

**Fostering Promise  
Policy Priority Work Group Updates  
September 2024**

**Policy Priority #1: Housing Readiness Plans for Every Transition Age Youth**

**Goal:** 100% of youth in foster care age 16+ will have completed a housing plan and can access the documentation they will need to secure housing when they age out.

**Key Deliverables by end of 2026:**

1. A Housing Readiness Plan template and process
2. An online repository for youth's critical documentation
3. A Housing Readiness Plan mobile app in beta

**Progress to date:**

- Partnered with Just Advocates to produce a report: *“Effective Housing Readiness Plans: Listening to the Voices of Transitional Aged Youth to Improve the System”* Just Advocate interns from the UC Berkeley Goldman School of Public Policy conducted a two-month study which included interviews with TAY service providers and focus groups with emerging adults with lived experience. Their report provides concrete recommendations including the most critical components to include in a mobile solution.
    - Presented recommendations on key features for the housing readiness plan mobile solution to TAY providers across California at the California Alliance annual conference in September soliciting their feedback on the recommendations.
    - Will continue to gather feedback from key stakeholders, county social workers, TAY providers, case managers, and youth and young adults with lived experience.
  - Meeting with tech advisors (leaders in the high-tech space) to address the technological aspects of creating a robust, user-friendly mobile solution that effectively supports youth and emerging adults in preparing them for independent living and securing housing as they transition out of foster care.
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**Next Work Group for Policy Priority #1 :**

November 1, 2024  
10:00am – 11:00am

Note: Please contact [Melina Andreas](#) if you have not yet been a part of this work group and wish to participate. If you have already participated in this work group, you will receive the calendar invite shortly.

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**Policy Priority #2: Expanding Housing Options for Transition Age Youth (TAY)**

**Goal:** Secure 500 additional housing units for TAY across the San Francisco Bay Area by 2027.

**Key Deliverables by end of 2026:**

1. A Funding Feasibility Study scoped and completed
2. An online repository of “Emerging Adult-Friendly” housing options (housing options suitable or TAY)
3. A convening to propel TAY housing development

**Progress to date:**

- With Good River Partners, we are laying the groundwork for a robust Funding Feasibility Study to identify innovative funding streams – mixing private financial investments and public subsidies for foster youth – to acquire existing and build new homes for TAY.
    - We are in conversations with the Housing Accelerator Fund with the goal of launching the study by early 2025.
  - Engaged student interns from San Jose State University Information Technology (IT) department to build and populate a Housing Repository of TAY-friendly housing communities in the San Francisco Bay Area.
    - Creating the criteria, identifying the communities and creating the tools to store and search by zipcode as well as other key features.
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- Have met with faith-based leaders, providers and developers in two counties to lay the groundwork for transforming church-owned land into housing for TAY. Our objective: Identify best practice models to share with other faith-based leaders at a forum in early 2025.
  - St. James AME Zion Church formed the [St. James Community Development Corporation](#) to build New Beginnings Housing – a village for TAY in San Mateo.
  - JV Churches in South San Jose, in partnership with Equity Community Builders, is evaluating the possibility of using their land for affordable housing for youth who have experienced foster care.
- A TAY Housing Forum is being planned with California Alliance of Child and Family Services and the Catalyst Center. . (Note: this is a change since we first met. We have expanded the scope to include Policy Priority #4 and are moving it out from late 2024 to the first half of 2025.)

The goal is to bring together key stakeholders including developers, faith-based organizations, Housing Authorities, Child Welfare agencies, and service providers, to explore housing models made more accessible via new legislation and/or funding streams.

- We're partnering with California Alliance, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), Youth Law Center and SV@Home. We will be actively seeking other partners as well.

### **Next Work Group for Policy Priority #2:**

November 8, 2024  
10:00am – 11:00am

Note: Please contact [Melina Andreas](#) if you have not yet been a part of this work group and wish to participate. If you have already participated in this work group, you will receive the calendar invite shortly.

### **Policy Priority #3: Secure a Committed Mentor for Every TAY Exiting Foster Care**

**Goal:** Every emerging adult who ages out of foster care will have a caring mentor who has committed to their well-being until the age of 30.

**Key Deliverable by end of 2026:**

A pilot that extends the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program for NMDs (non-minor dependents) up to age 30. Includes:

- Expanding the mentor pool and promoting enduring relationships
- New policies to support emerging adults
- Curriculum and training needed for mentors of young adults

**Progress to date:**

- Convened several meetings with the heads of CASA from four San Francisco Bay Area counties (San Francisco, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Contra Costa) to begin identifying requirements for a pilot program to extend CASA to serve emerging adults 18-30.
- Have begun the work of scoping the program, including:
  - Collecting data on current youth & emerging adults – how many have CASAs today?
  - Determining target population for the pilot
  - Determining how to provide a continuity of support for youth aging out. Moving from CASAs to Mentors
  - How to recruit / retain mentors for NMDs
  - The training curriculum needed for their success
  - Outlining a repository of resources for mentors of NMDs
  - Considering the policy changes required for NMDs

**Next Work Group for Policy Priority #3:**

November 1, 2024  
2:00pm – 3:00pm

Note: Please contact [Melina Andreas](#) if you have not yet been a part of this work group and wish to participate. If you have already participated in this work group, you will receive the calendar invite shortly.

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**Policy Priority #4: Inform and Reform Adult Systems**

**Goal:**

Increase awareness and usage of Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers in collaboration with Bay Area Housing Authorities. Increase voucher acceptance rates among property owners and managers.

**Key Deliverables by end of 2026:**

1. A best practices model for Housing Authorities to reach TAY with FYI/FUP vouchers
2. A targeted marketing effort to increase FYI/FUP voucher acceptance.
3. An online directory of housing communities that will accept FYI/FUP vouchers

**Progress to date:**

- We are developing a regional convening with Housing Authorities, Child Welfare agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders to discuss improvements in the FYI program, promote their use among TAY, and encourage their acceptance among property owners.
    - We are combining NOTE: It was decided to combine this effort with Policy Priority #2, hosting a broader TAY Housing Summit in the first half of 2025 with California Alliance. (See above.)
    - The magic: Convening Child Welfare Directors, Housing Authorities County Housing Departments, and affordable housing developers in one room.
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- We are partnering and leveraging relevant work from advocacy organizations like John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and Youth Law Center. For example, [JBAY's report: "What's Stopping California from Maximizing Federal Housing Assistance for Youth"](#) does an excellent job of referencing best practices, successes, and challenges.
- Discussions include exploring opportunities to pilot expanded voucher programs and integrating other funding sources, including county Housing Authority's "Move to Work" programs.

#### **Next Work Group for Policy Priority #4:**

November 8, 2024  
2:00pm – 3:00pm

Note: Please contact [Melina Andreas](#) if you have not yet been a part of this work group and wish to participate. If you have already participated in this work group, you will receive the calendar invite shortly.

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#### **Policy Priority #5: Use Data-Driven Insights / Data Collection and Integration**

**Goal:** Secure, centralize and make accessible the data needed by all Fostering Promise work groups to drive their respective initiatives forward.

#### **Progress to date:**

- We have determined that there are two distinct areas of focus for the work:
    1. Provide data needed by each of the other four Fostering Promise policy workgroups to help guide their work.
    2. Create the infrastructure (technology / tools) needed to store data for the Housing Repository and make it easily accessible and searchable.
      - This will likely include creating a scalable database that consolidates data from various sources to support the organization's policy priorities.
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- Initial steps include assembling a comprehensive list of data requirements from all work groups and exploring tools to manage this data effectively.

**Next Work Group for Priority #5 / Data:**

November 8, 2024

3:30pm – 4:30pm

Note: Please contact [Melina Andreas](#) if you have not yet been a part of this work group and wish to participate. If you have already participated in this work group, you will receive the calendar invite shortly.