

## 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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### 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

"Creating Successful Transitions into  
Adulthood for Hawai`i's Foster Youth"



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`OHANA, INC.

# HAWAII 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™ 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™ is for individuals who at the time of enrollment:

1. 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?

1. 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 LEADERSHIP 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™ 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™ participant, please contact:

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