



"STATEWIDE SURVEY" CONTINUED FROM FRONT

- Hourly wages increased 13 percent, from \$9.05 at program entry to \$10.25 at the time of the survey. For participants that had been in the program for over one year, the average wage increase was \$2.71 more per hour.
- Community college enrollment increased 68 percent, from 28 percent to 47 percent.
- Permanent connections with an adult increased from 84 percent at program entry to 93 percent at the time of the survey. Custodial mothers reported a greater change, from 77 percent to 90 percent.
- Youth participants reported high levels of satisfaction with THP-Plus: 92 percent of respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the program as Excellent or Good.

The survey results also demonstrate that THP-Plus fulfills an important role in preventing homelessness among former foster youth. When asked where they would be living without THP-Plus, one in four respondents stated that they would be homeless. The policy brief will also include information about the satisfaction of participants and provide information about outcomes based by THP-Plus model-type and parenting status. The policy brief was issued on September 1st and is available for download from the THP-Plus website at www.thplusplus.org.

"THP-PLUS INSTITUTE" CONTINUED FROM INSIDE RIGHT

During the Institute, the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project released its newest publication, The Host Family Model in THP-Plus. The publication outlines the process and special considerations for providing THP-Plus housing and services in a family setting.

Presentations from the Institute and a full conference report are available at www.thplusplus.org. The recently completed publication about the host family model is also available for download on the website.

For additional information about the Institute, or to order print copies of the host family publication, please contact Michele Byrnes at michele@johnburtonfoundation.org

THP-Plus Annual Report Available October 20th

The THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project will release the Annual Report for 2007-08 on October 20th. Now in its second year, the THP-Plus Annual Report is a concise overview of key facts and figures about the THP-Plus program, including how many youth are in the program and what counties are participating. The Annual Report also includes profiles of youth participants from different parts of the state. The Annual Report will be available on October 20th by either downloading it from the THP-Plus website (www.thplusplus.org) or contacting Project Manager Michele Byrnes for a printed version. The THP-Plus Annual Report is a useful tool to educate local policymakers and other stakeholders about the value of this important program, and additional copies of the printed THP-Plus Annual Report may be requested for this purpose.

"FEDERAL FUNDING" CONTINUED FROM INSIDE LEFT

written, youth who elect to remain in foster care after age 18 would be required to meet one of four conditions, each of which relate to their participation in school or employment.

If California elects to extend the option of foster care past age 18, there will need to be some consideration of how that affects THP-Plus, according to Amy Lemley, Policy Director of the John Burton Foundation. "There is strong evidence from the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth that extending foster care past age 18 improves outcomes for youth," said Lemley. The study referenced by Lemley measured the educational, employment, health and criminal justice status of youth from three states over five years. At the time of the study, two of the states discharged foster youth at age 18 (Iowa and Wisconsin) and the third (Illinois) extended foster care to age 21. In Illinois, roughly 75 percent of youth elect to remain in foster care past age 18, a figure that is more than cut in half by age 21. "If the policy to extend foster care past 18 is pursued, THP-Plus can be an important resource for those youth who elect to leave foster care and for those who need more support after age 21."

To stay informed about the status of the federal legislation, sign up for regular policy updates by e-mailing Amy Lemley at amy@johnburtonfoundation.org.



NEWS

Welcome to *THP-Plus News*, a quarterly newsletter of the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project. The Project is a partnership between the John Burton Foundation, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing. Our goal is to expand access to THP-Plus, California's only housing program for former foster youth. THP-Plus provides former foster youth with affordable housing and a rich array of supportive services, including job training, educational advocacy, mentoring, and case management.

INSIDE:

- THP-Plus Training
- Federal Funding
- Youth Perspective
- THP-Plus Institute

To submit a question to a practitioner or to comment on the newsletter, e-mail nicole@johnburtonfoundation.org

This is a publication of the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes– a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California dedicated to improving the quality of life for California's homeless children and developing policy solutions to prevent homelessness.

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Expanding Housing Options for Youth In Transition

SURVEY
Statewide Survey of Youth in THP-Plus Shows Progress in Education, Employment and Permanency

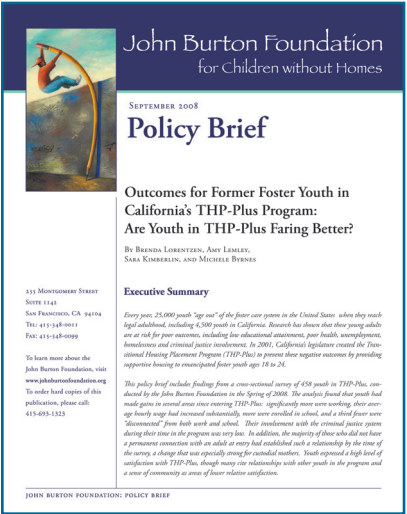
On September 1st, the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project will release a policy brief summarizing the findings of a statewide survey of THP-Plus participants. Led by John Burton Foundation Research Fellow Brenda Lorentzen, Ph.D., this survey provides the most detailed information to date on the achievement of youth in THP-Plus in the areas of education, employment, criminal justice involvement and permanency. For THP-Plus Project Manager Michele Byrnes, findings from the survey are vital to the long-term health of the program. "The survey results show that youth in THP-Plus are experiencing higher rates of employment, school enrollment and connections to caring adults since entering the program," said Byrnes. "This information helps make the case that THP-Plus is not just a 'feel good' program; it is making a real difference."

The survey sample included 458 participants from 34 THP-Plus programs throughout the state. Forty-three percent of surveys were received from the San Francisco Bay Area, 18 percent from Southern California, and 39 percent from other parts of California. Three-quarters of survey respondents were between 18 and 20 years of age.

Highlights of the survey results include:

- Employment rates increased 19 percent, from 53 percent at program entrance to 63 percent at the time of the survey (40 percent were working part-time and 23 percent full-time.)

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TRAINING

Training on 09-10 Letter of Intent was Held September 9th

The THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project conducted a free online web seminar about development of the THP-Plus Letter of Intent on Tuesday, September 9th at 10:00 am.

Each year, all county THP-Plus representatives planning to provide THP-Plus services must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). The deadline for submitting the Letter of Intent for FY 2009-10 has not yet been finalized, but has historically been October 1st. However, CDSS has the discretion to set an earlier deadline.

The LOI process represents an opportunity for counties to think strategically about increasing THP-Plus capacity to meet local demand. Assessment of unmet needs for housing among emancipated foster youth at the county level can help make the case for more THP-Plus slots. For example, data such as the average number of young people on the wait list for THP-Plus, the number of young adults turned away from THP-Plus due to lack of space, the percentage of emancipated youth in the county who become homeless, the number of ILP youth nearing emancipation who don't have post-emancipation housing secured, or information about specific sub-populations of young people (such as young parents, college students, or individuals with special needs) whose needs are not met by existing THP-Plus programs in the county, can all help support the need to expand THP-Plus at the local level.

The LOI provides CDSS with important information to inform the development of the 2009-10 THP-Plus budget. The required elements of the LOI include: a brief summary of the county's demographics and need for a housing program; the number of youth emancipating from the county annually; the number of beds/units planned for 2009-10; the THP-Plus rate to be paid to the provider(s); the anticipated start date; and the contact information for the county THP-Plus representative.

For additional information, please contact Michele Byrnes at michele@johnburtonfoundation.org or (415) 693-1323.

FEDERAL FUNDING

U.S. Congress Considering Extending Federal Funding for Foster Care to Age 21

The United States Congress is currently considering legislation that would extend federal funding for youth in foster care to age 21. While many states (including California) have statutes that authorize the juvenile court to retain jurisdiction beyond age 18, most states rarely elect to do so, and only then for the minimum amount of time necessary. The reason for this is that the primary source of federal foster care funding (Title IV-E of the Social Security Act) is terminated when a youth reaches the age of majority, defined as age 18 in most states. Without the Title IV-E federal contribution, most states consider foster care for older youth cost-prohibitive and discharge them from foster care.

In California, the federal contribution is approximately 50 percent of the total cost of foster care. Several previous efforts have been made in the state legislature to extend foster care to age 21 using state-only funds, most recently Senate Bill 1289 authored by Senator Gil Cedillo and sponsored by the California Youth Connection. Despite a growing consensus about the need to expand support for foster youth in transition, the legislation was not successful due in large part to the cost to the State of California.

If successful, the federal legislation would cut this cost in half, by funding 50 percent of the cost of foster care for youth to age 21. The first bill to propose an extension to age 21 was the Foster Care Continuing Opportunities Act, (S. 1512) introduced by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-California) in May 2007. In June 2008, Representative Jim McDermott (D-Washington) introduced House Resolution 6307, the Fostering Connections to Success Act, which would extend federal funding to age 21 in addition to a range of other foster care reform provisions. On June 24th, H.R. 6307 passed unanimously out of the House of Representatives and passed out of the Senate Committee on Finance on September 10th.

If passed, the Fostering Connections to Success Act would go into effect on October 1, 2010, providing almost two years for states to determine whether or not they will elect to access the expanded federal funding. As the bill is currently

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YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Youth Perspective: THP-Plus Provides Stability and Support for Young Mother

When Lindsay was herself still a child, she found herself taking care of her two little brothers as a result of her mother's on-going drug use and extended absence and neglect. At just 15, Lindsay found out she was pregnant and she and her two younger brothers were removed from her mother's custody and sent to live with her father. When her son was seven months old, she left her father's house due to constant family fighting and moved in with her step-sister, whose husband was secretly using drugs. Lindsay also began using, and was ultimately reported to the Department of Social Services and entered foster care. Before long, social workers showed up at her house, and when she reluctantly admitted she wouldn't be clean if given a drug test, she was told she had two minutes to say goodbye to her son before he was taken into custody. Lindsay went into a tailspin when her son was placed into the foster care system. She ran away, got more involved in using drugs, and became pregnant again.

Her second pregnancy as a teenager was the wake-up call Lindsay needed. Upon realizing she was pregnant, Lindsay turned herself into the Department of Social Services, where she agreed to enter into a drug rehabilitation and counseling program. When she emancipated from the foster care system, Lindsay was offered a room at St. Anne's, a THP-Plus program in Los Angeles. Lindsay appreciated having her own apartment for her family within a larger community of young mothers. The staff at St. Anne's worked closely with Lindsay to help her regain the custody of her oldest son, Dominic, all the while offering the support and guidance Lindsay needed to learn how to be a responsible parent.



"St. Anne's is the reason my son's case got closed [and I got him back]. They provided me with all the services I needed: daycare, schooling, transportation for doctors' appointments. The advocates help us and they have different programs here. If you go, and you actually pay attention, you can learn a lot."

Lindsay holds herself accountable for the poor decisions she made in the past and has proven that she learned from the situation she found herself in. "I won't have my kids detained again. I got my son detained, and I deserved to get my son detained. Then I did everything I had to do to get him back. St. Anne's showed me how to do a lot of things I didn't know how to do. They showed me, this is what part of being a parent is. I went through a lot, and I managed to get my son's case closed after two years."

Lindsay now has her GED and she is three credits away from earning her high school diploma. She is currently in a job training program. "I'm glad I have support. Cause I don't know what I'd do if I didn't. If I wasn't in this program, I would probably be sleeping on someone's sofa." Lindsay recognizes the role the St. Anne's THP-Plus program played in turning her life around by reuniting her with her children and helping her find stability so she can be the best mother for her sons.

2008 THP-Plus Institute Draws Practitioners Statewide

The second THP-Plus Institute was held on July 17th at the Center for Healthy Communities at the California Endowment in Los Angeles. More than 200 participants representing 40 public agencies and 80 community-based organizations participated in the full-day training.

According to John Murray, Senior Planning Analyst at the San Francisco County Human Services Agency, "The Institute provided a great opportunity for providers, counties, and state representatives to share their perspectives, ideas, and best practices in providing THP-Plus services."

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John Wagner, Director of California Department of Social Services