



Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Annual Report – October 2011



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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TO: Members of the Tennessee General Assembly
FROM: Linda O'Neal, Executive Director
DATE: October 31, 2011
RE: *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2011 Report*

In accordance with 2009 Public Chapter 415 now codified as T.C.A. 37-2-601 and included in this report as Appendix A, attached please find the *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2011 Report*. Effective July 1, 2011, responsibility for this Council and its report was transferred to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. TCCY welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with dedicated child advocates from all across the state who are embracing the challenge 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 youth 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.

This report outlines the progress made by the Youth Transitions Advisory Council in developing strategies to assist these young adults as they prepare for success in the lives ahead of them.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth expresses appreciation to the members of the 106th and 107th Tennessee General Assembly for both 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. It is our hope you will find the resources necessary to continue to fund these essential services so all Tennessee youth have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential.

Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2011

Table of Contents

Overview and Recommendations.....	1
Update on Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009).....	4
Resource Centers.....	4
Department of Children’s Services Data.....	7
Youth Engagement.....	12
Children’s Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT) Data.....	14
Conclusion.....	18
Appendix A Public Chapter 415 (2009) and T.C.A. 37-3-116.....	19
Appendix B 7/14/2011 and 9/29/2011 Meeting Agendas and Summaries.....	27
Appendix C State Agency Responses to Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009).....	41
Appendix D Resource Center Reports.....	49
Appendix E Youth Engagement Survey.....	63



Youth Transitions Advisory Council

Overview

All children deserve the opportunity to become successful, productive adults. Children must be safe, healthy, educated, nurtured, supported and engaged to prepare them to make a successful transition into adulthood. With more than 230,000 young people aging out of foster care nationally, it is critical they receive services and supports to help make a successful transition without the traditional family or community supports. Unfortunately, youth aging out of state custody often do not have these supports in place, making the transition from state custody into adulthood incredibly challenging, resulting in increased risk for negative outcomes.

Research indicates providing supports and services until age 21 leads to better outcomes for youth. Remaining in care after turning 18 more than doubles the chance a youth will be working or in school at age 19. Young women who remained in care saw a 38 percent reduction in pregnancy before age 20. Research also clearly shows the adverse outcomes for the youth who are not able to access services beyond age 18. Youth transitioning from foster care suffer significantly higher rates of incarceration, homelessness, school dropout, unemployment, unwanted pregnancy, and lack of access to health care. Studies show more than one in five youth will become homeless after age 18 and one in four will be incarcerated within two years of leaving the system.

With this grim outlook for the youth aging out of state custody, policy makers must make it a priority to improve the opportunities for young people to succeed and transition into adulthood successfully, including extending foster care services beyond age 18. The Tennessee Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) works to identify quality, effective services and supports, as well as opportunities for improvement by addressing the barriers and gaps these young people experience.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Tennessee General Assembly should reauthorize and provide recurring funding for the Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010, codified in T.C.A. 37-2-417. In May 2010, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted the Youth Empowerment Act of 2010. The Act received tremendous support with six sponsors in the House of Representatives and all members of the Senate signing on as co-sponsors of the original legislation. The Act authorized the Department of Children's Services (DCS) to develop a program extending services to youth under the age of 21 who are transitioning to adulthood from

state custody. As stated above, research shows improved outcomes for some of Tennessee's most vulnerable youth when they are able to access services beyond age 18. DCS has submitted sweeping changes to policies, protocols and forms to support the Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act and the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. States are able to draw down Title IV-E reimbursement funds to offset the costs associated with extending services. The federal law allows states to extend foster care to youth involved in any of five educational or employment categories until they turn 21. The DCS proposed policy includes three of the five categories: secondary education, post-secondary education and special needs. These changes are currently under review by the Administration of Children and Families. It is imperative the General Assembly reauthorize the Act and continue funding for services, enabling Tennessee to offer post-custody services to our most vulnerable youth. The state dollars provide the match necessary to pull down the federal funds made available through the Fostering Connections Act. These services provide the supports necessary for young Tennesseans aging out of state custody to be productive and successful citizens.

Recommendation 2: The Department of Children's Services should make efforts to have all children who exit state custody Title IV-E eligible. The Department of Children's Services should create policies and procedures that give all children in state custody the opportunity to utilize available services and supports. Delinquent youth are very limited in the services for which they are eligible. However, if delinquent youth successfully complete their programs, DCS should consider whether the youth is appropriate for a step down placement in a foster home or alternate setting. If a child is in foster care at least one day, he or she may be eligible for a variety of services funded through Title IV-E dollars. As demonstrated in the chart on page 8, there are 1,521 delinquent youth age 13-19 who could potentially access services that would increase their opportunities to transition into adulthood successfully.

Recommendation 3: State and community agencies should make efforts to improve information and data gathering and sharing. The delivery of effective services depends on a variety of factors including appropriate access to accurate, timely, and complete information. For individuals, this means reporting of diagnostic and treatment histories, as well as up to date assessment information. Safety concerns may also require criminal history and juvenile justice information be made available to selected entities. Often information is collected across multiple agencies which could be pieced together to create a more complete picture. However, agencies may not be willing or able to share information with other agencies.

The issue is gathering and sharing the information from a variety of sources in ways that protect the individual while adequately informing decision makers responsible for policy and program development, operation and evaluation. The development of policies and technical protocols will help promote effective and collaborative information gathering and sharing. As agencies are able to work together and create opportunities for wrap around services, youth will be able to make smoother and more successful transitions out of state custody and into adulthood.

Recommendation 4: Tennessee should encourage across system and community wide approach to addressing the needs of youth transitioning to adulthood. Tennessee has created public-private and state-local partnerships to implement essential public structures, "infrastructure" services, for children and families – basic public supports developed in our child welfare, education, health, human services, juvenile justice, mental health and disability services systems. These partnerships are critical to providing the services and supports necessary for youth to transition successfully. While the Department of Children’s Services has a critical role in helping youth aging out of state custody, it is unrealistic to expect DCS to work in isolation. Other state and community agencies must acknowledge their role in the successful transition of youth into adulthood. A young person’s opportunity for success increases when there is across system and community wide approach in providing supports and services.

Recommendation 5: The various groups meeting to address the needs of youth transitioning into adulthood should explore opportunities to streamline and consolidate efforts. There have been multiple groups meeting to address the needs of youth transitioning into adulthood. Specifically, two of the groups often have the same members attending both meetings with very similar goals and missions regarding transitioning youth. The Transitioning Youth Task Force coordinated through the Department of Mental Health has worked to address the needs of youth transitioning into adulthood. While the Task Force has had a primary interest in addressing youth with mental health needs, YTAC has a focus on the needs of youth aging out of state custody. However, as data from the Children’s Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT) on pages 16-17 indicates, older youth in state custody are experiencing similar, if not the same, critical issues, including having a mental health diagnosis. The two groups have met individually and together and there is consensus that consolidating the two groups will be more effective and efficient. YTAC is working with the Task Force to ensure the transition will be seamless and the goals of the two groups will be merged successfully into YTAC.

Update on Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009)

In May 2011, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted Public Chapter 410 abolishing legislative oversight committees, including the Select Committee on Children and Youth (SCCY). The legislation transferred responsibility for coordinating the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) created by Public Chapter 415 in 2009 and codified at T.C.A. 37-2-601 to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). The purpose of the council is to track the effectiveness of services provided to youth in state custody as they transition from care into adulthood and to develop strategies for maintaining adequate data and information to help inform policy decisions.

YTAC has met twice since TCCY received the new responsibility, on July 14, 2011 and September 29, 2011. Meeting agendas and summaries are available in Appendix B. The July 14 meeting agenda included an update on the statutory transfer of YTAC responsibilities from the SCCY to TCCY. The group also reviewed the original legislation establishing YTAC and discussed next steps.

Following the July 14, 2011 meeting, TCCY mailed a letter to state agencies inviting them to present on transitioning youth services available through their agency at the September 29, 2011 meeting. The letter also requested information on the status of T.C.A. 37-2-602, which requires state agencies to make efforts to identify applicants or service recipients who have been in state custody and share information about post-custody services for which the youth may be eligible. State agencies are also required to modify agency forms to identify youth who have been in state custody when forms are revised or updated.

The various state agencies submitted thoughtful answers to the questions posed in the letter, including a description of efforts made to address the requirements of the legislation. Their responses also included their thoughts on what information DCS could provide to better inform state departments about available post custody services. All of the state agency responses can be found in Appendix C. An additional positive outcome of the letter was that it prompted some agencies to contact DCS to identify opportunities to collaborate to better serve youth transitioning out of state custody. This type of collaboration and partnership is necessary for a successful system wide approach to address the needs of youth transitioning into adulthood, as expressed in Recommendation #4.

Resource Centers

Tennessee DCS works in partnership with the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to support a statewide network of resource centers to support transitioning foster youth. The resource centers implement the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and bring together people and resources to help youth make the connections they need for permanence, education,

employment, housing, health care and supportive personal and community relationships. The core strategies and objectives of the Initiative are:

- 1) Youth Engagement: to prepare young people to be meaningfully involved as decision-makers and self-advocates;
- 2) Partnerships and Resources: to access the resources of public and private systems and philanthropic organizations, expand and deepen community support, and cultivate community champions for young people transitioning from foster care;
- 3) Research, Evaluation and Communications: to involve key stakeholders in using data to drive decision making and communications, and in documenting results;
- 4) Public Will and Policy: to advance policy and practice that improve outcomes for young people transitioning from foster care; and
- 5) Increased Opportunities: to create an array of opportunities and help young people gain access to them.

In 2002, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative funded a multi-year grant to support the implementation of the initiative in Middle Tennessee. In 2011, the initiative expanded to West and East Tennessee. Currently three resource centers serve transitioning foster youth across the state:

- South Memphis Alliance: Dream Seekers Initiative
- Monroe Harding, Nashville: Youth Connections
- Child and Family Tennessee (Knoxville): Project NOW

These three resource centers provide educational training, resource coordination, financial literacy training and implementation of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to transitioning youth up to age 24.

The resource centers offer young people the Opportunity Passport™, the primary component of which is an Individual Development Account (IDA) or a matched savings account. A matched savings account can help young people aging out of foster care learn financial management, obtain experience with the mainstream banking system, and save money for assets, putting them on a path towards being a productive, successful adult. Each resource center will enroll a minimum of 40 youth per year in the Opportunity Passport™. Outcomes are tracked through the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey and the Management Information System for Individual Development Accounts (MIS-IDA).

The South Memphis Alliance Dream Seekers Initiative has served 32 youth, several of whom are continuing to participate in youth leadership board meetings and other activities. The program is actively working to address their challenges of receiving referrals, consistent youth engagement and transportation. South Memphis Alliance also has several local partners who assist in their continued efforts to help youth successfully graduate from their program.

Monroe Harding's Youth Connections located in Nashville was the first resource center in Tennessee, established almost six years ago. The program has served over 600 youth, including

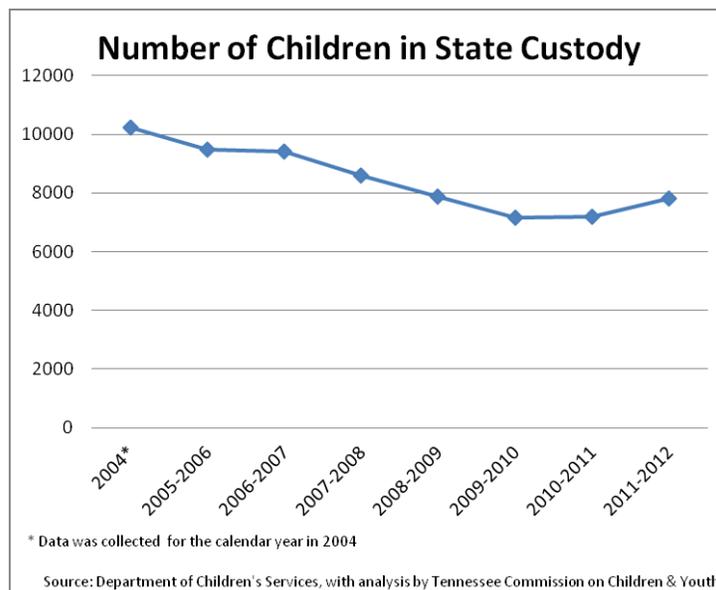
some youth who returned for services. Over 60 young people have obtained their GED after participating in the GED classes and 80 percent of participants in the Stepping Stones program found employment with the help of a vocation coordinator. Despite these successes, Youth Connections continues to address the challenges of keeping young people engaged in the program as the youth are trying to manage their own issues, including lack of transportation, limited access to mental health treatment and homelessness. Youth Connections has recently moved to an area in Nashville where public transportation makes the location easily accessible to youth and they will continue to make efforts to improve the program.

The newest resource center is located in Knoxville at Child and Family Tennessee. The Project NOW program has had contact with 37 youth. The program is working to encourage youth to use public transportation so they will be able to attend the Financial Literacy courses and helping them identify a co-signer for their bank account when under the age of 18. While Project NOW already has several local and community partners, they continue to build partnerships around education, employment, housing and other support services to help youth transition into adulthood successfully.

The history and background of all three resource centers along with the number of youth served in each program is available in Appendix D.

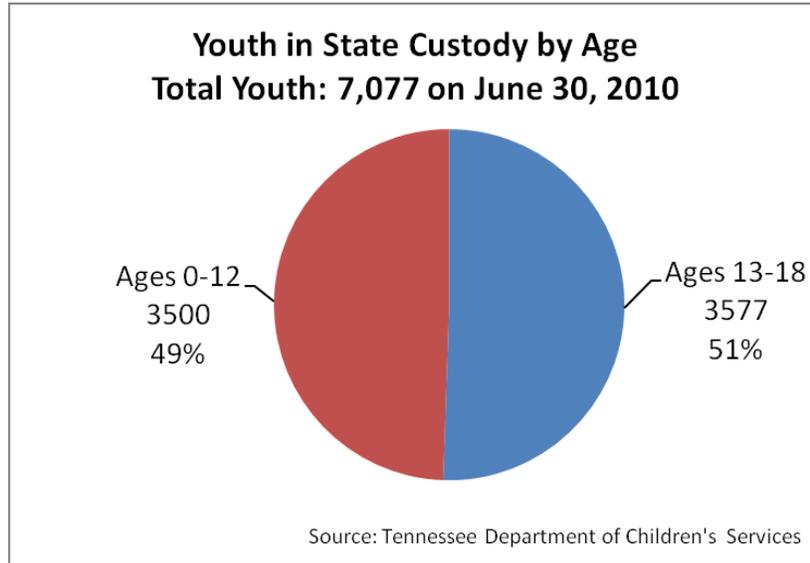
Department of Children's Services Data

Tennessee has seen a dramatic decline in the number of youth in state custody since 2004, with over 10,000 in custody in 2004 and dropping to its lowest at 7,163 in FY 2009-2010. New policies and improvements in the system led to the decline. The adoption of the Multiple Response System (MRS) has helped reduce the number of children unnecessarily placed in state custody. In addition, the priority of permanence for all children by DCS has led to an increase in timely and successful reunification, relative placements and termination of parental rights and placement for adoption when appropriate.

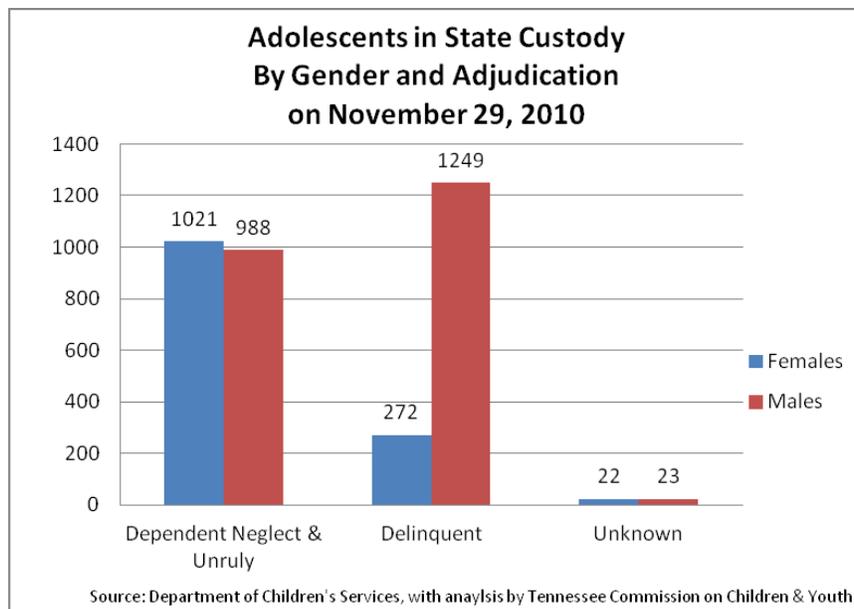


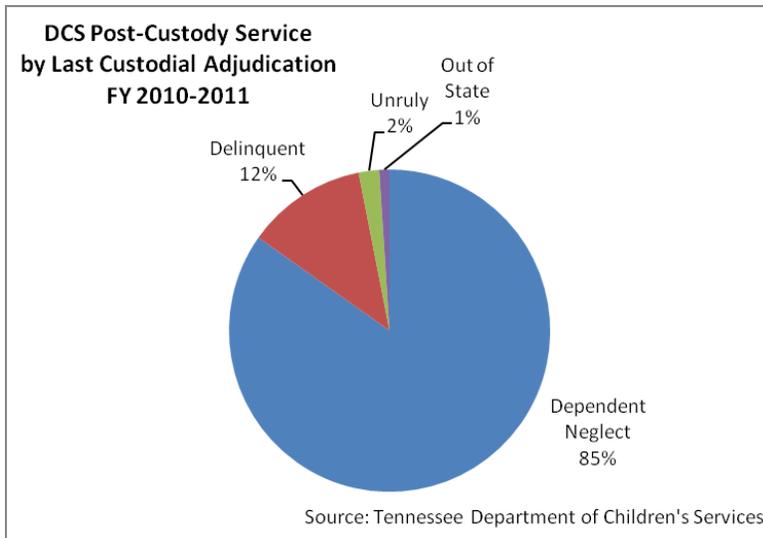
In the last two years, there has been a slight increase in the number of children in custody. This increase can be attributed to the increased number of children who have entered state custody due to the financial hardship their families have faced during the Great Recession. Also, economic conditions have made it more difficult for reunification as parents, relatives and other caregivers are not in a position to care for the children, and as a result, they remain in the custody of the state. Another challenge DCS faces with reunification are the number of parents, relatives and other caregivers with mental health and substance abuse issues, including alcohol, methamphetamines and prescription drugs.

DCS reported 7,077 children were in custody on June 30, 2010. The graph below shows more than half the children in custody were older, between 13 and 18 years old.



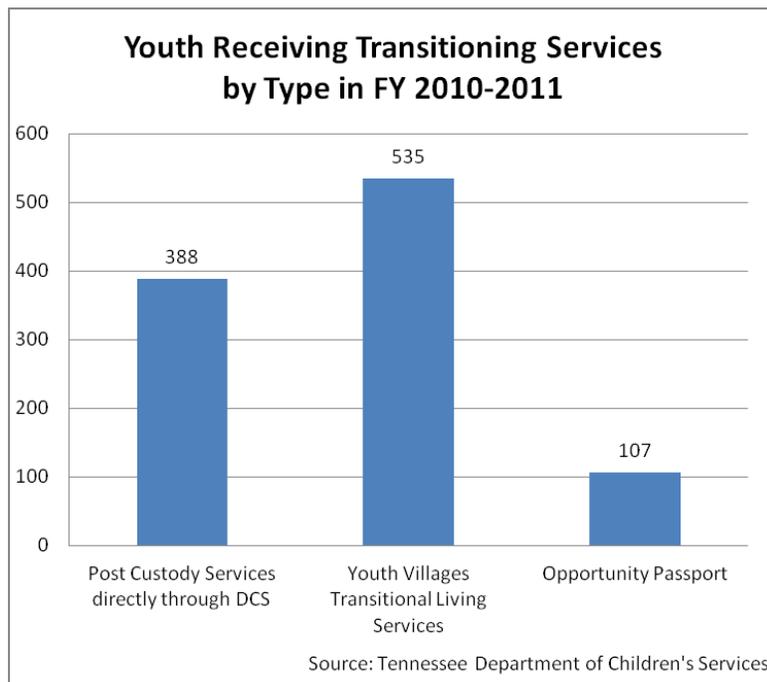
There were a significantly higher number of males in custody between the ages of 13 and 19, with a total of 2,260 males and 1,315 females. The graph below shows the number of adolescents by gender and adjudication. Young males account for 82 percent of the delinquent youth. These statistics highlight the importance of implementing policies that facilitate receipt of post-custody services for youth adjudicated delinquent. If delinquent youth are in a placement that qualifies as “foster care” when they turn 18, a foster home or non-secure congregate placement, they qualify for a variety of state and federally funded services. DCS practice should ensure youth adjudicated delinquent are in placements that qualify youth for these important transition services.





Currently, of the 388 youth who received post custody services directly through DCS, 329 or 85 percent of them had the status of dependent neglected. However, only 47 or 12 percent of the youth receiving the services were adjudicated delinquent. This further confirms the importance of increasing opportunities for youth adjudicated delinquent to access transitioning services.

Youth aging out of state custody may be eligible for services through multiple sources, including, but not limited to, DCS, private providers and community agencies. The graph below shows the number of youth who received transitioning services in FY 2010-2011. The service types included in the graph are Youth Villages Transitional Living, Resource Center's Opportunity Passport™ and Services received directly through DCS.



DCS has a contract with Youth Villages to serve youth ages 17-23, who were in state custody and in a foster care placement for at least one year after their 14th birthday or one day after their 17th birthday. In FY 2010-2011, Youth Villages served 535 youth through their Transitional Living Services. Monroe Harding, in Nashville, also provides a transitional living program, but data for youth served during FY 2010-2011 were not currently available.

The three resource centers in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville provided the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Opportunity Passport program to 107 youth in FY 2010-2011. Additional community based agencies provide services like employment, housing and food assistance, but are not specifically targeting youth transitioning out of state custody.

There are a variety of post custody services and supports available through DCS. In FY 2010-2011, 388 youth received services directly through DCS. The chart below lists the number of youth receiving services through DCS by region.

**Total Number of Youth who Received DCS Post Custody Services
by DCS Region**

Davidson	42	Shelby	50
East	20	Smoky Mountain	29
Knox	40	South Central	27
Mid Cumberland	23	Southwest	22
Northeast	32	Tennessee Valley	49
Northwest	20	Upper Cumberland	34

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services

DCS has over thirty services available to youth transitioning out of state custody into adulthood. The services include those available directly through DCS, as well as the services discussed above available through Youth Villages, resource centers and other community agencies. Below is a list of all the services available to youth aging out of state custody.

Services Available to Youth Aging Out of State Custody

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 (If Still in High School/Pursuing a GED - up to age 20)
32	Case Management

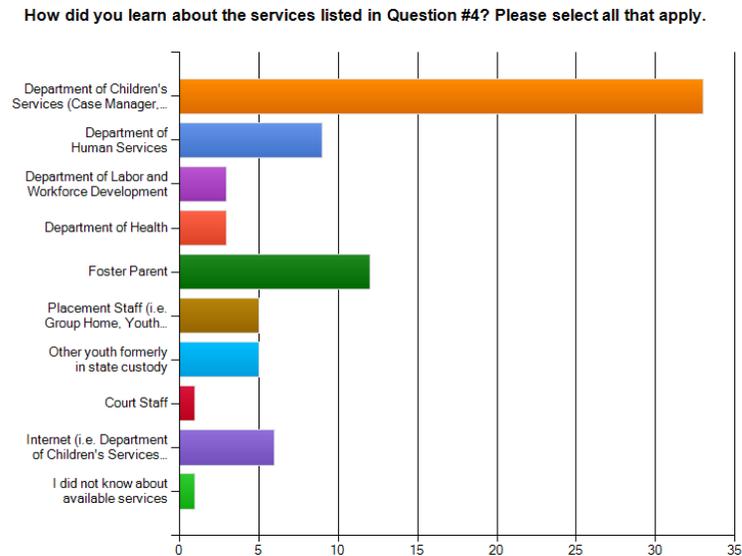
Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services

YTAC appreciates the ongoing cooperation of DCS, including providing data and information for this annual report. Tennessee Code Annotated 37-2-601 requires the identification of data collection strategies, and the reporting of certain data elements regarding youth served post custody. Moving forward, the YTAC will work to develop effective data collection strategies in coordination with DCS to ensure the requirements of the statute are met. The data will also help identify the greatest areas of need and inform effective service planning and resource allocation.

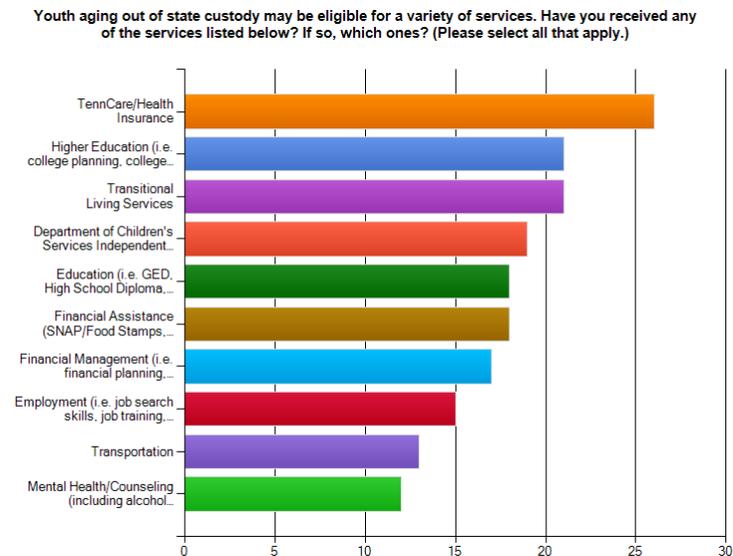
Youth Engagement

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council acknowledges the importance of having youth input in identifying strategies to assess the effectiveness of transitioning services and creating policies to help provide services and supports for youth transitioning into adulthood. In an effort to better engage youth in YTAC, a survey was created and distributed to transition age youth (see Appendix E). There were a total of 53 surveys submitted.

As shown in the chart below, the majority of youth (75%) learned about available services through DCS. This chart indicates there is a missed opportunity for other state agencies to help inform young people about available services, as discussed in Recommendation 4.

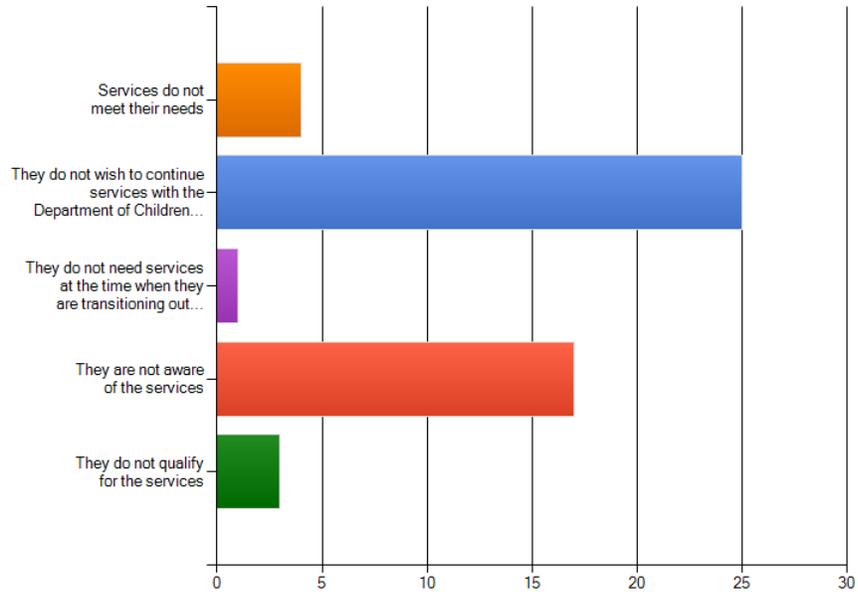


The chart below shows the variety of services youth are receiving. The most accessed service is TennCare with 50 percent receiving their services.



The survey also addressed requirements of T.C.A. 37-2-601, including the reasons why children do not accept post-custody services. Fifty percent of youth responded youth do not wish to continue services with DCS as the main reason why they do not accept available transitioning services. The reason with the second highest number of responses was that youth are not aware of the services. These survey results indicate there is a need for education and outreach to inform youth about available services and to break the stigma of remaining in the system.

What do you think is the main reason other youth do not accept available transitioning services?



Children's Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT)

Under the direction of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, the Children's Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT) uses an intensive quality service review (QSR) approach to collect, analyze, and report essential information about the population of children and families receiving services from the Department of Children's Services. The CPORT process was initiated in 1994 and continues to assess the status of children in care, measuring the effectiveness of the service delivery system to promote positive system change and guide policymakers toward decisions that enhance the safety and well-being of children and families.

The CPORT division staff works collaboratively with DCS to implement and support the intensive case review process with case reviewers representing both agencies and the Tennessee Center for Child Welfare (TCCW). The integration of CPORT and DCS QSR produces quantitative and qualitative results and ensures high quality evaluation results used for continuous system improvement, and implementation and reinforcement of best practices to children and their families.

The QSR serves as the evaluation tool and methodology for measuring child welfare outcomes relative to what is working and not working in case practice. The QSR protocol is designed for use in a case-based QSR process for conducting a guided professional appraisal of the current status of a child and family, and the adequacy of the performance of key system of care practices and services for the child and family.

The process for the reviews includes face-to-face interviews (except when circumstances prevent) with the following: child (if age appropriate), parents, custodial department, caseworkers, caregivers (foster parent or direct care staff in a group facility), court representatives, teachers and other relevant service providers. The case records are reviewed, and pertinent documents or reports are copied and compiled for the reviews. The majority of information is collected through the interview process.

One of the indicators used to evaluate system performance is **long-term view**. This indicator asks the following questions:

- Is there an explicit plan for the child and family that should enable them to live safely and independent from the child welfare system?
- Does the plan provide direction and support for making smooth transitions across settings, providers and levels of services?
- Where is the child and family team headed with the child and family?
- Will this direction lead to the child being successful in daily settings after the next major developmental transition or anticipated placement is made?
- Is there a sensible guiding view for services?

Long-term view helps provide a strategic vision used to set the purpose and path of intervention and support. It is used to focus a coherent child and family plan and process.

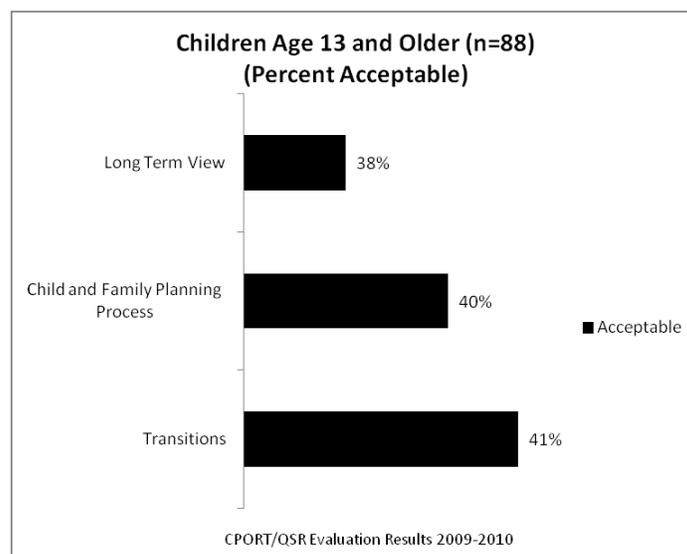
The **child and family planning process** indicator takes the service plan into consideration to evaluate system performance. The child and family should have a single integrated service plan developed by the child and family team. The service plan should serve as a comprehensive, dynamic service organizer and is focused by the long-term view for the child and family. This indicator asks the following questions:

- Is the working service plan developed by the child and family team?
- Is the working service plan individualized and relevant to needs and goals?
- Are supports, services and interventions assembled into a holistic and coherent service process that provides a mix of elements uniquely matched to the child and family's situation and preferences?
- Does the combination of supports and services fit the child's and family's situation so as to maximize potential results and minimize conflicting strategies and inconveniences?

The **transitions** indicator evaluates system performance by asking to what degree:

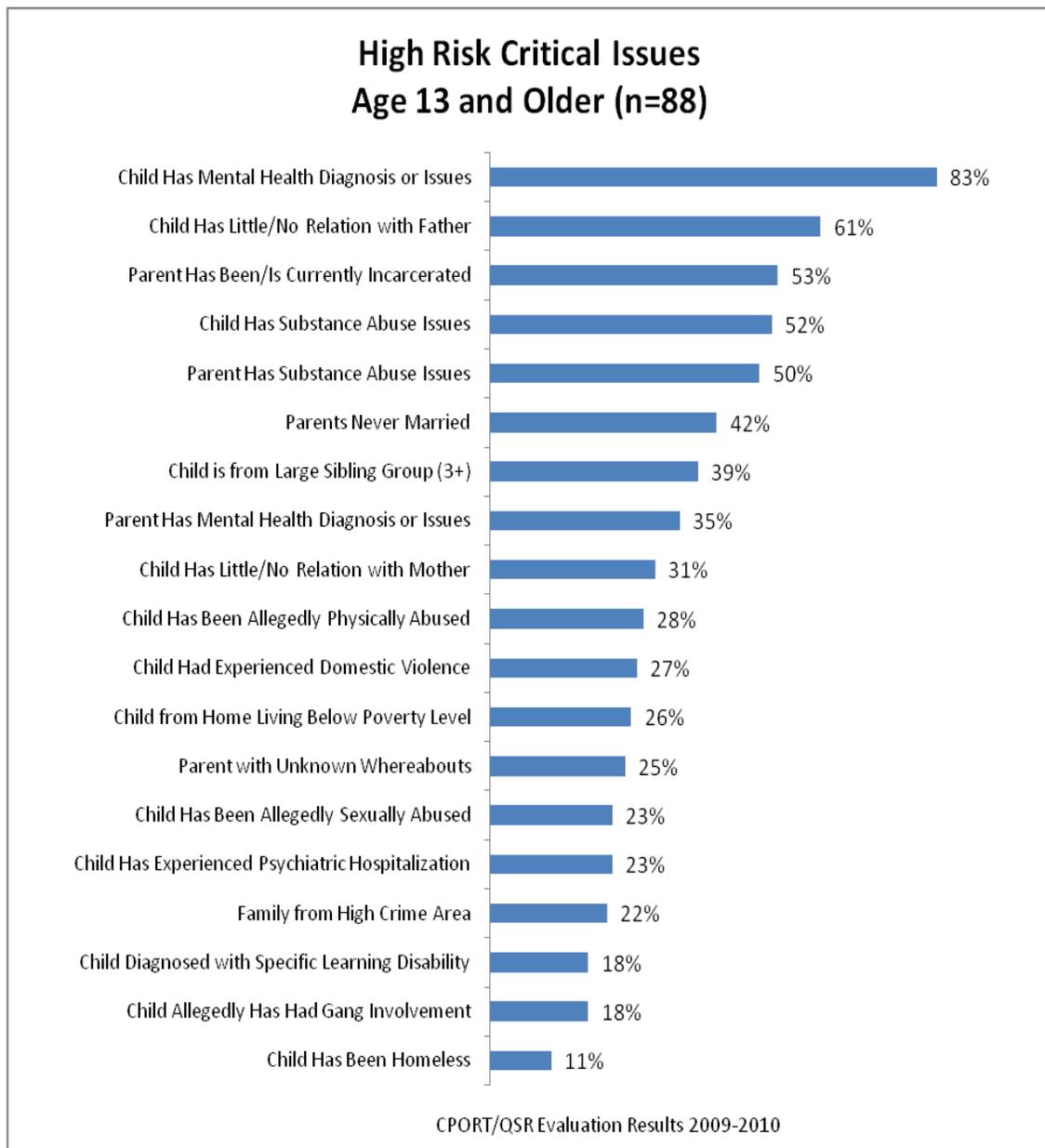
- Is the current or next life change transition for the child and or family being planned and implemented to assure a timely, smooth and successful adjustment for the child and family after the change occurs?
- Is the family experiencing stressors that may contribute to the onset or maintenance of problems?
- If the child is returning home and to school following a temporary placement in foster care, treatment or detention are transition arrangements being made to assure a smooth and successful transition and life adjustment in daily settings following the return?
- Are family supports with friends, clergy, professionals or community readily available to assist the family in coping with various life experiences and transitions?

Below is a chart of the review results in 2009-2010 for children ages 13 and older for the indicators discussed above.



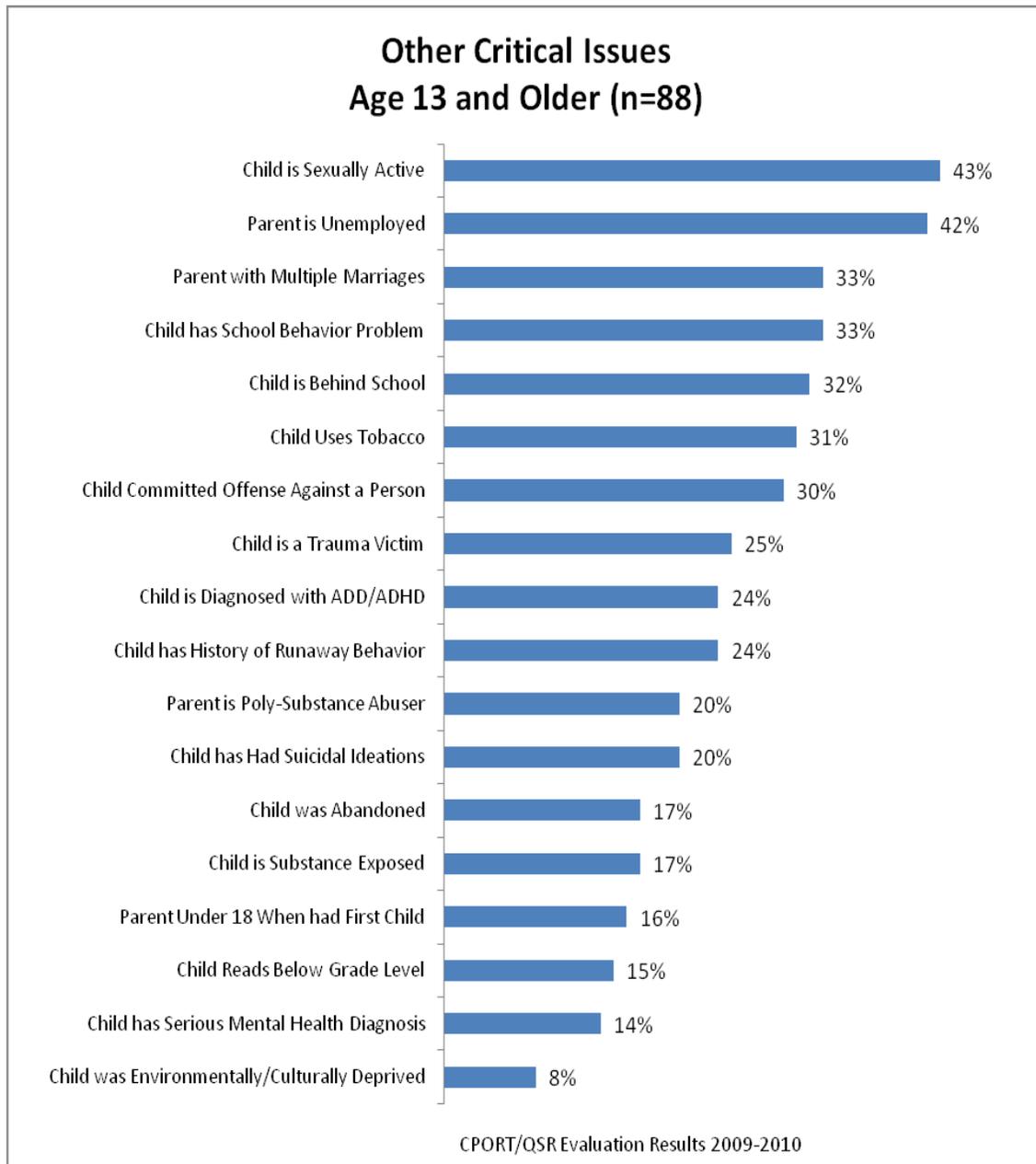
CPORT/QSR data indicates less than half the children ages 13 and older had acceptable ratings on long-term view (38%), child and family planning process (40%) and transitions (41%) system performance indicators. All three indicators are critical to a child’s successful transition from state custody. Youth aging out of state custody have a range of challenges and it is imperative DCS develop an individualized plan with each child and family to ensure a successful and smooth transition. As the CPORT/QSR results point out, older youth may have the opportunity for better outcomes if there are improvements in the system.

**Critical Issues for Children in state custody
(Age 13 and Older; 2009-2010)
Part 1 of 2**



Critical issues are included in the information collected through QSR. Critical issues are the children and family conditions that contribute to the risk of entering or remaining in custody. These conditions or characteristics also influence the need for services. These charts list the High Risk Critical Issues for children ages 13 and older in state custody. With so many older youth experiencing such a range of critical issues, the need for supports and services is evident so they may have an opportunity to transition successfully and be healthy and productive citizens.

**Critical Issues for Children in state custody
(Age 13 and Older; 2009-2010)
Part 2 of 2**



Conclusion

As the parent to all children in custody, it is the moral responsibility of the state to ensure all children in custody are safe, healthy, educated, nurtured, supported, engaged and prepared to make a successful transition into adulthood. As research and data included in this report indicates, providing supports and services to older youth increases their opportunities to successfully make the transition from adolescence into adulthood. 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. Making the commitment that all children and youth have the opportunity to become successful and productive citizens ensures a brighter future for Tennessee.

Appendix A
Public Chapter 415 (2009) and
T.C.A. 37-3-116

STATE OF TENNESSEE
PUBLIC CHAPTER NO. 415
HOUSE BILL NO. 686

By Representatives Richardson, Sherry Jones, Hardaway

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 638

By Senators Marrero, Harper, Ford

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, relative to children 18 years of age and older who are aging out of custody of the department of children's services.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 37, Chapter 2, is amended by adding the following as a new part:

37-2-501.

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

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

(2) Identifying the following:

(A) strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of children served by post-custody services,

(B) the number of services provided by the department of children's services,

(C) the number of children who accept these services,

(D) reasons why children do not accept such services, and

(E) the number of children that continue their education and the number that do not; and

(3) The advisory council shall report no later than October 31st of each year to the select committee on children and youth,

house children and family affairs committee, house health and human resources committee and senate general welfare, health and human resources committee, 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 which 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.

37-2-502.

(a) All state agencies which administer cash or in-kind assistance, or both, to youth age eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24), within the course of normal business, shall make reasonable effort 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 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, websites, emails, verbal notifications, and or other printed material.

37-2-503.

(a) The private, non-profit 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, mental health care; and

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

(c) Such 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 .

37-2-504.

In preparing a foster child for independent living prior to the child reaching eighteen (18) years or 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.

37-2-505.

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.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: June 3, 2009


KENT WILLIAMS, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES


RON RAMSEY
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

APPROVED this 11th day of June 2009


PHIL BREDESEN, GOVERNOR

37-2-417. Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010. -
[Effective until June 30, 2012. See the Compiler's Notes.]

(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.

[Acts 2010, ch. 1065, §§ 1-3.]

Compiler's Notes. Acts 2010, ch. 1065, § 5 provided that the act, which enacted this section, shall be repealed June 30, 2012. The repeal of the act shall not affect any programs that provide services to youth who are transitioning to adulthood from state custody and that are administered by the department of children's services prior to July 1, 2010.

Appendix B
7/14/2011 and 9/29/2011
Meeting Agendas and Summaries



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrew Johnson Tower, Ninth Floor
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

July 14, 2011

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

1st Floor Conference Room

Andrew Johnson Tower

Welcome/Introductions – *Linda O’Neal*

Transition of Advisory Council from SCCY to TCCY: PC 410 (2011) – *Linda O’Neal*

Review of Statute/Original Legislation – *Linda O’Neal*

PC 415 (2009) – Transitioning Youth Advisory Council

PC 1065 (2010) – Youth Empowerment Act

Update on Youth Aging Out & Fostering Connections Implementation –

Department of Children’s Services

Dave Aguzzi

Kim Crane Mallory

Debbie Miller

Report to Legislature Due October 2011 - *Discussion*

Opportunities and Overlaps in Transition Youth Groups and Efforts – *Linda O’Neal*

Consolidation of State Transitioning Youth Groups/Efforts? - *Discussion*

Future Meetings

Other Business



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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1-800-264-0904

**YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY**

TCCY 1st Floor Conference Room

July 14, 2011

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Participants:

Linda O'Neal
Dave Aguzzi
Sumita Banerjee
Aaron Campbell
Richard Edgar
Darci Halfinan
Kimberly Holst
Jacqueline Johnson
Kim Crane Mallory

Debbie Miller
Christy Montgomery
Karen L. Morgan
Steve Petty
Lee Ragsdale
Sukey Steckel
Elyn Wilbur
Mark Wolf

I. Welcome and Introductions – Linda O'Neal

- O'Neal welcomed the Group and requested members to introduce themselves

II. Transition of Advisory Council from SCCY to TCCY: PC 410 (2011) – Linda O'Neal

- O'Neal expressed sadness and disappointment about the legislation that abolished the Select Committee on Children and Youth (SCCY). TCCY did not support the legislation and appreciates all the work Cindy Perry and Debbie Gazzaway have done for the children and youth of Tennessee.
- With the help of Cindy and Debbie, TCCY is prepared to take on the new responsibility of convening and coordinating the group formerly referred to as PC 415.
- The SCCY reports, including the PC 415 reports, will be posted on the TCCY website (www.tn.gov/tccy). The Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination reports will also be posted.

III. Review of Statute/Original Legislation – Linda O'Neal

PC 415 (2009) – Youth Transitions Advisory Council

- O’Neal did an overview of the legislation which created the post custody advisory council.
- Ragsdale asked if youth in the juvenile justice system are included. O’Neal and DCS staff explained some of the limitations in providing services funded by IV-E dollars for a juvenile justice youth. If the youth has a felony after turning 18, they are ineligible. Ragsdale explained the juvenile justice youth are often the ones with the least support available to them when they transition. Members of the Council agreed it was important to address the needs of the juvenile justice youth too in an effort to prevent them from entering the adult criminal justice system.
- The Council expressed an interest in working with the Department of Corrections to try and collect data on how many adults in the criminal system came in contact with the juvenile justice system as a youth.
- The group began to discuss next steps. O’Neal noted that since the group was on hold with the uncertainty of SCCY’s future, we can use this change as an opportunity to guide the work of the Council.

PC 1065 (2010) – Youth Empowerment Act

- O’Neal briefly reviewed the legislation that authorized (not required) DCS to provide programs for transitioning youth in order to pull down federal funds made available through the Fostering Connections Act. YTAC serves as the advisory council for this legislation. O’Neal explained DCS would go into more detail about the program during their update.

I. Update on Youth Aging Out & Fostering Connections Implementation – Dave Aguzzi, Kim Crane Mallory and Debbie Miller

- Aguzzi provided an update on proposed policy changes for the Independent Living program at DCS, using a PowerPoint.
- During the presentation, Campbell asked if there were enough specialized Foster Care Review Boards to serve as the judicial review. Miller explained while there currently are not enough, DCS is working with the AOC to identify the counties/regions with the larger transitioning youth populations and ensure there are specialized FCRB available in those areas.
- DCS is interested in gaining a better understanding of why some young people refuse or decline the services. Ragsdale wondered if the youth who declined the services may be the ones who need it most.
- Mallory explained DCS interested in working with other departments and agencies (local, state, community) in coordinating where the youth who are not eligible for DCS services can go? What other services are available to them?
- Mallory presented Jim Casey Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (OPPS) data about housing, including distributing a handout. Mallory agreed to share a copy of the OPPS so the Council could get a sense of what data may be available and what could be included in the report.
- O’Neal thanked Aguzzi, Mallory and Miller for the wonderful update and expressed excitement over the proposed policy changes.

II. Report to the Legislature - Discussion

- O'Neal provided an overview of what was included in the previous two reports (2009 & 2010) to the Legislature. O'Neal then asked the group about their thoughts for the 2011 Report.
- Ideas generated from the group included:
 - Fostering Connections/policies updates;
 - data from DCS (including estimates);
 - data from Jim Casey (i.e., housing);
 - other data that helps identify the barriers and challenges;
 - an explanation of the responsibilities moving from SCCY to TCCY;
 - Resource Centers' updates, including data;
 - And reauthorization of Youth Empowerment Act legislation in recommendations.
- Ragsdale suggested including a need for accurate information gathering and sharing between criminal/juvenile justice. O'Neal described the longitudinal data system (LDS) and the hope that it will help address some of the data questions.
- O'Neal asked DCS about their efforts to make juvenile justice/all children in DCS custody IV-E eligible. Miller explained when a youth completes their juvenile justice requirements, DCS often recommends a step down and/or a return to the court to identify the youth as dependent/neglect.
- Wolf explained DCS can't do it alone and suggested a system of care approach requiring collaboration at the community level and throughout the system to provide services and supports to transitioning youth. Wolf described the Community Action Board specific for transitioning youth called the Knoxville Youth Transition Council.
- Morgan described a similar group in Memphis called the Memphis Youth Transition Council and asked if it is appropriate to collaborate with the local DCS Community Advisory Board (CAB). She explained their efforts to find clear ways to connect different groups and help try to streamline the multiple groups/efforts.
- O'Neal noted the Maury County DCS CAB has been the advisory board for the local System of Care program.
- O'Neal suggested TCCY will send letters to state departments to request an update on implementation of PC 415 (cc: the department's representative on the Council) and include their responses in the report.
- Campbell suggested when recommending reauthorization, we should include any changes we want to make and recommend recurring funding.
- O'Neal asked whether there was a need for workgroups. Ragsdale suggested forming workgroups if/when the process necessitates it.
- O'Neal asked the group about including youth input in the report and better ways to engage youth in the Advisory Council. Campbell, Halfman, Ragsdale, Morgan, Mallory and Wolf agreed to work together to try and better engage youth, including creating/distributing a survey to gather feedback for the October 2011 Report.

III. Opportunities and Overlaps in Transition Youth Groups & Efforts/ Consolidation of State Transitioning Youth Groups and Efforts - Linda O'Neal

- O’Neal explained multiple departments and agencies provide services/interface with transitioning youth. She described a group convened through DMH, Transitioning Youth Task Force and asked if the Council felt that group could be integrated with YTAC.
- Edgar, who chairs the DMH group, said there was good potential for the groups to work together and invited O’Neal to the next meeting to propose the idea to the Taskforce.
- Mallory noted integration of the groups would demonstrate to the legislature our efforts to streamline and become more efficient.
- Wilbur pointed out many of the members of the Taskforce are also on YTAC and integration made sense.
- O’Neal distributed a handout about opportunities to collaborate from the Forum for Youth Investment.
- O’Neal proposed using a format similar to a previous GOCCC steering panel on transitioning youth, and invite other departments and agencies who interface with transitioning youth to present at the next YTAC meeting.
- Wolf expressed an interest in making sure local/community efforts were aware of the work of the YTAC.
- O’Neal suggested making YTAC open to anyone who is interested in participating. The group agreed. Mallory did note it would be important to have some sort of structure in place for when group-wide decisions had to be made.
- Campbell suggested an annual meeting when everyone is invited. Set the agenda for the following year, and smaller groups can do work through the year, and departments can identify when the meeting is addressing something that is relevant to them. Campbell also shared Youth Villages has great meeting space available and would be happy to host.
- Wolf suggested the next meeting be a “mega meeting” and all the departments and agencies be asked to present about their policies and available services. Edgar agreed as different departments have different definitions for terms and policies.

IV. Future Meetings

- O’Neal asked the group how often the Council should meet. Also suggested DCS and Resource Centers provide brief updates at the start of every meeting. The group discussed quarterly meetings and building in the needs of other departments and agencies as they arise.
- Next meeting will be on September 29, 2011, possibly at Youth Villages or Ellington Agricultural Center. Invite all interested parties to the meeting. YTAC members can plan on meeting 30 minutes prior to start time to discuss the October Report. A draft of the report will be emailed to members prior to the meeting.

V. Other Business

- Morgan about the status of the self evaluation team? Mallory updated the group that she and Laura Denton will be pulling together the team, since they were on hold during transition from SCCY to TCCY.
- O'Neal explained TCCY is working on a DMC study and asked members if they would be willing to distribute a survey that is part of the study. O'Neal explained they would be provided a link to the survey, and TCCY would appreciate any help distributing the survey to youth, families, service providers.
- Mallory (director of IL programs) gave her new email address kim.mallory@tn.gov.



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1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

September 29, 2011

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Youth Villages

3310 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, TN 37211

Welcome/Introductions/Acceptance of July Meeting Summary – *Linda O’Neal*

Overview and Update on Youth Aging Out & Fostering Connections Implementation –
Dave Aguzzi and Kim Crane Mallory, Department of Children’s Services

Overview of Available Services for Youth Transitioning to Adulthood –
Michael Warren, Department of Health
Susan Steckel, Department of Mental Health
Michael Myszka, Bureau of TennCare
Alicia Cone, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities
Paul Lefkowitz, Department of Human Services
Gayle Feltner, Department of Education
Christy Montgomery, Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Toni Shaw, Tennessee Housing Development Agency

Networking Lunch

Overview of Available Services for Youth Transitioning to Adulthood (continued)-
Melissa Jackson, Youth Villages
Mark Wolf, Tennessee Voices for Children
Darci Halfman, Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families

Update from Resource Centers –
Karen Morgan, South Memphis Alliance
Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding
TBA, Child & Family Tennessee

Consolidation of State Transitioning Youth Groups/Efforts? – Discussion

October 2011 Report to Legislature Update – *Sumita Banerjee*

Future Meetings

Other Business



STATE OF TENNESSEE
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YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL
MEETING SUMMARY

Youth Villages
3310 Perimeter Hill Drive Nashville, 37211
September 29, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Participants:

Linda O'Neal, Chair
Dave Aguzzi
Sumita Banerjee
Julia Barlar
Carole Beltz
Pam Brown
Aaron Campbell
Pamela Cash
Sabrina Clark
Alicia Cone
Kevin Crawford
Wanda Donnelly
Richard Edgar
Gayle Feltner

Darci Halfman
Vickie Harden
Kimberly Holst
Cheryl Hultman
Melissa Jackson
Representative Sherry Jones
Nyasha Justice
Lauren Kissinger
Paul Lefkowitz
Kim Crane Mallory
Senator Beverly Marrero
Christy Montgomery
Teresa Moore
Karen L. Morgan

Rob Mortensen
Michael Myszka
Steve Petty
Barbara Quinn
Lee Ragsdale
Anne Robertson
Toni Shaw
Shantel Standefer
Sukey Steckel
Mary Jane Ware
Michael Warren
Ellyn Wilbur
Mark Wolf

I. Welcome and Introductions– *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal welcomed the Group, thanked Youth Villages for hosting the meeting and invited members to introduce themselves.

II. Acceptance of July Meeting Summary – *Linda O'Neal*

- O'Neal asked members to review the July Meeting Summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (RAGSDALE) AND SECONDED (WILBUR) TO ACCEPT THE JULY 2010 MINUTES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

III. Overview and Update on Youth Aging Out & Fostering Connections Implementation – *Dave Aguzzi and Kim Crane Mallory, Department of Children's Services*

- Mallory presented Independent Living and Transition Plan (refer to PowerPoint).

- Aguzzi presented data overview (refer to PowerPoint).
- Representative Jones asked for clarification on data. How many of the total number of children served received services specifically through Fostering Connections. Mallory explained they did not have the breakdown of the data, but would be happy to get that information.
- Senator Marrero suggested creating a concise, bulleted document to explain the program and data to legislators.
- O'Neal explained DCS has proposed policy changes to Fostering Connections implementation to broaden the once very narrow definition which does not impact the number of children served, but rather what funding stream will be used to pay for services.
- Justice asked if this would mean there would be more children under judicial oversight as required by the federal Fostering Connections Act. DCS confirmed this may be the case.
- Feltner told the group about a Fostering Connections Workshop in Washington, DC in November. Justice explained this conference is focused on the educational aspect of the law. Mallory confirmed their office had received information about the workshop and is exploring opportunities to attend.

IV. Overview of Available Services for Youth Transitioning to Adulthood

- Warren from Department of Health made a presentation (refer to PowerPoint).
- Marrero asked about services for post-custody youth who are pregnant/parenting. Warren explained some of the changes that happened with Title X funding, but assured the group there are still family planning services available through local health departments.
- Mallory shared about a new grant DCS will be implementing that the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination was originally awarded. The grant addresses teen pregnancy prevention for foster youth.
- Steckel made a presentation on services available through Department of Mental Health. A document with the presentation information will be available on the DMH website.
- Myszka made the Bureau of TennCare presentation (refer to PowerPoint). Senator Marrero asked how youth learn about available services. Myszka and Mallory explained DCS is the primary agency to inform youth about the services as TennCare does not have staff out in the field.
- Cone from the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities presented on the Developmental Disabilities Network (refer to PowerPoint).
- Lefkowitz provided an update on ways the Department of Human Services is addressing the needs of transitioning youth, including updating forms and partnering with DCS to streamline the process for youth (see handout).
- Feltner provided an overview of services available through the Department of Education (see PowerPoint). Hardin raised the issue some youth are facing with colleges not accepting 504 plans.
- Montgomery from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development explained their programs working with transition age youth (refer to PowerPoint).

- Shaw presented on services available through the Tennessee Housing Development Agency (see handout).
- Jackson from Youth Villages shared a short video explaining their services. She also briefly reviewed the multi-year study they are doing about transitional living services.
- Wolf from Tennessee Voices for Children talked about the K-Town program (see PowerPoint). He also reminded the group about the upcoming State of the Child Conference, October 19-21, 2011.
- Halfman, Executive Director of the Tennessee Alliance for Children and Families, discussed the importance of collaboration and maximizing opportunities to serve youth, including opportunities to utilize vacant space for housing for youth transitioning.

V. Update from Resource Centers

- Morgan provided an update on the services available through the South Memphis Alliance (see handout).
- Cash continued the updates from the resource centers with an overview of the services available at Youth Connections through Monroe Harding in Nashville.
- Standefer completed the Resource Center update with a presentation on Child & Family Tennessee (see handout).

VI. Consolidation of State Transitioning Youth Groups/Efforts? – *Linda O’Neal*

- O’Neal asked the group about their thoughts on consolidating the multiple efforts to address the needs of youth transitioning to adulthood. She reviewed data from TCCY’s, Children’s Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT), highlighting transition age youth in state custody have significant rates of mental health and substance abuse issues. O’Neal used the data to demonstrate how the issues youth in state custody face are very similar, if not the same, as the challenges the DMH Transitioning Youth Task Force works to address.
- Ragsdale expressed the importance of “no wrong door” and not just a single portal of entry for services for youth.
- Mallory shared there was a similar discussion at the GOCCC Steering Panel last year, and many people expressed an interest in making an effort to consolidate the groups so people aren’t attending multiple meetings with the same/similar goals.
- Harden shared there was some confusion between the two groups.
- Steckel asked what the overall purpose of the group is? She reported the next step for the DMH Task Force should be to identify their goals and where they want to go.
- O’Neal emphasized the focus on youth aging out of state custody would remain a priority for YTAC, but asked the group if it made sense to consolidate the groups and expand the focus of YTAC.
- It was determined the group would revisit the idea at a later date. In the meantime, the DMH Transitioning Youth Task Force will meet on October 5th and O’Neal will attend to be a part of the discussion.

VII. October 2011 Report to Legislature Update - *Sumita Banerjee*

- Banerjee updated the group on the annual report due to the legislature by October 31st of each year. She has incorporated the recommendations made by the group in the July meeting, and invited the group to contact her with any additional recommendations/suggestions.
- Banerjee thanked the workgroup who convened to create the Youth Engagement Survey. Over 40 surveys have already been submitted. The link is on the back of the agenda and she encouraged the group to share it with appropriate youth.
- O'Neal emphasized the recommendation to reauthorize the Youth Empowerment Act/Fostering Connections and funding for the program will be first. In addition to the report, the group will advocate for the support of the legislature.

VIII. Future Meetings

- O'Neal asked the members when the group should meet next. After some discussion, the group concluded the next meeting should be either in December or early January, before the legislative cut-off date and perhaps again in February after the budget release.
- Topics for the next meeting will include reauthorization and funding, DCS data, update from Resource Centers and possibly an update on the DCS teen pregnancy prevention grant.

IX. Other Business

- No further business. Meeting adjourned.

Appendix C
State Agency Responses to
Implementation of Public Chapter 415 (2009)

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

<p>Question #1</p>	<p>Efforts in identifying youth who are eligible for services, including any modifications to agency forms to help identify youth in (or who have been in) state custody</p>
<p>Department of Mental Health</p>	<p>DMH has sent emails regarding PC 415 to DMH contract agencies and Regional Mental Health Institutes (RMHIs) that have contact with youth ages 18-24. The DMH contract agencies and RMHIs have been encouraged to make reasonable efforts to determine if an applicant for assistance in this age range has ever been in the custody of the state and if so, to share information with the applicant about the possible services by DCS, other state agencies and community partners.</p>
<p>Bureau of TennCare</p>	<p>DCS plays major role in the identification of youth in custody to TennCare. There has been discussion regarding ways to flag applications of youth who are in transition. The decision was made to allow DCS to complete an application for the child, in anticipation of the child's 18th birthday, rather than waiting for a letter to arrive from TennCare advising of such. DCS also refers to Case Management as necessary.</p>
<p>Department of Education</p>	<p>Any student seeking enrollment in any public school must be enrolled by a parent or legal guardian or have a Power of Attorney for Care of a Minor Child. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may require proof of residence. Students who have been identified as being in the care of the DCS and needing special education services will be assigned an LEA approved surrogate parent (this is a role that can be filled by a foster parent if they have cared for the child for at least one year and have successfully completed the LEA surrogate parent training). Each LEA (DCS is an approved LEA) has a Child Find Plan which explains a particular LEA's approach/steps to determining children who are eligible for services. The State of Tennessee has a standard eligibility determination which is used by all LEAs.</p>
<p>Department of Human Services</p>	<p>In order to identify applicants for Family Assistance benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, TANF and Medicaid) the Department has added the following question to the Family Assistance application: "Are you currently age 18-24 AND were you in state custody as a child? Yes or No." Family Assistance Bulletin 42 provides instruction to field staff completing eligibility determination interviews to direct applicants who answer "yes" to the following website: http://www.tn.gov/youth/services/interdependent.htm</p>
<p>Department of Health</p>	<p>As intake forms are being revised and updated, DOH will modify said forms for the WIC and CSS programs (our programs that provide cash or in-kind assistance) to incorporate a question to determine whether applicants age 18-24 have been in state custody.</p>
<p>Department of Labor & Workforce Development</p>	<p>The Electronic Case Management and Activity Tracking System (e-CMATs) database is used by all 13 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA) which serve as the administrative entities for Workforce Investment Act programs. This system is utilized by our department to maintain case files and compute performance reports which are submitted to USDOL Employment & Training. The database screens have data fields which can be marked to indicate a foster care participant. As part of the intake process, all youth are interviewed, assessed and given an Individual Service Strategy as prescribed by WIA section 129(c)(1). During this process individual characteristic information, including the barrier of foster care participant, is acknowledged and captured.</p>
<p>Tennessee Housing Development Agency</p>	<p>No response.</p>
<p>Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities</p>	<p>The Council provides no direct services, per our federal law. We generally share information about Council's activities through various presentations and our website and newsletter.</p>

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

<p>Question #2 Department of Mental Health</p>	<p>Methods of informing transitioning youth about available services and supports The DMH is committed to addressing the needs of youth transitioning to adulthood and to encouraging the Department's contracted agencies and RMHIs that serve youth in transition to adulthood to comply with PC 415 in identifying the youth in this age range and in providing them with the appropriate information. Additionally, DMH chairs the statewide Youth Transition Task Force, which is a forum for statewide stakeholders to examine issues facing youth in transition to adulthood.</p>
<p>Bureau of TennCare</p>	<p>DCS has the primary function in terms of informing transitioning youth about available services and supports. The major TennCare services available for the population of 18-21 year old youth are Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSD&T - also known as "TennCare") services. Informing and educating all children and adolescents, including transitioning youth, occur through outreach efforts of TennCare, the Department of Health and the Managed Care Contractors (MCCs). Methods include, but are not limited to, mailings, phone calls and health fairs.</p>
<p>Department of Education</p>	<p>Each LEA is responsible for preparing students for transition (page 5 of Easy IEP). Students receiving special education services must have a transition assessment and Focused Plan of Study (secondary courses) in place by 14 years of age (most students are being involved in their IEP development by this age). By the year they turn 16, students receiving special education services must be invited to the IEP meeting and must have in place an appropriately constituted plan that includes measurable post secondary goals based on an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transitions service needs. Other appropriate agencies may be invited if permission is obtained from the parents, guardian, or surrogate parent. Many LEAs have extensively developed transition programs which they often outline on their websites. Many of the LEAs are including transition programs and procedures for intermediate and middle school grades as well as secondary schools. Many LEAs offer transition brochure or parent training programs, Career Fairs and Transition Fairs and have all of their local agencies participate. Students, parents, guardians, and surrogate parents can meet with the local agencies and determine who they want to invite to their son's or daughter's IEP Team Meeting.</p>
<p>Department of Human Services</p>	<p>To ensure consistency in messaging, the DCS interdependent living website is the primary method by which DHS staff inform transitioning youth about services and supports. There is a link to the website on the DHS homepage.</p>
<p>Department of Health</p>	<p>DOH will share resource information (as provided by DCS) to former foster youth and youth transitioning from state custody.</p>
<p>Department of Labor & Workforce Development</p>	<p>State staff, administrative entity staff and sub-contractor staff are all trained and required to provide information to youth participants who are in transition, including those in foster care. Each LWIA has a Youth Council which works in conjunction with the Local Workforce Investment Board to design the framework of its youth program. Each Youth Council has performed resource mapping of all services available to transitioning youth within their respective counties. Through this process, contractors are chosen on a competitive basis and a system of available referrals is identified (WIA Section 123). The TDLWFD staff provides additional training to LWIA staff through a series of quarterly meetings and by using correspondence throughout the year. Because our WIA Youth Services program manager actively participates with the PC 415 Advisory Council, any new information is provided to our LWIA as soon as that information is available.</p>
<p>Tennessee Housing Development Agency</p>	<p>No response.</p>
<p>Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities</p>	<p>We share information about the Council grants and activities via presentations, our website, and our newsletter.</p>

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

<p>Question #3</p>	<p>Other updates to policies or procedures to better serve transitioning youth</p>
<p>Department of Mental Health</p>	<p>In the coming year, DMH will review scopes of service in all contracts that may serve transition age youth to include language that would ensure youth who have been in the custody of the state are properly identified and informed of resources available to them under PC 415.</p>
<p>Bureau of TennCare</p>	<p>TennCare does not have specific policies or procedures relating to services for transitioning youth. However, challenges specific to this population are identified during the quarterly meetings held with DCS and the MCOs, and proposals are made to work toward resolution of these issues. During these discussions, recommendations may be made to formulate policies, as needed.</p>
<p>Department of Education</p>	<p>The Division of Special Education prepares an Interagency Agreement as prescribed in the IDEEA on an annual basis (it is in the process of being updated this year). Last year, we prepared a grid to accompany the Interagency Agreement so that we could clearly lay out responsibilities. We included DCS staff members in our regional Transition Trainings and the Easy IEP Help Desk staff traveled to convenient locations to train DCS staff on the appropriate development of IEPs through the Easy IEP system. Our Help Desk staff can now transfer student IEPs with no waiting period for paper copies to be mailed.</p>
<p>Department of Human Services</p>	<p>None required; updates already implemented.</p>
<p>Department of Health</p>	<p>The Children's Special Services (CSS) program requires that care coordinators complete a transition checklist on all enrolled participants. CSS is currently reviewing national guidelines regarding transition to adulthood for children and youth with special health care needs (CSHCN) and working to update the transition planning process for participants. The Maternal and Child Health Section, as part of the 2010 five-year needs assessment, identified transition planning for CSHCN as a state priority measure for the 2010-2015 period.</p>
<p>Department of Labor & Workforce Development</p>	<p>Training and Employment Notice No. 18-05 is the policy provided as guidance to LWIAs concerning the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. The policy provides an overview of services available to youth transitioning out of the foster care system. The policy also outlines how WIA programs can act as collaborators and leverage resources to obtain a positive outcome. The WIA identifies several barriers a youth participant may have to qualify that youth as eligible (WIA section 101 & 127). As part of its State Plan, the TDLWD has submitted to USDOL, Tennessee's intention to focus on serving the neediest of needy. LWIAs must evaluate participants and serve those with the most identified barriers, including foster care. The full State Plan is available via web access at http://www.tn.gov/labor-efd/et_services_prog_mgmt_plng.html. The TDLWD has also taken a leadership role in assisting with the development of the pilot Regression Model performance system which USDOL has adopted nationwide. The purpose of the regression-adjusted performance target setting is to provide a transparent, objective- and evidence-based framework that accounts for factors outside the control of state and local public workforce administrators. By adjusting the characteristics of participants served by LWIAs, regression-adjusted targets encourage workforce system providers to more extensively serve populations with significant barriers to employment.</p>
<p>Tennessee Housing Development Agency</p>	<p>No Response</p>
<p>Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities</p>	<p>There have been no updates to policies or procedures needed as of this time, but we are always open to improving our public awareness and outreach efforts.</p>

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Question #4	Information the Department of Children's Services could provide to you to inform and update your department about available post custody services
Department of Mental Health	Information from DCS that would assist DMH in complying with PC 415 would be an annual updated list of available resources in all 95 counties for youth in post custody.
Bureau of TennCare	Not applicable. Regular communication occurs as previously noted.
Department of Education	It would be helpful for us to know the Permanency Plan goals for a student so that we could make our transition plans more meaningful (we want our students to be able to articulate their goals so that we can offer the appropriate services to help them get to their goals). As part of the revision of the Interagency Agreement, it would be helpful to us to have information about DCS services so that we can share this list of resources with the LEAs.
Department of Human Services	It is vital that DCS keep the DCS interdependent living website up to date. DCS may want to consider a re-design of the site to provide a clearer picture of available services on the main page.
Department of Health	Brochures or web links to resource programs; information about health insurance coverage options for children who transition out of state custody.
Department of Labor & Workforce Development	The continued participation of DCS in PC 415 Advisory Council and on other state collaborative bodies has been the most effective way for our department to obtain information to implement cross-agency collaborations, such as the WIA Summer Employment Program in 2009.
Tennessee Housing Development Agency	No Response
Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities	At this time, we are not aware of any information that the Department of Children's Services could provide to the Council to inform and update the Council about available post custody services.

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Question #5	Any participation your Department has had with the Advisory Council
Department of Mental Health	DMH staff has attended the past PC 415 Advisory Council meetings (held by the GOCCC and now by TCCY) and was actively involved in the earlier DCS meetings, which preceded the creation of the PC 415 Advisory Council.
Bureau of TennCare	TennCare does not currently have any direct involvement with the Youth Transitioning Advisory Council. Having completed further research as to the work of this Council, we welcome the opportunity to work more closely with them.
Department of Education	The Department of Education, Division of College and Career Readiness has been participating in the Youth Transitions Advisory Council.
Department of Human Services	This response also partly addresses question 2 as well; however, DHS has dedicated staff, specifically eligibility counselors in most cases that participate with the courts and other service providers to complete case review of the youth aging out of foster care to ensure that the client is aligned with and aware of all the services our department provides. These staff provide their input and expertise for the design of the plan for AOY. To date, we've had full participation everywhere a council exists.
Department of Health	Jacqueline Johnson, Director of Children's Special Services, has been a regular participant in the conference calls and in-person meetings.
Department of Labor & Workforce Development	The TDLWFD has fully participated in the PC 415 Advisory Council since its inception and sees it as a vital part of our service's Strategic Vision for Youth. The Advisory Council has been a great resource to our department in identifying collaborations and means of improvement. Christy Montgomery, Grants Program Manager for Youth and Planning serves as our agency's designated representative. She may be reached at christy.montgomery@tn.gov or 615-741-3872.
Tennessee Housing Development Agency	THDA has not participated with YTAC previously, but we would welcome the opportunity to participate going forward.
Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities	The Council has been invited to do a presentation to the Advisory Council in the near future.

Appendix D
Resource Center Reports

Youth Transition Advisory Council Year End Resource Center Report

SMA, Inc.

History: SMA, Incorporated is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) agency that was established in the spring of 2000 by Mr. Reginald Milton, who is an inner-city Community Organizer. This was after he had spent years helping in some of the poorest communities in the State of Tennessee. SMA's mission is to improve the quality of life of families. By focusing on preventive intervention the goal is to help stabilize these families by addressing problems before they become a crisis.

SMA is one of the largest community based organizations in the City of Memphis. Its board of directors was originally composed of local community leaders representing over 10 individual neighborhood groups.

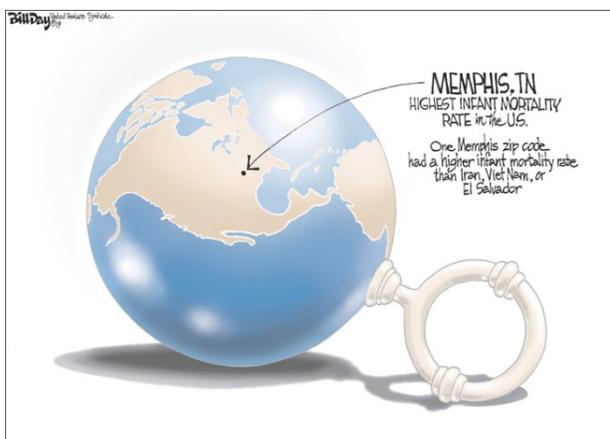
In 2002 SMA launched **Stand By Me – Juvenile Intervention**. Within three years this agency was providing more than 2,000 incarcerated youths annually with behavioral modification services. This program included HIV/AIDS Prevention, and anti-gang education.

In 2004 SMA created the **Opportunity Bank**. This program provides women with a 12-week course on how to successfully operate a small business. At the end of their training these future entrepreneurs can apply for funding up to \$5,000. Over 70 women have completed this program.

In 2005 SMA contracted with the Department of Children's Services to be the lead agency in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "**Family-to-Family Initiative**." SMA was contracted through DCS to provide behavioral modification services to youth in foster care as well as work to build the number of perspective foster parents. Over the years SMA has become a committed partner with DCS in its effort to ensure our children have safe, nurturing, and healthy homes.

Memphis has the highest infant mortality rate in the United States. In fact, the SMA Center is located in the 38106 zip code where the highest number of these cases are reported.

Realizing that preventive services cannot work if there is no effective way to access those who wish to be served; in 2006 SMA made its first venture into Social Entrepreneurship. The agency decided to operate a for-profit cleaning service that would cater to mothers. SMA purchased a run down Laundromat in the heart of the 38106 area. Within two years SMA was able to raise nearly a million dollars to convert this facility into a Laundromat/Mother Center. This state of the art center will include new energy efficient washers and dryers. It will also house satellite offices for the



Department of Children's Services, the University of Memphis' nutritional center, the Health Department Outreach Center and a medical health clinic that will provide free pre and post natal examinations. This center is expected to open in the fall of 2012.

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.

- **Core services:** Foster care advocacy, HIV/AIDS education and testing, substance abuse prevention, anger management & goal setting, and financial literacy.
- **Local Partnerships:** Tennessee Department of Mental Health, Division of Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services, Tennessee Department of Children's Services, JustCare Family Network, The Women's Foundation, The Assisi Foundation, and Memphis/Shelby County Government.
- **Successes:** We have successfully graduated 32 participants, several of which are continuing to participate via youth leadership board meetings and other youth engagement activities. We have filled a part-time position with one of our young people!
- **Challenges & Barriers:** Mainly the challenges we have experienced have been in developing an effective referral process, but that has been overcome and it is currently flowing much more smoothly. An ongoing challenge is consistent youth engagement. The barriers are that of transportation to which our solution has been to utilize a transportation company. This has helped, but there are still those who don't complete financial literacy classes for various reasons.
- **Next Steps:** As an active participant in monthly DCS Cross Functional meetings, we will capitalize on this opportunity to promote services for young people in care and communicate the referral process. We are also in the process of increasing our Community Partnership Board and garnering additional financial support for youth in care and exiting care. Sponsorship for IDA matches, stipends/incentives and computer equipment/building space are top priorities.
- **Number of Youth Served:** 32

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update

Report Completed by: Karen Morgan

Nashville Knoxville **Memphis (bold selection)**

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	27	5
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	16	5
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	0	1
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	90%	90%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	8	2
Number of new door openers created	5	3
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	1	1
Total number of participants in life skills classes	10	34
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	unknown	unknown
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	8	3

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Monroe Harding

- **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 16-23 who are currently in, or aging out of, the foster care system.

- **Core services**

Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 6 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 formally partners with the Department of Children's Services, Nashville Career Advancement Center and US Bank.

Youth Connections informally collaborates with Oasis Center, Y-Build, Job Corp, United Neighborhood Health Care, 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 60 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 purchased assets such as transportation and laptops for school.
- **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**
With a new President/CEO in place, Monroe Harding is in the midst of a new strategic plan that will allow the organization to continue to position itself as a leader in the community. Youth Connections, which recently relocated to the East Nashville area, will continue with the current programming and reaching out to additional young people while strengthening the manner in which we use the youth voice to improve our services.
- **# youth served**
Since its existence, Youth Connections has served over 600* youth.

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update
 Report Completed by: Pamela Cash

Nashville Knoxville Memphis (**bold selection**)

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	54	28
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	11	7
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	33	20
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	100%	100%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	Apr 83%/Oct 81%	April 86%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	0	0
Number of new door openers created		
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	21	21
Total number of participants in life skills classes	99	72
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	8	4

Youth Transition Advisory Council Report on Resource Centers

Child & Family Tennessee

- **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. Participants will be adolescents and young adults age 14 to 23 (until the client's 24th birthday), who have a current or previous connection to the State's foster care system. 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 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
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

- **Successes**

- To date, 18 youth have completed Financial Literacy courses and 16 have opened IDA accounts.
- 13 youth have kept their IDA accounts open to date.
- An additional 8 youth are expected to begin attending Financial Literacy courses this month.
- Thus far, 13 partnerships are in place and 4 Door Openers have been secured with formal MOUs.

- **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.
- One barrier to opening IDAs for youth under 18 is lack of a co-signer for their account.

- **Next Steps**

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

- Enroll youth in Financial Literacy courses,
- 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.

- **# youth served**

- Contact has been made with 37 youth total,
- 22 of the 37 youth began Financial Literacy courses; 18 youth have completed courses; 16 youth have opened IDAs.

Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update

Report Completed by:

Nashville **Knoxville** Memphis (**bold selection**)

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled		16
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered		11
# of Asset Specific Classes offered		0
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome		90%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey		N/A*
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings		10
Number of new door openers created		4
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held		4
Total number of participants in life skills classes		13
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment		N/A**
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered		8

* youth were not enrolled in time to participate in the April OPPS survey. OPPS data will be available after October 2011

**Pre/Post testing has not yet been made available. Plans are in place to begin using Pre/Post testing during FY2012

Appendix E
Youth Engagement Survey

Youth Engagement Survey - YTAC

Youth Engagement Survey -YTAC

The Tennessee Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) is responsible for making recommendations to the Tennessee General Assembly and policy makers on ways to improve the lives of youth aging out of state custody. As a young person, your input is very important to us. So, we are hoping to learn the best way to get your ideas and feedback.

Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey. Feel free to forward this survey to anyone under the age of 24.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey or the Youth Transitions Advisory Council, please contact Sumita Banerjee at sumita.banerjee@tn.gov or (615)532-1588.

Thank you in advance for your input and helping us find ways to engage youth in the Youth Transitions Advisory Council!

*1. How old are you?

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24

Other (please specify)

*2. Have you ever been in state custody? Please select all that apply.

- No
- Yes, foster care
- Yes, juvenile justice

If yes, were you in foster care or juvenile justice when you turned 18?

Youth Engagement Survey – YTAC

*3. Are you currently pursuing an education/degree/certificate?

- No
- Yes, High School Diploma
- Yes, GED
- Yes, Vocational Certification
- Yes, Associates Degree
- Yes, Bachelors Degree
- Yes, Post-College Degree

*4. Youth aging out of state custody may be eligible for a variety of services. Have you received any of the services listed below? If so, which ones? (Please select all that apply.)

- I have not received any services.
- Housing
- TennCare/Health Insurance
- Mental Health/Counseling (including alcohol & drug treatment)
- Resource Centers (South Memphis Alliance, Monroe Harding, Child & Family Tennessee)
- Education (i.e. GED, High School Diploma, Vocational training, etc.)
- Higher Education (i.e. college planning, college access, financial aid, etc.)
- Transportation
- Employment (i.e. job search skills, job training, career planning, etc.)
- Financial Assistance (SNAP/Food Stamps, TANF, WIC, etc.)
- Financial Management (i.e. financial planning, assistance with opening a bank account, etc.)
- Parenting Classes/Skills (if applicable)
- Department of Children's Services Independent Living Services
- Transitional Living Services
- Assistance from Faith Based Community (Church, Temple, Mosque, etc.)
- Assistance from Community Agency

Other (please describe)

Youth Engagement Survey - YTAC

5. How did you learn about the services listed in Question #4? Please select all that apply.

- Department of Children's Services (Case Manager, Family Service Worker, Independent Living Specialist)
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Department of Health
- Foster Parent
- Placement Staff (I.e. Group Home, Youth Development Center, etc.)
- Other youth formerly in state custody
- Court Staff
- Internet (I.e. Department of Children's Services website, Google search, etc.)
- I did not know about available services

Other (please specify)

6. In question #4, if you selected you have not received any services/assistance since turning 18, what is the main reason you did not?

- Services did not meet my needs
- I did not wish to continue services with the Department of Children's Services/other state agencies
- I did not need services at the time
- I was not aware of these services
- I did not qualify for the services

Other (please specify)

Youth Engagement Survey - YTAC

***7. What do you think is the main reason other youth do not accept available transitioning services?**

- Services do not meet their needs
- They do not wish to continue services with the Department of Children's Services/other state agencies
- They do not need services at the time when they are transitioning out of state custody
- They are not aware of the services
- They do not qualify for the services

Other (please specify)

***8. Some youth transitioning out of state custody do not know about the services that may be available to them. What do you think is the best way to inform youth of available services? Please select up to three answers.**

- Facebook (creating a group page)
- Website
- Email
- Text Messages
- Face-to-face meetings
- Community groups
- Additional Information prior to exiting state custody

Other (please specify)

Youth Engagement Survey - YTAC

***9. In previous surveys, youth formerly in state custody identified five key areas they believe are important in helping youth transition successfully. Which two areas do you believe are most important for the Youth Transitions Advisory Council to address?**

- Functional Inter-personal Relationships - Positive relationships with an adult who can help make important decisions, be a role model, etc.
- Housing and Basic Necessities - A place to live and feed to eat
- Economic Capacity/Education and Job Readiness - Help finding a job, paying for an education, learning a skilled trade, etc.
- Health and Mental Health Care - Access to health insurance/treatment, alcohol and drug treatment, mental health counseling, etc.
- Transportation - Help getting a car, lack of public transportation, car maintenance, getting a drivers license, etc.

Other (please specify)

***10. Your input is very important to us, what do you think is the best way to communicate with youth? Please select up to two answers.**

- Facebook
- Text Messages
- Online Surveys
- Phone Surveys
- In Person Meetings/Surveys
- E-mail

Other (please specify)

***11. Would you be willing to provide input and feedback to the Youth Transitions Advisory Council in the future?**

- Yes
- No

If you selected 'Yes,' please enter your contact information below (Name, email address, phone number). Your information will be kept confidential.

Youth Engagement Survey - YTAC

Thank you for participating in this survey! Your input is very important to the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. Please contact Sumita Banerjee at sumita.banerjee@tn.gov or (615)532-1586 if you have any follow-up questions, concerns or would like to learn more about the Youth Transitions Advisory Council.