



# Foster Youth to Independence Program (FYI): Creating bridges to self-sufficiency

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Department of Housing  
Services

[www.co.washington.or.us](http://www.co.washington.or.us)

# → What is FYI ?

- FYI is a housing and life skills program administered by HUD that provides temporary Housing Choice Vouchers to foster youth ages 18-24 who are at risk of homelessness.
- Eligible foster youth receive up to 3 years of rental assistance through local Public Housing Authorities and wrap-around supports through Oregon Department of Human Services and various community-based agencies working with at-risk youth.
- The goals of the program is to come alongside these youth and help them create a strong bridge from being a ward of the state to independent adulthood.





# FYI Eligibility



## 3 basic criteria:

- Between ages 18-24
- Has left foster care or will leave care within 90 days
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness

Once they turn 25, they are no longer eligible. If they lease up before turning 25, their voucher is good for 3 years.

It does not matter at what age they left foster care. If they were in and are now out, and meet the other 2 criteria, they are eligible.





# Wrap-around supports

## 5 types:

- Basic life skills ( Finance, credit, nutrition, shopping, etc. )
- Counseling on leases, rental assistance, deposits, utility hook-ups, etc.
- Landlord assurances ( references, Rent Well, etc. )
- Job attainment counseling ( resume, grooming, professionalism, interview, etc.)
- Education or career advancement (GED, trade school, college, grants, conduct )





# Think about the possibilities!

Imagine all the good we can do with a program like this!

- Consider the needs of youth aging out of foster care
- What a privilege it is to come alongside a young person and pour hope, encourage, confidence and tangible resources into their life at this critical stage
- They need so much help in this season of their lives...

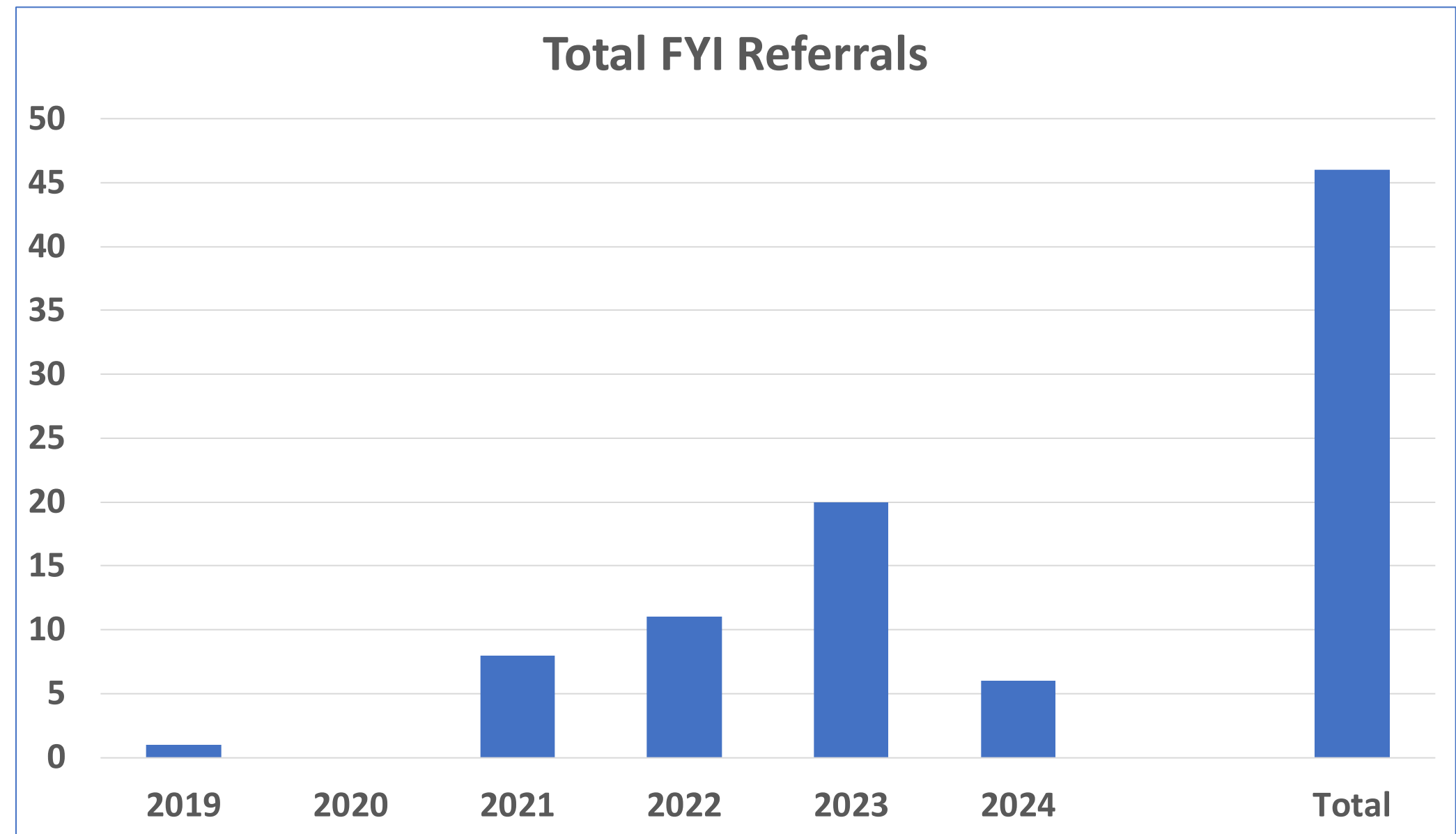
How to use the mail, coping with loneliness, accessing mental health resources, finding a good dentist, applying for financial aid, where to get furniture...



# How many vouchers can we issue?

Right now, HUD will issue us up to 25 non-competitive vouchers each fiscal year with the ability to request another 25 if we utilize at least 90% of the first 25.

We have barely scratched the surface. Most of our referrals come from Youth Village. We believe there are more youth out there and we want to help them with this program...but we need your help to do it.





# What we have done so far...

- Recognized the need for a strong partnership between ODHS, HAWC, and CoC of Washington County
- Recognized the need for intensive housing support
- Applying self-sufficiency principals and coaching to FYI participants
  
- Consistent increase in referrals and lease ups
- Recognized by HUD for Oregon's best FYI utilization rate
- Building rapport and trust with our participating youth
- Co-enrolling many into our Family Self-sufficiency program

# → FYI Resource Network

- September 2021 ODHS coordinated our first FYI Resource Network team meeting. Team included: ODHS-CW, ODHS-SS, HAWC, Community Action (Release of information signed before staffing cases).







**ODHS - CW**  
Eligibility & Self-sufficiency resources

**HAWC**  
Rental Assistance  
FYI Coordination



**YOUTH VILLAGE**  
**NEW AVENUES**  
**BOYS AND GIRLS AID**  
Referrals  
case management  
ILP funds

**HUD**  
Funding approval  
and guidance

**CoC**  
Homeless program  
integration

# → Why we need help

- This population needs intensive case management and coaching
- Like SHS, integrated wrap-around supports are necessary to effect real and lasting change
- HUD envisioned that ILP supportive services and ODHS case management would fill these needs
- These youth need so much more





# What we need help with

HAWC and DHS alone cannot help these youth become confident, thriving adults. We need help with:

- Intensive counseling and social work
- Access to mental health resources
- Partners with expertise in helping at-risk youth
- Opportunities for these youth to network with their peers
- More referrals and community awareness about FYI

# → Barriers

## Barriers assisting youth

- No steady employment
- Struggle with Interpersonal skills and critical thinking
- Navigating complex governmental systems
- Building trust and rapport
- Poor-to-no rental history
- Communication
- Mental health and emotional need
- Dedicated Case management
- Additional funding for applications/ deposits, furniture, fees etc.



# → HAWC Youth feedback

*“Many never hear about resources like this, or we hear about it but have no number to call, no person to ask, to find out more”*

*“Need this information 12-24 months before we age out. We are thinking about what happens next a lot then”*

*“Transition from in care to living alone is a big shock sometimes. Some type of transitional housing with other youth would help”*

*“We need access to basic skills like (budgeting, paying bills, shopping, etc. ) before leaving care or during transitional housing”*

*“RE-skills; not school, more like “Group”. Snacks, socializing with other youth, interactive skill learning and activities”*



# → HAWC youth feedback

*“This program took a lot of weight off my chest, worrying about how I will survive on my own. I was able to worry a lot less about my income and think about my future”*

*“I feel like this program gives me time to learn how to live on my own. It’s like a transition plan that empowers me to make this transition in steps instead of all at once”*

*“I really appreciate that my FYI Coordinator is so readily available. It’s very impactful to have someone to help me with this transition in my life. Once I connected for the first time with my FYI Coordinator, I felt better about my future knowing I was not alone”*



# → Making a difference

- Provided housing for 14 youth so far
- Currently assisting 15 more find housing
- Enrolled 7 youth into our Family Self-sufficiency program
- Collaborate with community partners to provide wrap-around supports
- Helping apply for financial aid and enroll in college or obtain GED
- Coaching on rental assistance, lease interpretation, building positive rental history, and life skills
- Career exploration and discovering their potential



# Questions?





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Oregon Department of Humans Services – Child Welfare