

# iFoster Supports New Actions to Support Children and Families in Foster Care

*These regulations address several aspects of the 7 key areas identified in iFoster's Lived Experience Guide to Fixing Foster Care 2023*

TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, September 29, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Earlier this week, the [Biden-Harris Administration released 3 regulations](#) intended to strengthen services and supports for children and families in the child welfare system.

1. Support Kinship caregivers by allowing states to simplify the process for kinship caregivers to become foster care providers and require that states provide these family members with the same financial support that any other foster home would receive.

2. Require that every state's child welfare agency ensure that LGBTQI+ children in their care are placed in foster homes where they will be protected from mistreatment related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, where their caregivers have received special training on how to meet their needs, and where they can access the services they need to thrive.

3. Allow child welfare agencies to use federal funds to expand access to legal services for families who need access to a lawyer to achieve stability.

"On behalf of our national foster community, iFoster applauds these actions. These regulations address several aspects of the 7 key areas identified by the foster care community in [iFoster's Lived Experience Guide to Fixing Foster Care 2023](#)", said Serita Cox, CEO of iFoster.

The Lived Experience Guide to Fixing Foster Care 2023 is a call to action from the over 6,000 members of the foster care community (Youth, Caregivers and Frontline Workers), across all 50 states who participated in the 2022 and 2023 Voice of the Community research reports.



The overarching theme of the guide is that the child welfare system is not a person-centered system, focused on the well-being of each individual child, and it needs to be. Whether a child spends a day, a week, a year, or longer, in the child welfare system, the well-being of every child needs to be the principal focus. Anchoring on the child would lead to changes in prevention activities, in what are acceptable placements and caregivers, in the workloads and priorities of frontline workers, and in the choice of exit pathways for children and youth in care. Each child's situation and needs would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis instead of a one-size-fits-all approach.

The 7 recommendations by the foster care community in the Lived Experience Guide to Fixing Foster Care are:

1. Put the child at the center,
2. Prevention through poverty alleviation,
3. Caregiver profession,
4. Auto-enroll in services,
5. Invest in workers,
6. Child welfare doesn't end at exit,
7. Self-sufficiency exits are a choice.



These regulations address several aspects of the 7 key areas identified by the foster care community in iFoster's Lived Experience Guide to Fixing Foster Care 2023"

*Serita Cox, Co-Founder & CEO*

Recommendation #1 – PUT THE CHILD AT THE CENTER.

1. Support Kinship caregivers.
2. Protect LGBTQI+ youth.

CRISIS was the term most often used by Voice of the Community 2022 survey participants to describe the availability of families to take in children in the foster care system. Simply put, there are not enough beds for kids.

Frontline Workers reported that matching a child with a family for fit along any important suitability factor of culture, race/ethnicity, religion, gender identity/sexual orientation, ability to handle specific disabilities or mental or physical health issues, is nearly impossible. As a result, 65.5% of Youth surveyed felt discriminated against in their family placement. At the same time, caregivers reported that they are not adequately prepared or supported to care for the children they received.



iFoster Logo

Expanding the pool of qualified foster families, and adequately training and supporting these families to retain them, are the keys to having a large enough pool of safe and appropriate caregivers to match them to the needs of EVERY child. Supporting Kindship caregivers by simplifying the process and requiring that states provide these family members with the same financial support as any other foster home can expand the pool of qualified families. Paired with requiring that every state's ensures that LBFTQI+ are placed in safe and appropriate homes is a step towards achieving a person-centric system.

These views were shared in NPR's On Point broadcast "Inside America's critical shortage of foster care homes", hosted by Meghna Chakrabarti.

## Recommendation #2 - PREVENTION THROUGH POVERTY ALLEVIATION

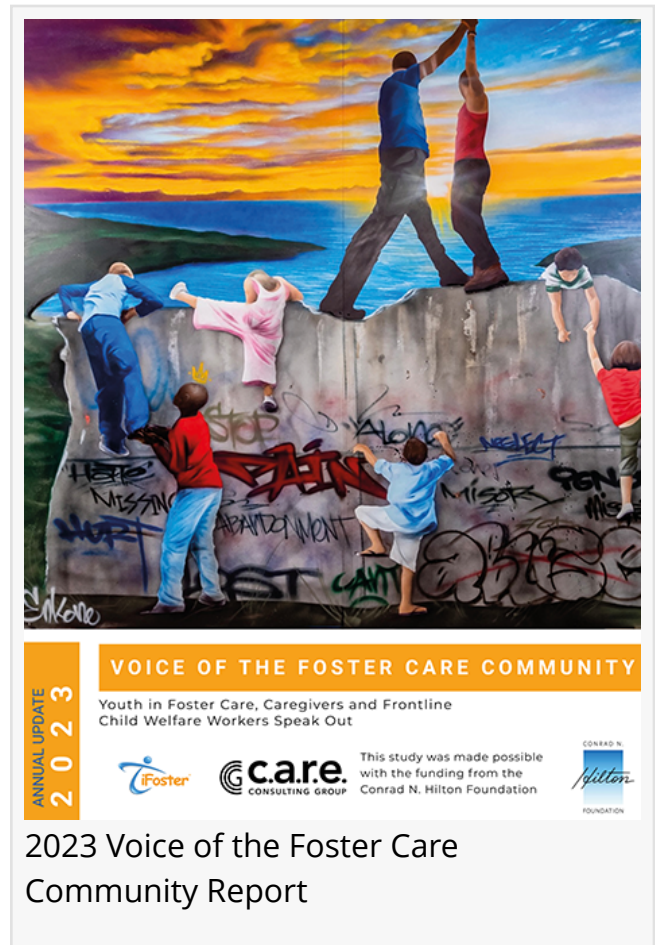
3. Allow child welfare agencies to use federal funds to expand access to legal services for families who need access to a lawyer to achieve stability.

Poverty was identified as the reason for a child's removal by 77.5% of Frontline Workers in the 2022 Voice of the Community Survey. They recognize that while government and community programs exist, they are outside the scope and authority of the child welfare system. However, they propose that the child welfare system should be engaged before child removal by connecting families to services. By making federally funded legal services more readily available to families living in poverty may be a step towards alleviating the underlying causes that result in child removal.

iFoster looks forward to continuing to work with the Administration, on behalf of the members of the iFoster community, to elevate their lived experiences and recommendations for improving the foster care system.

### About iFoster

iFoster is a 501c3 national non-profit with the largest and most inclusive online community of youth, caregivers, and organizations in foster care; with over 75,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Guam. iFoster's mission is to ensure that every child growing up outside their biological home has the resources and opportunities they need to become successful. Through its members, iFoster supports over 175,000 children and youth in foster care and aging out every



year, connecting them to over \$195 Million in resources and supportive services.

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