THE ACADEMY
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SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SACHS Research Summary:
Extended Foster Care Participation &
Preventing Homelessness Among Young Adults Exiting Foster Care

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November 2018

SACHS
Southern Area Consortium
of Human Services

INSPIRING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS
IN HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

More than 45 states currently extend care to foster youth over 18 and with good reason. Neuroscience has shown that "typical" youth do not reach self-sufficiency until age 26. Most youth outside the foster care system continue to receive extensive support from their families in the form of financial help, housing, educational assistance and emotional support. Research has shown that extended foster care helps youth in the child welfare system to achieve better outcomes in adulthood. Young people who remain in foster care until age 21 are less likely to experience homelessness or become pregnant before age 21 and are more likely to be employed and attend college compared with those who leave care at age 18.

California's Extended Foster Care Program (EFC), *The California Fostering Connections to Success Act* was signed into law September 30, 2010 through Assembly Bill (AB) 12 and became effective January 1, 2012. Enrollment is voluntary and flexible. Foster youth who remain in care past the age of 18 can opt out and re-enter the program, are eligible for additional age-appropriate supervised independent living settings and can use a number of participation options to maintain eligibility. In a 2015 survey of California child welfare social workers, 89 percent believed that older youth in foster care "need" or "absolutely need" help after turning 18 years old.

At the request of the Southern Area Consortium of Human Services (SACHS) Directors, this research summary sets out to answer two questions:
- *Why are eligible youth not participating in extended foster care (EFC) and the services associated with EFC?*
- *What enhancements can be made to foster care and EFC services so youth exiting the child welfare system can successfully avoid homelessness?*

Data on participation in the EFC program is presented, along with research on the potential impacts of child welfare systems (including Independent Living Programs) regular emphasis on the term "self-reliance" as the goal for youth aging out of foster care (versus one that emphasizes independence and interdependence as mutual goals), as well as survey data from caseworkers and foster youth that provide insights into why foster youth do and do not participate in EFC and their knowledge of its associated benefits/services.

Recommendations for enhancing foster youth participation in EFC are included as well as various strategies for preventing homelessness among this population over the long-term. The report concludes with a selection of supplemental resources, including hyperlinks to data, tools, additional background on EFC; national continuums of care models for preventing homelessness among the broader population of unaccompanied youth/young adults; supports for post-secondary education for foster youth; reports on related efforts/studies; and a list of national and state organizations and initiatives focusing on youth/young adult homelessness.

I. Background
The Need for Extending Foster Care Beyond Age 18

- More than 45 states currently extend care to youth in foster care age 18 and older, recognizing that continued support during the late teens and early twenties is critical to youth during a period of emerging adulthood.[1]
- Neuroscience demonstrates that older youth are in the process of establishing greater autonomy, developing a personal identity, and learning greater impulse control.[2] Despite unique strengths and assets, they are not yet fully mature adults and should not be expected to function within adult-oriented systems. They need and deserve continued assistance, connections to caring adults, and safety nets as they move into adulthood.
- Most peers of foster youth moving into their twenties, continue to receive extensive support from their families, in the form of financial help, housing, educational assistance, and emotional support. Extended foster care (allowing young adults over 18 to stay in foster care) can close the gap between youth in foster care and their peers.[3]
- Research finds extended foster care helps youth in the child welfare system—who do not always have built-in support networks—achieve better outcomes in adulthood. Young people who remain in care to age 21 are less likely to experience homelessness or become pregnant before age 21 and are more likely to be employed and attend college compared with those who leave care at age 18.[4]
    - Courtney (2015) estimates that based solely on increased educational attainment, every $1 that Illinois spends on foster care beyond age 18 provides a benefit of around $2 to foster youth in increased lifetime earnings.
    - Improved outcomes for foster youth aging out can also lessen financial burdens on society–with reduced costs incurred (e.g. less dependence on public benefits; decreased risk for criminal behavior, incarceration and teen pregnancy).[5]
- Studies have found that, while extending foster care to age 21 is effective in improving outcomes at age 21, many young adults continue to experience negative outcomes such as

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[1] Juvenile Law Center. (2018, May 31). Juvenile law center launches national extended foster care review. *Targeted News Service*. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/juvenile-law-center-launches-national-extended-foster-care-review

[2] Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. (2011). *The Adolescent Brain: New Research and Its Implications for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care.* St. Louis, MO: Author. Retrieved from https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-theAdolescentBrain-2011.pdf

[3] Juvenile Law Center. (2018, May 31). Juvenile law center launches national extended foster care review. *Targeted News Service*. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/juvenile-law-center-launches-national-extended-foster-care-review

[4] Courtney, M.E., Dworsky, A., Cusick, G.R., Havlicek, J. Perez, A., Keller, T. (2007). *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 21.* Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago. Available at: http://wwwnews.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/071212.foster.study.pdf; Dworsky, A., & Courtney, M.E. (2010). *Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study.* Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Available at: http://www.chapinhall.org/research/brief/assessing-impact-extending-care-beyond-age18-homelessness-emerging-findings-midwest

[5] Courtney, M. (2015). *Do the Benefits of Extending Foster Care to Age 21 Outweigh the Costs? Evidence from Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin.* Retrieved from https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CourtneyReportChapter.pdf Also see: Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2013). *Cost Avoidance: The Business Case for Investing in Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.* (2013). Retrieved from: http://www.aecf.org/resources/cost-avoidance-the-business-case-for-investing-in-youth-aging-out-of-foster/ For example, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative study estimates a conservative estimate of financial impacts at nearly $8 billion per cohort year as the "cost of bad outcomes" making the point that tremendous return on investment can be achieved by providing effective services and supports and creating permanent relationships with responsible and caring adults.

homelessness, underemployment, and the inability to complete college, at age 23 and beyond.[6]

- o Foster youth transitioning into adulthood, like their peers with no history of foster care, need some supports in place even after age 21. According to some researchers, the "typical" youth is not expected to reach self-sufficiency until age 26 and receives, on average, $44,500 in parental support after age 18.[7]
- o Providing housing assistance and other supports to young adults after they leave extended foster care is critical if the overall goal is to prevent and not just delay homelessness.[8]

- Successful extended foster care systems provide more than additional years of care after youth would otherwise age out. Extended foster care systems provide young adults with comprehensive skills, resources, and relationships that remain as aftercare supports as they transition to adulthood. To fulfill their mission of supporting youth, extended care systems must engage foster youth in a way that is respectful of their status as young adults, as well as, their need for continued support. It also must be trauma-informed and supported by adolescent development research.[9]

- o In this regard, the National Extended Foster Care Review database, the National Conference of State Legislature's webpage on Supporting Older Youth in Foster Care[10] and Child Trends' publication, Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey[11] reveal that there is still much work to be done to ensure that state and county systems engage youth people in age- and developmentally-appropriate ways that recognize and respect the increasing independence older youth/young adults display .

California's Extended Foster Care Program[12]

- The California Fostering Connections to Success Act was signed into law September 30, 2010 through Assembly Bill (AB) 12 and became effective January 1, 2012. It is often referred to simply as AB 12 or extended foster care (EFC) and will be referenced as such in this report. AB 12 allows foster care for eligible youth to extend beyond age 18 up to age 21.
- Eligible youth who voluntary enroll in EFC are designated as "non-minor dependents" (NMDs). Youth voice, choice, and preference are intended to be at the heart of case planning and court processes, and the fact that youth in EFC are legal adults participating on their own free will means that EFC is structurally very different from foster care for minors.

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[6] Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Brown, A., Cary, C., Love, K., & Vorhies, V. (2011). *Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

[7] Newman, L.A., Goscha, S., & Coakley, P. (2015). *Transitional Aged Youth with Barriers: Supports Needed to Achieve Self-Sufficiency.* Boston, MA: Public Consulting Group, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/media/1299/transitional_aged_youth_with_barriers_white_paper.pdf

[8] Dworsky, A. & Courtney, M. E. (2010). *Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study.* Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/research/extended-foster-care-delays-but-does-not-prevent-homelessness/

[9] Torpey, K. (2018, July 27). *Nebraska's B2i Program: Extended Foster Care That Honors Youth Voice.* Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/nebraskas-b2i-program-extended-foster-care-honors-youth-voice

[10] Available at: http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/supports-older-youth.aspx

[11] Fryer, G., Jordan, E., DeVooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey.* Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

[12] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf

- California's EFC program is flexible, foster youth who remain in care past the age of 18: [13]
    - Can opt out and reenter,
    - Are eligible for additional age-appropriate supervised independent living settings,[14]
    - Can use a number of participation options available to maintain eligibility including a "catch-all" option, which allows a NMD to maintain eligibility by participating in an activity designed to remove barriers to employment. The catch-all option is meant to be a bridge for any gaps that may occur due to unforeseen difficulties or bumps the NMD may encounter, though nowhere is it specified that the option is temporary. This flexibility is meant to recognize the differing needs of NMD, to be age appropriate, and to encourage participation.[15]
- In September 2018, [All County Letter (ACL) No. 18-101](#) informed California counties that NMDs can now also enter, reenter or remain in EFC if they are married or get married. Married youth in EFC are subject to the same supervision requirements as other NMDs and they are eligible for the same placement options (if available and appropriate). In addition, this ACL stated that otherwise eligible non-minors who are involved in the military reserves or National Guard can also participate in EFC. The only exception to this eligibility is if they are called to active duty status or otherwise not available for required monthly caseworker visitation.[16]
- In a survey of California child welfare social workers, their own attitudes about extended foster care is also noteworthy. Although there is some trepidation among caseworkers that the extension of care will lead to greater dependency among youth on the child welfare system, workers also have serious concerns about the ability of many youth to survive on their own without extended care. The overwhelming majority of caseworkers surveyed (n=220; 89%) believe that older youth in foster care "need" or "absolutely need" help after turning 18 years old. Furthermore, over 40 percent of caseworkers (n=101) felt that youth are not ready to live on their own until they reach 20 or 21 years old and slightly under one-fifth (n=45) believe youth are not ready to be fully independent until age 25 or later.[17]

Extended Foster Care Program Participation Rates
National Rates
- In 2016, Child Trends conducted a [national survey](#) of state independent living coordinators (spanning 47 states, including California) to gather data on services and supports for young people transitioning from foster care.
    - Survey findings indicated that although foster care is almost always available in some form to youth over age 18, three quarters of states reported that most young people leave foster care before the maximum age permitted.

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[13] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf

[14] The two new placement options created with AB 12 were Transitional Housing Placement Plus Foster Care (THP-Plus-FC) and Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILP).

[15] Children's Advocacy Institute. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf,

[16] California Department of Social Services. (September 12, 2018). *All County Letter No. 18-101, Eligibility for EFC For Married Youth and Youth Performing Non-Active Duty Military Service.* http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/ACL/2018/18-101.pdf

[17] Napolitano, L., Sulimani-Aidan, Y., & Courtney, M. E. (2015). *Extended Foster Care in California: Youth and Caseworker Perspectives.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_EF_IB1015.pdf

- Nearly every state reported that foster care can be extended beyond age 18, with 40 of the 47 states that responded to the survey reporting that it is available to at least some young people up to age 21.
- In 27 states that extend foster care to age 21 or older, Child Trends found young people typically leave at age 18.[18]

Rates in California and SACHS Counties

- Utilizing the *California Child Welfare Indicators Project* reports, the figures and tables below reflect data trends on extended foster care participation (within child welfare[19]) for the State of California and cumulatively for the seven SACHS counties.[20]

Figure 1: Total Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18[21]
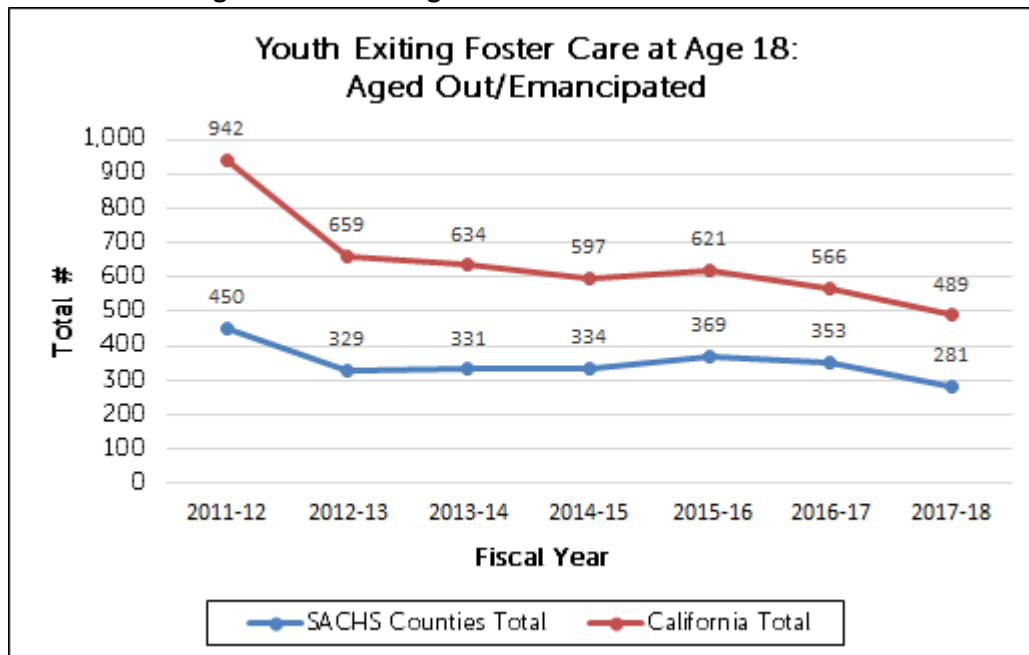
Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18: Aged Out/Emancipated

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[18] Fryer, G., Jordan, E., DeVooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey.* Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

[19] In addition to children who turn 18 being eligible for EFC through child welfare services, youth who are subject to a probation-supervised foster care placement on their 18th birthday can also access the California EFC program until they turn 21. Probation involved youth were not included in the data extracted from the *CCWIP* website for purposes of this report, but this data is available at http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

[20] Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Eyre, M., Chambers, J., Min, S., Randhawa, P., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Tran, M., Benton, C., White, J., Lee, H., & Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports.* Retrieved 11/1/2018, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

[21] Reflects the total number of total young adults who exited foster care services (child welfare only) at age 18 (CCWIP data subset: aged 18 years+60 days) due to the following exit reason: *Aged Out/Emancipated* from Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30) 2011-12 to FY 2017-18. Reflects those who were in care a total of 8 days or more. Includes cumulative, exit totals across Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Figure 2: Total Young Adults Enrolled in Extended Foster Care[22]
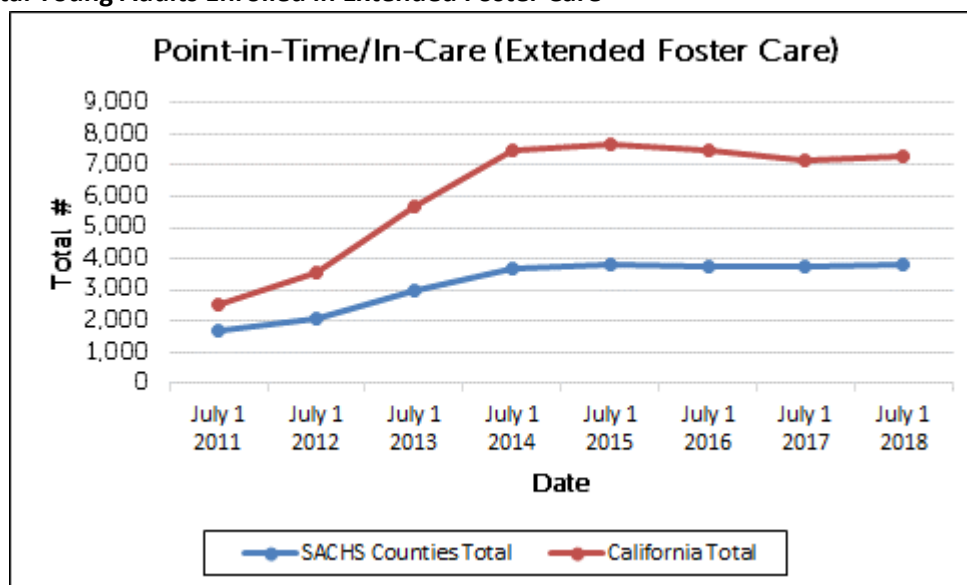
Table 1

Young Adults (Age 18-21) in EFC (Child Welfare)	Point in Time/In Care (July 1, 2011-July 1, 2018)							
	Jul 1, 2011	Jul 1, 2012	Jul 1, 2013	Jul 1, 2014	Jul 1, 2015	Jul 1, 2016	Jul 1, 2017	Jul 1, 2018
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
SACHS Counties Total [23]	1,716	2,068	2,971	3,710	3,838	3,773	3,724	3,816
California Total	2,532	3,572	5,690	7,497	7,692	7,460	7,176	7,263

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[22] Reflects the total number of total young adults (aged 18-21) enrolled in extended foster care services (child welfare only) at the same point in time annually (July 1st), from 2011 to 2018.
[23] Includes cumulative, point-in-time totals across all young adults (ages 18-21 only) enrolled in child welfare extended foster care in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Figure 3: Total Extended Foster Care Entries[24] by Fiscal Year

Extended Foster Care Entries
(18-20 year olds)
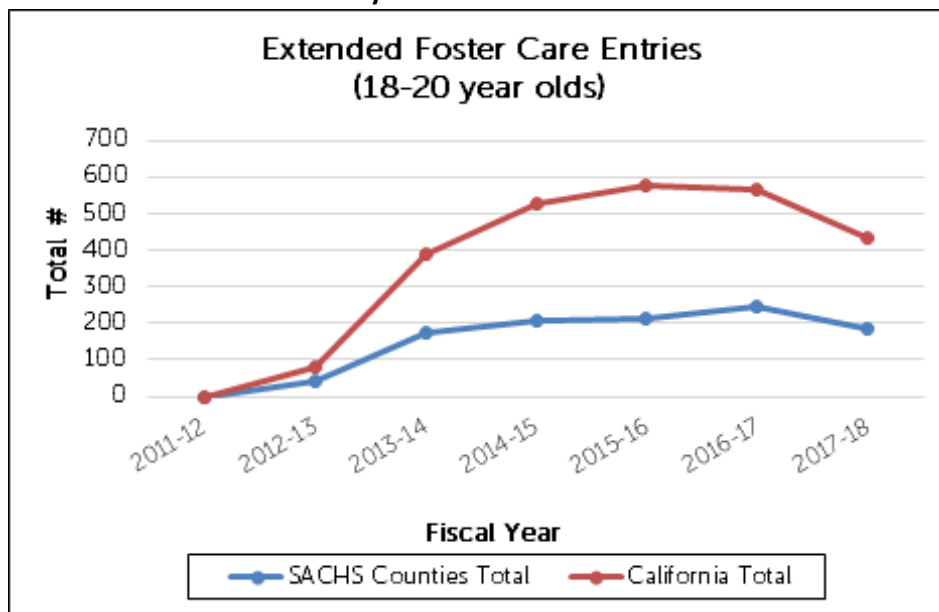
Table 2

Young Adults (Age 18-20) Entering EFC (Child Welfare)	Extended Foster Care Entries by Fiscal Year (FY 2011/12-FY 2017/18)						
	Fiscal Year 2011-12	Fiscal Year 2012-13	Fiscal Year 2013-14	Fiscal Year 2014-15	Fiscal Year 2015-16	Fiscal Year 2016-17	Fiscal Year 2017-18
	n	n	n	n	n	N	n
SACHS Counties Total[25]	40	176	205	211	245	187	176
California Total	78	390	529	576	566	435	404

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[24] Reflects the total number of entries into EFC services (child welfare only) by young adults (aged 18-20) from Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30) 2011-12 to FY 2017-18. It includes only those young adults entering EFC who were in care a total of 8 days or more.
[25] Includes cumulative total entries across all EFC young adults (ages 18-21 only) enrolled in child welfare foster care in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

Importance of Safe and Stable Housing for Youth Exiting Foster Care

- Exiting foster care and facing adulthood without strong connections to families, school, employment, and communities places young people at risk in both the short and long-term. The array and availability of services and interrelated supports youth transitioning from foster care need often fall into six major service areas:[26]
    1. Post-secondary education
    2. Employment and career development
    3. Financial capability[27]
    4. Safe, stable, and affordable housing
    5. Health and mental health care; and
    6. Permanent relationships with supportive adults
- From the six major service areas above, stable housing provides the foundation upon which people build their lives. Without a safe, affordable place to live, it is almost impossible to achieve one's full potential. High rates of housing instability and homelessness can exacerbate problems for youth exiting foster care, creating significant obstacles to healthy development and self-sufficiency.[28]
    o Prior research indicates that experiencing homelessness can have negative effects on youth's health, their close relationships, and their educational outcomes—including greater school mobility, likelihood of being chronically absent, lower achievement and graduation rates.[29]
    o Youth that are homeless experience higher incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety. They are also more likely than their housed peers to report suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. In a large study in Philadelphia, unaccompanied homeless youth were forty-five percent more likely to have considered suicide and almost five times as likely to have hurt themselves on purpose on one or more occasions in the prior year.[30]
    o Securing and maintaining a stable place to live provides youth with a greater sense of security and confidence. Stability in housing supports youth in seeking and maintaining employment, attending college, accessing physical and mental health services, as well as building and maintaining strong interpersonal relationships.[31]
- One of the greatest challenges faced by young people aging out of foster care is finding an appropriate, safe, stable and affordable place to live.

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[26] Fryar, G., Jordan, E., & Devooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care.* Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

[27]Financial capability refers to a person's ability to manage his or her budget and achieve his or her financial goals. Young people who have experienced foster care often lack exposure to financial experiences such as banking and budgeting habits and have less adult support than their peers in learning budgeting or money management skills. They may also face issues related to their credit which can affect housing options.

[28] Fryar, G., Jordan, E., & Devooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care.* Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

[29] Related studies: Brumley et al., 2015; Fantuzzo et al., 2012; Herbers, et al., 2012; Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, 2015; Ingram, Bridgeland, Reed, & Atwell, 2016; Obradović et al., 2009; and Tobin, 2016

[30] Perlman, S, Willard, J, Herbers, J, et al. (2014). Youth homelessness: Prevalence and mental health correlates. *Journal of the Society for Social Work & Research, 5*(3), 361–77.

[31] Children's Initiative for Fostering Futures Initiative. (2015). *Survey of San Diego County Extended Foster Care (EFC) Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://www.jitfosteryouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2015-Study-of-SD-County-EFC-Youth-FINAL.pdf

- o Child Trends' (2017) publication, <u>Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey</u> asked states to report a primary area of strength and a primary area in which they could do better in supporting young people transitioning from foster care. Twenty-one states responded that housing was a primary area in need of improvement or an area in which their state is actively working to improve, specifically through providing transitional and/or affordable housing.[32]

Current Housing Data on California Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18 or Older[33]

- Based on data from California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau, Table 5 below shows outcomes for foster youth exiting care at age 18 or older, including the number of and percentage with housing arrangements (reported from January 1, 2017-June 30, 2018). Housing arrangement includes:
  - o Youth who have made arrangements to rent their own housing or to pay rent to or share rent with another person
  - o Youth who have made arrangements to live free of rent with another individual
  - o Youth who have made arrangements to live in supportive transitional housing
  - o Youth who have made arrangements to receive subsidized housing
  - o Youth who have made arrangements to live in a college dorm the next available quarter/semester, and
  - o Youth who have made housing arrangements other that those listed above (e.g., military, Job Corps, California Conservation Corps or AmeriCorps)

  Table 5 on the following page includes both overall statewide data for California and county reported data for each of the seven individual SACHS counties.

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[32] Fryer, G., Jordan, E., DeVooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey*. Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from <u>https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf</u>

[33] Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Eyre, M., Chambers, J., Min, S., Randhawa, P., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Yee, H., Tran, M., Benton, C., White, J., Lee, H., & Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved 11/1/2018, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: <u>http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare</u>

Table 5 *(*Statewide/County Total includes both Child Welfare and Probation Youth)*

**Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18 or Older (Measure 8A)**										
Data Source: SOC 405X & SOC 405XP, http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Research-and-Data/Childrens-Programs-Data-Tables											
CA Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau			*Time Period: January 1, 2017-June 30, 2018*								
County	Agency	Age Group	DENOMINATOR Whereabouts Known During Quarter	Completed High School or Equivalency	Percentage Who Completed High School or Equivalency	Obtained Employment	Percentage Who Obtained Employment	Youth w/Housing Arrangements	Percentage of Youth w/Housing Arrangements	Youth with Permanency Connection	Percentage of Youth with Permanency Connection
Statewide	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	336	99	29%	71	21%	276	82%	303	90%
		NMD Age 18	303	122	40%	63	21%	227	75%	253	83%
		NMD Age 19	266	176	66%	64	24%	184	69%	234	88%
		NMD Ages 20-21	2609	2155	83%	1698	65%	2454	94%	2498	96%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	247	142	57%	125	51%	204	83%	225	91%
	Child Welfare Total		3761	2694	72%	2021	54%	3345	89%	3513	93%
	Probation Total		931	540	58%	305	33%	731	79%	811	87%
Statewide Total*			4692	3234	69%	2326	50%	4076	87%	4324	92%
Imperial	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	5	2	40%	1	20%	5	100%	5	100%
		NMD Age 18	9	4	44%	0	0%	8	89%	9	100%
		NMD Age 19	4	4	100%	0	0%	3	75%	4	100%
		NMD Ages 20-21	8	4	50%	4	50%	8	100%	8	100%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	6	2	33%	1	17%	3	50%	6	100%
	Child Welfare Total		32	16	50%	6	19%	27	84%	32	100%
Imperial Total*			39	22	56%	11	28%	34	87%	39	100%
Los Angeles	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	169	47	28%	46	27%	138	82%	155	92%
		NMD Age 18	91	42	46%	26	29%	75	82%	82	90%
		NMD Age 19	81	54	67%	26	32%	63	78%	72	89%
		NMD Ages 20-21	951	790	83%	632	66%	911	96%	919	97%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	33	21	64%	17	52%	29	88%	33	100%
	Child Welfare Total		1325	954	72%	747	56%	1216	92%	1261	95%
Los Angeles Total*			1566	1066	68%	797	51%	1416	90%	1474	94%
Orange	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	2	0	0%	1	50%	2	100%	2	100%
		NMD Age 18	4	2	50%	0	0%	2	50%	4	100%
		NMD Age 19	6	5	83%	1	17%	6	100%	6	100%
		NMD Ages 20-21	66	61	92%	47	71%	63	95%	64	97%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	12	8	67%	9	75%	12	100%	12	100%
	Child Welfare Total		90	76	84%	58	64%	85	94%	88	98%
Orange Total*			104	87	84%	64	62%	99	95%	102	98%
Riverside	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	23	8	35%	7	30%	20	87%	22	96%
		NMD Age 18	10	4	40%	1	10%	8	80%	8	80%
		NMD Age 19	17	14	82%	2	12%	11	65%	16	94%
		NMD Ages 20-21	165	136	82%	106	64%	154	93%	162	98%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	9	4	44%	4	44%	9	100%	9	100%
	Child Welfare Total		224	166	74%	120	54%	202	90%	217	97%
Riverside Total*			268	193	72%	140	52%	242	90%	259	97%
San Bernardino	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	52	9	17%	7	13%	47	90%	49	94%
		NMD Age 18	38	14	37%	5	13%	28	74%	27	71%
		NMD Age 19	28	19	68%	4	14%	17	61%	20	71%
		NMD Ages 20-21	143	129	90%	93	65%	135	94%	134	94%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	21	9	43%	13	62%	16	76%	14	67%
	Child Welfare Total		282	180	64%	122	43%	243	86%	244	87%
San Bernardino Total*			360	204	57%	136	38%	295	82%	297	83%
Santa Barbara	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
		NMD Age 18	7	3	43%	1	14%	7	100%	7	100%
		NMD Age 19	2	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%	2	100%
		NMD Ages 20-21	23	19	83%	19	83%	21	91%	23	100%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	5	2	40%	2	40%	5	100%	5	100%
	Child Welfare Total		38	25	66%	23	61%	35	92%	38	100%
Santa Barbara Total*			50	30	60%	30	60%	46	92%	49	98%
Ventura	**Child Welfare**	Youth Who Exit at Age 18	3	1	33%	1	33%	2	67%	1	33%
		NMD Age 18	2	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%
		NMD Age 19	1	1	100%	1	100%	1	100%	1	100%
		NMD Ages 20-21	26	11	42%	17	65%	25	96%	13	50%
		Re-Entry NMD Ages 18-21	7	5	71%	3	43%	6	86%	6	86%
	Child Welfare Total		39	19	49%	23	59%	35	90%	22	56%
Ventura Total*			60	32	53%	32	53%	54	90%	41	68%

Available Housing Programs for Young Adults Exiting Foster Care

- Below are examples of some housing supports and anti-homelessness programs available in California that can serve young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless even when they are no longer a NMD (21+).
    - o **Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program** can be available to former foster and probation youth, ages 18 to 24. Services include housing as well as supportive services and case management that are designed to help youth achieve independence when they leave the program.[34]
    - o **Family Unification Program (FUP) voucher**s[35] can assist youth at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who left foster care at age 16 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days and are homeless or at risk of homelessness might to assist with the cost of housing. FUP vouchers used by youth are limited to 36 months of housing assistance.[36] For more information refer to the HUD Fact Sheet: Housing Choice Voucher Program Family Unification Program (FUP).[37]
    - o **College-Focused Rapid Rehousing** provide rental subsidies and supportive services to homeless college students, so they can live on their own and continue their education. This includes partnerships with colleges, guardian scholar programs, and nonprofits to make the college campus the primary center of service delivery. In addition, it provides students experiencing homelessness a peer navigator to support youth with housing and academic case management to students.[38,39]
    - o **Bridge Housing** offers short to medium term rental payments to stabilize housing for individuals or families.
    - o **The Foreclosure Prevention Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-289)** (signed into law in 2008) enables owners of properties financed in part with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTCs) **to claim as low-income units those occupied by low-income students who were in foster care**. Owners of LIHTC properties are required to maintain a certain percentage of their units for occupancy by low-income households; students (with some exceptions) are not generally considered low-income households for this purpose. The law does not specify the length of time these students must have spent in foster care nor require that youth are eligible only if they emancipated.
    - o In Fiscal Year 2017-2018, the **Homeless Youth and Exploitation Program,** a grant opportunity program administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services,

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[34] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (2018). *THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report 2017-2018.* San Francisco, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.jbaforyouth.org/2017-18-thp-annual-report/

[35] Note: Family Unification Program (FUP) is a program under which Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs), also commonly known as Section 8 vouchers, are provided. In addition to being offered to eligible youth/young adults exiting foster care, these vouchers are also offered to families whose lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in either the imminent placement of the family's children in out-of-home care or delay in the discharge of the children to the family from out-of-home care.

[36] U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development, Office of Housing Voucher Programs. (2017). *Fact Sheet, Housing Choice Voucher Program, Family Unification Program.* Retrieved from https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FUP_FACT_SHEET.PDF

[37] Ibid.

[38] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (Producer). (2018). *The Homeless Emergency Assistance Program: California's Newest Strategy to Address Youth Homelessness. [Video webinar].* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QRzzrJloqY&feature=youtu.be

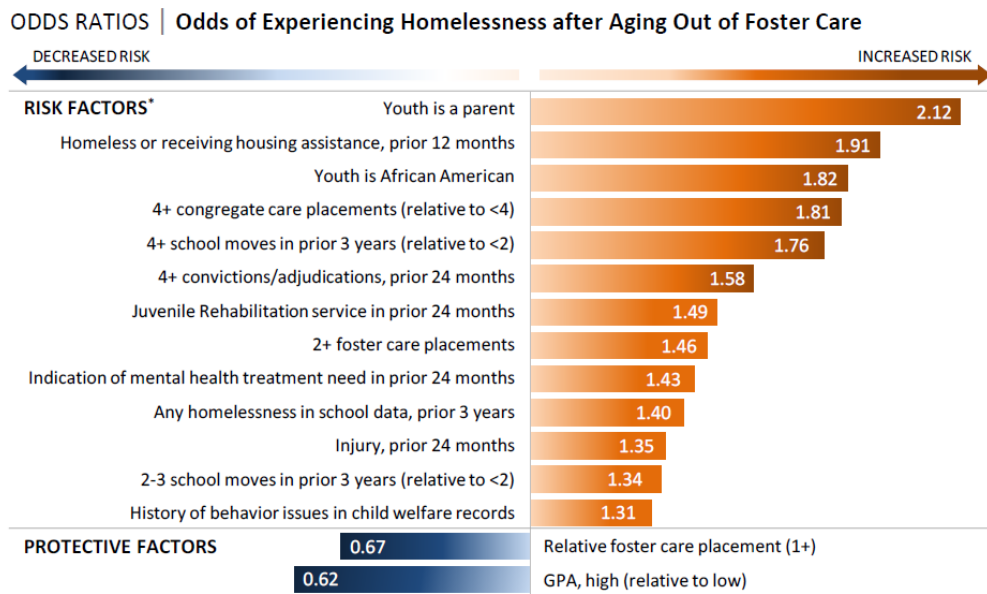[39] Note: Like Rapid Rehousing, College-Focused Rapid Rehousing: assists with housing identification and landlord recruitment, provides rental subsidies, provides case management, and utilizes Housing First Approach. However, it differs from Rapid Rehousing in that is time-limited "with flexibility," utilizes peer navigators, provides academic case (in addition to "traditional" case management), and partners with colleges.

promoted the following evidence-based services to young adults receiving supports under the Program to help them avoid homelessness: Rapid Rehousing, Benefits Advocacy, Rental Assistance, Housing Stabilization Services, Transitional Housing, Care Coordination, Supportive Housing, Employment Training, Housing Navigation, Education Supports, Street Outreach and Family Finding.[40]

Predicting Risk of Homelessness Among Youth/Young Adults Aging Out of Foster Care

- Data regarding the experiences and needs of young people experiencing homelessness establishes that their situation is often defined by multiple overlapping challenges, persistently unmet needs, problematic interactions with local systems, and many missed opportunities to intervene.[41]
- Yet, several factors and variables can impact the likelihood of a youth aging out of foster care becoming homeless. Understanding these risk and protective factors can help service providers target engagement strategies, interventions and resources accordingly.
  - o Shah, et al. (2015)[42] identified key risk and protective factors associated with youth homelessness in the 12 months after they age out of foster care (Figure 7). Authors used a predictive model that involved input from subject matter experts, various data elements (including a study population of 1,213 youth statewide who exited foster care at age 17 years-old or older and did not return to care), and a refinement of the current statistical model in Washington State.

Figure 7

ODDS RATIOS | Odds of Experiencing Homelessness after Aging Out of Foster Care

DECREASED RISK — INCREASED RISK

RISK FACTORS*

Risk Factor	Odds Ratio
Youth is a parent	2.12
Homeless or receiving housing assistance, prior 12 months	1.91
Youth is African American	1.82
4+ congregate care placements (relative to <4)	1.81
4+ school moves in prior 3 years (relative to <2)	1.76
4+ convictions/adjudications, prior 24 months	1.58
Juvenile Rehabilitation service in prior 24 months	1.49
2+ foster care placements	1.46
Indication of mental health treatment need in prior 24 months	1.43
Any homelessness in school data, prior 3 years	1.40
Injury, prior 24 months	1.35
2-3 school moves in prior 3 years (relative to <2)	1.34
History of behavior issues in child welfare records	1.31

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective Factor	Odds Ratio
Relative foster care placement (1+)	0.67
GPA, high (relative to low)	0.62

*NOTE: 1) Disrupted adoptions are highly predictive of homelessness (Odds Ratio = 3.39), but the prevalence is extremely low (2 percent) and therefore not included in the above chart, 2) prior homelessness or housing assistance was based on data from ACES and HMIS and included permanent and permanent supportive housing, and 3) all factors are statistically significant at p <.05 except history of behavior issues in child welfare records (p = .22).

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[40] For more information: http://www.caloes.ca.gov/GrantsManagementSite/Documents/HX%2018%20RFA.pdf

[41] Bay Area Legal Aid. (July 2018). *Building a Safety Net for the Safety Net: Legal Aid in Partnership with Youth. [Insights from Youth Homelessness project].* Oakland, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://baylegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-BayLegal-Youth-Homelessness-Project-Report.pdf

[42] Shah, M., Liu, Q., Mancusco, D., Marshall, D., Felver, B. Lucenko, B. & Huber, A. (2015). *Youth at Risk of Homelessness Identifying Key Predictive Factors among Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Washington State.* Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis Division. Retrieved from https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf

- o Results from Chapin Hall's (2017) national survey on homelessness found that the highest risk factor for youth/young adult homelessness was the lack of a high school diploma or GED. Youth without such basic education credentials were found to be 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness. In addition, this survey identified the second highest risk factor as having a child (parenting teens). More than one in three homeless young women were pregnant or parenting. The survey also found other certain populations–specifically, African American, Hispanic youth, American Indian and Alaska Native youth; and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are statistically more likely to experience homelessness than their peers. It also shows that young people living in rural and urban communities experience homelessness at similar rates.[43]

- o Family homelessness also contributes to youth homelessness. A 2016 study of homeless and formerly homeless youth found that 47 percent experienced homelessness both with their families and on their own.[44]

- o A recent study of youth (ages 12 to 25) experiencing homelessness in Louisville, Kentucky and southern Indiana found that one of every two females and one of every three males reported being sex-trafficked, with sixteen as the average age of their first such experience."[45]

- o There has been a lot of discussion in recent years about "disconnected youth." Disconnected youth are between the ages of 16-24 and characterized by their disconnection from education (this includes long periods without school attendance or enrollment), the workforce, and networks of social support. They are off-track to reach a future that includes self-sufficiency, economic stability, or well-being.[46]

- o A growing body of research broadly implicates social and emotional learning processes (e.g., self-management, social awareness, growth mindset and self-efficacy) in many aspects of school success and suggests these skills may represent important protective factors for promoting resilience among homeless and highly mobile students.[47]

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[43] Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

[44] Ingram, E.S., Bridgeland, J.M., Reed, B., & Atwell, M. (2016). *Hidden in plain sight: Homeless students in America's public schools.* Washington, DC: Americas Promise Alliance. Retrieved from http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf

[45] Middleton, J., Ghent, R., Gattis, M., Roe-Sepowitz, D., Goggin, R., Frey, L. (2016). *Youth Experiences Survey (YES): Exploring the Scope and Complexity of Sex Trafficking in a Sample of Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Kentuckiana.* Louisville, KY: University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work. Retrieved from https://louisville.edu/kent/research-special-programs-projects/special-projects/kentucky-2016-yes-report

[46] Bardine, D. and members of National Network for Youth's Policy Advisory Committee. (2015). *What Works to End Youth Homelessness.* Washington, DC: The National Network for Youth. Retrieved from: https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homelessness.pdf

[47] Cutuli, J. J., & Herbers, J. E. (2014). Promoting resilience for children who experience family homelessness: Opportunities to encourage developmental competence. *Cityscape, 16*(1), 113.; Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development, 82*(1), 405–432.; Moffitt, T., et al. (2011). A gradient of childhood self-control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 108*(7), 2693–2698.

Crisis of Homelessness Among College Students[48]

- Housing insecurity and homelessness can contribute to lower graduation rates for young people involved in foster care. Students struggling with these issues lack the basic support structure to allow them to properly focus on their studies and succeed.[49]
- A 2017 national survey[50] (the first survey to consider the basic needs security of former foster youth in community college) found that two in three community college students were food insecure, about half of community college students were housing insecure, and 13 to 14 percent were homeless.
  - Survey findings also included that 29 percent of former foster youth surveyed were homeless, a far higher rate than that of non-former foster youth attending community college (13 percent). Students with children were also disproportionately likely to experience food and housing insecurity.
  - There appears to be very little geographic variation in hunger and homelessness among community college students. Basic needs insecurity does not seem to be restricted to community colleges in urban areas or to those with high proportions of Pell Grant recipients, and is prevalent in all regions of the country.[51]
- Locally, one in every five of the Los Angeles Community College District's 230,000 students is homeless, and nearly two-thirds cannot afford to eat properly, according to a June 2017 survey commissioned by their system's board of trustees.[52]
- While pursuing degrees despite enduring basic needs insecurity, college students are nonetheless striving to ameliorate conditions of material hardship. Neither financial aid nor employment is a sufficient buffer to prevent students from going hungry or even homeless— at least half of the food and housing insecure students in research studies received Pell Grants and/or were employed.[53]
  - Homeless students were even more likely than housing-secure students to work more than 20 hours a week but half as likely to earn $15 per hour. As they work more and earn less, students find themselves unable to properly continue their studies.
  - In addition, parenting community college students, in many cases are missing other forms of support. Goldrick-Rab, et al. (2017) estimated that 63 percent of parenting students were food insecure and almost 14 percent were homeless, but only about five percent received any child care assistance.
- While there is an array of social programs that could support students pursuing degrees these may not be reaching them because of insufficient information, barriers and/ or eligibility requirements.[54]

[48] Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education.* Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Retrieved from https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf

[49] Alvarez, F. (2017, September 1). Without A Home: Former Foster Youth Struggle with Homelessness In College. *Foster Care Newsletter.* Retrieved from http://foster-care-newsletter.com/foster-youth-homelessness-college/#.W9v5WNJKiUl

[50] Survey respondents included more than 33,000 students at 70 community colleges in 24 states

[51] Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education.* Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Retrieved from https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf

[52] Holland, G. (2017, June 29). 1 in 5 L.A. community college students is homeless, survey finds. *Los Angeles Times.* Retrieved from https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-community-college-20170628-story.html

[53] Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2013). *Recovery: Job growth and education requirements through 2020.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

[54] Duke-Benfield, & Saunders, K. (2016). *Benefits access for college completion: Lessons learned from a community college initiative to help low-income students.* Washington, D.C.: CLASP.

II. Information Related to Why Eligible Youth Are Not Participating in EFC and Associated Services

Pressures for Self-Sufficiency Among Aged-out Foster Youth

- Independent Living Programs utilization among emancipated foster youth has primarily defined "success" as achieving self-sufficiency or self-reliance. Research has begun to analyze these pressures for self-sufficiency and independence. According to some of these studies, emancipated youth themselves have a primary goal of living on their own without relying on others for help. While more research is needed, this goal of self-sufficiency may lead youth to experience tensions between the goal of independence and obtaining or relying on others for support. Thus, this conflict could impact older youth's enrollment rates in extended foster care services.[55]

    o In one study utilizing in-depth interviews with a subset of 44 youth from the Midwest, Samuels and Pryce (2008) found that the strong desire for self-reliance led to a sense of disconnection from others and a fear of seeking and receiving emotional support. Many participants noted that they have persevered through hardship and expressed pride in their skills of self-reliance.

        ▪ This sense of striving towards self-reliance may be reinforced through Independent Living Programs that attempt to prepare youth to transition from foster care to a more independent adulthood, with the knowledge that many critical challenges and additional barriers lie ahead for this special population.[56]

    o Fear of dependence on others is also embedded within a larger societal context of dominant cultural values, such as individualism and personal autonomy that may also shape youths' personal philosophies regarding the ideal life after emancipation.[57]

        ▪ In a societal context in which many adults are dependent upon others for help at many points in the life course, limited definitions of "success" as self-sufficiency may need to be broadened.

        ▪ Given these parameters, some researchers have suggested that youth who are aging out of foster care should be encouraged to seek interdependence rather than independence as they work through the challenges associated with emerging adulthood, which would include the successful utilization of social supports that help to maintain stability in the years following emancipation.[58]

- For 18-year-olds who have experienced so much uncertainty and lack of control in their lives, the idea of signing themselves back into foster care as an adult can be a hard sell. Young adults might decide they want to try out life on their own without the requirement to meet regularly with a social worker. However if it does not work out it is important to ensure these individuals are aware of the safety net EFC can provide them, and their option to reenroll.

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[55] Curry, S. & Abrams, L. (2014). Housing and Social Support for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: State of the Research Literature and Directions for Future Inquiry. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal,32*(10).

[56] Samuels, G. M., & Pryce, J. M. (2008). "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 30*, 1198–1210.

[57] Reindal, S. M. (1999). Independence, dependence, interdependence: some reflections on the subject and personal autonomy. *Disability & Society, 14*(3), 353–367.

[58] Samuels, G. M., & Pryce, J. M. (2008). "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger": Survivalist self-reliance as resilience and risk among young adults aging out of foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 30*, 1198–1210.
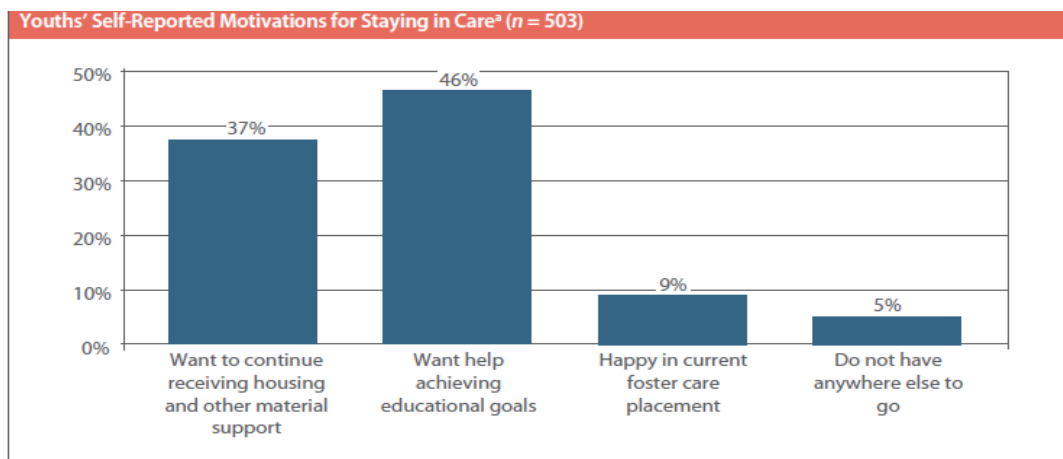
Feedback from California NMDs and Caseworkers on Extended Foster Care

- Napolitano, Sulimani-Aidan & Courtney (2015) researched attitudes towards and knowledge about EFC in California, both from the viewpoint of young people themselves as well as caseworkers across California. Three specific areas were examined:

    (a) Youth's motivation to participate in extended foster care and caseworker perceptions of their motivation;

    (b) Youth's knowledge of extended foster care and caseworker perceptions of their knowledge;

    (c) Caseworker attitudes toward extended foster care.[59]

Motivations to Remain in Care: Youth Desires and Caseworker Perceptions

- Over two-thirds of youth (n=475; 67.4% of surveyed adolescents between 16.75 and 17.75 years of age who had been under the supervision of county child welfare agencies across California for at least six months) reported that they wanted to stay in care after age 18.
    - Caseworkers also believed that youth wanted to participate in EFC. Eighty-five percent of caseworkers (n=193) reported that their youth had a somewhat favorable or very favorable attitude towards remaining in foster care.
- The perspectives from youth and caseworkers diverged in some cases when it came to the motivations for youth to remain in EFC (see Figures 4 and 5 below).
    - Youth most commonly reported wanting to participate in EFC to further their education (n=217; 46%) and receive support for material goods and housing (n=190; 37%). Caseworkers also believed these were important motivations for youth. However, caseworkers reported that housing and material needs were a stronger motivating factor than education for youth to remain in care.
        - The majority of caseworkers (n=114) also reported that youth's lack of other options was a strong motivating factor for youth to participate in extended foster care. However, only 5.1 percent (n=31) of the youth reported this as their main motivation to stay in care.

Figure 4

Youths' Self-Reported Motivations for Staying in Care[a] (*n* = 503)

|	
Want to continue receiving housing and other material support	37%
Want help achieving educational goals	46%
Happy in current foster care placement	9%
Do not have anywhere else to go	5%

[a] Note: Youth were asked to pick the main reason they would stay in care.

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[59] Napolitano, L., Sulimani-Aidan, Y., & Courtney, M. E. (2015). *Extended Foster Care in California: Youth and Caseworker Perspectives*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_EF_IB1015.pdf

Figure 5

Caseworker Perceptions of Youths' Motivations to Stay in Care[b] (*n* = 235)
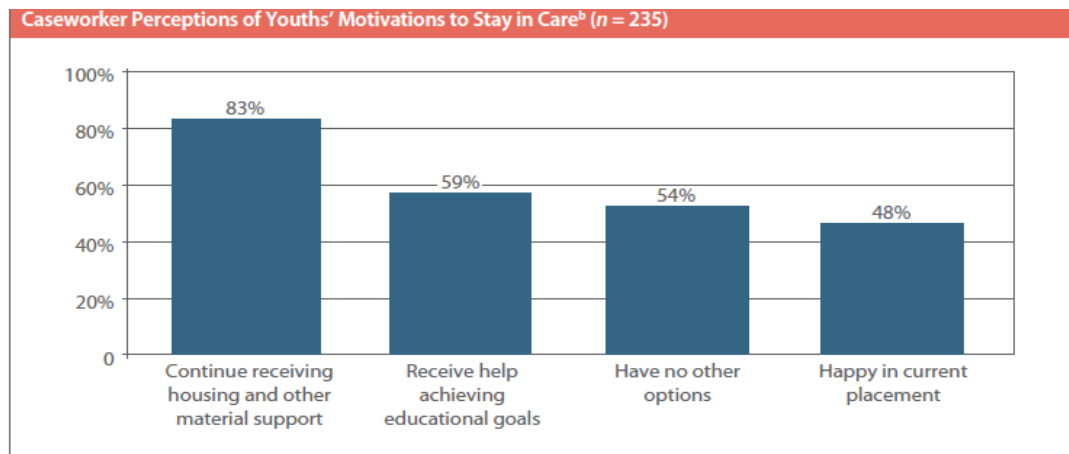
b 5-point scale: 1=not a motivation, 5=strong motivation. Bars represent percentage of caseworkers responding 4 or 5.

Motivations to Leave Care: Youth Desires and Caseworker Perceptions

- The perspectives of youth and caseworkers also diverged in some cases when it came to the motivations for youth to leave care (Figures 6 and 7).
  - o Caseworkers generally believed youth were motivated to leave care because of a desire to not be involved with the child welfare system anymore. Over half of caseworkers (n=118) reported that youth were strongly motivated to leave care because of a desire for more freedom or independence. Nearly half of caseworkers (n=95) reported that youth were strongly motivated to leave care because they did not want to deal with foster parents or group home staff anymore (Figure 7).
    - ▪ This does not match the stated desires of the youth surveyed. Among youth who did not want to remain in care past age 18, only 5 percent indicated their main reason was because they did not want to deal with foster parents or group home staff anymore, while over one-third of respondents (n=103) reported a desire for more freedom as the main reason they would want to leave care (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Youths' Self-Reported Motivations for Leaving Care[d] (*n* = 228)

d Note: Youth were asked to pick the main reason they would leave care.

Figure 7

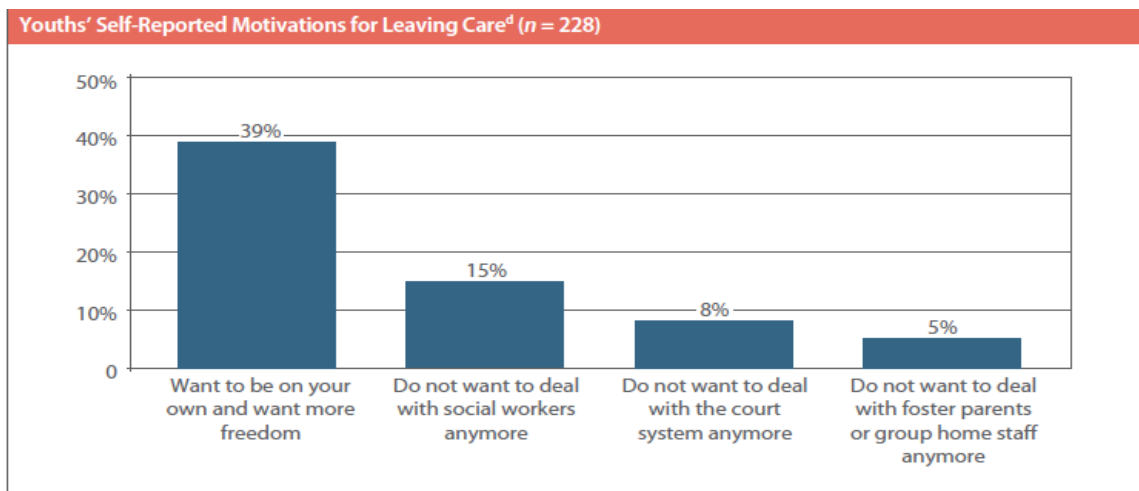Caseworker Perceptions of Youths' Motivations to Leave Care[c] (n = 235)

[c] 5 point scale, 1=not a motivation, 5=strong motivation. Bars represent percentage of caseworkers responding 4 or 5.

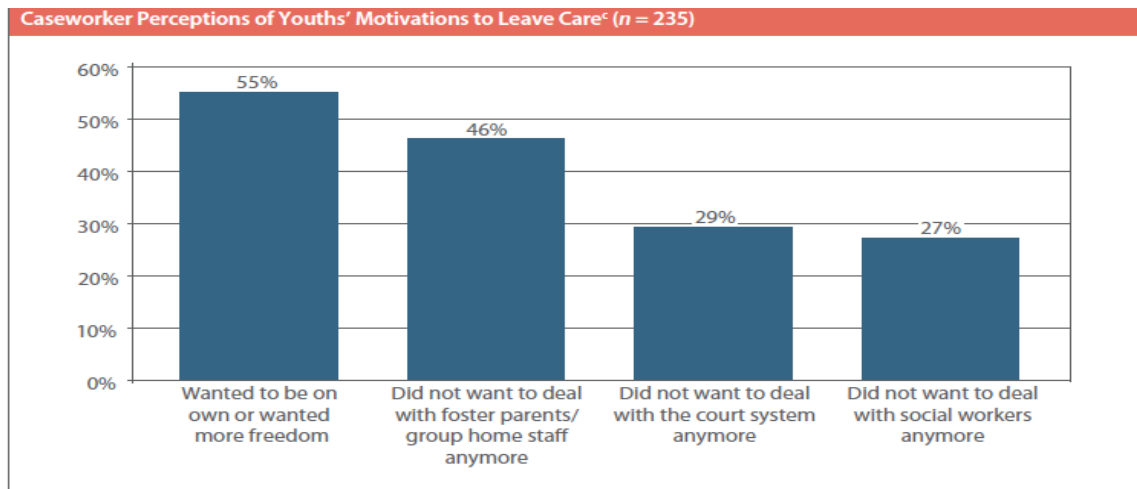## *Extended Foster Care: Youth Knowledge and Caseworker Perceptions*

- In the study, while many caseworkers were concerned that youth were not well versed in the process for remaining in care, the vast majority of youth reported being aware of their right to remain in foster care after turning 18, though they were less clear about the details of extended foster care and what would be required of them to remain in care as young adults   (Tables 3 and 4).[60]

Table 3

Youths' Knowledge of Residential Options in Extended Care		
Statement About Extended Care Options	**Youth Answering Correctly**	
	n	*%*
Youth in extended care can live in an approved home of a nonrelated legal guardian (for example, with foster parents). [a]	611	85.2
Youth in extended care can live in an approved home of a friend or relative. [a]	605	84.7
Youth in extended care can live in an independent living arrangement that has been approved by a social worker (SILP). [a]	599	82.2
Youth in extended care can live in a foster family home or foster family agency. [a]	591	80.5
Youth in extended care can live in transitional housing, like THP-Plus Foster Care. [a]	563	77.4
Youth in extended care can live in group homes after the age of 19. [b]	294	39.4
Youth in extended care can live with the person she/he was taken from when she/he entered care. [b]	295	37.5

[a] Statement is true.
[b] Statement is false.

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[60] Note: It is very possible that knowledge of extended care among foster youth in California reaching the age of majority and their caseworkers has improved since Napolitano, Sulimani-Aidan & Courtney (2015) conducted the youth and caseworker surveys in 2013.

Table 4

Youths' Knowledge of Specific Provisions of Extended Care		
Statement About Extended Care Provisions	**Youth Answering Correctly**	
	n	*%*
Youth in extended foster care have to see their social worker(s) at least once a month. [a]	585	79.9
Youth who are pregnant can be in extended foster care. [a]	531	71.3
Youth in care on their 18th birthday automatically stay in extended foster care unless they decide to leave. [a]	501	70
Youth in extended foster care have to check in with the court at least twice a year. [a]	455	63.7
Youth who exit care after 18 are allowed to re-enter the system up until the age of 21. [a]	466	63.4
Youth in extended foster care may get their foster care payment paid directly to them. [a]	466	62.7
Youth have to be working AND in school in order to qualify for extended foster care. b	424	58.8
Youth have to be working full time to qualify for extended foster care. [b]	369	52.7
Youth who are in a foster care placement and on probation at age 18 are not eligible for extended foster care. [a]	328	44.4
Youth cannot receive extended foster care benefits if they move out of their home county or the state. [b]	252	32.8
Youth have to be in school full time in order to qualify for extended foster care. [b]	221	30.2
Roommates of youth in extended foster care need to submit to criminal background checks. [b]	142	19.9

[a] Statement is true.
[b] Statement is false.

Summary of Study Takeaways/Recommendations for Caseworkers[61]

- Several youth expressed uncertainty about the services for which they are eligible under EFC, the amount of foster care maintenance payment they are to be receiving, housing options and even what they need to do to prepare for before they turn 21.
- Some of the youth also expressed a concern that the professionals assisting them did not know enough about the law or did not explain it well enough. Dependency attorneys and social services professionals must be sure that they fully understand AB 12 law so that they can clearly outline to youth what is required of them.
- The findings presented here provide important insights for caseworkers and foster care providers into the kinds of information that youth need in order to be fully informed of their rights, and their responsibilities under EFC. More informed youth can also impact whether or not they decide to enroll in EFC.
- Finally, it would benefit older foster youth to receive some type of practical training and classes with regard to not only the traditional independent living skills, but also training specific to AB 12/EFC, so that they are very clear what will be required of them and how they can obtain the most beneficial outcomes from the EFC Program.

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[61] Napolitano, L., Sulimani-Aidan, Y., & Courtney, M. E. (2015). *Extended Foster Care in California: Youth and Caseworker Perspectives.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_EF_IB1015.pdf

Challenges for Parenting NMDs

- Youth who are custodial parents have the same rights to participate in foster care after age 18 as all other youth. However, it is important to ensure that pregnant and parenting NMDs are adequately served by EFC services, and do not fall through the cracks.
    - Parenting NMDs may derive the greatest benefit from EFC but can have a difficult time maintaining eligibility. With the need to care for their children, there are instances in which that necessity surpasses their ability to attend school and/or work. This can lead to the NMD being out of compliance with the participation requirements and potential loss of eligibility for a program that provides vital assistance to the NMD and his/her child.
    - In addition to childcare and other support raising their children, struggling parents need help acquiring and maintaining employment and continuing their education.
    - The solution is not to exempt parenting NMDs from requirements meant to benefit them, but to put in place common sense solutions to assist these NMDs with issues that arise related to childcare.[62]

Social Worker, Attorney and Judicial Caseloads[63]

- The caseloads issue is one that is often discussed. Many counties around California are experiencing increasing foster care caseloads.
- EFC will never reach its full potential if the professionals tasked with ensuring that it is properly utilized and applied are so overloaded that they cannot effectively represent and support the young persons who are meant to benefit from this program.
    - In most California counties, EFC has been more popular among older foster youth than was originally anticipated. This participation, at least in some counties, has led to problems with staffing, and a shortage of appropriate placements. Today, child welfare social workers and dependency attorneys, who already had heavy caseloads, now have an expanded client base to serve, with a very different set of needs.
        - Caseloads of dependency attorneys and dependency court judges must be brought to within the standards recommended by the American Bar Association and the National Association of Counsel for Children. At the very least, caseloads must meet the standards set forth by California's Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care.[64]
        - If it presents an issue, county's social worker caseloads may need to be addressed, either by training more workers to work with NMDs, or if that is not adequate by adding more social workers to the department specifically to serve the NMD population. Caseloads for social workers who are properly trained and educated about AB 12 and can work with older foster youth and NMDs must be brought to within acceptable standards.

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[62] Dworsky, A., Morton, M.H., Samuels, G.M. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.; Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf,
[63] Children's Advocacy Institute (2013). Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, 36. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf
[64] Available at: http://www.courts.ca.gov/brc.htm

Challenges with Dual Jurisdiction[65]

- AB 12/EFC has transition jurisdiction in place so that eligible probation youth can benefit from EFC services. Too often, probation youth, though they are legally eligible for EFC services, do not benefit from them. However, several of the issues that counties have been encountering with regards to probation youth could be rectified if California reinstated dual jurisdiction for all counties.
  - o Under dual jurisdiction, foster youth in the delinquency system could benefit from necessary services offered by the child welfare system and they could more seamlessly transition back into foster care and EFC.
  - o Dual jurisdiction may facilitate more social worker involvement with older dual-status youth and would increase likelihood that these youth would receive the information, resources, and guidance they need to obtain and maintain eligibility for EFC.

Involuntary Exits from THP+FC and THP-Plus Programs

- Together, the Transitional Housing Placement Plus Foster Care (THP+FC) and Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) programs are housing and serving over 3,000 transition-age current and former foster youth in California. In October 2018, John Burton Advocates for Youth released the THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report 2017-18[66]
  - o The report found that THP-Plus experienced a decrease in involuntary exits, whereas THP+FC stayed unchanged when compared to 2016-17. The rate of involuntary exits was 27% for THP-Plus, down from 36%, and the rate for THP+FC was 32%, down from 33%. The average length of stay for youth was 15.63 months in THP-Plus and 12.54 months in THP+FC.
  - o The report also revealed that youth who achieved permanency between 16 and 18 were seeking housing support but unable to access THP-Plus. Close to half of the THP-Plus programs (48%) reported having to deny youth who achieved permanence between 16 and 18, therefore making them ineligible from accessing the program. This prevented 104 youth from receiving housing support and took place in 22 counties in the state.
  - o THP-Plus providers reported that 20 percent of college-attending program participants lost their financial aid because they did not meet satisfactory academic progress. Likewise, THP+FC providers reported 20 percent lost their financial aid due to failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

Lack of Enrollment in Additional Social Service Benefits by EFC Youth

- Without support, financial assistance and guidance from family, it is vital for EFC youth to know about and access all public support programs that can help them with meeting basic necessities such as housing, food, medical care, and transportation. While many EFC youth may have received public assistance, nutrition assistance or other supports while in foster care, many are not aware that some benefits can continue longer.

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[65] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, 36. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf
[66] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (2018). *THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report 2017-2018.* San Francisco, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.jbaforyouth.org/2017-18-thp-annual-report/. Note: To learn more about these and other findings including the report's practice and policy implications, view the web seminar recently conducted about the report's findings; and accompanying presentation slides.

- o CalWORKS
  - § NMDs are eligible to receive CalWORKs benefits up to the age of 21 if they fit CalWORKS guidelines, meet at least one of five eligibility conditions, agree and adhere to the Mutual Agreement (Share of Cost 162) and cooperate with a six-month review hearing/ certification.
    - In a 2015 survey of San Diego County's NMDs (n=325), nearly all (99%) of the survey respondents reported that they were not accessing CalWORKs, which would provide time-limited monetary support and services to eligible participants.
    - In addition, 36% of these respondents stated they would like more information on CalWORKS, indicating that some respondents may not be knowledgeable about their potential eligibility for this program[67]
- o CalFresh
  - § While all NMDs are eligible to receive CalFresh if they are living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) and/or meet the qualifying income level, many NMDs are not enrolled.
    - Similar to CalFresh findings, in a 2015 survey of San Diego County's NMDs (n=325), the majority (92%) of the respondents reported that they were not accessing CalFresh nutrition assistance.
    - In addition, 48% of these respondents stated they would like more information on CalFresh, which may indicate that some respondents may not know about their potential eligibility for this program.[68]
- o Further research is needed to summarize NMD enrollment and knowledge of other state and county programs they might be eligible for such as: Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program, Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payments (SSI/SSP) (for disabled young adults), Medi-Cal, Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP), Trafficking and Crime Victim Assistance Program, and/or civil legal aid and transportation assistance programs which all have the potential to offer additional supports to those who qualify.

III. Recommendations for Enhancing Participation in Extended Foster Care and Preventing Homelessness
Strategies to Improve Access and Reduce Barriers to Extended Foster Care

- Understanding the service needs of youth in foster care and the challenges they face in accessing and effectively utilizing programs and services intended to ease their transition to adulthood can help counties to not just extend foster care, but provide extended support and services that are precisely targeted to meet their unique needs.
- To ensure EFC is as successful as possible and has the intended impact, it is critical to identify and address peripheral issues that may create barriers for young adults to maintain their eligibility and the unanticipated obstacles they may encounter along the way.

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[67] Children's Initiative for Fostering Futures Initiative. (2015). *Survey of San Diego County Extended Foster Care (EFC) Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://www.jitfosteryouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2015-Study-of-SD-County-EFC-Youth-FINAL.pdf
[68] Ibid.

Outreach Strategies/Marketing the Extended Foster Care Program

- A detailed plan for outreach and the development of youth-friendly materials is key to a successful EFC program. Youth need to know about the program, how it works, if they are eligible and how to enroll and take full advantage of the benefits of EFC. Child welfare agencies and their staff should employ a variety of communication strategies and also coordinate closely with community partners and providers for shared support. Potential strategies for child welfare social workers/agencies to effectively outreach and market this program to young people are included below.[69]
    - o Enhance screening and assessment for all vulnerable youth who would be eligible to access to EFC benefits, programs, and services.
    - o Begin conversations regarding EFC with 14- and 15-year old youth currently in the custody of child welfare services.
    - o Provide young people in foster care with a written notice that describes their rights, eligibility requirements, potential opportunities, and the benefits of EFC and how to apply in clear, developmentally-appropriate language as part of transition planning prior to youth reaching age 18.
    - o Educate key people (e.g. foster parents, biological parents, teachers, community partners) in young people's lives regarding the requirements and benefits of EFC, so that they can directly encourage the young people to participate.
    - o Post advertisements in places within the county where eligible youth may see them (e.g. schools/community colleges, community-based organizations, malls, local motel/hotels, shelters, campgrounds, medical clinics)
    - o Approach local service providers and youth for ideas about the best strategies for connecting with hard to reach youth. Outreach measures that understand the youth perspective and honor youth voice are a hallmark of successful EFC programs.
    - o Recognize the need to be available in the evenings and weekends and to get out and meet youth/young adults in the community. Providing responsive services means taking meetings in parks, adapting schedules to provide evening hours and generally working to meet youth "where they are."[70]
    - o Utilize available state/county demographic data on EFC participants[71] to identify underrepresented young people that may need tailored engagement strategies.
    - o During the transition planning process, reiterate details of the program to older youth, ensuring they are explicitly aware of the resources and benefits of EFC.
    - o Use technology such as social media, YouTube PSAs, a dedicated agency website, electronic health records, text messaging and/or mobile apps to engage and educate youth about the benefits of EFC.
    - o Provide incentives, such as cell phone minutes or gift cards to encourage young people to enroll or attend informational EFC sessions.
    - o Ensure young adults understand there is a clear path to reenter EFC. Due to the mobility of this population, multiple points of access and referral are necessary to

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[69] Most examples gathered via National Extended Foster Care Review database at: https://jlc.org/issues/extendedcarereview
[70] Bay Area Legal Aid. (July 2018). *Building a Safety Net for the Safety Net: Legal Aid in Partnership with Youth. [Insights from Youth Homelessness project].* Oakland, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://baylegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-BayLegal-Youth-Homelessness-Project-Report.pdf
[71] For California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CWIP) reports, refer to: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

identify and reengage them. This should include a centralized hotline where individuals can call to reenter foster care.

Recommendations from Transition Age Foster Youth[72]

- In January 2015, Voice Our Independent Choices for Emancipation Support (VOICES) convened a cohort of Sonoma County transition age foster youth to identify systemic, county-level barriers facing foster youth in their transition to independence as well as to develop recommendations to address these identified barriers.
    - o The VOICES AB 12 Youth Cohort met with youth aged 18 to 21 who were receiving AB 12/EFC services in Sonoma County as well as experts and external stakeholders.
    - o The focus groups with current and former foster youth identified these common problems experienced by AB 12 youth approaching age 21: housing instability, difficulty accessing higher education, a lack of preparedness for employment and independent living, and disconnectedness from their communities.[73]
        - By extending the safety net for these vulnerable youth, AB 12 provides a critical opportunity for NMDs to build skills, find stable housing, and prepare for independence. However, in Sonoma County, as elsewhere around the state, implementation of AB 12 has not been seamless, and far too many transition age foster youth continue to experience significant barriers to self-sufficiency.
    - o Through their research, the VOICES AB 12 Youth Cohort developed the following recommendations (for detailed action plan see full report) for Sonoma County to improve the lives of foster youth by strengthening the ability of county's child welfare, probation, education, and housing systems to support their transition to adulthood.
        - **Recommendation 1: Ensure foster youth access, enroll, and receive benefits.** Invest in enhanced, standardized screening and assessment of all homeless, at-risk, and systems-involved youth, and provide them with expert assistance in applying for and accessing all benefits and programs for which they are eligible.
        - **Recommendation 2: Eliminate homelessness and housing instability among foster youth.** Develop a mixed-use, single-site housing model for current and former AB 12 foster youth and other at-risk community members. Within this model, create a wellness center and supportive community for residents to utilize as a tool for their personal growth. The program should also incorporate supports for independent living, including training and guidance in financial literacy.
        - **Recommendation 3: Increase high school graduation rates and college access.** Develop a Summer Academy Program for high school age foster youth to help them become familiar with and prepare for postsecondary education and establish an Education Navigator position coordinated with the

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[72] Connell, R. & Hughes, S. (2016). *Recommendations to Improve Services for Transition Age Foster Youth in Sonoma County.* Napa, CA: Voice Our Independent Choices for Emancipation Support (VOICES). Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5820ebe79de4bb306f47f109/t/589e23ff725e2565706d7dc4/1486758914811/Changing +The+Story.pdf
[73] Malachowski, G. (2015). *Patchworked Lives Revisited.* Santa Rosa, CA: Sonoma County Human Services Department, 13.

Office of Education to support foster youth postsecondary academic, financial, emotional readiness, and success.[74]

Summary of Lessons Learned from Implementation of Statewide EFC Systems[75]

There are additional insights to gain from EFC programs in other states that may be beneficial in expanding the number of young people served by EFC as well as the services offered to them. Utilizing the National Extended Foster Care Review Database and research from Jordan, et al. (2017), key lessons learned and recommendations are listed below gleaned from multiple states (including California, Nebraska, Ohio, Rhode Island, Washington and Virginia) following implementation of their EFC programs.

1. Involve young adults in planning, implementation and policy development. Ensure their voices are valued, and an ongoing feedback loop is available for their input.
   o Hearing from young people is the best way to determine gaps and identify solutions. For EFC services to be effective, they need to be informed by the experiences of those they seek to serve and benefit. This will increase the engagement of NMDs throughout the EFC program. It is vital young people are encouraged and supported in setting their own goals for their life, making plans to reach those goals and taking steps toward those goals.
2. Conduct an inventory of young adults' placement and service array and proactively address any gaps to ensure quality extended care.
3. Clearly document the various administrative and fiscal processes that need to be in place to establish eligibility and allow for maximization of available funds for NMDs.
4. Train child welfare social workers and stakeholders and ensure a unified message around the goals of EFC and the centrality of the engagement of young people. Well-trained and well-supported caseworkers are imperative to an excellent EFC system.
   o Critical elements of the case management practice model for young adults should incorporate assessment, engagement and intervention tools in line with best practices that recognize the unique needs and developmental stage of this special population. Child welfare systems must provide caseworkers the training, support, and time to develop these types of relationships with NMDs. The relationships NMDs

[74] Connell, R. & Hughes, S. (2016). *Recommendations to Improve Services for Transition Age Foster Youth in Sonoma County.* Napa, CA: Voice Our Independent Choices for Emancipation Support (VOICES). Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5820ebe79de4bb306f47f109/t/589e23ff725e2565706d7dc4/1486758914811/Changing+The+Story.pdf

[75] Pokempner, J. (2018). *Lessons from Washington State: When We Build Excellent Extended Foster Care Systems, We Show Youth We Care About Who They Grow Up to Be* [Blog]. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/lessons-washington-state-when-we-build-excellent-extended-foster-care-systems-we-show-youth-we ; Pokempner, J. (2018). *High Hopes for Extended Care in Rhode Island: The Importance of Implementation Doing Extended Foster Care Right* [Blog]. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/high-hopes-extended-care-rhode-island-importance-implementation-doing-extended-foster-care; Torpey, K. (2018). *Nebraska's B21 Program: Extended Foster Care That Honors Youth Voice* [Blog]. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/nebraskas-b2i-program-extended-foster-care-honors-youth-voice; Pokempner, J. (2018). *The New Year Brings High Hopes for Extended Care In Ohio* [Blog]. Philadelphia, PA: Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from https://jlc.org/news/new-year-brings-high-hopes-extended-care-ohio.
Jordan, E., Fryar, G., & Devooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Virginia Findings from a National Survey and Policy Scan.* Child Trends. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Virginia-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-and-Policy-Scan-11.29.17.pdf

have with their caseworkers can be the difference between system engagement and aging out.

5. Ensure policy and practices created are informed by adolescent development, responsive to the needs of emerging adults and are trauma-informed. Without this, systems are built that young people will not opt into or will not thrive in.
    o EFC youth should be allowed increased freedom and independence beyond that available in traditional foster care, including the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them. They should also be given clear information on the option to exit and re-enter care. The process for reentry into care should be easy to access for young people. In addition, it is imperative to focus on preparing youth for adulthood earlier, well before age 18, as young people must be given adequate opportunities to practice the skills that they need to flourish in the adult world.

6. All relationships matter. Help young people identify and connect to a support network, including their peers, older youth who can share lessons learned, supportive friends and family, and individuals in the community who can help young people reach their goals.
    o Youth need hard and soft skills to make it as an adult, but they will also need to be to maintain family and community ties for their success to be sustainable. Finding permanency and connecting youth with supportive adults is imperative to a successful transition to adulthood. The combination of independent living and supportive connections has been found to be essential for youth as they reach for their goals. The child welfare system can explore ways to be more flexible and creative in how it sees and supports permanency for older youth. It can start by listening to youth and who they identify as important. Research studies suggest that in addition to other benefits youth/young adults might derive from these permanent connections, they might also aid them in preventing homelessness.[76]

7. Convene a stakeholder group to reflect and review what types of placements and supportive services NMDs are finding most important and which are contributing to improved outcomes. Follow-up with changes or modifications to the EFC program as needed.

8. Partner with other agencies.
    o Some states find that having an official interagency work group helps them streamline services and supports more efficiently as they work with this population.

9. Build and strengthen relationships across the state.
    o California's county-administered child welfare system may present challenges for disseminating best practices and employing successful strategies in other areas of the state regarding EFC. However, building and reinforcing cross-county partnerships can broaden the service array, expand effective programs, and encourage areas of the state that have invested less in this population to invest more. Furthermore, learning

[76] Dworsky, A., Napolitano, L., & Courtney, M. (2013). Homelessness During the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health, 103*(Suppl 2), S318–S323.; Avery R. (2010). An examination of theory and promising practice for achieving permanency for teens before they age out of foster care. *Child Youth Serv Review, 32*(3):399–408.; Curry, S. & Abrams, L. (2014). Housing and Social Support for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: State of the Research Literature and Directions for Future Inquiry. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal,32*(10).

from other states that have implemented Title IV-E EFC that are coordinating across a county-administered system may also provide insights for California's program.

Additional Recommendations for Child Welfare Agencies Extended Foster Care Programs

Below are recommendations on how California might improve its EFC program and outcomes for youth/young adults who are exiting foster care.[77]

1. Consider choosing to adopt a different discourse about "self-reliance," for youth aging out of care, one that emphasizes independence and interdependence as mutual goals.
    o Research has begun to analyze pressures for self-sufficiency and self-reliance among aged-out foster youth that are often unattainable, particularly given the lower level of vocational skills, education and financial support than other individuals of a similar of age group. Pressure for self-reliance, combined with a lack of connections in times of need, may prohibit emancipated foster youth from attaining and maintaining a stable living situation without EFC.[78]
2. Continue to collect and monitor data to measure the critical outcomes regarding young adults in extended foster care and use it to inform decision-making.
    o Youth satisfaction and feedback are key data points to gather in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. It is critical that state leaders and stakeholders understand which young people are (and are not) choosing to remain in care, and how, or if, their outcomes improve when they remain. By closely monitoring data, stakeholders can monitor implementation, address any barriers or challenges to program participation, and design/refine EFC policies and practices accordingly.
3. Provide comprehensive aftercare supports/additional innovative options for former foster youth as they transition out of care.
    o Since the reality is that many foster youth will not be prepared to live self-sufficiently even when aging out in California at age 21, it is important to not only to maintain services and resources for older youth who have aged out of foster care, but to create new and innovative ways/programs in which to ensure that these young adults have access to needed supports upon aging out of care.
        ▪ California does offers some resources to this effect. For example, John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) grants are available to those up until 26 years of age;[79] the Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP-Plus) program is available to former foster and probation youth, ages 18 to 24;[80] and the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) has been expanded to include transition age youth,

[77] Note: Many of the recommendations for this section came from Children's Advocacy Institute (2013). [Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, ES 10-12.Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf]

[78] Curry, S. & Abrams, L. (2014). Housing and Social Support for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: State of the Research Literature and Directions for Future Inquiry. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 32*(10).

[79] Note: Funding for the eligibility expansion was included in the 2018-19 State Budget. Changes to eligibility were included in a budget trailer bill (AB 1811). Students meeting the expanded eligibility requirements were able to apply for Chafee grants in October 2018. The updated application is now available at: https://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov/StudentApplication.aspx

[80] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (2018). *THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report 2017-2018.* San Francisco, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.jbaforyouth.org/2017-18-thp-annual-report/. Note: Under Transitional Housing, transition age youth formerly in county care are eligible for discounted rents in certain housing facilities up to the age of 24 (some go to age 25).

age 18 to 24 who are not parents.[81] Thus, the state must protect these and other programs and services in place that serve as a safety net for young adults who have exited the foster care system at age 21 but are not yet prepared to be completely self-sufficient.[82]

4. Ensure permanency connections for young adults exiting foster care.
   o Another major aftercare support is to ensure permanency connections for these young adults. It is key that those exiting foster care report they have at least one connection to a caring, committed adult who can provide them a safe, stable relationship, guidance and emotional support. To this effect, some states have even found success pairing youth exiting foster care with a life coach.[83]

5. Emphasize the importance of the Transition Independent Living Case Plan (TILCP).
   o The TILCP is crucial and the centerpiece of a NMD's participation in EFC. It lays out the means by which the young adult is maintaining his/her eligibility for EFC and his/her individualized plan for transitioning out of the foster care system.
     - Child welfare social workers should remind the NMD that the quality of plan is on them. The social worker cannot do these tasks on their behalf, thus young persons must take responsibility to actively participate in the EFC program, and that includes the creation of their own TILCP/exit plans.
     - The TILCP cannot be a boilerplate document; it must be tailored to each individual and reflect his or her particular goals and needs.
     - The NMD must not only be meaningfully involved and invested in creating his/her own TILCP but he/she must also be able to make modifications to the TILCP as plans change or problems arise.

6. Address Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) readiness issues.
   o Too many NMDs have been placed in SILPs before they are ready for the level of independence that the placement provides. The issue can be addressed by:
     - Providing an adequate number of THP-Plus-FC placements to meet the demand for a more supported option available to NMDs;
     - Innovative efforts to provide realistic options within the structure of EFC that will serve youth who want more independence, but are not yet ready for and SILP;
     - Counties making it easier for youth who have entered a SILP, only to realize that they are not yet ready, to move into a more appropriate placement;
     - Addressing caseloads, as an adequate number of appropriately informed and trained professionals (social workers, probation officers, attorneys and judges) are a necessity.

7. Ensure cooperation and coordination among counties.

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[81] Prior to the policy change, individuals under age 24 were not eligible for the CalEITC unless they were parents.

[82] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, 23. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf

[83] One example: Prather, S. (2017, February 13). Nonprofit life coaches fill the parental gap for 18-year-olds exiting foster care. *Star Tribune.* Retrieved from http://www.startribune.com/nonprofit-life-coaches-fill-the-parental-gap-for-18-year-olds-exiting-foster-care/413656203/

- o Counties need to cooperate so that NMDs are able to successfully maintain their eligibility and receive the intended benefits of EFC.
  - § Counties must communicate about their policies and procedures.
  - § They must cooperate with regards to courtesy supervision.
  - § They must work together to share information and promising practices that may help to address funding issues, preserve programs, and extend the safety net for former foster youth once they leave care.

Addressing the Crisis of Homelessness Among NMDs in College[84]

- Failure to secure NMDs basic needs during college puts them at risk of dropout, which leads to poorer outcomes (for more information, see *Section E. Supporting Post-Secondary Education for Foster Youth*). Here are some recommendations to help address basic needs security among these students.[85]
  - o Identify homelessness as early as possible. If issues with a student's living situation can be identified quickly, it's more likely that early interventions and housing supports can help them to prevent it from interfering with their education.
  - o Promote degree completion by increasing marketing and eligibility of the CalFresh program to NMDs in college.
    - § Recently, there have been notable efforts/progress on this front:
      - In September 2018, the Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) released a white paper, *Responding to the College Hunger Crisis*[86] documenting new laws in California to address hunger among college students by increasing access to CalFresh. While Federal rules deny food stamp eligibility to a student unless they are working at least 20 hours a week or meeting an eligible exemption, California broadened these exemptions through *Assembly Bill (AB) 1930* (Skinner, 2014).[87]
      - In addition, *AB 1894* (Weber, 2018)[88] now allows all California State Universities to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program.[89]
        - o Note: To ensure effective implementation of this new requirement, the Western Center on Law and Poverty (WCLP) recommends securing surcharge-free cash EBT and grocery EBT on campus and on-campus farmer's markets that accept EBT payments. WCLP also recommends securing additional funding for the *Hunger Free Campus Initiative*[90] established by *AB 453* (Limón, 2017).[91]
        - o College students can use the new and convenient CalFresh College Student Portal[92] to apply for benefits.

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[84] Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education.* Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Retrieved from https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf

[85] Ibid.

[86] Available at: https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/College_Student_Hunger_Whitepaper_WCLP_Sept2018.pdf

[87] For full AB 1930: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB1930

[88] For full AB 1894: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1894

[89] For more information: http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/CalFresh/Restaurant-Meals-Program

[90] For more information: https://wclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/HungerFreeCampus_2018_Summary_Final.pdf

[91] For full AB 453: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB453

[92] Available at: https://students.getcalfresh.org/

- o John Burton Advocates for Youth also maintains a webpage [CalFresh Resources](93) for college faculty and other supportive adults working with foster youth and a recently updated webpage, [Frequently Asked Questions: Non-Minor Dependents & CalFresh](94).
- o Create incentives for colleges to offer benefits access opportunities on their campuses and work to align social and educational policies to ensure that access for students is as seamless as possible. The Center for Law and Social Policy offers excellent recommendations in this regard:[95]
  - Encourage state and federal investment in targeted aid programs that reach students with the most financial need, and/or Promise programs that help students who otherwise would not access financial aid.
  - Re-institute year-round Pell Grants so students have access to summer support to make progress in their studies and to contribute to living expenses.
  - Change American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC) requirements so that students who receive Pell Grants can access AOTC as well.
  - Advocate for additional federal (and state) policy change to support youth experiencing homelessness, such as recent policies including: *Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act* (HEASHFY, S.1795/H.R. 3740)[96] and *The Homeless Children and Youth Act* (HCYA, H.R. 1511/S. 611).[97]
- o Recommendations and Strategies for Colleges to Consider:
  - Identify an institutional leader or committee of leaders who are specifically charged with assessing and addressing students' basic needs security.
    - Consider the model now in place at the University of California—Berkeley, where a workgroup is tasked with coordinating and overseeing advocacy efforts around basic needs security.[98]
  - Hire a case manager and/or train existing staff to serve as a single point of contact for basic needs insecure students, including NMDs and homeless students.[99] Consider positioning this person within a comprehensive campus

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[93] Available at: http://www.jbaforyouth.org/calfresh-resources-colleges/
[94] Available at: http://www.jbaforyouth.org/faq-non-minor-dependents-calfresh/
[95] Duke-Benfield, & Saunders, K. (2016). *Benefits access for college completion: Lessons learned from a community college initiative to help low-income students.* Washington, D.C.: CLASP. Retrieved from http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Benefits-Access-for-College-Completion-Lessons-Learned.pdf
[96] HEASHFY streamlines the financial aid process for homeless and foster youth and requires colleges and universities to designate single points of contact to assist homeless and foster youth, and to develop a plan to assist youth to access housing resources during and between academic terms. Some of the additional policy changes include allowing homeless-identified youth under 24 to be classified as independent students (allows them to get full financial aid), streamlining FAFSA paperwork and removing the requirement that students must have their housing status re-verified ever year.
[97] HCYA is bi-partisan legislation that reforms HUD Homeless Assistance to meet the needs of homeless children, youth, and families. It allows some of the most vulnerable homeless families and youth – those staying with others because they have nowhere else to go, and those staying in motels – to be eligible for HUD homeless assistance by aligning eligibility criteria with those of other federal programs. HCYA also prohibits HUD from imposing national priorities on local communities for specific program models or specific populations.
[98] Graduate Assembly. University of California at Berkeley. (2016). *Basic needs security workgroup resolution 1611D.* Retrieved from https://ga.berkeley.edu/committee/basic-needs-security-workgroup/
[99] Note: On September 21, 2016, Governor Brown signed *Assembly Bill (AB) 801*, (Bloom) *The Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act* into law. California Education Code sections 66025.9, 67003.5, 69514.5, 69561 and 76300 were

center that offers training and education about poverty, income inequality, and socioeconomic class, as well as provides direct services to students in need.

- For example, the Human Services Resource Center at Oregon State University offers a food pantry, a shower, laundry, assistance completing SNAP applications, and emergency short-term housing.

▪ Identify and implement creative approaches to addressing food insecurity, including the creation of campus food pantries, campus community gardens, food recovery programs, and coordinated benefits access programs. Whenever possible, engage community food pantries and local food banks to help do this work most effectively.[100]

- For example, Humboldt State University has an excellent benefits access program in "Oh SNAP!"[101] and Single Stop[102] provides support for benefits access at community colleges across the country. A few organizations that offer technical assistance for this effort includes College and University Food Bank Alliance[103] and Swipe Out Hunger.[104]

Remove Internal Barriers to Housing Programs and Supports for Foster Youth[105]

- Focused efforts to remove internal barriers impeding EFC youth from accessing housing resources are needed to prevent homelessness. Internal barriers can include individual provider requirements, program rules, practices, and structures that prevent or delay programs from serving transition age youth (especially those most at-risk) effectively. Internal barriers are often related to a provider's unique values/philosophy, or organizational capacity and structure, rather than tuned to achieving specific outcomes. However, internal barriers may also be linked to external barriers, such as public funding restrictions and contract requirements.
  - o Criteria that limit access to services or admission to housing include:
    - ▪ Not accepting certain types of transition age youth, such as youth who are pregnant or parenting, youth who have serious mental health or behavioral issues, or youth who have substance abuse problems, and
    - ▪ Requiring or preferring youth with a high school diploma or GED, a current job, or prior work experience.

      Reasons given for excluding youth include lacking the organizational capacity to provide sufficient supervision, treatment, or support; while reasons for requiring or preferring youth with existing educational attainment or employment experience

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modified to define and prescribe certain services to foster youth, former foster youth and homeless youth. This means each postsecondary educational institution must designate a staff member to serve as the Homeless and Foster Student Liaison, responsible for informing students about financial aid and other assistance available to them and assisting them to apply for and receive federal and state financial aid and available services.

[100] Dubick, J., Mathews, B., & Cady, C. (2016). *Hunger on campus: The challenge of food insecurity for college students.* College and University Food Bank Alliance. Retrieved from http://studentsagainsthunger.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Hunger_On_Campus.pdf

[101] Available at: http://hsuohsnap.org/

[102] Available at: http://singlestopusa.org/our-work/

[103] Available at: https://sites.temple.edu/cufba/about-us/

[104] Available at: http://www.swipehunger.org/

[105] Child Welfare Initiative. (2013). *Transition Age Youth Housing and Service Roadmap: A Best Practices Framework.* Los Angeles, CA: Child Welfare Initiative. Retrieved from http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/75772.pdf

include admitting youth most likely to meet a program's requirements and outcome standards or working with "motivated" youth.

- o Program rules that are consistent challenges for youth to meet include:
    - ▪ "House rules," such as curfews, room checks, making meals, and overnight guest policies; and program structures, such as attending school and having a job simultaneously, or undergoing therapy or counseling.

    For house rules, providers describe the need to protect the safety and comfort of youth and staff. In support of such rules and requirements, providers cite a desire to promote certain values or a philosophy which may be independent of youths' actual needs, developmental stage, or goals.
- o Providers must recognize that the foster youth they serve need a network of housing programs and supportive services that are more individualized, flexible, and adaptive than what other youth require. Utilizing case reviews, program observations, and interviews with staff and youth to assess each provider's practices, and to identify service areas where refinements to requirements, rules, practices, and structures can be made will help improve accessibility, and "fit" of programs and services to assist older foster youth more effectively.
    - ▪ One example, in a report prepared by Columbia Law School, Adolescent Representation Clinic (2016), Aged Out/Cast Out: Solutions to Housing Instability for Aging Out Foster Youth in New York provided the following recommendations for improving the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) application process for aging out youth:
        - Permit foster youth to apply for and live in housing with their foster siblings;
        - Allow foster youth to indicate flexible or changing geographic preferences;
        - Eliminate the practice of deeming applications "dead" upon a missed deadline;
        - Reform the eligibility requirements to permit minor drug offenses and minor criminal convictions; and
        - Provide and orientation that teaches young people how to prevent losing their apartment.[106]

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[106] Columbia Law School, Adolescent Representation Clinic. (2016). *Aged Out/Cast Out: Solutions to Housing Instability for Aging Out Foster Youth in New York.* New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from https://www.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/legacy/files/public_affairs/2016/july/aged_out-cast_out-_mhls-arc_housing_report_july_2016.pdf

Ensure Accessible Housing for Young Adults Who Are Exiting Extended Foster Care

- Providing housing assistance and other supports to young adults after they leave EFC is critical if the overall goal is to prevent and not just delay homelessness.[107] Thus, the state must protect programs and services already in place that serve as a safety net for young adults who have exited the foster care system but are not yet prepared to be completely self-sufficient.[108]
- Even with California's various housing resources already available to foster youth (see *Section 1. Background, Available Housing Programs for Young Adults Exiting Foster Care*) it is important to note that within California affordable housing is cited by advocates and state officials as one of the biggest obstacles to housing stability.
    - The challenging California housing market and a shortage of HUD Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers available to former foster youth is an ongoing struggle that is reflected in youth/young adult homeless numbers. Therefore, additional resources are needed to close the gap between the supply of and demand for housing available to this population. Two examples of approaches that may assist include:
        - Encouraging public housing agencies to give youth who aged out of foster care preference on their waiting lists as some already do; and
        - Providing federal, state, or local tax credits to housing developers who create low-cost rental units specifically for this population.[109]

Other Strategies for Child Welfare Agencies to Reduce Youth Homelessness in California

1. Repeal foster care "look-back" provision.
    - Under the current financing structure, the Title IV-E foster care entitlement is limited by an outdated "look-back" rule that ties a foster child's eligibility for federal funding to income guidelines not updated since 1996.
        - California advocates and lawmakers must encourage the federal government to fix the federal foster care look-back provision, as this could ultimately threaten critical programs that provide a necessary safety net for youth who age out of care, whether they leave foster care at age 18 or at age 21.[110]
2. Increase child welfare's involvement in local Continuums of Care (CoC).
    - CoCs are designed to promote local community-wide commitment with the goal of ending homelessness. The California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership recommends that child welfare agency representatives and stakeholders (particularly those with lived experience) work with local CoCs to determine how best to assess vulnerability and risk of homelessness through a child welfare lens and participate in

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[107] Dworsky, A. & Courtney, M. E. (2010). *Assessing the Impact of Extending Care beyond Age 18 on Homelessness: Emerging Findings from the Midwest Study.* Chicago: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/research/extended-foster-care-delays-but-does-not-prevent-homelessness/
[108] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, 23. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf
[109] Dworsky, A., Napolitano, L., & Courtney, M. (2013). Homelessness During the Transition From Foster Care to Adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health, 103*(Suppl 2), S318–S323.
[110] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, 40. Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf

discussions on how new funds are allocated to solutions for those facing housing instability.[111]

3. **Ensure child welfare has a voice in significant state spending on homelessness.**
    o   In 2016, California State law created the <u>Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council</u> to inform state and local decision-making on how housing monies are allocated. The newly passed *Senate Bill 850* elevates the State Homeless Council to an agency-level entity within the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency, and the council will administer the approved $500 million Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP).[112] Of this total, at least five percent ($25 million) is dedicated to establish or expand services meeting the needs of homeless youth or youth at risk of homelessness. Council appointees include a representative from California Department of Social Services (CDSS), as well as a youth who has experienced homelessness.
        ▪   The California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership recommends that the council continue to find ways to incorporate the views of county child welfare agencies and nonprofit housing service providers to adequately advocate for child welfare involved families and youth/young adults experiencing housing insecurity. Advocacy efforts on their behalf must include experience-based data in support of scaling programs that work.[113]
    o   In addition, it is recommended that county child welfare is at the table with local CoCs to pursue additional opportunities for federal funding, such as those through the U.S. Administration for Children and Families <u>Runaway and Homeless Youth Program</u> (provides grants to local programs that provide emergency shelter, street outreach, and transitional housing) or the <u>Homeless Youth and Exploitation Program</u> (a grant opportunity program administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services that provides for the immediate needs of homeless youth on the street, with funds supporting shelter and drop-in services, outreach, food, clothing, physical and mental health services, drug abuse education, and sexual exploitation support).

4. **Move from silos of expertise to an effective systemic response.**
    o   Housing programs and pilots for child welfare families and youth experiencing homelessness implemented in the past decade all have one thing in common: robust cross-system collaboration that leverages multiple types of expertise. The collaborations include key players, beyond just child welfare and housing arenas, coming together under one agreed upon mission and with a commitment to shared oversight.[114]
        ▪   Collaboration across federal, state and local partners is crucial to providing a <u>coordinated community response</u> and the full range of solutions they require.
        ▪   For example, acting on their own, youth experiencing homelessness are routinely denied essential public benefits and basic necessities such as

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[111] Ibid.

[112] The Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) was established by <u>SB 850</u> signed by Governor Brown on June 27, 2018. For John Burton Advocates for Youth webpage on HEAP see: http://www.jbaforyouth.org/homeless-emergency-aid-program/

[113] California Child Welfare Coinvestment Partnership (Summer 2018). Housing Insecurity and Child Welfare Insights Vol XV. Retrieved from http://co-invest.org/wp-content/uploads/Insight_XV_FINAL_web.pdf

[114] Ibid.

housing, public benefits programs, and healthcare that they are legally entitled to receive. Thus, integrated legal and social work services can improve their access to these services. For youth who consent to legal representation, an interdisciplinary team allows the youth, attorney, and social worker to develop a long-term case plan that maximizes the value of benefits and anticipates and helps removes any barriers in the future.[115]

- Emphasize the importance of community relationships. Some of the most historically challenging barriers to homelessness (e.g. unwilling landlords, voucher shortages) may be overcome with strong partnerships in the local community.

5. Facilitate cross-county sharing of lessons learned, promising programs and innovations in California.
   o As all counties work to address youth homelessness, sharing cross-county innovative and evidence-based homelessness interventions, lessons learned, and resources will increase statewide capacity to prevent and end future experiences of homelessness among young people.
     - For example, in California as of January 2018, San Francisco, San Diego and Santa Cruz are participants in the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program,[116] and share insights and recommendations regarding a wide range of housing programs serving young people including rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, and host homes.[117]
     - In Los Angeles County, CASA [Court Appointed Special Advocates] of Los Angeles[118] volunteers serve youth who are transitioning from foster care into adulthood, with a main priority of helping them find and maintain stable housing.
     - In Fresno County, via the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission Safe Place Program and Sanctuary Outreach to the Streets (SOS) youth in crisis can TXT 4 HELP [Text "Safe" and their current location (street, city, zip)] for access to immediate help and supportive resources. SOS also offers food, shelter and activities six days a week at the Sanctuary Drop-In Center for youth and young adults ranging from 12 to 24 years old.[119]

6. Improve data collection and reporting on housing instability and homelessness on child welfare–involved families.[120]
   o Adding the ability to document housing instability and homelessness to the *Child Welfare Services-California Automated Response and Engagement System* (CWS-CARES), with reporting through the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) can help identify when homelessness is a contributing factor to

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[115] Bay Area Legal Aid. (July 2018). *Building a Safety Net for the Safety Net: Legal Aid in Partnership with Youth. [Insights from Youth Homelessness project].* Oakland, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://baylegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-BayLegal-Youth-Homelessness-Project-Report.pdf
[116] For more information: https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/yhdp/
[117] Note: Host homes are when an adult brings a homeless youth into their own home temporarily, with supportive services.
[118] For more information: https://casala.org/
[119] For more information: http://www.fresnoeoc.org/sos
[120] California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership (Summer 2018). Housing Insecurity and Child Welfare *Insights Vol. XV.* Retrieved from http://co-invest.org/wp-content/uploads/Insight_XV_FINAL_web.pdf

- removal and a barrier to permanency.
    - Enabling the collection of more robust and disaggregated data on the occurrence and impact of housing instability and homelessness on child welfare involved families can support the development of better policies and programs for this highly vulnerable population.
        - With statistics linking family homelessness to youth/young adult homelessness these efforts are also likely to reduce the number of youth/young adults exiting foster care facing homelessness.[121]

7. Make full use of extended foster care–ensuring eligible foster youth are aware of it, can access, enroll, and receive its benefits to extend their safety net.
    o Helping eligible young people understand the power of extended foster care to support their self-identified goals (including the right to be housed in developmentally appropriate independent living settings that allow them the opportunity to practice their adult living skills in a real world setting while also being given support and guidance) and how to access its benefits can be an essential element of reducing homelessness for this population.[122]

8. Offer youth online access points where they can quickly link to personalized housing options/resources.
    o For example, in New Jersey, the [Adolescent Housing Hub](#) (AHH or the Hub)[123] is a real-time database designed to assist youth with placement in a transitional or permanent housing program. The AHH program is managed by the Office of Adolescent Services under the Department of Children and Families. AHH services are available to eligible homeless youth, youth at risk for homelessness, and youth aging out of the child welfare system, ages 16-21 years. The service combs through their list of housing programs and matches a given youth with the top three choices given the specifics of their case history. It's intended to serve as a long-term housing option which will eventually guide the youth to a more permanent residence.

9. Work closely with young people to develop a transition plan that specifically addresses their long-term housing stability.[124]
    o As mentioned prior it is critical that transition plans for youth exiting foster care are individualized (via a dialogue with the youth about their goals in important areas of their life, such as safety, housing, income, education, and wellness) and address their particular needs and circumstances. This planning process should reflect the realities

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[121] Ingram, E.S., Bridgeland, J.M., Reed, B., & Atwell, M. (2016). *Hidden in plain sight: Homeless students in America's public schools.* Washington, DC: Americas Promise Alliance. Retrieved from http://civicenterprises.net/MediaLibrary/Docs/HiddeninPlainSightOfficial.pdf; Report cites a 2016 study of homeless and formerly homeless youth found that 47 percent experienced homelessness both with their families and on their own.

[122] Bay Area Legal Aid. (July 2018). *Building a Safety Net for the Safety Net: Legal Aid in Partnership with Youth. [Insights from Youth Homelessness project].* Oakland, CA: Author. Retrieved from https://baylegal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-BayLegal-Youth-Homelessness-Project-Report.pdf

[123] For more information on the Adolescent Housing Hub: http://www.performcarenj.org/youth/resources/adolescent-housing-hub.aspx

[124] Pilnik, L., et al. (2017). *Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice Involvement and Youth Homelessness: Principles For Change.* Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Retrieved from https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/FINAL%20Principles%20.pdf ; U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *Foster Youth Transition Toolkit.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/youth-transition-toolkit.pdf

of young people's lives, such as where and with whom they feel safest and their personal risks or concerns related to housing.

o Child welfare social workers should not simply ask if each youth has a place to sleep the night or week they are released, but instead ensure that the youth/young adult is positioned for maintaining safe and stable housing. That plan should include where they plan to live, with whom they plan to live, and how they plan to pay for their housing-related costs.

▪ In addition to a "first-choice" long-term housing plan, transition planning should include one or more backup plan(s) in case the planned living arrangements do not work out. Youth should also have a crisis plan, meaning that they know what they would do, and who to call, if they find themselves facing homelessness despite the efforts detailed in their transition plan.

▪ Moreover, special attention should be given during this transition planning process to the housing needs of youths who frequently changed placements, youths who were physically abused, and youths with mental health problems. This special attention might include more hands-on housing search assistance or advocacy with transitional housing programs that might otherwise screen them out.[125]

10. **Provide supports to help youth build financial assets while still in foster care.[126]**

o Many NMDs are woefully unprepared to handle their finances upon entering EFC. Counties must approach education around issues of financial security and the fundamentals of budgeting as a priority and look for approaches that will better prepare foster youth for what they will face at age 18 and beyond.

o Child welfare agencies supporting youth in building financial assets can increase the housing options available to youths and provide them with a safety net should they experience a loss of income that might otherwise lead to homelessness. The Jim Casey Opportunity Passport,[127] which includes a matched savings account component, is an example of this type of asset-building program.

o Children's Advocacy Institute (2013) also recommended there should be some meaningful standard assessment of a youth's understanding of basic finances and budgeting prior to approval for an SILP.[128]

11. **Explore the promotion of social and emotional learning processes (e.g., self-management, social awareness, growth mindset and self-efficacy) as protective factors for promoting resilience among homeless and highly mobile young people.**

o Research points to the importance of self-management and growth mindset as protective factors for homeless and highly mobile students and suggest the benefit of fostering these social and emotional learning processes skills (via exposure through

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[125] Dworsky, A., Napolitano, L., & Courtney, M. (2013). Homelessness During the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood. *American Journal of Public Health, 103* (Suppl 2), S318–S323.

[126] Ibid.

[127] For more information: https://www.aecf.org/work/child-welfare/jim-casey-youth-opportunities-initiative/areas-of-expertise/opportunity-passport/

[128] Children's Advocacy Institute at the University of San Diego School of Law. (2013). *California's Fostering Connections: Ensuring That the AB 12 Bridge Leads to Success for Transition Age Foster Youth.* San Diego, CA: Author, Retrieved from http://www.caichildlaw.org/Misc/AB12_Report_Final.pdf

targeted policies and interventions) to promote positive outcomes for this vulnerable population.[129]

12. **Increase college graduation rates among young people aging out of foster care.**
   o Effective post-secondary educational strategies require innovations in both policy and practice. This includes expanding support programs that address the academic, tuition/financial aid, social/emotional, and housing needs of college students who are current or former foster youth (for more information, see *Part IV. Resources, Section B. Tools to Assist Case Managers Working with Foster and Homeless Youth in College* and *Section E. Supporting Post-Secondary Education for Foster Youth* of this report).

13. **Equip communities with tools for engaging youth with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability in program planning and policy advocacy.**
   o Review best practices for centering and uplifting the voices of youth who have experienced homelessness or housing instability, as this partnership with youth has various benefits in the efforts to address community homelessness.
      ▪ For example, one component of Jovenes, Inc. (a Homeless Youth Agency in Southeast Los Angeles, CA) includes connecting youth with a Peer Navigator. Jovenes, Inc. Peer Navigator and Coordinated Entry Representatives are current community college students who have lived experience with homelessness. They spend 20 hours per week on campus (out of Extended Opportunity Programs & Services and financial aid offices) conducting outreach, assessment, and connecting youth with local housing opportunities to help reduce youth homelessness and promote college achievement.[130]

14. **Improve services for rural counties lacking services for youth experiencing homelessness.[131]**
   o National estimates[132] find similar rates of homelessness among youth in rural communities, but it also found rural communities have unique youth experiences and challenges for service delivery.
      ▪ Most rural counties lack services designed specifically for youth experiencing homelessness, forcing young people to go without help or to travel long distances to gain support. These findings highlight the need to reexamine programs and funding to ensure that young people in every part of the country have access, within a reasonable distance, to youth-specific homelessness services, housing options, and supports.

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[129] Baharav, H., Leos-Urbel, J., Obradovic, J., & Bardack, S. (2017). *The Educational Success of Homeless and Highly Mobile Students in San Francisco Unified School District.* Stanford, CA. John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities, Stanford Graduate School of Education. Retrieved from https://gardnercenter.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/HMM%20Students%20in%20SFUSD%20Report.pdf

[130] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (Producer). (2018). *The Homeless Emergency Assistance Program: California's Newest Strategy to Address Youth Homelessness. [Video webinar].* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QRzzrJloqY&feature=youtu.be; For more on Jovenes, Inc., http://www.jovenesinc.org/

[131] Morton, M., Dworsky, A., Samuels, G., & Patel, S. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in rural America.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/Youth-Homelessness-in-Rural-America.pdf; Morton, M., Dworsky, A., Patel, S. & Samuels, G. (2018). *Rural Counties Lack Services for Youth Experiencing Homelessness.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/research/youth-homelessness-rural-america/

[132] Ibid.

SACHS Research: EFC Participation & Preventing Homelessness Among Young Adults Exiting Foster Care

- - *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in Rural America* (October 2018) provides critical insights for better-tailored policies and programs to help end youth homelessness in rural America.
    - Investments by public and private funders and technical assistance are recommended to develop and evaluate innovative service delivery models for youth in rural communities.
      - One example, host homes have been successful in providing housing to youth experiencing homelessness in rural and suburban areas where there is not a runaway and homeless youth program or center. A social services agency can recruit and train the families, and partner with schools, law enforcement, courts and/or the juvenile justice system to receive referrals of youth who need a safe place to stay.
      - Engaging broader public systems (such as schools and justice systems) and services (such as after-school programs and faith-based organizations) to support better identification and service delivery for youth experiencing homelessness is especially important in rural communities.

15. **Improve access to sexual and reproductive health care services for youth in care.**
    - Increasing efforts to incorporate evidence-based pregnancy prevention and risk reduction programs for youth at risk of homelessness and testing models that provide prenatal and post-partum care in non-traditional settings can help address youth's sexual and reproductive health needs.[133]
      - The [Los Angeles Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth][134] (LA RHEP) (convened by The National Center for Youth Law) brings together foster youth and the agencies that serve them to promote evidence-informed strategies that reduce unplanned pregnancies and dismantle systemic barriers to sexual and reproductive health education and service access for youth in foster care. Their goal is to dramatically reduce unintended pregnancy rates for youth in care over the next ten years.

16. **Avoid criminalizing survival behavior of homeless youth.**
    - Unaccompanied youth may be arrested or cited for reasons that are solely related to their homelessness. A 2017 report by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice provides some examples, and recommendations on how local governments can focus on ways to avoid criminalizing survival behavior.
      - For example, in Harris County, Texas the [TRIAD Prevention Program] is a partnership between the juvenile probation, child protection and mental health agencies. It offers 24-hour intake for youth age 10-17, and provides emergency shelter, evidence-based services, service referrals, and follow-up. The program

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[133] Dworsky, A., Morton, M.H., Samuels, G.M. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America.* Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from: https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/VoYC-PP-Brief-FINAL.pdf
[134] For more information: http://fosterreprohealth.org/

serves youth who are alleged to have committed status offenses and certain misdemeanors, as well as youth in crisis. [135]

IV. Resources
A. Data/Additional Information (includes hyperlinks)

- **Extended Foster Care in California**
  Juvenile Law Center (2018)
  Provides an overview of EFC in California including state eligibility, extension proves, re-entry, courts & rights and subsidies. Also offers national EFC system review tool/database to help policymakers and advocates better understand and serve older youth (those over 18) who are aging out of foster care.

- **CEBC Topic: Youth Transitioning Into Adulthood Programs**
  The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare
  Youth Transitioning into Adulthood Programs are defined by the CEBC as programs that increase the skills, knowledge, and supports of youth who age out of the child welfare system while in out-of-home care and, therefore, have to transition out of the foster care system and live on their own. Features information on approximately 20 evidence-based or evidence-informed programs or practices for this population, many of which include housing supports.

- **Child Welfare Information Gateway Webpage-Extending Out-of-Home Care for Youth Past Age 18**
  U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau (2017)
  Provides various links to other resources that provide more information on federal and state efforts to support youth in out-of-home care past age 18. Resources include state and local examples.

- **Extending Foster Care Beyond 18 [Webpage]**
  National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) (2017)
  The Denver-based child welfare project staff focuses on state policy, tracking legislation and providing research and policy analysis, consultation, and technical assistance on the extension of foster care Beyond age 18, specifically geared to the legislative audience.

- **Success Beyond 18: Re-examining the Foster Care Review Process: Extended Foster Care as a Catalyst for Improved Practices and Better Outcomes**
  Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2013)
  Provides guidance on implementing quality oversight and review processes for young adults in extended foster care. The brief focuses on establishing case oversight and review processes that include youth in developmentally appropriate ways, maximizing their opportunity for success as they transition out of care.

- **Using a Housing First Philosophy When Serving Youth**
  U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2017)
  Explains the Housing First approach, which focuses on quickly connecting people experiencing a housing crisis to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry (e.g., sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements). The document describes the core principles of Housing First as they relate to youth and techniques to better serve youth.

- **Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Program**
  The CSEC program provides specialized prevention and intervention services to children who are victims, or at risk of being victims, of commercial sexual exploitation. These services are provided

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[135] Pilnik, L., et al. (2017). *Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice Involvement and Youth Homelessness: Principles For Change.* Washington, DC: Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Retrieved from https://www.juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/FINAL%20Principles%20.pdf

alongside the general child welfare services and may include specialized housing and placement services tailored for this subpopulation.[136]

B. **Tools** (includes hyperlinks)

- *National Extended Foster Care Review Database*
  The Juvenile Law Center (released in May 2018)
  - o Offers national EFC system review tool/database to help policymakers and advocates better understand and serve older youth (those over 18) who are aging out of foster care. It is a comprehensive database that catalogues how each state is implementing EFC with their laws, policies, and procedures.
  - o In creating the National Extended Foster Care Review tool, The Juvenile Law Center surveyed state rules on eligibility, reentry for youth age 18 and older, case management services, court oversight, and subsidies that encourage permanency for older youth. The results of the survey found diverse extended care practices across the country.
  - o The goal of the database is to be able to look at similarities and differences across states to better understand how to provide EFC services in ways that are most valuable to youth, so they enroll in the program and choose to remain in care.
  - o Next steps planned for The Juvenile Law Center in this work include determining how best to implement EFC by releasing a guide on core components for EFC systems, as well as recommended implementation strategies and an issue brief on how to leverage federal funding to support more effective systems.

- *Supporting Older Youth in Foster Care [Webpage]*
  National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) (2017)
  This toolkit provides an overview of the issues faced by older youth in foster care as well as policy options and checklists for legislators to consider.

- *California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)*
  University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services
  Receives quarterly extracts from California's child welfare administrative data system (CWS/CMS), configures the information longitudinally, and then produces performance outcomes reports that are made publicly available to summarize statewide and county level data. In addition to pulling data reports specifically for 18-21 year NMDs, CCWIP also reports outcomes for youth exiting foster care at age 18 or older (refer to Measure 8A).

- *National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)*
  U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Admin. for Children and Families Children's Bureau
  Collects information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth who have aged out of foster care. This information allows ACF to track which independent living services states provide and also assess the collective outcomes of youth. NYTD Services and Outcomes Reports summarize findings from State NYTD data submissions compiled by the Children's Bureau.

- *Foster Care Transition Toolkit*
  U.S. Department of Education (2016)
  The U.S. Department of Education (ED), in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and youth and practitioners involved in the child welfare system, developed this toolkit to help youth access the resources needed to

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[136] Note: In 2017, AB 604[136] was passed which clarified that survivors of trafficking (including CSEC survivors) would maintain their eligibility for EFC even when the adjudications that triggered their eligibility were vacated.

successfully transition into adulthood, secure safe and stable housing and continue on to postsecondary education, and meaningful careers.

- *Tools to Assist Case Managers Working with Foster and Homeless Youth in College*
  John Burton Advocates for Youth (2018)
  - The Case Management Check-in Guide[137] is a cheat sheet outlining topics to raise week by week throughout the academic semester, moving case managers from asking "how's school going?" to asking targeted questions at just the right time.
    - The guide is currently being utilized by 36 transitional housing providers who are participating in Beyond the Safety Net, a two-year initiative led by John Burton Advocates for Youth.[138] Providers report that using the guide has helped their case managers build trust; identify and address potential obstacles early on; and provide timely reminders, support and referrals to resources.
  - In August 2018, John Burton Advocates for Youth also released a Foster Youth Educational Planning Guide.[139]
    - The guide provides a comprehensive overview of the different higher education options available for foster youth in California, ranging from Career Technical Education programs to four-year universities. The publication includes college preparation guidelines for advocates supporting youth in reaching their educational goals, with considerations for students beginning in the sixth grade.
    - In addition to information on the educational preparation, application and matriculation processes, the guide reviews financial aid options, and directs youth and advocates to the Financial Aid Guide For California Foster Youth[140] (October 2018) for more step-by-step support.
    - Additionally, the guide outlines on-campus supports available to foster and former foster youth in higher education such as Educational Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) and NextUp, formerly known as CAFYES.

- *Know Before You Go*
  Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Law Center (CLC) of California
  Know Before You Go started as a collaboration between the Alliance for Children's Rights and the Children's Law C enter after California extended foster care to age 21. The Alliance and CLC joined forces to create the *Know Before You Go* campaign to educate and support young adults transitioning from foster care to independence.
  - *Housing for Extended Foster Care*
    Know Before You Go discusses housing for youth who remain in foster care in California under the EFC program and provides information on where youth can live and what kinds of assistance is available to youth who extend care.

- *Keeping Your DYFS Case Open Until 21 in New Jersey: The Experiences of Young People Like You*
  New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services
  Features interviews of youth talking about the benefits of keeping their case open past age 18 and receiving voluntary services, including housing, financial, transportation, life skills, employment, education, Medicaid, and other services.

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[137] Available at: http://www.jbaforyouth.org/casemanagementcheckinguide/

[138] John Burton Advocates for Youth is partnering with 36 housing programs collectively serving 1,648 current and former foster and probation youth and homeless youth across 17 counties to improve their capacity to support youth with applying for and enrolling and persisting in college. For more information: http://www.jbaforyouth.org/btsn/

[139] Available at: https://www.ilponline.org/Documents/Foster%20Youth%20Educational%20Planning%20Guide.pdf There is also a Spanish version of this guide available here.

[140] Available at: https://jbaforyouth.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c5c4648d6f7a56d317af47ea7&id=f0ad03b15b&e=64f0b3998a

C. Additional Background on Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Y/YAs[141]

Prevalence and Uniqueness of Homelessness Among Y/YAs

- Reports across various systems show homeless unaccompanied youth/young adults are a group that often stays hidden from view.
  - Many young people fail to approach shelter and housing programs due to concerns of personal safety because they are often victimized there (e.g. robbed, sexually assaulted or raped, beaten, or assaulted with a weapon), fear of entering the foster care system, mistrust of service providers, lack of awareness that there are targeted programs for homeless youth, or word-of-mouth that no beds are available.
  - Instead they believe they are safer in groups in unsheltered locations, sleeping in cars, or couch-surfing with relatives, friends or strangers. Young people who struggle with homelessness are often in constant motion.[142]
  - Youth who are homeless are often understandably suspicious of offers from adults to assist. Child welfare social workers can often gain youth support more quickly through a trusted relationship with a community provider that the young person already knows.
- The first national estimates report, Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America (2017) from Chapin Hall's Voices of Youth Count initiative found that about one in 10 young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 experience some form of homelessness within a 12-month period.
  - In the January 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) national point-in-time study found 553,742 individuals were experiencing homelessness. According to the same meta-analysis, nationally 30% of adults experiencing homelessness had also been in foster care, creating a cycle that is often hard to break.[143]
  - Prevention and early intervention are essential. The Chapin Hall 2017 national survey revealed that about half of the young people ages 13 to 25, who were homeless during the 12-month period studied, experienced homelessness for the first time.[144]
- California reports the largest numbers of unaccompanied homeless children and youth, at 15,458 individuals or 38% of the national total, and 82.5% of those young people are unsheltered with little or no access to the services they need to make a permanent transition off the streets, out of poverty, and into stable adulthood.
  - Youth/young adult homelessness involves diverse experiences and circumstances. While the concept of homelessness might seem straightforward, it

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[141] The following background include the latest information on the broader issue of unaccompanied youth/young adult homelessness and not specific to foster youth and EFC youth populations who are aging out. However, there

[142] Whitbeck, L., Welch Lazoritz, M., Crawford, D., & Hautala, D. (2016). *Administration for Children and Families Family and Youth Services Bureau Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Study Final Report.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf.

[143] California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership (Summer 2018). Housing Insecurity and Child Welfare *Insights, Vol. XV.* Retrieved from http://co-invest.org/wp-content/uploads/Insight_XV_FINAL_web.pdf. Note: A similar statistic within California, according to a 2018 report from San Francisco's Larkin Street Youth Services, 37% of youth who utilize their services report prior involvement in the foster care system.

[144] Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2017). *Voices of Youth Count: Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America.* Retrieved from http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/

takes many forms in terms of situations, needs, and duration. These different circumstances require varying solutions.[145]

- o Transition age youth too often bear the brunt of the complex relationship between homelessness and foster care.
- o The State of California possesses three of the top five major city Continuum of Cares (CoC) in the nation, with the highest rates of unaccompanied homeless youth.[146]
- o Twenty-one percent of youth who entered THP+FC and 36 percent of youth who entered THP-Plus over FY 2017-18 had experienced homelessness prior to entering the program.[147]
- o Solving youth homelessness is a critical part of ending California's larger homelessness crisis, because young people who experience homelessness are five times more likely than their peers to become homeless adults.[148]

- Youth homelessness is unique due to the following distinct characteristics of developing young adults:[149]
  - o They are still developing physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially and thus are challenged to fully function within adult-oriented systems.
  - o They enter homelessness with little or no work experience.
  - o They are often forced into leaving the education system prior to completion (i.e., junior high and high school) as a result of homelessness and experience academic gaps due to transiency and changing schools.
  - o They experience high levels of criminal victimization, including sexual exploitation[150] and labor trafficking.
  - o They often become homeless, before developing basic life skills, such as cooking, budgeting, housekeeping, job searching, etc.
  - o They often distrust adults and societal systems due to the high prevalence of trauma, sexual and physical abuse, rejection and violence in their lives.

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[145] Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2017). *Voices of Youth Count: Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America.* Retrieved from http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/
[146] The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. (2017). *HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress,* 2017. Retrieved from https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf
[147] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (2018). *THP+FC & THP-Plus Annual Report 2017-2018*. San Francisco, CA: Author. Retrieved from http://www.jbaforyouth.org/2017-18-thp-annual-report/
[148] Administration for Children and Families (ACF). (2016). *Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau Street Outreach Data Collection Report.* Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf
[149]Whitbeck, L., Welch Lazoritz, M., Crawford, D., & Hautala, D. (2016). *Administration for Children and Families Family and Youth Services Bureau Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Study Final Report.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/data_collection_study_final_report_street_outreach_program.pdf.
[150] Note: There is a significant correlation between the populations of youth experiencing homelessness and commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC).

D. Continuums of Care for Preventing Homelessness Among Unaccompanied Y/YAs[151]

Federal Strategic Framework to Prevent Youth/Young Adult Homelessness[152]

- There is a Federal model and national goal to prevent and end homelessness among youth/young adults. National experts, including the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the National Network for Youth, the National Alliance to End Homelessness, and A Way Home America, have a strategic alignment around what it would take for a community to accomplish this. The Federal strategic framework is built around four outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, education and employment, and social-emotional well-being.
    - o To this end, communities must invest in the following:
        - *Coordinated, system-wide efforts that engage multiple stakeholders across sectors;*
        - *Data collection that captures the true scope of the issue and measures change over time;*
        - *A robust continuum of services and interventions tailored to the diverse needs of youth experiencing homelessness;*
        - *The authentic input of youth with lived experience on the decisions that impact their lives.*
    - o If these components represent the framework, then the service-level interventions undertaken by providers must include:
        - *Prevention and early-intervention to identify youth who are most at-risk of homelessness*
        - *Outreach and low-threshold drop-in and shelter programs to engage youth, keep them safe, and connect them with community resources*
        - *Service-rich housing programs based on a variety of models tailored to the diverse needs of youth, including:*
            - Time-limited and non-time-limited,
            - Congregate and scattered site,
            - Rental subsidy,
            - Host home
        - *Education/employment programs that support living-wage, career-track jobs;*
        - *Exit and transition planning that supports each young person to achieve the greatest level of independence possible;*
        - *Programs, services and housing that are specifically designed to effectively meet the needs of LQBTQ youth, youth of color and trafficked youth.*[153]
- Currently other states are implementing coordinated systems to serve youth/young adults based on the above Federal model, and research pointing to the need for a diverse, multi-pronged approach to meet this population's needs.
    - o Diverse housing opportunities; intensive case management; educational and economic stability and mobility services; open-access programs; relational, social, and emotional wellness services; mental and physical health services; and family treatment programs must be available in some form in all California communities.[154]

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[151] The following background and recommendations include the latest information on the broader issue of unaccompanied youth/young adult homelessness and not specific to foster youth and EFC Y/YA populations who are aging out.
[152] California Coalition for Youth. (2018). *A Call to Action: End and Prevent Youth Homelessness in California.* Sacramento, CA: Author, 3. Retrieved from http://calyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RHY-Hearing-Paper-January-2018.pdf
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

The National Network for Youth Service Structure/Continuum[155]

- The National Network for Youth is a membership organization of service providers, state agencies, coalitions, advocates and individuals who work towards a vision of a world where vulnerable and homeless youth can escape the dangers of the streets and access safety, youth-appropriate services, hope, and healing.
- Young adults are defined by a complex and critical stage of personal growth. While young people experiencing homelessness require a combination of developmentally-appropriate housing and service options at the systemic level, this approach depends on close collaboration between government agencies, philanthropists and community-based organizations.[156]
- Based on the latest research, The National Network for Youth documented a service structure/continuum (interrelated to the Federal Strategic Framework in the section above) as to what works to prevent and appropriately respond to youth/young adult homelessness.
  - o The basic building blocks of a youth-centric system are summarized below.
    - Prevention and Early Intervention
      - *Prevention services and outreach to connect youth to services*
      - *Drop-in centers to engage youth and link to community resources*
      - *Shelter to provide an important first step off the street*
      - *Family engagement and interventions when safe and appropriate*
    - Housing and Support Services
      - *Youth-appropriate housing programs to build independent living skills*
      - *Case management to improve wellness and decision-making*
      - *Connection to education to increase future income earning capability*
      - *Workforce development to enable youth to compete in the job market*
    - Service Frameworks
      - *Culturally competent services*
      - *Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses on meeting each young person at their unique development stage, supporting positive growth.*
      - *Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) provides services in a way that is appropriate for youth who have experienced abuse and/or trauma.*
      - *Utilizing a strengths-based approach to services.*
      - *Services that respond to survivors of human trafficking*
- A detailed infographic was developed as a resource to help communities implement the National Network for Youth's Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness. It prompts communities to identify strengths and gaps in the services they offer to young people experiencing homelessness. Please see the following page.

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[155] Bardine, D. and members of National Network for Youth's Policy Advisory Committee. (2015). *What Works to End Youth Homelessness.* Washington, DC: The National Network for Youth. Retrieved from: https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/2015-What-Works-to-End-Youth-Homlessness.pdf
[156] The National Network for Youth. (2017). *Criteria for Ending Youth and Young Adult Homelessness.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/Criteria-for-Ending-YYA-Homelessness.pdf

Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

All support services & housing models should be implemented according to the following principles
Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Cultural Competence, Client Centered Care & Strengths-Based Family Services

nn4y
The National Network for Youth

Services Available Throughout the Entire System

Early childhood services
Identification & expedited priority access to: prenatal care; quality childcare; Head Start/Early Head Start; early intervention (i.e. IDEA Part C) & preschool programs

Case management
Planning & goal-setting exercises; care coordination; advocacy & referrals to additional services

Medical care
Doctor appointments & checkups; substance abuse services & other treatment

Mental health care
Individual & group counseling; suicide prevention & emotional wellness

Mentoring
Ongoing guidance & support from peers or adults, with an emphasis on healthy, long-term relationships

Family support services
All-family counseling; parenting assistance & affordable/accessible childcare for young parent families

Legal services
Direct representation for civil & criminal matters, record expungement and assistance obtaining ID

School-based services
Adequately trained and resourced McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons; case management; health care; sexual health education & student support communities (i.e. Gay/Straight Alliances)

Postsecondary education
Financial aid; priority for work study; tuition waivers; priority for housing; housing during academic breaks; single points of contact & campus support services (i.e. food, health & counseling)

Prevention Services | Early & Crisis Intervention Services | Long-Term Services | Aftercare Services

In-home care
Counseling, activity groups & substance abuse prevention to keep youth with family

Respite care
Counseling & crisis intervention to provide a "break" for youth and family

Drop-in centers
Providing a safe environment with supportive services including meals, showers, health care & counseling to help build trust & offer options for exiting homelessness

Centralized communications
Phone hotline such as National Runaway Safeline (1-800- RUNAWAY) & instant message, email or text services to connect youth & family to housing & services

Therapeutic family services
Individual & group counseling to safely & appropriately reunite youth with family

Education & technical training
Support & re-engagement for students; middle, high school & postsecondary instruction; GED & technical programs

Life skills building
Self-care, money & household management; goal-setting & problem solving development

Workforce development
Skills training, employment assistance, internships, career planning & other professional preparation

Post-family reunification
Counseling, supportive services & referrals to address ongoing needs

Post-housing support
Case management, counseling & referrals

Follow-up
Periodic contact with youth & family to determine progress & provide additional services or referrals

Public education
Outreach and communications to increase public awareness & information about available resources

Community & street outreach
Peer advocates & others identify youth in need to build trust, provide services (i.e. drop-in center & shelter referrals) & help prevent abuse/exploitation

Systems-based approaches
School, child welfare, health care & criminal justice[1] professionals identify youth in crisis & provide counseling, substance abuse services, housing assistance & other resource referrals

Nurturing permanent connections
Family reunification, kinship care placements, legal guardianships & supportive services to build long-term relationships with caring adults

Post-exit community outreach
Opportunities for youth to re-engage with needed services at any given time

Family crisis housing [minors]
Temporary housing while family undergoes intensive therapeutic interventions; available before youth is ejected from home or runs away (i.e. Basic Center Program, host home & short-term foster care)

Time-limited rental assistance [TAY][2]
Short-term rental assistance to either prevent youth or young parent families from losing current shelter, or to facilitate quick return to stable housing[3]

Crisis intervention programs [minors & TAY]
Temporary housing with basic needs provision & youth-appropriate services (i.e. Basic Center Program for minors & emergency shelter programs for TAY)

Host-family home [minors & TAY]
External family provides youth with safe & stable housing on a temporary basis

Congregate transitional housing [minors & TAY]
Congregate setting with preparation for independent living (i.e. Transitional Living Program, Transitional Housing & Maternity Group Homes[4])

Extended rental assistance [TAY]
Full to partial rental assistance, basic life needs provision & supportive services while youth pursue education or vocational training

Supportive housing [TAY]
Non-time-limited accommodations & supportive services for youth with the most significant challenges

Permanent affordable housing [TAY]
Long-term, deed-restricted rental housing for very low-income youth

Transition in place [TAY]
May include 24-hour access to staff & independent living skills training, with option of taking on apartment lease before or after program completion

Prevention Housing | Early & Crisis Intervention Housing | Longer-Term Housing

Core Outcomes to Measure Success

Stable housing: safe, stable & developmentally appropriate housing with access to supportive services as necessary

Permanent connections: healthy attachments to peers, mentors, family & other caring adults

Education, training & employment: employability through supported academic success, development of workplace skills & connections to employers

Health & social/emotional well-being: physical health; ability to create & maintain positive relationships with others, solve problems, experience empathy & manage emotions

Self-sufficiency: self management with regard to finance, cooking, shopping, laundry, transportation, parenting & household management

Key

Support services or housing models that belong to one stage are identified by one color.

Support services or housing models that belong to two or more stages are identified by two or more colors. Each color appears in sequential order, beginning with the stage of origination.

E. Supporting Post-Secondary Education for Foster Youth

- There is considerable support for the notion that the rate of return on investment in higher education is high enough to warrant the financial burden associated with pursuing a college degree. Education plays a critical role in young people's ability to support themselves and their families, in attaining and maintaining a fulfilling career, in avoiding homelessness and in building a strong social network.[157]
  - For young adults ages 25–34 who work fulltime, year-round, higher educational attainment is associated with higher median earnings (this pattern was consistent from 2000 through 2016).
    - For example, in 2016 the median earnings of young adults with a bachelor's degree were 57 percent higher than those of young adults who completed high school ($31,800).[158]
- In terms of postsecondary education, research from 2013 found that less than three percent of young people involved in foster care earned a college degree by age 25 (compared to 28 percent of all 25-year-olds).[159]
- Furthermore, within the general population, young people ages 25 to 32 with a college degree are significantly less likely to be unemployed, at 3.8 percent, compared to those with only a high school degree, at 12.2 percent.[160] With this disparity in mind, it is necessary to ensure offerings and services are in place to support transition age youth achieve post-secondary educational success.

Innovation and Success in Post-Secondary Educational Strategies for Foster Youth[161]

- Many states have shared areas of innovation and success in their post-secondary educational strategies. Most strategies fall into three main areas:
  - *Recruitment and retention supports specifically created for transition age youth.*
    - Arizona's *Bridging Success* is an on-campus recruitment and retention program for foster care alumni, in a partnership with ASU and the Maricopa Community Colleges.
    - In Michigan, there are 13 institutions of higher education providing on-campus supports to foster youth and alumni.

[157] Fryer, G., Jordan, E., DeVooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey.* Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

[158] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2018). *The Condition of Education 2018* (NCES 2018-144). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cba.asp; Note: This pattern of higher earnings associated with higher levels of educational attainment also held for both male and female young adults as well as for White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian young adults.

[159] Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (2013). *Cost Avoidance: The Business Case for Investing in Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.* (2013). Retrieved from: http://www.aecf.org/resources/cost-avoidance-the-business-case-for-investing-in-youth-aging-out-of-foster/

[160] Pew Research Center. (2014). *The Rising Cost of Not Going to College.* Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/

[161] Fryer, G., Jordan, E., DeVooght, K. (2017). *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey.* Bethesda, MD: Child Trends. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/SYPTFC-Findings-from-a-National-Survey-11.29.17.pdf

- California also reports an extensive network of post-secondary resources, such as providing a support person for transition-age youth in every community college.
- Virginia's *Great Expectations* program is a nationally recognized program that helps Virginia's foster youth earn post-secondary credentials. It supports foster youth as they complete high school, gain access to a community college education, and transition successfully from the foster care system to living independently. It is available at 18 out of 23 Virginia Community Colleges.
- In New Jersey, the *New Jersey Foster Care (NJFC) Scholars Gap Housing Program* is limited to NJFC Scholars[162] in good standing with their institution. The program is aimed specifically at helping students find housing for the gap months between school years and during the winter break. As many colleges don't let their students remain on campus while school is out and a number of foster youth have no place to go, this is a vital service that helps many NJFC Scholars retain housing security they need to focus on their studies.

o *Supporting youth in planning for post-secondary success.*
- In Connecticut, social workers assist youth in creating a post-secondary education plan starting in the 8th grade. These plans are monitored throughout the youth's educational career and reviewed every 6 months.
- In Washington State, the *Supplemental Educational Transition Planning (SETuP)* program provides foster youth ages 14–18 with educational planning, information, and connections to other services/programs. It provides coordination between high school counselors and foster youth to ensure they have an educational transition plan.

o *Funding or scholarship supports.*
- In Delaware, an arrangement with Delaware State University allows two students per year to attend with year-round housing and financial supports that should equate to minimal costs for their college completion. This program also includes university supports to assist youth in their acclimation to college life.
- Nevada also offers a scholarship to in-state colleges or universities for youth who aged out of foster care and maintain a 2.0 GPA.

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[162] For more information of the *New Jersey Foster Care (NJFC) Scholars Program*: https://www.fafsonline.org/njfc-scholars-program/

- John Burton Advocates for Youth's recorded webinar Foster Youth College and University College Support for additional resources and supports in place to help foster youth thrive on campus.[163]

F. Reports of Other Efforts/Studies (includes hyperlinks)

- *Jim Casey Youth Opportunities and Success Beyond 18 Initiative*
  The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018)
  A national and state-based effort that believes every young person leaving foster care should have the family connections, opportunities and support needed for a successful transition to adulthood. Provides various tools and resources with the goal to increase opportunities for young people who are in or transitioning from foster care. Includes sponsorship of the Success Beyond 18, a campaign that advances policies and practices to help young adults who are transitioning out of foster care.

- *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey*
  Child Trends (2017)
  Includes results and recommendations following a national survey, *Services and Supports for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care* of state independent living coordinators.

- *Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Virginia Findings from a National Survey and Policy Scan*
  Child Trends for the Better Housing Coalition and Children's Home Society of Virginia (2017)
  Shares what is known about older youth transitioning from foster care ("transition-age youth") in Virginia; describes federal data on youth outcomes in Virginia and other states; and details findings from a recent policy scan and national survey on services targeted to these youth.

- *Housing for Young Adults in Extended Federally Funded Foster Care*
  Amy Dworsky & Denali Dasgupta
  Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, US. Department of Health and Human Services (2018)
  This brief summarizes information gathered from a purposive sample of officials from public child welfare agencies in states that have extended federally funded foster care to age 21 and from a group of stakeholders who attended a convening on the topic. The purpose of the brief is to begin to address the gaps in our knowledge of best practices for housing young adults in extended care, of the housing options currently available to those young adults, and of how those options vary across and within states.

- *Bay Area Legal Aid Youth Homelessness Project (YHP)*
  Bay Area Legal Aid's Youth Homelessness Project (YHP) is a community-based, comprehensive civil legal assistance program designed to end youth homelessness by facilitating access to legal entitlements and supports, connecting youth with immediate safety and long-term stability, and amplifying youth voice to transform systems. Since 2007, BayLegal has provided legal support and representation to youth ages 14 to 24 from across seven Bay Area counties.

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[163] John Burton Advocates for Youth. (Producer). (2017). *Foster Youth College and University College Support. [Video webinar].* Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8097OkdMZg&feature=youtu.be

- *Supporting Youth in Foster Care: Research-Based Policy Recommendations for Executive and Legislative Officials in 2017*
  Child Trends (2017)
  Explores the state of foster care and provides recommendations to policymakers interested in supporting youth in foster care. Includes a section on the extension of foster care beyond 18.

- *Child Welfare Information Gateway: State and Local Housing Initiatives Supporting Youth Aging Out of Foster Care*
  State and local examples across the country provide strategies to help transitioning youth locate and maintain safe and affordable housing, To learn about more please see below initiatives.

  o Building Capacity to Evaluate Interventions for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH), 2013–2018
    U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (2017)
    Provides project descriptions and reports from the two phases of the Children's Bureau's planning and implementation grants to build capacity to end youth homelessness.

  o *Aged Out/Cast Out: Solutions to Housing Instability for Aging Out Foster Youth in New York*
    Columbia Law School, Adolescent Representation Clinic (2016)
    Discusses common challenges that youth aging out of foster care in New York face as they attempt to find stable housing. The report offers recommendations for policy and practice improvements for each challenge presented.

  o *The Possibilities Project*
    Better Housing Coalition (2018)
    Describes the collaborative program that provides young people aging out of Virginia's foster care system with housing, crucial support services, and counseling supports. The page also provides statistics on youth aging out of foster care in Virginia.

  o *Related Publications for Building Capacity to Evaluate Interventions for Youth with Child Welfare Involvement at Risk of Homelessness: Phase I/II*
    Mathematica Policy Research (2016-2018)
    Provides high-level themes and lessons learned from a process study of the Children's Bureau planning and implementation grants for developing and testing cross-system interventions for youth with child welfare involvement who are most likely to experience homelessness.

  o *TAY Housing and Service Roadmap: A Best Practices Framework*
    Child Welfare Initiative (2013)
    Presents a 2-year assessment of housing and supportive services for transition-age youth in Los Angeles County and the Best Practices Framework that was developed to improve outcomes for transition-age youth. The report concludes with recommendations for removing barriers in specific transitional housing and supportive service programs for youth formerly in foster care.

  o *Creating a TAY Triage Tool: Prioritizing Transition Age Youth (TAY) for Permanent Supportive Housing*
    Corporation for Supportive Housing (2013)
    Describes the methodology for developing a triage tool that targets homeless transition-age youth for permanent supportive housing and outlines next steps for learning about how to use the tool efficiently.

- o *Evaluating Housing Programs for Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care*
  Mathematica Policy Research (2014)
  Focuses on the importance of evaluating housing programs for youth who age out of foster care and the barriers to evaluating them. The report concludes with suggestions for how the field can move forward to build the evidence base in this area.

- o *The Family Unification Program: A Housing Resource for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care*
  Dion, Kleinman, Kauff, & Dworsky (2014)
  U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, Mathematica Policy Research, & Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
  Describes the extent to which communities are using the Family Unification Program (FUP) to support foster youth who have aged out of care and need housing. The report concludes by discussing potential barriers to referring youth for FUP and the need for cross-agency communication and collaboration for effective implementation.

- o *Housing*
  Project Life
  Provides questions to help youth determine if they are prepared to find stable, affordable housing after aging out of foster care. The page also describes different types of housing resources that may be available to youth.

- o *Housing and Social Support for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: State of the Research Literature and Directions for Future Inquiries*
  Curry & Abrams (2014)
  Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, *31*(5)
  Reviews the literature on housing and emancipated foster youth in the transition to adulthood. The paper concludes with suggestions for future research, policy, and **practice concerning emancipated foster youth and housing.**

G. Related Organizations/Initiatives Focusing on Youth/Young Adult Homelessness
(includes hyperlinks)

- *SchoolHouse Connection*
  SchoolHouse Connection is a national organization promoting success for children and youth experiencing homelessness, from birth through higher education. They provide strategic advocacy, resources, policy updates, and technical assistance in partnership with early childhood programs, schools, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth. They lead national efforts to strengthen federal education and housing policies for youth experiencing homelessness. Through advocacy training and assistance, SchoolHouse Connection also supports state-based teams around the country in achieving lasting, state-level policy changes to end homelessness for many youth and improve their outcomes.

- *National Organizations/Initiatives Focusing on Y/YA Homelessness*
  - o National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW) (http://www.nchcw.org/)
  - o United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) (https://www.usich.gov/)
  - o U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (https://www.hud.gov/)
  - o National Alliance to End Homelessness (https://endhomelessness.org/)
  - o National Network for Youth (https://www.nn4youth.org/learn/resources/)

- o National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth and Families (https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/)
- o A Way Home America (AWHA) (http://awayhomeamerica.org/)
- o National Center on Family Homelessness (https://www.air.org/center/national-center-family-homelessness)
- o National Center on Homeless Education (http://center.serve.org/nche/)
- o National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (http://naehcy.org)
- o Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (https://www.rhyttac.net/)
- o The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) (https://www.csh.org/)
- o American Bar Association-Homeless Youth and the Law Initiative (https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_services/homelessness_poverty/initiatives/homeless_youth_andthelaw/)
- o Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth (https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/programs/maternity-group-homes)
- o Covenant House International (https://www.covenanthouse.org/)
- o The True Colors Fund (https://truecolorsfund.org/)

- *California Organizations/Initiatives Focusing on Y/YA Homelessness*
  - o California Coalition for Youth (CCY)[164] (http://calyouth.org/)
  - o California Homeless Youth Project (http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/)
  - o John Burton Advocates for Youth (http://www.jbaforyouth.org/housing/)
  - o Homeless and Housing Strategies for California (https://homelessstrategy.com/)
  - o Conrad N. Hilton Foundation (https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/priorities/homelessness)
  - o The Los Angeles County Homeless Initiative (http://homeless.lacounty.gov/)

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[164] Note: CCY also operates the California Youth Crisis Line, a statewide, toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotline (1-800-843-5200) available to teens and young adults ages 12-24 and/or any adults supporting youth. The California Youth Crisis Line is an immediate, reliable and free link between youth and local services.