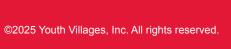
## Improving Child Welfare Systems

**SECRETARIES' INNOVATION GROUP** 

**DECEMBER 4, 2025** 



The force for families





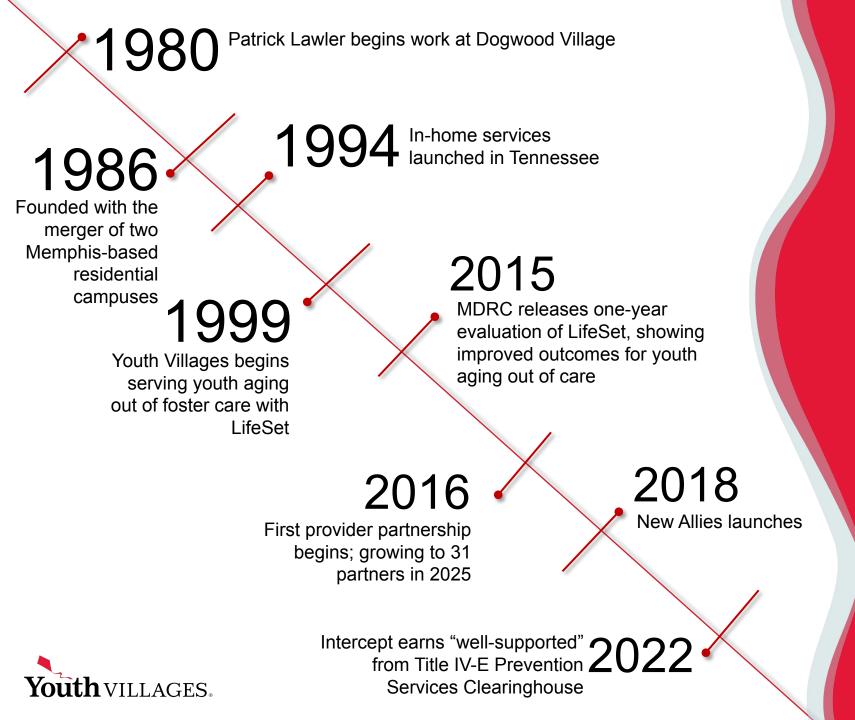
## Welcome

About Youth Villages

The current landscape

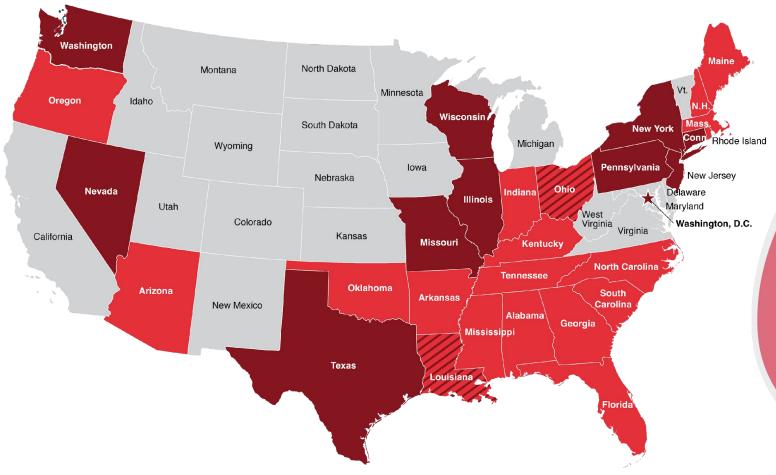
- Three actionable steps to improve systems
- **Q+A**





## Significant Moments in our History

## **Youth Villages National Footprint**



- Youth Villages staff deliver services
- Youth Villages' services delivered through partner agencies

Louisiana and Ohio serve children and families through both partnerships and direct services.

- 5,000 staff nationwide; 123 locations in
  29 states and D.C.
- 13,000 children and families daily (only 500 in residential); 47,000+ annually







No involvement with the law

Within the follow-up period

## Ongoing Challenges

**Budget & Finances** 

Juvenile Court
Judges
Child Safety

Concerns Lack of Residential

**Placements** 

**Providers** 

Legislative
Pressure
Staff Challenges

Legal
Matters/Lawsuits
Need for Foster Parents

Kids Sleeping in Offices and Hotels
Uncertainty

### The State of Child Welfare

November 13, 2025: Executive Order - child welfare is a nationwide, cross-system priority

#### **Some highlights:**

- Expanding use of data and evidence to reduce time in care and unnecessary placements, support families and youth aging out of care
- Increasing education and workforce development opportunities
- Supports youth aging out of foster care
- Requires cross-agency collaborations
- Creating conversations in the federal government to advocate for what is needed to transform systems

#### The WHITE HOUSE



RESIDENTIAL ACTION

#### Fostering the Future for American Children and Families

Executive Orders November 13, 2025

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. Purpose and Policy. My Administration is dedicated to empowering mothers and fathers to raise their children in safe and loving homes. When crises prevent such an arrangement, our Nation's foster care system must be ready to serve children in need. Today's Children often stay in feet.

Children often stay in foster care for years, and those who transition out due to age frequently face uncertain futures without the support systems essential to educational, career, and relational success. Many caseworkers are overburdened. Information systems are ordered outdated. Some jurisdictions and organizations maintain policies that discourage or prohibit qualified families from serving children in need as foster and adoptive parents because of their sincerely-held religious beliefs or adherence to basic biological truths.

Our Nation's children and youth — and the families who care for them — deserve better. To that end, my Administration, with special leadership from the First Lady, will harness Federal support, technology, and strategic partnerships to provide young Americans in or transitioning out of the foster care system with the tools they need to become successful adults.

Sec. 2. Modernizing the Child Welfare System. (a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall, within 180 days of the date of this order, take appropriate action to:

- (i) update applicable regulations, policies, and practices to improve the collection, publication, utility, and transparency of State-level child-welfare data, including by improving collection of data and information indicative of child well-being and safety, eliminating duplicative or unnecessary high-cost and low-value reporting requirements, and expanding and expediting child-welfare data publication:
- (ii) promote modernization of State child-welfare information systems and use of the most effective foster care management and outcome-tracking platforms, including by incorporating such modernization efforts as part of information exchanged with or technical (iii) expend on.
- (iii) expand States' use of technological solutions, including predictive analytics and tools powered by artificial intelligence, to increase caregiver recruitment and retention rates, improve caregiver and child matching, and deploy Federal child-welfare funding to maximally effective purposes and recipients; and

### The State of Child Welfare

November 2025: Confirmation of Alex Adams as Assistant Secretary at Administration for Children and Families

"This is a moment of opportunity. With leadership from the president and first lady, we can transform the child welfare system to one that is family-centered, data-driven, and results-focused. We can clear away the clutter and give states flexibility to truly focus on their highest order needs."

- Alex Adams



**How Can** States Improve **Child Welfare** Systems?



## Create a Strong Agency Culture



### Mission-centered culture

Our Mission & Values:

To help children and families live successfully.

Kids' needs come first always.

Children are raised best by their families.

We provide a safe place.

We strive to achieve positive, lasting results.

We are committed to our staff.

We are each responsible for providing the highest level of service to our customers.

We constantly improve our performance to achieve excellence.



## Building strong cultures that make a

- meaningful impactAssemble a strong leadership team
  - Your time and attention are valuable; prioritize what is most important, and delegate when possible.
  - Plan for the future
    - Build a strategic plan with clearly defined goals and a roadmap to reach them
  - Construct a culture of urgency centered around supporting families

## Make Evidence-Based Decisions



## Use Evidence to Make Decisions

## Measure Outcomes



- Keep Score (Scorecards)
  - Know who is doing well and who is not
  - What is going well and not going well

## Hold Providers Accountable

- Have honest problem-solving conversations with your providers
- Have a mechanism to direct referrals and contracts to those getting the best outcomes

Utilize Chapin Hall's

Data Center and

Map2Impact

(a new Youth Villages-Chapin Hall partnership)

Analyzes state data and presents as evidence to inform decisions

# Partner with providers, private funders, young people and the Federal Government



## Partner with Your Providers ...

... and incentivize them to provide the types of services you most need, to the children and families who most need the services.

Rates that support provider's costs

High quality services are expensive

Rate structures are important

Keep it simple

#### **Consider the ROI**

Prioritize providers that yield the best outcomes vs. those that are cheapest Consider rewarding for outcomes

Develop creative ways to incentivize the best providers



### **Partner with Private Funders**

## Find philanthropists in your state who care about this work

Youth Villages' partnership with Blue Meridian Partners allows us to create public/private partnerships to better support state child welfare systems, young people aging out of care, and families who need services and support to prevent their children from going into foster care.



Funding for
LifeSet, Intercept
and technical
assistance
for systems and
practice change
support



over \$34M
in direct matching
grants to stand up
LifeSet and support

Intercept scaling in

17 states.

We have granted



We have an open round of applications right now

for private funding to support LifeSet and Intercept scaling.



## **Partner with Young People**

Ask them! Listen to youth aging out in your state

Consider extending foster care in your state

Check out the Playbook:

A road map for child welfare agencies, policymakers and advocates who are committed to improving outcomes for young people who turn 18 in foster care

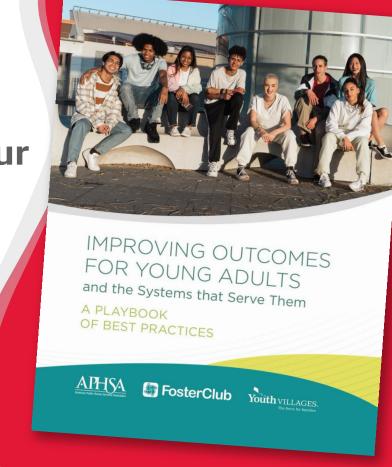
Co-designed with young people with lived

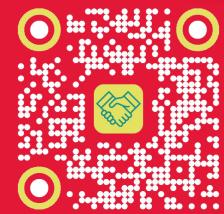






Read the Playbook





## Partner with the Federal Government to Maximize Federal Funding Opportunities

Family First
Prevention Services Act

Chafee & ETV Funds

Medicaid



## A&D

## **Thank You**

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