



Chafee Strengthening Outcomes for Transition to Adulthood

Building Evidence to Support Youth Success

The [Chafee Strengthening Outcomes for Transition to Adulthood \(Chafee SOTA\)](#) project is exploring innovative ways to evaluate programs that serve youth transitioning out of foster care. Four sites have been selected to participate in the Chafee SOTA evaluation, supported by the [Administration for Children and Families \(ACF\)](#). These four programs will partner with the Chafee SOTA evaluation team, led by [Westat](#), to carry out evaluation activities using innovative learning methods tailored to each program's service model. Chafee SOTA aims to develop a set of innovative learning methods to improve the implementation of promising practices and programs while strengthening the evidence of how well they work to support successful outcomes for youth transitioning out of foster care.



Great Expectations

Great Expectations (GE) is a [college coaching program for youth who are or were formerly in foster care and currently attending community college in Virginia](#). The program, operated by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), was founded in 2008 with the mission to promote educational attainment, employment, and self-sufficiency in young people.

1,060 Young people currently involved with GE

23 Community colleges

40 Community college campuses

What supports does GE provide?

Campus Coach Support Services

- Outreach to eligible students
- One on one mentoring by GE coaches
- Course selection and application support
- Life skills training

College Workforce & Education Services

- Career and education planning
- Job search/job placement support

Support with Concrete Needs

- Emergency financial support
- Access to health and mental healthcare providers
- Access to material needs (housing, food, etc.)

What outcomes does GE aim to achieve?



Increased community college enrollment and retention



Improved GPA



Increased degree completion or certificate attainment



Increased employment and employment retention



Increased life functioning skills (housing stability, food security, etc.)



Evaluation research questions

- 1 How effective is GE in improving college retention and performance (GPA, degree or certificate completion) and employment?
- 2 What are the essential activities and components of the GE program? To what extent and how well are they being implemented?
- 3 What are student experiences with GE, and how can they help to inform program improvements?

How will GE be evaluated?

Interrupted Time Series (ITS)

Uses longitudinal data to estimate the impact of an intervention at the program level.

GE was rolled out incrementally over a 15-year period to all 23 VCCS schools. Using ITS, for each year since 2008, schools that were implementing GE are the intervention group and those that were not yet implementing GE are the control group.

Synthetic Control Method (SCM)

Based on comparing pre/post-change between the intervention site (VCCS) and a combination of control sites (the synthetic control), weighted to resemble Virginia during the pre-GE baseline period.

The synthetic control sites will consist of community college systems from other states that do not have a program similar to GE.

Qualitative Evaluation

Surveys from GE coaches will provide information on program implementation and activities. Focus groups of GE students will provide insight into students' experiences in GE and community college in general.

Youth voice

The Chafee SOTA project was developed with a focus on the meaningful involvement of young adult partners with foster care experience. Youth voice on the project is led by the Young Adult Advisor (YAA) team. The YAAs are a team of individuals with varying experiences within the foster care system. The YAAs work closely with the study team to advise and consult on all aspects of the project. In particular, the YAAs lead youth engagement at each of the four study sites to incorporate the views of youth with foster care experience.