

California **Foster** Workforce Development

By David Ambroz

Introduction



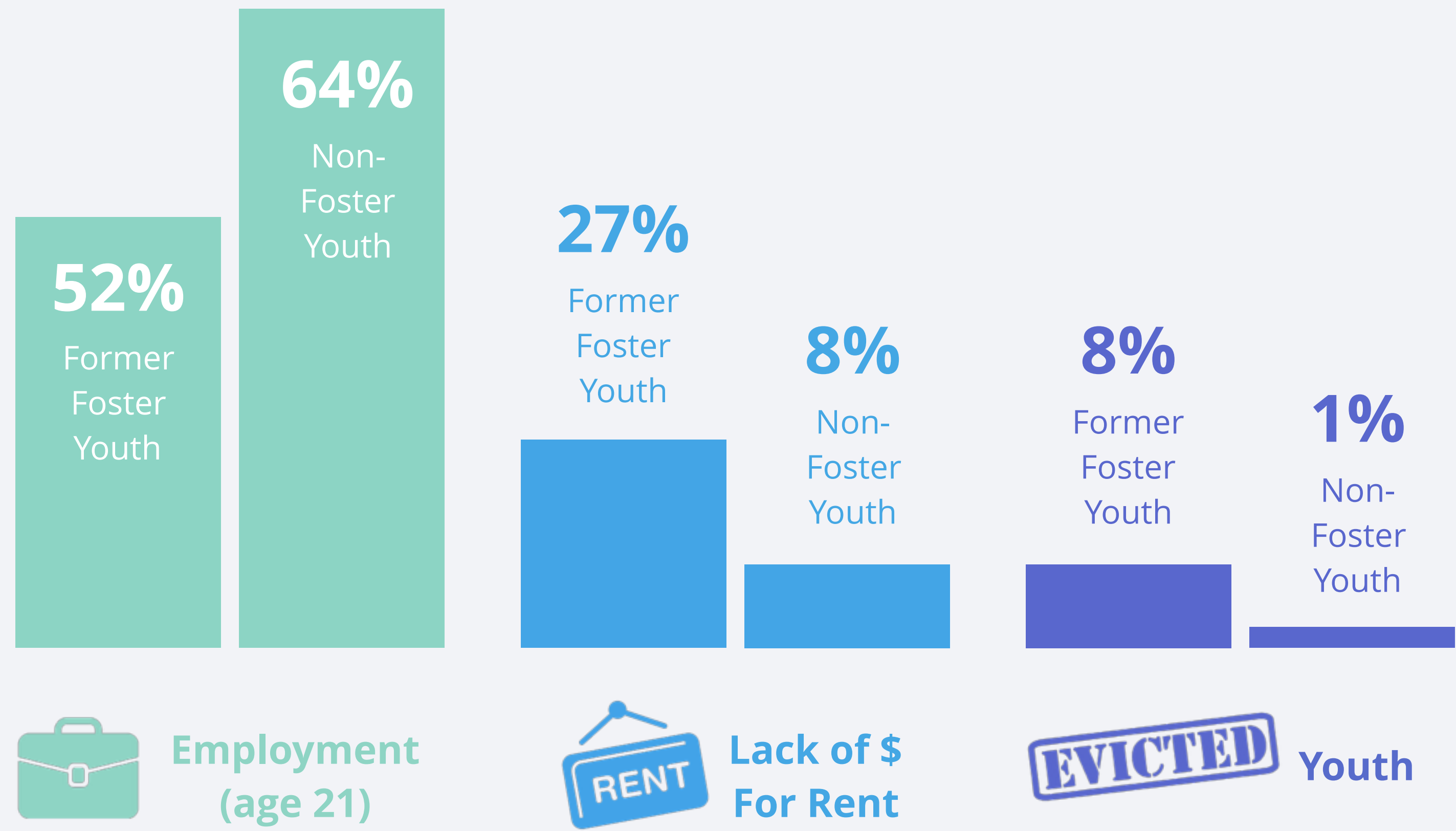
Aging youth out of foster care are **underemployed** or **unemployed**.

In most states, when foster youth turn 18, they are no longer covered by the system. These adolescents typically do not fare well when compared with other teens living with their families. The result being these children are more likely forced to live by themselves without support, stop their education, be homeless, go on welfare or get arrested.

The cost of doing nothing will have consequences on taxpayers and our foster youths outcome. With employment our aging foster youth will likely avoid the social ills listed and overcome adversity.

The Facts

Chapin Hall Center for Children Study



Youth aging out of care are vulnerable to poor economic outcomes

Data indicates that there is an absence of effort to address the career and employment issues that face youth in care. Proactive career development, employment opportunities and extending foster care services beyond 18 are fundamental in establishing a successful future for youth in care.

*CWC Draft Policy Paper “Government Policy on Employment of Former Foster Youth”

Employment Challenges

Finding Connections & Prioritizing



Connections & Prioritizing Employment is Key for Workforce Development

Most often adolescents find their first job through family or community **connections**

because they have been removed from their families, communities and schools and placed into the care of the state and county government.

Also, due to court orders and other system requirements a youth in foster care may have to seek court permission to apply for jobs or engage in career exploration programs, delaying their entrance in the workforce.

Historical Improvements

2001

The **Foster Youth Employment Training and Housing Task Force** developed a framework for collaboration with local workforce development and foster care systems.

2004

The **Walter S. Johnson Foundation** funded several California counties to implement the **Gateway Project College and Career Pathway Program**

2006

The County of Santa Clara was honored with a top award from the California State Association of Counties for its Emancipated Foster Youth (EFY) Employment Program from among 260 entries throughout California.

2007

As part of the Governor's Career Technical Education Initiative, the California Community Colleges utilized the experiences and lessons learned under the Walter S. Johnson Gateway Project to develop and launch Career Advancement Academies (CAAs) in three regions throughout the State.

Several California counties have recognized the importance of continuing to support the foster youth formerly in their care by prioritizing employment opportunities for these young people

Success Story

Santa Clara Case Study

The Importance of Continuing Support

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors under the leadership of then *Director of Family and Children's Services*, **Will Lightbourne**, established a policy that former foster youth would be given an opportunity to **secure employment with the county**. The policy creates a special application process for benefitted, entry level positions with the county.

Goal:

Hiring managers are encouraged by the child welfare and human resources departments to request candidates from this pool for interviews, and applicants are given three days to respond to invitations to schedule and interview. Those hired enter as unclassified and receive full health benefits. After three months of successful employment the youth can come permanent.



EMPLOYMENT
COUNSELOR



PRIORITY
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

Success Story

Santa Clara Case Study

Outcome

The modest program have been well received. Many former foster youth are working for Santa Clara County in various positions as the county is a major employer, having a positive impact on youth aging out. Over time, the program has been expanded to include twenty-two entry-level classifications, representing more than one thousand entry-level positions across the county.

The Santa Clara employment program should be expanded to all governmental bodies including cities, counties and the state.



*CWC Draft Policy Paper “Government Policy on Employment of Former Foster Youth”

Strategies

California should replicate Santa Clara County

California should **increase access to workforce development and employment opportunities for foster youth** transitioning from the foster care system by replicating statewide the Santa Clara County Emancipated Foster Youth Program that provides public sector, entry-level job opportunities to untrained, economically-disadvantaged youth transitioning out of the foster care system.



Strategies

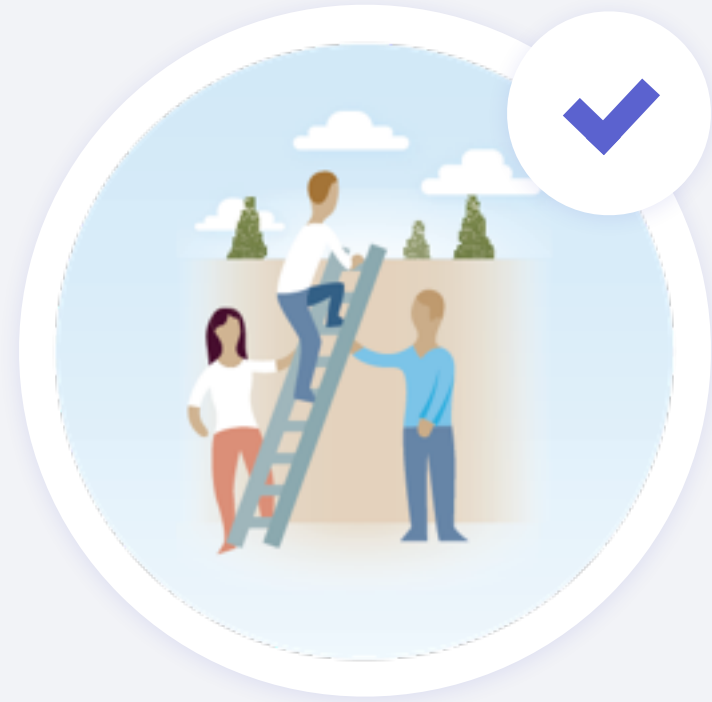
Los Angeles County should replicate Santa Clara County

If possible all counties and cities should be approached, but in particular, Los Angeles. Allowing us to target locally.

Los Angeles County

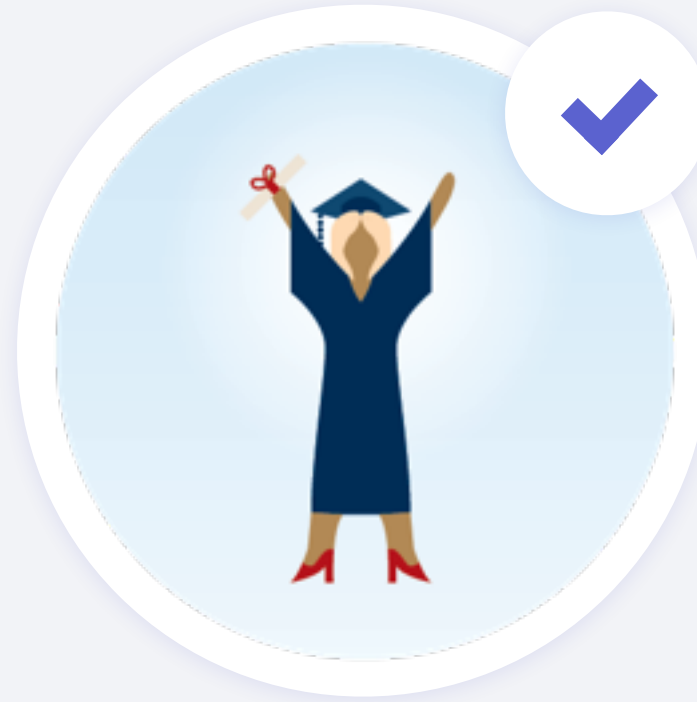
A stylized map of California is shown in the background. The state is filled with a solid blue color. The Los Angeles County area, located in the southern part of the state, is highlighted with a solid purple color. The text 'Los Angeles County' is placed to the right of the purple area.

Benefits



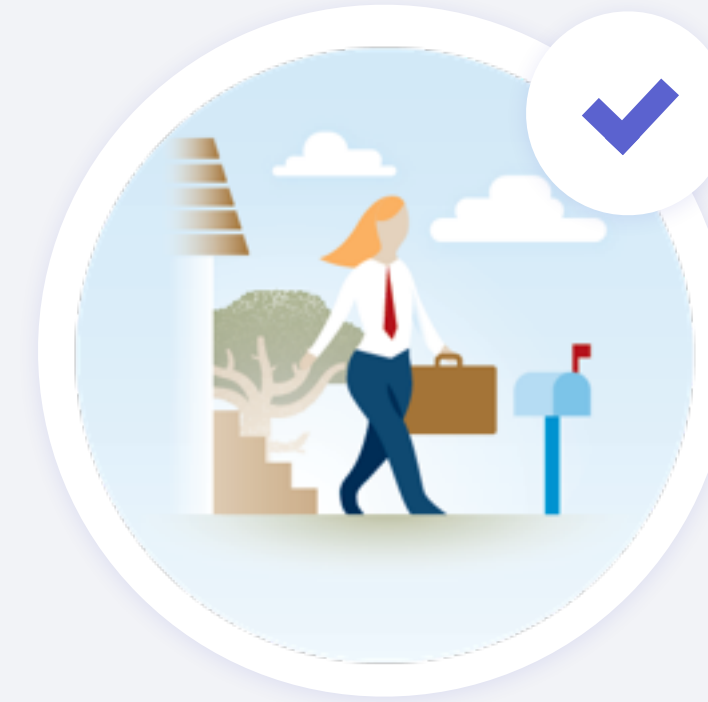
More ...

... young people connected to caring families, caring adults, and support networks



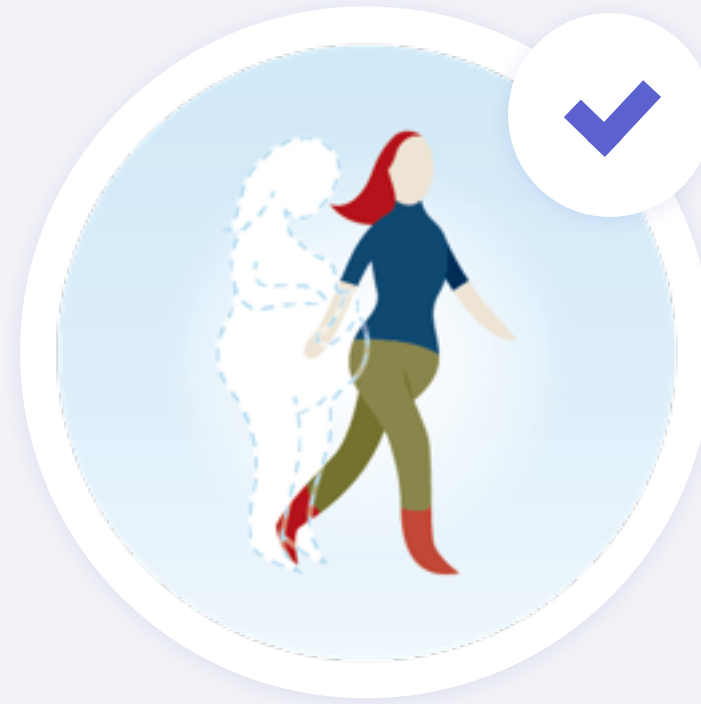
More ...

... young people completing high school, vocational training, and college.



More ...

... people employed.



Fewer ...

... unplanned pregnancies



Lower...

... healthcare costs.

What We Are Asking Today:

Will you join our working group to make
priority employment a goal for local
governments across the state?

Questions?

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