



THP-Plus Annual Report

2009-10

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for Children Without Homes



"Being in THP-Plus helped me a lot. The people in the program are like my family because they provide the support that I need. If I wasn't in the program, I wouldn't be focused on school. Instead, I'd be focused on figuring out where am I going to live, what am I going to have to eat today."

— THP-Plus participant, Monterey County

THP-Plus at a Glance

The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THP-Plus) provides safe, affordable housing and supportive services to youth formerly in the foster care and juvenile probation systems in California. Following is a summary of "quick facts" about THP-Plus.

2,245 Youth Served Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010
1,385 Housing Capacity as of June 30, 2010
23% Single Site Housing Model
63% Scattered Site Housing Model
14% Host Family Housing Model
\$2,400 Average Monthly Cost Per Participant
67 THP-Plus Service Providers
2.4 Average Number of Years as a Service Provider
50 Participating Counties

"When I turned 18 and aged out of foster care, I moved in with an extended family member temporarily but had no income and was worried about what my future would be like. That is when I heard about THP-Plus. It is helping me transition to adulthood, and I have been able to get and keep work."

— THP-Plus participant, Solano County



August 2010



Dear THP-Plus Partners,

On behalf of the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing, we are pleased to share the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THP-Plus) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2009-10. This report highlights the achievements of THP-Plus over the last year in aiding youth formerly in the foster care and juvenile probation systems in their transition to adulthood. It also reveals the challenges the program has faced.

In 2001, THP-Plus was created to support youth exiting the foster care and juvenile probation systems. Funded by the State of California, the program provides former foster youth and youth exiting juvenile probation with housing and comprehensive supportive services, including: educational assistance, counseling, and employment and mental health support. While the program experienced tremendous growth in the preceding years, Fiscal Year 2009-10 marked the first reduction to the THP-Plus allocation since the program began, decreasing it from \$40.8 million to \$35.8 million. The loss of \$5 million to THP-Plus resulted in an 11% reduction in housing capacity, leaving many former foster youth and youth exiting probation on waiting lists to enter programs. Like many in California, these youth are facing increasing challenges in finding stable employment and safe, affordable housing.

Despite these challenges, THP-Plus programs have continued to successfully serve California's youth. In 2009-10, 50 of California's 58 counties implemented THP-Plus, providing affordable housing and supportive services to 2,245 youth, age 18 to 24. The uncertainty of the current political and fiscal environment even yielded an unexpected benefit: agencies aiding youth in transition have formed creative and strong community partnerships. The work of the counties and the providers through this difficult time demonstrates their unwavering commitment.

The THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project was designed to support development and expansion of THP-Plus through technical assistance, training, policy advocacy and evaluation. This year, the Project continued to employ the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System, providing the most comprehensive data collection since THP-Plus began. For the first time, we can evaluate the effectiveness of THP-Plus by understanding the progress youth make during their time in the program. Early reports look good: youth exiting THP-Plus make gains in education, employment, and earnings, despite rates of unemployment among young adults not seen since the Great Depression.

We would like to acknowledge the commitment of the THP-Plus community: nonprofit providers, county administrators, and the young adult participants. We look forward to working towards a day when every youth in California makes a safe, supported transition from the foster care and juvenile probation systems.

SENATOR JOHN BURTON (RETIRED)
Chair
John Burton Foundation

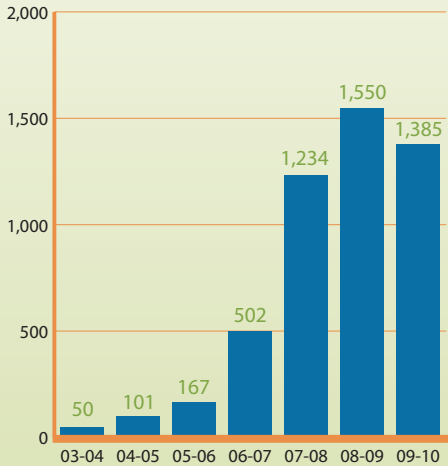
JOHN WAGNER, *Director*
California Department of
Social Services

JONATHAN HUNTER,
Western Region Managing Director
Corporation for Supportive Housing

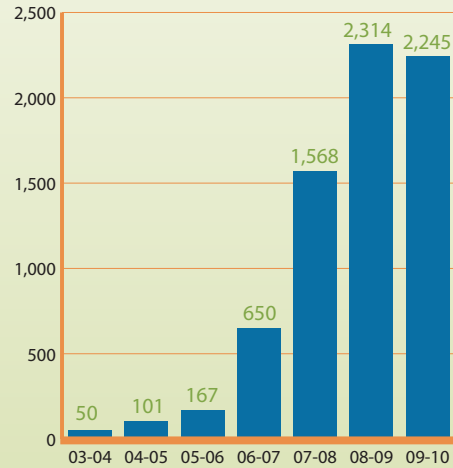
THP-Plus in 2009-10: Serving Youth In Uncertain Economic Times

In Fiscal Year 2009-10, THP-Plus programs served 2,245 youth in 50 counties throughout California. This fiscal year marked the first time that THP-Plus experienced a budget reduction since the program was first implemented in 2003. This \$5 million cut decreased the annual budget from \$40.8 million to \$35.8 million, resulting in an 11% reduction in housing capacity, and a 3% reduction in the number of youth served over the 12-month period, July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

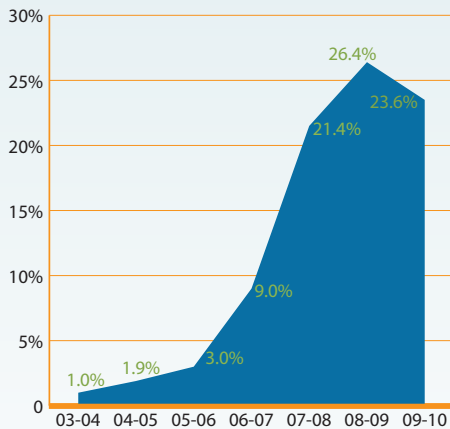
THP-Plus Housing Capacity as of June 30, 2010



Youth Served in THP-Plus over 12-month Period



Percentage of Demand for THP-Plus Met Annually

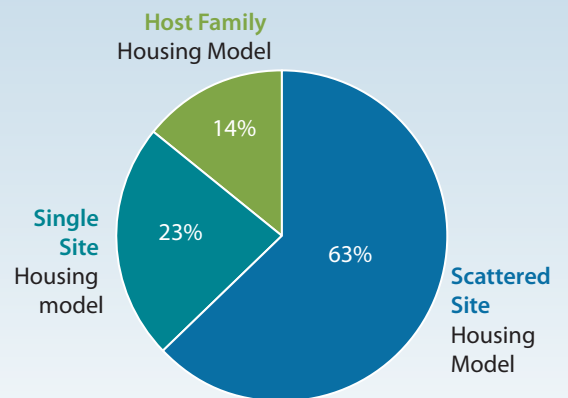


In preceding years, the housing capacity of THP-Plus has grown, resulting in a greater percentage of otherwise homeless youth receiving assistance. The budget reduction experienced this year has set THP-Plus programs back in meeting this demand.

In the 12 months that ended December 31, 2009, 5,497 youth emancipated from the foster care and juvenile probation systems in California. According to a 2009 report published by the Urban Institute, 19% (1,044) of these youth will experience homelessness within 12 months after being discharged. Based on the estimated number of youth who will likely experience homelessness, the percent of demand that is being met by THP-Plus has fallen from a high of 26.4% (08/09) to 23.6% demand being met by THP-Plus (09/10).

THP-Plus Housing Models

In 2009-10, 67 THP-Plus service providers helped former foster youth find safe, stable housing.



Analysis of Participants Entering THP-Plus in Fiscal Year 2009-10

For the second year, the John Burton Foundation conducted a statewide analysis of participants who entered California’s THP-Plus program during the first three quarters of the fiscal year. The full analysis is available at the THP-Plus website, www.thpplus.org. Provided here is a summary of key findings for the 1,337 youth who entered THP-Plus during the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2009-10, alongside those who entered during the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2008-09.

Findings and Implications:

Demographic profile: The demographic profile of youth entering THP-Plus remains largely unchanged from Fiscal Year 2008-09 to 2009-10. Two exceptions are (1) the percentage of youth who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, and (2) the percentage of youth who experienced homelessness before entering THP-Plus, both of which decreased.

Most youth continue to enter from non-foster care settings: Youth continue to enter THP-Plus from a range of living settings, with just one in three entering directly from a foster care placement.

Homelessness remains prevalent: A full 16% of youth enter THP-Plus directly from homelessness, while over one in three (34%) have experienced homelessness at some time prior to their entrance to THP-Plus. While both of these figures are slightly lower than those reported for the previous fiscal year, they remain high and indicate that youth have experienced a high level of instability prior to entering THP-Plus.

Youth remain extremely economically vulnerable at entry: A slightly lower percentage of youth entered THP-Plus with a job, down from 45% in Fiscal Year 2008-09 to 42% in 2009-10. However, the same percentage (27%) entered the program reporting no earned income or other support. For those with a non-zero income, the median monthly income from all sources remained the same for both fiscal years: \$700, equivalent to an annual income of \$8,400.

Participant Characteristics at Entrance to THP-Plus		
	2008-09	2009-10
Male	35%	39%
Female	65%	61%
Self-identified lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender	12%	8%
Black	42%	41%
White non-Hispanic	23%	21%
Hispanic	20%	21%
Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, or Other	15%	18%
Custodial parent	12%	13%
Experienced homelessness before entering THP-Plus	39%	34%
ILP-eligible probation ward as a minor	17%	16%
Age 18 to 20	82%	82%
Age 21 to 24	18%	18%

Housing Immediately Prior to THP-Plus		
	2008-09	2009-10
Foster care placement	30%	33%
Living with relative or others with free rent	23%	23%
Renting own or shared housing	15%	16%
Emergency shelter, homeless, or other unstable housing	19%	16%
Supportive housing program	9%	5%
Other type of housing	4%	8%

60% county share of cost removed. 16 counties implement THP-Plus.

THP-Plus moves toward statewide implementation. 39 counties implement THP-Plus.

THP-Plus Participant Tracking System is launched. THP-Plus serves over 2,000 youth annually for the first time.

\$5 million budget reduction to THP-Plus. 50 counties implement THP-Plus.

THP-Plus programs continue to overcome last year’s challenges and serve youth statewide

2006

2007

2008

2009

Present



"This program was like my second chance. I was able to go back to school, work three jobs, and take care of my son. I met a lot of people there that I could look up to and that inspired me to continue doing what I was doing."

—THP-Plus participant, Los Angeles County

Analysis of Participants Exiting THP-Plus in Fiscal Year 2009-10

The John Burton Foundation also conducted a statewide analysis of participants who exited California's THP-Plus program during the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2009-10. The full analysis is available in the Policy Brief, published in August 2010, "Outcomes of Former Foster Youth Participating in California's THP-Plus Program," which can be found on the website. Provided here is a summary of key findings for the 550 youth who exited THP-Plus during the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2009-10.

Education: The most notable increase in educational attainment was in the receipt of the high school diploma. At entrance, 57% of youth had received their high school diploma, a figure that increased to 63% upon exit. Additionally, 22% of participants were attending either a two- or four-year college at entrance, a figure that increased to 27% at exit.

Housing: Overall, THP-Plus participants improved their housing circumstances between program entrance and exit. At entrance, 16% lived in emergency shelters or other unstable housing. At exit, roughly two-fifths of youth (42%) lived in a rented apartment, either by themselves or with a roommate. The second most prevalent place youth exited the program to was rent-free housing with a relative or others (34%). The balance of youth who exited THP-Plus lived in college dorms (1%), a different THP-Plus program (1%), other supportive transitional housing program (8%), emergency shelter (3%), or other (11%).

Employment: Participants increased their rate of employment marginally between entrance and exit, despite historic levels of unemployment for young adults during this time period. At entrance to the program, 41% of youth were employed, a figure that increased to 43% at exit.

Earnings: The average monthly earnings of youth exiting THP-Plus was \$800 as compared to \$700 at entrance, a 14% increase. Additionally, the percentage of participants who reported having no income fell from 29% at entrance to 18% at exit from THP-Plus. The average hourly wage also increased from \$8.50 at entrance for those who were working to \$9.00 at program exit.

Average length of stay: Although the total allowable time youth may participate in THP-Plus is 24 months, the average length of stay for youth who exited in the first three quarters of the year was just 12 months. Of youth who exited, 22% participated in the program less than 6 months, 36% participated six to nine months, and 42% participated in THP-Plus for one year or more.

Reason for exit: While the majority of youth exited THP-Plus voluntarily (60%), a troubling percentage of youth exited involuntarily (40%). Additional research is required to better understand the circumstances of these latter exits, both to ensure that youth are not being forced to exit in a manner that violates program regulations or youths' fair housing rights, and to see what issues might be readily resolved.

Receipt of special services: Youth exiting THP-Plus programs received specialized supportive services across all areas measured: mental health, substance abuse, and disabilities (learning, developmental and/or physical). The largest increase was in mental health services, which were received by 19% more youth at exit than at entrance.

"Life is hard, but I know I can make it better because I believe in myself and my virtues.

I will fight to make my dreams come true. Now it is time to stand up and scream to the world 'I exist!'"

— Suamhirs Rivera



Participant Profile: Suamhirs Rivera – Succeeding Against All Odds

Suamhirs is a 20-year-old former foster youth living in San Diego County. As a participant in the New Alternatives THP-Plus program, he is developing skills to live independently and is actively advocating for youth emancipating from the foster care system.

"It was hard to connect with people when I knew maybe next week or next month, I would move again. I never unpacked my stuff."

age of 16, he moved from placement to placement, making it difficult to gain stability and establish meaningful connections to those around him. "It was hard to connect with people when I knew maybe next week or next month, I would move again. I never unpacked my stuff," he said. When he emancipated at the age of 18, Suamhirs had no family in the country, and no place to live. Suamhirs learned about THP-Plus through his case manager, and with her assistance entered the program at New Alternatives.

THP-Plus has helped Suamhirs not only by providing him with a place to live, but also by giving him the support necessary to make his transition from foster care successful. Now living in a one-bedroom apartment, Suamhirs is enjoying the independence it brings while still having the assistance of a case manager. "I am getting better at taking care of myself and my health. I am learning budgeting and money management skills. And I got my job with the help of New Alternatives." More importantly, he

has built relationships that have supported him as he continues his transition from care. "They are not just a program anymore, they have become a family. I have no family in the U.S., so I have adopted them as my family, and they have adopted me, too."

Participating in THP-Plus has also inspired Suamhirs to become an advocate for emancipating foster youth. He has assisted in trainings for youth, conferences, and many other activities in support of youth aging out of the foster care system. According to Suamhirs, being an advocate provides him with the opportunity to be a role model and give back to others: "I tell them that if I did it, [they] can do it. I want to help teach youth the tools they need to succeed."

Suamhirs is now working at a law firm in San Diego with victims of human trafficking, and beginning to imagine his future after THP-Plus. "Right now, I see someone successful, but someone who has not achieved all his goals. At the end of THP-Plus, I know I will have the strength and the knowledge to accomplish them. I want to become an attorney, but before I do that, I want to give back to youth who age out."

"Right now, I see someone successful, but someone who has not achieved all his goals. At the end of THP-Plus, I know I will have the strength and the knowledge to accomplish them."



The THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project is a collaboration between the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

The Project supports the development and expansion of THP-Plus programs through technical assistance, training, evaluation, and policy development. The goal of the Project is to reduce homelessness among former foster youth throughout California.

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This report contains data from the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System, surveys completed by THP-Plus providers and county representatives, and interviews with THP-Plus participants. Research Fellow Sara Kimberlin conducted the analysis for this report. The complete data analysis can be found in the 2010 Policy Brief, available on the THP-Plus website.

Graduate Student Intern Suzy Bischalaney conducted the THP-Plus providers' survey and accompanying analysis.

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