



Youth Transitions Advisory Council
Annual Report – October 2018

Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Richard Kennedy, Executive Director
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STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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TO: Members of the Tennessee General Assembly
FROM: Richard Kennedy, Executive Director
DATE: October, 31, 2018
RE: *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2018 Report*

In accordance with T.C.A. 37-2-601 – 37-2-606 the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth is pleased to provide the 2018 Annual Report of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council brings dedicated advocates together from all across the state who are developing and implementing new strategies to meet the challenges of engaging former foster youth as they make the critical transition from adolescence to adulthood. This report outlines the work of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council as the members continue to develop strategies to assist these young adults as they prepare for success in the lives ahead of them. Included in this report are the **ACCOMPLISHMENTS** of the Council in 2018 and a number of recommendations for continued improvement in providing services for former foster youth.

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. As we all know from experiences with the young adults in our lives, and as a growing body of research confirms, the human brain continues to grow and develop well past the age of 18. Brain executive functions of such as good judgment and understanding the consequences of our actions are among the last to develop, often in the mid-twenties. Additional research shows that trauma and adverse childhood experiences affect the outcomes of many of these young people.

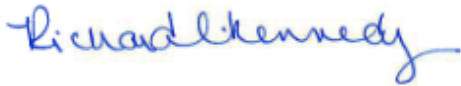
For former foster youth, the challenge of that transition is even greater because they often lack the important emotional and financial support nurturing parents provide their adult children. Prior to the advent of extension of foster care services, former foster youth often were left to fend for themselves upon aging out of state custody. Estranged from their families, lacking adequate education and social skills, many of these young people found themselves in dire circumstances, unable to meet their daily needs, continue their education, compete for jobs, find suitable housing or access adequate health or mental health care services. Many former foster youth experience homelessness, unplanned pregnancies or have encountered the criminal justice system because they aged out of custody without the proper tools to face the challenges of modern life most adults experience today. Extension of foster care services allows these youth the opportunity to complete or continue their education, with access to

health care, housing assistance and other supports to help them succeed in life, while at the same time playing an important role in achieving the goals Tennessee has set for improving graduation rates, increasing educational attainment, building stronger families and creating safer communities.

Youth with behavioral health and substance abuse issues face many of the same barriers to success as they transition from child to adult serving systems. Young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have additional challenges. Services funded by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Services and TennCare play an important role meeting the needs of these young people.

The Youth Transitions Advisory Council and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth express appreciation to the members of the General Assembly for the opportunity to improve the lives of these young people, and for appropriating much needed funding to the Departments of Children's Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Bureau of TennCare to assist these youth at this critical time in their lives. We hope you will find the resources necessary to continue to fund essential services so all Tennessee youth have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Kennedy, Executive Director
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth
Chair, Youth Transitions Advisory Council

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2018

In 2017, DCS partnered with representatives from the Jim Casey Initiative (JCI) and Main Spring (MC) to begin analysis exploring expanding Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) to include the two remaining eligibility criteria: Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; and employed for at least 80 hours per month. DCS knows that the two main reasons for termination of services are youth not maintaining academic eligibility and youth requesting termination of services. During FY 2018 DCS compiled a significant amount of data for the fiscal and program analysis around several different program expansion prototypes. The draft analysis was completed and a second meeting with DCS executive and senior staff in June 2018 to review results and discuss finalizing the report. DCS is scheduled to complete the final report in October 2018 and make a decision on moving forward with some type of expansion. Expanding eligibility for Extension of Foster Care Services to youth seeking employment opportunities would allow more to remain in the program while they restore their academic eligibility or pursue a full-time employment.

Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) was provided to 709 youth in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. This reflects the total youth participation, regardless of the year they accepted services.

In 2018, the mean retention days for remaining in Extension of Foster Care Services was 271 down slightly from 284 days in 2017, but more than the 259 days in 2016. DCS will continue to evaluate supports needed to increase retention of youth in EFCS.

Forty-six percent of eligible youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services in FY 2017-18, slightly up from 44 percent in FY2016-17.

	Total Aged Out	Total Aged Out Eligible for EFCS	Eligible Population Accepting EFCS	Percent Accepting EFCS
FY 2008-09	1209			
FY 2009-10	1162			
FY 2010-11	1131	813	163	20%
FY 2011-12	1084	748	201	27%
FY 2012-13	1017	768	301	39%
FY 2013-14	984	779	312	40%
FY 2014-15	932	731	353	48%
FY 2015-16	996	815	388	48%
FY 2016-17	935	793	349	44%
FY 2017-18	961	790	367	46%

In FY 2018, there were 541 youth utilizing the Educational and Training Vouchers and Bright Futures scholarships. Both Educational and Training Vouchers and total scholarships are at the highest level in five years.

FY	ETV	Bright	Total
2013	282	126	408
2014	262	139	401
2015	357	145	502
2016	357	144	501
2017	346	137	483
2018	411	130	541

Tennessee DCS Office of Independent and Transitional Living have provided training to 945 participants. Trainings included education on transition plans, independent living services, understanding the transitioning population and youth engagement.

Training Group	Participants Trained
Court	217
DCS	409
Foster Parents	161
Other	41
Provider Agency	116
Youth	427
Grand Total	945

As of June 2017, 3,367 former foster youth were enrolled in TennCare under provisions of the Affordable Care Act allowing state Medicaid programs to provide health insurance to youth who turn 18 in foster care up until age 26.

TN DCS utilizes the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data to help understand the circumstances of our transition aged youth. The most recent NYTD submission contains survey data for 21-year-olds formerly in foster care, collected October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. This is a partial year's submission and included the following data:

- 65 of 106 youth participated in the NYTD 2018A 21 year old follow-up survey
- 32 reported as Unable to Locate/Invite
- 89 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported having connections to an adult
- 35 percent participating 21-year-olds reported having children

- 38 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported being Homeless during the past two years
- 32 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported being incarcerated during the past two years

This year one youth from the Mid-Cumberland area was selected to be one of The Foster Club's Outstanding Young Leaders. This was an opportunity for young people with personal experience in the foster care system to spend time with their congressional representative, as well as White House officials, in Washington, D.C., and participate in a Shadow Experience where youth and policymakers met to learn from one another. Young people in and from foster care were able to speak to and learn from Congress and the White House members while gaining a "hands-on" understanding about how the U.S. government operates.

In FY 2018, a youth from Middle Tennessee was selected as a Jim Casey Young fellow by the Jim Casey Initiative and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This youth represented Tennessee in national meetings and events providing knowledge and insight related to the needs and experiences of youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

This year the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative also hosted a Youth Engagement Convening that allowed DCS to bring three youth from West, Middle and East Tennessee to attend the two day convening that focused on learning concepts on youth engagement as a strategy and fueling inspiration for authentic Youth Engagement. Youth from TN were featured during the event speaking on a panel about race and ethnic inclusion and presenting their thoughts on what authentic youth engagement meant to them.

During FY 2018, eight peer advocates supported 785 youth at foster care review boards in the following counties or courts: Blount, Davidson, Coffee, Maury, Sumner, Shelby and Johnson City. DCS renewed a five year contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts to train and support Peer Advocates in each existing and future Model Foster Care Review Board (MFCRB). Peer Advocate duties and responsibilities include being present at each MFCRB, reviewing documents and information packets on each youth being reviewed, meeting with each youth before their scheduled time to discuss any concerns that youth may have and sharing IL-related information on services, being with the youth during the review to support that youth and helping articulate their concerns and preferences, and providing recommendations and feedback to the MFCRB on each youth's IL and transition plan. Each Peer Advocate receives a stipend for their participation.

The Office of Independent Living continues to coordinate two grand regional Youth 4 Youth Board meetings in collaboration with community-based partners. Meeting topics and activities vary from region to region, but all offer a variety of informational presentations by professionals,

team building events, public services opportunities, focus group and discussion topics, skill and knowledge training, college tours, and fellowship with other foster youth.

FY 2018

Region	Y4Y meeting	Attendance	Avg. attendance
Middle	8	41	5
West	11	131	12

Under the federally-funded PREP contracts Leadership Academy Camps continue to be a success. Coordinated by the Harmony Family Center, this two-day event is held at the scenic Camp Montvale in Maryville, Tennessee, where youth participate in a spectrum of events around team building, IL skill development, sexual health and family planning, and fellowship with other foster youth, including ropes courses, wall climbing, equestrian therapy, swimming, hiking, preparing meals, and, of course, campfires and s'mores. This year DCS and Harmony staff created an experimental all-female "Glam Camp" that served nearly 30 girls. Feedback from youth and staff was very positive.

This year the camp served a total of 70 youth ages 17-24 from across the state. Youth feedback continues to be positive, and staff report, though organizing and implementing the camp is a lot of work, it is worth the effort. DCS has partnered with other divisions at DCS and contract provider agencies for assistance with recruiting youth and is looking forward to another year of hosting camps.

Tennessee CASA provided Training of Facilitators for 85 CASA staff on National CASA's new CASA Pre-Service Volunteer Training Curriculum. The updated curriculum now includes a chapter on advocating for older youth, adolescent development, and laws pertaining to older youth in care. All new CASA volunteers will receive this training prior to being assigned a case in order to provide effective advocacy for transitioning youth.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health Services (TDMHSAS), in collaboration with Youth Era, created and developed a training curriculum for a Young Adult designation of the Certified Peer Support Specialist program, a specialized training and certification program tailored to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults. This curriculum is in the final approval stages, and the first training cohort of Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialists (CYAPSS) will take place in the coming fiscal year.

TDMHSAS hired a Young Adult Engagement Coordinator who has been working with the Healthy Transitions Statewide Youth Coordinator, the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC), and the local System of Care Across Tennessee sites. Through a partnership between TDMHSAS and Tennessee Voices for Children (Healthy Transitions and System of

Care Across Tennessee), a peer leadership academy was held in August 2018 to include trainings for youth, young adults, and families. There were 19 youth and young adults (Y/YA) that attended the Y/YA track that focused on helping Y/YA gain the skills to become empowered leaders and speak out about mental health issues. There were speakers and presenters from NAMI Davidson, YouthMOVE National, and Southern Word, as well as keynote sessions that focused on prosocial leadership and implicit bias.

The TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) has met at least monthly and has participated in ongoing activities to ensure youth and young adult voice and input at the state level, including:

- Participating on the Council on Children’s Mental Health and Youth Transitions Advisory Council
- Being awarded a Dare to Dream America Grant to plan and execute the Second Annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Resource Carnival and to continue their Humans in Real Life project (a Humans of New York-inspired photo campaign that focuses on mental health, substance abuse, and systems involvement)
- Participating in multiple trainings and conferences such as: a Youth Mental Health First Aid training, the 2017 Young Adult Leadership Academy, a Building Strong Brains: ACEs training, and the System of Care Across Tennessee conference.
- Providing input on upcoming Framelabs to be held across the state, a partnership between TDMHSAS and the Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth meant to train community partners on the importance of using effective messaging strategies and to facilitate group conversations brainstorming ways we can more effectively develop messaging around youth/young adult mental health.

TDMHSAS staff and two Healthy Transitions staff at the local level started the process of becoming Certified Site Based Trainers of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model, an evidence-informed approach for effectively engaging and working with youth and young adults.

OnTrackTN teams served one hundred youth and young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis.

TDMHSAS, in collaboration with Vanderbilt University’s Medical Center and the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), hosted a second statewide First Episode Psychosis Conference entitled “First Episode Psychosis: Walking Together on the Road to Recovery.” The conference was attended by approximately 180 statewide and national participants.

TDMHSAS made plans to partner with Helen Ross McNabb Center to implement an OnTrackTN team in Knox County in the upcoming fiscal year. As a result of the 2018 federal appropriations, there was an increase in the SAMHSA Mental Health Block Grant which resulted in additional funds being available through the 10 percent set-aside. During the next fiscal year, these funds will be used to 1) expand services to Hamilton County through an Announcement of Funding and 2) ensure support and fidelity of OnTrackTN teams through the use of a statewide trainer and consultant.

2018 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant was awarded to Woodbine Community Organization for the development of two shared living residences that will provide 16 single room occupancy units in Nashville. Each resident in the shared living project will have an accessible bedroom and private bath and will share the kitchen, living, dining, and laundry areas. The project also includes two SRO units for live-in caregivers. The grant amount was \$500,000. Woodbine Community Organization has partnered with Monroe Harding for the provision of onsite services to include continued education, vocational training and life skills. Other sources of funding include owner equity being provided by Woodbine.

DCS approved the concept of a pilot site in Chattanooga for “Victory Lap”, to provide housing for youth transitioning out of foster care in vacant units of senior living facilities. Promoters of the concept are seeking interested partner agencies for both the facility and case management provider in the Southeast region.

In FY 2016-2017, kidcentraltn.com saw continued growth in website traffic and email subscribers. Particularly through utilization of search engine marketing (SEM), the average number of unique monthly visitors and returning visitors continued to increase. Over the course of the year, kidcentraltn.com featured topics on its home page that are important to transitioning youth, such as articles about Tennessee Promise, Teen Peer-to-Peer Mental Health, and Help Your Teenager to be a Safe Driver. In September, 2018 kidcentraltn.com moved to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. In the time since kidcentraltn’s launch under TCCY the number of email subscribers has continued to increase along with social media interactions.

TCCY staff trained 323 people across the state in FY 2018 to provide training to others in their own agency, program or community so ACEs prevention and mitigation can be fully integrated into services provided to children and families as part of *Building Strong Brains* Tennessee. Thus far in FY 2019, TCCY has trained 35 additional trainers and has accepted 150 individuals to participate in training for trainers events. Over the past three fiscal years, TCCY has trained 834 trainers from all over the state.

The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities continues to provide several offerings for transition-aged youth with disabilities. The Council provides leadership in Tennessee to assure

that services and supports are available to all Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Council conducts comprehensive reviews of state disability services, facilitates interagency collaboration and coordination, and educates the public and policymakers about best practices in the disability field.

Council staff conduct Youth Readiness Days (YRD), a one-day, four-hour workshop delivered in different high schools throughout the state. In this past fiscal year, YRDs took place in East TN in Sullivan County; in West TN in Lauderdale County and Middle TN in Metro Nashville, in conjunction with STEP (Support & Training for Exceptional Parents) staff. Students learned about the importance of self-advocacy; the “reality check” of transitioning to adulthood; state resources and services that would be helpful for transition-age youth, and the need to develop a one-page plan that identifies their attributes and skills, their “good day/bad day” scenarios, what was important to and for them, and life activities that require support from another person or the service system for success. The Council has presented approximately 30 of these YRDs to date.

In 2016 the Council came up with a new youth training delivery model. In an effort to foster collaboration with the state’s Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Statewide Independent Living Council that shares many of the same priorities as the Council and Tennessee’s Developmental Disabilities Network agencies, the Council proposed a four-day non-residential Youth Leadership Academy to take place in the region covered by each CIL. Like the aforementioned YLFs and YRDs, this program emphasizes planning for life after high school, developing self-advocacy and independent living skills, and information about services and resources in the community for transition-aged youth.

In June 2017, the Council piloted its first YLA with T.A.R.P., Inc. (Training, Advocacy, Referral, Peer Support and Transition) the CIL in Paris, Tennessee. In June 2018, the Council and Empower Tennessee (Middle TN’s Center for Independent Living) co-facilitated a YLA, which also featured sessions on problem solving and disability identity and pride. This initiative was so successful that plans are already underway for a second Council/Empower YLA in the summer of 2019.

Chambliss Center for Children in Chattanooga opened four more Transitional Living units this year, bringing the total number of units to 10. We have one additional unit currently under renovation. Each unit is single occupancy and includes all the amenities a young person should need; intensive case management is also provided to assist the youth in reaching their full potential. Youth receive a fully-furnished, single-room duplex unit with all utilities paid, including internet. Youth also receive a monthly bus pass, weekly allowance for groceries, cell phone service, connections with opportunities at local colleges and trade schools, and access to life skills training and financial management classes through our local resource center (I Am Ready Center). Youth are provided a home cooked meal each Monday through our volunteer-supported Homemade Monday Program. Additionally, we are currently developing a

“Cheerleader” program, where local volunteers sign up to provide regular care packages to encourage our resident youth as they progress through the school semester.

Organizations and individuals involved with the Youth Transitions Advisory Council continue to exhibit a strong commitment to the success of transitioning youth and strive to provide opportunities for young adults facing challenges.

Last year foster youth participating in TOP® provided 13,995 hours of service to Tennessee communities. Young men at Mt. View Youth Development Center volunteered at a local food pantry. Youth at Florence Crittenton in Knoxville made posters and t-shirts to raise awareness about human trafficking in TN. Young men at Lebanon Academy walked dogs and cleaned cages at a local animal shelter.

In FY 2018, TOP® was implemented at 22 locations across the state. Oasis staff completed seventy (70) hours of onsite monitoring and coaching with site staff. One hundred twenty two (122) participated in TOP® training, gaining skills in effective youth engagement and high quality group facilitation.

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS 2018

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

Though much work has been done to fulfill past recommendations, by the many stakeholders involved in this process, much more work is needed on several of the recommendations before they are accomplished, and some will be ongoing over the course of several years. The following items have been identified as issues yet to be resolved and serve as the recommendations of the Council for 2018.

NEW 2018 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The Department of Children's Services and the Youth Transitions Advisory Council should support and work together to implement changes to the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program made in the Families First Prevention Services Act signed into law in February 2018.** The Act extends the financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate supports and services to former foster care youth under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee) to age 23 and extends to age 26 eligibility for Education and Training Vouchers under Chafee, which are currently only available to youth up to age 23. **Tennessee Law should be amended to allow for implementation of these changes.**
- **Tennessee should accommodate new Federal Legislation, the SUPPORT for Parents and Communities Act, allowing Medicaid reciprocity for former foster youth to age 26 who turned 18 while in custody.** This would allow foster youth the freedom to move from one state to another without fear of losing their health insurance. Many former foster youth would like to relocate to further their education, seek employment, or be with family or supportive adults, but cannot do so due to the risk of losing health insurance.

- **TennCare should allow youth who age out of foster care to remain on TennCare Select rather than changing MCO's**, to allow for a more seamless transition that avoids unnecessary changes in providers or interruption of medically necessary services.
- **The Department of General Services should consider offering surplus computers to youth involved in the child welfare system, as well as foster families to provide support in meeting their education needs.** Currently, the State of Tennessee makes its surplus computers available to local schools after the data has been cleaned off the hard-drives. Providing children and youth in foster care with computers will assist them in meeting their long-term education goals.
- **Tennessee should waive tuition and fees at schools in the state higher education system for youth aging out and for youth in the child welfare system above the age of 16.** Youth in foster care or who exit foster care at older ages face challenges meeting their basic needs when attending post-secondary programs. Some may be ineligible for Pell Grants and other federal aid due to their placement status while in custody. Even with federal aid and DCS scholarships available, it often takes time for these funds to be made available to the youth via refunds. Some program costs may result in barely enough funding to cover tuition, leaving little if any left for needs such as living expenses and transportation. Also, Tennessee Promise does not cover 4 year university programs. **Waiving tuition and fees at state sponsored post-secondary programs for youth in or formerly in foster care would provide access to higher education to more of these youth, and free up funds for other expenses.**
- **Tennessee law should be amended to create a new tax credit for businesses who hire current and former foster youth to help them gain employment experiences that assist them in pursuing a career in the future.** The jobs you have early in your career play a significant role in future employment experiences, even affecting future salaries. Former foster youth want to work, but often lack an employment history or experiences, limiting access to anything but entry level positions and pay.
- **The Youth Transitions Advisory Council should develop internal processes to address strategies to implement new and ongoing recommendations, development of its Annual Report, and structure of its meetings.**

CONTINUING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Training is needed to increase disability sensitivity and awareness for those working with young people in the foster care system.** Staff working with foster care youth, and potentially families who are in the foster care system, should have access to disability

sensitivity and awareness training to ensure their interactions and communications with foster care youth with disabilities are effective and appropriate. This training can be conducted by staff at the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities for free.

- **Training/access to information is needed regarding services available to individuals with disabilities.** It is important for youth in transition to have access to information concerning services and resources that would help them. Youth with disabilities and the people who support them should be aware of **Tennessee Disability Pathfinder**, an information and referral office started by the **Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities** and the **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center**, that has staff who can answer questions over the phone about disability programs and services across the state. Pathfinder also hosts a comprehensive website of governmental and non-profit services and resources, which is updated regularly. In addition, it is vital for youth in transition to know about state programs like **Vocational Rehabilitation**, the **ECF (Employment and Community First) CHOICES** Program and other resources that can help them become more engaged in their communities and expand their access to employment opportunities.
- **Strategies are needed to help young adults be more aware of and more easily access information about the availability of resources and how to connect with them,** including providing handouts and implementing strategies to ensure information in online resources is current/relevant – kidcentraltn for state-funded services and Tennessee Disability Pathfinder for disability services. Easy access to information/services is important. Youth should be encouraged to help identify strategies for improved accessibility for information.
- Multiple Youth Leadership Groups exist in DCS (Youth 4 Youth), Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (Youth Leadership Council). Department of Health has also created a youth leadership group. **Children’s Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Health and Labor and Workforce Development are meeting to develop youth leadership strategies to connect and share information, speakers and other interactions between the groups and this work should continue.**
- ***Building Strong Brains Tennessee*** is focused on preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) whenever possible, and providing services and supports to children and families when they cannot be prevented, to mitigate the long-term impact on education, employment and lifelong physical and mental health. Young people transitioning from state custody to independence have, by definition, been exposed to ACEs. Young people transitioning from child to adult mental health, substance abuse and special education/vocational rehabilitation systems have also often been exposed to ACEs. Transitioning services need to focus on what has happened to these young adults

and provide the services needed to mitigate the impact and lead to recovery. **The funding for *Building Strong Brains* was increased in FY 2019 to \$2.45 million dollars and made recurring.**

- **Neuroscience confirms brain development is not completed until around age 25, with executive function in the prefrontal cortex the last skill to develop.** Trauma has a significant impact on developing brains, and children in state custody have all experienced trauma. As a result of still developing executive function, there is a need for assistance in addressing inhibitory control, working memory, cognitive flexibility, impulsivity, organization, planning and other executive function skills.
- Department of Children’s Services Youth Development Center and other programs serving children in Tennessee have incorporated **more evidence-based, trauma-informed services.** DCS contracts require evidence-based and trauma-informed services. These and other efforts should continue in collaboration with the *Building Strong Brains* goal to change the culture in Tennessee to focus on what has happened to youth.
- If Extension of Foster Care does not expand to provide services for transitioning youth who are employed, linkages should be established with other resources to **assist these and other young adults with employment readiness, skills for maintaining jobs, etc.**
- The Youth Transitions Advisory Council should **monitor any new federal legislation** affecting transitioning youth and identify strategies for their implementation. Tennessee should maximize opportunities to access any new federal funds for transitioning youth.
- **Tennessee DCS, foster parents and contract agencies should focus on earlier interventions with adolescents ages 14-16 year olds to help them prepare for adulthood.** Development of many of the skills needed for successful transition to adulthood should begin with younger adolescents. Decisions made during this time, especially related to education, have a long-term impact on educational opportunities and success.
- **If the immigration status for youth in foster care is in question, there is a need to clearly establish immigration status for youth before they turn 18.** The immigration status of young adults is important in determining their eligibility for certain services. There are also legal differences that relate to minors that are important, so DCS should assist youth in clarifying their status before they transition to adulthood. Improvements in practice and assistance for these youth can greatly improve their potential and prospects for being productive members of society and contributing to the overall economy. **DCS should continue efforts to involve attorneys who provide pro bono legal assistance in this process.**

- **There is a need for increased awareness regarding implications of immigration status for youth transitioning to adulthood. In addition to steps to clearly establish immigration status above, DCS should also work with providers to be sure they know when they do or do not have** to ask questions about immigration status and how immigration status impacts timely service eligibility.
- **There is a need to strengthen the connections between and among DCS and other state departments for an expansion in the service array to assist youth with disabilities or other special needs in the successful transition to adulthood.** Youth who have intellectual, developmental or physical disabilities often have a need for assistance. Special services for this group of transitioning youth include enhanced independent living skills, peer transitional support, support for college accommodations, access to vocational rehabilitation, Labor and Workforce Development programs, community colleges, etc. Efforts should be made to ensure youth are aware of new initiatives that emphasize employment opportunities and meaningful community engagement, such as TennCare’s Employment and Community First (ECF) program which *is* open to transition-aged youth with IQs 70 or above.
- **When children who are in custody are eligible for Social Security Supplemental Security Income (SSI), DCS and Department of Human Services (DHS) staff should assist them in the application process prior to transition.** Negotiating the application process for Social Security benefits is a daunting task, especially for young adults who have disabilities. TN DCS staff should assist youth in this process prior to transitioning as they often have access to medical, psychological and other records that would assist in the eligibility determination process. DHS staff should provide appropriate assistance to TN DCS staff in completing the applications and assist in moving applications expeditiously through the process.
- **Transition-age youth who have never been in state custody need services and supports in much the same way former foster youth do.** As efforts have increased to facilitate access to services for adolescents to avoid state custody, many more youth who are very similar to those in foster care transition to adulthood without a stable, supportive and nurturing family. It is in the best interests of those young adults and the Tennessee community for services and supports to be provided to help them become productive, successful adults. The Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services has three programs funded by SAMSHA providing services to transition age youth: Treatment and Recovery for Youth, Healthy Transitions, and On Track TN. On July 1, 2016, TennCare and DIDDS began providing services for transition age youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities through its Employment and Community First/Choices program.

- **DCS should identify and implement strategies to provide bridge assistance for young people during the initial period of transition.** When transitioning youth experience a gap in assistance that leaves them dependent on unstable and/or unsupportive families or friends, it can result in loss of opportunities to establish a path toward success. Strategies should be in place to ensure they have access to essential supports, including housing and basic needs, until time for college enrollment, move into campus housing, etc. Programs provided by Park Center and YVLifeSet include some limited services to address this need.
- **DCS should implement best practices for pregnancy prevention and for pregnant and parenting adolescents statewide.** These practices should especially be implemented in residential programs, through Resource Centers and other programs/providers. Access to voluntary long acting reversible contraceptives should be available for young women to avoid pregnancy. For those who are pregnant and parenting, best practices assistance should be provided to help them have a healthy, successful pregnancy and become nurturing, supportive parents. Over the past year, efforts by private agencies, A Step Ahead, YVLifeSet, Sisters Saving Sisters implemented through the Resource Centers and the Oasis Center Teen Outreach Program have worked to reduce unplanned pregnancy and prevent HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. The TennCare Bureau has revised payment requirements for voluntary long acting reversible contraceptives to make them more readily available.
- **DCS should continue to identify and implement best practices for addressing the unique needs of youth who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ).** The increasing awareness of special issues related to LGBTQ youth highlights the need to improve practice for these youth. LGBTQ youth experience special challenges in custody and in transitioning to adulthood. Identification and implementation of best practices for dealing with these challenges should improve outcomes for these youth and young adults. DCS has a work group focused on policies and training, placements, safety, etc. DCS has policy on this, which is an accomplishment, though there is still work to do.

DCS Legal Issues

- **Transitioning youth need assistance resolving legal issues they may become embroiled in related to their lack of adult experiences and poor decision making.** Transitioning youth become involved in legal issues related to housing such as leases and evictions, family legal issues such as the custody of a child or divorce, and sometimes criminal activities. The Tennessee Bar Association and Access to Justice should establish a pro bono legal services program geared toward the 18-24 year old young adults who need assistance. The Law School Clinics should be encouraged to consider this as an area

where they might provide assistance. Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland has received funding for Gilbert Family Fellows to provide attorneys to address legal issues transitioning youth experience in the region.

- **Efforts should be made to identify pro bono legal assistance like that provided by the Knoxville Leadership Foundation to assist youth who have been in custody to pursue expungement of misdemeanor charges acquired prior to the age of 18.** Even minor offenses on a young adult's juvenile record can present serious challenges for successful transition to adulthood. Expungement would help alleviate barriers for youth related to education, housing, employment or military service. The Tennessee Supreme Court Access to Justice Program could provide leadership in this effort. Gilbert Family Fellows provide this assistance for youth in the Middle Tennessee area.
- **Juvenile Courts should review their practices for reporting to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation to ensure they are not reporting cases unnecessarily.** Unnecessary inclusion of the names and records of youth who have been involved with the juvenile court system presents serious challenges for successful transition to adulthood. These records have an adverse long-term impact on youth in areas like education, employment, housing and military service. The Administrative Office of the Courts should provide training for juvenile court judges regarding this issue. The Administrative Office of the Court has established a committee to review expungement practices as they related to juvenile courts and law enforcement.
- **The Youth Transitions Advisory Council should collaborate with DCS, Higher Education institutions and the Department of Education (DOE) and other stakeholders to develop better strategies to assist youth in maintaining academic eligibility.** The most likely reason youth become ineligible for Extension of Foster Care Services is due to academic ineligibility. Youth who lose Extension of Foster Care Services due to academic ineligibility may resume receiving services upon establishment of a new academic plan.

Essential Documentation Recommendation

- **DCS should continue to assist young adults with essential documents (birth certificate, Social Security card, education records, etc.) required for many aspects of adult living.** Essential Documents are listed on page seven of the current Department of Children's Services' "Independent Living and Transition Planning Guide," which can be found at <http://www.tn.gov/youth/dcsguide/manuals/ILTranPlanGuide.pdf>. Current DCS policy calls for all youth ages 17 or older exiting foster care to be provided with one complete set of essential documents required for participating in many of the adult educational, employment, public benefits and other systems. Youth should also receive

one set of copies to serve as backup information. Youth also need to be provided with information regarding how to safeguard the documents and procedures for obtaining replacement documents, if needed, and provided assistance when necessary to obtain replacement documents. More work is needed to identify and implement best strategies for securing the documents. DCS continues to work on this and reports currently the number of calls on annual basis is limited, largely to circumstances where youth have lost documents and/or caregivers will not give them access.

Educational Issues Recommendations

- As school systems in the state have scheduling autonomy, including whether they have a block or period system, **options should be available to foster youth who change schools and/or systems to ensure they are able to maintain acquisition of credits and do not lose the hours required for credits acquisition for graduation.** Transportation to the previous school system or other educational options should be provided by the Department of Children’s Services. **More collaboration is needed between DCS and local education agencies when placement decisions are being addressed.** Opportunities for success in school, especially including class scheduling, should be a consideration in placement decisions. School counselors should collaborate with DCS educational specialists to prevent discrepancies with credit acquisition and recovery, preferably at the time of enrollment. Concerns about the serious implications for youth of this continuing recommendation led to the legislation passed in 2015 to require a full diploma for certain youth who meet state credit requirements. While this serves a part of the problem, it does not and cannot address movement between systems with different scheduling (block or period). The issue also presents itself when the credits earned at programs with in-house schools do not transfer.
- **Department of Children’s Services staff and staff at the Department of Education, State Board of Education and Local Education Agencies should work together to facilitate successful transition of youth between and among schools.** This should include minimizing placement in alternative classes except in cases where such placement is required for school or child safety, primarily when youth have been adjudicated for the serious offenses that require notification to the school, or when placement is clearly linked to increasing the prospects for earning credit or participating in credit recovery/accelerated credit programs. **In any case, including when school notification is required, there should be an individual determination whether placement in an alternative school is necessary and appropriate.** Providing youth with an opportunity for a “fresh start” may facilitate their future educational and behavioral success and reduce the chances of them connecting/reconnecting with “negative” peers in alternative school. This would be consistent with efforts to ensure

services are provided in the least restrictive and most appropriate educational environment.

- **Staff with the juvenile courts and Department of Children’s Services and members of foster care review boards and model foster care review boards should acknowledge the importance of educational services in permanency plans.** Educational services should be recognized as the therapeutic services they are for child well-being. **Plans for placement change/return should consider school timetables whenever possible.** Examples include expediting return home or a planned placement change so children can begin a new school year/semester/grading period back in their home school or in their new placement. In contrast, return home or placement changes should be coordinated to accommodate the end of a grading period, semester or end of course testing. Plans should include strategies to ensure youth have sufficient “seat time” to be eligible to take end-of-course examinations.

Higher Education Recommendations

- **Strategies should be developed and implemented to ensure the necessary steps are taken so youth in custody are eligible to participate in Tennessee Promise.** DCS staff and other providers should assist transitioning youth, and information on how to do this should be communicated clearly in writing and through training by webinar or in person. The Oasis College Connections and other programs across the state, including Tennessee College Access and Success Network, should support youth in establishing eligibility for Tennessee Promise. Tennessee Promise should develop a pool of mentors for children who have been in foster care and young adults with other special needs (mental health, substance abuse, etc.), and those mentors should receive special training to equip them to support these students.
- **When youth transition plans include attending post-secondary education in Tennessee, the plans should include implementation of strategies for applying for financial aid (scholarships/loans/grants) and connecting youth with student life, disabilities and financial aid coordinators or other appropriate resources at higher education institutions to establish a support network for success at the institution.** While this is outlined in DCS policy, there are opportunities to improve its implementation. Youth should be advised of the need for caution in applying for student loans in many circumstances, and the importance of actually utilizing financial opportunities to advance their education. Youth should also be advised to apply for minority scholarships based on their experience in foster care. There is a need for additional help to maintain grade point averages and ongoing eligibility for EFC, etc. Support is needed at universities, community colleges and Tennessee Colleges of Applied

Technology to provide those young adults who had an IEP or 504 plan in high school with assistance in obtaining educational accommodations in post-secondary education.

- **State-funded higher education programs should explore the feasibility of providing a bus pass as a part of tuition costs, especially for youth transitioning from state custody.** Transportation is a major challenge for foster youth/former foster youth in terms of work and college. Some private institutions in Tennessee already include a local bus pass in their tuition costs. Transportation is an ongoing issue for transitioning youth, and a bus pass could have a major impact on their ability to attend and succeed in higher education. Efforts should be made to focus on transportation providers to enlist their assistance and guidance in identifying strategies to help with transportation options for former foster youth and other transitioning youth. An additional transportation barrier exists for youth who have physical disabilities and require the use of walkers, wheelchairs and scooters. Access to wheelchair-accessible transportation is extremely limited statewide, primarily with limited access in Davidson County. Youth with these challenges may require some extra support in accessing appropriate transportation in order to succeed in education, employment and other community integration pursuits.
- Participation in higher education is a major pathway to success for young adults, and especially important for youth who are/have been in state custody. **YTAC needs active participation by representatives of the higher education system in Tennessee to facilitate better understanding and implementation of strategies to address related issues experienced by these young adults.** Efforts should be made to engage representatives of the public higher education system (Tennessee Higher Education Commission/Board of Regents/University of Tennessee System) and the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association to participate with YTAC. DCS has met with the Chancellor of the State Board of Regents and the President of the Independent Colleges and requested representatives.

Housing

- **The Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) should continue to provide housing assistance opportunities for transitioning youth.** Housing continues to be a major need for transitioning youth. THDA has taken important steps to address this issue by including transitioning youth aging out of care as a priority population due to their increased risk of experiencing homelessness. Funding has been awarded to seven programs providing housing to transition-age youth. Funding has been provided through the Emergency Solutions Grant program for rapid re-housing and street outreach activities to Monroe Harding and the Oasis Center in Nashville. Funding has been provided through the Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grants Program for the development of permanent or transitional rental housing to the following: Keystone Development, Inc., Johnson City; Franklin Housing Authority; Crossroads Campus,

Nashville; Crossville Housing Authority; and Omni Community Services, Nashville. DCS and THDA should continue to collaborate on strategies to further expand housing options for this population, including consideration of identifying and implementing a dedicated funding stream to meet this need. Opportunities for collaboration between THDA and other funding streams should be explored to provide more young people with case management and other assistance in maintaining housing.

- **Young adults need assistance maintaining stable housing.** They often experience challenges as a result of adverse childhood experiences or intellectual and developmental disabilities. While more housing is needed, strategies are also essential to keep young people in existing and new housing – assistance addressing impulsivity, lack of executive function, etc. Housing options under independent living need to be expanded, especially including the provision of case management/supportive services.

Services and Supports Recommendations

- **Youth who are unable to achieve permanency by age 18 should be encouraged to utilize extended foster care services.** Permanency is the primary goal for all children in state custody. When they are unable to achieve permanency, all stakeholders who come in contact with these youth should encourage them to participate in extended foster care services. All eligible youth should be encouraged to enroll in EFC Services, and DCS should explore the opportunity to add other categories of eligibility allowed by Federal law. This would enable the state to draw down additional Federal funds to provide assistance for vulnerable young adults and provide opportunities to increase participation.
- **Funding for Resource Centers for transitioning youth should be continued and there should be analysis to determine the need for expansion.** Resource centers are important infrastructure for transitioning youth. Ongoing funding provides stability and serves as core funding around which other community dollars can be generated. As described in Tennessee Code Annotated 37-2-603, the resource centers that currently exist in Chattanooga, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville should provide a “one-stop shop” for foster youth and former foster youth. Youth often come for assistance in acquiring a GED, and then explore other needs. Optimally, assistance with financial management, job search and other related needs should be provided in one place to facilitate keeping youth engaged and ensure all their needs are met. Resource Centers may be needed in other areas in Tennessee as well, so there should be a review and analysis to determine if needs in other/rural areas justify expansion. In the absence of Resource Centers, other strategies are needed to provide core supports and services. Accessing Resource Centers on-line is an option to explore. Continuation of contracts for the four Resource Centers is essential to maintain current levels of support for youth aging out of foster care.

- **The YVLifeSet (Youth Villages Transitional Living Program) should be continued and funded on an ongoing basis.** Through a combination of state funds and matching funds, the Youth Villages contract was continued in FY 2014 and 2015, a major accomplishment. The Youth Villages Transitional Living Program is highly effective at ensuring youth aging out of care have the necessary skills and supports to be successful adults. Since the program started in 1999, it has served more than 5,000 youth across the state of Tennessee with a success rate of over 80 percent. Youth Villages’ commitment to the aging-out population is well documented. More information about this program is presented later in other parts of this report.
- **Various options to overcome transportation barriers are needed as this continues to be a great need for transitioning youth.** The bus pass option identified under “Higher Education Recommendations” and the provision of one-stop-shop Resource Centers discussed above to facilitate access to the broad range of needed services would both help address transportation barriers. Youth Villages has had a few automobiles donated to their program for youth. Youth at some Resource Centers have used matching funds in Opportunity Passports to purchase automobiles. Other creative strategies should also be identified and implemented.
- **The Department of Children’s Services has made great strides to facilitate continuation of TennCare eligibility for all foster youth who transition from state custody to adulthood, and these efforts should continue.** TennCare has advised TN DCS that they are automatically approved for continued TennCare under the former foster youth category as required by the Affordable Care Act. This facilitates ongoing access to needed health services and minimizes the likelihood there is a gap in or loss of coverage because paperwork is not completed timely. Clinical practice guidelines should be developed to focus on the needs of young people transitioning to the adult service systems, and health care providers should be aware of transition needs. DCS should monitor the process to ensure EFC youth are appropriately and timely enrolled as provided by the ACA. TennCare needs to be an active partner in facilitating ongoing eligibility. DCS has been reaching out to former foster youth to help them enroll for continued coverage when they are eligible. It would be helpful for youth to have some training in self-advocating for individual health care needs, especially to strengthen their ability to describe personal physical or mental health challenges that might interfere with their ability to become meaningfully-engaged adults in their communities.
- **All youth who are transitioning need to have a connection to a caring adult who is significant for them and who is available to provide support and guidance.** Mentors or coaches are needed for transitioning foster youth to provide a significant, ongoing supportive relationship, a kind of relational permanency. There should be consideration

of the development and implementation of funding for a contract(s) for mentoring/coaching services for youth who are transitioning to adulthood. These mentors/coaches need special training regarding the needs of youth who are transitioning to adulthood and the services and supports that are available to guide them on that journey. If the young person does not already have a connection to a caring adult mentor, when possible, mentors who have personal experience with the foster care system should be identified. As an alternative to a relative or other caring adult, a mentor or coach might serve as a “permanent mailing address” for youth, provide a stable point of contact or a repository for copies of essential documents as discussed earlier.

- **The Department of Children’s Services should identify appropriate strategies for transition support services for children who are adjudicated delinquent and do not qualify for Fostering Connections because they are in a secure placement prior to exiting custody.** Many of these youth are also in need of services to increase their opportunities to become successful, productive adults. Current funding levels present challenges, so strategies should be developed to address this need in the future. As noted in the Accomplishments section, three agencies were awarded funding for step-down placements from Youth Development Centers. Hopefully these additional resources will help address this need and enhance eligibility for EFC for youth adjudicated delinquent.
- **Transition plans should be individualized to meet the needs of each young person and should contain the information needed for accessing the services and supports identified by and for the youth for a successful transition to adulthood.** It should function as an individualized “handbook” to facilitate successful transition to adulthood for each young adult and should be based on the young person’s goals, skills, needs and strengths. DCS needs to continue to monitor and train for timely and improved transition planning, and the Administrative Office of the Court should train foster care review boards regarding the importance of good transition planning.
- **Youth in Youth Development Centers need access to Low-Fee Bank Accounts.** DCS should develop relationships with financial institutions to open low-fee bank accounts for youth in YDCs to encourage those youth to begin saving at an early age. Resource Centers already have established relationships with banks through the Opportunity Scholarship program and can assist.
- **Easily identifiable information regarding transitioning services should be available on a youth-friendly website.** DCS should contract for this activity to provide a user-friendly url for the site, but DCS should include language in the contract to ensure it “owns” the url in the event of contract changes in the future. The url for this site should be shared with young people as part of transition planning, and state and community-based organizations that serve former foster youth should share this site with young

people. In addition to other information, the site should include information regarding how to access essential documents. DCS should also share a working phone number with the same group for young people who have no or limited access to the internet so they could contact DCS for service information, including how to replace essential documents, if needed. Discussions regarding the best strategies for development, funding and hosting of a website for youth is ongoing. DCS created a page on its website to provide Independent Living information. Essential documents should be available: testimonials on Extension of Foster Care Services and information about eligibility for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. The Independent Living webpage is broken into sections for youth and staff and contains all IL policies and guides.

<https://www.tn.gov/dcs/article/dcs-independent-living-services>)

Legal System Issues Recommendations

- **The Department of Children’s Services should expand eligibility criteria for Extension of Foster Care** to include other categories of youth eligible under the Federal Fostering Connections legislation. Those categories include youth who are working or participating in work activities 80 hours per month or engaged in activities that lead to employment and need other assistance, including financial management, housing, transportation, etc.
- **Whenever safe and possible, youth in youth development centers should be stepped down to qualifying placements that make them eligible for extension of foster care services.** Appropriate transition plans should be made in sufficient time to facilitate such placements and connect youth with needed services and supports. Transition planning for youth in YDCs needs to begin early after admission as the average length of stay is about six months. As noted in the Accomplishments section, three agencies were awarded funding for step-down placements from Youth Development Centers. Hopefully, these additional resources will help address this need and enhance eligibility for EFC for youth adjudicated delinquent.
- **There is a need to increase the availability of model foster care review boards across the state where members have received special training regarding the needs of and resources for youth who are transitioning to adulthood.** Members of such foster care review boards can play a significant role in ensuring permanency and transition plans address the needs of youth who are transitioning to adulthood. Strategies used by model foster care review boards should be used by other foster care review boards to assist in their review of youth who are transitioning to adulthood. The AOC has an ongoing effort to develop model foster care review boards around the state. It is a lengthy process dependent solely on the cooperation

and desire of the Juvenile Court judge in that jurisdiction and availability of interested and qualified board members. In an effort to aid rural areas that have struggled to recruit certain professionals as board members, the AOC is developing manuals specific to each well-being component (i.e., health, education, etc.) to assist the boards with identifying barriers in each area and making quality recommendations to remove the barriers. A new initiative this year was the establishment of foster care review boards that solely review young adults in extension of foster care. This initiative is in collaboration with the Tennessee Board of Regents wherein faculty or staff serve as foster care review board member providing invaluable information to assist the young adults receive permanency. During FY 2018, four peer advocates served 54 EFC young adults in three counties with EFC boards.

- **Peer advocates are important resources working with current and former foster youth and model foster care review boards. DCS and AOC currently have a five-year contract for the AOC to train, monitor and supervise peer advocates. Funding for peer advocates should be continued and their availability expanded.** Peer advocates help youth feel comfortable and supported in the foster care review process. DCS and the Administrative Office of the Courts should explore ways to increase the availability of peer advocates for foster youth and former foster youth and identify additional ways to adequately support peer advocates. In Fiscal Year 2013, DCS entered into a five-year \$55,500 per year contract with the Administrative Office of the Court to train, monitor and supervise peer advocates to work with Specialized Foster Care Review Boards. The contract established training requirements for peer advocates and included provisions to pay travel, per diem and stipends for the peer advocates. During Fiscal Year 2018, 8 peer advocates supported 785 foster youth at foster care review boards in the following counties: Blount, Davidson, Coffee, Maury, Sumner, Davidson, Shelby and Johnson City. Though the goal for this past year was to have a peer advocate assigned to each county that has a model foster care review board, this was not possible due to lack of sufficient funding and lack of available peer advocates. There are 8 counties with model foster care review boards requesting a peer advocate.
- **Foster youth should be encouraged to register to vote when they are 18.** Research shows the earlier a person starts to vote, the more likely they are to continue to vote, and a photo id is required to vote. Foster youth should be encouraged to register to vote in person to ensure they are eligible to vote absentee if necessary in the first election after they are eligible to vote. Resource Centers and the YVLifeSet programs should encourage participants to register and vote. New DCS policy 31.6 provides guidance to ensure youth are provided an opportunity to register and encouraged to vote.

- **Tennessee law needs an amendment to provide a mechanism for continuing judicial oversight for youth, who were in custody in another state and are in Tennessee and otherwise eligible for receipt of Extension of Foster Care Services in order to facilitate their receipt of these services.** A mechanism is needed to ensure compliance with requirements for all young people who are eligible for and receiving EFC services in Tennessee. The Administrative Office of the Court’s Court Improvement Project has agreed to put this on the agenda for discussion in the coming year.
- **CASA programs should continue to educate both volunteers and youth about extended foster care services and challenges transitioning foster youth experience, and CASA volunteers should serve youth between ages 14 and 21.** CASA volunteers are important resources to help youth make successful transitions to adulthood. CASA volunteers and others who are working with transitioning youth should know the importance of linking them with appropriate educational, legal and other services and supports, and including those items in permanency and transitional living plans. DCS has met with CASA to encourage this emphasis on transitioning youth, and CASA has facilitated training of advocates to provide support for these youth. The Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth should encourage CASA programs to serve youth ages 14 - 21. The CASA Appointment Order specifies appointment of an advocate for children under the age of 18. CASA should explore the framework of advocacy necessary for serving youth ages 18 – 21 enrolled in Extension of Foster Care Services and explore a template for a CASA Appointment Order to serve these young adults. **Juvenile Court judges should be encouraged to appoint CASA volunteers for adolescents 14 and older, and even for older youth who are between ages 18 and 21.** As discussed throughout these recommendations, young adults who have been in foster care are still in need of a connection to a caring adult who can speak up for the young person’s needs and teach them to advocate for themselves.
- **The Department of Correction and Juvenile Court Judges should be encouraged to facilitate the continuation/development of strong bonds between children and their incarcerated parents,** especially mothers and daughters, as research indicates this is important for the success of both the children and their mothers.
- **Courts should ensure transitional permanency hearings occur and DCS legal services should file the pleadings necessary to ensure all factors to encourage successful transition to adulthood are addressed in transition plans and through other appropriate strategies.** Access to housing, educational services, employment, behavioral health services and other needed supports are important for successful

transition to adulthood and reduce the likelihood of homelessness, unemployment and criminal justice system involvement.

Training Recommendations

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

As reported in the “Accomplishments” section, during FY 2018, DCS trained 945 individuals. Whenever feasible, workshops regarding transitioning youth should be presented at appropriate regional and state conferences.

- **Juvenile court judges need ongoing training regarding the different authority they have related to youth who are receiving extended foster care services as young adults compared to youth under age 18 who are still in state custody or age 18 and still under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court for a delinquent adjudication.** While such training was provided at one point, this is an ongoing training need.

Implementation of new and continuing recommendations included in this report would represent an important step forward in providing the infrastructure needed to help young people who have been in state custody be successful. In general, the recommendations have not been prioritized, as they are interrelated, and there is not a single solution to the many challenges faced by these young adults. As the legal parent for young people who have been in state custody, it is the responsibility of the State of Tennessee to provide the resources necessary for them to successfully transition to adulthood.

OVERVIEW

Since its inception in 2009, the Youth Transitions Advisory Council has brought together advocates from all child serving agencies in state government to assist in efforts to improve the lives of youth transitioning to adulthood. Whether aging out of foster care or moving from child serving systems providing treatment or care for those with mental health, substance abuse or intellectual and developmental disorders, Tennessee has been a leader among states in assisting young adults navigate the challenges of modern life.

The number of youth participating in Extension of Foster Care services remained at a high level. The rate of participation of those eligible in Extension of Foster Care Services was 46 percent in 2018. Slightly more young people aged out of foster care in 2018 than the previous year and fewer were eligible. The total number of young people participating, 792, was significantly more than the 743 served in 2017. The number of days young people remained in Extension of Foster Care fell slightly from 284 days in 2017 to 271 days in 2018.

One hundred twenty-four young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services obtained a high school diploma (114) or HiSET (10) and 18 completed post-secondary education in FY 2018.

Youth Villages YVLifeSet, served about 726 youth each day in Tennessee and 1,629 youth participated in the program in FY 2017. Other data for 2017 found 92 percent in school or graduated, 89 percent living with family or independently, and 85 percent had experienced no trouble with the legal system in the last 12 months.

Tennessee's four Resource Centers serving youth aging out of foster care continue operations: Helen Ross McNabb Project Now in Knoxville, South Memphis Alliance in Memphis, Monroe Harding Youth Connections in Nashville, and in Chattanooga, IAMREADY Center. All four Resource Centers provide life skills, asset management training through the Opportunity Passport, sexual health education (Sisters Saving Sisters) employment assistance and other services unique to the needs of their youth. The Resource Centers provide specific details of their success later in this report. The resource centers served 707 young people who had aged out of foster care.

Tennessee Housing and Development Agency continues to put emphasis on serving foster youth due to their high risk of homelessness for the past several years. In 2018, THDA awarded a TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Woodbine Community Organization for the development of two shared living residences that will provide 16 single room occupancy units in Nashville. The Woodbine Community Organization partnered with Monroe Harding for the provision of onsite services to include continued education, vocational training and life skills. Other sources of funding include owner equity being provided by Woodbine.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services provides two programs serving transition age youth and young adults suffering from or at risk of serious emotional disturbance or substance abuse. These efforts support sustainability of behavioral health services in Tennessee that meet the unique needs of youth and young adults at risk of developing a serious mental health condition and/or co-occurring disorder or experiencing a first episode of psychosis.

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative works with youth and young adults with or at risk of developing a serious mental health condition and/or co-occurring disorder in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. Healthy Transitions provides targeted and innovative awareness, outreach, and specialized treatment and recovery support services to the following prioritized populations of youth and young adults ages 16-25: those in contact with the criminal justice system; those aging out of foster care through child welfare; those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and those who identify as being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or Intersex (LGBTQI).

The Tennessee First Episode Psychosis Initiative serves adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15-30, who are experiencing psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, unusual thoughts or beliefs, or disorganized thinking, with symptoms present for more than a week but less than 24 months. Carey Counseling provides the services in the Northwest Region. In the spring of 2016, Congress increased the set aside in the State Mental Health Block Grant program from five to 10 percent for first episode programs. Funding has been provided to establish services in Davidson county to Mental Health Cooperative, Inc. and Shelby county to Alliance Healthcare Services. The two programs have served a total of 49 individuals.

TENNESSEE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Activities and/or programs being undertaken by the Tennessee Housing Development Agency to address the housing needs of youth aging out of foster care include the following:

1. Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant awards were made to these agencies providing housing for youth aging out of foster care:
 - *2012 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Omni Community Services, Inc.* The grant was originally awarded to provide 12 housing units, on a statewide basis, for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The homes acquired under the grant are single-family three or four bedroom units and are occupied by three or four persons per home.

Omni Community Services works with special needs persons of all ages, including youth involved in the foster care system. A request was made to expand the scope of the grant to provide housing for youth aging out of foster care. Two units in Davidson County were provided for youth aging out of foster care. Each home has the capacity to serve up to four youth. The Housing Trust Fund grant and agency funds were used to acquire each of the properties. The grant amount utilized for the homes for youth was \$154,000.

The project was completed in December 2015.

- *2014 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to the Crossville Housing Authority for new construction of a four-plex of one bedroom apartments for youth aging out of foster care in Crossville.* The grant amount was \$136,050. The units are located in walking distance or close proximity to post-secondary educational institutions, medical facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, discount stores and the Tennessee Career Center.

Youth residing in the apartments receive case management and supervised independent living services from the Department of Children's Services. Services may include job placement assistance, vocational assessments, self-sufficiency skill training and transitional living services. The project was constructed on property already owned by the housing authority, and it was funded by the TN Housing Trust Fund grant, a zero percent loan made possible through the THDA/Tennessee Department of Revenue Community Investment Tax Credit Program, agency funds, and donations.

Tenants receive Section 8 rental assistance and a homeless priority. The tenants also receive a living allowance through the Department of Children's Services, and some are employed. The project is complete and is fully occupied.

- *2015 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Crossroads Campus for six beds of transitional housing for youth aging out of foster care and other at risk youth facing poverty and homelessness in Nashville.* The program is a pet retail social enterprise providing job training for disadvantaged youth and adoptions for homeless dogs and cats at risk of euthanasia. Earned revenues from the pet shop help to sustain the program. The grant amount was \$159,877.

The project was funded by the TN Housing Trust Fund grant and private funds raised through fundraising efforts. The project was completed in March 2016.

- *2016 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Keystone Development, Inc. for the development of 12 one-bedroom apartments in Johnson City.* The grant was for Phase 1 of the Baker Street Apartments development. Six of the apartments were set aside for homeless youth, many of whom will have aged out of foster care. The other six units were set aside for seniors who will serve as mentors and role models for the youth.

The units were developed in partnership with the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages. The partner agencies are providing financial assistance and case management. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in this project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award, a bank loan, and a Johnson City HUD HOME grant.

The project was completed in August 2017.

- *2017 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Keystone Development, Inc. for the development of 12 apartments in Johnson City.* This is Phase 2 of the Baker Street Apartments development under which Keystone was awarded a 2016 TN Housing Trust Fund grant. Three units were set aside for homeless youth many of who will have aged out of foster care. Nine units were set aside for seniors.

The units were developed in partnership with the Department of Children's Services and Youth Villages. The partner agencies will provide financial assistance and case management. Completion is anticipated by November 2017. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in this project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award.

- *2017 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to the Franklin Housing Authority for the rehabilitation of the 22 unit Park Street Apartments development in Franklin.* The rehabilitation of Park Street Apartments represents the third site of the Franklin Housing Authority’s Master Redevelopment Plan. One unit will be set aside for youth aging out of foster care. The grant amount was \$500,000. Other sources of funding in the project include a Federal Home Loan Bank grant award, A TN Department of Environment and Conservation grant award, and a loan from Pinnacle Bank utilizing the THDA/Department of Revenue Community Investment Tax Credit Program.
 - *2018 TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Woodbine Community Organization for the development of two shared living residences that will provide 16 single room occupancy units in Nashville.* Each resident in the shared living project will have an accessible bedroom and private bath and will share the kitchen, living, dining, and laundry areas. The project also includes two SRO units for live-in caregivers. The grant amount was \$500,000. Woodbine Community Organization has partnered with Monroe Harding for the provision of onsite services to include continued education, vocational training and life skills. Other sources of funding include owner equity being provided by Woodbine.
2. 2014 Emergency Solutions Grants to the following youth serving agencies for rapid re-housing, street outreach, and funds for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- Monroe Harding in Nashville. The grant amount was \$36,615 for rapid re-housing activities.
 - Oasis Center in Nashville. The grant amount was \$63,385 for street outreach, rapid re-housing, and funds for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Strategic Planning

The THDA strategic plan includes provisions to address the housing needs of youth aging out of foster care. Priority points are added to Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant applications proposing to serve youth aging out of the foster care system.

THDA also included a session on “Housing the Hard to Serve” during the 2017 Governor’s Housing Conference. In an effort to encourage the development of more housing for youth aging out of foster care, panel members presented strategies utilized in successfully developing housing for youth aging out of Tennessee’s foster care system.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL DATA

➤ **Strategies to access and track effectiveness of Extension of Foster Care services and the operation of the Resource Centers**

The Tennessee Department of Children's Services provides Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program services through the Office of Independent Living Program (IL) who also monitors and implements the provision of Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS). As a part of the federal mandate, IL is charged with building a network of appropriate supports and services for youth transitioning out of care and for those who are likely to remain in care. The primary objectives of Tennessee's service network include;

- helping to ensure youth build connections with caring adults,
- developing youth to be productive individuals within their communities,
- assisting youth with acquisition and maintenance of gainful employment,
- supporting youth through their achievement of educational/vocational goals, and
- providing opportunities for financial assistance and skill development for DCS youth and exiting young adults.

Any youth, including those of Native American heritage, who have been or were in the custody of DCS and who meet eligibility criteria as outlined in policy, have the opportunity to request and access ILP services.

The Department's goal is to provide each young person in foster care, age 14 or older, with supports, services, experiences, and opportunities that are individualized, based on the strengths and needs of each individual youth and their families, important to healthy adolescent development, and to help the youth successfully transition to adulthood. Strengths and needs of a 14-year-old who is four years from legal independence are generally different from those of a 16 or 17-year-old who is facing the imminent assumption of adult rights and responsibilities. The planning and provided services for these youth must be tailored on that basis.

DCS uses Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program funds to staff 14 Independent Living Program Specialists (ILPS), within each region of the state. The DCS ILPS work directly and collaboratively with Family Service Workers (FSW), foster parents, contracted providers, youth and the general public. They are responsible for local program coordination, service delivery, community resource development and ongoing consultation to agency staff, resource parents and youth. Although the primary function of the ILPS is to provide support and technical assistance to staff and resource adults, they also provide direct services and support to youth and young adults through life skills training classes, processing of the Independent Living Allowance,

assistance with securing financial aid (FAFSA), the federal Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and other scholarship applications, and support and coordination of local statewide youth leadership boards and other leadership activities.

Ongoing program purposes for the Office of Independent Living include:

- Help youth likely to age out of foster care successfully transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency by providing supportive services;
- Help youth likely to age out of foster care receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain gainful employment;
- Help youth likely to age out of foster care prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions;
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care through mentorship opportunities and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition into adulthood;
- Provide leadership opportunities for youth in care to advocate for system changes and improvements, build a network of peer support and bring youth voice and authentic engagement to entities that create and implement youth-centered programming
- Improve quality practice of EFCS case workers through summits, trainings and on the ground support/coaching.

The Department of Children’s Services continues to be committed to data-driven decision making. DCS continued to measure specific variables over the past fiscal year, which is reflected in this report.

Transitional Survey Results of Emancipated Youth:

DCS is committed to ensuring 90 percent or more of youth who age out of custody at 18 have at least one of the following apply at the time of emancipation: earned a GED/HiSet, graduated from high school, enrolled in high school or post-secondary program. Youth with special needs who age out must be currently enrolled in a vocational training program or employed full time.

DCS compiled survey results of all youth who aged out of care between January 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018. Out of the 360 Dependent/Neglected/Unruly youth, 92 percent met one or more of the outlined criteria.

DCS will continue to promote educational opportunities for youth in custody and those who leave custody at an older age. During FY 2018, 412 youth and young adults obtained high school diplomas or an equivalency. Three hundred twenty four custodial youth obtained a high school diploma (224) or HiSET (64). Of the custodial youth, 65 were placed at Youth Development Centers and obtained a high school diploma (43) or HiSET (22). One hundred twenty-four adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services obtained a high school diploma (114) or HiSET (10).

A related initiative that started late in FY 2018 was Project Wrap Around. Project Wrap Around is a collaboration between the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), Davidson County Juvenile Court, and the Department of Children's Services' (DCS) Central Office staff & Davidson County Regional staff to increase timely high school graduation rates, matriculation, retention rates, and attainment of post-secondary certificates or degrees among the 14 - 21 population in foster care. This is currently a pilot project that includes youth in DCS custody via Davidson County court commitment, and any Extension of Foster Care young adults enrolled in a MNPS. It is hoped that intensified efforts to assist students with credit consolidation and recovery, IEP development and implementation, and ongoing tracking and support will increase secondary graduations rates, post-secondary enrollment and improved post-secondary success.

In FY 2018, 18 completed post-secondary education. The following represent the post-secondary programs completed.

Non EFCS

Carson-Newman College
East Tennessee State University
TCAT-Athens
TCAT-Nashville
Tennessee Wesleyan University
Tusculum University
University of Memphis
University of Tennessee-Martin

EFCS

Chattanooga State Community College
Concorde Career College
Jackson State Community College
Middle Tennessee State University
Nashville State Community College
TCAT-Crossville

TCAT-Dickson
TCAT-Knoxville
TCAT-McMinnville

Educational caregiver/advocacy efforts include attending educational meetings, consulting with DCS staff, resource parents and schools as well as, providing educational training to departmental personnel and schools. From July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018, the Education Division provided consultation to Child and Family Teams, field services worker (FSWs), and public/non-public schools over 57,200 times. Education staff participated directly in over 2100 Child and Family Team Meetings and more than 1400 Individual Education Plan (IEP)/504 Meetings. Additionally, the Education Specialists advocated for students in more than 180 disciplinary hearings and in 140 specialized foster care review board meetings. Staff also provided 317 educational training sessions for over 4100 surrogate parents, resource parents, FSWs, and school staff.

Both the YDC and the provider in-house schools provide a full high school curriculum that leads to a regular high school diploma. Opportunities for credit recovery, self-paced learning and mastery learning are also made available. In instances where students leave the YDC or a provider in-house school prior to completing graduation requirements, there are 15 Education Specialists across the state (at least one in each DCS region) that help students transition back into public schools or into adult education programs in order to finish their course work and earn a regular high school diploma. DCS staff, provider in-house schools and public schools are trained to consult these Education Specialists to assist in the transition process.

Students who are educated in provider in-house schools and in our YDC who are significantly behind in credits based and are at least 17 years old are provided the opportunity to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma by passing an exam called HISET. The decision to allow a student this option for obtaining a high school credential is made by the Child and Family Team (CFT). A High School Equivalency Exam Recommendation form (formerly referred to as a waiver) is submitted for students who are approved by the CFT. Wilder, the last remaining YDC, is able to prepare and administer the HISET to their students on-site. Currently, students in provider in-house schools must be transported off site to take the exam; however, the DCS Education Division and the Department Labor and Workforce Development are working together in hopes of providing on-site HISET testing at these schools in the future. This project is in the beginning phase this year at its first location, Mountain View Academy for Young Men. There have been two on-site HISET test administrations there and another is scheduled for October 2018. Through this partnership, we are hoping to remove all barriers by providing the in-house provider schools with the required preparation materials, voucher codes to pay for the HISET, and local adult education staff who will come on-site to administer the HISET. Our hope is that this will allow a significant number of students to leave custody with the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary education, enroll in vocational training programs, or enter the workforce.

The Office of Independent Living (IL) is focused on ensuring education remains a major focus in transition planning to help young people meet their educational goals. Both IL and Education encourage young people to advocate for their education in order to be successful in their future educational endeavors, and get involved in school programs, including TN Promise, that help support their educational well-being.

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) continues to educate courts/FCRB on the importance of educational questions, records and support services to ensure enhanced educational goals. During FY 2018 the AOC kicked off a pilot project with DCS central and regional offices, juvenile courts and metro and higher education partners to improve the quality of work in specialized EFC Foster Care Boards and over 17 Foster Care Review Boards in Davidson County. This pilot is focused on improving educational and other case data provided by DCS to assist the boards in making better assessments of a youth's point of transition and in turn make better recommendations, provide high quality training for DCS, court and board members on engagement techniques, secondary and post-secondary planning, and other transitional planning.

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information on youth in foster care (via a survey) who are 17 years of age, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth at that time and then when a sample of the youth who completed surveys turn ages 19 and 21.

TN DCS utilizes the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) data to help understand the circumstances of our transition aged youth. The most recent NYTD submission contains survey data for 21-year-olds formerly in foster care, collected October 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. This is a partial year's submission and included the following data:

- 65 of 106 youth participated in the NYTD 2018A 21 year old follow-up survey
- 32 reported as Unable to Locate/Invite
- 89 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported having connections to an adult
- 35 percent participating 21-year-olds reported having children
- 38 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported being Homeless during the past two years
- 32 percent of participating 21-year-olds reported being incarcerated during the past two years

National statistics for this sample population are not yet available, because the entire two data submission periods have not been completed.

EFC Criteria Expansion Project

TN's EFC program currently operates three of the five eligibility criteria outlined in the Fostering Connections guidelines and Tenn. Code Ann. 37-2-417 Tennessee's Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act of 2010;

- 1.) Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- 2.) Enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary or vocational education; and
- 3.) Incapable of working or enrolling in an approved academic program due to a medical condition, including a developmental or intellectual condition.

In FY 2017, DCS began an analysis project to explore expanding EFC to include the two remaining eligibility criteria;

- 4.) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; and
- 5.) Employed for at least 80 hours per month.

DCS partnered with representatives from the Jim Casey Initiative (JCI) and Main Spring (MC) consulting to analyze the fiscal and programmatic impact expanding the program would have. This expansion would not only impact the Office of Independent Living but would involve expansion of services, supports and policy/protocol for Divisions of Adoption and Permanent Guardianship, Juvenile Justice, Foster Care, Placement and others. DCS, JCI and MS spent the beginning of 2017 gathering information in preparation for a large planning meeting with DCS executive and regional staff in August to frame the direction for this analysis project. Primarily, the analysis will report on fiscal impact, but through planning and discussion leading up to the August meeting, it was decided to include programmatic impacts on policy and protocol changes.

In preparation for the August meeting, two sets of feedback were collected. The first was an online survey for EFC regional and IL CO staff on the current program and potential expansion and the second was a series of three focus group meetings with current and former foster youth in Memphis, Nashville and Knoxville. In total, 33 youth between the ages of 16-21 participated. Youth were asked to provide feedback about the current EFC program and areas they would like to see improvement. Some highlights consistent across all three groups were youth felt supported by their case managers and stated desire to meet with and connect more with them. Youth felt the biggest need was more housing and more housing options. Information collected was processed and used to inform discussion throughout the August meeting.

During FY 2018 DCS compiled a significant amount of data for the fiscal and program analysis around several different program expansion prototypes. The draft analysis was completed and a second meeting with DCS executive and senior staff in June 2018 to review results and discuss finalizing the report. The initial results seem positive and the team agreed to move forward with the final analysis looking at several options around various lengths of services and mechanisms for delivering services. DCS is scheduled to complete the final report in October 2018, about the time this report is finalized, and make a decision on moving forward with some type of expansion.

➤ **Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of young adults served by Extension of Foster Care**

In addition to using TFACTS data, Independent Living Program Specialists maintain data that demonstrates overall provision of Extension of Foster care services via monthly reports that are submitted to Central Office. This report includes certain identifying information on the clients and dates of service. The monthly reports are compiled upon the conclusion of each fiscal year to produce each year’s data. Data reported for youth in custody are derived from TFACTS system records. Data related to IL staff participation in CFTMs, and training provided by such staff, is tracked manually.

➤ **The number of services provided by the Department of Children’s Services**

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

1	Post-Secondary Application Fees
2	Testing Fees (SAT, ACT, GED)
3	Tutoring
4	Educational fees
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	Bright Futures (State Funded) Scholarship
28	YVLifeSet
29	Opportunity Passport™ (per the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative) - Provided Via the Resource Centers
30	Placement Services
31	Case Management
32	Household Furnishings
	<i>Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS</i>

➤ **The number of young adults who received these services during FY 2017-2018 and length of stay in EFCS.**

TN DCS provides youth aging out of state custody services through multiple sources. This is based on their eligibility, and services are provided by TN DCS as well as through TN DCS contracts with private providers and community agencies.

Services Provided:

- YVLifeSet: 1536 (780 DCS Grant, 934 privately funded; some youth received services via both funding streams, not simultaneously, at some point during FY 2018)
- Resource Centers: 707
- Extension of Foster Care Services: 792 Individuals/811 EFCS Episodes.

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

FY 2018 EFCS Retention: Days in EFCS

In FY 2018, the mean (days) were 271 days, median (days) were 179, which is slightly down from last year. In FY 2017, the mean (days) were 284 days, median (days) were 209. DCS will continue to evaluate supports needed to increase retention of youth in Extension of Foster

Services. TN IL does know that the two main reasons for termination of services are youth not maintaining academic eligibility and youth requesting termination of services. It is hoped that efforts such as Project Wraparound will result in increased retention rates based on continuation of educational plans.

Region	Mean (Days)	Median (Days)	Mode (Days)
Northwest	282	172	209
Southwest	381	223	81
Shelby	375	294	1096
Davidson	240	162	0
Mid Cumberland	215	154	77
South Central	252	237	46
Upper Cumberland	263	164	1096
Northeast	264	159	1096
Knox	308	174	1096
East	268	180	0
Smoky Mountain	200	175	206
Tennessee Valley	275	142	1096
Total (Days)	271	179	1096

Program Exits

The following represent the circumstances by which young adults leave extended foster care that are captured for reporting purposes during FY 2018:

- Successful Completion of Educational Program;
- Voluntary Termination of Services (Self Termination);
- Transition to Adult Services;
- Unable to Locate;
- Academic Ineligibility;
- Risk to Self or Others (example: committing a violent crime, which is in violation of the Rights and Responsibilities Agreement young adults sign when accepting extension of foster care services);
- Turned age 21.

	Academic	Risk to Self/Others	Self	Completion of Ed. Program	Transition to Adult Services	Turned Age 21	Unable to Locate	Grand Total
Davidson	23	1	11	0	2	4	0	41
East	11	0	7	0	7	2	5	32
Knox	0	0	21	0	2	3	0	26
Mid Cumberland	24	3	15	1	3	2	15	63
Northeast	11	2	3	0	1	2	3	22
Northwest	17	0	4	1	1	2	0	25
Shelby	37	1	7	1	5	5	7	63
Smoky Mtn	7	3	25	6	3	1	4	49
South Central	20	1	6	5	1	0	4	37
Southwest	10	0	1	0	1	1	1	14
TN Valley	22	2	10	2	6	3	1	46
Upper Cumberland	30	0	6	6	2	6	3	53
Grand Total	212	13	116	22	34	31	43	471

The primary support service offered to young adults who exit EFCS is YVLifeSet. YVLifeSet continues working with the youth after EFCS end and can assist working with the youth to re-establish EFCS, depending on the reason for exiting. Youth who exit for academic reasons can work a viable education plan to get back on track and eligible for EFCS before they turn 21. Other services available to youth who exit to adult services that have and established SSI qualification could receive mental health and behavioral health services in coordination with the state’s Medicaid Waiver program, TennCare, or services through the state’s Employment and Community First/Project Transitions program.

One-hundred twenty young adults did complete their high school diploma (109) or HiSet (11) while receiving EFCS in FY 2018, but may be categorized as another exit type due to furthering their education or self-termination. These young adults successfully completed one aspect of their education but exited without completing their entire goals such as proceeding to or maintaining post-secondary education.

➤ **The number of youth who exited state custody and received scholarship assistance from DCS to continue into post-secondary educational programs during FY 2017-2018.**

The Department offers young adults who were in foster care or who are in foster care on their 18th birthday the opportunity to continue to receive a variety of supports and services beyond age 18 to help them successfully transition to adulthood. The Department of Children’s Services is the sole administrator of Education and Training Vouchers. The Office of Independent Living has a Scholarship Administrator who manages the ETV funds available and State Funded Scholarship. ETV applicants are required to provide documentation of total

cost of attendance and the financial aid package for the programs they are enrolled in to the Scholarship Coordinator who reviews this information and establishes ETV awards accordingly. DCS is able to provide an unduplicated number of ETVs awarded each year. The program will continue looking at ways to maximize the impact of funding and involving communities and individual colleges and universities in providing increased opportunities for this population. Data is currently being reviewed to help determine fluctuations in ETV awards, identifying the factors affecting this to inform strategies for maximizing utilization. The Bright Futures State Funded Scholarship awarded through the Governor’s Office will continue in the coming year, and \$500,000 is the amount the state legislature has allocated toward this program.

There was an overall increase in the number of scholarships provided during FY 2018.

2018	ETV	State	Total
Tennessee 4-Year University	71	35	106
Tennessee Community Colleges	210	67	277
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	56	17	73
University of Tennessee System	25	11	36
Private 4-Year Colleges	28	0	28
Non State Technical Colleges	21	0	21
Total	411	130	541

2017	ETV	State	Total
Tennessee 4-Year University	63	49	112
Tennessee Community Colleges	160	58	218
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	42	23	65
University of Tennessee System	12	7	19
Private and out of State 4-Year Colleges	42	0	42
Non State Technical Colleges	27	0	27
Total	346	137	483

Source: Independent Living Scholarship Report

➤ **Number of children in state custody during FY 2018**

Overview	
Total Children in Custody	14,903
Adjudication	
Dependent/Neglect	12,442
Unruly	244
Not Listed	231
Delinquent	1,986
Gender	
Male	8,395
Female	6,508
Age Range	
0-12	8,207
13-19	6,696
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	21
Asian	21
Black/African American	3,412
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	9
Unable to Determine	30
White	10,102
(blank)	160
Multi-Racial	1,148

Children by Adjudication, Gender, and Age Group							
		Female			Male		
Adjudication	Total	0-12	13-19	Total	0-12	13-19	Total
DELINQUENT	1,986	2	281	283	13	1690	1,703
DEPENDENTNEGLECT	12,442	3796	2,205	6,001	4244	2197	6,441
UNRULY	244	4	105	109	6	129	135
(blank)	231	63	52	115	78	38	116
Statewide	14,903	3,865	2,643	6,508	4,341	4,054	8,395

Children by Region and Age Range			
		Age Range	
Region	Total	0-12	13-19
Davidson	995	481	514
East TN	981	540	441
Knox	1,342	890	452
Mid Cumberland	1,675	822	853
Northeast	1,306	784	522
Northwest	805	460	345
Shelby	1,612	784	828
Smoky Mountain	1,469	840	629
South Central	1,359	739	620
Southwest	728	353	375
TN Valley	1,296	724	572
Upper Cumberland	1,335	790	545
Statewide Total	14,903	8,207	6,696

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

- **Number of EFCS young adults served FY 2018 broken down by adjudication, gender, race/ethnicity, region/county.**

By Region:

Region	Number
Davidson Region	65
East Tennessee Region	56
Knox Region	45
Mid Cumberland Region	101
Northeast Region	49
Northwest Region	41
Shelby Region	105
Smoky Mountain Region	74
South Central Region	57
Southwest Region	31
TN Valley Region	80
Upper Cumberland Region	88
Grand Total	792

Total Individuals Served: 792

Adjudication (at time exiting DCS custody):

- Dependent/Neglected: 664
- Unruly: 34
- Delinquent: 94

Gender:

- Female: 446
- Male: 346

Race/Ethnicity:

Race	Count of RACE
American Indian/Alaska Native	2
American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American	1
American Indian/Alaska Native, White	2
Asian	4
Asian, White	1
Black/African American	237
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	2
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown, White	1
Black/African American, White	32
Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	2
Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown, White	3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, White	1
White	503
Grand Total	792

Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)	Count of Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)
NO	726
UNKNOWN	28
YES	38
Grand Total	792

By County:

County	Number of EFCS Episodes	Number of Young Adults Served
Anderson	18	18
Bedford	6	6
Benton	1	1
Bledsoe	2	2
Blount	19	19
Bradley	20	19
Campbell	9	9
Cannon	1	1
Carroll	2	2
Carter	3	3
Cheatham	5	4
Claiborne	6	5
Clay	2	2
Cocke	7	7
Coffee	6	6
Crockett	4	4
Cumberland	15	15
Davidson	64	64
Dekalb	3	2
Dickson	3	3
Dyer	2	2
Fayette	2	2
Fentress	4	4
Franklin	8	7
Gibson	12	12
Giles	7	6
Grainger	1	1
Greene	16	16
Hamblen	23	22
Hamilton	42	42
Hancock	1	1
Hardin	3	3
Hawkins	4	4
Haywood	5	4
Henderson	3	3

Henry	2	2
Hickman	1	1
Houston	1	1
Humphreys	3	3
Jackson	4	4
Jefferson	9	9
Knox	46	43
Lauderdale	4	4
Lawrence	15	15
Lincoln	3	3
Loudon	1	1
Macon	12	12
Madison	12	12
Marion	1	1
Marshall	3	3
Maury	7	7
McMinn	6	6
Meigs	1	1
Monroe	8	8
Montgomery	19	18
Morgan	2	2
Obion	2	2
Overton	3	3
Perry	2	2
Pickett	1	1
Polk	1	1
Putnam	17	16
Rhea	6	6
Roane	8	8
Robertson	7	7
Rutherford	24	24
Scott	4	4
Sequatchie	4	3
Sevier	14	14
Shelby	105	104
Smith	12	11
Stewart	6	6
Sullivan	10	10

Sumner	9	9
Tipton	3	3
Union	5	5
Van Buren	2	2
Warren	8	8
Washington	12	12
Wayne	2	2
Weakley	3	3
White	6	6
Williamson	17	16
Wilson	29	27
Grand Total	811	792

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

The following describes the number of youth who received independent living wraparound services FY 2018.

Independent Living Wraparound Services Custodial Population 2017-2018:

Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2015-16	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2016-17	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2017-18	Total Youth Served 2015-16	Total Youth Served 2016-17	Total Youth Served 2017-18	Total Expenditure 2015-16	Total Expenditure 2016-17	Total Expenditure 2017-18
447	508	496	389	433	300	\$59,786.61	\$73,723.35	\$82,507.57

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18
Drivers Education	37	47	51	37	47	50	\$13,636.00	\$19,147.00	\$19,867.00
Drivers Testing Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	45	28	47	41	22	41	\$7,761.73	\$3,454.05	\$7,319.42
Good Grades Incentive	52	47	55	49	45	47	\$2,250.00	\$1,830.00	\$1,950.00
Graduation Package	135	140	192	102	95	129	\$21,789.43	\$23,225.72	\$35,848.48
Honor/Senior Class Trip	14	14	15	14	13	14	\$1,865.00	\$1,701.00	\$2,955.00
Housing Application Fees (Post-Secondary)	10	11	7	10	11	6	\$1,743.00	\$1,365.00	\$790.00
IL Class Stipend	22	15	22	22	14	22	\$800.00	\$475.00	\$875.00
Materials for Vocational Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	\$115.00	\$79.33	\$800.00
Other Special Needs	14	30	22	12	22	22	\$3,008.95	\$10,851.36	\$4,563.26

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	21	22	7	14	15	7	\$655.00	\$910.00	\$275.00
Senior Event Transportation	3	0	0	3	0	0	\$70.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Educational Fees	4	2	3	4	2	2	\$890.00	\$1,314.00	\$920.00
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	27	11	5	26	11	5	\$1,297.50	\$570.50	\$276.00
Tutoring	0	6	0	0	2	0	\$0.00	\$1,757.50	\$0.00
Yearbooks	40	27	36	40	27	36	\$2,830.00	\$2,017.89	\$2,968.41
Youth Leadership Stipend	22	107	33	14	106	33	\$1,075.00	\$5,025.00	\$3,100.00
Total	447	508	496	389	433	*300	\$59,786.61	\$73,723.35	\$82,507.57

Independent Living Wraparound Services Extension of Foster Care Population 2017-18:

Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2015-16	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2016-17	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2017-18	Total Youth Served 2015-16	Total Youth Served 2016-17	Total Youth Served 2017-18	Total Expenditure 2015-16	Total Expenditure 2016-17	Total Expenditure 2017-18
421	381	328	328	316	187	\$65,400.62	\$83,099.29	\$83,464.30

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18
Auto Insurance	22	15	32	21	15	30	\$6,464.21	\$4,939.02	\$11,594.99
Drivers Education	19	41	32	18	41	32	\$6,915.00	\$16,059.00	\$12,925.00
Drivers Testing Fees	1	0	0	1	0	0	\$350.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Educational Fees	0	1	1	0	1	1	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$153.75
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	12	12	6	11	11	5	\$1,240.00	\$1,432.50	\$1,010.00
Good Grades Incentive	9	6	4	9	5	2	\$450.00	\$270.00	\$120.00
Graduation Package	89	71	59	60	55	46	\$12,058.67	\$11,483.84	\$11,220.30
Honor/Senior Class Trip	6	10	5	6	10	5	\$535.00	\$1,233.00	\$762.00
Household Furnishings	12	23	17	11	20	14	\$5,820.98	\$12,085.62	\$9,123.46
Housing Application Fees (Post-Secondary)	15	14	10	15	14	10	\$2,615.00	\$1,929.00	\$3,488.13
IL Class Stipend	9	3	1	8	3	1	\$425.00	\$150.00	\$50.00
Materials for Vocational Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	\$109.99	\$86.16	\$120.50
Non Recurring Housing Start Up	30	31	43	20	19	25	\$14,102.12	\$16,600.69	\$15,667.48
Other Special Needs	24	32	23	18	30	18	\$3,844.57	\$5,725.75	\$5,399.38

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Instances of Service Provided 2017-18	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Youth Served 2017-18	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17	Expenditure 2017-18
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	45	26	15	29	18	10	\$1,595.00	\$1,145.00	\$983.00
Senior Event Transportation	1	1	0	1	1	0	\$20.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	10	5	2	9	5	2	\$556.50	\$381.00	\$194.00
Tools for Vocational School	0	8	2	0	6	2	\$0.00	\$3,962.39	\$1,426.73
Transportation Grant	36	20	19	24	14	15	\$1,872.20	\$1,135.50	\$898.50
Tutoring	3	0	2	1	0	2	\$800.00	\$0.00	\$1,895.00
Vehicle Repairs	6	3	12	5	3	11	\$1,577.88	\$963.00	\$3,400.08
Yearbooks	18	17	11	18	17	11	\$1,168.50	\$1,142.82	\$857.00
Youth Leadership Stipend	53	41	31	42	27	28	\$2,880.00	\$1,825.00	\$2,175.00
Total	421	381	328	328	316	*187	\$65,400.62	\$83,099.29	\$83,464.30

***Starting fiscal year 2018, the youth served represents unduplicated clients and not sums; some youth received more than one type of service during FY 2018.**

Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS

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

The Youth Engagement Lead continues to develop strategies to connect with aged-out youth who did not accept services or are unable to continue services. The main reasons young people give for not accepting EFCS continue to be:

1. Desire to work instead of continue educational goals;
2. Could not be located;
3. Did not want to be involved with DCS.

The Office of Independent Living also collected the reasons why youth did not accept EFCS, which reflected the above top reasons. IL Specialists in each region were asked to go back and indicate the reasons youth who aged out during FY 2018 did not accept EFCS. Results were compiled into the statewide table below, excluding the region of Northeast.

Statewide		
Reason	Count	%
Academic Ineligibility	102	24%
Could Not be Located	78	18%
Criminal Charges	7	2%
EFCS Not Offered	16	4%
Entered Military	3	0.007%
Moved Out of State	25	6%
Refusal	87	21%
Risk to Self/Others	2	0.004%
Social Security Benefit	15	4%
Transition to Adult Services	13	3%
Uncertain	38	9%
Undocumented	12	3%
Went to Work	25	6%
Grand Total	423	

Extension Of Foster Care Services Uptake, Total and by Region:

During FY 2018, 46 percent of the total eligible aged-out population of youth accepted Extension of Foster Care services, which is slightly up from last year's total which was 44 percent; 37 percent of dependent/neglected youth, one percent of unruly youth and 6 percent of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services out of the total eligible aged-out population (eligible based on placement type at age 18).

One specific group that continues to be less likely to accept Extension of Foster Care services is young people who are adjudicated delinquent. Of the all youth eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services who aged out during FY 2018, four percent (18 percent within adjudication) of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services, compared to 40 percent (55 percent within adjudication) of dependent/neglected youth. While these percentages are slightly lower than FY 2017, a higher percentage of youth adjudicated Unruly accepted EFCS, within that adjudication, than last year (38 percent in FY 2017 vs. 51 percent in FY 2018).

Region	Aged Out	Aged out Eligible	Accepted EFCS	% EFCS Uptake
Davidson	76	62	24	39%
East	47	41	23	56%
Knox	61	46	23	50%
Mid Cumberland	118	105	52	50%
Northeast	72	62	31	50%
Northwest	46	40	18	45%
Shelby	142	80	34	43%
Smoky Mountain	92	87	45	52%
South Central	93	78	25	32%
Southwest	51	43	15	35%
TN Valley	80	72	42	58%
Upper Cumberland	83	74	35	47%
Total	961	790	367	46%

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

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

EFC youth in foster care placements at some point during FY 2018	363
EFC youth receiving the Independent Living Allowance during FY 2018	433

Extension of Foster Care Placements (Note that some individual young adults received more than one type of placement service during FY 2018):

EFCS Placement Service	Number of Young Adults Per Service (some were in more than one placement during the Fiscal Year)
Regular Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	427
Regular Board Rate Extension of Foster Care	180
Contract Foster Care Extension of Foster Care	129
Independent Living Residential Extension of Foster Care	89
Level 2 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	23
Continuum: Level 3 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	28
Graduated Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	15
Level 2 Congregate Care Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 3 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	3
Level 3 Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 4 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	4
Extraordinary Rate Extension of Foster Care	2
Special Circumstances Rate Extension of Foster Care	1
L3 AS-ND PRTF MID Extension of Foster Care	3
L3 SED-PRTF High Extension of Foster Care	3
L3 AS-ND PRTF HIGH Extension of Foster Care	2
L3 AS-ND RTC Extension of Foster Care	1
Level 2 SN Continuum Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 2 Special Population - Education Extension of Foster Care	1
Total Individuals Served	714

The following summarizes young adults in Extension of Foster Care who did not have a placement service during FY 2018:

Had an EFCS episode during the fiscal year but no EFCS placement	40
EFCS episode ended on or after July 1, 2017 and the placement service ended on or before July 1, 2017. The last payment date was in the last fiscal year (ending June 30, 2016)	11
EFCS placements existed during the fiscal year but no payment records in a valid reporting status until after July 1, 2018, or at all	27
	Total: 78

Source: Tennessee Department of Children’s Services – TFACTS

The Department of Children’s Services continues to be focused heavily on implementation of the federal Fostering Connections Act and Tennessee’s Transitioning Youth Empowerment Act. The Department continues to focus on training efforts, increased outreach to young people; youth engagement to improve practice, increase services (paid and non-paid life skills development); increase housing opportunities and overcoming barriers to serving special populations. Participation by Office of Independent Living staff in Child and Family Team meetings to provide information on independent living services, Extension of Foster Care Services and to assist with the development of Independent Living and Transition Plans is also a focus.

The Office of Independent Living continued to provide training, as follows:

Training Group	Participants Trained
Court	217
DCS	409
Foster Parents	161
Other	41
Provider Agency	116
Youth	427
Grand Total	945

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

Office of Independent Living staff participated in Child and Family Team Meetings, as follows:

CFTM TYPE	Count of CFTM Type
Discharge/Exit Custody	678
Discharge/Exit Extension of Foster Care	130
Emergency CFTM	1
Extension of Foster Care Progress Review	391
FSW - Progress Review of Non-Custody	3
Individual Program Plan	33
Initial Custody	56
Initial Extension of Foster Care	106
Initial Permanency Plan Custody	191
JJ - Classification	1
JJ - Discharge From Probation/Aftercare	3
JJ - Reclassification	1
JJ - Release to Aftercare	5
Permanency Plan Revision Custody	220
Placement Stability	36
Plan Revision (IPP)	4
Progress Review Custody	1013
Quarterly IPP Review	3
Special Called	109
Transition to Adulthood	554
Grand Total	3538

Source: Independent Living Monthly Report

Additionally, Independent Living staff assisted with the development of 93 Independent Living Plans and 697 Transition Plans based on manual reporting. There was participation in an additional 75 Initial or Revision Permanency Plan CFTMs that did not contain plan types identified on the reports.

Youth-Involved Advocacy and Engagement Activities

The Youth Engagement Coordinator and other Independent Living Central Office staff handled more than 100 Formstack inquires submitted via the online transmission form and responded to a high number of phone and in-person referrals. Inquiries on services and resources were matched

with local DCS and Central Office staff that connects the youth or person inquiring on the youth's behalf to resources and information in that youth's area. Common resources connected include YVLifeSet, Opportunity Passport, EFCS re-establishments, Community Resource referrals, ETV/Bright Futures Scholarships and even TennCare.

Engaging youth in planning and decision-making regarding their own lives reaps critical benefits throughout the process of transitioning to adulthood. Along with the ongoing transition planning, normalcy and assisting youth in permanency and preparation for adulthoods, DCS and partners work towards creating many youth engagement activities. This section highlights activities involving youth during FY 2018.

The Office of Independent Living continues to coordinate two grand regional Youth 4 Youth Board meetings in collaboration with community-based partners. Meeting topics and activities vary from region to region, but all offer a variety of informational presentations by professionals, team building events, public services opportunities, focus group and discussion topics, skill and knowledge training, college tours, and fellowship with other foster youth. A third Youth 4 Youth Board is in the final planning phase for the Chattanooga/TN Valley area of the state to begin late 2018.

SFY 2018

Region	Y4Y meeting	Attendance	Avg. attendance
Middle	8	41	5
West	11	131	12

Under the federally-funded PREP contracts Leadership Academy Camps continues to be a success. Coordinated by the Harmony Family Center, this two-day event is held at the scenic Camp Montvale in Maryville, Tennessee, where youth participate in a spectrum of events around team building, IL skill development, sexual health and family planning, and fellowship with other foster youth, including ropes courses, wall climbing, equestrian therapy, swimming, hiking, preparing meals, and, of course, campfires and s'mores. This year DCS and Harmony staff created an experimental all-female "Glam Camp" that served nearly 30 girls. Feedback from youth and staff was very positive.

This year the camp served a total of 70 youth ages 17-24 from across the state. Youth feedback continues to be positive, and staff report, though organizing and implementing the camp is a lot of work, it is worth the effort. DCS has partnered with other divisions at DCS and contract provider agencies for assistance with recruiting youth and is looking forward to another year of hosting camps.

This year one youth from the Mid-Cumberland area was selected to be one of The Foster Club's Outstanding Young Leaders. This was an opportunity for young people with personal experience in the foster care system to spend time with their congressional representative, as well as White House officials, in Washington, D.C., and participate in a Shadow Experience where youth and policymakers met to learn from one another. Young people in and from foster care were able to speak to and learn from Congress and the White House members while gaining a "hands-on" understanding about how the U.S. government operates. Members of Congress were able to listen to the stories of young people and gain a well-rounded understanding of the experiences of youth in foster care to help them as they pursue policies that impact all foster youth.

Each year the Jim Casey and Annie E. Casey Foundation accept nominations for youth to participate as a Jim Casey Young Fellow. In FY 2018, DCS nominated a youth from Middle Tennessee who was accepted to be a part of the program. As a Jim Casey Young fellow, this youth represented Tennessee in national meetings and events providing knowledge and insight related to the needs and experiences of youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood. Some highlighted events participated in included the Youth Leadership Institute, a five-day session that aims to develop youth's leadership and professional development skills and the Jim Casey Fall Convening, a two day convening to share progress on national strategic planning, discuss new approaches to accelerate racial and ethnic equity, inclusion for young people, strategize how to influence and improve policy and practice to advance race equity and inclusion. This year the Jim Casey Youth Opportunity Initiative also hosted a Youth Engagement Convening that allowed DCS to bring three youth from West, Middle and East Tennessee to attend the two day convening that focused on learning concepts on youth engagement as a strategy and fueling inspiration for authentic Youth Engagement. Youth from TN were featured during the event speaking on a panel about race and ethnic inclusion and presenting their thoughts on what authentic youth engagement meant to them.

New Resources, Services and Other Interesting Updates

A new housing resource through Tennessee Children's Home serving EFC female young adults 18-21 in Clarksville is expected to begin accepting youth early October 2018. During the initial roll out of the program they will house three females and once all units are vacant and inspected they will have the capacity to house 33 females. They are also in the process of locating a separate location to serve male young adults.

Chambliss Transitional Living Program expanded their program with six additional units. Youth receive a fully-furnished, single-room duplex unit with all utilities paid including internet. Youth also receive a monthly bus pass, weekly allowance for groceries and hygiene items, connections with opportunities at local colleges and trade schools, life skills training and financial management classes.

Monroe Harding recently opened a new Independent Living program for ages 18-24 that have experienced trauma as victims of crime (such as child abuse or sexual assault). The program provides a fully furnished private studio apartment with a shared living model. Residents will have access to mentoring, therapeutic supports, workforce development, educational supports, and life skills cultivation.

Nashville's Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) secured a \$3.5 million grant from HUD to address youth homelessness to be served over a two year period. The grant is eligible to be renewed each year after the first two years at \$1.75 million. HUD, the Metro Homeless Impact Division, MDHA, Oasis Center and 22 local partners including DCS worked on the application. This group is currently working on the planning and development of how the funds will be utilized. Nashville was one of 11 communities to be awarded.

Knoxville Community Development Corporation in Knox County and the Chattanooga Housing Authority in Hamilton County applied for FUP vouchers (which included the development of MOUs between HUD, the administering agencies and DCS) to assist youth aging out of foster care & families that need housing to assist with prevention or reunification efforts.

Partnership's I Am Ready Center in Chattanooga is in the process of rebooting the Youth 4 Youth Board in the East, TN/Chattanooga area. Partnership has scheduled to begin holding monthly Youth 4 Youth Boards with the first being held on October 25, 2018.

DCS partnered with the Johnson City Housing Authority and Homes for Youth Program. Between DCS and Youth Villages LifeSet, which provides the case management piece, this partnership identifies youth who qualify for a homeless preference. The Johnson City Housing Authority prioritizes DCS youth into one bedroom apartments within their development and has recently received a grant and built brand new apartments in the Johnson City area for those youth who have a homeless preference and have also applied for Section 8.

Supervised Independent Living Residential placement options

- Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in Greeneville, TN is a male only cottage style with common kitchen and living space. They accept custodial male youth ages 17 and older. They are currently planning to re-open their on-site school so the EFC youth can work on their high school diploma instead of the local school system.
- Holston Homes for Children in Greeneville, TN accepts both males and females between two apartment buildings. Youth share a living space and have their own bedrooms. The youth attend school in the community.
- Smoky Mountain Children's Home in Sevierville, TN is a female only cottage style home. They have the capacity to serve eight youth.

- Partnership for Children, Families, and Adults in Chattanooga, TN accepts males. The youth share the kitchen and living space. They have hired a new case manager to work with the youth in their program.
- Chambliss Center for Children in Chattanooga, TN accepts both males and females. All units have private bedrooms, living space, and kitchen. Each unit has a second bedroom that can be used for an office or a child if the young adult is a parent.
- Monroe Harding in Nashville, TN accepts both males and females. Youth share the kitchen and living space. They have their own bedroom and some units have their own bathroom. They have opened a new housing site with VOCA grant funding and in partnership with Woodbine Community Organization.
- Omni Visions in Nashville, TN accepts males between two homes where youth share the kitchen and living space.
- TN Children's Homes in Clarksville, TN is opening a new IL Residential program for females.

During the analysis of expanding EFC criteria, IL and senior staff discussed options around the structure and funding status of the EFCS Independent Living Allowance program.

Improvements were made to the way Tennessee DCS develops Independent Living and Transition plans for youth in DCS custody and those receiving Extension of Foster Care Services. The enhancements were developed in the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System (TFACTS), and included adding system enforcement of required categories and action steps to address such things as credit checks, opportunities for mentoring and support, essential documents to provide upon exit from care, maintenance of health insurance and providing information about advance care plans/health care proxies. These sections of the permanency plan also print out in ways that make it easier for youth and team members to review and work with. These changes bring Tennessee's permanency plan development more in line with federal law and state policy requirements, and help ensure older youth have their needs addressed. Modifications in how strength and need records are addressed will systematically link with assessment information in a future phase of the permanency plan enhancement project.

In December 2016, DCS began implementation of Your Money, Your Goals (YMYG), a financial empowerment training designed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau for social service settings and those who work directly with youth including case managers, private provider agencies and foster parents. This training is different from other financial trainings in that it uses a financial empowerment approach and includes a number of standalone modules. It is designed to start by identifying a youth's goals then planning and using their finances to meet and achieve those goals. For example, if a young person sets a goal of buying a car, they would complete the standalone module on purchasing a vehicle, turning their wish into a set of SMART

goals and then mapping out the various steps to get there. Steps may include increasing their credit score, tracking spending, prioritizing a budget and setting a savings target.

This training not only helps staff and foster parents working with youth to set a financial goal but connects how setting a goal in itself is a life skill. Youth will achieve the financial goal itself such as buying a car, and they also have the accomplishment of setting and achieving a goal creating empowerment that transfers into other aspects of their lives.

Each training begins with an examination of cultural values around money and identifies how the values influence our financial behavior. This is an opportunity for youth to reflect on their birth family’s culture and values about money and how this has affected them. The toolkit also has a section for the foster parents or case managers to examine their own culture and values about money and how this may influence their work with youth. The class completes a series of exercises on needs, wants and obligations that prompts foster parents and case managers to consider how their own priorities may differ from those of the youth they are working with. This challenges participants to consider the youth’s perspective and how they can use this as a starting point for their discussion about finances.

YMYG also emphasizes the connection with Prudent Parenting protocol and trauma. When talking about buying a car, purchasing a cell phone, budgeting skills and bank accounts, participants are reminded about the Prudent Parenting standards and encouraged to think about what they can do differently moving forward. Participants also explore the benefit of financial empowerment in reducing the impact of trauma for young people. Youth who experience a level empowerment in this area of their lives increase their overall self-confidence, helping them to see positive aspects of their lives other than the trauma they have experienced.

DCS trainers have expressed YMYG has been very positive for participants who are using the tools themselves; trainers are developing skills to identify teachable moments with the young people they are working with. Participants have given positive responses to this training.

Your Money, Your Goals Training to Date

Type of Participant	# of Participants
DCS Foster Parent	30
DCS Staff	53
Total	83

The Department of Children’s Services continues to administer the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program, to support the implementation Wyman’s Teen Outreach Program (TOP®), an evidence-based pregnancy prevention model, in selected Level II and III residential treatment centers in at John C. Wilder Youth Development Center and in Nashville

through Metro Juvenile Court. One thousand and forty (1,040) adolescents participated in TOP® in these settings during FY 2018.

TOP® takes a broad youth development approach to the prevention of pregnancy and other risky behaviors by engaging youth in:

- Curriculum-guided discussion groups that are active and engaging where youth do most of the talking;
- Youth-driven community service learning projects.

TOP® provides important opportunities for youth to participate in “normalized” activities, consistent with the federal mandate that youth in custody have access to developmentally normative experiences as much as possible. TOP® nurtures the key factors research identifies as protective from risk and adversity: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy or sense of purpose, high expectations and opportunities for participation among them.

TOP® service learning activities are particularly powerful vehicles for enhancing protective factors and building social and emotional skills. Last year foster youth participating in TOP® provided 13,995 hours of service to Tennessee communities. Young men at Mt. View Youth Development Center volunteered at a local food pantry. Youth at Florence Crittenton in Knoxville made posters and t-shirts to raise awareness about human trafficking in TN. Young men at Lebanon Academy walked dogs and cleaned cages at a local animal shelter. In TOP®, youth plan as well as carry out their service learning projects, practicing skills like planning, decision-making, budgeting, team work, etc.

Training, technical assistance and oversight of the TOP® project is provided by Oasis Center in consultation with E.T.S.U and Vanderbilt Center of Excellence for Children in State Custody. In FY 2018, TOP® was implemented at 22 locations across the state. Oasis staff completed seventy (70) hours of onsite monitoring and coaching with site staff. One hundred twenty two (122) participated in TOP® training, gaining skills in effective youth engagement and high quality group facilitation.

Opportunities:

- While there are some excellent services for some of the state’s more complex youth, there are fewer developmentally appropriate services available for those young adults with a borderline IQ or certain mental health diagnoses. In some instances, youth have particular needs that are going unaddressed due to gaps in the array of services and housing.
- Increasing access to housing for young adults receiving EFCS, especially in West Tennessee, is another opportunity DCS continues to explore. Tennessee Housing and

Development Agency (THDA) has provided information on grants and their web-based housing search. Current DCS providers are developing unique approaches to make housing available as well and applying for local housing authority funding. DCS is exploring other options such as a specialized provider RFQ and establishing EFC-only foster parents.

- DCS continues to strive toward increasing employment opportunities for youth in care. Employment Opportunities for adolescents are necessary to assure economic self-sufficiency and generate self-esteem. Expanding EFCS to include working criteria would provide significant support and opportunity for youth working to obtain employment. Expansion remains DCS' greatest opportunity.
- Integrate preparation for adulthood with permanency efforts through improved, quality Transition Planning (file reviews and coaching). This continues to be a challenge. The recently released permanency plan enhancements have shifted the way DCS generates and completes permanency plans which will support better plan development. The additional permanency plan goals for 16 year olds will also encourage earlier planning for IL-related training and skill development.
- Improve work around LGBT population and immigrant populations.
- Mentoring.
- Re-establish Youth Leadership (Y4Y) boards on the East side of the state.
- In effort to improve Authentic Youth Engagement DCS created a statewide Leadership Board entitled Young Adult Advisory Accountability Council (YA3C) that will serve as the foundation for all youth engagement work throughout the state.

RESOURCE CENTER REPORTS

South Memphis Alliance, Inc.

History

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

SMA work focuses largely on five core initiatives:

- **Dream Seekers Initiative** works with young people transitioning from foster care.
- **Hope Chest** includes comprehensive sex education, as well as support services for pregnant and parenting teens that are or were in foster care.
- **Community Action Panel** is composed of community leaders from over a dozen South Memphis civic groups and neighborhood associations.
- **Social Suds Resource Center**, located inside a neighborhood laundromat provides a plethora of social services to patrons of the laundromat.

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

Emergency Services

- **Food vouchers**
- **Bus passes**
- **Clothing/Uniform vouchers**
- **Assistance with housing option location**

Educational Services

- **Intensive life skills for foster youth**
- **HIV/AIDS education and testing**
- **Financial education**

- **Goal setting**
- **Teen pregnancy and parenting supports**

Local Partnerships

Tennessee Department of Children Services	Meritan Inc.	Just City, Criminal Justice Services	Metropolitan Inter Faith Association (MIFA)
Books From Birth	Shelby County Office of Childhood and Youth	First Tennessee Bank	Paragon Bank
Memphis Cares	Grizzlies Foundation	State of Tennessee (Shelby County) Community Advisory Board	Shelby County Juvenile Court
Urban Child Institute Memphis	CD Council	Urban Child Institute	Habitat of Humanity
United Way of the Mid-South	Memphis Public Library	ResCare	The University of Memphis
Planned Parenthood of the Greater Mid-South	The Assisi Foundation	Shelby County Family Planning	MALSI
Omni Visions	Memphis Artists for Change	Lemoyne Owen College	St. Jude Research Hospital
Porter Leath	Shelby County Health Department	American Works	Hope Credit Union

Successes

- Opportunity Passport Dream Seekers Job Readiness Program cultivated a group of 46 young people ages 18-22 who were prepared for work, empowered with necessary pre-employment skills and coached for job retention and advancement opportunities. These 46 young people successfully completed the Job Readiness Program.
- Our Opportunity Passport Dream Seekers were celebrated during our First Annual Foster Care Appreciation Banquet this year. Eleven young people graduated from high school. They received graduate baskets, as well as \$40 visa gift cards.

Challenges and Barriers

- Housing is a consistent barrier to engagement. The young people are moving multiple times in a year due to their inability to secure housing. Their addresses and their phone numbers change frequently, making them unable to connect with needed resources.

- Transportation needs are a barrier for the population that SMA serves. The agency provides bus passes to participants; however, the public transit system in the area is often inadequate.
- Due to transportation issues, youth who enroll in the program at satellite sites are often more difficult to engage for group activities.

Next Steps

- SMA continues to diligently seek housing options and innovations in providing housing for young people transitioning out of care. SMA is applying for funding to build a transitional housing apartment complex to help meet this need.
- Sponsorship for IDA matches, stipends/incentives, computer equipment and building space are among top priorities.

Success Story

Keviana has been a part of SMA's Dream Seekers program since July 2015. She entered a welcoming foster home along with her brother. Her foster mother introduced her and her sibling to the Dream Seekers Program, where she took advantage of the benefits the program had to offer. She served on the Y4Y leadership board since enrolling into the dream seekers program, as well she is our next candidate for Youth Services Coordinator position with SMA. Keviana is a freshman at the University of Memphis and is working as an administrative assistant in the dean's office. Not only are we proud of her educational accomplishments, we are proud to announce that she was selected as SMA's Fantastic Foster Youth of the year. She will receive a \$1,000 check and is able to use it how she pleases. Keviana has overcome many obstacles including the stigma that is associated with being a foster child.

Memphis Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update

Report Completed by: Tiffany N. Turnage

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	40	58
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	5	8
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	4	6
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	85%	85%
OPPS Surveys		
% of youth completing an OPPS survey (April & October only)	91.6%	100% (April)
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	2	1
Number of new door openers created	4	2
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	4	6
Total number of participants in life skills classes	25	20
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	5	4



History

Since 1893, Monroe Harding has continually adapted to meet the needs of children who are in, or transitioning out of state custody, caring for more than 16,000 children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected. Today, we are a healing community for youth and families as they move beyond trauma to experience hope. We are meeting this mission through four key programs serving young people who are currently in or are transitioning from the foster care system: Foster Care, Residential Programs, Education & Workforce Development, and Therapy and Healing.

Trauma and Resiliency Informed Care (TRIC) is the lens through which we see our work with children and youth in foster care. At Monroe Harding, we shift the focus from treating symptoms to addressing and healing the underlying issues. We ask not what the child did, but what happened to the child.

Core Services

Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 12 years and has focused on quality performance since inception. The center provides an assortment of services focused on empowering youth ages 16-26 through their transition out of care. Youth Connections supports our youth through The Opportunity Passport™ financial management classes, high school equivalency prep, post-secondary education planning, assistance with employment, sexual health education and assistance with finding housing. The center also has an in-house thrift closet specifically for foster youth. Through our programs and staff relations, we encourage personal stability and a healthy transition into adulthood.

Local Partnerships

Youth Connections continues to partner with the Department of Children's Services, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and US Bank.

Through our Workforce Development program, Monroe Harding partners with several local businesses and organizations such as Crossroads Pet Shop and Adopt, Habitat ReStore, Rocket Fizz Candy Shop, and McKendree United Methodist Church. These businesses have agreed to provide internships/vocational training or employment opportunities to prepare young people for the workforce.

The center also collaborates with Oasis Center, Martha O'Bryan Center, Goodwill Career Solutions, Youth Villages and the Community Advisory Board to provide services to youth who do not meet the criteria to be in DCS custody.

Successes

Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 160 young people have obtained their High School Equivalency through their participation in the HiSet classes, and 80 percent of Workforce Development participants have obtained employment with the assistance of the career coach. In addition to young people learning sound financial management and the importance of saving, numerous youth have matched their savings through The Opportunity Passport™ to purchase assets such as transportation, laptops for school and investments in a Roth IRA.

S.H.E. (Sexual Health Education), which has been in existence for just over two years, has so far educated over 180 young women on how to change their behavior to avoid contracting HIV and STDs and to significantly decrease their chances of being involved in unintended pregnancies. We have educated young women not only at the resource center but have also facilitated this program at G4S, Camelot, Oak Plains Academy and Omni Visions residential facilities. In an effort to respond to the needs of the young ladies participating in this program, Youth Connections started a monthly support group, Sisterhood. Sisterhood is designed to give the participants a safe space to continue the conversations regarding sexual health, and to also connect with and provide support for one another through their life experiences and challenges.

Youth Connections is located on the third floor of McKendree United Methodist Church. This downtown Nashville location places the center in the heart of the city and makes it more accessible to program participants. The center is also in close proximity to many of its community partners, including the Department of Children's Services, and closer to many resources such as the Nashville Public Library. The church has also provided volunteers, donations to the thrift closet and support for many of our events.

Youth Connections held two graduation ceremonies celebrating over 15 High School Equivalency and high school graduates. Many of the community partners, as well as the graduates' families attended the ceremonies. Monroe Harding awarded 10 scholarships that totaled just over \$10,000. The participants were able to use their scholarship money for tuition, rent, transportation, or needed supplies for their post-secondary training. Students enrolled at several different higher education institutions including Tennessee State University, Nashville State Community College, Tennessee College of Applied Technology, and Volunteer State Community College.

Challenges and Barriers

Many of the young people who 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, lack 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. Many of these presenting issues make it difficult for the young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves.

Next Steps

The organization continues to assess its programs and make changes and improvements where needed. Monroe Harding is expanding the reach of the Independent Living program to include any youth and youth adults (YYA) ages 18-24, who have experienced trauma as victims of crime (such as child abuse or sexual assault) and might otherwise be homeless. We continue to provide comprehensive services for children and families in our Foster Care program throughout Middle Tennessee; and residential, education, workforce development and mental health services for older youth through our Youth Connections and Independent Living programs.

Nashville Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update

Report Completed by Pamela Madison

	Previous Year	Year to Date
Opportunity Passport™		
Number of new youth enrolled	48	40
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	9	8
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	18	17
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	98%	99%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	94%	68%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	3	3
Number of new door openers created	5	4
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	5	5
Total number of participants in life skills classes	72	65
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	99%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	9	8

Helen Ross McNabb Center's Project NOW!

History

The Helen Ross McNabb Center is a premier, not-for-profit provider of behavioral health services in East Tennessee. Since 1948, the Center has provided quality and compassionate care to children, adults and families experiencing mental illness, addiction and social challenges. As the Center celebrates 70 years of providing services to communities in East Tennessee, its mission remains clear and simple; "Improving the lives of the people we serve."

McNabb has over 30 years of experience working with runaway, homeless and at-risk teenagers, complemented by over 20 years of providing outreach services to youth in local schools, as well as many years providing street outreach services, over 15 years of offering transitional living services for older youth and young adults and five years of permanency services for youth in foster care. Following a merger with Child & Family Tennessee in August 2013, Helen Ross McNabb Center assumed management of *Project NOW!*, including *Opportunity Passport* and *Sisters Saving Sisters*. Helen Ross McNabb is accredited by CARF (Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities).

Core Services

Project NOW! (Navigating Opportunities that Work) is one of the many programs operating under the umbrella of the Helen Ross McNabb Center. Over the past year, *Project NOW!* has provided Resource Center services to youth in the Grand East Division of the State (including Knox, Blount, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Sevier, Anderson, Campbell, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Union, Roane, and Scott counties). The Resource Center provides financial education through *Opportunity Passport*, life skills, programs of interest to youth, opportunities with local business and industry and post high-school information, as well as study skills and opportunities for the youth to give back to the community. *Project NOW!* provides sexual health and pregnancy information for girls through the *Sisters Saving Sisters* program. Our financial literacy partner provides assistance with instruction and individual coaching to youth. The Jim Casey Foundation provides training for staff, leadership opportunities for youth and financial assistance in the form of matches for youth who meet the saving criteria for an asset purchase. Other collaborations of note are driving and personal safety skills programs through the Knoxville Police Department. Incentives workshops at the Knoxville Career Center include personal safety through a private collaboration and pregnancy prevention programs through a new organization called Step Up. *Project NOW!* continues to work with the Department of Children's Services who provide the most program referrals as well as Youth Villages, foster parents and foster youth themselves.

Several organizations have provided services through training programs and information sessions providing a positive experience for our youth. Pellissippi State assists youth in providing

presentations focusing on post-secondary opportunities. Area military recruiting offices have presented other post-secondary options. The Knoxville Center for Applied Technology offers tours, free lunch and encouragement and information for youth transitioning out of foster care. Other collaborations include: ICAM (Integrated Community Agency Meeting), the Knoxville Leadership Foundation and the Knoxville Homeless Coalition; all providing interagency support to transitioning youth. The Job Corps has become a resource for many of the youth aging out and needing postsecondary training as well as housing and support.

<u>Local Partnerships</u>
Department of Children’s Services (Knox County, Smoky Mountain and East Tennessee)
Helen Ross McNabb Center’s
Runaway Shelter, Transitional Living Program (TLP) and Street Outreach
K-town Empowerment Network and K-town Coordinating Council
Knox County Juvenile Court
Knox Area Compassion Coalition
Youth Villages Transitional Living Program
Goodwill Industries
University of Tennessee Work Achievement Values Education (WAVE) HiSet program
Knox County Public Defender’s Office
University of Tennessee Center For Parenting
Pellissippi State Community College
Knoxville Interfaith network (KIN)
First Tennessee Bank
YMCA Knoxville
Knox County Health Department
Knox Auto Parts
Emerald Youth Foundation
Knoxville CAC Transit
Omni Visions
Tennessee College of Applied Technology
Socially Equal Energy Efficient Development (SEED) of Knoxville

Smoky Mountain Financial
Belmont College
Middle Tennessee State University
Knoxville Police Department
Tennessee Housing Development Authority
Knoxville Homeless Coalition
Knox County CASA
KnoxWorks
West Chevrolet
Food City
Tennessee Career Center, Knoxville
Twin City Motors
Workforce Connections
Pink Diamond Defense
KARM (Knoxville Area Rescue Mission)
Job Corps
Youth Transitions Advisory Council of Knoxville
Panera Bread
Chick-fil-a
Knox County Schools
Village Behavioral Health
CCAHT Community Coalition
Against Human Trafficking
Metro Drug Coalition
UT Extension
KAPPI

Successes

Since January 2017, the *Resource Center* had been located in a building that provided primarily Project NOW! services. In July of 2018 the Resource Center moved into a space shared by the Transitional Living Program, the Runaway Shelter, and Homeless Outreach. The current facility also shares a building with the Great Starts program (for at-risk mothers and children). Also on the campus is the Katie Miller Residential Facility that serves teenage girls. The new space offers opportunity to serve the youth that are in many of these other programs and also qualify for *Opportunity Passport* and *Sisters Saving Sisters*.

The Helen Ross McNabb Center *Project NOW!* Facebook Page posts about resources and program opportunities multiple times a week to keep youth informed. The page has more than 180 likes. Quarterly, the Page reaches more than 1,000 Facebook users. The rate of contact with users has grown exponentially in the last 4 months and youth, foster parents, stake holders, businesses and providers are encouraged to use it as a source of information.

Community Outreach continues to grow and has resulted in numerous workshops made available thru various organizations and businesses. Financial literacy classes through *Opportunity Passport* as well as *Sisters Saving Sisters* and other life skills-related classes are held regularly. Active participation in the program continues to grow due to consistency and efforts to reach youth in a variety of ways. Attendance at life skill events and other programs has grown from attendance of 2 – 3 to 8-12. A relationship with several community partners has resulted in much needed classes on driver's safety, personal safety, soft skills, career opportunities, human trafficking, character development, healthy living, and cooking through collaboration with the Knoxville Career Center and Knoxville Police Department and the University of Tennessee Extension Office and Pink Diamond Defense. The Center will continue its mission of providing financial education, leadership activities, sexual health, as well as life skills and asset purchase training and other programs that are of benefit and useful to the youth.

Sisters Saving Sisters has become a vital part of the *Project NOW!* Resource Center. Over 130 young women have taken advantage of the course in the past year. *Sisters Saving Sisters* addresses disease and pregnancy prevention, saying no to unwanted sex, sexual responsibility, as well as information about community resources providing free or inexpensive sexual health resources. Ladies in *Project NOW!* and *Sisters Saving Sisters* have been given the opportunity to attend self-defense classes through a collaboration with Pink Diamond Defense that offers programs monthly. Through all of these programs young women engage in discussion of issues pertinent to their life experiences in an accepting non-judgmental environment and find ways to solve their problems and the issues they face.

Project NOW! has several youth enrolled at the University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, Tennessee Tech, Belmont College, Libscomb University as well as Roane State, Walters State, Pellissippi State Community College Blount County, and Knoxville campuses.

Youth are also enrolled at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Paul Mitchell Cosmetology, and barber school. In the past year at least three youth have chosen the military for a post-secondary option serving full-time and in reserve status. Two youth have been accepted by the Job Corps and several others are in the application process.

Knoxville Police Department and a local car dealership have agreed to provide foster youth and former foster youth who do not have a license the opportunity to gain driving hours with an officer after hours. This is a huge positive for these youth who typically have no one to assist them in the basics of driving and/or provide a vehicle for them to learn and practice. Being able to acquire a license is an incentive to save for a vehicle. Without this local support many of these youth would not have gotten driving practice with positive direction, correct information, and a supportive knowledgeable adult to assist with acquiring driving skills.

Challenges and Barriers

The Knoxville based Resource Center has its own unique population differing some from other centers throughout the state. The population of youth referred to *Project NOW!* are, for the most part rural youth. Transportation to the Center is a problem for youth who do not drive and many that are more than 50 miles from Knoxville.

The *Project NOW!* Center has a substantial number of youth who cannot participate because of lack of transportation. While the program is available to youth in 16 counties no transportation exists beyond the initial entry into the program through *Opportunity Passport* where transportation is often provided by a caseworker or the foster parent. Continual referrals have increased the number of young people in the program with youth who cannot attend, have no internet or continually must be encouraged to communicate, attend events, complete paperwork, and others who are not interested. Communication regarding the Resource Center services is an obstacle with many misinformation being passed on to providers, youth, and foster families.

Only one person is employed at the Resource Center and services are sometimes stretched between programs. Scheduling, planning and presenting activities, networking with the community, providing financial literacy classes, sexual health classes, processing matches and the accompanying paper work, as well as continually communicating with youth have to be carefully prioritized and scheduled.

Our youth are resilient despite a history of abuse and neglect and in many cases a transient life style. Soft skills, general knowledge and basic communication safety and healthy living skills are sometimes lacking and continued programming is needed to address the development of these essential tools for success.

Next Steps

The coordinator, youth, or others should take advantage of speaking opportunities that inform area organizations of these youth in transition and their needs and challenges. Continuing to increase networking with other service organization in the area should be done. Area organizations both public and private should be educated on the services and goals of the Resource Center. The Center will continue to support youth in acquiring life skills, completing requirements for a high school diploma and in selecting post-secondary training that best meets their needs and career goals.

Programs and presenters that meet the real world and life challenges of these youth in transition should be a priority as well as more opportunities for youth leadership. Providing opportunities for youth to attend cultural, community, art, or athletic events is a needed service for these youth to expand and stimulate their interest in the larger world. Collaboration between the Resource Center and other providers is needed and would provide a stronger base and larger base of programs and better understanding of the Resource Center services.

**Knoxville Resource
Center**

Completed by Christy Martin

	July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017	July 1 2017 - June 30, 2018
Opportunity Passport		
Number of new youth enrolled	22	48
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	4	12
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	7	5
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	100%	93%
OPPS Surveys		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	October 2016 78.6% April 2017 95%	October 2017 82.6% April 2018 96.3%
Community Partnership Boards		
Number of board meetings	3	7
Number of new door openers created	7	13
Life Skills Classes		
Number of life skills classes held	8	17
Total number of participants in life skills classes	39	92
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	92%	93%
Youth Leadership & Engagement		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	6	4



Youth and Young Adults Resource Center

History

The Partnership for Families, Children and Adults has been serving the Tennessee Valley community for 140 years through professional counseling, crisis intervention, and prevention services. It began with the 1877 establishment of the Ladies Aid Society, which later became the Florence Crittenton Home. Under the direction of United Way, The Florence Crittenton Service, Family Service Agency and Travelers Aid Society merged into Community Services of Greater Chattanooga, Inc. in 1973. In 1981, the agency assumed the name Family and Children's Services of Chattanooga, Inc., and in 2003 became the Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. Today, the Partnership has grown to become the region's largest and most comprehensive human services agency serving 19 counties in Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama.

Our Accreditation and Memberships:

- Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc. (COA)
- United Way of Greater Chattanooga
- Alliance for Children and Families Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare
- National Foundation for Credit Counseling

Mission Statement

Empowering People. Building Communities.

Vision Statement

Helping build a stronger, smarter, safer community.

Partnership Programs Impact

The Partnership FCA is Chattanooga's oldest and largest human services non-profit organization. Partnership FCA has over 20 programs that provide individuals and families with the tools and resources to build stability and create independence through stability services (which includes youth and young adult serving programs), deaf services, victim support services, and elder support.

Partnership programs focus on specific needs of the Greater Chattanooga community providing experienced social workers, counselors and other highly trained professionals. Together, these separate, but complimentary centers of services provide support to families and individuals who may have many related needs.

Updates

In June 2018, Partnership made the decision to close the foster care portion of its Youth Services department, as other community programs are doing an excellent job providing that service, allowing us to shift funds and focus to strengthening wrap around programming for transition-aged youth ages 14-26 years old. We were able to secure a new grant through the Office of Criminal Justice Programs to supplement our programming and have expanded our population reach to include youth who have experienced childhood physical abuse, neglect, or child sexual abuse in addition to youth currently and formerly in foster care.

The new grant has also allowed us to expand our resource center offerings to include an Education/Career Navigator and Therapist component in addition to our Financial Literacy, Life Skills Education, Sexual Health Education, and Transitional Housing for EFC.

As of October 1, 2018, Partnership's Youth Services department has transformed into the River City Youth Collective (RCYC). We will no longer be using the name I AM Ready for our resource center, however, the RCYC encompasses all of our program offerings to the youth in our community.

River City Youth Collective (RCYC)

The River City Youth Collective believes that all people have the right to live stable, healthy lives. The RCYC is committed to supporting youth and young adults in their transition from adolescence to independence. People are meant to live life within the community together, which is why the RCYC is a collaboration. It is a collective, a safe space where youth and young adults can find acceptance, support, and opportunities to learn and grow from and with one another. The RCYC is "for the youth, by the youth."

The RCYC will still support the *Sisters Savings Sisters* sexual health education curriculum for girls and young women, the Jim Casey Opportunity Passport financial literacy curriculum, and life skills education classes for youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care and juvenile justice.

In addition to these already established programs, the RCYC now supports a full-time Education and Career Navigator who assists youth in obtaining employment by helping with applications, resumes, interviews, and transportation. Additionally, the Navigator will assist youth in

achieving academic goals by assessing academic strengths and weaknesses, obtainment of GED, assisting with college/scholarship applications and essays, and establishing a long-term education plan. A part-time therapist is also available for private counseling, groups, and workshops. The vision for RCYC therapy is to empower youth to take ownership of their own emotional health. Therapy sessions provide a safe space where youth are able to speak freely without judgment, process past, and present emotions, improve self-awareness and establish and pursue personal goals. Individual therapy sessions, group therapy sessions and enrichment classes are all offered. Therapy is available as a free service to RCYC youth ages 14-24 years old that qualify.

Partnerships

Partnerships in and around the Chattanooga area have enriched the experience of youth involved in the River City Youth Collective. The RCYC receives a majority of referrals from the Independent Living Specialists in both Hamilton and Bradley counties. During summer 2018, Sarah Rogers, a local strength and fitness coach, worked with youth from Cleveland Academy and Chambliss Center for Children through CrossFit style strength and wellness coaching. The partnership was so successful that Sarah has begun working directly with the facility!

Partnership's Consumer Credit Counseling provides financial literacy education for youth participating in the Opportunity Passport curriculum and Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union opens savings accounts for every youth. The University of Tennessee's extension offices has provided life skills education to youth in both Hamilton and Bradley County through basic cooking and nutrition education classes.

Referring Agencies:

- The Department of Children's Services
- Cleveland Academy
- Parkridge Valley
- Chambliss Center for Children

Community Partners:

- Partnership for Families, Children & Adults Consumer Credit Counseling
- Unum
- Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union
- UT Hamilton County Extension Office, SNAP-Ed
- UT Bradley County Extension Office, SNAP-Ed
- Abra Auto Body
- The Thornton Group
- Launch Chattanooga

- CoLab

Successes

- Rebranding
- New Grant
- 85.7percent Opportunity Passport survey completion during April survey administration.
- Developed Community Partnership Board
- Youth Leadership Board Kick-Off (October 24th)
- RCYC Youth selected to represent Tennessee at the Jim Casey National Youth Leadership Institute this year

Challenges and Barriers

Many of the young people who come to RCYC lack support systems that can assist them with navigating the challenging period of transitioning into adulthood. They are often unemployed, lack 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. Many of these presenting issues make it difficult for young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves.

A challenge for the RCYC has been the transportation of youth and young adults. While there are staff and a shared mini-van available to pick up those without transportation it is a long task which can take upwards of an hour barring traffic and weather. As the RCYC grows into a larger program, it will be more difficult to continue transporting youth to classes and workshops. At present, transportation is a minimal issue but could grow in the foreseeable future. Reliable transportation for youth will help them stay focused and complete their goals while involved with the RCYC

Next Steps

With the rebranding of the I AM Ready Center to the River City Youth Collective, there will be more focused attention on the Youth Leadership Board in collaboration with the Youth 4 Youth board through the local and central Independent Living offices. Several older youth have been informed of the new board and are excited to serve as mentors and engage in their community.

I AM Ready Report	July 2017- June 2018
Number of new youth enrolled	41
Number of Financial Literacy Classes Offered	13
Number of Asset Specific Classes Offered	7
(April and October) percentage of youth completing an OPPS survey	October 2017: 26.92%* April 2018: 85.71%
	**Staffing transition
Number of board meetings	4
Number of new door openers created	4
Number of life skills classes held	20
Total number of participants in life skills classes	86

YVLIFESET OVERVIEW

Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program is designed to assist young adults between the ages of 17 and 22, who are transitioning from child welfare and juvenile justice services to adulthood, in learning the skills needed to live successfully. A successful transition includes maintaining safe and stable housing, participating in an educational/vocational program, developing life skills necessary to become a productive citizen and remaining free from legal involvement. YVLifeSet specialists (directly providing the services to the young adults) carry a small average caseload of 8-10 and have multiple contacts (via phone or face-to-face) weekly with each young person in order to engage on a high level. The program is based on a multiple systems approach meaning services are aimed not only at the individual but at all the areas (systems) that may affect the youth (e.g. community, peer group, family, and school/work).

Young adults in the YVLifeSet program are assigned a specialist responsible for aiding youth in every step of the transition process. Specialists are responsible for teaching skills and lessons associated with the focal areas and will ensure that young adults are capable of accessing community resources such as medical attention, housing, and financial support, if necessary. Specialists are available to the young adults 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They also make a minimum of one face-to-face contact per week with the young adult. The number of sessions can be increased based on individual needs.

The focal areas of YVLifeSet include permanency, education, employment, housing (through natural supports), basic independent living skills, and engagement. To support youth in their transition to adulthood, the program uses evidence-based interventions and best practices with regards to the following areas: trauma, pregnant/parenting youth, substance abuse issues, physical and mental health, domestic violence, financial literacy and basic independent living skills.

Since the program was created in 1999, it has helped over 9,760 young adults in Tennessee (and 13,202 nationwide) build independent and successful lives for themselves. Youth Villages began providing YVLifeSet services in Tennessee over 19 years ago and has effectively replicated the program in numerous locations. Today, YVLifeSet serves nearly 1,400 young adults daily in Tennessee and nine other states, with a success rate (defined as living independently or with family) of 91 percent at Discharge, 90 percent at 12 month follow-up.

Partnership with DCS

For more than 19 years, Youth Villages has been providing comprehensive services to young adults aging out of care and other at-risk youth in Tennessee through its YVLifeSet program. In 2007, the Tennessee Department of Children's Services partnered with the Day Foundation and Youth Villages to reach more youth across the state. That public/private partnership was

expanded in 2013 when Youth Villages stepped forward and offered to match dollar-for-dollar state funding for services. Youth Villages offered to contribute \$3 million in private dollars if the state would match those private dollars with \$3 million to provide comprehensive services for young people aging out of foster care. This continued partnership provides the opportunity for every youth aging out of care in Tennessee to receive services.

Tennessee YVLifeSet Data FY 2018

- YVLifeSet served about 726 youth daily
- 1,629 youth participated in the program
- At 12 month follow-up:
 - 92 percent In school, graduated or working
 - 89 percent Living with family or independently
 - 85 percent No trouble with the law

Clinical Trial

From October 2010 to October 2012, Youth Villages' YVLifeSet Program participated in an independent, random assignment evaluation conducted by MDRC, a non-profit, non-partisan research and policy group that specializes in this type of evaluation. MDRC has an outstanding reputation in the field for methodological rigor and for translation of evaluative findings to policymakers. Dr. Mark Courtney, a researcher with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, led the study as principal investigator. The study, which took place in Tennessee, included more than 1,300 youth, making it the largest random assignment evaluation of this type of program for young adults in this critical transition phase.

The evaluation examined the difference that Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program makes for youth aging out of care – its impacts on a range of outcomes, including education, employment, mental health, and financial security. One-Year [Impact Findings](#) from the evaluation were released in 2015, and show that participation in the YVLifeSet program boosted earnings by 17 percent, increased housing stability and economic well-being (including a 22 percent decrease in the likelihood of experiencing homelessness), and improved some of the primary outcomes related to health and safety (including improvements in mental health and a decrease in intimate partner violence). The program was found to be equally effective across different subgroups of youth, including youth with and without histories of juvenile justice custody, as well as urban and rural youth.

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

TENNESSEE HEALTHY TRANSITIONS INITIATIVE

The Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is a five-year \$5 million discretionary grant awarded to the TDMHSAS by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in September 2014. The purpose of the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative is to assist Tennessee youth and young adults with or at risk of developing a serious mental health condition and/or co-occurring disorder in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. This goal will be accomplished through providing coordinated public awareness, outreach and engagement, and access to treatment and resiliency and recovery support services to youth and young adults ages 16-25 with or at risk of serious mental health conditions or co-occurring disorders in two targeted communities. Healthy Transitions provides targeted and innovative awareness, outreach, and specialized treatment and recovery support services to the following prioritized populations of youth and young adults ages 16-25: those in contact with the criminal justice system; those aging out of foster care through child welfare; those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; and those who identify as being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, or Intersex (LGBTQI).

Local Laboratory 1 is located in a rural seven-county area in Northwest Tennessee (Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion and Weakley counties) and is being implemented by Carey Counseling Center, Inc. *Local Laboratory 2* is located in Hamilton County in Southeast Tennessee and is being implemented by Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System. The two Local Laboratories began providing services in February 2016. Services and supports include the following: care coordination utilizing the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model; Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment; supported education; and peer support services. Tennessee Voices for Children houses the Statewide Youth Coordinator and assists with statewide public awareness and youth engagement efforts. Centerstone Research Institute houses the Lead Evaluator, who coordinates evaluation activities.

Team members from TDMHSAS attend and are active participants at Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) meetings, now providing updates on progress toward grant goals at each Council meeting.

Some of the successes during FY18 year include:

- The Tennessee Department of Mental Health Services (TDMHSAS), in collaboration with Youth Era, created and developed a training curriculum for a Young Adult designation of the Certified Peer Support Specialist program, a specialized training and certification program tailored to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults. This

curriculum is in the final approval stages, and the first training cohort of Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialists (CYAPSS) will take place in the coming fiscal year.

- TDMHSAS hired a Young Adult Engagement Coordinator who has been working with the Healthy Transitions Statewide Youth Coordinator, the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC), and the local System of Care Across Tennessee sites. Through a partnership between TDMHSAS and Tennessee Voices for Children (Healthy Transitions and System of Care Across Tennessee), a peer leadership academy was held in August 2018 to include trainings for youth, young adults, and families. There were 19 youth and young adults (Y/YA) that attended the Y/YA track that focused on helping Y/YA gain the skills to become empowered leaders and speak out about mental health issues. There were speakers and presenters from NAMI Davidson, YouthMOVE National, and Southern Word, as well as keynote sessions that focused on prosocial leadership and implicit bias.
- The TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) has met at least monthly and has participated in ongoing activities to ensure youth and young adult voice and input at the state level, including:
 - Participating on the Council on Children’s Mental Health and Youth Transitions Advisory Council
 - Being awarded a Dare to Dream America Grant to plan and execute the Second Annual Children’s Mental Health Awareness Resource Carnival and to continue their Humans in Real Life project (a Humans of New York-inspired photo campaign that focuses on mental health, substance abuse, and systems involvement)
 - Participating in multiple trainings and conferences such as: a Youth Mental Health First Aid training, the 2017 Young Adult Leadership Academy, a Building Strong Brains: ACEs training, and the System of Care Across Tennessee conference.
 - Providing input on upcoming Framelabs to be held across the state, a partnership between TDMHSAS and the Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth meant to train community partners on the importance of using effective messaging strategies and to facilitate group conversations brainstorming ways we can more effectively develop messaging around youth/young adult mental health.
- TDMHSAS staff and two Healthy Transitions staff at the local level started the process of becoming Certified Site Based Trainers of the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Model, an evidence-informed approach for effectively engaging and working with youth and young adults.

These efforts support sustainability of behavioral health services that are driven by and that meet the unique needs of youth and young adults; expand the young adult workforce through the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist program; and infuse youth and young adult voice at both the local and state level.

TENNESSEE FIRST EPISODE PSYCHOSIS INITIATIVE (FEPI)

In the FY 2014 appropriation, Congress allocated additional funds to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to support “evidence-based programs that address the needs of individuals with early serious mental illness, including psychotic disorders.” States were required to set-aside five percent of their Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) allocation to support this evidence-based program. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) began planning for the implementation of the five percent set-aside to address early intervention programming as soon as the 2014 budget legislation passed. The proposal approved by SAMHSA included provisions for a First Episode Psychosis (FEP) treatment program focusing on a rural area of Tennessee using a Coordinated Specialty Care model. The proposal provided a beginning budget, staffing and implementation model designed to be flexible in the face of the challenges of implementing an urban program in a rural area. With innovations focusing on the use of technology and a one-provider arrangement, the proposal was approved and implementation began within 30 days following approval.

The program, titled OnTrackTN and modeled after OnTrackNY, serves youth and young adults between the ages of 15-30, who are experiencing psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, unusual thoughts or beliefs, or disorganized thinking, with symptoms present for more than a week but less than 24 months. In the months following the approval of the proposal, TDMHSAS contracted with Carey Counseling Center, Inc. (Carey) to implement the program in a seven-county area in the northwest corner of Tennessee. The counties in the service area are Lake, Obion, Weakley, Benton, Carroll, Gibson, and Henry.

In the spring of 2016, Congress increased the set-aside in the State Mental Health Block Grant program from 5 to 10 percent for first episode programs. TDMHSAS submitted a proposal to expand the First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI) through the 10 percent set-aside, which was approved by SAMHSA. The proposal identified the following two priorities: (1) Expand the OnTrackTN program to two additional sites in Tennessee, and (2) Create a statewide FEPI Learning Collaborative consisting of, at minimum, all three OnTrackTN sites. In May 2016, TDMHSAS released an Announcement of Funding requesting proposals to implement OnTrackTN in two of the following three counties: Davidson, Hamilton, and Shelby. A review panel scored the proposals and contracts were awarded to Mental Health Cooperative, Inc. in Davidson County and Alliance Healthcare Services in Shelby County. All programs were trained in the OnTrackNY model.

Team members from TDMSHAS regularly attend YTAC meetings, now providing updates on progress toward goals at each Council meeting.

Some of the successes during FY18 year include:

- OnTrackTN teams served one hundred youth and young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis.
- TDMHSAS, in collaboration with Vanderbilt University's Medical Center and the Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO), hosted a second statewide First Episode Psychosis Conference entitled "First Episode Psychosis: Walking Together on the Road to Recovery." The conference was attended by approximately 180 statewide and national participants.
- TDMHSAS made plans to partner with Helen Ross McNabb Center to implement an OnTrackTN team in Knox County in the upcoming fiscal year.
- As a result of the 2018 federal appropriations, there was an increase in the SAMHSA Mental Health Block Grant which resulted in additional funds being available through the 10 percent set-aside. During the next fiscal year, these funds will be used to 1) expand services to Hamilton County through an Announcement of Funding and 2) ensure support and fidelity of OnTrackTN teams through the use of a statewide trainer and consultant.

These efforts support sustainability of behavioral health services in Tennessee that meet the unique needs of youth and young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis. Services provided by OnTrackTN teams focus on helping these youth and young adults work toward recovery and meeting personal goals.

**APPENDIX A
MEETING AGENDAS AND
SUMMARIES**



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Andrew Jackson Building, Ninth Floor
502 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

October 5, 2017

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

[615.742.4151](tel:6157424151)

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of August 10, 2017 Meeting Summary	<i>Linda O’Neal, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)</i>
Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update	<i>Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director Office of Independent Living, DCS</i>
Update from Resource Centers	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections</i>
	<i>Dream Seekers</i>
	<i>Christy Martin, Project Now! Robert Love, I AM READY</i>
Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program	<i>Christina Scott, Youth Villages LifeSet Annemarie Rainwater</i>
Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service (DMHSAS)	
Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant	<i>April Tanguay, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative	<i>Will Voss, TN Voices for Children</i>
Park Center Emerging Adult Program	<i>Julia Barlar, Park Center</i>
2017 Annual Report	<i>Accomplishments and Recommendations; Review Annual Report Draft</i>
Next Meeting	<i>Proposed 2018 Meeting Dates May 3 June 21? In conjunction with CCMH August 9 October 4</i>
Other Business	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>



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TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Youth Transitions Advisory Council

October 5, 2017

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

MEETING SUMMARY

Participants

Phil Acord	Catherine Kercher	Christina Scott
Dave Aguzzi	Robert Love	Natasha Smith
Julia Barler	Gina Lynette	Ned Andrew Solomon
Jon Berestecky	Pam Madison	April Tanguay
Bryan Currie	Christy Martin	Jerresha Tinker
Sarah Elghalban	Teresa Moore	Eric Valinor
Rachel Hauber	Jessica Mullins	Joseph Valinor
Tim Hickman	Linda O’Neal	Will Voss
Sumita Keller	Crystal Parker	Caitlin Wright
Richard Kennedy	Steve Petty	
	Annemarie Rainwater	

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of August 10, 2017 Meeting Summary & Introductions – Linda O’Neal, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

O’Neal welcomed the group, expressed her appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions. No announcements were made.

O’Neal asked members to review the August 10, 2017 meeting summary. She asked for revisions or edits.

IT WAS MOVED (ACORD) AND SECONDED (VOSS) TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 10, 2017 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director and Jerresha Tinker, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services

Aguzzi reported on the Extension of Foster Care Expansion meeting held on August 17, 2017 with Commissioner Bonnie Hommrich, Assistant Commissioner of Finance Doug Swisher and Mainspring Consulting.

He shared data derived from focus groups and surveys. Young adults and DCS staff reviewed reasons why young adults did not accept or receive Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) upon exiting custody. He said the main reasons were Academic Ineligibility and Refusal of Services. O'Neal asked if Tennessee Promise could have helped and Aguzzi answered the lack of resources like Tennessee Promise was not the problem, but the young adults were not at a place to accept services.

There was an agreement reached on the scope of analysis by Mainspring Consulting. They reviewed the fiscal analysis/impact of adding two criteria of eligibility looking at EFCS, Adoption Subsidy and SPG Subsidy, the Fiscal Analysis/Impact of adding an increased Independent Living Allowance rate for parenting young adults and the Impact on Policy/Practice. Aguzzi said there is a significant cost associated with expansion.

Acord asked for a clarification about offering support of those youth not already in school. Aguzzi explained the three eligibility criteria they can use and said there may be some flexibility. One of the barriers is the cost to offer the service.

Aguzzi reported young adults who received Extension of Foster Care Services for July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

757 total EFCS Episodes to June 30, 2017
743 total young adults served to June 30, 2017
338 total active in EFCS as of June 30, 2017

Young adults who received EFCS during the same time frame last year:
772 total EFCS Episodes to June 30, 2016
755 total young adults served to June 30, 2016
334 total active in EFCS as of June 30, 2016

Aguzzi reviewed the custodial independent living wraparound services. For youth in custody, there were 508 services provided, 433 individuals received services. For youth in Extension of Foster Care services, 381 services were provided and 316 individuals served.

Extension of Foster Care Placements: there were 307 young adults in traditional placements, 74 young adults were in supervised independent living placements, 446 received independent living allowance, a total of 666 young adults received placement assistance while in EFCS.

Acord asked about data showing a need of services. Aguzzi said it is currently difficult to capture this data. From talking with the clients and staff, he believes housing is a need.

Tinker said they are prepping for their Jim Casey Conference in Clearwater, Florida in November. Permanency after the age of 18 is the focus. They are also currently recruiting for Camp Montvale, the two-day youth camp in Maryville. She asked for volunteers as well.

Update from Resource Centers

Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pam Madison

Madison said there is an increase of young people coming to the resource center. When asked who referred them, the answer has been “word of mouth.” There is a new check-in system at the Center using an iPad. They use an app allowing them to collect data on who is coming to the center and why. The system has only been in place for a month and a half and so far there have been 287, 93 of those were unique visitors. Madison is excited about the partnership with the Oasis Center to provide housing for the young adults.

Madison reported some of the young adults have started college. She shared the story about Robert. She said he is living on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville (UTK), but is taking classes at Pellissippi Community College through the Bridges Program. He will eventually transition to UTK. Robert can still participate in Opportunity Passport while attending college. Madison reported they also have students at TSU.

Madison talked about the grant provided by the Country Music Association to create a music program giving youth access to music education. She shared the young people seemed more interested in learning from other musicians instead of playing instruments. Madison reported partnering with a local music school. Recently, the Soundtracks program leader Chester Thompson and his special guest Melinda Doolittle from American Idol gave the youth a chance to learn about music and themselves in a safe and creative space. The young people gained access to the technical side of the business and amazing musicians.

Monroe Harding, which provides a nurturing environment for Nashville children in foster care, is developing and implementing a year-round music education program for youth in its Cooperative Living program. That program, “Soundtracks,” will create a much-needed opportunity for creative self-expression for at-risk teenage boys.

Madison said she wants to continue with programs and offer other amazing opportunities allowing the young people to expand their world. Acord asked about Jimmy Wayne. Madison said he started at Monroe Harding when he did the Walk Across America and he has offered other support. Wayne has a wonderful fan base and anytime he posts something on his social media page, his fans go into action.

***Project NOW!* – Christy Martin**

Martin reported 50 youth were initiated into the Sisters Saving Sisters program. Most of their referrals are residential while only a few are from DCS. She said they have a new bank partner providing financial education and assistance. There have been four matches for Opportunity Passport in the last month, a lot for Helen Ross McNabb.

Martin said she was concerned about the facilities, but discovered several facilities will be renovated and her program will be included. They are conducting back to school tutoring, volunteer and community services.

Martin reported many of their youth have started college at University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Tennessee Technological University, Pellissippi State, Belmont, Carson Newman, Roane State and other local institutions.

I.A.M. READY Center – Robert Love

Love reported about the significance of education for the youth. I AM READY has kids at Chattanooga State, UTC, Lee College, Cleveland State. They are still reaching out to those campuses because the center goes up to age 26. This allows them to provide additional services. It is crucial to continue to market themselves to let those kids know they are not alone.

Staff have had conversation with Sodexo Erlanger to provide an internship for the youth and give them other options making it easier for them to want to go to college.

I AM READY had the first class to graduate from the Cleveland location showing the accomplishment of branching off outside of Chattanooga.

Love introduced Catherine Kercher as the new SHE program coordinator. Kercher talked about partnerships with Connections with Cleveland Academy, Chambliss, Choices Pregnancy Center. They have 17 girls so far.

Sarah Elghalban was introduced as the new Assistant Director for Youth Services. She spoke briefly and said she is focusing on expanding I. A.M. Ready and the SHE program.

Dream Seekers – Steve Petty

Petty provided a brief report on behalf of Tiffany Turnage. There are 30 young people on waitlist for Dream Seekers. The first classes are scheduled to begin October 9th – 13th during fall break. October is also OPSS month where they are preparing their clients to take the surveys.

They have a goal to enroll 152 young ladies into the Sisters Saving Sisters (SSS) program this year. Classes for SSS are scheduled for October 9th-13th. They hope to continue receiving support from their partners through increasing numbers of referrals received.

The Job Readiness Program cultivated a group of youth ages 18-25 who are now prepared for work, empowered with necessary pre-employment skills and ready to promote job retention and advancement. There were 46 young people who have gone through the Job Readiness Program, exceeding their goal of 40. Currently, the job readiness program is inactive due to lack of funding, but they are actively seeking funding to continue this program.

SMA has partnered with KaBOOM, BlueCross Blue Shield of Tennessee Health Foundation, and Circles of Success Learning Academy to provide volunteers for the Playground Project. A total of 10 Dream Seekers participated in building a playground on Friday September 29th. The youth will receive volunteer hours and a stipend for assisting with this event. Also, five of their female youth will attend a “Note 2 Self Art Expression Workshop” on October 9-12th at the ISNS Girls Mentoring House. The workshop will bring awareness to Teen Mental Illness and also focus on emotional wellness to help girls cope with life’s many ups and downs.

Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Christina Scott and Annemarie Rainwater

Scott reported they serve 699 youth in Tennessee: 299 Middle, 242 East and 158 West. Out of the 699 youth served, 313 were state funded. There were 1,701 youth served this past fiscal year. Scott said 90 percent either are in high school or have graduated.

The holiday program has begun where they are collecting holiday presents for the youth they serve and their siblings and/or children. Scott reviewed the peer to peer events such as an educational opportunity to build their resume with the American Job Center, banking and credit education with the credit union and a scavenger hunt at the Memphis Zoo.

Scott introduced Annemarie Rainwater who is an YV Scholar and the newest member of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. She is a 22 years old student majoring in social work. Rainwater is committed to working in the foster care field and shared her life story to explain why this subject is a passion of hers.

Rainwater explained she is originally from Michigan where she initially entered custody at nine years old along with four other siblings for six months. Her family moved to Tennessee because they were running from DCS. Rainwater said her mother had another child after moving to Tennessee and soon she ended up raising her siblings.

Rainwater said her parents partied, did drugs and did not want anything to do with their children. Her father abused her and her autistic brother because they were the oldest. She said she missed a lot of school due to bruises from her father. Finally, DCS took them away from their parents when Rainwater was 13. Eventually, the siblings were split up. Rainwater lived in eight homes in one year. She felt helpless and unloved. Her eighth home was her favorite and the foster parents wanted to

adopt her. She went on a rebellious streak by running away twice because she wanted to hurt them before they got a chance to hurt her. Fortunately, her rebellion did not scare them away.

Rainwater said it took time to terminate parental rights because her father was actually her step-father. She said the adoption was finalized just before her 18th birthday on May 17, 2012. Rainwater graduated with a 3.0 GPA and she immediately started at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU). She said her adoptive mom found grants for foster children and got her connected with the LifeSet Program. Rainwater has been a YV Scholar for four years and said had it not been for LifeSet, she would have dropped out of school. They got her back on track and now her goal is to be a caseworker.

Rainwater said her two brothers and two sisters were also adopted while one of her sisters aged out of the system. They are all still very close.

Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant – April Tanguay

Tanguay shared the TRY grant began four years ago and officially ended August 31st. Since there was money left, they received an extension. Centerstone and Pathways were the providers for the grant. The funding will only last to the end of December or January.

Tanguay reported 400 adolescents and youth were served and they are looking to serve another 30 in the next month. She said there will be one more training in January.

Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Initiative – Will Voss, Tennessee Voices for Children Project Director, Healthy Transitions

Voss said he presented to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) conference recently. The First Episode Psychosis Conference in Franklin was September 11th-12th. He said the conference highlighted lessons learned and showed the perspectives of the family and youth.

The Young Adult Leadership Academy was August 24th – 25th. They worked with the young adults on how to tell their stories. Voss said they wanted more time with Steve Petty who talked with them about advocacy. The Young Adult Leadership Council meets once a month in Nashville. The next one is October 28th.

They are working with the youth program builders to complete the certified peer program. They are also working on effective youth and young adults training. There will be a TIP training next month.

There were two trainings last month with the Oasis Center to effectively work with LGBTQ youth.

Park Center Emerging Adult Program – Julia Barlar, Park Center

Barlar explained the Emerging Adults Program is a strengths-based program providing opportunities for each young adult to pursue their individual goals in the areas of education, vocation, living situation, and community living skills. The program will be 10 years old in January. She gave a brief background on Park Center and the services offered. Barlar said she recently attended a meeting where people were unaware Park Center had housing available. She said many people did not even know about NAMI.

Barlar said housing is for those adults 18-24 years old throughout Tennessee with a diagnosis of severe and persistent mental illness. They must have history of mental health hospitalizations or adolescent foster care or currently be homeless. They cannot be a sex offender or have a past of sexual acting-out behaviors. There are no insurance or income requirements because a grant from the Department of Mental Health funds the program. Park Center can serve young adults until age 25 as long as they were in the program by age 24.

Barlar also talked about their Psychiatric Rehabilitation Program. It is for adults ages 18-24 with a diagnosis of severe and persistent mental illness. This program requires TennCare insurance and is not appropriate for individuals with intellectual disabilities who have an IQ of less than 70. Barlar said to refer someone anyway because if they get a referral for someone with the precursor symptoms of the eligible mental health conditions, they will look at it. The program teaches illness management and recovery as published by SAMSHA

They have four college students and two GED students. Barlar said they push education and employment as a requirement for the program. They do have a day program. There are also supportive community outings where they go places that are cheap or free so the young adults can continue after the program is no longer available. They have to attend class in the morning to attend the outing.

Barlar said they have a supported house for women and an independent living situation for both men and women. Referrals for housing can be made at Parkcenternashville.org They can stay for as long as they want or until the day before they turn 25. Services offered include occupational therapy, art therapy, recreational therapy and tutoring. There is a support group for family members meeting the third Thursday at the Park Center North.

There is a sliding fee scale for those who live at home and there is the SOAR program for homeless. SOAR is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) for eligible adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder. Barlar said the SSI benefits come quickly. TennCare will provide transportation for the day program. Every year they have a fundraiser to teach job skills in an unusual way. They have mason jars with ingredients to make cookies. This teaches them how to run an assembly line, about business and other life skills.

Review 2017 Annual Report Draft – Linda O’Neal and Steve Petty

- O’Neal explained the report for the General Assembly is due October 31, 2017. She reviewed recommendations, contributions and corrections with the Council.

Next Meetings

- Proposed meeting dates are May 3rd, June 21st in conjunction with CCMH, August 9th and October 4th.

Other Business

- O’Neal requested future meeting topics be sent to Petty by email.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:28 p.m.



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Andrew Jackson Building, Ninth Floor
502 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

May 3, 2018

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

[615.742.4151](tel:615.742.4151)

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of October 5, 2017 Meeting Summary	<i>Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)</i>
Victory Lap	<i>Rosemary Ramsey</i>
Tennessee Housing and Development Agency	<i>Toni Shaw</i>
Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update	<i>Office of Independent Living, DCS Brian Stephens Director, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director, Jerresha Tinker, Youth Engagement</i>
Update from Resource Centers	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections</i>
	<i>Dream Seekers</i>
	<i>Christy Martin, Project Now! Catherine Kercher, I AM READY</i>
Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program	<i>Heather Tribble, Youth Villages LifeSet</i>
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Update Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative	<i>Kisha Ledlow, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
Discussion about Youth Housing and Placement	
Next Meeting	<i>2018 Meeting Dates June 21 In conjunction with CCMH Midtown Hills Police Precinct August 9 Goodwill October 4 Goodwill</i>
Other Business	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>



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Youth Transitions Advisory Council

May 3, 2018

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

Dave Aguzzi
Julia Barler
Jon Berestecky
Stacey Buchannon
Amy Campbell
Sarah Elghalban
Joey Ellis
Jane Fleishman
Nate Harmening
Rachel Hauber

Kim Holst
Richard Kennedy
Catherine Kercher
Brandy Kidd
Kisha Ledlow
Pam Madison
Christy Martin
Linda O'Neal
Steve Petty
Rosemary Ramsey

Kristen Russell
Christina Scott
Toni Shaw
Natasha Smith
Brian Stephens
Jerresha Tinker
Heather Tribble
Eric Valinor
Joseph Valinor
Jules Wilson

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of October 5, 2017 Meeting Summary & Introductions – Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)

Kennedy welcomed the group at 12:33 p.m. He expressed his appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions and announcements.

Youth Leadership Healthy Transitions Tennessee will host the 2nd Annual Children's Mental Health Awareness Resource Carnival will be held on Saturday, May 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Hadley Park Community Center, 1037 28th Avenue North, Nashville.

Berestecky announced Chambliss Center for Children has six transition units for youth and will have five more by the end of the summer.

Fleishman announced the youth at the Oasis Center have an art exhibit on display next week. Come by and see it.

Kennedy asked members to review the October 5, 2017 meeting summary. He asked for revisions or edits.

IT WAS MOVED (BERESTECKY) AND SECONDED (CAMPBELL) TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 5, 2017 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Kennedy announced O’Neal’s retirement and she shared her sentiments.

Victory Lap Project – Rosemary Ramsey

Ramsey provided an overview of the Victory Lap Project. The Victory Lap Project unites young and old for mutual social and economic benefit. Integrating older foster youth into retirement communities provides them with housing stability, employment opportunities and the support of caring adults. In turn, the senior housing provider enjoys an on-site workforce, revenue from otherwise vacant units and the magic of intergenerational friendships. She also talked about her experiences in the community and her love for the residents. Ramsey had a little experience with at-risk youth, but she wanted to talk to the experts to fill in the gaps.

Ramsey highlighted a few intergenerational programs. Judson Manor is a ground breaking residential partnership in Cleveland, Ohio where graduate-level CIM students began living at Judson Manor in exchange for complimentary living accommodations. The students also provide cultural programming at all three of Judson’s retirement communities. She also talked about an intergenerational program where Dutch college students are living in nursing homes to save on rent in exchange for volunteer work. The students teach the elderly how to send emails and to use Skype.

Bridge Meadows is an intentional intergenerational living community where youth formerly in foster care, their adoptive parents, and elders find a true home built with love and a shared vision of a better tomorrow. Genesis is a small intergenerational community in Washington, DC, consisting of 27 affordable apartments for seniors, young families transitioning out of foster care and other families. At Genesis, neighbors commit to supporting each other and the community. Everyone has value and contributes their talents.

Ramsey said the youth get to share in a community where people support one another instead of just an apartment. They are able to develop their employment skills and discover career paths in the fields of hospitality, healthcare, grounds and maintenance, recreation, sales and administration. A retirement community has plenty of entry-level jobs available with flexible schedules and no need for transportation to work. The youth would also have on-site food service, 24-hours security, group transportation, computer access, and other amenities already included. The seniors are caring adults with a lot left to give through time, mentorship and they just love interacting with the young people.

Ramsey reported agencies are able to free up time and money to serve more youth through these partnerships. There is a peace of mind knowing the youths’ basic needs are met and a responsible adult is on duty 24 hours a day. This allows for more scalable residential model versus building and renting group homes or apartments.

Ramsey said the senior housing sector has the lowest occupancy since 2009 because of oversupply. The benefit of these partnerships to the senior housing providers is there are more flexible shifts leading to labor cost savings. With staff on site, short shifts to serve meals, answer phones and more are feasible. Youth add vibrancy that cannot be duplicated by other means, not to mention the marketing advantage of being an intergenerational community instead of just another “old folks home.”

Ramsey said each party would have specific responsibilities to make this work. The senior living partner is the real estate partner and leverages its high fixed cost and economies of scale to serve youth at a lower cost than a group home or traditional apartment. Agencies stick with their core competencies and get out of the real estate business.

Currently, Tennessee approved a pilot site in Chattanooga. They just need an agency to own the pilot program. Alabama has senior living partner programs in Montgomery with several agencies interested. The state approved the project this week. The board rate in Alabama is \$70 a day compared to \$48 a day in Tennessee. California has multiple opportunities via the community college system’s Guardian Scholars program.

Ramsey went over the board rate split in Tennessee. The youth would receive \$122 per month stipend for incidentals, senior living partner receive \$763 per month and the case management agency would receive \$580 per month. The question came up as to whether the youth would have to pay rent or use the money earned for savings. Ramsey said this particular model has not been tried anywhere although similar to other programs.

Stephens added the key is connecting with a licensed agency and the program would have to meet the state’s criteria.

Ramsey also shared sample floorplans of retirement community apartments and the jobs available within retirement communities.

Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Brian Stephens, Director, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director and Jerresha Tinker, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services

Aguzzi provided data for the Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) episodes to March 31, 2017 for state fiscal years 2017 and 2018. He said they noticed more young people are returning to receive services than last year. He reported:

Youth Served in FY18	<i>Youth Served in FY17</i>
706 total EFCS Episodes	647 total EFCS Episodes
691 total young adults served	641 total young adults served
365 total active in EFCS	343 total active in EFCS

Aguzzi talked about the permanency plan enhancement phase II. He said permanency is more of a process. It outlines responsibilities and goals for foster parents. He said they are working on the integration of currently separate records with the CFTM and categories across program areas. No more linking records to a separate Permanency Plan record. They are also integrating categories across program areas like Juvenile Justice and Independent Living.

Other enhancements include more concurrent goal combinations, updated requirements across program areas (non-custody, custody, juvenile justices, EFCS) and enhanced features for generating the printed summaries. Aguzzi said this will set the stage for Phase III: Integration of Assessments and Services. He quickly recalled Phase I and said it was to establish a more child focused way to navigate and retrieve records.

Aguzzi said more requirements for 16 year olds will be added in Phase II. In addition, there is a category crediting the youth for skills on the basis of a “strength or need.” Some skills still have to be addressed as a need because they are federally-mandated. Aguzzi said training will occur to explain the enhancements.

Stephens provided an overview of the EFC Expansion and some analysis conducted over the last year. Stephens said EFC conducted its own fiscal analysis as well. He talked about Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)/Resource Center Expansion and said they applied for seed money through Jim Casey to create a program for males similar to the Sister Savings Sister program.

Stephens talked about Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative to understand adolescent brain development training and learning. He mentioned specialized Expected Family Contribution Federal Work-Study Program (EFC FSW) training, *Building Strong Brains Tennessee* (ACEs) and other internal trainings.

Stephens talked about expanding housing opportunities. He mentioned Tennessee Housing Trust Fund, DCS resources, Individual inquiries and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. FUP vouchers provide housing assistance to families involved with the child welfare system, to reunify families or keep them together, and youths aged 18-21 who have aged out of the foster care system. To qualify, families and youths must lack adequate housing.

Tinker reported on re-visioning youth engagement. She said Jim Casey has been working with them at DCS to improve the agency, youth voice and develop youth as professional individuals and to develop staff. They will attend the Jim Casey Youth Engagement Conference in three weeks.

Tinker said there is a leadership academy camp on May 22-23 at Camp Montvale in Maryville. She said youth who have attended the camp loved it, but unfortunately, the youth may only attend once because of funding. Tinker said the girls asked for a separate camp just for girls. She said because of the requests, there will now be a Glam Camp June 26-27 for ladies age 16-18. She asked for volunteers to help chaperone at the camps.

Tennessee Housing and Development Agency (THDA) – Toni Shaw

Shaw followed up about the Victory Lap project and said THDA currently has a similar project in Johnson City. She looks forward to talking further with Rosemary Ramsey. Shaw said THDA is now reviewing creative and innovative rental housing development proposals for the 2018 Spring Round of the Competitive Grants Program. The maximum grant amount is \$500,000 and there is no grant minimum. Extra points are given for projects providing housing for ex-offenders and youth transitioning from foster care, those serving homeless veterans, and those setting-aside units for very low and extremely low income households.

Shaw welcomed ideas and referrals. The grant is offered twice a year. THDA conducts application workshops prior to the deadline of each grant. For more information, visit <https://thda.org/business-partners/competitive-grants>. Email Toni Shaw at toni.shaw@tn.gov if you would like to be added to the mailing list. Shaw said there are other grants as well.

Questions about the Family Unification Program (FUP) came up again. More information can be found on the program at https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FUP_FACT_SHEET.PDF.

Update from Resource Centers

Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pam Madison

Madison closed the cooperative living program for males last year. Monroe Harding is moving its site from Green Hills and is not closing. She reported the Opportunity Passport program has written \$15,500 in matching funds (vehicles, housing, education). She said these youth are saving at record numbers. Madison reported 84 youth currently enrolled. Since 2006, they have served over 750 youth.

Madison reported on the HiSet program. They will have two graduations this year compared to 17 youth who graduated last year. Graduation will be held on June 6th and everyone is invited.

Madison said they continue to have its tutoring program at the Center and in-house in their apartments. There are currently 19 youth in their apartments and many more on a waiting list. She reported on the social activities provided like yoga classes every Thursday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. Madison said a good number of males are doing yoga as well. They also have Southern Word workshop.

Project NOW! – Christy Martin

Martin reported there are 28 youth active in Opportunity Passport. Since October, 23 youth have been trained in Opportunity Passport with 96.3 percent completing their follow up surveys on time as of April 2018. The number of matches is seven (five vehicles, one health, and two vehicle matches pending).

Martin said she met with a youth focus group on April 4th to get their input on program planning. Youth suggestions included online job search and application, soft skills training (interviewing, talking to others, etc.), resume writing, review of financial management, and information about post-secondary programs. The youth also expressed a need for recreational activities such as cookout in the Smoky Mountains, outdoor movie nights, cooking together, pizza nights, video games, and a night out to eat. Based on the youth input and availability of facilities, there is no space for online or tech based skills until there is a move.

Martin reported they are implementing a Strong Women Video Series specifically for young ladies. The series asks viewers to identify the heroine’s goals and to discuss whether they were met and what makes them “strong women.” The outdoor video series uses a projector outside of the building and is accompanied by popcorn and drinks.

Martin reported on Operation Hope Coach. She said Kristie Blevens presented a review of budget management and savings. She talked about their post-secondary program visits for the summer to Pellissippi State, TCAT-Knoxville, South College, Carson Newman, University of Tennessee and Maryville College. Martin reported more colleges were involved as well.

Martin discussed monthly activities such as pizza night, cooking dinner night, eating out night, etc. She said they are working on ways to inject fun in and around Knoxville that are free while also having a variety of cultural experiences. The youth attended the Orange and White Game at the University of Tennessee. Other events included viewing Sgt. York (a new play) and other planned events.

Martin mentioned new collaborations with Pink Diamond Defense to specialize in women’s self-defense classes and the Community Coalition Against Human Trafficking (CCAHT) to emphasize empathy and why it is important, recognizing negative pushes and cultural pulls to determine the difference between a disguise and a positive pull in life.

Martin talked about *Building Strong Brains Tennessee* ACEs training conducted by TCCY last week in Knoxville. She had nothing but praise for the training and said it was filled with great data.

I.A.M. READY Center – Catherine Kercher

Kercher briefly talked about the makeup of the board and reported there have been 31 youth served through I Am Ready since January 2018 and 47 SHE Sisters since October 2017. The Opportunity Passport Survey had an 85.7 percent completion rate.

She discussed programs in Chattanooga and Cleveland and highlighted two students who are taking advantage of the program. A barber student at Chattanooga State has been attending the program since January 2018 and he wants to open a barber shop/recording studio. This dream is developing through a connection with The Co-Lab, a nonprofit startup accelerator that supports entrepreneurial growth in southeast Tennessee.

Another youth came to the center to give back to society by mentoring youth who have journeyed the same paths she had through the foster care system. She has proven to be an exceptional mentor to the teens in the program, encouraging them to stay motivated in school, be responsible and be kind to others. She openly shares the foster youth experiences with her colleagues on the Community Partnership Board. This summer, she will host a series of “hangouts” for female youth to gather and talk about their experiences.

Kercher said they conducted a focus group with the youth and said they have incorporated a drama therapy personal history project into the program. This is a two-day pilot program where participants will develop skills for understanding the context of their own personal histories, sense of self and desires for future roles in their communities. Other developing programs include Teachable Moments, SNAP ED, Girl Talk and Sexual Health Education for Boys.

Community Partnerships are with Chattanooga Public Library, Cleveland Academy, CoLab, Consumer Credit Counseling, Erlanger Health System, Parkridge Valley Mental Health, SNAP ED and Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union.

Kercher reported the SHE Program had 47 new youth, 10 pregnant and parenting, 44 in foster care and 4 in juvenile justice.

Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Heather Tribble and Christina Scott

Scott shared data from first quarter of 2018. She reported 678 youth were served statewide. Pregnant youth make up five percent compared to 15 percent of parenting youth. She said on average, 53percent are living with parents while two percent were homeless or transient. She provided more numbers as to 59 percent youth seeking employment in West Tennessee compared to 35 percent in Middle Tennessee and 21 percent in East Tennessee.

Tribble reported serving 705 youth, 252 in East, 239 in Middle, and 214 in West Tennessee. They serve 695 youth on average in Tennessee daily. She said 316 cases are funded by the state and 389 are funded with private dollars.

Tribble talked about Backpack Heroes where they will be providing backpacks to youth in the YVLifeSet program. Donors and volunteers who come to help fill them, provide the backpack and school supplies. She discussed the recent peer-to-peer activities. One was in East Tennessee at the Carter Center where the youth were educated on resume writing and interviewing. Y-12 Credit Union held a Mad City Money activity with the youth. Section 8 came to discuss how to get vouchers for housing and how you could lose housing.

In Middle Tennessee, Legal Aid came and talked about Juvenile Record expungement. Youth were educated around healthy relationships and what the warning signs to look for in a relationship that are unhealthy. Youth played the Game of Life where they learned about careers, budgets, and making adjustments based on life events.

Upcoming events include graduation parties for high school and college students. The YV Scholars are having a pilot for community college students.

Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Initiative – Kisha Ledlow

Ledlow introduced Jules Wilson as the new Youth and Young Adult Coordinator. She reported Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) continues to develop the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist program. The training curriculum and manual was developed in collaboration with YouthEra, a youth-run organization in Oregon. TDMHSAS is now working on the program handbook and internal processes.

Through the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, trainings on the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) model continue to be offered. In addition, four individuals across the state are in the process of becoming Certified TIP Trainers and will be able to offer the training through the state. The TIP model is an evidence-informed framework for working with youth and young adults with mental health challenges.

Ledlow said the TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) received the Youth MOVE National Dare to Dream America Grant. The YALC, in collaboration with Tennessee Voices for Children, is using the grant to host its Second Annual Children's Mental Health Awareness event. She announced this year, the event will be a mental health resource carnival to be held on May 19, 2018, 9:00 am-12:30 pm at Hadley Park Community Center. The grant will also allow the YALC to further develop and expand its Humans in Real Life Campaign.

Ledlow reported since January 2016, the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative has received 331 referrals, provided 228 screenings, and enrolled 124 youth and young adults who have or at risk of developing mental health challenges or co-occurring disorders. Since October 2014, OnTrackTN has served almost 100 young adults experiencing a first episode of psychosis. As a

result of the program, young adults experienced a 90 percent reduction in emergency room visits for behavioral health reasons. In addition, there was a reduction of over 75 percent in the average days spent in the hospital for behavioral health reasons.

Youth Housing and Placement Discussion

Kennedy facilitated a discussion on youth housing and placement not previously addressed. Someone suggested training on maintaining public housing.

Next Meetings

June 21st in conjunction with Council on Children's Mental Health at Midtown Hills Police Precinct. The August 9th and October 4th meetings will both be held at Goodwill Industries.

Other Business

Kennedy requested future meeting topics be sent to Petty by email. Petty mentioned Section 8 and a Reunification Voucher as possible topics. There will be a presentation on Teen Courts at the June 21 meeting.

Shaw said she will talk to someone at THDA could come to present at a future meeting. Ledlow suggested taking a deeper look into mental health and how programs are limited in meeting those needs as well as peer support. Individual Placement and Support (IPS) was also mentioned.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:19 p.m.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNCIL ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

June 21, 2018
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Midtown Hills Police Precinct
1443 12th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203

Tentative Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

- Richard Kennedy, Executive Director, TCCY

TDMHSAS Transition Initiatives

- *Healthy Transitions Program and Evaluation*
 - Heather Taylor-Griffith, Director, Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- *OnTrackTN Program and Evaluation*
 - Heather Taylor-Griffith, Director, Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services,
 - Don Walker, SOCAT Lead Evaluator, TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist Program

- Jules Wilson, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator

Juvenile Justice Reform Act Update

- Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate, TCCY

Networking Lunch

Tennessee Youth Courts

- Denise Bentley, J. D., Youth Court Director

Department of Children's Services

- *Independent Living*
 - Brian Stephens, Director of Independent Living

YVLifeSet

- Heather Tribble, YVLifeSet Coordinator – Tennessee
- Christina Scott, YVLifeSet
- Angela McCrady, YVLifeSet

Resource Centers

- Youth Connections – Monroe Harding – Pamela Madison
- Project Now – Helen Ross McNabb – Christy Martin
- Dream Seekers – South Memphis Alliance – Tiffany Turnage

Closing

2018 CCMH Meeting Dates:

Thursday, August 16, 2018 – TBD

Thursday, October 18, 2018 – Midtown Hills Police Precinct

2018 YTAC Meeting Dates:

August 9, 2018 – Goodwill Industries

October 4, 2018 – Goodwill Industries

Council on Children’s Mental Health Purpose Statement

Design a comprehensive plan for a statewide System of Care for children and families that is family-driven, youth-guided, community-based, and culturally and linguistically competent.



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
COUNCIL ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH
YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Andrew Jackson Building, 9th Floor
502 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

June 21, 2018
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Midtown Hills Police Precinct
1443 12th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37203

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees:

Jennifer Aitken	Kim Fyke-Vance	Jerri Moore	Julie Smith
Carol Ackley	Deborah Gatlin	Kelli Mott	Sara Smith
Katie Armstrong	Debra Granger	Jessica Mullins	Tabitha Stone
Anna Arts	Criss Griffin	Jill Murphy	Dakota Sullivan
Stephanie Athalone	Tamara Hall	Yolanda Neal	Roger Stewart
Elizabeth Ball	Rachel Hauber	Zack Nitzschke	Joan Sykora
Julia Barlar	Kimberly Holst	Megan Osborn	Latonya Tate
Whitney Barrett	Cheri Holzbacher	Amy Olson	Vicki Taylor
Denise Bentley	Karen Howell	Crystal Parker	Heather Taylor-Griffith
William Bianca	Miracle Hurley	Margaret Payne	Jerresha Tinker
Hope Bond	Brittney Jackson	Steve Petty	Heather Tribble
Hailey Brasher	Ashley Jasinski	Taylor Phipps	Tiffany Turnage
Garla Camarillo	Katherine Kercher	Athena Randolph	Keri Virgo
April Cox	Richard Kennedy	Mary Rolando	Don Walker
Brenda Donaldson	Beth Langston	Willie Ross	James Wilson
Jennifer Drake-Croft	Toni Lawal	Delora Ruffin	Jules Wilson
Joey Ellis	Dallis Lax	John Rust	Tammy Wilson
Kendall Elsass	Pam Madison	Kara Rymar	Lygia Williams
Carey Farley	Melissa McGee	Christina Scott	Kinika Young
Connie Farmer	Christy Martin	Pragati Singh	
Brittany Farrar	Sarah Metter	Lindsay Sinicki	
Laritha Fentress	Terra Miller	Russette Sloan	

I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements – Richard Kennedy, TCCY Executive Director

Kennedy called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. He welcomed everyone and commended Melissa McGee for her work with CCMH, Steve Petty for his work with YTAC, and gave a brief background on each Council. Kennedy reviewed the agenda and highlighted some of the programs attendees would be hearing from today.

Kennedy thanked everyone for making attendance a priority and asked for introductions and announcements. He addressed a few housekeeping matters before moving through the agenda. He reminded attendees to sign one of the sign-in sheets, as they are essential for reporting requirements related to the federal System of Care grant.

Announcements included:

- Kinika Young with the Tennessee Justice Center announced they are currently conducting a campaign called Insure our Kids. She said there is in-person training in Memphis on July 19th.
- Skyline Madison Campus is hosting a lunch and learn on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder next Friday, June 29th.

II. Approval of Meeting Summaries

Kennedy thanked Natasha Smith of TCCY for preparing the past meeting summaries for both CCMH and YTAC meetings. He also thanked Russette Sloan of TCCY for filling in today for Smith while she is on annual leave.

Motion to accept the April 5, 2018 meeting summary for CCMH (VIRGO) passed unanimously.

The May 3, 2018 meeting summary for YTAC will be approved at the YTAC meeting in August.

III. Healthy Transitions and OnTrackTN Programs and Evaluations – Heather Taylor-Griffith, Director, Office of Children, Young Adults and Families, Tennessee Department

**of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) and Don Walker, SOCAT
Lead Evaluator, TDMHSAS**

- Taylor-Griffith reported on the Youth and Young Adult Initiatives of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Taylor began her presentation by talking about the importance of brain development. She explained young adulthood is filled with milestones moving toward independence. Some young adults have the opportunity to have a supportive network and others do not.
- Taylor-Griffith said 50 percent of serious mental health conditions develop by age 14 and 75 percent by age 24. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among ages 10-14, and is the second leading cause of death among ages 15-24. A 2014 study by SMAHSA shows young adults are less likely to access services than adults aged 26 and over.
- Taylor-Griffith reviewed statistics on outcomes for young adults with mental illness. In terms of education, high school graduation is delayed and they are less likely to have high school diploma or GED. They are less likely to be employed and less likely to have stable housing. Young adults with mental health conditions are also more likely to be involved in the justice system.
- She reviewed the Youth and Young Adult Initiatives impact statement.
- The Office of Children, Young Adults and Families includes support for early childhood, school-aged children, youth and young adults, and families. Intervening with young adults is having a multigenerational impact.
- Youth and Young Adult Initiatives include:
 - Healthy Transitions – youth and young adults age 16 -25 at risk for mental health conditions. Services are available in seven counties.
 - First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI): OnTrack TN – targeted for youth and young adults age 15-30 that have experienced a first episode of psychosis.
 - Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS)
 - Young Adult Leadership Council – a statewide council consisting of young adults that have lived experience with mental health conditions and juvenile justice. This council works to provide input and improve these systems.
- Youth and Young Adult Initiatives Updates:
 - Creating an Open and Affirming Culture of Care Training – Carryover funds were used to partner with Oasis Center last year to develop training for providers on best-practices in serving individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. Trainings have been held in Hamilton County as well as Nashville.
 - Young Adult Leadership Academy was held last August. This event aimed to enhance participants’ leadership skills and educate them on how to be advocates.
 - Transitions to Independence Process (TIP) Model – The Healthy Transitions teams continue to participate in trainings in the TIP Model, an evidence-informed approach for effectively engaging youth and young adults. Currently there are four individuals working to become Certified Site Based Trainers.

- First Episode Psychosis Conference was held in September of 2017 with 183 participants. Excellent feedback was received on the conference.
- OnTrackTN and Healthy Transitions Sustainability – when funds are received, the Department strives to explore ways to develop programs that are sustainable.
- Youth and Young Adult Initiatives Coming Soon
 - FrameLabs – the team will be partnering with TCCY to conduct three FrameLabs across the state. The FrameLabs will train community partners on the importance of using effective messaging strategies around youth and young adult mental health.
 - Expansion of Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) Workforce - Through the use of MH Block Grant funds and an Announcement of Funding process, they will be launching a new initiative that will expand the CYAPSS workforce by employing three CYAPSS in community agencies across the state.
 - Peer Leadership Academy – A peer leadership academy will be held in August 2018 that will include trainings for youth, young adults, and families.
 - Expansion of OnTrackTN – Beginning July 1, the program will expand to Helen Ross McNabb Center in Knox County.
 - OnTrackTN Technical Assistance Support Expansion - TDMHSAS is currently exploring ways to further support current OnTrackTN sites in implementing and sustaining the coordinated specialty care model.
- Taylor-Griffith reviewed Health Transitions Data through March 21, 2018:
 - Outreach and Engagement – Since the Healthy Transitions Initiative started, local sites have contacted approximately 1,087 people one-on-one to discuss the HTI.
 - Total Referrals – 331, Total Screenings – 228, Total Enrollments – 124
 - The majority of participants identify as male at 61 percent. Thirty seven percent identify as female, and one percent identify as transgender.
 - Eleven percent of young adults enrolled identify as LGBTQ.
 - Most participants are in the 18-21 age range at 56 percent.
 - Most young people identify racially/ethnically as white at 56 percent.
 - Sixty-six percent of participants have experienced violence or trauma.
 - Eighteen participants report having been arrested within 30 days prior to enrollment.
 - Participants rated their overall health higher at discharge than at intake.
 - They also reported social connectedness had improved.
- Don Walker provided an Introduction to First Episode Psychosis (FEPI).
 - OnTrackTN serves young people aged 15-30 that have experienced symptoms of psychosis within the past 24 months. Symptoms can include having unusual thoughts or behaviors, and hearing or seeing things other people do not.

- Services are provided at Alliance Healthcare Services in Shelby County, and Mental Health Cooperative in Davidson County. Services are also provided through Carey Counseling Center in seven rural counties: Benton, Carroll, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion and Weakley
- Caseloads do not exceed 35. Services include coping strategies, medication/treatment, education/employment support, substance abuse treatment, social skills training, housing support, and peer support.
- Walker reviewed the demographics of participants including gender, race and age. Overall, the majority of youth and young adults identified as male. The majority also identified as African American.
- Walker discussed results from all sites. A total of 99 intake forms were completed from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2017. Alliance had 25 participants, Carey Counseling had 13, and MHC had 36 participants. One hundred percent of OnTrackTN participants have a crisis plan. Thirty-six percent participate in educational activities, and 32 percent were employed in competitive work.
- Percent of youth or young adults visiting the ER showed a reduction of over 90 percent.
- Average days per youth or young adult in the hospital showed a reduction of over 75 percent.
- Walker discussed further results from Carey Counseling. Out of 36 clients served, 29 had data from intake and either discharge or follow-up interviews (refer to slide for overview). The Clinical Global Impression score for participants had a significant reduction of illness severity.

IV. Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist Program – Jules Wilson, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)

- Wilson provided a brief history of the peer support in Tennessee. In 1990 peer-run drop in centers began to open in Tennessee, and the first peer staff members were hired. In 1999 The Parent Peer Model (for Parent Support Providers) was initiated as part of the first System of Care project in Tennessee. In 2005, the Drop-In Centers became Peer Support Centers with a strong focus on recovery. More behavioral health professionals began to understand and value peer support. In 2007, peer support services were identified by Medicaid as an evidenced-based mental health model of care opening the door for TennCare to fund peer support. In 2008, Tennessee began its certification for program for people with lived experience of mental illness or co-occurring disorders. They were called Tennessee Certified Peer Specialists. The development of a competency course training allowed Family Support Specialists to establish certification for Parent Peers in Tennessee in 2011. In 2016, work began to create a similar peer support program but for the unique population of young adults. The Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council also began meeting monthly in Nashville. Youth Move Oregon/Youth ERA is contracted to create

the Young Adult Peer Support Training in 2017. TDMHSAS also hired a Youth and Young Adult Coordinator to oversee the new program.

- Wilson said the biggest difference from other programs is eligibility. There is an age limit requiring specialists to be between the ages of 18 and 30. There is also a broader eligibility for lived experience with mental health, substance abuse, co-occurring disorder, and/or involvement with other systems such as juvenile justice, foster care and homeless services. If in recovery from substance abuse, specialists are required to have maintained abstinence for at least 12 months.
- Wilson gave an overview of the population receiving services.
- She reviewed the requirements for certification and the length of the certification. One difference in the requirements for CYAPSS, is that professional references are not required.

V. Juvenile Justice Reform Act Update – Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate TCCY

- Petty provided an update on the 2018 Juvenile Justice Reform Act. This legislation was drafted by the Governor’s administration and sponsored by Senator Mark Norris. The bill as filed had no opposition in the Senate. The House implemented significant changes in the bill. Petty highlighted a few critical aspects of the legislation.
 - The bill requires school personnel who file petition with juvenile court to provide information on efforts made to address problems in school and facts showing the need for court intervention.
 - Petty mentioned the changes in financial obligations. The bill prioritizes restitution over all other financial obligations. It eliminates the imposition of all financial obligations other than restitution against children, while allowing imposition against parents who are able to pay.
 - The bill prohibits use of detention as a disposition and precludes attorneys from waiving that prohibition.
 - The bill requires Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Department of Children’s Services (DCS), and the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth to issue a report assessing statewide data to be submitted to the Governor, the speaker of senate and the house speaker by January 1, 2019.
- Kennedy thanked Petty for his work on behalf of youth in Tennessee and the summary he provided for the legislation.

VI. Tennessee Youth Courts – Denise Bentley, J.D., Youth Court Director

- Bentley began her presentation talking about the importance of understanding brain development and maturity needed to make good decisions. Bentley reported on trends that

support Tennessee Youth Courts. Youth do not always understand the risks and impact of their poor decision making. The U.S. Supreme Court is now beginning to make decisions based on science around brain development. Bentley commended TCCY on the policy paper on Therapeutic Approach.

- Bentley highlighted three U.S. Supreme Court cases crucial to juvenile justice reform.
- Data from the Tennessee Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges show only 10.6 percent of juveniles referred are considered violent or dangerous. Research shows that outcomes are better for youth who are not involved in traditional juvenile court. Research suggests that once involved with traditional juvenile court, youth are up to 40 percent likely to return.
- Bentley said one way to use a therapeutic approach to juvenile justice for teenagers is the teen court process. Youth courts and teen courts add resilience and reduce recidivism. Youth justice programs are rapidly expanding local juvenile justice diversion programs in which youth are sentenced by their peers in collaboration with adults. Restorative justice provides accountability, competency development, and community safety. Restorative justice also gives victims an opportunity to participate. This type of justice also enables offenders to understand the harm caused and its impact. The process builds upon the offender's strengths and competencies. Restorative justice practices protect the public through a process in which individual victims, the community, and offenders are all stakeholders.
- Tennessee follows the national trend in Youth Justice Program models. Forty-one percent use the adult judge model, 31 percent use the peer jury model, 18 percent use the youth judge model, and 10 percent use the tribunal model.
- Bentley said approximately 2,000 youth are served per year. Fewer than four percent are involved in the system a second time.
- Bentley shared a video with the group called "Youth Court: Giving Kids a Second Chance".

VII. Department of Children's Services, Independent Living – Brian Stephens, Director of Independent Living, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director and Jerresha Tinker, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Department of Children's Services

- Stephens announced Courtney Matthews is now the Director of Independent Living. He will be moving into a new role in DCS with Program Accountability Review.
- Stephens gave an overview of the Office of Independent Living. The office prepares youth in foster care and young adults who age out of foster care for a successful transition to adulthood to become confident and productive individuals in society. Youth population includes age 14-16 custodial youth in the Independent Living Plan, age 17 and up custodial youth in the Transition Plan, and 18-21 aged-out youth in Extension of Foster Care (EFCS). Eligibility for the voluntary program includes completing a high school or equivalent program, enrolled in college or a vocational education program, and unable to work or participate in a secondary program because of a medical condition. Stephens

reviewed the scope of services included with Extension of Foster care Services. He encouraged providers to reach out if there are items or services needed.

- Dave Aguzzi provided attendees with EFCS data report. More young people are accepting extension of foster care services. The retention rate has been improving year-to-year. In FY 2017, there were a total of 714 EFCS episodes. In FY 2018, there were a total of 780 episodes. Acceptance rates for FY 2017 is as follows: aged out total is 935, aged out eligible is 793, and aged out acceptance is 349.
- Tinker gave an update on the youth engagement work. The Jim Casey Youth Convening was recently held, and a Young Adult Accountability Council was created in order to ensure the work is more youth driven. Next week, the first Glam Camp Leadership Academy Camp will be held at Camp Montvale. Activities include yoga, wall climbing, cooking and many more. This is a statewide camp held in Blount County.
- Stephens reported on the EFC Eligibility Expansion Project. An analysis meeting will be held in July to provide strategy recommendations for expanding to include two new criteria.
- The Family First Prevention Services Act extends eligibility for Education and Training Voucher (ETV) for youth to age 26 and amends the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence program by extending independent living services to assist former foster youth up to age 23.

VIII. Youth Villages LifeSet – Heather Tribble, YVLifeSet Coordinator-Tennessee, Christina Scott, YVLifeSet, and Angela McCrady, YV LifeSet

- Heather Tribble provided an overview on Multi-Systemic Therapy for Emerging Adults (MST-EA). MST-EA is designed for young people age 17-23 at the highest risk for negative outcomes. Referrals have included juvenile and adult justice system-involved clients, youth aging out of foster care, and prison re-entry populations, as well as young adults in supported housing programs.
- Emerging adults collaborate with therapists in designing a treatment plan that will be carried out over approximately seven to eight months. Services generally range six to 12 months depending on individual client needs.
- MST-EA blends cognitive behavioral therapy, behavioral interventions, motivational interviewing, affective education, and extensive skill building to address the array of issues associated with the emerging adult's mental health symptoms and other problems.
- MST-EA includes paraprofessional "coaches" who help teach concrete life skills.
- Published outcomes include significant reductions in criminal charges and mental health symptoms, reduced substance abuse, and improved rates of employment.
- Oregon Social Learning Center and University of Massachusetts are partnering with Youth Villages to conduct a randomized control trial in Tennessee. Tribble reviewed the eligibility for participation in the clinical trial. She also reviewed the incentives to participate in the trial as well as the research procedures of the clinical trial.

- Geographic Service Delivery is in Shelby Fayette, Tipton, Lauderdale, Sullivan and Washington Counties.
- Tribble presented national statistics on youth who age out of state custody at 26.
- Participants in the LifeSet program are age 17-22. Specialists are available twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Specialists assist with education, housing, employment, life skills. Success at one year post discharge is significant.
- Tribble also provided an overview of the YV Scholars Program. The mission is to provide the opportunity for young adults in transition from foster care with support to advance in the areas of education, technical skills, employment and community service.
- YV Scholars may reside in foster homes, independent living, with birth families, or adoptive/parent homes.

XI. Resource Centers, Pam Madison, Youth Connections-Monroe Harding, Christy Martin, Project Now – Helen Ross McNabb, Tiffany Turnage, Dream Seekers-South Memphis Alliance

- Pam Madison with Youth Connections reported on the Opportunity Passport Program which provides budgeting, bi-monthly asset education classes and matched savings for youth up to \$3,000.00.
- Youth Connections also has the HISET/High School Equivalency Program. They hold two graduations per year. This program includes flexible class time for students.
- They also provide post-secondary education planning.
- Madison said the Workforce Development program assists students with resume writing, interviewing skills, and sometimes coordinates paid internships.
- The Sexual Health Education Program is designed for young women, and covers information like pregnancy prevention. The Sisterhood provides a peer support group for young women to discuss what is happening in their lives.
- Additional services and activities include a food pantry, provision of hygiene, clothing, and small household items, yoga, accessibility to computers and a safe place.
- Christy Martin with Helen Ross McNabb reported on Project NOW! She said they had 58 youth who have completed the Jim Casey financial program. Currently there are 48 youth active in the program. They secured eight new partners in the last few months. Plans for next year include increasing stipends. The program will be relocating later this week.

IX. Closing

Kennedy thanked attendees for being present until the end.

Next CCMH Meeting Dates:
 Thursday, August 16, 2018 – TBD
 YTAC Annual Report
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Thursday, October 18, 2018 – Midtown Hills Police Precinct

Next YTAC Meeting Date:

Thursday, August 9, 2018 – Goodwill Industries

Thursday, October 4, 2018 – Goodwill Industries

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Council on Children’s Mental Health Purpose Statement

Design a comprehensive plan for a statewide System of Care for children and families that is family-driven, youth-guided, community-based, and culturally and linguistically competent.



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrew Jackson Building, Ninth Floor
 502 Deaderick Street
 Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
 (615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
 1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

August 9, 2018

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

[615.742.4151](tel:615.742.4151)

Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of May 3, 2018 Meeting Summary	<i>Richard Kennedy, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)</i>
Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Update Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative	<i>Heather Taylor Griffith, Director, Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program	<i>Heather Tribble, Youth Villages LifeSet</i>
Tennessee Housing and Development Agency	<i>Toni Shaw, THDA Jeborah Scott, THDA</i>
Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update	<i>Office of Independent Living, DCS Brian Stephens Former Director, Courtney Matthews, Incoming Director, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director,</i>
Update from Resource Centers	<i>Catherine Kercher, I AM READY Christy Martin, Project Now!</i>
	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections Steve Petty for Tiffany Turnage, Dream Seekers</i>
System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT)	<i>Melissa McGee, Director of CCMH and SOCAT, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth</i>
2018 YTAC Annual Report	<i>Steve Petty, TCCY</i>
Next Meeting	<i>Next Meeting October 4 Goodwill 2019 Proposed Meeting Dates May 2, 2019 June 20, 2019 In conjunction with CCMH August 8, 2019 October 3, 2019</i>
Other Business	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>



STATE OF TENNESSEE
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Youth Transitions Advisory Council

August 9, 2018

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

MEETING SUMMARY

Participant

Phil Acord
Dave Aguzzi
Joel Alex
Julia Barlar
Salena Bures
Jane Fleishman
Deandra Green
Craig Hargrow
Rachel Hauber
Hanna Henscheid
Kim Holst
Willie Jones
Sumita Keller

Richard Kennedy
Catherine Kercher
Gina Lynette
Pam Madison
Christy Martin
Courtney Matthews
Melissa McGee
Auja Montgomery
Teresa Moore
Rachel Murphy Norman
Christal Penniz
Steve Petty
Rosemary Ramsey

Christina Scott
Jeborah Scott
Toni Shaw
Natasha Smith
Shelley Smith
Ned Andrew Solomon
Brian Stephens
Jacqueline Talley
Jerresha Tinker
Heather Taylor-Griffith
Heather Tribble
Eric Valinor
Joseph Valinor
Jules Wilson

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of May 3rd and June 21st Meeting Summaries – Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)

Kennedy welcomed the group at 12:37 p.m. He expressed his appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions and announcements.

IT WAS MOVED (BARLAR) AND SECONDED (ACORD) TO ACCEPT THE MAY 3, 2018 AND JUNE 21, 2018 MEETING SUMMARIES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Update and Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative– Heather Taylor-Griffith

It was announced that Kisha Ledlow is now the Texas System of Care Project Director at Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Griffith highlighted the Youth and Young Adult (Y/YA) Initiatives to assist Tennessee Y/YA in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. She said these initiatives promote targeted and innovative awareness, outreach, and specialized mental health services and supports. The initiatives are Healthy Transitions (HT), First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI): OnTrackTN, Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) and Young Adult Leadership Council.

Griffith said with the healthy transitions carryover funds, TDMHSAS partnered with the Oasis Center last year to develop a training for providers on best-practices in serving individuals who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer called “Creating and Open and Affirming Culture of Care.” To date, they have held a training in Hamilton County, Northwest Tennessee, and two trainings in Nashville.

The Healthy Transitions teams continue to participate in trainings on the TIP Model. This is an evidence-informed approach for effectively engaging and working with youth and young adults. It is something that you can infuse in the work that you are currently doing. Four individuals are currently in the process of becoming Certified Site Based Trainers. They are hoping to utilize these trainers to expand the number of agencies that are utilizing the model (TTAC).

Griffith reported TDMHSAS is partnering with TCCY to conduct three FrameLabs across the state. There will be one in each region to train community partners on the importance of using effective messaging strategies. They will then facilitate group conversations to brainstorm ways to become more effective in developing messaging around youth/young adult mental health. These conversations will be shaped by input and feedback from the Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council.

She reported that through the use of MH Block Grant funds and an Announcement of Funding process, TDMHSAS will launch a new initiative to expand the Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) workforce by employing three CYAPSS in community agencies across the state. There will also be a Peer Leadership Academy this weekend, through a partnership between TDMHSAS, Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC), Healthy Transitions and SOCAT, to include trainings for youth, young adults, and families. For more information, contact Jules Wilson.

Griffith said OnTrackTN programming expanded to Helen Ross McNabb Center in Knox County on July 1st. TDMHSAS is currently exploring ways to further support current OnTrackTN sites in implementing and sustaining the coordinated specialty care model. They are also exploring ways to provide additional technical assistance and support to increase capacity to implement this model

across the state. There is a Healthy Transition site in Chattanooga. An announcement of funding for providers will be sent out in the coming weeks. Griffith said there was an increase in grant funding with 10 percent set aside for recidivism.

Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Heather Tribble, Christina Scott and Auja Montgomery

Scott shared data from first quarter of 2018. She reported 682 youth were served statewide. 231 in Middle 213 in West. 695 youth served on an average day. 362 funded by private dollars and the rest through the state. 54 percent of youth are employed. 18 percent are in school or unable to work. 28 percent are seeking employment. They handed out backpacks each year.

Scott highlighted the Peer-to-peer events each month. She said in East Tennessee, Helen Ross McNabb came and educated the youth on HIV/AIDs. Section 8 came and conducted Life Skills training. There has also been voters' registration drives and other resources onsite. In West Tennessee, they learned about mindfulness, toured schools and also learned about HIV/AIDs and received confidential screenings.

Auja Montgomery, a LifeSet scholar talked about the importance of Youth Villages and the LifeSet program. She was a foster care youth for a little over a year until she aged out of the system. She shared her story on how she came into the system with her five siblings. Montgomery joined LifeSet her senior year of high school and became a scholar prior to entering Belmont University. She said her specialist CJ helped get her ready for college and prepared her. She still meets with him to talk about school and life. Montgomery also has a mentor named Jessica who provides a great balance between a life coach and a friend.

Montgomery said her family and other resources like her professors have been a blessing as well. She believes her aunt and uncle taking her in and being a part of LifeSet has changed her life so much in the last three years. She feels like she now has a voice. Montgomery said LifeSet is more than just giving youth money. They give tools and resources to ensure a successful beginning in life as a young adults.

Tennessee Housing and Development Agency (THDA) – Toni Shaw and Jeborah Scott

Shaw talked about the Fall Tennessee Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant due in September. There was a grant application workshop this morning and a webinar will take place Monday, August 13th from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Approximately \$2 million will be available for the fall round. Applications will be accepted from cities, counties, development districts, public housing authorities, other State departments and private non-profit organizations. All housing funded through the program

Scott talked about a Section 8 voucher that is tied to the family. Housing Choice voucher. It is a federally funded program and THDA currently serves 72 counties across the state. She said they do not fund Davidson county because there is already have a program. Can pick a preference. Payment standards are in line with HUD. Just under \$500 per family on average. Can conduct a family recertification by mail every 12 months.

Waiting list gets purged regularly to ensure the list is fresh.

The Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) or “Voucher” program is a federal rental assistance program funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) where very low-income individuals, families, the elderly and the disabled receive assistance to afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in the private market. As the leading state housing agency, THDA administers the Housing Choice Voucher program in 72 Tennessee counties, between 4 regional offices. The offices and county service areas are East Tennessee , Middle Tennessee, South Central Tennessee and West Tennessee.

Eligibility for a Housing Choice Voucher is based on the total annual gross income and household size and is limited to US citizens and non-citizens who have eligible immigration status. In general, the family's income may not exceed 80 percent of the area median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. Federal rules require 75 percent of new households admitted each year to be “extremely low income,” with incomes that do not exceed 30 percent of the area median income. Median income levels are published by HUD annually and vary by county. The income limits may be found at www.huduser.org/portal/datasets/il.html.

Interested applicants may apply at <https://apply4housing.com/Tennessee> once an open waitlist is available. Interested applicants must submit an application with the public housing agency who administers the program in the county where they wish to live. All waiting list openings are announced through advertisements in local newspapers. The announcement will advise the public of the date and time the waiting list will be accepting applications as well as the website to use to apply for placement on the waiting list.

The waiting period varies based upon turnover of currently assisted families (families leaving the program) and funding awards made by Congress annually. THDA is unable to predict the waiting time for an individual family. Metropolitan counties tend to have a larger number of applicants; longer lists and longer waiting periods. In THDA’s program, to ensure that we serve the residents of each county, an applicant must live in the county for which they applied for one year after admission before becoming eligible to relocate with the voucher to another county or state.

Any rental housing, including single family homes, apartments and mobile homes, qualifies as long as it is in decent, safe and sanitary condition, as defined by program Housing Quality Standards.

Scott talked about the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS). THDA works with families and interested parties to create step-by-step plans that lead to economic independence. The purpose of the FSS program is to facilitate access to the supportive services that families need to become free of public assistance in a five-year time period. All participating Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) families have the opportunity to participate in the FSS program if they desire. The FSS program is voluntary for THDA's Housing Choice Voucher families. She said about three percent of the families volunteer to participate in this program.

In addition to gaining access to valuable supportive services, THDA establishes a savings (or escrow) account for FSS families when their earned income increases from obtaining a job or receiving a job-related promotion or raise. When a HCV participant's income increases, their family contribution toward rent also increases. This money is placed in a "savings" account for the family. When the family completes their contract of participation and/or becomes free of public assistance, they are eligible to receive the balance of their account.

THDA's Homeownership Voucher Program offers a mortgage subsidy to low income households that currently receive a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Rental Assistance. The subsidy factors are the same as the rental program with expenses being an additional consideration for homeownership. THDA's assistance allows low income families to purchase a home they would otherwise not be able to. The mortgage assistance payment is paid directly to the lender or loan servicing company. The families must complete both, pre-purchase and post-purchase counseling.

THDA will review the loan terms, housing quality standards, independent home inspection report, appraisal, and contract of sale. The seller must be willing to pay for and complete all of the repairs. All households must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- THDA Voucher must be current and in good standing.
- All household members must not owe a debt to any housing authority.
- Must be first-time homebuyers (or have not owned a home in the last three years).
- Bankruptcies must be discharged for at least one year for Chapter 13 and three years for Chapter 7.
- Must have saved \$1,000 or 1% of the purchase price, whichever is greater, toward the home purchase.
- Savings cannot be a gift or a loan. The applicant(s) must have saved the money over a period of time and apply it as a down payment or toward closing costs associated with the home purchase.
- Credit score must be at least 640, if one exists.
- Must complete HUD approved pre-purchase counseling.

Housing Choice Voucher Family Unification Grant for youth aging out of the system.

Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Courtney Matthews, Incoming Director, Brian Stephens, Former Director, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director and Jerresha Tinker, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services

Matthews provided a brief overview of the population served and the Jim Casey State Plan 2019-2021. The key focuses of the three-year plan are Permanency; Stable Housing; Educational Success and Economic Security; and Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting Supports.

Under Permanency, Matthews reported they should increase the number of youth age 14 or older in full guardianship who achieves permanency through adoption or guardianship, increase the number of youth in custody who have an identified mentor and increase the number of youth age 14 or older who exit custody to permanency with family.

As for Stable Housing, Matthews said they will increase the number of young people who emancipate and report not experiencing homelessness at their first National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) survey post discharge from foster care, by racial/ethnic category at 19 and at 21. They will also increase the number of youth who age out of care that have an identified stable placement at time of exiting.

Under Educational Success and Economic Security, Matthew reported DCS plans to increase the number of young people who age out of custody reporting a high school diploma or HiSet at age 19 by racial and ethnic category from NYTD surveys. They will also increase the number of youth who enroll in a post-secondary program while receiving EFCS and increase the number of young people who age out of custody report being employed at 17, 19, and 21 by racial and ethnic category from NYTD surveys.

As for Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting Supports, Matthew said they will increase the number of young people who report having a child on a NYTD survey that report not having another child by the next NYTD survey at age 19 and 21. They will also increase access to support and services for pregnant and parenting youth in care and who’ve aged out of care while decreasing generational cycles of abuse and neglect for children of current and former foster youth.

Matthews talked about the steps DCS is taking to implement these services. Stephens said there seems to be a shift in funding for prevention services. Aguzzi talked about the Chaffee guidelines and said there are opportunities there, but the money has not been extended.

Aguzzi provided data for the Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) episodes to June 30, 2018 for state fiscal years 2017 and 2018. He said very few meet the special needs category.

Youth served in FY18

811 total EFCS Episodes
792 total young adults served
342 total active in EFCS

Youth served in FY17

757 total EFCS Episodes
743 total young adults served
338 total active in EFCS

Aguzzi said when looking at the data, it is important to determine why the outcomes changed in an effort to learn from best practices. He pointed out the Mid Cumberland region and the Upper Cumberland have the highest differences. He also mentioned there was an increase in those who came back for service who were enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Tinker reported on implementing the youth voice. She said the youth voice is implemented throughout the Jim Casey State Plan in the areas of advocacy, policy/program improvement, mentoring and to help drive their NYTD work. Tinker said the statewide Youth Leadership Boards and Young Adult Advisory Accountability Council (YA3C) will serve as the foundation for all youth engagement work throughout the state. Young people will review NYTD collection methods and strategies and identify improvements and strategies to increase the number of youth who complete NYTD surveys.

The Jim Casey State Plan commits DCS to bring youth voice to the Tennessee Interagency Council on Homelessness and push for youth as a priority population. For EFC Retention, they will incorporate feedback from Young Adult Accountability and Advisory Council on retention related to educational programs.

Update from Resource Centers**I.A.M. READY Center – Sarah Elghalban and Catherine Kercher**

Elghalban is the Assistant Director of Youth Services at Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. She reported on changes to the name and program in the near future. The I.A.M. READY Center is the Chattanooga site for the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, operated by the Partnership for Families, Children and Adults. The I.A.M. READY Center prepares youth aging out of foster care for the realities of the real world so that they may continue toward success. The Center serves young people between the ages of 14-26 who have spent at least one day in foster care after the age of 14, living in or around the Hamilton County Area.

Kercher provided highlights of their programs like Cleveland Academy in Bradley County. She said they have expanded the SHE program where they discussed sexuality in the media and music. Kercher said all they need for a referral is the name, date of birth and phone number.

They will have a car buying workshop on September 20th.

Project NOW! – Christy Martin

Martin highlighted accomplishments since July 1st. She said there have been 11 new youth in Opportunity Passport with two matches for education and housing. There are two vehicle matches pending. She reported they have completed Career Readiness Program for Youth with UT Extension and two classes for the Sisters Saving Sisters with 16 youth. They also celebrated four youth birthdays.

Martin said they evaluated programs and facility for beginning of Easy Choices program, scheduled Job Corps information session and mobile Career Center unit. She also scheduled monthly First Self Defense for Young Ladies class and weekly cooking classes starting September 5th until Thanksgiving.

They have relocated to new facility and completed integrating programs and services. Martin reported there was an information Session with Youth Villages and Omni Vision and said they are currently in the planning stages. She said they will have a monthly meal night where youth/staff prep the meal and arranged to have therapy animal visits. Martin said they are planning a Community Service day for youth to clean up the walking trail on the property as well as Tailgating Saturdays (pending cable and game availability) for those who have never experienced a University of Tennessee football game.

Martin's challenges include the number of youth being referred and caseworker/manager knowledge of program as well as transportation of youth from outlying counties. Another challenge is the size of program and potential/employee hours.

Martin has been asked to provide more community information and program visibility and asked everyone to like and follow the program on Facebook by going to Helen Ross McNabb – Project NOW! Their new address is 3006 Lake Brook Blvd., Building 2, Knoxville, TN 37809. Martin's can be reached at 865-544-5000 ext. 2667 or by cell at 865-256-5613. Her email address is christy.martin@mcnabb.org.

Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pam Madison

Youth Connections is a resource center for young men and women, ages 16-26, who are currently in or have aged out of foster care or state custody. They provide assistance with all aspects of employment, housing, understanding credit scores and how to strengthen them, HISET tests, post-secondary education planning, sexual health education, and financial education classes.

Madison said in addition to their core classes, they have a great location in downtown Nashville where youth can hang out, shoot pool, make a snack, or use the computer lab to research jobs, check email, Facebook, etc. All program participants have access to laundry facilities and showers and can pick up personal hygiene and small household items from the free thrift store.

Madison reported they are offering YOGA every Thursday. She said a 16-week, evidence-based program with their therapy group will begin at the end of August.

Friday, October 5th, Monroe Harding will be celebrating its 125th anniversary.

South Memphis Alliance (SMA) Dream Seekers – Steve Petty for Tiffany Turnage

Petty reported that May was foster care awareness month. There was a youth movie night for their clients. Pizza, sandwiches, sodas and candy were provided. They also hosted an “Art is Love” painting party where the youth enjoyed painting the Memphis skyline. They moved their annual foster care community and recruitment fair to June to avoid the rain. Overall, it was a successful event with 12 vendors. Petty reported six to 10 individuals signed up to become foster parents.

SMA has enrolled 42 new participants into the Dream Seekers Program since the beginning of the year. There are 15 young people currently enrolled in the Dream Seekers program. The enrollment process began July 1, 2018. The goal was 85 percent for the Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (OPPS) surveys. SMA exceeded the goal and received 100 percent this past April and they are anticipating 100 percent for October of this year.

Petty reported the goal for the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) Sisters Saving Sisters (SSS) is 152 young ladies for the year. SMA’s last scheduled class for this grant period was Monday, June 25th. They have had 120 to complete the Sisters Saving Sisters (SSS) Program to date. They hope to continue receiving support from their partners through increasing numbers of referrals received.

The Job Readiness Program cultivated a group of youth ages 18-22 who are prepared for work by empowering them with necessary pre-employment skills. They are also promoting job retention and advancement.

SMA will host its Second Annual Free Laundry Day before December 2018. This event is free to the community, especially adolescents who are pregnant and/or parenting. Petty reported \$5,000 was donated from The Urban Child Institute. The free laundry day will be located inside of SMA’s Social Suds Resource Center.

SMA's Girls Day In was July 20th. Every year, SMA has a donor to donate about 50-60 personal hygiene bags to the young ladies in the Dream Seekers program. During the Girls' Day In, they had a pampering party where the young ladies and staff members did manicures and pedicures. They also had refreshments and "Real Talk" sessions. In the real talk sessions, they gave the girls an opportunity to discuss anything they wanted. The girls talked about peer pressure, school, being in foster care, sex education, time management, goal setting, life skills, bullying, self-love and more.

SMA is preparing to transition into their new facility by Fall 2019. Two more agencies will also occupy part of the space available. More details coming soon.

System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) – Melissa McGee, TCCY and Jules Wilson, TDMHSAS

McGee defined System of Care as a philosophy of how care should be delivered. The overarching goal is for all child and family service providers work together to ensure a family-driven community partnership across the state. She said System of Care is a holistic approach to young children, children, youth, and young adults and their families.

McGee said they know if they do not approach the family as a whole then any change may effect in a child or youth's life may not be long-lasting (setting effect). They also know if they do not allow family and youth voice in the process it will also not be as effective. SOCAT meets families where they are. Providers may see a "need" and want to focus on that; however, if the family does not see it as a need or they do not want to address it then it is important to honor their wishes and focus our attention on the things that they want.

A Local Interagency Planning Team (LIPT) must be established on behalf of children in each community. The team may be single or multi-county teams dependent upon the size of the community and the geographic availability of needed resources. The underlying purpose for the development of the LIPT is to improve and facilitate the coordination of services to children with severe emotional disorders (SEDs) and addictive disease. LIPTs have the following goals:

- To assure that children with severe emotional disorders (SEDs) and addictive disease (ADs) and their families have access to a system of care in their geographic areas;
- To assure the provision of an array of community therapeutic and placement services;
- To decrease fragmentation and duplication of services and maximize the utilization of all available resources in providing needed services;
- To facilitate effective referral and screening systems that will assure that children have access to the services they need to lead productive lives.

McGee said they do not want to reinvent the wheel in communities where there are already teams in place.

Wilson said the goal is to be youth-guided. Youth are given a decision-making role in the policies and procedures governing services and care for all youth with an emphasis on creating a sustainable voice, strength-based, worthwhile and fun.

McGee said youth work better when they stay within their own communities. She defined culturally and linguistically competent care where families, however defined, make choices shaped by their cultural backgrounds and their needs. She said service providers build upon their own cultural knowledge and respect family strengths. Programs do more than offer equal, nondiscriminatory services by tailoring services to meet the unique needs of youth and families.

Wilson talked about the 2018 Peer Leadership Academy and Certified Young Adult Peer Support Specialist Program.

McGee announce a SOCAT Conference September 21-22, 2018 at the Embassy Suites in Murfreesboro.

CCMH will have a meeting August 18, 2018 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

2018 YTAC Annual Report – Steve Petty

Petty said he will send a draft to everyone next week for their edits. He will need it back by October 1st to ensure delivery to the legislature by October 31st. Accomplishments and recommendations will be reviewed at the next meeting on October 4th.

Next Meetings

The next meeting will be October 4th at Goodwill Industries. 2019 proposed meeting dates are:

May 2, 2019

August 8, 2019

June 20, 2019 (in conjunction with CCMH)

October 3, 2019

Other Business

Meeting Adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

APPENDIX B

TCA 37-2-601

TCA 37-2-417

TCA 37-2-418

TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED
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*** Current through 2017 Regular Session (Chapter 493). ***

Title 37 Juveniles
Chapter 2 Placement of Juveniles
Part 6 Extension of Foster Care

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-2-601 (2017)

37-2-601. Establishment of extension of foster care services advisory council.

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

(A) Identifying strategies to assess and track effectiveness of extension of foster care services and the operation of resources centers authorized by this part; and

(B) Identifying the following:

(i) Strategies for maintaining accurate numbers of children served by extension of foster care services;

(ii) The number of services provided by the department of children's services;

(iii) The number of children who accept these services;

(iv) Reasons why children do not accept these services; and

(v) The number of children who continue their education and the number who do not.

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

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

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

information.

(a) All state agencies that administer cash or in-kind assistance, or both, to youth eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) years of age within the course of normal business shall make reasonable efforts to determine if an applicant for assistance has ever been in the custody of the state. If the applicant has been in state custody, the state agency shall share information with the applicant regarding possible services to be provided by the department of children's services, other state agencies and community partners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) These services shall be available at any time until the person reaches twenty-four (24) years of age regardless of whether the youth elects to remain in a voluntary extension of foster care 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.

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

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

37-2-605. Construction of part.

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

TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED
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*** Current through 2017 Regular Session (Chapter 493). ***

Title 37 Juveniles
Chapter 2 Placement of Juveniles
Part 4 Foster Care

Tenn. Code Ann. § 37-2-417 (2017)

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

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

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

- (1) Completing secondary education or a program leading to an equivalent credential;
- (2) Enrolled in an institution which provides postsecondary or career and technical 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.