



National Edition 5

Our Strength is... You

February Edition 2023

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2022 might be over, but last year's achievements are just a starting point for the great things coming this year! Today our community represents 71,485 members who seek to better their lives and the lives of children and youth in the child welfare system. Last year, over 43,000 members received discounts on daily expenses, clothing, entertainment, food, phone service, and transportation through the iFoster discount programs during record-breaking inflation.

The resources in this edition of our newsletter will help keep this year in focus with our VSP partnership that offers affordable to free glasses for qualifying members, financial support for post-secondary education, and tutoring. Let's continue to build a stronger, more vibrant iFoster community!

Resources for You

K-12 Tutors are just a click away



Is your child or youth struggling in school? If so, let's match them up with a FREE, vetted tutor from a top university (such as UCLA, UC San Diego, and Cornell University). This service is available for any current or former foster youth in any K-12 subject matter based on your child's needs and studying preferences. And yes, Spanish-language tutors are available for ESL students too!

[Register Today](#)

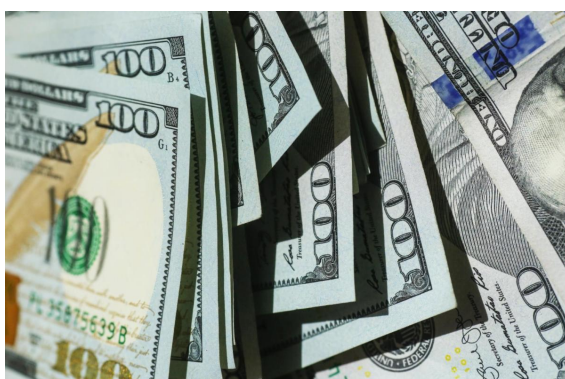
FREE Eye Glasses



Staying focused sometimes means getting a new pair of glasses. If you or your child's insurance doesn't cover a broken or out-of-prescription pair of glasses, iFoster can help! We can provide certificates for free eye exams and glasses to current and former foster youth up to age 24 through our partnership with Vision Service Plan (VSP). Having a 20/20 vision could be FREE!

[Learn more](#)

Two Tax Truths



March 2– Time is Running Out to Fill out a FAFSA



There are two truths you need to know: if you are reading this, you are GREAT, and taxes should be filed yearly for youth in foster care. Most current and former foster youth qualify for tax credits even if they haven't made the minimum income required to file taxes OR have zero earnings!

Take advantage of FREE \$\$\$ in your pocket by filing your taxes! After all, you've earned it!

iFoster is here to answer any questions and help connect you to trained tax preparers who can help you file your taxes for FREE.

If you are looking for additional resources to file your taxes by yourself, our partner at John Burton Advocates for Youth created this [checklist](#) to help with that endeavor. It is California focused but relevant no matter where you live!

FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form that provides students with federal financial assistance to attend college. FAFSA provides awards between \$19k-\$32k—now that is a pretty penny!

Better yet, if you spent time in foster care, you're likely eligible for FAFSA, Pell and Chafee ETV grants (FREE \$\$\$) to attend college or vocational schools. BUT the FAFSA form must be filled out to get these funds. Doing so makes available Pell Grants, which don't ever need to be paid back, with awards ranging between \$4k-\$6K! AND being in foster care for at least one day between the ages of 16 and 18 qualifies you for an additional \$5k a year for vocational training or college.

And if you still need to apply for FALL SEMESTER, do so now because Chafee ETV grants are not unlimited and do run out. Don't worry; iFoster can help you apply today! And if you still need to apply for FALL SEMESTER, do so now because Chafee ETV grants are not unlimited and do run out. Don't worry; iFoster can help you apply today!

[Get Tax Help Now](#)

[Need FAFSA Help](#)

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS ON FOSTER CARE

iFoster's research team, CARE CG, is busy analyzing the responses to our Voice of the Community Survey, year 2, and we'd like your input! With over 4,500 youth, caregivers, and front-line workers responding to our year 2 survey, this will be the single biggest lived experience and front-line survey ever completed measuring what you, the community, think of the child welfare system and what needs to change.

Our research team would like to share some of the findings and get more insights from you - the community. In December, we held numerous focus groups with transition-age foster youth. And we are just completing focus groups with front-line workers. We'd love to hear from caregivers of all types: foster parents, kinship parents, biological parents, legal guardians, adoptive and pre-adoptive parents. All are welcome.

Focus groups will be approximately 90 minutes and be completely confidential. Participants will receive a \$50 gift card for participating. Space is limited, so sign up early.

Please click on the link below to register for the date and time of the focus group that works best for you:

[Monday, February 6th @ 7 PM ET / 6 PM CT / 4 PM PT](#)

[Tuesday, February 7th @ 3 PM ET / 2 PM CT / 12 PM PT](#)

[Thursday, February 9th @ 2 PM ET / 1 PM CT / 11 AM PT](#)

Over 70,000 Community Members Became Connected to Over 123,000 Resources!

2022 was another year of major growth and impact for iFoster. Thanks to our partners and supporters, we were able to reach more children, youth, caregivers, and front-line workers and were able to provide more resource connections than ever before.

We employed more of our community, providing professional pathways for hundreds of transition-age foster youth. And they, in turn, did an incredible job in ensuring their peers across the country got the resources they needed to succeed.

And we had some sizeable wins to expand what we do. So look out, 2023!

Thanks again for such an impactful year—with your help and support, we know the best is yet to come!



[Read More](#)

[Partner Spotlight: The Felix Organization Founded by Darryl](#)

Are you ready to LEVEL UP?

On Thursday, February 9th, from 3-5 pm EST/12-2 pm PST, the LevelUP EXPERIENCE RETURNS! Tune in for a FREE one-day online event hosted by The Felix Organization, Music is Unity Foundation and The Purple Project. This event will motivate the upcoming youth leaders transitioning out of the foster care system.

There will be discussions, prizes, and more info on future planning, self-care, relationships, safety, and health.

Since space is limited, register as soon as possible. There is also a \$50 gift card giveaway for the first 50 people to register.



Register Here

Did You Know?

Can giving no-strings-attached cash to youth aging out of foster care help them achieve self-sufficiency?

That is the question iFoster is out to answer. With funding from the California Department of Social Services, iFoster will be leading the largest Guaranteed Income pilot project ever for foster youth. It will be an intensive research investigation over 18 months studying 600 youth aging out of foster care to determine if giving them monthly cash stipends helps them successfully transition. Findings will be shared with the community and with State and Federal governments. Stay tuned!

iFoster is hiring over 200 interns in 2023.

Our interns serve ten-month paid internships in our TAY AmeriCorps peer navigator program. This program is designed to develop interns professionally as they help their peers - other foster youths - obtain the resources they need to graduate high school, persist in college, get a job and become self-sufficient. If you live in CA, KY, NV, OH, New York City or WA and are a current/former youth in foster care ages 18-26 interested in helping your peers, see the flyer and complete the interest form here.

Learn-Listen-Lead on Capitol Hill

The 118th Congress' Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth (CCFY) got together with iFoster, National Foster Youth Institute and Youth Villages on Wed, Feb 1st, to discuss this year's caucus priorities. We wished to focus on better supporting our youth aging out of care - so we brought some reinforcements - namely, the Armed Services. We invited the retired Commanding Officer of Bethesda's Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command (retired) to share how the military prepares its service members to leave service and the education, employment, housing, and health supports the VA provides after service resulting in the staggeringly better outcomes they now achieve because of it. A model of investment in successful transitions that child welfare could learn from. Please check out the side-by-side comparison we provided to the CCY and attendees to start the conversation on how the Child Welfare system can learn from Armed Services.



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For more information, please contact: iFoster Support at 855-936-7837 / text 530-550-8001/ support@ifoster.org. Must be an iFoster Member/ Register at www.ifoster.org, it's free!

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