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Peris Hill provides affordable housing for Twin Cities foster youth



Audrey Kennedy



A studio apartment reserved for youth aging out of foster care in Peris Hill. Photo courtesy of the Peris Foundation

foster care.

Driving the news: Peris Hill is opening in the Lowry Hill neighborhood next week, with more than a dozen units designated for youth ages 18-21 who were forced to exit the Hennepin County foster care system.

Why it matters: Stable housing is a critical step in transitioning out of foster care, but [options are scarce](#) across the country. And an [estimated 20% of foster youth](#) become homeless the moment they age out.

- "Kids turn 18, walk out of the system and have no place to go," said Marcia Lowry, executive director of advocacy group A Better Childhood. "They don't have a support network or the means to pay a deposit, much less rent."

State of play: In Minnesota, [roughly 600-800 youths](#) age out of the foster care system each year.

- At age 18, they can opt into the state's extended foster care, which provides services and a stipend for housing until they turn 21.
- Outside of that, transitional housing programs for former foster youth exist, and there are several in the Twin Cities. But the majority of them focus on those experiencing homelessness.

What they're saying: Peris is intended to prevent former foster youth from ever being homeless, said Peris Foundation executive director Courtney Kiernat.

- "This building isn't an afterthought for fosters. It was designed for them," Kiernat said.

Details: The 45-unit complex, funded in part through the federal low-income housing tax credit program, designates 15 of the apartments for former foster youth.

- The remaining affordable housing units are targeted for renters who make 50-60% below the area median income.

How it works: Local youth advocacy group The Link connects foster youth with the apartment complex and handles their applications.

- Once approved, they can pay using their stipend funds, or get assistance from Peris Foundation's partners.

Between the lines: Kiernat told Axios the building's mix of adults and former foster youth will create organic opportunities for mentorship and connections. Though, there's no requirement for neighbors to interact.

- "It's a nice idea, but without programs in place, there's no way to ensure that's going to happen," Lowry said.

What's ahead: The building has received over 70 applications — 17 of which are for the former foster youth units, as of this week.

- Tenants will begin moving in over the coming months.



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