

GaDOE Federal Programs Conference *Embark Georgia*

David Meyers
September 15, 2022



**J.W. Fanning Institute
for Leadership Development**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Agenda

- Introductions
- What is Embark?
- What is the need?
- ETV and SB 107
- Embark Georgia Conference and Summer Program
- Conversation and Questions



What is Embark?

- **Local: Campus Support Programs**

Campus Support Programs are located at many of the USG and TCSG campuses across Georgia. All campuses have a Designated Point of Contact (Quanta 😊), but what develops on that campus is different for each one.

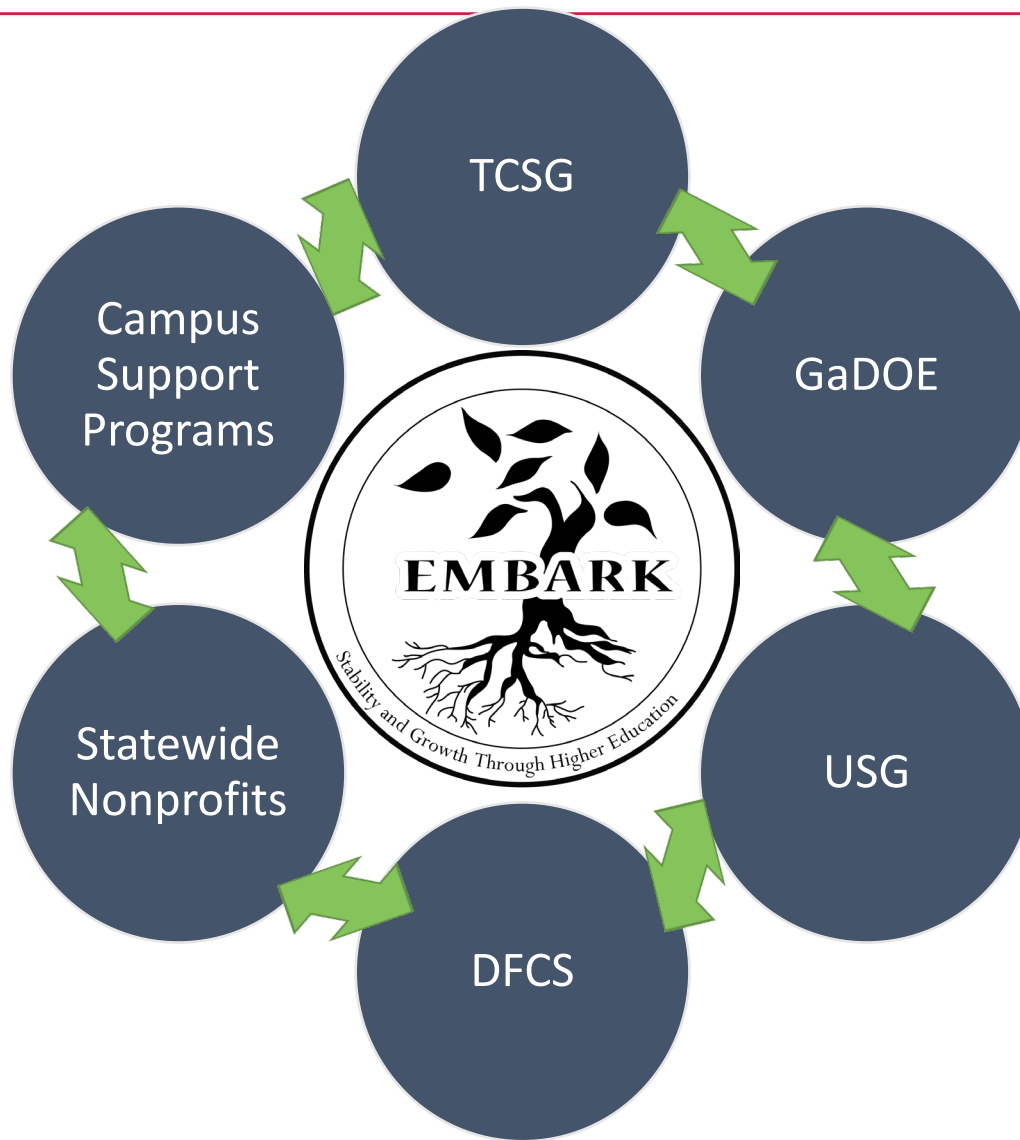
- **Statewide: Embark Georgia Network**

The Embark Georgia statewide network serves post-secondary professionals and institutions to ensure connectivity, share best practices, and provide information exchange among youth, community based stakeholders, and K-12 educators in support of youth who have experienced foster care and homelessness.

- **National: FAAN (Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide)**

Embark Georgia is one of 17 states across the country who serve as the backbone support (i.e. coordinating body) for a collaborative effort to increase equity in postsecondary education attainment for students who have experience in foster care.





Definition of foster youth

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and preadoptive homes.



Definition of Homeless/Unaccompanied youth

Individuals whose nighttime residence is NOT:

- Fixed: stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- Regular: used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis
- Adequate: sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in the home

(42 U.S.C. §11434A(2)(B)(i))

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY):

- Homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian.



Foster Care and Education (ABA 2016)

~400,000

- Number of children and youth in foster care on nationally

34%

- Percent of 17-18 year olds in care who have experienced 5+ school changes

84%

- Percent of 17-18 year old youth in foster care who want to go to college

20%

- Percent of youth in foster care who graduated from high school who attend college

9%

- Percent of former foster youth who attain a certificate/AA/bachelor's degree



By age 24...

	Foster Youth	Comparison
Ever homeless	24%	NA
Currently employed	48%	74%
Women ever pregnant	75%	40%
Median income	\$8,000	\$18,300
Men convicted of crime	59%	10%
Women convicted of crime	28%	2%

DESPITE THESE STATISTICS – MANY FOSTER YOUTH DO ENROLL IN COLLEGE

Mark Courtney, et al, Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 23 and 24, [Chapin Hall](#) at the University of Chicago, 2011.

Comparison group for this study: National Longitudinal Study Of Adolescent Health



Educational Attainment

	Foster Youth (n=593)		Comparison (n=890)	
Enrolled in College	237	39.9%	641	72.0%
2/4 Year Degree Attained	49	8.2%	410	46.0%

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Georgia Numbers

	All foster birth-18	All homeless PK-12 grade
Region 1	1096	2188
Region 2	521	1939
Region 3	1163	1833
Region 4	758	3102
Region 5	923	4129
Region 6	617	1930
Region 7	269	1356
Region 8	669	1571
Region 9	305	2010
Region 10	511	2305
Region 11	930	1680
Region 12	635	1820
Region 13	1139	6506
Region 14	1389	3670
Total	10925	36039



Division of Family and Children Services 2015 PIT data and DOE Fall 2015 data



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Barriers to Accessing Higher Education

Lack of:

- Access to parental financial information and support
- Financial means to live independently and safely
- Financial self-sufficiency once enrolled in college
- Housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas
- Balance between school and other responsibilities
- Adult guidance and support
- Information about available support systems

NAEHCY toolkit 2017



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Barriers to Retention

- *Uncertain how to ask for help*
- Study skills and other basic know-how not well developed
- Difficulty navigating college system
- Most are first-generation, low-income students
- Housing instability

[California College Pathways](#): Higher Education training “Foster Youth: Supporting Educational Success”

Foster youth are three times more likely to persist in college if they participate in a campus support program for foster youth



The Good News – Resiliency!

- Support protective factors
 - Promote social capital
 - Set high expectations
 - Provide opportunities for meaningful participation
- Trauma-informed interventions and practices
 - Avoid re-traumatization

What is wrong
with you?



What has
happened to
you?



Life Transitions Study with Dr. Kim Skobba

Life Pathways and the Transition to Higher Education for Homeless and Foster Youth.

- Purpose: identify events and interactions that help and hinder academic progress so that higher education and housing policies may be better coordinated to improve access to and successful outcomes for students coming from homelessness and foster care.
- Methods: qualitative study utilizing interviews of young adults who were either homeless or in foster care during high school and a small comparison group of low-income students who do not have a history of homelessness or foster care.
- Central research question: “What is the experience of transitioning into college for former foster care and homeless students?”

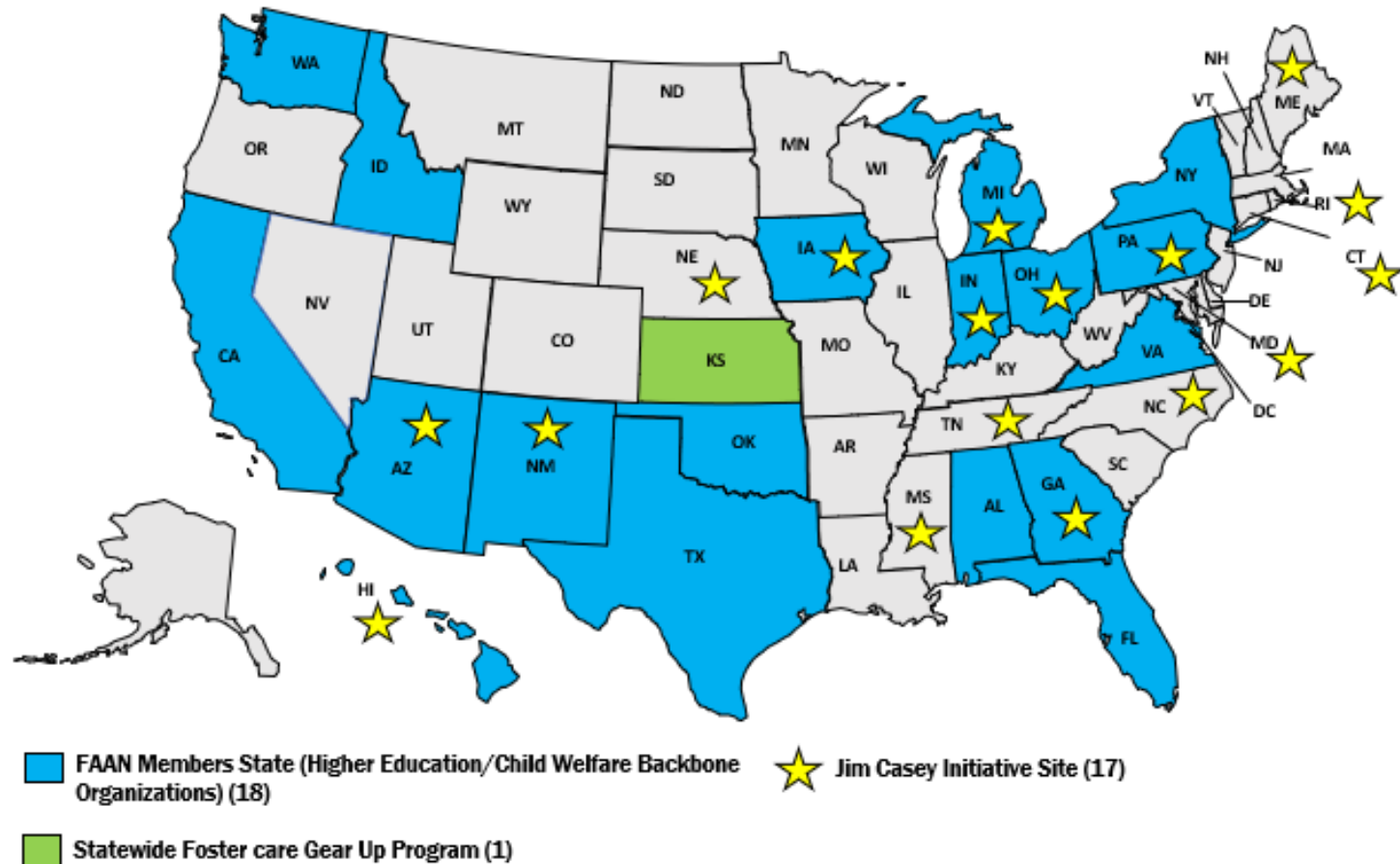


Study Findings Include:

- Many of the participants struggled to meet basic material needs
 - Many experienced emotional difficulties
 - Many were disconnected from family
 - Most lacked a strong social network and had limited social capital
 - Even the smallest barriers to success sometimes proved difficult to overcome
 - Access to parental financial information and support
 - Financial means to live independently and safely
 - Financial self-sufficiency once enrolled in college
 - Housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas
 - Balance between school and other responsibilities
 - Adult guidance and support
 - Information about available support systems
- Campus support programs were very helpful (like those in the Embark Georgia network)**



Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide



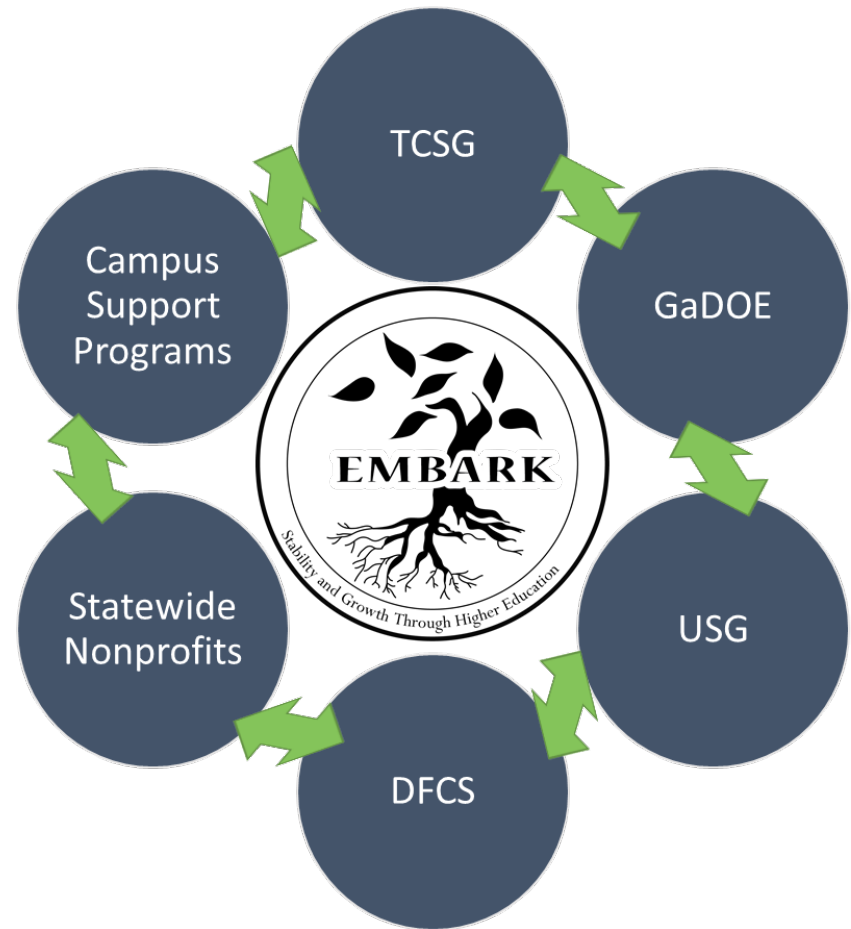
National Program Scan

- California: [California College Pathways](#) (campus based programs across the state)
- Washington: [Passport to Careers](#) and [College Success Foundation](#) (statewide) and [Champions](#) (campus based)
- Michigan: [John Seita Scholars](#) (campus based) and [Fostering Success Michigan](#) (statewide)
- Texas: [Education Reach for Texas](#) (statewide)
- Virginia: [Great Expectations](#) (community college)



Embark Georgia: Statewide Network

The Embark Georgia statewide network serves post-secondary professionals and institutions to ensure connectivity, share best practices, and provide information exchange among youth, community based stakeholders, and K-12 educators in support of former foster and homeless youth.



Embark Georgia Supporters

- **University System of Georgia (USG):** College Access Challenge Grant (CACG)
- **Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)**
- **Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS):** Independent Living Program
- **Department of Education (GaDOE):** Federal Programs
- **Community Based Organizations:**
 - Multi Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC)
 - Georgia Youth Opportunities Initiative (GYOI)
 - Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates (GA CASA)
- **Private Philanthropy:**
 - Whitehead Foundation
 - Hilton Foundation
 - Communities 4 Children
 - AT&T Foundation



Embark Georgia

Mission: to increase college access and retention for youth who have experienced foster care or homelessness.

Strategies:

- Relationship building
- Information sharing
- Supporting Designated Points of Contact (DPOC)
- Fostering the growth of campus-based programs across Georgia campuses.

Activities:

- Embark Conference
- Embark Summer Precollegiate Program
- Presentations, Regional Coalitions
- Connecting with other campuses: TA & DPOCs
- Development/Support of Campus Programming
- Data and Research



Toolkits for Program Development

Casey Family Programs - [Supporting Success](#)

NAEHCY - [College Access and Success](#)

Program Development Highlights:

- Designated Leader (DL)/Special Points of Contact (SPOC)
- Internal and External Champions
- Collaborations with Community Agencies
- Data Driven Decision Making
- Staff Peer Support and Professional Development
- Sustainability Planning



Existing Campus Programming in GA

- Kennesaw State University:
[CARE](#)
- Savannah State University:
[STAR](#)
- Embark Albany
 - Albany Technical College
 - Albany State University: Foster 2 College (F2C)
- Columbus State University:
[Embark on Education at CSU](#)
- South Georgia State College:
R.I.S.E. (Retention Involves Empowering Students)
- Georgia Gwinnett College:
Grizzlies serving Grizzlies
- Georgia State University:
[Embark Network at Georgia State University](#)
- Georgia Southwestern College
- East Georgia State College:
EGSC - Embark
- Southeastern Technical College
(Swainsboro campus)
- Fort Valley State University:
“The Vault”
- Georgia Institute of Technology: Embark
- The University of Georgia:
[Embark@UGA](#)



Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV)

- ✓ The Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV) will cover many post-secondary expenses so hopefully **loans are not necessary!**
- ✓ Designed to assist youth who have experience foster care with financial assistance **for living and educational expenses**, while attending an **accredited** post-secondary educational institution





ETV Updates...

Current Georgia ETV Allocations:

- ✓ Now, \$5,000 per year can be paid to schools
- ✓ Student may receive an **additional** stipend beyond that ETV allocation in the amount of \$300 OR \$600 per month

**Depending on Eligibility and Approval

How will ETV support you?

Cost-of-Attendance

Meal Plan

Tuition

On-Campus Housing

Other Approved Expenses

School Supplies

Books

Stipends

(Must be a full-time student)

\$300 per month

- On-Campus with Meal Plan
- Off-Campus paid-placement

\$600 per month

- On-Campus without Meal Plan
- Off-Campus non-paid-placement

✓ At Accredited Post-Secondary Institutions!

What to Expect?

Deadlines

Submitting applicable information by specific dates

Communication

Make sure your ILS has everything they need **AND** make sure you have all of your questions answered

GETTING & KEEPING ETV:

Complete an application with your ILS each year (FAFSA, Goals, Signatures)

Maintain a 2.0 GPA

Submit Grades



Senate Bill 107 (became law on 7/1/2021)

Provides for:

- In state tuition at USG and TCSG schools for students identified as homeless
- Tuition waiver for qualifying foster care/adopted students at TCSG schools
- Students must be under 28 years old
- DFCS must advertise the availability of the program



What have campuses done to support students during Covid-19?

- Food pantries:
 - Mobile
 - Pick up locations
 - Digital ordering
- Hot spots and laptops available for check-out
- Living space available locally if at risk of homelessness

Link to a report from the Field Center

https://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Foster-Youth-COVID-19-FINAL_Corrected.pdf





2022

EMBARK GEORGIA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 2022 Embark Georgia Leadership Conference will be a two-day in person event hosted at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education on the campus of the University of Georgia. The conference is designed to bring together professionals and students to build relationships, share information, and increase educational opportunities for young people who have experienced foster care and/or homelessness.

October 25	
10:00am	Opening Session
10:30am	College Access Simulation
12:00pm	Lunch on Your Own
1:30pm	Workshops
4:45pm	Networking Reception
October 26	
8:00am	Breakfast
9:00am	Workshops
12:00pm	Luncheon
12:30pm	Youth Voice Closing Plenary
1:30pm	Conference Conclusion



Embark Summer Precollegiate Program

Participants spend five days on campus at the University of Georgia where they receive important information on college preparation, learn about the college application process, develop leadership skills, and discover new opportunities. The program is open to rising sophomores and juniors who are in foster care, wards of the state or emancipated.



COLLEGE PREPARATION

Students will have the opportunity to talk with college admission counselors, financial aid representatives, career college advisors and university professors.



CONNECTION

Students will participate in fun activities with other youth in foster care and meet current college students.



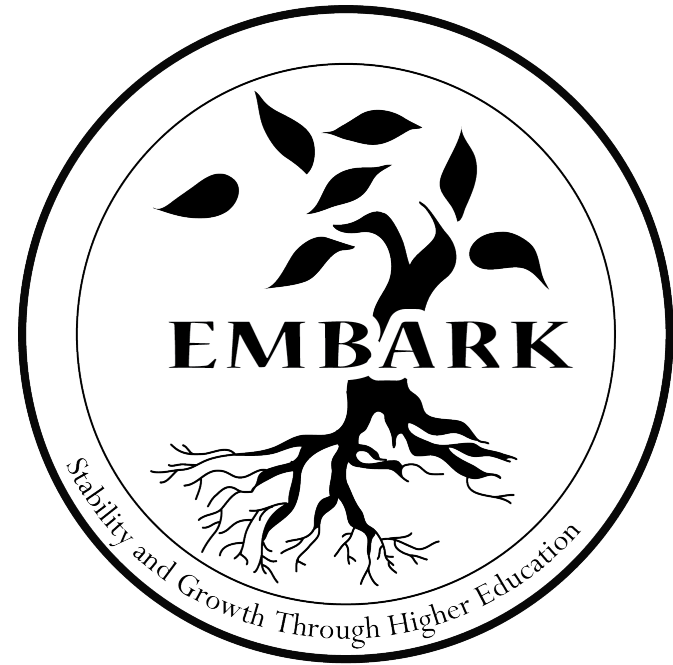
COLLEGE LIFE

During the program, participants stay in residence halls, eat in the dining halls, participate in recreational sports, and visit the libraries, athletic facilities, and classrooms.



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