



Child Welfare Policy Roundtable

March 3, 2023





AB 867:



AB 867: ENSURING YOUTH EXITING FOSTER CARE CAN SUCCEED

- Authored by Assemblymember Friedman.
- Sponsored by the Children's Law Center of California, Public Counsel, and Youth Law Center
- Link to legislation:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB867

AB 867: BACKGROUND

- AB 12 provides extended foster care until age 21.
- WIC 391 provides requirements to ensure that adequate transition to adulthood planning begins at age 14, continues until a young person ages out at age 21, and is done satisfactorily before a case can be closed by the court.
- These detailed provisions were put in place to make sure young people have the tools, resources, and support they need to successfully transition to adulthood.
- These detailed provisions were also put in place to make sure the child welfare agency, related agencies and community stakeholders, have sufficient time to do comprehensive planning and get assistance well before discharge.

AB 867: THE NEED

- Despite existing law on transition planning, large numbers of young people are leaving foster care without proper plans and many face homelessness and housing instability.
- The transition planning requirement does not contain mechanisms for enforcement to prevent these poor outcomes.

AB 867: THE RESPONSE

The law would:

1. Require the child welfare agency to ensure that transition planning occurs, including in the area of housing, before exiting the child welfare system, and
2. Provide the court the ability to keep a case open past age 21 if the requirements for the transition plan have not been satisfactorily met.

AB 867: WHY IT IS THE RIGHT SOLUTION NOW

- **We should leverage our increased investments to prevent young adult homelessness:**
 - The state has recently invested more funds and expertise in housing for young people, providing child welfare with tools and resources to meet the transition planning requirement. This includes an increased investment in Housing Navigation and Maintenance Funds and THP-Plus.
 - Federal resources, such as the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers provide excellent housing resources for young people as they age out of foster care.
 - Interagency collaboration and resource maximization is needed for young people to experience the benefits of these increased investments.
- **Young people deserve meaningful accountability systems related to discharge/transition planning:**
 - There are no meaningful accountability when poor or no discharge planning is done. Young people suffer the results by being homeless and in unsafe circumstances.
 - System accountability—through the option to continue court jurisdiction when planning is not properly done—is needed to ensure that young people leave care to safety and stability and that planning begins early, consistent with the law.



AB 1675



AB 1675: IMPROVING PARTICIPATION IN ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

- Authored by Assemblymember Alanis.
- Sponsored by California Youth Connection and Youth Law Center.
- Link to legislation:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240AB1675
- A complementary budget request has been submitted.

AB 1675: BACKGROUND

- Promoting enrichment activities has been a priority for young people in foster care in California through CYC's advocacy since at least 2016 through the introduction of legislative proposals and related advocacy. .
- Enrichment and extracurricular activities are critical to healthy child and adolescent development and healing.
- Enrichment activities have an array of benefits to youth, families and communities:
 - Research shows that they can improve outcomes related to education, employment, and avoidance of risky behaviors.
 - Participation in activities provides outlets for young people to express their emotions, experience “normal” childhood experiences, and connect with peers and their community.
 - Participation in activities can support caregivers and enhance placement stability.

AB 1675: THE NEED

- There are some available funding to support enrichment activities (Family Flexible Funds, Title IV-E, Medicaid), but there is no dedicated funding stream and no requirement to leverage available funding for this purpose, making the funding investment in activities inconsistent and inadequate.
- While the state and federal law require participation in enrichment activities for children and youth in foster care, there are no accountability mechanisms, making ensuring participation under current law difficult.

AB 1675: THE RESPONSE

The bill would:

1. Require the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to convene a workgroup that includes young people with lived experience to design and implement the proposed activity stipend for youth in foster care if their application for an 1115 Waiver is granted and Medicaid funding can be used for this purpose.
1. Require California Department of Social Services (CDSS), DHCS and the Department of Education (DOE) to develop a plan to maximize and leverage all available funds to support participation in enrichment activities for children and youth in foster care.
2. Require CDSS to submit a report on the usage of Family Flexible funds to support participation in enrichment activities,, the impact of this funding on children and youth well-being, and best practices and challenges around the fund usage.
3. Require that the case plan of youth in foster care include a description of whether the child is participating in enrichment activities, and that the existing court hearings for all youth in foster care includes a review of whether foster youth have the opportunity to participate in activities in accordance with existing state and federal law.

AB 1675: WHY IT IS THE RIGHT RESPONSE NOW

- The children's mental health crisis continues and the need for effective, community based interventions like enrichment activities to support home based settings has never been greater.
- A range of funds are now available: we need to focus our efforts and attention on leveraging these funds and understanding the impact of the investment in enrichment activities on youth in foster care to build a solid infrastructure to support participation in activities on an ongoing basis.
- We should be accountable to young people for the promises we have made them in law related to enrichment activities. Aligning with federal and state law on accountability in case planning and court is long overdue.

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