



NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SPAULDING FOR CHILDREN AND PARTNER AGENCIES RECEIVE \$20 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT
TO ESTABLISH NEW NATIONAL IMPROVEMENT CENTER
THAT ENGAGES AND EMPOWERS YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN FINDING PERMANENCY**

SOUTHFIELD, Mich., Oct. 10, 2021 – Spaulding for Children, a private, non-profit child welfare agency, announced today that it is part of a consortium of five organizations that has been awarded a new 5-year, \$20 million grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Children’s Bureau to develop a new national quality improvement center to authentically engage and empower youth in foster care, especially related to permanency decisions.

The funding will establish the **Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency (QIC-EY)** starting October 2021. The new national center will help to ensure that children throughout the United States who are in foster care are authentically engaged, particularly related to permanency decisions.

The five partner agencies include Spaulding for Children, the North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC), the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors (NEACWCD), the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL), and the University of Washington (UW). Spaulding will serve as Lead Agency.

“The Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency will work to change how child welfare systems view children. Changing the mindset so youth are seen as competent, knowledgeable parties who deserve to have input and decision-making power about their lives,” Cristina Peixoto, President and CEO of Spaulding for Children, said. “This shift will entail program, system and worker-level changes.”

The QIC-EY will select 6-8 pilot sites, states, counties, tribal nations and territories, during the first year of the project. Working in partnership with the sites, the QIC-EY will implement and evaluate authentic youth engagement models in the pilot sites and help the sites to make systemic changes necessary for youth engagement. The QIC-EY will also develop a training/coaching model for the workforce that focuses on learning skills necessary for authentic youth engagement. This training/coaching model will be piloted in the sites and then disseminated nationally. The training/coaching model will include capacity building training, tools, and strategies that will serve as a change agent for the child welfare workforce and system to embrace the voice of youth in all aspects of the system of care.

The QIC-EY is expected to bring systemic change that will be reflected through intentional policies, practices, and culture shifts – at first, within the selected pilot sites and, later, to the nation at large. The new center is expected to raise awareness, and to change the mindsets of caregivers, social work professionals, families, court personnel and other support agencies in order for youth to be recognized as competent, knowledgeable parties who deserve to have input and decision-making power about their lives.

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