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Think of Us Releases New Report Highlighting Youth Experiences Navigating the Foster Youth to Independence Initiative

New report offers a roadmap to strengthen housing stability for youth transitioning from foster care.

Washington, D.C. (Tuesday, August 11, 2026) -- Think of Us (TOU) today released ***The Long Road Home: Youth Experiences Navigating the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative***, a new report that amplifies the voices of young people navigating one of the nation's most important housing programs for youth transitioning from foster care.

The FYI Program is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiative that provides dedicated rental assistance and supportive services to young adults transitioning out of foster care who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

The report draws on surveys from 104 young people across 16 states and Washington, D.C., along with in-depth interviews with 15 young people, to better understand what helps youth successfully access stable housing when aging out of care, and what barriers continue to stand in their way.

Young people shared that the FYI initiative can be life-changing, but too many experience challenges throughout the process, including limited awareness of the program, inconsistent communication, application processing and voucher issuance delays, difficulty finding landlords who accept vouchers, and the financial burden of moving into housing.

The report includes 12 recommendations for federal action to strengthen implementation of the FYI Initiative. Recent [HUD guidance](#) aligns with several recommendations identified through this research. TOU was grateful to meet with First Lady Melania Trump, HUD, and the Administration for Children & Families to provide recommendations ahead of the guidance being released.

"Housing is the foundation on which young people build every other aspect of adulthood. When youth receive an FYI voucher and successfully use it, it can be transformative. The young people who have lived the challenges and successes of accessing this critical resource give us a clear roadmap for strengthening the program. Their experiences should shape how we improve systems going forward."

— Sixto Cancel, Founder & CEO, TOU

"This program gave me stability at an important time in my life and allowed me to focus on career growth and financial independence. I'm grateful for the opportunity and hope continued improvements in communication and support can help others have a smooth experience as well."

— Young Adult (who successfully obtained a voucher)

The Long Road Home examines every stage of the FYI voucher experience, from preparing to transition out of foster care through maintaining stable housing, and offers practical recommendations for federal agencies, policymakers, and community organizations working to improve outcomes for young people.

A special thank you to Good River Partners, the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Treasury, and the Office of the First Lady.

Most importantly, TOU thanks the lived experts whose voices and perspectives are reflected in the *The Long Road Home* Report, and those whose guidance and feedback shaped the report.

The full report is available [here](#).

About Think of Us

Think of Us is a national nonprofit that uses data, technology, policy, and lived experience to help transform the foster care system into a child and family well-being system.

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