

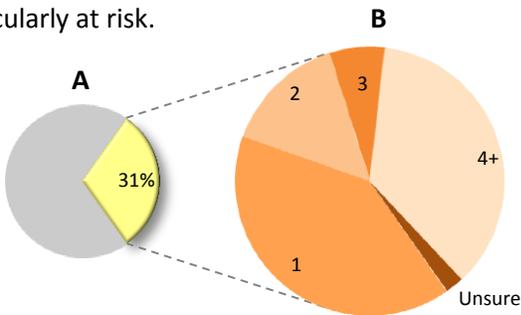
## IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH



Each year, over 26,000 foster youth “age out” of the child welfare system in the United States. In Maryland, the majority of foster youth over the age of 14—a total of 4,100 at the end of FY 2012—will remain in care until they “age out” between the ages of 18 and 21. While some of these youth may transition to independence smoothly and successfully, many more face significant challenges finding and maintaining adequate housing.

### HOMELESSNESS AMONG FOSTER YOUTH

Any youth can **experience homelessness**, but foster youth that have “aged out” of the child welfare system are particularly at risk.



**Graph A:** Percentage of foster youth experiencing homelessness in a 2.5 year period

**Graph B:** Number of times a foster youth was homeless in a 2.5 year period

### EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS

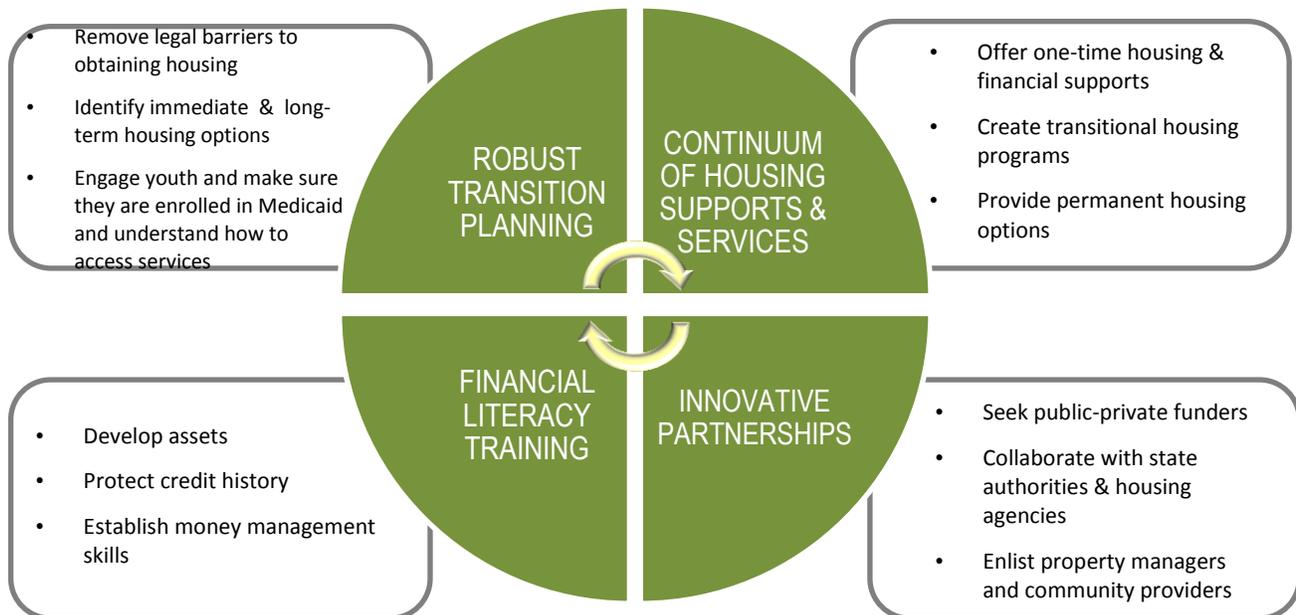
Housing instability during foster youth’s transition to adulthood is particularly detrimental. It **increases** the likelihood of experiencing **negative outcomes** and compromises their ability to become self-sufficient.

- Intermittent schooling
- Physical abuse
- Sexual victimization
- Substance abuse
- Poor physical and mental health
- Unstable employment
- Little-to-no-access to health care
- Delayed independence



### THE SOLUTION

Advocates for Children and Youth has identified **several key strategies for reducing homelessness among former foster youth** to help ensure that foster youth have safe, stable and affordable housing upon aging out of the child welfare system. In addition to providing a range of supports and services, including access to health care, after youth age out of care, it is especially important that transition planning and financial literacy training begin well before emancipation.



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