

NEWS

July 11, 2023

For Immediate Release

A Lift for Life After Foster Care

Redwood City – In a unanimous vote, San Mateo County supervisors agreed Tuesday to provide current and former foster youth ages 18 up to 22 with \$1,000 a month in the County’s first [guaranteed income program](#).

About 70 eligible young adults will receive a direct deposit for up to 18 months.

“Our goal is to disrupt the cycle of poverty,” said Supervisor David J. Canepa, who sponsored the proposal with Supervisor Noelia Corzo.

“Foster youth face so many challenges that most of us cannot imagine,” Canepa said. “We as a community want to help these young adults finish high school and go on to college or trades programs without so much of the crushing burden of making ends meet in a county with such a high cost of living.”

Corzo said foster youth “remain very vulnerable” to housing instability and homelessness as they age-out of the system. “Concrete economic support allows for some relief from the economic pressures that might otherwise push them out of San Mateo County and away from their support systems and friends,” Corzo said.

The funds come with no spending restrictions. Recipients can use the monthly stipend as they see fit, for education, transportation, housing, food and other needs.

With a secure monthly income floor, it is anticipated that participants will be better able to take advantage of services provided to transitional age foster youth. These include access to educational and financial counselors and a range of support staff that will provide linkages to health and mental health services, employment services and enrichment activities.

The encouragement and financial support are needed to help current and former foster youth navigate the complexities of lease agreements, school and work applications and other responsibilities without families to guide them.

The first \$1,000 direct deposits are expected to begin around the New Year. Supervisors approved the program as a pilot that includes a thorough evaluation that will test the impact.

The evaluation will include analysis and cross-comparison with local, state and national outcomes for foster youth. This will include comparing high school completion, post-secondary enrollment, attainment of gainful employment, housing stability and proximity to county of origin.

Canepa noted that a disproportionate number of youth in foster care as well as former foster youth are people of color. “This accelerates social justice,” Canepa said.

Corzo said, “As a community, we think this is a win for all of us because we are addressing the racial disparities in the child welfare system. We certainly hope this creates more opportunities for transitional age foster youth to remain in San Mateo and to thrive.”

Supervisors voted to allocate \$732,000 in local [Measure K funds](#) toward the \$2.032 million pilot project. The balance will come from a pool of funds reserved for youth-focused services managed by the County’s own [Human Services Agency](#) and \$100,000 from the [Silicon Valley Community Foundation](#).

Supervisors voted 4-0 (Supervisor Ray Mueller was not present for the vote) to approve the “San Mateo County Guaranteed Income Pilot Program for Transitional Age Foster Youth” – item Number 4 on the Board’s regular [agenda](#).

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