

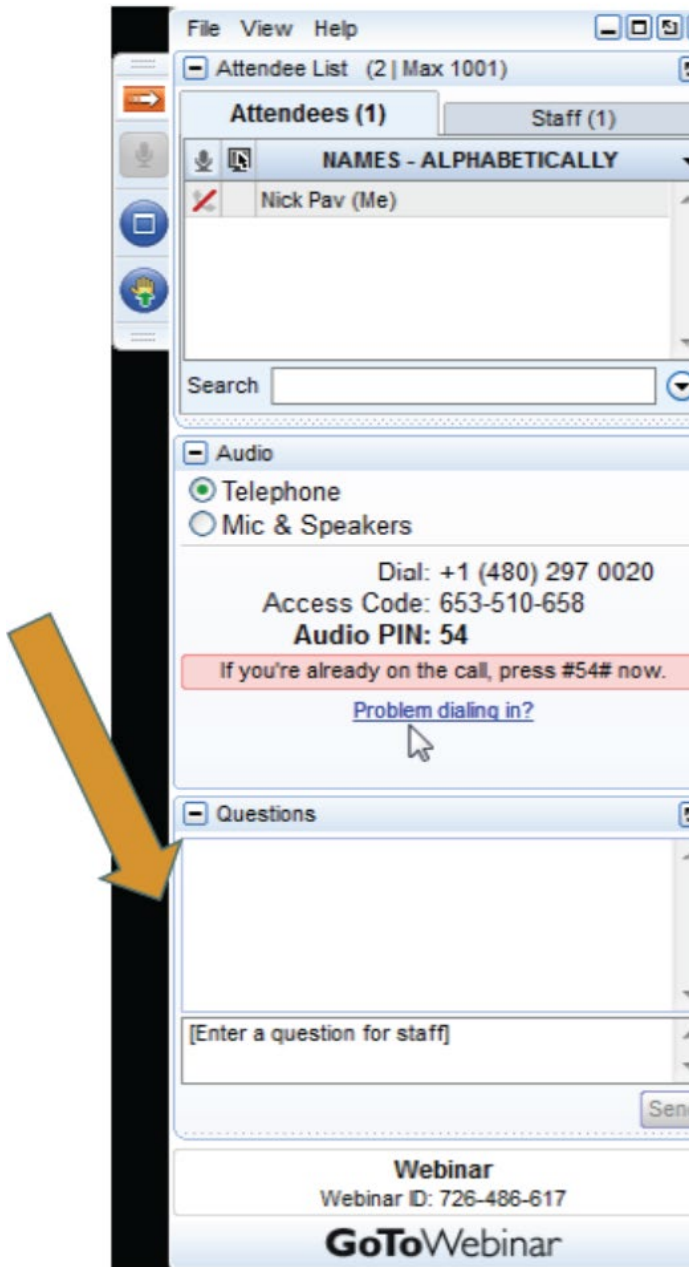
POLICY WEBINAR | JULY 2021

# Ensuring Successful Transitions from Extended Foster Care

ALLIANCE  
*for* CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS



# Logistics



- Webinar resources, including recording and supplemental materials, will be posted at <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/>
- All attendees are muted during webinar.
- Please submit questions using the "Questions" function on your GotoWebinar dashboard.
- Email Ines Rosales at [irosales@alliancecr.org](mailto:irosales@alliancecr.org) if you experience technical difficulties.



# Overview

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- **Updates to Policies** Impacting Youth In and Exiting Extended Foster Care
- **Practice Recommendations** for Successful Transitions
  - Importance of Youth-Centered Transition Planning
  - Setting Education and Employment Goals
  - Housing Navigation and Building Tenancy Skills
  - Improving Legal Permanency for Older Foster Youth
  - Linkages to Safety Net Programs
- Questions

# Presenters

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- **Valerie Earley**, Branch Chief, Resource Family Support & Permanency, California Department of Social Services
- **Vincent D'Averso**, Mentor Program Director, Transition-Age Youth Services, Alliance for Children's Rights
- **Mitsu Klines**, Project Manager, Transition-Age Youth Services, Alliance for Children's Rights
- **Erica Waterford**, Vice President Education & Employment, First Place for Youth
- **Rachel Stein**, Supervising Staff Attorney, Children's Rights Project, Public Counsel
- **Cynthia Billey**, Adoptions Program Director, Alliance for Children's Rights
- **Marisa Lopez-Scott**, Staff Attorney, Youth Law Center

# Extended Foster Care Overview

As of 2012, **any youth who turned 18 and who had an order for foster care placement on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is eligible to participate in EFC until they reach 21 years of age.**

In order to receive Extended Foster Care benefits and services, youth must meet **one** of the following participation criteria:

- Completing high school or equivalent program; OR
- Enrollment in college, community college, or a vocational educational program; OR
- Employment of at least 80 hours/month; OR
- Participating in a program or activity designed to remove barriers to employment; OR
- Inability to do one of the above requirements because of a medical condition.

**Youth in EFC ("nonminor dependents") may opt to exit and re-enter care at any time before they turn 21.**

# Impact of Pandemic on Transition Age Youth

## Housing Stability:

- 22% of transition aged youth reported experiencing at least one episode of homelessness since the start of the pandemic.
- Nearly one-third of youth surveyed feared being forced to leave their current housing arrangement.

## Employment:

- 50 percent of transition-age youth from foster care who were working before the pandemic lost their employment or had their hours severely cut, compared to 35 percent as of April 2020.
- Of the youth who experienced homelessness, 1 in 4 is unemployed.

## Education:

- 100% of youth enrolled in school reported that the pandemic has had negative impacts on their education.
- Of the youth who experienced homelessness, 1 in 7 dropped out of school.

## Mental Health and Wellness:

- Fifty percent of young people reported feeling down, depressed, or hopeless **everyday** or **more than half the days**.

# Federal & State Law Changes

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**UPDATES TO POLICIES** IMPACTING YOUTH IN AND EXITING  
EXTENDED FOSTER CARE



# FY 20-21 State Extension of Benefits (AB 89 & SB 115)

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- \$28,629,000 to support transition age youth in Extended Foster Care during the pandemic
- Funding to support provisions, to:
  - **Allow a NMD (18-21) to remain in Extended Foster Care even if they are not meeting participation criteria, and**
  - **Extend foster care benefits beyond 21 for any NMD who turned 21 between 4/17/20 – 6/30/21.**

[AB 89](#)

[SB 115](#)

[ACL 20-117 E](#)



# Federal Law Passed After Creation of the Initial 21+ Program

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## **Federal Pandemic Act**

- Prohibits states from terminating support to young adults in foster care due to age through September 30, 2021;
- Requires states to outreach to all young adults who exited care on or after January 27, 2020 as a result of age and allow them to reenter;
- Waives the participation conditions; and
- Authorizes federal funding for these young adults remaining in care or returning to care.

# Two EFC Cohorts

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## APRIL COHORT

- State program for young adults who were in EFC upon turning 21 on or after April 17, 2020.
- For the April Cohort of young adults, the requirements and benefits outlined in ACL 20-117E.
- No court involvement.

## JANUARY COHORT

- Federal program for young adults who were in EFC upon turning 21 after January 27, 2020.
- Requirements outlined in ACL 21-51.
- No court involvement.

# FY 2021-22

## State Extension of Benefits

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### California State Budget of 2021 (AB 128)

- Authorizes young adults who **were in EFC when they turned 21 years of age on or after April 17, 2020, to continue to receive assistance payments and case management support through December 31, 2021. They must sign a VRA and be in a supervised setting.**
- Authorizes young adults who **were in extended foster care on or after January 27, 2020 to receive assistance payments through December 31, 2021 upon signing a VRA and supervised placement approval.**
- **Continues waiver of participation requirements** for NMDs ages 18-21 through December 31, 2021, unless Stafford Act flexibilities for employment and education requirements are rescinded prior to December 31, 2021.

# Outreach, Notification & Public Awareness



Title IV-E Agencies **must make diligent efforts to locate eligible young adults**, including providing notification to the young adult through their most recently available contact information and engaging in a public awareness campaign.



# Placement, Care & Federal Financial Participation Requirements

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- **Re-entry Agreement**
- Title IV-E Agency must **assess income for IV-E eligibility.**
  - Young adults are still eligible to re-enter and receive support and assistance if they have income or resources that make them ineligible for federal financial participation.

# Caseworker Contact & Support

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- Monthly contact
- Help develop transition plan:
  - Identify key services and supports
  - Meet unmet mental, physical, or education needs



# Caseworker Contact & Support

- **Monthly contact visits between regular caseworkers and young adults, 21 years old and over, may occur through other remote methods, such as emails, texts, telephonic calls, or videoconferencing.**
- **Caseworkers should also attempt an in-person contact with the young adult at least quarterly.**
  - Generally, caseworkers are to make best efforts to contact the young adult, document efforts, and note the result of the contact.
- **Lack of contact from the young adult is not a reason to discontinue assistance.**
  - Caseworkers must continue to offer referrals to support services, including but not limited to CalWORKS, CalFresh, employment support, and postsecondary education support resources, including financial aid and campus support programs.

# Chafee Program Funds

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**California received \$47.2 million in additional Chafee funding through the Federal Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act.**

- \$9.3 million dedicated to the **Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program** to exhaust the current waitlist and bring recipients to the maximum \$5,000 funding level.
- \$4 million dedicated to the **Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program**, which allows PHAs to request housing choice vouchers to serve former foster youth under age 25.
- Remaining funds will be used for **one-time direct relief payments** issued to **current and former foster youth** who are **18 – 26 years old and eligible for EFC** as of the date of eligibility verification.



# Chafee Direct Relief Payments

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- Prepaid cards are **available in physical or virtual form.**
- Assistance is **not contingent on the youth opting into EFC.**
- Payment is **not considered income** for the purposes of CalWORKS, CalFresh, CAPI, and Emergency Child Care Bridge programs.
- Fastest way to apply for youth age 18-20 to apply is by contacting their social worker, ILP coordinator, or probation officer.
  - Youth ages 21 – 26 should use the Chafee [portal](#) to apply.
- **Deadline for eligibility verification is September 3, 2021.**



# Housing Navigators

- Assist young adults in locating, securing and maintaining housing, with priority given to youth in foster care;
- Provide housing case management;
- Prevent young adults from becoming homeless; and
- Improve coordination of services and linkages to resources across the community.

FY 21-22 budget restores \$5 million in funding in 2021-22 and ongoing to support housing navigators; and increases in FY 22-23 and ongoing to support transitional housing services for young adults, with priority given to foster youth ages 18 – 25.

# Practice Recommendations for Successful Transitions

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**IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH CENTERED TRANSITION PLANNING**



# Transition-Age Youth Services Program

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**Alliance for Children's Rights supports youth by providing free consultation and legal services including:**

- Resolving Identity Theft
- Re-entering Foster Care (for Youth 18-21)
- Clearing Juvenile Tickets
- Accessing SSI Benefits
- Sealing Juvenile Records
- Requesting Name Changes from the Court
- Obtaining Your Birth Certificate
- Foster youth support services on college campuses
- Financial aid and scholarship programs
- High school diploma completion programs



# Challenges: *Homelessness & Education*

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## Challenge 1

### Homelessness

- About 33% of youth had been homeless between the ages of 17 and 21 years old.
- Most were homeless for periods of one week to three months.
- 35% of youth are discharged from Transitional Housing Programs for Nonminor Dependents (THP-NMD) involuntarily.

## Challenge 2

### Education

- High school dropout rate is 35.1% for foster youth vs. 11.5% of all students.
- Foster youth have a suspension rate of 15.1% vs. 3.5% of all students.
- 13.3% of foster youth are prepared for college and careers vs. 42% of all students.
- Only 3% of foster youth earn a college degree.

# Challenges: *Prison Pipeline & Mental Health*

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## Challenge 3

### Prison Pipeline

- 25% of foster youth will be in prison within two years of emancipation.
- 40% of inmates were sentenced to prison 0-5 years after leaving foster care, male and female.
  - <2 years, 19%.
  - 2-5 years, 21%.

## Challenge 4

### Mental Health

- One-third of transition age foster youth in California struggle with mental health and substance abuse issues.
- The pandemic has worsened the issue.
- 49% of transition age foster youth felt that COVID-19 has had a major impact on their mental health and wellness.

[John Burton Advocates for Youth, May 2021](#)

# Solutions

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*Extended financial support/extended foster care increases a youth's chances of earning a credential by age 21 by 8%.*

**A support system:**  
Former foster youth are 44% less likely to experience homelessness if they had “enough” people to turn to.

More young adults knowing about and receiving **AB 12** resources.

More positive discharge to biological family members or adopted when in foster care.

Participating in AFS Lifelong Connections Project, Independent Living Skills Programs, and Transitional Housing Programs.

# Practice Recommendations for Successful Transitions

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**SETTING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT GOALS**





# First Place for Youth: Improving the Extended Foster Care System for Transition-Age Youth

Erica Waterford  
VP Education and Employment



## OUR MISSION & VISION

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Founded in 1998, First Place for Youth envisions a world in which involvement in the foster care system does not limit young people's opportunity to thrive.

Using a dual lens of service delivery and policy change, its mission is to support foster youth to build the comprehensive skills needed to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency and responsible adulthood.



Our program model includes:



Safe, Stable  
Housing



Intensive Care  
Management



Education +  
Employment  
Support



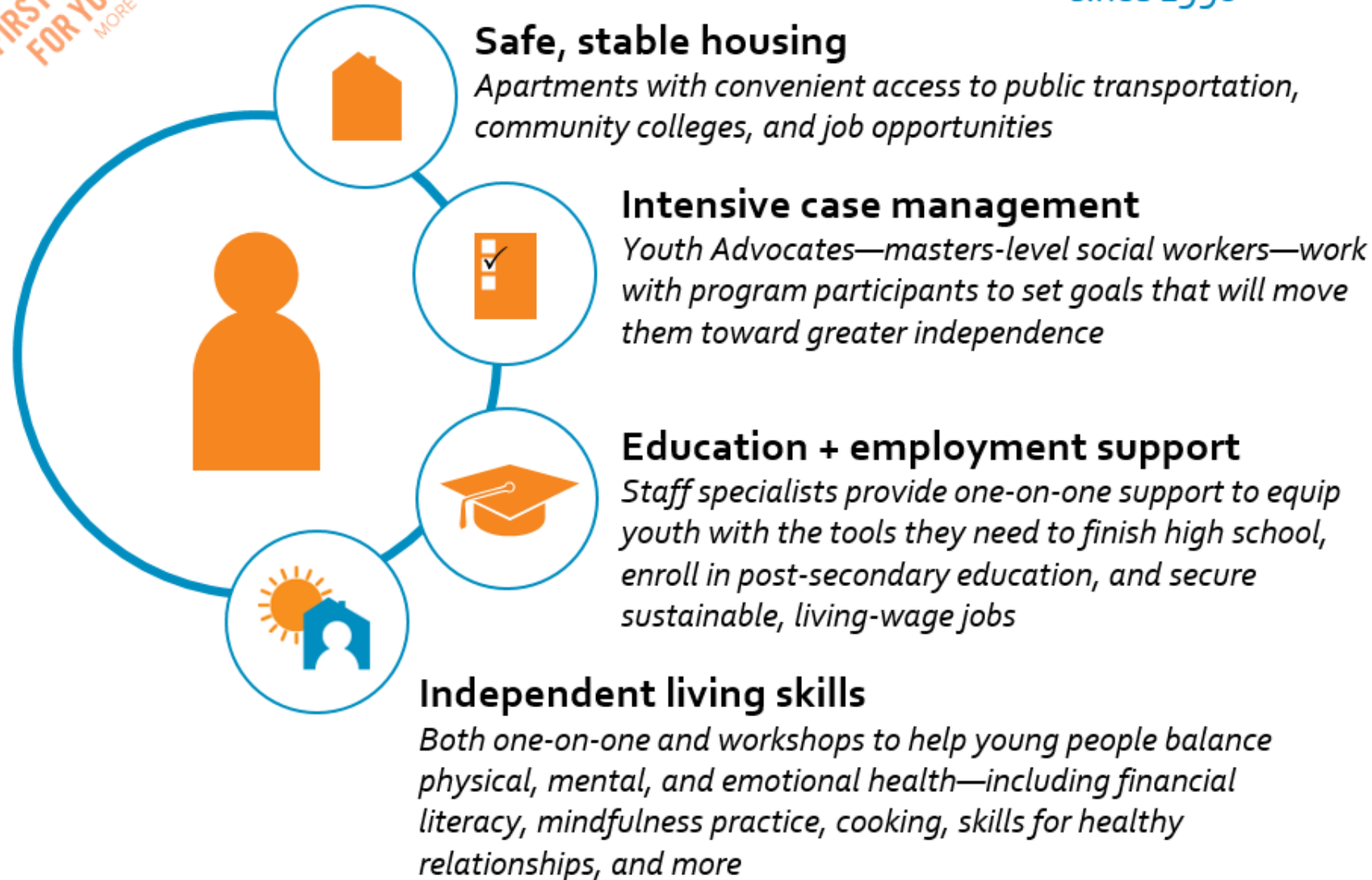
Healthy Living  
Skills

Recognized as  
an innovative,  
high-impact,  
national best  
practice model.



## Our Program

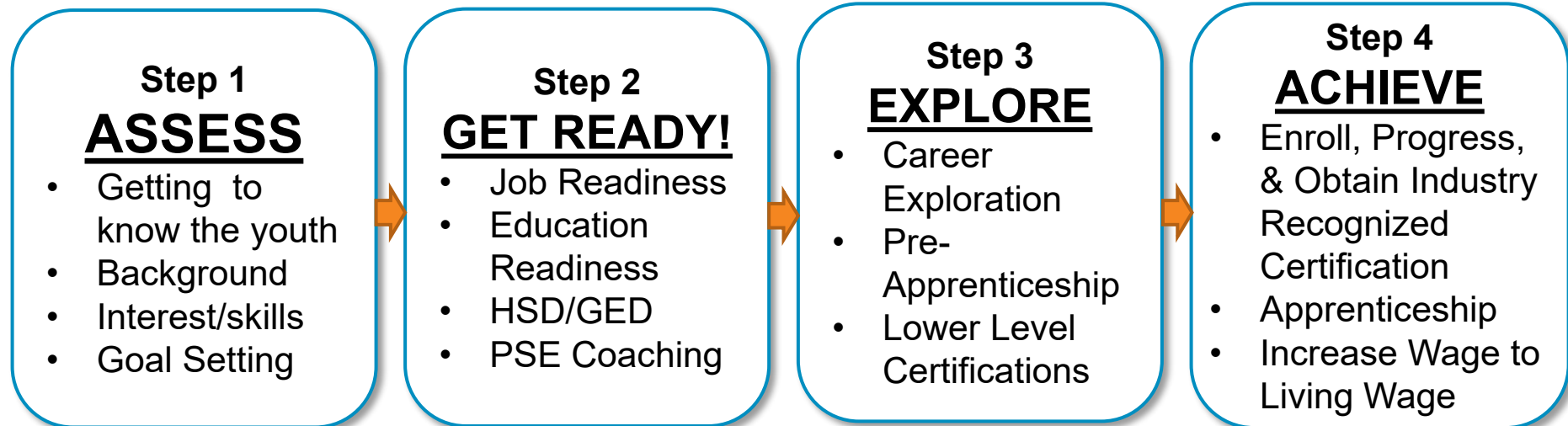
Direct services to more than 9,000 transition-age foster youth  
since 1998





# STEPS TO SUCCESS:

Education and Employment Action Planning towards Self-Sustainability



# APPRENTICESHIP



## PAID JOB

A competitive wage  
from day one



## EDUCATION

Structured learning and  
on-the-job training



## CREDENTIALS

Resume-enhancing, industry-  
recognized credentials

## Pre-Apprenticeship

A PRE-APPRENTICESHIP is a structured, work-based learning program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in formal apprenticeship programs.

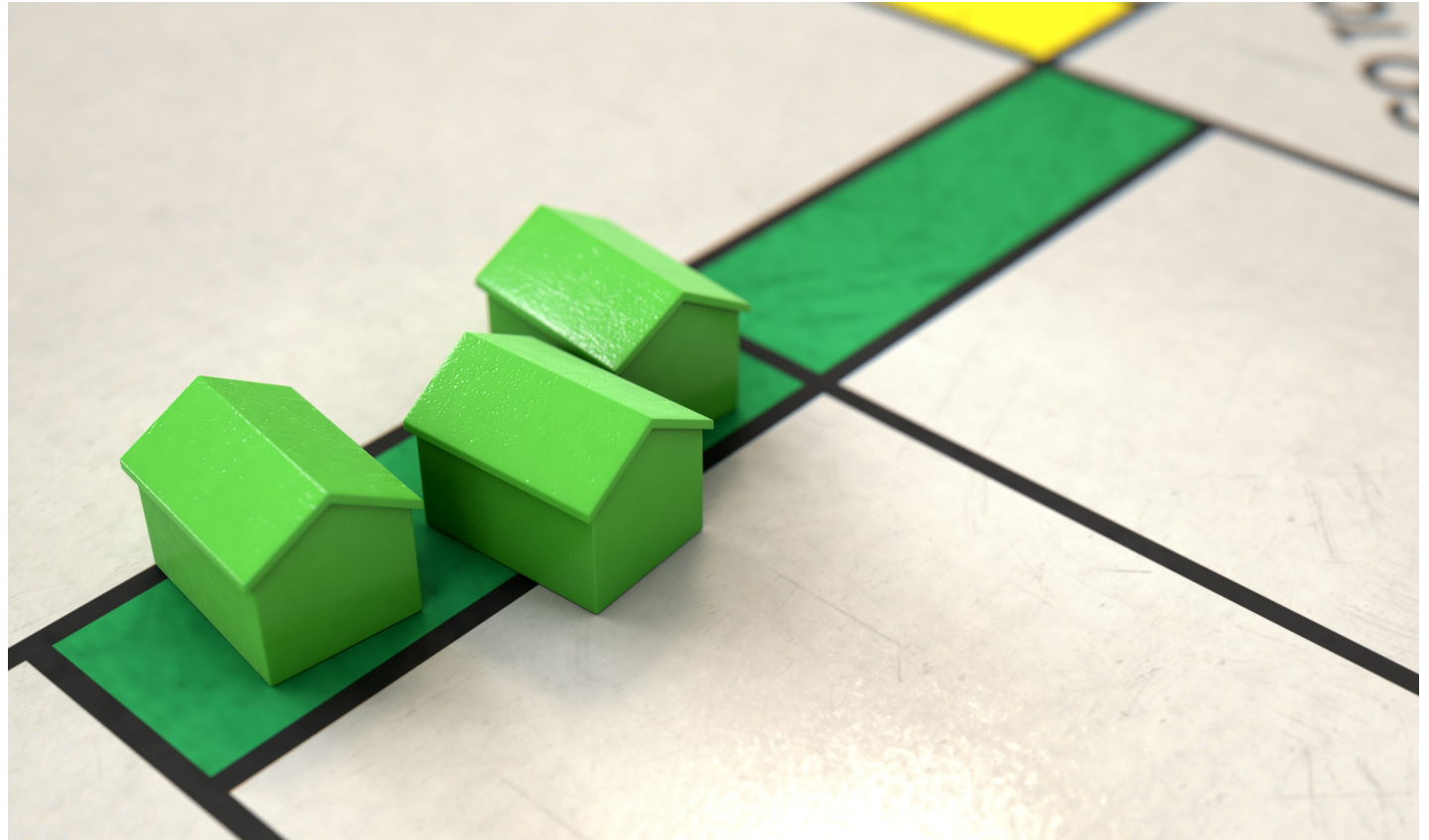
# Practice Recommendations for Successful Transitions

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**HOUSING NAVIGATION AND BUILDING TENANCY SKILLS**

# Housing Navigation

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# EFC Housing Options

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- Transitional Housing Placement Program for Nonminor Dependents (THPP-NMD)
- Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)
- Foster Home (Resource Family):
  - Approved home of relative or NREFM
  - Home of a Nonrelated Legal Guardian
  - Non-relative Resource Parent
- Dual Agency Regional Center Homes (only for Regional Center consumers)

# Navigating EFC Housing

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- Start **planning** for EFC housing well in advance of NMD's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Help youth **understand their options**
  - Review potential THPP-NMD program agreement and/or lease with NMD so they understand their obligations;
  - Explore NMD's willingness to have a roommate;
  - Review SILP readiness assessment document with NMD; and
  - Explain allocation of foster care funding in various settings.
- Counties should **use maximum flexibility to approve potential SILPs**, and also approve **Transitional Living Settings** as a short-term option.
- Ensure youth have an **updated TILP**.
- Ensure youth have **copies of their vital records**/documents.
- If youth will receive SILP funding, help them **set up direct deposit**.
- If youth will SILP in dorm, help them plan for housing during school breaks.

# Former Foster Youth Housing Options

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THP-Plus

ILP-THP

Apartment/Room/Dorm

Regional Center Homes

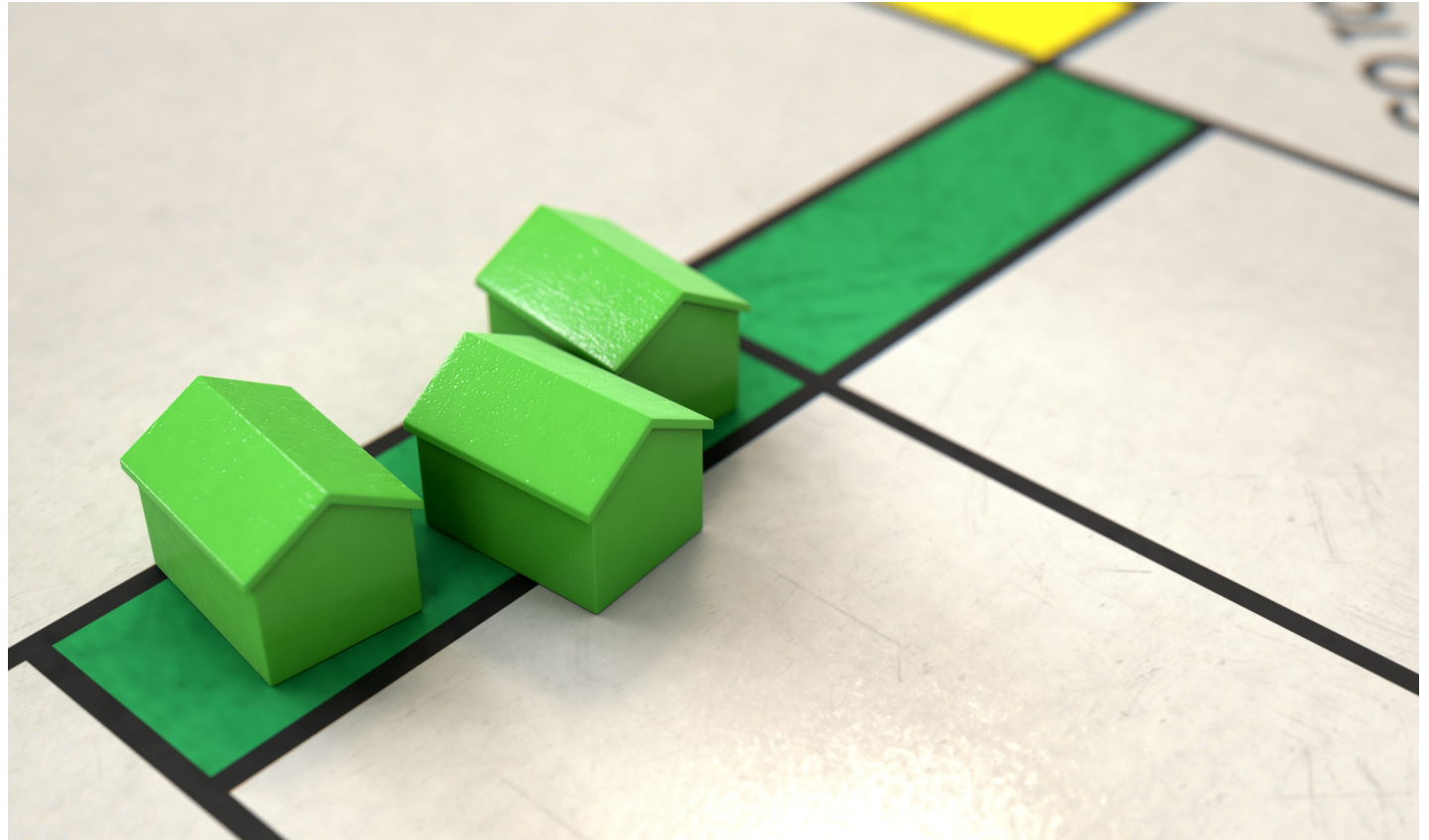
# Transition Planning BEFORE Exiting Care

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- ✓ Refer youth to LA County Youth Coordinated Entry System 6 months prior to exit.
- ✓ **Begin planning well in advance of when NMD exits care.**
- ✓ DCFS & Probation System Liaisons can help youth apply for housing services (THP-Plus, problem-solving funds, RRH funds).
- ✓ Invite Liaisons to 6-month and 90-day transition planning meetings.
- ✓ Ensure youth:
  - have access to their vital records/documents,
  - have an updated TILP (if they are interested in THP Plus and/or ILP services),
  - or designated representative is the payee before case closure if youth is SSI-eligible.

# Building Youth Tenancy Skills

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# Helping Youth Understand Housing Responsibilities

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- Pay rent on time (if required to pay rent)
- Keep unit in good repair and pay for any damage they cause
- Follow the rules in the lease and/or program agreement (e.g., pets, smoking, overnight guests, parking)
- Respect other tenants' rights (e.g., keeping noise down, not blocking hallways or leaving security gates open)

# Help Youth Understand Key Housing Rights

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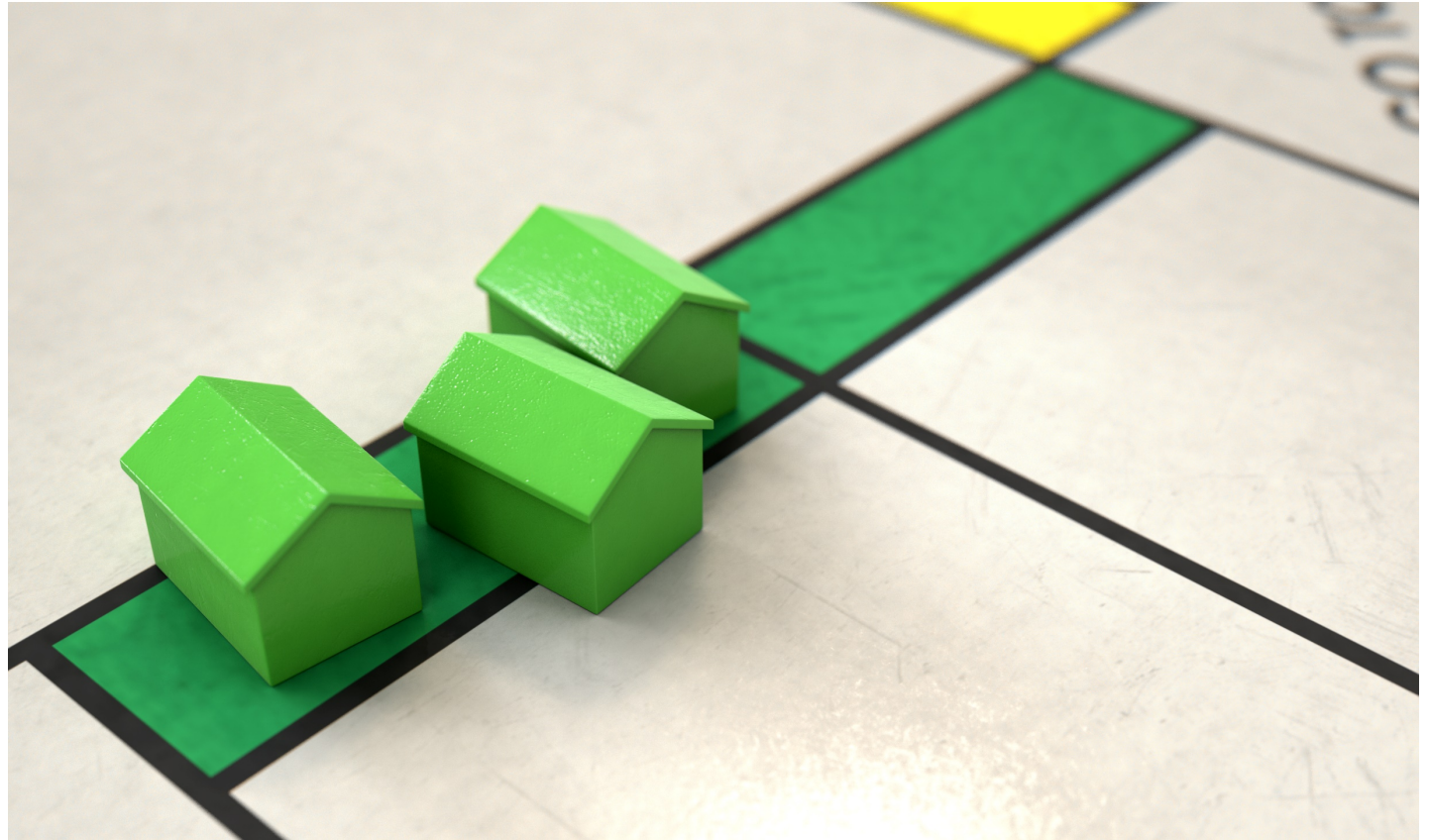
*Protection from unlawful discrimination—no adverse actions based on a protected status*

- Right to:
  - request a reasonable accommodation for a disability;
  - safe, adequate, and sanitary housing; and
  - proper written notice regarding any potential discharge/termination/eviction.



# Housing Assistance Resources

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# Addressing Housing Rights & Stability Concerns

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- Support youth in trying to resolve the issue with THP/landlord/roommate.
- Request a Child and Family Team meeting (for NMDs).
- Inform youth of resources:
  - Family Urgent Response System: 1-833-939-3877 or [info@cal-furs.org](mailto:info@cal-furs.org)
  - Housing Rights Center: 1-800-477-5977
  - CDSS Foster Care Ombudsperson: 1-877-846-1602 or [fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov](mailto:fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov)
  - Youth's dependency attorney (for NMDs)
  - Public Counsel: 213-385-2977 ext. 500
  - Alliance for Children's Rights: 213-368-6010

# Addressing Housing Rights & Stability Concerns

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Assist youth in seeking legal help immediately upon receiving any type of notice (verbal or written) of discharge or eviction.

LA County Resources:

- Stay Housed LA at <https://www.stayhousedla.org/referral/> or call 888-694-0040 for legal help
- Public Counsel: 213-385-2977 ext. 500
- Alliance for Children's Rights: 213-368-6010
- Youth who experience unlawful housing discrimination may submit a complaint with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing at <https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/ComplaintProcess/> or by calling: 800-884-1684

# Practice Recommendations for Successful Transitions

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**IMPROVING LEGAL PERMANENCY FOR OLDER FOSTER YOUTH**

# Increasing Permanency for Older Youth

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- Multiple research studies have demonstrated the **importance of achieving permanency** (adoption, returning home to live with biological parent(s), living with relatives, legal guardianship), and the need to address challenges surrounding permanency to improve outcomes for youth who are or have been involved in the foster and/or probation systems.
- Youth who exit foster care without a permanent family or adult connection have a **higher risk for increased rates of homelessness, poverty, teen pregnancy, a lack of education, and involvement with the criminal justice system.**
- Having a **stable, permanent family and supportive community is linked with youth being able to successfully attain permanent housing, higher education, self-efficacy, and social/emotional well-being.**
- Caregivers and youth lack awareness of the options for legal permanency after age 18, such as non-minor dependent adoption; as well as repeatedly mention a concern around public benefits – both the potential loss of benefits following adoption, and the lack of information on available benefits.

Source: Office of Child Protection, Permanency Report for Los Angeles County Foster Youth, August 2018.

# Omar

- Adopted at age 19 by his foster parents, Andrew and Shelley Villaescusa, 7/6/17.
- Featured on Fox11 "Wednesday's Child" program and matched with the couple at age 16.
- A strong bond formed, but Omar wasn't quite ready for a permanent family; he wanted his independence and went back to his previous group home.
- After turning 18, he realized he wanted to be adopted and Keith and Shelly welcomed him back into their home.





# Permanency for Older Youth Myths

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## MYTH

It's better not to leave foster care to permanency so you can continue to have access to benefits.

## MYTH

Child welfare work with older youth can focus exclusively on independent living skills, not permanency planning.

## MYTH

Respecting youth voice means accepting their "no" to permanency without further inquiry or work.

## MYTH

It's too late to work on permanency for older youth.



# Permanency for Older Youth Myth vs. Fact

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## MYTH

Better not to leave foster care to permanency so you can continue to have access to benefits.

## FACT

Youth adopted at age 16 or older do **not lose** benefits through adoption.

- At least 15 states including California (AB12) provide for an extension of adoption assistance program (AAP) benefits to age 21 if the youth is adopted at age 16 or older.
- In addition, youth adopted at age 16 or older qualify for the Independent Living Program (ILP) so they do not lose any of those benefits by being adopted, either.

## MYTH

Better not to leave foster care to permanency so you can continue to have access to benefits.

## FACTS

Youth in guardianship with relatives qualify for ***KinGap*** to age 21 if the guardianship was established at age 16 or older. Youth in guardianship with non-relatives qualify for ***State Foster Care benefits*** to age 21, regardless of the age the guardianship was established.

Youth in guardianship with relatives qualify for ***ILP benefits*** if the guardianship was established at age 16 or older. Youth in guardianship with non-relatives qualify for ILP if the guardianship was established at age 8 or older.

## MYTH

Child welfare work with older youth can focus exclusively on independent living skills, not permanency planning.

## FACTS

Social workers **must** focus on **both** developing youth's independent living skills and finding a permanent connection, even an adoptive family.

Independent living skills are important, but permanency should also be a goal for older youth/young adults. Family or other permanent connections are important at every age and stage of life.

**Example:** California AB 12 and AB 1712 – Social workers ***are required*** to continue to provide permanency planning for youth in the Extended Foster Care program after age 18.

## MYTH

It's too late to focus on finding an adoptive family for an older youth.

## FACTS

It's never too late to find a permanent legal family for a youth/young adult. Adoption is a permanency option worth considering for youth that are transitioning out of care or who are remaining in extended foster care at/after age 18.

Little effort is put into understanding what youth are saying "no" to. Many "nos" are based on misunderstandings, while others are based on barriers we must address:

- *"I do not deserve family."*
- *"I do not have time for family. I have to get ready for discharge."*
- *"I cannot trust anyone and don't trust the system to find me a family."*

**We must respect youth voice, but we also have an independent obligation to make continuous efforts to help youth understand what permanency can look like for them and achieve that outcome.**

# NMD Adoption

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## Legally possible for a youth to be adopted at age 18 and older (AB 1712)

- Young adults ages 18-20 that remain in Extended Foster Care and under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court can be adopted and retain their AB12 benefits (incl. ILP benefits), as well as receive AAP benefits and MediCal coverage.
- RFA approval is not required for NMD adoption ([CDSS Statewide RFA Technical Assistance Call 11/7/18](#)).
- NMD adoption does involve **an assessment** of the prospective adoptive parent(s) appropriateness for the NMD's adoption, as specified in [WIC 366.31\(f\)\(5\)](#) and [All-County Letter 13-100](#).
- Statutory framework for NMD adoption is under [WIC 366.31\(f\)](#).

# NMD Adoption – Statutory Framework

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At six-month review hearing, the juvenile court shall inquire about progress being made to provide **permanent connections** for the NMD; and determine whether a prospective adoptive parent has been **identified and assessed as appropriate** for the NMD's adoption. (WIC 366.31(e)(4))

At a review hearing, **at the request of an NMD** who has an **established relationship** with an adult determined to be the NMD's **permanent connection**, the juvenile court may order NMD adoption as the permanent plan. (WIC 366.31(e)(4))

- Sets hearing for finalization of the adoption within 60 days
- Agency must prepare and submit **report specified in WIC 366.31(f)(5)** within 10 days before the adoption finalization hearing, **describing the assessment:**
  - Length and nature of the relationship;
  - Criminal background clearances completed;
  - AAP agreement signed;
  - Best interests of the NMD and the prospective adoptive parent(s); and
  - Mutual consent of the NMD and the prospective adoptive parent(s).

**Court shall make findings and orders to approve the adoption agreement and declare:**

- Legal relationship of parent and child, with all the rights and responsibilities of that relationship; and
- Birth parents relieved of all parental duties toward, and responsibility for, the NMD and have no rights over the adopted NMD.

# NMD Adoption

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**Case planning** for NMD adoptions should include at least:

- *Assisting the NMD in identifying permanent connections*, including facilitating contact with a relative;
- *Documenting the NMD's desire to be adopted* by an adult who has been established as the NMD's permanent connection

Social worker or probation officer responsible for **preparing assessment of the potential adoptive family** (ACL 13-100, Attachment A)

- Youth-focused;
- Evaluate length and nature of the relationship, including the motivation to adopt;
- Criminal background clearances;
- Face to face interviews;
- Mutually consent to the adoption;
- Determination that adoption is in best interests of NMD and adoptive parent(s); and
- Recommendation re: the NMD adoption.

**Disclosure of** NMD's medical, psychosocial and historical background **information** as determined by the NMD.

- Social worker responsible for providing specific advisement and instructions to NMD.
- NMD has sole authority to disclose or permit disclosure of the information to the prospective adoptive parent(s).



# NMD Adoption

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Judicial Council of California developed legal forms for NMD adoption – **Agreement of Adoption (JV-475), Order of Adoption (JV-479), Consent of Spouse (JV-477)**

- NMD's status as an adult requires the NMD to consent to the adoption.
- NMD adoption is based on the mutual consent of two or three adults (i.e., the NMD and the prospective adoptive parent or parents). Termination of parental rights is therefore not required.

Los Angeles Juvenile Court developed additional legal form – **Petition for Adoption (local form)**

- Adoption Unit (clerk) requiring for opening adoption case with an adoption case number.

# OCP Benefits Guide

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- LA County OCP [Foster Youth Benefit and Entitlement Charts](#) and accompanying [Reference Guide](#) for transition-age youth
- Information on programs that foster and probation youth may be eligible for during the time they're in care and afterward, including if they exit foster care through legal permanency including adoption.

# Practice Recommendations for Successful Transitions

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**LINKAGES TO SAFETY NET PROGRAMS**

# Connecting to Safety Net Programs

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**Many of these safety net programs are available to youth while they're participating in extended foster care.**



# CALFRESH (AKA FOOD STAMPS)

- CalFresh (known federally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or (SNAP)), is a nutrition program that provides monthly food benefits to households.
  - Benefits are issued monthly on an EBT card.
  - There are limits to how CalFresh benefits can be used (Yes: food and plants to grow; No: medications, hot foods, and self-care items like soap and diapers).
- Eligibility is based on who is in the household, and meeting the income requirements.
  - A household is defined as a group of people that (1) live together AND (2) purchase and prepare food together.
- **Some NMDs are eligible for CalFresh while they're participating in extended foster care.**
  - Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis and the county considers the household's earned and unearned income.  
NOTE: only the portion of the foster care payment that the youth receives directly should count as income!

# MEDI-CAL COVERAGE FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

## Who Qualifies

- Youth in foster care (including foster youth supervised by juvenile probation) in ANY STATE on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Living in California now
- Are younger than age 26

## What's Covered

- Medical care
- Vision exams (glasses and contact lenses are not covered for youth over 21)
- Substance abuse treatment
- Mental health services and counseling
- Dental Care (braces are not covered for youth over 21)

For more information, visit [coveredtil26.org](https://coveredtil26.org)

# SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

## Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP) (Title XVI Benefits)

- Needs-Based Federal Assistance program administered by the Social Security Administration for those who are disabled, blind, or aged 65
  - Must be low-income and have low-assets (under \$2,000) to qualify
- The disability definition for a child (under age 18) is: “a physical or mental health condition(s) that very seriously limit his or her activities and the condition(s) must have lasted, or be expected to last, at least 1 year or result in death.

## Social Security Benefits (Retirement, Survivor, Disability Insurance “RSDI”) (Title II Benefits)

- Earned benefits program administered by the Social Security Administration based on a youth’s parent’s employment record and include:
  - Dependent’s benefits, when a parent is receiving RSDI for retirement or disability.
  - Survivor’s benefits, when a parent who has earned enough work quarters has died.
- In order for a youth to qualify for these benefits, the child’s parent had to work enough quarters to establish eligibility and the amount of these benefits varies widely based on the parent’s work history and income.
- Youth are eligible until age 18, or age 19 if they’re a full-time student (no higher than grade 12).
  - Also, youth may be able to continue to receive RSDI benefits as a Disabled Adult Child after the age of 18 if they become disabled before age 22.
- There are no income or asset limits for RSDI benefits.



## SSI - AB 1331 AND AB 1633 REQUIREMENTS

- AB 1331 requires that counties screen foster youth (including probation-supervised foster youth) between the ages of 16.5 and 17.5 for potential eligibility for SSI, and for those likely to be eligible for SSI, to apply on the youth's behalf.
- If the child is eligible for federal AFDC-FC (federal foster care payments), the county also has an obligation to shift the youth's foster care payment to nonfederal AFDC-FC during the month of application for SSI, and for one month/year after SSI is granted to maintain eligibility for SSI.
- Counties are also obligated to provide information and assistance regarding:
  - The federal requirement that the youth establish continuing disability as an adult, if necessary, in order for SSI benefits to continue beyond his or her 18th birthday.
  - The process for becoming his or her own payee, or designating an appropriate representative payee if benefits continue beyond his or her 18th birthday, and regarding any SSI benefits that have accumulated on his or her behalf.
- Finally, if the county is the payee for either a youth's SSI benefits or RSDI benefits, the county must establish a no-cost, interest-bearing maintenance account for each child (individual accounts), keep an itemized current account of all income and expense items, and establish procedures for disbursing money from the accounts, **including disbursing the net balance to the beneficiary upon release from care.**

# BENEFITS FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING YOUTH

## CalWORKs (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or TANF)

- CalWORKs provides monthly cash assistance payments to low-income families with minor children.
  - The benefit is provided on an EBT card.
  - There are income and resource/assets requirements to establish eligibility.
- CalWORKs is intended to be a time-limited transition program to move parents into employment (generally only 48 months, but some time extenders can apply).

## The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- **Who:** Serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk.
- **What:** Provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care.
- **Where:** WIC services are provided in many places, including:
  - County Health Departments, Hospitals, Community Centers, Schools, Public Housing Sites, and Mobile Clinics.

# GENERAL ASSISTANCE (GA)/GENERAL RELIEF (GR)

- GA or GR is cash aid administered and paid by the county for indigent residents who don't have any other source of support.
  - GA is available to people who cannot qualify or have not yet qualified **for any other cash benefit program** (programs like SSI or CalWORKs).
- Most counties make it a loan.
  - Note: County may only collect if the former GA/GR recipient has a financial surplus “beyond the amount it takes to meet the needs of herself and her family.” *County of San Diego v. Muniz* (1978) 22 Cal. 3d 29.
- The income limits are generally less than the monthly benefit and the asset limits are at the county's discretion.
- Each county's program is different.

# THP-PLUS HOUSING

- **What:** A county program intended to help former foster youth achieve self-sufficiency through a combination of supportive services, funding, and transitional housing.
- **Who:** Youth are eligible for THP-Plus if they exited foster care (whether supervised by child welfare or juvenile probation) on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday from a county that has elected to participate in the THP-Plus Program.
- **Time of eligibility:** Eligible youth can stay in THP-Plus housing for a maximum of 24 cumulative months, and the maximum age for THP-Plus is 24 years old. However, a county may choose to extend its THP-Plus program until the age of 25 or for a total of 36 cumulative months for any THP-Plus tenant that meets one of the following criteria (in addition to the general eligibility criteria):
  - The former foster youth is completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential; OR
  - The former foster youth is enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary education, including an accredited vocational institution.



Webinar resources, including recording and supplemental materials, will be posted at <https://allianceforchildrensrights.org/resources/>



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