

Children's Rights

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensrights.org/states-must-move-quickly-to-help-older-youth-through-the-pandemic/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Last year, young leaders and child welfare advocates made their voices heard leading to \$400 million in critical emergency federal aid for foster youth. Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, current and former foster youth ages 14 to 26 are eligible for funding for cash assistance, housing, college, and other necessities. The Act also prohibits states from requiring a child to [transition out of foster care](#) solely due to their age, ensuring no young person is cut off from critical housing and support services during the public health emergency.

Signed into law in December 2020, states, Tribes, and communities are still figuring out how they will distribute the new funding to young people. But with a deadline of September 30 to spend all the funding, states must create and implement plans to ensure youth receive the support they need now. Last year we saw too many youths in [dire need of assistance](#). Right now states have the power and the money to support youth and make sure they don't fall through the cracks during this crisis.

In any given month, over 1,400 youth age out of foster care on their own that's nearly 20,000 youth each year. Unlike the [millions](#) of young adults who moved back home with their family when COVID-19 hit, young people who age out of foster care are facing this crisis alone. Without a family to turn to during the pandemic, many of them have ended up jobless, struggling to access food and other basics, or homeless.

A post shared by Children's Rights (@childrensrights)

After aging out of foster care at 18, Justin Kidder had to navigate into adulthood alone. Born in California, Justin spent his youth in and out of foster homes across three different states before being sent to a group home facility until he transitioned out of state care. You can say I was lucky until I wasn't, he said.

In talking about his childhood, Justin shared that he missed out on ROTC, playing ball with friends, and other activities you think of as a child. I was completely cut off from friends, including my best friend who lived only 10 minutes down the road, he shared. But they may as well have been 1,000 miles away. Justin was on his own, aging out of a system with no guidance and no adult who seems to care.

Now, 27, Justin is the proud owner of [Milk and Butter Catering](#) in Houston, Texas, where he also advocates for youth aging out of foster care. I aged out of foster care from a group home. It's not a nutritious way of living. No nurturing goes on. It's just a place to hold you until you age out, without in any way educating you or making you ready to live independently.

###

First Name	Last Name
Email Address	