



2023 Lead Legislative Agenda

Black and Indigenous youth and young adults (BIPOC YYA), and other YYA are overrepresented in foster care, among those experiencing homelessness, and in our juvenile justice system due to historic and current systemic racism. We are committed to eliminating these racial disparities and addressing the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on young people. As always, our legislative agenda is guided and inspired by YYA with lived experience.

SB 5230: Extended Foster Care

Extended Foster Care (EFC) exists to help youth and young adults who are dependents of the state when they turn 18. However, many youth and young adults in foster care are not receiving the support they need while in EFC, with COVID-19 exacerbating struggles. By expanding EFC eligibility requirements and available resources, Washington could better support its youth and young adults as they enter adulthood.

Solution:

Make EFC more accessible and as close to an "opt-out" system as possible, increase monthly payments, and extend eligibility through age 26.

Champion: Senator Wilson

SB 5644: Limiting Access to Juvenile Records

Juvenile records have significant consequences for youth and young adults and can cause difficulties in adulthood. BIPOC youth and young adults face higher rates of referrals to court and adjudications for criminal offenses than their white counterparts, which further impacts their adult life. Current record sealing laws do not adequately protect youth and young adults from lifelong consequences.

Solution:

Make records equally as confidential as dependency records, increase accessibility, and create accountability measures for those who illegally share sealed records.

Champion: Senator Frame

SB 5591: Financial Capability for Youth in Foster Care

Youth and young adults in Washington state who are in foster care need access to financial literacy skills and a bank account at a young age to help them be successful when they leave care. Without these resources, they can become trapped in a cycle of poverty.

Solution:

Pass legislation directing DCYF to establish an account for youth and young adults in foster care ages 14+ with a monthly allowance deposited, paired with financial education beginning at 12 years of age.

Champion: Senator Nobles

START

Student to Adulthood Readiness Training, or START, will be a required course for high school graduation. Students will learn skills that prepare them for adulthood including financial literacy, professional development, basic mechanics, cooking skills, how to access resources in the area, and more. Doing this will prepare youth and young adults for success in adulthood, while simultaneously preventing homelessness, financial crisis, and other barriers.

Solution:

Create a START curriculum and pilot program that can measure curriculum outcomes and success.

Champion: TBD

HB 1406: Youth Seeking Shelter & Services

Youth and young adults under 18 cannot lawfully stay in a shelter for longer than 72 hours. In cases where young people cannot return home to a safe and supportive environment and their parents do not give consent or cannot be located, youth and young adults may end up experiencing homelessness.

Solution:

Create a pathway for youth and young adults to lawfully stay in a shelter, develop a safety assessment for the youth or young adult, and provide a community support team.

Champion: Representative Cortes



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