



- ii. The former foster youth in enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary education.

**This bill:**

- 1) Renames the HNP to the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP)
- 2) Requires HCD to accept one county board resolution and one allocation form, and execute one standard agreement from a child welfare agency that accepts any distribution of money for the Transitional Housing Program and HNMP.
- 3) Expands the HNMP to serving youth who are up to 25 years of age.
- 4) Revises the HNMP to require counties to give priority to foster youth who are former foster youth in addition to those who are current foster youth.
- 5) Adds the number of former foster youth served by HNMP to the existing data points that counties are required to report to HCD.
- 6) Revises THP-Plus to require counties to provide services to former foster youth up to age 25 rather than making it optional for counties.
- 7) Removes the requirement that former foster youth receiving THP-Plus services, between the ages of 24 and 25, be enrolled in secondary education, post-secondary education, or an equivalent to receive services.
- 8) Provides that to the extent that this Act increases the overall cost to local agencies for programs or the level of service mandated by the 2011 Realignment Legislation it shall only apply to local agencies to the extent that the state provides annual funding for increased costs.

**COMMENTS:**

- 1) *Author's Statement.* "California is home to the largest population of foster youth in the nation, serving nearly 60,000 children and youth. Each year, nearly 3,500 of these youth "age out" of the system, exiting foster care with an average annual income of just \$11,904. While California has invested in programs to assist former foster youth, these programs do not have the capacity to ensure all of these youth make a transition into housing and eligibility requirements place those who "age out" of these services at risk of homelessness.

To address this issue, AB 1615 expands the eligibility and program duration for existing housing programs targeted to serve former foster youth. Specifically, this bill lengthens the program duration of the Transitional Housing Program-Plus from 24 to 36 months and the upper age limit from 23 to 24 for all youth participating in the program. It also increases the upper age limit for the Housing Navigators Program to 24, aligning the program with the age limits on federal housing vouchers. In doing so, AB 1615 allows counties to maximize federal resources and ensures this vulnerable population of transitional age youth have the support they need to transition into safe, stable housing.”

- 2) *Background of Youth Homelessness.* According to the Homeless Data Integration System from the California Interagency Council (Cal-ICH) on Homelessness, there were 25,461 unaccompanied youth who experienced homelessness and accessed services in California during 2020, almost 18,000 of which are between 18 and 24.<sup>1</sup> Youth, in particular, often fall through the cracks in homelessness planning. Because of this, California has made efforts to combat youth homelessness. One example, is through the Homelessness Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAPP) which requires reporting requirements and set-asides for youth, specifically.

According to a report by John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), there are approximately 60,000 youth in foster care, with 17% of them at the upper age limit for foster care.<sup>2</sup> Thus, being able to adequately house youth from the foster care system will contribute significantly to tackling a homeless youth problem.

- 3) *THP-Plus.* This program helps provide housing and supportive services to former foster youth, between ages 18-24, for up to 24 months. Counties have the discretion to extend the age to include 24 and provide assistance for up to 36 months if the youth is in the education system. As of June 2021, there were around 1000 youth in the program.

Forty-percent of participants experienced homelessness sometime between exiting foster care and starting the program, and 92% exited the program to

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<sup>1</sup> Cal-ICH Homeless Data Integration System. Accessed May 2022. <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>

<sup>2</sup> Tureck Lee, Simone. *2020-21 Statewide Analysis of Supportive Housing for Former Foster Youth in California. 2021.* Accessed May 2022. <https://jbay.org/resources/2020-21-supportive-housing-for-ffy>

stable housing which exhibits how successful of a program this is.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the extension of services has been effective for youth outcomes, not only in staying enrolled in school. Observed benefits included saving money, achieving stable housing, and maintaining mental health among others. This bill leaves the extension and eliminates the educational requirement so that all participants reap the benefits of the extra year of services.

- 4) *HNP*. HNP helps young adults, ages 18-21, secure and maintain housing, with priority to foster youth. This includes case management, essential services, coordination of resources, and other supports. In addition, the federal government provides Housing Choice Vouchers through its Family Unification Program (FUP) and Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI). Eligibility for these programs are for people ages 18-25. HNP can provide funding for localities to administer the Housing Choice Vouchers. However, HNP only helps youth up to age 21 even though the vouchers can be used through age 24. Thus, this bill expands the age limits of HNP to 25 so that it aligns better with federal and state programs like FUP, FYI, and THP-Plus.
- 5) *Double Referral*. This bill passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on June 13th with a 5-0 vote.

#### **RELATED LEGISLATION:**

**SB 1252 (Torres, Chapter 774, Statutes of 2014)** — gave counties the option of extending the services of THP-Plus if the youth is in the education system

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No    Fiscal Com.: Yes    Local: Yes

**POSITIONS:** (Communicated to the committee before noon on Wednesday, June 15, 2022.)

#### **SUPPORT:**

California Alliance of Child and Family Services (Co-Sponsor)  
 John Burton Advocates for Youth (Co-Sponsor)  
 A Better Way  
 Abode Services

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<sup>3</sup> Lemley, Amy; Tureck Lee, Simone. *Youth in THP-NMP and THP-Plus a 2020-21 Census*. (John Burton Advocates for Youth, December 2021). [https://jbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021AR\\_Census.pdf](https://jbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021AR_Census.pdf)

All Saints Church Foster Care Project  
Alliance for Children's Rights  
Allies for Every Child  
Alternative Family Services  
Aspiranet  
Association of Community Human Service Agencies  
Beyond Emancipation  
Bill Wilson Center  
California Catholic Conference  
California Coalition for Youth  
California Faculty Association  
California Police Chiefs Association  
Casa Pacifica  
Central Valley Community Resources  
Chief Probation Officers of California  
Children Now  
Children's Advocacy Institute  
Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)  
Doing Good Works  
EA Family Services  
EAH Housing  
Edgewood Center for Children and Families  
Everychild Foundation  
First Place for Youth  
Florence Crittenton Services of Orange County, INC.  
Glide  
Hillsides  
Holly Place  
Hollywood Now  
Housing California  
Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, INC.  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority  
National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter  
New Alternatives  
Oak Grove Sanctuary Palm Springs  
One Day, INC.  
Orangewood Foundation  
Public Counsel  
Reedley College  
STAR Vista  
Students Rising Above  
Sycamores

TLC Child and Family Services  
Walden Family Services  
Youth and Family Services, YMCA

**OPPOSITION:**

None received.

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