A bill to be entitled

An act relating to young adults who are homeless or were in the child welfare system; amending s. 409.1452, F.S.; requiring each Florida College System institution and state university, in consultation with the State Office on Homelessness, to develop a plan to prioritize the placement of certain students in residence halls or dormitory residences; providing responsibilities for the Office of Continuing Care, Florida College System institutions, and state universities; requiring that certain institutions and universities give priority to certain students for housing and work-study programs; creating s. 409.14521, F.S.; defining the term "young adult"; requiring certain entities to develop programs and supports to help young adults access certain federal programs and vouchers; providing requirements for such programs and supports; requiring specified entities to maintain certain records and provide certain assurances to landlords; providing applicability; requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, in consultation with other entities, to conduct a specified study and report its findings to the Governor and Legislature by a date certain; providing requirements for such study;

effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (3) of section 409.1452, Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (5), and a new subsection (3) and subsection (4) are added to that section, to read:

409.1452 Collaboration with State University System, Florida College System, and Department of Education to assist children and young adults who have been or are in foster care or are experiencing homelessness; documentation regarding eligibility for tuition and fee exemptions; housing assistance.—The department shall collaborate with the State University System, the Florida College System, and the Department of Education to address the need for a comprehensive support structure in the academic arena to assist children and young adults who have been or remain in the foster care system in making the transition from a structured care system into an independent living setting.

(3) Each Florida College System institution and state university shall, in consultation with the State Office on Homelessness, develop a plan to prioritize the placement of students who are 28 years of age or younger and who:

(a) Are or were formerly in foster care in the United States;

(b) Are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness; or

(c) Are eligible for the tuition and fee exemption under s. 1009.25(1)(c)1.-4. or (1)(e),

in residence halls or dormitory residences owned or operated by the institution or university at which the student attends. The Office of Continuing Care established under s. 414.56 is responsible for determining if a student is or was formerly in foster care in the United States. Each Florida College System institution and state university is responsible for determining whether a student meets the definition of a homeless child or youth by using the process for determining whether a student is eligible for a tuition or fee exemption under s. 1009.25(1)(c)1.-4. or (1)(e).

(4) If a Florida College System institution or state university implements a priority system for the assignment of students to any of the following, the institution or university must give first priority to students who are eligible for the tuition and fee exemption under s. 1009.25(1)(c)1.-4. or (1)(e):

(a) Housing owned or operated by the institution or university.

(b) Year-round housing.

(c) Work-study programs.

Section 2. Section 409.14521, Florida Statutes, is created

to read:

409.14521 Housing assistance for young adults.—

(1) As used in this section, the term "young adult" means a person who is 28 years of age or younger who was in the child welfare system in the United States after he or she attained the age of 14.

(2) The department, community-based care lead agencies, their subcontracted providers, and housing authorities created under s. 421.04 shall develop programs and supports to help young adults access all available federal programs and vouchers offered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development relating to housing and housing stability. At a minimum, the programs and supports must include all of the following:

(a) The creation of a list identifying each young adult eligible for federal housing programs and vouchers within each community-based care lead agency's geographic service area.

(b) A recruitment and communication plan to help community-based care lead agencies contact and engage with such young adults.

(c) A memorandum of understanding or letter of intent between each community-based care lead agency and each housing authority located within the geographic service area of the community-based care lead agency.

(d) Written certification from each community-based care

lead agency to each housing authority located within the lead agency's geographic service area which verifies that the young adult was involved in the child welfare system after turning 14 years of age.

(e) A detailed list of processes and support services that are available to a young adult who is participating in a federal program or voucher.

(3) The department, community-based care lead agencies, and their subcontracted service providers that administer housing funds for young adults in the child welfare system must maintain detailed records of all reasonable actions taken to facilitate a young adult's acquisition of a residential lease. Reasonable actions include providing assurances to a landlord that funding will be provided on a monthly basis in order for the young adult to execute a contract for the lease of residential property. Such assurances may include cosigning the contract to lease the residential property, providing a guarantee, or any other form of assurance acceptable to the landlord. This subsection applies to entities that serve young adults receiving postsecondary educational services and support or aftercare services under s. 409.1451 or young adults receiving continuing care under 39.6251.

Section 3. (1) The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) shall conduct a study relating to the barriers that young adults who are or were in

the child welfare system or who are or are at risk of experiencing homelessness, and who are not enrolled in a Florida College System institution or state university, face when trying to obtain housing. The study must include recommendations for overcoming such barriers.

(2) OPPAGA shall conduct such study in consultation with the Department of Children and Families, the Department of Commerce, public housing authorities, young adults affected by this act, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

(3) OPPAGA shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2026.

Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.