



Youth Transitions Advisory Council
Annual Report – October 2013

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Linda O’Neal, Executive Director



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TO: Members of the Tennessee General Assembly
FROM: Linda O'Neal, Executive Director
DATE: October 29, 2013
RE: *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2013 Report*

In accordance with Chapter 415 Public Acts of 2009 now codified as T.C.A. 37-2-601 – 37-2-606 and included in this report as Appendix D, attached please find the *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2013 Report*. Effective July 1, 2011, responsibility for this Council and report were transferred to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth under Chapter 410 of the Public Acts of 2011. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council brings dedicated child advocates together from all across the state who are developing new strategies to meet the challenges of engaging former foster youth as they make the critical transition from adolescence to adulthood.

As we all know from experiences with our own children, siblings, nieces or nephews, and as a growing body of research confirms, the human brain continues to grow and develop well past the age of majority. Indeed brain executive functions of good judgment and maturity are among the last to develop in the mid-twenties. For good or bad, the choices we make and the goals we set regarding education, career, and interpersonal relationships shape the opportunities and outcomes available to us later in life. For former foster youth, the challenge of that transition is even greater because they often lack the important emotional and financial support nurturing parents provide their adult children.

Too often limited financial resources, job opportunities and housing options reduce the potential of these young adults for completing their education and becoming engaged and productive citizens. Many former foster youth experience homelessness or have encountered the criminal justice system because they lack the strong role models and community connections a stable family can provide. Assistance for youth aging out of state custody can play an important role in achieving the goals Tennessee has set for improving graduation rates, increasing educational attainment, building stronger families and creating safer communities.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth express appreciation to the members of the Tennessee General Assembly for the opportunity to improve the lives of these young people, and for appropriating much needed funding to the Department of Children's Services to assist these youth at this critical time in their lives. This report outlines the work of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council as we continue to develop strategies

to assist these young adults as they prepare for success in the lives ahead of them. Included in this report are the ACCOMPLISHMENTS of the Council in 2013 and a number of recommendations for continued improvement in providing services for former foster youth. We hope you will find the resources necessary to continue to fund essential services so all Tennessee youth have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

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The preparers also thank the members of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council for their review of the draft report and recommendations for improvement.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Extension of Foster Care (EFC) Services was provided to 566 youth in Fiscal Year 2013. This reflects the total youth participation, regardless of the which year they accepted services.

The rate of participation of those eligible to participate in Extension of Foster Care Services almost doubled from 20 percent in FY 2011 to almost 40 percent in FY 2013.

	Total Aged Out	Total Aged Out Eligible for PC/EFCS	Accepted PC/EFCS of Eligible Population
FY 2008-09	1209		
FY 2009-10	1162		
FY 2010-11	1131	813	163
FY 2011-12	1084	748	201
FY 2012-13	1017	768	301

DCS Office of Independent and Transitional Living has provided Extension of Foster Care Services training to 1574 participants:

Training Group	Number of Participants Trained
DCS Staff	893
Provider Agency	410
Foster Parents	106
Court Affiliated	27
Mixed Group	138
Total	1574

Three resource centers have been funded Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 through a combination of state dollars and grant funds from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. These resource centers are in Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville. Funding has also been allocated for the development and operation of a fourth resource center in Southeast Tennessee in Fiscal Year 2014.

Youth Villages Transitional Living program contract has been continued and expanded to allow more youth to receive services, with criteria revised to target those youth who need services the most, and requiring Youth Villages to complete the National Youth Transitions Database (NYTD) baseline surveys.

Former foster youth are categorically eligible for TennCare under age 21, and effective January 2014 will be categorically eligible until age 26.

In 2013, Public Chapter 397 amended language allowing foster youth placed outside their home county to be considered county residents for the purpose of attending local schools. Local education agencies are required to share school records with the Department of Children's Services (DCS) even for students who have incurred debts to the school before they came into state custody. This facilitates more timely placement in new schools when necessary and assists DCS in transition planning by better identifying youth education needs and progress prior to custody. DCS Education Specialists help identify educational needs and progress in order for youth to meet education goals to achieve a High School Diploma and be ready to enroll in college or technical school.

The Department of Children's Services has engaged in extensive collaborative work with colleges and universities to encourage strengthening support for youth participating in Extension of Foster Services and increasing their retention within post-secondary education.

Middle Tennessee State University and Hiwassee College have developed a program to support former foster youth as they adjust to college life. Efforts are underway to expand support at other colleges and universities.

Youth may attend out of state college and receive Educational Training Vouchers. They must reside in Tennessee to receive Extension of Foster Care Services.

Married youth are now eligible and may access Extension of Foster Care Services.

DCS is implementing strategies to conduct credit checks on 16- and 17-year-olds effective January 2014 to determine if any youth is a victim of identity theft or credit fraud and clear the records, if necessary, before age 18. DCS will provide information to 18-year-olds on how to check their own credit report, and will have to ensure strategies are in place to help youth who turn 18 in early 2014 check their credit report.

Effective July 1, 2012, DCS entered into a five-year \$55,500 per year contract with the Administrative Office of the Court to train, monitor and supervise peer advocates to work with Specialized Foster Care Review Boards. The contract establishes training requirements for peer advocates and includes provisions to pay travel, per diem and stipends for the peer advocates.

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

As described in this report, the Youth Transitions Advisory Council has received reports from the Department of Children's Services regarding the provision of services for youth transitioning to adulthood, representatives from the Resource Centers and other organizations that currently provide services to these youth, advocates for transitioning youth, and most importantly, young adults who have transitioned from state custody. The combined conversations of all interested parties has resulted in the identification of the infrastructure, the kinds of services and supports, needed to help young people successfully transition to adulthood. While this infrastructure is primarily focused on young adults who were formerly in state custody, many of the same resources are also needed by young adults who are transitioning from the children's services systems for individuals with disabilities, mental health and substance abuse treatment needs to the adult service delivery systems.

At the March meeting of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council the council created a subcommittee to look at the status of the 2012 recommendations. Though much work has been done by the many stakeholders involved in this process to fulfill those recommendations, much more work is needed on several of the recommendations before they are accomplished, and some will be ongoing over the course of several years. The following items have been identified as issues yet to be resolved and serve as the recommendations of the Council for 2013.

Essential Documentation Recommendation

- **Young adults often need assistance with essential documents (birth certificate, Social Security card, education records, etc.) required for many aspects of adult living.** Essential Documents are listed on page seven of the current Department of Children's Services' "Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide," which can be found at <http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/manuals/ILTranPlanGuide.pdf>. Current DCS policy calls for all youth ages 17 or older exiting foster care to be provided with one complete set of essential documents required for participating in many of the adult educational, employment, public benefits and other systems. Youth should also receive one set of copies to serve as backup information. Youth also need to be provided with information regarding how to safeguard the documents and procedures for obtaining replacement documents, if needed, and provided assistance when necessary to obtain replacement documents. Strategies for securing the documents include having a mentor or other trusted advisor keep a copy or keeping a copy on a password protected flash drive or "Drop Box" website. Information suggests providing essential documents is improving in some regions, and DCS will continue to monitor this. In spite of challenges, discussions about use of "Drop Box" or other technology should continue.

Educational Issues Recommendations

- As school systems in the state have scheduling autonomy, including whether they have a block or period system, **options should be available to foster youth who change schools and/or systems to ensure they are able to maintain acquisition of credits and do not lose the hours required to acquire credits for graduation.** Transportation to the previous school system or other educational options should be provided by the Department of Children’s Services. Opportunities for success in school, especially including class scheduling, should be a consideration in placement decisions.
- **Department of Children’s Services staff and staff at the Department of Education, State Board of Education and Local Education Agencies should work together to facilitate successful transition of youth between and among schools.** This should include minimizing placement in alternative classes except in cases where such placement is required for school or child safety, primarily when youth have been adjudicated for the serious offenses that require notification to the school, or when placement is clearly linked to increasing the prospects for earning credit or participating in credit recovery/accelerated credit programs. **In any case, including when school notification is required, there should be an individual determination whether placement in an alternative school is necessary and appropriate.** Providing youth with an opportunity for a “fresh start” may facilitate their future educational and behavioral success and reduce the chances of them connecting/reconnecting with “negative” peers in alternative school. This would be consistent with efforts to ensure services are provided in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational environment.
- **Staff with the juvenile courts and Department of Children’s Services and members of foster care review boards and specialized foster care review boards should acknowledge the importance of educational services in permanency plans.** Educational services should be recognized as the therapeutic services they are for child well-being. **Plans for placement change/return should consider school timetables whenever possible.** Examples include expediting return home or a planned placement change so children can begin a new school year/semester/grading period back in their home school or in their new placement. In contrast, return home or placement changes should be coordinated to accommodate the end of a grading period, semester or end of course testing. Plans should include strategies to ensure youth have sufficient “seat time” to be eligible to take end-of-course examinations.
- **The Department of Children’s Services should implement additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition/recovery during the time children are placed in youth development centers.** DCS is lauded for changing the educational program within its

youth development centers to a semester system to optimize opportunities for youth to maintain/acquire credits. Additional strategies should also be implemented.

- **The Department of Children’s Services should advocate for additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition and recovery for children in foster care.** DCS Education Specialists should advocate in public schools, YDCs and contract provider schools for students to participate in credit recovery programs, summer school and other accelerated credit options that might be available.

Higher Education Recommendations

- **When youth transition plans include attending post-secondary education in Tennessee, the plans should include implementation of strategies for applying for financial aid (scholarships/loans/grants) and connecting youth with student life, disabilities and financial aid coordinators or other appropriate resources at higher education institutions to establish a support network for success at the institution.** While this is outlined in DCS policy, there are opportunities to improve its implementation. Youth should be advised of the need for caution in applying for student loans in many circumstances, and the importance of actually utilizing financial opportunities to advance their education. Youth should also be advised to apply for minority scholarships based on their experience in foster care.
- **All state-funded colleges and universities should keep residence halls open during holidays or provide other housing opportunities for foster youth/former foster youth during this time.** Several public and private universities in Tennessee already provide this opportunity for former foster youth. Expansion to additional higher education institutions would benefit more former foster youth.
- **State-funded higher education programs should explore the feasibility of providing a bus pass as a part of tuition costs, especially for youth transitioning from state custody.** Transportation is a major challenge for foster youth/former foster youth in terms of work and college. Some private institutions in Tennessee already include a local bus pass in their tuition costs. Transportation is an ongoing issue for transitioning youth, and a bus pass could have a major impact on their ability to attend and succeed in higher education.
- Participation in higher education is a major pathway to success for young adults, and especially important for youth who are/have been in state custody. **YTAC needs active participation by representatives of the higher education system in Tennessee to facilitate better understanding and implementation of strategies to address related issues experienced by these young adults.** Efforts should be made to engage representatives of the public higher education system (Tennessee Higher Education

Commission/Board of Regents/University of Tennessee System) and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association to participate with YTAC. DCS has met with the Chancellor of the State Board of Regents and the President of the Independent Colleges and requested representatives.

Services and Supports Recommendations

- **Youth who are unable to achieve permanency by age 18 should be encouraged to utilize extended foster care services.** Permanency is the primary goal for all children in state custody. When they are unable to achieve permanency, all stakeholders who come in contact with these youth should encourage them to participate in extended foster care services. All eligible youth should be encouraged to enroll in EFC Services, and DCS should explore the opportunity to add other categories of eligibility allowed by Federal law. This would enable the state to draw down additional Federal funds to provide assistance for vulnerable young adults.
- **Funding for resource centers for transitioning youth should be continued and expanded.** Resource centers are important infrastructure for transitioning youth. Ongoing funding provides stability and serves as core funding around which other community dollars can be generated. As described in Tennessee Code Annotated 37-2-603, the resource centers that currently exist in Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville should provide a “one-stop shop” for foster youth and former foster youth. Youth often come for assistance in acquiring a GED, and then explore other needs. Optimally, assistance with financial management, job search and other related needs should be provided in one place to facilitate keeping youth engaged, ensuring all their needs are met. Resource Centers are needed in other areas in Tennessee as well. In the absence of resource centers, other state funding or resources are needed to provide core supports and services. Funding has been provided in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget to fund the existing Resource Centers through a combination of state funding and grants from the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. Funding has also been identified for a Resource Center in Chattanooga to serve the Southeast Region. Continuation funding for Resource Centers is essential.
- **The Youth Villages Transitional Living (TL) Program needs to be funded on an ongoing basis.** Through a combination of state funds and matching funds, the Youth Villages contract was continued and expanded in Fiscal Year 2013 to serve a minimum 800 youth, including providing assessments of youth not enrolled in the TL program. The Youth Villages Transitional Living Program is highly effective at ensuring youth aging out of care have the necessary skills and supports to be successful adults. Since the program started in 1999, it has served more than 5,000 youth across the state of Tennessee with a success rate of over 80 percent. Youth Villages’ commitment to the aging-out population is well documented.

- **Various options to overcome transportation barriers are needed as this continues to be a great need for transitioning youth.** The bus pass option identified under “Higher Education Recommendations” and the provision of one-stop-shop resource centers discussed above to facilitate access to the broad range of needed services would both help address transportation barriers. Youth Villages has had a few automobiles donated to their program for youth. Youth at some Resource Centers have used matching funds in Opportunity Passports to purchase automobiles. Other creative strategies should also be identified and implemented.
- **CASA programs should continue to educate both volunteers and youth about extended foster care services and challenges transitioning foster youth experience, and CASA volunteers should serve youth between ages 18 and 21.** CASA volunteers are important resources to help youth make successful transitions to adulthood. CASA volunteers and others who are working with transitioning youth should know the importance of linking them with appropriate educational, legal and other services and supports, and including those items in permanency and transitional living plans. DCS has met with CASA to encourage this emphasis on transitioning youth, and CASA has facilitated training to begin to provide support for these youth. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth should encourage CASA programs to serve youth who are participating in Extension of Foster Care Services.
- **The Department of Children’s Services has made great strides to facilitate continuing TennCare eligibility for all foster youth who transition from state custody to adulthood, and these efforts should continue.** The Department of Children’s Services has developed an arrangement with TennCare to permit application for TennCare services 30 days prior to the youth’s 18th birthday to ensure continuity of health care coverage. This facilitates ongoing access to needed health services and minimizes the likelihood there is a gap in or loss of coverage because paperwork is not completed timely. Clinical practice guidelines should be developed to focus on the needs of young people transitioning to the adult service systems, and health care providers should be aware of transition needs. DCS should monitor the process to ensure EFC youth are appropriately and timely enrolled as provided by the ACA.
- **All youth who are transitioning need to have a connection to a caring adult who is significant for them and who is available to provide support and guidance.** Mentors or coaches are needed for transitioning foster youth to provide a significant, ongoing supportive relationship, a kind of relational permanency. There should be consideration of the development and implementation of funding for a contract(s) for mentoring/coaching services for youth who are transitioning to adulthood. These mentors/coaches need special training regarding the needs of youth who are transitioning

to adulthood and the services and supports that are available to guide them on that journey. If the young person does not already have a connection to a caring adult mentor, when possible, mentors who have personal experience with the foster care system should be identified. As an alternative to a relative or other caring adult, a mentor or coach might serve as a “permanent mailing address” for youth, provide a stable point of contact, or as a repository for copies of essential documents as discussed earlier.

- **The Department of Children’s Services should identify appropriate strategies for transition support services for children who are adjudicated delinquent and do not qualify for Fostering Connections because they are in a secure placement prior to exiting custody.** Many of these youth are also in need of services to increase their opportunities to become successful, productive adults. Current funding levels present challenges, so strategies should be developed to address this need in the future.
- **Transition plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each young person and should contain the information needed for accessing the services and supports identified by and for the youth for a successful transition to adulthood.** It should function as an individualized “handbook” to facilitate successful transition to adulthood for each young adult and should be based on the young person’s goals, skills, needs and strengths. DCS needs to continue to monitor and train for timely and improved transition planning, and the Administrative Office of the Court should train foster care review boards regarding the importance of good transition planning.
- **Easily identifiable information regarding transitioning services should be available on a youth-friendly website.** DCS should contract for this activity to provide a user-friendly url for the site, but DCS should include language in the contract to ensure it “owns” the url in the event of contract changes in the future. The url for this site should be shared with young people as part of transition planning, and state and community based organizations that serve former foster youth should share this site with young people. In addition to other information, the site should include information regarding how to access essential documents. DCS should also share a working phone number with the same group for young people who have no or limited access to the internet so they could contact DCS for service information, including how to replace essential documents, if needed. Discussions regarding the best strategies for development, funding and hosting of a website for youth is ongoing.

Legal System Issues Recommendations

- **The Department of Children’s Services should recommend introduction of legislation to change references in the statutes from “post custody” to “extended foster care” or “extension of foster care services,” depending on the context.** In response to Federal Fostering Connections legislation, terminology for services for

children who have transitioned out of foster care at legal adulthood has changed. State law should be amended to be consistent with federal language.

- **Whenever safe and possible, youth in youth development centers should be stepped down to qualifying placements that make them eligible for extension of foster care services.** Appropriate transition plans should be made in sufficient time to facilitate such placements and connect youth with needed services and supports. Transition planning for youth in YDCs needs to begin early after admission as the average length of stay is about six months.
- **There is a need to increase the availability of specialized foster care review boards across the state where members have received special training regarding the needs of and resources for youth who are transitioning to adulthood.** Members of such foster care review boards can play a significant role in ensuring permanency and transition plans address the needs of youth who are transitioning to adulthood. Strategies used by specialized foster care review boards should be used by other foster care review boards to assist in their review of youth who are transitioning to adulthood. The AOC has an ongoing effort to develop specialized foster care review boards around the state. It is a lengthy process dependent solely on the cooperation and desire of the Juvenile Court Judge in that jurisdiction and availability of interested and qualified board members.
- **Peer advocates are important resources working with current and former foster youth and specialized foster care review boards. DCS and AOC currently have a five-year contract for the AOC to train, monitor and supervise peer advocates. Funding for peer advocates should be continued and their availability expanded.** Peer advocates help youth feel comfortable and supported in the foster care review process. DCS and the Administrative Office of the Courts should explore ways to increase the availability of peer advocates for foster youth and former foster youth and identify additional ways to adequately support peer advocates.
- **Foster youth should get a photo id by age 16 and the Tennessee Department of Safety should provide a *free* photo id for all youth in foster care regardless of their age.** The Department of Children's Services should implement a protocol with the Department of Safety and Homeland Security to provide a State issued photo identification for all foster youth 16 years and older. Pending actions include: approval by DCS Fiscal, education of staff regarding steps to implement the protocol, and determinations regarding payment for youth in contract placements. **Foster youth should also be encouraged to register to vote when they are 18.** Research shows the earlier a person starts to vote, the more likely they are to continue to vote, and a photo id is required to vote. Foster youth should be encouraged to register to vote in person to ensure they are eligible to vote absentee if necessary in the first election after when they are eligible to vote.

- **Interdepartmental agreements are needed between the Department of Children’s Services and other state departments so DCS can pay for licenses (or have licensing fees waived) for youth who have completed requirements for licensing from those other public agencies.** When young adults who have been in foster care complete requirements for certain trades that require a license (cosmetology, plumbing, electrical, etc.), the cost of the license is often a barrier to moving forward in the job they are trained to do.
- **Tennessee law needs an amendment to provide a mechanism for continuing judicial oversight for youth who were in custody in another state and are in Tennessee and otherwise eligible for receipt of Extension of Foster Care Services in order to facilitate their receipt of these services.** A mechanism is needed to ensure compliance with requirements for all young people who are eligibility for and receiving EFC services in Tennessee.
- **Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to appoint CASA volunteers for older adolescents, and even for young adults who are between ages 18 and 21.** As discussed throughout these recommendations, young adults who have been in foster care are still in need of connection to a caring adult.
- **The Department of Correction and Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to facilitate the continuation/development of strong bonds between children and their incarcerated parents,** especially mothers and daughters, as research indicates this is important for the success of both the children and their mothers.
- **Courts should ensure transition hearings occur and that all factors to encourage successful transition to adulthood are addressed in transition plans and through other appropriate strategies.** Access to housing, educational services, employment, behavioral health services and other needed supports are important for successful transition to adulthood and reduce the likelihood of homelessness, unemployment and criminal justice system involvement.
- **Legislation should be enacted that requires all youth in foster care be allowed to graduate from high school if they have completed the minimum number of high school credits for graduation specified by state law.** Current state law requires 22 credits to graduate, but some counties in Tennessee require more than the minimum number of credits for graduation. While this may be laudable in terms of preparation for college, children in foster care should not be penalized because they sometimes experience placement in multiple school systems with different numbers of credit requirements. As a special “local education agency (LEA),” the Department of Children’s Services ensures the youth development centers and provider agencies’ in-house schools

comply with statutory minimum credit requirements. State law should require all school systems to allow graduation for children in foster care who have completed the statutorily specified number of credits.

Training Recommendations

- **Initial and ongoing training regarding the importance of assisting youth in making successful transitions to adulthood needs to be provided to a wide range of stakeholders that all have the potential for making a difference in encouraging positive outcomes for these vulnerable young adults.** Training should include information about the availability of Fostering Connections/EFC and educational, legal and other services and supports that help young adults navigate the many barriers they face. In addition to the youth themselves, among the stakeholders who could benefit from such training are the following:
 - Department of Children’s Services staff;
 - Juvenile court judges and magistrates;
 - Youth services officers and other juvenile court staff;
 - Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs);
 - Guardians ad Litem;
 - Attorneys who practice in juvenile court;
 - Foster care review board members;
 - Foster parents;
 - Residential provider agency staff;
 - Mental health service providers;
 - School guidance counselors/school social workers;
 - Peer advocates; and
 - Mentors for current/former foster youth.

As reported in the “Accomplishments” section, DCS has trained 1574 individuals. Whenever feasible, workshops regarding transitioning youth should be presented at appropriate regional and state conferences.

- **Juvenile court judges need training regarding the different authority they have related to youth who are receiving extended foster care services as young adults compared to youth under age 18 who are still in state custody or age 18 and still under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court for a delinquent adjudication.** DCS provided a workshop in August at the 2013 Juvenile Court Judges Conference, and such training is needed on an ongoing basis.

Implementation of the recommendations included in this report would represent an important step forward in providing the infrastructure needed to help young people who have been in state custody be successful. In general, the recommendations have not been prioritized, as they are

interrelated, and there is not a single solution to the many challenges faced by these young adults. As the legal parent for young people who have been in state custody, it is the responsibility of the State of Tennessee, to provide the resources necessary for them to successfully transition to adulthood.

Update on Implementation of Extension of Foster Care Services

The purpose of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) is to track the effectiveness of services provided to youth in state custody as they transition from care into adulthood, and to develop and recommend strategies for maintaining adequate data and information to help inform policy decisions.

YTAC has met three times since submitting its last report in October 2012, in March, June, and September. Meeting summaries are available in Appendix B. There are two recurring agenda items at every meeting of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. The first is an update from the Department of Children's Services Office of Independent and Transitional Living on the successful implementation of Extension of Foster Care Services. The final presentation including data for all of Fiscal Year 2013 is included in Appendix C. All presentations are available upon request.

The second recurring agenda item at every Council meeting is a time for presentations from the three resource centers. Resource Center reports are included in Appendix A.

The Council has greatly benefitted from the attendance and participation of transitioning youth who have received extended foster care services and are participating in the Resource Center programs. The experiences these youth share with the Council not only provide real time and real world feedback on programs and services the youth receive, they also are a motivational lift to all the Council members who see and feel the affect their work has on these young people. YTAC members travel from across the state, without the benefit of state travel reimbursement or meals, to improve the lives of these young adults and their communities. The inclusion of youth changes the dynamic of entire meeting.

Meetings also frequently include other special presentations related to issues or programs that serve transitioning youth.

The **“Accomplishments” of the Council are many** and included at the beginning of this report. **Several accomplishments and new future opportunities deserve special mention.**

In the Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 budgets, **Youth Villages Transitional Living Program** contract has been continued and expanded to allow more youth to receive services, with criteria revised to target those youth who need services the most. This program provides assistance to young adults transitioning from state custody and supports permanence for eligible youth who exited from state custody as teenagers. The Transitional Living program provides case management services and focuses on the identification of housing resources, employment/employability, educational attainment, life skills preparation and the enhancement of permanent adult connections. The Youth Villages Transitional Living program has been nationally

recognized and is undergoing a study to determine the effectiveness of the program. While the study is ongoing, preliminary results show of youth who complete the Youth Villages program and respond to outcome surveys, 80 percent are living at home with family or independently, have had no trouble with the law in the past six months and have graduated or remained in school. Youth Villages Transitional Living program is a model for states and programs around the country serving youth making the transition from foster care to young adulthood. Presentations to the Council about the Youth Villages Transitional Living program and study are also included in Appendix C.

A second accomplishment deserving attention is the **continuation of the three existing Resource Centers in Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville, and the planning and funding for an additional Resource Center** in the Southeast Tennessee/Chattanooga area available in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget. DCS is working with Partnership for Families, Children and Adults and the City of Chattanooga to develop an environmental scan and implementation plan in hopes of having a resource center running by spring 2014. Providing access to more Resource Centers across the state to provide life skills classes, financial literacy training, and adult support to these youth will play an important role in the continued success of this program.

The **Youth Transitions Advisory Council was enlisted** by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) and Centerstone Research Institute (CRI) to collaborate in the application for a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The **Treatment and Recovery for Youth (TRY) grant will improve substance abuse treatment and recovery services for Tennessee adolescents and transition-aged youth and their families** by developing a learning laboratory in Madison and Maury Counties that will inform infrastructure development/systems improvements and provide direct service delivery for 400 unduplicated youth for the four-year life of the grant. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council was chosen because of its broad participation from state agencies serving transitional youth including the Departments of Children's Services, Human Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and TennCare. The grant has been approved, and **YTAC will serve as the required body for grant oversight and implementation**. The availability of YTAFC as a resource for this was considered instrumental in receiving grant approval.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council continues to broaden its scope and reach out to other groups and state agencies involved in providing services to youth transitioning to adulthood. Representatives from the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation division have participated in the work of the Council. Many of the issues faced by former foster youth are similar to those faced by youth with mental illness or disabilities as they make their transition. The Council has recently had inquiries to

participate from the Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities as well as advocates for transitional youth with other disabilities.

While DCS continues to work with public and private post secondary institutions to improve the successful transition of former foster youth attending colleges and universities, the Youth Transitions Advisory Council continues to desire participants from the University of Tennessee system, the Board of Regents and Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities.

Resource Centers

The following are brief summaries of the reports submitted by the Resource Centers in Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville. The complete reports are included in Appendix B.

Knoxville:

Project NOW (Navigating Opportunities that Work) is the Resource Center in the Knoxville area serving transitioning youth in the East Tennessee, Knox and Smoky Mountain regions. It is one of over 35 evidence based programs operated under the umbrella of Child & Family Tennessee (CFT)/Helen Ross McNabb Center. Over a hundred youth (106) have begun financial classes: 81 have completed the classes, 75 have completed enrollment, and 51 are still active on the caseload. Thus far, 29 matches have been completed for Individual Development Accounts by 20 different youth, totaling \$13,586.77 in matched funds – three times the amount of matched dollars compared to the previous year. The average matched purchase is \$468.51 (27.45% of youth).

Project NOW has a diverse and extensive list of Community Partners, including Knoxville Youth Transition Council, K-Town Youth Empowerment Network and K-Town Coordinating Council, Knox County Juvenile Court, Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union, YWCA Knoxville Housing, Tenants Choice Property Management, Tennessee School of Beauty, Never Alone Parenting Program (NAPP), and Smoky Mountain Financial, among many others. They plan to continue to focus on community partners in the areas of employment, education, housing and other support services to facilitate permanent connections for the youth in their community.

Memphis:

South Memphis Alliance (SMA, Inc.) is the Resource Center serving transitioning youth in Memphis/ Shelby County. In addition to those transitioning to adulthood, SMA also works with pregnant or parenting teens who have been involved in the foster care system. It also provides behavior health education to prevent youth drug and alcohol addiction and HIV/STD prevention. SMA has had 121 youth complete its financial education classes. Many of these youth go on to participate in youth leadership activities and serve on the Youth for Youth (Y4Y) board.

SMA was originally founded to organize neighborhood associations in South Memphis. In addition to the support of these neighborhood associations, SMA has also developed Community Partnerships with a variety of Memphis organizations: Youth Dimensions, Shelby County Office of Childhood and Youth, Metropolitan Inter Faith Association (MIFA), JustCare Family Network, Grizzlies Foundation, St. Jude Research Hospital, Memphis Artists for Change, First Tennessee Bank, Southern College of Optometry, Memphis Black Arts Alliance, The Assisi Foundation, Goodwill Village Apartments, and Memphis Cares, among others.

Nashville:

Youth Connections, the Nashville Resource Center housed at Monroe Harding, has been in existence for almost eight years. The center provides an assortment of services focused on empowering youth through their transition out of care to adulthood. Youth Connections houses five major programs: Opportunity Passport™ financial management, life skills, Stepping Stones employment training, GED education, and an in-house thrift store specifically for foster youth.

Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 85 young people have obtained their GED through participation in the GED classes and 80 percent of Stepping Stones participants have obtained employment with assistance of the vocation coordinator. Numerous youth have matched their savings through Opportunity Passport™ to purchase assets such as transportation, laptops for school, and invest in a Roth IRA. For the first time since the inception of The Opportunity Passport™, one of the participants became a first-time homebuyer. She has participated in the program for over five years and has utilized her IDA (Individualized Development Account) match money for the purchase of a car and investments. Her investments assisted her in the purchase of the home.

Youth Connections continues to partner with the Nashville Career Advancement Center and US Bank. Through the Stepping Stones program Monroe Harding partners with several local businesses and organizations such as Crossroads Pet Shop and Adopt, Essex Bargain Hunt Stores, Macy's, and The Shop Barber and Hair Salon. These businesses have agreed to provide employment opportunities or vocational training to prepare young people for the workforce.

As mentioned earlier in this report, initial planning and preparation is underway on the development of a fourth Resource Center in Chattanooga to serve transitioning youth in that part of the state.

2013 YTAC Data request from DCS

1. Strategies to access and track effectiveness of Extension of Foster Care services and the operation of the resource centers

The Department of Children's Services is committed to data-driven decision making. Key goals for the office of Independent Living were developed and adopted by regional DCS staff as part of the Department's "S.M.A.R.T. Goals" implementation. Goals were set to measure specific items during the past fiscal year, completion of Life skills assessments and transitional surveys, completion of monthly face to face with young adults and ongoing identification of uptake rate for Extension of Foster Care Services. The measures related to completion of life skills assessments is displayed below, and the identification of the Extension of Foster Care Services uptake rate is described in a subsequent section. Work is still needed to capture Transitional Survey and EFCS monthly face to face completion rates. The Transitional Survey functions in TFACTS are being overhauled, to create options that are streamlined, easier for staff to complete, and designed to capture the most relevant data. The ability to accurately capture monthly face to face contacts with the EFCS population is dependent upon implementation of the "Fostering Connections" functionality enhancements in TFACTS (see a description of this effort, below).

Goals for this fiscal year are:

- Increase uptake rate to 50% for young adults accepting EFC
- Increase in youth getting State ID
- Increased completion and usage of Casey Life Skills
- Increasing Youth Engagement and development of more Youth 4 Youth Boards and a Statewide Board.
- Increased use of IL wrap around funds

In addition to these data collection efforts, the Department of Children's Services is focused on continually improving the quality of independent living and transition planning with young people and has disseminated tools to assist staff with this. Three guides for creating IL and Transition plans were developed, and an in person and online training on creating quality plans has been delivered to DCS staff. A file review tool focused specifically on the quality of IL and transition plans was developed and is being implemented as part of a statewide IL file review process that is currently underway. This data will allow DCS to identify key strengths and opportunities related to Independent Living, and to develop specific regional and team-level plans to enhance the provision of Independent Living planning and services. DCS is currently completing a case file review. Below are some of the data based on the transition plan reviews. This information helps The Office of Independent living set goals and work on quality implementation activities.

Number of Approved Life Skills Assessments during FY 2012-13: 1790

Did the young person attend the most recent Permanency Plan CFTM?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	92.3%	72
No	7.7%	6

Does the youth plan to accept voluntary Extension of Foster Care services as an adult?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, youth plans to accept Extension of Foster Care Services	34.3%	24
Maybe, Extension of Foster Care Services have been discussed with the youth but the youth has not made a decision.	20.0%	14
No, youth plans to refuse Extension of Foster Care Services or other adult supportive services	5.7%	4
Unknown. There is no documentation that Extension of Foster Care Services has been discussed with the youth.	21.4%	15
N/A: youth is not likely to qualify due to their placement at age 18 (YDC or detention)	7.1%	5
N/A: youth is not expected to age out	12.9%	9

The transition plan as part of the permanency plan was updated on schedule per policies 16.31 and 16.51.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.1%	61
No	12.9%	9

Does the youth have an adult support outside of DCS who is involved in their Child & Family Team and will likely be in their life long term?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	65.3%	47
No or unable to determine	34.7%	25

Is there an indication that the youth is experiencing “normal/typical” extracurricular opportunities? (sports, academic clubs, school trips, graduation celebrations)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, WITH the support of IL funds	2.9%	2
Yes, but WITHOUT the support of IL funds	15.7%	11
No, no evidence of "normal/typical" extracurricular opportunities	81.4%	57

Is there evidence the youth has a state issued photo ID?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	22.5%	16
No, there is no evidence that the youth has a state issued photo ID	77.5%	55

2. Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of young adults served by Extension of Foster care;

In addition to using TFACTS data, Independent Living Program Specialists maintain data that demonstrate overall provision of Extension of Foster care services via a monthly report that is submitted to Central Office. This report includes certain identifying information on the clients and dates of service. The monthly reports are compiled upon the conclusion of each fiscal year to produce each year’s data. Data reported for youth in custody is derived from TFACTS system records. A significant effort that will increase the capacity to derive data from TFACTS is the “Fostering Connections” enhancement project. This functionality enhancement will allow for the creation of system records that accurately establish programmatic and IV-E eligibility for the Extension of Foster Care population, and streamline the way services are provided to the young adults. These enhancements will ultimately eliminate the need for staff to track data manually, allow the Department to claim IV-E reimbursement, and ensure greater fiscal internal controls. These enhancements also include fixes to TFACTS functionality related to establishing subsidy records, and the capability to accurately claim IV-E reimbursement for eligible adopted youth and youth who exited custody to subsidized permanent guardianship.

3. The number of services provided by the Department of Children’s Services;

**Services Available to Youth in State Custody
and Those Who Receive Extension of Foster Care Services**

1	Post Secondary Application Fees
2	Testing Fees (SAT, ACT, GED)
3	Tutoring
4	Summer School
5	Independent Living Class Stipend (to Support Life Skills Instruction)
6	Graduation Package
7	Yearbooks
8	Membership/Activity Fees for Extracurricular or Leadership Activities
9	Senior Event Related Transportation
10	Honor/Senior Class Trip (School Related Activity)
11	Housing Application/Fees for Post Custody
12	Materials/Uniforms for Vocational Studies
13	Completion of Job Readiness Training
14	Job Start-up Costs
15	Driver’s Education Class Fees
16	Driver’s Testing Fees
17	Car Insurance
18	Transportation Grant
19	Car Repairs
20	Housing Related Fees
21	Tools/Equipment (Technical/Vocational Programs)
22	Other Special Needs Unique to Youth Services
23	Child Care Assistance
24	Youth Leadership Stipend
25	Independent Living Allowance
26	Educational and Training Voucher (Scholarship)
27	State Funded Scholarship
28	Youth Villages Transitional Living
29	Monroe Harding Independent Living
30	Opportunity Passport™ (per the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) - Provided Via the Resource Centers
31	Placement Services
32	Case Management

4. The number of young adults who received these services during Fiscal Year 2012-13; DCS provides youth aging out of state custody services through multiple sources. This is based on their eligibility, and services are provided by DCS as well as through DCS contracts with private providers and community agencies.

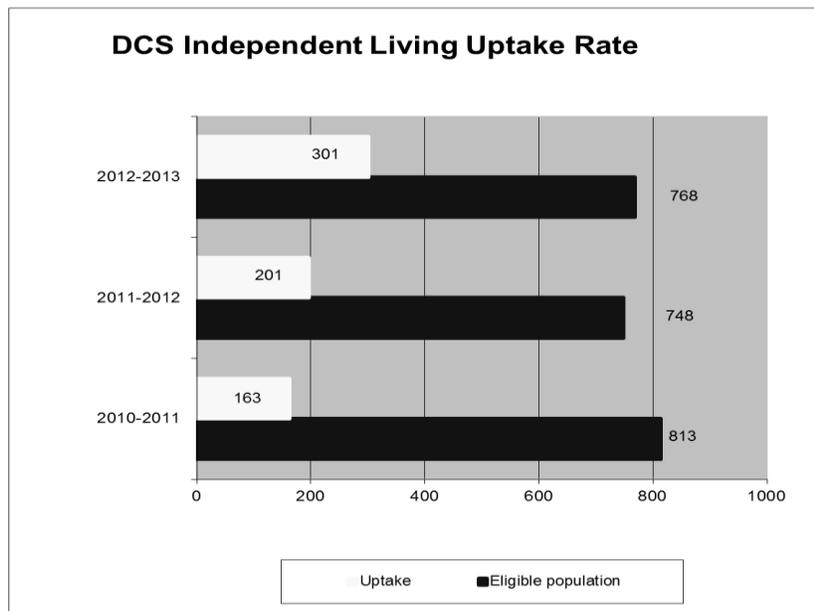
Transitional Living: 634
 Resource Centers: 115 new youth enrolled
 Extension of Foster Care Services: 564
 Scholarship Only: Not Currently Available

Sources: Grantee Reports, Independent Living Monthly Report, Independent Living Scholarship Report

5. Reasons why youth do not accept these services;

DCS will be re-instituting a short survey over FY 2014 to young adults to understand reasons for not accepting EFC. The Department is developing the questions at this time. Another addition in FY 2014 will be the hiring of a youth engagement lead. This staff person will be contacting young adults that age out and do not accept services to offer DCS support, and ensure they know about EFCs.

One specific group who continue to be less likely to accept Extension of Foster Care services is young people who are adjudicated delinquent. Of the total youth who aged out eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services during FY 2013, only 4% of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services, compared to 33% of dependent/neglected youth. The following displays the Post Custody/Extension of Foster Care uptake rate for prior years:



Meetings were held with regional juvenile justice staff to discuss the barriers to serving juvenile justice youth, and input from the youth was gathered by these regional staff. There were three issues identified among youth from the juvenile justice system: 1) They were more likely to view custody as punitive and therefore less likely to want voluntary services; 2) Unlike many dependent/neglected youth, many of these young people had families to return to as adults and 3) Some “myths” around eligibility for youth who are in the juvenile justice system continue to exist among staff. To address this, specific training was delivered to juvenile justice and youth development center staff. Per their request, handouts specific to the eligibility of juvenile justice youth were developed and disseminated. The Office of Independent Living will explore new ways to approach this population to increase the uptake rate. Tennessee will meet with the Jim

Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and the National Resource Center for Youth Development to explore what might be working in other states.

6. The number of youth who exited state custody who received scholarship assistance from DCS to continue into post secondary educational programs during FY 2012-13:

408 Total Scholarships (some youth received both over time): (ETV: 282, State Scholarship: 126)

Source: Independent Living Scholarship Report

7. Number of children in state custody during FY 2012-13;

Number of Children by Demographics	Total
Total ...	15020
Adjudication	
Dependent/Neglect	11903
Delinquent	2761
Unruly	255
Unknown/Missing	101
Gender	
Male	8549
Female	6471
Age Range	
0-12	8288
13-19	6732
Race	
White	9877
Black/African American	3741
American Indian/Alaska Native	29
Asian	11
Multi Racial	617
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	13
Unable to Determine	150
Unknown/Missing	582

Number of Children by Adjudication, Gender and Age Group							
	Total	Female			Male		
		0-12 years	13-19 years	Total	0-12 years	13-19 years	Total
Dependent/Neglect	11903	3909	1945	5854	4291	1758	6049
Delinquent	2761	2	448	450	16	2295	2311
Unruly	255	4	115	119	4	132	136
Unknown/Missing	101	30	18	48	32	21	53
Statewide	15020	3945	2526	6471	4343	4206	8549

Number of Children by Region and Age Range

Assignment Region	Total	0-12 years	13-19 years
Davidson	904	384	520
East Tennessee	1045	672	373
Knox	1212	885	327
Mid Cumberland	1904	1000	904
Northeast	1369	822	547
Northwest	510	245	265
Shelby	2101	1002	1099
Smoky Mountain	1527	964	563
South Central	951	422	529
Southwest	692	320	372
Tennessee Valley	1425	730	695
Upper Cumberland	1380	842	538
Statewide	15020	8288	6732

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

8. Number of post custody youth served FY 2012-2013 broken down by adjudication, gender, race/ethnicity, region/county;

Total Served: 564

Adjudication:

Dependent/Neglected: 460

Unruly: 27

Delinquent: 76

Exited Custody via Interstate Compact: 1

Gender: Female: 315, Male: 249

Race/Ethnicity:

American Indian/Alaska Native: 2
Asian: 1
Black/African American: 200
Hispanic: 18 (subset of the other categories)
Multiracial: 17
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 1
White: 318
Unable to Determine: 25

By Region:

Northwest	22
Southwest	33
Shelby	96
Davidson	46
Mid Cumberland	84
South Central	42
Upper Cumberland	49
Northeast	32
East	33
Smoky Mountain	44
Tennessee Valley	51
Knox	32

By County:

Anderson	7
Bedford	3
Blount	15
Bradley	8
Campbell	5
Cannon	1
Carter	1
Chester	1
Cheatham	3
Claiborne	7
Clay	2
Cocke	4
Coffee	6
Cumberland	12
Davidson	45
Dekalb	2
Dickson	12
Dyer	1
Fayette	1
Fentress	3
Franklin	6
Gibson	8
Giles	4
Grainger	2
Greene	6
Hamilton	26
Hardeman	1
Hardin	3
Hawkins	2
Haywood	2
Henderson	3
Henry	6
Humphreys	8
Jackson	4
Jefferson	4
Johnson	1
Knox	28
Lauderdale	2
Lawrence	12
Lincoln	5
Loudon	3

Macon	3
Madison	10
Marion	2
Maury	8
McMinn	7
McNairy	1
Meigs	2
Monroe	5
Montgomery	20
Morgan	3
Blount	1
Morgan	1
Obion	1
Overton	2
Polk	1
Putnam	9
Rhea	1
Roane	5
Robertson	5
Rutherford	16
Scott	4
Sevier	10
Shelby	96
Smith	2
State of WI	1
Stewart	1
Sullivan	8
Sumner	5
Tipton	8
Trousdale	1
Unicoi	3
Union	3
Van Buren	1
Warren	6
Washington	12
Wayne	5
Weakley	5
White	2
Williamson	6
Wilson	7

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

9. The following describes the number of youth who received independent living wraparound services FY 2013. This is reported from TFACTS.

Description	# of Youth
Auto Insurance	6
Child Care Help	0
Drivers Education	25
Drivers Test Fee	0
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	10
Good Grade Incentive	21
Graduation Package	127
Honor/Senior Trip	7
Household Furnishings	1
Housing Application Fee	15
IL Class Stipend	11
Job Training Readiness	0
Job Training Start up Cost	0
Material for Vocational Studies	1
Non-Recurring Housing Start Cost	4
Other Special Needs	5
Post Secondary Applications	39
Senior Event Transportation	4
Summer School	1
Testing Fees	35
Tools for Vocational Studies	0
Transportation Grant	11
Tutoring	2
Vehicle Repair	4
Yearbooks	24
Youth Leadership Stipend	22

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

10. Number of youth who decline continuation of foster care services and the reasons given for declining the services.

During FY 2013, 39% of the total, eligible aged-out population of youth accepted Extension of Foster Care services; 33% of dependent/neglected youth, 2% of Unruly youth and 4% of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services.

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS and Independent Living Monthly Report

Reasons for declining voluntary services: see question 5

11. Number of young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services who were in foster care placement, supervised independent living arrangements and other placement arrangements;

- # in Foster Care Placements at some point during FY 2012-13: 288
- # who received the Independent Living Allowance during FY 2012-13: 299

*Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – Independent Living Monthly Report, **Narrative section of the report on some of the efforts the Department has made over the past year***

The Department of Children's Services has focused heavily on implementation of the federal Fostering Connections Act and Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act. The Department of Children's Services is providing Extension of Foster Care Services to the following populations under this act:

1. Young adults up to age 21 completing high school or GED. Past practice extended foster care services up to age 20. Extending the age to 21 provides additional opportunities for youth to complete secondary education.
2. Young adults up to age 21 who are enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education. Past policy and practice provided services to this population under Chaffee. Expanding this option under Fostering Connections allows young adults to remain in their current placement or move into a supervised living setting over the summer or other short break and utilize IV-E funds to support this placement. This continuity of care will provide young adults additional stability and opportunities to prepare to enter post-secondary educational programs.
3. Young adults up to age 21 who have a medical condition that prevents them from pursuing post-secondary education or full-time employment. For those that qualify and accept services, this will provide a "bridge" of time to secure Supplemental Security income (SSI) and other adult support services for individuals with special needs, continue to work on independent living skills and implement the young person's transition plan.

Implementation of this Act required a full update to IL and related policy, manual, handouts and online materials. The state's plan was approved and implementation of the new policies began in July 2012.

A major initiative that took place in 2011-2012 was around staff training. During the reporting period, the Department of Children's Services implemented a statewide training initiative focused on improving the quality of Independent Living and Transition Planning and implementation of new policy. Nearly 3000 DCS staff were trained in person in "IL Back to Basics," which focused on the development of quality IL and Transition plans and "New Policy Training: 18 is not a magic number," which trained staff on new policies around extension of foster care services to 21. This training is also available online. One-pagers and handouts that clearly outline eligibility and available services were developed and disseminated. Additionally, the IL section of the DCS website was updated to include this new information and online trainings. To follow up on the success of this training, an IL file review tool was developed and is being implemented statewide as part of an IL file review process. Information from the file reviews will allow DCS to identify statewide and regional strengths and opportunities, and to develop specific statewide, regional and team-level plans to enhance the provision of Independent Living planning and services. Ongoing training is being conducted.

The Department of Children's Services coordinated Youth Leadership Academies and Youth 4 Youth Board meetings in collaboration with community based partners. These meetings took place in West, Middle and East Tennessee, with over 82 youth participating. IL Leadership has conducted focus groups with youth leaders to identify strategies to better engage youth in care.

The Department of Children's Services is implementing two grants to improve services to pregnant and parenting youth in foster care. One grant, the Federal Personal Responsibility Education Program, has been used to implement the evidence based pregnancy prevention Teen Outreach Program® in selected congregate care settings and the initial results are promising. The Center for the Study of Social Policy awarded Tennessee a grant to target the unique needs of pregnant and parenting youth in foster care in Knox County.

The Performance Accountability Review (PAR) Unit updated the review tool used to evaluate private providers to better evaluate whether independent living and transition goals from the youth's permanency plan are incorporated into the youth's individual treatment plan. The office of Independent Living is reviewing PAR reports to determine if agencies need additional technical assistance in the areas of planning for our youth.

Opportunities:

One of the biggest challenges for the Department of Children's Services is around transitioning those youth with serious special needs. New policy provides an opportunity to continue services to these youth and bridge them to appropriate adult services during a critical time period. While this option is available, it is voluntary, and many young people who are most in need of the services do not wish to accept voluntary services. Additionally, while there are some excellent services for some of the state's more complex youth, there are fewer developmentally appropriate services available for those young adults with a borderline IQ or certain mental health diagnoses. DCS is implementing a centralized review and monitoring process for these young adults and is strengthening partnerships with key agencies through entities such as the Youth Transitions Advisory Council, Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities,

Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Improving the transition of youth with serious special needs will take ongoing collaboration between multiple state agencies and community based partners.

DCS has the opportunity to expand its Extension of Foster Care to serve young adults that are participating in a program or activity designed to address or even remove barriers to employment, or if a young adults is employed at least 80 hours a month.

Other accomplishments

- DCS collaborated with TennCare and the Tennessee Department of Human Services to allow foster youth who are aging out of foster care to reapply for TennCare 30 days prior to the youth turning 18, so that there is no lapse in coverage. Additionally, protocols are in place to assure that qualified youth in Extension of Foster Care Services maintain their TennCare eligibility.
- DCS has continued and expanded funding a grant with Youth Villages, providing Transitional Living Services to eligible youth and young adults. This program provides assistance to young adults transitioning from state custody and to support permanence for eligible youth who exited state custody as teenagers. The Transitional Living program provides case management services and focuses on the identification of housing resources, employment/employability, educational attainment, life skills preparation and the enhancement of permanent adult connections.
- The one-stop shop model begun in collaboration with Nashville's Monroe Harding to provide educational training, resource coordination, financial literacy training and implementation of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and Opportunity Passport™ expanded to two sites in Memphis and Knoxville. All three sites are in full operation with funding from DCS, and enrolled 115 new youth during this fiscal year. DCS is working with Partnership for Families, Children and Adults and the City of Chattanooga to develop an environment scan and implementation plan in hopes of having a resource center running by spring 2014.
- DCS continued distribution of the State Funded Scholarship (Bright Futures) program established by the Governor's Office to bridge the gap for former foster youth and young adults who may not be eligible for ETV. 126 youth received this scholarship.
- DCS partnered with Connected TN to develop a program entitled Computers for Kids, which is designed to provide donations of laptop computers. This opportunity is being provided throughout the state, targeting youth in state custody and youth who age out of foster care. 694 laptops were allocated and scheduled for distribution to foster youth statewide for the FY 2013 fiscal year.
- Developed a one page tip sheet for youth focused on youth in foster care being empowered to make decisions about their lives. Youth 4 Youth board members and former foster youth were involved in the development of this document.
- Development of an IL EFC youth brochure is ongoing.

- DCS is finalizing contracts with the Credit Bureaus to ensure our youth 16 and older have regular credit checks and do not become victims of credit fraud and to help youth understand about credit.
- Developed an internal review tool to evaluate the quality of independent living and transition plans and services. The Department conducted one internal review in September 2012 and is in the process of conducting a second review that will be completed in October 2013. Strengths and opportunities for improvement will be highlighted and action steps will be developed for continuous quality improvement.
- DCS is working to partner more closely with post- secondary institutions to develop more support systems for our youth attending these institutions.
- The Office of Independent Living secured a position for a Youth Engagement Lead. The hiring process has begun.
- A few juvenile courts across the state have appointed CASA volunteers for older adolescents and young people between the ages of 18 and 21. DCS will continue to partner with CASA to increase utilization of these supports
- Some DCS regions have developed quality youth circles or continuous quality Initiatives (CQI) methods to improve the quality of work in the regions.
- DCS IL is working collaboratively with the Administrative Office of the Courts and courts to support the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) process.

Appendix A
Resource Center Reports

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Child & Family Tennessee Knoxville

- **History**

Child & Family Tennessee is a private, non-profit agency that began through the vision of volunteers from a local church who wanted to meet the needs of unwed mothers in 1929. Child & Family's mission is *to strengthen the community by strengthening families through prevention, treatment and advocacy services*. Our agency is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare organizations (JCAHO), and is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Development Disabilities, the Tennessee Department of Health, and Tennessee Department of Children's Services. In the 1960s, Child & Family began providing residential care to youth placed in the State of Tennessee's custody. The agency opened the area's only emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth in 1978. Our 31 years of experience with runaway, homeless and at risk teenagers is complemented by 18 years of experience providing outreach services to youth in local schools, 10 years of experience providing street outreach services, 15 years of Transitional Living services for older youth and young adults, and 4 years of permanency services for youth in foster care.

- **Core services**

Project NOW (Navigating Opportunities that Work) is one of over 35 evidence based programs operated under the umbrella of Child & Family Tennessee (CFT). Project NOW will provide Individual Development Account (IDA) and Resource Center services to youth. Due to Jim Casey changes, youth are no longer required to open IDA accounts; they are allowed to open or use a bank account with ANY financial institution—the role of Project NOW is to actively assist them in completing this task during their active program engagement. Participants will be adolescents and young adults age 14 to 26 (until the client's 26th birthday), who have a current or previous connection to the State's foster care system (at least 1 day after the age of 14). Project NOW will also allow youth access to the agency's existing transitional living services for youth. Project NOW will additionally include an IDA component to interested youth to meet what is currently an unmet need for youth in transition in East Tennessee. The project will serve any youth meeting criteria living within the 16-county Department of Children's Services (DCS) Knox, Smoky Mountain or East Tennessee Regions. Clients will be offered thirteen (13) activities through Knoxville's Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative (JCYOI) approach. Activities fall within the domains of independence identified by Brendto et al in the reclaiming youth approach to positive youth development.

Local Partnerships

Partners within the Community include:
Knoxville Youth Transition Council
Knox County, Smoky Mountain, and East Tennessee Department of Children’s Services Child & Family Tennessee Runaway Shelter, Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach
K-Town Youth Empowerment Network & K-Town Coordinating Council
Knox County Juvenile Court
Knox Area Compassion Coalition
Youth Villages Transitional Living Program (TLP)
Goodwill Industries
University of Tennessee Work Achievement Values Education (WAVE) GED program
Knox County Public Defender’s Office
University of Tennessee Center for Parenting
Boy Scouts of America
Knoxville Interfaith Network (KIN)
Youth Villages Governor’s Mentoring Program
Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union
YMCA Knoxville
YWCA Knoxville Housing
Knox County Health Department
Tenants Choice Property Management
Knox Auto Parts
Emerald Youth Foundation
Knoxville CAC Transit
Omnivisions
Camelot Care Centers
ChildHelp USA TN
Tennessee School of Beauty
Excent Ultimate Life Summit
SEED of Knoxville
TribeOne
Smoky Mountain Financial
Hiwassee College
Middle Tennessee State University
Never Alone Parenting Program (NAPP)
Children’s Defense Fund; Haley Farms
Helen Ross McNabb Center
Tennessee Housing Development Authority
Knoxville Homeless Coalition
CASA

- **Successes**

- To date, 106 youth have begun financial classes, 81 have completed financial classes, 75 have completed enrollment, 51 are still active on caseload
- Project NOW has seen its highest referral numbers and sources in recent months
- Thus far, 29 matches have been completed by 20 different youth, totaling \$13,586.77 in matched funds--*3 times the amount of matched dollars than the previous year! Average matched purchase: \$468.51 (27.45% of youth)
- Partnership with NAPP has allowed for direct coordination of client services for a pregnant & parenting youth population; bidirectional referrals for services and client assistance

- **Challenges & Barriers**

- Transportation can be a barrier when serving young people in transition. We have found that many youth do not have access to personal transportation and, even though Financial Literacy courses are held near a major bus stop, not all youth have access to public transportation.
- Fulfilling contractual obligations to provide stipends for youth time, using current annual budget
- Fulfilling contractual obligations of additional services can at times be challenging given staff limitation and respect for youth time and other obligations/commitments
- Despite meeting all quarterly benchmarks in financial education courses offered, Project NOW has seen lower numbers of actual enrollment, not adequately meeting quarterly enrollment expectations; courses begin with an adequate amount, but we are not seeing all of these youth through to completion

- **Next Steps**

During the next year, Child & Family Tennessee will continue to:

- Enroll youth in Financial Literacy courses,
 - Specifically addressing the issues of those who fail to complete the entire enrollment process
- Assist youth in opening Individual Deposit Accounts (IDA) with Project NOW's banking partner,
- Build community partnerships around education, employment, housing, and other support services.
- Develop support and processes to avoid youth making personal withdraws from IDA accounts—ex: peer advice networks, utilizing stipend opportunities, etc.
- Continue efforts of actively seeking new and innovative ways to facilitate permanent connections for youth in alignment with current Initiative focus
- Continue engagement of KYTC to increase local networking collaborations and efforts towards youth services.

**Resource Center Report
Knoxville**

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by: Laura Denton

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	18	26
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	4 sessions	4 sessions
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	3	3
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	100%	99%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	89% (April)	84% (April & October)
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	9Youth/9 Community	8
Number of new door openers created	4	7
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	23	20
Total number of participants in life skills classes	10	32
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	9	19

Youth Transition Advisory Council Year End Resource Center Report

SMA, Inc. Memphis

South Memphis Alliance (SMA) opened our doors in 2000 to help organize neighborhood associations in the urban communities of South Memphis. Over time we've expanded our services to serve youth in foster care and families in crisis. Despite our growth, we hold fast to our core belief that civic engagement is the bedrock of strong communities, and that **strong communities promote stable families.**

Our work focuses largely on four core initiatives:

Dream Seekers Initiative works with young people transitioning from foster care;

Hope Chest supports services for pregnant and parenting teens who are or were in foster care;

Stand By Me provides behavioral health education services focused on alcohol, drug and HIV/AIDS prevention for youth aged 13-21;

Community Action Panel is composed of community leaders from over a dozen South Memphis civic groups.

SMA is one of the most unique community based agencies in the City of Memphis. Its close connection with urban residents creates a level of trust and interaction rarely seen between an agency and the community.

SMA Core Services

Foster care advocacy, mentoring, HIV/AIDS education and testing, substance abuse prevention, anger management & goal setting, financial education, and teen pregnancy & parenting support services.

Local Partnerships

Tennessee Department of Children Services	Youth Dimensions	ROSS Innovative Employment Solutions	Metropolitan Inter Faith Association (MIFA)
Southern College of Optometry	Shelby County Office of Childhood and Youth	First Tennessee Bank	Black Rose Foundation
Memphis Cares	Grizzlies Foundation	JustCare Family Network	The Women's Foundation
United Way of the Mid-South	Memphis Public Library	Memphis Black Arts Alliance	Hatilloo Theatre
Planned Parenthood	The Assisi Foundation	Shelby County Family Planning	Goodwill Village Apartments
United Way	Memphis Artists for Change	Lemoyne Owen College	St. Jude Research Hospital
Porter Leath	Shelby County Health Department	Seedco	Memphis Artists for Change

Successes

- 121 participants have successfully completed Financial Education, many of which are continuing to participate via youth leadership board meetings (95% of Y4Y board are Dream Seekers) and other youth engagement activities.
- We are scheduled to provide Financial Education course at two youth detention centers in January 2014.
- We have hired a new Youth Services Coordinator, Jeremy Cummings. He completed his Financial Education training Fall 2012.
- We have linked five of our pregnant, or parenting teens to our Hope Chest program, which provides them with incentives for implementing healthy parenting skills such as doctor's visits, well-child check ups, breastfeeding, parenting classes, etc.
- SMA has established a new partnership with ROSS Employment Innovative Solutions. They provide GED prep classes. They also pay the fee for the GED for qualified participants. They provide transportation assistance to our young people, as well as job readiness training.
- We have established multiple series of Life Skill classes that are geared toward our participants who are 18 and older. These classes provide in-depth information on resources needed to be successful in independence. For example, the housing series covers everything from identifying the different types of housing to referrals to housing partners.
- Through our continued partnerships and aggressive funding campaign, SMA is well positioned to sustain our efforts to assist young people in making successful transitions to adulthood.
- SMA has reformed our Community Partnership Board to include a representative from a person working in the field that correlates to their subcommittee. For instance, a representative from MIFA Housing is the chair of the Housing.
- SMA and Y4Y have established a protocol where the agency provides financial support to the board, in an attempt to assist them in meeting the goals that they establish for the board.

Challenges & Barriers

- Transportation is a barrier with the population of young people that we service. The agency offers bus passes to our participants, but the public transit system in the area is often inadequate.
- Keeping the young people who are enrolled while at a youth detention center engaged after they are released.
- Finding viable housing options for our older participants has been one of the greatest challenges to assisting young people in establishing stability.

Next Steps

- SMA is diligently seeking housing options and innovations in providing housing for young people transitioning out of care.
- Sponsorship for IDA matches; stipends/incentives and computer equipment/building space are top priorities.
- Will hold an event at least once per month that provides another opportunity for engagement.

**Resource Center Report
Memphis**

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by: Tameka Daniel

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	45	18
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	16	10
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	3	2
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	90%	90%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		82% (April)
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	3	1
Number of new door openers created	15	2
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	8	4
Total number of participants in life skills classes	34	16
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	90%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	14	6

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Monroe Harding Nashville

- **History**

Monroe Harding was established in 1893 to provide a home for orphaned children. Throughout the years, we have served over 15,000 youth and today we continue to provide services for youth and their families throughout middle Tennessee. Monroe Harding's mission is to guide and support the most vulnerable children and youth across a bridge to personal independence and success within a safe and nurturing environment. Monroe Harding provides both residential and non-residential programs. The residential program provides a home for at-risk youth who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect and behavioral problems. The non-residential programs are: Project SHARE, which matches at-risk elementary students with adult mentors; Independent Living, which provides a safe place for youth to live as they transition out of care into the community; and Youth Connections, which is a one-stop shop resource center for young people ages 16-26 who are currently in, or aging out of, the foster care system.

- **Core services**

Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 8 years and has focused on quality performance since inception. The center provides an assortment of services focused on empowering youth through their transition out of care. Youth Connections houses five major programs: Opportunity Passport™ financial management, life skills, Stepping Stones employment training, GED education, and an in-house thrift store specifically for foster youth. Through our programs and staff relations, we encourage personal stability and a healthy transition into adulthood for all young adults involved in Youth Connections.

- **Local Partnerships**

Youth Connections continues to partner with the Department of Children's Services, Nashville Career Advancement Center and US Bank.

Through our Stepping Stones program MH partners with several local businesses and organizations such as Crossroads Pet Shop and Adopt, Essex Bargain Hunt Stores, Macy's, and The Shop Barber and Hair Salon. These businesses have agreed to provide employment opportunities or vocational training to prepare young people for the workforce.

Youth Connections informally collaborates with Oasis Center, Y-Build, Job Corp, United Neighborhood Health Care, Goodwill Career Solutions, Youth Villages and the Community Advisory Board to provide services to youth who do not meet the criteria to be in DCS custody. This group of young people can receive various services through the mentioned agencies such as referral's to community resources, financial assistance, counseling, and mentoring.

- **Successes**

Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 85 young people have obtained their GED through their participation in the GED classes and 80% of Stepping Stones

participants have obtained employment with assistance of the vocation coordinator. Also, in addition to young people learning sound financial management and the importance of saving, numerous youth have matched their savings through Opportunity Passport™ to purchase assets such as transportation, laptops for school, and invest in a Roth IRA.

For the first time since the inception of The Opportunity Passport™, one of the participants became a first-time homebuyer. She has participated in the program for over five years and has utilized her IDA (Individualized Development Account) match money for the purchase of a car and investments. Her investments assisted her in the purchase of the home.

S.H.E. (Sexual Health Education) is a new program at Youth Connections that began this year. This program is designed to educate young women on how to change their behavior to avoid contracting HIV, STD's and to significantly decrease the chances of being involved in unintended pregnancies.

- **Challenges & Barriers**

Many of the young people that come to Youth Connections for services lack support systems that can assist them with navigating the challenging period of transitioning into adulthood. They are often unemployed, have a lack of transportation, are dealing with current and past abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual), have had insufficient future planning and are sometimes homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. With many of these presenting issues, it makes it difficult for the young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves.

- **Next Steps**

Monroe Harding is committed to serving more youth and achieving better outcomes. The organization continues to assess its' programs and make changes and improvements where needed. Youth Connections will continue with the current programming and strive to reach additional young people strengthening the manner in which we use the youth voice to improve our services.

**Resource Center Report
Nashville**

YTAC Annual Report/Update
Report Completed by: Pamela Cash

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	39	44
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	11	11
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	23	21
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	80%	95%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	0	0
Number of new door openers created	3	5
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	23	21
Total number of participants in life skills classes	105	165
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	9	9

Appendix B
Meeting Summaries

Table 1: Summary of Council Agendas, Purposes and Outcomes

YTAC Meetings

DATE/ TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
March 22, 2013	Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of October Meeting Summary	Steve Petty made welcoming remarks and ask attendees to introduce themselves. The Council accepted the October 2012 meeting summary.
	Department of Children’s Services and Office of Independent Living Update –	Kim Mallory, Director, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children’s Services provided current FY data on extension of foster care services and policy updates on policy changes.
	Update from Resource Centers	Pamela Cash of Youth Connections at Monroe Harding provided update on progress at the Nashville resource center. Tameka Daniel, of South Memphis Alliance provided an update on activities at the Memphis resource center.
	Update from Youth Villages	Mary Lee, Business Development Specialist, Youth Villages, Inc. provided preliminary outcome data from the on-going study being conducted on the Transitional Living Program.
	Presentation from K-Town Youth Empowerment Network	Thomas Moore, Social Marketing Coordinator, K-Town talked about the programs success with social marketing and engaging youth.
	2012 Report to the General Assembly filed October 31, 2012	The Council discussed the Report filed with the Legislature in October 2012. The Council chose to establish a subcommittee to determine the status of recommendations.
	Next Meeting	The Council planned to meet June 22, 2013.
	Other Business	None.

DATE/ TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
Subcommittee Conference Call May 15, 2013	Welcome and Introductions	Steve Petty asked telephone participants and attendees to introduce themselves.
	Organize and Review Recommendations	Participants chose to arrange recommendations in an alphanumeric order to better discuss. A. Essential Documentation B. Educational Issues C. Higher Education Issues D. Services and Supports E. Legal System Issues F. Training Participants discussed the current status of recommendations in sections A,B,C .
	Next Steps	Participants chose to meet again on June 6 to complete its work.
	June Report to Council	Deferred.
	Further Business	None.

DATE/ TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
Subcommittee Conference Call June 6, 2013	Welcome and Introductions	Steve Petty asked telephone participants and attendees to introduce themselves.
	Organize and Review Recommendations	Participants discussed status of recommendations regarding. A. Services and Supports B. Legal System Issues C. Training
	Next Steps	The outcomes should be presented at the Council meeting in June and used as the basis for the Recommendations in the 2013 report to be filed in October.
	June Report to Council	Sumita Banerjee agreed to present to the Council at the June meeting.
	Further Business	

DATE/ TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
June 21, 2013	Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of March Meeting Summary	Linda O'Neal welcomed the group, asked for introductions and acceptance of the March meeting summary
	Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent and Transition Living Update	Mike Leach, Director, Office of Independent and Transitional Living, Department of Children's Services. provided current FY data on extension of foster care services and policy updates on policy changes.
	Update from Resource Centers	Tameka Daniel, South Memphis Alliance provided update of the activities of the resource center in Memphis.
	Update on continuation of Youth Villages Transitional Living contract	Mary Lee, Business Development Specialist, Youth Villages, Inc provided update on the services to be provided by the Youth Villages Transitional Living program under the new contract with the Department of Children's Services..
	SAMHSA/CSAT State Youth Treatment Grant	Judy Greenwood, Centerstone Research Institute provided information on a grant application to SAMSHA Centerstone was partnering with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services known as Project TRY (Treatment and Recovery for Youth). They want the Youth Transitions Advisory Council to provide statewide governance.
	Report from Recommendations Subcommittee	Sumita Banerjee provided report to the Council on the status of the recommendations discussed by the Subcommittee.
	2013 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2013	Steve Petty discussed the report needed from DCS and the Resource Centers for the 2013 Report to the General Assembly.
	Next Meeting	The Council will meet September 12, 2013.
	Other Business	Dates for upcoming events were discussed.

DATE/ TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PURPOSE
September 12, 2013	Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of June Meeting Summary	Linda O’Neal welcomed the group, asked for introductions and acceptance of the June meeting summary
	Department of Children’s Services and Office of Independent and Transition Living Update	Mike Leach, Director, Office of Independent and Transitional Living, Department of Children’s Services along with Dave Aguzzi, DCS provided year-end data for extension of foster care services and policy changes made to improve the program. They also discussed goals for the current FY.
	Update from Resource Centers	Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding Shantel Standefer, Helen Ross McNabb (formerly Child & Family Tennessee) along with former foster youth and Tameka Daniel, South Memphis Alliance all provided updates on the activities of the resource centers in Nashville, Knoxville and Memphis.
	Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant	Linda McCorkle, Investigator, TDMHSAS, told the Council about winning the grant award and hope to be ready to provide services by January 2014.
	2013 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2013	The Council discussed the accomplishments of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council for FY 2013 and the further recommendations of the Council to be included in the 2013 Report to the General Assembly.
	Next Meeting	The Council set future meeting dates of November 21, 2013 and May 1, 2014.
	Other Business	None.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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**YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY**

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee
937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208

March 22, 2013

12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Participants:

Sumita Banerjee
Julia Barler
Pam Cash
Tameka Daniel
Amanda Futral
Gayle Feltner
Judy Freudenhal
Karin Freyer
Joe Goldsmith
Darci Haffman

Michelle Hall
Mary Jones
Joyce Kearney
Dustin Keller
Richard Kennedy
Kristy Leach
Mary Lee
Kim Crane Mallory
Debbie Miller
Christy Montgomery

Michael Myszka
Robin Nobling
Kay Overbey
Steve Petty
Anne Robertson
Tawny Spinelli
Andrea Westerfield
Alysia Williams

I. Welcome and Introductions– *Steve Petty*

- Petty welcomed the group and asked everyone to introduce him/herself.
- Petty explained Linda O’Neal’s father passed away this week and she is unable to be here today.

II. Acceptance of August Meeting Summary – *Steve Petty*

- Petty asked members to review the October Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.

- **IT WAS MOVED (MILLER) AND SECONDED (MONTGOMERY) TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 2012 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent Living Update – *Kim Crane Mallory*

Refer to PowerPoint and Handouts

- Petty thanked Mallory for coming to the meeting to share updated information about the Extension of Foster Care Services and the Office of Independent Living.
- Mallory stated the PowerPoint includes the first six months of the current fiscal year regarding extension of foster care services.
- The program services 439 youth in the 2011-2012 fiscal year and have already served 431 in the first half of this fiscal year. This demonstrates an increase in the uptake of the services. Efforts will continue to ensure more youth take advantage of the services.
- Several policies have been updated to allow for additional youth to access services including allowing married youth to be eligible. Independent Living Assistance no longer reduces at age 20 it will continue until 21.
- Youth may attend an out-of-state school and receive the Education Training Vouchers (ETV). Students in Extension of Foster Care Services must attend in-state colleges.
- Kennedy inquired about the possibility of an interstate compact allowing students to receive services in another state. Mallory explained not all states have extension of services at this time making a compact difficult but the department is working toward this type of arrangement in the future.
- Mallory stated several 2013 goals include an independent living website for youth and a statewide youth board.
- Other goals include:
 - updating the current independent living survey to a 30 question checklist;
 - working with higher education to provide greater coordination of services, MTSU and Hiawassee currently have programs and are working with DCS in a collaborative way;
 - creating a streamlined CANS assessment for independent living; and,

- increase collaboration with DMHSAS to work on youth with mental health needs.
- Mallory stated her last week with DCS is the end of March and she is moving to a position with the University of Tennessee – Knoxville College of Social Work.
- Mallory distributed handouts about IL given to youth and family.
- Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative has a new Success Beyond 18 initiative. DCS has asked for Tennessee to be a part of this campaign. Participants viewed a video about the new initiative. The video is located at: jimcaseyyouth.org
- Petty thanked Kim for all her work and wished her well. He expressed his excitement about Debbie Miller coming back to DCS.

IV. Update from Resource Centers – *Representatives*

- Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – *Pam Cash*
 - Cash explained her office at Monroe Harding had no power, email, phone, or internet server for the past few days.
 - Since last meeting, Monroe Harding has hired a new GED teacher, who has prior experience and taught at TSU. This teacher has been with Monroe Harding since the last part of November. Enrollment has increased and engagement with the community has also increased. Great teachers keep community young people in class which has been a struggle. Long time students are becoming successful. They are currently at capacity with the GED program
 - They also have a new life skills coach who will take over the responsibility of opportunity passport. This person will be able to give the program more attention.
 - Monroe Harding was awarded a DCS contract to start a pregnancy prevention program in July. The new coach will also be responsible for this program as well. The program has a goal to serve 75 people in the first year.
 - Cash shared a story about one the young men in their independent program who is the valedictorian of his senior class at Hillsboro high school. He has been awarded a full scholarship at Tennessee State University and a \$20,000 scholarship to any school he wants to attend. He is scheduled to presenting at a conference in DC where roughly 11,000 applied to present.

- South Memphis Alliance – *Tameka Daniel*
 - Daniel has taken over for Karen Morgan who has left SMA to work with alcohol and drug clients in her private practice.
 - SMA is opening Laundromat/resource center intended to be a one stop shop for young people. Services will include vision exams, resources and other assistance in addition to being a real life Laundromat. This is in an effort to meet people where they are. The first will serve as a pilot to see if others should be opened around the city.
 - SMA has had 3 young people meet the requirements for stability. This allows them the opportunity to get a car and/or apartment by saving funds that will be matched by a local bank.
 - SMA has begun to contract with HealthConnect for case management. HealthConnect will also refer back into the program at SMA.

V. Update from Youth Villages – *Mary Lee*

Refer to the PowerPoint and Handouts

- Lee discussed and distributed handouts about the preliminary outcome data from the study conducted on Youth Villages transitional living program.
- Study began in October 2010 with a goal of 1700 youth participating. This would be broken down into 1300 young people in YV program and 400 in traditional services. The study was able to meet this goal.
- A national group conducted follow up surveys to find out about indicators including Housing, mental health services, job, education, legal involvement, etc.
- Banerjee asked about reasons for the low participation in West Tennessee. Lee stated that the referrals came from DCS and the youth. The youth had to agree to participate in the program. It was difficult to track these youth and locate them for follow-up surveys.
- Lee stated that a large portion of referrals came from East Tennessee as there are not as many services in the area. There are more community services available in Memphis.
- Mallory stated there are only three DCS regions in the West Tennessee region as categorized by Youth Villages. She will look at the numbers of youth eligible for the

study from DCS regions to compare how many youth were available when compared with those who participated.

- No new youth will be allowed into the evaluated study group. Follow-up surveys occur one year after receiving services. Initial data from the first one year follow up is just being obtained.
- Mallory explained the department has started looking at uptake of services. Next year, the plan will be to track uptake data by region. This will allow staff to look at trends and be able to intervene where necessary or address training issues. Now the study intake period is complete, YV can accept more youth in the program to receive services.

VI. Presentation from K-Town Youth Empowerment Network – *Thomas Moore*

Refer to the PowerPoint

- Petty described the K-Town Youth Empowerment Network as being a federally funded System of Care initiative working with transition age youth from 14-21 and thanked Moore for coming on short notice to talk about the program
- Moore described the program criteria for admission to K-Town They can accept only youth in Knoxville who have a mental health axis one diagnosis. As a System of Care, services are youth guided and youth are involved in all meetings.
- Interagency collaboration means integration with all grant funded agencies working out of the same office.
- The initial goal is to bring all individuals involved with the youth to a meeting and see who will continue to be a part of the youth's life and be involved. This includes anyone the youth wants to be involved such as significant others. This can be problematic when there are potential abusive situations with partners.
- K-Town uses a strengths based model by maximizing the youth's strengths and is community based by using resources in the same community where the child is located.
- The program is in the fourth year of a six-year grant. In regards to sustainability, the project intended to have workgroups who are trained in an area to then be able to continuing training others in the community after K-Town. For example, members of the family support workgroup need 160 hours to get certified as a family support provider. These individuals could return to their community and teach others.

- K-Town has a youth outreach center with TVs, laundry, and games. They also hope to add a technology component so youth can work on their GED while at the center.
- Moore previously worked at the children's defense fund and was a TEACH for America participant in rural Mississippi. He wants to focus hard on the outcomes and real goals of what are obtainable for these individual youth. In contrast to the approach of just providing food to get people to come with no expectations of reaching goals or working on outcomes. K-Town hosted a chat and chew with Knoxville juvenile justice center staff. The staff elicited feedback from the center staff about how to get more referrals from the courts. Center staff said K-Town is not publicizing success stories waiting on youth to take giant steps while not recognizing the small goals achieved. Staff are now focusing on recognizing small gains
- K-Town is working on Job shadow programs for youth. Most local business contacted have been willing to work with the program and give these youth a job. This can lead the youth to greater independence.
- Petty will send out the presentation and handouts to the group
- Petty thanked him for his presentation and described the K-Town data dinner theater presented at CCMH meeting. He recalled how one of the K-Town participants was Genesis who had previously attended YTAC meetings.

VII. 2012 Report to the General Assembly Filed October 31, 2012 – *Steve Petty*

- Petty mentioned the October 2012 report was submitted in a timely fashion. He sent out a link to the report and it is on TCCY's website. Feel free to review the report for recommendations and next steps. The report had 29 recommendations. The group does not intend to achieve all recommendations in the first year but wanted to include them in the report.
- Banerjee asked if TCCY had received any feedback from the Legislature about the report. Petty stated TCCY has not received any feedback to his knowledge.
- Mallory stated that many of the recommendations do not need legislative involvement but require departmental work or a policy change. She asked if the group wanted to rank recommendations or have workgroups to work on these recommendations.
- Miller recommended having a workgroup to meet after the legislature adjourns to inquire about the status of the recommendations and possibly rank them before October and the next report due date.
- Mallory commented about how the report helped her push for changes to policy. There is still a need for higher education to be involved in this work.

- Banerjee agreed that we need workgroups to work on recommendations between YTAC meetings.
- Petty stated the recommendations are organized into related groups but are not prioritized in anyway. The group could review progress and next steps. If there are successes or recommendations that have been completed, these could be highlighted in the next report.
- Kennedy explained how he reached out to Jason Powell about having someone involved from the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA). He agreed to follow up with Powell. He is a legislator now and may be able to be more involved.
- Mallory stated she has worked on getting a statewide youth board and they could help prioritize these recommendations if needed. She also said the state would not have foster care services to age 21 without YTAC and this group can achieve great things.
- Petty talked about the success the department has had with uptake and getting youth to accept services.

VIII. Future Meetings

- Participants discussed next meetings dates and concluded the group would meet June 21, 2013 and September 12, 2013.
- Petty stated O’Neal wanted to know if the group would like to meet on a quarterly basis. We don’t want to overtax members and participants if meetings are not needed.
- Banerjee commented about wanting the group to work on the current recommendations. She recommended meeting soon to identify people who would want to work on the recommendations.
- Miller suggested the workgroup needs to meet in late April or May to make recommendations to the group in June and then work again in August to present an updated draft of recommendations in September. She also stated departments need to have legislative proposals to the governor by September.
- Banerjee stated Petty could solicit workgroup members by email and have a conference call meeting in April and May.

- Petty asked for a tentative date for a conference call meeting. Group decided to meet May 15, 2013 at 1 p.m.
- Lee stated we should send out the recommendations to the whole group and see if they group could prioritize them and give feedback about their top recommendations when the call happens.
- Petty stated he would send the report for the group to work on their priorities. Banerjee agreed to help with the process of sending it out to the group.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
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Youth Transitions Advisory Council

June 21, 2013

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

Meeting Summary

Participants:

Sumita Banerjee
Tameka Daniel
Judy Greenwood
Darci Halfman
Mary Jones
Dustin Keller

Richard Kennedy
Mike Leach
Mary Lee
Teresa Moore
Michael Myszka
Linda O'Neal

Steve Petty
Lee Ragsdale
Tawny Spinelli
Alysia Williams

Welcome and Introductions (Linda O'Neal)

- O'Neal welcomed participants and thanked them for participating in YTAC. She stated she is honored to be the chair because this is a group that can make a difference in the lives of youth transitioning into the adult serving systems of mental health, health care, etc.
- O'Neal asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Acceptance of March Meeting Summary (O'Neal)

- O'Neal asked members to review the March Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits
- **IT WAS MOVED (RASGDALE) AND SECONDED (SPINELLI) TO ACCEPT THE MARCH 2013 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent and Transitional Living Update (Mike Leach)

Review PowerPoint from DCS Office of Independent and Transitional Living emailed to members after the meeting.

- Leach introduced himself to the group. He is the new director of the Office of Independent and Transitional Living.
- He also reviewed his PowerPoint and data about the extension of foster care services program.
- Currently, 269 youth are receiving extension of foster care services. Youth are enrolling and leaving on a rolling basis. Leach stated his office is continuing to look at uptake of these services and ensuring youth take advantage of services. DCS is anticipating 313 youth to graduate with high school diploma or a GED.
- Spinelli asked about reasons a young person may not enroll in the EOTV. She wanted to know if their GPA was an issue and if they were not meeting the standard. She also asked if the GPA requirement was based on each semester or a yearly cumulative. Leach stated he was unsure and did not have the information but would find out and let Spinelli know.
- The program has served a total of 496 from the beginning of the year until May 1. Service uptake is increasing from 388 and 439 in prior years. Leach stated it is predicted those served will be over 500 by the end of the fiscal year in June.
- Ragsdale asked if this increase is due to more being in custody in general or a higher percentage enrolling in the service. Leach stated there are more in custody and there are still improvements that can be made in our uptake rates but do feel our outreach has led to more youth in services.
- O'Neal remarked a 25 percent increase in both years is impressive.
- Leach reviewed the numbers of youth using funding of services and stated the division needs to work to get more youth using available funds such as testing fees, graduation package, etc. Spinelli commented the more youth that know about all of the available incentives, the more invested they will be. Leach described a tip sheet about these incentives and hopes to get it passed around to make some improvements. O'Neal added these incentives should be built into the child and family team meeting. Leach acknowledged this point and said facilitators need to know this information and historically people were denied or it takes a lot of work. These stumbling blocks have discouraged people from asking and he would like to change this.
- Lee offered to include this updated information in the foster parent training at Youth Villages.
- Kennedy asked if foster parents have to bill for services or if they get a flat payment each month. If a bill is generated could these items be a checklist that they include. Halfman clarified that foster parents are paid a flat rate monthly.
- O'Neal stated that most private providers just pay them a flat rate each month and have trouble recruiting foster parents because of low payment rates.

- Leach stated 1,434 people, either DCS staff or community providers, have been trained in various independent living topics.
- He is also planning to gather and analyze Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) data for this population. This will help DCS have a better sense of improvement that can be made to better assist these youth.
- Based on a prior YTAC recommendation, Leach explained how DCS now has a system in TFACTS to pay for photo ids for all foster youth. This funding will happen on a regional level by check. The regional office will not have to send a request for funding to the central office. Halfman asked if providers should talk with staff on the regional level if the regional staff say they can not fund photo ids for youth. Leach stated DCS is still working to finalize this option in TFACTS so all regional staff would know this is an option; they are currently working on making this information widely available.
- Youth Villages transitional living program has been expanded and funding has been increased following the recent study. The criteria are more inclusive so more youth can be served by YV.
- Leach informed the group about Connected4TN that recently purchased over 3000 computers for foster youth in the state who have graduated. This program and grant end this year. The agency has applied for another grant and is hopeful about its success. The original program was provided by stimulus funding, commonly referred to as ARRA funding.
- Funding for resource centers has increased as the department has been able to add some funding from the Casey Foundation to add to centers in Memphis and Knoxville. Monroe Harding in Nashville received state funding to increase their budget. The department also has some additional funding to start a center in Chattanooga and is currently looking for partners there.
- Leach also explained the Department is enhancing partnerships with other agencies that serve or could potentially serve this age group, including Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Legal Aid, Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA), DCS-Education, and Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families (TACF). Halfman expressed how great it was to have Mary Meador from DCS Education on the last subcommittee call for YTAC. Leach said DCS is working to get folks from the Board of Regents and to get them involved with YTAC.
- He reviewed goals for IL in 2013. The first was to have an IL specific website geared to youth in custody. He stated he was not sure how a website is going to work but is reviewing how IL can connect and communicate with this group of youth. The department is also working to continue building TFACTs around the IL program.

- Ragsdale asked if there had been any progress on getting data about how many people in the adult criminal justice system had also been in the foster care system or juvenile justice system. This data would provide an opportunity to look at trends and offer some possible suggestions on how to intervene earlier and stop the transition.
- O’Neal stated the P20 project of having an integrated dataset across departments should be in process and stems from the Race to the Top funding at the Department of Education. The Department of Correction was trying to get that information for some time and maybe making progress.
- O’Neal thanked Leach for his presentation and this information.

Update from Resource Centers

- **Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding**
 - Petty explained that Pam was unable to be at the meeting today.
- **Child & Family Tennessee**
 - Petty explained that a representative was unable to be here from Child and Family Tennessee. He stated the agency is merging with Helen Ross McNabb.
- **Tameka Daniel, South Memphis Alliance**
 - Daniel explained SMA is currently conducting the opportunity passport process, 16 youth are in the process this quarter with 13 from DCS and three from RTS. The program will help three youth open checking accounts and matching their funds effective this July. SMA is also trying to get funding for housing and/or partnership to provide housing opportunities for youth.
 - Daniel stated two youth have completed their GED and four youth have gotten jobs from the initiative. Halfman inquired if they will increase the number of youth in opportunity passport. Daniel said they will increase enrollment when they are able to increase their funding.

Update on continuation of Youth Villages Transitional Living contract (Mary Lee)

Refer to PowerPoint from Youth Villages sent to members after the meeting.

- Lee reviewed the PowerPoint and stated because of increased funding and matching funds, YV can now serve 800 new youth in the Transitional Living Program.
- O’Neal thanked ML for her presentation and she is excited about the extension and expansion of the contract. She also thanked YV and DCS for making this expansion and extension happen.

SAMHSA/CSAT State Youth Treatment Grant (Judy Greenwood)

- Greenwood described the grant application submitted by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Services (TDMHSAS). Centerstone Research Institute assisted with the application and

will conduct the evaluation component if the grant is awarded. Outcome of the grant application will not be available until late September.

- Project will be known as Project TRY. TRY stands for Treatment and Recovery for youth. Greenwood reviewed the key points of the application. The grant should serve 400 youth between the ages of 12-24 and their families and caregivers who have alcohol and drug disorders with co-occurring mental health disorders.
- The grant is intended to have systems transformation around co-occurring disorders. The project works with DOE, DCS, DOH, TCCY, TennCare, and DHS. The project will also work with local providers in Maury County and Jackson-Madison County.
- The project will have local governance and the writers are hopeful they can use the Council on Children's Mental Health and YTAC to provide statewide governance. The grant period lasts for four years and is \$3.8 million per year. Linda McCorkle will serve as the project director and a coordinator will be hired at the state level.
- Project goals include 212 clinicians trained across the state to sustain the program and 2000 local professionals educated to raise community awareness and advocate for policy changes at the local level.
- O'Neal thanked Judy for presenting to the group as she wanted YTAC to know about this possibility with the grant. YTAC will serve as the advisory group and will add members to the group as needed to meet goals of the grant. We know youth in the age group who are foster youth or in the juvenile justice system who have issues with alcohol and drugs. We also know issues surrounding Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS).
- Williams asked when an announcement of the grant award would be made and O'Neal replied that September is usually when federal grant awards are released.
- Williams asked about how the counties were picked as part of the grant application. Greenwood replied that Madison and Maury County professionals approached TDMHSAS about applying for the grant. The department chose them to help developed the grant application.
- O'Neal stated these grants typically have a very short turnaround time and require the partners to be pre-selected. These grants do not allow you to start from ground up. Because of the framework in Maury County stemming from the System of Care grant and the interfaces for TDMHSAS in Madison County such as the Tennessee Integrated Court Screening and Referral Project in addition to the co-occurring treatment services already offered there, these communities were ready to work with this grant.

Report from Recommendations Subcommittee (Sumita Banerjee)

Refer to the spreadsheet emailed to members after the meeting.

- O'Neal thanked Petty and other members of the subcommittee for meeting and preparing this report on the recommendations. She also thanked Petty and Banerjee for putting the information together and Banerjee for presenting today and facilitating the discussion.

- Banerjee stated a group of YTAC members met during two conference calls to review recommendations from last year’s report in anticipation of this year’s and to provide the group with feedback to inform this year’s report. The subgroup went through each recommendation and discussed the progress or outcome. Leach was extremely helpful in this process.
- Banerjee referred member’s attention to a spreadsheet that was created to show feedback or progress gained from the call. This will be helpful in reviewing what should be included in the report for 2013.
- Banerjee reviewed the spreadsheet from conference calls by each item. Additional information and discussion about each item is noted below. [Council actions and responses at the meeting are listed in the table below.]

Category	ID Code	Recommendation Summary	Council Actions/Responses
Essential Documents	A1	DCS should provide essential documents; perform credit checks.	clear erroneous information on a credit report.
Education Issues	B1	acquire cr required to	forever will have to show this diploma from DCS. Group recommended focusing on keeping them in a local school and only use DCS as a last resort. Recommendation will remain in the report.
	B2	There should be an individual de	More information is needed about this recommendation. Recommendation will remain with the same concerns as B1.

		Courts, DCS, FCRB, should include education needs in	
	B3		Members stated that many of these recommendations are tied together. Recommendation will remain in the report.
	B4	Enhance credit acquisition/recovery for youth in development centers.	Recommendation will remain in the report. Report should mention the legislation that recently passed.
	B5	Enhance credit acquisition/recovery for youth in foster care.	Recommendation will remain in the report to continue to illustrate struggles. No complete list exists for schools doing this work. More information is needed and need to have staff from higher education involved in this work. Spinelli mentioned that Foster Youth need to know they are considered a minority for financial aid. Recommendation will remain in the report.
Higher Ed	C1	Transition plans including post-secondary education should include strategies for applying for financial aide connecting with student life to establish a network for success	No complete list exists for schools doing this work. More information is needed and need to have staff from higher education involved in this work. Recommendation will remain in the report.
	C2	State colleges and universities should keep residence halls open during holidays.	No complete list exists for schools doing this work. More information is needed and need to have staff from higher education involved in this work. Recommendation will remain in the report.
	C3	Bus pass!	Recommendation will remain in the report.
	C4	address related issues ex	Leach mentioned he will ask John Morgan for a representative to YTAC from TBR. Banerjee commented this could be a success to include in the report. Recommendation will remain in the report.

Services and Supports	D1	Youth unable to establish permanency should enroll in Extended Foster Care.	<p>Members recommended an updated website to make these services easier to find. DCS is working to educate youth who opt out of services that they can reenter later. Spinelli would like to change w recommendation to state: “<u>all eligible youth should enroll in extended foster care</u>”</p>
			<p>to look at extending the state’s services to mirror these categories. Members agreed to an additional recommendation – <u>DCS should do an analysis of the youth who would be eligible for these two areas and the cost associated with enrolling these youth.</u></p>
	D2	Resource Center funding should be continued and expanded.	<p>Members suggested the state should have a plan to restore funding for Memphis and Knox Jim Casey funding ends. Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	D3	Funding for Youth Villages Transitional Living program should be expanded.	<p>This recommendation has been completed.</p>
	D4	Creative strategies to overcome transportation barriers should be identified and implemented.	<p>DCS will continue to explore options for reliable transportation. YV has been able to have some vehicles donated for their youth. Recommendation will remain in the report</p>
	D5	CASA should continue to educate volunteers and youth. CASA volunteers should serve youth ages 18 to 21	<p>Leach discussed meetings between CASA and DCS IL to achieve this purpose. This recommendation should be highlighted as a success</p>
	D6	DCS should continue to facilitate TennCare eligibility for youth transitioning out of foster care.	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>

			<p>The group acknowledged that this is happening at YV in the transitional living program and others should be encouraged to do the same. The group suggested encouraging DCS to allow these folks to be a part of meetings and involved.</p> <p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	D7		<p>The group recommended including the need for adequate planning time to achieve this and not just the day before their 18th birthday.</p> <p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	D8	DCS should identify strategies for transitional services for youth adjudicated delinquent and placed in secure setting.	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	D9	identified by and for the youth function as a handbook	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p> <p>The group recommended continuing to look at the best options to communicate with this population.</p>
	D10	Information about transition services should be available on youth friendly website.	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p> <p>The group recommended including the need for adequate planning time to achieve this and not just the day before their 18th birthday.</p>
Legal System	E1	Step youth in YDC's down to qualifying placement	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	E2	Increase availability of specialized foster care review boards	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	E3	Increase use of peer advocates in specialized foster care review boards	<p>Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>
	E4	Foster youth should receive a free photo ID at age 16	<p>This has been achieved and protocols are now in place. The group recommended adding that all youth of age should be assisted with registering to vote. Updated Recommendation will remain in the report.</p>

	E5	Judges should appoint CASA volunteers for older and transitioning youth.	Leach stated he is working to provide additional information from TN CASA. Recommendation will remain in the report. The group recommended involving Mandy Lewis from DOC to inform about these interactions.
	E6	DOC and Courts should encourage and develop bonds between foster youth and incarcerated parents.	Recommendation will remain in the report.
	E7	Courts should ensure occurrence of transition hearings and that transitions plans address all factors needed for a successful transition.	Recommendation will remain in the report.
	E8	Change post custody to extension of foster care services in TCA 37-2-601.	Recommendation will remain in the report. Group recommended focusing on keeping them in a local school and only use DCS LEA as a last resort.
	E9	Foster youth should be allowed to graduate with the minimum number of credits required by state law.	Recommendation will remain in the report
	E10	Pass legislation requiring youth school records be provided to DCS regardless of debts incurred by student.	Legislation was passed in the last session. This should be included as a success in the report.
Training	F1	Provide training to a broad range of stake holders about importance of successful transitions.	Recommendation will remain in the report.
	F2	Judges need training regarding the differences in their authority between foster youth and transitioning youth.	Recommendation will remain in the report.

2013 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2013

- O’Neal encouraged the group to send ideas about the report or about new recommendations to Petty.
- Petty stated he would like to have a call with DCS and the resource centers to coordinate and streamline information and data for the report.
- Leach stated he has a call at the end of the month and Petty could join that call and lead it.
- O’Neal stated she is excited about all the successes over the past year. She thanked Leach, Crane, providers and all who have helped make this progress happen. O’Neal also acknowledged Spinelli as an inspiration. Leach has done a great job keeping us informed about IL.

- Lee suggested including some quotes from young people about the services in the report this year.
- Banerjee asked about the possibility of getting regular input from youth about these recommendations. Kennedy suggested using the resource centers as a place to interact with youth.

Next Meeting

- O'Neal stated the next meeting would be September 12, 2013 from 12:30 until 3:30. Petty will send a reminder with the location.

Other Business

- Williams informed the group about an upcoming TAMHO symposium focused on children and youth and invited members to attend. Information will be emailed to the group.
- Adjourned at 3:29 p.m.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
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Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Recommendations Subcommittee

Conference Call

May 15, 2013

1:00 pm Central Time

Local (615) 253-1557

Toll-free 1-888-741-7144

Members Present

Steve Petty, TCCY
Richard Kennedy, TCCY
Sumita Banerjee
Alica Banks
Alicia Cone
Gayle Feltner

Darci Halfman
Mary Jones
Mike Leach
Mary Lee
Aliysa Williams
Keri Sealander

I. Welcome & Introductions

- Participant introductions
- Mike Leach introduction, the new Independent Living Director DCS.

II. Organize and Review Recommendations

- Group agreed to follow Debbie Miller's suggestion of lettering/numbering the recommendations to help have discussion in organized manner (e.g., A1, A2, B1, etc.)

Recommendation Regarding Essential Documentation

- *A1 - Current DCS policy calls for all youth ages 17 or older exiting foster care to be provided with one complete set of essential documents required for participating in many of the adult educational, employment, public*

benefits and other systems. Youth should also receive one set of copies to serve as backup information (excerpt).

- (M. Leach) essential documents currently provided, but not the flash drives & dropbox. Don't believe this is happening yet, but can move forward with discussing with regional staff & IT about costs. Potential pilot in region? ACTION – Leach will research current policy and practice and will follow-up with group.
- (M. Leach) credit check update, required to start by the end of 2013. Credit checks annually for 16 & 17 year olds currently in custody (JJ included). Older youth will be encouraged, but since they are adults, can decline. Contracts with credit reporting agencies in process.
- M. Jones, Question – IDs for JJ youth? Currently working with fiscal to identify process to purchase photo IDs for youth (M. Leach).

Recommendations to Address Educational Issues:

- ***B1- As school systems in the state have scheduling autonomy, including whether they have a block or period system, options should be available to foster youth who change schools and/or systems to ensure they are able to maintain acquisition of credits and do not lose the hours required to acquire credits for graduation (excerpt). –***
 - (S. Petty) AOC bill passed regarding education of children in state custody that may have some effect on this recommendation.
 - (M. Leach) Will get an update from DCS staff and will follow-up with group.
 - (S. Petty) will put this recommendation in pending/on hold category. May be a long term goal recommendation.
- ***B2 - Department of Children's Services staff and staff at the Department of Education, State Board of Education, and Local Education Agencies should work together to facilitate successful transition of youth to local schoolsIn any case, including when school notification is required, there should be an individual determination whether placement in an alternative school is necessary and appropriate.***
 - (G. Feltner) Special Education youth records/IEP can be transferred to school placement from DCS placement. Interagency agreement in place for students in special education.
 - (S. Petty) CIP has discussed this issue, regarding release of records to DCS (rather than to the student if there is an outstanding debt, etc. to the school). Legislation was not introduced this past session, but may be in the future.

- ***B3- Staff with the juvenile courts and Department of Children’s Services and members of foster care review boards and specialized foster care review boards should acknowledge the importance of educational services in permanency plans. Educational services should be recognized as the therapeutic services they are for child well-being. Plans for placement change/return should consider school timetables whenever possible.***
 - (S. Petty) Will check in with Nyasha & Kay Overbey regarding update on FCRB.
 - (M. Jones) When a child is returned home, permanency goal, etc. consider the district’s school calendar and how that will impact the student’s progress (e.g., not sending youth home with one week left in school, etc.). (M. Leach) this is best practice. Have seen better work around this, but important to continue to educate people on this. Some discussions have happened with FCRB.
 - (D. Halfman) PBC causes some struggle for providers as they are strongly encouraged to move children. (S. Petty) Need to work on adding this to recommendation. (R. Kennedy) Are there any discussions to revisit PBC? Yes, providers, DCS & Chapin Hall have been working on this issue.
- ***B4 - The Department of Children’s Services should implement additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition/recovery during the time children are placed in youth development centers.***
 - (S. Petty) Have heard some improvements being made at YDC, but don’t know specifics. M. Leach to provide update.
- ***B5 - The Department of Children’s Services should advocate for additional strategies to enhance credit acquisition and recovery for children in foster care.***
 - (S. Petty) Same as above, but not YDC. M. Leach to provide update
 - (G. Feltner) Will follow-up to try and identify other DOE staff to be involved in YTAC.

Recommendations Related to Higher Education

- ***C1 - As outlined in policy, when youth transition plans include attending post-secondary education in Tennessee, the plans should include implementation of strategies for applying for financial aid (scholarships/loans/grants) and connecting youth with student life, disabilities and financial aid coordinators or other appropriate resources at higher education institutions to establish a support network for success at the institution.***

- (S. Petty) MTSU has some policies on this, also heard Tennessee Tech & Hiwassee have been doing something.
- (R. Kennedy) Develop something for transition plan to educate youth on the various options for post-secondary (e.g., for profit institutions, etc.). M. Leach will look into what current practice is and will follow up.
- C1 – (Keri) Have worked with students who have accrued massive debt and are unsuccessful with the program. Has been an issue in East Tennessee.
- ***C2 - All state-funded colleges and universities should keep residence halls open during holidays or provide other housing opportunities for housing for foster youth/former foster youth during this time.***
 - (M. Leach) Know some schools have housing available for breaks.
 - (S. Petty) Will explore participation on YTAC from Board of Regents & UT System & TICUA (R. Kennedy).
- ***C3 - State-funded higher education programs should explore the feasibility of providing a bus pass as a part of tuition costs, especially for youth transitioning from state custody.***
 - (S. Petty) Will follow-up as we get representation of Higher Ed.
- ***C4 - YTAC needs active participation by representatives of the higher education system in Tennessee to facilitate better understanding and implementation of strategies to address related issues experienced by these young adults.***
 - (S. Petty) Move this to the top priority of Higher Ed list.

Recommendations for Services and Supports:

- ***D1 - Youth who are unable to achieve permanency by age 18 should be encouraged to utilize extended foster care services.***
 - (M. Leach) More could be done on this. Have talked to partners and ask them to encourage youth to opt in for EFC.
 - (M. Jones) Better education to the support service agencies in community on what EFC entails (requirements and services available). Possibly a training objective or part of orientation process for the community agencies. So, they can really explain the services available to youth through EFC.
- ***D2 - Funding for resource centers for transitioning youth should be continued and expanded.***
 - (M. Leach) Goal is to continue funding for the 3 resource centers, will know in next couple of weeks whether funding will be maintained.

- ***D3 - Funding for Youth Villages' transitional living program should be continued and expanded.***
 - (M. Leach) Commissioner to meet with Youth Villages to discuss potential of expansion, but will at minimum be maintained.
- ***D4 - Various options to overcome transportation barriers are needed as this continues to be a great need for transitioning youth.***
 - (R. Kennedy) Asked about transportation association for statewide. S. Banerjee to follow-up on possible contact.

III. Next Steps

- Conference Call Meeting scheduled for **June 6, 2013, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.** to complete review of remaining recommendations and to identify next steps. Also, any progress or updates on the recommendations discussed will be presented.



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Youth Transitions Advisory Council
Recommendations Subcommittee
Conference Call
June 6, 2013
1:00 pm Central Time

Local (615) 253-1557
Toll-free 1-888-741-7144

Members Present

Steve Petty, TCCY
Dustin Keller, TCCY
Richard Kennedy, TCCY
Sumita Banerjee
Alicia Cone
Karen Fryer

Darci Halfman
Mike Leach
Mary Meador
Wendy Spence
Tawny Spinelli

II. Welcome & Introductions

II. Organize and Review Recommendations

- ***D1 - Youth who are unable to achieve permanency by age 18 should be encouraged to utilize extended foster care services.***
 - (Leach) Approximately 800 who are eligible, uptake approximately 27% for uptake, seen increase with D&N population:
 - Total Uptake: 27%
 - D/N Uptake Only: 40%
 - Unruly Uptake Only: 15%
 - Delinquent Uptake Only: 7%
 - Currently working to connect with courts and private providers. Will be able to use recent data to identify gaps and opportunities for educating and increasing awareness.

- (Spinelli) include language around re-entry, how many are returning? Need to increase education and awareness on this option.
- ***D2 - Funding for resource centers for transitioning youth should be continued and expanded.***
 - (Leach) 3 current resource centers: Nashville will receive an increase, Memphis & Knoxville both were decreased in the budget. However, using Jim Casey dollars to supplement and get back to current funding for 2 years. 1 new resource center: Chattanooga will receive \$50K funding as a new center. Hope to start by middle of next fiscal year, working on identifying community partner. Jim Casey will come to provide training, etc.
 - (Halfman) Will current centers be used to help new center and provide guidance? (Leach) Yes, moving forward our goal is to work more collaboratively.
 - (Kennedy) Should we include the restoration of the reduction of \$40K to each Memphis & Knoxville in TCCY budget recommendations?
- ***D3 – Funding for Youth Villages’ transitional living program should be continued and expanded.***
 - (Leach) Youth Villages’ funding has been expanded to \$3M for this year (from \$2.1M). This will allow them to serve additional youth and change the criteria to expand youth who are eligible.
- ***D4 – Various options to overcome transportation barriers are needed as this continues to be a great need for transitioning youth.***
 - (Banerjee) To follow-up with statewide transportation contact.
 - (Spinelli) It is important to promote things like through opportunity passport, option to match on vehicle.
- ***D5 – CASA programs should continue to educate both volunteers and youth about extended foster care services and challenges transitioning foster youth experience, and CASA volunteers should serve youth between ages 18 and 21.***
 - (Spence & Fryer) CASA has national curriculum “Fostering Futures” teaching CASA advocates on how to work and help address issues specific to older youth. CASA working with Nyasha at AOC on what they’re doing as far as training. CASA is planning the training for this year, have done in East TN in past, but will use train the trainer model to help reach more CASA.
 - (Spinelli) something to consider adopting for CASA Conference next year.
 - Leach scheduled to meet with CASA and will discuss further then.

- ***D6 – The Department of Children’s Services has made great strides to facilitate continuing TennCare eligibility for all foster youth who transition from state custody to adulthood, and these efforts should continue.***
 - (Banerjee) Ensure that this current structure/process continues with changes to TennCare and possible transition from DHS to TennCare.
 - (Leach) and explore opportunities to improve.

- ***D7 – All youth who are transitioning need to have a connection to a caring adult who is significant for them and who is available to provide support and guidance.***
 - (Spinelli) Youth identify supportive adult to invite to attend in team meetings. For youth who are college bound, helpful to identify mentor at secondary institution.
 - (Kennedy) Expand opportunities with existing agencies, e.g. Big Brothers/Big Sisters, to identify volunteers.
 - (Keller) Does YV currently have a mentoring/coaching program?
 - (Leach) It is challenging to identify ongoing mentoring/coaching with young person moving around and other needs.
 - (Meador) Often youth already has someone they trust who could be brought in and trained/educated on how they can play a role in youth’s success.

- ***D8 – The Department of Children’s Services should identify appropriate strategies for transition support services for children who are adjudicated delinquent and do not qualify for Fostering Connections because they are in a secure placement prior to exiting custody.***
 - (Meador) Makes it difficult for youth who could do well in school and don’t transition from YDC to school. Also difficulty finding employment.
 - (Leach) Have discussed with JJ and have identified opportunities to improve this process and challenges/barriers (elimination of group homes and options for step down). Also involves juvenile court, opportunities to educate judiciary on this issue.
 - (Halfman) Challenge for youth who are in JJ until age 19. In instances when YDC requests space, they would give very short notice.
 - (Leach) need to improve transition planning and starting process earlier.
 - (Kennedy) Could we identify space/locations that currently exist that could be considered a step down option.

- ***D9 – Transition plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each young person and should contain the information needed for accessing the services and supports identified by and for the youth for a successful transition to adulthood.***

- (Leach) recent IL review showed some improvement, but currently doing a sample review that will end in July. Have invited Brian A. team to review around January to see improvement/opportunities.
- (Petty) This is an ongoing process.

- (Leach) The handbook explains transition planning. Invited Jim Casey to do TA on youth engagement and case planning, youth/adult partnership training and court related issues on June 24th at 10AM in Cordell Hull Building.

- ***D10 – Easily identifiable information regarding transitioning services should be available on a youth-friendly website.***
 - (Leach) Met with Communication’s Office, will be moving forward, but will need to consider cost of web designer, etc. Will reach out to youth to help identify what they want. Considering url, don’t want to use state site, so youth won’t associate with “DCS.” Plan of action steps.
 - (Kennedy) Why create it? Couldn’t we use an existing organization’s website (e.g. Oasis Center)?
 - (Keller) There has been discussion in the past about considering ownership by DCS so the url doesn’t have to change if organization/contract changes.
 - (Spinelli) Could we use a national organization site?

- ***E1 – Whenever safe and possible, youth in youth development centers should be stepped down to qualifying placements that make them eligible for extension of foster care services.***
 - Refer to D8

- ***E2 – There is a need to increase the availability of specialized foster care review boards across the state where members have received special training regarding the needs of and resources for youth who are transitioning to adulthood.***
 - (Meador) We need consistency in training for Specialized FCRB.
 - (Leach) barrier with AOC and challenges working with DCS/Courts.

- ***E3 – Peer advocates are important resources working with current and former foster youth and specialized foster care review boards and should be continued and their availability expanded.***
 - (Petty) This has been an ongoing challenge, but not sure of updates/current status.
 - (Spinelli) Training is paramount for peer advocates, making sure they are adequately prepared as self-care can be an issue for retention.

- ***E4 – Foster youth should get a photo id by age 16 and the Tennessee Department of Safety should provide a free photo id for all youth in foster care regardless of their age. Foster youth should also be encouraged to register to vote when they are 18.***
 - (Leach) working with F & A currently, hoping to implement July 1. If not currently doing it, possibly add to checklist item on transition plan, to encourage but can't require.
- ***E5 – Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to appoint CASA volunteers for older adolescents, and even for young adults who are between ages 18 and 21.***
 - (Spence) Some judges are eager to do this, but others may not. Will add this to discussion with M. Leach/DCS to see how it can be better addressed.
 - (Keller) Ask Jenna Hendrix at AOC to talk to Judges at Conference to promote.
 - (Leach) Could wrap it into already scheduled session regarding extension of foster care.
- ***E6 – The Department of Correction and Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to facilitate the continuation/development of strong bonds between children and their incarcerated parents.***
 - (Petty/Kennedy) Will get clarification and follow-up with Mandy Lewis from DOC, formerly DCS, to help address.
 - (Spinelli) issues around transportation to and from and the availability of the foster parents and case worker
- ***E7 – Courts should ensure transition hearings occur and that all factors to encourage successful transition to adulthood are addressed in transition plans and through other appropriate strategies.***
 - (Leach) Could be equality issues from court to court.
- ***E8 – The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation to change references in the statutes from “post custody” to “extended foster care” or “extension of foster care services,” depending on the context.***
 - (Petty) Nothing specific to this passed in last session. Will have to follow-up with CIP on this to potentially file something next session.
- ***E9 – The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation that requires all youth in foster care be permitted to graduate from high school if they have completed the minimum number of high school credits for graduation specified by state law.***
 - (Meador) great recommendation, but nothing has moved forward with this. Challenges because different schools/counties require a different number of

credits to graduate. Rather than gauge on number of credits, if it could be based on the subjects required to graduate.

- (Keller) Could the young person be moved back into DCS LEA so they could graduate? (Meador) Yes, that could work.
- ***E10 – The Administrative Office of the Courts Court Improvement Program should recommend introduction of legislation that requires all school records of children in state custody be forwarded to the receiving school regardless of whether they have unpaid/outstanding school fines.***
 - (Meador) Release of records will be required for children in DCS custody and can't be held due to fines, etc.
- ***F1 – Training regarding the importance of assisting youth in making successful transitions to adulthood needs to be provided to a wide range of stakeholders that all have the potential for making a difference in encouraging positive outcomes for these vulnerable young adults.***
 - (Spinelli) Add peer advocates? School counselors?
 - (Keller) Have the trainings at conferences like TCSW, etc.
 - (Leach) –Provided training information:
 - DCS Staff-798 Participants
 - Provider Agency-405
 - Foster Parents-86
 - Court Affiliated-27
 - Mixed Group-118
 - Total-1434 Participants
 - . Possibly identify multiple agencies to have presenters/trainers who could present the same message
- ***F2 – Juvenile court judges need training regarding the different authority they have related to youth who are receiving extended foster care services as young adults compared to youth under age 18 who are still in state custody or age 18 and still under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court for a delinquent adjudication.***
 - (Leach) Updated brief on extension of foster care for court and legal staff.
 - (Meador) need to include education on brief to court/judges to help educate them on the challenges.

I. Next Steps

- (Petty) Report from call with Mary Meador and Jackie Parker May 29

B1 The State Board of Education is the policy making body from Tennessee schools. There is little, actually zero interest on their part to put all school system on the same schedule.

Race To The Top and before that no child left Behind were impediments to enrolling foster children in local schools. Principals are concerned about foster children lower schools TCAP scores and also their graduation rate.

Schools want Court order.

Memphis, Nashville and other urban school districts are not a problem, There is more funding and more services available to meet the needs of these children and one child's individual scores are not going to affect scores in the same way it does in smaller systems. In rural schools the funding and services are not readily available. If the kids are in county custody, they have a history, if out of county they are a stranger.

B2 Children in Foster Care are probably placed in alternative schools often. While it may seem inappropriate for foster children, with no delinquent charges to be placed in alternative school, often that is the most appropriate educational placement available. Children are able to get caught up on course work and transition from the alternative school to the regular public school placement with an opportunity to succeed. How long the child remains in alternative school is the issue.

B3 This is very difficult when children are released from Level IV placement and creates similar situation as when youth are released from a contract placement under performance based contracting.

B4 YDC have changed to semester schedule. They have 3 semesters and attend class year round. They have also implemented more computer based curricula allowing each student to work at their own pace, and if appropriate strictly on the classes and course work the individual needs to graduate. This is tremendous improvement. Average length of stay is 6 months though some only there 4 months.

B5 Educational Specialists are available to assist schools and case workers in determining what each child needs to graduate. Getting transcripts is problematic.

- (Leach) Essential documents practice, inconsistent across the state. So, opportunities to improve practice.
- (Leach) Met with IL specialist and discussed their focus of working with youth to help identify options for education. If they want to attend for profit online schools, will talk about other options, including lower cost schools, etc. Challenge identified are youth who “re-enter” and have already accumulated a lot of debt. Feel like our team (DCS) is making good effort to provide guidance to young people.
- (Spinelli) Better education about state schools offer scholarships to foster youth.

- (Meador) YDC offers online college classes that are accepted for credit from college & universities.

II. June Report to Council

- Create spreadsheet with recommendations, brief “snapshot” with update/actions taken, ask council to determine “next step” for report. Modify and include in next report, identify as success to celebrate, not include moving forward, etc. Include column on agencies who could help address recommendation.
- Want to be cautious before introducing new recommendations. Create common recommendations/cross-walk.

III. Further Business

- Next meeting is June 21st at 12:30 p.m. at Goodwill Industries. Please email Steve any potential agenda items.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
601 Mainstream Drive
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

September 12, 2013

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

Meeting Summary

Participants:

David Aguzzi	Ashley Harrington	Linda O’Neal
Sumita Banerjee	Nyasha Justice	Jackie Parker
Julia Barlor	Dustin Keller	Steve Petty
Pam Cash	Richard Kennedy	Lee Ragsdale
Alicia Cone	Kristy Leach	Andrea Reed
Tameka Daniel	Mike Leach	Shantel Sandefer
Joe Goldsmith	Linda McCorkle	Tawny Spinelli
Genesis Hardin	Teresa Moore	Alysia Williams

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of June Meeting Summary (Linda O’Neal)

- O’Neal welcomed the group and ask for introductions

Acceptance of June Meeting Summary (O’Neal)

- O’Neal asked members to review the June Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits. She also requested approval to make technical edits, including typos, syntax, etc., for the final version that will be included in the report to the General Assembly.
- **IT WAS MOVED (SPINELLI) AND SECONDED (RAGSDALE) TO ACCEPT THE JUNE 2013 MEETING SUMMARY WITH NEEDED EDITS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Department of Children’s Services and Office of Independent and Transitional Living Update (Mike Leach and Dave Aguzzi)

Refer to the PowerPoint sent to members after the meeting.

- Leach and Aguzzi reviewed PowerPoint providing statistics and updates about the Office of Independent and Transitional Living.
- Leach stated based on CANS data, more work on interventions for 14-16 years is needed, as these youth have more mental health issues, etc.
- Leach recognized the great job Spinelli did when she talked to 850 resource parents. He thanked her for participating.
- Extension of foster care services served 566 youth in FY2013, 449 in FY2-12) and 388 in FY2011. These numbers represent an increase in new youth to the program as well as youth who have continued in the program from year to year. The youth who are continuing in the program would be included in all years where they are served.
- Leach discussed uptake of services for the current fiscal year. Uptake has increased overall over prior fiscal years; however, uptake for youth adjudicated as delinquent actually decreased. DCS has attempted to increase these numbers over the past year by increasing support, training and outreach.
- Leach also stated DCS is going to begin setting goals for youth who are reestablishing or coming back into custody after leaving.
- Not maintaining academic eligibility is the most prevalent reason youth drop out of services, along with self-termination of agreement. Most youth are getting an independent living allowance and a few are in foster care placements.
- Leach has worked over the last five months to involve the Tennessee Board of Regents and other institutions of higher education. The group expressed its appreciation for DCS's work around getting higher education involved. Ragsdale stated as the pool of students gets larger, the more beneficial for these schools to be involved.
- Leach has encouraged DCS to propose legislation changing language in the code from "post custody" to "extension of foster care services."
- DCS is currently working to implement a resource center in Chattanooga. Cash and Leach have been to Chattanooga and talked with potential partners about this effort. Some partners have shown interest and DCS hopes to have a contract soon.
- Leach stated he is currently waiting for DCS fiscal to approve to move forward with paying for state ids for youth in custody.
- The office plans to hire a youth engagement lead and grants manager.
- Youth 4 Youth Boards are currently located in Memphis, Southwest region and Northeast region. Boards are active and working on creating a youth bill of rights, health awareness and life skills training. Leach would like to see more boards created across the state.
- Leach discussed several enhancements to TFACTS benefiting IL.
 - DCS has not been able to claim cost savings because of IL program. TFACTS did not have the capability to draw down IV-E funding for youth in the program. A fix for this will be loaded into TFACTS and allow funding for IL youth through IV-E moving forward.

- IL data that has been presented at YTAC has historically been manually kept in excel by IL specialists. This data will now be loaded into TFACTS.
- DCS is working on putting National Youth in Transitions Database survey information in TFACTS.
- Leach will be meeting with the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD) about training needs for next year and working with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to improve services and outcomes.
- O’Neal expressed her appreciation to Leach and Aguzzi for sharing this information and activities completed by DCS.

Update from Resource Centers

- *Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding*
 - 58 young people are active in Opportunity Passport.
 - Monroe Harding has a New GED Teacher and she is producing awesome work. Seven young people have completed their GED.
 - Several students are now in higher education after completing GED.
 - Monroe Harding has also started a second GED class in the afternoon because of a long waiting list.
 - A couple of youth have completed their internship in the stepping stones and crossroads pet shop and now have experience as groomers, cashiers, etc. Both interns have enrolled in Nashville State and have jobs at Wal-mart.
 - A pregnancy prevention program called “sisters saving sisters” started last month.
 - A young lady is purchasing a townhome because of Monroe Harding’s assistance. Her payment will essentially be the same as her rent. She graduated from MTSU last year and is currently working. She saved money and intended to use the money as a down payment on her home.
 - Matt, who has spoken to YTAC in the past, has a full scholarship to UT – Knoxville. This summer he spent a week on Necker Island with Richard Branson. He has a small IT business fixing iphones, laptops, etc.
- *Shantel Standefer, Helen Ross McNabb (formerly Child & Family Tennessee)*
 - Genesis Hardin was also in attendance at the meeting.
 - Sixteen participants have made 26 matches in the program.
 - Six youth recently spoke at the homeless coalition panel. Historically this panel has worked with families and veterans. Mark Wolf helped get youth involved in the most recent panel which allowed Genesis to get reconsidered for a housing match.
 - The youth in the program are making cards for children and youth coming into foster care in hopes to combat the initial feeling of loneliness.

- Genesis discussed how she now has a full time job and is a part of Project NOW. She had been released from services because of grades, and since that time she has improved her GPA and returned to school. She has housing at the YWCA after speaking at the homeless panel. She is helping create a better perception of transitioning youth at YWCA.
- O’Neal thanked Genesis for coming back to YTAC. It is always a pleasure to hear from her, and also great to hear her grades have improved and she has housing.
- *Tameka Daniel, South Memphis Alliance*
 - The program is currently undergoing a great deal of change.
 - Nine people are active in the program working on life plans and setting goals.
 - Housing continues to be a huge issue for their young people. The youth advisory council was reformed in order to partner with MIFA and improve housing options for these youth.
 - Y4Y board reviewed YTAC’s recommendations from last year and have suggestions. Youth preferred the Dropbox program for essential documentation as adults in their life are typically not stable. Youth also agreed with educational recommendations and improving the higher education community’s understanding of the needs of transitional youth.
 - Youth also suggested that Resource Centers should have their own private transportation allowing youth to be more constant in their participation in the program. Bus passes are not productive because youth will use them for other purposes. Youth need more options for services. Even though youth now qualify for long-term homeless housing options, there is usually a waiting list.

O’Neal thanked all resource centers for their information and for all the work they do to help with reports for YTAC.

Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant (Linda McCorkle)

- TDMHSAS received the grant effective September 1, 2013. Centerstone Research Institute spearheaded the grant which will serve ages 12-17 and 18-25. The department has never targeted these age groups for specific treatment services. They are not allowed to over lap ages of youth and adults. The project has two service locations: Maury and Madison Counties. TDMHSAS will also have a position to assist with overseeing the project. The grant allows for a six month planning time, but McCorkle is hopeful services will start around the first of 2014.
- Services provided to youth will be outpatient treatment and transitional services.
- McCorkle believes the grant was successful in part because of the existence of YTAC and the willingness of the group to serve as governance for the grant.

- O’Neal stated she is delighted the department received the grant and is happy to partner with them.

2013 Report to the General Assembly due October 31, 2013

ACCOMPLISHMENTS and Recommendations

- Spinelli gave an overview of kidcentraltn.com and provided flyers about the site. Leach stated services provided by TL and partners are listed on the site.
- O’Neal stated YTAC’s annual report due on October 31st to the legislature. The report typically includes data from DCS and resource centers as well as summaries from council meetings.
- O’Neal walked the group through the 2012 report using power point so all could see and comment on needed revisions. Changes, other notes and revisions from the group were incorporated into the document for inclusion in the 2013 report.
- The following are substantive changes that will be made to the draft recommendations that will be sent to members for review, feedback and approval before the report is finalized and submitted to the General Assembly:
 - While there has been great work regarding an ID for youth in state, there is still work to be done;
 - Added an additional recommendation regarding the need for agreements between state departments to pay for licenses for youth;
 - Added a recommendation for DCS to create strategies for youth who will reach their 18th birthday around the January 2014 date to be included in the credit checks; and,
 - Added a recommendation for legislative action to allow former foster youth from other states now residing in Tennessee and receiving extension of foster care services to have continuing judicial oversight.
- Members had a discussion about increasing the independent living allowance and gathering data to support this as a possible future recommendation.
- Petty requested reports from the Resource Centers as soon as possible but no later than October 1.
- O’Neal thanked the group for their great work with these recommendations and staying throughout the process.

Next Meeting

- O’Neal discussed next meeting options and it was decided November 21, 2013, and May 1, 2014, would be the next meeting dates. The report will be emailed to the group for review, feedback/edits and approval. The distribution of the draft report will request approval responses, but it will also make it clear failure to respond will be considered an indication of approval.

- TCCY and TDMHSAS will move from Metro Center back downtown between now and the next meeting. Meeting location will be determined closer to time.
- O'Neal shared her appreciation for everyone attending and especially for youth who share their perspectives. We look forward to working with representatives of the TRY grant and are excited about YV's contract extension. She also thanked Leach for his hard work and accomplishments.

Other Business

- Adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Appendix C
Presentations



**Youth Transitions
Advisory
Committee**

Michael Leach
& Dave Aguzzi
TN DCS

1

**DCS Office of
Independent Living**

- The purpose of the DCS Office of Independent Living is to assist youth in making a successful transition from foster care to adulthood.
- DCS offers supports and services for youth transitioning out of care, and those who are likely to remain in care, to help them become successful adults

10040013 YIAC 2

Core IL Services & Supports

- Scholarships
- IL Wrap funding
- Housing support through Placement services or Independent Living Allowance (ILA)
- Independent Living & Transition Planning
- Life Skills Instruction
- Leadership Opportunities
- Case Management
- Extension of Foster Care Services for young adults 18-21

YIAC 10040013 3

TN DCS IL

July '12 to June '13 Data

EFC Data

- 2012-2013- 564 served through Extension of Foster Care
- 2011-2012- we had 444 post custody
- 2010-2011- we had 388- post custody

10040013 YIAC 5

EFC Data 2012-13 by Region

Northwest: 22	Upper Cumberland: 49
Southwest: 33	Northeast: 32
Shelby: 96	Knox: 32
Davidson: 46	East: 33
Mid Cumberland: 84	Smoky Mountain: 44
South Central: 42	TN Valley: 51

10040013 YIAC 6

Uptake Numbers and Percentages



Total Aged Out FY13: 1019

- Delinquent: 520
- Dependent/neglect: 465
- Unruly: 34

10040013 YIAC 7

Uptake Numbers and Percentages



Total Aged Out Eligible for EFCS: 768

- Delinquent: 274
- Dependent/neglect: 460
- Unruly: 34

10040013 YIAC 8

Uptake Numbers and Percentages



Uptake Numbers

- Total Aged Out FY13 and Received EFCS During FY13: 301
- Delinquent: 34
- Dependent/Neglect: 251
- Unruly: 16

10040013 YIAC 9

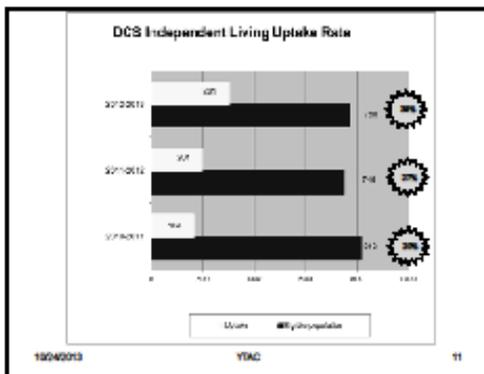
Uptake Numbers and Percentages



Uptake Percentages

- Total Aged Out FY13 and Received EFCS During FY13: 39% of Total Eligible
- Delinquent: 4% of Total Eligible
- Dependent/Neglect: 33% of Total Eligible
- Unruly: 2% of Total Eligible

10040013 YIAC 10

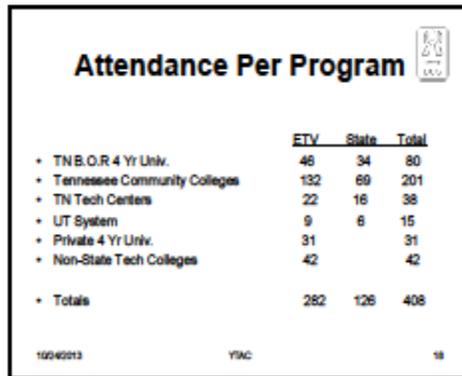
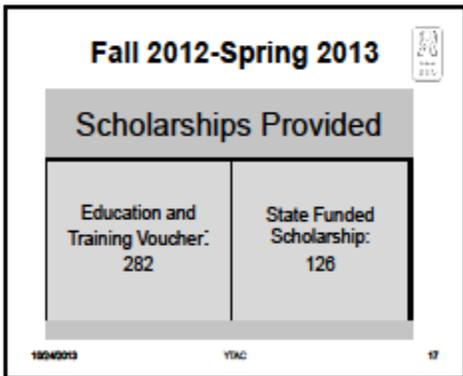
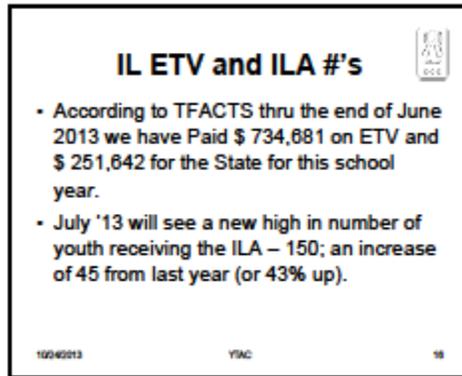
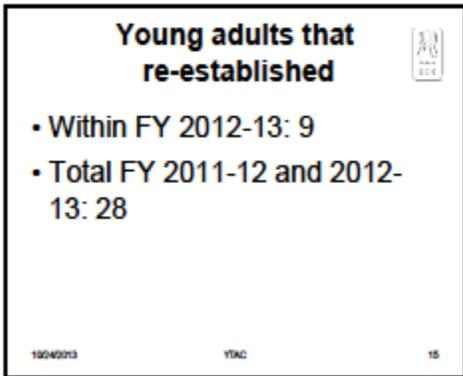
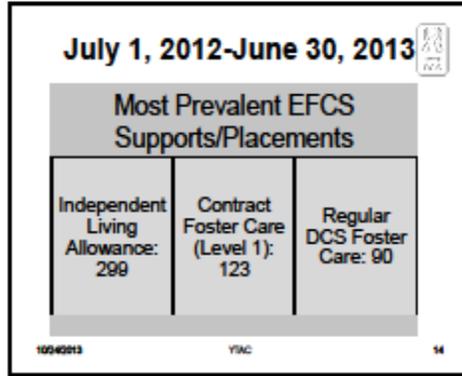
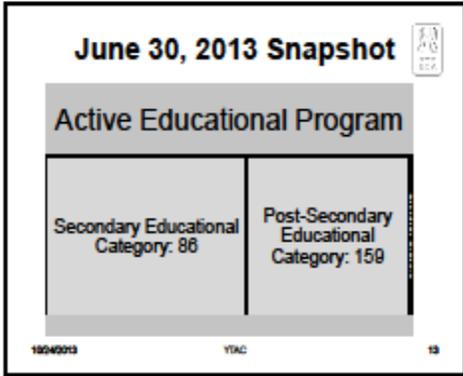


June 30, 2013 Snapshot



- 249 - Number of youth actively receiving Extension of Foster Care Services
- 121 - Number of EFCS young adults graduated with a High School Diploma or GED
- 281 - Approximate total number of youth graduated with a High School Diploma or obtained GED
- Not maintaining Academic Eligibility and Self Termination of Agreement were the main reasons for termination of EFC FY 2012-13

10040013 YIAC 12



Norwest Region Example



- Northwest had 8 youth apply for Post-Secondary funding in the Fall of 2012. As of June 30th, we have had 19 youth apply for Post-Secondary funding.

10/4/2013

TYC

19

CANS Demographics Data



- Youth between ages of 14-17 years, who entered custody between 7/1/12 and 6/30/13, and who had a commitment region of the Davidson or Mid Cumberland region (n = 334 youth)
- Gender – 67% male, 34% female
- Race – 47% white, 37% black, 16% other
- Adjudication – 49% dependent neglect, 44% delinquent, 5% unruly, 2% missing

10/4/2013

TYC

20

CANS Data



- 46% had trauma histories requiring services. For emotional distress 33% had evidence of internalizing behavior problems and 68% had evidence of externalizing behavior problems.
- At least one type of family problem was present in 80% of cases. 60% of youth had criminal or delinquent behavior and 41% of youth had needs for services to address substance abuse.

10/4/2013

TYC

21

CANS Data



- While 65% had school problems and only 19% had an identified vocational strengths 74% had at least 1 positive connection and 60% had some indication of positive future

10/4/2013

TYC

22

17+ year olds in custody

as of Aug 31st, 2013

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| • Davidson-74 | • Smoky-77 |
| • East-46 | • MC-112 |
| • TN Valley-91 | • Knox-39 |
| • Shelby-104 | • NE-74 |
| • SW-40 | • Runaway-62 |
| • UC-80 | • THV-87 |
| • SC-70 | • Lockup- 241 |
| • NW-31 | • Total= 1188 |

10/4/2013

TYC

23

Partnerships



- Met with TBR Presidents
- Will meet with Dyersburg Community College
- Met with Pellissippi State
- Met with Union University
- Met with the President & other leadership staff at Walter's State Community College
- Will meet with the Tennessee center for Applied technology president's in November
- Met with President of TN Independent Colleges and Universities association.
- Met with Cumberland University

10/4/2013

TYC

24

Post Secondary Discussions



- Continue to Transition Plans should include strategies to assist youth with applying for financial aid, and connecting youth with programs that will establish networks of success.
- DCS has asked TBR and Private Universities to identify staff to attend based on YTAC recommendations.
- Discussed State colleges and universities should keep dorms open for former foster youth during holidays, summers, breaks as applicable.
- Strategies to address transportation issues.

19940013 YTAC 25

Hope Foster Care Grant



- By year graduated from High School:
- 2013.....40
- 2012.....47
- 2011.....45
- 2010.....49

19940013 YTAC 26

TN DCS Independent Living Program Updates



Current Partnerships and Initiatives

19940013 YTAC 27

Legislation Request



TCCY YTAC Recommendation:

The proposed legislation would amend Tenn. Code Ann. §37-2-601 (et. seq.) by replacing each instance of "post custody" with "Extension of Foster Care." The legislation is necessary to reflect a change in both services available and population served for Departmental programming for young people who age out of foster care.

19940013 YTAC 28

Enhancing Partnerships



- THDA (Housing Agency)TNHousingSearch.org
- Governor's Housing Summit.
- Legal Aid Society.
- Job Corps.
- Oct 23rd TAMHO meeting presentation.
- Sept 25th CASA meeting presentation.

19940013 YTAC 29

Personal Responsibility Education program (PREP)



- Helping adolescents make educated decisions about their lives using curriculum based group activities and a service learning component.
- Monroe Harding Sisters for Sisters Program.
- Oasis and UT Memphis provide training & technical assistance in the Teen Outreach Program (TOP)

Agencies- UCHRA, Porter Leath, Omni Visions-TASK, Madison Oaks, Monroe Harding, Grouff Effort, Smoky Mountain Children's home, Florence Crittenton. DCS Will be expanding to two or three more agencies.

19940013 YTAC 30

PREP TOP Data



Site	Total Completed	Total Referrals/Offers	Number of Youth with Opportunity to Complete Program* (i.e., in care or at-risk)	Male	Female	13-14	15-17	18-24	Total
Monroe Harding, Inc.	3	32	25	12	13	2	21	2	48
Young Adult Transitions, Inc.	27	28	28	18	10	11	17	0	46
Upper Cumberland Resource Agency	42	112	102	53	49	4	58	0	164
Young Men's Initiative/Chattanooga	30	122	122	48	74	7	115	0	194
Western Connections Agency	10	122	122	41	81	12	109	0	121
Good Habits, Inc.	0	22	22	11	11	11	11	0	22
University for Families, Children & Adults	0	22	22	0	22	0	22	0	22
Rockwell Connections SM	0	22	22	11	11	11	11	0	22
Senior Care SM	0	22	22	11	11	11	11	0	22
Total	112	522	506	234	272	37	306	0	613

* This column shows the number of youth who participated in the program and had an opportunity to meet completion criteria. Youth were NOT counted as being an opportunity to complete if they were in the program due to an appeal or if they entered the program within 90 days of their last court-ordered placement (i.e., entered program on or after 10/1/13).

10240213 YIAC 31

Job Corps



- TN DCS IL built a stronger relationship with Job Corps.
- There has been a significant increase in Foster Care Referrals over the last 4 months.
- Nashville- 10+
- Memphis- 10+
- Chattanooga- 0
- Jackson- 4
- Johnson City- 3

10240213 YIAC 32

Resource Centers



- SMA Dream Seekers Memphis.
- Helen Ross McNabb- Project NOW in Knoxville.
- Monroe Harding Youth Connections.
- Have started discussions with the City of Chattanooga and Partnership to implement a resource center.
- Working to fully implement by Jan/Feb 2014.

10240213 YIAC 33

State ID's



- Created agreement with Dept. of Safety
- Developed Affidavit to provide to DMV
- Developed fiscal/regional payment mechanism.
- FSW can create case service. The price of an ID for a person under 18 years of age is \$5.00, and for a person over 18 years of age is \$9.50. The ID for a person under 18 is for two years, and for person over 18 is for five years.
- Waiting for DCS Fiscal to approve moving forward

10240213 YIAC 34

Plan to Hire



- Youth Engagement Lead & Grants Manager.
- Make follow up contact with young adults who did not accept EFC.
- Statewide Youth Ambassadors Board.
- Provide additional support for Y4Y Boards.
- Assist in Coordination of Youth Leadership Academies.

10240213 YIAC 35

Youth 4 Youth Boards



- Shelby County/SW region/East Tri-regional board.
- Life Skills training and education.
- Creating Youth Bill of rights.
- Supporting Youth document.
- Health Awareness.
- How to make Money.
- **Need to develop more boards.**

10240213 YIAC 36

Youth Villages TL



- Expanded the Transitional Living program to serve more youth and young adults.
- Developed updated referral process.
- YV providing education about their services within DCS regions.
- Will start new NYTD baseline.
- YV developed YV/DCS NYTD MOU.

19Q40213

YIAC

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TFACTS Enhancements



- Fostering Connections
- Draw down IV-E funding for services to young adults/Integrate more of IL work into TFACTS.
- TFACTS updated transition checklists/exit surveys should be available Nov.
- Working on NYTD Surveys in TFACTS

19Q40213

YIAC

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Jim Casey and NRCYD



- Sept 17th follow up with Jim Casey to discuss Technical Assistance around Youth Engagement
- Sept 12th NRCYD follow up to discuss training needs for the next federal fiscal year.

19Q40213

YIAC

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IL Ongoing Focus



- Training staff to develop quality transition plans
- Strengthening youth engagement and build youth voice
- Focus on earlier interventions with 14-18 year olds.
- Integrating preparation for adulthood with permanency efforts.

19Q40213

YIAC

40

Activities



- Foster Parent Conference presentation and IL vendor table.
- Youth Panel and presentation at Judges Conference in Knoxville.
- Participated in development of Homelessness grant with Family & Children, TN Voices for Children, Oasis and TCCY. Waiting to hear if we received the grant.
- Preparation for Brian A. IL. File review in January
- Quarterly IL webinars for DCS staff that work with youth and EFC adults. This will begin soon.

19Q40213

YIAC

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Additional Activities



- Working to develop process for credit checks
- Engaged DCS staff who work with TennCare to start discussions about The Affordable Care Act and Implications for youth aging out of foster care.
- Ongoing Current File review process.
- Working to expand the definition of Supervised Independent living(SIL) and increase potential living settings for young adults.

19Q40213

YIAC

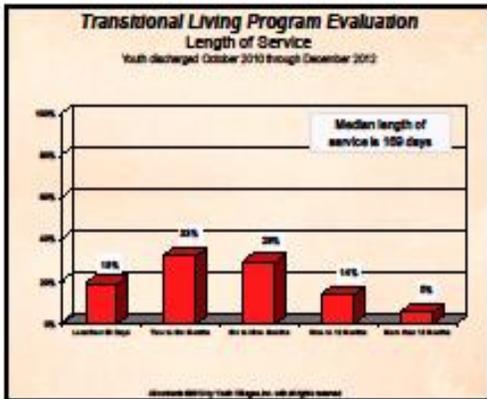
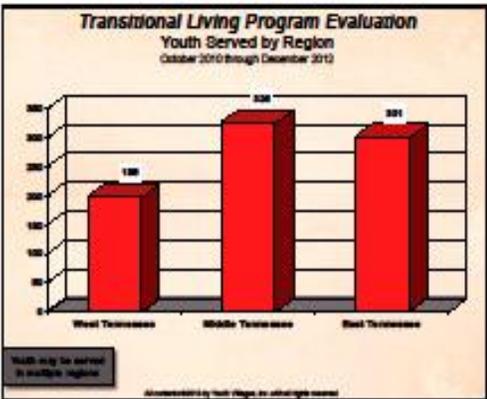
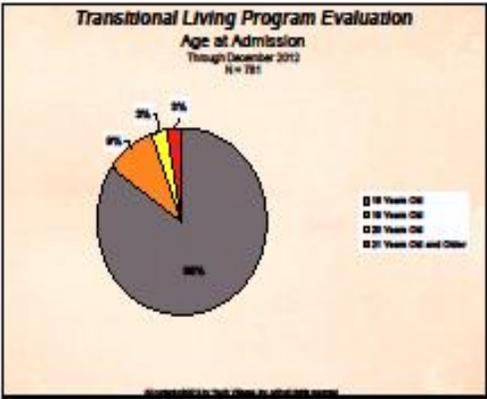
42

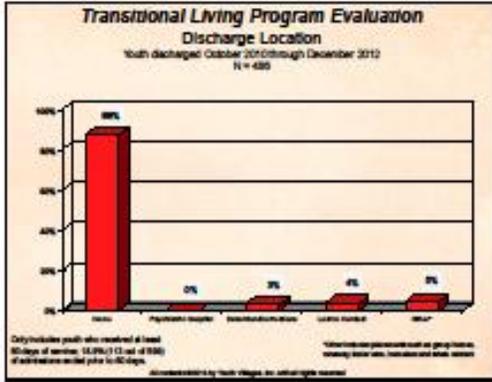
Youth Villages Transitional Living Program Evaluation

Information through December 2012

MDRC (www.mdrc.org) is conducting a random assignment evaluation of Youth Villages' Transitional Living Program. Mark Courtney, Ph.D., is principal investigator for the project.

Unauthorized use of Youth Villages' or MDRC's logos is prohibited.





Transitional Living Program

Presentation for Tennessee Youth Transitions
Advisory Council

June 21, 2013



Transitional Living Program History

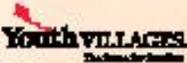
- Created in 1999 with a grant from The Day Foundation
- Designed to help youth between the ages of 17 and 22 who are making the transition out of state custody to an independent life
- Systemic approach that incorporates multiple aspects of the youth's natural ecology (community, peers, family, school in addition to their personal characteristics)
- Strength-based approach to services
- Over 5,800 participants with a success rate of 86%



Program Objectives

The program focuses on the following areas:

- Permanency
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Independent Living Skills
- Youth Involvement



Program Objectives

Permanency: Young adults in the program will learn the interpersonal skills necessary to create and maintain healthy personal relationships with immediate and extended family, friends, and any other individuals that the youth identifies as important.

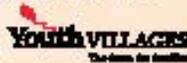
Education: Young adults will be progressing toward an educational objective or graduated at discharge from the program.

Employment: Young adults in the program will secure and maintain employment by the point of discharge.

Housing: Young adults will secure and maintain stable and suitable housing either independently or with appropriate family or community leaders.

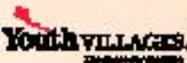
Independent Living: Young adults will improve their independent living skills (cooking, cleaning, money management, parenting skills, etc.)

Youth Involvement: Young adults will be assisted in developing their own services plan and goals for the future.



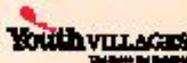
Program Key Components

- Transitional Living (TL) Specialists have extremely high levels of training and supervision
- Caseloads of only 8-10 young adults per TL Specialist
- A minimum of 1 session per week conducted in the community or as frequently as needed
- 24/7 on call support to TL participants
- Average length of stay is 7-9 months



Under the FY14 TL Contract Youth Villages will:

- Serve 400 youth under the DCS eligibility criteria
- Serve 400 youth under YV match dollars with no eligibility criteria being prescribed. However, priority will be given to youth with prior DCS involvement
- Continue providing comprehensive pre-admission assessments for all youth referred to the program
- Assist DCS with administering National Youth Transitions Database (NYTD) Surveys



DCS Eligibility Criteria

- Young adults who are emancipated to adulthood from state custody at or after their 18th birthday, who were in foster care placement at their 18th birthday;
- Young adults released from a foster care placement to permanency, who were in state custody starting at age 17 or older; OR
- Youth ages 17 or older in state custody and in a foster care placement for the purpose of assessment to determine eligibility, appropriateness for services and preparation for transition to adulthood.



Exclusionary Criteria

Before admitting, the following areas must be assessed thoroughly. If youth meet at least 2 of the following criteria, they may not be a candidate for the program unless there are strong protective factors or other adaptive areas that would offset the behavior/problem.

- History of extensive gang involvement that resulted in the youth not being able to successfully detach from the negative peers
- History of severely injuring someone with a gun or other weapon
- History of violent criminal behavior (i.e. rape, armed robbery, etc.)
- Current homicidal ideations/threats
- Current suicidal ideations/threats

Exclusionary Criteria Continued

- Extreme aggression
- Current access to weapon that cannot be monitored
- Youth not willing to consistently meet with TL specialist
- Significant impairment in youth's ability to meet independent living goals as a result of chronic mental health issues
- Psychiatric behavior not controlled by medications (e.g. hallucinations, delusions, paranoia)
- Intellectual disabilities, developmental delays that impede a youth's ability to complete TL goals

Youth referred to the program may be deemed inappropriate for admission if their current behaviors pose serious safety risks to the staff and community.

To make referrals, please contact:

Melissa Jackson – East TN
Melissa.Jackson@youthvillages.org
(865) 560 – 2545

Joe Goldsmith – Middle TN
Joseph.Goldsmith2@youthvillages.org
(615) 251 – 7221

Avery Duncan – West TN
Avery.Duncan@youthvillages.org
(901) 252 – 7932



Appendix D

T.C.A. 37-2-417

T.C.A. 37-2-601-604

TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED
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Title 37 Juveniles
Chapter 2 Placement of Juveniles
Part 4 Foster Care

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-2-417 (2013)

37-2-417. Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010.

(a) This section may be known and cited as "Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010."

(b) The department of children's services is authorized to develop a program to provide services to youth who are transitioning to adulthood from state custody. Services may be provided on a voluntary basis to any person who is at least eighteen (18) years of age but less than twenty-one (21) years of age, who was in the custody of the department at the time of the person's eighteenth birthday and who is:

- (1) Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- (2) Enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or vocational education;
- (3) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment;
- (4) Employed for at least eighty (80) hours per month; or
- (5) Incapable of doing any of the activities described in subdivisions (b)(1)-(4) due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition, which incapability is supported by regularly updated information in the permanency plan of the person. In such a case the person shall be in compliance with a course of treatment as recommended by the department.

(c) Services may also be made available to any person who meets the requirements of subsection (b) but refused such services at the time of the person's eighteenth birthday if at any time the person seeks to regain services prior to the person's twenty-first birthday.

(d) The advisory committee established in § 37-2-601 shall serve as an advisory committee for programs and services established by this section.

(e) The commissioner of children's services shall establish policies and procedures in order to create and implement this program.

(f) The department is authorized to seek federal funding or to participate in federal programs developed for this purpose.

HISTORY: Acts 2010, ch. 1065, §§ 1-3; 2012, ch. 653, § 1.

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*** Current through the 2013 Regular Session ***

Title 37 Juveniles
Chapter 2 Placement of Juveniles
Part 6 Post-Custody Services

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-2-601 (2013)

37-2-601. Establishment of post-custody services advisory council.

(a) (1) The executive director of the Tennessee commission on children and youth shall establish a non-funded, voluntary, post-custody services advisory council, which shall be responsible for:

(A) Identifying strategies to assess and track effectiveness of post-custody services and the operation of resources centers authorized by this part; and

(B) Identifying the following:

- (i) Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of children served by post-custody services;
- (ii) The number of services provided by the department of children's services;
- (iii) The number of children who accept these services;
- (iv) Reasons why children do not accept these services; and
- (v) The number of children who continue their education and the number who do not.

(2) The advisory council shall report no later than October 31 of each year to the Tennessee commission on children and youth, the civil justice committee and health committee of the house of representatives and the health and welfare committee of the senate, making recommendations for the continuing operation of the system of post-custody services and supports.

(b) The department of children's services and other state agencies that provide services or supports to youth transitioning out of state custody shall participate fully in the council and shall respond to the recommendations put forth by the council as appropriate.

HISTORY: Acts 2009, ch. 415, § 1; 2011, ch. 410, § 3(j); 2013, ch. 236, § 78.

37-2-602. Determination of whether youth applicants for assistance were formerly in state custody -- Identification by state agencies on agency forms -- Sharing of information.

(a) All state agencies that administer cash or in-kind assistance, or both, to youth eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) years of age within the course of normal business shall make reasonable

efforts to determine if an applicant for assistance has ever been in the custody of the state. If the applicant has been in state custody, the state agency shall share information with the applicant regarding possible services to be provided by the department of children's services, other state agencies and community partners.

(b) State agencies shall modify agency forms to identify youth who have been in state custody as the agencies' forms are otherwise revised and updated.

(c) The department of children services may share services information for former foster youth and youth transitioning from state custody through already established models such as, but not limited to, web sites, emails, verbal notifications or other printed material.

HISTORY: Acts 2009, ch. 415, § 1.

37-2-603. Establishment of resource centers to provide or facilitate assistance.

(a) The private, nonprofit community is urged to establish a network to provide information, assistance, services and supports to persons from sixteen (16) to twenty-four (24) years of age who were in foster care on the person's eighteenth birthday and persons from sixteen (16) to twenty-four (24) years of age who have been in foster care at any time after the person's fourteenth birthday.

(b) The resource centers shall provide or facilitate the assistance necessary to:

(1) Deal with the challenges and barriers associated with the transition into adulthood and early adult years;

(2) Support post-secondary education, vocational training and job skills development for such person;

(3) Find and retain employment, housing, transportation, parenting and family support, health care and mental health care; and

(4) Navigate systems and procedures that impact the person's education, employment, health and mental welfare and basic needs.

(c) These services shall be available at any time until the person reaches twenty-four (24) years of age regardless of whether the youth elects to remain in a voluntary post-custody arrangement with the department or the youth chooses to terminate any relationship with the state.

(d) The resource centers shall be supported in part by the department in the community where the centers are located, subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated for this purpose. The department is authorized and encouraged to share staff with the resource centers, as well as provide financial support.

HISTORY: Acts 2009, ch. 415, § 1.

37-2-604. Preparing foster children for independent living.

In preparing a foster child for independent living prior to the child reaching eighteen (18) years of age, the department shall provide information on the resource centers established pursuant to this part to all children over sixteen (16) years of age in foster care. The information shall include the address of the nearest resource center and services available from the center. Each child shall be encouraged to maintain periodic contact with resource center personnel and to provide current and accurate residence and contact information to the resource center. Ninety (90) days before a child leaves state custody the department of children's services shall notify the child of all information, services, web sites and assistance available for post-custody.

HISTORY: Acts 2009, ch. 415, § 1.

37-2-605. Construction of part.

Nothing in this part shall be construed to require a person to have maintained continuous contact with the resource centers or the department in order to be eligible to receive services from the resource centers or the department.

HISTORY: Acts 2009, ch. 415, § 1.