
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Becker, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2162
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Naima Ford Antal
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Housing: county funding allocations: nonminor dependents and young adults

SUMMARY

This bill changes the reporting requirements for the Transitional Housing Program and the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program. The bill also redefines the population served by the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program and increases the age of young adults eligible to be served to 28 years old.

ABSTRACT

Existing Law:

- 1) Authorizes the Housing and Urban Development's Foster Youth to Independence Initiative and Family Unification Program to provide Housing Choice Vouchers to eligible former foster youth 18 through 24 years of age. Family Unification Program provides vouchers to families at risk of separation due to housing as well as youth aging out of foster care while the Foster Youth to Independence Initiative voucher is limited to youth aging out of foster care. (*42 United States Code 1437(x)*)
- 2) Establishes the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act which authorizes youth who begin using their voucher to extend assistance for up to 24 additional months for a potential total of five years of federally subsidized housing. (*Public Law 116-260*)
- 3) Defines homeless to mean an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; an individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence; unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age; families with children and youth who are homeless; or any individual or family who are fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions, has no other residence and lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing. (*24 Code of Federal Regulations 578.3*)
- 4) Establishes the transitional housing program (THP) and requires the California Department of Housing and Community (HCD), subject to an appropriation, to allocate

funding to counties to help young adults who are 18 to 24 years of age, inclusive, to secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults formerly in the state's foster care or probation systems. (*Health and Safety Code [HSC] 50807(a)*)

- 5) Requires HCD to consult with the California Department of Social Services, the Department of Finance, and the County Welfare Directors Association of California to develop an allocation schedule for purposes of distributing funds allocated to counties. (*HSC 50807(b)*)
- 6) Requires a county, if it accepts any distribution of THP money, to report the following data to HCD on an annual basis:
 - a. The number of homeless youth served;
 - b. The number of former foster youth served;
 - c. The number of homeless youth who exited homelessness into temporary housing; and,
 - d. The number of homeless youth who exited homelessness into permanent housing. (*HSC 50807(c)*)
- 7) Establishes Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program which requires HCD, to allocate funding to counties to provide housing navigators to help young adults who are 18 to 24 years of age secure and maintain housing. Requires counties that receive an allocation to give priority to young adults currently or formerly in the foster care system. (*HSC 50811(a)*)
- 8) Requires a county with a Housing and Navigation and Maintenance Program to provide training to its child welfare agency social workers and probation officers who serve nonminor dependents. Requires the training to address an overview of the housing resources available through the local coordinated entry system, homeless continuum of care, and county public agencies, including, but not limited to, housing navigation, permanent affordable housing, THP-Plus, and housing choice vouchers. (*HSC 50811(c)*)
- 9) Defines "nonminor dependent" as a current or former foster youth who is between 18 and 20 years of age; in foster care under the responsibility of the county welfare department, county probation department, or Indian tribe; and is has a transitional independent living case plan. (*Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) 11400(v)*)
- 10) Defines a "supervised independent living placement" as an independent supervised setting in which the NMD is living independently. (*WIC 11400(w)*)

This Bill:

- 1) Expands the information that a county that accepts funding for the Transitional Housing Program is required to report to include:

- a. The number of young adults served and how many of them were formerly in the foster care or probation system.
 - b. The number of young adults who were homeless when they began receiving assistance.
 - c. The number of young adults who received assistance and obtained temporary housing.
 - d. The number of young adults who received assistance and obtained permanent housing.
- 2) Strikes the requirement that counties report the number of former foster youth served under the current section's definition of former foster youth.
 - 3) Defines "young adult formerly in the state's foster care or probation system" to mean a young adult who previously met the definition of a child or nonminor dependent in the Welfare and Institutions Code, who had been removed by the juvenile court from the custody of their parent, legal guardian, or Indian custodian; and for whom juvenile court jurisdiction was terminated while the young adult remained in placement.
 - 4) Increases the age youth can get services funded by the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program to 28 years old.
 - 5) Defines the populations who can receive services through the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program to be nonminor dependents and young adults formerly in the state's foster care or probation system.
 - 6) Clarifies the uses of Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program funding allocated to a county child welfare agency to include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Assisting young adults with identifying and applying for housing, including housing that qualifies as a supervised independent living placement.
 - b. Assisting young adults with applying for a federal housing choice voucher and identifying housing with the housing choice voucher.
 - c. Providing young adults with financial assistance to help cover the cost of housing application fees, security deposit, first month's rent, utility set-up, and other move-in costs.
 - d. Providing landlord incentives.
 - e. Providing young adults with supportive services that help them maintain stable housing, including education and employment support, financial literacy and planning, case management, and counseling.
 - 7) Expands the information that a county that accepts funding for the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program is required to report to include:

- a. The number of young adults served who are nonminor dependents and young adults formerly in the state's foster care or probation system.
 - b. The number of young adults who were homeless when they began receiving assistance.
 - c. The number of young adults who received assistance and obtained temporary housing.
 - d. The number of young adults who received assistance and obtained permanent housing.
 - e. The housing authority with which the county child welfare agency has a memorandum of understanding or letter of intent to provide federal Family Unification Program or federal Foster Youth to Independence Initiative housing vouchers. If the county child welfare agency does not partner with a housing authority to provide the housing vouchers described in this paragraph, the child welfare agency must state the reason why it does not partner with a housing authority to provide those housing vouchers.
 - f. The number of housing vouchers that have been issued to young adults in the county that are funded by the federal Family Unification Program or the federal Foster Youth to Independence Initiative. Defines "issued" to mean the voucher has been assigned to a specific person, whether that person is searching for housing or has entered into a lease, and whether the voucher is new or recycled.
- 8) Requires HCD to, on an annual basis, make publicly available the information described in e) and f) above.
 - 9) Defines "homeless" to have the same meaning as defined in Part 578.3 of Title 24 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
 - 10) Defines "housing authority" to mean a housing authority created pursuant to the Housing Authorities Law.
 - 11) Defines "nonminor dependent" to have the same meaning as defined in subdivision (v) of Section 11400 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

FISCAL IMPACT

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee:

- 1) General Fund cost pressures of an unknown amount to provide HNMP services to young adults up to age 28 who have Housing Choice Vouchers and otherwise would have exited the HNMP program at age 24. These costs are potentially significant but will depend on the number of young adults served and the amount of assistance provided. Data indicates approximately 2,000 youth per month statewide aged 18 to 24 years use a foster youth

housing choice voucher. Because these vouchers must be secured by age 24 and may be used for only three to five years, the age expansion provided in this bill would affect only a small portion of these youth and only if they required additional services.

Since 2022, HCD has received an annual budget appropriation of \$13.7 million for the HNMP program. HCD allocates this funding to counties per existing law based on each county's proportionate share of the state's foster youth population aged 18 to 21. This bill does not change the state's funding allocation methodology but rather provides counties added flexibility within their existing budget allocation.

- 2) HCD estimates minor and absorbable administrative costs. HCD anticipates a slight increase in its workload to incorporate the changes in the bill, including creating updated reporting forms and producing an annual public report, providing technical assistance to awarded county child welfare agencies, and updating program materials. HCD believes this workload can be managed with existing resources.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Bill:

According to the author, "In California, about 3,000 young people annually make their final exit from care without the support of a family. Young adults can receive rental assistance through FYI/FUP federal housing vouchers for up to five years. Youth who receive their federal housing voucher at age 24 may keep their voucher and use it at any time through age 28. However, our state's HNMP services currently stop assisting young adults at age 24. Leaving these young adults without county resources that provide critical support to them beyond the age of 24, including help pursuing education, employment, and other self-sufficiency goals. [This bill] seeks to close this gap by expanding the upper age limit for HNMP-funded services from 24 to 28, adding two additional questions to the existing reporting form for counties that accept HNMP funding, and ensuring that HCD makes this information publicly available."

Extended Foster Care

The intent of extended foster care is to bridge the gap between the intensive supervision of foster care and unsupervised adulthood by maintaining a safety net of support while providing the youth independence and additional educational or work opportunities. It was prompted by the recognition that many youth were unable to successfully transition from foster care or group care to adulthood without additional guidance and assistance.

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (*P.L. 110-351*) enabled states to expand the definition of a foster "child," by creating extended care for youth up to age 21. The federal law allows foster youth to remain in care past age 18 if they meet one of the following participation criteria: enrolled in high school or a high school equivalency credential; enrolled in college, community college, or vocational education; employed for at least 80 hours a month; participating in other qualifying activities or programs designed to remove barriers to employment; or medically exempt from meeting any of the other participation criteria.

In 2010, California enacted AB 12 (*Beall, Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010*), which defined nonminor dependent and permits foster youth to remain in extended foster care until age 21, under the same criteria as the federal statute. At the six month hearing prior to a youth turning 18 years old, the youth's social worker or probation officer must submit a transitional living plan to ensure that the youth will meet at least one participation criteria, listed above, if the youth plans to participate in extended foster care. The youth must also sign an agreement to remain in foster care within six months of turning 18, reside in an eligible placement, and agree to work with their social worker to meet the goals of their transitional living plan. Additionally, existing law allows qualifying nonminors who are former foster youth under the age of 21 to petition the court for re-entry into foster care in order to participate in extended foster care. AB 12 (*Beall, Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010*) and additional statute changes have expanded the supports for nonminor dependents.

Federal Housing Choice Vouchers

Former foster youth ages 18 through 24 are eligible for one of two federal housing choice vouchers: the Family Unification Program or the Foster Youth to Independence Initiative. The voucher programs are intended to support former foster youth as they transition from foster care, have aged out of care, or those who are at least 16 years old or older and are at risk of becoming homeless. Youth who receive a voucher at 24 years old are allowed to keep the voucher until they are 28 years old. Both programs have two parts, required by federal law: the housing voucher provided by the Public Housing Authority, which is funded by the federal government, and supportive services that are provided by county child welfare agencies, which are funded by the state or local agencies.

Although federal funding has provided additional resources to address the housing needs of youth, in the past there have been some challenges in utilizing the Family Unification Program and Foster Youth to Independence Initiative vouchers. Specifically, some counties have not requested vouchers or only request a few because they cannot offer the required supportive services without a dedicated funding source. There are also challenges with identifying housing for youth with vouchers, which adds additional consequences. For example, housing authorities cannot request additional vouchers unless 90 percent of their vouchers are utilized, meaning youth must be in active leases. This means that even when vouchers are in circulation, if youth are struggling to receive the support they need to secure housing, counties cannot request additional vouchers and youth who are in need remain on the waiting list.

The Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (discussed more below) was expanded in 2022 to provide the dedicated funds for supportive services counties requested. According to John Burton Advocates for Youth, the use of vouchers has increased 136% since 2022 and federal vouchers provide 55% of California's housing support for former foster youth. This bill would require counties to report more detailed information on the number of young adults they support with vouchers and the partnerships established to distribute them.

Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program

California's Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program was established in 2019 to provide housing support services to youth ages 18 through 21. The program was updated and renamed in 2022 to extend services to youth up to 24 years old and prioritize former foster youth. The

program works in tandem with the federal housing voucher programs to ensure youth have the resources they need to use the vouchers quickly and effectively. County child welfare agencies receive the funding from HCD to support housing navigators to assist young adults in securing and maintaining housing. Other activities include, but are not limited to:

- Providing housing case management, which includes essential services in emergency supports to foster youth;
- Preventing young adults from becoming homeless; and,
- Improving the coordination of services and linkages to key resources across the community including those from within the child welfare system and the local Continuum of Care.

This bill updates the list of activities to specify the types of services that should be provided to young adults to align them with the goals of the federal voucher program and support the effective utilization of the vouchers. It also expands the eligibility age of the program to 28 years old to align with the eligibility age range of the voucher programs.

When a county child welfare agency accepts Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program funding, they are required to provide training to their social workers and probation officers who serve nonminor dependents. The training must provide an overview of the housing resources available through the local coordinated entry system, homeless continuum of care, and other county public agencies, such as housing navigation, permanent affordable housing, THP-Plus, and housing choice vouchers. The training must also address how to access and receive a referral to existing housing resources, the social worker's and probation officer's role in identifying unstable housing situations for youth, and referring youth to housing assistance programs.

This bill updates the list of activities to specify the types of services that should be provided to young adults to align them with the goals of the federal voucher program and support the effective utilization of the vouchers. It also expands the eligibility age of the program to 28 years old to align with the eligibility age range of the voucher programs.

On an annual basis, county child welfare agencies that accept Housing Navigation and Maintenance funding are required to provide a report to HCD regarding:

- The number of homeless youth served.
- The number of foster children served.
- The number of homeless youth who exited homelessness into temporary housing.
- The number of homeless youth who exited homelessness into permanent housing.

This bill expands the data that counties are required to share to include data on the partnerships between the county welfare office and the housing authority.

Related/Prior Legislation:

AB 1615 (Ting, 2022) would have renamed the housing navigator program as the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, and would extend eligibility and priority for the program to help young adults who are 18 to 24 years of age, inclusive, with priority given to young adults formerly or currently in the foster care system. It also would, for a child welfare agency that accepts any distribution of money for both the Transitional Housing Program and the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, require the department shall accept one county board resolution and one allocation acceptance form, and execute one standard agreement, for both programs. AB 1615 was held in Senate Appropriations but its contents were adopted in a budget trailer bill.

SB 187 (Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 50, Statutes 2022) is a budget trailer bill that included the language of AB 1615.

AB 12 (Beall and Bass, Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010) established the California Fostering Connections to Success Act, which extended transitional foster care services to eligible youth between ages 18 and 21 and required California to seek federal financial participation for the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (Kin-GAP).

COMMENTS

This bill expands the data collection requirements for the Transitional Housing Program and Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program and aligns the programs requirements with the federal housing vouchers that the programs support. These programs have been proven effective to help former foster youth with the housing challenges they face. Amid the ongoing housing affordability and homelessness challenges in California, people with added disadvantages, like former foster youth, are in danger of housing instability well into adulthood. These programs give them the tools they need to establish an early stable housing and rental record. Reliable housing can also help maintain stable employment and achievement of educational goals. This bill would give the state the data needed to show the utilization patterns of the program in a more helpful way.

PRIOR VOTES

Senate Housing Committee:	10 - 0
Assembly Floor:	78 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15 - 0
Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee:	12 - 0

POSITIONS

Support:

John Burton Advocates for Youth (Sponsor)
Alliance for Children's Rights
Allies for Every Child
Aspiranet
California Alliance of Caregivers
California Alliance of Child and Family Services
Children Now
Greater Sacramento Urban League
Los Angeles County
Ohlone College Nextup
Orangewood Foundation
Stepping Forward LA
Sycamores

Oppose:

None received

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