



History Behind FYI Vouchers and the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act

The **Overcoming Hurdles in Ohio Youth Advisory Board** is a statewide organization of young people, ages 14-24, who have experienced foster care. The OHIO YAB's mission is to be the knowledgeable statewide voice that influences policies and practices that effect all youth who have or will experience out of home care.

Alumni of Care Together Improving Outcomes Now is an alumni group of adults who have experienced foster care personally, and who dedicate their time to improve outcomes for the next generation. ACTION Ohio initiatives include Thanksgiving Together, Three Days on the Hill and supporting the advocacy priorities of the statewide youth advisory board.

From 2013 – 2020, Ohio foster care youth and alumni traveled to Washington D.C. on an annual basis. Three Days on the Hill was designed by ACTION Ohio to provide foster care youth and alumni with opportunities to further their leadership development. After participating in DC-based training and preparation, participants shared their lived experience to educate for positive change.

During solutions-focused meetings with federal legislators and HUD staff, participants deepened their knowledge about legislative processes.





Those eight annual visits led to Ohio foster care youth designing two federal provisions:

- The ***Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act*** (FSHO) is youth-driven in every sense, because the only reason it exists is that Ohio foster care youth and alumni volunteered their time, fundraised locally, and traveled to D.C. annually, from 2013-2020, with the goal of ending the Foster Care to Homeless Pipeline. It was the youth themselves who wrote the bill. Their national petition to support this bill received over 55,000 signatures.
- The ***Foster Youth Independence initiative*** (FYI), as established by HUD, provides on-demand housing vouchers to public housing authorities to prevent or end homelessness among young adults under age 25, with a history of foster care.

The **National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW)** has been a continual source of support, encouragement and empowerment for Ohio foster care youth and alumni throughout this process.

