



NEWS RELEASE

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HACA Announces New Housing Resources for Foster Youth at Risk of Homelessness

*75 housing vouchers awarded, representing over \$1M in supportive housing,
for youth aging out of the foster care system in Austin*

AUSTIN, TEXAS – The Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) is pleased to announce the award of new Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative. These housing vouchers will help young people aging out of foster care find safe and stable housing through partnerships with the Ending Community Homeless Coalition (ECHO) and LifeWorks Austin.

The Foster Youth Initiative provides housing choice voucher assistance to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), in partnership with Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWAs), for youth at risk of becoming homeless. HUD awarded HACA vouchers worth the equivalent of \$1,045,917 in rental payments for 75 foster youth. In addition to rental assistance, this funding provides supportive services to assist young people on their path to self-sufficiency.

"This initiative recognizes the importance of addressing homelessness as children leave foster care so they can make a safe transition to adulthood without ending up on the streets," said Michael Gerber, HACA CEO. "Today's young people will become tomorrow's adults, and we must do all we can to make sure they are adults that are housed."

Housing assistance provided by the FYI initiative will assist Austin-area youth ages 18 to 24 years, who left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, and are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals who receive vouchers can rent a house, duplex, or apartment within the Austin area. HACA will partner with the Ending Community Homeless Coalition (ECHO) and LifeWorks Austin to identify eligible foster youth to receive rental assistance. In early 2022, foster youth will receive rental assistance from HACA, with support services provided by LifeWorks Austin that will include counseling, education, and workforce development.

"Entanglement in systems like juvenile justice and foster care can be clear indicators of future housing instability," said Matthew Mollica, Executive Director of ECHO. "Providing

the necessary access to resources and support to youth as they transition out of these systems is a critical piece of Austin's strategy to end homelessness, and ECHO is excited to partner on such an important initiative for our community that will positively impact the lives of dozens of youth."

"Seventy-six percent of youth who experience homelessness in our community have experienced foster care, juvenile justice, or both," according to Susan McDowell, CEO of LifeWorks. "These vouchers will play a significant role in our community's efforts to ensure that youth have the support and opportunities they need to succeed."

"We are grateful to HUD for providing HACA with housing resources for foster youth in Central Texas," said Lisa Garcia, Vice President of Assisted Housing for HACA. "We are committed to working with local community partners to assist young people with securing, affordable housing and services to positively impact their lives and our community."

To learn more about HUD's Foster Youth to Independence program, visit <https://bit.ly/HUD-FYI>, and for details on HACA's Housing Choice Voucher Program please go to hacanet.org/resident/assisted-housing. For more information about ECHO go to AustinEcho.org, and for details on Austin's movement to End Youth Homelessness, visit [LifeWorks \(lifeworksaustin.org\)](http://LifeWorks (lifeworksaustin.org)).

About the Housing Authority of the City of Austin

Established in 1937, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) is a public unit of government separate from the City of Austin. HACA's mission is to cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self-reliance, growth, and optimism. As a High-Performing housing authority that assists over 20,000 Austinites, HACA owns and operates 1,839 units of subsidized housing in 18 developments throughout Austin. For more information, visit www.hacanet.org, or find us on Twitter [@hacanet](https://twitter.com/hacanet).

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