

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Fiscal Policy

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BILL: CS/CS/SB 584

INTRODUCER: Fiscal Policy Committee; Education Postsecondary Committee; and Senators Garcia and Osgood

SUBJECT: Young Adult Housing Support

DATE: April 18, 2025

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Palazesi</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>HE</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Sneed</u>	<u>McKnight</u>	<u>AHS</u>	<u>Favorable</u>
3.	<u>Palazesi</u>	<u>Siples</u>	<u>FP</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>

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**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

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**I. Summary:**

CS/CS/SB 584 expands housing access and support services for students who are current or former foster youth or experiencing homelessness. The bill requires Florida College System (FCS) institutions and state universities, in coordination with the State Office on Homelessness within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to develop plans prioritizing the placement of eligible students in campus housing. If an FCS institution or state university implements a housing or support assignment system, the institution must give first priority to homeless youth (as defined federally) for:

- Institution-operated housing.
- Year-round housing.
- Work-study opportunities.

The bill directs the DCF, community-based care lead agencies (CBCs), and municipal housing authorities to take actions necessary to implement the federal Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) housing initiative. This includes entering into a memorandum of understanding or a letter of intent, offering supportive services, and certifying child welfare history. Additionally, the bill requires the DCF, CBCs, and their subcontracted service providers that administer housing funds for young adults in the child welfare system to document actions taken to facilitate a young adult's acquisition of a residential lease.

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to study and report by December 1, 2026, barriers to housing for homeless and former foster youth and provide recommendations. The study must involve consultation with state agencies, housing authorities, and affected youth.

The bill will have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on state expenditures. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Homeless Youth and Children in Foster Care**

Federal law provides a definition for the term “homeless children and youths,” which means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children and youths who are:<sup>1</sup>

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodation.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters or are abandoned in hospitals.
- Utilizing for a primary nighttime residence a place that is public or private, but not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children living in circumstances described above.

The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.<sup>2</sup>

Florida law defines the term “children and youths who are experiencing homelessness” to have the same meaning as “homeless children and youths” under federal law.<sup>3</sup> A student in foster care refers to any child or youth who has been removed from their home and placed in the custody of the state due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment, and who is currently residing in a licensed foster home, group home, or other approved out-of-home placement under the oversight of the Department of Children and Families.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(2).

<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a(6).

<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.01(12), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 39.001, F.S.

In school year 2022-23, there were 94,889 students enrolled in Florida school districts that were identified as homeless<sup>5</sup> and there were 21,031 children (aged 0-17) in foster care.<sup>6</sup>

### **State Office on Homelessness**

The State Office on Homelessness was created within the DCF to provide interagency, council, and other related coordination on issues relating to homelessness<sup>7</sup> and is required to:<sup>8</sup>

- Coordinate among state, local, and private agencies and providers to produce a statewide consolidated inventory for the state's entire system of homeless programs which incorporates local continuum of care plans.
- Collect, maintain, and make available information concerning persons who are homeless, including summary demographic.
- Annually evaluate state and continuum of care system programs and develop a consolidated plan for addressing the needs of the homeless or those at risk for homelessness.
- Explore, compile, and disseminate information regarding public and private funding sources for state and local programs serving the homeless and provide technical assistance in applying for such funding.
- Monitor and provide recommendations for coordinating the activities and programs of continuums of care and promote the effectiveness of programs to prevent and end homelessness in the state.
- Provide technical assistance to facilitate efforts to support and strengthen continuums of care.
- Develop and assist in the coordination of policies and procedures relating to the discharge or transfer from the care or custody of state-supported or state-regulated entities persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.
- Spearhead outreach efforts for maximizing access by people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness to state and federal programs and resources.
- Promote a federal policy agenda that is responsive to the needs of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in this state.
- Review reports on continuum of care system performance measures and use such measures to evaluate program effectiveness and make recommendations for improving current practices to work toward ending homelessness in this state.
- Formulate policies and legislative proposals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness in this state and coordinate the implementation of state and federal legislative policies.
- Convene meetings and workshops of state and local agencies, continuums of care, and other stakeholders for the purpose of developing and reviewing policies, services, activities, coordination, and funding of efforts to end homelessness.
- With the input of the continuums of care, conduct or promote research on the effectiveness of current programs and propose pilot projects aimed at ending homelessness.
- Serve as an advocate for issues relating to homelessness.

<sup>55</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2022-2023 Homeless Student Count*, available at <https://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/20081/urlt/PERA-3356i-Homeless-and-Unaccom-Youth-2223-FS5-w-Charter-LEAs-DEH-Masked.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Florida Department of Health, *FLHealthCharts*, [https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?cid=8601&rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer&utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?cid=8601&rdReport=NonVitalIndNoGrp.Dataviewer&utm_source=chatgpt.com), (last visited March 26, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> Section 420.622 (1), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 420.622 (3)(a)-(o), F.S.

- Investigate ways to improve access to participation in state funding and other programs for the prevention and reduction of homelessness to faith-based organizations and collaborate and coordinate with faith-based organizations.

### **Office of Continuing Care**

In 2020, the Legislature created the Office of Continuing Care (office) within the DCF to help individuals who have aged out of the child welfare system.<sup>9</sup> The office provides ongoing support and care coordination needed for young adults to achieve self-sufficiency. Duties of the office include, but are not limited to:

- Informing young adults who age out of the foster care system of the purpose of the office, the types of support the office provides, and how to contact the office.
- Serving as a direct contact to the young adult in order to provide information on how to access services to support the young adult's self-sufficiency, including but not limited to, food assistance, behavioral health services, housing, Medicaid, and educational services.
- Assisting in accessing services and supports for the young adult to attain self-sufficiency, including, but not limited to, completing documentation required to apply for services.
- Collaborating with the community-based care lead agencies to identify local resources that can provide support to young adults served by the office.<sup>10</sup>

### **Educational Support Structures for Children in the Foster Care System or who are Experiencing Homelessness**

The DCF is required to collaborate with the State University System, the Florida College System (FCS), and the Department of Education to address the need for a comprehensive support structure in the academic arena to assist children and young adults who have been or remain in the foster care system in making the transition from a structured care system into an independent living setting.<sup>11</sup>

Each school district program, FCS institution, or state university at which a student who is experiencing homelessness, and a current or former foster child or young adult is required to have, at a minimum, a knowledgeable, accessible, and responsive employee who acts as a liaison and provides assistance to those students who are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees to assist in resolving any problems related to such exemption.<sup>12</sup>

A school district program, FCS institution, or state university may also provide campus coaching services and other support to a student who is experiencing homelessness or current or former foster children and young adults to promote his or her successful completion of postsecondary education and transition to independent living.

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter 2021-169 s. 20, L.O.F.; codified as s. 414.56, F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 414.56, F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 409.1452, F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 409.1452(1), F.S.

### ***Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) Program***

The Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) Program is a program that provides monthly financial support for foster youth to secure housing, utilities, and assist with the daily cost of living while attending certain postsecondary educational institutions.<sup>13</sup>

A young adult is eligible for PESS if certain criteria are met, including:

- Specified criteria with respect to when the child was living in foster care;
- Earned a standard high school diploma;<sup>14</sup>
- Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time<sup>15</sup> student or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary institution as provided in s. 1009.533, F.S.;<sup>16</sup>
- Has reached 18 years of age, but is not yet 23 years old;
- Has applied for any other grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify;
- Submitted a complete and error-free Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and
- Signed an agreement to allow the DCF and the CBC to access his or her school records.<sup>17</sup>

### ***State University Systems Support***

Students who have experienced foster care or homelessness are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, FCS institution, or state university.<sup>18</sup> In 2023-2024 there were 249 students who were in foster care and 432 students experiencing homelessness who received a fee exemption.<sup>19</sup> In addition to the fee exemption, several state universities offer comprehensive program designed specifically for students who have experienced foster care or homelessness.

### **Florida Atlantic University**

Educate Tomorrow at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) is part of the First Year Experience at the university. The program provides students with wrap-around services from admission to graduation, with a goal of creating a strong foundation of support, academic coaching, career advising, and access to services on and off campus.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Department of Children and Families, *Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS)*, available at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/independent-living/youth-young-adults/postsecondary-education-services-and> (last visited March 27, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Pursuant to s. 1002.3105(5), F.S., s. 1003.4281, F.S., or s. 1003.4282, F.S., or its equivalent pursuant to s. 1003.435, F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 409.1451(2)(a)4., F.S., defines “full-time” as 9 credit hours or the vocational school equivalent.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1009.533, F.S., provides for eligible postsecondary education institutions, including: (1) a Florida public university, Florida College System institution, or career center; (2) An independent Florida college or university that is accredited by an accrediting association whose standards are comparable to the minimum standards required to operate an institution at that level in Florida and which has operated in the state for at least 3 years; (3) an independent Florida postsecondary education institution that is licensed by the Commission for Independent Education and meets other specified criteria; (4) a Florida independent postsecondary education institution that offers a nursing diploma approved by the Board of Nursing; and (5) A Florida independent postsecondary education institution that is licensed by the Commission for Independent Education.

<sup>17</sup> Section 409.1451(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1009.25, (1)(c), (e), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Florida Board of Governors, *Fee Waiver Summary*, <https://www.flbog.edu/resources/data-analytics/dashboards/fee-waiver-summary/>, (last visited March 27, 2025).

<sup>20</sup> Florida Atlantic University, *Educate Tomorrow*, <https://www.fau.edu/uas/educate-tomorrow/>, (last visited March 27, 2025).

Through collaboration with campus and community partners, the Educate Tomorrow at FAU Program offers the following services to students:<sup>21</sup>

- Referral to Academic Support Services
- AOK Scholars
- Opportunity to get involved in our sponsored student organization, Enlightening Generations (learn more)
- Referral to FREE campus tutoring
- Referral to campus engagement opportunities, such as First Gen
- Referral to campus resources such as Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Financial Aid, and the Career Center
- Student advocacy and assistance throughout your time at FAU
- Independent living skills activities
- Opportunities to get involved on campus

#### Florida International University

Launched in 2014, Florida International University's (FIU) Fostering Panther Pride (FPP) program offers tailored academic and support services to former foster youth and students experiencing homelessness. The program's primary goal is to assist these students in their transition to FIU, their retention and graduation, and their pursuit of securing employment or graduate studies upon earning their bachelor's degree.<sup>22</sup>

FPP tailored support services and participation benefits include:<sup>23</sup>

- Processing DCF and homeless tuition exemption paperwork.
- Serve as liaisons between FPP students and FIU Housing & Residential Life to secure housing and promote a smooth transition into on-campus residence.
- Connecting students to community resources and partners (i.e.: Homeless Helpline, Educate Tomorrow, Voices for Children, HANDY, etc.).
- Access to the FPP Cupboard (food, toiletries, and other personal care items) and the university's Student Food Pantry.
- Dedicated Success Coaches provide students with a support system and help them navigate university processes pertaining to admissions, financial aid, registration, and housing. Staff also assist students with accessing institutional resources (i.e.: academic advising, tutoring, counseling services, career development services) for academic and professional development.
- Students are paired with FIU faculty, staff, and/or alumni mentors who serve as guides through their academic journey.
- Access to priority course registration.
- Laptop loaner program.
- Access to book stipends and housing scholarships.

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<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> Florida International University, *Fostering Panther Pride*, <https://sas.fiu.edu/fpp/>, (last visited March 27, 2026).

<sup>23</sup> Florida International University, *Fostering Panther Pride*, <https://sas.fiu.edu/fpp/>, (last visited March 27, 2026).

### University of Central Florida

The Knight Alliance Network (KAN) at the University of Central Florida (UCF) provides support services supporting the student success and well-being of youth who experience foster care, relative care, adopted, or homelessness. The KAN plays an essential role in the students' lives by focusing on the students' well-being and providing support services to encourage the completion of college. The KAN strategically partners with UCF campus and community partners, to promote the well-being of KAN students. The KAN offers the following services:<sup>24</sup>

- Pre-college enrollment support
- Transition support
- Goal setting
- Advocacy
- Assistance with waivers
- Assistance with navigating campus
- On-campus support services
- One on one counseling
- Coaching
- Resources
- Referrals
- Tuition Waiver Assistance
- Mentoring

### **Foster Youth to Independence Initiative**

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative is a federal program aimed at preventing homelessness among young adults who are aging out of foster care or have prior foster care experience. Introduced in 2019, the FYI initiative provides time-limited rental assistance through the Housing Choice Voucher Program, connecting young adults to supportive services from local community resources to help them develop essential life skills and achieve self-sufficiency.<sup>25</sup>

The FYI Initiative is designed for young adults who are transitioning out of foster care or have prior foster care experience and are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Young adults who are transitioning out of foster care or have prior foster care experience and are homeless or at risk of experiencing homelessness may receive housing assistance and supportive services for up to 36 months.

In Florida, local public housing authorities contract directly with HUD to offer housing vouchers like the FYI initiative. There are currently over 90 public housing agencies in Florida that participate in public housing assistance.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> University of Central Florida, *Knight Alliance Network*, <https://scs.sdes.ucf.edu/foster-youth-and-homeless-students/>, (last visited March 27, 2025).

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *FYI Brochure for Young Adults*, available at <https://www.hud.gov/sites/default/files/PIH/documents/FosterYouthInitiativeBrochure-YoungAdult.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Find Your Local Public Housing Agency (PHA)*, *HA Contact Information by State: Florida*, [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/pha/contacts](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts).

## **Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability**

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) is a research arm of the Florida Legislature. OPPAGA was created by the Legislature in 1994 to help improve the performance and accountability of state government. OPPAGA provides data, evaluative research, and objective analyses to assist legislative budget and policy deliberations. OPPAGA conducts research as directed by state law, the presiding officers, or the Joint Legislative Auditing Committee.<sup>27</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

#### **Comprehensive Academic Support Structure for Children in the Foster Care System**

The bill amends s. 409.1452, F.S., to require each Florida College System (FCS) institution and state university, in consultation with the State Office on Homelessness within the Department of Children and Families (DCF), to develop plans for prioritizing the placement of students who are or were formerly in foster care and those experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness. This includes, but is not limited to, students who qualify for a tuition and fee exemption based on meeting the federal definition of homeless children and youth and students who are current or former foster youth, in residence halls and dormitory residences owned by the institution or university. Additionally, the bill specifies that the Office of Continuing Care is responsible for determining whether a student is or was formerly in foster care, and each FCS and state university is responsible for determining whether a student is experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The bill provides that if an FCS institution or state university implements a priority system for assigning students to, or awarding any of the following, the institution or university must give first priority to students who qualify for a tuition and fee exemption based on meeting the federal definition of homeless children and students who are current or former foster youth:

- Institution-operated or university-operated housing.
- Year-round housing.
- Work-study opportunities.

The bill prohibits FCS institutions and state universities from requiring students to have a cosigner or guarantor to obtain housing if the student receives housing support through the Road to Independence Program or is in a continuing care program for young adults.

#### **Housing Support for Young Adults**

The bill creates s. 409.14525, F.S., to require the DCF, community-based care lead agencies, and housing authorities to take any action required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development to administer the federal Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative. These actions may include DCF, the community-based care lead agencies, and their subcontractors doing any of the following:

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<sup>27</sup> Office of Program Policy and Government Accountability, *About Us*, <https://oppaga.fl.gov/About> (last visited Mar. 27, 2025).



- Entering into a memorandum of understanding or letter of intent with all housing authorities within their service areas.
- Providing or securing supportive services for participating youth for the duration of the FYI initiative voucher.
- Providing a written certification to the housing authority verifying the youth's child welfare history.
- Identifying youth eligible for an FYI initiative voucher within the community-based care lead agency's caseload and communicating their eligibility to the youth.

The bill requires the DCF, community-based care lead agencies, and their subcontracted service providers that administer housing funds for young adults in the child welfare system, document actions taken to facilitate a young adult's acquisition of a residential lease, which may include, but are not limited to, providing assurances to a landlord that funding will be provided on a monthly basis through a housing voucher.

#### **The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability Report**

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study of the barriers that young adults who are homeless or were formerly in foster care face when trying to obtain housing. The study must include recommendations for overcoming those barriers. In conducting the study, OPPAGA is required to consult with the DCF, the Board of Governors of the State University System, the FCS, the Department of Commerce, public housing authorities, affected young adults, and other stakeholders.

The bill requires OPPAGA to report its findings by December 1, 2026, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.

#### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

##### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

##### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

##### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

##### **D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill is expected to have an insignificant negative fiscal impact on state expenditures. The Department of Children and Families and the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability can absorb the requirements of the bill within existing resources.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 409.1452 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates section 409.14525 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates an undesignated section of Florida law.

**IX. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

**CS/CS by Fiscal Policy on April 17, 2025:**

The committee substitute:

- Expands eligibility for students prioritized for placement in residence halls to include those who were the subject of a shelter proceeding, dependency proceeding, or termination of parental rights proceeding.
- Requires the Office of Continuing Care to determine whether a student is or was formerly in foster care.

- Requires each Florida College System and State University System institution to determine whether a student is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption based on meeting the definition of "homeless children and youths" under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Requires the Department of Children and Families, community-based care agencies, and their subcontractors that administer housing funds for young adults in the child welfare system to document actions taken to facilitate the acquisition of a residential lease, which may include—but are not limited to—providing assurances to a landlord that funding will be provided on a monthly basis through a housing voucher.

**CS by Education Postsecondary on March 31, 2025:**

The committee substitute deleted provisions related to the assurances of payment for residential leases by the Department of Children and Families, community-based care agencies or subcontractors.

**B. Amendments:**

None.