

THP-PLUS ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2007-08

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



THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project
Published by the John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes

“Thank you very much for this opportunity.
I no longer feel alone.”

-THP-Plus participant, Riverside County

Acknowledgments

The information in this document is drawn from the results of the 2008 THP-Plus participant survey; focus groups and interviews with THP-Plus participants; and surveys and interviews with county THP-Plus representatives and THP-Plus providers.

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Research Fellow Brenda Lorentzen, Ph.D., conducted the analysis for this report. Graduate Student Intern Nicole Farkouh designed and conducted the participant-specific survey, focus groups and interviews.

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2001
AB 427
establishes
THP-Plus

2002
THP-Plus
de-linked
from STEP

2004
THP-Plus
changed to
annual
allocation

2005
Eligibility
expanded
to age 24

2006
60 percent
county
share of cost
removed

2008
Number of
youth served
surpassed
1,500

October 2008

Dear Partners

Dear THP-Plus Partners,

On behalf of the John Burton Foundation, the California Department of Social Services, and the Corporation for Supportive Housing, we are pleased to share the THP-Plus Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2007-08. This report highlights the progress we have made in the THP-Plus program, which provides housing and comprehensive supportive services to California's former foster youth.

Each year in California, more than 4,000 former foster youth "age out" or "emancipate" from the child-welfare system. Studies indicate that on leaving foster care, youth face significant challenges in making a successful transition from the child-welfare system to independent adulthood. In 2001, the California state legislature created the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THP-Plus) to address the housing and service needs of this growing population.

This year, the most important accomplishment of THP-Plus was the tremendous growth in the program. The Schwarzenegger Administration proposed significant increases in the funding for State Fiscal Year 2007-2008: THP-Plus served 1,548 former foster youth in 39 counties this year. This reflects an increase in the number of youth served of more than 130 percent statewide.

In the spring of this year, the John Burton Foundation conducted a comprehensive survey of more than 450 THP-Plus participants from 34 programs throughout the state. The results demonstrate that the program is working: after receiving THP-Plus housing and services, young adults reported significant increases in work participation, hourly wages, educational enrollment and connections with a caring adult.

Although there has been great progress, we recognize that the demand for THP-Plus continues to grow. In response to this ongoing and increasing need, the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project, originally envisioned as lasting only two years, will continue for a third year. During Fiscal Year 2008-09, we will focus on decreasing homelessness among former foster youth by expanding THP-Plus capacity; strengthening the program's evaluation and monitoring capacity; and increasing the knowledge of effective housing programs for former foster youth through technical assistance and training.

Thank you for your commitment to ending homelessness among former foster youth and your interest in THP-Plus.

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

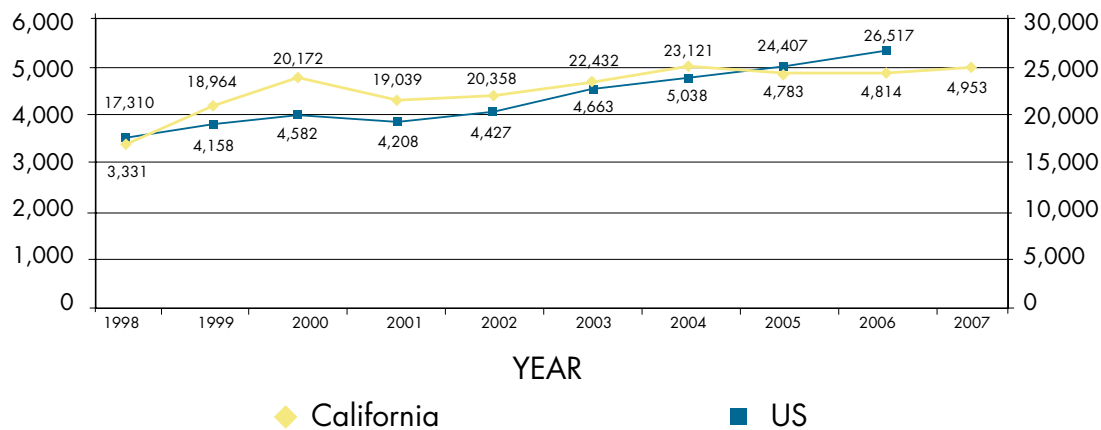
"I was homeless before now.
THP-Plus has helped me build a structure
and a sense of security. I couldn't be more thankful!"
-THP-Plus participant, San Luis Obispo County

Growing

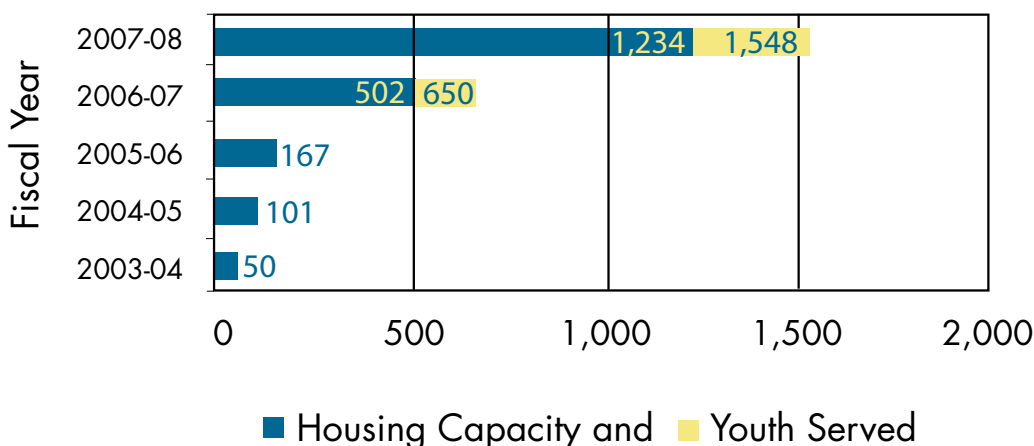
THP-Plus in 2007-08: Growing to Meet the Demand

Over the past ten years, California has experienced a 48 percent increase in the number of youth emancipating from foster care, which mirrors the national trend. As this trend continues to grow, so does the need for safe, affordable housing and supportive services for former foster youth. In FY 2007-08, THP-Plus answered the need: housing capacity grew more than 100 percent, from 502 to 1,234, as did the number of youths served, from 650 to 1,548. The number of counties implementing THP-Plus more than doubled, from 16 to 39.

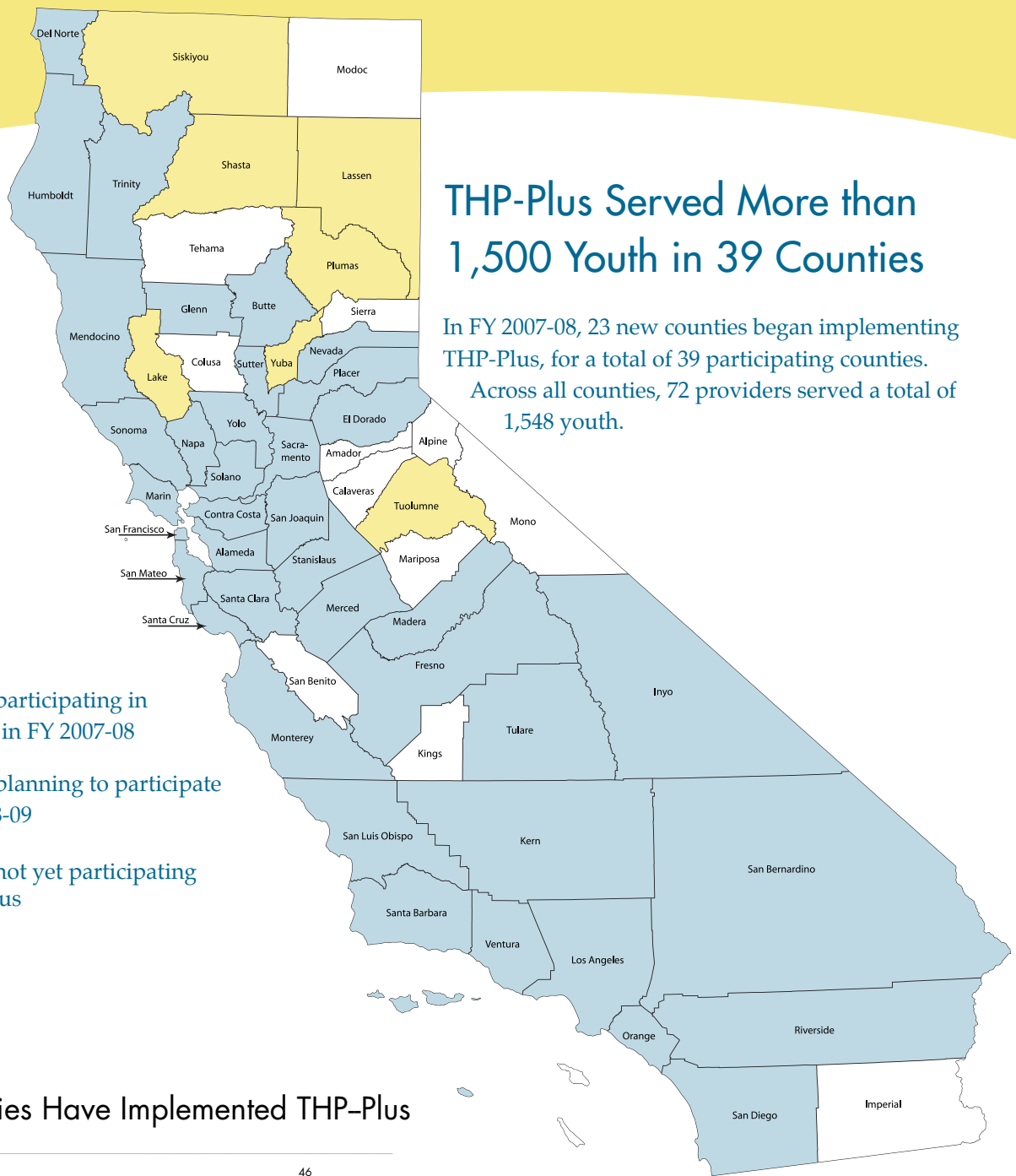
Emancipating Foster and Probation Youth in California



THP-Plus Served More Than 1,500 Youth



In FY 2007-08, THP-Plus housing capacity more than doubled, reaching 1,234 housing slots. A total of 1,548 young people were served by the program.



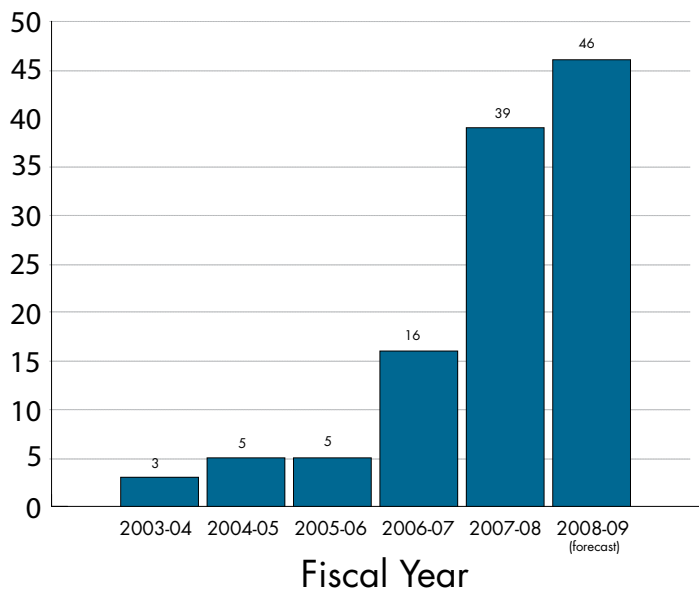
THP-Plus Served More than 1,500 Youth in 39 Counties

In FY 2007-08, 23 new counties began implementing THP-Plus, for a total of 39 participating counties. Across all counties, 72 providers served a total of 1,548 youth.

Legend

- Counties participating in THP-Plus in FY 2007-08
- Counties planning to participate in FY 2008-09
- Counties not yet participating in THP-Plus

39 Counties Have Implemented THP-Plus



* A total of 39 counties served youth in 72 THP-Plus programs in FY 07-08. An additional seven counties were approved by the California Department of Social Services to provide THP-Plus housing in FY 08-09. This number includes counties with CDSS-approved plans in FY 2007-08 that did not yet serve youth.

Transitions

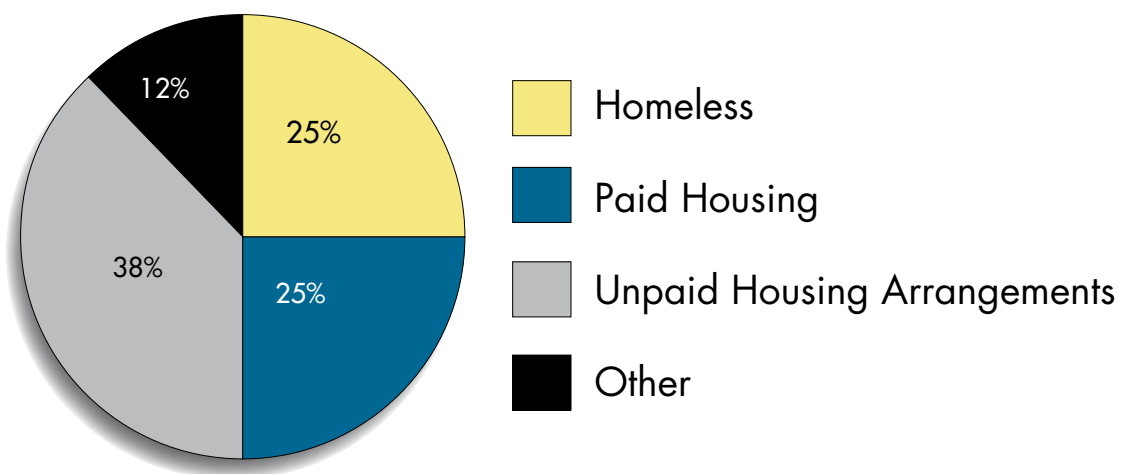
Youth in THP-Plus: Making Safe, Supported Transitions

“The program has helped me to go back to school. Before I got my apartment, I worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week because I had to pay rent.”

-THP-Plus participant,
Alameda County

In the spring of 2008, the John Burton Foundation conducted an extensive written survey of THP-Plus participants. Four hundred fifty-eight valid surveys were returned from 34 providers in 27 counties. Highlights of the survey results are presented in the following pages. Focus groups were conducted with THP-Plus youth participants at First Place for Youth in Alameda County, and St. Anne's in Los Angeles County. Additional interviews were conducted with program participants from Los Angeles and Stanislaus Counties. Complete survey results are available in *Outcomes for Former Foster Youth in California's THP-Plus Program: Are Youth in THP-Plus Faring Better?*, a Policy Brief published by the John Burton Foundation in September 2008.

25% of Respondents Believed They Would Be Homeless Without THP-Plus



“I have accomplished a lot of goals and
I have come a long distance.”

-THP-Plus participant, San Luis Obispo County

Characteristics of THP-Plus Participants

The majority of survey respondents were female (68%) and had participated in the program for six months or less. Nearly one third of respondents came to THP-Plus directly from foster care, and one in four believe they would be homeless without THP-Plus. The figures below provide additional information about who benefits from THP-Plus programs.

Description of Survey Participants

N=458

Gender

Male	32%
Female	68%
Custodial mothers	26% of total participants

Length of Time in the Program

< 1 month	12%
1-6 months	50%
7-12 months	24%
13-18 months	9%
19-24 months	5%

Housing immediately prior to THP-Plus

Foster care placement	30%
Apartment leased by youth	13%
With friend or family member, no rent paid	30%
Emergency shelter or homeless	13%
Other	14%

Age

Average	19.6 years
18	19%
19	31%
20	25%
21	14%
22	9%
23	2%
SSI recipients	6%

Housing Model

Single site	48%
Scattered site	37%
Host Family	15%

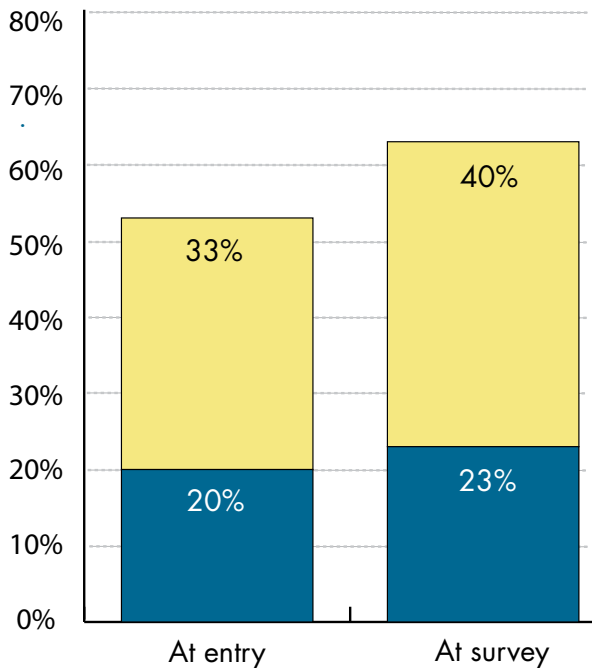
“I’ve learned a lot from this program,
and I feel at the end, I will be prepared to
live on my own.”

-THP-Plus participant, San Francisco County

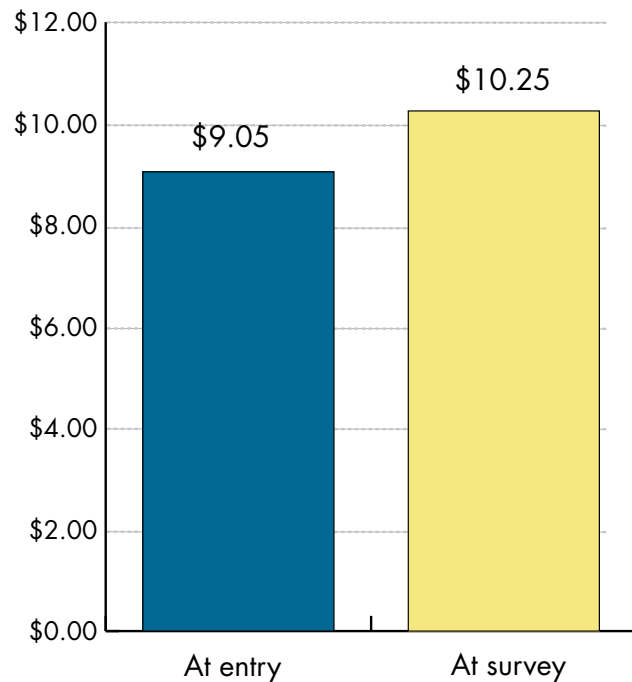
Participant Outcomes

Survey results indicate that THP-Plus is making a measurable, positive impact in the lives of former foster youth. THP-Plus survey respondents reported significant increases in work participation, hourly wages and enrollment in community college, as demonstrated in the charts below.

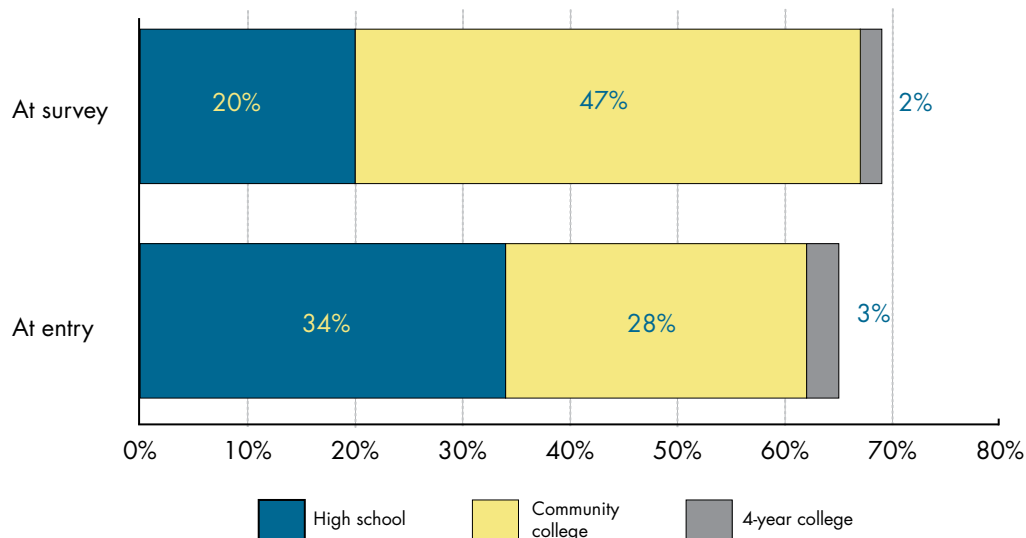
Employment Rates Increased 19%



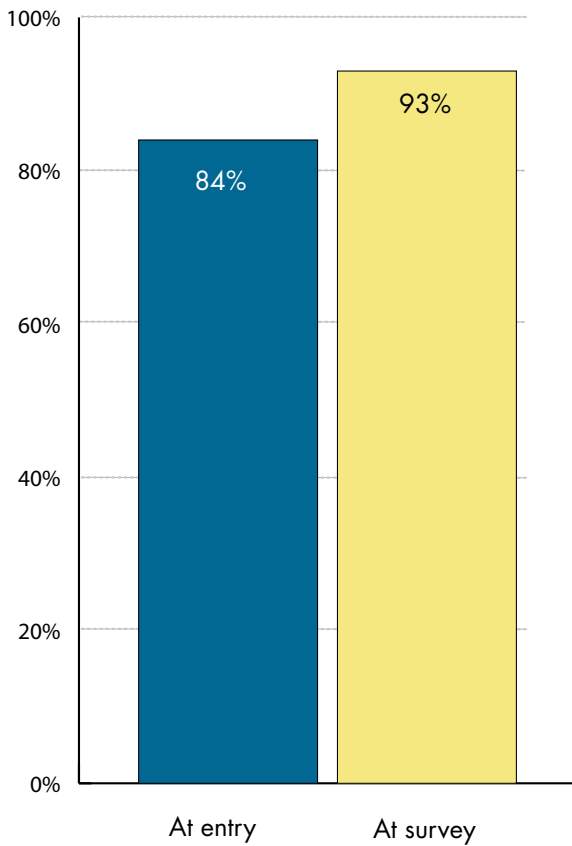
Hourly Wages Increased 13%



Community College Enrollment Increased 68%

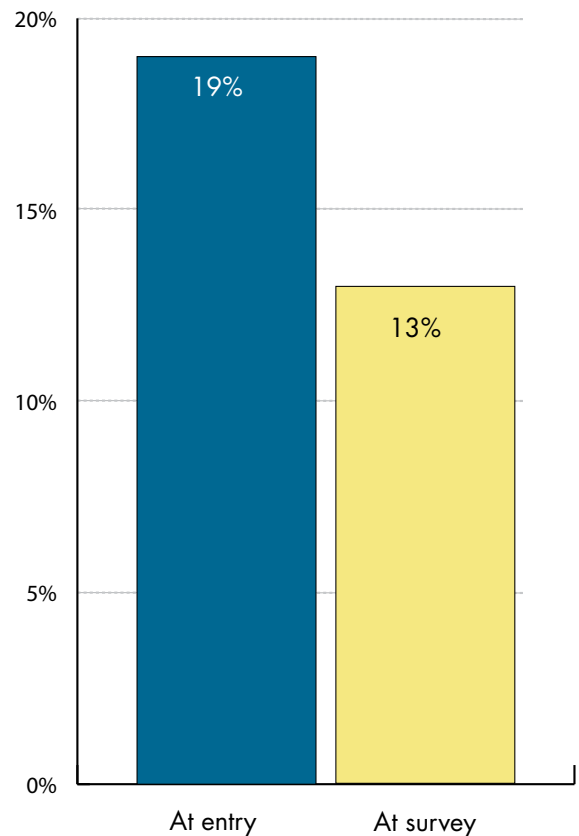


Percentage of Youth with a Permanent Connection Increased 10.7%



The survey documents an increase in the number of youth who report having established a permanent connection with an adult who could provide support, advice and guidance. At entry, 84 percent of youth reported having at least one such “permanent connection,” while at the time of the survey, 93 percent reported having such a relationship with a trusted adult, an increase of 10.7 percent.

Percentage of “Disconnected Youth” Decreased 32%



Survey results indicated that participants are balancing work and school: 45 percent of participants are employed and in school. Survey results also indicated a significant decrease in the number of respondents who were neither attending school nor working, a situation commonly referred to as “disconnectedness.” The percentage of “disconnected youth” (excluding youth receiving SSI) decreased 32 percent, from 19 percent at entry in THP-Plus, to 13 percent at the time of the survey.

Participant Satisfaction

An important measure of the quality of the THP-Plus program is the level of satisfaction among its participants. Of the 458 youth who responded to the survey, the vast majority reported high levels of satisfaction with THP-Plus.

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the program:

- 92 percent rate their overall satisfaction with the program as excellent or good
- 93 percent rate the quality of case management as excellent or good
- 89 percent rate the safety and quality of housing as excellent or good

Profiles

Participant Profile

Precious:

Building a Future for
Herself and Her Daughter

St. Anne's THP-Plus Program, Los Angeles County

Precious is a 20-year-old participant in the St. Anne's THP-Plus program in Los Angeles. She joined a gang at a young age, and served nine months in a lock-down facility for girls. At 15, she was placed into a foster home, where she developed a good relationship with her foster mother. Precious graduated from high school, and had a good job with the post office until she was laid off due to cutbacks.



After leaving her foster home at 19, Precious could not find a stable living arrangement. She moved between various houses of friends and sometimes lived on the streets. When Precious became pregnant, she approached a former case worker and asked for help finding a place to stay.

Precious learned about St. Anne's, a THP-Plus program where each mother lives in her own apartment with her baby. "I liked it when they said that you get your own place and everything. So I applied, and kept coming up for interviews, and finally I got it. And when I got here, I realized that what I was doing [with the gang] was stupid. I got reunited with my family, and things started going really well." Precious has an internship in the medical billing department of a hospital. She is also considering becoming an Emergency Medical Technician or a firefighter.

"St. Anne's helped me so much. If I wasn't here, I don't know where I'd be. I could be homeless, I could be killed, I could be anything ... I really thank St Anne's because without them ... I don't know where my baby and I would be."

The only way Precious thinks the program could be improved is if it were longer. "Because then I could go to school ... two years really isn't enough time to get a credential, especially since I have a baby."

Precious is confident that with the support of the St. Anne's THP-Plus program, she will be able to give a better life to her daughter. "I'm not afraid of her having the same problems I had because I believe I'm a good mother. My baby comes first before me. As long as she's fed, and taken care of, I'm fine."

For more information, visit:
www.thpplus.org

About the THP-Plus Statewide Implementation Project

This annual report is a product of the Transitional Housing Placement Program (THP-Plus) Statewide Implementation Project, a collaboration between the John Burton Foundation, 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 growing population. In order to achieve this goal, the Project is facilitating the development and expansion of THP-Plus programs in counties across California.

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