



March 9, 2024

Dear Chair and Members:

On behalf of the Saint Paul Children's Collaborative, we write in support of increasing the appropriation for the state's Fostering Independence Grant program by \$6 million to address the pending shortfall.

The groundbreaking Fostering Independence Grant program not only provides access for Fosters to higher education, but also provides the stability and opportunity that Fosters need as they enter a very vulnerable period in their lives. As a Family Service Collaborative providing resources to support some of Saint Paul's most vulnerable young people, we are acutely aware of the impact of Fostering Independence Grants on the lives of eligible Fosters. We are concerned that without an increase in the appropriation, Fosters will be put on a wait list and left without the resources they need to move forward in reaching their goals and building stability and independence in their lives as they transition out of high school. Facing a wait list for support that is not available through any other source will cause some Fosters to end their college journey early or never start that journey at all, which represents a tremendous loss to the impacted Fosters and our community.

Minnesota owes it to Fosters to make good on the commitment to them offered through the Fostering Independence Grants by increasing the appropriation to this critical program by \$6 million this session. We thank you in advance for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole MartinRogers".

Nicole MartinRogers
Co-director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Davis".

Laurie Davis
Co-director

CC:

Owen Wirth, Committee Administrator
Sam Parmekar, Committee Administrator