



**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**  
**Annual Report – October 2017**

**Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**  
**Linda O’Neal, Executive Director**  
**Steve Petty, YTAC Director**





Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth authorization number 316103. October 2017. 144 copies. This public document was promulgated at a cost of \$5.33 each.



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

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

TO: Members of the Tennessee General Assembly  
FROM: Linda O'Neal, Executive Director  
DATE: October, 2017  
RE: *Youth Transitions Advisory Council 2017 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 2017 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 2017 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 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,



Linda O'Neal, Executive Director  
Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth  
Chair, Youth Transitions Advisory Council

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Preparing this report:

- Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate, Youth Transitions Advisory Council Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.
- Linda O’Neal, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, Executive editor.

Contributing to this report:

- Brian Stephens, Director, Office of Independent and Transitional Living, Department of Children’s Services.
- Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director, Office of Independent and Transitional Living, Department of Children’s Services.
- April Tanguay, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- Kisha Ledlow, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.
- Toni Shaw, Tennessee Housing and Development Agency.
- Jude White, Tennessee Children’s Cabinet.
- Heather Tribble, YVLifeSet, Youth Villages, Inc.
- Wendy Jill Spence, Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocates.
- Pamela Madison, Monroe Harding Youth Connections.
- Christy Martin, Helen Ross McNabb’s Project NOW.
- Tiffany Turnage, South Memphis Alliance, Inc.
- Robert Love, Partnership I.A.M Ready Chattanooga Independent Living Resource Center.
- Jane Fleishman, Oasis Center.
- Ned Andrew Soloman, Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2017

During FY 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.

Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) was provided to 743 youth in Fiscal Year (FY) 2017. This reflects the total youth participation, regardless of the year they accepted services.

In 2017, the mean retention days for remaining in Extension of Foster Care Services increased to 284 days from 259 days in 2016 and 255 days in 2015. DCS will continue to evaluate supports needed to increase retention of youth in EFCS.

Forty-four percent of eligible youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services in 2017.

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

In FY 2017, both the Educational and Training Vouchers and Bright Futures scholarship maintained high utilization. DCS Independent Living (IL) did outreach to the population that was adopted or went to Subsidized Permanent Guardianship (SPG) over the last two years. Tennessee Promise has also been a factor in the increase.

<b>FY</b>	<b>ETV</b>	<b>Bright</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2013</b>	282	126	408
<b>2014</b>	262	139	401
<b>2015</b>	357	145	502
<b>2016</b>	357	144	501
<b>2017</b>	346	137	483

Tennessee DCS Office of Independent and Transitional Living have provided training to 1,426 participants. Trainings included education on transition plans, independent living services, understanding the transitioning population and youth engagement.

<b>Training Group</b>	<b>Participants Trained</b>
Court	4
DCS	438
Foster Parents	110
Other	179
Provider Agency	249
Youth	446
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1426</b>

In 2017, DCS was released from the Brian A. Consent Decree after 16 years of federal court supervision. One of the reforms listed by the department in celebrating the end of the suit is being the first state in the United States to offer independent living services to all foster youth who age out of custody.

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 included survey data for 17 year olds in foster care collected October 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. This submission included the following:

- 189 of 305 youth participated in the NYTD 2017A 17 year old baseline survey (there were 63 additional “straddlers,” or youth who could still be surveyed into the NYTD period)
- 95 reported as “Unable to Locate/Invite
- 95 percent of participating 17 year olds report having connections to an adult. National NYTD statistics for 17 year olds show 93 percent
- 6 percent participating 17 year olds report having children. National NYTD statistics for 17 year olds show 7 percent
- 15 percent of participating 17 year olds report being Homelessness ever. National NYTD statistics for 17 year olds show 16 percent



- 50 percent of participating 17-year-olds report ever being incarcerated. National NYTD statistics for 17 year olds show 37 percent

During FY 2017, DCS implemented an automatic credit process for youth age 14+ in foster care. This automated process runs checks with the three main credit reporting agencies (Equifax, TransUnion and Experian) through DCS' SACWIS system, TFACTS. The system is designed to complete credit checks for youth when entering custody and each year upon their custodial anniversary date. The system compiles information from the check into TFACTS where the FSW can review then discuss with youth. If a discrepancy is found, DCS will work to clear the discrepancy and ensure the youth's credit history is clear. Tennessee DCS has received national recognition for implanting this process as completing credit checks manually is a time consuming and difficult process for many states. DCS continues to meet with other states and agencies to share how this process was designed and implemented.

In the 2017 state budget, DCS was approved to hire four additional Extension of Foster Care Family Service Workers. DCS assigned these positions to the regions of North East, TN Valley (Hamilton County), Mid Cumberland and potentially South Central. These FSWs will work exclusively with aged out youth.

Four youth from Tennessee were selected to be among FosterClub'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.

In FY 2017, a youth 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.

During FY 2017, 8 peer advocates supported 642 youth at foster care review boards in the following counties or courts: Blount, Davidson, Coffee, Maury, Montgomery, Sumner, Davidson, 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. DCS was able to not only renew the grant for

another five years, but also increased the amount of annual funding by 36%, increasing the stipend amounts for youth.

In June 2017, DCS Office of Independent Living Director was a presenter and panelist member at the National Conference on Ending Homelessness in Washington, DC to share Tennessee’s work serving homeless and unaccompanied minors.

In 2016, TennCare created the Employment and Community First/Choices program to provide Long Term Services and Supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those aging out of foster care or who have elderly caregivers who can no longer care for them. The program provides supports to allow individuals to live in a community setting and maintain stable employment. United Health Care began participating in the Employment and Community First/Choices Program on July 1, 2017. They invited a representative of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council to participate in the development of the program, and Steve Petty serves in that role.

The Office of Independent Living continues to coordinate three 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.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Y4Y meeting</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Avg. attendance</b>
<b>East</b>	7	119	18
<b>Middle</b>	7	35	5
<b>West</b>	11	132	12

A new addition to the federally-funded PREP contracts was the highly-successful IL Leadership Academy Camps. 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 first year served a total of 94 youth ages 17-24 from across the state. Youth feedback was very positive, and staff reports, 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.

The Dream Maker’s Project is a new resource for aging out foster youth that connects them with community-based partners to meet various financial needs or dreams. Representatives from Dream Makers reached out to DCS during FY 2017 wanting to make an impact on Tennessee

youth. DCS met with Dream Maker staff and implemented a referral process and is pleased to share that the partnership has been successful and youth have already had dreams fulfilled.

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.

Tennessee CASA provided Training of Facilitators for 50 CASA staff on National CASA's newly released 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.

In FY 2017, the Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative State Transition Team met three times and engaged in developing a Shared Purpose Agreement as well as planning for FY18 activities.

In FY 2017, the Tennessee Department of Mental Health Services (TDMHSAS) developed a statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) in order ensure youth and young adult voice and input at a state level. For example, over the past year the Statewide YALC has actively provided feedback and input on the development of a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist-Transition Age designation. This specialized training and certification program will be tailored to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults. In addition, members from the statewide YALC participated in the development of a public service announcement(PSA) entitled "It's Okay to Talk About Youth Mental Health." This PSA was developed through collaboration between the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Department of Education, and the Tennessee Governor's Children's Cabinet. It features several members of the YALC sharing their experiences with mental health/substance abuse challenges and giving advice to adults on how to help the young people in their lives.

Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) provided grant funding for two agencies providing housing to transition age youth through the TN Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant. The first grant was 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 whom 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. A second grant went 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.

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.

YV LifeSet had 191 youth in Tennessee graduate from high school, and 100 of those youth plan to attend college. Six participants graduated from college. One youth from YV LifeSet was recently appointed to the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth by Governor Haslam. This youth is frequently sought out by CASA and other organizations to share her story of being in foster care.

In May, 13 YV LifeSet youth attended a leadership academy in East Tennessee. The youth spent two days focusing on team building, trust building, problem-solving, effective communication and other life skills through physical activities, cooking, and workshops.

*Building Strong Brains* Tennessee received non-recurring funding in FY 2017 and 2018. In FY 2017, the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth provided 16 two-day Training-for-Trainers events across the state training 502 participants. The Department of Education focused its Conditions of Learning Conference on compassionate schools to encourage development of more trauma-informed schools and also provided the education-focused *Building Strong Brains* training to over 2,000 school personnel.

Since 2000, the Council on Developmental Disabilities has hosted the **Youth Leadership Forum** (YLF) four-day summer training for high school youth with disabilities on a university campus. After 10 years of implementing this program, the Council began looking at other ways to deliver training to transition-age youth with disabilities. It began to take its youth training "on the road" with its **Youth Readiness Days (YRD)**, a one-day, 4-hour workshop delivered in different high schools throughout the state. 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 25 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.

In June 2017, the Council piloted its first YLA with **T.A.R.P., Inc.** (“Training, Advocacy, Referral, Peer Support and Transition”) and the CIL in Paris, Tennessee. During the training, two legislators – Representative Andy Holt of District 76 and Representative Tim Wirgau of District 75 – told the participating self-advocates about the legislative process and the best ways to communicate with legislators. Lauren Hill, Director of Guest Services and Revenue Management for Tennessee’s State Parks in the Department of Environment and Conservation, talked about employment opportunities at the parks. Jeremy Norden-Paul of the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities talked about figuring out what kind of jobs you want to do. Kathleen Turner with Commercial Bank gave a detailed “in-service” on opening and keeping track of checking and savings accounts, and the need to design a budget.

Other presentations addressed the history of the independent living movement, social media networking, local services and resources, and post-secondary training and education programs. There were also sessions led by Council and TARP staff on self-advocacy, independent living skills and one-page plans. The entire training initiative was geared toward youth with disabilities moving beyond high school with a clearer vision of “what happens next,” and the steps needed to ensure a positive and productive future.

Chambliss Center for Children in Chattanooga opened six units of housing for youth aging out of the foster care system; four units are in process. 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 and hygiene items, connections with opportunities at local colleges and trade schools, life skills training and financial management classes.

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.



## YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS 2017

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 2017.

### NEW 2017 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). **Strategies should be developed to connect and share information, speakers and other interactions between the groups.**
- ***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* should be increased 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 Centers 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.**

## CONTINUING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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 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. 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),

- 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 wellbeing 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 2017, four peer advocates served 60 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 2016, 8 peer advocates supported 642 foster youth at foster care review boards in the following counties: Blount, Davidson, Coffee, Maury, Montgomery, 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 over 10 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 2017, DCS trained 1,426 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 for those 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 44 percent in 2017. Fewer young people aged out of foster care in 2017, and fewer were eligible. The total number of young people participating, 743, was only slightly less than the 755 served in 2016. The number of days young people remained in Extension of Foster Care increased from 259 days in 2016 to 284 days in 2017.

One hundred twenty young adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services obtained a high school diploma (109) or HiSET (11). In FY 2017, 29 completed post-secondary education. In 2017, DCS was released from Brian A. Consent Decree after 16 years of federal court supervision. One of the reforms listed by the department in celebrating the end of the suit is being the first state in the United States to offer independent living services to all foster youth who age out of custody.

YVLifeSet, formerly known as Youth Villages Transitional Living Program, served about 695 youth each day in Tennessee, and 1,701 youth participated in the program in FY 2017. Other data for 2017 found 90 percent in school or graduated, 70 percent employed or seeking employment, 96 percent living with family or independently, and 82 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 172 young people aging out of foster care.

For the past several years Tennessee Housing and Development Agency has put increased emphasis on serving foster youth due to their high risk of homelessness. In 2017, THDA awarded a Housing Trust Fund Competitive Grant to Keystone Development, Inc. for the development of Phase 2 of a plan for 12 one-bedroom apartments in Johnson City. Six of the

apartments will be set aside for homeless youth, many of whom will have aged out of foster care. The other six units will be set aside for elderly 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 will provide financial assistance and case management. THDA also awarded funding to the Franklin Housing Authority for rehabilitation of the Park Street Apartments. One unit will be set aside for foster youth.

The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services continues to provide three programs serving transition age youth and young adults suffering from or at risk of serious emotional disturbance or substance abuse. Awarded in 2013, the Treatment and Recovery for Youth (TRY) grant serves adolescents and young adults in Maury and Madison Counties suffering from substance abuse disorders. This grant ended August 30, it is currently in a no-cost extension.

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).

In addition, TDMHSAS partners with key stakeholders and youth and young adults on both state and local levels to convene a State Transition Team (STT). The STT collaboratively prioritizes system improvements to the child and adult mental health systems and other relevant child and adult system partners, including funding mechanisms, administrative structures, regulatory requirements, policy, and an array of services and supports available to youth and young adults with or at risk of serious mental health conditions or co-occurring disorders.

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 which 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.
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 FROM DCS

#### ➤ **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 its Independent Living Program (ILP) and monitors the provision of Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS). As a part of the federal mandate, this Division 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 ongoing connections with caring adults,
- the development of productive individuals within their communities,
- the acquisition and maintenance of gainful employment,
- the achievement of educational/vocational goals, and
- the availability of financial assistance and skills training 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 help the youth successfully transition to adulthood. The strengths and needs of a 14-year-old who is four years from legal independence are generally different from those of a 17-year-old who is facing the imminent assumption of adult rights and responsibilities and so the planning, and services are tailored on that basis.

DCS uses Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program funds to staff 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 and youth. 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, provisions of the Independent Living Allowance, assistance

with financial aid (FAFSA), Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and other scholarship applications, and support and coordination of statewide youth leadership boards, Youth 4 Youth.

Program Purposes for the next four years are:

- Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 transition to self-sufficiency by providing services;
- Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment;
- Help youth likely to remain in foster care until age 18 prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions;
- Provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care through mentors 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;
- Improve quality practice of EFCS case workers through convenings, 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, 2017 and June 30, 2017. Out of the 289 Dependent/Neglected/Unruly youth, 89 percent met one of 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 2017, 444 youth and young adults obtained high school diplomas or an equivalency. Three hundred twenty four custodial youth obtained a high school diploma (247) or HiSET (77). Of the custodial youth, 69 were placed at Youth Development Centers and obtained a high school diploma (41) or HiSET (28). One hundred twenty young

adults receiving Extension of Foster Care Services obtained a high school diploma (109) or HiSET (11). In FY 2017, 29 completed post-secondary education. The following represent the post-secondary programs completed.

**Non EFCS**

East Tennessee State University
Hiwassee College
Middle College
Murray State University
Northeast State Community College
Pepperdine University
Southwest State Community College
Tennessee College of Applied Technology
Tennessee Technological University
Union University
University of Tennessee-Knoxville
West Tennessee Business College

**EFCS**

Carson-Newman University
Chattanooga State Community College
East Tennessee State University
Fortis Institute
Nashville State Community College
Pellissippi State Community College
Remington Career College
Tennessee College of Applied Technology
University of Memphis

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, 2016, through June 30, 2017, the Education Division provided consultation to Child and Family Teams, field services worker (FSWs), and public/non-public schools over 75,000 times. Education staff participated directly in nearly 2000 Child and Family Team Meetings and 1350 Individual Education Plan (IEP)/504 Meetings. Additionally, the Education Specialists advocated for students in more than 250 disciplinary hearings and over 150 specialized foster care review board meetings. Staff also provided 251 educational training sessions for approximately 2,728 surrogate parents, resource parents, FSWs, and school staff.

Both the YDCs 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 a YDC or a provider in-house school prior to completing graduation requirements, there are 15 Education Specialists across the state (one in each DCS region) who 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 YDCs who are significantly behind in credits based on their age are provided the opportunity to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma. The decision to allow a student this option for obtaining a high school credential is made by the Child and Family Team. This has allowed 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.

As a final note, a significant piece of legislation passed was this year that affects at risk students. In the past, students in juvenile detention centers who were eligible for special education services were to be educated by the Local Education Agency (LEA). There was no provision for the education of students who were NOT eligible for special education. This year legislation was proposed and passed that mandates that all students in detention centers will be educated regardless of custody status or eligibility for special education services. House Bill 307 (Senate Bill 1195) ensures that the LEA where the detention center is located will provide educational services for students being held in those facilities.

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 TRIO and TN Promise, that help support their educational well-being.

The AOC continues to educate courts/FCRB on the importance of educational questions, records and support services to ensure enhanced educational goals. During FY 2017 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 and Maury 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. This follow up sample consists of youth who exited foster care at age 17 or who aged out of foster care; the follow up surveys for the youth turning age 21 between October 1, 2017 to September 30 2018 who were reported in the 19-year-old follow up in last year's YTAC report started October 1, 2017.

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 included survey data for 17-year-olds in foster care collected October 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. This submission included the following:

- 189 of 305 youth participated in the NYTD 2017A 17 year old baseline survey (there were 63 additional "straddlers," or youth who could still be surveyed into the NYTD period).
- 95 reported as Unable to Locate/Invite.
- 95 percent of participating 17-year-olds report having connections to an adult. National NYTD statistics for 17-year-olds show 93 percent.
- 6 percent participating 17-year-olds report having children. National NYTD statistics for 17-year-olds show 7 percent.
- 15 percent of participating 17-year-olds report being Homelessness ever. National NYTD statistics for 17-year-olds show 16 percent.
- 50 percent of participating 17-year-olds report ever being incarcerated. National NYTD statistics for 17-year-olds show 37 percent.

In FY 2017, the use of Education and Training Vouchers and Bright Futures Scholarships remained relatively stable from the 2016, with a slight decrease. DCS Independent Living (IL) continues to do outreach to the population who were adopted or went to Subsidized Permanent Guardianship (SPG) over the last two years.

### **EFC Expansion Analysis Project**

TN's EFC program currently includes 3 of the 5 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. During FY 2017, DCS began an analysis project to explore expanding EFC to include the two remaining eligibility

criteria; 3.) Participating in a program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment; and 4.) 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.

The August meeting was held, and at the time of this report Main Spring is compiling feedback from the meeting into a final document to continue collecting information and data to complete the analysis which should be released in early 2018.

➤ **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 2016-2017 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: 1658 (971 DCS Grant, 1300 privately funded; some youth received services via both funding streams, not simultaneously, at some point during FY 2017)
- Resource Centers: 172
- Extension of Foster Care Services: 743 Individuals/757 EFCS Episodes.

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

**FY 2017 EFCS Retention: Days in EFCS**

In FY 2017, the mean (days) were 284 days, median (days) were 209. In FY 2016, the mean days were 259 days, median (days) were 168. 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.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Mean (Days)</b>	<b>Median (Days)</b>	<b>Mode (Days)</b>
Northwest	270	208	140
Southwest	307	264	0
Shelby	376	298	94
Davidson	302	231	0
Mid Cumberland	226	186	214
South Central	221	180	28
Upper Cumberland	318	269	1096
Northeast	210	149	0
Knox	255	189	0
East	212	120	0
Smoky Mountain	257	162	85
Tennessee Valley	426	328	1096
<b>Total (Days)</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>1096</b>

### **Program Exits**

The following represent the circumstances by which young adults leave extended foster care that are captured for reporting purposes FY 2017:

- 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	32		1			3		36
East	10		5		2	1	5	23
Knox	2		19		2	3		26
Mid Cumberland	23		3	1	4	3	7	41
Northeast	27	1	3		2	1	4	38
Northwest	18		2			1		21
Shelby	25	2	12		1	2	6	48
Smoky Mtn	14		19	3	5	3	9	53
South Central	17		3	1	2	3	9	35
Southwest	11	1	5	1		2	2	22
TN Valley	16		11	1	1	4	2	35
Upper Cumberland	26		5	5	3	3		42
<b>Grand Total</b>	221	4	88	12	22	29	44	420

The primary service offered to young adults who exit extension of foster care services is YVLifeSet. YVLifeSet continues working with the youth 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. Youth who exit to adult services have SSI established and then 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 2017, 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 2016-2017.**

The Department offers young adults who were in foster care or who are in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> 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 a decrease in the number of scholarships provided during FY 2017, with most of the decrease in utilization in the Middle Tennessee area. This may be attributed to staff vacancies in the Office of IL, as those staff are primarily responsible for reaching out to eligible youth, assisting youth with completing the applications and gathering supporting documents, and submitting the applications for processing.

<b>2017</b>	<b>ETV</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total</b>
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
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>483</b>

<b>2016</b>	<b>ETV</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tennessee 4-Year University	65	43	108
Tennessee Community Colleges	45	54	99
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	173	39	212
University of Tennessee System	8	8	16
Private 4-Year Colleges	41	0	41
Non State Technical Colleges	25	0	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>501</b>

<b>2015</b>	<b>ETV</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Total</b>
Tennessee 4-Year University	66	38	104
Tennessee Community Colleges	166	69	235
Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology	39	29	68
University of Tennessee System	11	9	20
Private 4-Year Colleges	38	0	38
Non State Technical Colleges	37	0	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>502</b>

Source: Independent Living Scholarship Report

➤ **Number of children in state custody during FY 2017**

<b>Overview</b>	
Total Children in Custody	<b>14,421</b>
<b>Adjudication</b>	
Dependent/Neglect	<b>11,740</b>
Unruly	<b>296</b>
Not Listed	<b>244</b>
Delinquent	<b>2,141</b>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	<b>8,222</b>
Female	<b>6,199</b>
<b>Age Range</b>	
0-12	<b>7,652</b>
13-19	<b>6,769</b>
<b>Race</b>	
White	<b>9900</b>
Black/African American	<b>3401</b>
Multi-Racial	<b>1062</b>
Asian	<b>17</b>
Missing	<b>13</b>
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	<b>12</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	<b>11</b>
Unable to Determine	<b>5</b>



<b>Children by Adjudication, Gender, and Age Group</b>							
		<b>Female</b>			<b>Male</b>		
<b>Adjudication</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>0-12</b>	<b>13-19</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>0-12</b>	<b>13-19</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dependent/Neglect	11,740	3,508	2,122	5,630	3,976	2,134	6,110
Unruly	296	4	127	131	6	159	165
Not Listed	244	75	48	123	67	54	121
Delinquent	2,141	2	313	315	14	1,812	1,826
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>14,421</b>	<b>3,589</b>	<b>2,610</b>	<b>6,199</b>	<b>4,063</b>	<b>4,159</b>	<b>8,222</b>

<b>Children by Region and Age Range</b>			
		<b>Age Range</b>	
<b>Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>0-12</b>	<b>13-19</b>
Davidson	920	389	531
East TN	829	419	410
Knox	1,290	887	403
Mid Cumberland	1,708	790	918
Northeast	1,298	761	537
Northwest	807	456	351
Shelby	1,585	737	848
Smoky Mountain	1,387	790	597
South Central	1,164	548	616
Southwest	676	323	353
TN Valley	1,291	703	588
Upper Cumberland	1,397	810	587
Missing	69	39	30
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>14,421</b>	<b>7,652</b>	<b>6,769</b>

*Source: Tennessee Department of Children's Services – TFACTS*

- **Number of EFCS young adults served FY 2017 broken down by adjudication, gender, race/ethnicity, region/county.**

**By Region:**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number</b>
Davidson Region	68
East Tennessee Region	49
Knox Region	41
Mid Cumberland Region	75
Northeast Region	50
Northwest Region	39
Shelby Region	103
Smoky Mountain Region	77
South Central Region	59
Southwest Region	31
TN Valley Region	65
Upper Cumberland Region	86
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>743</b>

**Total Individuals Served: 743**

**Adjudication (at time exiting DCS custody):**

- Dependent/Neglected: 610;
- Unruly: 25;
- Delinquent: 108;

**Gender:**

- Female: 422;
- Male: 321.

**Race/Ethnicity:**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Count of RACE</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American	1
American Indian/Alaska Native, White	2
Asian	3
Asian, Black/African American	1
Asian, White	1
Black/African American	238
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	1
Black/African American, Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown, White	1
Black/African American, White	27
Multi-Racial - One Race Unknown	4
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2
White	461
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>743</b>

<b>Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)</b>	<b>Count of Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino)</b>
NO	674
UNKNOWN	26
YES	43
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>743</b>

**By County:**

<b>County</b>	<b>Number of EFCS Episodes</b>	<b>Number of Young Adults Served</b>
Anderson	13	13
Bedford	4	4
Benton	2	2
Bledsoe	3	3
Blount	14	14
Bradley	20	20
Campbell	7	7
Cannon	4	4
Carroll	2	2
Carter	4	4
Cheatham	4	4
Chester	2	2
Claiborne	7	7
Clay	2	2
Cocke	7	7
Coffee	8	8
Crockett	3	3
Cumberland	18	17
Davidson	67	66
Dekalb	2	2
Dickson	6	6
Dyer	4	4
Fayette	1	1
Fentress	4	4
Franklin	5	5
Gibson	11	11
Giles	10	10
Grainger	2	2
Greene	14	14
Hamblen	17	17
Hamilton	29	29
Hardin	2	2
Hawkins	8	8
Haywood	4	4
Henderson	3	3

Henry	2	2
Hickman	2	2
Humphreys	4	4
Jackson	1	1
Jefferson	18	18
Knox	41	41
Lake	1	1
Lauderdale	6	6
Lawrence	8	8
Lewis	1	1
Lincoln	3	3
Loudon	2	2
Macon	9	9
Madison	10	10
Marion	2	2
Marshall	5	4
Maury	8	7
McMinn	5	5
McNairy	2	2
Meigs	3	3
Monroe	9	9
Montgomery	21	20
Moore	1	1
Morgan	3	3
Obion	1	1
Overton	3	3
Perry	1	1
Pickett	1	1
Putnam	18	18
Rhea	3	3
Roane	5	5
Robertson	5	5
Rutherford	23	22
Scott	3	3
Sevier	14	13
Shelby	106	103
Smith	10	9
Stewart	2	2

Sullivan	14	13
Sumner	11	11
Tipton	1	1
Unicoi	1	1
Union	7	7
Van Buren	2	2
Warren	7	7
Washington	9	9
Wayne	5	5
Weakley	1	1
White	7	7
Williamson	8	7
Wilson	9	8
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>743</b>

Source: Tennessee Department of Children’s Services – TFACTS

The following describes the number of youth who received independent living wraparound services FY 2017.

**Independent Living Wraparound Services Custodial Population 2016-2017:**

Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2014-15	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2015-16	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2016-17	Total Youth Served 2014-15	Total Youth Served 2015-16	Total Youth Served 2016-17	Total Expenditure 2014-15	Total Expenditure 2015-16	Total Expenditure 2016-17
463	447	508	285	389	433	\$56,623.88	\$59,786.61	\$73,723.35

<b>Service</b>	<b>Instances of Service Provided 2014-15</b>	<b>Instances of Service Provided 2015-16</b>	<b>Instances of Service Provided 2016-17</b>	<b>Youth Served 2014-15</b>	<b>Youth Served 2015-16</b>	<b>Youth Served 2016-17</b>	<b>Expenditure 2014-15</b>	<b>Expenditure 2015-16</b>	<b>Expenditure 2016-17</b>
Drivers Education	26	37	47	25	37	47	\$8,700.00	\$13,636.00	\$19,147.00
Drivers Testing Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	29	45	28	28	41	22	\$5,757.68	\$7,761.73	\$3,454.05
Good Grades Incentive	88	52	47	80	49	45	\$3,570.00	\$2,250.00	\$1,830.00
Graduation Package	128	135	140	97	102	95	\$18,899.14	\$21,789.43	\$23,225.72
Honor/Senior Class Trip	8	14	14	7	14	13	\$1,770.00	\$1,865.00	\$1,701.00
Housing Application Fees (Post- Secondary)	19	10	11	16	10	11	\$3,075.00	\$1,743.00	\$1,365.00
IL Class Stipend	22	22	15	22	22	14	\$1,075.00	\$800.00	\$475.00
Materials for Vocational Studies	0	1	1	0	1	1	\$0.00	\$115.00	\$79.33
Other Special Needs	14	14	30	14	12	22	\$3,644.07	\$3,008.95	\$10,851.36

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2014-15	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Youth Served 2014-15	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Expenditure 2014-15	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	48	21	22	34	14	15	\$1,805.00	\$655.00	\$910.00
Senior Event Transportation	0	3	0	0	3	0	\$0.00	\$70.00	\$0.00
Educational Fees	5	4	2	5	4	2	\$2,953.99	\$890.00	\$1,314.00
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	28	27	11	26	26	11	\$1,215.50	\$1,297.50	\$570.50
Tutoring	7	0	6	3	0	2	\$982.50	\$0.00	\$1,757.50
Yearbooks	31	40	27	30	40	27	\$2,326.00	\$2,830.00	\$2,017.89
Youth Leadership Stipend	10	22	107	9	14	106	\$850.00	\$1,075.00	\$5,025.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>*286</b>	<b>*389</b>	<b>*433</b>	<b>\$56,623.88</b>	<b>\$59,786.61</b>	<b>\$73,723.35</b>

**Independent Living Wraparound Services Extension of Foster Care Population 2016-17:**

Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2014-15	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2015-16	Total IL Wrap Services Provided 2016-17	Total Youth Served 2014-15	Total Youth Served 2015-16	Total Youth Served 2016-17	Total Expenditure 2014-15	Total Expenditure 2015-16	Total Expenditure 2016-17
375	421	381	191	328	316	\$56,525.79	\$65,400.62	\$83,099.29



Service	Instances of Service Provided 2014-15	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Youth Served 2014-15	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Expenditure 2014-15	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17
Auto Insurance	13	22	15	12	21	15	\$3,710.94	\$6,464.21	\$4,939.02
Drivers Education	23	19	41	23	18	41	\$8,045.00	\$6,915.00	\$16,059.00
Drivers Testing Fees	0	1	0	0	1	0	\$0.00	\$350.00	\$0.00
Educational Fees	4	0	1	3	0	1	\$932.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Extra-Curricular Leadership Activity/Membership Fees	22	12	12	17	11	11	\$2,639.33	\$1,240.00	\$1,432.50
Good Grades Incentive	14	9	6	12	9	5	\$619.00	\$450.00	\$270.00
Graduation Package	83	89	71	62	60	55	\$11,588.52	\$12,058.67	\$11,483.84
Honor/Senior Class Trip	2	6	10	2	6	10	\$175.00	\$535.00	\$1,233.00
Household Furnishings	3	12	23	2	11	20	\$1,215.00	\$5,820.98	\$12,085.62
Housing Application Fees (Post-Secondary)	15	15	14	15	15	14	\$2,855.00	\$2,615.00	\$1,929.00
IL Class Stipend	6	9	3	6	8	3	\$225.00	\$425.00	\$150.00
Materials for Vocational Studies	1	1	1	1	1	1	\$133.15	\$109.99	\$86.16
Non Recurring Housing Start Up	25	30	31	20	20	19	\$8,723.04	\$14,102.12	\$16,600.69
Other Special Needs	25	24	32	20	18	30	\$6,619.59	\$3,844.57	\$5,725.75

Service	Instances of Service Provided 2014-15	Instances of Service Provided 2015-16	Instances of Service Provided 2016-17	Youth Served 2014-15	Youth Served 2015-16	Youth Served 2016-17	Expenditure 2014-15	Expenditure 2015-16	Expenditure 2016-17
Post-Secondary Application/Registration Fees	30	45	26	25	29	18	\$1,760.00	\$1,595.00	\$1,145.00
Senior Event Transportation	0	1	1	0	1	1	\$0.00	\$20.00	\$50.00
Testing fees (GED, SAT, ACT)	13	10	5	11	9	5	\$822.00	\$556.50	\$381.00
Tools for Vocational School	0	0	8	0	0	6	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,962.39
Transportation Grant	45	36	20	29	24	14	\$2,345.50	\$1,872.20	\$1,135.50
Tutoring	1	3	0	1	1	0	\$50.00	\$800.00	\$0.00
Vehicle Repairs	5	6	3	5	5	3	\$1,410.56	\$1,577.88	\$963.00
Yearbooks	15	18	17	15	18	17	\$968.00	\$1,168.50	\$1,142.82
Youth Leadership Stipend	30	53	41	22	42	27	\$1,689.16	\$2,880.00	\$1,825.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>191*</b>	<b>*328</b>	<b>*316</b>	<b>\$56,525.79</b>	<b>\$65,400.62</b>	<b>\$83,099.29</b>

**\*These are sums of individual youth served; some youth received more than one type of service during FY 2017. The unduplicated number of youth served, by service category/type or total is available upon request.**

*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. Undecided about future plans;
3. Did not want to be involved with DCS;

In preparation for the EFC Expansion Analysis Project, information was collected to help inform 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 reason for each youth served during FY 2017. Results were compiled into the statewide table below, excluding the region of Northeast.

<b>Statewide (excluding NE)</b>		
<b>Reason</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Academic Ineligibility	102	26%
Refusal	97	25%
Could Not be Located	52	13%
Uncertain	42	11%
Moved Out of State	35	9%
Transition to Adult Services	21	5%
Criminal Charges	19	5%
Undocumented	6	2%
Went to Work	6	2%
Didn't Age Out	3	1%
EFCS Not Offered	2	1%
Social Security Benefit	2	1%
Risk to Self/Others	2	1%
Received EFCS	1	0%
Entered Military	1	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>391</b>	

Then Youth Engagement Lead 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.

In addition to handling ongoing requests, the Office of IL partnered with the Office of Adoption and SPG at DCS to send out monthly letters to adoptive parents of youth who may be eligible for ILWrap services and ETV scholarships. The Office of IL has received a high number of calls from adoptive parents who either forgot or understood requirements of services and scholarships differently. This project to increase awareness of services has been a success and reminder that training on awareness is an ongoing project.

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

During FY 2017, 44 percent of the total eligible aged-out population of youth accepted Extension of Foster Care services, which is down slightly from last year’s total which was 48 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 2017, six percent (22 percent within adjudication) of eligible juvenile justice youth accepted Extension of Foster Care Services, compared to 37 percent (55 percent within adjudication) of dependent/neglected youth.

<b>Region</b>	<b>Aged Out</b>	<b>Aged out Eligible</b>	<b>Accepted EFCS</b>	<b>% EFCS Uptake</b>
<b>Davidson</b>	83	68	28	41%
<b>East</b>	58	49	28	57%
<b>Knox</b>	57	47	18	38%
<b>Mid Cumberland</b>	118	110	37	34%
<b>Northeast</b>	62	57	20	35%
<b>Northwest</b>	50	45	19	42%
<b>Shelby</b>	119	78	35	45%
<b>Smoky Mountain</b>	87	85	44	52%
<b>South Central</b>	88	77	26	34%
<b>Southwest</b>	40	33	12	36%
<b>TN Valley</b>	82	63	35	56%
<b>Upper Cumberland</b>	91	81	47	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>44%</b>

*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 2017	<b>307</b>
EFC youth receiving the Independent Living Allowance during FY 2017	<b>447</b>

**Extension of Foster Care Placements (Note that some individual young adults received more than one type of placement service during FY 2017):**

<b>EFCS Placement Service</b>	<b>Number of Young Adults Per Service (some were in more than one placement during the Fiscal Year)</b>
Regular Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	436
Contract Foster Care Extension of Foster Care	120
Independent Living Residential Extension of Foster Care	74
Regular Board Rate Extension of Foster Care	63
Level 2 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	23
Continuum: Level 3 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	20
Graduated Rate Extension of Foster Care (IL Allowance)	17
Level 2 Special Needs - Mental Retardation Treatment Extension of Foster Care	5
Level 2 Congregate Care Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 3 Continuum Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 3 Extension of Foster Care	4
Level 4 Special Needs Extension of Foster Care	4
Extraordinary Rate Extension of Foster Care	3
L3 AS-ND PRTF MID Extension of Foster Care	3
Level 2 SN Continuum Extension of Foster Care	3
Level 2 Special Population - Education Extension of Foster Care	1
Level 3 Enhanced Sex Offender Treatment Extension of Foster Care	1
<b>Total Individuals Served</b>	<b>666</b>

Had an EFCS episode during the fiscal year but no EFCS placement	38
EFCS episode ended on or after July 1, 2016 and the placement service ended on or before July 1, 2016. The last payment date was in the last fiscal year (ending June 30, 2016)	6
EFCS placements existed during the fiscal year but no payment records in a valid reporting status until after July 1, 2017, or at all	33
EFCS episode started during the fiscal year but the placement started after the fiscal year	0
	<b>Total: 77</b>

*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:

<b>Training Group</b>	<b>Participants Trained</b>
Court	4
DCS	438
Foster Parents	110
Other	179
Provider Agency	249
Youth	446
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1426</b>

*Source: Independent Living Monthly Report*

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

<b>CFTM TYPE</b>	<b>Count of CFTM Type</b>
Discharge/Exit Custody	610
Discharge/Exit Extension of Foster Care	124
Extension of Foster Care Progress Review	357
FSW - Progress Review of Non-Custody	12
Individual Program Plan	58
Initial Custody	43
Initial Extension of Foster Care	81
Initial Permanency Plan Custody	158
JJ - Classification	3
JJ - Discharge From Probation/Aftercare	7
JJ - Program Transfer	5
JJ - Reclassification	1
JJ - Release to Aftercare	15
Permanency (Adoption Only)	2
Permanency Plan Revision Custody	241
Placement Stability	54
Plan Revision (IPP)	5
Progress Review Custody	792
Quarterly IPP Review	4
Special Called	115
Transition to Adulthood	601
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3288</b>

*Source: Independent Living Monthly Report*

Additionally, Independent Living staff assisted with the development of 166 Independent Living Plans and 703 Transition Plans based on manual reporting. There was participation in an additional 50 Initial or Revision Permanency Plan CFTMs that did not contain plan types identified on the reports.

### **Youth-Involved Advocacy and Engagement Activities**

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 will highlight activities involving youth during FY 2017.

The Office of Independent Living continues to coordinate three 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.

**SFY 2017**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Y4Y meeting</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Avg. attendance</b>
<b>East</b>	7	119	18
<b>Middle</b>	7	35	5
<b>West</b>	11	132	12

A new addition to the federally-funded PREP contracts was the highly-successful IL Leadership Academy Camps. Coordinated by the Harmony Family Center, this 2-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 first year served a total of 94 youth ages 17-24 from across the state. Youth feedback was very 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.

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 planning. Each Peer Advocate receives a stipend for their participation. DCS was able to not only renew the grant for another five years, but also increased the amount of annual funding by 36 percent as well as the stipend amounts for youth.

100 foster youth from across the United States were selected to be one of FosterClub’s Outstanding Young Leaders. Four of those youth were from Tennessee. 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 accepts nominations for youth to participate as a Jim Casey Young Fellow. In FY 2017, DCS nominated a youth from East 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 include 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.

### **New Resources, Services and Other Interesting Updates**

During FY 2017, DCS implemented an automatic credit process for youth age 14+ in foster care. This automated process runs checks with the three main credit reporting agencies (Equifax, TransUnion and Experian) through DCS’ TFACTS system. The system is designed to complete credit checks for youth when entering custody and each year upon their custodial anniversary date. The system compiles information from the check into TFACTS where the FSW can review then discuss with youth. If a discrepancy is found, DCS will work to clear the discrepancy and ensure the youth’s credit history is clear. DCS has received national recognition for implanting this process as completing credit checks manually is a time consuming and difficult process for many states. Tennessee DCS has and continues to meet with other states and agencies to share how this process was designed and implemented.

A new housing resource through the Chambliss Transitional Living Program in Chattanooga opened. 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. Chambliss opened six units and is working to expand additional housing for youth.

In the Northeast region, 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.

In last year's budget request, DCS was approved to hire four additional Extension of Foster Care Family Service Workers (FSW). Through a series of reviews of regional caseload size, travel distance and other indicators, DCS assigned these positions to the regions of North East, TN Valley (Hamilton County), Mid Cumberland and potentially South Central. These FSWs will work exclusively with aged-out youth.

The Dream Maker's Project is a new resource for aging-out foster youth that connects them with community-based partners to meet various financial needs or dreams. Representatives from Dream Makers reached out to DCS during FY 2017 wanting to make an impact on Tennessee youth. DCS met with Dream Maker staff and implemented a referral process and is pleased to share that the partnership has been successful and youth have already had dreams fulfilled. For more information about this program and to see the type of dreams from youth, visit <http://dreammakersproject.org/>.

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 they 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**

<b>Type of Participant</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
DCS Foster Parent	10
Private Provider Staff	34
Private Provider Parents	6
DCS Staff	49
Conference (Mix of Participants)	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

The Department of Children’s Services continues to administer the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program, an evidence-based pregnancy prevention model, Wyman’s Teen Outreach Program (TOP®) in selected Level II and III residential treatment centers and in the state’s three youth development centers. One thousand and seventy seven (1,077) adolescents participated in TOP® in these settings during FY 2017.

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 13,876 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 blankets for homeless individuals and dog toys for a local animal shelter. Young men at Volunteer Academy in Gallatin grew a vegetable garden and donated 80 pounds of produce to a local food bank. 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 the Tennessee Centers of Excellence for Children in State Custody. In FY 2017, TOP® was implemented at 22 locations across the state. One hundred fifteen (115) staff participated in TOP® training, gaining skills in effective youth engagement and high quality group facilitation.

The chart below (Figure 4) shows the number of girls in Tennessee state custody remained consistent from 2011-2015, but the number of births fluctuated quite a bit from year to year, and by extension so did the birth rate. As a result, it is difficult to draw any conclusion about trends over time. However, of the population of girls in state custody, ages 15-19; on average, there were about 17 births per every 1,000 girls.

<b>Birth Rates Among Teens (15 -19 years) in DCS Custody, TN, 2011 -2015</b>			
<i>Year</i>	<i>Births</i>	<i>Number in Custody</i>	<i>Birth Rate per 1000</i>
<b>2011</b>	74	2716	27.2
<b>2012</b>	29	2807	10.3
<b>2013</b>	60	2847	21.1
<b>2014</b>	39	2885	13.5
<b>2015</b>	42	2880	14.6
<b>Total 2011 -2015</b>	244	14135	17.3
<b>Data Sources TennCare and DCS</b>			

**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 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.
- Integrate preparation for adulthood with permanency efforts through improved, quality Transition Planning (file reviews and coaching).
- Improve work around LGBT population and immigrant populations.
- EFCS expansion to include eligibility criteria, such as participating in program or activity designed to promote or remove barriers to employment or employed for at least 80 hours per month.

## **RESOURCE CENTER REPORTS**

### **Helen Ross McNabb Center's Project NOW!**

#### **History**

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 more than 66 years, its mission remains clear and simple, "Improving the lives of the people we serve." McNabb has 33 years of experience working with runaway, homeless and at-risk teenagers, complemented by 20 years of providing outreach services to youth in local schools, 12 years providing street outreach services, 17 years of offering transitional living services for older youth and young adults and four 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!, that includes *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. 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! offers sexual health and pregnancy prevention services for girls through the *Sisters Saving Sisters* program. A new collaboration to offer more financial skill and services is being planned. This opportunity, through partnering with First Tennessee Bank will provide individual financial coaching as well as group instruction in skills leading to financial maturity. 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 to attend workshops at the Knoxville Career Center 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, information sessions providing a welcoming atmosphere 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 the Youth 4 Youth board with DCS, ICAM (Integrated Community Agency meeting), the Knoxville Leadership Foundation and the Knoxville Homeless Coalition; all providing interagency support to transitioning youth.

**Local Partnerships**

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 (TLP)

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



## **Successes**

Since January 2017, the Resource Center has been located in a building that provides primarily Project NOW! services. Included are a classroom, computer access for youth and a kitchen large enough for teaching life skills as well as a living room/informal meeting room area for youth to visit, relax or study. Several financial literacy classes through *Opportunity Passport* as well as *Sisters Saving Sisters* and other life skills-related classes have taken advantage of this dedicated space. It has also provided community presenters and the youth a place to learn in a relaxed atmosphere that is their own. The current facility is in close proximity to Pellissippi State Community College, Tennessee College of Applied Technology and Knoxville Transit Authority busses. Plans are underway for meal preparation opportunities for youth that are also part of community service for the foster parent training provided by McNabb. Active participation in the program continues to grow due to consistency and efforts to reach youth in a variety of ways. The current facility will enhance the opportunity to provide more services to youth through space for a clothing and school supply closet and a space for a dedicated computer classroom and technology resource center. A relationship with several community partners has resulted in much needed classes on driver's safety, personal safety, soft skills, and career opportunities through collaboration with the Knoxville Career Center and Knoxville Police Department. The space will continue to provide space for financial education, leadership activities, sexual health, as well as life skills and asset purchase training.

*Sisters Saving Sisters* has become a vital part of the Project NOW! Resource Center. Over 50 young women have taken advantage of the course addressing 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. Regular programs are held at a residential facility as well as at the Resource Center. Young women engage in discussion of issues pertinent to their life experiences in an accepting non-judgmental environment.

Project NOW! has several youth enrolled at the University of Tennessee, East Tennessee State University, Belmont College, Lipscomb University as well as Pellissippi State Community College at Roane State, Blount County, and Knoxville campuses. Youth are also enrolled at the Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Paul Mitchell Cosmetology, and barber school. Youth enrolled in post secondary training are encouraged and rewarded for speaking to current high school youth exploring opportunities post-high school. Successes in K-12 public school are encouraged and celebrated.

## **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 most youth who do not drive and many more than 50 miles from Knoxville.

Only one person is employed at the Resource Center and services are sometimes stretched between programs. Scheduling, planning and presenting activities, providing financial literacy classes, sexual health classes, processing matches and the accompanying paper work, as well as communicating with youth leave little time to seek out opportunities for the community to collaborate with the Resource Center.

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 skills are sometimes lacking and programming is needed to address the development of these essential tools for success.

### **Next Steps**

A priority for the Project NOW! Resource Center is securing a permanent home that offers the space and opportunity of the present facility. The coordinator or others should take advantage of speaking opportunities that inform area organizations of these youth in transition and their needs and challenges. The Center will continue to support youth in completing requirements for a high school diploma and post-secondary training.

The youth problem of transportation and distance from the Knoxville Resource Center continues to be a problem. Solutions need to be examined and pursued. Finding more and varied life skills 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.

**Knoxville Resource  
Center**

**Completed by Christy Martin**

	<b>July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016</b>	<b>July 1 2016 - June 30, 2017</b>
<b>Opportunity Passport</b>		
Number of new youth enrolled	20	22
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	2	4
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	29	7
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	100%	100%
<b>OPPS Surveys</b>		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	October 2015 72.5%/April 2016 57%	October 2016 78.6%/April 2017 95%
<b>Community Partnership Boards</b>		
Number of board meetings	4	3
Number of new door openers created	14	7
<b>Life Skills Classes</b>		
Number of life skills classes held	16	8
Total number of participants in life skills classes	78	39
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	92%
<b>Youth Leadership &amp; Engagement</b>		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	3	6



## 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)
Southern College of Optometry	Shelby County Office of Childhood and Youth	First Tennessee Bank	MemTV
Memphis Cares	Grizzlies Foundation	State of Tennessee (Shelby County) Community Advisory Board	Shelby County Juvenile Court
Flextronics Logistics, Memphis	CD Council	Urban Child Institute	TennDerCare
United Way of the Mid-South	Memphis Public Library	ResCare	The Grizzlies Foundation
Planned Parenthood of the Greater MidSouth	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	Maximus	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**

Melissa has been a part of SMA's Dream Seekers program since January 2011. She entered a welcoming foster home along with her three sisters. Her foster mother introduced her and her siblings to the Dream Seekers Program, where she took advantage of the benefits the program had to offer. She served as the Y4Y leadership board president for three years, as well as held the Youth Services Coordinator position with SMA. Melissa obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Memphis in 2015 and went on to obtain her master's degree from DePaul University in May 2017. Not only are we proud of her educational accomplishments, we are proud to announce that she was married in September 2017. Melissa 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
<b>Opportunity Passport™</b>		
Number of new youth enrolled	40	76
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	7	10
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	7	10
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	85%	85%
<b>OPPS Surveys</b>		
% of youth completing an OPPS survey (April & October only)	93%	91.6% (April).
<b>Community Partnership Boards</b>		
Number of board meetings	4	2.
Number of new door openers created	1.	1
<b>Life Skills Classes</b>		
Number of life skills classes held	5	3.
Total number of participants in life skills classes	30	13.
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%.
<b>Youth Leadership &amp; Engagement</b>		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	6	5



## **Monroe Harding Youth Connections**

### **History**

Monroe Harding (MH) was established in 1893 to provide a home for orphaned children. Throughout the years, it has served over 15,000 youth, and today continues to provide services for youth and their families throughout middle Tennessee. Monroe Harding does for kids in foster care what a family would do. We provide security, support and give young people a chance for success. We are meeting this mission through three key programs serving young people who are currently in or are transitioning from the foster care system: Foster Care, Youth Connections, and Independent Living.

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. It is not about what the child did, but what happened to the child.

### **Core Services**

Youth Connections has been in existence for almost 11 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 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 Stepping Stones 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, Y-Build, Job Corp, United Neighborhood Health Care, Goodwill Career Solutions, Youth Villages and the Community Advisory Board to provide services to youth who do not meet the criteria to be in DCS custody.

## **Successes**

Since Youth Connections has been in existence, over 150 young people have obtained their High School Equivalency through their participation in the HiSet classes, and 80 percent of Stepping Stones 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 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 160 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 University of Tennessee, Knoxville (Bridge Program), 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**

Monroe Harding is committed to serving more youth and achieving better outcomes. Just over three years ago, Monroe Harding began making the transition to a trauma-informed agency. The agency is committed to recognizing and responding to the impact of traumatic stress on those who have contact with the system, including children, caregivers and service providers. Monroe Harding is ensuring that all staff at every level of the organization is trained and the agency is able to sustain trauma awareness, knowledge and skills into the organizational culture, practices and policies. The agency's goal is to act in collaboration with all those who are involved with the youth, using the best available science to facilitate and support the recovery and resiliency of the youth.

The organization continues to assess its programs and make changes and improvements where needed. In March of this year, the difficult decision was made to close Monroe Harding's Cooperative Living program. The program provided a high level of trauma-informed care to the youth but was not financially self-sustaining. We continue to provide uninterrupted 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. Youth Connections will continue with the current programming and strive to reach additional young people, strengthening the manner in which we use the youth voice to improve our services.

## Nashville Resource Center Report

YTAC Annual Report/Update

Report Completed by Pamela Madison

	Previous Year	Year to Date
<b>Opportunity Passport™</b>		
Number of new youth enrolled	43	48
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered	9	9
# of Asset Specific Classes offered	18	18
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome	97%	98%
<b>OPPS Surveys</b>		
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	53%/90%	94%
<b>Community Partnership Boards</b>		
Number of board meetings	3	3
Number of new door openers created	3	5
<b>Life Skills Classes</b>		
Number of life skills classes held	5	5
Total number of participants in life skills classes	68	72
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment	100%	100%
<b>Youth Leadership &amp; Engagement</b>		
Number of youth leadership activities offered	9	9

## **Partnership- I.A.M Ready Chattanooga Independent Living Resource Center**

### **History**

The Partnership for Families, Children and Adults (Partnership) has provided services to at-risk youth through various programs since its establishment in 1877. Agency-wide services include foster and adoptive services for dependent, neglected, homeless and runaway youth; family and individual counseling; independent living services; and sexual assault and domestic violence services.

Partnership is one of the few accredited human service organizations in Chattanooga. We are accredited with the Council on Accreditation. This assures funders and partners that we have met “best practice” standards in all areas of our organization. We are also a licensed child placement agency. Throughout the agency we approach all clients with a trauma informed, strength based and culturally sensitive philosophy.

### **Mission Statement**

Partnership Mission statement is as follows: “Partnership is a community impact organization whose mission is to Empower People. Build Communities. Our services provide benefits through an effective array of critical services and collaborative partnerships that continually evolve to meet community needs.”

### **Vision Statement**

Partnership Vision statement is as follows: “Helping build a stronger, smarter, safer community.”

### **Core services**

#### **Partnership Programs Impact – The Entire Circle of Life**

The Partnership is one of Chattanooga’s oldest and largest human services non-profit organization. Partnership has over 20 programs that provide individuals and families with the tools and resources to build stability and create independence. From children to elderly, Partnership programs impact the entire circle of life. These programs are not geared to help an individual for a day, a month or even a year. Instead, the Partnership aims to develop a lifetime of success for the most vulnerable in our community.

## **Partnership 5 Centers of Service:**

### **Youth Services-Elder Services-Family Strengthening Services-Credit Counseling Services – Crisis Services**

Partnership reaches a diverse range of individuals and families through Five Centers of Service. 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.

Youth Service core services are Family Foster Care, Emergency Foster Care, Respite Foster Care, Therapeutic Foster Care and Independent Living Services (I AM READY Center). The I AM READY Center has two locations. One location is in Chattanooga in Hamilton County, and the other is in Cleveland in Bradley County. The expansion occurred in October 2016. Having the two locations allowed us to expand services and reach more youth in two separate regions.

I AM READY 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. Services available include a financial education curriculum that teaches basic knowledge such as savings, asset building, credit, credit reports, money management, and budgeting. The program is in the process of opening an additional office location in the Cleveland.

In addition to financial skill-building and support, I AM READY Center participants have access to streamlined and specialized services within the Hamilton County community, specifically related to the key outcome areas defined by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative that are evidence-based and essential for a successful transition into adulthood. Participants are connected with resources and tools within their community to help them establish their own social capital and support networks.

### **Local Partnerships**

Local Partnerships have been essential to the success of the program. Participants have been exposed to resources that otherwise would not be available to them. A byproduct of the partnerships has been a wide array of benefits to participants. Listed below are some of the partnerships:

- Cleveland Academy: OPPS Classes;
- Chambliss Center: offered OPPS Classes to students on site;
- Homeless Coalition: presentation of services;
- GreenSpaces: presentation to students;

- CASA/ I AM READY Center Cleveland Grand Opening: new space to serve youth in neighboring counties;
- Pathways: continued partnership to offer youth housing and independent living classes
- PATH: training and program presentation;
- UTC/TSU Nutrition Matters: life skills cooking class, household budgeting;
- Cleveland DCS: presentation of services and request for referral;
- Wrap Around Funds: DCS Independent Living Specialist, Cindy Ashburn presentation to students;
- CNE: Money School, presentation to Camelot in South Pittsburgh, presentation to Camelot in Cleveland, Cleveland Tennessee: Bradley County United Way, Maytag/ Whirlpool Cleveland Tennessee, Hart Gallery: presentation to students;
- 5Points Boxing: life skill presentation self-defense classes;
- COS: Innovation Fair presentation to more than 300 attendees at convention;
- WIOA Hamilton County: summer job Program Presentation;
- WIOA Bradley County: summer Job Program Presentation;
- T-Mobile: tour, school mentorship and employment readiness training;
- Education Opportunity Center Universe of Tennessee at Chattanooga: presentation about the significance of education and training as well as available scholarships;
- NHC: nursing home Christmas caroling including approximately 25 carolers;
- Cleveland State: life skills presentation; Lee University: Life skills; Hamilton County Foodbank: volunteer opportunity for youth to help prepare food for families in need;
- 2017 I AM READY Center Summer Camp;
- STS Transportation: free transportation for youth to OPPS training.

The Local Community partners include key members from many of the areas in which we are hoping to affect outcomes including education, employment, entrepreneurial, housing, physical, and mental health, social capital, financial capability and food.

Education: Cleveland State, Chattanooga State, Lee University, CASA, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Education Opportunity center. Unum employees provide on-site mentorship to program participants.

Employment: WSi Workforce Solutions, Sodexo/ Erlanger, T-Mobile, Tennessee Career Center of Southeast Tennessee, WIOA, Youth and Family Development- Career Development.

Entrepreneurial: Co Starters Co. Lab, Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise's Money School, and Hart Gallery.

Housing: Pathways for Young Adult Program-Transitional Living, Partnership Foster Care, Chattanooga Homeless Coalition, and Chattanooga Housing Authority.

Physical & Mental Health: 5Point Boxing of Cleveland, Health Connect of America, Mental Health Co-Op, Fort-Wood, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Healthy Transitions Program, Hamilton County Health Department.

Social Capital: WSi Workforce Solutions, News Channel 9, Department of Children Services, UNUM, City of Chattanooga, T-Mobile.

Financial Capability: Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise's Money School, United Way's Neediest Case, First Tennessee Bank.

Food: Chattanooga Area Food Bank, Department of human services, SNAP, and UT Chattanooga/ Tennessee State University Healthy Choices nutrition class.

### **Successes**

- The I AM READY Center co-located with CASA of Bradley County to offer a second location for students in the surrounding counties.
- Recruited first I AM READY Volunteer from the participants
- Unum awarded the center a \$10,000 grant, which has been utilized for matching funds for youth in the OPSS program.
- MSi Workforce Solutions donated 50 book bags fully supplied with school supplies for youth in the program.
- New office with an I AM READY class room space at McCallie Avenue in Chattanooga creates a easily accessible location.
- Classes were taught in conjunction with the Co.Lab curriculum.
- Strengthened relationship with community partner First Tennessee Bank. They have offered speakers, bank tours, discounted bank products, and mentors for our students.
- Youth participated in Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise's Money School.
- Developed a partnership with The Hart Gallery allowing our class to take place at their gallery. The owner has been a speaker in the Co.Lab class and shared her unlikely story of entrepreneurship. Hart Gallery has also offered retail space to our artists/entrepreneurs and has displayed their art for sale.
- Sodexo/ Erlanger: Has employees that serve as mentors as well as have two community advisory board members. This organization also has directly hired several students for part time and full time employment. The staff of Sodexo/ Erlanger also shared opportunities with students to bid on contracts with Erlanger.
- Collaborated with Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise to offer small business classes for youth interested in owning their own small business in the form of a seminar.



- Partnered with local television station, News Channel 9, to have a presentation at Unum. During presentation the station awarded \$500 to I AM READY Center's Volunteer of the Year.
- T-Mobile: Has sponsored several events and tours and has also given our organization countless hours of volunteers participation. This organization also has representatives that serve as community advisory board members.
- Collaboration with United Way/211 to be able to refer youth countywide to I AM READY center via 211 phone call.
- Continued to offer and implement a microenterprise coaching program in our I AM READY Independent Living Centers. The program is for youth aging out of foster care.
- Partnership is currently providing transitional housing through sub contract services with Pathways Young Adult Program, we have served 13 male youth through Extension of Foster Care Services. This program is currently accepting referrals.
- Partnered with Erlanger/ Sodexo Services to provide janitorial/housekeeping jobs for program participants. Mr. Robert Love in the process of creating additional dialogue for additional resources and support. The program just recently employed its first IAM READY participant.

### **Challenges & Barriers**

The I AM READY Center main challenge in regards to youth participation has been finding transportation for youth. The program coordinator, Robert Love, often transports youth to different locations for activities that are coordinated with our community partners. However he often runs out of space to be able to transport everyone in one vehicle. Not only has transportation to events been an issue but also transportation to class. Countless youth have expressed their eagerness to participate in class however it is difficult to transport them to our main office in Chattanooga from rural counties.

The solution for better transportation has been having client's FSWs, Case Workers, and biological parents to transport them to and from class. Partnership employees and interns have also assisted with several activities. For local trips the program coordinator partnered with local transportation company, STS Transport and has had youth transported to several community activities for no cost. Many of the young people that come to the IAM READY Center for services lack support systems that can assist them with navigating the challenging period of transitioning into adulthood. They are often unemployed, have a lack of transportation, are dealing with current and past abuse (emotional, physical, and sexual), have had insufficient future planning and are sometimes homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. With many of these presenting issues, it is difficult for the young people to remain focused on following through with completing the goals that they have set for themselves.

Additionally, youth aging out of foster care often do not have access to medical care or knowledge of medical coverage and benefits. Additional funding is needed for case workers and matching funds for program participants.

Collaboration with DCS is a continuing improvement. Strategic planning is needed on an ongoing basis. Partnership staff participated in strategic planning with Knoxville DCS on Independent Living Services and Extension of Foster Care Services. The recommendation is DCS IL staff and Youth Villages Life Set staff be provided on site office space within resource centers to offer comprehensive services.

### **Next Steps**

Partnership's I AM READY Center year three program will focus on reaching or exceeding program established outcomes, locate additional funding that will continue to support the current infrastructure of the program as well as add additional ancillary services to enhance the current programming.

### **I.A.M Ready: Strategic Plan**

- Recruit youth from surrounding colleges who can benefit from the programs services. These campuses included but are not limited to Lee University, Cleveland State, Chattanooga State and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.
- Youth will be hired by PFCA staff to serve as youth liaison to ensure effective partnership.
- Identify more strategic community partnerships to enhance current service delivery. Partnerships for leadership and volunteer opportunities, life skills classes and door openers.
- Strengthen current Advisory Committee to include members with innovative ideas that can move the program forward and have a stronger impact for the youth.
- Create a stronger relationship with DCS in order to improve recruitment efforts in Hamilton County and improve mechanisms for disseminating information and message (email, newsletters, Facebook, presentations, PSAs, interviews with media outlets).

**IAM READY 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Report**  
**July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017**

IAM READY REPORT CHATTANOOGA	July, August, Sept	Oct, Nov, Dec	Jan, Feb, March	April, May, June
<b>Opportunity Passport™</b>				
Number of new youth enrolled ( 38)	5	9	13	14
# of Financial Literacy Classes offered (16)	7	18	22	9
# of Asset Specific Classes offered (7)	10	10	12	11
% of youth with favorable post-test outcome- (90%)				
<b>Survey</b>				
(April & October only), % of youth completing an OPPS survey	90 %	90%	90%	69%
<b>Community Partnership Boards</b>				
Number of board meetings (5)		2		1
Number of new door openers created (13)	1	1	7	4
Number of life skills classes held (16)	4	6	11	5
Total number of participants in life skills classes (244)				
Asset Building (38)				
Good Credit (38)				
Money Mgmt. (38)				
Education/Training (32)				
Housing (34)				
Transportation (35)				
Saving/ Investing (29)		32		52
% of youth showing increased proficiency pre to post assessment (95%)				
Number of Leadership Activities	2	2	2	2



## **YVLIFESET OVERVIEW**

Youth Villages' YVLifeSet program (formerly known as Transitional Living) is designed to assist young people 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 people) 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).

Youth 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 youth are capable of accessing community resources such as medical attention, housing, and financial support, if necessary. Specialists will be available to the youth 24-hours a day, seven days a week. They will also make a minimum of one face-to-face contact per week with the youth. The number of sessions can be increased based on the individual needs of each youth.

The focal areas of YVLifeSet include permanency, education, employment, housing (through natural supports), basic independent living skills, and youth 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 9,490 young people in Tennessee (and 12,318 nationwide) build independent and successful lives for themselves. Youth Villages began providing YVLifeSet services in Tennessee over 16 years ago and has been able to effectively replicate the program in numerous locations. Today, YVLifeSet serves nearly 1151 young people daily in Tennessee, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Georgia and Oregon with a success rate of 86 percent.

### **Partnership with DCS**

For more than 16 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 2017)**

- YVLifeSet served about 695 youth daily
- 1,701 youth participated in the program
- 90 percent In school or graduated
- 70 percent Employed or seeking employment
- 96 percent Living with family or independently
- 82 percent No trouble with the law

### *Update on Clinical Trial*

*Youth Villages' YVLifeSet Program is participating 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, leads the study as principal investigator. The study (taking place in Tennessee) includes more than 1,300 youth, making it the largest random assignment evaluation of this type of program for young people in this critical transition phase.*

*The evaluation will examine 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. It is intended to provide important information for policymakers and practitioners who are interested in improving the lives of these vulnerable young people.*

[Impact findings](#) from the evaluation were released earlier this year, 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.

## **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING FOR ADOLESCENTS IN CUSTODY: TOP® LEARNING COLLABORATIVE**

The Department of Children’s Services continues to administer the federal Personal Responsibility Education Program to implement an evidence-based pregnancy prevention model, Wyman’s Teen Outreach Program (TOP®) in selected Level II and III residential treatment centers and in the state’s three youth development centers. One thousand and seventy seven (1,077) adolescents participated in TOP® in these settings during FY 2017.

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 and in which 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 13,876 hours of service to Tennessee communities. Young men at Mountain View Youth Development Center volunteered at a local food pantry. Youth at Florence Crittenton in Knoxville made blankets for homeless individuals and dog toys for a local animal shelter. Young men at Volunteer Academy in Gallatin grew a vegetable garden and donated 80 lbs. of produce to a local food bank. 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 the Tennessee Centers of Excellence for Children in State Custody. In FY 2017, TOP® was implemented at 22 locations across the state. One hundred fifteen (115) staff participated in TOP® training, gaining skills in effective youth engagement and high quality group facilitation.





## 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.

In addition, TDMHSAS partners with key stakeholders and youth and young adults on both state and local levels to convene a State Transition Team (STT). The STT collaboratively prioritizes system improvements to the child and adult mental health systems and other relevant child and adult system partners, including funding mechanisms, administrative structures, regulatory requirements, policy, and an array of services and supports available to youth and young adults with or at risk of serious mental health conditions or co-occurring disorders. Using data from the Local Laboratories to inform priority areas, the STT works in partnership with member organizations and individuals to enhance the coordination of services for youth in transition across departments and agencies and address funding and policy changes needed to realize system improvements. The STT functions as a public-private partnership with reporting

responsibilities to three statutorily mandated councils: the Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC), the Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH) and the TDMHSAS Planning and Policy Council.

Team members from TDMHSAS, Tennessee Voices for Children, Centerstone Research Institute, Carey Counseling Center, Inc., and Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System regularly attend and are active participants at Youth Transitions Advisory Council (YTAC) meetings, now providing updates on progress toward grant goals at each Council meeting.

## **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 FY 2017, Carey provided services for a third year through the OnTrackTN program and has served a total of 32 youth and young adults.

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, that 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. Both programs were trained in the OnTrackNY model and began enrolling individuals into the program in October 2016. The two programs have served a total of 49 individuals.

In addition to the success of the OnTrackTN program itself, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (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 on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017 entitled “First Episode Psychosis: Walking Together on the Road to Recovery.” The conference was attended by approximately 180 statewide and national participants.

Team members from TDMSHAS and Carey Counseling Center, Inc. regularly attend YTAC meetings, now providing updates on progress toward grant goals at each Council meeting.

## **TREATMENT AND RECOVERY FOR YOUTH GRANT**

In 2013, the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS) approached the chair of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council about the Council supporting an application for a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to deliver treatment and recovery support services to adolescents and transitional age youth. The Youth Transitions Advisory Council would collaborate with grantees and provide consultation and state-level support. The grant was awarded in September 2013 in the amount of \$3.8 million over four years through August 31, 2017. Over 400 youth/transitional aged youth have been served through the four years of the grant. The target number to be served over the life of the grant is 400.

The Department contracts with Centerstone Research Institute for data and evaluation and with Centerstone of Tennessee and Pathways, Inc. as the service providers to implement the Treatment and Recovery for Youth (TRY) grant in Maury and Madison counties. The TRY Team has become an integral part of the Youth Transitions Advisory Council. Team members from TDMHSAS, Centerstone and Pathways are always in attendance and are active participants in meetings, providing updates on progress toward grant goals at each Council meeting.

The evidence based model used with the grant is the Adolescent -Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA). The goal of the model is for the youth to find the healthy and positive behaviors more rewarding and "reinforcing" than their unhealthy substance abusing lifestyle. A-CRA helps youth and their parents identify pro-social activities and services in their community to become involved in that provide important alternatives to time spent using substances. In addition, A-CRA teaches skills to improve communication, problem solving and the ability to create positive relationships. A-CRA shows several positive outcomes, including reduction in substance use, legal involvement and co-occurring mental health problems. TDMHSAS has begun the process of developing a multi-year workforce development training plan that will enhance services delivered by adolescent and transitional youth-serving providers across the state. The A-CRA model training was provided to seven agencies in June 2015 serving either youth or transitional age youth and again in July 2016 to an additional five agencies. TDMHSAS hopes to provide another training on the A-CRA model in the future. A conference was held in August 2016 focusing on alternative methods of treatment for substance use disorder.

TRY grant partners have delivered TRY Project and A-CRA informational sessions and trainings to numerous community agencies and programs, including juvenile courts and public schools. To date more than 1,300 professionals and youth advocates have been educated on the TRY Project and A-CRA.

The grant ended August 30, 2017. TDMHSAS was granted a no-cost extension to expend the remainder of the funds.



**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 6, 2016**

**12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time**

**Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee**

**937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208**

**615.742.4151**

**Agenda**

<b>Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of August 4, 2016 Meeting Summaries</b>	<i>Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.</i>
<b>Department of Children's Services, Office of Independent Living Update</b>	<i>Michael Leach, Director, Office of Independent Living, DCS. Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director</i>
<b>Update from Resource Centers</b>	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections Tameka Daniel Greer, Dream Seekers</i>
	<i>Mary Binger, Project Now! Jack Parks, I AM READY</i>
<b>Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program</b>	<i>Heather Tribble, Youth Villages LifeSet</i>
<b>Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service</b>	
<b>Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant</b>	<i>Amy Vosburg, Centerstone Erica Spencer, Pathways.</i>
<b>Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative</b>	<i>Kisha Ledlow, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
<b>Presentation from Legal Aid Society</b>	<i>Sonya Bellafant, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland</i>
<b>2016 YTAC Annual Report due October 31, 2016</b>	<i>Review Accomplishments and Recommendations</i>
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<i>2017 Meeting Dates</i>
<b>Other Business</b>	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>

**WI-FI password**

**Donate 2015**





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

Andrea Jackson Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
502 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800  
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956  
1-800-264-0904

**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

October 6, 2016

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time  
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

**MEETING SUMMARY**

Participants:

Phil Acord  
Dave Aguzzi  
Heather Allen  
Sonya Bellafant  
Mary D. Binger  
Liz Blasbery  
Carrie Brna  
Tameka Daniel Greer  
Shay Grier  
Lorena Dominy

Ginger Harris  
Sumita Keller  
Richard Kennedy  
Michael Leach  
Kisha Ledlow  
Barbara Lonardi  
Pam Madison  
Jessica Mullins  
Jordan Neal  
Crystal Parker  
Jack Parks

Steve Petty  
Latoya Phillips  
John Rust  
Natasha Smith  
Ned Andrew Solomon  
Wendy Spence  
Brian Stephens  
Amy Vosburgh  
Will Voss  
Shauna Webb

**Welcome, Acceptance of August 2016 Meeting Summary & Introductions – Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**

- Kennedy welcomed the group, expressed his appreciation for those attending and recognized Mike Leach and his contributions to YTAC as he has taken another position with DCS. Kennedy asked for introductions.
- Kennedy asked members to review the August Meeting summary. He asked for revisions or edits.

**IT WAS MOVED (SOLOMON) AND SECONDED (PARKS) TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 2016 MEETING SUMMARY WITH REVISIONS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

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

- Aguzzi highlighted DCS’ accomplishments and data for FY2016.
- Steve Petty will send out the PowerPoint to everyone. Aguzzi said this information will be included in the report to the General Assembly.
- Leach gave an update on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting and Normalcy standard signed into law in Tennessee on March 29, 2016. He said states were given until October 1, 2016 to implement the law, including the development of policy, a protocol and training.

- The overall number of youth participating in Extension of Foster Care Services increased for the fifth consecutive year.
- Aguzzi said DCS completed the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) file submissions for federal fiscal year 2016, that included the follow up age 19 surveys.
- Aguzzi shared the contact information for he and Brian Stephens, the new director of the Office of Independent Living.

## Update from Resource Centers

- **Dream Seekers, South Memphis Alliance (SMA) – Tameka Daniel-Greer**
  - Daniel-Greer reported SMA is currently conducting surveys this month.
  - She said SMA received a \$10,000 grant for job readiness from Flextronics.
  - SMA is currently working with a local architect and local partners in Memphis to build housing for youth aging out of foster care. Daniel-Greer hopes to apply for the THDA grant next year.
- **Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pam Madison**
  - Madison provided a brief update about the continuous work with the HiSet program. She said Youth Connections recently held an event to assist youth with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application for college.
  - She reported Youth Connections has been focusing on voter registration and explaining the importance of voting. Madison said many of the youth and young adults they serve do not believe their voice matters. She said they have invited local representatives to come by and speak on why voting matters at an upcoming cookout. Madison shared Youth Connections will provide rides to the polls as well.
  - Madison introduced Lorena Dominy, a young adult who has used the services at Monroe Harding.
  - Dominy said she came from South America and was adopted at age 10. After experiencing trauma, she had behavioral issues and ended up in DCS custody at age 14.
  - Dominy praised her DCS worker for helping to keep her safe. She also praised the Office of Independent Living and said it was the best thing to happen to her.
  - Dominy shared her story and accomplishments because of the collaborative effort of many in the room.
- **Helen Ross McNabb – Project NOW! – Mary Binger**
  - Binger reported on the increased community partnerships. Because most of the matches have been going toward vehicles, it was necessary to form partnerships with reputable car dealerships and a certified board mechanics.
  - Binger said they have partnered with a few churches as well. There has been an increase in community networking and mentors for the young adults. Some of the skills being taught are independent living classes like cooking; taxes; moving out and resume writing are some of the skills taught.

- Binger mentioned that they too are focusing on completing surveys this month.
- **I.A.M. READY Center – Jack Parks**
  - Parks thanked and congratulated Mike Leach. He praised his staff for all of the work they do.
  - The I.A.M. Ready Center celebrated its two-year anniversary on June 25, 2016. They serve young people between the ages of 14-26 who have spent at least one day in foster care after the age of 14. Parks said over \$7,000 has been paid out in assets to the youth over a two-year period.
  - The center is located with the City of Chattanooga’s Youth and Family Development Department, an important collaborator thus allowing them to serve as a one-stop shop. All of the youth can attend any of the educational recreation centers.
  - Parks highlighted many of the local partnerships with local businesses. Unum employees participated in life skills classes, T-Mobile donated school and program supplies along with hosting a door opener and leadership event. Parks noted that one of the T-Mobile executives sits on the board for I.A.M. Ready and was a foster child at one point.
  - Parks mentioned partnering with Erlanger/Soleduex Services to provide janitorial and housekeeping jobs for program participants.
  - I.A.M. Ready received a \$25,000 grant from the Jim Casey Foundation to implement a microenterprise coaching program in their Independent Living Centers for those youth aging out of the foster care system. This is a one-time grant.
  - Parks said the youth created a video to promote the program highlighting the perspectives from the youth and the foster care staff.
  - Parks said they hosted a Reality Check II forum focusing primarily on the existing students enrolled for the current year. There were 28 clients served with guest appearances by NFL Tredayl Sands, Hamilton County Judge Robert Philyaw and Court Director Antonio Petty.
  - On October 12, a second location will open in Cleveland to solve the transportation problem for many youth, DCS workers and foster parents. Parks said CASA was a big help.
  - Parks encouraged DCS to continue to provide the referrals.

### **Announcements**

- On October 12-13, 2016, the 2016 Governor’s Housing Conference will take place. You may register now at [tnghc.com](http://tnghc.com).
- Voss announced the next meeting with the healthy initiative Young Adult Leadership Council is October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Kennedy announced the opportunity to apply for the ACEs Train-the Trainer and explained the criteria and end-goal.

### **Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

- **Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant – Amy Vosburg, Centerstone**

- Vosburg reported Centerstone has begun its final year of the TRY grant. She highlighted some of their accomplishments and said 266 young people have been service with 19 being transitional youth.
- **Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Program – Kisha Ledlow, Project Director, Healthy Transitions and Shauna Webb**
  - Ledlow gave a brief overview of Health Transitions Initiative and the statewide Young Adult Leadership Council. She reported the second meeting was held last month with great interest and engagement from the participants. The Young Adult Leadership Council is a new project for 16-25 year olds who are transitioning into adulthood and who have lived experience with mental illness, substance abuse, foster care, juvenile justice, and/or is at-risk of being homeless. Young adults who have "been there" and who have a passion to help others are needed to drive this movement. They meet monthly in Nashville to collaborate, to brainstorm, and to develop a plan that will serve young adults statewide.
  - Ledlow said the next meeting will be October 15<sup>th</sup> where they will discuss having a bigger impact on state services.
  - Currently, they are working on training for the Peer Support program. Ledlow said staff is in the process of blending new training components with what is already in place.
  - Ledlow reported being in the final stretches of the approval phase for the logo. Once everything is approved, they can launch their website. They do have a Facebook page.
  - Webb shared success stories of a few of the youth and young adults served. She said they recently participated in the Tennessee Valley Pride Parade to support their LGBTQ clients.
  - Ledlow reported there is Safe Zone training in place to assist in working with LGBTQ youth.
  - The Young Leadership Council will present their work from the summer to the American Evaluation Association in Atlanta on October 24-29, 2016.
  - Ledlow reported on the First Episode Psychosis Program and said they are in the process of renewing a contract with OnTrack USA to provide training to launch a statewide learning collaborative. There are now four sites trained.
  - She shared that Carey Counseling served 25 over a year and a half. The goal was 20. They currently have 15 enrolled.

**Presentation from Legal Aid Society – Sonya Bellafont, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands**

- Bellafont shared her background as a member of the ACEs community and is very familiar with the challenges the youth of today face. She is an attorney from Michigan who has practiced for 11 years, almost exclusively with Legal Aid. She has been in Tennessee for a year and is a Harris A. Gilbert Fellow.
- The Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands, Tennessee's largest non-profit law firm, announced in July that it had launched its Gilbert Family Fellowship, a program providing free civil legal services to children and young adults. The fellowship will be the first legal assistance program in the state of Tennessee specifically targeting children and young adults in both urban and rural communities.
- The program is made possible by a \$100,000 donation from Harris A. Gilbert, a longtime supporter of Legal Aid Society and an attorney with Wyatt Tarrant & Combs LLP, with support from his children. The funds will be used over a two- to three-year period to build a program across 48 counties that identifies legal issues children and young adults face and provides free civil legal assistance to them.
- The Gilbert Family Fellowship areas of assistance include:

- Securing necessary and appropriate health services, particularly mental health services, for children and young adults who need them, but do not have them;
  - Identifying eligibility for special education and related services for school-age children;
  - Preventing unfair exclusionary discipline of students that causes loss of important instructional time and opportunities to succeed;
  - Working with juvenile courts to identify youth who are at risk and in need of services; and
  - Advocating for young adults exiting the custody of the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services and/or those who are receiving post-custody services.
- A growing body of research shows that many young adults face significant obstacles as they “age out” of the foster care system. Such challenges, and other adverse childhood experiences often encountered by at-risk youth, can have serious and negative impacts on their adult lives, including homelessness, mental illnesses, incarceration and unemployment, among others.
  - The Gilbert Family Fellows will identify the chronic issues that unjustly plague at-risk youth in schools, in homes and in the community, and will become their legal advocates to overcome obstacles so they can experience a path for success.
  - There are nine Legal Aid Society attorneys named as Gilbert Family Fellows: Paige Barbeauld (Clarksville); Sonya Bellafant (Columbia); Kimi Dement (Nashville); Cherrelle Hooper (Gallatin); Aimee Luna (Murfreesboro); Rachel Moses (Cookeville); Rae Anne Seay (Tullahoma); Emma Sholl (Nashville) and Theresa-Vay Smith (Oak Ridge).
  - Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland advocates for fairness and justice under the law. The non-profit law firm offers free civil legal representation and educational programs to help people in its region receive justice, protect their well-being and support opportunities to overcome poverty. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge and Tullahoma. Legal Aid Society is funded in part by United Way.
  - Bellafant can be reached at [sbellafont@las.org](mailto:sbellafont@las.org).

## **2016 YTAC Annual Report Review Recommendations – Steve Petty**

- Petty explained the report for the General Assembly is due October 31, 2016. He reviewed recommendations, contributions and corrections.

## **Next Meeting**

- Kennedy reported the dates are still being finalized for 2017. There will be a joint meeting with CCMH in June.

## **Other Business**

- Kennedy requested future meeting topics. Some of the topics mentioned include:
  - TennCare services;
  - Juvenile Justice issues;
  - Keeping the community first
  - Employment and housing issues;
  - Youth Challenge Program;
  - Presentation from Misty Neely, Director of Accreditation at DCS;

- Presentation from Youth Court Representative;
- Mental Health and the state homeless plan;
- Data collection; and
- Transition-aged youth from high school to adulthood with IDD.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:03 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 11, 2017**

**12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time**

**Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee**

**937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208**

**615.742.4151**

**Agenda**

<b>Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of October 6, 2016 Meeting Summaries</b>	<i>Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)</i>
<b>Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update</b>	<i>Brian Stephans, Director, Office of Independent Living, DCS Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director</i>
<b>Update from Resource Centers</b>	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections Brian Stephans for Tiffany Turnage, Dream Seekers</i>
	<i>Christy Martin, Project Now! Carmen Hutson, I AM READY</i>
<b>Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program</b>	<i>Heather Tribble, Youth Villages LifeSet</i>
<b>Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service (DMHSAS)</b>	
<b>Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant</b>	<i>April Tanguay, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
<b>Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative</b>	<i>Kisha Ledlow, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
<b>Federal Legislation</b>	<i>Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate, TCCY</i>
<b>Presentation on Adverse Childhood Experiences</b>	<i>John Rust, Field Director, TCCY</i>
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<i>June 22, 2017 in conjunction with CCMH (Midtown Hills Police Precinct) August 10, 2017 October 5, 2017</i>
<b>Other Business</b>	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>





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

Andrea Jackson Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
502 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800  
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956  
1-800-264-0904

**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

May 11, 2017

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time  
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Participants:**

Dave Aguzzi  
Jon Berestecky  
Liz Blasbery  
Chad Coleman  
Leslie Fluhrer  
Ginger Harris  
Timothy Hickman  
Betsy Holmes  
Carmen Hutson  
Sumita Keller

Richard Kennedy  
Barbara Lonardi  
Kisha Ledlow  
Pamela Madison  
Christy Martin  
Sarah Metter  
Steve Petty  
Rosemary Ramsey  
Kathy Robinson  
John Rust  
Natasha Smith

Brian Stephens  
Jacqueline Talley  
April Tanguay  
Jerresha Tinker  
Heather Tribble  
Eric Valinor  
Joseph Valinor  
Shauna Webb  
Caitlin Wright  
Christina Youmans

**Welcome, Acceptance of October 2016 Meeting Summary & Introductions – Richard Kennedy, Associate Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**

- Kennedy welcomed the group, expressed his appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions. No announcements were made.
- Kennedy asked members to review the October 6, 2016 meeting summary. He asked for revisions or edits.

**IT WAS MOVED (COLEMAN) AND SECONDED (MADISON) TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 6, 2016 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Department of Children's Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Brian Stephens, Director and Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services (DCS)**

- Stephens said Brian A. is ending. He introduced Jerresha Tinker who will be the new Youth Engagement Coordinator replacing Ginger Harris. Tinker joins DCS from Knoxville. Ginger Harris is now the Middle Tennessee Program Coordinator.
- Stephens said DCS budget cost increased in Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) to \$2,774,000. There were four additional field service workers hired at \$271,400. The resource center contracts will be renewed for three years (July 2017-June 2020) with no change in the funding amount. He reported the Jim Casey Grant increased from \$30,000 to \$40,000 and was used to enroll an additional 25 youth in Opportunity Passport.
- He said the Youth Villages' YV LifeSet program will be renewed for three years (July 2017-June 2020) with no change in their funding amount.

- Stephens reported the Administrative Office of the Courts Peer Advocate along with the Model Foster Care Review Boards (MFCRBs) will be renewed for five years (July 2017-June 2022) with an increase of 51 percent from \$50,000 to \$75,000 to expand boards in other areas and increase youth compensation rates. DCS and the Administrative Office of the Courts engage in ongoing work to make improvements to the MFCRBs and has a two-year pilot in an effort to improve secondary and post-secondary outcomes for youth 14-21 in Davidson and Maury Counties by restructuring boards with people from professional backgrounds in education, health/mental health, housing and workforce development.
- DCS is working to develop a better process to withdraw youth from schools before enrolling and collect full set of transcripts, including Individualized Education Program (IEP), starting with the first year in secondary education to assess youth's educational progress and identify needs and supports. There will be mentorship and college exploration activities to prepare and plan for post-secondary goals. In addition, there will be some training around college/career planning, motivational interviewing techniques and child development between 14-21 years of age.
- Stephens reported DCS is collaborating with the Department of Education (DOE) by developing a data sharing agreement with DOE's P20/longitudinal system to pull child information into TFACTs. Mary Meador is the Director on lead.
- Employment and Community First Choices is an integrated, home and community-based services program, aligning incentives toward promoting and supporting integrated, competitive employment and independent living as the first and preferred option for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) youth. The program went live on January 1<sup>st</sup> and they are working through issues. Stephens said they are working on engaging the regional staff early in transition planning to address issues of conservatorship, when needed, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Administration (SSA) applications and other needs.
- Tennessee receives from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services an allocation for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) to cover the costs of attendance at post-secondary institutions, including room and board costs, for youth who age out of foster care. Stephens reported an ETV letter goes out monthly to these youth and the foster families within 90 days or less of their 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays. There is a mass mailing at age 16.
- As for the immigration issue, Stephens said there have been consistent issues over the last five months with youth aging out without legal status. The process started too late and in many cases, the youth had been in care for multiple years with limited understanding from regional staff on how the process worked. They are now trying to engage these youth earlier.
- Stephens said those numbers can be tracked through a mega report. There are 41 kids with undocumented status within the system. He wants to get ahead of it. Stephens shared there are pro bono attorneys working with them as well. DCS is working on getting final approvals for periodic case review to connect with regions on undocumented youth 14 years old and older.
- Stephens said DCS is working with Mainspring Consulting and Casey Family Programs for the Extension of Foster Care Expansion Project. It will expand to two categories: employed for no less than 80 hours a month and participating in a program/activity that promotes employment and addresses barriers to employment.
- In an effort to measure the impact fiscally and programmatically, they will use focus groups, surveys and data collection. This will be a big deal meeting week of August 7<sup>th</sup>. The intent is to remove barriers for those youth who remain in foster care and want to work. Aguzzi said it takes policy to enact changes and you must take into account the affect these policies may have on other programs. All programs have to be compatible.
- Between now and August, there will be a lot of data gathering, focus groups and analysis. Aguzzi said the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System (TFACTS) would have to be enhanced as well. Realistically, it will be before the new administration. Stephens said it sounds easier than it is to implement.

- Aguzzi reported that from July 1-April 30, there were 677 total Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) compared to 689 on March 31, 2016, 670 total young adults served compared to 677 in 2016 and 344 total active in EFCS compared to 347 in 2016. Aguzzi said it was down from last and believes he can attribute the discrepancies to pulling the data from TFACTS as opposed to manually calculating it as in 2016.
- Aguzzi reported the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) surveys must be submitted by Monday, May 15 and is a federal requirement. He said this will be the first submission with the new survey data. Aguzzi hopes the updated survey will provide better data. He anticipates sending a file with 193 surveys this time. Another file will be submitted with data from now through the end of September.
- Aguzzi said DCS improved on the RedCap surveys and mini-surveys. They are pulling data from current person's record now. They also fixed some educational values (post-secondary, pull only from education records).
- Aguzzi talked briefly about the credit check law. He said they finally completed the automated process to generate MeridianLink. They came up with a great solution to send data to all three credit reporting agencies. Aguzzi said currently they are only sending it to two credit reporting agencies. Since March, there have been 609 credit checks with only two hits to date. He said once they find there is a problem, they take steps to correct it before the youth ages out.
- Stephens highlighted Chambliss Center for Children and asked Liz Blasbery to share how Chambliss is developing housing for youth transitioning out of foster care. Blasbery reported Chambliss currently has one completed and working on four more in Chattanooga. She said these are high quality apartments with granite countertops and hardwood floors. Blasbery said the mindset behind it is these kids deserve something nice. These apartment are for anyone who qualifies for the Extension of Foster Care services. There is an interview process they will have to go through.
- Blasbery said nearly a quarter of children aging out of state care become homeless. Unless the foster home is willing to keep these youth after they turn 18, they are no longer eligible to be in the system. For some, this could be before high school ends. As long as they are continuing their education and working at least part time, the Chambliss Center has somewhere for them to live.

## Update from Resource Centers

- **Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pamela Madison**
  - Madison provided a brief update about the continuous work with the HiSet program. She said Youth Connections recently held an event to assist youth with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application for college.
  - She reported last year they served just over 200 youth. Opportunity Passport is the largest program and most successful since money is tied to this program. Madison said the match money is up to \$3,000. The program has been going on for four years now. Up until two months ago, only one person qualified for the match. Recently, there have been three youth to qualify. All three are either in school and working. They each have cars and no longer have to depend on public transportation.
  - These young people are saving and placing \$2,000 into a Roth IRA each year. Madison said Youth Connections has partnered with US Bank to also serve youth outside of Nashville.
  - Madison reported about 50 females have participated in the Share Her Experience (SHE) program since June 2016. Since the SHE program is limited to four and a half hours and the girls wanted to continue the conversation, they started a sisterhood group. The sisterhood group allows for questions and a real conversation to occur. It also shows them how to make positive choices.
  - Madison said there was a HiSet graduation in December where they had 13 graduates. Eight of them went on to post-secondary programs. The next graduation is June 8<sup>th</sup>. An invite will be sent soon.

- Madison reported 49 youth completed their career assessments and will now be able to speak with a career coach. They have 14 interns currently.
- **Dream Seekers – Brian Stephens**
  - Stephens reported they have 116 youth enrolled. He said 75 youth were able to participate in Opportunity Passport with a 91 percent completion rate. There have been some matches made.
  - He said 11 youth are scheduled to graduate. Eight of those will attend Community College in Memphis while three will attend the University of Tennessee.
  - There was a Foster Care appreciation banquet where the youth received a \$40 gift card.
  - There will be a Community and Recruitment Fair on May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- **Project NOW! – Christy Martin**
  - Martin is new to the program and thanked Pam Madison for her assistance. She reported they have 30 active participants and has recently updated the filing system.
  - She said they have a new training room they are proud of where they can start conducting trainings.
  - There is a waiting list of 36 referrals through the end of the year. Martin said there were four door openers in the last month.
  - She said Sisters Saving Sisters is struggling to get participants. They have trained 18 since February. Training is scheduled for May 31<sup>st</sup> and in June.
- **I.A.M. READY Center – Carmen Hutson**
  - Hutson replaced Jack Parks. She reported they have expanded by adding another office in Bradley County. The position is full-time.
  - The program received a grant from microenterprises to assist youth to start their own business. Some youth interested in arts and they partnered with the Heart Gallery and had their art work displayed. One young man has already earned \$100 for some of his pieces. Another youth is interested in Photography.
  - Hutson visited University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) and talked to other students to get them to think about post-secondary education. She said they want to give the youth opportunities outside of what they are used to.
  - They have also partnered with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) career center. Some of the youth have been volunteering. Hutson said the goal is to find out what the kids are interested in and see if they can get paid for what they love to do.
  - I.A.M. READY has also partnered with the Homeless Coalition and Homeless Help to identify youth who became homeless after transitioning out of foster care.

### **Youth Villages (YV) LifeSet Program Update – Heather Tribble**

- Tribble reported there were 687 youth served in Tennessee and 385 youth served with private dollars while the remainder with DCS dollars. She said 90 percent of youth are in school or have graduated and 60 percent are employed or seeking employment.
- Tribble said the YV Scholars program has 57 scholars. Five of those scholars will graduate this month. One will continue on to get her Master's degree in Social Work. They have 27 applications for scholars. It is a rigorous interview process with a panel.

- Tribble said 29 scholars are going to Orlando for a trip in June. They will go to Red Lobster Headquarters and Disney World. In August, they will have an orientation at the CEO's house.
- Tribble discussed the mentorship component and the peer-to-peer events. They have visited the Zoo in the East. The Credit Union came for one event. Nurse Family Partnership and Law Enforcement came for an event in Memphis. In Nashville, they have had events with Legal Aid and conducted a money management workshop as well as a Mock Trial.
- There is an annual trip to Bridgestone and Dell to see the behind-the-scenes action.
- Tribble said YV always feed them.

## **Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

- **Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant – April Tanguay, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)**
  - Tanguay gave a brief overview of the four-year grant for the new people. The grant is in its fourth year and is ending soon. They have met all of their goals. One goal is getting more agencies on board with the new approach.
  - Tanguay reported they have been actively training agencies, but stressed it is a long certification process and takes about a year to complete. She said only five have completed the process. There is one final training this July. She is reaching out to four recovery courts dealing with adolescents and transitional-age youth serving agencies. Chestnut Health Institute does the training.
  - Tanguay said they have enrolled over 380 adolescents and youth, a little above the target rate 74.7 percent reported no alcohol use and over 80 percent reported no marijuana use at six-month follow up. 33.4 percent school, 66.6 percent employment
  - Christina Youmans from Pathways in Jackson came to talk about the goal to reunite the youth with the community. They are planning an event called Health Rocks, but more substance abuse specific. They serve the 12-24 age group.
- **Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Program – Kisha Ledlow, Project Director, Healthy Transitions and Shauna Webb**
  - Ledlow gave a brief overview of Health Transitions Initiative. She reported that both sites are now fully staffed. This is a five-year grant. The four targeted populations are the homeless, those involved in Juvenile Justice, those in the child welfare system and LBGQTQ.
  - She provided updates on the state level. The statewide young adult leadership council will have certification and training for adults. They discovered there are only so many trained under the age of 30. Because it is important to have peer services, the Department will develop a training specifically for young adults.
  - Ledlow said there is a video appearing on kidcentraltn.org about talking about youth mental health. (<https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/it-s-ok-to-talk-about-youth-mental-health-video-feature>). She will also have Petty send the link.
  - Both Governor Haslam and Mayor Barry made proclamations since the first week of May commemorates National Children's Mental Health Awareness Week.
  - Ledlow indicated they are in the process of strategically planning for last two years of the grant. They are working on training for the Peer Support program.
  - Ledlow reported there were 190 referrals, 110 screenings, 56 enrollments and 30 discharges to date.

- Chad Coleman from Carey Counseling reported they serve seven counties across Northwest Tennessee. He said in honor of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week, Paris, Tennessee lit up the Eiffel Tower.
- Ledlow shared the “MyStrength” app, a mobile self-help resources to enhance and transform traditional behavioral healthcare. Healthcare payers and providers integrate MyStrength to extend access to evidence-based resources to help consumers better manage depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders while improving overall well-being.
- Ledlow said they can communicate through text messages the policy changes at the community, agency and state level. They have a pilot program for text messaging to remind about appointments and engage the youth.
- Shauna Webb from Hamilton County urban lab reported they conducted public awareness pieces for National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). She said they had a “Chat about” with a moderator and young adult leadership council. Webb reported they housed seven homeless individuals by providing them with homeless vouchers.
- Ledlow reported on First Episode Psychosis Initiative and gave a brief overview. She said the quicker a young person gets effective services the better they have to recover. Carey Counseling started in 2014 and covered seven counties. They have enrolled 30 in rural Northwest Tennessee to date since starting. There are 24 enrolled this year. She said 96 percent avoided psychiatric hospitalization because of the services provided.
- They were awarded two additional sites Alliance Healthcare served 19 in Shelby County and Mental Health Cooperative served 21 in Davidson County.
- They are engaging three local sites as well as Helen Ross McNabb. Helen Ross McNabb does not receive funding, but were able to receive some funding to start a First Episode Psychosis program.
- In the Fall, the second First Episode Psychosis Conference will take place.
- Ledlow said most referrals come internally because they all have crisis teams.

### **Federal Legislation – Steve Petty**

- Petty highlighted several federal bills in Congress specifically pertaining to foster care youth.

### **Presentation on Adverse Childhood Experiences – Richard Kennedy, Associate Director and John Rust, Director of Field Operations, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth**

- Kennedy gave a brief overview of the history of the Tennessee’s ACEs Initiative and the Training for Trainers. To date, TCCY completed 13 and two additional training in May and June. There have been approximately 410 trained. He explained TCCY was very purposeful in selecting the appropriate diversity to complete the training in an effort to reach all people.
- Rust went through the two-day training in 45 minutes. He showed how we can have successful parenting of the next generation with educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship and lifelong health.
- He shared the four core concepts of development as being the brain architecture, “serve and return”, toxic stress, and resilience.
- He played a few videos.

### **Next Meetings**

- There will be a joint meeting with the Council on Children’s Mental Health on June 22<sup>nd</sup> at Midtown Hills Police Precinct. We also meet August 10<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup> at Goodwill Industries.



**Other Business**

- Kennedy requested future meeting topics be sent to Petty by email.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:34 p.m.





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

June 22, 2017  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Midtown Hills Police Precinct  
1443 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Nashville, TN 37203

**Agenda**

Welcome and Introductions

- Linda O'Neal Executive Director, and Marie Williams, TDMHSAS Commissioner

Why Focus on Youth and Young Adults?

- Kisha Ledlow, Project Director Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, TDMHSAS

The Importance of Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Their Care

- Shauna Webb, Volunteer Behavioral Health

Young Adult Leadership Council

- Will Voss, Healthy Transitions Program Manager & Statewide Youth Coordinator, Tennessee Voices for Children

Systems of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT)

- Keri Virgo, Project Director, SOCAT Initiative, TDMHSAS
- Kisha Ledlow, Project Director Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, TDMHSAS

Lunch

Independent Living

- Brian Stephens, Director of Independent Living, Department of Children's Services

Resource Centers

- Youth Connections – Monroe Harding – Pamela Madison
- Project Now – Helen Ross McNabb - Christy Martin
- Dream Seekers – South Memphis Alliance – Tiffany Turnage
- I Am Ready – Partnership for Children, Families and Adults – Carmen Hutson

YV LifeSet

- Heather Brown, YV LifeSet State Coordinator, Tennessee, Youth Villages
- Brittany Farrar – Youth Villages
- Jenn Cougill – Youth Villages

TDMHSAS Initiatives

- Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis – Kisha Ledlow, TDMHSAS
- TRY Grant – April Tanguay, Project Director, TDMHSAS

Closing

2017 CCMH Meeting Dates:  
August 24, 2017 – Midtown Hills Police Precinct  
October 19, 2017 – Midtown Hills Police Precinct

2017 YTAC Meeting Dates:  
August 10, 2017 – Goodwill Industries  
October 5, 2017 – 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**

Andrew Jackson Building, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
502 Deaderick Street  
Nashville, TN 37243-0800  
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956  
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Youth Transitions Advisory Council & Council on Children's Mental Health

June 22, 2017

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Midtown Hills Police Precinct

1443 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendees:**

Elizabeth Ball	Magdalynn Head	Sarah Metter	Christy Sigler
Julia Barlar	Aimee Hegemier	Grace Monk	Pragati Singh
Justine Bass	Kurt Hippel	Briana Moore	Julie Smith
Kathy Benedetto	Joel Hodges	Jerri Moore	Natasha Smith
Jon Berestecky	Elizabeth Holmes	Teresa Moore	Sara Smith
Heather Brown	Jeremy Humphrey	Jessica Mullins	Wendy Spence
Kimberly Chisolm	Miracle Hurley	Jill Murphy	Clinton Sprinkle
Chad Coleman	Joan Jenkins	Yolanda Neal	Brian Stephens
Susan Cope	Cheryl Johnson	Zack Nitzschke	Jeana Stevenson
Renee Darks	Jacqueline Johnson	Amy Olson	Roger Stewart
Brenda Donaldson	Sumita Keller	Linda O'Neal	Justin Sweatman
Kathleen Dunn	Richard Kennedy	Crystal Parker	Jerresha Tinker
Kendall Elsass	Sarah Kirschbaum	Julia Pearce	Shannon Tolliver
Stephanie Etheridge	Toni Lawal	Steve Petty	Eric Valinor
Laritha Fentress	Kisha Ledlow	Taylor Phipps	Joseph Valinor
Randi Finger	Stephanie Livesay	Hailey Pruett	Keri Virgo
Jane Fleishman	Barbara Lonardi	Lisa Ragan	Amy Vosburgh
Lori Flippo	Robert Love	Elizabeth Reeve	Will Voss
Leslie Fluhrer	Pam Madison	Nakeisha Ricks	Don Walker
Deborah Gatlin	Christy Martin	Kathy Robinson	Shauna Webb
Katie Goforth	Laura Martin	Delora Ruffin	Zanira Whitfield
Criss Griffin	Alice May	Ronnie Russell	Marie Williams
Emalee Hanley	Melissa McGee	John Rust	Matt Yancey
Rikki Harris	Michelle McGruder	Toni Shaw	Kinika Young
Tanisha Haynes	Elizabeth McNerney	Raquel Shutze	

## **I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements -- Linda O'Neal, TCCY Executive Director and Marie Williams, Commissioner, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

- O'Neal called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.. She welcomed everyone and praised Melissa McGee for her work with CCMH and Steve Petty for his work with YTAC and gave a brief background on each Council.
- O'Neal reported CCMH began the sunset process for 2018 through joint representation from TCCY and TDMHSAS in testifying for the Education, Health and General Welfare subcommittee of the Joint Government Operations committee of the Tennessee General Assembly on Thursday, June 15, 2017. We are excited to report that Representative John Ragan motioned to recommend continuing CCMH for four years to 2022. The Council will continue the sunset process in the spring of 2018 when the General Assembly reconvenes. She thanked Richard Kennedy, Steve Petty, Sejal West, and Matt Yancey who attended the meetings and hearing.
- Williams also made opening remarks, thanked and recognized key staff members. She reminded the audience of their voice and ability to make a difference.
- O'Neal thanked everyone for making attendance a priority and asked for introductions. She addressed a few housekeeping matters before moving through the agenda. She 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. O'Neal thanked SGT. Jones and the staff at the Midtown Hills Police Precinct. O'Neal also asked attendees to complete to Conflict of Interest form if they have not already done so.
- O'Neal shared information about the upcoming System of Care Conference. The conference will be held on Monday and Tuesday, July 17th and 18th, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Murfreesboro. If anyone is interested in volunteering, please touch base with Keri Virgo or Melissa McGee. Registration details will be coming soon.

## **II. Approval of Meeting Summaries**

- O'Neal thanked Natasha Smith of TCCY for preparing the meeting summaries for both CCMH and YTAC meetings.
- Motion to accept the April 27, 2017 meeting summary for CCMH (**GOFORTH, MOTION, HARRIS, SECONDED, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**)
- Motion to accept the May 11, 2017 meeting summary for YTAC (**PARKER, MOTION, WEBB, SECONDED, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**)

## **III. Why Target on Youth and Young Adults? – Kisha Ledlow, Project Director of Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, TDMHSAS**

- Ledlow gave an overview of the program. She explained a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) study reported 75 percent of serious mental health conditions develop by age 24. There are one in five youth who had mental illness and 67 percent did not receive treatment. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for this population.

- Ledlow shared reasons why youth and young adults are not transitioning into the adult system. While many of us realize that young people do not become an adult overnight after their 18th birthday, our systems are set up in ways that treat them as such. One way in which youth/young adults can fall through cracks is the difference in eligibility requirements in the child versus adult systems. A second way in which this can happen, the youth/young adult may not know how to apply for adult services and if they figure that out, the process becomes so confusing and frustrating that they give up. Lastly, if the youth/young adult does seek out services, is successful in locating services they need, the services are targeted to older adults and are not developmentally appropriate, engaging, or relevant. There is a need for provision of continuity of care across many systems that offer relevant services and supports.
- Ledlow reported the outcomes for the youth and young adults they work with include delayed high school graduation and being less likely to have a high school diploma or GED, being less likely to be employed or maintain stable employment, having no stable housing, and more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system. More than 16 percent of those with serious mental illness lack jobs. Even when they do find employment, young adults with serious mental illness can find it hard to keep their jobs. They are much more likely than peers without mental illness to have had more than three employers in the past year.
- Young people with mental illness also find it hard to maintain stable housing, making it hard to keep a job or receive consistent mental health services. More than 15 percent of young adults with serious mental illness moved three or more times in the past year, compared to 6.7 percent of young adults without mental illness.
- Young adults with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder were three times as likely to have been on probation or parole in the past year as young adults without either (11.8 percent compared to 3.5 percent).
- All individuals deserve the chance to lead a productive life in which they thrive. Young adults are at a point in their life where the possibilities can be seemingly endless. This should not change just because they struggle with a mental health condition. Ledlow suggested we set up young adults for success on the front end to potentially avoid intensive treatment on the back end.
- Ledlow shared information about what can be done, for example - having oriented and holistic recovery programs where they focus on more than mental health and assisting in the self-discovery process to empower the youth through informed decision-making. Programs focused on this population are there to help them through the negative consequences of potentially difficult decisions.

#### **IV. The Importance of Engaging Youth and Young Adults in Your Care – Shauna Webb, Volunteer Behavioral Health**

- Webb started out with a poll exercise where she asked the audience to text an accomplishment they experienced at 23 years of age. In explaining this exercise, she explained the importance of using icebreakers with those youth and young adults.
- Webb detailed an ideal process starting with the initial appointment. Her agency utilizes a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) to engage the young person. There is a phone call and meeting out in the field or in the office. Text messages are also used to remind the youth about the meeting. She said all of this is strictly to build rapport.

- Webb reported the CPRS for Young Adults job is to create a culture of positive talk in staffing for more creative solutions to problems. The CPRS sits in on staffing and provides supportive input. She attends support groups with young people and creates data-driven support groups for young adults. CPRS uses reflective listening skills.
- Webb talked about the Youth Participatory Action Research Project from Summer 2016. She also shared other examples of tools used to engage the youth and young adults.

**V. Young Adult Leadership Council – Will Voss, Healthy Transitions Program Manager & Statewide Youth Coordinator, Tennessee Voices for Children**

- Voss explained the structure of the Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC). He said the YALC locations are Northwest (Carroll, Gibson, Weakley, Obion, Lake, Henry and Benton counties), Chattanooga (Hamilton County) and Statewide (East, Middle and West).
- The mission is to strive to empower youth and young adults by connecting them to and improving accessibility to local resources and cultivation leadership qualities in individuals transitioning into adulthood. The vision is establish an inclusive and engaging network for people transitioning to adulthood, while connecting youth and young adults to resources and improving accessibility.
- Voss said the goals of YALC are to engage youth and young adults in prosocial activities, increase awareness about the Healthy Transitions Initiative, educate community members and providers on the importance of youth/young adult engagement and enhanced services and supports, empower youth and young adults to make positive changes in state and local-level policies and provide youth and young adults an opportunity to connect with others with shared experiences and passions
- Voss believes these set goals can be achieved through a strategic sharing workbook, engagement on healthy transitions' local and state transition teams, with public awareness and social marketing campaigns, community event planning and engagement in research and evaluation.
- The Hamilton County YALC had a Youth Participatory Action Research Project (YPAR), a youth driven special project and Young Adult Leadership Council Members presented at the American Evaluation Association Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Coming up on the horizon is to develop a strategic sharing workbook and a social marketing campaign. Their hashtag is #CHATTABOUTMENTALHEALTH.
- There was a Panel discussion conducted through collaboration from the Hamilton County Healthy Transitions Staff and the Hamilton County Young Adult Leadership Council and led by Nori Nori with the Chattanooga Youth and Family Engagement and Power 94.3.
- In Northwest Tennessee, they have created Life Education and Discussion (L.E.A.D.) to help with the barriers to participation due to rural area and transportation. Coming up on the horizon is the continued social marketing to assist with updating billboards and public awareness of Healthy Transitions and unique needs of youth and young adults.
- Voss highlighted events from the Children Mental Health Awareness week. Carey Counseling got a proclamation signed by Lake County Mayor Denny Johnson and Tiptonville Mayor Reid Yates. Paris lit up the Eiffel Tower.
- In addition to activities for Children's Mental Health Awareness Week Event, the Statewide YALC received feedback on sections of current CPRS Manual, had a Community Mental Health Resource Fair



and Block Party, Humans in Real Life Campaign, and developed a PSA through iOS Studios, in partnership with Tennessee Voices for Children, Tennessee Department of Mental Health Substance Abuse Services, KidCentral TN, and the Tennessee Department of Education.

- The video <https://vimeo.com/219565748> was highlighted in Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) e-blast last month as their feature story around the work being done here in TN.
- Coming up on the horizon is the continued social marketing campaign, trainings and the planning of a Leadership Summit.
- Voss said they were able to get bridges around Tennessee lit up for Children Mental Health Awareness week as well.
- Voss reported there was a Young Adult Leadership Track site visit where they identified individual strengths and how to apply them, explored how personal values, culture, and experiences shape our approach to leadership, gave recognition on how to grow leadership skills and discovered collective leadership.
- Joseph Valinor, a member of the Hamilton County Young Adult Leadership Council shared goals they plan to achieve by the year of 2020. They want to increase membership to include at least 20-40 members on each council, solicit support from youth and young adults serving organizations, increase awareness of Healthy Transitions and other topics of interest, and develop Youth M.O.V.E. Chapters.
- Valinor shared why he joined the council and said he wanted to improve emotional intelligence and cultural competence.
- Voss said there is information about how to join the council in the packets.
- Lisa Ragan, Consumer Affairs and Peer Recovery Services Director briefly shared her experience with mental health issues and talked about how to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist. A Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) is a person who has experienced mental illness, substance use disorder or co-occurring disorder, who has made the journey from illness to wellness, and who now wishes to help others with their journey. Certified Peer Recovery Specialists can draw from their own journey of recovery to inspire hope and provide support to others who are facing similar situations. When two peers work on recovery together, they can progress further than if they go it alone.
- Ragan reported they have trained more than 700 people since 2013. Tennessee has about 312 currently certified. The 40-hour training includes role-plays, feedback, group work, self-examination, tests, and six hours devoted to ethics. Topics covered include communication, problem solving, values, motivation, and wellness, among others. The training is provided free to all accepted applicants; however, you will be responsible for your own transportation, lodging, meals, beverages, and snacks. She said they have started to work with churches as well.
- Ragan said they are looking into a unique program specifically for youth and young adults because the 40-hour one-week training may be a problem for young adults because it starts at 8 a.m. New training will be necessary for supervisors who will manage these young adults.

**VI. System of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) – Keri Virgo, Project Director for SOCAT Initiative and Kisha Ledlow, Project Director for Tennessee Healthy Transitions Initiative, TDMHSAS**

- O’Neal congratulated Virgo who was recently appointed as the SOCAT Project Director. She said we are excited about her new role and welcomed her to lead a working session/conversation about the SOCAT Initiative.
- Virgo discussed reengaging CCMH workgroups to support the work of the SOCAT initiative. She described the criteria for the two workgroups - one is strategic financing workgroup for those who are interested in developing and implementing a strategic financing plan with broad-based support from child-serving departments, providers, and managed care organizations. The other social marketing workgroup is for those interested in developing and implementing a culturally and linguistically competent social marketing and communication strategic plan. Sign up for one of the groups.
- Upcoming groups include Family Development Workforce and CCMH Report Workgroup.

## **VII. YV LifeSet -- Heather Brown, YV LifeSet State Coordinator for Tennessee,**

- Brown provided a brief description of her role and an overview of the program. She shared national statistics on youth who aged out of state custody and quick facts about the program. Almost half of the states have adopted extension of foster care. According to the National Statistics on Youth Who Aged Out of State Custody when looking at their outcomes at age 26, seven percent have completed a two-year or four-year degree, 31 percent had been homeless or couch surfing, 46 percent were employed and 59 percent had been arrested at least once.
- Brown shared a quote from Philanthropist Clarence Day who was a longtime Youth Villages supporter, donating more than \$14 million to the organization before his death in 2009, and briefly talked about the history and evolution of YVLifeSet. Since 1999, nearly 10,000 youth have been served with 1,100 youth in the YVLifeSet program served daily. The current locations are Georgia, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon and Tennessee.
- Brown reviewed the key components of YVLifeSet and detailed the process from the initial assessment to the evidence-based programs and interventions (EBPs).
- EBPs and best practice interventions currently used in YVLifeSet treatment design and available to all young adults in the program, as clinically needed are Motivational Interviewing (MI), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood (PAYA). Additional EBPs in the treatment manual that may vary by geography or provider are Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS), Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA) and Community Advocacy Project (CAP) – domestic violence.
- Brown said they conduct their own outcome evaluation research through a call center. She said the research specifically looks at success one-year post-discharge. She noted 88 percent of participants live at home with family or independently, 84 percent are in school, graduated or employed and 81 percent had no involvement with the law.
- Randomized evaluation with a sample size of more than 1,300 showed an 84 percent response rate. Out of those surveyed 60 percent received YV LifeSet services. The implementation study results as it relates to health and safety revealed 13 percent had a decrease in mental health, 30 percent decrease in violent relationships, 17 percent increase in employment, seven percent increase in earnings, 22 percent decrease in homelessness and 13 percent decrease in hardship or lack of food. YVLifeSet is the only program to show impact in multiple domains (increased earnings, job attainment, housing stability without directly

providing housing, mental health and reduced partner violence) across a very diverse population (different races, urban, rural, child welfare and probation).

- Brown shared Heather Tribble’s contact information for more information. Her phone number is 615-250-7224 or email her at [Heather.Tribble@youthvillages.org](mailto:Heather.Tribble@youthvillages.org).
- Brown reported the high school graduation rate improved. She said they have 85 participants in middle Tennessee getting ready to go to college and 30 in east Tennessee. Brown also highlighted the YV Scholars program. She said funding comes from the Clarence Day Foundation and Department of Children’s Services. The marketing department also has fundraisers.

#### **VIII. Independent Living – Brian Stephen, Director of Independent Living and Jerresha Tinker, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Department of Children’s Services**

- Stephens provided a background of their services. He shared a snapshot of data for custodial youth age 14-17. He reported on the Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) Aged Out & Acceptance rate for FY16 and said there were 966 aged out total, 815 aged out eligible and 388 who accepted EFCS. He went on to report 741 have been served to date with 354 currently open spots. Stephens said there is a 49 percent acceptance rate and noted some young people aging out are walking away from the services. The EFCS retention days is 259 with 510 from secondary, 206 from post-secondary and four disabled.
- Stephens answered a question about kids in juvenile detention and reported the juvenile justice population is eligible as long as they are in a IV-E eligible placement when they turn 18.
- Stephens reported how they track where the scholarship money is being spent. He showed how 47 percent went to a community college, 21 percent to Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT)/Vocational schools and 32 percent to a four-year University.
- Stephens shared the FY16 exit data revealing 207 young people exited the program for academic reasons, 116 for self, 45 they are unable to locate, 29 turned 21, 15 for completion of educational pursuit, 10 because they are a risk to self or others and one young person was deceased.
- Stephens said they are in the process of revisiting the eligibility requirements and are working with the Jim Casey Foundation to expand the criteria. This will be a voluntary program for youth who turn 18 in foster care (not placed at a secure facility) and are:
  - completing a high school or equivalent program;
  - enrolled in college, community college or a vocational education program;
  - unable to work or participate in a secondary or post-secondary program because of a medical condition;
  - employed no less than 80 hours a month; or
  - participating in a program designed to remove barriers to employment.
- Stephens talked briefly about the automatic credit checks and said they are conducting 285 a month.
- Tinker provided a brief report on the Montvale Leadership Academy. She said there were 47 youth who attended. The vision board portion was her favorite activity because it taught the youth how to identify goals.

#### **IX. DCS Resource Centers**

##### **➤ Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pamela Madison**

- Madison gave an overview of the resource center located in downtown Nashville. 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 and has been around for about 11 years.
- They recently celebrated 19 young people who graduated from a traditional school, HiSet program or Nashville State Community College. Madison said they were able to give away 9 scholarships from \$500 to \$2,000. Through the post-secondary education assistance program, devoted staff assist the students in completing applications and getting ready for school.
- Madison reported 75 youth currently active in the Opportunity Passport program and said the program can match up to \$3,000 over the lifetime of the program. Served almost 700 youth through this program. Transportation is the most matched category. Had three young people receive the full \$3,000 match for transportation. Discourage car notes. If they do approve a car note, the youth must set up a budget to make sure they can afford it on paper.
- Madison talked about the Sexual Health Education (SHE) program and the monthly sisterhood group extended beyond SHE where the girls mainly talk about boys. Madison said staff takes the girls for manicures and allow them to do yoga or go to the mall like other young girls their age.
- Madison reported they are working on securing funding for a male program. Right now, there are positive male role models who have volunteered to come in and have conversations with the young men.
- Madison highlighted the community partnerships providing soft skills training and providing meaningful life skills to the youth and young adults. They also have an independent living residential facility where staff makes surprised visits to ensure the rules are being followed.
- Madison shared they have a young lady who will be going to Baltimore, Maryland to participate in the Jim Casey Youth Leaders Institute.
- She reported about taking the youth to a ranch in Williamson County where they experienced the outdoors.

➤ **Project NOW! Helen Ross McNabb – Christy Martin**

- Martin spoke about Project NOW (Navigating Opportunities that Work) and gave a brief overview. The program uses the evidence-based Jim Casey model to help foster care youth ages 14-24 to develop financial skills. She reported there are 35 participants in the financial literacy class. Martin added the courses include teaching the youth about debt reduction, car buying and budgeting and shared the matching program can continue for up to three years after the financial literacy course.
- Martin reported the services offered extend to those in foster care for only a day. Other services offered are Sisters Saving Sisters (SSS), advisement on how to prepare for a self-sufficient adulthood and assistance in seeking a job or higher education. In the last two months, they trained 47 youth in SSS.
- Martin said military recruiters came to the center to talk to the youth. Pellissippi State representatives came as well. She invited Knox County Police Department to come and talk about safe driving.

➤ **I.A.M. Ready, Partnership for Children, Families and Adults – Robert Love**

- Love talked about the extended resources within your community and all of the people who contributed to your success. He asked people to imagine if they lacked those resources. He said the I.A.M. Ready center provides those resources.
- They talked about financial literacy programs, asset building, having good credit, and money management. Once you complete your follow up survey you receive \$40. You receive \$100 for just completing the class. They also help with educational training, housing, transportation, investment. They set youth up for success.
- Newer program teaching entrepreneurship. They work with local companies to hire the youth. Kids get excited about employment.
- Love talked about the most recent location in Cleveland/Bradley County. He said the Department of Children Services has done a lot to help build the program.
- Summer camp is coming up July 13<sup>th</sup>-August 3<sup>rd</sup>. There will also be a scavenger hunt throughout Chattanooga. Love said the youth are excited

**X. Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS Initiatives)**

➤ **Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Program – Kisha Ledlow, Project Director, Healthy Transitions, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)**

- Ledlow gave a brief overview of Health Transitions Initiative. It is currently funded through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). She reported that both sites are now fully staffed. This is a five-year grant. The four targeted populations are the homeless, those involved in Juvenile Justice, those in the child welfare system and LBGTQ.
- She provided updates on the state level. The statewide young adult leadership council will have certification and training for adults. They discovered there are only so many trained under the age of 30. Because it is important to have peer services, the Department will develop training specifically for young adults.
- Ledlow said they participated in an evaluation with their Georgia counterpart to learn from each other. They also developed a shared purpose agreement with the state transition team and are forming various workgroups. She said they are currently looking for volunteers.
- Ledlow indicated they are in the process of strategically planning for the last two years of the grant. They are working on training for the Peer Support program.
- At the local level, they are utilizing the team-based approach. They started providing services in January and February of last year. Carey Counseling, Inc. implemented appointment texting to clients, Memorandum of Understandings with courts and had two billboards in Paris and Camden. Volunteer Behavioral Health is looking to hire a part-time youth coordinator.
- Ledlow reported on First Episode Psychosis Initiative (FEPI). She said Congress increased their funding to allow for two additional sites Alliance Healthcare in Shelby County and Mental Health Cooperative in Davidson County. Through March 31<sup>st</sup>, 17 young people enrolled through Alliance Healthcare, 21 enrolled through the Mental Health Cooperative and Carey Counseling enrolled 31 since December.

- Carey Counseling was selected to participate in an evaluation to look at outcome and fidelity. Carey Counseling is pioneering a first episode psychosis program in a rural area.
- Alliance Healthcare started support groups, one for youth and one for the family members.
- Ledlow announced the Second First Episode Psychosis Initiative Conference September 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites in Franklin, TN. Conference will be free.

➤ **Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant (TRY Grant) – Amy Vosburgh, Project Manager and Yolanda Neal, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)**

- Vosburgh reported the goal is 400 referrals and they are at 365 to date. She said there is an influx of referrals with minimum effort. The increase has been in self-referrals and school referrals, but Vosburgh said most still come from the court system. She said they took many of the youth bowling the end of May and are planning a picnic before school starts again. Yolanda Neal in Jackson spoke briefly and reported they are on target with the grant and announced they will have a TRY-Fun Bash at the Farmer’s Market in Jackson on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

**X. Workgroup Updates/Discussion Plans for Future Meetings – Linda O’Neal**

- Steve Petty announced the Tennessee Housing Development Agency will have the Tennessee Housing Trust Fund- Competitive Grants 2018 Fall Round Application Workshop on August 9<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. CST at the Midtown Hills Police Precinct. For more information, contact Toni Shaw at [tshaw@thda.org](mailto:tshaw@thda.org).
- O’Neal thanked attendees for being present until the end.

**Next CCMH Meeting Dates:**

August 24, 2017 (Midtown Hills Police Precinct)

October 19, 2017 (Midtown Police Precinct)

**Next YTAC Meeting Date:**

August 10, 2017 (Goodwill)

Meeting adjourned at 2:07 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 10, 2017**

**12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time**

**Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee**

**937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208**

**615.742.4151**

**Agenda**

<b>Welcome/Introductions/Announcements/Acceptance of June 22, 2017 Meeting Summary</b>	<i>Linda O’Neal, Executive Director, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)</i>
<b>United Health Care ECF Initial Advisory Council</b>	<i>Tonya Copeland, Director, UHC Employment and Community First Choices Program</i>
<b>Tennessee Housing and Development Agency</b>	<i>Toni Shaw, Housing Programs Manager, THDA</i>
<b>Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update</b>	<i>Brian Stephens, Director, Office of Independent Living, DCS</i> <i>Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director</i>
<b>Update from Resource Centers</b>	<i>Pamela Madison, Youth Connections</i> <i>Tiffany Turnage, Dream Seekers</i> <i>Christy Martin, Project Now!</i> <i>Robert Love, I AM READY</i>
<b>Update from Youth Villages LifeSet Program</b>	<i>Heather Tribble, Youth Villages LifeSet</i>
<b>Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service (DMHSAS)</b>	
<b>Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant</b>	<i>Christina Youmans, Pathways</i> <i>Amy Vosburgh, Centerstone</i>
<b>Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative</b>	<i>Kisha Ledlow, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services</i>
<b>2017 Annual Report</b>	<i>Accomplishments and Recommendations</i>
<b>Next Meeting</b>	<i>October 5, 2017</i>
<b>Other Business</b>	<i>Future Meeting Topics</i>







STATE OF TENNESSEE

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1-800-264-0904

**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**

August 10, 2017

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Participants:**

Dave Aguzzi  
Julie Barlar  
Robin Bell  
Jon Berestecky  
Amy Campbell  
Tonya Copeland  
Bryan Currie

Kim Holst  
Robert Love  
Christy Martin  
Linda O'Neal  
Steve Petty  
Natasha Smith  
Ned Solomon  
Wendy Spence  
Brian Stephens

Jerresha Tinker  
Heather Tribble  
Eric Valinor  
Joseph Valinor  
Amy Vosburgh  
Will Voss  
Shauna Webb  
Christina Youmans

**Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of June 22, 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 June 22, 2017 meeting summary. She asked for revisions or edits.

**IT WAS MOVED (SOLOMON) AND SECONDED (BERESTECKY) TO ACCEPT THE June 22, 2017 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**United Health Care Employment and Community First Choices (ECF) Initial Advisory Council – Tonya Copeland, Director, UHC Employment and Community First Choices Program**

Copeland explained for the benefit of those unfamiliar, that the Employment and Community First CHOICES Program is administered by TennCare through its contracted managed care organizations. It offers services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Services in the program will help people gain employment and live as independently as possible in the community.

Copeland explained the importance of the advisory council and the program. She said the ideal age of exposure to the program is age 17, so they will already know their options before transitioning out of the system at age 18. Copeland reported the youth have a desire for independence. Contrary to perception, these services compliment, not hinder the youth.

Copeland said this is the first time families can receive services for youth with developmental disabilities. Copeland defined developmental disability and explained the difference between developmental and intellectual disabilities. She said DIDD no longer maintains a waiting list. There is now a referral list and eight priority categories.

The services a person in Employment and Community First CHOICES will receive depend on which benefit group they belong. Copeland explained there are three benefit groups. She said group four is Essential Family Supports where services are for families caring for a child under the age of 21 who has an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD). The child must live at home with their family, not a foster family. Adults age 21 with I/DD living at home with their family can also choose to enroll in this group if they qualify. Group four is limited to up to \$500 per month for children up to age 18 and up to \$1,000 per month for 18 years old and older with a maximum of \$15,000 a year.

Group five is known as Essential Supports for Employment and Independent Living and serves adults age 21 and older who have an I/DD but do not qualify for the level of care in a nursing home. A person age 18-21 with I/DD may be enrolled in this group if they cannot live with their family anymore. A person who would qualify to receive care in a nursing home can choose to enroll in this group if Group 6 is full and their needs can be met with these services. Group five limits the cost to \$30,000 for the year.

Group six is the Comprehensive Supports for Employment and Community Living. These services are only for adults age 21 and older who would qualify to get care in a nursing home. This does not mean the person has to receive care in a nursing home. This program provides services at home and in the community; however the person needs to meet the criteria for nursing home care. A person age 18-21 with I/DD is eligible to enroll in this group if they are no longer able to live with their family. There is a low to moderate limitation of \$45,000 to \$60,000 a year or more depending on the person's need.

Copeland explained the employment supports in place. She said exploration helps clients decide if they want to work and types of jobs they may like while discovery is where someone helps them identify the kinds of work as well as their skills and strengths. Situational observation and assessment allows the clients to try out certain jobs to see if it is something they would like to do. Copeland said John Campagnino is the employment specialist.

Copeland said there are other employment wraparound services and self-advocacy services as well. There are a couple organizations providing these services like The Arc. Copeland said she would be happy to provide a list of providers.

United Health Care does not provide any of the services. They contract with agencies across the state to provide these services. Copeland suggested families complete the online screening to start the process. People can get through the entire screening process within 30 days.

United Health Care began in July 2017. They are meeting every month currently and will move to quarterly meetings. There are still areas where people are not aware of this program. This is the only way DIDD youth can receive services now, especially in rural areas.

Petty pointed out the advisory council was required in the contract.

Copeland said there were 1700 slots the first year and an anticipated 1000 this year, but she said it depends on the money allocated. Solomon shared there are 102,000 people with I/DD.

**Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis Initiative – Will Voss, Tennessee Voices for Children Project Director, Healthy Transitions, Shauna Webb Volunteer Behavioral Health Care System and Joseph Valinor**

Voss announced Young Adult Leadership Academy is happening August 24<sup>th</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> at The Westin in Nashville. He announced the First Episode Psychosis Conference is scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> in Franklin. More information will follow soon. Voss reported Kisha Ledlow made a presentation at the Mental Health Conference recently.

Voss said the Young Adult Leadership Academy meets once a month in Nashville and is engaged in pro-social activities, self-identification and are actively going to schools. There is a video on [kidcentraltn.com](http://kidcentraltn.com).

Webb gave an update for Hamilton County where they develop and implement mental health related support services to youth and young adults 16-25 years old. She said they are currently hiring an employment specialist. There have been three “Training for Intervention Procedures” (TIPS®) trainings. Webb reported the monitoring visit they had the day before went well and said she would be attending a conference in Boston next week. Webb said the life skill support groups meet each Friday at Johnson Mental Health.

Joseph Valinor talked about a research project conducted with young people to discover the barriers for getting connected to resources.

**Tennessee Housing and Development Agency – Toni Shaw, Housing Programs Manager, THDA**

Shaw distributed a flyer and talked about the rental-housing grant worth \$2 million. THDA is seeking creative and innovative rental housing development proposals for the 2018 Fall Round of Competitive Grants under the TN Housing Trust Fund. The maximum grant amount is \$500,000 and there is no grant minimum. The grant has a 50 percent match that can be in the form of supportive services or property.

The application deadline is September 28, 2017 by noon. There are extra points for projects providing housing for youth transitioning from foster care, ex-offenders and homeless veterans. Nonprofits, governmental agencies, and public-housing authorities may apply.

There is a webinar scheduled for August 15, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CST. The grant is available twice a year and the contract will go for three years.

Someone suggested Shaw reached out to Tennessee Association of Mental Health Organizations (TAMHO) and a few other similar groups when she asked for help in ways to improve the low application numbers. Barler said the extra support required to staff the apartments for the youth may be the disconnect.

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

Stephens said the Office of Independent Living (IL) will begin sending out a newsletter. There are over 2,000 youth aged 16 and older. He provided a preview of the newsletter.

Stephens said a lot of states’ child welfare system does not serve the unaccompanied and homeless youth population. Tennessee is leading the nation with serving this population. He used the illustration of trying to explain how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for states that do not have bread to demonstrate all of the things you have to think about.

Aguzzi reported young adults who received Extension of Foster Care Services (EFCS) for July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. There were 757 total EFCS Episodes, 743 total young adults served and 338 total active in EFCS as of June 30, 2017. Aguzzi compared the numbers from 2016 where they had 772 total EFCS Episodes, 755 total young adults served and 334 total active in EFCS as of June 30, 2016. Aguzzi believes they are serving around the same number as the previous year and speculated the data may be lower because it is still being entered.

Aguzzi explained that an episode reflects someone coming for one service and returning a few times for the same service. They can come back after age 18 and still receive services up to age 21. They must stay in an educational program to remain eligible.

There have been 68 individuals served in Davidson Region; 103 in Shelby Region; 86 in Upper Cumberland Region; 77 in Smoky Mountain Region; and 75 in Mid Cumberland Region. Aguzzi speculates as to the various reasons why the numbers in other regions may be lower. The juvenile justice population tends not to accept services. Some of them come into custody later in life. Aguzzi believes the population has a lot to do with it.

Aguzzi talked about the types of services provided (custodial independent living wrap services). Services include drivers’ education (34), educational fees (1), good grades incentive (47), youth leadership stipend (107); yearbooks (18); graduation package (74); honor/senior class trip (14); and extra-curricular leadership activity/membership fees (28). There were 263 individuals served and 369 wraparound services provided. Unfortunately, many of the youth and foster/adoptive parents are not aware of these services.

Aguzzi shared another slide detailing other EFCS IL wrap services where 161 individuals were served and 272 services provided.

Aguzzi said there were 307 young adults in Traditional Placements during FY 2017; 74 in supervised Independent Living Placements (up from last year); 446 received Independent Living Allowance (down from last year); 666 received Placement.

Stephens said they are preparing for a big meeting next week to discuss the EFC Expansion Project on August 17<sup>th</sup> with DCS leadership, JCI, and Main Spring Consulting. Fiscal/program analysis report due Fall 2017,

Jerresha Tinker spoke briefly about the focus group project. They served 90 youth in four different camps. There was a stipend offered for youth to attend the camp. The two-day camp is Camp Montvale in Maryville, TN. There are horses and outdoor activities. The youth are taught life skills.

## **Update from Resource Centers**

### **Dream Seekers – Robin Bell**

Bell reported they enrolled 76 young people and exceeded the goal of 40. She said 16 additional youth were funded through South Memphis Alliance. Bell said they had challenges recruiting for Sisters Saving Sisters (SSS), but they ended up serving 182 and the goal was 152.

### **I.A.M. READY Center – Robert Love**

Love reported they moved to a new facility near the McCallie area. He said they toured colleges this summer. They visited University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Cleveland State Community College, Lee University. Love hopes to visit Vanderbilt and Tennessee State.

Love reported 50 backpacks were donated and distributed to the youth. He mentioned the partnership with the Heart Gallery allowing the youth to sell some of their art work.

He said the youth had an idea to acknowledge one of their volunteers. Love reached out to News Channel 9 and the Pay It Forward segment where they were able to surprise her. It will air on Monday night at 6 p.m. EST.

Love reported they hired a Sexual Health Education (SHE) program coordinator.

### ***Project NOW!* – Christy Martin**

Martin reported they visited five college including Pellissippi State. She said a representative from Carson Newman visited the center as well as a recruiter from the Air Force. Martin shared many of the private colleges are beginning to reach out to the youth.

Martin reported they recently completed an audit where she was made aware of a few activities she needed to perform.

Martin said they enrolled 16 new youth with 100 percent favorable post-test outcomes. They had four Opportunity Passport participants and a 90 percent completion rate on surveys in April.

Martin reported they are working with Operation Hope through First Tennessee Bank who is providing financial literacy training. They are also working closely with the career center to provide soft skills training, very necessary skills.

The Knoxville Police Department has agreed to occasionally conduct a safe driving course for the youth. The foster parents and youth are excited about this.

### **Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Heather Tribble**

Tribble reported they served 691 youth in Tennessee. They served 240 in Middle Tennessee, 236 in East Tennessee and 215 in West Tennessee. She talked about the peer-to-peer events and said there was a CPR class conducted allowing the youth to become certified, drivers' safety classes and the Human Resources department came to talk to youth about using LinkedIn. Tribble said USB came to talk about Money management and the stock market.

The program held a backpack drive. There were 152 backpacks given out in Middle Tennessee alone.

Volunteers come from word of mouth. They mainly donate money and at times donate school supplies and help fill the backpacks.

Tribble talked about the YV Scholars program. There are 67 scholars including 20 new scholars who went to orientation in Memphis. A graduate school component was recently added. A LifeSet specialist will be kept for another two years.

### **Update from Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

#### **Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant – Christina Youmans, Pathways and Amy Vosburgh, Centerstone**

Youmans talked about the TRY-Share Bash in Jackson at the Farmer's Market. It was not as successful as she would have liked it to be and she stated they have challenges in reaching a particular age group and population. There were 150 people although she was shooting for over 200. There were several vendors in attendance. They had the police department, fire department and gave out free snacks.

The program received a no cost extension for the four-year grant. It will continue through March 24, 2018. Pathways is using Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (A-CRA) for their certification program. It takes some people a year or more to complete presenting a challenge since the grant is coming to an end.

Vosburgh shared their goal was 60 clients, but they actually have 65 with the court ordered referrals. She said they are working with probation officers to help get youth back on track. Total 115 clients so far. Centerstone is discussing what their cutoff date will be for enrollment to give the clients a full six-month of service.

### **2017 Annual Report – Linda O'Neal and Steve Petty**

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

### **Next Meetings**

There will be a joint meeting with the Council on Children's Mental Health on October 5<sup>th</sup> at Goodwill Industries.

**Other Business**

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

Meeting Adjourned at 3:41 p.m.





## **APPENDIX B**

**TCA 37-2-601**

**TCA 37-2-417**

**TCA 37-2-418**



\*\*\* 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.

\*\*\* 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.