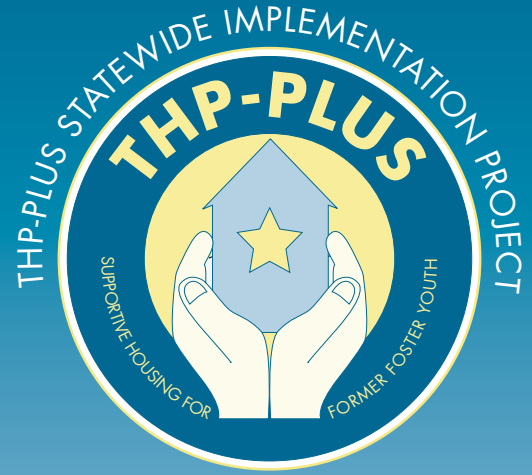


Fiscal Year 2008-09



THP-Plus Annual Report

Providing Affordable Housing and Supportive Services to Youth
Formerly in the Foster Care and Juvenile Probation Systems

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

The information in this Annual Report is drawn from the California Department of Social Services, the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System, and surveys with county THP-Plus representatives and THP-Plus providers.

The participant profile is drawn from a participant panel conducted at the 2009 THP-Plus Institute and follow-up interviews.

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Special thanks go to the THP-Plus county administrators and program providers who provided information in the development of the report, and to the THP-Plus participants for sharing their insights and experiences through a participant panel and interviews.

2001

AB 427 establishes THP-Plus

2002

THP-Plus de-linked from STEP

2003

2004

THP-Plus changed from one-time fund to annual allocation

2005

Eligibility expanded to age 24

2006

60% county share of cost removed

2007

2008

THP-Plus Participant Tracking System launched

Federal Fostering Connections to Success Act signed into law

October 2009

Dear THP-Plus Partners,

On behalf of the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), and the Corporation for Supportive Housing, we are happy to share with you the THP-Plus Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008-09. This report highlights some of the important accomplishments achieved in the last year to reduce homelessness among former foster youth.

In the eight years since the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THP-Plus) was created, California has made significant progress in ensuring its former foster youth succeed in adulthood. This year, over 2,300 otherwise homeless youth in 46 counties benefited from THP-Plus, which offers them the same common-sense support provided to youth from intact families, including affordable housing, educational assistance, employment counseling and access to mental health support. More youth are being served by THP-Plus than ever before.

This year marked a time of great economic uncertainty for the state and the nation as a whole. The state budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10 currently includes a \$5 million cut for THP-Plus, the first budget reduction since the initial THP-Plus participants were served in 2003. In the current budget climate, nearly all social service programs are being affected. We are committed to ensuring that former foster youth across California continue to be served by high-quality THP-Plus programs, and will continue to work towards the goal of every youth in California making a safe, supported transition from foster care.

Despite tough budget news, the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project, a partnership between the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing continued to pursue its goal of expanding THP-Plus through technical assistance, advocacy and evaluation. We are proud to announce the launch of the THP-Plus Participant Tracking System, the first-ever statewide evaluation system for the program. The system was developed by the John Burton Foundation in close consultation with county representatives and nonprofit housing providers. It currently has over 1,000 youth records from 28 counties, entered by 55 nonprofit housing providers, and has provided valuable information about the importance of safe, affordable housing for youth in their transition from foster care. Additional developments in Fiscal Year 2008-09 include a successful THP-Plus Institute in July, the publication of a first-ever statewide survey of youth in THP-Plus, and a series of educational workshops to strengthen practice.

We would like to acknowledge the tremendous commitment of the THP-Plus community: nonprofit service providers, county administrators, and the young adult participants themselves, all of whom are essential to the success of THP-Plus. We look forward to continuing to work with all of you to support foster youth as they make the important transition from foster care to successful adulthood.

Sincerely,



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 2008-09: Continued Growth throughout California

In Fiscal Year 2008-09, THP-Plus served more youth than ever before. More than 2,300 youth received affordable housing and supportive services in 94 THP-Plus programs, representing a 50% increase from Fiscal Year 2007-08. Housing capacity grew from 1,234 to 1,549 and the number of counties implementing THP-Plus increased from 39 to 46.

Figure 1 **Growth in the Number of Youth Served by THP-Plus**

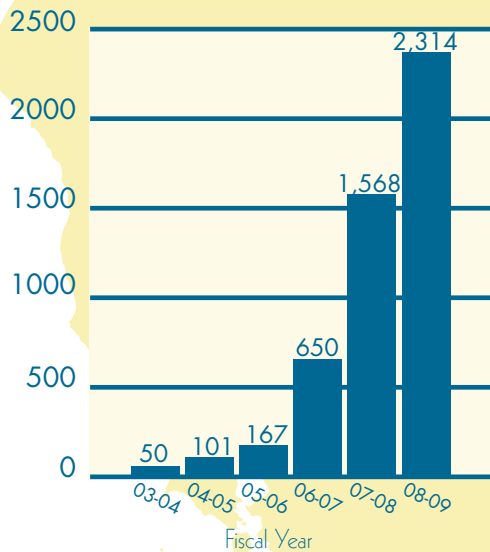


Figure 2 **Growth in the Number of Counties Implementing THP-Plus**

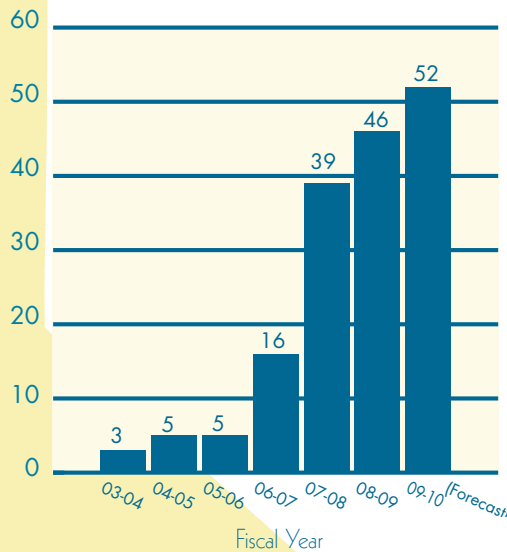
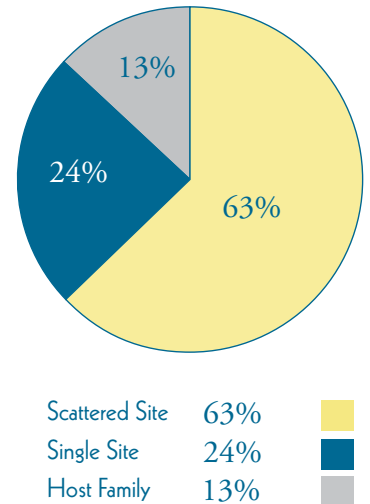


Figure 3 **THP-Plus Housing Models**



THP-Plus Spreads Statewide, Reaching 46 of California's 58 Counties

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Alameda | 10. Imperial | 19. Merced | 28. San Bernardino | 37. Shasta |
| 2. Butte | 11. Inyo | 20. Monterey | 29. San Diego | 38. Siskiyou |
| 3. Calaveras | 12. Kern | 21. Napa | 30. San Francisco | 39. Solano |
| 4. Contra Costa | 13. Lake | 22. Nevada | 31. San Joaquin | 40. Sonoma |
| 5. Del Norte | 14. Lassen | 23. Orange | 32. San Luis Obispo | 41. Stanislaus |
| 6. El Dorado | 15. Los Angeles | 24. Placer | 33. San Mateo | 42. Sutter |
| 7. Fresno | 16. Madera | 25. Plumas | 34. Santa Barbara | 43. Trinity |
| 8. Glenn | 17. Marin | 26. Riverside | 35. Santa Clara | 44. Tulare |
| 9. Humboldt | 18. Mendocino | 27. Sacramento | 36. Santa Cruz | 45. Ventura |
| | | | | 46. Yolo |

Counties planning to implement THP-Plus in FY 2009-10

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Colusa | 4. Tehama |
| 2. Mariposa | 5. Tuolumne |
| 3. Sierra | 6. Yuba |

Counties not yet participating in THP-Plus

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Alpine | 4. Modoc |
| 2. Amador | 5. Mono |
| 3. Kings | 6. San Benito |

Analysis of Participants Entering THP-Plus in Fiscal Year 2008-09

The John Burton Foundation conducted a statewide data analysis of participants who entered California's THP-Plus program during the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2008-09. The full analysis is available in the Policy Brief published in July of 2009, "Needs and Demographics of Former Foster Youth Entering California's THP-Plus Program: Findings from the Statewide Participant-Tracking System." Provided here is a demographic summary of youth who entered THP-Plus during this nine-month period, as well as a summary of where youth lived immediately prior to entering THP-Plus.

Figure 4 **Participant Characteristics at Entrance to THP-Plus**

Female	65%
Male	35%
Black	42%
White non-Hispanic	23%
Hispanic	20%
Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, Multi-racial, or Other	15%
Custodial parent	12%
Self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender	6%
Involvement with juvenile probation prior to THP-Plus	17%
Experienced homelessness prior to THP-Plus	39%
Age 18 to 20	82%
Age 21 to 24	18%

Figure 5 **Housing Immediately Prior to THP-Plus: Nearly One-Third of Participants Enter THP-Plus Directly from Foster Care**

Foster care	30%
Living with relative or others with free rent	23%
Homeless, emergency shelter, or other unstable housing	19%
Renting own or shared housing	15%
Supportive housing program	9%
Other housing	4%

Participant Needs at Program Entrance

THP-Plus participants entered the program with significant challenges. Parenting participants and those age 21 to 24 entered the program with greater disadvantages than non-parenting or younger participants. Participants age 21 to 24 were more likely to be custodial parents, and more likely to have experienced homelessness than participants age 18 to 20. Additionally, custodial parents who entered THP-Plus were less connected to the workforce and school than non-parenting youth.

Figure 6 **Homelessness Prior to THP-Plus by Age**

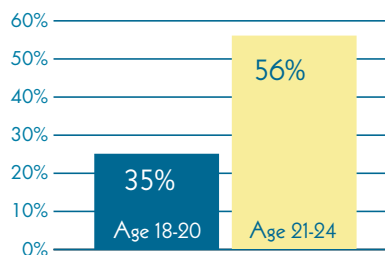


Figure 7 **Homelessness Prior to THP-Plus by Parenting Status**

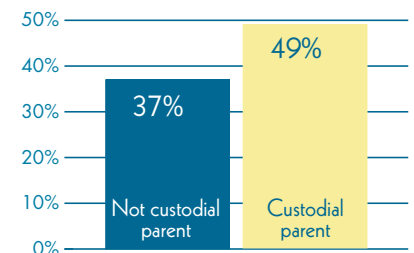


Figure 8 **Employment Status at Entrance to THP-Plus**

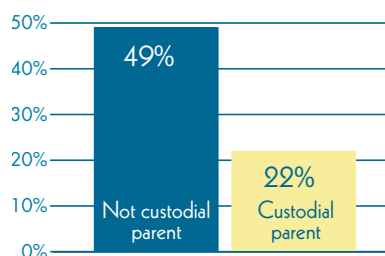
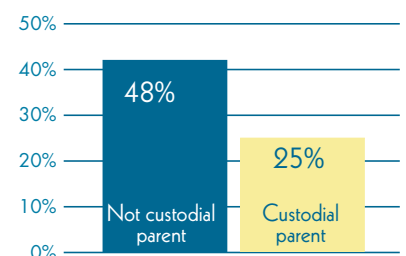


Figure 9 **School Attendance at Entrance to THP-Plus**



Implications of Analysis

Most youth do not enter THP-Plus

directly from foster care. Just under one-third (30%) of participants lived in foster care immediately prior to entering THP-Plus. This relatively low percentage suggests a need for improved transition planning as well as ongoing concurrent planning as youth prepare for their legal discharge from foster care.

Homelessness was prevalent among THP-Plus participants at

program entrance. Almost one-fifth (19%) of participants were homeless or living in an emergency shelter or other unstable housing immediately before entrance to THP-Plus, and nearly two-fifths (39%) had experienced homelessness at some point before entering the program. These high rates of homelessness indicate that a large proportion of THP-Plus participants have experienced highly unstable living situations with associated risks to their physical and mental health, and ability to establish safe and self-sufficient lifestyles.

Many THP-Plus participants were not connected to work or school at

program entrance. Less than half (45%) of entering participants were working and only two-fifths were in school. Over one-third (36%) were “disconnected” from both work and school at entrance to THP-Plus. These figures are cause for concern, as connection to employment and/or education is the most effective path to long-term self-sufficiency for most transition-aged young adults.

Young adults entering THP-Plus demonstrated low levels of school achievement and very low incomes.

Nearly one-third (31%) of participants had not completed a high-school credential before entering THP-Plus. Over one-quarter (27%) of participants reported no income, and those with income had a median annualized income of \$8,400, below the federal poverty line of \$11,201 for a one-person household. The median wage among those reporting wages was only \$8.50 per hour, below the living wage in California.

Participants entering THP-Plus showed high rates of permanent connections to adults and health insurance coverage.

Over 90% of young adults reported that they had a connection to an adult who could provide support and guidance. A full 85% reported that they had health insurance. Both of these are positive findings, though it may be important to assess whether participants continue to enjoy high levels of health-insurance coverage after age 21, the upper age limit for automatic eligibility for MediCal among former foster youth in California.

Young people age 21 to 24, as well as custodial parents, entered THP-Plus with greater disadvantages than other participants.

Older youth were 60% more likely to have experienced homelessness and 80% more likely to be custodial parents than participants age 18 to 20. More custodial parents had experienced homelessness and fewer were working or in school than participants who were not custodial parents. These findings indicate that older youth and custodial parents have high needs and may need to be targeted with more intensive services.

Participant Profile

Danny:

Building a Stable Future through Education, Stable Housing and Support

Danny is a 23-year-old THP-Plus participant in Monterey County. Through his participation with the Peacock Acres PATH-Plus THP-Plus program, he has mastered valuable skills and gained confidence to live on his own.

Danny was discharged from the child welfare system at the age of 18 after spending seven years in foster care. Like many of his peers in the system, he lived in multiple foster homes before he moved into a group home at the age of 12. After “aging out” of the system, Danny was able to secure a job and started pursuing a college degree. Despite these accomplishments, he could not afford to live on his own. Instead, Danny bounced between friends and relatives, relying on them for temporary support until he could afford more permanent housing.

When the Peacock Acres THP-Plus program opened in 2008, Danny seized the opportunity and applied. He has been living in his own studio apartment for more than a year, and is building his employment and advocacy skills while also receiving valuable case management and mentoring services. He is working at a group home and pursuing a certificate in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling.

According to Danny, he doesn't know where he'd be without the program: “The program helps youth in transition to gain the skills they need to live on their own. Emancipation can be very scary, especially if you don't have family or people you can rely on. The PATH-Plus program gave me the stability I needed to obtain balance in my life.”

Although he has always held a job, having stable housing has meant the difference between surviving and thriving. For the first time ever, Danny is able to put money into a savings account each month to prepare himself for life after THP-Plus: “Sometimes it's hard to put that money into the account each month, but I do. It helps me to know it will be there later.” Danny plans to complete his associate's degree before exiting THP-Plus, and will leave the program with increased savings and newly acquired skills.

Danny has also benefited from strong relationships with the THP-Plus case managers and his supervisor at the group home. “I know I can rely on them for support, both when I'm struggling and when I'm celebrating my successes.” Danny feels confident about his future. “After completing two years in the program, I will be ready to live independently.”



About the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project

This annual report is a product of the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project, a collaboration of the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing. The goal of the Project is to reduce homelessness among former foster youth by expanding access to THP-Plus, the only fully state-funded housing program specifically targeting this population. In order to achieve this goal, the Project is facilitating the development and expansion of THP-Plus programs in counties across California.

References

Kimberlin, S., Lemley, A. & Byrnes, M. (2009). Policy Brief: Needs and Demographics of Former Foster Youth Entering California's THP-Plus Program: Findings from the Statewide Participant-Tracking System. San Francisco, CA: John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes. http://thpplus.org/pdfs/JBF_Policy_Brief.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau, Housing and Household Economic Statistics Division.

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