



# Aging Out OF FOSTER CARE IN AMERICA

In many states, when kids in foster care turn 18, they are no longer part of the foster care system, and many find themselves living alone, without the support, resources, and guidance of a stable family or other caring adults in their lives. As a result, they are more likely than their peers to drop out of school, become parents before they are ready, experience homelessness, or end up in jail – costly consequences<sup>1</sup> that affect all Americans.

**HERE'S A LOOK AT THE SITUATION, AND THE SOLUTION:**

1. "Cost Avoidance: Bolstering the Economic Case for Investing in Youth Aging Out of Foster Care," Cutler Consulting, 2009. "Foster Care to 21: Doing it Right," Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2011.

# THE PROJECTED **COSTS OF DOING NOTHING**

ON AVERAGE, FOR EVERY YOUNG PERSON WHO AGES OUT, TAXPAYERS AND COMMUNITIES PAY \$300,000 IN SOCIAL COSTS OVER THAT PERSON'S LIFETIME.

Social costs equal taxpayer-funded costs such as **public assistance** and **incarceration**, as well as costs **absorbed by the community**, such as wages lost as a result of dropping out of high school.



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$$\begin{array}{rcccl} 26,000 & + & \$300,000 & = & \$7.8 \text{ billion}^2 \\ \text{YOUNG PEOPLE AGING OUT} & & \text{PER PERSON} & & \text{IN TOTAL COSTS} \end{array}$$

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2. "Cost Avoidance: The Business Case for Investing in Youth Aging Out of Care," Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, 2013.

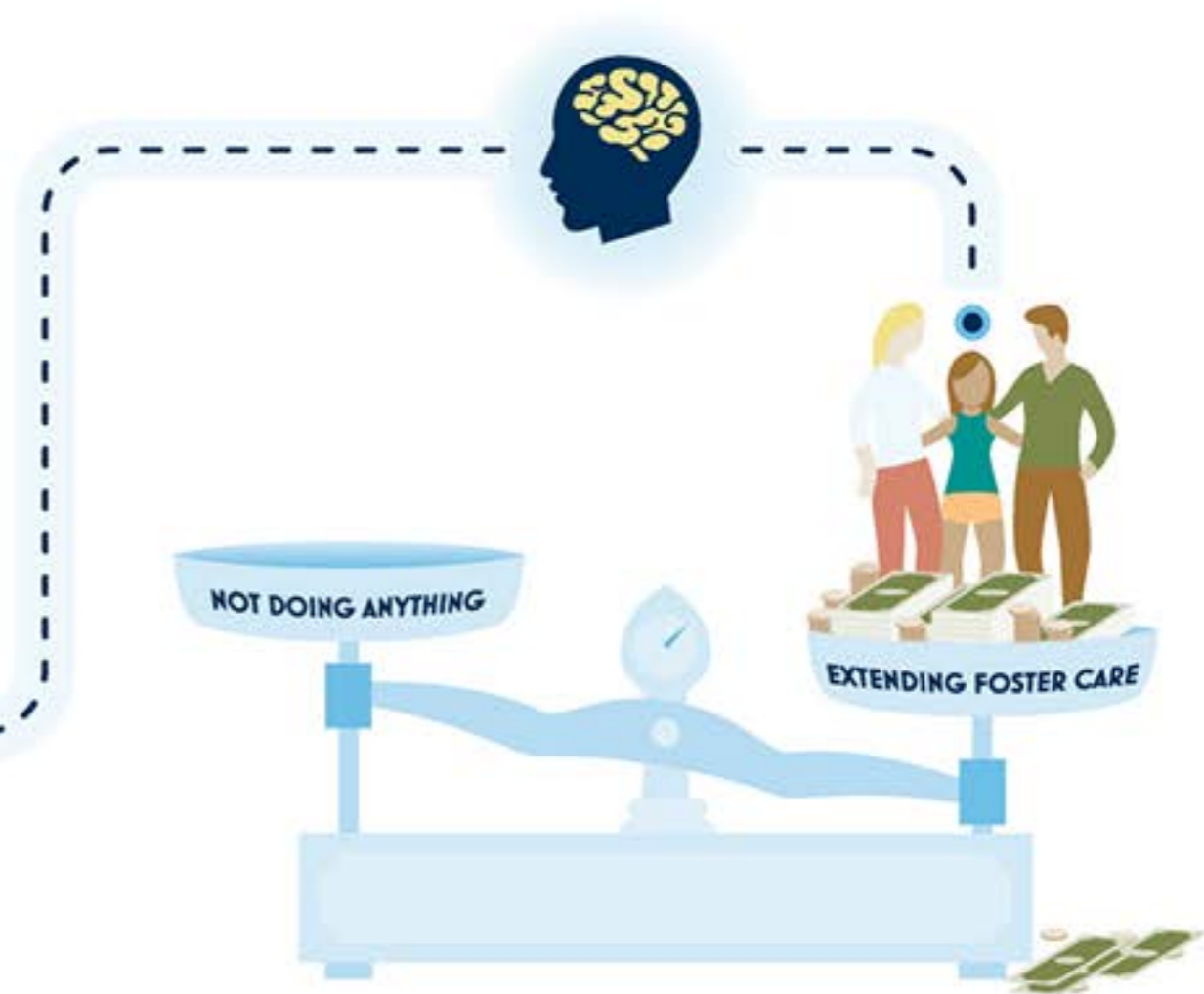
# A SOLVABLE PROBLEM

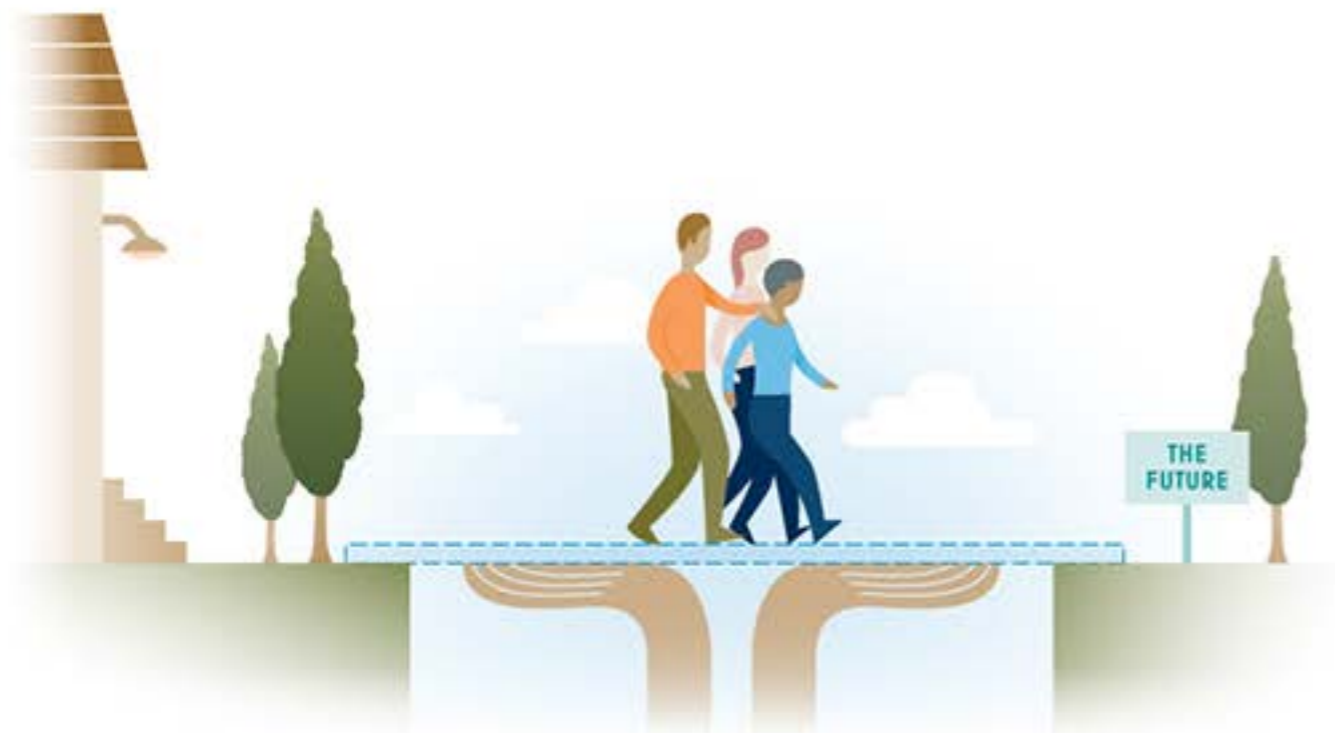
Despite these realities, there are reasons for optimism. Through a law passed in 2008<sup>3</sup>, the federal government offers a financial incentive to states that choose to extend foster care services for young people beyond age 18.

3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008* (P.L. 110-351)

## 🔍 ADOLESCENT BRAINS

WHAT'S MORE, THE LATEST RESEARCH ON THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN PROVES THAT THE TEEN BRAIN IS STILL DEVELOPING, PROVIDING A 'SECOND CHANCE' FOR KIDS TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY.





## THE FIRST SIGNS **OF IMPROVEMENT**

A number of states across the U.S. have sought or received approval to extend foster care beyond age 18. Extending foster care services is a key first step, but it's not enough. By extending foster care and doing it right, we'll ensure that more young people have opportunities to succeed.

# THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF DOING IT RIGHT

By extending care, *and* enacting reforms to the foster care system, we will all see the benefits, and sooner than we think- through:



## MORE...

...young people connected to caring families, caring adults, and support networks



## MORE...

...young people completing high school, vocational training, and college



## MORE...

...people employed



## FEWER...

...unplanned pregnancies



## LOWER...

...healthcare costs

# A FORMULA FOR **SUCCESS BEYOND 18**

When it comes to extending foster care, it's **quality – not quantity – that matters**. A national effort is underway to improve the lives of those aging out of foster care. The Success Beyond 18 campaign calls on states to do it right by:



Helping young people **achieve permanent and lasting relationships** by the time they age out of foster care.



Supporting young people in developing **relationships and networks that support their healthy development**.



Giving kids in foster care **the opportunity and responsibility to plan and direct their own futures**.

SUCCESS BEYOND 18 IS A CAMPAIGN OF THE JIM CASEY YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE, DESIGNED TO CREATE A BETTER PATH FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER CARE TO ADULTHOOD.

GET INVOLVED AND LEARN MORE AT:  
**[www.jimcaseyyouth.org](http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org)**

