



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.



Just in Time

Located in San Diego, CA, Just in Time for Foster Youth (JIT) is a non-profit community serving young adults ages 18-26 who have experienced the challenges of the foster care system. JIT offers both a caring community of support and critical resources to meet young adults' basic emergency needs, as well as services such as financial literacy, career readiness skills, health and well-being exploration, and more. These resources are supported by a caring community of volunteer coaches who provide authentic connection and support in these young people's lives. JIT aims to break the cycle of foster care by helping youth with foster care experience achieve self-sufficiency, well-being, and life satisfaction in eight key life components: housing, transportation, education, employment, finances, relationships, healthy practices, and personal power.

3,500 Young adults are connected with the JIT community

730 Volunteers engage with JIT each year

40 JIT staff, over half of whom have foster care experience

What supports does JIT provide?

Services | Cohort-based services provide a series of topical workshops intended to build young adults' capacity in a specific life area, such as financial knowledge or professional development skills. Individualized services and resources provide support to young adults based on specific needs in their lives, such as emergency assistance and household furniture and supplies.

Coaching | Young adults are matched with a volunteer coach with experience in the topic area of the service. The coach participates in the service alongside the young adults and meets with them separately to provide additional support and mentoring.

Community | Young adults build personal relationships through volunteer-based coaching, as well as JIT services and events.

What outcomes does JIT aim to achieve?



Increased housing stability



Increased employment aligned with personal interests



Increased educational attainment aligned with personal goals



Increased access to reliable transportation



Increased financial management skills



Increased key drivers of change (confidence, capability, consciousness, and connectedness)



Evaluation research questions

- 1 What is the self-sufficiency and well-being of youth five years after entry into the JIT community?
- 2 How does level of engagement in JIT relate to self-sufficiency and well-being?
- 3 How does the self-sufficiency and well-being of youth five years after entry into the JIT community compare with youth just entering JIT?
- 4 How does self-sufficiency and well-being relate to progress on key life components, including basic needs, pursuit of knowledge, empowerment, and community?

How will JIT be evaluated?

Formative Process Evaluation

The evaluation is developing new scales to measure individual growth areas that are important to understand the impact of JIT's interventions. This involves conducting cognitive interviews and validating new and modified scales to measure confidence, capability, connectedness, and consciousness as well as aspects of self-sufficiency, well-being, and life satisfaction.

Outcome Study

The central component of the evaluation is the administration of a survey and in-depth interviews with a cohort of young adults who initially connected with JIT five years ago. The outcome study will focus on understanding the growth young adults have experienced along key internal growth dimensions, their status on key life components, and the supports they received from JIT along the way.

Analysis of Administrative Data

Using state-level administrative data, long-term outcomes for participants in JIT are compared to those of comparable groups of young adults with foster care experience who did not use JIT. Propensity score analysis is being used to strengthen the equivalence of the intervention and comparison groups where outcome differences may be influenced by differences between the two groups.

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.