

GOAL: Ensuring that all youth who elect to participate in extended foster care are appropriately and safely housed.

Background: Current law allows any youth who was in a foster care placement on his or her 18th birthday to remain in foster care, at his or her option, until the age of 21. All youth in foster care have a right to a safe and appropriate housing. Despite this right, many young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 do not have a stable, appropriate place to live where they can benefit from the advantages of extended foster care. The right to participate in extended foster care has not resulted in the creation of enough supported housing to meet the need. Advocates for youth must partner with county agencies and the state to enforce a foster youth's right to housing and to overcome the barriers that are leading to housing instability and inadequate housing stock available to this population.

Policy Statement:

The Alliance for Children's Rights believes that all youth who are eligible for extended foster care are legally entitled to safe and appropriate housing. Advocates for youth must enforce the housing rights of those eligible for extended foster care benefits through AB 12 (Chapter 559, Statutes of 2010). We must overcome barriers leading to housing instability and inadequate housing stock. We must also highlight and solve dysfunctions in the foster care system, including delays and errors in the provision of safe housing and financial benefits for non-minor dependents, that contribute to homelessness.

The Alliance State and Local Policy Action Plan Includes:

- Co-sponsoring AB 2337 (Gipson), to remove administrative barriers so that youth in need of transitional services are able to enter or re-enter extended foster care;
- Advocating for amendments to state regulations governing transitional housing for current and former foster youth to increase the availability and stability of such housing;
- Implementing legal strategies to enforce the right to safe and stable housing for non-minor dependents;
- Identifying trends in homelessness and risk of homelessness in Alliance client cases;
- Working with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Los Angeles County Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to maximize housing options for youth who are or have been in foster care;
- Analyzing the availability of transitional housing programs and identifying gaps in available programs and services in relation to client needs. Specifically, we advocate that county agencies better quantify homelessness among key client populations, including:
 - Those who are eligible for extended foster care benefits but are not currently receiving benefits,
 - Those in extended foster care who are homeless,
 - Those in extended foster care who are at imminent risk of homelessness (such as those in emergency shelters or facing eviction proceedings), and
 - have exited out of extended foster care and are homeless.
- Asserting due process rights of non-minor dependents facing eviction from transitional housing.