



# ALTERNATE *Living*

a mentoring and navigation program for youth that addresses individual and systemic change

## About us

Overcoming Adversities (OCA) is the only nonprofit in Puerto Rico created, led by and for foster youth. Rooted in lived experience, we provide peer mentoring, navigation support, and opportunities for youth exiting foster care or the juvenile justice systems to develop their social capital. Our work disrupts social isolation and breaks generational cycles of poverty by generating impact through direct service and providing subject-matter-expert consulting to public agencies. Since 2022 we have impacted 250+ youth in foster care or the juvenile justice systems, and are currently implementing strategies to grow our impact in Puerto Rico and beyond.

### mission

To provide intensive support and improve system-wide programs, practices and policies through innovation, evidence and lived-experience engagement.

### vision

The people and systems serving our youth offer them a real chance at a stable, happy life

## The *Alternate Living* Program

Created by foster youth that aged out of the system, Alternate Living (AL) is a holistic, peer-led mentoring program that provides consistent, hands-on support to young adults navigating life after foster care, often for the first time without a safety net.

AL was created in response to the concerning facts about foster youth in Puerto Rico:

- Only 3% receive some kind of mentorship
- Less than 9% obtains a technical or bachelor's degree
- Many wards suffer lack of housing, unemployment and social isolation

Participants are 18–25 years old, the period when youth face the highest risk of housing instability, unemployment, and isolation after exiting the foster system.

**“When we age out of the system, we do not have support nor guidance. It is up to us, alone, to learn how to survive.”** – Alternate Living Program Participant

In response to this crisis, the AL team steps in to provide comprehensive, hands-on support that guides participants in building independence, community, and purpose. With urgency, it provides what the system cannot: consistent, responsive, family-like people and environments during the most vulnerable years of early adulthood. Through our multi-pronged approach, participants receive:

- **One-on-one mentoring and personalized navigation support** in housing, employment, education, relationship-building and daily self-sufficiency.
- **Wellness and community activities** that promote mental health and support networks.
- **Access to a community co-working space** in Mayagüez and a network of mentors, entrepreneurs, and other high-impact professionals.

## in numbers

At its core, Alternate Living fills the people-support gap left when youth exit foster care, by offering individualized guidance, 24/7 emergency support, and consistent advocacy during moments of crisis and transition. By filling the gap, AL helps young adults stabilize their lives and move toward independence with confidence. To date, we have:

250+

IMPACTED YOUTH

~\$20,000

FED. AID SECURED

23

INTENSIVE  
MENTORSHIP\* PAIRINGS

14

JOBS AND FINANCIAL  
STABILITY SECURED

14

HOUSING PLACEMENTS

*“They meet our needs with speed and urgency [...]. OCA finds options to help you quickly in a way that other systems don’t.”* – Alternate Living Program Participant

*\* Participants have received critical support navigating housing crisis, securing employment, and building stability during their transition to independence.*

## Join Us

Support ensuring that **no young adult leaves foster care or juvenile justice system alone, without guidance, advocacy, or someone to call when everything feels at risk**, by investing in Overcoming Adversities.



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