



National Edition 25

Stay Safe-Boost Your Impact in 2025 with These Essential Resources & Stories!

January Edition 2025

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**TO OUR SOUTHERN CA
COMMUNITY - KNOW THAT OUR
HEARTS ARE WITH YOU DURING THIS
DIFFICULT TIME. OUR THOUGHTS
ARE WITH EVERYONE IMPACTED BY
THE DEVASTATING FIRES.
STAY INFORMED AND STAY SAFE.**



Welcome 2025! iFoster is here and committed to providing you with the support and resources needed to excel in every aspect of your life. Stay tuned this year for more updates, success stories, and opportunities to grow and thrive.

Let's make this year impactful and transformative together! We have updated this

Emergency Fire Resources for LA County

Coping when Disaster Strikes



Following a disaster, prioritizing your emotional well-being is crucial. Be mindful of your own feelings and behaviors, as well as those of your family members. Maintaining emotional health enables you to think clearly and respond effectively to urgent situations, ensuring the safety of yourself and your loved ones.

[Learn more](#)

LA County Employee Resource List



In times of need, it's essential to know where to turn for support. Whether you're dealing with stress, seeking counseling, or facing a crisis, Los Angeles County offers a variety of resources to assist employees and their families. From the Veterans Crisis Line to stress management programs and disaster hotlines, these services are designed to provide the help and guidance necessary to navigate challenging times.

[Learn more](#)

LA Employee Wildfire Guide



With over 111,000 employees in Los Angeles County, local disasters can greatly affect our community. During wildfire season, those in impacted neighborhoods may face property damage or sudden evacuation orders, leading to challenges like finding temporary housing, arranging pet care, managing kids' school absences, and dealing with work disruptions. To aid in these tough times, learn more about the LA County Employee Wildfire Support Guide.

[Learn more](#)

Resources for you

FREE Goal Setting Guide



Goal setting made easy—we have an app for that! Start 2025 off by watching this short video to learn about SMART goals, and then use this handout to write down the goals you want to accomplish for the year to put you on the path to success.

FREE Career Planning Tool



Do you want a job that is you? Try out Career Cruising! It is an interactive tool designed to help you discover your career interests while developing an educational plan to achieve your career goals. Click below to contact iFoster to set up your Career Cruising account.

Be a Smart Saver This Year



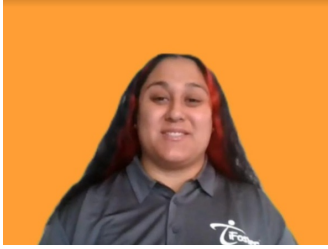
If you're constantly looking for opportunities to cut costs and make your money go further, we have some exciting news for you. iFoster, in partnership with Working Advantage, is your ultimate discount hero! This program will help you save significantly on everything you need – from essentials and stylish clothing to supplies and even incredible adventures!

Download Your Own
Smart Goals
Worksheet

Start Exploring Careers
Today

Start Saving and
Thriving

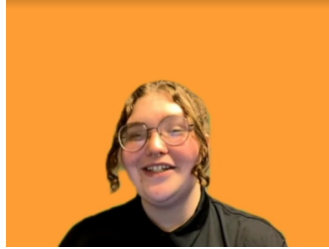
Essential Self-Care Strategies



STOP. PAUSE. BREATHE.
Discover the importance of taking a moment to pause and recognize when you need daily self-care. Stephanie, one of our Peer Navigators, shares actionable self-care steps you can implement today.

Hear from Stefanie
about Self-Care

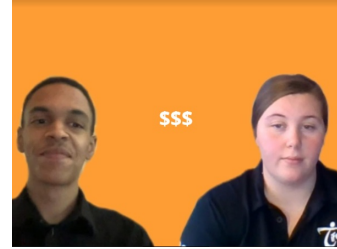
Nutritional Wellness Guide



Ever heard the saying "You are what you eat?" It's true! Learn the importance of healthy eating as Gaia, our Peer Navigator, walks you through making nutritious choices, understanding food portions, and reading nutrition facts labels.

Hear from Gaia about
Nutrition

Smart Money Management



Want to save more money? The Wise Pockets method can help you keep more of your cash! Peer Navigators Avante and Dymond will guide you through this interactive budgeting game, designed to help you learn effective money management and boost your savings.

Hear from Avante &
Dymond about Wise
Pockets

FAFSA: Finally Arrived—But No Time for Students to Snooze!



The wait is over, and the 2025-26 FAFSA form is finally [here!](#) Released on December 1, 2024, students can apply for financial aid to cover their college or career school expenses from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Though the release may seem fashionably late, don't let that fool you into thinking there's any time to waste!

Whether you're new to FAFSA or a seasoned veteran, it's essential to complete your application without delay. Online submissions are typically processed within one to three days, which means your selected schools will soon be able to access your information.

Plus, you can always review your FAFSA Submission Summary, make necessary corrections, or add schools if needed.

Before diving in, make sure you're fully prepped:

- Create your StudentAid.gov account if you haven't already.
- Gather the documents you'll need to complete the form.
- Determine your dependency status to know if your parents or spouse should provide information.

Time to get started and secure your financial future! For detailed information and to fill out your FAFSA, head over to StudentAid.gov now.

Happy applying, and may the financial aid odds be ever in your favor!

[Apply or Learn More Here](#)

Congress Passes Landmark Legislation for Foster Youth and Families!

As we embrace the New Year with renewed hope, we have some extraordinary news about a monumental achievement for foster youth and their families. Just before the holiday break, Congress passed the Strengthening State and Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act (H.R. 7906), marking the biggest overhaul of child welfare in decades.

Despite facing some setbacks, the Senate unanimously passed this critical legislation on Saturday, showcasing their commitment to our community. Over the past two years, iFoster and its partners have been deeply involved in crafting this comprehensive bill, undertaking the meticulous and challenging process of fine-tuning ideas, language, and punctuation.

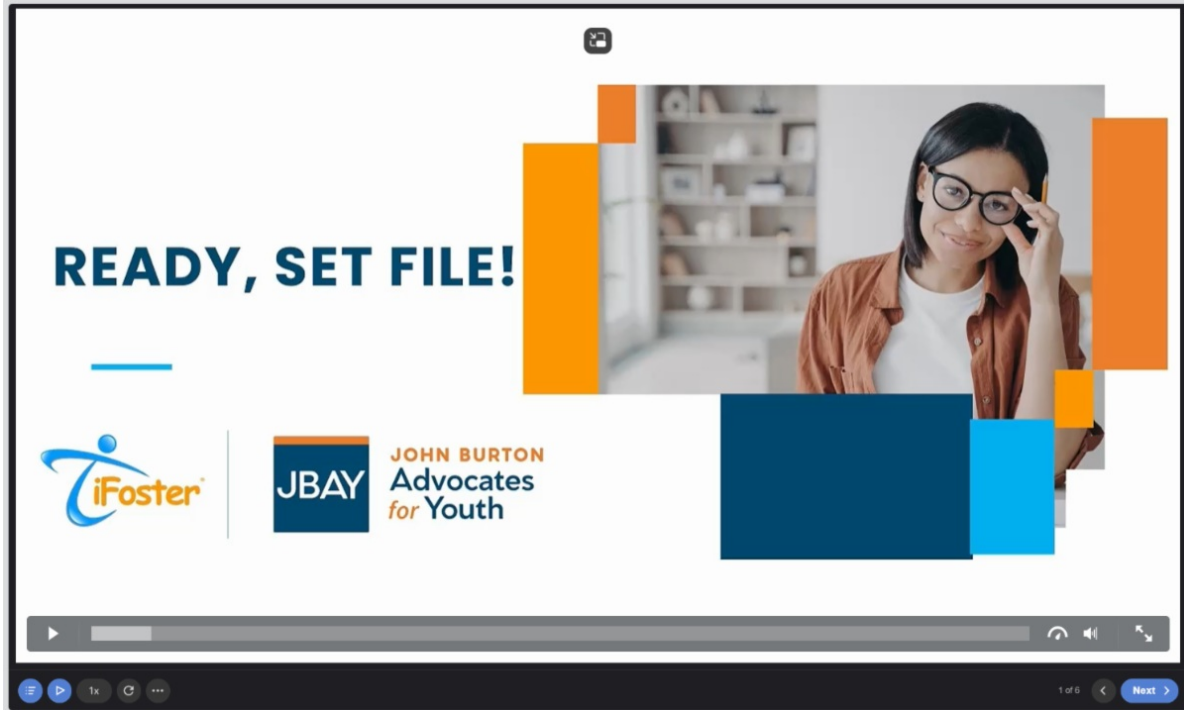
Here's a glimpse of the significant provisions included in the bill:

- **Addressing Poverty and Neglect:** The legislation provides funding to address poverty-related issues, ensuring that children do not enter foster care due to economic hardships.
- **"For Us by Us" Approach:** States must now involve individuals with lived experience, including kinship caregivers and youth, in shaping child welfare plans.
- **Improving Outcomes for Transition-Age Youth (TAY):** The bill enhances access to essential services for TAY to support their transition to adulthood.
- **Consistent Funding for Kinship Navigators:** The program allocates \$10 million per year through competitive grants, open to nonprofits and government agencies, to better support formal and informal kinship caregivers.
- **Supporting Kinship Families:** Title IV-B funds can be used for kinship families and peer-to-peer support programs.
- **Evaluating Adoption Services:** This aims to improve pre- and post-adoption services through thorough evaluations.
- **Increased Funding for Tribal Child Welfare Programs and Courts:** This ensures additional resources for tribal child welfare initiatives.

This historic legislation is a tremendous victory for the entire iFoster community and recognizes the importance of supporting and empowering foster youth and their families. These changes are expected to bring meaningful improvements to the lives of many within our community.

As we move forward into the New Year, let's celebrate this significant progress and remain committed to making a difference. Together, we look forward to achieving even greater milestones for foster youth and their families.

Ring in the New Year with Tax Savvy Moves: Get Ready, Get Set, File!



As we welcome the new year, it's time to start thinking about everyone's favorite season—tax season! While it might seem daunting, especially for first-timers, there's no need to worry because iFoster and John Burton Advocates for Youth have you covered with our fantastic new self-directed tax tool.

Forget about those pricey tax services—meet TaxSlayer, our partner, providing you with the means to file your taxes for FREE. We believe every dollar counts, so our tool is designed to maximize your return and ensure more of your hard-earned money stays where it belongs—in your pocket!

What makes our tax tool so special? It's tailored just for you! Unlike the one-size-fits-all approaches, we've developed various scenarios with John Burton Advocates for Youth to match your unique circumstances, helping you find the best strategies for an optimized return.

So, don't wait to file this year—GET READY, SET, AND FILE! Become a tax-season pro with our support, and let us help you keep the dough right where it belongs.

Happy filing, and remember, we're here to support you every step of the way!

[Start your Tax Journey with Us](#)

Partner with iFoster: Empower Yourself or Expand Your Agency's Impact While with AmeriCorps!



iFoster is hiring over 200 interns in 2025

iFoster is looking for more than 200 dedicated interns for the upcoming year.

Our interns participate in a ten-month, paid internship through our TAY AmeriCorps Peer Navigator program. This initiative is designed to offer professional development to interns. At the same time, they assist fellow foster youths in accessing resources vital for graduating high school, continuing in college, securing employment, and achieving independence.

If you are 18 or turning 18 before September 30, 2025, have current or past experience in foster care, and live in CA, KY, NV, OH, or New York City, we encourage you to fill out [this interest form](#) to join us in making a difference!

iFoster Seeks HOST Sites for 2025.

Are you an agency or organization eager to boost your capacity at no cost while offering valuable work experiences for foster youths? If so, consider becoming a TAY AmeriCorps host site! iFoster trains over 200 TAY AmeriCorps Peer Navigators every year, but to place them in meaningful internships, we need host sites.

Since its inception in 2019, iFoster's TAY AmeriCorps has connected over 30,000 transitional-age foster youths to essential resources. During the pandemic, the program helped more than 65,000 low-income CA residents and foster youths get vaccinated. We are a two-time award-winning AmeriCorps program.

If you are a program or agency serving foster youth and are interested in having interns assist in connecting your clients to resources, please [complete this interest form](#).

Partner Spotlight: FosterClub's AllStar Internship Opportunity and Kollab Youth Winter Session 2025



We're excited to feature FosterClub's AllStar Internship in this month's Partner Spotlight! Applications are now open for the next cohort of this incredible six-week hybrid program. Designed to empower young

individuals (ages 18-25) with lived experience in foster care, the AllStar Internship aims to foster both personal and professional growth while honing critical advocacy skills.

What the AllStar Internship Offers:

- Four Weeks of Virtual Training: Focuses on leadership, personal skill development, and advocacy.
- Two Weeks in Oregon: Interns will facilitate a three-day conference tailored for young people preparing to transition out of care.
- Transformative Experience: This internship equips participants with valuable skills for life and work and positively impacts our communities.

We need your help to identify the next group of AllStars. If you know a young person who might be the perfect fit—or if you work with young individuals who would thrive in this program—please share this fantastic opportunity with them.

Application Deadline: Monday, February 17, 2025.

Application Link: [Learn More and Apply](#)

If you have any questions regarding the internship, please email youthservices@fosterclub.com or invite interested young people to attend the upcoming [virtual info session on Tuesday, January 21, 2025](#).

Don't miss out on the "iFoster Out and About" section this month to read about FosterClub and iFoster's recent trip to Washington, D.C., with Journey to Success!



Embark on a path of personal growth, skill enhancement, and empowerment with our Winter session program. Designed for youth ages 14-19, this outstanding opportunity allows you to acquire essential skills, gain mentorship from industry experts, and uncover exciting new possibilities. We're currently accepting registrations for our Winter Cohort, allowing students to get started right away and experience the full benefits of the program. **Deadline to register:** January 31, 2025.

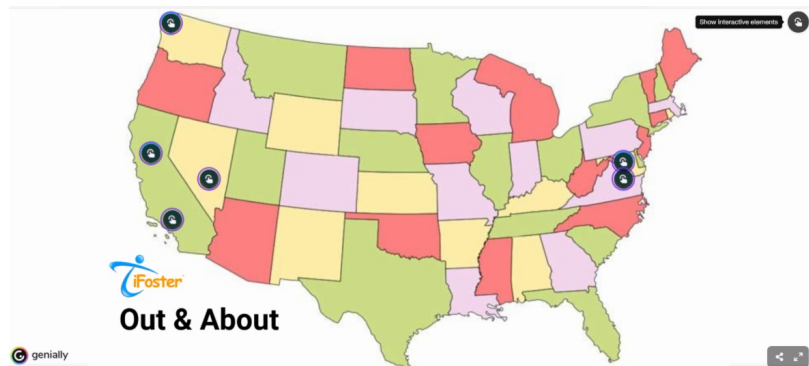
Application Link: [Learn More and Apply](#)

Partner with iFoster: Empower Yourself or Expand Your Agency's Impact While with AmeriCorps!

Explore More in "iFoster Out and About"

In this edition, we've updated our interactive map with fresh highlights and inspiring achievements from various regions. Click the link in our newsletter to journey through iFoster's ongoing impact and all the new stories we've gathered from across the country.


Celebrate our collective progress and discover what we've been up to since our last update. Join us to see how our iFoster community is making a difference, one adventure at a time!



[Check out what's going on](#)



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