

Melvin Roy is a nationally recognized youth advocate, speaker, and founder whose journey from the foster care system to leadership and public service has inspired audiences across the country. A proud Virginian and alumnus of the foster care system, Melvin has devoted his life to centering lived experience and reshaping systems to better serve young people.

He is the Founder of Foster-U, an initiative he launched while earning his Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Old Dominion University, aimed at increasing college access and mentorship for foster youth. At ODU, Melvin served as Vice President of the Student Government Association and was honored with the Ellen Neufeldt Leader of the Year Award and the Evon-Broderick Award for Community Engagement and Service.

Melvin's professional and advocacy journey includes service as President of SPEAKOUT, Virginia's statewide youth advisory board, and roles as a Youth Support Partner at UMFS, Marketing Intern with American Express, and an All-Star Intern with FosterClub, where he contributed to national conversations on foster care reform. He has worked alongside influential leaders, including staff in the Office of Vice President Kamala Harris, and authored a federal policy report through the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, which he presented at The White House and to Members of Congress and federal agencies.

Currently, Melvin serves as the Independent Living Coordinator at The Friends of Foster Care, where he supports young adults as they navigate the transition to adulthood. He also serves as an Advisory Board Member for the organization. His governance experience includes having served on the Board of Directors for UMFS and the Old Dominion University Alumni Association, where he advocated for youth-centered leadership and inclusive policy.

Melvin's story and work have been featured across numerous platforms, including WTVR, WTKR, WAVY News, Richmond Magazine, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Monarch Magazine*, and the *My Future Talks* podcast by The Friends of Foster Care.

Known for his unique blend of policy expertise, lived experience, and faith-driven purpose, Melvin brings powerful insight and heartfelt inspiration to every room he enters. As keynote speaker for the 14th Annual Commonwealth of Virginia CSA Conference—"Elevating Youth Voices: Stepping Into the Future"—Melvin invites us to reimagine what's possible when we not only listen to youth, but trust them to lead.