

Examples from the Field: What One City is Doing

Indianapolis Launches Anti-Homelessness Initiative for Foster Youth: August saw Indianapolis, Ind., Mayor Bart Peterson and partners overseeing the kickoff of Fostering Independence (FI), a new initiative to provide direction and hope to dozens of local youth aging out of the foster care system and on the brink of homelessness. FI is a collaborative effort led by the City of Indianapolis, West Indianapolis Development Corporation and Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center that will provide transitional housing and support services for former foster children released from the state's care at the age of 18. FI is also a key plank in the mayor's *Blueprint to End Homelessness*. The Blueprint cited a need for housing, supportive services and other initiatives to target at-risk populations, including youth leaving the foster care system. For more information about the new initiative please visit:

<http://www.indygov.org/eGov/Mayor/PR/2005/8/20050817b.htm>, and for more information on the Blueprint see <http://www.chipindy.org/ReaderFormatAll.pdf>.

Situation of Latino Foster Youth Draws Congressional Attention

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's recent Public Policy Conference, included a recent half-day Capitol Hill forum entitled, "Latino Children in Foster Care: How to Create a Promising Future," and led by U.S. Representative Dennis Cardoza (D-CA). A panel of distinguished leaders from the private and public sectors discussed strategies to improve the lives of Latino children and youth in the foster care system. Notably, of the 500,000 children and youth in the foster care system nationwide, 91,000 are Latino. Currently, reported Ruth Massinga, president and CEO of Casey Family Programs, Latino children are three times more likely to be placed in foster care than whites. Recommendations offered by panelists included:

- ⇒ Eliminate barriers at all levels of government to assessment of each foster youth's mental health conditions and treatment;
- ⇒ Provide youth who are leaving care with a variety of opportunities to learn independent living skills, as well as resources; and
- ⇒ Include new provisions in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that target better academic and economic outcomes for former foster youth.

Ms. Massinga's remarks at the forum may be found at

www.casey.org/Resources/InterviewsAndSpeeches/HispanicCaucus2005.htm.

National League of Cities, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families



For more information about the

Municipal Network on Disconnected Youth, please contact:

Jessica Sandoval at 202/626-3035, sandoval@nlc.org

or Senior Consultant Andrew Moore at 215/848-6910, moore@nlc.org

