

# Safe Housing for Foster Youth Ages 18-21

## Vision

*Youth aging out of Washington's foster care system are provided safe and appropriate housing that supports their transition into adulthood with the resources necessary to achieve their educational, career, and social goals.*

## Five Year Goal

*Washington State fully implements the Fostering Connections Act so all youth in care have the opportunity to remain in care until age 21.*

---

## Current Policy

- Youth may remain in care until age 21 in order to achieve a high school diploma or GED (50% federal match)
- Youth with high school diploma can remain in care to pursue post-secondary education through the Foster Care to 21 Program (83 spots, state-only funds)
- Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) provides housing assistance for youth ages 18 to 23 who have aged out of the foster care system. Youth income must not exceed 50% of area mean income (about 88 spots)

---

## Facts on Safe Housing for Youth in Care

- *According to Children's Administration, 525 youth have exited care in FY 2011*
- *Washington State's safe housing for youth in care programs have demonstrated tax payer cost savings of \$1.35 for every dollar invested, and positive results for participants who realize accrued benefit in increased earnings of \$5.16 for every dollar invested<sup>1</sup>*
- *Approximately half of all American youth between the ages of 18-24 still live with their parents<sup>2</sup>*
- *Studies of youth who leave foster care without a safe, permanent family reveal consistently negative life outcomes<sup>2</sup>*
- *According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, one out of every six youth in foster care experience homelessness*

<sup>1</sup>WSIPP: *Extending Foster Care to 21 Measuring Costs & Benefits in Washington State.*

<sup>2</sup>Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth, [www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth](http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth)

---

## The Youth Perspective

*"I was in foster care for more than four years. When I turned 19 I exited care and was unprepared and without a safe place for my son and I to live. The Independent Youth Housing Program gave me a safe place to live so I am now able to work, care for my son and make progress toward my life goals for both of us."*

**- Melody Esteves, Alumna of Care**

*"Without the Foster Care to 21 program, I would have had nowhere to go after aging out. This opportunity has allowed me to pursue my education from a place of security so I can focus on success instead of just survival."*

**-Deonate Cruz, Foster Care to 21 Participant**

For Questions or Comments,  
please contact Jim Theofelis or Jon Brumbach:

2100 24th Ave S, Suite 210  
Seattle, WA 98144  
p (206) 323-5437 f (206) 323-1003



**The Mockingbird Society**  
Building a world-class foster care system