

A TRANSITION SYSTEMS DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICE

Bridge Homes Institute

The bridge is a system, not a building.

Bridge Homes Institute trains organizations to run the Bridge Homes Model, a property optional transition system for young adults leaving foster care.

This deck makes the funding case for certifying navigators inside Arizona placement and group care organizations.

Robert Barlow, PhD, Founder and Model Architect

Capability deck for funders and agencies. August 2026. Rates hold through December 2027.

Two problems, and only one of them is well known

PROBLEM ONE: THE CLIFF

Young people age out of care into a gap. Housing, income, education, and support all end at roughly the same moment, at an age when most young people still get substantial family support.

In tribal systems the cliff can come earlier. At Fort McDowell, youth age out of tribal care as early as sixteen.

Everyone in this room already knows this problem. It is not the one that stops the work.

PROBLEM TWO: THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

Organizations want to respond and cannot. Standing up a transition program requires a lease structure, a resident agreement, a housing rider, a savings mechanism, a curriculum, a services schedule, a logic model, an outcomes framework, licensing analysis, and a funding case.

That is a year of specialist work that a small organization does not have the staff to produce.

The gap is not in young people. It is in the organizations that already serve them, want to respond, and cannot build the system alone.

We install a working system inside the organization you already have

WHAT A PARTNER SITE RECEIVES

- A complete, tested operating model: manual, legal structure, savings mechanism, curriculum, data framework, and funding case
- Adapted to your jurisdiction, your population, and your building, or to no building at all
- Training and certification so your own team runs it
- Your name on the door, your data, your community relationships

WHAT WE ARE NOT

- Not a national franchise that requires you to adopt our brand
- Not a consultant who delivers a report and leaves
- Not a competing provider. We do not seek placements, contracts, or census.
- Not a licensing category. Your license, your policies, your liability, unchanged.

We do not hand you a plan. We install a program, then step back.

The bridge is a system, not a building

Every other transition housing model requires a building before it requires anything else, so the conversation ends the moment a partner says they do not have one. This model does not end. It phases.

Phase one. Curriculum and navigation overlay

Runs inside your existing placements with no new property and no licensing change.

Phase two. Savings and capital mechanism

The Resilience Reserve, including a milestone deposit design built for minors.

Phase three. Housing

Added when a site, a lease, or a partner property becomes available.

The Bridge Homes Model, eight components

24-month transition arc A defined runway rather than an open ended stay, with a structured beginning, middle, and exit.	Resilience Reserve Residents contribute \$500 per month. Months 1 to 6 are a program pay in. Months 7 to 24 convert into savings the resident takes with them.	Banking partnership A financial institution opens resident accounts and delivers financial literacy and planning. OneAZ fills this role at the inaugural site.	College Pathway Program Postsecondary navigation and persistence support, built from doctoral research on what keeps foster care alumni enrolled.
Structured curriculum Monthly interactive modules covering the practical and relational skills the transition requires.	Legal and operating structure Operating agreement, resident lease, and program housing rider, integrated into the implementation manual.	Data and outcomes framework Logic model, outcomes framework, and reporting structure so the program can prove what it does from day one.	Funding architecture Grant tracker, funder narrative, and a case built around the pillars funders actually score against.

It installs in all three approved living arrangements

A qualified young adult in voluntary extended foster care lives in a licensed foster home, in congregate care, or in supervised independent living. The model is a curriculum and practice overlay, so it runs in any of the three without a licensing change.

01. Licensed foster home Curriculum delivered by the licensed caregiver, with the anchor function carried by the caregiver and a navigator assigned by the agency.	02. Congregate care Structured programming inside an existing group care license. Highest fidelity, since staffing is already scheduled and supervised.	03. Supervised independent living Scheduled contact and coaching rather than supervision, alongside the Independent Living Subsidy where the young adult qualifies.
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ALREADY IN STATUTE AND POLICY	HOW THE MODEL IS BUILT TO IT
Extended foster care ends at 21	The 24-month arc is timed so the exit plan, the savings, and the permanent connection are complete before services end, not after.
Success coaching requires trained coaches	Institute certification is designed to sit alongside the Department administered training requirement, not replace it.
Quality review monitors participation	The curriculum drives the exact categories under review: secondary completion, postsecondary enrollment, and employment.
Transitional living eligibility begins at 16	Youth in Department, licensed group care, or tribal custody at 16, 17, or 18 qualify for transitional living services.

Sources: A.R.S. 8-521.02 and 8-521.03; DCS Program Policy Chapter 5, Sections 32, 33, and 36; Laws 2023, Chapter 141.

SECTION ONE

The Evidence Base

Designed from research, not instinct. Two original frameworks authored under the Bridge Homes College Pathway Program, submitted to peer reviewed journals and currently under review.

Two frameworks, two different jobs

FRAMEWORK A

The Transition Justice Framework for Foster Youth

Answers why. Reframes aging out as a question of continuing obligation rather than individual readiness, and gives staff language for what the system owes at exit.

Four obligations the training makes operational: **Obligation**, the duty created at removal continues after exit. **Restoration**, practice is organized around restoring what removal cost. **Voice**, decisions are made with the young person, in meeting structure and documented decision rights. **Continuity**, support is calibrated to readiness rather than to a birthday.

Submitted and currently under peer review.

FRAMEWORK B

The Navigator-Anchor Model

Answers how. Specifies the two functions a young person needs at the same time: a navigator for systems and skills, an anchor for durable relationship.

Congregate settings tend to be staffed for navigation and understaffed for anchoring, which produces churn at exit. The two functions do not have to sit in one person; they have to be assigned, resourced, and tracked. Anchoring is a staffing and scheduling decision, not a personality trait, which is why it can be trained.

Submitted and currently under peer review.

Both manuscripts are under peer review, and both trace back to doctoral research on educational and career pathways after foster care.

Four activation states, and why the model measures two things at once

Cross navigation capacity with anchor relationship and you get four states. Only one produces a durable transition.

	LOW ANCHOR RELATIONSHIP	HIGH ANCHOR RELATIONSHIP
Low navigation capacity	I. Dormant entitlement. Rights are held on paper and never converted. Low take up everywhere.	II. Supported non activation. A trusted adult without benefits knowledge or reach. Wellbeing up, take up flat.
High navigation capacity	III. Brittle activation. Resources accessed, but shocks cannot be absorbed. Sharp attrition at the first renewal.	IV. Durable transition. Resources accessed and sustained. Take up, renewal, and persistence all elevated.

Modules 6 and 7 teach the navigator and anchor functions as separate, assessable skill sets. Permanent connection is already a stated goal of extended foster care; this is the mechanism for producing one.

SECTION TWO

Training, Certification, and What Funding Buys

Nine modules across two days, three certification tiers, and no fee charged to the organizations that send staff.

Framework Foundations: nine modules, two days

	WHAT HAPPENS	TIME
Day One: what is owed	Modules 1 to 4. The Exit; Two Framings, Two Programs; The Four Pillars; Who Is Actually in the Room. Six of the nine modules end in written table work.	6.5 hrs
Day Two: how it reaches a person	Modules 5 to 9. The Activation Gap; Navigation Capacity; Anchor Relationships; The Four Activation States; Integration and Certification.	6.5 hrs
The certification exam	Closed book, 100 points, six sections. Eighty percent to pass, with a floor on the Arizona instruments and case classification sections.	1.5 hrs
The applied task	A completed Four Pillar Program Audit or Anchor Function Map drawn from the candidate's own caseload, submitted after the training.	14 days
Supervised practicum	Certified Navigator tier only. Observed practice on all four navigation components, a twelve month timing map for a real caseload, and a thirty day follow up.	90 days

Delivered in person over two consecutive days, on site, with printed participant packets and desk cards at every seat.

Three tiers, one ladder

Tier one. Framework Practitioner

All sixteen hours. Eighty percent or higher on the written exam. One applied task within fourteen days. Delivers the model as staff under supervision.

Tier two. Certified Navigator

Tier one, plus observed practice on all four navigation components, a twelve month timing map for a real caseload, a completed anchor function map with a thirty day follow up. Carries named navigation responsibility and signs take up reporting.

Tier three. Institute Facilitator

Tier two, plus co facilitation of two modules under observation, a Four Pillar Program Audit for a site other than their own, and a passing facilitation rubric. Delivers Framework Foundations at a replication site.

Certification is held by the individual and verified by the Institute, so the organization keeps an auditable record of who is qualified, and the credential travels with the person.

What the funding pays for, and what it does not

One. Cohort delivery

Two facilitator days per cohort, printed packets and desk cards for every seat, room and materials, exam administration and scoring. **Produces Framework Practitioners across three to five organizations per cohort.**

Two. Navigator practicum

Ninety days of supervised practice per candidate: observed work on all four navigation components, a timing map on a live caseload, an anchor function map, and the thirty day follow up. **Produces Certified Navigators who carry named responsibility inside their own agency.**

Three. Facilitator development and measurement

Co facilitation and rubric review for Institute Facilitators, plus baseline and take up measurement at every participating site so the work can be evaluated rather than described. **Ends the dependency: sites train their own staff and the Institute verifies.**

NOT CHARGED

Participating organizations pay no tuition, no license fee, and no per seat cost. They contribute staff time, a room, and their take up data. Nothing in this model is sold to a program that serves young people leaving care.

Where the model actually stands today

An inaugural site	Five young women ages 17 to 26 at a South Phoenix property in partnership with FIBCO Family Services, renovation funded by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, first move ins targeted for fall 2026.
A completed replication design	A full Wassaja Edition for Wassaja Family Services on the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, rewritten for tribal jurisdiction, with a two track design for minors and adults, data sovereignty terms, and a phased launch path.
A documented operating package	A complete implementation manual and an eleven document package including resident services schedule, savings model, logic model, outcomes framework, and grant tracker, with two manuscripts under peer review behind the design.

STAGE OF EVIDENCE

The model is designed and launching, not proven. The framework manuscripts are under peer review and not yet published. No resident outcomes exist yet, because first move ins are targeted for fall 2026. What is offered today is design rigor and replicability.

What gets measured, and when it can be reported

The measures are set before the first resident moves in, because retrofitting measurement is how programs end up with three years of activity and no evidence.

MEASURE	WHY IT MATTERS TO FUNDERS	WHEN IT CAN BE REPORTED
Housing stability at exit and 12 months post exit	The measure agencies and funders ask for first	Exit late 2028, follow up late 2029
Resilience Reserve balance	Unique to this model. No competing program reports it.	From month 7, first cohort
Postsecondary enrollment and persistence	Ties directly to the research base and the College Pathway claim	2027 onward
Employment and earnings at exit	What state agencies and workforce funders score	Late 2028
Replication fidelity and time to launch	How fast a partner goes live and how closely the build holds	From the first replication forward
Partner capacity change	Proves the install worked and the partner can run it without us	Twelve months after each launch

Time to launch is the metric this sector forgets and funders care about most.

Robert Barlow, PhD

Research

PhD in Ethical Leadership, St. Thomas University.
Dissertation on educational and career pathways after foster care, grounded in Ecological Systems Theory and Ethical Leadership Theory.

Governance

Board service across FIBCO Family Services, March of Dimes Arizona, the George Washington Carver Museum, and Zenith College and Career Prep.

Operating rigor

Twenty plus years leading HR and talent operations across multi site organizations of 500 to 10,000 people. Navy Recruiting Command leadership. Submarine quality assurance officer.

Lived experience

Foster care alum. Author of the memoir *The Name They Gave Me*, tracing foster care to Navy submarine service to doctoral scholarship.

The model was designed by someone who studied the problem at the doctoral level and has spent twenty years building people systems that survive turnover and audit.

Four ways to fund this

	WHAT IT UNDERWRITES	AMOUNT
1. Fund one cohort	Two facilitator days, materials, and exams for a cohort of up to 20 staff drawn from three to five organizations. The smallest unit, and it stands on its own if you go no further.	\$13,500
2. Fund a navigator	The ninety day practicum that turns a trained staff member into a Certified Navigator carrying named responsibility inside their own agency. Seat plus practicum.	\$3,200
3. Fund the evidence	Baseline and take up measurement with two written reports at up to five sites, which is what turns this from a promising design into something the field can evaluate.	\$22,500
4. Fund a year in Arizona	Two cohorts, ten practicums, two Institute Facilitators, and fidelity review and measurement at up to five sites, delivered at no cost to participating organizations.	\$95,000

Every amount above is built from the published Rate Card. The Cost Proposal Worksheet shows the arithmetic line by line. Purchase orders, invoices, and grant agreements are all accepted.

A funder who needs a charitable recipient gives through FIBCO Family Services, the Institute's 501(c)(3) fiscal sponsor, until nonprofit status is established.

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