

Help Foster Youth Become Successful Adults



One in three youth aging out of foster care at 18 experience **homelessness** within the first year of **aging out of care**.

- *The Housing Status and Well-Being of Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Washington State* (September 2013) No. 11.195.

One in four youth who reach age 18 in the **juvenile justice system** are **homeless within one year** of their release.

- *Impact of Homelessness on Youth Recently Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation Facilities* (June 2013) No. 11.191.

Extended Foster Care provides the support, stability, and opportunity necessary for foster youth aging out of care at age 18 to become successful adults.

Extended Foster Care (EFC) is a program for youth aging out of foster care who are in education, employment, or other qualifying programs. EFC provides essential housing and other supports for 18- to 21-year-olds.

Yet, Washington State denies entry into the program for certain vulnerable youth – *even if they meet qualifying eligibility criteria*. Current law denies entry into EFC if the youth is:

- In the juvenile justice system at age 18;
- Missing from care at age 18 – including being sexually trafficked;
- Experiencing mental health or substance abuse problems that lead them to drop out of the program more than once;
- Sent to a “trial return home” placement before age 18, even if that placement fails; and
- Not in EFC before their 19th birthday – even though the program provides benefits up to age 21.

Washington State needs a system that ensures our most vulnerable foster youth have the supports they need to become successful adults.

Expansion of Extended Foster Care gives all foster youth aging out of care at age 18 access to Extended Foster Care services through age 21 if they meet education, employment, or other program entry criteria.

This legislation helps all foster youth aging out of care at age 18 access to EFC to help them seek a brighter future and become successful adults.