

GUIDE FOR CONTACTING LEGISLATURE & GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

✓ **The \$13.7 million Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program serving former foster youth is preserved in the Legislature's Joint Budget Plan.**

✓ **Their budget plan also removes the "trigger" the Governor placed on a new foster care rate structure.** The new rate structure increases the monthly payment for youth in SILPs to \$2,288. The trigger would make the new rates contingent on available funding in 2026, which means no guarantee. Removing the trigger ensures youth will receive this increased monthly payment.



This is great news! But we're not done yet...



For these investments to make it into the final state budget, we need to encourage both the Assembly and Senate to hold strong in their positions on these investments, and we need to urge the Governor to agree to these positions. We can do this by **calling, emailing, and using social media**. Please find guidance below for each of these strategies.

Questions? E-mail Simone Tureck Lee with John Burton Advocates for Youth at simone@jbay.org.



PHONE CALLS

ASSEMBLY

- Call **Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas: (916) 319-2029**
"Hello, I am calling to provide a position on budget items. My name is _____. I am with (organization/ affiliation/ lived experience). I'm calling to thank the Assembly for a budget that protects foster youth and urge the Speaker to stand strong on the Legislature's preservation of the Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program and removal of the trigger placed on foster care rates."

SENATE

- Call **Senate Pro Tem Mike McGuire: (916) 651-4002**
"Hello, I am calling to provide a position on budget items. My name is _____. I am with (organization/ affiliation/ lived experience). I'm calling to thank the Senate for a budget that protects foster youth and urge the Pro Tem to stand strong on the Legislature's preservation of the Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program and removal of the trigger placed on foster care rates."

GOVERNOR

- Call the **Governor's Office: (916) 445-2841 (after selecting a language, press 6 to speak with a representative)**
"My name is _____. I am with (organization/ affiliation/ lived experience). I'm calling to urge the Governor to preserve the \$13.7 million Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program serving former foster youth, and to remove the trigger placed on the new foster care rate structure, as proposed by the Legislature and supported by stakeholders statewide."



ASSEMBLY

E-mail address for the office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas:

assemblymember.rrivas@assembly.ca.gov

Subject Line: Preserve Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program & Reject Trigger on Foster Care Rates

E-mail Body:

Dear Speaker Rivas,

I am writing to thank the Assembly for rejecting the Governor's proposed elimination of the \$13.7 million Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, and the proposed trigger on California's new foster care rate structure. Together, these actions will prevent homelessness among current and former foster youth. Please continue to stand strong with foster youth in your position regarding these investments in final budget negotiations.

[Optionally provide anecdotes, stories, stats, or any other information about the importance of these investments as it relates to the young people you serve, yourself, etc.]

The Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program prevents homelessness among former foster youth: It funds supportive services for over 1,300 former foster youth who have a federal Housing Choice Voucher through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) or Family Unification Program (FUP) and helps our state access \$22.6 million in federal housing assistance annually. If this program is eliminated, this effective state/federal partnership will come to a halt and put youth at risk of homelessness.

The proposed foster care rate structure will prevent homelessness among current foster youth: Subjecting California's new foster care rate structure to a trigger means that foster youth have no promise of stable housing. One of many changes this new structure makes is providing a higher monthly payment for foster youth ages 18-20 who are responsible for identifying and paying for their housing themselves. Without this additional assistance for housing, California will continue to see 1 in 5 current foster youth experience homelessness between ages 18-20.

Thank you for ensuring that California fulfills its responsibility to foster youth by preserving the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program and removing the trigger on the foster care rate structure.

Sincerely,

Name, Title

Organization/Agency/Affiliation

SENATE

E-mail address for the office of Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire:

senator.mcguire@senate.ca.gov

Subject Line: Preserve Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program & Reject Trigger on Foster Care Rates

E-mail Body:

Dear Pro Tem McGuire,

I am writing to thank the Senate for rejecting the Governor's proposed elimination of the \$13.7 million Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program, and the proposed trigger on California's new foster care rate structure. Together, these actions will prevent homelessness among current and former foster youth. Please continue to stand strong with foster youth in your position regarding these investments in final budget negotiations.

[Optionally provide anecdotes, stories, stats, or any other information about the importance of these investments as it relates to the young people you serve, yourself, etc.]

The Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program prevents homelessness among former foster youth: It funds supportive services for over 1,300 former foster youth who have a federal Housing Choice Voucher through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) or Family Unification Program (FUP) and helps our state access \$22.6 million in federal housing assistance annually. If this program is eliminated, this effective state/federal partnership will come to a halt and put youth at risk of homelessness.

The proposed foster care rate structure will prevent homelessness among current foster youth: Subjecting California's new foster care rate structure to a trigger means that foster youth have no promise of stable housing. One of many changes this new structure makes is providing a higher monthly payment for foster youth ages 18-20 who are responsible for identifying and paying for their housing themselves. Without this additional assistance for housing, California will continue to see 1 in 5 current foster youth experience homelessness between ages 18-20.

Thank you for ensuring that California fulfills its responsibility to foster youth by preserving the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program and removing the trigger on the foster care rate structure.

Sincerely,

Name, Title

Organization/Agency/Affiliation

GOVERNOR

1. Go to <https://www.gov.ca.gov/contact/>.
2. Under “What is your request or comment about?” select “Budget May Revision 2024-25.”
3. Under “What is the purpose of your message” select “Leave a comment” and hit next.
4. Under “If applicable, what is your stance on this topic” select “Con.”
5. Under “What is your message for the Governor?” edit the blurb below accordingly, and paste into the text box.
6. Alter the subject line (which will have auto populated) to be “Restore funding for Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program and Remove the Trigger on Foster Care Rates”
7. Complete the contact information requested and hit “submit.”

Please use the below blurb for your email to the Governor. Edit the highlighted sections as you see fit. Feel free to incorporate information about your organization or any stories or information that will illustrate the importance of these investments.

On behalf of (organization or agency name) **OR** as a person with lived foster care experience **OR** (state your connection to the issue), I am writing to urge the Governor to:

1. Restore funding for the \$13.7 million Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program serving former foster youth, administered by the California Department of Housing & Community Development.
2. Remove the trigger placed on the newly proposed foster care rate structure.

The Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program prevents homelessness among former foster youth: It funds supportive services for over 1,300 former foster youth who have a federal Housing Choice Voucher through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) or Family Unification Program (FUP). Federal vouchers for former foster youth have been underutilized in California because there was not a source of public funding to provide the required supportive services. Since county child welfare agencies began using the Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program for this purpose, the number of FYI/FUP vouchers for former foster youth has increased 54% in California, bringing \$22.6 million in federal investment to California annually. If this program is eliminated, this effective state/federal partnership will come to a halt and put youth at risk of homelessness.

The proposed foster care rate structure will prevent homelessness among current foster youth: Subjecting California’s new foster care rate structure to a trigger means that foster youth have no promise of stable housing. One of many changes this new structure makes is providing a higher monthly payment for older foster youth (nonminor dependents) who are responsible for identifying and paying for their housing themselves. Without this additional assistance for housing, California will continue to see 1 in 5 current foster youth experience homelessness between ages 18-20.

California has a unique responsibility to foster youth, who were removed from their families due to abuse and neglect. When this removal occurred, the State assumed the full legal responsibility to responsibly care for them. Please ensure that California fulfills this responsibility by preserving the Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program and removing the trigger on the foster care rate structure.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Please visit our social media [toolkit](#) and make posts using content from the top rows labeled “Final Budget Advocacy”

Social Media Toolkit:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1pcyf_BVEWQZgnCy2zUsr8RbiZqRtQt8nxeE5iMIOpZw/edit