SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Senator Sabrina Cervantes, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 2162 (Bryan) - Housing: county funding allocations: nonminor dependents and young adults

Version: February 18, 2026
Policy Vote: HOUSING 10 - 0, HUMAN S. 5 - 0
Urgency: No
Mandate: No
Hearing Date: August 3, 2026
Consultant: Mark McKenzie

Bill Summary: AB 2162 would expand eligibility for housing navigation benefits under the Housing and Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP) to young adults who are 18 to 28 (rather than 24) years of age. The bill would also revise and expand the reporting requirements under the HNMP and make clarifying changes to the Transitional Housing Program (THP), as specified.

Fiscal Impact:
- Unknown, potentially significant future cost pressures related to the expansion of the populations that can receive services under the HNMP to include young adults that are 25 to 28 years of age, inclusive. Specifically, there could be pressure to provide additional funding for the program to the extent there is insufficient funding to provide services to both the current aged 21 to 24 population and expanded 25 to 28 years old populations that would be eligible under the bill. These potential cost pressures would be limited to additional benefits provided to the small subset of young adults that retain specified federal housing vouchers beyond age 24. See Staff Comments. (General Fund)

- The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) estimates minor and absorbable costs for workload to create updated reporting forms, produce an annual public report, provide technical assistance to county child welfare agencies, and update program materials. (General Fund)

Background: Existing law, the HNMP, requires HCD, subject to an appropriation in the Budget Act, to allocate funding to county child welfare agencies to provide housing navigators to help young adults who are 18 to 24 years of age, inclusive, secure and maintain housing. A county receiving HNMP funds must give priority to young adults currently or formerly in the foster care system. The HNMP currently receives $13.7 million in annual funding through the Budget Act, and HCD allocates funds based on each county's proportionate share of the state's foster youth population aged 18-21. HNMP funds can be used for the following purposes: to provide housing case management, including essential services in emergency supports to foster youth; to prevent young adults from becoming homeless; and to improve 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 (COC).

When a county child welfare agency accepts HNMP funding, they are required to provide training to their social workers and probation officers that provides an overview of the housing resources available through the local coordinated entry system, homeless COC, and other county public agencies, including 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. On an annual basis, county child welfare agencies that accept HNMP funding are required to provide a report to HCD regarding: the number of homeless youth served; the number of current and former foster youth served; and the number of homeless youth who exited homelessness into temporary and permanent housing.

Existing law, the THP, requires HCD, subject to an appropriation in the Budget Act, to allocate funding to county child welfare agencies to help young adults who are 18 to -24 years of age, inclusive, secure and maintain housing, with priority given to young adults formerly in the state's foster care or probation systems. The THP receives $33.3 million in annual funding through the Budget Act. This funding was established to expand on local transitional housing programs (called "THP-Plus"), and provides up to 36 months of subsidized (or free) housing and supportive services to former foster and out-of-home probation youth ages 18 to 24. County child welfare agencies that accept THP funding are required to report the following to HCD annually: the number of homeless youth served; the number of former foster youth served; and the number of homeless youth who exited homelessness either into temporary or permanent housing. THP funding is very flexible, and counties that accept an allocation may use it to expand existing programs or establish new programs based on local housing and service needs, as long as funding is used to assist young adults with securing and maintaining housing. Funding can also be used to improve coordination of services and linkages to community resources within the child welfare system and the homeless continuums of care as well as outreach and targeting to serve those with the most severe need.

Former foster youth who are 18 to 24 years of age are eligible for one of two federal housing choice vouchers: the Family Unification Program (FUP) or the Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI). These 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. Housing authorities administer the FYI and FUP vouchers and rely on county child welfare agencies to refer youth, verify eligibility, and provide supportive services. HNMP funds the supportive services required by the federal government to utilize the vouchers, but existing law specifies that the upper age limit for receiving housing navigation and supportive services under that program is 24 years of age. Counties therefore lack the resources to offer essential services to voucher holders beyond age 24, including supporting the pursuit of education, employment, and other self-sufficiency-related goals.

Proposed Law: AB 2162 would expand eligibility for housing navigation benefits under the HNMP to young adults who are 18 to 28 (rather than 24) years of age, revise specified reporting requirements, and make clarifying changes to both the HNMP and the THP. Specifically, this bill would:

- Expand the age limit eligibility for receiving housing navigation and supportive services under the HNMP from 18 to 24 years of age to 18 to 28 years of age.
- Require county welfare agencies that receive HNMP funds to give priority to nonminor dependents and young adults formerly in the foster care or probation systems (rather than young adults currently or formerly in the foster care system).
- Specify the following eligible uses of HNMP funds (consistent with current regulations):
  - Assisting young adults with identifying and applying for housing, including housing that qualifies as a supervised independent living placement.
  - Assisting young adults with applying for a federal housing choice voucher and identifying housing with the housing choice voucher.
  - 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.
  - Providing landlord incentives.
  - 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.
- Require county welfare agencies accepting HNMP funds to report the following information annually to HCD, in addition to specified information on the numbers of young adults served through the program:
  - The housing authority with which the county child welfare agency has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or letter of intent to provide FYI or FUP federal housing vouchers. If the county does not partner with a housing authority for this purpose, it must report the reasons why it does not.
  - The number of housing vouchers that have been issued to young adults in the county that are funded by the FYI or FUP federal voucher programs.
- Require HCD to make the above reported information regarding FYI and FUP federal vouchers and MOUs publicly available on an annual basis.
- Makes clarifying changes to the THP statutes by replacing the term "former foster youth" with "young adult formerly in the state's foster care or probation system," and conform the definition of "homeless" with a federal definition, as specified.

Related Legislation: SB 187 (Budget and Fiscal Review Committee), Chap. 50/2022, renamed the housing navigator program as the HNMP, and extended eligibility and priority for the program to provide housing navigation services to young adults who are 18 to 24 years of age (rather than 18 to 21), with priority given to young adults formerly or currently in the foster care system, as specified.

AB 12 (Beall), Chap. 559/2010, defined nonminor dependent and permitted foster youth to remain in extended foster care until age 21, under the same criteria as specified in federal law.

Staff Comments: This bill is intended to align the state HNMP eligibility age to the maximum eligibility period for the FYI and FUP federal housing voucher programs. Data indicates that approximately 2,000 youth per month statewide who are 18 to 24 years of age use a federal housing choice voucher. Under current law, county welfare agencies are not authorized to use HNMP funds to support a voucher holder beyond the age of 24, so those youth recipients lose the supports that can help them maintain stable housing. Because this bill extends the eligibility for HNMP funds to age 28, this bill would allow those recipients to continue to receive services funded through HNMP for the duration of their federal vouchers. This would create cost pressures to continue to provide funding that benefits those recipients while also fully serving the eligible populations that are 18 to 24 years of age. However, since federal vouchers must be secured by age 24 and may be used only three to five years, the age expansion provided in this bill would only affect a small portion of youth voucher holders, and only if they require continued services. Staff notes that the bill does not change the state's funding allocation methodology, but provides counties with added flexibility within their existing budget allocation.

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