



Native American Youth and Family Center

5135 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland, OR 97218 | p 503.288.8177 | f 503.288.1260 | nayapdx.org

March 1, 2021

To: Chair Williams and Members of the House Committee on Human Services

RE: House Bill 2340 – Support

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is William Miller, I am Blackfeet and Cherokee and I represent the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA) located in Portland, Oregon. NAYA's wraparound programs directly serve over 2,000 individual Native American youth, adults, and Elders every year and positively impacts more than 10,000 Native Americans living in Portland's growing Native American community a year. I am writing today in support of House Bill 2340.

NAYAs Pathways to Adulthood Independent Living Program is a culturally specific program designed to provide supportive life skills and assistance to Native American and self-identifying Native foster youth, ages 16-21, in the Tri-County area. In fiscal year 2019-2020 NAYA served an average of 25 youth each month and 39 total youth throughout the year supporting them in goal setting and skill building in education, employment, housing, health care, transportation, money management, personal growth, and other areas. During that year, 4 youth graduated from high school, 2 signed up for college courses, and 15 were employed. At NAYA, ILP youth also have access to cultural enrichment activities and skill building workshops each month as well as one on one support with their ILP worker. The program provides critical supports to youth as they near aging out of the foster care system at age 21. Some foster youth take longer to stabilize and transition successfully while they learn to balance education, work, and maintaining stable housing. While our other foster care program serves youth until age 24, ILP provides specific skill building financial supports, housing programs, and other opportunities for youth to build on the necessary life skills they need to live independently and engaged in their community. During the pandemic, youth face even more barriers to receiving the services they need with difficulty finding stable employment, housing, and a decrease in connection to their peers and natural supports. ILP workers continue to show up to the youth they serve in creative ways prior and during this pandemic.

On behalf of the Native American Youth and Family Center we urge the passage of House Bill 2340, for the enrichment and betterment of our foster youth.



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Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" being more prominent than the last name "Miller".

William Miller
Advocacy Manager
Native American Youth and Family Center