



COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Human Rights Commission

Recommendation Number: (20260323-005): Recommendation to Support Youth Transitioning Out of Foster Care Through Housing Stability, Targeted Services, and Legislative Advocacy

WHEREAS, youth who age out of foster care face disproportionate risks of homelessness, housing instability, unemployment, poor health outcomes, and the absence of consistent familial or adult support during the transition to adulthood; and

WHEREAS, research published in *Children and Youth Services Review* using the National Youth in Transition Database and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System found that 29% of foster youth nationally had experienced homelessness by age 21; and

WHEREAS, according to the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing at The University of Texas at Austin, 33% of youth who age out of foster care in Texas experience homelessness by age 21, exceeding the national rate; and

WHEREAS, according to the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing's 2025 executive summary on youth homelessness and foster care, the number of young adults ages 18 to 25 seeking housing assistance in Austin and Travis County increased from 376 in Fiscal Year 2022 to 1,018 in Fiscal Year 2024, and **53% of those young people reported a history in foster care**; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services permits eligible young adults to remain in or return to Extended Foster Care through age 21, yet many young people still encounter barriers to stable housing, transportation, education, employment, healthcare, and long-term support as they transition out of care; and

WHEREAS, housing support, caring adult connections, coordinated transition planning, and flexible financial assistance are recognized as important protective factors for youth leaving foster care; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has a substantial interest in preventing homelessness, advancing equity, supporting youth well-being, and strengthening community-based systems of care for transition-age young people;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission encourages the Austin City Council to prioritize youth transitioning out of foster care in the City's budget, policy, and intergovernmental planning and to direct the City Manager to explore and report back on opportunities to support this population through the following actions:

1. **Develop targeted housing interventions** for transition-age youth with foster care history, including rapid rehousing, transitional housing, move-in assistance, emergency rental assistance, landlord incentives, and other homelessness-prevention tools.
2. **Expand support for nonprofit and community-based providers** serving youth exiting foster care, including organizations providing housing navigation, case management, mentoring, behavioral health services, legal services, education support, workforce development, and basic-needs assistance.
3. **Strengthen transition navigation and care coordination** so that youth aging out of care are connected, prior to discharge where possible, to housing planning, identification documents, healthcare, transportation, public benefits, employment supports, and stable adult support systems.
4. **Establish or expand flexible emergency assistance** for transition-age youth with foster care experience to address immediate needs such as rent gaps, deposits, utilities, food, transportation, childcare, and work-related expenses that may otherwise result in homelessness or housing instability.
5. **Improve cross-system coordination** among the City of Austin, Travis County, Austin Public Health, school districts, the local homelessness response system, youth-serving nonprofits, and relevant state agencies to strengthen referral pathways, discharge planning, and continuity of care.
6. **Track outcomes and promote accountability** through regular reporting on City-funded efforts supporting transition-age foster youth, including housing stability, service utilization, and other available outcome measures, while protecting individual privacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission recommends the Austin City Council consider including in its legislative program direction for the City's Intergovernmental Relations Office and contracted lobbyists to advocate for stronger statewide support for youth aging out of foster care, including:

1. increased state funding for housing assistance, aftercare, and homelessness-prevention services for youth exiting foster care;
2. strengthened access to and continuity in Extended Foster Care through age 21;
3. improved statewide transition-planning standards so that youth leave care with housing plans, identification documents, healthcare continuity, and connections to education and workforce supports; and
4. stronger coordination among the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, housing agencies, workforce systems, and local homelessness-response systems so that youth do not fall into crisis upon reaching adulthood.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Human Rights Commission urges the Austin City Council to recognize preventing homelessness among youth transitioning out of foster care as a housing, equity, public health, and human rights priority and to consider targeted local investment as part of the City's broader homelessness-prevention strategy.

Background

Young people exiting foster care often enter adulthood without the family, financial, and housing supports that many of their peers rely upon during the transition to independence. Available research shows that youth with foster care experience face heightened risks of homelessness both nationally and in Texas, and recent Austin/Travis County data indicates a significant overlap between youth homelessness and foster care history. While the State of Texas provides some supports, including Extended Foster Care through age 21 for eligible youth, local investment and coordination can help close critical gaps in housing stability, service access, and transition planning.

Date of Approval: March 23, 2026

Motioned By: Commissioner Kirsh Pozen

Seconded By: Commissioner Oliva-Martínez

Vote: 8-0

For: Chair Duhon, Vice Chair Zeidan, Commissioners Aslam, Davis, Kirsh Pozen, Krueger, Morgan Avitia, Oliva-Martínez

Against: None

Abstain: None

Recuse: None

Off the dais: None

Absent: Commissioners Igram, Khawar

Attest: *Ryan Sperling*

(Ryan Sperling, Staff Liaison)