Poverty - Foster Care

Poverty and homelessness are a reality that affects our global community as well as individual homes. As families look to balance their income in a thin economy many have had to depend on our government’s social assistance. The government has developed state organizations that are designed to give families help in areas of job search, training and family development. One of the state family assistant programs is Foster Care.

Foster care is the term used for a system in which a minor who has been made a ward is placed in an institution, group home, or private home of a state-certified caregiver referred to as a “foster parent”. The placement of the child is usually arranged through the government or a social-service agency. The institution, group home or foster parent is compensated for expenses. [1

- There are over 500,000 kids in foster care and over 40% will become homeless at some point......
- African American youth make up 14% of US population but they make up 30% of foster-care kids... **Placement Into Foster Care and the Interplay of Urbanicity, Child Behavioral Problems and Poverty.**
- 55% of foster care kids are arrested before the age of 18-21.... When only 8% of kids in the same age bracket in their own homes end up going to Jail. **Data on Children in Foster Care from the Census Bureau By William P. O’Hare The Annie E. Casey Foundation**
- Their experiences in “the system” could range from a single stable placement with a relative or foster family to several placements in group homes and residential care facilities. The nature and quality of services, including services to prepare young people for the transition to adulthood, may also vary greatly, depending on the state and even county responsible for their care. **Despite such heterogeneity, research over the past three decades suggests that many young people aging out of foster care are not prepared for the transition to adulthood. As a group, they fare more poorly than their peers across a variety of domains, including education and employment.**

Table II.1. Key Studies of Homelessness and Housing Instability Among Former Foster Youth

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<tr>
<th>Study Sample Housing Outcomes</th>
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<td><strong>Barth (1990)</strong></td>
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- Young people aging out of foster care are also at a disadvantage in the labor market because they lack preparation for employment. **Moreover, workforce development programs that target foster youth have generally not been the subject of evaluations, although the few evaluations conducted to date suggest that workforce development programs do not produce promising results (Casey Family Programs Study of EMPLOY, Dworsky and Havlicek 2010).**

**Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care**

A Review of the Literature and Program Typology
Cross-System Coordination. Yet another barrier to stable housing among young people aging out of foster care is a lack of systems integration. Many jurisdictions do not coordinate services between the child welfare system and other public systems, such as public schools, departments of workforce development and, of particular relevance to this discussion, public housing agencies. The lack of coordination may reflect differences in priorities. Housing is generally not perceived as one of the child welfare system’s primary responsibilities, and public schools and departments of workforce development, for example, do not necessarily regard youth aging out of foster care as their target population. As a result, housing assistance is typically not the province of agencies that might otherwise engage in cross-system coordination. Agencies’ failure to establish close working relationships with one another has implications for meeting the housing needs of young people aging out of foster care. Child welfare workers may not be aware of housing programs or resources available to emancipating foster youth because child welfare agencies and local housing authorities often do not work together either to explore housing options for transitioning foster youth or develop plans for housing this population. Thus, even if housing assistance is available, young people aging out of care may need to seek out that assistance and navigate the application process on their own.