

Adrien Lewis, Founder and President, CarePortal

U.S. House Committee on Ways & Means, Subcommittee on Work & Welfare

Hearing: “Leaving the Sticky Notes Behind: Harnessing Innovation and New Technology to Help America’s Foster Youth Succeed”

I. Introduction and Personal Background

Chairman LaHood, Ranking Member Davis, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued leadership in strengthening outcomes for children and youth in foster care. I am deeply grateful to testify at a time when this Committee is advancing bipartisan solutions that prioritize innovation, partnership, and meaningful connection.

My name is **Adrien Lewis**, and I am the founder of **CarePortal**, a national technology platform that connects caseworkers who identify needs with local faith communities, businesses, and individuals ready to help in real time. Through deep, local partnerships, we have built a Care-Sharing network of over **6,000 faith communities** and **1,500 agencies** that have served more than 600,000 children and caregivers – in unity together – across 39 states, one vetted need at a time.

These are more than numbers. **Consider MeKaisha**. She was about to turn 18 and age out of foster care while pregnant and alone. She had nothing – no resources, no family, no support community. Her caseworker used CarePortal to request a crib and baby supplies. Within hours, the **Denbow family** from a nearby local church responded. They delivered the items and built a trusting relationship with MeKaisha. They hosted her baby shower and helped her complete driver’s education. The Denbows went from neighbors to friends to family. Because of that connection, MeKaisha’s baby never entered foster care. Today, MeKaisha is mentoring other young moms aging out of care. This is what is possible when we use technology to unleash the resources and relational power of community, with neighbors seeing and serving their most vulnerable neighbors.

Years before building technology, I was leading a business. A vision trip to Haiti opened my eyes to how poverty separates families. That experience led my wife and me into foster care, where we adopted three of our six children. What we have seen up close has shaped everything we believe about what heals families: **connection**.

II. CarePortal Facilitates Community-Based Care-Sharing, At-Scale

At the last hearing in June, Chairman LaHood said our goal should be to help young people *gain employment, obtain housing, and create meaningful connections with adults.*

Meaningful connection is what CarePortal is designed to facilitate.

How it works

CarePortal is a Care-Sharing technology platform that allows child welfare professionals to share verified needs on behalf of children, youth, and families. These needs are instantly communicated to local responders who can say “yes” to act in real time, with faith communities serving as the nexus of connection.

Designed alongside frontline caseworkers, the platform reflects their workflow, their pressures, and their priorities for improving safety and wellbeing of children and families they are serving.

Functionally, CarePortal operates as an on-demand coordination system — much like ride-sharing applications connect riders with nearby drivers. It gives caseworkers and community responders shared visibility, quick communication, and a trustworthy way to match needs with resources, catalyzing relationships in the process.

CarePortal also includes a secure fintech layer that efficiently directs resources to families, tracks fulfillment, and ensures accountability for items and funding delivered.

Our Theory of Change

CarePortal operates through a simple but transformational theory of change: **connection changes everything**. A concrete need triggers a meaningful connection, with neighbors seeing and serving neighbors. That connection builds trust. Trust can lead to ongoing relationships, stabilizing vulnerable families. Over time, scaled Care-Sharing networks augment resilient, coordinated, local ecosystems of support that strengthen families and reduce downstream costs.

Sample Request



Help Support a Youth Aging Out

  
Follow Pray Share

 \$0.00 still needed

Request: #259482 • Urgency: Normal • Demographic: Child-Centered
Request • City: Alvin • State: Texas • Zip Code: 77511 • County: Brazoria •
Submitted By: TX-CPS

Story • 1 Child

A 17-year-old foster youth is not only aging out of foster care, but she is also stepping into motherhood. She recently gave birth to her son and wants to provide her baby with a healthy beginning by breastfeeding him. However, she does not have a working refrigerator or freezer to safely store her breast milk. We are seeking help to provide her with a refrigerator/freezer to allow her to nourish her baby. If you are able to help, your generosity would make a world of difference. Thank you.

Needs • 1 Needs



1

Freezer/Refrigerator

Need met in full!

CarePortal Purpose Statements

Each CarePortal request starts with the caseworker choosing a "Purpose Statement" for that request, with the purpose statement clarifying the goal of the caseworker. "Help Support a youth Aging-Out of Foster Care" is one of those purpose statements. Here are all of the CarePortal purpose statements:

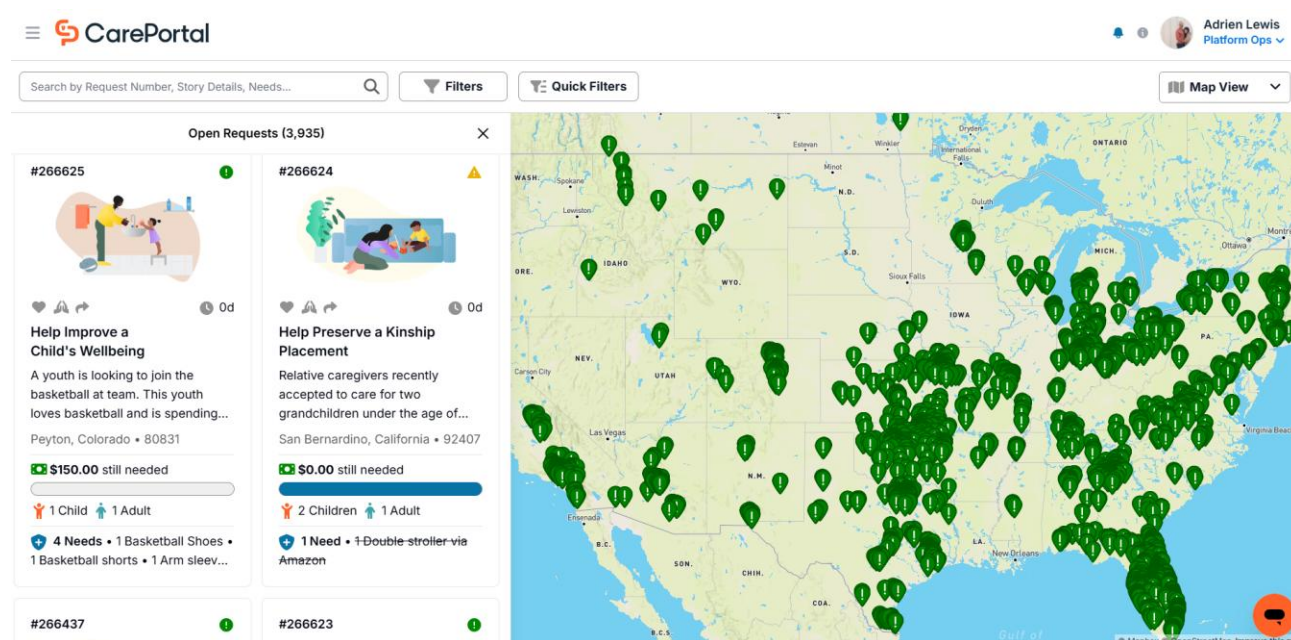
Prevention

- Help Prevent a Child from Entering Foster Care
- Help Strengthen a Biological Family

Of all the needs met, 65% have been to strengthen family's pre-removal, and 35% have been to strengthen foster and adopt placements, family reunification efforts, and foster youth transitioning out of foster care.

The impact of CarePortal's network is scaling rapidly, and we have a goal to serve 1 million children and caregivers **every year**. This impact is happening neighbor to neighbor, one connection at a time. Again, these are more than numbers. These are powerful children and families full of promise and potential, like MeKaisha.

Active Map of Open CarePortal Requests ([Visit Map](#))



III. CarePortal Values and Supports our Nation's Caseworkers

To truly support families, we must also support our child welfare professionals, who are frontline heroes in our nation. In a survey with over **70,000 responses**, **96% of caseworkers** agreed that connections through CarePortal made them feel more supported in their work. These relationships matter.

Here is additional feedback from caseworkers about the efficacy of community-based Care-Sharing from their experiences:

- 187,609 caseworker reviews yielded an average review of 4.7 out of 5 stars.
- 96% felt more support in their work by using CarePortal.
- 96% said CarePortal improved child or family wellbeing.
- 90% reported CarePortal helped keep a child out of foster care.
- 93% said CarePortal helped preserve an existing placement.

Leveraging technology to unleash the resources and relational power of community not only benefits children and families in crisis, including transition-aged-youth, it also supports and strengthens our nation's vital care infrastructure.

IV. CarePortal Operationalizes and Advances the Fostering the Future Executive Order and Federal Priorities

This Subcommittee's leadership through the **bipartisan Title IV-B reauthorization** made it possible for *Promoting Safe and Stable Families* funds to support digital portals connecting communities to families. Recent **HHS guidance** further clarified that Title IV-E funds can be used for technology tools that facilitate service referral and outreach. These steps lay the groundwork for scaling the kind of innovation that CarePortal represents.

Building upon this foundation, just last week, President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump signed the **Fostering the Future Executive Order**, a bold national initiative directing HHS to modernize child welfare systems, expand the use of innovative technology, and deepen partnerships with faith-based organizations to improve connections and outcomes for children and families across the continuum of care, including for transition-aged-youth.

Executive Order Priority	CarePortal Alignment
Modernize digital systems	CarePortal is a live, national platform used daily by agencies
Increase data transparency	Every response is tracked with measurable outcomes
Partner with faith communities	6,000+ faith communities engaged
Repurpose returned funds	CarePortal is ready for scaled investment through Chafee and IV-B
Support youth self-sufficiency	Supports housing, employment, transportation, education

This Subcommittee's leadership and the Fostering the Future Executive Order sets the direction. CarePortal is one platform that provides immediate implementation that is ready for next-level scale. Not years into the future. But right now. Together, we can modernize child welfare infrastructure while keeping people - not programs - at the center.

V. Action-Oriented Recommendations for Congress

From a CarePortal perspective, we offer three recommendations to accelerate action in furtherance of the important bipartisan work of this Subcommittee and the Fostering the Future Executive Order:

1. **Authorize and incentivize states** to use **Chafee funds** for technology that strengthens relationships and expands access to concrete supports and mentoring relationships for youth transitioning out of foster care.
2. **Repurpose returned federal funds** to create a dedicated set-aside for scaling Care-Sharing technologies like CarePortal that boost efficiency, increase adult connection, and improve youth outcomes.
3. **Offer an enhanced federal match** for states adopting digital tools that measurably improve relational permanency and streamline Chafee program administration.

These simple changes would allow Congress, HHS, and states to more aggressively advance vitally important directives to modernize child welfare technology while reducing administrative burdens and expanding meaningful connections, and to do so with the urgency that our nation's most vulnerable children deserve.

We should strengthen vulnerable families before they break, to mitigate the flood of children into foster care. We should raise-up more foster and adopt families and strengthen them with community-based support, so children suffering extreme neglect or abuse have ready, well-supported placements. We should provide the resources and relationships that youth aging out of foster care need to have a real chance to flourish. "Aging-out" should never mean aging-out alone. While government has an important role to play in protecting our most vulnerable children, government cannot do all these things. Community can. What's needed is connection. Connection that technology can facilitate, at-scale.

A national Care-Sharing movement has begun, with people serving children and families together, as a shared priority, across lines of race, class, culture, denomination, and generation. Congress need not initiate something new. Rather, Congress need only put wind in the sails of the many who are coming together in local communities – with action, not talk – to do the important work of loving their neighbors.

With the right tools and investment, we can make Care-Sharing as common and reliable as ridesharing, the **“Uber of child welfare”**. An on-demand network of support for the child welfare system. That is my quest. That is my hope.

Thank you for boldly empowering communities to see and serve their most vulnerable neighbors, one meaningful connection at a time. You have an enthusiastic partner in CarePortal.