

Jan 26, 2021

To the members of the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council,

Sending warm wishes on this January morning.

**The OHIO YAB and ACTION Ohio** are incredibly excited about the Older Youth provisions that were included in the recently passed stimulus act from the *Supporting Foster Youth and Families through the Pandemic Act* (H.R. 7947), including:

- A temporary increase in Chafee funding, which does not require a state match.
- Expanded eligibility for former foster youth to receive support from Chafee funds until the young person turns 27.
- A temporary increase in ETV funds that increases the maximum ETV award for students with a foster care history from 5K to 12K.
- Foster youth are now eligible for extended foster care support services until turning 22, and those who “aged out” during the pandemic are allowed to return.
- States are required by federal statute to notify young people about the moratorium on “aging out” of care, expanded Chafee eligibility and services, and how to reconnect with support services.

**These provisions are time-limited**, and therefore must be maximized and made available as soon as possible. Ohio foster care youth and alumni would love to be of support and for the state of Ohio be a national leader when it comes to utilizing this provision. Some of the ideas that young people have proposed are:

- to have a 24-hour statewide hotline and hire former foster youth help man it
- to create a statewide Public Service Announcement
- to mandate Independent Living units in every county, as per previous written testimony from [Raven Grice](#) and [Merri Haren](#)
- to [Make Every Training Hour Count](#) by mandating specific training on resources for caseworkers and foster parents who serve teens



**OHIO YAB President Roman Sandhu** feels so strongly about this that he has offered to drive to every children services agency in NW Ohio to let them know about these provisions, to *positively transform* the lives of young people with a foster care history in the midst of the current pandemic.

**Roman's offer demonstrates a deep sense of urgency.** Every day, every week, and every month that passes without moving these temporary provisions forward represents a missed opportunity to improve outcomes for foster youth.

**Ohio foster care youth and alumni** helped advocate for these federal provisions initially, and continue to reach out to Health and Human Services staff members regarding national implementation. It bears repeating that the one permanent provision for Older Foster Youth in the stimulus bill – the *Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act* -- was written by Ohio foster care youth themselves.

**We understand that internal meetings are taking place** regarding how Ohio plans to roll out these provisions. Ohio foster care youth and alumni would love to be a part of future conversations to help to expedite the process, and ensure its effectiveness in terms of making sure these resources are able to be accessed by the young people who need them the most.

**We truly are better together,** and always value opportunities to work with each of you. Here are some of the faces of our youth leaders, reminding others to please: "Don't forget to foster my future."



Thank you for your ongoing dedication to the needs of Ohio's foster care youth,

Lisa Dickson  
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ACTION Ohio  
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[www.fosteractionohio.org](http://www.fosteractionohio.org)