AFTER 18 your FUTURE your CHOICE

Eighteen means new choices. We'll be by your side.

What we believe –

EVERY YOUNG ADULT IS FULLY VALUED

Our Goals

An important new law gives foster youth the option to remain in foster care and receive services and supports until age 20, providing exciting new opportunities to support young adults as they forge their ways into the world. As of January 1, 2012, many of these young adults will have the option to continue to receive services and supports – thanks to landmark legislation called the California Fostering Connections to Success Act (also known as AB 12).

Our goals for implementing this new law:

- Ensure young adults leave foster care with the social, emotional and practical skills to achieve their potential and succeed in life.
- Create a system where young adults' individual and collective needs are respected and VALUED.

Our Values

In implementing this new law, we embrace six core values. These values reinforce and reflect what will be possible for young adults because of the new law. As a community, we affirm that every one of these young adults is completely and fully VALUED.

Voices of Young Adults:

- **The voices of young adults truly matter.** It's about listening to and really hearing what's important to them – and then helping them to act on that. Every aspect of these young lives counts, including educational goals, meaningful work experiences, and permanent, loving and dependable adult relationships.

Assistance & Partnering:

- **Young adults often need active assistance – and real partnerships – to reinforce and support learning as they transition into adulthood.** This is an opportunity to support young adults in taking charge of their lives and futures – working with them on relationships, problem solving, personal responsibility and skill building to ensure they will thrive. We may need to transform the ways in which we work, emphasizing supports rather than supervision, to ensure that everyone is truly working together to provide needed guidance and assistance through youth focused and youth centered programs.

Love & Belonging:

- **Everyone needs someone.** We all need someone who loves us unconditionally and on whom we can depend. Family and loved ones provide a foundation and help enable young adults to realize their potential. Our job is to ensure that **every** young adult has a family or caring and committed relationships with adults who can support and guide him or her in life.

Unique Needs:

- **Every young adult is unique.** Some may require intensive levels of support and assistance, while others may need more guidance and skill building to achieve their goals. Providing individualized attention helps to ensure successful transitions.

Eligibility is Maintained:

- **Young adults should have access to every available service.** Our community is committed to supporting programs and policies that cover all eligible young adults – and helping them to secure all needed, allowed and available services and supports.

Development is Supported:

- **Challenges, pitfalls and experimentation are part of the process of becoming an adult.** The ways in which we relate to these young adults must balance the need to protect and guide them with their rights and responsibilities as legal adults. Young adults need to explore their own abilities and be accountable for their mistakes. They must be allowed to experience logical consequences knowing that if they stumble – no matter the cause – they can find help, support and guidance from accepting adults.

CDSS
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

To learn more visit www.after18ca.org

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