

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Leading with Excellence”**

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH AUTOMATED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION:** FEBRUARY 2020

(Must have been **fully** implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2020)

**CHECK HERE IF THIS PROJECT IS BEING SUBMITTED FOR THE COVID-19 IMPACT AWARD ONLY.** (Projects must be implemented on or before December 31, 2020. **Note:** Projects implemented less than one year ago will not be eligible for any other PQA awards. In addition, once a project is submitted, you cannot submit the same project for awards consideration in subsequent years).

**PROJECT STATUS:**  Ongoing  One-time only

**HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?**  Yes  No

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 As part of its continued effort to the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative’s  
 2 (OYC) Foster Youth at Work campaign, public and private partners worked to align  
 3 workforce services for foster youth across Los Angeles County. In 2018, with funding  
 4 from the CAWD Accelerator 6.0, the OYC partners agreed to embark on a new strategy  
 5 to develop a coordinated and integrated universal referral process between DCFS and  
 6 the seven workforce boards in L.A. County. WDACS spearheaded the development of  
 7 the web-based Automated Referral System (ARS), in collaboration with the Data  
 8 Management and Analytics division of the department. The Automated Referral System  
 9 (ARS) was implemented to replace a manual tracking system and to improve the  
 10 feedback loop of the referrals made by public and private partners to the America’s Job  
 11 Centers of California (AJCC) throughout LA County. Through the ARS, WDACS, six  
 12 other Workforce Development Boards in the Los Angeles Basin, the AJCCs, and  
 13 Department of DCFS have access to a central point where workforce program  
 14 participant information, such as demographic data, location, participation status in other  
 15 programs and program consent agreements are stored.

**BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY**

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY**

<b>SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS</b> Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, 510 S. Vermont Ave, 11 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Los Angeles, 90020		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-351-5246
<b>PROGRAM MANAGER’S NAME</b> Irene Pelayo		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-905-9520
<b>PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME)		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b> 213-738-2015
<i>Stephanie Maxberry</i> 6-25-21		<b>EMAIL</b> smaxberry@wdacs.lacounty.gov
<b>DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE</b> Otto Solorzano		<b>TELEPHONE NUMBER</b>
<i>Otto Solorzano</i> 06/25/2021		

**\*\*ELECTRONIC, WET, OR SCANNED SIGNATURES ARE ACCEPTABLE\*\***

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Leading with Excellence”**

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH AUTOMATED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project **to the County**. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success **and specify assessment time frame**. Use Arial 12 point font.

Prior to the creation of the Automated Referral System, foster youth referrals were tracked manually utilizing hard copy referrals. This information was analyzed and entered manual into a database. Participating agencies, such as DCFS, had no formal method for verifying enrollment into a workforce development program. Staff members were spending time inefficiently to ascertain the required information. This was costing the County valuable resources and time. Additionally, if the information was not retrieved in a timely manner, the potential participant suffered the consequences as they did not get the resources delivered timely.

Los Angeles County has identified foster youth as a priority population to receive workforce services. As part of these efforts Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) department allocates funding under its Youth@Work program to serve current or former foster youth. The targeted efforts ensure that foster youth countywide can participate in workforce services inclusive of soft skills development and work experience. To facilitate services to youth, WDACS partners with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and other community-based organizations to provide referrals for potential foster participants. Through this partnerships WDACS has built a foster Automated Referral System (ARS) to provide services and track participants in a streamlined and efficient process. This new ARS system was implemented on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

The ARS has a built-in geolocation system, which allows for accurate referral to sites based on proximity, as well as a comment section within the profile used to track the individual as they progress through the program. Further, the system can be queried for data at the aggregate level to develop reports and illustrate program trends. The ARS not only promotes intergovernmental cooperation and coordination, but it is also being considered across other workforce development programs across the state. This program enhancement also bridges gaps in coordination across agencies that provide employment services leading to improved quality of programming, as the ARS allows partners to access data points to inquire about various data sets needing further exploration. The ARS raises potential best practice opportunities to scale across the public workforce system.

Through the ARS, WDACS and its partners have access to a shared site that includes vital workforce program participant information that is critical to their success.

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
***“Leading with Excellence”***

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH AUTOMATED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

Documents, such as consent agreements, are also centralized to encourage more efficient coordination, improving service for the participant.

The status and location of participants is also critical and obtained in an expeditious manner to assist with additional supportive services, such as career exposure opportunities.

The ARS is allowing for partners to collaborate and work toward understanding various components of the Youth@Work program, which has been unavailable prior to implementation.

The entire referral's lifecycle is tracked and monitored, allowing for comprehensive data analysis, including the number of referrals received, percentage of those enrolled in workforce development programs, detailed reasons for not enrolling, and length of time between referral date and enrollment. Upon enrollment, all interested agencies also have access to information regarding services provided and employment. To date, there have been over 771 foster youth referred to LA County America's Job Centers of California. These referrals are being sent directly to the corresponding AJCC within the WDACS network. Although not all referrals are converted to enrollment, the data from the ARS has helped in identifying bottlenecks and challenges. WDACS has developed a plan to continue process and system improvement of the ARS by meeting on an ongoing basis with the DMA division and brainstorm improvements based on lessons learned.

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Leading with Excellence”**

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH AUTOMATED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

**Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only.** Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12-point font.

**I.1.4 Support Educational Outcomes for Systems-Involved Youth**

The ARS foster efforts are part of a larger, on-going strategy of integrating systems to improve outcomes for foster youth in the region. For example, at the end of 2019 the seven workforce boards in L.A. County developed a regional operational agreement with the county’s child welfare, education and probation departments establishing a shared goal that all foster youth should participate in 100 hours of work experience by age 16, and 300 hours by age 18.

**I.2.4 Support Job Readiness and Increase Employment Opportunities for Youth Served by the County**

The swift development time of ARS aligns with integration to digital services which benefit youth by providing faster services to become job ready and find employment, advance education, or post-secondary education.

**I.2.9 Support the Long-Term Success of Transitional Aged Youth**

Having a central tracking system has allowed for easier access to data and information of youth participating in the program. WDACS is able to draw reports and share with partners to ensure youth receive and are linked to additional services that will aid in their long-term success.

**II.1.3 Coordinate Workforce Development**

The Foster Youth ARS has improved and streamlined communication between WDACS, DCFS, and other partner organizations. The speed to which participants are enrolled in services have increased. To continue serving high priority populations the resources available to staff must also continue to develop. ARS has demonstrated that changes to a system can have drastic impacts as this system is also currently being modeled for other aspects of WDACS services referrals. WDACS commitment to continuous development encourages cooperation amongst its partners and leads the partnership to continue identifying processes for development.

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*“Leading with Excellence”*

**2021 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12-point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: FOSTER YOUTH AUTOMATED REFERRAL SYSTEM**

**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12-point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED <b>ANNUAL</b> COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED <b>ANNUAL</b> COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED <b>ANNUAL</b> REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) <b>TOTAL ANNUAL</b> ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**ANNUAL= 12 MONTHS ONLY**