# EPIC 'OHANA, INC.

EPIC `Ohana, Inc. is a non-profit organization.
EPIC is not a part of Child Welfare
Services (CWS). Our job is to organize
and facilitate `Ohana Conferences,
Youth Circles, `Ohana Finding and
`Ohana Connections. EPIC helps families
and CWS talk, plan, and make decisions.

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O'AHU

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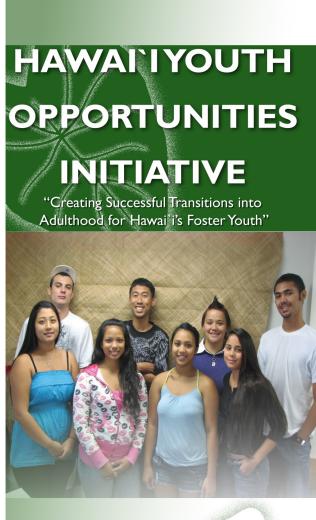
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# Mission Statement

Families are the foundation of our community, and their well-being is inextricably linked to the health and prosperity of the community, state, and nation. EPIC transforms the culture of child welfare practice through a respectful, collaborative, solution-oriented process that protects children, strengthens families, and enhances the health of the community.

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## HAWAI'I YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

### **HISTORY**

In 2001, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Casey Family Programs collaborated in founding the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. The Initiative began with a vision that every young person aging out of foster care should have access to the opportunities and supports needed for a successful transition to adulthood.

#### **MISSION**

To bring together the people, systems and resources necessary to assist youth leaving foster care make successful transitions to adulthood.

#### **OUTCOME AREAS**

The Initiative measures success by improved outcomes in six areas: permanence, education, employment, housing, physical and mental health, and personal and community engagement.

#### **CORE STRATEGIES**

The five core strategies of the Initiative's Theory of Change are: 1) youth engagement, 2) partnerships and resources, 3)research, evaluation and communication, 4) public will and policy and 5) increased opportunities: Opportunity Passport™, Door Openers

### WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY PASSPORT™?

The Opportunity Passport<sup>™</sup> helps young people make a successful transition to adulthood through organizing resources and creating opportunities-financial, educational, employment, health care, and entrepreneurial opportunities for alumni of and youth still in foster care.

# WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME AN OPPORTUNITY PASSPORT™ PARTICIPANT?

The Opportunity Passport  $^{\text{TM}}$  is for individuals who at the time of enrollment:

- I. are between 14 and up to their 24th birthday;
- 2. were in the public child welfare foster care system at the age of 14 or older;
- 3. agree to all participation requirements and sign the participant agreement.

# WHAT DOES THE OPPORTUNITY PASSPORT™ INCLUDE?

- I. Financial Literacy Training-youth will participate in a series of classes aimed at developing financial competency in the areas of basic money management, banking and saving for asset purchases.
- 2. A personal bank account: for short-term expenses and instant access to cash
- 3. A matched savings account: an Individual Development Account (IDA) is designed to help an individual establish a pattern of regular savings and accumulate assets. Deposits will be matched up to a \$1000 per enrollment year, to be used for approved purchases (car, computer, rent deposit, business start-up, etc.).

### WHAT ARE DOOR OPENERS?

- -Door Openers are opportunities to accumulate experiential and tangible assets as well as other benefits that go beyond saving and making asset purchases. A Door Opener expedites access to educational, employment and personal opportunities.
- -Door openers are created on behalf of and available to Opportunity Passport™ participants and other similarly situated young people in or exited from foster care as identified by the Youth Leadership Board.
- -Door openers are developed jointly by the Youth Leadership Board and the Community Partnership Hui.
- -Door openers create connections with the community: employers, businesses, health care providers, educational institutions, faith-based and community-based organizations, and service providers.

# WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP HUI?

The Community Partnership Hui:

- 1. Brings together key local decision-makers in the areas of child welfare, both public and private.
- 2. Takes responsibility for developing, implementing, assessing and improving strategies to ensure that youth transitioning from foster care successfully transition to adulthood.
- 3. Ensures the achievement of improved outcomes for young people in transition and to assure that adequate resources are available to achieve those outcomes by creating Door Openers.

## WHAT IS THE HI H.O.P.E.S.YOUTH LEADER-SHIP BOARD?

The Youth Leadership Board in Hawai`i named themselves 'HI H.O.P.E.S.'. This stands for 'Hawai`i Helping Our People Envision Success'.

### The HI H.O.P.E.S. Board:

- 1. Ensures that the youth and young adult voice is included in all aspects of planning, implementation and evaluation of the initiative.
- 2. Ensures that it has time and focus exclusively dedicated to the business of creating opportunities, and tracking and overseeing implementation of other aspects of the initiative.
- 3. The YLB is provided with funds to create or enhance existing opportunities for young people in or who have been in foster care.
- 4. Enjoys opportunities for personal growth, development of leadership & advocacy skills.
- 5. Board members will receive stipends for their involvement in YLB meetings, trainings and other activities/events. EPIC will deposit ½ of the stipend into their personal savings account and ½ into their IDA savings account.

## Eligibility for HI H.O.P.E.S. Board membership:

- 1. Were in child welfare foster care system at age of 14 or older and currently between the ages of 14 and up to 24th birthday,
- 2. Are or in the process of becoming Opportunity Passport  $^{\mathsf{TM}}$  participants,
- 3. Are committed, involved and agree to attend, participate and abide by operating procedures established by the Youth Leadership Board.

If you are a young person or know of a young person who meets the eligibility requirements and are interested in becoming an Opportunity Passport  $^{\text{TM}}$  participant, please contact:

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