

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 22, 2023

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
Secretary
Department of Housing & Urban Development
451 7th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Marcia Fudge:

We write to call your attention to delays in the delivery of housing vouchers for youth aging out of foster care. As you know, homelessness is one of the most serious hardships that transition-aged youth may endure, disrupting social, economic, and physical well-being. We appreciate the work of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to address these challenges—including under the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative—and ask for your help to improve the administration of these programs. We have heard from individuals who have encountered significant barriers and delays to securing FYI housing vouchers, and we urge you to ensure housing resources are delivered to transition-aged youth in an accessible and timely manner.

We have heard the stories from former foster youth like Anna from Connecticut, who in 2019 aged out of foster care, enrolled in college, and moved into on-campus housing. During her sophomore year, she had to move out of her dorm as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Unlike her peers, Anna didn't have a "home" to which she could return. After a lengthy period of sleeping on friends' couches and conducting outreach to various resources, she learned that she qualified for the FYI housing voucher. Even after she found the resource, it took six months for her to be issued the voucher and an additional three months to find a landlord who would accept it. When Anna finally found a viable housing option that would accept the voucher, she was unable to move in for several weeks due to delayed HUD inspections and requirements. Throughout this process, public housing agency staff did not keep Anna updated on the status of her case, requiring her to repeatedly initiate communication with housing officials. It was only through her follow-up communication that she learned about the required inspections, delaying her move-in even further.

Students are not the only ones struggling with administrative delays. For example, Ada, a former foster youth and young mother of two from Minnesota, had to move between various short-term rentals for four months until she was issued a FYI voucher this past July with the help of a local agency. Even still, Ada has been unable to secure housing because so few landlords are willing to rent to those using HUD housing vouchers, despite her having no history of eviction, poor rental history, or bad credit.

Anna and Ada's stories are not isolated cases. Twenty percent of foster youth become homeless the day they age out of care.¹ Your agency estimates that an additional 25 to 50 percent of these

¹ Christina Dronen (March 2022). [42 Aging Out of Foster Care Statistics](#). Finally Family Homes.

former foster youths are unstably housed—either doubling up, sleeping on friends’ couches, or facing eviction.² Involvement in the child welfare system is a major predictor for future homelessness, with fifty percent of the nationwide homeless population having spent time in foster care.³ Programs like the Foster Youth to Independence housing voucher have the potential to change the trajectory of these young adults’ lives, but only if they are accessible to them. That is why it’s so crucial to inform transition-aged youth of housing resources in advance of their transition and ensure those seeking help are able to apply and receive assistance quickly and free of unnecessary red tape.

We respectfully request you provide the following information:

1. An update on the Department’s initiatives to increase housing security for youth and young adults who will age out of foster care in the next two years as well as those who have aged out of care since 2019.
2. An update on what the Department is doing to ensure that transition-aged youth and young adults are made aware of the housing and other resources available to them as well as where to find additional information.

We look forward to working with you to ensure foster youth have access to safe and stable housing when they age out of care or otherwise experience disruptions in their housing situations. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

² Office of Policy Development and Research, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (June 2014). [Understanding Housing Challenges and Supports for Former Foster Youth](#). U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

³ National Foster Youth Institute (May 2021). [Housing & Homelessness](#). National Foster Youth Institute.