



# Graduation and Outcomes for Success for OSY

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## Member States:

**Kansas**  
(Lead State)  
**Alabama**  
**Florida**  
**Georgia**  
**Illinois**  
**Iowa**  
**Kentucky**  
**Massachusetts**  
**Mississippi**  
**Nebraska**  
**New Hampshire**  
**New Jersey**  
**New York**  
**North Carolina**  
**Pennsylvania**  
**South Carolina**  
**Tennessee**  
**Vermont**

## Partner States:

**Alaska**  
**Arkansas**  
**California**  
**Colorado**  
**Idaho**  
**Maryland**  
**Minnesota**  
**Missouri**  
**Montana**  
**Oregon**  
**Washington**  
**Wisconsin**

## Director's Message

Mentorship can be the key to changing someone's life. I would not be where I am today without the influence of so many important people—including my paternal grandmother and many different teachers over the years. While working in the migrant education field gives us daily chances to be mentors, having a formal program to help target specific goals takes it to the next level. Our pilot states have some great stories to tell (see page 2) and we are excited to see where GOSOSY Mentorship takes us in 2018. Please continue to share your good news, your ideas, and your thoughts. Reach me any time at [tkalic@embarqmail.com](mailto:tkalic@embarqmail.com).

~ Tracie Kalic, GOSOSY Director



*"Show me a successful individual and I'll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don't care what you do for a living—if you do it well I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor."*

– Denzel Washington

GOSOSY's focus on mentorship kicked off with a planning meeting in Atlanta in 2016. The collaboration with World Education Inc. has resulted in a Mentoring Toolkit that continues to be perfected based upon feedback from the pilot states of Alabama, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Nebraska and North Carolina. The final version of the GOSOSY Mentoring Toolkit will be available to all states by Summer 2018 via the GOSOSY website at [www.osymigrant.org](http://www.osymigrant.org).

## Nebraska OSY ‘Take Charge’ of Mentoring Project



The GOSOSY Mentor Program asked Nebraska to participate as a pilot state in 2016. Since that time, the program has evolved in their state and Nebraska staff offered a behind-the-scenes look at how it has happened.

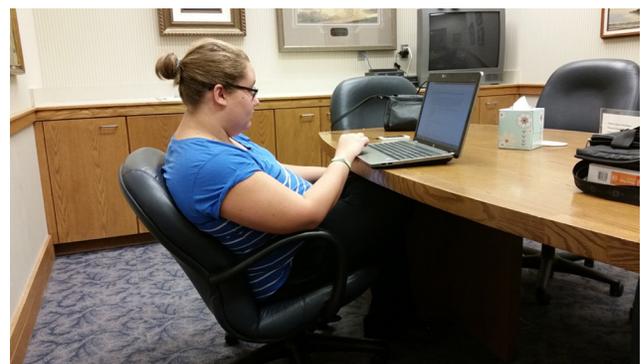
Kiowa Rogers, regional Migrant Education Director at ESU 13 in western Nebraska, explains that the MEP staff has always had the goal of seeing OSYs graduate with high school diplomas or HSEDs, and they have seen several successes, especially when recruiters doubled as OSY service providers. In the quest to see even more graduates, the staff initially thought a generalized vision and additional full-time staff would yield the results they hoped to see.

“But after a couple of months, we realized that there were much deeper issues affecting our OSY than a shortage of MEP staff time,” Kiowa explains. “And our vision wasn’t always the OSY vision. We experienced a rapid succession of OSY signing up for credit accrual and HSED programs, and then a disappointing decline in participation. Something was missing. Vision and time weren’t enough. We realized that we needed something new, although we didn’t know what it was, so we took the opportunity [to participate in the pilot]. I’m thankful we did.”

Tyson began work as a Nebraska Youth Advocate last year. He tells a story that illuminates how a mentoring model can flip the way staff think about serving OSY.

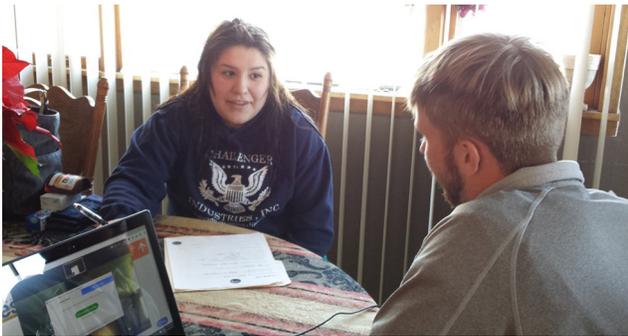
“With one particular OSY we jumped straight into schoolwork. She was so close to graduation with only two high school classes to complete online. She had a computer and internet connection, and the school she dropped out of was paying for the two courses. She lived at home with parents who also wanted her to complete high school. She had an MEP Youth Advocate to help and when she worked with me she was able to complete lessons with 80% or higher. In our view, she had everything going for her. Yet she avoided us and didn’t complete the work. We wondered what was missing and the school psychologist helped us come to the realization that we had never asked this OSY about her dreams, hopes, and plans for her life. We had simply asked her if she would like help completing high school. When the opportunity came to join the GOSOSY mentoring pilot, we viewed it as an opportunity to let the OSY decide the direction they want to take their lives and for us to support that. Maybe this OSY wasn’t quite ready for school? Maybe she wants a more stable work life, or home life? We started to view OSY as people with needs beyond education. Maybe if we respect that, their education will fall into place.”

Nebraska has named its mentoring program “Take Charge” in the hopes of boosting OSY self-confidence. Initial questions from OSY reveal some of their uneasiness with committing to a formal program, but both Kiowa and Tyson urge providers to emphasize that the program truly puts the OSY in charge of how it goes. Remember that the program can be tailored to each individual OSY and his/her specific needs and goals.



## Nebraska OSY 'Take Charge' of Mentoring Project (continued)

"We wanted to show OSY we were there to support them in what they wanted to do, not tell them what we wanted them to do and so we chose a name to reflect that mission," explains Tyson. "We wanted them to 'Take Charge' of their life, and we'll support it in any way we can. If we can support them in taking charge of their lives and futures, we've given them a lifelong gift, rather than just temporary support services."



A surprising benefit of the mentoring model is the way it has made providers' jobs both easier and more fun. The built-in structure of the program has made it easier to see the OSY more often and with a purpose in mind.

"It's also helped me build better rapport with my OSY," Tyson says. "They see me as an equal or friend – someone they trust."

Though Kiowa realizes that it is still early to label the evolution of the pilot program an official success, she has been surprised at the overwhelmingly positive response from the state's OSY.

"With 'Take Charge' the OSY are excited to meet to work on their future," she says. "One OSY has finished his high school diploma. Others have set great goals that reach farther than high school completion such as becoming an EMT and starting a business. 'Take Charge' has changed the way we see the OSY, and the way they see themselves and us. We have learned that our OSY are

young adults with amazing potential and 'Take Charge' has helped us work on developing that potential with OSY."

The MEP program goals have shifted from doing whatever it takes to help OSY complete high school or HSED as quickly as possible to discovering each OSY's unique potential and helping them prepare to reach that potential, with high school or HSED completion being just one step in that journey. Mentoring is showing staff that OSY are capable of much more than simply obtaining a degree or equivalency.

An enormous benefit has proven to be the re-thinking of how providers spend time with OSY. Tyson has a student pursuing his HSED who needs little to no academic assistance. But through "Take Charge" he articulated the goal of having his own roofing and siding company. Now he and Tyson spend their time together setting up a business plan for his future business, already named "Storm Roofing". They research taxes and how to pay employees, how to target potential customers, and advertising.

"If I had come to him to help with HSED, he wouldn't have been motivated or interested," says Tyson. "But because I came to him to help him develop his future, he now sees his HSED as a small step in the grand scheme of his life, and it has given him a reason to complete it. I believe he is firmly 'Taking Charge' of his future."



# GOSOSY State Spotlight: ALABAMA

Cyndi Townley • *Director of Migrant Education Services*

Joyce Bishop • *State OSY Director*

Peggy Haveard • *Federal Programs Coordinator for Migrant Services*



The state of Alabama currently serves between 40 and 50 OSY depending on the season. Concentrations of OSY are in the poultry industry in north Alabama (Marshall and DeKalb Counties), tomato crops in central Alabama (St. Clair County), peach orchards (Chilton County) and plant nurseries, fishing, and truck crops southwest Alabama (Mobile and Baldwin Counties).

The emphasis on recruiting and serving OSY migrant clients began five years ago with the hiring of a director and collaboration with the OSY consortium. That collaboration has allowed the state personnel to be trained in how best to address the specific needs of the OSY population and how to serve this population more effectively. We are aided in ID&R by ESCORT and each school system-based recruiter.

## ► Mobile County

Classes meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Mobile [see photo below]. Classes are a part of the outreach of the church allowing ESL classes, GED classes and our GOSOSY classes to be held there on Wednesday evenings. Childcare is provided by volunteers.



## ► St. Clair County

MEP staff visits Chandler Mountain Head Start Parent meetings [see photo below] offering to teach life skills lessons to get to know the attendees and recruit more OSY.



## ► DeKalb County

MEP staff making home visits are always watching for new OSY to recruit.



Recruiters also take time to deliver Life Skills lessons to new recruits on the spot.



## State Spotlight: ALABAMA (continued)

### ► Marshall County

OSY attend a session on decision making led by the Marshall County Extension Office. These four OSY (pictured with recruiter Lorena Franco) receive transportation assistance from MEP staff to these classes as well as English classes. The four are also part of the state's mentoring and goal setting project.



## AgHelp LLC

If you see a success, there is a very good chance mentorship was involved in the journey from idea to fruition. Feliciano Paredes, founder of AgHelp LLC, created his AgHelp app to help migrant farmworkers locate potential employment as well as local resources. Paredes, a former migrant worker himself, said, “I’ve had encouragement and mentoring on this project from Linda Chamberlain, who leads the Technology Commercialization Office at Grand Valley State University (in Michigan).” He goes on to say, “We have received positive feedback, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Most recently, we’ve been working with the group at Startup Boost. The mentorship, leads and referrals have really helped continue our momentum.”



## National Farmworker Awareness Week

National Farmworker Awareness Week is March 24 – 31. The group Student Action for Farmworkers suggests many different ways to bring better awareness with tips on its website: <https://www.saf-unite.org/content/2018-messages>. Ideas they highlight include the Cesar Chaves Blood Drive Challenge, education concerning the minimum wage and harmful pesticides, distributing farmworker fact sheets, and holding a farmworker film screening and discussion.

