

TRANSITION-AGED FOSTER YOUTH 2024 POLICY PRIORITIES

CALIFORNIA



First Place for Youth helps foster youth build the skills they need to make a successful transition to self-sufficiency and responsible adulthood. Since our founding in 1998, we've made it our mission to improve the lives of young people, not just through our direct service programs, but also through our advocacy efforts. Therefore, as the largest California nonprofit dedicated exclusively to providing housing, case-management, education and employment support to young adults exiting foster care, **First Place for Youth supports the following bills this year:**



SB 1079 (Menjivar) Youth Housing Bond Act of 2024

Combats homelessness and housing instability for California's current and former foster youth by creating a dedicated funding source, the Youth Housing Bond Fund Act of 2024, that will allow both public agencies and community-based organizations with specific youth expertise to directly apply for funds for the purpose of acquiring, renovating, constructing, or purchasing youth housing.



AB 2477 (Zbur) Foster Care: Independent Living

Provides foster youth with the chance to grow the best financial safety net possible by clarifying in state law that youth are allowed to accumulate cash savings while they are in extended foster care, without jeopardizing their determination of benefits eligibility.



SB 1322 (Wahab) Foster youth: Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program

Ensures that more foster youth receive support for educational pursuits and job training by lowering the eligible age for the California Chafee Education and Training Grant from 16 years old to 14 years old.

In addition, **First Place for Youth opposes the proposed eliminations** of the following programs in this year's budget:



Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) Housing Supplement

The SILP Housing Supplement was recently established in the 2023 Budget, and provides a housing supplement for youth in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), based on the cost of housing in the County where the youth resides. Without this supplement, youth will be unable to compete with the increasing cost of housing in California and therefore, be at a greater risk of homelessness.



Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP)

This program was enacted in 2021 and provides housing navigation and supportive services to youth up to age 25 who hold a special population Housing Choice Voucher for former foster youth. Since its inception, HNMP has helped to decrease homelessness among transition-age youth by increasing the number of housing vouchers for former foster youth by 54%.



Family Unification Response System (FURS)

FURS was established in 2019 and provides a child welfare-specific support system comprised of a 24/7 statewide hotline and in-person mobile response teams in all 58 counties. Services are offered by specially trained staff who understand the distinct, trauma-based needs of young people in foster care and their families. The elimination of this program place youth currently or formerly in foster care at greater risk of instability, disrupted relationships, loss, and re-traumatization.