

FOR YOUTH

# A path to independence

for San Francisco's foster youth 18+





Launchp^ds

Helping youth successfully  
transition from foster care  
to adulthood.

Launchpads is a program of **Freedom Forward**, with funding from **The Tipping Point Community** and the support of San Francisco Family and Children's Services.



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# What is Launchpads?

Participants have access to...



Vetted places to live with compatible hosts



Monthly subsidy from San Francisco County.



Additional funds for move-in costs and more



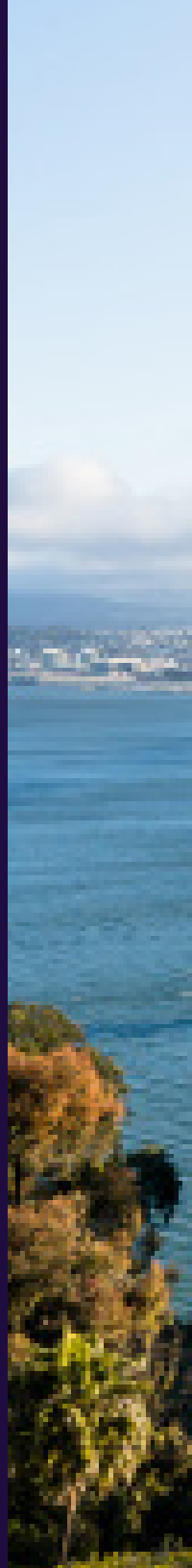
A social worker who checks in monthly



Conflict mediation and problem solving



A community of hosts, youth, and service providers





# Getting started

## What is Launchpads?

Launchpads connects youth in San Francisco extended foster care to hosts in the Bay Area. The hosts are willing to rent out space in their homes (usually a private bedroom, but it could be an entire unit). We do this with an app where you create a profile and can look at homes that are available for rent. Launchpads is a project of Freedom Forward, a nonprofit that serves youth in San Francisco.

## Who is eligible?

Eligible youth are in San Francisco extended foster care (ages 18–21) and have either done a SILP assessment or been recommended by their social worker. Youth must be approved by their social worker to participate in Launchpads. We do not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, national origin, legal status, language, color, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

## How do I get started?

First, you must talk to your social worker, and they must approve you to participate. Then you can create a profile on the app (<https://app.wearelaunchpads.org>)

After you have created a profile, you can look at all the



homes on the site. You can see what the homes look like, including the spaces the hosts are renting out. You can also see their location (many hosts live outside of San Francisco, in other parts of the Bay Area), the house rules, and a brief biography of the hosts.

## **Who are the hosts?**

In general, hosts are people who want to support young people in their community. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences.

## **How does someone become a host?**

We advertise for hosts all over the Bay Area, and staff at Launchpads screen and approve all hosts who show up on the app. To become an approved host, they have to:

- Complete a host application
- Complete a Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation background check
- Complete an online background search by a private company called Checkr.
- Provide two personal references
- Complete a thirty-minute interview
- Complete a six-hour training

Potential hosts are automatically excluded from participating if any background check finds:

- Any history of criminal child or elder abuse
- Any history of violent crime
- Any history of domestic violence

# Moving in

## Matching process

After your social worker has approved you and you have created a profile on the app (<https://app.wearelaunchpads.org/>), you can use the app to see the available homes. You can see who the host is, what their house rules are, where the home is located, and how the space they're renting looks.

If you see a place that looks interesting to you, you can message the host on the app. You can ask them any questions you have about their home, or anything else you are curious about. They can message you back and answer your questions. They may have questions for you as well.

If you are still interested in that home, the next step is to add your social worker to the conversation on the app. They will help set up a meeting between you, your social worker, and the host. You can also ask to bring other people to the conversation, such as your CASA, if it would be helpful. In addition, if you ask us, a Launchpads staff member (who has lived in foster care themselves) can attend the meeting as well to provide additional support.

After the meeting, you and the host have 24 hours to decide if it is a good match. Even if you know you both want to go forward, we ask that you wait 24 hours to confirm, just because it's such a big decision.

If you and the host both decide it is a good match, then you

will decide on a date to move in, and you will sign two documents: 1) a program agreement with Launchpads, and 2) a shared living agreement with the host that outlines the rules and expectations for both of you.

## Interviewing hosts

When you and your social worker schedule a meeting with a prospective host it is up to you to decide what you want to ask them. Below we've provided some sample questions you might consider asking.

### Getting to know the host

- Tell me about why you decided to become a host with Launchpads.
- Tell me about what you like to do in your free time.
- What are you hoping your relationship will be like with a renter?

### Rules and expectations

- What rules and expectations do you have for renters?
- Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_ guideline that I saw in your profile?

### Rules and expectations

- What is your daily routine?
- What time do you generally wake up and go to sleep?
- How clean do you like to keep your space?
- What is the best way for us to talk about problems that arise/what is the best way to make a request?
- How often do you like to have friends over?
- Do you feel comfortable if I have friends over?
- What is your routine like during COVID-19? What would

we need to do to make sure we both feel safe (e.g. vaccinations, social distancing)?

- What are your pet-peeves when living with someone?

### Miscellaneous

- What are some of your concerns about moving in here?
- When you've had a bad day what do you need me to know?
- Do you hope to share meals together sometimes?
- Do you cook most of your meals at home?
- How do you like to spend your weekends?
- Do you smoke?
- Is there anything else I should know?

### Role of your social worker

Your social worker will be a part of this process the entire way. First, they approve you to have a profile on the app. Then they set up a meeting between you and any host you're interested in meeting with, and they facilitate the meeting. They then do an inspection to make sure the home meets SILP requirements. Finally, they continue to be your social worker while you are living there, which means they will meet with you monthly.

# Rules and expectations

### For you

Each host will have different rules and expectations. For ex-

ample, hosts may or may not allow overnight guests or pets. Please feel free to ask them questions about their expectations. You can ask questions when you are messaging them on the app and also when you are at the in-person meeting. The host's rules will be outlined in a shared living agreement you both will sign. In addition to these individual house rules, there are some rules for all youth using Launchpads:

### **Drugs and alcohol**

You may not possess or consume illegal drugs while in a Launchpads home. In addition, if you are under the age of 21, you may not possess or consume alcohol. If you are over 21, we ask that if you drink, you drink responsibly.

### **Use of products that cause house fires**

You may not use candles, smoke, or burn incense in Launchpads homes.

### **Physical aggression**

Physical aggression is strictly prohibited.

### **Weapons**

No weapons are allowed in the home at any time.

### **Property destruction**

It is important that you leave the host's home in the same condition it was in when you moved in. If you do not, this may impact the return of your security deposit. (See more details on security deposits later in the guide.)

### **Verbal/written abuse**

Verbal or written abuse, racial slurs, and physical violence or threats are unacceptable. If you are experiencing a

problem, please reach out to your social worker, Launchpads staff, or other support persons.

### **Romantic relationships**

We encourage you to engage in healthy romantic relationships, but you may not engage in a romantic relationship with your host.

### **Cleanliness**

Living in a shared space means taking on chores and keeping your space neat and livable. Do your best to clean up after yourself. It is also a good idea to ask your host how they want you to help keep shared spaces clean and tidy.

### **Kindness**

Kindness goes a long way in making things work! Do your best to treat your host and your housemates with kindness and respect. If you are having challenges, please reach out to the Launchpads staff so we can help!

### **For your host**

Hosts have to do more than just pass a background check, complete training, and complete the interview. Many of the expectations for hosts are the same as what we ask of you:

### **Drugs and alcohol**

Hosts may not possess or consume illegal drugs while hosting a Launchpads home.

### **Physical aggression**

Physical aggression is strictly prohibited.

## **Romantic relationships**

Hosts may not have a romantic relationship with you while you are living in their home.

## **Verbal/written abuse**

Verbal or written abuse, racial slurs, and physical violence or threats are unacceptable.

## **Kindness**

We expect hosts to treat you with kindness and respect.

# **Support for you**

## **Orientation**

When you create a profile on Launchpads, we offer a 1.5-hour orientation to explain the services Freedom Forward offers and telling you a bit more about how Launchpad works.

## **Facilitated conversation and problem solving**

It can be challenging to live in a home with people you have just met. We want to make sure you and your host have the best relationship possible and can handle any disagreements that come up. We have contracted with Community Boards, a San Francisco nonprofit that offers mediation services. They will meet with you and your host approximately one month after you move in and have a conversation with both of you to make sure things are going well. If you need help addressing issues, that is part of what they are there for. They do not take sides; they help everyone communi-

cate clearly to reach an agreement that works for you both.

### **HYPE Center**

Freedom Forward, the organization that runs Launchpads, has another program that offers many services for youth. Some of these services include:

- Therapy and mental health services provided by West-Coast Children’s Clinic
- Education support through Five Keys
- Legal workshops provided by Justice at Last
- Financial literacy classes provided by the International Rescue Committee
- Care packages and access to funds to further your goals

### **Fun Fund**

Launchpads has a small fund available to youth to help build their relationship with their hosts. This fund allows youth to take their host out for a meal, a movie, or other fun activity.

### **Your own supports**

You will still have access to all your ongoing support systems while you are in Launchpads. You will still have your social worker, attorney, therapist, medical providers, and anyone else that you consider a support.

# Paying for your home

### **Rent and other expenses**

Because Launchpads homes are approved as SILPs, you will receive a SILP check every month from the City and



County of San Francisco. Your social worker will help you get this set up. You and your host will agree on the date and method of paying rent when you create your shared living agreement. You are responsible for paying your rent in full and on time. We suggest you make sure that your budget can cover the rent and any other expenses you have when you move into a home. If you are concerned about paying your rent on time, you and your social worker can arrange for your SILP payment to go directly to your host. If at some point you cannot pay the rent, please get in touch with your social worker right away.

Some hosts will charge for other expenses, for example electricity or Wi-Fi. Please make sure you know if they are charging for anything in addition to rent, so you can budget for that as well. This will be in your shared living agreement.

### **Security deposit**

Your security deposit is \$1200. Launchpads will pay \$1000 of it. We ask that you pay the last \$200 towards your security deposit. If you do not have \$200, please talk with your social worker, who may be able to help. If you live in the home for six months or longer, and you leave the home in the same condition it was in when you moved in, you will get the entire \$1200 when you move out. If the home is damaged, the cost to clean or repair any damage may come from your security deposit.

# Moving out

## When and why you'll move out

You will move out at some point. Common reasons for moving out include:

- You have reached the end of extended foster care because you have turned 21 (or, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is before July 2021 and you have turned 22).
- Your agreement with your host ends. You and your host will decide how long you will rent from them, and it will be in your shared rental agreement.
- You need to move for personal reasons, such as for school, a job, or to join the military.
- You and your host do not get along. We certainly hope that it will be a good match, and that any challenges can be resolved with the help of your social worker, Launchpads, and Community Boards. But you can end the agreement at any time by providing written notice to Launchpads and your host. If at all possible, we ask that you give one month's notice.
- Your host may ask you to leave. Many launchpads participants will be considered "lodgers," rather than tenants. This is likely the case if you are sharing space, such as a bathroom or kitchen, with your host. If you are considered a lodger your host is required to give you a 30-day notice to move out if you have lived there for less than a year, and 60-day if you have lived there over a year.

## What to do when you move out

When it is time to move out, you will need to do certain things. It is important that you leave the space as clean and cared for as you found it. This will allow you to keep the entire \$1200 deposit.

### Cleaning suggestions

- Move all your belongings out of the home.
- Dust and wipe all surfaces.
- Remove any cobwebs.
- Sweep or vacuum floors.
- Mop uncarpeted floors.
- Use a glass cleaner to wash all the windows, mirrors, glass doors, and any other glass surfaces in your area.
- Empty wastebaskets and take all trash out of the home.

You may also ask your host what they expect you to do before you leave.

# Other rights and obligations

## Program agreement

We ask that all youth participating in Launchpads sign a program agreement. (Please see the attached agreement.) Everything in that agreement is covered in this information packet, including rules and expectations, eligibility, and

paying rent.

## Right to confidentiality and privacy

You have the right to privacy of your information. Therefore, we will not share information about you without your permission. Your social worker cannot speak on your behalf without your permission. If you feel it would be helpful for your social worker to speak on your behalf to your host or to anyone at Launchpads, you can sign a waiver allowing them to speak to others for you.

# Resources and emergency contacts

Should an emergency or unplanned situation arise, the following people/entities can be contacted.

<b>Service/description</b>	<b>Contact information and availability</b>	<b>Examples of when to use a service</b>
<b>Acute emergency:</b> Call 911 for medical, psychiatric, or other emergencies.	911  Available 24 hours per day 7 days per week	If you or your host is in danger, having a medical emergency, or are having a mental health crisis that requires immediate attention call 911

<p><b>Alternatives to 911:</b> For resources such as a suicide hotline, rehabilitation services, LGBTQ mental health hotline and other resources, see this list of resource.</p>	<p>See the following list of resources:  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/LPnon911">https://tinyurl.com/LPnon911</a></p>	<p>If you or your host are looking for alternatives to calling 911</p>
<p><b>Therapy Services:</b> If you don't currently have a therapist but feel it would be helpful to you in your life, connect with the HYPE center and they can connect you to the right resources</p>	<p><b>HYPE Center</b>  Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30  <a href="http://hypecentersf.com">hypecentersf.com</a></p>	<p>Reach out to HYPE if you are looking for resources including therapy services, legal support, or education support reach out to the SF HYPE center</p>
<p><b>Miscellaneous problems related to your housing:</b> At Launchpads, we want to be a resource for hosts and youth. If things arise that seem outside of the other resources provided, contact us.</p>	<p><b>Launchpads staff</b>  <a href="mailto:monica@freedom-forward.org">monica@freedom-forward.org</a>  Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Will make best effort to respond to issues with urgency on nights and weekends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage to your home</li> <li>• Uncertainty about how to respond to a specific situation with your host</li> <li>• Seeking resources to better support a young person or yourself</li> </ul>

<p><b>Mental Health Emergencies:</b> For mental health emergencies that can wait an hour or more for a response call the mobile crisis unit. Mobile crisis provides acute psychiatric crisis evaluation and intervention for adults. They aim to intervene to deescalate crisis early on.</p>	<p><b>San Francisco City and County Mobile Crisis</b>  (415) 970-4000  Available Monday-Friday from 8:30 am to 9:00 pm and Saturdays from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You feel you are a danger to yourself or others</li> <li>• Your host is threatening suicide</li> <li>• Your host is throwing objects or hitting furniture/walls or acting irrationally</li> <li>• Your host is verbally threatening someone</li> </ul>
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<p><b>General concerns:</b> If you are concerned about your well-being or need help addressing a problem in your Launchpads home contact your social worker.</p>	<p>Contact your social worker</p> <p>Monday-Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are experiencing personal challenges that you don't know how to address (e.g. substance abuse, intimate partner abuse, budgeting problems) reach out to your social worker. If you are not comfortable with your social worker, reach out to another adult who you trust.</li> <li>• If you are having problems with your host that you don't know how to deal with, reach out to your social worker for advice, or to another adult who you trust. Launchpads is also happy to be a resource in these situations.</li> </ul>
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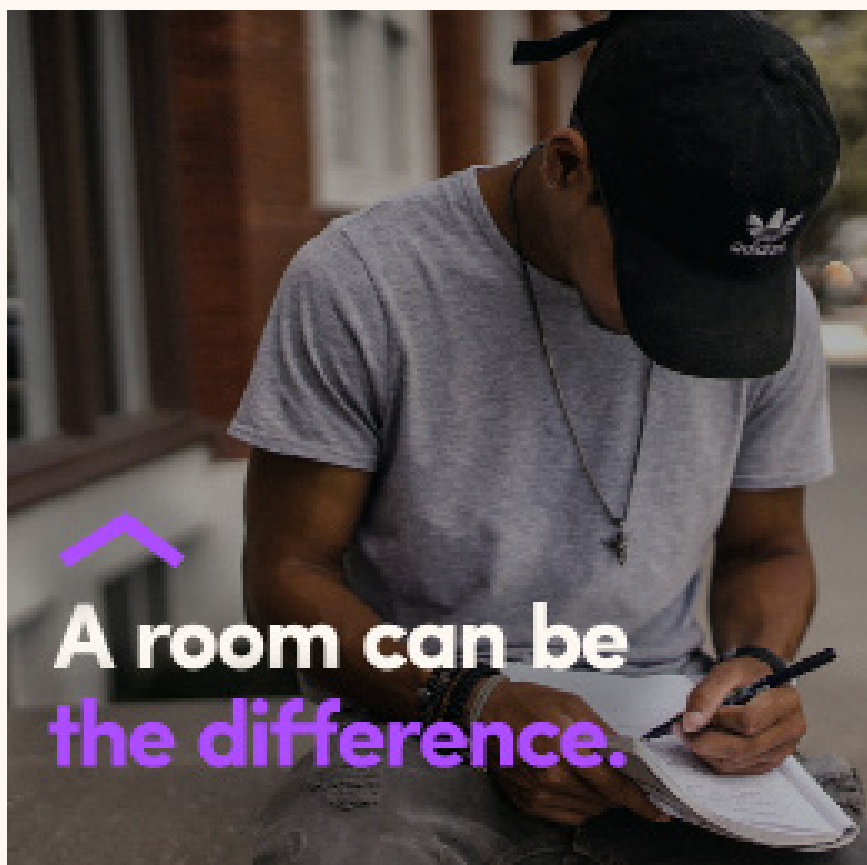
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*Do you have any questions about Launchpads? Or suggestions to improve our program? We want to hear from you! Please feel free to reach out anytime. You can email [Monica@freedom-forward.org](mailto:Monica@freedom-forward.org), or call (415) 449-7373. We look forward to helping you have a warm, safe and comfortable home!*

# A room can be a fresh start.

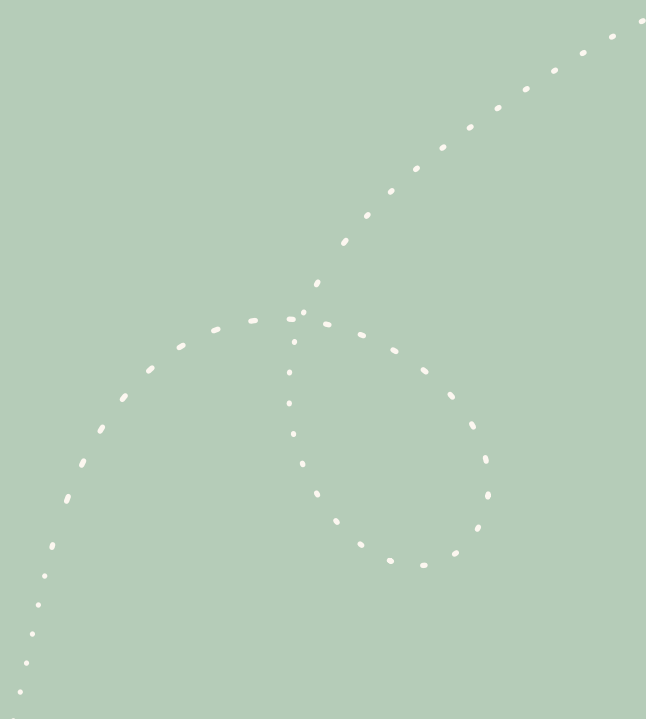
We are looking for hosts and others to join our community.  
Learn more at [wearelaunchpads.org](https://wearelaunchpads.org).





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A room can be  
the difference.

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[wearelaunchpads.org](http://wearelaunchpads.org)