

Strengthening Housing Supports, Care, and Services for Former Foster Youth and those Exiting DCFS Care

A recent [RAND study](#) found that young people in Los Angeles County transitioning from the foster care system are at “extreme risk of experiencing homelessness,” facing challenges finding and maintaining permanent, stable housing. The study’s participants moved an average of 15 times over a one-year period; the study also found that one-third of participants still lived in temporary placements after one year, raising their risk of future homelessness. This instability has impacts on quality of life, reliance on health care, public assistance, and mental health challenges.

This Board has long recognized the need to better support our young people as they exit foster care, ensuring we are not exiting youth to homelessness. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) has likewise taken action to specialized housing support for foster youth in and exiting care, creating the Department’s Supportive Housing Division in 2021, and funding community-based organizations to provide emergency housing options for young people’s whose housing plans fall through due to unforeseen disruptions before their exit from the system. The County’s Department of Mental Health (DMH) also offers specialized services for transition-age youth, including transitional housing and independent living. While they may be eligible for these beds, none are currently available exclusively for current or former foster youth.

MOTION

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Despite these programs, critical gaps remain in supports for young people who have exited DCFS care and find themselves unhoused or facing homelessness. Once a young person has exited the child welfare system at age 21, DCFS's jurisdiction ends pursuant to the California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 450 - WIC § 450, but the County has not yet designated a Department to provide navigation and continued support to these young adults. This Board has stated before and continues to believe that the County should be more intentional in its efforts to support former foster youth as they emerge into adulthood and equip them with the supports needed to successfully achieve independence, security and stability. This work is critical to homelessness prevention and ensuring overall youth wellbeing and security.

We must also ensure that young people in our care have the tools and support they need to resolve problems with their housing placements. In October 1998, the Board of Supervisors established the Children's Group Home Ombudsman (Ombuds) at the recommendation of the Civil Grand Jury and Commission for Children and Families. The Ombuds is an independent resource and advocate for youth placed in DCFS contracted Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs). The Ombud's role is to provide youth with a confidential and informal process to help them with concerns they are not able to resolve on their own or that may go unnoticed. At the time that the Ombuds office was established, AB12/Extended Foster Care and its associated placement options did not exist.

On January 1, 2012, AB 12 became effective which allowed youth ages 18-20 to remain in foster care until their 21st birthday. AB 12 also created new placement options, one of which was Transition Housing Program Plus Foster Care (THP+FC), which has been renamed to Transitional Housing Placement Program, Non-Minor Dependent (THPP-NMD). Since AB12 and its associated placement THPP-NMD did not exist at the time of the establishment of the Ombudsperson, the Board could not account for services to this youth population. As a result, foster youth in THP-NMD do not have an independent office they can turn to when facing challenges with their housing placement or provider. This must change.

More recently, in January of this year, this Board passed a [motion](#) focused on enhancing the continuum of care for former foster youth and those exiting DCFS care,

calling for an extensive report back with data and recommendations for improving supports and housing options for those young people. On April 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved establishing the [County's first ever department on homelessness](#), and on July 1, 2025, the Board of Supervisors approved the new department name of [LA County Department of Homeless Services and Housing](#). This new Department will be home to all efforts related to homelessness and housing, including homelessness prevention work for our transition-aged youth.

The report back for the “Enhancing the Continuum of Care for Former Foster Youth and Those Exiting DCFS Care” motion identified continued challenges and contained several innovative recommendations. Based on feedback from young people and homeless service providers, we recognize the need for an increase in transitional and permanent housing resources for youth who have recently aged out of foster care up to age 26. Given the level of vulnerability of youth who become homeless and spend even one night unsheltered, and the high rate of inflow from foster care into the homeless services system (estimated to be one-third of youth experiencing homelessness in the County¹), it is vital we build out a continuum of services, for those in DCFS care and former foster youth. Given the fiscal challenges we face and will continue to face due to the current federal administration, we must ensure that we are using our limited and stretched resources to do so in the most productive, intentional, and strategic way. We must increase program capacity where it is most needed, leverage and shift funding streams, and do our very best to strengthen our homeless prevention services for young people. Young people across Los Angeles County, especially those impacted by our own County systems, deserve better.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

1. Build on the capacity assessments provided in the “Enhancing the Continuum of Care for Former Foster Youth and Those Exiting DCFS Care” report back by conducting a real-time and multi-year forecast housing type gap analysis,

¹ <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2025/02/la-foster-care-youth-struggle-with-housing-as-they.html>

inclusive of the number of beds that are **actually needed** of each bed type to adequately meet the housing and service needs of the youth needing placement/housing, submitted to the Board in 120 days. This should be done by assessing the needs of each young person and identifying the best housing program to fit their needs, and include;

- a. A strategy for conducting a placement/housing capacity assessment and gap analysis on an annual basis to inform policy and funding decisions.
 - b. A discussion on how they plan to enhance the THPP-NMD programs, and THP+ programs based on feedback from youth, providers, and advocates including:
 - i. Revising the contracting process to the extent legally permissible to make it more accessible for providers, and in line with state requirements.
 - ii. Cost projections and strategies for increasing THPP-NMD capacity.
 - c. A discussion of the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) program, and plans for improving alignment of SILP placements with youth readiness and support needs to ensure that youth appropriate for this placement type are in SILPs, as well as providing enhanced case management support to youth placed in SILPs. This plan should include increased THPP-NMD capacity
 - d. A discussion of Project HOPEBridge and plans for sustainable funding and expansion.
 - e. An assessment within 30 days to determine the estimated number of foster youth aging out of care due to age in 2026, including demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity), and by zip code or region/Service Planning Area.
2. In collaboration with the Chief Information Office (CIO), Probation, Office of Child Protection (OCP), Department of Mental Health (DMH), Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH), Department of Economic Development (DEO), Department of Public Health (DPH), Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Department of Youth

Development (DYD), and local Housing Authorities, report-back in 120-days on plans to enhance data collection and sharing, ensuring data safeguards for youth, as allowable under law to support youth's streamlined connection to available resources and to allow for an effective, cross-department coordination of care.

3. Fund the two non-budgeted Children Services Administrator II (CSA II) items already included in the ordinance for the Auditor- Controller to expand the Children's Service Ombudsperson's office to serve young people in transitional housing placements, like THPP-NMD.
4. Report back in 90-days on how to implement enhanced strategies outlined in the August 22, 2025 "Report Back on Enhancing the Continuum of Care for Former Foster Youth and Those Exiting Department of Children and Families Services' Care, to ensure transition planning for young people placed in SILPs to ensure housing stability once they exit care. This report back should identify how to do a warm-handoff to DYD and additional partners, feasibility of a near peer mentor model, and any additional supports young people placed in SILPs need to be successful once their SILP payment stops at age 21. These strategies should be developed in collaboration with current and former foster youth, relevant County departments, and other non-County stakeholders.

I, FURTHER MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors direct:

5. The Department of Youth Development (DYD) work with DCFS, DPH, HSH, DMH, LACOE, DEO, DHS, DPSS, Library, OCP, and the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to report back to the Board within 180 days on a plan to expand their scope and infrastructure to include provision, coordination and oversight support for at-risk former foster youth who have exited foster care, through age 26, including youth who may not be ILP eligible. The report back should include DYD's plan to engage with community-based organizations to holistically support young people achieve security and stability including but not limited to:
 - i. Care coordination/navigation
 - ii. Housing, including immediate interim housing

- iii. Intensive case management
 - iv. Mental and behavioral health
 - v. Substance use services
 - vi. Concrete supports
 - vii. Education and education-related supports
 - viii. Workforce development, including vocational training and apprenticeships
 - ix. Mentoring and coaching
 - x. Age-appropriate life skills development, including financial literacy
 - xi. Targeted services and supports for parenting young people
 - b. This report back should also identify the County, State and Federal funding sources currently available to support this work, and any potential funding gaps and possible funding sources to ensure capacity and programmatic support. This should include an exploration of what funding streams can be shifted to DYD, HSH, or other youth serving Departments to streamline the work.
 - c. This report back should also include discussion of a demonstration project, using a mentor model like Reentry Action Youth (RAY), that can be launched more immediately to begin serving former foster youth in need of holistic supports.
 - d. This report back should be informed by young people with lived experience and the Los Angeles County Youth Commission to ensure that the services and referral system proposed align with their needs.
6. Direct HSH to work with DCFS to explore transitioning the Stepping Stones program, which provides emergency shelter and support to youth exiting care without housing, to the new Department of Homeless Services and Housing, by July 1, 2026. This should include a discussion of how to ensure the funding stream can move with the program, staffing needs, and a quick referral process with DCFS.
 7. Direct the Department of Youth Development and the LA County TAY Table of the System of Care, through the OCP in collaboration with CIO, County Counsel,

DCFS, DPH, HSH, DMH, Probation, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), DEO, DPSS, Library, and CEO to explore the feasibility of creating and implementing a protocol or “Fast Pass” to prioritize navigation support for current and former foster youth through age 26 who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness for County administered and/or funded services and supports, where legally and regulatorily permissible in a 180 day report back.

- a. The Fast Past process should be developed through low and cost neutral strategies, and should include, but not be limited to the following array of supports and services:
 - i. Care coordination/navigation
 - ii. Housing, including immediate interim housing
 - iii. Intensive case management
 - iv. Mental and behavioral health
 - v. Substance use services
 - vi. Concrete supports
 - vii. Education and education-related supports
 - viii. Workforce development, including vocational training and apprenticeships
 - ix. Mentoring and coaching
 - x. Age-appropriate life skills development, including financial literacy
 - xi. Targeted services and supports for parenting young people
 - b. This report back should also include a discuss of data sharing challenges and plans to ensure data can be shared safely and securing between County departments.
 - c. It should also be informed by young people with lived experience and the Los Angeles County Youth Commission to ensure that the services proposed aligns with their needs.
8. Direct DCFS and HSH to work with the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA) to execute an MOU in 120 days documenting that only DCFS will refer youth for FYI and FUP vouchers, consistent with HUD guidelines.

- a. Direct HSH and DCFS to report back in 60 days on the protocol to ensure that all youth receiving the vouchers receive HSH ICMS.
9. Direct the LA County TAY Table of the System of Care, through the OCP in partnership with DCFS, DYD, the Los Angeles County Youth Commission, HSH, the LA Emissary and other groups of youth with lived experience, to report back in 60 days with a comprehensive list of all the tables working to end youth homelessness and recommendations to minimize the number of groups (by combining, consolidating and cutting efforts), reduce duplicative efforts, and identify clearly defined, distinct scopes of work for each remaining entity.
10. Direct HSH to include at least one subject matter expert in youth housing and homelessness expert in their new department staffing chart to lead on Transitional Aged Youth homelessness in HSH, beginning on July 1, 2026.
 - a. This subject matter expert position's job description should include requirements that this they will coordinate with and integrate the efforts of other departments' work to address youth homelessness and collaborate and co-design with youth lived experience expertise as identified in directive 8.
11. Direct DMH to work with DCFS to improve collaboration between DMH's Office of TAY and Housing and Job Development Divisions and DCFS. A report back with a workplan to improve coordination and communication should be submitted to the Board in the next 90 days. This report back should also examine whether any DMH beds can be held exclusively for foster youth and former foster youth, how to better identify youth who may be DCFS-impacted and eligible for DMH beds, and how peer mentors can be used to do outreach with young people who are eligible for DMH housing to improve engagement and housing retention. It should also discuss strategies to ensure that housing funds through the Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA) are targeted to youth and young adults aging out of DCFS care.

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