

# Assembly Bill 1675

## Extracurricular/Enrichment Activities for Foster Youth

Assemblymember Alanis (AD 22)

### SUMMARY

All young people deserve the opportunity to develop their skills, interests, and relationships through participation in enrichment activities. For young people in the child welfare system, these opportunities are especially crucial because many systems-involved young people have experienced trauma and face high risks in terms of poor adolescent and adult outcomes. Despite clear evidence that enrichment and extracurricular activities are healing and improve well-being and adult outcomes, the young people who need this intervention the most—youth in foster care—are the ones most likely to not have the opportunity to take part in activities in their communities and schools or to enjoy time with peers. This bill would reduce the barriers young people face to participate in enrichment activities by leveraging all available funds for activities and increasing accountability.

### BACKGROUND

**The barriers to participation in extracurricular activities continue to be significant for youth in foster care, resulting in lost opportunities to heal and grow.** While some laws have been in place to reduce barriers to participation, young people in foster care continue to face barriers largely due to a lack of funding and accountability.

**The positive benefits of participation in activities for young people, especially those who are most vulnerable, are far-reaching.** Extracurricular engagement

supports healthy development and improves mental health outcomes by helping young people build resiliency and counteract the harmful effects of trauma. Extracurriculars help young people improve academic outcomes, develop new skills, and reduce risky behavior.

**The children's mental health crisis requires effective responses, including interventions like extracurricular and enrichment activities.** In January 2022, the U.S. Surgeon General issued an Advisory highlighting the urgent need to address a growing crisis in the mental health of the nation's youth. Investment in enrichment activities provides young people with positive interventions that can help them heal, build community, and develop skills. For children and youth in foster care, addressing this mental health crisis requires investment in an intervention that research has clearly demonstrated has an incredible impact, but which is largely unavailable to these youth: extracurricular and enrichment activities.

### THIS BILL

This bill would promote participation in enrichment activities for youth in foster care by leveraging available funds for this purpose and increasing accountability under existing laws. The bill would require 1) the Department of Social Services, Department of Health Care Services, and Department of Education to develop a plan to maximize and leverage all available funds to support participation in enrichment activities; 2) require the Department of Health Care Services to include young people and

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families in implementation planning if its request to provide an activity stipend is approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid through its 1115 Demonstration Waiver Request (CalBH-CBC); and 3) additional accountability mechanisms to ensure that existing laws are followed.

**SPONSORS**

Youth Law Center (YLC)  
California Youth Connection (CYC)

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