves.

A. AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Twenty-one of the 22 CSU campuses and 100% of the nine UC campuses have a foster youth support program in place. A total of 1,690 students were served during the 2015/2016 academic year by the 31 support programs that provided service numbers in their survey responses.

are still able to access services such as counseling, community events and special seminars. The program numbers in Table 10 comprise participants at all levels, including where there are tiered levels of support.

While the proliferation of programs across so many campuses represents a significant step forward, not all foster youth have access to these programs and the supports available are not always adequate to their needs. One-third of the universities reported insufficient funding as a barrier to serving all students who want support. While two-thirds of respondents reported being able to serve all eligible students who request support, all programs reported that current funding levels were not sufficient to meet the full range of needs. Consistent mental health services and more financial assistance for housing and emergencies were named as the greatest unmet needs. In addition, while some foster youth opt to forgo participation in the program, others are not aware of the special support programs available to them. Multiple campuses expressed the need for more resources to be able to reach these students before they start school.

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAMS

CSU	UC
1,086	604

Some campuses, such as CSU Northridge, CSU Chico, CSU Fullerton, UC Riverside and UCLA, report a tiered structure in their programs. A tiered approach offers assorted levels of support to different categories of students based on eligibility factors, such as age in foster care. Eligibility restrictions or funding constraints may require limiting certain services such as scholarships or priority registration to a subset of students. Those who do not qualify for these more intensive supports

TABLE 11: REASONS WHY SOME FOSTER YOUTH ARE NOT ENROLLED IN PROGRAM

	CSU	UC
We are able to serve everyone who is eligible and those who do not participate have chosen not to.	63%	89%
There are additional students who qualify for our program and would like to enroll but we do not have the resources to serve them.	32%	11%
Unknown	5%	N/A

B. PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL HOME

The nature of these programs varies widely, due to how they were formed, unique campus cultures and administrative systems, where initial support came from, and how much financial support comes from the university.

TABLE 12A: DEPARTMENT WHERE PROGRAMS ARE HOUSED – CSU

EOP	Stand-Alone
62%	38%

TABLE 12B: DEPARTMENT WHERE PROGRAMS ARE HOUSED – UC

Admissions	Student Success/ Equity Program	Stand-Alone
11%	67%	22%

TABLE 13: DOES PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM REQUIRE ADMISSION TO EOP? (CSU ONLY)

Yes	No
29%	71%

While the majority of CSUs do not require students to be admitted to EOP in order to participate in their foster youth programs, six campuses do require it. This can be problematic since application to EOP must happen concurrent with application to the university. Many foster youth, however, are unaware of the program, its value and benefits, as well as the fact that they must apply at the same time they apply to the university.

Program directors report that when EOP admission is required for participation in the foster youth support program, flexibility around entry into EOP is important for former foster youth who frequently have little guidance through the university admissions process. Transitioning out of foster care, finding housing, and figuring out the elements for university application is daunting for most, on top of personal-life challenges.

SPOTLIGHT

Of the six campuses that require admission to EOP to participate in the foster youth program, *San Jose State* is unique in allowing for entrance to EOP and the foster youth program *after* admission to the university. The foster youth program coordinator can advocate for late admission with the director of EOP on a case-by-case basis.

Other programs offer more limited flexibility around EOP admission. San Diego State offers late application to EOP if its Guardian Scholars program identifies a student before they are actually on campus. Cal State Los Angeles also offers some flexibility; students can be admitted to the foster youth program after admission to the university, though they will not receive the full EOP grant and services.

C. PROGRAM STAFFING AND FUNDING

Almost all public universities now have, at a minimum, a full-time permanent staff person dedicated to supporting foster youth. In most cases, this is a program coordinator or manager, but in two instances the sole staff person is a counselor-level position. Of the 21 CSUs and nine UCs that responded to the survey, all but one CSU and one UC reported that the university pays for at least one full-time staff person. The two campuses that don't pay for personnel through the university budget must rely on external fundraising to support staffing costs.

Two-thirds of campuses have only enough funding to support a single full-time staff person. About one-third of campuses provide more than that, though half of these second positions are less than one full-time employee (FTE). Most programs rely solely on university backing to cover staffing costs,

however, seven CSUs and three UCs rely on external funding to supplement what the university contributes to provide sufficient staffing.

Programs that are limited to a single staff member can be challenging to operate as one individual is tasked with both managing the program and providing direct outreach, counseling, and other services to students. Having a dedicated counselor in addition to a program director or coordinator enables the latter to outreach to more students and develop the relationships across the campus and community that support student success.

TABLE 14A: UNIVERSITY-PAID POSITIONS IN FOSTER YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAM – CSU

University Paid Position	% of Universities
1 or more FTE position university funded	91%
< 1 FTE position university funded	0%
No university contribution	4.5%
Unknown	4.5%

TABLE 14B: UNIVERSITY-PAID POSITIONS IN FOSTER YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAM – UC

University Paid Position	% of Universities
1 or more FTE position university funded	78%
< 1 FTE position university funded	11%
No university contribution	11%

D. FUNDING FOR NON-PERSONNEL PROGRAM COSTS

In order to be effective, programs must have a source of funds to cover non-staff costs. In particular, these include direct assistance to students to help with housing, food, transportation, emergencies, books, supplies, and other essential items. While some campuses receive financing from the university to assist with these costs, the majority must rely on external fundraising. Table 15 shows the percentage of campuses that receive university funds for direct assistance versus outside donations. Note that the amount of funding provided both by universities and raised externally varies considerably by campus. University contributions can range from $5,000 to $185,000 and are not consistent from year to year. Similarly, the amount of funding raised externally ranges from $20,000 to $600,000 and can also be inconsistent from year to year.

TABLE 15: CAMPUSES THAT RECEIVE UNIVERSITY FUNDS OR OUTSIDE FUNDS FOR DIRECT STUDENT ASSISTANCE

	CSU[5]	UC
Receive university funds	14%	33%
Raise outside funds	64%	56%
No access to funds for direct assistance	23%	11%
Unknown	5%	N/A

One UC and one CSU campus receive no direct funding from the university for either personnel or non-personnel costs. These programs are financed entirely from philanthropic funding.

TABLE 16: CAMPUSES THAT RECEIVE NO DIRECT FUNDING FROM THE UNIVERSITY

	CSU	UC
No direct university funding	5%	11%

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[5] Column total exceeds 100% because one campus program receives money for direct assistance from both the university and from outside sources.

1. DIRECT ASSISTANCE THROUGH PROGRAMS

Programs use funds for direct assistance in a variety of ways to meet the distinct needs of foster youth. Some form of emergency funding is critical in most every program. Of the CSU campuses, six offer no direct assistance. Two UC campuses report no direct assistance. The type and amount of support offered varies considerably by campus and is generally determined based on the amount of funding available, rather than by the total need, as funding is not sufficient at most universities to meet the financial needs of students.

TABLE 17: TYPES OF DIRECT ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY PROGRAMS TO STUDENTS

Direct Assistance	% of Campuses
Emergency funds	77%
Housing subsidies	60%
Cash scholarships	59%
Book vouchers	45%
Food/meal cards	41%
Gas cards/transportation support	14%
Childcare	0%

Other direct support offered by one or more campuses:
- Donations from community: clothing, food, housing items
- Grad school prep courses, interview clothes, airline tickets
- Laptop lending
- Research fellowships
- Summer scholarships
- Supplies, printing
- Unmet needs: medical/dental/optometry

E. PROGRAM SPACE

One means of campus support that is important for students is to provide space that creates a sense of "home" and "belonging." Foster care alumnae who have succeeded through college regularly describe the importance of having a place to go on campus—to get help, to learn, or to socialize with people who can relate to their experience. The best foster youth program spaces include a confidential meeting place for counseling, an area for computer access and printing, and gathering space for workshops and social get-togethers. Consideration as to where this space is provided is important as well. Program space should be located in an easily accessible location that is integrated into the larger campus milieu.

SPOTLIGHT

The Guardian Scholars program at **CSU Fullerton** offers a distinct space for foster alums that is also connected with other students. The program is located in the "Center for Scholars" which includes the Abrego Future Scholars (first year students from disadvantaged backgrounds), the Edison Transfer Scholarship Program, and the President's Scholars for high-achieving first year students. The Guardian Scholars space includes a confidential counseling room, a community room in which to study or relax, and a computer lab with free printing. While the students value their separate Guardian Scholars space that allows them to commune with others who share their distinct background as alumnae of the foster care system, the diverse community in the Center for Scholars is helping them to explore and develop their identity as scholars, beyond an identity as "former foster youth." The co-location of different scholar programs has proven extremely beneficial to the Guardian Scholars by connecting them more easily with other ambitious students and helping encourage them to join in community service projects and internships.

i Courtney, M. E., Okpych, N. J., Charles, P., Mikell, D., Stevenson, B., Park, K., Kindle, B., Harty, J., & Feng. H. (2016). Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 19. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

ii Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Brown, A., Cary, C., Love, K., & Vorhies, V. (2011). Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

iii Johnson, Hans, (2014), Making College Possible for Low-Income Students: Grant and Scholarship Aid in California, Public Policy Institute of California.

iv Dworsky, A. and Perez, A., Helping Former Foster Youth Graduate from College: Campus Support Programs in California and Washington State, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 2009.

v Lopez, K. and Duran, B., Transitional Age Foster Youth: Getting Them into and Through College, Central Valley Higher Education Consortium, 2016.

vi California Assembly Bill 214 factsheet, downloaded at http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/AB-214-Weber-College-Student-Hunger-Relief-Act-2017-Factsheet.pdf July 5, 2017.

vii U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 2016

EMBARK
ON A CAREER

PART IV: EMBARK

Completion of a four-year degree, while a major milestone, in fact marks not the end of a foster youth scholar's journey, but rather a new beginning. The policy initiatives described throughout this document serve to prepare foster youth to enter the next stage of their lives, whether that involves pursuing an advanced degree or entering directly into their chosen career path. While no campus-based policy initiatives were identified for this report that specifically speak to supporting the transition into career, many individual programs have developed robust programming to support students as they prepare to exit college and move into the world of work. This is a crucial element of foster youth support programming and additional funding from universities that enables programs to offer career planning services can serve to improve long-term outcomes for these students.

SPOTLIGHT

At **Cal State San Marcos**, once a student has earned about 90 units, the ACE program staff develop a plan either for the job market or graduate school. This includes a checklist list of things that the student needs to do so that they are prepared to enter the job market or meet the necessary deadlines for graduate school. If the student completes all of the items on the checklist they receive $200 to help with that transition. In addition, the Alumni Association gives all ACE Scholar graduates a two-year free membership, which includes access to the career center.

For those former foster youth students interested in pursuing a graduate degree, a model of support exists in the Guardian Professions Program (GPP), operated by UC Davis. Over the past four years, this program has offered support that included educating undergraduates about graduate school; offering supportive services to former foster youth as they apply for graduate degrees; coaching applicants through the complex application process; providing small scholarships to cover application expenses; and providing supportive services during the time a student is enrolled as an advanced degree student. The program began by supporting students wishing to apply to one of UC Davis' 90 graduate programs and eventually expanded to support students from across the state, although the scope of the program moving forward may be shifting due to funding limitations. Over its four years in existence, 73 students were accepted into graduate school with the help of the GPP and 21 graduated and moved on to their careers.

CONCLUSION

The information provided by the CSU and UC campuses that participated in the survey enhances our understanding of the current state of support for foster youth at public four-year universities in California and points to a range of institutional level practices that can be put in place to better help foster youth succeed. The number of colleges now providing support for foster youth is impressive and the institutional commitment of funds to support these programs points toward real dedication to improving outcomes for this highly vulnerable population of students. Programs do continue to struggle, however, meeting students' housing requirements and ensuring that consistent funding is available to adequately staff programs and provide direct support to students for pressing needs.

In addition, while each campus has some of the recommended policies in place, no campus reported having all of these practices operationalized on their campus. As such, there is room for each institution to adopt new policies that better support foster youth. It is the hope of the authors that the spotlighted policies will enable programs to look to each other for ideas for new approaches.

While the total number of foster youth students is small relative to the entire student body, the State of California has a unique relationship to foster youth because the child welfare system made the determination to remove these children from the care and custody of their parents and assume full legal responsibility for them. Given this unique relationship, the exceptional disadvantages that foster youth face, and the fact that the small numbers make providing special accommodations eminently feasible, continuing to grow and improve support for foster youth to reach their educational goals is a path on which the four-year universities that comprise both the CSU and UC systems should continue to travel.
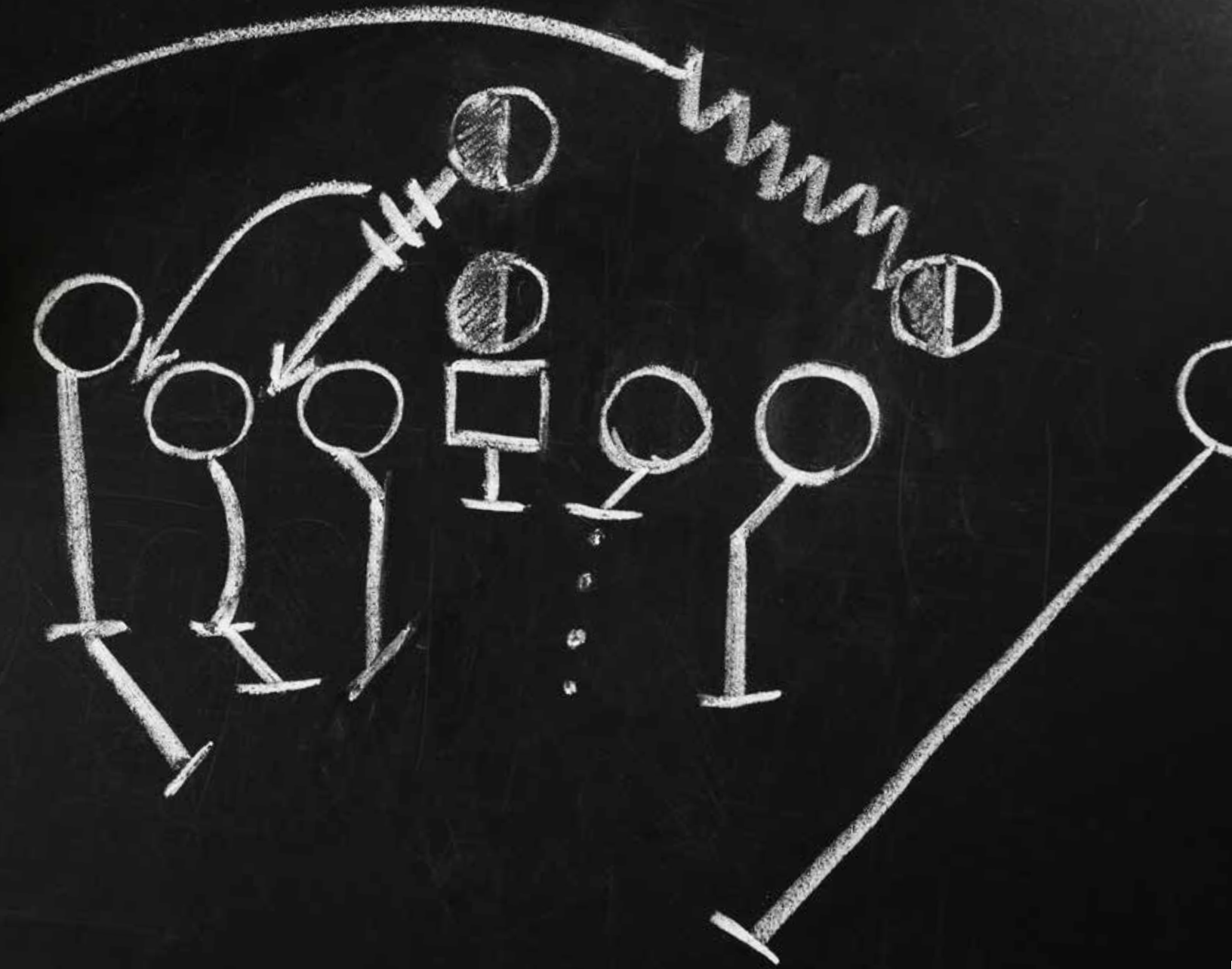
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