

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY'S MORRISON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY FOUND ARIZONA FRIENDS OF FOSTER CHILDREN FOUNDATION'S KEYS TO SUCCESS PROGRAM EXCEEDED PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES IN ASSISTING ARIZONA FOSTER YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE.

(PHOENIX, AZ) — The Morrison Institute's Impact Study was conducted over the summer of 2023 and found evidence of meaningful impacts of the Keys to Success program on youth transitioning out of the foster care system in Arizona.

Every year, approximately 1,000 youth age out of the foster care system in Arizona. When foster youth turn 18 years old many of them will end up homeless, incarcerated, underemployed or undereducated. Ten years ago, AFFCF designed a program that was intended to change the story of a child that aged out of foster care in Arizona. The Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University engaged in an evaluation of the Keys to Success Program to determine its impact in Arizona.

Key finding from the impact study based on program goals:

- 88% of youth secured employment within 1 year [target = 80%]
- 86% of youth retained employment for 30+ days within 1 year [target = 75%]
- 86% of youth gained a skill or aptitude within 6 months of enrollment [target = 70%]
- 80% of youth enrolled in post-secondary education or vocational training, or established an industry-specific career pathway within 6 months of enrollment [target = 65%]
- 76% of youth increased their Self Sufficiency Matrix score by 3+ points within 1 year [target = 65%]

"As somebody that aged-out of the system, I am very well aware of what happens when we don't support our kids, beyond the data and the anecdotes. We can't change the circumstances that brought these kids into foster care, but we can change the way we support them to ensure they achieve their potential and change their story and the story of their own kids." stated Luis De La Cruz, CEO and President of AFFCF.

Impact evaluation cited that participants commonly noted the valuable relationship established with their caseworker/specialist who served as a trusted adult they could rely on. Each Keys to Success participant is provided with an education/career specialist dedicated to supporting them every step of the way. This unique relationship provides Keys to Success participants the confidence and support they need to succeed.

Survey participants shared that Keys to Success helped them with the following:

- 90% - setting goals
- 89% - planning for their future
- 88% - money management
- 87% - telling others what I need to achieve my goals
- 86% - making decisions

AFFCF is proud to serve foster youth in the Keys to Success program. Participants are eligible to enroll in Keys to Success if they reside in Maricopa, Pima or Yavapai County. If adopted or placed in legal guardianship after age 15, or has unified with biological family after age 14. Participants must demonstrate a commitment to engage in the career developer services and sign the youth participation contract that outlines expected commitments, responsibilities and behaviors.

“Keys to Success helped me see that my future can be great. Before I didn’t think I was going to graduate high school. Now I’m planning for a career in the medical field.” stated Victoria, Keys to Success Participant.

Keys to Success Impact Evaluation Executive Summary available upon request.

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Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF) provides foster care support by closing critical funding and service gaps. AFFCF has over 40 years of experience ensuring Arizona's foster care population can participate in the same activities as their non-foster care peers, achieve self-sufficiency through employment, education, and housing programs and pursue post-secondary success. AFFCF is dedicated to changing the story of foster care in Arizona and qualifies for the Arizona Foster Care Tax Credit. Visit affcf.org for more information.