



FAQs on Medi-Cal Housing Supports for TAY & FFY

Medi-Cal managed care plans cover several housing supports for transition-age youth (TAY) and former foster youth (FFY) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These Community Supports can help youth find and apply for housing, pay for security deposits and other set-up fees, and maintain their housing. As of January 1, 2026, plans must also offer up to six months of rental payments to eligible members (Transitional Rent).

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) recently published a [Factsheet on Medi-Cal Housing Supports](#) and more in-depth [Issue Brief on Transitional Rent](#). This resource builds upon those, answering some frequently asked questions about Medi-Cal housing supports, as they apply to TAY and FFY.

Does a youth need to be enrolled in a managed care plan to receive Medi-Cal housing supports like Transitional Rent or the Housing Trio?

Yes. Transitional Rent and other Community Supports are only available to individuals enrolled in a Medi-Cal managed care plan. They are not available to youth in Fee-for-Service Medi-Cal.

Are former foster youth up to age 26 eligible for Transitional Rent?

It depends on the individual's circumstances. If a FFY is (1) experiencing or at risk of homelessness and (2) meets the access criteria for [Specialty Mental Health Services \(SMHS\)](#), [Drug Medi-Cal \(DMC\)](#), or [Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System \(DMC-ODS\)](#), then they are eligible for Transitional Rent. Youth who are transitioning out of foster care at age 18 or later are eligible to receive Transitional Rent at any time between leaving foster care and their 26th birthday, so long as they meet the other two eligibility criteria listed above.

Are nonminor dependents eligible for Transitional Rent?

It depends on the individual's circumstances. Transitional Rent cannot supplant other housing programs. If a nonminor dependent (NMD) is, for example, currently living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), Transitional Housing Placement (THP-NMD), or foster home, then they would not be eligible for Transitional Rent. However, if they are exiting or at imminent risk of losing their current placement, then they could be eligible under the "transitioning out of

foster care” or “experiencing unsheltered homelessness” populations, if they satisfy the other two criteria explained above.

Are youth leaving a juvenile correctional facility eligible for Transitional Rent?

It depends on the individual’s circumstances. If the youth is (1) experiencing or at risk of homelessness and (2) meets the access criteria for [Specialty Mental Health Services \(SMHS\)](#), [Drug Medi-Cal \(DMC\)](#), or [Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System \(DMC-ODS\)](#), then they are eligible for Transitional Rent. Youth who are transitioning out of a youth correctional facility, prison, or other carceral setting are eligible for Transitional Rent up to six months after that transition, so long as they meet the other two eligibility criteria above.

If a youth needs housing immediately upon exiting incarceration, the pre-release case manager should talk to the youth about available housing support programs, including Transitional Rent, prior to release. The case manager can work with the managed care plan to get an authorization in place before they are released.

Does a youth need to secure housing before being approved for Transitional Rent?

To receive final authorization from the managed care plan for Transitional Rent payments, there does need to be an identified housing location. However, it is not the youth's responsibility to secure this on their own. The Transitional Rent provider and/or a Housing Transition Navigation Services (HTNS) provider (if they have one) should work with the member to find and apply for housing. Once housing is identified, the Transitional Rent provider will inspect the housing location for safety and facilitate the signing of the lease.

If a youth is denied Transitional Rent for a lack of “secured housing,” ask the Transitional Rent and/or HTNS provider for housing navigation assistance. If the plan denies your request or insists you need secured housing, call the [Health Consumer Alliance](#) at 888-804-3536 for free legal help.

Does a youth need to demonstrate a payment source (e.g., a voucher) to support them after the Transitional Rent benefit ends?

To receive authorization for Transitional Rent, a youth needs to have a “housing support plan” in place. If they are moving into a permanent setting (i.e., a place with a renewable lease agreement), then this plan must describe how the member will pay rent after Transitional Rent is exhausted (e.g., income, BHSA housing, or subsidies), among other requirements. However, if the youth is moving into an interim setting (i.e., no lease agreement or not renewable), then this housing support plan can be less detailed, in recognition that planning takes time.

Importantly, the member is not alone in developing a housing support plan. The managed care plan should refer them to Housing Transition Navigation Services (HTNS), another Community Support, which can help the youth develop this plan. Notably, if a youth is eligible for Transitional Rent, they are also automatically eligible for HTNS.

If a youth is denied Transitional Rent for a lack of a "housing support plan," ask for HTNS. If the plan continues to deny or otherwise delay your request, call the [Health Consumer Alliance](#) at 888-804-3536 for free legal help.

What's the quickest way for a youth to access Transitional Rent?

While there is no wrong door to request Transitional Rent, accessing the Housing Transition Navigation Services (HTNS) Community Support before applying for Transitional Rent can help expedite the process. If the youth is eligible for Transitional Rent, then they are also eligible for HTNS. The HTNS provider can help the youth navigate the eligibility and authorization requirements for Transitional Rent more easily and quickly. It is their responsibility to help the youth find and secure housing, including through the new Transitional Rent benefit, if applicable.

To request HTNS, call the youth's managed care plan or visit [CDSS & DHCS's ECM & Community Supports Referral Pathways website](#) for more information.

What happens if a former foster youth turns 26 while receiving Transitional Rent?

After authorization, a youth may use Transitional Rent without redetermination for six months from the date of authorization. Thus, if a FFY is authorized at age 25 and turns age 26 while receiving Transitional Rent, then they can continue to receive the benefit through the originally authorized six-month period.

Will Medi-Cal also cover security deposits and other set-up fees?

Yes. The "Housing Deposits" Community Support can cover lease applications fees, security deposits, utility set-up fees, first-month utilities, health and safety services to prepare housing (e.g., cleaning, minor repairs, pest remediation), and disability adaptive aids. If an individual is eligible for Transitional Rent, then they are also automatically eligible for Housing Deposits.