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Young People from Foster Care Hit Hard by COVID-19, Lack Resources and Connections to Weather this Storm

(Washington D.C.) A second in a series of polls of young people from foster care has been conducted by FosterClub, the national network for young people from foster care, revealing troubling insights about how the COVID-19 crisis continues to negatively affect some of the nation's most vulnerable youth.

*"It's been 6 weeks and I still haven't gotten any correspondence from unemployment."
- 21 year old from foster care, living in Missouri*

613 respondents from 44 states between the ages of 18 and 24 shared their experiences in the poll, which was conducted through social media and across FosterClub's network. A full report of the poll is available at <https://tinyurl.com/FosterClubPollMay>.

"This crisis hit young people from foster care fast and hard. These new poll results indicate the situation continues to become more desperate by the day, particularly for young people who have already aged out of foster care and are without family to rely on," said Celeste Bodner, Executive Director at FosterClub. "Youth from foster care are falling through the cracks. They aren't eligible or able to access the unemployment or stimulus checks the rest of America is counting on to get by."

For information about resources available to support young people through the COVID crisis, visit www.fosterclub.org/C19. For more information about the poll or to find out how you can help, contact FosterClub at help@fosterclub.com or call 503-717-1552.

DATA SNAPSHOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM FOSTER CARE (age 18-24)

Food Security

Nearly 1 in 5 young people reported they have run out of food.

*"I don't qualify for SNAP. But I also don't make enough to keep up with the rising prices of food due to COVID-19."
- 23 year old in Texas*

51% said they are having challenges with food security.

"I have no money to buy food I haven't ate in 48 hours just trying to stay hydrated."

- 21 year old in New Jersey

"I have been using my money to pay for my bills and now rent which has lead me to have less money to spend on food. I have been eating less so that my food can last longer." - 22 year old in Illinois

"Due to my health condition, I was advised not to go out.. it's really been hard; I'm always hungry because I don't get enough to eat."

- 23 year old in Ohio

Housing

23% reported that they are being forced to move or fear being forced to leave their current living situation.

"I was evicted from my apartment and have been unemployed & couch surfing since the start of COVID-19."

- 21 year old in North Dakota

"I am a graduating college senior. I cannot find a job. I can't move back home to family like many of my peers can. I'm scared of not making rent next month."

- 22 year old in Arizona

Employment & Finances

65% said they had lost work, hours or been laid off because of the pandemic.

"I applied for unemployment 5 weeks ago and haven't heard back."

- 19 year old in Oklahoma

37.4% indicated they didn't know how to apply for unemployment or couldn't get the info they needed.

"My hours have been reduced, but I worry they are going to fall more."

- 24 year old in Louisiana

50% of those who lost work because of COVID 19 who had filed for unemployment benefits did not receive benefits.

"Trying to find a job to pay for my bills, I have no financial help at all, while taking online classes."

- 21 year old in Indiana

52% said they did not receive a stimulus check. 40% weren't even sure if they were eligible.

Connections & Stress

1 in 5 young people indicated they are on their own - or almost entirely alone.

"People without family support are really overlooked during this time."

- 22 year old in Washington

Only 37% said they can rely on family (legal or chosen) during this crisis.

"I just moved placements so I feel I lost a lot of my support during this crisis."

- 19 year old in Colorado

"I've just been in this state of isolation in terms of peers. I have a lot of adult-like figures in my life, but not many peers."

- 18 year old in Florida

FosterClub is proud to join over 650 youth, parents and advocates and over 110 organizations (national and state) in a sign-on letter asking Congress to #UPChafee to help older youth from foster care weather this crisis. In brief, the requests to Congress include:

1. Increase Chafee Funding by 500 Million.
2. Extend the Age of Eligibility for Chafee Aftercare Services to Age 23 for All Youth.
3. Suspend Participation Requirements for Young People in Extended Foster Care.
4. Place a Moratorium on Discharges from the Foster Care System for Youth Ages 18-21.
5. Allow States to Draw Down Title IV-E funds until a Young Person Reaches Age 22.

[READ THE FULL SIGN-ON LETTER: www.tinyurl.com/UpChafeeLetter](http://www.tinyurl.com/UpChafeeLetter)

About FosterClub

FosterClub is the national network for young people in foster care. Through work led by over 500 young leaders, FosterClub provides direct services to youth who experience the system and elevates the young peoples' voice to drive change in the child welfare system. Learn more about FosterClub and how you can support young people in foster care at www.fosterclub.org.