

RESOURCES FOR LIFE

This toolkit is provided as a convenient guide to the many resources and opportunities available to you as you prepare for and begin your life as a successful adult. Each entry contains contact information that will make it easy for you to follow up later and access programs, services, and products when you need them.

EDUCATION

[Campus Based Support Programs in Michigan](#): A list of schools in Michigan with support on campus for youth with experience in foster care, including direct links to program descriptions and contact information.

[College Application Toolkit](#): A step by step guide students can use to develop an action plan beginning in freshman year of high school to get ready for college!

[Financial Aid Toolkit for Students](#): Includes everything you need to know to help pay for college in Michigan.

[Handbook for Youth in Foster Care](#): The purpose of this handbook is to help you: understand what is happening while you are in foster care; know who people are and what they are supposed to do; know what documents are available and their purpose; maneuver your way through foster care; get what you need.

[Virtual College Fair Toolkit](#): This toolkit contains videos, links and more about ETV, Financial Aid and schools in Michigan that offer support to students with experience in foster care!

www.FosteringSuccessMichigan.com: The FSM website includes over 600 library resources for students and professionals including podcasts, webinars, toolkits and more!

HOUSING

[AYA Youth Collective](#): Drop in and housing shelter in the Grand Rapids area focused on supporting youth ages 14-24 experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

[GoSection8.com](#): Interactive tool that helps you find housing in Michigan by zip code or county.

[Housing Assessment and Resource Agency Contact List](#): This is a list of housing agencies by county in Michigan operated through state government and HUD. Be sure to mention that you have experience in foster care as you may qualify for HUD's Foster youth to Independence Initiative (FYI).

[MSHDA - Housing Choice Voucher Program \(michigan.gov\)](#): This federal program provides rent subsidies for very low-income people who find their own housing in private homes and apartment buildings.

[Our House](#): Offers housing support and scholarships for youth with experience in foster care. They also offer an annual camp, connection to mentors, and employment opportunities for youth in the Washtenaw area.

[Underground Railroad, INC](#): Provides shelter and support for men and women on the southeast side of the state who are victims of domestic and sexual violence, human trafficking, and stalking.

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH

[Crisis Text Line](#): Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Provides 24/7 support.

[Foster Care Recovery/River Jordan](#): River Jordan offers a variety of services to youth aging out of foster care including transitional living services and peer support recovery. The session “Introduction to Foster Care Recovery” was presented by River Jordan.

[Foster Youth in Transition: Health & Wellness, Your Mind](#): Provides resources and information for youth transitioning out of care in Michigan on mental and behavioral health topics, including depression, suicide, relationships, feelings, eating disorders, substance use, and problem gambling.

[Foster Care Transitional Medicaid Brochure](#): Provides an overview of what you need to know about medical assistance for youth aging out of foster care.

[Health Liaisons/Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#): Teens who have experienced time in foster care have a back-pocket resource they might not know about: Health liaison officers (HLOs). No matter where you live, a barrier-busting HLO is assigned to you. The session “WHAT’S WRONG?! Your Access to Care and How Health Liaisons Want to Partner With You” by [Aaron Canfield](#) covered this topic!

CULTURAL & PERSONAL IDENTITY

[Fostering Success Michigan Ambassadors Program](#): The FSM Ambassadors are a group of young people from across Michigan who are focused on using their lived experiences in foster care to advocate for change in the child welfare system of Michigan! FSM provides training in leadership and advocacy for youth with experience in foster care who are interested in sharing their lived experiences to drive change in child welfare in Michigan. The session “The ABCs of Advocacy” was presented by the FSM Ambassadors!

[Graci Harkema, Speaker, Diversity & Inclusion](#): Graci Harkema presented a dynamic keynote at MTC called “Embracing Identity & Rising in Belonging.” Her message focused on the importance of living as our true selves, accepting ourselves, showing up as who we are. Learn more about Graci and watch additional inspiring videos by visiting her website!

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[Redefining Normal](#): Redefining Normal is a book written by MTC keynote speakers, Seita Scholars, and alumni of foster care, Justin and Alexis Black. The keynote address “Redefining U” dove into some key information about defining your identity! Check out Alexis and Justin’s website to learn more!

[ROSE from Concrete Podcast Series](#): ROSE (Rising Over Societal Expectations) Empowerment Group was started by Michigan Teen Conference Keynote Speaker and author Justin Black. His podcast series features a variety of topics focused on closing the information gap for black, brown, and marginalized people including youth who have experienced foster care.

[Ruth Ellis Center](#): The Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit creates opportunities with LGBTQ+ young people to build their vision for a positive future. The Ruth Ellis Center has established a national reputation for quality and innovation in providing trauma-informed services for lesbian, gay, bi-attractional, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ+) youth, and young adults, with an emphasis on young people of color, experiencing homelessness, involved in the child welfare system, and/or experiencing barriers to health and wellbeing.

LIFE SKILLS

[Graff Chevrolet/Bay City, MI: Steve Humphry](#) provides tips and advice to youth and MYOI coordinators shopping for autos. Coordinators and youth can contact Steve to set an appointment to test drive inventory typically in the \$2500-\$5000 range. Email Steve above or call 989-684-4411 for more information.

[Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative](#): MYOI's goal is to ensure that young people in foster care have successful outcomes in housing, education, employment, community engagement and health. Each site provides youth boards, community partner boards, training, financial matches for assets, and stipends.

[Mid-Michigan Community Action Agency](#): Help with housing and money management, work and study life, daily living skills and self-care, careers and education planning, and the future and looking forward for youth who are homeless, couch surfing, or thinking of running away from home.

[SMART Goals](#): Learn how to create better goals with the help of Keynote speaker Justin Black! This guide helps you create goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound).

FINANCES/EMPLOYMENT

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#): Apply for the FAFSA each year by March 1st to be considered for federal, state, and institutional grants and scholarships! If you were in foster care at age 13 or older, be sure to answer “YES” on Question #53! **Completing the FAFSA can be confusing! Reach out to your caseworker, MYOI coordinator, Education Planner, or school counselor for help!

[FreeTaxUSA®](#): Free tax filing online for Federal Tax Returns

[Fostering Futures Scholarship](#): The Fostering Futures Scholarship is facilitated through MI-Student Aid and provides funding to students who have experienced foster care in Michigan on or after age 13. Students must also demonstrate financial need to qualify. Be sure to apply by June 30th!

[Open Heart Communities](#): Supports youth in Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Program and provides life skills training. During MTC, Open Heart Communities shared a great resource called [Playspent](#) that helps you learn how to manage money during their presentation “Spent: Understanding Your Money.”

[Samaritas](#): Facilitates the Education and Training Voucher Program that provides up to \$5000 each year to eligible students to assist with college or vocational training expenses. Learn more and apply online!

[Tuition Incentive Program](#): The Tuition Incentive Program (TIP) provides Medicaid eligible recipients tuition assistance during a student’s qualifying certificate or associate degree program and also during the student’s bachelor’s degree program. Reach out to [MI Student Aid](#) to learn more!

[Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care \(YAVFC\)](#): The Michigan YAVFC program allows youth to remain in foster care and receive supportive and financial benefits until the age of 21.

[Youth in Transition Funding \(YIT\)](#): YIT is a funding source available to cover expenses related to the development of self-sufficiency for youth who experienced out of home care after the age of 14 and have not yet reached age 23. Eligible expenses must not be covered by any other government or community resources.

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

[Adoption Option, INC](#): AOI’s YIT Mentoring services are designed to facilitate readiness for independence into adulthood for youth ages 14-21 who were in foster care placement after their 14th birthday. This program currently services Midland, Gladwin, Isabella and Saginaw Counties.

[Child Safe Michigan Mentoring Program](#): Child Safe Michigan is an affiliate of the Judson Center provides mentors for children in foster care. Mentors are friends, advocates and supporters who listen, care and help.

[FosterClub](#): FosterClub is a national network for youth with experience in foster care. FosterClub's mission is to lead the efforts of young people in and from foster care to become connected, educated, inspired and represented so they can realize their personal potential and contribute to a better life for their peers.

[Fostering Success Michigan](#): FSM focuses on helping youth with experience in foster care get to an through college! Whether you are interested in attending a 4-year university, community college, or trade school, the Fostering Success Michigan website provides resources to help you get the information you need to prepare for college and decide what college best suits your needs. FSM is here to support you! Feel free to [reach out via email](#) if you have questions or need connections!

GOVERNMENT, STATE, AND LEGAL RESOURCES

Foster Care Review Board Program

Contact: Jeanette Bridges
Phone: 734-330-6573
Email: bridgesj@courts.mi.gov
925 W. Ottawa, Lansing, MI 48933
www.courts.michigan.gov

Three important things for me to know:

1. Right to request review of the case by the FCRB related to safety, well-being, and permanence.
2. Ensuring compliance of legal representation.
3. Ensuring necessary services are provided in a successful transition into adulthood.

Michigan Attorney General

OK2SAY Program

Contact: Stephanie Grace
Phone: 517-335-3947
Email: agcp@mi.gov or graces@michigan.gov
525 West Ottawa Street, Lansing, MI 48909
www.ok2say.com

Three important things for me to know:

1. A Culture of Silence: In the majority of violent incidents that occur in our schools, someone other than the perpetrator of violence knows of a threat before it's carried out but fails to report it. Often, students choose to keep quiet because they fear retaliation, rejection, or stigmatization by their peers. The result is a culture of silence in which students suffer harm that could have been prevented if another had chosen to speak out.
2. A Commitment to Safety: The goal of OK2SAY is to stop harmful behavior before it occurs by encouraging anyone to report threatening behavior to caring adult authorities who can help. OK2SAY encourages Michigan residents to confidentially submit tips 24/7 using the OK2SAY mobile app, online, email, texting, or by calling trained program technicians. Upon receipt of a tip, specially trained OK2SAY technicians address the immediate need and forward the information to the appropriate responding law enforcement agency or organization. Tips go to schools, local law enforcement agencies, community mental health agencies or the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
3. A TIP SAVES LIVES: Ultimately, it's about early intervention and prevention. When students make the courageous decision to break the code of silence and speak out against harmful behavior, they equip authorities with the information needed to respond to threats and avert tragedy. And that's a good thing for Michigan schools, communities, and families. So, let's stand up for student safety. Remember: It's OK2SAY.

Michigan 2-1-1

<https://www.mi211.org/>

Three important things for me to know:

1. Includes information on resources related to food, housing, paying bills, family support and more!
2. Free, confidential support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
3. Choose to connect 3 ways: Online at the link above, dial 2-1-1 on your phone, or text your zip code to 898211

Michigan Department of Health & Human Services Education Planners

https://www.michigan.gov/fyit/0,4585,7-240-44289_45022-296562--,00.html

Three important things for me to know:

1. Education Planners can provide consultation and support to youth in accessing educational services and developing education plans.
2. Education Planners can provide support and assistance to youth to help identify available financial aid resources and assist with post-secondary enrollment.
3. Education Planners can assist foster care workers with setting up transportation for students to remain in their school of origin following foster care placement or replacement.

Michigan Department of State

Secretary of State Office

Driver's License, Vehicle Registration, Register to Vote, Change Address

Contact: Information Center

Phone: 888-767-6424

www.michigan.gov/sos

Three important things for me to know:

1. Use the online Express SOS to change your address, renew your driver's license, and renew your vehicle plate/tab at www.michigan.gov/expresssos.
2. Self-service kiosks are available at many locations or you can make an in person appointment by visiting www.michigan.gov/sos
3. To get a State ID, you need: your SSN, proof of residency, and a payment of \$10.00. **Youth in Transition (YIT) funds are available to cover the cost!

Michigan Department of State

Traffic Safety Division

Contact: Robert Gwizdz

Email: gwizdzr@michigan.gov

Phone: 517-373-9669

PO Box 30810, Lansing, MI 48909

www.michigan.gov/sos

Three important things for me to know:

1. Visit Michigan.gov/TeenDriver for resources and information about Graduated Driver Licensing, driver's licenses and state IDs.
2. Graduated Driver Licensing is required for all Michigan drivers under the age of 18.
3. The Michigan Graduated Driver Licensing Parent Checklist is a free resource intended to assist parents and teens with understanding and following the steps of GDL.

Michigan Department of State

Vital Records Office

Records of Michigan Births, Deaths, and Marriages

Contact: Eligibility Unit

Phone: 517-335-8666, press option #4

Email: VRCustomerService@michigan.gov

333 S. Grand Ave., 1st Floor, Lansing, MI 48933

www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

Click on Vital Records: Birth, Death, Marriage, Divorce

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1. You can order a Birth Record online through VitalChek (www.vitalchek.com).
2. Using the online VitalChek, the processing time is 1-2 days.
3. To order a Birth Record online, there is a \$12.00 RUSH fee plus a \$11.50 credit card handling fee, and a \$46 first copy fee.

Michigan Legal Help

Self-help Tools

www.michiganlegalhelp.org

Three important things for me to know:

1. Michigan Legal Help is for people who are handling their legal problems without a lawyer. It can help you learn about your legal problems and get ready for court.
2. There are many Do-It-Yourself tools to help you create court forms. This website does not give legal advice, and it is not a substitute for having a lawyer.
3. If you need more help, search the website for a lawyer, community services, or a Self-Help Center nearby.

U.S. Social Security Administration

Social Security Number and Card

Contact: Social Security Local Branch

Phone: 800-772-1213

<https://www.ssa.gov/agency/contact/>

www.ssa.gov

Three important things for me to know:

1. You can get a replacement Social Security card for free online at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/ if you are 18 or over.
2. It usually takes 10-14 business for your card to be mailed from the date of application.
3. If you cannot apply for a new card online, you will need to complete the application and either mail it or take it to a local office.
<https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ss-5.pdf>.