



California Alliance  
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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*December 1, 2006*

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: 916-445-4633

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

The California Alliance of Child and Family Services, representing more than 150 nonprofit agencies that provide an array of services and support to vulnerable children and families throughout the State, urges you to give California's foster youth a fighting chance at higher education, stable housing and living wage employment by fully funding THP-Plus in your January budget proposal.

Of the 4,200 youth who "emancipate" annually from California's foster care system when they turn 18, two out of three face an imminent housing need, according to the California Department of Social Services. These youth are our future. Without access to the same common sense assistance provided by intact families, they will become incarcerated, unemployed, uninsured and homeless.

THP-Plus is a cost-effective program that provides this assistance through affordable housing and comprehensive supportive services. Compared to foster youth who are not in THP-Plus, participants are two times more likely to complete high school, three times less likely to become incarcerated and four times less likely to experience homelessness.

Under your leadership, California has made important steps towards helping former foster youth achieve their potential, both through the passage of Proposition 1C and the removal of THP-Plus's county share of cost. Despite this progress, THP-Plus remains out of reach for 95% of youth who need it.

The need is urgent – despite a 25% overall reduction in the number of children and youth in foster care in California since 1998, the number of youth emancipating annually has grown 38%. Literally every day, young people emancipate from foster care across California. Too often, they do so without even the basics: a place to live, a job, a high school diploma or the support of a caring adult.

We can do better for the abused and neglected youth of California. I urge you to fully fund THP-Plus in your January budget. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Nicette Short*  
Senior Policy Advocate