

## **Permanency Partner's Program (P3)**

In October 2004, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) began the Permanency Partners Program (P3), specifically to address the need for permanent families for older youth in long-term foster care. P3 Children Social Workers (CSWs) are an additional worker assigned to youth between the ages of 12-18 years of age, who focus their efforts on family finding and engagement. P3 services are especially important because historically, older youth are the least likely to exit care with a permanent family relationship, placing them at high-risk for homelessness, incarceration, welfare dependency, early pregnancy, unemployment, and educational loss.

P3 CSWs are part-time and retired social workers who help the child's primary worker and are allowed to focus exclusively on finding adult connections to support these youth. The P3 CSW works with the youth to learn how they feel about family and assists the primary social worker in overcoming identified barriers to permanency. Family finding techniques employed include following all leads provided by the youth, from reading the entire case cover to cover, searching the internet for friends and relatives, and talking to the parents, relatives, or other important people in the life of the youth. P3 CSWs are trained to engage new connections as well as reintegrate existing connections for the youth.

P3 CSWs have become an integral part of the DCFS service team, and often participate in other programs offered including Team Decision Making, Family Group Decision Making, Wraparound, Family Preservation, and Kinship/ASFA to support their work. The work of the P3 CSW is focused on locating meaningful connections from the youth's past/present, with the ultimate goal of a permanent family for each youth. Avenues for this include reunification with a parent, adoption, and legal guardianship. Additionally, the program seeks to find adults who are willing to be a lifelong connection for a youth in care.

As of July 2011, P3 has provided P3 services to 4,635 youth. Approximately, 37% (1696) of the youth now have a legally permanent plan. A total of 435 youth have returned home to a parent and had their child welfare case closed, 114 youth have returned home and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS and 106 are in reunification. In addition, 150 youth have been adopted, 26 youth are living in an adoptive home, and 275 youth, who were previously opposed to adoption, are now involved in adoption planning. Finally, 141 youth were granted legal guardians and now have a closed case, 136 youth were in a legal guardianship prior to their case closing due to emancipation, 161 youth are in legal guardianship and continue to have their case supervised by DCFS, and 152 youth are moving through the process to grant a legal guardianship.