In today’s economy, a college degree or postsecondary credential is increasingly important to securing a job with a living wage and good benefits. Yet far too often, higher education remains out of reach for foster and homeless youth. Foster and homeless youth often experience poor academic preparation, considerable financial hardship, housing challenges, and limited social capital to help navigate the varied demands of higher education. For example, a study by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab and the Association of Community College Trustees found that approximately 13-14 percent of community college students were homeless, noting that 30 percent of former foster youth surveyed experienced homelessness. These youth also are at higher risk for lasting health and mental health effects from traumas experienced, poor health care, and other stressors that undermine college success.

Poor college graduation and attendance rates reflect these challenges. A report produced by the National Working Group on Foster Care and Education found that although over 70 percent of 17-18-year-olds in foster care want to attend college, less than half enroll in postsecondary education and only 3 to 10 percent attain a bachelor’s degree. In fact, a 2021 report by John Burton Advocates for Youth found that foster youth experienced the highest rate of failure in Satisfactory Academic Progress—34 percent—after the first year of college. The findings from a Government Accountability Office report indicate unaccompanied homeless youth have similar college enrollment patterns as foster youth. To enable foster and homeless youth to have the best chance in school, work, and life, we must ensure these students have the appropriate support to enroll and graduate with a postsecondary credential.

The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act would improve college access, retention, and completion rates for foster and homeless youth by substantially improving state capacity to support these students as they transition to and attend college. Specifically, this bill would:

- Invest $150 million a year in states, tribes, & territories to establish or expand statewide initiatives to assist foster and homeless youth in enrolling in and graduating from institutions of higher education;
- Establish formula grants to states based on a state’s share of foster youth and homeless youth, with a $500,000 minimum grant;
- Dedicate 70 percent of grants to (a) developing Institutions of Excellence committed to serving foster and homeless youth via robust support services; (b) covering the remaining cost of attendance beyond federal and state grant aid, (c) providing comprehensive wraparounds, and (d) offering robust student health and mental services;
- Direct 25 percent of grants to establish intensive, statewide transition initiatives to improve the college going culture and increase college enrollment by foster and homeless youth;
- Reserve 7 percent of funds for technical assistance and evaluation, 3 percent for tribes, tribal consortia, or tribal organizations and 2 percent for territories.
Supporting Organizations

National Organizations

Alliance for Positive Youth Development
Association of Children's Residential & Community services (ACRC)
Boys Town
C4 Innovations
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for the Study of Social Policy
Children's Advocacy Institute
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Rights
EDGE Consulting Partners
Family Centered Treatment Foundation
Family Promise
First Focus Campaign for Children
First Quarter Strategies
First Star Institute
FosterClub
Haynes-Maslow Logistics & Consulting
HEAR US Inc.
iFoster
Juvenile Law Center
Maddy Day LLC & Associates
National Association of Counsel for Children
National Center on Adoption and Permanency
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Crittenton
National Education Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
Partners for Our Children at the University of Washington in Seattle
SchoolHouse Connection
Student Housing Advocate Alliance
The Family Focused Treatment Association
The Field Center
The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice
Think of Us
Youth Law Center
Youth Villages

State and Local Organizations

15th Night
18 Degrees
ACTION Ohio

Agora Cyber Charter School
All About the Youth Community Center (AAYCC)
All Saints Church Foster Care Project
Ardmore City Schools
Bellevue School District
Belmont Charter School
California Youth Connection
Center for Transforming Lives
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
Chicago HOPES for Kids
Child Care Services Association
Children's Advocacy Alliance
Children's Home Society of North Carolina
Children's Law Center of California
Community Education Partnerships
Community Outreach through Radical Empowerment (CORE)
Connecticut Voices for Children
Dane County Youth Action Board
Deming Public Schools
Direction Service
Family Promise of Colorado Springs
Foster Forward
Fostering Success Michigan
Gilliam County Family Services
H.O.M.E.S Campaign
Healthy Healed Whole LLC
Henry County Board of Education
HerStory Ensemble LLC
Holy Wisdom Monastery
Homeless Services Consortium of Dane County
John Burton Advocates for Youth
Kalispell HEART Program
KidsVoice
Lane Community College
Law Office of Kara Jennings LLC
Legal Counsel for Youth and Children (LCYC)
Lockport City School District
LYTE Collective
Maslow Project
Medford School District, Oregon
Menominee Indian School District
MICAH
MOSES
My Friend's Place
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCSU Feed the Pack Food Pantry</th>
<th>Sacramento LGBT Community Center</th>
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<td>Nevada Kids Foundation, Inc.</td>
<td>Safe Place for Youth</td>
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<td>Salvation Army</td>
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<td>Oak Tree Resources</td>
<td>Sanctuary of Hope</td>
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<td>OHIO Youth Action Board</td>
<td>SUN Scholars Inc.</td>
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<td>Ozone House Youth &amp; Family Services</td>
<td>Tenant Resource Center</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children</td>
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