Job Description: DCFS Workforce Navigator

Job Title: Workforce Navigator – Foster Youth Transition Program
Location(s): Los Angeles, CA (hybrid: DCFS Youth Engagement Section Vermont Corridor Office 8300 S. Vermont Ave., LA CA 90044., City WorkSource Center Site, and Field)
Status: Full-time

Summary
The DCFS Workforce Navigator is a frontline career specialist who plays a key role in guiding foster youth ages 18 to 21 as they transition from care to employment, education, and lasting stability. This is a City of Los Angeles initiative, in partnership with the LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), co-located at the Youth Engagement Section (YES) and supported by the City's network of workforce and education providers.

The Workforce Navigator will serve as a consistent,care and healing-centered guide who works in partnership with youth to identify their goals, explore career pathways, and access wraparound services. Navigators will support a caseload of youth who self-identify as ready to pursue employment, education, or training opportunities. Services will include one-on-one coaching, group workshops, hands-on assistance with job readiness, and connection to paid employment programs, training, or apprenticeships.

The role requires empathy, flexibility, cultural humility, and a strong understanding of both trauma-informed youth engagement and Los Angeles' workforce development system. The Navigator will also play a key role in sharing youth-centered feedback and tracking employment outcomes to improve systems, inform policy, and ensure the City and County workforce systems evolve to meet the needs of transition-age foster youth.

Primary Responsibilities
Direct Youth Engagement & Navigation

- Establish strong, trusting, and youth-centered relationships through regular check-ins and follow-ups (virtual and in-person).
- Conduct confidential, one-on-one interviews and assessments to determine each youth's career readiness, goals, and support needs.
- Co-design individualized "Pathway Plans" that outline immediate next steps and long-term aspirations.
- Encourage youth to explore job, education, or training opportunities aligned to their interests and talents.
- Provide warm handoffs to City YouthSource Centers, AJCCs, training providers, and support services (e.g., transportation, childcare, legal docs). Continue to do ongoing follow-ups for two years.
- Use creative, youth-friendly communication tools (text, visuals, direct messages) to maintain engagement and accountability.
- Demonstrate emotional regulation and self-awareness, especially in high-stress or

emotionally charged situations, in order to provide stable and supportive guidance to youth navigating complex challenges.
- Remain a consistent support person through moments of uncertainty, emotional hardship, or transition even when progress is non-linear.

Workforce Development & Skills Readiness
- Assist youth in job search, application, and interview preparation, including resume creation, cover letters, and onboarding paperwork.
- Facilitate group and one-on-one workshops on labor rights, budgeting, workplace expectations, digital literacy, and job retention.
- Support youth in accessing certifications, internships, apprenticeships, and subsidized employment programs (e.g., LARISE, Hire LA, workforce programs).
- Help youth navigate forms and procedures related to onboarding (I-9s, W-4s, etc.) and understand their workplace rights.

System Navigation & Coordination
- Attend Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings when needed and transition case conferences as a key part of youth's case planning.
- Collaborate with DCFS social workers, YES staff, City workforce teams, and community-based organizations.
- Maintain a regularly updated directory of youth-serving workforce, housing, education, and mental health partners.
- Support strong interagency communication and coordinated service delivery.

Performance Tracking & Systems Improvement
- Track youth outcomes, including employment status, salary growth, credential attainment, and job retention.
- Conduct regular check-ins and maintain detailed notes on youth progress.
- Share youth feedback and outcomes with DCFS Youth Engagement Section (YES) and the City's AJCC to inform programming.
- Report systemic barriers, success stories, and opportunities for improvement that emerge from youth experiences.
- Help define and monitor youth-centered success metrics, including career satisfaction, well-being, and retention.
- Incorporate youth voice into ongoing program design and service improvements, ensuring services stay relevant and responsive.

<u>Preferred Characteristics</u>
- Culturally responsive and trauma-informed in both mindset and practice. Youth-oriented and healing-centered—able to hold space for both vulnerability and ambition.
- Confident navigating public systems (child welfare, workforce, education, housing) and simplifying access for youth.

- Skilled at building rapport quickly and maintaining professional, nonjudgmental relationships.
- Comfortable working in field-based and mobile environments (some travel to partner sites or youth locations required).
- Embraces uncertainty with a can-do attitude; demonstrates the confidence to take initiative and the humility to ask for help when challenges arise. Collaborates effectively to problem-solve and move work forward, even when conditions are unclear.
- Open to giving and receiving feedback, and continuously improving service delivery.

Minimum Qualifications

- 2–3 years of experience working with transition-age youth, preferably foster youth or those impacted by public systems.
- Demonstrated ability to provide direct services using trauma-informed, relational approaches.
- Familiarity with workforce development systems, college access, and employment programs in Los Angeles County, including knowledge of apprenticeship pathways and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Experience presenting or leading workshops with diverse youth audiences.
- Proficiency with digital tools, including Google Workspace (Drive, Docs, Sheets, Forms, and Calendar).
- Bachelor’s degree in Social Work, Youth Development, Public Administration, or related field preferred but equivalent lived/professional experience strongly valued.
- Bilingual (Spanish, Armenian, or other common LA County languages) preferred but not required.
- Must have a drivers license.