

# E MAKUA ANA YOUTH CIRCLES

## FACT SHEET

The *E Makua Ana Youth Circle* model grew out of San Jose California's *Emancipation Conference* program, which is based on Family Group Decision-Making/Conferencing. E Makua Ana means *becoming an adult* in Hawaiian. The Circles are for youth, 16 and older, who will be leaving state custody. The Circle's purpose is to celebrate the teenager's emancipation and bring together the teenager's supporters and service providers who can help the teen develop a plan for their future independence. The Circles are solution-focused and youth driven.

### Why do E Makua Ana Youth Circles?

- To reduce homelessness among emancipated youth
- To connect youth to their circle of support, which may include the families from whom they were removed
- To give youth the opportunity to gain more information about further education, training, financial assistance, housing options and other social service providers
- To encourage youth to dream big while giving them the tools and support to achieve their dreams

### Goals of E Makua Ana Youth Circles:

- To celebrate the youth's emancipation
- To increase the youth's ability to be self determined and self-sufficient
- To prepare youth to focus on his/her own successful transition to independence
- To develop/foster communication between the youth and their circle of support
- To create individually tailored, outcome driven plans for the future

### Youth Circles are Youth Driven, which means:

- Youth decides if they want to participate
- Youth decides who attends
- Youth decides how the Circle opens
- Youth decides what are their goals
- Youth decides what is eaten at the Circle
- Youth decides what is their plan

### Who is Eligible?

- A youth 16 to 18 years old in foster care
- A youth receiving the DHS higher education payment (18 through 21)
- Victoria S. & Bradley L. Geist Foundation Grant: For former foster youth and foster youth who emancipated from state custody ages 16-24, excluding youth exiting correctional and drug treatment facilities

## What is the E Makua Ana Youth Circle Process?

The Youth Circle is a respectful three-phase process that guides the youth and invited participants to develop specific plans for the teen's future. Pre-Circle contacts occur with Circle facilitator and the youth who decides who to invite to the Circle, what food will be served and how to open the process.

1.     Information Gathering  
      Opening & Introductions (Developing Support)  
      Identifying Youth's Strengths (Developing Support)  
      Youth's Goals (Youth Voice)  
      Identifying Youth's Needs:
  - ♥ Brainstorming Resources/Options Related to Housing, Education, Financial Aid, Employment, Documents, Transportation, Physical & Emotional Well-being, Circle of Support and any other areas important to future planning for the youth (Knowledge is Power)
2.     Youth Alone Time  
      Circle participants take a break while the youth spends time reviewing the resources and selecting a plan. The youth has the option of selecting someone to be present during this process. (Youth Voice)
3.     Presentation of the Plan  
      Participants are invited back into the room. The youth presents his or her plan. Participants help the youth strengthen the plan, if needed. Timelines and task assignments are added. A follow-up Circle date is set and complementing the youth on new information learned or reaffirmed during process closes Circle (Youth Empowerment through Voice, Tools, and Support)

## What happens after the E Makua Ana Youth Circle?

- The facilitator makes copies of the Circle Summary which is mailed to all participants
- The follow-up Circle reviews the plan made at the first Circle and includes:
  - Identifying the successes – what's working?
  - Are there new challenges/needs?
  - What's been completed?
  - Are there any additional tasks to add?