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Juvenile Law Center Launches National Extended Foster Care Review

National children's rights public interest law firm closes National Foster Care Month by releasing 50-state survey of extended foster care policies

Philadelphia, PA (May 31, 2018) – Juvenile Law Center today unveiled a new tool to help understand issues facing older youth in foster care – the National Extended Foster Care Review. The tool catalogues each state's laws and policies concerning extended foster care – continued support for youth who are age 18 and older.

"Juvenile Law Center is proud to have created a comprehensive database of what states are currently doing around extended foster care," said Staff Attorney Lisa Swaminathan. "Adopting an expansive and inclusive legal framework is the first step to creating extended foster care systems that best serve youth."

More than 45 states currently extend care to youth in foster care age 18 and older, recognizing that continued support during the late teens and early twenties is critical to youth during a period of "emerging adulthood." Neuroscience demonstrates that older youth are in the process of establishing greater autonomy, developing a personal identity, and learning greater impulse control. They need and deserve continued assistance, connections to caring adults, and safety nets as they move into adulthood. Most peers of these youth – other young people moving into their twenties – continue to receive extensive support from their families today, from financial help to housing to educational assistance and emotional support.

As advocates for older youth in foster care, Juvenile Law Center has recognized the importance of this issue for years. The National Extended Foster Care Review is a tool for advocates and policy makers to explore how states are implementing extended foster care with their laws, policies, and procedures. In creating the Review, the organization surveyed state rules on eligibility, re-entry for youth age 18 and older, case management services, court oversight, and subsidies that encourage permanency for older youth.

"Some states have been very thoughtful in adopting laws and policies to extend foster care to older youth; the rules may be entirely different once a young person reaches age 18," said Swaminathan. "For instance, some states set different rules for checking in with youth who are attending college out-of-state or -county, afford different housing options to older youth, provide greater opportunity for them to manage their own finances, or give older youth even greater input in case management."

The Review can be used as a tool alongside other resources, such as the National Conference of State Legislatures' webpage on [Supporting Older Youth in Foster Care](#) and Child Trends' publication, [Supporting Young People Transitioning](#)

[from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey](#). The Review and these existing publications reveal that there is still much work to be done to ensure that our systems engage youth people in age- and developmentally-appropriate ways. Next steps for Juvenile Law Center in this work include determining how to better implement extended foster care by releasing a guide on core components for extended foster care systems and an issue brief on how to leverage federal funding to support more effective systems.

We encourage press to explore the Review at <https://jlc.org/issues/extendedcarereview>.

Juvenile Law Center advocates for rights, dignity, equity and opportunity for youth in the foster care and justice systems. Founded in 1975, Juvenile Law Center is the first non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the country. We fight for youth through litigation, appellate advocacy and submission of amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs, policy reform, public education, training, consulting, and strategic communications. Widely published and internationally recognized as leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center has substantially shaped the development of law and policy on behalf of youth. We strive to ensure that laws, policies, and practices affecting youth advance racial and economic equity and are rooted in research, consistent with children's unique developmental characteristics, and reflective of international human rights values. For more information about Juvenile Law Center's work, visit www.JLC.org.

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