

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
 Association for Family and Community Integrity, Inc.
 Behavioral Health Alliance of Texas
 Bering Omega Community Services
 Care for Elders
 Career and Recovery Resources, Inc.
 Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
 CHILDREN AT RISK
 Children's Defense Fund
 Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris Co., Inc.
 Coalition of Behavioral Health Services
 Collaborative for Children
 Communities In Schools
 Community Family Centers
 Community Health Choice, Inc.
 Covenant House of Texas
 DePelchin Children's Center
 Depression & BiPolar Support Alliance Greater Houston (DBSA)
 Easter Seals of Greater Houston, Inc.
 Family Services of Greater Houston
 Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.
 Good Neighbor Healthcare Center
 Greater Houston Healthconnect
 Harris County Healthcare Alliance
 Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston
 Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children
 Houston Area Community Services
 Houston Area Women's Center
 Houston Food Bank
 Houston Methodist Hospital
 IntraCare Behavioral Health
 Jewish Family Service
 League of Women Voters Houston
 Legacy Community Health, Services Inc.
 Lesbian Health Initiative
 March of Dimes
 Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM)
 Memorial Hermann Healthcare System
 Mental Health America of Greater Houston
 NAMI Greater Houston
 National Association of Social Workers-Houston
 Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
 New Hope Housing, Inc.
 Northwest Assistance Ministries
 Phoenix Houses of Texas, Inc.
 Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast
 Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services
 Santa Maria Hostel, Inc.
 SEARCH Homeless Services
 Spaulding for Children
 Spring Branch Community Health Center
 Springfield College School of Human Services
 St. Joseph House
 Texas Children's Hospital
 Texas Health Institute
 Texas Hunger Initiative
 The Arc of Greater Houston
 The Council on Alcohol & Drugs Houston
 The Immunization Partnership
 The Living Bank
 The Network of Behavioral Health Providers
 The Rose
 The Walk for Mental Health Awareness-Houston
 The Women's Home
 United Way of Greater Houston
 Vita-Living, Inc.
 Wesley Community Center
 Worklife Institute
 YMCA of Greater Houston



Children and Youth
Preventing Homelessness of Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care

Position Statement Approved by One Voice Texas: December 10, 2014

Issue/Concern:

Research is clear that youth who age out of foster care are more likely to experience homelessness. Lack of serious support and preparation are key factors leading to this negative outcome. Currently, the Texas Family Code 263.303 requires the Department of Family and Protective Services to provide services to assist with the transition of youth 16 and older. Section 264.121 (f)(1) of the TFC vaguely mentions housing services, but the current Transition Plan only contains questions about where the youth currently lives in foster care and where and with whom the youth will be living once they leave the system. There are no minimum standards in statute that ensure proper planning occurs, reducing the number of youth who age out of foster care and into homelessness and creating an ineffective variation in practice from one caseworker to the next across the state of Texas.

Specific Policy Recommendations:

At the beginning of the transition planning process, a housing stability plan should be developed. It should include, but not be limited to:

- Cost of housing and sources of income, benefits and/or rental assistance that can help to ensure the living arrangement is stable;
- If the youth plans to live with friends or family, the agreement the youth has with these individuals including but not limited to his/her length of stay; expectations regarding rent and other household obligations; knowledge of the youth's needs and identity that may conflict with household members or the type of housing they are seeking;
- Emergency shelter/housing resources so that youth can access temporary shelter and longer term housing;
- Review of a common rental application to ensure the youth has all documentation/information necessary to rent;
- If available, the identity of a cosigner and/or references.

What Can Be Accomplished?

Proper planning prior to the exit of a youth from foster care will help to ensure his/her long-term stability and ability to successfully achieve independence.

How Will This Impact State Funding?

This policy improvement has no fiscal impact on the DFPS budget as transition planning already occurs but that impact on other public agencies can be reduced when youth can successfully achieve independence.

Supporting Facts/Research Resources:

- ✓ Chapin Hall. 2012. Predictors of Homelessness during the Transition from Foster Care to Adulthood. Available at: <http://www.chapinhall.org/research/inside/predictors-homelessness-during-transition-foster-care-adulthood>
- ✓ HUD. 2014. Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care. Available at: http://www.huduser.org/portal/youth_foster_care.html
- ✓ National Governor's Association. 2007. State policies to help youth transition out of foster care. Available at: <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-ehsw-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/state-policies-to-help-youth-tra.html>

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